



WIENER
PHILHARMONIKER
— 1842 —

Bernadette Mayrhofer

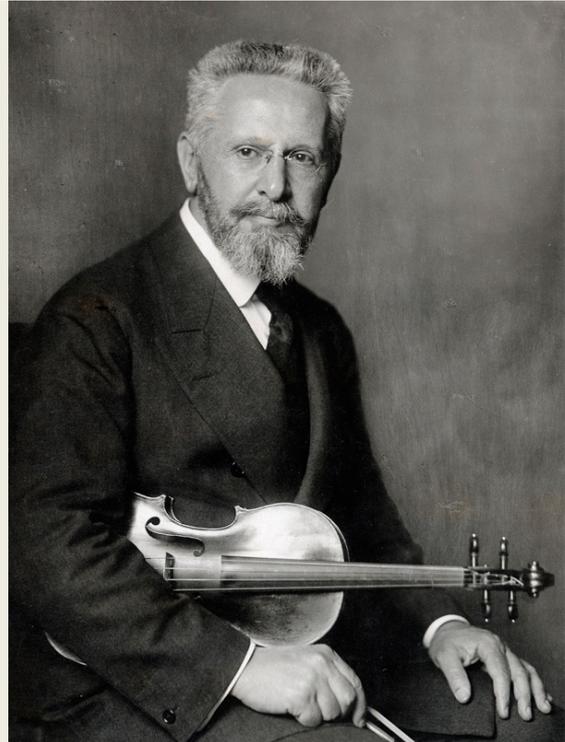
Arnold Rosé (Concertmaster, Violin I, Viola soloist)

Born October 10, 1863 in Jassy/Romania, died August 25, 1946 in exile in London/UK

Admission to the Vienna Court Opera either on April 20, 1881 or on October 23, 1881; First admission to the Vienna Philharmonic (WPh) on October 23, 1881, one-year break 1897/1898, withdrawal on March 24, 1901, admission again on September 1, 1929;

Immediately upon the 'annexation' on March 12, 1938, immediate forced leave from the State Opera Orchestra and thereby also loss of membership in the Vienna Philharmonic;

Education/Teachers: 1873 – 1877 studies with Karl Heißler at the Conservatory of the Society of Friends of Music in Vienna; 1879 debut in the Gewandhaus Leipzig, first major solo performance with the Vienna Philharmonic already at the age of 17 (Goldmark's violin concerto), 1883 founding of the internationally renowned "Rosé Quartet" (lasted for 55 years, until shortly before his death in exile), especially with his Vienna Philharmonic colleagues **Paul Fischer**, Anton Ruzitska and **Friedrich Buxbaum**, famous world premieres of works of Johannes Brahms, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Arnold Schönberg and Anton Webern, Imperial and Royal court musician, Austrian chamber virtuoso, Hofrat, Professor, violin teacher at the Conservatory of the Society of Friends of Music in Vienna and at the Academy of Music;



Arnold Rosé, 1930

Selected awards: Golden Order of Merit for Services Rendered to the Republic of Austria, Jubilee Ring of the Vienna Philharmonic (1931), Honorary member of the Vienna State Opera (1931) as well as of the Vienna Philharmonic (1933)

Married to Justine Mahler (sister of Gustav Mahler), his daughter Alma was a violinist (murdered 1944 in the KZ Auschwitz-Birkenau), his son Alfred was a pianist und conductor (exile in Canada), his brother Eduard Rosé was a cellist (deported to the Ghetto Theresienstadt, where he died on January 24, 1943) and was married to Emma Mahler, another sister of Gustav Mahler;

Escape from Vienna at the end of March 1939 at the age of 75, by way of Berlin and Amsterdam, arrival in London/UK on May 1, 1939;



Revival of the "Rosé Quartet" in exile (with Karl Doktor, the violist of the Busch Quartet, **Friedrich Buxbaum** and his daughter Alma Rosé, amongst others), regular performances in the National Gallery in the context of Lunch Time Concerts, 1942 concerts in Wigmore Hall, including on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the Vienna Philharmonic;

Sources see footnote¹

"As you correctly assume, after 57 years in the opera, 56 years with the quartet and 44 years in the Hofmusikkapelle I have now disappeared into retirement without further ado."² In this manner, Arnold Rosé described his situation in a letter to the renowned violinist, Carl Flesch.³ It is due to Flesch and especially Rosé's daughter Alma that, after traumatic months in Vienna, the famous concertmaster of the Vienna Philharmonic could arrive in exile in London at the age of 75. Rosé's successful string ensemble, the Rosé Quartet, which had already been founded 1883 in Vienna, was continued in exile. For the expelled musician, playing music in this ensemble was not only important in financial terms, but also gave him a feeling of security. The murder of his daughter Alma in the concentration camp in Auschwitz constituted an additional calamity for the musician, and deep depression and health problems followed. Arnold Rosé died in London on August 25, 1946.

"Disappeared into retirement without further ado"⁴ – Expulsion from the State Opera Orchestra and the Association of the Vienna Philharmonic

"The non-Aryan members of the solo personnel are not employed for the repertoire as long as higher directives do not arrive (...) The necessary withdrawals from service were decreed by way of suspension and concern (...) 2.) Hofrat Prof. Arnold Rosé (...)."⁵ Thus reads the anti-Semitic motivated eviction document, composed in austere official jargon on March 18, 1938 by State Opera director Erwin Kerber himself. Their sudden eviction from the professional surroundings came as a great shock to those affected. Shortly after the 'annexation,' Arnold Rosé depicted his situation in a short letter to the famous violin player and teacher Carl Flesch, who already

¹ Richard Newman, Alma Rosé. Wien 1906/Auschwitz 1944. Eine Biographie, Bonn 2003, 13 – 30; Information on Rosé, collected by HAdWPh/ Dr. Silvia Kargl (archivist); Stefan Drees, Lexikon der Violine, Berlin 2004, 535; Clemens Hellsberg, Demokratie der Könige. Die Geschichte der Wiener Philharmoniker, Zürich 1992, 241f; Arbeitsgruppe Exilmusik Hamburg, Lebenswege von Musikerinnen im „Dritten“ Reich und im Exil, Hamburg 2000, 201ff; www.lexm.uni-hamburg.de.

² „Wie Sie richtig vermuten, bin ich nun nach 57 Jahren Oper, 56 Jahren Quartett und 44 Jahren Hofmusikkapelle in den Ruhestand versunken, ohne Sang und Klang.“ [As you correctly assume, after 57 years in the opera, 56 years with the quartet and 44 years in the Hofmusikkapelle I have now disappeared into retirement without further ado.]

³ Flesch, Carl F.: „...und spielst Du auch Geige?“, Zürich 1990, 182.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ „Die nichtarischen Mitglieder des Solopersonals werden bis zum Einlangen höherer Weisungen im Spielplan nicht beschäftigt (...) Die notwendigen Außerdienststellungen wurden im Wege der Beurlaubung verfügt und betreffen (...) 2.) Hofrat Prof. Arnold Rosé (...).“ [The non-Aryan member of the solo personnel are not employed for the repertoire as long as higher directives do not arrive (...) The necessary withdrawals from service were decreed by way of suspension and concern (...) 2.) Hofrat Prof. Arnold Rosé (...)] Letter of Kerber/Vienna State Opera Administration to BThV, March 18, 1938, AdR, ÖBThV 886/1938.



resided in his English exile: "As you correctly assume, after 57 years in the opera, 56 years with the quartet and 44 years in the Hofmusikkapelle I have now disappeared into retirement without further ado.. I think you know me well enough to understand that I am a stranger to vanity, but I just can't believe to be so suddenly written off. I am awaiting full retirement effective May 1st, but have yet to receive any official notice. My little wealth has vanished into nothingness during the inflation, with the effect that I now have to bring down my standard of living to below modest. I'm in my 75th, my wife in her 70th year, and thus the pension needs to suffice for another couple of years. The extended suffering of my wife tarnishes my last years, yet I am still healthy and don't even have the shakes! Ha, ha!"⁶

Arnold Rosé's fate led Flesch to an unprecedented relief action for his cherished colleague and friend. Flesch started a circular, in which he enquired about potential donors all over the world – he addressed first and foremost wealthy music lovers – in order to be able to provide Rosé a monthly sustenance of 500 RM. Rosé's situation in Vienna dramatically intensified, his wife was seriously ill and required her husband's full support. *"In many respects, the necessary care of the sick imposes great deprivations upon me. Income opportunities such as giving lessons would reduce my pension claims, otherwise I could work hard [...]"⁷ On July 5, 1938, Rosé was led by the serious circumstances to accept Flesch's willingness to help: " [...] now a fate beyond any individual forces the pen into my hand, and I have to overcome myself to tell you that my further existence will have to be more than modest. [...] Should you be able to realize your noble intention, I would accept it without hesitation."⁸*

⁶ „Wie Sie richtig vermuten, bin ich nun nach 57 Jahren Oper, 56 Jahren Quartett und 44 Jahren Hofmusikkapelle in den Ruhestand versunken, ohne Sang und Klang. Ich glaube, daß Sie mich genügend kennen, um zu wissen, daß mir Eitelkeit fremd ist, aber daß man so plötzlich totgesagt wird, ist nicht zu fassen. Am 1. Mai erwarte ich meine Vollpension, doch habe ich bis jetzt keine amtliche Benachrichtigung erhalten. Mein kleines Vermögen ist während der Inflation in Nichts zeronnen, so daß ich meinen Lebensstandard auf mehr als bescheiden herunterdrücken muß. Ich bin im 75., meine Frau im 70. Lebensjahr, da muß die Pension noch ein paar Jahre langen. Das vieljährige Leiden meiner Frau trübt meine letzten Jahre, doch bin ich noch bei Gesundheit und habe nicht einmal den gewissen ‚Tatterich‘! Ha, ha!“ [As you are correctly assuming, I have now sunk into retirement without a sound and song, after 57 years in the opera, 56 years with the quartet and 44 years as part of the court music band. I think you know me well enough to understand that I am a stranger to vanity, but I can't believe that I can be so suddenly written off. I await full retirement effective May 1st, but have yet to receive official notice. My little wealth has vanished into nothingness during the inflation, with the effect that I now have to bring down my standard of living to below modest. I'm in my 75th, my wife in her 70th year, and thus the pension needs to suffice for another couple of years. The extended suffering of my wife tarnishes my last years, yet I am still healthy and don't even have the shakes! Ha, ha!]. Flesch, „...und spielst Du auch Geige?“ (as note 3), 182

⁷ „Die unerlässliche Pflege der Kranken legt mir in mancher Hinsicht große Entbehrungen auf. Eine Verdienstmöglichkeit wie Unterricht erteilen, würde meine Pensionsansprüche reduzieren, sonst könnte ich noch intensiv arbeiten [...]" [In many respects, the necessary care of the sick imposes great deprivations upon me. Income opportunities such as giving lessons would reduce my pension claims, otherwise I could work hard [...]] Ibid., dated July 1938, 184.

⁸ „[...] nun zwingt mir ein über-individuelles Geschick die Feder in die Hand und ich muß mich überwinden Ihnen mitzuteilen, dass mein weiteres Dasein ein mehr als bescheidenes wird sein müssen. [...] Sollten Sie Ihre vornehme Absicht in die Tat verwirklichen können, so würde ich dies ohne Zögern annehmen“ [...] now a fate beyond any individual forces the pen into my hand, and I have to overcome myself to tell you that my further existence will



Arnold Rosé's wife Justine died on August 22, 1938. In addition to this personal suffering, socially conditioned fears such as isolation, solitude and melancholia characterized Rosé's remaining time in Vienna. Especially tragic for Rosé was the alienation of his old friend Richard Strauss, who no longer came to the Pyrker gasse (the apartment of the family Rosé) to play skat and also otherwise no longer remained in contact with him. Strauss collaborated with the National Socialists, took over the chairmanship of the Reich Music Chamber and alienated many friends of Jewish descent, such as, for example, his Jewish librettist Stefan Zweig, who later committed suicide in Brazil. However, also other musicians who had earlier played music with Rosé in his apartment kept away. Other endangered friends or acquaintances had already gone into exile.⁹

An additional serious problem which Arnold Rosé faced were his "deeply melancholic" moods, to which he already previously had certain inclination, but which now emerged fully intensified by the exceptional psychological pressures (death of his wife, eviction and persecution). Consequently, his daughter Alma was very worried and corresponded in this matter with Bruno Walter. On August 23, 1938, shortly after the death of Arnold Rosé's wife, Bruno Walter conveyed consoling and personal words to Rosé and his children: *"Our past (...) was rich; our memories are beautiful and great; they are a comforting possession not to be lost in this horrible present. Tell yourself every day, and all of you tell each other every day, dear Alfi [Alfred, the son of Arnold Rosé, author's note] and Alma, that, whatever the suffering brought on by life, Justine felt safe and secure and comforted in all your love. And believe us that we will always carry her abiding memory in our hearts."*¹⁰

The population groups persecuted by the Nazis stood under the constant threat to be confronted, or threatened, denounced, evicted, fetched and/or deported at all times. The ever-present danger of "being fetched" also pertained to the family Rosé. In a letter to his son Alfred, who had fortunately already fled to Canada, Arnold Rosé – after an incident of November 15, 1938 – cautiously expressed himself in the following way: "I had 'a visitor' who enquired after

have to be more than modest. [...] Should you be able to realize your noble intention, I would accept it without hesitation.] Ibid., dated June 5, 1938, 183.

⁹ Newman, Alma Rosé (as note 1), 109, 117.

¹⁰ „Unsere Vergangenheit (...) war reich; unsere Erinnerungen sind schön und groß; sie sind ein unverlierbarer und tröstender Besitz in einer enstzlichen Gegenwart. Sage Dir es täglich, und sagt Ihr es Euch täglich, lieber Alfi [Alfred, Sohn von Arnold Rosé, Anm. d. Verf.] und Alma, daß, was auch das Leben an Leid gebracht, Justine sich in Eurer Liebe sicher und geborgen und getröstet gefühlt hat. Und glaubt uns, daß wir ihr treues Andenken immer im Herzen tragen werden.“ [Our past (...) was rich; our memories are beautiful and great; they are a comforting possession not to be lost in this horrible present. Tell yourself every day, and all of you tell each other every day, dear Alfi [Alfred, the son of Arnold Rosé, author's note] and Alma, that, whatever the suffering brought on by life, Justine felt safe and secure and comforted in all your love. And believe us that we will always carry her abiding memory in our hearts.] Ibid., 117.



you.”¹¹ On December 1st, Arnold Rosé’s daughter Alma reported to her brother from London about an incident with the SA in the night of September 28, 1938: “On the day you left us, the SA visited us at night – thank God father was already asleep. They wanted my car. Generally we experience such nice little interludes. We absolutely want to go somewhere else. I will not rush anything – be reassured. But I am exploring options.”¹²

In order to bridge the time to a possible escape, those who remained in Vienna had various survival strategies, such as preparing for “surprises”, avoiding arrest and the constant and highly difficult search for means of escape. On October 7, 1938, Alma Rosé wrote to her brother and sister-in-law in Canada: “I wish we could also already be so far! [...] Could Louis send an undated invitation to me and father? There is talk about that it might be the case that we will experience a surprise, [...] In order to be safe in any case, it would be important to have an invitation in hand, so that we may go somewhere. Likewise, I am asking you to write to the friend in London, C.F. [Carl Flesch, author’s note] and to request the same of him. You might think that we disturb your finally accomplished peace for no reason, but it is really serious and important. Please, arrange this as quickly as possible, so that in an emergency we will find a refuge for the time being. – [...] At this moment I am happy – but for how long!”¹³

“Also Father’s only wish has been most recently: Let’s get away.”¹⁴ – Escape to Great Britain

Arnold Rosé’s courageous, energetic and clever daughter Alma – named after her famous aunt Alma Mahler-Werfel – managed to make the impossible possible and rescued her father from the living conditions in Vienna, which had become increasingly unbearable.

¹¹ „Ich hatte ‚Besuch‘, der sich nach dir erkundigte.“ [I had ‘a visitor’ who enquired after you.] Ibid., 127.

¹² „Am Tag, an dem Du uns verlassen hast, waren noch in der Nacht SA da – Gottlob hat Vati schon geschlafen. Sie wollten mein Auto. Wir haben überhaupt so hübsche kleine Intermezzi erlebt. Wir wollen unbedingt wo anders hin. Ich werde nichts überstürzen – sei beruhigt. Aber ich bin auf einer Erkundungsreise.“ [On the day you left us, the SA visited us at night – thank God father was already asleep. They wanted my car. Generally we experience such nice little interludes. We absolutely want to go somewhere else. I will not rush anything – be reassured. But I am on an exploration trip.] Ibid., 128.

¹³ „Wären wir nur auch schon so weit! [...] Könnte Louis Vati und mir eine undatierte Einladung senden? Man spricht davon, daß der Fall eintreten könnte, daß wir da eine Überraschung erleben, [...] Um auf alle Fälle sicher zu sein, wäre es wichtig, eine Einladung in Händen zu haben, damit man irgendwohin kann. Ebenso bitte ich Dich, an den Freund in London C.F. [Carl Flesch, Anm. der Verf.] zu schreiben und ihn um dasselbe zu ersuchen. Du wirst vielleicht glauben, daß man unnötig Deine endlich errungene Ruhe stört, aber es ist wirklich ernst und dringend. Erledige es bitte so rasch als möglich, damit wir im Notfall eine Zuflucht für die erste Zeit finden. – [...] Momentan bin ich froh – aber wie lange!“ [I wish we could also already be so far! [...] Could Louis send an undated invitation to me and father? There is talk about that it might be the case that we will experience a surprise, [...] In order to be safe in any case, it would be important to have an invitation in hand, so that we may go somewhere. Likewise, I am asking you to write to the friend in London, C.F. [Carl Flesch, author’s note] and to request the same of him. You might think that we disturb your finally accomplished peace for not reason, but it is really serious and important. Please, settle this as quickly as possible, so that in an emergency we will find a refuge for the time being. – [...] At this moment I am happy – but for how long!] Ibid., 122.

¹⁴ „Auch Vatis einziger Wunsch war in letzter Zeit nur: Fort.“ [Most recently, also father’s only wish was: Let’s get away.] Ibid., 131.



On October 29, 1938 under the 'protective cloak' of her Czech passport, she embarked on an "exploration trip"¹⁵ through various countries. In London, she met with Carl Flesch, the renowned British conductor Sir Adrian Boult, and others. The descriptions of these encounters, especially her 'advances' with regard to emigration, are recorded in the unpublished memoirs of Leila Doubleday Pirani, a former student of Rosé and later a close friend of the family Rosé: *"After she had somewhat collected herself, we went to see Professor Flesch. Shunning neither ways nor means, he had collected a sufficient amount of money for the Rosé fund, so that the British government could no longer deny the issuance of an entrance visa. Flesch held her father in highest esteem, was extremely friendly to her and said that he would be greatly satisfied if he could wrench Arnold from the Nazi's claws."*¹⁶

During their meeting with Adrian Boult on December 2, 1938, Alma Rosé proposed to him that the Rosé Quartet should assemble again in London, with Friedrich Buxbaum as cellist and herself as second violinist. Boult was full of enthusiasm and was himself willing to sign Arnold Rosé's work permit.¹⁷

Arnold Rosé soon also received the liberating message; his daughter Alma had in London handled the bureaucratic requirements for the much longed for 'permits' – a special acceleration request sent by Bruno Walter to the daughter-in-law of the viceroy of India could significantly shorten the tedious application procedure. Finally, on December 15, 1938 she wrote her brother of the encouraging developments: *"Just now, the message arrived that father received the permit for permanent residence and work in this country. The Home Office administrated him as credible in just three weeks!!! Since my arrival, I have collected about 100 [pounds, author's note]. Written to all sorts of people, etc. You can imagine how I reacted. [...] I have some requests to play in the Netherlands, Athens, etc. First, I will now return and prepare father everything for the departure. Then, I want to settle him in London, close to Leila. And then, I wish to go and make money. All the money collected in the fund is now up to 300 [pounds, author's note], so that there is no reason to be nervous for the time being. You don't be so either! Most recently, also father's only wish was: Let's get away [...] God grant that we may soon establish ourselves and settle into a real home [...]"*¹⁸

¹⁵ „Erkundungsreise“ [Exploration trip].

¹⁶ „Nachdem sie sich ein bißchen gefaßt hatte, suchten wir Professor Flesch auf, der nicht Mittel noch Wege gescheut, so viel Geld für den Rosé-Fonds zu sammeln, daß genug beisammen war, daß die britische Regierung die Ausstellung eines Einreisevisums nicht länger versagen konnte. Flesch hatte vor ihrem Vater die größte Hochachtung, war äußerst nett zu ihr und sagte, seine größte Genugtuung wäre es, Arnold den Klauen der Nazis entreißen zu können.“ [After she had somewhat collected herself, we went to see Professor Flesch. Shunning neither ways nor means, he had collected a sufficient amount of money for the Rosé-fund, so that the British government could no longer deny the issuance of an entrance visa. Flesch held her father in highest esteem, was extremely friendly to her and said that he would be greatly satisfied if he could wrench Arnold from the Nazi's claws.] Ibid., 128.

¹⁷ Ibid, 129.

¹⁸ „Eben kam die Nachricht, daß Vati das permit für ständigen Aufenthalt und gleichzeitig Arbeitsbewilligung in diesem Land erhalten hat. Er ist unbedenklich beim Home Officegeführt worden in drei Wochen!!! Seitdem ich hier bin, habe ich noch gegen 100 [Pfund, Anm. d. Verf.] gesammelt. An alle möglichen Leute geschrieben etc. Kannst Dir denken, wie ich reagiert habe. [...] Ich habe einige Anträge in Holland, Athen etc. zu spielen. Zuerst fahre ich jetzt mal



Alma Rosé was back in Vienna already on Christmas Day. Time was increasingly running out: Their apartment in the Pyrkergrasse was to be “Aryanized” in the first week of March 1939, but withal they were ‘lucky’ – the future tenants assured that there was no hurry with the takeover. “First, father and daughter should sort out their issues.”¹⁹ Before their definite escape, there were several problems to cope with: The extreme cold of winter, the exceptional situation of those threatened as well as the stress with bureaucratic requirements led to a sickness in Alma Rosé, in consequence of which she was required to undergo tonsillectomy. Precious time was lost for escape preparations. The fact that on January 2, 1939, Arnold Rosé received a larger sum of dismissal payments from the State Theatre Administration – a total of 12.660,89 RM²⁰ – made it possible to cover a range of special payments: relocation, “Reich flight tax” (Reichsfluchtsteuer) and “punitive taxes”²¹, the many tickets, medical fees etc. A critical incident – Hitler’s invasion of Czechoslovakia (March 15/16, 1939) rendered her Czech passport worthless – necessitated Alma Rosé sudden flight from Vienna. With greatest difficulty, she just managed to escape the country. It was still assured to her the day before her escape, on March 14, that her father would receive his passport within the next days. Arnold Rosé followed after her in the end of March, and on May 1 arrived in London by way of Berlin and Amsterdam. He expressed his great relief on a postcard to his son just days after his arrival in exile, on May 8, 1939.²²

In a letter of March 19, 1939 to her brother in Canada, Alma Rosé described the last tumultuous days in Vienna prior to her hasty escape.²³ “ [...] *At the moment we are staying on the roof with Leila, but we are already vigorously looking for a furnished flat for father. He is in good hands – I’ve written him down everything in great detail, and even more. I was queued up for father’s passport for 8½ hours, without sitting for even a second. H. [Heini, Alma Rosé’s friend, author’s note] and I now hold the permits for two months, so you can imagine how we*

zurück und richte Vati alles zur Ausreise. Dann will ich ihn in London in die Nähe von Leila settle[n sic!]. Und dann will ich Geld verdienen gehen. Das ganze gesammelte Geld mit dem fond ist jetzt sicher 300 [Pfund, Anm. d. Verf.], so daß man für die erste Zeit nicht nervös sein muß. Du sei es auch nicht! Auch Vatis einziger Wunsch war in letzter Zeit nur: Fort. [...] Gott gebe es, daß wir bald Fuß fassen und uns ein richtiges Heim gründen [...].” [Just now, the message arrived that father received the permit for permanent residence and work in this country. The Home Office administrated him as credible in just three weeks!!! Since my arrival, I have collected about 100 [pounds, author’s note]. Written to all sorts of people, etc. You can imagine how I reacted. [...] I have some requests to play in the Netherlands, Athens, etc. First, I will now return and prepare father everything for the departure. Then, I want to settle him in London, close to Leila. And then, I wish to go and make money. All the money collected in the fund is now up to 300 [pounds, author’s note], so that there is no reason to be nervous for the time being. You don’t be so either! Most recently, also father’s only wish was: Let’s get away [...] God grant that we may soon establish ourselves and settle into a real home [...].] Ibid., 130f.

¹⁹ „Erst sollten Vater und Tochter ihre Angelegenheiten ins reine [sic!] bringen.“ [First, father and daughter should sort out their issues.] Ibid., 133.

²⁰ Internal correspondence of the SThV, signed by Eckmann, February 24, 1939, AdR, SThV 2143/38.

²¹ *Sühneabgabe*. Reichsfluchtsteuerbescheid/Arnold Rosé, Reichsfluchtsteuerstelle I. district, Vienna I, March 15, 1939, a quarter of the assets (326 RM) had to be paid by March 25 at the latest. Arisierungsakten, AdR/VA 30013.

²² Newman, Alma Rosé (as note 1), 138.

²³ Ibid., 135 – 137.



have to approach this matter. Both violins [the Mysa and the Guadagnini, author's note] and all of the jewellery are outside.²⁴ Also the watch of F.J. [Franz Josef, a golden watch with a chain, which Arnold Rosé had received as a gift from the emperor, Newman's note]. The relocation with all of the silver was not yet approved (unfortunately!), even though it had been submitted on November 3, and I've already urged twice. You can't even imagine how difficult everything has become since you have left. On November 10, the SA was here and enquired about you. Lucky enough that they could say you have left long ago. I'm sure you would have been imprisoned."²⁵

"Just imagine, I am going into town to look for work."²⁶ – The 76 year-old Arnold Rosé in London

When in the beginning of May 1939 and at the age of 76 Arnold Rosé started his new life in exile, nothing was as before. Up until his eviction from the orchestra in March 1938, he pursued an unequalled musical career, the most important stops of which are shortly outlined in the introductory profile to Arnold Rosé.²⁷

Rosé's arrival in England in the beginning of May 1939 went off cordially. He felt great relief over having escaped the hazard and he was received by friends such as Carl Flesch and Toscanini. "Musical soirees" were held in his honour, he was invited to attend concerts by Richard Tauber, Arturo Toscanini and Bronislaw Hubermann, and he met with Sir Adrian Boult

²⁴ In the context of the obligatory declaration of property, Rosé managed to 'misappropriate' both of the above mentioned violins from the Nazis. They were thus both missing in Rosé's declaration of property, which he was required to submit to the Nazi authorities as a precondition for his legal escape. AdR, VA 30013.

²⁵ „[...] Momentan wohnen wir am Dach bei Leila, suchen aber heftigst ein möbliertes Flat schon für Vati. Er ist in guten Händen – ich habe ihm alles genau aufgeschrieben, und außerdem mehr. Ich war 8½ Stunden für Vatis Paß angestellt, ohne eine Sekunde zu sitzen. H.[Heini, Alma Rosés Freund, Anm. d. Verf.] und ich haben nun die Erlaubnis für 2 Monate, also kannst Du Dir vorstellen, wie wir die Sache angehen müssen. [...] Beide Geigen [die Mysa und die Guadagnini, Anm. v. Newman] und der ganze Schmuck sind draußen.²² Auch die Uhr von F.J. [Franz Joseph, eine goldene Uhr mit Kette, die Arnold Rosé vom Kaiser geschenkt bekommen hatte, Anm. v. Newman]. Die Übersiedlung mit dem ganzen Silber war noch nicht bewilligt (leider!), obzwar es am 3. 11. eingereicht wurde und ich schon 2x urgiert habe. Du kannst Dir nicht vorstellen, wie die Sachen erschwert sind, seitdem Du weg bist. Am 10.11. waren SA da und haben um Dich gefragt. Das Glück, daß die sagen konnten, Du bist längst weg. Du wärest sicher eingesperrt worden" [...]. At the moment we are staying on the roof with Leila, but we are already vigorously looking for a furnished flat for father. He is in good hands – I've written him down everything in great detail, and even more. I was queued up for father's passport for 8½ hours, without sitting for even a second. H. [Heini, Alma Rosé's friend, author's note] and I now hold the permits for two months, so you can imagine how we have to approach this matter. Both violins [the Mysa and the Guadagnini, author's note] and all of the jewellery are outside. Also the watch of F.J. [Franz Josef, a golden watch with a chain, which Arnold Rosé had received as a gift from the emperor, Newman's note]. The relocation with all of the silver was not yet approved (unfortunately!), even though it had been submitted on November 3, and I've already urged twice. You can't even imagine how difficult everything has become since you have left. On November 10, the SA was here and enquired about you. Lucky enough that they could say you have left long ago. I'm sure you would have been imprisoned.] Letter from Alma Rosé (London) to her brother Alfred Rosé (Canada), London March 19, 1939; cit. as: *ibid.*, 135f.

²⁶ Arnold Rosé in a letter to his son in Canda, cit. as: *ibid.*, 143.

²⁷ Drees, *Lexikon der Violine* (as note 1), 535; Hellsberg, *Demokratie der Könige* (as note 1), 241f; Newman, *Alma Rosé* (as note 1), 13 – 30; Arbeitsgruppe Exilmusik Hamburg, *Lebenswege von Musikerinnen im „Dritten“ Reich und im Exil* (as note 1), 201ff.

in order to discuss the revival of the quartet in England. His daughter had organized a small room in her vicinity, and it was not long before Alma Rosé managed to find a large, two-storied maisonette for herself and her father.

The Rosé Quartet was regrouped with the help of Karl Doktor, the viola player of the Busch Quartet: Buxbaum played the violoncello, Alma Rosé the second violin and the Englishman Ernest Tomlinson the viola. The work permits referred to the quartet exclusively. The modest revenues of the quartet prompted both of the Rosés to apply for a revision of their work permits – Arnold Rosé desired a teaching permit – but this was declined. It was a hard blow to Arnold Rosé that his daughter Alma decided to go to the Netherlands for a couple of months in order to accept engagements there. As soon as Alma Rosé had accepted the offers in the Netherlands and fixed the travel dates, the performance prospects of the quartet improved. Rosé's job seeking in London bore fruit: His request for live performances in the National Gallery met with great approval. Starting from December 1939, Alma Rosé was substituted by the English violinist Walter Price.

Despite improved professional prospects – Rosé had in January 1940 received a teaching permit and the status of a “friendly foreigner” – he struggled to cope with financial problems. His lack of practical skill in organizing the household led to his dependence on a house keeper – from Vienna. When the Carl Flesch fund expired, only the financial support of his daughter from Holland remained for the moment.²⁸ He finally turned to Arturo Toscanini and recounted to him his financial plight. Toscanini helped him out with 300 dollars by return of mail, and Bruno Walter sent him 100 dollars from the USA as well. In order to come by some money, Rosé eventually started selling pieces from his private ownership. He even thought of selling his valuable Stradivari, but refrained from doing so for the time being.

Yet another turning point came along with the German attack on the Netherlands, which surrendered after only five days. His daughter Alma, who had continued to postpone her return to England and even allowed her five-month return guarantee to expire, was trapped. Arnold Rosé sank into depression and seriously started to consider selling his Stradivari. His daughter, however, who wanted to prevent this at all costs, had taken the necessary ‘expertise’ with her to Holland.

²⁸ During an attempted escape in December 1942 from the Netherlands – she attempted to flee to Switzerland – Alma Rosé was denounced, imprisoned and then brought to the detention camp of Drancy, a town close to Paris. On July 18, 1943 Alma Rosé – through the new regime of the notorious Austrian, Alois Brunner, the deportations in Drancy were rapidly speeded up – was packed together in a train with 1000 captives and deported to the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. Her fate in the KZ is known from various books. Up until her death on April 5, 1944, Alma Rosé led the camp band – also known as *Mädchenorchester von Auschwitz* – and thereby saved the lives of many members of the orchestra. For an extensive account, see: Newman, Alma Rosé (as note 1).



A great fortune in these difficult times – apart from his quartet – was Rosé’s circle of friends, which supported him in all matters. When with the onset of the aerial war over London a bomb hit in the vicinity and burst the window panes of Rosé’s apartment, he moved in the beginning of November 1940 to Welwyn Gardens City in Hertfordshire – a peaceful and pleasant area in London – with the help of his friends Dr. Paul and Nora Nathan. It was with their help as well that he received rent allowance from the public relief office. In August 1943, shortly before his 80th birthday, he moved to his Viennese friends Hans and Stella Fuchs in Blackheath, where he was very comfortable. He wrote to his son in Canada: *“My condition is satisfactory, and I would be reassured if I got to hear a word from A. [Alma, author’s note].”*²⁹

Rosé continued to practice the violin for two hours every morning, participated in rehearsals and performances, and read much. Towards the end of the war, his health noticeably deteriorated, and problems with the gallbladder forced him to hold a strict diet, which would however not keep him from having lunch every Saturday with Mathilde Freud, the oldest daughter of Sigmund Freud, and her husband Robert Hollitscher.

When a V1-bomb hit close to the Fuchs house, Stelle Fuchs, Hans Fuchs and Arnold Rosé were slightly injured. Despite these circumstances, Rosé seemed to be managing well. He wrote to his son on September 6, 1944: *“You don’t need to worry about me. Fuchs and Tischler [two married couples and good musical friends of Rosé from Vienna, author’s note] are true friends to me. [...] I hope to spend Christmas with A. [Alma, authors’ note] and patiently await a message.”*³⁰

Musical engagements of Arnold Rosé and Friedrich Buxbaum in London³¹

The most important musical pillar of Rosé and Buxbaum in exile in London was the revived “Rosé Quartet,” in which they played together with the Englishmen Ernest Tomlinson (viola) and – after Alma Rosé’s withdrawal in November 1939 – Walter Price (second violin). However, the personnel frequently changed. May Mukle sometimes took over the violoncello part from Buxbaum. The repertoire of the quartet was dedicated particularly to the works of

²⁹ *“Mein Befinden ist befriedigend, und wäre ich ganz beruhigt, wenn ich von A. [Alma, Anm. d. Verf.] ein Wort zu hören bekäme.”* [My condition is satisfactory, and I would be reassured if I got to hear a word from A. [Alma, author’s note].] Letter from Arnold Rosé to Alfred Rosé September 14, 1943. Mahler-Rosé-Collection, cit. as: Newman, Alma Rosé (as note 1), 389.

³⁰ *„Um mich sollst Du Dich nicht sorgen. Fuchs u. Tischler [zwei Ehepaare und gute MusikerfreundInnen Rosés aus Wien, Anm. d. Verf.] sind mir wahre Freunde. [...] Ich hoffe, um Weihnachten mit A [Alma, Anm. d. Verf.] zu sein, und warte geduldig auf Nachricht.* [Don’t worry about me. Fuchs and Tischler [two married couples and good music friends of Rosé from Vienna, author’s note] are true friends to me. [...] I hope to spend Christmas with A. [Alma, authors’ note] and patiently await a message.] Letter from Arnold Rosé to his son Alfred in Canada, September 6, 1944, cit. as: *ibid.*, 391.

³¹ An overview of the concerts performed by Rosé and Buxbaum in exile, which the author managed to elicit from exile magazines and other sources, are found in: Bernadette Mayrhofer, *„Die Angelegenheit des Judenabbaus geht jetzt ganz ruhig vor sich“*. Vertreibung von Wiener Philharmonikern nach 1938 und ihr Leben im Exil. Diploma thesis, Vienna 2005, 149f.

Viennese classical and romantic periods, above all the works of Haydn, Mozart, Dittersdorf, Beethoven, Brahms and Schumann. An exception was the Shostakovich Quartet in C major, op. 49, which was on the programme on December 3, 1941.

Their regular performances in the context of the Lunch Time Concerts took place daily – except Saturdays and Sundays – in the National Gallery, which could be utilized otherwise because the artworks had temporarily been rehoused. The musicians here obtained reduced wages, the rest went to the “Musician’s Benevolent Fund.” The driving force behind this highly successful project to support unemployed musicians was the pianist Myra Hess. On July 23, 1943, the 1000th concert was held and up to this point around 450.000 auditors had purchased an admission ticket. The Rosé Quartet performed in the National Gallery 14 times, albeit at times as trio, such as on November 6, 1940, and on November 18, 1943, when only Rosé, Buxbaum and Myre Hess performed. Both times they played Brahms’s Trio op. 8, amongst others.³² Yet another musical highlight of their times in exile were the concerts in the Wigmore Hall in London, on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the Vienna Philharmonic in 1942. In the British exile magazine “Zeitspiegel”, the centenary celebration of the Vienna Philharmonic in Vienna was commented with great criticism and sarcasm: *“How could the Philharmonic complete their national mission, if they – in the year of their centenary existence – have to drop, indeed delete, from their own glamorous history the possibly most glamorous era, the era of Gustav Mahler? If they have to delete the name of the last executor of Mahler’s heritage, Brunno (sic!) Walter? If they are not allowed to receive from the master who had so richly impregnated their most recent era – Toskcanini? If in front of stalls of S.S. uniforms and sadistic thugs they have to exercise art for the pleasure of mass murderers?”*³³ The concerts of the ‘counter-event’ in exile took place on May 4, May 28 and June 11 – with contributions by the Rosé Quartet – in London and were highly successful.³⁴ Rosé reported to his son on June 11: “After the concert of June 11, instead of flowers Kokoschka dedicated to me a lovely handwritten page together with flowers in a vase. [I’m] so delighted, the

³² Raab Hansen, NS-verfolgte Musiker in England. Spuren deutscher und österreichischer Flüchtlinge in der britischen Musikkultur. Hamburg 1996, 130-234.

³³ „Wie sollten die Philharmoniker ihre nationale Mission erfüllen können, wenn sie – Jahr ihres hunderjährigen Bestandes – aus ihrer eigenen glanzvollen Geschichte die vielleicht glänzendste Epoche streichen, ja auslöschen müssen, die Epoche Gustav Mahlers? Wenn sie auslöschen müssen den Namen des letzten Exekutors des Mahlerschen Erbes, Brunno (sic!) Walter? Wenn sie nicht von dem Meister empfangen dürfen, der ihre letzte Periode am reichsten befruchtet hat – Toskcanini? Wenn sie vor einem Parkett von S.S.-Uniformen und sadistischen Fratzen zum Wohlgefallen von Massenmördern Kunst exerzieren müssen?“ [How could the Philharmonic complete their national mission, if they – in the year of their centenary existence – have to drop, indeed delete, from their own glamorous history the possibly most glamorous era, the era of Gustav Mahler? If they have to delete the name of the last executor of Mahler’s heritage, Brunno (sic!) Walter? If they are not allowed to receive from the master who had so richly impregnated their most recent era – Toskcanini? If they have to exercise art in front of the stalls of S.S.-uniforms and sadistic visages?] Jenö Kostmann, Philharmonische Meditationen. Zum 100. Geburtstag des Wiener Symphonieorchesters, in: Zeitspiegel, No. 15, April 11, 1942, 9.

³⁴ Newman, Alma Rosé (as note 3), 233f; See also Zeitspiegel No. 25, 7; No. 15, 9; No. 20, 9; 21, 7; 23, 7; DÖW-Sig. 3001; „Times“, Saturday, May 30 1942; programme slip of Free Austrian Movement, copy of Annemarie Kofler.



dedication: to God's violinist!"³⁵ On the occasion of Rosé's 80th birthday on October 24, 1943, the "Anglo-Austrian Music Society" hosted a large concert in the Wigmore Hall on October 27. The Rosé Quartet (with Buxbaum, Tomlinson and Jekel) played with Myra Hess on the piano.³⁶ Rosé reported about a "completely outsold hall and endless ovations"³⁷ in an enthusiastic letter to Alfred, and he further describes: "Times, Daily Telegraph & other news issued articles. Was widely commented. After the concert, a supper in my honour took place in the Savoy Hotel, which was hosted by the Anglo-Austrian Music Society, on the 29th a lunch with Frankenstein as president, who held a long toast on myself. Very honouring and sincere."³⁸ At this point, Arnold Rosé did not yet know that his daughter Alma had already been deported to the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau.³⁹ Still on September 6, 1944, about six months after the murder of his daughter in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Arnold Rosé still cherished the hope, "to spend Christmas with A. [Alma, author's note]."⁴⁰

"Enough! [...] What stands in front of me is – nothing. No hope. [...] Man just does not grow any further."⁴¹ - Arnold Rosé at the end of his life

After the end of war, Arnold Rosé even received an invitation by the Vienna Philharmonic to resume his activities as concertmaster. This caused him exceptional joy. In a letter to his son, he writes on February 2, 1946: "You can imagine how stunned I was when reading the letter. What satisfaction, appreciation, and honour! [...] I declined the position as concertmaster, because I no longer feel strong enough for it. Alma's death has gravely affected my heart, it has made it very weak. On top of this, the gallbladder disease which lasted four months has enervated me. In any case, I have to sleep over this issue and think about it."⁴²

³⁵ "Kokoschka hat mir nach dem Konzert am 11. JUNE statt frischer Blumen ein entzückendes Blatt von seiner Hand mit Blumen in einer Vase gewidmet. [Bin] ganz begeistert, die Widmung: dem Geiger Gottes!" [After the concert of June 11, instead of flowers Kokoschka dedicated to me a lovely handwritten page together with flowers in a vase. [I'm] so delighted, the dedication: to God's violinist!] Newman, Alma Rosé (as note 1), 234.

³⁶ Copy of the invitation of the „Anglo-Austrian Music Society“, supplied by Annemarie Kofler.

³⁷ „total ausverkaufte[n] Saal und unaufhörliche[n] Ovationen.“ [completely outsold hall and endless ovations.]

³⁸ „Times, Daily Telegraph & andere News haben Artikel gebracht. Wurde sehr commentiert. Nach dem Concert fand im Savoy Hotel ein supper [sic!] mir zu Ehren statt, gegeben von Anglo-Austrian Music Society, am 29th ein lunch [sic!] mit Frankenstein als Präsident, der einen langen toast [sic!] auf mich hielt. Sehr ehrend und herzlich.“ [Times, Daily Telegraph & other news issued articles. Was widely commented. After the concert, a supper to in my honour took place in Savoy Hotel, which was given by the Anglo-Austrian Music Society, on the 29th a lunch with Frankenstein as president, who held a long toast on myself. Very honouring and sincere.] October 30, 1943, Newman, Alma Rosé (as note 1), 349.

³⁹ Further information to Alma Rosé's deportation and murder by the Nazis see footnote 28.

⁴⁰ "um Weihnacht mit A. [Alma, Anm. d. Verf.] zu sein." [to spend Christmas with A. [Alma, author's note].] Letter of Arnold Rosé to his son in Canada, September 6, 1944, cit. as: *ibid.*, 391.

⁴¹ „Genug! [...] Was vor mir steht, ist – nichts. Keine Hoffnung. [...] Nur der Mensch wächst nicht mehr.“ [Enough! [...] What stands in front of me is – nothing. No hope. [...] Man just does not grow any further.] Letter of Rosé to his son, Mahler-Rosé-Collection, cit. as: *ibid.*, 406.

⁴² „Du kannst Dir vorstellen, wie sprachlos ich war, als ich den Brief las. Diese Genugtuung, diese Anerkennung, diese Ehrung! [...] Die Konzertmeisterstelle lehne ich ab, da ich mich nicht mehr kräftig dafür fühle. Almas Tod hat mein Herz sehr angegriffen, sehr geschwächt. Dazu die 4 Monate währende Gallenerkrankung hat mich sehr entkräftet. Jedenfalls muß ich die Sache lange überschlafen, überlegen.“ [You can imagine how stunned I was when reading



When in the end of July 1945 Arnold Rosé learned of the terrible death of Alma in the concentration camp Auschwitz on April 5, 1944,⁴³ he fell into depression, his health deteriorated rapidly and on February 7, 1946 he suffered a severe heart attack, from which he never recuperated. From his colleague Friedrich Buxbaum he received the message that his relative Willi Silberstein was shot dead in an attempt to cross the borders. When Arnold Rosé learned from Buxbaum of the murder of the Philharmonic musicians Max Starkmann, Viktor Robitsek and his wife, as well as of the many Nazis remaining in the orchestra,⁴⁴ he wrote to his son in great disillusionment on February 12, 1946: "I am glad that I have quit my job. Enough! What stands in front of me is – nothing. No hope. [...] Man just does not grow any further."⁴⁵ Arnold Rosé passed away in London on August 25, 1946. His cinerary urn was brought to Vienna five years later.⁴⁶ At the Grinzing cemetery in Vienna's 19th district, a grave of honour reminds of this great musician as well as his wife Justine Rosé and his famous daughter Alma Rosé.⁴⁷ A commemorative plaque in honour of Rosé was unveiled in 1976 on his former residential house in the Pyrker gasse 23, also in the 19th district of Vienna.⁴⁸

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Translation: Dennis Johnson

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⁴³ Further information to Alma Rosé's deportation and murder by the Nazis see footnote 28.

⁴⁴ Newman, Alma Rosé (as note 1), 381, 393, 406.

⁴⁵ „Ich bin froh, daß ich meinen Beruf beendet habe. Genug! [...] Was vor mir steht, ist – nichts. Keine Hoffnung. [...] Nur der Mensch wächst nicht mehr.“ [I am glad that I have quit my job. Enough! What stands in front of me is – nothing. No hope. [...] Man just does not grow any further.] Letter from Arnold Rosé to his son, Mahler-Rosé-Collection, cit. as: *ibid.*, 406.

⁴⁶ Newman, Alma Rosé (as note 1), 407.

⁴⁷ http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Grinzing_Friedhof_-_Arnold_Rose.jpg

⁴⁸ Information on Rosé, collected by HAdWPh/ Dr. Silvia Kargl (archivist).