



Straussmania: Popculture of the 19th century

The multimedia project Straussmania, beginning in December 2022, is dedicated to the places and protagonists of popular culture of the 19th century. In individual chapters, Straussmania tells of remarkable venues throughout the districts of Vienna such as the New World (Neue Welt) in Hietzing, Sperl in Leopoldstadt, and the Apollo Hall (Apollosaal) in Schottenfeld. All of the visited locations appropriately vibrate in three-quarter time because they are connected to the music of the Strauss family and their contemporaries. Straussmania is a joint project of ORF.at, the Vienna Institute for Cultural and Contemporary History (vicca.at) and the Library of Vienna.

The New Dreher Beer Hall

Oliver Rathkolb

The New Dreher Beer Hall (*Neue Dreher'sche Bierhalle*) in Vienna's third district not only offered a popular concert venue for well-known Viennese bands, it also provided the stage for the premier performances of the New Vienna Women's Orchestra (*Neue Wiener Damen-Orchester*). This group of eight female musicians was led by violinist, conductor and pianist, Josephine Weinlich.

In 1859, a dignified inn designed by Anton Dreher the elder (1810—1863) was located at Landstraßer Hauptstraße 97—101. Situated on the former site of two smaller buildings, including the inn *Zur grünen Weintraube*, Dreher's inn boasted a large open-air restaurant and dance hall which could host 3,000 patrons.

Various military bands, plus Eduard Strauss and his ensemble, performed there. Carl Michael Zierer and Franz Lehár conducted equally acclaimed musical events on site. The building complex, also called Dreher's Establishment, was designed by urban architect Josef Zeller (1822—1890).

Dreher's successful brewery business was built from technological innovation, his own international experience and entrepreneurial foresight. It operated in Vienna-Schwechat, Michelob near Saaz (now Měcholupy) in Bohemia, plus near Budapest and in Trieste. Their 11 storage cellars had capacity for 328,000 barrels of beer. Dreher was close friends with the last liberal mayor of Vienna, Cajetan Felder, whom he appointed his son's legal guardian. Felder even made Dreher Palace (*Palais Dreher*) at Opernring 8 his official residence. Incidentally, Dreher beer is still available in Hungary and sold as *Birra Dreher* in Italy.

The Paris World's Fair of 1867 hosted an authentic replica of a "beer temple by Dreher with genuine Schwechater", a structure created at great financial cost. In 1868, the original New Dreher Beer Hall in Vienna was already quite well attended, not least due to the new manager, Mr. Nemetz, a large selection of cuisine, and, as the "non plus ultra", Schwechater beer. The Saturday soirées with the well-known band of the Infantry Regiment Herzog von Württemberg were particularly popular. Even the sixth Surgeons' Day attendees danced enthusiastically in this establishment in order to recover from the daily routine of the conference.

It was in this illustrious place of Viennese culture that Josephine Weinlich began to make European cultural and musical history. Josephine was born in 1848 in Dejte, Hungary (present-day Dechtice, Slovakia). Her father was Franz Weinlich; her mother, Josepha, née Hoschna, was Weinlich's third wife. They lost the source of their prosperity, namely a ribbon factory, allegedly as a result of the revolution in 1848. Weinlich, a former ribbon manufacturer, obtained an entertainment license as a folk singer; as of 1861, he could be found at musical performances of his daughters from his first marriage and with other leading musicians. Josephine's first appearance as a piano accompanist was in 1867. In 1868 she founded the New Vienna Women's Orchestra, initially conducting her ladies' orchestra from her seat at the piano.

Further success followed in 1869, with the premier tour of a women's sextet traveling to Budapest and Prague. In Prague she enjoyed acclaim in the Convict Hall and on Sophie's Island (*Žofínský ostrov*), at times performing with 12 other women. Critique of her work from Germany was very positive. Per the daily *Münchener Tagesanzeiger* on August 28, 1869: "The excellent reputation that preceded this extraordinarily gifted artist proved to be most justified. Indeed, the orchestra, consisting of six young women, has such a graceful and lovely image that the more the chords swell, the more powerful the notes rush, the more animated and captivating it all becomes".

Her marriage in 1871 to music director Ebo Fortunatus Amann, who subsequently served as the orchestra director, was followed by their first U.S. tour of 42 cities—including an efficacious performance at Steinway Hall in New York. There was significant friction with the local concert agent, which resulted in the orchestra being disbanded and returning to Europe. The acclaim in the press however was tremendous, leading to the founding of women's orchestras.

Josephine Weinlich not only arranged the orchestral pieces but also composed dance pieces herself. In 1873 the program included a tour to St. Petersburg in Russia and on May 25, 1873, Weinlich performed with her orchestra, which by then had grown to 33 women and seven Dresden boys' wind players, in the Great Hall of the Vienna Musikverein. Press coverage was divided. The *Morgenpost* wrote of a "significant success" on May 28, 1873 and the "stormy applause" received by soloists Else Weinlich and Pauline Jewe was also highlighted. The critic of the *Neue Freie Presse* (May 27, 1873) could not restrain himself from misogynistic prejudiced criticism. Criticism contained various slights, such as referring to Josephine Weinlich as a "vigilant housewife, —oh, forgive me— lady director," and laced with back-handed references to the musical quality, but "with that thin sound that is peculiar to all female musical productions". The *Berliner Musikzeitung* (June 12, 1873), on the other hand, not only reported on the grace of the musicians, but also emphasized, without reservation, "the solid achievement of the ladies and the precision of their performance. Multiple rounds of applause for the soloists and the satisfaction of the 'at-capacity audience'" were also highlighted.

This orchestra, having grown to 50 musicians, subsequently gave equally well-received concerts during the Vienna World's Fair in the Flower Halls of the Horticultural Society at Parkring 12.

The years that followed, until the last documented joint concert of the First European Women's Orchestra in Marseille in June 1879, produced many guest performances abroad

and in Vienna. Concert tours were held in Germany (Dresden, Leipzig, Berlin), then France (Paris), Italy (Milan, Bologna, Naples), and England (London, Portsmouth, Exeter, Brighton). In 1876, stops in Riga and Königsberg (present-day Kaliningrad) followed, as well as performances in Scandinavia (Copenhagen, Stockholm, Uppsala, Jönköping, and Gothenburg).

The repertoire of this well-traveled orchestra consisted of works by Johann Strauss Jr., overtures and potpourris from operas, as well as original compositions. This mixture appealed to public audiences, but appalled some critics.

In later years Josephine Weinlich performed as a pianist with her newly formed Cäcilien Quartet, in which her sister Elise also played cello. They toured Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. She then stayed in Lisbon after a concert with her sister and also worked for a few months as conductor of the municipal orchestra. She subsequently worked as a piano teacher and editor of a music journal financed by her husband, "*Gazeta musical. Jornal Illustrado, Theatros Musica e Bellas-Artes*," 1884-1886. She died of tuberculosis in Lisbon on January 9, 1887.

Selected works:

Piano: Puppet shows (*Puppenspiele*) (Impromptu, op. 20), Women's Emancipation March (Waltz) (*Frauen-Emanzipations-Marsch (Walzer)*), Siren Songs (Polka Mazurka, also for larger orchestration) (*Sirenenlieder*) (Polka Mazurka, Mazurka, *auch für größere Besetzung*), Free Thoughts (*Freie Gedanken*) (Waltz), The Frivolous (*Die Frivole*) (Polca française), Polka-Mazurka (op. 13)

Violoncello: Dream of Naples, On the Mountains (violoncello solo with orchestral accompaniment) (*Traum von Neapel, Auf den Bergen (Violoncello-Solo mit Orchesterbegleitung)*)

Orchestral works: Salute to Graz (*Gruß an Graz*) (Polca française), Spring Air (*Frühlingsluft*) (Polca française), Potpourri for String Orchestra (*Potpourri für Streichorchester*), The Frivolous (*Die Frivole*) (Polca française), Josefina Polka (*Josefinen-Polka*) (Polca françaises), Great Joys (*Tolle Freuden*) (Polca française), Salute to the Neugabliters (*Gruß an die Neugablitzer*) (Polca française), Electric Sparks (polka fast, trio) (*Elektrische Funken*), Melody March (*Polka schnell, Trio*), (*Melodien-Marsch*)

Song: The Wobble, A Dream in Naples (Solo for Violoncello) (*Das Wackeln, Ein Traum in Neapel (Solo für Violoncello)*)

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