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A reference to Mozart in Frambach's play *Menschenwerth* (1791)

David Black and Dexter Edge

Johann Heinrich Frambach, *Menschen=Werth. Ein Schauspiel in fünf Acten*.... Wesel, gedruckt bei Franz Jakob Röder. 1791.

[63]

Dritter Aufzug.

(Zimmer im Hause des Commerzienraths.)

Erster Auftritt.

(Es ist Abend. Madame Gallburg sizt an einem Ti=
sche, worauf zwey Lichter brennen. Verschiedene
Bücher um sie herum. Sie durchblättert einige,
indem tritt der Commerzienrath ein: er legt
Hut und Stock weg.)

Der Commerzienrath. Die Commerzienräthinn.

Der Commerzienrath.

Guten Abend, Malchen! — Ey, ey mein
Kind, du hier zu Hause, mit einem ganzen
Lager von Gehrsamkeit *[sic]* umgeben, während die
ganze Stadt in dem Conzertsaal die fremden
Castraten und Sänger, so erst kürzlich von
Rom, Venedig, Florenz und Neapel ange=
kommen, bewundert und beklatschet? Du hier,
liebes Malchen, indeß Signor Strombolo, Fio=
relli, Carasella, Berrosi, die Signora Camilla,
Cassandra, Rosaura durch die Macht ihrer Zau=
berkehlen eine ganze Stadt entzücken und einem

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Dritter Aufzug.

(Zimmer im Hauſe des Commerzienraths.)

Erſter Auftritt.

(Es iſt Abend. Madame Gallburg ſitzt an einem Tiſche, worauf zwey Lichter brennen. Verſchiedene Bücher um ſie herum. Sie durchblättert einige, indem tritt der Commerzienrath ein: er legt Hut und Stock weg.)

Der Commerzienrath. Die Commerzienräthinn.

Der Commerzienrath.

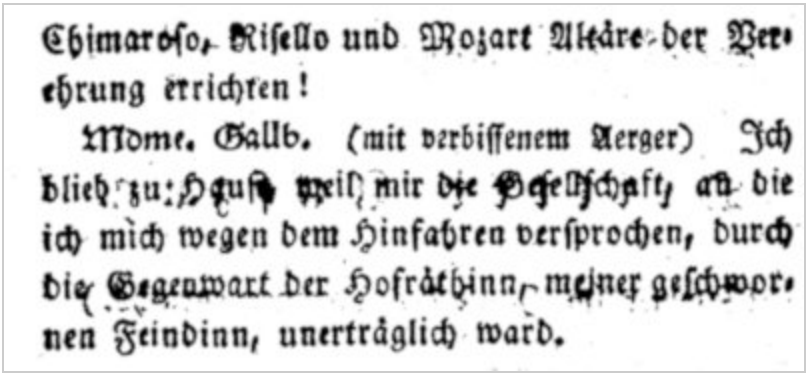
Guten Abend, Malchen! — Ey, ey mein Kind, du hier zu Hauſe, mit einem ganzen Lager von Gehrſamkeit umgeben, während die ganze Stadt in dem Conzertſaal die fremden Caſtraten und Sänger, ſo erſt kürzlich von Rom, Venedig, Florenz und Neapel angekommen, bewundert und beklatſchet? Du hier, liebes Malchen, indeß Signor Strombolo, Fiorelli, Carafella, Berroſi, die Signora Camilla, Caſſandra, Roſaura durch die Macht ihrer Zauberkehlen eine ganze Stadt entzücken und einen

[64]

Chimaroso, Risello *[sic]* und Mozart Altäre der Ver=
ehrung errichten!

Mdme. Gallb. (mit verbissenem Aerger) Ich
blieb zu Hause weil mir die Gesellschaft, an die
ich mich wegen dem Hinfahren versprochen, durch
die Gegenwart der Hofräthinn, meiner geschwor=
nen Feindinn, unerträglich ward.

[...]


Chimaroſo, Riſello und Mozart Altäre der Verehrung errichten!

Mdme. Gallb. (mit verbiſſenem Aerger) Ich blieb zu Hauſe weil mir die Geſellſchaft, an die ich mich wegen dem Hinfahren verſprochen, durch die Gegenwart der Hofräthinn, meiner geſchworenen Feindinn, unerträglich ward.

[translation:]

[63]

Act 3.

(House of the Commercial Councilor.)
Scene 1.

(It is evening. Madame Gallburg sits at a table on which two lamps are burning. Various books are around her. She is leafing through some of them, when the Commercial Councilor enters: he lays down his hat and cane.)

The Commercial Councilor. His Wife.

The Commercial Councilor.

Good evening, Malchen! — Hey, hey my child,
you here at home, surrounded by a whole
storehouse of erudition, while in the concert hall
the whole city admires and applauds
the foreign castrati and singers, recently arrived
from Rome, Venice, Florence and Naples?
You here, dear Malchen, while Signor Strombolo,
Fiorelli, Carasella, Berrosi, and Signora Camilla,
Cassandra, Rosaura enchant the entire city through
the power of their magical throats, and erect
altars of worship to Chimaroso, Risello and Mozart!

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Madame Gallburg (with concealed irritation).
I stayed at home because the company with whom
I had promised to ride there was made unbearable

for me by the presence of the court councilor's wife,
my sworn enemy.

Commentary

From at least the mid-1780s, references to Mozart and his music began to appear in a variety of literary genres, as diverse as a didactic children's story (Musäus, *Moralische Kinderklapper für Kinder und Nichtkinder*, 1788), a theological tract (Barth, *Meine Gedanken über die Einleitung in die christliche Religion*, 1791), and several plays. Frambach's *Menschenwerth* is one of five plays published or performed during Mozart's lifetime that are now known to contain references to him; the others are Kaffka's *Sechs Freyer und keine Braut* (1787), Kotzebue's *Menschenhaß und Reue* (1788), Jünger's *Er mengt sich in alles* (1791), and one other still to be published on this site.

Johann Heinrich Frambach (1771–1821) was a writer who spent most of his career as a public official. Born in Düsseldorf, from 1795 he was in Cologne, where he became a tax collector for the occupying French administration. In 1799 he married Maria Ursula Claisen; their daughter Marie Agnes Frederique was born in 1801, and there may have been a further daughter in 1815. In 1801, Frambach and Franz Bachoven (d. 1817) formed a short-lived theater troupe that had controversial tenures in Cologne, Aachen, and Düsseldorf (see Fritz 1901, 103–25 and Auch 1960, 58–70). After a sojourn in Hamburg, where he may have worked as a goldsmith (Huppert 1924, 381), Frambach returned to Cologne, eventually becoming chair of the finance bureau for the *Roer-Département*. Following the French defeat, he served as secretary of the Cologne *Handelskammer* until his death. Frambach has sometimes been confused with the philologist and prolific playwright Friedrich Eberhard Rambach (1767–1826).

Frambach began his literary career with a series of plays: *Menschenwerth* (1791), *Betrug durch Heucheley* (1792), *Der Flüchtling* (1793), and *Die Inquisition* (1798). These attracted little attention and none are known to have been produced, although *Menschenwerth* was also issued in Vienna in 1791 in vol. 87 of Jahn's *Theatralische Sammlung*. The short play *Kreuz- und Queerzüge: Leben und Heldentod des Ritters Gaensebier* (1795) is a satire on the Jacobin writer Franz Theodor Matthias Biergans. In 1801 Frambach composed a prologue for the opening night of his theater company (the prologue is printed in Dahm 1802). His tragedy *Die Belagerung von Hamburg im Jahre 1216* was produced in Hamburg in 1804 and published in 1810; it received scathing reviews and did not enter the repertory. Frambach also edited and contributed to the newspapers *Verkündiger im Ruhr-Departement* in 1801–1802 and 1806–1807 (see Goedeke, vol. 16:496), and *Welt- und Staatsboth zu Köln* from 1809.



Mit hoher Obrigkeitlicher Bewilligung
wird heute
Dienstag, den 30sten October, 1804.
zum Erstenmal aufgeführt:

Die Belagerung von Hamburg,
im Jahr 1216.

Trauerspiel in fünf Acten, von Frambach.

Personen:

Waldemar der Zweyte, genannt der Siegreiche, König von Dännemark . . . . . Herr Steiger.
Graf Albrecht von Orlamünde, Statthalter in Holstein und Oberbefehlshaber des dänischen Heers . . . . . Herr Herrfeld.
Graf Ludwold von Ellenbe . . . . . Herr Gleg.
Graf Hugo von Ringstädt . . . . . Herr Leo.
Radulph, Steno, Knarsen, Dänische Hauptleute . . . . . Herr Schedder. Herr Testenoble. Herr Lichtenfeld.
Irmingild, Waldemars Tochter . . . . . Madame Testenoble.
Der Bürgermeister von Hamburg . . . . . Herr Stegmann.
Thormund, sein Sohn . . . . . Herr Wohlbrück.
Hedwig, seine Tochter . . . . . Madame Herrfeld.
Erster, Zweyter, Dritter, Vierter Rathsherr . . . . . Herr Rathenfels. Herr Kirchner. Herr Petersen. Herr Rousseau.
Stein, Hausewald, Bärwert, Hamburger Bürger . . . . . Herr Schäfer. Herr Rau. Herr Erhard.
Rathsdiener . . . . . Herr Erdmann.
Dänische Edelleute.
Kriegsleute.
Einwohner Hamburgs.

Die Handlung ist im ersten und dritten Act ausserhalb Hamburgs, in den andern in der Stadt; sie beginnt noch vor Tages Anbruch, und endet mit Sonnenuntergang.

Erster Rang, 2 Mark 4 Schill. Zweiter Rang, 1 Mark 12 Schill. Parterre, 1 Mark 4 Schill. Gallerie, 8 Schill.

Logen sind nur bey dem Cassirer im Operahofe, Vormittags von 10 bis 1 Uhr zu bestellen.
Jedes Billet ist nur für den Tag gültig, an dem es gelöset wird.
Der Ordnung wegen kann Niemand, weder bey den Proben noch unter der Vorstellung, aufs Theater gelassen werden.

Der Anfang ist um 6 Uhr.

Poster for the premiere of Frambach's *Die Belagerung von Hamburg im Jahre 1216.* (Universität Hamburg)

Menschenwerth ("Menschen=Werth" on the title page) is apparently Frambach's first published work; the preface is dated Düsseldorf, April 1791. The play concerns two unscrupulous friends: the lawyer Ludwig Gallburg (son of the couple in the scene quoted above) and the ordinand Heinrich Seestädt, who conspire to have Heinrich's sister Leonore married off to Ludwig. But Leonore is in love with an actor, Julius Hellniz, and refuses to marry Ludwig. Ludwig and Heinrich's scheme is eventually revealed, and Leonore is able to marry Julius.

As Huppert points out (1924, 381), the themes of the play—the hypocrisy of the clergy and bourgeoisie, and the virtue displayed by the impoverished Julius—were no doubt inspired by the revolutionary ideas of the time. The title *Menschenwerth* derives from Leonore's speech to her father justifying her love for Julius:

> Edel ist seine Liebe — ja Vater,
> denn in seinem Herzen wohnt die reinste Tu=
> gend! — Eine Würde, die ihm kein Fürst zu
> geben vermögte, ist seiner Seele eingeprägt! —
> Der wahre Menschenwerth, den nichts, keine
> Armuth, keine Fesseln verdrängen! —
> [Frambach, *Menschenwerth*, 45]

> Noble is his love — yes Father,
> because in his heart lives the purest virtue! —
> A dignity which no prince could give him is
> imprinted on his soul! — The true human value,

> which nothing, not poverty, nor fetters can
> displace! —

(An echo of the phrase also appears near the end of the play, on page 147.) Similar sentiments are found in the epigraph printed on the play's title page, adapted from Friedrich von Hagedorn's poem *Die Glückseligkeit*:

> Nicht Erbrecht und Geburt, das Herz macht groß und klein;
> Ein König könnte Sklav, ein Sklave König seyn.
>
> Inheritance and birth do not make the heart large or small;
> A king could be a slave, or a slave a king.

(Hagedorn actually wrote "Nicht Erbrecht noch Geburt," and "Kaiser," not "König.")

The reference to Mozart appears at the beginning of Act 3. Ludwig's father, the well-meaning but naïve Commerzienrath asks his snobbish and scheming wife (in her first appearance) why she is not at the concert hall. He addresses her as "Malchen," the pet form of Amalia or Amalie. The male singers mentioned by the Commerzienrath (Strombolo, Fiorelli, Carasella and Berrosi) do not appear to be historical figures, but rather stereotypical "Italian" surnames. The female singers (Camilla, Cassandra, Rosaura) are mentioned only by their first names, but these too are probably Frambach's inventions. The composers are a different story: "Chimaroso" is undoubtedly Domenico Cimarosa (1749–1801), and "Risello" is probably intended to be Giovanni Paisiello (1740–1816). Frambach could hardly have been unaware of the correct spellings, and the mangling of their names was no doubt for humorous effect. Mozart is the only composer whose name is left intact.

Nothing is known of Frambach's life or education in Düsseldorf, or his knowledge of music. In the context of the play, Mozart is named among composers and singers of opera, and it is the only non-Italian name. No opera by Mozart is known to have been performed in Düsseldorf by the time of the publication of *Menschenwerth*. Cologne, the largest nearby city, saw a production of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* by the company of Johann Böhm as early as Oct 1784; in Bonn, just slightly further away, *Don Giovanni* was first performed on 13 Oct 1789, and *Figaro* a month later, on 14 Nov. Both operas (in German adaptations) seem to have been quite popular in Bonn, and Frambach might have heard of their success, even if he was not able to attend. But by early 1791, when Frambach was preparing *Menschenwerth* for publication, he would have had many opportunities to read in the theatrical press about Mozart's operas on German stages, without having seen any of them. So he might merely have dropped Mozart's name without knowing Mozart's music.

We are grateful to Steven Whiting for his assistance with the research for this entry.

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