

The Dresden Court Orchestra in the Hubertusburg Hunting Palace: The Instrumentation for Performing Operas in 1737, 1741 and 1742

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Under the reign of Saxon Elector Friedrich August II (1696-1763), members of the Dresdencourt orchestra were sent to the Hubertusburg hunting palace during the autumn season. Their names were recorded in lists of the Hubertusburg documents. According to its title, the lists of 1737, 1741 and 1742 show the members who were chosen for performing operas. The instrumentation of this orchestra has not yet been discussed in detail. Therefore, this research examines whether the number of instrumentalists in these three lists indicates the instrumentation for performing operas.

Instrumentalists are identified from these lists through a comparison with yearbooks of the Dresden court. Many documents of Hubertusburg specify that most of them were due to play in the operas, one specific instrument assigned to them in the yearbooks.

It is widely considered that the performing practice of the Dresden court orchestra was reflected in *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (1752) written by Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773), who belonged to this orchestra from 1729 to 1741. He defined the number of each instrument to constitute ensembles in this book. The number of the instrumentalists in those three lists resembles those shown by Quantz. Therefore, all of the instrumentalists must have been ordered to perform at the same time.

However, because violists, oboists and bassoonists were large in number, the total number of instrumentalists in the lists of 1741 and 1742 slightly exceeds that of instruments which Quantz recommended for an ensemble with 10 violins. According to the sets of orchestral parts used for performing operas in those years, the orchestration of arias would have caused this excess.

This research concludes that the number of instrumentalists in these three lists must indicate the instrumentation for performing operas at that time.