

0246. LEOPOLD MOZART TO HIS WIFE, SALZBURG; POSTSCRIPTS BY WOLFGANG AND LEOPOLD

Milan, 21st September, 1771

Today, after the prayer bell, there is the first instrumental rehearsal for the *opera*¹ by *Sgr. Hasse*, who is in fine fettle,² praise God. At the end of the coming week the *serenata*³ will be rehearsed, and on Monday there is the first *recitative* rehearsal, [5] and on the other days the choruses will be rehearsed.

On Monday, or Tuesday at the latest, Wolfgang will be entirely finished. *Sgr. Manzuoli*⁴ often comes to us; we have visited him only once. *Sgr. Tibaldi*⁵ comes almost daily at around 11 o'clock and stays seated at the table until around 1 o'clock, while Wolfgang in the meantime is *composing*. Everyone is exceptionally courteous [10] and shows the greatest respect for Wolfgang. Yes, we do not have even the least of vexations, because they are, every one of them, good and famous singers and reasonable people. This *serenata* is in truth a little *opera*, and the *opera* itself is not longer as far as the music is concerned, for it is made longer only by the two extensive *ballets* which are performed after the 1st and 2nd *acts*, each of which will certainly last 3 quarters of an hour. [15]

I would not find room to describe all the preparations for these celebrations.⁶ All Milan is in motion, particularly because they put off much, yes, most of it, until the last moment, and consequently everyone is working, partly for the theatre, – partly for the reception of His Royal Highness,⁷ – for the apartment and rooms etc. – [20] for the cordons and illuminations at the cathedral, – for clothing – the servants' *liveries* – – requirements for *coaches* – horses etc., *balls*, etc., complete painting and renovation of the entire *theatre etc. etc.* – – in short, a hundred things which elude my memory. – – everyone, everyone is in motion.

[25] A few days ago, *Miss Devis*⁸ arrived here. She drove past our lodgings in the post coach. I recognised her and she recognised us, for we were standing on the *balcony* at that moment. A couple of hours later, I went up to the 3 Kings⁹ to visit her, for I imagined she would alight there, for it is the most presentable inn and not far from us. [30] She, her sister,¹⁰ father and mother felt unspeakable joy; I was showing their servant *Herr Hasse*'s accommodation, and immediately *Herr Hasse*'s daughter came in with inexpressible joy, for they have been bosom friends since Vienna. Then, straight away, they all enquired about you both, they commend themselves. You will no doubt remember who *Miss Devis* is, with the glass organ?¹¹ – – [35]

¹ BD: *Ruggiero ovvero L'eroica gratitudine*, text by Metastasio. Hasse's last opera.

² BD: *Partenope*. Johann Adolf Hasse (1699-1783), in Vienna once again since 1764. Leopold Mozart heard his opera *Demetrio* in Mantua in 1770 (cf. No. 0158/22). He was plagued by gout.

³ BD: *Ascanio in Alba* KV 111. Cf. No. 0239/15.

⁴ BD: Giovanni Manzuoli (1725?-1780?), soprano castrato from Florence, in London since 1764. He gave Wolfgang singing lessons free of charge, cf. Nos. 0095/11, 12; 0099/76. He was singing the leading role in *Ascanio*.

⁵ BD: Giuseppe Luigi Tibaldi (* 1719). Tenor, mentioned in No. 0117/9.

⁶ BD: There is a description by Giuseppe Parini: *Descrizione delle Feste celebrate in Milano... : in G. Parini, Tutte le opera*, Firenze, 1925

⁷ "Sr. K: hoheit". BD: Archduke [Erzherzog] Ferdinand, son of Maria Theresia: his wedding was to be celebrated.

⁸ "zu den 3 Königen".

⁹ BD: Marianne Davies (1744-1792), whom the Mozarts had met in London, cf. No. 0099/145.

¹⁰ BD: Cecily Davies (1738-1836). They launched in the same building as Hasse in Vienna; he gave Cecily singing lessons, while the two sisters gave him English lessons.

¹¹ BD: A player on this instrument is mentioned in No. 0099/145. In London in 1746, the composer Gluck announced a concert in which he would perform everything that is possible on a violin or harpsichord on "musical glasses" with "full orchestral accompaniment". The instrument was further improved by Benjamin Franklin. Marianne Davies was a virtuoso on this instrument.

Do you want to see the tightrope acrobats who were in Salzburg? – who are now advancing on Milan for this occasion. They are working at full speed to put up an astonishingly large tent for them. 2 days ago, the *Italian actors* stopped playing because the theatre now has to be free for the rehearsals [40] and in order not to hinder the painters, who are working day and night. These *actors* were exceptionally good, especially in *character* pieces and *tragedies*.

Anyone coming to Milan now, to these wedding festivities, will certainly see fine things. A coach with 4 persons, *en compagnie*,¹² would not eat into reserves very much. [45] The room would be the most difficult thing. There I can help, and take the people in here. One would simply have to live in the same conditions as soldiers for a short time, and, regarding the *housekeeping*, have the cooking done at home too.

I have just received your letter¹³ of the 13th. The violinist *La haie*¹⁴ will hopefully not have been that high-spirited lad, [50] the brother of the merchant's wife in Amsterdam, who then made off. But he was not old. Yesterday esteemed Count *Castelbarco*¹⁵ was still not here. He will have stopped off for a while on the way in *Insprugg*¹⁶ and then also on his estates in *Ala* and *Roveredo*.¹⁷

[55] In your last letter¹⁸ you wrote that many people had already gone mad, and now you write to me that many are dying of red dysentery. This is very vicious, for, if it attacks people in the both the head and the arse, it does indeed look dangerous. I must have taken quite a dose of it with me from Salzburg, for I still feel an occasional attack of dizziness. [60] But it is no wonder – – where the air is already infected – – one can easily pick something up.

That is why I wrote regarding the pillules.¹⁹ I want my arse to cure my head.

Our compliments to all good friends, both gentlemen and ladies. [65] We kiss both of you 10 000 000 times, and I am as always your
Lp Mozart.

MOZART'S POSTSCRIPT TO HIS SISTER:

I am well, praise and thanks be to God. I cannot write much. First of all, I don't know what to write; second, my fingers are hurting so much from *composing*. Keep well; my handkiss to Mama. I often whistle my whistle, and no-one answers me.²⁰ Now only 2 *arias*²¹ are still left to do for the *serenade*, then I am finished. [70] My *compliments* to all good friends, both gentlemen and ladies. I have no wish to see Salzburg again; I am afraid I too could go mad.

Wolfgang.

LEOPOLD MOZART'S POSTSCRIPT ON THE INSIDE OF THE ENVELOPE:

In putting the books²² together it is necessary to take good care. I took with me the two half-leather bound ones that lay in the little room,²³ [75] and found that in one the whole sheet

¹² = "Travelling in company".

¹³ BD: 0245a, lost.

¹⁴ BD: Hendrik de Hey, listed in No. 0105/81.

¹⁵ "H: Gr: Castelbarco". BD: Also mentioned in No. 0218/49.

¹⁶ Innsbruck.

¹⁷ Rovereto.

¹⁸ BD: No. 0243a, lost.

¹⁹ BD: Laxatives, cf. Nos. 0244/21-22; 0248/30 ff.

²⁰ BD: Wolfgang and Nannerl seem to have used a whistling signal, with the second part being the answer on hearing the first part.

²¹ BD: The composing of these two arias lasted until 23rd September.

²² BD: Copies of Leopold's violin school, of which he had a number unbound in Salzburg.

²³ BD: The small interior room in their apartment in Salzburg, cf. No. 0090/37.

K k, or K k was bound in twice.

That was a donkey of a book-binder, he should, and must, have seen it. In future address all letters to Herr Troger.²⁴

²⁴ BD: Leopold Troger, secretary to the governor general of Lombardy, cf. No. 0155/41. Troger's sister lived in Salzburg, where he visited her in 1771.