

Milan, 13th September, 1771

With God's help, Wolfgang will completely finish the *serenada*,² which is really more a *theatrical action* in two parts, in twelve days.³ The recitatives, with and without instruments, are all finished, as are all the choruses, [5] of which there are eight,⁴ and five of them are to be danced at the same time.⁵ Today we watched the dance rehearsal, and were very amazed at the industriousness of the two dance masters, *Pick*⁶ and *Fabier*.⁷ The first representation is *Venus*, who comes down out of the clouds, accompanied by *genii* and graces.

The *andante* in the *symphony*⁸ already has eleven women dancing it, [10] namely eight *genii* and the graces, or eight graces and three goddesses. The final *allegro* in the *symphony* is a chorus with 32 chorus members, namely eight *sopranos*, eight *altos*, eight *tenors* and eight *basses*, and is simultaneously danced by 16 persons, eight women, eight men.

Another chorus is one of shepherds and shepherdesses, who are different persons again. [15] Then there are choruses with the shepherds alone, thus the *tenors* and *basses*, other choruses with the *pastorellas*⁹ alone, thus the *sopranos* and *altos*. In the final scene, they are all together, *genii*, graces, shepherds, shepherdesses, chorus singers and dancers of both sexes, and all of them dance the final chorus together. This does not include the *solo* dancers, namely *Msr. Pick*, *Madame Binetti*, [20] *Msr. Fabier* and *Mademoiselle Blache*. The little *solos*, placed between the choruses, now for two *sopranos*, now for *alto* and *soprano* etc., are also interspersed with *solos* for the male and female dancers.

The personages in the cantata are: *Venus*, Signa. Falchini, *seconda donna*;
Ascanio, Sign. Manzoli,¹⁰ *primo uomo*;
Silvia, Signa. Girelli, *prima donna*;
 [25] *Aceste*, Priest, Sign. Tibaldi, *tenor*;¹¹
Faun, *Shepherd*, Sign. Solzi, *secondo uomo*.

N.B. As far as Venice in 1773 is concerned,¹² I already have everything in hand.

MOZART'S POSTSCRIPT TO HIS SISTER:

A.S.,¹³ I am only writing to you so that ... I write, although it is inconvenient for me, since I have severe catarrh and a running nose. [30] Tell Fräulein W. von Mölk¹⁴ that I am very much looking forward to Salzburg again if I can only receive such a present¹⁵ for the menusets¹⁶

¹ BD: Original lost. NissenB.

² BD: *Ascanio in Alba* KV 111. Cf. No. 0239/15.

³ BD: On the basis of No. 0243/18, it seems Mozart only had 23 days to compose *Ascanio in Alba*.

⁴ BD: In the numbering of the NMA, there are seven independent choruses. Leopold probably included No. 29, which is musically identical to Nos. 28 and 30, but has a different text.

⁵ BD: Nos. 2, 9, 33, and probably Nos. 6 and 28, but possibly 28 and 29.

⁶ BD: Carlo de Picq (also Pick, Le Picq), 1749-1806, cf. No. 0166/24. In 1772 involved in the ballet *Le gelosie del serraglio* [KV Anh. 109 (135a)], written for *Lucio Silla* (KV 135). The aria KV 584 makes a playful reference to him.

⁷ BD: Jean Favier, worked with Picq. The collaboration had already started by 1769, with ballets in Venice.

⁸ BD: Mentioned in No. 0243/18 ff.

⁹ = shepherdesses.

¹⁰ BD: Giovanni Manzuoli (1725?-1780?), soprano castrato from Florence. He gave Wolfgang singing lessons free of charge, cf. No. 0099/76. Cf. 0095/11, 12.

¹¹ BD: Giuseppe Luigi Tibaldi (* 1719). Mentioned in No. 0117/9.

¹² BD: The contract from Mozart to write an opera for the Teatro San Benedetto in Venice had already been finalised on 17th August, 1771. No reason is known why the opera was never composed.

¹³ A.S. = Dearest sister ["Amata Sorellina"].

¹⁴ BD: Anna Maria Barbara von Mölk, daughter of the Salzburg Court Chancellor.

¹⁵ BD: A kiss?

again as I did at that same concert. When she hears she will know.

¹⁶ BD: It is not clear which menuets are meant.