

“MEISTERTRUNK” / “MAYOR’S DRINK”

ROTHENBURG OB DER TAUBER

The plot of the play - Historisches Festspiel 'Der Meistertrunk'

a Rothenburg master glazier and poet, summarized the dramatic events of 1631 and their happy ending into a stage play.

On Whitsuntide 1881 the Rothenburgers and even then thousands of guests from all over Germany and abroad celebrated the first performance of the Historical Festival Play in the Town Hall's Imperial Hall.

It became an overwhelming success.

Still today, the Historic Festival Association succeeds every year in reviving the past with this stage play and numerous authentic scenes in front of the unique set of the medieval historic town centre.



Adam Hörber
(06-30-1827 - 10-28-1905),

The plot of the play

It's the morning of the 30th of October 1631 in the free imperial city of Rothenburg upon the Tauber river. The governing mayor, Bezold, and his town council are discussing the imposing situation - the city is surrounded by the emperor's troops under the command of Fieldmarshall Johann Tserclaes, Tilly. They have reason to believe that Swedish forces are on their way to help, so the council agrees to try to hold on and not surrender. The city commander has sent the last of their able men the "Junge Schar" (the young troopers) to fight.

Messenger's flood the town - councilmen with a storm of defeating reports, so finally retired mayor, Nusch, proclaims the end of the battle and hangs out the white flag.

Drums and Trumpets announce Field Marshall Tilly's triumphant entry along with his officers and adherents. The desperate folk of Rothenburg pleas for mercy. Their plea falls on deaf ears, for the court martial wants to make an example of the town councilmen against whom they have raised grave accusations. The verdict: Plunde and destroy the city and kill the town council.



Magdalena, governing-mayor Bezold's niece, pleas once again for mercy but to no avail. The Kellermeister's (man in charge of the wine cellars) daughter suggests that the defeated offer their conquerors a welcome drink. Her father fills the 3 1/4 liter glass goblet with local wine and the council presents it to their tormentors. After tasting sufficient of the strong wine Tilly suddenly changes his mind offering the city council a last chance: "If one of you is able to empty this goblet - in one draught - then I shall be merciful, forget all fault."

Nusch wants to make the attempt - contemplates one last time - then empties the huge goblet swallow for swallow and accomplishes what all thought to be impossible. Tilly is impressed and keeps his promise. The play closes with the choir, "We fold our hands....."