

Operetta after the Habsburg Empire

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

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Spring 2013

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Abstract

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This thesis discusses the political, social, and cultural impact of operetta in Vienna after the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. As an alternative to the prevailing literature, which has approached this form of musical theater mostly through broad surveys and detailed studies of a handful of well-known masterpieces, my dissertation presents a montage of loosely connected, previously unconsidered case studies. Each chapter examines one or two highly significant, but radically unfamiliar, moments in the history of operetta during Austria's five successive political eras in the first half of the twentieth century. Exploring operetta's importance for the image of Vienna, these vignettes aim to supply new glimpses not only of a seemingly obsolete art form but also of the urban and cultural life of which it was a part.

My stories evolve around the following works:

Der Millionenonkel (1913), Austria's first feature-length motion picture, a collage of the most successful stage roles of a celebrated operetta comedian, which aimed to advertise the artistic potential of the new and controversial medium of film;

Bruno Granichstaedten's *Der Orlow* (1925) and *Reklame!* (1930), two of a series of jazz-inspired, American-themed revue operettas meant to prove that—even after World War I—the genre was still relevant and Vienna remained its foremost innovator;

Ralph Benatzky's *Das kleine Café* (1934) and *Herzen im Schnee* (1937), two "intrinsically Austrian" operettas, endorsed by the Austrofascist government and tourism office to promote the geographical and cultural treasures of the "New Austria," both at home and abroad;

Rudolf Weys's version of Franz Lehár's *Der Rastelbinder* (1902/1944), one of the Third Reich's many operetta revisions, with which the Nazis hoped to replenish Greater Germany's repertory of "Aryan" works;

Die Straussbuben (1946), Vienna's first postwar Singspiel, a trusty Strauss pastiche that became the touchstone for a recovering Austrian national pride, and likewise proved a last—missed—chance to find operetta a new lifeline.

The patchwork adumbrated by these historical scraps points to a larger trend: after the fall of the Habsburg Empire, operetta was considered cultural capital for Vienna and, as such, increasingly became an object of political relevance. While this development inextricably linked operetta to the image of Vienna (and Austria), and at points helped to keep this form of musical theater alive, it was also largely responsible for operetta's hopeless stagnation.

to MuVa
with love and gratitude

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Acknowledgements

This project could not have been completed without the generous financial support of a Dissertation Fellowship of the Gerda Henkel Stiftung, an Ernst Mach Fellowship of the Austrian Exchange Service (ÖAD), and a UC Berkeley Graduate Fellowship.

I am immensely grateful to the members of my dissertation committee: Richard Taruskin, who has provided wise counsel ever since my first semester at Berkeley, encouraged and supported this project, and never doubted my ability to finish it; Mary Ann Smart, who in turns pushed me with her perspicacious insights and offered heartening advice; and Elaine Tennant, who first proved a canny interlocutor in my qualifying exam and later acted as an enthusiastic reader.

There are others who have been equally encouraging. Without the inspiration and still continuing support of my Cambridge mentors, Martin Ennis and Roger Parker, I would never have made it to Berkeley. Siegfried Mattl, always willing to share his expertise on Viennese history, was the best "local adviser" I could have wished for during my research trips to Austria. Günter Krenn answered my many film-related questions. Marie-Theres Arnbom and Stefan Frey advised me on operetta-specific matters. A late-night phone conversation with Kevin Clarke gave me fresh inspiration and ended a barren spell. Helga Benatzky and Ernst Kauffmann provided me with both materials and insider information on their respective relatives, Ralph Benatzky and Bruno Granichstaedten. Axel Sikorski enlightened me about his grandfather Hans Sikorski. Franz Fröhlich from the AKM, Boris Priebe from Felix Bloch & Erben, and Sabine Hansmann from Josef Weinberger Publishers offered information about various primary sources.

The staff at the following libraries and archives made my research not only an adventure but also a pleasure: Wienbibliothek im Rathaus (especially Elisabeth Köhler and Thomas Aigner); Österreichisches Theatermuseum (especially Christiane Mühlegger and Kurt Ifkovits); Filmarchiv Austria (Thomas Ballhausen and Günter Krenn); Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv; Österreichische Nationalbibliothek; Österreichisches Staatsarchiv; Bezirksmuseum Wien Hernals; Archiv der Wiener Volksoper; Universitätsbibliothek Wien; Deutsches Bundesarchiv Berlin; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin; Ernst Marischka Archiv, Hallein; Universitätsbibliothek Bayreuth (Georg Prechtel); Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library and Interlibrary Borrowing Services at UC Berkeley.

My extended research stays in Vienna were made much more pleasant by my godmother Eva Nowotny and the Wiener Singakademie. I could share my subject-related excitement with Viennese colleague Clara Huber during extended coffeehouse meetings and operetta-film viewings in the charming Bellaria-Kino. My dear friend Geelke Meier came to explore the city with me when I first arrived; she, Anna Prowse, and Jenny Clark managed to stay in touch all the way, and cheered me on from afar.

At Berkeley, I was blessed with the company of many kind-hearted and intelligent colleagues as well as incredibly supportive staff. Among my more senior siblings, Adeline Mueller, Bill Quillen, Esther Criscuola de Laix, Lisa Jakelski, Rebekah Ahrendt, and Emily

Richmond Pollock gave especially sympathetic, levelheaded advice toward the end. Holly Replogle-Wong, Nicholas Mathew, and James Davies kindly read and commented on early chapter drafts. Melissa Hacker, Lisa Robinson, and Jim Coates helped me jump all administrative hurdles. Jamie Apgar acted as a reliable courier of draft manuscripts. Anicia Timberlake and Nell Cloutier, as well as my Viennese friends Sarah Noemi Schulmeister and Magdalena Peyrer-Heimstätt, looked up sources in Berlin, Paris, and Vienna when I could not do it myself. Most essential to my positive graduate-school experience, however, were my year mates and later dissertation group, Emily Frey, Rachana Vajjhala, and Garrick Trapp who, in many friendly gatherings, offered their smart insights and emotional support as well as their precious friendship. Without them I might not have made it through. I can only hope that I have been able to give them some of what they have given me.

Finally, and above all, I want to thank my parents, Elke and Erwin, who have weathered the highs and lows of my academic journey thus far with unfailing patience and good humor. Their encouragement, love, and advice kept me grounded throughout the entire process; as obliging listeners, assiduous footnote editors, and caring companions, they have been even more invaluable during these last few months. To them I dedicate this work.

INTRODUCTION

Vienna, January 2013. Arriving for my final research visit, I enter the Austrian capital through the international airport's sparkling new terminal. As I escape the long flights of narrow corridors into the arrival hall, I am faced with a vast wall display of score excerpts from *Die lustige Witwe*.

This operetta is Franz Lehár's (1870–1948) most popular. Following its world premiere at the Theater an der Wien in 1905, the work quickly found a special place in music lovers' hearts the world over,

I read on the awkward English label behind an assortment of high-tech trashcans. Directly opposite, brightly colored billboards advertise historic buildings as well as the city's largest schnitzel—"Vienna's only attraction that will also satisfy your appetite"—as tourists wait for their baggage. This is the first impression that modern Vienna offers its international visitors.



Figure 0.1: The *lustige Witwe* Wall, Arrival Hall of the new Austrian Star Alliance terminal, Vienna International Airport. (Photo by the author.)

Operetta still seems to be regarded as a major asset for Vienna, then—an important factor both in the self-propagated and foreign perceptions of the Austrian capital as “the city

of music."¹ This may come as a surprise; after all, operetta has long since lost its relevance as the sought-after, trendy leisure activity of large parts of Vienna's population and, consequently, has forfeited the identity-establishing potential that once sparked so many heated debates about its appearance and reception.² Abroad, too, the art form is no longer treated as a hot continental commodity today; it now speaks mainly to a small group of specialists as well as those with long personal memories. Explanations of operetta's importance for Vienna are not to be found then in the present, but by exploring the history of the city and its entertainment theater. And such explorations promise to supply more than new glimpses of a seemingly obsolete form of musical theater. As Camille Crittenden observed in her compelling study, *Johann Strauss and Vienna: Operetta and the Politics of Popular Culture*, "operetta offers an invaluable window on to the urban and cultural life of which it was a part."³

Literature about the history of operetta in Vienna is by no means scarce. Yet, as libretto scholar Thorsten Stegemann already pointed out almost two decades ago, the state of scholarship is surprisingly deficient, the vast majority of writings featuring a facile or anecdotal, non-scholarly style and sticking to the same few stock approaches.⁴ The Anglo-American literature in particular offers, in Andrew Lamb's words, "precious little beyond Strauss or Lehár biographies, general operetta histories and collections of synopses."⁵ Responsible for the dearth of academic engagement is, among other things, what Stegemann called the "pseudointellectual-seeming repudiation" of operetta, which—still habitual among academics today—was spurred on by the disparaging positions of influential early twentieth-century critics such as Theodor Adorno, Hermann Broch, and Karl Kraus. Furthermore, such important German musicologists as Carl Dahlhaus and Georg Knepler have endorsed the narrative of operetta's perpetual degeneration after Offenbach.⁶

Among the few German-language operetta scholars (hardly any of them musicologists) who have recently started to think of new ways to approach this vast and influential form of musical theater is Marion Linhardt, whose critical analyses of the field's shortcomings and suggested plans of action have inspired much of this thesis. Lamenting particularly the prevailing "work-analytical" trends in the literature, Linhardt has argued repeatedly that "an

¹ The most recent literature on Vienna's image as a city of music includes Lutz Musner, *Der Geschmack von Wien: Kultur und Habitus einer Stadt*, Interdisziplinäre Stadtforschung 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2009) and Martina

² See Marion Linhardt, *Kontrolle—Prestige—Vergnügen: Profile einer Sozialgeschichte des Wiener Theaters, 1700–2020* (Vienna: LiTheS in cooperation with Don Juan Archiv, 2012), 6.

³ Camille Crittenden, *Johann Strauss and Vienna: Operetta and the Politics of Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 261.

⁴ Thorsten Stegemann, "Wenn man das Leben durchs Champagnerglas betrachtet..." *Textbücher der Wiener Operette zwischen Provokation und Reaktion* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995), 11.

⁵ Andrew Lamb, review of *Johann Strauss and Vienna: Operetta and the Politics of Popular Culture*, by Camille Crittenden, *Music & Letters* 82 (2001): 466. Two authors should be mentioned here along with Lamb: Kurt Gänzl with his *The Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) and Gänzl and Andrew Lamb, *Gänzl's Book of the Musical Theatre* (New York: Schirmer, 1989), and Richard Traubner, whose dissertation on operetta films (NYU, 1996) and *Operetta: A Theatrical History* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1983) are likewise widely considered to be "definitive" works on the subject.

⁶ "pseudointellektuell anmutende Ablehnung"; Stegemann, *Wenn man das Leben*, 11 and Albrecht Dümmling, "Wiederentdeckung NS-verfolgter Operettenkomponisten: Erfahrungen eines Musikwissenschaftlers," in *Operette unterm Hakenkreuz: Zwischen hoffähiger Kunst und "Entartung,"* ed. Wolfgang Schaller (Berlin: Metropol, 2007), 201.

approach that aims to work out the social relevance and ideological potential of entertainment theater cannot be limited to observations about the satirical or sentimental, provocative or reactionary tendencies of a few, apparently representative works," but should entail a "differentiated examination of all the ramifications of operetta's development, the diversity of its production, presentation, and reception."⁷ Frameworks based on quality judgments, prescribed norms of genre, or on contrasting "operetta" with contiguous art forms, cannot do justice to this complex, multilayered network of genres, Linhardt maintains, since such frameworks run the risk of relying on a fictive operetta prototype whose properties can only be found in a handful of works.⁸ She proposes:

Beside the theater-immanent perspective, a socio-historical one should be adopted, which recognizes operetta as an element of a diverse cultural field, the cornerstones of which are provided by political and social turning points and the needs defined by them. This, not least, would make the possibilities of a political instrumentalization of entertainment theater describable.⁹

In the case of Vienna, Linhardt points out, "this involves attention to the several hundred works premiered there over many decades" if one does not want to risk reading "meanings" into individual operettas that could never have been conveyed to members of a contemporary audience.¹⁰ Linhardt is not in principle against detailed analyses of individual operettas. She argues, however, for a new "path toward the selection of works whose analysis is really meaningful, and toward a determination of the aspects to be analyzed." The criteria for studying operetta and its librettos need to be derived from the "practical theatrical possibilities and constraints of the time"; the objects of analysis have to be the dramaturgical patterns and

⁷ "Eine Betrachtungsweise, die die soziale Relevanz und das ideologische Potential des Unterhaltungstheaters herausarbeiten will, kann sich nicht in Beobachtungen zu satirischen oder sentimental, provokativen oder reaktionären Tendenzen einiger vermeintlich repräsentativer Werke erschöpfen"; "einer differenzierten Betrachtung aller Verästelungen der Operettenentwicklung, der Vielfalt ihrer Produktion, Präsentation und Rezeption"; Marion Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole: Zu einer kulturellen Topographie des Wiener Unterhaltungstheaters (1858–1918)* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2006), 3 and 10.

⁸ Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, 2.

⁹ "Neben der theaterimmanenten wäre sodann eine sozialhistorische Perspektive einzunehmen, die die Operette als Element eines weitgefächerten kulturellen Feldes begreift, dessen Eckpunkte mit politischen und gesellschaftlichen Einschnitten und den hierdurch definierten Bedürfnissen gegeben sind. Damit würden nicht zuletzt die Möglichkeiten einer politischen Instrumentalisierung des Unterhaltungstheaters beschreibbar." Marion Linhardt, "Schlaglichter auf die Operette," in *Warum es der Operette so schlecht geht: Ideologische Debatten um das musikalische Unterhaltungstheater (1880–1916)*, Maske und Kothurn 45 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2001), 2–3. If not otherwise indicated, translations are my own and stresses are original. Typographical errors and inconsistencies in German sources have been amended.

¹⁰ "bedeutet dies, dass man sich den mehreren hundert Werken zuwenden muß, die hier im Laufe der Jahrzehnte uraufgeführt wurden"; Linhardt, "'Der Wiener Stoff ist [...] nicht unumgänglich notwendig, wenn nur die Wiener Seele in ihr lebt.' Was ist 'wienerisch' am Libretto der Wiener Operette?," in *Österreichische Oper oder Oper in Österreich? Die Libretto-Problematik*, ed. Pierre Behár and Herbert Schneider (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2005), 215.

“fashions” that help to characterize different, relatively well-defined but short-lived operetta types.¹¹

In her own writings, Linhardt tackles the vast blanks she has located on the map of operetta history through systematic exploration and stock-taking of Vienna’s multifaceted theater scene. Her habilitation thesis *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, for example, offers an admirably detailed topography of operetta in Vienna until the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She explains:

The assignment of the numerous operetta stages to urban spaces, each with a specific population configuration and a certain prestige, and the positioning of individual venues in the overall context of the theater and city history also lend a contour to these venues’ audiences—previously only a blurred mass of “auditors”: existing audience strata become comprehensible and the interdependence of the audience and the repertory emerges.¹²

Abounding in fascinating data concerning the interrelation between operettas, their venues, and the topography of the city and its population, Linhardt’s extensive network analysis (though surely overwhelming even for interested non-specialist scholars) provides subsequent operetta specialists with an invaluable starting point. Her approach, however, only allows her to incorporate comparatively few detailed observations about individual works and events, and remains rather abstract and theoretical. Inevitably, the problem she herself raised—that a few popular operettas take elevated and apparently “representative” positions in the scholarly literature—obstinately remains. What is more, at the end of the Habsburg monarchy—the point at which Linhardt’s book as well as many others stop—the musical theater topography she describes became far more complex, making it impossible to view Vienna’s operetta scene through only a few venues. Between 1918 and 1955, a dizzying array of interdependent political, constitutional, economic, social, and cultural changes affected Vienna’s cityscape as well as its theater scene. New media (cinema, a booming recording industry, and public radio) made operetta available and affordable to an ever-broadening audience, in Vienna and further afield, offering even less well-off Austrians the opportunity to listen to smash hits from the capital’s elite venues in the comfort of their homes.¹³ Moreover, new impulses from the Berlin

¹¹ “Weg hin zu einer Auswahl von Werken, deren Analyse tatsächlich sinnvoll ist, und eine Bestimmung der zu analysierenden Aspekte.” “theaterpraktischen Möglichkeiten und Zwängen der Zeit”; Linhardt, “Der Wiener Stoff,” 215–216.

¹² “Die Zuordnung der zahlreichen Operetten Bühnen zu städtischen Räumen mit je spezifischer Bevölkerungszusammensetzung und bestimmtem Prestige und die Positionierung der einzelnen Bühnen im Gesamtkontext der Theater- und damit Stadtgeschichte verleihen auch den Besuchern dieser Bühnen, der zunächst verschwommenen Masse ‘Zuschauer’, eine Kontur: Real existierende Publikumsschichten werden faßbar, die wechselseitige Bedingtheit von Publikum und Repertoire tritt zutage.” Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, 22.

¹³ Indeed, soon such use of modern media was no longer necessarily “secondary”: Richard Oswald’s silent film *Paganini* (1923), for example, seems to have spawned the eponymous 1925 Lehár operetta with Richard Tauber, and Oswald’s *Lady Hamilton* (1921) may have inspired Eduard Künneke’s 1926 stage work with the same title. See Richard Traubner, “Operette: the German and Austrian musical film” (PhD diss., New York University, 1996), 71.

revue and the Broadway musical led to an even wider range of works covered under the term "operetta."

These complexities are not the only good reasons to focus on operetta after the Habsburg Empire. When World War I started, Viennese operetta was at the height of its international popularity: while it had still been a local phenomenon in Strauss's time, the success of *Die lustige Witwe* had put operetta on the cultural world map. As Vienna lost its political importance as the capital and royal seat of a vast, wealthy empire, its internationally esteemed cultural assets such as operetta became welcome means for officials as well as other citizens to assure themselves of the city's continuing cosmopolitan status. Since operettas were prime export products, their representations of Vienna gained significance and were carefully calculated.

The scholarly literature hardly reflects these negotiations. Renowned fin-de-siècle scholar Moritz Csáky, for example, once concluded his observations about the art form with the offhand statement that "after 1918 operetta lost its cultural bearings and seemed understandable only through a transfigured nostalgia."¹⁴ Others, including Andrew Lamb in his Grove article, do note twentieth-century operetta's continued currency when they observe that composers such as Paul Abraham and Ralph Benatzky "sought to combine the traditional romance of operetta with modern stories and dance styles," but they read such measures as "signs of the terminal decline of the classical operetta," ignoring the fact that fashionable dances and contemporary settings were also essential ingredients of such "classic masterpieces" as *Die Fledermaus* and *Die Lustige Witwe*.¹⁵

Another problematic topic is the commercial aspect of operetta, which is usually seen to reflect negatively on popular musical theater and therefore played down if not ignored altogether by scholars. Contrasting the operetta with the musical, Otto Hambüchen, for example, noted "serious differences ... even in the outer form ... : most musicals, and the most successful ones, kept themselves apart from the state- or city-subsidized theaters." He overlooks the fact that most operettas before 1930 were also produced for independent theaters and supported largely by their audience appeal.¹⁶ Even such a brilliant operetta analyst as Volker Klotz uses the argument of a different, commercial "means of production and distribution" to contrast the objectionable musical and "bad," populist operetta with what he regards as the "good," satirical, system-critical specimen. While musical theater scholar Kevin Clarke has started to debunk this notion, it is still widespread.¹⁷

¹⁴ "Nach 1918 kam der Operette ihr kulturelles Umfeld abhanden, und man glaubte, ihre Inhalte nur mehr in einer verklärten Nostalgie verständlich machen zu können." Moritz Csáky, "Die Wiener Operette: Unmoralisch und dekorativ," *Damals: Das aktuelle Magazin für Geschichte und Kultur* 31, no. 3 (1999): 25.

¹⁵ Andrew Lamb, "Operetta," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20386> (accessed February 23, 2013).

¹⁶ "Gravierende Unterschiede ... schon in der äußeren Form ... : die meisten und erfolgreichsten Musicals trennten sich von den staatlich oder städtisch subventionierten Theatern." Otto Hambüchen, *Operette sich, wer kann! Eine Plauderei zur Entwicklung von Operette und Musical* (Geldern: Braukmann, 1997), 145–146.

¹⁷ "Herstellungs- und Vertriebsweise"; Volker Klotz, *Operette: Porträt und Handbuch einer unerhörten Kunst* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2004), 20; Kevin Clarke, "Im Himmel spielt auch schon die Jazzband": *Emmerich Kálmán und die transatlantische Operette, 1928–1932* (Hamburg: Von Bockel, 2007), 19–21.

Of course, no PhD dissertation or single volume can hope to satisfy Linhardt's demand for "an account that connects the numerous artistic, social, theatrical, topographical, and economic aspects of the operetta scene in the German-language area up to 1945."¹⁸ Accordingly, this thesis does not attempt a full picture. My account can be neither complete nor final. I want, rather, to contribute one new layer to the open-ended scholarly accretion that constitutes operetta history. As an alternative to the common Anglo-American panoramic approach as well as to Linhardt's topographical one, this thesis offers a montage of loosely connected case studies formed around individual operetta events; philosopher Gilbert Ryle and anthropologist Clifford Geertz might have called them "thick descriptions."¹⁹ These vignettes zoom in on significant operetta moments during each of Austria's successive political eras in the first half of the twentieth century: the First Austrian Republic (1918–1934), the Austrofascist state (1934–1938), the annexation to the Third Reich (1938–1945), and the early postwar Second Republic (1945–). Choosing my events, I have sought opportunities to grapple with larger questions of musical style, venues, and reception, as well as the relationship between music, Viennese society, and the image of the city. By mediating among multiple levels of inquiry, I hope to supply the depth and graspable detail that have been missing from surveys of twentieth-century Viennese operetta while still remaining sensitive to the broad outlines of its historical scope.

In order to reach this goal, my criteria for choosing case studies have been the exact opposite of those employed by Csáky, for example, who focused on operetta's "'classical' representatives" in the belief that most other works "have perhaps rightly fallen into oblivion."²⁰ I have selected my case studies not because of their position in today's operetta canon, but in light of their original impact. Unlike Klotz, who also explicitly omitted those "once popular pieces that meanwhile have vanished from the repertory because they have likely faded forever," I am not interested in what Viennese operetta should or can be on today's stages, but rather in what it was and meant during the various time periods under investigation and may, as a consequence, mean for today's historian.²¹ Indeed, unlike Stegemann or Martin Lichtfuss, I do not even start my account with those operettas that dominate the repertory today.²² Nor, for that matter, do I want to examine operetta primarily as a series of "works" with fixed texts, as many of these scholars have done.

Deliberately avoiding the handful of "outstanding masterpieces" favored in previous accounts, I have picked a series of radically unfamiliar events, alternative stories that may

¹⁸ "Eine Darstellung, die die zahlreichen künstlerischen, sozialen, theatralischen, topographischen und wirtschaftlichen Aspekte der Operettenszene im deutschsprachigen Raum bis 1945 ... miteinander verknüpft"; Linhardt, "Schlaglichter auf die Operette," 2.

¹⁹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), influenced by Gilbert Ryle, "The Thinking of Thoughts: What is 'Le Penseur' Doing?," *Collected Papers 2* (London: Hutchinson, 1971), 480–496.

²⁰ "'klassische' Vertreter"; "vielleicht zu Recht der Vergessenheit anheimgefallen sind"; Moritz Csáky, *Ideologie der Operette und Wiener Moderne: Ein kulturhistorischer Essay zur österreichischen Identität* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1996), 11–13.

²¹ "irgendwann einmal populäre Stücke, die inzwischen aus dem Repertoire verschwanden, weil sie wohl für immer erblasst sind"; Klotz, *Operette*, 19. One should note here, that in his brilliant reference work Klotz pursues the rather different goal of making operetta more attractive for today's theaters and audiences again.

²² Stegemann, *Wenn man das Leben*, 12 and Martin Lichtfuss, *Operette im Ausverkauf: Studien zum Libretto des musikalischen Unterhaltungstheaters im Österreich der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1989), 13.

illuminate new aspects of not only the composition but also of the production, performance, consumption, and reception of operetta in twentieth-century Vienna. To determine which particular moments in Vienna's operetta history could provide the most revealing or startling commentary on Austria's cultural life and justify a thick description, has been the primary historiographical challenge of this study, requiring a substantial amount of preliminary archival research. Many a promising-looking path became a blind alley when insufficient documentation prevented further access to roads that had first seemed so passable. Having originally set out to research performances of single-act Singspiele in basement theaters, seedy late-night costume shows with eccentric dances, and catchy *Schlager* numbers broadcast on national radio request programs, I soon found out how difficult it was to accumulate useful information and texturing detail about events that newspapers did not cover and whose performance materials were rarely preserved. On the other hand, I was surprised to discover a wealth of untold, powerfully expressive moments on the same famous stages that feature prominently in most history surveys. To use Marie-Theres Arnbom and Kevin Clarke's words: operetta, as we claim to know it, remains a "terra incognita."²³

As a consequence, this thesis may disappoint some readers: "operetta" will remain here just what it has always been in the standard histories—a popular but elite genre performed in Vienna's most glamorous high-society venues. But since the chronological structure of my thesis hardly leaves room to evoke a sense of simultaneity, it made little sense to attempt a breakdown into kinds of venues, backgrounds of audiences, performance quality, and impact further afield. In the end, the focus on Vienna's flagship theaters has allowed me best to pursue both of my main objectives: to trace the *Selbst- und Fremdbild* (the self-perception and perception by others) advanced in operettas that were produced in Vienna with the explicit objective of wide international distribution, and to put such "classics" as *Das Land des Lächelns*, *Gräfin Mariza*, and *Im weißen Rössl* into perspective by providing a context of directly comparable and equally significant historic operetta events.

While working on this project I was delighted to learn that several other scholars are currently striving to enrich operetta history in similar ways: the curators of the 2012 exhibition "Welt der Operette" in Vienna's Theatermuseum, for example, explicitly focused on aspects, "which in operetta research and the great operetta volumes of the past have so far been neglected: contemporary history, sex, and new media." Arnbom, Clarke, and the contributors of the perceptive essay collection accompanying this exhibition share my goal to show operetta as a genre "in touch with the pulse of time"—an international form of musical theater that flourished through a lively cultural exchange between Europe and America and was immediately affected by the drastic and frequent changes in its surroundings.²⁴ Promising recent studies have also come from US scholars. While Timothy Freeze's PhD thesis (U Michigan, 2010) bridged the academic gap between "serious" and "entertainment" music by examining operetta and other popular fin-de-siècle influences on Mahler, Zoe Lang's

²³ Marie-Theres Arnbom and Kevin Clarke, "Vorwort: Parallelwelten der Operette," in *Welt der Operette: Glamour, Stars und Showbusiness*, ed. Marie-Theres Arnbom, Kevin Clarke, and Thomas Trabitsch (Vienna: Brandstätter, 2011), 14.

²⁴ "die bislang in der Operettenforschung und in den großen Operettenbüchern der Vergangenheit übergangen wurden: Zeitgeschichte, Sex und neue Medien"; "dicht am Puls der Zeit"; Arnbom and Clarke, "Parallelwelten der Operette," 14.

dissertation (Harvard, 2005) dealt with interwar Strauss reception and issues of Austrian identity. As I write, Micaela Baranello (Princeton) is working on a thesis titled “The Operetta Empire: Viennese Music Theater and Austrian Identity, 1900–35.” The accretion of operetta history is gaining momentum, it seems!

My own layer of this history starts with a prologue that shows how, even before the end of the Habsburg Empire, Vienna’s operetta network was increasingly expanded through the new media. I zoom in on the launch of Austria’s first feature-length movie, *Der Millionenonkel* (1913), featuring popular operetta- and *Volksstück*-comedian Alexander Girardi—celebrated as a last emblem of Viennese operetta’s “Golden Era”—in more than thirty of his most successful stage roles. Incorporating the latest fashions and addressing current concerns in Viennese culture and politics, the producers relied on the renown of Girardi and operetta to promote the artistic possibilities and respectability of the new and controversial medium of film. *Der Millionenonkel* made the stage genre and its star accessible to larger parts of society, while introducing a promising new, internationally marketable vehicle for operetta.

After the Great War, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was reduced to an unimportant Alpine republic. As poverty-stricken Vienna struggled to keep pace with the modernizations of other metropolises, many artists and intellectuals left for the more glamorous art scenes of Berlin, Hollywood, or New York.²⁵ Vienna’s producers and theater directors, hoping to build on operetta’s international dream successes from before the war, had to battle with an unsettled political situation, economic crises, crippling entertainment taxes, an impoverished bourgeoisie, and ever-increasing competition from public radio and the talkies. Chapter 1 examines director Hubert Marischka’s series of American-themed “jazz”-operetta productions at the Theater an der Wien. I focus particularly on the first and last of these, Bruno Granichstaedten’s now almost forgotten smash hit *Der Orlow* (1925) and its much more radically “modern,” unlucky successor *Reklame!* (1930). Marischka’s choice of subject matter and his glamorously cosmopolitan production style contradict undifferentiated assessments of 1920s operetta as a single nostalgic celebration of Austria’s golden past and illustrate his difficult balancing act between presenting Viennese operetta as a modern, international, and cosmopolitan art form on the one hand, while retaining its specifically, but not stereotypically “Viennese” aspects that made it “authentic” and irreplaceable, on the other.

A far bigger watershed than the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy—for all areas of Viennese art and culture—was the destruction of democracy in 1933 and the establishment of the authoritarian Corporate State after the civil war in February 1934. While historians already pointed to this turning point more than fifteen years ago,²⁶ it is still hardly reflected in operetta accounts, which tend to treat the interwar years as a single continuous period. In Chapter 2, I want to adjust this perception by examining the conditions under which Ralph Benatzky wrote operettas for Austrofascist Vienna after leaving the Third Reich in 1933. Upon their takeover, Austrofascist authorities quickly assumed unprecedented power over Viennese entertainment

²⁵ See, for example, Gänzl and Lamb, *Gänzl’s Book of the Musical Theatre*, 892 and Linhardt, “Schlaglichter auf die Operette,” 8.

²⁶ Erika Weinzierl, “Österreichische Kulturpolitik in den dreißiger Jahren,” in *Verspielte Zeit: Österreichisches Theater der dreißiger Jahre*, ed. Hilde Haider-Pregler and Beate Reiterer (Vienna: Picus, 1996), 23.

venues and their programming as they tried to foster a Christian, corporate value system as well as the sense of a distinctly Austrian, national (rather than regional or pan-German) identity.²⁷ Nostalgic recollections of “Alt Wien” were now propagated officially as a legitimization of the present and future of the entire state;²⁸ operetta was no longer representative only of Vienna but was integrated into the patriotic narrative of a glorious national music history—a hallmark of the “music country Austria.”²⁹ Such imagery also became part of the regime’s intensified efforts to expand tourism, an important source of income, which had suffered immensely from the recent economic crises as well as the Nazis’ strenuous efforts to pressure the Austrians to join the Reich. Not surprisingly, then, both Benatzky’s chamber operetta *Das kleine Café* (1934), set in a true-to-life Viennese middle-class milieu, and his grand revue *Herzen im Schnee* (1937), which celebrated the pleasures of the Tyrolean Alps, were welcomed by Austrofascist officials with open arms and allowed the composer to continue along the lines of his earlier successes. But the restrictive theater policies and the increasingly traditionalist attitude of large parts of the population soon started to limit Benatzky’s creative options and eventually induced him to turn his back on Vienna.³⁰

After the Anschluss, when racial persecutions made Vienna an unsafe and unprofitable working environment even for celebrated Jewish authors, the repertory of theaters shifted increasingly away from new operettas to emphasize instead re-workings of racially and politically unproblematic older material.³¹ Chapter 3 sheds light on one of the operetta revisions commissioned by Nazi officials in order to replenish the Reich’s performable repertory: the unfinished 1944 version of Franz Lehár’s popular success *Der Rastelbinder* (1902), which originally featured a Jewish main character. For its editor, Viennese cabarettist Rudolf Weys, a pro-Austrian social democrat with a Jewish wife, this official commission proved a powerful tool to dodge many of the Third Reich’s bullets as work of this sort increasingly turned into an alibi. Weys’s case shows that musical theater could provide a lifeline for authors under the Nazi regime. The absence of political explicitness in operetta made it both an ideal form of escapist entertainment with a native, now “German-Viennese” background, as well as a welcome vehicle for nonconformist artists who could not afford to attract attention or leave the Reich.

The years following World War II are, as Wolfgang Jansen has recently pointed out, still largely ignored in operetta scholarship.³² And, indeed, from the standpoint of innovative

²⁷ See W. E. Yates, *Theatre in Vienna: A Critical History, 1776–1995* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 221 and Barbara Feller, “Vorwärts in die Vergangenheit: Stadtbilder und Baupolitik im austrofascistischen Wien zwischen 1934 und 1938,” in *Alt-Wien: Die Stadt, die niemals war*, ed. Wolfgang Kos and Christian Rapp (Vienna: Czernin, 2004), 273–279.

²⁸ See, for example, Christian Glanz, “Wiener Operette und österreichische Identität,” *European Journal for Semiotic Studies* 13 (2001): 516.

²⁹ Musner, *Der Geschmack von Wien*, 154.

³⁰ Compare with Christian Glanz, “Wien und Berlin als ‘wechselseitige Exilorte’ der Musik,” in *Vienna Meets Berlin: Cultural Interaction, 1918–1933*, *British and Irish Studies in German Language and Literature* 41, ed. John Warren and Ulrike Zitzlsperger (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 240 and 242.

³¹ Traubner, “Operette,” 55.

³² Wolfgang Jansen, “Von der Operette zum Musical: Zur Entwicklung des unterhaltenden Musiktheaters nach 1945,” in Arnbom, Clarke, and Trabitsch, *Welt der Operette*, 243.

production, the history of the genre in the late 1940s hardly deserves any attention.³³ But operetta's importance for Vienna and Austria by no means ceased at that time. My final chapter focuses on Vienna's first postwar operetta premiere, *Die Straussbuben* (1946), a new Singspiel cobbled together from previously unknown music in the Strauss brothers' estate. Hailed in the press as evidence that the "quintessentially Austrian" genre was alive and well, the successful Raimund Theater production received substantial political support as operetta became a welcome focus for the official propagation of a recovering, resolutely apolitical Austrian national pride.³⁴ By asserting a break with Third Reich cultural ideas and the return to specifically "Austrian" traditions and values—in this case Strauss, the waltz, and the Singspiel—the Allied forces and new government evaded any problematization of the Nazi past and Austrian complicity in it, encouraging instead cultural business as usual. The *Straussbuben* case, however, shows obvious continuities between wartime and postwar aesthetic preferences: like Wey's *Rastelbinder*, this new operetta had been written as an official Reich commission long before the much-touted *Stunde Null*. The reception of the work makes clear that officials' deliberate and ironic use of operetta as trusty Austrian musical memento pushed concerns about forward-looking innovation into the background and stifled any remaining efforts toward the renewal of Viennese popular musical theater.

In spite of the radically different setups within the time periods covered, the patchwork adumbrated by these historical scraps points to a larger trend: after the end of the Habsburg Empire, operetta was considered important cultural capital for Vienna and, as such, increasingly became an object of political relevance, even a propaganda instrument.³⁵ While this development inextricably linked operetta to the image of Vienna—and Austria—and helped to keep this form of musical theater alive at points, it was also largely responsible for operetta's hopeless stagnation.

I finish my investigation with a more uplifting look across the pond. The epilogue examines the legacy of Viennese operetta in three successful American postwar musicals, Billy Wilder's movie *The Emperor Waltz* (1948), Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music* (1959), and Cole Porter's *Kiss me, Kate* (1948). While all three works respond to operetta with critical distance—Wilder's and Porter's by parodying the older musical theater form, *The Sound of Music* by trying to avoid any markers of it—they nevertheless bear witness to the continuing fascination of Austrian topics as well as to the unceasing emotional potency of operetta's musical resources.

³³ See Appendix 6 for a list of Vienna's musical theater premieres after 1945.

³⁴ Siegfried Mattl, *Das 20. Jahrhundert, Geschichte Wiens 6* (Vienna: Pichler, 2000), 18.

³⁵ See Linhardt, *Kontrolle—Prestige—Vergnügen*, 57 on theater in general.

PROLOGUE: THE HABSBURG EMPIRE

Setting the Screen

The premiere of the Austrian motion picture *Der Millionenonkel* in 1913 was touted as a sensational sellout. Realized by film pioneer Alexander “Sascha” Kolowrat and operetta luminaries Ernst and Hubert Marischka, the movie attracted great interest both in Vienna and further afield,³⁶ offering a remarkable list of novelties: it was the longest Austrian feature film to date, an artistic and commercial breakthrough for Kolowrat’s new “Sascha Film” company,³⁷ the first Austrian movie to present operetta, one of the earliest to incorporate an original film score, and also the first successful star vehicle, featuring the famous operetta comedian Alexander Girardi in more than thirty of his stage roles—from jailor Frosch in Johann Strauss’s *Fledermaus* (1874) to violin primarius Rácz Pali in Imre Kálmán’s *Zigeunerprimas* (1912).³⁸

Der Millionenonkel appeared at a time when many still saw cinema as a direct threat to staged theater. The Viennese press at the time carried numerous articles and interviews about the dangers and benefits of film.³⁹ As in other European metropolises, cinemas in Vienna had initially attracted a lower-class audience.⁴⁰ Yet by 1907 the novelty of the medium had worn off and the world economic crisis kept this audience from attending.⁴¹ If the Viennese film industry was going to have a future, it needed to attract the middle classes. In order to counter the stigma of film as corruptor of public morals and to transform the medium from an entertainment commodity into a respectable art form, longer films modeled on bourgeois literature and stage works were introduced.⁴² Of course, such competition—at such an

³⁶ The Wiener Lichtspieltheater, for example, extended its run of the movie because of the “extraordinary interest.” *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, October 5, 1912, 23. The *Prager Tagblatt*, *Bohemia*, and the *Grazer Tagblatt* describe similar successes outside Vienna. See excerpts in *Kinematographische Rundschau* 294 (1914): 71.

³⁷ Robert Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema: A History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005), 19. Hubert Marischka’s records document a net profit of more than 37000 crowns until December 1913 alone.

³⁸ Accounts of the number of characters Girardi played varied enormously. The star’s son claims that the film featured more than 60 Girardi roles. (Anton Maria Girardi, *Das Schicksal setzt den Hobel an: Der Lebensroman Alexander Girardis* [Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1941], 306–307.) The only extant copy shows the star in twenty-three different guises; the detailed synopses in the *Kinematographische Rundschau* and several newspapers mention thirty four. For a complete list of Girardi’s documented roles in *Der Millionenonkel* see Appendix 1.

³⁹ This debate was described in “Franz Molnar über Kino und Theater: Schadet das Kino dem Theater?,” *Neues Wiener Journal*, September 18, 1913, 3.

⁴⁰ Lee Grieveson, “Audiences: Surveys and Debates,” in *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, ed. Richard Abel (New York: Routledge, 2005), 46.

⁴¹ Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema*, 9–10.

⁴² Willy Riemer, “Literature and Austrian Cinema Culture at the Turn of the Centuries,” in *Literature in Vienna at the Turn of the Centuries: Continuities and Discontinuities around 1900 and 2000*, ed. Ernst Grabovszki and James N. Hardin (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), 185. On international developments at that time see Harald Jossé, *Die Entstehung des Tonfilms: Ein Beitrag zu einer faktenorientierten Filmgeschichte* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Alber, 1984), 99 but also Janet Staiger, “Rethinking ‘Primitive’ Cinema: Intertextuality, the Middle-Class Audience, and Reception Studies,” in *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 119.

economically difficult time—exacerbated the hostility of established institutions of high culture.⁴³ Nevertheless, by 1913 such intellectuals as Peter Altenberg and Arthur Schnitzler began to speak up for Austrian film's creative potential, with popular actors including Hansi Niese and Karl von Zeska soon defecting to the new medium.⁴⁴

Der Millionenonkel was clearly part of this movement toward respectability. The movie assembled a cast of influential Austrians: Alexander Kolowrat, a rich aristocrat and popular cult figure, known also for his involvement in other elite ventures such as car racing;⁴⁵ Hubert Marischka, "well-established member" of the glamorous Carltheater;⁴⁶ and—most importantly—actor Alexander Girardi, Vienna's "darling,"⁴⁷ a star for whom many profitable showcase works were written and whose important birthdays were celebrated officially.⁴⁸ Girardi hats were a fashion craze in fin-de-siècle Vienna, as were his portraits, candies—even Girardi liqueur.⁴⁹

Not unusually, reviews of the film were uniformly positive, stressing its progressive qualities. As many pointed out, Girardi's success was aided by the screenplay, which integrated many of his most famous roles into a typical operetta plot: a young count (played by Marischka) develops a fancy for a beautiful actress, seeks her acquaintance but is found out by his wife during a masked ball and has to feign a disastrous duel in order to make up with her.⁵⁰ This standard operetta narrative was framed in a self-reflexive, "documentary" manner: at the beginning Kolowrat and Marischka visit the star in his private home to suggest the film project,⁵¹ as they describe the plot, the operetta pictures appear on the screen. Girardi is convinced and agrees to take part.

⁴³ Victoria Duckett, "Theater, legitimate," in Abel, *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, 626.

⁴⁴ Walter Fritz, *Alexander Girardi und der Film* (Vienna: Österreichische Gesellschaft für Filmwissenschaft, 1968), 10.

⁴⁵ Markus Nepf, "Die ersten Filmpioniere in Österreich: Die Aufbauarbeit von Anton Kolm, Louise Veltée/Kolm/Fleck und Jacob Fleck bis zu Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs," in *Elektrische Schatten: Beiträge zur Österreichischen Stummfilmgeschichte*, ed. Francesco Bono, Paolo Caneppele, and Günter Krenn (Vienna: Filmarchiv Austria, 1999), 11.

⁴⁶ "bekanntem Mitgliede des Wiener Carltheaters"; "Alexander Girardi im Film," *Kinematographische Rundschau* 262 (1913): 6.

⁴⁷ "Liebling"; "Eine Kinosenation: Girardi im Film," *Deutsches Volksblatt*, September 11, 1913, 8.

⁴⁸ Rudolf Holzer, *Die Wiener Vorstadt Bühnen: Alexander Girardi und das Theater an der Wien* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei, 1951), 601–602.

⁴⁹ Kos and Rapp, *Alt-Wien*, 485. Many minor roles in *Der Millionenonkel* were also cast with members of Vienna's high society: popular folksinger Pepi Augustin, for example, played an overzealous constable, operetta composer Leo Fall conducted the orchestra during a theater performance, and even the filmed theater audience boasted applauding celebrities such as Bernhard Baumeister, a leading actor at the prestigious Burgtheater.

⁵⁰ For a detailed discussion of the appeal of this popular plot type in European film after 1908—breaking out of bourgeois marriage but "restoring the disturbed equilibrium" for a happy ending—see Barry Emslie, "The Domestication of Opera," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5 (1993): 167–177.

⁵¹ Such "documentary" scenes seem to have catered to the strong public interest in the private lives of stage celebrities at the time. Gerald Piffel, "Hinter den Kulissen: Die ungeschminkte Welt des Theaters," in *Von der Pose zum Ausdruck: Theaterfotografie, 1900–1930*, ed. Barbara Lesák and Gerald Piffel (Vienna: Brandstätter, 2003), 143–153.



Figure 0.2: Alexander Girardi, Hubert Marischka, and Alexander Kolowrat in a now lost scene of *Der Millionenonkel*.⁵²

This combination of an overarching theatrical narrative with real-life elements as well as tried-and-tested “cinematic attractions” (for example, the increasingly fast succession of Girardi’s appearances in his well-known costumes and Marischka’s slapstick pursuit of the beautiful actress) ensured a broad audience appeal⁵³ and was praised by the press as an “exceedingly auspicious idea, even worthy of emulation.”⁵⁴

Similarly glowing were the comments on Robert Stolz’s music, which is unfortunately now missing.⁵⁵ Most films at the time were still accompanied by amateur pianists, who did not always manage to underline the screen actions: Stolz reported on emotional death scenes accompanied by the “Blue Danube” waltz, for example.⁵⁶ Understandably, then, *Millionenonkel*

⁵² *Kinematographische Rundschau* “Girardi-Nummer” special (1913): 7. Photo courtesy of the Filmarchiv Austria.

⁵³ Arthur Maria Rabenalt, “Metarmorphosen der Operette” (1980), in *Gesammelte Schriften 3: Schriften zu Operette, Film, Musical und Tanz*, ed. Marion Linhardt (Hildesheim: Olms, 2006), 94–95 and Kerstin Bartel, *Faszination Operette: Vom Singspiel zum Film* (Laaber: Laaber, 1992), 18. On “cinema of attraction,” see, for example, Tom Gunning and André Gaudreault, “Le cinéma des premiers temps, un défi à l’histoire du cinéma?,” in *Histoire du Cinéma: Nouvelles Approches*, ed. J. Aumont, A. Gaudreault, and M. Marie (Paris: La Sorbonne nouvelle, 1989), 55–65.

⁵⁴ “überaus glücklicher, sogar nachahmungswürdiger Gedanke”; “Wiener Brief,” *Erste internationale Film-Zeitung* 13, March 29, 1913, 88.

⁵⁵ Fritz, *Alexander Girardi und der Film*, 7.

⁵⁶ Robert Stolz, “Die Revolution begann 1913,” in *Geschichte des Films in Österreich*, Ausstellungskatalog, ed. Agnes Bleier Brody (Vienna: Isda & Brodmann, 1966), 35.

critics marveled at how “effectively [the music] underlines the actions on the screen”⁵⁷ and stressed that the score was not “an arrangement of a Girardi hit potpourri ... , but ... a proper original composition, into which the mosaic of the most immortal Girardi operettas seems to be embedded. This required not only a thorough musical connoisseur but also a composer with tasteful ideas.”⁵⁸ One reviewer further stressed the film’s affinity to more prestigious musical theater when he suggested that Stolz had composed “a proper operetta” because “the music, which filled *circa* two hours, would fully suffice to make up two modern operettas.”⁵⁹

Critics also mentioned the “photographically almost perfect” filming technique and “technical tricks,” pointing toward another sophisticated attribute of the film, its progressive cinematography.⁶⁰ Marischka and Kolowrat experimented with perspective and space, used close ups and long shots, varied viewpoints, and created narrative continuity through segmented actions and cross-cutting—for example, between two characters having a phone conversation.⁶¹ The unusual pace of the film was determined by Girardi’s appearances, which, as film scholar Günter Krenn has pointed out, seem rather incidental at the beginning but increasingly agglomerate and eventually reach a climax at a masked ball scene when, facilitated by a revolutionary montage effect, several Girardis seem to be on screen at once.⁶² Devoid of any theatrical antecedents, such techniques acknowledged film as an art with its own possibilities.

Finally, the notion of the film’s prestigious and sophisticated nature was promoted by its glamorous reception in Vienna, as is documented in the press: “all who can be seen at sensational premieres were present in the overcrowded hall,” the *Deutsches Volksblatt* noted,⁶³ and the *Kinematographische Rundschau* concluded triumphantly that this “proves yet again that the interest for film theater has captured all circles.”⁶⁴ “Everyone will now want to marvel at this most Viennese of all actors.”⁶⁵

This high demand could hardly be satisfied any time soon, as only four venues had managed to obtain the premiere showing rights from the movie’s distributor, the

⁵⁷ “die Vorgänge auf der Leinwand wirksam unterstützt”; *Neues Wiener Journal*, September 11, 1913, 6.

⁵⁸ “nicht ... das Arrangement eines Girardi-Schlager-Potpourri ... , sondern ... eine regelrechte Neukomposition, in die das Mosaik der unvergänglichsten Girardi-Operettenwerke eingestückt erscheint. Das bedurfte also nicht nur eines gründlichen Musikkenner allein, sondern auch eines Komponisten mit geschmackvollen Ideen.” “Die Musik zum Girardi-Film,” *Kinematographische Rundschau* “Girardi-Nummer” special (1913): 20.

⁵⁹ “eine regelrechte Operette”; “Die Musik, die zirka zwei Stunden dauert, würde reichlich genügen, zwei moderne Operetten zu füllen.” “Der Girardifilm als ein Operettenfilm,” *Kinematographische Rundschau* 279 (1913): 16.

⁶⁰ “photographisch fast vollständig einwandfrei”; “technischen Tricks”; “Generalproben im Kino,” *Filmwoche* 27 (1913): 12 and *Kinematographische Rundschau* 288 (1913): 111–112, respectively.

⁶¹ “Eine Kinosenation: Girardi im Film,” *Deutsches Volksblatt*, September 11, 1913, 8. As Riemer has pointed out, however, the succession of shots does not always make sense visually. Riemer, “Literature and Austrian Cinema Culture,” 189. Riemer discusses the novel filming techniques of the Girardi film in some detail.

⁶² Compare with Günter Krenn, “Der bewegte Mensch: Sascha Kolowrat,” in Bono, Caneppele, and Krenn, *Elektrische Schatten*, 40.

⁶³ “In dem überfüllten Saale war alles anwesend, was bei Sensationspremierens zu sehen ist.” “Eine Kinosenation: Girardi im Film,” *Deutsches Volksblatt*, September 11, 1913, 8.

⁶⁴ “das neuerlich den Beweis erbrachte, daß das Interesse für das Filmtheater alle Kreise erfaßt hat.” “Der Girardifilm,” *Kinematographische Rundschau* 288 (1913): 111–112.

⁶⁵ “Jedermann wird jetzt diesen wienerischsten aller Schauspieler ... bewundern wollen.” “Marine-Kino der Adria-Ausstellung,” *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 15, 1913, 3.

Österreichisch-Ungarische Kinoindustrie. Keeping the tickets scarce and much sought after helped to make the movie even more of an object of desire. Moreover, the four premiering theaters were not exactly average cinemas: the Kruger-Kino was a *Nobelkino* (classy movie theater), known for its choice program and attended by the upper classes, aristocrats, even members of the royal family.⁶⁶ The Imperial-Kino also seems to have targeted the upper ten thousand considering that it presented itself as “the most elegant and exclusive cinema of the imperial residence” in its advertisements for the film.⁶⁷ The Sofiensäle had been a well-established venue famous for its elite balls, its carnival, sports and operetta events as well as its waltz concerts since the 1860s.⁶⁸ Finally, the Marine-Kino was part of the season-long Adriatic exposition in the Prater amusement park, a spectacle that—as the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* pointed out—“would be hard to trump in its attractions.”⁶⁹ Clearly, the film was expected to be an unusual crowd puller.⁷⁰ But although the distribution tactics and the resulting advertising advanced the reputation of *Der Millionenonkel* as a prestigious venture, the ticket prices were within the normal range for Viennese cinemas at the time and the film therefore theoretically accessible to large parts of the Viennese population.⁷¹

The second major concern in reviews of *Der Millionenonkel*, apart from the movie’s artistic merit and prestige, was its value as “a theater-historical document.”⁷² For one thing, it was—in Hubert Marischka’s words—“an archival monument ... of the extensive oeuvre of our brilliant Alexander Girardi.”⁷³ As Siegfried Kracauer observed, in its early days stage people often welcomed film not as a medium in itself but primarily as “a means of emphasizing the art of the actor,” and “as a wonderful opportunity to popularize theatrical productions.”⁷⁴ Indeed, Marischka himself attested later that Girardi had been incapable of grasping the different laws

⁶⁶ Verein artminutes, “Kruger Kino,” KinTheTop,

http://www.kintheworld.at/forschung/kintheworld_1_KrugerKinoDetail01.html (accessed October 4, 2011).

⁶⁷ “dieser elegantesten und vornehmsten Kinobühne der Residenz”; *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 12, 1913, 4.

⁶⁸ Christoph Römer, *Die Sofiensäle: Eine Wiener Institution* (Erfurt: Sutton, 2004), 55–57.

⁶⁹ “an Zugkraft nur schwerlich zu überbieten sein dürfte”; *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 10, 1913, 4.

⁷⁰ Even the Marinekino secured the first-run screening rights “with great pecuniary sacrifices.” (“mit großen pekuniären Opfern”; *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 10, 1913, 4.) Later advertisements of several other cinemas imply the difficulties especially the smaller venues faced in screening the film. The commercial of the Baumgartner Grand Bio-Theater, for example, noted—several weeks in advance—the “great expense” of securing the exclusive screening rights in the 13th, 14th and 15th district, where *Der Millionenonkel* was to run “with Robert Stolz’s music” for “an entire week” in late October. (*Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, October 19, 1913, 26.) None of these press announcements specified whether such cinemas were able to hire an entire orchestra or only a pianist.

⁷¹ In the Sofiensaal Kinetophon tickets for *Der Millionenonkel* cost between 60 hellers and 3 crowns and the Marine-Kino offered combined tickets and entrance to the exhibits starting at 1.40 crowns. (*Neues Wiener Journal*, September 18, 1913, 15.) There are, to my knowledge, still no studies of early Viennese cinema audiences. In an email correspondence, however, film journalist Dr. Herbert Wilfinger kindly emailed me with information of ticket prices for other films screened in Vienna in 1913, all of which were between 40 hellers and 3 crowns for adults, depending on the kind of cinema and seat.

⁷² “ein theatergeschichtliches Dokument”; “Eine Kinosenation: Girardi im Film,” *Deutsches Volksblatt*, September 11, 1913, 8.

⁷³ “ein archivarisches Denkmal ... von dem umfangreichen Schaffen unseres genialen Alexander Girardi”; Hubert Marischka, “Wie der Girardifilm zustande kam,” *Kinematographische Rundschau* 270 (1913): 27.

⁷⁴ Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947), 18.

of the cinematic medium,⁷⁵ and recent writers on the film have noted that Girardi's "accomplished" performance exhibits "the best of stage technique."⁷⁶ Contemporary commentators, on the other hand, repeatedly pointed out how well suited Girardi was as a film actor because of his "marvelously impassioned facial expressions with his amazing expressiveness."⁷⁷ "One did not miss the word at all," reviewers commented,⁷⁸ because of these gestures as well as Stolz's accompanying music, which "refreshed the old memories" and "enliven[ed] the excellent film greatly."⁷⁹ The *Kinematographische Rundschau* explained further:

Alexander Girardi ... can only be understood entirely to the sounds of fetching Viennese waltzes of our renowned operetta composers; what Girardi's eloquent mimic expressions cannot say by themselves, the lively music supplies, without which we cannot imagine our Girardi at all.⁸⁰

But *Der Millionenonkel* was not only noted for recording Girardi's acting for posterity; reviewers also praised the film for capturing Viennese characters and "Viennese locales in action," for example through the "felicitous framing of the Viennese street appearance."⁸¹ Such comments point to a much larger interest in archiving the city at the time, a direct result of Vienna's modernization. Since the 1880s, the acceleration of life through technical advancements, the compression of the urban space, and the diversification of lifestyles had made the urban system much more complex.⁸² Between 1850 and 1900 half the houses that had distinguished Vienna's cityscape had been demolished,⁸³ and the city's population almost doubled to more than two million between 1880 and 1910.⁸⁴ These radical changes caused a

⁷⁵ Hubert Marischka, "Als ich mit Girardi filmte," *Wiener Journal*, May 26, 1929, 19.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Riemer, "Literature and Austrian Cinema Culture," 189.

⁷⁷ "sein wunderbar beseeltes Mienenspiel mit seiner staunenswerten Ausdrucksfähigkeit"; "'Girardinetto': Zu unserem heutigen Titelbild," *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, September 12, 1913, 10.

⁷⁸ "so dass man das Wort gar nicht vermisst"; "Eine Kinosenation: Girardi im Film," *Deutsches Volksblatt*, September 11, 1913, 8.

⁷⁹ "die alten Erinnerungen auffrischten"; Girardi, *Das Schicksal setzt den Hobel an*, 307–308; "belebt außerordentlich den famosen Film"; "Der Girardi-Film," *Kinematographische Rundschau* 282 (1913): 4.

⁸⁰ "Alexander Girardi ... ist unter den Klängen der fescen Wiener Walzer unserer bekannten Operettenkomponisten erst ganz und voll zu verstehen und was das beredte mimische Spiel Girardis allein nicht sagen kann, ergänzt eben die flotte Musik, ohne die wir unseren Girardi uns gar nicht denken können." "Der Girardi-Film," *Kinematographische Rundschau* 282 (1913): 4.

⁸¹ "Wiener Schauplätze in der Handlung"; "Eine Kinosenation: Girardi im Film," *Deutsches Volksblatt*, September 11, 1913, 8; "trefflich dargestellte[] Umrahmung des Wiener Straßenbildes"; "Girardi im Film," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*; quoted in *Kinematographische Rundschau* 288 (1913): 74.

⁸² Monika Sommer, "Imaging Vienna—Das Surplus von Wien: Stadterzählungen zwischen Ikonisierung und Pluralisierung," in *Imaging Vienna: Innensichten, Außensichten, Stadterzählungen*, ed. Monika Sommer, Marcus Gräser, and Ursula Prutsch (Vienna: Turia & Kant, 2006), 10.

⁸³ Elisabeth Großegger, "Das 'phantastische Bild eines alten Wien [...], das nie existiert hat und doch die eigentliche Wahrheit wäre': Die Konstruktion von Alt-Wien auf der Bühne," in *Mythos Alt-Wien: Spannungsfelder urbaner Identitäten*, ed. Monika Sommer and Heidemarie Uhl (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2009), 99.

⁸⁴ Heinz Fassmann, "Einwanderung, Auswanderung und Binnenwanderung in Österreich um 1910," in *Demographische Informationen 1990/91*, ed. Institut für Demographie an der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1991), 92–101; cited in

sense of foreign infiltration and triggered a yearning for stability and the familiar.⁸⁵ The longing for the “good old days,” especially among the skeptical petty bourgeoisie, was cleverly used by Vienna’s populist mayor Karl Lueger, who united the disparate social fractions of the Viennese bourgeoisie through a politics of clericalism and anti-Semitism. Lueger helped to foster “Alt Wien,” a city image in the form of a pre-industrial middle-class community founded on heritage, paternalism, authority, and a Christian-catholic value system.⁸⁶ This superimposition of an idealized image of the imperial city on the modern metropolis was unique and distinguished Vienna from other western megacities.⁸⁷

The interest in the preservation of the old city and its traditions went even further: starting in the 1870s, historical societies were founded and city museums established,⁸⁸ and around 1910 liberal *Heimatschutz* (homeland security) became an active force, addressing the immediate losses due to modernization without objecting to it *en large*.⁸⁹ The historic museum became a hub for “urban researchers” and documentarians who depicted “vanishing Vienna,” supplementing maps and location drawings of individual buildings with depictions and even short films of typical Viennese characters that could be found on the city’s streets, so-called “Wiener Typen.”⁹⁰

Photography was the preferred medium of such archiving attempts, as it seemed to capture an otherwise unattainable “reality”: as author Friedrich Schlögl put it, “the photographer now takes the figures ‘from the street,’ places them in front of his impartial instrument and the characters appear on paper in unquestionable authenticity, yes, if desired, in unretouched truth.”⁹¹ Amateur photographer Emanuel Wähner, for example—now considered one of the foremost documentarians of his time—produced a series of snapshots of Viennese performing everyday duties as early as the 1880s.⁹² Similarly, Emil Mayer’s series “Wiener Typen und Straßenbilder” (1908/1911) captures his wide range of subjects with a great immediacy.⁹³

Rüdiger Wischenbart, “Vienna 1910: A City without Viennese,” in *Vienna: The World of Yesterday, 1889–1914*, ed. Stephen Eric Bronner and F. Peter Wagner (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1997), 36–37.

⁸⁵ Wischenbart, “Vienna 1910,” 41.

⁸⁶ Wolfgang Maderthaner, “Transformationen der Wien-Narrative im 20. Jahrhundert,” in Sommer, Gräser, and Prutsch, *Imaging Vienna*, 23.

⁸⁷ Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, 139–140.

⁸⁸ Monika Sommer, “Stadt im Museum: Wien und die Musealisierung in der Gründerzeit,” in Kos and Rapp, *Alt-Wien*, 78.

⁸⁹ Sándor Békési, “Heimatschutz und Großstadt: Zu Tradition und Moderne in Wien um 1900,” *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 20 (2009): 99.

⁹⁰ Sommer, “Stadt im Museum,” 82–83. Extant films include Österreichisch-Ungarische Kinoindustrie, “Typen und Szenen aus dem Wiener Volksleben” (1911), *Österreich Box 1: Das Ende der Donaumonarchie*, DVD, ed. Hannes Leidinger, Verena Moritz, and Karin Moser (Vienna: Filmarchiv Austria, 2010).

⁹¹ “So nimmt nun der Photograph die Gestalten ‘von der Straße’, stellt sie vor sein unparteiisches Instrument und die Figuren stehen in unzweifelhafter Echtheit, ja nach Verlangen in unretouchirter Wahrheit auf dem Papiere.” Friedrich Schlögl, “Von alten und neuen Sachen, Figuren und Dingen,” in *Wienerisches: Kleine Kulturbilder aus dem Volksleben der alten Kaiserstadt an der Donau* (Vienna: A. Hartleben, 1882), 351.

⁹² Reingard Witzmann, *Wiener Typen: Historische Alltagsfotos aus dem 19. Jahrhundert* (Dortmund: Harenberg, 1982), 90–91.

⁹³ Kos and Rapp, *Alt-Wien*, 478.

Others chose to paint a more idealized picture of Viennese street life. Otto Schmidt's two portrait series entitled "Wiener Typen" (1873/1875 and 1880), for example, seem theatrical and staged, several characters wear wigs or clothes made from the same patterned fabric, and even some of the faces appear more than once. Moreover, Schmidt portrayed his subjects in front of painted street and backyard scenes, although photographic techniques would already have allowed for on-site shootings. Clearly, not documentary faithfulness but the refinement of the "type" and the conveyance of a particular atmosphere were Schmidt's main objective.⁹⁴

Idealized Wiener Typen were also depicted as statues or watercolors,⁹⁵ and together with the vanishing old cityscape became an important topic in Viennese publications. Many leading newspapers and magazines at the end of the Habsburg era had a special column that dealt with "Wiener Volksleben" and Wiener Typen.⁹⁶ As Christian Rapp has pointed out, the feuilleton format was particularly popular for such contributions, as it allowed for an inconspicuous mixing of description and interpretation, which left open what was real and what was imagined at the same time as evoking the comforting, nostalgic image of a small-town community in the midst of the metropolis.⁹⁷ Not least, the usual presentation of Wiener Typen in a series helped to suggest a harmonious community, in spite of their diverse social and economic backgrounds.⁹⁸

Operetta did not lag behind with regard to such nostalgic trends: while pithy local characters had already featured prominently in the Biedermeier stage works of Johann Nestroy and Ferdinand Raimund among others, more standardized "types" developed toward the end of the nineteenth century. Adolf Müller's Strauss pasticcio *Wiener Blut* (1899)—featuring a *Ringelspielbesitzer* (owner of a merry-go-round), a *Fiaker* (horse carriage coachman), a *Deutschmeister* (soldier of the royal infantry), and a folksinger⁹⁹—started a whole series of "Alt Wien" operettas with comfortingly familiar, older Viennese music and various Wiener Typen.¹⁰⁰ As in Otto Schmidt's photographs, not real Viennese people acted as models for these operetta characters, but certain costume ensembles, accessories, local expressions and idioms.

⁹⁴ Christian Rapp, "Wiener Typen: Zu Erfindung und Karriere eines Soziotops," in Kos and Rapp, *Alt-Wien*, 147 and Witzmann, *Wiener Typen*, 88. Other examples of this phenomenon are the photos of renowned photographer Charles Scolik, who pasted "Wiener Typen"—played by popular actors—into his photographs of street views to make them come alive. Franz Höllriegl, *Wiener Cicerone: Illustrierter Fremden-Führer durch Wien und Umgebung* (Vienna: Dorn, 1903), 109 mentioned by Rapp, "Wiener Typen," 147.

⁹⁵ "Raum 10: Wiener Typen," in Kos and Rapp, *Alt-Wien*, 475–490.

⁹⁶ Witzmann, *Wiener Typen*, 89 and Arnold Klaffenböck, "'In jedem Treppenwinkel blüht hier ein Roman': Diskurse von Alt-Neu-Wien in der Unterhaltungsliteratur, 1860–1938," in Sommer and Uhl, *Mythos Alt-Wien*, 124.

⁹⁷ Rapp, "Wiener Typen," 142.

⁹⁸ Bernhard Tschofen, "'... besser als Disney-Lands!' Reflexionen zur Ausstellung 'Alt-Wien: Die Stadt, die niemals war,'" in Sommer and Uhl, *Mythos Alt-Wien*, 20.

⁹⁹ Christian Glanz, "Himmelblaue Zeit: Alt-Wien in der Operette," in Kos and Rapp, *Alt-Wien*, 230–231.

¹⁰⁰ Other Alt Wien operettas include the Singspiel *Alt-Wien* (1911), which was based on music by Joseph Lanner (1801–1843) and featured various street vendors including a female gingerbread baker, as well as Leo Fall's *Brüderlein fein* (1909), which centered on the historical figure of the Biedermeier Kapellmeister and composer Joseph Drechsler (1782–1852) and some of his popular melodies; the "Biedermeier-operetta" *Die tolle Therese* (1913) was based on Johann Strauss Sr.'s music, and *Wiener Kinder* (1917) used Johann Schrammel's. Linhardt observed that the number of operettas with Viennese subject matter increased ten times from the last forty years of the nineteenth century to the prewar years of the twentieth century. Linhardt, "Der Wiener Stoff," 218.

It is remarkable, in this respect, that for advertising purposes Vienna's private operetta venues circulated collectable series of their stars' role portraits that looked strikingly similar to those of "real" Wiener Typen.¹⁰¹ As Barbara Lesák has pointed out, Ludwig Gutmann, the photographer for most operetta theaters until the end of the Great War, typically used a rather old-fashioned and conventional style, placing his subjects in front of painted or neutral backgrounds in his studio, parallel to the camera, and in poses rooted in nineteenth-century traditions.¹⁰²



Figure 0.3: Alexander Girardi as Adam in Zeller's operetta *Der Vogelhändler* (ca. 1890; left) and a *Wäschermädel* (laundress) from Otto Schmidt's series "Wiener Typen" (ca. 1886; right).¹⁰³ An operetta titled *Das Wäschermädel* was premiered at the Theater in der Josefstadt in 1905.

The line between real and imagined was even more blurred in the folksinger business where remarkable interchanges took place: the horse carriage man of crown prince Rudolf, Josef Bratfisch, for example, eventually became a popular folksinger while stage celebrities

¹⁰¹ Gerald Piffel, "Seine Popularität hat alle Rekords geschlagen," in Arnbom, Clarke, and Trabitsch, *Welt der Operette*, 118.

¹⁰² Barbara Lesák, "Heroisches Bildungstheater: Sezessionstendenzen und musikalischer Amüsierbetrieb in Wien," in Lesák and Piffel, *Von der Pose zum Ausdruck*, 47–48.

¹⁰³ Photos courtesy of Österreichisches Theatrumuseum, ÖTM FS_PP100977 (left) and Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ÖNB/Wien, Pk 3304,1 (right).

such as Girardi often acted as folk characters—most famously in Gustav Pick’s “Fiakerlied” (1885), which is also featured in *Der Millionenonkel*.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, anecdotes report how “real” Girardi appeared acting out his role, and when his horses slipped during the filming, the professional horse carriage drivers on site praised him for his professional and “courageous” reaction.¹⁰⁵ Girardi’s interpretation of their profession was so successful that the *Fiakers’* association even presented the actor with a “silver horsewhip” in 1915.¹⁰⁶

If one can believe contemporary author and critic Felix Salten, Girardi was in fact a pivotal figure connecting the “real” and the idealized Vienna. In a fictional letter to a friend in Berlin, Salten observed in 1910:

When he speaks we hear from his voice the elemental cries of the folk, ... and when the people speak of Girardi, they immediately bring up all the Wiener Typen as comparison; the Fiaker, the Imperial and Royal soldier, the waiter, the sports baron. But the Vienneseness that he presents is at its heart not the real one, but it is a Vienneseness that he himself has invented. ... Ever since he has come up with it, it is being imitated. People have learnt from him in the theater how to be Viennese and they have copied it afterwards. Hundreds ... of his spontaneous ideas of Vienneseness now walk around ... alive. ... Lately, every other young man one met on the street, every horse carriage driver, every mailman, every civic booster was a Girardi role. ... One could say that much of what Girardi does is Vienna, but much of what Vienna does is Girardi.¹⁰⁷

Against this background, *Der Millionenonkel* can be seen as more than just a document preserving a part of Viennese theater history: cleverly using the new medium, the film’s makers offered yet another series of Wiener Typen, for each of Girardi’s roles was such a character. Not only the liberal Heimatschützer would see their archiving efforts supported in this film, then; the wide circles of bourgeois, staunchly nationalist Christian Socials following Lueger could also welcome this production as showing the “most innate Vienneseness, an own-brand, a favorite dish of the Viennese.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Kos and Rapp, *Alt-Wien*, 485–486.

¹⁰⁵ “Girardi bei der Film-Aufnahme,” *Kinematographische Rundschau* “Girardi- Nummer” special (1913): 19.

¹⁰⁶ “Silberne Peitsche”; Erwin Wratschko, “Girardi im Film,” *Wiener Zeitung*, Dezember 3, 1950 and Holzer, *Die Wiener Vorstadtbühnen*, 593.

¹⁰⁷ “Wenn er spricht, hören wir aus seiner Stimme die Urlaute des Volkes, ... und wenn die Leute von Girardi reden, schleppen sie auch sofort alle Wiener Typen zum Vergleich heran; den Fiaker, den Deutschmeister, den Zahlkellner, den Sportbaron. Aber das Wienertum, das er gibt, ist im Grunde nicht das wirkliche, sondern es ist ein Wienertum, das er ganz allein erfunden hat. ... Seit er esersonnen hat, wird es nachgeahmt. Die Leute haben im Theater von ihm gelernt, wie man wienerisch ist und haben es nachher kopiert. Hunderte ... seiner plötzlichen Ideen vom Wienertum laufen jetzt ... lebendig umher. ... Zuletzt war denn auch jeder zweite junge Herr, den man auf der Straße traf, jeder Fiakerkutscher, jeder Briefbote, jeder Spießbürger eine Girardi-Rolle. ... Man könnte sagen, vieles, was Girardi tut, ist Wien, aber vieles, was Wien tut, ist Girardi.” Felix Salten, *Das österreichische Antlitz* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1909), 147–150; also partly quoted in Rapp, “Wiener Typen,” 148.

¹⁰⁸ “ureigenstes Wienertum, eine Hausmarke, ein Leibgericht des Wieners”; “Der Girardifilm,” *Kinematographische Rundschau* 288 (1913): 111–112.

While the influence of operetta on the image of cinema was evidently a major concern of this film project and its reception, the impact of the new medium on the stage genre is less apparent. "Operetta" at the time was by no means well defined: as an art form connected to all members of society who could afford any theater attendance, it had a constantly changing reference framework. During the late nineteenth century operetta had been widely associated with Vienna's supposed degeneration as a result of urbanization. German nationalists, especially, saw operetta as French and "frivolous" amusement, which threatened to oust the older, "authentic" Viennese folk play.¹⁰⁹ To counter this development, conservative citizens' initiatives supported the foundation of several theaters (among them the Kaiser-Jubiläums-Stadttheater, the Raimund Theater, and the Bürgertheater) specifically for performances of traditional works.¹¹⁰ But the advocated folk play programs could not compete with the audience appeal of operetta, which—in its many different guises—increasingly dominated the repertory of most Viennese theaters during the first decade of the twentieth century.¹¹¹

As Marion Linhardt has shown in admirable detail, Viennese operetta indeed changed significantly around the turn of the century: as a direct response to Vienna's critically perceived metropolization, one can observe, in Linhardt's words, "processes of internationalization, mediatization, and potentiation" (meaning both acceleration and amplification) in Viennese musical theater, which—together with the quick succession of deaths of Strauss, Suppé, and Millöcker—explain why the notion of an operetta "crisis" was first evoked around 1900. From now on nineteenth-century operettas were commonly received as the fruits of a "golden age," the compositional and dramatic quality of contemporary operetta production as debased—an interpretation that is uncritically reflected even in many recent publications about the art form.¹¹²

Linhardt distinguishes between two main types of operetta that crystallized around this time, the operetta of the metropolis and the operetta of the imperial city Vienna:

While the operetta of the metropolis in its themes and subject matters, its dramaturgic strategies, its character types, and its musical means adopted the most up-to-date tendencies, which connected it with an internationally tinted and thus internationally marketable atmosphere of glamor, its complement, the operetta of the imperial city, drew its specific profile from strong local links, from reference to traditional social patterns, and from an aesthetic basis in a field of theatrical precedents that reached far into the past.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, 148.

¹¹⁰ Silvia Ehalt, "Wiener Theater um 1900," in *Glücklich ist, wer vergißt...? Das andere Wien um 1900*, ed. Hubert Ch. Ehalt, Gernot Heiss, and Hannes Stekl (Vienna: Böhlau, 1986), 341 and 336–337; also Roman Horak and Siegfried Mattl, "'Musik liegt in der Luft...': Die 'Weltkulturhauptstadt Wien': Eine Konstruktion," in *Stadt.Masse.Raum: Wiener Studien zur Archäologie des Popularen*, ed. Roman Horak, Wolfgang Maderthaler, Siegfried Mattl, and Lutz Musner (Vienna: Turia & Kant, 2001), 171.

¹¹¹ Yates, *Theatre in Vienna*, 196–197.

¹¹² "Prozesse der Internationalisierung, der Medialisierung und der Potenzierung"; Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, 124–125.

¹¹³ "Während die Operette der Metropole in ihren Themen und Stoffen, ihren dramaturgischen Strategien, der Figurenzeichnung und den musikalischen Mitteln aktuellste Tendenzen aufgriff, die sie mit einer international gefärbten und damit international vermarktbareren Atmosphäre des Glamours verknüpfte, gewann ihr

While the “imperial,” “Alt Wien” operettas primarily catered for conservative Viennese middle-class audiences skeptical of the modernizations of city life, the “cosmopolitan” works played in vaudeville venues as well as glamorous theaters such as the Theater an der Wien, Carltheater, and Johann-Strauß-Theater became successful further afield.¹¹⁴ Indeed, after the staggering world success of *Die lustige Witwe* in 1905, the dominance of Viennese works on the international operetta market was unrivaled. American, French, and British producers scrambled for the rights of any halfway decent Viennese work and the catchiest waltzes reappeared in palm-court orchestras, coffee houses, dance halls and street corners all over Europe and the New World. Particularly Lehár’s, Kálmán’s, Leo Fall’s, and Oscar Straus’s works were consistently popular abroad.¹¹⁵

In Linhardt’s discussion of the contrasting concepts of “cosmopolitan” and “imperial” operetta each style is encapsulated by a representative actor, the “dancing Jew” Louis Treumann and Alexander Girardi, respectively.¹¹⁶ Central to Linhardt’s observations are Karl Kraus’s reactions to those stars: while Treumann was for him only a salesman who—without creative talent or the comic potential so important in Vienna’s theater tradition—relied solely on “social polish,” smooth conversation, and dancing,¹¹⁷ Girardi’s style as well as his explorations of older spoken works made him an “authentic” *Lustige Person* (comedian), rooted in folklore, an icon of traditional Viennese art.¹¹⁸ Kraus chose to ignore the fact that Girardi, like Treumann, successfully appeared in many newer (though mostly “imperial”), often sentimental operettas and through his renditions of typical Viennese characters played a significant part in the “dumplingification” of Viennese operetta and “its degeneration into the folksinger-like” that the author criticized so sharply.¹¹⁹ He disconnected Girardi from the despised contemporary operetta and made him a representative solely of the old repertory apparently threatened by it.¹²⁰

In *Der Millionenonkel*, Girardi presents an image of operetta that is remarkably different from Kraus’s: here, the star’s roles in contemporary operettas (*Pufferl*, *Zigeunerprimas*, *Bruder Straubinger*, etc.) and his folk-singing numbers are acknowledged as much as his earlier and spoken characters. The prominent involvement of up-and-coming tenor Hubert Marischka, whose “elegant” appearances as “bon vivant” in fashionable dance operettas increasingly

Komplement, die Operette der Residenzstadt, ein spezifisches Profil aus der starken lokalen Bindung, aus der Bezugnahme auf tradierte gesellschaftliche Muster und aus der ästhetischen Fundierung in einem weit in die Vergangenheit reichenden Feld theatralischer Erscheinungen.” Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, 239.

¹¹⁴ Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, 95 and 108; also Linhardt, “Der Wiener Stoff,” 213–230.

¹¹⁵ Traubner, *Operetta*, 275.

¹¹⁶ Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, 149.

¹¹⁷ “gesellschaftlichen Schliff”; Karl Kraus, “Grimassen über Kultur und Bühne,” *Die Fackel* 270–271 (1909), Projekt Gutenberg, <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/4687/42> (accessed March 20, 2013).

¹¹⁸ Kraus, “Grimassen über Kultur und Bühne”; see also Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, 170–177.

Remarkably, Salten argued the opposite, that with the “wit, ... caricatural acuity, [and] hard irony” of his couplets’ texts, Girardi went against the “mellow soul” of Johann Strauss’s waltzes, to which they were often set. “All these texts are forced unto the waltzes, they go against nature,” Salten wrote, adding that Girardi was “lacking a basic Viennese element: the inner dancing.” (“Witz, ... karikaturistischen Schärfe, ... harten Ironie”; “der weichen Seele”; “Alle diese Texte sind den Walzern aufgezwungen, gehen ihnen gegen die Natur”; “ein wienerisches Grundelement ... : das innere Tanzen”;) Felix Salten, “Girardi-Kainz,” in *Das österreichische Antlitz*, 149 and 150.

¹¹⁹ “Verknödellung”; “Ihre Entartung ins Volkssängerische”; Kraus, “Grimassen über Kultur und Bühne.”

¹²⁰ Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, 175–176.

established him as Treumann's rival,¹²¹ also suggests the promotion of a more inclusive picture of operetta in the film, whose rather "cosmopolitan" plot was based on an eponymous stage work by Adolph Müller jr. (1892). Furthermore, reviews show that Stolz even incorporated musical hits from recent dance operettas without Girardi, which, because of their international familiarity, provided a witty commentary on the screen action¹²² and in Vienna were "always met with knowing laughter."¹²³

Put on a par with classic operettas and folk pieces, then, the cultural value of newer works was no longer questioned in *Der Millionenonkel*. Indeed, the wide perception that the artistic respectability of Girardi's stage characters would help to elevate the film genre also contributed to establishing "operetta" all the more firmly as an essentially Viennese cultural asset. By including modern ("cosmopolitan" and "imperial") operettas in a presentation of Girardi highlights, their canonic "legitimacy" was suggested. At the same time, reviews show that *Der Millionenonkel* was also welcomed as an opportunity—made possible only through the wordless new medium film—to present more locally rooted works (Linhardt's "imperial" operettas) and the character of the city to an international audience. The *Kinematographische Rundschau* proudly reported:

And so Girardi, whose name is treasured and valued wherever there are theaters and theater people, will now regale with his delicious humor in a live moving picture all those millions, who otherwise would never have the opportunity to become acquainted with Girardi in his very own, self-created art. In his newest creation ... Alexander Girardi ... will win his international audience, to whom he will speak in the Volapük of film and tell them, why the people of Vienna and Berlin and all others who know Girardi's art name him as one of the best of the German stages.¹²⁴

These brief explorations have portrayed *Der Millionenonkel* as a conscious effort to address the latest trends in Viennese culture and politics, as well as current concerns, in order to promote

¹²¹ Around the time when *Der Millionenonkel* played in Vienna's cinemas, for example, Marischka starred as the principal in Lehár's *Die ideale Gattin* at the glamorous Theater an der Wien. "Franz Lehár's neue Operette 'Die ideale Gattin,'" *Neue Freie Presse*, October 12, 1913; see also Traubner, *Operetta*, 254.

¹²² "Eine Kinosensation: Girardi im Film," *Deutsches Volksblatt*, September 11, 1913, 8. For example, when count Waldersberg (Marischka's character) follows his love interest across the city, the composer introduced the melody of the smash hit "Man steigt nach" ("one follows," but also "one philanders") from Leo Fall's 1908 operetta *Die geschiedene Frau*, in which Marischka had played the leading role. "Aus der Kinowelt," *Grazer Tagblatt*, February 6, 1914, 6.

¹²³ "immer mit verständnisvollem Gelächter aufgenommen"; "Generalproben im Kino," *Filmwoche* 27 (1913): 12.

¹²⁴ "Und so wird Girardi, dessen Namen man überall dort, wo es Theater und Theaterleute gibt, wohl zu schätzen und zu werten weiss, nun im lebenden Filmbilde einmal alle die Millionen mit seinem köstlichen Humor ergötzen, die sonst niemals Girardi in seiner ureigensten und selbstgeschaffenen Kunst kennen zu lernen Gelegenheit hätten. Alexander Girardi ... wird ... in seiner neuesten Schöpfung ... sein internationales Publikum gewinnen, zu dem er im Volapük des Films sprechen und ihm einmal sagen wird, warum die Wiener und Berliner und alle anderen, die Girardis Kunst kennen, ihren Girardi als einen der besten deutscher Bühnen nennen."

Kinematographische Rundschau "Girardi-Nummer" special (1913): 6. Volapük is a constructed language (like Esperanto) that flourished in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century.

both the artistic possibilities and the respectability of (Austrian) film as well as a wholesome image of Viennese operetta. Speaking to conservative theater fans and staunch patriots as well as to the fashion-conscious high society and curious workers who could not afford to see Girardi in the theater, the film proved a hit in Vienna, and, free from language barriers, it also promised successes further afield, promoting Vienna's star Girardi as well as the city's leading musical offering, operetta, a popular export product on the international music market.¹²⁵

And yet *Der Millionenonkel* would remain the only successful movie of its kind. Plans to produce a second film with Girardi fell through,¹²⁶ and an attempt by Kolowrat's rival company Wiener Kunstfilm to follow suit misfired only two months after the *Millionenonkel* was released. Like the Girardi vehicle, the long and expensive "Großfilm" *Johann Strauss an der schönen, blauen Donau* combined operetta scenes (performed by stage celebrities such as the original Merry Widow Mizzi Günther and operetta comedians Hansi Niese, Louise Kartousch, and Richard Waldemar) with optic sensations such as magnificent ball scenes, historic costumes, and decorations as well as with original music by Alfred Grünwald and real-life documentary features, molded into a loose biographical narrative about Johann Strauss jr., the father figure of Viennese operetta. But in spite of the efforts of cinema advocates to stress the prestigious nature of this first biopic, the film flopped: as the press concluded, the waltz king's life lacked dramatic interest so that an "unambitious love story" had to be drawn on, which, full of unmotivated dream scenes and anachronisms, lacked all "historical correctness."¹²⁷ Instead, as film scholar Robert Dassanowsky observed, literary-based social dramas on crime and problems of the urban working class dominated Austrian cinema until World War I.¹²⁸

Only during the bleak war years did the elegant world of operetta become an increasingly welcome refuge.¹²⁹ But these later operetta films were different from the Girardi movie: typically straightforward adaptations of stage works, without a star focus, without original music, and without the same agendas.¹³⁰ Indeed, those agendas were no longer necessary: by the time the Austrian Republic was proclaimed, film was firmly established even within high society,¹³¹ and operetta had become an essential element in both the international image and self-conception of Vienna—an integral part of Viennese identity.¹³²

¹²⁵ Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema*, 19. Several reviews note the film's potential to promote Viennese operetta and Girardi internationally. See, for example, *Kinematographische Rundschau* "Girardi-Nummer" special (1913): 6 and "'Girardinetto': Zu unserem heutigen Titelbild," *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, September 12, 1913, 10.

¹²⁶ "Girardi Film-Gesellschaft" to Girardi, June 2, 1913; Österreichisches Theatermuseum, Hubert Marischka Papers.

¹²⁷ "anspruchlose Liebesgeschichte"; "historische Richtigkeit"; *Neue Freie Presse*, November 19, 1913, 10; *Deutsches Volksblatt*, November 19, 1913, 9; also "Ein mißglückter Johann Strauss-Film," *Rumburger Zeitung*, November 22, 1913; all cited in Anton Thaller, *Österreichische Filmografie 1: Spielfilme, 1906–1918* (Vienna: Filmarchiv Austria, 2010), 118 and 120.

¹²⁸ Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema*, 13 and 23–24. Indeed, 200 of the 350 movies made in Austria until 1918 were nonfiction films. See Paolo Caneppele, "Austro-Hungary," in Abel, *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, 52.

¹²⁹ Rabenalt, "Metarmorphosen der Operette," 96.

¹³⁰ For example, Ziehrer's *Der Landstreicher* (1916) and Lehár's *Wo die Lerche singt* (1918); the latter premiered the same year as the eponymous stage work.

¹³¹ Dassanowsky, *Austrian Cinema*, 24.

¹³² Linhardt, *Residenzstadt und Metropole*, 53.

CHAPTER 1: THE FIRST REPUBLIC

“Spiel’, My Jazzband, Spiel!’”

For you, for you
Ist alles was ich tu’!

.... Neon signs appear, headlights flood the stage and the setting changes abruptly as in the movies: from Hershman’s office one directly enters the colorful carnival hustle and bustle in Nice, which admittedly is theater within the theater. Sound film recordings are being made, advertising girls run across the auditorium, an advertising revue passes on stage, one idea chases the next, loudspeakers bellow from every nook and cranny and, even on the street, escort the visitor part of his way:

For you, for you
Ist alles was ich tu’.¹³³

The premiere of Bruno Granichstaedten’s operetta *Reklame!* on February 28, 1930, shook the Theater an der Wien with storms of enthusiasm and filled Vienna’s papers with panegyrics. “If there was still doubt whether Vienna keeps the upper hand in the battle about the leadership of operetta, then this great evening has confirmed that Vienna leads by a far margin,” exclaimed the *Welt am Morgen*,¹³⁴ while other dailies offered long lists of superlatives and details of the production’s “American-gigantic” proportions.¹³⁵ Masses of performers and technical workers as well as five hundred hours of rehearsal had been necessary to make this production work, claimed *Das kleine Volksblatt*.¹³⁶ Even in terms of decor, director Hubert Marischka had managed to outdo all his glamorous earlier productions. The *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* summarized: “beautiful, opulent, colorful. ... Marischka has reached the limit here.”¹³⁷

¹³³ “For you, for you / Ist alles was ich tu’! / ... Reklamelichter tauchten auf, Scheinwerfer überfluten die Bühne und wie im Film wechselt unvermittelt der Schauplatz: Aus Hershmanns Bureau kommt man unmittelbar in das bunte Karnevalstreiben in Nizza, das freilich Theater im Theater ist. Tonfilmaufnahmen werden gemacht, Reklamegirls laufen durch den Zuschauerraum, eine Reklamerevue zieht über die Bühne, ein Einfall jagt den andern, Lautsprecher brüllen an allen Ecken und Enden auf und begleiten noch auf der Straße den Besucher ein Stück Weges: / For you, for you / Ist alles was ich tu’.” “Die neue Jazzoperette Granichstaedten im Theater an der Wien,” *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, March 2, 1930, 12.

¹³⁴ “Wenn noch ein Zweifel bestanden hat, ob im Kampf um die Führung in der Operette Wien die Oberhand behält, so hat dieser große Abend bewiesen, daß Wien mit vielen Längen führt.” “Reklame,” *Welt am Morgen*, March 4, 1930, 5.

¹³⁵ “amerikanisch-gigantisch”; “Reklame’-Streiflichter von einer Rekord-Dauerprobe: Von Morgen bis nach Mitternacht,” *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 1, 1930.

¹³⁶ “Reklame’: Die Erfolg verbürgte Sensationspremiere im Theater an der Wien,” *Das kleine Volksblatt*, March 2, 1930, 24.

¹³⁷ “Schön, üppig, bunt. ... Marischka hat hier die Kulmination erreicht.” “Die ‘Reklame’-Premiere: Im Theater an der Wien,” *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, March 2, 1930, 13–14.

Along with its spectacular, mind-blowing technology and unsurpassably extravagant decor, critics particularly praised the operetta's unusual book. *Reklame!* tells the story of English lord Percy Livingston, whose family has disinherited him for marrying the American dancer Mary. Struggling to make a living in New York, Percy agrees to fake an affair with a newly arrived European singer in order to spawn the scuttlebutt that is necessary to ensure her American success. Advertising monarch Hershman, in charge of this coup, also wants to exploit Mary's jealousy and asks her to shoot her "rival" with a fake shotgun. Pained by true feelings, however, the dancer uses a real revolver and only narrowly escapes catastrophe as well as imprisonment. The scandal makes Mary famous and an object of desire, but in the end she decides for the rueful Percy.

This "very American story,"¹³⁸ free from "false sentimentalities,"¹³⁹ was welcomed by commentators as evidence "that real life too can be brought on stage ... and that even in the home of all romanticism, in the operetta theater, one can be cool and objective."¹⁴⁰ In the Austrian capital, advertising was already an established and successful business: *circa* three thousand billboards were scattered around the city by 1930—in relation to Vienna's population count, this number was among the highest in Europe.¹⁴¹ And *Reklame!*'s pertinent subject matter even allowed for a previously untapped source of operetta funding as well as a new kind of advertisement for Viennese firms: product placement. Apart from the glamorous costumes provided by local fashion houses,¹⁴² an Act I scene showing rehearsals of Hershman's "great, living propaganda show"¹⁴³ featured products by real companies such as Erdal (shoe polish), Ovomaltine (hot drink), Stollwerck (chocolate), and Elix (light bulbs).¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ "ganz amerikanische Geschichte"; "Theater an der Wien: 'Reklame,'" *Illustrierte Kronen-Zeitung*, March 1, 1930.

¹³⁹ "verlogenen Sentimentalitäten"; "Reklame," *Welt am Morgen*, March 4, 1930, 5.

¹⁴⁰ "daß auch wirkliches Leben auf die Bühne gebracht werden kann ... und daß man auch in der Heimat aller Romantik, im Operettentheater, kühl und sachlich sein kann." "'Reklame' im Theater an der Wien," *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 2, 1930, 5.

¹⁴¹ Wolfgang Kos, ed., *Kampf um die Stadt: Politik, Kunst und Alltag um 1930* (Vienna: Czernin, 2009), 549.

¹⁴² Showing off local businesses had become an aspiring aspect of musical entertainment culture ever since Marischka's revue *Alles aus Liebe* (1927), with which he had actively involved Viennese companies in order to support employment opportunities in the Austrian capital. For a detailed discussion see Oliver Kühschelm, "Implicit Boycott: The Call for Patriotic Consumption in Interwar Austria," *Management & Organizational History* 5 (2010): 165–195.

¹⁴³ "die große, lebende Reklameschau"; "Theater an der Wien: 'Reklame,'" *Der Morgen*, March 5, 1930.

¹⁴⁴ "'Reklame': Die neue Operette des Theaters an der Wien," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, March 1, 1930 and "Theater an der Wien: Reklame," *Der Morgen*, March 5, 1930.



Figure 1.1: Dancer Lilly Schwalm presents “Elix,” the lasting light bulb. Premiere of Granichstaedten’s *Reklame!*, Theater an der Wien, February 28, 1930, (left) and a contemporary poster commercial (right).¹⁴⁵

Vienna’s critics saw such product placement in a positive light and as a sign of creativity. One paper commented, for example:

What does it hurt that through *Reklame!* also glimmer intermittent calls and luminous effects of real advertising, which ... not only can but must be artistic, if it is to be effective.¹⁴⁶

Reklame! displayed “character, punch, esprit” summarized the *Welt am Morgen*,¹⁴⁷ while another paper listed “invention, humor, peppiness, [and] tempo.”¹⁴⁸

Such praise also addressed the way in which standard operetta patterns had been evaded.¹⁴⁹ While still organized into the traditional three acts, the operetta is “broken down

¹⁴⁵ Photos courtesy of Österreichisches Theatermuseum, ÖTM FS_PSA70781 (left) and Energie AG Oberösterreich (right).

¹⁴⁶ “Was schadet es, wenn durch ‘Reklame!’ zeitweilig auch die Lockrufe und Leuchteffekte der wirklichen Reklame glitzern, die ... nicht nur künstlerisch sein kann, sondern auch sein muß, wenn sie wirken soll.” “Theater an der Wien. Zum erstenmal: ‘Reklame,’” *Neues Wiener Journal*, March 1, 1930, 11.

¹⁴⁷ “Eigenart, Schlagkraft, Witz”; “Reklame,” *Welt am Morgen*, March 4, 1930, 5.

¹⁴⁸ “Erfindung, Witz, Schmiß, Tempo”; *Ostauer Morgenzeitung*, March 4, 1930; quoted in *So urteilt die Presse über das große Theater-Ereignis Wiens “Reklame!”* (Vienna: Bernhard Berger, 1930), 23.

into a plethora of pictures," as *Das kleine Volksblatt* observed.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, *Reklame!* does not feature the customary second couple. Although both main characters have their suitors, these disappear as soon as their chances wane. The humorous elements typically contributed by the buffo couple and the comedian are also incorporated in ways that were unusual for contemporary works. Hans Moser's hilarious utterances as the head of the advertising institute "Hershman's Weltreklame" are for once not confined to the final act but integrated throughout, becoming an essential part of the storyline, and two further comical characters appear intermittently throughout the operetta.¹⁵¹ The press lauded *Reklame!* for "restoring gaiety" to the art form:¹⁵² "finally a funny operetta again!" the *Neues Wiener Journal* exclaimed.¹⁵³

Like its book, *Reklame!*'s score also shows many features unconventional for Viennese operetta at this time. Even the Act II finale, at the climax of the plot, avoids what one paper termed the "opera-like" grandiloquence of chorus commentary and traditional recitatives.¹⁵⁴ Several critics noted that "the famous tragic operetta conflict has almost become a negligibility of the performance."¹⁵⁵ Indeed, recitative only features as part of an embedded opera scene but is otherwise replaced by melodrama. Furthermore, almost all occurrences of large-ensemble singing are framed as performances. This use of a "play within the play" technique to introduce musically diverse or dramaturgically traditional elements was welcomed by those Viennese critics who yearned for logic and continuity.¹⁵⁶

Reklame!'s departures from common operettic practice were quite clearly moves toward American models. As Gerald Bordman has pointed out, bombastic grand finales, recitatives, and the extensive use of large choruses were by this time considered "hopelessly antiquated" in the US.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, *Reklame!*'s almost excessive use of dance or show scene expansions—almost every musical number ends with such a dramaturgically unnecessary interlude—points to Broadway revue practices and Florenz Ziegfeld's celebrated shows specifically. The work's resulting, rather loose storyline was clearly in between classical operetta and revue structures. As one paper put it, *Reklame!* "blithely builds a bridge that offers everyone just what they want."¹⁵⁸

¹⁴⁹ See, for example, "'Reklame': Die neue Operette Granichstaeddens im Theater an der Wien," *Volks-Zeitung*, March 2, 1930, 7.

¹⁵⁰ "in eine Unmenge von Bildern zerlegt"; "'Reklame': Die Erfolg verbürgte Sensationspremiere im Theater an der Wien," *Das kleine Volksblatt*, March 2, 1930, 24.

¹⁵¹ For details on the standard operetta structure see Lichtfuss, *Operette im Ausverkauf*, 97.

¹⁵² "die Heiterkeit zurückbringt"; "Theater an der Wien: 'Reklame,'" *Wiener Zeitung*, March 2, 1930, 7.

¹⁵³ "Endlich wieder eine lustige Operette!" "Theater an der Wien. Zum erstenmal: 'Reklame,'" *Neues Wiener Journal*, March 1, 1930, 11.

¹⁵⁴ "opernmäßigen"; "'Reklame': die Erfolg verbürgte Sensationspremiere im Theater an der Wien," *Das kleine Volksblatt*, March 2, 1930, 24.

¹⁵⁵ "der berühmte tragische Konflikt der Operette ist fast schon zu einer Nebensächlichkeit der Aufführung geworden"; "'Reklame' im Theater an der Wien," *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 2, 1930, 5.

¹⁵⁶ See, for example, "Theater an der Wien. Zum erstenmal: 'Reklame,'" *Neues Wiener Journal*, March 1, 1930, 11.

¹⁵⁷ Gerald Bordman, *American Operetta: From H.M.S. Pinafore to Sweeney Todd* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 107–108 and 128.

¹⁵⁸ "so bildet es fröhlich eine Brücke, jedem das bietend, was er gerade will." "Theater an der Wien: 'Reklame!,'" *Deutschoesterreichische Tages-Zeitung*, March 2, 1930, 7.

This short discussion of Granichstaedten's *Reklame!* stands in stark contrast to most portrayals of operetta in First Republic Vienna. Contemporary operetta composer Oscar Straus, for example, observed:

In its consciousness of what it has, Vienna is ... harder to entice for a trial, an experiment, for the unwonted and new than Berlin. ... Vienna has created the new operetta and thereby has founded a kind of tradition based on an eminent confidence of taste, which, on the other hand offers a certain resistance toward the new and untried. One does not happily give up the sweet security of success, one does not endanger the firmly coined brand through too far-reaching or even bold variations. Therefore Vienna has its well-proven, audience-favored operetta genre, which—seen with Berlin eyes—is perhaps rather too protected from every draft of air.¹⁵⁹

Similarly, operetta scholars such as Martin Lichtfuss note that, in light of the economic and cultural disadvantages Vienna's theaters had to face during the interwar period, the more esteemed venues and publishing houses often stuck with established molds, avoided high-risk experiments, and contracted authors whose works had already been successful—actions that contributed to the routinization of operetta in the interwar period and restrained composers aiming for innovative approaches.¹⁶⁰

While such portrayals of interwar operetta as somehow creatively inhibited or limited are undoubtedly well founded, they do not document the efforts of several Viennese theater directors and publishers to produce innovative, internationally up-to-date operettas in spite of the deficient local conditions. For Vienna's operetta protagonists were painfully aware of the need for fresh takes on the genre. In an interview with Bruno Granichstaedten entitled "Away With The Operetta Mold!," the fashionable arts magazine *Die Bühne*, for example, noted the urgent necessity that Viennese operetta move with the times:

It is well known that Viennese operetta is among those things that count as inimitable Austrian export articles abroad, a means of propaganda for the Austrian way, which has, however, really not always been beneficial. We have to understand that abroad people draw conclusions about our mentality from the sentimentality [we show]. ... We must not be surprised if our democratic disposition is judged, for example, by the seemingly invincible public taste for dukes, counts, and princes in operetta. ... We can

¹⁵⁹ "Wien im Bewußtsein seines Besitzes ist ... schwerer als Berlin für den Versuch, für das Experiment, für das Ungewohnte und Neue zu gewinnen. ... Wien hat die neue Operette geschaffen und damit eine Art von Tradition begründet, der eine eminente Geschmackssicherheit zugrunde liegt, die aber andererseits dem Neuen und Unerprobten gewisse Widerstände bereitet. Man gibt die süße Erfolgssicherheit nicht gern auf, die festgeprägte Marke läßt man sich durch allzu weitgehende oder gar kühne Variierungen nicht gefährden. So hat Wien heute sein erprobtes, von der Gunst des Publikums getragenes Operettengenre, das—mit Berliner Augen gesehen—nur vielleicht zu sehr vor jedem Luftzug behütet wird." Oscar Straus quoted from documents in his estate (without further details) in Franz Mailer, *Weltbürger der Musik: Eine Oscar-Straus Biographie* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1985), 115.

¹⁶⁰ Lichtfuss, *Operette im Ausverkauf*, 57.

see that in most cases, foreign countries already shut themselves off from new Viennese operettas.¹⁶¹

In this chapter, then, I want to explore Viennese attempts to hold on to the reins of Austria’s most internationally marketable cultural export. I will concentrate on Viennese operetta’s glamorous flagship venue, the Theater an der Wien, which was one of only three independent theaters that survived Red Vienna relatively unimpaired.¹⁶² Quick to pick up on any international vogue, this theater’s new director Hubert Marischka encouraged authors to pick American subject matters that would lend themselves to unconventional musical and structural treatment. In the Old World of the 1920s, the United States was equated increasingly with tempo, progress, fashion, and an optimistic attitude to life—ideal characteristics for a successful operetta. Within two years of taking office, Marischka was able to launch the first of a whole series of emphatically innovative New World–themed productions that culminated with *Reklame!*:

Year	Title	Composer	Setting
1924	<i>Gräfin Mariza</i>	Imre Kálmán	Hungary
1925	<i>Der Orlow</i>	Bruno Granichstaedten	US/Russia
1926	<i>Die Zirkusprinzessin</i>	Imre Kálmán	Russia/Vienna
1927	<i>Die Königin</i>	Oscar Straus	Switzerland
1927	<i>Die gold’ne Meisterin</i>	Edmund Eysler	“Old” Vienna
1928	<i>Die Herzogin von Chicago</i>	Imre Kálmán	US/Sylvania
1929	<i>Rosen aus Florida</i>	Leo Fall/Erich Wolfgang Korngold	US/France/Russia
1930	<i>Reklame!</i>	Bruno Granichstaedten	US
1931	<i>Der Bauerngeneral</i>	Oscar Straus	Russia
1931	<i>Der Traum-Express</i>	Robert Katscher	Cannes (France)
1932	<i>Der Teufelsreiter</i>	Imre Kálmán	Hungary?
1932	<i>Sissy</i>	Fritz Kreisler	“Old” Vienna
1933	<i>Zwei lachende Augen</i>	Oscar Straus	[?]

Table 1.1: Director Hubert Marischka’s significant operetta premieres at the Theater an der Wien.

While operetta scholar Kevin Clarke has already provided valuable insights about two of these—in his words—“transatlantic productions,” Leo Fall’s *Rosen aus Florida* (1929) and Imre

¹⁶¹ “Es ist bekannt, daß zu den Dingen, die das Ausland zu den unnachahmlichen österreichischen Exportartikeln zählt, vor allem die Wiener Operette gehört, ein Propagandamittel für österreichische Art, das uns wahrhaftig nicht immer genützt hat. Wir müssen es verstehen, daß man draußen aus der Sentimentalität auf unsere Mentalität schließt. ... Wir dürfen uns nicht wundern, wenn man unsere demokratische Gesinnung etwa nach dem scheinbar unumstößlichen Publikumsgeschmack an Grafen, Fürsten und Prinzen der Operette beurteilt. ... Wir sehen ja, daß sich das Ausland in schon überwiegenden Fällen neuen Wiener Operetten verschließt.” Fred Heller, “Weg von der Operettenschablone! Gespräch mit Bruno Granichstaedten,” *Die Bühne* 160 (1927).

¹⁶² The other two venues were the Raimund Theater and the Stadttheater, the latter of which was also in Marischka’s hands. Yates provides a detailed account of the fates of Vienna’s various theaters. See Yates, *Theatre in Vienna*, 211.

Kálmán's *Die Herzogin von Chicago* (1928), pointing to fascinating connections with films and Broadway musicals as well as with such Zeitopern as Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf* (1927), little attention has been devoted to the other American-themed and jazz-influenced Viennese operettas.¹⁶³

I will therefore focus on the two operettas that frame the Theater an der Wien's "transatlantic" period: Bruno Granichstaedten's box-office hit *Der Orlow* (1925)—one of director Marischka's first triumphs, which arguably triggered a whole series of US-themed jazz-operetta productions also in other Viennese and Berlin theaters—and the same composer's last Viennese premiere, the peculiar genre mix *Reklame!* (1930), which already figured at the beginning of this chapter. Through these works I want to provide insights into the production processes of Red Vienna's leading operetta venue and also investigate First Republic Austrian conceptions of the New World as well as American expectations toward Viennese operetta. How were these works envisioned by their creators? How did the authors incorporate American elements and what ensured that these modern operettas were still accepted as Viennese products? How did contemporary critics as well as Viennese and international audiences respond to these deliberately "progressive" works? Why did the Viennese interest in operettas with American subject matter abate around 1930? And why did these remarkable works not prevail in operetta histories and theater programs?

Hubert Marischka, whom we have already met as a renowned tenor and film pioneer, became the director and co-owner of the Theater an der Wien in 1923 after the death of his predecessor and father in law, Wilhelm Karczag. He took office during a difficult time for Vienna and its theaters. World War I had left the Austrian capital in a state of crisis: the great Habsburg empire had been reduced to an unimportant Alpine republic with a disproportionately large capital. Almost one third of the six million Austrians lived in Vienna,¹⁶⁴ which, economically unviable and now lacking the treasure chambers Bohemia and Hungary, depended solely on the material support of its provinces, as food, coal, and electricity became increasingly scarce, especially after the inflation of 1921–1922 and the subsequent collapse of the Austrian currency.¹⁶⁵ Clashes between the extremely conservative outlooks within the federal states and the new Socialist municipal government of "Red Vienna" caused further inner-political tension.¹⁶⁶ Lacking any liberal middle, Austria's two political camps fought each other throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s in a vicious civil war.

¹⁶³ Kevin Clarke, "'Der Walzer erwacht—die Neger entfliehen': Erich Wolfgang Korngolds Operetten (bearbeitungen) von *Eine Nacht in Venedig* 1923 bis zur *Stummen Serenade* 1954," *Frankfurter Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 12 (2009): 26 and *Im Himmel*, 43. Clarke's book is based on his PhD thesis, "Emmerich Kálmán und die transatlantische Operette" (FU Berlin, 2005).

¹⁶⁴ Brigitte Ott, "Die Kulturpolitik der Gemeinde Wien, 1919–1934" (PhD diss., Vienna University, 1968), 2.

¹⁶⁵ Franz-Peter Kothes, "Die theatralische Revue in Berlin und Wien 1900–1940 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ausstattungsrevue: Strukturen und Funktionen" (PhD diss., Vienna University, 1973), 195.

¹⁶⁶ For a detailed introduction to "Red Vienna" see, for example, Judith Beniston and Robert Vilain, eds., *Culture and Politics in Red Vienna*, *Austrian Studies* 14 (Maney Publishing for the MHRA, 2006), 36–59.

Operetta lacked support from either faction: while cultural officers of the Christian Social party questioned its moral values and only encouraged performances of established works with suitably tame subjects,¹⁶⁷ Vienna's Social Democratic leaders rejected operetta for lacking revolutionary qualities.¹⁶⁸ For them, operetta was the worst variety of "traditional and meaningless bourgeois entertainment."¹⁶⁹ Most Socialist cultural politicians agreed that workers should devote their leisure time to self-improvement and cultural education rather than to such "philistinism" and "otiose distraction" as was embodied by operetta.¹⁷⁰ In order to develop "the original good instincts of a new theater audience," the Social Democratic *Kunststelle* (Arts Office) specifically subsidized tickets for spoken theater as well as modernist or classical music events.¹⁷¹ Bound at least to some degree to audience demand, however, Social Democratic officials had to make concessions in the long run and increasingly offered subsidized tickets also for lighter musical fare.¹⁷² While directors of other private theaters such as the Deutsches Volkstheater sought cooperations with the Kunststellen, Marischka avoided them.¹⁷³ It seems that the association of his theaters with luxury was more important to him than a guaranteed—if somewhat reduced—income through institutional bulk purchases of cheap tickets. The Social Democratic Kunststelle's concessions to popular musical theater "in lieu of art" aroused heated confrontations within the party, notably with intellectuals such as Arthur Schnitzler and Karl Kraus, who even suggested using alcohol to wean the Viennese proletariat off operetta.¹⁷⁴

This Social Democratic contempt for operetta found an explicit outlet in a much-debated tiered entertainment tax system, introduced in Vienna in 1921: while spoken theaters were charged with the already significant amount of up to 10 percent of their income, operetta and revue venues had to contribute 30 percent.¹⁷⁵ As the responsible councilor Hugo Breitner explained, taxes were to be constituted in view of a profession's greater good for society as a whole.¹⁷⁶ Popular musical theater venues could only be tolerated if they were paying for ethically sounder causes. Operetta houses suffered even more under this measure because of their comparatively high production expenses—not least the pay of a statutory number of musicians.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, competition in the entertainment business had become damagingly intense: while the city's population had been declining significantly since 1914, a

¹⁶⁷ Judith Beniston, "Cultural Politics in the First Republic: Hans Brecka and the 'Kunststelle für christliche Volksbildung,'" in *Catholicism and Austrian Culture*, Austrian Studies 10, ed. Ritchie Robertson and Judith Beniston (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 111.

¹⁶⁸ Alfred Pfoser, *Literatur und Austromarxismus* (Vienna: Zöcker, 1980), 61.

¹⁶⁹ "traditionellen und sinnlosen Vergnügung der Bourgeoisie"; quoted in Ott, "Kulturpolitik," 44.

¹⁷⁰ "Banausentum"; "müßiger Zerstreung"; mayor Karl Seitz, minutes of the municipal council meeting from November 13, 1923; quoted in Ott, "Kulturpolitik," 45–46; see also Judith Beniston, "No Laughing Matter: The Place of Comedy in David Josef Bach's Theatre Politics," in Beniston and Vilain, *Culture and Politics*, 166.

¹⁷¹ "die ursprünglich guten Instinkte eines neuen Theaterpublikums"; "Die Kunststelle der Arbeiterschaft," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, October 30, 1921, 17; quoted in Beniston, "No Laughing Matter," 165.

¹⁷² Yates, *Theatre in Vienna*, 205.

¹⁷³ Beniston, "Cultural Politics," 103.

¹⁷⁴ Beniston, "No Laughing Matter," 181–182.

¹⁷⁵ For details on this tax law, see, for example, Kothes, "Theatralische Revue," 195.

¹⁷⁶ Hugo Breitner, "Lustbarkeitsabgabe und Theaterkrise," *Arbeiter Zeitung*, March 29, 1925, 9.

¹⁷⁷ See "Theaterkrise und Lustbarkeitssteuer," *Neues Wiener Journal*, November 9, 1922.

number of new theater and music venues had opened,¹⁷⁸ public radio was launched in 1924,¹⁷⁹ and cinema continued to prosper throughout the 1920s.¹⁸⁰

With plenty of experience and fully aware of the financial risks of the trade, Hubert Marischka started his position as director of the Theater an der Wien with a general overhaul of this esteemed, state-independent business. He assembled a fresh cast of stars as well as an increasingly family-run team, with his brother Ernst writing libretti, his brother Franz providing ideas for the decorations, Carl overseeing the technical considerations, and his wife Lilian acting as a costume designer.¹⁸¹ Of course, this nepotism was repeatedly criticized by the press but it allowed for cost efficiency and financially more risky productions.

From the outset, Marischka identified two challenges he needed to tackle in order to keep up the Theater an der Wien's elevated position: to maintain and foster the Viennese operetta tradition beyond the Great War and to keep up with international trends in order to ensure worldwide distribution and success. He approached these tasks by promoting "Alt Wien"-style Singspiele on the one hand and glamorously fashionable, internationally attractive operettas on the other.¹⁸² Implementing his double-tracked programming immediately, Marischka started his appointment with new productions of works by Johann Strauss to appease the conservative Viennese theatergoers and to demonstrate that his program was grounded in local traditions.¹⁸³ Later he continued in this direction with new, hugely successful "Alt Wien" works such as Edmund Eysler's *Gold'ne Meisterin* (1927) and Fritz Kreisler's *Sissi* (1932), which sparked a whole wave of "stillborn Old-Viennese operettas," as

¹⁷⁸ These new venues could prosper during the inflation because many Viennese spent their daily earnings on evening entertainment before the money could lose its value.

¹⁷⁹ Hit songs and snippets from successful operettas were part of many radio programs, and even whole works—recent smash hits as well as older favorites—were soon broadcast on a weekly basis. An early study based on responses from listeners of diverse social backgrounds, reveals a significant demand for further operetta broadcasts. Paul Felix Lazarsfeld, *RAVAG-Studie* (Vienna: Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle, 1932).

¹⁸⁰ Circa thirty film companies (along with further production and distribution companies) settled in Vienna's Neubau district and Breitner noted in 1925 that the number of available cinema seats had risen from ca. 54000 to 67000 since the outbreak of the war. Breitner, "Lustbarkeitsabgabe und Theaterkrise," *Arbeiter Zeitung*, March 29, 1925, 9.

¹⁸¹ Gertrud Marischka, manuscript of a Hubert Marischka biography, n.d., 90–91; Österreichisches Theatermuseum, Marischka Papers.

¹⁸² In a 1928 newspaper interview he pointed to this strategy directly: "A few circumstances fill me with particular joy this season. Mainly, that I succeeded in helping our dear Maestro Eysler make his 'Gold'nen Meisterin' another grand success and restoring honor to the authentic Viennese Singspiel. ... But then it was also granted to me this season to launch the great international operetta in Imre Kálmán's 'Die Herzogin von Chicago,' and to provide the metropolis Vienna with the cosmopolitan touch that is so important for tourism and our economic life." (Einige Umstände aber erfüllen mich in dieser Saison mit besonderer Freude. Vor allem, daß es mir gelungen ist, unserem lieben Meister Eysler mit seiner 'Gold'nen Meisterin' wieder einmal zu einem ganz großen Erfolg zu verhelfen und das echt wienerische Singspiel wieder zu Ehren zu bringen. ... Dann aber war es mir in dieser Saison auch noch gegönnt, die große internationale Operette in Emmerich Kalmans 'Die Herzogin von Chicago' herauszubringen, der Großstadt Wien die für den Fremdenverkehr so wichtige und für unser Wirtschaftsleben so bedeutende Weltnote zu geben.") "Direktor Hubert Marischka-Karczag," unidentified newspaper clipping, probably from August 1928; Marischka Papers. Compare with Lichtfuss, *Operette im Ausverkauf*, 169.

¹⁸³ Marischka continued this practice in his other venues: his first season at the Stadttheater was opened on September 28, 1926, with a gala performance of Strauss's *Fledermaus*. Ruth Bauer, "Die Geschichte des Neuen Wiener Stadttheaters" (PhD diss., Vienna University, 1970), 150.

Bernhard Grun put it.¹⁸⁴ Such nostalgic reminiscences, although they satisfied the yearnings of those mourning the loss of the Empire, did not make it far from Vienna and, internationally, were no longer seen as typical of their time.

On the other hand, starting with his successful production of Kálmán's *Gräfin Mariza* in 1924, Marischka fostered a more cosmopolitan style of operetta to attract younger Viennese as well as international audiences. Successes abroad did not only help to keep up the Theater an der Wien's prestige but were essential if he wanted to earn the necessary revenue to finance further projects.¹⁸⁵ Because Marischka had also inherited Karczag's publishing house, the theater's cash register could benefit directly from any additional business, even with the new mass media, which to so many other stages only posed a threat. Success on a Marischka stage eventually resulted in royalties not only for the sheet music and international production as well as distribution rights but for recordings, frequent radio broadcasts, and film licenses.¹⁸⁶

In spite of the triumph he had scored with Kálmán's *Gräfin Mariza*, by the time of the *Orlow* premiere in April 1925, Marischka was in almost desperate need of another sensational success. For the Theater an der Wien's next production, Ernst Steffan's *Das Milliardensouper*, had been a glaring flop with only 28 performances "in spite of magnificent decor" and its popularity in Berlin.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, as a result of increasingly dire economic and cultural-political circumstances, neighboring venues were folding one by one. In May 1925 the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* reported the recent closures of seven renowned theaters and five cabarets.¹⁸⁸ The *Neue Freie Presse* described Marischka's—and operetta's—dire situation:

Lehár kept silent, the operetta skies became clouded and Kálmán ruled the hour. Among flops "Gräfin Mariza" grew into a world success and in his dreams even appeared as a recapitalization operetta to the gloomy mind of a Viennese director. But even the most Hungarian countesses wear out and often nothing remains of a *Milliardensouper* ["billion supper," title of the following flop] but an upset stomach. It is just in time that Granichstaedten's *Orlow* fell into the lap of the Theater an der Wien.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁴ "totgeborener Alt-Wiener Operetten"; Bernard Grun, *Kulturgeschichte der Operette* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1961), 431.

¹⁸⁵ Marie-Theres Arnbom, "'Mit frommen Schauern in Marischkas Girikirche...'" Hubert Marischkas Operetten-Imperium, 1923–1935," in Arnbom, Clarke, and Trabitsch, *Welt der Operette*, 79 and Clarke, "Der Walzer erwacht," 26.

¹⁸⁶ *Der Orlow*, for example, was broadcast once every year, in March 1925 (right after its premiere!), May 1926, April 1927, and March 1928. See *Radio Wien* issues for those months.

¹⁸⁷ "trotz prunkvoller Ausstattung"; Gertrud Marischka, Hubert Marischka biography, 88.

¹⁸⁸ "Die verschwindende Theaterstadt Wien: Theater um Theater wird geschlossen," *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 30, 1925; quoted in Bauer, "Geschichte des Stadttheaters," 107–108.

¹⁸⁹ "Lehár schwieg, der Operettenhimmel verdüsterte sich und Kálmán regierte die Stunde. Zwischen Nieten wuchs 'Gräfin Mariza' zu einem Welterfolg, erschien einem bedrückten Wiener Direktorengemüt im Traum sogar als Sanierungsoperette. Aber auch die ungarischsten Gräfinnen nützen sich ab und von einem Milliardensouper bleibt oft nichts als eine Magenverstimmung übrig. Da ist dem Theater an der Wien gerade noch zu rechter Zeit Granichstaedten's 'Orlow' in den Schoß gefallen." "'Der Orlow' ... Erstaufführung am Theater an der Wien," *Neue Freie Presse*, April 4, 1925, 10.

Marischka was willing to take extraordinary measures to make Granichstaedten's work into the necessary hit.¹⁹⁰ Internal theater correspondence shows that he originally envisioned a premiere with Berlin's great operetta diva Fritzi Massary as his partner. His administrative partner Emil Steininger agreed with Marischka that "if two such aces as you and the Massary launched a work, it would naturally be a splurge for the sensation-mongering Viennese." "One knows that a lot of people would go green with envy." Steininger continued, however, by meticulously itemizing all the unavoidable costs—from taxes and royalties to complimentary press seats—concluding that even with a sold-out house, the theater would incur a loss. The "luxury" of Massary's guest appearance was out of the question even at Vienna's flagship venue, which, according to Steininger, made the same daily revenue as all the city's other theaters combined.¹⁹¹ Indeed, even without Massary's appearance the financial situation became so tense during the autumn and winter of 1925 that staff reductions were unavoidable and the ensemble had to be "downsized severely," a measure that to audience members "became apparent through the particular decline of the sound effects and the sparse music between acts."¹⁹²

Such financial constraints also illustrate how much Marischka risked with his grandiose staging of Granichstaedten's work. As one reviewer sharply observed, "the decorations, Parisian costumes, and the orchestral forces that this operetta requires are so costly that only a lasting success could turn them to account."¹⁹³ Leading woman Betty Fischer's "stylized crinoline gown" in Act III, for example, was "of such size, that in order to act she had to doff half of it" because it did not fit through any stage door.¹⁹⁴ Acutely aware of the magical appeal of luxury and pomp on Viennese audiences in these times of economic hardship, and in an effort to address the growing, internationally spurred revue craze in Vienna,¹⁹⁵ Marischka correctly predicted that a profligate staging, complete with attractive lines of chorus girls and an accumulation of luxury objects, was a worthwhile, even necessary investment. And the director was successful: the press agreed that "the operetta's decor exceeded everything to

¹⁹⁰ Gertrud Marischka, Hubert Marischka biography, 88.

¹⁹¹ "wenn zwei solche Kanonen, wie Du und die Massary ein Werk aus der Taufe heben, so ist es selbstverständlich für die Sensationslust der Wiener ein Prassen"; "man weiss, dass so und sovieler Leute vor Neid zerplatzen würden"; Steininger to Marischka, October 27, 1924; Marischka Papers.

¹⁹² "wesentlich eingeschränkt"; "durch die ganz besondere Verminderung der Klangeffekte und die spärliche Zwischenaktmusik"; Edition Bristol director Callé to Emil Steininger from the Karczag Verlag, March 26, 1926; Marischka Papers.

¹⁹³ "Dekorationen, ... Pariser Kostüme und die orchestrale Aufmachung, welche diese Operette erfordert, sind so kostspielig, daß sie sich nur durch einen Dauererfolg bezahlt machen können." "Theater an der Wien," *Illustrierte Kronen-Zeitung*, April 4, 1925.

¹⁹⁴ "stilisierte Krinolinentoilette Betty Fischers von solcher Größe, daß sie fürs Agieren aus der Hälfte derselben schlüpfen mußte"; "'Der Orlow': Operetten-Premiere im Theater an der Wien," *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, April 5, 1925, 12. Such accentuation and exaggeration of the star as individual through "a kind of extreme model haute couture," as revue scholar Franz-Peter Kothes describes it, was a typical highlight of contemporary revues and was received as such in the press. Kothes, "Theatralische Revue," 152.

¹⁹⁵ Berlin, the German-language revue capital, had been infected with New York's and Paris's revue fever around 1923. (See Birgit Peter, "Schaulust und Vergnügen: Zirkus, Varieté und Revue im Wien der Ersten Republik" [PhD diss., Vienna University, 2001], 135.) International revues such as Charell's *An Alle!* and Sam Wooding's *Chocolate Kiddies* started to tour Vienna in 1925 and shaped the Austrian expectations of the genre. Christian Klösch, "Unterhaltung im Übermaß: Die große Zeit der Revue," in Kos, *Kampf um die Stadt*, 199.

date.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, the *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* credited the Parisian dresses with a significant impact on *Der Orlow's* success,¹⁹⁷ and writer Hans Liebstoekl attested that such sumptuous productions were “the most honest way nowadays to make money with theater and to keep up this impoverished, unhappy, and tormented city’s appearance that things are just as plentiful here as they are in Paris at the grand revues.”¹⁹⁸

The audiences agreed with this enthusiastic press: with 428 consecutive performances—more than *Die Fledermaus*—Granichstaedten’s work yielded the fourth-longest run at the Theater an der Wien.¹⁹⁹ Even before the premiere, Steininger could already announce the unprecedented feat of placing contracts with two foreign theaters,²⁰⁰ and in 1928 Marischka proudly reported that 425 theaters so far had acquired the performing rights for *Der Orlow*.²⁰¹ Further evidence of the work’s triumph are its adaptations as a silent movie in 1927 and as a talkie in 1932.²⁰²

Apart from the glamorous production, *Der Orlow's* success was largely due to its remarkable book. Set in a New York car factory, *Der Orlow* tells the story of a Russian grand duke who, having fled to the US after the 1917 revolution, works as a simple mechanic and falls in love with the popular singer Nadja Nadjakowska, herself a Russian émigré. Mistaken for a thief, when he tries to make himself a legitimate suitor by selling his only keepsake of Russia, the famous “Orlow” diamond, the impoverished nobleman has to overcome many a New World preconception before he can embrace his attractive countrywoman.

Granted, this storyline points to the very operetta “mold” Oscar Straus and many contemporaries bemoaned, following, as cabarettist Karl Farkas observed around this time, the tradition established by Lehár’s box-office smash *Die lustige Witwe* (1905):

There are always two couples of whom one knows everything from the outset. One of them falls out in the second act in order to find itself—as sure as death—in the last; the other sings two duets, dances and provides humor.²⁰³

¹⁹⁶ “Die Ausstattung der Operette übertraf alles Bisherige”; “‘Der Orlow’: Die neue Operette im Theater an der Wien,” *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, April 4, 1925.

¹⁹⁷ “Premiere im Theater an der Wien: ‘Der Orlow,’” *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, April 5, 1925.

¹⁹⁸ “Es ist heute die redlichste Art, mit dem Theater Geld zu verdienen und dieser verarmten, unglücklichen und gepeinigten Stadt den Anschein zu erhalten, daß es bei uns ebenso reichlich zugeht, wie in Paris bei den großen Revuen.” Hans Liebstoekl, “Theater,” *Wiener Sonn- und Montags-Zeitung*, April 14, 1925, 5.

¹⁹⁹ Thomas Aigner, “Der musikalische Nachlass Bruno Granichstaedten,” essay manuscript (Vienna University, 2004), 9. The only operettas with longer runs at the Theater an der Wien were Lehár’s *Lustige Witwe* (premiered in 1905; 483 performances), Leo Fall’s *Rose von Stambul* (1916; 480), and Johann Strauss’s *Zigeunerbaron* (1885; 477).

²⁰⁰ Steininger to Marischka, October 27, 1924; Marischka Papers.

²⁰¹ “Arbeitsgemeinschaft Reinhardt-Marischka: Die Zukunft des Theater an der Wien und des Stadttheaters,” *Neues Wiener Journal*, August 10, 1928, 5; also quoted in Clarke, *Im Himmel*, 214.

²⁰² “Der Orlow” (1927), directed by Jakob and Luise Fleck; “Der Diamant des Zaren” (1932), directed by Max Neufeld.

²⁰³ “Es gibt immer die zwei Liebespaare, von denen man von Anfang alles weiß. Das eine zerkracht sich im zweiten Akt, um sich todsicher im letzten zu finden, das andere singt zwei Duette, tanzt und sorgt für Komik.” “Operette oder Revue?,” *Die Bühne* 76 (1926): 11–12; reprinted in Marion Linhardt, *Stimmen zur Unterhaltung: Operette und Revue in der publizistischen Debatte (1906–1933)* (Vienna: Lehner, 2009), 212. A few disappointed reviewers’ comments show expectations that *Der Orlow* would break away from this established “mold.” See, for example, “Der Orlow,” *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 5, 1925, 5. Others, however, were pleased about this “return to the

Yet Viennese audiences received *Der Orlow's* altogether foreign, present-day milieu—without reference to Vienna!²⁰⁴—as an unusually fruitful subject, and even critics raved that the work had “entered virgin soil for operetta.”²⁰⁵ Indeed, both the Russian and the American material, but especially the latter was excitingly novel:²⁰⁶ although a couple of earlier operettas had already successfully explored the New World as a topic, most notably Carl Millöcker's Broadway hit *Der arme Jonathan* (1898) and Leo Fall's popular smash *Die Dollarprinzessin* (1907), none had exploited the musical potential of such American subject matter.²⁰⁷ By 1925 modern US dances had become a fashion craze in European capitals. German-language composers increasingly had to measure up to their colleagues at Broadway and started to spike their scores with what they considered jazzy dance numbers.²⁰⁸ In *Der Vetter aus Dingsda* (1921), for example, Eduard Künneke wittily accompanied the far southeastern country Batavia with syncopated music. As Volker Klotz has observed, however, such numbers rarely provided more than momentary extra spice.²⁰⁹

Granichstaedten took this development an important step further: the big sensation of *Der Orlow* were the “surprising sound effects” attained through the main orchestra's alternation, opposition, and collaboration with a fully fledged jazz band, which performed partly on stage, causing one paper to announce “the beginning of the bar operetta.”²¹⁰ This novel aspect was not planned from the outset. According to his co-librettist, Hubert Marischka's brother Ernst, Granichstaedten—who, through his early hit *Bub oder Mädel* (1908) and the nostalgic “operetta idyll” *Auf Befehl der Kaiserin* (1915), held a reputation as a

elegant operetta.” See, for example, “Die Toiletten der neuen Oscar Straus-Operette,” *Die Bühne* 118 (1927): 56–57.

²⁰⁴ Even *Gräfin Mariza* had presented its fashionable shimmy rhythms still against the reliable backdrop of familiar crownland territory—Hungary. Although the Austrian capital is not even a locale in this work, Tassilo sings of Vienna in the famous “Grüß mir die reizenden Frauen im schönen Wien.” The critical *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* specifically praised *Der Orlow's* lack of songs celebrating the Austrian capital. “Von der Generalprobe des ‘Orlow’: Im Theater an der Wien,” *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 4, 1925, 6.

²⁰⁵ “für die Operette Neuland erschlossen”; R.H., “Theater an der Wien,” *Wiener Zeitung*, April 4, 1925, 6.

²⁰⁶ See, for example, “Der Orlow’: Premiere im Theater an der Wien,” *Neues 8-Uhr-Blatt*, April 4, 1925, 3. Indeed, Slavic subjects allowed for some fashionable exotic spice: Russian dancers like Nadja (or dancers with Eastern-sounding stage names) were particularly popular in continental Europe at the time, at least partly because of the hype surrounding Diaghilev's Ballet Russes in revue and fashion center Paris. And Russian topics caught on after *Der Orlow*, as hit works such as Kálmán's *Zirkusprinzessin* (1926), Lehár's *Zarewitsch* (Berlin, 1927), and Straus's *Bauerngeneral* (1931) show. These works, as the press duly noted, avoided any pro-communist sentiments, implicitly favoring czarist Russia. See, for example, “Von der Generalprobe des ‘Orlow’: Theater an der Wien,” *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 4, 1925, 6. Compare with Lichtfuss, *Operette im Ausverkauf*, 149 and Klotz, *Operette*, 399.

²⁰⁷ Compare with Klotz, *Operette*, 341.

²⁰⁸ Examples are Kálmán's *Bayadere* (1921) and *Gräfin Mariza* (1924) as well as Künneke's *Der Vetter aus Dingsda* (1921).

²⁰⁹ Klotz, *Operette*, 400.

²¹⁰ “überraschende Effekte”; “Der Anfang zur Baroperette”; “Der Orlow,” *Die Neue Zeitung*, April 5, 1925, 4; see also “‘Der Orlow’ des Theaters a. d. Wien,” *Der Tag*, April 5, 1925. The jazz band was led by a clarinetist of the Vienna Philharmonic, Charles Gaudriot. Soon after his appearance in *Der Orlow* and *Die Herzogin von Chicago*, Gaudriot left the orchestra to establish the RAVAG's first radio jazz band—with brilliant success. See Dietrich Heinz Kraner and Klaus Schulz, *Jazz in Austria: Historische Entwicklung und Diskographie des Jazz in Österreich* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1972), 9.

composer of specifically Viennese music—had initially envisaged the story of a Russian grand duke who flees to Paris after World War I and becomes a tailor. Ernst Marischka had objected that a tailor could not make an operetta hero and insisted on turning him into a more respectable estate manager. However, having just contracted Kálmán's *Gräfin Mariza*, the story of an impoverished nobleman who works as a bailiff, his brother Hubert would only accept their work after yet another rewriting. "And through this reconfiguration the operetta acquired a whole new—a modern appearance," Ernst reported.²¹¹

In his insatiable quest to create "something new, something unprecedented," director Marischka was also the one who pushed for a suitable musical implementation of this promisingly fashionable subject matter. His fourth wife Gertrud reports:

Shortly before, he had heard the Whiteman orchestra in London and the jazz, still unknown on the continent, had fascinated him. Now he had all the Whiteman discs that he had brought from London delivered to the theater and played them to Granichstaedten and his orchestra members there.
The musicians shook their heads[,] obnoxious, this saxophone... a true caterwaul! Everyone urgently advised against the risk of employing this instrument for the *Orlow*. There would be a theater scandal—the audience would not put up with such an impertinence. Thousand objections were raised.
But once Hubert believed in a cause, he could not be dissuaded.
Granichstaedten was tempted by the new challenge.²¹²

Curious to see the audience reactions, the director insisted that the first jazz sounds should come from the orchestra while he was on stage. Gertrud describes the premiere:

The contested music number moved closer and closer. Hubert has admitted to me that never before he had stood on stage in nearly as much agitation as before this experiment. His heart was in his mouth, he was barely able to sing the verse of the introduction to this duet.
And then came the big moment!
Up on the stage Betty Fischer sang:
"Zottelbär, ach Zottelbär..." [shaggy bear, oh shaggy bear...]
And down in the orchestra it was seconded in the same rhythm:
"Quack – quack quack – quack – quack quack quack..."

²¹¹ "Und durch diese Umgestaltung bekam die ganze Operette ein ganz anderes—ein modernes Gesicht." Ernst Marischka to Volksoper director Franz Salmhofer, January 28, 1963; Ernst Marischka Papers (private archive) in Hallein.

²¹² "Kurz vorher hatte er in London das Whiteman Orchester gehört und der am Kontinent noch unbekanntes Jazz hatte ihn fasziniert. Jetzt ließ er sämtliche Whiteman Platten, die er sich aus London mitgebracht hatte, ins Theater schaffen und spielte sie dort Granichstaedten und seinen Orchestermitgliedern vor. Die Musiker schüttelten den Kopf [,] unmöglich, dieses Saxophon... eine richtige Katzenmusik! Alle rieten dringend von dem Wagnis ab dieses Instrument beim 'Orlow' einzusetzen. Es würde einen Theaterskandal geben—das Publikum ließe sich eine solche Zumutung nicht gefallen. Tausend Einwände wurden vorgebracht. Aber wenn Hubert einmal an eine Sache glaubte, ließ er sich nicht mehr davon abbringen. Granichstädten reizte diese neue Aufgabe." Gertrud Marischka, Hubert Marischka biography, 89–90.

A mumbling and murmuring filled the house—in the boxes and first rows of the orchestra tier people got up and lent forward to look into the pit and see the instrument with which these never-heard sounds were created.

With the end of the number started a frenetic applause that demanded several repetitions.

Victory for jazz, all along the line!²¹³

Of course, the rather sensationalist tone of this report demands caution for, as Eugen Semrau has recently shown in the case of Robert Stolz's wife Einzi, the spouses of operetta composers often had their own, advantageous but questionable ways of writing history.²¹⁴ Yet it is true that *Der Orlow* premiered very much at the beginning of Vienna's contact with jazz and in a very different context even than Kálmán's *Herzogin* three years later.²¹⁵ In 1925 Austrians did not have any grasp of the prospering American art form since comparatively few foreign jazz musicians had made it to inflation-torn postwar Vienna.²¹⁶ Like Gertrud Marischka, jazz scholar Klaus Schulz points to gramophone records as the most prevalent medium for getting to know the unfamiliar music. Paul Whiteman's "symphonic jazz" was particularly popular among the conservative Viennese audiences because it was more melodic and less aggressive than "hot jazz."²¹⁷ Indeed, the skeptical Viennese commonly equated the art form with noise, slapstick, sultry eroticism, and superficial exoticism.²¹⁸ For example, in his *Jazz: Wiener Roman* (also from 1925), novelist Felix Dörmann, who had written several operetta librettos,²¹⁹ described "the choppy melodies of the foreign music, which sets Vienna's pace, after which she staggers on babblingly—the lost city."²²⁰ Similarly, in his "Monotonization of the World" of the same year,

²¹³ "Immer näher und näher rückte die umkämpfte Musiknummer. Hubert hat mir gestanden, daß er nie zuvor in einer nur annähernd so großen Aufregung auf der Bühne gestanden ist, als vor diesem Experiment. Das Herz hat ihm bis zum Hals hinauf geschlagen, er war kaum fähig die Vorstrophe zu diesem Duett zu singen. Und dann war der große Augenblick gekommen! Oben auf der Bühne sang Betty Fischer: 'Zottelbär, ach Zottelbär...' und unten sekundierte es aus dem Orchester im gleichen Rhythmus: 'Quak – quak quak – quak – quak quak quak...' Durch das Haus ging ein Murmeln, ein Raunen—in den Logen und ersten Parkettreihen erhoben sich die Leute und beugten sich vor um ins Orchester blicken zu können und das Instrument zu sehen mit welchem diese noch nie gehörten Töne hervorgebracht wurden. Mit Beendigung der Nummer setzte frenetischer Applaus ein, der mehrere Wiederholungen forderte. Sieg des Jazz auf der ganzen Linie!" Gertrud Marischka, Hubert Marischka biography, 91.

²¹⁴ Eugen Semrau, "Mehr als ein Leben: Konstruktion und Funktion der Robert-Stolz-Legende," in Schaller, *Operette unterm Hakenkreuz*, 179–197.

²¹⁵ Furthermore, while the sound of the saxophone cannot have been entirely new to the Viennese premiere audience, Granichstaedten's use of the "flexatone," a percussion instrument first patented in Britain a couple of years earlier, probably was. This instrument was also soon taken up by composers such as Krenek in *Jonny spielt auf* (1927), Arthur Honegger in *Antigone* (1927), and Schoenberg in his *Variations for Orchestra* (1928). See Aigner, "Der musikalische Nachlass Bruno Granichstaedten," xxx.

²¹⁶ Wolfgang Lamprecht, *Zur Geschichte der österreichischen Jazz(kritik)* (Vienna: Löcker, 2009), 96–97 and Klaus Schulz, *Jazz in Österreich, 1920–1960* (Vienna: Album, 2003), 12.

²¹⁷ Lamprecht, *Geschichte der Jazz(kritik)*, 88 and 76 and Kraner and Schulz, *Jazz in Austria*, 7.

²¹⁸ Schulz, *Jazz in Österreich*, 16.

²¹⁹ Among Dörmann's librettos were those for Granichstaedten's *Bub oder Mädels* (1908) and *Majestät Mimi* (1911).

²²⁰ "die gehackten Melodien der fremden Musik, die den Rhythmus von Wien angibt, nach dem sie lallend weitertaumelt—die verlorene Stadt"; Felix Dörmann, *Jazz: Wiener Roman* (Vienna: Strache, 1925), 209–210.

Stefan Zweig bemoaned the “sterilization” of cities through American influences particularly in dance, fashion, cinema, and radio.²²¹

In Granichstaedten’s operetta, however, the American setting cleverly justified the use of syncopated music and jazz band sounds (for instrumentation and rhythm were the two parameters to the composer’s interpretation of “jazz”) as unobjectionable local color.²²² Furthermore, Granichstaedten employed the jazz band most spectacularly in the second couple’s comic or even parodistic numbers. The manuscript of Jolly and Dolly’s first duet, “Fräulein, wie kann man nur so treu sein,” for example, shows a peculiar orchestration including wooden drum, a children’s trumpet, xylophone, glockenspiel, and saxophone.²²³ Granichstaedten set trombone glissandi and drawn-out appoggiaturas in the strings and repeatedly demanded the performance to be “grotesque!” or “very comical.” To resolve all doubt of its jocular nature, the number starts with a blaring trumpet quotation of the first famous measures of Bizet’s “Toréador” aria from *Carmen*.

The main couple’s already mentioned, flirtatious jazz number “Zottelbär” can also not be taken at face value: in this parabolic shimmy, Nadja, fully assimilated to her New World environment, coquettishly threatens to train and “cultivate” the seemingly “wild” Russian bear Alex (“because you lack any concept of a certain polish”).²²⁴ The audience, of course, could smirk about these “American” attempts to educate the high-ranked, Old World nobleman. With such an ambivalent treatment of the American influences Granichstaedten managed to appease even some of the more conservative critics. The Christian Social *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, for example, observed with satisfaction that “the jazz band nuisance is given comic shrift.”²²⁵

It seems, then, as if the musical interactions that bring the first couple closer on a “serious,” emotional level were originally all in a nostalgic Russian or romantic neutral style. Granichstaedten, once more following Lehár’s groundbreaking *Lustige Witwe* recipe, used three different musical idioms. Apart from the two national ones (Russian and American in *Der Orlow*; Pontevedrian and Parisian in Lehár’s hit), both works also share a neutral, cosmopolitan style, which is reserved mainly for the first couple to express their more reflective, solitary utterances and communicate their true feelings for each other.²²⁶ Indeed, several reviews of the *Orlow* premiere remarked on the “swaying and singing ... great waltz duet of the second

²²¹ Horak and Mattl, “Musik liegt in der Luft,” 164–165.

²²² This was noted in “‘Der Orlow’: Operetten-Premiere im Theater an der Wien,” *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, April 5, 1925, 12.

²²³ The original orchestral materials of *Der Orlow* are unfortunately missing.

²²⁴ “kultivieren”; “denn für den gewissen Schliff fehlt dir der Begriff”; Bruno Granichstaedten and Ernst Marischka, *Der Orlow: Operette in 3 Akten*, Klavierauszug mit Text (London: Octava E.B. 0040, 1961), 25.

²²⁵ “Mit dem Jazzbandunfug wird lustige Abrechnung gehalten.” “‘Der Orlow’: Die neue Operette im Theater an der Wien.” *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, April 4, 1925.

²²⁶ Volker Klotz points to these three levels in his brilliant, though short analysis of Granichstaedten’s work. See Klotz, *Operette*, 400–402. In *Der Orlow*, Alex shows the urbane side of his character in the customary third-act tenor-hit song “Wandere, mein Mädchen” as well as the sauntering “Zigarettenlied.” Nadja’s emotional maturity and sophisticated manners are established in her entrance number, a slow Boston, in which she is pondering on her feelings for Alex.

act"²²⁷ (No. 8, "Melodram und Duett"?) and noted that, in spite of employing such a wide range of musical styles, Granichstaedten had "remained true with his heart to the authentic Viennese waltz, the warm-hearted Wienerlied."²²⁸ These comments hint at yet another part of the operetta mold shaped by *Die lustige Witwe*: ever since Lehár's smash hit, the main love song, which usually became the most successful independent number, had been a great ballroom waltz like the famous "Lippen schweigen." Even in *Gräfin Mariza*, in which both main characters share a Hungarian background, the lovers find each other in a Viennese waltz (No. 11, "Sag' ja, mein Lieb, sag' ja!").²²⁹ By setting the emotional climax to plot-independent and therefore "neutral" music that was, however, recognized as distinctly Viennese, the universal, cosmopolitan character of the Viennese genre was implied and even operettas without Austrian subject matter could be marked.²³⁰ As musical scholar Gerald Bordman pointed out, this practice had soon been taken up internationally, even by American operetta composers such as Rudolf Friml and Sigmund Romberg.²³¹

In light of these more established aspects, Granichstaedten's *Der Orlow* appears to be a tentative experiment, featuring many internationally attractive elements still within the safe traditional mold of Viennese operetta. The use of a tried-and-tested dramaturgical structure, a familiar framework for different musical styles, and an identifiably Viennese number at the romantic climax allowed the work's collaborators to dare some unprecedented inclusions of controversial, cutting-edge Russian, jazz, and revue materials.

However, after the initial, positive responses to *Der Orlow's* jazz components, the authors apparently felt encouraged to take their experiment a remarkable step further: scarcely one month after the work's premiere, a reviewer of the twenty-fifth performance reported that

the longueurs have disappeared and many a neat and original thing has been added, so two new numbers, of which particularly the striking tango duet with jazz band accompaniment in the second act strongly enhances the atmosphere.²³²

But the newly added song and dance number (No. 11b "Musik-Fortsetzung und Tango"), inserted as the lovers' last duet right before the Act II finale, did more than enhance the atmosphere: the American music now became crucial for the first couple's happy end.

²²⁷ "Wiegend und singend ... großes Walzerduett im zweiten Akt"; R.H., "Theater an der Wien," *Wiener Zeitung*, April 4, 1925, 6; see also Otto Howorka, "'Der Orlow': Erstaufführung im Theater an der Wien," *Reichspost*, April 4, 1925, 7 and "'Der Orlow': Die neue Operette im Theater an der Wien," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, April 4, 1925.

²²⁸ "mit dem Herzen ... dem echten Wiener Walzer, dem gemütvollen Wiener Lied treu geblieben"; "'Der Orlow': Operette von Ernst Marischka und Bruno Granichstaedten," *Neue Freie Presse*, April 4, 1925, 10.

²²⁹ Compare with Klotz's analysis of *Die Gräfin Mariza* in *Operette*, 462.

²³⁰ Compare with Linhardt, "Der Wiener Stoff," 223.

²³¹ Bordman, *American Operetta*, 85. Bordman also points to the importance of Kern's departure from using traditional three-four time in his *Show Boat* (1927), which instead features ballad forms in four-four time as the main love songs, "Why do I love You?" and "Make Believe." Bordman, *American Operetta*, 136.

²³² "Die Längen sind verschwunden und manches Hübsche und Originelle ist hinzugekommen, so zwei neue Nummern, von denen besonders das aparte Tangoduet mit Jazzbandbegleitung dem zweiten Akt eine starke Stimmungssteigerung gibt." "Theater an der Wien," *Neue Freie Presse*, April 30, 1925.

Leading up to this number, Nadja—enjoying the “bright moonlight” with Alex at the garden party—demands that Alex tell her “something pretty.” His simple reply, “Nadja, I love you!” cannot satisfy her. “I have heard all of this so many times!” she complains. “Why don’t you make use of the atmosphere?” And Alex does: “Oh, saxophone, be my postilion of love,” he calls the jazz band, which has so far provided background music behind the scene, and finally: “play, my jazz band, play!”²³³ Moving on from the couple’s earlier Russian and then “neutrally” Viennese romantic encounters, which had also taken their cues from diegetic instruments (the Novgorod bells and balalaika, and the violin, respectively), it is the saxophone—at the time widely understood as a synonym for a libidinal counter-world to old Europe’s bourgeoisie²³⁴—that breaks down the last inhibition thresholds between these two émigrés and adds to a foundation of their relationship that is no longer based only on shared nostalgia but can blossom in the American present. Nadja’s suggested boredom with conventional declarations of love inhibits Alex from intoning a traditional waltz duet and leads Viennese operetta onto untrodden paths.



Figure 1.2: Hubert Marischka and Lea Seidl as Alex and Nadja in Granichstaedten’s *Der Orlow*, Theater des Westens, Berlin 1925.²³⁵

²³³ “Helle Mondbeleuchtung”; “etwas recht Hübsches!” “Nadja, ich liebe Sie!” “Das habe ich alles schon so oft gehört!” “Nütz’ doch die Stimmung ein bisschen aus!” “Oh, Saxophon, / Sei du mein Liebespostillon”; “Spiel’, my Jazzband, spiel!”; Bruno Granichstaedten and Ernst Marischka, “Der Orlow: Operette in 3 Akten,” libretto manuscript. (London: Octava, 1958), II/22.

²³⁴ The same can be observed in Hermann Hesse’s characterization of the saxophonist Pablo in his *Steppenwolf* (1927), for example. Even the title hero of Ernst Krenek’s *Jonny spielt auf*, who was really a violinist, was commonly portrayed with a saxophone, and that long before the Nazis. See Kos, *Kampf um die Stadt*, 568.

²³⁵ Photo courtesy of Österreichisches Theatermuseum, ÖTM FS_PSE71172.

Encouraged by *Der Orlow's* sensationally positive reception in Vienna, which seemed to confirm that he had moved into the right directions, Marischka expanded his imperium shortly thereafter. For one, he took over the Stadttheater in 1926, where he experimented further with large, internationally influenced revue formats until 1929. The *Volks-Zeitung* proudly reported that Marischka had "furnished the world also with a second export article: the Viennese revue,"²³⁶ and the *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt* gushed about the production *Alles aus Liebe*:

An Austrian revue! That means a new asset for Austria, a new Viennese landmark, a new Viennese delicacy, a new Viennese success. ... The Viennese ... finally have a revue that bears comparison to the ones from Paris, London, and Berlin and yet is totally different from those.²³⁷

During the late 1920s Marischka also acted as co-director of the Raimund Theater, situated in a more suburban location and catering primarily for the domestic market with such works as Granichstaedten's "Alt-Wiener Singspiel" *Das Schwalbennest* (1926).²³⁸ This operetta monopoly allowed the director to exchange shows between theaters and to share out his forces to maximum economic and artistic profit.²³⁹ In fact, the social function of his enterprise was clearly significant, providing many jobs and sources of revenue.²⁴⁰ In June 1926 Marischka was presented with the "Golden Medal for Services toward the Republic of Austria," a sign of governmental appreciation showing how important Marischka's enterprise was, both economically and culturally.

In the Theater an der Wien, Marischka could now focus on cosmopolitan-style, and specifically jazz operettas without having to neglect other trends. In March 1927, the director traveled to the US in order to experience New York's operetta theaters and "get to know the American taste in art, to which one now needs to start adjusting also in Europe."²⁴¹ After his return and having explored further the potential of Russian topics in Kálmán's *Die Zirkusprinzessin*, Marischka produced three American-themed operettas: Kálmán's *Herzogin*

²³⁶ "der Welt auch einen zweiten Exportartikel geliefert: die Wiener Revue." "'Alles aus Liebe': Die neue Marischka-Revue," *Volks-Zeitung*, October 2, 1927.

²³⁷ "Eine österreichische Revue! Das heißt ein neues Aktivum für Österreich, eine neue Wiener Sehenswürdigkeit, eine neue Wiener Spezialität, ein neuer Wiener Erfolg. ... Die Wiener ... haben endlich eine Revue, die denen von Paris, London und Berlin gleichkommt und doch ganz anders ist als diese." "Die neue Wiener Revue Marischkas: Eindrücke von der gestrigen Generalprobe im Stadttheater," *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, October 2, 1927, 19.

²³⁸ Compare with Kothes, "Theatralische Revue," 214. An application from Marischka and his co-director Emil Steininger to take over the Carltheater in 1924 was rejected by Breitner.

²³⁹ For example, *Der Orlow* was moved to the Raimund Theater sometime after its four hundredth performance, making way for a new glamorous Theater an der Wien premiere. For details on Vienna's other theater monopolies see Yates, *Theatre in Vienna*, 208–210.

²⁴⁰ Lichtfuss, *Operette im Ausverkauf*, 42. The heated negotiations about the size of the ensemble to be employed when Marischka took over the Stadttheater in 1926 show that city officials were hoping for additional, promising employment opportunities. See Bauer, "Geschichte des Stadttheaters," 147.

²⁴¹ "um den amerikanischen Kunstgeschmack kennen zu lernen, dem man sich anzupassen nun auch in Europa beginnen muß." Marischka quoted in Gertrud Marischka, Hubert Marischka biography, 109.

von *Chicago* (1928), Korngold's *Rosen aus Florida* (1929), and Granichstaedten's *Reklame!* (1930). And he was not the only one to get mileage out of US themes after *Der Orlow*: in due course works such as Michael Krausz's *Glück in der Liebe* (1927) and Oscar Straus's *Hochzeit in Hollywood* (1929) were taken on by the Johann-Strauß-Theater, and revue operettas such as Mischa Spoliansky's *Zwei Krawatten* (1929, Berliner Theater) and Granichstaedten's *Evelyne* (1927, Deutsches Künstlertheater) premiered in Berlin. Furthermore, Viennese directors started to launch works of American origin, most successfully Vincent Youmans's *No, No, Nanette*, which had a run of more than six hundred performances at the Bürgertheater and Stadttheater in 1928.²⁴²

Interest in such productions was spurred by the ever-intensifying jazz craze and the increasing exposure to American musical culture in Vienna after the consolidation of the new currency through foreign loans.²⁴³ From 1926 onwards the radio station RAVAG started to broadcast live jazz concerts from bars and coffee houses,²⁴⁴ and in 1928 it recruited the first radio jazz band.²⁴⁵ Furthermore, international revues such as *Revue Nègre* (1926), *Black People* (1927), and *Artisten* (1928), featuring many famous American jazz musicians, soon swamped Vienna.²⁴⁶ Sam Wooding gave a much-noted performance in the Raimund Theater in November 1925; Paul Whiteman visited Vienna in 1926, George Gershwin and Josephine Baker in 1928,²⁴⁷ the same year that Ernst Krenek's jazz opera *Jonny spielt auf* caused a major stir. The emerging talkies further helped to familiarize Viennese audiences with American jazz: in January 1929 the first Hollywood movie, *Der Jazzsänger* (*The Jazz Singer* [1927]) with Al Jolson, arrived in Vienna's movie theaters.²⁴⁸

Perhaps surprisingly, then, Marischka's later "transatlantic" projects were only moderately successful. Kálmán's *Die Herzogin von Chicago* (1928)—which openly confronts the clash between the Old and the New World as a Charleston-crazy billionaireess from Chicago meets an ultraconservative, poor European prince on her travels to Vienna and Budapest—could not convince the Viennese audiences entirely, in spite of its internationally acknowledged topicality, its opulent design and decorations, and its infectious music. It was replaced after 287 performances.²⁴⁹ Kálmán scholar Kevin Clarke, who interprets *Die Herzogin* as "the peak of Kálmán's parody operetta," explains its flop partly by the advent of "other, more newsworthy" events, and argues that the work's malignant mocking of the Old World's decline and of the beloved operetta genre itself was not appreciated in such times of crisis when Viennese audiences sought escapism more than ever.²⁵⁰ Indeed, unlike Granichstaedten, who seems to use fashionable jazz and revue elements in an earnest attempt to match the American style, Kálmán juxtaposes jazzy numbers with waltzes and czárdás so that they

²⁴² See photo reproduced in Clarke, *Im Himmel*, 14.

²⁴³ Lamprecht, *Geschichte der Jazz(kritik)*, 87.

²⁴⁴ Schulz, *Jazz in Österreich*, 19.

²⁴⁵ Lamprecht, *Geschichte der Jazz(kritik)*, 197–198.

²⁴⁶ Klösch, "Unterhaltung im Übermaß," 199.

²⁴⁷ Kraner and Schulz, *Jazz in Austria*, 8–9.

²⁴⁸ Clarke, *Im Himmel*, 126.

²⁴⁹ Gänzl, *The Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre*, 653.

²⁵⁰ "der Gipfel der Kálmánschen Parodieoperette"; "anderen, aktuelleren Ereignissen"; Clarke, *Im Himmel*, 88 and 206.

“become a deliberate caricature,” allowing, Clarke observes, for “new punch lines about Viennese operetta as a genre that constantly recycles itself.”²⁵¹

Yet contemporary reviews suggest that such parody in Kálmán’s jazz operetta was lost even on some of the sharpest Viennese commentators. Renowned critic Ludwig Hirschfeld, for example, described *Die Herzogin*—with which Kálmán explicitly hoped to “steer onto a new, entirely modern path”—²⁵² as:

not new wine but old water in old pipes. The authors, who seem to be too spoiled by success, have delivered a remarkably weak, humorless, and schematic work this time, and it is high time that they decide to write a somewhat different operetta for once.²⁵³

The journal *Moderne Welt* also called *Die Herzogin* “a cliché operetta” and noted that “we have already seen the same subject at the Theater an der Wien, only in a different garb.”²⁵⁴ Finally, more than half of the respondents to a Viennese newspaper’s public opinion poll voted for *Die Herzogin* as the “dumbest” operetta book of the day.²⁵⁵ The conventional plot caught commentators’ attention and distracted them from the work’s innovative elements and parodistic play with the mold.

The *Herzogin* disappointment left Marischka in a delicate financial situation. The press quickly picked up on this. *Der Tag*, for example, gloomily observed “that the bill on operetta successes is irredeemable, and that for now there is no prospect for business with Viennese operetta created in Vienna. One of Vienna’s most profitable export articles no longer has a say on the world market.”²⁵⁶ Others specifically criticized the direction Marischka had chosen with his production and demanded that he turn away from the “mammoth operetta,” this “bloated monstrosity,” which he could no longer outperform.²⁵⁷ Critic, music historian, and Lehár biographer Ernst Decsey was among Marischka’s most outspoken detractors:

It is not operetta that is “dead”—nobody has claimed that yet [*sic!*]—but just the Marischka operetta: the particular shape or misshape he has tried to give it, for which Granichstaedten’s *Orlow* is an eloquent example. Marischka fights the allegation that

²⁵¹ “zur bewussten Karikatur ... werden”; “neue Pointen über die Wiener Operette als sich ständig recycelndes Genre”; Clarke, *Im Himmel*, 145–146.

²⁵² “das Stück in eine neue ganz moderne Bahn zu lenken”; Kálmán to Marischka, June 12, 1927; quoted in Clarke, *Im Himmel*, 87.

²⁵³ “kein neuer Wein, sondern altes Wasser in alten Schläuchen. Die vom Erfolg anscheinend allzu verwöhnten Autoren haben diesmal eine bemerkenswert schwache, humorlose und schematische Arbeit geliefert, und es ist höchste Zeit, daß sie sich entschließen, einmal eine irgendwie andere Operette zu schreiben.” Ludwig Hirschfeld, “Kálmán Premiere,” *Neue Freie Presse*, April 6, 1928, 12.

²⁵⁴ “Klischeeoperette”; “Dasselbe Thema, nur in anderem Gewand, sahen wir schon im Theater an der Wien.” “Zwischen Walzerrhythmus und Jazzfurioso,” *Moderne Welt: Kultur und Gesellschaft* 22 (1928): 14.

²⁵⁵ “blödeste”; “Unsere Operetten-Preisfrage,” unidentified newspaper clipping; Marischka Papers.

²⁵⁶ “daß die Wechsel auf Operettenerfolge uneinlösbar geworden sind, und auch zunächst keine Aussicht besteht, mit der Wiener, in Wien kreierte Operette ein Geschäft zu machen. Einer der ergiebigsten Exportartikel Wiens hat auf dem Weltmarkt nichts mehr zu sagen.” “Finale,” *Der Tag*, August 3, 1928.

²⁵⁷ “Mammutoperette”; “aufgeblasene Monstrum”; “Die Zukunft des Theaters an der Wien und seine Vergangenheit,” *Volks-Zeitung*, August 12, 1928.

he holds on to a particular mold and reminds us that in the *Orlow* he introduced jazz music. Si tacuisses... He had better not reminded us of it. Precisely this was the biggest evil, that he has jazzed up the good Viennese operetta—and not even for the sake of originality, because in Paris and London it was all over town years before. Jazz was grafted onto our operetta as an inorganic element. ... Marischka is not a Whiteman and one cannot mix Pilsner with cocktails. *Par ordre de Mufti* a new art form cannot be produced out of thin air, not even at the request of a big capitalist with an interest in the arts.²⁵⁸

Franz Lehár himself also added his two cents to this attack:

Viennese operetta has two big opponents: the revue and the American operetta. I ask, now, what has the Theater an der Wien done in order to counter these opponents? It has simply absorbed the revue and the Americanism into Viennese operetta. What does absorbing mean, however? Absorbing means imitating and imitating means to dispense with originality and any kind of character. But if I don't create out of the inside, if I don't write what my soul dictates, if I listen to what the others do, then I am no longer myself. But then I also don't create Viennese operetta. The Theater an der Wien made the mistake of wanting to produce premieres which would have to be surefire hits. ... Therefore the Theater an der Wien has kept at arm's length every work that could be an experiment. Cutting a new path, however, is always an experiment. Now, the management may say that in such difficult times one cannot think about experimenting. Here we go our separate ways now.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ "Nicht die Operette ist 'tot'—das hat bisher kein Mensch behauptet—sondern die Marischka-Operette: die bestimmte Form oder Mißform, die er zu geben versuchte. Wofür gerade Granichstaedens 'Orlow' ein beredtes Beispiel ist. Marischka wehrt sich gegen den Vorwurf, er halte an einer bestimmten Schablone fest, und erinnert daran, daß er in dem 'Orlow' die Jazz-Musik einführte. Si tacuisses... Er hätte daran lieber nicht erinnern sollen. Das war ja das größte Übel, daß er die gute Wiener Operette verjazzt hat und zwar nicht einmal um den Preis der Originalität, denn in Paris und London piffen schon alle Revuespatzen Jahre vorher den Jazz vom Dach. Der Jazz wurde unsrer Operette als unorganisches Element aufgepfropft. ... Marischka ist kein Whiteman und man kann Pilsner nicht mit Cocktails mischen. Par ordre de Mufti läßt sich keine neue Kunstform aus dem Boden stampfen, auch nicht auf Wunsch eines kunstinteressierten Großkapitalisten." Ernst Decsey, "An einer Ecke der Theatergeschichte," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, August 15, 1928.

²⁵⁹ "Die Wiener Operette hat zwei große Gegner: Die Revue und die amerikanische Operette. Ich frage nun, was hat das Theater an der Wien getan, um diesen Gegnern entgegenzutreten? Es hat die Revue und den Amerikanismus der Wiener Operette ganz einfach einverleibt. Was heißt aber einverleiben? Einverleiben heißt nachahmen und nachahmen bedeutet auf Originalität und auf jede Eigenart verzichten. Schöpfe ich aber nicht von innen heraus, schreibe ich nicht das, was mir meine Seele diktiert, horche ich darauf, was die anderen machen, dann bin ich nicht mehr ich selbst. Dann schaffe ich aber auch keine Wiener Operette. Das Theater an der Wien beging den Fehler, Premierien herausbringen zu wollen, die todsicher einschlagen müssen. ... Dadurch hat sich das Theater an der Wien jedes Werk vom Leib gehalten, das ein Experiment sein konnte. Neue Wege gehen, ist aber immer ein Experiment. Nun kann allerdings die Direktion sagen, daß man in schweren Zeiten nicht an ein Experimentieren denken darf. Hier trennen sich nun unsere Wege." Franz Lehár, "Die Zukunft der Wiener Operette," *Neues Wiener Journal*, August 11, 1928.

Lehár's as well as his disciple Decsey's criticism should be read in light of the composer's falling out with Marischka shortly before as well as his forthright rivalry with Kálmán, to whose works the director had repeatedly given preference. For although these scathing remarks ring somewhat true, Lehár's own compositions were by no means free from the "Americanisms" he criticized. Indeed, as Kevin Clarke has pointed out, Lehár voiced no objections to and even conducted the jazzy *Lustige Witwe* score assembled for Erich von Stroheim's 1925 Hollywood film *The Merry Widow*.²⁶⁰ Furthermore, the composer clearly recognized Granichstaedten's innovative achievements in *Der Orlow*, for in his *Paganini*, premiered in October 1925 just a few months after Granichstaedten's success, Lehár too abandoned the waltz as the great love duet. Only the solo number "Liebe, du Himmel auf Erden" is a "Valse Moderato"; the first couple's romantic Act II number, "Niemand liebt dich so wie ich," is a foxtrot. His later hits, *Der Zarewitsch* (Berlin, 1927)—like *Der Orlow* with a Russian subject matter previously so rare—and *Das Land des Lächelns* (Berlin, 1929), each feature a "Valse Boston" as the main love duet.²⁶¹ It seems, then, as if Lehár in fact profited from Granichstaedten's experiment.

In spite of the sharp criticism and the moderate audience interest, Marischka continued to believe in the line he had chosen. It was unfortunate that the next "transatlantic" production, *Rosen aus Florida*, was already outdated before it could take off. When Leo Fall had started this operetta shortly before his death in 1923, the subject matter—another love story between an American multimillionaire and an impoverished Russian countess—had much potential, but by the time Erich Wolfgang Korngold's finished version premiered in 1929, neither the book nor the music offered anything that could have satisfied Marischka's audiences. Fall's reputation and the attractive star cast (including Marischka, Rita Georg and silent-movie star Ossi Oswalda) could not hide the work's obvious plot similarities to *Der Orlow* and *Die Herzogin* and its outdated musical style. With 216 performances *Rosen aus Florida* was a brief success in Vienna but it did not catch on anywhere else.²⁶²

And still, Marischka did not give up. As the beginning of this chapter has shown, in *Reklame!*, his next Theater an der Wien premiere, he took his "American" ideas further than ever. After the disappointments of Kálmán's and Korngold's ventures, Marischka decided to return to the author team of his original transatlantic success, Ernst Marischka and Bruno Granichstaedten. Ever since *Der Orlow*, expectations from Granichstaedten had built up; in Vienna as well as further afield, he was now seen as the "most modern" Viennese operetta composer,²⁶³ who in terms of both material and form "steer[ed] clear of worn-out tracks"²⁶⁴ in his quest for "today's true operetta of the present."²⁶⁵ The *Wiener Zeitung* spelled out:

²⁶⁰ Clarke, "Der Walzer erwacht," 21.

²⁶¹ "Hab nur dich allein" and "Wer hat die Liebe uns ins Herz gesenkt," respectively. Stefan Frey, *Franz Lehár oder das schlechte Gewissen der leichten Musik* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995), 155.

²⁶² Günter Tolar, *So ein Theater! Die Geschichte des Theaters an der Wien* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 1991), 213.

²⁶³ See, for example, "Die 'Reklame'-Premiere: Im Theater an der Wien," *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, March 2, 1930, 13–14, "Reklame," *Der Tag* (Berlin), March 7, 1930 and "The Berlin Theatres," *New York Times*, February 19, 1928, 110. Much later, the same view was voiced by Grun in *Kulturgeschichte der Operette*, 394.

²⁶⁴ "die ausgetretenen Gleise mied"; Fred Heller, "Weg von der Operettenschablone! Gespräch mit Bruno Granichstaedten," *Die Bühne* 160 (1927).

²⁶⁵ "die wirkliche Gegenwartoperette von heute"; Ludwig Hirschfeld, "Große 'Reklame'-Revue: Granichstaedten-Premiere im Theater an der Wien," *Neue Freie Presse*, March 1, 1930, 7.

Bruno Granichstaedten is the right man to Americanize the old form entirely. His *Orlow* with its eccentric music was a bashful beginning; the jazz operetta *Reklame* is tailored entirely to the taste and economic activity of the American stage.²⁶⁶

And critics saw their expectations toward *Reklame!* confirmed: an “effective advertisement [Reklame] for Vienna,”²⁶⁷ one paper trumpeted and another predicted that this operetta would “give the stagnating art form invigorating impulses and possibilities of development that could lead to a new bloom.”²⁶⁸

Indeed, Granichstaedten not only provided his new operetta—as we have seen above—with an unusual libretto and musical elements inspired by Broadway but he also revolutionized its musical structure: unlike the earlier “transatlantic” works, *Reklame!* no longer involves any distinct musical levels. Apart from the Czech bandmaster who introduces himself with a piano number in a “Polka Tempo,”²⁶⁹ all characters express themselves in the same “American” idiom—there is not even a neutral, cosmopolitan style.²⁷⁰ The *Reichspost* observed:

The jazz operetta as a tight unit is born and only small, coy hints reveal that Granichstaedten, the competent master of modern dance music, comes from the Viennese waltz and Viennese song.²⁷¹

The *Volks-Zeitung*, too, noted the sparsity of “Viennese” moments in the work:

Only once does the composer in his American mood dare to recall the Viennese operetta of yore. One believes one is hearing a truly charming slow waltz. It is, however, only an “English waltz.”²⁷²

²⁶⁶ “Bruno Granichstaedten ist der richtige Mann, um die alte Form völlig zu amerikanisieren. Sein ‘Orlow’ war mit seiner exzentrischen Musik ein schüchterner Beginn; die Jazzoperette ‘Reklame’ ist völlig auf Geschmack und Konjunktur der amerikanischen Bühne zugeschnitten.” “Theater an der Wien: ‘Reklame,’” *Wiener Zeitung*, March 2, 1930, 7.

²⁶⁷ “eine wirksame Reklame für Wien”; Ludwig Hirschfeld, “Große ‘Reklame’-Revue: Granichstaedten-Premiere im Theater an der Wien,” *Neue Freie Presse*, March 1, 1930, 7.

²⁶⁸ “gibt der stagnierenden Kunstgattung belebende Impulse, Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten, die zu einer neuen Blüte führen können.” “Reklame,” *Welt am Morgen*, March 4, 1930, 5.

²⁶⁹ “Musikstück Nr. 4,” Bruno Granichstaedten and Ernst Marischka, *Reklame! Operette in 3 Akten*, Vollständiger Klavierauszug mit Text (Vienna: W. Karczag and Edition Bristol E.B. 0150, 1930), 26.

²⁷⁰ This may explain why several papers saw *Reklame!* and none of the earlier transatlantic works as “the first real grand jazz operetta.” See, for example, “Die neue Jazzoperette Granichstaedten im Theater an der Wien,” *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, March 2, 1930, 12.

²⁷¹ “Die Jazzoperette der geschlossenen Einheit ist geboren und nur kleine, verschämte Andeutungen verraten, daß Granichstaedten, der souveräne Beherrscher der modernen Tanzmusik, vom Wiener Walzer, vom Wiener Lied kommt.” “‘Reklame’-Uraufführung im Theater a. d. Wien: Die neue Granichstaedten-Operette,” *Reichspost*, March 2, 1930.

²⁷² “Ein einziges Mal getraut sich der Komponist in seiner amerikanischen Laune an die Wiener Operette von einst zu erinnern. Da glaubt man einen wirklich reizenden langsamen Walzer zu hören. Es ist aber nur ein ‘English Waltz.’” “‘Reklame’: Die neue Operette Granichstaedten im Theater an der Wien,” *Volks-Zeitung*, March 2, 1930, 7. Evidence that the English waltz “Meine Augen fragen Dich...!” was the Act II duet performed at the premiere

This comment, perhaps not surprisingly, refers to the Act II love duet between Mary and Percy, “Meine Augen fragen Dich...!” While the refrain features a “valse à deux temps” rhythm, which could easily be taken for a straightforward waltz, the verse is an unmistakable “Valse Boston” (in German-speaking lands better known as “English waltz”), in which three steps equally divide two bars, creating a hemiola effect with the one-bar-long bass pattern.²⁷³ Employing this more voguish alternative to the classic waltz for the main couple’s grand duet allowed Granichstaedten—like Lehár and others who had chosen this option since *Der Orlow*—to include the lilting three-quarter time that evoked the romantic associations operetta audiences expected without jettisoning the work’s modern, American milieu.

But, unlike so many of its famous predecessors, this grand duet did not become a major hit. Apart from the *Volks-Zeitung*, only one other review mentions the number at all—again not by its title or refrain line, as was common practice, but only generically.²⁷⁴ Clearly, the number lacked memorability. Whether disappointed by its unremarkable reception or because the *Volks-Zeitung* comment showed that with its three-quarter time the duet was still associated with Viennese—rather than Americanness, *Reklame!*’s producers decided to replace “Meine Augen” as part of the customary post-premiere revisions.²⁷⁵

The new duet “Es war im Frühling” was the most radical yet. With the substitution of a syncopated—probably swung—alla breve number, Granichstaedten eliminated the last traces of the waltz in his operetta. It is questionable, however, whether the Theater an der Wien audience welcomed this adjustment. For even the—entirely positive—premiere reviews show that critics were searching for Viennese characteristics, which suggests that many were uncomfortable with the fact that so little about *Reklame!* marked it as Austrian. The *Reichspost*, for example, wrote:

Of course, not much of this [Viennese waltz, Wienerlied] can be heard in this operetta revue with its American appearance, but here and there ... one can feel in the inimitable peppiness with which the small things are served the whiff of a musical culture that, at home in this city, even ennobles jazz.²⁷⁶

can be found in a Berlin review of the occasion (“‘Reklame’: Eine Wiener Operetten-Uraufführung,” *BZ am Mittag*, March 3, 1930). This review mentions the song lines “Baby, mein Baby” and “Wie lange läßt du mich noch allein liegen?,” which can be found in the numbers “Geburtstags-Chor” and “Heut hab ich von dir geträumt” respectively—songs that are only part of the Book of Song Texts (Bruno Granichstaedten and Ernst Marischka, *Reklame! Operette in 3 Akten*, Texte der Gesänge [Vienna: W. Karczag and Edition Bristol, 1930], 13 and 11). This source does not contradict but seems to feature in more detail the version of the work that is captured in the short piano score with the lowest publisher’s number (Bruno Granichstaedten and Ernst Marischka, *Reklame! Operette in 3 Akten*, Klavierauszug [Vienna: Bristol E.B. 0149, 1930]). Both the book of song texts and this piano reduction include “Meine Augen” in Act II.

²⁷³ “Boston (ii),” *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03675> (accessed December 18, 2012). See also Victor Silvester and Philip J.A. Richardson, *The Art of the Ballroom* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1936), 25.

²⁷⁴ “Theater an der Wien. Zum erstenmal: ‘Reklame,’” *Neues Wiener Journal*, March 1, 1930.

²⁷⁵ The streamlined result of these revisions are documented in the full score. Granichstaedten and Marischka, *Reklame!*, Klavierauszug E.B. 0150.

²⁷⁶ “zu hören ist davon [Wiener Walzer, Wienerlied] natürlich in dieser amerikanisch aufgemachten Operettenrevue nicht viel, aber da und dort ... fühlt man in dem unnachahmlichen Schmiß, mit der die Sächelchen

The *Welt am Morgen*, too, searched for native characteristics or achievements and inferred the following:

It is jazz rhythm heard with a Viennese ear. His jazz orchestra plays on the fringes of the Vienna woods, whose melodies swoosh into all the daring harmony, into the new sound color, even into the parodistic titter.²⁷⁷

Without the Boston, *Reklame!* became even less placeable—it now lacked any emblem of the “neutral,” “universal” Vienneseness that had assured the Austrian capital of its operetta’s continued international dominance.

What was left was without doubt structurally and musically modern and technologically progressive but, in the long run, could not convince the Theater an der Wien’s audiences. Of course, reviewers marveled at the fascinating mix of “operetta, sound film, revue, salon drama, [and] great spectacle,”²⁷⁸ and lauded the exemplary “assimilation to the unlimited possibilities created by technology,” which made the operetta cliché a thing of the past.²⁷⁹ Yet, persistent comments on the “overload of music, sound effects, and noise,”²⁸⁰ which left the audience “almost stunned, but not always carried away,”²⁸¹ hint at a certain amount of spectators’ alienation. Particularly telling is a statement in the *Deutschösterreichische Tages-Zeitung*:

[*Reklame!*] might have cost a fortune and is certainly well worth seeing, although it also seems to depart alarmingly from what, in this country, one is used to calling operetta.²⁸²

The reviewer brings up another crucial problem: *Reklame!*’s gigantic production expenses made it difficult for Marischka to maintain, and too costly for other Austrian theaters to take

serviert werden, den Hauch einer Musikkultur, die in dieser Stadt heimisch, sogar die Jazz veredelt.“ “Reklame’-Uraufführung im Theater a.d.Wien,” *Reichspost*, March 2, 1930. Other papers stressed Granichstaedten’s “Viennese charm and musicality” or pointed out that he “knows that he owes the Viennese people melodious ideas.” (“Wiener Charme, Wiener Musikalität”; “Reklame’: Die Erfolg verbürgte Sensationspremiere im Theater an der Wien,” *Das kleine Volksblatt*, March 2, 1930, 24; “er ... weiß, daß er den Wienern melodiose Einfälle schuldig ist”; “Theater an der Wien. Zum erstenmal: ‘Reklame,’” *Neues Wiener Journal*, March 1, 1930, 11.)

²⁷⁷ “Es ist Jazz-Rhythmus mit einem Wiener Ohr gehört. Sein Jazzorchester spielt am Rande des Wiener Waldes, dessen Melodien in alle gewagte Harmonik, in die neue Klangfarbe, selbst in das parodistische Gekicher hineinrauschen.“ “Reklame,” *Welt am Morgen*, March 4, 1930, 5.

²⁷⁸ “Operette, Tonfilm, Revue, Salondrama, große Schau”; Ludwig Hirschfeld, “Große ‘Reklame’-Revue,” *Neue Freie Presse*, March 1, 1930, 7.

²⁷⁹ “Angleichung an die unbegrenzten Möglichkeiten, die die Technik geschaffen hat”; “Theater an der Wien. Zum erstenmal: ‘Reklame,’” *Neues Wiener Journal*, March 1, 1930, 11.

²⁸⁰ “mit Musik, Klangeffekten und Geräusch überladen”; Ludwig Hirschfeld, “Große ‘Reklame’-Revue,” *Neue Freie Presse*, March 1, 1930, 7.

²⁸¹ “fast betäubt, aber nicht immer mitgerissen”; “Reklame’-Uraufführung im Theater a.d.Wien,” *Reichspost*, March 2, 1930.

²⁸² “Ein Vermögen mag das gekostet haben und es ist an sich sicher sehenswert, wenn es sich auch bereits bedenklich von dem zu entfernen scheint, was man hierzulande als Operette anzusprechen gewohnt ist.” *Deutschösterreichische Tages-Zeitung*, March 2, 1930, 7.

on. The creators' attempt to keep theater competitive with the new media by matching their speed and provisions onstage rendered a wide distribution impossible. It did not help that the Social Democratic official organ *Kunst und Volk*, with a well-aimed side blow to the disdained entertainment business, bluntly announced that the talkies would soon rout operetta and popular theater. "In Hollywood an operetta can be furnished and cast a hundred times better than in the richest operetta house of a metropolis," the periodical stated only months after Marischka's final "transatlantic" work premiered.²⁸³ *Reklame!* closed after a devastatingly short run of 176 performances; no further productions of the work are documented. By August 1930 director Marischka had to apply for "a one-time credit for the purpose of keeping up business at the Theater an der Wien."²⁸⁴

And another of Marischka's objectives did not work out: the assumption that the combination of contemporary American subject matter and syncopated musical style would open the doors of English-speaking theaters to his "transatlantic" works. The director of the Theater an der Wien had not been alone in speculating on Broadway successes of his "American" operettas. Korngold's contract with Leo Fall's heirs for *Rosen aus Florida* provides explicit evidence that those parties too were targeting the international market.²⁸⁵ The press also repeatedly showed hope for successful exports of the transatlantic operettas: the *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt's* review of *Der Orlow*, for example, advanced the "perhaps not unwarranted speculation for performance runs in the land of dollars,"²⁸⁶ and the *Moderne Welt* believed that *Die Herzogin* would be a good export product.²⁸⁷ Nor did such hope fade: Ernst Marischka's communications from the 1950s document plans for a new *Orlow* adaptation, for which publisher Otto Blau "expect[ed] business ... particularly considering that the subject is internationally interesting and even topical"; in Blau's opinion, "the work could ... be very successful again, notably also in America."²⁸⁸

Yet, while *Der Orlow* was a huge success across continental Europe—the *New York Times* reports four hundred performances in Paris alone,²⁸⁹ and surviving Italian, Polish, and Scandinavian performance materials suggest popularity in these countries also—the English adaptation by P.G. Wodehouse (among others), mounted as *Hearts and Diamonds* in London's

²⁸³ "Eine Operette kann in Hollywood hundertmal reicher ausgestattet und hundertmal besser besetzt werden, als im reichsten Operettenhaus einer Großstadt." Fritz Rosenfeld, "Tonfilm und Theater," *Kunst und Volk* 1 (1930): 22.

²⁸⁴ "eines einmaligen Kredites zum Zwecke der Aufrechterhaltung des Betriebes des Theaters a.d.Wien"; Hubert Marischka to the Österreichische Kontrollbank für Industrie und Handel, August 1930; Marischka Papers.

²⁸⁵ "Vereinbarung," n.d.; Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, F88 Leo Fall, 194; quoted in Clarke, "Der Walzer erwacht," 42.

²⁸⁶ "eine vielleicht nicht unberechtigte Spekulation auf Serienaufführungen im Dollarland"; "Der Orlow': Operetten-Premiere im Theater an der Wien," *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, April 5, 1925.

²⁸⁷ "Zwischen Walzerrhythmus und Jazzfurioso," *Moderne Welt: Kultur und Gesellschaft* 22 (1928): 14.

²⁸⁸ "da ich mir hiervon ... ein Geschaeft verspreche, zumal in Anbetracht der Tatsache, dass der Stoff international interessant und sogar aktuell ist; das Werk kann ... , insbesondere auch in Amerika, zu neuen Erfolgen kommen." Otto Blau to Ernst Marischka, January 18, 1956; Ernst Marischka Papers.

²⁸⁹ "Granichstaedten, Wrote Operettas: Viennese Composer Dies Here at 64 Creator of Orlow," *New York Times*, June 1, 1944, 19.

West End in June 1926,²⁹⁰ flopped after only forty-six performances.²⁹¹ Granichstaedten's work never made it to Broadway.

This fate was shared by the other transatlantic works launched at the Theater an der Wien. *Rosen aus Florida* did not catch on anywhere abroad,²⁹² and for *Reklame!* there seems to be no documentation at all of productions outside Vienna. Not even Kálmán could continue his series of impressive Broadway runs after *Countess Maritza* (1926) and *The Circus Princess* (1927): *The Duchess of Chicago* already fell through at the Shubert brothers' out-of-town tryouts.²⁹³

A possible explanation of these failures can be found in an interview of Lee Shubert with Vienna's daily *Die Stunde* in 1930, in which the Broadway producer observed:

In America we have had great successes with operetta from Europe but in the last years the American production has taken over the theaters entirely and established itself. The jazz music acted like an epidemic throughout all of America, the musical comedy became the star attraction of theaters and one turned away from the waltz euphoria of imports from Vienna. ... I find it strange that European operettas always involve so many Americans. Of course this looks a bit ridiculous to us. Because the people who describe these dollar billionaires and dollar princes have of course never known them. There is a cliché of Americans in Viennese and German operettas that one cannot inflict on our audiences over there. The librettists should rather take their characters from places that Americans do not know either. But to make Americans, of all people, the main characters of the operetta is misguided for American export. The Viennese milieu—certain keywords one knows about Vienna, the Prater and the *Heuriger* [tavern selling homegrown wine]—is still very popular with us.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰ P. G. Wodehouse, Laurie Wylie, Graham John, Bruno Granichstaedten, and Max Darewski, *Hearts and Diamonds* (London: Keith Prowse, 1926).

²⁹¹ See Traubner, *Operetta*, 299 and David A. Jasen, *P. G. Wodehouse: Portrait of a Master* (New York: Music Sales Group, 2002), 103. The flop in London may, however, have been partly due to weaknesses of the production. As the *London Times* reported, "what the play is all about hardly appears." Although the reviewer praised the principals' singing, he voiced that "one would have been glad to have been able to understand a little more clearly what precisely they were singing about." "Hearts and Diamonds," *London Times*, June 2, 1926, 12; *The Times Digital Archive* (accessed June 22, 2012).

²⁹² Clarke, "Der Walzer erwacht," 47.

²⁹³ Gänzl, *The Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre*, 653; cited also in Clarke, *Im Himmel*, 234. In fact, only very few originally German-language operettas made it to Broadway during the 1920s and only a handful were received cordially: Leo Fall could only show *Madame Pompadour*, Lehár's—in Europe very successful—works were not represented at all, and of the three contributions by Eduard Künneke, only *The Love Song* became a hit. Kálmán's position in America was clearly unique. See Bordman, *American Operetta*, 130.

²⁹⁴ "Wir haben in Amerika große Erfolge mit Operetten aus Europa gehabt, aber in den letzten Jahren hat die amerikanische Produktion völlig von den Theatern Besitz ergriffen und sich behauptet. Die Jazz-Musik wirkte wie eine Epidemie durch ganz Amerika, die musikalische Komödie wurde der Clou der Theater und man kam von der Walzerseligkeit des Imports aus Wien ab. ... Komisch finde ich es, daß in den europäischen Operetten stets so viele Amerikaner und Amerikanerinnen vorkommen. Das wirkt natürlich bei uns ein bißchen lächerlich. Denn die Leute, die diese Dollarmilliardäre und Dollarfürsten beschreiben, haben sie natürlich nie gekannt. Es gibt ein Klischee des Amerikaners in den Wiener und deutschen Operetten, das man unserem Publikum drüben nicht zumuten kann. Die Librettisten sollten lieber ihre Figuren aus Gegenden beziehen, die auch die Amerikaner nicht kennen. Aber gerade Amerikaner zu Hauptakteuren der Operette zu machen, ist für den amerikanischen Export

While the beginning of this statement shows that Marischka's assessment of musical trends in the US was clearly very perceptive, Shubert also spelled out that Americans had no real interest in importing anything but waltz-drenched works from Austria: American audiences went to see European works in order to experience the (idealized) Old World, not to witness implausible portrayals of American life or watered-down jazz. Indeed, reactions to the London adaptation of *Der Orlow* show that the work's American and jazz components were not received as in any way innovative or exciting in the English-speaking world. The review in the *London Times* describes Granichstaedten's operetta as "a very pleasant after-dinner entertainment," concluding that "musical comedy continues upon its inconsequent way, and *Hearts and Diamonds* ... is another milestone on the familiar but by no means unamusing road."²⁹⁵ And whereas at the time of *Der Orlow*'s premiere Granichstaedten's "jazz" may still have passed as cutting-edge (or at least as fashionable) in many European countries, by the time of *Reklame!*, when the Viennese had the chance to hear "authentically American" theater music as well as performers from the US,²⁹⁶ the Austrian composer's collection of popular dance numbers was utterly outdated—not even a Charleston, let alone a Black Bottom could be found in his score.²⁹⁷

A particularly telling example of what Americans wanted from Old World imports is the reception of Walter Kollo's operetta *Three Little Girls* (1930), one of the Shuberts' few European productions after Kálmán's *Circus Princess*. Kollo, who is considered one of the main exponents of the Berlin operetta after Lincke,²⁹⁸ had set *Drei arme kleine Mädchen* (1927)—the story about three generations of an impoverished Prussian noble family—in early nineteenth-century Potsdam, but for the Broadway production the location was changed to the apparently more atmospheric Vienna.²⁹⁹ In a review of the local premiere, a Pittsburgh Press critic praised "this

verfehlt. Das Wienerische Milieu, die gewissen Schlagworte, die man über Wien weiß, der Prater und der Heurige, findet bei uns noch immer Erfolg." "Der Mann der dreihundert amerikanischen Theater," *Die Stunde*, May 28, 1930; also quoted in Clarke, *Im Himmel*, 234–235.

²⁹⁵ "Hearts and Diamonds," *London Times*, June 2, 1926, 12; *The Times Digital Archive* (accessed June 22, 2012).

²⁹⁶ "'No, no, Nanette!' Amerikanische Operette im Bürgertheater," *Neue Freie Presse*, December 25, 1927, 18.

²⁹⁷ Indeed, in his musical depiction of America, Granichstaedten seems to have relied heavily on Marischka's reports upon his return from the US. Having identified dramatic crime scenes with weapons as an essential ingredient of popular American theater, for example, Granichstaedten's Act II climax in *Reklame!* centers around a revolver. Similarly, Marischka's observation that the "monstrous cacophonies" of the "uninhibited, rapid succession of street noises" explained New York's musical affinity with jazz—Marischka called those street noises a "traffic jazz band" (Gertrud Marischka, Hubert Marischka biography, 109)—is reflected in *Reklame!*'s foxtrot "Liebe braucht keine Reklame!," which starts with a fortissimo descending chromatic line orchestrated for brass, tremolo strings and peculiar additions such as Seeschlange and siren. Percy then sings: "Hörst du es sausen, die Großstadt durchbrausen?" ("Musikstück 18, Foxtrot," Granichstaedten and Marischka, *Reklame!*, Klavierauszug E.B. 0150, 110.) Granichstaedten's sounding portrayal of New York was successful with Viennese audiences; the *Reichspost*, for example, noted that "there is much banjoing and jazzing in the orchestra so that one really seems to hear New York's thundering, booming everyday hustle and bustle." ("In dem Orchester banjot und jazzt es, daß man wirklich New Yorks tösendes, brausendes Alltagsgetriebe zu hören vermeint.") "'Reklame'-Uraufführung im Theater a. d. Wien: Die neue Granichstaedten-Operette," *Reichspost*, March 2, 1930.

²⁹⁸ See, for example, Grun, *Kulturgeschichte der Operette*, 384.

²⁹⁹ Marguerite Kollo, "Drei arme kleine Mädels," Kollo, <http://www.kollo.com/fileadmin/kollo/pdf/drei-arme-kleine-maedels.pdf> (accessed July 10, 2012).

Viennese [!] importation” with its lilting waltz numbers as “a throwback to the days of *The Chocolate Soldier*, *The Merry Widow* and those other musical vehicles of hallowed memory.” He concluded: “you’re in Vienna as you watch *Three Little Girls*, and Mr Kollo’s score ... never permits you to forget it.”³⁰⁰

Perhaps not surprisingly, then, European operetta’s biggest success on the Anglo-American market after 1930 was an adaptation of Ralph Benatzky’s revue operetta *Im weißen Rössl* (1930), which combined jazz-inspired music with an almost excessively Austrian setting including mountain scenery, dirndl dresses, and folksy Schuhplattler dances. And, like many of the later 1920s’ international hit works written by Viennese composers, *Im weißen Rössl* was premiered in Berlin, where financial resources and performance opportunities were much more plentiful.³⁰¹ With the advent of the talkies came what film scholar Verena Moritz has aptly described as “the musical cementing of clichés,”³⁰² and Berlin’s new position as the capital of stereotypical, nostalgic Viennese and operettic export articles was confirmed: German film productions in 1930 and 1931 alone include Manfred Noa’s *Der Walzerkönig*, Erich Schönfelder’s *In Wien hab ich einmal ein Mädels geliebt*, Géza von Bolváry’s *Zwei Herzen im ¾ Takt* and *Die lustigen Weiber von Wien*, Hans Tintner’s *Kaiserliebchen*, Conrad Wiene’s *So lang’ noch ein Walzer vom Strauß erklingt*, and Robert Land’s *Wiener Liebschaften*. Although most of these movies were not direct adaptations of stage works, even the titles hint at their pedigree in Viennese operetta and the Wienerlied.³⁰³ When some of their directors—notably Ernst Lubitsch and Walter Reisch—emigrated to the US, this type of “Viennese” film also successfully settled overseas.³⁰⁴ Ralph Benatzky and Hans Weigel comically described this phenomenon in the waltzing “Finale II” of their Hollywood-themed operetta *Axel an der Himmeltür*, premiered in Vienna in 1936:

Es sieht nah’ und ferne	Near and far
Das Publikum gerne	The audience likes to see
Den echten Film aus Wien!	The real film from Vienna!
Es drängen die Massen	The masses usually crowd
Sich stets an die Kassen	To the ticket offices
Beim echten Film aus Wien!	For the real film from Vienna!

³⁰⁰ “Heat or No Heat, ‘Three Little Girls,’ Which Has Opened The Alvin Theater, Is a Light Opera You’ll Not Soon Forget,” *Pittsburgh Press*, September 22, 1931, 25.

³⁰¹ Hermann Schlösser, “Grinzing am Potsdamer Platz: Berlins Anziehungskraft für Wiener Künstler und Intellektuelle,” in Kos, *Kampf um die Stadt*, 267. In order to bypass the bad conditions in Austria, Viennese operetta composers increasingly considered Berlin as the location of their works’ premieres. Leo Fall had been the first to decide for a Berlin premiere with his *Lieber Augustin* (1912), and was soon followed by Oscar Straus (*Letzter Walzer* [1920]), Robert Stolz (starting with *Die Tanzgräfin* [1921]), and Franz Lehár (starting with *Der Zarewitsch* [1927]). For more detail see Stefan Frey, “Das wahre Zeittheater’: Deutsche Operettenkarrieren, 1899–1944,” in Arnbom, Clarke, and Trabitsch, *Welt der Operette*, 218.

³⁰² “der musikalischen Zementierung von Klischees”; Verena Moritz, “Vergangenheitsbewältigung,” in *Kampfzone Kino: Film in Österreich, 1918–1938*, ed. Verena Moritz, Karin Moser, and Hannes Leidinger (Vienna: Filmarchiv Austria, 2008), 158.

³⁰³ See Wolfgang Thiel, “Alt-Wien auf Berlinisch? Anmerkungen zur Tonfilmoperette *Der Kongreß tanzt* (1931),” in *Wien—Berlin: Stationen einer kulturellen Beziehung*, ed. Hartmut Grimm, Mathias Hansen, and Ludwig Holtmeier (Saarbrücken: Pfau, 2000), 170–176.

³⁰⁴ Moritz, “Vergangenheitsbewältigung,” 159.

Ja, die Walzer und Lieder,	Yes, the waltzes and songs,
Die Donau, der Prater,	The Danube, the Prater,
Die zieh'n immer wieder	They again and again drag
Die Leut' ins Theater!	The people into the theater!
D'rum drängst's zum echten Film aus Wien	That's why toward the real film from Vienna
Die Filmproduzenten magisch hin!	The film producers are attracted magically!
Und was Metro, Fox und Paramount	And what Metro, Fox, and Paramount
In ihren Studios dreh'n,	Shoot in their studios,
Bekommen die Wiener dann erstaunt	The Viennese then astoundedly
Als Wiener Film zu seh'n!	Get to see as Viennese film! ³⁰⁵

As Benatzky tells us, the waltz—the very element that Viennese composers were increasingly eliminating from operetta in favor of American musical styles—remained a particular selling point for such “Viennese” films. This paradox was noted by journalist Erwin Rainalter in the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* right at the time of the *Reklame!* premiere:

in Vienna ... , where [the waltz] is so much rooted in the folk, ... one only wants to hear jazz today, and any American singer achieves fuller houses than all Viennese composers and singers together. In order to know that the waltz is still alive, one has to listen further afield: in Berlin one has dreamt and gotten high on the “waltz dream” [*Walzertraum*, operetta by Oscar Straus 1907] again a few years ago; and in England the whole carnival nowadays revolves around the Viennese three-four time. ... Only in Vienna do people not want to know about the waltz any more. ... But it remains strange that these new, modern, souped-up operettas, adapted for an altered taste, are less and less successful. ... The storm that came across the ocean devastated overabundant harvests of melodies. And instead brought tempo, pep, and many other things that are very nice but do not at all suit the Viennese and his music.³⁰⁶

The makers of *Reklame!*, in spite of their bold decision to get rid of all waltz-like Vienneseness for the streamlined Theater an der Wien version, must have become aware of the rather different international expectations for their work. Still within the premiere year, the Karczag Verlag and Edition Bristol assembled yet another score, together with a detailed libretto, under the alternative title *Der Dollar rollt!*. Apparently adapted for productions outside Vienna, all locally specific product placement was removed from this version. Remarkably, the

³⁰⁵ Ralph Benatzky, Paul Morgan, Adolf Schütz, and Hans Weigel, *Axel an der Himmelstür: Ein musikalisches Lustspiel in 3 Akten (6 Bildern)*, Klavierauszug mit Text (Vienna: Ludwig Doblinger D. 7480, 1936), 36–38.

³⁰⁶ “in Wien ... , wo [der Walzer] so sehr im Volke verwurzelt ist, ... will man heute nur mehr Jazz hören, und irgend ein amerikanischer Sänger macht vollere Häuser als alle Wiener Komponisten und Sänger zusammengenommen. Um zu wissen, daß der Walzer noch lebt, muß man hinaushorchen: in Berlin hat man vor einigen Jahren den ‘Walzertraum’ wieder geträumt und sich daran berauscht; und in England steht heuer der ganze Karneval im Zeichen des Wiener Dreivierteltaktes. ... Nur in Wien will man vom Walzer nichts mehr wissen. ... Aber werkwürdig bleibt, daß diese neuen, modern frisierten, für einen gewandelten Geschmack adaptierten Operetten im Erfolg immer mehr abfielen. ... Der Sturm, der übers Meer kam, verwüstete reiche, überreiche Melodienernten. Und brachte dafür Tempo, Schmiß und lauter andere Dinge, die sehr schön sind, die aber gar nicht zum Wiener und zu seiner Musik passen.” Erwin H. Rainalter, “Der Walzer jubiliert,” *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, March 2, 1930.

plot was also adjusted and the minor character of the “ad man” removed—a character whose cynical commentary several reviewers had described as almost Kurt Weillian.³⁰⁷ Through these changes the previously ambiguous, fascinating yet frightening portrayal of the all-dominating advertising “machine” becomes more lighthearted, the work less complex.

Most significantly, however, the international version of *Reklame!* features yet another new Act II duet. Instead of their trivial alla breve dance number, Mary and Percy now engage in an entirely groundless and platitudinous adulation of the Viennese waltz:

I.	I.
Percy: 's war in einer Bar! Wie war doch der Name? Dort saß ganz versteckt Ein [<i>sic</i>] junge Dame!	Percy: It was in a bar! What was the name again? There sat hidden away A young lady!
Mary: Eine kleine Jazz Spielte heimlich leise	Mary: A small jazz [band] Played secretly, quietly
Percy: Was?	Percy: What?
Mary: So ein Lied aus Wien, Eine Walzerweise.	Mary: A song from Vienna, A waltz tune.
Percy: Süßer Wiener Walzer Dein gedenk' ich Tag und Nacht! Süßer Wiener Walzer, Du hast uns zusammengebracht!	Percy: Sweet Viennese waltz Of you I think day and night! Sweet Viennese waltz, You have brought us together!
Mary: Von dem holden Rhythmus gepackt Schlug das Herz im Dreivierteltakt!	Mary: Captured by your graceful rhythm The heart beat in three-four time!
Beide: Und im Walzertanzschritt Nahm das Glück uns lachend mit!	Both: And with the waltz's dancing steps Happiness swept us away! ³⁰⁸

One may expect that, having labored to establish any halfway plausible connection to Vienna and the waltz, Granichstaedten and the Marischka brothers would have pined for a classic musical setting of this text. The new duet, however, is once again a clearly identifiable “English waltz,” complete with hemiolas and hesitations.

³⁰⁷ See, for example, Alfred Rosenzweig, “‘Reklame!’ Granichstaedten-Uraufführung im Theater an der Wien,” *Der Tag*, March 3, 1930.

³⁰⁸ Bruno Granichstaedten and Ernst Marischka, *Der Dollar rollt! (Reklame!) Operette in 3 Akten*, Vollständiges Regie- und Soufflierbuch (Vienna: W. Karczag and Edition Bristol, 1930), 49.

Mary: So ein Lied aus Wien, eine Walzer - Wei se! Süs - ser___ Wie - ner Wal - zer,___ dein ge - denk' ich___
 Tag und Nacht, Süs - ser___ Wiener Wal - zer,___ du hast uns zu - samm'ge - bracht!

poco rit.
mf
più rit.

Example 1.1: Verse end and beginning of the refrain, "Musikstück 15 (Mary, Percy)." *Der Dollar rollt!*, Music: Bruno Granichstaedten, Text: Ernst Marischka and Bruno Granichstaedten. (© Copyright by Kurier Zeitungsverlag und Druckerei Ges.mbH and Papageno Buch u. Musikalienverlag Ges.mbH, Wien.)³⁰⁹

Faced with the choice between a total relapse to worn-out but still popular structures and a risky but fresher and inherently consistent experiment, the authors decided for an awkward—and luckless—middle course.

The transatlantic flops at the Theater an der Wien had their consequences: Granichstaedten in particular struggled after the disappointment of *Reklame!*. It was his last operetta to be premiered in Vienna. During the Nazi era he had to emigrate to the US, where he experienced yet again that his music was neither American nor Viennese enough for Broadway or Hollywood. Impoverished and working as a bar pianist he died in New York in 1944; his jazz operettas were forbidden throughout the war and never secured a place in the repertory again. Kálmán, discouraged by *Die Herzogin's* flop, turned to more conventional subject matter in works such as *Der Teufelsreiter* (1932) but never recovered his outstanding reputation.

Only Marischka, the businessman at heart, was able to bounce back from his transatlantic experiments: his sensational Stadttheater production of *Im weißen Rössl* one year

³⁰⁹ Bruno Granichstaedten and Ernst Marischka, *Der Dollar rollt! (Reklame!) Operette in 3 Akten, Vollständiger Klavierauszug mit Text* (Vienna: W. Karczag and Edition Bristol E.B. 0150, 1930), 87–88.

after *Reklame!* was the most elaborate yet—a saving grace!—and with Kreisler’s smash hit *Sissy* (1932) he formally welcomed “Alt Wien” into his flagship venue again. In the end, the Theater an der Wien could live without New World clichés, but it could not do without Viennese ones!

CHAPTER 2: THE CORPORATE STATE

Of Mehlspeis', Ski Holidays, and Other Austrian Delights

Vienna in the early 1930s:

Around this time a prominent Viennese coffeehouse on Kärtnerstraße adorned its window display with a couple of portrait photos, below which one could read: "Two Popular Austrians." One picture showed Hubert Marischka, the other—Engelbert Dollfuß. "And who'd still say that Austria ain't no operetta state!" growled a passerby and quickly toddled off.³¹⁰

Austria—an operetta state? The political conditions for operetta indeed became much more favorable when conservative leader Dollfuß assumed power and established his authoritarian system in 1933/1934, putting an end to the riots and unrest between Social Democrats and Christian Socials, which had bedeviled everyday life in Vienna since the July Revolt in 1927. The main goal of the new regime's cultural program lay in eliminating the influences of Social Democracy, which it regarded as the root of all evil.³¹¹ Operetta's mostly bourgeois framework now clearly became an asset. Furthermore, the Christian Social focus on specifically "Austrian" history and established customs enabled theater directors to meet both foreign and national expectations toward the art form: the internationally preferred image of the nostalgic, backward homeland of "wine, women, and waltzes" matched the new regime's idealized image of an idyllic agrarian, deproletarianized country with cultural traditions between the baroque and Biedermeier.³¹²

Indeed, Marischka's 1933 Stadttheater revue *O, du mein Österreich*, a "Musical Parade in Two Parts with a Historical Procession: A Thousand Years of Austria," was very much in accordance with the cultural ambitions of the rising Austrofascist movement. The spectacle—an adaptation of Roda-Roda's *Feldherrnhügel* by Karl Farkas, involving 250 performers—aggrandized the Habsburg monarchy, pointed to distinctly "Austrian" qualities of the country and its people, and featured exactly those popular mythologies of an "eternal Austria" that were to provide the ideological glue for the Christian Corporate State.³¹³ Dollfuß appreciated

³¹⁰ "Um diese Zeit schmückte ein prominentes Wiener Kaffeehaus in der Kärtnerstraße seine Auslage mit zwei Porträtfotos, darunter stand zu lesen: 'Zwei beliebte Österreicher.' Das eine Foto zeigte Hubert Marischka, das andere—Engelbert Dollfuß. 'Und da soll no aner sag'n, Österreich is' ka Operettenstaat!' knurrte ein Passant und trollte sich schnell." Alexander Witeschnik, *Dort wird champagnisiert: Anekdoten und Geschichten zur Geschichte der Operette* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980), 101–102.

³¹¹ Alfred Pfoser and Gerhard Renner, "'Ein Toter führt uns an!' Anmerkungen zur kulturellen Situation im Austrofascismus," in *Austrofascismus: Beiträge über Politik, Ökonomie und Kultur, 1934–1938*, ed. Emmerich Talos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Graz: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1984), 224–225.

³¹² Georg Rigele, "Kulturschock am Lande: Tourismus und Fremdenverkehr in den dreißiger Jahren," in *Kunst und Diktatur: Architektur, Bildhauerei und Malerei in Österreich, Deutschland, Italien und der Sowjetunion, 1922–1956*, ed. Jan Tabor (Baden: Grasl, 1994), 254.

³¹³ Pfoser and Renner, "Ein Toter führt uns an!," 240–241.

and supported Marischka's contribution to the "new Austria," and praised the theater's potential and importance in the program leaflet, stressing that "the promulgation of paternalistic ideas from the stage has the greatest propaganda strength and outweighs many public assemblies and many kinds of of tourist propaganda."³¹⁴

But neither Marischka nor Dollfuß lasted long in the Austrofascist state. While Dollfuß's assassination at the hands of Austrian Nazis in July 1934 came as a violent shock to most, the death of Marischka's imperium was slow and foreseeable. The situation for theaters in the early 1930s was still bleak. Suffering from the continued general economic distress as well as the back-breaking burden of another high entertainment tax on private theaters, the Raimund Theater, the Bürgertheater, the Komödie, and the Theater der Komiker had to shut down within the first few months of the 1933/34 season, while the Volksoper never opened its doors and the Neue Wiener Bühne was waiting for new tenants.³¹⁵ After the saving grace of those two last box-office smashes, Ralph Benatzky's *Im weißen Rössl* (1931) and Fritz Kreisler's *Sissy* (1932), the Marischka stages still stood strong throughout the first half of the season, but an interview with the *Neues Wiener Journal* in March 1933 already shows the director's growing apprehensiveness:

Nowadays, even the so-called "grand" success only just manages to keep us afloat. Rescue only comes from the super success. From the sensational smash of a novelty that one "has to have seen" ... , that offers records both in terms of acting and decorations, and that yields such word of mouth as to ensure a minimum of two to three hundred performances.³¹⁶

His continued belief in the future of operetta as monumental spectacle gradually got Marischka's venues into enormous financial difficulties. Moreover, after the Nazis' takeover in Germany in 1933, his Karczag publishing company had lost its most important business market because the majority of its star composers were Jewish, which precluded the performance of their works in the Reich.³¹⁷ This severe blow also affected the Theater an der Wien, the Karczag "advertising stage," where novelties were presented to theater agents from all over the world. Without the royalties of his older smash hits, Marischka could neither finance the production of new works, nor even keep up the going concern.³¹⁸ By January 1934 he too felt impelled to take

³¹⁴ "Die Verkündigung von vaterländischen Ideen von der Bühne herab hat die größte Kraft der Propaganda und wiegt mit manchen Volksversammlungen und mit vielen Mitteln der Fremdenverkehrspropaganda auf." Program of the Stadttheater revue *O, du mein Österreich* (1933); quoted in Kothes, "Theatralische Revue," 203.

³¹⁵ Bauer, "Geschichte des Stadttheaters," 201 and 208.

³¹⁶ "Heute vermag ja sogar der sogenannte 'große' Erfolg nur, uns zur Not über Wasser zu halten. Die Rettung kommt einzig vom Supererfolg. Vom sensationellen Einschlagen einer Novität, die man 'gesehen haben muß' ... , die auf darstellerischem wie Ausstattungsgebiet lauter Höchstleistungen bietet und die dann jene Mundreklame ins Funktionieren bringt, die zwei bis dreihundert Aufführungen als Minimum garantiert." Hubert Marischka, "Welche Wiener Theater können heute noch prosperieren? Die 'Super-Leistung' ist der einzige Ausweg aus der Theaterkrise," *Neues Wiener Journal*, March 2, 1933, 7; also quoted in Bauer, "Geschichte des Stadttheaters," 202.

³¹⁷ Compare with Pfoser and Renner, "Ein Toter führt uns an!," 232–233.

³¹⁸ Gertrud Marischka, Hubert Marischka biography, 130; see also Arnbom, "Marischkas Girlikirche," 77 and Kevin Clarke, "'Jüdische Dудelei': Die 'entartete' deutsche Operette und ihr 'Nachsommer' auf Wiener Bühnen 1933 bis 1938," in Arnbom, Clarke, and Trabitsch, *Welt der Operette*, 164.

cost-cutting measures and broke off the all too staff-intensive patriotic Austria revue after a run of hardly more than a hundred performances.³¹⁹ The anxious reaction of the *Neues Wiener Journal* shows the proportions of the matter in the minds of contemporaries:

The operetta empire that director Hubert Marischka rules is not the domain of a sole trader; surely the lion's share of Austria's popularity abroad ... clings to Vienna's leading operetta stage. Viennese waltz, anchored in the Viennese operetta, is considered standard currency in Paris, London, Stockholm, and New York.³²⁰

According to Marischka, Dollfuß had personally promised his help as he, too, considered the Theater an der Wien "an Austrian asset to which nothing should happen"; however, on the day when the rescue contract was to be signed, the chancellor was murdered and the relief operation, as the Christian Social leader had apparently envisioned it, never materialized.³²¹ The Theater an der Wien turned into one of the most debt-ridden Viennese stages³²² and a subject of intense debates in the press.³²³ Within a year both the Stadttheater and the Theater an der Wien had to close their doors.

And yet operetta remained an important and lucrative part of Viennese cultural life throughout the Austrofascist era. Peculiarly, while most of Vienna's exclusive operetta theaters folded and star composers increasingly moved their grand premieres to economically as well as politically safer ground such as Zurich's Stadttheater,³²⁴ other Viennese venues clearly benefitted from including operetta in their repertory. Indeed, as Christian Höslinger has pointed out, the "light muse" dominated the playbills across Austrofascist Vienna.³²⁵

Perhaps most striking was the State Opera's reach for the more popular genre. While up until the 1920s only classic hits by Johann Strauss had been tolerated in Vienna's most

³¹⁹ Bauer, "Geschichte des Stadttheaters," 208.

³²⁰ "Das Operettenreich, das Direktor Hubert Marischka kommandiert, ist nicht die Domäne eines Einzelunternehmers, an der führenden Operettenbühne Wiens hängt sicherlich ... ein Großteil der Beliebtheit Österreichs im Ausland. Wiener Walzer, in der Wiener Operette verankert, gilt als Standardwährung in Paris, London, Stockholm und New York." *Neues Wiener Journal*, January 26, 1934; quoted in Edda Fuhrich, "'Schauen Sie sich doch in Wien um! Was ist von dieser Theaterstadt übriggeblieben?' Zur Situation der großen Wiener Privattheater," in Haider-Pregler and Reiterer, *Verspielte Zeit*, 108.

³²¹ "ein österreichisches Aktivum, dem nichts passieren dürfe"; Marischka; quoted in Holzer, *Die Wiener Vorstadtbühnen*, 644 and Tolar, *So ein Theater!*, 220. See also Gertrud Marischka, Hubert Marischka biography, 141.

³²² Angela Eder, "'Hast du heute deinen kulturhistorischen Tag, oder kann man mit dir über Revue reden?'" Das Theater an der Wien 1936 bis 1938," in Haider-Pregler and Reiterer, *Verspielte Zeit*, 134.

³²³ See, for example, "Bund und Gemeinde unterstützen Theater an der Wien," *Neues Wiener Journal*, August 5, 1934, 24 and Austromusikus, "Theaterdirektor Staat: Kulturelle Forderungen zur Sanierung Marischkas," *Neues Wiener Journal*, August 12, 1934, 25.

³²⁴ See, for example, the comments in "Zwei Uraufführungen in Zürich," *Neue Freie Presse*, January 24, 1937, 13. Compare also with Andrew Lamb, *150 Years of Popular Musical Theatre* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 221.

³²⁵ Clemens Höslinger, "'Leichtes Genre' in schweren Zeiten: Franz Lehárs *Giuditta* und das Wiener Opernmilieu im Krisenjahr 1934," in *Bekanntnis zur österreichischen Musik in Forschung und Lehre: Festschrift Eberhard Würzl*, ed. W. Pass (Vienna: Vom Pasqualihaus 11, 1996), 101.

prestigious musical theater venue,³²⁶ the bleak economic situation of the 1930s made it necessary for director Clemens Krauss to take on Heuberger's *Opernball* (in 1931), Suppé's *Boccaccio* (in 1932) and finally even the premiere of Lehár's last work, *Giuditta* (in 1934). Krauss initially rejected this new operetta as unsuitable repertory for the State Opera, but, faced with pressure from political officials, he had to change his position. In a letter to the federal theater administration, he made clear, however, that it had been "by no means the artistic route" that moved him to produce Lehár's work and that he was not willing "to subordinate the artistic goals of the institution for purely financial reasons" again. Krauss left Vienna in December 1934.³²⁷

The majority of the press saw the inclusion of *Giuditta* in the State Opera repertory in a more positive light. As the cultural magazine *Tonfilm Theater Tanz* spelled out,

many operas that are highly esteemed by the audience elite, are generally not box-office successes and our sadly impoverished state needs to be glad to have a popular draw in the repertory for once. ... The standard of our most important theater by no means suffers from this; on the contrary, if [*Giuditta*], which some people claim to be unsuitable for our opera, achieves something economically, it is much more likely that we can afford to launch new productions that boost the artistic prestige of our main stage.³²⁸

Indeed, the premiere of Lehár's operatic work—produced, how could it be otherwise, under Marischka's guest direction—was an event of unprecedented dimensions, with live broadcasts by the RAVAG and almost a hundred foreign radio stations. In contradiction to what is often reported, with forty-four performances until 1938, *Giuditta* was a box-office success by State Opera standards.³²⁹

A similar reliance on operetta can also be observed at Vienna's private prose theaters. In the early 1930s both the Theater in der Josefstadt and the Volkstheater started to include a *Lustspieloperette* (comedy operetta) or a *musikalisches Lustspiel* (musical comedy) at the end of their seasons because the significantly higher revenue could balance financial deficits from

³²⁶ The State Opera produced Strauss's *Fledermaus* (in 1894), *Zigeunerbaron* (in 1910), and *Nacht in Venedig* (in 1929).

³²⁷ "keineswegs jener künstlerischen Linie"; "die künstlerischen Ziele des Instituts rein aus finanziellen Gründen zurückzustellen"; Karl Krauss to the Bundestheaterverwaltung, June 11, 1934; Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖSta), Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Oper, 631 ex. 1934. For a detailed account of Krauss's dealings with *Giuditta* see Höslinger, "Leichtes Genre."

³²⁸ "so und so viele Opern, die wohl bei der Elite des Publikums viel Anwert finden, im allgemeinen kein Kassenerfolg sind und unser leider so armer Staat muß froh sein, einmal ein Zugstück im Spielplan der Oper zu haben. ... Darunter leidet das Niveau unseres wichtigsten Theaters keineswegs; im Gegenteil, wir können uns dann, wenn mit diesem Werk [*Giuditta*], von dem manche behaupten, es passe nicht in den Rahmen unserer Oper, wirtschaftlich etwas erzielt wird, viel eher leisten, Uraufführungen oder Neuinszenierungen herauszubringen, die das künstlerische Prestige unserer Hauptbühne fördern." "Streiflichter durch die Wiener Staatsoper: 'Giuditta,'" *Tonfilm Theater Tanz* 3 (1934): 2.

³²⁹ Höslinger, "Leichtes Genre," 106 and 103.

“serious literary works,” as the press readily explained.³³⁰ At the same time, though, directors of operetta theaters became increasingly skeptical about the art form. Arthur Hellmer, who took over the Theater an der Wien in 1936, originally envisaged a program similar to that at the Theater in der Josefstadt (which featured mostly spoken drama) “because good operettas don’t exist in any noteworthy number at present.”³³¹ The new director also considered operetta “to be technically and economically a matter of luxury.” He agreed with his predecessor Marischka that “the budget of an operetta theater of international standing is so high that it can only be justified by sensational successes. Experience shows that, in a time that is economically as beleaguered as ours, one cannot count on such successes.”³³² City officials and other theaters, however, did not approve of Hellmer’s alternative programming: “the business of the Viennese prose theaters would be threatened by another new playhouse,” it was argued; the Theater an der Wien should remain an operetta stage.³³³ In order to secure the concession, Hellmer had to give in.³³⁴ As a compromise he opened his house with Ralph Benatzky’s already mentioned witty “musical comedy” *Axel an der Himmelstür*.

The new director’s choice was an astute one, for—although *Axel* was, in Bernhard Grun’s apt words, a real “small grand operetta”³³⁵ and is seen by many scholars as Vienna’s last significant, “home-grown” repertory hit as well as the end point of commercial, privately funded operetta—³³⁶ Hellmer’s choice emphatically signaled a turn away from Marischka’s priorities and an interest in more intricate formats. “Change of director. Change of genre,” *Der Wiener Tag* summarized. “One no longer hears grand, long, sad operettas at the Theater an der Wien.”³³⁷ Indeed, while Vienna’s former operetta emperor had commissioned from Benatzky music for his grand Stadttheater revues *Wien lacht wieder* (1926) and *Alles aus Liebe* (1927), the operettas of this resourceful composer had never premiered on a Marischka stage.³³⁸

³³⁰ “Welturaufführung im Deutschen Theater,” *Reichspost*, April 22, 1934, 14. See also “‘Das kleine Café’ auf der Bellaria,” *Tonfilm Theater Tanz* 6 (1934): 6.

³³¹ “weil es gute Operetten in nennenswerter Anzahl derzeit überhaupt nicht gibt.” “Arthur Hellmer,” *Tonfilm Theater Tanz* 5 (1936): 11.

³³² “Ich halte die Operette auch technisch und ökonomisch heute für eine Luxusangelegenheit.” “Der Etat eines Operettentheaters von internationaler Geltung ist so hoch, daß er nur durch Sensationserfolge zu decken ist. Die Erfahrung lehrt, daß in einer wirtschaftlich so bedrängten Zeit, wie es die unsere ist, mit derartigen Erfolgen nicht mehr zu rechnen ist.” “Direktor Hellmer: ‘Ich mache ein Abonnementtheater,’” *Der Morgen*, March 23, 1936, 11.

³³³ “Die Wiener Prosatheater würden durch eine weitere neue Schauspielbühne in ihrer Existenz bedroht.”

“Konzession für Hellmer gesichert,” *Der Morgen*, April 27, 1936, 11.

³³⁴ For a detailed discussion of Hellmer’s plans for the Theater an der Wien see Eder, “Hast du heute deinen kulturhistorischen Tag,” 128–129.

³³⁵ “kleine große Operette”; Grun, *Kulturgeschichte der Operette*, 439.

³³⁶ See, for example, Attila E. Láng, *Das Theater an der Wien: Vom Singspiel zum Musical* (Vienna: Jugend & Volk, 1976), 62 and Clarke, “Jüdische Dudelei,” 164.

³³⁷ “Direktionswechsel. Genrewechsel. Man hört nicht mehr große, lange, traurige Operetten im Theater an der Wien.” “Musikalisches Lustspiel im Theater an der Wien,” *Der Wiener Tag*, September 2, 1936, 7.

³³⁸ Benatzky had written the music of many of Erik Charell’s grand productions in Berlin’s Grosses Schauspielhaus, not least the internationally successful mammoth operettas *Casanova* (1928) and *Die drei Musketiere* (1929), but he also had become known as a master of intricate, nimble-witted chansons, which he performed in cabarets and vaudeville shows together with his first wife, the Viennese diseuse Josma Selim. After her untimely death in 1929, Benatzky increasingly focused on small-scale musical comedies, most notably *Meine Schwester und ich* (1930) and *Bezauberndes Fräulein* (1933), into which he could incorporate such witty songs.

In Austrofascist Vienna, however, Benatzky's works were in high demand: with nine productions at four different Viennese venues, ranging from small folk comedies to a grand revue operetta, Benatzky was the most prolific and prominently featured operetta composer in the Austrofascist capital: "Ralph Benatzky in all camps," noted a Viennese journal as early as in 1934.³³⁹ The fact that the composer was "Aryan" and wrote most of his own librettos, which theoretically allowed for his works to be marketed also in Nazi Germany, must have contributed to his popularity with Viennese theater directors. Furthermore, his chamber works bore many practical advantages: as they required only small forces and no virtuosic singing, they could easily be performed in smaller venues.³⁴⁰ Indeed, as Table 1 shows, it was particularly those spoken-drama venues Hellmer aspired to, that helped to put Benatzky on Vienna's cultural map.

Title	Book/Lyrics by	Venue	Premiere Date
<i>Das kleine Café</i> (musikalisches Lustspiel)	Ralph Benatzky	Deutsches Volkstheater	April 21, 1934
<i>Die Prinzessin auf der Leiter</i> ³⁴¹ (musikalisches Spiel)	Ralph Benatzky	Theater in der Josefstadt	August 3, 1934
<i>Büxl</i> (Volksstück mit Musik)	Ralph Benatzky	Deutsches Volkstheater	March 15, 1935
<i>Der König mit dem Regenschirm</i> (musikalisches Lustspiel)	Ralph Benatzky	Theater in der Josefstadt	April 18, 1935
<i>Der reichste Mann der Welt</i> (Stück mit Musik)	Hans Müller, Hans Weigel	Deutsches Volkstheater	April 3, 1936
<i>Axel an der Himmelstür</i> (musikalisches Lustspiel)	Paul Morgan, Adolf Schütz, Hans Weigel	Theater an der Wien	September 1, 1936
<i>Herzen im Schnee</i> (Wintersport-Revueoperette)	Henry Gilbert, Armin L. Robinson, Robert Gilbert	Stadttheater (Zurich); Volksoper (Vienna)	December 19, 1936; September 8, 1937
<i>Pariserinnen</i> (musikalisches Lustspiel)	Ralph Benatzky	Theater in der Josefstadt	May 7, 1937
<i>Majestät privat</i> (Lustspieloperette)	Arthur ³⁴² Hellmer, Ralph Benatzky	Theater an der Wien	December 18, 1937

Table 2.1: Ralph Benatzky's works first performed in Vienna during the Austrofascist years.

The Christian Social rulers thought highly of Benatzky and enthusiastically endorsed his works. The premiere of *Axel*, for example, went off as a gala performance in support of the federal government's *Winterhilfe* (Winter Relief) campaign, and was attended by many political

³³⁹ "Ralph Benatzky in allen Lagern," *Tonfilm Theater Tanz* 9 (1934): 6.

³⁴⁰ See also Grun, *Kulturgeschichte der Operette*, 438–439.

³⁴¹ This work was a reworked version of *Meine Schwester und ich* (Berlin, 1930).

³⁴² Fritz Hennenberg attributes the book to Arthur Hellmer (Hennenberg, *Ralph Benatzky: Operette auf dem Weg zum Musical* [Vienna: Edition Steinbauer, 2009], 163), other sources mention Kurt or Karl von Hellmer. The performance materials are lost and the two piano reduction volumes do not mention the librettist.

notables as well as Viennese celebrities.³⁴³ Such approval by the manifestly traditionalist regime is particularly remarkable considering how popular the composer had been in the liberal Weimar Republic as well as in Red Vienna. Furthermore, Benatzky is commonly viewed as one of the most innovative operetta authors of his time. Contemporaries such as author Hugo Wiener went so far as to claim that “had Hitler not come along, we Europeans would have been just as far [with regard to musical theater trends] as the Americans,” arguing that “Benatzky with his *Weißes Rössl* was on the right track.”³⁴⁴ Operetta historians, too, have singled out Benatzky as the “trailblazer” of a new form, the intelligent, socially relevant, and timely musical comedy, a theatrical counterpart to the talkies.³⁴⁵

This chapter will examine the phenomenon of Benatzky’s Austrofascist prolificacy and supposed success by looking at two very different projects by this versatile composer, at opposite ends of his 1930s creative spectrum: *Das kleine Café* (1934), the first chamber operetta he produced in Vienna after leaving the Reich; and the grand “winter-sports revue operetta” *Herzen im Schnee* (1937), with which Benatzky tried to draw on earlier successes. Which aspects of operetta were attractive to the Austrofascists and how did the new regime affect the art form as well as Viennese theatrical life in general? What made Benatzky such a seemingly ideal composer for Corporate Austria and, finally, how did he manage the balancing act of satisfying such a conservative regime and yet producing some of the most innovative works of his time?

³⁴³ See correspondence between the Theater an der Wien and the Bundeskanzleramt; ÖSta, Archiv der Republik (AdR), Bundeskanzleramt, Inneres, Präsidium, Winterhilfe, 7671; also “Wiedereröffnung des Theaters an der Wien: ‘Axel an der Himmelstür,’” *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, September 3, 1936, 17.

³⁴⁴ “Wäre Hitler nicht gekommen, wären wir in Europa ebenso weit gewesen wie die Amerikaner. Benatzky, mit seinem *Weißes Rössl*, war auf dem besten Weg.” Hugo Wiener, *Zeitensprünge: Erinnerungen eines alten Jünglings* (Vienna: Amalthea, 1991), 235; also quoted in Clarke, “Jüdische Dudelei,” 164. Similarly, Arthur Maria Rabenalt, “Operette als Aufgabe: Aufsätze zur Operettenkrise” (1948), in Rabenalt, *Gesammelte Schriften* 3, 14–15.

³⁴⁵ See, for example, Grun, *Kulturgeschichte der Operette*, 440 and Frey, “Das wahre Zeittheater,” 213–214; also Hennenberg’s publication with the denotative title *Ralph Benatzky: Operette auf dem Weg zum Musical*.

Das kleine Café

Ganz ruhig im Zeitmaß
(*allein*) (*beschwörend, mit aller Innigkeit*)

Franz: A-ber ich hab' müssen den Tal-mi hier seh'n, daß mir ein-mal die Au-gen auf-geh'n, daß ich ver-steh' was das Schick-sal meint, wenn's dir ei-ne Frau schenkt o-der an Freund, dann halt sie dir fest und laß sie nicht los!

Denn von al-len Schmer-zen ist kei-ner so groß, als das Ge-fühl: Ver-las-sen zu sein, so mut-ter-seelen allein.

Instrumental markings: Vibr. (Melodie) 3 Klar. Solo, ohne VI., mf, 3 Trp. Solo, Pos. Solo, Vcl. Bass, Bass, Solo Trp. Melodie, nur Strch., pp, espr, mf, 1. Sax., (voller Klang), 2. Sax., 3. Sax., pppp, fpp, pp, ritard.

Example 2.1: Excerpt from No. 11, "Ensemble und Finale II." *Das kleine Café*, Music and Text: Ralph Benatzky. (© Copyright 1934 by Ludwig Doblinger (Bernhard Herzmannsky) KG, Wien; Bühnenverlag: Felix Bloch Erben, Berlin.)³⁴⁶

What connoisseur of pre-1930s operetta would have identified this quiet, musically simple monologue by a small waiter as an Act II finale? No noble tenor hero, no glamorous attire, no

³⁴⁶ "But I've had to see the sham so that my eyes would open for once, that I would understand what fate means, when it sends you a wife or a friend, then hold them tight and don't let them go!! Because of all pains none is greater than the feeling of being forsaken, entirely forsaken." Ralph Benatzky, *Das kleine Café*, Klavierauszug mit Text (Vienna: Ludwig Doblinger and Bernhard Herzmannsky D.7160, 1934), 93–94.

suave cantilenas—only an ordinary man, a baron’s bastard son who, in despair, just about manages to sob the last words.

The second finale of Benatzky’s *Das kleine Café* starts off as one might expect, with a confrontation between Franz’s three former and current love interests in a slow ländler, complete with chorus commentary and followed by energetic tango outbursts of the jealous ladies. But the customary crowd climax is withheld. Franz’s true beloved, Helene, the practically minded daughter of coffeehouse owner Wallenstein, does not react with an explosion of outrage like her rivals. Above a sparse slowfox reminiscence in the strings, she speaks to Franz with ostensible indifference and finally runs off, barely concealing tears, with the comment that “this is not worth wasting a single word on.”³⁴⁷ Left alone, Franz realizes that the money he has recently inherited is not enough to make him happy:

Ich hab’ nämlich glaubt	For I have thought
Auf dieser Welt	That in this world
Gibt’s einen Herrgott	There is a god
Und der ist das Geld!	And that is money!
Für’s Geld kann man sauf’n,	For money one can drink,
Sich allerhand kauf’n	Buy all kinds of things
Sogar einen Hofnarr’n	Even a jester
Oder sonst eine Kreatur,	Or some other kind of creature,
Und doch bleibt man wie der letzte Stein	And still, one is left like the last stone
Allein...	Alone... ³⁴⁸

The composer and librettist deemed this second-act ending “experimental, but if successful, a sensation.”³⁴⁹ In his diary, Benatzky noted:

I have played through the Finale II a hundred times, have listened closely, fine-tuned it... Here I stand. God help me, I cannot do it better. If it is performed simply, humanly, affectionately, and, in spite of the melancholy, with a quiet smile, it will *have* to work! It is an entirely new way to show with chaste, almost folksong-like musical means the inner, emotional processes of someone who has been forsaken by everybody. In operetta, which is founded on implausibility and hubbub, it is a risk. But perhaps with this I will bring the genre forward a little, out of the lowlands and toward real musical comedy.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ “Es lohnt sich ja nicht, ein einziges Wort zu verlieren.” Benatzky, *Das kleine Café*, Klavierauszug, 87.

³⁴⁸ Benatzky, *Das kleine Café*, Klavierauszug, 92.

³⁴⁹ “Geändertes II. Finale *Kleines Café* halte ich für experimental, aber, wenn es gelingt, für eine Sensation.” Ralph Benatzky, diary manuscript, January 30, 1934 in Helga Benatzky’s private collection, Hamburg.

³⁵⁰ “Hundertmal habe ich das Finale II durchgespielt, genau überhört, gefeilt... hier stehe ich, Gott helfe mir, ich kann’s nicht besser. Wenn es einfach, menschlich, herzlich, und, trotz der Wehmut, mit einem leisen Lächeln, gebracht wird, *muß* es wirken! Es ist ein ganz neuer Weg, der [*sic?*], mit schlichten, fast volksliedhaften Tonmitteln, die inneren, seelischen Vorgänge eines Menschen, der von allen verlassen wird, zu schildern. In der Operette, die auf Unwahrscheinlichkeiten und Radau aufgebaut ist, ein Wagnis. Aber vielleicht bringe ich das Genre damit ein bissl vorwärts, aus den Niederungen heraus, zum wirklichen, musikalischen Lustspiel.” Benatzky, diary, January 31, 1934.

The Viennese appreciated Benatzky's experiment. In praising the work's lack of "bedizened pomp that makes today's operetta so unpalatable," *Das kleine Volksblatt* evidently intended a dig at *Giuditta*, which had premiered only three months earlier.³⁵¹ Indeed, *Das kleine Café* was close to the antithesis of Marischka's glamor and Lehár's "would-be operatic singing."³⁵² Benatzky's musical numbers were devised as folk songs, easily memorable and singable, with comparatively small ranges and diatonic melodies. As the composer explained, such musical simplifications were necessary when one wanted to write successfully for an ensemble of actors rather than for singers and dancers.³⁵³ But the melodic constraints also made it easier to bring across more intricate texts and word play, and offered good opportunities for parody and the grotesque³⁵⁴—those very properties that commentators missed in Lehár.³⁵⁵ It is not surprising, then, that one of the adjectives reviewers applied to all his small-scale operettas was *geistreich* (witty, ingenious).

Benatzky's musical textures were also praised, in particular for their intelligent instrumentation, which "chattered, whispered," and steered clear of "overblown dramatic conversations."³⁵⁶ In order to avoid mannerism and "false pathos, as in the recitations of operas in the older style," Benatzky searched for an idiom that "imperceptibly oscillates between prose and song."³⁵⁷ In *Das kleine Café* his efforts, which point so clearly toward the American musical, were particularly successful, as Helene's stark response in the Act II finale shows. The *Wiener Tag* noted:

The whole work is almost a melodrama, underlined and painted over, whole scenes through-composed, always light-footed and variegated, and all of a sudden the musical conversation gives way to a chanson or a hit song.³⁵⁸

Through such musical underlining, Benatzky managed to connect his songs and, in spite of their popular hit-tune character, give them a purpose within the plot development.³⁵⁹

³⁵¹ "aufgedonnerte Pomp, der die Operette von heute so ungenießbar macht"; "'Das kleine Café' im Volkstheater," *Das kleine Volksblatt*, April 22, 1934, 27.

³⁵² "opernambitionierter Gesang"; Arthur Maria Rabenalt, "Aktivierte Operette" (circa 1930); reprinted in Linhardt, *Stimmen zur Unterhaltung*, 303–304.

³⁵³ In his novel *In Dur und Moll*, Benatzky's rascally main character Toni Belloni perspicuously explains that in order to make a song into a successful hit, the range has to be kept small to facilitate a nonchalant delivery between song and speech. Ralph Benatzky, *In Dur und Moll: Roman eines Menschen und einer Zeit* (Wiesbaden: Verlag der Greif Walther Gericke, 1953), 114.

³⁵⁴ Benatzky, diary, September 2, 1934.

³⁵⁵ See, for example, Hanns Gutman, "Operette auf Irrwegen," *Schwäbische Thalia der Stuttgarter Dramaturgischen Blätter* 13 (1931/32): 38; reprinted in Linhardt, *Stimmen zur Unterhaltung*, 323.

³⁵⁶ "sie plaudern, sie flüstern"; "breit ausladenden dramatischen Unterhaltungen"; "'Das kleine Café' im Volkstheater," *Das kleine Volksblatt*, April 22, 1934, 29.

³⁵⁷ "falsches Pathos, etwa wie in den Recitationen der Opern älteren Stils"; "unmerklich zwischen Prosa und Gesang pendelt"; Benatzky, diary, September 23, 1930; also quoted in Maurus Pacher, *Vom pikanten Chanson zum Musical: Zum 100. Geburtstag von Ralph Benatzky* (Vienna: Wiener Bohème, 1984), 12.

³⁵⁸ "Das ganze Stück ist beinahe ein Melodram, untermalt und übermalt, ganze Szenen durchkomponiert, immer leichtflüssig und stimmungsfarbig, und auf einmal ist die musikalische Konversation in ein Chanson, einen Schlager übergegangen." Fred Heller, "Benatzkys 'Kleines Café' im Volkstheater," *Der Wiener Tag*, April 22, 1934.

The music's modesty also fit Benatzky's main characters: rather than fairy princesses or millionaires they were almost always ordinary people, who, like the audiences, had to cope with real-life issues such as unemployment and insolvency. This milieu also changed the dynamics among the protagonists. Benatzky no longer relied on the traditional separation of "aristocratic serious" and "ordinary buffo" pairs, but combined aspects of both in his quirky main couple, in this case Franz and Helene (although her rival Georgette gets most of the interesting soubrette items). Furthermore, as Volker Klotz has pointed out, the power relations between men and women are unusual. While the ladies clearly wear the breeches—in *Das kleine Café*, Franz constantly gets bossed around by the jealous "virago" Georgette, the glamorous lady of society Violetta, and the haughty "Wiener Madl" Helene³⁶⁰—it is the good-natured, endearingly droll male principal who calls the tune in most of the catchy, whimsical music numbers.

New in *Das kleine Café*, whose characteristics as so far described were to some extent already present in Benatzky's earlier small-scale works, was its Viennese focus. Written both for and about Vienna, it was Benatzky's first premiere after leaving Berlin, where he had moved in the 1920s because of the better facilities and more varied creative opportunities.³⁶¹ But when Hitler seized power, Berlin was no longer attractive for the composer. Although the Nazis, who had at first branded Benatzky a Jew,³⁶² "rehabilitated" him as "Aryan and thereby housebroken" as early as October 1933, his wife Mela was Jewish and not safe in the Reich.³⁶³ Furthermore, Benatzky's work was no longer appreciated in Germany; his endearing but unheroic male protagonists and the emancipated female principals hardly suited Nazi ideology, and Benatzky's ample use of parody often bore more or less concealed, unacceptable criticism. A particularly blunt example is the last verse of a couplet in his *Pariserinnen* (1936), in which, embedded in almost Dadaist remarks about goldfish and traffic lights, Benatzky sets the following text to an exaggeratedly *gemütlich* Schuhplattler melody:

<p>Es herrschen auf Erden heut' höh're Gewalten Um Länder und Völker konform zu gestalten, Da formt man die Menschheit durch Formalitäten Und Brutalitäten zu Totalitäten! Dabei wird die uralte Weisheit zertreten, Wir Menschen sind eigentlich auch... Was[?]</p> <p>Refrain: Individividi-, dualili-, Individividi-, dualili-, Individividi-, dualili-täten!</p>	<p>Today there are higher powers on earth To create conformist countries and people, One forms humankind through formalities And brutalities into totalities! With this the ancient wisdom is crushed That we humans are in fact also... Well, what?</p> <p>Individuals!³⁶⁴</p>
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³⁵⁹ Compare with Rabenalt, "Operette als Aufgabe," 15.

³⁶⁰ Ralph Benatzky, *Das kleine Café*, Soufflier- und Regiebuch (Vienna, Leipzig, and Berlin: Ludwig Doblinger, 1934), 14.

³⁶¹ Benatzky, diary, 1927; quoted in Fritz Hennenberg, *Es muß was Wunderbares sein... Ralph Benatzky zwischen "Weißem Rößl" und Hollywood* (Munich: Paul Zsolnay, 1998), 136.

³⁶² Benatzky, diary, April 11, 1933.

³⁶³ "als Arier und somit stubenrein"; Benatzky, diary, October 2, 1933.

³⁶⁴ Ralph Benatzky, "Nr. 12 Couplet ('Individualitäten')," *Pariserinnen*, Klavierauszug (Vienna: Wiener Operetten Verlag W.O.V. 224, 1937), 51–52.

Reactions to *Das kleine Café* in the Nazi daily *Der Stürmer*, describing the work as a “biliously schmalzty, fabricatedly Viennese musical setting ... , which ... never [accords] with the unaffected taste of a down-to-earth audience,”³⁶⁵ show what hackles Benatzky raised in the Reich. “And he is [a Jew] after all,” the critic raged and, “overcome” with a “pogrom mood,” continued:

Depending on the economic situation—and by no means on the author’s character—[his work] becomes either “knorke” [Berlin dialect for “swell”] or “authentically Viennese.” Knorke no longer cuts the ice. In Berlin the penny has already dropped. Thus—[in Viennese dialect] let’s go, let’s go, it isn’t cold—one composes in an “authentically Viennese” manner!³⁶⁶

As overwrought as this agitation against the composer was, it also bears a grain of truth: with the German stages barred, it was vital for Benatzky to break into the Viennese theater market again. As Ralf Waldschmidt has observed, the diverseness of the composer’s works between 1934 and 1938 documents his frantic endeavors to match his earlier successes and attract local audiences with similarly pertinent, up-to-date materials in order to secure the income for a reasonably carefree life.³⁶⁷ A statement in an interview about *Das kleine Café* shows the eagerness of Benatzky—since the collapse of the Habsburg Empire officially a Czech national—to assert his Austrian affiliations:

In spite of my longtime absence from Vienna, I am still the same Viennese and Austrian as I was in my youth—and if the audience senses this from my melodies, then I am completely happy.³⁶⁸

Unlike his earlier chamber works, in which tango and foxtrot had dominated, *Das kleine Café* prominently featured waltzes and ländler as well as Viennese dialect.

Benatzky’s efforts were successful. Apart from the Nazi critique, reviewers of *Das kleine Café* lauded his return to “the older Viennese *Lokalstück*” (dialect folk play),³⁶⁹ and commented particularly on the “homey” locations, his “real Viennese, charming music,” and the many typically local elements, such as the commercial slogans of merchants and other Wiener Typen

³⁶⁵ “widerlich schmalzige, gemacht wienerische Vertonung ... , die ... niemals dem unbeeinflussten Geschmack eines bodenständigen Publikums [entspricht].” “Musik-Tschoch’ im Volkstheater,” *Der Stürmer*, April 28, 1934, 3.

³⁶⁶ “und er ist doch [ein Jude]”; “überwältigt”; “Pogromstimmung”; “Je nach Konjunktur—beileibe nicht nach dem Charakter des Autors—wird es ‘knorke’ oder ‘echt wienerisch’. Knorke zieht heute nicht mehr. Den Berlinern ist der Knopf bereits aufgegangen. Also—gemma, gemma, kalt is’ net!—komponiert man ‘echt wienerisch!’” “So sieht er aus,” *Der Stürmer*, April 21, 1934.

³⁶⁷ Ralf Waldschmidt, “Benatzkys Kammeroperetten nach 1930,” in *Im weißen Rössl: Zwischen Kunst und Kommerz*, ed. Ulrich Tadday (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 2006), 58.

³⁶⁸ “Trotz meiner langjährigen Abwesenheit von Wien bin ich derselbe Wiener u. Österreicher geblieben, wie ich es in meiner Jugend war—und wenn das das Publikum aus meinen Melodien heraus empfindet, dann bin ich restlos glücklich.” “Das kleine Café’ auf der Bellaria,” *Tonfilm Theater Tanz 6* (1934): 7.

³⁶⁹ “Das kleine Café,” *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, April 24, 1934, 8.

in the introductory “Naschmarktsinfonietto.”³⁷⁰ The story’s consoling message that money alone is never enough and that love is much more important for happiness—a message which Benatzky would deliver again and again in his Viennese works³⁷¹—was particularly appreciated in crisis-torn Vienna where, by 1934, the average salary only just reached 70 percent of the 1929 level. With industrial production dwindling ever since the beginning of the depression, almost 45 percent of industrial workers were unemployed by early 1934, and for every available office job there were eighteen people without work.³⁷² Franz’s boredom and unhappiness in high society after accepting his inheritance, and his ultimate preference for a stable life and work in the small coffeehouse, as well as for the local girl rather than a socialite or a dazzling singer, could hearten many Viennese.

Considering how consciously Benatzky had tailored *Das kleine Café* for Viennese audiences, it is not surprising that the regime welcomed the work: many important politicians graced the premiere (dedicated to “the social services of the Old-Viennese Union”),³⁷³ and the Kunststelle für christliche Volksbildung featured *Das kleine Café* in its program, which suggests that the organization had purchased a block of discounted tickets for its members.³⁷⁴ After the dissolution of the Social Democratic party in February 1934, the newly founded Christian Social unity party Vaterländische Front had abolished all cultural organizations that did not toe its line and, in September that year, the remaining Kunststelle für christliche Volksbildung was to merge into the unitary Österreichische Kunststelle. Through this institution the Vaterländische Front—whose primary cultural goal was “the uniting of culture and an patriotism through suitable cultural-political measures”³⁷⁵—wanted to foster all “that adheres to [the new state’s Christian, German, and corporative] foundations, grows out of the Austrian folk heritage, and advances respect for Austrian achievement, work, and Austrian essence.”³⁷⁶ Memorandums of verbal agreements between the Österreichische Kunststelle and several private theaters show how the regime aimed to exert a “fundamental influence on theaters.”³⁷⁷

It was not always necessary for government officials to intervene, however. Communications of Volkstheater director Rolf Jahn from December 1933 show that, even

³⁷⁰ “anheimelnde”; “echt wienerische, reizende Musik”; “Welturaufführung im Deutschen Theater,” *Reichspost*, April 22, 1934, 14. On the importance of the coffeehouse and its cuisine for Vienna see, for example, Musner, *Der Geschmack von Wien*, 15 and 109.

³⁷¹ A great example is the number “Ein bißchen Liebe” in Benatzky’s *Der reichste Mann der Welt* (1936).

³⁷² Wolfgang Maderthaner, “Die Krise einer Kultur,” in *Österreich 1934: Vorgeschichte—Ereignisse—Wirkungen*, ed. Günther Schebeck (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004), 61.

³⁷³ “den Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen des Alt-Wiener Bundes”; *Neue Freie Presse*, April 21, 1934, 7.

³⁷⁴ See “Das Mai-Juni-Programm der Kunststelle,” *Reichspost*, April 22, 1934.

³⁷⁵ “die Vereinigung von Kultur und Staatsgefühl durch geeignete kultur-politische Massnahmen”; “Richtlinien für sämtliche Kulturreferenten der V.F.”; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 37. Compare with Anita Mayer-Hirzberger, “The Takeover of Social Democratic Musical Institutions by the Austrian ‘Corporate State,’” in Beniston and Vilain, *Culture and Politics*, 306.

³⁷⁶ “was sich zu diesen Grundlagen [des neuen Staates: Christlich, deutsch, berufständisch] bekennt, aus dem österreichischen Volkstum wächst und der Achtung vor österreichischer Leistung, Arbeit und österreichischem Wesen dient.” “Richtlinien für die Arbeit der Kulturreferenten bei den Bezirks- und Ortsleitungen. Beiblatt Nr. 3 zum Rundschreiben Nr. 1 des Generalsekretariats der Vaterländischen Front vom 17.12.1934”; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 37.

³⁷⁷ “eine wesentliche Beeinflussung der Theater”; “Entwurf einer Landesweisung über die Kunststelle,” ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38.

before the Ständestaat was fully set up, the theaters reacted sharply toward the political tensions and self-censored their repertory accordingly. Jahn explained his rejection of a drama by Bernhard Rehse, for example, with the “thoroughly changed political situation,” which made it “extremely inopportune” to stage the work in contemporary Austria: “nowadays, one would receive a satire that is pointed against officialdom, against the police, etc., not as harmless as you, my dear Mr Rehse, meant it, and the audience would be alienated in places that would only have amused it a year ago.”³⁷⁸

Still, once the Austrofascist Kunststelle had been set up, the libretto of any prospective production had to be delivered there at least five days before rehearsals started. If the institution decided to endorse the work, it took on a certain number of performances but reserved the right to make its final decision after the premiere. In case the Kunststelle rejected a production—“which is of course to be justified ... with moral, political, religious, and general literary arguments”—and the work was nevertheless performed, the organization was released from all responsibilities. While this intervening measure, particularly powerful because of the monopoly position of the Österreichische Kunststelle, cannot yet have been fully in place for *Das kleine Café*, Benatzky’s later works had to go through this process.³⁷⁹

In spite of such interference, however, the Vaterländische Front never aimed at a comprehensive censorship system. As a manuscript essay about “Cultural Politics in Austria” in the institution’s papers emphasizes, “cultural life shall unfold with the necessary freedom. In case interventions are necessary, these need to be handled with care. We have neither the intention nor the means to keep culture on the leash.”³⁸⁰ But active suppression was often unnecessary as Vienna’s press and audiences became increasingly conservative. Benatzky’s last Viennese premiere, *Majestät privat* (1937)—a cheeky, typically “Parisian comedy” about the adventures of a royal Casanova—garnered neither critical nor popular success: the plot, featuring “lubricities that are unbearable” and not “indigenous” to Vienna, was deemed too immoral.³⁸¹ Such reactions show how fine a line Benatzky had to walk in his works for Austrofascist Vienna with regard to subject matter and style. While several diary statements demonstrate that against the Nazis he would always have taken the side of the Corporate State,³⁸² others convey skepticism toward the conservative, self-regarding Austrofascist cultural ideology. “Blubo à la Vienne wherever one burped!” he reported of a *Heuriger* evening

³⁷⁸ “Die durchaus veränderte politische Lage”; “äusserst inopportun”; “Man würde heutzutage eine Satire, die sich gegen das Beamtentum, gegen die Polizei u.s.w. richtet, nicht so harmlos auffassen, wie Sie von Ihnen, sehr verehrter Herr Rehse, gemeint war und das Publikum wäre an Stellen, die es noch vor einem Jahre ausschliesslich erheitert hätten, befremdet.” Rolf Jahn to Bernhard Rehse, December 28, 1933; Österreichisches Theatermuseum, Heinrich Schnitzler Papers.

³⁷⁹ “die natürlich ... zu begründen ist ... mit sittlichen, politischen, religiösen und allgemein literarischen Argumenten”; “Gedächtnisprotokoll; 3. September 1936: Über die mündliche Vereinbarung zwischen der Ö.K. und dem Theater in der Josefstadt für die Spielzeit 1936/37”; ÖStA, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38. These agreements would have affected Benatzky’s *Pariserinnen* production.

³⁸⁰ “soll das Kulturleben sich in jener Freiheit entfalten, die es braucht. Sind Eingriffe nötig, so müssen sie mit Vorsicht geschehen. Wir haben weder die Absicht noch die Mittel, die Kultur am Gängelband zu führen.” n.n., “Kulturpolitik in Österreich,” manuscript; ÖStA, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 37, 14.

³⁸¹ “Diese Schlüpfrigkeiten sind unerträglich”; “bodenständig”; “Majestät privat,” *Das kleine Volksblatt*, December 19, 1937, 23.

³⁸² See, for example, Benatzky, diary, July 26, 1934.

organized by the Austrian composers' league, and he also complained about the sleazy ingratiation and "knee-slapping," "duliö-like [Austrian slang for intoxicated] intimacy of the a-tout-prix Viennese" that he had witnessed at Austria's exhibit at the 1935 World Exhibition in Brussels.³⁸³

With *Das kleine Café*, Benatzky managed to satisfy not only those who were looking for a waltz-drenched homage to Vienna but also the more critical or cliché-weary audience members, at the same time positioning himself so that his own attitude—whatever it might have been—could not be pinned down. He achieved this through his characteristic, by this time already tried-and-tested balance of very different musical materials, none of which could be taken entirely seriously. As critic Fred Heller observed, Benatzky was a specialist in mixing styles into an "infallible" cocktail, combining "crooning Boston rhythms" and "scoffing ländler tempos," the glamorous and the folksy.³⁸⁴ His riskily emotional Act II finale is embedded in comic numbers, which led one critic to note with relief that its "melancholic pathos" was "just one more melodramatic effect that tickles."³⁸⁵ Immediately beforehand, Georgette delivers the exaggeratedly "French" chanson parody "Chiribiri" and (already within the finale) another humorous slowfox "about the art of palm reading."³⁸⁶ Similarly, after the interval, once Franz's loneliness is reestablished in another "intimate," "folksong-like" solo number, a brooding, explicitly parodistic quotation from Schubert's "Erlkönig" introduces the jealous ladies once more. Played by the saxophone, of all instruments, and perhaps aiming at the more sincere use of Schubert's melodies in Berté's schmaltzy Alt Wien epic *Das Dreimäderlhaus*, this quotation may well have been one of the "sneaky melodic malignities" that years later prompted critic Ludwig Ullmann to call Benatzky "the Bernard Shaw of the light but almost pedantically witty muse."³⁸⁷

In this eclectic, indiscriminate context, the composer's use of jazz instruments and a wide range of fashionable American dances—theoretically anathema to the Austrofascists, who had vowed to "brace [themselves] against the frightening degeneration of culture" by "combat[ing] every kind of negro culture (jazz or so-called Americanism)"—remained entirely

³⁸³ "Blubo à la Vienne, wohin ma krapetzte!" "schenkelklopfende"; "duliö-ske Intimität ... der A-tout-prix Weana"; Benatzky, diary, July 23, 1936. "Blubo" is an acronym for the National Socialist "Blut- und Bodenideologie" (blood and soil ideology), the aggrandizing of the German racial lineage and native soil. Blubo literature and art glorified rural life and promoted a return to nature. These ideas, of course, were also important to the Austrofascists, whose added emphasis on Christian values is sometimes reflected in the adapted term "Gobo" (Gott- und Bodenideologie). On "Blubo" in Austria see, for example, Gabriele Volsansky, "Die 'Affaire Wenter': Zum Verhältnis austrofascistische Kulturpolitik und Nationalsozialismus," in Haider-Pregler and Reiterer, *Verspielte Zeit*, 54.

³⁸⁴ "Unfehlbar"; "er schmachtet im Bostonrhythmus und spottet im Ländlertempo"; "mondän und volkstümlich"; Fred Heller, "'Pariserinnen' in der Josefstadt," *Der Wiener Tag*, May 9, 1937, 12; similarly in "Benatzkys 'Kleines Café' im Volkstheater," *Der Wiener Tag*, April 22, 1934.

³⁸⁵ "melancholische Pathetik"; "nur ein melodramatischer Effekt mehr, der ... kitzelt"; "Benatzkys 'Kleines Café' im Volkstheater," *Der Wiener Tag*, April 22, 1934, 8.

³⁸⁶ "über die Handlesekunst"; "'Das kleine Café' im Volkstheater," *Das kleine Volksblatt*, April 22, 1934, 27.

³⁸⁷ "hinterhältiger melodischer Bosheiten"; "der Bernard Shaw der leichten, aber geradezu pedantisch gewitzten Muse"; Ludwig Ullmann, "Christl Mardayns Benatzky-Premiere," *Der Morgen*, May 10, 1937.

unchallenged.³⁸⁸ Indeed, the regime may have backed Benatzky's partly mocking use of foreign elements because, without being too obtrusive, these elements could help to present Austria as a modern, progressive state overseas.³⁸⁹ For, as the press stressed, *Das kleine Café* bore potential for exposure abroad,³⁹⁰ especially after the international triumph of Benatzky's jazzy *Im weißen Rössl* and the successful Broadway run of his first chamber operetta, *Meine Schwester und Ich* in 1930.³⁹¹

Just as essential to his success as the balance between diverse musical elements was their delivery—as Benatzky's already quoted comment about the experimental Act II finale makes clear. For the successful realization of his specific performance standards, Benatzky relied on his long-trusted star principal, the parody artist Max Hansen.³⁹² The *Wiener Zeitung* aptly commented:

as Franz Lehár has his [Richard] Tauber, Benatzky has his Hansen! ... Who could perform the quirky and uniquely Benatzkian slowfox and waltz songs with such meticulously fitting, trenchant, enthralling rhythm, musicality, and peculiar humor, as well as a kind of compelling amiability?³⁹³

It was exactly the "amiable" or "endearingly" comic quality of Hansen's performance that made any sentimental moments and insinuated criticism palatable and, so reviewers repeatedly stressed, contributed crucially to the success of Benatzky's operettas.³⁹⁴ Indeed, even critics who pleaded for an operetta without any tragic elements lauded the fact that, rather than with a "sobbing finale," the Act II of *Das kleine Café* had finished "with remarkable subtlety and pleasant discretion."³⁹⁵

A great example for Benatzky's successful Wiener Melange is Franz's catchy "Mehlspeis" couplet, one of *Das kleine Café's* most popular hits. This eulogy to Viennese cuisine, praising dumplings and Sachertorte over caviar and *vol au vents*, must have appealed to the Christian Social regime, for food was held dear in the Corporate State: it was not by chance that the Austrian pavilion at the 1935 World Exhibition in Brussels made a feature of its sausage stall, and that the main attraction and crowd puller at the Parisian exhibition two years

³⁸⁸ "gegen den erschreckenden Kulturverfall ... stemmen"; "bekämpfen jede Art von Negerkultur (Jazz oder sogenannten Amerikanismus)"; n.n., "Kulturpolitik in Österreich," manuscript; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 37, 16.

³⁸⁹ Kos, *Kampf um die Stadt*, 508.

³⁹⁰ See, for example, "Ralph Benatzky: 'Das kleine Café'. Deutsches Volkstheater," *Neue Freie Presse*, April 22, 1934, 11.

³⁹¹ Traubner, *Operetta*, 326.

³⁹² Kevin Clarke, "Zurück in die Zukunft: Aspekte der Aufführungspraxis des *Weißten Rössl*," in Tadday, *Zwischen Kunst und Kommerz*, 104.

³⁹³ "Hat Franz Lehár seinen Tauber, so Benatzky seinen Hansen! ... Wer könnte die eigenartigen und ganz besonderen Benatzkyschen Slowfox- und Walzweisen mit so minutiös sitzender, treffender, packender Rhythmik, Musikalität und Absonderlichkeit eines Humors, plus einer irgendwie bezwingenden Liebenswürdigkeit, bringen?" "Das kleine Café," *Wiener Zeitung*, April 24, 1934, 10.

³⁹⁴ See, for example, "Das kleine Café im Volkstheater," *Das kleine Volksblatt*, April 22, 1934, 27.

³⁹⁵ "das schluchzende Finale"; "mit bemerkenswerter Feinheit und wohlthuender Diskretion"; "Ralph Benatzky: 'Das kleine Café'. Deutsches Volkstheater," *Neue Freie Presse*, April 22, 1934, 11.

later was a “Viennese café” catered by a renowned Austrian confectionery.³⁹⁶ Benatzky had already used food in earlier works to distinguish Austrian predilections and specialties from German ones. As Norbert Abels observed, *Im weißen Rössl*, with all its eating as well as talking, singing, and ranting about food, almost turns into a “romanticization of staple foods,” even a “culinarization of eroticism.”³⁹⁷

Franz’s hymn to Viennese cuisine is similarly rhapsodic. And yet, even reviewers skeptical in principle about the “encomium of Mehlspeisen” granted that Benatzky’s music “refreshingly de-sweetened” what could have been “conventional sob slop.”³⁹⁸ Indeed, the “Mehlspeis” couplet is not set, as one might expect, to a *gemütlich* waltz or *ländler* but to a casual foxtrot. Franz’s melody seems rather matter-of-fact; in the extant recording Hansen chooses a typical mixture of song and speech. Only the ascending line at the verse ends, including dramatic pauses and occasionally thrown-in exclamations, gives way to rather suggestive, almost ecstatic wallowing. It is inherently funny to realize that this blinkered but lovable Viennese eccentric is only enumerating a list of typical local dishes.

Franz: A Mehl - speis', ach mir fehl'n die Wor - te, ist die be - ste Me - di - zin, Pa - la -
 A Mehl - speis', ach mir fehl'n die Wor - te, ist die be - ste Me - di - zin, So ein
 But Mehl - speis', oh I have no words is like Am - bro - si - a, Päl - lä -
 A Mehl - speis', läu - tets al - le Glock - erln, tragt es bis zum Ä - ther hin, sol - che

(Example 2.2 beginning)

³⁹⁶ Stefan Plischke, “Wir freuen uns und sind sehr stolz! Die österreichischen Pavillons in Brüssel 1935 und Paris 1937,” in Tabor, *Kunst und Diktatur*, 315 and Adolph Stiller, *Oswald Haerdtl: Architekt und Designer, 1899–1959* (Salzburg: A. Pustet, 2000), 94.

³⁹⁷ “Verklärung von Grundnahrungsmitteln”; “Kulinarisierung der Erotik”; Norbert Abels, “Operettenfinale und Weltverspottung: Das *Weißer Rössl*, Robert Gilbert und das Ende einer Kunstform,” in Tadday, *Zwischen Kunst und Kommerz*, 20.

³⁹⁸ “erfrischend entsüßt”; “herkömmliche Rührpapp”; “Ralph Benatzky: ‘Das kleine Café’. Deutsches Volkstheater,” *Neue Freie Presse*, April 22, 1934, 11.

II. Vers: (gerufen) Jessas, i werd' a Laberl!

tschin - ken o - der Zwetsch - ken - knö - del o - der gar a Sa - cher - tor - te, das gibt's halt nur in Wien.
 Ap - fel - stru - del 7 Germ - knö - del o - der gar a Sa - cher - tor - te, das gibt's halt nur in Wien.
 tschein - kens, 8 Balls of Ten - nis, 9 and from Mis - sis Sa - cher - torts that's real "Made in Vi - en - na."
 Mohn - strit - zel, Nuß - beu - gel, Salz - bur - ger Nok - kerln, die gibt's halt nur in Wien!

rallentando *tempo*

Example 2.2 continued: Final phrases of the "Mehlspeis' Couplet." Das kleine Café, Music and Text: Ralph Benatzky. (© Copyright 1934 by Ludwig Doblinger (Bernhard Herzmannsky) KG, Wien; Bühnenverlag: Felix Bloch Erben, Berlin.)³⁹⁹

Even more tellingly, the couplet contributes to the work's perplexingly unromantic, Vienna-centered end—a tongue-in-cheek play with operetta conventions and perhaps even with the "new Austrian" *Biederkeit* (bourgeois Puritanism). When Franz has finally convinced the supercilious Helene to marry him, he does not sing of love or spring—the most common song subjects, as he himself has established earlier.⁴⁰⁰ In fact, only the *Guglhupf* (Bundt cake) with which his cashier presents him can assure Franz that it is really a festive occasion.⁴⁰¹ As Helene's behavior makes it doubtful that Franz's "dream of delight" will ever be other than culinary, the waiter resorts to a final, rousing "Mehlspeis" reminiscence and fervently concludes: "this only happens in Vienna!!"⁴⁰²

³⁹⁹ "[1] A Mehlspeis, oh words fail me, is the best cure; crepes, plum dumplings ([2] such an apple strudel, yeast dumpling) or even a Sacher cake, that you only get in Vienna. [4] A Mehlspeis, ring all the bells, broadcast it on the air; such a poppy-seed yeast bread, nut croissant, Salzburg vanilla soufflé, that only exists in Vienna!" Benatzky, *Das kleine Café*, Klavierauszug, 65–66.

⁴⁰⁰ "Was hat man denn nicht alles schon besungen, am meisten wohl die Liebe und den Lenz"; Benatzky, *Das kleine Café*, Soufflier- und Regiebuch, 44.

⁴⁰¹ "Jetzt weiß ich erst wirklich ganz genau, dass heut' a Festtag is!" Benatzky, *Das kleine Café*, Soufflier- und Regiebuch, 44.

⁴⁰² "Wonnetraum"; "Das gibt's halt nur in Wien!!" Benatzky, *Das kleine Café*, Soufflier- und Regiebuch, 44.



Figure 2.1: Max Hansen with the *Guglhupf* and the rest of the Ensemble. Ralph Benatzky, *Das kleine Café*, Act III Schlußgesang; Deutsches Volkstheater, Vienna, April 21, 1934.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰³ Photo courtesy of Österreichisches Theatermuseum, ÖTM FS_PSA8650.

Herzen im Schnee

[One] amusing little anecdote[] to be appended:

Hannes Schneider, the great Austrian skiing ace and originator of the Arlberg style, takes a trip to America. In the giant hall of Madison Square Garden in New York a 200-foot-high ski jump with artificial snow has been erected. Thirteen thousand people fill the hall. High up stands Schneider, ready for the drop. The hall is dark, only spotlights beaming on him and on the Austrian ambassador ... in the VIP box. Breathless suspense. The giant orchestra is supposed to intone the Austrian national anthem as a salutation. All thirteen thousand rise from their seats and hear, standing—"At the White Horse Inn on the Wolfgangsee —" Because in America they think it's the Austrian national anthem.—Nice!

Ralph Benatzky in his diary, January 15, 1937.⁴⁰⁴

What seemed a peculiar mix-up to Benatzky may in fact have been deliberate: budget reports for the New York branch of the Austrian tourism office show that Hannes Schneider's "propaganda trip" and the sensationally popular *White Horse Inn* revue on Broadway were Austrian officials' two great white hopes for a "rising development of the tourist traffic from America."⁴⁰⁵

Even before Benatzky's most famous collaboration reached American stages, the Austrian Chancellor's Office recognized the composer's importance as "a representative of the Viennese genre" who had "contributed immensely to disseminating the reputation of our native music."⁴⁰⁶ In October 1933, during the triumphal runs of *Im weißen Rössl* in London and Paris,⁴⁰⁷ Benatzky was awarded the "Silver Medal of the Republic of Austria for Services to the Republic,"⁴⁰⁸ following the government-internal report

⁴⁰⁴ "Lustige Anekdotchen nachzutragen: Hannes Schneider, die große österr. Skikanone, Erfinder des Arlberger Stils, macht eine Amerikatournee. In der Riesenhalle des Madison-Square-Garden in Newyork ist eine 70m hohe Sprungschanze mit künstlichem Schnee gebaut. 13.000 Menschen füllen die Halle, hoch oben steht Schneider zum Absprung bereit. Halle dunkel, nur Scheinwerferstrahlen auf ihn und den österr. Gesandten ... in der Ehrenloge. Atemlose Spannung. Das Riesenorchester soll zur Begrüßung die österr. Nationalhymne intonieren, alle Dreizehntausend erheben sich von ihren Plätzen und hören stehend an—'Im weißen Rössl am Wolfgangsee —' Weil man das Lied in Amerika für die österr. Nationalhymne hält.—Schön!" Ralph Benatzky, diary, January 15, 1937.

⁴⁰⁵ "der aufsteigenden Entwicklung des Reiseverkehrs aus Amerika"; "Gedächtnisvermerk über die am 27. November 1936 ... stattgefundene 14. Direktionsratssitzung der Österreichischen Verkehrswerbung— Werbedienst des Bundesministeriums für Handel und Verkehr"; ÖSta, AdR, Bundesministerium für Handel und Verkehr, Verkehrssektion, 47076, 1937.

⁴⁰⁶ "ein Vertreter des Wiener Genre"; "ungemein viel zur Verbreitung des Rufes unserer heimischen Musik beigetragen"; "Tabelle über einen Dekorierungsantrag des Herrn Staatssekretärs"; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 2, 47.565-K/1937.

⁴⁰⁷ Traubner, *Operetta*, 327.

⁴⁰⁸ "Silberne Ehrenzeichen der Republik Österreich für Verdienste um die Republik"; Pacher, *Benatzky*, 24. It is not widely known that Benatzky had recommended himself for this award, a fact that annoyed many of the Viennese officials. See Benatzky to the Bundes-Ministerium für Kultur und Unterricht; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 2, Z.27.893-K/1933.

that abroad, particularly in America, Vienna's reputation as capital of music apparently relies to a large extent also on the fact that our city leads the way in the area of the light muse. Austrian hits and among them those by Benatzky have surely attracted a much larger audience to Austria than many a more valuable product of serious Austrian music. Not least, the *Weisses Rössl* has had such a resounding success, especially in England that, in view of promoting tourism alone, a recognition of Benatzky could be justified.⁴⁰⁹

Im weißen Rössl, set in St. Wolfgang, a small town in Austria's Salzkammergut region, indeed attracted the interest of many foreigners. Tourism in the area boomed as the work conquered one country after another, and Carl Lamac's homonymous film from 1935, for which Benatzky contributed additional music, even prompted international travel businesses to organize *Rössl*-themed trips to St. Wolfgang.⁴¹⁰

Tourism was a crucial source of income in 1930s Austria as—like operetta—it did not require raw materials.⁴¹¹ When the Austrian government, fearing annexation attempts from the Third Reich, prohibited National Socialist identifiers such as emblems and uniforms in May 1933, the Nazis reacted with a decree that obliged Germans to pay a thousand marks on entering Austria. This exceptionally high tariff effectively closed the frontiers; hardly any Germans traveled to Austria in the following years. Especially the western provinces, conveniently close for Germans, were affected. In Tyrol, for example, the number of overnight stays decreased by more than half, from 2.7 million in 1932 to 1.3 million in 1934.⁴¹²

The Austrian government took immediate measures to overcome the resulting shortfalls: an "Institute for Tourism Research" was founded at Vienna's College for World Trade

⁴⁰⁹ "dass im Auslande, speziell in Amerika, der Ruf Wiens als erste Musikstadt zum grossen Teil wohl auch darauf beruht, dass unsere Stadt auf dem Gebiete der heiteren Musik als richtungsgebend gilt. Österreichische Schlager und darunter die von Benatzky haben zahlenmässig gewiss an sich ein weit grösseres Publikum auf Österreich aufmerksam gemacht als manches viel wertvollere Produkt der ernsten österreichischen Musik. Nicht zuletzt hat das 'Weiße Rössl' zumal in England einen so durchschlagenden Erfolg gehabt, dass schon vom Standpunkte der Fremdenverkehrsförderung aus eine Anerkennung Benatzky's wohl gerechtfertigt sein könnte." "Benatzky, Ralph. Dr.—Verdienstorden," February 5, 1936; ÖSta, AdR, Präsidium für Handel und Verkehr, 11419, Pr./1936. Benatzky's "propaganda talents" were not only appreciated in *Im weißen Rössl*. The "Mehlspeis" couplet, for example, was praised by the press for "having served the popularization of the 'Viennese cuisine.'" ("Propagandabegabung"; "der Popularisierung der 'Wiener Küche' ... besonders gedient";) "Musikalische Nachsaison im Volkstheater," *Der Morgen*, April 23, 1934, 4. As expected, *Das kleine Café* was soon taken on by Zurich's Schauspielhaus as well as in Berlin, and Benatzky reports of a radio broadcast from Copenhagen as well as the acquisition through His Majesty's Theatre in London. See Benatzky, diary, January 19, 1935 and November 29, 1934.

⁴¹⁰ "Das 'weiße Rössl' wirbt," *Wiener Zeitung*, March 27, 1936, 10; also cited in Karin Moser, "Der 'gute' Film," in Moritz, Moser, and Leidinger, *Kampfzone Kino*, 380.

⁴¹¹ See, for example, Erwin Deinlein, "Die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung des Fremdenverkehrs," in *Handbuch für den österreichischen Fremdenverkehr*, ed. Gewerbeförderungsdienst des Bundesministers für Handel und Verkehr (Vienna: Österreichische Gesellschaft für Fremdenverkehr, 1934), 31.

⁴¹² Statistics from Adolf Lässer, *100 Jahre Fremdenverkehr Tirol* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1989), 173; cited in Wolfgang Straub, *Willkommen: Literatur und Fremdenverkehr in Österreich* (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 2001), 40.

in early 1934,⁴¹³ and the production of advertising materials, posters, and films was increased and translated into numerous languages.⁴¹⁴ Furthermore, branch offices of Austria's tourism agency were established in every major city to lure visitors from all over the world. Efforts were also made to boost inland travel: in order to encourage Austrians to see their own country and support their own economy, direct trains between major cities and the most important holiday resorts were organized, discounted ticket rates offered, and radio advertisements broadcast nationally.⁴¹⁵ Of course, as in the case of operetta, the relatively affluent Viennese middle classes were the most important target of such endeavors.⁴¹⁶ And although the expected influx of German visitors did not materialize after the Thousand Mark Ban was lifted following the July Agreement between Austria and the Reich in 1936, by 1937 Austrian hotels managed to equal the numbers from 1931 thanks largely to the intensive advertising efforts.⁴¹⁷

One important measure toward boosting the numbers of overnight stays was to promote a second season. Apart from the traditional summer travel, Austria increasingly presented itself as a winter destination in the 1930s. Winter sports, and particularly skiing, became the new drawing cards. Officials of the Christian-conservative regime, which placed such importance on history and tradition, promoted this up-and-coming sport as "a markedly Austrian affair," tracing its origins back to Alpine farmers before 1200 and boasting that Austria was the only country with licensed skiing teachers as well as "scientifically grounded" skiing tuition. Winter-sports fans were led to believe that only in Austria could one learn to ski properly.⁴¹⁸ Such efforts were successful. As skiing became increasingly fashionable in the 1930s, high-society magazines and tabloids started to picture Austrian as well as international stars and notables on their winter break in the vastness of the wintery Alps.⁴¹⁹ Chancellor Schuschnigg himself spent New Year's in Tyrol, at St. Anton's Hotel Post, the press eagerly reported.⁴²⁰

The arts, too, fueled the tourism and winter-sports enthusiasm. Novels, including Erich Kästner's *Drei Männer im Schnee* (1934) and Karl Springenschmid's *St. Egid auf Bretteln* (1936), but also film comedies, such as *Peter im Schnee* (1937) by Carl Lamac, contributed to the growing perception of Austria as a skiing nation. Even more influential internationally were Arno Fanck's spectacular ski movies, most notably *Der weiße Rausch* (1931) with Leni

⁴¹³ Christian Maryska, "Buchungslage gut, Nächtigungszahlen steigend! Wintertourismus und Fremdenverkehrswerbung in Österreich," in *Schnee von gestern: Winterplakate der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, ed. Johannes Kamps and Christian Maryska (Vienna: Holzhausen, 2004), 31.

⁴¹⁴ Feller, "Vorwärts in die Vergangenheit," in Kos and Rapp, *Alt-Wien*, 278.

⁴¹⁵ "Gedächtnisvermerk über die am 8. Oktober 1937 ... stattgefundene 20. Direktionsratssitzung der Österreichischen Verkehrswerbung—Werbedienst des Bundesministeriums für Handel und Verkehr"; ÖSta, Bundesministerium für Handel und Verkehr, Verkehrssektion, 35266, 1938.

⁴¹⁶ Christian Rapp, "Schnelle neue Alpen: Schnappschüsse der Moderne aus Österreichs Bergen," in Kos, *Kampf um die Stadt*, 123.

⁴¹⁷ Straub, *Willkommen*, 34. For a detailed account of the "Thousand Mark Ban" and the July Agreement see also Gustav Otruba, *A. Hitler's "Tausend-Mark-Sperre" und die Folgen für Österreichs Fremdenverkehr (1933–1938)* (Linz: Rudolf Trauner, 1983), II.

⁴¹⁸ "eine ausgesprochen österreichische Angelegenheit"; "wissenschaftlichen Grundlagen"; Ferdinand von Weiss, "Wintersport und Fremdenverkehr," in Gewerbeförderungsdienst des Bundesministers für Handel und Verkehr, *Handbuch für den österreichischen Fremdenverkehr*, 343 and 347.

⁴¹⁹ See also Rapp, "Schnelle neue Alpen," 127.

⁴²⁰ See, for example, Ingrid Wolf, "St. Anton am Arlberg 1937," *Die Bühne* 439 (1937).

Riefenstahl and Hannes Schneider, who—in a rather loose story with breathtaking mountain panorama footage—showed off the novel stem turns of his acclaimed “Arlberg method.”⁴²¹ The regime, aware of these films’ propaganda impact, repeatedly decorated Schneider, “the master and patron of the Austrian skiing sport.”⁴²²

It was on the occasion of such an award ceremony that chancellor Schuschnigg and foreign-affairs secretary Guido Schmidt heard of the great success of Benatzky’s new *Herzen im Schnee* at the Stadttheater in Zurich, where it had premiered in December 1936. This grand “winter-sports revue operetta” played in Schneider’s hometown, the already-mentioned fashionable ski resort St. Anton am Arlberg and, in a fictional story, featured characters modeled on several villagers as well as the national icon himself.⁴²³ Revolving around the skiing teacher’s amorous interest in Rosl, the local tailor’s daughter, and his flirtations with the visiting English lady Margaret, *Herzen im Schnee* shows humorous conflicts between the backward but practical locals and the elegant, eccentric strangers during a typical Arlberg skiing season.

The touristic potential of the work was immediately apparent. Austrian officials were attracted by the novelty of the winter-sports material with its authentic setting as well as by the promise of Benatzky’s international popularity, especially because the antipodal attributes *Herzen im Schnee* promoted—“scenic beauty and glamorous elegance,” the autochthonous and the cosmopolitan, tradition and progress—showed off the harmonious synergy of both sides of the “new Austria” as its leaders envisioned it.⁴²⁴ “In the interest of Austrian winter sports ... we have gladly accommodated the wishes of the Arlberg that with the aid of this operetta a grand international advertising campaign should be set in motion now,” reported Schmidt, who liked the idea of “a propaganda vehicle quite different from posters, prints, and ads, which every country offers after all.”⁴²⁵ Kunststelle director Kuno Grohmann argued that *Herzen im Schnee* seemed “to have the makings of an international campaign for Austria as substantial as *Das weisse Rössl* once did.”⁴²⁶

Benatzky, too, openly admitted his hopes that *Herzen im Schnee* would become “a kind of wintry *Weißes Rössl*.”⁴²⁷ The composer had long toyed with the idea of some sort of sequel to his biggest success, whose royalties had enabled him to buy a comfortable home in safe

⁴²¹ Rapp, “Schnelle neue Alpen,” 126; Wolfgang Straub, “Schnee auf Österreichs Literaturbergen,” in Kamps and Maryska, *Schnee von gestern*, 92–93.

⁴²² “Meister und Förderer des Österr. Skisportes”; Kos, *Kampf um die Stadt*, 376.

⁴²³ “Max Hansen als Regisseur und Entdecker,” *Neue Freie Presse*, August 29, 1937, 14.

⁴²⁴ “landschaftliche Schönheit wie mondäne Eleganz”; “Die neue große Benatzky-Operette in der Volksoper: ‘Herzen im Schnee,’” *Die Österreichische Kunststelle, Mitteilungsblätter* 64 (1937). Compare with Tschofen, “Ein Wintermärchen?,” 71 and Pfoser and Renner, “Ein Toter führt uns an!,” 241.

⁴²⁵ “Im Interesse des österreichischen Wintersportes ... haben wir den Wunsch des Arlbergs gerne aufgenommen, dass mit Hilfe dieser Operette nun eine grosse internationale Propaganda eingeleitet wurde.” “eine ganz andere Propaganda ... als Werbeplakate, Drucksachen und Anzeigen, die schliesslich jedes Land bringt”; Guido Schmidt an Georg Frankenstein, n.d.; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38.

⁴²⁶ “geeignet scheint, eine ebenso grosse Weltpropaganda für Österreich zu machen, wie seinerzeit ‘Das weisse Rössl’”; Kuno Grohmann to Georg Schicht, June 18, 1937; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38.

⁴²⁷ “eine Art winterliches ‘Weißes Rössl’”; “Benatzky über Operette und Wintersport,” *Neue Freie Presse*, September 8, 1937, 9.

Switzerland in 1932.⁴²⁸ His only work of revue size since 1930 had been *The Flying Trapeze* (1935)—like *Im weißen Rössl* a collaboration with Hans Müller and Erik Charell—but Benatzky had been disappointed with the outcome.⁴²⁹ In fact, his diary entries show that he thought his chamber works to be of much higher originality and quality than his larger works. At the same time, the composer was increasingly eager for future creative and financial opportunities. “There are fewer and fewer people who stand behind my output,” he worried when Josefstadt director Otto Preminger considered leaving Vienna for Hollywood in 1935, and he regretted that he was not more suited for the film business.⁴³⁰ In August 1936, unsure of what project to tackle next, the composer committed his frustration to paper:

The urge to “make money,” which could motivate me to work ... , flags because in these theater-averse times it is entirely impossible to earn more than a skimpy livelihood. ... Then perhaps the addiction to outward glamor might spur me on? No again. Because the “operetta” genre is a *genre maudit* that—no matter how artistic and sophisticated my aspirations—is always assessed as second hand, and will always lag and be rated as frivolous, no matter of how uninspired bombastic “serious art” rubbish gets.⁴³¹

Benatzky went on to lament the futility of efforts to raise the standard of musical comedies because the audiences were “no less amused by the ‘pits’ of other productions of the same genre,” as by his own “(polished, clean, witty, humanly seen and felt) musical comedy situations.”⁴³²

Remarkably, it was only a few days later that Benatzky began composing the music to *Herzen im Schnee*,⁴³³ which is so different from his other works of this time and, both in form and content, shows such striking similarities to *Im weißen Rössl*. It even has the same lyricist, Robert Gilbert, although the book authors Henry Gilbert and Armin Robinson were new to the team.⁴³⁴ Like its summertime predecessor, *Herzen im Schnee* is a cocktail mixed from elements of modern pop culture and rustic clichés, and combines travel adventure with down-to-earthness. Once more, Max Hansen plays one of his “slightly self-parodistic,” “amiable”

⁴²⁸ Benatzky, diary, January 14 and 23, 1935; see also Hennenberg, *Operette auf dem Weg zum Musical*, 123.

⁴²⁹ Benatzky, diary, June 4, 1935.

⁴³⁰ “immer weniger sind es derer, die noch zu meiner Produktion stehen”; Benatzky, diary, July 1, 1935.

⁴³¹ “Der Trieb ‘Geld zu machen’, der mich veranlassen könnte zu arbeiten ... , erlahmt daran, daß es in diesen theaterabgewandten Zeiten ganz unmöglich ist, mehr als das knappe tägliche Leben zu erwerben. ... Weiters könnte mich die Sucht nach äußerem Glanz vielleicht anspornen? Auch nicht. Denn das Genre ‘Operette’ ist ein genre maudit, das, ist mein Bestreben noch so künstlerisch und anspruchsvoll, immer als second hand gewertet wird, und, mag der Mist der bombastischen ‘ernsten Kunst’ noch so einfallslos sein, immer zurückstehen, nicht seriös gewertet werden wird.” Benatzky, diary, August 25, 1936.

⁴³² “weil das Publikum ... sich in den ‘Niederungen’ anderer Produktionen gleichen Genres zumindest so amüsiert, wie in meinen (gefeilten, sauberen, witzigen, menschlich gesehenen und empfundenen) Musiklustspielsituationen.” Benatzky, diary, August 25, 1936.

⁴³³ Benatzky, diary, September 14, 1936.

⁴³⁴ Early sources cite Benatzky also as the librettist—perhaps to facilitate performances in Nazi Germany since at least Henry and Robert Gilbert had Jewish roots—and Benatzky scholars such as biographer Fritz Hennenberg have supported this idea. (Hennenberg, *Es muß was Wunderbares sein*, 235.) However, extant contracts with the other authors prove their involvement. Private communication with Boris Priebe, dramaturg at Felix-Bloch Erben publishing.

characters—this time in the role of Seppl Huber, the fictionalized Hannes Schneider.⁴³⁵ Hansen, also the director of the production, even gets to sing another quodlibet with quotations from various hit songs, operetta favorites, and Shakespeare lines. The “beautiful” Sigismund in *Im weißen Rössl* is substituted here by the shy townie Bobby, whose stutter is, in turn, clearly inspired by Klärchen’s lisp in the earlier operetta. The audience also witnessed another comic rehearsal of the village choir and, as the *Neue Freie Presse* noted, the *Rössl*’s “famous act-closing rain becomes a lucrative snowfall” in *Herzen im Schnee*.⁴³⁶ There is yet again plenty of opportunity for urban audiences to laugh at the clumsiness of the—this time Tyrolean—country folk and smirk at the typical ignorance and eccentricities of the genteel visitors,⁴³⁷ and just as the locals in *Im weißen Rössl* openly announce that “the magic of the season” is that “the scenery yields interest,”⁴³⁸ St. Anton’s inhabitants bluntly conclude the final chorus:

<p>Ja, gäb’s auf der Welt keinen Fremdenverkehr Na, wo nehmeren wir dann das Einkommen her! Ja! Gäb’s auf der Welt keinen Fremdenverkehr... Gäb’s im Inland auch bald keinen Ausländer mehr! Wenn all’weil die Fremden gern z’Haus bleiben nur, Na, dann schau’n wir gut aus mit unsrer Natur! Drum Ausländer kummt’s! Steigt’s nur ein in den Zug! Denn Inländer hab’n mir im Inland g’rad g’nug!</p>	<p>Yes, if there were no tourism in the world Well, where would we get our income from? Yes, if there were no tourism in the world There also would soon be no foreigner inland! If the strangers always prefer to stay at home, Well, then we sit pretty with our nature! So, foreigners, come! Get onto the train! For we have all the natives we need inland!⁴³⁹</p>
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Finally, *Herzen im Schnee* ends, just like *Im weißen Rössl*, without any “international” couples: the two Austrians find each other, the English lady marries her English fiancé, and the stuttering Bobby finds work as a radio reporter in Vienna. All return where they belong. As one paper noted:

The moral of this propaganda story: foreign ladies are in no danger of avalanche or marriage. Only skiing classes, where flirting is included in the service.⁴⁴⁰

In remarkable contrast to the earlier work, however, none of the skiing guests are German: after the damaging Thousand Mark Ban, English visitors were instead welcomed on stage—and depicted rather more neutrally.

⁴³⁵ “leicht selbstparodistisch gefärbten”; “liebenswert”; Felix Fischer, “‘Herzen im Schnee’ in der Volksoper,” *Das kleine Blatt*, September 9, 1937, 7 and “Wauwau,” *Der Morgen*, September 13, 1937.

⁴³⁶ “aus dem berühmten Aktschlußregen wird ein rentabler Schneefall”; Ludwig Hirschfeld, “‘Herzen im Schnee’. Benatzky-Revue in der Volksoper,” *Neue Freie Presse*, September 10, 1937, 9.

⁴³⁷ Abels, “Operettenfinale,” 7. The townie Bobby, for example, tells a cock to go back to laying eggs and Seppl boasts that in England he was introduced to “the great poet Bernhard Schaf [Sheep].” (“dem grossen Dichter Bernhard Schaf haben’s mir vorgestellt”); Henry Gilbert, Armin L. Robinson, and Robert Gilbert, *Herzen im Schnee*, Textbuch (Zurich: Musikverlag und Bühnenvertrieb Zürich AG, 1937), 121 and 24.

⁴³⁸ “Das ist der Zauber der Saison! Da trägt die Landschaft Zinsen!”

⁴³⁹ Gilbert, Robinson, and Gilbert, *Herzen im Schnee*, Textbuch, 123.

⁴⁴⁰ “Moral der Propagandageschichte: Ausländerinnen drohen in St. Anton weder Lawinen- noch Heiratsgefahren. Bloß Skikurse, bei denen der Flirt im Honorar inbegriffen ist.” Ludwig Hirschfeld, “‘Herzen im Schnee’. Benatzky-Revue in der Volksoper,” *Neue Freie Presse*, September 10, 1937, 9.

As so often, Benatzky was not happy with the work, and particularly with the book. While he never commented on its similarities to *Im weißen Rössl*, he repeatedly criticized the libretto as “dawdling,” “primitive,” “naïve,” and “too long,” albeit conceding that it was “not ineffective.” After the premiere in Zurich, he reflected that at least some of his musical numbers would have been “worthy of a better cause” but then bluntly admitted that *Herzen im Schnee* offered “good business opportunities.”⁴⁴¹ The contract with Vienna’s Volksoper, which he concluded soon thereafter, seemed to confirm his hopes.

The political presence at the Viennese premiere of *Herzen im Schnee* in September 1937 was even more impressive than it had been for Benatzky’s other works. Chancellor Schuschnigg was accompanied by an entourage of ministers of state and foreign ambassadors, as well as by the presidents of the national radio station RAVAG and the agency for tourism advertising. The mayor of St. Anton, the owner of the Hotel Post, and Hannes Schneider had also been invited in order to demonstrate the production’s closeness to real life (or, rather, vice versa).⁴⁴² After Act I, secretary general of the Vaterländische Front Guido Zernatto appeared on stage to greet the performers;⁴⁴³ later on, Schuschnigg personally received Benatzky for a long, friendly conversation.⁴⁴⁴ Furthermore, the Kunststelle organized special events such as an “advertisement performance” for representatives of the workforces, yet again in the presence of high cultural officials.⁴⁴⁵

There was a reason for this deployment of political big shots: *Herzen im Schnee* was the first stage work endorsed and promoted by Neues Leben, a cultural institution founded in 1937 on the model of the Nazi organization Kraft durch Freude and the Italian Dopolavoro.⁴⁴⁶ The Österreichische Kunststelle was incorporated into this new institution, which aimed for “an intensified cultural-political influence on the Viennese private theaters” as well as a “purge of the theater business.”⁴⁴⁷ Minutes of an early meeting show that the new cultural leaders lamented Austrian theaters’ sacrifice of “high-quality art” for the sake of business as well as their reliance on “sensation and the lowest instincts.” Neues Leben, the officials agreed, should therefore steer the program selection and boost “the artistic quality of performance” more than ever. *Herzen im Schnee* was brought up in this discussion as a prime example of how one could “educate the audiences and direct them toward worthwhile pieces” through

⁴⁴¹ “vertrödelt, primitiv”; “naiv, zu lang”; “nicht unwirksam”; “einer besseren Sache würdig”; “gute Geschäftsmöglichkeiten”; Benatzky, diary, December 17 and 22, 1936.

⁴⁴² “Herzen im Schnee,” *Das kleine Volksblatt*, September 9, 1937, 12.

⁴⁴³ “Festpremiere in der Volksoper,” *Wiener Zeitung*, September 9, 1937, 8.

⁴⁴⁴ Grohmann to Legationsrat Dr. Karl Leitmaier, September 11, 1937; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 2; see also Benatzky, diary, September 9, 1937.

⁴⁴⁵ “‘Herzen im Schnee’ als große öffentliche Werbevorstellung,” *Österreichische Kunststelle: Mitteilungen* 65, September 15, 1937.

⁴⁴⁶ Horst Jarka, “Zur Literatur- und Theaterpolitik im ‘Ständestaat,’” in *Aufbruch und Untergang*, ed. Franz Kadroska (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1981), 523 and Anton Staudinger, “Abwehr des Nationalsozialismus durch Konkurrenz? Zur Kulturpolitik im Austrofaschismus,” in *Volkstheater: 100 Jahre Theater. Zeit. Geschichte*, ed. Evelyn Schreiner (Vienna: Jugend & Volk, 1989), 84.

⁴⁴⁷ “ein verstärkter kulturpolitischer Einfluß auf die Wiener Privattheater”; “Reinigung des Theaterbetriebes”; Dir. Dr. H., “Entwurf für eine Vereinbarung zwischen dem V.F.-Werk ‘Neues Leben’ und der ‘Österreichischen Kunststelle,’” April 1, 1937; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38.

“appropriate ticket sales.”⁴⁴⁸ Accordingly, the Kunststelle newsletter proudly announced an “increased ticket acquisition” and “particularly discounted prices” for Benatzky’s work.⁴⁴⁹

The political input in Vienna’s *Herzen im Schnee* production may have been much more weighty, however: an agreement between the Kunststelle and the Volksoper direction determined that the former had to be consulted about the casting, the direction, the scene decorations—even about the texts. In return, the Kunststelle took charge of advertising for the production and organized a “world poster as winter tourism campaign for *Herzen im Schnee*,” which was to be disseminated all across Austria at least a month before the premiere.⁴⁵⁰ Unfortunately, without the performance materials from the earlier Zurich production as comparison, it is impossible to determine how much the Kunststelle actually intervened in the Viennese production of *Herzen im Schnee*, and even with these materials on hand it would be difficult, as it is likely that Benatzky and his co-authors retooled their work to a certain extent from the outset, in order to ensure its distribution and success in the country in which it was set.

One aspect of the Kunststelle’s influence, however, is documented: the institution pleaded for particularly lavish stage settings and allocated a budget three times as high as for other productions.⁴⁵¹ While the sets at the Zurich premiere had already aimed at an authentically “upper-Austrian” impression,⁴⁵² Walter von Hoeßlin’s Viennese replica of St. Anton astonished audiences with its “stunning likeness to nature,” which commentators saw as an “estimable deed with regard to tourism advertising”—a remark that shows that a significant proportion of the potential travelers targeted by the production was situated in Vienna.⁴⁵³ The “traditional” side of Austrian culture was also represented in an “uncommonly sumptuous staged wedding procession,”⁴⁵⁴ in which “representatives of the various rural regions” marched with delegation banners and flags, behind them the veterans’ association, fire brigade, and sports clubs in their traditional garb.⁴⁵⁵ This display of the state’s sacred and secular celebration and staging culture was complemented by a couple of spectacular, usable skiing slopes as well as an artificial ice surface,⁴⁵⁶ on which ice comedians, skating artists, and lines of chorus girls could show their stunts in grotesque costumes.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁴⁸ “hochwertige Kunst”; “Sensation und die niedersten Instinkte”; “die künstlerische Höhe der Darstellung”; “das Publikum zu erziehen, es auf wertvolle Stücke hinzulenken”; “gebührenden Kartenabsatz”; Kulturleitertagung, n.d., must have been in August or September 1937; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 37.

⁴⁴⁹ “einen erhöhten Kartenbezug”; “besonders ermäßigten Preisen”; *Österreichische Kunststelle: Mitteilungen* 65, September 3, 1937.

⁴⁵⁰ “Weltplakates als Winterverkehrswerbung für ‘Herzen im Schnee’”; “Gedächtnisprotokoll über die Vereinbarung zwischen der Österreichischen Kunststelle ... und der Direktion der Volksoper”; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38.

⁴⁵¹ “Gedächtnisprotokoll über die Vereinbarung zwischen der Österreichischen Kunststelle ... und der Direktion der Volksoper”; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38.

⁴⁵² Hennenberg, *Es muß was Wunderbares sein*, 236.

⁴⁵³ “verblüffender Naturähnlichkeit”; “schätzenswerte Tat im Hinblick auf die Fremdenwerbung”; Felix Fischer, “‘Herzen im Schnee’ in der Volksoper,” *Das kleine Blatt*, September 9, 1937, 7.

⁴⁵⁴ “einen ungemein kostspielig inszenierten Hochzeitszug”; “Herzen im Schnee,” *Das kleine Volksblatt*, September 10, 1937, 12.

⁴⁵⁵ “Vertreter der einzelnen ländlichen Bezirke”; Gilbert, Robinson, and Gilbert, *Herzen im Schnee*, Textbuch, 121.

⁴⁵⁶ “Saisonbeginn in der Volksoper,” *Tonfilm Theater Tanz* 9 (1937).

⁴⁵⁷ Felix Fischer, “‘Herzen im Schnee’ in der Volksoper,” *Das kleine Blatt*, September 9, 1937, 7.



Figure 2.2: Max Hansen and Hulda Gerin as Seppl and Margaret on the ski slopes of the Act II mountain scenery. Ralph Benatzky, *Herzen im Schnee*; Vienna, Volksoper, September 8, 1937.⁴⁵⁸

Just how much touristic importance officials placed on such true-to-life presentation of Austrian flair also abroad can be seen from the Kunststelle's preliminary contract with London's Adelphi Theatre, stipulating that all decorations should be authentically Austrian, and that Austrian specialists had to be consulted on all travel and artistic matters. Under a penalty of 25,000 schilling, the story's setting had to remain in Austria, and the international title of the work was to read "St. Anton am Arlberg" so that under no circumstances could interested audience members forget the name of their holiday dream world.⁴⁵⁹

Reactions to the Viennese production were—while hardly exuberant—consistently benevolent, perhaps partly because of its prominent endorsement by Austria's leaders. Many critics

⁴⁵⁸ Photo courtesy of Österreichisches Theatermuseum, ÖTM FS_PSE315076alt.

⁴⁵⁹ Grohmann to Frankenstein, June 18, 1937; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38.

commented on the “lighthearted pleasure” or the “charming musical Benatzky pearls,”⁴⁶⁰ and saw the performance as an “effective and animated propaganda prospectus” that would be very successful abroad.⁴⁶¹ Even the tourism trade journal *Verkehrswirtschaftliche Rundschau* speculated about the “many hundred hearts” that the work brought to St. Anton and other winter-sports centers through “its Austrian character, its music, its traditional garb, and its local color.”⁴⁶²

Benatzky, however, after his recent negative experiences, was skeptical about such “signs of outward success” and soon suspected that the operetta revue would be a financial disappointment for him.⁴⁶³ He was right: in spite of the great success in Zurich and the friendly reception of the Viennese premiere, *Herzen im Schnee* did not catch on widely,⁴⁶⁴ and even in the Volksoper the production was replaced soon after the ninety days stipulated in the Kunststelle contract.⁴⁶⁵

Several reasons for this flop come to mind. Contemporary witness Hugo Wiener reports in his memoirs that the production failed because the artificial ice rink on stage—the organizers’ pride and joy—was produced with a chemical additive that made the singers (as well as the first rows of the audience) hoarse.⁴⁶⁶ More easily confirmed, several reviews suggest that the rather direct parallels to *Im weißen Rössl* were not seen in an entirely positive light. The “sequel”—as so often—did not offer enough originality to convince. The critic of the *Wiener Zeitung*, for example, hinted:

[*Herzen im Schnee*] is nice and—as they like to say—*geistvoll* [spirited, intellectually stimulating]; it comes from the “White Horse Inn.” ... With the sole difference that snow has fallen in the meantime.⁴⁶⁷

This cannot have been the only reason for the failure, however, because the similarities to the earlier revue operetta already must have been apparent in Zurich, where *Herzen im Schnee* was an extraordinary success.⁴⁶⁸ The discrepancy in reception between Zurich and Vienna may have been due to the different staging or cast, but it could also have been a result of censoring measures by the Kunststelle. Finally, the explicitly political context of the Viennese production

⁴⁶⁰ “unbeschwertes Vergnügen”; “reizenden musikalischen Benatzky-Perlen”; “Herzen im Schnee,” *Das kleine Volksblatt*, September 10, 1937, 12.

⁴⁶¹ “ein sehr wirksamer und lebendiger Propagandapropekt”; Ludwig Hirschfeld, “‘Herzen im Schnee’: Benatzky-Revue in der Volksoper,” *Neue Freie Presse*, September 10, 1937, 9.

⁴⁶² “viele hunderte Herzen”; “ihre österreichische Art, ihre Musik, ihre Trachten und ihr Lokalkolorit”; Julius Leuthier, “Arbeit und Aufgaben der ‘Österreichischen Verkehrswerbung,’” *Verkehrswirtschaftliche Rundschau* 3 (1938): 7; cited also in Maryska, “Buchungslage gut,” 35.

⁴⁶³ “Anzeichen äußeren Erfolges,” Benatzky, diary, September 9, 1937.

⁴⁶⁴ Hennenberg, *Operette auf dem Weg zum Musical*, 162.

⁴⁶⁵ The last mention of the work in the Kunststelle’s *Mitteilungen* is for December 19, 1937. Daily program leaflets for this time are not extant.

⁴⁶⁶ Wiener, *Zeitensprünge*, 132.

⁴⁶⁷ “Sie ist nett und—wie man so gerne sagt—geistvoll, sie kommt vom ‘Weißen Rössl’. ... Nur, daß mittlerweile Schnee gefallen ist.” “Herzen im Schnee,” *Wiener Zeitung*, September 10, 1937, 8.

⁴⁶⁸ “Die neue große Benatzky-Operette in der Volksoper: ‘Herzen im Schnee,’” *Österreichische Kunststelle: Mitteilungen* 65, September 3, 1937; also Grohmann to Schicht, June 18, 1937; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38.

may have contributed to its flop. In this respect, it is noteworthy that between June and December 1937—just at the time when *Herzen im Schnee* played at the Volksoper—the Kunststelle lost half of its 28,000 subscribers, at least partly because members now also had to enroll in the more evidently party-affiliated Neues Leben, whose involvement made the political interference in sponsored theater productions increasingly obvious to the Viennese.⁴⁶⁹

Outside of Austria, too, the *Herzen im Schnee* project failed to live up to the high expectations of politicians and press. Indeed, the great touristic potential that had made the work so attractive to Austrian officials never bore fruit. Benatzky reported of negotiations with the Gaeté Lyrique in Paris and also mentioned that J.J. Shubert had been approached with the work.⁴⁷⁰ Negotiations with Kraft durch Freude about a Reich production were at least considered,⁴⁷¹ and Max Hansen planned a tour of Stockholm and Copenhagen.⁴⁷² The greatest importance, however, was placed on the work's production at the Adelphi theater in London because with this event, Guido Schmidt reasoned, "a launch in all western countries, and particularly Paris, New York, etc., is as good as secured."⁴⁷³ Top-class singers, including Bobby Howes, John Mills, and Kitty Carlisle, who had just starred in Broadway's *White Horse Inn*, were considered, and a suitable author for the book's English adaptation was found. But apparently *Herzen im Schnee* did not show enough potential for the London theater to consider backing the production financially—this matter was left entirely to the Austrian prospects. The Adelphi direction estimated that 12,000 pounds total capital would be necessary for the production⁴⁷⁴—a huge sum if paid in Austrian schilling. In a meeting of the directors for Austrian Traffic Advertisement, the government involvement in financing the planned London production was subject to a detailed discussion that showed a definite reluctance on the officials' part.⁴⁷⁵ And although Kuno Grohmann even made the effort to ask private business angels for their support, traces of the venture peter out thereafter.⁴⁷⁶

As a sample of the work of Viennese operetta's most prolific composer endorsed by the Corporate State, the productions investigated in this chapter may suggest that Austrofascist musical theater simply continued with the trends of the 1920s. Indeed, one of the main reasons that operetta became interesting for the new rulers was its already proven potential to show off Austria as a country of natural beauty, great cultural heritage, unspoiled traditions, and

⁴⁶⁹ See Heidemarie Brückl-Zehetner, "Theater in der Krise: Sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Wiener Theater der Ersten Republik" (PhD diss., Vienna University, 1988), 206.

⁴⁷⁰ Benatzky, diary, July 1, 1937 and May 28, 1937.

⁴⁷¹ Vaterländisches Front-Werk "Neues Leben" to the general secretary [n.n.], August 25, 1937; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38.

⁴⁷² "Max Hansen über seine künstlerischen Pläne," *Neue Freie Presse*, April 16, 1937, 3.

⁴⁷³ "ist der Start in allen westlichen Ländern, insbesondere Paris, New-York etc. so gut wie gesichert." Guido Schmidt to Frankenstein, n.d.; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38.

⁴⁷⁴ His Majesty's Theatre Direction to Armin Robinson, May 24, 1937; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38. Most of the official correspondence of the Österreichische Verkehrswerbung about the planned productions in France and the UK has unfortunately been shredded.

⁴⁷⁵ "Gedächtnisvermerk über die am 8. Oktober 1937 ... stattgefundene 20. Direktionsratssitzung der Österreichischen Verkehrswerbung—Werbedienst des Bundesministeriums für Handel und Verkehr"; ÖSta, AdR, Bundesministerium für Handel und Verkehr, Verkehrssektion, 35266, 1938.

⁴⁷⁶ Grohmann to Schicht, June 18, 1937; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 38.

lovable locals—aspects that were the most successful with international audiences and that now also promoted the preferred image of the “new,” Corporate Austria. Benatzky’s worldwide smash hit *Im weißen Rössl* was the ideal model for Austrofascist operetta, then, as it not only recommended the country’s beauties to potential foreign visitors but also helped to foster a much-desired national pride and sense of belonging among Austrian audiences. While the use of jazz elements and the comic, blunt presentation of Austrian foibles would perhaps not have fared as well with Austrofascist authorities had they been newly introduced, their previously positive reception and impact on tourism granted Benatzky much leeway in his Viennese works.

Yet withal, Benatzky’s Austrofascist productions show major concessions to the political situation, documenting more generally a fundamental change in Viennese operetta culture as authors could no longer focus primarily on audience appeal but were forced to seek the state approval on which even private theaters now depended—a change that is most commonly attributed to the Nazi era. Benatzky’s efforts in *Das kleine Café* to affirm that his work was (still) compatible with Viennese (and Austrofascist) concerns, demonstrate that he was quite aware of what was expected of him in the “new Austria.” Combining a novel chamber-scale format—widely performable and even showing elements of the traditional Viennese folk play—with innovative musical twists as well as many of his typical, peculiar local characteristics and habits, *Das kleine Café* managed to satisfy all hopes as well as his own ambitions, and made it possible for the composer to make Vienna his new professional residence.

The later *Herzen im Schnee*, however, shows how frustrating it was to work in the Austrofascist operetta scene. Because chamber works made much less profit, Benatzky had to produce new ones in rapid succession, while the constantly looming censorship and increasingly conservative audience reactions added further worries. Unflatteringly, the work most promisingly welcomed by state officials, *Herzen im Schnee*, was a straightforward “sequel” to an earlier success, a mere “business opportunity” in Benatzky’s eyes. But when not even this most enthusiastically endorsed work could secure an audience (read: financial) success, Vienna became entirely unattractive for the versatile composer.

When *Herzen im Schnee* was taken off the program—right around the time that the opening of *Majestät privat* also made negative headlines—the composer prayed that this would be his last premiere in the Austrian capital.⁴⁷⁷ Less than a month later he left Vienna for Switzerland, “and thus gladly put an end to some of the ugliest months of my life.”⁴⁷⁸ The conditions in the Corporate State had not made work easy for the composer. And still, when Austria was finally annexed to the Third Reich a couple of months later, Benatzky reacted with shock:

As of last night, Austria is National Socialist! Schuschnigg yielded to force, German troops have passed the borders, the swastika flies everywhere, independence is gone, a

⁴⁷⁷ Benatzky, diary, December 19, 1937.

⁴⁷⁸ “und beschloß damit, mit Freuden, einige der häßlichsten Monate meines Lebens”; Benatzky, diary, January 11, 1938.

long, bitter battle for it is over, the last small stronghold of free speech and of a possibility to work in the hapless German language has collapsed.⁴⁷⁹

In spite of its increasing restrictions, for Benatzky Austrofascism had clearly been the lesser of two evils.

⁴⁷⁹ "Österreich, seit gestern abend nationalsozialistisch! Schuschnigg wich der Gewalt, deutsche Truppen haben die Grenzen passiert, überall weht das Hakenkreuz, die Selbständigkeit ist hin, ein langer bitterer Kampf um sie ist zu Ende, das letzte kleine Bollwerk freier Meinungsäußerung und Arbeitsmöglichkeit in der unglücklichen deutschen Sprache gefallen." Benatzky, diary, March 11, 1938.

CHAPTER 3: THE OSTMARK

Revising Lehár's *Rastelbinder* for the Reich

Operetta during the Third Reich may seem a rather barren subject—and not just at first sight.⁴⁸⁰ Indeed, with regard to innovative production, an exploration of Reich-German operetta can hardly be fruitful, as both Hans-Dieter Roser and Wolfgang Jansen have recently contended. Epigonal works, whose protagonists “had disqualified themselves artistically by dint of all too much closeness and submissiveness to the Nazi regime,” understandably have not attracted detailed critical attention from scholars.⁴⁸¹

Yet, in spite of the lack of original new works, operetta did not lose its importance when Austria was “annexed” to Germany. Especially in Vienna it remained a weighty cultural product,⁴⁸² but the rest of the Reich, too, did not want to miss out on entertaining musical theater works. As state councilor Hans Severus Ziegler (now best known for organizing the infamous “degenerate music” exhibition in Düsseldorf) pointed out in his preface to the 1938 edition of Reclam’s operetta guidebook:

No theater director today will want to do without a decent number of operettas on his program, and his attitude is fully justified both artistically and in terms of repertory politics. ... Whoever knows how to direct a German operetta with taste and musical thoroughness contributes, like every comedy theater, to the entertainment and amusement of exactly those wide circles of the population who, in their own difficult struggle for life, know enough to thank the gay and happiest muse particularly sincerely.⁴⁸³

Ziegler’s statement reflects the convictions of propaganda minister and president of the Reich cultural chamber Joseph Goebbels who was convinced that, applied in the right way, operetta could influence and motivate large parts of the population on an emotional level. While other

⁴⁸⁰ Most of the contributions to the topic can be found in a book of conference proceedings, Schaller’s *Operette unterm Hakenkreuz* and in Arnbom, Clarke, and Trabitsch, *Welt der Operette*. See also Christoph Dompke, *Unterhaltungsmusik und NS-Verfolgung, Musik im “Dritten Reich” und im Exil 15* (Neumünster: Von Bockel, 2011).

⁴⁸¹ “hatten sich durch allzu große Nähe und Willfährigkeit gegenüber dem nazistischen Regime künstlerisch disqualifiziert”; Jansen, “Von der Operette zum Musical,” 243, and Hans-Dieter Roser, “Kein Shimmy für Stiefel. Operette in Wien in den Jahren 1938 bis 1944: Eine Bestandsaufnahme,” in Arnbom, Clarke, and Trabitsch, *Welt der Operette*, 179–197.

⁴⁸² Roser, “Kein Shimmy für Stiefel,” 195.

⁴⁸³ “Kein Theaterleiter der Gegenwart wird in seinem Spielplan auf eine angemessene Zahl von Operetten verzichten wollen, und sein Standpunkt ist sowohl künstlerisch wie spielplanpolitisch voll gerechtfertigt. ... Wer eine deutsche Operette geschmackvoll und musikalisch sorgfältig zu inszenieren versteht, der trägt wie jedes Komödientheater zur Unterhaltung und Aufheiterung oft gerade derjenigen breiten Kreise des Volkes bei, die im eigenen schweren Lebenskampf der heiteren und ausgelassensten Muse besonders herzlichen Dank wissen.” Hans Severus Ziegler, “Zum Geleit!,” in *Reclams Operettenführer* (2nd edition), ed. Walter Mnilk (Leipzig: Reclam, 1938), 3–4.

Nazi ideologues such as Alfred Rosenberg were not fond of musical entertainment theater because, in its current state, it could neither display heroic German greatness nor morally improve the German people, Goebbels encouraged the favorite musical genres of the time. As contemporary reviews confirm, operettas easily filled the theaters, they were turned into successful films, and their hit songs featured prominently on music request programs broadcast at the time, providing—in manifold ways—the amusement, relaxation, and entertainment Goebbels sought for Germans.⁴⁸⁴

Yet, in their search for appropriately entertaining musical theater works, the Nazis faced a major problem: the growing objectionability of many foreign and Jewish works as well as of those set in hostile countries, combined with a steadily increasing number of theaters within the expanding “German” territories, quickly resulted in great demand for a short supply of acceptable compositions.⁴⁸⁵ As Reichsdramaturg Rainer Schlösser had reported to Goebbels as early as 1934, the situation was particularly bleak with regard to “Aryan operetta”:

At the time of takeover the situation on the operetta market was such that 80 percent of the output—both musical and textual—was of Jewish origin. 10 percent was Aryan with regard to the composer, but of those the librettists were likewise Jewish. The purely Aryan works could not have exceeded 10 percent.⁴⁸⁶

Goebbels instructed Schlösser to condone the existing operetta repertory for the moment,⁴⁸⁷ soon, however, “pressure was applied on all entities to multiply the Reich script department’s efforts toward operettas of purely Aryan origin through local discoveries and approaches.”⁴⁸⁸ Theater directors increasingly filled the gaps in their programs with new, epigonal operettas by racially acceptable composers, who were often “of the second, third, and fourth guard,” to use Christoph Dompke’s words. Particularly successful Jewish operettas were replaced by works with strikingly similar plots—Kálmán’s *Gräfin Mariza*, for example, gave way to Nico Dostal’s *Die ungarische Hochzeit* (1939), Benatzky’s *Im weißen Rössl* to Fred Raymond’s *Saison in*

⁴⁸⁴ See Hans-Jörg Koch, “Das NS-Wunschkonzert’: Operette als Narkotikum,” in Schaller, *Operette unterm Hakenkreuz*, 117. The Reich’s theater programs reflect this preference for carefree entertainment: while comic and light works totaled 48 percent of stage performances before 1939, during the war their share rose to 56.5 percent. Alan E. Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, & Economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 164.

⁴⁸⁵ Heinz Drewes, “Die Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitungen,” *Allgemeine Musikzeitung* 70 (1943): 25. Compare with Dompke, *Unterhaltungsmusik und NS-Verfolgung*, 85 and Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler’s Reich* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 130.

⁴⁸⁶ “Bei Machtübernahme war die Lage auf dem Operettenmarkt so, dass 80% der Produktion sowohl musikalisch wie textlich jüdischen Ursprungs war. 10% war den Komponisten nach arischen, den Librettisten nach aber ebenfalls jüdischen Ursprungs. Die rein arischen Werke endlich dürften 10% nicht überstiegen haben.” Rainer Schlösser to Goebbels, September 12, 1934; Bundesarchiv, R55/20169, 145; reproduced in Schaller, *Operette unterm Hakenkreuz*, 14–16.

⁴⁸⁷ Stefan Frey, “‘Dann kann ich leicht vergessen, das teure Vaterland...’ Lehár unterm Hakenkreuz,” in Schaller, *Operette unterm Hakenkreuz*, 94.

⁴⁸⁸ “wurde auf alle Intendanten ein Druck ausgeübt, die Bemühungen der reichsdramaturgischen Stelle um Operetten rein arischer Herkunft durch örtliche Neuentdeckungen und Versuche zu vermehren.” Schlösser to Goebbels, September 12, 1934; reproduced in Schaller, *Operette unterm Hakenkreuz*, 14.

Salzburg (1938), and Granichstaedten's *Auf Befehl der Kaiserin* to August Pepöck's *Reiter der Kaiserin* (1941).⁴⁸⁹ In terms of musical style such "prescribed surrogate pieces," as Klotz termed them, tended to be rather more conservative, avoiding international influences as much as possible.⁴⁹⁰ As Ziegler already observed in 1938:

Naturally, the Third Reich gradually had to eliminate the typically Jewish and strongly jazzed-up operetta with the pleasant result that the operetta theaters of all large and smaller cities where Aryan operetta composers are cultivated still show full houses. Of course it would be desirable that we once again acquire as a supplement to our current operetta treasury comic *Spielopern* [light operas] of the lightness and true humor of Lortzing's *Wildschütz*—a matter that is in the interest of the taste-building education of the audience whose sense of style and entertainment must not degenerate further.⁴⁹¹

As the regime's limitations to the repertory became stricter and its aesthetic ideals more defined, the program selection still proved difficult for venues in 1940.⁴⁹² Following an order from Hitler, Goebbels thus founded the *Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitungen* (Reich Office for Music Arrangements) whose prime mission was to replenish the repertory of music theater venues and concert halls by commissioning and supervising new works as well as revisions of older, no longer appropriate compositions. The institution was established as an adjunct to the music division of the propaganda ministry and was run mainly by the musicologist Hans Joachim Moser, although it was officially headed by the party member Heinz Drewes.⁴⁹³

The Reichsstelle, a project that, according to Drewes, was "followed closely by the Führer himself with the greatest interest,"⁴⁹⁴ has so far mostly been mentioned in connection with its "serious" music activities, and as a constituent of a broader movement to make classical repertory more suitable for Reich performances.⁴⁹⁵ As official Reichsstelle lists show,

⁴⁸⁹ "die zweite, dritte oder vierte Garde"; Dompke, *Unterhaltungsmusik und NS-Verfolgung*, 86.

⁴⁹⁰ "verordnete Surrogatstücke"; Volker Klotz, "Der Widerspenstigen Lähmung," in Schaller, *Operette unterm Hakenkreuz*, 79–80, also 88.

⁴⁹¹ "Selbstverständlich hat das Dritte Reich die typisch jüdische und stark verjazzte Operette allmählich ausschalten müssen mit dem sehr erfreulichen Ergebnis, daß die Operettentheater aller großen und kleineren Städte, wo der arische Operettenkomponist gepflegt wird, nach wie vor volle Häuser zeigen. Gewiß wäre es wünschenswert, daß wir zur Ergänzung unseres heutigen Operettenschatzes wieder einmal komische Spieloperen von der Leichtigkeit und wirklichen Humorigkeit des Lortzingschen 'Wildschütz' bekämen, was im Interesse einer geschmackbildenden Erziehung des Publikums, dessen Stilgefühl und Sinn für Unterhaltung nicht weiter verflachen darf, liegt." Ziegler, "Zum Geleit!," 3.

⁴⁹² Roser, "Kein Shimmy für Stiefel," 191.

⁴⁹³ Potter, *Most German of the Arts*, 130. Drewes had started his career as a conductor of operettas and operas in Weimar. See Albrecht Dümling, "'Wider die Negerkultur, für deutsches Volkstum,'" in *Glitter and be Gay: Die authentische Operette und ihre schwulen Verehrer*, ed. Kevin Clarke (Hamburg: Männerschwarm, 2007), 147.

⁴⁹⁴ "vom Führer persönlich fortlaufend mit grösstem Interesse verfolgt"; Drewes to personnel division, March 7, 1942 and Leiter M [Drewes] to Abteilung H (in the Propaganda Ministry), 10 September 1942; Bundesarchiv, R 55/240; quoted in Potter, *Most German of the Arts*, 130.

⁴⁹⁵ For detailed accounts of the revisions of Handel's works see Pamela M. Potter, "The Politicization of Handel and His Oratorios in the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, and the Early Years of the German Democratic Republic," *Musical Quarterly* 85 (2001): 311–341; Katja Roters, *Bearbeitungen von Händel-Oratorien im Dritten Reich*, Schriften des Händel-Hauses in Halle 16 (Halle: Altenburg, 1999), 33–42; Rudolf Pečman, "Georg Friedrich

however, Handel's oratorios and various repertory operas by no means constituted the majority of the works overseen by the institution: at least half of the office's commissions were for operettas, for revisions as well as new works.⁴⁹⁶ So far, only a few accounts, notably those by Pamela Potter, mention this particular emphasis, and even those are limited to the same examples that Moser himself offered in his 1943 article "Von der Tätigkeit der Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitungen."⁴⁹⁷ As Volker Klotz rightly pointed out, a closer look at these Third Reich operetta commissions as well as their circumstances is necessary in order to construct a "more reliable overall picture."⁴⁹⁸ In this chapter I will take a first step toward such an improved picture with a detailed investigation of the Reichsstelle revision of Lehár's popular operetta *Der Rastelbinder*, which was to be premiered at Vienna's Raimund Theater in celebration of the composer's 75th birthday in January 1945.⁴⁹⁹

Considering the Nazis' urgent quest for economically viable, popular musical entertainment, the operetta I have chosen to examine seems a rather obvious candidate for a Reichsstelle revision. *Der Rastelbinder*, which premiered in Vienna's Carl-Theater in 1902 to a libretto by

Händel im Dritten Reich: Alttestamentarische (jüdische) Oratorienthematik im Blickfeld der nazistischen Fälscher Georg Friedrich Händels," in *Socialist Realism and Music: Colloquia Musicologica Brunensia* 36, ed. Petr Macek, Mikulá Bek, and Geoffrey Chew (Prague: Koniasch Latin Press, 2004), 97–100. On Third Reich revisions of Mozart's works see, for example, Erik Levi, "The Aryanization of Music in Nazi Germany," *The Musical Times* 131 (1990): 19–23 and Erik Levi, *Mozart and the Nazis: How the Third Reich Abused a Cultural Icon* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

⁴⁹⁶ See Hans Joachim Moser, "Von der Tätigkeit der Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitungen," in *Jahrbuch der deutschen Musik 1943*, ed. Hellmuth von Hase (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1943) and Drewes, "Die Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitungen." This focus was clearly based on Goebbels's order rather than on the officers' personal preference: as Moser admitted, he was challenged by the operetta editing work since the art form was alien to him at first, his area of expertise being early German music, particularly Heinrich Schütz. See Moser, "Selbstbericht des Forschers und Schriftstellers Hans Joachim Moser," 21 and "Schlußwort Hans Joachim Moser am 19.9.1947," 3; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Hans Joachim Moser Papers, N. Mus. Nachl. 31, Boxes 5 and 15 respectively. Similarly, Goebbels's diaries from 1939 to 1941 suggest that Drewes temporarily fell out of the minister's favor because he showed "too little understanding for the entertaining part of music" and was reluctant to spend more of the Reichsstelle budget on the popular genres. ("zu wenig Verständnis für den unterhaltenden Teil der Musik"); Goebbels, diary entry on November 23, 1940; see Joseph Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels: Sämtliche Fragmente*, part I vol. 8, ed. Elke Fröhlich (Munich: Saur, 1987), 432; quoted also in Erik Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (London: Macmillan, 1994), 37–38. Moser's list of the Reichsstelle's operetta commissions is reproduced in Appendix 2.

⁴⁹⁷ Pamela M. Potter, "Musicology under Hitler: New Sources in Context," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 49 (1996): 95–96 and Erik Levi, "Opera in the Nazi Period," in *Theatre under the Nazis*, ed. John London (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 147. Both these authors offer the same examples as cited in Moser, "Von der Tätigkeit," 80. Alfred Einstein's 1946 review of this compilation in *Notes*—suitably angry for its time—already shows the trend to focus on the office's work with "serious music" and to condemn Moser as the "most unsavory fellow" of all.

⁴⁹⁸ "ein zuverlässigeres Gesamtbild"; Klotz, "Der Widerspenstigen Lähmung," 88.

⁴⁹⁹ Sikorski to Moser, n.d.; Wienbibliothek, Handschriftensammlung, Weys Papers, ZPH 1011. Unless otherwise noted, all the archival documents cited in this chapter are from Weys's papers in this archive.

Victor Léon, had been the “first real operetta” venture of Hitler favorite Franz Lehár.⁵⁰⁰ The work tells the story of the young Slovakian orphan Janku, whose foster family, in keeping with the local tradition, betroths him to their even younger daughter, Suza, before sending him out to make his living as a traveling handyman. Twelve years later—in Act I—Janku, now called Schani, is permanently employed as a plumber in Vienna and wants to marry his boss’s daughter, Mizzi. But he is confronted with his Slovakian past by the peddler Pfefferkorn, who had once given Suza a silver gulden intended to help Janku on his journey. Suza has accompanied Pfefferkorn to Vienna and pretends to look for a job as a maid there in order to reunite with her Slovakian sweetheart Milosch, Janku’s friend, who is stationed in Vienna as part of his military service. Both Janku/Schani and Suza had forgotten about their bond and are stricken when Pfefferkorn reminds them of it. For Act II the story moves to Milosch’s military base, where he has returned to distract himself from his heartache after having learned of Suza’s previous engagement. Dressed up as soldiers, Mizzi and Suza, as well as Pfefferkorn and Janku/Schani, follow him in order to resolve the problem. Of course, the masquerade involves plenty of slapstick before leading to a happy end for both couples.

Starting with such a typical plot including elements of mistaken identity, *Der Rastelbinder* featured most of the ingredients that only three years later were to make Lehár’s *Lustige Witwe* such a triumphant and lasting hit: memorable waltz melodies, including “Wenn zwei sich lieben” and “Das is a einfache Rechnung”; plenty of humor and comic stage moments; some nostalgic melancholy; and a few scenes in a Slavic—but allied Slavic!—setting. Indeed, in spite of some dramaturgical weaknesses the work had been extremely popular: at least 2742 performances were documented up to the end of World War I alone; furthermore, two film versions (from 1909 and 1926) appeared during the silent era.⁵⁰¹ In Vienna, *Der Rastelbinder* was Lehár’s biggest success.

In its original state, however, this propitious operetta—promising not only as a standard work for the Third Reich repertory but also as an economic success for theaters—could not be performed in Nazi Germany.⁵⁰² Its central character was an itinerant Jewish peddler, Wolf Bär Pfefferkorn, who was characterized on stage with the obligatory Yiddish accent and melismatic turns. As Lehár scholar Stefan Frey has pointed out, to include such a character had been a daring project even in 1902, when anti-Semitism in Vienna was already seething. Pfefferkorn was the first Jewish leading role in the history of operetta, and reviewers of the premiere had shown much dismay and skepticism toward him, despite Jewish tenor Louis Treumann’s compelling impersonation.⁵⁰³ Under the Nazis, a new version became necessary in order to “rescue” the peddler and the work for German theaters. Such a revision also allowed for the omission of the work’s Jewish librettist, Victor Léon, in favor of the new editor. Negotiations with the composer started in 1942.

⁵⁰⁰ Lehár himself called it this, since *Wiener Frauen* (1901) had involved a lot of piecing together of different materials in order to fit the contemporary operetta conventions. See Stefan Frey, liner notes to Franz Lehár, *Der Rastelbinder* with Fritz Muliar, the ORF Choir and Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Hans Graf, recorded November 1981, CPO, 777 038-2, 2004, compact disc, 14.

⁵⁰¹ Frey, *Rastelbinder* CD liner notes, 17.

⁵⁰² See Frey, “Dann kann ich leicht vergessen,” 96–97.

⁵⁰³ Frey, *Rastelbinder* CD liner notes, 15. Louis Treumann recreated this character, his first big success, in the 1926 silent film version.

While *Der Rastelbinder* seems an all too obvious candidate for a Nazi revision, the editor whom the Reichsstelle entrusted with this task does not easily fit the image of the typical Nazi *Säuberer* (cleanser) evoked in the accusatory accounts of historians such as Fred Prieberg or Eric Levi.⁵⁰⁴ Indeed, Rudolf Weys (1898–1978) was a rather unlikely candidate for the job, as his wife was Jewish—a fact that, especially after the passing of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, complicated the process of securing a professional license from the *Reichskulturkammer* (Reich Cultural Chamber) and, as we shall see, created considerable further difficulties. What is more, Weys's political inclinations seem to have been antagonistic to the regime: although through his professional affiliation he inevitably engaged in the regime's entertainment programs such as *Kraft durch Freude*,⁵⁰⁵ his personal correspondence during this time show reserve as well as hints of skepticism and there is no reason to doubt that he was a convinced antifascist and a staunch pro-Austrian social democrat.⁵⁰⁶

Scholars have taken most notice of Weys for his cabaret work, particularly that written for the Wiener Werkel, an institution now often mentioned as the prime example of Austrian resistance against its Nazi German rulers.⁵⁰⁷ It was difficult to keep any kind of cabaret going during the Third Reich. Goebbels was of course aware of the powerful potential for political allusions in cabaret, and soon (and repeatedly) forbade such allusions as well as “any hint at political events or persons in performances, conferences, and announcements.”⁵⁰⁸ These measures quickly showed results: by the time World War II began, the Reich's depoliticized cabaret had mostly regressed to noncritical vaudeville shows.⁵⁰⁹ While before the war, “positive cabaret” that fell into the official marching line and attacked only those who questioned the National Socialist mindset was still somewhat encouraged, Goebbels did not appreciate jokes about food rationing and other war-time realities and in 1941 forbid even positive references to current events and public figures.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁴ Levi, “Aryanization of Music,” 20 and Fred Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1982), 355.

⁵⁰⁵ Even Hans Veigl, the author of the most critical account of Weys and the Wiener Werkel so far, reckons that the cabarettist's work for Nazi organizations was solely a “survival strategy” (“Überlebensstrategie”). Hans Veigl, *Tränen und Gelächter: Kleinkunst im Wiederaufbau* (Straden: Österreichisches Kabarettarchiv, 2009), 18.

⁵⁰⁶ See, most recently, Alfred Dorfer, “Satire in restriktiven Systemen Europas im 20. Jahrhundert” (PhD diss., Vienna University, 2011), 77.

⁵⁰⁷ See, for example, Felix Kreissler, *Kultur als subversiver Widerstand: Ein Essay zur österreichischen Identität* (Munich: Edition KAPPA, 1997), 188–189, Manfred Lang, “Kleinkunst im Widerstand: Das Wiener Werkel, das Kabarett im Dritten Reich” (PhD diss., Vienna University, 1967), Hans Veigl, *Lachen im Keller—Von den Budapestern zum Wiener Werkel: Kabarett und Kleinkunst in Wien* (Vienna: Löcker, 1986), and Hilde Haider-Pregler, “Das ‘Wiener Werkel’—ein ‘Wiener Januskopf’? Kabarett zwischen Opportunismus und Widerstand,” in *Die “österreichische” nationalsozialistische Ästhetik*, ed. Iljana Dürhammer and Pia Janke (Vienna: Böhlau, 2003). There seems to be no English-language literature on Weys.

⁵⁰⁸ “jede politische Anspielung und jeden Hinweis auf politische Vorgänge oder Personen in Aufführungen, Conférenzen und Ansagen”; Goebbels to the president of the Reichstheaterkammer, December 8, 1937; ÖSta, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Oper 1940/40; quoted in Evelyn Deutsch-Schreiner, “Nationalsozialistische Kulturpolitik in Wien 1938–1945 unter spezieller Berücksichtigung der Wiener Theaterszene” (PhD diss., Vienna University, 1980), 123. See also Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 246.

⁵⁰⁹ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 249.

⁵¹⁰ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 245 and 257.

Having lost much of its appeal as a result of such measures and the precautionary self-censorship they prompted, Vienna's renowned cabaret Literatur am Naschmarkt, the "Burgtheater of cabaret" where Weys had worked since 1934, had to be closed down in November 1938 owing to the lack of funds.⁵¹¹ Soon thereafter, however, Weys's former colleague Adolf Müller-Reitzner was given official permission to open the Wiener Werkel. While party membership gave Müller-Reitzner the necessary political legitimacy, he still took pains to regather members of the Literatur staff. As he apparently explained to Weys, despite his political inclinations he had no intention of recruiting his authors from the *Völkischer Beobachter* (one of the most radical Nazi papers); rather, he wanted to recreate the earlier cabaret's liberal and critical tradition as far as possible.

Life for Viennese cabarettists was rather more "glorious" than in other parts of the Reich. Local censors by no means misunderstood what was happening on Vienna's stages, but condoned much more than did their counterparts in the "Altreich," at least partly because they were aware of tensions and discontent in the "Ostmark" that could be relieved through some typically Viennese grouching.⁵¹² Satirical critique had what cabaret scholar Peter Jelavich has called a "safety valve function," allowing disgruntled Viennese to "laugh off steam" before accumulating dissatisfaction could result in more forceful, disruptive outbursts. Furthermore, in Germany it was widely known since Wilhelmine times that strict censorship could have the inadvertent effect of attracting public curiosity, yes even of advertising the non-streamlined venues or authors as a result.⁵¹³

The Werkel's censor in the Viennese propaganda ministry, architect and cabaret lover Josef Kurz, was known as rather lenient and even a useful contact for the staff.⁵¹⁴ Similarly, the intendant of the radio station Reichssender Wien, also responsible for the Wiener Werkel, once said to Weys:

You are impertinent, but I don't have to understand it. If Goebbels were to come to Vienna, he would understand.⁵¹⁵

Indeed, a Goebbels visit posed a real danger to the Werkel members, as Müller-Reitzner soon discovered. When the minister came to Vienna in December 1940, he witnessed a performance of the fifth Werkel program, including Weys's piece "Der Wiener Januskopf," which can serve here as a good example of the kind of critical work for which Weys repeatedly has been noted. The title refers to the Austrian double eagle, here portrayed as one optimistic and one pessimistic character who reflect on their situation—a combination of roles that Karl Krauss had already used in his tragedy *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (1922). The optimist starts:

⁵¹¹ "Burgtheater der Kleinkunst"; Hans Veigl, *Bombenstimmung—Das Wiener Werkel: Kabarett im Dritten Reich* (Vienna: Kremayr & Scheriau, 1994), 10–11.

⁵¹² Veigl, *Tränen und Gelächter*, 19–20.

⁵¹³ Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret*, 34–35.

⁵¹⁴ Lang, "Kleinkunst im Widerstand," 43.

⁵¹⁵ "Ihr seid sehr frech, aber ich muß es ja nicht verstehen. Nur wenn Goebbels nach Wien kommen sollte, der wird's verstehen." Kreissler, *Kultur als subversiver Widerstand*, 189.

Seit zwatousend Jahr bin ich Wiener
Und stimme seit jeher mit "Ja",
Als ganz gehorsamster Diener
Des Staates, der jeweils grad da.

For 2000 years I've been a Viennese
And have always voted with Yes,
As entirely obedient servant
Of the state, no matter what it was.

This impersonation of opportunism appears to be an early forerunner of the famous *Herr Karl*, a character Helmut Qualtinger and Carl Merz created with similar sarcasm from their observations of Viennese behavior two decades later.⁵¹⁶ The optimist's "other half," the *Raunzer* (grouser), counters:

Mein Zwilling, der will net sinnieren,
Doch i denk ma manchmal ganz laut:
Ein Weaner, der muaß kritisieren,
Der kann net heraus aus der Haut.

My twin does not want to ponder,
But I sometimes think to myself loudly:
A Viennese has to criticize,
He cannot shed his skin.

Considering the regime's official discouragement of criticism—even critical reviews of cultural events were abandoned officially, in favor of so-called *Kunstabetrachtung* (art appreciation), a concept that was never successfully implemented⁵¹⁷—the assertion that a Viennese *has* to criticize, as well as the implication that there was so much apt material when one started to use one's brain, was not without danger. The "grouser" later specifies a few of the areas he has "thought about," for example:

Was nutzen ma Barock und Paläste,
Und wia ma so sagt, die "Guldur"!?
Ich siech nur mehr spärliche Reste,
Auch die gengan schon in Verlur.

What use have baroque and palaces,
And also the so-called *culture*?
I see [?] only scanty remains,
Even those are now dwindling away.

These lines discuss quite bluntly the state of the arts, the necessity of Third Reich culture to rely on a (Viennese) "golden past" and its failure to break new creative ground.

The piece even directly confronts the demands of high-ranking state officials. Alluding to the statement that "*Gemütlichkeit* while working is laziness," which Hermann Göring had expressed during a visit to Vienna, the optimist voices:⁵¹⁸

Ich hab unlängst a Zeitung gelesen,
Da halten s' ma d' Gmütlichkeit vor.
Gehts, laßts ma mei sonniges Wesen,
Nebn der Arbeit brauch I an Humor!

I recently read a paper
Where they hold the *Gemütlichkeit* against me.
Now, leave me my sunny nature,
Along with the work I need humor!⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁶ Carl Merz and Helmut Qualtinger, *Der Herr Karl* (1961) (Vienna: Deuticke, 2007).

⁵¹⁷ For a detailed discussion see Cornelia Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 365.

⁵¹⁸ "Gemütlichkeit bei der Arbeit ist Faulheit"; quoted in Herbert Staud, "Das Ostmark-Kabarett 'Wiener Werkel'—Kollaboration oder Demonstration?," *Österreichische Literatur im Exil*, http://www.literaturepochen.at/exil/lecture_5034.pdf, 8 (accessed February 3, 2013). For a detailed discussion of the concept of *Gemütlichkeit* in Vienna see Musner, "Eine Archäologie der Wiener Gemütlichkeit," in *Der Geschmack von Wien*, 173–204.

Having seen the performance, Goebbels gave director Müller-Reitzner a long dressing-down, in which he reproached the director for the “hidden criticism and Viennese ranting,” prohibited any further performances of the program, and “very plainly called the man’s attention to the riskiness of his conduct.”⁵²⁰ This, however, was the only time Goebbels attended, and one of only two programs that were censored after they had been publicly performed. Right at the end of the war, when many Viennese appeared to side with the invading Russians, Goebbels regretted his lenience with regard to Viennese peculiarities. In his diary he admitted his qualms about the “so-called Viennese humor that has been trivialized and exalted in our press and radio very much against my will. The Führer did assess the Viennese correctly,” he concluded; “one should have bridled them better.”⁵²¹ Indeed, the Werkel was able to stage ten programs to great acclaim until the general closure of all theaters in autumn 1944, and all of them swayed between begrudging conformity and sly resistance—a phenomenon that has sparked lengthy scholarly debates over the last decades.

The Werkel’s slightly recalcitrant image is rather similar to that of the Wien Film company under Karl Hartl, which has been discussed even more frequently.⁵²² In the popular “Vienna films,” a similar kind of Austrian or specifically Viennese identity was evoked through dialect, locations, and music, through nostalgic memories of the “good old days” as well as the usual grumbling and grouching. While there is not necessarily any reason to doubt that Weys and others such as film producer Willi Forst really used this “pro-Viennese” approach to offer at least a little resistance to the regime, one should always bear in mind that many at the time saw the portrayal of such local flair as a device to strengthen the image of German culture and thus as another motivation to further the fighting spirit.

While Weys’s work for and impact on Third Reich cabaret clearly has been a significant subject of scholarly investigation in the German-speaking world, his involvement with operetta during this time is less well known. Even Weys himself mentioned little about his operetta achievements in his published works. The reason is obvious: cabaret as a genre posed much more of a challenge, as it called for a more definite critical commitment than operetta. As Weys observed:

⁵¹⁹ Rudolf Weys, “Der Wiener Januskopf”; reproduced in Österreichische Literatur im Exil, <http://www.literaturepochen.at/exil/multimedia/pdf/weysjanuskopf.pdf> (accessed February 1, 2013). The full text of this cabaret number is reproduced in Appendix 3.

⁵²⁰ “versteckter Kritik und Wiener Raunzerei”; “machte den Herrn sehr eindeutig auf die Gefährlichkeit seines Tuns aufmerksam.” Goebbels, diary entry on December 9, 1940; see Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, part I vol. 9, 42. See also Rudolf Weys, *Wien bleibt Wien und das geschieht ihm ganz recht* (Vienna: Europa, 1974), 249 and Volker Kühn, *Die Zehnte Muse: 111 Jahre Kabarett* (Cologne: Verlagsgesellschaft, 1993), 97.

⁵²¹ “sogenannten Wiener Humor, der bei uns in Presse und Rundfunk sehr gegen meinen Willen immer verniedlicht und verherrlicht worden ist. Der Führer hat die Wiener schon richtig erkannt. ... Man hätte sie besser im Zaum halten müssen.” Goebbels, diary entry on April 9, 1945; see Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, part II vol. 15, 692.

⁵²² On the Wien Film see, for example, Walter Fritz, *Kino in Österreich, 1928–1945: Der Tonfilm* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1991), 118–125 and Gottfried Schlemmer, “Wien-Film,” in Grimm, Hansen, and Holtmeier, *Wien—Berlin*, 178–186.

If we ... look for contemporary criticism, where in the realms of operetta can one find a reaction to current events, to say nothing of satire, irony, and political significance? In day-to-day life operetta perhaps functioned as a lightning rod toward "high spirits"; however, it has never claimed to be a political outlet, and thus it did not provide Vienna with satirical *Zeittheater* at any time. However, from Hans Wurst [the German Merry Andrew] to Nestroy contemporary references and criticism have been vital elements of the mime and folk theaters.⁵²³

But while the cabaret work was more interesting for Weys during the Third Reich as well as for any subsequent scholar searching for Austrian resistance, operetta's lack of topical criticism—at other times a major shortcoming in Weys's view—was exactly what made the art form appealing for him during Austria's *Anschluss*. As he explained in a letter to a friend:

I adjusted my work to the Nazi era in that I confined myself to harmless fooling around. I wrote comedies and droll stories. Those were the least offensive and eluded the attention of the propaganda ministry. I wrote, for example, "Lisa, benimm dich," a much-performed piece that generated most of our livelihood, I wrote "Ringstrassenmelodie," a "revue comedy," as I called it, but into that one I interspersed so many pro-Austrian sentiments again that it scandalized, needless to say. I wrote "Mädel im Frack," a piece of harmless bullshit, "Höchste Eisenbahn," cut from the same bad cloth, etc., etc. Relatively appealing was my cabaret work at the "Wiener Werkel."⁵²⁴

It was operetta that provided the author with the most innocuous and still comparatively lucrative work during the Third Reich. An account of Weys's operetta work therefore will not provide spectacular insights into Austrian resistance and stories of heroic actions; yet it can show another important side of the life of a writer under the Nazi regime, a side that a far larger group of people working during this era experienced. The purpose of the following account of Weys's revision of *Der Rastelbinder*, then, is not to drag this man—so far with a comparatively "clean record"—in the Nazi mud; on the contrary, my investigation will show that even a man whose resistant stance toward Hitler's regime remains unrefuted had to make

⁵²³ "Wenn wir ... nach Zeitkritik Ausschau halten, wo findet sich in Operettengefilten ein Reagieren auf aktuelle Zeitereignisse? Von Satire, Ironie und politischer Bedeutung ganz zu schweigen. Im Tagesgeschehen funktionierte die Operette vielleicht als Blitzableiter in der Richtung 'Gute Laune', jedoch die Mission, politisches Ventil zu sein, hat sie gewiss nie beansprucht, sie bot denn auch in Wien zu keiner Zeit satirisches Zeittheater. Von Hans Wurst bis Nestroy aber waren Zeitanspielung und Zeitkritik Lebenselemente des Mimus- und Volkstheaters." Weys, "Hans Wurst im Keller," n.d..

⁵²⁴ "Meine Arbeiten passten sich insofern der Nazizeit an, als ich mich restlos aufs harmlose Blödeln beschränkte. Es entstanden Lustspiele und Schwänke. Damit eckte man am wenigsten an, es entzog sich am meisten einer Stellungnahme des Propagandaministeriums. Es entstand z.B. 'Lisa, benimm dich', ein sehr viel gespieltes Stück, das den Grossteil unseres Lebensunterhaltes bildete, es entstand 'Ringstrassenmelodie', eine 'Revuekomödie', wie ich es nannte, aber dort streute ich schon wieder so viel pro-österreichische Stimmungen ein, das es natürlich aneckte. Es entstanden 'Mädel im Frack', ein harmloser Bockmist, 'Höchste Eisenbahn', desgleichen und schlecht, etc. etc.. Relativ reizvoll war noch meine Kleinkunstarbeit am 'Wiener Werkel'; Weys to "Robert," March 12, 1946.

a large number of compromises, to weigh up the pros and cons of every decision in a bid to save both his life and his conscience.

Weys first got involved in the *Rastelbinder* project in June 1944, when Moser advised the publisher Hans Sikorski that he “employ another dramatically gifted *ostmärkisch* author and suggest my old plan to him.”⁵²⁵ Both Moser and Sikorski were unhappy with the editorial work carried out by Della Zampach and a certain “Herr Köller,” who in spite of having worked on the project for several months had not incorporated all the Reichsstelle’s suggestions and, moreover, had seen their work rejected by Lehár. Sikorski, who had worked with Weys previously (see chapter 4), suggested the cabarettist to Moser. Weys quickly accepted and offered to shelve all other work in order to finish this urgent task as soon as possible. He did this in spite of reservations from the outset, which he expressed to Moser:

As you know, the *Rastelbinder* question is very delicate in every respect. It is in any case an ungrateful task to edit a libretto that was once a world success, because even if the new work is successful, anybody who has once seen the original will compare—consciously or unconsciously—the new with the old.⁵²⁶

While to Moser he couched his reservations in careful terms, he presented them much more openly in his first letter about the work to Lehár:

When—approximately two months ago—the “Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitungen” approached me and asked whether I would dare an already twice-failed attempt at a new version of the *Rastelbinder*, I have to admit, I shied away at first. How, I thought, can the figure of Pfefferkorn be saved and how (the most difficult issue!) *the third act* [Act II]!

First of all, I asked Dr. Sikorski whether this was a matter of “Aryanization” (which I would have refused strictly!), but I was informed that the book adaptation would come about *with* the approval of Victor Léon’s heirs, indeed, even by their *request*. In addition, Dr. Sikorski explicated in detail that the third act [Act II] in its old form—however matters stand!—could hardly be performed again, for the fooling around of a clumsy Jew and *the laughing about just that* would be no longer acceptable, and considered objectionable by all, not only in present-day Germany but also *beyond that*, so that not even (to give an example) a performance in Switzerland would be possible in *this* form.

⁵²⁵ “noch einen dramatisch begabten ostmärkischen Autor daranzusetzen und ihm meinen alten Plan vorzuschlagen”; Moser to Sikorski, June 3, 1944.

⁵²⁶ “Wie Sie wissen, ist ja die ganze Frage ‘Rastelbinder’ in jeder Hinsicht sehr heikel. Ein Buch bearbeiten, das einmal ein Welterfolg war, ist in jedem Fall eine undankbare Aufgabe, denn auch bei Gelingen der Neu-Arbeit vergleicht jeder, der das Stück seinerzeit sah, bewusst oder unbewusst das Neue mit dem Gewesenen.” Weys to Moser, June 23, 1944.

This argument was plausible and banished my understandable basic concerns for the time being.⁵²⁷

Sikorski's argument may not seem coherent, if only because Pfefferkorn is by no means the most "clumsy" *Rastelbinder* character—Suza or Mizzi's father would easily win that competition—and he is definitely the most endearing figure. Nevertheless Sikorski's prediction was correct: after World War II *Der Rastelbinder* did indeed vanish from the stage. It is unlikely, however, that, had it been completed, postwar theater directors would have felt any more comfortable producing Weys's version with a non-Jewish Pfefferkorn, regardless of the revision's subtlety and moral quality.

Weys's basic principle for his *Rastelbinder* revision was that "a bad physician operates more than necessary. I made changes only when there were compelling reasons, never more."⁵²⁸ It is sometimes difficult to reconstruct which changes were by Weys, since he based his work as much as possible on Zampach's version, which has not yet been recovered. His correspondence shows, however, that Weys rejected many of Zampach's alterations, thus suggesting that he must have approved the changes of the final version.

Most of Weys's changes reflect the Reichsstelle's proclaimed intention of making the older material as accessible as possible.⁵²⁹ Drewes and Moser agreed that, in order to achieve this, it would be necessary to "retrieve the same close relationship between artwork and listenership" that the original audience enjoyed.⁵³⁰ In operetta, they argued, "timeliness" had always been much more important than in opera. Drewes explained:

As much as the operetta masterworks by Suppé, Johann Strauss, [and] Millöcker constitute historical *Denkmäler* [monuments], one should also note that operettas are

⁵²⁷ "Als nun—vor ungefähr zwei Monaten—die 'Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitungen' an mich herantrat und anfragte, ob ich den schon zweimal fehlgegangenen Versuch einer Neubearbeitung des 'Rastelbinder' wagen wolle, ich muss gestehen—, da schrack ich zunächst zurück davor. Wie—, so dachte ich, kann die Figur des Pfefferkorn gerettet werden und wie (das Schwerste!) *der dritte Akt* [Act II]! Zunächst erkundigte ich mich bei Dr. Sikorski, ob es sich etwa um eine 'Arisierung' handle (welche ich strikte abgelehnt hätte!), erhielt jedoch die Auskunft, dass eine Buchbearbeitung *mit* Einverständnis der Erben von Victor Léon, ja sogar über deren *Wunsch* zustande käme. Des weitern führte Dr. Sikorski eingehend aus, dass der dritte Akt [Act II] in der alten Form—wie immer die Dinge liegen!—wohl kaum mehr aufgeführt werden könnte, denn die Ulkereien eines ungeschickten Juden und *das Lachen eben darüber* wären nicht nur im heutigen Deutschland, sondern auch *darüber hinaus* nicht mehr tragbar und sicherlich von allen nicht mehr erwünscht, so dass nicht einmal (als Beispiel genommen) eine Aufführung in der *Schweiz* in *dieser* Form möglich wäre. Dieses Argument war einleuchtend und verscheuchte zunächst meine begreiflichen Grundbedenken." Weys to Lehár, July 27, 1944.

⁵²⁸ "ein schlechter Arzt, der mehr operiert als nötig. Das heisst, ich änderte nur, wo zwingender Grund vorliegt, niemals mehr"; Weys, "Kurze Vorbemerkung zu meiner Bearbeitung des 'Rastelbinder,'" n.d..

⁵²⁹ For example, the dialogue of the prologue is significantly altered to make the children's engagement more plausible to a 1945 audience.

⁵³⁰ "gleiche Beziehungsnähe zwischen Kunstwerk und Hörerschaft wiederzugewinnen"; Moser, "Von der Tätigkeit," 79. The Reichsstelle also applied the same principle to the music, particularly the instrumentation: with a "cautious hand" the editors aimed to raise the standard of the—for modern audiences, sometimes "scanty"—orchestration to match that of the "master himself at the height of his artistry." They treated what they considered to be "weak numbers" next to "valuable pearls" with a "careful blood transfusion ... in order to breathe juvenile vitality into any works of the light muse with an elderly appearance." See Drewes, "Die Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitungen," 25.

meant to serve not educational but entertainment purposes, and thus should not demand any kind of historical perspective from the audience. Therefore, *Denkmäler* purism is out of place here: the impact has to be immediate—not refracted through a historical prism.⁵³¹

Of course, the *zeitbedingte Verbrauch* (prevailing consumption) in operetta was a justification, behind which the Reichsstelle could hide any “Aryanizations” by involving new, racially acceptable editors, and thus steadily mitigate the importance of Jewish contributions to the art form, at least on paper. One should note, however, that the more general practice of modernizing operettas to suit contemporary conditions had been common long before the Nazi era and is still a standard procedure today. In their decisions about cuts and changes, producers are no longer so severely influenced by official state censorship—or by their fear of it, for preemptive self-censorship often made any state action unnecessary. There are still topics, however—especially in German-speaking countries since the end of the Third Reich—that would certainly be considered objectionable. Furthermore, since most operetta theaters are not subsidized to the same degree as “serious” opera and concert houses, they have always depended heavily on wide public approval, a fact that makes a work’s topical jokes and its relevance to the audience much more attractive for operetta producers than its value as a historic document.

One change, of course, was imperative: the reworking of Pfefferkorn’s character. Although the Reichsstelle had approved Zampach’s “simple conversion of ... Pfefferkorn into the ‘Black Peter,’”⁵³² Weys preferred a locally typical “Szandor.” The most obvious change for anyone who knew the original version was Szandor’s new dialect, more of a High German with an Austrian—“ostmärkisch”—influence. Szandor is molded into a fully integrated member of society: while Pfefferkorn had originally come from Vienna, Szandor—matching his new Eastern name—is a local tinker like Suza’s and Janku’s fathers and tells the audience about his childhood in that same Slovakian village, Trencsin. His comment on the children’s engagement, “that such a stupid custom exists? People are addlebrained!” (No. 4, Finale), is no longer the criticism of an outsider.⁵³³ Instead, he is a liberal progressive insider who wants to move away from an outmoded tradition because “that such a custom still exists, I really find

⁵³¹ “Auch ist zu beachten, dass die Operetten, so sehr sie in ihren klassischen Spitzenleistungen bei Suppé, Johann Strauss, Millöcker, auch geschichtliche Denkmäler darstellen, doch nicht der Bildung, sondern der Unterhaltung dienen sollen, also vom Publikum keinerlei historische Perspektive verlangen dürfen. Deshalb ist hier Denkmäler-Purismus fehl am Ort: die Wirkung muß stets unmittelbar—nicht durch ein historisches Prisma gebrochen—durchschlagen.” Drewes, “Die Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitungen,” 25. In order to bring old operettas up to date, the Reichsstelle considered it necessary to change several libretto locations to what were then German or German-occupied locations: Millöcker’s *Bettelstudent* was moved from Cracow to Breslau, Nedbal’s *Polenblut* was renamed *Erntebraut* and set in Bohemia, and Suppé’s *Fatinitza* was removed from its original 1854 setting at the Battle of Sebastopol and updated to Bulgaria’s 1940s “war of liberation.”

⁵³² “die einfache Umformung des Leib Pfefferkorn in ‘den schwarzen Peter’”; Moser to Sikorski, October 7, 1943, transcript.

⁵³³ “daß so ä dumme Sitt’ besteht? Die Leut sind doch verschroben!” Franz Lehár and Victor Léon, *Der Rastelbinder: Operette in einem Vorspiel und zwei Acten*, Vollständiger Clavier-Auszug mit Text (Vienna: Josef Weinberger Bühnen- u. Musikalienverlag Ges.mbH J.W. 1299, 1902), 20.

too queer.⁵³⁴ Szandor does not have to make excuses when he is invited to dine in celebration of Mizzi's and Janku/Schani's engagement, as the Jewish Pfefferkorn had done in his touchingly awkward reply:

GLÖPPLER: Do stay, eat with us!
 PFEFFERKORN: Eat with you? Well, that is a tricky one, because I can eat nothing anywhere—I have some kind of stomach catarrh—but I'll drink a drop with you!⁵³⁵

Szandor simply digs in like everyone else.

Pfefferkorn's character is not the only one whose identity had caused tensions in the original work: following his departure to Vienna in the prologue, Janku seems to undergo some kind of identity crisis, which is expressed most clearly in his song "Ich bin ein Wiener Kind" (No. 9). Again, Weys removed the discordant elements in verse 1:

<p>No. 9 [Old] My darling, my bride, Has confided to me, Very quietly, not loudly: That a Slovakian would be Not quite to her taste! She'd really rather have it That I should become a Viennese like her! With talent One could easily become one. This was my goal, And love can do wonders – I'm not a Slovakian With 'toje tak' I am a Viennese boy, Like they should be, I'm not a Brezina Who does not understand a word of German, If I had not become a Viennese I'd have a donkey's rage Therefore, dear god, Come, let me be a Viennese!</p>	<p>No. 9 [New] My darling, my bride, Has confided to me, Very quietly, not loudly: Her heart and mind Beats only for Vienna She'd really rather have it That I should become a Viennese like her! With talent One could easily become one. This was my goal, And love can do wonders – I quickly became A Vienna boy I am a Vienna boy, Like they should be, I don't know about sadness No, no, that cannot be! If I had not become a Viennese I'd have a donkey's rage Therefore, dear god, Come, let me be a Viennese!⁵³⁶</p>
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⁵³⁴ "daß immer noch der Brauch besteht, ich find das zu verschroben"; Weys, "Der Rastelbinder," libretto manuscript, 20–21.

⁵³⁵ "GLÖPPLER: Aber bleiben's da, essen's mit! / PFEFFERKORN: Mitessen? Das is bei mir so ä Geschichte, ich kann nämlich nix überall essen—ich hab' etwas ä Magenguitar—aber trinken werd' ich mit euch a Tröppele!" Franz Lehár and Victor Léon, *Der Rastelbinder: Operette in einem Vorspiel und zwei Akten*, libretto (Vienna: Josef Weinberger, 1980), 59.

⁵³⁶ "Mei' Schatz, mei' Braut, / Hat mir vertraut, / Ganz leis', net laut: / 's wär' ein Slowak / Nicht ganz ihr G'schmack! (New: Ihr Herz und Sinn / Schlägt nur für Wien.) / Sie hätt's halt gar so gern: / Ich sollt' ein Wiener werd'n. / Mit

Instead of describing the negative aspects of being Slovakian, Janku/Schani now sings affirmative lines about being Viennese. The xenophobic parts are simply cut, which may seem at first surprising and unnecessary considering the Reich-prevalent stress on German supremacy. But by changing these lines, the identity conflict, which so many particularly in the original, multicultural Viennese audience must have experienced themselves, was toned down as much as possible. One may conclude that matters of multicultural origin were simply no longer deemed topical or endorsable, but one should also note that Slovakia was a kind of satellite state, a dependent ally of the Third Reich, with whom it was advisable to cultivate and demonstrate an amicable relationship.

“The most difficult problem of the new version” was by all accounts the final act of Lehár’s operetta.⁵³⁷ The original version had clear dramaturgical shortcomings for, as Lehár biographer Stefan Frey has aptly described, it “degenerates—in a rather unmotivated way—into a costume orgy in the barrack yard, with the single racy pretext to stick the ladies into uniforms, for ‘soldier’s pants provide a great attraction.’”⁵³⁸ Moser considered this act to be “entirely unworthy of discussion”—perhaps partly because of its deplorable disrespect for the military as well as its erotic element, strengthened by the close harmony of the two female lines in a climactic duet.⁵³⁹ Weys was at least able to appreciate the act’s original appeal, though initially he was unsure how to recreate it:

Now, although the final act (the reef of the new version!) may be antiquated in every respect and will surely, in its old form, never be found on stage again, it was still amazing and burlesquely funny, if not to everyone’s fancy. But that is a fact. To find an equivalent for this merry merriness will be enormously difficult.⁵⁴⁰

Talent / Man’s leicht werden könnt’. / Das war mein Ziel, / Und Liebe kann gar viel! / Bin kein Slowak / Mit toje tak! (New: Ich wurde g’schwind / Ein Wiener Kind,) / [...] Bin halt a Wiener Kind, / So wie’s im Büchel steht, / Ich bin kein Březina, / Der kein Wort deutsch versteht! (New: Ich kenn’ ka’ Traurigkeit, / Naa, naa, dös gibt’s ja net!) / Wār ich kein Wiener wor’n / Hätt’ ich ein’ Eselszorn! / Du, Herrgott mein, / Geh’ lass’ mich Wiener sein!” See Lehár and Léon, *Der Rastelbinder*, libretto, 48–49; Weys, “Der Rastelbinder,” libretto manuscript, 58–60.

⁵³⁷ “Das schwierigste Problem der Neubearbeitung”; Weys to Moser, July 1, 1944.

⁵³⁸ “verkommt etwas unmotiviert zur Verkleidungsortgie im Kasernenhof, mit dem einzigen, pikanten Vorwand, die Damen in Uniformen zu stecken, denn ‘Soldatenhosen haben Reiz gar großen.’” Frey, *Rastelbinder* CD liner notes, 15.

⁵³⁹ “ganz undiskutabelen”; Moser to Sikorski, June 3, 1944. Indeed, contemporary critics, for example of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, praised operettas that “could entertain a full house without salaciousness and ambiguous suggestive innuendos.” Karl F. Vonsien, “Liebe lacht im Lärchenhof: Erfolgreiche Operette Schweriner Autoren,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, May 9, 1942; reproduced in Klotz, “Der Widerspenstigen Lähmung,” 80. On the de-eroticizing of operetta under the Nazis see Kevin Clarke, “Einleitung: Homosexualität und Operette?,” in Clarke, *Glitter and be Gay*, 8.

⁵⁴⁰ “Der Schlussakt nun (Die Klippe der Neubearbeitung!) war—mag er auch in jeder Hinsicht überlebt sein und mag er auch sicherlich nie wieder in alter Form auf eine Bühne kommen—toll und burlesk lustig, wenn auch nicht nach jedermanns Geschmack. Aber es war so. Ein Equivalent für diese lustige Lustigkeit zu finden, ist enorm schwer.” Weys to Moser, June 23, 1944. See also Weys to Moser, July 1, 1944.

Indeed, Zampach's and Köller's attempts had foundered on this "reef," which had been the original reason to involve Weys.⁵⁴¹ The cabarettist's approach was sparked by the artistic director of the Raimund Theater, where the new version was to be premiered. Willy Seidl suggested moving Act II back to the Slovakian village of the prologue. After some hesitation, Weys was taken with this idea, as it allowed for the most "natural" meeting place for all the characters as well as for an "uncontrived" solution to the whole conflict.⁵⁴² Besides, by using this location Weys could incorporate all of the Reichsstelle's suggestions as well as plenty of the required humor. He proudly reported to the Reichsstelle that in this new version, *Der Rastelbinder* would become a "'folk operetta' that is rooted and *remains* within its local setting."⁵⁴³ Moser was thrilled.

At least partly responsible for the Reichsstelle's satisfaction were the economic advantages of Weys's solution. In fact, Seidl's initial suggestion had been borne of circumstances dictated by the fifth year of war: a return to the Slovakian village allowed for some serious "savings on decor."⁵⁴⁴ Weys's version also managed with a smaller cast: because the military base location was no longer included, the minor characters originally introduced there could be cut entirely.⁵⁴⁵ Instead, the final act reused some of the Trenčsin village characters—most importantly Suza's mother Babuschka and Milosch's father.

Economy was also Weys's major concern when it came to the music. He tried to use as much of the existing score as possible: as Moser had observed, in the earlier versions "the already rather weak and sparse music numbers get lost in the extensive dialogue scenes, without being introduced compellingly."⁵⁴⁶ In order to improve the overall balance between text and music, he could not afford to lose many numbers. Furthermore, considering Lehár's reluctance about the project, it was advisable to keep the composer's involvement to a minimum. Weys cut only the climactic female duet and planned for two new musical items, the last finaletto and a duet for Mizzi and Janku, as "the buffo couple can hardly remain without a number."⁵⁴⁷ He wrote a first, rather generic sketch of this love duet (involving some rather random somersaults and handstands) but remained unsure how to approach the number: although worried about making Lehár feel pressured into writing a new piece, he still wanted to encourage the composer. From the start, Weys anticipated that he would have to write a new text to an existing Lehár melody in case the composer would not deliver on his promise.

⁵⁴¹ "Klippe"; Moser to Sikorski, October 7, 1943, transcript. In 1943 Moser had already written to Sikorski about Zampach's "boring and hardly effective" edition.

⁵⁴² "natürlich"; "zwanglos"; Weys to Sikorski, July 1944. In order to persuade Moser and Lehár, Weys even wrote a "psychological analysis," showing what each of the main characters would most naturally be doing immediately after the end of Act II, and that for the characters to meet again, all other locations would look forced. Weys to Moser, July 19, 1944 and Weys, "Beilage A," n.d.; see also Weys, "Kurze Vorbemerkung."

⁵⁴³ "im Milieu wurzelnden und *bleibenden* 'Volksoperette'; Weys to Moser, July 19, 1944.

⁵⁴⁴ "Dekorationsersparnis"; Weys to Sikorski, July 9, 1944 and Weys to Moser, July 19, 1944.

⁵⁴⁵ Weys, "Kurze Vorbemerkung."

⁵⁴⁶ "verlieren sich die ohnehin etwas schwachen und spärlichen Musiknummern in den weiträumigen Sprechszenen, ohne zwingend eingefädelt zu sein"; Moser to Sikorski, June 3, 1944.

⁵⁴⁷ "das Buffopaar nicht gut ohne Nummer bleiben kann"; "Kurze Vorbemerkung."

Having read Weys's libretto, Lehár reacted positively—"You really have brought out the best in this old subject matter!"⁵⁴⁸—and agreed to write the new pieces, but asked for some further time as he was still recovering from a lengthy illness. Sikorski and Weys remained skeptical about the composer's commitment. As a precaution, they searched out themes from earlier Lehár works such as *Zirkusmädel* and discussed the possibility of creating a *finaletto* out of reminiscences. As it turned out, their apprehension proved correct: in the following months Lehár offered more and more excuses and confirmed his dilatoriness with regard to the project. The editors, however, never got to make use of their backup plan.

Although Weys had found his own solution for Act II, he did take up one important suggestion of Moser's:

Janku has long since spent the silver gulden that would have made the children's engagement valid. It cannot be adduced as a witness but Black Peter cunningly vows that it—was a fake! As the three fathers want to descend on the alleged counterfeiter, the four lovers happily protect him—now all is resolved, no further disaster looms, the children's engagement was never valid.⁵⁴⁹

Moser proposed that it could remain open whether Peter's statement—Szandor's in Weys's version—is "veridical or only facetious";⁵⁵⁰ however, Weys decided to make the fake silver gulden Szandor's secret: one that gnaws at his conscience throughout the work until it is revealed at the end. Lehár did not like this part of the new plot. He told Weys several times that he wanted the "fake silver gulden" removed, a request that Weys apparently did not understand:

He still objects to one aspect of my revision and reinforces this also in his letter, that is: the *fake* silver gulden! ... I do not consider Lehár's objection to be valid, that the figure of Szandor (Rastelbinder) is distorted if he is capable of giving Suza a fake coin in the prologue. For the new version shows clearly how *much* this very "fake gulden" has been bothering Szandor for twelve long years. Plus the final resolution shows clearly that confessing is rather hard for him. At the same time, it is exactly the "gimmick" of the fake gulden that makes for such a good and *clean* resolution at the end! Now, I know that you and the Reichsstelle share this, *my* opinion. But —, will we not have to *abandon* it as a concession to Lehár? I have a feeling that it is too "contre coeur" for him. I do not

⁵⁴⁸ "Sie haben aus dem alten Stoff herausgeholt was nur möglich war!" Weys, reporting to Seidel about his meeting with Lehár in Ischl, August 9, 1944.

⁵⁴⁹ "Der Silbergulden, der die Kinderverlobung gültig gemacht hätte, den hat Janku schon damals ausgegeben, er ist als Zeuge nicht mehr beizubringen, aber der schwarze Peter schwört listig er sei—falsch gewesen! Die drei Väter wollen über ihn als Falschgeld-Gauner herfallen, aber die vier Verliebten stellen sich selig vor ihn—nun ist alles in Ordnung, nun kann ihnen kein Unglück mehr drohen, die Kinderverlobung hat niemals zu Recht bestanden." Moser to Sikorski, October 7, 1943, transcript.

⁵⁵⁰ "wahrheitsgemäß oder nur spaßhaft"; Moser to Sikorski, June 3, 1944.

yet know what Szandor should be doing in the finale of the last act, but I will just have to think of something.⁵⁵¹

As Lehár had made clear, the “fake silver gulden” did change the tinker’s character, as his song “Das is a einfache Rechnung” shows. In the original text, Pfefferkorn wholeheartedly wished the best for the children and instructed them to learn some important values in life—frugality, a sense of business and charity. Szandor’s words bear a more self-centered subtext through their new context: although they seemingly evoke the same values, the stress is placed more firmly on the warning not to spend the gulden. If Janku were to do that, of course, Szandor’s fraud might be discovered and both of them would be in trouble. Szandor is, in short, not as selfless and trustworthy as Pfefferkorn, Victor Léon’s kind-hearted, good-natured, if rather naïve and clumsy Jew. There is now a hint of deceit throughout the operetta. Weys’s lack of understanding in this matter is particularly puzzling because he could easily have satisfied both parties by having Szandor only pretend that the gulden was a fake at the end, a possibility Moser had himself mentioned. In any case, Weys assured Lehár that he would get rid of the fake gulden but never seems to have made any effort to do so. Perhaps he decided not to put any more time into the *Rastelbinder* revision until Lehár had taken on his share of the work—a sensible precaution, as it turned out.

While the changes described thus far mostly show Weys’s effort to satisfy his employer’s demands, the comic role of tinsmith Glöppler, Mizzi’s father, provided him with some opportunity for less streamlined expression. Weys kept Zampach’s idea (commended by Moser) for transforming Glöppler, “whose tirades are today no longer directed at securing a seat in parliament, but at attaining an appointment as the president of the Teetotalers Association.”⁵⁵² In the original, Glöppler had used political terminology whenever he spoke because he was rehearsing for the time when he could leave the tiring plumbing business to his new son-in-law (Janku/Schani) and spend his time in politics. It is not surprising that the Reichsstelle was unhappy with his clumsy attempts at becoming a politician and the implication that such work was less strenuous: politics and its agents were no laughing matter during the Third Reich. Yet the alternative they accepted hardly seems an improvement. Mizzi’s father makes his first, unannounced entrance as follows:

⁵⁵¹ “Nur zu einem Punkt meiner Bearbeitung steht er nach wie vor ablehnend und bekräftigt dies auch in seinem Brief, das ist: der *falsche* Silbergulden! [...] Ich halte den Einwand Lehárs, die Figur Szandors (Rastelbinder) werde verfälscht, wenn er imstande sei im Vorspiel der Suza ein falsches Geldstück anzuhängen *nicht* für berechtigt. Denn die neue Bearbeitung zeigt ja ganz deutlich, wie *sehr* Szandor durch sage und schreibe zwölf Jahre immer wieder eben die Tatsache des ‘falschen Gulden’ irgendwie bedrückt hat. Auch die letzte Auflösung erweist deutlich, dass ihm sein Geständnis recht schwer fällt. Gleichzeitig ergibt aber gerade der ‘Gag’ des falschen Gulden eine so gute und *glatte* Auflösung am Schluss! Nun ich weiss ja, dass Sie und die Reichsstelle auch dieser, *meiner* Meinung sind. Aber–, werden wir nicht trotzdem Lehár die Konzession machen müssen, davon *abzukommen*? Ich habe das Gefühl, es geht seinem Herzen zu sehr ‘contre coeur’! Zwar weiss ich noch nicht, welchen letzten Einsatz Szandor dann wirklich im Finale des Schlussaktes haben soll, aber es wird mir eben doch etwas einfallen müssen.” Weys to Moser, August 24, 1944.

⁵⁵² “dessen Tiraden heute nicht mehr der Erringung eines Parlamentsmandates gelten, sondern der Erreichung einer Präsidentenstelle im Antialkoholikerverein”; Weys, “Kurze Vorbemerkung.”

- GLÖPPLER: (*house cap, green apron, comes out of the apartment, rambles as if memorizing, but with great pathos and without noticing the two*)... and this enemy, this enemy, who has settled in [einrotten; made-up word]; one has to wipe him out [ausrotten]!! Wipe him out without mercy, without pity, without charity, without, without, without what?? Mizzerl, do say - ??
- MIZZI: (*dusting*) What do you want, daddy?
- GLÖPPLER: I have forgotten the fourth term, "mercy, pity, charity, and," and, well, now I am at loss!
- MIZZI: Ah, are you preparing a speech for the teetotalers' association again?
- GLÖPPLER: Of course! Remember, they want to make me their president!⁵⁵³

The terminology Glöppler uses seems very much rooted in the contemporary war situation. Moreover, because *ausrotten* (eradicate) is even today strongly associated with the Holocaust, the tinsmith's first statement, devoid of any context, sounds like a speech Hitler could have made about Jewish citizens. Mizzi's interjection, however, establishes quite quickly that Glöppler is not a believable politician, but a harmless, petty-bourgeois Viennese eccentric, who picks up impressive words and applies them indiscriminately to his own small world. Although Glöppler's character is no longer directly linked to politics, then, his (mis)use of contemporary political vocabulary can be read as a statement about the way politics was practiced in the Reich, or more specifically in Vienna: with conviction, but without concrete understanding or knowledge of the exact content. A later dialogue between Mizzi and Glöppler makes this interpretation even more plausible:

- GLÖPPLER: Our guiding principle should be: "No more delirium!" Alcohol of any kind should be abolished!! (*sweeps off pans from the counter in a rage.*)
- MIZZI: But father, what's your point? You yourself enjoy drinking a good drop of wine?!
- GLÖPPLER: Don't distract me! The good drop is my private concern. Within the society I'm part of the general public and it should be abolished! (*angrily*) Ah, what am I talking about! Alcohol should be abolished! Without mercy, without pity, without charity and without, without, do you think I can come up with the stupid word?!⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵³ "GLÖPPLER: (*Hauskappchen, grüne Schürze, kommt aus der Wohnung, spricht, gleichsam memorierend, aber mit großem Pathos vor sich hin ohne der Beiden zu achten*)... und dieser Feind, dieser Feind, der sich eingerottet hat, man muß ihn ausrotten!! Ausrotten ohne Gnade, ohne Barmherzigkeit, ohne Mitleid, ohne -, ohne -, ohne was - ?? Mizzerl, so sag' schon—?! / MIZZI: (*Staub abwischend*) Was willst denn, Vater!? / GLÖPPLER: Ich hab vergessen was das Vierte is' -, 'Gnade, Barmherzigkeit, Mitleid und'—und -, na, jetzt weiß ich net weiter! / MIZZI: ah -, studierst schon wieder eine Red' für den Antialkoholikerverein? / GLÖPPLER: Natürlich! Die woll'n mich doch zum Präsidenten machen!" Weys, "Der Rastelbinder," libretto manuscript, 30.

⁵⁵⁴ "GLÖPPLER: unser Leitsatz muß sein: 'Nie wieder Delirium!' Alkohol in jeder Form gehört vernichtet—!! (*fegt in Rage Töpfe von der Budel herunter.*) / MIZZI: Aber Vater, was willst' denn—? Du trinkst doch selber gern ein' guten Tropfen?! / GLÖPPLER: Bring' mich nicht aus'n Konzept! 's gute Tröpferl is' meine Privatangelegenheit, im Verein gehöre ich der Allgemeinheit und die g'hört vernichtet—! (*ärgerlich*) Ah -, was red I denn da z'samm! Der Alkohol

Glöppler's hypocritical stance, condemning something on principle that he himself enjoys in private, fits very well with Weys's description of the grumbling Viennese in his "Januskopf": "My twin does not want to ponder," but "a Viennese has to criticize." The character trait of not thinking too closely about one's surroundings but criticizing them passionately nevertheless, was clearly something Weys liked to exploit.

Other small changes might even be read as a hint of resistance. For example, advising Suza on her duties as his new housemaid, Glöppler makes another sally of the kind sampled above:

GLÖPPLER: (*loudly*) You know, most importantly you have to tend to tidying my room. When you come to see me later –, then, then, then I will give you an address, without mercy, without pity, and without...

SUZA: Yes [Ja], *pan*.

GLÖPPLER: Without Japan? She must be a Chinese—she is always on about the Japanese!⁵⁵⁵

Suza still uses the Slovak expression for "mister" or "master," *pan*, in order to appear polite to her new boss. Glöppler, however, does not know the expression and hears "Japan" instead of "yes, master." This little joke appears repeatedly, also in the original version. However, Glöppler's subsequent comment is only in the Weys version. He is hinting, of course, at the tensions between Japan and China, especially since the Japanese had invaded Manchuria in 1931. By itself this comment might appear innocuous but in 1939, after several intellectuals (among them the influential Marxist journalist and cabarettist Jura Soyfer who by 1944 had already been killed in Buchenwald) had pointed out the parallels between Japan and Germans, the *Werkel* had produced a sketch entitled "Das chinesisches Wunder," which had used Japanese/Chinese tensions as a barely concealed metaphor for the friction between the Austrians and the Germans.⁵⁵⁶ The popular program—criticized by Nazi officials—included a conversation of Chinese clerks and cleaners with Pif-keh ["Pifke" is an—often pejorative—Austrian expression for a German], a high officer of the Tokioten [a play with "Idioten"] from Japanland, who had invaded Wi-en, the capital of Chinareich.⁵⁵⁷ While many in the *Rastelbinder* audience—and, probably, most non-local state officials—would not have picked up on such references in Glöppler's statement, Weys could still expect a response, at least from a Viennese audience.

gehört vernichtet! Ohne Gnade, ohne Barmherzigkeit, ohne Mitleid und ohne, ohne, glaubt's Ihr, das tepperte Wort fällt mir ein—?!" Weys, "Der Rastelbinder," libretto manuscript, 31.

⁵⁵⁵ "GLÖPPLER: (*laut*) Weißt, vor allem mußst' dich um die Aufräumung von mein' Zimmer kümmern. Wenn's d'nachher zu mir kommst –, dann –, dann –, dann werd' ich dir eine Red' halten, ohne Gnade, ohne Barmherzigkeit und ohne... / SUZA: Ja, pan. GLÖPPLER: / Ohne Japan—? Das muß eine Chineserin sein, dass sie's immer mit die Japanesern z'tun hat!" Weys, "Der Rastelbinder," libretto manuscript, 56.

⁵⁵⁶ Staud, "Das Ostmark-Kabarett 'Wiener Werkel,'" 2.

⁵⁵⁷ Fritz Eckhardt and Franz Paul, "Das chinesisches Wunder: En Spiel um den Chinesen, der net untergeht," *Österreichische Literatur im Exil*, <http://www.literaturepochen.at/exil/multimedia/pdf/eckhardtchinese.pdf> (accessed October 13, 2010).

One further, rather puzzling moment in Weys's revision provokes speculation: the refrain of Szandor's entrance (No. 3). For this number Weys used Zampach's "successful" text, which delineates the general duties and life of a tinker in the adjusted, no longer Yiddish dialect and without the specific references to his Jewishness.⁵⁵⁸ Strangely, while Weys commented on these text changes, the music is never once touched on in all the accessible correspondence about the revision. Indeed, replying to Sikorski's explicit request to make a list of all the necessary new music, Weys failed to mention this number.⁵⁵⁹ Furthermore, the way Weys presented the new text in his manuscript, including the explanatory comment "(2 bars of music)" in places matching the original composition, suggests that no melodic changes were carried out or planned. It is unlikely, however, that Weys or Moser or Sikorski should not have perceived these melismas—in a mostly harmonic minor, complete with augmented seconds and an underlying woodwind texture—as typically Jewish, especially as this particular melody was originally paired with the text, "I am a poor Jew! I am not at all well."⁵⁶⁰

Langsam

Pfefferkorn: Ich han - del nur mit Zwie - fel, es geht mir gor nix gut; zer -
Szandor: Als Ras - tel - bin - der sehr be - gehrt, zieh' ich von Ort zu Ort. Wie ein

- ris - sen Rock und Stie - fel, ich bin ä ar - mer Jud!
 Vogel ohne Nest, der sich nirgend nieder - läßt. Einmal bin ich da und ein - mal dort.

(Example 3.1 beginning)

⁵⁵⁸ Weys, "Kurze Vorbemerkung."

⁵⁵⁹ The same melismatic melody was also woven into the introduction to the prologue; however, one easily could have cut out the corresponding parts there.

⁵⁶⁰ "ich bin ä armer Jud! Es geht mir gar nix gut;"

Es geht mir gor nix_ gut,
Bald bin_ ich_ da,_ bald dort. ich_ bin_ ä_ ar - mer_ Jud!
Und morgen bin ich längst wieder fort.

Ob. u. Fag.

Example 3.1 continued: Refrain of No. 3, “Eintrittslied des Pfefferkorn” with the original text (top) and Wey’s 1944 version (bottom). *Der Rastelbinder*, Music: Franz Lehár, Text: Victor Léon. (© Copyright by Josef Weinberger Bühnen- u. Musikalienverlag Ges.mbH, Wien.)⁵⁶¹

As Frey established, these melismas had been the focal point of heated discussions about the work’s Jewish aspect even after its premiere performance:

Disgusting... His entrance number, an unedifying imitation of those lugubriously beautiful songs whose interval relation is different from that in occidental music, triggers sentiments in the listener that do not suitably prepare him for what is to come.⁵⁶²

Surely, the reaction to such a melody would have been at least equally strong during the Third Reich.

But what could have been done about it? To change the melody would have been awkward, it being the most memorable part of the song—the refrain. Working on other numbers, for example Szandor’s already mentioned “Das ist a einfache Rechnung,” Wey had objected to Zampach’s changes to the refrain. The song’s popularity and memorability, he argued, required that at least the first few lines be adapted from the original.⁵⁶³ In Szandor’s entrance number it was, of course, impossible to keep the original words, which most explicitly identified the main character as a Jew. It might therefore have seemed too big an intervention to change also the melody.

Or did the editors feel that, without the specifically Jewish text, the melody could simply pass as “Eastern?” The fact, that Wey never mentioned a potential problem with the music of this number and that Moser did not take issue with it either, suggests that—as so

⁵⁶¹ Pfefferkorn: “I only trade with onions, I am not at all well; torn frock and boots, I am a poor Jew! I am not at all well, I am a poor Jew!” Szandor: “In high demand as a tinker, I move from place to place. Like a bird without a nest that settles nowhere. Once I am here and once I’m there. Soon I am here, soon there. And tomorrow I’m long gone.” Lehár and Léon, *Der Rastelbinder*, Clavier-Auszug, 19.

⁵⁶² “Widerlich... Schon sein Auftrittslied, eine unerquickliche Imitation jener schwermütig-schönen Gesänge, deren Intervallverhältnis ein anderes ist, wie das der abendländischen Musik, löst in diesem Milieu in dem Hörer Empfindungen aus, die ungünstig auf das Kommende vorbereiten.” Ludwig Karpath; quoted in Frey, *Rastelbinder* CD liner notes, 16.

⁵⁶³ Wey’s to Sikorski, July 9, 1944 and Wey’s, “Kurze Vorbemerkung.”

often—the musical language managed to escape from the usual ‘political’ implications: there was no definite way of pinpointing the melody’s Jewishness—its markers were common elements of any “Othering” or Orientalizing music. Even Lehár’s woodwind texture, which might have seemed to point toward the typical Klezmer sound, was in fact missing the indispensable clarinet and featured instead a more generally “Oriental” oboe.⁵⁶⁴ In the end, it is even possible that Weys quite deliberately—and without calling attention to it—kept this residual Jewish aspect of the work intact—the only reminder to an attentive, knowing audience of the original, Jewish Pfefferkorn.

The *Rastelbinder* revision was not just any assignment for Weys. As an official *Reichsauftrag* (government commission) it offered a way to dodge many of the bullets the Third Reich had in store for him, his wife Gertrude (whom he called Gerda), and their son. While his early negotiations with Sikorski and the Reichsstelle suggest that at first Weys’s incentive for accepting the job was mainly financial, it soon became clear that “said employment also seems to protect me from unpleasant capture.”⁵⁶⁵ In the early war years many actors and artists had enjoyed the privileges of so-called UK status (NB: this stood for “unabkömmlich,” indispensable), which entailed official *NS-Truppenbetreuung* (entertainment of the military) as well as cultural work for official party organizations, but saved them from being drafted.⁵⁶⁶ Weys had been UK throughout the war because of his participation through the *Werkel* in Wehrmacht programs and the “Kraft durch Freude-Truppenbetreuung.” As more and more of his colleagues had to report for military service, it was the *Rastelbinder* commission that allowed him to retain that coveted exemption.

The prospect of such privileges must have been one reason why Weys fought for the viability of the project. It was uncertain whether, having refused two unsatisfactory attempts, Lehár would agree to any further work on a new *Rastelbinder*. In order to convince the composer, Moser, Sikorski, and Weys planned a visit to Bad Ischl, where Lehár had moved in 1939 in order to protect his Jewish wife Sophie from Nazi assaults.⁵⁶⁷ The three visitors discussed their plan of action at length: Weys was particularly worried that Lehár would consider their collective appearance as an ambush and react petulantly. In the end, they agreed that Weys should first meet “Maestro Lehár” alone.⁵⁶⁸ Their subsequent correspondence suggests that the visitors used Weys’s family situation as a tactic to persuade Lehár. On his return Weys reported to Sikorski:

⁵⁶⁴ On Orientalism in music see, for example, Derek B. Scott, “Orientalism and Musical Style,” *The Musical Quarterly* 82 (1998): 309–335 (on the use of the oboe, see particularly page 327); also, Ralph P. Locke, “Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers, Muezzins and Timeless Sands: Musical Images of the Middle East,” *19th-Century Music* 22 (1998): 20–53. On the importance of the clarinet in Klezmer see Walter Zev Feldman, “Jewish music; 3 (ii) Klezmer,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/41322pg4> (accessed November 10, 2010).

⁵⁶⁵ “Besagte Tätigkeit schützt mich im Moment wohl auch vor unangenehmen Zugriffen.” Weys to “Doktor Hecker,” August 14, 1944.

⁵⁶⁶ Steinweis, *Art, Ideology, & Economics in Nazi Germany*, 169–170.

⁵⁶⁷ Frey, “Dann kann ich leicht vergessen,” 100.

⁵⁶⁸ Weys to Seidel, August 9, 1944.

So, I got to Vienna okay (even with a seat). Gerda was very pleased about everything I had to tell her, she laughed a lot about her indirect “assistance” with the Lehár agreement regarding the *Rastelbinder*.⁵⁶⁹

It seems from this that Weys’s references to his wife’s Jewishness and the resulting difficult situation for the whole family had been a clinching argument in securing the composer’s assent. Indeed, it would make sense that Lehár was moved by such a situation: he himself was in a very similar position, even though his own wife was comparatively safe owing to Lehár’s exalted position as one of the Reich’s trophy composers. Lehár knew of his powers and in this case willingly exerted them to help Weys, as his rather blunt letter to the author, written two months later, shows:

I have agreed to arrange the *Rastelbinder*. I have really only done that in order to help you. I know exactly your situation and I am anxious to accommodate you, as much as it is in my power to do so.⁵⁷⁰

And the *Rastelbinder* project did indeed help Weys to save his wife—even sooner than he or Lehár could have imagined. On arriving in Vienna after his trip to Bad Ischl, Weys was confronted with a first work deployment call for Gerda: their son Rupi had just turned six, the age limit for Jewish mothers to stay at home with their “mixed” children. Weys immediately wrote to the employment office, stressing the indispensable professional services his wife was carrying out for him:

Since 1940 my wife has been looking after my apartment, my workplace there and my child, who has now turned six, *without any* (not even the smallest amount of) help. As I have not had any kind of dictation or secretarial assistance at my disposal *since 1941*, my wife learned to type during this time so that at least the *copying and transcription of my manuscripts* could be carried out in a timely manner. I thus feel entitled to say that through such behavior *more than one project has been saved* in my household and at my workplace for years now.

I am hit all the more gravely now, at a time when I am entrusted with a commission from the Reich minister, by the officially requested potential external labor assignment for my wife. If it becomes reality, I will face household and child without any help, but will also be without any transcribing assistance for the ongoing *Wehrmacht* and *KdF* programs. *In order to implement the Reich commission* I would even have to *call upon the help of a typist*—at least by the hour. And apart from that, any intellectual concentration would

⁵⁶⁹ “Also–, ich bin gut (sogar per Sitzplatz) nach Wien gekommen. Gerda war sehr erfreut über alles, was ich zu erzählen hatte, sie lachte sehr über ihre indirekte ‘Mithilfe’ am Lehár-Einverständnis zum ‘Rastelbinder.’” Weys to Sikorski and wife, August 9, 1944.

⁵⁷⁰ “Ich habe zugesagt den Rastelbinder einzurichten. Ich habe das wirklich nur getan, um Ihnen zu helfen. Ich kenne Ihre Situation genau und bin bestrebt Ihnen entgegenzukommen, soweit es in meinen Kräften steht.” Lehár to Weys, October 1, 1944.

necessarily be lacking if child and house were to be left unattended or if I had to attend to them.⁵⁷¹

His appeal was successful; for the time being Gerda was exempted from all duties outside her home.

Matters took a new turn, however, when Goebbels announced the general closure of all theaters across Greater Germany. From September 1, 1944, the Reich minister demanded the war deployment of all persons engaged in the cultural sector.⁵⁷² From a friend Weys had heard about the closure in advance and acted immediately by writing letters to Moser, Sikorski, and Lehár, asking for confirmation that his commission would continue. For the composer he even drafted a possible reply.⁵⁷³ Lehár's response letter, using Weys's suggested wording almost exactly, came only three days later and indeed helped the author to avoid deployment.

As a result of the theater closure, Weys's financial situation became increasingly bleak. In order to secure some future income, he tried to negotiate with Sikorski an official contract guaranteeing that his *Rastelbinder* version would be recognized as the work's authoritative version—but in vain. He also repeatedly urged both Moser and Lehár to consider him for further editorial work on operettas, asking especially to be involved in any new official commissions. He even tried to initiate new projects such as a new version of Lehár's *Der Göttergatte* (1904).⁵⁷⁴ But the composer's reaction was discouraging: "I don't want to think about *Göttergatte* and the like. After ten years I want to write a new stage work."⁵⁷⁵

To make matters worse, in late August 1944 work on the *Rastelbinder* project came to a halt: Lehár's assistance was now needed and the composer pleaded a trip to Switzerland as taking precedence. (After a Gestapo attempt to detain his wife in Bad Ischl, Lehár had started to spend significant amounts of time with her in Switzerland, where she could feel safer.⁵⁷⁶) Weys, whose contract stated that he was to receive the final installment for his stipend only on the completion of the project, repeatedly contacted Moser asking for an advance, as he had

⁵⁷¹ "Seit 1940 betreut meine Frau ohne jede (auch nur die kleinste) Hilfe meine Wohnung, meine eben dort befindliche Arbeitsstätte und mein nun sechs Jahre alt gewordenes Kind. Da ich seit 1941 auch keinerlei Diktat- oder Stenotypistinnenhilfe zur Verfügung habe, lernte meine Frau in dieser Zeit maschinschreiben, damit wenigstens *Vervielfältigung und Abschrift meiner Manuskripte* jeweils rechtzeitige Erledigung finden konnte. Ich darf also wohl mit Berechtigung aussprechen, dass durch solches Verhalten schon seit Jahren in meinem Haushalt und bei meiner Tätigkeit *mehr als eine Arbeitskraft eingespart* wurde. *Umso schwerer trifft mich nun, zu einem Zeitpunkt, da ich mit dem Auftrag des Herrn Reichsministers vertraut bin, der laut Verordnung geforderte eventuelle anderweitige Arbeitseinsatz meiner Gattin.* Wird er zur Tatsache, stehe ich ohne jede Hilfe Haushalt und Kind gegenüber, aber auch ohne jede Abschreibehilfe bei den fortlaufend zu erstellenden Wehrmachts- und KdF-Programmen. *Ich müsste zur Erfüllung des Reichsauftrages sogar eine—wenigstens stundenweise—Hilfe einer Stenotypistin in Anspruch nehmen.* Ganz abgesehen davon, dass jede geistige Konzentration notwendigerweise fehlen muss, sollte Kind und Haus ohne Wartung bleiben oder ich mich dieser widmen müssen." Weys to the Vienna employment office, August 16, 1944.

⁵⁷² Joseph Goebbels, "Der totale Kriegseinsatz der Kulturschaffenden," *Die Reichskulturkammer: Amtliches Mitteilungsblatt* ... 2, no. 8/9 (1944): 121–127.

⁵⁷³ Weys to Sikorski, to Lehár, and to Moser, August 24, 1944.

⁵⁷⁴ Weys to Lehár, September 25, 1944.

⁵⁷⁵ "An *Göttergatten* und dergleichen will ich nicht denken. Ich will ein neues Bühnenwerk nach 10 Jahren schreiben." Lehár to Weys, October 1, 1944.

⁵⁷⁶ Frey, "Dann kann ich leicht vergessen," 100.

done his part and was now dependent on Lehár. With growing desperation Weys even wrote to the composer, expressing his admiration and gratitude toward the “venerable master” and entreating him to act soon.⁵⁷⁷ Weys’s endeavors were in vain—Lehár’s reply was cool, no action followed.

However, Weys was soon to realize that these interruptions to the project—particularly as they were not caused by him—could in fact be highly beneficial to his family. When further evil tidings came, “that all men from the *Volkssturm* [People’s Militia], whose family situation is like mine (wife!) will in all likelihood be divided among ‘entrenchments’ [at the front] (possibly O.T. [Organisation Todt]),”⁵⁷⁸ Weys was able to give several new excuses for delays with the project, all of them through “unpredictable ... reasons”:

- a) Franz Lehár’s trip to Switzerland (end of September until mid-October),
- b) a *current* kidney and bladder infection of the Maestro,
- c) requests for essential changes to the textbook currently being edited, from both the Maestro and the publisher of the work.⁵⁷⁹

With “requests for essential changes” Weys was alluding to Lehár’s rejection of the “fake silver gulden” twist at the end of the work. In other words, he was now turning the only problem still to be solved—a minor one, as he himself had repeatedly stated—into a major reason for the work’s delay. He even prompted Sikorski to provide him with a letter that would support his case officially. This letter is worth quoting at length, as Sikorski’s unusual wealth of information and his strangely long-winded style show how little at this stage the Reich commission was about providing a good new version. Instead, the project had become mostly an alibi:

You know how enthusiastic and happy about everything Maestro Lehár has shown himself to be regarding your work for the *Rastelbinder* so far; you also know how satisfied we and the gentlemen from the ministry are. But exactly *because* the new version promises to be so particularly excellent, I have to ask you about something else today: namely, the matter of the “silver gulden!” You remember that even at the time of our planning session in Ischl (in the presence of director Drewes and Prof Moser from the ministry) the Maestro repeatedly spoke of this motive, which, in his opinion, was not handled entirely correctly from the psychological standpoint. He has just written me a letter about this matter, which I

⁵⁷⁷ “hochverehrter Meister”; Weys to Lehár, September 25, 1944.

⁵⁷⁸ “dass alle Volkssturmmänner, deren familiärer Fall so gelagert ist wie meiner (Gattin!) aller Vorrassicht nach auf ‘Schanzen’ eingeteilt werden (möglicherweise O.T.)”; Weys to Sikorski, November 15, 1944. The Organisation Todt was a civil and military engineering organization founded by Fritz Todt and led, after 1942, by Albert Speer, the Minister of Armaments. The institution was notorious for using forced labor for their often dangerous large-scale construction work.

⁵⁷⁹ “nicht vorraussehbare [...] Gründe”; “a) eine Reise Franz Lehárs in die Schweiz (Ende September bis halben Oktober), b) eine *derzeitige* Nieren- und Blasenerkrankung des Meisters, c) wesentliche Änderungswünsche an dem in Arbeit befindlichen Textbuch sowohl von Seiten des Meisters als auch vom Verleger des Stückes.” Weys to the Vienna employment office, December 30, 1944.

enclose as an attachment. You can see all the details from it. Lehár probably did not write to you about it directly, because he perhaps *did not want to burden you with the extra work*. However, I think that you'll be able to clear that hurdle within *6–8 weeks at the most*. A longer period of time will hardly be needed for these changes, which relate mainly to the first and third act.

Should you succeed with a good and new solution here, the work will surely be even more polished and you will have given Maestro Lehár the greatest pleasure for his 75th birthday! The gentlemen from the ministry also will be grateful for it. When all is said and done, however, you know yourself that the *minister likewise has a great interest in the completion of the new version and the best possible solution*.

You'll also find in Lehár a much more ambitious collaborator for the *still outstanding songs* than he has been so far, if you fulfill his heart's desire.⁵⁸⁰

For his wife, the *Rastelbinder* commission provided further helpful excuses, too. Once more arguing for Gerda's indispensability at home, Weys mentioned to the employment office his "work-related trips to Ischl to Maestro Lehár," a matter he had stressed repeatedly since his letter to the employment office in September 1944.⁵⁸¹ At that early point, Weys may still have seriously believed that he would have to travel to Bad Ischl. When he offered this possibility to Lehár, however, the composer wrote back dismissively that "you don't have to come to Ischl, because I can only work *alone*," so that a future visit became entirely needless.⁵⁸² Several of Weys's statements support the assumption that he never saw Lehár again. And still, having received a call to report for duty at the Volkssturm in mid-December, the author excused himself at short notice by declaring that he had already bought tickets to visit Lehár. Weys described this bold act to both Sikorski and his friend Louis Barcata, expressing quite clearly to the latter his growing derision of the malfunctioning Nazi bureaucracy and their blind obedience at the mention of important names:

⁵⁸⁰ "Sie wissen ja, wie begeistert und in allem einverstanden Meister Lehár sich zu Ihrem bisherigen Arbeiten zum 'Rastelbinder' geäußert hat, Sie wissen auch, wie zufrieden wir und die Herrn vom Ministerium sind. Aber gerade *weil* die Neubearbeitung so besonders gut zu werden verspricht, muss ich Sie heute doch noch um etwas bitten: Die Sache mit dem 'Silbergulden' nämlich! Sie erinnern sich, dass schon bei unserer seinerzeitigen Arbeitsaussprache in Ischl (im Beisein von Intendant Drewes und Prof. Moser vom Ministerium) der Meister immer wieder auf dieses seiner Meinung nach psychologisch nicht ganz richtig geführte Motiv zu sprechen gekommen ist. Nun schreibt er mir neuerdings einen Brief in dieser Sache, den ich Ihnen in der Anlage beifüge. Sie sehen daraus alles Nähere. Wahrscheinlich hat Lehár Ihnen nicht direkt darüber geschrieben, da er Ihnen die *Mehrarbeit*, die dadurch entsteht, vielleicht nicht *zumuten wollte*. Ich glaube aber, dass Sie in *längstens 6–8 Wochen* auch diese Hürde hinter sich gebracht haben werden. Einen grösseren Zeitraum werden die dadurch bedingten Änderungen, die sich ja in der Hauptsache auf den 1. und 3. Akt beziehen, wohl kaum brauchen. Gelingt Ihnen hierbei eine gute und neue Lösung, so ist das Werk sicherlich noch abgerundeter und Sie haben damit Meister Lehár zu seiner 75. Geburtstagsfeier die allergrösste Freude bereitet! Auch die Herren im Ministerium werden dafür nur dankbar sein. Schliesslich und endlich aber wissen Sie ja selbst, dass der *Herr Minister* an dem Zustandekommen der Neufassung und einer *bestmöglichen Lösung ebenfalls grosses Interesse hat*. Sie werden auch für die *noch ausständigen Lieder* in Lehár einen noch viel ambitionierteren Mitarbeiter finden als bisher, wenn Sie seinen Herzenswunsch erfüllen." Sikorski to Weys, November 27, 1944.

⁵⁸¹ "arbeitsbedingten Fahrten nach Ischl zu Meister Lehár"; Weys to the Vienna employment office, December 30, 1944. See also Weys to the Vienna employment office, September 12, 1944.

⁵⁸² "nach Ischl müssen Sie nicht kommen, denn ich kann nur *allein* arbeiten"; Lehár to Weys, October 1, 1944.

By now I have received an "economic allocation certificate," which Kurz from the propaganda ministry could still fend off this time. Because of a "Reich commission" (minister personally ... etc.). Admittedly, his two letters (employment office and Gestapo) have not settled the matter for good, but I don't think that they will ride roughshod over them. Interestingly, the Volkssturm also still came forward with a call to muster last Sunday. Regrettably, I was just visiting Lehár in Ischl, of which I informed them apologetically, adding also the request not to put me in the foremost units, because I still had to finish a "Reich commission" from the "minister personally," etc. Well, we'll see...!⁵⁸³

Letters to his friends show that Weys still had not been drafted in April, when the Vienna Offensive, the final battle for the city, was launched by Soviet forces. It had been "a high-wire act from month to month, often from week to week,"⁵⁸⁴ but as he wrote to Lehár in late March 1945:

Considering all that, I should be glad that for us personally things are not worse, that I can still be at home with my wife and child and protect both ... I owe this, incidentally, largely to the "*Rastelbinder* Reich commission," which I produce as an "alibi" and "identification" at all official offices.⁵⁸⁵

Weys and his family all survived the war and, although postwar times were still hard, the author quickly found outlets for his creative work: he was asked to help with the preparations for the Viennese antifascist exhibition "Niemals vergessen" in 1946, and provided radio stations and magazines with educational reports such as "Cabaret unter den Augen der Zensur." Weys was able to continue his cabaret career in Vienna until his death in 1978.

This discussion of the Reichsstelle commission to edit Lehár's *Der Rastelbinder* provides several insights into the Third Reich operetta world. The simple, grey- (or, better, sepia-) shaded

⁵⁸³ "Nun ist ja inzwischen ... ein 'wirtschaftlicher Bereitstellungsschein' an mich ergangen, den diesmal noch Kurz vom Prop.Amt abwehren konnte. Durch 'Reichsauftrag' (Minister persönlich...usw.). Freilich sind seine zwei Schreiben (Arbeitsamt und Gestapo) nicht enderledigt, ich glaube aber kaum, dass sie darüber hinweggehen werden. Interessanterweise hat sich aber trotzdem auch der Volkssturm vergangenen Sonntag mit einer Einberufung zu einem Kompagnieapell gemeldet. Bedauerlicherweise war ich gerade bei Lehár in Ischl, wovon ich jene entschuldigend in Kenntnis setzte, mit der gleichzeitig angeschlossenen Bitte, mich nicht gerade in die allerersten Einheiten einzusetzen, da ich noch einen 'Reichsauftrag' vom 'Minister persönlich', usw. fertigzuarbeiten hätte. Nun, wir werden ja sehen..!" Weys to Louis Barcata, December 19, 1944.

⁵⁸⁴ "ein Seiltanzen von Monat zu Monat, oft von Woche zu Woche"; Weys to unknown recipients (a couple), December 14, 1944.

⁵⁸⁵ "Bei alledem muss ich noch froh sein, dass es persönlich nicht ärger steht, dass ich noch zuhause bei Frau und Kind sein und beide beschützen kann [...] Das habe ich übrigens zu einem Gutteil dem 'Rastelbinder-Reichsauftrag' zu verdanken, den ich an allen amtlichen Stellen als 'Alibi' und 'Ausweis' vorweise." Weys to Lehár, March 26, 1945.

conclusion is that Weys's changes show neither a fanatically fascist nor a consistently resistant stance. While the official commission called for a certain number of concessions to the regime's ideals—the rewriting of Pfefferkorn's character being the most obvious example—the sparingness and subtlety of Weys's editorial changes, as well as the reservations he initially expressed, substantiate a rather moderate image of the Reichsstelle's work,⁵⁸⁶ and even support Fred Prieberg's suggestion that Goebbels used this institution primarily as an administrative measure to keep extremist cultural outgrowths under control.⁵⁸⁷

But Goebbels's establishment of the Reichsstelle—on Hitler orders!—and his demand for a focus on lighter musical fare also suggest that operetta was still deemed important by the National Socialist regime when the war was in full swing. Even during the final stages of the war—when the *Rastelbinder* project had made no significant progress for months, when no performance possibility was in sight, and when all but a select few artists had already been drafted—Weys was still given official support to carry on with his work.

Weys's experience, moreover, is a clear sign of the many loopholes in the complex, decentralized National Socialist system, especially toward the end of the war: as those central figures who had once given their express orders to promote operetta attended to more pressing war matters, cultural administration was left freely in the hands of their underlings whose interpretation of what needed to be done varied widely.

As the story of the *Rastelbinder* commission has shown, Weys's happy end was the outcome of a collaborative effort, involving the good will and blind eyes not only of Lehár and publisher Sikorski but also of the Reichsstelle—which, at least by this time, was likely no more than a one-man operation. The case therefore also gives some credence to Moser's largely disparaged postwar statements before denazification authorities and can contribute to the recent, much-needed reevaluation of this hapless musicologist. For, although Moser was without doubt a notorious *Mitläufer* (follower), desperate to keep himself—and his many dependents—afloat under different political regimes,⁵⁸⁸ recent findings show that some of his work has been dismissed too easily, especially by German colleagues who used him as a scapegoat for many of the era's misdeeds in German musicology.⁵⁸⁹ Defending himself as well as the Reichsstelle, Moser wrote:

Incidentally, I am not ashamed of *any* of the opera and operetta revisions or new commissions—none of them was meant to replace a Jewish author.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁶ See also Levi, *Music in the Third Reich*, 76 and Christian Glanz, "Grautöne und blue notes: Zur Populärmusik in Wien zwischen 1938 und 1945," in *Musik in Wien, 1938–1945*, ed. Carmen Ottner (Vienna: Ludwig Doblinger, 2006), 278–279.

⁵⁸⁷ Prieberg, *Musik im NS-Staat*, 355.

⁵⁸⁸ See Alfred Einstein, review of *Jahrbuch der deutschen Musik 1943*, ed. Hellmuth von Hase, *Notes* 3 (1946): 289. For recent literature on Moser see Anselm Gerhard, "Musicology in the 'Third Reich': A Preliminary Report," *The Journal of Musicology* 18 (2001): 517–543.

⁵⁸⁹ Pamela P. Potter, "Moser: (2) Hans Joachim Moser," *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19191pg2> (accessed March 14, 2013) and her *Most German of the Arts*.

⁵⁹⁰ "Übrigens schäme ich mich *keiner* der Opern- und Operettenbearbeitungen oder Neuaufträge—keine wollte einen jüdischen Autoren ersetzen." Moser, "Schlußwort Hans Joachim Moser am 19.9.1947"; Moser Papers, Box 5.

I have only performed artistic-scholarly tasks ... and have even continually defied the Nazi ideology by providing authors married to Jews with commissions, and Jews and otherwise politically persecuted people with professional licenses.⁵⁹¹

Weys's example shows that operetta could indeed be a lifeline for authors during this difficult time, even for some who had not been operetta specialists previously. The genre's lack of political explicitness became a welcome feature for artists who could not afford to attract attention. Weys's situation as a locally significant and popular but internationally little-known author is representative of German and Austrian artists who, even if they wanted to emigrate, were not famous enough to dare a new start abroad (as, for example, the operetta composer Robert Stolz had done). Indeed, librettists and other writers whose success depended on the German language were limited in their options abroad, regardless of their fame.

To receive an official Reichsstelle commission for an operetta project was a winning combination then: it did not require much political commitment, paid comparatively well, and could help to avoid dangerous military service as well as to keep the family together. Weys was not the only one to have benefited from these privileges. Indeed, trying to exculpate himself, Moser did not even mention Weys as an example. Instead he wrote of the commissions he had given to the *judenversippten* (miscegenetically Jewish) Eduard Künneke, Edmund Nick, and Hans Ebert.⁵⁹² Future research will perhaps show how these authors used their operetta commissions, and to what extent they were supporters of the regime. It is, however, already clear that—at least to many artists working at the time—operetta during the Third Reich was by no means a barren subject.

⁵⁹¹ "habe ich einzig künstlerisch-wissenschaftliche Aufgaben erfüllt [...] und mich sogar dauernd der Nazi-Ideologie widersetzt, indem ich jüdisch verheirateten Autoren zu Werkaufträgen, jüdisch oder sonst politisch Verfolgten zu Berufsgenehmigungen verholfen [habe?]." Moser, December 10, 1947; Moser Papers, Box 1. Also Moser, "Selbstbericht des Forschers und Schriftstellers Hans Joachim Moser," 22; Moser Papers, Box 15.

⁵⁹² Moser to Curt Sachs, December 25, 1948; Moser Papers, Box 6.

CHAPTER 4: THE SECOND REPUBLIC

“Operetta is Dead—Long Live Operetta!”

Prolog: Die Wiener Operette:

... Ich bin ein bisserl alt geworden
Und recht verstaubt, Gott sei's geklagt,
Die kessen Brüder aus dem Norden,
Die hab'n mich sogar tot gesagt.
Man hat ihnen schon recht gegeben
Wenn man ganz "unverhofft" mich sah,
Doch weckte mich zu neuem Leben
Der Wunderdoktor Marischka!
Die "Straussbuam" füllen jetzt die Kassen,
Man spricht von an Erfolg, an toll'n,
Und das Theater kann kaum fassen
Die, die mich sterben sehen woll'n.

Prologue: Viennese Operetta:

... I have gotten a little old
And, alas, rather dusty.
The breezy brothers from the North,
They have even declared me dead.
One has already agreed with them
When one saw me rather "unexpectedly,"
But I was revived by
The wondrous doctor [quack] Marischka!
The "Strauss boys" now fill the coffers,
One speaks of a fantastic success,
And the theater can hardly believe it
Those that want to see me die.⁵⁹³

“Viennese Operetta is Alive! ‘Straussbuben’ Sensation in the Raimund Theater” read the headline of an Austrian daily on October 21, 1946.⁵⁹⁴ The city’s first grand operetta premiere after the war was a major social event. Witnesses reported uncountable encores, evocations, and homages that elongated the performance to the length of *Götterdämmerung*.⁵⁹⁵ For months tickets sold out weeks in advance, and many predicted a run much longer than a year.⁵⁹⁶

The work in question was a new pastiche cobbled together by some of Vienna’s most experienced operetta celebrities from previously unknown music in Johann Strauss Jr.’s estate, spiked with a series of his and his brother Josef’s most memorable melodies. *Die Straussbuben*, which focused on a fictional love triangle between adolescent Johann and Josef Strauss and the daughter of a Viennese ballroom manager, enjoyed much official support: the prestigious Johann Strauss Society offered its patronage,⁵⁹⁷ and state- and municipal-government leaders

⁵⁹³ “Zwischen den Zeilen. Das Dreibuberlhaus oder: Die Operette ist tot—es lebe die Operette!,” censor’s copy of the libretto manuscript; Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, M. Abt. 350, File A46, Box 2.

⁵⁹⁴ “Die Wiener Operette lebt! ‘Straussbuben’-Sensation im Raimundtheater,” *Welt am Montag mit Sport*, October 21, 1946.

⁵⁹⁵ “Die Straussbuben’: Die Operette,” *Wiener Zeitung*, October 22, 1946.

⁵⁹⁶ See, for example, Rudolf Weys to Publisher Hans Sikorski, November 7, 1946; Weys Papers.

⁵⁹⁷ See Weys to Franz Salmhofer, director of the Johann Strauss Society, September 30, 1946; Weys Papers. Remarkably, this society is no longer interested in *Die Straussbuben*. President Professor Magister Peter Widholz informed me via email that “our society was founded in 1936 for the original works by Johann Strauss. Therefore,

not only opened the glittering premiere festivities: federal president Karl Renner and chancellor Leopold Figl even returned for the hundredth, “rapturously acclaimed” performance in January 1947.⁵⁹⁸

Zealous press reviews provide first insights into what made *Die Straussbuben* so successful. Critics raved about the classical form of this “ur-Viennese operetta,”⁵⁹⁹ its sophisticated music, tasteful plot, homey local setting, the dear, familiar faces on stage, and the authentic folk humor, which made the theater visit “the purest, most genuine, untarnished pleasure.”⁶⁰⁰ “This is the operetta that Vienna needs and that the world needs from Vienna,” proclaimed the *Wiener Kurier*.⁶⁰¹ The work was also welcomed as evidence of Viennese operetta’s restored independence after German domination. As one paper asserted:

After the long-lasting import from the “Altreich,” [this production ...] denotes also the return to our Austrian operetta. And this return could hardly have been implemented better than with the cornucopia of melodies by Johann and Josef Strauss.⁶⁰²

Ironically, however, the work’s conception was by no means as immaculate as the press would let on. On the initiative of publisher Hans Sikorski, who had acquired the rights to Strauss’s unpublished estate music in 1942, Hubert Marischka, Rudolf Weys, and former Theater an der Wien conductor Oskar Stalla had started work on *Die Straussbuben* in the midst of war, without any plans to involve the government, but it soon became clear that official support could facilitate progress on the project.⁶⁰³ For during Hitler’s regime, work with original Strauss music required the authorization of the Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitungen: facing a lack of promising contemporary and “Aryan” alternatives, Reich officials increasingly focused on revamping previously unsuccessful works by Vienna’s waltz king, who, both in the Reich and further afield, could act as a symbol for Greater Germany’s glorious past and magnificent cultural heritage.⁶⁰⁴

The Nazis’ reliance on Johann Strauss as ideal German musician and inspiring role model is especially juicy considering that this composer, too, had Jewish roots. Already shortly after Austria’s annexation, Goebbels noted in his diary:

unfortunately, I do not know specific literature about ‘operettas with Strauss music.’” Email from Peter Widholz to the author, July 22, 2010.

⁵⁹⁸ “beifallsumbrauste Aufführung”; “Hundertmal Straussbuben,” *Welt am Abend*, January 21, 1947.

⁵⁹⁹ “urwienerische Operette”; “Ewige Wiener Operette: Von Suppé bis Steinbrecher,” *Die schöne Wienerin* 11 (1947).

⁶⁰⁰ “uneingeschränkt reinstem, lauterstem, ungetrübtestem Vergnügen”; “Die Straussbuben’: Die Operette,” *Wiener Zeitung*, October 22, 1946.

⁶⁰¹ “Das ist die Operette, die Wien und die Welt von Wien braucht.” E.W., “Jubel um die ‘Straussbuben’: Operettenaufführung im Raimundtheater,” *Wiener Kurier*, October 22, 1946.

⁶⁰² “[Diese Vorstellung] bedeutet auch nach jahrelangem Import aus dem ‘Altreich’ die Rückkehr zu unserer österreichischen Operette. Und diese Rückkehr hätte sich kaum besser vollziehen können als mit der Melodienfülle von Johann und Josef Strauss.” “Wiener Operette im Raimundtheater: ‘Die Straussbuben,’” *Stimme der Frau* 11 (1946).

⁶⁰³ Reichsstelle director Heinz Drewes to Weys, October 15, 1943; Weys Papers.

⁶⁰⁴ See Weys, “Erklärung und Information zur Entstehung des Singspieles ‘Die Straussbuben,’” May 16, 1946; Weys Papers and Weys to Hubert Marischka, April 12, 1943; Weys Papers.

A particular sly dog has found out that Johann Strauss is a one-eighth Jew. I forbid making this public. Because firstly, it is not yet proven and secondly, I do not fancy sacrificing the whole German cultural heritage bit by bit. In the end our history will be left only with Widukind, Heinrich the Lion, and Rosenberg. That is not very much.⁶⁰⁵

For the prosperity of the Reich's cultural scene—and operetta in particular—Johann Strauss was simply too vital to be doubted. Goebbels ordered Strauss scholars to hush up the unfortunate family history and even had the evidence, an entry in the wedding registry of St. Stephan, replaced with an amended, politically unobjectionable copy.⁶⁰⁶ Furthermore, the Gestapo seized the composer's estate from his half-Jewish stepdaughter, Alice Strauss-Meyszner in April 1939, and a three-part article series in the Nazi daily *Der Stürmer*, resolutely claiming Strauss as an anti-Semite, demanded that she give up her inheritance as "payable Jewish penance."⁶⁰⁷ Under such pressure, Strauss-Meyszner soon "bestowed" the estate upon the city of Vienna, but she managed to stay involved in decisions about the musical collection.⁶⁰⁸ Indeed, *Die Straussbuben*, whose previously unpublished materials came from this captured estate, seems to have enjoyed the heir's approval; postwar communications between the authors and Strauss's family are amicable and show genuine interest in the project.⁶⁰⁹

Taking into consideration this rather peculiar genesis, this final chapter will examine the postwar reception of this official Reich commission and explore the tension between *Die Straussbuben's* strategic, glamorous launch and resolutely brilliant initial success, and its disastrous reverberations not only for operetta but for Viennese culture in general.

During the years following World War II, theater was considered an ideal medium to educate Austrians, to foster a collective, national spirit based on politically unquestionable values, and to instill a new belief in a bright and independent future for the country. All who had political

⁶⁰⁵ "Ein Oberschlauberger hat herausgefunden, daß Joh. Strauss ein Achteljude ist. Ich verbiete, das an die Öffentlichkeit zu bringen. Denn erstens ist es noch nicht erwiesen, und zweitens habe ich keine Lust, den ganzen deutschen Kulturbesitz so nach und nach unterbuttern zu lassen. Am Ende bleiben aus unserer Geschichte nur noch Widukind, Heinrich der Löwe und Rosenberg übrig. Das ist ein bißchen wenig." Goebbels, diary entry on June 5, 1938; see Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, part I vol. 5, 334.

⁶⁰⁶ Wiener Institut für Strauss-Forschung, "Die Geschichte der Fälschung der Eintragung der Trauung des Johann Michael Strauss mit Rosalia Buschin im Jahre 1941," *Tanz Signale*, <http://www.johann-strauss.at/wissen/faelschung.shtml> (accessed September 19, 2012).

⁶⁰⁷ "fällige Judenbuße"; Peter Eppel and Christian Mertens, *Die Restitution von Kunst- und Kulturgegenständen im Bereich der Stadt Wien, 1998–2001* (Vienna: Museen der Stadt Wien, Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek, 2002), 75.

⁶⁰⁸ Correspondence within the Reich propaganda ministry about the 1934 Strauss pastiche *Die Tänzerin Fanny Elßler* suggests that Oskar Stalla, the musical arranger of *Die Straussbuben* and the earlier work, was appointed as the executor of Strauss's estate by the composer's family. See Senior Legal Secretary Rüdiger to Assistant Judge Dr. Flügel, October 26, 1934; Bundesarchiv, R55/141, Fiche 1.

⁶⁰⁹ Rudolf Meyszner to Marischka, July 2, 1946; Marischka Papers.

power tried to enforce their value systems and ideological goals through cultural offensives: Austria's political parties, the Catholic Church, and the Allied occupation forces.⁶¹⁰ One main objective of these authorities for Viennese theatrical productions was to facilitate the separation of Austria from Germany. This was attempted by establishing links with older, local traditions that reasserted a continuity only interrupted by the Hitler years. As the present offered only few uplifting ideas, intellectuals argued, the new Austrian self-image should be grounded in the fresh illumination and portrayal of history.⁶¹¹ Cultural councilor Viktor Matejka emphasized soon after taking office that his main goal would be to restore the worldwide recognition of Austria's culture after the years of Nazi barbarism.⁶¹² The Allies unanimously supported such backward-looking cultural politics that would divert Austrians from all-German sentiments as well as from a reality of ruins and food rations, and instead provide them with positive role models and the sense of a distinctly Austrian collective identity. French officials even specifically recommended that the safest history to evoke would be that of the Habsburg era.⁶¹³

Operetta, of course, was perfect for such stage revivals of a glorious past. As we have seen, nostalgic settings of an idealized "Alt Wien" as well as biographical works about famous Austrians had become popular trends even before the end of the Empire, as smash hits such as Heinrich Berté's Schubert pastiche *Das Dreimäderlhaus* (1915) exemplify. Indeed, as the long list in Appendix 4 demonstrates, pastiche operettas based on Strauss family music were by no means a new phenomenon by the time of *Die Straussbuben*. The first such compilation had premiered even before the waltz king's death in 1899 and apparently with his consent: *Wiener Blut* became a hit on German-speaking stages and is still part of the standard repertory. Italian audiences reacted more favorably to a later Strauss pastiche, Oskar Stalla's *Die Tänzerin Fanny Elssler* (1934).⁶¹⁴ Other notable Strauss cocktails include Oscar Straus's unusual "three-generations" story *Drei Walzer* (1935), featuring music by Strauss senior and junior as well as his own, and Ralph Benatzky's *Casanova* (1928), a collaboration with Erik Charell which, instead of aiming to revive an "authentic" Straussian sound, incorporated fashionable jazz and

⁶¹⁰ Evelyn Deutsch-Schreiner, "'Theaterland Österreich': Theater im verdeckt geführten Kulturkampf um eine österreichische Identität von 1945 bis 1955," in *Wiederaufbau in Österreich, 1945–1955*, ed. Ernst Bruckmüller (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2006), 145.

⁶¹¹ See, for example, Susanne Frölich-Steffen, "'Nationbuilding' in Österreich: Versöhnung von Austriaismus und Pangermanismus im Zuge der EU-Mitgliedschaft," in *Österreichische Nation—Kultur—Exil und Widerstand: In memoriam Fritz Kreissler*, ed. Helmut Kramer, Karin Liebhart, and Friedrich Stadler (Vienna: Lit Verlag, 2006), 57, as well as other articles in this volume.

⁶¹² "Tätigkeitsbericht der Geschäftsgruppe III—Kultur und Volksbildung—des Wiener Magistrats vom April 1945 bis März 1946"; Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, M. Abt. 350, File A22, Box 21; also cited in Cornelia Szabó-Knotik, "Selbstinszenierung und Handelsbilanz: Die (Re)Konstruktion Österreichs nach 1945 mittels Musik," in *Musik-Wissenschaft an ihren Grenzen: Manfred Angerer zum 50. Geburtstag*, ed. Dominik Schweiger, Michael Staudinger, and Nikolaus Urbanek (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2004), 363.

⁶¹³ Robert Graham Knight, "Besiegt oder befreit? Eine völkerrechtliche Frage historisch betrachtet," in *Die bevormundete Nation: Österreich und die Alliierten, 1945–1949*, ed. Günter Bischof and Josef Leidenfrost (Innsbruck: Haymon, 1988), 75–92 and Barbara Porpaczny, *Frankreich—Österreich, 1945–1960: Kulturpolitik und Identität* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2002), 126–128.

⁶¹⁴ Director of the Deutsches Theater (Berlin) Heinz Hilpert to Ministerialrat Rüdiger, September 27, 1934 and internal communications between Rüdiger and Gerichtsassessor Dr. Flügel, October 26, 1934; Bundesarchiv, R55/141, Fiche 1.

dance elements into a grand revue operetta with Strauss melodies. In France and the English-speaking world, the most successful Strauss cocktail was Korngold's fictionalized Strauss biography *Walzer aus Wien* (1930)—soon further promoted by Alfred Hitchcock's 1934 film adaptation *Waltzes from Vienna*.⁶¹⁵

The tried-and-tested appeal and comprehensibility of such materials for audiences from a wide range of backgrounds made operetta even more attractive for the communist, though cosmopolitan Matejka. Furthermore, as an export product independent of raw materials and complicated compensation agreements, operetta remained one of the strongest assets of Austria's foreign trade balance. Most importantly for the country's cultural rehabilitation, however, operetta was considered, as one postwar critic put it, "the expression of a mentality that is recognized, loved, and gratefully remembered everywhere as Austrian—in spite of all the incidents of the last years."⁶¹⁶

Soon after the end of the war, therefore, Viennese cultural leaders started discussing ways to reinvest operetta with the importance that it had held within the Austrian capital's musical life before World War II.⁶¹⁷ Capable composers had to be found, new performers trained.⁶¹⁸ For although everyone agreed on the genre's importance for postwar Vienna, even its most dedicated advocates had to admit that operetta was not in good shape. In defense of the art form, Marischka correctly pointed out that critics had proclaimed an operetta crisis even in Strauss's days,⁶¹⁹ but he, too, knew that the situation had changed since the 1930s: while older box-office hits such as Kálmán's *Gräfin Mariza* and Benatzky's *Im weißen Rössl* were popular as ever, new successful works were nowhere to be found.⁶²⁰ But restagings of older operettas, theater officials argued, would carry no yield for Austria, neither with regard to renewing culture nor in terms of bringing in further foreign exchange.⁶²¹

In August 1946, two months before the *Straussbuben* premiere, Matejka and his colleague Robert Kraus met with Raimund Theater director Fritz Imhoff, Hubert Marischka, and Rudolf Weys to plan the most advantageous possible launch of Vienna's new operetta. The

⁶¹⁵ Clarke, "Der Walzer erwacht," 49 and 64.

⁶¹⁶ "den Ausdruck einer Mentalität, die man überall als österreichisch erkannt, geliebt und allen Zwischenfällen der letzten Jahre zum Trotz dankbar in Erinnerung behalten hat." Rudolf Kalmar, "Operettentheater gesucht," *Neues Österreich*, August 15, 1946. Indeed, the particular benefits of operetta were also noted by the occupiers: according to Maria Kinz, the Russians' interest in Viennese operetta contributed to the expeditious reopening of the Raimund Theater as the first of Vienna's theaters after the war. Maria Kinz, *Raimund Theater* (Vienna: Jugend & Volk, 1985), 64.

⁶¹⁷ The president of the Gesellschaft der Autoren, Komponisten und Musiktextautoren (AKM) to cultural councilor Viktor Matejka, August 20, 1946; Wienbibliothek, Handschriftensammlung, Viktor Matejka Papers, ZPH 830.

⁶¹⁸ Departmental head of Vienna's cultural office Robert Kraus to Matejka, November 26, 1946; Matejka Papers. There even was a discussion whether Fritz Imhoff was a suitable director for the Raimund Theater, and other operetta authorities such as composer Nico Dostal applied to become his successor. (Nico Dostal to Matejka, August 19, 1946; Matejka Papers.) None of the available luminaries could convince the city authorities, however. Kraus to Matejka, November 26, 1946; Matejka Papers.

⁶¹⁹ Letter with the manuscript of a short article "Frühzeitig 'Tot-Gesagte' haben das längste Leben!," Marischka to Kurt J. Beck, March 1, 1955; Marischka Papers.

⁶²⁰ See, for example, "Echo des Tages: Gespräch mit Hubert Marischka," manuscript of a radio interview [October 1946]; Marischka Papers.

⁶²¹ Imhoff to the Austrian National Bank, April 2, 1947; Wienbibliothek, Handschriftensammlung, Imhoff Papers, ZPH 1563.

Raimund Theater was the capital's only serviceable theater available for musical entertainment theater and its managers were fully aware of their "irremissible responsibility ... to pave the way for the new Austrian operetta internationally."⁶²² While clearly a varied program was most desirable and advantageous for such a task, Imhoff argued that the sets, costumes, and ensemble for more than one new production posed risky, even impossible investments given the postwar situation. Furthermore, Marischka pointed out from experience that a work's international success could only be guaranteed by a Vienna run of at least 250 to 300 performances.⁶²³ In their efforts to ensure the successful revival of operetta, the responsible authorities therefore decided to stake everything on one card: *Die Straussbuben* was their trump. And once this decision was made, all parties involved fought for this production to be received as a success. Although there are no revealing records, *Straussbuben* performances may well have been "papered" (a common practice in the theater business to fill a house and promote a work by giving out free tickets);⁶²⁴ after all, the minimum number of performances necessary for the international success mentioned by Marischka was barely reached. Yet, confronted with the looming rumors of operetta's "death," performers and commentators alike pointed at this long *Straussbuben* run as proof of the genre's viability.⁶²⁵ Clearly sensing what was at stake for Austrian culture, most of Vienna's reviewers chose to assist *Die Straussbuben's* success by stressing the work's positive aspects.

Strikingly, in spite of its Third Reich genesis (of which officials, unlike the press, were fully aware) and after delicate and lengthy negotiations about the libretto with the mayor's office,⁶²⁶ few alterations were deemed necessary to make this work an ideal representation of both the Austria and the operetta postwar leaders envisaged: as was typical for entertainment works written during the Reich, *Die Straussbuben* scrupulously avoided explicit political references.⁶²⁷ Moreover, its original Strauss melodies provided musical authority and therefore

⁶²² "seine unerlässliche kulturelle Aufgabe ... , der neuen österreichischen Operette den Weg in die Welt wieder zu öffnen"; Imhoff to the Austrian National Bank, April 2, 1947; Imhoff Papers.

⁶²³ Kraus, "Niederschrift vom 7. August 1946"; Marischka Papers and Imhoff Papers.

⁶²⁴ See Gertrud Marischka, Hubert Marischka biography, 92.

⁶²⁵ See, for example, "Ewige Wiener Operette: Von Suppé bis Steinbrecher," *Die schöne Wienerin* 11 (1947), and Alex Picher's reaction in "Der Star muß glauben, was er spielt," *Welt am Montag mit Sport*, March 31, 1947.

⁶²⁶ Marischka to Weys, April 18, 1946, and Weys to Marischka, April 26, 1946; Weys Papers.

⁶²⁷ Two musical numbers were exchanged for supposedly stronger ones and the dialogue was modified in places. Weys to Dr. Fritz Stein (Genossenschaft dramatischer Schriftsteller), January 28, 1947; see also Marischka to Weys, April 18, 1946; Weys Papers. It seems remarkable that the "free Austria" welcomed this Strauss pastiche with open arms considering that during the Third Reich the authors had been unable to place it at a Viennese venue. (Sikorski to Weys, July 17, 1944; Weys Papers.) Austrian Nazis had refused to program the work at the Volksoper, a theater that—ostentatiously renamed into "Opernhaus der Stadt Wien"—became the city officials' battleship in a fight for at least partial artistic independence from Berlin's centralistic cultural politics, and for "an autonomous art in our city." ("einer eigenständigen Kunst in unserer Stadt"; "Sitzung am 17.6.1939"; Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, M. Abt. 350/ Beiräte; quoted in Deutsch-Schreiner, "Nationalsozialistische Kulturpolitik," 181–182.) Only a few productions of older, "classical" operettas were condoned at the city's theater. (Weys to "Herr Holms," April 17, 1944; Weys Papers.) On Nazi officials' fight about the Volksoper see Markus Felkel, "Am Wendepunkt vom Unterhaltungstheater zum subventionierten Kulturvermittler: Die Volksoper im Dritten Reich," in *100 Jahre Wiener Volksoper: Ein Projekt zur Wiener Theatergeschichte*, ed. Ursula Simek (Vienna: Böhlau, 1998), 61 and 65 and Deutsch-Schreiner, "Nationalsozialistische Kulturpolitik," 101–104 and 181–182.

authenticity, the setting placed it within a long line of “Alt Wien” works, and its biographical plot, portraying a politically uncontroversial, historical celebrity, could educate Austrian audiences and make them proud. The waltz king even proved the ideal cultural icon for representation abroad. As librettist Rudolf Weys pointed out:

Johann Strauss still is not only an Austrian export article but much more: I would guess our little Alpine country owes good old Johann *circa* 80 percent of its regained political independence.⁶²⁸

Unsurprisingly, then, the authors used every opportunity to promote the waltz king in *Die Straussbuben*. The Act II finale, for example—showing an “obeisance of the waltz kings” by the grateful, inebriated Dianasaal audience after Johann Strauss’s return to Vienna and his brother Josef’s debut as bandmaster—features a chorus set to a middle theme of the famous “Emperor Waltz.” Anyone in an Austrian audience could have hummed along to this well-known, catchy melody as it delivered its platitudinous text:

The image shows a musical score for a chorus. It consists of two systems. Each system has a vocal line (Chor) and a piano accompaniment (piano). The music is in 3/4 time. The lyrics are: "Strauss - bub'n Strauss-dy - na - stie! Hoch die Strauss-me - lo - die! Du Strauss - wal - zer, der uns be - tört, dem die Welt ge - hört!". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, typical of a waltz.

Example 4.1: Excerpt from the Act II Finale. *Die Straussbuben*, Music: Josef and Johann Strauss, Text: Hubert Marischka and Rudolf Weys, Musical Arrangement: Oskar Stalla. (© Copyright by Papageno Buch- und Musikalienverlag Ges.mbH, Wien.)⁶²⁹

⁶²⁸ “zumal ja Johann Strauss noch immer nicht nur ein Exportartikel der Österreicher ist, weit mehr, ich schätz, unser Alpenländchen verdankt dem guten Johann zu 80% seine wieder errungene politische Selbstständigkeit.” Weys to Robert Gilbert, October 9, 1946; Weys Papers.

⁶²⁹ “Strauss boys, Strauss dynasty! / Cheers to the Strauss melody! / You Strauss waltz who bewitches us, / to

A picture of the production shows that for this scene the ensemble built a half circle on stage, linking arms and swaying in step with the music.



Figure 4.1: Act II Finale, *Die Straussbuben*; Vienna, Raimund Theater, October 20, 1946.⁶³⁰

This inviting, inclusive gesture, especially in combination with the use of a collective “we,” suggests that the fourth wall was broken at this point and the celebration of the Austrian hero spilled from the festivities on stage down into the postwar auditorium.

The immediately following polka intensified this communal spirit further and brought the second Act to a climactic end. While Verses 1 and 3 basically enumerated (stereo)typically Viennese attributes—landmarks and personalities that the Strauss boys delighted with their dances: the Danube, the Emperor, Schönbrunn Castle—Verse 2, bluntly revealing the work’s Third Reich origins, presents Vienna with its waltzes and Strauss brothers as part of a list of cities that, through its inclusion of Prague, clearly delineates former Greater German territory:

whom the world belongs!” Josef Strauss and Johann Strauss, *Die Straussbuben: Singspiel in 3 Akten (11 Bildern) von Hubert Marischka und Rudolf Weys*, Klavierauszug mit Text (Vienna: Papageno Buch- u. Musikalienverlag Ges.mBH P.V. 104, 1946), 152.

⁶³⁰ Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Handschriftensammlung, Fritz Imhoff Papers, ZPH 1080, Box 10, 4.24.14; © Copyright by Wienbibliothek.

In Nürnberg hab'ns ein' Trichter,	In Nuremberg they have a funnel, ⁶³¹
In München gibt's das beste Bier,	In Munich there is the best beer,
Jede Stadt hat was,	Every city has something,
Die Walzer haben wir!	We have the waltzes!
In Weimar war'n die Dichter,	In Weimar there were the poets,
In Prag geht nie der Schinken aus,	In Prague they never run out of ham,
Und die Wienerstadt	And the Viennese city
Hat ihre Brüder Strauss!	Has its Strauss brothers! ⁶³²

This curious slip exemplifies beautifully not only that a sense of all-German identity was still somehow ingrained in 1946 Vienna but also that the same cultural hallmarks were used under two different political regimes to encourage a feeling of togetherness and belonging among audiences.

The final verse, however, was amended after the war. Originally, the climax had been a comical one, based on the running joke that the Strauss family's janitor Jeremias Straus "with one 's'" (played by director Imhoff) wants to show off his affiliation with the waltz kings and tries to take over the band, only to be detained by the youngest Strauss brother, Eduard, who then masterfully conducts the concluding phrases of the act.⁶³³ By simply changing the lyrics of that last verse, the postwar version, however, envisaged a much more rousing, topical act conclusion, leaving no doubt about the specifically Austrian message the Second Republic's new leaders were hoping to convey:

Jeremias: In brü-der-li-cher Lie-be steh'n al-le Strauss-bub'n hier zu-gleich, sei'n wir stolz auf sie, sie g'hörn zu Ö-ster-reich!

Example 4.2: Excerpt from Act II finale. *Die Straussbuben*, Music: Josef and Johann Strauss, Text: Hubert Marischka and Rudolf Weys, Musical Arrangement: Oskar Stalla. (© Copyright by Papageno Buch- und Musikalienverlag Ges.mbH, Wien.)⁶³⁴

⁶³¹ "Nuremberg Funnel" is a jocular term describing a mechanical way of learning and teaching: material gets "funneled" [drummed] into the student.

⁶³² Strauss et al., *Die Straussbuben*, Klavierauszug, 153–154. For the whole polka's text see Appendix 5.

⁶³³ Hubert Marischka and Rudolf Weys, "Die Straussbuben: Singspiel in 3 Akten," annotated libretto manuscript, n.d.; Weys Papers.

⁶³⁴ "In brotherly love all Strauss brothers stand together here, let's be proud of them, they belong to Austria!" Strauss and Strauss, *Die Straussbuben*, 154.

This staging of Austrian unanimity worked wonders: the Act II finale was reportedly so popular that it had to be repeated every night.

While the Raimund Theater direction and city authorities agreed on *Die Straussbuben* as a suitable model for a new Viennese operetta, and the press—especially the official organs of the Allied forces and Austrian political parties—demonstratively supported this choice with their exuberant reports, a few outliers did voice disapproval. Publisher Ludwig Doblinger, for example, was appalled by the contract conditions for *Die Straussbuben*, which he argued would be “ruinous” for “Viennese operetta’s entire creative prowess.” Although he thought highly of the work’s textual and musical quality, he feared that it would “block the Raimund Theater—our only operetta theater—for months, perhaps years, so that our operetta composers have no hope to get a word in edgewise in Vienna.”⁶³⁵

Even more forthright was Rudolf Kalmar, the chief editor of the cross-party daily *Neues Österreich* who was also briefly affiliated with the federal theater administration in 1945. Kalmar fundamentally agreed with the official view on operetta’s importance for the new Austria: “it is indisputably among the strongest assets of the Austrian cultural property,” he wrote in August 1946. For him, however, *Die Straussbuben* was a critical turn in the wrong direction. Like Doblinger, Kalmar feared that the Strauss pastiche would occupy Vienna’s only operetta stage for too long and that, as a result, real novelties would premiere elsewhere. By failing to encourage a new, timely repertory, the journalist argued, Vienna would lose irrevocably its former reputation as operetta’s capital.⁶³⁶

Kalmar’s criticism was more fundamental than Doblinger’s and concerned two main features of *Die Straussbuben*: its endorsement of antiquated musical styles and its lack of topicality. For one thing, he observed, musical numbers that would have been considered old hat only a few years earlier were now welcomed as operetta’s lifeline.⁶³⁷ Indeed, the fact that *Straussbuben* reviewers praised that “the waltz ... dominates this operetta and proves yet again a smiling winner over jazz, saxophone, and percussion flutter”⁶³⁸ and hailed the work’s moral qualities (which, one paper observed, made it commendable even for minors), points at a fundamental change in the aesthetic goals for operetta.⁶³⁹ The work’s “grand classical style” as well as the “clean,” “unsoiled,” nature of the book⁶⁴⁰—characteristics lauded almost unanimously by critics and authors—stood in striking contrast to the traditional ideals for the

⁶³⁵ “ruinösen”; “das gesamte Wiener Operettenschaffen”; “das Raimund-Theater—als unser einziges Operettentheater auf Monate, vielleicht auf Jahre blockieren, sodass unsere Operettenkomponisten überhaupt keine Aussicht haben in Wien zu Worte zu kommen.” Ludwig Doblinger to Matejka, July 25, 1946; Matejka Papers.

⁶³⁶ “Sie gehört unbestreitbar zu den stärksten Aktiven des österreichischen Kulturbesitzes.” Rudolf Kalmar, “Operettentheater gesucht,” *Neues Österreich*, August 15, 1946.

⁶³⁷ Rudolf Kalmar, “Dreibuberlhaus’ im Raimundtheater,” *Neues Österreich*, October 23, 1946.

⁶³⁸ “Der Walzer ... beherrscht die Operette und zeigt sich wieder einmal als lächelnder Sieger über Jazz, Saxophon und Schlagzeuggefliir.” “Stadttheater Bern: Die Straussbuben,” *Der Bund* (Bern), September 29, 1947, and “Frühlingsstimmen: Premiere im Magyar Színház,” *Uj Hírek* (Budapest), March 22, 1948.

⁶³⁹ “Die ‘Straussbuben’: Singspiel im Stadttheater,” *Vaterland* (Lucerne), April 5, 1949.

⁶⁴⁰ “großem klassischen Operettenstil”; “Premiere im Raimundtheater: ‘Die Straußbuben,’” *Weltpresse*, October 21, 1946; “grundsauer”; “Stadttheater Bern: Die Straußbuben,” *Der Bund* (Bern), September 29, 1947.

genre. For, as we have seen, while Viennese theaters had always offered folksy or nostalgic “Alt Wien” operettas for the more conservative local audiences, such works had hardly ever been meant for national representation or export abroad. Internationally successful operetta had always been considered an adult genre, and attracted its audiences precisely through its suggestive or alluring nature, combining popular musical styles with exhibitions of the latest dance and fashion trends.

Considering the postwar appeal of reviving original Straussian forms, it may seem surprising that the *Straussbuben* authors labeled their work “Singspiel,” a designation hardly ever used by the waltz king himself, who sought an affiliation with international trends and successful role models such as Jacques Offenbach. The promotion of a term that represented one of the oldest popular theater traditions in German-speaking lands had been pushed significantly under the Nazis.⁶⁴¹ Hans Severus Ziegler, for example, justified the elimination of jazz operettas and cosmopolitan works by Jewish authors by stressing that “the tasteful and musically sophisticated operetta ... is nothing but the modern Singspiel.”⁶⁴² This term allowed for all French and Jewish origins of operetta to be easily ignored, and instead emphasized its Germanness and popular—“folk”—resonance on the one hand, while creating a link to a “classical” tradition and another of Vienna’s great musical trophies, Mozart, on the other.⁶⁴³ Operetta as Singspiel, then, stood for “classical” as well as indigenous roots and could conveniently elevate the entertainment genre both as high art and as a folk tradition—two cultural strands particularly valued, in postwar Austria as much as in the Third Reich.⁶⁴⁴

Kalmar’s second major concern about *Die Straussbuben*, its datedness, was, of course, also an aspect deliberately advocated by Viennese officials. The journalist argued that the work’s *Backhendlseligkeit* (hackneyed fried-chicken bliss) no longer concerned Viennese audiences.⁶⁴⁵ And, while only a few other reviewers agreed⁶⁴⁶ and most welcomed the work’s portrayal of a “food stamp-free world,”⁶⁴⁷ reactions in the theater suggest that Viennese audiences were indeed yearning to see their worries addressed. Strikingly, the musical number that observers described as critical for the work’s overall success—a waltz with a remarkably lackluster and by no means catchy melody—was the only one that featured any direct contemporary references: director and character comedian Fritz Imhoff’s “masterfully executed final-act couplet,” in which, as one paper put it, “all kinds of issues of the day were addressed wittily and with the funniest emphasis.”⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴¹ Compare with Klotz, “Der Widerspenstigen Lähmung,” 82 and 84.

⁶⁴² “Die geschmackvolle und musikalisch kultivierte Operette ... ist nichts anderes als das moderne Singspiel.” Ziegler, “Zum Geleit!,” 3.

⁶⁴³ Compare with Szabó-Knotik, “Selbstinszenierung und Handelsbilanz,” 356.

⁶⁴⁴ Compare with Kevin Clarke, “Walzerträume: Wien als Setting in Bühnen- und Tonfilmoperetten vor und nach 1933,” in *Wenn ich sonntags in mein Kino geh’: Ton—Film—Musik, 1929–1933*, ed. Rainer Rother and Peter Mänz (Berlin: Bönen, 2007); reproduced on the Operetta Research Center website, http://www.operetta-research-center.org/main.php?task=5&cat=4&sub_cat=13&id=00165 (accessed October 10, 2012).

⁶⁴⁵ Kalmar, “‘Dreibuberlhaus’ im Raimundtheater,” *Neues Österreich*, October 23, 1946.

⁶⁴⁶ See, for example, H.R., “Raimundtheater: ‘Die Straussbuben’ von Hubert Marischka und R. Weys,” *Die Komödie*, December 5, 1946.

⁶⁴⁷ “bezugsscheinfreie Welt”; [no title], *Die Woche*, October 27, 1946.

⁶⁴⁸ “meisterhaft vorgetragenes Couplet im letzten Akte”; “allerlei Tagesfragen werden in witzigster Pointierung

In the first three verses of this waltz number, Imhoff described—with Jeremias’s manner and dialect of a typical Viennese jovial old grouser (the already mentioned *Raunzer*)—first the unsettled, nervous current atmosphere (as a bridge from the nineteenth-century plot to postwar reality), then the hardships in the bombed city, and the unfamiliar language jumble on Vienna’s occupied streets. Each of these pithy verses—which showed off beautifully Rudolf Weys’s otherwise suppressed cabaret skills—was followed by a variation on the refrain “slowly, slowly, take your time!,” exemplifying the famous *Wiener Gemütlichkeit*, a quality that in the eyes of Viennese had always distinguished their people from the operose, overly industrious Germans. The final stanza was politically the most concrete:

Viel Konferenzen werden gehalten,	Many conferences are being held,
Friede soll werden wieder auf Erden,	Peace shall be on earth again,
Wir woll’n halt nix als die Zeiten, die alten,	We just want nothing but the old times,
Arbeit und Ruah’, damit hätt’ ma gnua!	Work and rest—that would be enough for us!
Seit der Verirrung so vor acht Jahren,	Since the aberration about eight years ago,
Haben wir so viel Böses erfahren,	We have experienced so much evil,
Daß wir bereu’n und bitten zugleich:	That we are sorry and beg at the same time:
Schenkt’s uns doch wieder ein frei’s Österreich!	Grant us a free Austria again!

And instead of the earlier, affirmative refrain, Imhoff now sings:

Aber net gar so langsam,	But not quite so slowly,
Laßt’s Euch net so viel Zeit,	Don’t take so much time,
Tun wir Wiener euch gar net leid?	Don’t you take pity on us Viennese at all?
Wir war’n z’frieden, beliebt in der Welt,	We were happy, popular in the world,
Und unser Schilling, der war a Geld!	And our schilling—now that was a coin!
A Großdeutschland hab’n wir net braucht,	We never needed a Greater Germany,
Wir hab’n besser `gessen getrunken	We ate, drank,
	and g’raucht! and smoked better [before]!
Tot is das tausendjährige Reich,	The thousand-year empire is dead,
Doch neuhundertfünfzig lebt Österreich!	But Austria lives nine hundred fifty! ⁶⁴⁹

Imhoff’s performance brought down the house without fail. The star even received letters asking him for the text of these last verses, which apparently expressed the concerns and sentiments of the Viennese population so well.⁶⁵⁰ And, although official recommendations to stick with a distant, comforting past were left behind in this number, the messages Austria’s new leaders wanted operetta to convey were clearly expressed—and in a way that resonated with postwar audiences: the waltz presented Austrians (as in the Act II finale, collectively

mit Geist beantwortet“; “Die Straussbuben,” *Wiener Zeitung*, October 22, 1946.

⁶⁴⁹ Strauss et al., *Die Straussbuben*, Klavierauszug, 163–165.

⁶⁵⁰ Hansi Popp to Fritz Imhoff, n.d.; Imhoff Papers. The number was first published in a two-volume compilation with piano accompaniment (Vienna, New York: Papageno, P.V. 102/I-IV), in which only the first three verses were printed. However, probably due to popular demand, the waltz number was published separately the following year with six verses (P.V. 103). The full piano reduction (P.V. 104) was cut to four verses. See Appendix 5 for the complete number’s text.

referred to as “we”) as a simple, peace-loving, good-natured people who had been perfectly happy with their circumstances before the foreign, German interference.

Lacking the typical nostalgic nineteenth-century veil, however, this couplet also shows alarmingly clearly the unfortunate, distressing consequences of postwar Austrian cultural tactics. By dissociating Austrian habits and traditions from German ones, yes, in this (and many) cases by portraying Austrians as kindhearted, slightly naïve, and innocent victims of Nazi German “aberrations,” and by delivering this message in a sanitized, deliberately carefree, and endearingly comic wrapping, many popular entertainment works evaded critical confrontation with the Nazi past and helped large parts of Viennese society to repress a sense of their own political responsibility for World War II and its atrocities.⁶⁵¹

The *Straussbuben* sensation proved a nine days’ wonder. Despite a few respectable runs in Austria and neighboring countries,⁶⁵² critics outside Vienna reacted to the work much more harshly: one paper in Graz, for example, found the plot “so boring it is a turn-off, thoroughly characterless, unless one is in favor of seeing the retrieval of a *duliöh* [intoxicated] atmosphere as the only desirable goal.”⁶⁵³ Similarly, a critic in Bern described the book as “better comparable with a *Gartenlaube* novel for daughters of wealthy families rather than an operetta libretto of the twentieth century,”⁶⁵⁴ and the *Volksstimme* in St. Gallen complained about the “nasty mawkishness and far-fetched humor” of this “shallow” work.⁶⁵⁵ And while several papers reported of a wide international interest,⁶⁵⁶ performances in the English- or French-speaking world are untraceable. Reluctant to take on the English adaptation of *Die Straussbuben*, exiled *Herzen im Schnee* librettist Robert Gilbert tried to explain to his friend Weys that “the taste here [in America] is ... worlds apart from everything European.” Indeed, not even the long-planned launch in Germany came through.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵¹ Compare with Oliver Rathkolb, *Führertreu und gottbegnadet: Künstlereliten im Dritten Reich* (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1991), 76. See also Veigl, *Tränen und Gelächter*, 17–18, and Lonnie Johnson, “Ambivalenzen der österreichischen Nationswerdung,” in Kramer, Liebhart, and Stadler, *Österreichische Nation*, part. 96–97.

⁶⁵² See accounting records; Weys Papers.

⁶⁵³ “zum Abgewöhnen langweilig, durchaus nichtssagend. Es sei denn, daß man die Wiedergewinnung einer ‘Duliöhstimmung’ als einzig erstrebenswertes Ziel anzusehen geneigt ist.” “Entgleisung der Operette: Das Singspiel ‘Die Straussbuben,’” *Die Wahrheit* (Graz), September 26, 1947; also “Die Straussbuben,” *Tiroler Zeitung* (Innsbruck), February 9, 1952.

⁶⁵⁴ “eher einem Gartenlaubenroman für höhere Töchter vergleichbar, denn einem Operettenlibretto des 20. Jahrhunderts”; “Stadttheater,” *Berner Tagwacht*, September 30, 1947. *Die Gartenlaube* was a popular family magazine in the second half of the nineteenth century.

⁶⁵⁵ “übelster Gefühlsduselei und an den Haaren herbeigezogener Komik”; “seicht”; “Stadttheater: ‘Die Straussbuben,’” *Volksstimme* (St. Gallen), November 18, 1947.

⁶⁵⁶ Apparently, venues in London, Paris, Turkey, and Spain expressed an interest. (Weys to the Austrian National Bank, September 20, 1948; Weys Papers.) Furthermore, Emil Steininger, once the co-director of the Theater an der Wien, planned to produce the work in Los Angeles, and the rights for a film adaptation were sold to a Hollywood company. See Fred Lorenz to Weys, February 11, 1949 and “Streit um die ‘Straussbuben,’” *Welt am Abend*, December 8, 1947.

⁶⁵⁷ “Der Geschmack hier ist ... himmelweit von allem Europäischem verschieden.” Robert Gilbert to Rudolf Weys,

The Raimund Theater also struggled in the following years. In spite of its undoubted position as Vienna's first operetta house, the venue repeatedly had to close its doors due to weak attendance.⁶⁵⁸ As long-scarce goods started to fill the stores again, people hesitated to spend their limited income on theater visits, leaving especially the private venues in a financial crisis.⁶⁵⁹ As the *Montags-Morgen* explained in November 1949:

In the past, when there was nothing edible to buy, one bought an expensive theater ticket to dispose of one's money; today there are so many good things again that the stomach had to spare and on top of that the schilling has become rarer. If one goes anywhere at all, one goes to the cinema because it is cheaper and more comfortable. Or, whoever likes it even cozier listens to his operetta at home by the speakers. *If* one listens to it, for unfortunately the whole genre has been worn out and all experiments to fit the once world-famous Viennese operetta into a modern, prickly gown have failed so far.⁶⁶⁰

The makeup of the operetta audiences had also changed—or rather, the audiences had not changed: Gertrud Marischka, for example, observed in the biography of her husband that after the *Straussbuben* performances "Hubert was ... welcomed and surrounded at the stage door by a flock of cheering, no longer very young women."⁶⁶¹ While some of the older Viennese still found comfort in the reliable contents and familiar faces of Viennese operetta, others resorted to the up-and-coming Heimatfilm, which offered a similar value system and more realistic settings than the new, "clean," folk-like operetta, but for smaller ticket prices. Indeed, not surprisingly the 1950s and -60s saw a boom of operetta Heimatfilme such as *Das Schwarzwaldmädchel* (1950) and *Die Försterchristl* (1962). The younger generation, eager to taste long-forbidden fruit, also soon turned toward more international art forms, particularly jazz and American film.⁶⁶²

Fearing the competition of other entertainment options, many Viennese artists and cultural politicians demanded the establishment of a state-run operetta theater, an "objective patron" immediately after the war, because they believed that, protected from the self-serving commercial interests of individuals, operetta would be able to regain its former artistic

September 11, 1946; Wey's Papers.

⁶⁵⁸ "Wiedereröffnung des Raimund-Theaters?," *Das kleine Volksblatt*, November 17, 1949.

⁶⁵⁹ Deutsch-Schreiner, "Theaterland Österreich," 148, and Linhardt, *Kontrolle—Prestige—Vergnügen*, 68.

⁶⁶⁰ "Früher, als man nichts Essbares zu kaufen bekam, kaufte man sich, um sein Geld loszuwerden, auch eine teure Theaterkarte, heute gibt es wieder so viel gute Sachen, die der Magen entbehren musste, und der Schilling ist obendrein rarer geworden. Wenn man schon irgendwo hinget, geht man ins Kino, weil es billiger, bequemer ist. Oder wer es noch gemütlicher haben will, hört seine Operette daheim beim Lautsprecher. Wenn er sie hört, denn das ganze Genre hat sich leider abgebraucht und alle Experimente, die ehemals weltberühmte Wiener Operette in ein modernes, prickelndes Kleid zu stecken, haben bis jetzt versagt." [Stress added in translation.] "Der erste Apfel fiel vom Stamm... Vom Raimundtheater krächzt der Pleitegeier," *Montags-Morgen*, November 31, 1949.

⁶⁶¹ "Hubert wurde ... beim Bühnenausgang von einer Schar jubelnder, nicht mehr sehr junger Frauen empfangen und umringt." Gertrud Marischka, Hubert Marischka biography, 37.

⁶⁶² Günter Krenn, "Im Ballsaal und beim Heurigen: Alt-Wien im österreichischen Spielfilm," in Kos and Rapp, *Alt-Wien*, 241.

quality.⁶⁶³ Indeed, even Kalmar thought of an operetta theater under state protection as a “capital idea for the artistic rebuilding in Austria.”⁶⁶⁴ The underlying concept of an operetta culture independent from financial considerations and popular reception was, of course, another recent one: as we have seen, until the 1930s the art form had always relied on audience rather than state approval. Indeed, at the height of operetta’s international success, during the 1920s, Viennese venues had paid crushing luxury taxes rather than receive state subsidies. It was not its compliance with official moral or political values that had secured operetta’s success, but its carefree—if not necessarily critical—grappling with current issues and fashionable trends.

However, as Viennese officials and press started to grasp that “neither subventions nor public charges will help with the theater crisis,” plans for a state-funded operetta venue were apparently abandoned.⁶⁶⁵ The only measure toward some kind of institutionalization of the art form was the establishment of an operetta class at Vienna’s conservatory in 1949. Put in charge of this class was—how could it be otherwise?—Hubert Marischka, now widely hailed as the “good soul” of Viennese operetta. One paper explained:

In the bleak years after the dreadful war, [Marischka] has brought about a renaissance of Viennese operetta on his own accord, has himself created exemplary works of the best format, and also, as a performer of interesting character roles, has provided a shining example to the eager youth of how one has to play operetta in Vienna, how one has to cultivate this most cheerful child of the light muse.⁶⁶⁶

Press and city officials hoped that the celebrity and “bon vivant,” who had worked with singers from Strauss’s original casts and created many of the most popular operettas’ principal characters, would hand on his first-hand knowledge to the next artistic generation and “lead

⁶⁶³ Kraus to Matejka, November 26, 1946; Matejka Papers.

⁶⁶⁴ “ein Königsgedanke des künstlerischen Wiederaufbaues in Österreich”; Kalmar, “Operettentheater gesucht,” *Neues Österreich*, August 15, 1946.

⁶⁶⁵ “Der Theaterkrise helfen weder Subventionen noch Kunstgroschen”; “Der erste Apfel fiel vom Stamm... Vom Raimundtheater krächzt der Pleitegeier,” *Montags-Morgen*, November 31, 1949; see also Jansen, “Von der Operette zum Musical,” 244.

⁶⁶⁶ “Er hat in den düsteren Jahren nach dem furchtbaren Krieg aus eigener Kraft eine Renaissance der Wiener Operette zustandegebracht, hat selbst Werke von bestem Format geschaffen und auch als Darsteller interessanter Charakterrollen der nachdrängenden Jugend ein leuchtendes Beispiel gegeben, wie man Operette in Wien zu spielen hat, wie man dieses fröhlichste Kind der heiteren Muse zu pflegen hat.” “Montag; Der Kopf der Woche: Hubert Marischka—Der gute Geist der Wiener Operette,” unidentified newspaper clipping [ca. 1950]; Marischka Papers. Years later, conservative Viennese author and editor Rudolf Holzer was still praising works such as *Die Straussbuben*, and even described them as “timely”: “there was something heroic in Marischka’s attempt to give operetta an artistically timely expression [after WWII]. With the books to the operettas *Die Straussbuben* and *Die Walzerkönigin*, he returned to the erstwhile form of the folk-like Viennese, “narrative” operetta again in recent years.” (“Es lag etwas Heroisches in Marischkas Versuch, künstlerisch der Operette zeitgemäß Ausdruck zu geben. Mit den Büchern zu den Operetten ‘Die Straussbuben’, ‘Die Walzerkönigin’, im Raimund- bzw. Bürgertheater gespielt, kehrte er in den letzten Jahren selbst wieder zur einstigen Form der volkstümlich-wienerischen, ‘erzählenden’ Operette zurück.”) Holzer, *Die Wiener Vorstadtbühnen*, 644.

Viennese operetta to another heyday."⁶⁶⁷ This hope seems particularly ironic when one considers that one decade earlier, Marischka had been held largely responsible for the increasing lack of new operetta talents. Following the bankruptcy of his theater empire, the "Ring of Performing Musicians in Austria," for example, had accused the "former dominator of Viennese operetta theaters" for "not having tried in any way to give operetta a new impulse by fostering a good ensemble or supporting young authors":

The consequences today are so catastrophic that there are not even enough performers available for operetta, so that one is forced to borrow them from film or spoken theater if one wants a good performance.⁶⁶⁸

And while Marischka professed upon his conservatory appointment that the training of young talents had been close to his heart for years,⁶⁶⁹ his own postwar works, starting with *Die Straussbuben*, show that the luminary's main focus lay on the preservation of earlier ideals, ideals from even before his own heyday, rather than the nurturing of a once again buzzing, international art form.⁶⁷⁰ Publisher Doblinger's worries were confirmed: a new generation of operetta composers never made it on Vienna's stages. Instead, along with more works from the old guard and in the same vein as *Die Straussbuben*, houses such as the Raimund Theater increasingly filled their coffers through reruns of stalwart crowd pleasers from the trusty "Alt Wien" repertory again.⁶⁷¹

Looking at *Die Straussbuben* in this rather depressing context, Kalmar's early and largely ignored concerns were clearly justified: for operetta, this work was indeed a critical move in the wrong direction. While it is arguable that operetta *production* could have regained its former prosperity had officials picked a different first postwar premiere, the art form's *reception* after 1945 suffered tremendously by the choice of a Strauss pastiche with Third Reich origins as its luminous representative. For the return to Straussian ideals further confirmed the already established, warped narrative of operetta's perpetual decline after the waltz king, the widely accepted story of the "golden" days of Strauss's classical operettas, which were followed by

⁶⁶⁷ "die Wiener Operette zu einer neuen Glanzzeit emporzuführen"; "Montag; Der Kopf der Woche: Hubert Marischka—Der gute Geist der Wiener Operette."

⁶⁶⁸ "dem bisherigen Beherrscher der Wiener Operettentheater"; "in keiner Weise versucht hat, durch die Pflege eines guten Ensembles oder durch die Förderung junger Autoren und Komponisten der Operette einen neuen Impuls zu geben. Die Folgen sind heute so katastrophale, dass nicht einmal Schauspieler für die Operette zur Verfügung stehen, so dass man gezwungen ist, wenn man eine gute Leistung haben will, sich dieselben vom Tonfilm oder vom Schauspiel auszuborgen." Ring der ausübenden Musiker Österreichs, Gewerkschaftsbund der österreichischen Arbeiter und Angestellten, Gewerkschaft der Musiker, "Vorschläge für den Wiederaufbau des österreichischen Theater- und Musiklebens durch Schaffung eines gerechten Ausgleiches zwischen den Interessen der lebenden und mechanischen Musik," 6; ÖSta, AdR, Vaterländische Front, Box 2, 27.185/36.

⁶⁶⁹ Emmi Majewsky, "Echo des Tages," manuscript of a radio interview with Hubert Marischka, October 13, 1949; Marischka Papers.

⁶⁷⁰ Marischka also wrote the librettos for *Die Walzerkönigin* (Bürgertheater, 1948), a considerable success in Vienna based on life episodes of singer and actress Maria Geistinger, for *Abschiedswalzer* (1949), *Liebesbriefe* (1955) and *Deutschmeisterkapelle* (1958).

⁶⁷¹ Compare with Jansen, "Von der Operette zum Musical," 244. For a list of postwar musical theater premieres in Vienna see Appendix 6.

the “silver” works of Lehár and Kálmán, and finally by the 1940s’ commercial *Blech* (which means both “metal” and “rubbish/crap” in German).⁶⁷²

In compliance with postwar cultural-political goals, *Die Straussbuben* yet again stressed innocent “classical” and “folk” aspects of the art form, and thus failed to actively encourage a revival of aspects that the Nazis, and to a certain extent even the Austrofascists, had eliminated—aspects largely responsible for operetta’s former international attraction and success: eroticism, glamor, timely subject matter, fashionable dances, and contemporary music styles. By preserving a former *content* and *style* of operetta rather than what it stood for—topicality, carefree entertainment, vogue—the Strauss pastiche presented the genre not as a living tradition but as a precious artifact of Austrian cultural heritage and of no longer reachable greatness.⁶⁷³ Although a new work, *Die Straussbuben* promoted cultural preservation over creation.

The new aesthetic preferences led to a severe limitation of the operetta canon as well as its performance practice after 1945. As Kevin Clarke has pointed out, almost all of the twentieth-century works that managed to secure places in the postwar repertory could be interpreted “folkloristically”—Kálmán’s *Gräfin Mariza* and Benatzky’s *Im weißen Rössl* are perfect examples. Anton Würz’s *MGG* entry on operetta also reflects this aesthetic: the work of Granichstaedten, Paul Abraham, Robert Stolz, and others who incorporated contemporary musical styles, is summarized in a couple of sentences, while “noble,” “high-quality,” “pure-sounding” *Singspiele*, which (singing the praises of domesticity) “reached the rank of folkloric *Spieloper*,” were described in comparative detail. Examples are Künneke’s *Das Dorf ohne Glocke* (1919), Arno Vetterling’s *Liebe in der Lerchengasse* (1936), and Edmund Nick’s *Das kleine Hofkonzert* (1935), which had prospered during the Third Reich.⁶⁷⁴ Furthermore, through performances by opera singers and philharmonic orchestras, operettas were treated (just as they were during the Nazi era) as folk classics.⁶⁷⁵ The neglect of other, more contemporary aspects and practices in Viennese (and Jewish!) popular music history—aspects that had still been prominent, for example, in Benatzky’s Austrian tourist works—contributed to an increasingly essentialized image of Austrian culture as nostalgic, folkloristic, even antediluvian.

Postwar politicians’ plans for operetta as a means to foster a new collective identity and to present the Alpine republic as an independent, culturally sophisticated, politically irreproachable country worthy of foreign support may have been successful—after all, especially from an international viewpoint, the values promoted in the Strauss pastiche are still considered to be intrinsically Austrian today. Viennese operetta, however, was sacrificed in the process: for the nuanced reception and international appeal of this genre, *Die Straussbuben* was a final deathblow.

⁶⁷² For a detailed account of how this standard narrative was established, see Dompke, *Unterhaltungsmusik und NS-Verfolgung*, 43–44.

⁶⁷³ Compare with Szabó-Knotik, “Selbstinszenierung und Handelsbilanz,” 367.

⁶⁷⁴ “sehr noblen, den Rang einer volkstümlichen Spieloper erreichenden Singspiel”; “hochwertiges, reintöniges Biedermeier-Singspiel”; Anton Würz, “Operette,” in *Die Musik in Gegenwart und Geschichte* 10, ed. Friedrich Blume (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962), 108–109. Compare with Jansen, “Von der Operette zum Musical,” 243–244.

⁶⁷⁵ Clarke, “Der Walzer erwacht,” 84, Koch, “Das NS-Wunschkonzert,” 119, and Roser, “Kein Shimmy für Stiefel,” 186.

Only a few weeks after the grand premiere of the fateful Strauss pastiche, Vienna's most successful postwar cabaret, *Das kleine Brettl*, premiered its new program, "Between the Lines." The last sketch of the evening was a spoof with the significant title "Das Dreibuberlhaus or: Operetta is Dead—Long Live Operetta!"⁶⁷⁶ While in her prologue—which opened this chapter as epigraph—the personified Viennese operetta still appears somewhat hopeful for "doctor" Marischka's wondrous powers, the final song brings all but the desired happy end:

Finale

*Fragt man bei der Handlungsführung,
Was jetzt noch passieren kann:
Nach dem Schmalz der Herzensrührung
Fehlt ein Happy end,
Denn des san ma g'wöhnt!*

Finale

*If you ask, considering this plot direction,
What can still happen now:
After the heart-warming schmaltz
The happy end is missing,
Because that's what we are used to!*

(One hears an outcry; just having entered, operetta sinks down lifelessly)

Everyone: What has happened?

Schani [Johann]: Now operetta has definitely died!⁶⁷⁷

*Ja, was wär die Wiener Operette
Ohne Schmalz und ohne Frau'n,
Denn wenn das der Librettist nicht hätte,
Könnt' er keine Handlung bau'n.
Ohne uns're Tränen,
Ohne uns're Liebe,
Ohne uns're Rührung kommst net aus!
Denn das ist das unnachahmlich Nette
Hier in Wien bei uns zuhaus!
Ja, was wär die Wiener Operette
Ohne Marischka und Strauss!*

*Yes, what would Viennese operetta be
Without schmaltz and without women,
Because if the librettist did not have this,
He could not construct a story line.
Without our tears,
Without our love,
Without our emotions you cannot manage!
For that is the inimitably nice thing
Here in Vienna where we are at home!
Yes, what would Viennese operetta be
Without Marischka and Strauss!⁶⁷⁸*

⁶⁷⁶ Pun on the widely criticized but popular fictional Schubert pastiche *Das Dreimäderlhaus* by Heinrich Berté (1916).

⁶⁷⁷ "(Man hört einen Schrei, die eingetretene Operette ist leblos umgesunken) / Alle: Was ist denn passiert? / Schani: Jetzt ist die Operette endgültig gestorben!"

⁶⁷⁸ "Zwischen den Zeilen: Das Dreibuberlhaus," libretto manuscript; Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, M. Abt. 350, File A46, Box 2.

EPILOGUE: ACROSS THE POND

The Emperor's Old Whiskers

Right when Vienna's Raimund Theater was buzzing with *Die Straussbuben* in 1946, the waltz king's same famous melodies were also being evoked on the other side of the pond. Film director and Austrian émigré Billy Wilder—having returned from the task of “de-Nazifying” the German film industry—was shooting *The Emperor Waltz*, his only musical comedy, with Bing Crosby and Joan Fontaine.⁶⁷⁹

From the perspective of a few old ladies, whose gossiping at a grand ball in fin-de-siècle Vienna is accompanied by the eponymous Strauss piece, the lavish Technicolor production tells the parallel love stories of traveling New Jersey salesman Virgil Smith (Crosby) and his mongrel Buttons, who have come to Austria to convince Emperor Franz Joseph to endorse their phonograph. When the mutt gets into a fight with Countess Johanna von Stolzenberg Stolzenberg's purebred poodle (who has just been chosen to breed with the emperor's dog), both the canines and their owners begin tempestuous acquaintances that eventually lead to the foreseeable happy ends.

As its classical title suggests, *The Emperor Waltz* shows many obvious markers of operetta, even in spite of its rather sparing use of musical numbers. Indeed, as Kevin Clarke pointed out in his IMDb review, the “stranger-in-the-Alps” plot, the stylized folk costumes and village settings, the excessive yodeling and Schuhplattler dancing, and the portrayal of the emperor as an endearing old fool could have come straight out of the *White Horse Inn*, which had been so popular with Broadway audiences only a decade earlier.⁶⁸⁰ And—unlike *Die Straussbuben* with its nostalgic straightforwardness—the producers also emulated Benatzky through the film's “rather pleasing quality of seeming to kid itself along.” Especially the “emphasis on romance in the realm of canines,” wrote one critic, made it impossible to think “that either Mr. Brackett or Mr. Wilder ever took what they did too seriously.”⁶⁸¹

Standard musical elements of operetta are also treated rather cheekily. For example, at that romantic moment when a Danilo from *Die lustige Witwe* would sing “lips are silent, violins whisper” and Alex in *Der Orlow* ask “don't you hear the violins?,” practically minded Virgil insists on making such matters diegetic: wheeling in a piano to accompany the dogs' (and his own) first flirtations, he orders police men nearby to get out their fiddles. After all that, the expected romance happens mostly behind closed doors, however: amusingly, the traditional waltz extension of “I Dream To Kiss Your Hand, Madam” is executed not by the main couple but—rather clumsily—by the room maid, the chauffeur, and an old receptionist in the hotel lobby.

⁶⁷⁹ Gerd Gemünden, “Gained in Translation: Exile Cinema and the Case of Billy Wilder,” in *The Cosmopolitan Screen: German Cinema and the Global Imaginary, 1945 to the Present*, ed. Stephan Schindler and Lutz Koepnick (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 36.

⁶⁸⁰ Kevin Clarke, “Re-vamping the ‘White Horse Inn’ for Hollywood?,” review of *The Emperor Waltz*, IMDb, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0040317/reviews-11> (accessed March 21, 2013).

⁶⁸¹ Edwin Schallert, “Emperor Waltz’ Elegant Extravaganza,” *LA Times*, May 27, 1948.

Similarly comic is a scene on the island in a picturesque, solitary mountain lake where, just as Virgil and Johanna finally come closer again, the countess listens up, asking

Johanna: What's that noise?

Virgil: Oh, that; that comes from the village. You know, during daytime they make violins and in the evening they fiddle. (*Pauses to listen as the villagers, in full folksy splendor and rapturously playing a waltz, are faded in.*) Mighty pleasant, isn't it?

Johanna: That's probably due to the echo...

Leaving aside the obvious, funny implausibility of the once again willfully diegetic accompaniment, Johanna's skepticism and Virgil's enjoyment of these clichéd sounds show rather plainly the two sides of Wilder's operetta interpretation: while clearly "relishing in the popular strudel-and-schmaltz aesthetic," as cinema scholar Gerd Gemünden observed, *The Emperor Waltz* also constantly spoofs these relished commonplaces.⁶⁸²

The film's most substantial musical number, Crosby's crooning yodel song "The Friendly Mountains," makes these two sides clearest. Through its "clever blending of comedy and utterly unreasonable but novel musical effects," the sequence became, as one reviewer noted, yet another "twist at old Viennese 'corn.'"⁶⁸³ Hiking along an Alpine road in Lederhosen and Tyrolean hat, the yodeling Virgil is answered and then accompanied by "magical echoes and a swarm of slap-dancers in the dells"⁶⁸⁴—a scene that seems designed to check off a whole list of Austrian clichés in rapid succession. The lightly executed punch line comes in the following scene when Johanna, enjoying her country ride in the car, hears distant singing and dreamily tells her father:

Listen to that yodel: it's the voice of Austria—mountain-borne, deep-rooted, eternal!

Her poodle starts barking as Buttons and Virgil come into sight—the "authentic" Austrian voice belongs to the salesman from New Jersey, dressed up in full ethnic drag.

Such play with the common expectations of both natives and foreigners (within the film as well as in the audience) about Austria, Austrianness, and how these concepts should be represented musically, is traceable throughout the film. Indeed, Wilder directly addresses the issue of what is apparently expected from Austria in one of his typically suggestive, snappy exchanges—here between the emperor and Virgil when they finally meet. Responding to the monarch's grumpy complaints about his whiskers, the practical salesman advises:

Virgil: Well, you could always shave them off, your majesty? ... I think you'd look much nicer without all that ... whipped cream!

⁶⁸² Gemünden, "Gained in Translation," 36.

⁶⁸³ Schallert, "'Emperor Waltz' Elegant Extravaganza," *LA Times*, May 27, 1948.

⁶⁸⁴ Bosley Crowther, "The Screen: Bing Crosby Rambles Through 'Emperor Waltz,' With Joan Fontaine, at Music Hall," *New York Times*, June 18, 1948.

Emperor: Excellent idea! They've bored me for the last forty years. ... But it cannot be done. ... Young man, if I were to shave off these whiskers, Austria would be thrown into a state of turmoil. Think what it would do to our postage stamps, our coins, our banknotes.

Virgil: I guess you are stuck on that.

Emperor: Glad you see my point.

The American everyman and the Austrian leader agree: in spite of the abundant wish for change, the country's prosperity depended on its traditional, now utterly antiquated looks. At the same time both these Wilder characters also show awareness that, stuck with its clichés, Austria struggled to keep up with modernity.

The image of old whipped cream, applied here most directly to the emperor's beard, became a common one in postwar American twitting of the backwardness and nostalgia associated with the Alpine republic and its operetta traditions. One of the most famous musical works to come under such attack was Rodgers & Hammerstein's Austrian-themed musical *The Sound of Music* (1959). Brendan Gill of the *New Yorker*, for example, felt himself "slowly drowning in a pit of sticky-sweet whipped cream, not of the first freshness."⁶⁸⁵ Similarly, London reviewers of the 1961 opening at the Palace Theatre criticized the work's "marsh of treacle" or its "Austrian sugar-icing an inch thick," and the *Herald Tribune's* review of the 1965 film premiere was headed "If You Have Diabetes, Stay Away from This Movie."⁶⁸⁶ Such attributes of stale richness and fake, sickening sweetness were linked directly with what critics considered the work's operetta characteristics—its stagy ensembles and soaring nuns' choruses, the hearty ländler dancing scene near the end of Act I, and most obviously the sentimental plot.⁶⁸⁷ Powerful *New York Times* critic Brook Atkinson, for example, noted:

the scenario of *The Sound of Music* has the hackneyed look of the musical theatre they replaced with *Oklahoma!* in 1943. ... It is disappointing to see the American musical stage succumbing to the clichés of operetta. The revolution of the Forties and Fifties has lost its fire.⁶⁸⁸

Remarkably, such reactions appeared in spite of the authors' efforts to avoid all operetta associations. Librettist Howard Lindsay explained their fears:

The minute you say "Vienna" everybody thinks of chorus boys in short pants, and the

⁶⁸⁵ Quoted in Max Wilk, *The Making of the Sound of Music* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 78.

⁶⁸⁶ Bernard Levin in the *Express* and W.A. Darlington in the *Daily Telegraph*; quoted in Wilk, *The Making of the Sound of Music*, 53 and 78.

⁶⁸⁷ See, for example, Eliot Norton's review for the *Boston Herald*, October 18, 1959; quoted in Wilk, *The Making of the Sound of Music*, 32; also Traubner, *Operetta*, 406.

⁶⁸⁸ Quoted in Wilk, *The Making of the Sound of Music*, 38–39. Similarly, *New York Times* critic Bosley Crowther bewailed the film version's obvious "operetta pattern," as well as its "cosy-cum-corny" staging "that even theatre people know is old hat." Wilk, *The Making of the Sound of Music*, 77–78.

minute you have a waltz, you're sunk. ... We had to keep the story believable and convincing and not letting [*sic*] it get into the never-never land operetta lives in.⁶⁸⁹

Once seen—as in the case of *Der Millionenonkel*—as a genre that could help to make others (including film) respectable, operetta was now avoided by international authors for fear that any such associations would make their works look passé.

In *The Sound of Music*, Vienna is indeed only portrayed as a place of suspect or disagreeable sophistication, and the pastoral *ländler* dominates over the more elegant, urban waltz. In fact, the love song between Maria and the captain, “An Ordinary Couple”—as dreamily waltzing as it may feel—is not even in three-four time. Similarly, “Edelweiss,” the number that most clearly defines the work’s conception of “Austria,” is simple, folk song-like, and accompanied only by a guitar, thus underlining the metaphor of its Alpine homeland as “small and white, clean and bright.”⁶⁹⁰ In *The Sound of Music*, then, Austria is an innocent, authentic, rural country rooted to nature, religion, as well as history, and untouched by the conceit of the modern, industrialized, political world. This image not only comes strikingly close to the widespread postwar portrayal of Austria as Hitler’s naïve first victim—a portrayal we also saw shine through in *Die Straussbuben*—but, ironically, also relied on the same “folksy” and “earthbound” qualities that first the Austrofascists and then the Nazis had encouraged in their musical theater. Trying to avoid any direct confrontation with the older genre and its stealthy, outdated forms, the authors of *The Sound of Music* thus ended up evoking a more straightforwardly schmaltzy, seemingly innocuous set of Austrian attributes that were nevertheless widely associated with operetta.

Almost directly opposed to *The Sound of Music*’s (non-)approach to the older musical theater form was the one featured in another groundbreaking American musical, Cole Porter’s *Kiss me, Kate* (1948). Porter, who—according to Ethel Merman’s biographer Brian Kellow—“worked to scrub away the layers of starch that had built up in the years when operetta was king,”⁶⁹¹ went for a purely mocking portrayal of operetta in his musical take on Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, as part of his play with different levels of dramatic, literary, and musical sophistication.⁶⁹² The number in question, operetta waltz parody “Wunderbar” (a cosmopolitan-style Boston waltz, to be precise), is the first song that the belligerent main couple, Lilli and Fred, share as they remember the early, happy days of their relationship, when they worked for “that little British makeshift of a Viennese operetta that for some reason was laid in Switzerland but the costumes were Dutch.”⁶⁹³ Their performance—itself an act of nostalgic memory very much like Mary and Percy’s in *Reklame!*’s most international love duet—is mockingly overblown, combining grand gestures with scraps of German text that clearly denote the outdated conceits and exaggerations of a broad-brush Old World. Already in

⁶⁸⁹ Quoted in Frederick Nolan, *The Sound of Their Music: The Story of Rodgers & Hammerstein* (New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2002), 247.

⁶⁹⁰ Raymond Knapp, “History, *The Sound of Music*, and Us,” *American Music* 22 (2004): 137–138.

⁶⁹¹ Brian Kellow, *Ethel Merman: A Life* (New York: Viking, 2007), 50.

⁶⁹² Raymond Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 273 and 28.

⁶⁹³ The number’s title may allude to Robert Katscher’s cosmopolitan jazz operetta *Die Wunderbar* (Vienna, 1930), which was adapted for a Broadway production (1931) and a Warner Brother’s movie (1934), both with Al Jolson.

1948, as American audiences got accustomed to the up-and-coming “method acting” in newer musical theater productions, the theatricalities of traditional operetta performance styles increasingly came to be seen as absurd and ludicrous and were thus an easy target for comic treatment.⁶⁹⁴

Strikingly, *Kiss me, Kate* with its fresh take on musical theater became extremely popular also in Vienna. As Jansen has recently observed, the Austrian and German productions of Porter’s work amounted to a “Big Bang” for the American musical in German-language theaters.⁶⁹⁵ Following its sensationally successful premiere in Frankfurt in November 1955, Volksoper producer Marcel Prawy promptly launched *Kiss me, Kate* as Vienna’s first American musical three months later. It was a triumph without immediate successors, for *Wonderful Town* and *Annie Get Your Gun*—premiered by Prawy within the same year—flopped in Vienna,⁶⁹⁶ as reviewers once more expressed suspicion about the “entirely foreign, un-Viennese, and musically inferior” qualities of the more modern genre and pleaded for Spieloper, Singspiel, and classical operetta to be fostered instead.⁶⁹⁷ As Appendix 6 shows, it took almost a decade before anyone dared to produce another American musical in Austria.

What made *Kiss me, Kate* the successful exception, then? I would like to think that, among other things, it was the work’s underlying reliance on, yes, even an affirmation of operetta’s magic that appeased and appealed to Viennese audiences. For, against all odds, it is “Wunderbar,” this parodistic, throwaway operetta pastiche, that brings the main couple, Fred and Lilli, together again. As Raymond Knapp has argued:

It is this song that convinces us, in dramatic terms, that the couple had a past relationship worth reviving. It is also what allows us to see how close beneath the surface that revival lurks, in the easy way the two first fall into the comic play at enacting the “loving couple” familiar from Viennese operetta, then yield to the seemingly inevitable moment when the masks slip and their play becomes real.⁶⁹⁸

In spite of all its quaint, antiquated theatricality, then, operetta’s recipe could still work. And what moves Fred and Lilli in *Kiss me, Kate* as well as Virgil and Johanna in *The Emperor Waltz*, was also successful with postwar audiences, as the popular reception of all the operetta-influenced American works discussed here illustrates: ticket sales were spectacular and the combined list of Tony and Oscar nominations interminable; the *Sound of Music* soundtrack album even became the all-time best-selling record album worldwide.⁶⁹⁹ In spite of their creators’ bluntly expressed critical distance, in these works the legacy and fascination of Viennese operetta survived.

⁶⁹⁴ Knapp, *The American Musical*, 274 and 41–42.

⁶⁹⁵ Jansen, “Von der Operette zum Musical,” 251 and 255.

⁶⁹⁶ Christoph Wagner-Trenkowitz, “‘Er war der große Anzündler’: Marcel Prawy und die Wiener Volksoper,” in *Marcel Prawy: “Ich mache nur, was ich liebe,”* ed. Norbert Rubey (Vienna: Amalthea, 2006), 22.

⁶⁹⁷ “völlig landfremd, unwienerisch und musikalisch minderwertig”; “Wonderful Town,” *Neues Österreich*, November 11, 1956; quoted in Jansen, “Von der Operette zum Musical,” 251–252.

⁶⁹⁸ Knapp, *The American Musical*, 281–282.

⁶⁹⁹ Nolan, *The Sound of Their Music*, 262.

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Appendix 1

Alexander Girardi's Roles in *Der Millionenonkel* (1913)

Role, in order of appearance (Profession)	Work (Genre)	Premiere
Girardi	N/A	N/A
Pufferl (Friseur)	Pufferl (Operette)	1905
Valentin (Diener)	Der Verschwender (Originalzaubermärchen)	1884 (G)
Josef Drechsler (Schauspieler)	Brüderlein fein (Alt-Wiener Singspiel)	1913 (G)
<i>Mucki Vierröckl (Fensterputzer)</i>	<i>Ein armes Mädel (Posse mit Gesang)</i>	1893
Valentin (Tischler)	Der Verschwender (Originalzaubermärchen)	1884 (G)
Gottlieb Weigel (Schuhmacher)	Mein Leopold (Originallebensbild)	1886 (G)
Jonathan Tripp (Selbstmordgefährdeter)	Der arme Jonathan (Operette)	1890
Bruder Straubinger (Landstreicher)	[literary figure]	–
<i>Wolfsberg [?] (Wachmann)</i>	<i>Wienerstadt in Wort und Bild (Posse)</i>	1887
Radfahrer	–	–
Karl Flenz (Briefträger)	Er und seine Schwester (Posse mit Gesang)	1902
<i>Geselle Charles (Schlosser)</i>	<i>Schlosserkönig (Operette)</i>	1889
<i>Einer von der Bande [?] (Pülcher)</i>	<i>Wienerstadt in Wort und Bild (Posse)</i>	1887
Fiaker	(Fiakerlied)	1885
Mikhail Cakow (reicher Bulgare/Oberst a.D.)	Der Millionenonkel (Operette)	1892
Janos (Diener)	Heißes Blut (Posse mit Gesang)	1892
Celestin (Organist)	Mam'zelle Nitouche (Vaudeville)	1890
Racz Pali (Kapellmeister)	Zigeunerprimas (Operette)	1912
<i>Martin (Obersteiger)</i>	<i>Der Obersteiger (Operette)</i>	1894
<i>Franz Torelli (Komiker)</i>	<i>Künstlerblut (Operette)</i>	1906
Marchese Filippo Sebastiani	Der lustige Krieg (Operette)	1881
Kasim Pascha (Schah)	Fürstin Ninetta (Operette)	1893
<i>Bruder Straubinger (Kriegsveteran)</i>	<i>Bruder Straubinger (Operette)</i>	1903
Ignaz Wirbel (Kellner)	Der Nazi (Posse mit Gesang)	1895
Kálmán Zsupan (reicher Schweinezüchter)	Zigeunerbaron (Operette)	1885
<i>Aschenmann (Waldbauer/Millionär)</i>	<i>Der Bauer als Millionär (Romantisches Originalzaubermärchen mit Gesang)</i>	1898 (G)
<i>Simon Rymanovicz (Student)</i>	<i>Der Bettelstudent (Operette)</i>	1882
<i>Benozzo (Wirt)</i>	<i>Gasparone (Operette)</i>	1884
<i>Godibert (Wachtmeister)</i>	<i>Jungfrau von Belleville (Operette)</i>	1881
Ballettmeister	Ein Armes Mädel	1893
Adam (Vogelhändler)	Der Vogelhändler (Operette)	1891
Profos	Heimliche Liebe (Operette)	1911
Frosch (Gefängniswärter)	Fledermaus (Komische Operette)	1878 (G)
Richter	?	?

“(G)” marks the dates of Girardi's first performance of works that he did not premiere.
Roles in italics are not part of the (only?) extant original film copy (at the Filmarchiv Austria)

Appendix 2

The Operetta Commissions of the Reichsstelle für Musikbearbeitungen

This list is taken directly from the manuscript inventories in Hans Joachim Moser's papers held by the Staatsbibliothek Berlin ("Auftragswerke der Reichsstelle" and "Selbstbericht des Forschers und Schriftstellers Hans Joachim Moser," 22; N. Mus. Nachlaß 31, Box 15). As it was not possible to confirm all details (particularly those of the intended as well as eventual publishers and premiere venues), I have reproduced everything as presented by Moser. Crossed-out notes are omitted. Wherever possible, however, I have added the first names of composers and librettists; names were adjusted to the spellings prevailing today.

New Commissions—Operetta

Work	Composer	Librettist	Publisher; Venue
<i>Die vertauschten Liebesleute</i>	Ralph Benatzky	Kern [?]	
<i>Manina</i>	Nico Dostal	[Hans] Lix, [Alexander] Adler	Allegroverlag; Berlin, Admiralspalast
<i>Die tanzende Helena</i>	W[illy] Richartz	L[eo] Lenz, [Richard] Bars	
<i>Das Buch der Liebe</i>	E[berhard?] Glombig	Christof Schulz-Gellen	Munich, Gärtnerplatz
<i>Fasching in Wien</i>	Aug[ust] Pepöck	[Hermann] Hermecke, [Bruno] Hardt-Warden	
...	[Harald] Böhmelt		
...	[Arno] Vetterling		
<i>Pamelas Erlebnis</i>	Joh[anne]s Müller		
<i>Das Halsband der Königin</i>	Edm[und] Nick	Gerhard Metzner	Munich, Gärtnerplatz
<i>Regenbogen</i>	Will Meisel	[Just] Scheu, [Ernst] Nebhut	
<i>Linzer Torte</i>	[Ludwig] Schmidseider	[Hans Gustl] Kernmayer, [Ignaz] Brandtner	Linz, Stadttheater

Modernizations—Operetta and Singspiel

Work	Composer	Editor(s)	Publisher; Venue
<i>Die Schwarzwaldnachtigal</i>	[Friedrich] Silcher	[R.] Pickert, [Otto] Urack	Sikorski
<i>Episode in Ungarn</i>	[Franz] Schubert	[Hubert] Marischka, O[skar] Stalla	Marischka Verlag
<i>Der Bettelstudent</i>	[Karl] Millöcker	R[ichard] Bars, [Gustav] Quedenfeldt	Sikorski; Berlin, Admiralspalast
<i>Verzaubertes Wien (Calioastro)</i>	Joh[ann] Strauss	[Gustav] Quedenfeldt, [Karl] Tutein	Sikorski; Danzig, Staatstheater
<i>Das Apfelfest (Jabuka)</i>	Joh[ann] Strauss	[Fried] Walter, [Christof] Schulz-Gellen	Sikorski; Nuremberg, Stadttheater
<i>Waldmeister</i>	Joh[ann] Strauss	[Ralph] Benatzky	Bote & Bock

Work	Composer	Editor(s)	Publisher; Venue
<i>Frühlingsluft</i>	Jos[ef] Strauss	[Bruno] Hardt-Warden, [August] Pepöck	Eirich and Dobliger; Hannover, Mellinith[?]
<i>Leichte Cavallerie</i>	[Franz von] Suppé	[Paul?] Beyer, Jos[ef] Rixner	Bote & Bock; Chemnitz, Stadttheater
<i>Die Erntebraut (Polenblut)</i>	O[skar] Nedbal	[Hermann] Hermecke, [Hans Joseph] Vieth [or Stärk?]	Dobliger; Chemnitz, Drehbühne
<i>Fatinitza</i>	[Franz von] Suppé	[Eduard] Rogati-Bußmann[?], [Harald] Böhmelt	Sikorski
<i>Indigo</i>	Joh[ann] Strauss	[Erwin?] Hartung, [Hans Joseph] Vieth	
<i>Don Cesar</i>	[Rudolf] Dellinger	[Hans] Weißbach, R[udolf] Kattnigg	Aug[ust] Cranz; [Chemnitz], Drehbühne
<i>Der Seekadett</i>	[Richard] Genée	[Hans] Brennecke, [Horst] Platen	Sikorski
<i>Rosl vom Wörthersee</i>	[Carl Adam] Zeller	[Gustav] Quedenfeldt, [Carl Wolfgang] Zeller, R[udolf] Kattnigg	Sikorski
<i>Die Straussbuben</i>	Joh[ann] Strauss	Hub[ert] Marischka, [Oskar] Stalla, [Rudolf] Weys	Sikorski
<i>[Der] Rastelbinder</i>	[Franz] Lehár	Rud[olf] Weys	Sikorski; Vienna, Raimund Theater

Appendix 3

Rudolf Weys: "Der Wiener Januskopf"

Wiener Werkel program No. 5 (premiered on October 20, 1940)

Reprinted in Österreichische Literatur im Exil,

<http://www.literaturepochen.at/exil/multimedia/pdf/weysjanuskopf.pdf>

(Two protagonists—optimist and grouser—stand in the garb of taproom singers, dressed exactly the same, in the middle of the stage. Optimist hides the grouser at first.)⁷⁰⁰

I.

Optimist:

Seit zweitausend Jahr bin ich Wiener
Und stimme seit jeher mit "Ja",
Als ganz gehorsamster Diener
Des Staates, der jeweils grad da.
Ich wär ja mit allem zufrieden,
Ich war auch noch niemals der Hopf,
Nur san halt die Gusto verschieden
Da drin in mein doppelten Kopf.

Beide (während der Raunzer erstmalig sichtbar wird):

Juhu! Hallo!
Als Januskopf stehngan mir do!

Raunzer:

Mein Zwilling, der will net sinnieren,
Doch i denk ma manchmal ganz laut:
Ein Weaner, der *muß* kritisieren,
Weil, der kann net heraus aus der Haut!
I sag, mir gehn etliche Dekka
Aus der Backhendelzeit heute ab.
Doch wann i was red, haßts, i mecker,
Und wann i was sag, bin i schlapp!

Beide (wie früher):

Juhu! Hallo!
Als Januskopf stehngan mir do!
(*Raunzer verschwindet wieder.*)

I.

Optimist:

For 2000 years I've been a Viennese
And have always voted with Yes,
As entirely obedient servant
Of the state that existed at that particular time.
I would be satisfied with everything,
I have also never been the Hopf [?],
But the tastes are different after all
Within my double head.

Both (while the grouser first becomes visible):

Yoohoo! Hello!
As Janus face we stand here!

Grouser:

My twin does not want to ponder,
But I sometimes think to myself loudly:
A Viennese *has* to criticize
Because he cannot shed his skin.
I say, I'm missing many hundred grams
From the good old times today.
But when I tell something, they say I rant,
And if I say something, I'm feeble!

Both (as earlier):

Yoohoo! Hello!
As Janus face we stand here!
(*Grouser disappears again.*)

⁷⁰⁰ "(Zwei Darsteller—Optimist und Raunzer—stehen in Heurigensängerdreß völlig gleich gekleidet in der Mitte der Bühne. Optimist verdeckt zunächst den Raunzer.)"

II.

Optimist:

Ich hab unlängst a Zeitung gelesen,
Da halten s' ma d' Gmütlichkeit vor.
Gehts, laßts ma mei sonniges Wesen,
Nebn der Arbeit brauch i an Humor!
Ja, warum soll der Mensch denn net lachen
In unserer Großstadt-Provinz?
Mir werns schon bestimmt noch dermachen,
Genau so wie Graz oder Linz.

Beide (wie früher):

Hallo! Juhu!
Mir schau den Bemühungen zu!

Raunzer:

Mei Freund is direkt a Verführer,⁷⁰²
Nur mir geht halt manches net ein.
Heut verliert ja sogar die Admira
Gegn die Altreichen mit Null zu Neun.⁷⁰³
Was nutzen ma Barock und Paläste,
Und wia ma so sagt, die "Guldur"!?
Ich siech nur mehr spärliche Reste,
Auch die gehngan schon in Verlur.
(Zum ersten Mal treten beide nebeneinander.)

Optimist: Geh kusch!

Raunzer: Halts zsamm!

Optimist: Sei stad, denn jetzt stengan mir stramm!

III.

Optimist:

Der Balkan heißts, steht uns doch offen,
Und mir wern ein Umschlagplatz!

Raunzer:

Ich hab nix dagegn, woll mas hoffen,
Weil sonst ziag i doch noch nach Graz.

II.

Optimist:

I recently read a paper
Where they hold the *Gemütlichkeit* against me.
Now, leave me my sunny nature,
Along with work I need humor!
Yes, why should a person not laugh
In our metropolitan province?
We will definitely get there eventually,
Just like Graz or Linz.⁷⁰¹

Both (as earlier):

Hello! Yoohoo!
We are watching those efforts!

Grouser:

My friend is almost a seducer,
But I just don't understand a few things.
Today even the Admira loses
Against those from the Altreich nil to nine.
What use have baroque and palaces,
And also the so-called *culture*?
I see only scanty remains,
Even those are now dwindling away.
(For the first time both stand next to each other.)

Optimist: Quiet now!

Grouser: Keep it together!

Optimist: Be silent, for now we stand at
attention!

III.

Optimist:

The Balkans, they say, are open to us,
And we will become a trade center!

Grouser:

I don't mind, let's hope,
Because otherwise I'll move to Graz after all.

⁷⁰¹ "Ostmark" cities that Hitler preferred to Vienna and wanted to make into cultural metropolises and industrial centers. Staud, "Das Ostmark-Kabarett 'Wiener Werkel,'" 8.

⁷⁰² Pun on "Führer"?

⁷⁰³ In the final of the 1939 Reich soccer championship, the Viennese club Admira—"Ostmark champion" of the year—had lost abominably against the best "old-German" club, FC Schalke 04.

Optimist:
Vom Kahlenberg bis fast nach Baden
Reicht heute unser Groß-Wien!

Raunzer:
Na wenn schon! Soll ma nix schaden!
Deswegen steckt a net mehr drin!

Optimist: Des Gfraßt!

Raunzer: Des Gfrieß!

Beide: I beiß eahm noch zsamm, des is gwiß!

Optimist: Mei Leben lang muaß i mi streiten!

Raunzer: Er giftet mich ganz enorm!

Optimist: Nur, sehgn ma an Fremden von weiten,

Beide: Da geh ma gleich beide konform!

Optimist: An Weaner wolln Sie schimpfieren?

Raunzer: Sie!! Mir ham zwar ein Doppelgesicht,

Beide: Doch des könnt Ihnen etwas zitieren,

Provozieren S' unsere Einigkeit nicht!

(Vorhang.)

Optimist:
From the Kahlenberg almost up to Baden
Reaches our Great Vienna today!

Grouser:
Whatever! It won't hurt me!
There is still nothing more in it!

Optimist: This person!

Grouser: That mug!

Both: I will kill him eventually, that's for sure!

Optimist: All life long I have to quarrel!

Grouser: He infuriates me enormously!

Optimist: But if we see a stranger from afar,

Both: Then we both agree immediately!

Optimist: You want to scold a Viennese?

Grouser: You!! We may have a double face,

Both: You would like that, wouldn't you,

Don't provoke our agreement!

(Curtain.)

Appendix 4

Pastiche Operettas based on Strauss Family Music

This list is a compilation of all the operettas I came across during my research that take significant proportions of their music from works by Johann Strauss senior and/or his sons Johann and Josef. As I could not get hold of many scores or other performance materials of these works, it was impossible to confirm all the details given here.

Work's Title	Strauss	Libretto	Music Arrang.	Premiere
<i>Wiener Blut</i>	JSJ	Victor Léon, Leo Stein	Adolf Müller jr.	Vienna, 1899
<i>Gräfin Pepi</i> (after <i>Simplicius</i> , <i>Blindekuh</i>)	JSJ	Victor Léon	Ernst Reiterer	Vienna, 1902
<i>Frühlingsluft</i>	JfS	Carl Lindau, Julius Wilhelm	Ernst Reiterer	Vienna, 1903
<i>Das Frauenherz</i>	JfS	Carl Lindau	Ernst Reiterer	Vienna, 1905
<i>Das Schwalberl aus dem Wienerwald</i>	JfS	Emil Berger, Louis Taufstein	Fritz Sommer	Vienna, 1906
<i>Tausend und eine Nacht</i> (after <i>Indigo und die 40 Räuber</i>)	JSJ	Leo Stein, Carl Lindau	Ernst Reiterer	Vienna, 1906
<i>Das Teufelsmädel</i>	JfS	J.S. Clifford, Louis Taufstein, Josef S. Donebaum	Ernst Siebert	Vienna, 1908
<i>Reiche Mädchen</i> (after <i>Die Göttin der Vernunft</i>)	JSJ	Felix Salten, Franz Glawatsch	Ernst Reiterer	Vienna, 1909
<i>Die weiße Fahne</i>	JfS	Fritz Grünbaum	Oscar Stalla	Vienna, 1911
<i>Der blaue Held</i> (after <i>Carneval in Rom</i>)	JSJ	Ferdinand Stollberg		Vienna, 1912
<i>Die tolle Therese</i>	JSJ	Leopold Krenn, Julius von Ludassy	Otto Römisch	Vienna, 1913
<i>Faschingshochzeit</i>	JSJ	Oskar Friedmann, Fritz Lunzer	Josef Klein	Vienna, 1921
<i>Casanova</i>	JSJ	Rudolph Schanzer, Ernst Welisch	Ralph Benatzky	Berlin, 1928
<i>Walzer aus Wien</i>	JSJ, JfS	Julius Bittner; Alfred Maria Willner, Heinz Reichert, Ernst Marischka	Wolfgang Erich Korngold	Vienna, 1930
<i>Freut euch des Lebens</i>	JSJ, JfS	Julius Wilhelm, Peter Herz, nach Johann Nestroy	Bernhard Grün	Leipzig, 1932
<i>Die Tänzerin Fanny Elßler</i>	JSJ	Hans Adler	Oscar Stalla, Bernhard Grün	Berlin, 1934

<i>Drei Walzer</i>	JSJ, JSS	Paul Knepler, Armin Robinson, Robert Gilbert	Oscar Straus	Paris, 1935
<i>Nacht am Bosphorus (after Indigo und die 40 Räuber)</i>	JSJ	Gustav Heidrich	Ernst Schliepe	?, 1936
<i>Waldmeister</i>	JSJ	Gustav Davis	Ralph Benatzky	–, 1941
<i>Verzaubertes Wien (after Cagliostro in Wien)</i>	JSJ	Gustav Quedenfeldt	Karl Tutein	?, 1941
<i>Das Apfelfest (after Jabuka)</i>	JSJ	Christof Schulz-Gellen	Fried Walter	?, 1943
<i>Walzerträume</i>	JfS	Tilde Binder, Ernst Friese	Bruno Uher	Nuremberg, 1942
<i>Wiener Bonbons</i>	JSJ	Franz Zelwecker	Franz Zelwecker	Graz, 1943
<i>Die Straussbuben</i>	JSJ, JfS	Hubert Marischka, Rudolf Weys	Oscar Stalla	Vienna, 1946
<i>Walzerzauber</i>	JSJ	Willy Werner Göttig	Willy Werner Göttig	Mannheim, 1949

JSJ = Johann Strauss junior

JSS = Johann Strauss senior

JfS = Josef Strauss

Appendix 5

Rudolf Weys: *Straussbuben* Texts (1943/1946)

Act II Finale—Polka

Strauss et al., *Die Straussbuben*, Klavierauszug, 153–154.

1 Leni:

Zum Walzer g'hört die Geigen,
Zur Geigen aber g'hört ein Mann,
Der das Walzerspieln
Zum narrisch werden kann!
Wir werd'ns euch beiden zeigen,
Jetzt bricht eine Revolte aus
Geg'n das Königstum
Im Walzerkönigshaus!

Refrain:

Wenn in Wien die Musi spielt,
Das geht in d'Füß,
Da wird man wild,
Alles dreht sich umadum,
Tschindaratabum!

2 Schüsserl:

In Nürnberg hab'ns ein Trichter,
In München gibts das beste Bier,
Jede Stadt hat was,
Die Walzer haben wir!
In Weimar war'n die Dichter,
In Prag geht nie der Schinken aus,
Und die Wlenerstadt
Hat ihre Brüder Strauss!

3 Eduard:

Ihr werd's vielleicht nicht wissen:
Wenn Johann einen Walzer spielt,
Hupft die Donau mit,
Der Steffel wird ganz wild!
Die Vogerln tun sich küssen,
Die Bären tanzen mit Gebrumm,
Selbst der Kaiser dreht sich
Draußen in Schönbrunn!

1 Leni:

For the waltz one needs a violin,
For the violin, however, one needs a man,
who can play waltzes
So well that one could go nuts!
We will show you two,
A revolt breaks out now
Against the kingdom
Within the waltz kings' home!

Refrain:

When the music plays in Vienna,
That goes into the feet,
One goes wild,
Everything spins round and round,
Tschindaratabum!

2 Schüsserl:

In Nuremberg they have a funnel,
In Munich there is the best beer,
Every city has something,
We have the waltzes!
In Weimar there were the poets,
In Prague they never run out of ham,
And the Viennese city
Has its Strauss brothers!

3 Eduard:

You may not know this:
When Johann plays a waltz,
The Danube hops along,
St. Stephan's tower goes wild!
The birds kiss,
The bears dance and hum,
Even the Emperor spins round
Out there in Schönbrunn!

[OLD] 4 Jeremias:

Als Straus will ich euch's zeigen,
Wie ich ein' Walzer dirigier',
Fehlt euch auch das "S",
Die Geigen g'hört jetzt mir!

Eduard:

Wass woll'n Sie mit der Geigen?
Sie sind ja doch kein echter Strauss!
Wenn's ein Strauss sein soll,
Dann geh' halt ich hinaus!

[NEW] 4 Jeremias:

Heut' ist ein Riesentrubel!
Der Jubel bleibt in Wien net aus,
Ruhm und Rubel bringt
Der Schani mit nach Haus!
In brüderlicher Liebe
Steh'n alle Straussbub'n hier zugleich,
Sei'n wir stolz auf sie,
Sie g'hörn zu Österreich!

[OLD]⁷⁰⁴ 4 Jeremias:

As Straus I want to show you
how I conduct a waltz,
You may miss the "S"
But the violin belongs to me now!

Eduard:

What do you want with the violin?
You are still no real Strauss!
If it has to be a Strauss,
Then I'll go out there!

[NEW] 4 Jeremias:

There is a great hubbub today
The cheers in Vienna are inevitable,
Renown and rubles
Schani brings home with him!
In brotherly love
All Strauss boys stand here together,
Let us be proud of them,
They belong to Austria!

No. 15, Lied (Jeremias)

Strauss et al., *Die Straussbuben*, Klavierauszug, 163–165.

1

Wie heut die Leut rennen und jagen,
Wie sie nervös sind, grantig und böse sind.
Keiner hat Zeit sich zu vertragen,
I weiß ein Rat, macht's es so wie i,
I bin ganz stad, schau zu von Weitem,
Mir ist's zu fad allerweil z'streiten,
Mit'n Kopf durch d' Wand geht's im Leben nie,
I hab mei eigne Philosophie!

Langsam, langsam, lass' dir nur Zeit,
Schluckweis trinken macht viel mehr Freud!
Renn net, stöß' net, dräng dich net vor,
Immer fidel, all's mit Humor!
Raunz net, brumm net, reg dich net auf,
Schimpf net, schrei net, zahlst ja nur drauf,
Darum langsam, alles mit G'fühl,
Der Herrgott macht's eh so wie er will.

1

How people run and speed today,
How nervous, grumpy, and angry they are.
Nobody has time to live in harmony,
I know what to do, do it like me,
I'm very quiet, watch from afar,
I find it too boring to fight all the time
With the head through the wall never works in life,
I have my own philosophy!

Slowly, slowly, just take your time,
Drinking sip by sip is much more fun!
Don't run, don't push, don't jump the line,
Always gay, everything with humor!
Don't nag, don't grumble, don't make a fuss,
Don't rant, don't shout, you only pay extra,
Therefore slowly, everything with feeling,
God does it the way he wants anyway.

⁷⁰⁴ Hubert Marischka and Rudolf Wey, "Die Straussbuben: Singspiel in 3 Akten," annotated libretto manuscript; Wey Papers.

2

Nach jedem Krieg geht's drunter und drüber,
Jahre vergehen, bis d'Häuser stehen.
's gibt keinen Sieg, 's g'winnt nur der Schieber,
das müssen's einseh'n, die Herr'n Strateg'n:
wie schnell im Krieg all's demoliert ist
und wie lang's dauert bis renoviert ist!
Wenn man das z'erst bedenken möcht,
Gäb es kein Krieg mehr, na hab i net recht?

Drum langsam, langsam, laßt's Euch nur Zeit,
Friedlich leben macht viel mehr Freud!
Macht's kein' Aufmarsch, bleibt's schön daham,
Arbeit's und kommt's beim Weinderl dann z'samm!
Hetzt's net, hußt's net d'Leut geg'neinand,
Reicht's doch friedlich ein' jeden die Hand,
D'rum vertrag't's euch, i hab das G'fühl,
Daß kein Volk der Welt ein Krieg mehr will!

3

Gehst du in Wean heut' über die Strassen,
Durch alle Zonen, wo Weana wohnen,
Hörst nah' und fern auf allen Gassen:
How do you do, bon jour und dawai!
'S Reden is schwer für'n Weana Schnabel,
Im Wörterbuch such i die Vokabel,
Rennt mi wer um, mach' i ka G'schrei,
Sing in vier Sprachen mei Litanei.

Lentement, slowly make no Bahöll,
Take it easy that's very well!
Lach', keep smiling! Comment dites vous?
Ich auch Genosse Towarisch du!
That is okay und das Karascho,
I am so sorry pardon, nitschewo!
Alle red'ns nur i bin ganz still,
Der Herrgott der weiß schon, was i will!

4

Uns're Wirtschaft, die soll sich heben,
Die Vorbereitung steht in der Zeitung!
Aber ob wir dies Heben erleben,
Das eben frag' ich mich alle Tag',
Wann kommt die Zeit, wo unser Essen,
Nicht mehr nach Kalorien wird bemessen,
Wo wir ein Schnitzl krieg'n und an Reis,
Ganz ohne Schleich, zum normalen Preis!

2

After every war it's all haywire.
Years go by until the houses stand.
There is no victory, only the profiteer wins,
They have to admit it, those strategists:
How quickly everything is demolished in war
And how long it takes until it is renovated!
If one might think of this first,
There would be no war, am I not right?

So slowly, slowly, take your time.
Living peacefully is much more fun!
Don't demonstrate, just stay at home,
Work and then come together for some wine!
Don't incite, don't turn people against each other,
Shake hands with everyone peacefully,
So be friends; I have a feeling,
That no people on earth wants war any more!

3

If you cross the street in Vienna today,
Wander through all zones where Viennese live,
You hear near and far in every alley:
How do you do, bon jour, and dawai!
Talking is difficult for a Viennese trap,
I search for the vocabulary in a dictionary,
If someone runs me over, I don't scream,
But sing my litany in four languages.

Lentement, slowly, make no brouhaha,
Take it easy that's very well!
Laugh, keep smiling! Comment dites vous?
Me too, comrade Tovaritch!
That is okay and that karascho,
I am so sorry, pardon, nichevo!
Everyone talks, only I am silent,
God already knows what I want!

4

Our economy is supposed to improve,
The preparations are listed in the papers!
But whether we will live to see this improvement,
That's what I ask myself every day,
When comes the time when our food
Will no longer be measured in calories,
Where we get a schnitzel and rice,
Without any illicit trading, at the normal price!

Langsam, langsam, geht es bergauf,
Wer's net aushalt, der geht halt drauf!
Rohstoff geb's ja, und Kohl'n aus Pol'n
Wer gut z' Fuß ist, der kann sich hol'n.
Eis'nbahnschienen führ'n üb'rallhin,
Hast ein Auto kriegst kan Benzin.
Alle lieb'n uns, doch i' hab' das G'fühl,
Mit uns macht ein jeder was er will.

5
Die grosse Zeit, die ist vorüber,
Mir war die "kleine" wahrhaftig lieber,
Technik und Geist hab'n viel erfunden,
Auto und Flugzeug, elektrischen Strom,
Ab'r was nützt uns d'schönste Erfindung
Uns d'rüber z'freu'n, fehlt jede Begründung,
Wenn wir im Finstern sitzen seit Tag'n,
Z' Fuß geh'n und frier'n bei hungrigen Mag'n!

Langsam, langsam, geh'n wir zurück,
Kerz'n, Petroleum, das ist uns'r Glück
Was hast von der Elektrizität,
Wann der Strom ausbleibt und d'Tramway steht!
Auch nicht schlecht pflanz'n, tut uns das Gas,
Wie d'Funzerln brennen, das ist doch a G'spass.
Man will ja net raunz'n, ab'r i hab' das G'fühl,
Langsam, langsam wird's doch an jeden z'viel.

6 [4]
Viel Konferenzen werden gehalten,
Friede soll werden wieder auf Erden,
Wir woll'n halt nix als die Zeiten, die alten,
Arbeit und Ruah', damit hätt' ma gnua!
Seit der Verirrung so vor acht Jahren,
Haben wir so viel Böses erfahren,
Daß wir bereu'n und bitten zugleich:
Schenkt's und doch wieder ein frei's Österreich!

Aber net gar so langsam,
Lasst's Euch net so viel Zeit,
Tun wir Wiener euch gar net leid?
Wir war'n z'frieden, beliebt in der Welt,
Und unser Schilling, der war a Geld!
A Großdeutschland hab'n wir net braucht,
Wir hab'n besser 'gessen getrunken und g'raucht!
Tot is das tausendjährige Reich,
Doch neunhundertfünfzig lebt Österreich!

Slowly, slowly it goes uphill,
Who can't endure it, will bite the dust!
Raw materials are available, and coals from Poland,
Who's light on their feet can go and get them.
Railway tracks go everywhere,
If you have a car, you don't get gas.
Everyone loves us but I have a feeling that
Everyone does what he wants with us.

5
The great times are over,
I truly preferred the "small" ones,
Technology and intellect have invented much,
Cars and planes, electric power,
But what's the use of the most beautiful invention,
We have no reason to be happy about it,
When we are sitting in the dark for days,
Travel on foot and freeze with hungry stomachs!

Slowly, slowly we recede,
Candles, petroleum, that's our bliss.
What do we gain from electricity,
When the power fails and the tramway stands still!
The gas also hoaxes us considerably,
How those dim lights brun, that's frankly a joke.
One doesn't want to rant but I have the feeling that
Slowly, slowly it's getting too much for everybody.

6 [4]
Many conferences are being held,
Peace shall be on earth again,
We just want nothing but the old times,
Work and rest—that would be enough for us!
Since the aberration about 8 years ago,
We have experienced so much evil,
That we are sorry and beg at the same time:
Grant us a free Austria again!

But not quite so slowly,
Don't take so much time,
Don't you take pity on us Viennese?
We were happy, popular in the world,
And our schilling—that was a coin!
We never needed a Greater Germany,
We ate, drank, and smoked better [before]!
The thousand-year empire is dead,
But Austria lives nine hundred fifty!

Appendix 6

Operetta Premieres in Vienna from 1945 to 1970

This list has been excerpted from Wolfgang Jansen's "Chronik des populären Musiktheaters auf deutschsprachigen Bühnen 1945–1990," published on the Deutsches Musicalarchiv website, http://www.deutsches-musicalarchiv.de/Chronik/chronik-1945-1999_20120606.pdf (accessed February 28, 2013).

Premiere	Title	Composer	Authors	Theater
Oct. 20, 1946	<i>Die Straussbuben</i>	Johann & Josef Strauss	Hubert Marischka, Rudolf Weys	Raimund Theater
Nov. 24, 1946	<i>Schicksal mit Musik</i>	Robert Stolz	Karl Farkas	Apollo-Theater
May 20, 1947	<i>Endstation</i>	Jára Benes	Béla Szenes, Josef Petrak	Bürgertheater
Sep. 24, 1947	<i>Drei von der Donau</i>	Robert Stolz	Robert Gilbert	Stadttheater
Dec. 22, 1947	<i>Wiener Musik</i>	Edmund Eysler	Peter Herz, Martin Kosta	Bürgertheater
Mar. 5, 1948	<i>Der gestohlene Walzer</i>	Jára Benes	Fritz Eckhardt	Wiener Künstlertheater
Apr. 19, 1948	<i>Ein Lied aus der Vorstadt</i>	Robert Stolz	Dora Maria Brandt, Georg Fraser	Deutsches Volkstheater
Sep. 2, 1948	<i>Miss Austria</i>	Fritz Eckhardt	Fritz Eckhardt	Bürgertheater
Nov. 10, 1948	<i>Die Walzerkönigin</i>	Ludwig Schmidseder	Hubert Marischka, Aldo Pinelli	Bürgertheater
Oct. 22, 1948	<i>Die Nacht mit der Kaiserin</i>	Franz Grothe	M. Astalas, T. Nordhaus	Raimund Theater
Jan. 7, 1949	<i>Entweder—Oder</i>	Alex Steinbrecher	Hans Weigel	Theater in der Josefstadt
Jan. 16, 1949	<i>Sebastian, der Seitenspringer</i>	Jára Benes	F. Schwarz, Peter Neumann	Theater "Augen-Gottes"
Jan. 18, 1949	<i>Bel Ami</i>	Rudolf Kattnigg	Fritz Eckhardt	Raimund Theater
Feb. 4, 1949	<i>Der Florentiner Hut</i>	Werner Kruse	H. Budjahn, Hans Weigel	Theater in der Josefstadt
Mar. 1, 1949	<i>Die kleine Schwindlerin</i>	Jára Benes	Alfred Maria Willner	Theater "Augen-Gottes"
Mar. 23, 1949	<i>Aber Ninette</i>	Hermann Kind	Michael Howard	Bürgertheater
June 30, 1949	<i>Ich mach dich glücklich</i>	Erwin Halletz	Gabor von Vaszari	Bürgertheater
Sep. 8, 1949	<i>Abschiedswalzer</i>	Ludwig Schmidseder	Hubert Marischka, Rudolf Österreicher	Bürgertheater
Dec. 22, 1949	<i>Frühling im Prater</i>	Robert Stolz	Ernst Marischka	Stadttheater
May 1, 1951	<i>Das Glücksrezept</i>	Robert Stolz	Raoul Martiné, Hugo Wiener	Bürgertheater
Apr. 4, 1952	<i>Wirbel im Hochhaus</i>	J.G. Bayer	Stefan Wagner	Stadttheater
June 1, 1953	<i>Ballade vom lieben Augustin</i>	Robert Stolz	U. Becher, Peter Preses	Arkadenhof

May 28, 1954	<i>Tauben für die Kaiserin</i>	Eric Werba	Carl Nästlberger, Carola Koblitz	Raimund Theater
Nov. 23, 1955	<i>Liebesbriefe</i>	Nico Dostal	Hubert Marischka, Rudolf Oesterreicher	Raimund Theater
Feb. 14, 1956 (AP; Dec. 2, 1948, US)	<i>Kiss me, Kate</i> ⁷⁰⁵	<i>Cole Porter</i>	<i>Bella Spewack, Samuel Spewack, Cole Porter</i>	<i>Volksoper</i>
May 20, 1956	<i>Rendezvous um Mitternacht</i>	Rudolf Kattnigg	Otto Emmerich Groh	Raimund Theater
Nov. 9, 1956 (GLP; Feb. 25, 1953, US)	<i>Wonderful Town!</i>	Leonard Bernstein	Betty Comden, Adolph Green, Joseph Fields, Jerome Chodorov	Volksoper
Feb. 27. 1957 (GLP; May 16, 1946, US)	<i>Annie Get Your Gun!</i>	Irving Berlin	Herbert Fields, Dorothy Fields, Irving Berlin	Volksoper
Apr. 1, 1958	<i>Hallo, das ist die Liebe</i>	Robert Stolz	Hugo Wiener, Bruno Hardt-Warden, Robert Bodanzky	Raimund Theater
May 31, 1958	<i>Deutschmeisterkapelle</i>	Carl Michael Ziehrer	Hubert Marischka, Rudolf Oesterreicher	Raimund Theater
Sep. 3, 1958	<i>Madame Scandaleuse</i>	Peter Kreuder	Ernst Nebhut, Josef Maria Frank	Raimund Theater
Sep. 11, 1959	<i>Wirbel um Rosi</i>	Erwin Halletz	Kurt Nachmann, Rolf Olsen	Raimund Theater
May 25, 1960	<i>Bel Ami</i>	Peter Kreuder	Therese Angeloff, Franz Gribitz	Raimund Theater
June 5, 1963	<i>Ein schöner Herbst</i>	Robert Stolz	Hans Weigel	Theater in der Josefstadt
Mar. 25, 1964	<i>Frühjahrsparade</i>	Robert Stolz	Hugo Wiener, Ernst Marischka	Volksoper
Oct. 22, 1964	<i>Lady aus Paris</i>	Peter Kreuder	Karl Farkas	Raimund Theater
Dec. 1, 1965 (GLP; Oct. 14, 1961, US)	<i>The Fantasticks</i>	Harvey Schmidt	Tom Jones	Neues Theater am Kärntner Tor
Dec. 21, 1965 (GLP; Oct. 14, 1961, US)	<i>How to Succeed In Business Without Really Trying</i>	Frank Loesser	Abe Burrows, Jack Weinstock, Willie Gilbert, Frank Loesser	Theater an der Wien
Jan. 4, 1968 (GLP; Nov. 22, 1965, US)	<i>Man Of La Mancha</i>	Mitch Leigh	Joe Darion, Dale Wasserman	Theater an der Wien
June 4, 1968	<i>Wohl dem, der lügt</i>	Robert Stolz	Hans Wigel	Theater in der Josefstadt
Dec. 19, 1969	<i>Die Jungfrau von Paris</i>	Friedrich Schröder	Günther Schwenn	Raimund Theater
Nov. 14, 1970 (GLP; Nov. 11, 1966, US)	<i>Cabaret</i>	John Kander	Fred Ebb, Joe Masteroff	Theater an der Wien

GLP = German-language Premiere;

AP = Austrian Premiere

⁷⁰⁵ As the German-language premiere of this work was in Frankfurt in November 1955, *Kiss me Kate's* Vienna premiere is not mentioned in Jansen's list in spite of its impact.