

Milan, 8th Dec., 1770

Today, after the prayer bells, there is the 2nd *recitative* rehearsal.¹ The first rehearsal went so well that only once was a pen taken up to change a single letter and alter *della* to *dalla*. This was to the honour of the *copyist* [5] and provoked amazement in everyone, since otherwise |: as they all said :| there is always an astonishing quantity of words and notes to be changed everywhere. My wish is that it will go similarly with the *instrumental* rehearsals, which, when you receive this letter, will perhaps already have started. As far as I can speak without paternal partiality, I find that he has written the *opera* well [10] and with great inventiveness. The singers are good. Now it depends on the *orchestra* and, ultimately, on the *caprice* of the audience. Much therefore also depends on good luck, as in a *lottery*. As far as Neapolitan hosiery is concerned,² please tell Herr M \ddot{o} lk,³ with my most obedient compliments, that the white Neapolitan hose may be strong, but not beautiful at all. [15] For this reason, they are mostly died black, and I do not doubt that he will find them at Herr Kerschbaumer's.⁴ If he had sent me a message while I was in Naples, I would have been of service to him. Yet, as I have said, the white ones are coarse, as he will see when I come home, for I wear them. One finds black ones everywhere. Whether they really are from Naples is another question. [20] They are simply made from a certain twisted silk, and this can be imitated anywhere. As far as my brother⁵ is concerned, you can make arrangements via Herr Hagenauer⁶ for Herr *Provino*,⁷ or someone else, to give him a ducat⁸ in your name, as if you were having them give it to him on your own initiative, without me. I will refund it immediately. I am writing this in haste. [25] We kiss you both many 10 000 000 times and I am as always your

Mozart

We commend ourselves to all good friends, both gentlemen and ladies, within and beyond the house.

You were generous to my brother!⁹

For I have now received your letter.¹⁰

¹ BD: Cf. No. 0211/18-10, where Wolfgang is composing recitatives for the opera *Mitridate, Rè di Ponto*, KV 87 (74a); the composition is marked "opera seria". Libretto by Cigna-Santi, based on Parini's translation of Racine's *Mitridate*. The date of the first rehearsal is not known.

² BD: Leopold's wife had obviously made an enquiry (No. 0221a, lost).

³ BD: Probably Royal Chancellor [Hofkanzler] Franz Felix Anton von M \ddot{o} lk (1714-1776).

⁴ BD: Johann Franz Kerschbaumer, a Salzburg merchant.

⁵ BD: Leopold had two brothers; it is not clear which one is meant here.

⁶ BD: Johann Lorenz Hagenauer (1712-1792), Salzburg merchant. Sometime landlord and friend to the Mozart family.

⁷ BD: A Salzburg merchant, already mentioned in No. 0053/9.

⁸ BD: = 4.5 florins.

⁹ BD: From No. 0230/14 it is clear Frau Mozart had sent him 20 florins.

¹⁰ BD: No. 0221a, lost.