

# An unknown letter of Albert Lortzing.

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The National library of the Netherlands owns a letter by Albert Lortzing that has remained unnoticed until now by Lortzing scholars.<sup>2</sup> The letter is hidden in a collection of autographs, compiled in an "album amicorum" of the German-Dutch composer Gustav Adolph Heinze (1821-1904). The composer's legatè has been managed by his (step-)daughter Louise Westermann-Heinze (1837-1929). The National library bought the album amicorum in 1980 from the antiquarian B.M. Israel, Amsterdam. It is catalogued as KW 135 F 25; Lortzing's letter is in the collection dl.6, fol. 11r. (Heinze, L.H. 1887)<sup>3</sup>

The letter is dated 2 July 1841. No addressee is mentioned in the catalogue, the questioned person indicated as "N.N.". However, it was not very difficult to find out who this person is: as I will show in this article it must have been Henriette Brüning-Peuckert, at the time of the writing of this letter a colleague of Lortzing and a highly reputed singer in Leipzig, who was to become Heinze's wife until her death in 1892.

Although the content of this letter might not be very interesting - it is, in fact, just a note more or less to confirm a request for an appointment - the process of finding out what the letter was all about led me to some little nuggets of information about aspects of Lortzing's life.

First things first: let's start with the transcription of the letter<sup>4</sup>.

- 1 Geehrte angehende Liederdichterin!
- 2 Es soll mir zur Ehre und zum Vergnügen gereichen
- 3 die Kompositionen des herren [?] Hei ---- wollte ich
- 4 sagen - Ihres Empholenen kennen zu lernen.
- 5 Will derselbe mir daher die Ehre seines
- 6 Besuches schenken, so bin ich morgens bis 9 Uhr
- 7 und nachmittags nach 3 Uhr stets zu Hause
- 8 anzutreffen.
- 9 mit collegialischer Freundschaft
- 10 Ihr
- 11 Ergebener
- 12 Albert Lortzing.

The letter is written in the old German "Kurrent script", which has been the normal handwriting in German speaking countries until the first part of the twentieth century. Initially I had some difficulties deciphering the handwriting and I am indebted to Dr. Irmlind Capelle, whom I asked the same day I found the letter if she was aware of the existence of it, for the transcription of the salutation (that is addressed to a "lyricist").

After answering me that this letter was unknown to her, and pointing out that Lortzing concludes "mit *collegialischen* Freundschaft" (= "best wishes"; italics by me) – so "N.N." must have been a singer or an actress, she asked me if I knew with whom the composer Heinze was married.

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2 The letters of Albert Lortzing are published by Dr. Irmlind Capelle in Lortzing, 1995

3 It was surprisingly easy to find the letter; actually I more or less stumbled upon it while I was whiling away by haphazardly entering keywords in the catalogue of the library. It is a sign of the ignorance of Albert Lortzing in The Netherlands, that no-one has paid any attention to this letter before.

4 A scan of the letter is online at [http://resources42.kb.nl/EUROPEANATRAVEL/135F25\\_6/Europeana\\_1500pixels\\_breed\\_ipeg8\\_X/135F25\\_6\\_011r\\_X.jpg](http://resources42.kb.nl/EUROPEANATRAVEL/135F25_6/Europeana_1500pixels_breed_ipeg8_X/135F25_6_011r_X.jpg) (accessed 14 April 2014)

This was the key to revealing the secrets of this letter and I subsequently only had to find some simple biographical information about Heinze, in whose legacy the letter was found.

The most important source about G.A. Heinze is his own autobiography, "Een Kunstenaarsleven" (= "An Artist's Life"). (G. A. Heinze, 1905)<sup>5</sup> Another source is Klaas Sierksma: "Gustav Adolph Heinze, proeve van een levensbeschrijving", Muiderberg 1979<sup>6</sup>. This small book added not too much to Heinze's autobiography for the purpose of this paper, but it describes extensively Heinze's period in The Netherlands (from 1850 onward) and it contains a list of compositions of Heinze compiled by Theo Klinkhamer and Willem Noske.

A third source is Yasmin Flores: The clarinet works of Gustav Adolph Heinze (Thesis, 2009) (Flores, 2009), interesting as it may be for an analysis of three of Heinze's works (the *Concertstück für Clarinette und Orchester*, op. 1; *Drei Lieder*, op. 23 for Mezzo-soprano, clarinet, and piano; and the *Grand Quintetto*, op. 22b for piano, flute, clarinet, horn, and bassoon), and for non-Dutch reading scholars who want to be informed about Heinze, Flores leaned heavily on Sierksma's book for the biographical details, that she had translated into English, and so, unfortunately, also copies some of the weaker points<sup>7</sup>. Besides: it adds not very much to my investigation here which is centered around Lortzing: Lortzing is not mentioned on any of the 472 pages.

Finally for the writing of this article, "Een eeuw Nederlandse muziek 1815-1915" by Eduard Reeser (Reeser, 1986), has been of value, although only in a very limited way. It was the first source I consulted when I tried to find out more about Heinze, because I have that book in my own home-library. Reeser (1908-2002), a laudable Dutch musicologist who devoted his long and productive life to the publication of an eleven-volume work on the writings of Alphons Diepenbrock<sup>8</sup>, has outlined in this book the 19th century musical landscape in The Netherlands, although Heinze is only mentioned briefly. But, in the few pages he devotes to Heinze, he also mentions Heinze's wife who, with the pen-name Heinrich Berg, "provided Heinze with opera-libretti, as wel as lyrics for songs and choral works".<sup>9</sup>

Gustav Adolph Heinze was born as Gustav Ferdinand Gotthold Heinze on 1 October 1821 in Leipzig. His father, Ferdinand Heinze, was principal clarinetist in the Leipzig Gewandhaus and Stadttheater orchestra's, and he taught his son playing the clarinet and the piano, which the young Gustav picked up rather easily. In 1835, when Gustav was only 14 years old, he was appointed in the same orchestra as his father, and later, on instigation of Mendelssohn, he became first clarinetist, while his father had to step back to second clarinetist. (Sierksma 1979)<sup>10</sup> After a period of study in Dresden (1838-1840; (G. A. Heinze, 1905, pg. 2), Heinze returned to Leipzig, where he lived until 1844. He played with several conductors, of which he also mentions Lortzing<sup>11</sup> and became acknowledged with a lot of composers; Heinze mentions besides Albert Lortzing also Ferdinand Hiller, Niels Gade, Robert Schumann, Franz Lachner, William Sterndal-Bennett, Berlioz and Richard Wagner (G. A. Heinze, 1905, p. 18).

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5 According to the preface Heinze wrote his autobiography in German, but left it uncompleted. His (step-)daughter Louise Westermann-Heinze translated the work into Dutch and completed it.

6 Sierksma, 1979

7 As an example: on page 10 of her thesis she writes: "On September 15, 1842, "Herr Heinze, the younger" premiered his own composition *Adagio for Clarinette and Pianoforte*, op. 15 during a morning concert in Leipzig." This is a literally translation of Sierksma, 1979, pg 8, but Sierksma doesn't give any references for the fact. However, in the Album Amicorum at the National library is a printed announcement of a concert in the Hotel de Pologne on Monday September 12, 1842.

8 Diepenbrock, 1962

9 (Reeser, 1986) pg 111: "Tevoren had hij in Duitsland reeds veel gecomponeerd, waarbij zijn echtgenote onder de schuilnaam Heinrich berg hem van opera-, lied- en koorteksten had voorzien."

10 G. A. Heinze, 1905 pg 82 tells a different story "(...) de vader was echter een zeer verstandig man, die het talent van zijn zoon erkende en waardeerde – hij voelde zijn minderheid tegenover hem, zonder jaloezie, en hij stelde zelf voor, de plaatsen te ruilen, wat hem gaarne toegestaan werd, daar hij wel een conscientieus, degelijk musicus was, maar zich niet door hogere gaven van poësie, karakteristiek of dramatische opvatting onderscheidde". The short and free translation of this is: Heinze's father realised that his son was a better musician and proposed to exchange the positions. For the quotations in Dutch I use the same outdated spelling and punctuation as Louise Westermann-Heinze.

11 G. A. Heinze, 1905, pg 18; on pg. 8, talking about his good friend the baritone Heinrich Stürmer (1811-1902), he also mentions Lortzing as a tenor at the opera. Stürmer sang the part of Meister Steffen in Lortzing's Hans Sachs during the world premier on 23 June 1840.

It is here in Leipzig where Heinze fell in love with the singer Juliana Frederike Henriëtte Peuckert (b. 14 February 1809, + 31 July 1892, Muiderberg), who was married to Johann Dietrich Brüning<sup>12</sup>.

Johann Dietrich Brüning, also called Karl Brüning (Lortzing, 1995 pg. 509), was from 1831 to 1833 a colleague of Lortzing in his Detmold period (Schramm, 1951, pg. 63). He left Detmold at the end of 1832 and worked until 1834 in Hannover, then from 1834 - 1836 in Aachen/Cologne, where he married Henriette, according to another letter of Lortzing dd 17 sept 1835<sup>13</sup> (Lortzing, 1995). Two children were born from this marriage: Carl Brüning, born in Cologne 22 November 1835, died in Wiesbaden before 3 april 1879, and Louise Caroline Henriette Brüning, born in Bremen 8 february 1837. (Sierksma, 1979, pg. 7).

It is not sure what happened after that: Sierksma writes "no documentation about the death of Johann Brüning, a divorce or an official marriage between Heinze and Henriette has been found". However, Capelle (Lortzing, 1995, pg. 509) states that Brüning died in 1870 in Petersburg, and worked in Hamburg from 1838 to 1847, i.e. since Henriëtte was in Leipzig in 1839, Brüning probably already wasn't living with Henriette anymore when she met Heinze. Sierksma suggests that Henriette probably belonged to the Catholic Church and that because of this she couldn't divorce Johann Brüning officially. Flores again copies this suggestion, but Heinze himself wrote in his autobiography that he married Henriette in 1842<sup>14</sup>. And, since Henriëtte already had been married (and divorced) before she met Brüning (with the actor Seeberg), I don't think the church was an insurmountable obstacle for her to become Heinze's wife<sup>15</sup>. Sierksma writes that Gustav and Henriëtte celebrated their 25th anniversary on 15 juli 1867, which seems to match the date Heinze himself reported.

So, now Heinze had fallen in love with Henriëtte, he had to get Henriette's attention, and in her completion to Heinze's autobiography, Heinze's stepdaughter who, by the way, calls herself Louise Westermann-Heinze and speaks of Heinze as "my beloved father" (G. A. Heinze, 1905, pg.ix), indicating no clue to her biological father Karl Brüning, tells the story of how Heinze operated in winning the love of her mother.

Heinze didn't know how to get through to Henriette and asked his friend Heinrich Stürmer for help. Stürmer was also a good friend of Henriette, so he knew how to bring Heinze in contact with her. He came up with a ruse: Stürmer would pretend that his piano was broken and, because he needed an instrument to practice, he would ask Henriette if he could use her house and piano. He would bring his own accompanist; of course this turned out to be Heinze. Now Henriette intended to leave the two alone, but Stürmer insisted that she should attend the rehearsal to give some advice. The actual rehearsal must have been rather short, according to Louise, and after that there was enough time left for a cosy chat. Stürmer's piano remained defunct for as long as was necessary to bring the lovers together. It is a nice little story, but

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12 Sierksma, 1979 pg 7, misprints Johann Diedrich, the mistake is copied by (Flores, 2009).

13 Here again a little inaccuracy by Sierksma, 1979, pg 8, who states that Henriëtte started using the pen-name Seeberg after she met Heinze, that was copied in Flores, 2009, pg 10, while, according to Lortzing's letter of 17 September 1835, the name Seeberg was used officially and even printed in the Theaterkronik. I must admit that it is difficult to keep all the different pen-names of Henriette apart: Heinrich Berg, Henriëtte Heinze-Berg, Henriëtte Seeberg and, according to Sierksma, 1979, eventually also Mad. H. Hinze.

14 G. A. Heinze, 1905 pg. 49: "Tot rijpheid van mijn besluit, een anderen, meer uitgebreiden werkring te zoeken, droeg ook grootendeels bij, mijne gelukkige echtvereeniging, in 1842, met de hoogbegaafde kunstenaress Henriette Brüning Peuckert, eene edele en liefdevolle vrouw"

15 My source of information about Henriette is Blum, Herloßsohn, & Marggraff, (1846) vol. 2, where a short biography of her until 1839, by Marggraff is given on p. 48. "Brüning, Henriette, geb. Peuckert, geb. zu Dresden 1809, wirkte in der Jugend im Ballette des dortigen Hoftheaters und wurde später al Solotänzerin daslbest engagirt. Um sie dem Theater zu entziehen, sandten die Eltern sie nach Töplitz zu einer Verwandten; hier aber, der strengen elterlichen Aufsicht entbunden, widmete sie sich ganz der Bühne und trat im Alter von 14½ Jahr als Preciosa mit großem Beifall auf; sie wurde sofort engagirt und heirate 1824 den unter dem Namen Seeberg bekannten Schausp[iel]er Baron von Palmstein, doch wurde diese Ehe bald wieder gelöst. Eine geraume Zeit spielte Mad. B[rüning] bei verschiedene Gesellschaften in den Städten Töplitz, Zittau, Görlitz, Karlsbad, Altenburg etc als jugendliche Liebhaberin und Opersoubrette, bis sie 1828 von Director Bethmann für Leipzig engagirt wurde; sie folgte demselben später nach Magdeburg, nachdem sie in Braunschweig mit Beifall gastirt hatte; 1832 wurde sie vom Director Ringelhardt für Leipzig engagirt, ging von hier 1833 an das aachen-kölnler Theater, wo sie sich mit dem Vorigen [i.e. Johann Dietrich Brüning – GO] vermählte. Nach dem kurzen Engagement in Dresden gastirte Mad. B. mit rühmlichen Erfolge in Hamburg und Mannheim, wo sie auf längere Zeit engagirt wurde. Das Engagement ihres Gatten in Hamburg aber bestimmte sie, den mannheimer Contract mit Opfern zu lösen und nach Hamburg zu eilen. Gegenwärtig (Mai 1839) ist sie abermals in Leipzig angestellt; Mad. B. spielt jetzt junge Frauen, Anstandsdamen und Charakterrollen, wie Orsina, Milfort, Elisabeth etc, zu denen sie körperlich und geistig gleich befähigt ist; besonders ihrer Vielseitigkeit wegen ist sie jeder Bühne ein höchst schätzbares Mitglied."

Louise was only four years old during this time, and it is possible that this narration has a bit more "Dichtung" than "Wahrheit".<sup>16</sup>

Interesting is that according to the account of Louise, Henriette lived in the Funkenburg. Lortzing lived in the Funkenburg too, a plaque serves to keep the memory alive for future generations, although with incorrect dates, because in 1841 he lived in the Frankfurter Straße 29 (nr. 1086), more or less just around the corner of the Funkenburg. (Förster, 2008, p. 58; a map of Lortzing's residences in Leipzig is given on page 59).

Now, interesting for the meaning of the letter, Louise tells us that her mother tried to repress in Heinze the clarinet virtuoso, because that had a bad influence on his health, and tried to encourage Heinze's talent as a composer. She gave him theme's to fantasise about and wrote songs and ballads for him, even, with her pen-name Heinrich Berg, opera libretti to compose, like "Der Guerilla-Hauptmann" (Op. 6, 1841, lost) and later "Die Loreley" (Op.10).

By combining all this information, I concluded that Lortzing's letter must have been addressed to Henriëtte Brüning-Peuckert, who was a colleague of Lortzing and "wrote songs", and that the letter was presumably an answer to a request of Henriette to Lortzing to have a look at some music composed by Heinze, most likely including "Der Guerilla-Hauptmann", and to give him some advice.

Interesting is that Lortzing writes on line 3 - 4:

*(Es soll mir zur Ehre und zum Vergnügen gereichen)  
die Kompositionen des herren [?] Hei ---- wollte ich  
sagen - Ihres Empholenen kennen zu lernen.*

This means: Lortzing knew who the endorsed person was, and he might as well have had his suspicions about the relationship between the two (and had some fun with it...).

Obviously the meeting must have taken place: Heinze wrote in his autobiography: "(...) Lortzing's judgment was encouraging; he praised me for my melodic invention, but advised me to be a bit more frugal with this, and to give more attention to musical form(...)"<sup>17</sup>

Having discussed the meaning and background of this letter, I think there is some room left for another aspect of Lortzing, the "sociable Lortzing", as far as it is mentioned in Heinze's account. Heinze attended, as a young artist, meetings between other artists in Leipzig, who came together in the evening hours after opera or concert performances in a "Kneipe" (= a public house). It is known that Lortzing was active in many social circles in Leipzig: he was a

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16 G. A. Heinze, 1905 pg. 83 "(...) Vooral trok hem aan eene dame, lieveling van het publiek, die door haar schoone stem, haar groot dramatisch talent diepen indruk op hem maakte - dit was mevrouw Henriette Brüning Peuckert, eene vrouw van het echte kunstenaarsras, die het hoogste, het edelste zocht die de groote dichters en componisten door en door kende en vereerde, en wie de kunst heilig was.

Zij werd het ideaal van den zeer jeugdigen Heinze - hij wilde - hij moest haar nader leeren kennen - maar hoe? - Haar zoo maar te naderen, daartoe ontbrak hem de moed, door het groote verschil van positie en leeftijd. Maar G.A. Heinze was slim en vlug in 't bedenken en smeden van plannetjes.

Vriend Stürmer werd in den arm genomen, daar hij met genoemde dame zeer bevriend was - men herinnert zich dat de heer Stürmer de voortreffelijke Baryton was, die den pas beginnenden lieder-componist raad en goede wenken gaf - die eerst mentor en protector was geweest en later een trouwe vriend voor hem werd. Gustav Heinze bedacht eene ware krijgslist, om de vesting aan te vallen, die van meer dan één zijde bestormd werd - en dit gelukte volmaakt. Vriend Stürmer kwam op een mooien dag bij zijne geachte kunst-zuster en had een groot verzoek aan haar - zijne piano was defect - of hij een uurtje bij haar mocht komen repeteeren - hij zou zijn accompagnateur wel zelf meëbrengen. Het verzoek werd natuurlijk gaarne toegestaan. Gustav Heinze was in de wolken! hij zou zijn aangebedene Henriette zien en spreken - hij telde de uren. Hij kwam met den grooten zanger - de tactvolle kunstenaress begroette de heeren vriendelijk, maar wilde zich direct retireeren, om de artisten ongestoord te laten. - Ja - maar zóó was dat niet gemeend en bedoeld, juist andersom - doch gelukkig was vriend Stürmer ook niet van gisteren en geen nieuweling in "Herzensangelegenheden" hij verzocht haar, liever te blijven, te luisteren en hem hare opinie te zeggen, daar hij zeer op haar oordeel gesteld was. De dame voldeed ook aan dit verzoek van haar vriend - zij bleef in het salon. - Na de repetitie, die niet al te lang was, werd gezellig gepraat - Gustav Heinze in extase - over een paar dagen zou weër gerepeteerd worden op dezelfde plaats met denzelfden accompagnateur. Er scheen aan Strümers piano erg veel te haperen, want hij kwam nog zeer vaak naar de "Funkenburg" en wel zóólang, tot hij niet meer behoorde mede te gaan(...)"

17 G. A. Heinze, 1905, pg 52: "(Mijne dichterlijk begaafde Henriette schreef een opera-tekst voor mij "Der Guerilla-Hauptmann" die ik kant en klaar in partitie had.) Lortzing's oordeel daarover was bemoedigend; hij prees mijne gemakkelijke melodische vinding, ried mij echter aan wat spaarzamer er mede te zijn, en den vorm meer te bestudeeren. (Ik heb dat werk nooit gehoord - nu, de wereld zal er ook wel niet veel aan verliezen.)".

member of the freemason's lodge "Balduin zur Linde", that had its meetings in the Elsterstraße 2, ("Balduin zur Linde," 2013), and of the "Tunnel Society", that met in the Hotel de Pologne (Lange, 1931), but here another circle must be indicated that Heinze himself calls "Die Ritter vom Geist" (a reference to the novel of Karl Gutzkow is probably intended) where witty and informative conversations ("geestige en leerrijke gesprekken") were held.

Heinze sums up the more or less regular visitors: the singers Kindermann and Schmidt, the actors Düringer, Baudius, Dessoir, Ballman, the poets Herloßsohn and Drobisch and the composers Schumann, Lortzing, Verhulst, Gade, Zöllner and Ferdinand Hiller. Heinze continues his story with some anecdotes of Schumann's moodiness (pg 27) and the influence of the Leipzig curfew at 22.30h on Schumann's first symphony (that debunks the opinion that the first theme of Schumann's first symphony was inspired by the Spring poems of Adolph Böttger; the symphony was called "Nightwatchman Symphony" in those days, instead of "Spring Symphony")<sup>18</sup> but of particular interest here is that Lortzing and Schumann obviously met each other in one of their social circles and must have known each other personally.

It could be interesting to know where they came together; Muns, (2010) thinks they met in the "Kaffeebaum", "Schumann's daily hangout", which might be possible, but since Heinze mentions explicitly the word "Kneipe" and beer drinking – and above all lists a lot of artists that did not belong to Schumann's "Davidsbündler" – I think a pub like "Zum Birnbaum" (adjacent to the Hotel de Pologne) that Förster (Förster, Otto Werner, n.d.) mentions as one of Lortzing's venues of preference is more likely.

Only one letter of Lortzing to Robert Schumann is preserved – an even shorter one than the present letter to Henriëtte Brüning-Peuckert – and is printed in Lortzing, 1995 on pg. 170. Dr. Capelle writes in a footnote "Der Kontakt zwischen Lortzing und Schumann war auf Grund der unterschiedlichen Interessen nicht groß, wenn auch davon ausgegangen werden muß, daß die beiden sich persönlich gekannt haben". Heinze's memoirs make this a bit more plausible.

Heinze moved with Henriëtte and her two children to the Netherlands in 1850. On 11 July 1882 he, Henriëtte Brüning-Peuckert, his step-son Carl Brüning (then living in Wiesbaden) and his stepdaughter Louise Westermann-Brüning acquired the Dutch nationality.

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2<sup>nd</sup> revision 31 January 2015. Two grammatical errors in the transcription of the letter were corrected. Also the date of writing (2 July 1841) has been corrected, with many thanks to Dr. Irmlind Capelle for pointing out the mistakes.

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18 G. A. Heinze, 1905, pg 28; the Leipzig night watchman sang "Nun hört ihr Herrn, und lasst euch sag'n, die Glocke hat halb elf geschlag'n"; a more prosaic text than the poem „O wende, wende deinen Lauf/ Im Tale blüht der Frühling auf!“ by Böttger! Muns, (2010) , also using Heinze's memoirs as a starting point, explores this in more detail.

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