

A Context for Mozart's French Ariettes: The Wendling Family and Friedrich Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*

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This essay examines Mozart's relationship to the Wendling family and the French ariettes he wrote during his visit to Mannheim. Through documentary evidence we glimpse the underside of court life, involving an affair between Elisabeth Augusta Wendling and Elector Palatine Carl Theodor. Six years after Mozart's visit, Friedrich Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* was performed at the Mannheim National Theater in 1784. The goal of the essay is first to draw connections between Mozart and the Wendlings, and second to consider Schiller's fictional Luisa Miller, her father, and mother—a family possibly modeled on the Wendlings.

The Wendling Family

Among the friends Mozart made during his visit to the Mannheim court in 1777–78 were the Wendlings—Johann Baptist, his wife Dorothea, and their daughter Elisabeth Augusta—whom Mozart first met on November 8, 1777, a few days after his arrival:

Today after lunch at about two o'clock I went with Cannabich to the flautist Wendling. There everyone was extremely polite. The daughter, <who was once the elector's mistress>, plays the keyboard quite nicely. After that I played myself. I was in such an excellent mood that I cannot describe it. I played nothing but from my head, and three duets with violin which I had never seen in my life, and whose author I had never even heard of. They were all so content that I had to kiss the women. With the daughter it was not hard for me, for she is no dog. (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:110)¹

The flautist Johann Baptist Wendling had joined the Mannheim orchestra in 1751 or 1752, and in a short time became principal flautist at the court. He gave private flute lessons to Elector Palatine Carl Theodor, and eventually visited London and Paris, where he performed and published his own music.² Dorothea Wendling was born at Stuttgart in 1736 to a family of musicians named Spurni, and she married Johann Baptist Wendling on January 9, 1752. According to an early biographer, she “lived with him in a happy marriage” (*lebte mit ihm in glücklicher Ehe*, Lipowsky 1811:386). Later that year she was appointed a singer at the Mannheim court, and at the

age of sixteen she made her debut in Baldassare Galuppi's *Antigona* (1753). She appeared as prima donna for the first time in 1758 in Ignaz Holzbauer's *Nitteti*, and for the next twenty years she was the most celebrated soprano at the Mannheim court. Her last and most famous role was Ilia in Mozart's *Idomeneo* (Munich, 1781).³ The concert aria (K. 294a) that Mozart wrote for her in Mannheim in 1778 was undoubtedly an impetus for Holzbauer's one-act opera, *La morte di Didone* (1779), based on Metastasio's *Didone abbandonata* and which featured Dorothea in the title role.⁴

Elisabeth Augusta, the only surviving daughter of the Wendlings, was born on October 4, 1752. At the age of ten, she made her stage debut in Tommaso Traetta's *Sofonisba* as the young son of Sofonisba, with her mother in the title role.⁵ By the time she was seventeen, she had appeared in several comic operas, including the role of La Cecchina in Niccolò Piccinni's *La buona figliuola* in November 1769.⁶ In a letter of November 20, 1777, Maria Anna Mozart mentions:

Yesterday, on St. Elizabeth's Day, Wolfgang and I ate with Herr and Madame Wendling, namely, the flautist; Wolfgang gets along well with them; they have an only daughter who is very beautiful, and whom Bach in England wanted to marry; she has been sickly for more than a year and a half, because she has not been cured completely of a fever; it is too bad about this person. (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:136)⁷

Both Wolfgang and his mother indicate that Elisabeth Augusta Wendling was very beautiful, and that at some point she had been the mistress of Carl Theodor. Furthermore, we learn that Johann Christian Bach, who had befriended the Mozarts during their trip to London in the 1760s and who subsequently wrote two operas for the Mannheim court in the 1770s, had wanted to marry her.

Mozart's Ariettes

Wolfgang enjoyed the company of the Wendlings, especially the good-looking daughter, and mainly out of friendship wrote two French ariettes (K. 307 and 308) for Elisabeth Augusta. These are the only two songs Mozart is known to have composed with French texts, and they served as preparatory work for his anticipated trip to Paris; there he wrote several sets of keyboard variations based on French songs, including "Lison dort" (K. 264), "Ah, vous dirai-je Maman" (K. 265), "La belle Française" (K. 353), and "Je suis Lindor" (K. 354). On February 7, 1778, Mozart wrote to his father:

The Wendlings are all of the opinion that my compositions will be extraordinarily well received in Paris. That doesn't cause me any fear, for I can, as you know, quite easily adopt or imitate any kind and any style of composition. I composed for Mlle. Gustl (the daughter), shortly after my arrival, a French song, for which she gave me the words, and which she sings extremely well. Here I have the honor to send it to you. At the Wendlings it is sung every day; they are completely crazy about it. (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:265)⁸

Although Mozart neglects to mention the words, it has been assumed that the first song he wrote was “Oiseaux, si tous les ans,” K. 307.⁹ Elisabeth Augusta selected the text, by Antoine Ferrand (1678–1719), from a chanson anthology.¹⁰ (The complete text and English translation are given below.)

<p>Oiseaux, si tous les ans Vous quitter nos climats, Dès que le triste hiver Dépouille nos bocages; Ce n'est pas seulement Pour changer de feuillages, Ni pour éviter nos frimats. Mais votre destinée Ne vous permet d'aimer Qu'à la saison des fleurs. Et quand elle est passée, Vous la chercher ailleurs, Afin d'aimer toute l'année.</p>	<p>You birds, if every year you leave these climes as soon as dreary winter strips our groves; It is not only for a change of foliage, nor to avoid the frosty weather. But your fate only allows you to love in the season of flowers. For when springtime is gone, you look for it elsewhere in order to love all year round.</p>
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Mozart's charming setting in C Major captures the mood of lost innocence inherent in the poem. After setting up a dominant seventh on “mais votre destinée” (in m. 27), an abrupt shift to the minor mode creates a chilling effect on the words “ne vous permet d'aimer / qu'à la saison des fleurs” (mm. 28–34; see example 1). But the major mode is restored in the next measure, the frosty weather dispelled. Mozart even introduces a bird call in the keyboard accompaniment (mm. 43–46) and freely repeats the affirmative final line, “afin d'aimer, d'aimer toute l'année, toute l'année” (mm. 47–53; see example 2).

On February 28, 1778, Mozart wrote, “I have promised the daughter a few more French ariettes, of which I began one today. When they are finished, I will send them on small paper like the first” (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:305).¹¹ He apparently only completed one other, “Dans un bois solitaire,” K. 308.¹² As with K. 307, the text by Antoine Houdart de la Motte (1672–1731) was probably selected by Elisabeth Augusta. The pastoral mood and content of the poem descends from Battista Guarini's *Pastor fido*, as well as the galant painting subjects of Antoine Watteau and his followers.

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Example 1: Mozart, "Oiseaux, si tous les ans," K. 307, mm. 26–34.

Musical score for Example 1, measures 26–34. The score is in 3/4 time and G major. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins at measure 26 with the lyrics "mais vo - tre de - sti - née ne vous - per - met, ne". The piano accompaniment starts with a *cresc.* marking and includes several triplet figures. The score concludes at measure 34 with the lyrics "vous per - met d'ai - mer qu'à la sai - son des fleurs;".

Example 2: Mozart, "Oiseaux, si tous les ans," K. 307, mm. 43–53.

Musical score for Example 2, measures 43–53. The score is in 3/4 time and G major. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins at measure 43 with the lyrics "et quand elle est pas - sée, vous la cher - chez ail - leurs, a - fin d'ai -". The piano accompaniment includes a prominent sixteenth-note pattern in the right hand and a steady bass line. The score concludes at measure 53 with the lyrics "mer, d'ai - mer tou - te l'an - née, tou - te l'an - née.". The piano accompaniment ends with a *cresc.* marking and a final *f* dynamic.

Dans un bois solitaire et sombre,
 Je me promenais l'autre jour:
 Un enfant y dormait à l'ombre,
 C'était le redoutable Amour.
 J'approche, sa beauté me flatte,
 Mais j'aurais dû m'en défier,
 J'y vis tous les traits d'une ingrante
 Que j'avais juré d'oublier.
 Il avait la bouche vermeille,
 Le teint aussi beau que le sien.
 Un soupir m'échappe, il s'éveille:
 L'amour se réveille de rien.
 Aussitôt déployant ses ailes
 Et saisissant son arc vengeur,
 D'une de ses flèches cruelles,
 En partant, il me blesse au coeur.
 Va, va, dit-il, aux pieds de Sylvie,
 De nouveau languir et brûler:
 Tu l'aimeras toute la vie,
 Pour avoir osé m'éveiller.

In a lonely and gloomy wood
 I walked the other day;
 a child slept in the shade,
 it was the fearsome Cupid.
 I approach; his beauty fascinates me.
 But I should have been careful,
 he has the traits of a heartless maiden
 whom I had sworn to forget.
 He had ruby lips,
 a complexion as beautiful as hers.
 A sigh escapes me, and he awakes;
 love wakes at the slightest thing.
 Immediately spreading his wings
 and grasping his vengeful bow,
 one of his cruel arrows
 wounds me in the heart, as he leaves.
 Go, go, he says, at Sylvia's feet
 will you languish and burn anew;
 you shall love her all your life,
 for having dared to awaken me.

This second French ariette (K. 308, example 3) is much more sophisticated and vocally challenging than the first (K. 307). For one thing, the female singer assumes a male persona, to “languish and burn” at Sylvia’s feet. Although Mozart could have set this as a strophic song (five stanzas of four lines each), he instead created a modified da capo form. The first stanza (mm. 1–15) begins in A♭ Major, with a cantabile theme, and the three middle stanzas form a continuous, contrasting section. The penultimate stanza modulates through a variety of keys and tempos in *Sturm und Drang* fashion before coming to a stop on the word “coeur” (mm. 42–57; see example 3). Mozart uses the first line of the last stanza (“Va, va, dit-il”) as a transition (Presto, mm. 58–62), returning to A♭ and the opening thematic material for the last stanza (mm. 63–77).

This song comes on the heels of three Italian concert arias that Mozart had recently composed for Aloisia Weber, Anton Raaff, and Dorothea Wendling (K. 294, 295, and 295a, respectively). All of these are mentioned in a letter of February 28, 1778, in which Mozart talks about tailoring the music for each individual singer. As with these arias, Mozart wrote the French ariettes to suit the taste and voice of Elisabeth Augusta. She and her mother were especially fond of French culture, and two years later, when Mozart was completing *Idomeneo* in Munich, Mozart warned his father and sister in a letter of December 5, 1780: “You must accustom yourself a little to kissing . . . Here as often as you come to Dorothea Wendling’s (where everything is half in the French style) you must embrace mother and daughter—but *nota bene*

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Example 3: Mozart, "Dans un bois solitaire," K. 308, mm. 42–65.

Allegro

Aus - si - - tôt dé - ploy - ant ses ai - les et sai - sis - sant son arc ven - geur,

46

d'u - ne de ses flê - ches, de ses flê - ches cru - el - les, en par -

51

tant, en par - tant, il me bless - se au -

55

Presto

coeur, il me bles - se au couer. Va, va, va,

cre - - - scendo

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va, - - dit - il, va, dit - il, aux pieds de Syl - vi - e,

on the chin, so that the make-up does not become blue” (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 3:49).¹³ Although the two ariettes are not as technically demanding as his opera arias, neither would be out of place in an opéra-comique or at the Concert Spirituel. Mozart could have written an Italian aria for “Gustl” as well, but he obliged the mother and daughter’s Francophilia, no doubt with an eye on his impending trip to the French capital.

Mozart had originally planned to accompany J. B. Wendling and the oboist Friedrich Ramm to Paris during Lent in 1778. However, Mozart’s infatuation with Aloysia Weber got the better of him, and he decided he would rather accompany her to Italy than go to Paris. As a rationalization for the change of plan, Mozart (and his mother) vilified the Wendling family. On February 4, 1778, Mozart wrote to his father: “Wendling is a thoroughly honest and very good man, but unfortunately without any religion, and so is his entire house. It is enough to say that his daughter was a mistress” (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:252).¹⁴ Although Leopold refused to give his blessing to Wolfgang’s trip to Italy, he agreed with his wife and son about the Wendlings: “As I said already, it is a good thing that you, my son, did not travel to Paris in that company. A father who discards his daughter in his own interests is detestable, and how can you rely on his friendship, when he has sacrificed his own flesh and blood to self-interests, and his honor squandered throughout the entire country as well as in neighboring lands?” (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:298).¹⁵ The sordid details that Leopold only hints at (discussed in the next section) do not leave a favorable impression of the Wendlings.

The Wendling Affair

During the summer of 1772, the elector did have an affair with Elisabeth Augusta, who from early May was singing in a comic opera titled *L’isola d’Amore* by Antonio Sacchini. The diplomatic reports of Count Andreas von Riaucour, Saxon ambassador to the Palatine court, make specific reference to the affair and the machinations behind the scenes. The first reference comes on May 12, 1772, when Riaucour writes from Schwetzingen, the summer palace of Carl Theodor:

There is every indication that the Elector Palatine has decided to take a new mistress, and the choice has fallen on the daughter of a singer, who combines very great beauty with the attractions of youth and a cultivated mind, which will certainly develop further with age. Her mother, who has sacrificed this young person for her own ambition, is of a malicious character, arrogant and unscrupulous in the methods that she employs to succeed in her plans. No doubt she has been involved in this affair and

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has permitted it to happen, and in addition is gaining a certain advantage by means of her daughter's influence on the elector.¹⁶

Is it possible that Dorothea Wendling was primarily responsible for getting her daughter involved in the relationship? If so, where was her father, Johann Baptist? During the spring of 1772 he was in London, where he made the acquaintance of J. C. Bach and performed in several concerts that season. In any event, Dorothea's aim to gain more influence with the court opera must have been transparent to an insider like Riaucour, who had been in residence at Mannheim longer than the Wendlings had been on the payroll.

By mid-July the affair had already begun to take its toll on the electress, who was spending most of her time at her own palace at Oggersheim, rather than with the elector at Schwetzingen. Riaucour reports:

Madame Electress Palatine and Princess Christine arrived here the day before yesterday to dine with the elector and returned that evening to Oggersheim, after having seen the Italian intermezzo called *L'isola d'Amore*.

We observed that Madame Electress was not terribly happy during the performance, and [it was because of] the choice that the elector made for the young Wendling to take the place of his former mistress named Seifert; this princess had marked kindness toward this young person, and especially for her mother, who is prima donna and who performed in the above-mentioned piece. As this last one is very conniving, one fears that in time she will have too much power over the elector. Madame Electress has enough sense to close her eyes to all this, however, since the elector provides for all the extraordinary expenses she has at Oggersheim and he continues to have feelings for her; but in her heart she is deeply hurt and does not hide it from her confidantes.¹⁷

The former mistress, Josepha Seyffert, Countess von Heydeck, was the mother of three daughters and a son, Carl August von Bretzenheim—all natural children of Carl Theodor. She had died in 1771. Josepha had been a dancer in the ballet corps, and she and her children were provided a comfortable palace close to the elector's residence. (Mozart gave the children lessons while he was in Mannheim, hoping to improve his chances for a permanent appointment at court.) Thus, Dorothea Wendling must have expected that an affair with the elector would be an excellent means of social advancement for her daughter.

According to Riaucour, however, Elisabeth Augusta's tastes were much more sophisticated than Josepha's, and in a short time she began to tax the elector's purse.

It is said that the elector is beginning to be extremely embarrassed by his new mistress, who has had an education quite different from her predecessors, who had been plucked from poverty and obscurity. She has a great desire for expensive things, which this prince does not like at all since he is particularly frugal, especially since he has four children, and it is rumored, that to avoid an even greater number, he will be giving her a husband; however, we do not know whether she will remain in her position or be forced to follow her future husband's path.¹⁸

We do not know to whom the elector might have intended to marry Elisabeth Augusta Wendling, but her father clearly hoped that she would marry his new friend from London, J. C. Bach. Having been commissioned to write an opera for Mannheim, Bach arrived on September 12, 1772, to complete and rehearse his opera and to conduct the premiere, as was the custom. Within a month of Bach's arrival, the elector's affair with Mademoiselle Wendling was over. Again, we learn from Riaucour:

Everyone is happy that the elector has given up his new mistress, not so much through any fault of her own, but rather because of her father and mother who are very intriguing and very malicious. They have already hatched a plot to reform the court and get rid of a great number of personnel and are anticipating their future credit and grandeur.¹⁹

Here Riaucour implicates both father and mother in the disastrous affair. What changes of personnel would have been worth risking their daughter's future happiness? Riaucour provides no further information, and opera at Mannheim seems to have continued as before. Bach's opera, *Temistocle*, had its premiere on November 5, 1772. It was so successful that Bach was commissioned to write a second one, *Lucio Silla*, based on the libretto that Mozart had set for Milan.²⁰

Schiller's Drama of "Intrigue and Love"

One other connection to the Wendling family has not yet been put forward. On April 15, 1784, Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* received its premiere in Frankfurt and was performed two days later at the Mannheim National Theater, two years after his first drama, *Die Räuber*, had created a sensation there.²¹ Students of German literature have sought to identify historical figures as models for the characters in the play, but have generally concluded that the Miller family—father, mother, and Luisa—were Schiller's invention. The resemblance between the fictional Millers and the historical Wendlings, however, seems more than coincidental. Schiller originally intended to call his play *Luisa Miller*, and as in Gotthold Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* (1772),

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Schiller was more concerned with developing the character of the title role than with the others. The tragic ending is a rewriting of *Romeo and Juliet*, with a series of misunderstandings and a delayed entrance leading to the accidental murder of Luisa and the suicide of her lover Ferdinand. For our purposes here, the most striking aspect is the domestic tragedy of the Millers' family life: a domineering mother, a protective father, and a daughter's lost virtue.²²

As in the novels of Jane Austen, Schiller subtly shows how music permeated the leisure time of the middle classes and the aristocracy. Herr Miller is described as a "city musician, or, as they are called in some places, a town piper" (Stadtmusicant oder, wie man sie an einigen Orten nennt, Kunstpfeifer), and there are references to music and music-making sprinkled throughout the play.²³ Miller uses musical analogies several times, most dramatically when confronting the President in act 2, scene 6: "Saving Your Grace. My name is Miller, if you want to hear an Adagio—with mistresses I cannot serve you. As long as the court has its own supply, the delivery is not up to us middle-class people. Saving Your Grace."²⁴ This is one of the scenes depicted by Daniel Chodowiecki in his illustrations of the play in 1786.²⁵ At the beginning of the second act, Lady Milford "sits at a keyboard and improvises" (sitzt vor dem Flügel und phantasiert), and in the penultimate scene Luisa asks Ferdinand to accompany her on the fortepiano.

The unnamed Duke in *Kabale und Liebe* is supposedly modeled on Karl Eugen, the music-loving Duke of Württemberg.²⁶ Schiller knew him well, having attended the elite Karlsschule in Stuttgart. The corrupt President in the drama was likely modeled on a court minister, Count Samuel Friedrich von Montmartin, and Wurm on his assistant, Lorenz Wittleder. Lady Milford (who is British in the play) seems to be a composite of a number of the duke's mistresses, but especially Countess Franziska von Hohenheim, who eventually became Karl Eugen's consort in 1785 and was supposed to have had a benevolent influence on him (see table 1). No doubt there were courtiers like Chamberlain von Kalb at every court, foppish and self-important and ready to say or do anything that might enhance their status. But the most interesting parallels are between the Miller family and the Wendlings.

Miller, Luisa's father, is a musician in the play and in the first scene is practicing a violoncello, but there are also references to the violin and flute. Although we are not told so explicitly, Herr Miller probably spends his days rehearsing and performing music in a variety of venues at the court, teaching pupils in his home or around town, and possibly composing music on demand.²⁷ Near the end of *Kabale und Liebe* there is an oblique reference to flute lessons, Wendling's principal instrument:

Table 1: Characters in *Kabale und Liebe* and possible historical models.

Character	Model
Präsident von Walter, am Hof eines deutschen Fürsten	Count Samuel Friedrich von Montmartin
Ferdinand, sein Sohn, Major	_____
Hofmarschall von Kalb	_____
Lady Milford, Favoritin des Fürsten	Franziska von Hohenheim, mistress and later wife of Karl Eugen
Wurm, Haussekretär des Präsident	Lorenz Wittleder, assistant to Count Montmartin
Miller, Stadtmusikant oder, wie man sie an einigen Orten nennt, Kunstpfeifer	Johann Baptist Wendling, principal flautist at Mannheim court
Dessen Frau	Dorothea Wendling, wife of J. B., and singer at Mannheim court
Luise, dessen Tochter	Elisabeth Augusta Wendling, daughter of J. B. and Dorothea
[References to Duke offstage]	Duke Karl Eugen von Württemberg

Ferdinand: Miller, ich weiß nur kaum noch, wie ich in Sein Haus kam—Was war die Veranlassung?

Ferdinand: Miller, I scarcely remember how I came to your house.—What was the reason?

Miller: Wie, Herr Major? Sie wollten ja Lection auf der Flöte bei mir nehmen? Das wissen Sie nicht mehr?

Miller: How so, Major? You wanted to take lessons on the flute with me? You no longer remember?

The most obvious attribute common to Luisa Miller and the Wendling's daughter, Elisabeth Augusta, is her uncommon beauty. C. F. D. Schubart singles her out as the "erste Schönheit" (most beautiful, Schubart 1806:144) in the Mannheim orchestra.²⁸ Miller's remarks about his daughter are equally applicable to Wendling's daughter (act 1, scene 1):

Miller: Das Mädcl ist schön—schlank—führt seinen netten Fuß. Unterm Dach mag's aussehen, wie's will. Darüber guckt man bei euch Weibsleuten weg, wenn's nur der liebe Gott parterre nicht hat fehlen lassen.

Miller: The maiden is beautiful—slender—turns a nice leg. Under the roof it can be as it may. One overlooks that in you women, as long as the dear Lord has not left you lacking on the ground floor.

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In act 1, scene 5 (again referring to Luisa):

Wurm: (*lebhaft*) Das schönste Exemplar einer Blondine, die, nicht zu viel gesagt, neben den ersten Schönheiten des Hofes noch Figur machen würde.

Wurm: (*animated*) The finest example of a blond, who, it is not too much to say, can still cut a figure beside the first beauties of the court.

And in act 2, scene 4:

Miller: Du aber auch mit deinen Vergißmeinnicht-Augen! (*Lacht voller Bosheit.*) Das hat seine Richtigkeit, wem der Teufel ein Ei in die Wirthschaft gelegt hat, dem wird eine hübsche Tochter geboren—Jetzt hab' ich's blank.

Miller: But you with your forget-me-not eyes! (*Laughs full of malice.*) There is a reason, whenever the Devil really has laid an egg in your household, a pretty daughter is born to them. —Now it's become clear.

At first glance, it would appear that Frau Miller has little in common with Dorothea Wendling. However, Schiller's audience would have been struck by the role Frau Miller played in encouraging her daughter to advance in society through a match to a higher class. Her rather naive view stands in stark contrast to Herr Miller's, who from the beginning (act 1, scene 1) understood the incompatibility of the President's son and his daughter:

Miller: Nehmen kann er das Mädel nicht—Vom Nehmen ist gar die Rede nicht, und zu einer—daß Gott erbarm? —Guten Morgen! —Gott, wenn so ein Musje *von* sich da und dort, und dort und hier schon herumbeholfen hat, wenn er, der Henker weiß! was als? gelöst hat, schmeckt's meinem guten Schlucker freilich, einmal auf süß Wasser zu graben. Gib du Acht! gib du Acht! und wenn du aus jedem Astloch ein Auge strecktest und vor jedem Blutstropfen Schildwache ständest, er wird sie, dir auf der Nase, beschwatzen,

Miller: Marry the girl he cannot. There is no question of his marrying her, and as for having her for a [mistress] . . . God help us! Good morning! —God, if one of these Monsieurs has already made the rounds here and there, and there and here, through the hangman knows what else, then my fine scamp has a taste for digging for fresh water. Be careful! very careful; even if you look through every keyhole and stand watch for every drop of blood, he'll sweet talk her right under your nose, and give the girl one, and escape,

dem Mädél Eins hinsetzen
und führt sich ab, und das
Mädél ist verschimpfiert auf
ihr Lebenlang, bleibt sitzen,
oder hat's Handwerk ver-
schmeckt, treibt's fort. (*Die
Hand vor der Stirn*) Jesus
Christus!

and the girl has a bad reputa-
tion for the rest of her life,
and remains behind; or else,
if she has a knack for work-
ing with her hands, she'll do
it. (*Hand on his brow*) Jesus
Christ!

Mannheimers were well aware of the elector's predilection for beautiful women, and of course he could not marry his mistresses as long as the electress lived. A visitor to Mannheim during the autumn of 1772 confirms the outcome of the recent events related by Riaucour:

The elector is extremely fond of women; one can always see lots of little electors or electresses at Schwetzingen. He had an Italian mistress [Josepha Seyffert] who died a short while ago. Now the position is vacant. The daughter of the flautist Wendling had pursued him and was tested for several weeks, but the elector became disgusted with her. The father had not wanted anything to do with it, so people say, but the mother had wanted it all the while. (Obser 1907:150)²⁹

Compare this with Miller's accusations of his wife (act 1, scene 1):

Miller: Das Blutgeld meiner
Tochter? —Schier dich zum
Satan, infame Kupplerin!
—Eh will ich mit meiner
Geig' auf den Bettel
herumziehen und das Con-
cert um was Warmes geben—
eh will ich mein Violoncello
zerschlagen und Mist im
Sonanzboden führen, eh ich
mir's schmecken lass' von
dem Geld, das mein einziges
Kind mit Seel' und Seligkeit
abverdient.

Miller: Blood money for my
daughter? Go to Satan,
infamous procuress!
I will go begging with my
violin and give a concert
for something warm . . .
I will destroy my cello
and put dung in
the sounding-board
before I'll eat from the
money my own child has
earned with her soul
and her salvation.

Later, in act 2, scene 5, Miller curses both the seducer and his wife who pandered to him. To which Frau Miller replies, "Do I deserve a curse, my daughter?" (Miller: Fluch über das Weib, das ihm kuppelte! / Frau Miller: Verdien' ich diesen Fluch, meine Tochter?)

By October 1772, Elisabeth Augusta was an attractive young woman of twenty whose reputation had become tainted. An independent witness confirms that, "Bach wanted to marry the young Augusta Wendling, but the elector had spoiled his right. The father was upset. [Bach] lodged with the

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Wendlings, and therefore all the arias that [Dorothea] Wendling sang were especially good. She sang beautifully and created the leading role of Aspasia” (Obser 1907:165).³⁰ Although Bach’s opera was a success (in no small part because of the interpretation of the prima donna), he must have been bitterly disappointed about Elisabeth Augusta’s affair with the elector, which ruined his chance to form a mutually agreeable alliance with the Wendlings. Apparently, it was an open secret that Johann Baptist was upset. If this is true, consider Miller’s lament (act 1, scene 1) in this context:

Miller: Das Mädcl setzt sich
alles Teufelsgezeug in den
Kopf; über all dem Herum-
schwänzen in der Schlaraffen-
welt findet’s zuletzt seine
Heimath nicht mehr, vergißt,
schämt sich, daß sein Vater
Miller der Geiger ist, und
verschlägt mir am End einen
wackern ehrbaren Schwieger-
sohn, der sich so warm in
meine Kundschaft hinein-
gesetzt hätte.

Miller: The girl gets all sorts
of Devil’s stuff into her
head; above all, with all that
wandering around in Fools’
Paradise, she cannot find
her way home any more;
she forgets, she is ashamed
that her father is Miller the
fiddler, and in the end she’ll
cheat me out of a decent,
honorable son-in-law, who
could have worked himself
so warmly into my patrons’
favor.

Conclusion

Although the Wendling family could have seen a production of *Kabale und Liebe* at Munich in the 1780s with Theobald Marchand in the role of Miller, no direct documentary evidence of their knowledge of the play or their reaction to it has come to light. If Schiller had explicitly modeled Frau Miller on the local prima donna, everyone at Mannheim would have known exactly who his models were. In fact, Schiller does hint at the identities in the following passage in act 2, scene 4, when Miller blurts out, “Orchestra! — Yes, where you, procuress, will howl treble and my blue hind end will perform the bass! . . . God in heaven!” (Orchester! — Ja, wo du Kupplerin den Discant wirst heulen und mein blauer Hinterer den Conterbaß vorstellen! . . . Gott im Himmel!) The term *Discant* (treble) is a synonym for *Sopranistin*, the professional title of a court singer. Unfortunately, we do not know for sure whether Schiller knew the Wendling family history. Yet it seems likely, given the location of the work’s premiere and the distinctive traits of the Wendlings, that Schiller used poetic license to transform this family of musicians into fictional characters caught up in a plot of “intrigue and love.”

The question remains: did her mother and father sacrifice Elisabeth Augusta's future happiness in an attempt to gain greater influence at Carl Theodor's court? Probably. Her health was poor, and she was never able to become a successful opera singer. She never married, and Leopold Mozart later mentioned that she had become the mistress of the intendant, Count Johann Anton von Seeau in 1784.³¹ Ultimately, she died at the age of forty-two in 1794 (her father and mother died in 1797 and 1811, respectively).

If Mozart had known Schiller's play, would he have made the connection between the Millers and the Wendlings? Again, we will probably never know. Mozart and the Wendlings crossed paths several more times, most notably in Munich in 1780–81, while he completed *Idomeneo*. Years later, Constanze Mozart claimed, "The most happy time of his life was whilst at Munich during which he wrote *Idomeneo* which may account for the affection he entertained towards the work" (Novello and Novello 1955:94). He also planned to write to the Wendlings about some concertos in January of 1783 (possibly the three he was completing to sell by subscription, K. 413, 414, and 415).³² On his trip to Frankfurt in October 1790 to attend the coronation of Leopold II as Holy Roman Emperor, Mozart met some of his Mannheim friends, including "old Wendling and his Dorothea."³³

Mozart's gift of the French ariettes must have given Elisabeth Augusta and her parents many hours of pleasure. At the same time, they give us a vocal portrait of an eighteenth-century singer.³⁴ The ariettes provide a small window into Elisabeth Augusta's intimate feelings just after a tumultuous time in her life: she chose the texts and must have influenced Mozart's musical setting, since we know he preferred to tailor music to his singers. Mozart says the ariettes were sung every day at the Wendlings, and thus we have a glimpse into the domestic life of a family of musicians. Elisabeth Augusta also happened to be the daughter of the soprano who created Mozart's *Ilia*. The desire for power and influence may have caused Dorothea to make poor choices, but Elisabeth Augusta apparently bore no grudge against her parents. (At least no letters or diaries with a contrary view have survived.) Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* also depicts a family of musicians, and while we have no proof, there is an undeniable parallelism between the family of Elisabeth Augusta Wendling and that of Schiller's Luisa Miller.

Notes

I read a version of this paper at the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies in Philadelphia in April 2000. I want to acknowledge Margaret Butler, Dexter Edge, Daniel Hertz, John Rice, Arthur W. McArdle, and Michael Ritterson for their many helpful comments. I also want to thank Karen Hiles and the anonymous readers for their help in shaping the revised version of this essay. Any weaknesses that remain are my responsibility.

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1. “heüt nach tisch gleich um 2 uhr gienge ich [mit] Canabich zum flutraversist wendling, da war alles in der grösten höflichkeit. Die tochter, welche <einmal Maitresse von dem Curfürsten war> spielt recht hübsch Clavier. hernach habe ich gespielt. ich war heünt in so einer vortrefflichen laune, daß ich es nicht beschreiben kann. ich habe nichts als aus dem kopf gespielt; und drey Duetti mit violin die ich main lebetag niemahlen gesehen, und dessen author ich niemahlen nennen gehört habe. sie waren allerseits so zufrieden, daß ich—die frauenzimmer küssen muste. bey der tochter kam es mir gar nicht hart an; denn sie ist gar kein hund” (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:110). The phrase in brackets, about the daughter having been the mistress of the elector, was written in the family code to avoid potential trouble with authorities. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. The punctuation and orthography of the texts follow the original.

2. On Wendling’s life and work, see Gunson (1999).

3. For a summary of her singing career, see Corneilson (2001).

4. See Corneilson (2000:38–39, 44–45).

5. This was not a mute role, but rather the young girl had to sing a short aria. When the opera was revised by Galuppi for Turin, this arioso was omitted, although the child portraying Sofonisba’s son received a small fee. See Butler (2001:158, 165).

6. Because of their similar names and since both appeared on stage at the electoral court, Elisabeth Augusta and her aunt Elisabeth Wendling (née Sarselli), the first Elettra in Mozart’s *Idomeneo*, have often been confused in the secondary literature. The Mozarteum in Salzburg owns a portrait said to depict Dorothea’s sister-in-law, Elisabeth Wendling. This is reproduced in color in Münster (2002:131, fig. 72) and in Leopold and Pelker (2004:80). However, little is known of the provenance of this painting, and it could possibly depict Elisabeth Augusta Wendling. Unfortunately, no other portraits of Elisabeth Augusta or her aunt are available for comparison.

7. “göstern als an Elisabetha tag hab ich und der wolfgang bey herrn und Madame Wendling gespeiset, nemlich bey den flautraversisten, der Wolfgang gilt alles bey ihnen sie haben eine einzige tochter die sehr schön ist, und die der Bach in England hat wollen heurathen, sie ish schon über 1½ Jahr kränklich, weil sie von einem fieber ist übel curiert worden, ist woll schade um dise pehrsohn” (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:136).

8. “beym wendling sind sie alle der Meynung das meine Composition ausserordentlich in Paris gefallen würde. das ist gewis das mir gar nicht bang ware, denn ich kann so ziemlich, wie sie wissen, alle art und styl vom Compositions annehmen und nachahmen. Ich habe der Mad:^{selie} gustl, | die tochter | gleich nach meiner ankunft ein französches lied, wozu sie mir den text gegeben hat, gemacht, welches sie unvergleichlich singt. hie habe ich die Ehre damit aufzuwarten. beym wendling wirts alle tag gesungen. sie sind völlig Narrn darauf” (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:265).

9. Köchel ([1862] 1964) assigns the song the number 284d, with the remark: “Komponiert angeblich Anfang November 1777 in Mannheim.” Mozart’s letter of February 7, 1778, implies that the song had existed for some time by then, but he neither gives a specific date of composition nor identifies its text. He sent a copy of the song—copied *gratis* by Fridolin Weber—to Leopold, who acknowledged receiving it in a letter dated February 16, 1778. The Wendlings presumably kept the autograph. Constanze eventually sent copies of the songs K. 307 and 308 to Breitkopf & Härtel in March 1799; see her list in Bauer and Deutsch (1962–75, 4:229).

10. According to Köchel ([1862] 1964), an exemplar is located in Florence at the Biblioteca del Conservatorio “Luigi Cherubini,” shelf mark, B 2949/1.

11. “der tochter habe ich noch einige französsche ariettes versprochen, wovon ich heüt eins angefangen habe, wenn sie fertig sind, so werde ich sie, wie die erste, auf klein Papiere schicken” (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:305).

12. Köchel ([1862] 1964) assigns this song the number 295b, with the remark “Komponiert angeblich Ende Februar oder Anfang März 1778 in Mannheim.”

13. “das küssen müssen sich schon ein wenig angewöhnen ... hier werden sie so oft sie zur Dorothea Wendling kommen |: wo alles noch halb französisch fuß ist :| Mutter und tochter Embraßirn müssen—aber NB: auf das kinn—damit der schminck nicht Blau wird” (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 3:49).

14. “der Wendling ist ein grund Ehrlicher und sehr guter Mann, aber leider ohne alle Religion, und so das ganze haus. Es ist ja genug gesagt daß seine tochter <maitresse> war” (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:252).

15. “daß du, mein Sohn, mit <diser Compagie nicht> nach Paris gereiset, hab schon gemeldet, ist ganz gut geschehen. <ein Vater der seine Tochter> aus interesse so hinwirft, ist verabscheuungswürdig, und wie kann man auf seine freundschaft bauen, da er sein eigenes Blut dem Eigennutzen aufopfert, und seine Ehre dadurch in einem ganzen Lande und auch in benachbarten Ländern in die Schanz schlägt” (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 2:298).

16. Riaucour’s report dated May 12, 1772: “<Il est des indices qui font présumer, que l’Elect’ Palatin s’est décidé pour une nouvelle Maitresse, et que le choix est tombé Sur la fille d’une chanteuse, qui réunit à une très grande beauté les agrements de la jeunesse, et un esprit cultivé, qui se développera certainement avec l’age. La mère, qui a Sacrifié cette jeune personne à Son ambition, est d’un caractère méchant, hautaine, et peu scrupuleuse sur le choix dex moyens qu’elle employe, pour réussir dans Ses projéts. Il n’est pas à douter, qu’elle ne veuille se meler des affaires, si on la laisse faire, et qu’elle gagne un certain ascendant par le credit de Sa fille sur l’esprit du Souverain.>” The passages in angle brackets were written in a numerical code and transliterated in Dresden. I want to thank Dr. Ulrich Leisinger, who checked my transcriptions of the unpublished Riaucour correspondence on location in Dresden: Riaucour, Andreas. 1772. *Acta, Des geh: Raths, Gr: von Riaucour, Abschickung an der churpfälzischen Hof und dessen daselbst geführte Negociation betr: anno 1772*. Loc. 2627, Bd. 25, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden.

17. Riaucour’s report dated July 14, 1772: “Madame L’Electrice Palatine et La Princesse Christine vinrent avanthier ici diner avec Msgr. L’Electeur, et retournerent le Soir à Oggersheim, après avoir vû la représentation de l’Intermezzo italien, nommé l’Isola d’Amore. <On a observé, que Madame L’Electrice n’etoit pas trop gaie pendant ce Spectacle, et on allége pour raison, le Choise, que l’Electeur a fait de la jeune Wendlin, à la place de Sa défunte Maitresse nommé Seifert; cette Princesse ayant toujours eü de bontés marquées pour cette jeune personne, et surtout pour Sa mère, lacquelle est première Chanteuse, & qui joua précisément dans la surdite Pièce. Comme cette derniere est fort intrigante, on craint beaucoup, qu’avec le tems elle ne gagne trop d’ascendant sur L’Electeur. Madame l’Electrice à trop d’esprit, pour ne pas fermer les yeux à tout cela, tant que L’Electeur fournit à la dépense extraordinaire, qu’Elle fait à Oggersheim, et qu’il continuë d’avoir pour Elle, au moins enterieurement, les attentions qui Lui sont duër; mais dans la fond Elle s’en chagrine beaucoup, et ne le cache pas à Ses Confidantes.>”

18. Riaucour’s report dated July 18, 1772: “<On dit, que l’Elect. commence à être extrêmement embarrassé de Sa nouvelle Maitresse, laquelle a eü une éducation bien differente de celle de ses prédécetrices, qui étoient tirées de la misère et de l’obscurité. Elle incline beaucoup pour la dépense, que ce Prince n’aime pas trop, étant singulierement économe, surtout depuis qu’il a quatre enfans, et on se dit à l’oreille, que pour en éviter un plus grand nombre, il lui

donnera un Mari, sans qu'on sache cependant, si elle restera sur le même pié, ou, si elle sera obligée de suivre le sort de Son future Epoux.>"

19. Riaucour's report dated October 13, 1772: "<Tout le monde est enchanté, que l'Electeur se foit défat de sa nouvelle Maitresse, non pas tant à cause d'elle, que pas rapport à ses Pere et Mère, qui sont très intriguans, et très méchants. Ils avoient déjà formé le prôjet, de réformer la Cour, et de disposer des employs les plus considerables, et avoient annoncé au dehors leur credit et leur grandeur future.>"

20. Naturally, Mozart wanted to see Bach's setting, which was performed in 1775, and borrowed a copy of the score from Georg Joseph Vogler. See Corneilson (1994:206–18).

21. Today, Schiller's bourgeois tragedy of "intrigue and love" is probably best known, at least in non-German-speaking countries, as the source of Verdi's *Luisa Miller*, first performed at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, on December 8, 1849. As is often the case, the operatic version bears only passing resemblance to Schiller's original drama. Verdi also based operas on Schiller's *Die Räuber* (as *I masnadieri*), *Jungfrau von Orleans*, *Wallerstein's Lager*, and *Don Carlos*.

22. On Schiller's early career, see Alt (2000). For an overview of early performances of Schiller's plays, see Rudloff-Hille (1969).

23. The musical references and allusions in *Kabale und Liebe* are documented in Fähnrich (1977:68–77). See also Longyear (1967).

24. "Halten zu Gnaden. Ich heisse Miller, wenn Sie ein Adagio hören wollen—mit Buhlschaften dien' ich nicht. Solang der Hof da noch Vorrath hat, kommt die Lieferung nicht an uns Bürgersleut'. Halten zu Gnaden." The German text of Schiller's play is based on the Projekt Gutenberg-DE available at <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/schiller/kabale/kabale.htm>.

25. In the background of this scene, a violin hangs on the wall. Other illustrations feature a violoncello and often show a trio of instruments in the background (violin, cello, and hunting horn). This series is reproduced in Henning (1976) in the unnumbered pages immediately following the facsimile of the first edition of the play, published by C. F. Schwan in Mannheim, 1784.

26. Charles Burney wrote of Karl Eugen: "His passion for music and shews, seems as strong as that of the emperor Nero was formerly. It is, perhaps, upon such occasions as these, that music becomes a vice, and hurtful to society; for that nation, of which half the subjects are stage-players, fiddlers, and soldiers, and the other half beggars, seems to be but ill governed. Here nothing is talked of but the adventures of actors, dancers, and musicians" (Burney 1775, 1:107).

27. For studies of the status and daily activities of German court musicians in the eighteenth century, see Mahling (1983) and Busch-Salmen (1991:128–30).

28. "Die Tochter dieses musikalischen Ehepaars war zwar ehemahls die erste Schönheit im Orchester; aber die natürliche Kälte ihres Charakters machte sie im Sang und Flügelspiel beynähe unbedeutend" (Schubart 1806:144). Schubart does not comment further on the "natural coldness of her character" that made her only of minor importance in singing and keyboard playing.

29. "L'Electeur aime extrêmement les femmes, l'on voit à tous momens des petits Electeurs ou Electrices à Schwetzingen. Il avoit une maitresse italienne, qui est morte depuis peu. Itzt vaciret der Platz. Die Tochter des Flutenisten Wendling hat ihn briguiet und sich einige Wochen auf die Probe gegeben, mais l'Electeur s'en est dégouté. Der Vater hat es aber nicht zugeben wollen, wie man sagt, die Mutter hat es aber durchaus gewollt" (Obser 1907:150).

30. "Bach hat die junge Auguste Wendling heyrathen wollen, der Churfürst hat ihm aber das Gericht versalzen. Le Père en est au desespoir. Er hat bei Wendlings logirt, und daher sind auch alle Arien, welche Wendling sang, vorzüglich gut. Sie sang sehr schön und machte die Hauptrolle der Aspasia" (Obser 1907:165). Hardenburg later became Staatskanzler at the Prussian court.
31. "die august wendling itzt die geliebte des Gr: Seeau ist etc: etc: etc:" (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 3:341).
32. "Nun muß ich schlüssen weil ich noch einen brief an die Wendling nach Mannheim wegen mein Concerten zu schreiben habe" (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 3:252).
33. "auch der alte Wendling mit seiner Dorothe" (Bauer and Deutsch 1962–75, 4:116). However, this letter does not survive in autograph, and it might be at least partially corrupt. Mozart attended the local premiere of *Figaro* at Mannheim on October 24, 1790, and also visited friends in Munich before returning to Vienna in November.
34. In 1777–78, Mozart was particularly interested in musical portraits, and in addition to these French ariettes, he depicted Rosa Cannabich in a keyboard sonata (K. 309) that he wrote for her in late 1777. See Mozart's letter of December 6, 1777. The work is discussed in Finscher (1992:76–78).

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