

1253. CONSTANZE MOZART¹ TO BREITKOPF & HÄRTEL,² LEIPZIG

Most highly honoured sirs,

Vienna, 13th August, 1799.

I recently felt joy as I took the book

Characteristische Lebensgemälde unsrer Zeitgenossen³ by J. G. Meissner,
Vienna, 1799, publ. Doll,

[5] in my hands. I found Mozart's name was there as well. But, lo and behold, it was nothing but a copy of the necrology,⁴ or a description of his life copied from it word-for-word, published by Hubek in Graz in 1794, and of which I bought up all 600 copies so as to destroy at least these,⁵ since I cannot destroy the book by the necrologist, enclosed here. [10] I offer to make available to you all materials which I have for an outline of his life to let you order and edit them yourselves. With help from these and from Niemetschek's work⁶ and the greater part of the necrology, it is certainly possible to make a whole.

You start your letter of 24th July by saying there is much duplication among the *canons*. [15] This is surely not an accusation? You say that you have not yet compared the catalogue of *canons* with the *canons* themselves. Yet you have quite certainly received a copy. This will show you that, apart from the *quartet*, not only all the promised *canons*, but also the *Alleluja*,⁷ not promised, are there. The fact that something is duplicated has no bearing on the matter, [20] and is due to the following: two persons gave me everything they had, and so it was natural that one should give me something that the other had already given me, or that both should give me some things that I already had, and I did not take the time to copy them.

It may be that Mozart wrote more *canons*, but I do not know them, [25] and he did not write any, at least after 9th February, 1784, other than those I have not shown you.

Regarding the 2 *sonatas* Nos. 4 and 5,⁸ which you say you cannot use because they are incomplete: I cannot complete them, and it will never be done. You therefore acted correctly in keeping back the 18 florins set as the price. [30] But I would therefore ask that this music, too, be returned at the very next opportunity: I will be able to make use of it.

From your letter of 22nd June:⁹ You had now supposedly sent back everything that you could not use from the songs etc. I sent you, except for the incomplete *mi lagnerò*,¹⁰ which you would also send back to me by the next post. [35] From your letter of 24th July: we wrote the title *mi lagnerò*, mistaking it for another piece. – I would therefore like to have this other piece.

With your letter of 24th July you force me to speak about the *clavier concerto*¹¹ once again. I am unhappy to do so because here I cannot avoid a sweeping discourse, which is as

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 ≈ "Characteristic Life Portraits of our Contemporaries".

⁴ BD: By Friedrich Schichtegroll (1765-1822), pedagogue in Gotha, professor, court counsellor [Hofrat], Member of the Munich Academy of the Sciences. Published necrologies for the years 1791-1806. He drew on material submitted by Nannerl for his article on Mozart in the "Nekrologe" for 1791, reprinted in 1794 as *Mozarts Leben* [Mozart's Life]. Constanze bought all 600 copies to prevent their circulation.

⁵ BD: The book is nevertheless listed in NissenB App., p. 212.

⁶ BD: Cf. note on No. 1250/37.

⁷ BD: KV 553; cf. No. 1246/51-52.

⁸ BD: Not identified.

⁹ BD: No. 1245a (lost).

¹⁰ BD: KV 437; cf. No. 1245/150 ff.

¹¹ BD: Probably the Coronation Concerto KV 537 cf. No. 1245/150 ff.

unpleasant to you as it is to me. [40] Here, then, is my final and surely irrefutable answer. In your letter of 3rd June¹² you dropped your original demand completely; I can therefore remain completely silent on that. But I wish to take the trouble to set down here the entire relevant passage of your letter of 18th April¹³ so that you have a better overview of the matter:

[45] “The themes sent to you (just recently) were hastily picked out by a music copyist. We have most of these pieces, or will obtain them soon. Many of them have already been printed or are in fact in the hands of many. Among the pieces that have been promised to us there are still some *clavier concertos*, whose themes we enclose (there were 2 of them).¹⁴ [50] If you would be so kind in the meantime as to let us consult the original score, it would be more pleasant for us, and in this case we offer to pay you for *N.B. the consultation* of each score 5 ducats,¹⁵ yet we must beg you, in the event of your accepting this proposition, to give us a favourable answer on this at once and ask you to send the scores immediately [55] because we must furthermore communicate our decision to those who have offered us these scores.”

And I sent you these two scores at once, thus doing everything you had asked, did enough in every way for the money I received later. In the meantime I have noticed that, in order to safeguard myself, I should not have sent them without asking you beforehand [50] to which category these *concertos* belong: with those already printed or with those to be found as copies in many or in few hands.

But the confidence I placed in you that you would not offer me 5 ducats(!) for a major unprinted *concerto*, your expressions let us consult and [65] the consultation and the complete avoidance of the phrase purchase (in your letter, at the point marked *N.B.* above, you originally wrote each score, and you later changed this to of each score,¹⁶ and tied in the words ‘the consultation’ in the margin using this sign †. This necessarily made me believe that these 2 *concertos* were in print and that you were offering me 5 ducats for consulting the original score to correct any possible inaccuracies in the printing. [70] With that I was satisfied. Now, unfortunately, the intervening time has shown me that you had asked for, or wanted to ask for, unprinted works. Although it has now transpired that, by your error, one of the two you requested was already in print, and although you have in a certain sense, namely according to your unilateral plan, [75] lost 5 ducats as a result, you can reckon this loss against the other *concerto*, which even then costs you only the very modest price of 10 ducats. I have no accusations to make against myself in my dealings with you: I immediately carried out what you asked of me, and you would be treating me unfairly not to believe that I acted entirely *bona fide*. [80] In my letter of 15th June¹⁷ I stated the price of the *clavier concertos* under point *H.*, and indeed a price such as I have never before accepted from anyone and which I will accept from no-one but yourselves, and I therefore ask you to let me know soon if you wish to have the *concerto* you still lack for 15 ducats¹⁸ [85] because otherwise, as you wrote quite unprompted in the letter mentioned, I shall find another use for it. But I would ask you to show me the theme again so that I do not err. If you would be so gracious as not to send the themes of the pieces that you require on a separate leaf, but to quote them in your letters themselves, I should be very obliged to you. One more thing. [90] You received a printed *concerto* which you did not want but had requested, are dissatisfied and ask for another instead. Without realising it, and contrary to my wishes, I sent you one that had been printed: if I wished, then, I could just as easily ask for that one back from you as you ask for

¹² BD: No. 1244b (lost).

¹³ BD: 1240a (lost).

¹⁴ BD: Probably KV 537 and KV 467 (cf. No.1245, incipits following line 163).

¹⁵ BD: = 22.5 florins.

¹⁶ Changing “jede” [= “per”, “each”] into “jeder” [= “of each”, “of every”].

¹⁷ BD: Cf. No. 1245/89-91.

¹⁸ BD: 67.5 florins.

another one from me. I will not do this, however, but rather leave the completed business as it is. [95] I will even drop the express condition I set in the catalogue of the songs sent on 25th March (see under No. 19. “If – which I ask you to examine”). Ultimately, the whole matter is most unpleasant for me because I am always forced to conclude that I flattered myself too much in thinking you were asking to consult the grand piano *concertos* for the sake of accurate printing. [100]

I am sorry to inform you that you have printed the variations *Je suis Lindor*,¹⁹ which you did not obtain from me, from a faulty copy. Now I can no longer give you the original, nor even the Paris edition.²⁰ But compare the Amsterdam reprint,²¹ most probably based on that, [105] and you will find quite a difference in favour of the latter.

After receiving the 5 ducats sent, our interim account must be settled, with the exception of the small extra sums added in my letter of 30th July.

[110] Besides that I have these new entries to my account :

	Postage on	your letter of 16 th July _____	26 ^{kr}
		my _____ 22 nd _____	12.
		your _____ 30 th _____	24.
		_____ 24 th _____	21.
[115]		my _____ 9 th August _____	12.
			1 fl. 35 ^{kr} .

In the enclosure, besides some anecdotes, there follows the complete catalogue of all *clavier sonatas* composed since 9th February, 1784, and the like. It is quite possible that nothing there is unknown to you, [120] but this way you will at least be sure that nothing has escaped you. I would be very pleased if, contrary to expectations, I have shown you something new. I do not require the catalogue back.

I have the honour to be, with the utmost respect,

most honoured sirs,

[125]

your most devoted servant

Constance Mozart

¹⁹ BD: KV 354 (299a).

²⁰ BD: Published in 1778 as the third piece in the first edition, “TROIS AIRS VARIES...” by Heina, along with KV 179 (189a) and KV 180 (173c).

²¹ BD: By J. Schmidt around 1780.