

**"AMADEUS"**

by

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Final Draft

**INT. STAIRCASE OUTSIDE OLD SALIERI'S SALON - NIGHT - 1823**

Total darkness. We hear an old man's voice, distinct and in distress. It is OLD SALIERI. He uses a mixture of English and occasionally Italian.

**OLD SALIERI**

Mozart! Mozart! Mozart. Forgive me!  
Forgive your assassin! Mozart!

A faint light illuminates the screen. Flickeringly, we see an eighteenth century balustrade and a flight of stone stairs. We are looking down into the wall of the staircase from the point of view of the landing. Up the stair is coming a branched candlestick held by Salieri's VALET. By his side is Salieri's COOK, bearing a large dish of sugared cakes and biscuits. Both men are desperately worried: the Valet is thin and middle-aged; the Cook, plump and Italian. It is very cold. They wear shawls over their night-dresses and clogs on their feet. They wheeze as they climb. The candles throw their shadows up onto the peeling walls of the house, which is evidently an old one and in bad decay. A cat scuttles swiftly between their bare legs, as they reach the salon door.

The Valet tries the handle. It is locked. Behind it the voice goes on, rising in volume.

**OLD SALIERI**

Show some mercy! I beg you. I beg  
you! Show mercy to a guilty man!

The Valet knocks gently on the door. The voice stops.

**VALET**

Open the door, Signore! Please! Be  
good now! We've brought you something  
special. Something you're going to  
love.

Silence.

**VALET**

Signore Salieri! Open the door. Come  
now. Be good!

The voice of Old Salieri continues again, further off now, and louder. We hear a noise as if a window is being opened.

**OLD SALIERI**

Mozart! Mozart! I confess it! Listen!  
I confess!

The two servants look at each other in alarm. Then the Valet hands the candlestick to the Cook and takes a sugared cake from the dish, scrambling as quickly as he can back down the stairs.

**EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE SALIERI'S HOUSE - VIENNA - NIGHT**

The street is filled with people: ten cabs with drivers, five children, fifteen adults, two doormen, fifteen dancing couples and a sled and three dogs. It is a windy night. Snow is falling and whirling about. People are passing on foot, holding their cloaks tightly around them. Some of them are revelers in fancy dress: they wear masks on their faces or hanging around their necks, as if returning from parties. Now they are glancing up at the facade of the old house. The window above the street is open and Old Salieri stands there calling to the sky: a sharp-featured, white-haired Italian over seventy years old, wearing a stained dressing gown.

**OLD SALIERI**

Mozart! Mozart! I cannot bear it any longer! I confess! I confess what I did! I'm guilty! I killed you! Sir I confess! I killed you!

The door of the house bursts open. The Valet hobbles out, holding the sugared cake. The wind catches at his shawl.

**OLD SALIERI**

Mozart, perdonami! Forgive your assassin! Piet^! Piet^! Forgive your assassin! Forgive me! Forgive! Forgive!

**VALET**

(looking up to the window)

That's all right, Signore! He heard you! He forgave you! He wants you to go inside now and shut the window!

Old Salieri stares down at him. Some of the passersby have now stopped and are watching this spectacle.

**VALET**

Come on, Signore! Look what I have for you! I can't give it to you from down here, can I?

Old Salieri looks at him in contempt. Then he turns away back into the room, shutting the window with a bang. Through the glass, the old man stares down at the group of onlookers in the street. They stare back at him in confusion.

**BYSTANDER**

Who is that?

**VALET**

No one, sir. He'll be all right.  
Poor man. He's a little unhappy, you know.

He makes a sign indicating 'crazy,' and goes back inside the house. The onlookers keep staring.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. LANDING OUTSIDE OLD SALIERI'S SALON - NIGHT**

The Cook is standing holding the candlestick in one hand, the dish of cakes in the other. The Valet arrives, panting.

**VALET**

Did he open?

The Cook, scared, shakes his head: no. The Valet again knocks on the door.

**VALET**

Here I am, Signore. Now open the door.

He eats the sugared cake in his hand, elaborately and noisily.

**VALET**

Mmmm - this is good! This is the most delicious thing I ever ate, believe me! Signore, you don't know what you're missing! Mmmm!

We hear a thump from inside the bedroom.

**VALET**

Now that's enough, Signore! Open!

We hear a terrible, throaty groaning.

**VALET**

If you don't open this door, we're going to eat everything. There'll be nothing left for you. And I'm not going to bring you anything more.

He looks down. From under the door we see a trickle of blood flowing. In horror, the two men stare at it. The dish of cakes falls from the Cook's hand and shatters.

He sets the candlestick down on the floor. Both servants run at the door frantically - once, twice, three times - and the frail lock gives. The door flies open.

Immediately, the stormy, frenzied opening of Mozart's Symphony No. 25 (the Little G Minor) begins. We see what the servants see.

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S SALON - NIGHT**

Old Salieri lies on the floor in a pool of blood, an open razor in his hand. He has cut his throat but is still alive. He gestures at them. They run to him. Barely, we glimpse the room - an old chair, old tables piled with books, a forte-piano, a chamber-pot on the floor - as the Valet and the Cook struggle to lift their old Master, and bind his bleeding throat with a napkin.

**INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT**

Twenty-five dancing couples, fifty guests, ten servants, full orchestra.

As the music slows a little, we see a Masquerade Ball in progress. A crowded room of dancers is executing the slow portion of a dance fashionable in the early 1820's.

**EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SALIERI'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

As the fast music returns, we see Old Salieri being carried out of his house on a stretcher by two attendants, and placed in a horse-drawn wagon under the supervision of a middle-aged doctor in a tall hat. This is DOCTOR GULDEN. He gets in beside his patient. The driver whips up the horse, and the wagon dashes off through the still-falling snow.

**MONTAGE:**

**EXT. FOUR STREETS OF VIENNA AND**

**INT. THE WAGON - NIGHT**

The wagon is galloping through the snowy streets of the city. Inside the conveyance we see Old Salieri wrapped in blankets, half-conscious, being held by the hospital attendants. Doctor Gulden stares at him grimly. The wagon arrives outside the General Hospital of Vienna.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. A HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - LATE AFTERNOON**

A wide, white-washed corridor. Doctor Gulden is walking down it with a priest, a man of about forty, concerned, but somewhat self-important. This is Father VOGLER, Chaplain at the hospital. In the corridor as they walk, we note several

patients -- some of them visibly disturbed mentally. All patients wear white linen smocks. Doctor Gulden wears a dark frock-coat; Vogler, a cassock.

**DOCTOR GULDEN**

He's going to live. It's much harder to cut your throat than most people imagine.

They stop outside a door.

**DOCTOR GULDEN**

Here we are. Do you wish me to come in with you?

**VOGLER**

No, Doctor. Thank you.

Vogler nods and opens the door.

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON**

A bare room - one of the best available in the General Hospital. It contains a bed, a table with candles, chairs, a small forte-piano of the early nineteenth century. As Vogler enters, Old Salieri is sitting in a wheel-chair, looking out the window. His back is to us. The priest closes the door quietly behind him.

**VOGLER**

Herr Salieri?

Old Salieri turns around to look at him. We see that his throat is bandaged expertly. He wears hospital garb, and over it the Civilian Medal and Chain with which we will later see the EMPEROR invest him.

**OLD SALIERI**

What do you want?

**VOGLER**

I am Father Vogler. I am a Chaplain here. I thought you might like to talk to someone.

**OLD SALIERI**

About what?

**VOGLER**

You tried to take your life. You do remember that, don't you?

**OLD SALIERI**

So?

**VOGLER**

In the sight of God that is a sin.

**OLD SALIERI**

What do you want?

**VOGLER**

Do you understand that you have sinned? Gravely.

**OLD SALIERI**

Leave me alone.

**VOGLER**

I cannot leave alone a soul in pain.

**OLD SALIERI**

Do you know who I am? You never heard of me, did you?

**VOGLER**

That makes no difference. All men are equal in God's eyes.

**OLD SALIERI**

Are they?

**VOGLER**

Offer me your confession. I can offer you God's forgiveness.

**OLD SALIERI**

I do not seek forgiveness.

**VOGLER**

My son, there is something dreadful on your soul. Unburden it to me. I'm here only for you. Please talk to me.

**OLD SALIERI**

How well are you trained in music?

**VOGLER**

I know a little. I studied it in my youth.

**OLD SALIERI**

Where?

**VOGLER**

Here in Vienna.

**OLD SALIERI**

Then you must know this.

He propels his wheelchair to the forte-piano, and plays an unrecognizable melody.

**VOGLER**

I can't say I do. What is it?

**OLD SALIERI**

I'm surprised you don't know. It was a very popular tune in its day. I wrote it. How about this?

He plays another tune.

**OLD SALIERI**

This one brought down the house when we played it first.

He plays it with growing enthusiasm.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. THE STAGE OF AN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S**

We see the pretty soprano KATHERINA CAVALIERI, now about twenty-four, dressed in an elaborate mythological Persian costume, singing on stage. She's near the end of a very florid aria by Salieri. The audience applauds wildly.

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON - 1823**

**OLD SALIERI**

(taking his hands off  
the keys)

Well?

**VOGLER**

I regret it is not too familiar.

**OLD SALIERI**

Can you recall no melody of mine? I was the most famous composer in Europe when you were still a boy. I wrote forty operas alone. What about this little thing?

Slyly he plays the opening measure of Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik. The priest nods, smiling suddenly, and hums a little with the music.

**VOGLER**

Oh, I know that! That's charming! I didn't know you wrote that.

**OLD SALIERI**

I didn't. That was Mozart. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. You know who that is?

**VOGLER**

Of course. The man you accuse yourself

of killing.

**OLD SALIERI**

Ah - you've heard that?

**VOGLER**

All Vienna has heard that.

**OLD SALIERI**

(eagerly)

And do they believe it?

**VOGLER**

Is it true?

**OLD SALIERI**

Do you believe it?

**VOGLER**

Should I?

A very long pause. Salieri stares above the priest, seemingly lost in his own private world.

**VOGLER**

For God's sake, my son, if you have anything to confess, do it now!  
Give yourself some peace!

A further pause.

**VOGLER**

Do you hear me?

**OLD SALIERI**

He was murdered, Father! Mozart!  
Cruelly murdered.

Pause.

**VOGLER**

(almost whispering)

Yes? Did you do it?

Suddenly Old Salieri turns to him, a look of extreme innocence.

**OLD SALIERI**

He was my idol! I can't remember a time when I didn't know his name! When I was only fourteen he was already famous. Even in Legnago - the tiniest town in Italy - I knew of him.

**CUT TO:**



**EXT. A SMALL TOWN SQUARE IN LOMBARDY, ITALY - DAY - 1780'S**

There are twelve children and twenty adults in the square. We see the fourteen-year-old Salieri blindfolded, playing a game of Blindman's Bluff with other Italian children, running about in the bright sunshine and laughing.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

I was still playing childish games  
when he was playing music for kings  
and emperors. Even the Pope in Rome!

**CUT TO:**

**INT. A SALON IN THE VATICAN - DAY - 1780'S**

We see the six-year-old MOZART, also blindfolded, seated in a gilded chair on a pile of books, playing the harpsichord for the POPE and a suite of CARDINALS and other churchmen. Beside the little boy stands LEOPOLD, his father, smirking with pride.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

I admit I was jealous when I heard  
the tales they told about him. Not  
of the brilliant little prodigy  
himself, but of his father, who had  
taught him everything.

The piece finishes. Leopold lowers the lid of the harpsichord and lifts up his little son to stand on it. Mozart removes the blindfold to show a pale little face with staring eyes. Both father and son bow. A Papal Chamberlain presents Leopold with a gold snuff box whilst the cardinals decorously applaud. Over this scene Old Salieri speaks.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

My father did not care for music. He  
wanted me only to be a merchant,  
like himself. As anonymous as he  
was. When I told how I wished I could  
be like Mozart, he would say, Why?  
Do you want to be a trained monkey?  
Would you like me to drag you around  
Europe doing tricks like a circus  
freak? How could I tell him what  
music meant to me?

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. A COUNTRY CHURCH IN NORTH ITALY - DAY - 1780'S**

Serene music of the Italian Baroque - Pergolesi's Stabat Mater - sung by a choir of boys with organ accompaniment. We see the outside of the 17th-century church sitting in the wide landscape of Lombardy: sunlit fields, a dusty, white road, poplar trees.

**INT. THE CHURCH AT LEGNAGO - DAY - 1780'S**

The music continues and swells. We see the twelve-year-old Salieri seated between his plump and placid parents in the congregation, listening in rapture. His father is a heavy-looking, self-approving man, obviously indifferent to the music. A large and austere Christ on the cross hangs over the altar. Candles burn below his image.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

Even then a spray of sounded notes  
could make me dizzy, almost to  
falling.

The boy falls forward on his knees. So do his parents and the other members of the congregation. He stares up at Christ who stares back at him.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

Whilst my father prayed earnestly to  
God to protect commerce, I would  
offer up secretly the proudest prayer  
a boy could think of. Lord, make me  
a great composer! Let me celebrate  
your glory through music - and be  
celebrated myself! Make me famous  
through the world, dear God! Make me  
immortal! After I die let people  
speak my name forever with love for  
what I wrote! In return I vow I will  
give you my chastity - my industry,  
my deepest humility, every hour of  
my life. And I will help my fellow  
man all I can. Amen and amen!

The music swells to a crescendo. The candles flare. We see the Christ through the flames looking at the boy benignly.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

And do you know what happened? A  
miracle!

**INT. DINING ROOM IN THE SALIERI HOUSE - DAY - 1780'S**

CU, a large cooked fish on a thick china plate. Camera pulls back to show the Salieri family at dinner. Father Salieri sits at the head of the table, a napkin tucked into his chin. Mother Salieri is serving the fish into portions and handing them round. Two maiden aunts are in attendance, wearing black, and of course the young boy. Father Salieri receives his plate of fish and starts to eat greedily. Suddenly there is a gasp - he starts to choke violently on a fish bone. All the women get up and crowd around him, thumping and pummeling him, but it is in vain. Father Salieri collapses.

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON - 1823**

**OLD SALIERI**

Suddenly he was dead. Just like that!  
And my life changed forever. My mother  
said, Go. Study music if you really  
want to. Off with you! And off I  
went as quick as I could and never  
saw Italy again. Of course, I knew  
God had arranged it all; that was  
obvious. One moment I was a frustrated  
boy in an obscure little town. The  
next I was here, in Vienna, city of  
musicians, sixteen years old and  
studying under Gluck! Gluck, Father.  
Do you know who he was? The greatest  
composer of his time. And he loved  
me! That was the wonder. He taught  
me everything he knew. And when I  
was ready, introduced me personally  
to the Emperor! Emperor Joseph - the  
musical king! Within a few years I  
was his court composer. Wasn't that  
incredible? Imperial Composer to His  
Majesty! Actually the man had no ear  
at all, but what did it matter? He  
adored my music, that was enough.  
Night after night I sat right next  
to the Emperor of Austria, playing  
duets with him, correcting the royal  
sight-reading. Tell me, if you had  
been me, wouldn't you have thought  
God had accepted your vow? And believe  
me, I honoured it. I was a model of  
virtue. I kept my hands off women,  
worked hours every day teaching  
students, many of them for free,  
sitting on endless committees to  
help poor musicians - work and work  
and work, that was all my life. And  
it was wonderful! Everybody liked  
me. I liked myself. I was the most  
successful musician in Vienna. And  
the happiest. Till he came. Mozart.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. THE ARCHBISHOP OF SALZBURG'S RESIDENCE - VIENNA - DAY -  
1780'S**

A grand room crowded with guests. A small group of Gypsy  
musicians is playing in the background. Thirteen members of  
the Archbishop's orchestra - all wind players, complete with  
18th-century wind instruments: elaborate-looking bassoons,  
basset horns, etc. and wearing their employer's livery - are  
laying out music on stands at one end of the room. At the  
other end is a large gilded chair, bearing the arms of the  
ARCHBISHOP OF SALZBURG. A throng of people is standing,

talking, and preparing to sit upon the rows of waiting chairs to hear a concert.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

One day he came to Vienna to play some of his music at the residence of his employer, the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. Eagerly I went there to seek him out. That night changed my life.

We see Salieri, age thirty-one, a neat, carefully turned-cut man in decent black clothes and clean white linen, walking through the crowd of guests. We follow him.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

As I went through the salon, I played a game with myself. This man had written his first concerto at the age of four; his first symphony at seven; a full-scale opera at twelve. Did it show? Is talent like that written on the face?

We see shots of assorted young men staring back at Salieri as he moves through the crowd.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

Which one of them could he be?

Some of the men recognize Salieri and bow respectfully. Then suddenly a servant bearing a large tray of cakes and pastries stalks past. Instantly riveted by the sight of such delights, Salieri follows him out of the Grand Salon.

**INT. A PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S**

The servant marches along bearing his tray of pastries aloft. Salieri follows him.

The servant turns into:

**INT. BUFFET ROOM IN THE PALACE - DAY - 1780'S**

Salieri's POV: several tables, dressed to the floor with cloths are loaded with many plates of confectionery. It is, in fact, Salieri's idea of paradise! The servant puts his tray down on one of the tables and withdraws from the room.

**INT. A PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S**

Salieri turns away so as not to be noticed by the servant. As soon as the man disappears, Salieri sneaks into the buffet room.

**INT. BUFFET ROOM IN THE PALACE - DAY - 1780'S**

Salieri enters the room and looks about him cautiously. He is salivating with anticipation as he stares at the feast of sweet things. His attention is attracted in particular by a huge pile of dark chocolate balls arranged in the shape of a pineapple. He reaches out a hand to steal one of the balls, but at the same moment he hears giggling coming toward him. He ducks down behind the pastry table.

A girl - CONSTANZE - rushes into the room. She runs straight across it and hides herself behind one of the tables.

After a beat of total silence, MOZART runs into the room, stops, and looks around. He is age twenty-six, wearing a fine wig and a brilliant coat with the insignia of the Archbishop of Salzburg upon it. He is puzzled; Constanze has disappeared.

Baffled, he turns and is about to leave the room, when Constanze suddenly squeaks from under the cloth like a tiny mouse. Instantly Mozart drops to all fours and starts crawling across the floor, meowing and hissing like a naughty cat. Watched by an astonished Salieri, Mozart disappears under the cloth and obviously pounces upon Constanze. We hear a high-pitched giggle, which is going to characterize Mozart throughout the film.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. PALACE GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S**

The throng is mostly seated. The musicians are in their places, holding their various exotic-looking wind instruments; the candles are all lit. A Majordomo appears and bangs his staff on the floor for attention. Immediately COLLOREDO, Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg enters. He is a small self-important figure of fifty in a wig, surmounted by a scarlet skullcap. He is followed by his Chamberlain, the Count ARCO. Everyone stands. The Archbishop goes to his throne and sits. His guests sit also. Arco gives the signal to start the music. Nothing happens. Instead, a wind musician gets up, approaches the Chamberlain and whispers in his ear. Arco in turn whispers to the Archbishop.

**ARCO**

Mozart is not here.

**COLLOREDO**

Where is he?

**ARCO**

They're looking for him, Your Grace.

**INT. A PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S**

Three servants are opening doors and looking into rooms going off the corridor.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. PALACE GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S**

The guests are turning around and looking at the Archbishop. The musicians are watching. There is puzzlement and a murmur of comment. The Archbishop tightens his lip.

**COLLOREDO**

(to Arco)

We'll start without him.

**INT. PALACE BUFFET ROOM - DAY - 1780'S**

Mozart is on his knees before the tablecloth, which reaches to the floor. Under it is Constanze. We hear her giggling as he talks.

**MOZART**

Miaouw! Miaouw! Mouse-wouse? It's  
Puss-wuss, fangs-wangs. Paws-claws.  
Pounce-bounce!

He grabs her ankle. She screams. He pulls her out by her leg.

**CONSTANZE**

Stop it. Stop it!

They roll on the floor. He tickles her.

**CONSTANZE**

Stop it!

**MOZART**

I am! I am! I'm stopping it - slowly.  
You see! Look, I've stopped. Now we  
are going back.

He tries to drag her back under the table.

**CONSTANZE**

No! No! No!

**MOZART**

Yes! Back! Back! Listen - don't you  
know where you are?

**CONSTANZE**

Where?

**MOZART**

We are in the Residence of the  
Fartsbishop of Salzburg.

**CONSTANZE**

Fartsbishop!

She laughs delightedly, then addresses an imaginary Archbishop.

**CONSTANZE**

Your Grace, I've got something to tell you. I want to complain about this man.

**MOZART**

Go ahead, tell him. Tell them all. They won't understand you anyway.

**CONSTANZE**

Why not?

**MOZART**

Because here everything goes backwards. People walk backwards, dance backwards, sing backwards, and talk backwards.

**CONSTANZE**

That's stupid.

**MOZART**

Why? People fart backwards.

**CONSTANZE**

Do you think that's funny?

**MOZART**

Yes, I think it's brilliant. You've been doing it for years.

He gives a high pitched giggle.

**CONSTANZE**

Oh, ha, ha, ha.

**MOZART**

Sra-I'm-sick! Sra-I'm sick!

**CONSTANZE**

Yes, you are. You're very sick.

**MOZART**

No, no. Say it backwards, shit-wit. Sra-I'm-sick Say it backwards!

**CONSTANZE**

(working it out)  
Sra-I'm-sick. Sick - kiss I'm - my  
Kiss my! Sra-I'm-sick - Kiss my arse!

**MOZART**

Em iram! Em iram!

**CONSTANZE**

No, I'm not playing this game.

**MOZART**

No, this is serious. Say it backwards.

**CONSTANZE**

No!

**MOZART**

Just say it - you'll see. It's very serious. Em iram! Em iram!

**CONSTANZE**

Iram - marry Em - marry me! No, no!  
You're a fiend. I'm not going to  
marry a fiend. A dirty fiend at that.

**MOZART**

Ui-vol-i-tub!

**CONSTANZE**

Tub - but i-tub - but I vol - love  
but I love ui - You. I love you!

The mood becomes suddenly softer. She kisses him. They embrace. Then he spoils it.

**MOZART**

Tish-I'm tee. What's that?

**CONSTANZE**

What?

**MOZART**

Tish-I'm-tee.

**CONSTANZE**

Eat

**MOZART**

Yes.

**CONSTANZE**

Eat my - ah!

Shocked, she strikes at him. At the same moment the music starts in the salon next door. We hear the opening of the Serenade for Thirteen Wind Instruments, K.

**MOZART**

My music! They've started! They've started without me!

He leaps up, disheveled and rumpled and runs out of the room. Salieri watches in amazement and disgust.



**CUT TO:**

**INT. PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S**

The music is louder. Mozart hastens towards the Grand Salon away from the buffet room, adjusting his dress as he goes.

**INT. GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S**

The opening of the Serenade is being tentatively conducted by the leader of the wind-musicians. Guests turn around as Mozart appears - bowing to the Archbishop - and walks with an attempt at dignity to the dais where the wind band is playing. The leader yields his place to the composer and Mozart smoothly takes over conducting.

Constanze, deeply embarrassed, sneaks into the room and seats herself at the back.

**INT. PALACE BUFFET ROOM - DAY - 1780'S**

The music fades down. Salieri stands shocked from his inadvertent eavesdropping. After a second he moves almost in a trance toward the door; the music dissolves.

**INT. GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S**

Mozart is conducting the Adagio from his Serenade (K. 361), guiding the thirteen wind instrumentalists. The squeezebox opening of the movement begins. Salieri appears at the door at the back of the salon. He stares in disbelief at Mozart.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

So that was he! That giggling, dirty-minded creature I'd just seen crawling on the floor. Mozart. The phenomenon whose legend had haunted my youth. Impossible.

The music swells up and Salieri listens to it with eyes closed  
-  
amazed, transported - suddenly engulfed by the sound. Finally it fades down and away and changes into applause. Salieri opens his eyes.

The audience is clearly delighted. Mozart bows to them, also delighted. Colloredo rises abruptly, and without looking at Mozart or applauding and leaves the Salon. Count Arco approaches the composer. Mozart turns to him, radiant.

**ARCO**

Follow me, please. The Archbishop would like a word.

**MOZART**

Certainly!

He follows Arco out of the room, through a throng of admirers.

**INT. ANOTHER PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S**

Mozart and Arco walk side by side. They pass Salieri who is staring at Mozart in fascination. As they disappear, he steals toward the music stands, unable to help himself.

**MOZART**

Well, I think that went off remarkably well, don't you?

**ARCO**

Indeed.

**MOZART**

These Viennese certainly know good music when they hear it.

**ARCO**

His Grace is very angry with you.

**MOZART**

What do you mean?

They arrive at the door of Colloredo's private apartment.

**ARCO**

You are to come in here and ask his pardon.

Arco opens the door.

**INT. ARCHBISHOP'S PRIVATE ROOM - DAY - 1780'S**

The Archbishop is sitting, chatting to guests. Among them are several ladies. Arco approaches him obsequiously.

**ARCO**

Your Grace.

**COLLOREDO**

Ah, Mozart. Why?

**MOZART**

Why what, sir?

**COLLOREDO**

Why do I have to be humiliated in front of my guests by one of my own servants?

**MOZART**

Humiliated?

**COLLOREDO**

How much provocation am I to endure  
from you? The more license I allow  
you, the more you take.

The company watches this scene, deeply interested.

**MOZART**

If His Grace is not satisfied with  
me, he can dismiss me.

**COLLOREDO**

I wish you to return immediately to  
Salzburg. Your father is waiting for  
you there patiently. I will speak to  
you further when I come.

**MOZART**

No, Your Grace! I mean with all  
humility, no. I would rather you  
dismissed me. It's obvious I don't  
satisfy.

**COLLOREDO**

Then try harder, Mozart. I have no  
intention of dismissing you. You  
will remain in my service and learn  
your place. Go now.

He extends his hand to be kissed. Mozart does it with a  
furious grace, then leaves the room. As he opens the door we  
see:

**INT. PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S**

A group of people who have attended the concert, among them  
Constanze, are standing outside the private apartment. At  
sight of the composer they break into sustained applause.  
Mozart is suddenly delighted. He throws the door wide open

so that the guests can see into the private apartment where  
the Archbishop sits - and he can see them. Colloredo is  
clearly discomfited by this reception of his employee. He  
smiles and bows uneasily, as they include him in the small  
ovation.

Mozart stands in the corridor, out of the Archbishop's line  
of sight, bowing and giggling, and encouraging the applause  
for the Archbishop with conducting gestures. Suddenly  
irritated, Colloredo signs to Arco, who steps forward and  
shuts the door, ending the applause.

**INT. PALACE GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S**

Salieri, in this vast room, is standing and looking at the  
full score of the Serenade. He turns the pages back to the  
slow movement. Instantly, we again hear its lyrical strains.

CU, Salieri, reading the score of the Adagio in helpless fascination. The music is played against his description of it.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

Extraordinary! On the page it looked nothing. The beginning simple, almost comic. Just a pulse - bassoons and basset horns - like a rusty squeezebox. Then suddenly - high above it - an oboe, a single note, hanging there unwavering, till a clarinet took over and sweetened it into a phrase of such delight! This was no composition by a performing monkey! This was a music I'd never heard. Filled with such longing, such unfulfillable longing, it had me trembling. It seemed to me that I was hearing a voice of God.

Suddenly the music snaps off. Mozart stands before him as he lays down the score.

**MOZART**

Excuse me!

He takes the score, bows, and struts briskly out of the room. Salieri stares uncomprehendingly after the jaunty little figure.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

But why?

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

**OLD SALIERI**

Why? Would God choose an obscene child to be His instrument? It was not to be believed! This piece had to be an accident. It had to be!

**INT. PALACE DINING ROOM - DAY - 1780'S**

At the table sits the EMPEROR JOSEPH II, eating his frugal dinner and sipping goat's milk. He is an intelligent, dapper man of forty, wearing a military uniform. Around him but standing, are his Chamberlain, JOHANN VON STRACK: stiff and highly correct. COUNT ORSINI-ROSENBERG: a corpulent man of sixty, highly conscious of his position as Director of the Opera. BARON VON SWIETEN, the Imperial Librarian: a grave but kindly and educated man in his mid-fifties. FIRST KAPELLMEISTER GIUSEPPE BONNO: very Italian, cringing and time-serving, aged about seventy. And Salieri, wearing decorous black, as usual.

At a side-table, two Imperial secretaries, using quill pens

and inkstands, write down everything of importance that is said.

**JOSEPH**

How good is he, this Mozart?

**VON SWIETEN**

He's remarkable, Majesty. I heard an extraordinary serious opera of his last month. Idomeneo, King of Crete.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

That? A most tiresome piece. I heard it, too.

**VON SWIETEN**

Tiresome?

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

A young man trying to impress beyond his abilities. Too much spice. Too many notes.

**VON SWIETEN**

Majesty, I thought it the most promising work I've heard in years.

**JOSEPH**

Ah-ha. Well then, we should make some effort to acquire him. We could use a good German composer in Vienna, surely?

**VON STRACK**

I agree, Majesty, but I'm afraid it's not possible. The young man is still in the pay of the Archbishop.

**JOSEPH**

Very small pay, I imagine. I'm sure he could be tempted with the right offer. Say, an opera in German for our National Theatre.

**VON SWIETEN**

Excellent, sire!

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

But not German, I beg your Majesty! Italian is the proper language for opera. All educated people agree on that.

**JOSEPH**

Ah-ha. What do you say, Chamberlain?

**VON STRACK**

In my opinion, it is time we had a piece in our own language, sir. Plain German. For plain people.

He looks defiantly at Orsini-Rosenberg.

**JOSEPH**

Ah-ha. Kapellmeister?

**BONNO**

(Italian accent)

Majesty, I must agree with Herr Dirretore. Opera is an Italian art, solamente. German is - scusate - too brutta for singing, too rough.

**JOSEPH**

Ah-ha. Court Composer, what do you say?

**SALIERI**

I think it is an interesting notion to keep Mozart in Vienna, Majesty. It should really infuriate the Archbishop beyond measure - if that is your Majesty's intention.

**JOSEPH**

You are cattivo, Court Composer.  
(briskly, to Von Strack)  
I want to meet this young man. Chamberlain, arrange a pleasant welcome for him.

**VON STRACK**

Yes, sir.

**JOSEPH**

Well. There it is.

**INT. BEDROOM IN SALIERI'S APARTMENT - DAY - 1780'S**

A somber room which serves both as a bedroom and a study. We see a four-poster bed. Also, a marble mantelpiece above which hangs a handsome cross in olivewood, bearing the figure of a severe Christ. Opposite this image sits Salieri at his desk, on which stands a pile of music paper, quill pens and ink. On one side of him is an open forte-piano on which he occasionally tries notes from the march he is composing, with some difficulty. He scratches notes out with his quill, and ruffles his hair - which we see without a powdered wig. There is a knock at the door.

**SALIERI**

Si.

A servant admits LORL, a young lower-class girl, who appears

carrying a basket in which is a box covered with a napkin. She has just come from the baker's shop.

**SALIERI**

Ah! Here she comes. Fraulein Lorl,  
good morning.

**LORL**

Good morning, sir.

**SALIERI**

What have you got for me today? Let  
me see.

Greedyly he unwraps the napkin and lifts the lid on the box.

**SALIERI**

Ah-ha! Siena macaroons - my  
favourites. Give my best thanks to  
the baker.

**LORL**

I will, sir.

He takes a biscuit and eats.

**SALIERI**

Thank you. Are you well today,  
Fraulein Lorl?

**LORL**

Yes, thank you, sir.

**SALIERI**

Bene! Bene!

She gives a little curtsy, flattered and giggling and is shown out. Salieri turns back to his work, chewing. He plays through a complete line of the march. He smiles, pleased with the result.

**SALIERI**

Grazie, Signore.

He inclines his head to the Christ above the fireplace, and starts to play the whole march, including the phrase which pleased him.

**INT. A WIGMAKER'S SHOP - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S**

The march continues on the forte-piano as we see Mozart, seated in front of a mirror, wearing an extravagant wig. On either side of him stands a SALESMAN, one of them holding another wig, equally extravagant. Mozart takes off the first wig, to reveal his own blonde hair, of which he is extremely proud, and hands it back.

**MOZART**

And the other one?

The Salesman puts the second wig on his head. Mozart pulls a face of doubt in the mirror.

**MOZART**

And the other one?

He takes it off and the other Salesman replaces it with the first wig on his head.

**MOZART**

Oh, they're both so beautiful, I  
can't decide. Why don't I have two  
heads?

He giggles. The music stops.

**INT. GRAND SALON - THE ROYAL PALACE - DAY - 1780'S**

A door opens. We glimpse in the next room the Emperor Joseph bidding goodbye to a group of military officers standing around a table.

**JOSEPH**

Good, good, good.

He turns and comes into the salon, where another group awaits him. It consists of Von Strack, Orsini-Rosenberg, Bonno, Von Swieten and Salieri. The room contains several gilded chairs dotted about, and a forte-piano.

**JOSEPH**

Good morning, gentlemen.

All bow and say, Good morning, Your Majesty!

**JOSEPH**

(to Von Strack)

Well, what do you have for me today?

**VON STRACK**

Your Majesty, Herr Mozart -

**JOSEPH**

Yes, what about him?

**VON STRACK**

He's here.

**JOSEPH**

Ah-ha. Well. There it is. Good.

**SALIERI**

Majesty, I hope you won't think it improper, but I have written a little



March of Welcome in his honour.

He produces a paper.

**JOSEPH**

What a charming idea. May I see?

**SALIERI**

(handing it over)

It's just a trifle, of course.

**JOSEPH**

May I try it?

**SALIERI**

Majesty.

The Emperor goes to the instrument, sits and plays the first bars of it. Quite well.

**JOSEPH**

Delightful, Court Composer. Would you permit me to play it as he comes in?

**SALIERI**

You do me too much honour, Sire.

**JOSEPH**

Let's have some fun.

(to the waiting

Majordomo)

Bring in Herr Mozart, please. But slowly, slowly. I need a minute to practice.

The Majordomo bows and goes. The Emperor addresses himself to the march. He plays a wrong note.

**SALIERI**

A-flat, Majesty.

**JOSEPH**

Ah-ha!

**INT. PALACE CORRIDOR - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S**

Taking his instructions literally, the Majordomo is marching very slowly toward the salon door. He is followed by a bewildered Mozart, dressed very stylishly and wearing one of the wigs from the perruquier.

**INT. ROYAL PALACE GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S**

Joseph finishes the march. The door opens.

**MAJORDOMO**

Herr Mozart.

Mozart comes in eagerly. Immediately the march begins, played by His Majesty. All the courtiers stand, listening with admiration. Joseph plays well, but applies himself fiercely to the manuscript. Mozart, still bewildered, regards the scene, but does not seem to pay attention to the music itself. It finishes and all clap obsequiously.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Bravo, Your Majesty!

**VON STRACK**

Well done, Sire!

The Emperor rises, pleased with himself. He snatches the manuscript off the stand and holds it in his hand for the rest of the scene.

**JOSEPH**

Gentlemen, gentlemen, a little less enthusiasm, I beg you. Ah, Mozart.

He extends his hand. Mozart throws himself to his knees, and to Joseph's discomfort kisses the royal hand with fervour.

**MOZART**

Your Majesty!

**JOSEPH**

No, no, please! It is not a holy relic.

(raising Mozart up)

You know we have met already? In this very room. Perhaps you won't remember it, you were only six years old.

(to the others)

He was giving the most brilliant little concert here. As he got off the stool, he slipped and fell. My sister Antoinette helped him up herself, and do you know what he did? Jumped straight into her arms and said, Will you marry me, yes or no?

Embarrassed, Mozart bursts into a wild giggle. Joseph helps him out.

**JOSEPH**

You know all these gentlemen, I'm sure.

Von Strack and Bonno nod.

**JOSEPH**

The Baron Von Swieten.

**VON SWIETEN**

I'm a great admirer of yours, young man. Welcome.

**MOZART**

Oh, thank you.

**JOSEPH**

The Director of our Opera. Count Orsini-Rosenberg.

**MOZART**

(bowing excitedly)

Oh sir, yes! The honour is mine. Absolutely.

Orsini-Rosenberg nods without enthusiasm.

**JOSEPH**

And here is our illustrious Court Composer, Herr Salieri.

**SALIERI**

(taking his hand)

Finally! Such an immense joy. Diletto straordinario!

**MOZART**

I know your work well, Signore. Do you know I actually composed some variations on a melody of yours?

**SALIERI**

Really?

**MOZART**

Mio caro Adone.

**SALIERI**

Ah!

**MOZART**

A funny little tune, but it yielded some good things.

**JOSEPH**

And now he has returned the compliment. Herr Salieri composed that March of Welcome for you.

**MOZART**

(speaking expertly)

Really? Oh, grazie, Signore! Sono commosso! E un onore per me eccezionale. Compositore brillante

e famosissimo!

He bows elaborately. Salieri inclines himself, dryly.

**SALIERI**

My pleasure.

**JOSEPH**

Well, there it is. Now to business.  
Young man, we are going to commission  
an opera from you. What do you say?

**MOZART**

Majesty!

**JOSEPH**

(to the courtiers)

Did we vote in the end for German or  
Italian?

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Well, actually, Sire, if you remember,  
we did finally incline to Italian.

**VON STRACK**

Did we?

**VON SWIETEN**

I don't think it was really decided,  
Director.

**MOZART**

Oh, German! German! Please let it be  
German.

**JOSEPH**

Why so?

**MOZART**

Because I've already found the most  
wonderful libretto!

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Oh? Have I seen it?

**MOZART**

I - I don't think you have, Herr  
Director. Not yet. I mean, it's quite  
n - Of course, I'll show it to you  
immediately.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

I think you'd better.

**JOSEPH**

Well, what is it about? Tell us the  
story.

**MOZART**

It's actually quite amusing, Majesty.  
It's set - the whole thing is set  
in a - in a -

He stops short with a little giggle.

**JOSEPH**

Yes, where?

**MOZART**

In a Pasha's Harem, Majesty. A  
Seraglio.

**JOSEPH**

Ah-ha.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

You mean in Turkey?

**MOZART**

Exactly.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Then why especially does it have to  
be in German?

**MOZART**

Well not especially. It can be in  
Turkish, if you really want. I don't  
care.

He giggles again. Orsini-Rosenberg looks at him sourly.

**VON SWIETEN**

(kindly)

My dear fellow, the language is not  
finally the point. Do you really  
think that subject is quite  
appropriate for a national theatre?

**MOZART**

Why not? It's charming. I mean, I  
don't actually show concubines  
exposing their! their! It's not  
indecent!

(to Joseph)

It's highly moral, Majesty. It's  
full of proper German virtues. I  
swear it. Absolutely!

**JOSEPH**

Well, I'm glad to hear that.

**SALIERI**

Excuse me, Sire, but what do you

think these could be? Being a  
foreigner, I would love to learn.

**JOSEPH**

Cattivo again, Court Composer. Well,  
tell him, Mozart. Name us a German  
virtue.

**MOZART**

Love, Sire!

**SALIERI**

Ah, love! Well of course in Italy we  
know nothing about that.

The Italian faction - Orsini-Rosenberg and Bonno - laugh  
discreetly.

**MOZART**

No, I don't think you do. I mean  
watching Italian opera, all those  
male sopranos screeching. Stupid fat  
couples rolling their eyes about!  
That's not love - it's just rubbish.

An embarrassed pause. Bonno giggles in nervous amusement.

**MOZART**

Majesty, you choose the language. It  
will be my task to set it to the  
finest music ever offered a monarch.

Pause. Joseph is clearly pleased.

**JOSEPH**

Well, there it is. Let it be German.

He nods - he has wanted this result all the time. He turns  
and makes for the door. All bow. Then he becomes aware of  
the manuscript in his hand.

**JOSEPH**

Ah, this is yours.

Mozart does not take it.

**MOZART**

Keep it, Sire, if you want to. It is  
already here in my head.

**JOSEPH**

What? On one hearing only?

**MOZART**

I think so, Sire, yes.

Pause.

**JOSEPH**

Show me.

Mozart bows and hands the manuscript back to the Emperor. Then he goes to the forte-piano and seats himself. The others, except for Salieri, gather around the manuscript held by the King. Mozart plays the first half of the march with deadly accuracy.

**MOZART**

(to Salieri)

The rest is just the same, isn't it?

He plays the first half again but stops in the middle of a phrase, which he repeats dubiously.

**MOZART**

That really doesn't work, does it?

All the courtiers look at Salieri.

**MOZART**

Did you try this? Wouldn't it be just a little more -?

He plays another phrase.

**MOZART**

Or this - yes, this! Better.

He plays another phrase. Gradually, he alters the music so that it turns into the celebrated march to be used later in *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Non Piu Andrai*. He plays it with increasing abandon and virtuosity. Salieri watches with a fixed smile on his face. The court watches, astonished. He finishes in great glory, takes his hands off the keys with a gesture of triumph - and grins.

**INT. BEDROOM IN SALIERI'S APARTMENT - DAY - 1780'S**

We see the olivewood cross. Salieri is sitting at his desk, staring at it.

**SALIERI**

Grazie, Signore.

There is a knock at the door. He does not hear it, but sits on. Another knock, louder.

**SALIERI**

Yes?

Lorl comes in.

**LORL**

Madame Cavalieri is here for her

lesson, sir.

**SALIERI**

Bene.

He gets up and enters:

**INT. MUSIC ROOM IN SALIERI'S APARTMENT - DAY - 1780'S**

KATHERINA CAVALIERI, a young, high-spirited soprano of twenty is waiting for him, dressed in a fashionable dress and wearing on her head an exotic turban of satin, with a feather. Lorl exits.

**CAVALIERI**

(curtseying to him)

Maestro.

**SALIERI**

Good morning.

**CAVALIERI**

(posing, in her turban)

Well? How do you like it? It's Turkish. My hairdresser tells me everything's going to be Turkish this year!

**SALIERI**

Really? What else did he tell you today? Give me some gossip.

**CAVALIERI**

Well, I heard you met Herr Mozart.

**SALIERI**

Oh? News travels fast in Vienna.

**CAVALIERI**

And he's been commissioned to write an opera. Is it true?

**SALIERI**

Yes.

**CAVALIERI**

Is there a part for me?

**SALIERI**

No.

**CAVALIERI**

How do you know?

**SALIERI**

Well even if there is, I don't think you want to get involved with this



one.

**CAVALIERI**

Why not?

**SALIERI**

Well, do you know where it's set, my dear?

**CAVALIERI**

Where?

**SALIERI**

In a harem.

**CAVALIERI**

What's that?

**SALIERI**

A brothel.

**CAVALIERI**

Oh!

**SALIERI**

A Turkish brothel.

**CAVALIERI**

Turkish? Oh, if it's Turkish, that's different. I want to be in it.

**SALIERI**

My dear, it will hardly enhance your reputation to be celebrated throughout Vienna as a singing prostitute for a Turk.

He seats himself at the forte-piano.

**CAVALIERI**

Oh. Well perhaps you could introduce us anyway.

**SALIERI**

Perhaps.

He plays a chord. She sings a scale, expertly. He strikes another chord. She starts another scale, then breaks off.

**CAVALIERI**

What does he look like?

**SALIERI**

You might be disappointed.

**CAVALIERI**

Why?

**SALIERI**

Looks and talent don't always go together, Katherina.

**CAVALIERI**

(airily)

Looks don't concern me, Maestro.  
Only talent interests a woman of taste.

He strikes the chord again, firmly. Cavalieri sings her next scale, then another one, and another one, doing her exercises in earnest. As she hits a sustained high note the orchestral accompaniment in the middle of Martern Aller Arten from Il Seraglio comes in underneath and the music changes from exercises to the exceedingly florid aria.

We DISSOLVE on the singer's face, and she is suddenly not merely turbaned, but painted and dressed totally in a Turkish manner, and we are on:

**INT. OPERA STAGE - VIENNA - 1780'S**

The heroine of the opera (Cavalieri) is in full cry addressing the Pasha with scorn and defiance.

The house is full. Watching the performance - which is conducted by Mozart from the clavier in the midst of the orchestra - we note Von Strack, Orsini-Rosenberg, Bonno and Von Swieten, all grouped around the Emperor, in a box.

In another box we see an overdressed, middle-aged woman and three girls, one of whom is Constanze. This is the formidable MADAME WEBER and her three daughters, Constanze, JOSEFA and SOPHIE. All are enraptured by the spectacle and Madame Weber is especially enraptured by being there at all. Not so, Salieri, who sits in another box, coldly watching the stage.

Cavalieri is singing Martern aller Arten from the line Doch du bist entschlossen.

**CAVALIERI**

Since you are determined, Since you  
are determined, Calmly, with no  
ferment, Welcome - every pain and  
woe. Bind me then - compel me! Bind  
me then - compel me! Hurt me. Break  
me! Kill me! At last I shall be freed  
by death!

After a few moments of this showy aria, with the composer and the singer staring at each other - he conducting elaborately for her benefit, and she following his beat with rapturous eyes - the music fades, and Salieri speaks over it.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

There she was. I had no idea where they met - or how - yet there she stood on stage for all to see. Showing off like the greedy songbird she was. Ten minutes of ghastly scales and arpeggios, whizzing up and down like fireworks at a fairground.

Music up again for the last 30 bars of the aria.

**CAVALIERI**

(singing)

Be freed at last by death! Be freed at last by death! At last I shall be freed By! Death!

Before the orchestral coda ends, cut to:

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

Through the window we see that night has fallen.

**OLD SALIERI**

Understand, I was in love with the girl. Or at least in lust. I wasn't a saint. It took me the most tremendous effort to be faithful to my vow. I swear to you I never laid a finger on her. All the same, I couldn't bear to think of anyone else touching her - least of all the Creature.

**CUT BACK TO:**

**INT. THE OPERA HOUSE - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S**

The brilliant Turkish finale of Seraglio bursts over us. All the cast is lined up on stage. Mozart is conducting with happy excitement.

**CAST OF SERAGLIO**

(singing)

Pasha Selim May he Live forever!  
Ever, ever, ever, ever! Honour to his regal name! Honour to his regal name! May his noble brow emblazon  
Glory, fortune, joy and fame! Honour be to Pasha Selim Honour to his regal name! Honour to his regal name!

The curtains fall. Much applause. The Emperor claps vigorously and - following his lead - so do the courtiers. The curtains part. Mozart applauds the singers who applaud him back. He skips up onto the stage amongst them. The curtains fall again as they all bow. In the auditorium, the chandeliers descend,

filling it with light.

**INT. OPERA HOUSE STAGE - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S**

The curtains are down, and an excited hubbub of singers in costume surround Mozart and Cavalieri, all excited and chattering. Suddenly a hush. The Emperor is seen approaching from the wings, lit by flunkies holding candles. Von Strack, Orsini-Rosenberg and Von Swieten, amongst others, follow him. Also Salieri. The singers line up. Joseph stops at Cavalieri who makes a deep curtsey.

**JOSEPH**

Bravo, Madame. You are an ornament to our stage.

**CAVALIERI**

Majesty.

**JOSEPH**

(to Salieri)

And to you, Court Composer. Your pupil has done you great credit.

**INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S**

**MADAME WEBER**

Let us pass, please! Let us pass at once! We're with the Emperor.

**FLUNKY**

I am sorry, Madame. It is not permitted.

**MADAME WEBER**

Do you know who I am?

(pointing to Constanze)

This is my daughter. I am Frau Weber. We are favoured guests!

**FLUNKY**

I am sorry, Madame, but I have my orders.

**MADAME WEBER**

Call Herr Mozart! You call Herr Mozart immediately! This is insupportable!

**CONSTANZE**

Mother, please!

**MADAME WEBER**

Go ahead, Constanze. Just ignore this fellow.

(pushing her)

Go ahead, dear!

**FLUNKY**

(barring the way)  
I am sorry, Madame, but no! I cannot  
let anyone pass.

**MADAME WEBER**

Young man, I am no stranger to  
theatres. I'm no stranger to  
insolence!

**CUT BACK TO:**

**INT. OPERA HOUSE STAGE - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S**

All are applauding Cavalieri. The Emperor turns to Mozart.

**JOSEPH**

Well, Herr Mozart! A good effort.  
Decidedly that. An excellent effort!  
You've shown us something quite new  
today.

Mozart bows frantically: he is over-excited.

**MOZART**

It is new, it is, isn't it, Sire?

**JOSEPH**

Yes, indeed.

**MOZART**

And German?

**JOSEPH**

Oh, yes. Absolutely. German.  
Unquestionably!

**MOZART**

So then you like it? You really like  
it, Your Majesty?

**JOSEPH**

Of course I do. It's very good. Of  
course now and then - just now and  
then - it gets a touch elaborate.

**MOZART**

What do you mean, Sire?

**JOSEPH**

Well, I mean occasionally it seems  
to have, how shall one say?

(he stops in  
difficulty; to Orsini-  
Rosenberg)

How shall one say, Director?

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Too many notes, Your Majesty?

**JOSEPH**

Exactly. Very well put. Too many notes.

**MOZART**

I don't understand. There are just as many notes, Majesty, as are required. Neither more nor less.

**JOSEPH**

My dear fellow, 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**

Yes! yes! er, on the whole, yes, Majesty.

**MOZART**

(to Salieri)

But this is absurd!

**JOSEPH**

My dear, young man, don't take it too hard. Your work is ingenious. It's quality work. And there are simply too many notes, that's all. Cut a few and it will be perfect.

**MOZART**

Which few did you have in mind, Majesty?

Pause. General embarrassment.

**JOSEPH**

Well. There it is.

Into this uncomfortable scene bursts a sudden eruption of noise and Madame Weber floods onto the stage, followed by her daughters. All turn to look at this amazing spectacle.

**MADAME WEBER**

Wolfi! Wolfi, my dear!

She moves toward Mozart with arms outstretched in an absurd theatrical gesture, then sees the Emperor. She stares at him, mesmerized, her mouth open, unable even to curtsy.

**MADAME WEBER**

Oh!

Mozart moves forward quickly.

**MOZART**

Majesty, this is Madame Weber. She is my landlady.

**JOSEPH**

Enchanted, Madame.

**MADAME WEBER**

Oh, Sire! such an honour! And, and, and these are my dear daughters. This is Constanze. She is the fiancée of Herr Mozart.

Constanze curtsies. CU, of Cavalieri, astonished at the news. CU, of Salieri, watching her receive it.

**JOSEPH**

Really? How delightful. May I ask when you marry?

**MOZART**

Well - Well we haven't quite received my father's consent, Your Majesty. Not entirely. Not altogether.

He giggles uncomfortably.

**JOSEPH**

Excuse me, but how old are you?

**MOZART**

Twenty-six.

**JOSEPH**

Well, my advice is to marry this charming young lady and stay with us in Vienna.

**MADAME WEBER**

You see? You see? I've told him that, Your Majesty, but he won't listen to me.

Cavalieri is glaring at Mozart. Mozart looks hastily away from her.

**MADAME WEBER**

Oh, Your Majesty, you give such wonderful - such impeccable - such royal advice. I - I - May I?

She attempts to kiss the royal hand, but faints instead. The Emperor contemplates her prone body and steps back a pace.

**JOSEPH**

Well. There it is. Strack.

He nods pleasantly to all and leaves the stage, with his Chamberlain. All bow.

Cavalieri turns with a savage look at Mozart and leaves the stage the opposite way, to her dressing room, tossing her plumed head. Salieri watches. Mozart stays for a second, indecisive whether to follow the soprano or help Madame Weber.

**CONSTANZE**

(to Mozart)

Get some water!

He hurries away. The daughters gather around Madame Weber.

**INT. CAVALIERI'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S**

Katherina sits fuming at her mirror. A dresser is taking the pins out of her wig as she stares straight ahead of her. Mozart sticks his head round the door.

**MOZART**

Katherina! I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to write another aria for you. Something even more amazing for the second act. I have to get some water. Her mother is lying on the stage.

**CAVALIERI**

Don't bother!

**MOZART**

What?

**CAVALIERI**

Don't bother.

**MOZART**

I'll be right back.

He dashes off.

**INT. OPERA HOUSE STAGE - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S**

Constanze and Mozart make their way quickly through a crowd of actors in turbans and caftans, and stagehands carrying bits of the dismantled set of Seraglio. We see all the turmoil of backstage after a performance.

A fireman passes Mozart carrying a small bucket of water. Mozart snatches it from him and pushes his way through the crowd to Madame Weber, who still lies prone on the stage.

Mozart pushes through the crowd surrounding her and throws



water on her face. She is instantly revived by the shock.  
Constanze assists her to rise.

**CONSTANZE**

Are you all right?

Instead of being furious, Madame Weber smiles at them  
rapturously.

**MADAME WEBER**

Ah, what an evening! What a wise man  
we have for an Emperor. Oh, my  
children!

(with sudden, hard  
briskness)

Now I want you to write your father  
exactly what His Majesty said.

The activity continues to swirl around them.

**MOZART**

You should really go home now, Frau  
Weber. Your carriage must be waiting.

**MADAME WEBER**

But aren't you taking us?

**MOZART**

I have to talk to the singers.

**MADAME WEBER**

That's all right; we'll wait for  
you. Just don't take all night.

**INT. CAVALIERI'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S**

Cavaliere, still in costume, is marching up and down, very  
agitated.

**CAVALIERI**

Did you know? Had you heard?

**SALIERI**

What?

**CAVALIERI**

The marriage!

**SALIERI**

Well, what does it matter to you?

**CAVALIERI**

Nothing! He can marry who he pleases.  
I don't give a damn.

She catches him looking at her and tries to compose herself.

**CAVALIERI**

How was I? Tell me honestly.

**SALIERI**

You were sublime.

**CAVALIERI**

What did you think of the music?

**SALIERI**

Extremely clever.

**CAVALIERI**

Meaning you didn't like it.

Mozart comes in unexpectedly.

**MOZART**

Oh - excuse me!

**CAVALIERI**

Is her mother still lying on the floor?

**MOZART**

No, she's fine.

**CAVALIERI**

I'm so relieved.

She seats herself at her mirror and removes her wig.

**SALIERI**

Dear Mozart, my sincere congratulations.

**MOZART**

Did you like it, then?

**SALIERI**

How could I not?

**MOZART**

It really is the best music one can hear in Vienna today. Don't you agree?

**CAVALIERI**

Is she a good fuck?

**MOZART**

What??

**CAVALIERI**

I assume she's the virtuoso in that department. There can't be any other reason you'd marry someone like that.

Salieri looks astonished. There is a knock on the door.

**CAVALIERI**

Come in!

The door opens. Constanze enters.

**CONSTANZE**

Excuse me, Wolfi. Mama is not feeling very well. Can we leave now?

**MOZART**

Of course.

**CAVALIERI**

No, no, no, no. You can't take him away now. This is his night. Won't you introduce us, Wolfgang?

**MOZART**

Excuse us, Fraulein. Good night, Signore.

Mozart hurries Constanze out of the door. Cavalieri looks after them as they go, her voice breaking and rising out of control.

**CAVALIERI**

You really are full of surprises, aren't you? You are quite extraordinary, you little shit!

She turns and collapses, crying with rage, into Salieri's arms. We focus on him.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

At that moment I knew beyond any doubt. He'd had her. The Creature had had my darling girl.

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1820'S**

The old man speaks passionately to the priest.

**OLD SALIERI**

It was incomprehensible. What was God up to? Here I was denying all my natural lust in order to deserve God's gift and there was Mozart indulging his in all directions - even though engaged to be married! - and no rebuke at all! Was it possible I was being tested? Was God expecting me to offer forgiveness in the face of every offense, no matter how painful? That was very possible. All the same, why him? Why use Mozart to

teach me lessons in humility? My heart was filling up with such hatred for that little man. For the first time in my life I began to know really violent thoughts. I couldn't stop them.

**VOGLER**

Did you try?

**OLD SALIERI**

Every day. Sometimes for hours I would pray!

**INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY - 1780'S**

The young Salieri is kneeling in desperation before the Cross.

**SALIERI**

Please! Please! Send him away, back to Salzburg. For his sake as well as mine.

CU, Christ staring from the Cross.

**CUT BACK TO:**

**INT. AUDIENCE HALL - ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE - SALZBURG - DAY - 1780'S**

We see Leopold kneeling now not to the Cross but to Archbishop Colloredo, sitting impassively on his throne. Count Arco stands beside him. Leopold is a desperate, once-handsome man of sixty, now far too much the subservient courtier.

**COLLOREDO**

No! I won't have him back.

**LEOPOLD**

But he needs to be here in Salzburg, Your Grace. He needs me and he needs you. Your protection, your understanding.

**COLLOREDO**

Hardly.

**LEOPOLD**

Oh sir, yes! He's about to make the worst mistake of his life. Some little Viennese slut is trying to trick him into marriage. I know my son. He is too simple to see the trap - and there is no one there who really cares for him.

**COLLOREDO**

I'm not surprised. Money seems to be more important to him than loyalty or friendship. He has sold himself to Vienna. Let Vienna look out for him.

**LEOPOLD**

Sir -

**COLLOREDO**

Your son is an unprincipled, spoiled, conceited brat.

**LEOPOLD**

Yes, sir, that's the truth. But don't blame him. The fault is mine. I was too indulgent with him. But not again. Never again, I promise! I implore you - let me bring him back here. I'll make him give his word to serve you faithfully.

**COLLOREDO**

And how will you make him keep it?

**LEOPOLD**

Oh, sir, he's never disobeyed me in anything. Please, Your Grace, give him one more chance.

**COLLOREDO**

You have leave to try.

**LEOPOLD**

Oh, Your Grace - I thank Your Grace!  
I thank you!

In deepest gratitude he kisses the Archbishop's hand. He motions Leopold to rise. We hear the first dark fortissimo chord which begins the Overture to Don Giovanni: the theme associated with the character of the Commendatore.

**LEOPOLD (V.O.)**

My dear son.

The second fortissimo chord sounds.

**INT. A BAROQUE CHURCH - DAY - 1780'S**

We see a huge CU, of Mozart's head, looking front and down, as if reading his father's letter. We hear Leopold's voice over this image, no longer whining and anxious, but impressive.

**LEOPOLD (V.O.)**

I write to you with urgent news. I am coming to Vienna. Take no further

steps toward marriage until we meet.  
You are too gullible to see your own  
danger. As you honour the father who  
has devoted his entire life to yours,  
do as I bid, and await my coming.

**MOZART**

I will.

The camera pulls back to see that he is in fact kneeling beside Constanze. A PRIEST faces them. Behind them are Madame Weber, Josefa and Sophie Weber, and a very few others. Among them, a merry looking lady in bright clothes: the BARONESS WALDSTADTEN.

**PRIEST**

And will you, Constanze Weber, take  
this man, Wolfgang to be your lawful  
husband?

**CONSTANZE**

I will.

**PRIEST**

I now pronounce you man and wife.

The opening kyrie of the great Mass in C Minor is heard. Mozart and Constanze kiss. They are in tears. Madame Weber and her daughters look on approvingly. The music swells and continues under the following:

**INT. A ROOM IN LEOPOLD'S HOUSE - SALZBURG - NIGHT - 1780'S**

There is a view of a castle in background. Leopold sits alone in his room. He is reading a letter from Wolfgang. At his feet are his trunks, half-packed for the journey he will not now take. We hear Mozart's voice reading the following letter and we see, as the camera roves around the room, mementos of the young prodigy's early life: the little forte-piano made for him; the little violin made for him; an Order presented to him. We see a little starling in a wicker cage. And we see portraits of the boy on the walls, concluding with the familiar family portrait of Wolfgang and his sister Nannerl seated at the keyboard with Leopold standing, and the picture of their mother on the wall behind them.

**MOZART (V.O.)**

Most beloved father, it is done. Do not blame me that I did not wait to see your dear face. I knew you would have tried to dissuade me from my truest happiness and I could not have borne it. Your every word is precious to me. Remember how you have always told me Vienna is the City of Musicians. To conquer here is to conquer Europe! With my wife I

can do it. I vow I will become regular in my habits and productive as never before. She is wonderful, Papa, and I know that you will love her. And one day soon when I am a wealthy man, you will come and live with us, and we will be so happy. I long for that day, best of Papas, and kiss your hand a hundred thousand times.

The music of the Mass fades as Leopold crumples the letter in his hand.

**EXT. THE IMPERIAL GARDENS - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S**

Salieri stands waiting, hat in hand. Beside him stands a royal servant. Behind him, gardeners are glimpsed tending the shrubs and bushes along a grassy ride. Down this ride are seen cantering two people on horseback: the Emperor Joseph and his niece, the PRINCESS ELIZABETH. They are mounted on glossy horses. The Princess rides side-saddle. Running beside her is a panting groom. The Emperor rides elegantly; his niece, a dumpy little Hapsburg girl of sixteen, like a sack of potatoes. As they draw level with Salieri they stop, and the groom holds the head of the Princess' horse. Salieri bows respectfully.

**JOSEPH**

Good morning, Court Composer. This is my niece, the Princess Elizabeth.

**SALIERI**

Your Highness.

Out of breath, the Princess nods nervously.

**JOSEPH**

She has asked me to advise her on a suitable musical instructor. I think I've come up with an excellent idea.

He smiles at Salieri.

**SALIERI**

Oh, Your Majesty, it would be such a tremendous honour!

**JOSEPH**

I'm thinking about Herr Mozart. What is your view?

Salieri's face falls, almost imperceptibly.

**SALIERI**

An interesting idea, Majesty. But -

**JOSEPH**

Yes?

**SALIERI**

You already commissioned an opera from Mozart.

**JOSEPH**

And the result satisfies.

**SALIERI**

Yes, of course. My concern is to protect you from any suspicion of favouritism.

**JOSEPH**

Ah-ha. Favouritism. But I so want Mozart.

**SALIERI**

I'm sure there is a way, Majesty. Some kind of a little contest. I could perhaps put together a small Committee, and I could see to it naturally that it will select according to Your Majesty's wishes.

**JOSEPH**

You please me, Court Composer. A very clever idea.

**SALIERI**

(bowing)

Sire.

**JOSEPH**

Well. There it is.

He rides on. The groom releases her horse's head, and runs on after the Princess.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. CHAMBERLAIN VON STRACK'S STUDY - DAY - 1780'S**

Von Strack sits stiffly behind his gilded desk. Mozart stands before him, trembling with anger.

**MOZART**

What is this, Herr Chamberlain?

**VON STRACK**

What is what?

**MOZART**

Why do I have to submit samples of my work to some stupid committee?



Just to teach a sixteen-year-old girl.

**VON STRACK**

Because His Majesty wishes it.

**MOZART**

Is the Emperor angry with me?

**VON STRACK**

On the contrary.

**MOZART**

Then why doesn't he simply appoint me to the post?

**VON STRACK**

Mozart, you are not the only composer in Vienna.

**MOZART**

No, but I'm the best.

**VON STRACK**

A little modesty would suit you better.

**MOZART**

Who is on this committee?

**VON STRACK**

Kapellmeister Bonno, Count Orsini-Rosenberg and Court Composer Salieri.

**MOZART**

Naturally, the Italians! Of course! Always the Italians!

**VON STRACK**

Mozart -

**MOZART**

They hate my music. It terrifies them. The only sound Italians understand is banality. Tonic and dominant, tonic and dominant, from here to Resurrection!

(singing angrily)

Ba-ba! Ba-ba! Ba-ba! Ba-ba! Anything else is morbid.

**VON STRACK**

Mozart -

**MOZART**

Show them one interesting modulation and they faint. Ohime! Morbidezza!

Morbidezza! Italians are musical idiots and you want them to judge my music!

**VON STRACK**

Look, young man, the issue is simple. If you want this post, you must submit your stuff in the same way as all your colleagues.

**MOZART**

Must I? Well, I won't! I tell you straight: I will not!

**CUT TO:**

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S**

The room is very small and untidy. Constanze is marching up and down it, upset. Mozart is lying on the bed.

**CONSTANZE**

I think you're mad! You're really mad!

**MOZART**

Oh, leave me alone.

**CONSTANZE**

One royal pupil and the whole of Vienna will come flocking. We'd be set up for life!

**MOZART**

They'll come anyway. They love me here.

**CONSTANZE**

No, they will not. I know how things work in this city.

**MOZART**

Oh yes? You always know everything.

**CONSTANZE**

Well, I'm not borrowing any more money from my mother, and that's that!

**MOZART**

You borrowed money from your mother?

**CONSTANZE**

Yes!

**MOZART**

Well, don't do that again!

**CONSTANZE**

How are we going to live, Wolfi? Do you want me to go into the streets and beg?

**MOZART**

Don't be stupid.

**CONSTANZE**

All they want to see is your work. What's wrong with that?

**MOZART**

Shut up! Just shut up! I don't need them.

**CONSTANZE**

This isn't pride. It's sheer stupidity!

She glares at him, almost in tears.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SALIERI'S MUSIC ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON - 1780'S**

Salieri is giving a lesson to a girl student, who is singing the Italian art song, Caro Mio Ben.

There is a knock on the door.

**SALIERI**

Yes.

A SERVANT enters.

**SERVANT**

Excuse me, sir, there is a lady who insists on talking to you.

**SALIERI**

Who is she?

**SERVANT**

She didn't say. But she says it's urgent.

**SALIERI**

(to the pupil)  
Excuse me, my dear.

Salieri goes into the salon.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. THE SALON - LATE AFTERNOON - 1780'S**

Constanze stands, closely veiled, holding a portfolio stuffed with manuscripts. The singing lesson ends, with two chords on the instrument. Salieri enters the salon. Constanze drops him a shy curtsy.

**CONSTANZE**

Excellency!

**SALIERI**

Madame. How can I help you?

Shyly, she unveils.

**SALIERI**

Frau Mozart?

**CONSTANZE**

That's right, Your Excellency. I've come on behalf of my husband. I'm - I'm bringing some samples of his work so he can be considered for the royal appointment.

**SALIERI**

How charming. But why did he not come himself?

**CONSTANZE**

He's terribly busy, sir.

**SALIERI**

I understand.

He takes the portfolio and puts it on a table.

**SALIERI**

I will look at them, of course, the moment I can. It will be an honour. Please give him my warmest.

**CONSTANZE**

Would it be too much trouble, sir, to ask you to look at them now? While I wait.

**SALIERI**

I'm afraid I'm not at leisure this very moment. Just leave them with me. I assure you they will be quite safe.

**CONSTANZE**

I - I really cannot do that, Your Excellency. You see, he doesn't know I'm here.

**SALIERI**

Really?

**CONSTANZE**

My husband is a proud man, sir. He would be furious if he knew I'd come.

**SALIERI**

Then he didn't send you?

**CONSTANZE**

No, sir. This is my own idea.

**SALIERI**

I see.

**CONSTANZE**

Sir, we really need this job. We're desperate. My husband spends far more than he can ever earn. I don't mean he's lazy - he's not at all - he works all day long. It's just! he's not practical. Money simply slips through his fingers, it's really ridiculous, Your Excellency. I know you help musicians. You're famous for it. Give him just this one post. We'd be forever indebted!

A short pause.

**SALIERI**

Let me offer you some refreshment. Do you know what these are?

He indicates a dish piled high with glazed chestnuts.

**SALIERI**

Cappezzoli di Venere. Nipples of Venus. Roman chestnuts in brandied sugar. Won't you try one? They're quite surprising.

He offers her the dish. She takes one and puts it in her mouth. He watches carefully.

**CONSTANZE**

Oh! They're wonderful.

He takes one himself. We notice on his finger a heavy gold signet-ring.

**CONSTANZE**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

**SALIERI**

Don't keep calling me that. It puts

me at such a distance. I was not born a Court Composer, you know. I'm from a small town, just like your husband.

He smiles at her. She takes another chestnut.

**SALIERI**

Are you sure you can't leave that music, and come back again? I have other things you might like.

**CONSTANZE**

That's very tempting, but it's impossible, I'm afraid. Wolfi would be frantic if he found those were missing. You see, they're all originals.

**SALIERI**

Originals?

**CONSTANZE**

Yes.

A pause. He puts out his hand and takes up the portfolio from the table. He opens it. He looks at the music. He is puzzled.

**SALIERI**

These are originals?

**CONSTANZE**

Yes, sir. He doesn't make copies.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

The old man faces the Priest.

**OLD SALIERI**

Astounding! It was actually beyond belief. These were first and only drafts of music yet they showed no corrections of any kind. Not one. Do you realize what that meant?

Vogler stares at him.

**OLD SALIERI**

He'd simply put down music already finished in his head. Page after page of it, as if he was just taking dictation. And music finished as no music is ever finished.

**INT. SALIERI'S SALON - LATE AFTERNOON - 1780'S**

CU, The manuscript in Mozart's handwriting. The music begins to sound under the following:

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

Displace one note and there would be diminishment. Displace one phrase, and the structure would fall. It was clear to me. That sound I had heard in the Archbishop's palace had been no accident. Here again was the very voice of God! I was staring through the cage of those meticulous ink-strokes at an absolute, inimitable beauty.

The music swells. What we now hear is an amazing collage of great passages from Mozart's music, ravishing to Salieri and to us. The Court Composer, oblivious to Constanze, who sits happily chewing chestnuts, her mouth covered in sugar, walks around and around his salon, reading the pages and dropping them on the floor when he is done with them. We see his agonized and wondering face: he shudders as if in a rough and tumbling sea; he experiences the point where beauty and great pain coalesce. More pages fall than he can read, scattering across the floor in a white cascade, as he circles the room.

Finally, we hear the tremendous Qui Tollis from the Mass in C Minor. It seems to break over him like a wave and, unable to bear any more of it, he slams the portfolio shut. Instantly, the music breaks off, reverberating in his head. He stands shaking, staring wildly. Constanze gets up, perplexed.

**CONSTANZE**

Is it no good?

A pause.

**SALIERI**

It is miraculous.

**CONSTANZE**

Oh yes. He's really proud of his work.

Another pause.

**CONSTANZE**

So, will you help him?

Salieri tries to recover himself.

**SALIERI**

Tomorrow night I dine with the

Emperor. One word from me and the post is his.

**CONSTANZE**

Oh, thank you, sir!

Overjoyed, she stops and kisses his hand. He raises her - and then clasps her to him clumsily. She pushes herself away.

**SALIERI**

Come back tonight.

**CONSTANZE**

Tonight?

**SALIERI**

Alone.

**CONSTANZE**

What for?

**SALIERI**

Some service deserves service in return. No?

**CONSTANZE**

What do you mean?

**SALIERI**

Isn't it obvious?

They stare at one another: Constanze in total disbelief.

**SALIERI**

It's a post all Vienna seeks. If you want it for your husband, come tonight.

**CONSTANZE**

But! I'm a married woman!

**SALIERI**

Then don't. It's up to you. Not to be vague, that is the price.

He glares at her.

**SALIERI**

Yes.

He rings a silver bell for a servant and abruptly leaves the room. Constanze stares after him, horrified.

The servant enters. Shocked and stunned, Constanze goes down on her knees and starts picking up the music from the floor.

**CUT TO:**



**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

CU, Father Vogler, horrified.

**OLD SALIERI**

Yes, Father. Yes! So much for my vow of chastity. What did it matter? Good, patient, hard-working, chaste - what did it matter? Had goodness made me a good composer? I realized it absolutely then - that moment: goodness is nothing in the furnace of art. And I was nothing to God.

**VOGLER**

(crying out)  
You cannot say that!

**OLD SALIERI**

No? Was Mozart a good man?

**VOGLER**

God's ways are not yours. And you are not here to question Him. Offer him the salt of penitence. He will give you back the bread of eternal life. He is all merciful. That is all you need to know.

**OLD SALIERI**

All I ever wanted was to sing to Him. That's His doing, isn't it? He gave me that longing - then made me mute. Why? Tell me that. If He didn't want me to serve Him with music, why implant the desire, like a lust in my body, then deny me the talent? Go on, tell me! Speak for Him!

**VOGLER**

My son, no one can speak for God.

**OLD SALIERI**

Oh? I thought you did so every day. So speak now. Answer me!

**VOGLER**

I do not claim to unravel the mysteries. I treasure them. As you should.

**OLD SALIERI**

(impatiently)  
Oh yes, yes, yes, yes, yes! Always the same stale answers!  
(intimately to the

priest)  
There is no God of Mercy, Father.  
Just a God of torture.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S**

Salieri sits at his desk, staring up at the cross.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

Evening came to that room. I sat there not knowing whether the girl would return or not. I prayed as I'd never prayed before.

**SALIERI**

Dear God, enter me now. Fill me with one piece of true music. One piece with your breath in it, so I know that you love me. Please. Just one. Show me one sign of your favour, and I will show mine to Mozart and his wife. I will get him the royal position, and if she comes, I'll receive her with all respect and send her home in joy. Enter me! Enter me! Please! Te imploro.

Long, long silence. Salieri stares at the cross. Christ stares back at him impassively. Finally in this silence we hear a faint knocking at the door. Salieri stirs himself. A servant appears.

**SERVANT**

That lady is back, sir.

**SALIERI**

Show her in. Then go to bed.

The Servant bows and leaves. We follow him through:

**INT. MUSIC ROOM IN SALIERI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - 1780'S**

The Servant crosses it and enters:

**INT. SALON IN SALIERI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - 1780'S**

Constanze is sitting on an upright chair, veiled as before, the portfolio of music on her lap. Through the far door leading from the hall, another servant is peering at her. The first servant joins him and shuts the door on the girl, leaving her alone.

We stay with her. The clock ticks on the mantelpiece. We hear an old carriage pass in the street below. Nervously she lifts her veil and looks about her.

Suddenly Salieri appears from the music room. He is pale and very tight. They regard each other. She smiles and rises to greet him, affecting a relaxed and warm manner, as if to put him at his ease.

**CONSTANZE**

Well, I'm here. My husband has gone to a concert. He didn't think I would enjoy it.

A pause.

**CONSTANZE**

I do apologize for this afternoon. I behaved like a silly girl. Where shall we go?

**SALIERI**

What?

**CONSTANZE**

Should we stay here? It's a charming room. I love these candlesticks. Were they here earlier? I didn't notice them I suppose I was too nervous.

As she talks, she extinguishes the candles in a pair of Venetian candelabra and subsequently other candles around the room.

**CONSTANZE**

Wolfgang was given some candlesticks by King George in England, but they were only wood. Oh, excuse me. Let's not talk about him. What do you think of this? It's real lace. Brussels.

She turns and takes off her shawl.

**CONSTANZE**

Well, it's much too good for every day. I keep saying to Wolfi, don't be so extravagant. Presents are lovely, but we can't afford them. It doesn't do any good. The more I tell him, the more he spends. Oh, excuse me! There I go again.

She picks up the portfolio.

**CONSTANZE**

Do you still want to look at this? Or don't we need to bother anymore? I imagine we don't, really.

She looks at him inquiringly, and drops the portfolio on the floor; pages of music pour out of it. Instantly we hear a massive chord, and the great Qui Tollis from the Mass in C Minor fills the room. To its grand and weighty sound, Constanze starts to undress, watched by the horrified Salieri. Between him and her, music is an active presence, hurting and baffling him. He opens his mouth in distress. The music pounds in his head. The candle flickers over her as she removes her clothes and prepares for his embrace. Suddenly he cries out.

**SALIERI**

Go! Go! Go!

He snatches up the bell and shakes it frantically, not stopping until the two servants we saw earlier appear at the door. The music stops abruptly. They stare at the appalled and frightened Constanze, who is desperately trying to cover her nakedness.

**SALIERI**

Show this woman out!

Constanze hurls herself at him.

**CONSTANZE**

You shit! You shit! You rotten shit!

He seizes her wrists and thrusts her back. Then he leaves the room quickly, slamming the door behind him. Constanze turns and sees the two servants goggling at her in the room.

**CONSTANZE**

What are you staring at?

Wildly, she picks up the candelabrum and throws it at them. It shatters on the floor.

**INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S**

CU, Salieri standing, his eyes shut, shaking in distress. He opens them and sees Christ across the room, staring at him from the wall.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

From now on, we are enemies, You and  
**I!**

**CUT TO:**

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

The old man is reliving the experience. Vogler looks at him, horrified.

**OLD SALIERI**

Because You will not enter me, with

all my need for you; because You  
scorn my attempts at virtue; because  
You choose for Your instrument a  
boastful, lustful, smutty infantile  
boy and give me for reward only the  
ability to recognize the Incarnation;  
because You are unjust, unfair,  
unkind, I will block You! I swear  
it! I will hinder and harm Your  
creature on earth as far as I am  
able. I will ruin Your Incarnation.

**CUT BACK TO:**

**INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S**

CU, the fireplace. In it lies the olivewood Christ on the  
cross, burning.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

What use after all is Man, if not to  
teach God His lessons?

The cross flames up and disintegrates. Salieri stares at it.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S**

The front door bursts open. Mozart stumbles in, followed by  
EMMANUEL SCHIKANEDER, three young actresses, and another  
man, all fairly drunk. Schikaneder (who appears everywhere  
accompanied by young girls) is a large, fleshy, extravagant  
man of about thirty-five.

**MOZART**

Stanzi! Stanzi! Stanzi-Manzi!

The others laugh.

**MOZART**

Sssh!

**SCHIKANEDER**

(imitating Mozart)  
Stanzi-Manzi-Banzi-Wanzi!

**MOZART**

Sssh! Stay here.

He walks unsteadily to the bedroom door and opens it.

**SCHIKANEDER**

(to the girls, very  
tipsy)  
Sssh! You're dishgrashful!

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S**

Constanze lies in bed, her back turned to her husband, who comes into the room and shuts the door.

**MOZART**

(playfully)

Stanzi? How's my mouse? Mouse-ouse?  
I'm back - puss-wuss is back!

She turns around abruptly. She looks dreadful; her eyes red with weeping. Mozart is shocked.

**MOZART**

Stanzi!

He approaches the bed and sits on it. Immediately she starts crying again, desperately.

**MOZART**

What's the matter? What is it?  
Stanzi!

He holds her and she clings to him in a fierce embrace, crying a flood of tears.

**MOZART**

Stop it now. Stop it. I've brought  
some friends to meet you. They're  
next door waiting. Do we have anything  
to eat? They're all starving.

**CONSTANZE**

Tell them to go away. I don't want  
to see anybody.

**MOZART**

What's the matter with you?

**CONSTANZE**

Tell them to go!

**MOZART**

Sssh. What is it? Tell me.

**CONSTANZE**

No!

**MOZART**

Yes!

**CONSTANZE**

I love you! I love you!

She starts crying again, throwing her arms around his neck.

**CONSTANZE**

I love you. Please stay with me. I'm  
frightened.

**INT. THE ROYAL PALACE - DINING ROOM - DAY - 1780'S**

Joseph sits eating. A butler serves him goat's milk to drink.  
Joseph is holding a memorandum from Salieri in his hand.  
Salieri stands before him.

**JOSEPH**

I don't think you understand me,  
Court Composer.

**SALIERI**

Majesty, I did. Believe me, it was a  
most agonizing. decision. But finally,  
I simply could not recommend Herr  
Mozart.

**JOSEPH**

Why not?

**SALIERI**

Well, Sire, I made some inquiries in  
a routine way. I was curious to know  
why he had so few pupils. It is rather  
alarming.

**JOSEPH**

Oh?

With a gesture Joseph dismisses the butler, who bows and  
leaves the room.

**SALIERI**

Majesty, I don't like to talk against  
a fellow musician.

**JOSEPH**

Of course not.

**SALIERI**

I have to tell you, Mozart is not  
entirely to be trusted alone with  
young ladies.

**JOSEPH**

Really?

**SALIERI**

As a matter of fact, one of my own  
pupils - a very young singer - told  
me she was - er - well!

**JOSEPH**

Yes?

**SALIERI**

Molested, Majesty. Twice, in the course of the same lesson.

A pause.

**JOSEPH**

Ah-ha. Well. There it is.

**INT. SALIERI'S HOUSE - STAIRCASE - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S**

Salieri has just returned from the palace and is coming up the staircase. He is met by his servant.

**SERVANT**

Sir, there is a Herr Mozart waiting for you in the salon.

Salieri is plainly alarmed.

**SALIERI**

What does he want?

**SERVANT**

He didn't say, sir. I told him I didn't know when you would be back, but he insisted on waiting.

**SALIERI**

Come with me. And stay in the room.

He mounts the stairs.

**INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - SALON - DAY - 1780'S**

Mozart is waiting for Salieri, holding a portfolio. Salieri approaches him nervously. Mozart stands not belligerently, but humbly.

**SALIERI**

Herr Mozart, what brings you here?

**MOZART**

Your Excellency, you requested some specimens of my work. Here they are. I don't have to tell you how much I need your help. I truly appreciate your looking at these. I have pressures on me - financial pressures. As you know, I'm a married man now.

**SALIERI**

So you are. How is your pretty wife?

**MOZART**

She is well. She is - well, actually, I'm about to become a father! She



only told me last night. You are the first to know.

**SALIERI**

I'm flattered. And congratulations to you, of course.

**MOZART**

So you see, this post is very important to me right now.

Salieri looks at him in distress.

**SALIERI**

Why didn't you come to me yesterday, Mozart? This is a most painful situation. Yesterday I could have helped you. Today, I can't.

**MOZART**

Why? Here is the music. It's here. I am submitting it humbly. Isn't that what you wanted?

**SALIERI**

I have just come from the palace. The post has been filled.

**MOZART**

Filled? That's impossible! They haven't even seen my work. I need this post. Please, can't you help me? Please!

**SALIERI**

My dear Mozart, there is no one in the world I would rather help, but now it is too late.

**MOZART**

Whom did they choose?

**SALIERI**

Herr Sommer.

**MOZART**

Sommer? Herr Sommer? But the man's a fool! He's a total mediocrity.

**SALIERI**

No, no, no: he has yet to achieve mediocrity.

**MOZART**

But I can't lose this post, I simply can't! Excellency, please. Let's go to the palace, and you can explain

to the Emperor that Herr Sommer is an awful choice. He could actually do musical harm to the Princess!

**SALIERI**

An implausible idea. Between you and me, no one in the world could do musical harm to the Princess Elizabeth.

Mozart chuckles delightedly. Salieri offers him a glass of white dessert and a spoon. Mozart takes it absently and goes on talking.

**MOZART**

Look, I must have pupils. Without pupils I can't manage.

**SALIERI**

You don't mean to tell me you are living in poverty?

**MOZART**

No, but I'm broke. I'm always broke. I don't know why.

**SALIERI**

It has been said, my friend, that you are inclined to live somewhat above your means.

**MOZART**

How can anyone say that? We have no cook, no maid. We have no footman. Nothing at all!

**SALIERI**

How is that possible? You give concerts, don't you? I hear they are quite successful.

**MOZART**

They're stupendously successful. You can't get a seat. The only problem is none will hire me. They all want to hear me play, but they won't let me teach their daughters. As if I was some kind of fiend. I'm not a fiend!

**SALIERI**

Of course not.

**MOZART**

Do you have a daughter?

**SALIERI**

I'm afraid not.

**MOZART**

Well, could you lend me some money till you have one? Then I'll teach her for free. That's a promise. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm being silly. Papa's right - I should put a padlock on my mouth. Seriously, is there any chance you could manage a loan? Only for six months, eight at most. After that I'll be the richest man in Vienna. I'll pay you back double. Anything. Name your terms. I'm not joking. I'm working on something that's going to explode like a bomb all over Europe!

**SALIERI**

Ah, how exciting! Tell me more.

**MOZART**

I'd better not. It's a bit of a secret.

**SALIERI**

Come, come, Mozart; I'm interested. Truly.

**MOZART**

Actually, it's a big secret. Oh, this is delicious! What is it?

**SALIERI**

Cream cheese mixed with granulated sugar and suffused with rum. Crema al Mascarpone.

**MOZART**

Ah. Italian?

**SALIERI**

Forgive me. We all have patriotic feelings of some kind.

**MOZART**

Two thousand, two hundred florins is all I need. A hundred? Fifty?

**SALIERI**

What exactly are you working on?

**MOZART**

I can't say. Really

**SALIERI**

I don't think you should become known

in Vienna as a debtor, Mozart.  
However, I know a very distinguished  
gentleman I could recommend to you.  
And he has a daughter. Will that do?

**INT. MICHAEL SCHLUMBERG'S HOUSE - MORNING - 1780'S**

Hysterical barking and howling. The hall is full of dogs, at least five, all jumping up and dashing about and making a terrific racket. Mozart, dandified in a new coat and a plumed hat for the occasion, has arrived to teach at the house of a prosperous merchant, MICHAEL SCHLUMBERG. Bluff, friendly and coarse-looking, he stands in his hall amidst the leaping and barking animals, greeting Mozart.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Quiet! Quiet! Quiet! Down there,  
damn you.

(to Mozart)

Welcome to you. Pay no attention,  
they're impossible. Stop it, you  
willful things! Come this way. Just  
ignore them. They're perfectly  
harmless, just willful. I treat them  
just like my own children.

**MOZART**

And which one of them do you want me  
to teach?

**SCHLUMBERG**

What? Ha-ha! That's funny - I like  
it. Which one, eh? You're a funny  
fellow.

(shouting)

Hannah! Come this way.

He leads Mozart through the throng of dogs into a salon  
furnished with comfortable middle-class taste.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Hannah!

FRAU SCHLUMBERG appears: an anxious woman in middle life.

**SCHLUMBERG**

(to Mozart)

You won't be teaching this one either.  
She's my wife.

**MOZART**

(bowing)

Madame.

**SCHLUMBERG**

This is Herr Mozart, my dear. The  
young man Herr Salieri recommended

to teach our Gertrude. Where is she?

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

Upstairs.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Gertrude!

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

You can't be Herr Mozart!

**MOZART**

I'm afraid I am.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Of course, it's him. Who do you think it is?

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

I've heard about you for ages! I thought you must be an old man.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Gertrude!

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

It's such an honour for us to have you here, Herr Mozart. And for Gertrude.

**SCHLUMBERG**

People who know say the girl's got talent. You must judge for yourself. If you think she stinks, say so.

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

Michael, please! I'm sure you will find her most willing, Herr Mozart. She's really very excited. She's been preparing all morning.

**MOZART**

Really?

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

Ah, now! Here she comes.

GERTRUDE SCHLUMBERG appears in the doorway: an awkward girl of fifteen in her best dress, her hair primped and curled. She is exceedingly nervous.

**MOZART**

Good morning, Fraulein Schlumberg.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Strudel, this is Herr Mozart. Say good morning.

Gertrude giggles instead.

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

(to Mozart)

Perhaps a little refreshment first?  
A little coffee, or a little  
chocolate?

**MOZART**

I'd like a little wine, if you have  
it.

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

Wine?

**SCHLUMBERG**

Quite right. He's going to need it.  
(calling and clapping  
his hands)

Klaus! A bottle of wine. Prestissimo!  
Now let's go to it. I've been waiting  
all day for this.

He leads the way into:

**INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY - 1780'S**

A forte-piano is open and waiting. All the dogs follow him.  
After them come Mozart Frau and Fraulein Schlumberg. To  
Mozart's dismay, husband and wife seat themselves quite  
formally on a little narrow sofa, side by side.

**SCHLUMBERG**

(To the dogs)

Now sit down all of you and behave.  
Zeman, Mandi, absolutely quiet!

(to a young beagle)

Especially you, Dudelsachs - not one  
sound from you.

The dogs settle at their feet. Husband and wife smile  
encouragingly at each other.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Come on, then. Up and at it!

Mozart gestures to the music bench. Reluctantly, the girl  
sits at the instrument. Mozart sits beside her.

**MOZART**

Now, please play me something. Just  
to give me an idea. Anything will  
do.

**GERTRUDE**

(to parents)

I don't want you to stay.

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

That's all right, dear. Just go ahead,  
as if we weren't here.

**GERTRUDE**

But you are here.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Never mind, Strudel. It's part of  
music, getting used to an audience.  
Aren't I right, Herr Mozart?

**MOZART**

Well, yes! on the whole. I suppose.  
(to Gertrude)  
How long have you been playing,  
Fraulein?

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

Just one year.

**MOZART**

Who was your teacher?

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

I was. But she quite outgrew the  
little I could show her.

**MOZART**

Thank you, Madame.  
(to Gertrude)  
Come on now - courage. Play me  
something you know.

In response the wretched girl just stares down at the keyboard  
without playing a note. An awkward pause.

**MOZART**

Perhaps it would be better if we  
were left alone. I think we're both  
a little shy.

Husband and wife look at each other.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Nonsense. Strudel's not shy. She's  
just willful! You give into her now,  
you'll be sorry later. Strudel -  
play.

Silence. The girl sits unmoving. Schlumberg bellows:

**SCHLUMBERG**

I said play!

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

Michael!

**MOZART**

Perhaps if I were to play a little first, it might encourage the Fraulein.

(to the girl)

Why don't you let me try the instrument? All right?

Suddenly the girl rises. Mozart smiles at the parents. They smile nervously back. Mozart slides along the bench, raises his hands and preludes over the keys. Instantly a dog howls loudly. Startled, Mozart stops. Schlumberg leaps to his feet and goes over to the beagle.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Stop that, Dudelsachs! Stop it at once!

(to Mozart)

Don't let him disturb you. He'll be all right. He's just a little willful too. Please, please - play. I beg you.

Mozart resumes playing. This time it is a lively piece, perhaps the Presto Finale from the K. 450. The dog howls immediately.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Stop it! STOP!

Mozart stops.

**SCHLUMBERG**

No, not you. I was talking to the dog. You keep playing. It's most important. He always howls when he hears music. We've got to break them of the habit. Play, please. Please!

Amazed, Mozart starts to play the Rondo again. The dog howls louder.

**SCHLUMBERG**

That's it. Now keep going, just keep going.

(to the beagle)

Now you stop that noise, Dudelsachs, you stop it this instant! This instant, do you hear me? Keep going, Herr Mozart, that's it. Go on, go on!

Mozart plays on. Suddenly the dog falls silent. Schlumberg smiles broadly.



**SCHLUMBERG**

Good, good, good! Very good dog!  
Very, very good Dudelsachs.  
(to his wife, snapping  
his fingers)  
Quick, quick, dear, bring his biscuit.

The wife scurries to get a jar of biscuits. A servant brings in an open bottle of wine and a full glass on a tray. He puts it down beside Mozart as Schlumberg addresses the silent dog with deepest affection.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Now guess who's going to get a nice  
reward? Clever, clever Dudi.

He gives the biscuit to the dog who swallows it greedily. Mozart stops playing and stands up.

**SCHLUMBERG**

It's a miracle, Herr Mozart!

**MOZART**

(barely controlling  
himself)  
Well, I'm a good teacher. The next  
time you wish me to instruct another  
of your dogs, please let me know.  
Goodbye, Fraulein, goodbye, Madame!  
goodbye, Sir!

He bows to them and leaves the room. They look after him in puzzled astonishment.

**FRAU SCHLUMBERG**

What a strange young man.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Yes. He is a little strange.

**EXT. A BUSY STREET IN VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S**

A cheerful scene. We see Mozart strutting and beaming, making his way through the crowd of porters, carriers and hawkers, sellers of sausages and pastries, vendors of hats and ribbons. Horses and carriage clatter past him. His mood is best expressed by a bubbling version of Non piu Andrai played on the forte-piano.

Still in the same mood, he enters the door of his own house.

**INT. MOZART'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY - 1780'S**

Suddenly, he stops. He looks up the stairs. The grim opening chords from the Overture to Don Giovanni cut across the march from Figaro. What he sees, looking up the stairs, is a

menacing figure in a long, grey cape and dark grey hat, standing on the landing. The light comes from behind the figure so that we see only its silhouette as it unfolds its arms towards Mozart in an alarming gesture of possession. It takes a beat in which the air of sinister mystery is held before Mozart realizes who it is. Then, as the music continues, he hastily sets down the bottle of wine and rushes joyfully up the stairs and hurls himself into the figure's arms.

**MOZART**

Papa! PAPA!

Both men embrace. The music slowly fades.

**INT. MOZART'S LIVING ROOM - DAY - 1780'S**

A cramped, low-ceilinged little room which nobody has tidied for ages. We see music lying everywhere. Also there are many empty wine bottles; musical instruments - among them a mandolin, a viola, a forte-piano with the black and white keys reversed - books and abandoned plates of food.

Mozart clasps his father's arms. Leopold is now seen as an aging, travel-stained man in clothes that need repair. His face is lined, and he is obviously not in perfect health.

**MOZART**

Why are you here?

**LEOPOLD**

Am I not welcome?

**MOZART**

Of course, welcome! Welcome ten thousand times. Papa! my Papa!

He kisses his hands.

**LEOPOLD**

You're very thin. Does she not feed you, this wife of yours?

Mozart ducks away and fetches his father's bags from the landing.

**MOZART**

Feed? Well, of course she feeds me. She stuffs me like a goose all day long. She's the best cook in the world. I mean, since Mama. Just wait, you'll see.

**LEOPOLD**

Is she not here?

**MOZART**

I don't know. Stanzi? Stanzi!

Leopold looks about him at the mess in the room.

**LEOPOLD**

Do you always live like this?

**MOZART**

Oh, yes. Oh, I mean no - not exactly like this. I mean today - just today, Stanzi - I remember now. She had to go - yes! She had to help her mother. Yes, she's like that. Her mother's a very sweet woman, you'll see.

He carries the bag across the room and opens the door of the bedroom. Constanze lies in bed. She sits up, startled.

**MOZART**

Oh! I didn't know you were home.  
Stanzi, this is my father.

Constanze, who looks ill and tired, stares at Leopold.  
Leopold stares back from the doorway.

**MOZART**

We'll wait, we'll wait. Why don't you get up now, darling?

He closes the door again.

**MOZART**

She's very tired, poor creature.  
You know me: I'm a real pig. It's not so easy cleaning up after me.

**LEOPOLD**

Don't you have a maid?

**MOZART**

Oh we could, if we wanted to, but Stanzi won't hear of it. She wants to do everything herself.

**LEOPOLD**

How is your financial situation?

**MOZART**

It couldn't be better.

**LEOPOLD**

That's not what I hear.

**MOZART**

What do you mean? It's wonderful.  
Really, it's - it's marvelous! People love me here.

**LEOPOLD**

They say you're in debt.

**MOZART**

Who? Who says that? Now that's a malicious lie!

**LEOPOLD**

How many pupils do you have?

**MOZART**

Pupils?

**LEOPOLD**

Yes.

**MOZART**

Yes.

**LEOPOLD**

How many?

**MOZART**

I don't know. It's not important. I mean, I don't want pupils. They get in the way. I've got to have time for composition.

**LEOPOLD**

Composition doesn't pay. You know that.

**MOZART**

This one will.

He picks up some pages of manuscript.

**LEOPOLD**

What's that?

**MOZART**

Oh, let's not talk about it.

**LEOPOLD**

Why not?

**MOZART**

It's a secret.

**LEOPOLD**

You don't have secrets from me.

**MOZART**

It's too dangerous, Papa. But they're going to love it. Ah, there she is!

Constanze comes into the room. She is wearing a dressing gown and has made a perfunctory attempt to tidy her hair. We see that she is clearly pregnant.

**MOZART**

My Stanzi - look at her! Isn't she beautiful? Come on now, confess, Papa. Could you want a prettier girl for a daughter?

**CONSTANZE**

Stop it, Wolfi. I look dreadful. Welcome to our house, Herr Mozart.

**MOZART**

He's not Herr Mozart. Call him Papa.

**LEOPOLD**

I see that you're expecting.

**CONSTANZE**

Oh, yes.

**LEOPOLD**

When, may I ask?

**CONSTANZE**

In three months! Papa.

**MOZART**

Isn't that marvelous? We're delighted.

**LEOPOLD**

Why didn't you mention it in your letters?

**MOZART**

Didn't I? I thought I did. I'm sure I did.

He gives a little giggle of embarrassment.

**CONSTANZE**

May I offer you some tea, Herr Mozart?

**MOZART**

Tea? Who wants tea? Let's go out! This calls for a feast. You don't want tea, Papa. Let's go dancing. Papa loves parties, don't you?

**CONSTANZE**

Wolfi!

**MOZART**

What? How can you be so boring? Tea!

**CONSTANZE**

Wolfi, I think your father's tired.  
I'll cook us something here.

**LEOPOLD**

Thank you. That'll be fine. Don't  
spend any money on me.

**MOZART**

Why not? Oh, come, Papa! What better  
way could I spend it than on you? My  
kissable, missable, suddenly visible  
Papa!

The jaunty tune of Ich Mochte Wohl Der Kaiser sein (K.539) sounds through all the following. This is an alternate song from Il Seraglio: a very extroverted tune for baritone and orchestra and a prominent part for bass drum. The vocal part should be arranged for trumpet.

**EXT. STREET IN VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S**

Mozart and Constanze with Leopold between them. We see couples shopping.

**INT. A COSTUME SHOP - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S**

This is a shop where one can buy costumes for masquerades. It is filled with extravagant costumes of various kinds. Wolfgang is wearing a costume, a mask pushed up on his forehead; Constanze is wearing a little white velvet mask.

Amidst the merriment, Leopold is helped by two assistants to put on a dark grey cloak and a dark grey tricorne hat, to which is attached a full mask of dark grey. Its mouth is cut into a fixed upward smile.

He turns and looks at his son through this mask.

**CUT STRAIGHT TO:**

**INT. A LARGE PARTY ROOM - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S**

We are in the full whirl of a Masquerade Ball. Couples are dancing around dressed in fantastic costumes. The music of Ich Mochte Wohl Der Kaiser sein increases in volume and persists. We see the musicians thumping it out on a balustrade above the dancers. A steer is being roasted. Through the bobbing crowd we see a group, headed by the figure of Bacchus: this is Schikaneder in a Greek costume, wearing vine leaves in his hair. He is accompanied by his usual trio of actresses and three other men. Constanze as Columbine and Mozart as Harlequin are pulling Leopold by the hand of his dark cloak and smiling mask. This whole group threads its way across the crowded room and disappears through a door. As they go, they are watched by Salieri, standing alone in a corner,

wearing ordinary evening clothes. He turns away hastily to avoid being seen by them.

As soon as they disappear into the far room, Salieri goes quickly to a lady in the corner who is giving guests domino masks off a tray. He quickly takes a small black mask and puts it on.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. A GROTTO ROOM NEXT DOOR - NIGHT - 1780'S**

A fantastic room designed as a rocky grotto, lit by candles. A forte-piano to one side is being played by Schikaneder: the music of *Ich Mochte Wohl Der Kaiser sein* cross-fades to another tune. This is *Vivat Bacchus* from *Il Seraglio* which

Schikaneder, dressed as Bacchus, is humming as he plays. The music is actually accompanying a game of *Forfeits*, which has begun. Five couples (the group we have just seen) are dancing in the middle of a ring made by nine chairs. When the music stops they will each have to find a chair, and the one who fails must pay a forfeit.

Constanze is dancing with Leopold; Mozart is dancing with one of the actresses; the two other actresses are dancing with two other gentlemen; and two children dance together - a little boy and a little girl. The scene is watched by a circle of bystanders; among them - from the doorway - is Salieri.

Schikaneder stops playing. Immediately the couples scramble for the chairs. Leopold and Constanze meet on the same chair, bumping and pushing at each other to get sole possession of it. To the amusement of the people around, the chair over-balances and they both end up on the floor. Constanze immediately gets up again, sets the chair on its feet, and tries to pretend she was sitting in it all the time. But Schikaneder calls out from the forte-piano.

**SCHIKANEDER**

No, no! You both lost. You both lost.  
You both have to forfeit. And the  
penalty is you must exchange your  
wigs.

People are delighted by the idea of this penalty. The children jump up and down with excitement. The three actresses immediately surround Leopold, reaching for his hat and mask and wig, whilst he tries to hold on to them. Mozart takes off Constanze's wig - an absurd affair with side-curls. Constanze laughingly surrenders it.

**LEOPOLD**

No, please! This is ridiculous! No,  
please!

Despite his protests an actress takes off his hat, to which the smiling mask is attached, to reveal his outraged face showing a very different expression underneath. Another actress snatches off his wig to reveal very sparse hair on the old man's head. The third actress takes Constanze's wig from Mozart and attempts to put it on his father's head.

**LEOPOLD**

No, really!

**MOZART**

(calling to him)

This is just a game, Papa.

Constanze echoes him with a touch of malice in her voice.

**CONSTANZE**

This is just a game, Papa!

Laughingly, the bystanders take it up, especially the children.

**BYSTANDERS**

This is just a game, Papa!

As Leopold glares furiously about him, the actress succeeds in getting Constanze's wig firmly onto his head. Everybody bursts into applause. Delightedly, Constanze puts on Leopold's wig, hat and mask: from the waist up she now looks like a weird parody of Leopold in the smiling grey mask, and he looks like a weird parody of her in the silly feminine wig. Schikaneder starts to play again, and the couples start to dance. Leopold angrily takes off Constanze's wig and leaves the circle; his partner, Constanze, is left alone. Seeing this, Mozart leaves his partner and catches his father entreatingly by the arm.

**MOZART**

Oh no, Papa, please! Don't spoil the fun. Come on. Here, take mine.

He takes off his own wig and puts it on Leopold's uncovered head. The effect, if not as ridiculous, is still somewhat bizarre, since Wolfgang favours fairly elaborate wigs. He takes Constanze's wig from his father. As this happens, the music stops again. Mozart gently pushes his father down onto a nearby chair; the others scramble for the other chairs; and he is left as the Odd Man Out. He giggles. Schikaneder calls out to Leopold from the keyboard.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Herr Mozart, why don't you name your son's penalty?

Applause.

**MOZART**



Yes, Papa, name it. Name it. I'll do anything you say!

**LEOPOLD**

I want you to come back with me to Salzburg, my son.

**SCHIKANEDER**

What did he say? What did he say?

**MOZART**

Papa, the rule is you can only give penalties that can be performed in the room.

**LEOPOLD**

I'm tired of this game. Please play without me.

**MOZART**

But my penalty. I've got to have a penalty.

All the bystanders are watching.

**SCHIKANEDER**

I've got a good one. I've got the perfect one for you. Come over here.

Mozart runs over to the forte-piano, and Schikaneder surrenders his place at it.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Now, I want you to play our tune - sitting backwards.

Applause.

**MOZART**

Oh, that's really too easy. Any child can do that.

Amused sounds of disbelief.

**SCHIKANEDER**

And a fugue in the manner of Sebastian Bach.

Renewed applause at this wicked extra penalty. Mozart smiles at Schikaneder - it is the sort of challenge he loves. He defiantly puts on Constanze's wig and seats himself with his back to the keyboard. Before the astonished eyes of the company he proceeds to execute this absurdly difficult task. His right hand plays the bass part, his left hand the treble, and with this added difficulty he improvises a brilliant fugue on the subject of the tune to which they have been dancing.

Attracted by this astonishing feat, the players draw nearer to the instrument. So does Salieri, cautiously, with some of the bystanders. Constanze watches him approach. Only Leopold sits by himself, sulking.

The fugue ends amidst terrific clapping. The guests call out to Mozart.

**GUESTS**

Another! Do another! Someone else.

**MOZART**

Give me a name. Who shall I do?  
Give me a name.

**GUESTS**

Gluck! Haydn! Frederic Handel!

**CONSTANZE**

Salieri! Do Salieri!

SMASH CUT: Salieri's masked face whips around and looks at her.

**MOZART**

Now that's hard. That's very hard.  
For Salieri one has to face the right  
way around.

Giggling, he turns around and sits at the keyboard. Then, watched by a highly amused group, he begins a wicked parody.

He furrows his brow in mock concentration and closes his eyes. Then he begins to play the tune to which they danced, in the most obvious way imaginable, relying heavily on a totally and offensively unimaginative bass of tonic and dominant, endlessly repeated. The music is the very essence of banality. The bystanders rock with laughter. Mozart starts to giggle wildly. Through this excruciating scene, Salieri stares at Constanze, who suddenly turns her head and looks challengingly back at him.

Mozart's parody reaches its coarse climax with him adding a fart noise instead of notes to end cadences. He builds this up, urged on in his clowning by everyone else, until suddenly he stops and cries out. The laughter cuts off. Mozart stands up, clutching his behind as if he has made a mess in his breeches. The momentary hush of alarm is followed by a howl of laughter.

CU, Salieri staring in pain.

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

CU, The old man is shaking at the very recollection of his humiliation.

**OLD SALIERI**

Go on. Mock me. Laugh, laugh!

**CUT BACK TO:**

**INT. GROTTA - NIGHT - 1780'S**

A repetition of the shot of Mozart at the forte-piano, wearing Constanze's wig and emitting a shrill giggle.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S**

Salieri sits at his desk. He holds in his hand the small black party mask and stares in hatred at the place on the wall where the crucifix used to hang. Faintly we see the mark of the cross.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

That was not Mozart laughing, Father.  
That was God. That was God! God  
laughing at me through that obscene  
giggle. Go on, Signore. Laugh. Rub  
my nose in it. Show my mediocrity  
for all to see. You wait! I will  
laugh at You! Before I leave this  
earth, I will laugh at You! Amen!

**INT. MOZART'S WORKROOM - DAY - 1780'S**

It is littered with manuscripts. In the middle stands a billiard table. The beautiful closing ensemble from Act IV of Figaro: Ah, Tutti contenti! Saremo cosi plays in the background. Standing at the billiard table, Mozart is dreamily hearing the music and playing shots on the table.

From time to time he drifts over to a piece of manuscript paper and jots down notes. He is very much in his own world of composition and the billiard balls are an aid to creation. Presently, however, we hear a knocking at the door.

**CONSTANZE**

(outside the door)  
Wolfi! Wolfgang!

The music breaks off.

**MOZART**

What is it?

He opens the door.

**CONSTANZE**

There's a young girl to see you.

**MOZART**

What does she want?

**CONSTANZE**

I don't know.

**MOZART**

Well, ask her!

**CONSTANZE**

She won't talk to me. She says she has to speak to you.

**MOZART**

Oh, damn!

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY - 1780'S**

Mozart comes out. Framed in the doorway from outside stands Lork, the maid we noticed in Salieri's house. From his bedroom Leopold peeps out to watch. Mozart goes to the girl. Constanze follows.

**MOZART**

Yes?

**LORK**

Are you Herr Mozart?

**MOZART**

That's right.

**LORK**

My name is Lork, sir. I'm a maidservant. I was asked to come here and offer my services to you.

**MOZART**

What?

**LORK**

They'll be paid for by a great admirer or yours who wishes to remain anon - anonymous.

**CONSTANZE**

What do you mean? What admirer?

**LORK**

I can't tell you that, ma'am.

**MOZART**

Are you saying that someone is paying you to be our maid and doesn't want us to know who he is?

**LORK**

Yes. I can live in or out just as you wish.

Mozart turns to his father.

**MOZART**

Papa, is this your idea?

**LEOPOLD**

Mine?

The old man emerges from his bedroom. His son looks at him delightedly.

**MOZART**

Are you playing a trick on me?

**LEOPOLD**

I never saw this girl in my life.

(to Lorl)

Is this a kind of joke?

**LORL**

Not at all, sir. And I was told to wait for an answer.

**LEOPOLD**

Young woman, this won't do at all. My son can't possibly accept such an offer, no matter how generous, unless he knows who is behind it.

**LORL**

But I really can't tell you, sir.

**LEOPOLD**

Oh, this is ridiculous.

**CONSTANZE**

What is ridiculous? Wolfi has many admirers in Vienna. They love him here. People send us gifts all the time.

**LEOPOLD**

But you can't take her without reference. It's unheard of!

**CONSTANZE**

Well, this is none of your business.

(to Lorl)

Whoever sent you is going to pay, no?

**LORL**

That's right, ma'am.

**LEOPOLD**

So now we are going to let a perfect stranger into the house?

Constanze looks furiously at him, then at Lorl.

**CONSTANZE**

Who is we? Who is letting who?  
(to Lorl)  
Could you please wait outside?

**LORL**

Yes, ma'am.

Lorl goes outside and closes the door. Constanze turns on Leopold.

**CONSTANZE**

Look, old man, you stay out of this. We spend a fortune on you, more than we can possibly afford, and all you do is criticize, morning to night. And then you think you can -

**MOZART**

Stanzi!

**CONSTANZE**

No, it's right he should hear. I'm sick to death of it. We can't do anything right for you, can we?

**LEOPOLD**

Never mind. You won't have to do anything for me ever again. I'm leaving!

**MOZART**

Papa!

**LEOPOLD**

Don't worry, I'm not staying here to be a burden.

**MOZART**

No one calls you that.

**LEOPOLD**

She does. She says I sleep all day.

**CONSTANZE**

And so you do! The only time you come out is to eat.

**LEOPOLD**

And what do you expect? Who wants to walk out into a mess like this every

day?

**CONSTANZE**

Oh, now I'm a bad housekeeper!

**LEOPOLD**

So you are! The place is a pigsty  
all the time.

**CONSTANZE**

(to Mozart)

Do you hear him? Do you?

Explosively she opens the door.

**CONSTANZE**

(to Lort)

When can you start?

**LORL**

Right away, ma'am.

**CONSTANZE**

Good! Come in. You'll start with  
that room there.

(indicating Leopold's  
room)

It's filthy!

She leads the maid into Leopold's room. Mozart steals back  
into his workroom and gently closes the door. Leopold is  
left alone.

**LEOPOLD**

Sorry, sorry! I'm sorry I spoke!  
I'm just a provincial from Salzburg.  
What do I know about smart Vienna?  
Parties all night, every night.  
Dancing and drinking like idiot  
children!

**INT. MOZART'S WORKROOM - DAY - 1780'S**

Mozart stands trying to blot out the noise of his father's  
shouting from the next room.

**LEOPOLD (O.S.)**

Dinner at eight! Dinner at ten! Dinner  
when anyone feels like it! If anyone  
feels like it!

The ensemble of Ah, Tutti contenti! Saremo cosi from Act IV  
of Figaro resumes, coming to his aid and rising to greet the  
listener with its serene harmonies. Relieved, Mozart languidly  
picks up his cue and plays a shot on the billiard table: he  
is sucked back into his own world of sound.

**INT. SALIERI'S SALON - NIGHT - 1780'S**

The music fades. We see Lorl, dressed in a walking cloak, sitting before a desk, talking to someone confidentially.

**LORL**

They're out every night, sir. Till all hours.

A hand comes into frame offering a plate of sugared biscuits. On its finger we see the gold signet ring belonging to Salieri.

**LORL**

(taking one)  
Oh, thank you, sir.

**SALIERI**

Do any pupils come to the house?

**LORL**

Not that I've seen.

**SALIERI**

Then how does he pay for all this?  
Does he work at all?

**LORL**

Oh, yes, sir, all day long. He never leaves the house until evening. He just sits there, writing and writing. He doesn't even eat.

**SALIERI**

Really? What is it he's writing?

**LORL**

Oh, I wouldn't know that, sir.

**SALIERI**

Of course not. You're a good girl. You're very kind to do this. Next time you're sure they'll be out of the house, let me know, will you?

Confused, the girl hesitates. He hands her a pile of coins.

**LORL**

Oh, thank you, sir!

She accepts them, delighted.

**EXT. MOZART'S HOUSE - VIENNA STREET - AFTERNOON - 1780'S**

The final movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-flat (K. 482) begins. To its lively music, the door of the house bursts open and a grand forte-piano augmented with a pedal is carried



out of it by six men, who run off with it down the street. Following them immediately appear Wolfgang, Constanze and Leopold, all three dressed for an occasion. They climb into a waiting carriage which drives off after the forte-piano. As soon as it goes, Lorl appears in the doorway, peering slyly around to see that they are out of sight. Then she shuts the door and hurries off in the opposite direction.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. AN ORNAMENTAL GARDEN - VIENNA - AFTERNOON - 1780'S**

An outdoor concert is being given. Mozart is actually playing the final movement of his E-flat concerto with an orchestra. Listening to him is a sizable audience, including the Emperor, flanked by Strack and Von Swieten.

The crowd is in a happy and appreciative mood: it is a delightful open-air scene. We hear the gayest and most complex passage. Leopold and Constanze listen to Mozart, who plays his own work brilliantly. We stay with this scene for a little while and then

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. VIENNA STREET - AFTERNOON - 1780'S**

A carriage clopping through the streets. Lorl is sitting up on the box beside the driver. Inside the vehicle, we glimpse the figure of Salieri.

**EXT. AN ORNAMENTAL GARDEN - VIENNA - 1780'S**

We hear more of the concerto. Perhaps the slow interlude in the last movement of K. 482. Mozart is conducting and playing in a reflective mood. Abruptly we

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON - 1780'S**

Lorl is opening the door admitting Salieri. They go in. The door shuts.

**INT. MOZART'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON - 1780'S**

The room is considerably tidier as a result of Lorl's ministrations. Salieri stands looking about him with tremendous curiosity.

**LORL**

I think I've found out about the money, sir.

**SALIERI**

Yes what?

She opens a drawer in a sideboard. Inside we see one gold snuff box: it is the one we saw Mozart being presented with as a child in the Vatican.

**LORL**

He kept seven snuff boxes in here.  
I could swear they were all gold.  
And now look there's only one left.  
And inside, sir, look - I counted  
them - tickets from the pawnshop.  
Six of them.

Salieri turns to look around him.

**SALIERI**

Where does he work?

**LORL**

In there, sir.

She points across the room to the workroom. Salieri crosses and goes in alone.

**INT. MOZART'S WORKROOM - AFTERNOON - 1780'S**

Salieri enters the private quarters of Amadeus. He is immensely excited. He moves slowly into the 'holy of holies' picking up objects with great reverence - a billiard ball; a discarded wig; a sock; a buckle - then objects more important to him. Standing at Mozart's desk, strewn with manuscripts, he picks up Mozart's pen and strokes the feather. He touches the inkstand. He lays a finger on the candlestick with its half-expired candle. He touches each object as if it were the memento of a beloved. He is in awe. Finally his eye falls on the sheets of music themselves. Stealthily he picks them up.

CU, The pages.

We see words set to music. Against each line of notes is the name of a character: Contessa, Susanna, Cherubino. Then another page - the title page - written in Mozart's hand.

Le Nozze di Figaro Comedia per musica tratta dal Francese in quattro atti.

CU, The word Figaro.

CU, Salieri. He stares amazed.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. ORNAMENTAL GARDEN - VIENNA - AFTERNOON - 1780'S**

Mozart is playing the cadenza and coda of Piano Concerto (K. 482). He completes the work with a flourish. There is loud applause. The Emperor rises and all follow suit. Mozart comes

down to be greeted by him.

**JOSEPH**

Bravo, Mozart. Most charming. Yes, indeed. Clever man.

**MOZART**

Thank you, Sire!

**VON SWIETEN**

Well done, Mozart. Really quite fine.

**MOZART**

Baron!

He sees his wife and father standing by in the crowd. Leopold is signaling insistently.

**MOZART**

Majesty, may I ask you to do me the greatest favour?

**JOSEPH**

What is it?

**MOZART**

May I introduce my father? He is on a short visit here and returning very soon to Salzburg. He would so much like to kiss your hand. It would make his whole stay so memorable for him.

**JOSEPH**

Ah! By all means.

Leopold comes forward eagerly and fawningly kisses the royal hand.

**LEOPOLD**

Your Majesty.

Constanze curtsies.

**JOSEPH**

Good evening.

(to Leopold)

We have met before, Herr Mozart.

**LEOPOLD**

That's right, Your Majesty. Twenty years ago. No, twenty-two! twenty-three! And I remember word for word what you said to me. You said - you said --

He searches his memory.

**JOSEPH**

Bravo?

**LEOPOLD**

No! Yes, 'bravo,' of course 'bravo'!  
Everybody always says 'bravo' when  
Wolfi plays. Like the King of England.  
When we played for the King of  
England, he got up at the end and  
said, 'Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!' three  
times. Three bravo's. And the Pope  
four! Four bravo's from the Holy  
Father, and one 'bellissimo.'

All the courtiers around are looking at him.

**MOZART**

Father -

**LEOPOLD**

Hush! I'm talking to His Majesty.  
Your Majesty, I wish to express only  
one thing - that you who are the  
Father of us all, could teach our  
children the gratitude they owe to  
fathers. It is not for nothing that  
the Fifth Commandment tells us:  
'Honour your Father and Mother, that  
your days may be long upon the earth.'

**JOSEPH**

Ah-ha. Well. There it is.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. ORSINI-ROSENBERG'S STUDY - DAY - 1780'S**

The Director sits at his table with Salieri and Bonno.

**SALIERI**

I've just learned something that  
might be of interest to you, Herr  
Director.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Yes?

**SALIERI**

Mozart is writing a new opera. An  
Italian opera.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Italian?

**BONNO**

Aie!

**SALIERI**

And that's not all. He has chosen for his subject, Figaro. The Marriage of Figaro.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

You mean that play?

**SALIERI**

Exactly.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

He's setting that play to music?

**SALIERI**

Yes.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

You must be mad.

**BONNO**

What is this Marriage of Figaro?

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

It's a French play, Kapellmeister. It has been banned by the Emperor.

**BONNO**

Hah!

He crosses himself, wide-eyed with alarm.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Are you absolutely sure?

**SALIERI**

I've seen the manuscript.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Where?

**SALIERI**

Never mind.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. CHAMBERLAIN VON STRACK'S STUDY - DAY - 1780'S**

**VON STRACK**

I know we banned this play, but frankly I can't remember why. Can you refresh my memory, Herr Director?

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

For the same reason, Herr Chamberlain, that it was banned in France.

**VON STRACK**

Oh yes, yes. And that was?

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Well, the play makes a hero out of a valet. He outwits his noble master and exposes him as a lecher. Do you see the implications? This would be, in a grander situation, as if a Chamberlain were to expose an Emperor.

**VON STRACK**

Ah.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. THE EMPEROR'S STUDY - DAY - 1780'S**

The Emperor stands in the middle of the room in close conversation with Von Strack, Orsini-Rosenberg, Von Swieten, and Bonno. Salieri is not present. A door opens and a lackey announces:

**LACKEY**

Herr Mozart.

They all turn. Mozart approaches, rather apprehensively, and kisses Joseph's hand.

**JOSEPH**

Sit down, gentlemen, please.

They all sit, save Mozart. The room suddenly looks like a tribunal. Joseph is in a serious mood.

**JOSEPH**

Mozart, are you aware I have declared the French play of Figaro unsuitable for our theatre?

**MOZART**

Yes, Sire.

**JOSEPH**

Yet we hear you are making an opera from it. Is this true?

**MOZART**

Who told you this, Majesty?

**JOSEPH**

It is not your place to ask questions. Is it true?

**MOZART**

Well, yes, I admit it is.

**JOSEPH**

Would you tell me why?

**MOZART**

Well, Majesty, it is only a comedy.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

What you think, Mozart, is scarcely the point. It is what His Majesty thinks that counts.

**MOZART**

But, Your Majesty -

**JOSEPH**

(motioning him to be silent)

Mozart, I am a tolerant man. I do not censor things lightly. When I do, I have good reason. Figaro is a bad play. It stirs up hatred between the classes. In France it has caused nothing but bitterness. My own dear sister Antoinette writes me that she is beginning to be frightened of her own people. I do not wish to see the same fears starting here.

**MOZART**

Sire, I swear to Your Majesty, there's nothing like that in the story. I have taken out everything that could give offense. I hate politics.

**JOSEPH**

I think you are rather innocent, my friend. In these dangerous times I cannot afford to provoke our nobles or our people simply over a theatre piece.

The others look at their king solemnly, all save Mozart.

**MOZART**

But, Majesty, this is just a frolic. It's a piece about love.

**JOSEPH**

Ah, love again.

**MOZART**

But it's new, it's entirely new. It's so new, people will go mad for it. For example, I have a scene in the second act - it starts as a duet, just a man and wife quarreling.

Suddenly the wife's scheming little maid comes in unexpectedly - a very funny situation. Duet turns into trio. Then the husband's equally screaming valet comes in. Trio turns into quartet. Then a stupid old gardener - quartet becomes quintet, and so on. On and on, sextet, septet, octet! How long do you think I can sustain that?

**JOSEPH**

I have no idea.

**MOZART**

Guess! Guess, Majesty. Imagine the longest time such a thing could last, then double it.

**JOSEPH**

Well, six or seven minutes! maybe eight!

**MOZART**

Twenty, sire! How about twenty? Twenty minutes of continuous music. No recitatives.

**VON SWIETEN**

Mozart -

**MOZART**

(ignoring him)

Sire, only opera can do this. In a play, if more than one person speaks at the same time, it's just noise. No one can understand a word. But with music, with music you can have twenty individuals all talking at once, and it's not noise - it's a perfect harmony. Isn't that marvelous?

**VON SWIETEN**

Mozart, music is not the issue here. No one doubts your talent. It is your judgment of literature that's in question. Even with the politics taken out, this thing would still remain a vulgar farce. Why waste your spirit on such rubbish? Surely you can choose more elevated themes?

**MOZART**

Elevated? What does that mean? Elevated! The only thing a man should elevate is - oh, excuse me. I'm sorry. I'm stupid. But I am fed up to the



teeth with elevated things! Old dead legends! How can we go on forever writing about gods and legends?

**VON SWIETEN**

(aroused)

Because they do. They go on forever - at least what they represent. The eternal in us, not the ephemeral. Opera is here to ennoble us. You and me, just as much as His Majesty.

**BONNO**

Bello! Bello, Barone. Veramente.

**MOZART**

Oh, bello, bello, bello! Come on now, be honest. Wouldn't you all rather listen to your hairdressers than Hercules? Or Horatius? Or Orpheus? All those old bores! people so lofty they sound as if they shit marble!

**VON SWIETEN**

What?

**VON STRACK**

Govern your tongue, sir! How dare you?

Beat. All look at the Emperor.

**MOZART**

Forgive me, Majesty. I'm a vulgar man. But I assure you, my music is not.

**JOSEPH**

You are passionate, Mozart! But you do not persuade.

**MOZART**

Sire, the whole opera is finished. Do you know how much work went into it?

**BONNO**

His Majesty has been more than patient, Signore.

**MOZART**

How can I persuade you if you won't let me show it?

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

That will do, Herr Mozart!

**MOZART**

Just let me tell you how it begins.

**VON STRACK**

Herr Mozart -

**MOZART**

May I just do that, Majesty? Show  
you how it begins? Just that?

A slight pause. Then Joseph nods.

**JOSEPH**

Please.

Mozart falls on his knees.

**MOZART**

Look! There's a servant, down on his  
knees. Do you know why? Not from any  
oppression. No, he's simply measuring  
a space. Do you know what for? His  
bed. His wedding bed to see if it  
will fit.

He giggles.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. OPERA HOUSE - DAY - 1780'S**

Mozart sits on stage at a harpsichord rehearsing the singers  
taking the parts of Figaro and Susanna in the opening bars  
of the first act of The Marriage of Figaro. We watch Figaro  
measuring the space for his bed on the floor, singing and  
Susanna looking on, trying on the Countess' hat.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SALIERI'S SALON - DAY - 1780'S**

Orsini-Rosenberg and Bonno are sitting with Salieri.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Well, Mozart is already rehearsing.

**SALIERI**

Incredible.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

The Emperor has given him permission.

**BONNO**

Si, si! Veramente.

**SALIERI**

Well, gentlemen, so be it. In that case I think we should help Mozart all we can and do our best to protect him against the Emperor's anger.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

What anger?

**SALIERI**

About the ballet.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Ballet? What ballet?

**SALIERI**

Excuse me - didn't His Majesty specifically forbid ballet in his opera?

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Yes, absolutely. Is there a ballet in Figaro?

**SALIERI**

Yes, in the third act.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. THE OPERA HOUSE - DAY - 1780'S**

It is a full orchestral rehearsal. Mozart is conducting from the harpsichord with his hands; he does not use a baton. The singers are all in practice clothes, not costumes.

We are in the Act III and we hear the recitativo exchange just before the march begins. Orsini-Rosenberg and Bonno sit watching chairs.

Suddenly the march starts. Peasants and friends start to dance in and at the same moment, Orsini-Rosenberg gets up and comes down to Mozart. He is accompanied by an anxious Bonno.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Mozart! Herr Mozart, may I have a word with you please. Right away.

**MOZART**

Certainly, Herr Director.

He signals to the cast to break off.

**MOZART**

Five minutes, please!

The company disperses, curious. The musicians look at Orsini-Rosenberg.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Did you not know that His Majesty has expressly forbidden ballet in his operas?

**MOZART**

Yes, but this is not a ballet. This is a dance at Figaro's wedding.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Exactly. A dance.

**MOZART**

But surely the Emperor didn't mean to prohibit dancing when it's part of the story.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

It is dangerous for you to interpret His Majesty's edicts. Give me your score, please.

Mozart hands him the score from which he is conducting.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Thank you.

He rips out a page. Bonno watches in terror.

**MOZART**

What are you doing?

He rips out three more.

**MOZART**

What are you doing, Herr Director?

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Taking out what you should never have put in.

He goes on tearing the pages determinedly.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SALIERI'S SALON - DAY - 1780'S**

A servant opens the door to announce.

**SERVANT**

Herr Mozart.

Mozart brushes past him straight towards Salieri, who rises to greet him. The little man is near hysterics.

**MOZART**

Please! Please. I've no one else to turn to. Please!

He grabs Salieri.

**SALIERI**

Wolfgang, what is it? Sta calmo, per favore. What's the matter?

**MOZART**

It's unbelievable! The Director has actually ripped out a huge section of my music. Pages of it.

**SALIERI**

Really? Why?

**MOZART**

I don't know. They say I've got to re-write the opera, but it's perfect as it is. I can't rewrite what's perfect. Can't you talk to him?

**SALIERI**

Why bother with Orsini-Rosenberg? He's obviously no friend of yours.

**MOZART**

Oh, I could kill him! I mean really kill him. I actually threw the entire opera on the fire, he made me so angry!

**SALIERI**

You burned the score?

**MOZART**

Oh no! My wife took it out in time.

**SALIERI**

How fortunate.

**MOZART**

It's not fair that a man like that has power over our work.

**SALIERI**

But there are those who have power over him. I think I'll take this up with the Emperor.

**MOZART**

Oh, Excellency, would you?

**SALIERI**

With all my heart, Mozart.

**MOZART**

Thank you! Oh, thank you.

He kisses Salieri's hand.

**SALIERI**

(withdrawing it;  
imitating the Emperor)  
No, no, no, Herr Mozart, please.  
It's not a holy relic.

Mozart giggles with relief and gratitude.

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

**OLD SALIERI**

I'm sure I don't need to tell you I said nothing whatever to the Emperor. I went to the theatre ready to tell Mozart that His Majesty had flown into a rage when I mentioned the ballet, when suddenly, to my astonishment, in the middle of the third act, the Emperor - who never attended rehearsals - suddenly appeared.

**INT. OPERA HOUSE - DAY - 1780'S**

In the background the same recitativo before the March. The Emperor steals surreptitiously with Von Strack, his finger to his lips. He motions everyone not to rise, and slips into a chair behind Salieri, Orsini-Rosenberg and Bonno.

The three conspirators look at each other wide-eyed.

The recitativo summons up the march, but instead there is silence. Mozart lays down his baton. The musicians lay down their instruments. The celebrants of Figaro's wedding come in with a few pitiful dance steps, in procession, only to come presently to a halt, lacking their music. The singers try to go on singing, but they have no cues from their conductor or from the accompaniment. Everyone on stage looks lost, though they attempt to go on with the story for a while. Consternation grows on the faces of the conspirators. Mozart glances back at the group seated in the theatre. Finally, the Emperor speaks, in a whisper.

**JOSEPH**

What is this? I don't understand.  
Is it modern?

**BONNO**

Majesty, the Herr Director, he has removed a ballet that would have occurred at this place.

**JOSEPH**

Why?

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

It is your regulation, Sire. No ballet  
in your opera.

Mozart strains to hear what they are saying but cannot.

**JOSEPH**

Do you like this, Salieri?

**SALIERI**

It is not a question of liking, Your  
Majesty. Your own law decrees it,  
I'm afraid.

**JOSEPH**

Well, look at them.

We do look at them. The spectacle on stage has now ground to  
a complete halt.

**JOSEPH**

No, no, no! This is nonsense. Let me  
hear the scene with the music.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

But, Sire -

**JOSEPH**

Oblige me.

Orsini-Rosenberg acknowledges his defeat.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Yes, Majesty.

Orsini-Rosenberg rises and goes down to where Mozart sits  
anxiously with the musicians, watching his approach.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Can we see the scene with the music  
back, please?

**MOZART**

Oh yes, certainly. Certainly, Herr  
Director!

He looks back deliriously at Salieri, trying to indicate his  
gratitude. Salieri acknowledges with a slight and subtle  
nod.

Orsini-Rosenberg returns to his king.

**MOZART**

Ladies and gentlemen, we're going

from where we stopped. The Count:  
Anches so. Right away, please!

The singers scatter offstage to begin the scene again.

**JOSEPH**

(to Orsini-Rosenberg)

What I hoped by that edict, Director,  
was simply to prevent hours of dancing  
like in French opera. There it is  
endless, as you know.

**ORSINI-ROSENBERG**

Quite so, Majesty.

CUT BACK TO Mozart at the forte-piano, raising his hands.  
The musicians raise their bows. With a flourish the happy  
composer begins a reprise of the scene which had been cut  
out. The music of the march begins faintly; the celebrants  
of Figaro's wedding start to enter as the Count and the  
Countess sit in their chairs.

In the theatre we see increasing pleasure on the Emperor's  
face, sullenness and defeat on the courtiers'. Then, suddenly,  
without interruption, on a crescendo repeat of the march, we

**CUT TO:**

**INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S**

The theatre is brilliantly lit for the first public  
performance of Figaro. Everybody is there: the Emperor, Von  
Strack, Bonno Orsini-Rosenberg, Von Swieten, even Madame  
Weber and her daughters in a box. The musicians all wear  
imperial livery; the actors on stage are now in costume.  
Mozart, conducting, wears his Order of the Golden Spur. The  
company wheels in and around to the music of the restored  
march, which reaches a triumphant climax.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

**OLD SALIERI**

(to Vogler)

So Figaro was produced in spite of  
me. And in spite of me, a wonder was  
revealed. One of the true wonders of  
art. The restored third act was bold  
and brilliant. The fourth was a  
miracle.

The descending scale of strings in the final ensemble (Ah,  
Tutti contenti. Saremo cosi) fades in.

**INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S**



We see the tableau on stage with the Count kneeling to the Countess. All are singing.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

I saw a woman disguised in her maid's clothes hear her husband speak the first tender words he has offered her in years, only because he thinks she is someone else. I heard the music of true forgiveness filling the theatre, conferring on all who sat there a perfect absolution. God was singing through this little man to all the world - unstoppable - making my defeat more bitter with each passing bar.

CU, Salieri in his box, tears on his cheeks. He watches the ensemble and we listen to it for a long moment. Finally it fades, but continues underneath the following:

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

**OLD SALIERI**

And then suddenly - a miracle!

**CUT BACK TO:**

**INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S**

The ensemble reaches its climax, and fades away to the very quiet, slow chords immediately preceding the boisterous final chord. Salieri becomes aware that some of the audience are asleep and many more are apathetic. In the near silence we see the Emperor yawn behind his hand. Those nearby look at him. Orsini-Rosenberg smiles.

**CUT BACK TO:**

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

**OLD SALIERI**

Father, did you know what that meant? With that yawn I saw my defeat turn into a victory. And Mozart was lucky the Emperor only yawned once. Three yawns and the opera would fail the same night; two yawns, within a week at most. With one yawn the composer could still get -

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SALIERI'S SALON - DAY - 1780'S**

Mozart is pacing up and down. Salieri is listening sympathetically.

**MOZART**

Nine performances! Nine! That's all it's had - and withdrawn.

**SALIERI**

I know; it's outrageous. Still, if the public doesn't like one's work one has to accept the fact gracefully.

**MOZART**

But what is it they don't like?

**SALIERI**

Well, I can speak for the Emperor. You made too many demands on the royal ear. The poor man can't concentrate for more than an hour and you gave him four.

**MOZART**

What did you think of it yourself? Did you like it at all?

**SALIERI**

I think it's marvelous. Truly.

**MOZART**

It's the best opera yet written. I know it! Why didn't they come?

**SALIERI**

I think you overestimate our dear Viennese, my friend. Do you know you didn't even give them a good bang at the end of songs so they knew when to clap?

**MOZART**

I know, I know. Perhaps you should give me some lessons in that.

**SALIERI**

(fuming)

I wouldn't presume. All the same, if it wouldn't be imposing, I would like you to see my new piece. It would be a tremendous honour for me.

**MOZART**

Oh no, the honour would be all mine.

**SALIERI**

(bowing)

Grazie, mio caro, Wolfgang!

**MOZART**

Grazie, a lei, Signor Antonio!

He bows too, giggling.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S**

A performance of Salieri's grand opera, Axur: King of Ormus. Deafening applause from a crowded house. We see the reception of the aria which we saw Cavalieri singing on the stage near the start of the film. Cavalieri, in a mythological Persian costume, is bowing to the rapturous throng; below her is Salieri. We see the Emperor, Von Strack, Orsini-Rosenberg, Bonno and Von Swieten, all applauding. We hear great cries of 'Salieri! Salieri!' and 'Bravo!' and 'Brava!'

CU, Salieri looking at the crowd with immense pleasure. Then suddenly at:

CU, Mozart standing in a box and clapping wildly. Behind him, seated, are Schikaneder and the three girls we saw before in Mozart's apartment.

CU, Salieri staring fixedly at Mozart, then Mozart still clapping, apparently with tremendous enthusiasm.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

What was this? I never saw him excited before by any music but his own. Could he mean it?

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

**OLD SALIERI**

(to Vogler)

Would he actually tell me my music had moved him? Was I really going to hear that from his own lips? I found myself actually hurrying the tempo of the finale.

**CUT BACK TO:**

**INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S**

Salieri conducting the last scene from Axur: King of Ormus. On stage we see a big scene of acclamation: the hero and heroine of the opera accepting the crown amidst the rejoicing of the people. The decor and costumes are mythological Persian. The music is utterly conventional and totally uninventive.

CU, Mozart watching this in his box, with Schikaneder and the three actresses. He passes an open bottle of wine to them. He is evidently a little drunk, but keeps a poker face.

The act comes to an end. Great applause in which Mozart joins in, standing and shouting 'Bravo! Bravo!' Then he leaves the box with Schikaneder and the girls.

**INT. CORRIDOR OF THE OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S**

**MOZART**

(to Schikaneder)

Well?

**SCHIKANEDER**

(mock moved)

Sublime! Utterly sublime!

**MOZART**

That kind of music should be punishable by death.

Schikaneder laughs.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. STAGE OF THE OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S**

A crowd of people rings Salieri at a respectful distance. The Emperor is holding out the Civilian Medal and Chain.

**JOSEPH**

I believe that is the best opera yet written, my friends. Salieri, you are the brightest star in the musical firmament. You do honour to Vienna and to me.

Salieri bows his head. Joseph places the chain around his neck. The crowd claps. Salieri makes to kiss his hand, but Joseph restrains him, and passes on. Cavalieri, smiling adoringly, gives him a deep curtsy, and he raises her up.

The crowd all flock to Salieri with cries and words of approval. All want to shake his hand. They tug and pat him. But he has eyes for only one man - he looks about him, searching for him and then finds him. Mozart stands there. Eagerly Salieri moves to him.

**SALIERI**

Mozart. It was good of you to come.

**MOZART**

How could I not?

**SALIERI**

Did my work please you?

**MOZART**

How could it not, Excellency?

**SALIERI**

Yes?

**MOZART**

I never knew that music like that  
was possible.

**SALIERI**

You flatter me.

**MOZART**

Oh no! One hears such sounds and  
what can one say, but - Salieri!

Salieri smiles.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S**

Explosive laughter as Mozart and Schikaneder enter the  
apartment, very pleased with themselves and accompanied by  
the three actresses. The front door opens, very gingerly.  
Mozart, still rather drunk, sticks his head into the room,  
anxious not to make a noise. He sees the strangers and breaks  
into a smile.

**MOZART**

Oh. Everybody's here! We've got  
guests. Good. I've brought some more.

He opens the door wide to admit Schikaneder and the girls.

**MOZART**

We'll have a little party. Come in.  
Come in. You know Herr Schikaneder?  
(to a girl)  
This is! a very nice girl.

**CONSTANZE**

(standing up)  
Wolfi.

**MOZART**

Yes, my love?

**CONSTANZE**

These gentlemen are from Salzburg.

**MOZART**

Salzburg. We were just talking about  
Salzburg.

(to the two men,  
jubilantly)

If you've come from my friend the  
Fartsbishop, you've arrived at just  
the right moment. Because I've got

good news for him. I'm done with Vienna. It's over, finished, done with! Done with! Done with!

**CONSTANZE**

Wolfi! Your father is dead.

**MOZART**

What?

**CONSTANZE**

Your father is dead.

The first loud chord of the Statue scene from Don Giovanni sounds. Mozart stares.

**INT. AN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S**

The second chord sounds. On stage we see the huge figure of the Commendatore in robes and helmet, extending his arms and pointing in accusation.

**INT. AN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S**

The second chord sounds.

On stage we see a huge nailed fist crash through the wall of a painted dining room set. The giant armoured statue of the COMMENDATORE enters pointing his finger in accusation at Don Giovanni who sits at the supper table, staring - his servant Leporello quaking with fear under the table.

**THE COMMENDATORE**

(singing)

Don Giovanni!

The figure advances on the libertine. We see Mozart conducting, pale and deeply involved. Music fades down a little.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

So rose the dreadful ghost in his next and blackest opera. There on the stage stood the figure of a dead commander calling out 'Repent! Repent!'

The music swells. We see Salieri standing alone in the back of a box, unseen, in semi-darkness. We also see that the theatre is only half full. Music fades down.

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

And I knew - only I understood - that the horrifying apparition was Leopold, raised from the dead. Wolfgang had actually summoned up his own father to accuse his son

before all the world. It was  
terrifying and wonderful to watch.

Music swells up again. We watch the scene on stage as the  
Commendatore addresses Giovanni. Then back to Salieri in the  
box. Music down again.

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

**OLD SALIERI**

Now a madness began in me. The madness  
of a man splitting in half. Through  
my influence I saw to it Don Giovanni  
was played only five times in Vienna.  
But in secret I went to every one of  
those five - all alone - unable to  
help myself, worshipping sound I  
alone seemed to hear.

**INT. AN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S**

**OLD SALIERI (V.O.)**

And hour after hour, as I stood there,  
understanding even more clearly how  
that bitter old man was still  
possessing his poor son from beyond  
the grave, I began to see a way - a  
terrible way - I could finally triumph  
over God, my torturer.

Music swells. On stage Don Giovanni is seized and gripped by  
the Statue's icy hand. Flames burst from obviously artificial  
rocks. Demons appear and drag the libertine down to Hell.  
The scene ends.

CU, Salieri, staring wide-eyed.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S**

We see huge and attractive posters and billboards advertising  
Schikaneder's troupe. The camera concentrates on the one  
which reads as follows:

**EMMANUEL SCHIKANEDER**  
Impresario de luxe  
**PRESENTS**  
The Celebrated  
**SCHIKANEDER TROUPE OF PLAYERS**  
**IN**  
An Evening of  
**PARODY**  
Music! Mirth! Magic!  
**ALL SONGS AND SPEECHES WRITTEN**  
**BY**  
**EMMANUEL SCHIKANEDER**

who personally will appear in every scene!

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - NIGHT - 1780'S**

Noise; smoke; the audience is sitting at tables for an evening of vaudeville. Mozart, Constanze and their son Karl, now about two years old, and sitting on his mother's lap, are watching a parody scene by Schikaneder's troupe. They are rowdy, bawdy and silly, incorporating motifs, situations and tunes from Mozart's operas which we have seen and heard. Before them on the table are bottles of wine and beer, plates of sausages, etc.

**THE PARODY**

On stage we see a set which parodies the dining room in Don Giovanni's palace, shown before.

Schikaneder as Don Giovanni is dancing with the three actresses to the minuet from Don Giovanni (end of Act I), played by a quartet of tipsy musicians. Leporello is handing around wine on a tray.

Suddenly there is a tremendous knocking from outside. The music slithers to a stop. All look at each other in panic. Leporello drops his tray with a crash. All go quiet. One more knock is heard. Then all musicians, actresses, Don Giovanni and Leporello make a dash to hide under the table which is far too small to accommodate them all. The table rocks. Schikaneder is pushed out. He is terrified. He shakes elaborately. Three more knocks are heard; louder.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Who is it?

One more knock.

**SCHIKANEDER**

C-c-c-come in!

In the pit a chromatic scale from the Overture to Don Giovanni turns into a anticipatory vamp. This grows more and more menacing until the whole flat representing the wall at the back falls down.

An absurd pantomime horse gallops in. It has a ridiculous expression, and is manned by four men inside. Standing precariously on its back is a dwarf, wearing a miniature version of the armour and helmet worn by the Commendatore. He sings in a high, nasal voice:

**COMMENDATORE**

(singing)

Don Giovannnnnnnnnni!



He tries to keep his balance as he trots in, but fails. He falls off onto the stage. He beats at the horse, trying to get back on.

**COMMENDATORE**

Down! Down!

Bewildered, the horse looks about him, but cannot see his small rider who is below his level of sight.

**COMMENDATORE**

I'm here! I'm here!

The horse, amidst laughter from the audience, fails to locate him. Exasperated, the dwarf signals to someone in the wings. A tall man strides out carrying a see-saw; on his shoulders stands another man.

The dwarf stands on the lowered end of the see-saw. There is a drum roll and the man above jumps down onto the raised end and the Commendatore is abruptly catapulted back onto the horse, only backwards so that he is facing away from Don Giovanni. The two men bow to the applauding audience, and retire off-stage.

The Commendatore tries to extend his arms in the proper menacing attitude, and at the same time turn around to face Don Giovanni. This he finds difficult.

**COMMENDATORE**

(singing)

Don Giovannnnnnnnni!

**SCHIKANEDER**

Who the devil are you? What do you want?

**COMMENDATORE**

(singing)

I've come to dinnnnnner!

**SCHIKANEDER**

Dinner? How dare you? I am a nobleman. I only dine with people of my own height.

**COMMENDATORE**

Are you drunk? You invited me. And my horse. Here he is. Ottavio!

The horse takes a bow. The dwarf almost falls off again.

**COMMENDATORE**

Whoa! Whoa! Stop it!

The three girls rush to his aid and reach him just in time. They sing in the manner of the Tree Ladies later to be put

into The Magic Flute.

**FIRST LADY**

(running and singing)  
Be careful!

**SECOND LADY**

(running and singing)  
Be careful!

**THIRD LADY**

(running and singing)  
Be careful!

**ALL THREE TOGETHER**

(close harmony)  
Hold tight now!

They grab him.

**COMMENDATORE**

(angry)  
Leave me alone! Stop it! I'm a famous  
horseman.

**OTTAVIO**

And I'm a famous horse!

He gives the ladies a radiant smile. The three ladies sing,  
as before, in close harmony.

**FIRST LADY**

(singing)  
He's adorable!

**SECOND LADY**

(singing)  
Adorable!

**THIRD LADY**

(singing)  
Adorable!

An orchestral chord. The three ladies turn to Ottavio and  
sing to him.

**THREE LADIES**

(singing together)  
Give me your hoof, my darling, And  
I'll give you my heart! Take me to  
your stable, And never more we'll  
part!

**OTTAVIO**

(singing: four male  
voices)  
I'm shy and very bashful. I don't

know what to say.

**THREE LADIES**

(singing together)

Don't hesitate a second. Just answer  
yes and neigh.

Ottavio neighs loudly, and runs at the girls.

**COMMENDATORE**

(speaking)

Stop it. What are you doing? Remember  
who you are! You're a horse and they  
are whores.

Boos from the audience.

**SCHIKANEDER**

(speaking)

This is ridiculous. I won't have any  
of it. You're turning my house into  
a circus!

A trapeze sails in from above. On it stands a grand soprano  
wearing an elaborate Turkish costume, like a parody of  
Cavaleri's in Il Seraglio. She comes in singing a mad  
coloratura scale in the manner of Martern aller Arten.

**SCHIKANEDER**

(speaking)

Shut up. Women, women, women! I'm  
sick to death of them.

He marches off stage.

**SOPRANO**

(singing dramatically)

Dash me! Bash me! Lash me! Flay me!  
Slay me! At last I will be freed by  
death!

**COMMENDATORE**

Shut up.

**SOPRANO**

(swinging and singing)

Kill me! Kill me! Kill me! Kill me!  
At last I shall be freed by death.  
At last I shall be freed by dea -

The Commendatore pulls out his sword, reaches up and thrusts  
her through with it. The soprano collapses on the bar of the  
trapeze. The audience applauds. At the same moment eight  
dwarves march in bearing a huge cauldron of steaming water.  
They sing as they march to the sound of the march that was  
cut from Act III of Figaro. They are dressed as miniature  
copies of the chorus in that scene except that they are

wearing cooks' hats.

**EIGHT DWARVES**

(singing)

We're going to make a soprano stew!  
We're going to make a soprano stew!  
And when you make a soprano stew!  
Any stupid soprano will do! Any stew-  
stew-stew-stew-stew! Any stewpid  
soprano will do!

They set the giant pot down in the middle of the stage. The trapeze with the dead soprano is still swinging above the stage.

We hear the chromatic scale from the Don Giovanni overture again, repeated and repeated, only now fast and tremolando. To this exciting vamp Schikaneder suddenly rides in on a real horse, waving a real sword. With this he cuts the string of the trapeze, and the soprano falls into the pot. A tremendous splash of water. Schikaneder rides out. More applause.

All the dwarves produce long wooden cooking spoons and climb up the sides of the pot. The three girls produce labeled bottles from under their skirts. The first is SALT.

**FIRST LADY**

(singing)

Behold!

**PEPPER**

**SECOND LADY**

(singing)

Behold!

She sneezes.

**AND SCHNAPPS**

**THIRD LADY**

(singing)

Behold!

She hiccups.

They throw them into the pot.

**COMMENDATORE**

(speaking to the  
dwarves)

How long does it take to cook a  
soprano?

**DWARVES**

(all together)

Five hours, five minutes, five seconds.

**COMMENDATORE**

(speaking)

I can't wait that long. I'm starving!

**OTTAVIO**

(speaking; four voices)

So am I.

Schikaneder marches in as Figaro.

**SCHIKANEDER**

(singing to the tune  
of Non piu ante)

In the pot, I have got a good dinner.  
Not a sausage or stew, but a singer.  
Not a sausage or stew but a singer.  
Is the treat that I'll eat for my  
meat!

**COMMENDATORE**

Oh shut up. I'm sick to death of  
that tune.

CU, Mozart laughing delightedly with the audience.

**THE THREE GIRLS**

(singing again to the  
horse)

Give me your hoof, my darling, and  
I'll give you my heart.

**COMMENDATORE**

Shut up. I'm sick of that one too.

All the dwarves climb up the rim of the pot. As they climb,  
they all hum together the opening of Eine Kleine Nachtmusik.

**COMMENDATORE**

And that one, too!

The soprano rises, dripping with water in the middle of the  
pot.

**SOPRANO**

(singing)

Oil me! Broil me! Boil me!

All the dwarves beat her back down into the pot with their  
long wooden spoons.

**SOPRANO**

(from inside the pot)

Soil me! Foil me! Spoil me!

**HORSE**

I can't eat her. Sopranos give me  
hiccups. I want some hay!

**FIRST LADY**

(singing to Schikaneder)  
Hey!

**SECOND LADY**

(singing to Schikaneder)  
Hey!

**THIRD LADY**

(singing to Schikaneder)  
Hey!

**SCHIKANEDER**

Hey what?

**ALL THREE LADIES**

(singing to La oi  
daram)  
Give him some hay, my darling, and  
I'll give you my heart!

**COMMENDATORE**

Shut up.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Leporello! We want some hay -  
prestissimo! Leporello - where are  
you?

The table is raised in the air by Leporello sitting under it  
on a bale of hay.

**FIRST LADY**

(singing to horse)  
Behold!

**SECOND LADY**

(singing to horse)  
Behold!

**THIRD LADY**

(singing to horse)  
Behold!

Ottavio the horse gives a piercing neigh and runs down to  
the hay.

**COMMENDATORE**

(holding on)  
Hey! Hey! Watch out!

The vamp starts again vigorously. The horse's rear-end swings  
around on a hinge to turn his hind-quarters straight on to

the audience. The rest of him stays sideways. His tail springs up in the air to reveal a lace handkerchief modestly hiding his arsehole.

Schikaneder offers him a handful of hay. The horse eats it, and out the other end comes a long Viennese sausage. The audience roars with laughter. Another handful of hay and out of the other end falls a string of sausages. Then a large pie, crust and all. Then a shower of iced cakes!

Suddenly - silence. Schikaneder produces an egg from his pocket. Ottavio the horse rears up in disgust.

**COMMENDATORE**

Whoa! Whoa, Ottavio! Whoa!

Leporello pries open the horse's mouth. Schikaneder pops the egg into it. A breathless pause as a drum roll builds the tension, up and up and up, and then suddenly out of the horse's rear-end flies a single white dove.

Wild applause.

It flies into the audience. Immediately all the cast start humming the lyrical finale from Figaro: Tutti Contenti. More and more doves fly out from the wings and fill the theatre. Everybody picks up the sausages and cakes and begins to eat. The end of the sketch is unexpectedly lyrical and magical, and then, suddenly, the tempo changes and the coarse strains of Ich Mochte wohl Der Kaiser take over and the whole company is dancing, frantically. A general dance as the curtain falls.

It rises immediately. The audience - including Mozart - is delighted. They applaud vigorously. Schikaneder takes a bow amongst his troupe. Among much whistling and clapping, he finally jumps off the stage and strides through the audience toward the table where Mozart sits with his family. On stage, a troupe of bag pipers immediately appears to play an old German tune. Some of the audience joins in singing it.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Well, how do you like that?

Mozart is smiling; he has been amused. Constanze has been less amused and is looking apprehensive.

**MOZART**

Wonderful!

(indicating his baby  
son)

He liked the monkey, didn't you?

**SCHIKANEDER**

Yes, well, it's all good fun.

**MOZART**

I liked the horse.

Schikaneder sits at the table, and drinks from a bottle of wine.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Isn't he marvelous? He cost me a bundle, that horse, but he's worth it. I tell you, if you'd played Don Giovanni here it would have been a great success. I'm not joking. These people aren't fools. You could do something marvelous for them.

**MOZART**

I'd like to try them someday. I'm not sure I'd be much good at it.

**SCHIKANEDER**

'Course you would. You belong here, my boy, not the snobby Court. You could do anything you felt like here - the more fantastic the better! That's what people want, you know: fantasy. You do a big production, fill it with beautiful magic tricks and you'll be absolutely free to do anything you want. Of course, you'd have to put a fire in it, because I've got the best fire machine in the city and a big flood - I can do you the finest water effects you ever saw in your life. Oh, and a few trick animals. You'd have to use those.

**MOZART**

Animals?

**SCHIKANEDER**

I tell you I picked up a snake in Dresden last week - twelve foot long - folds up to six inches, just like a paper fan. It's a miracle.

Mozart laughs.

**SCHIKANEDER**

I'm serious. You write a proper part for me with a couple of catchy songs, I'll guarantee you'll have a triumph-de-luxe. Mind you, it'll have to be in German.

**MOZART**

German!

**SCHIKANEDER**



Of course! What else do you think they speak here?

**MOZART**

No, no, I love that. I'd want it to be in German. I haven't done anything in German since Seraglio.

**SCHIKANEDER**

So there you are. What do you say?

**CONSTANZE**

How much will you pay him?

**SCHIKANEDER**

Ah. Well. Ah,

(to Mozart)

I see you've got your manager with you. Well, Madame, how about half the receipts?

**MOZART**

Half the receipts! Stanzi!

**CONSTANZE**

I'm talking about now. How much will you give him now? Down payment?

**SCHIKANEDER**

Down payment? Who do you think I am? The Emperor? Whoops, I have to go.

He rises in haste for his next number.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Stay where you are. You're going to like this next one. We'll speak again. Triumph-de-luxe, my boy!

He winks at Mozart and disappears toward the stage. Mozart looks after him, enchanted.

**CONSTANZE**

You're not going to do this?

**MOZART**

Why not? Half the house!

**CONSTANZE**

When? We need money now. Either he pays now, or you don't do it.

**MOZART**

Oh, Stanzi.

**CONSTANZE**

I don't trust this man. And I didn't

like what he did with your opera.  
It was common.

**MOZART**

(to Karl)  
Well, you liked it, didn't you?  
Monkey-flunki-punki.

**CONSTANZE**

Half the house! You'll never see a  
penny. I want it here, in my hand.

**MOZART**

(dirty)  
Stanzi-manzi, I'll put it in your  
hand!

**CONSTANZE**

Shut up! I'll not let you put anything  
in my hand until I see some money.

He giggles like a child.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SCHLUMBERG HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY 1780'S**

Dogs are barking wickedly. Michael Schlumberg comes in from  
his salon. Mozart stands there looking very unwell and  
bewildered. He is also drunk, but making a careful attempt  
to keep his composure.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Herr Mozart. What a surprise. What  
can I do for you?

**MOZART**

Is my pupil still anxious to learn  
the art of music?

**SCHLUMBERG**

Well, your pupil is married and living  
in Mannheim, young man.

**MOZART**

Really? Perhaps your dear wife might  
care to profit from my instruction?

**SCHLUMBERG**

What is this, Mozart? What's the  
matter with you?

**MOZART**

Well. Since it appears nobody is  
eager to hire my services, could you  
favour me with a little money instead?

**SCHLUMBERG**

What for?

**MOZART**

If a man cannot earn, he must borrow.

**SCHLUMBERG**

Well, this is hardly the way to go about it.

**MOZART**

No doubt, sir. But I am endowed with talent, and you with money. If I offer mine, you should offer yours.

Pause.

**SCHLUMBERG**

I'm sorry. No.

**MOZART**

Please. I'll give it back, I promise. Please, sir.

**SCHLUMBERG**

My answer is no, Mozart.

CU, Mozart. His voice becomes mechanical.

**MOZART**

Please. Please. Please. Please. Please. Please.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. THE IMPERIAL LIBRARY - DAY - 1790'S**

Von Swieten and Salieri stand close together. Several scholars and students are examining scrolls and manuscripts at the other end of the room.

**VON SWIETEN**

(keeping his voice down)

This is embarrassing, you know. You introduced Mozart to some of my friends and he's begging from practically all of them. It has to stop.

**SALIERI**

I agree, Baron.

**VON SWIETEN**

Can't you think of anyone who might commission some work from him? I've done my best. I got him to arrange

some Bach for my Sunday concerts. He got a fee - what I could afford. Can't you think of anyone who might do something for him?

**SALIERI**

No, Baron, no. I'm afraid Mozart is a lost cause. He has managed to alienate practically the whole of Vienna. He is constantly drunk. He never pays his debts. I can't think of one person to whom I dare recommend him.

**VON SWIETEN**

How sad. It's tragic, isn't it? Such a talent.

**SALIERI**

Indeed. Just a moment - as a matter of fact I think I do know someone who could commission a work from him. A very appropriate person to do so. Yes.

The opening measures of the Piano Concerto in D Minor steal in.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. THE COSTUME SHOP - VIENNA - DAY - 1790'S**

This is exactly the same shop which Mozart and Constanze visited with Leopold. Now Salieri's servant stands in it, waiting. We see a few other customers being served by the staff: renting masks, costumes, etc. One of the staff emerges from the back of the shop carrying a large box, which he hands to Salieri's servant. The servant leaves the shop. Through the window we see him hurrying away through the snowy street full of passers-by, carriages, etc.

**INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - DUSK - 1790'S**

The D Minor Concerto continues. Salieri, alone, eagerly opens the box from the costume shop and takes out the same dark cloak and hat that Leopold wore to the masquerade, only now attached to the hat is a dark mask whose mouth is cut into a frown, not a laugh. It presents a bitter and menacing expression. He puts on the cloak, the hat and the mask and turns his back. Suddenly we see the assembled and alarming image reflected in a full-length mirror. The music swells darkly.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. A SNOWY STREET IN VIENNA - DUSK - 1790'S**

As the tutti of the D Minor Concerto continues, we see Salieri, dressed in this menacing costume, dark against the snow, stalking through a street which is otherwise lively with people going to various festivities. Some of them wear frivolous carnival clothes.

**INT. MOZART'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK - 1790'S**

Mozart sits writing at a table. He appears now to be really quite sick. His face expresses pain from his stomach cramps. There is a gentle knock at the door. He rises, goes to the door and opens it. Immediately there is a SHOCK CUT:

The dark, frowning mask stares at him and at us. The violent D Minor chord which opens Don Giovanni is heard. Salieri in costume stands in the doorway.

**SALIERI**

Herr Mozart?

The second chord sounds and fades. Mozart stares in panic.

**SALIERI**

I have come to commission work from you.

**MOZART**

What work?

**SALIERI**

A Mass for the dead.

**MOZART**

What dead? Who is dead?

**SALIERI**

A man who deserved a Requiem Mass and never got one.

**MOZART**

Who are you?

**SALIERI**

I am only a messenger. Do you accept? You will be paid well.

**MOZART**

How much?

Salieri extends his hand. In it is a bag of money.

**SALIERI**

Fifty ducats. Another fifty when I have the Mass. Do you accept?

Almost against his will, Mozart takes the money.

**MOZART**

How long will you give me?

**SALIERI**

Work fast. And be sure to tell no one what you do. You will see me again soon.

He turns away. Mozart closes the front door. Instantly we hear the opening of the Requiem Mass (also in D Minor). Mozart turns and looks up at the portrait of his father on the wall. The portrait stares back. Constanze opens the door from the bedroom. She sees him staring up.

**CONSTANZE**

Wolfi? Wolfi!

He looks at her with startled eyes. The music breaks off.

**CONSTANZE**

Who was that?

**MOZART**

No one.

**CONSTANZE**

I heard voices.

He gives a strange little giggle.

**CONSTANZE**

What's the matter?

She sees the bag of money.

**CONSTANZE**

What's that? Oh!

(pouncing on it)

Who gave you this? How much is it?  
Wolfi, who gave you this?

**MOZART**

I'm not telling you.

**CONSTANZE**

Why not?

**MOZART**

You'd think I was mad.

He stares at her. She stares at him.

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823**

Old Salieri is now wildly animated, totally driven by his confession to Vogler.

**OLD SALIERI**

My plan was so simple, it terrified me. First I must get the Death Mass and then achieve the death.

Vogler stares at him in horror.

**VOGLER**

What?

**OLD SALIERI**

His funeral - imagine it! The Cathedral, all Vienna sitting there. His coffin, Mozart's little coffin in the middle. And suddenly in that silence, music. A divine music bursts out over them all, a great Mass of Death: Requiem Mass for Wolfgang Mozart, composed by his devoted friend Antonio Salieri. What sublimity! What depth! What passion in the music! Salieri has been touched by God at last. And God, forced to listen. Powerless - powerless to stop it. I at the end, for once, laughing at Him. Do you understand? Do you?

**VOGLER**

Yes.

**OLD SALIERI**

The only thing that worried me was the actual killing. How does one do that? How does one kill a man? It's one thing to dream about it. It's very different when you have to do it, with your own hands.

He raises his own hands and stares at them. The raging Dies Irae from Mozart's Requiem Mass bursts upon us.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

Mozart sits working frantically at this demonic music. His whole expression is one of wildness and engulfing fever. He pours wine down his throat, spilling it, and grimaces as it hits his stomach. All around him are manuscripts.

There is a banging at the front door. Mozart does not hear it; the music raves on. Another knocking comes, louder. Constanze appears from the bedroom and stares at her distracted husband. The knocking is repeated again, even more violently and insistently.

**CONSTANZE**

Wolfi. Wolfi!

He looks at her. The music breaks off. Silence. An enormous bang at the door startles him.

Constanze moves to open it.

**MOZART**

No. Don't answer it!

**CONSTANZE**

Why?

Mozart springs up. He is clearly terrified.

**MOZART**

Tell him I'm not here. Tell him I'm working on it. Come back later.

He runs out of the room, into his workroom, and shuts the door. Now a little scared herself, Constanze goes to the front door and opens it cautiously. Schikaneder stands there, floridly dressed as usual. Lorl is seen peeking out from the kitchen.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Am I interrupting something?

**CONSTANZE**

Not at all.

**SCHIKANEDER**

(peering into the room)  
Where's our friend?

**CONSTANZE**

He's not in. But he's working on it.  
He said to tell you.

**SCHIKANEDER**

I hope so. I need it immediately.

He pushes her into the room.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Is he happy with it?

He sees the manuscript on the table, and goes to it eagerly.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Is this it?

He picks up a page without waiting for a reply.

**SCHIKANEDER**

What the devil is this? Requiem Mass?  
Does he think I'm in the funeral  
business?



Mozart opens he workroom door. We see him as Schikaneder sees him: wild-eyed, extremely pale and strange.

**MOZART**

Leave that alone!

**SCHIKANEDER**

Wolfi!

**MOZART**

Put it down!

**SCHIKANEDER**

What is this?

**MOZART**

Put it down, I said! It's nothing for you.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Oh! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! What have you got for me? Is it finished?

**MOZART**

What?

**SCHIKANEDER**

What? The vaudeville, what'd you think?

**MOZART**

Yes.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Can I see it?

**MOZART**

No.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Why not?

**MOZART**

Because there's nothing to see.

He giggles triumphantly. Schikaneder stares at him.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Look, I asked you if we could start rehearsal next week and you said yes.

**MOZART**

Well, we can.

**SCHIKANEDER**

So let me see it. Where is it?

Mozart, with a bright, rather demented smile presents his head to Schikaneder.

**MOZART**

Here. It's all right here, in my noodle. The rest is just scribbling. Scribbling and bibbling. Bibbling and scribbling. Would you like a drink?

He giggles. Schikaneder suddenly grabs his lapels.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Look, you little clown, do you know how many people I've hired for you? Do you know how many people are waiting?

**CONSTANZE**

Leave him alone!

**SCHIKANEDER**

I'm paying these people. Do you realize that?

**CONSTANZE**

He's doing his best.

**SCHIKANEDER**

I'm paying people just to wait for you. It's ridiculous!

**CONSTANZE**

You know what's ridiculous? Your libretto, that's what's ridiculous. Only an idiot would ask Wolfi to work on that stuff!

**SCHIKANEDER**

Oh yes? And what's so intelligent about writing a Requiem?

**CONSTANZE**

Money! Money!

**SCHIKANEDER**

You're mad! She's mad, Wolfi.

**CONSTANZE**

Oh yes, and who are you? He's worked for Kings. For the Emperor.

(shouting)

Who are you?

Schikaneder suddenly takes Mozart by the arms, and speaks to

him with intense appeal.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Listen, Wolfi. Write it. Please.  
Just write it down. On paper. It's  
no good to anyone in your head. And  
fuck the Death Mass.

**INT. SALIERI'S SALON - DAY - 1790'S**

A frightened and tearful Lorl sits before Salieri.

**SALIERI**

Now calm yourself. Calm. What's the  
matter with you?

**LORL**

I'm leaving. I'm not working there  
anymore. I'm scared!

**SALIERI**

Why? What has happened?

**LORL**

You don't know what it's like. Herr  
Mozart frightens me. He drinks all  
day, then takes all that medicine  
and it makes him worse.

**SALIERI**

What medicine?

**LORL**

I don't know. He has pains.

**SALIERI**

Where?

**LORL**

Here, in his stomach. They bend him  
right over.

**SALIERI**

Is he working?

**LORL**

I'm frightened, sir. Really! When he  
speaks, he doesn't make any sense.  
You know he said he saw - he said he  
saw his father. And his father's  
dead.

**SALIERI**

Is he working?

**LORL**

I suppose so. He sits there all he

time, doing some silly opera.

**SALIERI**

(startled)

Opera? Opera!

**LORL**

Please don't ask me to go back again.  
I'm frightened! I'm very, very  
frightened.

**SALIERI**

(insistently)

Are you sure it's an opera?

The Overture to The Magic Flute begins grandly. To the music of the slow introduction, we see:

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

The room, lit by a few candles, appears dirty. The camera shows us again Leopold's portrait on the wall, looking down upon a scene of disorder.

Papers litter the table; dirty dishes are piled in the fireplace; on the forte-piano lies Mozart's Masonic apron, woven with symbols. To the more lyrical passage of the introduction, we see Mozart take up a candle and enter:

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

We watch him stand beside Constanze, who lies asleep. Mozart now looks very ill; his wife appears worn out. Tenderly he touches her hair. Then he moves to the cot where his son Karl lies asleep and kneels, pulls up the child's little blanket and for a moment lays his own head down beside the boy's. Constanze opens her eyes and stares at him. Mozart rises and returns to:

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

The Introduction ends and suddenly the brilliant fast fugue begins. Instantly Mozart starts to dance to it, all alone: gleefully, like a child. He looks up at his father's portrait, and makes a silly, rude gesture at it. He is, briefly, an irresponsible and happy boy again.

Then suddenly there is a gentle knocking at the door. The music fades down. Warily, Mozart crosses and opens the door. The familiar dark chords from Don Giovanni cut across the happy music. It ends. Before him stands the masked stranger.

**MOZART**

I don't have it yet. It's not  
finished. I'm sorry, but I need more  
time.

**SALIERI**

Are you neglecting my request?

**MOZART**

No, no! I promise you, I'll give you a wonderful piece - the best I ever can!

He turns and looks. Constanze has come into the living room. Nervously, Mozart indicates her.

**MOZART**

This is my wife, Stanzi. I've been sick, but I'm all right now. Aren't I?

**CONSTANZE**

Oh yes, sir. He's all right. And he's working on it very hard.

**MOZART**

Give me two more weeks. Please.

Salieri contemplates them both.

**SALIERI**

The sooner you finish, the better your reward. Work!

He turns and goes down the stairs. Mozart shuts the door; he closes his eyes in fear.

**CONSTANZE**

Wolfi, I think you really are going mad. You work like a slave for that idiot actor who won't give you a penny and here. This is not a ghost! This is a real man who puts down real money. Why on earth don't you finish it?

He will not look at her or reply.

**CONSTANZE**

Give me one reason I can understand.

**MOZART**

I can't write it!

**CONSTANZE**

Why not?

**MOZART**

It's killing me.

He looks at her suddenly.

**CONSTANZE**

No, this is really awful. You're drunk, aren't you? Be honest - tell me - you've been drinking. And I'm so stupid I stay here and listen to you!

Suddenly she starts to cry.

**CONSTANZE**

It's not fair! I worry about you all the time. I try to help you all I can and you just drink and talk nonsense and - and frighten me! It's not fair!

Her tears flow. Mozart looks at her helplessly.

**MOZART**

Go back to bed.

**CONSTANZE**

Please! Let me sit here. Let me stay here with you. I promise I won't say all word. I'll just be here, so you know no one's going to hurt you. Please, please!

She sits down tearfully, staring at him.

We hear the Rex Tremendai Majestatis from the Requiem and see on the wall the portrait of Leopold Mozart looking down. The camera pans slowly downward from it back to the table. Mozart is writing the music. He looks up and sees that Constanze is fast asleep in her chair. Mozart gets up quietly. He puts on his hat and cloak, takes a bottle of wine and tiptoes from the house. Without stopping, the music changes from the heavy Requiem to the light-hearted patter of the Papa-Papa duet from The Magic Flute.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. SCHIKANEDER'S SUMMER HOUSE - NIGHT - 1790'S**

This little wooden structure stands in a courtyard in the tenement by the Weiden. Inside, we see a table, chairs, a forte-piano, bottles and a chaos of papers. Strewed about in the chairs are the three actresses, giggling. Schikaneder and Mozart, both drunk, are singing the duet of the two bird-people. The actor sings Papageno and the composer, in a soprano voice, sings Papagena at the keyboard. Absurdly, they end up rubbing noses and fall on each other's necks.

**EXT. VIENNA STREET - NIGHT - 1790'S**

Mozart, drunk and happy, staggers back through the snow. There are a few people about. He goes into his apartment

building.

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - DAY - 1790'S**

He comes through the door and stares across the living room at an open bedroom door. Puzzled, he crosses.

The bedroom is also empty. We see Constanze's empty bed; Karl's empty bed; empty closets.

**MOZART**

Stanzi? Stanzi-marini-bini?

He looks about him, puzzled.

**INT. FRAU WEBER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - 1790'S**

Frau Weber sits grimly talking. Mozart sits also, completely exhausted and passive under the rain of her constant speech.

**FRAU WEBER**

She's not coming back, you know.  
She's gone for good. I did it and  
I'm proud of it. 'Leave,' I said.  
'Right away! Take the child and go,  
just go. Here's the money! Go to the  
Spa and get your health back - that's  
if you can.' I was shocked. Shocked  
to my foundation. Is that my girl?  
Can that be my Stanzi? The happy  
little moppet I brought up, that  
poor trembling thing? Oh, you monster!  
No one exists but you, do they? You  
and your music! Do you know how often  
she's sat in that very chair, weeping  
her eyes out of her head because of  
you? I warned her. 'Choose a man,  
not a baby,' I said. But would she  
listen? Who listens? 'He's just a  
silly boy,' she says. Silly, my arse.  
Selfish - that's all you are. Selfish!  
Selfish, selfish, selfish, selfish,  
selfish.

And with a scream Madame Weber's voice turns into the shrill packing coloratura of the second act aria of the Queen of the Night, in The Magic Flute.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - NIGHT - 1790'S**

On stage we see the QUEEN OF THE NIGHT fantastically costumed, furiously urging her daughter to kill Sarastro. As she sings, we see the interior of the theatre, now re-arranged from when we last visited it to watch the Cabaret. An audience of ordinary German citizens stands in the pit area, or sits:

they are rapt and excited.

The theatre also possesses boxes; some of these show closed curtains - their inhabitants presumably engaged in private intimacies. In one of them sits Salieri.

**QUEEN OF THE NIGHT**

(singing furiously)

A hellish wrath within my heart is  
seething! Death and destruction Flame  
around my throne! If not by thee  
Sarastro's light be extinguished.  
Then be thou mine own daughter never  
more! Rejected be forever! So sundered  
be forever All the bonds of kin and  
blood! Hear! Hear! Hear God of  
Vengeance! Hear thy Mother's vow!

Thunder and lightning. She disappears amidst tremendous applause from the audience.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE THEATRE - NIGHT - 1790'S**

On the poster for The Magic Flute, the name Emmanuel Schikaneder should appear very, very large and the name of Mozart quite small:

I. & R. priv. Weiden Theatre  
The Actors of the Imperial and Royal  
Privileged Theatre of the Weiden  
Have the honour to perform  
**THE MAGIC FLUTE**  
A Grand Opera in Two Acts  
By  
Emmanuel Schikaneder  
(The Cast List)

The music is by Herr Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Herr Mozart out of respect for a gracious and honourable Public, and from friendship for the author of this piece, will today direct the orchestra in person.

The book of the opera, furnished with two copperplates, of which is engraved Herr Schikaneder in the costume he wears for the role of Papageno, may be had at the box office for 30 kr.

Prices of admission are as usual To begin at 7 o'clock

**INT. STAGE, AUDITORIUM AND WINGS OF SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - NIGHT -1790'S**

We CUT TO the scene immediately before Papageno's song, Ein Madchen oder Weibchen. Papageno, played by Schikaneder, dressed in his costume of feathers, is trying to get through



a mysterious door. A voice calls from within.

**VOICE**

Go back!

Papageno recoils.

**PAPAGENO**

Merciful Gods! If only I knew by  
which door I came in.

(to audience)

Which was it? Was it this one? Come  
on, tell me!

**VOICE**

Go back!

Papageno recoils.

**PAPAGENO**

Now, I can't go forward and I can't  
go back. Oh, this is awful!

He weeps extravagantly.

In the pit, Mozart indicates to the first violinist to take  
over as conductor. He slips from his place and goes stealthily  
backstage. We follow him. Over the scene we hear Papageno  
being addressed by the First Priest in stern tones.

**FIRST PRIEST**

(on stage)

Man, thou hast deserved to wander  
forever in the darkest chasms of the  
earth. The gentle Gods have remitted  
thy punishment, but yet thou shalt  
never feel the Divine Content of the  
consecrated ones.

**PAPAGENO**

Oh well, I'm not alone in that. Just  
give me a decent glass of wine -  
that's divine content enough for me.

Laughter. An enormous goblet of wine appears out of the earth.

We follow Mozart into the wings. Actors and actresses stand  
around in fantastic costumes. We see a flying chariot and  
parts of a huge snake lying about. Also the scenery door of  
a temple with the word 'Wisdom' inscribed on the pediment.  
Mozart walks to where there stands a keyboard glockenspiel  
with several manuals, and a musician waiting to play it.  
Silently Mozart indicates that he wishes to play the  
instrument himself.

On stage Schikaneder is being addressed haughtily by the  
First Priest.

**FIRST PRIEST**

Man, hast thou no other desire on earth, but just to eat and drink?

**PAPAGENO**

(Schikaneder)

Well!

Laughter from the audience.

**PAPAGENO**

Well, actually I do have a rather weird feeling in my heart. Perhaps it's just indigestion. But you know, I really would like - I really do want - something even nicer than food and drink. Now what on earth could that be?

He stares at the audience and winks at them. They laugh.

Now Papageno's aria (Ein Madchen oder Weibchen) begins. It is interpolated, as he pretends to play his magic bells, with the glockenspiel actually being played off-stage by Mozart. Schikaneder looks into the pit and does not see Mozart conducting. He looks into the wings and realizes the situation with amusement. He sings joyfully and the audience watches entranced.

**ANDANTE**

A sweetheart or a pretty little wife  
is Papageno's wish. A willing,  
billing, lovey dovey Would be My  
most tasty little dish. Be my most  
tasty little dish! Be my most tasty  
little dish!

**ALLEGRO**

Then that would be eating and drinking  
I'd live like a Prince without  
thinking. The wisdom of old would be  
mine - A woman's much better than  
wine! Then that would be eating and  
drinking! The wisdom of old would be  
mine - A woman's much better than  
wine. She's much better than wine!  
She's much better than wine!

**ANDANTE**

(encore, lightly, as  
before)

A sweetheart or a pretty little wife  
is Papageno's wish. A willing,  
billing, lovey dovey Would be My  
most tasty little dish.

**ALLEGRO**

I need to net one birdie only And I  
will stop feeling so lonely. But if  
she won't fly to my aid, Then into a  
ghost I must fade. I need to net one  
birdie only But if she won't fly to  
my aid, Then into a ghost I must  
fade. To a ghost I must fade! To a  
ghost I must fade!

**ANDANTE**

(encore)

A sweetheart or a pretty little wife  
is Papageno's wish. A willing,  
billing, lovey dovey Would be My  
most tasty little dish.

**ALLEGRO**

At present the girls only peck me.  
Their cruelty surely will wreck me.  
But one little beak in my own, And  
I'll up to heaven be flown! At present  
the girls only peck me. But one little  
beak in my own, And I'll up to heaven  
be flown. Up to heaven be flown! Up  
to heaven be flown!

At certain moments we see the stage from Salieri's point of view: Schikaneder singing, then pretending to play; and then we see Mozart playing the glockenspiel with great flourishes in the wings. Then, suddenly, the actor mimes playing, and no sound comes. He mimes again, but still nothing comes. He looks offstage in anxiety; there is evidently some commotion. People are looking down on the floor. The song comes to a near-halt. Schikaneder stares. Then the comedian signals to the deputy conductor to pick up the song and finish it. At this moment Salieri gets up and hastily leaves his box.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. WINGS OF SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - NIGHT - 1790'S**

We see the actress playing Papagena, wearing an old tattered cloak and about to tie a little painted cloth representing a hideous old woman over her face. She is looking worriedly down at Mozart, who is lying unconscious on the floor.

A few people around him are trying to revive him. One has put a wet handkerchief around his temples. Another is holding a small bottle of smelling salts. There are voices saying, 'Doctor! Take him to a dressing room. Someone call a carriage. Take him home.' Etc. Papagena is urged to go on stage by a distracted stage manager. Suddenly we hear the voice of Salieri.

**SALIERI**

I'll take care of him.

He steps forward.

**SALIERI**

I have a carriage. Excuse me.

The actors step back respectfully. He stoops and picks up the frail composer in his arms. Mozart is quite limp and Salieri has to fling his arms around his own neck. All this is watched nervously by Schikaneder on stage whilst performing his scene with Papagena as an ugly old woman.

**UGLY OLD WOMAN**

Here I am, my angel.

**PAPAGENO**

(appalled)

What? Who the devil are you?

**UGLY OLD WOMAN**

I've taken pity on you, my angel. I heard your wish.

**PAPAGENO**

Oh. Well, thank you! How wonderful. Some people get all the luck.

Audience laughter. The actress raises the little painted cloth with the ugly old face on it to show her own pretty young one to the audience. More laughter.

**UGLY OLD WOMAN**

Now you've got to promise me faithfully you'll remain true to me forever. Then you'll see how tenderly your little birdie will love you.

**PAPAGENO**

(nervous)

I can't wait.

**UGLY OLD WOMAN**

Well, promise then.

**PAPAGENO**

What do you mean - now?

**UGLY OLD WOMAN**

Of course now. Right away, before I get any older.

Laughter.

**PAPAGENO**

Well, I don't know! I mean you're a delicious, delightful, delectable little bird, but don't you think you

might be just a little tough?

**UGLY OLD WOMAN**

(amorously)

Oh, I'm tender enough for you, my  
boy. I'm tender enough for you.

Laughter.

**EXT. SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - NIGHT - 1790'S**

A waiting sedan chair. Mozart has recovered consciousness, but looks exceedingly ill. Salieri has set him down in the winter's night. Snow is falling.

**MOZART**

What happened? Is it over?

**SALIERI**

I'm taking you home. You're not well.

**MOZART**

No, no. I have to get back. I have -

He starts to collapse again. Salieri helps him into the sedan. The door is shut. The chair sets off and Salieri strides beside it, through the mean street. A lantern with a candle swings from the chair.

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

The door opens. Salieri enters carrying the lantern from the sedan chair. He is followed by Mozart, carried in the arms of one of the porters. The room is now really in complete disarray. The table is piled high with music: the pages of the Requiem lie amongst many empty wine bottles. The porter carries Mozart into

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

This room is miserably neglected. The bed is unmade, clothes lie about on the floor. A sock has been stuck into the broken pane of one window.

The porter lays Mozart down on the bed as Salieri lights candles from the lantern to reveal plates of half-eaten food and other signs left by a man whose wife has departed. It is obviously very cold. Another very small bed nearby belongs to the child, Karl.

**SALIERI**

(handing the porter  
the lantern)

Thank you. Go.

The porter leaves the room. Mozart stirs.

**MOZART**

(vaguely singing)  
Papa! Papa!

He opens his eyes and sees Salieri staring down at him. He smiles.

**SALIERI**

Come now.

He helps him to sit up and takes off his coat and his shoes and puts a coverlet around him.

**SALIERI**

Where is your wife?

**MOZART**

Not here! She's not well, either.  
She went to the Spa.

**SALIERI**

You mean she's not coming back?

**MOZART**

You're so good to me. Truly. Thank you.

**SALIERI**

No, please.

**MOZART**

I mean to come to my opera. You are the only colleague who did.

He struggles to loosen his cravat. Salieri does it for him.

**SALIERI**

I would never miss anything that you had written. You must know that.

**MOZART**

This is only a vaudeville.

**SALIERI**

Oh no. It is a sublime piece. The grandest operone. I tell you, you are the greatest composer known to me.

**MOZART**

Do you mean that?

**SALIERI**

I do.

**MOZART**

I have bad fancies. I don't sleep

well anymore. Then I drink too much,  
and think stupid things.

**SALIERI**

Are you ill?

**MOZART**

The doctor thinks I am. But -

**SALIERI**

What?

**MOZART**

I'm too young to be so sick.

There is a violent knocking at the front door. Mozart starts  
and looks around wildly.

**SALIERI**

Shall I answer it?

**MOZART**

No! No, it's him!

**SALIERI**

Who?

**MOZART**

The man. He's here.

**SALIERI**

What man?

The knocking increases in loudness, terrifying Mozart.

**MOZART**

Tell him to go away. Tell him I'm  
still working on it. Don't let him  
in!

Salieri moves to the door.

**MOZART**

Wait! Ask him if he'd give me some  
money now. Tell him if he would,  
that would help me finish it.

**SALIERI**

Finish what?

**MOZART**

He knows. He knows!

Salieri leaves the room.

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

Salieri goes to the front door and opens it to reveal Schikaneder, who has obviously come straight from the theatre. He still wears his bird make-up and under his street cloak, his feathered costume is clearly seen. He has with him the three actresses, also looking anxious and also in make-up as the three attendants in The Magic Flute.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Herr Salieri.

**SALIERI**

Yes, I am looking after him.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Can we come in?

**SALIERI**

Well, he's sleeping now. Better not.

**SCHIKANEDER**

But he's all right?

**SALIERI**

Oh, yes. He's just exhausted. He became dizzy, that's all. We should let him rest.

**SCHIKANEDER**

Well, tell him we were here, won't you?

**SALIERI**

Of course.

**SCHIKANEDER**

And say everything went wonderfully. A triumph-de-luxe - say that! Tell him the audience shouted his name a hundred times.

**SALIERI**

Bene.

**SCHIKANEDER**

I'll call tomorrow.

**SALIERI**

Yes.

(to the actresses)

And congratulations to all of you. It was superb.

**ACTRESSES**

Thank you! Thank you, Excellency!

Schikaneder produces a bag of money.



**SCHIKANEDER**

Oh, by the way, give him this. This is his share. That should cheer him up, eh?

**SALIERI**

Yes, indeed. Goodnight to you all now. It was perfection - truly!

**ACTRESSES**

(delighted)  
Goodnight, Your Excellency.  
Goodnight!

They bob and curtsey. Schikaneder stares at Salieri, uneasily, vaguely suspicious. Salieri smiles back at him and shuts the door. He stays for a moment, thinking. He contemplates the money.

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

Mozart is sitting up in bed, staring at the door. It opens. Salieri returns. He holds in his hand the bag of money.

**MOZART**

What happened?

Salieri pours the coins out of the bag onto the coverlet.

**SALIERI**

He said to give you this. And if you finish the work by tomorrow night, he will pay you another hundred ducats.

Mozart looks at the coins astonished.

**MOZART**

Another? But that's too soon! Tomorrow night? It's impossible! Did he say a hundred?

**SALIERI**

Yes. Can I - could I help you, in any way?

**MOZART**

Would you? Actually, you could.

**SALIERI**

My dear friend, it would be my greatest pleasure.

**MOZART**

But you'd have to swear not to tell a soul. I'm not allowed.

**SALIERI**

Of course.

**MOZART**

You know, it's all here in my head.  
It's just ready to be set down. But  
when I'm dizzy like this my eyes  
won't focus. I can't write.

**SALIERI**

Then, let us try together. I'd regard  
it as such an honour. Tell me, what  
is this work?

**MOZART**

A Mass. A Mass for the Dead.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. A SMALL DANCE HALL - BADEN - NIGHT - 1790'S**

Trivial dance music is playing. Constanze is doing a waltz  
with a young OFFICER in military uniform. At the moment we  
see her, she stops abruptly, as if in panic.

**OFFICER**

What is it?

**CONSTANZE**

I want to go!

**OFFICER**

Where?

**CONSTANZE**

I want to go back to Vienna.

**OFFICER**

Now?

**CONSTANZE**

Yes!

**OFFICER**

Why?

**CONSTANZE**

I feel wrong. I feel wrong being  
here.

**OFFICER**

(laying a hand on her  
arm)

What are you talking about?

**CUT TO:**

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

Mozart is sitting up in bed, propped against pillows. The coins lie on the coverlet; many candles burn in the necks of bottles. Salieri, without coat or wig, is seated at an improvised worktable. On it are blank sheets of music paper, quills, and ink. Also the score of the Requiem Mass as so far composed. Mozart is bright-eyed with a kind of fever. Salieri is also possessed with an obviously feverish desire to put down the notes as quickly as Mozart can dictate them.

**MOZART**

Where did I stop?

**SALIERI**

(consulting the  
manuscript)

The end of the Recordare - Statuens  
in parte dextra.

**MOZART**

So now the Confutatis. Confutatis  
Maledictis. When the wicked are  
confounded. Flammis acribus addictis.  
How would you translate that?

**SALIERI**

Consigned to flames of woe.

**MOZART**

Do you believe in it?

**SALIERI**

What?

**MOZART**

A fire which never dies. Burning one  
forever?

**SALIERI**

Oh, yes.

**MOZART**

Strange!

**SALIERI**

Come. Let's begin.

He takes his pen.

**SALIERI**

Confutatis Maledictis.

**MOZART**

We ended in F Major?

**SALIERI**

Yes.

**MOZART**

So now - A minor. Suddenly.

Salieri writes the key signature.

**MOZART**

The Fire.

**SALIERI**

What time?

**MOZART**

Common time.

Salieri writes this, and continues now to write as swiftly and urgently as he can, at Mozart's dictation. He is obviously highly expert at doing this and hardly hesitates. His speed, however, can never be too fast for Mozart's impatient mind.

**MOZART**

Start with the voices. Basses first.  
Second beat of the first measure -

**A.**

(singing the note)

Con-fu-ta-tis.

(speaking)

Second measure, second beat.

(singing)

Ma-le-dic-tis.

(speaking)

G-sharp, of course.

**SALIERI**

Yes.

**MOZART**

Third measure, second beat starting  
on E.

(singing)

Flam-mis a-cri-bus ad-dic-tis.

(speaking)

And fourth measure, fourth beat - D.

(singing)

Ma-le-dic-tis, flam-mis a-cri-bus ad-  
dic-tis.

(speaking)

Do you have that?

**SALIERI**

I think so.

**MOZART**

Sing it back.

Salieri sings back the first six measures of the bass line.

After the first two measures a chorus of basses fades in on the soundtrack and engulfs his voice. They stop.

**MOZART**

Good. Now the tenors. Fourth beat of the first measure - C.

(singing)

Con-fu-ta-tis.

(speaking)

Second measure, fourth beat on D.

(singing)

Ma-le-dic-tis.

(speaking)

All right?

**SALIERI**

Yes.

**MOZART**

Fourth measure, second beat - F.

(singing)

Flam-mis a-cri-bus ad-dic-tis, flam-mis a-cri-bus ad-dic-tis.

His voice is lost on the last words, as tenors engulf it and take over the soundtrack, singing their whole line from the beginning, right to the end of the sixth measure where the basses stopped, but he goes on mouthing the sounds with them. Salieri writes feverishly. We see his pen jotting down the notes as quickly as possible: the ink flicks onto the page. The music stops again.

**MOZART**

Now the orchestra. Second bassoon and bass trombone with the basses.

Identical notes and rhythm.

(He hurriedly hums

the opening notes of

the bass vocal line)

The first bassoon and tenor trombone -

**SALIERI**

(labouring to keep up)

Please! Just one moment.

Mozart glares at him, irritated. His hands move impatiently. Salieri scribbles frantically.

**MOZART**

It couldn't be simpler.

**SALIERI**

(finishing)

First bassoon and tenor trombone - what?

**MOZART**

With the tenors.

**SALIERI**

Also identical?

**MOZART**

Exactly. The instruments to go with the voices. Trumpets and timpani, tonic and dominant.

He again hums the bass vocal line from the beginning, conducting. On the soundtrack, we hear the second bassoon and bass trombone play it with him and the first bassoon and tenor trombone come in on top, playing the tenor vocal line. We also hear the trumpets and timpani. The sound is bare and grim. It stops at the end of the sixth measure. Salieri stops writing.

**SALIERI**

And that's all?

**MOZART**

Oh no. Now for the Fire.

(he smiles)

Strings in unison - ostinato on all - like this.

He sings the urgent first measure of the ostinato.

**MOZART**

(speaking)

Second measure on B.

He sings the second measure of the ostinato.

**MOZART**

(speaking)

Do you have me?

**SALIERI**

I think so.

**MOZART**

Show me.

Salieri sings the first two measures of the string ostinato.

**MOZART**

(excitedly)

Good, good - yes! Put it down. And the next measures exactly the same, rising and rising - C to D to E, up to the dominant chord. Do you see?

As Salieri writes, Mozart sings the ostinato from the beginning, but the unaccompanied strings overwhelm his voice on the soundtrack, playing the first six bars of their

agitated accompaniment. They stop.

**SALIERI**

That's wonderful!

**MOZART**

Yes, yes - go on. The Voca Me.  
Suddenly sotto voce. Write that down:  
sotto voce, pianissimo. Voca me cum  
benedictis. Call me among the blessed.

He is now sitting bolt upright, hushed and inspired.

**MOZART**

C Major. Sopranos and altos in thirds.  
Altos on C. Sopranos above.  
(singing the alto  
part)  
Vo-ca, vo-ca me, vo-ca me cum be-ne-  
dic-tis.

**SALIERI**

Sopranos up to F on the second 'Voca'?

**MOZART**

Yes, and on 'dictis'.

**SALIERI**

Yes!

He writes feverishly.

**MOZART**

And underneath, just violins -  
arpeggio.

He sings the violin figure under the Voca Me (Bars 7,8,9).

**MOZART**

(speaking)  
The descending scale in eighth notes,  
and then back suddenly to the fire  
again.

He sings the ostinato phrase twice.

**MOZART**

(speaking)  
And that's it. Do you have it?

**SALIERI**

You go fast!

**MOZART**

(urgently)  
Do you have it?

**SALIERI**

Yes.

**MOZART**

Then let me hear it. All of it. The whole thing from the beginning - now!

The entire Confutatis bursts over the room, as Mozart snatches the manuscript pages from Salieri and reads from it, singing. Salieri sits looking on in wondering astonishment. The music continues right through the following scenes, to the end of the movement.

**EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - WINTER NIGHT - 1790'S**

A carriage is driving fast through the night. Snow lies on the countryside.

**INT. THE CARRIAGE NIGHT - 1790'S**

The carriage is filled with passengers. Among them Constanze and Karl, her young son. They are sleepless and sway to the motion of the vehicle.

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

Mozart lying in bed exhausted, but still dictating urgently. We do not hear what he is saying to Salieri, who still sits writing assiduously. Mozart is looking very sick: sweat is pouring from his forehead.

**EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - WINTER NIGHT - 1790'S**

The carriage, moving through the night, to the sound of the music.

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

Mozart still dictating; Salieri still writing without stop.

**EXT. VIENNA STREET - DAWN - 1790'S.**

The carriage has arrived. Constanze and her son alight with other passengers. Postillions attend to the horses. She takes her boy's hand. It is a cold wintry dawn.

The music stutters to a close. End of the Confutatis.

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S**

**MOZART**

Do you want to rest a bit?

**SALIERI**

Oh no. I'm not tired at all.



**MOZART**

We'll stop for just a moment. Then we'll do the Lacrimosa.

**SALIERI**

I can keep going, I assure you. Shall we try?

**MOZART**

Would you stay with me while I sleep a little?

**SALIERI**

I'm not leaving you.

**MOZART**

I am so ashamed.

**SALIERI**

What for?

**MOZART**

I was foolish. I thought you did not care for my work - or me. Forgive me. Forgive me!

Mozart closes his eyes. Salieri stares at him.

**EXT. VIENNA STREET - WINTRY DAWN - 1790'S**

Constanze and Karl approach along the cobbled street, hand in hand toward their house. Snow lies in the street.

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN - 1790'S**

Mozart lies asleep in the bed, holding the last pages of the manuscript. Salieri lies across from him on Karl's small bed in his shirt sleeves and waistcoat. The child's bed is obviously too small for him and he is forced in to a cramped position.

**EXT. MOZART'S APARTMENT HOUSE - DAWN - 1790'S**

Constanze and Karl arrive at the door. They enter.

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAWN - 1790'S**

It is as disordered as before, save that the table, previously littered with pages, is now completely bare. Constanze looks at it with surprise and enters the bedroom.

**INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN - 1790'S**

Mozart is asleep in the bed. Salieri is dozing on the nearby child's bed. The room is full of the trailing smoke from guttering and guttered candles. Startled by Constanze's entrance and her young son, Salieri scrambles up. As he does

so, he attempts to button his waistcoat, but does it ineptly, so that the vestment becomes bunched up, making him look absurd.

**CONSTANZE**

What are you doing here?

**SALIERI**

Your husband is ill, ma'am. He took sick. I brought him home.

**CONSTANZE**

Why you?

**SALIERI**

I was at hand.

**CONSTANZE**

Well, thank you very much. You can go now.

**SALIERI**

He needs me, ma'am.

**CONSTANZE**

No, he doesn't. And I don't want you here. Just go, please.

**SALIERI**

He asked me to stay.

**CONSTANZE**

And I'm asking you -

She notices a movement from the bed. Mozart wakes. He sees Constanze and smiles with real joy. Forgetting Salieri, she goes to her husband.

**CONSTANZE**

Wolfe, I'm back. I'm still very angry with you, but I missed you so much.

She throws herself on the bed.

**CONSTANZE**

I'll never leave you again. If you'll just try a little harder to be nice to me. And I'll try to do better, too. We must. We must! This was just silly and stupid.

She hugs her husband desperately. He stares at her with obvious relief, not able to speak. Suddenly she sees the manuscript in his hand.

**CONSTANZE**

What is this?

She looks at it and recognizes it.

**CONSTANZE**

Oh no, not this. Not this, Wolfi!  
You're not to work on this ever again!  
I've decided.

She takes it from his weak hand. At the same moment Salieri reaches out his hand to take it and add it to the pile on the table.

She stares at him, trying to understand - suspicious and frightened and at the same time unable to make a sound. Mozart makes a convulsive gesture to reclaim the pages. The coins brought by Salieri fall on the floor. Karl runs after them, laughing.

**CONSTANZE**

(to Salieri)

This is not his handwriting.

**SALIERI**

No. I was assisting him. He asked me.

**CONSTANZE**

He's not going to work on this anymore. It is making him ill. Please.

She extends her hand for the Requiem, as she stands up. Salieri hesitates.

**CONSTANZE**

(hard)

Please.

With extreme reluctance - it costs him agony to do it - Salieri hands over the score of the Requiem to her.

**CONSTANZE**

Thank you.

She marches with the manuscript over to a large chest in the room, opens it, throws the manuscript inside, shuts the lid, locks it and pockets the key. Involuntarily Salieri stretches out his arms for the lost manuscript.

**SALIERI**

But - but - but -

She turns and faces him.

**CONSTANZE**

Good night.

He stares at her, stunned.

**CONSTANZE**

I regret we have no servants to show you out, Herr Salieri. Respect my wish and go.

**SALIERI**

Madame, I will respect his. He asked me to stay here.

They look at each other in mutual hatred. She turns to the bed. Mozart appears to have gone to sleep again.

**CONSTANZE**

Wolfi?  
(louder)  
Wolfi?

She moves to the bed. The child is playing with the coins on the floor. Faintly we hear the start of the Lacrimosa from the Requiem. Salieri watches as she touches her husband's hand. As the music grows, we realize that Mozart is dead.

CU, Constanze staring wide-eyed in dawning apprehension.

CU, Salieri also comprehending that he has been cheated.

The music rises.

CU, The child on the floor, playing with the money.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. STEPHEN'S CATHEDRAL - VIENNA - A RAINY DAY - 1790'S**

The Lacrimosa continues through all of the following: a small group of people emerges from the side door into the raw, wet day, accompanying a cheap wooden coffin. The coffin is borne by a gravedigger and Schikaneder in mourning clothes. They load it onto a cart, drawn by a poor black horse. All the rest are in black, also: Salieri, Von Swieten, Constanze and her son, Karl, Madame Weber and her youngest daughter Sophie, and even Lort, the maid. It is drizzling. The cart sets off. The group follows.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE CITY WALLS OF VIENNA - RAINY DAY - 1790'S**

The group has already passed beyond the city limits following the miserable cart. The Lacrimosa accompanies them with its measured thread.

The drizzle of rain has now become heavy. One by one, the group breaks up and shelters under the trees. The cart moves on toward the cemetery, alone, followed by nobody, growing more and more distant. They watch it go.

Salieri and Von Swieten shake hands mournfully, the water soaking their black tall hats. Schikaneder is in tears. Constanze is near collapse. Salieri moves to assist her, but she turns away from him, seeking the arm of Cavalieri. Madame Weber takes Karl's hand.

The music builds to its climax on Dona Eis Pacem! We CUT back to:

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING - 1823**

Morning light fills the room. Old Salieri sits weeping convulsively, as the music stops. Tears stream down his face. Vogler watches him, amazed.

**VOGLER**

Why? Why? Why? Why add to your misery by confessing to murder? You didn't kill him.

**OLD SALIERI**

I did.

**VOGLER**

No, you didn't!

**OLD SALIERI**

I poisoned his life.

**VOGLER**

But not his body.

**OLD SALIERI**

What difference does that make?

**VOGLER**

My son, why should you want all Vienna to believe you a murderer? Is that your penance? Is it?

**OLD SALIERI**

No, Father. From now on no one will be able to speak of Mozart without thinking of me. Whenever they say Mozart with love, they'll have to say Salieri with loathing. And that's my immortality - at last! Our names will be tied together for eternity - his in fame and mine in infamy. At least it's better than the total oblivion he'd planned for me, your merciful God!

**VOGLER**

Oh my son, my poor son!

**OLD SALIERI**

Don't pity me. Pity yourself. You serve a wicked God. He killed Mozart, not I. Took him, snatched him away, without pity. He destroyed His beloved rather than let a mediocrity like me get the smallest share in his glory. He doesn't care. Understand that. God cares nothing for the man He denies and nothing either for the man He uses. He broke Mozart in half when He'd finished with him, and threw him away. Like an old, worn out flute.

**EXT. CEMETERY OF ST. MARX - LATE AFTERNOON - 1790'S**

The rain has eased off. A LOCAL PRIEST with two boy acolytes is standing beside an open communal grave. Mozart's body is lifted out of the cheap pine box in a sack.

We see that the grave contains twenty other such sacks. The gravedigger throws the one containing Mozart amongst the others. An assistant pours quicklime over the whole pile of them. The acolytes swing their censers.

**LOCAL PRIEST**

The Lord giveth. The Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

**CUT BACK TO:**

**INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING - 1823**

**OLD SALIERI**

Why did He do it? Why didn't He kill me? I had no value. What was the use, keeping me alive for thirty-two years of torture? Thirty-two years of honours and awards.

He tears off the Civilian Medal and Chain with which the Emperor invested him and has been wearing the whole time and throws it across the room.

**OLD SALIERI**

Being bowed to and saluted, called 'distinguished - distinguished Salieri' - by men incapable of distinguishing! Thirty-two years of meaningless fame to end up alone in my room, watching myself become extinct. My music growing fainter, all the time fainter, until no one plays it at all. And his growing louder, filling the world with wonder.

And everyone who loves my sacred art  
crying, Mozart! Bless you, Mozart.

The door opens. An attendant comes in, cheerful and hearty.

**ATTENDANT**

Good morning, Professor! Time for  
the water closet. And then we've got  
your favourite breakfast for you -  
sugar-rolls.

(to Vogler)

He loves those. Fresh sugar-rolls.

Salieri ignores him and stares only at the priest, who stares  
back.

**OLD SALIERI**

Goodbye, Father. I'll speak for you.  
I speak for all mediocrities in the  
world. I am their champion. I am  
their patron saint. On their behalf  
I deny Him, your God of no mercy.  
Your God who tortures men with  
longings they can never fulfill. He  
may forgive me: I shall never forgive  
Him.

He signs to the attendant, who wheels him in his chair out  
of the room. The priest stares after him.

**INT. CORRIDOR OF THE HOSPITAL - MORNING**

The corridor is filled with patients in white linen smocks,  
all taking their morning exercise walk in the care of nurses  
and nuns. They form a long, wretched, strange procession -  
some of them are clearly very disturbed. As Old Salieri is  
pushed through them in his wheelchair, he lifts his hands to  
them in benediction.

**OLD SALIERI**

Mediocrities everywhere, now and to  
come: I absolve you all! Amen! Amen!  
Amen!

Finally, he turns full-face to the camera and blesses us the  
audience, making the Sign of the Cross. Underneath we hear,  
stealing in and growing louder, the tremendous Masonic Funeral  
Music of Mozart.

On the last four chords, we

**FADE OUT:**

**THE END**