

On 11 February 1792, Clemens Anton Wagner (unknown–1793), a violist in the Electoral Saxon *Hofkapelle* in Dresden, put down his quill.<sup>1</sup> He had just written to Gustav Friedrich Wilhelm Großmann a theatre principal – or actor-director and entrepreneur – then in Hannover. In his note, Wagner both lamented the unauthorized circulation of his operatic adaptations and fashioned it as an opportunity to strike a bargain. He wrote:

I have read that your company gave the opera *Doktor Mürner* by Schuster, which you had probably received from Herr Grams in Prague, who presently still has my score. I have had this [opera] arranged as well as *Das Ungeheuer*, the manuscript of which is attached, for the former Count Erdödy Theatre against cash payment. At the time, the Count chose the two pieces amongst various operas, and stipulated to retain them completely for his theatre with which I complied. But Herr Grams, who requested them for an entirely different use, had brought them before the *public*, where one performs them in different places. I certainly know well that this is no rarity, that was however also not my concern. What could have been done has been done; what one could not change had to stay. *Das Ungeheuer* appeared to me somewhat better, if it would otherwise not be difficult; it made a good impression in the Italian, together with perfectly fitting music, and in the coming weeks will be given again here. Should you find it useful for your theatre, there is a clean copy in stock at your disposal against exchange of another opera. I leave you to decide which of these three operas you want to give me [for it]: *Richard Löwenherz*, *Reinald*, *Die Wilden*. I have the parts to all of these operas, and I know how to get the French scores for a cheap price; however, since they cannot please me in these forms and arrangement, I would also like to be relieved [of making] a new copy and [German] text underlay through this favour.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Little is known about the life of Clemens Anton Wagner. He is listed as a member of the Electoral Saxon *Hofkapelle* until 1790. A company under the direction of a ‘C. D. Wagner’ is included in the *Theater-Kalender* of 1792, which was formed in July 1790 and toured the region to the west of Dresden. It is not clear if these Wagners are related. *Churfürstlicher Sächsischer Hof- und Staats-Calender auf das Jahr 1790* (Leipzig: Weidmann, [1790]), 64; and ‘Wagnerische Gesellschaft’, *Theater-Kalender* 13 (1792), 329.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Ich habe gelesen, daß bey Ihrer Gesellschaft die Oper von Schuster Doktor Mürner gegeben worden ist, welche Sie vermuglich von H. Grams aus Prag erhalten haben, der gegenwärtig noch meine Partitur hat: Diese und das Ungeheuer wovon hier das Manuscript folgt, habe ich gegen baare Bezahlung für das vormaliche Gräflich Erdidische Theater bearbeyten laßen, der

Wagner signed and sealed the letter before entrusting it to the Imperial Post for delivery. Owing to the efficacy of the Taxis's postal network, it would have only taken a few days to travel the 350 kilometres from Dresden to Hannover.

Much as the complex system of roads and coach houses that facilitated its delivery, this letter is evidence of the Empire's interconnectivity (see also Figure 0.1). Whereas Wagner was a court musician in Dresden, Großmann directed a mobile company that performed before audiences primarily in the Westphalian and Lower Saxon *Kreise*. The people Wagner mentioned by name in his letter were active in different professions and centres across the Empire and *Kulturkreis*: Joseph Schuster (1748–1812) was a *Kapellmeister* in Dresden, Anton Grams (1752–1823) operated a copy house in Prague, and Count Johann Nepomuk Erdödy (1723–89) had supported a theatre in Pressburg (Bratislava).<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, they were all linked through the theatre. Schuster had composed *Lo spirito di contraddizione* for the Dresden court in 1785, and *Il mostro* by Franz Seydelmann (1748–1806), another Dresden *Kapellmeister*, premiered there the following year.<sup>4</sup> Wagner had adapted these Italian court operas into German *Singspiele* – as *Doktor Mürner* and *Das Ungeheuer* – for Erdödy's court-affiliated theatre. Sometime later, Grams borrowed Wagner's copies and made them public, apparently without his

Herr Graf suchte sich damals unter verschiedenen Oper-Büchern, die zwey Stücken aus, und bedunge sich sie gantz für sein Theater zu behalten, daß habe ich denn auch befolgt, und nur H. Grams der sie zu einem gantz andern Gebrauch verlangte, hat sie in das *Publico* gebracht wo man sie verschiedener orten giebt, ich weis zwar wohl daß es keine Rarität ist, das war aber auch nicht meine Sorge, was man hat thun können ist geschehn, was aber nicht zu ändern war muste bleiben, das Ungeheuer schien mir etwas besser, wenn sich sonst nicht Schwierigkeiten fanden, im italiänischen hat sie mit der vortreflich bassenden Musick viel gethan, und wird mit kommender Woche hier wieder gegeben, sollten Sie sie für Ihr Theater brauchbahr finden, so steht Ihnen eine reinliche vorrätliche Abschrift gegen Tausch einer andern Oper zu Diensten noch stele ich Ihnen frey, welch Sie mir von diesen 3. Opern dafür geben wollen Richart Löwenherz, Reinald, die Wilten, von allen diesen Opern habe ich die Stücken, und weiß auch die französischen Partituren um ein billiges zu bekommen in den Formen und Eintheilung nicht gefallen können, und auch gerne des wieder Abschreibens und Text unterlegen überhoben seyn möchte.' C. A. Wagner to G. F. W. Großmann, Dresden, 11 February 1792, D-LEu, Kestner/ I/C/II/446/Nr. 2, fols. 1r–1v.

<sup>3</sup> On Joseph Schuster, see Laurie Hasselmann Ongley, 'Liturgical Music in Late Eighteenth-Century Dresden: Johann Gottlieb Naumann, Joseph Schuster, and Franz Seydelmann' (PhD diss. Yale University, 1992), 45–61; on Grams, see Milada Jonášová, 'Mozart's Prague Copyists: The Copying Workshop of Anton Grams', in Kathryn L. Libin, ed., *Mozart in Prague: Essays on Performance, Patronage, Sources, and Reception* (Prague: Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, 2016), 73–82; and on Erdödy, see Herbert Seifert, 'Musik und Musiker der Grafen Erdödy in Kroatien im 18. Jahrhundert', *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft: Beihefte der Denkmäler der tonkunst in Österreich* 44 (1995), 191–208.

<sup>4</sup> For more on Franz Seydelmann, see Hasselmann Ongley, 'Liturgical Music in Late Eighteenth-Century Dresden', 46–61.

permission. Knowing that Großmann's company had already performed *Doktor Mürner*, Wagner reasoned that if this former court opera was well received by Großmann's audiences, so too might his adaptation of *Das Ungeheuer*. He thus offered to exchange the *Singspiel* for Großmann's German-language version of either *Richard Löwenherz* (*Richard Cœur-de-lion*; Paris, 1784) by André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry (1741–1813) or *Die Wilden* (*Azémiá*; Fontainebleau, 1786) or *Reinald* (*Renaud d'Ast*; Paris, 1787) by Nicolas-Marie Dalayrac (1753–1809). Wagner would have been well aware that the works he sought were popular with audiences, and he wanted to save time adapting them so that he could stage one of them in German.

Wagner and Großmann had been in contact for at least five years by this point. In 1787, he wrote to Großmann to offer the score to Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf's hit *Der Apotheker und der Doktor* (Vienna, 1786).<sup>5</sup> He made sure to point out that he had already provided a copy of the *Singspiel* to the companies of Friedrich Ludwig Schröder (1744–1816) in Hamburg and Johann Heinrich Böhm (1740–92), which performed in twelve locations across the Reich.<sup>6</sup> Extant correspondence reveals that Großmann, Schröder, and Böhm knew each other well and that they stayed in contact throughout the period; and as such letters as Wagner's further suggest, companies operating across significant geographic expanses knew about each other's activities.<sup>7</sup> The Dresden musician was indeed well aware of the performances of Großmann's company in Kassel, Pymont (Bad Pymont), and Hannover, as well as those of companies in Hamburg and Koblenz that he knew Großmann would value.

Such missives offer only a glimpse into a densely connected theatrical world, which forms the subject of this chapter. Through an examination of archival documents and contemporary periodicals, I uncover the hundreds of German companies that performed across Central Europe in the decades leading up to the year 1800. Just as there was no single political capital of the Holy Roman Empire, so too was there no individual musico-theatrical capital, for many theatres staged German-language works in the largest

<sup>5</sup> C. A. Wagner to G. F. W. Großmann, Dresden, 8 February 1787. D-LEu, Kestner I/C/II/446/Nr. 1, fols. 1r–1v.

<sup>6</sup> Although Schröder is today best known for his staging of Mozart's operas, he was in his time a celebrated theatre director recognized throughout the Holy Roman Empire. See, for instance, Friedrich Meyer, *Friedrich Ludwig Schröder. Beitrag zur Kunde des Menschen und des Künstlers*, 2 vols. (Hamburg: Hoffmann and Campe, 1819). For more on the Böhm company, see Hans Georg Fellmann, *Die böhmische Theatertruppe und ihre Zeit* (Leipzig: Voß, 1928).

<sup>7</sup> These letters are preserved in D-LEu, Kestner I/C/III/192/Nr. 1–36; and D-LEu, Kestner I/C/II/290/Nr. 1–39.

residence cities, the smallest villages, and everything in between. Regardless of size or the assumed importance of a particular centre, the individual theatrical activity of any one location was owing to its position in the Empire. Many of the companies operating within these places were mobile and performed for public audiences before moving to courts, informing one another of their activities in the process. Musicians, dramatists, actors, and audiences were thus kept abreast of the latest developments, activities, and milestones in music theatre through periodicals. Retracing and remapping the movement of theatre companies as recorded in journals not only forces reconsideration of traditional sites of eighteenth-century German music and theatre, but also calls into question supposed divisions between the era's elite and popular cultures. I argue that the Empire's music theatre transcended and melded the boundaries of Imperial Estate, *Kreis*, and Reich – that is, the local, regional, and imperial – as much as it did the city and village, public and court, and the real and imaginary. By decentralizing the landscape of German music theatre in the final decades of the eighteenth century, this chapter reconstructs the Holy Roman Empire's connected musico-theatrical space and in the process uncovers a new map of the long-forgotten terrain of Central Europe's musical and theatrical world.

## Mapping the Landscape of Music Theatre

Wagner began his letter to Großmann by informing him that he had *read* about his company. There was no shortage of sources to which he could have turned. By this time, around 3,500 German periodicals concerned all matter of interests, and roughly 450 were dedicated specifically to the theatre during the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> One of the journals that Wagner would likely have had at his disposal was the *Theater-Kalender auf das Jahr 1792*.<sup>9</sup> Compiled the previous year, the periodical informed its readers, among other news, where a company performed, who directed it, its current line-up of actors, the repertoire it staged, and the pieces it was preparing for future performances.<sup>10</sup> Wagner would have read on page 282 that 'Doktor Mürner, Singspiel von Schuster' was listed among

<sup>8</sup> Wolfgang F. Bender, Siegfried Bushuven, Michael Huesmann, eds., *Theaterperiodika des 18. Jahrhunderts: Bibliographie und inhaltliche Erschließung deutschsprachiger Theaterzeitschriften, Theaterkalender und Theatertaschenbücher*, 3 pts, 8 vols. (Munich: Saur, 1994), 3:1:xxii and xxxi.

<sup>9</sup> Heinrich August Ottokar Reichard, ed., *Theater-Kalender 18 (1792)*.

<sup>10</sup> For example, 'Großmannsche Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender 18 (1792)*, 280–2.

Großmann's latest offerings.<sup>11</sup> If Wagner also had the previous year's *Theater-Kalender* at his disposal, he would have found similar information but also a note cross-referencing the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, which further listed the dates and locations of individual performances of a number of the Empire's troupes.<sup>12</sup> Such journals, the *Theater-Kalender* above all others, constituted important centralized sources of musico-theatrical information.<sup>13</sup>

The *Theater-Kalender* first appeared in 1775. That year, Duke Ernst II of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg (1745–1804) founded a permanent German court theatre in his *Residenzstadt* Gotha when he engaged members of the company led by Abel Seyler (1730–1800) that had previously given works there.<sup>14</sup> Edited by the co-director of this new *Hoftheater*, Heinrich August Ottokar Reichard (1751–1828), the *Theater-Kalender* was unlike most other theatre periodicals that had preceded it, such as the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767–9) and the *Almanach des Theaters in Wien* (1774).<sup>15</sup> Rather than focussing primarily on theatre in one city, Reichard's journal contained reports submitted by correspondents from across the Empire, Europe, and the world. Reichard designed this journal – as Bärstecher had his – for the benefit of practitioners and consumers of German music and theatre. His opening words from the first issue make clear his aim:

[I] flatter myself that this new idea of a paperback for the theatre – and it is new, for the *Vienna Almanac* has only a shade of resemblance with this one – and its implementation will be neither awkward nor unnecessary for our *Vaterland*. . . . We have very few texts about the German theatre, and those that we have, are either too one-sided for general consumption or too critical. In the present work [I have] sought such a text, which is equally useful for the artist and art enthusiast and helps a little to compensate for an absence of a general stage through all its reports, since, given Germany's political constitution, it must always remain an absurdity.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 282.

<sup>12</sup> 'Großmannsche Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 17 (1791), 210; and, for example, 'Cassel', *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* 6 (1791), 17; and 'Hannover', *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* 6 (1791), 131.

<sup>13</sup> On periodicals as sources of vast amounts of theatrical information during the second half of the eighteenth century, see Bender et al., *Theaterperiodika des 18. Jahrhunderts*, esp. 1:1:xi–xxviii.

<sup>14</sup> For more on the Seyler company, see Thomas Bauman, *North German Opera in the Age of Goethe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 91–114.

<sup>15</sup> Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, ed., *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (Bremen: Cramer, 1767–8); and *Almanach des Theaters in Wien* (1774). It is possible that Reichard is referring to the *Theatralkalender von Wien, für das Jahr* [also published as *Theatralalmanach von Wien, für das Jahr*] (1772–4) in the excerpt that follows.

<sup>16</sup> 'Man schmeichelt sich, daß diese neue Idee eines Taschenbuches für die Schaubühne – und neu ist sie, den der Wiener Almanach hat nur einen Schatten von Aehnlichkeit mit diesem – und

Thus, Reichard and Bärstecher had a common goal: to create an accessible journal in which German theatrical developments could be recorded and broadcasted across a domain too decentralized, diverse, and expansive for a single *Nationaltheater*. To accomplish their shared task, they relied on a network of correspondents to submit reports covering a troupe's membership, repertoire, area(s) of operation, and critical responses to their performances, to name but only a few aspects. Although Bärstecher and Reichard both began publishing their periodicals in 1775, the *Theater-Kalender* proved to be the lasting model. Whereas Bärstecher's *Theater-Zeitung* would only survive until May 1775, Reichard received contributions and subscriptions in such quantities that he not only started multiple spin-off publications, including the *Theater-Journal für Deutschland*, but, with the exception of 1795, also published an issue of the *Theater-Kalender* every year between 1775 and 1800.<sup>17</sup> Reichard was doubtless motivated in part by his responsibilities as the Gotha theatre's co-director, which included repertoire programming.<sup>18</sup> It seems others felt the same, as there was clearly a market for his almanac. As Thomas Bauman has noted, Reichard's texts 'achieved pan-Germanic influence on a plane with the literary prestige of the *Teutscher Merkur* (1773–89) edited by Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813) and Friedrich Nicolai's *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* (1765–1806).<sup>19</sup>

A few examples help to illustrate the *Theater-Kalender's* place in contemporary society. On his journey throughout the Empire in 1781, Nicolai was equipped with an understanding of local theatres and measured them up against the information he found in Reichard's journals.<sup>20</sup> In 1789,

ihre Ausführung, für unser Vaterland, weder unangenehm noch überflüssig seyn werde. . . . Wir haben sehr wenig Schriften über das deutsche Theater, und diejenigen die wir besitzen, sind entweder zur allgemeinen Lektüre zu einseitig, oder zu kritisch. Im gegenwärtigen Werke hat man eine solche zu sammeln gesucht, die für den Künstler und den Liebhaber der Kunst, gleich brauchbar sey, und in etwas den Mangel einer allgemeinen Bühne, durch ein Ganzes von Nachrichten ersetzen helfe, da jene, bey der politischen Verfassung von Deutschland, vielleicht auf immer ein Unding bleiben muß. 'An das Publikum', *Theater-Kalender* 1 (1775), [i–ii].

<sup>17</sup> In the preface to the 1796 volume, Reichard explains that an issue with the printer meant that the 1795 volume would not have appeared until Easter 1795, or just months before the publication of the 1796 volume. Therefore, he combined the volumes, including the most important information from 1795 in 1796. 'An das Publikum', *Theater-Kalender* 21 (1796), [i–iv]; and Heinrich August Ottokar Reichard, ed., *Theater-Journal für Deutschland* (Gotha, 1777–84).

<sup>18</sup> D-GOTsa, YY X 46 *Acta die Errichtung, Erhaltung, und Aufkündigung des herzogl. Hoff Theaters betreffend. Vom Julius 1775 bis October 1779*, fol. 2v.

<sup>19</sup> Bauman, *North German Opera*, 58.

<sup>20</sup> Friedrich Nicolai, *Beschreibung einer Reise durch Deutschland und die Schweiz, im Jahre 1781. Nebst Bemerkungen über Gelehrsamkeit, Industrie, Religion und Sitten*, 12 vols. (Berlin, 1783–96), 2:411.

Johann Wilhelm Diezel (1746–unknown) wrote to Großmann, among other business, to announce the foundation of a new court-affiliated theatre in Schwerin that I explore later in Chapter 3. Diezel was sure that Großmann had already spoken personally with the theatre's entrepreneur Count Bernhard Friedrich von Bassewitz (1756–1816), and that he probably knew of the director, Carl Johann Christian Fischer (1752–1807), from articles published in the *Theater-Kalender*.<sup>21</sup> When Carl Ludwig Fernow (1763–1808) later ruthlessly attacked this company in 1792, an unnamed respondent defended Fischer by instructing Fernow to read the *Theater-Kalender*, for, if he had, he 'would have stayed [at] home with his thrown-together comments'.<sup>22</sup> The journal's announcement of the premieres of melodramas by Georg Benda helped to spark interest in the new genre and inform those who sought to compose similar works. August Gottlieb Meißner (1753–1807) turned to the *Theater-Kalender* for information about melodrama when planning his own in 1776. He acknowledged melodrama's attractiveness but warned that it would be very wrong to conclude, like the editor of the *Theater-Kalender*, that it would displace opera and *Singspiel* from German stages.<sup>23</sup>

Those who consulted the *Theater-Kalender* would have had vast amounts of data at their fingertips. Indeed, its breadth of coverage is remarkable. The contents of each roughly 300-page volume can be summarized as a frontispiece engraving of a famous actor, dramatist, or musician; an introduction; an almanac for the upcoming year intermixed with engravings of tableaux from popular plays and music theatre; a series of theatrical monologues, reviews, and accounts of actors in well-known roles; reports addressing actors, theatres, and performances; critical and philosophical debates of theatrical subjects; histories of various *Nationaltheater* (i.e., vernacular theatres); biographies of noteworthy actors; an index of active dramatists and composers; a catalogue of printed works for the stage; an annotated bibliography of newly published critical texts; indexes of German and foreign-language theatres; the names of the companies that had recently disbanded; and, in early volumes, excerpts of music from popular stage pieces. Correspondents from around the Reich

<sup>21</sup> J. W. Diezel to G. F. W. Großmann, Schwerin, 12 January 1789, D-LEu, Kestner/I/C/III/N1/Di/Nr. 18, fol. 1v.

<sup>22</sup> '... so würden Sie mit Ihren zusammengebröckelten Bemerkungen zu Hause geliebt seyn'. *Beantwortung des Sendschreibens an den Schauspieldirektor Herrn Fischer, über das Schwerinsche Theater* (Schwerin, 1792), 25.

<sup>23</sup> August Gottlieb Meißner, *Sophonisbe: Ein musikalisches Drama, mit historischem Prolog und Chören* (Leipzig: Dyk, 1776), 6.

and abroad submitted these materials for inclusion in the journal to Reichard in Gotha, where they were collected, edited, printed, and posted back to subscribers the following year.<sup>24</sup> Just as the *Theater-Kalender* was a reliable source of news for eighteenth-century theatre professionals and enthusiasts, so too has it long been a go-to source for scholars searching for information about individual theatres, their actors, and their repertoires.<sup>25</sup>

Although the *Theater-Kalender* offers invaluable information regarding the yearly activities of individual companies, a new picture emerges when considering the publication as a whole. By connecting the dots between volumes, it is possible to realize the extent to which theatre permeated throughout Europe and the Empire. The sheer amount of information contained within its pages – not to mention the variation between correspondents and the constantly evolving nature of companies and their personnel – makes it difficult to determine with exact precision the number of theatres in operation between circa 1775 and circa 1800, but it is clear that the number was well into the hundreds.<sup>26</sup> The journal includes

<sup>24</sup> Reichard requested that the public send him contributions before the end of August for inclusion in the following year's volume. 'An das Publikum', *Theater-Kalender* 1 (1775), [iv].

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Ian Woodfield's investigation of the troupe of Pasquale Bondini in *Performing Operas for Mozart: Impresarios, Singers and Troupes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7–24.

<sup>26</sup> The following analysis is based on reports contained in Heinrich August Ottokar Reichard, ed., *Theater-Kalender auf das Jahr* [also published as *Taschenbuch für die Schaubühne, auf das Jahr*] (Gotha, 1775–94; 1796–1800) and the metadata upon which it is based and presented in Appendix 1. Reichard did not publish a volume in 1795, instead incorporating the most important information from the 1795 volume into that of 1796. For this reason, I supplemented 1795 with information found in a near-exact imitation of Reichard's journal, the *Theater-Kalender* (Mannheim, 1795). There is little coverage of the Empire as a whole during the period 1800–6. Most theatre journals in these years privilege one urban centre over others; indeed, a decade of war with France had disrupted touring circuits as well as communication. For this reason, I have supplemented this overview with information from the journals from this period that appear closest to Reichard's wide-reaching model: *Taschenbuch fürs Theater* (Hamburg, 1801) and *Theater-Kalender auf das Jahr 1804* (Hamburg, 1804). The information contained within the pages of the journals named here are sometimes plentiful, sometimes paltry. Not all companies submitted reports every year. It is frequently difficult to identify with certainty a company being discussed within individual volumes, let alone how they relate to others that visited the same centres as detailed in other volumes. Indeed, it is a challenge to track accurately troupes that were constantly evolving, for some disbanded only to be formed again years later, while others combined to form joint-companies. These could then separate and join or (re)form other troupes making the distinction between one theatre and the next difficult to discern from year to year. To provide Reichard enough time to prepare the next year's volume, information was sent by autumn of the preceding year (e.g., the 1776 volume contains information from 1775). On occasion, a correspondent would submit a report concerning the state of their local theatre retrospectively or over a period of several years. I made every effort to place that information into the appropriate year or period where this was the case. With consistency and ease of reference in mind, the period of coverage refers to the



accounts from about forty-five vernacular theatres, including those in the kingdoms of Denmark, France, Great Britain, Naples, and Sweden, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Russian Empire, Imperial Italy, and the State of the Church, as well as a few less-detailed descriptions of theatrical activities in colonies including Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Australia.<sup>27</sup> Most of the information transmitted in the *Theater-Kalender*, however, concerns German theatres. Ranging from sixteen in the first issue and peaking at sixty-six in 1792, an average of thirty-five troupes submitted reports each year. The most detailed and consistent accounts were those regarding companies operating mostly within the Empire. Those concerning troupes active in the *Kulturkreis* only were less frequent and detailed by comparison, often offering only the name of a company and an area of operation alongside other troupes in the same region.<sup>28</sup> Excluding the sixty or so accounts from those touring large areas such as Westphalia and Transylvania (Siebenbürgen), troupes visited roughly 356 cities, towns, and villages. Interpreting this data reveals the intense activity of these companies, illustrating as it does the extent of their reach throughout Europe.

Approximately 341 German-language companies operated in around 356 places throughout the *Kulturkreis* in the years leading up to 1800.<sup>29</sup> I have mapped these locations in Figure 1.1 to show the full extent of this network. Graduated dots indicate the number of German theatres that reported visiting a particular location throughout the period. Solid lines (many of which overlap) connecting these locales represent the movement of companies that linked centres within the Reich; lines broken by a short dash indicate troupe mobility across the Empire's boundaries and into the *Kulturkreis* or vice versa; and evenly dashed lines show the movement of companies that connected places in the *Kulturkreis* only. Unconnected dots are locations of standing theatres not visited by mobile troupes. A full list of companies and performance sites is presented in Appendix 1. Roughly

published date not least because the often-ephemeral nature of a company's existence makes precise dating impossible. I have further cross-referenced my data against the following source, aligning troupe names and adding additional entries where appropriate: Bender et al., *Theaterperiodika des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Despite making every effort to provide as complete and consistent a picture as possible, I do not claim this to be a comprehensive account and analysis of all German theatre companies operating during the period.

<sup>27</sup> For an example of foreign-language theatre coverage, see 'Ausländisches Theater', *Theater-Kalender* 3 (1777), 243–54.

<sup>28</sup> For instance, 'Einige Theater in Ungarn', *Theater-Kalender* 18 (1792), 326–7. A notable exception are reports from the Schuch company, which regularly sent detailed reports and operated exclusively in the *Kulturkreis*. See, for example, *ibid.*, 315–16.

<sup>29</sup> Three additional companies did not report their locations and do not factor into these statistics.

forty-nine (14 per cent) of all German theatres operated exclusively in the *Kulturkreis*, where they visited seventy-eight (22 per cent) locations with German stages. A goodly number of troupes regularly crossed imperial boundaries to perform in exclaves and communities to the west that had once been part of the Reich but no longer were, such as those in France, Switzerland, and the United Provinces.<sup>30</sup> Others entertained German communities to the east that were never politically a part of the Empire, including those that connected the Baltic region through Königsberg (Kaliningrad), Riga, and Reval (Tallinn), as well as those that extended via Ofen (Buda) and Pest to Temeswar (Timișoara) and Bucharest in Wallachia.<sup>31</sup> To the north, German theatres were situated in areas belonging to the kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden. As Figure 1.1 further reveals, all save a few isolated centres were integrated into a network of German theatres that linked directly or indirectly to the Reich by the movement of troupes. The geographic extremes of the network are the least dense in regard to mobility linkage and number of theatres, both of which intensify as proximity to the Empire increases.

Located in the geographic heart of this system, the Holy Roman Empire itself functioned as a hub of German theatrical activity. In so doing, it networked, through the movement of companies, German theatres throughout the *Kulturkreis* situated in neighbouring polities and territories. Theatres in the Swiss Confederation, for instance, were connected to those in the United Provinces via the Empire. Similarly, theatres along the Baltic in Poland-Lithuania, Prussia, and the Russian Empire appear to have been theatrically coupled to those in the kingdoms of Croatia, Galicia and Lodomeria, Hungary, and Slavonia by the Reich, for there was no direct connection between them. Although this may in some instances have been hindered by natural boundaries including the Carpathian Mountains, this does not seem to have inhibited troupes in the Reich traversing the Alps, Harz, or Ore mountains, for example. What is more, this is similar to the map of postal routes, which likewise indicates that there was no direct connection between the Baltic and Banat (compare Figures 0.1 and 1.1).

The vast majority of German troupes and performance locations were situated within the Reich. Employing the same symbology as Figure 1.1, Figure 1.2 removes those locations and companies active exclusively in the *Kulturkreis* to focus primarily on the 292 (86 per cent) troupes and the 278

<sup>30</sup> See Peter H. Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire: A Thousand Years of Europe's History* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), 544, 585–94, and 628.

<sup>31</sup> On these communities, see Charles W. Ingrao and Franz A. J. Szabo, eds., *The Germans and the East* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2008).



Figure 1.1 Network of German theatres in Europe, c. 1800

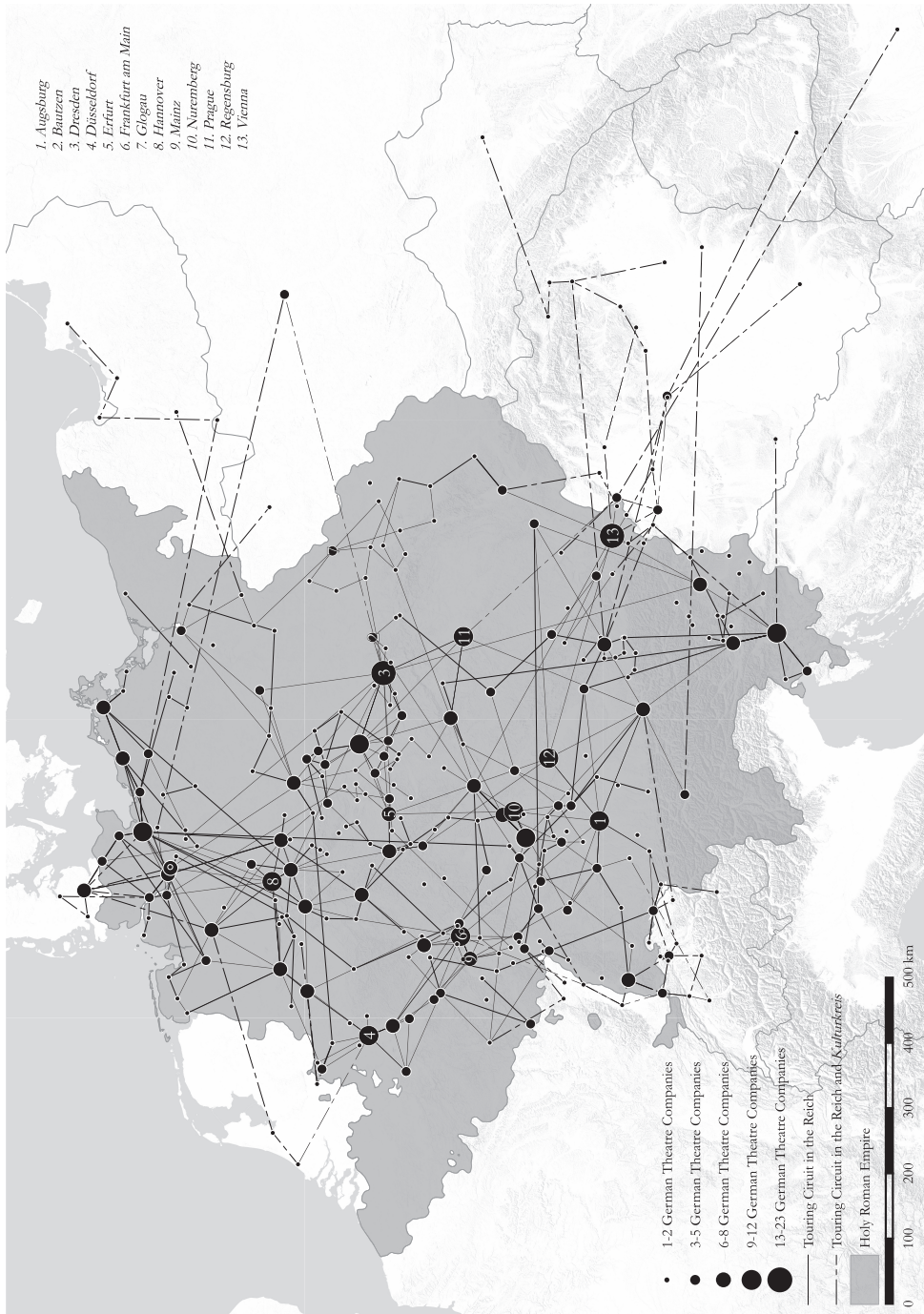


Figure 1.2 Network of German theatres operating in the Reich, c. 1800

(78 per cent) settlements they visited in the Empire. To be sure, a few troupes occasionally ventured into the *Kulturkreis*, which are also indicated here by lines broken by a short dash and to which I shall return later in this chapter. Comparison of Figures 1.1 and 1.2 reveals more clearly that, although such locations as Denmark, France, Hungary, Poland-Lithuania, Switzerland, and the United Provinces were integrated into this system through mobility, the highest density of performance locations and troupe movement was within the Empire. Indicating the centres with the most theatres in each imperial region for reference, Figure 1.2 especially shows that, with the exception of the Burgundian *Kreis*, German theatres covered the entire Empire with nearly every theatrical location linked to others near and far by the movement of companies. It also suggests that the dense network of theatrical activity in the Reich has no clear ‘centre’, as theatres were distributed throughout its space. Not all troupes staged musical genres, but evidence suggests that the majority did perform some combination of *Singspiel*, melodrama, ballet, and incidental music.<sup>32</sup> On occasion, members of a company’s orchestra might also perform musical academies (concerts) featuring instrumental music.<sup>33</sup> Most of the troupes that appear not to have embraced musical repertoires were society theatres (*Societätstheater*), comprising enthusiastic dilettantes who were not trained in music or did not possess the interest or resources required to stage music theatre. In total, about 292 troupes brought music and theatre to roughly 278 imperial locations between 1775 and 1806.

The complexity of the Empire’s spatial order poses challenges in mapping its theatrical landscape. In his exploration of the Reich’s borders and free movement across them, Luca Scholz has argued that this was because ‘internally, the Empire operated at several levels and had neither centre nor periphery’.<sup>34</sup> The same applies to its music theatre. Uncovering the distribution of theatres across individual Imperial Estates is particularly difficult owing to their sheer number (around 315) and their fluidity – a territory could change hands, overlap with another, or be ruled by a potentate who also reigned over others. The *Kreise*, however, represent a more stable intermediary level that played a vital role in the integration of the Reich’s

<sup>32</sup> It is difficult to determine precisely how many troupes performed musical repertoires. While some list their music directors, musicians, works performed, and the roles their actors performed in some reports, others include only a portion of this information. Others still offer no clues that would provide a sense of the types of works they performed.

<sup>33</sup> For example, ‘Großmann und Klossche Gesellschaft’, *Theater-Kalender* 13 (1787), 187.

<sup>34</sup> Luca Scholz, *Borders and Freedom of Movement in the Holy Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 32.

Estates.<sup>35</sup> These larger regional units therefore offer more productive insight into the distribution of theatres across territories and populations than do individual Imperial Estates.

It would be reasonable to assume that the larger the population and geographic size of a *Kreis*, the more theatres it would have operating within its space, as not only would more companies be required to entertain a greater populace, but additional troupes would be needed to cover wider expanses of land.<sup>36</sup> Yet neither population nor geographic size determined the total amount of companies or the number of theatrical centres in a region. Table 1.1 presents *Kreise* and imperial regions alongside the aggregate number of troupes and the locations they reported visiting in them so as to compare the distribution of theatre companies and theatrical density during the era (see also Figure 1.2). It reveals that although the Franconian *Kreis* was the second smallest by territory and among the least populous, thirty-nine companies recorded visiting nineteen settlements within its boundaries, making it theatrically busier than the Bavarian *Kreis* – with over twice the land and a quarter of a million more residents – and Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia – with about three times the population and land. The Franconian *Kreis* was also the most theatrically dense. There was on average one theatre company for every 34,000 living in its boundaries. This *Kreis* was therefore statistically the most theatrically accessible territory, outpacing larger regions with significantly more companies and performance locations including the Upper Saxon – with sixty-five companies active in fifty-four locations – and Austrian *Kreise*, the largest by size. And the increased theatrical activity within the Franconian *Kreis* is despite the fact that Thuringian roads were notoriously in disrepair.<sup>37</sup>

Descending a level deeper, the number of theatres in a specific location within a *Kreis* is similarly unrelated to population or size alone. It would again be reasonable to expect that the greater a settlement's population, the larger proportion of theatre-goers; the wider its territory, the more room to accommodate multiple theatres. Such an assumption led Daniel Hartz to conclude that 'Berlin had at least twice the population of Leipzig, and it was perhaps inevitable that the center of German opera should gradually shift from the university town to the teeming capital'.<sup>38</sup> But there was little

<sup>35</sup> See *ibid.*, 33–4.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Schmitt, *Schauspieler und Theaterbetrieb: Studien zur Sozialgeschichte des Schauspielerstandes im deutschsprachigen Raum 1700–1900* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990), 189.

<sup>37</sup> Scholz, *Borders and Free Movement*, 45.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Hartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style, 1720–1780* (New York: Norton, 2003), 438.

**Table 1.1** Theatrical distribution and density by *Kreis*, c. 1800

<i>Kreis</i> <sup>39</sup>	Companies	Locations	<i>Kreis</i> size (kilometres <sup>2</sup> )	<i>Kreis</i> population	Companies:size (kilometres <sup>2</sup> ) (companies:population)
Franconian	39	19	27,805.25	1,341,611	1:712.95 (1:34,400)
Lower Saxon	66	40	57,997.50	2,364,400	1:878.75 (1:35,824)
Upper Rhine	36	28	33,661.55	1,410,228	1:935.04 (1:39,173)
Swabian	33	20	32,445.60	1,672,389	1:983.2 (1:50,678)
Electoral Rhine	26	8	26,523	1,027,000	1:1,020.12 (1:39,500)
Westphalian	39	28	59,605.96	2,568,678	1:1,528.36 (1:65,864)
Lusatia (No <i>Kreis</i> )	6	2	9,625	369,185	1:1,604.17 (1:61,531)
Austrian	74	43	118,992.50	4,476,668	1:1,608 (1:60,496)
Upper Saxon	65	54	112,447.50	3,786,548	1:1,729.96 (1:58,255)
Bavarian	30	10	58,272.50	1,606,378	1:1,942.42 (1:53,546)
Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia (No <i>Kreis</i> )	29	12	76,230	4,496,864	1:2,628.62 (1:155,064)
Prussian Silesia (No <i>Kreis</i> )	6	14	37,400	1,776,000	1:6,233.33 (1:296,000)
Burgundian	0	0	25,795	1,888,000	–

inevitable about it. Table 1.2 similarly employs reports from troupes to reveal the three settlements in each *Kreis* with the most theatres alongside their populations leading up to 1800. With no fewer than twenty-three German-language companies performing before its residents during the era, Dresden and its 70,000 inhabitants had the most theatrical activity of any location.<sup>40</sup> This was slightly more than Vienna and its twenty-two theatres that entertained a population of around 254,231, that is, nearly four times larger than that of Dresden.<sup>41</sup> The difference is made even more

<sup>39</sup> I have taken *Kreis* populations and sizes from Peter H. Wilson, *From Reich to Revolution: German History, 1558–1806* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 364–77.

<sup>40</sup> Johann Hübner, *Johann Hübners reales Staats-Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexicon*, 26th edn (Leipzig: Gledit, 1795), 645.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 2607.

**Table 1.2** Most active theatrical locations by *Kreis*, c. 1800

Kreis	Location (Population, c. 1800) <sup>42</sup>	Number of theatre companies
Upper Saxon	Dresden (70,000)	23
	Leipzig (30,000)	10
	Eisenach (8,000); Stralsund (11,000)	8
Austrian	Vienna (254,231)	22
	Laibach [Ljubljana] (14,000)	9
	Klagenfurt (9,500)	7
Swabian	Augsburg (37,500)	12
	Ulm (15,000)	5
	Heilbronn (7,200); Karlsruhe (7,000)	4
Franconian	Nuremberg (30,000)	11
	Ansbach (13,000)	9
	Erlangen (8,000)	8
Lower Saxon	Hannover (17,000)	11
	Lübeck (30,000)	9
	Altona (20,000); Bremen (40,000); Hamburg (100,000); Hildesheim (11,000)	8
Bavarian	Regensburg (20,000)	10
	Salzburg (14,000)	8
	Passau (7,000)	5
Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia (No <i>Kreis</i> )	Prague (84,011)	10
	Karlsbad [Karlovy Vary] (2,500)	6
	Brünn (14,000); Olmütz in Mähren [Olomouc] (11,000)	4
Westphalian	Düsseldorf (11,000)	10
	Cologne (40,000)	8
	Münster (26,000); Pyrmont (1,000)	7
Upper Rhine	Frankfurt am Main (37,000)	9
	Kassel (20,000); Wetzlar (6,000)	6
	Hanau (6,000)	5
Electoral Rhine	Erfurt (17,000); Mainz (30,000)	8
	Heidelberg (11,000)	4
	Bonn (11,000); Koblenz (10,000)	3

<sup>42</sup> Population numbers in this table are taken from *ibid.*; Johann Hübner, *Johann Hübners reales Staats-Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexicon*, 26th ed. (Leipzig: Gledit, 1795); Johann Heinrich Jacobi, *Geographisch-Statistisch-Historische Tabellen zum zweckmäßigen und nützlichen Unterricht der Jugend* (Hamburg: Hoffmann, 1786–95); *Teuschlands National-Kalender zur gründlichen Kenntniß des jetzigen Zustandes aller teutschen Staaten und Länder auf das Jahr 1794* (Leipzig: Jacobäer, 1794); Friedrich Gottlob Leonhardi, *Erdbeschreibung der Preußischen Monarchie* (Halle: Hemmerde & Schwetschke, 1791–7); and [Philipp Ludwig Hermann Röder], *Reise von Venedig über Triest, Krain, Kärnten, Steuermark, und Salzburg, samt historisch, statistische Bemerkungen, über die Regierung, und Einwohner dieser Länder* (Frankfurt am Main, 1793). I have incorporated Jewish citizens into population totals when they were presented separately.



Table 1.2 (cont.)

Kreis	Location (Population, c. 1800)	Number of theatre companies
Lusatia (No <i>Kreis</i> )	Bautzen [Budissin] (9,500)	4
	Zittau (13,000)	1
Prussian Silesia (No <i>Kreis</i> )	Glogau [Głogów] (6,700)	3
	Breslau [Wrocław] (60,191); Brieg [Brzeg] (5,100); Bunzlau [Bolesławiec] (3,000); Hirschberg [Jelenia Góra] (7,000); Liegnitz [Legnica] (4,703); Neiße [Nysa] (5,000)	2
	Glatz [Kłodzko] (5,000); Grüneberg [Zielona Góra] (5,590); Jauer [Jawor] (3,599); Landeshut in Schlesien [Kamienna Góra] (3,000); Oels [Olesnica] (3,100); Sagan [Żagan] (3,670); Schweidnitz [Świdnica] (10,000)	1

stark given that reports from Vienna record ten exclusive private theatres (*Privattheater*) – theatres organized by small circles of elite enthusiasts often accessible by invitation only – compared to Dresden’s three. As for Berlin, its 150,000 residents had one third the number of theatres throughout the period when compared to Leipzig, Regensburg, and Erlangen – to name but a few – with populations of 30,000, 20,000, and 8,000 respectively.<sup>43</sup> Spanning 1,650 square kilometres, Nuremberg’s 30,000 residents were entertained by more German theatres than the 100,000 living within the 413 square kilometres that encompassed Hamburg.<sup>44</sup> Considering that the places with the most theatres in each *Kreis* had roughly the same number of theatres, with about ten, it would be difficult to make the case that any one location was *the* centre of imperial music theatre.

Yet secondary literature often gives the impression that large residence cities and urban locations were the most important sites of (German) music theatre in the late eighteenth century.<sup>45</sup> Fashioning the musico-theatrical activity of a select few cities to represent that of the entire period has its advantages, especially in so far as organizing a narrative is concerned. This is precisely the approach Bauman adopted, as he traced the development of

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 260, 1132, 1681, and 479.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 1420 and 910; and Wilson, *From Reich to Revolution*, 378–9.

<sup>45</sup> Schmitt, *Schauspieler und Theaterbetrieb*, 189; Michael J. Sosulski, *Theater and Nation in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), esp. 16–28; and Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2:445–96.

German opera from place to place, beginning in Leipzig and ending in Berlin.<sup>46</sup> Others have opted for a similar strategy in more recent explorations of the period.<sup>47</sup> Granted, the cities they often turn to – including ‘Leipzig and Berlin’ and ‘Stuttgart and Mannheim’ – all have important stories to tell.<sup>48</sup> And in some instances, data supports the special status afforded to urban settlements and court cities, particularly in the cases of Dresden and Vienna, which hosted private theatres and Italian and French *Hoftheater* in addition to German companies. But these are exceptions rather than the rule. Lower Saxony’s largest theatrical centre, Hannover, was an electoral capital without an elector, as he resided in London as King of Great Britain and Ireland. Other key court cities – Bayreuth, Berlin, Mannheim, and Munich, for instance – have among the fewest German-language theatres in their respective *Kreise*. Rather, locations including Augsburg, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt am Main, Nuremberg, and Regensburg rank among the most dynamic theatrical places in the same regions. Many of these were important Imperial Cities and therefore independent from any prince: Regensburg was the seat of the Reichstag, while Augsburg, Frankfurt, and Nuremberg were all major commercial centres, whose roads and access to waterways networked the Reich’s commerce, trade, communication, and movement. The presence of a court may help to explain why in some instances cities without a prince had more theatres than those with one. Rulers could offer cultural and fiscal stability to their *Residenzstädte*, helping to keep the number of theatres to a minimum by decree and by subsidizing in part or in full a resident company. But this was not always the case, as in Hannover or indeed the wealthy electoral capital Mainz, which had the same number of theatres as Erfurt, a town with no resident court. In places such as Lübeck that were not residences or that were outside of a prince’s territory altogether, a large number of theatres could be explained in part because companies that persisted on box-office sales alone might have been more susceptible to changing tastes and financial turns. Yet again, that is not to suggest that the mere presence of a court ensured stability or that mobile companies were more likely to fail by comparison to those situated in a single location, as I will explore in the next section. In short, there was no single city or even group of centres that dominated the Empire’s musico-theatrical landscape.

<sup>46</sup> This methodology is summarized in Bauman, *North German Opera*, 17–20.

<sup>47</sup> For example, Hertz, *Music in European Capitals*; and John Rice, *Music in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 2013).

<sup>48</sup> Rice, *Music in the Eighteenth Century*, 122–38; and Hertz, *Music in European Capitals*, 295–594.

Each settlement had its own circumstances that help to explain its individual level of theatrical activity. In the Imperial City of Wetzlar, for instance, no fewer than six theatres entertained the 6,000 living within its 14 square kilometres during the period.<sup>49</sup> This was the same level of theatrical activity as in the nearby Kassel, the capital of the Landgraviate of Hessen-Kassel with a population of 20,000 distributed across 105 square kilometres.<sup>50</sup> The theatrical parity of a much smaller Imperial City with a significantly larger *Residenzstadt* in this instance is owing to the presence of the Reichskammergericht in Wetzlar. Here, wealthy jurists and representatives from all over the Empire convened and sought entertainment when not consumed by legal proceedings. Indeed, the distribution of theatres across the Empire's regions and individual settlements has more to do with imperial context than population, size, and presence of a court.

Theatrical distribution in the Westphalian *Kreis* helps to illustrate further that musico-theatrical activity is best understood in an imperial framework. With ten companies performing for its 11,000 residents, Düsseldorf, the capital of the Duchy of Jürlich and Berg, hosted the most theatres of any location in the *Kreis* during the era. But it was followed closely by Cologne with eight theatres as well as Münster and Pymont, both of which hosted seven theatre companies in the decades leading up to 1800. With some 40,000 inhabitants and strong trade links to the Reich and France, the Imperial City of Cologne was much larger than Düsseldorf.<sup>51</sup> Further down the Rhine, Münster – the capital of a large bishopric – was home to 26,000 individuals.<sup>52</sup> The tiny spa town Pymont and its 1,000 inhabitants were situated to the east of Münster in the County of Pymont.<sup>53</sup> The relatively large proportion of companies operating in Pymont is puzzling at first glance, given that the same amount of troupes visited this village as a city with a court and about twenty-six times the number of residents. But companies sojourned in Pymont because the prince of Waldeck regularly visited the town in the summer, and, more importantly, because the renowned healing powers of its waters attracted visitors from around the Empire, making it a popular and well-established

<sup>49</sup> Jacobi, *Geographisch-statistisch-historische Tabellen*, table 30 [unpaginated]; and Wilson, *From Reich to Revolution*, 379.

<sup>50</sup> Hübner, *Johann Hübners reales Staats-Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexicon*, 430; and Wilson, *From Reich to Revolution*, 369.

<sup>51</sup> Hübner, *Johann Hübners reales Staats-Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexicon*, 499; and Wilson, *From Reich to Revolution*, 374.

<sup>52</sup> Wilson, *From Reich to Revolution*, 373.

<sup>53</sup> *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung vom Jahre 1797*, vol. 2 (Jena, 1797), 474.

holiday destination since the fourteenth century.<sup>54</sup> Those throughout the Reich with ailments sought out its thermal waters for their bodies by day and its theatre – provided by visiting companies – for their minds by night.

The Holy Roman Empire's musico-theatrical landscape was as varied as that of its politics. Just as there was no one political capital within its boundaries, so too was there no single capital of music theatre. Although the Reich was a central hub linking the German communities of the *Kulturkreis* in music and theatre, there was no centre within the Empire itself. Owing to its polycentric structure, the Reich 'avoided the cultural tensions between capital and province, court and country' and 'instead, cultural production . . . diffused more evenly throughout the Empire'.<sup>55</sup> This is precisely what the distribution of theatres explored here demonstrates. Traditional sites of German-language music theatre, including Berlin, Mannheim, and Vienna, are not sufficient – alone or together – to tell the history of the Reich's music theatre. German theatres were dotted across the Empire and provided spoken and musical genres to the millions living within its Estates. Larger geographic regions – potentially requiring a greater number of companies to cover that space – or settlements with large urban populations – with proportionally more theatre-goers – were not necessarily areas of greater theatrical interest. To be sure, the amount of theatres in any one region or settlement throughout the last quarter of the eighteenth century had little to do with the extent of their territory or population, as smaller *Kreise* and locations often had an equal or greater number of theatres entertaining their citizens than their larger neighbouring regions and cities. Musico-theatrical activity throughout the Empire's space rather depended on imperial circumstances, with examples from the Upper Rhine and Westphalian *Kreise* helping to explain how tiny rural areas could be as theatrically busy as sprawling urban settlements well over twenty times their size.

## Troupes and Performance Spaces

Close to 300 court, court-affiliated, touring, *Nationaltheater*, and (private) 'society' companies were responsible for bringing German music theatre to

<sup>54</sup> Hübner, *Johann Hübners reales Staats-Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexicon*, 1641. For contemporary histories of Pyrmont, see Georg Friedrich Christian Fuchs, *Systematische beschreibung aller Gesundbrunnen und Bäder der bekannten Länder vorzüglich Deutschlands, sowohl nach ihrer physisch-chemischen Beschaffenheit als auch ihrem medicinischen Gebrauch* (Jena: Gabler, 1798), 352–70.

<sup>55</sup> Wilson, *Holy Roman Empire*, 266.

audiences throughout the Empire.<sup>56</sup> Information transmitted in the pages of the *Theater-Kalender* indicates that just over half, 160 (55 per cent), of these circa 292 troupes were geographically fixed theatres that operated in only one location. The largest proportion of such companies were those that were directed by a principal in a civic centre, though a fair amount were court, court-affiliated, and society theatres. These theatres varied in size. Readers would have discovered, in 1791 for instance, that the company of Franz Xaver Glöggel (1764–1839) in Linz employed thirty actors and musicians, the Brünn Nationaltheater had twenty-eight actors and an orchestra of unreported size, and the Bonn Nationaltheater included sixty-one actors and musicians.<sup>57</sup> The operational lifespan of fixed companies was in many instances ephemeral, but some lasted for years.

The remaining 132 (45 per cent) theatres were mobile in some way, whether moving between the residences of a prince or touring regularly to perform for the public in no fewer than two locations. A company's mobility is difficult to trace with complete accuracy, for a theatre that was fixed in one location could later become mobile, while an erstwhile touring company could become stationary as circumstances changed. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that, as with stationary theatres, the largest group of travelling companies were those directed and managed by a principal. But there were also a significant number of court and court-affiliated companies that toured, including those based in Dessau, Salzburg, and Weimar.<sup>58</sup> Mobile troupes like these performed before audiences in an average of five locations each. The Lange troupe – which entertained theatre-goers in Budweis (České Budejovice) and Pilsen (Plzeň) during the 1790s – represents the low end of the spectrum; the company of Friedrich Wilhelm Bossann (1756–1813) was among the most active, having performed in no fewer than twenty-two settlements during the late 1780s and 1790s, in part because the War of the First Coalition (1792–7) with France forced the company to move further east

<sup>56</sup> On the traditional organization of German theatres in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see esp. Schmitt, *Schauspieler und Theaterbetrieb*, 4–41.

<sup>57</sup> Glöggel's company comprised ten actors, eight actresses, and an orchestra of twelve musicians. The Brünn Nationaltheater included fifteen actors, eleven actresses, two child actors, and an orchestra of unspecified size. The Bonn Nationaltheater was staffed by twelve actors, eight actresses, eight child actors, and an orchestra of thirty-three musicians. 'Linz', *Theater-Kalender* 17 (1791), 216–17; 'Brünner Nationaltheater', *Theater-Kalender* 17 (1791), 201–3; and 'Bonn', *Theater-Kalender* 17 (1791), 197–8.

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, 'Dessauische Hofschauspieler-Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 22 (1797), 327–8; 'Salzburgische Hofschauspielergesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 19 (1793), 307; and 'Herzogliches Hoftheater zu Weimar', *Theater-Kalender* 21 (1796), 322–3.

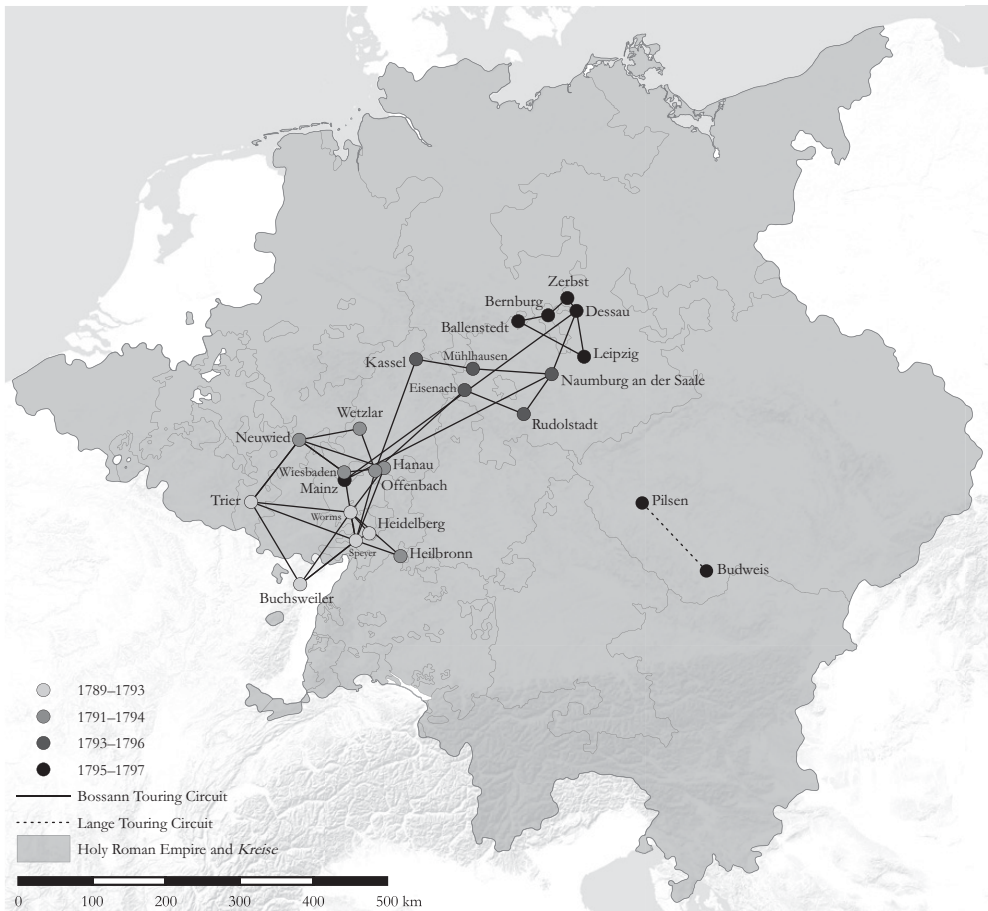


Figure 1.3 Touring circuits of the Bossann and Lange companies, 1789–97

(see Figure 1.3).<sup>59</sup> Much as their stationary counterparts, mobile companies varied in size. Touring companies included on average about twenty actors, many of whom occupied other important positions such as director, regisseur, and set designer.<sup>60</sup> Depending on circumstances, mobile companies could travel with their own machinists and materials like sets and costumes, though many employed those available at the local

<sup>59</sup> On the Lange Company, see ‘Langesche Gesellschaft’, *Theater-Kalender* 21 (1796), 303; and for Bossann’s actors, ‘Boßannsche Gesellschaft’, *Theater-Kalender* 21 (1796), 291.

<sup>60</sup> Compare, for instance, the Diestel and Dietrichs, Kuhne, Lange, and Bossann companies. ‘Diestel- und Dietrichssche Gesellschaft’, *Theater-Kalender* 12 (1786), 169–71; ‘Kuhnische Gesellschaft’, *Theater-Kalender* 12 (1786), 178; ‘Langesche Gesellschaft’, *Theater-Kalender* 21 (1796), 303; and ‘Boßannsche Gesellschaft’, *Theater-Kalender* 21 (1796), 291–2.

theatres they visited.<sup>61</sup> Troupes similarly toured with their own orchestra or employed musicians upon taking up residency to form their principal ensemble or otherwise strengthen their forces as required.<sup>62</sup> And although a touring troupe might remain at a theatre for a single season only, mobility did not preclude longevity. Persisting in one form or another from the early 1780s until 1799, the company of Johann Carl 'Jean' Tilly (1753–95) and, after his death, Louise Caroline Tilly (née Geyer; 1760–99) demonstrates that the operational lifespan of a mobile troupe could easily exceed that of a stationary theatre.<sup>63</sup>

Only about forty-five (34 per cent) of the companies that toured operated within one imperial region, as Lange's troupe had. The remaining eighty-seven (66 per cent) crossed regional boundaries. This included Bossann's company, which traversed six *Kreise*. Sometimes performing as one, sometimes as two, the troupes of Maria Barbara Wäser (1749–97) and her husband Johann Christian (1743–81), for instance, brought music theatre to audiences in twenty-nine centres across the Upper Saxon, Lower Saxon, and Westphalian *Kreise* as well as Prussian Silesia between the 1770s and early 1800s.<sup>64</sup> The company of Anton Faller (1756–1824) alone performed in about twenty locations that networked Prussian Silesia in the east with Bohemia and the Franconian, Swabian, and Upper Saxon *Kreise* towards the geographic heart of the Reich. Connecting these areas to the northern- and southern extremes, the troupe of Martin Jakob Thimm (1750–after 1808) traversed the Empire's length, visiting fourteen places in the process.<sup>65</sup> Northern areas were linked to the heartlands by such troupes as the Tilly company, while the troupe of Johann Georg Wilhelm (1750–unknown) connected more central locations to those in its south, including Laibach. The companies of Böhm and Simon Friedrich Koberwein (1733–1808) – which together visited no fewer than twenty-six settlements in the Bavarian, Swabian, Electoral Rhine, and Westphalian *Kreise*, Bohemia, and the Swiss Confederation from the 1770s throughout the early 1800s – traversed the Reich's western territories and were

<sup>61</sup> For a company that travelled with a machinist, painter, and set designer, see for example, 'Bernerische Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 9 (1783), 260–1.

<sup>62</sup> See, for instance, 'Frankfurt am Mayn: Aufzug eines Briefs', *Theater-Kalender* 14 (1788), 181–3; and 'Schauspiel-Requisiten', *Theater-Kalender* 13 (1787), 55–6.

<sup>63</sup> For example, 'Tillysche Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 24 (1799), 248–51.

<sup>64</sup> The company kept his name but was directed by others after Johann Christian Wäser's death. See, for instance, 'Wäserische Gesellschaft' and 'Wäserische Gesellschaft: Die zweyte', *Theater-Kalender* 5 (1779), xxx–xxxii; and 'Zweite Wäsersche Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 22 (1797), 305–6.

<sup>65</sup> I have included here, and in Figure 1.4, the capitals of Austrian regions that the Thimm company reported visiting.

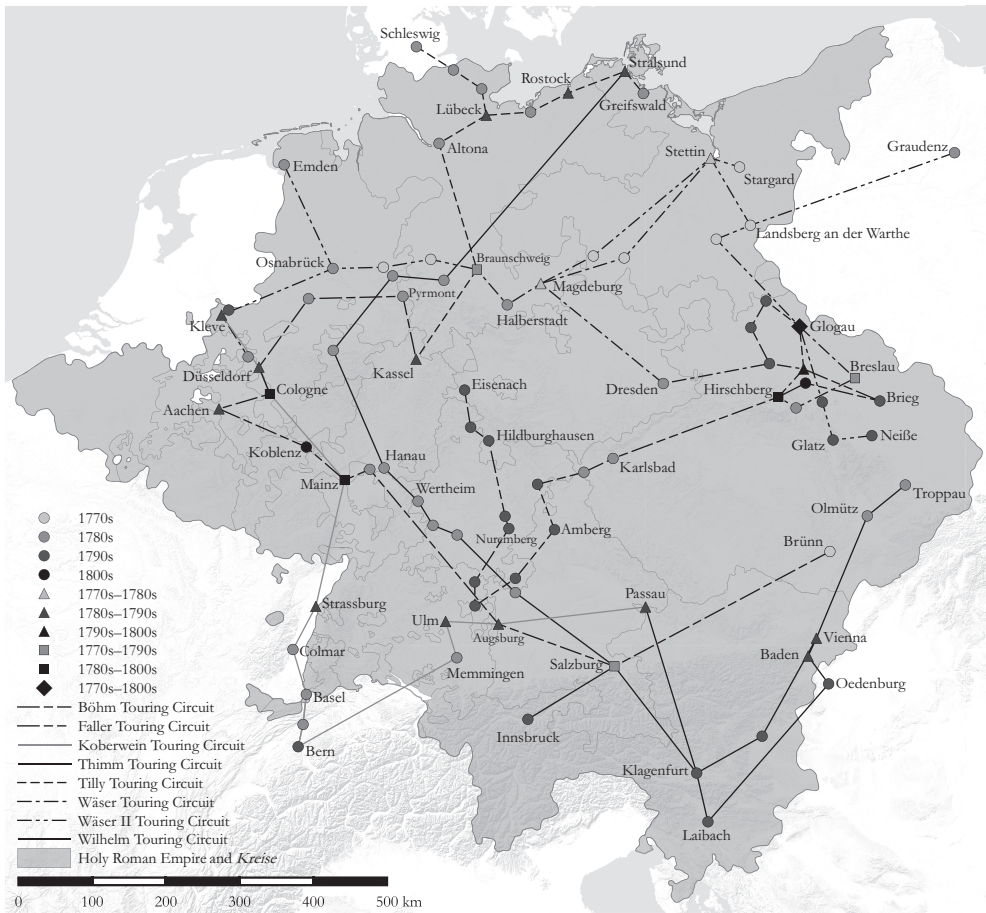


Figure 1.4 Touring circuits of the Böhm, Faller, Koberwein, Thimm, Wäser, and Wilhelm companies, c. 1800

among the roughly thirty-nine companies that regularly crossed both the boundaries between *Kreise* and the Reich itself.<sup>66</sup>

The mobility of these troupes alone networked nearly the entire Reich. As Figure 1.4 helps to demonstrate, individual companies regularly traversed such traditional musical regions as North and South Germany and Austria (Koberwein, Thimm, Tilly, and Wilhelm), as well as Central, East, and West Germany (Böhm, Faller, and Wäser). This figure and the total combined movement mapped in Figure 1.2 further reveal that nearly every corner of the Reich was serviced by touring companies, save for those areas

<sup>66</sup> For example, ‘Thimmsche Gesellschaft’, *Theater-Kalender* 11 (1785), 229–30; and ‘Koberweinsche Gesellschaft’, *Theater-Kalender* 20 (1794), 303–4.



sparsely populated, perhaps due to inhospitable terrain. Regardless of whether companies operated within one *Kreis* or throughout many, crossing the borders of Imperial Estates was indeed unavoidable for almost every mobile troupe. Despite role of the *Kreise* and the Imperial Estates in maintaining the road infrastructure, neither the external boundaries of the *Kreise* nor those of individual Imperial Estates played a significant role in channelling movement.<sup>67</sup> According to Scholz, unlike the modern practice of policing mobility at external borders, ‘the control of movement took place at strategic nodes along thoroughfares rather than at territorial boundaries’ in the early modern Empire.<sup>68</sup> External borders were thus fluid and troupes were able to traverse easily those of Estate and *Kreis* en route from one performance location to the next.

Once in an Imperial Estate, there were mechanisms to help regulate theatrical activity at a local level. When directors requested permission to perform in a territory, princely governments and Imperial Cities often granted successful applicants a ‘privilege’, or ‘the exclusive right, which the director of an acting company is given to an entire country, a province, or just a city, and which may prohibit all other companies from the right to perform in those lands, province, or city’.<sup>69</sup> Although common, the privilege system was not standard throughout the Reich. But when privileges were issued, they all but ensured a monopoly on performances to its bearer, who could request that authorities remove competitors that encroached on their territory.<sup>70</sup> Additional troupes could operate within a privileged area, but only with the written consent of the company already holding permission, as Johann Samuel Patzke (1727–87) explained in a letter dated to 1776:

Since Döbbelin has a privilege for the Duchy of Magdeburg, Herr Seyler cannot perform here again without Döbbelin’s consent. If the latter has explained this, Herr Seyler [should] send Döbbelin’s written statement to the General Direction with the request for permission to perform in Magdeburg, and then it will not be refused. The local Chamber President can otherwise not do anything in this matter. It only depends on whether Herr Seyler wants to try this option and hear if

<sup>67</sup> Scholz, *Borders and Freedom of Movement*, 34.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 168. On borders and the channelling of movement, see *ibid.*, 87–169.

<sup>69</sup> ‘... das ausschließende Recht, welches dem Direktor einer Gesellschaft Schauspieler auf ein ganzes Land, eine Provinz, oder nur eine Stadt gegeben, und vermöge welches alles andern Gesellschaften das Recht in diesem Lande, dieser Provinz oder Stadt zu spielen untersagt wird’. ‘Gedanken eines Weltbürgers, über das Schauspiel-Monopolium’, *Theater-Kalender* 4 (1778), 70. This particular correspondent was critical of the privilege system, arguing that it led to complacency and poor performance quality. On the privilege system, see Schmitt, *Schauspieler und Theaterbetrieb*, 13–15.

<sup>70</sup> Schmitt, *Schauspieler und Theaterbetrieb*, 13.

Döbbelin wants to get involved in a fair compromise. The permission for Herr Seyler must now come from Berlin.<sup>71</sup>

If privilege holders like Carl Theophil Döbbelin (1727–93) found more favourable terms elsewhere, they could sell their rights to another troupe. In this case, the appropriate court or city representative would broker a deal between the two principals, a topic I explore further in Chapter 3.

For the majority of companies, negotiating a privilege was the extent of their association with a court. Yet a few troupes not only performed in locations throughout a prince's land, but also in the residence city and even at the palace itself. Although it was uncommon, touring companies that performed at court for only a few months could be taken on permanently. In 1775, Duke Ernst II of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg established his German theatre and poached actors from Seyler's company that had previously performed in Gotha for part of the year.<sup>72</sup> When Elector Carl Theodor of the Palatinate (and later Bavaria; 1724–99) established the Mannheim Nationaltheater, in 1777, he did so by engaging the troupe of Theobald Marchand (1741–1800), which had hitherto visited the region on its circuit.<sup>73</sup> Döbbelin performed with his privileged company before audiences in Dresden, Magdeburg, and Berlin, that is until Elector Friedrich Wilhelm II of Brandenburg (1744–97) decided to establish a *Nationaltheater* and turned to him to direct it.<sup>74</sup> Some court theatres, therefore, were themselves built upon the foundations of successful erstwhile touring companies.

Permanent court appointments were rare, and the largest proportion of German-language companies that performed in a palace did so for only part of the year. Falling between those with a privilege and a resident court theatre, such companies were not official court institutions, although they were often supported by nobles or the potentate themselves. Court-affiliated

<sup>71</sup> 'Da Döbbelin ein Privilegium auf das Herzogtum Magdeburg hat, so kann Herr Seiler hier nicht wieder spielen, als mit Einwilligung Döbbelins. Wenn dieser darüber sich erklärt hat, dann schickt Herr Seiler Döbbelins schriftliche Erklärung an das General-Directorium, mit der Bitte um die Erlaubniß in Magdeburg zu spielen, und dann wird's nicht abgeschlagen werden. Der hiesige Camer-President kann sonst schlechterdings nichts bey der Sache thun. Es kommt nur darauf an, ob Herr Seiler diesen Weg versuchen, und hören will, ob Döbbelin sich in einen billigen Vergleich hierüber einlaßen möchte. Die Erlaubniß für Herrn Seiler muß von Berlin kommen.' J. S. Patzke to G. F. W. Großmann, Magdeburg, 11 September 1776, D-LEu, Kestner/II/A/IV/1579/Nr. 1, fol. 1v.

<sup>72</sup> 'Seilerische Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 1 (1775), 173–4; and 'Gotha', *Theater-Kalender* 2 (1776), 242–3.

<sup>73</sup> 'Marchandsche Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 3 (1777), 227–9; and 'Mannheim', *Theater-Kalender* 4 (1778), 210–11.

<sup>74</sup> Lena van der Hoven, *Musikalische Repräsentationspolitik in Preußen (1688–1797): Hofmusik als Inszenierungsinstrument von Herrschaft* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2015), 262.

theatres performed for audiences in a residence city for a set time before packing up and moving on to other settlements, including a court's secondary residence and the locations of regional trade fairs. Such was the case with the Brandenburg-Ansbach-Bayreuth Hofschauspielergesellschaft, which, during the mid-1780s, was led by Johann Ludwig Schmidt (unknown–1799), a director who ran touring companies on both sides of his tenure at court.<sup>75</sup> As its name suggests, this theatre performed for elite audiences in Ansbach and Bayreuth before continuing onwards to Erlangen, Nuremberg, and Salzburg.<sup>76</sup> The latter two locations were not even in the Margraviate of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Bayreuth. This troupe, therefore, not only performed for court audiences in the Margraviate of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Bayreuth and the Archbishopric of Salzburg, but also for civic ones in the Imperial City of Nuremberg.

The activity of the remaining touring companies similarly blur the boundaries between Imperial Estates as well as court and public stages. Like mobile troupes that visited areas outside of their affiliated courts, companies that catered primarily to public audiences might on occasion visit courts that were unable or unwilling to support their own permanent or affiliated troupe. Christian Johann Anton Jüngling and his troupe, for example, performed in Oldenburg and Altona as well as 'Schleswig and Eutin courts'.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, not only were some resident court theatres, like Gotha's, fashioned out of former mobile companies, but other *Hoftheater* were themselves, like Schmidt's, in essence touring public companies, entertaining as they did audiences outside of court in neighbouring cities. Similarly, travelling troupes otherwise unattached to a prince, including Jüngling's, staged music theatre for diverse public audiences one month, before stopping at nearby secular and ecclesiastical courts to entertain elite theatre-goers the next. In some instances, the settlements on a touring circuit were not even within the territory of the prince who supported the troupe, as was the case with the Brandenburg-Ansbach-Bayreuth

<sup>75</sup> For example, 'Schmidtische Margräfl. Anspachische und Bayreutsche Hof-Schauspieler-Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 11 (1785), 225–7; and, for more including a partial repertoire, see also, Arno Ertel, *Theateraufführungen zwischen Thüringer Wald und Altmühl im Aufbruch der deutschen Klassik* (Würzburg: Schöningh, 1965), 19, 51, and 94–6.

<sup>76</sup> 'Schmidtische Margräfl. Anspachische und Bayreutsche Hof-Schauspieler-Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 11 (1785), 225–7; and 'Schmidtische Margräfl. Anspachische und Bayreuthische Hofschauspielergesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 12 (1786), 196–8.

<sup>77</sup> 'Schleswig- und Eutinschen Hofe'. 'Jünglingsische Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 4 (1778), 209.

Hofschauspielergesellschaft. Although theatres of this period are often divided neatly into ‘court’, ‘civic’, and ‘wandering’ institutions, their operation as outlined here indicates that theatrical organization was much more fluid and complex than previously recognized.<sup>78</sup> For mobile troupes, transgressing the boundaries of court and public was as easy as traversing those separating *Kreise* and Imperial Estates.

Companies that toured to entertain both public and court theatre-goers did not significantly alter their repertoires to cater to these audiences. As Wagner skimmed through records of performances before writing to Großmann, he would have seen that his troupe performed in the *Hoftheater* of Wilhelm IX, Landgrave of Hessen-Kassel (1743–1821) in Kassel, the *Hoftheater* of the Elector of Brunswick-Lüneburg, King George III (1738–1820) in Hannover, and the theatre in Pymont during the summer of 1791.<sup>79</sup> Over 200 kilometres away in Lauchstädt – another tiny spa town of some 500 residents – the company of Joseph Bellomo (1754–1833) arrived to entertain students, Saxon nobility, and wealthy merchants.<sup>80</sup> Although primarily based in Weimar at the court of Duke Karl August of Saxe-Weimar and Saxe-Eisenach (1757–1828), Bellomo’s actors travelled to this popular summer destination as well as Erfurt, a nearby town belonging to the Electorate of Mainz.<sup>81</sup> More than a decade earlier and 400 kilometres to the south, the touring company of Emanuel Schikaneder (1751–1812) staged works before audiences in the Imperial Cities of Augsburg and Ulm as

<sup>78</sup> For these traditional distinctions, see, for example, Schmitt, *Schauspieler und Theaterbetrieb*, 4–41; and Bauman, *North German Opera*, 4–5.

<sup>79</sup> Großmann’s company began the year in Hannover. It travelled to Kassel to perform there between 21 March and 20 April, when it returned to Hannover. After performing on 22 May, the actors departed Hannover and resumed performances in Pymont on 24 May. The troupe remained there until 8 August, when extraordinary heat forced them to leave for Kassel. They resumed performances there on 16 August and continued until they left for Hannover on 17 September. ‘Cassel’, *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* 6 (1791), 342; and ‘Hannover. Aufgeführte Stücke von der Großmannschen Gesellschaft’, *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* 6 (1791), 568–9.

<sup>80</sup> Hübner, *Johann Hübners reales Staats-Zeitungs- und Conversations-Lexicon*, 1119; and Lesley Sharpe, *A National Repertoire: Schiller, Iffland and the German Stage* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 145.

<sup>81</sup> Bellomo’s company travelled from Weimar to Lauchstädt and began performances there on 13 June. After their performance on 14 August, the actors travelled to Erfurt, where they resumed activity on 19 August. On 6 September, Bellomo’s actors were summoned to perform in Weimar at the request of the Duke, and left for Erfurt again the following day, staging *Das rothe Käppchen*. Following a performance on 25 September, they returned to Weimar for the winter. ‘Weimar’, *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* 6 (1791), 570–1.

well as Stuttgart, the *Residenzstadt* of the Duchy of Württemberg.<sup>82</sup> Despite performing for both court and public theatre-goers, these companies did not maintain separate repertoires as Tables 1.3 through 1.5 help to illustrate. Repertoires were constantly evolving, but the snapshots presented here reveal that there was nevertheless significant overlap between ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ performance spaces. In fact, shortly after arriving in Erfurt, Bellomo’s actors were ordered back to Weimar for the day by the duke to stage a single performance of Dittersdorf’s *Das rothe Käppchen* (Breslau, 1790), a work that they had also put on by the request of the public no fewer than four times.<sup>83</sup> Companies could dedicate a performance to a prince, the leaders of an Imperial City, and the public on special occasions. But the pieces they staged in these instances were repeated elsewhere, as was the case when, on 30 June 1778, Schikaneder’s company dedicated to Duke Karl Eugen of Württemberg (1728–93) a performance of the play *Sophie, oder: Der gerechte Fürst* (1776), a work it had also staged for the Augsburg public – one not subservient to any prince – earlier that year on 24 February.<sup>84</sup> Alternatively, companies presented on special occasions a specially written prologue that was then followed by an appropriate work from its existing repertoire. Großmann’s actors, for example, contributed to the birthday celebrations of King George III by staging in Hannover the prologue *Die Georgs-Insel* which preceded Grétry’s *Richard Löwenherz*, a *Singspiel* that they also presented in Pymont and Kassel.<sup>85</sup> In short, repertoires changed neither because of the perceived status of the audience nor the significance of occasion.

That touring companies repeated works for court and public audiences is owing in part to practical concerns. Busy performance schedules, added to regular travel, meant that there were advantages to repeating works for

<sup>82</sup> Schikaneder’s actors began the year in Augsburg and performed there until 1 May, after which they departed for Ulm. Performances in Ulm commenced on 3 May and continued until the company left for Stuttgart following their performance on 25 May. On 27 May, Schikaneder’s troupe arrived in Stuttgart and staged their first piece two days later. They remained there until 7 September, when they departed for Augsburg. *Theater-Wochenschrift. Enthaltend Gedichte, Anekdoten, Nachrichten von andern deutschen Bühnen, Theaterreden . . .* (Augsburg: Hamm, 1778), [unpaginated]; *Theater-Wochenschrift. Enthaltend Gedichte, Anekdoten, Nachrichten von andern deutschen Bühnen, Theaterreden . . .* (Ulm: Schumacher, 1778), [unpaginated]; and *Theater-Wochenschrift. Enthaltend Gedichte, Anekdoten, Nachrichten von deutschen Schaubühnen, Theaterreden . . .* (Stuttgart: Mäntler, 1778), [unpaginated].

<sup>83</sup> ‘Weimar’, *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* 6 (1791), 571.

<sup>84</sup> *Theater-Wochenschrift. Enthaltend Gedichte, Anekdoten, Nachrichten von andern deutschen Bühnen, Theaterreden . . .* (Augsburg: Hamm, 1778); and *Theater-Wochenschrift. Enthaltend Gedichte, Anekdoten, Nachrichten von deutschen Schaubühnen, Theaterreden . . .* (Stuttgart: Mäntler, 1778).

<sup>85</sup> ‘Hannover’, *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* 6 (1791), 567.

**Table 1.3** Musical repertoire of the Großmann company, summer 1791

Music theatre <sup>86</sup>	Composer (place, date of premiere)	Performance location(s), date(s)
<i>Der Alchymist</i>	[Composer not identified]	1) Hannover, 15 June 2) Pyrmont, 9 September
<i>Der Apotheker und der Doktor</i>	[Dittersdorf] (Vienna, 1786)	1) Pyrmont, 1 July 2) Kassel, 12 September
<i>Das Automat</i>	[Johann André] (Berlin, 1782)	1) Pyrmont, 29 July 2) Kassel, 28 September
<i>Axur, König von Ormus</i>	Antonio Salieri ([ <i>Axur; re d'Ormus</i> ]; Vienna, 1788)	1) Kassel, 3 and 23 September
<i>Der Barbier von Sevilla</i>	[Composer not identified]	1) Pyrmont, 15 July
<i>Der Baum der Diana</i>	[Vicente Martín y Soler] ([ <i>L'arbore di Diana</i> ]; Vienna, 1787)	1) Hannover, 20 June 2) Pyrmont, 28 June and 21 July 3) Kassel, 29 August
<i>Betrug durch Aberglauben</i>	[Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf] (Vienna, 1786)	1) Hannover, 22 June 2) Pyrmont, 26 June and 3 August
<i>Don Juan</i>	[Mozart] ([ <i>Don Giovanni</i> ]; Prague, 1787)	1) Pyrmont, 8 July and 8 August 2) Kassel, 23 August
<i>Die Entführung aus dem Serail</i>	[Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart] (Vienna, 1782)	1) Hannover, 10 June 2) Pyrmont, 6 July
<i>Felix</i>	[Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny] ([ <i>Félix</i> ]; Fontainebleau, 1777)	1) Pyrmont, 26 July
<i>König Theodor in Venedig</i>	[Giovanni Paisiello] ([ <i>Il re Teodoro in Venezia</i> ]; Vienna, 1784)	1) Pyrmont, 13 July
<i>Die Liebe im Narrenhause</i>	[Dittersdorf] (Vienna, 1787)	1) Hannover, 14 June 2) Pyrmont, 31 July 3) Kassel, 6 September
<i>Die Liebe unter den Handwerksleuten</i>	[Florian Gassmann] ([ <i>L'amore artigiano</i> ]; Vienna, 1767)	1) Pyrmont, 17 July
<i>Lilla</i>	[Martín] ([ <i>Una cosa rara</i> ]; Vienna, 1786)	1) Pyrmont, 3 July 2) Kassel, 15 September
<i>Das Mädchen von Fraskati</i>	[Giovanni Paisiello] ([ <i>La frascata</i> ]; Venice, 1774)	1) Pyrmont, 10 July 2) Kassel, 20 August
<i>Oberon, König der Elfen</i>	[Paul Wranitzky] (Vienna, 1789)	1) Pyrmont, 19 July and 7 August 2) Kassel, 26 August

<sup>86</sup> Compiled from *ibid.*, 567–9; and 'Hannover. Aufgeführte Stücke von der Großmannschen Gesellschaft', *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* 7 (1792), 33–4.

**Table 1.3** (cont.)

Music theatre	Composer (place, date of premiere)	Performance location(s), date(s)
<i>Richard Löwenherz</i>	André-Ernest-Moseste Grétry (Fontainebleau, 1784)	1) Hannover, 6 June 2) Pyrmont, 24 July 3) Kassel, 17 September
<i>Die schöne Arsene</i> <i>Der Talisman</i>	[Composer not identified] [Salieri] ( <i>[Il talismano]</i> ; Milan, 1779)	1) Kassel, 31 August 1) Pyrmont, 5 August 2) Kassel, 17 August

**Table 1.4** Musical repertoire of the Bellomo company, summer 1791

Music theatre <sup>87</sup>	Composer (place, date of premiere)	Performance location(s), date(s)
<i>Der Apotheker und der Doktor</i>	[Dittersdorf] (Vienna, 1786)	1) Lauchstädt, 17 July
<i>Die Eifersucht auf der Probe</i>	[Pasquale Anfossi] ( <i>[Il geloso in cimento]</i> ; Vienna, 1774)	1) Lauchstädt, 8 August 2) Erfurt, 31 August
<i>Die eingebildeten Philosophen</i>	[Giovanni Paisiello] ( <i>[I filosofi immaginari]</i> ; St Petersburg, 1779)	1) Lauchstädt, 21 July
<i>Lilla</i>	[Vicente Martín y Soler] (Vienna, 1786)	1) Lauchstädt, 18 June and 6 July 2) Erfurt, 14 September
<i>Das rothe Käppchen</i>	Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf (Breslau, 1790)	1) Lauchstädt, 16 June, 11, 14, and 23 July, 1 and 13 August 2) Erfurt, 19 August, 7 and 24 September 3) Weimar, 6 September

as long as possible. Granted, companies that subsisted, at least partially, on subscriptions and ticket sales needed to perform pieces that attracted audiences to the theatre. To inform their choices and shape their programming decisions, directors and regisseurs could read about new works, how they were received, and where to purchase them in publications like the

<sup>87</sup> This information is taken from 'Weimar', *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* 6 (1791), 569–71.

**Table 1.5** Musical repertoire of the Schikaneder company, 1779

Music theatre <sup>88</sup>	Composer (place, date of premiere)	Performance location(s), date(s)
<i>Der Aerndtekrantz</i>	Johann Adam Hiller (Leipzig, 1771)	1) Stuttgart, 31 August and 3 September
<i>Ariadne auf Naxos</i>	Georg Benda (Gotha, 1775)	1) Stuttgart, 22 and 28 August
<i>Der Deserteur</i>	Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny ([ <i>Le déserteur</i> ]; Paris, 1767)	1) Augsburg, 3 and 17 February
<i>Erwin und Elmire</i>	[André] (Frankfurt am Main, 1775)	1) Stuttgart, 11 July
<i>Die Jagd</i>	Hiller (Weimar, 1770)	1) Stuttgart, 12 and 19 June, 31 July, and 25 August
<i>Die Liebe auf dem Lande</i>	Hiller (Leipzig, 1768)	1) Stuttgart, 25 June
<i>Lisuart und Dariolette</i>	Hiller (Leipzig, 1766)	1) Augsburg, 10 February 2) Stuttgart, 17 July
<i>Lottchen am Hofe</i>	[Hiller] (Leipzig, 1767)	1) Ulm, 14 May 2) Stuttgart, 2 June and 26 August
<i>Der lustige Schuster</i>	Hiller (Leipzig, 1771)	1) Stuttgart, 20 and 24 August
<i>Die Lyranten</i>	Emanuel Schikaneder (Innsbruck, 1775)	1) Ulm, 7 May 2) Stuttgart, [between 3 and 11 June]
<i>Das Milchmädchen und die beyden Jäger</i>	Egidio Duni ([ <i>Les deux chasseurs et la laitière</i> ]; Paris, 1763)	1) Augsburg, 16 and 26 February 2) Stuttgart, 4 July
<i>Der Töpfer</i>	Johann André (Hanau, 1773)	1) Augsburg, 23 April 2) Stuttgart, 22 June and 1 July
<i>Die verwandelten Weiber</i>	Hiller (Leipzig, 1766)	1) Stuttgart, 24 and 29 July
<i>Zemire und Azor</i>	[André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry] ([ <i>Zémire et Azor</i> ]; Fontainebleau, 1771)	1) Augsburg, 28 April 2) Stuttgart, 9 July
<i>Die Zigeuner</i>	[Johann Christoph Kaffka] (Munich, 1778)	1) Stuttgart, 18 August

<sup>88</sup> This data is compiled from performances listed in *Theater-Wochenschrift. Enthaltend Gedichte, Anekdoten, Nachrichten von andern deutschen Bühnen, Theaterreden . . .* (Augsburg: Hamm, 1778); *Theater-Wochenschrift. Ethaltend Gedichte, Anekdoten, Nachrichten von andern deutschen Bühnen, Theaterreden . . .* (Ulm: Schumacher, 1778); and *Theater-Wochenschrift. Enthaltend Gedichte, Anekdoten, Nachrichten von deutschen Schaubühnen, Theaterreden . . .* (Stuttgart: Mäntler, 1778).



*Theater-Kalender* as Chapter 2 reveals.<sup>89</sup> And as Chapter 3 will explore in greater detail, theatre directors and musicians also discussed the latest works in their correspondence and offered pieces for sale or exchange, as Wagner had in the letter that opened this chapter. In short, companies were always looking to expand their repertoires despite their busy travel and performance schedules.

Mobile companies performed the works that most appealed to their diverse audiences. But studies have hastily dismissed them because these troupes supposedly lacked the skills to perform the music of composers valued today.<sup>90</sup> According to Mozart, the Mainz Nationaltheater – which performed in the *Residenzstadt* Mainz and the nearby Imperial City of Frankfurt am Main – allegedly planned a performance of his *Don Juan* at the imperial coronation celebrations of Emperor Leopold II (1747–92) in 1790.<sup>91</sup> But playbills reveal that the company presented Dittersdorf's *Die Liebe im Narrenhause* that day, a discrepancy that led one scholar to defend Mozart by claiming that Dittersdorf's opera was simply 'less challenging for the performers'.<sup>92</sup> As I have shown elsewhere, *Don Juan* was by no means too difficult for the Mainz company, which had by this point staged it on no fewer than eight occasions including its German-language premiere.<sup>93</sup> That the troupe judged *Die Liebe im Narrenhause* to

<sup>89</sup> For a list of recently published works for the stage, see, for example, 'Schriften für die deutsche Bühne von Michael 1783. bis Michael 1784. im Druck erschienen sind', *Theater-Kalender* 11 (1785), 159–68.

<sup>90</sup> For an example of the negative evaluation of such theatres, see, John Warrack, *German Opera: From the Beginnings to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 63–71.

<sup>91</sup> Mozart claimed in a letter to his wife Constanze (1762–1842) that the company would present the work in his honour. Corroborating evidence has yet to be found. It is possible that Mozart – who is known to have distorted the truth in his correspondence – was merely projecting a false sense of his status privately to his wife (who would likely never have found out if the performance had actually taken place), since the event featured many musicians, most of whom had more success at the coronation than Mozart had himself. Wilhelm A. Bauer, Otto Erich Deutsch, and Joseph Heinz Eibl, eds., *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* 7 vols. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962–1975), 4: 116; and William Stafford, *The Mozart Myths: A Critical Reassessment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 24.

<sup>92</sup> Christoph Wolff, *Mozart at the Gateway to His Fortune: Serving the Emperor, 1788–91* (New York: Norton, 2012), 48.

<sup>93</sup> Austin Glatthorn, 'The Imperial Coronation of Leopold II and Mozart, Frankfurt am Main, 1790', *Eighteenth-Century Music* 14, no. 1 (2017), 94. By comparison, the Mainz Nationaltheater presented *Don Juan* three times and *Die Liebe im Narrenhaus* on seven occasions during 1790. Austin Glatthorn, 'The Theatre of Politics and the Politics of Theatre: Music as Representational Culture in the Twilight of the Holy Roman Empire' (PhD diss. University of Southampton, 2015), 326–31.

be better suited for this particular performance, that it was well received by audiences, and that Mozart simply might not have been telling the truth seems not to have mattered. What is more, the actor-director August Wilhelm Iffland went so far as to describe the Mainz company as the finest in the Empire (next to his in Berlin, of course), while another critic claimed that Mainz's German adaptation of Antonio Salieri's *Axur, König von Ormus* surpassed the original production in Vienna.<sup>94</sup> The musical capabilities of this troupe were no one-off. Schmidt's company in the Margraviate of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Bayreuth was noted for being particularly strong in musical repertoires.<sup>95</sup> No less a critic than Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749–1818) considered the musicians of Döbbelin's company among the Empire's best during the time when it was still touring.<sup>96</sup> Its nineteen instrumentalists must have been of significant quality, as Forkel included them alongside the most renowned orchestras in the Reich, a list which also included the *Hofkapellen* of the largest and most prestigious courts. The abilities of mobile companies were summed up by the 'thoughts of a cosmopolitan', who believed, 'in general, one sees much more assiduousness in a travelling company, which has before them a different public every three months at most, than in a standing theatre'.<sup>97</sup> Contemporaries therefore clearly recognized the capabilities of touring troupes.

Granted, musical and theatrical abilities differed from company to company, but it was not as if a certain piece was so challenging that another troupe was unable to stage it simply because it was written by a particular composer. It was in the interests of dramatists and musicians to create works that were accessible to as many of the Empire's troupes and audiences as possible. Andreas Eberhard, a musician in the employ of the Prince of Hessen-Hanau, for example, had composed a new setting of *Das tartarische Gesetz* by dramatist Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter (1746–97) for the company of Christian Ludwig Neuhaus (1749–98) in 1780.<sup>98</sup> When

<sup>94</sup> Glatthorn, 'The Imperial Coronation of Leopold II and Mozart', 94 and 95.

<sup>95</sup> 'Schmidtische Margräfl. Anspachische und Bayreutsche Hof-Schauspieler-Gesellschaft', *Theater-Kalender* 11 (1785), 227.

<sup>96</sup> 'Verzeichniß der besten Kapellen deutscher Höfe', *Musikalischer Almanach für Deutschland auf das Jahr 1782* (Leipzig: Schwickert, 1782), 151.

<sup>97</sup> 'So wird man gemeinlich bey einer reisenden Gesellschaft, welche längstens alle vierteljahr ein andres Publikum vor sich hat, viel mehr Eyfer blicken, als bey einem stehenden Theater.' 'Gedanken eines Weltbürgers, über das Schauspiel-Monopolium', *Theater-Kalender* 4 (1778), 73.

<sup>98</sup> A. Eberhard to G. F. W. Großmann, Hanau, 26 April 1781, D-LEu, Kestner/I/C/II/82/Nr. 1, fols. 1r–2r.

Eberhard sought another director who might be interested in staging his setting, he wrote to Großmann promising that it ‘received every possible acclaim not only here at court, but amongst the entire public’.<sup>99</sup> A decade later, Gotter himself was shopping around for a musician to set his latest drama, *Die Geisterinsel*. He wrote to the Mannheim actor Heinrich Beck (1760–1803), who remembered to have ‘heard from Mozart himself that he would hardly set more German topics, the reason being that he writes everything for Vienna where only Italian and no German operas are given [at court]’.<sup>100</sup> Beck then advised Gotter to contact Dittersdorf instead, as he happily composed for the German theatre, and proposed the following terms:

1 Ditters sells the first score – [to whom] he wants – and receives the text free of charge for this [first sale].

2 Neither music nor text may be copied and shared with another theatre – the first buyer must solemnly oblige to this condition [by signing a contract].

3 Ditters retains the right to share his composition with other German *Singspiel* theatres such as Berlin, Mannheim, Bonn, Mainz, Hamburg, etc. These must then purchase the dialog for extra, or – what would be better yet – the poet and composer share amongst themselves the income from all remaining stages.<sup>101</sup>

Beck thus offered only a suggestion as to how to protect the interests of the dramatist and composer and allow their work to reach as many theatres as possible. But in the event that the music was not performable for whatever

<sup>99</sup> ‘... nicht allein hier bey Hof sondern bey dem Ganzen *Publicum* allen möglichen Beifall erhalten’. A. Eberhard to G. F. W. Großmann, Hanau, 26 April 1781, fol. 1r.

<sup>100</sup> ‘So viel ich mich erinnere aus Mozards Munde gehört zu haben – wird er schwerlig mehr deutschen Sujets componiren; aus der Ursache weil er alles für Wien schreibt, wo nur Italienische und keine deutschen Opern gegeben werden.’ H. Beck to F. W. Gotter, Mannheim, 7 April 1791, D-GOL, Chart. B 1915 II, fol. 46v. For more on the correspondence concerning *Die Geisterinsel*, see Cliff Eisen, ed., *New Mozart Documents: A Supplement to O.E. Deutsch’s Documentary Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 65–7. However, the recipient of this letter is reported as Friedrich Hildebrand von Einsiedel (1750–1828) in this source. Gotter also considered Grétry, Johann Friedrich Anton Fleischmann (1766–98), Joseph Haydn, Friedrich Himmel (1765–1814), Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752–1814), Johann Schulz (1747–1800), Christian Schwenke (1767–1822), and Paul Wranitzky. Fleischmann and Reichardt would go on to set the text. Bauman, *North German Opera in the Age of Goethe*, 313.

<sup>101</sup> ‘1) *Ditters* verkauft die erste Partitur – wo er sie will – hierzu erhält er den Text ohntgeltlich. / 2) Weder Musik noch Text darf copiert und einem andern Theater mitgetheilt werden – hierzu muß sich der erste Käufer feierlich *reversiren*. / 3) *Ditters* behält das Recht seine *Composition* auch den andern deutschen Singspieltheatern mitzuthemen als Berlin, Mannheim, Bonn, Mainz, Hamburg pp. Diese müssen alsdann den *Dialog extra* kaufen oder – was beßer wäre – der Dichter und Componist theilen den Ertrag von allen übrigen Bühnen unter sich.’ H. Beck to F. W. Gotter, Mannheim, 7 April 1791, fol. 46v.

reason, a company could simply create or find another setting of a tried-and-tested story. *Das tartarische Gesetz* and *Die Geisterinsel* alone were set by no fewer than seven composers during the period.<sup>102</sup> And when Großmann received Eberhard's letter, he reminded himself that he needed to study the music of Ferdinand d'Antoine (1746–93), who was working on his own version of *Das tartarische Gesetz*. Although his company could not perform another setting without offending d'Antoine, 'were his music completely and utterly unperformable, that would change the matter'.<sup>103</sup> Music was, after all, only one part of the spectacle that the Reich's companies offered theatre-goers.

The theatrical network embedded within the pages of Reichard's *Theater-Kalender* not only decentralizes the landscape of late eighteenth-century music theatre, but it also sheds new light on the subtle intersections of court and public theatres. Informed by a Habermasian understanding of European society in the years around 1800, 'elite' court and 'popular' public cultures are often viewed as distinct, oppositional cultural spheres. Jörg Krämer called into question such a distinction when he observed that noble and public theatre-goers were not opposed to one another, as attitudes towards music theatre differed within each group.<sup>104</sup> He further noted that supporters of German repertoires were found both at court and in the wider public, rendering clear distinctions between them even more opaque.<sup>105</sup> The activities of many of the Reich's troupes as explored here further reveals that the boundaries between such classifications were flexible, not rigid. Of the roughly 290 companies operating within the Holy Roman Empire, around 130 toured regularly throughout its territories. In so doing, troupes had no option but to traverse the frontiers separating *Kreis* and Imperial Estate, capital and province, urban and rural, and court and public. While some mobile companies became renowned resident court theatres, other princely troupes were designed to leave the court

<sup>102</sup> *Das tartarische Gesetz* was set by Ferdinand d'Antoine (Bonn, 1782), Georg Benda (Mannheim, 1787), Andreas Eberhard, and Johann Zumsteeg (Stuttgart, 1780; 1760–1802); Johann Friedrich Anton Fleischmann (Weimar, 1798), Friedrich Wilhelm Haack (1760–1827; Stettin, 1798), Johann Friedrich Reichardt (Berlin, 1798), and Johann Zumsteeg (Stuttgart, 1798) all composed versions of *Die Geisterinsel*.

<sup>103</sup> '... es wäre den, daß seine Musick ganz und gar nicht aufführbar wäre, dann ist's ein Anderes.' A. Eberhard to G. F. W. Großmann, Hanau, 26 April 1781, fols. 1v–2r.

<sup>104</sup> Jörg Krämer, *Deutschsprachiges Musiktheater im späten 18. Jahrhundert. Typologie, Dramaturgie und Anthropologie einer populären Gattung*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998), 1:119–20.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 119–20.

behind to perform in local areas. Others still travelled on a circuit to entertain public audiences as well as courts that did not finance a resident theatre. These three phenomena are not mutually exclusive, and one point of common ground is that companies frequently presented the same works for their audiences. While on the one hand this was driven by practical reasons, on the other it was because there was a coherent body of works – communicated and recommended through networks of periodicals and letter-writing – that were most likely to attract audiences to the theatre and to help ensure companies were invited to return in the future. Quality between the Empire's troupes varied, and it was incumbent on musicians to compose or adapt works to be as accessible to troupes and audiences as possible. To be sure, more exclusive French and Italian *Hoftheater* such as those in Berlin and Vienna existed as projections of status, power, and taste.<sup>106</sup> But these cities also housed German-language companies accessible to members of court as well as more general audiences. Repertoire moved fluidly between theatrical institutions and distorted their alleged distinctions. So far as the music of the German stage was concerned, there was little difference between court and public theatre-goers in the second half of the eighteenth century.

## An Empire of Theatres

Many roads lead to Vienna. Or at least that is the impression conveyed in a fair amount of studies exploring German music theatre in the eighteenth century, as the operas composed for the city have long been the benchmark for the evaluation of such works.<sup>107</sup> But when, in 1786, the *Kapellmeister* of the Mannheim Nationaltheater, Ignaz Fränzl (1736–1811), arrived in Vienna having travelled those very roads, he claimed that, 'aside from the Hamburg theatre, he had seen every one in Germany and considered Vienna's – except for Brockmann's – amongst the worst'.<sup>108</sup> If Fränzl is to be believed, his journey was no small feat, as hundreds of companies operated throughout the Empire's territories. By reassembling the network

<sup>106</sup> On the Italian *Hoftheater* of Berlin and Vienna, see Christoph Henzel, *Die italienische Hofoper in Berlin um 1800: Vincenzo Righini als preußischer Hofkapellmeister* (Stuttgart: Springer, 1994); and Dorothea Link, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart's Vienna: Sources and Documents, 1783–1792* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>107</sup> See, for example, Warrack, *German Opera*, 124–90.

<sup>108</sup> 'Außer dem Hamburger Theater hat er alle in Teutschland gesehen, und zählt Wien außer Brotman unter das schlechteste.' J. D. Beil to G. F. W. Großmann, Mannheim, 6 April 1786, D-LEu, Kestner/I/C/III/24/Nr. 18, fol. 1r.

of imperial theatres, this chapter at once redraws the map of German music theatre across Central Europe and forces reconsideration of its traditional sites of investigation. It reveals that not all roads led to Vienna, which was one hub of many (see Figure 1.2). Although population size, geographic extent, and the presence or absence of a court are important factors in understanding musico-theatrical activity in any given place, the picture becomes most clear within an imperial context. Thus, the stories of such diverse settlements as Pymont, Regensburg, and Wetzlar become equally important as those of Berlin, Munich, and Vienna. The history of Schmidt's and Bellomo's court-affiliated public theatres have just as much to offer as those of Mannheim's court and Hamburg's public theatres, albeit for different reasons. In a polity where centre blended with periphery, music theatre extended uniformly across its territories. This was the theatrical landscape with which Fränzl would have been familiar.

Having claimed to have visited every theatre in the Reich, Fränzl felt he was in a position to evaluate those he visited. But he offers no explanation as to why he found Vienna's theatres – with the exception of that of Johann Franz Brockmann (1745–1812) – inferior by comparison to the others he encountered. What is clear, however, is that much as how many centres of music theatre have fallen through the cracks of investigation, so too have most of the companies that performed in them. Those numerous touring German theatres played a significant part in the history of Central European music and theatre. Yet they receive disproportionately little attention when compared to resident court and civic theatres, especially those designated as *Nationaltheater*. Despite the claim that privileges helped define and delineate spheres of performance to certain key cities, this was not the case, as travelling troupes helped ensure that music theatre reached settlements of all sizes, near and far.<sup>109</sup> The Reich's musico-theatrical system was self-regulated from the bottom up. Privileges were granted at a local level, yet no ruler – not even the emperor – had the authority to regulate theatre from the top down to ensure it reached all corners of the Reich. But it did. And the mobility of the German theatre companies that did so further challenges the perceived cultural distinctions of court and public theatre-goers. When considering the performances of companies that catered to both types of audiences, the cultural borders between these supposedly oppositional spheres appear as vague as those separating the Imperial Estates through which they travelled. Some court-affiliated companies were even explicitly designed by their court backers to

<sup>109</sup> Schmitt, *Schauspieler und Theaterbetrieb*, 189.

serve the public's interests as well as their own, a topic to which I shall return in Chapter 3.

Given the sheer number of theatres active within the Empire and the vast geographic distances they covered, it seems unlikely that Fränzl could have seen *every* theatre. But he really did not need to. Personal correspondence, like Wagner's, as well as periodicals such as the *Theater-Kalender* helped Fränzl and his contemporaries to make sense of their kaleidoscopic world of music theatre. While touring companies continuously made the arduous journey from one city to the next, readers throughout the Reich could be transported to any of its distant regions with the turn of a page. Periodicals thus rendered the Reich's theatre network as much an imaginary realm as a political and cultural one. The diffusion of information concerning theatrical institutions, personnel, repertoires, and developments was paramount. In this context, the letter Wagner posted to Großmann that began this chapter begins to make sense. Active in one of the Empire's most theatrically dynamic cities, Wagner reached out to Großmann, whose actors performed in eleven settlements of varying size. Wagner was not surprised that Grams in Prague had disseminated his German adaptations of Italian court opera for public performances across the Reich, but he hoped that he could make the best of the situation by trading these works for other *Singspiele* that were well received by audiences hundreds of kilometres away. Wagner was armed with the knowledge of exactly what pieces Großmann's actors presented, when, where, and who staged them, and, in some cases, even the public's reactions to them. The Reich's theatre companies, the journals that supported them, and the postal routes that facilitated their movement and communication linked this expansive and diverse space.

Information was key. Its dissemination through as many avenues as possible helped to connect and regulate hundreds of troupes across just as many Imperial Estates, ten *Kreise*, and one Empire. The spread of musical and theatrical news was not restricted to occasional personal, face-to-face interactions, for print media and written communication sent through the post could reach distant areas in a fraction of the time. This endowed German-language repertoires with the ability to transcend the Reich's local, regional, imperial, and cultural boundaries with ease and speed. And while this chapter has remapped the Empire's theatrical network as recorded in the pages of the *Theater-Kalender*, the next examines more closely how the information transmitted within it helped inform and shape the repertoire of music theatre that imperial companies performed.