

A Performance at the Old Dresden Opera House at the “Zwinger” (1719)

Abstract

Staging lavish opera performances was part of the Baroque self-glorification cultivated by absolutist rulers such as August “the Strong” (1670-1733), Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, who emulated the trend-setting French monarch Louis XIV. This pen-and-ink drawing offers a side view of the Old Dresden Opera House at the “Zwinger,” a grand Baroque palace in Dresden. The “Zwinger” was commissioned by August “the Strong” and designed by his court architect, Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann (1662-1736), one of Germany’s leading Baroque architects. The entire palace complex was constructed in stages from 1710 to 1728. The Old Opera House was built from 1718 to 1719. This drawing shows what must have been one of the earliest performances held there. Pen-and-ink drawing by Carl Heinrich Jacob Fehling (1683-1753), undated.

Source



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