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# The premiere of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Leipzig (4 Oct 1783)

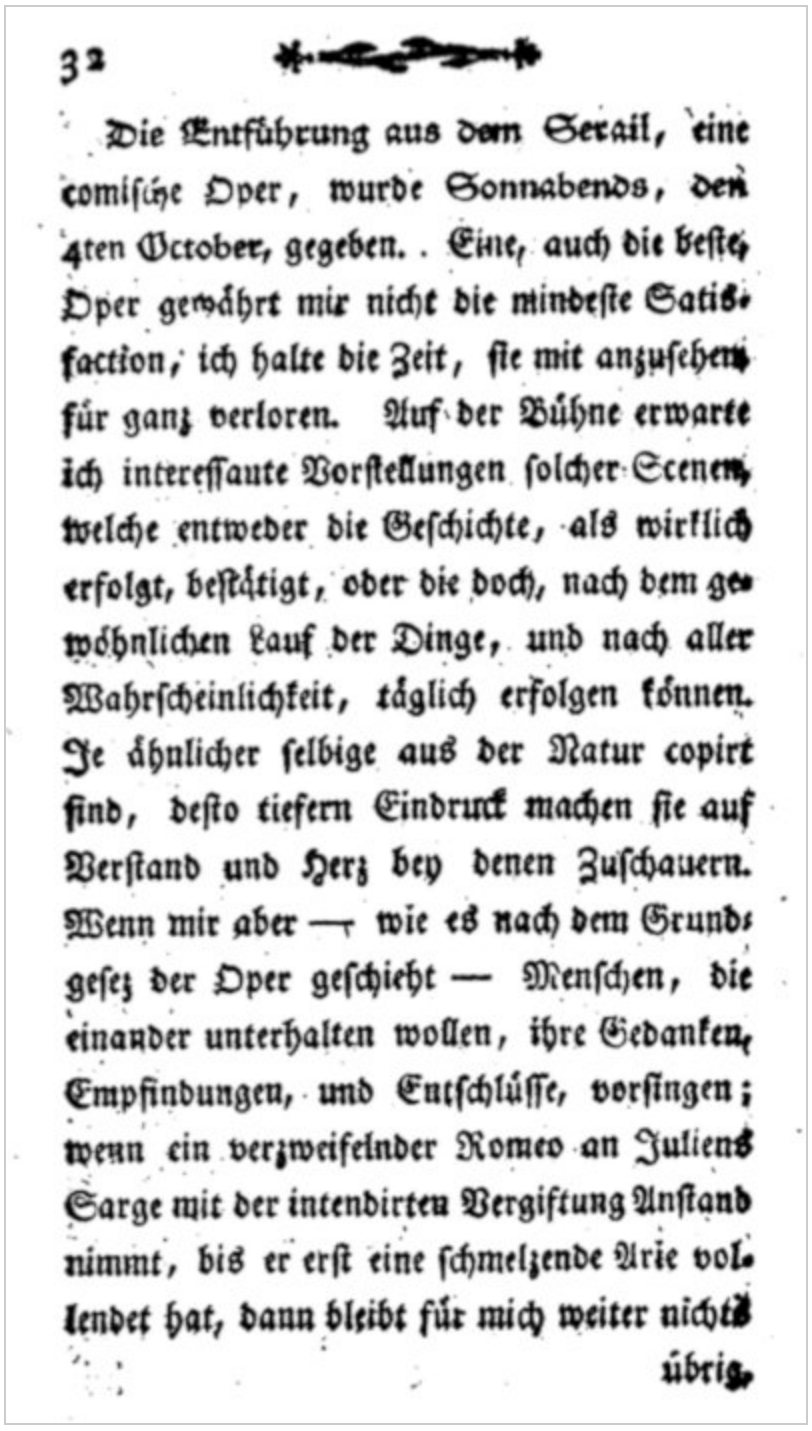
## Dexter Edge

**[Johann Friedrich Ernst von Brawe], *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal* [sic] *von der Leipziger Michaelmesse 1783*. Leipzig: Friedr. Gotth. Jacobäer und Sohn, 1784**

*[32]*

Die Entführung aus dem Serail, eine comische Oper, wurde Sonnabends, den 4ten October, gegeben. Eine, auch die beste, Oper gewährt mir nicht die mindeste Satis= faction, ich halte die Zeit, sie mit anzusehen für ganz verloren. Auf der Bühne erwarte ich interessante Vorstellungen solcher Scenen, welche entweder die Geschichte, als wirklich erfolgt, bestätigt, oder die doch, nach dem ge= wöhnlichen Lauf der Dinge, und nach aller Wahrscheinlichkeit, täglich erfolgen können. Je ähnlicher selbige aus der Natur copirt sind, desto tiefern Eindruck machen sie auf Verstand und Herz bey denen Zuschauern. Wenn mir aber — wie es nach dem Grund= gesez der Oper geschieht — Menschen, die einander unterhalten wollen, ihre Gedanken, Empfindungen, und Entschlüsse, vorsingen; wenn ein verzweifelnder Romeo an Juliens Sarge mit der intendirten Vergiftung Anstand nimmt, bis er erst eine schmelzende Arie vol= lendet hat, dann bleibt für mich weiter nichts

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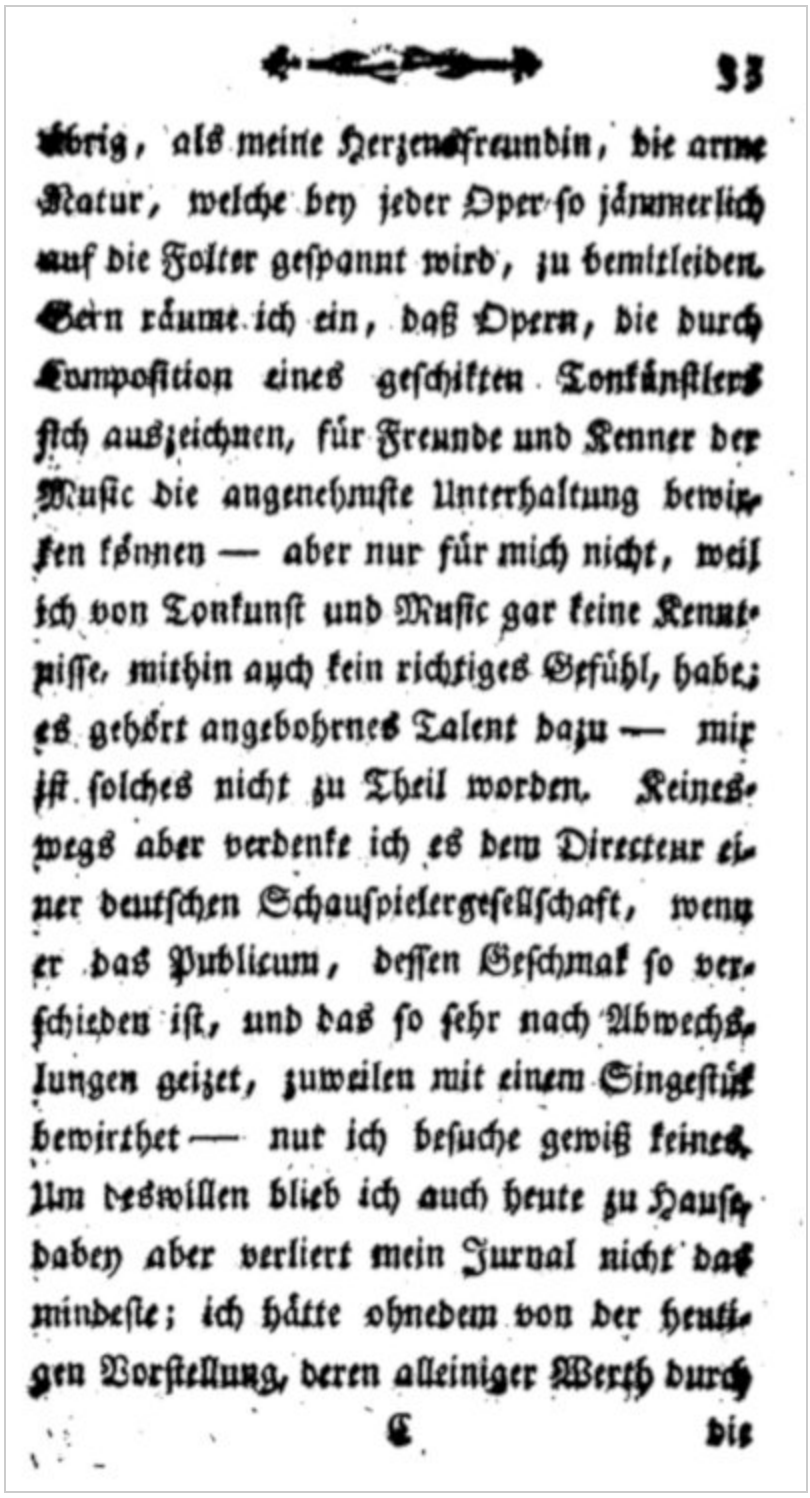
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übrig,

*[33]*

übrig, als meine Herzensfreundin, die arme Natur, welche bey jeder Oper so jämmerlich auf die Folter gespannt wird, zu bemitleiden. Gern räume ich ein, daß Opern, die durch Composition eines geschikten Tonkünstlers sich auszeichnen, für Freunde und Kenner der

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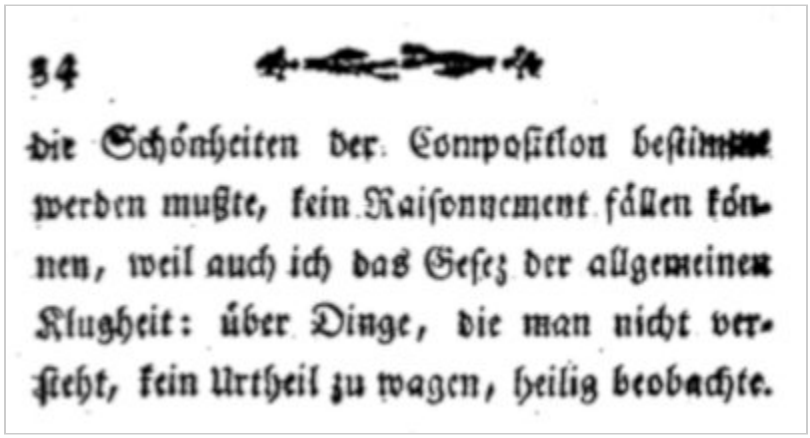
übrig, als meine Herzensfreundin, die arme Natur, welche bey jeder Oper so jämmerlich auf die Folter gespannt wird, zu bemitleiden. Gern räume ich ein, daß Opern, die durch Composition eines geschikten Tonkünstlers sich auszeichnen, für Freunde und Kenner der Music die angenehmste Unterhaltung bewirken können — aber nur für mich nicht, weil ich von Tonkunst und Music gar keine Kenntnisse, mithin auch kein richtiges Gefühl, habe; es gehört angebohrnes Talent dazu — mir ist solches nicht zu Theil worden. Keineswegs aber verdenke ich es dem Directeur einer deutschen Schauspielergesellschaft, wenn er das Publicum, dessen Geschmak so verschieden ist, und das so sehr nach Abwechslungen geizet, zuweilen mit einem Singestük bewirthet — nur ich besuche gewiß keines. Um deswillen blieb ich auch heute zu Hause; dabey aber verliert mein Jurnal nicht das mindeste; ich hätte ohnedem von der heutigen Vorstellung, deren alleiniger Werth durch

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*[34]*

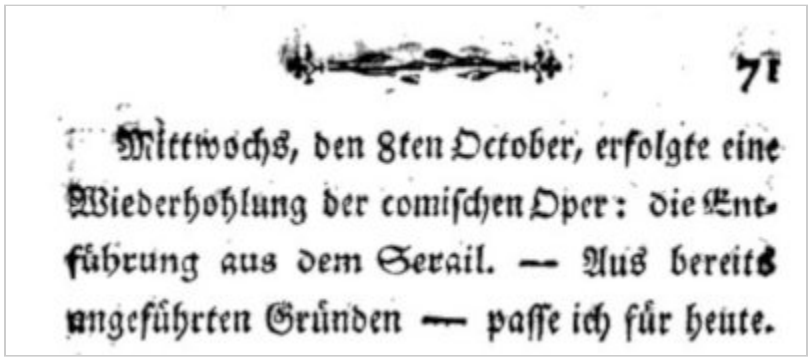
die Schönheiten der Composition bestimmt
werden mußte, kein Raisonnement fällen kön=
nen, weil auch ich das Gesez der allgemeinen

Klugheit: über Dinge, die man nicht ver=
steht, kein Urtheil zu wagen, heilig beobachte.




*[71]*

Mittwochs, den 8ten October, erfolgte eine
Wiederhohlung der comischen Oper: die Ent=
führung aus dem Serail. — Aus bereits
angeführten Gründen — passe ich für heute.




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## *Commentary*

It is generally said in the Mozart literature that the Leipzig premiere of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* took place on 25 Sep 1783. Otto Erich Deutsch gives this date in *Dokumente* (194), in his commentary to an item from the weekly journal *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, a brief reference to *Entführung* in the article "Nachricht von den Vorstellungen der Bondinischen Schauspieler=Gesellschaft zu Leipzig in der Michael=Messe 1783" ("Report on the Performances by the Bondini Acting Company in Leipzig during the Michaelmas Trade Fair 1783"). That article lists *Entführung* among the "Neue Stücke" (new works) performed by Bondini's company

in Leipzig during the trade fair, but gives no date for the performance. Deutsch provides one in his commentary (*Dokumente*, 194):

> Die Erstaufführung in Leipzig fand am 25. September statt. [...] Die Michael-Handelsmesse wurde Ende September abgehalten.
>
> The premiere in Leipzig took place on 25 September [...] The Michaelmas trade fair was held at the end of September.

Deutsch cites no source for the date, but it probably comes from Loewenberg's *Annals of Opera*, Deutsch's evident (if often unacknowledged) source for many dates of local premieres of Mozart's operas. Loewenberg (1978, col. 393) likewise gives no source, and we have been unable to locate either a primary source or a citation of one anywhere in the secondary literature. Nevertheless, the date has been generally adopted in the Mozart literature; it is given, for example, in Bauman (1987, Table 5, 103).

This commentary will show that *Entführung* was probably not performed in Leipzig on 25 Sep 1783; the opera's premiere in that city almost certainly took place nine days later, on 4 Oct. The primary source for this later date is the *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal*, in the passage transcribed above. Johann Friedrich Ernst von Brawe, the probable author, admits that he did not attend the performance of Mozart's opera on 4 Oct or its repetition on 8 Oct, but his dates are almost certainly reliable.

In order to provide the necessary historical context for understanding theatrical life in Leipzig at the time of the premiere of *Entführung*, this commentary begins with a summary of the network of relationships among the theaters in Leipzig, Dresden, and Prague in the second half of the eighteenth century. It then goes on to reconstruct the schedule of theatrical performances in Leipzig at the time of the Michaelmas trade fair in 1783, showing the place of Mozart's opera in that schedule. The commentary closes with a discussion of the venue, cast, and reception of the opera at its Leipzig premiere.

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## The theatrical network of Leipzig, Dresden, and Prague (⇧)

In the eighteenth century, Leipzig was the principal commercial center in the Electorate of Saxony; the electoral court was in Dresden. In the second half of the century, theatrical enterprises in Leipzig, Dresden, and Prague became closely intertwined. A central if relatively little-studied figure in the history of these interrelationships is the entrepreneur and theatrical impresario Giuseppe Bustelli. In 1764, Bustelli took out a long-term lease (an "emphyteutic" lease, a form of conditional and time-limited ownership) on the Kotzentheater in Prague, and established an Italian opera company there (see Teuber 1883, 252ff). Two members of his Italian company in Prague went on to have important careers of their own as theatrical impresarios: the buffo bass Pasquale Bondini (d. 1789), who became impresario of the German company that gave the Leipzig premiere of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in 1783 and the Italian company that gave the Prague premiere of *Le nozze di Figaro* in 1786; and the tenor Domenico Guardasoni, a key figure in Mozart's later career. Both Bondini and Guardasoni appear in the cast lists of several printed librettos for operas performed by Bustelli's company in Prague during the 1760s (see Haas 1916, 72–75). When Emperor Franz I (Francis Stephen of Lorraine, consort of Maria Theresia) died unexpectedly on 18 Aug 1765, a period of official mourning (Landestrauer) began in the Habsburg lands, including Bohemia and thus also Prague. Theaters were closed for the duration of the Landestrauer, placing Bustelli in a precarious financial position, one that he solved by negotiating a contract with the Dresden court for the provision of Italian opera in that city (Teuber 1883, 275).

In the 1760s, the electoral court in Dresden, rather than maintaining its own theatrical establishment, contracted with and provided subventions to impresarios for the provision of theater to the court and the Dresden public. In early Sep 1765, Bustelli contracted with the Dresden court to provide Italian opera; his initial contract ran through the following Easter, and his company gave its first performance in Dresden on 12 Sep 1765 (Haas 1916, 84). Bondini and Guardasoni were among Bustelli's performers in Dresden; their names appear, for example, in a printed libretto for Piccinni's *La buona figliuola*, first performed in Dresden on 16 Nov 1765 (Haas 1916, 85). On 11 Mar 1766 Bustelli was awarded a new one-year contract by the Dresden court, and his contract was subsequently renewed year by year until 1770, when he signed a six-year contract with the court running from Sep 1770 to Easter 1776, which he then renewed for a further six years. After the end of the Habsburg Landestrauer, Bustelli was also able to resume performances in the Kotzentheater in Prague in 1766; over the next few years, several members of his company (including Bondini and Guardasoni) performed with his company in both cities. However, Bustelli's successive contracts in Dresden entailed increasing commitment of the company's time and personnel to the court's theatrical and musical life, and by 1770, an essentially year-round commitment seems to have been required. (Bustelli's Dresden contracts are discussed in detail in Engländer 1922, 221–31; Engländer transcribes substantial sections of the contracts of 1766 and 1770.) Although the matter has apparently received little attention in the scholarly literature, Bustelli's increasing commitment in Dresden may in effect have forced him to maintain two Italian companies, one in Dresden and one at the Kotzentheater in Prague. It is

perhaps in this context that Bondini began to help with managerial duties in one city while Bustelli was attending to affairs in the other.

The Dresden court signed similar contracts with independent impresarios for the provision of German theater. Heinrich Gottfried Koch first contracted with the court in 1764; his company's first performance in Dresden took place on 25 Apr of that year. Although Koch's contract was renewed on 10 Feb 1765, it was allowed to lapse when it expired on 16 Jun 1765 (Prölß 1878, 218). The court was not terribly interested in German theater at that time, and seems also to have anticipated the need to make its small theater available to Bustelli's Italian company (negotiations with Bustelli appear already to have been in progress at that point). The court did not contract with a German company again until 1774, when it signed an agreement with Theophil Döbbelin, who was also awarded the privilege to perform in Leipzig. When Koch died on 3 Jan 1775, Döbbelin left Dresden to take over Koch's privilege in Berlin, and the Dresden court signed a new contract for German theater with impresario Abel Seyler. Seyler's initial contract in Dresden ran from Michaelmas (29 Sep) 1775 to Michaelmas 1776, and his company was granted the concurrent privilege to perform in Leipzig. Seyler's tenure in Dresden was brief: in the winter of 1776–77, after having been granted an extension in Dresden, he received and accepted an offer from Mannheim. His company's final performance in Dresden under his direction took place on 13 Mar 1777, and its final performance in Leipzig under his direction on 4 May of that year.

At this point, the history of the theatrical interrelationships among the three cities becomes murky, with conflicting accounts and details in the secondary literature. All sources agree, however, that on 11 Jul 1777, Pasquale Bondini was awarded a five-year contract to provide German theater to the Dresden court, with a company comprised in part of actors who had been with Seyler. He also took over Seyler's privilege for theater in Leipzig. It is still something of a mystery (one this commentary will not try to solve) why Bondini—whose German is reported to have been less that perfect and whose experience as a performer had been entirely in opera buffa—was awarded a contract to provide German theater and singspiel to the Dresden court. It is worth pointing out, however, that Bondini seems already to have been managing the German company by the time he signed his contract with the court: his German company's first performance in Leipzig took place on 21 May 1777 (Blümner 1818, 313), only two and a half weeks after Seyler's final performance there, and nearly two months before Bondini signed his contract with Dresden. It may be, then, that Bondini had gained sufficient managerial experience working with Bustelli to be able to step in quickly to run the German company when Seyler departed for Mannheim.

The War of Bavarian Succession began on 27 Jun 1778, and as a money-saving measure the Dresden court suspended its contracts with Bustelli (who had signed a six-year renewal in 1776) and Bondini, although Bondini retained his privilege to perform in Leipzig (Blümner 1818, 198). Following the end of the war on 21 May 1779, Bondini's contract was restored (Prölß 1878, 294), but the Dresden court took the opportunity to negotiate a new contract for a newly formed Italian company under Antonio Bertoldi (for Bertoldi's six-year contract, dated 1 Oct 1780, see Engländer 1922, 227–28).

Because Bondini's German was imperfect, he relied on native-speakers to direct his German company, initially Johann Christian Brandes (1735–1799), and from 1780, Johann Friedrich Reinecke (d. 1787). In 1781, Bondini also began to present Italian opera in Prague, at the theater in the palace of Count Thun. The first performance by Bondini's Italian company, of the opera buffa *Il finto pazzo per amore*, took place on 12 Sep 1781 (Teuber 1883, 356). Bondini's German company did not perform in Dresden during the summer, and because Leipzig had no Italian opera and the offerings in German theater in Prague were weak at that time, Bondini saw an opportunity. He arranged to have his Italian company present a summer season in Leipzig while his German company played in Prague, in between its engagements in Leipzig for the Easter and Michaelmas trade fairs, and for his Italian company to perform in Prague when the German company was in Leipzig and Dresden. His companies began this new schedule in 1782.

That same year, Bondini's contract in Dresden and his privilege for Leipzig were renewed for a six-year term. In 1783 he continued the schedule of the previous year, with his Italian and German companies trading places between Leipzig and Prague during the long "summer" season from Easter to the end of the Michaelmas trade fair in mid October. Thus at the time of the Leipzig premiere of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail,* Bondini was managing two companies: a German one (directed by Reinecke) that gave spoken plays and singspiel in Dresden, Leipzig, and Prague; and an Italian one that gave opera buffa in Leipzig and Prague—but not in Dresden, where Bertoldi held the contract for Italian opera.

## Theater in Leipzig during the Michaelmas trade fair in 1783 (⇧)

Leipzig has held annual trade fairs (Messen) since at least the twelfth century (for general background on these fairs, see de.wikipedia and Hasse 1885); the fairs continue today. Two principal seasonal fairs were established very early on, one taking place in the spring, beginning on the third Sunday after Easter (Jubilate), and one taking place in the autumn, beginning on the Sunday after Michaelmas ("Michaelis" or "Michaeli" in German), which always falls on 29 Sep. (Thus Deutsch's statement that the Michaelmas trade fair in 1783 took place at the "end of September" is not quite right; it is more accurate to say that it took place in the first half of October.) A New Year's fair was added later, but plays no role in our discussion here. The Michaelmas fair normally closed on the second Sunday after its opening; in 1783, this second Sunday fell on 19 Oct. The official opening of the fair, the first Sunday after Michaelmas, fell on 5 Oct that year—but as will become clear from the primary sources cited here, the short theatrical season associated with the fair in 1783 started several days earlier than the fair itself.

No known primary source gives the full schedule of theatrical performances in Leipzig at the time of the Michaelmas trade fair in 1783. Brawe's *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal* (cited here as *RTJ*) covers every performance from 2 Oct up to and including 19 Oct 1783, the final performance of the short Michaelmas season. However, there is good reason to believe that Brawe's listings are incomplete; he seems to have missed the first few performances of the season. The crux of the argument in this commentary will be a comparison of Brawe's dated reviews with the complete (but undated) lists in the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* of works performed during the 1783

Michaelmas season. The comparison will show that these lists, while undated, are chronological by first performance; the lists also show that five titles and at least six performances are unaccounted for in Brawe's reviews. Since Brawe provides a comprehensive account of the works performed from 2 Oct to 19 Oct, and we know that the season ended on that date, these additional performances must have taken place before 2 Oct. There is some evidence to suggest that the Michaelmas theatrical season in Leipzig may indeed have opened on 25 Sep. However, as we shall see, the season almost certainly did not open with *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.

Heinrich Blümner's *Geschichte des Theaters in Leipzig*, published in 1818, gives a brief summary of the principal events for each theatrical year in Leipzig from 1777 (the year that Bondini's first privilege took effect) up to and including 1817, the year before the book's publication. We pick up the thread in Leipzig at the end of 1782.

According to Blümner, Bondini's German company—Blümner calls it the "Privilegirte deutsche Gesellschaft"—performed in Leipzig from 8 Sep to 20 Oct 1782 (evidently their "Michaelmas" season that year, although Blümner does not mention this). The highlight of that season (at least in hindsight) was the Leipzig premiere of Schiller's *Die Räuber* on 20 Sep. At the end of his summary for 1782, Blümner writes "Im Winter kein Schauspiel" (Blümner 1818, 317)—that is, no theater in Leipzig over the winter. His summary for 1783 reads (in full):

> *[318]*
>
> 1783.
>
> Dieselbe [i. e. Bondini's German company]
> Anf. den 22. Apr. Adelheid von Ponthieu;
> Prolog vf. von Jünger, geh. v. M. Rei=
> necke. (Lit. u. Th. Zeit. v. 1783. S. 305)
> Beschl. den 2. Jun. der Schmuck, v. Sprick=
> mann. (ebend. S. 337. 419. 433.)
> Christ ging nach Petersburg; auch gingen
> Spenglers, Hempel u. M. Räder ab. Deb.
> den 28. Apr. von M. Schouwärt als Gräfin
> Rutland; von Schouwärt den 20. Apr. als
> Capacelli in Natur und Liebe im Streit.
> Auch kam M. Koch zurück.
> Personal im Theaterkalender von 1784. S.
> 230. f.
> Die Gesellschaft ging nach Prag.
> Italiänische Oper. Untern. P. B.
> Anf. d. 10. Jun. *Frai due litiganti il terzo gode*, von *Sarti*. Beschl. *Il conte di bell' umore*.
> Privil. deutsche Gesells. Untern. P. B.
>
> *[319]*

Anf. den 25. Sept. der Strich durch die Rech=
nung, und die Verlobung. Beschl. den 19.
Okt. Beverley, oder der englische Spieler.
( Lit. u. Th. Zeit. v. 1783. S. 715. f. 769. f.)
Vergl. Raisonnirendes Theaterjournal von der
Leipziger Michaelismesse 1783. Leipzig 1784.
Italiänische Oper von einigen Virtuosen,
zu ende des Jahres.

This summary bristles with abbreviations, but is less difficult to interpret than it might first appear. Apart from such ordinary abbreviations as "S." for "Seite," Blümner's include: "Anf." = Anfang; "vf" = verfasst; "geh." = gehalten; "M." = Madame; "Beschl." = Beschluß; "Deb." = Debüt; "Untern" = Unternehmer; "P. B." = Pasquale Bondini. The translation is:

*[318]*

1783
[Bondini's German company]
Opened 22 Apr, *Adelheid von Ponthieu*;
Prolog by Jünger, given by Madame Reinecke.
(*Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* 1783, p. 305.)
Closed 2 Jun, *Der Schmuck*, by Sprickmann.
(*ibid*. pp. 337, 419, 433)
Christ went to Petersburg; the Spenglers, Hempel
and Madame Räder also departed. Debuts on
28 Apr by Madame Schouwärt as Countess
Rutland; by [Herr] Schouwärt on 20 Apr as
Capacelli in *Natur und Liebe im Streit*.
Madame Koch also returned.
Personnel in *Theater-Kalender* for 1784,
pp. 230ff.
Italian opera, impresario Pasquale Bondini
Opened 10 Jun. *Fra i due litiganti il terzo
gode*, by Sarti. Closed with *Il conte di bell'
umore*. [by Bernardini]
The Privileged German Company, Impresario Pasquale Bondini

*[319]*

Opened 25 Sep, *Der Strich durch die Rechnung*,
and *Die Verlobung*. Closed 19 Oct, *Beverley,
oder Der englische Spieler*.
(*Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* 1783, pp. 715ff., 769ff.)
Cf. *Raisonnirendes Theaterjournal von der
Leipziger Michaelismesse 1783*. Leipzig 1784.
Italian opera by a group of virtuosi until
the end of the year.

Unusually for the time, Blümner gives detailed citations of his sources. His sources for 1783 are the same ones used in this commentary: Brawe's *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal* (Brawe consistently writes "Jurnal" rather than "Journal"); various issues of the weekly *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* (*LTZ*) in 1783; and the *Theater-Kalender* (Gotha) for 1784, which contains an entry on Bondini's German company listing its personnel (including departures, new arrivals, and debuts) for 1783. Blümner's overview of theater in Leipzig during 1783 can be summarized as follows (filling in contextual information):

> The theater in Leipzig was closed from 21 Oct 1782 until 21 Apr 1783. Bondini's German company played in Leipzig from 22 Apr (the Tuesday after Easter) until 2 Jun. The German company then went to Prague. Bondini's Italian company began its summer season in Leipzig on 10 Jun; Blümner does not give the end date. The German company returned to Leipzig, opening its season there on 25 Sep with a double bill of *Der Strich durch die Rechnung* and *Die Verlobung*. Its season closed on 19 Oct with *Beverley, oder Der Englische Spieler*. A visiting company of Italian virtuosi (not Bondini's company) then performed Italian opera in Leipzig until the end of the year. (Blümner's summary for 1784 clarifies that they remained in Leipzig until the end of Jan.)

Bondini's changes of personnel need not concern us here except for the return of "Madame Koch"—that is, Franziska Romana Koch, who (as we shall see) probably played the role of Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. (Herr Schouwärt's debut on "20 Apr" is an error; his debut with Bondini was actually on 30 Apr 1783; see *LTZ* 1783, 421–22.) The *Theater-Kalender* for 1784 (231) confirms that Bondini's German company began its summer season in Prague on 14 Jun 1783, 12 days after its final performance in Leipzig. The schedule for Bondini's Italian company in Leipzig in the summer of 1783 can be reconstructed from advertisements in the *Leipziger Zeitungen* (Woodfield 2012, Appendix 2, here esp. 229–34). These advertisements show that the company's season did, in fact, begin with *Fra i due litiganti* on 10 Jun, just as Blümner says; the advertisements also show that the Italian company's season in Leipzig closed on 21 Sep, just four days (according to Blümner's date) before the German company began its Michaelmas season there. The titles performed by the Italian company on 19 and 21 Sep, the final two performances of its Leipzig season, are not specified in the final advertisement, but a poster survives for *Il conte di bell'umore* on 21 Sep (Woodfield 2012, Appendix 1, 221). As this opera had been advertised as "new" for its performances on 14 and 16 Sep, it seems plausible that it may have been performed on 19 Sep as well. The "Italian virtuosi" who performed opera in Leipzig after the end of the Michaelmas season were not Bondini's Italian company, but rather a guest troupe.

Blümner writes that Bondini's German company began its Michaelmas season in Leipzig on 25 Sep with a double bill of *Der Strich durch die Rechnung* and *Die Verlobung*—thus not with Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. However, the source Blümner cites, the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, does not give a precise date for the beginning of the company's season (although it does confirm that *Der Strich durch die Rechnung* and *Die Verlobung* were the first two new works performed during that season). If Blümner had a source for the opening date of 25 Sep, he does not name it.

There are three known sources for the program of Bondini's German company during its Michaelmas season in 1783: the *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal*, and two articles in the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* for 1783, in issues 45 (8 Nov 1783, 715–18) and 49 (6 Dec 1783, 769–81).


Raiſonnirendes
Theaterjurnal
von der
Leipziger Michaelmeſſe
1783.
Leipzig,
gedruckt bey Friedr. Gotth. Jacobäer und Sohn,
1784.

The *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal* was published anonymously, but is reliably attributed to Johann Friedrich Ernst von Brawe (for more on Brawe and the attribution, see below). Brawe gives a comprehensive account of performances from 2 Oct up to and including 19 Oct 1783. He devotes 181 pages of his 191-page book to detailed reviews, averaging 10 pages each, including plot synopses for all but the best known works (which Brawe assumed did not need to be summarized for his readers), as well as extensive commentaries on the performances of the actors. His reviews are limited to the spoken plays. Only three singspiels were given during the period he covers: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* on 4 and 8 Oct; *Der Faßbinder*, a German adaptation of the French pasticcio *Le tonnelier*, on 12 Oct, as a "Nachspiel" (afterpiece) to *Der Strich durch die Rechnung*; and *Die eingebildeten Philosophen*, an adaptation of Paisiello's *I filosofi immaginari*, on 15 Oct, as an afterpiece to Gotter's *Mariane*. Brawe skipped all of the singspiel performances, for reasons he explains in the passage transcribed at the top of this page: he had no feeling for music, and the implausibility of opera in general made no sense to him theatrically. For those reasons, he did not attend either performance of *Entführung*, and he left the theater following the plays on the other two evenings. Of 12 Oct he writes:

> *[...]*
> Zum Nachspiel wurde die comische Operette, der Faßbinder gegeben—bekannt genung [*sic*] als Original, und Uebersezung, ein mageres Sujet, ohne alles Interesse—es wäre denn, we=

> gen der Music; davon verstehe ich nichts, wie schon gesagt, urtheile also auch nicht davon—ich drängte mich bey noch offner Gardine zum Ausgang. [*RTJ*, 124]
>
> As an afterpiece the comic operetta *Der Faßbinder* was given—sufficiently well known from its original and translation, a meager subject, lacking all interest—to stay would have been on account of the music; about which, as previously said, I understand nothing, and thus also have no opinion—I pushed my way through a still open curtain to the exit.

Of 15 Oct he simply writes:

> Zum Nachspiel wurden die eingebildeten Philosophen, eine Operette, gegeben, — welche ich nicht abwartete. [*RTJ*, 146]
>
> As an afterpiece, the operette *Die eingebildeten Philosophen* was given — which I did not stay for.

Table 1 gives the repertory of Bondini's German company in Leipzig from 2 to 19 Oct 1783, as recorded in Brawe's *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal*. (Where Brawe's title differs significantly from the usual form, his version is given in double quotes in the Title column, and the more usual form in the *Notes*.)

| Date | Title | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Oct | "Schwazhaftigkeit und Ehrgeiz" | *Ehrsucht und Schwatzhaftigkeit*, by Johann Gottfried Dyck, after Destouches |
| 3 Oct | *Die Nebenbuhler* | Trans. by Johann Andreas Engelbrecht of Sheridan's *The Rivals* |
| 4 Oct | *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* | Bretzner/Mozart |
| 5 Oct | *Liebe macht den Mann* | Trans. by C. F. Huber of Colley Cibber's *Love Makes a Man* |
| 6 Oct | *Die Holländer* | Johann Christian Bock, adapted from Goldoni's *I mercanti* |
| 7 Oct | *Der argwöhnische Liebhaber* | Christoph Friedrich Bretzner |
| 8 Oct | *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* | Bretzner/Mozart |
| 9 Oct | *Johann von Schwaben* | August Gottlieb Meißner |
| 10 Oct | *Der Schmuck* | Anton Mathias Sprickmann |
| 11 Oct | *Der Schwätzer* | Paul Weidmann |

| Date | Title | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 12 Oct | *Der Strich durch die Rechnung*<br>*Der Faßbinder* (Nachspiel) | Johann Friedrich Jünger<br>Trans. of the pasticcio *Le Tonnelier* |
| 13 Oct | *Otto von Wittelsbach* | Joseph Marius Babo |
| 14 Oct | *Die eifersüchtige Ehefrau* | Johann Joachim Christoph Bode after George Coleman the Elder, *The Jealous Wife* |
| 15 Oct | *Mariane*<br>*Die eingebildeten Philosophen* | Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter<br>Adaptation by Johann Gottlieb Stephanie d. J. of Paisiello's *I filosofi immaginari* |
| 16 Oct | *Der Graf von Olsbach* | Johann Christian Brandes |
| 17 Oct | *Der deutschen Hausvaters* | Otto Heinrich Freiherr von Gemmingen |
| 18 Oct | *Der Unterschied bey Dienstbewerbungen* | Johann Gottlieb Stephanie d. J. |
| 19 Oct | "Der englische Spieler" | *Beverley, oder Der Englische Spieler*, after *Béverlie* by Bernard-Joseph Saurin |

Table 1. Performances by Pasquale Bondini's German company in Leipzig, 2–19 Oct 1783, as reviewed in Johann Friedrich Ernst von Brawe, *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal* (Leipzig, 1784)

It is striking that Bondini's company performed every evening over the 18-day span, with no days off; he and Reinecke were undoubtedly trying to reap as much box-office as possible from the potentially large audiences during the fair season. The only work repeated over that span was *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*.

Two articles in the *Litteratur- und Theaterzeitung* deal with the Bondini company's Michaelmas season in Leipzig in 1783; the two are by different authors, as an editorial note on the first page of the second article is at pains to point out (*LTZ* 1783, 769). Although the second article is 13 pages long, the author manages to cover only four performances: *Der Strich durch die Rechnung* on 12 Oct (the author doesn't mention the afterpiece, *Der Faßbinder*); *Otto von Wittelsbach* on 13 Oct; *Die eifersüchtige Ehefrau* on 14 Oct; and *Mariane*, with its afterpiece *Die eingebildeten Philosophen*, on 15 Oct. The restricted scope of this second article does not help us reconstruct the company's program before 2 Oct, but it does at least confirm Brawe's listings for those four evenings. The short paragraph on *Die eingebildeten Philosophen* is also the only known review of any of the three singspiel performances by the Bondini company during the Michaelmas season of 1783; for that reason, we will return to this paragraph below when considering the possible cast of *Entführung*.

Although only four pages long, the earlier article in the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* (*LTZ* 1783, 715) gives the titles of all the works performed by Bondini's German company in Leipzig during its Michaelmas season in 1783 (only *Der Faßbinder*, which Brawe names as the afterpiece on 12 Oct, is missing). The works are divided into two categories: "Neue Stücke" ("new" works, meaning works that the company had not previously performed in Leipzig), and

"Wiederholungen" ("repetitions," meaning works that the company had already performed in Leipzig at some point). Table 2 gives all of the titles in each category in the order in which they are mentioned in the article, and the dates of the performances that Brawe reviews (or, in the case of *Entführung*, skips).

| **"Neue Stücke" (LTZ)** | **Dates (RTJ)** | **Notes** |
|---|---|---|
| *Der Strich durch die Rechnung* | 12 Oct | The performance on 12 Oct was probably a repeat |
| *Die Verlobung* | | |
| *Gaston und Bayard* | | |
| *Der Ostindier* | | |
| *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* | 4 Oct,<br>8 Oct | |
| *Liebe macht den Mann* | 5 Oct | |
| *Der Unterschied bey Dienstbewerbungen* | 18 Oct | |
| **"Wiederholungen" (LTZ)** | | |
| *Der Schwätzer* | 11 Oct | The performance on 11 Oct was probably a repeat |
| *Der beste Mann* | | |
| *Oda* | | |
| *Ehrsucht und Schwatzhaftigkeit* | 2 Oct | |
| *Die Nebenbühler* | 3 Oct | |
| *Die Holländer* | 6 Oct | |
| *Der argwöhnische Liebhaber* | 7 Oct | |
| *Johann von Schwaben* | 9 Oct | |
| *Der Schmuck* | 10 Oct | |
| *Otto von Wittelsbach* | 13 Oct | |
| *Die eifersüchtige Ehefrau* | 14 Oct | |
| *Mariane* | 15 Oct | |
| *Die eingebildeten Philosophen* | 15 Oct | Nachspiel |
| *Graf von Olsbach* | 16 Oct | |
| *Der deutsche Hausvater* | 17 Oct | |

| "Neue Stücke" (LTZ) | Dates (RTJ) | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| *Beverley* | 19 Oct | |

Table 2. New and "repeated" works performed by Bondini's German theater company in Leipzig, 25 Sep–19 Oct 1783. *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* (1783, 715–18), showing the dates of performances attended by Johann Friedrich Ernst von Brawe

There are 7 "new" works, and 16 works that the company had already performed in Leipzig prior to its Michaelmas engagement, for a total of 23 titles. The lists in the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* exactly follows the chronological sequence given by Brawe in all but two cases: *Der Schwätzer*, which Brawe attended on 11 Oct, but is listed first among the "Wiederholungen"; and *Der Strich durch die Rechnung*, which he attended on 12 Oct, but is listed first among the "Neue Stücke." The simplest explanation for these apparent discrepancies in the otherwise consistent chronological agreement between Brawe and the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* is that the performances on 11 and 12 Oct were second performances of plays that had already been given before 2 Oct, the first performance that Brawe attended. On that simple assumption, it becomes clear that both lists are consistently chronological by first performance.

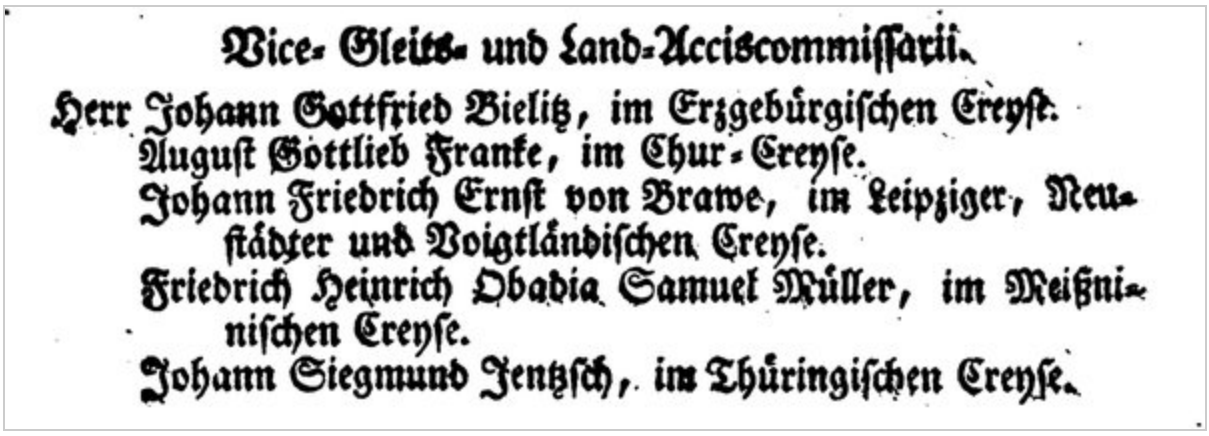
The *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* names five titles that Brawe does not mention: *Die Verlobung*, a one-act comedy by Wilhelm Heinrich Brömel; *Gaston und Bayard*, a translation of Belloy's *Gaston et Baiard*; *Der Ostindier* (unidentified; but see the Notes for two possible candidates); *Der beste Mann*, apparently a translation by Johann Christian Bock of an English original, not at all well received in Leipzig, according to the journal's correspondent; and *Oda, die Frau von zween Männern*, a tragedy by Joseph Marius Babo. Blümner states that Bondini's Michaelmas season in 1783 opened on 25 Sep with a double-bill of *Der Strich durch die Rechnung* and *Die Verlobung*. He cites the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* as his source for this claim, and the earlier of the two articles is the only one to mention *Die Verlobung*. However, that article does not specify the dates of the performances of either work, nor does it explicitly say that they were performed together. The pairing is certainly plausible: *Die Verlobung* is a single act, and *Der Strich durch die Rechnung*, although four acts, is relatively short, so *Die Verlobung* could easily have been added as an afterpiece. As we have seen, Brawe states that the performance of *Der Strich durch die Rechnung* on 12 Oct (its second performance, by our hypothesis) was also paired with an afterpiece, albeit a different one, *Der Faßbinder*.

Brawe and the two articles in the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* all agree that the performance on 19 Oct was the final one of the Michaelmas season in 1783. The date also corresponds to the traditional end of the Michaelmas trade fair, on the third Sunday following St. Michael's Day (Michaelis). Thus if the five titles that Brawe does not mention were indeed performed—and there is no reason to think that the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* is incorrect in saying that they were—then they must have been performed before 2 Oct, the date of Brawe's first review. As we have seen, it makes sense to assume that *Der Strich durch die Rechnung* and *Der Schwätzer* had already been performed once each before Brawe arrived in Leipzig. If Blümner is correct that the company opened its season on 25 Sep with *Der Strich durch die Rechnung* coupled with *Die*

*Verlobung* as an afterpiece, then there would have been six other possible evenings (26 Sep to 1 Oct) for performances of the other five plays: *Gaston und Broyard*, *Der Ostindier*, *Der Schwätzer*, *Der beste Mann*, and *Oda*. If we assume that each of those plays was given just once during those six days, we are left with one evening unaccounted for, although we do not know which evening was the "open" one. While *Entführung* could conceivably have been performed on that open evening, the known evidence and context speak against the possibility. For one thing, the performance of *Entführung* on 4 Oct fits exactly into the chronological list of first performances of "new" works in the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, just before *Liebe macht den Mann*, which was first performed on 5 Oct. If *Entführung* had been performed before 4 Oct, it would probably have come earlier in the list. No single work is known to have been performed more than twice by the Bondini company during the Michaelmas season in 1783; if the hypothesis suggested here is correct, *Entführung* is one of only three works performed twice, along with *Der Strich durch die Rechnung* and *Der Schwätzer*. The two performances of Entführung are securely documented, and it seems unlikely there was a third. We also cannot rule out the possibility that some other work on the schedule might have been repeated on the (hypothetical) open evening; if an evening is otherwise unaccounted for, there is no reason to jump to the conclusion that *Entführung* must have been performed on it. Furthermore, if Bondini's company had any day off at all over the intense 25-day stretch from 25 Sep to 19 Oct, it would have made sense for that day to come before the official opening of the Michaelmas fair on 5 Oct, rather than during the fair itself, when the potential for large audiences would have been at its highest. So it is quite plausible that our "open" evening in fact remained open, and that the company took the opportunity for a short breather. In any case, we know from Brawe's reviews that the company took no break from 2 Oct to 19 Oct. All things considered, then, it seems very unlikely that *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* was performed before 4 Oct.

In summary, it seems certain that *Entführung* was not performed in Leipzig on 25 Sep 1783, the date traditionally given for the premiere in that city, and that its performance on 4 Oct was almost certainly the local premiere. Whether it was also the Bondini company's first performance of the opera remains an open question; one wonders whether the company might have performed *Entführung* in Prague in the summer of 1783 before coming to Leipzig (on Woodfield's assumption that it certainly did so, see the Notes below).

Johann Friedrich Ernst von Brawe (1746–1806) was a bureaucrat and minor writer (see the helpful list of "Brawe Ressourcen" here). According to Weiz (1780, 29), Brawe was born in Pausche bey Osterfeld in Thuringia in 1746. He is said to have been risen from the rank of second lieutenant ("Sous-Lieutenant") to first lieutenant and then captain ("Hauptmann") in the Saxon infantry. From 1777 he held the governmental position of "Vice- Gleits- und Landacciscommissarius im Thüringischen Creyse." According to the 5th edition of *Das gelehrte Teutschland* (Hamberger & Meusel 1796, i:418–19), from 1785 Brawe held a similar position in the Leipzig regional government, "Vice- Geleits- und Landacciskommissar im Leipziger, Neustäditschen und Voigtländischen Kreise zu Leipzig." He is listed in that position in the *Churfürstlicher Sächsischer Hof= und Staats=Calender auf das Jahr 1788* (138).


Vice- Gleits- und Land-Acciscommiſſarii.
Herr Johann Gottfried Bielitz, im Erzgebürgiſchen Creyſe.
Auguſt Gottlieb Franke, im Chur-Creyſe.
Johann Friedrich Ernſt von Brawe, im Leipziger, Neuſtädter und Voigtländiſchen Creyſe.
Friedrich Heinrich Obadia Samuel Müller, im Meißniniſchen Creyſe.
Johann Siegmund Jentzſch, im Thüringiſchen Creyſe.

Entry for Johann Friedrich Ernst von Brawe in the *Churfürstlicher Sächsischer Hof= und Staats=Calender auf das Jahr 1788* (138)

The 5th edition of *Das gelehrte Teutschland* (Hamberger & Meusel 1796) attributes the *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal* to Brawe; this short biography of Brawe was published while he was still alive, and there is no reason to think the attribution is incorrect. His roster of known or attributed writings is slender: he is said to have written one opera libretto, *Eleonore* (1773), of which no copy is known to survive—an odd attribution for a man who avowed a complete lack of understanding of music and opera. He is also said to have edited at least three journals: the *Wochenblatt für Erwachsene* (Jan 1772 to Mar 1775), the *Raisonirendes Journal vom deutschen Theater zu Hamburg* (26 issues, Oct to Dec 1800 and Jan to Mar 1801), and the *Hamburgisches Wochenblatt für die Jugend und ihre Erzieher* (1803, no exemplar known to survive).

If read apart from its wider context, Brawe's passage on *Entführung* can easily be misunderstood (and has been) as making a critical claim of some sort about the opera, its relationship to the performances of the Bondini company, or to theater in general. Seen in the context of Brawe's book as a whole, however, there is no reason to read a critical subtext into his repeated claim that he was utterly unmusical. His complaint about the implausibility of operatic action (the example is Romeo singing an aria over Juliet's body before taking poison) has been echoed by opera skeptics ever since.

## The venue and cast (⇧)

The Bondini company's performances in Leipzig took place in the Theater am Ranstädter Thor (Brawe writes "Rannstedter"). The theater was built in 1766 and opened on 6 Oct of that year; Blümner (1818, 131ff) quotes extended descriptions of the original appearance of the theater and its decoration; in 1817 the theater had been remodeled in a classical style, and no longer looked as it had when it was first built. (The theater can be seen in its original form in a colored engraving by Carl Benjamin Schwarz from 1785, reproduced in Richter 1991, 64.) In its original form, the largest audience ever recorded for the theater was 1186 (Blümner 1818, 136, note). The theater building itself persisted throughout the nineteenth century, coming to be called the "Altes Theater" after the opening of the so-called "Neues Theater" in 1868. The Altes Theater was destroyed by British bombing in Dec 1943.

Because there is no known detailed review of the performances of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Leipzig in 1783, and no poster is known to survive, any reconstruction of the cast is necessarily speculative—although as we shall see, the principal cast in 1783 was probably identical to that listed on the poster for a performance in Leipzig the following year, on 2 Oct 1784 (the poster is reproduced in Richter 1991, 74). The singspiel repertory of Bondini's German company was very small in the years 1782 and 1783 (the company performed just one singspiel in Dresden in each of those years; see Prölß 1878, 304), and because the pool of competent singing actors in the company was severely limited at the time, the singing cast of *Entführung* in 1783 can be reconstructed with some confidence.

Only five members of Bondini's German company in 1783 are known ever to have taken lead singing roles. The "erste Sängerin" of the company at the time of the Leipzig performance of *Entführung* was Franziska Romana Koch (1748–1796), daughter of the composer Antonín Jiránek. She was born in Dresden and made her stage debut there in 1765 as a dancer in the company of Heinrich Gottfried Koch. In 1766 she married Koch's ballet master Friedrich Karl Koch. In the early 1770s she was an actress and singer in the company of Abel Seyler, performing in Weimar and Gotha. The title role in Wieland and Schweitzer's opera *Alceste* (1773; wikipedia) was written for her, as was the title role in the singspiel *Romeo und Julie* (1775) by Gotter and Georg Benda (on *Alceste* and *Romeo und Julie*, see Bauman 1985, 102–111 and 124–29 respectively). She came with Seyler to Dresden in 1775, and after Seyler departed in 1777, she remained with the German company under Bondini.




Franziska Roman Koch
Frontispiece, *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* 1781:iii (ÖNB)

Wieland had been moved to write a lengthy poem to Koch on the occasion of her performance as Alceste on 16 Feb 1774 (the poem is printed in *Theater-Kalender* 1777, 10–12), and Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter wrote a quatrain in her honor:

> An Mad. Koch.
> Ein sanftes Lied aus Deinem Munde,
> Versüßen würd es mir die letzte bittre Stunde,
> Allein ein Kuß, im Augenblick,
> Brächt' er ins Leben mich zurück.
> [quoted in Teuber 1885, 84]

> To Madame Koch
> A gentle song from you lips,
> Would sweeten my last bitter hours,
> But a kiss, that would restore me
> To life in an instant.

In 1780, a correspondent to the *Theater-Journal für Deutschland* reported on Koch's reception as Zemire in a performance of *Zemire und Azor* in Dresden:

> *[...]* Mad. Koch hatte die Ehre vom gan=
> zen Publiko mit Händeklatschen empfangen zu werden. —
> Diese sanfte Frau, die den größten Theil ihrer Tage mit
> Beschäftigung ihrer Kunst hinbringt, hatte schon den vorigen
> Winter, von einem in der Singkunst erfahrnen Mann,
> Namens Cornelius, so viel profitirt, daß uns die Verbes=
> serung ihres Vortrags, die Geläufigkeit in den Passagen und
> ihre ganze Art zu singen sehr merklich auffiel. Da sie von
> Nature eine volle, helle und rührende Stimme hat, auch
> schon ohne Kunst sich durch ihren Gesang in den Operetten
> Beyfall erwarb, so kann man sich leicht vorstellen, wieviel
> sie durchs Studium und gründliche Anweisung gewonnen hat,
> und zu welchem Grade der Vollkommenheit sie durch eigenem
> Fleiß in kurzem gelangen muß — —
> [*Theater-Journal für Deutschland*, no. 15 (1780), 118]

> *[...]* Madame Koch had the honor of being
> received with applause by the entire audience. —
> This gentle woman, who spends the greatest part of her days
> occupied with her art, has already profited so much from her
> work this past winter with a man experienced in the art of singing
> named Cornelius, that we were greatly struck by the improvement
> in her delivery, the fluency of her passage work, and her
> entire manner of singing. Because she has, by nature, a full,
> bright and moving voice, and had already received acclaim for
> her unschooled singing in operetta, one can easily imagine how
> much she has gained through study and fundamental instruction,

> and what degree of perfection she must achieve through
> her own application in a short time.

The *Gallerie von Teutschen Schauspielern und Schauspielerinnen* published a few years later in 1783 is more guarded in its evaluation of her merits:

> Sie ist zu Dresden geboren und debütirte
> 1765. Sie spielt die ersten Rollen in der
> Oper, wo sie durch einen für eine ungelernte
> Sängerin recht guten Gesang mehr, als durch
> Aktion gefält. Sie hat die vortheilhafteste
> Bildung, einen vortreflichen Wuchs, eine hohe,
> heltönende Stimme und eine einnemende Mi=
> ne. Schade ist es, daß es in Operetten so
> wenig Rollen giebt, die ihrer Grösse und Fi=
> gur angemessen sind.
> [*Gallerie* 1783, 131]

> She was born in Dresden and debuted
> in 1765. She plays first roles in opera,
> where, for an untrained singer, she pleases
> more with her singing than her acting. She has
> the most advantageous appearance, a splendid
> build, a high, brightly-toned voice, and an
> engaging mien. It is too bad there are
> so few roles in opera that are suitable to her
> size and figure.

In 1782, perhaps because of the dearth of singspiels in the company's repertory at that time, Koch left Bondini to join the company of Karl Wahr in Prague (*LTZ* 1782, 12; *Theater-Kalender* 1783, 274). She remained in Prague only briefly, however, rejoining Bondini in the spring of 1783: Wahr's enterprise in Prague was on the verge of foundering, and Therese Bellomo, Koch's replacement in Bondini's company in 1782, had not been a success, leaving Bondini after only a few months. So Bondini and Reinecke again needed a competent lead soprano if they wished to present singspiel at all. According to the *Theater-Kalender* of 1784 (231), Madame Koch's first appearance after rejoining the company was in the role of Clarisse in *Die eingebildeten Philosophen*, in its Leipzig premiere on 10 May 1783 (see also *LTZ* 1783, 425–26).

The comic actor and bass Friedrich Günther and his wife Sophie (née Huber) had both been with Bondini's German company in 1778 (they are listed among Bondini's company in the *Theater-Kalender* for 1779 as "Dem. Huber" and "Günther"), but they left to take positions at the court theater in Vienna at the beginning of the season 1780–81, Friedrich in the singspiel and Sophie in the spoken theater (on the Günthers in Vienna, see Michtner 1970, 82; for brief biographies, see *NDB*). When the singspiel company in Vienna was disbanded at the end of the season 1782–83, the Günthers returned to Bondini, making their joint return debuts in Leipzig on 24 Apr 1783 as

Just and Franciska in Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm* (*LTZ* 1783, 343f). Although Sophie Günther had not been engaged as a singer in Vienna, her abilities as a singing actor are praised (if somewhat equivocally) in the *Gallerie*:

> Ihr Gesang in der Operette ist blos Na=
> tur, aber die Lebhaftigkeit der Handlung, mit
> der sie ihn unterstüzt, thut besonders im Komi=
> schen eine ganz ausserordentliche Wirkung, um
> so mehr, je seltner Aktion und Gesang beisammen
> gefunden werden. [*Gallerie* 1783, 93]

> Her singing in operetta is mere natural ability,
> but the liveliness of gesture with which
> she supports it makes an entirely extraordinary,
> effect, especially in the comic, all the more so
> where acting and singing are so seldom found
> together.

In the *Theater-Kalender* for 1785 (200) her description reads "erste Soubretten und launische Rollen: singt" ("first soubrettes and capricious roles; sings"). All three—the Günthers and Madame Koch—sang in the performance of *Die eingebildeten Philosophen* by Bondini's German company in Leipzig on 15 Oct 1783. That performance elicited a brief (rather dismissive) review from a correspondent to the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*:

> Hierauf folgten die eingebildeten Philosophen, ein
> Singspiel aus dem Italienischen von Stephanie dem
> Jüngern. Der Innhalt dieser Oper ist das gewöhn=
> liche Italienische Persiflage, das kein geschmackvoller
> Gaumen genießen kann. Hingegen war die Musik vor=
> treflich. Hr. Günther als Petronio, Mad. Koch als
> Clarisse, Mad. Günther als Cassandra, und Hr. Zu=
> cker als Julien thaten ihren Rollen Genüge.—Und
> hier will ich meine Bemerkungen schließen. *[...]*
> [*LTZ* 1783, 779]

> [Gotter's Mariane] was followed by *Die eingebildeten*
> *Philosophen*, a singspiel from the Italian by Stephanie
> the Younger. The content of this opera is the usual
> Italian persiflage, that no tasteful palate can enjoy.
> On the other hand the music was excellent. Herr
> Günther as Petronio, Madame Koch as Clarisse,
> Madame Günter as Cassandra, and Herr Zucker
> as Julien did their roles justice.—And here I will
> close my remarks. *[...]*

Herr Zucker was a minor player in Bondini's German company, described in the *Theater-Kalender* of 1784 (231) as: "Hr. Zucker, chargirte Rollen, singt auch" ("Herr Zucker, small character roles, also sings"); the following year, the *Theater-Kalender* is more specific about his roles and voice: "Hr. Zucker, komische Rollen im Schauspiel, zweyte Baßstimme im Singspiel" ("Herr Zucker, comic roles in plays, second bass in singspiel"; *Theater-Kalender* 1785, 200).

Madame Koch almost certainly sang the role of Konstanze in the performances of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail in Leipzig* in Oct 1783, and Friedrich Günther almost certainly sang Osmin. Both are listed in these roles on the poster for the performance of *Entführung* in Leipzig on 2 Oct 1784 (Richter 1991, 74). Günther would have had an excellent model for Osmin, having been in Vienna to witness its creation by Ludwig Fischer. The soubrette Sophie Günther, with her "mischievous acting," seems most likely to have taken the role of Blonde in Leipzig in 1783, and that is indeed the role she took in the performance the following year, on 2 Oct 1784. Friedrich Franz Hurka (1762–1805), who later became a court singer in Dresden (1789) and a composer of some note, was "erster Tenorist" (first tenor) in Bondini's German company in 1783 (see Theater-Kalender 1784, 231). He sang the role of Belmonte in the performance of 2 Oct 1784, and he would have been the company's only option for the role in 1783. Although Herr Zucker, who sang in *Die eingebildeten Philosphen* in Leipzig in 1783, seems (judging by the requirements of his role in that opera) to have been a baritone, the company had so few singers at that time that by process of elimination he appears to be the only possibility for the role of Pedrillo in 1783, and he is indeed listed in that role on the poster from the following year. A Herr Schirmer played the role of Bassa Selim in the Leipzig performance of 2 Oct 1784; we know that he was a member of Bondini's Germany company in 1783 (see Theater-Kalender 1784, 231), so he quite possibly played the role in the Leipzig premiere as well.

The German company's music director since 1777 had been Friedrich Christoph Gestewitz (1753–1805), but he is said to have left the company in 1783 to become music director of Bondini's Italian company, before returning to the German company in 1784. However, the exact dates of his departure and return are uncertain, and Gestewitz may well still have been on hand to prepare and direct *Entführung* in Leipzig in 1783.

Bondini's German company gave the Dresden premiere of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* on 12 Jan 1785, probably with largely the same cast. A brief review of that performance in the *Magazin der Sächsischen Geschichte* singles out Hurka and the Günthers for praise:

> *[...]* Am 12ten [Jan] eine Ope=
> rette, von Bretzner, die Entführung aus dem
> Serail, componirt von Mozart, gefiel, ob sie
> gleich etwas schwer gesetzt war, allgemein, und
> ward durch Günthers Carricatur (war Osmin)
> und Mad. Günthers muthwilliges Spiel sehr
> unterhaltend. Hr. Hurka als Belmont, trug
> gut, mit Empfindung und oft brillant vor, wor=
> über man seine etwas ungeübte Aktion gern ver=

gaß. *[...]*
[*Magazin der Sächsischen Geschichte* 1785, 13. Stück, 58; *Dokumente*, 207]

*[...]* On 12 [Jan] an operetta by Bretzner, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, composed by Mozart, generally pleased—although it was somewhat heavily set—and was made very entertaining by Günther's caricature (he was Osmin) and Madame Günther's mischievous acting. Herr Hurka as Belmonte, performed well, with feeling and often brilliance, for which one gladly forgets his somewhat unpracticed action.

Although Madame Koch had played Ophelia in *Hamlet* just two days before this performance, it seems likely that she sang the role of Konstanze in this performance, although she is not mentioned.

We do not know how the company acquired the score of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, but the Günthers could have been the conduit: they would have had access to it in Vienna, and they had surely seen the opera and would have been in a position to recommend it to Reinecke and Bondini. They could also have been the conduit for the score of *Die eingebildeten Philosophen*, which likewise had its premiere in Vienna during their tenure there. Friedrich Günther, who sang the role of Petronio in the Bondini company's production of *Die eingebildeten Philosophen* in Leipzig, had sung the role in the Viennese production (see Michtner 1970, 101).

## Reception (⇧)

Apart from Brawe's statements referring to an opera he did not see, the only known published comment on *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Leipzig in 1783 (too brief to be called a "review") appeared in the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, in the list of "new works" performed by Bondini's German company during its Michaelmas season that year:

Die Entführung aus dem Serail, eine komische Oper in drey Akten von Herrn Bretzner, mit der Musik des Herrn Mozart, die, nach meinem Gefühl, zu künstlich ist. —
[*LTZ* 1783, 717; *Dokumente*, 193]

*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, a comic opera in three acts by Herr Bretzner, with music by Herr Mozart, which, in my opinion, is too contrived.—

Brawe's comments in the *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal* have no relevance to the reception of the opera in Leipzig because he did not see it, and his avowed lack of understanding of music and opera in general is not relevant to the reception of Mozart's opera in particular. (On attempts by recent writers to suggest that Brawe's comments do have a bearing on the reception of Mozart's opera, see the Notes below.)

As Bauman points out (Bauman 1987, 104), Christoph Friedrich Bretzner—the author of the libretto that, in adapted form, was used for Mozart's opera—may well have seen the opera for the first time at the performances in Leipzig in 1783. A 1782 "protest" attributed to Bretzner (see *Dokumente*, 187) regarding the unauthorized use of his libretto is now generally believed to be inauthentic. However, on 21 Jun 1783 the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* (1783, 398–400) published Bretzner's signed critique of the Viennese libretto, in which he notes that the texts of many of the sung numbers had been added by the adaptor and were not in his original version. He also includes an extended extract of the revised text of the quartet (the finale to act II), followed simply by the sarcastic comment: "Das heiß ich verbessern!" ("That's what I call improvement!"). His point, although he does not say so explicitly, is that he did not want to be held responsible for bad verse that he did not write.

Bretzner was born in Leipzig and spent his entire life there; he seems to have traveled little. It is unlikely that he had seen Mozart's opera before the publication of his critique: by the date of the critique's publication, only three performances of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* are known to have taken place outside of Vienna, two in Strasbourg (see the entry for 24 Jan 1783) and one in Warsaw (see the entry for 8 May 1783). Bretzner is quite unlikely to have attended these. (The opera is also known to have been performed in Prague at some point between Easter and Aug 1783, but the exact date remains unknown; see the Notes for the entry 24 Jan 1783.) So unless he made an otherwise unknown trip to Vienna and saw the opera there, he probably had not seen it by the time his critique was published. As an amateur but productive writer, Bretzner is likely to have taken an active interest in Leipzig's theatrical life, and as we have seen, a play of his, *Der argwöhnische Liebhaber*, was performed by Bondini's German company on 7 Oct 1783, the day before the second performance of *Entführung* (see Table 1 above). One supposes that he would have attended performances of his own work (even adapted versions, such as that in *Entführung*) if he was in town. Whatever Bretzner's reaction to Mozart's opera may have been after having seen and heard it, he is not known to have published any further critiques. Bretzner himself later adapted the libretto of *Così fan tutte*, suggesting that he did not hold a grudge against Mozart. (For an alleged reference to Mozart's *Figaro* in Bretzner's novel *Das Leben eines Lüderlichen*, see this entry on our site, where we show that the reference is actually to Beaumarchais's play.)

Although there is insufficient evidence to form a clear picture of the reception of *Entführung* in Leipzig in 1783, it may be indicative that Mozart's opera was one of only three works that Bondini's German company repeated during its short Michaelmas season that year, and it was the

only singspiel to be repeated. In a letter to his father dated 6 Dec 1783, Mozart writes that he had been told that the opera was a success in Prague and Leipzig:

> Meine teutsche opera Entführung aus dem Serail — ist in Prag und in Leipzig — sehr gut — und mit allem beyfall gegeben worden. — beydes weis ich von leuten die sie aldort gesehen haben.
> [*Briefe*, iii:295]

> My German opera, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* has been given—very well, and with all acclaim—in Prague and in Leipzig. — I know both from people who have seen it those places.

Bondini's German company also performed the opera during its Michaelmas season in Leipzig the following year, on 2 Oct 1784 (*LTZ* 1784:iv, 102; Woodfield 2012, 29), and it gave what seems to have been the Dresden premiere of the opera a few months later, on 12 Jan 1785, repeating it on 26 Jan.

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*Notes* ( ⇧ )

The Google Books scan of *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal* is based on an exemplar in the Austrian National Library (ÖNB, Alt Mag 4037-A). A second exemplar (not available digitally) is held by the Österreichisches Theatermuseum, 621255-A. A second digitized version, based on an exemplar in the collections of the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, is available here; that version is the basis for a complete transcription on de.wikisource. The *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal* is not mentioned in the first edition of Jahn's Mozart biography, but it is cited in a footnote in the second edition (i:653, note 62), as a reference for Jahn's statement that *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* was first given in Leipzig in 1783; he does not give a precise date for the performance, nor does he quote from the book. Blümner (1818) uses the *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal* as a source, but he does not mention the performances of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Richter (1991, 70) gives 4 Oct 1783 as the date of the premiere of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Leipzig, but cites no source.

Brawe's first entry on *Entführung* is transcribed in part in Woodfield (2012, 27, note 12; he does not identify Brawe as the author). Woodfield includes the date, 4 Oct, in his transcription, but oddly he does not refer to it in his main text, where he introduces his discussion of the passage as follows:

> The opera was thus given first in Prague during the summer of 1785 [*sic*] and then in Leipzig between 25 September and 19 October. An extraordinary review (effectively a non-review) of one of the early Leipzig performances was published in 1783. *[...]*

As we have seen, the range 25 Sep to 19 Oct is (probably) the complete span of the short Michaelmas theater season in Leipzig in 1783, and the span tells us nothing about the specific dates when Mozart's opera was performed. Woodfield's passive construction followed by a range of dates can be read to imply that *Entführung* was performed more than once in that span (and it was), but he does not mention the second performance on 8 Oct documented in the *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal*.

Woodfield's transcription is incomplete: he omits the text from "Auf der Bühne erwarte ich…" to "…zu bemitleiden" (including Brawe's example of Romeo and Juliet), and from "Um deswillen blieb ich auch heute zu Hause…" to the end. There are a handful of minor errors in Woodfield's transcription, mostly in punctuation; he also gives "Singestück" instead of Brawe's "Singestük" (Brawe was quite consistent in his idiosyncracies of spelling; one of these was omitting the 'c' in words more usually spelled with 'ck').

Woodfield argues that the production of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* by Bondini's German company in 1783 was a strategic choice on Bondini's part: that it was an implicit answer to criticisms in the theatrical press, predominantly the criticisms of an anonymous correspondent to the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*. In Woodfield's reading, the critic felt that if the company insisted on including musical theater in its repertory (with the implication that perhaps it shouldn't) then it should perform native German works, rather than translations of Italian opera buffa and French opéra comique (Woodfield, 26, surely overstates in saying that the critic was "waging a nationalistic campaign against such translations").

There are a number of problems with this overarching narrative, not all of which can be addressed here. As we have seen, Bondini's German company performed very little musical theater in 1782 and 1783, and it seems to have had at its disposal only five more or less competent solo singers at that time, severely limiting its choice of repertory. Woodfield consistently attributes choices regarding the German company's repertory, scheduling, and casting to Bondini—but these choices were almost certainly made by Reinecke, not Bondini. We do not even know if Bondini typically traveled with the German company to its engagements in Leipzig and Prague. After Bondini took up management of an Italian company based in Prague in 1781, it seems more likely that he would have traveled with that company than with the German one; or perhaps he remained in Dresden and took care of overall managerial and administrative duties from a distance. It is more likely Reinicke who chose to add *Entführung* to the German company's repertory, and that he did so because the opera had been successful in Vienna, the roles in the opera could be made to fit the forces he had, and he was able to obtain a copy of the score, perhaps from the Günthers, on their return to the company from Vienna. There is no evidence to suggest that Reinicke made his programming choices based on the criticisms of a correspondent to the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*; given the number of practical factors he had to juggle, it is rather unlikely.

In this context, Woodfield's reading of Brawe's non-attendance at the performances of the opera on 4 and 8 Oct 1783—which he portrays as an implicit criticism of the company's programming, calling it "a thinly veiled attack on Bondini's scheduling policy" (Woodfield 2012, 28)—is unpersuasive. Woodfield omits from his transcription Brawe's example of Romeo implausibly singing a mellifluous aria over (what he supposes is) Juliet's lifeless body. In the context of the time, Brawe can only be referring to Gotter and Benda's *Romeo und Julie* (1776), a key work in the history of native German-language singspiel of the time, and one closely connected with Madame Koch, who had created the title role.

There is no reason to think that Brawe's professed dislike of opera and his avowed lack of feeling for music are anything other than straightforward expressions of his personal taste. Brawe did not, so far as we know, participate in any wider debates on German opera in the theatrical press of the time; in fact, the *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal* seems to be his only known publication between 1775 and 1800. Brawe appears not to have been living in Leipzig in 1783, so he was not a local. Given that he apparently missed the beginning of the Michaelmas theatrical season that year (the performances from 25 Sep to 1 Oct), it

may be that he came to Leipzig specifically for the trade fair (which did not officially open until 5 Oct), and that he decided to entertain himself in the evenings by attending the theater and writing up detailed reviews. In other words, he did not come to Leipzig to attend the theater, but rather to attend the fair, visiting the theater as recreation.

On page 27, Woodfield states without citing a source that Bondini's German company first performed *Entführung* "in Prague during the summer of 1785" (*sic*, Woodfield means 1783). At the close of the chapter four pages later he takes this performance as an established fact: "Niemetschek was therefore right to stress Bondini's successful Prague production of *Die Entführung* as a truly seminal point in the composer's career." To our knowledge, the only references to a performance of *Entführung* in Prague in 1783 are found in Cramer's *Magazin der Musik* (Erster Jahrgang, Zweyte Hälfte, 999–1000) and the *Theater-Kalender* for 1784 (253); in both, the opera is listed among the operas given after Easter 1783 in the Nostitz theater by the company of Karl Wahr, not by Bondini's company (for transcriptions and additional commentary, see the Notes to the entry for 24 Jan 1783).

On pages 25 and 26, Woodfield discusses the singers Friedrich Franz Hurka, and Friedrich and Sophie Günther. The Günthers rejoined Bondini's German troupe in 1783 after a period with the Nationaltheater in Vienna (Woodfield does not mention that they had previously been with Bondini), and Hurka joined Bondini as first tenor around the same time. Woodfield begins his discussion of these three singers in a misleading way, saying that Bondini was "recruiting new singers in Vienna, three of whom played a part in his production of *Die Entführung*" (25). The Günthers didn't need to be recruited, as they had already been with Bondini before going to Vienna. There seems to be no clear evidence that Hurka was ever in Vienna: his name does not appear in Michtner's fundamental study of opera in the Viennese court theater at this time (Woodfield does not list Michtner in his bibliography), and we have found no other primary or biographical source that places him there. The idea that Hurka was associated with Vienna seems to derive entirely from a single reference, by a correspondent to the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, who notes in regard to the joint return debut of the Günthers in *Minna von Barnhelm* in Leipzig on 24 Apr 1783 that Hurka sang an aria between the third and fourth acts, and continues: "Herr Hurka ist mit Herrn Günther von Wien gekommen" ("Herr Hurka came with Herr Günther from Vienna," *LTZ* 1783, 344; Woodfield incorrectly writes "Barhelm" both in his main text on page 26 and in his transcription from the *LTZ* in note 4). While it is certainly possible that Hurka was visiting Vienna for some reason around the time the Günthers were preparing to leave and might have traveled with them to join Bondini's company, it is also possible that the reference to Hurka coming from Vienna was simply a mistake on the correspondent's part. Hurka eventually became a prominent singer and also a composer of some note; but there is no mention of a Viennese sojourn in the biographical entries on him in such standard references as Dlabacz (*Allgemeines historisches Künstler-Lexikon für Böhmen*, 1815, vol. 1, cols. 678–79) or Wurzbach (vol. 9, 439–41). In Woodfield's telling, Hurka becomes a fixed member of what Woodfield subsequently refers to as "the recent influx of performers from Vienna" (26) and "the trio of new recruits from Vienna" (27). On page 30, in his discussion of the review of the Dresden *Entführung* in 1785 in the *Magazin der Sächsischen Geschichte*, in which the Günthers and Hurka are mentioned, Woodfield writes "[o]f the cast, only the performers from Vienna were singled out." Thus the dubious association of Hurka with Vienna is transmuted into evidence for a (poorly supported) narrative on the importance of "Viennese" singers in Bondini's efforts to address criticisms of the company's singspiel performances.

Woodfield does not give first names for Franziska Romana Koch, in spite of her prominence as a singer and actress in the 1770s and 1780s. He does not refer to Koch in his discussion (page 13) of the performances of *Alceste* by Bondini's German company in Leipzig on 8 and 10 Aug 1781, even though she created the role in 1773 and sang it again in Leipzig, as is made clear in a glowing passage that Woodfield omits from his partial quotation of a review in the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* of the Leipzig performances (LTZ 1781, 575). Woodfield does not mention that Koch returned to Bondini's German company after her brief stint with Karl Wahr in Prague, nor does he mention that she would almost certainly have taken the role of Konstanze in that company's performances of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Leipzig and Dresden.

Woodfield's discussion of the history of the theatrical interrelationships among Leipzig, Dresden, and Prague in the second half of the eighteenth century (Woodfield 2012, chapter 1), while providing a useful starting place for research, was generally not used for the summary in the commentary above. His discussion omits a number of important earlier secondary studies (most notably Prölß 1878 and Teuber 1883), and his presentation is, partly as a result, unnecessarily confusing and not entirely correct.

William Weber, in his essay "Cosmopolitan, National, and Regional Identities in Eighteenth-Century European Musical Life" (Weber 2011, 215), writes the following regarding Brawe's passage on *Entführung* in the *Raisonnirendes Theaterjurnal*:

> In a critical survey of productions done at the Rannstädter Theater in 1783, the author, a military officer, declared that, though fascinated with *Entführung*, he knew nothing like it and was at a loss to evaluate such musical theater.

Apart from the year and the name of the theater (more usually spelled "Ranstädter"), this is wrong in every detail. Brawe's book is not a survey of all performances given in the theater in 1783, only those given by the Bondini company during its short Michaelmas season. Nor is Brawe's survey complete, even for that restricted period. By 1783, Brawe was a governmental official, not a military officer. Brawe does not declare that he was "fascinated" by *Entführung* (it is clear that he had no interest in it whatsoever and did not see it), and his comments on musical theater are general, not specific to that opera. Weber (2011, 226, note 32) identifies the author as "Johann Friedrich Erst [*sic*] von Brouve," and gives the title not quite correctly as "Raisonnirendes Theater Journal".

The identity of the play *Der Ostindier*—which the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* lists among the new works performed by Bondini's German company during the Michaelmas season in Leipzig in 1783—is uncertain. The *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* (1783, 717) describes the play as a comedy "aus dem Englischen." One possible candidate is *Die unmögliche Sache*, based on John Crowne's *Sir Courtly Nice, or It cannot be* (1685). In the German version, the character Williams (corresponding to the character Crack in Crowne's original) is referred to several times as the "der Ostindier," because he often refers to his experiences in the East Indies. Another possibility is *Der Ostindienfahrer* by Stephanie d. J., which had its premiere in Vienna in Oct 1781, and was apparently in the repertory of Bondini's German company in Dresden that same year (see Prölß 1878, 308).

The *Leipziger Zeitungen* for 1783, the source for the advertisements of Bondini's Italian company in the summer of that year, has not been made available online in digital form as of this writing.

The pagination scheme of the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* varies by year. The volumes for 1782 and 1783 are through-paginated. Although these volumes are divided into quarterly "parts," the reference to the part is unnecessary for a precise citation; for simplicity, that number has been omitted from citations of those volumes here. The volume for 1784, on the other hand, is separately paginated for each quarter. For that volume, citations here include the part number—for example "*LTZ* 1784:i, 15".

The citation given in *Dokumente* (194) for the brief reference to *Entführung* in issue 45 of the *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* in 1783 is not quite correct. Deutsch gives "Teil 1" (part 1), but the passage is actually from the "Vierter Theil" (part 4). *LTZ* was a weekly journal, grouped into quarterly "parts" (Teile). As explained above, the part number is not necessary for a precise citation, as the volume for 1783 is through-paginated. A more complete (but unnecessarily verbose) citation would be "*LTZ* 1783:iv, no. 45, 8 Nov 1783, 717."

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