

The Theater an der Wien ^{History}

was founded in 1801 by Emanuel Schikaneder, the librettist of Mozart's "Zauberflöte" and the creator of the role "Papageno". This opera had premiered ten years earlier in the "Theater auf der Wieden", where it enjoyed enormous success. A reminder of this popularity can be seen in the group of sculptures seen above the former main entrance, the so-called "Papageno Gate".

Important premieres soon followed, notably Beethoven's "Fidelio" in 1805 and Kleist's "Käthchen von Heilbronn" in 1810. The most popular actors of the day appeared: Ferdinand Raimund and Johann Nestroy enjoyed major successes as both actors and authors at Theater an der Wien. Many of the operettas by Offenbach were shown shortly after their Parisian premieres in the 1860's and enjoyed long runs.

This paved the way for the premiere in 1874 of the "Fledermaus", with which the "Golden Age" of the Viennese operetta reached its high point. Alexander Girardi, the most popular Viennese actor and interpreter of Viennese songs, along with Carl Millöcker, composer of "Der Bettelstudent", helped the theater to further successes. A generation later, Franz Lehár initiated operetta's "Silver Age" with the premiere of "Lustige Witwe" in 1905. Composers Emmerich Kálmán (Gräfin Mariza), Paul Abraham (Blume von Hawaii) and many others continued to extend and refine this genre for the next thirty years.

Following the Second World War, the Theater an der Wien served for ten years as the home of the Vienna State Opera, a period in which a since-legendary "Viennese Mozart Ensemble" came into being. After the State Opera was rebuilt, the Theater an der Wien was renovated and taken over by the city of Vienna, and re-opened with Mozart's "Zauberflöte". Every year it hosted performances for "Theater der Jugend". Soon the "Lustige Witwe" was revived and beginning in 1965 musicals were brought into the repertoire: Fiddler On The Roof, The Man Of La Mancha, Evita and Jesus Christ Superstar.

During the directorship of Peter Weck, CATS premiered in 1983 and played in Theater an der Wien until the fall of 1988. The fusion of the theater into the VEREINIGTEN BÜHNEN WIEN made it possible to transfer "Cats" into the Ronacher Theater, thus making way in Theater an der Wien for "The Phantom Of The Opera". Phantom itself was later transferred to the Raimund Theater an achieved a total run of nearly five years. It was followed in Theater an der Wien by the world premiere productions of "Freudiana" in December 1990 and "Elisabeth" in September 1992.

In 2006, the Mozart Year, the Theater an der Wien was reopened as the city of Vienna's new opera house with a gala featuring Plácido Domingo, and will now stage performances all the year round.

The Theater an der Wien is a marvellous addition to the internationally renowned operatic scene in Vienna and underscores the city's reputation as a centre of culture and music. Since it was reopened as the city of Vienna's new opera house in January 2006, the Theater an der Wien has established itself both nationally and internationally as a centre of baroque opera and modern, contemporary musical theatre.