

Brühl (Leipzig)

The **Brühl** (pronounced [bʁyːl] [ⓘ] [Ⓘ]listen)) is a street in Leipzig, Germany, just within the former city wall.

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Brühl with *Höfe am Brühl* shopping center to the left

History

On the corner of the Brühl and Katharinestrasse stands the Romanus house, built for the mayor of Leipzig between 1701 and 1704, and one of the finest baroque buildings remaining in the town.^[1]

In the late 18th century and early 19th century, the Brühl was part of the Jewish quarter of the city.

The Brühl retained Jewish connections into the 20th century. The street was a centre of the world fur trade. Chaim Eitingon, the Russian-born 'king of the fur trade', opened a branch there in 1893, and in the 1920s the street represented one-third of the world trade in furs.^[2]

Only 4.2% of Leipzigers as a whole worked in the fur industry, but 8.7% of Jewish Leipzigers did. The Brühl was an emblem of Jewish economic activity in Leipzig, and of the city as a whole.^[3]

In 1938, under the Nazi government, 'the entire Brühl district changed hands, as fur firms — the pinnacle of Jewish commerce in the city, along with the department stores — were stolen from their owners.'^[4]

Today the street contains a few 19th-century and early 20th-century buildings, most of the remaining buildings being from the third quarter of the 20th century. A notable modern building is the town's *Museum der bildenden Künste* (Museum of the visual arts).

Wagner's birthplace



The Brühl in 1905 during the fur fair, the houses decorated with bears and other skins



Romanushaus



Birth house of Richard Wagner in the Brühl in 1885

It was in the Brühl, in 1813, that the composer Richard Wagner was born^[5] at no. 3, the 'House of the Red and White Lions'. Ironically, Wagner's disciple Theodor Uhlig, in an 1850 essay which Wagner was later to build on for his own essay *Das Judenthum in der Musik*, condemned the music of Meyerbeer by linking it to the Jewish quarters of Leipzig and Dresden: 'If that is dramatic song, then Gluck, Mozart, Cherubini and Spontini carried out their studies at the Neumarkt in Dresden or the Brühl in Leipzig.'^[6] Wagner's birthplace was demolished in 1886, three years after his death, and the site was later occupied by a department store, built in 1968 to a design of the architect Harry Müller.

This building, which became disused in the 21st century, and a number of adjoining Plattenbauten, were replaced by a shopping centre called "Höfe am Brühl", which opened in 2015. Part of the facade of the 1968 department store was retained and the new new construction contains a memorial to the composer at the site of his birthplace.

A parallel street to the Brühl is now named *Richard-Wagner-Straße*, and the square at the western end of the Brühl is named *Richard-Wagner-Platz*.

References

Notes

1. Official Leipzig city website (<http://www.leipzig.de/int/en/tourist/stadtspaz/fotorund/02308.shtml>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080731183848/http://www.leipzig.de/int/en/tourist/stadtspaz/fotorund/02308.shtml>) July 31, 2008, at the Wayback Machine
2. Official Leipzig tourist service web-site (<http://www.lts-leipzig.de/cgi-bin/printContent.pl?url=/cs/click.system?navid,,1770,fa,,0,fb,,0,fc,,0,page,,lang,,en,filter,,id,,0,acceptAGB,,&fromCGI=1>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110717175704/http://www.lts-leipzig.de/cgi-bin/printContent.pl?url=%2Fcs%2Fclick.system%3Fnavid%2C%2C1770%2Cfa%2C%2C0%2Cfb%2C%2C0%2Cfc%2C%2C0%2Cpage%2C%2C%2Clang%2C%2Cen%2Cfilter%2C%2C%2Cid%2C%2C0%2CacceptAGB%2C%2C&fromCGI=1>) July 17, 2011, at the Wayback Machine
3. Willingham (2005), p. 25
4. Willingham (2005), p.123
5. "My Life — Volume 1 by Richard Wagner" (<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/5197>) (Ebook). Project Gutenberg.
6. *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 23 April 1850, p. 270

Sources

- Robert Allen Willingham II, *Jews in Leipzig: Nationality and Community in the 20th Century* (<https://www.lib.utexas.edu/etd/d/2005/willinghamr73843/willinghamr73843.pdf>), PhD dissertation, University of Texas, retrieved 1 January 2018