



SAXONY

The Free State of Saxony, the most easterly of Germany's federal states, is diverse in both its culture and scenery from the highest point in the land, Fichtelberg, in the Erzgebirge to the jagged precipices of the Elbsandsteingebirge, from the Saxon Wine Route hugging the gentle contours of the River Elbe to the romantic valleys of the Mulde and Zschopau. The entire region has profited from its rich natural resources, with the metal deposits in the Erzgebirge funding Saxony's glorious development of the arts.

Many of the most important buildings in Saxony and particularly Dresden date back to the rule of Augustus the Strong under whose auspicious patronage Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann made architectural dreams come true. What the Zwinger, Schloss, Hofkirche and Semper Opera House are to Dresden, the historic trade centres and merchant stores are to Leipzig, its most famous being the Mädlerpassage with Auerbachs Keller and Goethe's "Faust". Chemnitz is a city of secular cathedrals, of imposing monuments to industrial architecture from the "Gründerzeit" of the late 19th century.

Over 200 photographs show Saxony in all its glorious variety, with five specials focussing on famous Saxons from Johann Sebastian Bach to Karl May, the great powers of Augustus the Strong, the traditions of the Erzgebirge, the language of the Saxons and local specialities such as "Stollen" and "Leipziger Allerlei".

Details of our programme
can be found at
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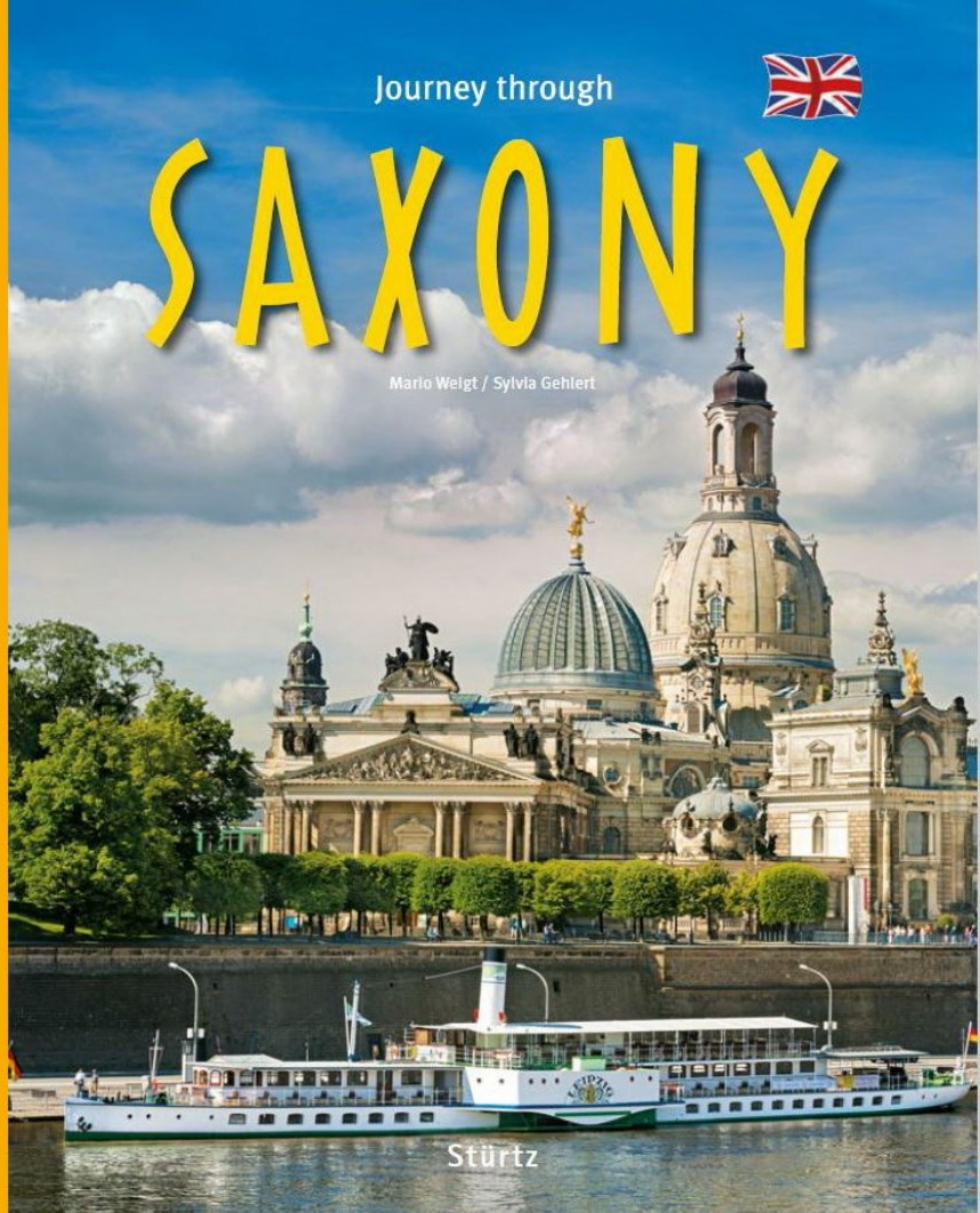


Journey through



SAXONY

Mario Weigt / Sylvia Gehlert



Stürtz

First page:
Saxony boasts a veritable wooden wonderland of children's toys and Christmas decorations. Angels

of light, candle arches and Christmas pyramids, building bricks, model farmyards and play shops, fierce-looking nutcrackers

and grandfatherly pipe smokers made in the Erzgebirge have brought pleasure to generations of kids and adults alike.

Previous page:

On February 13, 1985, forty years after its destruction, an exact replica of the Semperoper in Dresden (Semper Opera House,

depicted here) was ceremoniously reopened with a performance of Weber's "Der Freischütz" (The Freeshooter).

Below:

At the foot of Wolkenstein castle in the Zschopau Valley Wolkenstein's train hotel caters for numerous

day-trippers with its restaurant, bar and saloon. The sleeping cars can accommodate up to 62 guests.

Page 10/11:

The seven arches of the Bastei promontory have spanned the precipitous gorges of the Elbsandsteingebirge since 1851,

providing generations of intrepid visitors with spectacular panoramas. In the same year the first trains began chugging through

the valley of the Elbe to neighbouring Bohemia; paddle steamers had been navigating the river for almost a decade.



Contents

12	Saxony – at the heart of Europe
26	From Dresden to Zittau – city gems and magnificent landscapes Page 42 Augustus's strongest moments: the baroque elector who would be king Page 64 Stollen, the potato and Leipziger Allerlei: the cuisine of Saxony
76	Historic buildings, beautiful countryside and much more – Leipzig Page 88 The stars of Saxony – from Bach to the Schumanns Page 102 Is Saxon sexy?
108	Chemnitz's cathedrals and the green Erzgebirge Page 122 Everything comes from the mountains ...
134	Index
135	Map
136	Credits

From Dresden to Zittau – city gems and magnificent landscapes

The past and the present lived together in unison. Or should I say harmony. And with the countryside, with the Elbe, the bridges, the sloping hillsides, the forest and the mountains on the horizon, one could almost call it a symphony. History, art and nature lingered over the city and the valley, from the cathedral in Meißen to the park at Großsedlitz, like a chord of notes enraptured by its own sound." Thus wrote Erich Kästner in his book of childhood memoirs, entitled *Als ich ein kleiner Junge war* (When I was a Young Man), about Dresden.

On June 23, 2004, 59 years after the bombing of Dresden, the seemingly unachievable was finally achieved; a crane lifted a reconstructed wooden tower, complete with golden cross, back onto the cupola of the Frauenkirche. The tower and cross were donated by the British; the cross had been made by an English artist-blacksmith whose father had served on one of the bombers in the Second World War. The church now once again has its rightful place on Dresden's horizon, just as royal painter Bernardo Bellotto portrayed it in the mid-18th century. The mound of rubble where the church once stood was scheduled for disposal when the quick-witted preservation lobby stepped in, persuading the local authorities to leave it standing as an official memorial to the terrors of war. Thanks to the generosity of countless sponsors the church has risen like a phoenix from the ashes since the fall of the Berlin Wall, its exterior now checked with light new and dark original blocks of sandstone, a poignant tapestry of the past and the present. Painstakingly restored, Dresden now takes centre stage with its show of electoral Renaissance and royal baroque, mingled with Socialist functionalism; of neoclassicism at the Semper Opera House, tinged with the Moorish hues of the Yenidze cigarette factory; of VW's futurist Gläserne Manufaktur (Transparent Factory), soothed by the natural landscaping of the neighbouring Großer Garten.

The area around Dresden is just as pleasing. There's Moritzburg, the magical hunting lodge of Dresden's Saxon rulers; the Sächsische Weinstraße (Saxon Wine Route) through the green and pleasant valley of the River Elbe; the magnificent scenery of the hilly Elbsandsteingebirge; Upper Lusatia with its living Sorb culture and the splendour of Meißen and Bautzen – not forgetting Görlitz, the "pearl of Lusatia". You can now walk across the River Neisse or Nysa to Zgorelec in Poland in the old eastern block, unhindered by border guards. The national boundaries near Zittau, too, are no longer manned; instead, Germany, the Czech Republic and Poland are strengthening their bond of partnership in a region which is truly European.



Dresden's Zwinger is a masterpiece of the baroque, marking the pinnacle of Augustus the Strong's artistic career.

Architect Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann and sculptor Balthasar Permoser to the elector of Saxony and king of

Poland were the men who realised the monarch's visions of Italian and French splendour and elegance.



Left:
The Semperoper was again destroyed in the air raids of 1945 and has since been painstakingly rebuilt.

Centre and bottom left:
Richard Wagner was made musical director of the Semperoper in 1843. He attempted to generate an enthusiasm among his audiences for German

Romantic music, one of the more sensational performances being of Beethoven's 9th Symphony and "Ode to Joy". Busts of Schiller and Goethe flank the main entrance.



Page 28/29:
Dresden. Magically majestic, the city lies embedded in a romantic river valley, its impressive silhouette the source of inspiration for many a poet and painter. The mighty sandstone

Augustusbrücke straddling the Elbe links the famous baroque left bank to Dresden-Neustadt, the new town erected in place of Old Dresden after it was destroyed by fire in 1685.

Below:
On October 7, 1989, tens of thousands stood up for their rights outside the opera house on Theaterplatz. Inside the hall was buzzing to the strains of "Fidelio" which featured

a controversial set of barbed wire and pseudo Berlin Wall. Beethoven's tale of the triumph of bravery and loyalty over the despotism of the state proved extremely topical.



AUGUSTUS'S STRONGEST MOMENTS: THE BAROQUE ELECTOR WHO WOULD BE KING

When Frederick Augustus was born in 1670 his life was already mapped out before him. His older brother Johann Georg would one day ascend to the throne and he, the second oldest, was destined for a career in the military. When they were teenagers his effervescent father, a great lover of art, packed them off on an aristocratic Grand Tour to Europe's centres of art and power, introducing the boys to the artistic treasures, customs and traditions of their neighbours and allowing them to let their hair down a bit before the serious business of life as an adult royal began. Frederick Augustus revelled in the Carnival of Venice but proved less adept in the ballrooms of Paris than his older brother who was a master of both the dance and the small talk this necessitated. The Sun King nevertheless lavished much attention on the quiet 17-year-old. The young man for his part was overwhelmed by the splendour of the French court, by the magnificence of the palace at Versailles and by the aura surrounding France's absolutist ruler. He found himself wanting to be very much like this rich and remarkable man.



King of Poland

In 1694 his brother, the young Elector Johann Georg IV, suddenly died of smallpox, leaving Frederick Augustus the throne. Physical strength, obstinacy, cunning and sheer domination of character soon earned him the epithet of Augustus the Strong. His political agenda was ambitious. Alongside Austria and Brandenburg-Prussia he planned to make Saxony one of the great regional powers and a major player on the European stage. Two years later the Polish king died; Frederick Augustus promptly applied for the post. His chances of success were very slight. The board of Polish aristocrats

who were charged with electing the new king were not short of candidates and as a Protestant the elector could not be king of a Catholic country. Frederick Augustus pulled out all the stops. He sold off some of Saxony's hoard of treasure and also various estates and trading rights, using the profits to ingratiate himself with the blue-blooded electorate. He even converted to Catholicism – as head of the state which had given birth to the Reformation. His actions unleashed a storm of anger in Saxony which the elector dispelled by promising religious freedom for all. He was crowned Augustus II, king of Poland, in Cracow on September 15, 1697.

The seat of power and place of residence of the new elector-king was to be his native Dresden – once he had made some minor alterations. He wanted the modest town on the River Elbe to become a brilliant gem of the baroque, encapsulating the magic of Versailles and the beauty of the royal Italian palaces. He engaged an artistic dream team to realise his vision: the architect was Pöppelmann, the sculptor Permoser and the goldsmith Dinglinger. Their creations were a masterly combination of the cultural heritage of Europe and the playful spirit of Saxony: the Zwinger and Taschenbergpalais, the palaces of Moritzburg and Pillnitz, the Kleinodienmuseum in the Grünes Gewölbe (Green Vault), the Augustusbrücke, Großer Garten and Japanisches Palais. The bill was presented to his minions in the form of heavy taxes.

The fairer sex

Right up into old age Augustus the Strong had one weakness – namely for the fairer sex. Countless illegitimate children were said to



Left: Bavarian artist Balthasar Permoser worked in Rome, Venice and Florence before he was hired by Elector Johann Georg III in 1689 as the magnate's court sculptor. Permoser lies buried in the old Catholic cemetery in Dresden.

Far left: This gilt relief of Augustus the Strong now adorns the Johanneum, the museum of traffic on Dresden's Neumarkt.

Above: The Zwinger is the result of a close collaboration between architect Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann and sculptor Balthasar Permoser. One of the pair designed the famous

Kronentor or crown gate, featuring a gilt royal headpiece borne by four Polish eagles, and the other the statues of the four seasons adorning the niches of the gatehouse.

Pictures, right: Under Augustus the Strong (top portrait), himself a passionate admirer of Italian art, Balthasar Permoser (right portrait) developed a language of design which melded the paragons of the Mediterranean with the spirit of Dresden.



have been fathered by him; some estimates run to at least several dozen. Countess Anna Constantia Cosel, both beautiful and highly educated, was a good rider and a hardened drinker. She bore Augustus three children and for nine years was the royal favourite and an influential confidante. When an attempt was made to remove her from court in favour of a new mistress she pulled a marriage contract secretly signed by Augustus from under her petticoats and threatened to shoot the elector if he left her. Her unfaithful lover wasn't perturbed; he had his rebellious countess spirited away to the impenetrable fortress of Stolpen where she remained until long after his death. His only legitimate son, Frederick Augustus III, followed in his father's footsteps and was both elector of Saxony and king of Poland from 1733 to 1763. His death marked the end of the Augustinian Period and almost seven decades of political astuteness and artistic creativity for Saxony.



Below:
Moritzburg, Augustus the Strong's impressive summer residence, gracefully resides atop a man-made island surrounded by sparkling water and lush forest. The Renaissance hunting lodge

belonging to his predecessor Moritz forms the nucleus of the complex. Louis XV, whom Augustus strove to emulate his whole life long, also had his father's hunting pavilion built into Versailles.

Top right:
Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann was employed to manage the erection of Schloss Moritzburg which with its four banqueting halls and ca. 200 other rooms is indeed royal in

its proportions. The palace now holds an interesting museum of the baroque packed with works of art, various household implements and a first-class collection of trophies.

Bottom right:
This stone signpost stands at the entrance to the Moritzburg hunting lodge. The column (1730) is emblazoned with the

Electoral Saxon and Polish-Lithuanian coats of arms plus several royal Polish crowns. The elector of Saxony was also the king of Poland.





Top left:
Festung Königstein. During times of unrest the potentates of Saxony sought refuge within its mighty walls, taking their

state coffers and art treasures with them and leaving their underlings to suffer at the hands of their aggressors.

Centre left:
The historic fleet of paddle steamers which has navigated the waters of the Elbe since 1837 is a source of local pride. The boats



with their original, carefully preserved steam engines are protected as part of Saxony's industrial heritage.

Bottom left:
For centuries the fortress at Königstein was thought to be impenetrable until in 1848 apprentice chimney sweep Sebastian Abratzky boldly managed to scale the walls. It was Saxony's state prison from 1591 to

1922, detaining various troublesome contemporaries such as Russian revolutionary Mikhail Bakunin, Social Democrat August Bebel, writer Frank Wedekind and satirist Thomas Theodor Heine.

Below:
It wasn't only in times of crisis that the Saxon court sallied forth to Königstein. Its glorious panorama provided a spectacular backdrop for all kinds of royal

festivities. With buildings dating from the late Gothic to the 19th century, the enormous fortress is now an open-air museum of military history.





Above:
The neo-baroque fountain donated to Leipzig by merchant's widow Pauline Mende with its obelisk of red Meißner granite is the only building on Augustusplatz to have survived the ravages of the Second World War. After a few decades as Karl-Marx-Platz the square is now once more a busy focal point, fronted on one side by the glass facade of the Neues Gewandhaus.

Right:
On the north side of spacious Augustusplatz is the Leipzig opera house, opened in 1960. The first performance was "The Meistersingers of Nuremberg" by composer Richard Wagner who was born in Leipzig in 1813.



Far left:
Augustusplatz from left to right with the City-Hochhaus, campus library, Neues Augusteum and Paulinum. Since its founding in 1409, Leipzig University has been very much part and parcel of the city. The skyscraper is now no longer part of the university.

Left:
The modern canteen building on the university campus on Augustusplatz was finished in 2009. From the viewing platform of the giant City-Hochhaus behind it (142 metres / 466 feet high) you have grand views of the city.

Below:
The Paulinum is both great hall and the university church of St Paul's. The Neues Augusteum to its left is Leipzig University's main building.



THE STARS OF SAXONY – FROM BACH TO THE SCHUMANNs

In Eisenach, at the foot of the Wartburg in Thuringia, in 1685 a musical genius was born whose magnificent music was to transcend both national and religious boundaries. For 27 years Johann Sebastian Bach was the appointed master of music in Leipzig and the cantor of St Thomas's. He wrote hundreds of works both sacred and secular, one of which was the famous *Coffee Cantata*, a farce on the passion of the ladies of the time for the fashionable new beverage. Appropriately, he first conducted it at Zimmermanns Kaffeehaus in 1734.

At the very same time, a few streets further on Friederike Caroline Neuber was cleaning up the act at her theatre. Improvisation and juvenile farce were shown the door; Germany's first female theatre director was in the throes of reform. She demanded that her actors study their roles with care and stick to the script, keeping the plot coherent and enunciation clear in emulation of the classic French theatre. Neuber had to rule with a rod of iron in kid gloves, demonstrating diplomacy and cunning in her dealings with both her troupe, her aristocratic patrons and her scheming competitors. Her final discovery was a young parson's son from Kamenz, barely twenty, a student of theology and medicine in Leipzig who was mad about the theatre and whose first play, now long forgotten, she successfully staged. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing was later to become a classic in his own right with dramas such as *Minna von Barnhelm* and *Nathan der Weise*. By this time Neuber had long died a pauper, destroyed by the horrors of the Seven Years' War, in a peasant's hovel in Dresden-Laubegast.

Riotous imagination

In Dresden-Neustadt, much later in 1899, a certain Erich Kästner was born, writer of children's literature whose *Emil und die Detektive* (Emil and the Detectives), *Das doppelte Lottchen* (The Double Lottie) and *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer* (The Flying Classroom) have made him famous the world over. Fine powers of observation and a riotous imagination, empathy with the reader and the ability to poke fun at human weaknesses and contemporary afflictions are the trademarks of Kästner's work. With their undertone of gentle scepticism towards anyone in a position of authority, his poems, which he modestly referred to as "everyday", novels and journalism are still highly relevant today.



Left: "To send light into the depths of the human soul". Robert Schumann's native city Zwickau continues to honour the words of the great composer with its many high-calibre musical events.

Above: The Karl May Museum in Radebeul near Dresden has a collection of American-Indian artefacts which is unique to Europe. Karl May himself had absolutely no first-hand knowledge whatsoever of the life of many of his protagonists; his tales of the Wild West are pure figments of the imagination.

There was another young author in Saxony whose powers of imagination proved even more powerful than Kästner's, almost powerful enough to knock down his prison walls. Stuck behind bars for repeated fraud, a ruined, desperately poor young teacher began writing stories full of warmth, despair and a strong belief in love, hope and the triumph of justice. A smart publisher in Dresden saw them and serialised them in his newspaper. Karl May's career took off. Released from detention the master of mystery and suspense abandoned the inhospitable world of reality for the realms of fantasy, charming generations of young readers with brave and bold heroes such as Winnetou and Old Shatterhand, Kara Ben Nemsî and Hadschi Halef Omar. The fact that May had never been to the Wild West or the wastes of Kurdistan was irrelevant; his tales were a work of fiction right down to the last letter. And splendid they are too.

A young musician from Zwickau demonstrated a greater sense of decorum when asking for his piano teacher's daughter's hand in marriage. Despite his valiant efforts Wieck refused to give up his child prodigy Clara who had been heralded as a great pianist at the tender age of nine, wanting something better for her than marriage to Robert Schumann. There was no disputing that the young man had talent, but to leave his daughter to rot as housewife and mother was definitely not what Wieck wanted. Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann married without his consent in 1840, the life and love of two children of the Romantic period an exercise in poignancy down to the last detail. Robert's *Scenes from Childhood* tell their story, played by Clara with a bitter sweetness.



Small photos, right, from top to bottom: The statue of Bach outside Leipzig's Thomaskirche. Bach once said of his musical family, "Collectively, however, they are born musicians and [I] can

ensure that I can stage a concert of vocalists and instrumentalists with my family as my current wife sings a clean soprano and even my eldest daughter does not make a bad noise."

The Luther monument outside the Frauenkirche on Neumarkt in Dresden. The Reformer was the son of a miner from Eisleben.

Since 1999 the young Erich Kästner has once again perched on the wall outside the Villa Augustin in Dresden, watching the busy goings-on on Albertplatz just as the author described in his childhood memoirs. The bronze figure was fashioned by Mátýs Varga.



Below:

The open-air and toy museum at Seiffen explores everyday life in the central Erzgebirge during the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, dominated by the toy-making profession and other

trades involving the processing of wood. A water-powered lathe, a sawmill and tiny cottages-cum-workshops clad in wooden shingles illustrate how the people of the age lived and worked.

Top right:

At the toy museum in Seiffen you can see how a toymaker lived and worked in c. 1900. In the characteristic houses of the region the main living

room with its Dutch stove, the larder, the animal pens or workshops are on the ground floor, with the bedrooms and stores above.

Centre right:

Seiffen is world famous for its traditional Erzgebirge folk art. In over a hundred workshops pyramids, candle arches, angels of light, pipe

smokers, nutcrackers and other wooden toys are fashioned. Even this sign in the toy village is decorated with traditional wooden figures.

Bottom right:

Technology from c. 1880 is on display at the toy museum in Seiffen. The workshop features various ring-turning and regular lathes, a circular saw and a transmission system, all driven by hydroelectric power.



INDEX

	Text	Photo
Annaberg-Buchholz	14, 16, 122	126, 127
Augustusburg	108	
Bad Muskau		73
Bad Schandau		61
Bautzen	13, 26	22/23, 70
Borna	13	
Chemnitz	13, 19, 108	110, 111
Colditz		104
Dittelsdorf		75
Dresden	13, 17, 19–21, 26, 42, 65, 76, 88, 122	6/7, 26–51, 89, 136
Elbsandsteingebirge	21, 26, 102	10/11, 66, 67
Erzgebirge	12, 18, 108, 122	5, 108, 120–125
Fichtelberg		132, 133
Freiberg	14, 16, 122	116, 117
Glauchau	16	
Görlitz	26	70, 71
Greifensteine		119
Grimma		106
Großsedlitz	26	
Helmen	20	
Hohnstein		62, 63
Jonsdorf		19, 75
Kamenz		61, 103
Königstein	18	68, 69
Kottmarsdorf		73
Kriebstein		107
Leipzig	12, 13, 16–18, 20, 21, 64, 76, 88, 102	12, 14, 76–87, 89–101
Machern		105
Marienberg	122	113
Marienthal		72
Meißen	13, 18, 19, 26	17, 21, 56, 57
Morgenröthe-Rautenkranz	20	
Moritzburg	26, 42	54, 55
Netzschkau		129
Neuhausen		122
Nischwitz		105
Nossen		114, 115
Obercunnersdorf		72
Oberwiesenthal		133
Oelsnitz		123, 131
Obernhau		113
Oybin		74
Pillnitz	42	58/59
Pirna		60
Plauen	20	128, 130
Radebeul		52, 53, 88
Rochlitz		104
Sächsische Schweiz		60, 61, 66, 67
Schneeberg	14, 122	
Seiffen	122	24/25, 108, 120–125
Stolpen	43	
Thalwitz		105
Torgau		106, 107
Vogtland	12, 122	128, 129
Waldenburg		112, 113
Wiesa		119
Windischleuba	13	
Wolkenstein		9
Zittau	26	71
Zschopau		118
Zwickau	13, 20, 88, 108	88, 129

