Damen ohne Blasinstrumente – the non-brass ladies’ entertainment groups of the German Empire 1895-1918: an illustrated directory (part 3: R-Z)

Gavin Holman – September 2018

During the research on my paper on the German ladies’ brass ensembles of this period, I came across many pictures and details (sparse) of the other female troupes of musicians, singers and acrobats who also provided very popular entertainments. In the German speaking countries of Europe in the 1890s through to World War 1 there appeared a large number of “Damen Kapellen”, troupes of entertainers: brass/wind ensembles, string “orchestras”, salon “orchestras”, singing, dancing, acrobatic and theatre variety groups. These largely consisted of women, usually led by a man, and occasionally including males as players. These were professional groups and performed in theatres, as part of larger variety and vaudeville programmes, also at various concert venues in town and countryside.

Of course, such groups were not unique to the German Empire. Britain, the USA and other countries had similar entertainers. However, it seems that the calling cards and postcards promoting the German ensembles were much more prolific, and have survived to give us a small insight into that world – similar items are significantly rarer for other countries.

It was interesting to see the different types of ensembles that were active during this period and the range of entertainments they offered. On the other hand, the similarities between the groups was also marked – in their line up and costumes – they had their target audiences well addressed and were very popular. Over 350 such groups were identified in 580 images (excluding the 70 or so brass ensembles described in the previous paper).

This paper largely consists of a collection of the images of these various ensembles. Where dates are known (usually from the postage dates of postcards), they are given – ranging from the late 1890s to WW1 – though the groups certainly were in existence before the 1890s and, to a lesser extent, after the Great War. Some of the groups were named, but many were simply designated as an “orchester” of some type and differentiated by the name of their leader (usually a man). The groups in this paper are organised alphabetically by their “names” or leader’s surname as appropriate. Dates given are years that the particular ensemble was known to be active.

Detailed information about most of these ladies’ ensembles is not available without significant further research in the German language newspapers and entertainment journals, but many of them produced promotional postcards which provided their basic details, indicated their line up and variety of costumes and instruments. It is these that form the basis for the listings below.

The images are predominately from promotional postcards the groups had published, mainly during the period 1895-1914 – the “golden age” of the postcard. Prior to this time cards had been printed but general had not been used postally – they were given out at engagements and used as “cartes de visite”.

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Where there are multiple images of a particular group you can often see the different types of costumes they used, and also the range of instruments played.

The most significant research work in this area is Dorothea Kaufmann’s book “...routinierte Trommlerin gesucht”. This covers the whole range of women’s entertainment groups in the period 1860-1930, and gives detailed accounts and analyses of the social, political, artistic and economic environments in which they performed.

**Further information**

Anon - Damenkapellen im alten Düsseldorf – *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, 27-11-1938


Krollmann, C. - Eine Eichsfelder Musikanten-Familie – *Unser Eichsfeld*, 23 (6) 1928, pp. 131-137


Internationales Damen-Orchester "Raasch-Hilfreich"

Damen-Orchester "Radetzky" - W. Hangard (1903-1904)

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Elite Damen-Orchester - Franz Rauscher (1906)

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Elite Damen-Orchester - Alex Rauscher

Damen-Orchester - Ad. Reichl

Damen-Sextett der Truppe - A. Reinert

Damen Salon Orchester - Franz Richter
Internationales Damen-Orchester - W.J. Riesst

Donnerwetter tadellos – "Rigolettis" (1910)
Damen-Orchester "Romantique" - F.A. Oppermann (1903)

Damen-Künstler Orchester - Philipp La Rondelle

Damen-Concert-Orchester - Frau Louise Rosenkranz

Konzert-Ensemble - H. Roth (1913)

Damen-Stimmungs-Orchester - Rudolph

Damen Ensemble - Carl Ewald Sänger
Damen Orchester - Adalbert Schlosser

Orchestre des Dames Internationales - Willy Schmidt
(1911-1913)

Damen Salon und Stimmungsorchester - W. Schmidt

Damen Salon Orchester - Fr. Schmidt
Damenorchester - Heinrich Schmied

Damen-Salon-Orchester "Schneeglöckchen" - A. Hütter

Damen-Orchester - P. Schultz

Damen-Orchester - P. Schultz

Holländisches Damen-Elite-Orchester "Seelandia" – Riki Brand Bekker

Damen-Ensemble "Seestern" - Oskar Siese
Damen-Orchester "Silvia" - H. Sänger (1915)

Damen-Orchester "Singspiel" - Franz Riepert

Tamburitza-Damen-Kapelle "Slavul" - V. Reberski

Damen-Tamburitza-Orchester "Sljeme" - J. Ofak

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Damen-Musik Tanz u. Gesangs-Ensemble "Sofie" - Anton Wugrinetz
Tamburitza-Damen-Musik Tanz u. Gesangs-Ensemble "Sokol" - Bella Stepania Zsupan

Damen-Orchester "Sonnenblumen" - F. Höhne (1903-1910)
Elite Damen-Salon-Orchester "Sophie" - A. Huss (1914)

Damen-Orchester "Max Anna Spitze"
Address: Pressnitz I, Böhmen, Kaadnerstrasse 83

Oesterr. Damen-Capelle Jos. Steiner
Damen Konzert-Ensemble "Steiner" - Josef Steiner

Damen Konzert-Ensemble "Steiner" - Josef Steiner

Damen Konzert-Ensemble "Steiner" - Josef Steiner

Damen Konzert-Ensemble "Steiner" - Josef Steiner
Troupe Bella "Stella" - Ernest Pelosti

Damen Konzert Kapelle "Stephani" - Hans Siegl

Die Vier Sterne Damen Konzert und Jazz Stimmungs Quartett - H. Wilmann

5 Sisters Stey

Stockholmer Damen-Quartette

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Frischers akrobatisches Damen-Gesang und Tanz-Ensemble "Die Strandnixen" - Frischers

Frischers akrobatisches Damen-Gesang und Tanz-Ensemble "Die Strandnixen" - Frischers

Damen-Konzert-Orchester - Fritz Struck


Damen-Streichorchester "Thüringen" - Wilhelm Riemann

Burlesken-Ensemble "Thuringia" - E. Göhle

Damen-Orchester "Tilly Karn"

Damen Gesangs und Verwandlungs Ensemble "Titania" – Max Anders (1916-1917)

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Damen-Streichorchester "Transvalia" - Menne Heimig

Wiener Konzert-Damen-Orchester "Traviata" - C. Tomschi (1911-1913)

Wiener Konzert-Damen-Orchester "Traviata" - C. Tomschi (1911-1913)
Damen-Kunstler Ensemble "Trianon" - F. Lier

Ulrich’s Salon-Orchester

Niederrheinisches Damen-Orchester "Undine" - J. Völker

Niederrheinisches Damen-Orchester "Undine" - J. Völker

Variété und Burlesken Gesellschaft "Union" - Paul Forkel
Address: Elisenstraße 2, Chemnitz

Damen Orchester "Vergissmeinicht" - Hans Meersteiner
Damen Orchester "Vergissmeinicht" - Hans Meersteiner

Schwarzer Damens-Gesangs-Ensemble
Geschwister Verrant

Damen-Orchester "Victoria" – H. Mönch

Damen-Orchester "Waldglöckchen" - Carl Rabe (1910)

Damenorchester "Waldrosen" - Fr. Theiser (1913)

Damen-Orchester "Walküre" - Wilhelm Wustl
Salon Damen-Orchester "Walzertraum" - Emil Augustin (1909-1911)

Elite Damen-Salon-Orchester Wedel - Otto Wedel (1910)

Damen-Ensemble - Albine Weis

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Damen-Orchester "Wiener Blumen" - A. Hofmann (1902)

Original-Wiener-Damen-Orchester "Wiener Herzen" – Carl Schild (1908)

Original Wiener-Damen-Orchester "Wiener Lilien" – C. Peter (1903)

Elite-Damen-Salon-Quartett "Wiener Rosen" - D. Kugel

Wiener Damen-Concert-Orchester "Wiener Schwalben" – Frau Toni Altmann

Dames-Kapel "Wilhelmina" - R. Bekker
Damen-Ensemble "Wjera" - Fraulein W. Mance

Damen-Orchester - W. Wobig

Damen Salon Orchester - A. Wojciech

Damen Salon Orchester - A. Wojciech

Damen Salon Orchester - Fanny Wolf (1916)

Trio Wulpenia - Damen-Gesangs-Terzett (1915)
Damen-Concert-Orchester - Nic. Zalm (1908-1910)

Tiroler Damen-Gesangs-Ensemble "D’Zillerthaler" – Mirzl und Reiter (1906)

Zipper Ensemble
Dresden-A, Terrassenufer 6

Tamburitza Kapelle "Zlata" - C. Doliner
Tamburitza-Damen-Kapelle “Zvonimir” - Fr. J. Copetti

Unknown ensemble

Unknown ensemble
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<tr>
<th>C</th>
<th>Damen kapellen (names/directors)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Raasch-Hilfreich 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Radetzky                     14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rauscher 1                    14</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rauscher 2                    15</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Reinert                      16</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Rondelle                     19</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Rosenkranz                   20</td>
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</tr>
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