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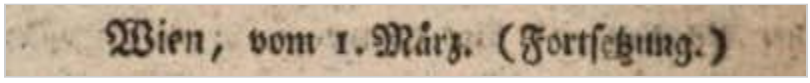
A Mozart benefit concert in the Kärntnertortheater (28 Feb 1787)

David Black

***Bayreuther Zeitung*, Anhang zum no. 30, Mon, 12 Mar 1787**

[112]

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[translation:]

Vienna, from 1 March (continued).

[...]

Yesterday Herr Mozart was able to give a musical
academy for his own benefit and had good receipts. He

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is traveling this month with his wife to London to have his talent admired and rewarded there, having been invited by the son of the Royal kapellmeister Sir Atwulf [*recte* Attwood], who stopped here for several months; and it can be taken as certain that he will please greatly.

Commentary

Mozart's music occupied a prominent place in the Lenten concerts held at the Kärtnertortheater in 1787 (for a list of the concerts see Morrow 1989, 264–68 and Edge 1992, 152–54.) On 23 Feb, the composer played the Concerto in D Minor, K. 466, and the piano obbligato in the aria "Ch'io mi scordi di te," K. 505, at Nancy Storace's farewell academy. At a benefit for the Willmann family on 7 Mar, Walburga Willmann performed "a grand fortepiano concerto by Herr Mozart." The oboist Friedrich Ramm's benefit concert on 14 Mar featured a Mozart symphony and an unidentified Mozart aria sung by Aloysia Lange. Finally on 21 Mar the bass Ludwig Fischer held a benefit concert featuring another Mozart symphony and the new aria "Alcandro, lo confesso," K. 512 (*Neue Folge*, 51–54, 90.) Despite the presence of his works in the concerts of other musicians, and the fact that he had given his own Lenten benefit concerts in 1784, 1785 and 1786, Mozart was not previously known to have organized a similar event for Lent 1787. As the program for the Lenten season of 1787 can otherwise be reconstructed almost entirely, the absence of any surviving *Theaterzettel* for a Mozart benefit concert had until now made it seem unlikely that Mozart had organized such a concert that season.

The report in the *Bayreuther Zeitung* refers to a concert on Wed, 28 Feb 1787, the second Wednesday in Lent, and the day before the dateline of the report, 1 Mar. (Ash Wednesday fell on 21 Feb in 1787, and Easter on 8 Apr. The Burgtheater was closed throughout Lent in 1787.) Hadamowsky (1966) lists a performance of the play *Edwin und Emma* by Franz Anton Schrämbl in the Kärntnertortheater on 28 Feb 1787, but this seems to be mistaken (Link 1998, 100).

Assuming that Mozart's concert on 28 Feb actually took place, which of his works were performed? There are no known dated compositions between the Six German Dances K. 509 (6 Feb) written in Prague and the Rondo in A minor K. 511 (11 Mar) completed back in Vienna, so it appears that no last-minute compositions were prepared for the concert. The possibilities are thus similar to the other unidentified concert items of the season: contemporaneous works include the Piano Concerto in C K. 503 and the "Prague" Symphony K. 504. However, while it may make intuitive sense to associate a concert with music completed a few days or weeks earlier, it has been pointed out that there is little solid evidence to confirm that Mozart always programmed his newest works to the exclusion of older ones (*Neue Folge*, 51–52; Edge 2001, 522). Among the possible attendees at the concert was the young Beethoven, who was in Vienna at the time (see Haberl 2006). Despite the frustratingly laconic nature of the report, it does inform us of what appears to be Mozart's final benefit concert in the Viennese court theaters. However, as long as potential dates in the Lenten seasons of 1788–1791 remain "open," we

cannot rule out the possibility that he continued to give concerts for which no documentation has yet been found.

The Bayreuth paper also gives a rather confused account of Mozart's unrealised plans to travel to London. The "son of the royal *Capellmeister* Sir Atwulf" is evidently Mozart's pupil Thomas Attwood, but his father Thomas senior (d. 1825) was not Master of the King's Music, although he did play in the King's Band. As we learn from Leopold's testy reaction to the proposal (*Briefe*, iii:606), Mozart had been planning a journey to England since at least Nov 1786, and a number of other reports carried the rumor (see our entry for 30 Mar 1787). On their way back to England, Attwood, Michael Kelly, and the Storaces visited Salzburg on 26–27 Feb 1787, with Leopold reporting that Wolfgang's plan assumes that Attwood "will have arranged something certain for him in London in advance, namely a contract to write an opera or a subscription concert etcetc" (*Briefe*, iv:28–29).

This item is quoted in *Auszug*, ii:1231–32 (22 March 1787).

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