

Salzburg
 16th March
 1826.

Most Highly Honoured Sir,

I had started a long letter to you [5] when the appearance of Abbott Stadler's³ study⁴ on the authenticity of the Mozart *Requiem* caused me to postpone its completion in order to inform you as quickly as possible of a passage which struck me and the knowledge of which, as I conclude from your advertisement, could at least be important to you. It may be that I am completely wrong in the statement I have just made. [10] Forgive me, I beg you, the costs I am therefore certainly causing you here for an uncertain gain: I can only pay the postage to you as far as the border. Whatever the case, it cannot possibly be unimportant for you to learn at the earliest moment of such a detailed treatment of this aspect of your current undertakings by this quite obviously highly informed man who has followed the matter since 1791. [15] I am therefore sending this *Vertheidigung* etc. immediately as a letter because, as they tell me at the post office, it must reach you in 5 days.

From page 13 it is clear that someone⁵ in Vienna, as it appears, owns the original score of the *Lacrimosa* and the *Domine*. [20] Could it really be that these two movements were not in my hands when I believed I was in a position to lend you the entire, combined original score, as I once had reason to believe according to what you told me? Could it really be that the copy from which you wish to publish, and which I can perfectly remember passing on to you, has the same gap in it, as would then be probable, [25] since you simply state that you have compared the latter with the former, not that you have corrected it? It is no doubt unnecessary for me to suspect any incompleteness anywhere. A plethora of grounds, of the most substantial grounds, speak against it. Concerning your role – the role of a musical scholar who, even if the number of them proves different from what I think, knows how many movements a *Requiem* has to consist of [30] and so have to be present in a combined Mozart-Süssmeyer⁶ work – who knows the Breitkopf edition,⁷ prepared, according to the relevant announcement they made, from nothing less than one of my wife's copies – a scholar who has

¹ BD: Georg Nikolaus Nissen (January 22, 1761- March 24, 1826), secretary to the Holstein Legation in Regensburg and then to the Danish Legation in Vienna. Met Constanze at the end of 1797, was either her landlord or cohabitant. Nissen advised Constanze in all business matters from 1798 onwards, especially with the publishers Breitkopf & Härtel and André. The letters, often formulated by him and signed by Constanze, reveal an experienced, if cautious, businessman. Cf. No. 1224 for longer note.

² BD: Johann Anton André (1775-1842), publisher. He was the third son of Johann André (1741-1799), composer, music director (from 1766), founded the music publishing business in Offenbach in 1784. It was thus in Johann Anton's first year as a publisher that the contract was concluded with Constanze (8th November, 1799) regarding the music in Mozart's estate. His full title in 1826 was "Music Director to the Grand Prince of Hessen and Court Councillor at the Princely Court in Isenburg" ["grossfürstlich hessischer Kapellmeister und fürstlich Isenburgischer Hofrath"].

³ BD: Maximilian Stadler (1748-1833) entered the novitiate in Melk in 1766. He was ordained priest, became a prior and then a commendator abbot. He must have known Mozart personally by 1781. Advised Constanze regarding Mozart's musical estate.

⁴ BD: *Vertheidigung der Echtheit des Mozart'schen Requiem*, Vienna, 1826, with two later supplements: *Nachtrag zu Vertheidigung der Echtheit des Mozart-Requiem*, Vienna, 1827, and *Zweyter und letzter Nachtrag..., sammt Nachbericht über die Ausgabe dieses Requiem durch Herrn André in Offenbach, nebst Ehrenrettung Mozart's und vier fremden Briefen*, Vienna, 1827.

⁵ BD: Joseph Eybler, probably referred to again in lines 117-118. At this point he possessed the autographs of the *Lacrimosa*, *Domine Jesu* and *Hostias*.

⁶ BD: Franz Xaver Süssmayer (1766-1803), came to Vienna in 1788, worked as a private tutor and occasionally in the Royal Music. He came into contact with Mozart via his teacher Georg von Pasterwitz (1730-1803), probably by 1790. Mozart's frequent assistant in the last years of his life. He completed Mozart's *Requiem*.

⁷ BD: Cf. note on No. 1301/35.

himself published the same *Requiem* for the *p. f.*⁸ – who, whether sooner or later, [35] would not have overseen even the smallest of gaps and, with complete presence of mind, would not have neglected to ask me immediately about missing authentic material and corrections and, since I would have failed him, would have looked elsewhere in one or two places if he considered it necessary. Concerning the role of the Abbot, who once made marking it⁹ a special priority [40] and demonstrated such application in this that his entire “being” as it was then is still vividly present, after quarter of a century, in my memory, which is very weak in matters and circumstances which were not necessarily apt to leave lasting impressions, – concerning his role, it is unthinkable that he could have examined an inaccurate, incomplete copy, as he has done, so to speak; [45] without the greatest punctiliousness, his work would have been worse than pointless, it would have been counter-productive. I consider (and who would not join me in this?) the copy with his markings, a copy which passed directly, in virgin state as it were, from his hands, precisely as he prepared it, into mine, from mine directly into yours, [50] to be more authentic, and thus certainly more complete and accurate than any other, even an original which, 10 years old, leafed through at home and on journeys and lent out, who knows whether perhaps simply for some little lessons, even if it were only from one room to the next? The possibility of passing through vicissitudes, being constantly subject to accidents: [55] that is the fate of anything whose true nature could not be discovered easily – or at all – by the owners of the previous two and the later four hands in which it otherwise rested, due to their lack of scholarship, unless it was the result of its immediately visible mutilation; for public use, this music, tested in practice, was available in parts. I cannot in fact remember anything being passed on to you [60] (for comparison, as you say, to which you would naturally have had a right) except the marked copy. But that, of course, is of no further importance. You know that I lent you the combined original score. That is enough for you, it is enough for me; and for whom should it not be enough? You have gone through the same “school” as Abbot Stadler: [65] you know Mozart’s handwriting as perfectly as he does; allow me to say “even more perfectly”, if the superlative “perfectly” can have a further comparative.

What I know is that you did not have any self-promoting interest in being convinced of its completeness or accuracy because, [70] due to the “secrets” which you mentioned and which I could keep forever, you would not have thought of making any public use of a copy made available to you by myself, let alone in the interesting manner now proposed. My interest was in a *mode de vivre*, in amicable acquaintance: in being of service to you in the best way I knew and could. [75] What I am sure of is that I was glad to be able to provide you, to the best of my knowledge, with a copy – I no longer know whether it was in response to your wish or due to my desire to oblige – a copy as well-prepared, and which I could leave as well-prepared, as no other copy before or since, except – if my memory does not entirely deceive me, in which case it will be put right in one week – [80] except my printed copy of the Breitkopf edition, and in the same venerable hand.¹⁰ What I entrusted to you was thus a precious rarity, an almost unique example, almost a second original, with no obligations of any kind except those which my sentiments for you could impose. Just as the handwritten copy of a work whose publication, [85] based on one of my wife’s copies, was announced for *September*, 1799, was of be of value to you as a lover of music simply because it came from that house, was of that provenance, it was likewise possible, indeed inevitable, for the provenance to appear to prove, in my eyes, the accuracy of any copies. Nor was I, as an amateur, capable of doing more than examining such things as, perhaps, the outward appearance of a beginning here and an ending there and the heading, and was unable – [90]

⁸ BD: André’s reduction of the Requiem for pianoforte appeared in 1801 with Latin and German texts. Cf. note on No. 1418.

⁹ BD: Marking the different handwritings in different parts of the score.

¹⁰ BD: Referring to the copy, compared and corrected by Abbé Stadler, mentioned in No. 1322/103.

since I would otherwise have had to rely on others – to vouch personally for anything more than that; and with which original was one to compare an original? If you had ever expressed the slightest wish to have the best possible thorough examination carried out on any copy, how could I, considering how our relationship started so amicably at the very beginning and continued unchanged over 25 years, [95] ever have done anything other than comply with your wish to the best of my ability? – I, who allowed a unique document, held by everyone to be a treasure – according to your declaration, which I willingly accept, despite my memory and even with pleasure – I allowed it to undertake such a long journey there and back for your benefit, which I would never have consented to if it had been for the benefit of anyone else. [100] This is now also the moment to confess to you that my memory wishes to suggest to me that you received the marked copy personally from me in Vienna. In this, too, it may be deceiving me, and once again nothing depends on this. The fact that I did pass it on to you is something which does matter, [105] and we both know that this happened. That I have consistently behaved as someone persuaded of the completeness and accuracy of this marked copy is proved by my idea of publishing it,¹¹ which I gave you a short time ago and for which I had only this copy to take into consideration. Although this idea could not place you under obligation, although you yourself had to examine and consider, accept or reject everything yourself, [110] and although my person is not involved in the task, I did nevertheless initiate, or rather instigate, the idea and I therefore feel the need to be sure that everything that could prejudice the publication has been dealt with. This is the intention of my letter, this is my purpose in sending you the printed version. [115]

If you were to assess as realistic what I have been moved to consider possible, you are in fact the man who does not have to wait for anyone’s advice. I may then rejoice to foresee that an admirer of Mozart, whose anonymity, despite the great favour expected of him, can be protected, if he wishes, by the mediation of the Abbot (with whom you surely became acquainted back then) [120] – that the present admirer will never draw back if you wish to use it, but rather be glad to be of assistance in this both unique and generally fascinating project of yours by letting you use a copy rendered irreproachable by an examination by a recognised expert; [125] this assistance in no way diminishes the full validity of the title of your edition. – In many respects I congratulate you that in future hardly any printed version other than your edition will be sought after.

– – It must seem very peculiar to you that, according to this letter from me today in which I name myself, and only myself, [130] in most of the places where you were certainly expecting me to name my wife, my wife may seem, in these places, to have ceased to be, yes, even to belong to the past. You will immediately find the explanation of this most logical new development in the letter I had already started, as mentioned above,¹² just as soon as I can get round to it. I shall continue with this consistently just as long as I do not forget to do so; [135] it is in every sense a fulfilment of my duties towards you personally, just as it is towards my wife; and I accuse myself of long neglect.

In conclusion, I hope you do not regret the time that I have robbed you of here, and I renew the attestation of the most complete and profound respect with which I have the honour of being,

[140]

Highborn Sir,
Your most obedient servant
Nissen

To the Esteemed Court Councillor¹³ *André* in Offenbach on Mayn.

¹¹ BD: Cf. No. 1404/21-22.

¹² Cf. line 4.

¹³ “Herrn Hofrath”. BD: His full title in 1826 was “grossfürstlich hessischer Kapellmeister und fürstlich Isenburgischer Hofrath”.