

## JEWISH *VOLKSSÄNGER* AND MUSICAL PERFORMERS IN VIENNA AROUND 1900



A few years ago, the American historian Mary Gluck gave a lecture at the International Research Center for Cultural Studies in Vienna on her research on Jews and popular culture in Budapest, which resulted in her book *The Invisible Jewish Budapest*.<sup>1</sup> In the discussion following her talk, she also touched on the topic of Jewish participation in Viennese entertainment culture at the turn of the twentieth century. The unanimous view, shared by both Gluck and the audience, was that Viennese Jews contributed to new forms of urban leisure and pastimes far less than their counterparts in Budapest.

It is an undisputed fact that Budapest had a vibrant, innovative, and dynamic singspiel scene that Jews in particular helped cultivate and maintain. Nevertheless, Jews also had a substantial presence in the entertainment scene in Vienna. On the one hand, we can attribute the fact that Jewish participation in Viennese popular culture has remained relatively unknown to the lack of relevant scholarship on the topic. Indeed, a considerable number of dissertations have been written on the topic of Jews in Viennese population culture in recent years.<sup>2</sup> With a few exceptions, the authors have not (yet) revised their projects to prepare them for publication. In the previous chapter, I discussed in detail why this topic has remained to a large extent a historiographical lacuna.

On the other hand, the lack of knowledge regarding the extent to which Jews participated in popular-cultural forms in Vienna is connected to the question of visibility. Although Jews did not conceal their identity as Jews, Jews and non-Jews were often so interconnected that at first glance and sometimes even after thorough investigation, it may be difficult if not impossible to identify anything Jewish about specific performers or the cultural activities in which they participated.

The following chapter takes this thesis as its point of departure. I begin with an overview of the most important Jewish *Volkssänger* groups and their performance venues, which in turn allows me to discuss what makes a *Volkssänger* ensemble Jewish and whether we can speak of “Jewish” singspiel venues. I also discuss whether a theater director who converted can still be understood as Jewish, as scholars have tended to do, for example, in the case of Gabor Steiner, the manager of Venice in Vienna (Venedig in Wien), Danzer’s Orpheum, and the Ronacher.

## The Etablissement Nestroy-Säle

“The two main streets in the Leopoldstadt are Taborstraße and Praterstraße. Praterstraße is almost grand, and it leads directly to pleasure. Jews and Christians populate it. It is smooth, wide, and bright. It has many coffeehouses.”<sup>3</sup> This is how Austrian writer Joseph Roth (1894–1939), in his book *The Wandering Jews (Juden auf Wanderschaft)*, describes the boulevard that leads from the city center to the Prater, Vienna’s extensive entertainment and recreation area. One of the cafes to which Roth alludes was the Café Willy, a meeting place for musicians and artists who enlivened Viennese nightlife with their performances. The coffeehouse provided a space for artists to set up performances at singspiel halls and variety shows, make and cultivate contacts, and exchange information with fellow artists. In addition, the Café Willy had the meeting room for the “Jolly Knights” (Lustige Ritter), an association of Viennese *Volkssänger*.<sup>4</sup>

Jews and non-Jews alike socialized at Café Willy. Together, they shaped the entertainment options available to the Viennese population and made up the audiences that attended the cabarets as well as the performances put on by *Volkssänger* and wrestlers, ventriloquists, and magicians in Leopoldstadt. Together, they also marveled at the artistic feats and exotic oddities on display in the variety shows. In this sense, Joseph Roth’s observation that “Jews and Christians” bustled about alongside one another on the Praterstrasse was nothing out of the ordinary. And the ethnic distribution of the people inhabiting this part of the city suggests that both Jews and non-Jews were visible in the streets of Vienna’s second district. Among all the Viennese districts, Leopoldstadt had the highest proportion of Jewish residents. Around 1900, 35.8 percent of Viennese Jews lived there. On account of this high concentration of Jews, this district was often called “Matzah Island” (Mazzeinsel).<sup>5</sup> Of this district’s entire population, 36.4 percent was Jewish.<sup>6</sup> But this means that the Jewish percentage of the population in Leopoldstadt was significantly lower than in the “Jewish” areas of other cities, such as Terézváros, Budapest’s sixth district, where three-quarters of the population was Jewish. Nevertheless, it is not surprising that both Jews and non-Jews left their mark on the streetscape of the Leopoldstadt. Needless to say, their presence next to one another was not always characterized by mutual understanding but also by tension and conflict.<sup>7</sup>

A part of Viennese entertainment culture at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries took place in an ethnically diverse and culturally plural environment in which Jewish and non-Jewish migrants, recent arrivals to the city, encountered a local population that was equally diverse and reflective of a rich array of cultural traditions.<sup>8</sup> This hybrid situation constituted the cultural atmosphere of the singspiel venues and the milieu in which the folk singers zeroed in on the characters that they satirized in their songs as the “Jew,” the “Bohemian,” and the “Croat.” And though Jews and non-Jews mutually built and maintained the entertainment landscape in and around the Praterstrasse, there were, without a doubt, performance venues that were more popular among Jews than non-Jews, not to mention the so-called suburban theater groups, whose audiences were, at least at certain moments in time, either mostly or entirely non-Jewish. Nevertheless, we cannot draw clear lines distinguishing between “Jewish” and “non-Jewish” ensembles. This lack of division seems to be partially the result of the milieu surrounding the singspiel halls, an expression of a new, urban culture that did not concern itself with such binaries or was perhaps possible precisely because of the lack of such oppositions.<sup>9</sup>

A second aspect of Roth’s quotation speaks to the venues that were situated in the Praterstrasse. This street housed not only the cafés that he mentions but also a number of theatrical establishments and other entertainment options. The Carltheater was perhaps the most famous of these, a *Volksbühne* (people’s theater) that the Austrian dramatist Johann Nestroy (1801–62) directed, starting in the mid-nineteenth century. He was also the namesake of a building constructed in 1898 in close proximity to the Carltheater, designed by the Zionist architect Oskar Marmorek. This building named after Johann Nestroy, the Nestroyhof, featured an entertainment venue located on the ground floor called the Halls of Nestroy (Nestroy-Säle), which opened on 11 November 1899.<sup>10</sup> The man who leased this space was Emanuel Adler or, as he also called himself, Adler-Müller. As I briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, Adler had previously performed up until this time under the name de Brye or Gaston de Brie as a “female impersonator.” One of the venues where audiences admired his acting skills was the Ronacher, the most important *variété* (vaudville theater) in Vienna around the turn of the twentieth century. With the Halls of Nestroy, he sought to establish himself as an independent entrepreneur in the entertainment sector.<sup>11</sup> Karl Steidler, the director of an entertainment venue named after him, served as co-director.<sup>12</sup> Because the Halls of Nestroy were classified as a singspiel venue that was only permitted to perform one-act plays alongside musical performances, we may conclude that Adler-Müller required the support of his colleague on account of Steidler’s license, which allowed him to produce multi-act plays, and for this reason joined his company.<sup>13</sup>

Compared to some other *Volkssänger* venues, the performances held by the Halls of Nestroy demonstrated markedly high quality. Caprice, a former salesclerk from Pest, was the *Hausdichter* (house poet). He was born Antal Lövi, changed

his name to Antal Oroszi in 1869, but was known in Vienna first and foremost by his stage name.<sup>14</sup> Other Jewish groups, such as the Budapest Orpheum Society, the Albert Hirsch Society, and the S. Fischer Society embraced and performed Caprice's burlesques. Another author whose plays the Halls of Nestroy often produced was Louis Taufstein (1870–1942). He wrote numerous comic songs, theater pieces, opera librettos, and comedies. Like Caprice, Taufstein was Jewish, and the plays that both of them wrote were mostly performed within the context of a Jewish milieu. The managers of the Halls of Nestroy, however, viewed themselves connected not only to a thematically Jewish theater but also to a general theater tradition associated with Viennese culture. We observe this pattern not least because the plays of Johann Nestroy were featured prominently in their performance program.<sup>15</sup>

Even though there was no shortage of Jewish ensembles in Vienna at the turn of the century, the Halls of Nestroy were an important addition to the entertainment scene. However, this venue had a short-lived history. Soon after the Halls of Nestroy opened its doors, people began to talk more about its financial problems than its performances. Adler-Müller was neither an experienced businessman nor did he possess the financial means to compensate for his lack of entrepreneurial acumen. Although he was able to secure substantial financial support from the Pilsner Brewery to keep the Halls of Nestroy temporarily afloat, the venue's debts soon took over. Since the members of the ensemble were paid only irregularly, they refused to perform on some days. In addition, the public's growing uncertainty that they would actually get to see the performance for which they bought tickets thus further worsened an already precarious financial situation. It comes as no surprise then that after only half a year of being in operation, the Halls of Nestroy had to be shut down. Adler-Müller was subsequently charged with fraud and embezzlement.<sup>16</sup> However, he did not wish to resign himself to failure. In September 1890, he managed to reopen the Halls of Nestroy. Once again, he had won the favor of a strong financial investor. To everyone's amazement, this investor's contributions were so significant that Adler-Müller was able to buy back the inventory that had been sold a few months earlier, at more than twice the price. But it quickly became clear that he had bitten off more than he could chew. Performances resumed only for a few weeks. And even this handful of performances was only possible because Adler-Müller pawned the jewelry of one of his staff members. On October 26, Adler-Müller's enterprise was closed for good, and he was sentenced to prison.<sup>17</sup>

## **The Folies Comiques**

The closing of the Halls of Nestroy so soon after Adler-Müller attempted to reopen the venue left no lasting lacuna in the Viennese entertainment landscape.

Just a year later, the Folies Comiques began to hold performances in the space of the Nestroyhof that Adler-Müller's failed enterprise had left empty.<sup>18</sup> Roland Eder initially led the Folies Comiques with a co-partner, before he took over the direction of the entire operation at the end of 1902.<sup>19</sup> Prior to trying his hand at leading a singspiel hall, Eder had gained fame particularly for his farces. Fritz Lung, of Edelhofer's Leopoldstadt Folk Orpheum, was brought on board as license holder (see my discussion below). In addition to the texts written by Eder, the Folies Comiques mainly performed pieces by Josef Armin, who, along with his wife, was one of the actors in the ensemble until April 1903.<sup>20</sup> Armin's performances were part of the actual attraction of the Folies Comiques. Louis Taufstein was also the author of numerous farces that the troupe brought to the stage.

As was the case with the Halls of Nestroy, the Folies Comiques echoed various aspects of a cultural tradition associated with Vienna. An example of this group's relationship to and engagement with Viennese culture was when a member joined the group in the spring of 1903 who performed as the composer Franz Schubert (1797–1821). Schubert was widely regarded as the epitome of Vienna as a city of music. Only a few years prior, a large exhibit had been dedicated to him and his works, permanently anchoring him in Vienna's collective memory.<sup>21</sup> In referencing the figure of Franz Schubert, the Folies Comiques participated in the local cult of personality surrounding the composer and thus positioned their performances within the larger cultural atmosphere that characterized Vienna. In addition, this troupe performed “jargon” or “slang” comedy (comedy in Yiddish-inflected German). One of the plays that we can attribute to the Folies Comiques was titled *Family Pschesina*, written by Louis Taufstein.<sup>22</sup> “Pschesina,” or sometimes “Brzezina,” was the name for a Bohemian stock character in Vienna around 1900, whose Jewish counterpart was “Little Kohn.” The name Brzezina gained cultural prominence on account of a comic song called “Servus Brezina” (“Greetings, Brezina!”) that Emil Várady performed at the Etablissement Gartenbau at the turn of the century. The name thus became a general byword used to refer to Czechs.<sup>23</sup> In everyday Vienna—and even in the Austrian Reichsrat—the term was frequently used in a discriminatory manner.<sup>24</sup>

At first glance, *Family Pschesina* is a simple comedy of errors. But the play deals with the question of what constituted Jewishness in fin-de-siècle Vienna. In the play, Boleslav Pschesina, a wealthy Czech Jew, wants his niece Helen to marry August Lerchenfeld, the son of one of his business associates. He awaits a visit from the future groom. Boleslav's wife, Eulalia, however, wants Helen to marry her son Isidor so that her jewelry remains in the family. Isidor also feels a strong emotional attachment to Helen. On the day before the anticipated visit, Isidor encounters August Lerchenfeld and his father's accountant, Menasse Pfeifendeckel, outside of Pschesina's villa. When they ask Isidor where Pschesina's home is, he tells them that it is still a long way off and advises them to stay the night in a nearby brothel. He tells them that Boleslav's house is the brothel. In

doing so, Isidor hopes that August will treat Helen disdainfully, assuming that she is a prostitute, and thereby discredit himself as potential husband. August and Menasse arrive at the Boleslav's home, which Isidor has purposefully misidentified as a house of ill repute, and August proceeds to treat Helen and Eulalia in a vulgar manner. He ends up in a fight with Boleslav, tossing the man out of his own home. When August's father arrives on the scene, they sort out the misunderstanding. Isidor's deceitfulness is made known, and he is forced to apologize. Ultimately, he cannot prevent August and Helen from marrying.

We should emphasize that *Family Pschesina* does not portray the Jewishness of its characters on the basis of a criterion as conventional as religious affiliation. Instead, Jewishness is indicated through the names of the protagonists, such as Menasse Pfeifendeckel, as well as the play's use of Yiddish terms such as *mishpoche* (family), *punim* (face), and *schmooze* (talk, chatter). But both of these kinds of indicators are only of limited use for identifying a person's Jewishness. The Yiddish expressions are to some degree a part of the Viennese idiom and can also be used by non-Jews. And both Pfeifendeckel and Lerchenfeld are not exclusively Jewish names. The reverse is also true: in turn-of-the-century Vienna, only "ethnic" Czechs were referred to as Brzezina/Pschesina, but the farce uses it as a Jewish family name.

Language and names are thus extremely unreliable indicators of national and ethnic identification and their usage is largely dependent on context. *Family Pschesina* demonstrates how some performances in the Viennese singspiel halls questioned ethnic categorizations and the perceived unambiguity of cultural affiliations.

## The Lemberg Singspiel Society

Not far from the Halls of Nestroy, in the Rotensterngasse, was Edelhofer's Leopoldstadt Folk Orpheum, which served in 1901 as the home of the Lemberg Singspiel Society.<sup>25</sup> The actors in the troupe had previously been active in Galicia with the Yiddish theater group led by Jacob-Ber Gimpel (1840–1906).<sup>26</sup> Brigitte Dalinger, who discusses the "Polish" (as the Lemberg Singspiel Society was also called) in her dissertation, argues that we must classify this group of actors somewhere along the spectrum between the Singers of Brod, a precursor of Yiddish theater in eastern Europe, and Viennese folk singers.<sup>27</sup> As a result, Galician and other eastern European Jewish immigrants in particular made up the audiences that attended the performances of the "Polish." These "Polish" actors represented an important source of cultural mediation between the traditional Jewish world in the eastern European provinces and modernity, which these immigrants encountered in Vienna. We see prime examples of this form of cultural mediation in two plays that the Lemberg Singspiel Society performed in 1903 and 1904.

The first play, *The Soldier of Plevna*, takes place in the historical context of the Russo-Turkish War and the Siege of Plevna (1877), during which a unit of Russian and Romanian troops defeated the Turks.<sup>28</sup> Max, the play's central character, fights on the side of the Romanians and distinguishes himself on account of his extraordinary valor. Deeply impressed by his courage, Max's comrades ask him who he is once the battle is over. Max answers, "I am a Jew and will always be a Jew." In a subsequent scene, which highlights his domestic sphere, Max converses with Chaim, the father of his bride. His father-in-law is surprised by Max's military involvement and asks him why he is so fearless. Max explains that he considers defending his homeland to be his duty. Chaim fails to understand Max's response. He asks Max what part of Romania he views as his homeland and whether he is paid for being a soldier. In response, Max refers to the rights he enjoys in Romania, which for him are sufficient motivation for his military service.

*The Soldier of Plevna* depicts the tensions between two Jews. The first, Chaim, lives in a traditional Jewish environment and therefore cannot understand Max's patriotism. Max, on the other hand, demonstrates an interest in the legal emancipation of the Jews and thus considers the divisions between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds to be of no consequence. As a result, Max's Jewishness and his participation in the war are not incompatible. On the contrary, these two aspects are for him directly connected with one another, as his response to the question posed by his comrades shows. When they ask him who he is, he does not give his name, but rather refers to his Jewishness. The play portrays Max's Jewishness not through religious plotlines, nor through the observance of religious laws, but rather through his heroism. The audience was thus presented with values that were of little significance in a Jewish environment marked by religiosity. In this context, it is worth noting that the Zionists of the time praised qualities such as valor and a willingness to participate in military combat as characteristics of a "new" Jew in Palestine. The idea was that the "new" Jew discarded attributes such as cowardice and physical weakness, which were sometimes used to characterize Jews in the Diaspora.<sup>29</sup> *The Soldier of Plevna*, however, combines the Zionist idea of the heroic Jew with a Diaspora nationalism. This play that the Lemberg Singspiel Society performed thus critiques the Zionist interpretation of Jewish life in non-Jewish "majority societies," as well as the values of the traditional Jewish world.

The second play that I wish to discuss in this context is *Jüdalj with His Traveling Bag*.<sup>30</sup> Dalinger describes it as "the first [play] performed in Vienna with a Zionist tendency" that can be found in the Archiv für Theaterzensur (archive of theater censorship).<sup>31</sup> The primary protagonist is a wealthy Jew by the name of Bauchfett, who wishes to marry his daughter Rebecca to a baron. The non-Jewish aristocrat is however only interested in Bauchfett's fortune and uses Rebecca in an attempt to take control of it. Meanwhile, Rebecca, who refuses to marry the baron, is in love with a poor teacher named Albert Kohn, a staunch Zionist. For a time, it appears to be a tricky situation with no way out. Ultimately, one of Albert

Kohn's friends, the Zionist Samuel Pinkeles, succeeds in convincing Bauchfett that he puts Judaism at risk with his plan to have the baron marry his daughter. At the end, Bauchfett supports the marriage between Rebecca and Albert.

Unlike *The Soldier of Plevna*, *Jüdalj with His Traveling Bag* depicts Jewishness through the construction of a sense of responsibility toward the Jewish community, specifically through Zionist sentiment. It communicates an appreciation for Zionism while simultaneously calling for a reformulation of traditional Jewish life. We see this in the play's criticism of the arranged marriage. To be sure, interconfessional marriage, as portrayed in *Jüdalj with His Traveling Bag*, was anything but common practice among Jews, determined neither by the parents of the bride or groom nor by the couple of their own free will. But an arranged marriage involving only Jewish partners, which failed to consider the young people's feelings, was widespread. Liberal-minded Jews had been fighting against this practice since the Haskalah.<sup>32</sup> *Jüdalj with His Traveling Bag* situates itself within this critical tradition. The performances of the "Polish" thus showed audiences an alternative to the lifestyle with which many Jewish immigrants from Galicia were accustomed. The "Polish" introduced new rules of conduct and acquainted their public with values that prevailed in Vienna at the time.

### ***"Jargon" Replaces Yiddish***

Although the actors who were members of the Lemberg Singspiel Society originally came from a Yiddish-language ensemble, they probably adapted quickly to local demand in Vienna and abandoned the Yiddish language in favor of "Jewish jargon." This is why one can categorize the "Polish" as a part of the Viennese *Volkssänger* scene rather than assigning them to the Yiddish theater tradition, as many Yiddish sources do.<sup>33</sup> There are various reasons for not including the "Polish" in the Yiddish tradition. I discuss some of these reasons in the following section, because they shed light on Viennese cultural specificity.

We see the first indication that the "Polish" were not a Yiddish theater group in the reaction that the Viennese public had to guest appearances of Jacob-Ber Gimpel's Yiddish ensemble from Lemberg. Not long after the Lemberg Singspiel Society was established in Edelhofer's Leopoldstadt Folk Orpheum, Gimpel came to Vienna with his troupe. Gimpel organized his own performances in the hotel Bairischer Hof, located in the Taborstrasse mentioned in Joseph Roth's quotation and thus not far from the performance venue of the "Polish."<sup>34</sup> It is possible that Gimpel moved his performances in order to benefit from the lively popularity that the "Polish" enjoyed in Vienna.<sup>35</sup> This interpretation of events would imply that they performed pieces in the Yiddish language. But there is also evidence to suggest that Gimpel came to Vienna to compete with the "Polish" and thereby compromise their success. Dalinger argues that the manager of Edelhofer's Leopoldstadt Folk Orpheum went to Lemberg (Lvov) to entice



some of the members of Gimpel's troupe to move to Vienna so that he could found the Lemberg Singspiel Society.<sup>36</sup> If this was the case, then Gimpel may have been prompted to come to Vienna out of a desire for retaliation. However, he was not successful. It is quite possible that his failure was due to the lack of resonance that Yiddish performances found among the population of Vienna.<sup>37</sup> But the fact that the shows put on by the Lemberg Singspiel Society met with significant audience approval suggests that the "Polish" abstained from performing in Yiddish.

Gimpel failed to garner the favor of the Viennese, and many folk singers also distanced themselves from him. They sometimes made him the target of their mockery and ridicule. We see this ridicule in a production of the Albert Hirsch Society (which I discuss in greater detail below). After Gimpel's arrival in Vienna, Hirsch's troupe performed a piece titled *Gimpel (from Lemberg) Is Here!*, a parody of the Galician theater director.<sup>38</sup> Similar to *Jüdalyn with His Traveling Bag*, this play also depicts an arranged marriage. Jacob Beer, the father of a Jewish girl named Malke, and Gimpel's father decide that their children should marry one another. For Jacob Beer, this appears to be an extremely advantageous arrangement, as Gimpel comes from a rather wealthy family. Malke, however, feels a strong attraction to Theodor, who only comes to the fore in the play because of the cavalier behavior that he displays. Jacob Beer remains unfazed by his daughter's feelings and holds fast to his decision. On the other hand, Malke's mother, Zelda, feels sorry for her daughter. In her youth, Zelda had been a member of an amateur theater and showcases her skills as an actress to prevent the marriage between Malke and Gimpel. When Gimpel arrives in Vienna one day to meet his future wife, Zelda comes to meet him as Malke. Gimpel, who is expecting to be greeted by a young lady, is disturbed by the age of his apparent bride and escapes the marriage agreement by fleeing back to Lemberg. Malke is then released from the marriage pledge and is free to marry Theodor.

We see the allusion to Gimpel clearly expressed in Hirsch's choice of the protagonist's surname and place of origin, as well as in the name of Malke's father, who has the same first name as the Lemberg ensemble director. The mockery of Gimpel, which also entails the humorous aspect of the piece, lies in Malke's mother, a former actress, being able to dupe him. Gimpel, who dedicated his life to the theater, is portrayed as too naïve to see through an "amateur performance" like the one Malke's mother gives, in reference to her past experience in the theater. Indeed, the character Gimpel in the play claims to have the ability to switch back and forth between various roles in order to deceive the people in his immediate surroundings and thereby influence situations to his benefit. When he finds himself in a compartment filled with antisemites on a train journey from Lemberg to Vienna who loudly rant about Jews, Gimpel conceals his Jewishness and is proud of his skill in pulling the wool over their eyes. But when he arrives in Vienna, he is beaten at his own game. He is the one who is misled. Because

Gimpel is unable to recognize deception as such, he appears incapable of living in the modern metropolis and is therefore wise to return to his hometown in Galicia. We also see this on Gimpel's way from the station to Jacob Beer's home. He sees a woman whom he thinks waves to him, but he can't properly interpret the gesture. The everyday cultural complexity of the metropolis confuses him, and the imagined blends with reality. Vienna overwhelms him.

Why Albert Hirsch chose to write a play that makes fun of Gimpel remains unclear. Various factors may have played a role in his decision. It is possible that Hirsch, a Viennese-born Jew, perceived a strong connection to the local folk-singer scene (see chapter 3) and simultaneously perceived antipathy for the Galician Jewish Gimpel and the Yiddish theater—an antipathy that was not uncommon between so-called East and West Jews during this period.<sup>39</sup> It may also be that when Hirsch debuted *Gimpel (from Lemberg) Is Here!* in the summer of 1901, he was toying with the idea of taking over as director of the Lemberg Singspiel Society, which is precisely what he did the following year. If this is true, he may have attempted to position his play as strategy for eliminating Gimpel's troupe as a potential source of competition. In any case, the Galician theater director did not stay long in Vienna. We cannot definitively say whether Hirsch specifically contributed to Gimpel's failure to find success in Vienna.

Unlike the two plays that I already discussed, the question of Jewishness has no relevance in *Gimpel (from Lemberg) Is Here!* In addition to mocking Gimpel, Hirsch's play offers a critique of arranged marriages, similar to the one found in *Jüdalj with His Traveling Bag* and many other textual templates that Jewish *Volkssänger* groups performed. The frequency with which this theme appears in such performances is a sign that it was of great concern to Viennese Jews. In any case, *Gimpel (from Lemberg) Is Here!* was well received by audiences. We can draw this conclusion from op-ed articles in newspapers, one of which declared that the play's performance provoked such an "enormous amount of laughter, the likes of which hadn't been heard for years."<sup>40</sup> As my discussion of its failed performances in Vienna illustrates, the Gimpel troupe did not find a place in the Viennese *Volkssänger* scene with its Yiddish-language plays. Gimpel and his group ultimately returned to their home city in eastern Galicia.

The evidence that I have introduced thus far allows us to deduce that the Lemberg Singspiel Society either gave no performances in Yiddish or quickly dispensed with them upon arrival in Vienna. Instead, this group presented plays in Jewish "jargon." The actors in this troupe, similar to those who performed with the Budapest Orpheum Society or Albert Hirsch's troupe, used a local Austrian (i.e., German-language) idiom colored with elements of Yiddish and a corresponding intonation.<sup>41</sup> An announcement in the magazine *Das Variété* points to this theatrical use of jargon. The announcement states that Mr. and Mrs. Kanner, members of the Lemberg Singspiel Society, presented the public with new "things in jargon" (*Jargonsachen*).<sup>42</sup> There is no mention of performances in Yiddish.

Another point that makes it unlikely that the “Polish” performed in Yiddish pertains to the group’s leadership. This aspect deserves particular attention, because it exemplifies the intertwining of Jews and non-Jews and their joint formation of Viennese popular culture. When the Lemberg Singspiel Society was founded in Vienna in 1901 and performed in Edelhofer’s Leopoldstadt Folk Orpheum, it was renamed the Fritz Lung Singspiel. This means that the “Polish” performed under the aegis of Fritz Lung’s license, with Lung acting as director. Though Lung (1844–1922) was Catholic, he was firmly rooted in the Jewish cultural milieu.<sup>43</sup> We know this to be the case because, as I discussed earlier, he also served as a license holder for the performances of the *Folies Comiques*.

In the spring of 1902, Albert Hirsch took over as director of the Lemberg Singspiel Society. Unlike Lung, he was Jewish, but it is doubtful whether as a native of Vienna he was familiar with the eastern European Jewish milieu, from which the members of the Lemberg Singspiel Society came. Nevertheless, his own troupe, which he had led before he took over the “Polish” group, had often used Jewish jargon. But that does not mean that he could speak or understand Yiddish. As was the case with Lung, it is unlikely that Hirsch would have applied for a position in a Yiddish-language troupe. Hirsch urged the “Polish” to bring their program more in line with local Viennese cultural expectations. To this end, he had the group perform pieces that he himself had written and already performed with his previous ensemble. Hirsch’s plays included, for example, *A Game of Klabrias in Court* and *The Rich Mr. Herzl*.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, under his direction, the “Polish” staged *Dada-Dodo*, written by (non-Jewish) *Volkssänger* Wilhelm Wiesberg (1850–96).<sup>45</sup> But this does not mean that the Lemberg Singspiel Society broke away from its eastern European Jewish cultural roots. The Lemberg Singspiel Society’s performances also included dramas and burlesques from the Yiddish theatrical repertoire, such as *Shmendrik* by Abraham Goldfaden (1840–1908). But even this play was not likely to have been performed in Yiddish, as we may deduce from the publicity used to promote it. It was specifically advertised with the title *Shmendrik, oder: Eine Dorfhochzeit* (*Schmendrik, or: the village wedding*).<sup>46</sup>

The Lemberg Singspiel Society, with its “mixed program” that encompassed both eastern European cultural traditions and Viennese *Volkssänger* pieces, seems to have found considerable favor with audiences. We see the group’s popularity not least of all in the fact that it had many imitators. For example, these imitators included a “German-Polish ensemble from Lemberg” that performed in various venues in the fifth, sixth, and fourteenth districts, all of which had only a small percentage of the city’s Jewish population.<sup>47</sup> “Polish” may have been synonymous with “eastern Jewish,” and the use of the term “German” may have been used to distinguish the copycat group from the original Lemberg Singspiel Society. In any event, the “Polish-German” group also performed plays composed by Yiddish authors.<sup>48</sup>

Marietta Kriebaum and Paula Baumann directed two other ensembles that sought to imitate the Lemberg Singspiel Society. Kriebaum presided over the Polish Variety Show from Lemberg, which performed in the café Zum goldenen Widder (the Golden Ram) located in 36 Taborstrasse.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, Baumann's troupe gave its performances in the Antreiber'schen Restauration, which was situated in the Krummbaumgasse.<sup>50</sup> Just like Fritz Lung, Kriebaum was not Jewish, but also had many contacts with Jews and was familiar with the Jewish milieu. Sara Frimmel, who appeared under the stage name Paula Baumann, was the first wife of Salomon Fischer, a well-known director of Jewish singspiel halls (see below). Marietta Kriebaum was married to Franz Xaver Kriebaum (1836–1900), the director of Danzer's Orpheum, who died in July 1900.<sup>51</sup> At one time, he performed with Albert Hirsch, alongside Josefine Schmer (1842–1904).<sup>52</sup> Kriebaum and Hirsch remained close acquaintances. We know this to be the case based, among other things, on the eulogy that Hirsch gave at Kriebaum's funeral. Hirsch's son Adolfi also had a personal connection with the Kriebaum family. We see evidence of this close connection in a letter to the editor that Adolfi wrote, which appeared in the *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* in the summer of 1901. The author of the letter asks the Jolly Knights, the *Volkssänger* association, why they have not yet arranged a tombstone for their former chairman, Franz Kriebaum. Adolfi mentions that immediately after Kriebaum's death, Josef Armin announced a collection to finance the tombstone and that they had already commissioned it. In December, it was reportedly too cold to set up the gravestone. Adolfi's letter goes on to say, "Well, today it's 29 July 1901, and it's not that cold out anymore! Kriebaum's grave is still missing a gravestone. Or is it the intense heat that prevents you from installing it? . . . How many degrees Réaumur, Celsius or Fahrenheit must it be for you to make good on your promise?"<sup>53</sup> A week later, Marietta Kriebaum also addressed the gravestone situation with her own letter to the editor. She corrects Adolfi to some degree, saying that Armin's idea for organizing a collection, which he had mentioned, never came to be. At that time, she explains that she objected to it, because she found it unpleasant "to beg for money for [her] deceased husband." That's why the Jolly Knights, she said, had agreed to organize a gravestone at the group's own expense. Nevertheless, Marietta Kriebaum concludes her own letter by complaining that her husband had been forgotten. She laments that in earlier times, when he was still director of Danzer's Orpheum, he had enjoyed the company of many friends, who had since vanished.<sup>54</sup>

Franz Kassina, Hirsch's son-in-law, took Emma Kriebaum, the daughter of Marietta and her deceased husband, under his wing and invited her to join his troupe in the summer of 1901.<sup>55</sup> This provides additional evidence that the Kriebaum family moved in a—albeit not exclusively—Jewish *Volkssänger* environment. It therefore comes as no surprise that Marietta Kriebaum, although she wasn't Jewish, operated a troupe in Leopoldstadt, which embraced the peculiari-

ties of the Lemberg Singspiel Society, in order to benefit from the popularity that the “Polish” had gained in Vienna.<sup>56</sup> Before Marietta Kriebaum ran the Polish Variety Show from Lemberg, she belonged to a troupe in which Käthe and Josef Armin were also members. Both had been employed for a long time at her husband’s Danzer’s Orpheum, a further indicator that the Kriebaums enjoyed relationships with Jewish colleagues and friends.<sup>57</sup>

If the Lemberg Singspiel Society performed in Yiddish and if Kriebaum and Baumann’s troupes, following their example, also gave their performances in Yiddish, then the majority of the Yiddish ensembles performing in Vienna at the time would have been directed by non-Jews. This is, to my mind, very unlikely. That two groups, led by non-Jewish directors, employed Jewish jargon in their productions is already surprising. But this phenomenon only serves to demonstrate that Jewish jargon was part of the Viennese linguistic landscape and was seen as such. This linguistic feature was the result of the overlapping of German, Jewish, Polish, and other cultural and communicative spaces, and we may even understand it as emblematic of the linguistic and cultural plurality of Vienna.<sup>58</sup> In any case, non-Jews did not necessarily feel alienated by the use of Jewish jargon, especially when they were familiar with the interstitial spaces in which Jews moved and operated. This was the case, for example, with the opera singer Leo Slezak (1873–1946) from Moravia. He was, as the *Illustrierte Wiener Extrablatt* writes, a “perfect Aryan [*Bravourarier*].” However, he is said to have been intimately acquainted with Jewish jargon and to have “spoken with a Yiddish accent [*gejüdelit*],” “as if his cradle had been in Half Asia.”<sup>59</sup> And it was a similar situation with Lung and Kriebaum. Marietta Kriebaum and her folk-singer groups demonstrably overlapped with various cultural spaces. Kriebaum was not only active in Leopoldstadt, but she also organized performances in the tavern Zum grünen Thor (the Green Gate), located in Lerchenfelder Strasse, where she produced both “Jewish” and “non-Jewish” plays.<sup>60</sup> And Paula Baumann was not just connected to the Jewish milieu, but also maintained a balancing act between different cultural worlds. After Baumann’s jargon troupe was banned from performing, she founded a new group. This group’s repertoire included popular folk pieces as well as aspects related to the Jewish world.<sup>61</sup>

A final reason why it is doubtful that the Lemberg Singspiel Society gave performances in Yiddish concerns a dispute among the *Volkssänger* regarding the announcement that the “Jewish” group Folies Caprice from Budapest intended to relocate to Vienna (for more on this, see chapter 3). In particular, the directors of three singspiel theaters that were located right next to the proposed new home of the Folies Caprice protested the move. The outraged directors were the managers of the Budapest Orpheum Society, the Lemberg Singspiel Society, and the Folies Comiques. If the “Polish” had indeed performed in Yiddish, then their director would not have perceived the presence of the Folies Caprice to be a threat, because their productions would have targeted a different segment of the

Viennese population. Only when the Lemberg Singspiel Society and the other two ensembles performed using Jewish jargon did the Folies Caprice appear to them to be a source of competition.

## The S. Fischer Society

The address 49 Zufahrtstrasse, in the heart of the Viennese Prater, was home to a venue called Zum Marokkaner (the Moroccan), where the S. Fischer Society usually performed. The group's director, Salomon Fischer (1853–1909), was born in Holicz in Moravia and tried his hand at acting when he was a young man. His early attempts in the theater, however, did not pan out. As a result, he instead became a *Volkssänger* and made his debut on the *Brettl* in 1873. Incidentally, he was the first of his profession to perform in the Prater all year round, while his colleagues fell back on the theatrical stages in other parts of the city during the winter months.<sup>62</sup> When he received his license in 1892, he was able to establish his own company, which he initially co-directed with his wife Paula Baumann, before they parted ways.<sup>63</sup>

Salomon Fischer is a vivid example of the close ties between Jewish and non-Jewish cultural strands that both contributed to a common Viennese cultural tradition. On the one hand, Fischer was firmly anchored in the Jewish world, but with his performances he also extended well beyond the Jewish milieu, thus creating a repertoire that in its entirety reflected Vienna's metropolitan cultural ambience. He organized Purim festivals and hired actors (albeit not exclusively) who had previously been employed by other Jewish theater troupes and who were familiar with the Jewish *Volkssänger* scene.<sup>64</sup> These actors included, for example, Josef Müller, who was born in Budapest in 1852.<sup>65</sup> He was primarily known for the songs he composed himself, which he performed in Jewish jargon. On the other hand, Fischer's repertoire also included plays that had no relationship to Judaism at all. In the spring of 1902, he included Ploni Pötzl, the "queen of all yodelers," in his performance program.<sup>66</sup> The entertainment staged in Zum Marokkaner thus reflected a cultural hybridity that was also clearly highlighted in one of Fischer's pieces, titled *The Jewish Christmas Tree*, which he performed on 25 and 26 December 1901.<sup>67</sup>

For Fischer, there seemed to be no clear boundaries between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. He renegotiated ethnic-cultural affiliations in the context of what he presented on stage, breaking down binary oppositions. In particular, we see this gesture toward critiquing binaries in the play *Your Only Patient*, written by Louis Taufstein and performed by the S. Fischer Society in 1903.<sup>68</sup> *Your Only Patient* portrays how the Jewish peddler Salamon Eisig is treated by the (non-Jewish) doctor Eulalia Pimperl. Eisig is her only patient. He comes to her office every day and complains of a series of ailments. Over the course of the play, it

becomes clear that he only fakes his illnesses. The real reason for his daily appearances is the financial support he receives from Eulalia to acquire the medications she prescribes. However, he pockets the money she gives him instead of going to the pharmacy. In addition, the doctor treats him to lunch every day, another reason for his regular visits.

The opening scenes depict Salamon as a small-time crook who shamelessly exploits Eulalia's sense of compassion. However, this depiction changes as the plot progresses, especially in light of a conversation between Eulalia and Julius Senftberger, the secret lover of her niece Ida. Julius visits Eulalia to ask her permission to marry Ida. But he proves to be too shy to make his request known. Eulalia assumes that Julius is a patient who wants to be examined, which is why she asks him to undress for the medical exam. Since Julius does not know that Ida's aunt is a doctor, he thinks her request amounts to a desire for a love affair. He is deeply outraged at Eulalia's seemingly impertinent behavior. The comical misunderstanding, however, is cleared up by the end of the play.

But before the misunderstanding can come to light, Julius rushes to Ida and reproaches her for not telling him the true nature of her aunt's profession. At this point in the play, Salamon joins Julius and Ida and confesses that he has been pulling the wool over Eulalia's eyes with regard to his illnesses. In this context, his dishonesty no longer seems like deception, but rather a venial misconduct, on par with Ida's unsettling reticence regarding her aunt's profession. Salamon, the Jewish peddler who at the beginning seemed to be a con artist, becomes a person with human weaknesses just like any non-Jew, in this case just like Ida.

Salamon's Jewishness is not explicitly mentioned or articulated in *Your Only Patient*. Since religion plays no role at all in the entire play, only his name and profession seem to hint at his Jewish identity. These are very unreliable criteria for determining a character's Jewishness. Even though the profession of the peddler was often associated with Jews, many non-Jews also practiced it. As I discussed in the case of the play *Family Pschesina*, a name alone cannot provide us a clear indication of one's ethnic or cultural affiliation. In addition, *Your Only Patient* portrays Salamon as greedy and sneaky, characteristics that were frequently employed at the time in antisemitic discourse.<sup>69</sup> But these characteristics were not used solely to describe Jews. The traits evoked to establish a character as Jewish are thus inclusive and can apply to non-Jews as well. Whether such traits are indicative of Jewishness depends entirely on context. Jewishness in *Your Only Patient* consists primarily in a difference that is also inclusive. Toward the end, when the play establishes a parallel between Salamon's behavior and that of non-Jews (at least comparable to the non-Jewish Ida's conduct), this difference largely dissolves. The distinctness of being Jewish is hardly present in the play. The boundaries between Jews and non-Jews become even more obscure and blurred.

Not all plays at this time in Vienna portrayed Jewishness as indeterminately as *Your Only Patient*. Some burlesques, written by Jews and performed by Jewish

ensembles, gesture toward the protagonists' Jewishness by implementing ostensibly immutable physical characteristics. We see such characteristics in the play *At the Marriage Broker's*, which the S. Fischer Society performed in 1903.<sup>70</sup> As the title suggests, the plot takes place in an agency that offers customers match-making and marriage brokering. Audiences would have recognized its owner, Mr. Zimt (literally "Mr. Cinnamon"), as Jewish on account of his use of a number of Yiddish terms, such as *chutzpah bokher* (*Chuzpejünger*), *shiksa*, *geschmusst*, and *ganef*. His employee, a young man named Leiser, is portrayed as a fun-loving type, who likes to smoke and seeks the acquaintance of non-Jewish women. One day, a woman comes to the office, seeking Zimt's matchmaking services to find a groom. Unfortunately, she finds all the suggested candidates unappealing. When Leiser also expresses a desire to marry during their conversation, Zimt laughs at him. Zimt declares that Leiser's big nose will prevent him from finding a bride. The customer, however, thinks Leiser is very attractive. In the end, Leiser and the woman promise to marry each other and plan to emigrate to America.

*At the Marriage Broker's* employs the trope of a big nose, an attribute often associated with Jews, and empties it of its stigmatizing power, interpreting it as a sign of beauty. The reversal of the original significance of this physical characteristic occurs by way of a straightforward critique of the anti-Jewish stereotype.<sup>71</sup> Taking the work of Homi Bhabha as a point of departure, we can understand this reversal as an act of "mimicry," whereby a common, pejorative image associated with Jews is incorporated but then reinterpreted and given new meaning through its use in a new context.<sup>72</sup> We also see this reference to a particular kind of nose, drained of its negative meaning and employed by Jewish authors of *Volkssänger* pieces as code signaling the characters' Jewishness, in a short parody of Adolphi, Albert Hirsch's son. In this piece, Adolphi talks about a woman whom he invites to accompany him to the Gänsehäufel, a public bathing beach in Vienna. There, he notices his friend Löbel, "[who has] a nose the size of a piece of Thonet furniture."<sup>73</sup> We can identify another example of a positive reworking of the "Jewish" nose in a 1909 play by Josef Armin. In this play, the plot revolves around a court case, during which the judge asks the (Jewish) defendant what her religion is. Before the defendant has a chance to answer, the plaintiff jumps in and says that everyone can see that she's Jewish on account of her nose.<sup>74</sup>

Unlike the significance that it had in antisemitic discourse of the time, the nose has no pejorative meaning in the examples that I have discussed. The trope to the "Jewish" nose often employed by Jewish *Volkssänger* serves, I argue, to invalidate the antisemitic stereotype rather than to strengthen it.

Salomon Fischer's son followed in his father's footsteps and chose a life in the theater. Emil Fischer and his wife, who performed with various groups under the stage name Charlotte Kranz, established their own ensemble in 1903 and chose as their venue *Zum römischen Kaiser* (the Roman Emperor), located in the Prater.<sup>75</sup> However, Emil Fischer was unable to achieve the same kind of success



that his father had. We can likely contribute his failure to the fact that by the time he founded his ensemble, the heyday of the *Volkssänger* and the singspiel halls, which had reached its peak at the beginning of the twentieth century, was already over. By the early 1900s, vaudeville and cinema had become the most popular forms of entertainment.

We can see the extent to which *Volkssänger* saw the vaudeville variety show as a particular source of competition in the fact that they increasingly oriented their performances and chose names more in line with what was happening in the vaudeville scene. For example, in the summer of 1904, Salomon Fischer hired Mister Marrion, Mister Raab, and Roszinka Galombosy to perform at the Prater-Orpheum. Marrion was lauded for his talents as a “vocal phenomenon,” Raab was famous for his ability to imitate an entire orchestra, and Galombosy was known as a “transformation singer.” Only after these three had taken the stage were there two theatrical performances with a Jewish connection: Josef Armin’s *Gutmann’s Success* and Louis Taufstein’s *The Silent Partner*.<sup>76</sup> In 1899, Albert Hirsch sought to draw crowds by advertising the performances of an “Afro-Cuban dancer named Vera Corézé” as part of his ensemble.<sup>77</sup> A year later, Hirsch announced that he had renamed his group the Variété Hirsch.<sup>78</sup>

## The Hirsch and Kassina Ensembles

The most important Jewish *Volkssänger* in Vienna at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by far was Albert Hirsch (1841–1927). Despite his importance for the entire *Volkssänger* industry, little scholarly attention has been devoted to him thus far. Most studies that discuss Hirsch merely repeat the information provided by Josef Koller’s 1931 survey of Viennese *Volkssänger*. Because I devote nearly the entire third chapter of this study to Albert Hirsch, I outline here only a few details related to his biography.

Albert Hirsch was born in Vienna and began his acting career early by performing with the Theater an der Wien, Theater in der Josephstadt, and Theater unter den Tuchlauben. However, despite this experience, he was unable to find a foothold in the world of theater, which is why he turned his attention to the folk-singer scene. For a time, he and his wife worked for the Drexler Singspiel and later for the Josefine Schmer Ensemble. Hirsch subsequently started his own ensemble, with family members making up the performers. His son Adolf, who was known simply by his nickname “Adolfi” and who had completed his musical education under the tutelage of Anton Bruckner (among others), was responsible for the group’s music.<sup>79</sup> Albert Hirsch, his wife, who was also a former actress, and his daughters played various roles in the group’s performances. He later added to his roster well-known *Volkssänger* such Mr. and Mrs. Armin, Karl Noisser, and Josef Müller.<sup>80</sup>

We can draw a parallel between the Jewishness that Hirsch portrayed in his plays and the sense of Jewish identification made evident by his actions. While religion was not a factor for Hirsch, we detect in his life and work a performative distinction between Jews and non-Jews. Although other *Volkssänger* had at least to some extent a similar conception of Jewish self-understanding, Hirsch provides us a clear and concrete example of this kind of Jewishness (see chapter 3). To echo what I discussed in chapter 1, Hirsch represents the Viennese Jews whose experiences and self-understanding cannot be understood in terms of acculturation.

We clearly see the deemphasizing of religion in one of Hirsch's plays, titled *Wrestlers at the Kosher Restaurant*. The focus of this play is a tavern that suffers from a painful lack of patrons.<sup>81</sup> The innkeepers, Zalma and Yentl, blame their kosher menu for their failing enterprise. They complain that even Jews avoid their restaurant because they have all discovered a love for pork. To remedy the situation, they decide to attract customers by offering entertainment and have a kind of vaudeville act in mind. However, they find themselves incapable of making any concrete steps to implement their new business model.

Zalma and Yentl's marriage appears to be in shambles, and Yentl regrets having married him. Their daughter Malvina's plans for the future are closely tied to the fate of the restaurant. Moritz, the waiter who works there, wants to marry Malvina, but Zalma is against it because Moritz does not earn enough money to support a family. Moritz suggests that they organize a wrestling match at the tavern. He argues that this attraction will lead to an influx of customers, thereby increasing profit. But before that, Moritz wants Zalma's promise that he can marry his daughter. Zalma agrees to the proposition and even puts their agreement in writing. In what follows, they announce the wrestling match with great fanfare, and patrons do indeed show up. The problem is that the customers immediately leave because the restaurant doesn't serve pork. Moritz's suggestion to organize the wrestling match reveals itself as a way of deceiving the family into allowing him to marry Malvina. Instead of inviting famous wrestlers, Moritz and another waiter who works at the restaurant enter the ring.

*Wrestlers at the Kosher Restaurant* critiques boundaries between Jews and non-Jews based on the observance of religious dietary laws. As the play illustrates it, they not only alienate Jews from non-Jews but also Jews from fellow Jews, as the absence of Jewish patrons at the restaurant underscores. A tavern restaurant offering a wide array of entertainment options—essentially an emblematic space for Jewish–non-Jewish interactions—drives off its customers in complying with a religious commandment. We might interpret the play's representation of dietary laws as an admonition that religion has no place in popular culture, that is, the realm of *Volkssänger*. The religious dimension of Jewishness, which does not appear in the overwhelming majority of *Volkssänger* plays, is thematized in *Wrestlers at the Kosher Restaurant*, only to be rejected. A religious outlook is depicted as obsolete and detrimental to everyday life. On the other hand, the play offers

no alternative, “more suitable,” form of Jewishness. We might conclude from Hirsch’s portrayal that it is preferable if Jewishness not play a role at all.

Albert Hirsch’s daughter Anna married Karl Kassina (1863–1909). Kassina started out as a Hirsch Society performer and in December 1901 received his own license to operate a *singspiel*.<sup>82</sup> Even when Anna and Karl Kassina left to form their own group, the two troupes maintained close professional and personal ties. Whenever the demand for *Volkssänger* abated, one of the troupes would temporarily disband and the Hirsch family would find work with the Kassinas, or vice versa. At the same time, there was a lively exchange between the two groups. It is worth noting here that the Kassina Ensemble regularly performed at the inn Neufellner’s Restaurant, located on the Lerchenfelder Gürtel in the sixteenth district, where Jews only made up about 2 percent of the population. We may therefore conclude that the group’s performances also attracted a number of non-Jews.

## **The Budapest Orpheum Society**

The Budapest Orpheum Society was probably the most well-known Jewish *Volkssänger* ensemble in all of Vienna. Because a monograph and several articles have already been devoted to this subject, I offer here only a brief outline of the group’s history.<sup>83</sup>

The reference to Budapest in the name is linked to the group’s origins. Some members of the ensemble, though they were for the most part originally from Vienna, had previously worked in the Hungarian capital. The reason for this was that Budapest was the central European center of Jewish jargon comedy, and it had a much larger and more vivid entertainment scene than Vienna.<sup>84</sup> In addition, the large *singspiel* halls that were mostly directed by Jewish impresarios held their performances in German, which meant that Viennese entertainers did not have to contend with a language barrier. Georg Wacks explains that Matthias Bernhard Lautzky (1819–1901), who had a license to operate a *singspiel* hall, traveled to Budapest in the spring of 1889 to find *Volkssänger* willing to join him in establishing his own ensemble in Vienna.<sup>85</sup> He quickly found what he was looking for. Together with Josef Modl (1863–1915), who was also a well-known folk singer, Lautzky founded the Budapest Orpheum Society.<sup>86</sup> Modl was in charge of the artistic direction. We should note here that Lautzky was not Jewish. In establishing with Modl one of the most important and famous entertainment groups in Vienna, Lautzky serves as a prime example for the mutual cooperation between Jews and non-Jews in the creation of popular cultural entertainment forms in the Habsburg metropolis. Initially, Lautzky and Modl chose the hotel Zum Schwarzen Adler, located in 11 Taborstrasse, as the performance venue for the Budapest Orpheum Society.

The plays that the Budapest Orpheum Society produced became the epitome of jargon comedy. Unlike many other singspiel groups, this ensemble was only partly associated with an aspect of popular culture that many viewed in a negative light. The Budapest Orpheum Society was also able to draw intellectuals and people from the upper echelons of society into their audiences. With their attractive performance lineup that was both extremely humorous and critical of the times, the ensemble found its way into literary works and thus became a part of collective memory.<sup>87</sup> Karl Kraus, though he wasn't entirely serious, even compared the Budapest Orpheum Society with the Burgtheater.<sup>88</sup> In any case, there was no other theater company in Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century that embodied Jewish entertainment like the Budapest Orpheum Society.

Their most important and best-known work was probably *Die Klabriaspartie* (The game of Klaberjass). Antal Oroszi (Caprice) wrote the play in 1889 and debuted it in Budapest in the same year. A year later, a somewhat altered version of the play written by Adolf Bergmann appeared in Vienna (see chapter 3 for a longer discussion).<sup>89</sup> *Die Klabriaspartie* enjoyed thousands of performances. The play focuses on a card game that Jews named Prokop Janitschek, Simon Dalles, and Jonas Ries, as well as the "Bohemian" Kiebitz Dowidl, play in a coffeehouse. There is also a character named Moritz, who is a waiter. Subtle punchlines and humorous statements run through the entire piece, and there is no recognizable course of action.<sup>90</sup> Despite the lack of plot, the play addresses the question of Jewishness like almost no other production of the time. It rejects all attempts to define Jewishness in a comprehensible fashion, suggesting that Jewishness cannot be described or measured empirically.<sup>91</sup> Similar to the other *Volkssänger* pieces that I have discussed here, the message of *Die Klabriaspartie* seems clear: there are no predetermined criteria for determining Jewishness, because it can only be negotiated contextually.

### ***Distinguishing between Jewish and Non-Jewish groups***

Thus far, I have focused in this chapter on *Volkssänger* ensembles that were generally considered to be Jewish and are still viewed as such today. This categorization appears to be justified in that the majority of these groups were made up of Jewish members, when we consider their ethnic, cultural, and religious affiliation. In addition, they performed pieces that often speak to a Jewish milieu or articulate a Jewish theme. Because these "Jewish" groups often hired and rehired the same actors and performers, they may well have made up an entire Jewish *Volkssänger* milieu. Examples of actors who performed with various Jewish groups are Karl Noisser and Mizzi Symer. While Noisser worked for the Hirsch Society, the Kassina Ensemble, and the Lemberg Singspiel Society, Symer performed with the Hirsch Society, the Karl Kassina Ensemble, the S. Fischer Society, as well as the Folies Caprice. To cite additional examples, Karl and Anna Kassina were

not only members of Albert Hirsch's company but were also engaged by the S. Fischer Society for a temporary stint in June 1903.<sup>92</sup> Armin Berg (1883–1956) also worked for Fischer, as well as the Budapest Orpheum Society, the Budapest Variété (a spin-off of the Budapest Orpheum Society), and other Jewish groups.<sup>93</sup> The Jewish *Volkssänger* and the groups they worked for were all closely linked with one another and thus created an environment that did not exclude non-Jews but could nonetheless be viewed at least to some extent as independent. We see this interconnectedness also in celebrations that were sometimes held to honor one of these actors. Most of the actors who took part in such events were Jewish and had previously performed in various Jewish groups alongside their colleague being celebrated. Non-Jews tended to be absent from such events, just as Jews often did not attend other festivities.<sup>94</sup>

Nevertheless, it would be incorrect to assume that there was a sharp contrast between Jews and non-Jews in the Viennese *Volkssänger* scene, as there was a fair amount of overlap between Jewish and non-Jewish groups. The composition of these groups frequently shifted; non-Jewish groups might have a Jewish director or Jewish members from one day to the next. The Gartenbau Restaurant, with its vaudeville performances, provides us an example of this variability. At the beginning of 1901, Käthe and Josef Armin both performed there. Martin Schenk, who was not Jewish but had previously performed with the Budapest Orpheum Society, was also engaged there.<sup>95</sup> Josef Müller, who was famous for his jargon songs, earned his living for a time at the Gartenbau.<sup>96</sup> This venue exemplifies the close cooperation that existed between Jews and non-Jews in Viennese popular culture.

We see a similar amalgamation between Jewish and non-Jewish groups in the performances that they offered the public. Troupes that had few if any Jewish actors in their ranks frequently staged so-called Jewish plays. These ensembles sometimes replaced their Alpine popular folk pieces with Jewish burlesques or simply added them to their lineup. In addition to other groups, the Mannsfeld Singspiel Group, located at the Wiedener Variété in the fourth district, did just this. In May 1904, the Blümel Comedy Ensemble was still the big attraction at the Wiedener Variété.<sup>97</sup> At the beginning of October, the group performed Josef Armin's *Illustrated Pages*.<sup>98</sup> Armin's play is a Jewish farce that the S. Fischer Society and the Folies Caprice also staged.<sup>99</sup> Two years prior, the Wiedener Variété had performed a play that it had borrowed from the Budapest Orpheum Society.<sup>100</sup> In mid-October 1904, Louis Taufstein's *A Fine Society* was performed.<sup>101</sup> Taufstein's pieces were also incorporated into the repertoire of the aforementioned Gartenbau Restaurant, which frequently offered farces and singspiel performances with Jewish themes. In this context, I would be remiss if I did not mention the heavily advertised performance of Adolf Wollner, who sang the hit song "Worüm war der klane Kohn nix zu finden?" ("Why was Little Kohn nowhere to be found?"), written by Eugen Joessel.<sup>102</sup> But none of these details that I have discussed here mean that the Mannsfeld Singspiel, the Gartenbau Restaurant, or other outfits

were specifically Jewish establishments. Rather, they positioned themselves in an interstitial space that made clear demarcations between Jewish and non-Jewish impossible.

My analysis here underscores how the divisions between Jewish and non-Jewish *Volkssänger* groups remained ambiguous. But we should not find this surprising. Instead, we must question the validity of seeking to identify a clear distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish ensembles. Such an approach is often based on a framework that involves binary categories, which consequently makes it difficult to discover the overlap between the two. Sometimes, this perceived need to seek out a contrast between Jewish and non-Jewish is the result of particular publication motives. For example, a study on Jewish popular cultural entertainment will hardly meet the expectations if its thesis argues that such a distinction cannot be made because the definition of Jewish is indeterminate.<sup>103</sup>

## **The Apollo and Danzer's Orpheum**

At any rate, the diverse interrelations between Jewish and non-Jewish *Volkssänger* ensembles make it somewhat difficult to identify particular groups as Jewish. This kind of classification is entirely impossible in the case of the vaudeville act (*variété*). The fact that a group performed individual jargon pieces and/or had a Jewish director is not enough to consider it Jewish. Otherwise, we would have to categorize the Ronacher in the final decade of the nineteenth century as a Jewish institution, because Josef Modl was the big star there. The problem of categorization is particularly evident when we take into consideration the Apollo Theater and Danzer's Orpheum, which were both directed by Jews. The Apollo was opened in September 1904. Ben Tieber (1867–1925), who was born in Bratislava, not far from Vienna, took over as manager.<sup>104</sup> Tieber traveled to America at a young age, and he was in charge of vaudeville shows in New York and other cities. He may have also spent time in South Africa engaged in similar activities, but the historical evidence for this is not as solid.<sup>105</sup> While he was abroad, Tieber acquired skills in business, which came in handy when he returned to Vienna. Upon his return, he first oversaw the Colosseum, before he took over management of the Apollo in 1904, serving as director there until 1923. After this time, illness forced him to lease out the space to another company.<sup>106</sup> On account of his entrepreneurial acumen, Tieber quickly succeeded in bringing in enough profit to acquire the Apollo one year after taking it over by means of a lease agreement. With an attractive lineup that not only brought internationally acclaimed productions to Vienna, but also vaunted its original performances, Tieber's Apollo was soon able to outstrip the Ronacher as the most prominent entertainment establishment.<sup>107</sup> His booming success also had something to do with appearances made by scantily clad dancers, earning Tieber the nickname “nudist specialist.”<sup>108</sup>

Ben Tieber was always concerned with offering the public new attractions, which is why he often traveled abroad. In 1905, for example, he spent several months in Germany, France, and England to discover new acts that he could bring back to Vienna.<sup>109</sup> Success, however, did not grace Tieber forever. Over time, the variety show outlived its popularity. As a result, Tieber saw the need to transform the Apollo into a theater in the traditional sense. He obtained the necessary approval for this change through the persistence that he was known to bring to all his endeavors.

When Gabor Steiner replaced Franz Kriebaum as director of Danzer's Orpheum in May 1900, he seems to have realized that the golden years of singspiel and vaudeville were, if not yet entirely over, fast approaching their end.<sup>110</sup> His predecessor's bankruptcy may have acted as a warning to him.<sup>111</sup> For this reason, Steiner sought to rebrand Danzer's Orpheum and turn it into a "boulevard theater" that would "unite true art with international artists."<sup>112</sup> For him, "true art" consisted of the operetta and bourgeois theater.

Gabor Steiner (1858–1944) was born in Temesvár, then part of the Kingdom of Hungary. He came from a family firmly rooted in the theater business. His father, Maximilian Steiner (1830–80), made his living as an actor before taking over as artistic director of the Theater an der Wien in 1869 and then as principal director of the theater in 1873. He appointed the operetta composer Carl Millöcker (1844–99) musical director of the theater. Later he also hired Johann Strauss II (1825–99) to work at the theater.<sup>113</sup> After Maximilian's death, his eldest son Franz Steiner (1855–1920) took over as director of Theater an der Wien. A few years later, he became manager of the Carltheater in the Praterstrasse, where his brother Gabor Steiner worked as a director and artistic director. He gained fame primarily as the director of Venice in Vienna (Venedig in Wien), located in the Vienna Prater, which replicated the sights of Venice with its canals and gondolas.<sup>114</sup>

## Venice in Vienna

In its early days, Venice in Vienna was by far the most important entertainment venue in all of Vienna. There were days when it attracted up to twenty thousand people. Gabor Steiner was able to make a name for himself as theater director there. During the winter months, Danzer's Orpheum served as a temporary home for Venice in Vienna's theatrical productions. From 1909 until 1912, Gabor Steiner also functioned as the director of the Ronacher. His son Max (1888–1971) was a film composer in the United States. He wrote the score for film classics such as *Gone with the Wind* (1939) and *Casablanca* (1943).<sup>115</sup>

The opening event at Danzer's Orpheum at the end of October 1900 featured the Brothers O'Brien, a pair of horizontal bar gymnasts, the dancer La

Sylphe, the eccentrics Smith and Cook, as well as other internationally known vaudeville stars.<sup>116</sup> The season premiere at the Apollo on 2 September 1904 presented, among other attractions, the soubrette Adele Moraw, the “mulatto dandies” Johnson & Dean, the juggler Everhardt, the Patty Frank gymnast troupe from Vienna, and a “biotophon,” an invention from the early days of cinema that entertained audiences with “singing, talking, and musical photographs.”<sup>117</sup> This colorful program once again demonstrates how difficult, if not impossible, it is to consider the Apollo, Danzer’s Orpheum, or even a number of other venues that existed in Vienna at this time as part of the “Jewish” entertainment industry.

The fact that both Ben Tieber and Gabor Steiner left Judaism problematizes this categorization further still. This begs the question whether we can even regard the two to be Jewish directors. Some academic studies sidestep the question of whether converts can still be considered to be Jews by referring to their “origin.”<sup>118</sup> This kind of historical approach needn’t take into account religious affiliation and can simply dismiss a biographical detail such as the rejection of Judaism. My approach in this study is altogether different.<sup>119</sup> I therefore attempt to answer the question of whether Ben Tieber and Gabor Steiner are examples of Jewish entrepreneurs in the Viennese entertainment industry using different means.

### ***Establishing a Criterion for Jewish Difference***

In the following, I explore two aspects that will help us to characterize Ben Tieber and Gabor Steiner as Jewish without reference to their religious status. We can subsume these two aspects under the term “Jewish difference,” in that they draw a distinction between Jews and non-Jews. The characteristics are dependent upon context and usually contain a performative element.<sup>120</sup>

The first aspect pertains to the choice of religion of the two converts. In 1887, Gabor Steiner married a former Catholic who had converted to Judaism. The fact that he remained faithful to Judaism and did not convert or agree to a civil wedding ceremony suggests that he saw himself as Jewish at the time. However, six years later, both Gabor Steiner and his wife converted from Judaism and became Protestants.<sup>121</sup> Though we do not know their exact motivations for this decision, it may have been the result of professional considerations. In this context, we should mention that the Vienna Zoo was forced to declare bankruptcy in 1900 because it had failed to receive public subsidies. It is quite possible that the city government, with Karl Lueger as mayor at that time, refused to assist the failing enterprise due to antisemitic sentiment. The zoo was a large attraction in Vienna, and tens of thousands of people came to visit its exhibitions featuring indigenous peoples. The zoo’s provisional director was Richard Goldmann, who was Jewish.<sup>122</sup> Given the political climate in fin-de-siècle Vienna, Gabor Steiner perhaps decided to officially renounce Judaism to attract paying customers with antisemitic inclinations who might have otherwise chosen other entertainment



options. It was known that Karl Lueger often attended performances at Venice in Vienna.<sup>123</sup> We can only speculate as to whether Lueger would have avoided the venue if Steiner had remained Jewish. In any case, Steiner's decision to leave the Jewish community likely did not hurt his professional ambitions.

Ben Tieber converted from Judaism and was baptized a Protestant in January 1899. A sense of conviction may have been more of a motivation for Tieber than for Steiner. There is historical evidence indicating that Tieber more or less felt a personal connection to and identified with Protestantism. His charitable donations to Protestant schools seem to suggest this sense of commitment.<sup>124</sup> We should note that both Ben Tieber and Gabor Steiner made a conscious decision to convert to Protestantism, which was a minority religion in Austria. Only a little more than 5 percent of the Austrian population was Protestant. Nevertheless, a fourth of Jews who decided to convert chose to be Protestant. Approximately half of Jewish converts decided to become Catholic, while the final fourth chose to be unaffiliated with any religious faith.<sup>125</sup> It is entirely possible that the decision to become Protestant had something to do with particular cultural similarities between Protestantism and the worldview of the bourgeoisie, to which a significant number of Jews belonged.<sup>126</sup> This choice of conversion may have also been the result of an unwillingness to join the religion chiefly responsible for the intellectual climate in Austria in which Jews who lived visibly as Jews had to contend with considerable disadvantages.<sup>127</sup> Seen in this light, conversion to Protestantism points to a particular form of Jewish self-understanding and underscores a distinction between Jews and non-Jews in Vienna around 1900.

The second aspect of "Jewish difference" that I identify in my analysis of Gabor Steiner and Ben Tieber concerns their mutual focus on the international. Because of this focus, they clearly stood out from a large part of the popular entertainment sector in Vienna around 1900. The Viennese entertainment industry was strongly influenced by *Volkssänger*, even if the various singspiel halls created a tangible sense of competition among them. The *Volkssänger* were closely associated with the trope of Old Vienna and highlighted in their songs a culture based on the local. An open atmosphere of xenophobia was one result of this emphasis (see chapter 3). Even though Jews participated in this tradition, it is possible that this sense of xenophobia was for some of them a source of discomfort. They may have been aware that the construction of a culture that was closely tied to a concept of Vienna and based on the delineation between itself and "foreign" influences could quickly lead to an attempt to deny Jews the possibility of participating in it. I have already shown an example of this attempt at exclusivity in chapter 1. And this sense of anguish may have been a reason that the city's large variety theaters, whose international performances provided a cultural counterpoint to the local cult around Old Vienna, were at least partially run or financed by Jews.<sup>128</sup> A look at Viennese institutions illustrates this point. Among the most important establishments that made up the city's entertainment industry at the

turn of the century were the Gschwandner, the Prater-Variété, Brady's Wintergarten, Weigl's Variété, the Ronacher, the Colosseum, the Apollo Theater, Danzer's Orpheum, and the Budapest Orpheum.<sup>129</sup> The last five of these establishments on this list were probably the most popular and most well-known entertainment venues in Vienna. In this context, it is rather remarkable that, at least for a short time and sometimes over the course of many years, these establishments all had a Jewish director who was also responsible for the artistic program.<sup>130</sup> And it seems that these impresarios were more enthusiastic than their non-Jewish counterparts about introducing the Viennese to international acts from around the world. Presumably, they endeavored to bring the international element as a remedy for Vienna's intellectual narrowness and provincial atmosphere. Gabor Steiner, for one, was explicitly committed to this goal. At the end of 1930, he wrote in the *Illustrierte Wochenpost* that he was particularly motivated in his work as a theater director by a desire to make the city more cosmopolitan through international performing acts.<sup>131</sup> He also considered himself to have been one of the first to invite African Americans to perform in Vienna.<sup>132</sup> As I have already discussed, Ben Tieber also had many international experiences that he put to good use in Vienna.<sup>133</sup> A look at what the Apollo offered before and during Ben Tieber's time as theater director makes for a compelling comparison. Whereas Tieber entertained audiences with a number of international attractions, the performance program in the year before he took over the venue was characterized by Old Viennese classics such as *The Sweet Guys* (*Die süßen Buam*) and the "Viennese yodeling duet, Kiesel-Marie and Korber."<sup>134</sup>

## Conclusion

I argue that the *Volksänger* plays penned by Jewish authors portray Jewishness without reference to religion. In these representations, Jewishness is anything but clearly outlined; instead, it is fluid, multifaceted, and opaque. In most of these pieces, Jewishness is expressed in a form of performative difference: Jews distinguish themselves from non-Jews through activities or their effects. This means that Jewish difference, as constructed in these works, is time- and context-dependent. In addition, this concept of Jewish self-understanding is inclusive, in that even non-Jews can adopt their characteristics. But that does not mean that all difference between Jews and non-Jews is lost (for more on this point, see chapter 5).

I have demonstrated through a range of *Volksänger* pieces that the Jewishness of the characters is indicated by way of their use of Yiddish-language terms. The use of Yiddish is not surprising. As the capital of a multiethnic monarchy, fin-de-siècle Vienna was the haven of tens of thousands of migrants who brought their own linguistic particularity and made multilingualism a prime characteristic of the city. Vienna's inhabitants connected their various ethnic and cultural identifi-

cations to language, thus promoting the particular brand of linguistic nationalism that would ultimately lead to the Austro-Hungarian Empire's downfall.<sup>135</sup> The fact that the Jewish characters in the farces performed by *Volkssänger* ensembles also demonstrate their difference through language underscores Jewish participation in the discourses and cultural processes of the time. Simultaneously, these pieces question the importance of language for ethnic identity. In particular, we see this in the fact that Jewishness was often indicated by the use of Yiddish expressions that were also a part of everyday speech in Vienna. Although the Jewish characters spoke German with Yiddish inflection (*jiddeln*), they used language that non-Jews could also understand and use. These plays thus eliminate one potential clear distinction between Jews and non-Jews and call into question the significance of differentiation based on ethnicity and culture.

One farce that clearly illustrates the problem of language is the play *Viennese Hospitality*, written by Adolf Hirsch.<sup>136</sup> It takes place in a Viennese coffeehouse that fails to attract business. For this reason, the coffeehouse's owner is all the more pleased when Count Horlos, one of his few regular customers, announces that he wants to introduce a friend from Bohemia to Viennese hospitality. Count Horlos explains that he would like to invite his friend to the café that evening. Because he has to attend the opera with his wife and leave his friend to his own devices for a period of time, Horlos asks the owner to be friendly toward his guest and serve him well. He assures the owner that he will take care of the bill. That evening, a Berliner comes to the coffeehouse, and the staff assume that he is the count's friend. The waiters provide him exemplary service, bringing him all the delicacies on their menu and the best champagne. When he attempts to pay the bill after his opulent meal, they not only comp his bill but also give him a cash sum. They do all this on the assumption that Count Horlos will later pay the bill. The only difficulty that arises is the conversation between the waiters and the guest. The conversations create misunderstandings, thereby also confusion and discord. The reason for this misunderstanding lies in the fine linguistic differences between the Berlin and Viennese ways of speaking. When the count's real friend, a beer brewer from Bohemia finally shows up, they think he is a dine-and-dasher and almost throw him out. Only the appearance of the count prevents this embarrassment from happening. Once he arrives, they all clear up the misunderstanding.

The play is more than a simple comedy of errors. Against the background of the multiethnic Habsburg monarchy with its linguistic pluralism and the closely related nationalisms, it deconstructs the notion of a language-based cultural homogeneity. Although both the guest from Berlin and the Viennese waiters speak German, serious problems in communication arise that point to deeper cultural differences. *Viennese Hospitality* thus thematizes aspects of language use—a topic that has received considerable attention throughout Austrian history. Questions such as how to establish mutual understanding despite linguistic differences be-

tween various ethnic groups and how to communicate meaning without ambiguity dominated political debate at the time and occupied many scholars and intellectuals.<sup>137</sup> Especially this situation throughout the monarchy influenced, for example, how the philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and Fritz Mauthner engaged with questions related to language.<sup>138</sup> Writers and intellectuals such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal and especially Karl Kraus devoted themselves to the question of language's potential as a form of expression.<sup>139</sup> Jewish *Volksänger* also entertained these kinds of questions. *Viennese Hospitality* illustrates how divisions between people are maintained despite—or perhaps even because of—their shared language and the underlying concept of a German cultural nation. The construction of identity based on language thus proves to be a myth. The play calls to mind the adage, incorrectly attributed to Karl Kraus, that nothing separates the Germans and the Austrians quite like the language they have in common.

## Notes

1. Mary Gluck, *The Invisible Jewish Budapest: Metropolitan Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016).
2. See the bibliography for additional information.
3. Joseph Roth, *Juden auf Wanderschaft* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1985), 46.
4. *Das Variété* 17 (25 February 1903): 1.
5. Ruth Beckermann, *Die Mazzesinsel: Juden in der Leopoldstadt 1918–1938* (Vienna: Löcker, 1992).
6. Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Juden in Wien 1867–1914: Assimilation und Identität* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1989), 85, 87.
7. See Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
8. See Andreas Resch, “Die Wiener Kulturwirtschaft um 1910 und die Partizipation von Juden, Tschechen und ‘Staatsfremden,’” in *Migration und Innovation um 1900: Perspektiven auf das Wien der Jahrhundertwende*, ed. Elisabeth Röhrlich (Vienna: Böhlau, 2016), 165.
9. Gluck, *Jewish Budapest*, 168.
10. *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt (IWE* in subsequent citations) 309 (9 November 1899): 8; 310 (10 November 1899): 15. In some instances, the opening date is erroneously given as 1 November 1899. See Johannes A. Löcker, “Vom Donaukanal zum Praterstern,” in *Artistenleben auf vergessenen Wegen: Eine Spurensuche in Wien*, ed. Birgit Peter, Robert Kaldy-Karo (= *Wien – Musik und Theater* 4, Vienna: LIT, 2013), 36.
11. *IWE* 66 (8 March 1900): 5.
12. *IWE* 320 (26 September 1899): 19.
13. Verena Schäffer, “Theater und Varieté im Nestroyhof: 1899 bis 1938. Vier Jahrzehnte theatraler Produktion in der Wiener Leopoldstadt” (unpublished thesis, Vienna, 2008), 42–43.
14. Gerhard Müller-Schwefe, *Was haben die aus Shakespeare gemacht! Weitere alte und neue Shakespeare-Parodien* (Tübingen: A. Francke, 1993), 75.

15. For example, see *IWE* 245 (6 September 1900): 14.
16. *IWE* 300 (1 November 1900): 4.
17. *IWE* 284 (16 October 1901): 2.
18. Schäffer, “Theater,” 51.
19. *Das Variété* 6 (29 November 1902): n.p.
20. Josef Armin (Rottenstein) (1858–1925) was born in Budapest and came to Vienna in 1873, where he got his start in a textiles company. He soon joined a traveling *Volkssänger* troupe. Along with his wife, Armin performed with various groups, including the Hirsch Society and the Folies Comiques. He also worked as a comedian at Danzer’s Orpheum, the Gartenbau variety, and Venice in Vienna. He attained his greatest fame with the farces that he composed for the Budapest Orpheum Society. See Josef Koller, *Das Wiener Volkssängertum in alter und neuer Zeit: Nacherzähltes und Selbsterlebtes* (Vienna: Gerlach & Wiedling, 1931).
21. Ulrike Spring, “Der Himmel über Wien. Franz Schubert, sein Körper und Alt-Wien,” in *Alt-Wien: Die Stadt, die niemals war*, ed. Wolfgang Kos and Christian Rapp (Vienna: Verlag, 2004), 151–58.
22. Louis Taufstein, *Familie Pschesina*, Niederösterreichisches Landesarchiv [NÖLA in subsequent citations] (Theaterzensur), Box 37/12 (1903). Newspapers also announced the play *Familie Pschesina* variously as *Familie Brzezina* (*IWE* 35 [3 February 1903]: 18). The spelling of Pschesina likely corresponded to how the name was pronounced.
23. *Das Variété* 1 (15 October 1902): n.p.
24. During a performance of the opera *The Bartered Bride* by Bedrich Smetana in February 1903, an ensemble member is said to have proclaimed the words “Waclav Brzezina” during the performance. A Czech newspaper reported this occurrence and interpreted it as an insult to the “Czech nation” (*IWE* 45 [15 February 1903]: 5).
25. *IWE* 287 (19 October 1901): 14.
26. Doris A. Karner, *Lachen unter Tränen. Jüdisches Theater in Ostgalizien und der Bukowina* (Vienna: Edition Steinbauer, 2005), 118.
27. Brigitte Dalinger, “‘Verloschene Sterne’: Geschichte des jüdischen Theaters in Wien” (PhD dissertation, Vienna, 1995), 21.
28. Siegler, “Der Soldat von Plewna,” NÖLA (Theaterzensur), Box 14/10 (1903).
29. See Daniel Wildmann, *Der veränderbare Körper: Jüdische Turner, Männlichkeit und das Wiedergewinnen von Geschichte in Deutschland um 1900* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).
30. S. Larescu, “Jüdalys mit dem Wandersack: Realistisches Bild mit Tanz und Gesang,” NÖLA (Theaterzensur), Box 14/17 (1904).
31. Dalinger, “Sterne,” 23.
32. David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 159–60.
33. On this, also see the footnotes in Dalinger, “Sterne,” 20–27.
34. *IWE* 194 (18 July 1901): 15.
35. Dalinger, “Sterne,” 21.
36. Dalinger, “Sterne,” 21.
37. Yiddish theater did not gain prominence in Vienna until the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. See Dalinger, “Sterne,” 28.
38. The play is actually called *Gimpel Is here!* (See Albert Hirsch, *Der Gimpel ist da!*, NÖLA [Theaterzensur], Box 21/20 [1901].) However, the newspapers announced the piece as

- Gimpel from Lemberg Is Here!* probably on account of the obvious reference to the real-life theater director. For my purposes here, I have placed “from Lemberg” in parentheses.
39. Klaus Hödl, *Als Bettler in die Leopoldstadt: Galizische Juden auf dem Weg nach Wien* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1994), 148–52.
  40. *IWE* 194 (18 July 1901): 15.
  41. Georg Wacks, “Der schöne Moritz von der Klabriaspattie,” in *Jüdisches Kabarett in Wien 1889–2009*, ed. Marie-Theres Arnbom and Georg Wacks (Vienna: Armin Berg, 2009), 54–55.
  42. *Das Variété* 15 (8 February 1903): n.p.
  43. Fritz Lung was born in Vienna as Friedrich Lung and as a child acted at the Josefstadt Theater. Later, he performed in Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, and other cities, before he became a *Volkssänger*. In 1897, he received a license to operate a singspiel hall and was able to start his own business (*IWE* 78 [18 March 1904]: 7).
  44. *IWE* 28 (28 January 1903): 6.
  45. See *IWE* 175 (27 June 1902): 15; *IWE* 166 (18 June 1902): 13. Hirsch’s own troupe performed *Dada-Dodo* in November 1901. See *IWE* 314 (15 January 1901): 23. On Wiesberg, see Anna Maria Huber, “Wilhelm Wiesberg” (unpublished PhD dissertation, Vienna, 1938).
  46. *IWE* 166 (18 June 1902): 13. On Schmendrik, see Klaus Hödl, “A Space of Cultural Exchange: Reflections on the Yiddish Theatre in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Pinkas* 3 (2010): 24–41.
  47. See *IWE* 198 (20 July 1902): 23; *IWE* 235 (26 August 1902): 15; *IWE* 237 (28 August 1902): 15.
  48. For example, see *IWE* 177 (29 June 1902): 20.
  49. *IWE* 328 (29 November 1901): 14.
  50. *IWE* 356 (28 December 1901): 6.
  51. Franz Xaver Kriebaum was born in Vienna and apprenticed to be a saddle maker. During the war against Prussia in 1866, he demonstrated great valor, for which he received the Silver Cross of Merit and later a singspiel license. At first, he tried his hand at performing as a *Volkssänger* in Pest and then had a breakthrough in Vienna, where he took the stage as part of a duo along with Aton Nowak. After their collaboration ended, he established his own variety show but gained greater fame only after taking over as director of Danzer’s Orpheum (*Artistentribüne* 34 [22 August 1895]: 1–2.)
  52. Born in Pest, Josefine Schmer began her career in Vienna as a member of the prominent group run by Johann Fürst (1825–82). She often played men and became famous for her so-called trousers roles (*Hosenrollen*). Many of the great stars of the Viennese *Volkssänger* scene performed in the ensemble that she founded in 1870.
  53. *IWE* 200 (24 July 1901): 3.
  54. *IWE* 212 (5 August 1901): 3.
  55. *IWE* 187 (11 July 1901): 15.
  56. Marietta Kriebaum had also once been a singer at the Deutsches Landestheater in Prague, where she met her husband (*IWE* 187 [11 July 1901]: 15). After marriage, she retreated into the domestic sphere and gained a reputation as a patron. She later received a license to run her own ensemble after the death of her husband.
  57. *IWE* 314 (15 November 1900): 15; *IWE* 328 (29 November 1900): 8.
  58. I borrow the term “space of communication” from the Austrian historian Moritz Csáky, “Hybride Kommunikationsräume und Mehrfachidentitäten. Zentraleuropa und Wien

- um 1900,” in *Migration und Innovation um 1900: Perspektiven auf das Wien der Jahrhundertwende*, ed. Elisabeth Röhrlich (Vienna: Böhlau, 2016), 65–97.
59. *IWE* 123 (3 May 1904): 8.
  60. *IWE* 314 (15 November 1900): 15.
  61. *IWE* 201 (23 July 1902): 14.
  62. *IWE* 71 (13 March 1901): 9.
  63. Koller, *Volkssängertum*, 146, 149.
  64. On Fischer’s Purim in 1901, see *IWE* 63 (5 March 1901): 15.
  65. Koller, *Volkssängertum*, 92–94.
  66. *IWE* 89 (1 April 1902): 8.
  67. *IWE* 354 (25 December 1901): 83.
  68. Louis Taufstein, “Ihr einziger Patient,” *NÖLA* (Theaterzensur), Box 17/11 (1903).
  69. Henry Wassermann, “Stereotype Darstellungen von Juden in der Karikatur,” in *Antisemitismus: Erscheinungsformen der Judenfeindschaft gestern und heute*, ed. Günther B. Ginzler (Bielefeld: Wissenschaft und Politik, 1991), 426.
  70. Alfred Walters, “Im Heiratsbureau,” *NÖLA* (Zensur), Box 17/9 (1903).
  71. For more on the stereotype of the Jewish nose, see Sander Gilman, *The Jew’s Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 169–93.
  72. Homi K. Bhabha, *Die Verortung der Kultur* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2000), 25–50.
  73. Adolff Hirsch, “Der ‘Dumme Kerl’ im *Gänsehäufel*,” *NÖLA* (Theaterzensur), Box 23/5 (1912), 5.
  74. Josef Armin, “Die Frau mit der Maske: Original-Posse in 1 Akt” (1909; 47 pp.) in *NÖLA* (Zensurakten), Box 29/6. We can see the degree to which the idea of the “Jewish nose” was part and parcel of the thinking of the time in a drawing that appeared in 1899 in the *Illustrierte Wiener Extrablatt*. The purpose of the drawing was to give readers an impression of the “Narrenabend des Wiener Männergesangsvereins” (Fool’s Night at the Viennese Men’s Choral Society). Among the masked men portrayed in the image is Heinrich Eisenbach (1870–1923), who functioned as the leader of the Budapest Orpheum Society from 1894 until World War I. Eisenbach, whose family was originally from Galicia, is clearly identified by a hooked nose. Despite the disguise he wears, he cannot hide. Even if the sketch in this instance was not the result of anti-Jewish motive, it nevertheless further solidifies the notorious stereotype that Jews had a particular type of nose.
  75. *IWE* 293 (25 October 1903): 16.
  76. *IWE* 181 (1 July 1904): 15.
  77. *IWE* 49 (18 February 1899): 8.
  78. *IWE* 5 (6 January 1900): 16.
  79. *Österreichisches Musiklexikon* (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften), [http://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik\\_H/Hirsch\\_Familie\\_2.xml](http://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_H/Hirsch_Familie_2.xml) (accessed 12 January 2019).
  80. Koller, *Volkssängertum*, 131.
  81. Albert Hirsch, *Ringkämpfer in der Koscher-Restaurations*, *NÖLA* (Zensur), Box 21/17 (1900).
  82. *IWE* 353 (24 December 1901): 9.
  83. See Georg Wacks’s important monograph, *Die Budapester Orpheumgesellschaft: Ein Variété in Wien 1889–1919* (Vienna: Holzhausen, 2002).
  84. Gluck, *Jewish Budapest*, 141.

85. Wacks, *Budapester Orpheumgesellschaft*, 6.
86. Josef Modl was born in Vienna and was hired by Drexler's Singpielhalle in 1884. He spent much of his professional life in Budapest. In Vienna, he performed mostly with the Budapest Orpheum Society and the Ronacher. See Koller, *Volkssängertum*, 166–67.
87. Simon Usaty, "O Tempora O Zores: Der österreichische Kabarettist Armin Berg" (PhD diss., Vienna, 2008), 5.
88. Dietmar Krug, "Was die Österreicher und die Deutschen trennt," *Die Presse*, 17 November 2012, <http://diepresse.com/home/meinung/diesedeutschen/1313957/Was-die-Österreicher-und-die-Deutschen-trennt> (accessed 12 January 2019).
89. Gluck, *Jewish Budapest*, 168–70.
90. Wacks, *Budapester Orpheumgesellschaft*, 56–57.
91. Gluck, *Jewish Budapest*, 170.
92. *IWE* 145 (2 June 1903): 8.
93. Usaty, "Tempora."
94. For example, see *IWE* 92 (4 April 1900): 7.
95. *IWE* 278 (10 October 1901): 18.
96. *IWE* 1 (1 January 1902): 8.
97. *IWE* 123 (3 May 1904): 16.
98. *IWE* 272 (1 October 1904): 10.
99. *IWE* 283 (12 October 1904): 15; 342 (13 December 1903): 43.
100. *Das Variété* 2 (15 October 1902): n.p.
101. *IWE* 283 (12 October 1904): 15.
102. *Das Variété* 5 (16 November 1902): n.p.
103. In this context, it is useful refer to a companion volume that accompanied an exhibit at the Jewish Museum Vienna that took place in 2016, titled "Wege ins Vergnügen: Unterhaltung zwischen Prater und Stadt" ("Paths to pleasure: Entertainment between Prater and the city"). The topic of the exhibit was "Jewish" entertainment establishments and artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, the companion volume mentions that the Budapest Orpheum Society was "a group of Jewish actors" (Brigitte Dalinger, "Jüdisches und Jiddisches," in *Wege ins Vergnügen: Unterhaltung zwischen Prater und Stadt*, ed. Brigitte Dalinger, Werner Hanak-Lettner, and Lisa Noggler [Vienna: Metropolverlag, 2016], 29.) Although this characterization might be appropriate for a publication dedicated to Jewish life, it is nonetheless incorrect. Admittedly, the majority of the members of the Budapest Orpheum Society was Jewish, but the group also had non-Jewish performers. And, I might add, not every single satirical song that the group sang and not every farce that they performed had a Jewish theme, even if this was often the case.
104. Other sources indicate that this birthplace was "somewhere in Galicia or in the Bukovina." See Rudolf Oesterreicher, "Ein großer Mann und seine kleinen Schwächen," in *Festschrift der Apollo Kino- und Theater-Ges. M. B. H.* (Vienna, 1954), 18.
105. *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1850*, vol. 14 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014), 338–39.
106. Sabine Claudia Tanner, *Vom Variété zum Kino: Die Baugeschichte des Wiener 'Apollo'-Varietés von 1903–1929* (Saarbrücken: Dr. Müller, 2009), 24–25.
107. Tanner, *Variété*, 26.
108. Birgit Peter, "Schaulust und Vergnügen: Zirkus, Variété und Revue im Wien der Ersten Republik" (PhD diss., Vienna, 2001), 100.



109. *IWE* 241 (1 September 1905): 7.
110. *IWE* 132 (15 May 1900): 6.
111. In particular, Kriebaum had to contend with competition from the Colosseum, which Ben Tieber managed at the time.
112. *IWE* 133 (16 May 1900): 5; 274 (6 October 1901): 3.
113. Norbert Rubey and Peter Schoenwald, *Venedig in Wien: Theater- und Vergnügungsstadt der Jahrhundertwende* (Vienna: Carl Ueberreuter 1996), 10–15.
114. Rubey and Schoenwald, *Venedig in Wien*, 39–161.
115. Rubey and Schoenwald, *Venedig in Wien*, 37.
116. *IWE* 299 (31 October 1900): 6.
117. Josef Zak, “Fünfzig Jahre ‘Apollo’ – Ein Rückblick,” *Festschrift der Apollo Kino- und Theater-Ges. M. B. H.* (Vienna, 1954), 12.
118. Steven Beller, “The Influence of Jewish Immigration,” in *Migration und Innovation um 1900: Perspektiven auf das Wien der Jahrhundertwende*, ed. Elisabeth Röhrlich (Vienna: Böhlau, 2016), 194.
119. Susan Glenn criticizes the reference to origin and ancestry as “blood logic.” See Susan A. Glenn, “In the Blood? Consent, Descent, and the Ironies of Jewish Identity,” *Jewish Social Studies* 8, no. 2 (2002): 139–52.
120. On the concept of “Jewish difference,” though formulated in different terms, also see Lisa Silverman, “Reconsidering the Margins: Jewishness as an Analytical Framework,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 8, no. 1 (2009): 103–20.
121. Rubey and Schoenwald, *Venedig in Wien*, 25.
122. Werner Michael Schwarz, *Anthropologische Spektakel: Zur Schaustellung ‘exotischer’ Menschen, Wien 1870–1910* (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2001), 167.
123. Rubey and Schoenwald, *Venedig in Wien*, 34–35.
124. Astrid Schweighofer, *Religiöse Sucher in der Moderne: Konversionen vom Judentum zum Protestantismus in Wien um 1900* (Munich: de Gruyter, 2015), 359.
125. Rozenblit, *Juden in Wien*, 148.
126. Schweighofer, *Religiöse Sucher*, 57–63.
127. Michael Pollak, “Innovation und soziale Identität im Wien des Fin de Siècle,” in *Eine zerstörte Kultur: Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus in Wien seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Gerhard Botz, Ivar Oxaal, and Michael Pollak (Vienna: Czernin, 1990), 91.
128. This includes the Ronacher, which was co-founded by the Jewish journalist Max Friedländer.
129. On the *Gschwandner*, see Astrid Göttche, *Erich Bernard, Das Gschwandner: Ein legendäres Wiener Etablissement* (Vienna: Metroverlag, 2012).
130. This was also the case with other establishments. Along with her sister Sofie Ruzek and two other individuals, Minna Rott founded in March 1903 an “amusement establishment in true Viennese tradition” with the name Zum süßen Mädél (*IWE* 72 [14 March 1903]: 13). When they sold it soon after, Minna Rott and her sister bought the extremely popular Brady’s Wintergarten.
131. I am indebted to the Viennese art historian Elana Shapira for bringing this to my attention.
132. Konrad Nowakowski, “‘30 Negroes (Ladies and Gentlemen)’: The Syncopated Orchestra in Vienna,” *Black Music Research Journal* 2, no. 2 (2009): 240.
133. *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* 245 (4 September 1904): 10.
134. *IWE* 67 (9 March 1902): 22.

135. Elisabeth Leinfellner-Rupertsberger, “Die Republik der Sprachen bei Fritz Mauthner: Sprache und Nationalismus,” in *Die Wiener Jahrhundertwende*, ed. Jürgen Nautz and Richard Vahrenkamp (Vienna: Böhlau, 1993), 389–404.
136. Adolf Hirsch, *Die Wiener Gemütlichkeit*, NÖLA (Theaterzensur), Box 23/14 (1917).
137. David S. Luft, *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture 1880–1942* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 17.
138. See William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History 1848–1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
139. Dagmar Lorenz, *Wiener Moderne* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2007).