Damen ohne Blasinstrumente – the non-brass ladies’ entertainment groups of the German Empire 1895-1918: an illustrated directory (part 2: H-Q)

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


Damen Konzert und Stimmungsorchester "Hans Ströhla"

Damen Kapelle "Hansa" - R. Köhler (1908)

Norddeutsches Damen-Salon-Orchester "Hansa" – G. Karger (1906)

Wiener Damen-Salon-Orchester "Harmonie" (1916)

Damen-Orchester "Harmonie" - H. Jahn (1914)

Harzer Damen-Orchester - Herm. Ernst (1913)
Damen Ensemble "Harzer Roller"

Damen Orchester "Haustein" - Josef Haustein

Damen Orchester - B.S. Haustein
Damen-Salon-Quartette - J. Höger

Damen-Künstler-Trio - Fr. Caroline Höhn (1915)

Damen-Orchester "Hollandia" - N.P. Wedemeyer

Damen-Orchester "Hollandia" - N.P. Wedemeyer

Wiener Damen-Elite-Orchester - E. Hornischer

Damen-Orchester "Hortensia" (1911)
Stockholmer Damen-Terzett - J. Hossfeld

Damen-Orchester "Humor" - Josef Peinelt

Elite Damen-Salon-Orchester - Willy Huß

Wiener Damen Orchester - Dora Huth

Wiener Damen Orchester - Dora Huth

Damen-Attraktions und Stimmungs-Kapelle – Arry Hüttemann
12 Damen-Orchester "Irene" - Hugo Unger (1901-1911)

Damen-Orchester "Isabella" - Marie Peinelt (1908)

Damen Gesangs-Terzett "Isaria" (1905)

Elite Damen Konzert und Solisten Orchester - Jul. Iser

Damen-Orchester "Isolde" - Josef Huss (1904)
Damen-Orchester "Juanita" - G. Poppowitsch (1907) [also known as Damen-Orchester "Poppowitsch"]

Damen-Orchester "Poppowitsch" (1907)

Strand-Damen-Orchester - Otto Jaedicke (1905-1911)

Strand-Damen-Orchester - Otto Jaedicke (1905-1911)
Steirisches Damen-Salon-Striechorchester - H. Jahn

Elite Concert-Damen-Orchester - Juliette Janetschek

Damen Konzert-Ensemble "Jankowski" (1913)

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Damen Konzert-Ensemble "Jankowski" (1913)

Damen Salon Orchester - M. Jehna
Damen-Concert-Orchester "Jungwirth-Czap"

Jeji Cesky Damsky Orchestr - Karen Ostrá

Salon Orchester - J. Kirves (1916)

Salon Konzert Damen-Ensemble - Julien Janet Klanner

Damen-Musik und Tanz-Quartette Geschwister Kocsis (1910)

Damen-Orchester "Koschinka" [founded in 1899]
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Damen-Salon-Orchester "Krebs" (1927)

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Damen-Orchester - Hans Kreuz (1900)

Elite Damen-Orchester "Kreuzfidel" - G. Boitmann (1910)
Damen-Burlesken und Variété Ensemble – Hans Lämmermann (1910)

Damen-Burlesken und Variété Ensemble – Hans Lämmermann (1910)

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Salon-Damen-Orchester - W. Langer

Damen-Orchester "Linda" - Josef Schmidl (1909-1915)

Damen-Orchester "Linda" - Josef Schmidl (1909-1915)
Original Lindström-Terzett Schwedisch-Deutscher Kunst-Gesang

Damen-Salon-Streich-Orchester - Ernst Link

Damen-Salon-Streich-Orchester - Ernst Link

Damen Salon Orchester - Willy Linkor

Original-Wiener-Damen-Orchester - Alois Litschauer

Tamburitza Damen-Kapelle "Ljubiza" - Frl. J. Sostaric
Damen-Orchester "Loreley" - Alfred Gsell (1908)

Internationales Elite Salon-Damen-Orchester - Hermann Loschien

Damen-Orchester "Ludwig" - Florian Ludwig
Damen Gesangs und Instrumental Ensemble "Mignon" - R. Wenzel

Damen Salon Orchester "Mignon" - J. Purkart

Damen-Orchester "Mimosa" - G. Angermann

Damen-Gesangs und Tanz Ensemble "DMoosblüamerln"
Damen-Attraktions-Ochester - Willy Münzner

Namieras Original Trio Glückstern-Ensemble - G. Reimann (1910)

Damen-Orchester "Neu-Wien" - Josef Bartl (1904)

Damen-Orchester "Neu-Wien" - Josef Bartl (1904)
Wiener Damen-Salon-Orchester "Neu Wien" - Franz Zunt

Damen-Orchester "Neumann"

Damen-Orchester - J. Nickl

Holländisches Damen-Orchester - J. Nicolaas

Elite Damen-Orchester - Richard Nobitschek
Damen-Konzert-Orchester "Nord Stern" - H. Amelang

Concert-Ensemble "Nordstern" - G. Karger

Damen-Orchester "Norma" - Joh. Hecker

Damen-Orchester "Norma" - Josef Bartl

Original Oberlandler Damen Kapelle - J.M. Karlitz (1910)
The members were Hansl, Gredl, Sepl, Irma, Mirzl, and Resl.

Elite-Damen-Orchester "Olive" - Josef Enzmann
Olympia Ensemble (1910)

Original Wiener Damen-orchester - Ferry Muuss

Damen-Orchester "Orpheus" - Alois Fuchs (1912)

Damen-Orchester "Orpheus" - Alois Fuchs (1912)

Damen-Salon-Orchester - Arthur Osterlandt

Damen-Orchester "La Paloma" - A. Neugebauer
Damen-Orchester - J. Panhans (1909-1912)

Elite-Damen-Orchester - Anton Peinelt (1910)
Damen-Orchester - Carl Peinelt (1905-1909)

Damen-Orchester - Carl Peinelt (1905-1909)

Damen-Orchester "La Perle" - A. Pöschl (1909)

Damen-Salon-Orchester "Perkeo" - Paul Christoph

Damen-Orchester "La Perle" - A. Pöschl (1909)
Elite Damen-Musik-Ensemble Phönix - Tilla Wieserov

Poettinger's schwedische Damen Sextett

Damen-Concert-Orchester - Hans Pöschl (1907-1917)

Damen-Concert-Orchester - Hans Pöschl (1907-1917)

Damen-Concert-Orchester - Hans Pöschl (1907-1917)

Damen-Concert-Orchester - Hans Pöschl (1907-1917)
Damen-Konzert-Orchester "Presto" - Otto Baumgarten
1916
[6 damen, 2 herren]

Damen-Orchester "Quinta" - Willibald Quinta (1899)
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