Citation:

Printed: Thu, 19 Nov 2026

Edge, Dexter. 2023. "Ludwig Fischer sings Osmin in Mannheim (31 Aug 1785)." In: *Mozart: New Documents*, edited by Dexter Edge and David Black. First published 17 Jul 2023. [direct link]

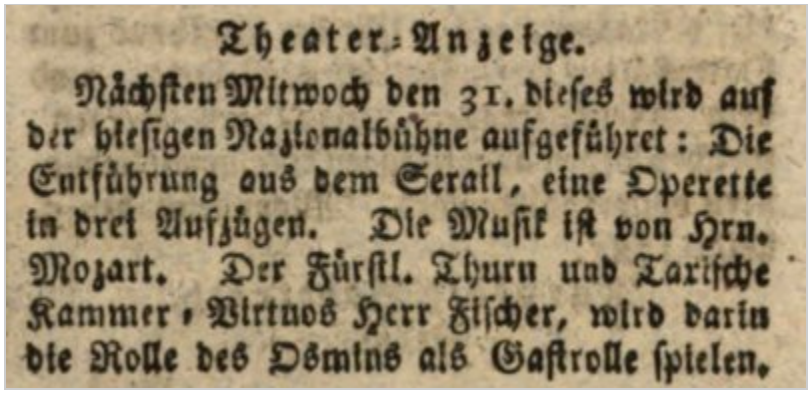
Ludwig Fischer sings Osmin in Mannheim (31 Aug 1785)

Dexter Edge

***Mannheimer Zeitung*, no. ciii, Sat, 27 Aug 1785, 423**

Theater=Anzeige.

Nächsten Mitwoch den 31. dieses wird auf der hiesigen Nazionalbühne aufgeführt: Die Entführung aus dem Serail, eine Operette in drei Aufzügen. Die Musik ist von Hrn. Mozart. Der Fürstl. Thurn und Taxische Kammer=Virtuos Herr Fischer, wird darin die Rolle des Osmins als Gastrolle spielen.



Theater-Anzeige.

Nächsten Mitwoch den 31. dieses wird auf der hiesigen Nazionalbühne aufgeführet: Die Entführung aus dem Serail, eine Operette in drei Aufzügen. Die Musik ist von Hrn. Mozart. Der Fürstl. Thurn und Taxische Kammer-Virtuos Herr Fischer, wird darin die Rolle des Osmins als Gastrolle spielen.

[translation:]

Theater Announcement.

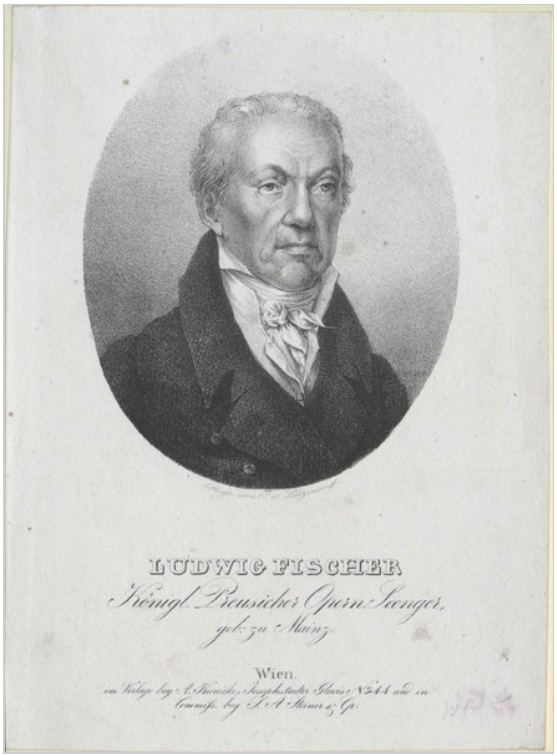
Next Wednesday, the 31st of this month will be performed in the National Theater here: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, an operetta in three acts. The music is by Herr Mozart. Herr Fischer, Chamber Virtuoso to Fürst

Mozart: New Documents by Dexter Edge & David Black
is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

Thurn und Taxis, will makes a guest appearance
in the role of Osmin.

Commentary

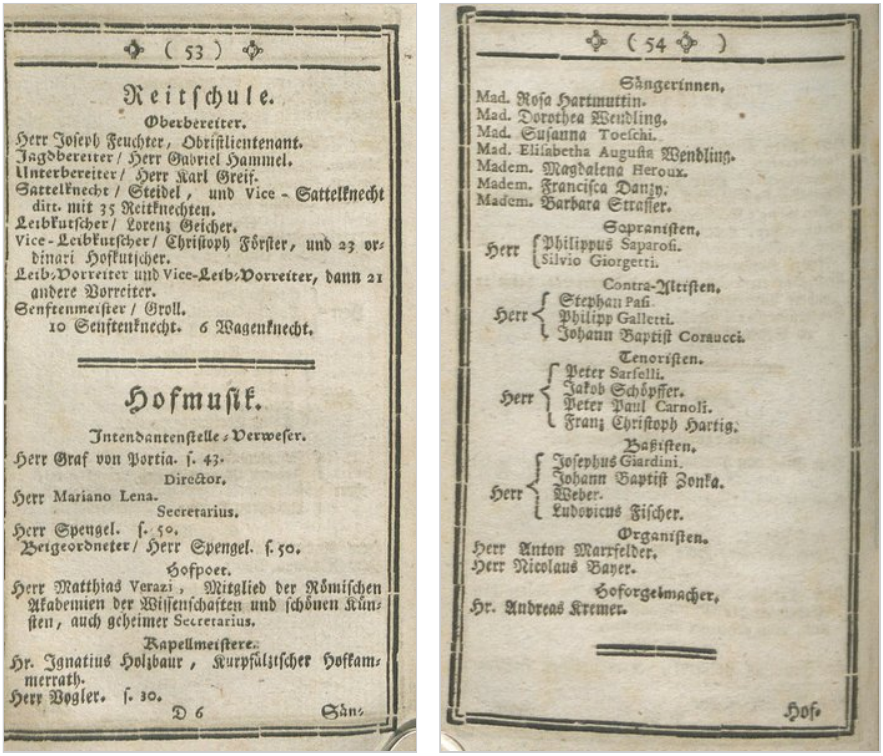
The bass Ludwig Fischer (1745–1825) created the role of Osmin in the original production of Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, apparently singing all 14 performances in the opera’s premiere run. He also seems to have been the only singer from that production to sing their role outside of Vienna. (Aloisia Lange later became well known in the role of Konstanze in Vienna and elsewhere, but Mozart composed the role for Catarina Cavalieri. On Lange’s appearances as Konstanze outside of Vienna, see our entries for 29 Sep 1784, 7 Jul 1789, 1 Aug 1789, and 13 Aug 1789). In 1785, two years after leaving the company of the Nationalsingspiel, Fischer made guest appearances as Osmin in Mannheim and Frankfurt. In the present commentary regarding his appearance in Mannheim, we take the opportunity to reexamine Fischer’s career as a whole, adding a number of new documents and details; for his appearance as Osmin in Frankfurt, see our entry for 13 Sep 1785. Fischer later went on to appear as Osmin at least once more later in his career, and he frequently sang “In diesen heil’gen Hallen” from *Die Zauberflöte* in concert. His son Joseph, whom he trained, went on to become one of the leading Mozart basses of the early nineteenth century. Ludwig Fischer was thus an important early vector in the transmission and reception of Mozart’s vocal music, and of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in particular.



F. von Lützendorf, *Ludwig Fischer* (lithograph)
(ÖNB)

Fischer was born in Mainz on 18 Aug 1745 (for sources on Fischer's biography, including his incomplete manuscript autobiography, see the *Notes* below). He began to sing bass around 1763, and by his own account, he was accepted as an apprentice (Accessist) at the Mainz court. His voice made a good impression on the famous tenor Anton Raaff—Mozart's first Idomeneo—during a visit to Mainz around 1770, and Fischer subsequently followed Raaff to Mannheim to study with him. Raaff in turn had studied with Antonio Bernacchi, and had a highly successful career on operatic stages in Italy and elsewhere before coming to Mannheim. Thus Fischer received training in the best Italian singing tradition from one of its best German practitioners. This training served Fischer well, as he continued to perform into his 60s.

Fischer made his stage debut in Mannheim as a last-minute substitute in 1772, and became a member of the Mannheim opera company. Among his roles with that company were Herkules in Anton Schweitzer's *Alceste*, and Rudolf II in the premiere of Holzbauer's *Günter von Schwarzburg*, with Raaff in the title role. Mozart heard *Günter von Schwarzburg* in Mannheim in Nov 1777, and must have heard Fischer, although he does not mention the singer in any of his letters from that time. Fischer moved with the Mannheim company to Munich in 1778, when Elector Karl Theodor transferred his court there. Mozart must have heard Fischer again in Munich in Schweitzer's *Alceste*, although again he does not mention him (see his letter of 18 Dec 1778, *Briefe*, ii:523). On 8 Oct 1779, Fischer married his colleague in the company, soprano Barbara Strasser.



(53)

Reitſchule.

Oberbereiter.

Herr Joſeph Feuchter, Obriſtlientenant.
Jagdbereiter / Herr Gabriel Hammel.
Unterbereiter / Herr Karl Greif.
Sattelknecht / Steidel, und Vice - Sattelknecht dirt. mit 35 Reitknechten.
Leibkutſcher / Lorenz Geicher.
Vice-Leibkutſcher / Chriſtoph Förſter, und 23 ordinari Hofkutſcher.
Leib-Vorreiter und Vice-Leib-Vorreiter, dann 21 andere Vorreiter.
Senftenmeiſter / Groll.
10 Senftenknecht. 6 Wagenknecht.

Hofmuſik.

Intendantenſtelle-Verweſer.

Herr Graf von Portia. ſ. 43.

Director.

Herr Mariano Lena.

Secretarius.

Herr Spengel. ſ. 50.
Beigeordneter / Herr Spengel. ſ. 50.

Hofpoet.

Herr Matthias Verazi, Mitglied der Römiſchen Akademien der Wiſſenſchaften und ſchönen Künſten, auch geheimer Secretarius.

Kapellmeiſtere.

Hr. Ignatius Holzbaur, Kurpfälziſcher Hofkammerrath.
Herr Vogler. ſ. 30.

D 6 Säng-

(54)

Sängerinnen.

Mad. Roſa Hartmuttin.
Mad. Dorothea Wendling.
Mad. Suſanna Toelchi.
Mad. Eliſabetha Auguſta Wendling.
Madem. Magdalena Heroux.
Madem. Franciſca Danzy.
Madem. Barbara Straſſer.

Sopraniſten.

Herr { Philippus Saparoli. / Silvio Giorgetti.

Contra-Altiſten.

Herr { Stephan Paſi. / Philipp Galletti. / Johann Baptiſt Corsucci.

Tenoriſten.

Herr { Peter Sarſelli. / Jakob Schöpffer. / Peter Paul Carnoli. / Franz Chriſtoph Hartig.

Baßiſten.

Herr { Joſephus Giardini. / Johann Baptiſt Zonka. / Weber. / Ludovicus Fiſcher.

Organiſten.

Herr Anton Marrſelder.
Herr Nicolaus Bayer.

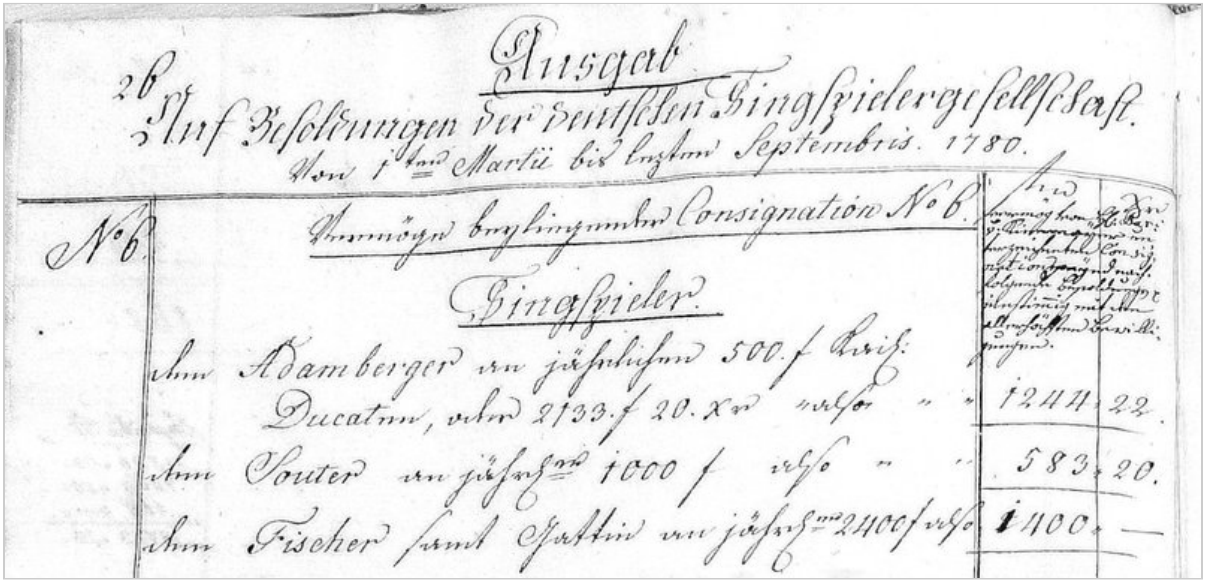
Hoforgelmacher.

Hr. Andreas Kremer.

Hof-

Ludwig Fischer and Barbara Strasser in the *Kurpfälzischer Hof- und Staats-Kalender*, 1777 (Rheinland-Pfalz dilibri)

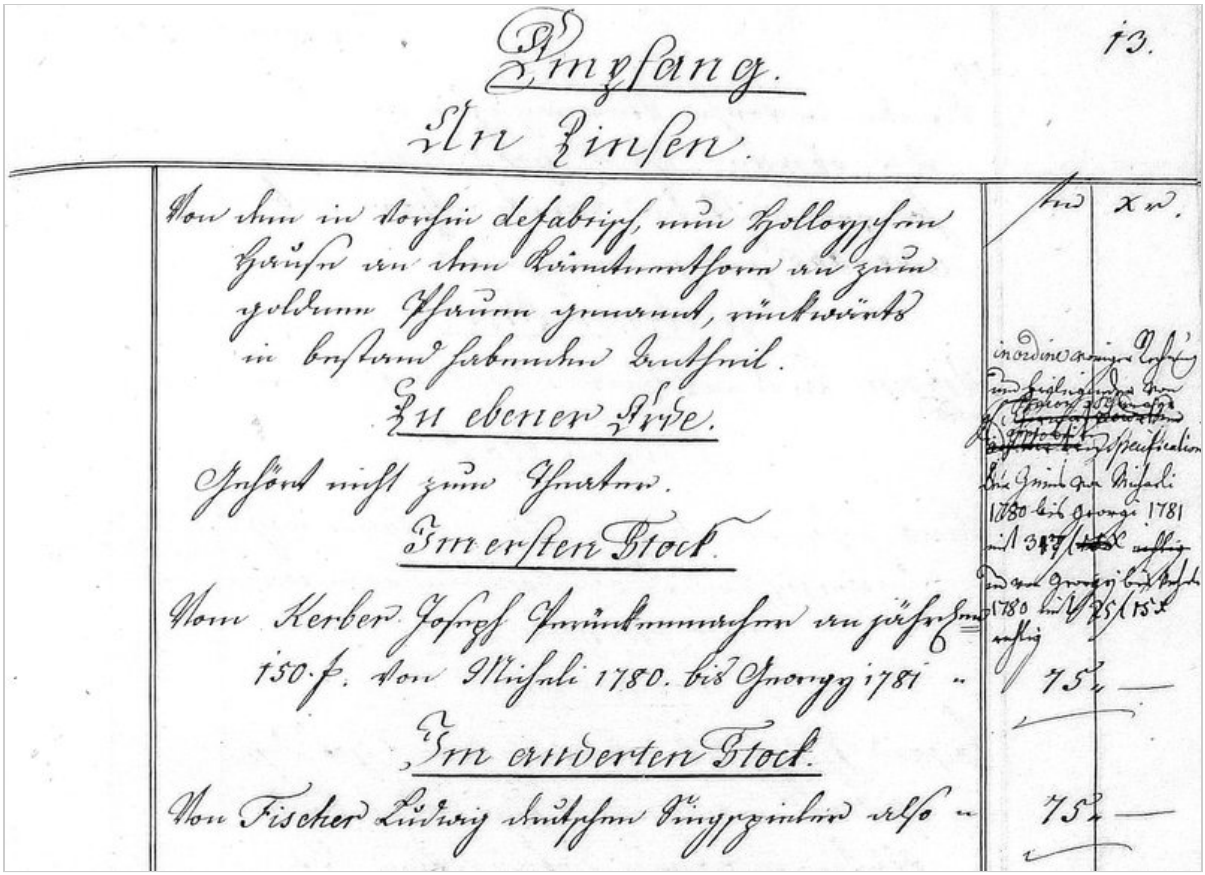
On 1 Mar 1780, at the beginning of the theatrical season 1780–1781, the Fischers joined the company of the Nationalsingspiel in Vienna, with a combined yearly salary of 2400 fl, making them the most highly paid members of the company.


Ausgab
26 Auf Besoldungen der Deutschen Singspielergesellschaft.
Von 1ten Martii bis letzten Septembris. 1780.
Nro 6. Vermöge beyliegenden Consignation Nro 6.
Singspieler.
Dem Adamberger an jährlichen 500 f Reichs
Ducaten, oder 2133 f 20 xr nach [illegible] 1244 22.
Dem Souter an jährl. 1000 f nach [illegible] 583 20.
Dem Fischer samt Gattin an jährl. 2400 f nach [illegible] 1400 —

Vienna, HHStA, Hoftheater SR 16, 26

Ausgab
Auf Besoldung der deutschen Singspielergesellschaft.
Von 1:ten *Martii* bis lezten *Septembris.* 1780.
[…]
Singspieler.
[…]
dem Fischer samt Gattin an jährl:en 2400 f also 1400,, —

According to the theater’s account book for the second half of that season, Fischer paid 75 fl for an apartment on the second floor of house no. 1067 on Kärntnerstrasse, which shared a back wall with the Kärntnertortheater.



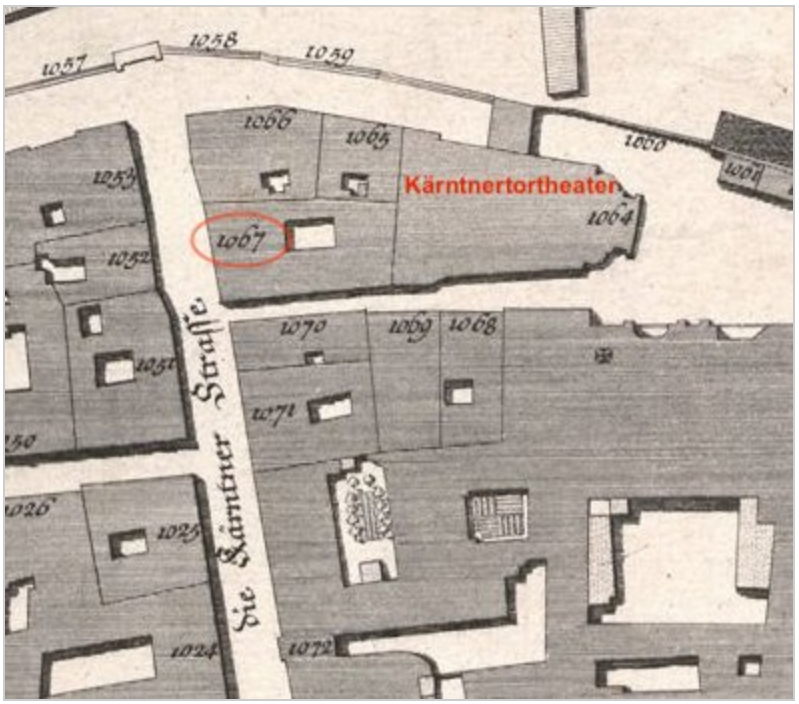
Vienna, HHStA, Hoftheater SR 17, 13

Empfang.
An Zinsen.

Von dem in vorhin defabrisch, nun Holloyschen
Hause an dem Kärntnerthore an zum
goldenen Pfauen genannt, rückwärts
in bestand habenden Antheil

[...]

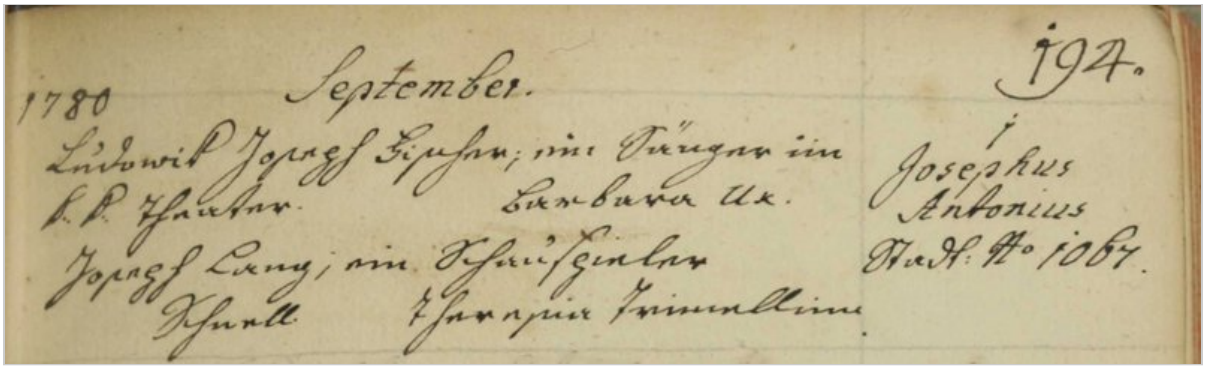
Im anderten Stock.
Von *Fischer* Ludwig deutschen Singspieler also „ 75„ —



Joseph Anton Nagel, *Grund Riß der Kayʃ. Königl, Residenz Stadt Wien* ... (detail)

"Holloyschen" refers to Joseph Halloy, the owner of the house, no. 1067[I], in which the court theater rented several apartments, which in turn were sublet to members of the company. Valentin Adamberger (Mozart's first Belmonte) lived there, as did the Jaquet family. The Fischers remained in that house throughout their engagement with the company.

Fischer sang an aria by Holzbauer at a concert of the Tonkünstler-Societät in Vienna on 14 Mar 1780 (Pohl 1871, 59; Morrow 1989, 248). So far as we know, this was his first public performance in Vienna; one wonders if he might have sung "Wenn das Silber deiner Haare" from *Günter von Schwarzburg*, an aria written for him and tailored to his voice (the aria is published in piano-vocal score in Corneilson 2011, 81–89; see also Corneilson's commentary on p. 10). Fischer's wife Barbara made her debut with the Nationalsingspiel on 12 Apr 1780 in the role of Frau von Bieder in *Die abgeredte Zauberei*, a German adaptation of Grétry's *La fausse magie* (Michtner 1970, 84). Fischer made his debut with the company two months later, on 13 Jun 1780, as Don Gonzales in *Claudine von Villa Bella*, a setting by Ignaz von Beecke of a libretto by Goethe (Michtner 1970, 83). Their son Joseph Anton was baptized on 1 Sep 1780; his godfather was the actor Joseph Lange.



(Vienna, St. Stephan, Taufbuch 01-096, 194r)

In spite of the failure of *Claudine von Villa Bella* with the Viennese public—it was performed only once more, on 15 Jun 1780—Fischer's reputation in Vienna flourished. During the three full seasons that the Fischers were members of the Nationalsingspiel, Ludwig sang at least 14 different roles, of which Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* was the last (Corneilson 2011, Appendix B, 57; Michtner 1970, 83 and *passim*). In a detailed report to Friedrich Nicolai on the Nationaltheater dated 31 Oct 1780, Tobias Philipp von Gebler wrote:

> 2) Herr Fischer, von dem Chur Pfälzischen Operntheater hieher gezogen, nebst seiner Frau und der damaligen ersten Sängerin, *Mdlle* Weber. Ein vortreflicher Bassist, welcher die tiefsten Töne mit einer Völle, Leichtigkeit und Annehmlichkeit singt, die man sonsten nur bey guten Tenoristen antrift. [Werner 1888, 104–5]
>
> 2) Herr Fischer, who moved here from the opera theater of Kurpfalz, along with his wife and the *prima donna* there, *Mademoiselle* Weber. An excellent bass, who sings the lowest notes with a fullness, lightness, and grace that one otherwise only finds among good tenors.

In a long review in 1781 of Salieri's *Der Rauchfangkehrer* published in the short-lived Viennese periodical *Meine Empfindungen im Theater*, the anonymous author wrote:

> Herr Fischer war Herr von Bär — sein vortreflicher Gesang, die unendliche Tiefe seiner Stimme, die angenehm und rein bis in den letzten Ton bleibt, und seine leichte ange= nehme Höhe, seine Kunst und Weise machen ihn zu einem der größten Sänger; aber sein Spiel macht ihn auch zum guten Schauspieler, wenn man ihm nur solche Rollen zutheilet, die seinem etwas fetten Körper und gesetzten Ansehen anpassen. Den Herrn von Bär hat er recht vortrefflich gespielt, und durch man= che raisonnirte Stelle dem unraisonnirten

Gedichte nachgeholfen.
[*Meine Empfindungen im Theater*, erstes Quartal, zwölftes Stück, 193]

Herr Fischer was Herr von Bär —
His excellent singing, the endless lows of his voice, which is pleasing and pure to the last notes, and his light and pleasant high notes, his artistry and manner make him one of the greatest singers; but his acting also make him good on stage, provided he is assigned roles that suit his somewhat fat body and staid mien. He played Herr von Bär quite well, and through some reasonable bits helped out the unreasonable poetry.

On 1 and 3 Apr 1781, Fischer appeared in a concert of the Tonkünstler-Societät, this time as a soloist in Albrechtsberger's oratorio *Die Pilgrime auf Golgotha* (Pohl 1871, 60; Morrow 1989, 250). Mozart made his public debut in Vienna at the second of those concerts. Mozart first mentions Fischer in a letter to his father Leopold on 1 Aug 1781 in which he names the planned principal cast for *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, which he had just been given to compose (*Briefe*, iii:143). In another letter to Leopold the following month, on 12 Sep 1781, Mozart writes that he would have liked to have had *Idomeneo* translated into German—he implies that he feels the court should have chosen his prospective German *Idomeneo* as one of the operas to be given in honor of the visiting Grand Duke Paul of Russia and Grand Duchess Maria Fyodorovna, instead of yet another Gluck opera (on the visits of the Grand Duke and Duchess, the "Count and Countess of the North," see our entry for 8 Oct 1782). Had he been given the opportunity to revise *Idomeneo*, he writes: "— die Rolle des Idomenè hätte ich ganz geändert — und für den fischer im Baß geschrieben" ("I would have changed the roll of Idomeneo completely — and written it as a bass for Fischer"; *Briefe*, iii:157). Fischer sang in at least three of the four Gluck operas given during the visit of the Grand Duke and Duchess: he appeared as Thoas in a German adaptation of *Iphigénie en Tauride*, the High Priest in *Alceste*, and (very likely) Calender in *Die Pilgrimme von Mekka*, a German adaptation of *Le rencontre imprévu*.

In a letter to his father on 26 Sep 1781, Mozart writes that he had asked Gottlieb Stephanie Jr. to make changes to the libretto of *Entführung* to enhance Osmin's role:

[...] da wir die Rolle des osmin H: fischer zugedacht, welcher eine gewis fortrefliche Bass-stimme hat |: ohngeacht der Erzbischof zu mir gesagt. er singt zu tief für einen Bassisten, und ich ihm aber betheuert er würde mit nächsten höher singen — :| so muß man so einen Mann Nutzen, besonders da er das hiesige Publikum ganz für sich hat. — [*Briefe*, iii:162]

[...] For we have intended the role of Osmin for Herr Fischer, who has a quite splendid bass voice (even though the Archbishop told me that he sings too low for a bass, and I assured him that next time he would sing higher—), thus one must use such a man, especially as he has the local public entirely in his favor.

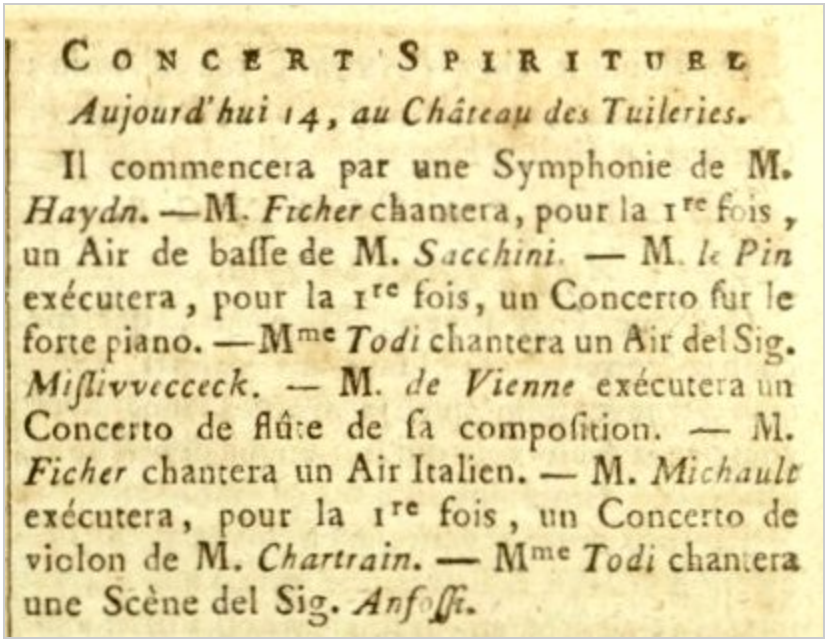
Mozart goes on, in one of the most famous passages in all his letters, to describe in detail his compositional thinking in Osmin's "Solche hergelaufne Laffen." He also writes of letting Fischer's low notes "shine" ("schimmern") in Osmin's second aria, where Mozart takes the vocal line down to a low D.

In his manuscript autobiography, Fischer writes of strife with the court theater's intendant, Count Orsini-Rosenberg, apparently over not receiving extra pay for extra work (Corneilson 2011, 36, translation on 37). Fischer writes that two days after offering his resignation he was dismissed, the day before the entire German singspiel company itself was dissolved, to be replaced the following season by an Italian opera buffa company—which Fischer would have been eminently qualified to join, but was apparently not invited. On 5 Feb 1783, Mozart wrote to his father:

> *[...]* fischer ist bey mir — der Baßist — er hat mich ersucht ich möchte wegen seiner dem Le grös nach Paris schreiben — weil er noch diese fasten dahin gehen wird; — man thut hier den Narrenstreich und lässt einen Mann weg, der nimmer ersezt werden wird; — [*Briefe*, iii:255]
>
> *[...]* Fischer is with me — the bass — he has asked me if I might write on his behalf to Le Gros in Paris — because he will go there already this Lent; — they are being idiotic enough here to let a man go who will never be replaced.

And on 12 Mar, Mozart wrote to Leopold: "das ist sicher, daß fischer in 8 tägen nach Paris geht" ("it is certain that Fischer is going to Paris in a week"; *Briefe*, iii:259).

Fischer did indeed arrive in Paris shortly after leaving Vienna, singing at the *Concert spirituel* on 14, 15, and 21 Apr 1783 (Pierre 1975, 322–23).



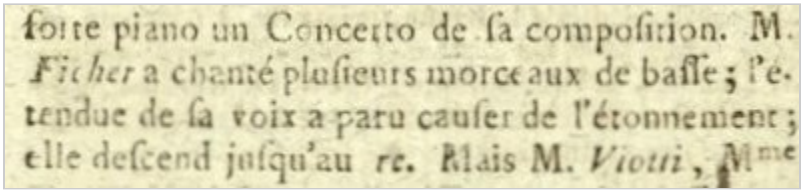
CONCERT SPIRITUEL

Aujourd'hui 14, au Château des Tuileries.

Il commencera par une Symphonie de M. *Haydn.* —M. *Ficher* chantera, pour la 1re fois, un Air de baſſe de M. *Sacchini.* — M. *le Pin* exécutera, pour la 1re fois, un Concerto ſur le forte piano. —Mme *Todi* chantera un Air del Sig. *Miſlivvecceck.* — M. *de Vienne* exécutera un Concerto de flûte de ſa compoſition. — M. *Ficher* chantera un Air Italien. — M. *Michault* exécutera, pour la 1re fois, un Concerto de violon de M. *Chartrain.* — Mme *Todi* chantera une Scène del Sig. *Anfoſſi.*

Announcement of the Concert spirituel for 14 Apr 1783
Journal de Paris, no. 104, Mon, 14 Apr 1783, 434
(*Bibliothèque nationale de France*)

"Ficher" (as his name was consistently spelled in the French press) received a brief notice in *Journal de Paris* on 16 Apr 1783 in a review of recent soloists at the *Concert spirituel*:



forte piano un Concerto de ſa compoſition. M. *Ficher* a chanté pluſieurs morceaux de baſſe; l'étendue de ſa voix a paru cauſer de l'étonnement; elle deſcend juſqu'au *re.* Mais M. *Viotti*, Mme

Journal de Paris, no. 106, 16 Apr 173, 446
(*Bibliothèque nationale de France*)

[...] M. *Ficher* a chanté plusieurs morceaux de basse; l'étendue de sa voix a paru causer de l'étonnement; elle descend jusqu'au re. *[...]*

Monsieur Fischer sang several pieces for bass; the compass of his voice seems to have caused astonishment; it extends down to D.

A slightly longer assessment appeared in *Mercure de France* on 10 May 1783:

On a entendu aussi à ces Concerts M. Ficher, Chanteur de Vienne, & qui a de la réputation. Sa voix, dans les sons graves, est fort nette, fort belle, & d'une etendue

> extraordinaire. Elle a paru faire moins de plaisir lorsqu’il l’elève au diapason du *tenore*. Au reste, sa manière de chanter est fort bonne, & nous croyons qu’il plaira toujours beaucoup quand il exécutera des morceaux convenables au caractre [*sic*] de sa voix.
> [*Mercure de France*, Sat, 10 May 1783, 83]

> We also heard at these concerts Monsieur Fischer, a singer from Vienna, who has an established reputation. His voice, in its deep notes, is very clear, very beautiful, and of an extraordinary compass. It seems to have given less pleasure when he took it into the *tenore* range. Furthermore, his manner of singing is very beautiful, and we believe he will always please greatly when he performs pieces suited to the character of his voice.

The implication that Fischer may not have pleased the Parisian public quite as much as one might have expected is borne out by a review in the *Mémoires secrets*:

> 21 *Avril* 1783. Il continue à débuter au concert spirituel différens virtuoses qui viennent tous les ans faire l’admiration du public. Beaucoup de cette espece y ont paru depuis peu.
> M. *Ficher* a chanté plusieurs morceaux de basse; l’étendue de sa voix a causé un étonnement général : il descend jusqu’au *Ré*. Malgré ce tour de force, il n’a pas brillé dans ces deux morceaux : on a trouvé sa voix quelquefois un peu sourde, principalement dans les passages où il se rencontroit des roulades. Peut-être auroit-elle mieux convenu à quelque air d’un tout autre caractere.
> [Louis Petit de Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets*, vol. 21, 1783, 254–55]

> 21 *April* 1783. Debuts continue at the Concert spirituel of various virtuosi who come every year to impress the public. Many of this sort have appeared there recently.
> Monsieur *Fischer* sang several pieces for bass; the compass of his voice caused general astonishment: it descends to *D*. In spite of this tour de force, he did not shine in his two pieces: one sometimes found his voice a bit muffled, principally in the passages where

> he encountered roulades. Perhaps his voice would be better suited to some aria of an entirely different character.

Whether or not the brevity of his stay in Paris had anything to do with this mixed reception, Fischer soon headed south for Marseille, where he booked passage on a Swedish frigate for the Roman port city of Civitavecchia. In his autobiography, Fischer gives a vivid account of the violent seasickness he suffered on the 13-day voyage. Following a two-month stay in Rome, he continued on to Naples on 2 Sep 1783. After singing at least twice for King Ferdinand and Queen Maria Carolina at their palace in Caserta, the king (according to Fischer) ordered Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* to be performed, with Fischer as Bartolo (Corneilson 2011, 38, translation on 39). The performance—which took place on 23 Nov 1783—was reported in the *Gazzetta di Parma*, because it was attended by the just-arrived Duchess of Parma, Maria Amalia, the queen's sister (as well as Emperor Joseph's).

> NAPOLI 25. *Novembre.*
> La sera del 22. del corrente giunse felicemente nel Real Sito di Caserta Sua Altezza Reale la Duchessa di Parma, accolta dai nostri Sovrani con tutte le dimostrazioni di giubilo, e di affetto. Nella sera di Domenica 23. se le diede nel Teatro del Palazzo di Caserta il divertimento di una Burletta nominata *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, messa in Musica dal famoso Maestro di Cappella Poesiello [sic], che è riuscita di intiera soddisfazione de' Sovrani, dell'accennata Reale Infanta, ed di tutti gli Spettatori, che in gran numero accorsero dalla Capitale.
> [*Gazzetta di Parma*, no. 49, Fri, 5 Dec 1783, 390]

> NAPLES, 25 November.
> On the evening of the 22nd of this month Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Parma arrived safely at the Royal Dwelling in Caserta, received by our sovereigns with all due demonstrations of joy and affection. On the evening of Sunday the 23rd, at the palace theater in Caserta, the entertainment of a burletta was given called *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, set to music by the famous *maestro di*

> *cappella* Paisiello, which succeeded to the complete satisfaction of the sovereigns, the above-mentioned Royal Infanta, and all the spectators, who came in great numbers from the capital.

Fischer’s appearance as Bartolo in this performance is verified by the printed libretto (Sartori 1990–94, i:396, entry 3731; see also the entry on Corago). The performance is also notable for including two other singers who a few years later would become members of the company of the court theater in Vienna: Domenico Mombelli as Count Almaviva, and Celeste Coltellini as Rosina.

Fischer then returned to Rome, surely knowing (perhaps by way of Maria Amalia) that he would be overlapping with the visit there of Emperor Joseph II. Joseph had recently mentioned Fischer in a letter to Rosenberg sent from Bologna on 18 Dec 1783:

> J’ai reçu votre lettre et votre relation n’est pas brillante pour Marchesi, je crois qu’il ne faut pas penser à le garder, et qu’on pourra trouver de mieux que lui et peut être à meilleur marché, entre autres je sais, que Fischer va revenir a Vienne, il a toujours beaucoup plû au public, sa voix est belle, si l’ont [*sic*] pourait parvenir à l’engager, bien entendre sans sa femme, ce seroit encore le meilleur parti à prendre. [Payer von Thurn 1920, 36–37]

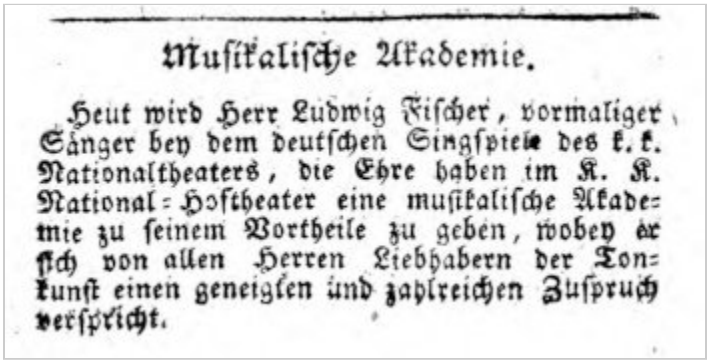
> I received your letter and your account is not brilliant for Marchesi. I think that we must not think of keeping him, and that we will be able to find better than him and perhaps on better terms. Among other things, I know that Fischer is going to return to Vienna. He always pleased the public very much, his voice is beautiful, if we could succeed in engaging him, without his wife of course, that would again be the best decision.

The reference is to the bass Antonio Marchesi, who had just made an inauspicious debut with the Viennese court theater on 8 Dec 1783 as Don Fabrizio in *La frascatana*; Count Zinzendorf, who attended the performance, wrote “Le nouveau acteur Marchesi fort desagráble” (“The new actor Marchesi most unpleasant”; Michtner 1970, 165). Evidently Joseph had learned even before arriving in Rome that Fischer wanted to return to Vienna, and he seemed favorably disposed to the idea of having Fischer fill Marchesi’s spot—provided they could hire Fischer without his wife.

Joseph arrived back in Vienna on Tue, 30 Mar 1784 (*Wiener Zeitung*, no. 26, Wed, 31 Mar 1784, 669). By his own account, Fischer arrived two days before the emperor; if we take Fischer at his word, this would imply that he arrived in Vienna on 28 Mar. Fischer writes that he promptly asked the emperor for permission to give a concert on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, namely 3 Apr 1784. The emperor instead granted him leave to give his concert in the Burgtheater on Palm Sunday itself, 4 Apr; Mozart had given a concert in the Burgtheater just three days earlier. Fischer’s concert was advertised in *Das Wienerblättchen* on 4 Apr, and noted in the *Wiener Zeitung* on 7 Apr.

Musikalische Akademie

Heut wird Herr Ludwig Fischer, vormaliger Sänger bey dem deutschen Singspiele des k. k. Nationaltheaters, die Ehre haben im K. K. National=Hoftheater eine musikalische Akade= mie zu seinem Vortheile geben, wobey er sich von allen Herren Liebhabern der Ton= kunst einen geneigten und zahlreichen Zuspruch verspricht.

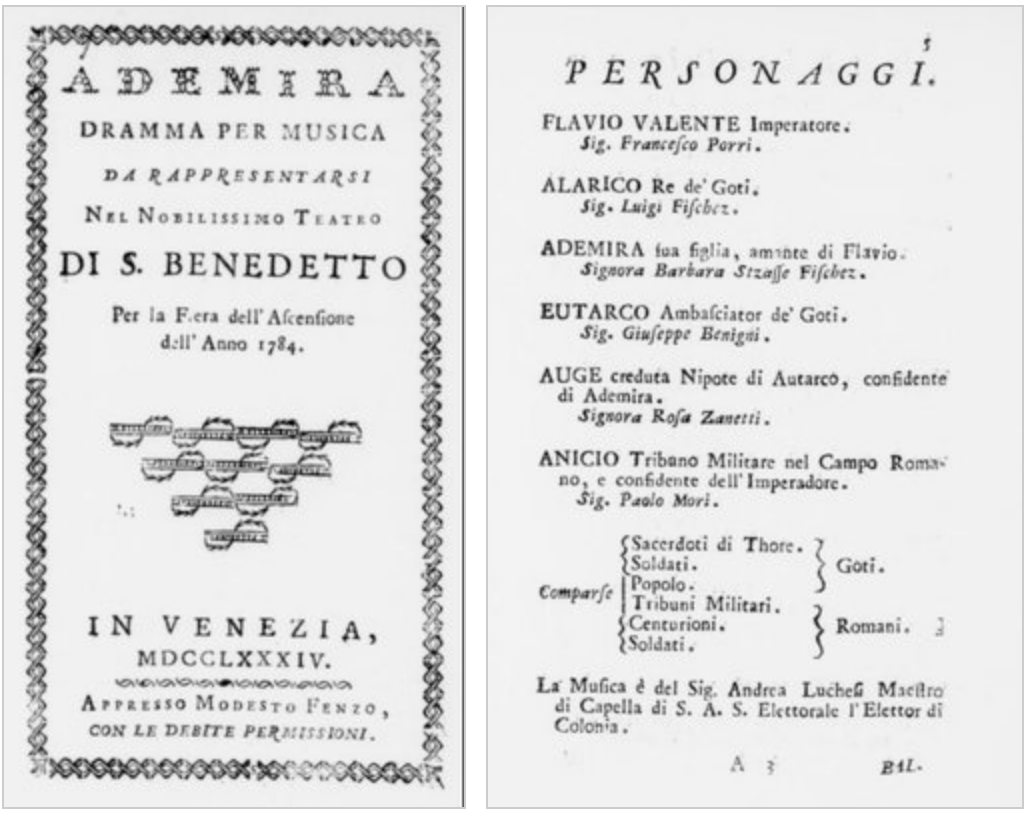

Musikaliſche Akademie.

Heut wird Herr Ludwig Fiſcher, vormaliger Sänger bey dem deutſchen Singſpiele des k. k. Nationaltheaters, die Ehre haben im K. K. National-Hoftheater eine muſikaliſche Akademie zu ſeinem Vortheile zu geben, wobey er ſich von allen Herren Liebhabern der Tonkunſt einen geneigten und zahlreichen Zuſpruch verſpricht.

Musical Academy.

Today Herr Ludwig Fischer, formerly a singer with the German Singspiel of the k. k. National-theater, will have the honor to give a musical academy for his own benefit in the National Court Theater, at which he promises all music lovers sympathetic and abundant reward.

Given that the emperor had shown a strong interest in rehiring Fischer for the court theater and that Fischer had made the trip from Rome to Vienna with the emperor's encouragement, Fischer's concert on 4 Apr seems likely to have been seen as a kind of audition, particularly in regard to his suitability for *opera buffa*. Unfortunately, we have no idea of the program of his concert. Under the circumstances, it would also seem to have made sense for Fischer to make a guest appearance in one of the *opere buffe* performed in Vienna in April, at the beginning of the new season, but we currently have no evidence that he did. We know only that Marchesi, who had not been retained by the ensemble for the season 1784–85, was paid 4 gulden by the court theater for four appearances at the beginning of that season in the role of Frasconio in Sarti's *I contratempi*, the season's first premiere (Michtner 1970, 171 and 391; HHStA, Hoftheater SR 21, 48, item 130). In any case, by the following month Fischer was in Venice, where he and his wife appeared as Alarico and Ademira in Andrea Luchesi's *Ademira* in the Teatro di San Benedetto; on the title page of the libretto, the opera is said to have been for the feast of Ascension (20 May that year), but in the secondary literature it is widely said to have premiered on 2 May (Sartori 1990–94, i:29, 316).



ADEMIRA

DRAMMA PER MUSICA

DA RAPPRESENTARSI

NEL NOBILISSIMO TEATRO

DI S. BENEDETTO

Per la Fiera dell' Ascensione dell' Anno 1784.

IN VENEZIA,

MDCCLXXXIV.

APPRESSO MODESTO FENZO,

CON LE DEBITE PERMISSIONI.

PERSONAGGI.

FLAVIO VALENTE Imperatore.
Sig. Francesco Porri.

ALARICO Re de' Goti.
Sig. Luigi Fischer.

ADEMIRA sua figlia, amante di Flavio.
Signora Barbara Strasser Fischer.

EUTARCO Ambasciator de' Goti.
Sig. Giuseppe Benigni.

AUGE creduta Nipote di Autarco, confidente di Ademira.
Signora Rosa Zanetti.

ANICIO Tribuno Militare nel Campo Romano, e confidente dell' Imperadore.
Sig. Paolo Mori.

Comparse: Sacerdoti di Thore. Soldati. Popolo. } Goti.
Tribuni Militari. Centurioni. Soldati. } Romani.

La Musica è del Sig. Andrea Luchesi Maestro di Capella di S. A. S. Elettorale l'Elettor di Colonia.

A 3 BIL-

(Schatz)

Although we do not know why Fischer was not offered a position in the *opera buffa* in Vienna, the sticking point may well have been his insistence on a joint appointment for his wife. For his part, the emperor had still not given up on Fischer by the end of 1784; on 27 Nov he wrote to Rosenberg regarding what sort of company might be installed in the Kärntnertortheater:

> Diese Truppe müßte in einer deutschen *Opera comique*, welche wohl die angenehmste für das Publikum zu seyn scheinet, bestehen; es könnte auch darinn eine Wirthschaft gefunden werden, daß einige Subjekte beyderseits nach Umständen gebraucht werden könnten; als z. B. Adamberger, Ruprecht, Saal, Dauer, die Kavalieri, Täuber, Saal p[erge]. wenn man die Lange, den Fischer mit seiner Frau die man wieder aufnähme, und vielleicht 2 oder 3 Subjecte, die beym Schikaneder jetz gefallen, dazu nähme, so wäre die Sache gerichtet; denn Umlauf ist ohnedieß bezahlt. [Payer von Thurn 1920, 58]

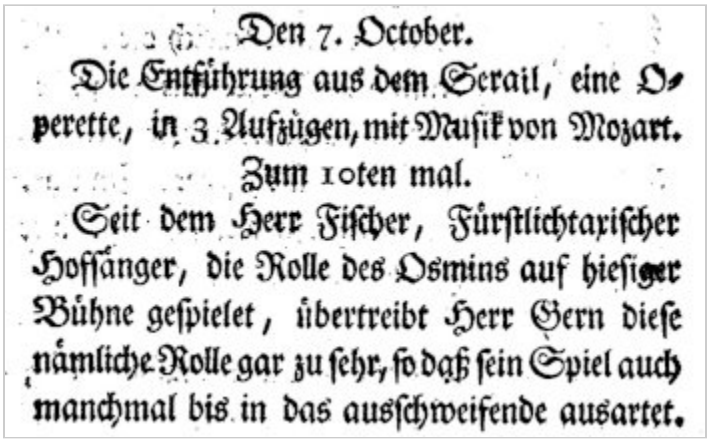
> This troupe would have to consist of a German *opéra comique*, which would seem to be the most pleasant thing for the public; some economy could also be found by doing this, as some subjects could, when circumstances called for it, be used on both sides: such as Adamberger, Ruprecht, Saal, Dauer, Cavalieri, Teyber, Saal etc. If one reengaged Lange, Fischer and his wife, and perhaps 2 or 3 subjects with Schikaneder who are currently popular, then the thing would be settled; for Umlauf is paid in any case.

But nothing came of the idea of rehiring the Fischers. The couple obtained a joint appointment in 1785 at the Thurn und Taxis court in Regensburg, where they remained until 1789 (Meixner 2018, 469). Almost nothing is known of their activities in Regensburg, but Fischer seems to have

been given leeway to go on tour. It was on one such tour in 1785 that he made guest appearances as Osmin in Mannheim (31 Aug 1785) and Frankfurt (13 Sep 1785).

The Mannheim premiere of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* had taken place on 18 Apr 1784 (see our entry for that date). Prior to Fischer's guest appearance (the ninth performance of *Entführung* in Mannheim) the role of Osmin had been taken by Georg Gern (on Gern, see our entry for 18 Apr 1784). Unfortunately, nothing is known about Fischer's reception as Osmin in Mannheim, but apparently it influenced how Gern performed the role, as we can gather from a short note in the *Tagebuch der Mannheimer Schaubühne* regarding the next performance on 7 Oct 1785:

Den 7. October.
Die Entführung aus dem Serail, eine O=
perette, in 3 Aufzügen, mit Musik von Mozart.
Zum 10ten mal.
Seit dem Herr Fischer, Fürstlichtaxischer
Hofsänger, die Rolle des Osmins auf hiesiger
Bühne gespielet, übertreibt Herr Gern diese
nähmliche Rolle gar zu sehr, so daß sein Spiel auch
manchmal bis in das ausschweifende ausartet.
[*Tagebuch der Mannheimer Schaubühne*, 1786, vol. 1, 6]


Den 7. October.
Die Entführung aus dem Serail, eine O-
perette, in 3 Aufzügen, mit Musik von Mozart.
Zum 10ten mal.
Seit dem Herr Fischer, Fürstlichtaxischer
Hofsänger, die Rolle des Osmins auf hiesiger
Bühne gespielet, übertreibt Herr Gern diese
nämliche Rolle gar zu sehr, so daß sein Spiel auch
manchmal bis in das ausschweifende ausartet.

7 October.
Die Entführung aus dem Serail, an operetta,
in 3 acts, with music by Mozart.
For the 10th time.
Since Herr Fischer, court singer to
Prince Taxis, played the role of Osmin on
our stage here, Herr Gern has exaggerated
this same role far too much, so that his
acting sometimes even degenerates into
licentiousness.

This criticism implies that Fischer played the role more broadly than Gern had previously been doing (not a surprise, perhaps); the writer does not aim the criticism at Fischer himself, but rather at Gern, who apparently was trying to mimic Fischer, but not doing it well. Two weeks after playing Osmin in Mannheim, Fischer made a guest appearance in the same role with Großmann's company in Frankfurt (see our entry for 13 Sep 1785).

In the spring of 1787, Fischer visited Vienna, where on 21 Mar, he gave a concert in the Kärntnertortheater (see the transcription of the poster in *Neue Folge*, 52, 54). At this concert, which included at least one symphony by Mozart, Fischer sang arias by Piccinni and Righini, Umlauf's "Zu Stephen sprach im Traume," and "eine neue Arie von Hrn. Kapellmeister Mozart", namely "Alcondro, lo confesso ... Non so, d'onde viene," K. 512, which Mozart entered into his catalogue of his own works three days earlier as a "Scena für H: fischer." So far as we know, this was Fischer's only public or private performance during this visit to Vienna. On 1 Apr 1787, Fischer entered a 16-line poem, "Die holde Göttin, Harmonie," into Mozart's now lost *Stammbuch* (*Dokumente*, 254; on the context of Mozart's *Stammbuch*, see our entry for 30 Mar 1787.)

The following year, Fischer traveled to Berlin. He sang twice for the king in Potsdam and twice for the queen in Berlin, and also sang at court in Schwedt (Corneilson 2011, 40, translation on 41). On 8 May he gave a concert at the Stadt Paris in Berlin. Heinrich Wilhelm Seyfried wrote in *Chronic von Berlin*:

> Den 8ten. Ungeachtet man Donnerstags wie gewöhnlich aussetzt; so wurde heute auf Verlan= gen vieler Gönner und Freund der Music außer= ordentlich ein Concert gegeben, in welchem **Herr Fischer** — welcher durch seine vortreffliche höchst= seltene Baßstimme und eigene Singmanier schon in Teutschland, Italien und Frankreich solchen wahren Beyfall erhalten, den nach seinen großen Lehrer Raff in München kein teutscher Sänger bisher erwarb, bereits auch hier schon in der **Stadt Paris** ein großes stark besetztes Concert gab und in demselben, außer mehreren Baß Arien, welche die besten italienischen und teutschen Komponisten für seine außerordentliche Stimme von dritthalb Oktaven im Umfange, besonders componirt haben, auch den **Mai** ein Wettgesang von **Ramler** und **Reichard**, unter Begleitung von lauter blasenden Instrumenten mit dem ausgezeichnendsten Beifalle singend vortrug — in welchem also eben der **Herr Fischer**, einige Arien sang, wovon eine von dem **Königl. Capellmeister Reichard** für seine Stim= me ganz neu gesetzt war und den Beschluß mit der berühmten Romanze aus dem Irrwissche nach **Um=**

lauf's Composition machte. [...]
[*Chronic von Berlin* (= *Berlinische Merkwürdigkeiten*), vol. 1, & 8. Stück, 31 Jan 1789, 106–7]

The 8th. Even though Thursday was suspended as usual, nevertheless a special concert was given today at the request of many patrons and friends of music, at which **Herr Fischer**—who through his excellent and exceedingly rare bass voice and particular manner of singing has achieved such genuine acclaim in Germany, Italy, and France as has no German singer since his teacher Raaff in Munich—gave here already in the **Stadt Paris** a concert with full accompaniment at which he sang with the most brilliant acclaim, in addition to several bass arias that the best Italian and German composers had especially composed for his extraordinary voice with its range of three and half octaves, also **Der Mai**, a contest song by **Ramler** and **Reichardt** accompanied only by wind instruments—and in which **Herr Fischer** also sang some arias which were given entirely new settings for his voice, and which closed with the famous aria from **Umlauf's** *Irrwisch*. [...]

The references are to the cantata *Der Mai* by Johann Friedrich Reichardt on a text by Karl Wilhelm Ramler, originally scored (in Reichardt's autograph) for soprano, tenor, and pairs of flutes, oboes, bassoons, and horns; and "Zu Stephen sprach im Traume" from Umlauf's *Das Irrlicht*. On 10 and 11 May Fischer made guest appearances with the Nationaltheater in Berlin as Sander in *Zemire und Azor* (a German adaptation from Grétry), with Friederike Unzelmann in the role of Zemire; according to *Annalen des Theaters*, Fischer sang an insertion aria. Both performances were so heavily attended that some people had to be turned away; the performance on 10 May was attended by the Queen and some of her children (*Chronic von Berlin*, I/7–8, 108ff). Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* had not yet been performed in Berlin (its premiere there was on 16 Oct 1788), so Fischer could not have made a guest appearance as Osmin in Berlin at that point.

The following year, Reichardt composed the opera *Brenno* specifically for Fischer in the title role. *Brenno* was premiered by the Prussian Royal Opera on 16 Oct 1789, the birthday of Queen Frederica Louisa (1751–1805), second wife of King Frederick Wilhelm II. The date and occasion are confirmed in a long report in *Chronic von Berlin* on the festivities for the queen's birthday:

Geburts=Fest Ihrer Majestät der regierenden Königinn. Königlichne Feier.

Der sechszehnte October bleibe ebenfalls für jeden rechtschaffenen Preussen ein sehr erfreulicher

Tag. *[...]*

Abends wurde zur Feier dieses Tages die Oper **Brennus**, von dem Königl. Capellmeister Rei= chart in Music gesetzt, in Gegenwart des ganzen Königl. Hauses und eines sehr zahlreichen Publici mit größter Pracht zum erstenmahle aufgeführt. [*Chronic von Berlin*, vol. 4, Stück 87 and 88, 1356–57]

Birthday Celebration of Her Majesty the Reigning Queen. Royal Holiday.

The sixteenth of October likewise remains a very joyful day for every honest Prussian. *[...]*

In the evening for the celebration of this day the opera ***Brenno***, set to music by the Royal Kapell-meister Reichardt, was performed with the greatest splendor in the presence of the entire Royal House and a very numerous audience.

According to Reichardt’s short biography of Fischer published in 1792, immediately after the first performance, Fischer was given a lifetime appointment in the king’s service with a yearly salary of 2000 thaler (*Musikalische Monathsschrift*, 3. Stück, Sep 1792, 68). Reichard notes that Fischer’s wife probably would also have received an appointment had she not suffered from a chest ailment in 1789 and 1790.



12 **Hofstaat des Königs.**

Garderobe-Inspector. Hr. Gasperini.
Hof-Poet. - Filistri de Caramondani.
Decorateurs. - Verona und Hr. Burnat.
Maschinen-Meister. - Eck.
Theater-Schneiderin. Mad. Herrmann.
Kastell.d.Opernhauses. Hr, Nestler.

Sänger und Sängerinnen bey der grofsen Oper.

Hr. Concialini, Soprano. Mad. Marchetti Fantozzi.
- Fantozzi, Tenore. Mlle. Niclas.
- Fischer, Bassist. Mad. Schick.
- Tosoni, Altist. Mad. Rhigini.
- Coli, Soprano. Mlle. Friedel.
- Tombolino, Soprano.
- Franz, Bassist.

Sänger und Sängerinnen bey der komischen Oper.

Hr. Benati. Hr. Cosmi. Mad. Benati.
- Liberati. - Gentilini. - Liberati.
- Lamperi.

Fischer in the company of the Prussian Royal Opera, 1795
Handbuch über den Königlich Preussischen Hof und Staat auf das Jahr 1795, 11
(Google Books)

The last two decades of Fischer's career have received relatively little attention, but are summarized by Lederbur (1861, 157), who lists the roles that Fischer sang with the court's Italian opera (see also Corneilson 2011, Appendix B, 58). In 1791, Fischer also sang the title role in Salieri's *Axur* with the court's German opera. Fischer and his wife became members of the Berlin Sing-Akademie in 1792.

Fischer's position with the Prussian court likewise gave him the opportunity to tour. In 1794 he was engaged to sing in Salomon's concert series at Hanover Square in London, the second series with Haydn. Fischer arrived later than expected in London, missing the first two concerts, thus making his debut in the third concert on 24 Feb 1794.



Mr. SALOMON's CONCERT, HANOVER-SQUARE.

MR. SALOMON moſt reſpectfully acquaints the Nobility and Gentry, that Dr. HAYDN's and Mr. FISCHER's arrival in this country having been unexpectedly retarded, he has (by the advice of many of his reſpectable friends) been induced to poſtpone the opening his Concerts from Monday next to MONDAY SE'NNIGHT, the 10th of February, when the firſt Performance poſitively will take place.

Dr. HAYDN will ſupply the Concerts with new Compoſitions, and direct the execution of them at the Piano Forte. Principal Vocal Performers are,

MADAME MARA, and Mr. FISCHER,

One of the King of Pruſſia's principal Opera Singers, who never appeared in this country before.

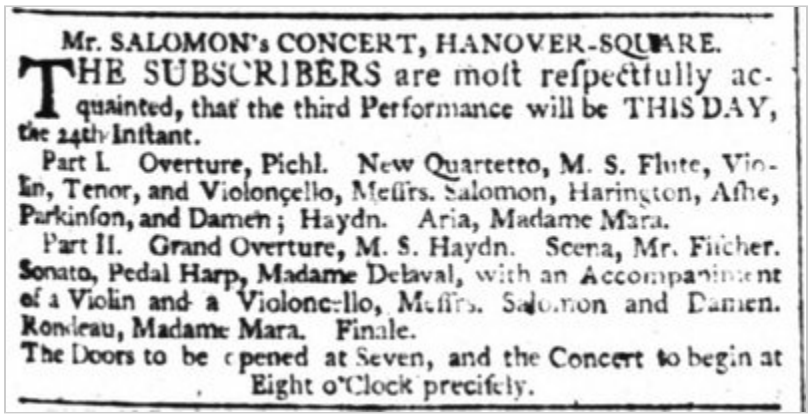
Principal Inſtrumental Performers, who will play Concertos and Concertantes on their reſpective inſtruments, are —Violins, Signor Vioetti and Mr. Salomon;—Piano Forte, Mr. Duſſek;—Oboe, Mr. Harrington;—German Flute, Mr. Aſh.

Pedal Harp, Madame KRUMPHOLTZ.

Beſides other diſtinguiſhed Performers, who will appear occaſionally.

Subſcriptions at Five Guineas for the 12 Concerts received, and Tickets delivered, at Meſſrs. Lockarts, Maxwell, Wallis, and Clark, Pall-mall.——The Ladies' Tickets are blue, and tranſferrable only to Ladies; and the Gentlemen's are red, and tranſferable to Gentlemen only.

The Times (London), no. 2901, Sat, 1 Feb 1794



Mr. SALOMON's CONCERT, HANOVER-SQUARE.

THE SUBSCRIBERS are moſt reſpectfully acquainted, that the third Performance will be THIS DAY, the 24th Inſtant.

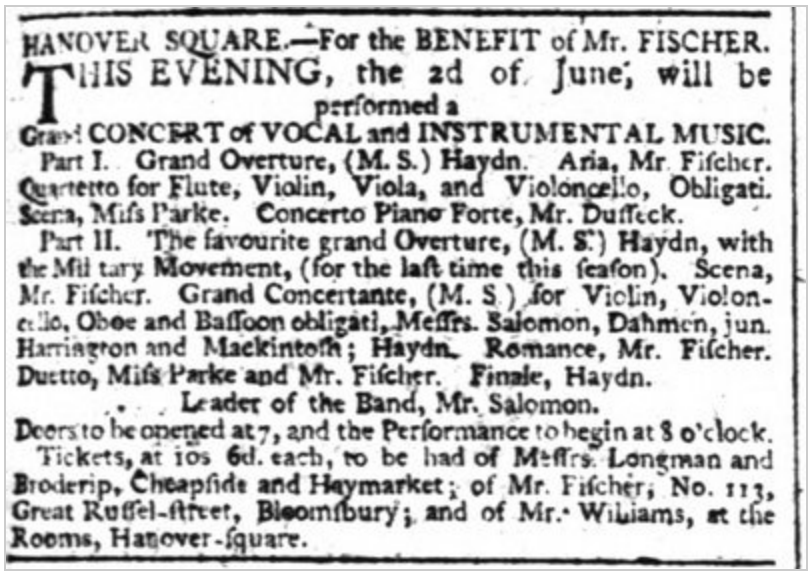
Part I. Overture, Pichl. New Quartetto, M. S. Flute, Violin, Tenor, and Violonçello, Meſſrs. Salomon, Harington, Aſhe, Parkinſon, and Damen; Haydn. Aria, Madame Mara.

Part II. Grand Overture, M. S. Haydn. Scena, Mr. Fiſcher. Sonata, Pedal Harp, Madame Delaval, with an Accompaniment of a Violin and a Violoncello, Meſſrs. Salomon and Damen. Rondeau, Madame Mara. Finale.

The Doors to be opened at Seven, and the Concert to begin at Eight o'Clock preciſely.

The Times (London), no. 2920, Mon, 24 Feb 1794

He then sang in each of the remaining nine concerts of the series, which ended on 12 May, and also at Haydn's benefit concert on 2 May. Fischer gave a concert at Hanover Square for his own benefit on 2 Jun 1794.



HANOVER SQUARE.—For the BENEFIT of Mr. FISCHER.
THIS EVENING, the 2d of June, will be performed a
Grand CONCERT of VOCAL and INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.
Part I. Grand Overture, (M. S.) Haydn. Aria, Mr. Fiſcher. Quartetto for Flute, Violin, Viola, and Violoncello, Obligati. Scena, Miſs Parke. Concerto Piano Forte, Mr. Duſſeck.
Part II. The favourite grand Overture, (M. S.) Haydn, with the Military Movement, (for the laſt time this ſeaſon). Scena, Mr. Fiſcher. Grand Concertante, (M. S.) for Violin, Violoncello, Oboe and Baſſoon obligati, Meſſrs. Salomon, Dahmen, jun. Harrington and Mackintoſh; Haydn. Romance, Mr. Fiſcher. Duetto, Miſs Parke and Mr. Fiſcher. Finale, Haydn.
Leader of the Band, Mr. Salomon.
Doors to be opened at 7, and the Performance to begin at 8 o'clock.
Tickets, at 10s 6d. each, to be had of Meſſrs. Longman and Broderip, Cheapſide and Haymarket; of Mr. Fiſcher, No. 113, Great Ruſſel-ſtreet, Bloomſbury; and of Mr. Williams, at the Rooms, Hanover-ſquare.

The Times (London), no. 2304, Mon, 2 Jun 1794

On 28 Feb 1796 (see our entry for that date), Fischer sang in a performance of extracts from Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* at a concert given in Berlin by Constanze Mozart. In the autumn of 1798, Fischer made a tour that took him to Leipzig, Dresden, and Vienna. Of his concert in Leipzig, a reviewer (probably Friedrich Rochlitz) wrote in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*:

> Herr Fischer ist allen Musikkennern und Musikfreunden zu bekannt und an allen grossen Orten Deutschlands zu berühmt, als dass wir nicht über ihn nur ganz kurz seyn sollten. Auch ist vor einigen Jahren schon Etwas über ihn gedruckt worden. Wir danken ihm also nur nochmals für das Vergnügen, das er uns durch sein Konzert gemacht hat. Dies war arrangiert, wie man es von einem Manne von Geschmack und Kenntnis des grossen vermischten Publikums erwarten konnte. Er suchte Zuhörer aller Art zu befriedigen; sang deshalb eine kräftige, gewaltige Scene aus Reichardts Brenno, verschiedene Bravourarien von Righini, die Romanze: zu Steffen sprach in Traume — von Umlauf, und die Arie in diesen heil'gen Hallen, von Mozart. Mit voller Kraft und aushaltender Stärke sang er hinunter bis D und hinauf bis ḡ, auch ā, ohne allen Zwang: aber, was mehr sagen will, er vermogte es, diese ungemeine Menge von Tönen mit grösster Fertigkeit, Reinheit, Präcision, Eleganz, Galanterie sogar, zu handhaben; so dass er seine gewaltige Bassstimme, wo der Ort dazu war, zum sanften Tenor werden lassen konnte. Um

auch nicht den Schein zu haben, als schmeichelten wir diesem vortrefflichen Sänger, merken wir noch an, dass wir in der lezten mozartischen Arie etwas weniger Verzierungen gewünscht hätten.

Jezt sezt er seine musikalische Reise über Dresden nach Wien fort.

Z***

[*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, no. 2, 10 Oct 1798, col. 31–32]

[translation:]

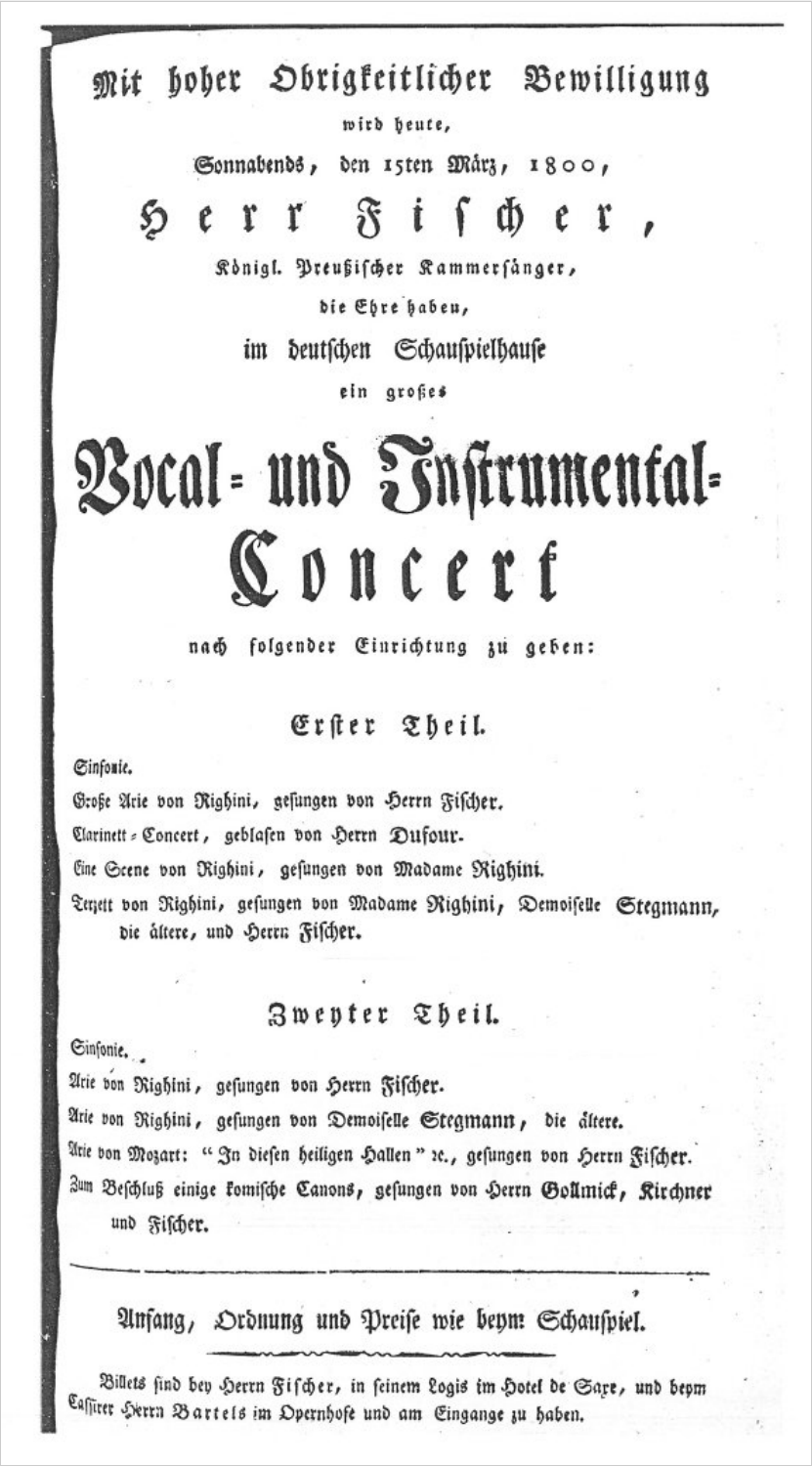
Herr Fischer is too well known to all connoisseurs and friends of music and too famous in all large locations in Germany that we need say too much about him. Some years ago something was also printed about him. We thus only thank him once again for the pleasure that he gave us with his concert. This was arranged as one would expect by a man of taste and knowledge of the large mixed audience. He tried to satisfy listeners of every sort; thus he sang a powerful and prodigious scene from Reichardt's *Brenno*, various bravura arias by Righini, the romance "Zu Stephen sprach im Traume" by Umlauf, and the aria "In diesen heil'gen Hallen" by Mozart. With full power and sustained strength he sang down to D and up to ḡ and even ā, without any forcing: but what is even more indicative is that he was able to handle this unusual quantity of notes with the greatest facility, purity, elegance, even *galanterie*; so that he could allow his powerful bass voice, when the occasion called for it, to become a gentle tenor. In order not to seem to be flattering this excellent singer, we also note that we would have wished somewhat fewer embellishments in the last Mozart aria.

Now he continues his musical tour via Dresden to Vienna.

Z***

On 27 Oct and (perhaps) 5 Nov 1798, Fischer appeared at two concerts given by Emanuel Schikaneder at the Theater auf der Wieden (Morrow 1989, 299). At the first of these, Fischer sang two arias by Righini, as well as "In diesen heil'gen Hallen" and "Zu Stephen sprach im Traume"; at the second he sang an aria by Righini, an aria from Paisiello's *Il re Teodoro*, and the same two numbers by Mozart and Umlauf. At the first concert, Beethoven played a piano concerto.

In 1800, Fischer visited Hamburg. On 8 Mar, he sang an aria by Righini at a benefit concert for Friederika Stegmann. On 15 Mar, he gave a benefit concert of his own:



Mit hoher Obrigkeitlicher Bewilligung
wird heute,
Sonnabends, den 15ten März, 1800,
Herr Fischer,
Königl. Preußischer Kammersänger,
die Ehre haben,
im deutschen Schauspielhause
ein großes
Vocal- und Instrumental-
Concert
nach folgender Einrichtung zu geben:

Erster Theil.

Sinfonie.
Große Arie von Righini, gesungen von Herrn Fischer.
Clarinett-Concert, geblasen von Herrn Dufour.
Eine Scene von Righini, gesungen von Madame Righini.
Terzett von Righini, gesungen von Madame Righini, Demoiselle Stegmann, die ältere, und Herrn Fischer.

Zweyter Theil.

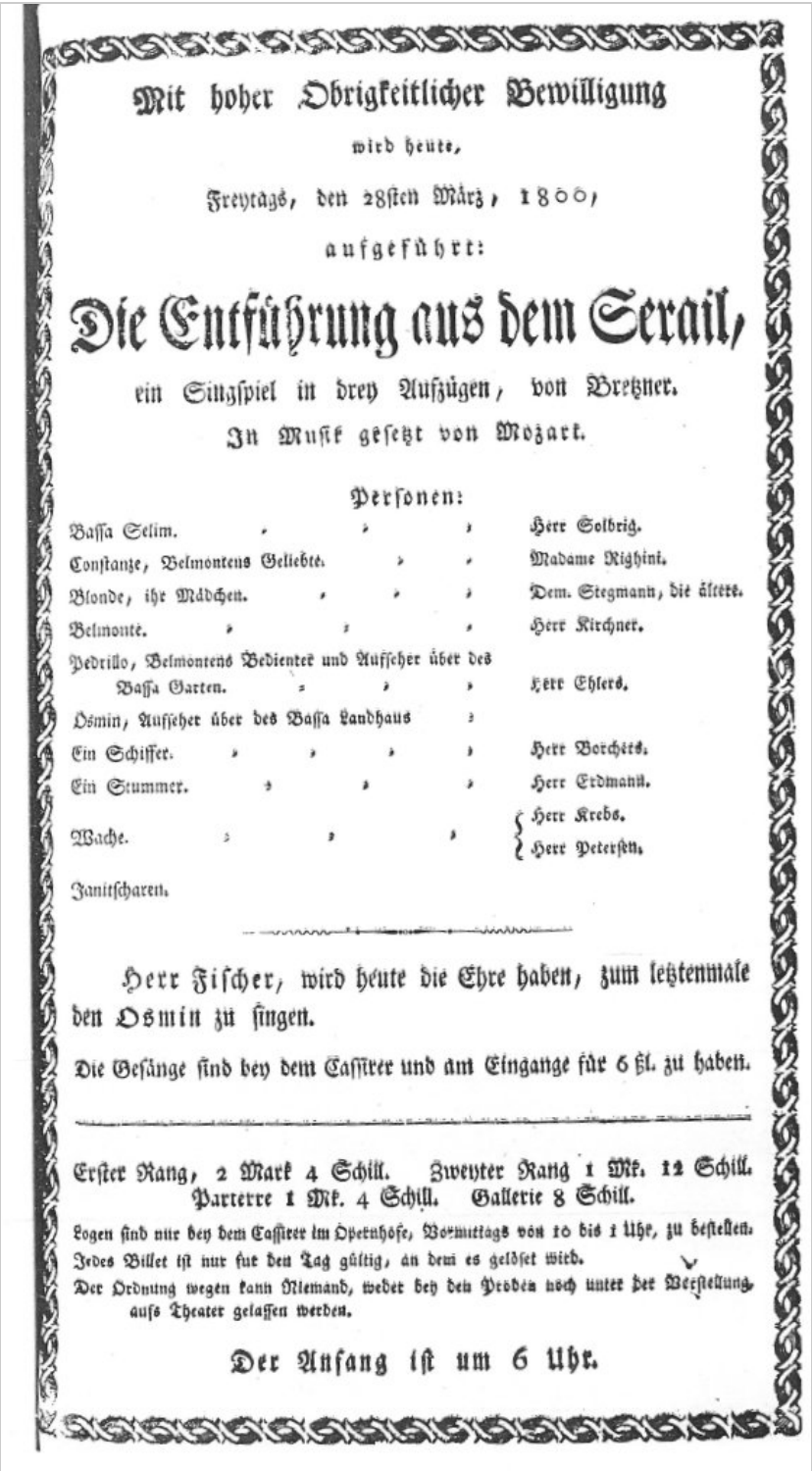
Sinfonie.
Arie von Righini, gesungen von Herrn Fischer.
Arie von Righini, gesungen von Demoiselle Stegmann, die ältere.
Arie von Mozart: "In diesen heiligen Hallen" ꝛc., gesungen von Herrn Fischer.
Zum Beschluß einige komische Canons, gesungen von Herrn Gollmick, Kirchner und Fischer.

Anfang, Ordnung und Preise wie beym Schauspiel.

Billets sind bey Herrn Fischer, in seinem Logis im Hotel de Saxe, und beym Cassirer Herrn Bartels im Opernhofe und am Eingange zu haben.

Poster for Fischer's benefit concert in Hamburg, 15 Mar 1800
(Universität Hamburg)

On 19 and 26 Mar he made guest appearances as Sander in *Zemire und Azor*, and on 28 Mar, he made a guest appearance as Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.



Mit hoher Obrigkeitlicher Bewilligung

wird heute,

Freytags, den 28sten März, 1800,

aufgeführt:

Die Entführung aus dem Serail,

ein Singspiel in drey Aufzügen, von Bretzner.

In Musik gesetzt von Mozart.

Personen:

Bassa Selim.	Herr Solbrig.
Constanze, Belmontens Geliebte.	Madame Righini.
Blonde, ihr Mädchen.	Dem. Stegmann, die ältere.
Belmonte.	Herr Kirchner.
Pedrillo, Belmontens Bedienter und Aufseher über des Bassa Garten.	Herr Ehlers.
Osmin, Aufseher über des Bassa Landhaus	
Ein Schiffer.	Herr Borchers.
Ein Stummer.	Herr Erdmann.
Wache.	Herr Krebs. Herr Petersen.
Janitscharen.	

Herr Fischer, wird heute die Ehre haben, zum letztenmale den Osmin zu singen.

Die Gesänge sind bey dem Cassirer und am Eingange für 6 ßl. zu haben.

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

Logen sind nur bey dem Cassirer im Opernhofe, Vormittags von 10 bis 1 Uhr, zu bestellen.
Jedes Billet ist nur fur 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 *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Hamburg, 28 Mar 1800, with Fischer as Osmin (Universität Hamburg)

Notably, Fischer did not appear as Sarastro in the performance of *Die Zauberflöte* in Hamburg on 17 Mar, the only other performance of a Mozart opera during his stay in Hamburg. To our knowledge, Fischer never sang that role on stage, although he frequently sang "In diesen heil'gen Hallen" in concert.

According to Lederbur (1861, 157), Fischer sang very little from 1806 on, and he retired from his position with the Prussian Royal Opera in 1811. He died in Berlin on 10 Jul 1825, apparently leaving a considerable fortune.

Fischer's son Joseph, baptized in Vienna on 1 Sep 1780, was trained in singing by his parents (the following is based mainly on Lederbur 1861, 155–56). From 1793 until 1795, when his voice changed, he sang alto with the Sing-Akademie. In 1801 he became first bass in Mannheim, and then from 1803 he was a member of the court theater in Kassel; that same year, he made his first guest appearances in Berlin, including Don Juan in a production of Mozart's opera in German. In 1810, when he was with the Westphalian court, he made a series of guest appearances in Berlin. His appearances there in that year can be tracked through a series of notices in *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stande*. His Mozart guest roles included Osmin, Figaro, Don Juan, and Titus. From 1814 to 1818, Joseph was a member of the Prussian Royal Opera. Following several years in Italy, he returned to Berlin, but retired early. In 1806 he adopted Anna, the daughter of actors Carl and Charlotte Miedke in Stuttgart. Trained in singing by Joseph, she also had a distinguished career in the 1820s and 1830s as Anna Fischer (and later as Anna Fischer-Maraffa) singing in Italy, Germany, France, and Spain. Ludwig's daughters Josepha Fischer (later Fischer-Vernier) and Wilhelmine also had careers as singers.

Notes (⇧)

Fischer's guest appearance as Osmin in Mannheim is noted in the theatrical calendar in Walter (1898, ii: 295n1). It is also noted in *Addenda* (46) based on a twentieth-century secondary source.

The principal source for Fischer's early life is his own manuscript autobiography; it was apparently first transcribed in full by Theinert (1902, 264–70), with copious annotations. More recently it has been published in facsimile with a transcription and English translation in Corneilson (2011); Corneilson also includes transcriptions of other important early sources, including Reichardt's biography (intended as a supplement to Gerber), published in *Musikalische Monathsschrift* in 1792. The most useful early dictionary article is Lederbur (1861, 156–57). Lederbur's treatment of Fischer's early life is closely based on the autobiography. Also useful is the biography in *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*.

In his autobiography, Fischer writes of becoming an "Accessist" at the electoral court in Mainz (Corneilson 2011, 32, translation on 33). We have so far been unable to find any reference to Fischer in the electoral *Hof-Staats= und Stands=Calender* for the 1760s (available digitally here).

Corneilson includes a table of Fischer's verified roles in operas and oratorios (Corneilson 2011, Appendix B, 57–58). The table lists 14 operatic roles in Vienna, exactly matching the individual roles discussed by Michtner (1970, 84 and *passim*). However, Michtner writes that Fischer appeared "[i]n 17 verschiedenen Rollen" in Vienna (Michtner 1970, 84). We are unable to account for the discrepancy.

The programs for all of Fischer's appearances in London in 1794 along with reviews mentioning Fischer are given in Landon (1976, 239–57).

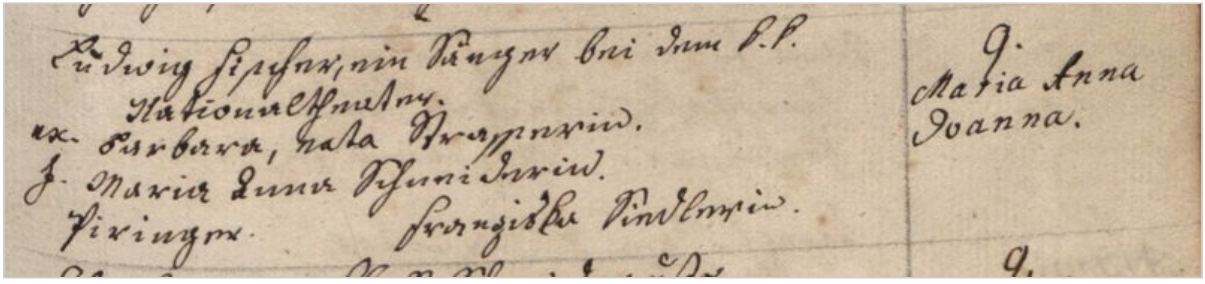
A variety of dates for Fischer's retirement are given in the secondary literature, including 1810, 1811, and 1812. We have followed Lederbur.

The obituary of Joseph Fischer in *Blätter für Theater, Musik und Kunst* has his date of birth as 12 Jul 1780. As we have shown here, he was baptized on 1 Sep 1780.

There is considerable confusion in the secondary literature over Fischer's children, including their number, names, and dates. As of this writing, the documented facts seem to be:

- Ludwig Fischer's son Joseph was baptized in Vienna on 1 Sep 1780 (see the discussion in the main text above).
- Fischer's daughter Maria Anna Joanna was baptized in Vienna on 9 Aug 1782.

  It remains unresolved whether this child is the "Josepha" (or "Therese" or "Therese Josepha") who went on to have a career as a soprano on the operatic stage as "Mademoiselle Fischer" and later as "Madame Fischer-Vernier", and is said to have been born in Vienna in 1782.



(Vienna, St. Stephan, Taufbuch 01-098, 42r)

- Fischer's daughter Wilhelmine, who also had a career as a singer, is said in the secondary literature to have been born in Vienna, in (variously) 1783, 1784, or 1785. We have so far been unable to locate any Viennese baptismal record for Wilhelmine. She is certainly not in the baptismal records for St. Stephen's for any of those years. Ludwig and Barbara Fischer are not known to have been in Vienna between the beginning of Apr 1784 and Ludwig's visit in the spring of 1787.
- A few sources mention a daughter Louise, said to have been born in 1787, but we have not found any primary documentation for her.

Mozart's reference to "fischer" in his letter of 20 Mar 1784—"Ich habe allein um 30 Abonnenten mehr als Richter und fischer zusammen"—refers to the violinist John Abraham Fisher, who was in Vienna at the same time as Ludwig Fischer.

The report in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* on Fischer's concert in Leipzig in 1798 is also transcribed in Corneilson 2011, 56n2). Corneilson suggests that the reviewer "Z***" is "probably Carl Friedrich Zelter," but this seems unlikely, as the review was filed from Leipzig and Zelter resided in Berlin. Our tentative identification of "Z***" as Rochlitz is based on Haas (2009). But note that the review of the

Leipzig concert appears in the same issue of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* as the first installment of Rochlitz's Mozart anecdotes with an explicit attribution to Rochlitz.

We are grateful to Michael Lorenz for his answers to specific questions and for his photos from the Hoftheater Rechnungsbücher; and to Bruce Brown and Janet Page for their comments and corrections.

Bibliography (⇧)

Corneilson, Paul. 2002. "The Mannheim Years of Ludwig Fischer (1745–1825)." In: Ludwig Finscher, Bärbel Pelker, and Rüdiger Thomsen-Fürst, eds. *Mannheim—Ein* Pardies der Tonkünstler? *Kongressbericht Mannheim 1999.* Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Mannheimer Hofkapelle, vol. 8. Frankfurt am Main, etc: Peter Lang.

————. 2011. *The Autobiography of Ludwig Fischer, Mozart's First Osmin*. Malden, Mass.: Mozart Society of America.

Hass, Ole. 2009. *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung (1798–1848)*. RIPM Consortium. [pdf]

Landon, H. C. Robbins. 1976. *Haydn in England, 1791–1795*. Vol. 3 of Haydn: Chronicle and Works. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ledebur, Carl von. 1861. *Tonkünstler-Lexicon Berlin's von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*. Berlin: Ludwig Raub.

Meixner, Christoph. 2018. "Die Thurn und Taxis'sche Hofmusik in Regensburg. Höfische Musikkultur unter reichspolitischen Vorzeichen." In: *Süddeutsche Hofkapellen im 18. Jahrhundert. Eine Bestandsaufnahme*. Ed. Silke Leopold and Bärbel Pelker. 435–78. Heidelberg University Publishing.

Michtner, Otto. 1970. *Das alte Burgtheater als Opernbühne von der Einführung des deutschen Singspiels (1778) bis zum Tod Kaiser Leopolds II. (1792)*. Theatergeschichte Österreichs, 3/1. Vienna: Hermann Böhlaus Nachf.

Morrow, Mary Sue. 1989. *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna: Aspects of a Developing Musical and Social Institution*. New York: Pendragon Press.

Payer von Thurn. 1920. *Joseph II. als Theaterdirektor. Ungedruckte Brief und Aktenstücke aus den Kinderjahren des Burgtheaters.* Vienna and Leipzig: Leopold Heidrich.

Pichler, Anton. 1879. *Chronik des Großherzoglichen Hof- und National-Theaters in Mannheim. Zur Feier seines hundertjährigen Bestehens am 7. October 1879*. Mannheim: J. Bensheimer.

Pierre, Constant. 1975. *Histoire du Concert spirituel, 1725–1790*. Paris: Société Française de Musicologie.

Pohl, C. F. 1871. *Denkschrift aus Anlass des hundertjährigen Bestehens der Tonkünstler-Societät, im Jahr 1862 reorganisirt als “Haydn” Witwen- und Waisen-Versorgung-Verein der Tonkünstler in Wien*. Vienna: Selbstverlag des “Haydn”, in Commission bei Carl Gerold’s Sohn.

Sartori, Claudio. 1990–94. *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800*. 7 vols. Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli.

Schumann, Christiane. 2005. *Mozart und seine Sänger. Am Beispiel der* Entführung aus dem Serail. Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe xxxvi, Musikwissenschaft, vol. 241. Frankfurt am Main, etc.: Peter Lang.

Theimert, H. 1902. “Jahrhundertfeier eines deutschen Trinkliedes und Mitteilungen aus dem Leben des Sänger-Komponisten Ludwig Fischer (1745–1825).” *Die Musik*, 2/4: 262–70.

Walter, Friedrich. 1898. *Geschichte des Theaters und der Musik am kurpfälzischen Hofe*. Forschungen zur Geschichte Mannheims und der Pfalz. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel.

———. 1899. *Archiv und Bibliothek des Grossh. Hof= und Nationaltheaters in Mannheim, 1779–1839.* Leipzig: S. Hirzel. [vol. 2, with Spielplan, etc.]

Werner, Richard Maria, ed. 1888. *Aus dem Josephinischen Wien. Geblers und Nicolais Briefwechsel während der Jahre 1771–1786.* Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz

---

Credit: DE

Author: Dexter Edge

Link(s): Google Books

Search Term: fischer

Source Library: BSB

Categories: Reception

First Published: Mon, 17 Jul 2023

Citation:

> Edge, Dexter. 2023. “Ludwig Fischer sings Osmin in Mannheim (31 Aug 1785).” In: *Mozart: New Documents*, edited by Dexter Edge and David Black. First published 17 Jul 2023. [direct link]