

Mozart's Sister Nannerl's London Diary: May 13, 1765 After a Court Concert

Lavender tints my skin like a sombre chord, like mist
in London twilight. The Queen was kind to send the gown.
Mama would like the satin ribbons, and I would like
Theresa's strudel, to wander through the Löchelplatz.
More sweet to hear the whortle of my dear canary
than hear the Queen's quavery Händel. Wolferl played
hard at camouflage; the organ swished like a fountain,
chords he improvised. For the Telemann song I've tried
my own variation — awakens frowning whole notes.
Wolferl and I played it tonight. What silly tricks
grown-ups demand. Find notes on a keyboard covered by
a cloth! I conjure insects. Make Wolferl guffaw.
High violin notes he has to name — allegretto.
Easy for him, never a mistake. Yet at nine, hard
to be perfect. Always. Thirteen years I've tried to be.
Not a prodigy, thank God. Sneeze — it may be G flat,
what do I know? Know sound taps my soul like a snow-flake,
see-saws my fingers into air — I once dropped a cup. . . .
Oh, to taste Theresa's chocolate. To be at home,
play only for deep mountain silence, chirruping birds.
Not for coarse slapping palms, the measure of Father's praise.

Leaving the hall, heard people humming — the serenade.
"Father, not mine." Wolferl grinned. "It's hers, Nannerl's."

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