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Die Entführung aus dem Serail at the Thurn und Taxis court in Dischingen (Summer 1791)

Dexter Edge and David Black

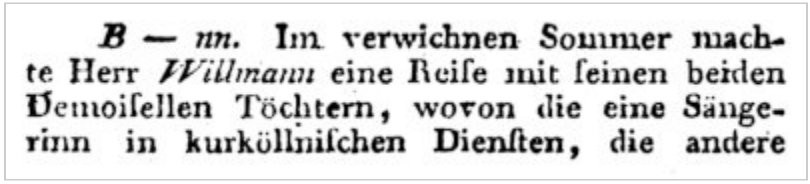
Musikalische Monathsschrift, Jul 1792

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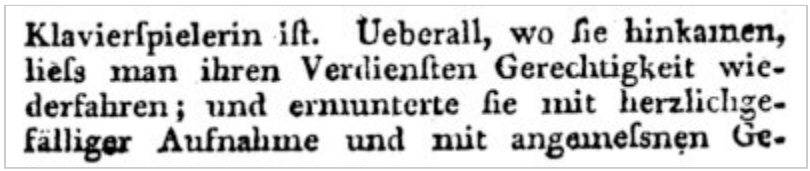
5. Nachrichten aus Briefen.



B — nn. Im verwichnen Sommer machte Herr *Willmann* eine Reise mit seinen beiden Demoisellen Töchtern, wovon die eine Sängerinn in kurköllnischen Diensten, die andere



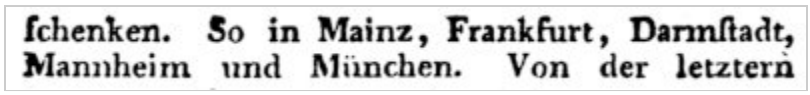
Klavierspielerin ist. Ueberall, wo sie hinkamen, liess man ihren Verdiensten Gerechtigkeit wiederfahren; und ermunterte sie mit herzlichgefälliger Aufnahme und mit angemessnen Ge-



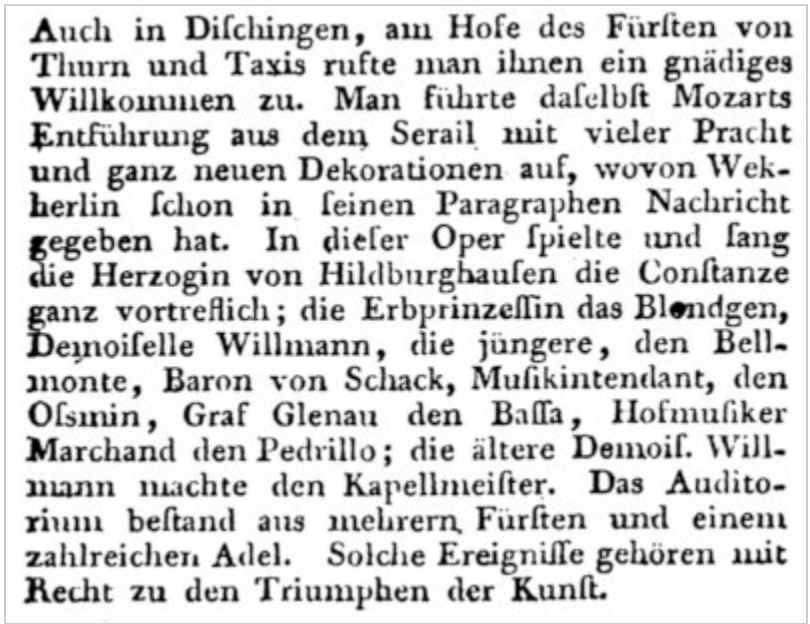
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[21]

schenken. So in Mainz, Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Mannheim und München. *[...]*


ſchenken. So in Mainz, Frankfurt, Darmſtadt, Mannheim und München. Von der letztern

Auch in Dischingen, am Hofe des Fürsten von Thurn und Taxis rufte man ihnen ein gnädiges Willkommen zu. Man führte daselbst Mozarts Entführung aus dem Serail mit vieler Pracht und ganz neuen Dekorationen auf, wovon Wekherlin schon in seinen Paragraphen Nachricht gegeben hat. In dieser Oper spielte und sang die Herzogin von Hildburghausen die Constanze ganz vortreflich; die Erbprinzessin das Blondgen, Demoiselle Willmann, die jüngere, den Bellmonte, Baron von Schack, Musikintendant, den Ossmin, Graf Glenau den Bassa, Hofmusiker Marchand den Pedrillo; die ältere Demois. Willmann machte den Kapellmeister. Das Auditorium bestand aus mehrern Fürsten und einem zahlreichen Adel. Solche Ereignisse gehören mit Recht zu den Triumphen der Kunst.


Auch in Diſchingen, am Hofe des Fürſten von Thurn und Taxis rufte man ihnen ein gnädiges Willkommen zu. Man führte daſelbſt Mozarts Entführung aus dem Serail mit vieler Pracht und ganz neuen Dekorationen auf, wovon Wekherlin ſchon in ſeinen Paragraphen Nachricht gegeben hat. In dieſer Oper ſpielte und ſang die Herzogin von Hildburghauſen die Conſtanze ganz vortreflich; die Erbprinzeſſin das Blondgen, Demoiſelle Willmann, die jüngere, den Bellmonte, Baron von Schack, Muſikintendant, den Oſsmin, Graf Glenau den Baſſa, Hofmuſiker Marchand den Pedrillo; die ältere Demoiſ. Willmann machte den Kapellmeiſter. Das Auditorium beſtand aus mehrern Fürſten und einem zahlreichen Adel. Solche Ereigniſſe gehören mit Recht zu den Triumphen der Kunſt.

[Wilhelm Ludwig] Wekhrlin, *Paragrafen*, vol. 2, 1791]

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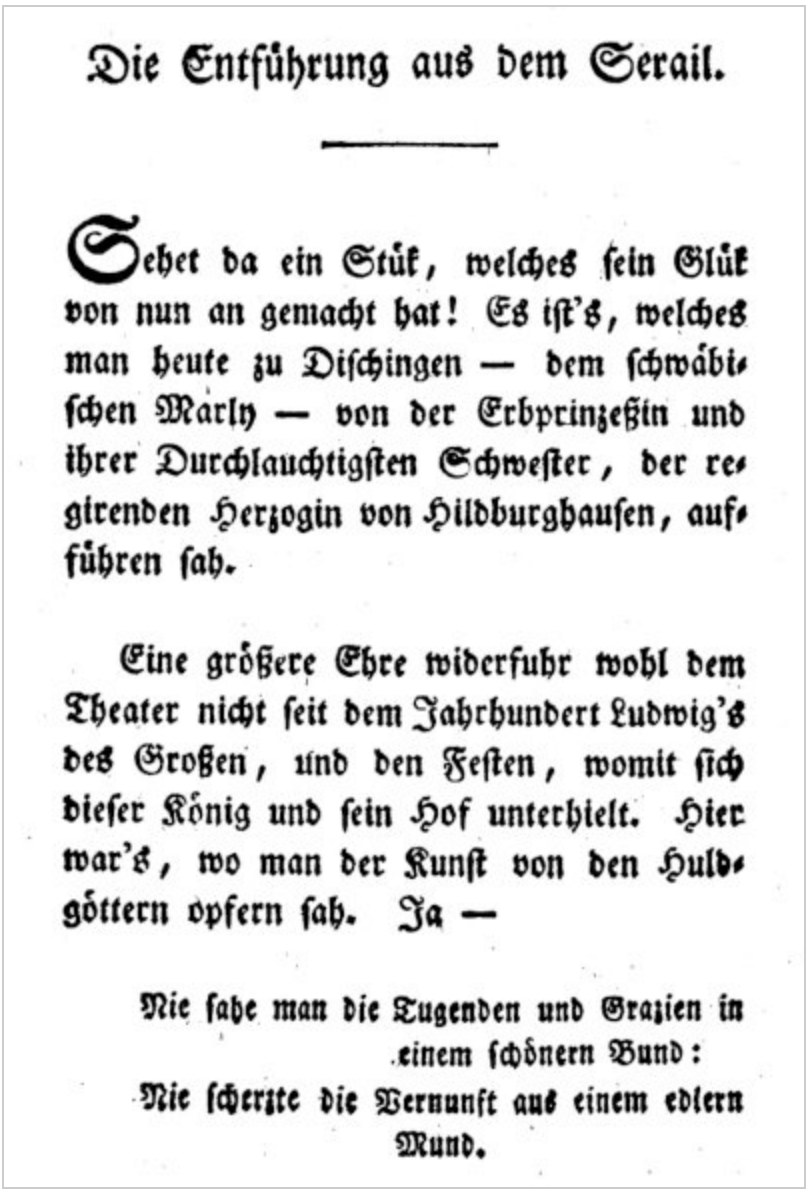
Die Entführung aus dem Serail.

————

Sehet da ein Stük, welches sein Glük von nun an gemacht hat! Es ist's, welches man heute zu Dischingen — dem schwäbi= schen Marly — von der Erbprinzeßin und ihrer Durchlauchtigsten Schwester, der re= girenden Herzogin von Hildburghausen, auf= führen sah.

Eine größere Ehre widerfuhr wohl dem Theater nicht seit dem Jahrhundert Ludwig's des Großen, und den Festen, womit sich dieser König und sein Hof unterhielt. Hier war's, wo man der Kunst von den Huld= göttern opfern sah. Ja —

> Nie sahe man die Tugenden und Grazien in einem schönern Bund:
> Nie scherzte die Vernunft aus eine edlern Mund.



Die Entführung aus dem Serail.

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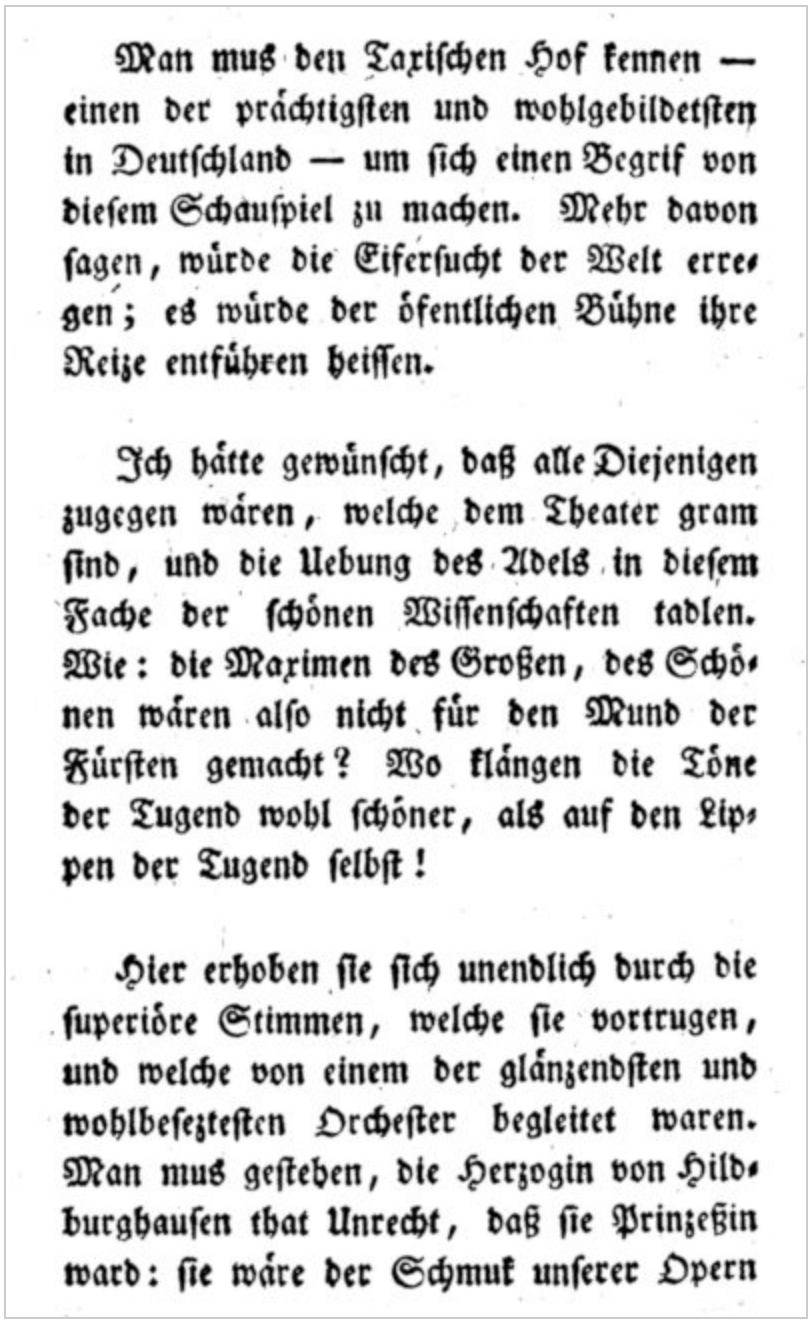
[207]

Man mus den Taxischen Hof kennen — einen der prächtigsten und wohlgebildetsten in Deutschland — um sich einen Begrif von diesem Schauspiel zu machen. Mehr davon sagen, würde die Eifersucht der Welt erre= gen; es würde der öfentlichen Bühne ihre Reize entführen heissen.

Ich hätte gewünscht, daß alle Diejenigen zugegen wären, welche dem Theater gram sind, und die Uebung des Adels in diesem

Fache der schönen Wissenschaften tadeln. Wie: die Maximen des Großen, des Schö= nen wären also nicht für den Mund der Fürsten gemacht? Wo klängen die Töne der Tugend wohl schöner, als auf den Lip= pen der Tugend selbst!

Hier erhoben sie sich unendlich durch die superiöre Stimmen, welche sie vortrugen, und welche von einem der glänzendsten und wohlbeseztesten Orchester begleitet waren. Man mus gestehen, die Herzogin von Hild= burghausen that Unrecht, daß sie Prinzeßin ward: sie wäre der Schmuk unserer Opern



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Ich hätte gewünſcht, daß alle Diejenigen zugegen wären, welche dem Theater gram ſind, und die Uebung des Adels in dieſem Fache der ſchönen Wiſſenſchaften tadlen. Wie: die Maximen des Großen, des Schönen wären alſo nicht für den Mund der Fürſten gemacht? Wo klängen die Töne der Tugend wohl ſchöner, als auf den Lippen der Tugend ſelbſt!

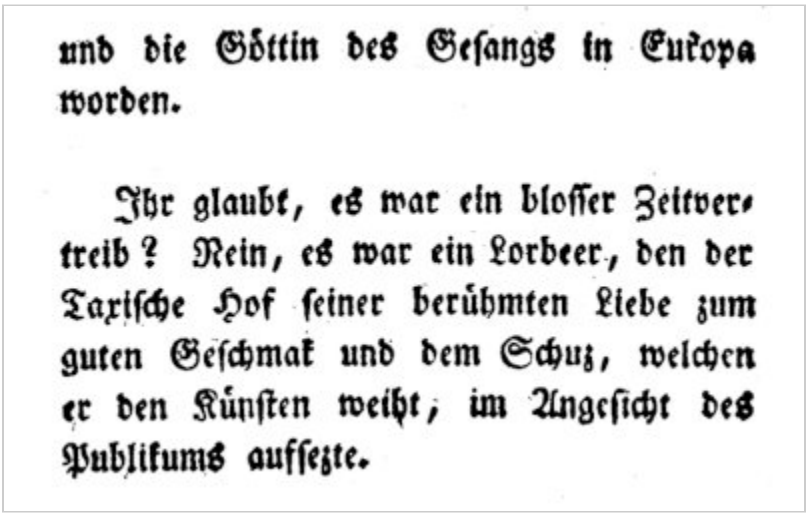
Hier erhoben ſie ſich unendlich durch die ſuperiöre Stimmen, welche ſie vortrugen, und welche von einem der glänzendſten und wohlbeſezteſten Orcheſter begleitet waren. Man mus geſtehen, die Herzogin von Hildburghauſen that Unrecht, daß ſie Prinzeßin ward: ſie wäre der Schmuk unſerer Opern

[208]

und die Göttin des Gesangs in Europa worden.

Ihr glaubt, es war ein blosser Zeitver= treib? Nein, es war ein Lorbeer, den der Taxische Hof seiner berühmten Liebe zum guten Geschmak und dem Schuz, welchen

er den Künsten weiht, im Angesicht des
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[translation:]

[*Musikalische Monatsschrift*]

News from Letters.

Bonn. Last summer Herr *Willmann*
made a tour with his two unmarried daughters,
one a singer in the service of the Elector of
Cologne and the other a keyboard player.
Everywhere they visited, their merits were
acknowledged and they were encouraged
with the most heartfelt favorable reception and
appropriate gifts. Thus in Mainz, Frankfurt,
Darmstadt, Mannheim, and Munich. *[...]*

Also in Dischingen, at the court of the Prince
of Thurn and Taxis, they were accorded a gracious
welcome. Mozart's *Entführung aus dem Serail*
was performed there with great splendor
and entirely new sets, about which Wekherlin
has already reported in his *Paragrafen*. Acting
and singing in this opera were: the Duchess
of Hildburghausen as Konstanze—most excellent;
the Hereditary Princess as Blonde; Mademoiselle
Willmann the younger as Belmonte; Baron von
Schacht, music intendant, as Osmin; Count
Klenau as Bassa; court musician Marchand as
Pedrillo; the elder Mademoiselle Willmann was
kapellmeister. The audience consisted of

several princes and numerous nobility. Such events rightly belong among the triumphs of art.

[Wekhrlin]

Die Entführung aus dem Serail.

Behold a piece that has made its fortune from henceforth! It is the one that was performed today in Dischingen—the Swabian Marly—by the Hereditary Princess and her Most Serene sister, the Duchess of Hildburghausen.

A greater honor has likely not befallen the theater since the century of Louis the Great and the celebrations with which this king and his court were entertained. Here it was that one saw the offerings to art of the gracious gods. Yes —

> Never were seen the Muses and Graces
> in lovelier league:
> Never did Reason jest from nobler mouth.

One must know the Taxis court—one of the most magnificent and well-appointed in Germany—in order to gain an impression of this production. To say more would arouse the envy of the world; it would rob the public stage of its charms.

I would have wished that all those had been present who bear ill will to the theater and reproach the efforts of the nobility in this field of the fine arts. For: were not the maxims of the great and good also made for the mouths of princes? Where indeed do the tones of virtue sound lovelier than on the lips of virtue itself!

Here they are infinitely exalted by the superior voices which produce them, and which are accompanied by the most brilliant and well-staffed orchestra. One must admit that the Duchess of Hildburghausen committed a crime in becoming a princess: she would have been the ornament of our opera and the goddess of song in Europe.

You believe that it was a mere amusement?

No, it was a laurel that the Taxis court,
out of its famous love of good taste and the
protection it devotes to the arts, placed upon
the public's brow.

Commentary

These two documents refer to the same event, a performance of Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the summer residence of the Thurn und Taxis court in Dischingen in 1791. The performers included Duchess Charlotte von Hildburghausen as Konstanze; her sister Princess Therese von Thurn und Taxis as Blonde; Magdalena Willmann as Belmonte; Leopold Mozart's former student Heinrich Marchand as Pedrillo; Baron Theodor von Schacht, music intendant of the Thurn und Taxis court, as Osmin; and Count Ignaz von Klenau as Bassa Selim. The performance was led, probably from the keyboard, by Walburga Willmann, Magdalena's older sister.

The first document is a letter from Bonn published in the inaugural issue of the *Musikalische Monathsschrift* in Jul 1792; that letter in turn refers to the second document, a short panegyric on the Dischingen performance written by Wilhelm Ludwig Wekhrlin, published in the second volume of his *Paragrafen* at the end of 1791. The report in the *Musikalische Monathsschrift* has been known to Beethoven scholars since the nineteenth century: in fact, most of the passage given here was included in the first German edition of Thayer's biography of Beethoven in 1866 (i:186). The Dischingen *Entführung* was subsequently referred to fairly often in the secondary literature; it is even mentioned in the article on Magdalena Willmann in the first edition of Grove's dictionary (1889, iv:461). Oddly, however, it has been overlooked in the Mozart literature, and neither document appears in *Dokumente* or *Neue Folge*.

The letter in *Musikalische Monathsschrift* is said to come from "*B — nn*"; it is unclear why the name of the city, obviously Bonn, was redacted in such a transparent manner. The topic of the letter is a concert tour "last summer" ("[im] verwichenen Sommer," namely the summer of 1791) undertaken by Johann Ignaz Willmann and his two daughters: Magdalena, a soprano in the company of the Nationaltheater in Bonn and the electoral Hofmusik; and Walburga, a skilled pianist who is said to have studied with Mozart. (On the claim that Walburga was Mozart's student, see our entry for 13 Jul 1791, which also provides additional background on the Willmann family.) The letter from Bonn in turn quotes a report from Munich on the sisters' reception there; that portion of the letter is not directly relevant to the Dischingen *Entführung* and is omitted at the ellipsis above, but it is discussed below. The letter carries no authorial attribution; but Willmann was an industrious publicist for his children, so he is a plausible candidate. In any case, he was traveling with his daughters and would certainly have witnessed the performance in Dischingen first hand. Another possibility is Christian Gottlob Neefe, a member of the Hofmusik in Bonn, who might have heard about the Dischingen performance from one of the Willmanns.

The head of the house of Thurn und Taxis at the time of the performance in Dischingen was Fürst Carl Anselm (1733–1805). From 1748 the principal residence of the Thurn und Taxis court was Regensburg, site of the so-called "immerwährender Reichstag" (perpetual Reichstag) of the Holy Roman Empire; Carl Anselm was the Reichstag's principal commissioner. The Thurn und Taxis court, which had become quite wealthy from operating the imperial postal service, supported its own Italian opera company from 1774 to 1778 and again from 1784 to 1786, and a German theater company in the intervening years. After 1786, the court did not have a theater company of its own, although it continued to maintain a musical establishment that grew to as many as 42 musicians by 1787 (on the theater companies of the Thurn und Taxis court, see principally Meixner 2008).

It has been suggested that "internal" opera performances at the Thurn und Taxis court, such as the performance of *Entführung aus dem Serail* in Dischingen, may have been fairly common (see Meixner 2018, 459), but at present little is known about them. The court is not known to have given a performance of *Entführung* prior to the one in Dischingen. However, the traveling company of Emanuel Schikaneder had performed the opera in Regensburg on 20 Jul 1787, and gave nine more performances of it over the next thirteen months, the last on 21 Aug 1788. So the opera would have been known to the court, and some of the court's musicians may well have played in the orchestra for Schikaneder's performances in Regensburg.

The summer residence of the Thurn und Taxis court was Schloss Trugenhofen (today Schloss Taxis) in Dischingen, around 50 km northwest of Augsburg, and around 130 km as the crow flies west southwest of Regensburg.



Schloss Taxis (Trugenhofen), Dischingen
(Wikimedia Commons)

The precise date of the performance of *Entführung* in Dischingen is unknown. What little can be said about the date must be pieced together from bits of contextual information. The Willmanns

were free to travel for several months in 1791 because the Nationaltheater in Bonn—in which Magdalena Willmann was a principal soprano—was on extended hiatus: the company is not known to have given any performances in Bonn between 7 Mar and 28 Dec 1791 (see the performance calendar in Reisinger et al. 2018, 198). From its inception in 1789, the Nationaltheater had taken substantial summer breaks: between 23 May and 13 Oct 1789, and between 23 Feb and 23 Oct 1790 (the theater closed early in 1790 because of the death of Emperor Joseph II on 20 Feb). So one might expect that in 1791 the theater would have resumed performances in October. The extended closure that year probably arose because the elector, Archbishop Maximilian Franz, was away from Bonn between the end of August and late December. Max Franz was, among his several other titles, Grand Master (Hochmeister) of the Teutonic Order (Deutscher Orden), which met in Mergentheim from 18 Sep to 20 Oct 1791. The elector, who presided at the meeting, brought more than 20 members of his Hofmusik to Mergentheim, including some of his singers, most of whom were also principals in the Nationaltheater, and several of his instrumentalists, who also played in the theater's orchestra (including young Beethoven). The trip homeward from Mergentheim to Bonn was a long one—by road today it is over 300 km—so the musicians Max Franz brought to Mergentheim probably did not return to Bonn until the end of October or the beginning of November. For his part, Max Franz went directly from Mergentheim to Vienna (he was the brother of Emperor Leopold II), arriving on 6 Nov 1791 and leaving for Bonn on 18 Dec (see our entry for that date). Thus the reopening of the Nationaltheater in Bonn seems to have been delayed until after his return.

The Willmanns embarked on their concert tour during this long hiatus of the Nationaltheater probably knowing that the elector needed Magdalena in Mergentheim for performances during the meeting of the Teutonic Order. Carl Ludwig Junker, who visited Mergentheim on 11 and 12 Oct 1791, while the meeting was in progress, reports hearing Magdalena sing the role of Lisette in *König Theodor* (a German adaptation of Paisiello's *Il re Teodoro in Venezia*) on 11 Oct (*Musikalische Korrespondenz*, no. 47, Wed, 23 Nov 1791, col. 374), so she must have arrived in Mergentheim by that date. Count Zinzendorf, who attended the meeting in Mergentheim, noted in his diary hearing a performance of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* on 8 Oct ("Mal chanté", he wrote; *Addenda* 71). Although Zinzendorf does not mention any singers by name, Magdalena Willmann would probably have taken the role of Konstanze in that performance. So we can safely say that Magdalena was in Mergentheim before 8 Oct, and the Dischingen performance must have taken place before her arrival in Mergentheim.

The letter in the *Musikalische Monathsschrift* reports that the Willmann sisters gave concerts in Mainz, Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Mannheim, and Munich during their tour in 1791, but gives no dates. However, we are able to fill in a few dates from other sources. On 23 Apr 1791, the *Franckfurter Frag= und Anzeigungs=Nachrichten* advertised a concert the following day by Magdalena and Walburga in Frankfurt. The *Mannheimer Intelligenzblatt* recorded the arrival in Mannheim on 5 May of "Hr. Willmann, Musikdirektor von Wien" (as he continued to style

himself), presumably with his daughters. A concert given by the Willmanns in Mannheim on 16 May is reported in the *Münchner Zeitung*:

> **Mannheim**, vom 17ten Mai. Gestern hat=
> ten wir das Vergnügen die zwei Schwestern
> Mesdemoisellen Willmann hier in einem von ih=
> nen gehaltenen Konzert zu bewundern. Die jün=
> gere, welche Kammervirtuosinn bei Sr. kurfürst=
> lichen Durchlaucht zu Kölln ist, erhielt bei dem
> Publikum den ausgezeichnetsten Beifall, theils
> wegen ihrem schönen und kunstvollen Gesang,
> als in Rüksicht des Umfangs ihrer harmonischen
> Stimme. Jeder Kenner räumt ihr unstreitig den
> Plaz einer der ersten Sängerinnen ein. — Ihre
> ältere Schwester spielte auf dem Fortepiano eben
> so meisterhaft; ihr schöner Ausdruk zog ihr all=
> gemeinen Beifall zu.
> [*Münchner Zeitung*, no. 81, Mon, 23 May 1791, 443]

> **Mannheim**, 17 May. Yesterday we had the
> pleasure of marveling at two sisters, the
> Mesdemoiselles Willmann, in a concert that
> they gave here. The younger, who is a chamber
> virtuosa with His Serenity the Elector of Cologne,
> received the most exceptional applause, partly
> on account of her beautiful and artistic singing,
> and also in consideration of the range of her
> harmonious voice. Every connoisseur without
> dispute grants her a place among the leading
> singers. — Her older sister's playing on the
> fortepiano is just as masterly; her beautiful
> expressiveness brought her general applause.

At present, nothing further is known about the Willmanns' tour until their arrival in Munich on 27 Aug 1791, recorded in the *Münchner Zeitung*. On 13 Sep, the same newspaper reports that the sisters had given (at least) two concerts; the dates are unspecified, but the concerts must have taken place between 27 Aug and 13 Sep.

> **München**. *[...]*
>
> Wir hatten dieser Tage das Vergnügen in ei=
> nem wiederholten Konzert, wovon dem leztern
> **Se. kurfürstl. Durch**. und **Ihre Durchl.**
> **die verwittibte Frau Kurfürstinn** beizuwoh=
> nen geruheten, die beiden Msllen Willmanns zu
> hören. Die Aeltere weiß in ihrem Klavierspiel
> viele Fertigkeit mit Präzision und Gefühl zu ver=

> binden: indessen die Jüngere ihre durch Höhe
> und Tiefe sich auszeichnende Stimme mit der
> feinsten Empfindung im Ausdruck und dem rich=
> tigsten Geschmak im Vortrage zu vereinigen weiß.
> Sie hat zulezt in dem bekannten Singspiel der
> Barbier von Sevilien so viel Anstand und Ein=
> sicht verrathen, daß sie Kennern der Musik und
> des Theaters den Wunsch abnöthigte, ihre Kunst
> in einer großen italienischen Oper einst bewun=
> dern zu können.
> [*Münchner Zeitung*, no. 144, Tue, 13 Sep 1791, 773]

[translation:]

> **München.** *[...]*
>
> In recent days we have had the pleasure to
> hear a repeated concert—the last of which His
> **Electoral Serenity** and **Her Serenity the Widowed**
> **Frau Prince-Elector** deigned to attend—given by
> the two Mesdemoiselles Willmann. In her keyboard
> playing, the elder knows how to combine much
> facility with precision and feeling; and the younger,
> with a voice that is distinguished by its high
> and low range, knows how to unite the subtlest
> sensitivity in expression with the richest taste in
> execution. Recently, in the well-known singspiel
> *Der Barbier von Sevilien*, she revealed so much
> grace and insight that she made the connoisseurs
> of music and theater wish to be able to admire
> her art in a grand Italian opera.

The references are to Elector Karl Theodor and Maria Anna of Saxony, widow of Maximilian III Joseph, Karl Theodor's predecessor as Elector of Bavaria.

This report on the Willmanns' concerts in Munich appears to be the basis for the quoted passage in the letter from Bonn printed in the *Musikalische Monathsschrift*, but there are differences. In the *Musikalische Monathsschrift* the passage reads:

> *[...]* Von [München]
> aus schreibt man öffentlich:
>
> Die Aeltere weiss in ihrem Klavierspiel vie-
> le Fertigkeit mit Präcision und Gefühl zu
> verbinden; indessen die jüngere, ihre durch
> Höhe und besonders durch Tiefe sich aus-
> zeichnende Stimme mit der feinsten Em-

> pfindung im Ausdruck und dem richtigsten Geschmack im Vortrage zu vereinigen weiss. Der grosse Violinist Eck gesellte in ihrem Konzert seine Virtu zu ihrem vortreflichen Gesang und Spiel. Gewiss ein glänzender Vorzug dieses hervorragenden Künstlers, den er ihnen hierdurch angedeihen liess. Die Sängerin hat zuletzt in dem bekannten Singspiel, der Barbier von Sevilien, nach Paisiellos Musik, so viel Anstand und Einsicht verrathen, dass sie Kennern der Musik und des Theaters den Wunsch abnöthigte, ihre Kunst in einer grossen italiänischen Oper einst bewundern zu können. Nach dem Stück ward sie herausgerufen, und der Intendant, Graf von Seeauf *[sic]*, führte sie selbst dem Publikum vor.
>
> [*Musikalische Monathsschrift*, no. 1, Jul 1792, 21]

The passages in blue do not appear in the *Münchner Zeitung*. The version in the *Musikalische Monathsschrift* adds the words "besonders durch" ("especially by") before "Tiefe" in the description of Magdalena's vocal range. The first two full sentences in blue refer to the participation at the Willmann's concerts of the violinist Johann Friedrich Eck:

> In their concert, the great violinist Eck combined his virtues with their superb singing and playing. Certainly a shining mark of approval hereby granted to them by this outstanding artist.

The last sentence, referring to Magdalena's curtain call at the end of *Der Barbier von Sevilien*, is also missing from the version in the *Münchner Zeitung*:

> After the piece, she had a curtain call, and the intendant Count von Seeau himself brought her out before the public.

The reference is to Count Joseph Anton von Seeau, intendant of music at the Bavarian court.

We cannot rule out the possibility that this expanded version of the report on the Willmanns' concerts was taken from another publication that has not yet been identified. But it seems more likely that the additions were made by the author of the letter from Bonn published in the *Musikalische Monathsschrift*. If that is correct, it would lend support to the hypothesis that Johann Ignaz Willmann was the author of the letter, as he would have been in a position to know

these additional details about Eck and the curtain call, and he was in any case never one to refrain from advertising his daughters' merits, particularly Magdalena's.

Dischingen lies about halfway between Munich and Mergentheim. If the Willmanns left Munich shortly after their final concert there, they would have had time for a stopover in Dischingen while still arriving in Mergentheim in time for Magdalena to sing in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* on 8 Oct 1791. On the other hand, nothing is currently known about the Willmanns' travels between their concert in Mannheim on 16 May and their arrival in Munich on 27 Aug. So they might well have gone to Dischingen *before* heading to Munich, although that itinerary would have been rather inefficient, as it would imply that after visiting Dischingen they traveled southeast to Munich, then retraced their steps, heading northwest toward Mergentheim, which is around 100 km more distant from Munich than Dischingen is. In the final analysis, however, these scraps of information and speculations about the Willmanns' travels do not help us narrow down the date of the Dischingen *Entführung* by very much.

The Thurn and Taxis court library preserves a variety of manuscript materials for *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (for a complete list, see the *Notes* below), including at least two vocal parts inscribed with names of singers in the Dischingen performance in 1791: "Mlle Wilmann *[sic]*" on the part for Belmonte, and "H. B. v. Schacht" on the part for Osmin (see the RISM record for D-Rtt, W.A.-Mozart 22/I and 22/II, based on the entry in Haberkamp 1981, 161). Although the sources for *Entführung* in the Thurn und Taxis library have not yet been comprehensively evaluated in terms of provenance and date, these names show that at least some of the material seems to have been used for the Dischingen performance.

The Performers

Apart from Magdalena Willmann and Heinrich Marchand, the cast of the Dischingen *Entführung* consisted of members of the nobility; Willmann was the only professional singer. The female leads were sung by aristocratic sisters: Konstanze by Duchess Charlotte Georgine Luise von Hildburghausen (1769–1818); and Blonde by her next younger sister Therese Mathilde Amalia, Princess of Thurn und Taxis (1773–1839). Charlotte and Therese were the two oldest daughters of Duke Karl II zu Mecklenburg-Strelitz, brother of Queen Charlotte, the wife of King George III of Great Britain.

Karl's oldest daughter Charlotte was born on 17 Nov 1769. On 3 Sep 1785, at the age of 15, she married 22-year-old Duke Friedrich von Sachsen-Hildburghausen (1763–1834), whom, it is said, she had not previously met (Grobe 1874, 452). The Hildburghausen court went bankrupt under Friedrich's father, and Friedrich's great grand-uncle Joseph Friedrich von Sachsen-Hildburghausen had been appointed administrator. Joseph Friedrich is well known to music historians for his celebrated musical establishment in Vienna in the 1750s and 1760s (see Brown 1991, here esp. 110–16). When Friedrich's father died in 1780, Joseph Friedrich became regent, a position he continued to fill until his own death in 1787, at which point Carl Alexander assumed his full responsibilities as head of the house.

Charlotte was 21 years old when she sang Konstanze in the Dischingen performance of *Entführung*; she was undoubtedly in Dischingen to visit her sister Therese. Charlotte is the only performer singled out by Wekhrlin in his panegyric: "Man mus gestehen, die Herzogin von Hildburghausen that Unrecht, daß sie Prinzeßin ward: sie wäre der Schmuk unserer Opern und die Göttin des Gesangs in Europa worden" (One must admit that the Duchess of Hildburghausen committed a crime in becoming a princess: she would have been the ornament of our opera and the goddess of song in Europe). We might be inclined to dismiss this as hyperbolic toadying, were it not for the fact that the excellence of Charlotte's singing is corroborated by several independent witnesses.

Hildburghausen was rather isolated from other major cities and courts, and relatively impoverished. Charlotte was well educated and highly cultured, as well as an exceptional musician, so rather than succumbing to the potential tedium of life in a minor provincial court, she did her best to create a stimulating intellectual and cultural circle in Hildburghausen. Among those she brought to Hildburghausen were the writers Jean Paul (Johann Paul Friedrich Richter) in 1799, and young Friedrich Rückert in 1808.

On 24 or 25 May 1799, shortly after arriving in Hildburghausen, 26-year-old Jean Paul wrote to his friend Christian Otto:

> Hier fängt es an, allmählig wichtig zu wer=
> den. Erstlich denke Dir, male Dir die himmli=
> sche Herzogin — mit schönen kindlichen Augen —
> das ganze Gesicht voll Liebe und Reiz und Ju=
> gend — mit einer Nachtigallen=Stimmritze —
> und einem Mutterherz —
> [Richter 1829, iii:81]

> Here things are gradually beginning to
> become important. First, imagine to yourself,
> paint for yourself the heavenly Duchess —
> with beautiful childlike eyes — her entire face
> full of life and charm and youth — with
> a nightingale glottis and a mother's heart —



Duchess Charlotte von Sachsen-Hildburghausen, pastel by Johann Philipp Bach (Wikimedia Commons)

Composer and writer Johann Friedrich Reichardt was a particular fan of Charlotte's singing. In a letter to Goethe from Berlin on 27 Feb 1801, Reichardt recommended that he take any opportunity to hear Charlotte perform Reichardt's newest Goethe settings:

> Schwer wird es mir Ihnen die Lieder zu schicken statt sie selbst zu bringen, sie Ihnen selbst vorzusingen; doch hoff' ich Sie werden auch so sich darinnen wiederfinden, und dann ist mein schönster Wunsch erfüllt. Komt *[sic]* Ihnen die Herzoginn von Hildburghausen nahe, so lassen Sie sich doch ja das Freudvoll p von ihr singen; ich glaubt' es nur von unsrer Königinn hören zu können, sie singt es aber ganz unglaublich schön. Auch die Prosperina muß sie Ihnen singen. *[...]* [Braunbehrens et al. 2002, 127–28]

> It will be hard for me to send you the songs instead of bringing them to you myself and singing them to you myself; but I hope that you will also find your own voice in them, and then my fondest wish will be fulfilled. If you ever find yourself in the vicinity of the Duchess of Hildburghausen, be sure to have her sing "Freudvoll und leidvoll"; I thought I would only be able to hear it from our Queen, but she sings it so unbelievably beautifully. She must also sing *Prosperina* for you.

The "Queen" is Charlotte's younger sister Luise (1776–1810), wife of King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia. Luise had married Crown Prince (as he then was) Friedrich Wilhelm in Berlin on Christmas Eve 1793, in a double wedding in which his brother Friedrich Ludwig married the youngest of the four Mecklenburg-Strelitz sisters, Friederike. Charlotte likely attended these

weddings in Berlin, and would probably have made other trips to visit her sisters there, so Reichardt would have had the opportunity to become acquainted with her and her singing. The antecedents of Reichardt's pronouns in his letter to Goethe are ambiguous, but he seems to have meant that Goethe should, if possible, hear Duchess Charlotte (not the Queen) sing "Freudvoll und leidvoll" and *Prosperina*, two of Reichardt's recent Goethe settings.

A few years later, Reichardt describes in his *Vertraute Briefe* an unexpected encounter with Duchess Charlotte, in Aug 1808 at Bad Liebenstein, the summer residence of the dukes of Saxe-Meiningen:

> Liebenstein, den 10. August.
>
> Hier bin ich ganz sonderbar wie gerufen angekommen. Kaum steig' ich vor dem Ba= dehause aus dem Wagen, und höre oben eine mir wohl bekannte schöne Stimme; so werd' ich auch zur **Herzogin von Hildburg= hausen** hinauf gerufen, und finde sie mit Anordnung einer musikalischen Gartenszene, zur Feier des nahen Geburtstages der **Her= zogin von Meinungen** *[sic]*, beschäftigt. Gern ergriff ich auf der Stelle die Feder für die erlauchte Sängerin, die auch ohne ihre Ge= burt und ihren Rang eine große Sängerin wäre, etwas aufzusetzen, worin sie ihren ausdrucksvollen Vortrag entwickeln kann. Ei= nige kleine Chöre aus meiner **Geisterinsel** schließen sich da gut genug an, und werden von einem seltnen Chor schöner Prinzessinnen vorgetragen werden. Zwei überaus liebliche Töchter der Herzogin von Hildburghausen, beide Brünetten, deren eine der schönen Kö= nigin von Preußen, ihre Tante, sehr ähn= lich sieht; *[...]*
> [Reichardt 1810, i:11–12]

> Liebenstein, 10 August
>
> Here I have arrived quite extraordinarily as if summoned. Scarcely had I descended from the coach in front of the bathhouse when I hear from above a beautiful voice that I know very well, and thus I am called up to the **Duchess of Hildburghausen**; I find her busy with the preparation of a musical garden scene for the coming birthday of the **Duchess of Meiningen**. I gladly took up my pen on the spot to set something for the illustrious singer—

> who even without her birth and rank would
> have been a great singer—something in which
> she can develop her expressive execution.
> Some small choruses from my **Geisterinsel**
> seemed to fit suitably enough and will be
> performed by a rare choir of beautiful princesses.
> Two utterly charming daughters of the Duchess
> of Hildburghausen, both brunettes, one of
> whom looks very much like her aunt, the beautiful
> Queen of Prussia *[...]*

The "Duchess of Meiningen" was Louise Eleonore, widow of Duke Georg I von Sachsen-Meiningen, and currently the regent of the duchy; her birthday was on 11 Aug, the day after Reichardt's arrival. Reichardt is referring to his singspiel *Der Geisterinsel* (1798), a setting of Gotter's adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Charlotte von Hildburghausen had 12 children between 1786 and 1804, of whom 7 survived to adulthood. Reichardt is probably referring to Therese (1792–1854)—who in 1810 would marry King Ludwig I of Bavaria—and Luise (1794–1824); Duchess Charlotte's oldest daughter Charlotte (1787–1847) was by this time already married to Prince Paul von Württemberg and is less likely to have been in Liebenstein.

By far the most detailed account we have of Charlotte von Hildburghausen's singing is a long and touching obituary published in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* on 15 Jul 1818 (*Nekrolog* 1818). Charlotte had died on 14 May 1818 at the relatively young age of 48 following an extended period of ill health. This obituary is the unacknowledged (and often plagiarized) source for nearly everything that has subsequently been written about Charlotte's singing (for examples, see the *Appendix* below). The obituary is signed "Gn"; these initials are not on Ole Hass's list of authorial initials and signs used in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (Hass 2009, xxx–xxxi), so the obituary was evidently not written by a frequent contributor to the newspaper. Judging by the level of detail in the obituary, it must have been written by someone closely connected with the Hildburghausen court who was well acquainted with Charlotte and her singing. A good candidate is the historian and theologian Johann Andreas Genßler (1748–1831), a native of Hildburghausen who spent nearly all of his life there. Genßler had been the teacher of young Prince Friedrich (as he then was), and Genßler went on to hold a series of increasingly important posts in Hildburghausen. His intellectual interests as a historian and writer would likely have made him a welcome addition to Charlotte's circle. It was Genßler who gave Charlotte her last communion four days before her death (Human 1886, 36).

Because the obituary in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* is central to our knowledge of Charlotte as a singer, we have given a complete transcription and translation of it as an appendix to this commentary. The author writes that Charlotte was "[e]ndowed by Nature with a noble and beautiful form, as well as a silvery pure, full, and supple voice" (Von der Natur, wie mit einer edeln, schönen Gestalt, so auch mit einer silberreinen, volltönenden, sehr biegsamen Stimme beschenkt), going on to say that in her youth in Hannover she had studied with an Italian singing

master named Giuliani, and that she continued to study and practice seriously after her marriage and move to Hildburghausen. The author gives an evocative general description of her singing:

> Sie sang
> mit der grössten Lieblichkeit und Präcision, so
> wie mit den geschmackvollsten Manieren ihr Ada-
> gio, und dann mit eben so grosser Leichtigkeit
> und Reinheit die Passagen und Coloraturen im
> Allegro. [Nekrolog 1818, cols. 503]

> She sang
> with the greatest sweetness and precision, as well
> as with the most tasteful embellishments in her
> adagios, and then with just as much lightness and
> purity the passages and coloratura in allegros.
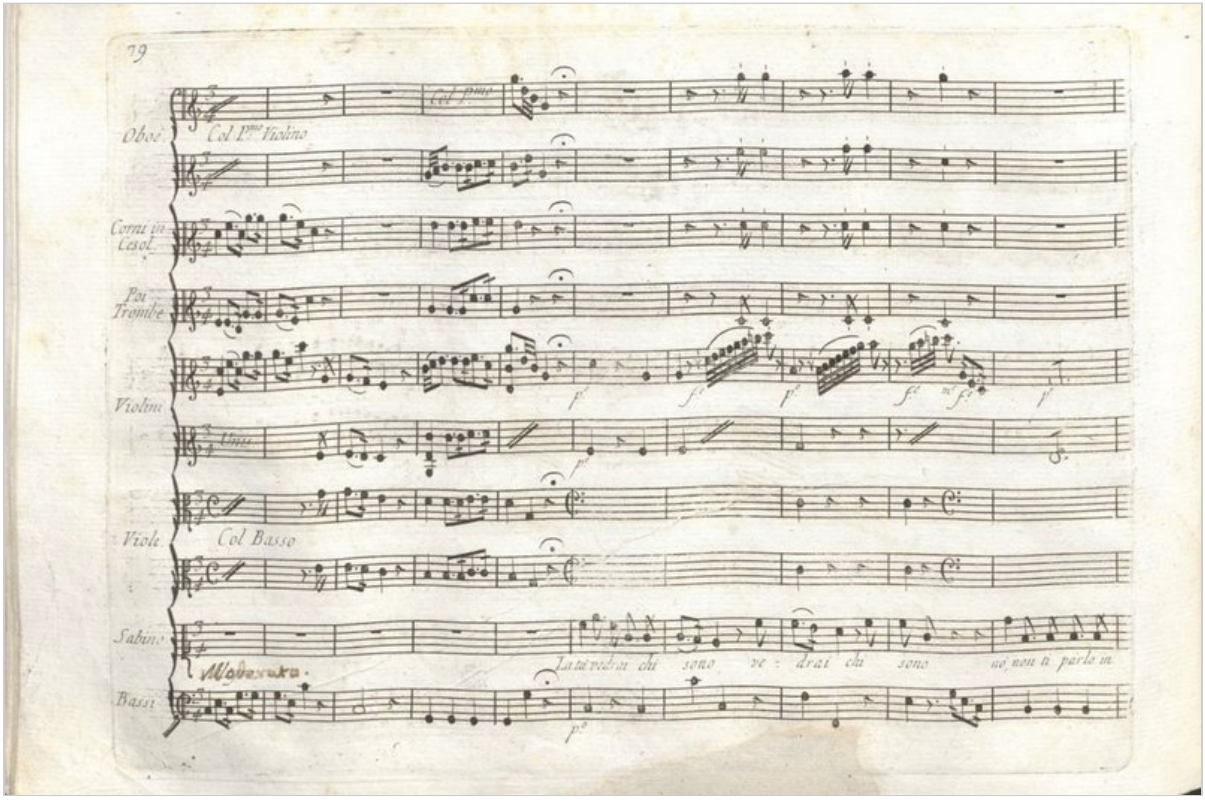
She sang many arias by Sarti—the writer recalls with particular pleasure her rendition of "Là tu vedrai" from *Giulio Sabino*—Martín y Soler, Paisiello, and Cimarosa, and:

> *[...]* von Mozart die Arien aus der
> *Entführung* herrlich, so dass man nicht wusste,
> sollte man mehr das hohe Gefühl, mit welchem
> sie dieselben vortrug, oder ihre Bravour in den
> Rouladen bewundern. Später sang sie die Arien
> aus *Titus* vorzüglich gern; dann auch die, aus
> der *Ginerva* von S. Mayer, und, ausser mehren
> andern, die verschiedenen grossen Scenen von
> Righini — man kann sagen, mit vollendetem
> Vortrag.
> [Nekrolog 1818, cols. 503–4]

> *[...]* then the arias from *Entführung* by Mozart,
> so magnificently that one did not know whether one
> should admire more the great feeling with which
> she performed these or her bravura in the roulades.
> Later on she especially liked to sing the arias from
> *Titus*; and also those from *Ginerva* by Simon Mayr,
> and among many others the various great scenes
> by Righini — one can say, with perfect execution.

The implication here is that she sang Konstanze's arias from *Entführung*, "Ach ich liebte," "Traurigkeit," and "Martern aller Arten." According to the author of the obituary, Charlotte often sang in Berlin with Reichardt and Righini, and the author notes that Reichardt considered her the equal of "Marchetti"—that is, Maria Marchetti Fantozzi, who had created the role of Vitellia in the premiere production of Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* in Prague in 1791. Another favorite work was Graun's *Der Tod Jesu*, in which Charlotte sang the soprano solos. When she became ill, she no longer trusted herself to sing larger works, but continued to sing with piano

accompaniment. The author writes that in these later years she particularly favored Reichardt's songs and Righini's ariettas.



Giuseppe Sarti, *Giulio Sabino*, "Là tu vedrai"
(BSB)

According to the letter from Bonn in the *Musikalische Monathsschrift*, the role of Blonde in the Dischingen *Entführung* was sung by the "Erbprinzessin." The reference is to Duchess Charlotte's next younger sister, 18-year-old Therese (1773–1839), who on 25 May 1789 had married Erbprinz (hereditary prince) Carl Alexander von Thurn und Taxis. Nothing else seems to be known about Therese as a singer, but it is safe to assume that she had a good musical education before her marriage. The wealthy Thurn und Taxis court would have provided an environment in which she had the opportunity to hear music-making at the highest level, and participate in other internal productions like that of *Entführung* in Dischingen.

How the Willmann sisters came to have entrée to the Thurn und Taxis court remains unknown. Their brother Maximilian later became a cellist in the Thurn und Taxis orchestra, but he took up this position only around 1794; in 1791 he was still a member of the Hofkusik in Bonn, so he is probably not the link. (We currently do not know what Maximilian was doing during the hiatus of the Bonn theater in 1791, so it is possible that he was traveling with his sisters and father, but at present we have no evidence that he did.) Perhaps the father Johann Ignaz had a connection to someone in the Thurn und Taxis musical establishment.

One of the most striking aspects of the Dischingen performance of *Entführung* is that Magdalena Willmann sang the male role of Belmonte. It seems likely that her usual role in that opera would

have been Konstanze. Magdalena's performance of Belmonte in Dischingen is her only documented appearance in a male role, but it is one that may have suited her voice. Some sources from the time suggest that she had an exceptionally strong chest voice and an unusually low range. The Munich report on her performance in *Der Barbier von Sevilien* mentions her wide range, and the amended version quoted in the *Musikalische Monathsschrift* emphasizes "especially" her low range. Heinrich Wilhelm Seyfried, in a follow-up to his report on Magdalena's poor reception at her Berlin debut on 9 Dec 1788, writes in the *Chronic von Berlin* (alternating between the points of view of her proponents and her detractors):

> Sie hat eine vortreffliche tiefe Alt=Stimme,
> entschieden mehrere Kenner. — Was kümmert uns ihr
> Alt, riefen andere. An einen solchen Ton sind wir
> gar nicht gewöhnt. Ein Frauenzimmer muß fein sin=
> gen, wenn sie ihr Glück machen will.
> [*Chronic von Berlin*, 9 May 1789, 541]

> She has a superb deep alto voice,
> many connoisseurs decided. — What do we
> care about her alto, others cried. We are not
> at all accustomed to such tones. A woman
> must sing delicately if she wants to succeed.

Seyfried is suggesting that her critics thought she sounded insufficiently feminine, which she may well have to some listeners if she had an unusually robust chest voice and low range. (On Magdalena's Berlin debut, see our entry for 11 Oct 1788.)

The tessitura of Belmonte's four arias is G3 to G4, well within the capabilities of a female alto. Belmonte's lowest note in any of his arias is a sustained C3 (C below middle C) in "Wenn die Freude Tränen fließen" in the second act, on the word "Pracht" (m. 30) at the end of the phrase "lohnt fürwahr nicht Krösus' Pracht". This note is certainly possible for a female voice with an unusually low range. But even if Magdalena could not sing down to C3, it would have been easy enough to adapt Belmonte's relatively few low notes to fit her voice.

The Dischingen *Entführung* is currently the only documented case of Walburga Willmann leading a musical performance. She was a pianist, and would almost certainly have led from the keyboard (probably in conjunction with the concertmaster, as was the general practice in opera at the time); Wekhrlin's description implies that the performance was given with full orchestra. When the Willmanns were living in Vienna in the 1780s, they presented two large-scale vocal works in which Walburga could have played a similar role: C. P. E. Bach's setting of Klopstock's *Morgengesang am Schöpfungsfeste* on 10 Feb 1785, and Joseph Haydn's *L'isola disabitata* on 19 Mar 1785. Although Walburga is not mentioned in the documentary record for either of these events, the fact that she led the performance of *Entführung* in Dischingen in 1791 suggests that she might have played a similar role in the performances in Vienna. (For more on the Willmann sisters, see our entry for 13 Jul 1791, and for Magdalena also our entry for 11 Oct 1788.)

According to the letter from Bonn published in the *Musikalische Monathsschrift*, the role of Pedrillo in the Dischingen *Entführung* was sung by "Hofmusiker Marchand." This was certainly Heinrich Wilhelm Friedrich Marchand (1769–after 1812), who studied with Leopold Mozart in Salzburg from 1781 to 1784, and traveled with Leopold to Vienna in 1785 (on Marchand see Sadie 2001 and Hintermaier 1972, 244–46). Marchand, who was a fine violinist and keyboardist, joined the music establishment of the Thurn und Taxis court in 1789 (see Meixner 2018, 449). The "Baron von Schack" who sang Osmin in the Dischingen *Entführung* was Freiherr Theodor von Schacht (1748–1823), music intendant of the Thurn und Taxis court (see Meixner 2018, 452). Schacht's name appears on a vocal part for Osmin in the Thurn und Taxis library, probably in connection with this performance. The "Graf Glenau" who took the role of Bassa Selim in Dischingen was probably Count Ignaz von Klenau (d. Regensburg 1829), a "Hofkavalier" at the Thurn und Taxis court, a relatively obscure member of the Klenau family, but possibly a brother of the considerably more famous military commander Johann von Klenau (the relationship is claimed in this genealogy from 1813).

The wealthy Thurn und Taxis court could afford to spend a good deal of money on its Hofmusik, and the annual outlay on music reached a high of 33,000 fl in 1798 (Meixner 2018, 446). The Thurn und Taxis orchestra is said to have been one of the finest of any German court, and it included several leading instrumentalists of the time who would have been more than equal to the challenges of Mozart's *Entführung* (on the prominent members of the orchestra, see Meixner 2018, 447–52). The court also maintained a separate "Türkische Musique" at Schloß Trugenhofen, consisting of a trumpet, two horns, two clarinets, two oboes, two bassoons, and "Obertambour" (Meixner 2018, 445 and n48), and the performance in Dischingen could also have drawn on their experience with the "Turkish" style.

The second document transcribed at the top of this page was written by journalist and Enlightenment gadfly Wilhelm Ludwig Wekhrlin (1739–1792). Wekhrlin made a career of irritating a succession of local authorities to the point of banishing or imprisoning him. In the late 1760s he was a clerk for the French ambassador in Vienna, and is said to have been the editor of the *Wienerisches Diarium* for a time in 1772. He also produced handwritten newspapers with anecdotes and gossip about the Habsburgs, for which he was arrested and expelled from the Habsburg lands in 1773. After an interval in Regensburg, he returned secretly to Vienna, again working for the French ambassador. The Habsburg authorities recruited him as a spy, but he proved to have no value in this capacity, so he was paid off and again expelled from the Habsburg lands. He initially settled in Augsburg, where he published the satirical *Denkwürdigkeiten von Wien* (1777), for which he was expelled from *that* city. He then relocated to the Swabian town of Nördlingen, where a contretemps with the town's mayor again led to his expulsion. Wekhrlin settled in nearby Baldingen in the lands of the Fürst von Oettingen-Wallerstein; here he published the journal *Chronologen* and its successor *Das graue Ungeheuer*. Because he continued to publish against the mayor of Nördlingen, he was arrested on 4 May 1787 and incarcerated in Burg Hochhaus near Hohenaltheim. He was able to continue writing during his incarceration, and his publications from this period included the two volumes of *Paragrafen*, the second of which contains Wekhrlin's panegyric on the Dischingen *Entführung*. After a time, the conditions of his

confinement were relaxed and he was allowed to travel, so by the time of the Dischingen performance, he would probably have been allowed to attend (Dischingen is only around 15 km as the crow flies from Hohenaltheim). Wekhrlin's entrée to the Thurn und Taxis court was probably through Georg Heinrich Lang, a pastor in Hohenaltheim with whom Wekhrlin had become friendly, and who had been appointed Hofprediger to Princess Therese von Thurn und Taxis, the Blonde of the Dischingen performance (on Wekhrlin and Lang, see Böhm 1893, 233). The hyperbole of Wekhrlin's piece on *Entführung* in Dischingen can be read as either toadying or satirical—given his history, that ambiguity of tone may have been deliberate.

Wekhrlin calls Dischingen—he seems to mean more specifically Schloß Trugenhofen and its lands—the "Swabian Marly," referring to the now demolished Château de Marly near Versailles, which Louis XIV built as a retreat from the formalities of court. Wekhrlin's reference to "Louis the Great" undoubtedly means Louis XIV. Wekhrlin quotes two lines from Wieland's verse narrative *Musarion, oder die Philosophie der Grazien* (1768). The full sentence (Wekhrlin omits the last phrase) is:

> *[...]* Nie sahe man die Musen
> Und Grazien in einem schönern Bund,
> Nie scherzte die Vernunft aus einem schönern Mund,
> Und Amor nie um einen schönern Busen.
> [*Musarion*, 12]
>
> *[...]* Never were seen the Muses
> and Graces in lovelier league,
> Never did Reason jest from nobler mouth,
> And never Amor about a lovelier breast.

The letter from Bonn in the *Musikalische Monathsschrift* implies that Wekhrlin had described the sets (Dekorationen) of the Dischingen performance of *Entführung*, but in effect he says only that the production there was so magnificent as to arouse jealously in the rest of the world were he to say more. However, the reference to "Dekorationen" in the *Monathsschrift* implies that the performance was staged. Fürst Carl Anselm von Thurn und Taxis had no hesitation in paying for expensive one-off events at court, even in remote Dischingen, such as the elaborate festivities in Dischingen 1789 celebrating the marriage of his son Carl Alexander to Therese von Mecklenburg-Strelitz (see Glatthorn 2018, 19ff).

Notes (⇧)

Thayer (1866, i:186) quotes the entire passage from *Musikalische Monathsschrift* on the Dischingen *Entführung*, omitting only the reference to Wekhrlin and the final sentence ("Solche Ereignisse gehören mit Recht zu den Triumphen der Kunst"). The quotation from the 1866 edition is retained in Thayer 1917 (i: 242–43). This item is missing from Schwob (2015).

Haberkamp's catalog of music in the Thurn und Taxis library (D-Rtt) lists manuscripts for *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* under five different shelfmarks (Haberkamp 1981, 161; all links go to the corresponding RISM records, which are based on Haberkamp):

- W. A. Mozart 22/I: full score in three volumes, listed together with:
- W. A. Mozart 22/II: "zahlreiches Stimmenmaterial aus verschiedenen Zeiten von verschiedenen Schreibern. Einige Singstimmen tragen die Namen der Sänger: Mlle Wilmann *[sic]* (Belmonte), H. B. v. Schacht (Osmin)" (no separate RISM record).
- W. A. Mozart 22/III: full score of Konstanze's aria "Ach ich liebte".
- W. A. Mozart 22/IV: another full score of the same aria with the annotation "Bearb[eitet] von Th. v. Schacht".
- W. A. Mozart 22/V: full score of Konstanze's aria "Martern aller Arten".

Rtt also preserves an arrangement of the overture and nos. 1–2 of *Entführung* for 14-part Harmonie (in Sammelband 26), and excerpts from the opera arranged for four clarinets, bassoon, and two horns (in Mozart 17/1). None of these manuscripts is listed in the critical report for the opera in the *Neue Mozart-Ausgaben*.

Scans of the original edition of both volumes of Wekhrlin's *Paragrafen* are available on Google Books (vol. 1; vol. 2).

The obituary of Duchess Charlotte states that in her youth she studied voice in Hannover with a "Giuliani" (although the author betrays some doubt about the name), and this detail was taken up in several subsequent reference works. We have been able to find no trace of a "Giuliani" teaching singing in Hannover in the 1770s or 1780s. A Carlo Massimo Giuliani (1743–1820) was a singer at the court of Bentheim-Steinfurt, but that was quite some distance from Hannover. It is possible that the author of the obituary simply got the name wrong.

We are grateful to Steven Whiting for his comments on the draft of this entry, and to Bruce Brown for his quick answers to queries.

Appendix

The obituary of Charlotte von Hildburghausen in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*

This obituary is the by far the most detailed description of Charlotte von Hildburghausen's singing. The article on her in Schilling's *Encyclopädie* (Schilling 1840) is essentially plagiarized from the obituary with only very slight adaptation. Schilling's entry was probably Grobe's source (1874, 453–54), which give the same material with only minor differences and no citation. Schoeppel (1917, 158ff) also seems to have drawn on the obituary, but synthesizes it with other sources, including Jean Paul's letter to Otto. The

obituary is signed "Gn."; we have suggested in the main text above that this may have been Johann Andreas Genßler. All German spellings are as they appear in the original.

NEKROLOG.

Am 14ten May starb zu Hildburghausen die regierende Frau Herzogin, *Charlotte*, geb. Herz. von Meklenburg-Strelitz, 48sten Lebensjahre. Die Anzeige ihres Todes gehört allerdings auch in diese Blätter. Nicht, als wenn hier von dem gesprochen werden könnte, was sie überhaupt, und was sie, als Fürstin, dem Lande war; auch das wäre kaum zu erwähnen, dass die Tonkunst an ihr eine wahre Freundin verlor: denn wer setzte dies von einer Fürstin von so ausgezeichneter Bildung in jeder Hinsicht, nicht ohnehin voraus: aber das ist Pflicht, hier anzumerken, dass sie diese Kunst selbst in einem ausgezeichneten Grade, als Sängerin, ausübte. Sie gehörte zu denen Dilettanten, die in das Wesen der Kunst wirklich einged[r]ungen sind, und die, in ihren Kunstleistungen, auf *dies* ihr, für alles Schöne empfängliche Gemüth und leicht erregbares Gefühl
hinwenden; keineswegs zu denen, die Musik blos zum Zeitvertreib in leeren Stunden üben, nur aus Schicklichkeit sie zu schätzen behaupten oder vorgeben.

Von der Natur, wie mit einer edeln, schönen Gestalt, so auch mit einer silberreinen, volltönenden, sehr biegsamen Stimme beschenkt, bekam ihr schönes Talent seine erste Bildung durch einen italien. Gesangmeister in Hannover. (So viel uns bekannt ist, durch Giuliani.) Sie setzte indess, nach ihrer Vermählung mit dem jetzt regierenden Herzoge von Sachsen-Hildburghausen, getrieben durch wahres Kunstgefuhl, ihre Gesangübungen eifrig fort, und erlangte, mit Beyhülfe mehrer, jenem nachfolgender Meister, durch
Hören anderer vorzüglicher Sängerinnen u. Sänger,
und durch eigenes Streben nach einem edeln, ausgebildeten Vortrage, einen hohen Grad von Vollendung. Mit dieser so vorzüglichen Künstlergabe entzückte sie denn auch immer alle, die um sie versammlet waren; und war dabey eben so an-

OBITUARY.

On 14 May in Hildburghausen, the reigning Duchess, *Charlotte*, née Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, died at the age of 48. The news of her death certainly belongs in these pages. It is not that she could be spoken of here because of what she was in general and what she was as a princess in these lands; and it would hardly be worth noting that music lost a true friend in her: for who does not take such a thing for granted with a princess of such excellent education in every respect? But it is a duty to note here that she herself practiced this art to such an excellent degree as a singer. She belonged to those amateurs who have truly penetrated
into the nature of the art, and who in their artistic achievements direct toward *this* their sensitive disposition for all that is beautiful and their easily roused emotions; and in no manner toward those who merely practice music as a pastime in their empty hours, only claiming or feigning to treasure it because it is respectable to do so.

Endowed by Nature with a noble and beautiful form, as well as a silvery pure, full, and supple voice, her fine talent received its first education from an Italian singing master in Hannover. (So far as we know, from Giuliani.) After her marriage to the now reigning Duke of Sachsen-Hildburghausen,
driven by true artistic feeling, she then zealously continued her vocal education, and with the assistance
of several successive masters, through hearing other excellent female and male singers , and through her own striving for a noble and well-trained execution, she achieved a high degree of perfection. With such an excellent artistic gift, she always enchanted all who gathered around her; and she was so unpretentious
in this as always to be ready to sing for receptive listeners.

spruchlos, als immer bereit zum Gesang vor empfänglichen Hörern.

In ihren frühern Jahren fand sie viel Vergnügen daran, in den Hofconcerten Arien, Duetten etc. zu singen, wobey gewöhnlich ihr Durchl. Gemal sie selbst mit der Violin accompagnirte. Es war für jeden Künstler eine höchst erfreuliche Erscheinung, dieses würdige Regentenpaar der Kunst
mit so viel Liebe anhangen zu sehen. Sie sang mit der grössten Lieblichkeit und Präcision, so wie mit den geschmackvollsten Manieren ihr Adagio, und dann mit eben so grosser Leichtigkeit und Reinheit die Passagen und Coloraturen im Allegro. So sang sie früher mehre Arien von Sarti, (mit besonderer Freude erinnern wir uns der: *La tu vedrai* etc.), von Martini, Paisiello, Cimarosa; dann von Mozart die Arien aus der *Entführung* herrlich, so dass man nicht wusste, sollte man mehr das hohe Gefühl, mit welchem sie dieselben vortrug, oder ihre Bravour in den Rouladen bewundern. Später sang sie die Arien aus *Titus* vorzüglich gern; dann auch die, aus der *Ginerva* von S. Mayer, und, ausser mehren andern, die verschiedenen grossen Scenen von Righini — man kann sagen, mit vollendetem Vortrag. Auch die beyden, ihr vorangegangenen Tonmeister, Reichardt und Righini, mit denen sie in Berlin oft sang, wenn sie sich am Hofe ihrer, nun mit ihr vereinigten, königl. Schwester befand, liessen ihr volle Gerechtigkeit wiederfahren. Ersterer äusserte unter anderm: nur sie könne eine Marchetti ersetzen; und sprach sein Urtheil über sie auch in seinen Schriften öffentlich aus. Ihr Triumph aber, und wo sich ihr hohes, schönes Gemüth am reinsten darlegte, war: Grauns *Tod Jesu*. Mit feyerlicherer Rührung und Wahrheit im Ausdruck sind die Recitative und Arien in diesem Werke wol nie und von Niemand gesungen worden, als von ihr. Mit jedem Tone schien sie ihr eigenes begeistertes Gefühl auf die Zuhörer überzutragen, und keiner erschien als leerer, bedeutungsloser Klang; alle sprachen sie

In her earlier years she took much pleasure in singing arias, duets, etc. in concerts at court, at which her Serene Husband usually accompanied her on the violin. For every artist it was a supremely gratifying phenomenon to see this worthy ruling couple taking up art with so much love. She sang with the greatest sweetness and precision, as well as with the most tasteful embellishments in her adagios, and then with just as much lightness and purity the passages and coloratura in allegros. Formerly she sang many arias by Sarti (we recall with special pleasure "Là tu vedrai etc."), by Martín y Soler, Paisiello, Cimarosa; then the arias from *Entführung* by Mozart, so magnificently that one did not know whether one should admire more the great feeling with which she performed these or her bravura in the roulades. Later on she especially liked to sing the arias from *Titus*; and also those from *Ginerva* by Simon Mayr, and among many others the various great scenes by Righini — one can say, with perfect execution. The two masters of music who predeceased her, Reichardt and Righini, with both of whom she often sang in Berlin when she found herself at the court of her royal sister, with whom she is now united, did her full justice. The former said among other things: now she could replace a Marchetti; and he often expressed his judgment of her in his published writing. Her triumph,
however, where she showed most purely her exalted and beautiful feeling, was in Graun's *Tod Jesu*. The recitatives and arias in this work have probably never been sung by anyone with more solemn expression and truth than by her. With every note she seemed to convey her own ardent feeling to the listener, and none seemed to be empty, meaningless sound; she spoke everything with her silvery purity, like the speech of a higher being, to the heart, and aroused in the sensitive listener the same high feeling that lived in her herself. For all who ever

in ihrer Silberreinheit, gleich einer Sprache höherer Wesen, zum Herzen, und erregten bey dem empfänglichen Zuhörer dasselbe hohe Gefühl, welches in ihr selbst lebte. Allen, die sie je in dieser Musik gehört haben, rufe ich nur die Recitative: "Gethsemane! wen hören deine Mauern" — "Ach! mein Immanuel! da liegt er" — und die Arie: "Singt dem göttlichen Propheten" — in's Gedächtnis, und noch jetzt werden die himmlischen Töne der hohen Frau in ihrer Seele wiederklingen. — Die letzte Musik, in welcher sie vor dem Publicum, das, so weit es der Anstand erlaubte, jederzeit in den Hofconcerten zugelassen wurde, sang, war Rombergs Composition zu Schillers *Glocke*. Thränen flossen, so oft sie die Worte sang: Ach, die Gattin ist's, die theure; ach, es ist die theure Mutter etc. Sie selbst war ja eine Vielen so theure Mutter, und wird nun schon selbst so heiss beweint!

heard her in this music, I call to mind only the recitative "Gethsemane! wen hören deine Mauern" — "Ach! mein Immanuel! da liegt er" — and the aria: "Singt dem göttlichen Propheten!" — and the heavenly tones of this exalted woman will resound once more in their souls. — The last music in which, so far as her condition allowed, she was ever permitted to sing in the concerts at court was Romberg's setting of Schiller's *Glocke*. Tears flowed whenever she sang the words: "Ach, die Gattin ist's, die theure; ach es ist die theure Mutter, etc." She herself was indeed such a dear mother to many, and is now herself already so keenly mourned.

Die letzte Zeit verlor sie, wegen öfterer Kränklichkeit und äusserer Verhältnisse, den Muth, grössere Tonstücke zu singen: sie beschränkte sich daher auf kleinere Gesänge am Pianoforte; und auch hier sang sie mit Leben und Seele. Nie blieb ein von ihr gesungenes Lied ohne Wirkung auf die Zuhörer; aber auch nie sang sie ein gleichgültiges, oder ein Lied, das nicht mit Geist und irgend einem Funken wahrer Kunst geschrieben war. Ihre Wahl war die richtigste. Es konnten wol die von ihr verworfenen Gesänge dennoch Werth haben, besonders für Andere: aber das, was sie wählte, gehörte gewiss zu dem Besten. Mehre deutsche Lieder Reichardts, und zwey Sammlungen von 12 italien. Arietten Righini's liebte sie vorzüglich.

Recently, because of frequent illness and external circumstances, she lost the courage to sing larger musical works: she therefore limited herself to smaller songs on the pianoforte; and here too she sang with life and soul. No song that she sang ever failed to have an effect on the listeners; but she also never sang an indifferent song or one that had not been written with spirit and some spark of true art. Her selection was unerring. The songs that she rejected might well have been worthy, especially for others: but what she chose certainly belonged to the best. She especially loved several German songs by Reichardt, and two collections of 12 Italian ariettas by Righini.

Ihre letzten Töne verhalleten, verschmolzen mit den, ihnen so verwandten herrlichen Tönen Hermstedts, der ihre letzten Gesänge mit der Klarinette begleitete, dessen Werth als Künstler sie ganz erkannte, und dessen Töne überhaupt

Her last tones faded away, blended with those magnificent tones, so closely allied to hers, of Hermstedt, who accompanied her last songs with

Original	Translation
mit unter den letzten waren, die ihr Ohr vernahm, ihr Herz empfand. Und dies hohe Gemüth musste so früh den zufälligen Mängeln der irdischen Hülle unterliegen; so früh den unveränderlichen Gesetzen der Natur folgen! Sie, die so Viele durch ihre schönen Talente beglückte, so Viele durch die ihr zu Gebote stehenden Mittel tröstete, musste noch lange und schwere Leiden dulden, ehe sie in das Land der Verklärung, welches sie, in ihren seelen vollen Klängen so oft ahnen liess, eingehen konnte! Sie ruhe sanft! In den bessern Welten wird sich ihr Geist zu noch höhern Gefühlen, zu noch grösserer Vollendung freudig emporschwingen! *Gn.*	the clarinet, whose worth as an artist she fully recognized, and whose tones were among the last that her ear ever perceived, her heart felt. And this exalted soul was required to succumb so soon to the chance defects of the mortal shell, so soon to follow the inexorable laws of Nature! She, who delightedso many with her beautiful talents, who comforted so many with the resources that stood at her command, was required to endure long and heavy suffering before she could enter the land of transfiguration that she so often presaged in her full and soulful sounds. May she rest in peace! In the better world her spirit will joyfully rise to still higher feelings with still greater perfection! *Gn.*

The soprano aria "Là tu vedrai" is from Act 1, scene 9 of Giuseppe Sarti's *Giulio Sabino*. It is a virtuosic coloratura aria with a wide range. "Ginerva" is Simon Mayr's *Ginerva di Scozia* (1801). The obituary refers to Charlotte singing three items from Carl Heinrich Graun's passion oratorio *Der Tod Jesu* (1755), on a text by Karl Wilhelm Ramler:

> Part 1
> no. 3, accompanied recitative, soprano, "Gethsemane! Gethsemane!"
> no. 6, recitative, soprano, "Ach mein Immanuel!"
>
> Part 2
> no. 19, aria, soprano, "Singt dem göttlichen Propheten", a full da-capo aria with a range up to C6 (two octaves above middle C).

The obituary also refers to Andreas Romberg's setting of Schiller's *Das Lied der Glocke* (1799), Romberg's op. 25, published in 1809. It is a cantata for four solo voices, choir, and orchestra. The section singled out in the obituary is a setting of lines 235–65 of Schiller's poem, on the death and burial of a wife:

> Ach! die Gattin ist's, die Theure,
> Ach! es ist die treue Mutter,
> Die der schwarze Fürst der Schatten
> Wegführt aus dem Arm des Gatten,
> Aus der zarten Kinder Schaar ...

> Ah! it is the wife, the dear one,
> Ah! it is the loyal mother,
> Whom the dark Prince of Shadows
> Takes away from the husband's arms,
> From the flock of tender children ...

The writer notes that Charlotte, in her last years, especially loved to sing "two collections of 12 Italian ariettas" by Vincenzo Righini. These would have been the *XII Ariette italiane* published by Schott in 1788 (BSB); and *Douze Ariettes avec accompagnement de Pianoforte, Paroles italiennes et allemandes* published by Simrock in 1805 (BSB). The 1788 set contains the arietta "Venni, Amore" which provided the theme for Beethoven's variations WoO 65; on this collection and Beethoven's variations, see also our entry on Countess Hatzfeld's performance of "Tutte nel cor vi sento" in Bonn. The clarinetist with whom Duchess Charlotte is said to have sung near the end of her life was Johann Simon Hermstedt (1778–1846).

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