

1263.* CONSTANZE MOZART¹ TO BREITKOPF & HÄRTEL,² LEIPZIG

[* This letter is in fact preceded by No. 1274, which follows No. 1262.]

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

Most highly honoured sirs,

Vienna, 9th Nov., 1799

For 2 months now, I have gone without the pleasure of receiving any letters from you, which surprises me, [5] since in my unanswered letters I made a number of interesting suggestions in response to your earlier proposals. What other conclusion can I draw from this, but that your business activities do not allow you wide-ranging, detailed negotiations with me, and that your desire must be either to conclude a formal contract covering everything or to purchase from me all the works I have my hands at once as perpetual property? [10] This would also undoubtedly be to my advantage, and personally I would of course be glad to be freed of a distant, cumbersome correspondence. I do furthermore have some hope of selling all of it at once or in workgroups. In fact, I have been offered not even fully 700 Imperial ducats for all of it, and I am asking for 1000.³ In keeping with my respect for you, [15] I hereby make you a preferential offer of all I have for the latter sum, half of which to be payable immediately on delivery and the rest in two amounts following at six monthly intervals: I will even lower the price by 100 ducats⁴ if you accept delivery of the works at New Year and I receive the whole sum at once. [20] I cannot accept *Andre's* conditions.

I very much hope that we shall agree in this matter, because I must, and truly do, prefer to let you benefit from it, for it was you who first had the idea I like so much of raising a monument to my husband with a worthy edition of his works. [25] I do not expect to hear from you the objection that the collection is not worth that much to you, for an almost complete collection of this kind in the master's own hand is unmistakably a treasure, and men with such connections as you, who have enough wealth to wait for a suitable moment, are certainly in a position to make great profit from it, sooner or later, by a complete or partial sale of the manuscripts to collectors, in England, for example. I could wish for nothing more than to combine my profit with yours, especially in gratitude for the friendly sentiments to which you have given expression in your letters and for your declarations of how much you would regret it if the consideration I showed you had required any sacrifice on my part, [35] and after you so kindly appealed to me not to forgo my profit. Since I urgently wish – the sooner the better – to be released from my uncertainty, I would ask you to send me a truly satisfactory answer with the next post – it is of course practically contained in the desired pure and simple Yes – so that I can be sure of your sentiments and evaluate them. [40] If, contrary to my hopes, you reject my offer, I would sincerely regret it, and you would then force me to confine myself to the wish that the conviction which I believe you have expressed may be fulfilled utterly and completely: the conviction that just as you started on your edition without my help, you will just as easily succeed in continuing it without my help and restricting it, to your greater profit, to already well-known works. Should I receive no answer with the next post, I will take your silence to mean that you reject my offer and, with the same kindness as ever, are participating only by wishing me luck in my undertaking. If your concurring answer

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: = 3150 and 4500 florins.

⁴ BD: Still a very good price if compared to the pieces in Appendix A in the contract, whose sale to André for 2550 florins was already firmly agreed.

were to be not only vague, [50] but if it also failed to give me formal assurances against any future objections by solemnly accepting one or other of my suggestions above as to conditions for transferring possession, I could in no way make use of it or even give it the least consideration, in order not to miss any favourable opportunities that might arise for benefitting myself and my children. [55]

But even in the latter and for me certainly unpleasant case, if you require any elucidations, be it for the biography or otherwise, no-one will be more willing to supply these than myself. I hope you recognise in this, as well as in my whole policy since our correspondence began, [60] a mother's feelings of duty united with the sentiments of deepest respect for yourselves, with which I am

your most obedient servant

Regarding all the concertos which you are selling on commission for me and have [65] for so long wished to be relieved of, I would ask you to send them with one of the first wagons to Messrs. Koch and *Leonhardi* in Frankfurt am Mayn at the expense of these gentlemen, and I am glad that I shall [70] no longer be a burden to you with them.

C: Mozart

Constance Mozart