

Austrian Imperial Anthem: “Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser” (1797)

Abstract

Austria, with its multiethnic composition, long struggled with national anthems. Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) composed the melody for “Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser” and Lorenz Leopold Haschka (1749–1827) provided the lyrics. Written for Emperor Franz II, the anthem aimed to stir patriotism during the Napoleonic Wars. This version of the song emerged before the end of the Holy Roman Empire and the start of the Austrian Empire. With some textual modifications over time, “Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser” [“God save Franz the Emperor”] served as the Austrian anthem until the end of the Habsburg Monarchy. The melody was adopted again with new lyrics by Ottokar Kernstock in 1929 and served as the official Austrian anthem until the *Anschluss* in 1938.

Source

God save Francis the emperor,
Our good Emperor Francis!
Long live Francis the emperor,
In the brightest splendour of happiness!
May sprigs of laurel bloom for him
As a garland of honour, wherever he goes.
God save Francis the emperor,
Our good Emperor Francis!

From the tips of his flag
May victory and fruitfulness shine!
In his council
May knowledge, wisdom and honesty sit!
And with his Highness's lightning
May justice but prevail!
God save Francis the emperor,
Our good Emperor Francis!

May the abundance of thy gifts
Pour over him, his house and Empire!
Break the power of wickedness, and reveal
Every trick of rogues and knaves!
May thy law always be his will,
And may this be like laws to us.
God save Francis the emperor,
Our good Emperor Francis!

May he gladly experience the highest bloom
Of his land and of his peoples!

May he see them, united by the bonds of brothers,
Loom over all others!
And may he hear at the edge
Of his late tomb his grandchildren's chorus.
God save Francis the emperor,
Our good Emperor Francis!

Source of English translation: "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser," Wikipedia (with small edits by GHDI staff),
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gott_erhalte_Franz_den_Kaiser

Source of original German lyrics: "Österreichische Kaiserhymnen," Wikipedia,
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Österreichische_Kaiserhymnen

Source: "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser." Available online
at: https://archive.org/details/GottErhalteFranzDenKaiser_201309

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