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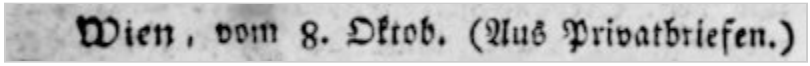
An early report on *Die Zauberflöte* (addendum) (8 Oct 1791)

Dexter Edge

Münchner Zeitung, no. 162, Fri, 14 Oct 1791

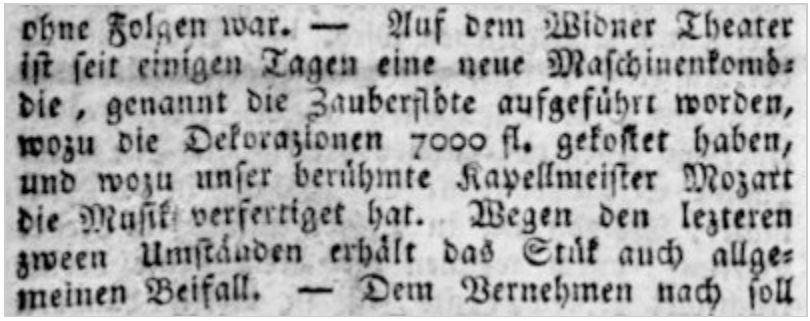
[863]

Wien vom 8. Oktob. (Aus Privatbriefen.)


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[...]

— Auf dem Widner Theater
ist seit einigen Tagen eine neue Maschinenkomö=
die, genannt die Zauberflöte aufgeführt worden,
wozu die Dekorazionen 7000 fl. gekostet haben,
und wozu unser berühmte Kapellmeister Mozart
die Musik verfertiget hat. Wegen den lezteren
zween Umständen erhält das Stük auch allge=
meinen Beifall. —


ohne Folgen war. — Auf dem Widner Theater ist seit einigen Tagen eine neue Maschinenkomö= die, genannt die Zauberflöte aufgeführt worden, wozu die Dekorazionen 7000 fl. gekostet haben, und wozu unser berühmte Kapellmeister Mozart die Musik verfertiget hat. Wegen den lezteren zween Umständen erhält das Stük auch allge= meinen Beifall. — Dem Vernehmen nach soll

[translation:]

— For the past few days at the
Wiednertheater a new machine comedy called
Die Zauberflöte has been performed, for which
the scenery cost 7000 fl and for which our famous
Kapellmeister Mozart produced the music. On

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account of the latter two circumstances, the piece
is also receiving universal acclaim.

Commentary

This early report on *Die Zauberflöte* is based on information submitted by a correspondent in Vienna, and appears under the dateline 8 Oct. (For a summary of sources documenting the opera's premiere and early performances, see the commentary to our entry for 1 Oct 1791.) The report, published in the *Münchner Zeitung* on 14 Oct 1791, is a variant of one published in the *Staats- und gelehrte Zeitung des hamburgischen unpartheyischen Correspondenten* that same day:

> Schreiben aus Wien, vom 5 October. *[...]*
>
> Auf dem hiesigen Theater ist seit etlichen Tagen eine neue Maschinen Comödie aufgeführt worden, die Zauberflöte genannt. Die Decorationen dazu haben 7000 Gulden gekostet, und der berühmten Kapellmeister Mozart hat die Musik dazu verfertigt. Dieses Umstandes und der schönen Decorationen wegen würde das Stück allgemeinen Beyfall gehabt haben, wenn der Text nur auch im mindesten der Erwartung entsprochen hätte. [*Neue Folge*, 72; for an English translation, see the commentary to our entry for 1 Oct 1791]

Because both reports were published on 14 Oct 1791, neither can have been the direct source for the other. However, the reports are so similar that they must derive from a common source; thus it seems certain that both are based on dispatches from the same correspondent in Vienna. Given that the report published in Hamburg is dated 5 Oct and the one published in Munich is dated 8 Oct, it may be that the correspondent rewrote from memory a letter that he or she had already sent to Hamburg, using slightly different wording. Alternatively, it may be that the correspondent sent identical letters to the two papers, and that the editors tweaked the prose differently before publication.

The most significant difference between the two reports is the spin put on the opera's reception: the Hamburg version states that because Mozart composed the music and the scenery was lavish and expensive, "the piece *would have* won universal acclaim, if only the text had met even minimum expectations." The Munich version, on the other hand, omits any criticism of the text, stating simply that because Mozart composed it and the production was lavish, the piece received "universal acclaim."

Both reports state that the "Dekorazionen" (scenery) cost 7000 fl. This contrasts with a report published in the same Hamburg paper on 4 Oct, but dated 24 Sep, six days before the premiere, which states that "Decorationen und Kleidungen" (scenery and costumes) together cost 5000 fl. (For the full text of this report, see the commentary to our entry for 1 Oct 1791.)

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