

0224. LEOPOLD MOZART TO HIS WIFE, SALZBURG; MOZART'S POSTSCRIPT FOR NANNERL

*À Madame / Madame Marie Anne / Mozart / à / Salzbourg / par Mantua<sup>1</sup>*

A Blessed New Year!

Milan, 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1770

I am writing, indeed with God's help, once again this year, [5] but the letter will then arrive a few days too late. The 19<sup>th</sup> was the first stage rehearsal,<sup>2</sup> while the previous one, on the 17<sup>th</sup>, was in the ballroom.<sup>3</sup> It went thoroughly well, praise God. Yesterday evening there was a *recitative* rehearsal, and today, after the *Ave Maria*, there will be the second rehearsal on stage, and on Monday<sup>4</sup> the last *orchestral* stage rehearsal. Now, you know from the last letter and this one that there were 5 rehearsals in total, [10] namely one with few *violins*, one large one in the ballroom, and 3 on stage. How it goes on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> will be reported to you at once. My comfort is that I see that both singers and *orchestra* are satisfied, and I, praise God, also have ears myself. During the rehearsal, I positioned myself right back below the main entrance in order to hear the exact effect at a distance. [15] But perhaps my ears showed too much partiality! In the meantime, we see and hear that our good friends are in high spirits and happy, and are joyfully *congratulating* my son. The maliciously minded, on the other hand, are now silent. The greatest and most respected music directors of this city, who can be trusted completely, namely *Sgri. Fioroni*<sup>5</sup> and *Sammartino*,<sup>6</sup> [20] are our true friends, as are *Lampugnani*,<sup>7</sup> *Piazza*, *Colombo*<sup>8</sup> etc., and so the envy, or rather the incredulity and the plain prejudices which some are displaying towards of the composition by our son, will not be able to harm us much. At least, I hope that it will not share the same sad fate as *Sgr. Jomelli*,<sup>9</sup> whose second *opera* in Naples is now so thoroughly *à terra*<sup>10</sup> [25] that they even want to replace it by another. He, now, is one of these famous masters, one about whom the Italians make a terrible rumpus. But it was a little bit light-headed of him to undertake to write 2 *operas* in one year for the same theatre, all the more so as he must have noticed that his first *opera*<sup>11</sup> | which we saw :| did not meet with great applause. [30] Now you know, at least, that starting from the 26<sup>th</sup>, we will be at the *opera* every evening, from one hour after *Ave Maria* to around 11 or almost 12 o'clock, with the sole exception of Fridays. In a

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<sup>1</sup> BD: Note (by Frau Mozart? Nannerl?) beside the address: "N° 53 from Milan".

<sup>2</sup> BD: 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 *Mithridate*. First performance 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1770.

<sup>3</sup> BD: Likewise in the Teatro Regio Ducal. The following rehearsals are known from the letters:

8<sup>th</sup> December: "2<sup>nd</sup> recitative rehearsal" [No. 0222/2];

12<sup>th</sup> December: "1<sup>st</sup> rehearsal with instruments ... 16 persons" [No. 0223/2];

17<sup>th</sup> December: "first rehearsal with the entire orchestra ... in the ballroom" [No. 0223/3-4];

19<sup>th</sup> December: "first rehearsal on stage" [No. 0224/5-6];

21<sup>st</sup> December: "recitative rehearsal" [No. 0224/7];

22<sup>nd</sup> December: "second rehearsal on stage" [No. 0224/8];

24<sup>th</sup> December: "main stage rehearsal" [No. 0224/8-9].

<sup>4</sup> BD: 24<sup>th</sup> December.

<sup>5</sup> BD: Giovanni Andrea Fioroni, in charge of music at the cathedral, cf. No. 0166/22.

<sup>6</sup> BD: Giovanni Battista Sammartini (1700/1-1775), church and court musician. Cf. No. 0160/12 f.

<sup>7</sup> BD: Cf. No. 0218/27. Giovanni Battista Lampugnani (1706- c.1784). At the première of *Mitridate* on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1770, he accompanied on the 2<sup>nd</sup> harpsichord; from the fourth performance onwards he conducted the opera (cf. No. 0227/26 ff.).

<sup>8</sup> BD: Piazza and Colombo were in charge of music at various churches in Milan.

<sup>9</sup> BD: Niccolò Jomelli (1714-1774), composer, whom the Mozarts met in Ludwigsburg (No. 0054/3) and Naples (No. 0192/23). The "second opera" in Naples was *Demofonte*, text by Metastasio, première 4<sup>th</sup> November, 1770.  
<sup>10</sup> = aground.

<sup>11</sup> BD: "first opera": *Armida abbandonata*, text by Francesco Saverio de Rogatis, cf. No. 0184/108. For Mozart's opinion of it cf. Nos. 0188/50-51 and 0189/73-74.

fortnight, at the latest, I will be able to report to you on my journey to *Turin*.<sup>12</sup> Then there will be a rapid helter-skelter so that we can spend the last days of Carnival in Venice. Just let the letters from Herr Hafner<sup>13</sup> go to a friend in Venice and inform me who has them. In the meantime, I also hope to hear something about a safe private lodging,<sup>14</sup> N.B. a safe lodging. For I am not enamoured of stopping off at an inn unless it is absolutely necessary. Keep well, both of you. We kiss you both many 100000 times and I am as always your Mozart

[40] To all friends, both gentlemen and ladies, our *compliments* and a blessedly happy New Year.

You can picture in your mind's eye Wolfgang in a red *scarlet* suit with gold braid and sky-blue *atlas* lining. Today the tailor starts work. He will wear this suit for the first 3 days<sup>15</sup> when he sits at the *keyboard*. The one made for him in Salzburg is too short for him by a hand's length, and too tight and too small all round. [45]

MOZART'S POSTSCRIPT TO HIS SISTER:



Ask if they have this *symphony* by *Mysliveček*<sup>16</sup> in *Salzburg* or not; for if they do not have it, we will bring it with us.

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<sup>12</sup> BD: Stayed 14<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1771.

<sup>13</sup> BD: Siegmund Haffner the Elder (1699-1772), Salzburg merchant and public figure. Mozart's *Haffner Symphony* KV 385 was written for his son by his second marriage, Siegmund Haffner the Younger (1756-1787).

<sup>14</sup> BD: The rooms occupied by the Mozart family in the house of the merchant Joseph Hagenauer were now due for repairs and redecoration; Leopold was worried that he and Wolfgang might be forced to stay in an inn on their return to Salzburg.

<sup>15</sup> BD: The first three performances, for which the composer was contractually obliged to conduct the orchestra, cf. No. 0227/26-27.

<sup>16</sup> BD: The Symphony has not been identified. Joseph Mysliveček (1737-1781), composer. He met the Mozarts in 1770 in Bologna, where he was working on an opera (cf. No. 0171/39); Mozart visited him in hospital in Munich in 1777 on his way to Paris.