



# OTTO HAAS

Formerly Leo Liepmannsohn, est. 1866  
London



Proprietors: Maud & Julia Rosenthal  
Associate: Dr. Ulrich Drüner

## MUSIC BOOKS AND EDITIONS AUTOGRAPHS AND MANUSCRIPTS

### A Brief History of Otto Haas

[Home](#)

In the last 140 years, the firm of Otto Haas has maintained continuity, despite great political and economic upheavals. The main stages in its history are as follows:



*Liepmannsohn's business card from Markgrafenstrasse 52, Berlin*

[History](#)

1866-72 Liepmannsohn & Dufour,  
*Paris 11 rue des Saint-Pères*

Priced catalogues nos. 1-37;  
auction catalogues.

[Catalogue](#)

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1874-1935 Leo Liepmannsohn, Berlin  
*Markgrafenstrasse 52 (1874-83)*  
*Charlottenstrasse 63 (1883-93)*  
*Bernburgerstrasse 14 (1893-1935)*

Priced catalogues nos. 1-238;  
64 auction catalogues (some in conjunction with other firms, primarily with Martin Breslauer, Berlin, and K. E. Henrici, Berlin).



*Liepmannsohn's premises in Markgrafenstrasse, Berlin (1<sup>st</sup> floor)*

[Links](#)

1936-1955 Otto Haas, London

Priced catalogues nos. 1 – 34

1955-2004 In 1955, the firm was acquired by A. & M. Rosenthal, who were responsible for catalogues 35-39; since catalogue 40 (2003), [Dr. Ulrich Drüner](#), one of Albi's closest colleagues and friends, has been active in the firm as an associate.

In 2006, Julia Rosenthal acquired her father's share in the partnership of Otto Haas, and along with Dr. Drüner, she



upholds the high standards of cataloguing and dealership to take this renowned company forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

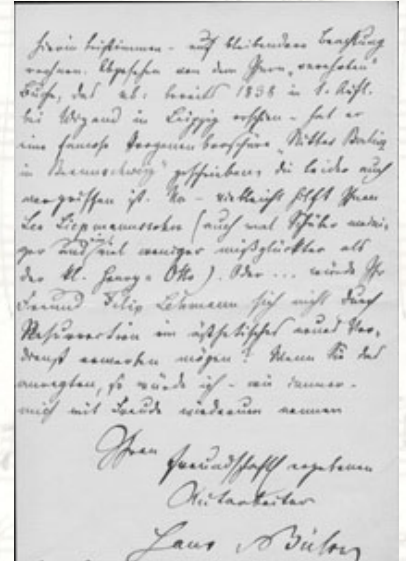
## ***A unique firm history: Three proprietors in 137 years***

Biographical notes by Oliver Neighbour

### **Leo Liepmannssohn (1840-1915)**

In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, a growing desire to study both early music theory and the music itself, brought about a demand for publications and manuscripts from all periods, many of which would previously have aroused little interest. Private collectors tended to lead the way, but institutions soon followed. By the time Leo Liepmannssohn served his apprenticeship with Asher & Co. in Berlin, it was not unusual for booksellers, Asher among them, to devote a section of a catalogue, or even a complete one, to antiquarian music. That was the pattern adopted by Liepmannssohn when he moved to Paris in 1866 and set up his own business there.

Liepmannssohn was a good amateur pianist who had studied with Hans von Bülow; indeed, in [a letter](#) in our archive, dated 1890, Bülow states that he was "once among my pupils" and adds that he was "not the worst". Liepmannssohn had a broad knowledge of music, which gradually became a salient feature in his Parisian catalogues. During the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, he retreated to London. Finding on his return that, as a German citizen, he was no longer entirely welcome, he sold his business in 1872 and moved back to Berlin, first as a partner in Asher & Co. and then, from 1874, as proprietor of his own concern. His catalogues quickly became famous for the quality of the



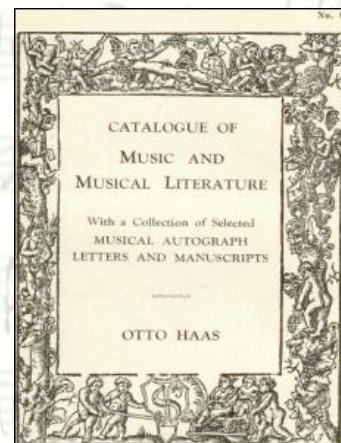
Letter by Hans von Bülow, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1890, about his pupil Liepmannssohn

items offered and the excellence of the descriptions. Indeed, they acquired the status of valued reference works in their own right, to which acknowledged experts in particular fields would contribute entries.

### Otto Haas (1874-1955)

Having already worked with well-known antiquarian booksellers in Frankfurt, New York and Berlin, Otto Haas entered into partnership with Liepmannssohn early in 1903 and became proprietor of the firm later in the same year. To clients, the change of ownership was scarcely noticeable. Haas retained the firm's old name and continued the series of sale catalogues in their established form and with the same expertise. After World War I, he restricted his sphere of activity almost entirely to autographs in general and to music and musical literature. By the time he was obliged to leave Germany in 1935, a large number of famous collections had passed through his predecessor's or his own hands, including those of André, Commer, Eitner, Friedländer, Heyer, James E. Matthew, Moscheles, Mottl, Riemann, Rust, M. Schlesinger, Spohr and Wolffheim.

Haas' application to re-establish his firm in London (incidentally, the former home of his wife, Kathleen) received warm support from Maggs Bros., and also from the British dealers, Cecil Hopkinson and Percy Muir. As early as 1909, Haas had issued a single catalogue under his own name, with a never fulfilled promise of more to follow. Now, starting afresh in London, he finally dropped his anonymity, although the *Daily Telegraph*, welcoming the first catalogue in his new series, em-



Cover of Otto Haas Catalogue No. 1, London, 1936



Postcard by Imogen Holst, the composer's daughter, with Christmas wishes for Frau Otto Haas

phasized the firm's continuity by heading its article 'Liepmannssohn, London'.

### **Albi Rosenthal (1914-2004)**

Early in 1955, Haas sold the firm to Albi and Maud Rosenthal. Albi Rosenthal, both of whose grand-fathers, Jacques Rosenthal and Leo S.Olschki, were celebrated antiquarian booksellers, had emigrated from Munich to London in 1933. Three years later he founded the firm A. Rosenthal Ltd., which still exists. Among the subjects originally favoured by it was music, which had always been Rosenthal's greatest enthusiasm, especially violin playing. The musical element, however, was now transferred to his prestigious new firm. Haas had already issued 34 catalogues in London. Between 1955 and 1959, Rosenthal added three more, and two associated with book fairs followed in 1972 and 1978 (unnumbered, but in fact nos. 38 and 39). Catalogue no. 40, (2005), marked a new beginning, exactly a century after Haas' acquisition of the firm.

It was on a different aspect of Haas' activities that Rosenthal tended to build. Many of the great institutional and private collectors of the first half of the century had not only bought from Haas but relied, to a remarkable degree, on his scholarly judgement and sound advice. As a collector himself, Rosenthal understood perfectly the varied requirements of his clients. He often became friends with them, taking pleasure in seeking out for them things which in turn gave them pleasure and enhanced their collections, whether these were modest or internationally renowned. There is scarcely a public or private collection in Europe or in the United States that has not been very considerably enriched through his pain-staking cooperation, whether as a consultant or agent. Perhaps his greatest



*Albi Rosenthal, after the Sotheby's sale of 17 May 1990, where he bought the autograph of Beethoven's Cello-Sonata for £480,000*

achievement in recent years, was to negotiate, sometimes against very considerable odds, the acquisition for the Paul Sacher Stiftung of a number of major archives, most notably those of Stravinsky and Webern.

Albi Rosenthal passed away on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2004. The most renowned music antiquarians (Bodin, Camner, Cox, Drüner, Lubrano, Mecklenburg, Schneider, Voerster) commemorated their colleague and mentor in a special catalogue, which was issued on the occasion of his Memorial Concert at the Wigmore Hall, London, on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2004.

Since then, the firm has continued under the direction of Maud and Julia Rosenthal, in association with Dr. Ulrich Drüner, a leading German antiquarian and musicologist, Albi's oldest associate of 33 years standing. In Spring 2006, Otto Haas issued a major catalogue [41], *W. A. Mozart and his World*, to mark the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the composer's birth, a benchmark contribution in Mozart year. Catalogue 42, featuring composers ranging from Leclair to Schoenberg, represented in rare editions, manuscripts and autograph letters [126 items], is now available.

Otto Haas aspires to continue its 140-year-old tradition of serving scholarship by offering a wide spectrum of musical literature in all fields and price-ranges, building international public and private collections, undertaking auction representation and handling the sale of musical manuscripts on a commission basis, thus serving its clientele worldwide.

