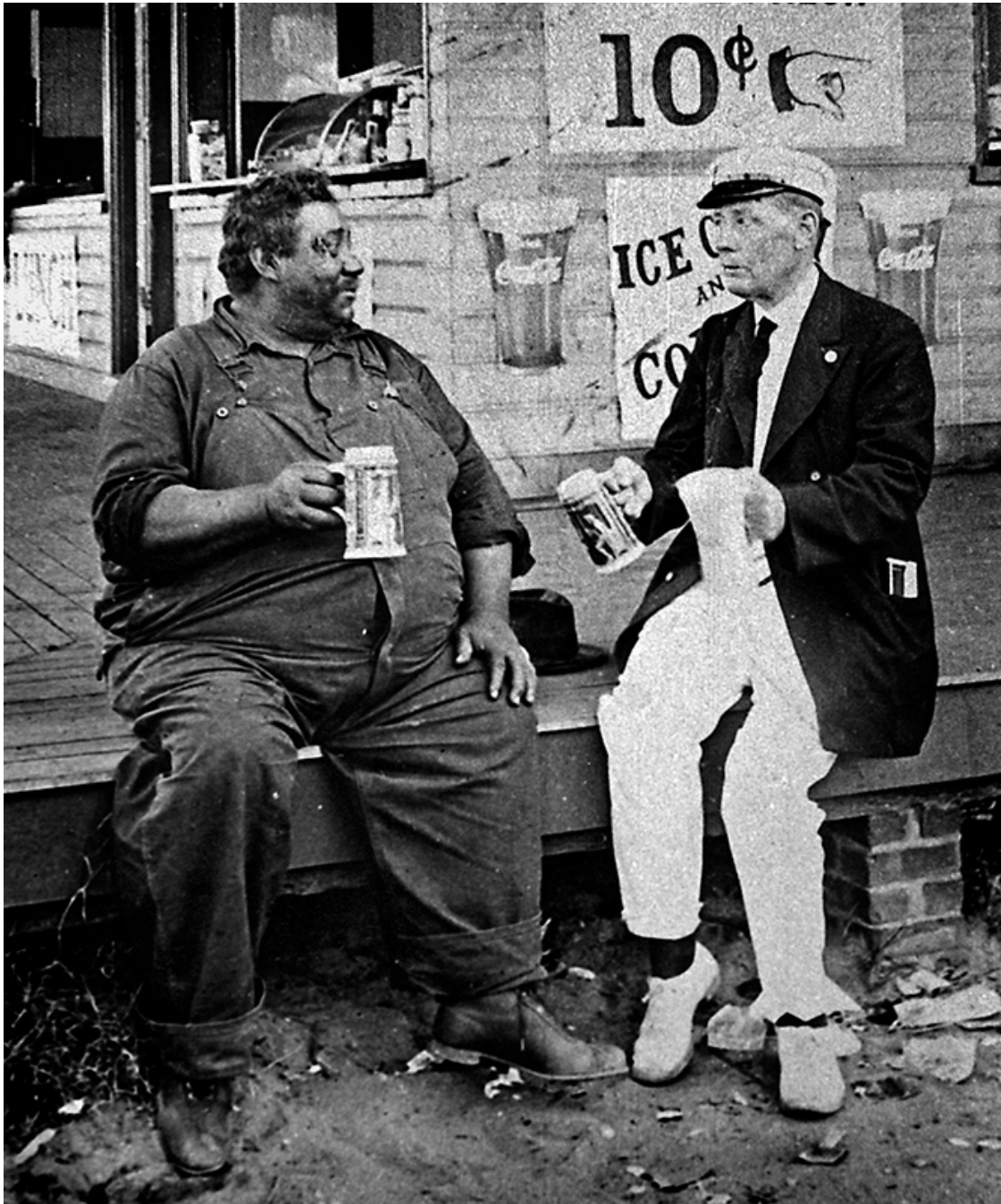


This Was Then: Island brew

On beer, barley, and Baron Von Horst.

By **Chris Baer** - October 2, 2019

[Chris Baer. (Oct. 02, 2019). THIS WAS THEN: ISLAND BREW, On beer, barley, and Baron Von Horst, associate of journalist Lillian Scot Troy. MV Times (Martha's Vineyard, MA). Reproduced for educational purposes only. Fair Use relied upon. Source: <https://www.mvtimes.com/2019/10/02/this-was-then-island-brew/>]



[Baron Louis von Horst, ca. 1900]



“It is stated,” recorded a writer for the New England Farmer in 1858, “that the first barley sewn in this country, was upon the island of Martha’s Vineyard, in 1602, by a man named Gosnold.”

Well, kind of. Explorer Bartholomew Gosnold’s men indeed planted the first recorded barley in the Western Hemisphere, together with wheat, oats, and peas, but it was most likely on Cuttyhunk, not

Martha's Vineyard. They abandoned the settlement after just a few weeks, and returned to England — much sooner than they had intended — and left before any of the barley would have been ready to harvest. Traditionally, barley was grown almost exclusively to make malt, which was used in the production of beer and whiskey.

Historian Charles Banks remarked upon colonial life on the Vineyard, “If drinking liquor can be called an amusement, it is certain that a considerable number of the people, from the clergy down to the serving-man, indulged their spare hours to an appreciable extent. Beer was brewed on the island. There was a malt-house at Edgartown before 1700 ... The use of liquor was well-nigh universal in the 18th century. I need only cite its regular appearance at ministerial ordinations, church raisings, funerals, and weddings, as pertinent evidence on this point.”

The records back up Banks. A vote passed at the Tisbury town meeting in 1733, for instance, paid for the “good wheaten cake, good Beere & Rum & Sugar” required to raise their new meeting house. Construction of the new Chilmark meeting house in 1724 similarly involved significant expenses for rum punch, beer, and cakes, paid for by the town.

Hops, another essential beer ingredient, has also been cultivated on our Island. Capt. Joshua Slocum, freshly world famous for being the first person to sail singlehanded around the world, grew hops in a valley near his West Tisbury home during the first decade of the 20th century. David Hugo, in a 1969 article for the Dukes County Intelligencer, wrote, “As a West Tisbury farmer, Joshua was a leader in introducing a new moneymaker to the Island: hops.

Flavel Gifford, who lived next door to Slocum, tells of picking hops for him at the rate of 10 cents per pound. He remembers well how light hops are and how long it took to make 10 cents. The experiment was not a success, and seems to have cured Slocum of the farming fever for good.”

But another oddly hoppy tale precedes Slocum's experiments by just a couple of years. In the fall of 1899, Baron Louis Von Horst, a German-born hops magnate, took a surprising and rather mysterious interest in Vineyard real estate. He first purchased a single lot in Tisbury from a Boston realtor. Then, on New Years' Eve, 1900, he purchased 20 additional lots in the remotest parts of West Tisbury — vast tracts of nearly valueless scrub oak in what is today the heart of the State Forest.

Baron Von Horst was born Louis Horst in Germany, and emigrated with his family to New York as a small child, soon becoming a naturalized citizen. In 1889, Louis and his siblings founded the Horst Brothers Co., dealers in hops and barley. They were wildly successful in the Eastern cities, soon expanding to Chicago, California, Oregon, British Columbia, and London, England. They

purchased extensive hops farms across the Pacific Coast. Known as “the hop kings of California,” Horst Brothers would soon become the largest hops producer and trader in the world. A personal friend of Adolphus Busch, Horst would soon furnish a large part of the hops used by Anheuser-Busch Brewing Co. in St. Louis, Mo. While his brother managed the U.S. market, Louis Horst took charge of the European branch, travelling regularly between California, his new home in London, and his native Germany. As a reward for his business prowess, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in Germany awarded Horst the title of baron of the dukedoms of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in May 1899.

The newly knighted baron and his wife set sail in the summer of 1899 to visit their California estates. It was upon returning that fall to their home in London that he purchased the first lot in Tisbury. A year later, the Horst Brothers Co. dissolved in a feud between brothers. It was during a flurry of international lawsuits between siblings that Von Horst swooped in and bought those 20 tracts in West Tisbury — some 1,000 acres, by some accounts, for which he paid on average of about \$1 per acre.

It was understood locally that Von Horst was going to raise hops on the Island. His West Tisbury property included one extant farm with a small building, but whether he planted any crops is not known. He soon stopped paying taxes on the land, and there is no evidence that he visited the Island after 1900. (His agent on the Island may have been a German farmer named Henrich Buhk of West Tisbury, also connected with the Hoft family, as in the Hoft Farm Reserve and John Hoft Road in Lambert’s Cove.)

In 1914, as the World War was just beginning, Von Horst was arrested in London by Scotland Yard detectives and placed in a detention camp, charged with espionage. Von Horst asserted that he was an American citizen, but the acceptance of his German title of baron muddled that question. MI5 claimed that Von Horst had distributed “seditious literature” to the Irish, and had even tried to acquire weapons for Sinn Fein in a plot to stage an armed uprising in Ireland.

When word reached the Vineyard, the rumor spread that he had purchased his land in West Tisbury not to raise hops, but rather to establish a signal station to direct German operations during the war.

Von Horst spent five years as a British prisoner. He suffered a mental and physical breakdown, and was eventually expelled, penniless, to Germany as an “undesirable alien.” His business in ruins, and as the U.S. continued to question his citizenship and deny him entry, and as Prohibition was preparing to crush the American beer industry, Von Horst remained in Germany for the rest of his years, successfully restarting the Horst Co. hops business in Coburg. Recent scholarship has revealed that Von Horst was likely innocent of the charges of subversion and espionage. Rather, he was probably a fall guy in an internal bureaucratic war between factions of MI5 and Britain’s Special Branch.

The Von Horst lots in West Tisbury were seized by the sheriff and acquired by surveyor William Swift in 1922; they were shortly afterward taken by eminent domain by the commonwealth, and incorporated into the State Forest.

Chris Baer teaches photography and graphics at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School. His book, "Martha's Vineyard Tales," containing many "This Was Then" columns, was released in June 2018.



T H E # 1 A R C H I V E F O R M U S I C A L T H E A T E R

Sections**US-OPERETTA**

Carita von Horst (1864-1935): The Baroness Who Composed "Gentleman Jack" And Bamboozled Hitler

Thomas Krebs
Operetta Research Center
8 January, 2020

How many female operetta composers can you name? Here is one who was also a baroness, no less. Her operetta *Kavalier Jack* was performed at least a hundred times in Berlin at the height of the Roaring Twenties.



Carita von Horst, née Partello, sitting at the piano. (Photo: Archive von Horst family)

Carita von Horst, née Partello (1864–1935) was an American who lived most of her life in Germany. She studied music, piano and composition in Stuttgart where she became friends with the four daughters of the Grand Duchess Marie

of Russia. Her father, Dwight J. Partello, was US consul in Düsseldorf and the owner of one of the largest collections of rare and valuable violins, among them a Stradivari that had belonged to the Tzars of Russia.

The Partello family claimed lineage going back to William I the Lion, King of Scotland. Carita's husband, Louis von Horst, was a German-born American businessman, the largest hops dealer in the US. In 1892 he married Carita and they moved to Germany, living in Coburg. In 1899 Louis von Horst was made a baron by the Duke of Coburg-Saxe-Gotha, and Carita became a baroness. In 1909 the von Horsts founded an opera school for American students in Coburg.

The *Oakland Tribune* reported on this in August 1912:

"A revolution in the education of American music students in Germany has been started by the handsome Baroness Carita von Horst, herself an American. Married to Baron Louis von Horst and possessed of great wealth, this American woman has undertaken to divert the music students of the United States from Berlin to Coburg, where she has opened a large conservatory, with the approval of the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia.

Berlin dispatches announce that the Grand Duke Cyril has accepted the honorary presidency of the Coburg conservatory, and that among the vice-presidents are Crown Princess Marie of Romania, Princess Beatrice and Princess Alfons of Orleans-Bourbon and the Grand Duchess Cyril of Russia.

Being wealthy and having no need of making the Coburg conservatory profit-paying, all surplus earnings from the institution are to be used by the baroness for free scholarship for talented Americans.

Piano and voice culture lessons in Berlin under the best instructors cost from USD 5,- to 20,- a half hour. The baroness proposes to make the fees to Americans at Coburg so low that the tuition for a month will be less than a single lesson in Berlin.

Duke Carl of Coburg has expressed a keen interest in the project of the baroness and has promised to provide a chance in the Royal Opera House to any student showing talent. Coburg is a wonderfully quaint city 800 years old. It is within a short distance of Bayreuth and a number of other opera centers."

The opera school was run successfully for a few years, but in 1914 Baron von Horst was arrested as a German spy by the British and interned for the duration of the war. He was to go on trial, but this never materialized due to lack of evidence. Nevertheless, in 1919 the British expelled him to his alleged home country, Germany as an undesirable alien, although he was in fact innocent of the charge of being an agent provocateur.

He and his wife lost their entire fortune during the war, but they still had their mansion in Coburg and their works of art.

Carita von Horst had written about 50 songs and some pieces for cello and piano when it was announced in 1921 that the Theater in Coburg was going to produce her opera *Die beiden Narren* (The Two Fools). No reviews of this have come to light so far, so it is not known how successful the opera was. It was apparently not her first work for the stage: According to reports in both *Musical America* and the *Brandon Weekly Sun* in 1912 Horst had completed the score of an operetta *The Gypsy Girl*, "on which she has been working for a long time. The critics say the music is the sweetest and dreamiest they have ever heard." Since it has not been possible to find any trace of this operetta one wonders who those critics were.

In a 1924 letter to the Prince of Fürstenberg, the founder of the Donaueschingen music festival, she wrote that six songs (of about 50 she had composed) had been published by Bote & Bock and three cello pieces by Schlesinger. No orchestral, piano or other chamber music composed by her is known.



The sheet music cover of "Kavalier Jack." (From the music collection of Staatsbibliothek Berlin)

The operetta production team for *Kavalier Jack* represented three generations – the composer in her early sixties, the librettist Theo Halton, aged 50, and the song lyricist Ernst Neubach, 25 years old.

Halton (1875-1940), whose real name was Heß, started out as an engineer before he became an author of over 70 works for the stage, among them the operetta *Mädels von Davos* by Martin Knopf. The journal *Der Humorist* referred to him as Viktor Hollaender's "house poet" in a 1916 article.



Original-Aufnahme vom Photogr. Kunstatelier Wertheim, Berlin W.

Jacob Hauerndes

Composer Victor Hollaender.

Ernst Neubach (1900–1968) was one the most prolific lyricists and librettists of the 1920s and early 30s, the self-declared author of 2.000 bad songs, among which are such perennials as “Ich hab’ mein Herz in Heidelberg verloren” (I lost My Heart in Heidelberg) or “In einer kleinen Konditorei” as well as the Hans May songs made famous by Joseph Schmidt: “Ein Lied geht um die Welt” (My Song Goes Round the World) and “Heut ist der schönste Tag in meinem Leben.”



Neubach was also a film director and producer. Being Jewish, he had to escape from Vienna in 1938 and emigrated to France. More on his life and career can be found [here](#) (in German):

The first performance of “Gentleman Jack”, as the operetta was then called, took place at the Theater in Coburg, the hometown of the von Horsts, in February 1925. As the *New York Herald* reported in an article entitled “American Woman Wins Distinction of Having Operetta Staged in Berlin”:

“before an audience composed chiefly of former and potential rulers, among them Ex-Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria, the former Grand-Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Grand Duke Cyril Vladimirovich and other one-time potentates who have established their courts there while waiting for more propitious days.

The work was assured of a friendly reception in Coburg as the von Horsts have social entrée to this circle, but Berlin, it was realized, was quite a different proposition. The proof of the pudding, however, is in the eating, and the in-

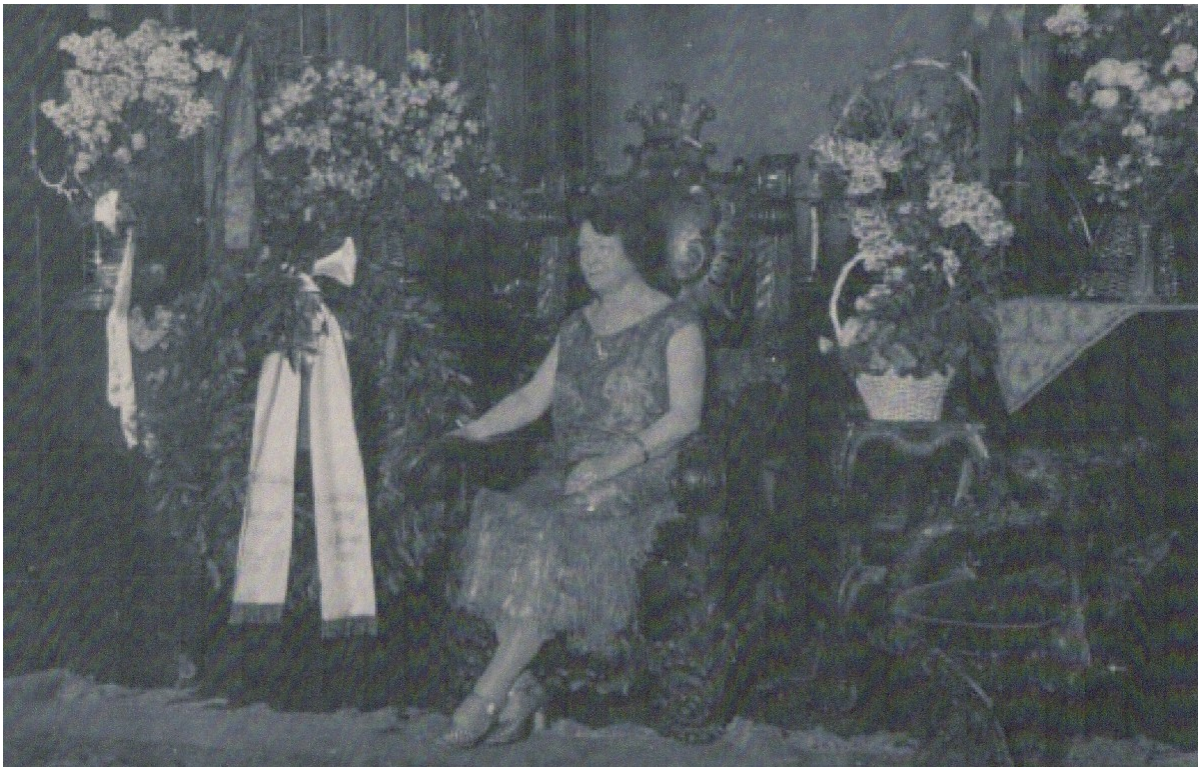
vited audience filling the historical old Thalia Theatre from pit to gallery showed unmistakable signs of approval by reacting spontaneously and continuously to the humorous situations of the book and the sprightly and well-achieved score."



Carita von Horst at the first night party of "Kavalier Jack" in Coburg. (Photo: Archive von Horst family)

There is a belief in the family of the composer that the production of the operetta might have been financed with money from the sale of Dwight J. Partello's violin collection after his death in 1920. He had planned to leave his collection to the Smithsonian Institution but his daughters, Carita and Adeline, who had expected to receive the collection, decided to contest the will. Dwight Partello's testament was in order, though, and so Adeline and her husband, Arthur M. Abell, who was a music critic, decided to try and convince the Smithsonian that accepting the collection was not in the public good.

They enlisted the help of famous musicians such as Fritz Kreisler, Leopold Stokowski and Arturo Toscanini, who all wrote letters expressing their opposition to the idea that these rare instruments should be lost to musicians forever. The controversy continued for months, but in the end Carita and Adeline did inherit their father's collection – and sold it to Lyon & Healy in Chicago.



Carita von Horst surrounded by flowers, on the opening night of "Kavalier Jack." (Photo: Archive von Horst family)

The *New York Herald* article continues with the review of the premiere at the Thalia Theater in Berlin:

"That the Baroness has exceptional facility in handling an orchestral score became evident two years ago when she gave a concert of her songs and excerpts of an opera in the Beethoven Hall.

Following the trend of the time, she now presents herself as an operetta composer, with Cavalier Jack, first cousin to 'Raffles', the formerly popular gentleman thief, as the name hero. And curiously enough, Erich Poremski, the lyric tenor who played the part, bore an unmistakable likeness to the late Harry Walden, a matinée hero who created the "Raffles" known to Berlin theatre-goers.

Indeed, the pains taken by Dr. Martin Zickel, one of the old guard of Berlin managers, to provide an adequate cast for the von Horst operetta, and his preparation to move the work to one of the West End houses seems to indicate that he has faith in its drawing power.

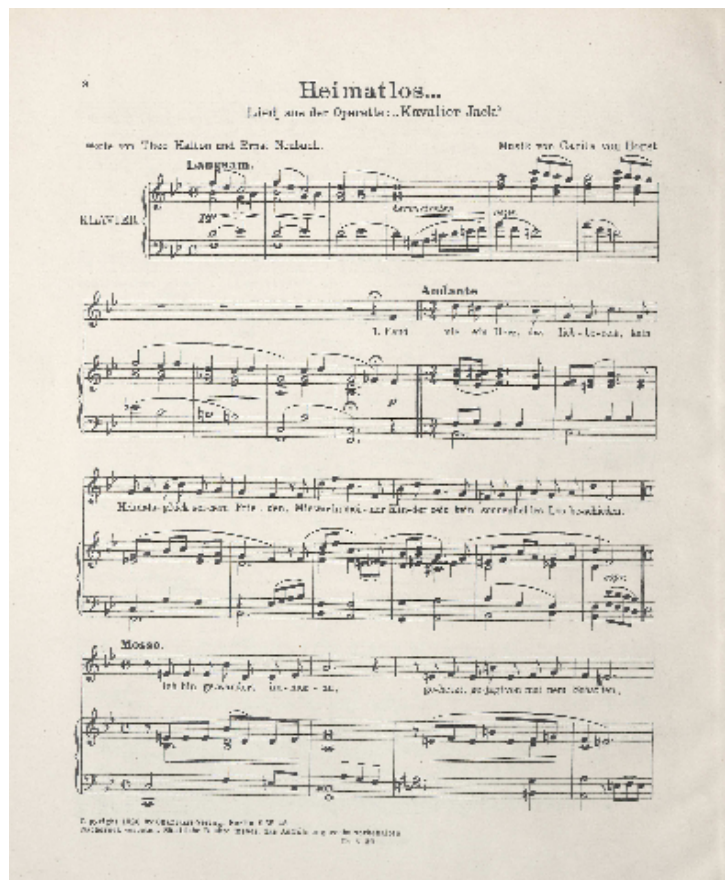
By a stroke of inspiration he engaged Josefina Dora, one of the few really good women comedienues, whose couplet 'Am I right?' proved to be the high water

mark of the evening.

Dance orchestras are also sure to include two of the other hits, 'My Baby' and 'Cavalier Jack,' in their spring itineraries.

Baroness von Horst, with her husband and son, was seated in one of the proscenium boxes, and was surrounded in the entr'actes by her friends, many of them from diplomatic and official German circles. The tulips and other spring blossoms sent to the green room were used to good effect in adding a colorful note to the white and blue English morning room in which the last act of the operetta was set."

One dance band at least did record tunes from the operetta, Bernard Etté on Vox, but so far it has not been possible to locate a copy.



The song "Heimatlos" from "Kavalier Jack" as published in a sheet music version. (From the music collection of Staatsbibliothek Berlin)

In summer 1926 *Kavalier Jack* was given in a new production by the Gastspielsdirektion Ewald Huth, at the Theater am Kurfürstendamm. Many of the original cast members were the same, the director and choreographer of the dances was Bruno Arno, Siegfried Arno's younger brother.

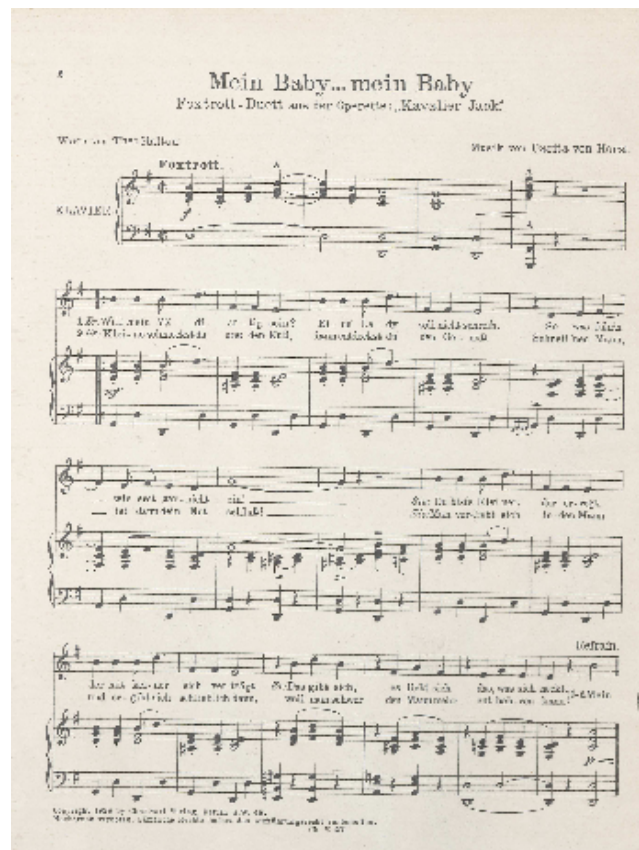
The reviews in the Berlin papers were mixed.

The *Vossische Zeitung* writes on 2 April 1926: *“Die Musik [...] behauptet sich durch gefällige Wendungen im Melodischen wie durch Geschick der Instrumentation. Frau von Horst wurde nach dem zweiten Akt oft gerufen.”*

And *Das Kleine Journal* states on 4 April 1926:

“Im Thaliatheater gibt es jetzt lustige Abende. Dr. Martin Zickel hat eine Art von Operettenposse herausgebracht, deren zweifellose Wirkung in erster Linie auf sein Konto zu setzen ist. Es ist – wie der Zettel besagt, nach einer amerikanischen Idee – eine kleine Verwechslungs- und Verwandlungskomödie mit detektivischem Einschlag. Das Ganze ist sehr bühnenwirksam gemacht und wird durch eine flotte, treffsichere Regie unterstützt, die auf Schritt und Tritt den alten Praktiker und Routinier Martin Zickel verrät. Zu den wirklich amüsanten und oft spannenden Vorgängen hat eine Dame die Musik geschrieben, Carita von Horst, der hübsche Melodien eingefallen sind und die auch den Versuch macht, eine Art von Finalsätzen zustande zu bringen. Vortrefflich ist die Instrumentation, die auf große Routine schließen läßt. Am Pult sitzt ein Mann, Kapellmeister Perak, der für größere Aufgaben bestimmt zu sein scheint.

Es ist von einer wohl gelungenen, gut abgestimmten Aufführung zu berichten. Man kennt Erich Poremskis degagierte Darstellung der Operettenhelden, erquickt sich an Baselts lebendigem Humor und freut sich über die drastische Komik der Dora. Die schmachtende Lyrikerin vertritt diesmal Elisabeth Balzer-Lichtenstein, die blendend aussieht und echte Operettentragik entwickelt. In weiteren Hauptrollen sieht man noch Heinrich Marlow, der einen düpierten Staatsanwalt mit groteskem Humor gibt, ferner Paul Hansen als lustigen Tippeljungen, den geschmeidigen Krafft-Lortzing als Malerjüngling und endlich die flott tanzende und singende Käthe Lenz. Das Publikum nahm die fröhliche Angelegenheit mit fröhlichem Applaus auf.



The song "Mein Baby" from "Kavalier Jack" as published in a sheet music version. (From the music collection of Staatsbibliothek Berlin)

Nothing is known of any musical activities of Carita von Horst after *Kavalier Jack*. On 26 April 1935 she died in Meran and was cremated in Milan.

A piano reduction of *Kavalier Jack* is held by the Library of Congress, and the Library of the University of Alberta, Canada, has a copy of the libretto ("Regiebuch") of the first production.

After her death, which was reported in Meran as well as in a few US newspapers, she made one posthumous reappearance in an article published in various regional US papers.

The Albuquerque Journal published a text on 10 June 1955 with the sensational title "American Woman, By Misreading Stars, Led Hitler Onto Road That Brought Ruin."

In the article, one George A. Hensley, retired realtor, and Carita von Horst's friend for many years, says that after the death of the Baron "his widow remained at Coburg, where she lived quietly under the Weimar Republic, composed operatic music and devoted much time to the study of astrology."

The article then goes on to say that:


“her astrological predictions, which, more often than not, proved uncannily correct, were brought to Hitler’s attention. Carita von Horst made a profound impression upon Hitler. [...]. The gullible Adolf fell for the blandishments of the shrewd Carita, and when failure stared him in the face, the double-dealing American horoscope artist exerted such hypnotic power over him that he returned time and again to her, though she had deliberately bamboozled him in the interests of her native America.”



Baroness von Horst, in a portrait from the Library of Congress. (Photo: Archive Thomas Krebs)

The article finishes with a statement by Hensley that he last heard from the Baroness in 1947. This is of course patently untrue, as it was her erstwhile husband, the Baron von Horst, who survived her, dying in 1947. Nor has it been possible to ascertain the 'fact' that she was a 'onetime president of the Astrological Society of Europe'.


The life and career of a composer who took herself seriously, but where solid facts are hard to come by for a researcher had found almost its last echo in a fanciful, sensational newspaper article.



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T H E R E I S O N E C O M M E N T

Javier Soria Laso

31/05/2022 at 22:04

A copy of Vox 08191 has 2 recordings of 2 tunes from "Kavalier Jack"/"Cavalier Jack" made by Bernard Etté's Orchestra in Berlin between April & May of 1926. The tunes in question are "Komm, Du Kleine Fee"/"Come, little Fairy!" & "Mein Baby"/"My Baby".

Transfers of both sides are available in Youtube thanks to Youtube user snookerbee:

–"Komm, Du Kleine Fee"/"Come, little Fairy!":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7LSSOJE7Vg>

– "Mein Baby" / "My Baby": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkClTuc4iAA>

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