

Christiane Hofer

Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann, a singer on Odeon

Three Odeon records of Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann are part of the GHT-archive/Alfred Seiser Collection. They are published on the web in the frame of the "Europeana-Dismarc" project.

Odeon xB 5234-3; xB 5570 rec.1912 in Berlin

Odeon xB 5234-3; xB 5570 rec.1912 in Berlin

Odeon xxB 5237; xxB 5238 rec. 09.1911 in Berlin

For a complete discography of Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann (Lotz-Zwarg), see Chart 1.

The discography of Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann shows only 21 titles. Today very few famous record collections feature her work. It appears strange and opens many questions that Mrs. Brügelmann stopped her recording sessions in 1914, at a time when recording became an important source of income for singers.

Biographical notes

Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann was born in Porto Alegre in Brazil on 16th August 1879. In some publications the year of birth is 1881, a little correction in a coquettish sense. She died of a heart attack in April 1941 in Karlsruhe in Germany, where she is also buried. Her maiden name was Hedwig Hänsel. She was the youngest daughter of a German immigrant family which was very successful in Porto Alegre.

As it was common for the social upper class, she was educated in a catholic monastery school, and there her voice was discovered and she became a solo singer in the church choir of the school. In that context she also got the first training of her voice. As a teenager she became familiar with European culture and music at the German club of Porto Alegre and decided to learn more in Germany. In 1896 she studied in Frankfurt, the native city of her father, at the academy of music.

Back to Brazil, in January 1899 she married the merchant and later bank director Theodor Brügelmann, who also was a member of a German immigrant family and a very good piano player. In November of that year she became the mother of a boy, Hermann Brügelmann, her only son. Theodor Brügelmann supported Hedy in her ambitions to sing. Later he also became her manager till their divorce in 1920. In summer 1900, the whole family moved to Germany. They settled in Cologne, where Hedy started her studies at the conservatory in 1901.

It seems interesting that near Düsseldorf, members of the Brügelmann family owned textile factories, the Cromford Werke in Ratingen. The founder of this factory, Dr. Moritz Brügelmann was married with Pauline Horson-Brügelmann, chamber singer of Saxonia, a concert and opera singer, who was in close contact with the Wagner family. She was a Wagner singer of the first generation in Bayreuth, so she was one of the interpreters of the "Blumenmädchen" in Parsifal's world premiere conducted by Hermann Levi in July 1882. Pauline Horson also studied in Cologne, but 30 years before Hedy. At the moment, I do not yet have more information, but there could be more interesting details in the future.

Hedy Brügelmann got on her career as a concert singer. In 1907 she

returned to Brazil on a first concert tour, which was very successful. A review and picture in a Brazilian journal by Arthur Nowakowski praised her talent and high technique in singing. And in a review, written two years later in the "Frankfurter Sänger-Zeitung" (No. 12, IV Jg, 14. 12. 1909), this period in Brazil was described as a fundamental event. The audience in Rio de Janeiro was so enthusiastic about her performance of interpretation of Brazilian music that they honored her as "Iracema".

Iracema: There is more than one explanation

"Iracema" is the title of a book written by a very popular Brazilian writer of the 19th century, Jose de Alencar. The book tells the love story of Iracema, a native girl of Brasilia, and Martim, a boy of a colonial immigrant family from Portugal. Their son Moacir is the personification of the understanding of the community and a symbol for correlation of love and harmony. It is a story of identification of the society of modern Brazil.

Another version is that Iracema is a combination of two native Tupi words, meaning "honey" and "lips". But Iracema also is the native goddess of water and love.

The coolest version of the explanation of the name is that Iracema means America as an anagram, which was mentioned in the Brazilian review.

Royal Romanian Chamber Singer

Back in Europe, Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann continued her studies but also her career as a famous concert singer. She was honored with the European title of a Royal Romanian chamber singer. She is called so on the labels of all her recordings.

The composer Max Bruch was one of her admirers. He invited her to study his opus 81, the Osterkantate, which was first performed in Cologne in 1908. The successful interpretation of his music by Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann was the basis of a lifelong friendship, as we know from the correspondence found in the private archive of the Adelman family, the family of the second wife of Theodor Brügelmann.

Max von Schillings, composer and music director of the Royal Opera House in Stuttgart motivated Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann to start a career as a singer on stage. In 1909 she started as a guest in Stuttgart as Elisabeth in Tannhäuser. The performance was so successfully that she was immediately hired as a member of the opera house. Her role was described as "Jugendlich-Dramatische" but she had a very wide repertoire of more than 40 roles.

Richard Strauss was impressed by her interpretation of the Marschallin in the Rosenkavalier in Munich and London, and Max von Schillings dedicated to her his opera Mona Lisa, first performed in Stuttgart 29. September 1915. Beside her work in Stuttgart, she travelled a lot and started an international career as an opera singer and recorded at that time for Odeon in Berlin. This career as record singer ended in 1914, after the beginning of World War One.

In 1914 a starring performance in Rio de Janeiro brought her back to

Brazil with Tito Scipa and Mario Sammarco in Aida and Tosca. And again in 1920 she appeared as Isabella in Carlos Gomes' opera "Salvator Rosa" in Rio de Janeiro. Other tours were organized to Zürich, Amsterdam, Munich, Hannover, London Covent Garden, and finally Vienna.

1916 to 1920: member of the Viennese Opera House (Kaiserl. kgl. Hofopertheater)

Contrary to other famous opera houses like Milano, London or New York, Vienna was and is (today they try to do it) an ensemble theatre. Singers stayed for longer periods in the house rather than only for starring performances. Beside this, the political and social difficulties of these years during and after the First World War were enormous. The day of declaration of war in July 1914, Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann had to sing Aida in Rio de Janeiro. She described her impressions in a talk with Paul Wilhelm published in Wiener Journal, 1916: ... "das ganze Leben war wie umgewandelt, die Börse reagierte sofort auf die Nachricht, alles öffentliche Leben schien gleichsam zu stocken und stand wie unter einem lähmenden Eindruck.." She also complained of being separated from her family. In 1916 she was also on tour in the battlefields. With singers of the Stuttgart opera house she performed in Lille and Bapaume in France for German soldiers. For this, she was decorated with the "Charlottenkreuz" and the title of Royal Chamber singer of Württemberg. A very brief honor, considering that in 1918 all kings and emperors of Germany and Austria had to abdicate.

Paul Wilhelm expressed 1916 in the "Wiener Journal" a warm welcome to Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann. The Viennese audience was very delighted of her voice and charming appearance. She started her performance in Vienna in October 1916 with "Les Huguenots" and "Don Giovanni" as it is shown in the casting list of 1916/1917 of the Viennese Opera House. In 1917 she continued in the Viennese autumn-season because in the same year she was also engaged in Munich.

Casting list of Wiener Hofoper 1916/1917 – Hedy Iracema Brügelmann

14.10.1916 Les Huguenots (4)	3.9.1917 Maskenball	(6)
17.10.1916 Don Giovanni (2)	10.9.1917 Aida	(4)
19.11.1916 Heilige Elisabeth	18.9.1917 Elektra	(7)
	3.10.1917 Rosenkavalier	(6)
	5.10.1917 Tannhäuser	(4)
	14.11.1917 Carmen	(1)
	23.11.1917 Ferdinand u. Luise	(6)
	9.12.1917 Fliegender Holländer	(4)

The playbill of 3rd December 1917 shows in the casting list Frau Brügelmann as Lady Milford and in the same performance Fr. Lehmann as Luise, her daughter. The eight years younger soprano was surely a very special challenge for Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann in Vienna.

The casting list of 1918/1919 makes it clear how wide the repertoire of Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann was and gives a good description what it means to sing in an ensemble theatre.

Besetzungsliste Wiener Hofoper 1918/1919 – Hedy Iracema Brügelmann

January:	18.1.1918 Tiefland	(9)
February:	18.2.1918 Otello	(2)
March:	17.3.1918 Ariadne auf Naxos	
May:	2.5.1918 Prophète	7.5.1918 Contes d'Hoffmann (6)
	31.5.1918 Ring /Götterdämmerung	

April:	12.4.1919 Parsifal (2)	25.4.1919 Ring/Siegfried
	29.4.1919 Zauberflöte	
May :	23.5.1919 Königin v.Saba (2)	
August:	24.8.1919 Lohengrin	
September:	1.9.1919 Cavalleria rusticana (5)	
November:	11.11.1919 Frau ohne Schatten	

The private casting list of Hans Odelga for the season 1918/1919 shows the real number of performances of Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann. Hans Odelga was an opera visitor who documented every day the actual casting of the Viennese opera house.

1918

August:	29.8. Rosenkavalier	30.8. Tiefland
September:	23.9. Elektra	
October:	10.10. Elektra	
November:	18.11. Tiefland	30.11. Othello
December:	2.12. Maskenball	22.12. Rosenkavalier

1919

February:	19.2. Aida	21.2. Othello	27.2. Maskenball
March:	20.3. Hoffmann's Erzählungen		27.3. Tannhäuser
April:	12.4. Parsifal	25.4. Siegfried	29.4. Prophet
May:	3.5. Elektra	5.5. Hoffmann's Erzählungen	
	10.5. Tiefland	23.5. Königin v.Saba	
	24.5. Rosenkavalier	31.5. Maskenball	
June:	2.6. Parsifal		

In a Viennese review of 12th April 1919 the performance of Kundry in Parsifal by Hedy Brügelmann was very well received, specially her interpretation of the role in tradition of Bayreuth is mentioned. And it is remarked that she studied the role with one of the most famous elder singers of the Vienna opera house and star of Bayreuth, Anna Bahr-Mildenburg.

„.....Die Rolle der Kundry war in der heutigen Aufführung Frau Brügelmann zugefallen und die strebsame Sängerin hat von ihr ohne Zaghafigkeit Besitz ergriffen. Sie gab keine bloß symbolisch-abstrakte Figur, wußte vielmehr durch eine Reihe individueller Züge weich-weiblicher, menschlich-wahrer Art zu fesseln; und ihre musikalische Sicherheit berührte wohlthuend. Bemerkenswert die geistige Durcharbeitung der Partie, das Sinn und Zweck aus der Musik schöpfende Gestalten und Agieren, was besonders damit zusammenhängt, daß Frau Brügelmann dem Vernehmen nach die Kundry mit Anna Bahr-Mildenburg studiert hat. Wenn Gurnemanz zur Musik des Karfreitagszaubers von der entsündigten Natur spricht, die „heut' ihren Unschuldstag erwirbt“, und von der Kreatur, die zum erlösten Menschen aufblickt, so hat sich dieser Vorgang nach Bayreuther Überlieferung in dem Spiel zwischen Parsifal und Kundry symbolisierend auszudrücken. Frau Brügelmanns an dieser Stelle ergreifendes Spiel ließ keinen Zweifel, daß hier die treueste Hüterin der großen Bayreuther Tradition mit am Werke war...“ (Wiener Operntheater, 12.4.1919)

In the play bill of the Viennese Opera House of Othello of 21st February 1919, Leo Slezak as Othello is partner of Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann as Desdemona. The prayer of Desdemona and the Weidenlied of Desdemona are also two of Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann's most beautiful titles on record, when she started her recording career on Odeon in September 1911.

But recording was not her passion. In an interview in 1916, Hedy

Iracema-Brügelmann expressed her feeling of joy in performing on stage, when she said: I have a passion for singing and playing on stage. „... Wenn die Künstlerin von ihrer Kunst spricht, scheint ihr ganzes Wesen von innerer Begeisterung erglüht, man fühlt ihre Freude, ihre Hingabe an den künstlerischen Beruf. Auf meine Frage, nach ihren Lieblingsrollen antwortet sie lächelnd und leicht mit den Achseln zuckend: “Das ist für mich sehr schwer zu beantworten, denn ich singe so leidenschaftlich gern und fühle mich so glücklich, wenn ich auf der Bühne stehe, daß mir jede Rolle, in der ich vor das Publikum trete, lieb ist und mein ganzes Denken und Fühlen ausfüllt....“(Neues Wiener Journal,No.8255,22.10.1916)

Karlsruhe and the years as teacher

1920 Theodor Brügelmann and Hedy divorced and she continued her career in Karlsruhe at the stage of the Badisches Staatstheater. She sang in the world premiere of Albert Noelte's opera “Francois Villon”. Till 1927 she performed in the Badisches Staatstheater in a lot of parts. But performances on stage became more and more difficult because of her short-sightedness. The year 1927 is a turning point in her life. After a serious accident and illness, when she nearly died, she stayed handicapped without the possibility to return to the stage. As an honored teacher she finished her career in Karlsruhe.

Although Hedy Iracema-Brügelmann's discography is small, she was one of the most fascinating singers in her time, at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. Born in a German family in South America, she started her career in Europe but never lost her connections to Brazil. She was American und European at the same time. There are still many questions left – as a summary please allow me to make an appeal: let us cooperate to find more and more details of life and work of this outstanding artist in between cultures and centuries.

Christiane Hofer, 14.Diskografentag, 8.6.2013, Bayreuth.

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	Matrix	RecDate	Plc	FaceNumber	OtherNur	Artist	Title
1	1828xB 5234	1911.09	aBER			Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	LOHENGRIN (M + W: Richard Wagner), I/2b: Traum (Elsa) "Einsam in truben Tagen"
2	9819xB 6087	1914.	BER	AA 5303B		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	TROVATORE (Giuseppe Verdi / Salvatore Cammarano), IV/1a: Aria (Leonora) "In meines Kerkers tiefe Nacht"
3	2530cxB 5236	1911.09	aBER	X 99732		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA (Pietro Mascagni / Guido Menasci, Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti), 5: Romanza (Santuzza) "Als Euer Sohn einst for"
4	2531cxB 5349	1911.10	aBER	X 99758	X 52690	Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	BALLO IN MASCHERA (Giuseppe Verdi / Antonio Somma), III/19: Aria (Amelia) "Der Tod sei mir willkommen"
5	25354xB 5234-	1912.0	BER	X 99846		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	LOHENGRIN (M + W: Richard Wagner), I/2b: Traum (Elsa) "Einsam in truben Tagen"
6	25355xB 5563	1912.0	BER	X 99847		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	TOSCA (Giacomo Puccini / Giuseppe Giacosa, Luigi Illica), I/3a: Duetto (Tosca) "Von unserm Hauschen"
7	25356xB 5563-	1912.0	BER	X 99847-2	X 52733	Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	TOSCA (Giacomo Puccini / Giuseppe Giacosa, Luigi Illica), I/3a: Duetto (Tosca) "Von unserm Hauschen"
8	25357xB 5564	1912.0	BER	X 99848		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	TOSCA (Giacomo Puccini / Giuseppe Giacosa, Luigi Illica), II/4: Paghiera (Tosca) "Nur der Schönheit weihst' ich mein Leben"
9	25358	1912.0	BER	X 99849		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	AIDA (Giuseppe Verdi / Antonio Ghislanzoni), I/1g: Aria (Aida) "Als Sieger kehre heim!" <1>
10	25359	1912.0	BER	X 99850		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	AIDA (Giuseppe Verdi / Antonio Ghislanzoni), I/1g: Aria (Aida) "Vater, Geliebter, die heiligen Namen" <2>
11	25360xB 5570	1912.0	BER	X 99851		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	TROVATORE (Giuseppe Verdi / Salvatore Cammarano), I/2: Cavatina (Leonora) "Es glänzte schon das Sternenheer"
12	25975xB 5237	1911.09	aBER	XX 76155		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	OTELLO (Giuseppe Verdi / Arrigo Boito): Sie saß mit Leide auf öder Heide (Weidenlied)
13	25976xB 5238	1911.09	aBER	XX 76156		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	OTELLO (Giuseppe Verdi / Arrigo Boito): Sei mir gegrüßt, Jungfrau Maria! (Gebet der Desdemona)
14	25987xB 5235	1911.09	aBER	XX 76169		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	NOZZE DI FIGARO (Wolfgang A. Mozart, KV.492 / Lorenzo da Ponte): Nur zu flüchtig bist du entschwinden
15	25988xB 5233	1911.09	aBER	XX 76170		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER (M + W: Richard Wagner), II/4b: Ballade (Senta) "Traff ihr das Schiff im Meere an"
16	26125xB 5____	1913.	BER	XX 76349		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	Im Treibhaus (Richard Wagner / Mathilde Wesendonk)
17	25126xB 5____	1913.	BER	XX 76350		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	Traume (Richard Wagner / Mathilde Wesendonk)
18	26153	1913.	BER	XX 76385		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	ARIADNE AUF NAXOS (Richard Strauss / Hugo von Hofmannsthal): Es gibt ein Reich (Arie der Ariadne) <1>
19	26154	1913.	BER	XX 76386		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (O)	ARIADNE AUF NAXOS (Richard Strauss / Hugo von Hofmannsthal): In den schönen Feierkleidern (Arie der Ariadne) <2>
20	26215xB 6084	1914.	BER	XX 76498		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (p)	Mainacht (Johannes Brahms, op.43,2 / Ludwig C. H. Hdty)
21	26220xB 6094	1914.	BER	XX 76505		Hedy Racema-Brugelmann (S), (p)	Traum durch die Dämmerung (Richard Strauss, op.29,1 / Otto J. Bierbaum)