

The Acquisition of the Wildhagen, Bitter, and Paur Collections by Alfred Berner for the Berlin Musikinstrumenten-Museum between 1957 and 1962. Questions of Provenance

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Abstract

Fritz Wildhagen (1878-1956) was one of the most active private collectors of musical instruments in Germany in the first half of the 20th century. Wildhagen was very well connected to other collectors and museums. After Wildhagen's death, Berlin's Musikinstrumenten-Museum acquired sixteen artefacts from his former collection in 1957. A few years later the museum additionally purchased several instruments which were originally part of the large Wildhagen collection. The provenance of some objects can be discerned, but the provenance of others is still uncertain. The objects of the former Wildhagen collection filled some poignant gaps in the Berlin museum, which had been caused by the Second World War. This paper provides an overview of an important part of the former Wildhagen collection that came to Berlin's Musikinstrumenten-Museum and discusses the acquisitions made in Berlin in the years after the Second World War.

Collecting old musical instruments was a real passion in the late 19th century. Some of the best-known collectors were César Snoeck, Mary Elisabeth Crosby Brown, Paul de Wit, Victor-Charles Mahillon, and Arnold Dolmetsch. They carefully combed through old castles, attics of churches and farmhouses, and through storage rooms of families and antique dealers. In most cases, their acquisitions are relatively well known and, in some instances (e.g. Paul de Wit), they were published in articles and catalogues. Until the beginning of the Second World War, Berlin's Museum of Musical Instruments was – to a large extent – made up of the two collections of Paul de Wit (1888 and 1890), the extensive one of César Snoeck (1903), and objects from the Prussian Art Chamber. These precious musical instruments constituted the largest

Der Erwerb der Sammlungen Wildhagen, Bitter und Paur durch Alfred Berner in den Jahren 1957 bis 1962 für das Berliner Musikinstrumenten-Museum. Fragen der Provenienz

Fritz Wildhagen (1878-1956) war einer der aktivsten Privatsammler von Musikinstrumenten im Deutschland der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Wildhagen stand in engem Kontakt mit anderen Sammlern und Museen. Nach seinem Tod erwarb das Berliner Musikinstrumenten-Museum 1957 sechzehn Artefakte seiner früheren Sammlung. Ein paar Jahre später erwarb das Berliner Museum zusätzlich einige Instrumente, die ursprünglich Teil der großen Sammlung Wildhagens gewesen waren. Die Provenienz mancher Objekte ist nachweisbar, diejenige anderer weiterhin unklar. Die Objekte der Sammlung Wildhagen füllten in Berlin manche schmerzhaft, durch den Zweiten Weltkrieg entstandene Lücke. Der Beitrag gibt eine Übersicht über den wichtigen Teil aus der Sammlung Wildhagen, der in das Berliner Musikinstrumenten-Museum kam, und diskutiert die Ankauf-Situation in Berlin in den Jahren nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg.

part of our collection of approximately 4,000 objects, besides the acquisitions from individuals, musicians, dealers, and workshops. Research on our catalogue of lost objects¹ has revealed that more than 2700 objects did not make their way back into our collection after 1945. They are still missing, and it is not known whether they were destroyed during bomb attacks and the battle of Berlin, or if they were brought from the small castle in Seifersdorf to the former Soviet Union as spoils of war.

1 Conny Restle (Ed.), Heike Fricke, Gabriele Groll, Christopher Li: Verlustkatalog des Berliner Musikinstrumenten-Museums (forthcoming Berlin 2018).

When Alfred Berner, one of Curt Sachs' pupils, reorganized and reopened the Berlin collection in 1946, his job was to fill the glaring gaps with new acquisitions. Many families had been bombed out of their homes in Berlin and offered their musical instruments, if these were still intact, to the museum. In most cases, nothing is known about the provenance of these instruments, and the museum is planning to delve deeply into the history of these objects which were acquired between 1946 and the 1980s. Yet on very rare occasions Alfred Berner had the opportunity to purchase objects from passionate collectors. In 1988, Gesine Haase wrote an extensive article on the museum's acquisitions after 1945, in which she also touched upon the objects of the former Wildhagen collection.² These three acquisitions were made in 1957 and 1960.

By the end of the war, there were not many educated people and collectors of art objects (and especially musical instruments) in Germany. Most experts had had to flee from Germany or had become victims of the Holocaust either because they were Jewish, or because they had acted against the Nazi regime. Others had lost their lives in a senseless and devastating war. One person, who – as far as we know – lived in inner emigration during these dark years, was the painter and author Fritz Wildhagen. Little is known about him and his life beyond an entry in Wikipedia³ and a paper given by Klaus Martius in 2009⁴, which focuses on Wildhagen as an estimated collector of lutes. In my opinion, a biography of him would be a worthwhile project given his significance as a representative of impressionism in Germany.

Fritz Wildhagen was born in Moscow in 1878. After the early death of his father Fedor Andretsch, the family moved to Elbing in West Prussia and later to Gdansk. He studied art history together with Hermann Grimm, son of the famous Wilhelm Grimm, at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin, and later, from 1901 to 1908 he studied painting with Friedrich Kallmorgen at the Königliche Akademie der Künste in Berlin. Succeeding his teacher Kallmorgen, Wildhagen for the most part focused his painting on landscapes. However,

he also frequently travelled: to France, Italy, Denmark, Russia, Poland, to the Balkans, Persia, and to Africa. In his publication »Afrika kam durch die Luft (Africa came through the air). Erinnerungen, Novellen, Capricci«⁵ he referred to his extensive and passionate voyages. Most importantly for the present discussion, Wildhagen was a good violin and viola player, and a connoisseur – of music, of old instruments, and of ladies. Besides painting, playing music for string quartet was one of his favorite activities. Among his inner circle of friends was Oswald Möckel, one of the finest violin makers of his time. In several brief anecdotes »Aus den Erinnerungen eines Sammlers« (From the Memories of a Collector), which he published in the »Zeitschrift für Musik«⁶, Wildhagen recounts numerous details about his activities as a collector of old musical instruments. In the same journal, Wildhagen also published an essay on »Von Schönheit und Wert alter Instrumente« (On the Beauty and Value of Old Instruments), a panegyric about collecting and playing musical instruments. This was the salient point: he collected instruments which had the effect of extraordinary beauty and value to him, and he wanted to maintain them for posterity.

On 4 December 1956, Wildhagen died in Schloss Holte-Stukenbrock, a small town some miles southeast of Bielefeld. After Wildhagen's death, his companion Gertrud Schreiber-Lobbes offered the collection, or to be exact, the remains of his former collection of musical instruments, to the Berlin museum. With the support of the German Lottery Fund, Alfred Berner was able to buy sixteen objects (MIM cat. nos. 4517-4532): twelve bowed and four plucked instruments. Now listed as MIM cat. no. 4528, a viola made by Matthaues Wenceslaus Stautinger (Würzburg 1731) was a real bargain and had already been bought by Berner on 16 January 1950, from Lothar Dehler in Berlin for no more than 250 Marks (fig. 1). In 1950, Berner did not know that this outstanding instrument had once been part of the Wildhagen collection and numbered among the objects which had been lost at the time when Wildhagen was fleeing from Gdansk to Westphalia in 1944. In the Berlin collection, in turn, the viola substituted a lute (MIM cat. no. 2296) made by Stautinger, which counts among the museums' own lost objects.

2 Gesine Haase: Glanzlichter unter den Neuerwerbungen nach 1945. In: Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz. 100 Jahre Berliner Musikinstrumenten-Museum 1888-1988. Berlin 1988, pp. 53-134.

3 URL: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fritz_Wildhagen [10.10.2017].

4 Klaus Martius: »Des schönen Fülle hat den Weg gesegnet«. Die Lauten in der Sammlung Fritz Wildhagen. In: Die Laute. Jahrbuch der Deutschen Lautengesellschaft 9/10, 2010, pp. 65-87.

5 Fritz Wildhagen: Afrika kam durch die Luft. Erinnerungen, Novellen, Capricci. Ed. by Roland Krischke. Heidelberg 1998.

6 Fritz Wildhagen: Aus den Erinnerungen eines Sammlers. In: Zeitschrift für Musik 111, 1950, pp. 97, 197, 485 and 604.



1 Viola, Mattheus Wenceslaus Stautinger, Würzburg 1731. Berlin, Musikinstrumenten-Museum des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung, MIM cat. no. 4528 (photo Harald Fritz)



2 Viola da spalla, Johann Christian Zäncker, Hermsdorf 1678. Berlin, Musikinstrumenten-Museum des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung, MIM cat. no. 4517 (photo Harald Fritz)

When Berner read Wildhagen's accounts in the *Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1950, he realized that he had acquired a stolen object, and therefore he made contact with Wildhagen. The two men agreed an exchange: the viola by Stautinger was returned to Wildhagen, and in exchange Berner received a marvellous French serpent (MIM cat. no. 4165), an hautbois by Stephan Koch (MIM cat. no. 4166), and an incomplete hautbois by Weigel (MIM cat. no. 4167). Unfortunately, the case is not very well documented and the handwritten record in

the inventory is the primary source. Berner's letter to Wildhagen, in which the exchange was agreed (and which is kept in the museum's manuscript archive⁷) has no details about the matter. Sadly, there are also not many letters in the archive about the many other acquisitions from that time.

7 Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Historisches Archiv (HA-SIM).

On a September afternoon, presumably in the early years after the First World War, Wildhagen had purchased the viola by Matthaeus Wenceslaus Stautinger in an antique shop in Potsdam – presumably, because none of his articles reveal an exact date of acquisition. Wildhagen was very pleased about the viola by Stautinger because he was aware of its value. Another important instrument acquired by the museum in 1957 was the viola da spalla (MIM cat. no. 4517; fig. 2) made by Johann Christian Zäncker in Hermsdorf unterm Kynast (today Sobieszów, Poland). Wildhagen cast his eye on this bulky and curious instrument when he discovered it in the shop of a violin maker in Berlin. As he records, he bought another violin from the late 17th century on this occasion as he had no more money to buy the viola. Years later, in January, he met this violin maker's son at a concert of the Klinger-Quartett and reached an agreement: he exchanged the viola for one of his most famous paintings, »Der Pechsee im Grunewald« (Lake Pech in the Grunewald forest). When Wildhagen did some research on this bulky viola he found out that it must be a rare viola da spalla.

Not every instrument from the Wildhagen collection has its own story, yet. Between the lines Wildhagen indicates that he frequently bought objects from Rudolph Lepke's Kunst-Auctions-Haus at the Potsdamer Straße in Berlin,⁸ which was a renowned institution for art auctions in Berlin in the years before the First World War, when Paul Cassirer and Hugo Helbig appeared on the auction market. It is significant that Lepke was a trade partner of the new Soviet government in the 1920s and was involved in the three so-called Russian Auctions: Lepke sold art objects which had been confiscated illegally by the Soviets from the Russian aristocracy and the middle classes. Museums in Germany and the USA are full of such objects, which came to Western Europe and the Americas via Rudolph Lepke's Kunst-Auctions-Haus in the 1920s. At the moment, it is unclear whether Wildhagen acquired musical instruments from Russia at these three auctions in 1928 and 1929.

As early as 1937, Wildhagen had sold parts of his collection to Wilhelm Bitter and Alfred Fuchs. The estimated value of the whole collection at this time was 64,725 Reichsmark.

8 Wildhagen 1950a (note 6), p. 98: »In dem bekannten Berliner Kunstversteigerungshause L. – damals noch in der Kochstraße [1885/86-1912] – war reges Leben.« In 1910, he bought a lute there, made by Magno Dieffopruchar, Venetia, 1609. The previous owner of this instrument was Adalbert Matkowsky, a well-known Berlin actor.



3 Bass-Viola da gamba, Gregorius Karpp, Königsberg 1693. Berlin, Musikinstrumenten-Museum des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung, MIM cat. no. 4653 (photo Jürgen Liepe)

Wilhelm Bitter was a psychotherapist and psychoanalyst. He emigrated to Switzerland in 1943, where he lived near Vevey and studied with Carl Gustav Jung. After the war, he established the institute for psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in Stuttgart in 1948. Wilhelm Bitter died in 1975. Alfred Fuchs, a Berlin lawyer, was his good friend. In 1960, this group of 35 objects (MIM cat. no. 4649-4683) from the former Wildhagen collection came to the Berlin museum, but the provenance of these objects remains in the dark. In his article »Von Schönheit und Wert alter Instrumente«⁹, Wildhagen speaks of a viola da gamba made by Gregorius Carpp, Königsberg 1694, which may be MIM cat. no. 4653 (fig. 3), dated to the year 1693, which Wildhagen had bought as a young man.¹⁰ The mandolin by Donato Filano, Naples, around 1770 (MIM cat. no. 4671) is depicted at the end of the same article. It is possible that Wildhagen wrote his 1950 article from memory, without seeing the sold objects and without any detailed documentation.

The last items of the former Wildhagen collection arrived at the museum in 1962. These came from Munich-born Leopold Paur. After the First World War, Paur worked as a lawyer in his home town and as an attorney and representative of several associations in Berlin. Interestingly, he was secretary-general of the »Schwäbisch-Alemannischer Heimatbund« (Swabian-Alemannic Confederation) immediately after the Second World War, who wanted to push the new federal state of Baden-Württemberg into a fusion with France – a union that never was achieved. Like Wildhagen, Paur was an ardent collector of old musical instruments, but not as knowledgeable about the history of ancient instruments as Wildhagen was. Consequently, Paur took the opportunity to fill the gaps in his own small collection when Wildhagen sold parts of his collection in 1937. There are six letters between Paur and Ulrich

Rück (dated 12 February 1937 to 14 May 1937) in which he asks Rück in Nuremberg about the value of the pochettes, the viola d'amore, and about the context of the glass harmonica in Ferruccio Busoni's »Doktor Faustus«.¹¹

The Museum of Musical instruments in Berlin is very fortunate that Alfred Berner was able to save the Wildhagen collection and open it to the public. Yet some important questions remain: it is currently unknown why Wildhagen sold such a large part of his collection in 1937. Was he forced to do so by the Nazis, or was he in need of money because his style of painting was not fashionable anymore at that time? To my knowledge there is no comprehensive catalogue of all objects that presumably once belonged to Wildhagen. How many instruments did he have? Did he exchange objects with other collectors? And, most importantly: who were the previous owners of these instruments? I am confident that the museum's ongoing research will be able to answer some of these questions within in the next few years. Today, the purchase of a group of instruments like the ones from the former Wildhagen collection would be impossible until all details about their previous owners and the history of the objects has been clarified.

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- 9 Fritz Wildhagen: Von Schönheit und Wert alter Instrumente. In: Zeitschrift für Musik 111, 1950, p. 577.
- 10 Wildhagen 1950(b) (note 9), p. 578: »Ich erwarb als junger Mensch eine Gambe von Gregorius Carpp in Königsberg aus dem Jahre 1694, die schon im Jahre 1715 in Stockholm zu einem Violoncello umgearbeitet worden war.«
- 11 Correspondence between Leopold Paur and Ulrich Rück (1937-1938). In: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Historisches Archiv, NL Rück, I, C-673. Busoni's glass harmonica was on loan to the Musikinstrumenten-Museum Berlin until Gerda Busoni sold the instrument to Leopold Paur, who sold Busoni's glass harmonica to Ulrich Rück in 1937 (Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung. Historisches Archiv HA-SIM 6).

Table 1 Collection Fritz Wildhagen (Gertrud Schreiber-Lobbes), acquired 1 July 1957 by the Musikinstrumenten-Museum Berlin SIMPK

4517	Viola da spalla	Johann Christian Zäncker	Hermisdorf unterm Kynast	1678
4518	Viola da gamba	Johann Christian Hoffmann	Leipzig	1728
4519	Violine	Joseph Meyer (zugeschrieben)	Geroldshofstetten bei Grafenhausen	um 1665
4520	Pardessus de viole	Louis Guersan	Paris	1754
4521	Viola da gamba	Gregorius Karpp	Königsberg	vor 1700
4522	Viola	Ulrich Reinhart	Salzburg	1672
4523	Viola da gamba (Bass)	Daniel Achatius Stadlman	Wien	1720
4524	Viola da gamba	Rudolph Höß	München	1696
4525	Englisches Violet	Otto Möckel & Curt Jung	Berlin	1934
4526	Viola d'amore	Maximilian Zacher	Breslau	1733
4527	Armviolen	?	Süddeutschland	2. Hälfte 18. Jahrhundert
4528	Viola	Matthaeus Wenceslaus Stautinger	Würzburg	1731
4529	Laute	Johann Andreas Kämbli	München	1751
4530	Mandora	Jacob Heinrich Goldt	Hamburg	1742
4531	Gitarre	Louis Gairaud	Nantes	1731
4532	Gitarre	José Pages	Cadiz	1812

Table 2 Collection Dr. med. et Dr. phil. Wilhelm Bitter (olim Wildhagen), acquired 4 March 1960 by the Musikinstrumenten-Museum Berlin SIMPK

4649	Virginal		Italien	1. Hälfte 17. Jahrhundert.
4650	Cembalo		Italien	Mitte 17. Jahrhundert
4651	Clavichord	Christian Gottlob Hubert	Ansbach	1784
4652	Tafelklavier		Deutschland	um 1780
4653	Bass-Viola da gamba	Gregorius Karpp	Königsberg	1693
4654	Bass-Viola da gamba	Joachim Tielke (vermutlich)	Hamburg	Ende 17. Jahrhundert
4655	Baryton	Hanns Kögl	Wien	1679
4656	Baryton	Josef Neuner	Passau	2. Hälfte 18. Jahrhundert
4657	Bratsche	?	Tirol (vermutlich)	um 1700

4658	Violine	?	Deutschland (vermutlich)	19./20. Jahrhundert
4659	Violine	?	Böhmen (vermutlich)	um 1800
4660	Violine	?	Deutschland	Mitte 19. Jahrhundert
4661	Viola d'amore	Simon Johannes Havelka	Linz	1763
4652	Viola d'amore	Sebastian Rauch	Breslau	nach 1700
4663	Hardanger Fele	Jon Erikson Helland (zugeschrieben)	Telemark	zwischen 1815 und 1840
4664	Laute	Johannes Friedrich Storck (vermutlich)	Augsburg	3. Viertel 18. Jahrhundert
4665	Laute	Magnus Stegher (vermutlich)	Venedig	1598
4666	Theorbierte Laute	Giorgio B. ...	Florenz (vermutlich)	1. Hälfte 17. Jahrhundert
4667	Chitarrone	Georg Aman	Augsburg	1707
4668	Pandurina	Domenico Brambilla	Mailand	1768
4669	Pandora	?	Italien (vermutlich)	um 1800
4670	Neapolitanische Mandoline	?	Italien	18. Jahrhundert
4671	Neapolitanische Mandoline	Donato Filano	Neapel	um 1770
4672	Gitarre	Martin Kaiser	Venedig oder Düsseldorf	1699
4673	Gitarre	Gratel	Mirecourt	um 1800
4674	Gitarre	?	Spanien (vermutlich)	um 1800
4675	Gitarre	Giacinto Santagiuliana	Venedig oder Vicenza	1800
4676	Gitarre	Johann Gottlieb Thielemann	Berlin	1814
4677	Lyragitarre	Johann Gottlieb Thielemann	Berlin	1807
4678	Arpeggione	Anton Mitteis (zugeschrieben)	Leitmeritz	2. Viertel 19. Jahrhundert
4679	Sister			um 1800
4680	Basszister	Andreas Ernst Kram	Nürnberg	1768
4681	Drehleier	Luthaud	Saint-Laurent-les-Mâcon (Ain)	1863
4682	Pochette	?	?	18. Jahrhundert
4683	Trumscheit	?	Deutschland	Anfang 18. Jahrhundert

Table 3 Collection Leopold Paur, acquired 21 June 1962, by the Musikinstrumenten-Museum Berlin SIMPK

4797	Spinett	Leopoldo Franciolini (»Antonius Antagnatius«)	Florenz	2.? Hälfte 19. Jahrhundert
4798	Hamburger Cithrinnen	Hinrich Kopp	Hamburg	1702
4799	Pardessus de viole	Sebastian Mayr	München	1720
4800	Viola d'amore	Ignatius Hoffman	Wölfelsdorff	1735
4801	Pochette	Gregorius Karpp	Königsberg	1697
4802	Pochette	?	Frankreich	17. oder 18. Jahrhundert
4803	Pochette	?	?	19. Jahrhundert
4804	Pochette	?	Deutschland	um 1800
4805	Pochette	?	?	18. Jahrhundert
4806	Pochette	?	Skandinavien (vermutlich)	18. Jahrhundert
4807	Pochette	?	Tirol (vermutlich)	18. Jahrhundert
4808	Pochette	?	?	19. Jahrhundert (vermutlich)
4809	Violine (Spazierstock- geige)	?	Deutschland oder Öster- reich	Anfang 19. Jahrhundert
4810	Mandora	Piero Serri	Florenz	1723
4811	Zierharfe		?	?
4812	3 Violinbögen	?	Deutschland	19. Jahrhundert
4813	Röhrenlaute Er hu qin	?	Formosa (Taiwan)	20. Jahrhundert
4814	Schalenhalslaute Sutsuma	?	Biwa (Japan)	20. Jahrhundert
4815	Bogenharfe / Bogenlaute	?	Guinea (Afrika)	19. Jahrhundert
4816	Kerbflöte	?	Formosa (Taiwan)	19. Jahrhundert