

**Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* in the Performances of Operas at the Burgtheater:
An Essay on the Circumstances of the 1786/87 Season
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The first performance of Mozart's opera *Le nozze di Figaro* was given at the Burgtheater in Vienna on 1 May 1786, and after the ninth performance in December, it disappeared from the stages of the city until August 1788. It is generally believed that this was due to the great success of Martín y Soler's *Una cosa rara* at the same theater, whose premiere was on 17 November 1786. However, this theory is not based on a consideration of the records of the actual performances of operas at the theater in those years. The number of operas in the repertoire in the 1786/87 theatrical season was greater than in any other season from 1783/84 to 90/91. Judging from the frequency of performances of *Figaro* between May and December 1786, it would be more reasonable to think that this opera was not staged after December in the 1786/87 season simply because the season ended before the opera was given its next performance. The fact that *Figaro* was not in the repertoire of the following season cannot be ascribed to the success of *Una cosa rara* either, because this opera was not staged before August of 1787. Moreover, many other operas of the 1786/87 season were not performed in the following season, too, and in place of them, new ones were introduced and performed in quick succession. As the cause of this sudden renewal of the repertoire, we may propose the departure from Vienna of a singer, Nancy Storace, who had been the leading soprano of the Italian Opera Company there since the 1783/84 season, when the Company had begun its public performances. She had also sung Susanna in the premiere of *Figaro*, and we can imagine that, without her, it became almost impossible to put this opera on the stage again.