

Opera and Operetta Productions at the Estonia Theatre during the German Occupation in 1941–1944: Operation, Repertoire and Reception

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Abstract

Despite the hard war years, the cultural life of the period of the German occupation in 1941–1944 remained vibrant. Surprising as it may seem, there were no strict and clear directives/instructions concerning musical policy in Nazi Germany. The repertoire policy depended largely on individuals and personal relationships. During the period of the German occupation culture in Estonia was placed under strict control but although the performances of works by politically and racially inappropriate authors were forbidden, this did not affect the standard repertoire of the Estonia Theatre much. Since its foundation in 1906, the Estonia Theatre had been a multi-genre theatre for drama, opera, operetta and ballet. Now in addition to operas, operettas, ballets and dramas in Estonian the Estonia Theatre was also obliged, on the demand of the German authorities, to perform operettas for the military in German. Additionally, evening entertainments known as Colourful Evenings (*Bunte Abende*) were organised. In summary throughout the German occupation there were no significant differences in the repertoire of the Estonia Theatre compared to that of the preceding period.