Citation:

Printed: Thu, 19 Nov 2026

Edge, Dexter. 2014. "A reference to Mozart's symphonic minuets (5 Dec 1791)." In: *Mozart: New Documents*, edited by Dexter Edge and David Black. First published 14 Sep 2014; updated 15 Jan 2023. [direct link]

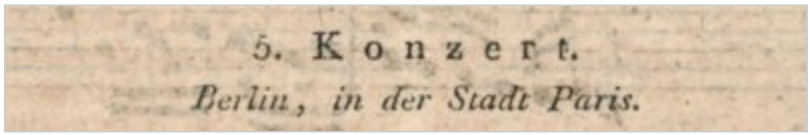
A reference to Mozart's symphonic minuets (5 Dec 1791)

Dexter Edge

[Carl Spazier], *Musikalisches Wochenblatt,* x, ?5 Dec 1791

[79]

Konzert.
Berlin, in der Stadt Paris.


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Berlin, in der Stadt Paris.

Die Sinfonie von *Hayd'n* (No. 14), mit welcher das Koncert am 1ten Decemb. eröffnet wurde, und in welcher das süsseste Cantabile ist, das je aus dem Herzen in die Sprache der Musik übergieng, that, zumal so rein und schön vorgetragen, eine ausnehmende Wirkung. Es ist, als wenn auf dem sanften und stetigen Getön der Blaseinstrumente der liebliche Gesang freundlich einhergetragen würde. Nur Schade, nach meiner Meinung, dass der humoristische *Hayd'n*, der unerschöpflich an Einfallen ist, und der, in seiner muthwilligen Laune, bald dies bald jenes Instrument neckt, es noch immer der Mühe werth hält, in das grosse Ganze seiner Sinfonien—*Menuetten* hineinzuschieben. Möchten doch diese Dinger, die sich seit eineim Jahrzehend gar zudringlich in unsere Sinfonien hineingefunden haben, (*Pleyel*, der Hayd'n in so vielen Genieschritten—*nachtritt*, debutirt auch sehr damit), doch endlich einmal abkommen! *) *[...]*

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. . . *n*

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. . . n

[translation:]

5th Concert.
Berlin, at Die Stadt Paris.

The *Haydn* symphony (No. 14), with which the concert of 1 December opened,

and which contains the sweetest cantabile that has ever passed from the heart into the speech of music, made an admirable effect, especially by being so correctly and beautifully performed. It is as if sweet song had been graciously infused into the gentle and sustained tones of the wind instruments. It is, in my opinion, a pity only that the humorous *Haydn*, inexhaustible in invention, and who, in his mischievous fancy, teases this instrument, then another, always considers it worth the trouble to insert minuets into the greater part of his symphonies. Yet one would wish that these things, which for a decade have found their way rather intrusively into our symphonies (Pleyel, who follows in so many of Haydn's footsteps of genius, has also brought out much in this style), would finally for once be done away with!*

[...]

C. S.

*Those who understand the art by which Haydn, Dittersdorf, Mozart, among others fashion their minuets, may well not share the above opinion.

. . . *n*

[Translation by Janet Page]

Commentary

The author of this review ("*C. S.*") is Carl Spazier (1761–1805), a frequent contributor to the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*. The review concerns a concert on Thursday, 1 Dec 1791 in the hotel the Stadt Paris in Berlin at which a symphony by Haydn was performed (on the Stadt Paris, see the entry for 5 Mar 1792). The reference to Mozart is found in a footnote to Spazier's complaint about the ubiquity of minuets in contemporary symphonies. The footnote is signed ". . . *n*", most likely Friedrich Ludwig Æmilius Kunzen (1761–1817), the principal editor of the *Wochenblatt*. Kunzen (if it is he) disagrees with Spazier's opinion of symphonic minuets, writing: "Those who understand the art with which Haydn, Dittersdorf, Mozart among others fashion their minuets may well not share the above opinion." Spazier countered with a longer article, "Über Menuetten in Sinfonien," that appears in issue XII (91–92) of the *Wochenblatt* (for a translation and discussion of Spazier's article, see Zaslaw 1989, 415–16).

The identity of the Haydn symphony is uncertain. Different publishers in the eighteenth century used different numbering systems for Haydn’s symphonies, and there was not one universally recognized “No. 14” at the time. However, the review makes clear that the symphony must have a movement that could reasonably be described as “cantabile” (although that word need not appear in a tempo marking); it must have a minuet; and it must have been composed (and probably published) before 1 Dec 1791. It was also likely one of Haydn’s more recent symphonies rather than an older one. Two candidates are:

- Symphony in B-flat Major, Hob. I:85, “La Reine,” composed in 1785–86, published by Forster as “Overture” no. 14
- Symphony in G Major, Hob I:88, composed in 1787, published as no. 14 by Artaria in Vienna in 1789.

Notes (⇧)

On the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, see the *Notes* to our entry for 10 Oct 1791. Deutsch (*Dokumente*, 358) includes a report from Vienna on *Die Zauberflöte* dated 9 Oct 1791 from page 79 in this same issue of the *Wochenblatt*, but he seems to have overlooked this reference to Mozart in a footnote on the very same page (X:79). Deutsch also omits a reference to Mozart in an article by Bernhard Wessely on the preceding page of this same issue (X:78; see the first entry for 5 Dec 1791). Schwob (2015, 189–190) includes the report by Spazier transcribed above, without reference to its publication on our site in 2014.

Bibliography (⇧)

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Zaslaw, Neal. 1989. *Mozart’s Symphonies: Context, Performance Practice, Reception*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Credit: DE

Author: Dexter Edge

Link(s): Google Books; BSB

Search Term: NA

Source Library: BSB, 4 Mus.th. 1492-1/2

Categories: Reception

First Published: Sun, 14 Sep 2014

Updated: Sun, 15 Jan 2023

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