

Oliver Rathkolb

The Vienna Philharmonic's "Cancelled" Subscription Audience
(Founders, Supporters and Contributors)

As with many other associations in the cultural scene of the late Habsburg Monarchy and during the crisis-ridden First Republic, patrons and other supporters continued to play an important role in the Vienna Philharmonic's private sector activities after 1909.

In the course of his research, the author of this dissertation, together with the Vienna Philharmonic's archivist Dr. Silvia Kargl, found, among other things, a large and heavy handwritten register on the orchestra's financial accounts in one of the Vienna State Opera's basement store rooms which is used as a sheet music archive today. This book of accounts provides a first and unique insight into the orchestra's group of sponsors among its subscribers between 1909 and 1945. The book lists a number of different groups structured according to the amount of their contributions: founders, supporters and contributors. The Vienna Künstlerhaus, for instance, maintained a similar system classifying its supporters as donors, founders, partners or friends.¹ The newly discovered book includes notes on the subscribers' seats or box seats from 1923/24 as well as their addresses and cancellations. However, in some cases, the notes remain incomplete.

The category of "founders" comprises a total of 125 persons during the period 1909-1942, but only four after the annexation to National Socialist Germany in 1938.

While the position of Founder No 1 was left blank, the title of Founder No 2 was assigned to the Arts Councillor Fritz Dobner-Dobenau, who joined the association as a founder in 1909. Friedrich (Fritz) Dobner v. Dobenau (1852-1925), from Osijek in the historical region of Slavonia (Croatia), was k. u. k. Truchsess of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and a large landowner. He was also an art collector, one of the founders of the Vienna Künstlerhaus as well as an honorary member of the Academy of Fine Arts, and is considered the founder of the Raimund Theater in Vienna.² Ranking at No 3 is the industrialist and patron Arthur Krupp (*Berndorfer Metallwarenfabrik*), the City of Vienna, the Mozarteum and the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* (Society of Friends of the Music of Vienna, Musikverein). Franz Traub, Vice President of the Anglo-Austrian Bank, was listed in position 22. He also figures among the donors of the Künstlerhaus but was removed from its lists.

¹ <http://www.wladimir-aichelburg.at/kuenstlerhaus/mitglieder/verzeichnisse/freunde-und-mitarbeiter/#b>

(Accessed March 3, 2013) as well as Oliver Rathkolb, Der kulturpolitische Kontext 1930 - 1960: Brüche, Kontinuitäten und Transformationen, in: Künstlerhaus (ed.), 150 Jahre Künstlerhaus - Festschrift (in preparation).

² Olga Stieglitz, Gerhard Zeillinger, Hildegunde Suet-Willen, Der Bildhauer Richard Kauffungen (1854-1942). Zwischen Ringstraße, Künstlerhaus und Frauenkunstschnle, Frankfurt/Main 2008, pp.97-98.

The implementation of the Nazi regime's anti-Semitic criteria was recorded only in a rather bashful way. In the case of Emmy Neumann from the fourth district of Vienna, for example, the single comment "abgereist IX 38" ("departed September 1938") was noted down. Some were lucky enough to escape Nazi terror and flee into exile. One of them was Dr. Friedrich Silberstein, for instance, a lecturer at the Institute of General and Experimental Pathology of the University of Vienna Medical School, who managed to flee with his family to Great Britain. Incidentally, both he and his daughter had been expelled by the University of Vienna.

However, these are only a handful of individual cases – a more extensive research approach, which has not been possible due to the relatively short period of time since locating the register of subscribers, remains reserved for future research projects. Still, on the basis of the effectively euphemistic comments alone, such as the one mentioned above ("departed September 1938") as well as other indications, it can be concluded that a significant proportion of the founders were of Jewish origin and therefore affected by Nazi persecution and terror.

The same can be stated with regard to the "supporters", a group of 246 persons reduced to only six after 1938. Kaethe (von) Gutmann, an elocutionist and widow of the writer and merchant Moritz (von) Gutmann³, whose name also figures on the list, again, accompanied by the remark "ausgezogen IX 38" ("moved out September 1938") – was killed in the Holocaust in 1942. Her husband was the son of the successful industrialist Wilhelm Ritter von Gutmann. Another supporter, the publisher Paul Zsolnay, whose Publishing House was seized upon a failed attempt of maintaining an Aryan facade, stayed in London. The book also makes mention of Muriel Gardiner, an American who, together with her partner and future husband, the chairman of the "Revolutionäre Sozialisten" ("Revolutionary Socialists" - successor of the banned Social Democratic Workers' Party) Joseph Buttinger, had already been fighting for democracy underground before 1938. In June 1938, after having completed her medical studies, she was finally urged to leave the country "voluntarily".

The contributors appear to have suffered a similar fate: for the period 1888-1938 the book lists a total of 769 persons, but only 472 for the years 1938-1942. The entry of Marianne Kuffner is accompanied by a handwritten note: "ausgezogen April 1939" ("moved out April 1939"). Ms. Kuffner was killed in the Auschwitz extermination camp on September 9, 1942. The private banker Dr. Alfons Thorsch did not "move out voluntarily" either, but had to flee into exile - first to Switzerland and then, via England, to Canada – losing his bank and a substantial part of his assets.⁴

³ http://www.juedischegemeinde.at/Familien/gutmann_Ketshendrf.htm (Accessed March 3, 2013). Misspelled in the subscription book as Guttman.

⁴ Hubertus Czernin, Die Auslöschung. Der Fall Thorsch, Vienna 1998

It will be up to future research to analyze the repercussions of this massive reduction in the orchestra's audience based on the racist criteria of the Nazi regime. Individual cases of voluntary withdrawals, which are also documented, are linked to the extreme financial pressure caused by Nazi policies and deliberately increased by the regime in order to expel those who were stigmatized.

In the first months, the orchestra also very clearly felt the financial impact of the "crisis of its audience" – a fact that remains evident in its protocols and has been proven by Fritz Trümpi.⁵ At the same time, the orchestra obviously attempted to increase the number of those paying smaller amounts of money ("50 Reichsmark per person"). From 1940, founders were also admitted again: Dr. Aurel Wolfram (333 RM), fan of the Philharmonic and de facto liaison with the *Reichspropagandaamt* (Reich Propaganda Office), who was even posted to the Philharmonic's Board by the Gauleiter, for example, or Dr. Ferry Schmidt, Director General of the Ostmark savings banks Girozentrale, as well as Ing. Hanns Kratky (500 RM each). Incidentally, in the German Reich the average monthly wage was approximately 208 Reichsmark. The conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler, by comparison, earned up to 4,000 RM per evening which was an absolute top fee.

Still, even though the orchestra increased the musicians' fees for additional concerts, it also continued to accumulate losses, finally reaching a deficit of 10,734.73 RM as opposed to the earlier 4362.01 RM. In 1938, the members of the Philharmonic received a total fee of 31,096 Reichsmark for subscription and extraordinary concerts; it was not until 1939/1940 that this amount was raised to 60,934 Reichsmark, with every member receiving a share of 2,985 RM (including the fee for the Salzburg Festival) – 544 RM more than in the season 1938/1939.⁶

The accountant and treasurer's comment on the reduction of expenditures for social purposes linked to the expulsion of Jews, which is recorded in the balance sheet as follows: „Ausgaben für soziale Zwecke...durch Ausscheidung der Juden gegen das Vorjahr (18.326,90) um cca. RM 4900,--verringert haben. Für nächstes Jahr kann mit einer weiteren Verringerung um cca. RM 3000.-gerechnet werden“, bears witness to an appalling system of inhumanity.

It is noteworthy, though, that before 1938, not a single prominent political party representative figured among the Orchestra's supporters and subscription audience, while a dominant majority was constituted by the educated classes of the bourgeoisie as well as several entrepreneurs, a large proportion of whom were Jewish. It remains up to future studies to find out who replaced the Jewish audience during the time of National Socialism. I do assume, however, that their expulsion led to an audience demographic that was both

⁵ Fritz Trümpi, *Politisierung der Wiener Philharmoniker und das Berliner Wien* 2011, p. 180.

⁶ Vienna Philharmonic Archive, report & balance sheet analysis 1939/1940.

broader and younger. As early as June 1940, the highest revenues were recorded since the year 1940.⁷

Furthermore, in December 1940, Countess Johanna Hartenau-Battenberg, an honorary member of the Vienna Philharmonic, announced that she would transfer a sum of 19,000 Reichsmark to the *Franz-Schalk-Gedächtnisfonds* (Franz-Schalk Memorial Fund). The interest was to go towards financing three music scholarships for young musicians (250-300 RM each) at the Imperial Academy of Music and the Performing Arts in Vienna⁸. These scholarships were intended to be awarded for the first time on the occasion of the Philharmonic's 100th anniversary in 1942. The Gau- and Reichsleiter Baldur von Schirach then put his stamp on that idea proclaiming on March 30, 1942, that the *Kulturamt* (Cultural Office) of Vienna, acting on a proposal from the Orchestra's Board, would indeed award three "Wiener-Philharmoniker-Jubiläums-Stipendien" (Vienna Philharmonic Anniversary Scholarships) of 1,000 RM each⁹.

As the war continued, the size of the audience did not diminish at all. On the contrary, due to the growing losses of the German Wehrmacht (unified armed forces) and ongoing bombings, concerts seemed to attract even more people, with the concert halls serving as a kind of place for emotional retreat. However, the phenomenon of private pre-war patronage had finally been eradicated for a long time.

This book is the first to provide us with the names of the people who formed the orchestra's audience – it is the first to tell us about the names, identities and individual fates of the Vienna Philharmonic's patrons and subscribers before 1938. At the same time, however, it illustrates the extent of the Nazi persecution, expulsion and – in many cases – extermination policies, too.

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<http://www.wienerphilharmoniker.at/>

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⁷ Vienna Philharmonic Archive, minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting of June 29, 1940.

⁸ Vienna Philharmonic Archive, minutes of the Board's meeting, December 23, 1940, p. 1.

⁹ Das Kleine Blatt, March 31, 1942.