

THE PRINCE LICHNOWSKY NEWSLETTERS: An introduction by BCC

In July 1991, the world was made aware of an extraordinary event in Mozart's life: toward the end of his life, he had been sued by his noble acquaintance Prince Karl Lichnowsky for the recovery of a substantial amount of money and a court had found in the Prince's favor. Walther Brauneis had discovered the documentary evidence and the announcement was made in an article published in the journal of the Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum.

While translating the Brauneis article, it occurred to me that it would be interesting to review the record (which seems substantially preserved) of Constanze Mozart's request for a pension. The request was initiated only a week after Mozart had died, i.e., shortly after the Lower Austrian Court had made its decision. I cast my paper in newsletter form to send to those who had received the translation. That was September 1991. By mid-November 1991, I had begun to hear from people, giving me their comments on the case. In addition, two recipients of the translation had gone public and sent me copies of their articles. To give all of this some distribution, I decided to repeat the newsletter format and sent out Issue No.2 in January 1992.

I continued to research the available record, the object being to look harder at what we knew and to attempt to give context to the fact of the Lichnowsky lawsuit. This grew into a document of some 20 pages, twice the size I had originally intended. Moreover, I had finished it on the anniversary of Constanze's death 150 years before, ergo an Anniversary Double Issue Nos.3 & 4 of 6 March 1992. More comments were received in the spring of 1992 and reported in Issue No.5. From that time on, there was relatively little new of relevance. The emergence of a scrap of paper in Mozart's handwriting, reported in the Mozart- Jahrbuch 1993/94, provided the occasion to review the status of the Lichnowsky affair (Issue No.6, February 1994).

Then, for a long time, there seemed nothing more worthy of reactivating the PL Newsletter. Nevertheless, Mozart researchers continue to look for evidence that might contribute to an understanding of two facts: 1) a court judgment against Mozart and in favor of Prince Lichnowsky was rendered in November 1791; and 2) this was not previously known to or even suspected by Mozart biographical research until the evidence turned up 200 years later.

Now, writing in October 2011, I am pleased to report that the series resumes with a Prince Lichnowsky Newsletter No.7. May further issues await.

- Issue No.1: 20 September 1991. A pension for the Widow Mozart.
- Issue No.2: 2 January 1992. Some initial published reactions.
- Double Issue Nos.3 & 4: 6 March 1992. The social background.
- Issue No.5: Commentaries.
- Issue No.6: 28 February 1994. Broken context.
- Issue No.7: October 2011: The origin of Mozart's debt: an answer?