

Leseprobe

*Art, Music, and Humour  
in Theodor Mintrop's  
Album for Minna*

Margaret A. Rose

AISTHESIS VERLAG

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Bielefeld 2023

The cover illustrates extracts from the concluding sketch in Theodor Mintrop's "Minna" album of 1855-1857. The photographs of the sketches in the Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen Abteilung Ostwestfalen-Lippe, D 72 Piderit, Theodor / Nachlass Theodor Piderit, Nr. 2 and Nr. 18, which are reproduced here, were taken by Matthias Schultes, Herbert Nitschke and Regina Gülicher, while the photographs of the Mintrop drawings in the Graphische Sammlung of the Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf are by Horst Kolberg, Neuss.

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## *Preface*

It was in September 1997 that I first set eyes on the album of sketches created between October 1855 and April 1857 by the Düsseldorf artist, and friend of Clara and Robert Schumann, Theodor Mintrop (1814-1870) for my great-great-aunt, the amateur pianist Minna Bozi, née Rose (1827-1857).

The album was not yet known to art historians, and I found it unexpectedly in a family archive in Detmold, from which had come a copy of a Rose family tree stamped “D72 Th. Piderit”. That document had been recognised as coming from archives in Detmold by the Bielefeld archivist Monika Minninger (1941-2010). Dr. Minninger had already assisted me with research into the Bielefeld side of the family of my great-great-grandfather (Minna’s father), the Bielefeld judicial councillor and magistrate Bernhard Friedrich (Fritz) Franz Rose (1792-1861), after a cousin, Peter (Karl-Ludwig) Rose in Heikendorf near Kiel had shown me his research into the earlier history of the Rose family in Lippstadt and copies of the family trees. It was, moreover, a relative of the family of Fritz Rose’s wife Elise Rose née Epping (1800-1847) from Lippstadt, the historian Dr. Eva-Maria Dahlkötter, who kindly drove me to Detmold in the autumn of 1997 to investigate the materials deposited there by descendants of Minna’s youngest sister Anna Piderit née Rose (1839-1886), the heroine of Mintrop’s posthumously published *König Heinzelmann’s Liebe* (King Heinzelmann’s Love) of 1875.

The large, leather-bound album titled “Minna”, which was at that time catalogued as “D 72 Th. Piderit Nr. 18” and is presently described as “D 72 Piderit, Theodor / Nachlass Theodor Piderit, Nr. 18” on the web pages of the North Rhine-Westphalian State Archive, originally contained 72 pages of sepia pen and ink drawings over pencil, including several with both wash and watercolour. The album also contains two photographs (one attached and one loose), which appear to have been added after the completion of the sketches in April 1857 and the death of Minna later that year. One page was missing a sketch, which I subsequently found in the Graphische Sammlung (Prints and Drawings Collection) of the Düsseldorf Kunstmuseum (Art Museum), which is now known as the Kunstpalast (Art Palace), Düsseldorf with the help of the 1978 and 1980 catalogues of its 19<sup>th</sup> century drawings by Dr. Ute Ricke-Immel (see Sketch 22 in Chapter 3.4).

The album itself had apparently not been viewed by any other visitor to the Detmold archives since being deposited there in 1964 by descendants of Minna’s youngest sister Anna, who had lived in Detmold with her husband, the medical doctor and author Dr. Theodor Piderit (1826-1912) from 1864 until her death in 1886.

A letter of 1860 from Anna Rose to Theodor Mintrop, which I discovered together with letters from Mintrop to Anna at the same time as I found his album for Minna, also provided explanations for many of the drawings in Mintrop’s 1860 album for Anna, on which Mintrop’s *König Heinzelmann’s Liebe* is partly based (see Ricke-Immal 1978 and 1980 and Rose 2016).

Thanks to the help of numerous archivists, friends, and relations – including relatives of Theodor Mintrop himself – I eventually managed to identify the central figures and subjects in Mintrop’s previously publicly unknown and unexplained drawings for Minna, and to complete the first edition of the album late in 2002. That edition (with an introductory section, as well as the illustrations with commentaries) was then published by the Aisthesis Verlag Bielefeld with the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Bonn early in early 2003 and republished with additional material in print and as an E-book in 2020.

Following the first edition of the album in 2003, Gabriele Zangs M.A., a great-great-grandniece of Theodor Mintrop, published in 2013 her monograph and catalogue of his

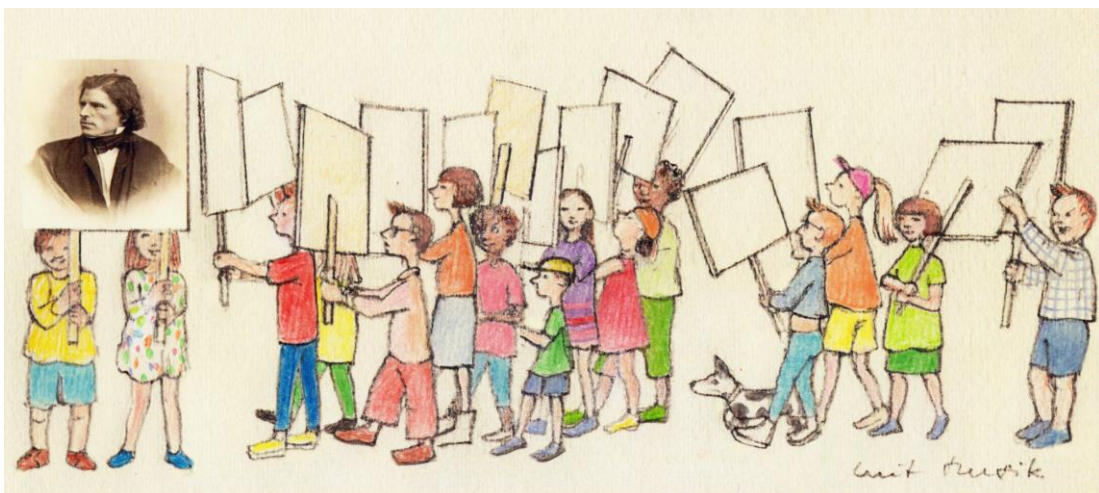
works, as well as in 2016 the entry on Mintrop in the *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon*, while her cousin Dr. Angelika Mintrop-Aengevelt produced a special new edition of Mintrop's *König Heinzelmann's Liebe* for the 200<sup>th</sup> celebration of his birth in 2014.

Since 2003 I have published two more editions of Mintrop's works with the Aisthesis Verlag Bielefeld: his correspondence with Anna Rose from 1857 to 1869 in 2014 (thanks also to the generous assistance given with its transcription by Dr. Frauke Bartelt), and in 2016 his sketches of 1855 and 1860 for Anna, together with the 1866 reworkings of them for what became his *König Heinzelmann's Liebe* with a commentary in German and English.

Now that Mintrop's name is again well known in his North Rhine-Westphalian homeland – Inge Sauer and her associates having also generously dedicated much of their time in recent years to the rehabilitation of the Düsseldorf Mintrop-Platz, as well as to the involvement of school children in the study of his works – and some English-language publications have discussed and reproduced sketches by him, it is time to publish an English version of my German text (as well as to add some new information to it), so that English-speaking readers may come to know more of Mintrop's imaginative and humorous works, and be able to judge other English commentaries on them for themselves.

In the following chapters and commentaries on Mintrop's sketches for Minna, reference is also made to the songs and other musical pieces that are alluded to in those sketches, or which may have inspired them, and information given on the musical life of the time. Picasso was reported to have said that “to draw you must close your eyes and sing”, and while Mintrop clearly drew with his eyes well open, his sketches will also show the influence on his imagination of both the art and the music of his time.

Margaret A. Rose  
Cambridge 2023



Inge Sauer, *Mit Musik* (With Music), Düsseldorf 2022.

## *Introduction*

Theodor Mintrop (1814-1870) was dubbed the “rural Raphael” in his time and may now also be appreciated as a “comic Raphael” for his humorous reworkings of both allegorical and real-life subjects with reference to Raphael’s works. In addition to his numerous other sketches, paintings, and wall frescoes, he produced at least three albums of sketches for members of the Rose family resident in Bielefeld and Düsseldorf in the 1850s, while also illustrating numerous letters to them.<sup>1</sup>

The first album of 1855 consists of sketches in the form of a *Bilderroman* or graphic novel for the young Anna Rose and is held in the Graphische Sammlung (Prints and Drawings Collection) of the Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf.<sup>2</sup> Mintrop named that album of sketches *Mammelitzken und die Heinzelmanken. Ein komisches Hausmärchen in Bildern* (Little mother and the gnomes. A comic fairy tale in pictures) and humorously combined in it images from books of instruction in housework for girls that were popular at the time together with local Rhenish stories of gnomes who were said to have helped with housework at night.<sup>3</sup> While that album also serves as a good example of a *Bildermärchen* or pictorial fairy tale, it further echoes the continuous comic-strip form of pictorial storytelling developed by Johann Heinrich Ramberg (1763-1840) and Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846) in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century from predecessors such as William Hogarth (1697-1764),<sup>4</sup> which was taken up later by contemporaries of Mintrop, including Wilhelm Busch (1832-1908)<sup>5</sup> and Adolph Schroedter (1805-1875).<sup>6</sup>

Theodor Mintrop created yet another album for Anna Rose on the occasion of her wedding in 1860, which became – together with the album of 1855 – the basis for his 1866 series of drawings known as *König Heinzelmans Liebe* (King Heinzelmans’s Love).<sup>7</sup> That work was published as a series of greyscale lithographs in 1875 after Mintrop’s death in 1870, together with a very romanticised text by Betty Lucas (1824-1903) as *König Heinzelmans’s Liebe*.<sup>8</sup> The Düsseldorf art historian Professor Richard Klapheck (1883-1939) later wrote, in his very informative study of Mintrop of 1923 (now a century old), of how Anna’s elder son Hans Piderit (born 1862) had prevented himself

<sup>1</sup> See Rose 2014.

<sup>2</sup> See Ricke-Immel 1978 and 1980 and Rose 2016.

<sup>3</sup> See Rose 2016, where this new thesis about the meaning of Mintrop’s “fairy tale” is explained more fully. Mintrop had already illustrated scenes from childhood for Wolfgang Müller von Königswinter’s *Kinderleben in Liedern und Bildern* (The life of children in songs and pictures) of 1850 (see also Klapheck 1923, p. 62), the year in which Theodor Kullak’s pieces for piano entitled *Kinderleben* (Scenes from childhood) had been published, but his sketches of Anna being helped with her housework by gnomes are more humorous.

<sup>4</sup> Hogarth’s works were popular in 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany thanks to engravings of them by Ernst Ludwig Riepenhausen (1765–1840), the father of the Riepenhausen brothers Franz (1786-1831) and Johannes (1787-1860), who became known for their 1816 life in pictures of Raphael, which Mintrop also imitated in his “Life of St. Luke” of 1852 (see Rose 2016, pp. 185-187). The Hogarth engravings by Ernst Riepenhausen were also commented on by Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-1799) and were of influence on other Düsseldorf artists such as J.P. Hasenclever (1810-1853); see also Soiné 1990.

<sup>5</sup> See also Rose 2011/2020, p. 30, note 78 and pp. 155f.

<sup>6</sup> Schroedter’s *Thaten und Meinungen des Herrn Piepmeyer* of 1848/49 is in a comic-book format and has a text written by the politician and satirist Johann Hermann Detmold (1807-1856).

<sup>7</sup> Betty Lucas née Bloem from Kreuznach was a friend of Jenny Marx and Malwida von Meysenbug as well as of the Kinkels and the Freiligraths, amongst other 19<sup>th</sup> century personalities and socialist writers (see Johanna Ludwig 1998), but much of her own writing – including that on Mintrop – was exaggeratedly sentimental.

<sup>8</sup> The novelist and critic Theodor Fontane (1819-1898) nonetheless praised the original drawings of 1866 when they were exhibited in Berlin in 1878 and also commented on Mintrop’s combination of both the idyllic and the religious with the humorous; see Fontane’s essays, Part 1, pp. 414-426 and Zangs 2013, p. 340.

and others from seeing the two albums created by Mintrop for Anna in 1855 and 1860.<sup>9</sup> What Richard Klapheck unfortunately could not know at that time was that there was yet another album of drawings executed by Mintrop for Anna's eldest sister Minna in the possession of Anna's family, which was only to be made public in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Theodor Mintrop's album for Anna's eldest sister Minna of October 1855 to April 1857 might be said to continue the story of Minna and her sisters from the first album for Anna of 1855 (see the conclusion to Chapter 2), but consists, in contrast to the two albums for Anna, of a series of shorter pictorial sequences illustrating festive occasions – such as a *tableau vivant* for Minna's birthday, a family Christmas in Düsseldorf, and the wedding of Mintrop's artist friend Eduard Geselschap to Anna's and Minna's sister Lotte Rose in Bielefeld in 1856 – as well as allegorical sequences and individual sketches. As in the albums for Anna of 1855 and 1860, many of the sketches depict the everyday life of the Rose family in Bielefeld and Düsseldorf, but often together with arabesque-like decorations and references to the works of Raphael and other artists, as well as meta-artistic jokes.<sup>10</sup>

Just as Ramberg and Töpffer enjoyed parodying older stories and images – as did Düsseldorf artists known to Mintrop such as Adolph Schroedter and Johann Peter Hasenclever<sup>11</sup> – so Mintrop's imaginative treatment of his subject-matter combines the everyday and the allegorical in a variety of humorous and inter pictorial ways, while sometimes also using the allegorical to create a frame for the everyday that raises the latter to a new imaginative level.<sup>12</sup>

In 1853 the philosopher Karl Rosenkranz (1805-1879) praised Hogarth, Töpffer, and Hasenclever for their humorous works, as well as the imaginative caricature in general for its ability to transform the mundane and the ugly as the “negative-beautiful” into a newly positive beautiful form.<sup>13</sup> Although Mintrop's works appear not to have been known to Rosenkranz at that time, many of his humorous private sketches of 1855 and later may be said to achieve such a transformative result; as does, for example, his sketch of Minna riding her grand piano in a musical “Walpurgisnacht”, or witches' sabbath, over the rooftops of Düsseldorf in Sketch 31.

Minna's love of music is, moreover, a major subject of the album. From the first sketch of a piano being carried upstairs to accompany the *tableau vivant* for her birthday in October 1855, to the depiction of Minna and her sister Aline in the last of the sketches, as they are led out of the album by an allegory of music and by *putti* holding scores by Mozart and Beethoven,<sup>14</sup> it is one of the most important “leitmotifs” of the album, and one which often also points to hidden musical allusions.

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<sup>9</sup> See Klapheck 1923, p. 109.

<sup>10</sup> The sketches of 1855 begin with an arabesque title page, but the next arabesque is the title page of 1860.

<sup>11</sup> See also Eva Büttner on humorous illustrations by Düsseldorf artists between 1830 and 1850.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, the use of figures from Raphael's Cupid and Psyche frescoes in the *Loggia di Psyche* (the “Loggia of Psyche”) in the *Villa Farnesina* in Rome as both a frame and a source of imagery for the sketches of the Geselschap wedding of 1856.

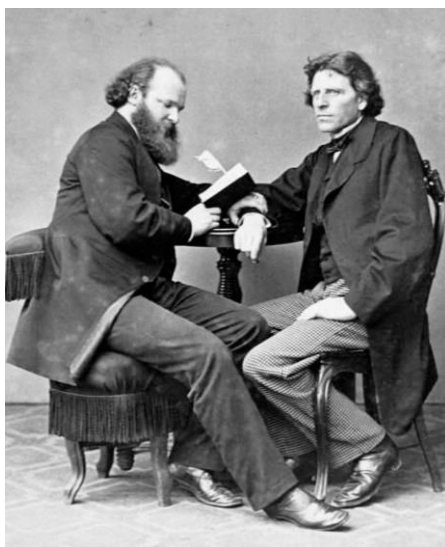
<sup>13</sup> See Rosenkranz 1853. (An English translation was published in 2015.)

<sup>14</sup> See also Sketch 7 with Minna and Lotte Rose playing music by Beethoven and Mozart. Aline's daughter Elisabeth Colbrunn was also musical and later gave piano lessons in Bielefeld. According to their cousin Dr. Heinrich Rose from Höxter, who boarded with the family of Fritz Rose while at school in Bielefeld in the late 1850s, both Aline and her elder sister Elise were also enthusiastic about the works of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), which had become more popular following their revival by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847) in the mid to late 1820s and were admired by Robert Schumann (1810-1856) amongst other mid-19<sup>th</sup> century composers.



## *Chapter 1. Theodor Mintrop, the rural and comic Raphael*

Richard Klapheck's 1923 monograph of Theodor Mintrop bears the striking sub-title: "Das Wunderkind der Romantik" – "The Child Prodigy of Romanticism". The nomenclature is borrowed from the Düsseldorf art historian Friedrich Schaarschmidt (1863-1902)<sup>15</sup> and introduces Mintrop as both a child of Romanticism and as an artist whose talent was evident in his childhood prior to any formal training.<sup>16</sup>



Undated photograph of Eduard Geselschap (1814-1878) and Theodor Mintrop (1814-1870) by G. & A. Overbeck, Düsseldorf (see also 3.4).

Theodor Mintrop was born at the farm known as "Barkhoven"<sup>17</sup> at Heidhausen near Essen-Werden<sup>18</sup> on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April 1814 and christened with the names "Heinrich Theodor" on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April of that year. His birth date has been given as the 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, or 17<sup>th</sup> of April, but the church records of Werden, as well as the announcement of his death on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1870, which was written by his friend, the poet Ludwig Bund (1828-1886), confirm that it was on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April 1814 that he first saw the light of day.<sup>19</sup>

Theodor, or "Dores"<sup>20</sup> as he came to be called by close friends and family, was the third child of Johann Wilhelm Mintrop (the "Schulte", or lessee farmer, of the farm Barkhoven at Heidhausen at the time) and his wife Elisabeth (née Löhmann),<sup>21</sup> but although he was to help both his father and eldest brother Wilhelm with their work, was not himself to run the farm as a full-time farmer, or to work there as a paid farm-hand or "Knecht".

Well before entering the *Königliche Preußische Kunstakademie* (Royal Prussian Academy of Art) at Düsseldorf as a student in 1844 at the age of 30, Theodor was said to have seen and been inspired by copies of the paintings of Raphael (1483-1520), which

<sup>15</sup> See Klapheck 1923, p. 8 and Schaarschmidt 1902, p. 89.

<sup>16</sup> In 1856 (the year in which the majority of Mintrop's sketches for Minna were made), he was described as belonging to the "Meisterklasse" (Masterclass) of the Düsseldorf Academy of Art and as a very significant talent (see also Rose 2003/2020, p. 23).

<sup>17</sup> The farm was named "Barkhoven" after one of its earlier lessees and was also spelt "Barkhofen".

<sup>18</sup> The "Obersadelhof Barkhoven" at Essen-Heidhausen, which was formerly leased by the Abbey at Werden to the "Schulte Barkhoven", is said to date back to the year 1050.

<sup>19</sup> See also Rose 2003/2020, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> One other variation on his name was "Döres", with an umlaut on the o.

<sup>21</sup> See also Zangs 2013, p. 11.

had been shown to him while he was still a boy; including Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia*.<sup>22</sup>



Left: Raphael, *Madonna della Sedia* (The Madonna of the chair), 1513/14, oil on panel, 71 cm, Palazzo Pitti Florence. Right: Mintrop admired and revered Raphael's works, but also reworks Raphael's images of the Madonna in this humorously secularised *conversazione* or conversation between the Madonna and saints, in which a pastor and other passers-by admire Elsken, the baby daughter of his friends Lotte and Eduard Geselschap in the Hofgarten gardens opposite their house, while the proud parents look on half-concealed in a darkened window behind the scene. (See Mintrop's letter to Anna Rose of the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1857 in D 72 Piderit, Theodor / Nachlass Theodor Piderit, Nr. 2 and Rose 2014, pp. 19 and 26.)

While serving as a bombardier in a brigade of the Westphalian artillery between 1834 and 1838,<sup>23</sup> Mintrop was also said to have seen and collected reproductions of Raphael's works, which were to be found in illustrated journals and papers such as the *Pfennig-Magazin* (a German-language version of the *Penny Magazine*).<sup>24</sup>

It was also while serving in the Westphalian artillery in Düsseldorf, Wesel, Cologne, and Münster that Mintrop's brigade passed through Lippstadt (the home of Minna's maternal grandparents and paternal great-grandparents) on the way from Wesel (the home town of his future friends Eduard and Friedrich Geselschap<sup>25</sup>) to manoeuvres in Salzkotten in early September 1836.<sup>26</sup> Although we do not have a complete record of what Mintrop saw in those towns, his letter to his father of October 1836, which Klapheck quotes, describes how he visited the cathedral in Paderborn (about 30 kilometres east of Lippstadt) around this time.<sup>27</sup> Further to this, Klapheck describes how Mintrop visited the cathedral at Münster and saw in the Town Hall there the portraits of the delegates to the

<sup>22</sup> See Klapheck, p. 23: Mintrop was said to have been shown an engraving of Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia* by his village priest.

<sup>23</sup> See Klapheck, pp. 23f. and pp. 137f. (Mintrop identified his artillery regiment as the 3<sup>rd</sup> brigade.)

<sup>24</sup> See Klapheck, p. 24 and Kertbeny 1867, p. 6. Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia* is also one of the works reproduced in the *Pfennig-Magazin* together with reproductions of the cartoons of Raphael's Vatican tapestries depicting scenes from the life of Christ. (See the *Pfennig-Magazin*, vol. 3, No. 92 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1835, pp. 1, 55, 87, 127, 159, 247, 263 and 303.)

<sup>25</sup> Their parents Johann and Anna Geselschap moved to Amsterdam from Wesel in 1814 for the birth of Eduard (the eldest of eleven children) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March of that year, in order to escape military action in Wesel, but returned there soon afterwards. (Eduard was christened in Wesel on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1814 and their youngest son Friedrich, who also became a history painter, was born there on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1835.)

<sup>26</sup> See Klapheck, p. 138.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*