

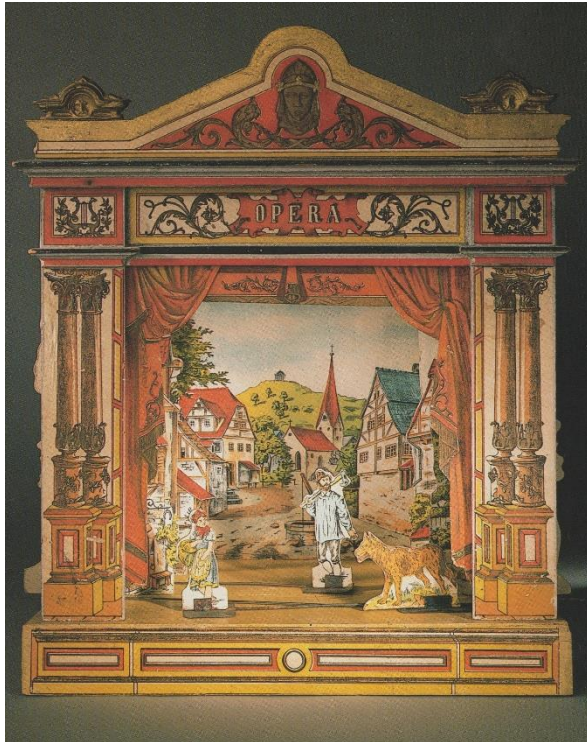
Papier Theatre in Germany and Austria. (With grateful thanks to the late Peter Baldwin, and his invaluable book *Toy Theatres of the World*.)

In Germany the Toy Trade was centred around Nuremburg, and here 'Papiertheater' sheets developed from 18th. century peep shows and dioramas. With the development of lithographic printing, taking over from copper-plate engraving in the 1830s, sheets of characters were issued for many popular operas, fairy stories, and plays. These were not originally designed for performances, and accompanying scenery took some time to arrive. Another difference between Germany and England was that Germany was not a unified country, it was still a collection of Ducal states, so that Berlin did not form the dominant centre of production, unlike London, and businesses sprang up in a number of cities, including Neuruppen, Mainz, Esslingen and Munich, among others.

One of the earliest publishers was J.C. Winckelmann, of Berlin, who started to issue theatre sheets in 1828. His scenes were often derived from designs by Schinkel and Gropius, two architects known for their designs for the Berlin stage. Berlin continued to be a centre for publication throughout the 19th. century. Here is one of his atmospheric back-drops.







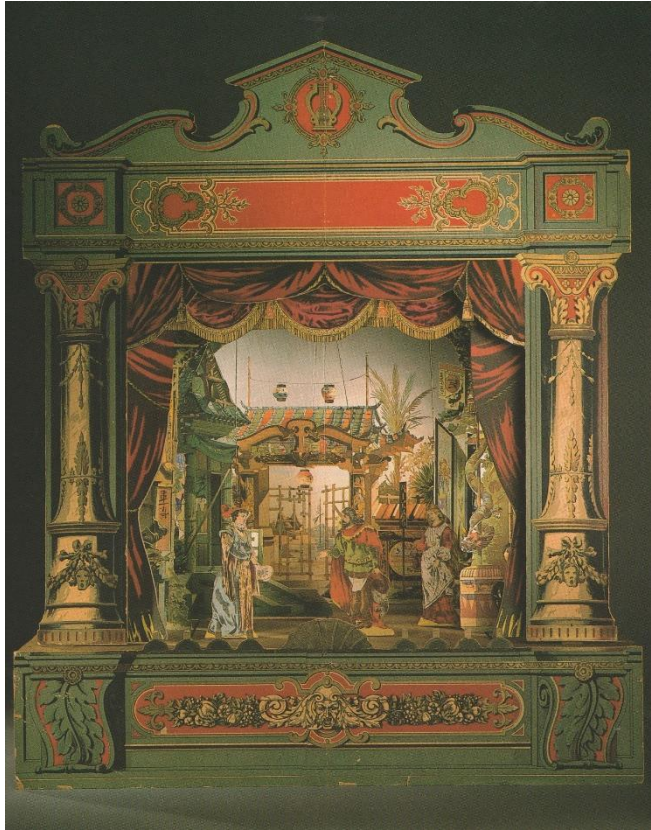
A later publisher was Adolf Engel, ca. 1880. Engel exported his designs to England through Gamages Toy Shop in London until the First World War. This catered for a wealthier middle-class market than that which patronised the English publishers, who were by now virtually reduced to two representatives, Webb and Pollock. This shows a theatre by Engel, illustrated in the 1906 Gamages catalogue. The play is 'Red Riding Hood', the German folk-tale re-worked for English audiences, although the village cottages and church show a markedly North German architectural style.



Mainz was also an important centre of Papiertheatre, and here was to be found Josph Scholtz. The above picture shows a relative early set of characters for 'The Marriage of Figaro'. Typically, there is only one pose



for each character. This company produced its first theatrical prints in 1830, and continued in business until the 1920s, when rising inflation and the reduction in the market ended a prolific and elegant and elaborate range of scenes and proscenia.



In Esslingen the firm of J.F. Schreiber entered the market rather later, in the 1850s, and continued until the 1960s. The output was extensive, highly decorative, and supplied in two sizes of scenes and characters. Like many other publishers, Schreiber only provided one design per character, unlike English publishers, who customarily provided three or four designs per character. Like other publishers too, Schreiber's scenes were all designed by leading theatre designers of the day, such as Theo. Guggenberger, rather

than taken from existing productions. This is a scene *A Japanese Garden* from 'Der Mikado', Sievert's play, rather than Gilbert and Sullivan's opera. Such scenes often contained a wealth of detail, including the use of accurate hieroglyphics on the walls and columns of Egyptian temple scenes, as can be seen from this example.





In Austria, the Kindertheater was dominated by one publisher in particular, Matthias Trentsensky (1790-1868) of Vienna. From the 1820s he started publishing characters and scenes using designs by Jachimovitz, the designer at the State Opera. He issued two sizes of stage, and 41 plays for the large size, and 16 for the small size were published, based on operas, including the latest by Wagner, fairy stories, and Shakespeare.



One of his designs records the 1855 Charles Kean production of Henry VIII, produced at the Princesses Theatre in Oxford Street in London. Kean's meticulous attention to historical detail in his productions especially of Shakespeare was known throughout Europe, and it obviously appealed to Trentsensky. None of the other publishers in Austria ever came close to matching Trentsensky in quantity or quality. He also exported to England, again for a wealthier clientele than that supplied by English publishers at the time.

These are just the principal names of the Austro-German publishers of toy theatre sheets. In general, we can say that the interest in the form started rather later than in England, and continued also rather later until at least the First World War and beyond. It was also far less dependant on real stage productions. Instead, publishers used professional designers for the stage to create new scenes and characters for them. In Schreiber's case he also commissioned the playwright Sievert to write plays for him. Many of Sievert's scripts, however, demand actions quite impossible for the characters, often who have only one pose available for the whole duration of the play or opera. This is in marked contrast to the English publishers, whose output often records in remarkable detail actual London productions, and usually contain several poses for the principal characters, and often two or three for the chorus or crowd.