

From Province to Province: Theatre Journey from Olomouc to Pressburg

Jana Laslavíková

In the nineteenth century, migrations and movements in German-speaking theatre environments were an integral part of the career paths of German-speaking theatre personalities. Theatre almanacs and biographic dictionaries provide useful sources for reconstructing the map of the overall professional network created by the mobility of the individual theatre personalities and even entire companies under the leadership of the same director. The routes show several shared features, such as movement from small provincial towns to bigger towns, from less significant ones to more significant ones, from small theatres with low profits to bigger ones, or even the progress of artists from working in provinces to theatres in the metropolis. The most frequent reason was their growing professional experience that enabled them to secure better contracts. In several cases, however, the changes in their career paths do not show any of the above characteristics. Quite the reverse, some artists migrated between very similar theatres, whether in terms of size, importance, or remuneration. Why did these changes take place then? What was the main motivation behind shifting from one place to another, often hundreds of kilometres away, to the same type of municipal theatre? Is it possible to talk about cultural transfer and mutual influence between municipal environments, including theatres, in linguistically determined German-speaking areas at all?

To answer these questions, we will look into the examples of two German-speaking theatre directors, Ignatz Czernitz (Ignaz Csernitz, Ignaz Czernits, 1814–1896) and Emanuel Raul (Emanuel Friedmann by his real name, 1843–1916), who rented the municipal theatres in Olomouc¹ and Pressburg (the present-day Bratislava)² in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Due to the very similar cultural milieus in which these two directors worked, we cannot talk

¹ Jiří Kopecký, Lenka Křupková, “Olomouc’s ‘Half-Year’ Provincial Theatre and Its Repertoire,” in *Opera as Institution: Networks and Professions (1730–1917)*, eds. Cristina Scuderi, Ingeborg Zechner (Zürich: LIT VERLAG GmbH & Co. KG, 2019), 157–178.

² Jana Laslavíková, *Mestské divadlo v Prešporku na sklonku 19. storočia. Medzi provinciou a metropolou [The Municipal Theatre in Pressburg at the Close of the 19th Century. Between Province and Metropolis]* (Bratislava: Hudobné centrum; Historický ústav, 2020).

of any cultural transfer between Olomouc and Pressburg in the strict sense, since the operations of German-speaking theatre companies in municipal provincial theatres in the Austro-Hungarian Empire were very similar.³ However, if it is the movement and migration of people, their ideas, and impetuses what we mean by transfer – as the case was not only the transmission of some information (that took place a lot more efficiently through books and periodicals anyway), but personal encounter and getting to know each other, bonding and mutual enrichment between the two participating parties and, at the same time, leaving their footprint in the new environment⁴ – it is important to examine the determinants of this transfer, as it had an influence on the activities of the above-mentioned German-speaking directors, too.

The analysis of contemporaneous source materials reveals that, besides numerous shared features, one of the crucial elements was different in every town, and this was the composition of the urban elite that formed the regular audience.⁵ Olomouc was a German-Czech, while Pressburg was a German-Hungarian town.⁶ The presence of the Czech elite, who gained access to the cultivation of their own language in the theatres over the nineteenth century despite the absence of a country of their own, led to their national unity (and to the birth of their own country after 1918). As Jitka Ludvová noted, “to have a professional theatre in one’s own language was one of the top priorities of the national ambitions in the nineteenth century. Not only because many people of various strata gathered in the auditorium and were thus accessible to political influences, but also because a professional theatre was a place of enterprise, a lot of money flew

³ Walther Taufar, “Das deutschsprachige Theater in Marburg an der Drau. Typologie eines Provinztheaters,” (PhD diss., Universität Wien, 1982); Peter Schmitt, *Schauspieler und Theaterbetrieb: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte des Schauspielstandes im deutschsprachigen Raum 1700–1900* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990); Hermann Schwedes, *Musikanten und Comödianten – eines Pack wie das andere. Die Lebensformen der Theaterleute und das Problem ihrer bürgerlichen Akzeptanz* (Bonn: Verlag für Systematische Musikwissenschaft, 1993).

⁴ Anna Veronika Wendland, “Cultural Transfer,” in *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, eds. Ansgar Nünning, Birgit Neumann (Berlin–Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 45–66.

⁵ Adam Hudek, Peter Šoltés, László Vörös, “Úvod” [“Introduction”], in *Elity a kontraelity na Slovensku v 19. a 20. storočí. Kontinuita a diskontinuita* [Elites and Counter-elites in Slovakia in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Continuities and Discontinuities], eds. Adam Hudek, Peter Šoltés (Bratislava: VEDA, vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied, 2019), 9–30.

⁶ Elena Mannová, Gabriela Dudeková, “Úvod. Komu patrí Bratislava? Multietnické mesto ako miesto lokálnej, národnej a nadnárodnej reprezentácie” [“Introduction. Whom does Bratislava Belong to? A Multiethnic City as a Site of Local, National and Transnational Representation”], in *Medzi provinciou a metropolou. Obraz Bratislavy v 19. a 20. storočí* [Between the Province and the Capital City: The Image of Bratislava in the 19th and 20th Centuries], ed. Gabriela Dudeková (Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV, 2012), 9–22.

through it, it was a significant employer for a number of professions, and it was linked to properties, buildings, business regulations, and licences.”⁷

For the Hungarian elite, the theatre was a means to spread the Hungarian language, which was to unite the Hungarian (multilingual) nation. At the same time, it served national representation purposes. Just like the Czech elite, the Hungarian one also took an active part in local politics through their activities in nationally oriented societies.⁸ What was even more important was their membership in the municipal council (known in Olomouc as the general committee and in Pressburg as the municipal committee) that took decisions about the lease of the theatre and the manner of its operations.⁹ The minutes of the meetings of the municipal council, as well as those of the meetings of the mayor and the theatre committee, reveal ties between the town as the owner of the theatre building and the theatre director as its lessee, and these ties influenced the manner of the existence of the theatre life of the town. If their relationship was good, the director received financial aid or concessions for energy and services from the town (from the municipal magistrate, as well as from the local societies) and, in that way, he could afford to purchase theatre novelties, pay out the agreed remuneration to the members of his ensemble, and organize regular guest performances of popular artists from the ticket revenue.¹⁰ The latter did not cover all the expenses, such as repairs of the building or the purchase of new decorations. As a central public venue of culture, the theatre had to be a priority for the local elite, especially when the town owned an older theatre building; in the opposite case, the director was unsuccessful.

The following text focuses on the relationship of Ignatz Czernitz and Emanuel Raul with the municipality of Pressburg at the level of the decisions of the town about the operations of the theatre and the views of local critics about the

⁷ Jitka Ludvová, *Až k bořkému konci. Pražské německé divadlo 1845–1945* [*To the Bitter End. Prague German Theatre 1845–1945*] (Praha: Academia: Institut umění – Divadelní ústav, 2012), 25.

⁸ Štefan Gaučík, “Kultúrne stratégie elit Prešporskej I. sporiteľne (1883–1918)” [“Cultural Strategies of the Elites of the First Prešporok Savings Bank (1883–1918)”], in *Kontinuita a diskontinuita*, eds. Adam Hudek, Peter Šoltés (Bratislava: VEDA, vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied, 2019), 190–214.

⁹ Jana Magdaléna Májecková, “Prví virilisti a poslanci Prešporka: municipiálny výbor po reforme samosprávy v roku 1870” [“The First Virilists and the Elected Members of the Pressburg Municipal Council after the Administration Reform of 1870”], in *V supermarkete dejín. Podoby moderných dejín a spoločnosti v stredoeurópskom priestore. Pocta Elene Mannovej* [*In the Supermarket of History. The Pattern of Modern History and Society in the Central European Region. In Honour of Elena Mannová*], ed. Gabriela Dudeková-Kováčová (Bratislava: VEDA, vydavateľstvo SAV; Historický ústav SAV, 2021), 411–431.

¹⁰ See Jana Laslaviková, “The High Province on the Western Border of Hungary: Ideological Aspects of the Operations of the Municipal Theatre in Pressburg in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *TheMA: Open Access Research Journal for Theatre, Music, Arts* 8, no. 1–2 (2019): 1–18.

staged opera repertoire, since that was the “destination” of theatre transfer. Both directors worked with their companies first in Olomouc and subsequently in Pressburg, with Czernitz working simultaneously in both towns for two seasons. During their careers, they became renowned provincial directors, in whose ensembles many popular actors and singers were formed. They began their own artistic careers as singers and actors in smaller theatres of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and subsequently established their own theatre companies. Czernitz stayed in Olomouc for four seasons and in Pressburg for five. Raul worked in Olomouc for three seasons and in Pressburg for nine, which provides a more extensive material for the analysis of his activities and reveals the reasons why his contract with the town was successfully renewed twice.

From Fortress to Former Coronation Town

In the latter half of the nineteenth century (specifically till 1884), Pressburg rented out to directors and their companies its theatre building erected in 1776. This first brick-and-mortar, free-standing theatre in Hungary was replaced in 1886 by a new building (the present-day Historical Building of the Slovak National Theatre on Hviezdoslav Square).¹¹ The latter had a Hungarian inscription on its façade, saying Városi Színház (Municipal Theatre in English). From the latter half of the eighteenth century onwards, the development of public theatre life in Pressburg was influenced on the one hand by the historically significant status of the town as the capital of Hungary and, on the other hand, by its contacts with the cultural milieu of Vienna, cultivated mainly by the German-speaking Pressburgers. The regular theatre audience consisted of German-speaking citizens of Hungary and their social status was marked by their publicly demonstrated loyalty to the Government of Hungary (they participated in Hungarian societies, used Hungarian greetings, supported Hungarian MPs in the Hungarian Parliament etc.).¹² Nevertheless, they cultivated their culture in German, and this

¹¹ Katarína Haberlandová, Laura Krišteková, “Theatre Architecture in Bratislava in the Context of Cultural-Social Changes, Urban-Planning Concepts and Architectural Innovations over Three Centuries,” in *Cultural and Artistic Transfers in Theatre and Music. Past, Present, and Perspectives*, ed. Michaela Mojžišová (Bratislava: VEDA Publishing House of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 2021), 114–138.

¹² Elena Mannová, Jozef Tancer, “Od uhorského patriotizmu k menšinovému nacionalizmu. Zmeny povedomia Nemcov na Slovensku v 18. až 20. storočí” [“From Hungarian Patriotism to Minority Nationalism. Changes in the Awareness of Germans in Slovakia from the 18th to the 20th Centuries”], in *My a tí drubí v modernej spoločnosti. Konštrukcie a transformácie kolektívnych identít [We and The Others in Modern Society. Constructions and Transformations of Collective Identities]*, eds. Gabriela Kiliánová, Eva Kowalská, Eva Krekovičová (Bratislava: Veda – vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied, 2009), 351–415.

met with opposition at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.¹³ The reason was that, in the service of nationalism, the theatre was perceived as one of the main means of spreading the national (Hungarian) language and culture, which fully manifested itself in Hungary after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 and the passing of the so-called language law in 1868. The ceremonial opening of the new building, stylized in national spirit (and with a programme consisting exclusively of Hungarian works) in 1886 was viewed as the symbolic beginning of a new era of the Hungarian Muse in Pressburg.¹⁴ The 1886 theatre season was therefore divided into a German and a Hungarian part, with their respective directors and ensembles. This was a major change from the way the first, 1776 theatre building had been leased, which had been rented exclusively by German-speaking directors.

Besides its brick-and-mortar theatre building, Pressburg offered to theatre directors a summer Arena in Au Park on the present-day Petržalka side of the Danube. In this way, the lessee could ensure a year-round operation for the members of his ensemble. However, the Arena was unroofed and could therefore be used only in good weather (the town built a roofed Arena at the same place, which still stands, only in 1899). When it rained, the shows moved to the brick-and-mortar theatre, which was a cool, dark and, consequently, quite unattractive place in the summer months (electric lighting was installed in the Pressburg theatre only in 1904–1906). The performances in the brick-and-mortar building took place from October till April, then they moved to the Arena until early September. For the sake of clarity, it should be noted that everything depended on the audience's interest, or on the social events which brought potential theatre visitors to the town. These included exhibitions and trade fairs, and the annual gatherings and celebrations of the local societies, which invited partner societies from nearby or more remote places. The introduction of rail transport also increased the number of visitors. Travelling to Pressburg for theatre from Malacky, a small town in the Záhorie region, is mentioned for example by the prominent Slovak lawyer, politician, and writer Ivan Déer.¹⁵ In the winter months, the repertoire consisted of German, Austrian, French, and English plays, comedies, and farces, to which costly operettas were added in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In the

¹³ See Eleonóra Babejová, *Fin-de-Siècle Pressburg. Conflict & Cultural Coexistence in Bratislava 1897–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

¹⁴ [Anonymous]: "Preßburgs neues Heim der Musen," *Preßburger Zeitung* 123, no. 263 (September 22, 1886): [2]. See also Otto von Fabricius, *Das neue Theater in Preßburg. Festschrift* (Preßburg: Druckerei des Westungarischer Grenzboten, 1886) and Károly Samarjay, *A pozsonyi régi és új színház. Das alte und neue Theater in Preßburg* (Pozsony-Preßburg: Wigand F. K. Nyomdájá, 1886).

¹⁵ Ivan Déer, *Rozpomienky na starý Prešporok* [*Memoirs of Old Pressburg*]. Archiv Národního muzea v Praze [Archives of the National Museum in Prague], Ivan Déer, box 7, inv. no. 358, p. 37.

late nineteenth century, modern plays and dramas from the German and the Austrian cultural milieus, as well as modern Spanish and Norwegian works, were also staged.¹⁶ In the summer theatre, the entertainment genre, including local farces full of references to funny local figures, prevailed almost exclusively. Just like in other municipal theatres, it was in the interest of the director to provide opera performances to the audience to gain their favour. As Pressburg had been the capital of Hungary from the late eighteenth century and, until 1848, also the venue of the sessions of the Hungarian Parliament, regular performances of an opera repertoire, including German Singspiele, were contractually guaranteed. If the director had no singers of his own, he had to invite an independent opera company. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the presence of opera on the stage of the Municipal Theatre symbolized mainly the glory of this former coronation town. Successful directors were those who regularly staged operas in a good quality and with an adequately large opera ensemble.¹⁷

Theatre Director Ignatz Czernitz Leading the Municipal Theatre in Pressburg

Theatre director Ignatz Czernitz arrived in Pressburg for the first time in April 1870. He took over the theatre along with Adam Bauer, the administrator of the Olomouc theatre. The actor Dr. Rudolf Tyrolt, who played in Czernitz's ensemble in Olomouc in the early years of his prolific career (and, invited by the former director, came to Pressburg as a guest performer in the summer of 1872), described this director as a "principal from the olden days," who was very informal with the members of his ensemble. "His motto was: don't be banging your head against a brick wall!"¹⁸ He took care of his ensemble members with patience and understanding. Thanks to his exceptional acting skills, by which he excellently portrayed characters in the Hungarian dialect (Czernitz was born in

¹⁶ Beatriz Gómez-Pablos, "El teatro de Calderón de la Barca y sus traducciones," in *Actas del XXI Encuentro de profesores de Español en Eslovaquia* (Bratislava: Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2018), 18–25.

¹⁷ Vladimír Zvara, "Hudba a hudobné divadlo v Bratislave pred prvou svetovou vojnou a po nej. Aspekty a súvislosti" ["Music and Musical Theatre in Bratislava Before and After World War I. Aspects and Connections"], in *Príspevky k vývoju hudobnej kultúry na Slovensku [Contributions to the Development of Musical Culture in Slovakia]*, ed. Lubomír Chalupka (Bratislava: Stimul, 2009), 69–86.

¹⁸ "Ignatz Czernitz [...] war noch ein Komödienprinzpal nach gutem alten Schlage. [...] Sein Grundsatz war: Nie mit dem Kopf durch die Wand!" Rudolf Tyrolt, *Aus dem Tagebuch eines Wiener Schauspielers. 1848–1902* (Wien und Leipzig, 1904), 43–44. At the beginning of his memoir, Rudolf Tyrolt recalls his childhood spent with his family in Pressburg. Subsequently, he was coming back there regularly to give guest performances, both in the first and the second theatre building.

the Hungarian town of Pécs), he became a favourite of the Austrian comedian Johann Nestroy, who gave him his costumes and wigs after his directorship ended.¹⁹ At the time of his arrival, Czernitz's background was the Olomouc theatre, which he had taken over in 1868 and directed till 1872. As Jiří Kopecký noted, "at the beginning of the season, the director (i.e., Czernitz) proudly declared that he was in one of the most beautiful provincial theatres of the monarchy [...]" Such words reinforced the favourable image Olomouc had gained as a prominent centre thanks to being a crossroads, although it had ceased to become attractive to the ruler [...]."²⁰ Despite a gradual change in its population (departure of imperial soldiers and dissolution of the military fortress, which enabled the town to expand and attract new Czech inhabitants to its centre) and an economic crisis in Austria-Hungary and Germany in the 1870s, Olomouc still strived for theatre performances comparable to the Viennese ones. The town did not bother even about the problems stemming from the crisis in German-language theatre operations caused by the rapid growth of new theatres and a shortage in proficient artists, which affected provincial theatres in the entire monarchy.²¹ It criticized the arriving lessees, and this resulted in frequent changes in directorship.

As for Pressburg, the theatre building complicated the situation for the lessees. In the 1870s, the first Municipal Theatre in Pressburg had been almost a hundred years old and was getting dilapidated. The town had a nostalgic desire for the return of its "glorious times" and, at the same time, was trying to participate in the modernization and industrialization process of Upper Hungary. Winemaking was a long-standing and highly profitable enterprise in Pressburg and the urban wine bars were joined by numerous cafés. The theatre stood at the front of the then Promenade near the Danube and rounded off the newly created centre. Its attendance, however, was relatively low, since its shabby and uncomfortable seats did not attract audiences. Opera evenings were the only exception. Consequently, to gain the favour of the audiences by an exciting and demanding musical dramatic repertoire, and not to go bankrupt at the same time, was a real challenge for Czernitz. From Olomouc, he brought opera novelties to Pressburg, such as the French grand operas *L'Africaine* and *Les Huguenots* (by Giacomo Meyerbeer), *La Juive* (by Jacques Fromental Halévy), the German romantic opera *Undine* by Albert Lortzing, and the Italian "Effektoper" *Un ballo in maschera* by Giuseppe Verdi. In 1870, he brought along opera soloists from the Olomouc ensemble, such as the first heldentenor F. W. Becker, the lyric tenor

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Jiří Kopecký, *Německá operní scéna v Olomouci I. 1770–1878* [*The German Opera Scene in Olomouc I. 1770–1878*] (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2012), 224.

²¹ Carl Joseph von Bertalan, *Das Provinz-Theater. Skizzen über die kleinen (halbjährigen) Bühnen in Österreich* (Klagenfurt, 1870), 21–22.

and spietenor Gustav Schweighofer, and a soloist called Hynek, and also the conductor of the opera, Emanuel Urban, and the choir master Jaroslav Jugmann. Czernitz himself rendered comic roles and was highly welcome in Pressburg. At a time when Pressburg rejoiced over the arrival of a proficient director, the Olomouc newspapers and the members of its municipal council kept harshly criticizing the standard of the opera performances. As Kopecký noted, "A specific result of Czernitz's bold (or maybe desperate?) step was gaining the summer season in Bratislava (Pressburg) despite the demand of the municipal council for the theatre director to focus exclusively on the Olomouc theatre."²² After gaining the lease of the Pressburg theatre, the hope for better chances made Czernitz to decide to terminate his contract with Olomouc prematurely. After his negotiations with the magistrate, he decided to stay and lead both theatres simultaneously. In 1872, however, he said goodbye to Olomouc for good and focused exclusively on Pressburg. In the winter, he played in the brick-and-mortar building and, in the summer, in the Arena. He was familiar with the preferences of the Pressburg (just like of the Olomouc) audience for Viennese guests, so he regularly invited star actors and singers. At the same time, he adjusted to the actual political situation and enabled Hungarian ensembles to give guest performances in the Municipal Theatre. He also met the demands of the local choirs, such as the Preßburger Liedertafel, which organized a joint concert in Pressburg with the Hungarian choir Budai Dalárda in 1871. Along with Adam Bauer, Director Czernitz supported the event by letting them use the hall of the Redoute, which formed part of the theatre building, free of charge.²³ The event took place during Pentecost and made waves in the cultural circles of Pressburg.²⁴ Czernitz built a positive image of himself in this way, too.

Right in the first season of Czernitz, Meyerbeer's opera *L'Africaine* premiered and this was seen as a big event for Pressburg, since the performance of the singers and the musicians, as well as the elaborate stage design, captivated the full-house audience.²⁵ In 1871, Czernitz staged Rossini's opera *William Tell* with an excellent casting that other provincial theatres could not even dream of, as the Preßburger Zeitung noted.²⁶ This was the merit of the tenor F. W. Becker, the baritone Gustav Simon, and Miss Januschowska, famous from Olomouc as the second lover and the performer of minor vocal parts. In the staging of the opera *Robert le Diable* (by Giacomo Meyerbeer), the soloists earned similar ap-

²² Kopecký, *Německá operní scéna v Olomouci I. 1770–1878*, 233.

²³ [Anonymous]: "Die Preßburger Liedertafel," *Preßburger Zeitung*, 107, no. 123 (May 31, 1871): [2].

²⁴ [Anonymous]: "Die Ofner Liedertafel in Preßburg," *Preßburger Zeitung*, 107, no. 124 (June 1, 1871): [1–2].

²⁵ [Anonymous]: "Theater. Oper," *Preßburger Zeitung*, 106, no. 105 (May 9, 1870): [2–3].

²⁶ E. Marbach: "Die letzten Opernvorstellungen," *Preßburger Zeitung*, 107, no. 125 (June 2, 1871): [1].

preciation.²⁷ A year later, Johann Batka, an influential music and opera critic in Pressburg, praised Director Czernitz for untiringly leading the local theatre with a steady hand, which was also evidenced by his latest staging of Nicolai's opera *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.²⁸ The *Preßburger Zeitung* daily repeatedly noted that Director Czernitz was only commuting to Pressburg and the audience had few opportunities to benefit from his personality, including his remarkable acting performances. When the director decided in 1872 to make a move and devote himself fully to leading the Pressburg theatre, the town welcomed his decision. However, the director slowly encountered the pitfalls of the year-round theatre operations in the town. Pressburg had about twenty-five thousand inhabitants and the regular theatre audience demanded frequent changes in the repertoire, including high-quality opera performances. The problem was the old brick-and-mortar building of the Municipal Theatre, as well as the dilapidated and unroofed summer Arena, which was subject to weather conditions. One of the biggest financial problems for theatre lessees, however, were the hereditary boxes in the Municipal Theatre, to which their aristocratic owners had a lifelong right of use for minimal charge.²⁹ Consequently, the director was losing significant amounts of profit and this fact could not be changed. The theatre had a separate part, a concert hall and ballroom of Redoute, and the director was gaining profits from its lease, too. However, as mentioned above, the hall was used by the local music ensembles and choirs, some of whose members were also members of the municipal committee. They could repeatedly bargain for a lower price of lease or for the use of the hall free of charge to promote local arts. The town praised Czernitz and Bauer, since they owned no debt and had no other receivables towards the town.³⁰ Opera agents appreciated that operas were cultivated,

²⁷ E. Marbach: "Die letzten Opernvorstellungen," *Preßburger Zeitung*, 107, no. 126 (June 3, 1871): [1].

²⁸ J. B. [Johann Batka]: "Musikalische Revue," *Preßburger Zeitung*, 108, no. 79 (April 6, 1872): [1].

²⁹ "Spis o dedičných lóžach v divadle" ["File on the Hereditary Boxes in the Theatre"], Archív mesta Bratislavy [Municipal Archive of Bratislava], Mesto Bratislava [Bratislava City], Účty [Accounts], box 2823, inv. no. 15734. The document on the hereditary boxes in the theatre was written in the latter half of the nineteenth century, at the time when the new theatre was erected, but it describes the whole genesis of the development of the hereditary boxes in the first Municipal Theatre of Pressburg, as well as in the theatre hall situated in the so-called Green House (a building that belonged to the town and in which the establishment of a theatre hall dates back to 1760–1764). The key players in the construction of the new theatre feared the recurrence of the unfavourable situation for the theatre lessees, so they made a definitive decision to end this system under the pretext of the "dissolution" (i.e., demolition) of the old theatre.

³⁰ Only a fragment of a contract survived about the joint activities of Ignatz Czernitz and Adam Bauer and no further contracts have been discovered from that period. What are available are some reports published in the *Preßburger Zeitung*, regularly informing about theatre life in the town through publishing summaries of the meetings of the municipal committee, including decisions regarding the Municipal Theatre.

and high-quality novelties were staged. During the years 1870–1875, numerous French, Italian, and German operas were performed, including several novelties, such as the première of Beethoven's *Fidelio* in 1873.³¹ Opera critiques revealed a pride in German-speaking opera soloists, whose performances matched the standard of the suburban theatres in Vienna. Many of them gained contracts at prominent German-speaking opera houses.³² At the same time, the critics appreciated Czernitz's efforts to bring Wagner's romantic operas *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, as well as Marschner's *Hans Heiling*, to Pressburg. For culture-lovers, the theatre was the centre of German-language theatre culture and to maintain its good reputation was a manifestation of Pressburgian local patriotism. Since bills and accounts of the incomes are not extant, we can only assume that the above reasons, and the consequences of the economic crisis, were the factors behind Czernitz's decision to discontinue his activities in the town in 1875.

Emanuel Raul, the “Last” German-Speaking Director in Pressburg

Another director who came to Pressburg after having previously worked in Olomouc was Emanuel Raul. He was born in Boskovice near Brno and his family was a member of the local Jewish community.³³ After “compulsive stays” in German-speaking provincial towns of the Habsburg Empire, and also in Odessa, Bucharest, and Ljubljana, he decided to set up his own company and, three years later, he already applied to the theatre in Olomouc. He might have been attracted to it because it was near his birthplace, but he apparently overestimated his skills, or underestimated the demands of the operations of the Olomouc theatre. As Lenka Křupková noted, “Raul strived for the best casting in the theatre where he was responsible also for the operations of the opera. No wonder, therefore, that in the first months of his directorship in the Olomouc theatre, whose operations the town did not fund in any way, he encountered financial difficulties.”³⁴ Another problem was the outflow of opera audiences even though Raul's opera performances had a good standard.³⁵ During the summer, Raul rented the theatre in

³¹ Jana Laslavíková, “Beethoven's Oeuvre as an Argument: *Fidelio* Staged by the Municipal Theatre at the End of the 19th Century and its Reception in the Context of the Beethoven Tradition in Pressburg,” *Hudební věda* 57, no. 2 (2020): 130–152, 244–245.

³² Kopecký, *Německá operní scéna v Olomouci I. 1770–1878*, 248.

³³ Jitka Ludvová, “Raul, Emanuel,” in *Hudební divadlo v českých zemích: osobnosti 19. století* [Music Theatre in Czech Lands: Personalities of the 19th Century] (Praha: Divadelní ústav; Academia, 2006), 434.

³⁴ Lenka Křupková, *Německá operní scéna v Olomouci II. 1878–1920* [The German Opera Scene in Olomouc II. 1878–1920] (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2012), 46.

³⁵ Ibid.

Karlovy Vary. This was a spa with a demanding global audience,³⁶ which attended excellent concert events in the summer under the leadership of the experienced conductors Josef Labitzky and his son, August.³⁷ In May 1886, a newly erected theatre, designed by Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer, was opened in the town. At the time of his arrival in the town in 1880, Raul still rented the old theatre building, built in 1788, where his activities were rated as average. As mentioned above, it was extremely difficult to lease older theatre buildings and repairs to them became an indispensable part of the annual budgets of the towns. The reality was often something else, though. At the time of Raul's arrival in Olomouc, the theatre in the Upper Square building celebrated the fiftieth year of its existence. During Raul's second season, a serious accident happened on the stage. The ropes of the pit broke and three female singers standing below fell under the stage and got injured. The local press blamed the town for the incident. As Křupková noted, the town "was so reluctant to spent on the theatre that being there became life-threatening." Although it did make some repairs to it in the summer, these were only minor ones, "for the sake of appearances."³⁸

Just like in the case of Ignatz Czernitz, local critics kept commenting negatively on the opera evenings. The members of the opera ensemble included some young singers, and their performances were labelled as rookie ones. The unfavourable selection of new members or casting the members in unsuitable roles probably stemmed from Raul's inexperience, since he was an actor himself. However, he failed to respond to the remarks voiced by the critics, which pointed out specific mistakes he made. Nevertheless, what speaks in his favour is the fact that he tried to distinguish between opera soloists and operetta ones, which was not a common practice at that time. Moreover, reviewers criticized Raul for his poor choice of operas, some of them having already been played too often, others being already outmoded. Raul's biggest achievement was undoubtedly the guest performance of Pauline Lucca in December 1880. This was not enough, though. In the meantime, competition was gaining foothold in the town in the form of Czech musical and dramatic performances and the Czech newspapers joined Raul's critics. All these facts caused major financial problems to the extent that the town did not renew his contract and Raul had to leave Olomouc after three years.

Thanks to his contacts with the urban elite, the theatre in Karlovy Vary became his long-term background. In Karlovy Vary, the season lasted from about

³⁶ See Anton Carl Löw, *Kurzgefasste aber vollständige Chronik der weltberühmten Cur- und Badestadt Karlsbad seit deren Entstehung bis auf unsere Tage* (Karlsbad: Verlag von Hans Feller, 1874).

³⁷ See Moritz Kaufmann, *Musikgeschichte des Karlsbader Stadttheaters* (Karlsbad: Kommission-Verlag Walther Heinisch, 1932).

³⁸ Křupková, *Německá operní scéna v Olomouci II. 1878–1920*, 52.

April 15th to the end of September, for almost six months. The season in Pressburg and Timișoara started at the beginning of October and closed at the end of April, or by Palm Sunday, and was divided into two parts, a German-language and a Hungarian-language one, each headed by its respective director and his company. These two towns made an agreement to alternate their directors. For the first four months (October to January), Pressburg had the German-speaking director while Timișoara had the Hungarian one. Subsequently (from February to April), the Hungarian director went to Pressburg and the German director to Timișoara. This agreement lasted for thirteen years (1886–1899).³⁹

For Emanuel Raul, the season started in Karlovy Vary, continued in Pressburg, and ended in Timișoara. He leased the Karlovy Vary theatre (the first municipal theatre of 1788, replaced in 1886 by the new building) from 1880; from 1880 to 1883, he concurrently leased the theatre in Olomouc, and, from 1883 to 1886, also the theatre in Liberec.

Raul first came to Pressburg in the autumn of 1890, and from there he moved to Timișoara in the winter of 1891. Raul's success stemmed from his well-executed performances, both in terms of music and drama, and the key figure behind this was the music and opera critic Johann Batka. Apart from his deep commitment to cultural and promotional activities in Pressburg's artistic societies, Batka was an especially active member also of the Zur Verschwiegenheit Masonic lodge, which had long supported German-language theatre in the town.⁴⁰ It was also Batka who, as a renowned reporter of the *Preßburger Zeitung* daily, built up a positive image of Emanuel Raul as a successful provincial director in the media even before his arrival in Pressburg. Consequently, thanks to his contacts with the European artistic milieu, Batka helped Raul to acquire the rights to perform sixteen opera premières between 1891 and 1899. These were *Cavalleria rusticana* (by Pietro Mascagni, 1891), *Jadwiga* (by August Norgauer, 1893), *Mala vita* (by Umberto Giordano, 1893), *Pagliacci* (by Ruggero Leoncavallo, 1893), *Rose von Pontevedra* (by Josef Forster, 1894), *Der Weise von Cordova* (by Oscar Straus, 1894), *Hansel and Gretel* (by Engelbert Humperdinck, 1894), *Enoch Arden* (by Viktor Hansmann, 1895), *The Bartered Bride* (by Bedřich Smetana, 1895), *Mignon* (by Ambroise Thomas, 1896), *Heimchen am Herd* (by Carl Goldmark, 1896), *The Evangelist* (by Wilhelm Kienzl, 1897), *Djamileh* (by Georges Bizet, 1897), *La bohème* (by Ruggero Leoncavallo, 1898), *Der Streik der Schmiede* (by Max Josef Beer, 1898), and *Griselda* (by Giulio Cottrau, 1898).

³⁹ Maria Pechtöl, *Thalia in Temeswar. Die Geschichte des Temeswarer deutschen Theaters im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Bucharest: Kriterion Verlag, 1972), 190.

⁴⁰ See *Geschichte der gerechten und vollkommenen Johannisloge zur Verschwiegenheit im Oriente Pressburg 1872–1932* (Im Selbstverlag, Druck Gebrüder Stiepel Reichenberg, 1932).

As for the older opera repertoire, there were regular performances of German romantic operas, such as *The Marksman* (by Carl Maria von Weber), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (by Otto Nicolai), *The Night Camp in Granada* (by Conrad Kreutzer), *Hans Heiling* (by Heinrich Marschner), *Martha* (by Friedrich von Flotow), *Alessandro Stradella*, *The Trumpeter of Säckingen* (by Viktor Ernst Nessler), *The Czar and the Carpenter*, *Undine*, *The Armourer* (by Albert Lortzing), *The Golden Cross* (by Ignaz Brüll), and also of the Italian operas *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Lucrezia Borgia* (by Gaetano Donizetti), *Il Trovatore*, *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Aida* (by Giuseppe Verdi) and the French operas *Faust* (by Charles Gounod) and *La Juive* (by Jacques Fromental Halévy). Raul was also interested in staging some of the masterpieces of Richard Wagner (*Lohegrin*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*); their staging, however, depended on obtaining highquality solo members for the ensemble or inviting guest soloists from the Imperial Court Opera.

According to Johann Batka, another evidence of Raul's interest in high-quality shows were the new decorations he ordered from the renowned Viennese studio of Brioschi, Burghart, and Kautsky.⁴¹ In December 1896, Batka reported on the première of the opera *Heimchen am Herd* with such decorations in the *Preßburger Zeitung*. He regretted that the theatre had no electric lighting, and it was difficult to see them.⁴² In January 1893, there was a performance of the opera *Undine*. To reinvigorate this older piece, Raul had ordered some new decorations from the Viennese studio.⁴³

Raul leased the theatre in Pressburg, and thereby also the Timișoara one, for nine years, with each of his lease agreements lasting for three years (i.e., the town renewed his agreement twice, in 1893 and 1896). These were the crucial moments in the development of German-language theatre in Pressburg, while the prominent Hungarian association Toldy Kör, with the support of the Hungarian Government, pursued the establishment of an exclusively Hungarian season at the opening of the new theatre in 1886. The renewals of Raul's agreement in 1893 and 1896 therefore provoked their repeated demonstrations of dissatisfaction, as their aim was not fulfilled. In 1893, the situation "only" led to discussions about reducing the payment for the lighting in the theatre.⁴⁴ In the 1895/96 season, when millennial celebrations were under preparation (presumably of the arrival

⁴¹ See Jana Laslavíková, "Theater Decorations in Pressburg in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *Music in art. International Journal for Music Iconography*, 45 (2020), 155–192.

⁴² J. B. [Johann Batka]: "Theater. Oper 'Heimchen am Herd' von Goldmark," *Preßburger Zeitung*, 133, no. 336 (December 6, 1896): [4].

⁴³ [Anonymous]: "Theater und Kunst Nachrichten. Undine," *Preßburger Zeitung*, 130, no. 8 (January 8, 1893): [5].

⁴⁴ [Anonymous]: "Zur Theaterfrage," *Preßburger Zeitung*, 129, no. 314 (November 13, 1892): [1–2].

of Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin), the activities of pro-Hungarian circles gained momentum and the vote in Raul's favour took place under dramatic circumstances. This led to a growing aversion towards Hungarian theatre in the town, as regularly pointed out by the *Preßburger Zeitung*.⁴⁵ In 1899, Toldy Kör finally achieved a change in the lease of the Pressburg theatre. In the same year, Timișoara completely cancelled German-language presentations and hence the agreement with Pressburg, and the contract with Raul, came to an end. The town leased the theatre to the Hungarian director Iván Relle who ran two companies (a German and a Hungarian one).

Conclusion

In the nineteenth century, municipal theatres in the provincial towns of Olomouc and Pressburg shared several features. These included a German-speaking urban audience and its preferences for Vienna and its cultural milieu. The operational model of the theatres was also similar. As the owner of the building, the town insisted on regular performances of operas and (Viennese) operettas even at the cost of a frequent alternation of lessees. The high costs of acquiring opera novelties and of their high-quality staging, including elaborate costumes and decorations, often made theatre directors bankrupt. Both towns took pride in being called “high” provinces: Olomouc thanks to its (historically) significant military fortress headed by army commanders and Pressburg for being “the second Hungarian town,” the headquarters of the infantry regiment and, from 1869, also the seat of a school for infantry cadets. Moreover, Olomouc justified its demands for high-quality opera productions with the argument that it was the seat of a university and an archdiocese. A Czech theatre also functioned there alongside the German one. Pressburg only had a law academy, but it was an ancient Hungarian coronation town. In both these towns, cultural transfer and its specific manifestations crystallized most clearly at the time of the directorship of Emanuel Raul, whose support by the German-speaking elite, including members of the Masonic lodge, undoubtedly contributed to the success of his nine-year directorship of the newly erected Municipal Theatre in Pressburg. His failure in an “Austrian” province was balanced by his major successes in a “Hungarian” one.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ [Anonymous]: “Zur Frage der Stabilisirung des ungarischen Theaters,” *Preßburger Zeitung*, 132, no. 61 (March 3, 1895): [1–2].

⁴⁶ This study was part of the research of VEGA Grant no. 2/0024/22: *The Theatre as the Venue and Tool of Social Change* and part of the APVV-20-0526 research project *Political Socialization in the Territory of Slovakia during the Years 1848–1993*, both conducted at the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

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From Province to Province: Theatre Journey from Olomouc to Pressburg

Abstract

The following study focuses on cultural transfer and the formation of theatre networks between the towns of Olomouc and Pressburg in the latter half of the nineteenth century. At that time, German-speaking theatre directors, namely Ignacz Czernitz and Emanuel Raul, worked in the municipal theatres of both these provincial towns. Their artistic activities in these two theatres share several features. What differed was the relationship of the urban elite (mainly members of the municipal council, the local press, and cultural societies) and their support of the director. Another important factor for the success of a theatre enterprise was the attractiveness of the theatre building, which decreased with its growing wear and tear. This manifested itself most prominently in the activities of Emanuel Raul, who encountered major financial difficulties in the fifty-year-old Olomouc theatre, whereas he was highly successful in the newly erected theatre in Pressburg.

Z provincie do provincie: divadelní cesta z Olomouce do Prešpurku

Abstrakt

Následující studie se zaměřuje na kulturní transfer a formování divadelních sítí mezi městy Olomouc a Prešpurk v druhé polovině 19. století. V městských divadlech obou těchto provinčních měst tehdy působili německy mluvící divadelní ředitelé, jmenovitě Ignacz Czernitz a Emanuel Raul. Jejich umělecká činnost v těchto dvou divadlech má několik společných rysů. To, co se lišilo, byl vztah městských elit (především členů městské rady, místního tisku a kulturních spolků) a jejich podpora ředitele. Dalším důležitým faktorem pro úspěch divadelního podniku byla atraktivita divadelní budovy, která s jejím rostoucím opotřebením klesala. Nejvýrazněji se to projevilo v činnosti Emanuela Raula, který se v padesát let starém olomouckém divadle potýkal s velkými finančními potížemi, zatímco v nově postaveném divadle v Prešpurku byl velmi úspěšný.

Keywords

municipal theatre; Olomouc; Pressburg; Ignacz Czernitz; Emanuel Raul

Klíčová slova

městské divadlo; Olomouc; Pressburg; Ignacz Czernitz; Emanuel Raul

Jana Laslavíková
Historický ústav SAV, v.v.i.
jana.laslavikova@savba.sk