

1296. CONSTANZE MOZART<sup>1</sup> TO BREITKOPF & HÄRTEL,<sup>2</sup> LEIPZIG

*Vienna / To / Messrs. Breitkopf & Härtel, / Leipzig*

To Herr Härtel.

[Vienna, 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1800]

Most highly honoured sir, I owe you my thanks for your friendly letter of 11<sup>th</sup> April, which reached me too late. [5] I join with you in most heartily regretting the early death of your former companion along your path through life, but ask you to show understanding if I should express my entirely justified feelings regarding some of the other matters in your letter. I am most grateful and obliged for all the kind expressions you use and leave it to you, and to time, to prove your friendship by deeds on some occasion. [10] I will not be so immodest as to present you with the opportunities to do so – you did after all once write that I had played and lost with my rights – but for my part I shall attempt to be useful to you at every opportunity you give me. Since Traeg<sup>3</sup> still had not sent off my little packet,<sup>4</sup> [15] I have for the meantime taken it into my keeping again to see if I can make it even more voluminous. But I will hand it over as soon as he sends off a consignment to you, of which he will inform me. Furthermore, the Niemieszek<sup>5</sup> biography, interleaved with blank pages, really is circulating as you suggested. But why did you not let me have a copy of your new declaration,<sup>6</sup> [20] which, as you write, supposedly corrects mine? The truth gains from discussion, and your claims stand in an even better light if I cannot refute them thoroughly. I wholeheartedly hope that your declaration contains nothing that I might believe I have to correct. I have addressed the public once: how very reluctantly would I do it a second time! [25] Once again, I hope that you have not provoked me to tell the public something which is as true as it is highly unpleasant for yourself.

Now that I have sold my stock of manuscripts and after six volumes have been published, during which you did not grant me any profit except a miserable *honorarium*, [30] mounting step-by-step, for the few pieces that you had received from me, and finally only six copies (I have not yet received one of the *glass harmonica quintet*, nor has Wapler<sup>7</sup> been able to give me the one still missing copy of the *oeuvres completes*:<sup>8</sup> after all this you now speak to me in every letter about the truly great profits that you would have granted me. [35] In one of my previous letters<sup>9</sup> I quoted in detail from your letter and calculated that, according to your words and in the way outlined, I would already have obtained from you the sum I requested in the first 2, in words two, years. Why did you not at least make a similar suggestion when I so urgently proposed the complete sale to you? [40] But I admit it: you acted as a clever

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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: Publisher and music dealer in Vienna.

<sup>4</sup> BD: Notes for the biography and an evaluation of all the Mozart fragments; cf. Nos. 1288/9 ff.; 1289/134-138.

<sup>5</sup> BD: Franz Xaver Niemetschek (1766-1849), professor of philosophy and pedagogy in Prague, later a professor in Vienna, where he died. Not only did he write a biography of Mozart published in Prague (Widtmann) in two impressions (1796/7 and 1808) and for which Constanze supplied a large quantity of notes and letter material, but he is also said to have played the major role in preparing Breitkopf & Härtel's complete edition of Mozart's works. The blank leaves were intended to enable readers to contribute their own stories and memories.

<sup>6</sup> BD: Cf. 1297/3.

<sup>7</sup> BD: Christian Friedrich Wappler, publisher and printer in Vienna, one of B & H's correspondents.

<sup>8</sup> BD: = complete works (as published by B & H, = OeC). Constanze was due to receive seven copies of each volume of the OeC, six on ordinary paper and one on "more beautiful" paper.

<sup>9</sup> BD: Cf. No. 1289/98-101: a proposed payment per sheet of the printed volumes.

businessman surely because you did not believe me: you know that I was more ready to believe you.

I would certainly like to know what you would think of these words if you were in my position, if I had requested from you, as you did, a *clavier concerto*<sup>10</sup> (which you are now announcing to the world [45] as a completely unknown one) which others had promised you you could easily get hold of elsewhere, and which now fills a complete volume, and if I had offered you 5, in words five, ducats.<sup>11</sup> Yet I will say nothing more. Your conscious mind, it is also called conscience, will surely from time to time hold up to you this *concerto*, the *Requiem*, the great promises over which I could only have rejoiced, [50] the promise made two letters ago to send me a plan soon for a continuing, and for me profitable, correspondence – you present me with these two prospects in the expectation that I will testify against *André* (I almost said: against the truth) – and heaven knows how many other things which only you can know: your conscience will surely hold these up to you from time to time. [55] As for my caution, which you called distrust, oh, how I regret that I did not continue with that much more diligently! No matter how many copies of the *Requiem* you may have had, you would not have been in a position to publish it with honour if you had not been able, as your later letters were to prove, [...] <sup>12</sup> I omit a word here, [60] to claim my copy as a basis. You then wished to compensate me for that with 20 florins: you wanted to settle the matter with the anonymous purchaser,<sup>13</sup> you did not send a word in reply when I informed you that he had revealed himself: I had to satisfy him on my own – and you presented me with a calculation of what I had already received for the *Requiem* at various courts.<sup>14</sup> [65] Yet on this point I will from now on maintain silence towards you and, as I said, appeal to your conscience. *En revanche*,<sup>15</sup> I refuse to hear any more promises from you such as those mentioned above, which you do not seem to think about again once you have written them down and which to me can only resemble an insulting mockery.

[70] Without any reminder from you, I will on my own initiative send you as many contributions to the biography as possible. In return, I may surely allow myself to request three copies of yours in due time, just as I may surely expect my 10 copies of the *Requiem*. To be quite correct, I did not stipulate a copy of the glass *harmonica quintet*. And regarding future volumes I am also completely subject to your *discretion*. [75] I will prove able to confine, if not my own wishes, at least your utterances within limits. In the meantime I am still hoping for the missing copy of the complete works.

With the greatest respect, I furthermore have the honour of calling myself  
your most obedient servant

[80]

Constance Mozart

Vienna, 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1800

This is what I have been thinking: I will write down all my contributions and additions in the Niemcezek biography when I stop circulating it. Simply give Traeg instructions to send it to you at once as soon as he receives it from me [85] so that you do not wait too long; this way you receive everything together.

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<sup>10</sup> BD: Cf. note on No. 1289/75.

<sup>11</sup> BD: 22.5 florins.

<sup>12</sup> BD: One word rendered illegible.

<sup>13</sup> BD: Count [Graf] von Walsegg commissioned the Requiem, but insisted on anonymity. He wrote out the parts in his own hand and had it performed as his work. He permitted the sale of individual copies to the courts of rulers.

<sup>14</sup> BD: Cf. Nos. 1245/67; 1260/46-47. One copy went to King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia for 450 florins (cf. note on No. 1207).

<sup>15</sup> = “on the other hand”.