

1252. CONSTANZE MOZART¹ TO BREITKOPF & HÄRTEL,² LEIPZIG

Vienna / To / Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel. / Leipzig

Most highly honoured sirs,

Vienna, 9th August, 1799.

I am adopting the idea you shared with me in your letter of 24th *Julius*,³ and have already found a competent and knowledgeable adviser (*Abbé* Stadler)⁴ [5] to help carry it out. From the earlier works which we have gone through, we have already found 15 arias (approximately) to be usable for your new project, and one cannot say for certain how many we shall yet find, for we still have to look through the greater part of it.

So now it only depends on the conditions that I can establish: [10] they are the following, from which I will hardly depart:

I will not send the original scores, – otherwise I would have to send you the entire works, which would on the one hand be contrary to my aim, and would multiply your work. Stadler is a most knowledgeable man; he has ambition and talent.

He cannot choose anything bad; he will not choose anything bad.

[15] The consequences of this are

1st, that you accept what I send and that I do not need to hear the least objection to the choice made.

2nd, that I will have copies of the individual arias made here at your expense. I give you herewith my word of honour that the copies will be made only from those originals which are in my hands alone. [20]

3rd I demand your word of honour that no other use will be made of the other parts, and that you will make sure that no other use can be made of them.

4th I demand, for each piece that I make available to you, two ducats or 9 florins, [25] immediately on receipt.

5th you will be so good as to inform me approximately how many songs you need so that I have an orientation.

Some of the pieces already selected bear the marks of their age; many are fairly new; all are charming and chosen, as mentioned, by S^t. [30] He has read your letter and therefore knows exactly how to judge.

You will find it impossible to believe what beautiful things I have found among my treasures. There is a work there, for example, which I did not even know myself;⁵ there, too, we began to search. But Stadler found everything so outstanding that he advised me against publishing individual numbers, of which we had already found suitable ones. [35] It is an opera and melodrama, both at once. Even the text is beautiful.⁶

Do you have no-one here, then, on whom you can rely completely?⁷

¹ BD: Nissen's handwriting, Constanze's signature. Nissen: cf. note No. 1224.

² BD: Founded as "Breitkopf" in 1719. On 1st November, 1795, Christoph Gottlob Breitkopf concluded a contract of partnership with Gottfried Christoph Härtel (1763-1827). This was followed in 1796 by a secret contract of sale in which the entire Breitkopf business was made over to Gottfried Christoph Härtel. The latter was also declared universal heir by Breitkopf shortly before his death in 1800.

³ BD: No. 1247a (lost).

⁴ BD: The idea was apparently that he would help to select simpler arias from Mozart's operas for publication as songs. Stadler: baptised Johann Karl Dominik Stadler (1748-1833), monk, priest, abbot. From 1796 entirely dedicated to music. Cf. note on No. 1224/29.

⁵ BD: Cf. Nos. 1255/3-11; 1288/238-239; 1297/17 ff. This is *Zaide* KV 344 (336b), a *singspiel* written by Mozart in 1779/80 for Johann Heinrich Böhm's theatre company, who performed in Salzburg in 1780.

⁶ BD: Text by the Salzburg court trumpeter Andreas Schachtner (cf. note on No. 0089/73). BD IV, p. 487, gives more details of the work, "*Das Serail*", on which it was based.

⁷ BD: Cf. lines 42-43 and No. 1245/184 ff., especially lines 188 ff.

My condition No. 1 cannot be eased; but I like open dealings, and from that you can judge my sentiments. [40] I am admittedly stringent in maintaining my rights; but I also like to give others the opportunity to secure their own.

So if you want to have somebody look at the selected arias here – whoever this may be – then you are free to do so, only give me his name – I will not make the least objection.

[45] Next time my answer to the remaining content of your letter.

Vienna, 9th August
1799.

your most devoted
Constance
Mozart