THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER, RELIGION, AND CULTURE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMANIC SALONS

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ABSTRACT

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Modern salons began as gatherings for conversation among the French aristocracy in the seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century it had become a bourgeois tradition, with its importance cumulating in the French Revolution. The French salon moved to Germany and Austria in the late eighteenth century, however, its heyday in those lands was in the nineteenth century. The salon became a place where women in both France and the Germanic lands could gain an education and power. What has yet to be discussed in scholarship is the extent to which the salon in the Germanic lands moved away from its French roots and became its own unique tradition.

First, purely musical salons began during the Biedermeier period, as will be seen when examining the German salons of Sara Levy, Amalie Beer, Lea Mendelssohn, Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel, and Clara Wieck-Schumann. Second, Germany and Austria saw the first salons hosted by Jewish women. This thesis highlights those of Henriette Herz, Rahel Levin-Varnhagen, Fanny von Arnstein, Sara Levy, Amalie Beer, Lea Mendelssohn, Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel, Berta Zuckerkandl, and Salka Viertel.

Finally, to demonstrate the benefits of Germanic salon culture, the last chapter focuses on Johanna Kinkel's involvement with the Berlin salon tradition. Kinkel was a composer, writer, and political activist. Her time in Berlin represents the most musically active period of her life. By examining the influence of the Germanic salon on her life, the importance of the tradition as a whole is apparent.
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INTRODUCTION

In Europe the nineteenth century was marked by many different changes: economical, political, and social. The Industrial Revolution was sweeping across the continent. The Enlightenment and French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century changed the way that people viewed politics and the rights of citizens. And as the century progressed there was a greater demand for increased rights and liberties of traditionally oppressed groups, such as Jews and women.

The distinctive socio-political circumstances and changes in Germany and Austria created a cultural atmosphere that was swift to adopt traditions from other lands. When new cultural traditions were adopted they were quickly absorbed into Germanic culture where they became independent from the original tradition. This work illustrates how the unique cultural, social, and political situation in Germany and Austria transformed the French salon into a distinct Germanic tradition.

The modern salon began in France in the seventeenth century with Catherine de Vivonne, Marquise de Rambouillet. In 1600, at the age of twelve, Vivonne married King Henry IV's Grand Master of the Royal Wardrobe and followed him to court in Paris. When her husband died in 1618 she inherited a town-house near the Louvre, rebuilt, and renamed it the Hôtel de Rambouillet.¹ The gatherings she hosted in her new residence were

neither the first nor the only in Paris, but they were the most brilliant and were the first to break down barriers of class, for all those admitted were treated equally.2

During the ascension of the bourgeoisie in the later eighteenth century, the Golden Age of the French salon began. While the new French salon was mainly a place for the middle class, the nobility still attended, thus beginning a trend towards a socially accepted mixture of classes that would continue into the nineteenth century. The salons catered to a diverse group of people and took place in the home of the hostess, salonière in France or Salongründerin in Germany and Austria.3 All bourgeois salons emphasized a person's intelligence and ability to discuss current cultural and political issues over class and trivial conversation.4

Throughout its history the salon was not recognized as official “employment.” Yet hosting a successful salon involved immense time, money, and effort. The hostess had to send out invitations, rehearse the entertainment (either the music or theatrical performances), and plan the meal (a light lunch or dinner was usually served). She also had to perfect her art of leading the conversation in an interesting and witty manner.5

Women who led salons were perceived as powerful. In France the idea of the powerful woman was originally accepted but was later feared during the Revolution. A powerful woman was believed to be the primary example of an “unnatural” female who

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3 To follow previous scholarship I will be referring to all hostesses as salonières. Petra Wilhelmy-Dollinger, Die Berliner Salons mit historisch-literarischen Spaziergängen (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 66.


5 Ibid., 2-3.
had brought France to its disastrous state. Later, especially in the Germanic salons, *salonières* would become more accepted, but they always negotiated a precarious position between public disgrace and private respectability.

The characteristics of an ideal bourgeois woman in the nineteenth century were meekness, passivity, and an ability to nurture. Her characteristics were understood to be in opposition to the ideal bourgeois man’s traits of directedness and activeness. The woman, as the subordinate partner, was trained to use her “natural” abilities to aid and please the men in her life. The education of a bourgeois woman was best described by Jean-Jacques Rousseau who, on the eve of the French Revolution, wrote in his treatise on education and human nature, *Émile* (1762),

> On women too depends the morals, the passions, the tastes, the pleasures, aye and the happiness of men. For this reason their education must be wholly directed to their relations with men. To give them pleasure, to be useful to them, to win their love and esteem, to train them in their childhood, to care for them when they grow up, to give them council and consolation, to make life sweet and agreeable for them: these are the tasks of women in all times for which they should be trained from childhood.

According to Rousseau, women should not be trained for anything other than what would be pleasing to a man. Her life was devoted to pleasing her father, her husband, and finally her sons. Education in a woman was seen as an ornament, something that would increase her marital opportunities. Rousseau’s beliefs about knowledge and gender roles would become status quo in the educational system of post-Revolutionary France as well as other European countries.

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Since women were believed to need only enough education to keep their husbands entertained and their children educated, their schooling was erratic at best. Most of a nineteenth-century bourgeois woman’s education took place in the home. In Germany, it was not until the early twentieth century that any real reform or structure was instituted in women’s education.

Women tended to receive an education equal to that of their male relatives until puberty, when their education stopped. In Germany the onset of puberty for girls was the beginning of the Wartezeit, or waiting period. During this time girls were seen as women in training and learned the skills necessary for marriage. The drastic change in educational expectations and the general uneasiness of the time caused many young women to dislike the Wartezeit. Women’s memoirs recall the period as a time of bodily discomfort and dismay at the restrictions of childhood pursuits such as reading.

The effects of Rousseau's statement can also be seen in attitudes about women's employment. The attitude—but not the reality—was simple; women were not supposed to work outside of the home. A woman's job was to tend house and care for her husband and children.

By the middle of the century in Germanic lands, home and work were two separate spheres. For the bourgeois, a woman working out of the house was seen as a disgrace and

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9 Bock, Women in European History, 122.


11 Fuchs and Thompson, Women in Nineteenth-Century Europe, 58.
caused a loss of familial status. As businesses began to move outside the home women could no longer contribute economically. As a result, many bourgeois women who needed to support their families did so surreptitiously with needlework or other indoor activities. Thus there is little documentation of women’s “work.”

Justification for this was the belief that public life would be detrimental to a woman’s reproductive health and sense of responsibility towards her family. There was also the fear that a working or performing woman projected immodesty and was, consequently, more sexually provocative. Actresses and other stage performers were often seen as having a social status similar to that of prostitutes. The negative social status of women musicians performing in public is further influenced by the long association of public performance with the courtesan tradition. Even in the nineteenth century music was seen as a signal of female availability (as a skill which enhanced the position of prostitutes who were sexually available or in young single women who were maritally available). On a professional level we encounter the female musician . . . who was considered brazen and sexually promiscuous by the mere fact that she ‘exhibited’ herself to the public. . . . The idea of the “brazen” woman can also be applied to women composers. To present one’s work to be displayed and performed to the public was seen as immodest.

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12 Ibid., 62.
13 Bock, Women in European History, 100.
14 For a discussion of the different types of women’s employment and its effects see Fuchs and Thompson, Women in Nineteenth-Century Europe, 61-83.
15 Linda L. Clark, Women and Achievement in Nineteenth-Century Europe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 82.
It is not surprising then that upstanding middle- and upper-class women would seek to maintain their respectability by not performing publicly. The salon allowed them a place to perform that was more culturally acceptable.

In spite of the acceptability of the private salon, it too held sexual overtones that date to its earliest inception in France. In the beginning many salonières hosted their salons from a divan (or daybed), a tradition that moved from France to the Germanic lands. We even find it in the fin-de-siècle salon of Berta Zuckerkandl who famously said, “On my divan Austria comes alive.” The divan, while elevating the salonière to a position of power, situates that power sexually. Despite the connotations, however, salons were still a more respectable way for women to operate in society since they were perceived as private spaces. The concerns about women’s sexuality emerging in public performances were removed.

The intersection of the public and private spheres that occurred in salons also meant that they were one of the few places where the sexes could intermingle relatively freely. Men and women did interact in public in the nineteenth century, but it was generally in a formalized way. There were rules and standards to follow in all aspects of gender interaction, which were not present in salons. There both men and women could engage in conversation and debate, a practice that was not possible publicly.

Though women’s roles and social mores changed throughout the nineteenth century, the importance of the salon tradition continued. In a century where women had

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17 Bilski and Braun, *Jewish Women and Salons*, 17.

18 Ibid., 14.
few advantages it gave them opportunities to wield power, have a career (albeit privately), or receive an education.19 The salon’s place between the public and private spheres enabled women to engage, as much as possible, in professional discourse. As the salon tradition became more established and independent in Germany and Austria the value of it as an institution for women became even more accepted.

19 Ibid., 2.
CHAPTER 1: GERMANIC SALONS

Overview

By the late eighteenth century the salon had moved to Germany and Austria; early salons in the Germanic lands were a part of the literary tradition. Unlike those in France, the term “salon” was not applied to the Germanic gatherings. Germanic women around 1800 referred to their meetings as their Gesellschaft or Kreis. The term “salon” was not given to these gatherings until the later part of the nineteenth century, when it was thought that the French tradition had died out. By the time the Germanic gatherings were called “salons” they had moved away from the literary tradition towards the completely musical or a combination of literature, art, and music. Throughout the long nineteenth century, Germanic salons were able to change with the times and remain popular.

To illustrate the continued popularity of the Germanic salon in the nineteenth century, I focus on the salons of Henriette Herz (1764-1847), Rahel Levin-Varnhagen (1771-1833), Fanny von Arnstein (1758-1818), Sara Levy (1761-1854), Amalie Beer (1767-1854), Lea Salomon-Mendelssohn (1777-1842), Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel (1805-1847), Clara Wieck-Schumann (1819-1896), Berta Zuckerkandl (1864-1945), Alma Mahler-Werfel (1879-1964), and Salka Viertel (1889-1978). These salons spanned the century,


21 Ibid., 151.

22 For the sake of consistency and to follow previous scholarship I will be referring to all Germanic gatherings mentioned as salons.

23 For a more detailed list of Germanic salons see Appendix. To avoid calling the salonières by their first name, I have hyphenated their maiden name with their married name. Admittedly, this option may occasionally be
with Herz’s salon beginning in the 1780s and Viertel’s salon ending after World War II. Each contributed to the Germanic salon tradition and will illuminate some of its unique features.

The first Germanic salon was hosted in Berlin at the home of Henriette Herz. Herz’s salon was also the first salon hosted by a Jewish woman. Born Henriette de Lemos (her father was a Jewish doctor), she married physician Markus Herz in 1778. Her salon was originally an outgrowth of her husband’s intellectual lectures. Markus Herz encouraged his wife’s attendance at his lectures in order to familiarize her with serious teachings and writings in lieu of the sentimental novels she usually read.24 Henriette Herz would attend the lectures and then preside over the conversation afterwards. Unlike the female-led French salons, Herz’s husband was the intellectual center of the gatherings.

Despite her secondary role, Herz was charming enough to attract a group of young authors writing in the new Romantic style, in addition to the academic regulars of her husband’s circle. The heyday of her salon occurred in the 1780s and 1790s, during which time those such as the teacher Gottlob Johann Christian Kunth, Minister of State Count Dohna the Elder, and the theologian Friedrich Daniel Schleiermacher were regular attendees.25 One of Herz’s major contributions to the Germanic salon tradition was the

confusing, especially in the case of Johanna Mockel-Kinkel who will be discussed in Chapter 2; yet, for reasons of consistency, it was the best solution possible.

24 Wilhelmy-Dollinger, Die Berliner Salons, 60. “Marcus Herz billigte die Neigung seiner Frau zur Lektüre; weil sie aber vorwiegend empfindsame Romane las, behafte er sich, vom didaktischen Eifer der Aufklärer beseelt, ihr auch ernsthafte Schriften nahezubringen.”

25 Ibid., 61-62.
inclusion of important figures of German Romanticism, a trend that would continue throughout the nineteenth century.

Henriette Herz’s salon, although the first, was not the most influential of the early Berlin salons. That distinction goes to Rahel Levin-Varnhagen, who hosted a salon from ca. 1780 to 1840. Unlike Herz, Levin-Varnhagen hosted a salon that was more closely related to the French literary salon, since she was the intellectual leader of the conversation. Her early salon was also different from Herz’s for she was single until 1814 when she married the diplomat, Karl August Varnhagen. Thus, her early salon—and her later salon in everything but name—was not associated with any male figure.

Levin-Varnhagen’s salon can be divided into two periods: the early salon from 1780 to the Napoleonic Wars and the late salon from 1819 to 1840. Important guests of her early period were members of the Royal Family and, similar to Herz, significant figures in German Romanticism including the philosopher and writer Friederich Schlegel, poet Clemens Brentano, poet and writer Jean Paul, writer August Wilhelm Schlegel, and Friedrich Daniel Schleiermacher. Some of the guests from Levin-Varnhagen’s first period would attend the second phase of her salon as well, but her Jewish background and her political beliefs meant that many original attendees, including members of the royal family, did not return. Instead, she also received the poet Heinrich Heine, members of the Mendelssohn family, the historian Leopold von Ranke, the philosopher Wilhelm von

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27 Bilski and Braun, Jewish Women and Salons, 31-32.
Humboldt, and the explorer Friedrich von Humboldt. Levin-Varnhagen’s salon had a great influence on the salon culture of both Germany and Austria as several members of her salon later relocated, spreading the tradition from Berlin to other parts of the German speaking world.

The two undisputed nineteenth-century centers of the Germanic tradition were Berlin and Vienna. In Vienna, the first salon was hosted by Fanny von Arnstein. Arnstein was born in Berlin to an influential family. Her father, Daniel Itzig, was a member of Frederick the Great’s court and the first Jewish man in Prussia to gain full citizenship rights. Family members were culturally educated and regulars at Levin-Varnhagen’s salon. Arnstein moved from Berlin to Vienna in 1776 when she married Nathan Adam Arnstein. Soon after her move to Vienna she began her salon.

Arnstein’s salon was important since it brought the tradition to Vienna and helped increase the social standing of culturally educated upper-class Jews. Her salon hosted the actress Friederike Unzelmann, the poet Clemens Brentano, the writers Friedrich Schlegel and August Wilhelm Schlegel, and the statesman Friedrich von Gentz. Hilde Spiel has said that Arnstein’s salon was “more permanent, much wider in social range and, finally, far more splendid than those established in...Berlin by Henriette Herz and Rahel Levin.”

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29 Salons also began to appear in Eastern European countries such as Poland in the late eighteenth century. See Halina Goldberg, Music in Chopin’s Warsaw (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 149-151.
30 Bilski and Braun, Jewish Women and Salons, 33.
32 Ibid., 51.
What further sets Arnstein’s salon apart from the French tradition and contemporary Berlin salons is her inclusion of music. Her salon was important to the musical establishment in Vienna, as both Mozart and Beethoven were a part of her circle, and she helped establish the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (Society of Music Lovers).³³

Daniel Itzig’s preoccupation with musically educating his children likely explains his daughter’s predilection for including music in her salon. Arnstein herself was an accomplished pianist, as was her sister Sara Levy, who was also a Berlin salonièr (see p. 13).³⁴ Lea Salomon-Mendelssohn, Felix and Fanny’s mother and herself an important musical salonièr, was Arnstein and Levy’s niece. With her educational background and her inclusion of music in a salon, Arnstein influenced the next generation of German and Austrian salonières.

Musical performances in the salon would become even more prevalent during the Biedermeier years, when freedom of speech was limited—spies of the secret police could be anywhere—and for a salon culture that depended on the freedom to discuss and debate, this was a devastating blow.³⁵ Instead of crumbling under the new regime, the Germanic

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³³ Bilski and Braun, Jewish Women and Salons, 35.

³⁴ Ibid., 33.

³⁵ In Austria the Biedermeier years began with the rise to power of Clemens Wenzel Lothar, Count Metternich. Metternich was first appointed foreign minister by Emperor Francis I in 1809 during Napoleon’s occupation of Austria. By this time the Austrian Emperor had little power, and Metternich’s job was to maintain good relations with the French. It was not until the fall of Napoleon in 1815 that Metternich truly gained power. He participated in the Congress of Vienna (a peace conference which restored the monarchy system and power structure of the late eighteenth century in Austria, Germany, France, Russia, and Britain), and was influential in the establishment of order after the chaos of the post-French Revolution years. Order came at a price, however, as Metternich was fiercely loyal to the Emperor whose mission it was to eradicate all traces of French politics in Austria. To this end, all supposed revolutionary or liberal activity, in Germany as well as Austria, was monitored and punished, creating an atmosphere of extreme repression. The repression was felt in all aspects of life, but especially the arts, affecting the lives and careers of all major composers, including Beethoven and Schubert.
salons adapted. Women began hosting purely musical salons. Intellectuals during the Biedermeier years turned to the seemingly less serious musical salons as a way of retaining fulfilling cultural interactions while evading the secret police. The leading hosts of musical salons in Berlin in the early Biedermeier period were Elisabeth von Staegemann (1761-1835), Princess Luise Radziwell (1770-1836), Sara Levy, Amalie Beer, and Lea Salomon-Mendelssohn.

Sara Levy’s salon began shortly after Herz’s salon in the 1780s and lasted until her death in 1854. Like others from the Itzig household she had a great affinity for music. She was an extremely accomplished pianist and took lessons with Wilhelm Friedemann Bach. Throughout her life, she preferred eighteenth-century music and showed little affinity for the current fashionable musical trends in Berlin. Some of the composers she favored were J. S. Bach, W. F. Bach, C. P. E. Bach, Johann Hasse, Johann Gottlieb Graun, and Johann Joachim Quantz.36 Her obvious affinity for the music of J. S. Bach and his sons meant that it was performed regularly in her salon.37 Since she personally knew both W. F. Bach and C. P. E. Bach she was able to commission, be gifted, or purchase many of their works.38 To help further the Bach revival of the mid-nineteenth century, she contributed her collection of scores to her great-nephew, Felix Mendelssohn. When he first conducted the St. Matthew Passion in 1829 Levy was in the audience.39

37 Bilski and Braun, Jewish Women and Salons, 17.
39 Wilhelmy-Dollinger, Die Berliner Salons, 147.
Amalie Beer’s salon did not begin until the 1820s, well into the Biedermeier period. Thus, it always included music and was known—along with that of the Mendelssohns’—as the best musical salon in the city. By the 1820s the Beer and Mendelssohn musical salons had begun to serve an important role in the musical life of Berlin. The censors were so strict that most of the concert performances in the city were produced privately, thus important musical innovations occurred in the salons, including the development of Lieder.  

Some of the important musical figures in Beer’s salon included Carl Maria von Weber, Muzio Clementi, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Ignaz Moscheles, Friederich Kalkbrenner, Louis Spohr, Niccolò Paganini, Henriette Sontag, Angelica Catalani, and Wilhelmine Schröder. Her salon was so popular that the music room in her house was expanded in 1811 to accommodate the large numbers of guests at her gatherings.

Another important musical salon in Berlin during the Biedermeier period was held in the home of Lea and Abraham Mendelssohn. This salon, although officially hosted by Lea Salomon-Mendelssohn, was really a family affair. Like Beer, the Mendelssohns hosted important composers and performers of the day, not the least of whom were Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn. It is in the musical salon of their parents that Felix and Fanny’s music was first heard and promoted. It also gave them an opportunity to practice their performing skills in a private arena.

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41 Ibid., 40.

Lea Salomon-Mendelssohn had grown up in the salon tradition as many of her aunts either hosted or were involved in the major salons of Berlin and Vienna. Lea’s “Sunday Musicales” ended in 1828 when Fanny married Wilhelm Hensel, a famous painter, and Felix left home. After a three-year hiatus, Fanny restarted the Mendelssohn salon, with ample support from her brother. In a letter from 1831, Felix wrote

I cannot tell you, my dear Fanny, how pleased I am by your plan for the new Sonntagsmusik. It’s a brilliant idea and I implore you in God’s name not to let it slip into oblivion, instead you must ask your nomadic brother to compose something new for you.

Fanny would indeed ask her brother to compose pieces for her salon. Although Mendelssohn-Hensel’s salon was primarily musical, they did reflect “conversations of music, word, and image . . . in the performances of Lieder, oratorios, instrumental music, and tableaux vivants.” These concerts were seen as private, but they were rehearsed and performed for a large number of guests. Illustrious musical personages such as Clara and Robert Schumann, Charles Gounod, Franz Liszt, Johanna Mockel-Kinkel, and the singer Giuditta Pasta would attend.

The musical salon and its importance continued even after Fanny’s untimely death in 1847. Later musical salons also tended to be hosted by women who were either composers themselves or related to a male composer. One of the most famous examples was the salon hosted by Clara Wieck-Schumann.

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43 Bilski and Braun, *Jewish Women and Salons*, 44.


45 Bilski, and Braun, *Jewish Women and Salons*, 47.

46 Ibid., 48.
Because of the travels required by Robert Schumann’s career, Clara Wieck-Schumann hosted salons in multiple cities during the middle of the century. Her first salons were in Leipzig (1841-1844) and Kopenhagen (1842, during a performance tour). She also hosted salons in Düsseldorf (1850-1857), Berlin (1857-1862 and 1873-1878), Baden-Baden (1862-1873), and Frankfurt (1878-1896). She, more than any other salonière, straddled the boundary between public and private performance, since her salon was an addition to her public performing career and not her only creative outlet. In fact, most of her salons were hosted while on tour.

Despite Wieck-Schumann’s innovation in combining public and private traditions, her involvement in the salon reinforces her own desire to conform to nineteenth-century social norms. She believed that women were by nature not able to be creative and that her job as a performing artist was to interpret what men had written. Despite her beliefs, Wieck-Schumann was ahead of her time since she was a woman who had a highly respected career performing in public. Yet she still conformed to many of the stereotypes of a middle-class female, including hosting successful salons.

By the late nineteenth century, salons had turned away from being purely musical gatherings. Salons of this time tended to include not only music, literature, and conversation, but also art, interior design, and architecture. The gatherings hosted by Berta Zuckerkandl and Alma Mahler illustrate the new form of integrated salon culture in fin-de-siècle Vienna.

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In the salon of Berta Zuckerkanndl art, music, literature, and politics were mixed. It was the most important salon in Vienna in the later nineteenth century, where whole artistic movements, such as the Viennese Secession, were founded. Critic Ludwig Hevesi explains that “the idea for the Secession was first discussed [in Zuckerkanndl’s salon]. Here the small group of moderns who gave expression to this idea first met and began the fight for the revivification of art in Vienna.”\(^{48}\) The Secession was comprised of artists such as Gustav Klimt, Otto Wagner, and Josef Hoffmann. The Secession’s primary goal was to present \textit{avant-garde} works that would help rid Vienna of what these artists regarded as artistically decadent in the earlier generation. The group held their own exhibitions, published their own journal, \textit{Ver Sacrum}, and eventually owned their own building designed by Josef Maria Olbrich. Also, the group of young Viennese writers called the \textit{Jung Wien} (Peter Altenberg, Felix Salten, Stefén Zweig, Hugo von Hofmannstal, and Herman Bahr) were all part of Zuckerkanndl’s circle.\(^{49}\)

Zuckerkanndl was instrumental in promoting the \textit{Wiener Werkstatte} (Viennese Workshops), an organization begun by Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser in 1903, which was preoccupied with the interior and exterior unity of buildings. Everything in the home—architecture, furniture, wallpaper, even clothes—was supposed to reflect the aesthetic of the design.\(^{50}\) Both Hoffmann and Moser were attendees of Zuckerkanndl’s salon, and she made it her duty to promote their work.


\(^{49}\) Bilski and Braun, \textit{Jewish Women and Salons}, 87.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 90.
Zuckerkandl’s salon was influential not only in art and architecture, but in music as well. Important musical figures such as Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg, and Alexander von Zemlinsky were regular guests. It was during a gathering at Zuckerkandl’s house that Mahler met his future wife, Alma Schindler. It is also in Zuckerkandl’s salon where Mahler met Alfred Roller and began the partnership that would produce the landmark production of *Tristan und Isolde* in 1906. In 1938, Zuckerkandl’s Vienna salon disbanded when she fled to France to escape Nazi persecution. There she began another short-lived salon.

Alma Mahler-Werfel grew up in Zuckerkandl’s circle since her step-father, Carl Moll, helped to found the Secession. Moll would figure prominently in the group, contributing to *Ver Sacrum* as well as being president between 1900 and 1901. From her interactions with Zuckerkandl, Alma learned the salon tradition and upon Mahler’s death, in 1911, she began her own salon. Hosting a salon was important for her social life, which during her marriage to Mahler had been severely limited by his need for isolation. His death and her subsequent salon reacquainted her with former companions, many of whom were also regular members of Zuckerkandl’s salon. Alma’s salon in Vienna ran from 1912 to 1936, when she and her third husband, Franz Werfel, fled the Nazis. On their way to America, she hosted a salon in 1938 in France (and attended Zuckerkandl’s French salon), and in 1941 she hosted a salon in Beverly Hills, California.

Alma’s salon was not the only or the most significant example of the Germanic salon tradition in America—specifically in California. Beginning in 1928 Salka Viertel, a German actress and screenwriter, hosted a salon that surpassed Alma’s and provided a solace for the many displaced German and Austrian artists and writers in California. During its
heyday, at the outbreak of World War II, Viertel’s salon hosted Franz Werfel, Alma Mahler-Werfel, Max Reinhardt, Charlie Chaplin, Aldous Huxley, Norman Mailer, Bertolt Brecht, and Heinrich and Thomas Mann. Many of the guests at her salon were writers, actors, and others who worked in the movie industry. Composers Arnold Schoenberg and Arthur Rubinstein were also a part of the circle. Viertel even tried to help Schoenberg break into movie scoring, but Schoenberg’s demands proved too much for the producers.

At the end of the war many of Viertel’s habitués returned to Europe, thus her salon steadily declined and the Germanic salon tradition effectively ended. First the demands of war and then the societal changes of the following decades made hosting a salon expensive and unnecessary. As women began to pursue intellectual and musical activities outside of the home, the need for a salon tradition gradually disappeared.

By the time of its demise, the tradition that started in France had spread its influence halfway around the world. Yet, while French salons are well known and researched, Germanic salons are less well-documented. At best they are presented within the French tradition, and their many innovative contributions are often overlooked. The Germanic salon’s distinctiveness mainly came from Germany and Austria’s unique socio-cultural background. The political and cultural events in the nineteenth century in the Germanic lands brought about the rise of musical salons as well as those hosted and attended by both Jewish and Christian devotees, neither of which were seen in France.

51 Ibid., 138.
52 Schoenberg demanded that he be able to complete the score before the movie, The Good Earth, was shot and coach the actors on the correct intonation of their lines. For more information see Bruce Cook, “Salka Viertel: Sundays in Mabery Road,” in Affairs of the Mind: The Salon in Europe and America from the 18th to the 20th Century, ed. Peter Quennell (Washington D. C.: New Republic Books, 1980), 163.
Jewish Salons and the Idea of Universal Humanity

Germany and Austria have a long history of anti-Semitism. In the late eighteenth century, however, influenced by French Enlightenment philosophy there began an increase in Jewish rights in both countries. France was looked to as a model in all aspects of Germanic culture, from the language to the political structure. At the outbreak of the French Revolution the people of both Austria and Germany supported the cause and adopted many of the Revolution’s ideas about humanity, equality, and brotherhood.

An important impetus towards greater Jewish independence was the 1781 Toleration Edicts in Austria and the German states. The laws alleviated many of the traditional taxes and restrictions. They also granted access to better economic and educational opportunities, but Jews were still not granted full citizenship rights. Even so,

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53 Jewish settlers first came to German lands around 70 C.E., but mass violence against them did not begin until the First Crusade in 1096. During the extreme religious fervor of the First Crusade at least five thousand Jews were killed. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Jewish population in Germany faced, in addition to murder, severe restrictions and regulations regarding everything from their living arrangements to whom they married. There were many attacks on Jewish communities, most occurred during times of extreme difficulty—such as the plague in 1349. The Jewish population in Germany did not regain its numbers until after The Thirty Year’s War (1618-1648). It would not be until the Toleration Edicts of 1781 that most of the restrictions were lifted, but Jews were not fully emancipated in Germany until 1871. See Panikos Panayi, Ethnic Minorities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany: Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Turks, and Others (London: Pearson Education, 2000), 13-14.

As in Germany, Jews had lived in Austria since the Middle Ages. Yet unlike Germany, during the early Middle Ages Austria (especially Vienna) was extremely liberal when it came to Jewish rights. Jews had almost complete freedom and constituted a well established middle class in Vienna. Vienna also became a sanctuary for those Jews fleeing from persecution in the other German-speaking lands. By the fourteenth century, however, public opinion turned against the Jewish population and they were expelled from Vienna. They returned to the city in the sixteenth century, but they did not regain their earlier freedoms and were forced to live in a ghetto outside of the city walls. For the next three hundred years little changed. In eighteenth-century Austria (as in Germany) some Jews were “tolerated subjects” and were allowed to live within Vienna, but it would not be until the Toleration Edicts that all Jews would be able to leave the ghetto. Even then, it was nearly impossible for Jews to be accepted. See Robert S. Wistrich, The Jews in Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 5-26.

54 Steven Beller, A Concise History of Austria (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 96.
the new freedoms allowed the Jewish population to move out of the ghetto, providing them an opportunity to assimilate into mainstream society.

The German and Austrian governments’ new tolerance laws corresponded to a reform movement in Judaism, which was also influenced by Enlightenment and French ideology. The first wave of the reform movement concerned itself purely with assimilation. Again influenced by France and the rising bourgeoisie, Jews tried to exhibit as many “Christian” middle-class attributes as possible. Thus, upper-class Jews began to dress in popular styles, speak in the vernacular, give their children a secular education, and amass large art collections in order to emulate the German cultural bourgeoisie.55 Hosting large social gatherings that demonstrated wealth and cultural knowledge, as well as encouraging interreligious interaction, was deemed vital to successful Jewish integration into German and Austrian society. Thus, German and Austrian Jews became almost exclusively associated with the Bildungsbürgertum or the educated bourgeoisie. 56

The German salons of the first few generations after the Toleration Edicts can be seen as those most associated with Jewish attempts at assimilation. Bilski and Braun describe the feeling of the period as the “romance of emancipation.” 57 During the first Germanic salons—those of Herz and Levin-Varnhagen—a conscious mixture of Gentile and Jewish guests were invited. By mixing with Gentiles and hosting intellectual and cultural salons, Germanic Jews sought acceptance as “Germans” rather than as “Jews.”

55 Bilski and Braun, Jewish Women and Salons, 24.


57 For a full discussion of salons of this type see Bilski and Braun, Jewish Women and Salons, 22-37.
The salons at Levin-Varnhagen’s represent early attempts by Jewish women to assimilate. In fact Levin-Varnhagen went so far as to convert, as did many Jewish women in the first few years after the Toleration Edicts.\(^{58}\) If a Jewish woman wanted to marry a Christian man she had to convert, and the same was true for men. Greater exposure to the surrounding Christian community and interreligious interactions such as the salon led to a greater number of conversions of both genders during Levin-Varnhagen’s generation.

Levin-Varnhagen had three serious suitors—whom she met through her salon—all three of whom were Christian. Eventually Levin-Varnhagen converted when she married her third suitor, Karl August Varnhagen.

Early nineteenth-century Vienna was more conservative regarding Jewish rights than the German states. The ability of Fanny von Arnstein, a Jewish woman who never converted, to attract a varied group of attendees and become socially tolerated is remarkable. It was her upper-class heritage that allowed her to break down the walls of Viennese society and join its ranks.\(^{59}\) She was able to use her wealth and education to gain social standing and at least semi-equality with her Christian acquaintances.

It would not be until Israel Jacobson moved to Berlin in 1814 that the second phase of the reform movement began with the instigation of new Jewish religious services. The reform services began in 1815, the same year that Napoleon lost power and the countries

\(^{58}\) For exact figures on conversion rates of Jewish women from 1800 to 1869 see Deborah Hertz, “The Troubling Dialectic Between Reform and Conversion in Biedermeier Berlin,” in *Towards Normality?: Acculturation and Modern German Jewry*, ed. Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter (London: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 119.

\(^{59}\) Spiel, “Fanny von Arnstein,” 49.
of his empire regained their sovereignty. Not all Jews in Berlin took part in the new services, which were originally held in Jacobson’s home, but a significant number did attend. The reform services removed many of the traditional restrictions of Judaism—for example the sermon and most of the singing was now in German instead of Hebrew, and in most services women were not required to sit behind a screen.

In 1817 Jacobson’s services were moved to the home of Amalie and Jacob Beer, who hosted a musical salon in their home as well. Shortly after the services began, the Beers renovated their home to accommodate the large crowds that attended. It was in the Beers’ home that music began to play an even more important role in the services. Giacomo Meyerbeer, as well as two Christian composers, Carl Friedrich Zelter and Bernard Anselm Weber, contributed music to the proceedings. Having Christian composers involved in Jewish services illustrates the apparent open-mindedness of the day. Members of the upper classes, or those in cultural and intellectual circles, sought to accept—at least on the surface—all people based on the ideal of universal humanity.

While Bilski and Braun use the term “romance of emancipation” only for the conversational salons of the early nineteenth-century, I would argue that assimilation and conversion played a major role in the musical salons of the Biedermeier era as well. Of the five most popular musical salonières, Sara Levy, Amalie Beer, and Lea Mendelssohn were

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61 Ibid., 109.

62 For more information on the Jewish reform movement and services see ibid., 108-113 and Panayi, Ethnic Minorities, 46-47.

63 Hertz, “The Troubling Dialectic,” 111.
Jewish, while Elisabeth von Staegemann and Princess Luise Radziwill were Gentile. It was the salons hosted by Jewish women that would be the most popular and influential.

We have seen that the Beers encouraged interaction between Jews and Gentiles in their salon and in the new religious services. Beer was also unique among the many Jewish salonières in Berlin and Vienna because she was one of the few women who did not use her salon as a means of conversion or assimilation. She, her husband, and her four sons (among them the composer Giacomo Meyerbeer) not only rejected conversion, but played an important role in the Berlin Jewish community. Following the Germanic salon tradition, however, she did host both Jews and Gentiles: musicians, writers, artists, and diplomats.

The salons in the home of Lea and Fanny Mendelssohn also represent the search for assimilation in the middle of the nineteenth century. Beginning in the late eighteenth century with the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, the Mendelssohns became an extremely important Jewish family in Berlin. Only two of Moses Mendelssohn’s six children remained Jewish, and Abraham Mendelssohn was one of the four who eventually changed their faith. Lea and Abraham had their children converted secretly to Christianity in 1816 and they themselves converted in 1822. Abraham wrote to Fanny about her conversion:

A few thousand years ago the Jewish form was dominant, then the pagan one; today, the Christian form predominates. Your mother and I were born into Judaism, through our parents; we were raised in it and, without having to change that form, have managed to follow God inside ourselves and in our consciences. We raised you and your brothers and sister to be Christian because that is the form of belief of most civilized people and because Christianity contains nothing that can turn us from the good; on the contrary, it can show you the path of love, obedience, acceptance, and resignation, if only through the example of its founder, recognized by so few and followed by still fewer. In professing your faith you have accomplished what society required of you: you can say that you are Christian.64

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64 Tillard, Fanny Mendelssohn, 47-48.
Conforming to society was then more important to the Mendelssohns, than religious affiliation, but Abraham also justifies his conversion by espousing principles of the ideal humanity—of universal goodness, love, obedience, acceptance, and resignation. Eventually, Fanny accomplished what in her parents’ eyes must have seemed the ultimate act of assimilation. Not only did she host a successful salon with a diverse group of attendees, but she also married the blond-haired, blue eyed, Protestant minister’s son, Wilhelm Hensel.65

Ultimately the ideal of a universal humanity was not met, since after the French occupation of Germany and Austria that lasted from 1806 to 1815 there was a backlash against the Jews. After Napoleon’s invasion many Germans turned away from revering French society and culture. There was an increase in German nationalism, and many took up the cause to rid their homeland from foreign occupiers.66

Much of the resentment against the bourgeois Jewry not only had to do with nationalism, but also class. Just as noble women were victims of jealously during the French Revolution, Jews received the same resentment in nineteenth-century Germany and Austria. The more they became associated with an upper class, the greater the lower class Germanic Christians resented them.

With the dissolution of Napoleonic rule many German citizens demanded a reversal of the Toleration Edicts, causing the first major riots against the Jews since the Middle

65 Ibid., 139.

Ages. The most serious of these, the “Hep-Hep” riots, occurred in 1819, five years after the decline of Napoleon. The name of the riots comes from the racial slur “hep-hep” that the instigators screamed at Jews during the violence. These riots instigated a pattern of increasingly negative public response in the face of strong legal and political support for Jewish rights.

The many waves of anti-Semitism throughout the nineteenth century can be seen not only in physical violence but also in the subtle tactics used in the “civilized” world of the salon. Jewish salonières who used the salon as a means to assimilate were subject to the many negative stereotypes imposed on converted and assimilated Jews. There was a prominent belief that by trying so hard to assimilate Jews were hiding something. Converted and assimilated Jews were thought to be obsequious and importunate and were still seen as outsiders. The ideas about assimilated Jews—and especially Jewish salonières—are best represented in a passage from the 1803 Wider die Juden (Against the Jews), written by Karl Wilhelm Grattenauer. He posits that “they read many books, speak several languages, use many arguments, draw in a variety of styles, paint in all colors, dance in all fashions, and have distinct abilities, but not the ability to unite all these elements into a total attractive femininity . . . no matter how long they spend time with

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68 Panayi, Ethnic Minorities, 34.

princes, counts, and other gentlemen.”70 To Grattenauer, and those who shared his opinions, the appearance of a Jewish woman’s cultural sophistication would always be a façade, since she lacked the essential element of femininity, that was, Christianity.

While Levin-Varnhagen’s salon was well attended by both Jews and Gentiles, her religion was remembered and commented on by Christian participants. In a letter about Levin-Varnhagen’s salon, her guest, Karl Gustav von Brinckmann, wrote to his Christian friend, Countess Luise von Voss, that “I can assure you that in the presence of this Jewish sofa, more wit, understanding, and flashes of brilliance are squandered in an evening than in three of our gatherings.”71 While the letter talks positively of the salon, it only further emphasizes that complete Jewish assimilation would be impossible, for Jews would never be able to entirely escape their heritage. Levin-Varnhagen was aware of this and wrote to her friend David Veit,

I have a strange fancy: it is as if some supramundane being, just as I was thrust into this world, plunged these words into my heart: “Yes, have sensibility, see the world as few see it, be great and noble, nor can I take from you the faculty of eternally thinking. But I add one thing more: be a Jewess!” And now my life is a slow bleeding to death.72

Through her many interactions in the salon Levin-Varnhagen knew that she would not stop being a Jew in others’ eyes. Even after her conversion she was never fully accepted as a Christian.73

70 Karl Wilhelm Grattenauer, Wider die Juden: ein Wort der Warung an alle unsere christlichen Mitbürger (Berlin: J. W. Schmidt, 1803), quoted in Bilski and Braun, Jewish Women and Salons, 37.

71 Karl Gustav von Brinckmann to Luise von Voss, October 10, 1802, Goethe and Schiller Archives, Weimar, quoted in Bilski and Braun, Jewish Women and Salons, 29.


Arnstein held a unique space in the social life of Vienna, for she held a place of equality in its high society. Yet, this equality was really only surface deep. A strong anti-Jewish sentiment pervades the letters and memoirs of those who could not snub her openly, but did so behind her back. Take, for example, this backhanded comment by Varnhagen, who himself married a converted Jew:

She was almost striking and strange phenomenon in Vienna. Attributes few women in high society possessed were noticed with wonder in a Jewish woman whose refinement and freedom of spirit, nurtured by the beneficial influence of Frederick the Second’s reign, seems all the more effective in a city where these virtues scarcely existed.\(^74\)

The point here is that the people of Berlin wondered not only at a woman possessing elegant characteristics, but that the woman who possessed them was a Jew. By emphasizing their wonderment, Varnhagen is implying that Jews normally did not exhibit such refinement.

Also, while Arnstein’s salon provided abundant cultural transfer it was recognized primarily for its Jewish connotations. Thus, in 1814 when Arnstein brought the first Christmas tree to her Viennese salon, the irony that a cultural symbol of Christianity was seen in the house of a Jewish woman was not lost on observers. The Viennese secret police wrote condescendingly in their reports that “the day before yesterday, at the Arnsteins, a much frequented Christmas tree celebration was held according to Berlin practice. There were the State Chancellor Hardenberg, the State Councilors Jordan and Hoffmann, Prince Radziwill, Herr Bartholdy, all the baptized and circumcised relations of the house.”\(^75\)

\(^74\) Spiel, “Fanny von Arnstein,” 50.

\(^75\) Ibid., 52.
Despite their conversion and other attempts at assimilation, the Mendelssohns too faced many types of discrimination. Sometimes the discrimination against them was in the form of physical violence, or threats of violence. During the “Hep-Hep” riots, Felix Mendelssohn was encountered by a member of the royal family who greeted him, “Hep, hep, Judenjung!” Later when Felix was fifteen, he and Fanny were walking along the street and Felix had to defend himself and his sister against an attack by some street urchins, who called them **Judenjungen**. Karl Heyse, Felix and Fanny’s tutor, commented on the incident in his diary: “Felix behaved like a man, but as soon as he got home he was unable to suppress his rage and indignation at the outrage that had been done him.” It would seem that even street children knew that since the Mendelssohns were perceived as Jewish, violence against them would be tolerated.

While some of the discrimination against the Mendelssohns was manifested violently, the majority was of a more insidious kind. The Mendelssohns—like other powerful Jewish families—were too influential to snub openly, thus many of the true feelings of the salon attendees can only be seen in their letters or later writings. After one of Lea Mendelssohn’s Sunday **musicales** a guest, Malla Montgomery-Silfverstolpe, wrote that “when one looks only at the face of Felix Mendelssohn, when he stands up and conducts the music in so lively and attentive a manner, he is really handsome . . . but he has a Jewish, rather ordinary profile and his head is set too close to his shoulders.”

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77 “Children of Jews.” Ibid., 123.
78 Ibid., 123.
79 Malla Montgomery-Silfverstolpe, 1912, quoted in ibid., 119.
By far the most important betrayal would occur when the letters of the musician Carl Friedrich Zelter to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe were published. Zelter, the director of the Berlin *Singakademie* and one of the most important musical figures in Berlin, was a good friend of Goethe’s. He was also Felix and Fanny’s composition teacher, attended both Lea Mendelssohn and Mendelssohn-Hensel’s salons and was a part of their family for many years. It was actually Zelter who introduced Goethe to the Mendelssohns. Goethe met Felix for the first time in 1821, and he took an eager interest in his career. The entire family met Goethe shortly after Felix’s first visit and kept the acquaintance up for the rest of Goethe’s life.

As the Mendelssohns had always had good relations with both Zelter and Goethe, it was a shock when their correspondence was published. Many of the comments between Zelter and Goethe referred to the Mendelssohns’ Jewish heritage. For example, on April 4, 1816 Zelter wrote of Abraham Mendelssohn that he

> is the second son of the philosopher [Moses Mendelssohn], and from the first years of his youth, after his father’s death, he has been attached to my house and its inmates. He is one of the right sort, and as such you will receive him.  

In this letter Zelter takes it upon himself to act as a de-facto father figure by telling Goethe that even though Abraham Mendelssohn is Jewish, he is “of the right sort” and so should be received with politeness. Goethe, too, remarks on the family’s Jewishness when writing about meeting Felix Mendelssohn for the first time:

> Admittedly, he is the son of a Jew, but no Jew himself. The father, to his own disadvantage, has not had his sons circumcised and educates them properly; it would really be curious if the son of a Jew turned out to be an artist.

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81 Ibid., 288.
Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the Mendelssohns held onto the
aive belief that conversion would be enough. They expected their children to be accepted
as a part of the Christian community when they were baptized. What Lea and Abraham did
not anticipate was the belief that converted Jews were second-class Christians. They would
never be seen as full Christians since they were not born into the tradition, thus they would
always face discrimination.

After German Unification and in resistance to the full emancipation of the Jews that
occurred in 1871, anti-Semitism again became as pronounced as it had been during the
Biedermeier years. The feelings about Jews at the time can best be summed up by the
mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, at the turn of the century. He was one of the most vehement
and controversial anti-Semites of the day, yet he famously said, “I decide who is a Jew.”
Lueger’s opportunistic politics may have influenced the preceding statement, but they
seem to echo many Austrians’ (and Germans’) sentiments at the time.

As anti-Semitism grew, many Jews turned away from assimilation and increasingly
began to congregate in their own homes, since the discrimination they felt on a daily basis
was not present. As the ideal of all people being accepted on the basis of a universal
humanity began to fade, so did the salon. Fewer Jewish women hosted salons with a diverse
group of people, thus there were fewer salons overall.

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82 Beller, A Concise History of Austria, 157.
84 Meyer, “German Jewry’s Path to Normality,” 21.
The few salons that did remain in the *fin de siècle* took on a persona of anti-establishment liberalism. Salons were no longer reflections of mainstream middle-class culture, rather they played host to the literary and cultural avant-garde. Thus, during this time Jews became associated less with the bourgeoisie, and more with the new liberal movements.

It was an association that was not always positive. The writer and satirist Karl Kraus wrote in his newspaper *Die Fackel* that

> this rapport between modern art and rich-idle Jewry, this rise in the art of design, capable of transforming ghetto into mansions, occasions the fondest of hopes. [...] Those who had the opportunity to admire the burgeoning of the celebrated *goût juif* at the recent Secessionist Exhibition will not dismiss such dreams as merely idle.\(^8\)

Like Lueger, Kraus was a controversial figure, but his comment illustrates that in the cultural politics of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna the concern that Jews were using culture to assist them in permeating society never went away.

Berta Zuckerkandl’s *fin-de-siècle* Viennese salon is a good example of the liberal bent of later Jewish *salonières*. The many artistic institutions that she supported were all a part of the radical art movement in Vienna, most of which had prominent Jewish members. Even the Christian Gustav Klimt was associated with Judaism because as the leader of the new avant-garde style, his art was considered Jewish.\(^9\)

The outlook expressed by Vienna’s mayor Karl Lueger, “I decide who is a Jew,” can also be seen in Zuckerkandl’s salon. It was present from the music played to the guests

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\(^9\) Bilski and Braun, *Jewish Women and Salons*, 93.
invited. Most of the music performed was written either by participants of the salon or Richard Wagner, who was known for his anti-Semitic writings. Carl Moll, a founding member of the Secession, would commit suicide at the end of World War II because of the failure of the Nazi cause, yet he attended Zuckerkanndl's salon. Even Alma Mahler, who married two Jews and was good friends with Zuckerkanndl, was known to make anti-Semitic comments. For example, when contemplating whether or not she was in love with Mahler, Alma names his faults:

No—he's a sick man, his position is insecure, he's a Jew, no longer young, and as a composer . . . [deeply in debt].

Clearly then, Mahler being a converted Jew was presented as a reason against Alma accepting his offer of marriage. Yet as Lueger stated, it would seem that the Gentiles in the salon interacted with Jews even if they had anti-Semitic beliefs. Conversely, the Jews of the salon were able to overlook anti-Semitism in favor of artistic or intellectual merit.

Salka Viertel’s California salon is an anomaly because it was not a vehicle for assimilation, nor was it associated with any avant-garde artistic movements. It primarily served as a refuge for displaced Germans and Austrians. Much of the difference between this salon and the earlier ones was the historical situation of the 1920s and 1930s. By 1928, when her salon began, anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria was as intense as it had been since the Middle Ages. Upon Hitler’s ascension to power in 1933, the outlook for Jews in those countries looked bleaker than it had ever looked.

In Viertel’s California salon, displaced Jews gathered and discussed the events happening in Germany and Austria. Much of what was discussed were the survivors’

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feelings of guilt. For example, the day after Bertolt Brecht and Viertel had a conversation about the Holocaust, Brecht gave Viertel a poem he had written:

I know, naturally: only through luck
Have I survived so many friends. But last night in a dream
I heard these same friends say to me: “The strong survive.”
And I hated myself.\footnote{Cook, “Salka Viertel,” 161.}

Naturally, it was hard for the refugees to live in a strange country and be powerless to stop the horrors occurring in their homeland. Many attendees of Viertel’s salon lost family members and friends in the Holocaust. Through her salon, Viertel was able to provide a sense of community and a piece of Germanic culture in an otherwise foreign land.

Throughout the entire history of the Germanic salon there was a propensity for Christians and Jews to interact, even when they did not do so elsewhere. The salon can be seen as the great equalizer where people put aside their differences and came together to celebrate their common humanity—at least that was the ideal.

\textit{Salonières as Patrons and Composers}

The way that Germanic salonières consciously contributed to the artistic—especially musical—establishment, further distinguishes them from French salonières. It is not until the salon tradition moves to Germany and Austria that we see whole artistic movements being determined within the salons. Germanic salonières were able to exert such influence because they played a significant role as patrons of young composers. Germanic salons are also important in the development of female composers because they provided a venue for their music to be heard.
Even though the early Germanic salons were not yet associated only with music, they were strongly tied to the intellectual and literary movements of the day, as can be seen by examining the salon of Rahel Levin-Varnhagen. She, more so than Herz, could converse intelligently and wittily with those in her circle. She had to develop her conversational skills further than Herz and other Berlin salonières because she was considered unattractive.\(^89\) Thus she had to use her intellect and witty conversation to hold people’s attention where other salonières did not, a fact that enabled her to be an intellectual leader in Germany.

Her intelligent conversation was not the only unique feature of her salon. She was a writer of letters, three thousand of which she gave to her husband. He would publish many of these letters after her death, and they helped to keep her legend alive.\(^90\) Levin-Varnhagen was associated with the literary movement in Berlin and hosted major poetic figures of the time. Corresponding to her interest in literature is the belief that she began the so-called “Goethe cult” through her salon activities.\(^91\)

She also participated in the other major salons of the time. She even attended Arnstein’s salon in Vienna while living for a year in that city, although she did not enjoy it.\(^92\) Arnstein was known to throw magnificent, elaborate gatherings, so some of Levin-Varnhagen’s discontent may have been distaste for a different way of running salons and a slight case of jealousy.

\(^89\) Bilski and Braun, *Jewish Women and Salons*, 28.

\(^90\) Spiel, “Rahel Varnhagen,” 18.

\(^91\) Bilski and Braun, *Jewish Women and Salons*, 28.

\(^92\) Spiel, “Rahel Varnhagen,” 18.
Fanny von Arnstein was known for the spectacle of her salons, but she was also important to the musical life of Vienna. She is probably the first early salonière to greatly influence a city’s musical establishment. She helped create the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, where she and the other founders could promote music of their own taste. It is then not a coincidence that eminent musical figures such as Mozart and Beethoven were a part of her circle. In fact, Mozart lived in Arnstein’s house for eight months before he met Constanze and during that time composed his first opera in Vienna, The Abduction from the Seraglio. By hosting, and more than likely playing music by Mozart and Beethoven, she was able to provide them much needed exposure and commission opportunities. Thus, through the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde and her salon, she was able to change the face of the public musical life of Vienna through the privacy of her home.

Starting with the musical salons of the Biedermeier era there is an even greater increase in women’s ability to influence artistic movements. Salonières’ patronage provided an arena where the new and innovative was welcome even if it was not always successful. Composing a piece that was unsuccessful in a salon was less of an embarrassment because of the privacy of the institution. It was not seen as the same as a failure in the public sphere. Those compositions that were successful were then either performed in a “public” arena, or gained the composer a new level of prominence.

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93 Bilski and Braun, Jewish Women and Salons, 35.

94 Fanny von Arnstein and her husband were regular subscribers to Mozart’s concerts. For more information on their relationship with Mozart see Robert W. Gutman, Mozart: A Cultural Biography (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1999), 562-563.

95 Ibid., 7.
A woman before and during the Biedermeier period who used her influence to promote her musical tastes was Sara Levy. She promoted the music of J. S. Bach and his sons by playing their music during her salons. She also commissioned works from J. S. Bach’s sons, notably a concerto from C. P. E. Bach at the end of his life. Whether the work was actually completed is unknown, though Peter Wollny believes that the concerto would likely have been the double concerto for harpsichord, fortepiano, and orchestra (Wq 47; H479). Wollny further believes that other works commissioned by Levy may have been C. P. E. Bach’s three quartets for flute, fortepiano, and bass; W. F. Bach’s wedding song “Cantilena nuptiarum consolatoria”; and W. F. Bach’s Harpsichord Fantasia in D Minor (Fk 19). What these commissions show is that Levy sought out her favorite composers to write for specific genres and instrumental ensembles that could be performed in her salon. By focusing on J. S. Bach and his sons she kept their music alive in Berlin.

In addition to commissioning new works, a number of women during the Biedermeier era and afterwards were either composers or associated with composers, and the salons also acted as a way for them to promote their or their male compatriots’ music. Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel and Clara Wieck-Schumann—and late in the century Alma Mahler-Werfel—are examples of women who were composers as well as salonières. They also hosted other female composers whose music was performed within their salons. For example, Johanna Mockel-Kinkel (who will be discussed further in Chapter 2) was a major figure in Berlin salons of the late 1830s.


97 See ibid., 658-659 for more information.
Despite being excellent composers and performers, both Clara Schumann and Mendelssohn-Hensel believed the gender ideologies of the time and saw their compositions as secondary to their other duties.\(^{98}\) Clara Schumann said, “I once believed that I had creative talent, but I have given up this idea: a woman must not wish to compose—there never was one able to do it.”\(^{99}\) Clara tended to view herself as an interpreter of male composers’ works, not as a composer herself. Mendelssohn-Hensel followed her family’s wishes and did not have any of her works published until the last years of her life, instead she concentrated on being a good wife and mother.

Beer, like Clara Schumann and Mendelssohn-Hensel, was primarily associated with the men in her life, yet she was one of the recognized leaders of the Jewish reform movement and her salon. She even had the nickname “the Queen Mother.”\(^{100}\) While other salonières used their salon as a means to promote the artists of their choice, Beer used it to promote the work of her sons. Three of her four sons had influential careers in the fields of their choice: Giacomo Meyerbeer was a leading composer particularly of French grand opera, Wilhelm Beer was a banker who made important discoveries in astronomy, and Michael Beer was a successful poet.\(^{101}\) In their mother’s salon, the sons could gain recognition and make contacts that would further their careers.\(^{102}\) This was especially true

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\(^{100}\) Tillard, “Felix Mendelssohn and Fanny Hensel,” 280.

\(^{101}\) Bilski and Braun, *Jewish Women and Salons*, 38.

\(^{102}\) Ibid., 41.
for Meyerbeer who must have benefitted from the many illustrious musical personalities who attended the salon.

Beer’s influence in hosting a salon extended to her granddaughter and Meyerbeer’s daughter, Cornelia Richter, who hosted a Berlin salon at the end of the nineteenth century. Richter, like Zuckerkandl, hosted mainly artists and writers. Yet, her salon tended to be associated with the early Berlin salon tradition of her grandmother’s generation.103 The two worlds were able to combine in her salon. She was even one of the first to receive and promote the work of Henry van de Velde who was a leading architect of the Jugendstil (Art Noveau), even after he condemned the style of her home.104 Clearly, the Berlin salon tradition at the end of the nineteenth century, although less prevalent, was still run by strong women who, influenced by past generations, welded enough power to influence artistic movements.

This trend was also true in Vienna, where the focus had moved away from the musical and political establishment to the entire artistic community. Berta Zuckerkandl, for instance, as well as being a leading figure in the Viennese avant-garde movement, was a published writer, primarily in journals (her father was a newspaper publisher). Alma Mahler-Werfel was associated with her composer husband, and was a composer herself, but she did not compose much after Mahler died. Instead she was mainly involved in the avant-garde artistic movements, many members of which attended her salon and were a part of her circle. Many of the leading figures of the art and literary world attended both


104 Ibid., 194.
her and Zuckerkandl’s salon. By hosting the main figures of these movements, both Zuckerkandl and Mahler-Werfel were able to influence and support the “new” art in the same way that earlier salonières supported musicians and political figures.

While none of the women tried to subvert the attitudes of their day, and in fact many agreed with the beliefs, the salon gave them previously unknown power. Through the salon tradition not only were they able to satisfy their creativity, but they were also able to influence the types of music performed. In an age where the salon audiences were some of the most discerning of the day, salonières were seen as the ultimate cultural authorities.
CHAPTER 2: JOHANNA MOCKEL-KINKEL

Biography

Johanna Mockel-Kinkel (1810-1858) is best known for her novel *Hans Ibeles in London*, her involvement in the *Vormärz*, and her contribution to the German feminist movement. Most of her fame occurred between 1845 and her death in 1858, so these are the years of her life most focused on in scholarly writings. Yet she was also a talented composer and pianist, whose participation in the Berlin musical salon tradition of the mid-nineteenth century greatly aided her growth as a musician.

Johanna Mockel-Kinkel was born to Peter Joseph Mockel, the *Maître d’études* (master of studies) in the city’s French Lyceum, and his wife, Anna Maria.105 Her parents were devoted Catholics and demanded unquestioned obedience. Thus, when both parents sought to channel Mockel-Kinkel’s energies and intelligence into the “feminine” duties of wifehood and motherhood, she was expected to comply.106

Mockel-Kinkel was unusually persistent and succeeded in gaining her parents’ permission to begin formal musical lessons in her late teens. She then began lessons with one of the best teachers in Bonn, Franz Ries, who had earlier been Beethoven’s violin teacher. With Ries, Mockel-Kinkel learned composing, conducting, and piano, but in accordance with the traditions of the day she was mainly exposed to music from the


baroque and classical traditions. Mockel-Kinkel had essentially no contact with the new romantic styles.  

Ries also exerted his musical tastes on the city of Bonn by running a *Musikalische Liebhabergesellschaft* or “Music Lover’s Society.” Ries’s society was the major musical event in Bonn. It was one of the many “Music Lover’s Societies” that were popular in nineteenth-century Germany, making it slightly outside of the mainstream salon tradition. Most of the music performed at the society meetings were small ensemble reductions of operas by Mozart, Weber, Beethoven, Gluck, Spohr, and Spontini. The society would be important in the early musical development of Mockel-Kinkel.

In 1832 Mockel-Kinkel, like Mendelssohn-Hensel, put aside her musical ambitions to marry. Her husband, Johann Paul Mathieux, was a bookstore owner from Cologne who was considered an upstanding Catholic by Mockel-Kinkel’s parents and the citizens of Bonn. Yet, as Mockel-Kinkel found out soon after they were married, Mathieux did not live a Christian life. After six months she could no longer tolerate Mathieux’s abuse and left him.

Luckily, Mockel-Kinkel was able to convince her parents to allow her back in their home, but despite evidence to the contrary, Mockel-Kinkel was blamed for the failure of her marriage. A passage from a Dr. Josef Joesten’s (a nineteenth-century scholar and writer) book *Literarisches Leben am Rhein* illustrates the bias against Mockel-Kinkel. She

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107 Ibid., 105.


110 Mockel-Kinkel began leading the society in 1829 at the age of nineteen, securing her status as a highly regarded musical figure in the city. See Carol Diethe, *Towards Emancipation: German Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998), 92.
was at that time no housewife, went reluctantly into the kitchen and played the piano all day. When her young husband flung her manuscript book out the window one day in anger, she rose coldly, went on foot to her parents in Bonn and left the marriage.\footnote{\textit{Sie war damals noch keine Hausfrau, setzte ungern den Fuß in die Küche und spielte den ganzen Tag Klavier. Als der junge Ehemann eines Tages in einer Anwandlung von Zorn ihr Notenheft aus dem Fensterwarf, stand sie kaltblütig auf, ging zu Fuß zu ihren Eltern nach Bonn und ließ die Ehe trennen.” Translation mine from quotation in Weissweiler, \textit{Komponistinnen aus 500 Jahren}, 221.}

Clearly Mockel-Kinkel was seen as the cause of the marriage’s break-up. The public bias against her only increased when she decided to legally separate from her husband. In mid-nineteenth century Germany and Austria women were not allowed to receive a divorce without their husband’s consent. Since Mathieux would not cooperate, Mockel-Kinkel tried unsuccessfully to obtain a divorce through the court. What follows is the testimony of the doctor who treated Mockel-Kinkel shortly after she left her husband. His account greatly contradicts that of Dr. Joesten:

I treated Frau Johanna Mathieux, born Mockel, in Bonn during the spring and summer of 1833. She suffered from a nervous disorder . . . caused by abuse from certain quarrels with her husband . . . which she had to endure nearly continuously. The same [her husband] admitted in my presence that he had particular information about how the health of his wife . . . was shattered. Namely, how he had robbed her mind of peace through interference that was detrimental to her health. He declared at the same time that an untroubled life was only suitable for weaklings and that strife and conflict made the nerves strong. He did not want to deviate at all from his type of treatment, but declared that his reprimands in the future would be increased. I explained to Frau Mathieux’s parents, in whose house she lived during her illness, that she would unquestionably die if she remained exposed to the abuse of her husband.\footnote{\textit{Frau Johanna Mathieux, geborene Mockel, habe ich in Bonn während des Frühlings und Sommers . . . 1833 behandelt. Sie litt an einer Nervenzerrüttung . . . veranlaßt durch Mißhandlung vermittelst ausgesuchter Qualereyen, die sie von ihrem Mann . . . fast ununterbrochen zu erdulden hatte. Derselbe hat nähere Tatsachen, wodurch die Gesundheit seiner Frau . . . zerrüttet worden ist, in meiner Gegenwart eingestanden. Wie er nämlich durch gesundheitsverderbliche Eingriffe auf ihr Gemüth ihr alle Ruhe bei Tag und Nacht geraubt hat, wobei er gleichzeitig erklärte, daß ein friedliches Leben nur für Schwächerlinge passe und daß Zank und Streit die Nerven stärke. Da er von seiner Behandlungsart nicht im Mindesten abgehen wollte, sondern erklärte, seine Maßregeln zukünftig noch zu schärfen, so habe ich der Frau Mathieux’s Eltern, in deren Haus dieselbe während ihrer Krankheit gebracht worden war, erklärt, daß dieselbe unfehlbar sterben}}
Even this testimony did not release Mockel-Kinkel from the blame or overturn convention, as it would be at least seven years before Mockel-Kinkel was legally released from her marriage (the timeline in Whittle and Pinfold identifies either December 1839 or May 1840 as the date). Even when she was finally granted a divorce, it was only with her husband’s consent.113

To escape the gossip and stress of the court case Mockel-Kinkel was granted her parents’ permission to go to Berlin, where she lived, studied, and taught music from 1836 to 1839. Berlin is also where Mockel-Kinkel first came into contact with the lavish Berlin salons and Romantic music (see p. 49).

After three years in Berlin, Mockel-Kinkel returned to Bonn in 1839. Believing that Mathieux would give his consent, her return was originally planned as a short trip to finalize her divorce. However, when she got to Bonn he again withdrew his support of the proceedings.114 To stave off the depression caused by this turn of events, Mockel-Kinkel turned to music, which had sustained her in her Berlin days. With the Bonn Musikverein she conducted works such as Mozart’s Requiem and her own compositions. She also began her own salon in the Berlin tradition.115
Shortly after her arrival in Bonn she met Gottfried Kinkel, a professor at Bonn University and a Protestant minister in Cologne. In the beginning, because Mockel-Kinkel was still married and Kinkel was engaged, their relationship was primarily one of friendship. According to accounts written by both Mockel-Kinkel and Kinkel the events of September 4, 1840 were a significant turning point. That night they were taking a boat trip on the Rhine and got overturned by a big steam boat. Both Mockel-Kinkel and Kinkel write about this incident, and it is interesting to examine the two different versions of the story. In Mockel-Kinkel’s version as the steamer overturned their boat her life flashed before her eyes and she fainted while Kinkel rescued them. In Kinkel’s version she clung to his chest for safety as he pulled them both from the water. Both accounts agree that after reaching safety they kissed for the first time. Mockel-Kinkel’s is obviously the more dramatic of the two, and it illustrates her belief that Kinkel would be her savior.

Like many of the Jewish salonières discussed in Chapter 1, Mockel-Kinkel had to convert to marry Kinkel. This time the conversion was from Catholicism to Protestantism, not Judaism to Christianity. Even with her conversion, he lost his teaching position in the theology department at the University of Bonn because of his relationship with a Catholic. He eventually got an untenured position teaching as a lecturer of art history in the university. Despite and perhaps because of the social scandal and consequences of their relationship, Mockel-Kinkel and Kinkel grew closer and were married in 1843.

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117 Ibid., 111.

In the first six years of her marriage, Mockel-Kinkel had four children, taking time away from her compositional and musical activities, but she did continue to teach the piano. She was aware of the sacrifice she made by following the “feminine” route. She wrote to her close friend Laura von Henning on December 11, 1845:

My dearest Laura! . . . For months my days have been removed more and more from all traces of poetry, since I have not left the sick bed of my small son. He had, when he was nearly a year old, survived a life-threatening sickness. Immediately afterwards followed the birth of my daughters. Fourteen days later the oldest was sick again, and afterwards repeatedly relapsed . . . I hear music no more.119

Furthermore, Kinkel spent much of his time away from home. Known for his oratory skills, Kinkel was a famous leader of the democrats during the Vormärz.120 Mockel-Kinkel was in full support of her husband’s activities, not even complaining about his many absences or when he left her and their young children to join the Revolutionary’s ranks.121

In 1849 Kinkel was arrested in Berlin for his part in the Vormärz. During his time in prison Mockel-Kinkel was instrumental in arousing public support for his release and pardon. She was also the leader behind his 1850 escape and flight to England.

Mockel-Kinkel and her children joined Kinkel in exile in London, where there was much support for the German revolutionaries. While in London Kinkel worked to further the Revolution’s cause, even going on a lecture tour in the United States. Mockel-Kinkel

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120 The Vormärz (literally, “before March”) is the period directly preceding the failed March Revolution of 1848 in Germany. Diethe, Towards Emancipation, 93.

121 Whittle and Pinfold, Voice of Rebellion, 113.
held the role of *Emigrantenmutter* to those Germans in exile in England. She and her husband hosted and financially supported many of the newcomers from Germany. Mockel-Kinkel earned money for the family as a music teacher and a writer (her most famous publication being *Hans Ibeles in London*). Her increasing ill-health and the many demands of the other emigrants meant that over time even writing was impossible. Johanna Mockel-Kinkel died in London in 1858 at the age of forty-eight from a fall out of her second-story window following an apparent heart-attack. Although there were a vocal few who argued she committed suicide, her death was ruled an accident.

### Mockel-Kinkel's Activities in Berlin Salons

In many ways Mockel-Kinkel’s few years in Berlin were the high point of her life, where she was able to follow her own inclinations and ambitions. Mockel-Kinkel was active in all aspects of music while in Berlin. She took composition lessons with Karl Böhmer—they focused on figured bass, counterpoint, and fugues—and piano technique lessons with Wilhelm Taubert. She was able to support herself in the city by teaching piano. She also wrote both a book about music—*Musikalische Orthodoxie*—and many critical essays.

More importantly, for the purpose of this thesis, Berlin was where Mockel-Kinkel first encountered the Germanic salon tradition. She was no stranger to the musical clubs or organizations that were so popular in nineteenth-century Germany and Austria; she was

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122 Ibid., 116-121.

123 For a full discussion of the issues surrounding Kinkel’s death see ibid., 121-123.

even involved in the few available to her in Bonn. Yet it was Berlin that was the epicenter of the Germanic salon tradition, and it was there that she met the major salonières of the time. Her later fame as an enlightened thinker, writer, and musician can be said to have begun through her interactions in Berlin’s salons.

On her journey to Berlin, she stopped in Frankfurt. While there she participated in the musical circle of Dorothea Schlegel, the wife of Friedrich Schlegel, and Rebecca Dirichlet, daughter of Lea and Abraham Mendelssohn, sister of Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, and niece of Dorothea Schlegel. Schlegel was one of Moses Mendelssohn's daughters, and Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn’s aunt. She had converted to Catholicism, and during her time in Berlin was associated with its salon culture. At the time of Mockel-Kinkel’s visit Schlegel, a widow of seventy-two, lived in Frankfurt. Rebecca Dirichlet was the sister of Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, and along with her mathematician husband, Peter Dirichlet, was also in Frankfurt.

Through Dirichlet and Schlegel, the rest of the Mendelssohn family was introduced to Mockel-Kinkel. While in Frankfurt, Mockel-Kinkel had the opportunity to meet Felix Mendelssohn. She showed Mendelssohn some of her compositions, and he was so impressed that he remained a supporter of hers for the rest of his life. When Mockel-Kinkel arrived in Berlin she was invited to and participated in Mendelssohn-Hensel’s

\[125\] “In Frankfurt wird Johanna durch Dorothea Schlegel bei Mendelssohn eingeführt, der ihr >sehr viel Ermutigendes< über ihre kompositorische Begabung sagt und bis zu seinem Tod ein aufrichtiger Bewunderer ihrer Werke bleibt.” Ibid., 223.
Sunday *musicales*. The invitation provided Mockel-Kinkel her first opportunity to hear the Romantic musical style and its genres.

While the musical interactions in Mendelssohn-Hensel’s home were important to the development of Mockel-Kinkel’s compositional style, her involvement and friendship with Bettina Brentano-von Arnim proved even more influential. Brentano-von Arnim, in addition to being the sister of Clemens Brentano, was the wife of the poet Achim von Arnim, who collaborated with her brother on the publication of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, the famous collection of German folk poetry. Brentano-von Arnim’s associations with the German Romantic movement would be one of the most significant influences on Mockel-Kinkel. In addition to this, many of Mockel-Kinkel’s philosophical and political beliefs, as well as her musicianship, can be better understood by her relationship with Brentano-von Arnim.

By the middle of the nineteenth century Brentano-von Arnim had become an extremely well-known writer and political figure. She was so well respected that when Kinkel was held under arrest for his involvement with the *Vormärz* it was Brentano-von Arnim who petitioned the king to have him released from jail. Carol Diethe posits that most of Brentano-von Arnim’s success in gaining political influence was her ability to use

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127 Diethe, *Towards Emancipation*, 42.
her sexuality as a way of opening doors. She routinely flirted—even in middle age—with men to gain their attention and as a way of entrance into their world.\footnote{Ibid., 44-45.}

Brentano-von Arnim's strength and self-assuredness were one of the many qualities that most likely attracted Mockel-Kinkel. In many ways both women had extremely similar personalities, even though Brentano-von Arnim was twenty-five years older. They both had a similar cynical attitude and were published writers. Both would also be associated with the women's emancipation movement.\footnote{"Vielleicht sich die beiden Frauen zu ähnlich, um auf die Dauer miteinander leben zu können. Beide komponieren, beide schreiben, beide nehmen auf die gleiche zynische Weise zu Problemen der Frauenemanzipation Stellung." Weissweiler, \textit{Komponistinnen aus 500 Jahren}, 224.}

Despite their other similarities, it was music that truly brought them together. Music would figure prominently in the novels published by both women.\footnote{Ann Willison, “Bettina Brentano-von Arnim: The Unknown Musician,” in \textit{Bettina Brentano-von Arnim: Gender and Politics}, ed. Elke P. Frederiksen and Katherine R. Goodman (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 304.} In many ways Brentano-von Arnim may have seen in Mockel-Kinkel a younger version of herself. Mockel-Kinkel had similar musical aspirations as Brentano-von Arnim did in her youth, and she broke conventions to follow them. Brentano-von Arnim had also deviated from social norms when she left home to pursue composition lessons. She later had to return home because of financial reasons.\footnote{Ibid., 313.} She eventually gave up the dream of being primarily a composer; in fact she did not publish many of her compositions. Because of their similar experiences, Brentano-von Arnim, more than any other woman in Berlin, must have
appreciated what Mockel-Kinkel was attempting, making her even more inclined to become Mockel-Kinkel's friend and mentor.

Brentano-von Arnim's involvement with the intellectual and artistic society of Berlin also meant that she would be involved with its salon tradition. She was born in 1785, thus she was part of the first generation of salonières, together with Henriette Herz and Rahel Levin-Varnhagen, and we know that she was a regular attendee of the latter's salon.\footnote{Diethe, Towards Emancipation, 39.}

Brentano-von Arnim did not begin her own salon until 1836, after the newly found fame from the publication of her novel Goethe's Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde in 1835. The novel was so popular that she attempted translating it herself into English.\footnote{Ibid., 40.} Her success put her in demand and there was no better place to talk about her philosophy and interests than a salon.

The heyday of Brentano-von Arnim's salon lasted from 1836 to 1839, which coincided with the exact years of Mockel-Kinkel's residence in Berlin. Like the many other Berlin salons of the time, Brentano-von Arnim's salon included a diverse group of people, reflecting her beliefs about life and especially religion in the 1830s.

Even though the Catholic Brentano-von Arnim was born in the same generation as the first Jewish salonières, the religious prejudices of the day did not bypass her completely. She is known to have made many anti-Semitic comments in her youth. Her brother, Clemens Brentano, also had associations with anti-Semitism and was the secretary of the Christlich-deutsche Tischgesellschaft (German-Christian Assembly). The German-Christian
Assembly was founded in 1811 in resistance to the French occupation of Germany and rejected Frenchmen, materialists, Jews, and women, but the Assembly was disbanded in 1813.\textsuperscript{134} During his time in the society Brentano compared the Jews to “flies, the last traces of the Egyptian plague.”\textsuperscript{135}

In her younger years Brentano-von Arnim was no doubt influenced by the anti-Semitic ideas of her brother and surrounding society, yet her views on Judaism changed greatly as she aged. During the time of her fame and salon she was extremely pro-Jewish. In her novels her concern over the fate of the Jews in Germany is prominent.\textsuperscript{136} She tended to sympathize with society’s outcasts and those who did not conform to social expectations.\textsuperscript{137} In addition to her sympathy for the Jewish plight, she agreed with those fighting for Jewish Emancipation and assimilation, as can be seen in her last novel, \textit{Gespräche mit Dämonen} (\textit{Conversations with Demons}, 1852). In it she sets down her reasons why Jews should be accepted into society.\textsuperscript{138}

She was also associated with the Young Hegelians—followers of the philosopher Georg Wilhelm Hegel who criticized dogmatic religious practices and the political system in Germany—during the years of her salon. She even used her political influence to help both Egbert and Bruno Bauer, members of the Young Hegelians, when they came into legal


\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 40


\textsuperscript{138} Claire Baldwin, “Questioning the ‘Jewish Question,’” 213
difficulties because of their writings.\textsuperscript{139} Two Young Hegelians, Eduard Gans and Leopold Zunz, had started a club, the \textit{Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden} (The Club for the Culture and Science of the Jews) in 1819 to combat anti-Semitic sentiment. Many of the members of this club were a part of Brentano-von Arnim’s circle.\textsuperscript{140} Both Brentano-von Arnim’s writings and involvement with the Young Hegelians illustrate her belief that Jews should be granted equal rights in Germany and that they should be welcomed into mainstream society.

Mockel-Kinkel’s interactions with those of different religious backgrounds were similar to Brentano-von Arnim’s. When Mockel-Kinkel arrived in Berlin she had already moved away from her Catholic heritage, since she had been rejected by the Bonn Christian community after the breakup of her first marriage and her husband had proved to be hypocritically pious. According to an early article, Mockel-Kinkel made \textit{art} her religion during her time in Berlin—that was her \textit{Glaubensbekenntnis} (profession of faith), according to which a person’s artistic talent was more important to her than his or her religious affiliations.\textsuperscript{141} Such a view corresponded with similar Romantic notions that emerged among the German Romantics. Her open-mindedness would also have combined well with Brentano-von Arnim’s later ideas about religious tolerance.

\textsuperscript{139} For more information on Brentano-von Arnim’s relationship with the Young Hegelians see Heinz Härtl, “Bettina Brentano-von Arnim’s Relations to the Young Hegelians,” in \textit{Bettina Brentano-von Arnim}, ed. Frederiksen and Goodman, 145-176.

\textsuperscript{140} Claire Baldwin, “Questioning the ‘Jewish Question,’” 217.

Not only did Mockel-Kinkel's religious ideas help her fit into Berlin’s salon culture, but her compositional talent helped as well. When she arrived in Berlin, she quickly adopted the Romantic style of composition and, more importantly, she began to compose primarily Lieder. While most of her compositions have been forgotten, her Lieder remain.¹⁴²

Once Mockel-Kinkel began composing Lieder, she focused on poets also favored by many other romantic composers, such as Emanuel Geibel, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Heinrich Heine, Adelbert von Chamisso, and Friedrich Rückert. She also wrote and set her own poetry to music, a trend that began while she was in Berlin and continued after she had left the city. One of her last published collections of Lieder (1840) are set to her own poetry. Her ability to write her own poetry foreshadows her later fame as a writer.

In addition to her own education, it was her relationship with Brentano-von Arnim that helped her become acquainted with the works of these poets. Brentano-von Arnim was part of the Goethe cult and composed her own Lieder to his poetry. And it was in Brentano-von Arnim’s salon that Mockel-Kinkel in 1837 met Emanuel Geibel, whose poetry she would use more than any other.¹⁴³

Sometimes, Mockel-Kinkel set to music poems that had been or would later be set by other composers, such as Robert and Clara Schumann or Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel. For example, Heine’s poem *Die Loreley* (1837) was one of the most popular poems set to

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music in the nineteenth century and was used by composers such as Friedrich Silcher, Franz Liszt, and Clara Schumann, as well as Mockel-Kinkel.¹⁴⁴

Mockel-Kinkel wrote settings of Geibel’s poems Der Zigeuner in 1837 and Der Spanische Zitherknabe in 1838. Siegel sees these two Lieder as the first German Lieder on Spanish topics. Robert Schumann’s Lied Der Hidalgo (1840) was thought to have been the first one to introduce Spanish topics to Lieder, yet the Mockel-Kinkel songs predate his.¹⁴⁵

An examination of the beginning measures of Schumann’s Der Hidalgo and Mockel-Kinkel’s Der Spanische Zitherknabe will illustrate some of the similarities between the two (see Examples 1 and 2):

Example 1. Johanna Mockel-Kinkel, Op. 8, No. 1 “Der Spanische Zitherknabe”; mm. 1-4

![Example 1](image)

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As can be seen above, both Lieder are in ¾. The pianist’s left hand in the opening measures of both plays the same rhythm. Both versions move from the tonic to the dominant within the measure, Schumann on the second half of beat one and Mockel-Kinkel on beat three, and each eventually includes all notes of the dominant seventh. Finally, both left hands switch from bass clef to treble clef on the second half of beat one. The right hands of both versions also display similarities, again in the rhythm. The second and third beats of each include an eighth-sixteenth-sixteenth-eighth rhythm with a contour that is essentially the inverse of each other. In Mockel-Kinkel’s version the first measure’s material reappears sporadically throughout the rest of the Lied. In Schumann’s version the first measure of the piano part makes up the majority of the accompaniment for the first section.

While such similarities are not seen in the tonality (Mockel-Kinkel’s in minor and Schumann’s in major) or form of the Lieder (Mockel-Kinkel’s in strophic and Schumann’s in ABA with a repetition of stanza 1) it is obvious that each derives from similar melodic and rhythmic material. In both cases the piano part is supposed to imitate the strumming of a
Spanish guitar. The similarity between the first two bars of both Lieder presents the intriguing possibility that Schumann, who knew Mockel-Kinkel through the salons, was influenced by her musical settings of Spanish topics.

The increase in Mockel-Kinkel’s artistic inspiration can be seen in her large output while in Berlin. In Brentano-von Arnim’s house she composed and published her Lieder collections Opp. 6-10 and two collections of duets Opp. 11 and 12. Both Lieder and duets were genres that were primarily performed in salons. Thus, Mockel-Kinkel’s pieces probably made their debut in Brentano-von Arnim’s gatherings. Mockel-Kinkel’s confidence in publishing the pieces indicates that their response when performed must have been relatively positive.

Mockel-Kinkel’s reception was likely helped by being a friend of Brentano-von Arnim’s, since Brentano-von Arnim was known and respected by many “great” composers. She met Beethoven in 1810 and he spent time with her while she was in Vienna. Beethoven was so impressed with Brentano-von Arnim that he dedicated his Lied on Goethe’s “Neue Liebe, Neues Leben” to her.147 Brentano-von Arnim’s compositions were also applauded by Liszt, Schumann, and Brahms. Liszt was a supporter of Brentano-von Arnim and her compositions, and Schumann and Brahms both dedicated pieces to her.148

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148 Ibid., 334-338.
Mockel-Kinkel may have helped Brentano-von Arnim with her major weakness in composition, harmony. Brentano-von Arnim was gifted in melody making, but confessed to never really understand the rules of figured bass and counterpoint. Her setting of “Ach neige, du Schmerzenreiche” from Goethe’s Faust illustrates some of her weaknesses (see Example 3):

Example 3, Bettina Brentano-von Arnim, “Ach neige, du Schmerzenreiche”; mm. 1-7

The melody of the first few bars is quite lyrical, yet the harmony while good is somewhat predictable and pedantic. It only deviates from the established eighth-note pattern in the climatic middle section (see Example 4):

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149 Ibid., 312.
By looking at examples 3 and 4 it is clear that for Brentano-von Arnim the melody was the most important part of the Lied, and the harmony or accompaniment was secondary.

Because of her weakness, she had a habit of asking friends to help her complete the harmonic material after she had composed the melodic line.\(^{150}\) It is possible that during Mockel-Kinkel’s time in her house she helped her complete her compositions or gave her counterpoint lessons, since in her piano pedagogy she taught harmony. Following the standards of her time, Mockel-Kinkel advocated intense study of counterpoint as a way of learning proper compositional technique. She even, in her later life, wrote instructional manuals on the most effective way to teach women counterpoint.\(^{151}\)

\(^{150}\) Ibid., 309.

\(^{151}\) For Kinkel’s opinion on how to teach music theory to girls please see Johanna Kinkel, "Musiktheorie für Mädchen,” in *Frau und Musik*, ed. Rieger, 51-55.
Mockel-Kinkel’s assistance could also help explain why Brentano-von Arnim finally began to publish her compositions in the 1840s. Unlike Mockel-Kinkel, who published her pieces as she wrote them, Brentano-von Arnim refrained from publishing her compositions in her younger years. She even refused when both her brother and her husband encouraged her to publish. Ann Willison explains her reluctance to publish as a symptom of the belief that public exhibitions of a woman’s work was immodest and an insecurity over what she felt were her technical weaknesses. It would take until 1842 for Brentano-von Arnim’s first collection of songs to be published, just three years after Mockel-Kinkel left Berlin.

Mockel-Kinkel and Brentano-von Arnim’s interactions within salon culture illustrate one of its most positive aspects, the ability for women to work together and learn in ways that were normally closed to them. Since women were excluded from public avenues of learning they could retreat to the salon where they learned from one another and their guests. As we see with both Brentano-von Arnim and Mockel-Kinkel, women’s interactions in the salon occasionally helped them gain the confidence to share their intellectual and artistic sides in the public sphere.

Mockel-Kinkel’s confidence can be seen in her later life, when she would become a trendsetting female writer and activist. Despite her later accolades, Mockel-Kinkel

\[152\] For a list of Brentano-von Arnim’s compositional publications and their dates see Willison, “Brentano-von Arnim: The Unknown Musician,” 305.

\[153\] Ibid., 309.

\[154\] The systematic analysis needed to research Mockel-Kinkel’s influence on Brentano-von Arnim’s music is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis. It presents an extremely interesting avenue for further research.
sacrificed the relative cultural and religious flexibility of Berlin to live in the more close-minded Bonn with Gottfried Kinkel. She did start her own salon in Bonn in 1839 shortly after her arrival there, but it would never be as grand as the ones she attended in Berlin. As she says about Bonn in a 1839 letter to her friend Emilie von Henning,

Deep sentiments are seldom, because large fortunes are seldom... In small cities nothing happens that is worth chatting about and thus people recount the same insignificant incident five or six times. In a large city one does not require a tenth the fraction of culture or intellect, yet they can still be fairly interesting to acquaintances.\(^{155}\)

Despite Mockel-Kinkel's later regrets and challenges, her time in Germanic salons illustrates the ways in which women of nineteenth century Germany and Austria could be culturally and intellectually interesting and respected in society despite their religion or gender.

The importance of the salon tradition in nineteenth-century artistic life has been evident in the previous discussion. Yet most scholarship still places the Germanic salon tradition inside the French conversational tradition. What this thesis has attempted to show is that once the salon moved to Germany and Austria it took on its own features and moved away from its French roots. Later French salons actually included Germanic elements such as the Jewish *salonière* and the inclusion of music.

The Germanic salon as a topic of research has many avenues for further research. Some of these avenues include a closer look at Mockel-Kinkel's Berlin activities, an examination of musical influences and borrowings that may have occurred from salon

\(^{155}\) “Tiefe Empfindungen sind selten, weil große Schicksale selten sind... In einer kleinen Stadt geschieht nichts, was des Erzählens wert ware und schwatzen wollen dennoch alle, folglich erzählen sie irgendein unbedeutendes Ereignis fünf oder sechs Mal, immer wieder das nämliche. In einer großen Stadt braucht einer nicht den zehnten Teil Bildung oder Verstand, um im Umgang dennoch leidlich interessant zu sein.” Translation mine from Willison, “Brentano-von Arnim: The Unknown Musician,” 88-89.
interaction, and a more in-depth look at the ways in which the Germanic salon helped foster the Romantic movement. By learning more about the Germanic salon we can learn more about the politics and culture of music and musicians Germany and Austria in the nineteenth-century.
Bibliography


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Appendix: Germanic Musical Salons

What follows is an elaborated version of the list found in Veronika Beci, *Musikalische Salons: Blütezeit einer Frauenkultur* (Düsseldorf: Artemis & Winkler, 2000), 320-325.

**Germany:**

**Sarah Levy (1761-1854)**
Hosted in Berlin, ca. 1800-1854

Important Guests: E. T. A. Hoffmann (writer), Ludwig Börne (writer), Gustav Droysen (historian), Carl Friedrich Zelter (musician/composition teacher), and the Mendelssohns

**Elisabeth von Staegemann (1761-1835)**
Hosted in Berlin, 1814-1835

Important Guests: E. T. A. Hoffmann (writer), Caroline Bardua (singer), Wilhelmine Bardua (singer), the Mendelssohns, Carl Maria von Weber (composer), and Carl Friedrich Zelter (musician/composition teacher)

**Henriette Herz (1764-1847)**
Hosted in Berlin, 1780s-early 1800s

Important Guests: Karl Gustaf von Brinckmann (poet), Count Dohna elder (Minister of State), Count Dohna younger (politics), Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (theologian), and Heinrich Heine (poet)

**Amalie Beer (1767-1854)**
Hosted in Berlin, 1800-1854

Important Guests: Carl Maria von Weber (composer), Muzio Clementi (composer), Johann Nepomuk Hummel (musician/composer), Ignaz Mocheles (musician/composer), Friedrich Kalkbrenner (musician/composer), Louis Spohr (musician/composer), Niccolò Paganini (composer/violinist), Henriette Sontag (singer), Angelica Catalani (singer), Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient (singer), Carl F. Zelter (composition teacher), Johann F. Reichardt (opera orchestra concert master), Bernhard A. Weber (composer), Vincenzo Righini (court musician), and the Mendelssohns

**Rahel Levin-Varnhagen (1771-1833)**
Hosted in Berlin, 1780-1833
Important Guests: Karl Gustaf von Brinckmann (poet), Friederike Unzelmann (actress), Friedrich Schlegel (writer), Prince Louis Ferdinand, Karl August Varnhagen (author and statesman), Clemens Brentano (poet), the Mendelssohns, Albert Brisbane (American socialist), and Heinrich Heine (poet)

Lea Salomon-Mendelssohn (1777-1842)
Hosted in Berlin, 1815-1830

Important Guests: Felix Mendelssohn (conductor/composer/performer), Fanny Mendelssohn (composer/performer), Carl Friedrich Zelter (musician/composition teacher), Robert and Clara Schumann, Franz Liszt, Peter Cornelius (poet/composer), Sarah Austin (writer), the Beers, and Sebastian Hensel (painter)

Luise Reichardt (1779-1826)
Hosted in Halle, ca. 1813; Hamburg, 1813-1836; Tübingen, ca. 1820

Important Guests: Clemens von Brentano (poet/novelist), Jean Paul (writer), Carl Friedrich Zelter (musician/composition teacher), and Prince Louis Ferdinand

Bettina Brentano-von Arnim (1785-1859)
Hosted in Berlin, 1836-1850s

Important Guests: Johanna Kinkel (musician/composer/writer/activist), Emanuel Geibel (poet), Egbert Bauer (Young Hegelian/writer), Bruno Bauer (Young Hegelian/writer), Clara Schumann, and Clemens Brentano (poet)

Henriette Solmar (1794-1890)
Hosted in Berlin, ca. 1800-ca. 1850

Important Guests: Heinrich Laube (political writer), Thomas Carlyle (writer), and George Eliot (writer)

Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel (1805-1847)
Hosted in Berlin, 1830-1845

Important Guests: Clara Schumann (composer, performer), Robert Schumann (composer), Charles Gounod (composer), Franz Liszt (performer, composer), Giuditta Pasta (singer), Johanna Kinkel (composer), Felix Mendelssohn (conductor, composer, performer), Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst (violinist), and Joseph Joachim (performer)

Johanna Kinkel (1810-1858)
Hosted in Bonn, 1839-1848
Important Guests: Gottfried Kinkel (writer/minister/revolutionary), members of the *Bonn Musikverein*, and her students

**Fanny Lewald (1811-1889)**
Hosted in Berlin, 1844-1889

Important Guests: Bettina von Arnim, George Sand (writer), Frédéric Chopin (composer), Franz Liszt (composer), Hans von Bülow (conductor), Cosima von Bülow-Wagner, and Blandine d’Agoult (Liszt’s illegitimate daughter and Cosima von Bülow-Wagner’s sister)

**Clara Wieck-Schumann (1819-1896)**
Hosted in Leipzig, 1841-1844; Kopenhagen, 1842; Düsseldorf, 1850-1857; Berlin, 1857-1862 and 1873-1878; Baden-Baden, 1862-1873; and Frankfurt, 1878-1896

Important Guests: Robert Schumann, Wolfgang Müller von Königswinter (poet), Ferdinand Hiller (conductor/composer), Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski (composer), Joseph Joachim (violinist/composer), Johannes Brahms (composer), Otto Julius Grimm (composer), the Mendelssohns

**Babette Meyer (1835-1916)**
Hosted in Berlin, mid-19th century-1914

Important Guests: Richard Voss (writer), Walther Rathenau (industrialist), and Ernst von Wildenbruch (poet)

**Cosima Wagner (1837-1930)**
Hosted in Munich, 1864-1866 and Bayreuth, 1874-1907

Important Guests: Richard Wagner (composer), Franz Liszt (composer), King Ludwig II of Bavaria, Peter Cornelius (poet/composer), Prince Konstantin von Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst and his wife Marie, Count Adolf von Schack, Countess Mare Dönhoff, Countess Marie von Schleinitz, Count Hohenthal, Count Krockow, and Baroness Olga von Meyendorff

**Cornelie Richter (1842-1922)**
Hosted in Berlin, 1866-1922

Important Guests: Henry van de Velde (architect/designer), Max Reinhardt (director of the Deutsches Theater), Hugo von Hofmannsthal (poet), Count Hoyos, and Count Kessler

**Felicie Bernstein (1850-1908)**
Hosted in Berlin, 1870s-1908
Important Guests: Carl Bernstein (scholar), Max Liebermann (painter), Theodor Mommsen (scholar), Ernst Curtius (historian), Frau Artôt de Padilla (actress), Georg Brandes (scholar), Max Klinger (painter), and Karl Emil Franzos (writer)

**Austria:**

**Fanny von Arnstein (1758-1818)**
Hosted in Vienna, 1780s-1818

Important Guests: Count Salm, Karl Gustaf von Brinckmann (poet), Friederike Unzelmann (actress), Friedrich Schlegel (writer), Ignaz Moscheles (musician), Wolfgang Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (poet, writer)

**Cäcilie von Eskeles (1760-1836)**
Hosted in Vienna, 1800-1836

Important Guests: Count Salm, Karl Gustaf von Brinckmann (poet), Friederike Unzelmann (actress), Friedrich Schlegel (writer), Ignaz Moscheles (musician), and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (poet, writer)

**Berta Zuckerkandl (1864-1944)**
Hosted in Vienna, 1887-1938 and Paris, 1938-1945

Important Guests: Gustav Klimt (Secession painter), Alma Mahler, Carl Moll (painter), Gustav Mahler & Justine Mahler, Richard Krafft-Ebing (doctor), Julius Wagner-Jauregg (doctor), Arthur Schnitzer (writer), Richard Beer-Hofmann (writer), Peter Altenberg (writer), Felix Salten (writer), Stefan Zweig (writer), Hugo von Hofmannstal (writer), Hermann Bahr (author/critic), Otto Wagner (painter/Secession), Josef Hoffmann (designer/Secession), Sophie Clemenceau (sister of Zuckerkandl and married to Paul Clemenceau), Paul Clemenceau (brother of the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau), Maurice Ravel (composer), and Max Reinhardt (actor/director)

**Alma Mahler (1879-1964)**
Hosted in Vienna, 1912-1936; Sanary-sur-mer, 1938; and Beverly Hills, 1941

Important Guests: Berta Zuckerkandl, Sophie Clemenceau, Paul Clemenceau, Franz Werfel (writer), Oskar Kokoschka (painter), Walter Gropius (architect), Paul Kammerer (biologist), Arnold Schoenberg (composer), Alban Berg (composer), and Anton von Webern (composer)

**United States:**
Salka Viertel (1889-1978)
Hosted in Beverly Hills, late 1920s-1945

Important Guests: Greta Garbo (actress), Bruno Frank (novelist), Alfred Döblin (writer), Lion Feuchtwanger (writer), Ludwig Marcuse (writer), Franz Werfel (writer), Alma Mahler, Max Reinhardt (actor/director), Charlie Chaplin (actor), Aldous Huxley (writer), Norman Mailer (writer/playwright), Arnold Schoenberg (composer), Bertolt Brecht (writer), Heinrich Mann (novelist), and Thomas Mann (writer)