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Mozart symphonies performed in Berlin concerts (5 Mar 1792)

Dexter Edge

***Musikalisches Wochenblatt,* xxii, ?5 Mar 1792**

[173]

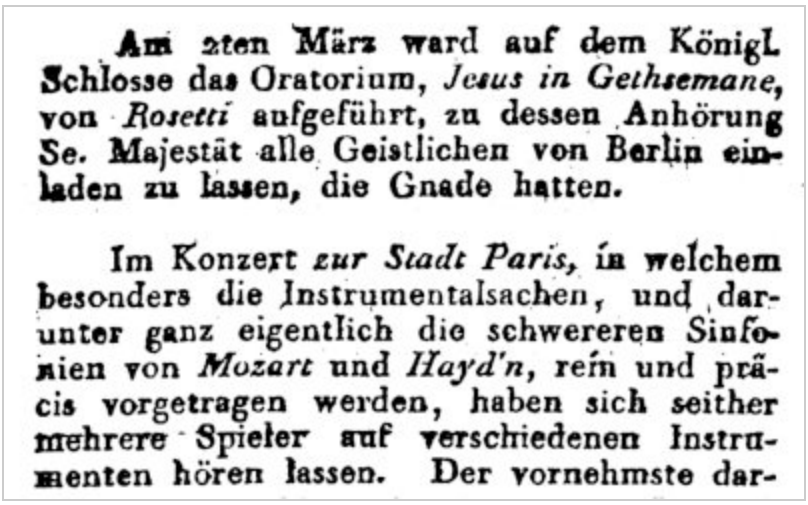
4. Öffentliche Musik in Berlin.



Am 2ten März ward auf dem Königl. Schlosse das Oratorium, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, von *Rosetti* aufgeführt, zu dessen Anhörung Se. Majestät alle Geistlichen von Berlin einladen zu lassen, die Gnade hatten.

Im Konzert *zur Stadt Paris*, in welchem besonders die Instrumentalsachen, und darunter ganz eigentlich die schwereren Sinfonien von *Mozart* und *Hayd'n* rein und präcis vorgetragen werden, haben sich seither mehrere Spieler auf verschiedenen Instrumenten hören lassen. *[...]*

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[translation:]

4. Public music in Berlin.

On March 2 the oratorio *Jesus in Gethsemane* by Rosetti was performed at the Royal Palace, which His Majesty graciously invited all the clergy of Berlin to hear.

In concerts at the *Stadt Paris*—at which instrumental pieces in particular, among them most especially the more difficult symphonies of *Mozart* and *Haydn*, are performed cleanly and precisely—various players on diverse instruments have performed thus far.

[translation by Janet Page]

Commentary

This brief unattributed report on public musical events in Berlin mentions that the "more difficult" symphonies of Mozart and Haydn are performed "cleanly and precisely" in concerts at the "Stadt Paris." The report is not referring to a specific concert; the implication seems to be that that symphonies by these two composers have been regularly performed and that the orchestra at the concerts is capable of performing them well. (For a reference to a specific concert in the Stadt Paris at which a symphony by Haydn was performed, see the entry for 5 Dec 1791.)

The Stadt Paris (or Ville de Paris), located at what is now Brüderstraße 39 in Berlin, was one of the city's leading inns; in his *Beschriebung der Königlichen Residenzstädte Berlin und Potsdam* (3rd ed., 1786, vol. 2, 965), Friedrich Nicolai writes:

> Das erste, wornach ein Fremder fragen wird ist wohl ein gutes Wirthshaus. Ich will daher die sämmentlichen hiesigen öffentlichen Wirthshäuser hieher setzen, nach den drey Klassen, in welche sie von dem Polizeydirektorium getheilet sind. Das erste derselben, die Stadt Paris, gehört besonders, wegen der Größe und der guten innern Einrichtung, Reinlichkeit und Ordnung, zu den vorzüglichsten Wirthshäusern in Deutschland.
>
> The first thing a visitor will ask for is a good inn. So I will place all of the public inns here into the three classes into which they are divided by the directorate of the police. The first among these, the Stadt Paris, because of its size and good inner arrangement, cleanliness, and order, belongs in particular among the most excellent inns in Germany.

A large room in the Stadt Paris was frequently used for concerts in the second half of the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth (see Mangum 2008, 71–72). Mozart himself may have stayed in the Stadt Paris during his visit to Berlin in April and May 1789 (see *NMD*, document 97, and *Neue Folge*, 91–92; see also Wolff 2012, 57–58, who speculates that Mozart may have taken part in concerts in the Stadt Paris).

The report cited here provides insufficient detail to identify with certainty the "difficult" Mozart symphony (or symphonies) that may have been performed. Of Mozart's last six symphonies, the "Haffner" (K. 385) had been published by Artaria in 1785 and would thus presumably have been available, but his subsequent symphonies (K. 425, K. 504, K. 543, K. 550, and K. 551) had yet to appear in print. However, Cliff Eisen and Neal Zaslaw have suggested that a group of Mozart symphonies listed in a catalog published by the Hamburg music dealer Johann Christoph Westphal in April 1790 may have included K. 425, K. 504, K. 543, and K. 551, in manuscript copies (see Eisen 1986, 628–29, and Zaslaw 1989, 427–28). They speculate that these symphonies may have come into circulation in northern Germany through a possible contact between Mozart and Berlin music publisher Johann Carl Friedrich Rellstab (1759–1813) during Mozart's trip to Berlin in 1789.

The oratorio *Jesus in Gethsemane* by Antonio Rosetti (c. 1750–1792) was composed and first performed in 1790 (Murray 2014, 300–308). Rosetti was summoned to Berlin early in 1792 by King Friedrich Wilhelm II specifically to lead the performance of *Jesus in Gethsemane* reported here (Murray 2014, 183; see also the review of this performance in *Musikalische Korrespondenz der teutschen Filarmonischen Gesellschaft* in the issue of 23 May 1792). A Requiem Mass by Rosetti composed in 1776 was performed at a memorial for Mozart in Prague in Dec 1791, a little over a week after Mozart's death (Murray 1992, summarized in Murray 2014, 182–83).

Notes (⇧)

Schwob (2015, 204–5) includes the notice transcribed above, without reference to its publication on our site in 2014. For an overview of the Mozart documents in *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, see the entry for 10 Oct 1791.

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