

Cellists' Corner

Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

prepared by David Johnstone from public information

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FEATURE ON LOUISE WANDERSLEB

Birth: 15th October, 1846 – Gotha, Germany

Death: 31st January 1901 – Gotha, Germany

Louise Wandersleb was a noted cellist, cello teacher and possibly had opportunities as a conductor too. She was the daughter of Christiana Dorothee Louise Wandersleb (née Behm 1827–1846) and of the court music director, piano teacher and composer Adolf Wandersleb (1810–1884), who first "guided her to the cello". Despite this, she was brought up by grandmother Marie Gabriele Behm (1800-1873), and known to her close circle as 'Lulu' all her life!

Her later advanced professional training on this instrument almost surely came from Friedrich Grützmacher. The first we know of her concert activity took place in Mühlhausen in 1866, when she – as a mere 20-year-old – was reviewed:

"Particular interest was aroused by the performance of the young cello virtuoso Miss Wandersleb from Gotha [...], who was named in a cello concerto by [Georg] Goltermann, developing a significant degree of technical skill".

In 1871 she played August Lindner's Cello Concerto in E minor in the 7th subscription concert in Kassel; she is also noted as having taken part in a string quartet by Mozart.

By the time of her appearing in several Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts in 1875, now aged almost 30, she attracted the "attention of larger German concert societies [...]. Welcomed as an extraordinary phenomenon by art critics in Leipzig, Cologne, Magdeburg, Stuttgart, etc., she was about to veer into broader directions when she was deprived of culture for some years by a dangerous affliction" (Vienna Signals, July 1, 1880).

In March 1876 – but it is unclear whether before or after this illness - she gave a performance in Basel in a "ladies' concert" together with the singer Podgorny and the pianist Leonie Größler-Heim. The newspaper's Basel correspondent judged her:

"Miss. Wandersleb, the cellist, let [...] feeling the consecration of the 'Eternal Feminine' throughout her playing, like her colleague on the piano. The artist tried to shine not through the magnificent display of a sweat-inducing technique, with which most virtuosos today believe they have to treat this instrument, but through a truly soulful, profound playing that brought out the wonderfully moving singing tone of the cello to its fullest. 'Hearing the Larghetto by Mozart by Miss Wandersleb and then dying', an enthusiast would say"

On June 6th, 1878, Luise Wandersleb married the pianist Alfred Patzig (1850–1927), who (logically) became her chamber music partner from then on and, in fact, accompanied her on both the piano and the organ. In the winter of 1879/1880, the couple undertook a joint concert tour through the Netherlands (Alfred Patzig had been there as a pianist a decade earlier) and they played together with the Utrecht-born violinist Charles Venth, as mentioned by a contemporary report:

"About the cello virtuoso Wandersleb and her husband pianist Patzig Gotha speak reports from Holland highly appreciative. They organized 16 concerts in 12 cities and the mainly excitement was by Mrs. Patzig-Wandersleb with the masterful performance of Lindner's Vcell concert [...]undivided admiration".

Given the great success of this first concert tour, the artist couple planned "a new tour for next March, again through Holland" (Bock 1880, p. 15). The concerts abroad soon had to be restricted, however, when five children were born between 1879 and 1887. Only the concert appearances in Gotha by Luise Patzig-Wandersleb are known for the entire period from 1883 to 1895.

It is unclear whether her place of residence was there, since her husband was the director of a conservatory in Essen from 1874 to 1909. In the concerts in Gotha she appeared both as a soloist and as a chamber musician. The "Illustrierte Zeitung" reported on her musical career on July 1, 1882, where she and Clara Schumann (1819-1896) were introduced as "contemporary virtuosos". In 1884 she played under the direction of her husband in the orchestra association, and she was perceived again as the main attraction of the concert:

"The association has recently also included solo recitals and vocal quartets in its program and gives its concerts, the most interesting numbers of which are offered by the well-known cellist Frau Patzig-Wandersleben".

She devoted herself particularly intensively to chamber music and often performed as a piano trio with her husband and the violinists Eichhorn and Voigtländer. In 1894 she organized, among other things, a chamber music cycle with several concerts.

The Patzig-Wandersleb couple had six children in all, four of whom became musicians. They were brought up lovingly by their mother and strictly musically by their father. From the age of five, every child was trained on two instruments. The Patzig couple ran a renowned conservatory for music with a piano teacher seminar in the Wandersleb'schen house at Eschleber Straße 1. There were frequent concerts in the institute, but also at Friedenstein Castle and in other cities. Among the children was the pianist Marie Patzig (1880–1970), who gave concerts in Gotha in 1895 and was named as a student at the Leipzig Conservatory in 1899. The German cellist, composer, instrumental teacher, music critic and publisher Hugo Eduard Schlemüller (1872 - 1918) was probably a student of hers, though little mention is made of any of her pupils.

In 1884 Alfred Patzig took over the upper music lessons at the educational institution in Schnepfenthal on two weekdays. On the occasion of an institutional concert in 1896, Duke Alfred awarded him the title of professor, but

"Unfortunately, at this time, his wife developed cancer, which killed the devoted mother, the gifted artist and teacher on January 31, 1901."

The same day in the "Gothaisches Tageblatt" appeared the following obituary:
"This morning, Mrs. Luise Patzig-Wandersleb, the wife of Professor Patzig, owner of the music conservatory of the same name, died here after a long and severe illness".

From this point, her husband Professor Patzig left most of the educational work to his eldest son Fritz (1879-1914). It was recognized that "with her, an important cello virtuoso passed away."

PHOTOS:

*** 1 as a young girl starting the cello under her father's supervision*

*** 2 as a young professional virtuoso*

*** 3 as a mature artist*



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