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Princess Maria Beatrice d’Este attends *Mitridate* (1 Jan 1771)

Dexter Edge

***Notizie del Mondo*, no. 3, 8 Jan 1771**

[23]

MILANO 2. Gennajo.

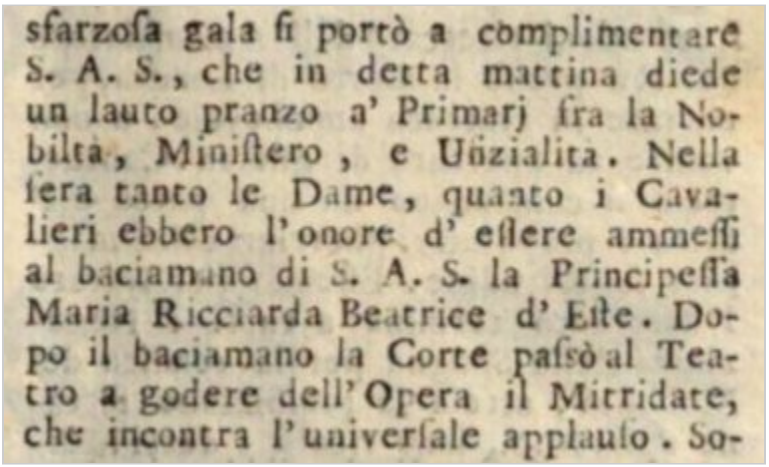
Jeri primo dell’anno questo Eccellentiss. Sig. Vicario di provvisione Marchese Rosales unitamente al nuovo Eletto Sig. Tenente-Regio D. Gio. Cittadini si portarono a complimentare il Sereniss. Duca di Modena, come pure fecero i Sigg. Conte Arrigone Casati Giudice delle Strade, e D. Francesco Alciati Giudice delle Vettovaglie per l’anno corrente 1771. Anche tutta questa Nobilità, Ufizialità, e Ministero in


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sfarzosa gala si portò a complimentare S. A. S., che in detta mattina diede un lauto pranzo a’ Primarj fra la Nobiltà, Ministero, e Ufizialità. Nella sera tanto le Dame, quanto i Cava-

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po il baciamano la Corte passò al Tea-
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[translation:]

[23]

MILAN, 2 January.

Yesterday, New Year's Day, the most excellent Signor Vicario, provisionally Marchese Rosales, together with the newly elected Signor Royal Lieutentant Don Giovanni Cittadini came to pay their respects to the most serene Duke of Modena, as did the Signori Count Arrigone Casati, Minister of Streets, and Don Francesco Alciati, Minister of Supplies for the current year 1771. Also all of the nobility, officials, and ministers came in splendid gala to pay respects to His Serene Highness, who that morning gave a lavish meal for the leading nobles, ministers and officials. In the evening many ladies and as many gentlemen had the honor of being admitted to kiss the hand of Her Serene Highness the Princess Maria Ricciarda Beatrice d'Este. After the hand-kissing, the court moved on to the theater to enjoy the opera

Mitridate, which received universal applause. *[...]*

Commentary

Mozart's *Mitridate* premiered in Milan on 26 Dec 1770, as the first of two operas given during the carnival season (the second was Carlo Monza's *La Nitteti*). Although it has generally been assumed that *Mitridate* was performed around 20 times in all, only two other performances had previously been documented, both from references in Leopold Mozart's letter of 29 Dec 1770, in which he mentions a performance that day and another two days earlier, on 27 Dec (*Briefe*, i: 411–12). Further performances are implied by his letter of 5 Jan 1771, where he writes that they are going to the opera "täglich" ("daily"; *Briefe*, i:413), but no other specific dates have been known up to now.

The report transcribed above from the newspaper *Notizie del Mondo* shows that *Mitridate* was performed on New Year's Day 1771 in the presence of Francesco III d'Este, Duke of Modena and governor-general of the province of Austrian Lombardy (the Duchy of Milan), and his granddaughter Maria Beatrice d'Este, whose marriage later that year to Habsburg Archduke Ferdinand would become the occasion for Mozart's *Ascanio in Alba* (see our entry for 17 Oct 1771). Francesco was nominal ruler of the province at that time, and thus provided Milan with something like a court on festive occasions, but he played no substantive role in ruling. (See our entry for 4 Apr 1770 on Mozart's patron Count Carlo di Firmian, Austrian minister plenipotentiary and the *de facto* ruler of the province.)

On the reception of *Mitridate* and the number of performances in its premiere run, see our entry for 16 Jan 1771.

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