

1231. CONSTANZE MOZART¹ TO BREITKOPF & HÄRTEL,² LEIPZIG

Most honoured sirs,

Vienna, 5th Dec., 1798.

I have the honour of replying herewith to your letter of the 10th November.³

1.⁴ As far as the price of the concerto, opus 1,⁵ is concerned, I shall not be remiss about declaring that you have now given me adequate explanation.

[5] 2., 3. I regret that your answer on these two points is not similarly satisfactory. How can you seriously maintain that no-one can let receipts out of their possession? If one wishes to settle an account, one will no doubt send the interim receipts and draw up a summary receipt for oneself. Money is at least as valuable as a receipt for money, [10] and yet you have no hesitation, naturally, in sending me whatever money is due according to your accounting. For anything I do not receive in cash but is put to my account, one must of course give me equivalent documentation, whether I have invoiced it or not. You say that I must turn to Herr Rau⁶ in this matter. But the gentlemen Rau and Schmidt have not sent me a final account; [15] you, gentlemen, have taken the business over from them, and have made the relations in which these two stood with me so entirely your own that in your accounts of 13th Sept., 1797, and 6th Oct., 1798, you yourselves have, without any further provisos, listed and invoiced everything that applies to these two persons, and also the two items for which I desire documentation, as being due to yourselves; [20] it is therefore from you that I can demand the verification. Furthermore, although it is completely unnecessary to say so, if I ask you to send me the documentation, you then have adequate authorisation to let them out of your keeping and I will inform you immediately when I receive them. You clearly risk just as little in entrusting these to the post as e.g. the order to Herr Wapler.⁷ [25] I naturally desire that no documentation of mine should exist which is no longer valid, which has been entirely closed, except the summary receipt which I sign at the end of each business transaction. Other papers can create great consternation following a person's death when surviving family members no longer know the details.

[30] I therefore repeat my request *ad* 2. and 3.

4. I expect the information as you kindly promise so that I can discuss it with Herr Sievers. Let us suppose I had not invoiced this or whatever other item – who would not consider it a pleasure to help a person of my sex in accounting matters? [35]

5. Since you wish to be freed from the selling of the *concerto*, *opus* 1,⁸ on commission, I shall issue as soon as possible an instruction to someone for you to the effect that this person should be entrusted with the 216 copies. You will therefore make sure that the outstanding 10 copies, or the money for them, are gathered in. [40]

6. I have received the 111 florins 22 kreuzers from Herr Wapler according to your order and have put it to your account.

As far as the *Bandlterzett*⁹ is concerned, I have suffered so much consternation that I will make efforts to forget it and say nothing more about it.

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. 1229.

⁴ BD: The numbering of the points 1. – 6. here corresponds to the numbering in No. 1228.

⁵ BD: KV 503; cf. note on No. 1230/28; No. 1228/8 ff.

⁶ BD: The Leipzig publishing house Schmid & Rauh was incorporated into B & H at the beginning of 1798.

⁷ BD: Cf. note on 1228/48, 85.

⁸ BD: Cf. No. 1230/19-20.

⁹ BD: Cf. Nos. 1216/3 ff., 1228/55 ff. B & H had promised, among other things, to print it free of charge.

[45] Although you have not uttered a syllable in reply to the suggestion I made to you regarding the engraved copper plate of my husband's portrait,¹⁰ that will certainly not keep me from sending you a print from it with this letter; I hope you will see this as a token of my goodwill. In return, I expect you to inform me as soon as possible whether you wish to buy the copper plate for the *concerto, opus 1*, and what you wish to give me for it. I refer likewise to my last letter of 16th November and to the rest of its contents.

Concerning what you mention about my distrusting you, my most honoured sirs, I have little to say in reply. [55] Is it distrust if one does not undertake a business of some importance without taking every precaution? By this one saves future consternation on both sides, one insures oneself against the possible death of a person on either side. Your profit is great; permit me therefore to stipulate good conditions for myself, the owner of the still unpublished items. As a legitimate publisher, your firm enjoys much more respect, has much more value, much greater claim to credibility regarding correctness and completeness, much more trust regarding works which last longer than from today until tomorrow, if you receive the works from the owner, from the widow; all of this entitles me likewise to ask for more.

As far as anecdotes and contributions to his biography¹¹ are concerned, [65] I am working on this with a friend, and you can place firm hopes in this. I am likewise working on the catalogue of the unpublished items,¹² and I am glad that this is not so very urgent because, as you say, you still have enough material.

I would ask you kindly to reply to the still open points and [70] have the honour to be, with the utmost respect,

most honoured sirs,
your most obedient servant.
Constance Mozart

The portrait of my husband which you placed at the front of the first volume¹³ is not at all to my satisfaction. [75] – If you would be kind enough not to take offence, I wish to tell you that your beautiful edition would be even more beautiful if the natural signs and the sharps were somewhat clearer. I have been asked to say this to you.

¹⁰ BD: Cf. note on No. 1228/117.

¹¹ BD: Cf. notes on Nos. 1228/115; 1229/2-4. In No. 1267/178-181, Constanze demanded a fee for the anecdotes published on 6th February and 11th September, 1799.

¹² BD: Mentioned in Nos. 1224/29; 1226/17; 1228/122.

¹³ BD: First volume of the complete works, of the "OeC", cf. note on No. 1230/3.