

# Jenka Duschnitz and her circle of friends

by Harold Chipman

(Excursus to the catalog entry Portrait Jenka Duschnitz 1920 by John Quincy Adams).

I learned about Jenka's circle of friends while researching the small collection of photographs she left me. Some photos were labeled, most were not. Some of these select friends I knew about, some were new to me, because Jenka unfortunately told me almost nothing about her life in Vienna. Through my research I was allowed to learn many interesting things.

Jenka intensively cultivated music as in many Viennese private homes. While her husband Willibald and daughter Eva composed modern songs, Jenka preferred classical music, but not exclusively. She played chamber music with many different Viennese artists, especially with the later world-famous violinist Erica Morini or the important Hungarian pianist Louis Kentner. Also composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold was a guest as well as opera singers Louise von Fraenkel-Ehrenstein, Selma Kurz and Marie Gutheil-Schoder.



Jenka and Lili Duschnitz, née Hammerschlag (married to Erich Duschnitz), the great friend of Erich Wolfgang Korngold, in Bad Gastein in 1918.

The famous piano teacher Theodor Leschetizky lived not far away on the same street. On her trips to Paris she visited Maurice Ravel. A letter from Ravel to Jenka has been preserved, where he apologized not to be able to see Louise von Fraenkel-Ehrenstein during her stay in Paris.

An earlier close friendship circle was formed by George Prince Festetics de Tolna (1882-1941), Nada Gellibrand (1893-1974) and Cari, Maltese Prince Ludwigstorff (1880-1955).



Jenka (with cane), next to her on the right Prince Georg Festetics, on the far left Countess Marie-Luise (Muzzy) Palffy<sup>1</sup>, at Semmering 1919.

In 1922 Jenka and daughter Eva converted to Catholicism. Godparents were Georg and Nada. Georg and Cari were both "ladies men" and were among Jenka's admirers. Nada was a famous beauty from England and later became a model for Vogue Magazine.

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<sup>1</sup> S. Dr. Harold Chipman and Bettina Schöngut, *Unsere Woche mit Mully und Muzzy – Forschung nach Personen dank Kosenamen*, unpublished manuscript, 2021.



Nada Gellibrand, Maltese Prince Cari Ludwigstorff, Jenka, c. 1920

Also a "ladies man" was the dashing Carl Count Lonyay (1888 - 1963), nephew of Elemer Prince Lonyay-Nagy-Lonyay. The latter was the second husband of Princess Stephanie of Belgium, the widow of Archduke Rudolf.

The very sporty Georg Reichsgraf von Wimpffen (1896 - 1968) also belonged to the circle of friends. Coming from one of the once richest families in Austria, he could not prevent the complete disintegration of the family empire.

From early Vienna times comes the friendship with Princess Stephanie Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingsfürst (1891 - 1972)<sup>2</sup>, the notorious spy and Hitler's friend. Much has been written about her. She remained a loyal and beguiling friend to my family for three generations.

Dr. Fernando Perez Sucre (1864 - 1935) was a doctor, diplomat, patron of the arts and scientist. Willibald and Jenka met him in Vienna while he resided there as Argentina's envoy (1909 - 1922). He loved Austria and worked hard to provide food for Austria after World War I and to revive its economy. He was an art lover, which united him with Willibald, and played classical music,

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<sup>2</sup> S. Martha Schad, Hitlers Spionin – das Leben der Stephanie von Hohenlohe, 2002

especially Beethoven, as well as Jenka. The city of Vienna honored him in 1921 by renaming the Untere and Obere Alleegasse with beautiful city palaces "Argentinierstrasse". His son Fernando Luis was a popular man in society. In his first marriage he married the Argentinian Elisa Bosch Alvear, who became a good friend of Jenka. In his second marriage he married in Brazil the Archduchess Maria Antonia of Habsburg-Tuscany.

A gorgeous woman and friend of Jenka was the enchanting Maria Lydia Hualberta de Lloveras, Princesse de Faucigny-Lucinge (1888 - c. 1963). Jenka must have met her in Paris, because that is where she lived and married a Frenchman from the highest nobility. She was a client of the Argentine architect Raúl Pérez Irigoyen, muse of the writer José Luis Borges and friend of Salvador Dali.

One of the most interesting friends of Jenka was Annie, Countess Dumba (c. 1880 - ?). She came from a very rich family in Courland (now Latvia), but after the First World War the family lost its properties and wealth. Then her much older husband, Count Dr. Konstantin Dumba, retired in 1917. When her sister and her family fled Russia to join her, she decided to pursue a career in textiles. She became very successful, both nationally and internationally. Thus, she was one of the first successful Austrian businesswomen.

The family of the Swedish diplomat Gösta Hedengren (1899 - 1993), who first came in the early 1930s as Legation Secretary with his strikingly beautiful wife Evelyn Barclay (1907 - 1938), became close and loyal friends for generations. Sadly, Evelyn died very young. At that time Gösta was working in Paris. Jenka, who was also living in Paris then, decided to play Cupid and introduced him to the vivacious Marie-Hélène Corragioni d'Orelli (1908 - 1995). The result was a lifelong happy marriage. Marie-Hélène was the great-great-niece of the very famous sculptor Carlo Marochetti<sup>3</sup> and inherited his chateau at Vaux-sur-Seine, not far from Paris.

In the 1930s Jenka made the acquaintance of Hedy Kiesler (1914 - 2000), married to Fritz Mandl, the munitions manufacturer and member of a widespread family of industrialists and doctors in Vienna ([s. for example the Adams portrait of Irene Mandl](#)). Their acquaintance came about because

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<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo\\_Marochetti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_Marochetti)



Willibald Duschnitz was a business partner and good friend of Fritz Mandl. The marriage was unhappy and she fled to Hollywood in 1937, where she had a dazzling film career under the name Hedy Lamarr. But she was also an excellent mathematician and, with Georg Antheil, invented the spread-spectrum method, today the basis for Bluetooth technologies and smartphones. She is now also recognized worldwide as an inventor.

In 1936, Jenka moved to Paris with her new husband, Dr. Louis Ferrière, and with the outbreak of war in 1939, to Geneva, Switzerland. But during the war it was still possible to live quite well in Switzerland, because this country was spared the war. Many prominent people stayed in the chic winter and summer resorts. Jenka also still experienced good times, as a photo testifies.



On the back of this photo Jenka writes somewhat melancholically and probably much later "I have just found that old snap of me taken at a dinner party, given in my honour at Gstaad by Princess Aga Khan. Gstaad, Janvier 1943." Princess Andrée Aga Khan (1898 - 1976) was the third wife of Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan III and the mother of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan.

Jenka's last twenty years of life were quieter. She visited Kitzbühel every summer, where she met old friends from her Vienna days. Princess Hohenlohe and the Hedengren family settled in Geneva. Among the new friends was the Austrian Ida Countess Luzárraga, wife of the Spanish consul in Geneva Count Eustaquio Luzárraga. With Jenka's death in Geneva on May 8, 1967, this illustrious circle of friends closed.