

Quartet Evening at Bettina von Arnim's in Berlin (1856)

Abstract

Like Madame de Staël in France and [Rahel Varnhagen von Ense](#) in Berlin, author [Bettina von Arnim](#) (1785–1859) was highly interested in cultural and political affairs. Her social circle included some of the most prominent figures of her era: [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](#) (1749–1832), Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), [Wilhelm von Humboldt](#) (1767–1835), and the [brothers Grimm](#), among others. Arnim was the sister of [Clemens Brentano](#) (1778–1842) and the wife of [Achim von Arnim](#) (1781–1831), both Romantic writers. In addition to being a prolific writer of fiction herself, Bettina von Arnim also wrote about social reforms and women's issues and was perceived by her contemporaries as a confident and unconventional woman. This watercolor of a musical evening at Arnim's Berlin home is illustrative of the Romantics' ideal of the "total work of art" [*Gesamtkunstwerk*]. Three busts hang prominently on the wall behind the musical quartet, and the blue sideboard in the background supports what appears to be a large (and rather curious) plaster sculpture of a seated figure elevated on series of bases. Watercolor by Carl Johann Arnold (1829–1916), 1856.

Source



Source: Original: Frankfurt am Main, Freies Deutsches Hochstift/ Frankfurter Goethe-Museum mit Goethe-Haus

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