

1283. CONSTANZE MOZART¹ TO BREITKOPF & HÄRTEL,² LEIPZIG

Most highly honoured sirs,

Vienna, 15th *Febr.*, 1800

I cannot adequately tell you of the feelings with which I read your letter of 4th *Febr.*, 1800: time will weigh on me until you have my answer. Your letter aroused in me the most animated joy over the continuation of your friendly sentiments [5] but, at the same time, unfortunately, heartfelt pity. If only your business, your time, had always allowed you to write to me like this, to give me such proof of your goodwill! Then, I may say, I would have paid little heed to my own profit. I have great sympathy for Herr Breitkopf in his illness,³ [10] and hope with all my heart that it may only have served to strengthen his future health all the more.

You can hardly regret more than I do that everything my husband left has now been in the hands of a third party⁴ since 9th January. What I said in my letter, that there is no-one I would rather have it go to than you, was literally true. [15] You had the initial idea, although you did not approach me at the very beginning; your edition is beautiful; I was your old friend; by then I had already been in some negotiations with you. These were then also the grounds for my writing to you three times, as urgently as I could: [20] I was of course demanding a categorical Yes or No, but how easy it would have been for you, since you are still speaking of the incomparably greater profit I would have made with you, to suggest even the probability of this or something similar! Yet I must still point out that even if I had received twice as much from you, namely from time to time and, as in the past, in small amounts, [25] that would still not have been as valuable to me as now having the sum I requested almost all at once. You always said that your only consideration must be the public: as honour-loving and clever businessmen, you are quite correct in that, but was it encouraging for me to see that this prevented you from agreeing any fixed plan with me, from giving me peace of mind in any solid way? [30] The larger scores would have become a main source for me; but there was no certainty that they would be published; you did not even tell me which ones you had already planned to publish. In short, I knew as good as nothing, knew only that you would publish what you – wished to publish. [35] It may not seem so, yet it is true: you knew more about me. You had thematic *catalogues* of all *sonatas* whose originals you could use: as early as 1st May, 1799, I sent you a large *catalogue*,⁵ listing names and pieces which I had so far placed in order, and later I let you know that I had found more. [40] You thus knew approximately the number of these always valuable and usable originals: from this *catalogue*, you knew the names of which *operas*, *oratorios* and major works I had as originals and could therefore, it seems to me, indeed have made some kind of calculation. As things are, it is all too late, and I have to restrain myself forcibly from expressing my heartfelt, impotent regret in every line. [45] Yes, I accept the sum offered, and thank you most sincerely for the kind sympathy which is clearly revealed in it. I am happy to consent to your request to name the purchaser: it is Herr *André*⁶ in Offenbach, to whose representative⁷ here everything was

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: Christoph Gottlob Breitkopf died on 7th April, 1800; cf. No. 1296/6.

⁴ BD: Paul Wranitzky, see line 48 below.

⁵ BD: No. 1241 (lost).

⁶ BD: The publishing business was founded in Offenbach in 1784 by Johann André (1741-1799), composer, music director (from 1766). After his death, the business was continued by his third son, Johann Anton (1775-1842). It was thus in the latter's first year as a publisher that the contract was concluded with Constanze (8th November, 1799) regarding the music in Mozart's estate.

handed over, without exception, on 9th January. [50] There is therefore nothing more at all to be had or borrowed from me, and I have pledged to give anything that might yet come into my hands to no-one but him.

Otherwise, as an answer to various details in your letter, I hereby make the following declaration to you, once and for all:

[55] that I feel obliged (and confess, and will confess everywhere, with great pleasure and in gratitude for your good treatment of me) to relinquish all the financial demands I have made on you when I receive the 100 florins whose payment you have ordered; this therefore serves as a comprehensive discharge for all time,

[60] the *concertos*⁸ you were selling on commission for me are included.

That I have absolutely no more demands on you except for the few originals of mine that you still have.

If you would be so good as to send these directly to Herr *André* at a suitable opportunity, I would be greatly obliged to you.

[65] that I would regard it as a great kindness on your part if you would continue to send me a copy of the complete works from time to time; and that if you should indeed continue to do so, I would consider it a most magnanimous act of friendship if you would furthermore, as in the past, give me 5 copies on poorer paper, although I do not have the least entitlement to them.

[70] There is nothing I would more fervently wish for than to be helpful to you with notes. Simply give me an opportunity. Herr *André* had to promise me a complete *thematic catalogue*; you shall receive this.⁹ The printed version of this would, in my opinion, be the crowning of the *biography*.¹⁰

In view of what you choose to tell me about the *Requiem*, [75] I must first of all refer to my letter of 30th January;¹¹ otherwise, however, I shall not justify myself in the manner you desire until such time as there is a call for it or until I am in some way forced to in order to avert damage. As interim information, I can let you know that the representative of the anonymous person¹² has not called on me since then, [80] so perhaps he is satisfied with the answer I gave him on that occasion; I am rather surprised myself, since the anonymous person does not live far from Vienna.

As far as the *andantino* is concerned, I reserve for myself the option of writing on another occasion; I still have to speak to someone about it.

[85] May I furthermore expect you to be so friendly as to return the glass *harmonica quintet*?¹³

When you asked for portraits¹⁴ of my husband, I sent you the one that was most like him among those that I know of him, in wax; it is this that I ask to have back again. ¹⁵This is a mistake, and I had only intended to send it.

[90] I commend myself to your friendship with the most unreserved respect and have the honour of being,

most highly honoured sirs,

⁷ BD: Paul Wranitzky, cf. No. 1263/13-17.

⁸ BD: The remaining copies of KV 503, originally to be sold on commission by B & H and in the meantime sold to André by Constanze.

⁹ BD: André initially a catalogue of works composed after 9th, 1784, announcing the intention of extending it in the future. Although he completed a comprehensive catalogue in 1833, it was never published.

¹⁰ BD: Constanza was obviously still expecting this to appear; cf. No. 1223/85 ff.

¹¹ BD: No. 1278.

¹² BD: Count [Graf] von Walsegg-Stuppach ordered the Requiem from Mozart, but insisted on anonymity. He copied the score out himself and presented it as his own composition.

¹³ BD: KV 617; it was published (in parts only) by B & H at the end of 1799.

¹⁴ BD: Cf. No. 1233/11-13. But according to the note on No. 1267/193-194, it was never sent.

¹⁵ BD: From here onwards, corrections were made later.

your most obedient servant.
Constance Mozart

[95] Traeg¹⁶ has paid me 40 florins; Eder's payment order is still valid. From Wapler I was only able to obtain 4 copies;¹⁷ I therefore gave him a receipt for these only.
– Now I am first of all looking forward to the beautiful 6th volume.¹⁸ –
Wapler did not have anything more than the 4 copies mentioned. [100]

¹⁶ BD: Publisher in Vienna.

¹⁷ BD: Probably of clavier concerto KV 503, originally to be sold by B & H on commission; the remaining copies were now to be sent to André.

¹⁸ BD: Of the complete works as published by B & H.