

“Bei uns ist immer was los!” Feste in Rheinland

„FASCHING IN MÜNCHEN“ / „CARNIVAL SEASON IN MUNICH“

Wie feiert man heute Fasching? (How is Fasching celebrated today?)

masquerade / costume ball: der Faschingsball, die Faschingsbälle

Geschichte der Faschingsbälle

It was only at the beginning of the 19th Century, in the years 1812 and 1813, that the first timid signs of Fasching appeared. The Napoleonic Wars, in some way, dampened the free expansion of such frolicking, but could not hold it down completely. In the years around 1820, the old Fasching customs reappeared more and more and no less a public figure than Gottfried Keller, in his book "The Green Heinrich", enthusiastically described the vivaciousness of the Munich Fasching parties. They were especially enlivened by the artists' balls, and parades. Carl Spitzweg, the painter, also took a theme for one of his beloved paintings a comic Fasching scene, showing a young man and his girl (masqueraded as a Knight and an Italian Maiden) being escorted by a gendarm to police headquarters.

Even at that time it was obvious that the specific Munich way lay in a community of people and artists. Besides the merry-go-rounds of masked people, which mainly took place in the streets, there now were the big society balls, "Redouten", Court Balls and Artists' Balls. The bulletin of St. Peter's Church wrote in February 1828 that on the 4th of that month, more than 5000 people attended the big masquerade ball at the "Great Theatre", and that on the 9th of February, the same year, coach after coach arrived in front of the "Odeon" for the Artists' Ball. Furthermore, it goes on, on the 16th of February, His Majesty King Ludwig I thrilled the population of Munich by taking a sleigh ride in a beautifully decorated sleigh, accompanied by blaring music which was heard all over town. The year 1838 also saw, at the "Hof- and Nationaltheater" a masquerade ball that undoubtedly belonged to the most splendid fests that Munich had seen for many years. A parade of masks, inside the house, portraying the four continents, brought enthusiastic applause from thousands of visitors. The costumes were of more than rich splendor and sparkled in the light of the wearers' jewels.

These kind of artists' balls were in vogue over a long period. Painters, sculptors, architects, poets, and musicians tried to outdo each other in the production of pictures full of fantasy, works of poetry and fictions, and musical creations. At the beginning of the 70's Fa-