

Mozart's 250th Birthday



Mozart was born in 1756 in Salzburg, Austria (then part of the Holy Roman Empire) and died in 1791 at 35 years of age in Vienna. Celebrations marking the 250th anniversary of his birth are taking place all over the world.

So, it is serendipitous that we have a Mozart button story appear in the newsletter during this, **MOZART'S 250th BIRTHDAY** year!!!

In January of 1783, to celebrate

the new year and Constanze's first pregnancy, the Mozarts held a ball in their own spacious quarters which lasted from six p.m. till seven o' clock the following morning. From the beginning, they lived beyond their means.

The continuous, lavish gifts from royalty in Mozart's childhood and early teens had left him with expensive tastes. And whatever their financial circumstances in later life, he had an almost compulsive love of the finest clothing. But Mozart developed his own special means of acquiring it. Take this note to one of his Viennese patrons, the Baroness Waldstätten:

Dearest Baroness,
". . . that beautiful red coat which took my fancy so vastly, pray, pray let me know where it is to be had, and at what price-for that I have quite forgotten, having been unable to take in anything at the time but its splendor! Indeed such a coat I must have-one which will really do justice to **certain buttons** with which my fancy has long gone pregnant! I saw them



18th Century Mother of Pearl. Carved border with three-pearl rows. Faceted emerald green glass cabochon surrounded by a paste ring. Topped with a carved pearl collar around a large paste center.



18th century porcelain of a cherub on clouds playing a flute with a prong-set paste border. 1-1/4" in diameter.

once, when I was choosing **buttons** for a suit, in the Kohlmarket at Brandau's **button-shop**, opposite the Milano. They are made of **mother-of-pearl**, with some sort of white stones around the edge and a fine yellow stone set in the centre of each. I should like to have all my things of good quality, workman- ship, and appearance! How is it, I wonder, that those who have not the means would be prepared to spend any amount on such articles, while those who have the means do not do so."—Mozart

And the ploy worked, as it usually did. But, also as usual, the lady was paid handsomely (far more than the coat could conceivably have cost) in the one currency which Mozart always had in abundance:

Dearest, Best and Loveliest of All, Gilt, Silvered and Sugared, Most Valued and Honored Gracious Lady Baroness!

Herewith I have the honor to send your Ladyship, in gratitude for having at



once taken so much trouble about the beautiful coat, and for your goodness in finding one just like it, two volumes of plays, a little book of stories - and most particularly, the rondo of which we spoke. (signed as from Mozart)

In honor of red coats, the following buttons are to enjoy! I hope Mozart would approve! Identifications will be in the next issue!



18th Century Mother of Pearl. Carved border with three-pearl rows. Faceted emerald green glass cabochon surrounded by a paste ring. Topped with a carved pearl collar around a large paste center. 1-1/2" in diameter. J. Journeay Collection



Lovely watercolor on ivory under glass set in silver with a silver ball border. 1-3/8" diameter



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