

## Materiali per lo studio delle Singing Babies

A cura di Giorgio Zoffoli



Per sbrogliare la matassa dell'attività delle Singing Babies, l'unica canzone in mio possesso è quella rintracciabile anche su YouTube all'indirizzo <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6s0EjN6jvyc>, che dimostra l'impostazione vocale della formazione, ricca di reminiscenze di vari generi musicali.



Un minimo di biografia sono riuscito a ricostruirla, ma aggiungo qui vari altri documenti che possono essere utili per avvicinarci allo scopo di avvalorare i collegamenti Singing Babies / Coeur Dames / Ensemble Seven Viennese Singing Sisters.

Links interessanti:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viennese\\_Singing\\_Sisters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viennese_Singing_Sisters)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ja8kho92Cvs>

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/the-coconut-grove-cabaret-time-after-midnight>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXyS-FGW4Yk>

## *Storia*

The Seven Viennese Singing sisters also known as The Singing Babies, were an a cappella close harmony singing group of the 1930s. The group appears to have been founded together with Edmund Fritz as “Edmund Fritz’s Singing Babies”, either in the late 20s or in 1930.

This group – with probable periodic changes of some members, including the loss of Edmund Fritz – gave concerts and made records, films and radio performances for a period of about eight years. The Internet Movie Database lists a 1930 movie starring Edmund Fritz called "Die Singenden Babies" but no details of the singers are known. Their first radio performance was likely in March 1930 in a radio program for the German "Funkstunde" (according to an extant playlist). Two months later, they made their first two gramophone records for the publishing company "Electrola" (see Discography below).

In August 1930, also together with Edmund Fritz, the group made their first movie shoot: the short film "Die Singenden Babies". Additional records for the "Electrola" label were produced in the fall of 1930, but not published. In 1931, the group cut four records in Milan, and gave a radio concert in the Netherlands. In the spring of 1932, the Singing Babies assisted in the film "Die Große Liebe", and later this same year, they appeared in the Franco-German co-production of the Anny Ondra film "Baby" (Anny Ondra movie <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXyS-FGW4Yk>), directed by Carl Lamac and produced by Friedrich Aussenberg. The Anny Ondra movie "Baby" shows the group singing two songs - "Ich lieb' Dich" ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=ja8kho92Cvs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ja8kho92Cvs)) and "Au Revoir Baby". (Friederike [Fritzi] Schlichter Lindberg is third from left in the first YouTube clip). The group recorded one disk in Czechoslovakia and four disks in Germany from songs in this movie.

At this point, The Singing Babies appear to have broken with Edmund Fritz and changed their name to the Viennese Seven Singing Sisters (though none were in fact sisters). Under this new name, the group made six records in London, in June 1933, in September 1933, and in the summer of 1934 (see Discography below). A last German film ("Ein Kuss nach Ladenschluss") premiered in March 1934. In this same month the group toured Switzerland, according to the Harmony Boys' Werner Doege, who remembered meeting them there. One year later they recorded two additional songs, again in Milan. In 1935 they appeared in the Brazilian film "Noites Cariocas". A commenter on the photo below corroborates that the group performed at the Cassino da Urca in Rio de Janeiro in February 1935; he found this information in a magazine of the era called "A Noite". He also confirms that they made a movie at this time, "Noites Cariocas".

On the website of the British Pathé film company, there are two astonishing short films with the Singing Babies, made in November 1937 and December 1938. The former, a beautiful melody by Chopin, has sound ([www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=11275](http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=11275)); the latter, filmed at The Coconut Grove, unfortunately does not ([www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=10981](http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=10981)). Eva Oplatek, the last surviving member of this group, recalls that Fritzi (Schlichter) Lindberg was the leader of the group at this time, and indeed in the first film, Fritzi can clearly be seen directing.

In 1938 the group toured Argentina, but then returned to Europe (possibly England). By early 1939, the group broke up due to the urgent need of many members to leave Europe after the rise of the Nazi regime. Several members emigrated to Argentina (sailing from

England); others went to the United States. The Argentine members reconstituted a group under the Singing Babies name and toured Argentina and Bolivia during the forties; this group most likely only had two or three of the original members, and does not seem to have produced any records. Additional information on the known members is given below.

A photo of the group with seven members. Other pictures of the group are also visible on this site. The number of the group apparently varied: a notice at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/resources/radio\\_times/pdf/RT-TVS-011-72dpi.pdf](http://www.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/resources/radio_times/pdf/RT-TVS-011-72dpi.pdf) indicates that at one point the group numbered six.

Many pictures, including a picture of a group of six singers in business clothes, can be found here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/63979448@N00/5825469690/in/photostream/>. The pictures on this site are from the personal archives of the Schlichter family.

### *Formazione*

One of the members was named Friederike (Fritzi) Schlichter Lindberg, who is on the top middle left on the first group photo referenced above. Another member was Petra (Deutschlander) van der Velden. These two members moved to Argentina in 1939 to escape the Nazis, where Fritzi ran an afternoon tea cafe known as The Atelier. Fritzi was the widow of the Finnish opera singer Helge Lindberg.

Another member was Eva Oplatek, who is on the top left of the first group picture. She was with the group from 1935–1937 and left to go into film, but her plans were also thwarted by the war. Ms Oplatek is now in her 90s and is helping us to update this page! According to her, another member was Lilo Alexander (who also recorded "Jeepers Creepers" [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQN\\_ZCkR\\_CA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQN_ZCkR_CA)), who moved to New York; Petra (nicknamed "Peter") (Deutschlander) van der Velden; Erna Maas, Daisy Doerling, and a pianist with the first name of Ira.

### *Discografia*

Berlin, May 1930 "Grüß mir mein Hawaii" - Electrola EG 1909 "Fox dei lilas" - Electrola EG 1909 "Die blonde Helene" - Electrola EG 1910 "Mädchen, wollt ihr gefallen" - Electrola EG 1910 Berlin, September and October 1930 "Stadt der Liebe" - unreleased "Bei uns ist immer Sonnenschein" - unreleased "Sieben kleine Tillergirls" - unreleased "Ja, so ein Mädél" – unreleased Milan, April or May 1931 "Soli, Soli" - Columbia CQ 664 "My boy" - Columbia CQ 664 "Come rosa sboccia amore" - Columbia CQ 665 "Lisabetta va alla moda" - Columbia CQ 665 Prague, April 1932 "Donauwalzer" - Ultraphon AP 744 Berlin, May 1932 "Bei uns ist immer Sonnenschein" - probably unreleased "Ja, so ein Mädél" - Odeon 186288 b "Wir sind ja heut' so glücklich" - Odeon A 161216 "An der schönen blauen Donau" - Odeon A 161216 Berlin, November 1932 "Ich lieb' dich, I love you, je t'aime" - Gloria GO 10462

"Auf Wiederseh'n, Baby" - Gloria GO 10462 also referenced on a 1930s playlist from Deutschlandradio on rivals of the Comedian Harmonists:

<http://www.dradio.de/dkultur/playlist/673330/895091/> "Trois mots" - Odeon 250338 "Au revoir, baby" - Odeon 250338

London, June 1933 "Cuban Tango" - Regal Zonophone MR 960 "Whistling in the dark" - Regal Zonophone MR 960 "Garland of Schubert Songs" - Regal Zonophone MR 1308

"Italian Serenade" - Regal Zonophone MR 1308 "The blue danube" - Regal Zonophone MR 1049

London, September 1933 "My Marguerita" - Regal Zonophone MR 1049

London, Summer 1934 "Selection from 'Lilac Time'" - Sterno 1467 "International Selection" - Sterno 1467

Milan, March 1935 "Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 2" - Regal Zonophone MR 1755 "William Tell - Overture" - Regal Zonophone MR 1755 William Tell Overture

Hollywood, August or September 1936 "Luar do sertao" - Victor 33925 "Guacyra" - Victor 33925

This group also appears on a compilation CD of a capella singing called "Sweetest Harmony" (1997) singing a song called "Cuban Tango" which was recorded in June 1933.

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Singing Babies (di Edmondo Fritz) è un gruppo vocale austriaco che ha inciso per La Voce del Padrone e la Electrola nei primi anni Trenta.

Hanno interpretato numerosi brani di Leo Leux con testi di Hanns Hannes. Sono presenti nel film diretto da Otto Preminger del 1931 *Die grosse Liebe*.

In Italia risultano delle incisioni del 1932 per la Columbia come Edmund Fritz's Singing Babies.

Potrebbe essere la stessa formazione, denominata Ensemble, utilizzata in numerose versioni di canzoni composte da Rudolf Nelson, ma è una ipotesi da approfondire.

Come pure dovrebbero essere le celebri Coeur Dames, le sette cantatrici comiche di Edmondo Fritz, coriste umoristiche che hanno interpretato fra le altre *Valzer Trullalero* di Eldo Di Lazzaro e C. Bruno.

Nelle foto che le ritraggono sono in genere sei ragazze (a volte cinque) con l'aggiunta sporadica di una pianista donna.

Leader del gruppo, anche perché la più attempata (nata nel 1900), dovrebbe essere stata Fritz Schlichter Lindberg; altre componenti furono Eva Oplatek che lasciò il gruppo nel 1937 e che doveva essere la più giovane del gruppo, Petra van der Velden, Lilo Alexander, Erna Maas, Daisy Doerling. La pianista che le accompagnava si chiamava Ira.

Sicuramente hanno operato con il nome di Seven Viennese Singing Sisters.

Hanno partecipato al film *Noites Cariocas* o anche *Cariocan nights* (altro titolo *Nights from Rio de Janeiro*) che sembra sia andato perduto.

Molto interessante la foto di gruppo con dedica a Marf [v. le *Notizie* del 15 Febbraio 2013].

### Canzoni di Marf interpretate

*Fox dei Lilas* (16 maggio 1930)

- [http://www.trio-lescano.it/incisioni/Fox\\_dei\\_lilas\\_\(Un\\_p'tit\\_boy\\_c'est\\_gentil\)\\_Mistinguett.wma](http://www.trio-lescano.it/incisioni/Fox_dei_lilas_(Un_p'tit_boy_c'est_gentil)_Mistinguett.wma)

- [http://www.trio-lescano.it/incisioni/Fox\\_dei\\_lilas\\_\(Une\\_girl\\_c'est\\_gentil\)\\_Pills\\_et\\_Tabet.mp3](http://www.trio-lescano.it/incisioni/Fox_dei_lilas_(Une_girl_c'est_gentil)_Pills_et_Tabet.mp3)

### Altre canzoni interpretate

*Auf Wiederseh'n, baby, dich vergess ich nie* (dal film *Baby*)

*Ce petit chemin* (in francese) (*Coeur Dames*)

*Come rosa sboccia amore* (*Edmund Frit's Singing Babies*)

*Die blonde Helene* (1930)

*Gruss mir mein Hawaii* (retro di *Fox dei Lilas*)

*Ich lieb' dich, I love you, je t'aime* (dal film *Baby*)

*La canzone del mio cuore* (di Gaetano Franco e Alfredo Bracchi) (*Coeur Dames*)

*Lisetta va alla moda* (*Edmund Frit's Singing Babies*)

*Mädchen, wollt ihr gefallen* (1930)

*My boy* (*Edmund Frit's Singing Babies*)

*Ouverture Guglielmo Tell* di Rossini (*Coeur Dames*)

*Seconda rapsodia* di Litz (*Coeur Dames*)

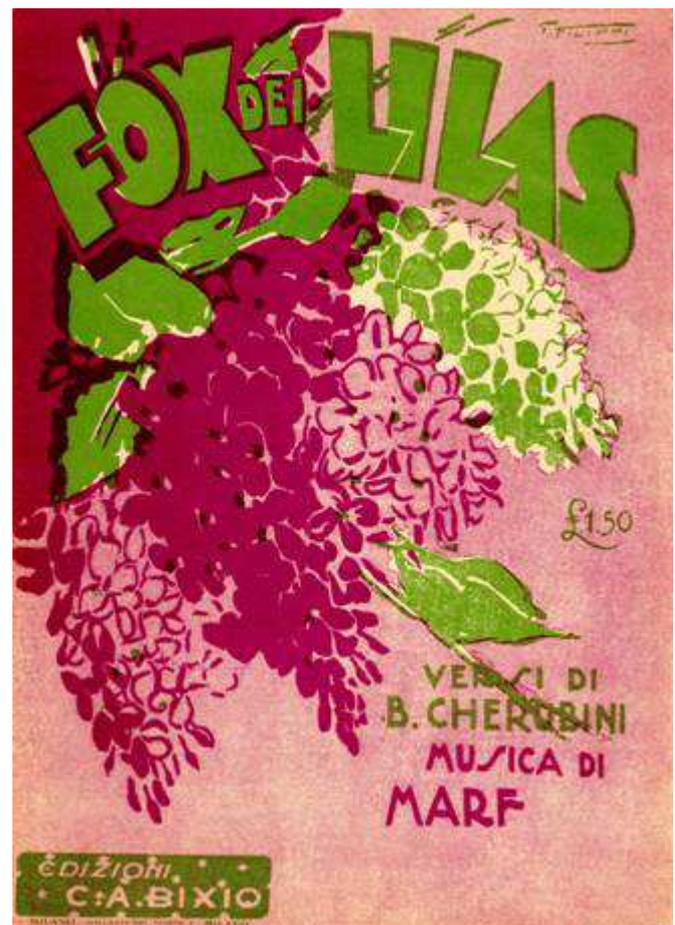
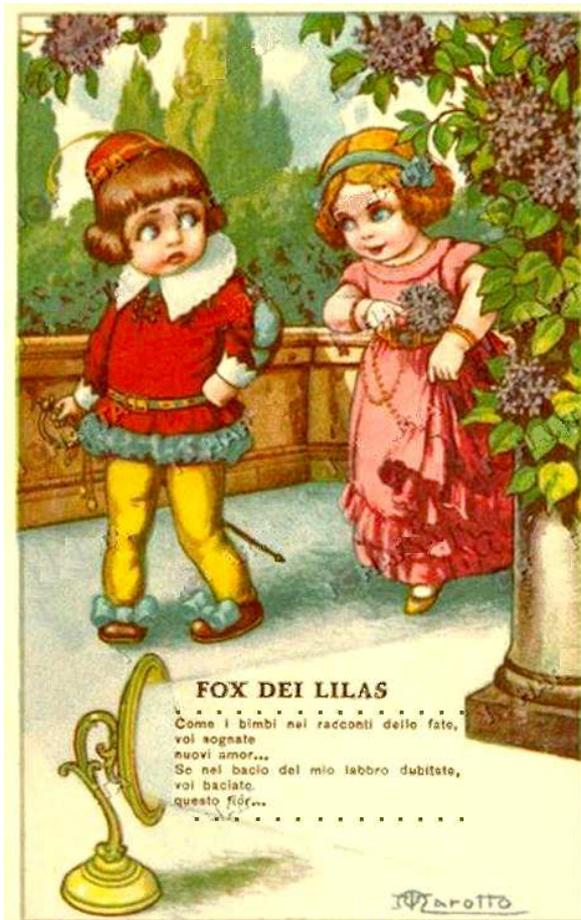
*Shuffle off to Buffalo*

*Soli soli* (*Edmund Frit's Singing Babies*)

*Valzer trullallero* (di C. Bruno e Eldo Di Lazzaro) (*Coeur Dames*) (1935)



*Altri documenti*



<i>titolo</i>	FOX DEI LILAS (FOX DEI LILLA')
<i>genere</i>	FOX TROT MODERATO
<i>musica</i>	MARF
<i>testo</i>	BIXIO CHERUBINI
<i>titolo francese</i>	PARFUM DE LILAS (CODICE ISWC T 005.929.138-1) UNE GIRL, C'EST GENTIL (CODICE ISWC: T 005.014.315-1) (TITOLO PER INTERPRETE MASCHILE) UN (P'TIT) BOY C'EST GENTIL (TITOLO PER INTERPRETE FEMMINILE)
<i>testo francese</i>	HENRI VARNA – LEO LELIEVRE - LEOPOLD DE LIMA
<i>anno</i>	1929
<i>interprete</i>	INES TALAMO (COLUMBIA CQ 464)
<i>interprete</i>	MARF (ORCHESTRA FERRUZZI) (ODEON O 10266)
<i>interprete francese</i>	MISTINGUETT
<i>interprete</i>	THE SINGING BABIES (DI EDOARDO FRITZ) – IN LINGUA ITALIANA (GRAMMOFONO R 10409) (REGISTRATO IL 16.05.30 – CATALOGO CHARM) (ELECTROLA EG 1909)
<i>interprete francese</i>	JEAN SABLON
<i>interprete francese</i>	PILLS E TABELT (GEORGES SELLERS ET SON ORCHESTRE JAZZ) (1931) (GRAMOPHONE K 6449)
<i>interprete francese</i>	LES VAGABONDS MELOMANES (REFRAIN CANTATO DA GIRARD E CIZERON (CRISTAL 5246)
<i>interprete francese</i>	ALBERICI
<i>interprete francese</i>	DANI (1969) (CON PAROLE MODIFICATE)
<i>casa editrice</i>	BIXIO CEMSA
<i>codice ISWC</i>	T-005.022.833-5
<i>fonte</i>	MANDOLINO ILLUSTRATO DA G. FILIPPI
<i>fonte</i>	SPARTITO ORIGINALE

Cavaliere , penseroso al mio cospetto,  
con dispetto, con mister  
voi guardate questo fior sul mio corsetto,  
io scommetto per saper.  
Questo fiore, che un miraggio certo avrà  
nel profumo qual linguaggio parlerà?

**E' il fiore di lilas,  
fiore che non sa bugia,  
ma solo vi dirà tutta la passione mia...  
Vi dice questo fiore: "Amore"  
se non risponde il cuore: "Amore"  
il fior si piegherà, è il destino dei lilas!**

Come i bimbi nei racconti delle fate,  
voi sognate nuovi amor.  
Se nel bacio del mio labbro dubitate,  
voi bacciate questo fior.  
Questo fiore di velluto fremerà  
e il mio ultimo saluto vi darà.

**Rit.**

E' il fiore di lilas, sotto il sole o al chiar di luna  
a chi lo coglierà egli porterà fortuna.  
Vi dice questo fiore: "Amore"  
e desta in ogni cuore: "Amore".  
Chi vuol felicità, prenda il fiore dei lilas!

*Le parole francesi di "Une girl c'est gentil",  
tratto dalla rivista "Paris qui brille", furono  
composte da Henri Varna, Leo Lelievre e  
Leopolod De Lima (pseudonimo della stessa  
Mistinguett) e interpretata (o diretta?) da Billy  
Milton, Pills et Tabet, ecc.*

*La versione femminile interpretata dalla grande  
Mistinguett è "Un (p'tit) boy c'est gentil".*

*La versione della cantante francese Dani ha le  
parole del testo molto modificate.*

## VERSIONE FRANCESE

## UN (P'TIT) BOY C'EST GENTIL

Lorsque les boys se rassemblent tous ensemble  
 mon cœur tremble de passion  
 aussi je cours plein d'audace sur leur trace  
 à la chasse aux frissons.  
 Exactement comme on suit un régiment  
 je les suis joyeusement en fredonnant.

**Un p'tit boy, c'est gentil  
 Ça fait perdre la cervelle  
 et mon désir grandit  
 quand ils sont en ribambelle.**

**Une: mais cela m'excite bien vite  
 Deux: ça fait quatre jambs je flambe.  
 Pour varier mes émois  
 je les veux tous à la fois.**

Mais pour peu qu'ils se mélangent chose étrange Ça  
 me change je n' sais plus  
 r'trouver celui dont l'allure la figure  
 la chevelure m'avaient plu.  
 Pour être sûre de ne plus jamais m' tromper  
 il faudra que je puisse les numéroter.

**Rit.**

## UNE GIRL C'EST GENTIL

Lorsque les girls se rassemblent toutes ensemble  
 mon cœur tremble de passion  
 aussi je cours plein d'audace sur leur trace  
 à la chasse aux frissons.  
 Exactement comme on suit un régiment  
 je les suis joyeusement en fredonnant.

**Une girl c'est gentil  
 mon cœur est séduit par elle  
 et mon désir grandit  
 quand elles sont en ribambelle.**

**Une: cela m'excite bien vite  
 Deux: ça fait quatre jambs je flambe.  
 Pour varier mes émois  
 je les veux toutes à la fois.**

Mais pour peu qu'elles se mélangent chose étrange  
 Ça me change je n' sais plus  
 r'trouver celle dont l'allure la figure  
 la chevelure m'avaient plu.  
 Pour être sûr de ne plus jamais me tromper  
 Il faudra que je puisse les numéroter.

**Rit.**