

# **Amadeus**

by

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Final Draft

FADE IN:

Total darkness. An OLD MAN'S VOICE rings out, distinct and in distress. He uses a mixture of English and occasionally Italian.

OLD SALIERI  
Mozart! Mozart! Mozart. Forgive  
me! Forgive your assassin!  
Mozart!

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

Flickeringly, an eighteenth century balustrade and a flight of stone stairs illuminate.

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! Pietet! Pietet!  
Forgive your assassin! Forgive  
me! Forgive! Forgive!

VALET

(looking up to the  
window)  
That's all right, Signore!  
(MORE)

VALET (CONT'D)

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.

**INT. LANDING OUTSIDE OLD SALIERI'S SALON - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)**

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.

**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.

Old Salieri 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 -**

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...

**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!

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

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.

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?

**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.

The 17th-century church sits 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.

The TWELVE-YEAR-OLD SALIERI is 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 -**

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.

(MORE)

OLD SALIERI (CONT'D)

And it was wonderful! Everybody liked me. I liked myself. I was the most successful musician in Vienna. And the happiest.

OLD SALIERI (CONT'D)

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.

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**

Through the open door Salieri sees several tables, dressed to the floor with cloths 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.

**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.

**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-woose?  
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

Say-I'm-Sick! Say-I'm sick!

CONSTANZE

Yes, you are. You're very sick.

MOZART

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

CONSTANZE

(working it out)  
Say-I'm-sick.

(MORE)

CONSTANZE (CONT'D)

Sick - kiss I'm - my Kiss my! Say-  
I'm-sick - Kiss my ass!

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

Uey-evol-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 ruffled and runs out of the room. Salieri watches in amazement and disgust.

**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.

(MORE)

OLD SALIERI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

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 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, Salieri 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.

Salieri reads 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.

(MORE)

OLD SALIERI (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 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 -**

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.

Greedily 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 curtsey, 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.  
 (MORE)

JOSEPH (CONT'D)  
 (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 mo  
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.

Cavaleri 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 we--

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

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.

JOSEPH

(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  
fiancee of Herr Mozart.

Constanze curtsies.

Cavalieri's astonished at the news.

Salieri watches 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. Salieri's off to the side.

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 younger 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,  
reading his father's letter.

LEOPOLD (V.O.)

I write to you with urgent news.  
I am coming to Vienna.

(MORE)

LEOPOLD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

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, 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.

(MORE)

MOZART (V.O.) (CONT'D)

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.

(MORE)

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

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.

**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!

**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.

**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.

**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.

(MORE)

CONSTANZE (CONT'D)

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.

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

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**

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.

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

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.

**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**

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!

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

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.

BACK TO:

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

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.

**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-  
 wouse? 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 (CONT'D)

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.

(MORE)

MOZART (CONT'D)

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.

(MORE)

SCHLUMBERG (CONT'D)  
 (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. 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.

**INT. A GROTTA 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 overbalances 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!

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 -**

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.

**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 Lorl, 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?

LORL  
Are you Herr Mozart?

MOZART  
That's right.

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

MOZART  
What?

LORL

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

CONSTANZE

What do you mean? What admirer?

LORL

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?

LORL

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.

(MORE)

CONSTANZE (CONT'D)

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 Lorl)

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.

**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 --

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

A carriage clapping 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 --

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

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 (CONT'D)

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.

**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 -**

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 in 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 balleteo 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.

Mozart at the forte-piano, raises 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 --

#### **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.

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

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 -**

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 -**

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 -

**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.

**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:

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 -**

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.

**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 curtsey, 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.

**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.

(MORE)

MOZART (CONT'D)

(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.

(MORE)

OLD SALIERI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

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 -**

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.

**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!

**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:

DWARF COMMENDATORE  
(singing)  
Don Giovannnnnnnnnnni!

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.

DWARF COMMENDATORE (CONT'D)  
Down! Down!

Bewildered, the horse looks about him, but cannot see his small rider who is below his level of sight.

DWARF 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 Giovannnnnnnnnnni!

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.

DWARF 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.

DWARF 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.

DWARF 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 Cavalieri'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!

DWARF 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.

DWARF COMMENDATORE

(speaking to the  
dwarves)

How long does it take to cook a  
Soprano?

DWARVES

(all together)

Five hours, five minutes, five  
seconds.

DWARF 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,  
(MORE)

SCHIKANEDER (CONT'D)  
 but a singer. Not a sausage or  
 stew but a singer. Is the treat  
 that I'll eat for my meat!

DWARF 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.

DWARF 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.

DWARF 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!

OTTAVIO  
 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!

DWARF 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.

DWARF 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.

DWARF 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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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 -**

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.

(MORE)

OLD SALIERI (CONT'D)

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.

**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. Lort 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 the 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?

(MORE)

CONSTANZE (CONT'D)  
 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  
the 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.

**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. Strewn 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.

(MORE)

## QUEEN OF THE NIGHT (CONT'D)

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.

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE THEATRE - NIGHT - 1790'S**

On the POSTER FOR THE MAGIC FLUTE, the name Emmanuel Schikaneder appears 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.

PAPAGENO (CONT'D)

(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)

A sweetheart or a pretty little  
wife is Papageno's wish.

(MORE)

PAPAGENO (CONT'D)

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)

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.

#### **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.

**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?

**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.

MOZART (CONT'D)

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

Wolfi, 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.

**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 Lorl, the maid. It is drizzling. The cart  
sets off.

The group follows.

**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 -**

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.

(MORE)

OLD SALIERI (CONT'D)

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 are 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 -

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