Citation:

Printed: Thu, 19 Nov 2026

Edge, Dexter. 2018. "Preisler hears Josepha Hortensia Müller play sonatas by Mozart and Auernhammer (11 Aug 1788)." In: *Mozart: New Documents*, edited by Dexter Edge and David Black. First published 3 Apr 2018; updated 1 Jul 2025. [direct link]

Preisler hears Josepha Hortensia Müller play sonatas by Mozart and Auernhammer (11 Aug 1788)

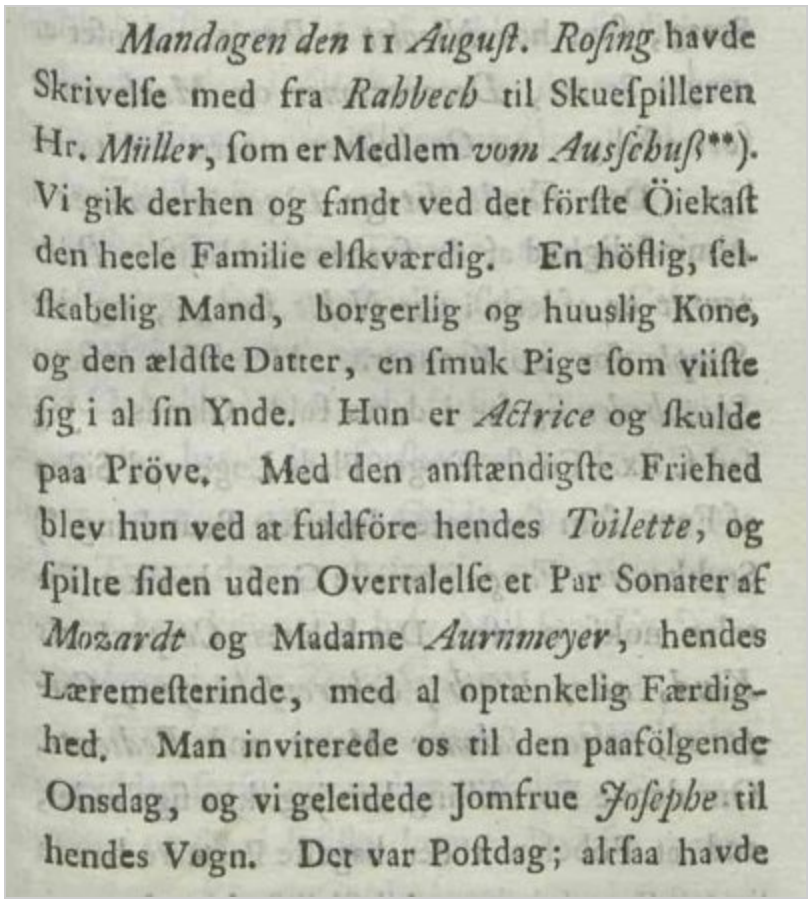
Dexter Edge

Joachim Daniel Preisler. *Journal over en Reise igiennem Frankerige og Tydskland i Aaret MDCCLXXXVIII*. Copenhagen: Christian Frederik Holm, 1789, vol. 2

[189]

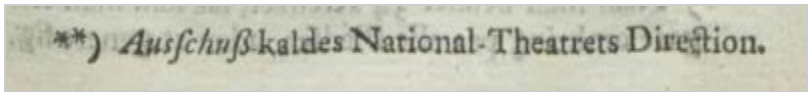
Mandagen den 11 *August*. Rosing havde Skrivelse med fra Rahbech til Skuespilleren Hr. *Müller*, som er Medlem *vom Ausschuß***). Vi gik derhen og fandt ved det förste Öiekast den heele Familie elskværdig. En höflig, selskabelig Mand, borgerlig og huuslig Kone, og den ældste Datter, en smuk Pige som viiste sig i al sin Ynde. Hun er *Actrice* og skulde paa Pröve. Med den anstændigste Friehed blev hun ved at fuldföre hendes *Toilette*, og spilte siden uden Overtalelse et Par Sonater af *Mozardt* og Madame *Aurnmeyer*, hendes Læremesterinde, med al optænkelig Færdighed. Man inviterede os til den paafölgende Onsdag, og vi geleidede Jomfrue *Josephe* til hendes Vogn. *[...]*

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Mandagen den 11 *Auguſt*. *Roſing* havde Skrivelſe med fra *Rahbech* til Skueſpilleren Hr. *Müller*, ſom er Medlem *vom Ausſchuß***). Vi gik derhen og fandt ved det förſte Öiekaſt den heele Familie elſkværdig. En höflig, ſelſkabelig Mand, borgerlig og huuslig Kone, og den ældſte Datter, en ſmuk Pige ſom viiſte ſig i al ſin Ynde. Hun er *Actrice* og ſkulde paa Pröve. Med den anſtændigſte Friehed blev hun ved at fuldföre hendes *Toilette*, og ſpilte ſiden uden Overtalelſe et Par Sonater af *Mozardt* og Madame *Aurnmeyer*, hendes Læremeſterinde, med al optænkelig Færdighed. Man inviterede os til den paafölgende Onsdag, og vi geleidede Jomfrue *Joſephe* til hendes Vogn. Det var Poſtdag; alſaa havde

**) *Ausschuß* kaldes National-Theatrets Direction.



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[translation:]

Monday, 11 August. *Rosing* carried a letter from *Rahbek* to the actor Herr *Müller*, who is a member of the *Ausschuß***) We went there, and found the entire family amiable from the first. A courteous, sociable man, his respectable and domestic wife, and their oldest daughter, a beautiful girl, who appeared in all her youthful grace. She is an *actress* and was getting ready for a rehearsal, so went on with her dressing with unaffected ease, and later, without persuasion, played a couple of sonatas by *Mozart* and Madame *Auernhammer*, her teacher, with all conceivable dexterity. We were invited again the following Wednesday, and we

escorted Miss Josepha to her carriage. *[...]*

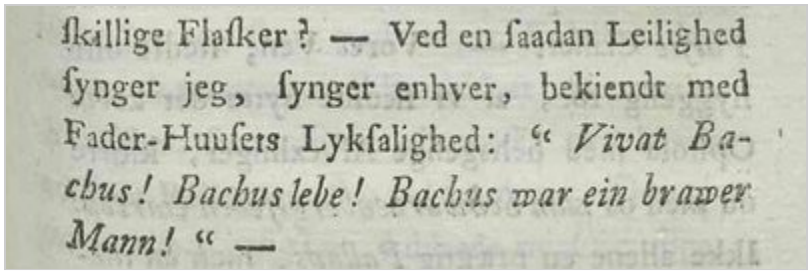
**) The *Ausschuß* is the directorate of the National Theater

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Commentary

In 1788, Joachim Daniel Preisler and Michael Rosing, members of the Royal Theater in Copenhagen, undertook a study tour of major European theaters, leaving Copenhagen on 3 May and returning on 23 Sep. Their principal stops were Hamburg, Paris (where they stayed a month and half), Vienna, and Berlin, with shorter stays in several other cities along the way. The following year, Preisler published his travel diary in two volumes as *Journal over en Reise igiennem Frankerige og Tydskland i Aaret MDCCLXXXVIII*; Rosing also kept a manuscript diary of the tour. The diaries of Preisler and Rosing have long been known to Mozart scholars for their descriptions of a visit to Mozart in the late afternoon of Sun, 24 Aug 1788 (*Dokumente*, 285–86), and Preisler's description of a visit to Joseph and Aloysia Lange on 20 Aug (*Dokumente*, 284–85).

Three additional Mozart references in Preisler's diary have escaped notice up to now. In the first volume, Preisler includes the text of a letter that he had written to a friend from Hamburg in the summer of 1787, in which he describes attending the premiere of Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Hamburg on 18 Jun 1787 (see our entry for that date). And in his entry for 17 Aug 1788 in the second volume, Preisler describes an outing to Pötzleinsdorf on the outskirts of Vienna with the eminent engraver Jacob Matthias Schmutzer, which ended in a convivial meal with a group consisting mainly of young art students. Because the party was well lubricated with local wine, Preisler ends the entry by quoting the beginning of "Vivat Bacchus" from *Entführung* (Preisler 1789, ii:219).


skillige Flaſker? — Ved en ſaadan Leilighed ſynger jeg, ſynger enhver, bekiendt med Fader-Huuſets Lykſalighed: "*Vivat Bachus! Bachus lebe! Bachus war ein brawer Mann!* " —

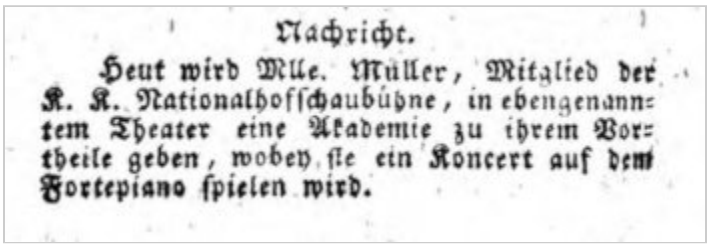
Johann Daniel Preisler, *Journal over en Reise igiennem Frankerige og Tydskland i Aaret MDCCLXXXVIII*, vol. 2, 219
(Royal Danish Library)

The third overlooked Mozart reference in Preisler's diary is a description of their visit to the home of actor Johann Heinrich Friedrich Müller (1738–1815) on their first full day in Vienna, Mon, 11 Aug 1788. During that visit, Preisler and Rosing heard Müller's eldest daughter Josepha Hortensia play piano sonatas by Mozart and her teacher Josepha Auernhammer, as described in the passage above.

Preisler and Rosing arrived in Vienna on Sun, 10 Aug 1788, and departed Wed, 27 Aug. On the evening of their arrival they attended the Viennese premiere of Cimarosa’s opera *Il fanatico burlato*. Their first stop the following day was the home of J. H. F. Müller, an actor in the company of the court theater, and at that time a member of the theater’s directorate (“Ausschuß”). Rosing carried a letter of introduction to Müller from the Danish writer and critic Knud Lyne Rahbek (1760–1830), who had visited Vienna in 1784 during a study tour of his own (for more on Rahbek, see our entry on Johann Friedrich Jünger’s letter to Brockmann).
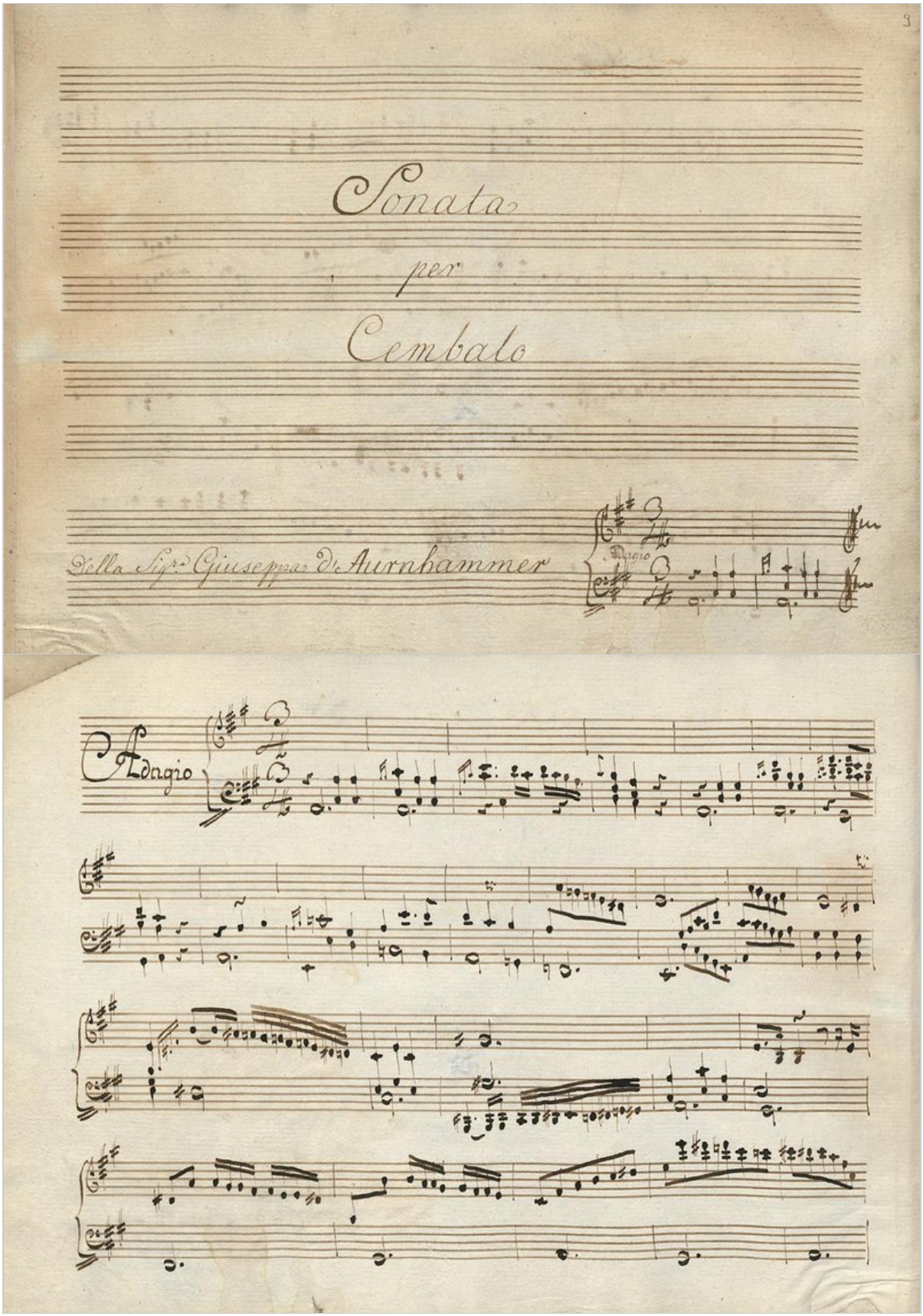
Müller’s daughter Josepha Anna Hortensia (1766–1807) was also a member of the court theater ensemble from 1782 to 1799, but little is known of her musical activities. From an announcement in *Das Wienerblättchen* we know that she gave a concert in the Burgtheater on 17 Feb 1785 at which she played a piano concerto:

Nachricht.
Heut wird Mlle. Muller, Mitglied der K. K. Nationalhofschaubühne, in ebengenann=tem Theater eine Akademie zu ihrem Vor=theile geben, wobey sie ein Koncert auf dem Fortepiano spielen wird.


Nachricht.
Heut wird Mlle. Müller, Mitglied der K. K. Nationalhofschaubühne, in ebengenann=tem Theater eine Akademie zu ihrem Vor=theile geben, wobey sie ein Koncert auf dem Fortepiano spielen wird.

Das Wienerblättchen,Thu, 17 Feb 1785, 150 (ANNO)

Preisler states that Josepha Hortensia played sonatas by Mozart and “Auernmeyer,” a garbled reference to Josepha Auernhammer (1758–1820), who herself had studied with Mozart. It had not previously been known that Müller was Auernhammer’s student. We cannot say what Mozart sonata Müller may have played for Preisler and Rosing, since all of the sonatas that he had composed up to that point would have been available to her in print or manuscript. Only two solo piano sonatas by Auernhammer are known, one in A major and the other in E major, both preserved in the collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Mus.ms. 901).



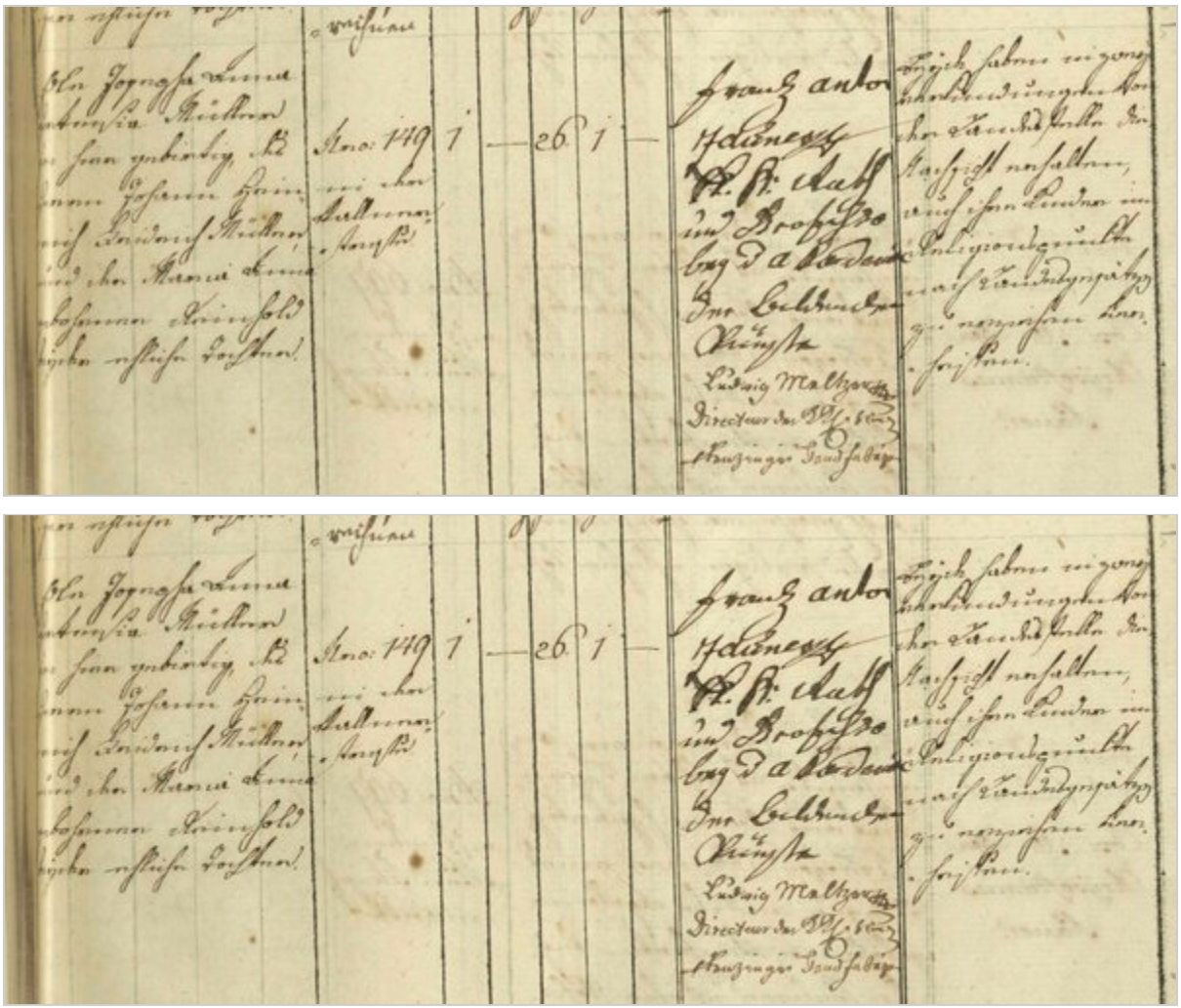
Josepha Auernhammer, Piano Sonata in A Major
Title page and opening of first movement
(SBB, Mus.ms 901)

It may be that Müller played one of these sonatas for the Danish visitors. We cannot say what concerto she played in the Burgtheater in 1785. Auernhammer is not known to have composed any concertos, but given that Auernhammer was Josepha Hortensia's teacher, it is attractive to imagine (albeit entirely speculative) that she might have played one of Mozart's.

Joseph Hortensia may also have played at least a portion of a work by Mozart in performances of Johann Friedrich Jünger's play *Er mengt sich in Alles*, which premiered in the Burgtheater on 23 Aug 1791 with Josepha Hortensia in the role of Charlotte and her father in the role of Charlotte's father Mileck (see our entries for 23 Aug 1791 and Jünger's letter to Brockmann).

Other than that, nothing else is currently known about Josepha Hortensia Müller as a musician. We do know that J. H. F. Müller had a Walter piano in his house in 1796 (five years after his daughter's marriage): it is mentioned in the diary of young Carl Friedrich Kübeck von Kübau, who reported meeting Beethoven at the Müllers' in Apr 1796 and hearing Beethoven play the instrument (Kopitz & Cadenbach 2009, i:528–31; for this passage in Kübeck's diary, see also Kübeck 1909, i:9ff, and Kerst 1913, i:68–69). Kübeck writes of the Müller household: "Man betreibt dort viel Musik" ("Much music is made there"). However, Josepha Füger (as she by then was) is not listed in Schönfeld's *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag* of 1796, suggesting that she may no longer have been performing on the piano in public or private by that point.

On 10 Oct 1791 Josepha Hortensia married painter and vice director of the Akademie der bildenden Künste Heinrich Friedrich Füger (1751–1818) at St. Michael's church in Vienna. Her children were baptized at the church Am Hof: a boy, Adam Heinrich Josef on 14 Oct 1792 and twin daughters, Anna Konstantia and Josefa Hortensia, on 24 Nov 1794.



Entry in the Trauungsbuch of St. Michael’s church for the marriage of Josepha Hortensia Müller and Heinrich Friedrich Füger, 10 Oct 1791
(Vienna, St. Michael, Trauungsbuch 2-9, 117)

Füger’s portrait of his wife confirms Preisler’s opinion of her beauty. Not surprisingly, Rahbek is said to have become infatuated with Josepha Hortensia during his visit in 1784 (Knudsen 1921, 69).



Heinrich Friedrich Füger, portrait of Josepha Füger (née Müller), ca. 1797
(Vienna, Oberes Belvedere, Inv. 4194)

Notes (⇧)

The reference to Josepha Hortensia Müller was discovered by Richard Mackey, to whom we are very grateful.

Michael Lorenz has discovered that J. H. F. Müller was a witness at Josepha Auernhammer’s wedding on 23 May 1786 to Johann Bessenig (Vienna, St. Michael, Trauungsbuch 02-09, 28). Our thanks to Lorenz for bringing this entry to our attention.

On Josepha Hortensia Müller’s concert in the Burgtheater on 17 Feb 1785, see also Morrow (1989, 259) and Edge (1992, 148). The concert is listed in *Indice de’ Spettacoli* for 1785 with the name “Signora Giuseppa Ortensia Müller” (we are grateful to Paul Corneilson for bringing this listing to our attention). At present this is her only known public appearance in a public concert.

The passage on Beethoven and the Müllers from Kübeck’s diary is transcribed in Kübeck 1909, and this transcription is reproduced in Kerst 1913 and Kopitz & Cadenbach 2009. The transcription in Kübeck 1909 gives the family name only as “M . . . r.” But subsequent references in the same paragraph—to the father of the household as an aging comic actor, to a son who is also an actor, and to two daughters, one of whom is married—all fit the family of Johann Heinrich Friedrich Müller, so it is beyond reasonable doubt that Kübeck is referring to the Müllers, and this is the identification given by Kopitz & Cadenbach in their notes.

We are grateful to Geoffrey Chew and Brite Forssén Jackson for their translation of this item. We would also like to thank Ted Albrecht for his help regarding the story about Beethoven and the Müllers, and Michael Lorenz for clarifying the details of Josepha Hortensia’s marriage record.

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First Published: Tue, 3 Apr 2018

Updated: Tue, 1 Jul 2025

Citation:

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