

1348a. CONSTANZE MOZART¹ TO BREITKOPF & HÄRTEL,² LEIPZIG

Most highly honoured sirs,

[Vienna, 29th April, 1802]

Today I had the great pleasure of receiving the interesting packet which you were so kind as to send to me via Herr Traeg,³ and I make haste to express to you my deepest obligation and gratitude for this beautiful present. [5]

You were more than gallant in sending me Volumes 2, 5 and 6 once again in the more splendid edition: the other edition would also have been adequate, since I would have redeemed my old ones with it. But better is of course better, and since the last ones to reach me are so perfectly preserved, I am keeping them, and by this circumstance I have gained all the more. [10]

Besides the volumes mentioned above, I have received
Nos. 9 and 10 of *sonatas*
and 6 and 7 of *concertos*.

Now, I did however raise your hopes of using an interleaved copy of Niemtschek's⁴ *biography* to collect contributions for you. [15] Moreover, to this purpose I either took it to friends or lent it to them. But I obtained nothing. Indolence is the order of the day. Only *Baron* van Swieten,⁵ once again, read it through carefully and afterwards declared to me that he found it good and knew of nothing that should be added to it. [20] Stadler made an annotation which I believe I sent to you. Now I no longer know if it was written on a separate piece of paper or in the book itself. If I get it back from a friend before this letter leaves, as I will make every effort to do, and if the annotation is in it, I will let you have it for the second time. [25]

It can be no surprise to you that I have nothing to add to it myself. I have of course already handed Niemtschek all the materials and information I can provide, many going to you as well. But one thought leads to another, associations are made, and so I have no doubt at all that the manuscript of your biography, [30] which I will read carefully and, if you allow, with my closest friends, will awaken much new or mislaid knowledge in myself and in them.

Isn't it true that I was not mistaken my last letter? Isn't it true that you are resentful about my reply with my refusal to make a statement about the Handel pieces?⁶ [35]

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: Publisher in Vienna.

⁴ BD: Franz Xaver Niemtschek (1766-1849), grammar school professor and then university professor of philosophy and pedagogy in Prague. He was later a professor in Vienna, where he died. In 1799 he wrote to B & H, saying that he had had only a little contact with Mozart during the latter's stay in Prague, but his wife had seen him every day. In a letter of 21st March to the same addressees, he said that he could tell them "everything" about the two sons, of whom the elder had spent "more than 3" years under his supervision, while the younger had been entrusted to his wife while Constanze went on the concert tour in the north of Germany. Carl's recollection, according to a letter of 4th March, 1856, was that he had received board and tutoring from Niemtschek from 1792 until the end of 1797. Not only did he write a biography of Mozart published in Prague (Widtmann) in two impressions (1796/7 and 1808) and for which Constanze supplied a large quantity of notes and letter material, but he is also said to have played the major role in preparing Breitkopf & Härtel's complete edition of Mozart's works.

⁵ BD: Gottfried Bernhard van Swieten (1733-1803), became a diplomat in 1755, served in numerous European cities. From 1777 he had educational responsibilities in Vienna. Owner of an enormously valuable library. Wrote the text for Haydn's "*Seven Last Words*" and "*The Seasons*". Acquainted with C. Ph. E. Bach. Met Mozart in Vienna in 1767, saw him regularly in Vienna, introduced him in his home to the music of Handel and Bach. Commissioned works from Mozart. Composed and conducted music himself.

⁶ BD: Cf. Nos. 1344/5, 6; 1342/2. Handel arrangements by Mozart for van Swieten.

In the hope of being able to help and oblige you in the future, I have the honour to be,
gentlemen, your most obedient servant

Constanze Mozart

Vienna, 29th April, 1802

[40]

Postscript

After having to leave this letter lying until today, 8th May, because the friend who had borrowed the *biography* from me kept promising it to me day after day, he now comes to me to say that someone must have gone off with it. I am therefore not in a position to carry out the intentions outlined above. [45] What comforts me in this is that I can be fairly sure that I let you have Stadler's⁷ annotation a long time ago. I flatter myself that this degree of certainty is founded on knowledge of myself, since I do not lightly put off anything that I have to do if I can be of use to others, which you, gentlemen, [50] will readily admit to having experienced yourselves in the course of our negotiations.

Vienna

To

Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel

Leipzig

⁷ BD: Abbé Maximilian Stadler. Maximilian (his monastic name), baptised Johann Karl Dominik Stadler (1748-1833), entered the novitiate in Melk in 1766. He was ordained priest, became a prior and then a commendator abbot. He was consistory adviser in Linz. From 1796 he returned to Vienna and gave himself entirely to his musical inclinations. He wrote that he heard Mozart playing the organ in Melk (in 1767: BD VI, p. 138). He must have known Mozart personally by 1781, when they went together to check the results of Artaria's work with the *Sechs Sonaten für Klavier und Violine*. Advised Constanze regarding Mozart's musical estate.