

1260. CONSTANZE MOZART<sup>1</sup> TO BREITKOPF & HÄRTEL,<sup>2</sup> LEIPZIG

Most highly honoured sirs,

Vienna, 18<sup>th</sup> Oct., 1799.

To my astonishment, I read an advertisement by Messrs. Gayl and Hedler<sup>3</sup> in the *Frankfurter Statsristretto*<sup>4</sup> with the following content:

“that I have handed the original score of the *Requiem* over to you”.<sup>5</sup>

[5] If you cannot put my mind entirely at rest regarding all the demands made by that anonymous nobleman and which I have constantly respected in keeping with my obligation, as is also witnessed by my correspondence with you, namely on the 25<sup>th</sup> May and 15<sup>th</sup> June,<sup>6</sup> I shall be forced, for the sake of my honour and because of my duty towards the anonymous gentleman, to have a denial printed in all newspapers where this is necessary. [10] I can see that this will be unpleasant for you, and I am therefore reluctant to do it, and will not do it before I receive your reply, if you give me one soon. It is in any case, moreover, directly contrary to the truth to say I handed the original score over to you, the latter expression leading the public and the anonymous gentleman to understand that I have sold you the work and thus have not kept my word to the anonymous gentleman, who has not yet given his permission. You must at least correct this with another advertisement in all the newspapers which carried the false statement.

You know all the circumstances perfectly well; yet I will repeat them once more. [20] I did indeed once wish to sell you the *Requiem*, but, as I have informed you on various occasions, only after placing a request in the newspapers asking the anonymous gentleman’s permission. A draft of the announcement had already been made: I will fetch the draft from my desk and write it out here:

[25] Since the anonymous gentleman who commissioned the blessedly departed Mozart to compose a *Requiem* a few months before the latter’s death has not had this work published after the passage of more than 7 years, Mozart’s widow gratefully sees in this course of action evidence that this gentleman would wish her any further profit that might accrue from its publication. [30] Meanwhile, for her own greater safety and as a consequence of the feelings which this gentleman evoked in her, she considers it her duty to appeal to this gentleman, in the Vienna, Hamburg and Frankfurt newspapers, to be so good as to let her know his sentiments within 3 months, [35] after which time she will be so bold as to publish the *Requiem* in the complete works of the deceased.

But then you informed me that you already have 2 copies, and requested me to lend you a copy purely for the sake of greater accuracy and out of consideration for me, so that I might have some share in the profits; when I raised difficulties, [40] you wrote to me expressly and quite coldly, saying that you did not need my copy. Since I now saw that you were resolved to publish, and you had informed me that you had copies, that is, several, I then made the decision, to which the anonymous gentleman will not and cannot have any objection, to accept what you know to be such a minimal return for lending my copy rather than to have

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<sup>1</sup> BD: Nissen’s handwriting, Constanze’s signature. Nissen: cf. note No. 1224.

<sup>2</sup> BD: Founded as “Breitkopf” in 1719. On 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> BD: A Frankfurt factory for wine vinegar and printer’s ink which also included a large music warehouse.

<sup>4</sup> BD: *Frankfurter Staats-Ristretto* of 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1799.

<sup>5</sup> BD: Constanze had lent B & H a copy (cf. Nos. 1245/68-70; 1246/7-8), but expressly asked that this fact should not be made public (cf. No. 1258/42-43).

<sup>6</sup> BD: Nos. 1243 and 1245.

nothing at all, [45] after dutifully and conscientiously refraining from publishing for 7 years, and only allowing two or three heads of state<sup>7</sup> to have it.

It is not important that it was only on 29<sup>th</sup> Sept. that I asked you not to publish the fact that you had received the *Requiem* from me (meaning, of course, essentially or initially); [50] this was only unnecessary caution. I could, however, have calmed myself with the thought that nothing that conflicts with the truth would be made public. –

I am taking this opportunity to enclose the following pieces to you:

No. 1. Two songs for the opening and closing of the Lodge,<sup>8</sup> which I will let you have for three ducats<sup>9</sup> together [55]

2. An aria (with preceding recitative) *Quaere superna*,<sup>10</sup> for one ducat according to the familiar practice,<sup>11</sup> and

3. *V'amo di core*,<sup>12</sup> for any payment you please if you can use it.

And these, then, are definitely the last of all the small vocal pieces, except for the *canzonetta Più non si trovano*,<sup>13</sup> [60] which I offered you on 28<sup>th</sup> August, and those which I told you about on the same date, saying that I could send only parts of them in the original for the reasons given.<sup>14</sup>

I have the honour to be, with the utmost respect, your most nobly born sirs' most obedient servant

[65]

Constance Mozart

verte<sup>15</sup>

Your debt to me as ascertained after my last letter ————— 15 fl. 27<sup>kr</sup>

Postage for my last letter of 10<sup>th</sup> Oct. ————— 49

making 16 fl. 16<sup>kr</sup>

[70] *N.B.* I now live on the Michaelerpla[t]z, at No. 5, on the third floor.

<sup>7</sup> “regierende Herren”. BD: Including King Frederick William II of Prussia.

<sup>8</sup> BD: KV 483 and KV 484, not listed in the “*Verzeichnüß*”.

<sup>9</sup> 3 ducats = 13.5 florins.

<sup>10</sup> BD: KV 143 (73a).

<sup>11</sup> BD: Cf. note on No. 1252/4 and note on No. 1256/3.

<sup>12</sup> BD: Canon for 3 four-voice choirs KV 348 (382g).

<sup>13</sup> BD: KV 549; cf. No. 1256/44-45.

<sup>14</sup> BD: Cf. No. 1256/3 ff.

<sup>15</sup> = turn the page.