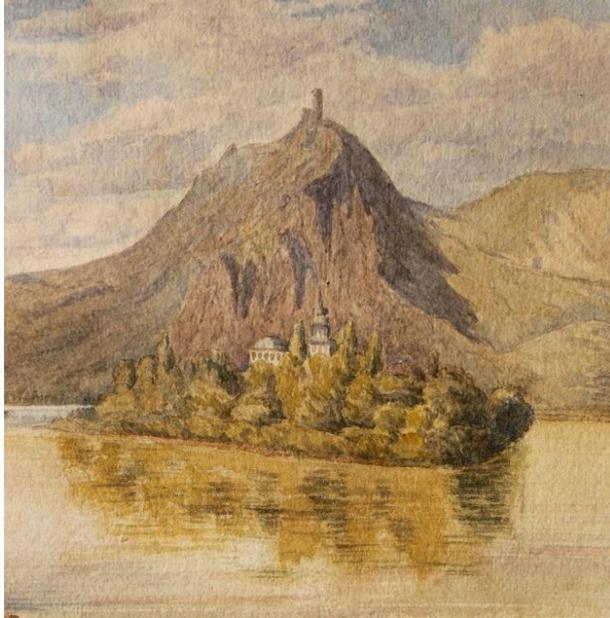


The Romantic Spirit

The impact of the Napoleonic Wars on the cultural life of Germany and Austria



A familiar adage claims that it is an ill wind indeed that blows no one any good, and certainly this is the case with the way in which the Napoleonic Wars impacted on the cultural life of Germany and Austria in the early decades of the 19th century. Warfare is a great stimulus to the creative mind and many German speaking artists, writers and composers produced some of their most original and inspired work as a direct result of conflict. The study day explores the backdrop to the Napoleonic wars, and goes on to appraise the paintings of Runge, Caspar David Friedrich and Kersting, *Symphony No 3 in Eb* and *String Quartet in F minor Op 95* by Beethoven, as well as music by CM von Weber, F Mendelssohn and R Schumann.

Session 1

The day begins with a general introduction to the Napoleonic Wars and to the ways in which the German speaking countries responded to Napoleon's invasion of their territories. The session goes on to explore the concept of 'Deutschheit' in the paintings of the early German Romantics and in the works of composers such as J Haydn, CM von Weber and Beethoven.

Session 2

This session takes a look at the way in which German and Austrian society restructured itself in the wake of the Congress of Vienna. It looks at the culture of the Biedermeier world and the concentration of the arts on the drawing room. Includes songs by Schubert and chamber music by Mendelssohn.

Session 3

The final session of the day is given over to a lecture recital with Peter at his Steinway grand piano performing, exploring and analysing a range of musical compositions that reflect the German spirit of the times (Deutschheit).

It was largely due to the impact of the Napoleonic wars that Germany finally established an artistic and cultural identity, and became one of the leading figures in the early 19th century Romantic Movement. Painters such as Runge, Schinkel and Friedrich (right), made powerful statements of *Deutschheit* (Germaness) in their works by turning to intrinsically nationalistic subject matter for their inspiration. Germany, in all its facets - rivers, landscape (forests, open plains and mountains), towns, ancient buildings, legends, customs, even the concept of the ideal German family – lent purpose and direction to these artists, infusing their pictures with extraordinary depth, poignancy, and above all, relevance.

Music with German subject matter

In turn, the theme of *Deutschheit* was taken up in the architecture, literature and - arguably most overtly of all - in the music of the period, especially in the works of Loewe, Weber (below), Schumann, Mendelssohn & Wagner. As the Classical world of Mozart and Haydn receded, the more striking compositions of the new century relied less on the aesthetics of form and order, and much more on the articulation of strong emotional feelings. If these feelings carried patriotic overtones – Mendelssohn in his second symphony *The Reformation*, Weber in his opera *Der Freischütz* – then so much the better, because these compositions in turn, helped to underpin the collective psyche of a Germany struggling towards identity and unity.

The effects of the theme of *Deutschheit* in the arts

With music to the fore, the lecture/study day explores the effects of the theme of *Deutschheit* in the arts of Germany in the early decades of the 19th century, a theme which flowed as prominently through the centre of the arts, as the national river Rhein flowed through the centre of Germany itself.