

The PRINCE LICHNOWSKY Newsletter

Issue No. 5. . . .2 January 1992

Our Motto: *All the news that fits the Prince!*

This issue of the *PL Newsletter* is devoted chiefly to reporting comments on the case of Lichnowsky vs. Mozart as covered in previous issues. Contributors have written from Germany, Austria, and America and their observations follow in last-name alphabetical order:

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From Volkmar Braunbehrens, Freiburg:

. . .Actually we know relatively little about him [Prince Karl Lichnowsky]. He doesn't come off very well in the memoirs of Countess Thürheim (who once wrote of him as *'einen zynischen Wüstling und schamlosen Feigling* -- "a cynical lecher and shameless coward"), but then she was primarily a friend of his wife and, from the beginning, the marriage was not a very happy one. Moreover, his wife seems to have been ill-prepared for marriage, which is all the more surprising when you think about what an enlightened and liberal household her mother, Countess Thun, kept. The more you research, the less clearly you perceive the people involved, in all their personal traits and peculiarities. . .

Lichnowsky's father, Johann Karl Gottlieb Ferdinand Lichnowsky, was born on 10 March 1720 (the date rates a question mark) and died on 19 April 1788 in Troppau, evidently the main seat of the family's possessions in Silesia. Karl Alois Lichnowsky was born on 21 June 1761 and died in Vienna on 15 April 1814. The father had prepared an entail for the family possessions but it was only some time after his death that the foundation trust took effect (on 6 September 1788, authenticated on 22 December 1788). I have looked into this question because I wanted to know if it ultimately had something to do with the trip to Berlin with Mozart, particularly the apparently temporary interruption in their travels together. What business did Lichnowsky have in Berlin, where did he go on this trip, why the peculiar zig-zag in Mozart's route and Lichnowsky's temporary leave-taking of Mozart -- and especially in this connection, Lichnowsky's borrowing money from Mozart: Lichnowsky must have made a sudden, unplanned side-trip -- where to? But I haven't gotten much farther with it.

[As for the basic thesis of the *Newsletter*:. . .] It appears to be the case that, after Mozart had died, Constanze Mozart definitely wanted to revise certain facts working to her disadvantage in the public opinion. In the case of the Requiem (also an open account), she was intent on leaving the public uncertain as to just how much of the Requiem Mozart was personally able to complete. She deliberately fostered the impression that the Requiem had been essentially finished and could easily be brought to completion with the sketches, and thus constituted Mozart's work. In Nissen, for example, there is no suggestion that Mozart left only one fragment behind. The motivation for her behaviour is readily understood: in the end, she wanted to be able to deliver the commission

in more or less "finished" form. The more astonishing thing is rather just how successful she was in achieving the impression she sought.

It seems to me thoroughly plausible then that, in the matter of the Lichnowsky lawsuit, the Mozart family (whoever may have known about it) would make every effort to keep the lid on the court's embarrassing judgment. In the two weeks left to him after the court decision, Mozart himself could hardly have told many people about it. As we know from the Puchberg letters, he was very much concerned with his reputation in the last years and was worried that all too much might become known about his circumstances. For this reason, I think we could even pose the question, whether Mozart may not also have been extremely close with the news with members of his own family, so that even they, such as the Hofers, and Sophie too (who lived with her mother), and the others, did not learn about it. Constanze obviously was not disposed to gossip and, besides, she knew full well what was at stake. I can imagine, for instance, that even Nissen (who tended to serve as a filter anyways) was never told about it by her and that Constanze was altogether rather unforthcoming about her marriage with Mozart.

When we don't know exactly what took place and we can only try to picture it to ourselves, then we should never proceed on the basis of how we ourselves might have behaved, but rather we must attempt to figure out what behaviour patterns the persons involved would have had, what corresponded, so to speak, to their self-determined behaviour traits. People do not all act out of the same sense of what is rational, but rather out of their own individual circumstances, their own ways of looking at things, etc. And it is only out of these that we can attempt to reconstruct what happened. (This is a sort of psychological approach that we can best study in the works of Henry James, an author who particularly understood how the most far-reaching consequences can grow out of the slightest differences between individuals.) *[BCC translation]*

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From Walther Brauneis, Vienna:

[With respect to the annex concerning Karl Lichnowsky's date of birth]: According to the entry in the parish register at St. Michael's church in Vienna's first district, Karl Alois was baptized on 21 June 1761. At the time, the family lived in the "Veteranische Haus" in Schauflegasse (No.6, by today's numbering). The house was pulled down around 1900. *[BCC translation]*

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From Konrad Küster, Grafenhausen:

In reading the *Newsletter*, another thought occurred to me: So far as we know, for the previous six years Mozart had written no further works for the Masons in Vienna; then in November 1791, the cantata KV623 appeared. In this connection, you mention Joseph Thun as someone who perhaps could have known about the lawsuit. And before that, you mention Razumowsky and his initiative in bringing Mozart to Prince Potemkin's attention. Now, an exposition on the theme "*allzeit ein buch -- Die Bibliothek Wolfgang Amadeus Mozarts*" ("always a book in hand -- The Library of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart"), has been on display in Wolfenbüttel since 5 December 1991 and, for it, Ulrich Konrad

of Göttingen has prepared a contribution to the catalog in which he explores the background to book No.14 in the inventory of Mozart's estate: *Geographisches und topographisches Reisebuch durch alle Staaten der österreichischen Monarchie nebst der Reiseroute nach Petersburg durch Polen, Wien 1789* (in O.E. Deutsch, *Dokumente*, page 509). If Mozart bought this book for a specific reason (sometime after 1789), then it can only have been for the "travel route through Poland to Petersburg"; consequently, his plans for such a trip must have been already fairly concrete.

This gives me the impression that there could have been persons who paid off Mozart's debts to Lichnowsky (as a donation) before people generally would have learned about the lawsuit (accounting for why the debt does not appear in the declaration of Mozart's estate); the ones who come most to mind in this regard are Razumowsky and Thun (as Lichnowsky's brothers-in-law). The fact that no mention of this donation exists could stem from its being a matter arranged entirely "within the family (Thun)" among the three gentlemen. But how we go about proving that, I don't know. . . .

In a more or less similarly narrow social context, the same could also have been done by others: by the Hungarian magnates who were prepared to provide support to Mozart in 1791 (Niemetschek, page 36). One must take into account that these persons did not live in Hungary but in Vienna as part of the court: there are numerous possibilities (Zichy, Batthyany, Festetics, Esterhazy, etc.). They too could have had the opportunity first to arrange matters "in private" with Lichnowsky (as between members of the same class) and only then have sought contact with Mozart to prevent his getting into such a situation again. (There is no question but that Lichnowsky also could have learned something out of all this -- to the later benefit of his relations with Beethoven.) [*BCC translation*]

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From Maynard Solomon, New York:

Clearly, there will be no early end to the crafting of scenarios to explain the court judgment against Mozart for 1,435 florins 32 kreuzer in favor of Prince Karl Lichnowsky recently discovered by Walther Brauneis. And, of course, any explanation is necessarily provisional, for we do not have sufficient information to explain why the Prince found it necessary, in November 1791, to obtain the judgment, which called for attachment of one-half of Mozart's salary as court-composer. To date, the proposed scenarios have taken for granted that the judgment is evidence of Lichnowsky's ill-will towards Mozart. However, it seems to me that a more benign interpretation is equally conceivable.

I suggest that Lichnowsky may voluntarily have taken an assignment of certain of Mozart's debts to third persons in an attempt to help extricate his friend from financial difficulties. Under this hypothesis, Lichnowsky assumed some of Mozart's debts -- to Michael Puchberg or Heinrich Lackenbacher, or to various "N.N."s or usurers -- when Mozart was sorely pressed for repayment. Of Mozart's creditors, the most likely is Puchberg, from whom, between June 1788 and June 1791, the composer had borrowed 1,451 florins, of which there is no contemporary record of repayment. The close coincidence of the amounts owed to Puchberg and to Lichnowsky is intriguing. I offer the following tentative

scenario: Mozart regularly paid Puchberg an appropriate amount of interest on the loans, but left the principal essentially unpaid; in late 1791 Puchberg was no longer willing or able to leave this sum outstanding, and Mozart, although returning to financial solvency at this time, was as yet unable to repay it; Lichnowsky was asked to retire Puchberg's loan and to take a note for the same amount from Mozart directly; Lichnowsky agreed, provided that Mozart accepted an attachment of his salary as security for the loan. The judgment, in this reading, rises, not from a hostile lawsuit, but is a codification of an agreement between the parties. Perhaps the court order was required to establish Lichnowsky's priority over competing creditors.

A few miscellaneous thoughts: If Puchberg had been paid off by Lichnowsky, this might explain why the former does not appear in the list of Mozart's creditors at his death. (Nissen, p.686, reports that Puchberg was eventually repaid, but offers no details.) Certainly, Prince Lichnowsky's own absence from the list of Mozart's creditors suggests a friendly and generous attitude toward Mozart's family. A model for the assignment suggested here is the assignment to Mathias Anzenberger of Mozart's promissory note covering Franz Hofdemel's loan of 100 florins. Last, inasmuch as the amount of the attachment was less than 10% of Mozart's gross income in 1791, it was not especially burdensome, and therefore should not be credited with plunging Mozart into despair or melancholy.

Of course, it remains altogether possible that Prince Lichnowsky had earlier loaned money to Mozart and now, in November 1791, especially after the great success of *Die Zauberflöte*, had grown impatient; perhaps he felt unfairly treated because other creditors (e.g., Lackenbacher, from whom Mozart had borrowed 1,000 florins in October 1790) had evidently been repaid in preference to himself. I offer my more benign scenario not merely to multiply imaginative solutions to this intriguing problem but because I think it worthwhile to seek an explanation consistent with the known generosity of Prince Lichnowsky, who served Mozart well and who went on to be Beethoven's selfless patron.

The Editor's Corner

First, I would like to thank Messrs Solomon, Küster, Brauneis, and Braunbehrens for their letters from which the foregoing contributions were taken.

In addition, my appreciation to others who have written. One correspondent makes the intriguing comment that "there is also a big Lichnowsky archives in South America, or so I am told." In a footnote to her article on the Lichnowsky lawsuit (excerpted in *PL Newsletter No.2*), Erna Schwerin reports that a review of Jaroslav Celeda's manuscript, "Mozart, Beethoven and Lichnowsky" (Prague, 1967) by the Czech physician Dr. Tomas Prikryl adds nothing directly to our knowledge or understanding of the court action and decision; ". . .Mozart is mentioned only marginally in the essay. . .No mention of Mozart's loan is made anywhere. . . ." The article does contain "details of sums of money borrowed by Lichnowsky to cover expenditures at various times, debts paid off, as well as other monies handed over to individuals."

Bruce Cooper Clarke