

HANS GÁL · WORK NOTES

Die Heilige Ente (The Sacred Duck)

(Opera) A play with gods and men. In a prelude and three acts

Text by K.M.Levetzow and Leo Feld. · Opus 15 · 1921

Instrumentation	Soli: 2 sop,1 alto, 3 ten, 2 bar, 2 bass; Mixed Chorus; Orch: 3(picc),3(cor),3(D-cl,bcl),3(cbn); 4,3,3,1; hrp; cel; timp; perc; str.; 2 scenes
Duration	full evening minutes
Publisher	Universal Edition (1922)
Availability	score and parts available for hire
First performance	Düsseldorf Apr.1923 (Szell)
Other performances	Prüwer, Breslau, Nov.1923, Mar.1925; Weimar, Feb.1924, Mar. 1924 Aachen, Feb.1924 Chemnitz, Feb.1924 Kassel, May 1924 Gál, Breslau, Feb. 1925 Saarbrücken, Apr. 1925 Zweig, Berlin, Aug.1925 Steinberg, Königsberg, Dec.1925; Prague Jan.1926 Schwarz, Karlsruhe, Apr. 1928, Jun. 1928, Aug. 1928

Kaiser, Vienna Radio, Mar. 1929

Mainz, Nov. 1932, Dec. 1932

Last full pre-war performance with orchestra: Mainz, Mar. 1933

Post-war

Theater Heidelberg, March 7th 2020, cond. Dietger Holm

Theater Heidelberg October 22nd - December 10th 2023, cond.
Dietger Holm

Piano version: Deutsche Oper, Berlin, Nov. 1990

Abridged piano version: Festsaal der Sophiensäle Berlin, Feb. 2011

Excerpts with piano, Berlin, Feb. 2011

Abridged children's version: Köln, Jun. 2003

Complete version with piano, Sophiensäle, Berlin, Sep. 2012

About the work

The decisive break-through for Gál came with the great success of his second opera, *Die Heilige Ente* ('The Sacred Duck'), a lyrical comic opera in a Chinese setting, which had its première in Düsseldorf in April 1923 under Georg Szell, and was published as his Op. 15 by Universal Edition. It was immediately taken up by another six theatres and was eventually performed with continued success in some twenty theatres, including Breslau, Weimar, Aachen, Chemnitz, Kassel, Königsberg, Prague and Berlin, during the next ten years. It was performed on Vienna Radio in 1929 - the first modern opera to be staged by the station. The principal tenor role was sung in several of these performances by the well-known opera singer Josef Witt. The work was still in the repertoire of German opera houses in 1933, when its successful run came to an abrupt end as a result of the political circumstances. *Die Heilige Ente* was Gál's first opera-collaboration with the librettist Karl Michael von Levetzow, whom he had met during his work at the Neue Wiener Bühne, and for whose play *Ruth* he had composed the incidental music. Richard Strauss had said: "If I hadn't found Hofmannsthal, I would have liked to work with Levetzow" [quoted from Waldstein, Hans Gál Vienna 1965 p. 40]

[View this work online](#)