

1237. CONSTANZE MOZART¹ TO BREITKOPF & HÄRTEL,² LEIPZIG

Most honoured sirs,

Vienna, 2nd March, 1799.

I am entirely satisfied with the spirit of your letter of 19th *February*³ and with the greater part of its content, especially with your candour. You will recognise a similar spirit in my reply.

[5] And now I must point out straightaway that although I cannot think badly of you, as I willingly admit, for looking around everywhere for my husband's works before attempting to contact me, it does however seem to me that this does not evince any of the friendly thoughts towards me which I had the pleasure of finding expressed in your last letter, [10] namely that you are happy to grant me as much profit as possible, wishing to couple my profit with yours. (Only comparison will show whether the works which you have obtained for yourselves are undoubtedly genuine (and correct), as you say they are.) In the meantime then, what you said in your last letter, thus raising my hopes, no longer applies at all.

[15] On your part, you want to have guarantees from me: nothing could be fairer, and I will not forbid you the use of all possible means. But my rights are equal to yours, so our relations must be likewise. If I give you thematic catalogues⁴ for the whole collection or for whole work groups, who guarantees me that – not you, you would not be capable of it – [20] but others, who saw the catalogue by chance, would not try to earn something and distinguish themselves by carefully tracking down the works. I cannot accept any suggestion of this kind. On the other hand, you do not expose yourself to the least risk if you give me your catalogue: you do not receive any less as a result. You cannot possibly suffer any loss of your property as a result. [25] I have all the less hesitation in saying this to you forthrightly because you yourselves, after all, made the suggestion of sending me your themes. I therefore expect these complete, all at once, or at least little by little in work groups, in whatever order pleases you. If you solemnly promise and assure me that you will take nothing from anyone that you can obtain from me, [30] I promise you in return to indicate conscientiously anything I know to be in other people's hands. I will now turn my attention first of all to the keyboard concertos and quartets, in keeping with your wishes: I therefore first of all expect from you their themes. Once we are entirely agreed, when I am sure that our connection will continue, [35] that you will pay reasonably (regarding the price for the sonatas recently⁵ I took some very bad advice), I shall never be guilty of creating the situation you fear, namely that pieces which I have entrusted to you could be published by another music dealer. By all means be extremely cautious. Furthermore, I already deserve now the increasingly acceptable conditions [40] to which you have committed yourself in this case, for right from the beginning of our first regular correspondence I made it my duty not to entrust anything to anyone except you. And that is how it shall continue if you too keep your word and are reasonable, as I shall have the opportunity to observe during the course of our negotiations.

[45] I would quite happily offer to make a public declaration:⁶ I can even tell you that it occurred to me myself after I learnt about the plans of Günther and Böhme,⁷ and I was on the

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. 1235a.

⁴ BD: Cf. Nos. 1224/29; 1226/17; 1228/99.

⁵ BD: Constanze had originally asked for 12 ducats (= 54 florins) for these, the so-called (and non-authentic) *Romantic Sonatas*. Cf. note on No. 1236/19; No. 1320/14, 29.

⁶ BD: Its content can be deduced from lines 51-56.

⁷ BD: Publishers in Hamburg, cf. note on No. 1214/7-8.

point of writing to you about it when I received your letter. It goes without saying that it would be to my shame if I did not behave just as honestly towards you as I demand from you when you act. [50]

I allow you, with immediate effect, to announce in the publication, placed wherever you want, that you are in contact with me and that you announce this with my consent, and I hope and wish, or rather I appreciate, that this will be infinitely to your advantage. [55] You may at the same time also declare that I am showing you the original scores of already known pieces.

Here are my replies to the 6 particular points.

1. I have already said above that I request the themes from you. I would be grateful if you would note for each work group which pieces, as far as you know, are missing, [60] along with the catalogue of what you do have.

2. For the moment, at least, I must firmly refuse to send an entirely complete catalogue of my pieces.⁸ But I have no objection to small ones, as done recently for the songs.⁹ In the course of time, but I am not setting a date, [65] you shall receive the complete thematic catalogue¹⁰ from the year 1784 onwards, in very orderly and clean writing in Mozart's own hand.

3. I will of course suggest conditions for each work.

4. I will also supply a note where I know for certain that copies are in other handwriting. [70] For me, the great difference is that I cannot of course ask so much for these. But you also always make substantial gains in time, effort, major costs and security by obtaining the pieces from me.

5. This suggestion is unacceptable to me. When you receive the items, [75] I wish to have my money before I send a new consignment. Nothing should be made public through my carelessness, and from my previous letter¹¹ you have the concrete example of the sonatas to show how clearly and how honestly and fairly I intend to state my position.

6. On this I am happy to agree,¹² and will consider the matter my personal duty if you pay well. [80] I will inform you of the place and date of the compositions whenever I know them, and ask you to indicate both in your edition.

I am glad that my suggestion regarding the original scores of the already known pieces meets with your pleasure. Perhaps the thematic catalogue will show me the way here. [85] I rely on the gratitude you promise to show me for this.

Here you will find the *Capricci*.¹³ The title was not inscribed by him, probably by his father. Today there are no character outlines¹⁴ for you because I do not have enough time, but in future, I have firmly instructed myself, I will send you something every time.

[90] From the esteemed *Baron S.*¹⁵ I hear that you have obtained a *duet* from *The Creation*: my congratulations to you on that. They are now putting it on in the theatre at Schwarzenberg's¹⁶ on the 19th with 181 instruments.

You do not need to put any address on my letters, since Mozart's name is sufficiently well known.¹⁷

⁸ BD: The catalogue compiled by Maximilian Stadler after a first perusal of the pieces in the summer of 1798, cf. note on No. 1224/29.

⁹ BD: Cf. No. 1236/52 ff.

¹⁰ BD: Cf. note on No. 0774; No. 1243/58-59: Mozart's own "*Verzeichnüss*" (= Catalogue of all my works from the month of February, 1784, to the month... 1...) Cf. note on No. 0774.

¹¹ BD: Cf. No. 1236/2 ff.

¹² BD: Constanze's reply does not allow clear conclusions about B & H's suggestion.

¹³ BD: Cf. note on No. 1234/19.

¹⁴ BD: "Anecdotes and contributions to his biography", cf. note on No. 1231/64.

¹⁵ BD: Baron van Swieten, cf. No. 1236/40 ff.

¹⁶ BD: The first public performance was in the Hoftheater on 19th March, 1799. The first performance was on the 29th or 30th April, 1798, in the Schwarzenberg Palace. It is possible that another performance took place there, as Constanze suggests, before 19th March, 1799.

[95] The dispatch of the *sonatas*¹⁸ cost 58^{kr.}: I therefore have to my account 71 fl. 41^{kr.}.¹⁹ I will invoice today's consignment in the coming days.

I have the honour of being, with respect,

most honoured sirs,

your most obedient servant Constance Mozart

¹⁷ BD: About this time, Constanze seems to have moved into an apartment with Nissen. Understandably, she did not wish to inform B & H of this.

¹⁸ BD: Cf. No. 1236/21.

¹⁹ BD: 70 florins 43 kreuzers (cf. No. 1236/23) + 58 kreuzers.