Citation:

Printed: Thu, 19 Nov 2026

Edge, Dexter. 2021. “Francesco Galoardi visits the Mozarts in Salzburg (2 Jan 1772).” In: *Mozart: New Documents*, edited by Dexter Edge and David Black. First published 6 Jun 2021. [direct link]

Francesco Galoardi visits the Mozarts in Salzburg (2 Jan 1772)

Dexter Edge

Archivio provinciale di Bolzano, Archivio Wolkenstein-Trostburg, fondo Toblino, n. 409/2

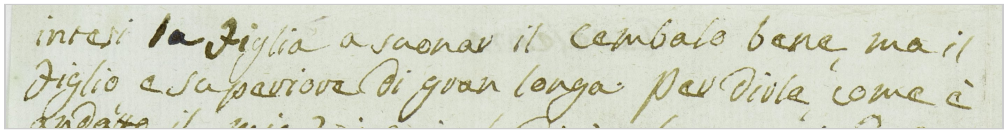
Eccelenza
Salisurgo 3 Genajo
1772

[1r]

[...] Ieri sera sono statto dal Mozzart;



[1v]
intesi la Figlia a suonar il Cembalo bene, ma il
Figlio e superiore di gran longa. *[...]*



[translation:]

Excellency
Salzburg, 3 January
1772

[...] Yesterday evening I was at the Mozarts;
I heard the daughter play the harpsichord well, but
the son is superior by a long way. *[...]*

Commentary

This report by the violinist Francesco Galoardi of his visit to the Mozarts in Salzburg was discovered by Clemente Lunelli (Lunelli 1982, 418; 1989, 545). It is the second of three Mozart

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references in letters written to Count Pio Fedele von Wolkenstein in Trent, all discovered by Lunelli: the others are discussed in our entries for 9 Nov 1771 (a letter from Count Cajetan von Rogendorf referring to *Ascanio in Alba*) and 29 Nov 1772 (a letter from Countess Antonia von Lodron in Salzburg; on Wolkenstein's biography, see our entry for 9 Nov 1771).

Francesco Galoardi (1740–1809) was born in Soresina in the province of Cremona (on Galoardi, see Lunelli 1982). Nothing is known of his early life and musical training. On 25 Dec 1769 he joined the orchestra of the Prince-Bishop of Trent, and in January 1772 he became a member of the musical establishment of Count Leopold Ernst von Firmian (1708–1783), Prince-Bishop of Passau from 1763 to 1783. During his time in Trent, Galoardi was Wolkenstein's violin teacher, and the two maintained a correspondence for several years following Galoardi's departure: seventeen letters from Galoardi to Wolkenstein survive, dating from 15 Jul 1771 to 3 Jul 1790.

Galoardi reports his visit to the Mozarts in his first letter to Wolkenstein after leaving for Passau. The visit took place on the evening of Thu, 2 Jan 1772. He writes that "the daughter" (Maria Anna "Nannerl" Mozart) plays the harpsichord ("Cembalo") well, but the son (Wolfgang) is far superior. Nannerl was 20 years old at the time, and Wolfgang was about to turn 16.

Lunelli interprets this passage as evidence that Leopold and Wolfgang Mozart had stopped in Trent on their return journey from Milan to Salzburg following the premiere of *Ascanio in Alba*, and that Wolkenstein heard Wolfgang perform on 9 Dec 1771 (Lunelli 1982, 419). While possible, there is no direct evidence for this claim. Leopold mentions nothing of Wolkenstein or a stopover in Trent in his letters home from Ala (about 40 km south of Trent) on 8 Dec, or Brixen on 11 Dec (*Briefe*, i:452–53).

Leopold and Wolfgang returned to Salzburg on 15 Dec 1771. The Archbishop of Salzburg, Count Sigismund Christoph von Schrattenbach, died the following day. Galoardi, in his letter to Wolkenstein, mentions that the first Requiem mass for the archbishop had been given on the morning of 2 Jan; Wolfgang would almost certainly have been at home when Galoardi visited the Mozarts that evening. Lunelli points out that Galoardi does not specifically say that he heard Wolfgang perform in Salzburg (which Lunelli takes to imply that he heard him in Trent), but it would be rash to assume that Wolfgang did not perform during Galoardi's visit. While Galoardi's letter implies that Wolkenstein had heard Wolfgang perform at some point, it does not necessarily imply that he had heard him in Trent on 9 Dec 1771. The Mozarts met Wolkenstein and Rogendorf at the beginning of 1770, during their first visit to Milan (their names are in Leopold's travel notes; *Briefe*, i:321), when both young noblemen were interning with Count Karl (Carlo) Firmian, Habsburg minister plenipotentiary to the Duchy of Milan (on Firmian, see our entry for 4 Apr 1770; on Rogendorf, our entry for 9 Nov 1771). Wolkenstein almost certainly heard Wolfgang at that time.

Notes (⇧)

Lunelli (1982, 421–22) gives a partial transcription of Galoardi’s letter of 3 Jan 1772, including the passage on his visit to the Mozarts. Carlini (2004, 53m citing Lunelli) reproduces the sentence about the visit, and follows Lunelli in taking this as evidence that Wolfgang performed at Wolkenstein’s on 9 Dec 1771. However, such a performance remains entirely speculative.

We are grateful to the Archivio provinciale di Bolzano for permission to publish the image of Galoardi’s letter. We would also like to thank Stefano Frega for his essential help with the research on this document, and Anne-Louise Luccarini and Janet Page for reading a draft of the commentary.

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Credit: Clemente Lunelli

Author: Dexter Edge

Link(s): NA

Search Term: NA

Source Library: Archivio provinciale di Bolzano, Archivio Wolkenstein-Toblino

Categories: Biography, Reception

First Published: Sun, 6 Jun 2021

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