



STIFTUNG  
MOZARTEUM  
SALZBURG

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## ***“dearest, most treasured little wife!”* The Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation has acquired a rare letter that Mozart wrote to his beloved wife Constanze while in Prague on Good Friday 1789**

The composer Wolfgang Amadé Mozart rarely travelled far from Vienna after he settled there in 1781, and when he did, he was almost always accompanied by his wife Constanze. As a result the only surviving letters that the couple exchanged after they married for love in 1782 date from the years between 1789 and 1791. They offer us an opportunity to peer deep into Mozart’s heart. He left Vienna in April 1789 on a journey to Berlin that took him via Prague, Dresden and Leipzig in the company of Prince Karl Lichnowsky, a man better known as one of Beethoven’s patrons. Mozart was motivated in the main by his desire to perform for King Frederick William II in Berlin – the Prussian ruler was a well-known music lover – but he also hoped to fill his coffers by giving concerts since the musical life of Vienna had suffered considerably since 1787 as a result of the latest Russo-Turkish War.

While on the road, Mozart wrote at least twice a week to his wife, who had remained behind in Vienna. In the course of these letters he reported on his encounters with mutual acquaintances and on his concert appearances. Particularly heartfelt and touching are the asseverations of his love, his petty jealousies and his concern for his wife’s health. The letter that he wrote to Constanze from Prague on 10 April 1789 begins with a tender salutation *“dearest, most treasured little wife!”* and goes on to mention his meetings with a number of friends, a contract for a new opera from Prague that he says is “almost in the bag” but which in the event came to nothing, and rumours that the king of Prussia was expecting him in Berlin. Mozart also told his wife how much he was longing to hear from her and hoped to find a letter from her waiting for him in Dresden, the next port of call on his journey. His message home ends with the words *“Kiss our Karl a thousand times and I you with my whole heart”*. The couple’s son, Carl Thomas, was then four-and-a-half-years old.

For a long time this letter was familiar only from a nineteenth-century publication, but the original has now arrived in the Bibliotheca Mozartiana of the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation and is already available online as part of the Foundation’s Digital Mozart Edition:

<https://dme.mozarteum.at/DME/briefe/letter.php?mid=1661&l=2>

This latest acquisition to the Foundation’s collection is introduced by Dr Ulrich Leisinger and Andreas Fladvad-Geier, respectively the Mozarteum’s director of research and its artistic director, under the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9u5-FiFHK0>

The Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation owns the world’s largest collection of Mozart family letters. Most of them have been in Salzburg since the middle of the nineteenth century, when Mozart’s two surviving sons, Carl Thomas and Franz Xaver, bequeathed the original letters that they owned to the Cathedral Music Association and Mozarteum – the immediate forerunner of the Mozarteum Foundation. Conversely, Mozart’s letters to Constanze were not among these priceless gifts. Constanze had evidently not passed them on to her children but had given them away, one by one, to her friends. From time to time these letters come on to the market, regularly commanding six-figure sums for a single page. The letter of 10 April 1789 was last sold at auction in the early 1990s. It is the first of the letters written by Mozart to Constanze during his travels to have been acquired by

the Mozarteum Foundation. The seller wishes to remain anonymous. The two parties have agreed not to divulge any details about the selling price.

The Foundation's president, Johannes Honsig-Erlenburg, has welcomed this latest acquisition: "What a special moment it is for this autograph letter to be added to the Mozarteum Foundation's collection – above all because this priceless document is one of the rare written declarations of Wolfgang Amadé's love for Constanze. We are extremely grateful to the letter's previous owners for contacting us directly since a non-profit-making organization like the Salzburg Foundation has no hope of competing at an auction."

One of the by-products of Mozart's visit to Dresden was Doris Stock's famous silverpoint drawing that was acquired by the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation in 2005. On 16 and/or 17 April 1789 Mozart visited Consistorial Councillor Christian Gottfried Körner, the father of the poet Theodor Körner and brother-in-law of Doris (Dorothea) Stock, who lived in the same building. Doris Stock was the daughter and pupil of a copper engraver, Johann Michael Stock, and enjoyed a reputation as an outstanding portraitist working in pastels. She was on friendly terms with many of the leading figures of her day, including Goethe and Schiller. In addition to working in pastels, Doris Stock also devoted herself to miniatures. It was presumably during one of Mozart's visits that she drew his profile. The filigree silverpoint drawing is one of the few authentic portraits of Mozart and the last portrait of him to date from his own lifetime.

### **The Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation**

For more than two and a half centuries Wolfgang Amadé Mozart has fascinated people all over the world through his music and his personality. The Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation is the world's leading institution aimed at preserving and disseminating this priceless cultural legacy. It also seeks to make the world aware of Mozart's manifold facets by opening up access to his music and to introduce his life and personality to everyone, regardless of their age.

A non-profit-making organization, the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation engages with the figure of Mozart as both man and artist and to this end has established initiatives in three key areas, organizing concerts, running Mozart museums and pursuing research, in that way building a bridge between the preservation of a tradition and the promotion of contemporary culture. Its aim is to open up different perspectives and encourage new ideas in our engagement with the composer. The Mozart Week Festival was established in 1956 with the goal of celebrating Mozart's birthday each January.

The Society of the Salzburg Mozarteum Foundation was established as the International Mozarteum Foundation in 1880 by the townspeople of Salzburg, although its origins date back to the Cathedral Music Society and Mozarteum that was set up in 1841. Mozart's widow Constanze and their two sons Carl Thomas and Franz Xaver Wolfgang donated much of their estate to the Society. As a result the Mozarteum Foundation owns the world's largest collection of original letters, portraits and instruments once in the possession of the Mozart family.

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