

Milan, 29th Dec., 1770

God be praised, the first performance of the *opera*¹ ran its course on the 26th to general applause, and during it two things that have never happened in Milan took place, namely that |: contrary to all custom on the first *sera*² :| [5] an *aria* by the *prima donna*³ was repeated, whereas otherwise at a first performance no-one ever shouts *fora*,⁴ and, secondly, that after almost all *arias*, hardly excepting a couple of *arias delle ultime parti*,⁵ there followed an astonishing clapping of hands and calls of *Viva il maestro, viva il maestrino*.⁶

[10] On the 27th, 2 of the *prima donna*'s arias were repeated, and since it was Thursday and as it was going over into Friday, one had to try to get away from it smartly, otherwise the *duetto*⁷ would have been repeated as well, for the rumpus had indeed started. But the majority wanted to have time for something to eat at home, and the *opera*, with 3 *ballets*,⁸ lasted its 6 solid hours. [15] But now they will try to shorten the *ballets*, for they last 2 solid hours. How we have been wishing that you and Nannerl could have the pleasure of seeing the *opera*! – – Never since time immemorial was there such eagerness in Milan to see the first *opera* as this time, since there was such terrible opposition beforehand, [20] and for two who said that the *opera* would be good, there were at once ten others who knew in advance that it was a prank, others that it would be a mishmash, and yet others that it would be a barbaric piece of German music. In this case, not even *patronage* helps with the reception given to the *opera*, for each one who goes to it wants, for his money, [25] to talk, shout and judge how he finds it. The *patronage* was of service to us, and was necessary, so that the *composition* is not hindered and so that no cudgel is thrown between the *maestro*'s legs during the time that he is *composing*, and then during the rehearsals, so that he is not hindered, and so that no malicious persons in the *orchestra* or among the singers can clown around with him. I am writing this in haste, since today is the 3rd performance. [30] You know that in *Italy* everyone is given a new name. For example, *Hasse*⁹ is called *Sassone*,¹⁰ *Galuppi*¹¹ is called *Buranello*¹² etc. etc. They call our son *Sgr. Cavalieri Filarmonico*.¹³

We kiss both of you 100000 times, commend ourselves to all friends, both gentlemen and ladies, and I am as always your
Mozart.

[35] They will pay out to you 60 ducats¹⁴ in the name of *Madame d'Aste*,¹⁵ or our *Marianne Troger*. I will tell you about the rest in my next letter.

¹ BD: Of 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 26th December, 1770, in the Teatro Regio Ducal, which was opened in 1717 with Gasparini's *Costantino* and burned down completely in 1776. Cast list in BD V, p. 289.

² = "evening".

³ BD: Antonia Bernasconi, cf. No. 0125/134 naming singers performing in Vienna.

⁴ BD: = "da capo".

⁵ = "from the last sections".

⁶ = "Long live the master, long live the little master".

⁷ BD: For the reactions of the singers as reported by Leopold cf. No. 0223/22.

⁸ BD: According to the libretto, these were composed by Francesco Caselli. They were performed "fuori dei Concerti" by 13 male and 13 female dancers, with additional parts for one male and one female dancer.

⁹ BD: Johann Adolf Hasse (1699-1783), in Vienna from 1764. Leopold Mozart heard his opera *Demetrio* in Mantua in 1770 (cf. No. 0158/22).

¹⁰ = "Saxon".

¹¹ BD: Baldassare Galuppi (1706-1785), born on the island Burano close to Venice.

¹² = "Little man from Burano".

¹³ = "Sir Philharmonic Knight."

¹⁴ BD: ≈ 270 florins.

¹⁵ BD: Marianne d'Asti von Asteburg, daughter of Leopold Troger, secretary to the Governor General [Generalgouverneur] in Milan (cf. No. 0155/41). His sister lived in Salzburg, he visited her in 1771.