

[Vienna,] 12<sup>th</sup> Jul., 1789.

Dearest, most valued friend!  
and most honourable B. O.<sup>3</sup>

God! I am in a predicament<sup>4</sup> which I would not wish on my worst enemy; and if you, sir, my best friend and brother, abandon me, [5] I am lost, by bad luck and entirely innocently, along with my poor, sick wife and child. – Only recently, when I called on you at home, sir, I wanted to pour out my heart – but did not have the courage to do so! – and still would not have it – only with trembling do I dare to do it in writing – and would not even dare to do so in writing – if I was not sure that you know me, are familiar with my circumstances, and completely convinced of my blamelessness [10] regarding my hapless, most sorrowful predicament. O God! Instead of expressing my thanks, I come with new requests! – Instead of settling the balance, with new wishes. If you know my heart completely, you must certainly feel my pain over this completely; the fact that all my means of earning have been restricted by this calamitous illness<sup>5</sup> is something that I hardly need to repeat to you; [15] although I must tell you that despite my miserable situation, I did in fact decide to give *subscription concerts* at home<sup>6</sup> in order at least to be able to meet the current expenses, so great and frequent, for I was completely convinced of your amicable readiness to be of service to me; but in this too I was unsuccessful; – [20] my fate is unfortunately so against me, but only in Vienna, that I truly cannot earn anything, however strong my will; for a fortnight now I have been sending a list round, and on it appears the single name<sup>7</sup> of Swieten!<sup>8</sup> – Now that it appears (the 13<sup>th</sup>),<sup>9</sup> however, that my little wife's health is improving from day-to-day, I would indeed be able to work again if this blow, [25] this heavy blow had not come on top of it; – they are at least consoling us that her health is improving – although yesterday evening she again caused me great dismay and despair, so great were her sufferings again – and mine with her, (the 14<sup>th</sup>) but last night she slept so well and has felt so much easier the whole morning that I cherish the best of hopes; now I am beginning to find the frame of mind to work again – [30] but from another

<sup>1</sup> BD: Original unknown. Edition Nottebohm. Corrected text taken from BD VIII, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> BD: Johann Michael Puchberg (1741-1822), 1768-1777 in charge of a factory and wholesale business for finished and semi-finished silk layers, velvet, ribbons, cloth and gloves. He resumed this activity in 1785 in association with his brother. The landlord of the premises on the Hoher Markt in Vienna was Franz, Count [Graf] Walsegg-Stuppach, who commissioned the *Requiem* from Mozart in 1791. Member of various Masonic lodges from 1773 onwards. It was probably in Masonic circles that he met Mozart. He was also in contact with Joseph Haydn, who wrote to him in January, 1792, in connection with Mozart's death. He represented Constanze for a time regarding Mozart's estate. Mozart dedicated to him the string trio divertimento in E<sup>b</sup> KV 563 (cf. No. 1094/23; No. 1121/11) and perhaps also the piano trio in E KV 542 (cf. notes on No. 1077/50 and No. 1083/18). In the course of three years, Puchberg lent Mozart a total of at least 1415 florins (cf. note on No. 1076). Constanze repaid the debt some years later. Puchberg died in poverty in 1822.

<sup>3</sup> BD: Masonic greeting (“*Ordensbruder*” = “brother in the order”).

<sup>4</sup> BD: Cf. note on No. 1076.

<sup>5</sup> Although BD VI describes the illness as being “Constanze's”, it seems to the translator that this is Mozart's illness, which came on just when Constanze was recovering, see lines 22 ff. Anderson adds “my” and translates “my unfortunate illness”.

<sup>6</sup> BD: For the reasons given in lines 19-22, they did not take place.

<sup>7</sup> BD: A comparison with the list of names sent to his father in March, 1784, shows the extent to which Mozart's position in Vienna had changed for the worse.

<sup>8</sup> BD: Gottfried Bernhard van Swieten (1733-1803), became a diplomat in 1755, served in numerous European cities. From 1777 he had educational responsibilities in Vienna. Owner of an enormously valuable library. Wrote the text for Haydn's “*Seven Last Words*” and “*The Seasons*”. Acquainted with C. Ph. E. Bach. Met Mozart in Vienna in 1767, saw him regularly in Vienna, introduced him in his home to the music of Handel and Bach. Commissioned works from Mozart. Composed and conducted music himself.

<sup>9</sup> BD VIII, p. 136: 13<sup>th</sup>, not 15<sup>th</sup> as in BD IV.

point of view I see myself as unfortunate – of course only for the moment! – Dearest, most valued friend and brother – you know my present circumstances, sir, but you also know my prospects; what we discussed stands; one way or the other, if you catch my meaning; – in the meantime I am writing 6 six easy keyboard sonatas for Princess Friederika<sup>10</sup> and 6 quartets for the King,<sup>11</sup> [35] all of which I am having engraved by Koželuch<sup>12</sup> at my own expense; besides that, the 2 *dedications* will also bring in something; in a few months, my fate must be decided, even in the smallest detail,<sup>13</sup> so you, most valued friend, risk nothing with me; now it simply depends on you, my only friend, whether you are willing or able to lend me a further 500 florins? – [40] I would ask, sir, to repay 10 fl. to you every month until my position is decided; then (which will surely be done in a few months at the latest) to pay you the whole sum back with any interest you desire, and besides that to declare myself your debtor as long as I live, which I will also unfortunately have to remain eternally, since I will never be in a position [45] to thank you adequately for your friendship and love; – praise God, it is done; now you know everything, do not on any account be offended by my confidence in you, and bear in mind that without your support the honour, the peace and perhaps the life of your friend and brother will come to an end; eternally, sir, your most obliged servant, true friend and brother  
[50]

W. A. Mozart.

From my home, 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1789.

Oh God! – I am almost unable to bring myself to send this letter off! – and yet I must do it! – If this illness had not come upon me, I would not have been forced to be so shameless towards my only friend; – [55] and yet I hope for your forgiveness, since you know the good and the evil of my situation. The evil lasts only for this moment, but the good will certainly endure when the momentary evil is removed. – *Adieu!* – Forgive me, sir, for God’s sake, forgive me at all costs! – – and – *Adieu!* – – – – –

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<sup>10</sup> “Prinzessin”. BD: Friederike Charlotte Ulrike Katherine of Prussia (1767-1820). Mozart composed only one of these sonatas, KV 576; cf. No. 1108/2.

<sup>11</sup> BD: KV 575. Six string quartets were ordered from Mozart by King Frederick William II of Prussia, of which only three were composed (KV 575, 589, 590, in June 1789, May 1790, and June 1790). These three quartets were published by Artaria & Co. as op. 18 on 28<sup>th</sup> December, 1791. Cf. note on No. 1104/2.

<sup>12</sup> BD: Leopold Anton Koželuch of Prague, cf. No. 0562/68. Niemetschek described Koželuch’s attitude to Mozart very negatively in a letter to B & H in 1799: he did not wish to mention Koželuch by name and used only the pseudonym “Zoilus”, emphasising how “he pursued Mozart in Prague with petty jealousy and slandered him, including his moral character”. Three quartets were finally published in 1791 not by Koželuch, but by Artaria & Co., shortly after Mozart’s death, and without a dedication to the King.

<sup>13</sup> BD: Presumably not “the smallest detail” but “that certain detail” is meant (cf. No. 1107/11). It probably concerns Mozart’s efforts for a position at court which was still unresolved even in the following year (cf. Nos. 1120/16; 1125/15-18).