

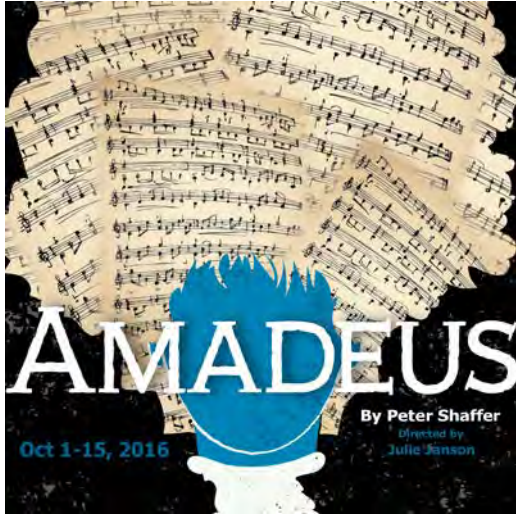
Providence Players of Fairfax AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENT – *AMADEUS*

Thurs 23 Jun (Salieri ONLY), Mon 27 Jun, Tues 28 Jun, Thurs 30 Jun (Call Backs-Invite Only)
6:45 – 9:45 All Dates

Amadeus

By Peter Shaffer

Directed by Julie Janson



A haunting, psychological drama about the relationship between Mozart and his less gifted admirer and bitter rival composer Salieri, this story won the Tony Award for Best Play and eight Academy Awards, including Best Film and Best Screenwriter. Salieri is the established court composer who has given himself to God so that he might realize his sole ambition to be a great composer. Enter the greatest composer of all time: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, a foul-mouthed, graceless oaf who has that which is beyond Salieri's envious grasp – genius.

This production will be a tribute to Sir Pete Shaffer, who passed away on 6 June 2016, after 90 years of sharing his own genius with the world.

14 Actors (8 Men – 3 Women – 3 Flexible) – All Open

- The Providence Players of Fairfax is a non-profit community theater troupe. All participation is on a volunteer, non-compensated basis.
- The Providence Players of Fairfax is a membership organization. Membership is not required to audition. If cast, actors in addition to production team members will be asked to become members of the Providence Players (\$10) for the season (if they are not already).

Location

The James Lee Community Center
2855 Annandale Road
Falls Church, VA 22042

Auditions will be held in the **theater**. Please come in the front of the community center and sign in at the counter. The staff can point you in the direction of the theater and signs will be posted.

Performance Dates and Times

Preview: September 29th, 2016; 7:00pm Curtain

Evening Performances: Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays; September 30 – October 15;
7:30 pm Curtain

Matinees: Sundays; October 2 & 9; 2:00 pm curtain

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Audition Dates

PLEASE RSVP to providenceplayers@cox.net with the dates you plan on auditioning.

Thurs 23 June, 6:45 - 9:45 pm (In the James Lee Theater): This day is for Salieri auditions ONLY. See character breakdown for more information.

Mon 27 June, 6:45 - 9:45 pm (In the James Lee Theater): Open Auditions. Readings from the script. See attached sides.

Tues 28 June, 6:45 - 9:45 pm (In the James Lee Theater): Open Auditions. Readings from the script. See attached sides.

Thurs 30 June, 6:45 - 9:45 pm (In the James Lee Theater): Call-Backs (by invitation)

Character Breakdown

This play provides an excellent range of difficulty and therefore has something for everyone, whether you are a seasoned actor or brand new to the stage. All are welcome. Below are the ages and some of the descriptors suggested by the playwright; however, no one should disqualify themselves based on this information. I provide my own notes for some guidance on what is important. We will be staying true to the location and period of the script: 18th Century Vienna. Most dialogue will be formal American English, but note that most characters have lines in different languages including French, German, and Italian.

***Additional note:** If the Venticelli are female, there will be two small speaking roles for men in a scene with Constanze. Right now my plan is to use the actor playing the Valet and Guiseppe Bonno, but that is subject to change.*

Speaking/Singing Roles (11):

Format: Character name, (gender, suggested age range): "playwright description (if any)", director guidance (if any)

Antonio Salieri (male, 30-50): The action of the play is driven by the contrast of the man Salieri thought himself to be (pious, humble, talented) with the man he is willing to become (a manipulative purveyor of psychological destruction). Must be able learn/handle a large amount of material and commit to three months of consistent rehearsals/line memorization (July, August, September). Salieri is in EVERY scene of the show. **Salieri auditions are 23 June and a monologue is required. The preferred monologue is attached but a serious monologue which is at least 2 minutes long is acceptable. You will also do some readings of Mozart/Salieri scenes from the script (see attached sides). All actors are welcome to return on 27/28 June to audition for other roles.**

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (male, 20-40): “An extremely restless man, his voice, light and high; his manner, excitable and volatile.” Willing to take risks physically and vocally; ability to play some piano is a perk but **not required**. These are the pieces I would like for Mozart to play live (if able): some of the march from *Marriage of Figaro*, and a quick example of *temolando*, *sforzando*, C minor, and D minor. Other than the march, most people could easily learn the rest, even if they don’t have experience.

2 x Venticelli (male or female, age neutral): “Purveyors of fact, rumor, and gossip throughout the play. Sometimes they speak to each other; sometimes to the Audience—but always with the urgency of those who have ever been first with the news.” These characters serve partially as narrators. They often speak rapidly through repeating and/or overlapping lines.

Constanze Weber (female, 20-40): Joyful, rambunctious, yet devoted, wife to Mozart

Joseph II (male, 30-50): “dapper, cheerful;” Emperor of Austria

Johann Kilian von Strack (male, 40-60): “stiff, proper;” Groom of the Imperial Chamber

Count Orsini-Rosenberg (male, 40-70): “plump and supercilious;” Director of the Imperial Opera

Baron von Swieten (male, 40-60): “cultivated and serious;” Prefect of the Imperial Library

Salieri’s Valet/Priest/Major-Domo (male, age neutral): Not very many lines but a frequent and important presence throughout the show – especially as Salieri’s valet.

***Katherina Cavalieri** (female, 20-40): Salieri’s “beautiful” pupil. This role is traditionally non-speaking but I am looking for a soprano who can sing a baroque concert aria and “Kyrie” for the C Minor Mass, instead of miming these sections. Otherwise this character doesn’t have any lines. **Come prepared to sing (arias preferred, memorization not required).**

Non-Speaking Roles (3):

Salieri’s Cook (male or female, age neutral)

Teresa Salieri (female, 30-40): “a placid lady;” wife of Salieri

***Guiseppe Bonno** (male, age neutral): Preferably a pianist who will accompany Katherina on her baroque concert aria. If Mozart cannot play the piano, I may also use this actor as a sort of “double” to Mozart. **Come prepared to play a classical piece, preferably by Mozart.**

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There are NO pauses for scene changes in this play. The minor set changes are done by “servants” (stage crew and actors) who work while the actors continue to engage in conversation.

Rehearsal Schedule:

I am VERY conscious of an actor’s time. I have broken this play into 30 scenes, some of which are only a page or two long. I have tried my best to group actors so that they get the most out of their time at rehearsals. **See attached scene breakdown for more information.** August will be focused on getting the primaries comfortable in their scenes. In late August/early September we will layer in the secondaries, tertiaries, and citizens.

A copy of the preliminary stage rehearsal schedule is included with this announcement and will be available online and at auditions. Stage rehearsals begin August 29, 2016 – this is when most actors will have regular rehearsals. Before that, there will be some readings, selected scene study, and character work based on actor availability in July and August (mostly focused on the leads). The schedule for these will be finalized a week or two after casting and will be based on crew and actor conflicts. Unless indicated otherwise, all rehearsals will happen at the James Lee Community Center. Rehearsals will be held in the evenings roughly from 6:45 to 9:45 pm and on Saturdays and Sundays as indicated.

Come to auditions prepared to list any availability conflicts over this time period. Space is provided on the audition form for this purpose.

Additional Audition Information/Instructions

- **HOW WE WORK:** You are welcome to come to audition on more than one of the open audition evenings. This is not a requirement. Most PPF auditions have actors up and down to read multiple times in multiple combinations and scenes. Most actors find this fun. With the exception of the Salieri auditions and as space allows, you will be able to watch the auditions. You may be asked to go into the hallway with audition partners and work a bit on a scene. We will do our best to get you up multiple times reading for parts you are interested in. You will also be asked to read for other parts you may not be auditioning for. The Providence Players strives to make our productions open to interested and engaged actors & actresses, regardless of their level of experience. We try and make our auditions as relaxing and fun as possible.
- **AUDITION PROCESS & SIDES:** Auditions will consist of readings from the script. No monologue required (unless you are auditioning for Salieri on the 23rd) although one of the sides may be a monologue from the play. Sides for the audition process will be supplied at auditions and are included in this announcement. Additional sides may be added at the auditions.
- **AUDITION FORM:** Resumes and headshots will be accepted, but are not required. Please **ALSO COMPLETE** the attached PPF *Amadeus Audition Form* and bring it with you to the audition.

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Additional Comments

From the original director, Sir Peter Hall:

Amadeus is probably the most successful serious play of the last half century. It has triumphed everywhere. So what is its extraordinary appeal?

Amadeus is a clear-eyed celebration of Mozart and his music. He is someone whose genius can stand with Shakespeare's. Wolfgang is of course dangerous to let on to the stage, because playwright and actors have to live up to a creativity that is almost superhuman. He also happens to be one of the great theater composers: his music easily commands a stage. But if the portrait can be convincing, the fascination is boundless—and makes for high drama.

Shaffer's play of course goes deeper. It looks unblinkingly at the rest of us, who are neither blessed nor cursed (like Mozart) with genius. It analyses with compassion and wit how desperately ordinary most of us are. For however talented we may secretly think ourselves to be, we remain in the great scheme of things relative mediocrities. It is only genius – that rarest and most precious of states – that is unaffected by fashion and indifferent to competition... Only genius makes its own rules.

From the director of this production, Julie Janson:

AMADEUS will be my directorial debut at PPF; however, this will be my 10th production with PPF where I serve both on the stage and behind the scenes. I have actively participated in more than 30 productions over the past 20 years, including my direction of Peter Shaffer's *Black Comedy* in 2004. My other directing credits include *The Elephant Man* by Bernard Pomerance (2012); *Shadow Box* by Michael Cristofer (2004); and *Reckless* by Craig Lucas (2003: Boston University Stage Troupe).

As a director, I believe first and foremost in creating an environment where both actors and crew feel inspired to challenge themselves and reach their maximum potential, all while having a positive, fun experience which results in a theater family.

We will be one of the first companies to have the honor of presenting this masterpiece after the tragic passing of Sir Peter Shaffer. We will do everything in our power to properly honor his greatest work.

This is a challenging show, but I believe the outcome will be extraordinary. I hope you will join us on this journey.



Providence Players

Audition Form "AMADEUS"

AUDITION NUMBER: _____

Attach Resume if you have one though not required.

COMPLETE ENTIRE FORM AND PRINT LEGIBLY

Name		
Mailing Address		
	Home	Work
Phone		
Email		
Cell Phone		

Note- If You are cast and are not already a member, you will be asked to become a member of the Providence Players. Membership is \$10 per season.

GENDER: F M **AGE (range):** _____ **HAIR COLOR:** _____ **HEIGHT:** _____

"IF CAST, I AM WILLING TO DO THE FOLLOWING..." (Circle ALL that apply to you):

Shave facial hair Grow facial hair Cut my hair Dye/color my hair Wear aging makeup Other

CIRCLE ALL PART(s) YOU ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT (review character descriptions thoroughly):

Any Part at All Antonio Salieri Mozart Venticelli Emperor Joseph II
Count von Strack Count Orsini-Rosenberg Baron van Swieten Constanze Weber
Valet/Priest/Major-Domo Salieri's Cook Teresa Salieri Katherina Cavalieri Guiseppe Bonno

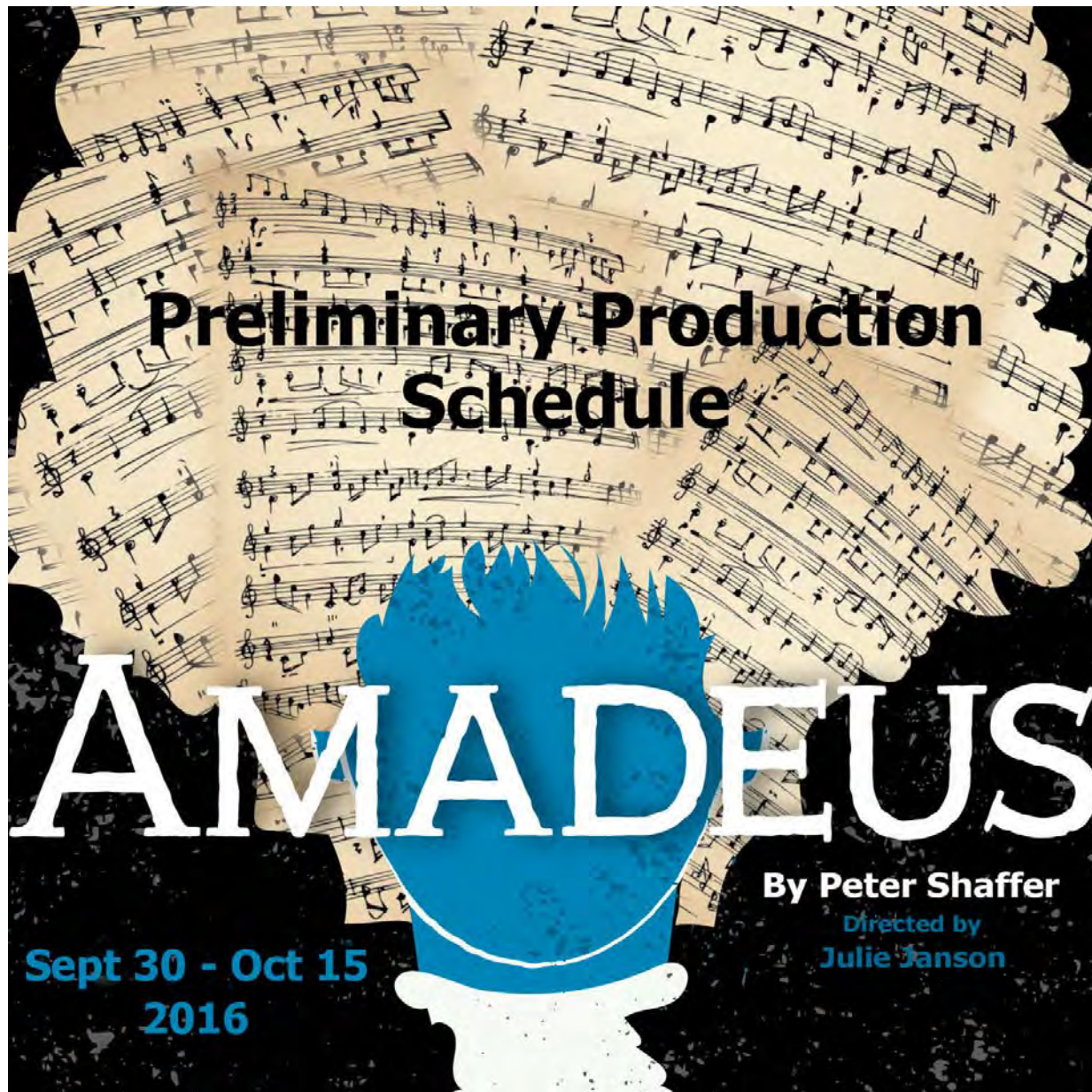
WHAT PART(s) ARE YOU MOST INTERESTED IN: _____

Would you be interested in getting involved with the production crew if you are not cast? (YES/NO)
If yes, what production areas are you interested in? (No experience required)

REHEARSAL CONFLICTS: Review draft rehearsal schedule and list ALL potential conflicts. Known absentee dates are imperative for scheduling rehearsal time to be as productive as possible for everyone. **Everyone cast must be at ALL performances and available for the entire week (Sept 23-29, 2016) prior to opening night.** See audition announcement for additional scheduling considerations.

THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE: List applicable experience to include - Acting, Singing, Piano, Languages, Other - that should be considered (*your attached resume welcomed, but NOT required*).

ADDITIONAL NOTES TO THE DIRECTOR AND CREW: Feel free to share any other personal information you think is pertinent in consideration for the cast of this production



Providence Players Amadeus Production Schedule **June 2016 – Subject to Revision**

Providence Players Production: Amadeus Preliminary Production and Stage Access Schedule

July 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Independence Day Holiday				8	9
10		12 PPF Play Reading Night			15	16
17	18 PPF Board Meeting				22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Providence Players Production: Amadeus Preliminary Production and Stage Access Schedule

August 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 PPF Play Reading Night	10	11	12	13
14	15 PPF Board Meeting	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	30 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	31 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM			

Providence Players Production: Amadeus Preliminary Production and Stage Access Schedule

September 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	2	3
4	5 Labor Day	6 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10 PM	7 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10 PM	8 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10 PM	9	10 PPF Theater Use Set Build Weekend 9 AM – 10 PM
11 PPF Theater Use Set Build Weekend 9 AM – 6 PM	12 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10 PM	13 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10 PM PPF Play Reading Night	14 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10 PM	15 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10 PM	16 PPF Tech Set Up 6:00 PM –10 PM	17 PPF Theater Tech Weekend 9:00 AM –10 PM
18 PPF Theater Tech Weekend 9:00 AM –5 PM	19 PPF Board Meeting	20 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10 PM	21 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10 PM	22 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10 PM	23 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10 PM	24 PPF Theater Use Dress Rehearsal 9:00 AM –6 PM
25 PPF Theater Use- Dress Rehearsal 9A M to 5 PM	26 PPF Theater Use Dress Rehearsal 5:00 PM –10 PM	27 PPF Theater Use Dress Rehearsal 5:00 PM –10 PM	28 PPF Theater Use Dress Rehearsal 5:00 PM –10 PM	29 PPF Student & Senior Preview Performance 7PM 5:00 PM –11PM	30 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11 PM	

Providence Players Production: Amadeus Preliminary Production and Stage Access Schedule

October 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11 PM
2 PPF Performance Matinee 2 PM 12 PM-6PM				6 PPF Thursday Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –10 PM	7 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11 PM	8 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11 PM
9 PPF Performance Matinee 2 PM 12 PM-6PM	10 Columbus Day Holiday	11 PPF Play Reading Night		13 PPF Thursday Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –10PM	14 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11PM	15 PPF Performance 7:30 PM 5:00 PM –11PM
16 PPF Strike 9 AM – 5 PM	17 PPF Board Meeting					

Salieri Audition Side Cover Page

Salieri auditions are being held separately on 23 June and a monologue is required. The preferred monologue follows - Page 43 From Script but a serious monologue which is at least 2 minutes long is acceptable.

You will also do some readings of Mozart/Salieri scenes from the script (see attached sides). All actors are welcome to return on 27/28 June to audition for other roles.

What was evident was that Mozart was simply transcribing music completely finished in his head. And finished as most music is never finished.

He resumes looking at the music. Immediately the Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola sounds — the vaulting, joyous tune in the first movement

Displace one note and there would be diminishment. Displace one phrase and the structure would fall.

He looks up again: the music breaks off

Here again — only now in abundance — were the same sounds I'd heard in the library.

He resumes reading, and the music also resumes: a ravishing phrase from the slow movement of the Concerto for Flute and Harp

The same crushed harmonies — glancing collisions — agonizing delights.

He looks up: again the music stops

The truth was clear. That Serenade had been no accident.

Very low, in the theatre, a faint thundery sound is heard accumulating, like a distant sea

I was staring through the cage of those meticulous ink strokes at — an Absolute Beauty!

He rises to his feet, holding the portfolio. And out of the low roar writhes and rises the clear sound of a Soprano, singing the "Kyrie" from the C Minor Mass. The accretion of noise around her voice falls away — it sounds suddenly clear and bright — then clearer and brighter. The light too grows bright: too bright: burning white, then scalding white! Salieri stands in the downpour of it, in the flood of the music which is growing ever louder — filling the theatre — as the Soprano yields to the full chorus singing fortissimo its massive counterpoint

This is by far the loudest sound the Audience has yet heard. Salieri staggers towards the Audience, holding the manuscripts in his hand, like a man caught in a tumbling and violent sea

Finally the drums crash in below: Salieri throws down the portfolio of manuscripts — and falls senseless to the ground. At the same second the

MUSIC

music explodes into a long, echoing, distorted boom, signifying some dreadful annihilation. The sound remains suspended over the prone figure in a menacing continuum — no longer music at all. Then it dies away, and there is only silence

The Lights fade

A long pause. Salieri is quite still, lying among the manuscripts

Finally the clock sounds: six times. Salieri stirs as it does. Slowly he raises his head and looks up. And now — quietly at first — he addresses his God

Capisco! I know my fate. Now for the first time I feel my emptiness as Adam felt his nakedness ... (Slowly he rises to his feet) Tonight at an inn somewhere in this city stands a giggling child who can put on paper, without actually setting down his billiard cue, casual notes which turn my most considered ones into lifeless scratches. Grazie Signore! You gave me the desire to serve You — which most men do not have — then saw to it that the service was shameful in the ears of the server. Grazie! You gave me the desire to praise You — which most do not feel — then made me mute. Grazie tanti! You put into me perception of the Incomparable — which most men never know! — then ensured that I would know myself forever mediocre. (His voice gains power) Why! ... What is my fault? ... Until this day I have pursued virtue with rigour. I have laboured long hours to relieve my fellow men. I have worked and worked the talent You allowed me. (Calling up) You know how hard I've worked! — solely that in the end, in the practice of the art which alone makes the world comprehensible to me, I might hear Your Voice! And now I do hear it and it says only one name: MOZART! ... Spiteful, sniggering, conceited, infantine Mozart! — who has never worked one minute to help another man! — shit-talking Mozart with his botty-smacking wife! Him You have chosen to be your sole conduit! And my only reward — my sublime privilege — is to be the sole man alive in this time who shall clearly recognize Your Incarnation! (Savagely) Grazie e grazie ancora!

He hurls the portfolio into a corner

So be it! From this time we are enemies, You and I! I'll not accept it from You — do you hear! ... They say God is not mocked. I tell you, Man is not mocked! ... I am not mocked! ... They say the spirit bloweth where it listeth: I tell you no! It must list to virtue or not blow at all! (Yelling) Dio ingiusto — You are the Enemy! I name Thee now — Nemico Eterno! And this I swear: To my last breath, I shall block You on earth, as far as I am able! (He

Amadeus Audition Sides Cover Page (Non- Salieri Sides)

Please note that if you are interested in auditioning for Salieri, they are being held separately on 23 June and a monologue is required. The preferred monologue is NOT included in these sides but appears as a separate side – Page 43 From Script- in the section prior to this section. A substitute, serious monologue, which is at least 2 minutes long is acceptable.

What follows are the various sides for the other characters.

purveyors of fact, rumour and gossip throughout the play. They speak rapidly—in this first appearance extremely rapidly—so that the scene has the air of a fast and dreadful overture. Sometimes they speak to each other; sometimes to the Audience—but always with the urgency of men who have ever been first with the news

Venticello 1 I don't believe it.
Venticello 2 I don't believe it.
Venticello 1 I don't believe it!
Venticello 2 I don't believe it!
Whisperers *Salieri!*
Venticello 1 They say.
Venticello 2 I hear.
Venticello 1 I hear.
Venticello 2 They say.
Venticello 1 } *(together) I don't believe it.*
Venticello 2 }
Whisperers *Salieri!*
Venticello 1 The whole city is talking.
Venticello 2 You hear it all over.
Venticello 1 The cafés.
Venticello 2 The Opera.
Venticello 1 The Prater.
Venticello 2 The gutter.
Venticello 1 They say even Metternich repeats it.
Venticello 2 They say even Beethoven, his old pupil!
Venticello 1 But why now?
Venticello 2 After so long?
Venticello 1 Thirty-two years!
Venticello 1 } *(together) I don't believe it.*
Venticello 2 }
Whisperers *SALIERI!*
Venticello 1 They say he shouts it out all day!
Venticello 2 I hear he cries it out all night!
Venticello 1 Stays in his apartments.
Venticello 2 Never goes out.
Venticello 1 Not for a year now.
Venticello 2 Longer. Longer.
Venticello 1 Must be seventy.
Venticello 2 Older. Older.
Venticello 1 Antonio Salieri—
Venticello 2 The famous musician—
Venticello 1 Shouting it aloud!

*around
the
audience
he to a
crescendo
of music
building in
Salieri's
mind*

Venticello 2 Crying it aloud!
Venticello 1 Impossible.
Venticello 2 Incredible.
Venticello 1 I don't believe it!
Venticello 2 I don't believe it!
Whisperers *SALIERI!*
Venticello 1 I know who *started* the tale!
Venticello 2 I know who started the tale!

Two old men—one thin and dry, one very fat—detach themselves from the crowd at the back and walk downstage, on either side: Salieri's Valet and Pastry Cook

Venticello 1 *(indicating him)* The old man's Valet!
Venticello 2 *(indicating him)* The old man's Cook!
Venticello 1 The Valet hears him shouting!
Venticello 2 The Cook hears him crying!
Venticello 1 What a story!
Venticello 2 What a scandal!

The Venticelli move quickly upstage, one on either side, and each collects a silent informant. Venticello 1 walks down eagerly with the Valet; Venticello 2 walks down eagerly with the Cook

Venticello 1 *(to the Valet)* What does he say, your master?
Venticello 2 *(to the Cook)* What *exactly* does he say, the Kapellmeister?
Venticello 1 Alone in his house.
Venticello 2 All day and all night.
Venticello 1 What sins does he shout?
Venticello 2 The old fellow—
Venticello 1 The recluse—
Venticello 2 What horrors have you heard?
Venticello 1 } *(together)* { *Tell us! Tell us! Tell us at once! What does he*
Venticello 2 } *cry? What does he cry? What does he cry?*

The Valet and the Cook gesture towards Salieri

Salieri *(in a great cry)* MOZART!!!

Silence

Venticello 1 *(whispering)* Mozart!
Venticello 2 *(whispering)* Mozart!

Von Strack (to Orsini-Rosenberg) You are required to commission a comic opera in German from Herr Mozart.

Salieri (to the Audience) Johann von Strack. Royal Chamberlain. A court official to his collar bone.

Orsini-Rosenberg (loftily) Why in German? Italian is the only possible language for opera!

Salieri Count Orsini-Rosenberg. Director of the Opera. Benevolent to all things Italian — especially myself.

Von Strack (stunty) The idea of a national opera is dear to His Majesty's heart. He desires to hear pieces in good plain German.

Van Swieten Yes, but why comic? It is not the function of music to be funny. Salieri Baron van Swieten. Prefect of the Imperial Library. Ardent Freemason. Yet to find anything funny. Known, for his enthusiasm for old-fashioned music, as "Lord Fugue".

Van Swieten I heard last week a remarkable serious opera from Mozart: Idomeno, King of Crete.

Orsini-Rosenberg I heard that too. A young fellow trying to impress beyond his abilities. Too much spice. Too many notes.

Von Strack (stunty, to Orsini-Rosenberg) Nevertheless, kindly convey the commission to him today.

Orsini-Rosenberg (taking the paper reluctantly) I believe we are going to have trouble with this young man. (He leaves the Light Box and strolls down the stage to Salieri) He was a child prodigy. That always spells trouble. His father is Leopold Mozart, a bad-tempered Salzburg musician who dragged the boy endlessly round Europe making him play the keyboard blindfold, with one finger, and that sort of thing. (To Salieri) All prodigies are hateful — non e vero, Compositore?

Salieri Divenzono sempre più sterili con gli anni. Orsini-Rosenberg. Precisamente. Precisamente.

Von Strack (calling suspiciously) What are you saying? Orsini-Rosenberg (avily) Nothing, Herr Chamberlain! ... Niente, Signor Pomposol...

Orsini-Rosenberg strolls on out. Von Strack strides off irritated

Van Swieten (coming downstairs) We meet tomorrow, I believe, on your committee to devise pensions for old musicians.

Salieri (deferentially) It's most gracious of you to attend, Baron. Van Swieten You're a worthy man, Salieri. You should join our Brotherhood of Masons. We would welcome you warmly.

Salieri I would be honoured, Baron!

Van Swieten If you wished I could arrange initiation into my lodge. Salieri That would be more than my due.

Van Swieten Nonsense. We embrace men of talent of all conditions. I may invite young Mozart also — dependent on the impression he makes. Salieri (bowing) Of course, Baron.

Van Swieten goes out

(To the Audience) Honour indeed. In those days almost every man of influence in Vienna was a Mason — and the Baron's lodge by far most fashionable. As for young Mozart, I confess I was alarmed by his coming. Not by the commission of a comic opera, even though I myself was then attempting one called *The Stolen Bucker*. ... No, what worried me were reports about the man himself. He was praised altogether too much.

The Venticelli hurry in from either side

— 566

Venticello 1 Such gaiety of spirit!

Venticello 2 Such ease of manner!

Salieri (to the Venticelli) Really? Where does he live?

Venticello 1 Peter Platz.

Venticello 2 Number eleven.

Venticello 1 The landlady is Madame Weber.

Venticello 2 A real bitch.

Venticello 1 Takes in male lodgers, and has a tribe of daughters.

Venticello 2 Mozart was engaged to one of them before.

Venticello 1 A soprano called Aloysia.

Venticello 2 She jilted him.

Venticello 1 Now he's after another sister.

Venticello 2 Constanze.

Salieri You mean he was actually engaged to one sister and now wants to marry another?

Venticello 1 (together) Exactly!

Venticello 2 Her mother's pushing marriage.

Venticello 1 His father isn't!

Venticello 2 Daddy is worried sick!

Venticello 2 Writes him every day from Salzburg!

Salieri (to them) I want to meet him. What houses does he visit?

Venticello 1 He'll be at the Baroness Waldstädten's tomorrow night.

Salieri Grazie.

Venticello 2 Some of his music is to be played.

Salieri (to both) Restiamo in contatto.

Venticello 1 (together) Certamente, Signore!

They go off

Salieri (to the Audience) So to the Baroness Waldstädten's I went. That night changed my life.

Set
* * * * *

The Library of the Baroness Waldstädten

In the Light Box, the background shows two elegantly curtained windows surrounded by handsome subdued wallpaper

Two Servants bring on a large table loaded with cakes and desserts. Two more carry on a grand, high-backed wing-chair which they place ceremoniously DR near the small table. They set the items and leave

Salieri (to the Audience) I entered the library to take first a little refreshment. My generous hostess always put out the most delicious confections in that room whenever she knew I was coming. *Dolci, caramelli*, and most especially a miraculous *crema al mascarpone* — which is simply cream cheese mixed with granulated sugar and suffused with rum — that was totally irresistible. (He takes a little bowl of it from the cake-stand and sits in the wing-chair, facing out front. Thus seated, he is invisible to anyone entering from upstage) I had just sat down in a high-backed chair to consume this paradisaal dish — unobservable, as it happened, to anyone who might come in.

Off stage, noises are heard

Constanze (off) Squeak! Squeak! Squeak!

Constanze runs on from upstage: a pretty girl in her early twenties, full of high spirits. At this second she is pretending to be a mouse. She runs across the stage in her gay party dress, squeaking, and hides under the fortepiano

Suddenly a small, pallid, large-eyed man in a showy wig and a showy set of clothes runs in after her and freezes c, as a cat would freeze, hunting a mouse. This is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. As we get to know him through his next scenes, we discover several things about him: he is an extremely restless man, his voice, light and high; his manner, excitable and volatile

Mozart Miaouw!

Constanze (betraying where she is) Squeak!

Mozart Miaouw! Miaouw! Miaouw!

The composer drops on all fours and, wrinkling his face, begins spitting and stalking his prey. The mouse — giggling with excitement — breaks her cover and scrambles across the floor. The cat pursues. Almost at the chair where Salieri sits concealed, the mouse turns at bay. The cat stalks her — nearer and nearer — in its knee-breeches and elaborate coat

Mozart I'm going to pounce-bounce! I'm going to scrunch-munch! I'm going to chewpoo my little mouse-wouse! I'm going to tear her to bits with my paws-claws!

Constanze No!

Mozart Paws-claws, paws-claws, paws-claws! *Ohh!*

He falls on her. She screams

Salieri (drily, to the Audience) Before I could rise, it had become difficult to do so. (He surreptitiously places the bowl on the small table)

Mozart I'm going to bite you in half with my fangs-wangs! My little Stranzerl-wanzerl-banzerl!

She laughs delightedly, lying prone beneath him

You're trembling! ... I think you're frightened of puss-wuss! ... I think you're scared to death! (Intimately) I think you're going to shit yourself.

She squeals, but is not really shocked. He emits a little babyish giggle

In a moment it's going to be on the floor!

Constanze Ssh! Someone'll hear you!

He imitates the noise of a fart

Stop it, Wolferl! Ssh!

Mozart Here it comes now! I can hear it coming! ... Oh what a melancholy note! Something's dropping from your boat!

Another fart noise, slower. Constanze shrieks with amusement

Constanze Stop it now! It's stupid! Really stupid!

Salieri sits appalled

Mozart Hey — hey — what's Trazom!

Constanze What?

Mozart T-R-A-Z-O-M. What's that mean?

Constanze How should I know?

Mozart It's Mozart spelt backwards — shit-wit! If you ever married me, you'd be Constanze Trazom.

Constanze No, I wouldn't.

Mozart Yes, you would. Because I'd want everything backwards once I was married. I'd want to lick my wife's arse instead of her face.

Constanze You're not going to lick anything at this rate. Your father's never going to give his consent to us.

The sense of fun deserts him instantly

Mozart And who cares about his consent?

Constanze You do. You care very much. You wouldn't do it without it.

Mozart Wouldn't I?

Constanze No, you wouldn't. Because you're too scared of him. I know what he says about me. *(In a solemn voice)* "If you marry that dreadful girl, you'll end up lying on straw with beggars for children."

Mozart *(impulsively)* Marry me!

Constanze Don't be silly.

Mozart Marry me!

Constanze Are you serious?

Mozart *(defiantly)* Yes! ... Answer me this minute: yes or no! Say yes, then I can go home, shit in the bed and shout "I did it!" *(He rolls on top of her delightedly)*

The Major-Domo of the house stalks in upstage

Major-Domo *(imperviously)* Her ladyship is ready to commence.

Mozart Ah! ... Yes! ... Good!

He picks himself up, embarrassed, and helps Constanze to rise

(With an attempt at dignity) Come, my dear. The music waits!

Constanze *(suppressing giggles)* Oh, by all means — Herr Trazom!

He takes her arm. They prance off together, followed by the disapproving Major-Domo

** @ on stage if using piano player*

Salieri *(shaken; to the Audience)* And then, right away, the concert began.

I heard it through the door — some serenade: at first only vaguely — too horrified to attend. But presently the sound insisted — a solemn Adagio, in E Flat.

The Adagio of the Serenade for Thirteen Wind Instruments (K. 361) begins to sound. Quietly and quite slowly, seated in the wing-chair, Salieri speaks over the music

It started simply enough: just a pulse in the lowest registers — bassoons and basset horns — like a rusty squeezebox. It would have been comic except for the slowness, which gave it instead a sort of serenity. And then suddenly, high above it, sounded a single note on the oboe.

We hear it

It hung there unwavering, piercing me through, till breath could hold it no longer, and a clarinet withdrew it out of me, and sweetened it into a phrase of such delight it had me trembling. The light flickered in the room. My eyes clouded! *(With ever-increasing emotion and vigour)* The squeezebox groaned louder, and over it the higher instruments wailed and warbled, throwing lines of sound around me — long lines of pain around and through me — Ah, the pain! Pain as I had never known it. I called up to my sharp old God "What is this? ... What?" But the squeezebox went on and on, and the pain cut deeper into my shaking head, until suddenly I was running——

He bolts out of the chair and runs across the stage in a fever, to a corner DL. Behind him in the Light Box the Library fades into a street scene at night: small houses under a rent sky. The music continues fainter, underneath

—dashing through the side-door, stumbling downstairs into the street, into the cold night, gasping for life. *(Calling up in agony)* "What?! What is this? Tell me, Signore! What is this pain? What is this need in the sound? Forever unfulfillable yet fulfilling him who hears it, utterly. Is it *Your* need? Can it be Yours?" ...

Pause

Dimly the music sounded from the salon above. Dimly the stars shone on the empty street. I was suddenly frightened. It seemed to me that I had heard the voice of God — and that it issued from a creature whose own voice I had also heard — and it was the voice of an obscene child!

The Lights change. The street scene fades

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SC8

Salieri's Apartments

It remains dark

Salieri I ran home and buried my fear in work. More pupils — till there were thirty or forty. More committees to help musicians! More motets and

later on. All stand frozen in attitudes of listening, until Salieri comes to a finish. Applause

(To Salieri) Charming ... *Comme d'habitude!* (He turns and extends his hand to be kissed) Mozart.

Mozart approaches, bows extravagantly, and kneels

Mozart Majesty! Your Majesty's humble slave! Let me kiss your royal hand a hundred thousand times!

He kisses it greedily, over and over, until its owner withdraws it in embarrassment

Joseph *Non, non, s'il vous plaît!* A little less enthusiasm, I beg you. Come sir. *Levez-vous!*

He assists Mozart to rise

You will not recall it, but the last time we met you were also on the floor! My sister remembers it to this day. This young man — all of six years old, mind you — slipped on the floor at Schönbrunn — came a nasty purler on his little head ... Have I told you this before?

Orsini-Rosenberg (hastily) No, Majesty!

Von Strack (hastily) No, Majesty!

Salieri (hastily) No, Majesty!

Joseph Well, my sister Antoinette runs forward and picks him up herself. And do you know what he does? Jumps right into her arms — hoopla, just like that! — kisses her on both cheeks and says, "Will you marry me: yes or no?"

The courtiers laugh politely. Mozart giggles uncomfortably

I do not mean to embarrass you, Herr Mozart. You know everyone here, surely?

Mozart Yes, Sire. (Bowing elaborately to Orsini-Rosenberg) Herr Director! (To van Swieten) Herr Prefect.

Van Swieten (warmly) Delighted to see you again!

Joseph But not, I think, our esteemed Court Composer! ... A most serious omission! No-one who cares for art can afford not to know Herr Salieri. He wrote that exquisite little "March of Welcome" for you.

Salieri It was a trifle, Majesty.

Joseph Nevertheless ...

Mozart (to Salieri) I'm overwhelmed, *Signore!*

Joseph Ideas simply pour out of him — don't they, Strack?

Von Strack Endlessly, Sire. (As if tipping him) Well done, Salieri.

Joseph Let it be my pleasure then to introduce you! Court Composer Salieri — Herr Mozart of Salzburg!

Salieri (sleekly; to Mozart) *Finalmente. Che gioia. Che diletto straordinario.*

Salieri gives him a prim bow and presents the copy of his music to the other composer, who accepts it with a flood of quick Italian

Mozart *Grazie, Signore! Mille milione di benvenuti! Sono commosso! È un onore eccezionale incontrala! Compositore brillante e famosissimo!* (He makes an elaborate and showy bow in return)

Salieri (dryly) *Grazie.*

Joseph Tell me, Mozart, have you received our commission for the opera?

Mozart Indeed I have, Majesty! I am so grateful I can hardly speak! ... I swear to you that you will have the best, the most perfect entertainment ever offered a monarch. I've already found a libretto.

Orsini-Rosenberg (startled) Have you? I didn't hear of this!

Mozart Forgive me, Herr Director, I entirely omitted to tell you.

Orsini-Rosenberg May I ask why?

Mozart It didn't seem very important.

Orsini-Rosenberg Not important?

Mozart Not really, no.

Orsini-Rosenberg (irritated) It is important to me, Herr Mozart.

Mozart (embarrassed) Yes, I see that. Of course.

Orsini-Rosenberg And who, pray, is it by?

Mozart Stephanie.

Orsini-Rosenberg A most unpleasant man.

Mozart But a brilliant writer.

Orsini-Rosenberg Do you think?

Mozart The story is really amusing, Majesty. The whole plot is set in a — (he sniggers) — in a ...

Joseph (eagerly) Where? Where is it set?

Mozart It's — it's rather saucy, Majesty!

Joseph Yes, yes! Where?

Mozart Well it's actually set in a *seraglio*.

Joseph A what?

Mozart A pasha's harem.

Orsini-Rosenberg And you imagine that is a suitable subject for performance at a national theatre?

Mozart Yes! ... Why not? It's very funny, it's amusing! ... On my honour, Majesty, there's nothing offensive in it. Nothing offensive in the world. It's full of proper German virtues, I swear it! ...

Salieri (blandly) *Scusate, Signore*, but what are those? Being a foreigner I'm not quite sure.

Joseph You are being *cattivo*, Court Composer.

Salieri Not at all, Majesty.

Joseph Come then, Mozart. Name us a proper German virtue!

Mozart Love, Sire. I have yet to see that expressed in any opera.

Van Swieten Well answered, Mozart.

Salieri (*smiling*) *Scusate*. I was under the impression one rarely saw anything *else* expressed in opera.

Mozart I mean manly love, *Signore*. Not male sopranos screeching. Or stupid couples rolling their eyes. All that absurd Italian nonsense.

Pause. Tension. Rosenberg coughs

I mean the real thing.

Joseph And do you know the real thing yourself, Herr Mozart?

Mozart Under your pardon, I think I do, Majesty.

Joseph Bravo. When do you think it will be done?

Mozart The first act is already finished.

Joseph But it can't be more than two weeks since you started!

Mozart Composing is not hard when you have the right audience to please, Sire.

Van Swieten A charming reply, Majesty.

Joseph Indeed, Baron. Fêtes and fireworks! I see we are going to have fêtes and fireworks! *Au revoir, Monsieur Mozart. Soyez bienvenu à la court.*

Mozart (*with expert rapidity*) *Majesté! — je suis comblé d'honneur d'être accepté dans la maison du Père de tous les musiciens! Servir un monarque aussi plein de discernement que votre Majesté, c'est un honneur qui dépasse le sommet de mes dus!*

A pause. The Emperor is taken aback slightly by this flood of French

Joseph Ah. Well — there it is. I'll leave you gentlemen to get better acquainted.

Salieri Good-day, Majesty.

Mozart *Votre Majesté.*

Salieri and Mozart bow

Joseph goes out

Orsini-Rosenberg Good-day to you.

Von Strack Good-day.

Orsini-Rosenberg and von Strack follow the Emperor out

Van Swieten (*warmly shaking his hand*) Welcome, Mozart. I shall see much more of you. Depend on it!

Mozart Thank you. (*He bows*)

Van Swieten goes out

Salieri *Bene.*

Mozart *Bene.*

Salieri I, too, wish you success with your opera.

Mozart I'll have it. It's going to be superb. I must tell you I have already found the most excellent singer for the leading part.

Salieri Oh: who is that?

Mozart Her name is Cavalieri. Katherina Cavalieri. She's really German, but she thinks it will advance her career if she sports an Italian name.

Salieri She's quite right. It was my idea. She is in fact my prize pupil. Actually she's a very innocent child. Silly in the way of young singers — but, you know, she's only twenty.

Mozart Yes.

Without emphasis Mozart freezes his movements and Salieri takes one easy step forward to make a fluent aside

Salieri (*to the Audience*) I had kept my hands off Katherina. Yes! But, I could not bear to think of anyone else's upon her — least of all his!

Mozart (*unfreezing*) You're a good fellow, Salieri! And that's a jolly little thing you wrote for me.

Salieri It was my pleasure.

Mozart Let's see if I can remember it. May I?

Salieri No need. It's yours.

Mozart *Grazie, Signore.*

Mozart tosses the manuscript on to the lid of the fortepiano where he cannot see it, sits at the instrument, and plays Salieri's "March of Welcome" perfectly from memory — at first slowly, recalling it, but on the reprise of the tune, very much faster

The rest is just the same, isn't it? (*He finishes it with insolent speed*)

Salieri You have a remarkable memory.

Mozart (*delighted with himself*) *Grazie ancora, Signore!* (*He plays the opening seven bars again, but this time stops on the interval of the fourth, and sounds it again with displeasure*) It doesn't really work, that fourth — does it? ... Let's try the third above ... (*He does so — and smiles happily*) Ah yes! ... Good!

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In the ensuing brief silence Constanze rushes down from the back, wildly excited. She flings herself on Mozart, not even noticing the Emperor

Constanze Oh, well done, lovey! ... Well done, pussy-wussy! ...

Mozart indicates the proximity of His Majesty

Oh! ... 'Scuse me! *(She curtsies in embarrassment)*

Mozart Majesty, may I present my fiancée, Fräulein Weber.

Cavalieri reacts in total surprise

Joseph *Enchanté, Fräulein.*

Constanze Your Majesty?

Mozart Constanze is a singer herself.

Joseph Indeed?

Constanze *(embarrassed)* I'm not at all, Majesty. Don't be silly, Wolfgang!

Joseph So, Mozart — a good effort. Decidedly that. A good effort.

Mozart Did you really like it, Sire?

Joseph I thought it was most interesting. Yes, indeed. A trifle — how shall one say? *(To Orsini-Rosenberg)* How shall one say, Director?

Orsini-Rosenberg *(subserviently)* Too many notes, Your Majesty?

Joseph Very well put. Too many notes.

Mozart I don't understand.

Joseph My dear fellow, don't take it too hard. There are in fact only so many notes the ear can hear in the course of an evening. I think I'm right in saying that, aren't I, Court Composer?

Salieri *(uncomfortably)* Well yes, I would say yes, on the whole, yes, Majesty.

Joseph There you are. It's clever. It's German. It's quality work. And there are simply too many notes. Do you see?

Mozart There are just as many notes, Majesty, neither more nor less, as are required.

Pause

Joseph Ah ... Well, there it is.

He goes off abruptly, followed by Orsini-Rosenberg and von Strack. The rest of the audience leaves also, Cavalieri with a furious scowl

Mozart, Salieri and Constanze remain

Mozart *(nervously)* Herr Salieri, is he angry?

Salieri Not at all. He respects you for your views.

Mozart I hope so ... What did you think yourself, sir? Did you care for the piece at all?

Salieri Yes, of course, Mozart — at its best it is truly charming.

Mozart And at other times?

Salieri *(smoothly)* Well, just occasionally at other times — in Katherina's aria for example — it was a little excessive.

Mozart Katherina is an excessive girl. In fact she's insatiable ... I mean in regard to vocal ornaments.

Salieri All the same, as my revered teacher the Chevalier Gluck used to say to me — one must avoid music that smells of music.

Mozart What does that mean?

Salieri Music which makes one aware too much of the virtuosity of the composer.

Mozart *(mischievously)* Well — I would hate to offend a *Chevalier*. Even though I am one myself.

Salieri Indeed?

Constanze *(brightly)* Oh yes! The Pope made Wolfgang a Chevalier when he was only fourteen!

Salieri *(smiling)* Extraordinary.

Mozart They say Gluck used the name all the time. He insisted on being addressed by it.

Salieri And you prefer not to be?

Mozart I think titles are absurd, in connection with music.

Salieri Ah. *(Slyly)* Even — "Court Composer"?

Mozart What? ... *(Realizing)* Ah. Oh. Ha. Ha. Well! ... That's different, of course ... My father's right again. He always tells me I should padlock my mouth ... Actually, I shouldn't speak at all!

Salieri *(soothingly)* Nonsense. I'm just being what the Emperor would call *cattivo*. Won't you introduce me to your charming fiancée?

Mozart Oh, of course! Constanze, this is Herr Salieri, the Court Composer. Fräulein Weber.

Salieri *(bowing)* Delighted, *cara Fräulein*.

Constanze *(bobbing)* How do you do, Excellency.

Salieri May I ask when you marry?

Mozart *(nervously)* We have to secure my father's consent. He's an excellent man — a wonderful man — but in some ways a little stubborn.

Salieri Excuse me, but how old are you?

Mozart Twenty-six.

Salieri Then your father's consent is scarcely indispensable.

Constanze *(to Mozart)* You see?

Mozart *(uncomfortably)* Well no, it's not *indispensable* — of course not!

Salieri My advice to you is to marry and be happy. You have found — it's quite obvious — *un tesoro raro!*

Constanze Well, *what* ... What is it?

Venticello 1 snatches up an old-fashioned round ruler from the fortepiano

Venticello 1 I want to measure your calves.

Constanze Oooo!

Venticello 1 Well?

Constanze Definitely not! You cheeky bugger!

Venticello 1 Now come on!

Venticello 2 You've got to let him, Stanzerl. All's fair in love and forfeits.

Constanze No it isn't — so you can both buzz off!

Venticello 1 If you don't let me, you won't be allowed to play again.

Constanze Well choose something else.

Venticello 1 I've chosen that. Now get up on the table. Quick, quick! *Allez-ooop!* (*Gleefully he shifts the plates of sweetmeats*)

Constanze Quick, then! ... Before anyone sees!

The two masked men lift the shrieking masked girl up on to the table

Venticello 1 Hold her, Friedrich.

Constanze I don't have to be held, thank you!

Venticello 2 Yes, you do: that's part of the penalty.

Venticello 2 holds her ankles firmly, whilst Venticello 1 thrusts the ruler under her skirts and measures her legs. Excitedly, Salieri puts down the bowl on the small table and reverses his position so that he can kneel in the wing-chair, and watch. Constanze giggles delightedly, then becomes outraged — or pretends to be

Constanze Stop it! ... Stop that! That's quite enough of that! (*She bends down and tries to slap him*)

Venticello 1 Seventeen inches — knee to ankle!

Venticello 2 Let me do it! You hold her.

Constanze That's not fair!

Venticello 2 Yes, it is. You lost to me too.

Constanze It's been done now! Let me *down!*

Venticello 2 Hold her, Karl.

Constanze No! ...

Venticello 1 holds her ankles. Venticello 2 thrusts his head entirely under her skirts. She squeals

No — stop it! ... *No!* ...

In the middle of this undignified scene Mozart comes rushing on — also masked

Mozart (*outraged*) Constanze!

They freeze. Salieri ducks back down and sits hidden in the chair

Gentlemen, if you please.

Constanze It's only a game, Wolferl! ...

Venticello 1 We meant no harm, 'pon my word.

Mozart (*stiffly*) Come down off that table, please.

They hand her down

Thank you. We'll see you later.

Venticello 2 Now look, Mozart, don't be pompous —

Mozart Please excuse us now.

The Venticelli go

The little man is very angry. He tears off his mask

(*To Constanze*) Do you realize what you've done?

Constanze No, what? ... (*Flustered, she busies herself restoring the plates of sweetmeats to the table*)

Mozart Just lost your reputation, that's all! You're now a loose girl.

Constanze Don't be so stupid. (*She too removes her mask*)

Mozart You are a married woman, for God's sake!

Constanze And what of it?

Mozart A young wife does not allow her legs to be handled in public. Couldn't you at least have measured your own ugly legs?

Constanze *What?*

Mozart (*raising his voice*) Do you know what you've done?! ... You've shamed me — that's all! *Shamed me!*

Constanze Oh, don't be so ridiculous!

Mozart Shamed me — in front of *them!*

Constanze (*suddenly furious*) You — shamed you! ... That's a laugh! If there's any shame around, lovey, it's *mine!*

Mozart What do you mean?

Constanze You've only had every pupil who ever came to you.

Mozart That's not true.

Constanze Every single female pupil!

Mozart Name them! *Name them!*

Constanze The Aurnhammer girl! The Rumbeck girl! Katherina Cavalieri — that sly little whore! *She* wasn't even your pupil — she was Salieri's. Which actually, my dear, may be why he has hundreds and you have none! He doesn't drag them into bed!

Mozart Of course he doesn't. He can't get it up, that's why! ... Have you heard his music? That's the sound of someone who *can't get it up!* At least I can do *that!*

Constanze I'm sick of you!

Mozart (*shouting*) No-one ever said I couldn't do *that!*

Constanze (*bursting into tears*) I don't give a fart! I hate you! I hate you for ever and ever — I hate you! (*A tiny pause. She weeps*)

Mozart (*helplessly*) Oh Stanzerl, don't cry. Please don't cry ... I can't bear it when you cry. I just didn't want you to look cheap in people's eyes, that's all. Here! (*He snatches up the ruler*) Beat me. Beat me ... I'm your slave. Stanzi marini. Stanzi marini bini gini. I'll just stand here like a little lamb and bear your strokes. Here. Do it ... *Batti.*

Constanze No.

Mozart *Batti, batti. Mio tesoro!*

Constanze No!

Mozart Stanzerly wanzerly piggly pool!

Constanze Stop it.

Mozart Stanzy wanzy had a fit. Shit her stays and made them split!

She giggles despite herself

Constanze Stop it.

Mozart When they took away her skirt, Stanzy wanzy ate the dirt!

Constanze Stop it now!

She snatches the ruler and gives him a whack with it. He yowls playfully

Mozart Oooo! Oooo! Oooo! Do it again! Do it again! I cast myself at your stinking feet, Madonna!

He does so. She whacks him some more as he crouches, but always lightly, scarcely looking at him, divided between tears and laughter. Mozart drums his feet with pleasure

Ow! Ow! Ow!

And then suddenly Salieri, unable to bear another second, cries out involuntarily

Salieri Ah!!!

The young couple freezes. Salieri—discovered—hastily converts his noise of disgust into a yawn, and stretches as if waking up from a nap. He peers out of the wing-chair

Good-evening.

Constanze (*embarrassed*) Excellency ...

Mozart How long have you been there?

Salieri I was asleep until a second ago. Are you two quarrelling?

Mozart No, of course not.

Constanze Yes, we are. He's been very irritating.

Salieri (*rising*) *Caro Herr*, tonight is the time for New Year resolutions.

Irritating lovely ladies cannot surely be one of ours. May I suggest you bring us each a *sorbetto* from the dining-room?

Mozart But why don't we all go to the table?

Constanze Herr Salieri is quite right. Bring them here — it'll be your punishment.

Mozart Stanzi!

Salieri Come now, I can keep your wife company. There cannot be a better peace offering than a *sorbetto* of aniseed.

Constanze I prefer tangerine.

Salieri Very well, tangerine. (*Greedily*) But if you could possibly manage aniseed for me, I'd be deeply obliged ... So the New Year can begin coolly for all three of us.

A pause. Mozart hesitates — and then bows

Mozart I'm honoured, *Signore*, of course. And then I'll play you at billiards.

What do you say?

Salieri I'm afraid I don't play.

Mozart (*with surprise*) You don't?

Constanze Wolferl would rather play at billiards than anything. He's very good at it.

Mozart I'm the best! I may nod occasionally at composing, but at billiards — never!

Salieri A virtuoso of the cue.

Mozart Exactly! It's a virtuoso's game! ... (*He snatches up the ruler and treats it as if it were a cue*) I think I shall write a Grand Fantasia for Billiard Balls! Trillos! Acciacaturas! Whole arpeggios in ivory! Then I'll play it myself in public! ... It'll have to be *me* because none of those Italian charlatans like Clementi will be able to get his fingers round the cue!

He gives a swanky flourish of the hand and starts to strut off, then suddenly realizes what he has just said and stops

Salieri I wrote a comic opera for Vienna. *La Grotta di Trofonio*.

Venticello 1 The talk of the city!

Venticello 2 The cafés are buzzing!

Another opera house interior is lit up. Another audience claps vigorously. Again Salieri bows to it

Salieri *(to the Audience)* I finally finished my tragic opera *Danaius*, and produced it in Paris.

Venticello 1 Stupendous reception!

Venticello 2 The plaudits shake the roof!

Venticello 1 Your name sounds throughout the Empire!

Venticello 2 Throughout all Europe!

Yet another opera house and another excited audience is lit up. Salieri bows a third time. Even the Venticelli now applaud him

Mozart's concert stops

Mozart rises from the keyboard and, whilst Salieri speaks, stumps directly through the scene and exits

Salieri *(to the Audience)* It was incomprehensible. Almost as if I were being pushed deliberately from triumph to triumph! ... I filled my head with golden opinions — yes, and this house with golden furniture!

The Citizens exit

SC 5
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Salieri's Apartments

The stage turns gold

Servants come on carrying golden chairs upholstered in golden brocade. They place these all over the wooden floor (three c. facing out front) and then leave

The Valet, a little older, appears, divests Salieri of his black coat and clothes him instead another black one (see Notes) with gold facings. He takes away the old coat

The Cook—also of course a little older—brings on a golden cake-stand piled with elaborate cakes. Placing this on the little table, he takes away the other cake-stand and plate of brandied chestnuts

Salieri My own taste was for plain things—but I *denied* it! ... The successful lived with gold, and so would I! ... I grew confident. I grew resplendent. I gave salons and soirées, and worshipped the season round at the altar of sophistication!

He sits at ease in his salon. The Venticelli sit with him, one on either side

Venticello 1 Mozart heard your comedy last night.

Venticello 2 He spoke of it to the Princess Lichnowsky.

Venticello 1 He said you should be made to clean up your own mess.

Salieri *(taking snuff)* Really? What charmers these Salzburgers are!

Venticello 2 People are outraged by him.

Venticello 1 He empties drawing-rooms. Now van Swieten is angry with him.

The Venticelli laugh maliciously

Salieri Lord Fugue? I thought he was the Baron's little pet.

Venticello 2 Mozart has asked leave to write an Italian opera.

Salieri *(to the Audience)* Italian Opera! Threat! — my kingdom!

Venticello 1 And the Baron is scandalized.

Salieri But why? What's the subject?

Van Swieten comes on quickly from upstage

Van Swieten *Figaro!* ... *The Marriage of Figaro!* That disgraceful play of Beaumarchais!

At a discreet sign of dismissal from Salieri the Venticelli slip away

Van Swieten joins Salieri and sits on one of the golden chairs

(To Salieri) That's all he can find to waste his talent on: a vulgar farce! Noblemen lusting after chambermaids! Their wives dressing up in stupid disguises anyone could penetrate in a second! ... When I reproved him, he said I reminded him of his father!... I simply cannot imagine why Mozart should want to set that rubbish to music!

Mozart enters quickly from upstage, accompanied by von Strack. They join Salieri and van Swieten

Mozart Because I want to do a piece about real people, Baron! And I want to set it in a real place! *A boudoir!* — because that to me is the most exciting place on earth! Underclothes on the floor! Sheets still warm from a woman's body! Even a pisspot brimming under the bed!

Van Swieten (*outraged*) Mozart!

Mozart I want life, Baron. Not boring legends!

Von Strack (*sitting*) Herr Salieri's recent *Danaius* was a legend and that did not bore the French.

Mozart It is impossible to bore the French — except with real life!

Van Swieten I had assumed, now that you had joined our Brotherhood of Masons, you would choose more elevated themes.

Mozart (*impatiently*) Oh elevated! Elevated! ... The only thing a man should elevate is his doodle.

Van Swieten You are provoking, sir! Has everything to be a joke with you?

Mozart (*desperate*) Excuse the language, Baron, but really! How can we go on forever with these gods and heroes?

Van Swieten (*passionately*) Because *they* go on forever — that's why! They represent the eternal in us. Opera is here to ennoble us, Mozart — you and me just as well as the Emperor. It is an aggrandizing art! It celebrates the eternal in man and ignores the ephemeral. The goddess in woman and not the laundress.

Von Strack Well said, sir. Exactly!

Mozart (*imitating his drawl*) Oh well said, yes, well said! Exactly! (*To all of them*) I don't understand you! You're all up on perches, but it doesn't hide your arseholes! You don't give a shit about gods and heroes! If you are honest — each one of you — which of you isn't more at home with his hairdresser than Hercules? or Horatius? (*To Salieri*) Or your stupid *Danaius*, come to that! Or *mine* — mine too! *Mithridates, King of Pontus!* ... *Il sogno di Scipione!* All those anguished antiques! They're all bores! Bores, bores, bores! (*Suddenly he springs up and jumps on to a chair, like an orator. Declaring it*) All serious operas written this century are boring!... Well, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand!

A pause. They turn and look at him in shocked amazement. He gives a little giggle, and then jumps down again

Look at us! Four gaping mouths. What a perfect quartet! I'd love to write it — just this second of time, this *now*, as you are! (*Imitating their voices*) Herr Chamberlain thinking: "Impertinent Mozart. I must speak to the Emperor at once!" Herr Prefect thinking: "Ignorant Mozart. Debasing opera with his vulgarity!" Herr Court Composer thinking: "German Mozart. What can he finally know about music?" And Mozart himself, in the middle, thinking: "I'm just a good fellow. Why do they all disapprove of me?" (*Excitedly, to van Swieten*) That's why opera is important, Baron. Because it's realer than any play! A dramatic poet would have to put all those thoughts down one after another to represent this second of time. The composer can put them all down at once — and still make us hear each one of them. Astonishing device: a vocal quartet! (*More and more excited*)

I tell you I want to write a finale lasting half an hour! A quartet becoming a quintet becoming a sextet becoming a septet — an octet — a nonet! On and on, wider and wider — all sounds multiplying and rising together — and the Together making a sound entirely new! ... I bet you that's how God hears the world. Millions of sounds ascending at once and mixing in His ear to become an *unending music*, unimaginable to us! (*To Salieri*) That's our job! That's our *job*, we composers: to combine the inner minds of him and him and him, and her and her — the thoughts of chambermaids and court composers — and turn the audience into God.

Pause. Salieri stares at him fascinated. Embarrassed, Mozart sounds a fart noise and giggles

I'm sorry. I talk nonsense all day: it's incurable — ask Stanzerl. (*To van Swieten*) My tongue is stupid. My heart isn't.

Van Swieten No. You're a good fellow under all your nonsense: I know that. He'll make a fine new Brother, won't he, Salieri?

Salieri Better than I, Baron.

Van Swieten Just try, my friend, to be more serious with your gifts. (*He smiles and presses Mozart's hand*)

Van Swieten goes out

Salieri rises

Salieri *Buona fortuna, Mozart.*

Mozart *Grazie, Signore. (Rounding on von Strack)* Stop frowning, Herr Chamberlain. I'm a jackass. It's easy to be friends with a jackass: just shake his "hoof".

He forms his hand into a "hoof". Warily von Strack takes it — then springs back as Mozart brays loudly like a donkey

Hee-haw! ... Tell the Emperor the opera's finished.

Von Strack Finished?

Mozart Right here in my noddle. The rest's just scribbling. Goodbye.

Von Strack Good-day to you.

Mozart He's going to be proud of me. You'll see.

Mozart gives a flourish of his hand and goes out, delighted with himself

Von Strack That young man *really* is ...

Salieri (*blandly*) Very lively.

Von Strack (*exploding*) Intolerable! ... Intolerable!

Von Strack freezes in a posture of indignation

Salieri (to the Audience) How could I stop it? ... How could I block this opera of *Figaro*? ... Incredible to hear, within six weeks, the Creature had finished the entire score.

Orsini-Rosenberg bustles in

Orsini-Rosenberg *Figaro* is complete! The first performance will be on May the first!

Salieri So soon?

Orsini-Rosenberg There's no way we can stop it!

A slight pause

Salieri (slyly) I have an idea. *Una piccola idea!*

Orsini-Rosenberg What?

Salieri *Mi ha detto che un balletto nel terzo atto?*

Orsini-Rosenberg (puzzled) *Si.*

Von Strack What does he say?

Salieri *E dimmi — non è vero che l'Imperatore ha proibito il balletto nelle sue opere?*

Orsini-Rosenberg (realizing) *Uno balletto ... Ah!*

Salieri *Precisamente.*

Orsini-Rosenberg *Oh, capisco! Ma che meraviglia! Perfetto! (He laughs in delight) Veramente ingegnoso!*

Von Strack (irritated) What is it? What is he suggesting?

Salieri See him at the theatre.

Orsini-Rosenberg Of course. Immediately. I'd forgotten. You are brilliant, Court Composer.

Salieri I? ... I have said nothing. (He moves away upstage)

The Lights begin to change, dimming down

Von Strack (very cross) I must tell you that I resent this extremely. Mozart is right in some things. There is far too much Italian *chittero-chattero* at this court! Now please to inform me at once, what was just said?

Orsini-Rosenberg (lightly) *Pazienza*, my dear Chamberlain. *Pazienza*. Just wait and see!

From upstage, Salieri beckons to von Strack. Baffled and cross, the Chamberlain joins him. They watch together, unseen

The Lights dim further

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An Unlit Theatre

The Light Box background shows a projection of lamps glowing faintly in the darkened auditorium. Orsini-Rosenberg sits on one of the three golden chairs, c, looking out front

Mozart comes in quickly R, wearing another bright coat, and carrying the score of Figaro. He crosses to the fortepiano

Orsini-Rosenberg Mozart ... Mozart!

Mozart Yes, Herr Director.

Orsini-Rosenberg (agreeably) A word with you, please. Right away.

Mozart Certainly. What is it?

Orsini-Rosenberg I would like to see your score of *Figaro*.

Mozart Oh yes. Why?

Orsini-Rosenberg Just bring it here to me. (Unmoving) Into my hand, please.

Mozart hands it to him puzzled. Orsini-Rosenberg turns the pages

Now tell me: did you not know that His Majesty has expressly forbidden ballet in his operas?

Mozart Ballet?

Orsini-Rosenberg Such as occurs in your third act.

Mozart That is not a ballet, Herr Director. That is a dance at *Figaro's* wedding.

Orsini-Rosenberg Exactly. A dance.

Mozart (trying to control himself) But the Emperor doesn't mean to prohibit dancing when it's part of the story. He made that law to prevent insertions of stupid ballet like in French operas, and quite right too.

Orsini-Rosenberg (raising his voice) It is not for you, Herr Mozart, to interpret the Emperor's edicts. Merely to obey them. (He seizes the offending pages between his fingers)

Mozart What are you doing? ... What are you doing, Excellency?

Orsini-Rosenberg Taking out what should never have been put in.

In a terrible silence Orsini-Rosenberg tears out the pages, Mozart watches in disbelief. Upstage, Salieri and von Strack look on together from the dimness

Now, sir, perhaps in future you will obey Imperial commands. (He tears out some more pages)

Mozart But ... But if all that goes — there'll be a hole right at the climax of the story! ... *(Crying out suddenly)* Salieri! This is Salieri's idea.

Orsini-Rosenberg Don't be absurd.

Salieri *(to the Audience)* How did he think of that?! Nothing I had ever done could possibly make him think of that on his own. Had God given him the idea?

Mozart It's a conspiracy. I can smell it, I can *smell* it! It's a conspiracy!

Orsini-Rosenberg Control yourself!

Mozart *(howling)* But what do you expect me to do? The first performance is two days off!

Orsini-Rosenberg Write it over. That's your forte, is it not? — writing at speed.

Mozart Not when the music's *perfect*! Not when it's absolutely perfect as it is! ... *(Wildly)* I shall appeal to the Emperor! I'll go to him myself! I'll hold a rehearsal especially for him.

Orsini-Rosenberg The Emperor does not attend rehearsals.

Mozart He'll attend this one. Make no mistake — he'll come to this one! Then he'll deal with *you*!

Orsini-Rosenberg This issue is simple. Write your Act again today — or withdraw the opera. That's final.

Pause. He hands back the mutilated score to its composer. Mozart is shaking

Mozart You shit-pot.

Orsini-Rosenberg turns and walks imperturbably away from him

Sneaky! — Cliquey!

Serenely, Orsini-Rosenberg leaves the stage

(Screeching after him) Count Orsini-Rosenshit!... Rosenclit!... Rosen—! I'll hold a rehearsal! You'll see! The Emperor will come! You'll see! You'll see!... You'll see!! *(He throws down his score in a storm of hysterical rage)*

Von Strack goes out upstage in the dimness

Salieri ventures down towards the shrieking little man. Mozart suddenly becomes aware of him. He turns, his hand shooting out in an involuntary gesture of accusation

(To Salieri) I am forbidden! ... I am — But of course you know already!

Salieri *(quietly)* Know what?

Mozart flings away from him

Mozart *(bitterly)* No matter! *(He makes to go)*

Salieri *(always blandly)* Mozart, permit me. If you wish, I'll speak to the Emperor myself. Ask him to attend a rehearsal.

Mozart *(amazed)* You wouldn't.

Salieri I cannot promise he'll come — but I can try.

Mozart *(returning)* Sir!

Salieri Good-day. *(He puts up his hands, barring further intimacy)*

Mozart retreats to the fortepiano

(To the Audience) Needless to say I did nothing whatever in the matter. Yet — to my total stupefaction —

Von Strack and Orsini-Rosenberg hurry on downstage

— in the middle of the last rehearsal of *Figaro* next day ...

The Emperor Joseph comes on from upstage

Joseph *(cheerfully)* Fêtes and fireworks! Fêtes and fireworks! Gentlemen, good-afternoon!

* * * * *

The Theatre

Salieri *(to the Audience)* Entirely against his usual practice, the Emperor appeared!

Von Strack and Orsini-Rosenberg look at each other in consternation. Joseph seats himself excitedly on one of the golden chairs, facing out front. As with the première of Seraglio seen in Act I, he watches the Audience as if it were the opera

Joseph I can't wait for this, Mozart, I assure you! *Je prévois des merveilles!*

Mozart *(bowing fervently)* Majesty!

The Courtiers sit also: von Strack on his right-hand side, Orsini-Rosenberg on his left. Salieri also sits, near the keyboard

Salieri *(to the Audience)* What did this mean? Was this proof God finally decided to defend Mozart against me? Was He engaging with me at last?

Mozart passes behind Salieri

Mozart (*earnestly, sotto voce*) I am so grateful to you, I cannot express —

Salieri (*aside, to him*) Hush. Say nothing.

Mozart goes on quickly to the fortepiano and sits at it

(*To the Audience*) One thing about the event seemed more than coincidence.

Music sounds faintly: the end of the third act of Figaro, just before the dance music starts

Strangely, His Majesty had arrived at precisely the moment when the dancers would have begun, had not they and their music been entirely cut.

The music stops abruptly

He and the rest of us watched the dramatic action proceed in total silence — whilst what should have been a party of celebrating peasants, dancing the fandango in the centre of the stage, stood absolutely motionless, their arms frozen in the air.

Flanked by his courtiers, the Emperor stares out front, following with his eyes what is obviously a silent pantomime. His face expresses bewilderment. Orsini-Rosenberg watches his sovereign anxiously. Finally the monarch speaks

Joseph I don't understand. Is it modern?

Mozart (*jumping up nervously from the keyboard*) No, Majesty.

Joseph Then what?

Mozart The Herr Director has removed a dance that would have occurred at this point.

Joseph (*to Orsini-Rosenberg*) Why was this done?

Orsini-Rosenberg It's your own regulation, Sire. No ballet in your opera.

Mozart (*nervously*) Majesty, this is not a ballet. It is part of a wedding feast: entirely necessary for the story.

Joseph Well, it certainly looks very odd the way it is. I can't say I like it.

Mozart Nor do I, Majesty.

Joseph Do you like it, Rosenberg?

Orsini-Rosenberg It's not a question of liking, Majesty. Your own law decrees it.

Joseph Yes. All the same, this is nonsense. Look at them: they're like waxworks up there.

Orsini-Rosenberg Well, not exactly, Majesty.

Joseph I don't like waxworks.

Mozart Nor do I, Majesty.

Joseph Well, who would? What do you say, Salieri?

Salieri Italians are fond of waxworks, Majesty. (*After a pause*) Our religion is largely based upon them.

Joseph You are *cattivo* again, Court Composer.

Von Strack (*intervening creamily*) Your Majesty, Count Rosenberg is very worried that if this music is put back it will create the most unfortunate precedent. One will have thereafter to endure hours of dancing in opera.

Joseph I think we can guard against that, you know, Chamberlain. I really think we can guard against hours of dancing. (*To Orsini-Rosenberg*) Please restore Herr Mozart's music.

Orsini-Rosenberg But Majesty, I must insist —

Joseph (*with command*) You will oblige me, Rosenberg! I wish to hear Mozart's music. Do you understand me?

Orsini-Rosenberg Yes, Majesty.

Mozart explodes with joy, jumps over a chair and throws himself at Joseph's feet

Mozart Oh God, I thank your Majesty! (*He kisses the Emperor's hand extravagantly, as at their first meeting*) Oh thank you — thank you — thank you, Sire, forever!

Joseph (*withdrawing his hand*) Yes, yes — very good. A little less enthusiasm, I beg you!

Mozart (*abashed*) Excuse me.

The Emperor rises. All follow suit

Joseph Well. *There it is!*

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The First Performance of Figaro

The Theatre glows with light for the first performance of Figaro

Servants enter and arrange the golden chairs in rows behind the three chairs c. Two chairs are placed r side by side, apart from the rest, to form Salieri's box

Sc9 — A Masonic Lodge

A Servant brings on a Masonic apron which he gives to Salieri who puts it on

A huge golden emblem encrusted with Masonic symbols descends

Van Swieten enters. He, too, is wearing the ritual apron over his sober clothes

Van Swieten and Mozart clasp hands in fraternal greeting

Van Swieten (*gravely*) This is not good, Brother. The lodge was not created for you to beg from.

Mozart What else can I do?

Van Swieten Give concerts, as you used to do.

Mozart I have no subscribers left, Baron. I am no longer fashionable.

Van Swieten I am not surprised. You write tasteless comedies which give offence. I warned you, often enough.

Mozart (*humbly*) You did. I admit it.

Van Swieten I will send you some fugues of Bach tomorrow. You can arrange those for my Sunday concert. You shall have a small fee.

Mozart Thank you, Baron.

Van Swieten nods and goes out

Salieri steps forward

(Shouting after van Swieten) I cannot live by arranging Bach!

Salieri (*sarcastically*) A generous fellow.

Mozart All the same, I'll have to do it. If he were to turn the lodge against me, I'd be finished. My brother Masons virtually keep me now.

Salieri Wolfgang, it's embarrassing, I know — but you must allow me to relieve you also.

Mozart No!

Salieri If it is the duty of a Mason to help — how much more of a friend?

Mozart Not another word. I would never take money from you. That friendship is worth all the gold in the world. Please — no more of that!

Salieri You overwhelm me.

Mozart I'll manage: you'll see! Things are looking up already. I've had a marvellous proposal from Schickaneder. He's a new member of this lodge.

Salieri Schickaneder? The actor?

Mozart Yes. He owns a theatre in the suburbs.

Salieri Well, more of a music hall, surely?

Mozart Yes ... He wants me to write him a vaudeville — something for ordinary German people. Isn't that a wonderful idea? ... He's offered me half the receipts when we open.

Salieri Nothing in advance?

Mozart He said he couldn't afford anything. I know it's not much of an offer. But a popular piece about brotherly love could celebrate everything we believe as Masons!

Salieri It certainly could! ... Why don't you put the Masons *into* it?

Mozart Into an opera? ... I couldn't!

Salieri laughs, to indicate that he was simply making a joke

All the same — what an idea!

Salieri (*earnestly*) Our rituals are secret, Wolfgang.

Mozart I needn't copy them exactly. I could adapt them a little.

Salieri Well ... It would certainly be in a great cause.

Mozart Brotherly love!

Salieri Brotherly love!

They both turn and look solemnly at the great golden emblem hanging at their backs

(Warmly) Take courage, Wolfgang. It's a glorious idea.

Mozart It is, isn't it? It *really is*!

Salieri Of course say nothing till it's done.

Mozart Not a word.

Salieri (*making a sign: a closed fist*) Secret!

Mozart (*making a similar sign*) Secret!

Salieri Good. (*He steps out of the scene downstage. To the Audience*) And if that didn't finish him off with the Masons — nothing would!

The golden emblem withdraws. We hear the merry dance of Monastatos and the hypnotized slaves from The Magic Flute: "Das Klinget so herrlich, Das Klinget so schön!". Mozart stands entranced downstage, hearing it too — then moves smilingly into his apartment, L., to write it down

Simultaneously, to the tinkling of the glockenspiel, Servants bring on a long plain table loaded with manuscripts and bottles and a plain stool, which they place beside it. The table also bears a chair and cushions and a blanket. They place the chair and cushions and then take away Mozart's Masonic apron

Sc 16—

Mozart sits to work on the stool in his apartment

At the same time Constanze appears wearily upstage, enters this dingy room and sits too. She wears a stuffed apron, indicating the advanced state of her pregnancy

Simultaneously, two other Servants bring on three gilded chairs from Salieri's resplendent salon which they place upstage R and then set the small gilded table with the loaded cake-stand next to them. We now have in view the two contrasting apartments. A Servant takes away Salieri's apron

The music fades down

The Venticelli appear to Salieri

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Mozart's Apartment; Salieri's Apartments

Venticello 1 *Mozart is delighted with himself!*

Venticello 2 *He's writing a secret opera!*

Venticello 1 *(crossly) And won't tell anyone its theme.*

Venticello 2 *It's really too tiresome.*

The Venticelli go off

The music stops

Salieri *He told me. He told me everything! Initiation ceremonies. Ceremonies with blindfolds. All rituals copied from the Masons! ... He sat at home preparing his own destruction. A home where life grew daily more grim.*

He goes upstage and sits on one of his gilded chairs, devouring a cake

Constanze *I'm cold ... I'm cold all day ... Hardly surprising since we have no firewood.*

Mozart *Papa was right. We end exactly as he said. Beggars.*

Constanze *It's all his fault.*

Mozart *Papa's?*

Constanze *He kept you a baby all your life.*

Mozart *I don't understand. ... You always loved Papa.*

Constanze *I did?*

Mozart *You adored him. You told me so often.*

Slight pause

Constanze *(flatly) I hated him.*

Mozart *What?*

Constanze *And he hated me.*

Mozart *That's absurd. He loved us both very much. You're being extremely silly now.*

Constanze *Am I?*

Mozart *(airily) Yes, you are, little-wife-of-my-heart!*

Constanze *Do you want to know what I really thought of your father? ...*

Do you remember the fire we had last night, because it was so cold you couldn't even get the ink wet? You said, "What a blaze" — remember? "What a blaze! All those old papers going up!" Well, my dear, those old papers were just all your father's letters, that's all — every one he wrote since the day we married.

Mozart *What?*

Constanze *Every one! All the letters about what a ninny I am — what a bad housekeeper I am! Every one!*

Mozart *Stanzi!*

Constanze *Shit on him! ... Shit on him!*

Mozart *You bitch!*

Constanze *(savagely) At least it kept us warm! What else will do that? Perhaps we should dance! You love to dance, Wolferl — let's dance! Dance to keep warm! (Grandly) Write me a contredanze, Mozart! It's your job to write dances, isn't it? (Hysterical, she snatches up his manuscripts from the table and flings them over the floor — pulling up her skirts and dancing roughly round the room like a demented peasant to the tune of "Non più andrai!". Singing savagely) "Non più andrai, farfallone amoro — Notte e giorno d'intorno girando!"*

Mozart *(shrieking) Stop it! Stop it! (He rises and tries to seize her) Stanzi-marini! Marini-bini! Don't, please. Please — please I beg you! ... Look there's a kiss! Where's it coming from? Right out of that corner! There's another one — all wet, all sloppy wet coming straight to you! Kiss — kiss — kiss — kiss!*

She pushes him roughly away

Constanze *Get off!*

A long pause

Mozart I'm frightened, Stanzi. Something awful's happening to me. The pains stay. And the dream!

Constanze (*quietly*) I can't bear it. I can't bear much more of this.

Mozart (*absorbed in himself*) The figure's like this now— (*Beckoning more urgently*) Here. Come here. Here ... Its face still hidden. Always hidden.

Constanze (*crying out*) Stop it! Stop it, for God's sake! Stop it! ... Stop! ... It's me who's frightened ... *Me!* ... You frighten me ... If you go on like this I'll leave you. I swear it!

Mozart (*shocked*) Stanzi!

Constanze I mean it ... I do ... (*She puts her hand to her stomach, as if in pain*)

Mozart I'm sorry ... Oh God, I'm sorry ... I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry! ... Come here to me, little-wife-of-my-heart! Come ... Come ...

He kneels and coaxes her to him. She comes half-reluctantly, half-willingly

Who am I? ... Quick: tell me. Hold me and tell who I am. Who? — come on.

Constanze Pussy-wussy.

Mozart Who else?

Constanze Miaouwy-powy.

Mozart And you're squeaky-peeky. And Stanzi-manzi. And Bini-gini!

She surrenders

Constanze Wolfi-polfi!

Mozart Poopy-peepee!

They giggle

Constanze Now don't be stupid.

Mozart (*insistent: like a child*) Come on — do it. Do it ... Let's do it. "Poppy!"

They play a private game, gradually doing it faster, on their knees

Constanze Poppy.

Mozart (*changing it*) Pappy.

Constanze (*copying*) Pappy.

Mozart Pappa.

Constanze Pappa.

Mozart Pappa-pappa!

Constanze Pappa-pappa!

Mozart Pappa-pappa-pappa-pappa!

Constanze Pappa-pappa-pappa-pappa!

They rub noses

Mozart } (*together*) { Pappa-pappa-pappa-pappa!

Constanze } Pappa-pappa-pappa-pappa!

Constanze Ah! (*She suddenly cries out in distress, and clutches her stomach*)

Mozart Stanzi! ... Stanzi, what is it?

The Venticelli hurry in

During the following, Constanze divests herself of her stuffed apron (thereby ceasing to be pregnant) and slowly rises

Salieri And suddenly she was delivered! A boy!

Venticello 2 Poor little imp.

Venticello 1 To be born to that couple.

Venticello 2 In that room.

Venticello 1 With that money.

Venticello 2 And the father a baby himself.

Constanze turns sorrowfully and walks briskly upstage and goes out, taking the apron with her

Mozart follows her for a few steps, alarmed. He halts

Venticello 1 And now I hear —

Venticello 2 Now I hear —

Venticello 1 Something more has happened.

Venticello 2 Even stranger.

Mozart picks up a bottle, then moves swiftly into Salieri's salon. He looks distracted

Mozart She's gone!

Salieri What do you mean?

The Venticelli slip away

Mozart Constanze's gone away! Just for a while, she says. She's taken the baby and gone to Baden. To the spa ... It will cost us the last money we have!

Salieri But why?

Van Swieten No, sir! Leave alone. *(To Mozart)* I did not look for this reward, Mozart. Never speak to me.

Van Swieten goes out. Katherina Cavalieri, embarrassed, goes out another way

The Lights change

Servants come on and remove the benches and chair

Salieri watches Mozart, who stands stunned

Sc 12
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Salieri's Apartments, and Outside in Vienna

Salieri Wolfgang? ...

Mozart shakes his head sharply — and walks away from him, upstage, desolate and stunned

Wolfgang — all is not lost.

Mozart enters his apartment, and freezes

(To the Audience) But of course it was! Now he was ruined. Broken and shunned by all men of influence. And for good measure, he did not even get his half receipts from the opera. *(He sits)*

The Venticelli come in

Venticello 1 Schikaneder pays him nothing.

Venticello 2 Schikaneder cheats him.

Venticello 1 Gives him enough for liquor.

Venticello 2 And keeps all the rest.

Salieri *(ironically)* I couldn't have managed it better myself.

Mozart sits despairingly at his table, in the gloom. He takes up a wine bottle — but it is empty. Suddenly he starts to write, with great vigour, dropping finished pages on the floor. Through this the Venticelli speak

Venticello 1 And as for Mozart —

Venticello 2 The poor fellow —

Salieri *(urgently)* What about him? ... I've heard nothing from him in days ... What is he doing?

Venticello 1 } *(together)* We don't know!

Venticello 2 } *(together)* We don't know!

Venticello 1 *(confidentially)* He's become really odd, sir.

Venticello 2 Turned dreadfully strange!

Venticello 1 Stays in his apartment all day.

Venticello 2 Burns his candle all night.

Mozart jumps up quickly, and faces front, downstage, looking out in alarm

Venticello 1 But appears over and over at his window —

Venticello 2 Staring wildly down into the street.

Venticello 1 Twitching!

Venticello 2 Trembling!

Venticello 1 Like a man deeply disordered!

Venticello 2 Or one driven out of his mind!

Salieri looks at them startled. Mozart sits again, and resumes his feverish writing

Venticello 1 *(hushed)* In fact, the rumour is —

Venticello 2 *(hushed)* The rumour is, sir —

Pause

Salieri What? ... Say it!

Venticello 1 } *(together)* Our Wolfgang has lost his wits!

Venticello 2 }

Pause. Salieri makes a sharp gesture of dismissal

The Venticelli leave quickly

The Lights change, becoming darker

Salieri *(to the Audience, very disturbed)* Was it true? Could it be possible? — Madness?! ... I'd never thought of that! — him retreating into that terrible refuge. Yet there would lie my Victory. Loss of wits must surely mean loss of talent! ... Triumph surged up through me. He was disarmed at last! ... And at that same moment came chill — deep-spreading chill. *(Pause)* Was this what I had actually done? Driven a man mad? ... *(Urgently)* I had to know. See for myself. Spy on him unseen — immediately! ... I couldn't keep away!

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