

Mozart performs at a concert in Mainz (20 Oct 1790)

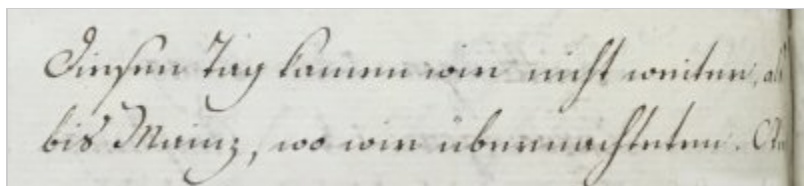
Martin Nedbal

Franz Joseph von Zierotin, "Tagebuch / meiner Reise zur Krönung / Kaiser Leopold II / im Jahre / 1790 / Geschrieben für mich / Franz Joseph Graf von Ziero= / tin / Von meinem Freunde und / Hofmeister / Alois Rogier," Czech Republic, State Regional Archive Opava, Olomouc Branch, Zierotin Family Archive Bludov (1295), 1427-1947, inventory number 467, shelfmark VI-2306, item 84

[84v] [...]

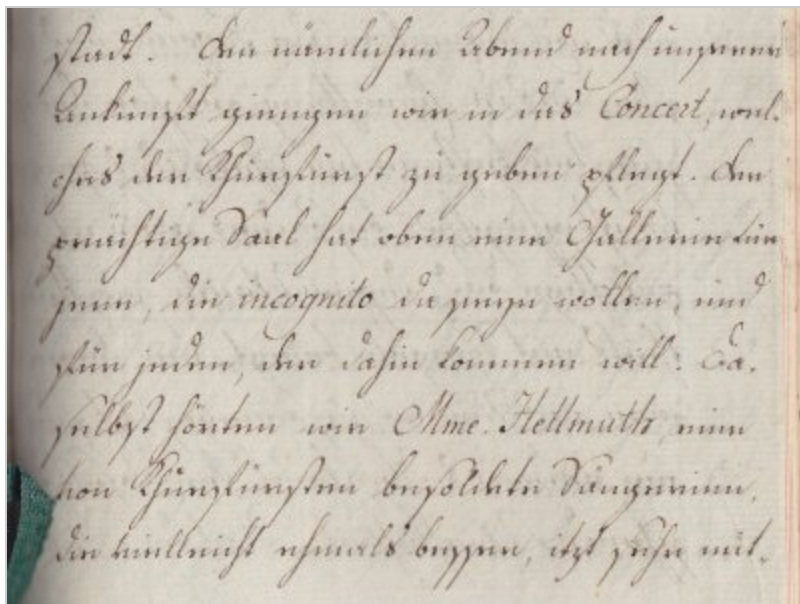
[20 Oct]

Diesen Tag kamen wir nicht weiter als bis Mainz, wo wir übernachteten. [...]



[85r]

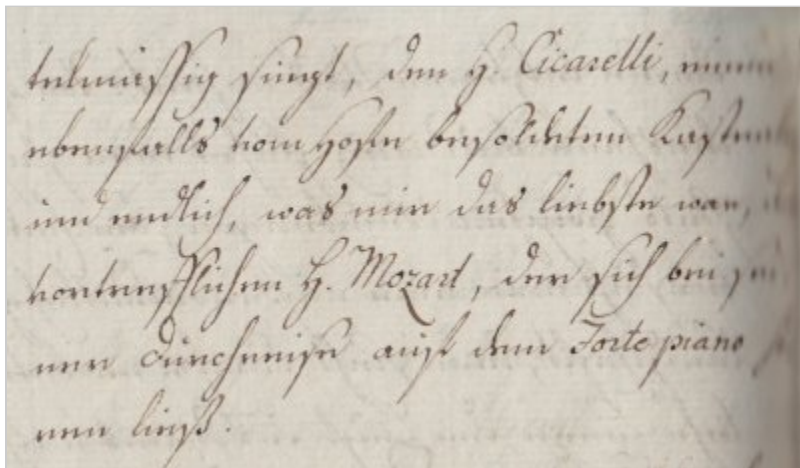
[...] Den nämlichen Abend nach unserer Ankunft giengen wir in das *Concert*, welches der Khurfürst zu geben pflegt. Der prächtige Saal hat oben eine Gallerie für jene, die *incognito* da seyn wollen, und für jeden, der dahin kommen will. Da selbst hörten wir *Mme. Hellmuth*, eine von Khurfürsten besoldete Sängerin, die vielleicht ehemals besser, itzt sehr mit=



Handwritten manuscript snippet in German cursive script, likely from a diary or travelogue. The text is partially obscured by a blue binding strip on the left. The visible text includes: "Auch in demselben Abend musizierten...".

[85v]

telmässig singt, den H. *Cicarelli*, einen ebenfalls vom Hofe besoldeten Kastraten, und endlich, was mir das liebste war, den vortrefflichen H. *Mozart*, der sich bei seiner Durchreise auf dem *Forte piano* hören ließ. [...]



Handwritten manuscript snippet in German cursive script, continuing the text from the previous snippet. The text includes: "In demselben Abend musizierten...".

[translation:]

[20 Oct]

Today we did not travel further than Mainz, where we spent the night. [...]

[...] On the same evening after our

arrival, we went to the concert that the Elector likes to give. The magnificent hall has an upper gallery for those who wish to be there *incognito*, and for anyone who wants to attend. There we heard *Mme. Hellmuth*, a singer paid by the Elector, who may have sung better at one time, but at present is very mediocre; Herr *Ceccarelli*, a castrato also paid by the court; and finally, my favorite, the excellent Herr *Mozart*, who was passing through and performed on the fortepiano. [...]

Commentary

This reference to Mozart’s participation in a concert at the electoral court in Mainz on 20 Oct 1790 comes from the travel diary of Count Franz Joseph von Zierotin (František Josef ze Žerotína, 1772–1845). In 1790, at the age of 18, Zierotin travelled to Frankfurt to attend the coronation of Leopold II as Holy Roman Emperor. The coronation was preceded by a largely ceremonial vote cast by the traditional electors. Zierotin was an “Edelknabe” (page-boy) in the Bohemian delegation (“Wahlbothschaft”), which represented the electoral vote associated since the Middle Ages with the Kings of Bohemia (see the roster of the Bohemian delegation [here](#)). Zierotin kept an extensive diary during his trip; the diary, which survives in a manuscript fair copy by Zierotin’s Hofmeister Alois Rogier, was overlooked by scholars until Marika Růžičková described it in her 2014 undergraduate thesis at Palacký University in Olomouc (Růžičková 2014). The diary contains two previously unknown references to Mozart: the one transcribed here, and another in Zierotin’s entry for 22 Oct 1790, when he witnessed Mozart directing a rehearsal of *Figaro* in Mannheim (see our entry for [that date](#)). Zierotin’s diary also contains several descriptions of theatrical and operatic performances in Vienna, where he stopped for a few days on his way to Frankfurt. Because eyewitness accounts of Viennese theater during this period are rare, we have included his descriptions at the end of this commentary.

Zierotin was descended from an ancient Moravian noble family, and he was a first cousin of Countess Maria Anna Hortensia von Hatzfeld (née Zierotin), the acclaimed amateur soprano who sang the role of Elettra in Prince Auersperg’s production of Mozart’s *Idomeneo* in Vienna in Mar 1786 (see [our entry](#) on that production). Zierotin spent his early career in imperial service and administration, but later devoted himself to his estates in Blauda (Bludov), Prauss (Prusy, in Prussian Silesia), and Wallachisch Meseritsch (Valašské Meziříčí; on Zierotin, see [Wolny 1829, i: 158–60](#), and [Lapáček 2012, 54](#)).

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[...]

[17 Oct]

Bevor ich Frankfort verlasse, möchte ich noch etwas von demselben berühren. Die Unterhaltungen, wenige ausgenommen, muß sich hier jeder *particulier* auf eigene Kosten verschaffen. Das Theater ist ziemlich groß, und schön, auch die Trupp, die da spielt ganz gut; denn es ist die Mainzische, aber sie spielt hier nur, wo man sie am leichtesten entbehren kann, im Sommer. Während der Krönung, waren hier noch

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2. andere Gesellschaften, näml. eine französische von Strasburg, und eine Triersche von H. Koberwein, der mit H. Böhm assoziert war; letzterer besorgte die Schauspiele, ersterer die Ballets, die keine von den beiden anderen hatte.

Diese 2. Gesellschaften spielten in hölzernen, eigens dazu errichteten Schauspielhäusern von mittelmässiger Größe. Die französische Trupp hatte viel Anstand in ihrem Spiele, den sich unsere deutschen Schauspieler, wann sie Kavaliers, Fürsten, oder wohl gar Könige vorstellen, nicht zu geben wissen; doch blickte überall der affektirte Gallier hervor. Trauerspiele waren nicht ihre *force* Stücke, sondern kleine Lust=

[82v]

spiele, und komische Opern; doch muß man sehr an ihre Musik gewöhnt seyn, wenn sie gefallen soll, indem sie ganz in französischen Geschmacke ist, nichts als Trillereyen. Diese Schauspieler schreien außerordentlich, machen sich aber eben dadurch so verständlich, daß man gewiß keine Silbe verliert. Sie dekla=

miren sehr richtig, und legen den Ak=
zent allzeit auf das wahre Wort. [...]

[translation:]

[...][17 Oct.]

Before leaving Frankfurt, I want to say a bit more about the city. Here, with few exceptions, each private individual must give entertainments at his own expense. The theater is quite large and pretty, and the troupe that performs there is very good; it is the one from Mainz, but it performs here only when it can be most easily spared, in summer. During the coronation, there were also two other companies here, namely a French one from Strasbourg, and one from Trier run by Herr Koberwein, who had joined with Herr Böhm; the latter provided spoken theater, the former ballets, each which the other did not have.

These two companies performed in specially erected wooden theaters of medium size. The French troupe had much decorum in its performance, which our German actors, when they portray cavaliers, counts, and even kings, do not know how to imitate; yet it always comes out in the affected Gauls. Tragedies were not their forte, but instead little comedies and comic operas; yet one must very much get used to their music in order to enjoy it, because it is completely in the French taste, nothing but trills. These actors shout extraordinarily, but they thereby make themselves so well understood, that one certainly does not miss even a single syllable. They declaim quite correctly, and they always put the accent on the right word. [...]

(On the three theatrical companies that Zierotin describes, see especially Glatthorn 2017, 93–95).

The Mainz company performed Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* (in a German adaptation as *Die Hochzeit des Figaro*) in Frankfurt on 25 Sep and 10 Oct; Zierotin does not mention these performances. (Christiane Keillholz, who went on to sing the role of Susanna in the Mannheim premiere of *Figaro* on 24 Oct 1790, made a guest appearance with the Mainz company in that role on 25 Sep; see our entry for [that date](#).) Mozart wrote to Constanze that the company also planned a performance of *Don Giovanni* for Tuesday, 5 Oct, but this performance did not take

place, and Dittersdorf's *Die Liebe im Narrenhaus* was given instead (Glatthorn 2017, 94). Some scholars claim that Mozart saw a performance of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Frankfurt on 12 Oct, but there is no evidence of such a performance (Glatthorn 2017, 94).

Mozart's concert in Frankfurt on 15 Oct was given in the city's theater. According to the poster announcing the concert (*Dokumente*, 329; facsimile in Glatthorn 2017, 107), at least one member of the Mainz company participated: Margarete Luise Schick (1773–1809; on Schick, see our entry for [1 May 1791](#)). Another participant was the castrato Francesco Ceccarelli (1752–1814), whom Mozart knew from Salzburg, and who at that time was a member of the musical establishment at the electoral court in Mainz. Mozart's concert began at eleven in the morning, and that same evening, the Mainz company performed Wranitzky's *Oberon* in the same theater. The participation of Schick and the shared venue has led some scholars to suggest that Mozart's orchestra at the concert consisted of musicians from Mainz, possibly members of the Mainz Hofkapelle (Glatthorn 2017, 106).

Mozart's concert seems not to have been very successful, and he left Frankfurt soon afterwards. According to a letter to Constanze on 15 Oct, he intended to leave on 18 Oct, but he was apparently already in Mainz already by 17 Oct, when he sent a letter from that city (the letter is lost, but Mozart mentions it in one written to Constanze from Mannheim on 23 Oct; *Briefe*, iv: 119). It may be that Countess Hatzfeld also helped organize the concert in Mainz; she had many family connections there: most importantly, her brother-in-law Franz Ludwig von Hatzfeld was intendant of court music in Mainz, and her sister-in-law Sophie von Coudenhoven (née Hatzfeld) was a member of the inner circle of the Elector, Archbishop [Friedrich Karl Joseph von Erthal](#) (1719–1802), who was a cousin. (On the Hatzfeld family and Mainz, see our entries for [Prince Auersperg's production of *Idomeneo*](#) and [Hugo von Hatzfeld's letter of 23 Mar 1786](#).)

Zierotin remained in Frankfurt until 20 Oct, when he began his journey homeward, making his first stop in Mainz. Up to now, our principal source on the concert in Mainz has been a brief report in the *Privilegierte Mainzer Zeitung*. The report is dated 21 Oct, but refers to the previous day:

Mainz, vom 21. Oktob. Unter mehreren fremden hohen Herrschaften befinden sich auch Se. fürstl. Gnaden des Hrn. Reichs-Vizekanzlers Fürsten von Colloredo nebst Frau Gemahlin und Kinder hier. Gestern war bei Hof große Tafel, wozu sämtliche hohe Fremde eingeladen wurden, und Abends Akademie, in welcher sich der berühmte Tonkünstler und Kapellmeister Sr. k. H. des Erzherzogs Franz, Hr. Mozart, auf dem Klavier mit höchst- und hohem Beifall hören ließ. [*Dokumente*, 331]

Mainz, from October 21. Among several other foreign nobility here are His Princely Grace Herr Reichs-Vizekanzler Prince von Colloredo, along with his wife and children. Yesterday, there was a grand reception at court, to which all the exalted foreigners were invited, and in the evening an academy, at which the famous composer and Kapellmeister of His royal Highness Archduke Franz, Hr. Mozart, performed at the keyboard, to the acclaim of the Elector and his distinguished guests.

The “Fürst von Colloredo” was [Franz de Paula Gundaker von Colloredo-Mansfeld](#) (1731–1807), a Habsburg diplomat based in Vienna. He had assumed the title of Fürst on the death of his father in 1788. His next younger brother was Hieronymus von Colloredo, the Archbishop of Salzburg and Mozart’s former employer. (For the relationships of this branch of the Colloredo family, see [this genealogy](#) from 1783.) The report in the *Privilegierte Mainzer Zeitung* implies that other visiting nobility also attended the concert; presumably, like Zierotin, these visitors were on their way home from the Frankfurt coronation. It was widely said at the time (as in the Mainz report) that Mozart was the Kapellmeister of Archduke Franz (who was soon to succeed his father Leopold II as emperor in 1792); but it seems fairly certain that he was not.

Mozart mentions the concert in Mainz in his letter to Constanze on 23 Oct 1790:

— ich habe den Tag vor meiner Abreise beym Churfürsten gespielt, aber magere 15 Carolin erhalten — [*Briefe*, iv:119]

— On the day before my departure [from Mainz] I played at the Elector’s, but received a meagre 15 Carolin —

A Carolin ([Karolin](#)) was a gold coin worth 11 gulden, so Mozart’s payment for the performance was 165 fl, the amount recorded in the accounts for the court musical establishment in Mainz (*Dokumente*, 331). This amounted to more than one third of the 450 fl that Mozart had received at the beginning of the year for composing *Così fan tutte* for the court theater in Vienna; the payment in Mainz also seems generous for a single appearance by a guest performer at a concert. So Mozart’s disappointment with the amount should be understood in the wider context of the high expenses of his trip to Frankfurt and his unhappiness with what he had earned from his concert there. (See [our entry](#) on Mozart’s receipt for his honorarium in Mainz.)

The exact program of the concert in Mainz remains unknown, but Zierotin’s diary shows that Francesco Ceccarelli again participated, as he had in Mozart’s Frankfurt concert on 15 Oct. This raises the possibility that some of the music from that concert might have been performed again in Mainz. One change from the Frankfurt concert was the replacement of Schick by soprano [Franziska Josepha Hellmuth](#) (1757–c.1798), who was a member of both the Mainz Hofkapelle and the Mainz theater company (Wagner 1984, 104).

The concert took place in the so-called “Akademiesaal” in the northern wing of the Electoral Palace in Mainz. Zierotin remarks that he attended as an unofficial guest (the implication of “incognito”) and thus observed the concert from a publicly accessible gallery. He gave a more detailed description of the hall during his first visit to Mainz on 14 Jul 1790:

[30r]

[...]

14. [Jul] In der khurfürstl. Residenz, die prächtig eingerichtet, ist vorzüglich der grosse Saal, der zu Konzerten, und im Fasching

zu Bälern gebraucht wird, merkwürdig.
Es ist sehr hoch mit schönen marmorir=
ten Säulen gestützt, so wie der gan=
ze Saal selbst marmorirt ist, und hat
oben eine mit starken eisernen Git=
tern versehene Gallerie, die dem Vol=
ke zum Auditorio dient; [...]

[translation:]

[...]
14 *[Jul]* In the Electoral Residence, which
is splendidly furnished, the great hall is
particularly remarkable; it is used for
concerts, and, in carnival time, for balls.
It is very high, supported by beautiful
marbled columns, just as the whole hall
itself is marbled, and it has an upper gallery
with a strong iron balustrade, which serves
as a place for the people to listen [...]

Zierotin's remarks suggest that the concert in Mainz was open to the general public, and he provides a rare description of the beautiful concert space, constructed in 1786–1787. The hall was destroyed by Allied bombing in the Second World War, but a photograph survives; it shows the marbling and the gallery with its iron balustrade, just as Zierotin describes.



Akademiesaal, Electoral Palace in Mainz (pre-war photograph)
(Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Rheinland-Pfalz)

Zierotin's diary contains other references to theater, including musical theater. Of particular interest are his descriptions of his visits to theaters in Vienna. He arrived in Vienna on 16 Jun 1790 and attended a performance in the Theater in der Leopoldstadt that same day:

[4r]

[16 Jun]

[...] Das Theater
in der Leopoldstadt, beim Kasperl genan[n]t,

[4v]

spielt auch andere ganz gute Stücke, und dieß gar nicht übel. Ich sah den Geisterseher, ein Stück ohne Liebesintrigen, ohne Hochzeit, ohne Frauzimmer kann man fast auch sagen. Diese Schaubühne zeichnet sich vorzüglich durch die Menge und Sauberkeit ihrer Dekorationen aus, und findet deshalb bei den Herrn Wiennern, die so sehr am Scheinn kleben, einen zahlreichen Zuspruch. [...]

[translation:]

[16 Jun]

[...] The Theater
in the Leopoldstadt, called Beim Kasperl,
also performs other plays that are quite good,
and not at all badly. I saw *Der Geisterseher*,
a piece without love intrigues, without
a marriage, one can almost even say without
women. This theater stands out especially
because of the quantity and fineness of its
decorations, and it is thus attended in large
numbers by the Viennese, who are so
attached to make-believe.[...]

The piece that Zierotin saw in the Theater in der Leopoldstadt was Joachim Perinet's *Der Geisterseher*, a comic play in five acts ("komisches Schauspiel in 5 Akten", based on a story by Friedrich Schiller) which had premiered on 28 May 1790 (Gugitz 1905, 165, and Angermüller 2009, 72; on Perinet, see our entry on his 29 *Annbemlichkeiten in Wien*). The following day, Zierotin visited the Burgtheater:

[4v]

[...]

17. [Jun] Besah ich das Nazionaltheatre. Es
ist sehr groß und prächtig, hat aber et=
was gothisches in seinem inneren Anse=
hen. In der Kleidung, und Dekoration
wird sehr auf das Kostüm, auf die im
Stücke herrschende Zeit und Umstände
gesehen.

[translation:]

[...]

17 [Jun] I viewed the Nationaltheater. It is
very large and magnificent, but has
something Gothic in its interior appearance.
In clothing and sets, much care is taken
with historical convention, the time and
circumstances depicted in the piece.

Zierotin does not explicitly say that he attended a performance in the Burgtheater that day, but if he did, it would have been *Die Glücksritter*, an adaptation of George Farquhar's *The Beaux Stratagem*.

[6r]

[...]

Abends im Nazionaltheatre, um die Meisterinn *Sacko* zu sehen. Diese berühmte Schauspielerinn ist sehr groß und stark, eher häßlich als schön, und schon bei Jahren; aber ihre Stimme ist sehr melodisch, und ihr Spiel so dahinreißend, daß man dabei auf das vergißt, woran die *Natur* an ihr zur Stiefmutter ward, und daß selbst der gefühlloseste gezwungen wird, an dem Stücke Antheil zu nehmen.

[translation:]

[...]

In the evening, at the Nationaltheater to see the masterly *Sacco*. This famous actress is very large and strong, more ugly than beautiful, and already advanced in years; but her voice is very melodious and her acting is so gripping, that one forgets *Nature* has treated her as a stepmother would, and that even the most insensitive are forced to become absorbed in the piece.

The play that Zierotin saw on 19 Jun was *Imogen*, Friedrich Ludwig Wilhelm Meyer's German adaptation of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (Hadamowsky i:64). On 24 Jun Zierotin attended an Italian opera in the Burgtheater:

[9r]

Jun: 24. War ich in der wälschen Oper. Da ich kein Kenner von Musik bin, und folglich selbst nicht urteilen kann, so muß ich mich auf das Urtheil anderer verlassen, für dessen Unpartheilichkeit ich kein Bürger bin. Dermalen werden in Wienn *Mlle: Ferraresi* als die beste Sängerinn, und *Mr: Benuci* als der beste Buffo gerühmt. Nach meinem stumpfen Gefühl sangen sie sehr schön.

[translation:]

24 Jun. I went to the Italian opera.
Because I am no connoisseur of music,
and therefore cannot judge for myself,
I have to rely on the judgment of
others, whose impartiality I cannot
vouch for. According to them, *Mlle.*
Ferrarese is considered the best singer,
and *Mr. Benucci* the best Buffo in
Vienna. In my dull opinion, they sang
very nicely.

The piece performed that evening was Salieri's *La ciffra* (Hadamowsky i:22), in which [Adriana Ferrarese](#) sang Eurilla and [Francesco Benucci](#) probably appeared in the role of Rusticone (Rice 1998, 442). Two days later, Zierotin attended a performance in the Theater auf der Wieden:

[10r]

[...]
26. [Jun] War ich auf der Wieden im Thea=
ter. Die Schauspieler mögen wohl so
ziemlich gut seyn, spielen aber so schlech=
te Stücke, als nur seyn können. Sie spie=
len Stücke, die oft 8, 9. auch 13. bis 14.

[10v]

Theile haben, und die eben so viele Aben=
de wahren, als das Stück Theile hat. Ich
sah eines, das nur einen Theil hatte, nämlich
König *Attila*, oder die Hexe von Augsburg.
So was dummes habe ich selbst in dem Som=
mer, oder Kasperl Theater noch nicht gese=
hen; und doch wird diese Truppe mit ei=
nem ziemlich zahlreichen Zuspruche be=
ehrt: ein Beweis, daß nicht alles was
groß, schön und edel ist, in Wienn ge=
schätzt wird, und daß es in Wienn d[em]
einzigen auch Leute giebt, die von recht
verdorbenen Geschmacke sind. [...]

[translation:]

[...]
26 [Jun] I went to the Theater auf der
Wieden. The actors may well be quite

good, but the pieces they play are as bad as can be. They perform pieces that often consist of 8, 9, even 13 to 14 parts, and that last for as many evenings as there are parts of a piece. I saw one, which was in only one part, namely *König Attila, oder die Hexe von Augsburg*. I have not seen anything so stupid even in summer or Kasperl theaters; and yet this troupe is honored with a quite large attendance: a proof that not everything that is great, beautiful, and noble is prized in Vienna, and that even in Vienna itself there are people, who have quite debased taste. [...]

The historical play ("historisches Schauspiel") *König Attila* that Zierotin saw on 26 Jun was by Emanuel Schikaneder; its performance the previous day, 25 Jun, was apparently the premiere (Deutsch 1937, 32).

Zierotin's observations on Viennese theater in the summer of 1790 are of particular interest, because, apart from the diaries of Count Zinzendorf (see Link 1998), we have few personal reactions to the city's cultural life during that period. Zinzendorf was at the performance of *Imogen* on 19 Jun, but otherwise did not attend any of the performances that Zierotin describes, so Zierotin is currently our only known witness to these. His subjective impressions of the "gothic" interior of the Burgtheater and the debased tastes of the Viennese (as reflected in the performance at the Theater auf der Wieden) offer a rare view of Viennese theater at that time from the point of view of an "outsider."

Notes (↑)

We do not know why Zierotin kept this detailed diary of his trip to the coronation in Frankfurt. It may be that he thought of publishing it; such coronation diaries were something of a minor publishing genre at the time. On the other hand, Zierotin clearly did not consider himself an author; the only publication by him that we have been able to find is a [speech on fire insurance](#) from 1834.

Zierotin's reference to the old Burgtheater as "gotisch" may seem odd to those who have seen paintings and prints of the theater's interior. But Zierotin may have made his first visit to the theater during the day, when candles would not have been lit, as they were during a performance. Since the theater had few if any windows to admit outside light, the theater may indeed have seemed dark and gloomy on first acquaintance.

We would like to thank Steven Whiting and Michael Lorenz for helpful discussions of particular points of translation; and Catherine Sprague for bringing to our attention the beautiful pre-war photograph of the concert hall in the Electoral palace in Mainz.

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