

Mozart

excerpt from a letter of July 3, 1778 to his father about his Paris Symphony

I had to compose a symphony to open the *concert spirituel*. It was performed with applause on Corpus Christi day, and I hear, moreover, that it has been noticed in the *Couriere de L'Europe* — so that you can see it has been exceptionally well received. I was exceedingly anxious at rehearsal, for never in my life have I heard a worse performance. You can have no conception of how they bungled and scrambled through it the first time and the second. Really I was quite frightened and would have liked to rehearse it once more, but there was so much else to rehearse that there was no time left. Accordingly I went to bed, fear in my heart, discontent and anger in my mind. I had decided not to go to the concert at all next day; but it was a fine evening, and I finally resolved to go with the proviso that if things went as ill as at the rehearsal I would certainly make my way into the orchestra, snatch Herr Lahouse's (the first violin's) instrument from his hand and conduct myself! I prayed God it might go well, dedicating all to His greater honour and glory, and *ecce!* — the symphony began! Raff stood near me, and in the midst of the first allegro came a passage I had known would please. The audience was quite carried away — there was a great outburst of applause. But, since I knew when I wrote it that it would make a sensation, I had brought it in again in the last — and then it came again, *da capo!* The andante also found favour, but particularly the last allegro because, having noticed that all last *allegri* here opened, like the first, with all instruments together and usually in unison, I began with two violins only, *piano* for eight bars only, then *forte*, so that at the *piano* (as I had expected) the audience said "Sh!" and when they heard the *forte* began at once to clap their hands. I was so happy that I went straight to the Palais Royale after the symphony, ate an ice, said the rosary I had vowed — and went home. I always am and always will be happiest there, or else with some good honest German, who, if a bachelor, lives alone like a good Christian or, if married, loves his wife and brings up his children well!

(Letters of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *selected and edited by Hans Mersmann, translated from the German by H.M. Bozman. New York: Dover Publications, 1972, pp. 107-108*)