

Chapter One

Of dwarfs, perversion, and patriotism: Schubert and Matthäus von Collin

For a long time, it was a cliché of Schubert scholarship that the composer lacked literary discrimination, that he had a liking for mediocre poems culled from his friends' often amateurish scribbles and from Viennese almanacs – in other words, that he was a supporter of the local literary economy. Whatever the counter-evidence of seventy-four Goethe settings and forty-four Schiller settings, his supposed willingness to accept second- or third-rate verse was a means by which critics could both condescend to Schubert and yet exalt him as one of those great composers in whose hands music overcomes all, even bad poetry. Like many clichés, the myth of Schubert's lack of poetic taste has been disproven by the evidence and by thoughtful consideration of the literary climate in which he lived. For a great and voluminous song composer in early nineteenth-century Austria, not every one of his lieder could claim the likes of Goethe as the source of its words. Superlative poetry is always in short supply, nor is the entirety of a poet's oeuvre ever amenable to composition by one person, at least, not by composers of genius and taste. Even Hugo Wolf, who tended to the omnivorous, omitted many a poem by Eduard Mörike and Goethe from his large lied anthologies. (Lesser lights, rushing in where angels fear to tread, have essayed omnium-gatherum feats on occasion, and history has not remembered them kindly for it.) Given Schubert's incessant quest for song texts, poets on lower rungs of the ladder leading to Parnassus would have to be pressed into service as well, and such poets are never in short supply.

The more one examines Schubert's literary choices, the more one is impressed by his acuity. From the array of poets of every stripe – good, bad, near-great, mediocre – at his disposal in Vienna's many literary almanacs and poetic anthologies, he chose the best. He was just as discriminating in his selection of poems from within an individual poet's oeuvre, choosing what was most thoughtful, most human . . . and therein lies this book. Poems deficient on poetic grounds, sometimes drastically so, can be both thought-provoking and amenable to great music. I do not speak here of such texts as Franz Schober's "An die Musik" or Franz von Bruchmann's voice from beyond the grave in "Schwestergruss" (a ghostly simulacrum of good poetry), although the songs composed to these poetically deficient words are beautiful, but of a different and smaller category of poetic also-rans. In such works, the poet may wrestle with the elements of poetic craft, his or her technique insufficient to full realization of the poem's ideas, but the ideas themselves may be arresting, complex, a window through which we can glimpse aspects of culture. The poets in the pages to follow are (with a few exceptions) just such creators: thoughtful purveyors of thoughtful poems. Some of their works may not

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appear to be “Denk’-Poesie” at first glance, but the fact that Schubert correctly understood them to be so is emblazoned in his music.

This book began with my puzzlement many years ago over an especially striking example of a deficient poem from which Schubert fashioned one of his most powerful songs: “Der Zwerg” (The Dwarf), D. 771, to words by Matthäus von Collin (1779–1824). What in these enigmatic and poetically hobbled words, I wondered, gave rise to music such as this? From what mysterious context did this poem arise, before the music was conceived? What was the poet trying to do? What forces are at work in the narrative? One reads the bizarre, violent ballad and senses a coded symbolism for which the Rosetta Stone is lacking. One scholar has rightly observed that “Der Zwerg” represents “the Romantic cult of the grotesque and the daemonic,”¹ and such explorations of the “night side” of psychological experience often defy complete decoding, especially for those distant from the time and place of the work’s inception. Without being Bosch, we may never understand everything that happens in his canvases. But the grotesque makes the mind search for answers to its riddles. Confronted with the seemingly incompatible juxtapositions of unlike elements which constitute the grotesque, we ask why.

It is not only Collin’s poem that impels questions, but what Schubert does with it. From the evidence of his music, how did the composer read the ballad? Did the poet, who knew Schubert personally, perhaps discuss this text with him? How did Schubert rewrite Collin in accord with his own designs? For me, the barrage of questions began with a query about a climactic moment in Schubert’s setting, a thunderbolt striking in conjunction with words that hardly seem deserving of such treatment. The gesture is an interruption of the musical passage in which it occurs and is so violent that it advertises itself as a self-conscious compositional decision: there is a premeditated reason for doing something so shocking to those words at that place. The poem, we discover, has both a historical side, cloaked even in its own day for reasons implicated in the very history upon which it comments, and a metaphysical side (Collin was schooled in philosophy). Schubert probably knew the former but chose to focus on the latter, on the probing of desire, alienation, and the Siamese twins of erotic passion and murderous hate. To the poet’s purposes, Schubert then added musical meanings which are, one can conjecture, deeply personal. This lied is a demonstration writ large of what makes the entire genre so rich in the right hands. Poems and poets have their own *raison d’être*, songs and composers still others, and the *danse à deux* between them, whether harmonious or contentious, is calibrated anew in every song. In great songs (and this is one of them), musical, literary, folkloric, historical, psychological, philosophical, cultural, political, and biographical matters peer out at one from a small – in size only – work. Density of reference in a compact package: this is one definition of “lied.”

In fact, all of the Collin–Schubert songs are “ideenreich” (rich in ideas), not just “Der Zwerg,” but also “Wehmut” (Melancholy), D. 772; “Nacht und Träume” (Night and Dreams), D. 827; the duet “Licht und Liebe” (Light and Love), D. 352; and the “Epistel: Musikalischer Schwank” (Letter: A Musical Prank), D. 749. Each of the five poems issues from a complex cultural backdrop, and all five settings represent Schubert at his highest level of musical

¹ John Reed, *The Schubert Song Companion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 143.

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invention. A closer look at the Collin songs is enough to tell us that it was not only the Goethes and Schillers who made poetry the venue for profound meditations on existence. Poets at less empyrean levels were also on the *qui vive* for new ideas and were able, on occasion, to find felicitous form for their musings on the latest intellectual currents. It is fortunate for Schubert, avaricious for new verse, that a poet such as Collin was at hand.

AUSTRIAN NATIONALISM IN RHYME: AN INTRODUCTION
TO MATTHÄUS VON COLLIN

The poet of “Der Zwerg” is not among those Romantics whose literary reputations have survived to the present day – one scholar summed him up as “de grandes ambitions et peu de moyens” (having great ambitions and little skill), and the description is apt.² Collin (Fig. 1) was, however, a crucial figure in the dissemination of Romantic ideas in Vienna, and a brief introduction to his life and works is therefore in order. He seems to have known from an early age that he wanted to be a writer and reportedly wrote several *Ritterromane* (“knightly novels,” or fiction about the age of chivalry) in his youth but refused in later life to reveal the pseudonyms under which he had published them.³ As a young man, he was, like many of his generation, passionate about Christoph Martin Wieland’s verse-romances, especially the *Oberon* of 1780, an early prototype of the Romanticism Collin would later espouse. Both he and his older, more celebrated brother Heinrich sought literary acclaim as writers of verse-drama, an unsurprising avenue for would-be writers in drama-mad Vienna. Even before “the Austrian Corneille” (Heinrich) completed his *Regulus* in 1801, Matthäus had written the lyrical play *Calthon und Colmal*, an example of the fad for Ossianic imitations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,⁴ followed by the romantic comedy *Fortunat* and another comedy entitled *Edmund der Geist des Hochgerichtes* (Edmund, the Ghost of the Gallows), the latter mostly in Viennese dialect.⁵ Other plays followed, although

² André Robert, *L'idée nationale autrichienne et les guerres de Napoléon: L'Apostolat du Baron de Hormayr et le salon de Caroline Pichler* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1933), p. 387.

³ A sketchy biography by Collin’s friend Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall appears in Matthäus von Collin, *Nachgelassene Gedichte*, ed. Joseph von Hammer, vol. 11 (Vienna: Carl Gerold, 1827), pp. ix–xl. See Karl Glossy, “Ein Gutachten Joseph Schreyvogels über Matthäus von Collins poetischen Nachlaß” in Reinhold Backmann, ed., *Festschrift August Sauer zum 70. Geburtstag des Gelehrten am 12. Oktober 1925, dargebracht von seinen Freunden und Schülern* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1925), pp. 223–232. Other facts about Collin’s early life can be gleaned from his biography of his brother Heinrich; see “Über Heinrich Joseph Edlen von Collin und seine Werke” in *Heinrich Joseph von Collin’s sämtliche Werke*, vol. vi, ed. Matthäus von Collin (Vienna, 1814), pp. 249–447.

⁴ *Calthon und Colmal* is drawn from one of James MacPherson’s Ossian poems, with the addition of Abel-and-Cain-like jealousy between brothers and a Romeo-and-Juliet-like pair of lovers. Collin intended the play as an opera libretto, and the framing choruses will remind some of Ingres’s eerie, unfinished, *grisaille* painting of *The Dream of Ossian*: Ossian and the chorus of bards in scene 1 sing, “Wer dann im Kampf des Todes fällt / O nehmt ihn freundlich auf / in eure Wolke, Geister,” and much the same words are repeated by all on stage at the end.

⁵ Matthäus von Collin, *Dramatische Dichtungen*, 4 vols. (Pest: Hartleben, 1813 and 1817). *Calthon und Colmal* appeared in the 1813 first volume, along with the historical play *Der Tod Friedrich des Streitbaren*, Collin’s translation of Corneille’s *Le Cid* as *Der Cid*, and the tragedy *Marius*. Two other volumes printed in 1817 contained the five-act historical drama *Bela’s Krieg mit dem Vater* (first published separately in Tübingen by J. G. Cotta in 1808), *Die feindlichen Söhne*, *Der Tod Heinrichs des Grausamen*, *Butes*, *Die Kunringer*, and *Der Streit am Grabe*. A small portion of *Fortunat* was published in the *Musen-Almanach für das Jahr 1814*, ed. Johann Erichson (Vienna: Carl Gerold, 1814), pp. 252–266.

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FIG. 1 Portrait of Matthäus von Collin (1779–1824)

Collin could no more make a living by his writing than anyone else in this book. Teaching was his principal *Brotarbeit* for much of his adult life; he completed a doctorate in law at the University of Vienna in 1804, and in November 1808 was appointed professor of aesthetics and the history of philosophy at the University of Cracow. Renewed war with the French intervened, however, and Collin left his position in Cracow almost immediately. After Austria's defeat in 1809, he returned to his interrupted academic career, this time as professor of the history of philosophy at the University of Vienna in 1810. From then on, he metamorphoses more and more from *Dichter* (poet) to *Beamter* (civil servant), a not-uncommon fate in *Vormärz* Austria; he was a *Hofkonzipist* in the finance ministry and

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worked as a censor from 1810 to 1820. When Heinrich died suddenly in 1811, Matthäus would busy himself for three years with the posthumous complete edition of his brother's works. The relationship between them seems to have been close; the 1812 volume of Heinrich's lyric poetry includes the poem "An meinen Bruder Matthäus Casimir," which begins with the comically consolatory line "Laß, mein Bruder, die Frösch' im Sumpfe quacken" (My brother, let the frogs in the swamp croak). The implication is that someone had dared to criticize Matthäus's writing and was being consigned for his sins to amphibian form.⁶

Collin's most famous student, however, was not enrolled at any university. Through the auspices of Moritz von Dietrichstein (Schubert dedicated "Erkönig" to this man), Collin was appointed tutor to François-Charles-Joseph Bonaparte, Duke of Reichstadt (1811–32), the son of Napoleon I and Marie Luise of Austria, on 1 January 1816 and probably continued in that capacity until he died (Fig. 2, Sir Thomas Lawrence's unfinished portrait of the child).⁷ Reading the accounts, one comes to admire Collin for his role in a sad story. The Roi de Rome or "l'Aiglon" (the eaglet), as he was called, was born to imperial splendor in France, but, upon Napoleon's downfall, was whisked off in early childhood to the Austrian court, where his father's name was anathema and his mother was ambivalent about his very existence and largely absent from his life.⁸ His education, with Dietrichstein in charge and Collin his Latin and Greek teacher, has been described by one French scholar as "défrancisation" (de-Frenchification); Dietrichstein himself told Marie Luise that the child must be considered of Austrian descent and "élevé à l'allemande" (raised in the German manner). Ripped from his French roots, the child reacted with a battery of psychological symptoms one might nowadays expect as the aftermath of such traumas visited upon the very young, especially when there was little in the way of love or understanding to help him cope. He resisted learning his new language, and his aversion to lessons in general prompted Dietrichstein to write

⁶ See Caroline Pichler, née von Greiner, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus meinem Leben*, vol. 1, ed. Emil Karl Blümml (Munich: Georg Müller, 1914), pp. 382–383, for Pichler's moving account of Collin's death, brought about, she believed, by the strain of his dual occupations as civil servant and poet. One hot summer afternoon, she recounts, Collin visited her house in Friedrich Schlegel's company, drank water mixed with raspberry juice in his favorite glass goblet, and complained of exhaustion. A few days later, he died, and Schlegel brought her the sad news. For "An meinen Bruder Matthäus Casimir," see Heinrich Joseph Edler von Collin, *Gedichte* (Vienna: Anton Strauß, 1812), pp. 10–11. See also Ferdinand Laban, *Heinrich Joseph Collin: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der neueren deutschen Literatur in Oesterreich* (Vienna: Carol Gerold's Sohn, 1879).

⁷ According to Herbert Seidler, "Matthäus von Collins Literaturkritik. Zu den Anfängen der Literaturwissenschaft in Österreich" in Herbert Zeman, ed., *Die Österreichische Literatur: Ihr Profil an der Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert (1750–1830)*, vol. 11 (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1979), p. 656, Collin tutored the Emperor's son until 1818, but Silvester Lechner, in "Zwischen bürgerlichem Anspruch und absoluter Herrschaft. Matthäus von Collins Rezensionen in den Wiener 'Jahrbüchern der Literatur' (1818 bis 1824)" in *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 267, points out that Collin's stipend for editorship would not have been sufficient to support him and that the tutoring role continued beyond 1818. To cite one example of Dietrichstein (1785–64) as composer, his *10 Lieder von A. Freyherrn von Steigentesch* (Vienna: Artaria, [1810?]), were published with guitar accompaniments provided by the virtuoso Mauro Giuliani.

⁸ See Jean de Bourgoing, *Papiers intimes et journal du Duc de Reichstadt* (Paris: Payot, 1928); the same author, "Documents inédits sur le fils de Napoléon" in *Revue des Etudes Napoléoniennes*, vol. xxxv, nos. 1–2 (July–August 1932): 5–83; André Castellet, *King of Rome: A Biography of Napoleon's Tragic Son*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1960); Gerd Holler, *Napoleons Sohn: Der unglückliche Herzog von Reichstadt* (Vienna and Munich: Amalthea Verlag, 1987); and Friedrich Schütz, "Aus dem Leben des Herzogs von Reichstadt," a feuilleton in the *Neue Freie Presse* (5 March 1889).

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FIG. 2 Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830), *Napoléon-François-Charles-Joseph Bonaparte* (1811–1832), styled King of Rome, later Duke of Reichstadt (called *Napoléon II*), 1818–19

Marie Luise for permission to punish the child by whipping him. Extreme psychological distress and resistance to a new and hostile environment seem the obvious causes both of the boy's disinterest in learning, with the notable exception of military matters, and of his supposed coldheartedness. He must have learned quickly the necessity of hiding his feelings wherever possible, but he was unable to suppress his grief upon learning of Napoleon's death in 1821. The boy worshipped the father he never really knew, and one imagines that he must have concocted rescue-fantasies in which his father would return and put everything to rights, fantasies as doomed as the boy himself, dead in 1832 of tuberculosis. Collin, it is clear, was kind to his young charge, and the boy recognized it, writing to his mother shortly after Collin's death to say, "The more I think of the deceased, the greater and more moving I find this loss I have suffered to be. Collin was one of the people I loved the most . . . How much he loved me and how much I have him to thank for the few things I know."

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In his last nine years, Collin devoted himself to literary criticism, in particular the editorship from 1818 to April 1821 of the first fourteen volumes of the Viennese *Jahrbücher der Literatur* (Literary Yearbooks).⁹ One of its founders was Friedrich von Gentz, a former liberal who became a strong adherent of Metternich's views and who intended the *Jahrbücher* as a political organ of the State, while Collin and Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, despite their unswerving loyalty to Kaiser and country, felt somewhat differently about the matter. Both men were moderately Josephinian in their views and dedicated to the advancement of scholarship; they saw the journal as a forum for the "Gelehrten-Republik" (republic of scholars).¹⁰ The first quarterly installment of the ninth volume (1820), for example, includes articles on the physiology of thought, ancient Persian heroic epics, an image of the god Tyr, Hans Sachs's poetry, the common origins of supernatural belief and rationalism, the history of Gothic architecture, and "Staatswissenschaft," followed by summaries of the latest English, French, and Finnish(!) literature. Collin on occasion promulgated certain State-sponsored views of literature (Schiller's *Don Carlos* was too passionate, he declared, and *Wallenstein* improperly counterposes an iron Fate against divine providence),¹¹ but he became increasingly unhappy with the conditions for scholars and artists alike in post-Napoleonic Austria.¹² In a letter to Baron Friedrich de La Motte-Fouqué written in 1820, Collin laments "an intellectual life once blossoming into richness and beauty [which] now lies splintered, mangled, and bleeding before our eyes."¹³ His friends attributed the decline in Collin's health and his early death to anguish over the temper of the times. On 14 November 1823, he excused himself from a walking expedition to Klosterneuburg with Hammer-Purgstall (who edited and published his friend's *Nachgelassenes Werk* four years later, when Schubert was still alive) and shortly thereafter, took to his bed and died on 23 November.

Collin was among the major figures of the Viennese *Frühromantik* and either hobnobbed or corresponded with such leading literary lights as Ludwig Tieck, Friedrich Schlegel, de La Motte-Fouqué, and others. He and his brother belonged to a circle of writers who met at the salon of the "Viennese Récamier" Caroline Pichler (1769–1843) – "Caroline Pichler

⁹ See Gudrun Busch, "Zwischen Frauentaschenbüchern und Literaturkritik, Therese Grob und Matthäus von Collin, oder: Bemerkungen zu 'norddeutschen' Liedertexten in Schuberts Freundeskreis" in Eva Badura-Skoda, Gerold Gruber, Walburga Litschauer, and Carmen Ottner, eds., *Schubert und seine Freunde* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1999), in particular, pp. 153–167.

¹⁰ See Silvester Lechner, "Eine Ästhetik der Zensur: Johann Ludwig Deinhardstein als Kritiker" in Alberto Martino, Günter Häntzschel, and Georg Jäger, eds., *Literatur in der sozialen Bewegung: Aufsätze und Forschungsberichte zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1977), pp. 284–326.

¹¹ This is an ironic *volte-face* coming from someone as enamored of the *Schicksalstragödie* as Collin was in his earlier years. Cited in Waltraud Heindl, *Gehorsame Rebellen. Bürokratie und Beamte in Österreich 1780 bis 1848* (Vienna, Cologne, and Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1990), p. 234.

¹² See Silvester Lechner, *Gelehrte Kritik und Restauration. Metternichs Wissenschafts- und Pressepolitik und die Wiener "Jahrbücher der Literatur" (1818–1849)* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1977); Wilma Fahrnberger, "Die Wiener Jahrbücher der Literatur und ihre Einflußnahme auf die Gestaltung der öffentlichen Meinung (Jahrgänge 1826–1840)," Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1951; Wolfgang Gerle, "Die Stellung der 'Wiener Jahrbücher der Literatur' zur Presse, Preßfreiheit, Preßgesetzgebung und Journalistik in ihren ersten acht Jahrgängen (1818–25)," Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1948; Lambert Haiböck, "Die Wiener 'Jahrbücher der Literatur,' 1818–49. Ein Aufriß," Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1953; and Hildegard Goger, "Der Einfluß der Romantik auf die Wiener Zeitschriften von 1808–1823," Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1964.

¹³ *Briefe an Friedrich de La Motte-Fouqué von Chamisso, Chézy, Collin*, ed. Albertine Baronin de La Motte-Fouqué (Berlin: W. Adolf, 1848), letter of 27 November 1820, p. 73.

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and the tower of St. Stephan's are two landmarks in Vienna," wrote the Swedish poet Per Daniel Amadeus Atterbom (1790–1855)¹⁴ – and who preached the creation of literary works to foster a particular ideal of nationalism. The chief architects of this proposed patriotic alliance between writers, historians, the State, and its various peoples were the prolific historian Baron Joseph von Hormayr zu Hortenburg (1782–1848), the Collin brothers, and Caroline Pichler, along with various lesser satellites.¹⁵ As Caroline Pichler wrote in her memoirs:

The study of history began to stir lively interest with the generation of that time. Many scholars took it up, and people sought strength and comfort in the contemplation of the past. This general atmosphere and frequent association with Hormayr, [Johann Wilhelm] Ridler, and [Franz Michael] Vierthaler also aroused in me a great interest in history in general and that of my Fatherland in particular. The *Oesterreichischer Plutarch* appeared then . . . specialists, with reason and convincing proofs, found much fault with the work, but in the meanwhile, it attained the goal that its creator perhaps intended: it awakened in many, as it did in me, an inclination for the history of the Fatherland and appealed to the imagination and feeling because it was written with warmth and poetic understanding. Hormayr also looked to his friends in particular and sought through them to lead the public in this direction. He was able to persuade the two Collin brothers to occupy themselves with patriotic subjects in their poetry . . . he stirred up many other souls as well, who willingly gathered around him, and he sought to inspire artists with the same spirit. Much happened then and also later for Austrian history that had its first impulse through Hormayr.¹⁶

¹⁴ See Per Daniel Amadeus Atterbom, *Reisebilder aus dem romantischen Deutschland: Jugenderinnerungen eines romantischen Dichters und Kunstgelehrten aus den Jahren 1817 bis 1819*, ed. Elmar Jansen (Stuttgart: Steingrüben Verlag, 1970), pp. 233–234.

¹⁵ See Maria Pulina Prins, *Joseph Freiherr von Hormayr: Van apostel der oostenrijks-nationale gedachte tot pionier der duitse eenheid* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1928); Brigitte Leuschner, ed., *Schriftstellerinnen und Schwesterseelen: Der Briefwechsel zwischen Therese Huber (1764–1829) und Karoline Pichler* (Marburg: Tectum, 1995); Gustav Zimmermann, *Hr. von Hormayr und die Lebensbilder aus dem Befreiungskriege* (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1844); Lena Jansen, *Karoline Pichlers Schaffen und Weltanschauung im Rahmen ihrer Zeit* (Graz: Wächter-Verlag, 1936); Karl Glossy, "Hormayr und Karoline Pichler," *Jahrbuch der Grillparzer-Gesellschaft* 12 (1902), reprinted in Karl Glossy, *Kleinere Schriften: Zu seinem siebzigsten Geburtstage (7. März 1918)* (Vienna and Leipzig: Buchdruckerei und Verlags-Buchhandlung Carl Fromme, 1918), pp. 195–215; Gertrude Prohaska, "Der literarische Salon der Karoline Pichler," Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1946; and Joseph Wihan, "Matthäus von Collin und die patriotisch-nationalen Kunstbestrebungen in Österreich zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts" in *Euphorion: Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte*, ed. August Sauer, 5. Ergänzungsheft (Leipzig and Vienna: Carl Fromme, 1901), pp. 93–199. In her poem "In das Stammbuch des Freyherrn von Hormayr. 1808," Caroline Pichler lauded Hormayr's mission to teach Austrians their own history: "Angegliht von diesen Heldenbildern, / Hochgesinnt für Vaterland und Recht, / Strebest du die Starken stark zu schildern, / Lehrend das entartete Geschlecht. / So hast du in's Herz der Zeitgenossen / Deiner Brust Begeisterung ergossen." See Caroline Pichler, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. xxii (Vienna: Anton Pichler, 1829), p. 90.

¹⁶ Pichler, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus meinem Leben*, p. 307. Ridler was a history professor at the University of Vienna and a director of the university library, while Vierthaler was appointed director of orphanages in Vienna in 1807. Joseph Freiherr von Hormayr's *Oesterreichischer Plutarch, oder, Leben und Bildnisse aller Regenten und der berühmtesten Feldherren, Staatsmänner, Gelehrten und Künstler des österreichischen Kaiserstaates*, 20 vols. (Vienna: A. Doll, 1807–14) was a compendium of the lives of Austrian kings, generals, statesmen, scholars, and artists.

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In essays such as Hormayr's "Über den poetischen Gebrauch des historischen Stoffes" (On the poetic use of historical subjects) and Collin's "Ueber die nationale Wesenheit der Kunst" (On the national essence of art), both published in Hormayr's influential periodical *Archiv für Geographie, Historie, Staats- und Kriegskunst* (Archive for Geography, History, Statesmanship, and the Art of War), these literary patriots propounded the historical ballad and the history play as the means by which the reading populace could find its national soul, could learn about their great Austrian ancestors and great events in the historical past and hence be inspired to recreate that glory in the present.¹⁷ History would become, in Hormayr's words, "no withered herbarium of names and dates, but a tree offering fruits and flowers resplendent with colors and scents."¹⁸ The Swiss historian Johannes von Müller (1752–1809), then resident in Vienna, had taken Hormayr under his wing as his protégé, and both men were closely allied with the Archduke Johann, who supported their efforts to define Austrian nationhood along the model of Müller's similar historical work on Switzerland's behalf. Müller had earlier lamented the reading public's lack of knowledge of medieval history in a lecture entitled "Über den Einfluß der Alten auf die Neuern" (On the Influence of the Old on the New), first delivered in 1781 and printed in Hormayr's *Archiv* for 1811: "The ancients of the German empire are as inaccessible as the Garden of the Hesperides and the Golden Fleece . . . their history is buried behind a wall of folios, rendered overly complicated and tasteless, their bad writing the Cerberus that turns away those who wish to know more."¹⁹ To make history palatable to the populace, to inculcate nationalistic sentiment, Müller's younger adherents proposed enveloping history in a mantle of ringing, resonant verse.²⁰

The members of the Pichler salon had predecessors in their enterprise and recent models to inspire them. One of the most influential was Friedrich Schiller, whose words "Der Österreicher – hat ein Vaterland! / Und liebt's – und hat auch Ursach' es zu lieben!'" (The Austrian has a Fatherland! And loves it, and has cause to love it) from act 1, scene 5 of

¹⁷ "Über den poetischen Gebrauch des historischen Stoffes" appeared in the *Archiv für Geographie, Historie, Staats- und Kriegskunst*, 8 and 10 January 1810, pp. 17–19. The essay is followed by Heinrich von Collin's historical ballad "Kaiser Max auf der Martinswand in Tyrol. 1493" about an episode in the life of the Habsburg ruler Maximilian I (1459–1519), who cut quite a dash as "der letzte Ritter" and whose numerous military campaigns often ended in defeat. Matthäus von Collin's essay "Über die Nationale Wesenheit der Kunst," appeared in the *Archiv für Geographie, Historie, Staats- und Kriegskunst*, 11, 14, and 16 October 1811, pp. 513–524.

¹⁸ Cited in Glossy, "Hormayr und Karoline Pichler," p. 198. Despite the flowery language of this quotation, Glossy points out that Hormayr in his historical writings "die Kraft der Darstellung fehlte" (p. 197).

¹⁹ Johannes von Müller, "Über den Einfluß der Alten auf die Neuern," *Archiv für Geographie, Historie, Staats- und Kriegskunst*, 25 January 1811, pp. 49–52. The quotation comes from p. 51.

²⁰ Hormayr's rise to prominence via a cascade of publications was followed by a meteoric fall from grace. Both the Emperor Franz and Metternich saw nationalistic patriotism as a dangerous survivor of the anti-Napoleonic days. After years of projects praised but unfunded or brought to a halt by censorship, Hormayr left Austria in the year of Schubert's death and went to Bavaria, where he turned his fecund pen to fiery attacks on Franz I and his "creature," Prince Metternich. Even before his departure, Caroline Pichler had lamented his ruin in a letter of 1822 to Therese Huber: "Hormayr hat sich viele Feinde auf den Hals gezogen. Ganz kann ich sein Streben nicht billigen, aber ich kenne, achte und bedauere ihn. Er ist, wie mir scheint, eine Ruine dessen, was er war und zu werden versprach" (see Glossy, "Hormayr und Karoline Pichler," pp. 207–208).

Schubert's late lieder

*Wallensteins Tod*²¹ (Wallenstein's Death) are cited as a prefatory quotation to Collin's "Ueber die nationale Wesenheit der Kunst" – Collin added the exclamation marks and dashes to Schiller's more sober proclamation (as we have already seen, his feelings about Schiller would change). The elder Schlegel brother had stated at the end of his 1808 lectures "Über dramatische Kunst und Literatur" (On Dramatic Art and Literature) that historical plays were the worthiest of all native German dramatic genres; in this mirror, he wrote, "the poet lets us see, though it be to our deep shame, what the Germans were of old and what they should become once again."²² Collin, although he later disagreed with Schlegel on certain points regarding the creation of drama, was influenced by these lectures and agreed with Schlegel's conclusions. "Don't you believe, along with me, that we must wish those poets well who bring the olden poetry of the Fatherland out into the light once again in renewed forms and with vivid characters?", Collin wrote to a friend in defense of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*, which had incurred criticism by, among others, Johann Ladislaus Pyrker (see chap. 2).²³

The ferment of patriotic reawakening before, during, and after the war of 1809 gave spurs to Matthäus's already incipient aesthetic credo, which he explained at length in "Über die nationale Wesenheit der Kunst." To summarize the essay briefly, Collin felt that the heroic sagas of earlier, mightier eras should become the roots of a newly revived poetic art that had of late lost its character in the desire to ape foreign ways of thought, principally French. True art, he believed, only resulted when "each idea that the artist strives to embody finds its echo in reality," and it was the highest duty of art to give to the people in their most troubled times a mirror of their own past, that they might become mindful of their own national individuality before its corruption by foreign influence. He therefore lauds Spanish art for its *völkisch* purity (in this, he echoes August Schlegel) and acclaims Shakespeare as the "creator of historical art,"²⁴ whose chronicle-plays inspired Collin's own enterprise. "The earlier Romantic art," Collin wrote, "has, with a heart full of desire, joy, and belief in a higher working, given birth to a daughter stronger than itself: historical drama."²⁵ "Das Volk" could thereby see enacted before their eyes tales of their nation in its formative

²¹ Friedrich Schiller, *Wallensteins Tod* in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 11: *Dramen II*, ed. Gerhard Fricke and Herbert Göpfert (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1962), p. 419. See also Karl Glossy, "Schiller und Österreich: Mit Benützung ungedruckter Briefe und Aktenstücke," *Österreichische Rundschau* 21/3 (1 November 1906), reprinted in Glossy, *Kleinere Schriften*, pp. 18–37.

²² August Wilhelm Schlegel, "Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur," *Siebenunddreißigste Vorlesung*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. v1, ed. Eduard Böcking (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1846), p. 433.

²³ See Hammer-Purgstall's biographical preface to Collin, *Nachgelassene Gedichte*, vol. 1, p. xxx. In Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben 1774–1852*, ed. Reinhart Bachofen von Echt (Vienna and Leipzig: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1940), Hammer-Purgstall writes of going to the theater frequently with the brothers Collin and of summer tramps in the mountains with Matthäus, despite the latter's thick-set physique, ill-suited to such exertions (pp. 180 and 182 respectively). In 1811, he writes that his work at the library and the evenings at Caroline Pichler's salon had brought him into closer contact with the Collin brothers, Friedrich Schlegel, and Hormayr (p. 205).

²⁴ Collin, "Über die nationale Wesenheit der Kunst," p. 515. Matthäus also wrote an essay "Ueber das historische Schauspiel" for the second volume of Friedrich Schlegel's *Deutsches Museum* (1812). Hormayr, inspired by Collin's Babenberger plays, wrote *Friedrich von Österreich* and *Leopold der Schöne*, performed at the Burgtheater in 1805 and 1806 respectively.

²⁵ Collin, "Über die nationale Wesenheit der Kunst," p. 512.