

Fritz Grünbaum (1880-1941) was the most important Austrian cabaret artist until 1933, the ironically self-deprecating philosopher among the emcees. He was a master of profound chitchat, and already famous during the Imperial era in Vienna and Berlin, where he performed in Hell (Die Hölle) and the Black Cat (Schwarzer Kater). He commuted between the two republics after 1918 as well, as he wrote and performed in Berlin's Cabaret of the Comedians (Kabarett der Komiker) as well as in Vienna's Simpl. In the latter, he developed the double emcee act together with Karl Farkas in 1922. Grünbaum also wrote several books, operetta libretti, and pop songs like "I Saw Helen Bathing" ("Ich hab das Fräulein Helen baden sehn"). In 1933, he returned to Austria and directed the Simpl until his deportation to the concentration camp Dachau in 1938. On the day before his arrest, he commented from the darkened stage of the Simpl, "I can't see a thing, absolutely nothing. I must have wandered into Nazi culture."

Fritz Grünbaum

"The little fellow with the enormous punch lines that always hit their mark without injuring—because their caustic effect was neutralized by kindness. He thought with his heart; he was a stirring philosopher in the guise of a drastic comic." (Karl Farkas)

