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# The Guitar Case-Files

presented by  
Erik Pierre Hofmann

Iss. no.2:  
“THE GUITARS OF  
THE TYROLESE MINSTRELS”

Stefan Hackl

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THE TYROLESE MINSTRELS”

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## FOREWORD

Early this year, when I presented the *Guitar Case Files* and published the series' first issue on my website and via social media, my long-time accomplice and friend Stefan Hackl was in the midst of writing an article for the year book "Jahrbuch des Österreichischen Volksliedwerkes". Incidentally or not, the subject was one we both had already approached in the past:<sup>1</sup> the yodelling singers from Tyrol, the so-called "Nationalsänger".<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact, both *Stauffer & Co.* and *The Renewed Guitar* comprise pictures of such ensembles – for the good and simple reason that they mostly accompanied themselves on the guitar (or on guitars even, plural).

Whereas they toured the western world during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, those "Nationalsänger" made a perfect example of not just one, but several aspects that made the guitar so immensely popular. First, there is the instrument's transportability; it is an undemanding travel companion, in addition to being well suited for outdoor performances – quite an obvious choice of instrument for early globe-trotters familiar to singing under the big blue sky. But then, there is also the guitar's capacity to lay out a discrete harmonic foundation for the human voice. Again, one highly useful characteristic in a musical setting largely based on multi part singing. And, last but not least, there is the simple fact that the guitar was one of the rare instruments considered suitable for the *beau sexe*. While things in this respect have luckily changed for the better since, it is undeniable that the skimpy morals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have done a lot to promote the guitar. While said morals effectively banned women from operating woodwind instruments or, god forbid, embracing a violoncello with their thighs, playing the guitar was deemed acceptable. A fact that certainly played a part as to why

some of the female members of the "Nationalsänger" played the guitar, too.

So, while Stefan, a born and bred Tyrolean himself, dug into the depths of his home region's export phenomenon, it soon became obvious that the material at hand would easily make for a longer article than the one that was originally planned. I must admit that even though the subject was not total news to me, I still was surprised by the scale of it – and the sheer number of documents bearing witness to it. Also, it seemed evident to the both of us that the article would benefit from colour-reproductions of the historical pictures at hand, and, for the sake of a larger public's comprehension, its translation into English.

This is why this second issue of the *Guitar Case Files* offers a revised and heavily augmented English version of the article originally published in print.<sup>3</sup> While we do not necessarily seek to convert you, dear reader, to the yodelling genre, we hope that you will find the following documentation of some of the guitar's many journeys – which in this case is to be taken quite literally – amusing and interesting.

Erik Pierre Hofmann

1. It should be noted that Stefan Hackl has devoted much of his time to the folk music of his home region not only as a researcher and author, but also as a music editor and musician himself. See multimedia CD *200 Jahre Volksmusikalisches Gitarrenspiel in Tirol*, Tiroler Volksliedwerk TVW 011, Innsbruck 2005 (<https://www.volkslied.at/200-jahre-volksmusikalisches-gitarrenspiel-in-tirol/>).

2. See p.6.

3. "Die Gitarren der Tiroler Nationalsänger", *Jahrbuch des Österreichischen Volksliedwerkes*, vol.72, Vienna 2023, pp.99-112.



Entry ticket to a concert of Ludwig Rainer, St-Petersburg, c.1860.  
Museum in der Widumspfiste Fügen.

## INTRODUCTION

A lot of research and writing has already been done about the Tyrolean minstrels who travelled the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and spread Tyrolean songs. Publications by Martin Reiter<sup>1</sup> and most recently by Sandra Hupfauf<sup>2</sup> paint a highly colourful and very detailed picture of a cultural phenomenon, that, in its balancing act between tradition and commerce, still has some significance in the present day.

An exhibition in the Tiroler Volkskunstmuseum (Tyrolean Folk Art Museum) in Innsbruck under the motto “Wir Tiroler sind lustig – Die Rolle der Volksmusik für den Tourismus” (“We Tyroleans are Merry – The Relevance of Folk Music for Tourism”) illustrates this in an exemplary manner. According to Karl C. Berger in his foreword to the catalogue,<sup>3</sup> the initial idea for the exhibition was a gift to the Volkskunstmuseum – a guitar that belonged to the Geschwister Buchberger, a singer group from the Zillertal that was highly popular during the 1930s. Nothing fancy, just a simple manufactured instrument from the Viennese music shop Stanberg, but paired with a couple of original “Lautenbänder” (lute straps) from the time, it makes for a nice emblem of the cultural phenomenon. [Fig.1]

For me, the exhibition was an impulse to take a closer look at the guitars of the Tyrolean minstrels, which are displayed in numerous illustrations.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, two trends relevant to this topic came together – on the one hand, the awakening interest of the educated classes in folk culture and thus the enthusiasm for folk songs, and on the other hand, the establishment of the guitar as a new instrument of fashion. Vienna was an important centre in both areas: for the collection of folk songs (Sonnleithner collection, Zischka-Schottky) and performances by “Salon Tyroleans” such as the “Tyroler



FIG.1

Wastl” (a character from the homonymous *Singspiel* by Emanuel Schikaneder and Jakob Haibel, Vienna 1796) and as a metropolis the guitar with personalities such as Mauro Giuliani (virtuoso and composer), Anton Diabelli (composer, arranger and publisher) and Johann Georg Stauffer (guitar maker). This means there are numerous points of contact: the songs popularized by the national singers appear in all sorts of arrangements and variation sets for the guitar.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Guitar from the estate of Martin Buchberger. Tiroler Landesmuseen/Volkskunstmuseum, inv. no. 33638 (photo: Johannes Plattner).

FIG.2

19. N<sup>o</sup> 12. **AUF D'ALM.**  
Lebhaft.

Singstimme.

1. Auf d'Al-ma gehn ma au-fi, es brumelt schon da Stier, diau di,  
2. Auf d'Al-ma gehn ma au-fi, weil s'Wet-ta is so schön, diau di,  
3. Auf d'Al-ma gehn ma. au-fi, und ma-chen grossi Kass, diau di,

Pianoforte

oder

Gitarre  
Begleitung.

diau di, diau di, didl oi e, und s'sel-bi is a Zoa=chad, dass nima is zu frua, diau di, diau di, diau di, didl oi  
diau di, diau di, didl oi e, da kann do je=da Sennabua zu sein a Sennrinhahn, diau di, diau di, diau di, didl oi  
diau di, diau di, didl oi e, glei Loab als wie die Mühlstoan, dös is nur grad a Gspass, diau di, diau di, diau di, didl oi

D. et C. N<sup>o</sup> 3574

First page of the song “Auf d’Alm”, excerpted from the song collection *Tyroler Alpenesänge*, published by Anton Diabelli & Comp., Vienna 1830. Private collection of the author.

Diabelli in particular took advantage of the seemingly genuine down-to-earth appeal, e.g. with three different arrangements of the songs by Zischka/Schottky (24 original Ländler based on the most popular folk tunes for singing, csakan and flute, each with guitar accompaniment, published in Vienna in 1820 by A. Diabelli & Comp.)<sup>4</sup> or the *Tyroler Alpengesänge* by Paul Scho[n]er (a court opera singer coming from Wildschönau who became known as the actor “Tyroler Wastl”).<sup>5</sup> [Fig. 2] Carl Eulenstein then published Tyrolese Melodies for guitar solo in England<sup>6</sup> – probably on the occasion of the performances by Tyrolese minstrels – based on the arrangements by Ignaz Moscheles<sup>7</sup> and Schoner/Diabelli. One of these songs, “Wann i in der Früh aufsteh” (“When I get up in the morning”), is one of the most frequently varied themes in classical guitar literature – all important guitarists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had an *air tirolien* in their repertoire.

## THE “NATIONALSÄNGER” PHENOMENON

Since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, various ensembles of travelling folk musicians have performed under the names “Nationalsänger”, “Alpensänger” or “Naturesänger” and embodied down-to-earth folk culture with their music and dance performances. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were mainly groups from the Zillertal such as the families Rainer, Halaus, Hauser, Strasser and Leo, but also Styrian singing societies such as those led by Carl Fischer. Originally created as a sales-promoting activity by travelling traders, the musical performances became extensive concert tours to, among other places, England, Russia and America. The Rainer family had such great success there that numerous ensembles appeared in their wake as “Tyrolese Minstrels”, who were by no means Tyrolean. The repertoire soon went beyond folk songs and the salon and theatre songs written in this style (such as

“Wann i in der Früh aufsteh”) and also included music from musical plays and operas.

While the “Nationalsänger” fashion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was still an expression of national romanticism or longing for home (for emigrants in America), in the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was exploited for tourism. In the post-war period, the Engel family and the “Kitzbüheler Trachtensänger” were important brand ambassadors, and clichés of down-to-earth folk culture were entertained in so-called “Tyrolean evenings”. In addition to typical folk instruments such as the zither, harp or “Hölzernes G'lachter” (a kind of xylophone), the guitar was an essential part of the accompanying instruments in most ensembles.

## THE GUITAR IN TYROL<sup>8</sup>

There is only little evidence from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century for the guitar being present in Tyrol. In 1809, composer Joseph Alois Holzmann from Hall saw and heard a guitar for the first time, played by his fellow composer Johann Baptist Gänsbacher (born 1778 in Sterzing, died 1844 in Vienna).<sup>9</sup> Around 1820, Johann Fritz (born 1783 in Pfaffenhofen, died after 1825 in Innsbruck) created a personal guitar model with a pear-shaped body, which was often copied and became quite popular (up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century), thanks to model variants by prominent makers such as Victorin Drassegg, Bernard Enzensperger and Ludwig Reisinger. The “Innsbrucker Lauten” built in Mittenwald after Fritz’s model were particularly appreciated by folk singers in the early 1900s. Other Tyrolean guitar makers were Josef Gschwenter (born 1838 in Mals, died 1894 in Innsbruck), Josef Ennemoser (1875-1953, Merano) and Otto Body (born 1857 in Debrecen, died 1936 in Innsbruck). A pioneer of the guitar in Tyrol was Leonhard von





FIG.3

The Rainer family on the occasion of a performance at the Royal Court in London in 1827, hand-coloured engraving of unknown origin, Heimatmuseum Kufstein, inv. no. PS2 (photo: Johannes Plattner © TLM/Volkskunstmuseum).

## THE TYROLESE MINSTRELS,

SIMON HOLAUS, VEIT RAHM, LUDWIG RAINER,  
 KLIER, and Madlle, MARGREITER,

TYROLESE WALTZING AND SINGING.  
**T**HE TYROLESE MINSTRELS (the RAINER family) very respectfully inform the Public, that at the desire of many distinguished personages, they purpose giving on MONDAY, July 2, and every succeeding day, at three o'clock precisely, in the CONCERT ROOM of the EGYPTIAN HALL, PICCADILLY, in addition to their present popular Vocal Performances, a characteristic specimen of the WALTZ, as danced in their native country, dressed in full costume; which dance they had lately the honour to perform before the Court at Windsor on two succeeding days, and to be sanctioned by the most flattering marks of the Royal approbation. Tickets 3s. may be had of Mr. Willis, Royal Musical Repository, Egyptian Hall. 1827

FIG.4

“The Tyrolese Minstrels”, advertisement for a concert of the Rainer Family at the Egyptian Hall (London) in 1827. Davenport Collection, N1998 Ep.EH52 ([www.davenportcollection.co.uk](http://www.davenportcollection.co.uk)).

FIG.5



8  
9

“Tyrolean Minstrels”, engraving group portrait by Sewell, New York & Baltimore, 1831. This portrait of an unidentified ensemble is quite remarkable, as the level of detail allows us to identify very clearly the two guitars in use. These are so-called “Molino-models” (named after Francisco Molino), which were built in three different Mirecourt-based workshops – Mauchant Frères (as the guitar opposite), Cabasse-Visnaire and Coffe – during the 1820s. While the guitar on the right is mostly hidden by the player turning his back to the viewer, as he appears to be conducting the group, the specific shape of the head leaves no room for doubt: he is certainly playing the same model as his colleague on the left. Digital archive Hofmann.

A so-called “Molino-model” guitar, posthumously named after the model promoted by Francesco Molino; Mauchant Frères, Mirecourt, c.1822. Private collection Erik Pierre Hofmann.



FIG.6



FIG.7

The Rainer Family, engraving by Benjamin W. Thayer, Boston, c.1840. While this and the following group portrait (see below) were made at virtually the same time at the same place, the guitar (which is unidentifiable in both pictures) changes from one that has no overlaying fretboard to one that has. Private collection Erik Pierre Hofmann.



FIG.8

Engraving from the title page of *The Celebrated Melodies of the Rainer Family, Adapted for the Piano Forte*, published by Oliver Ditson, Boston, c.1841. Private collection Erik Pierre Hofmann.

Call (1767-1815), who came from Eppan in South Tyrol. He worked in Vienna as a tax officer since 1796 and composed over 150 works for guitar. His chamber music in particular was highly appreciated in his days and frequently reprinted in Germany and in France. It was probably him who first introduced the above mentioned Gänsbacher to the guitar.

The instrument also played an important part in the musical life of the noble family von Tannenberg. Count Alois von Tannenberg took lessons with Gänsbacher, Kreszenz met Mauro Giuliani in Vienna and became dedicatee of his Variations op.103. Anna Prantl, before joining the famous Rainer singers, worked as a cook for the Tannenberg family.<sup>10</sup> Considering that the family owned a harp by Franz Brunner, this might explain how the Rainers got hold of a guitar by Brunner.

#### THE ROLE OF THE GUITAR IN “NATIONALSÄNGER” ENSEMBLES

A key factor for the guitar's popularity in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was its suitability as an accompanying instrument. It was easily accessible from a financial, musical and technical point of view<sup>11</sup> and was used in both folk songs and art songs (in the latter particularly as an attribute for the folk tone). August Swoboda in the foreword of his guitar method for ladies says:

“The guitar never touches the senses so much as it does at night, particularly a deep night, when the player is almost invisible. It is then that its sweet, melancholic sounds drop in the night; an irresistible, sweet complaint that even in relatively untutored hands exerts a force which is almost magnetic. Combined with a sonorous and trained masculine voice, it forms a delightful, harmonious whole which fulfils all expectations. Such is the vocation of this amiable instrument which, despite all the augurs of its imminent and definite decline, has

plenty enough admirers and players to ensure its existence for eternity.”<sup>12</sup>

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, guitar playing experienced another heyday (after a crisis of several decades). It was, especially in southern Germany, supported by the “Wandervogel”<sup>13</sup> movement, whose members used to perform songs outdoors, accompanying themselves on guitars (or lutes in guitar tuning), and by “Lautensänger” (lute singers) who gave concerts revisiting old song material and created new songs in the spirit of the old. Hence, there were countless points of contact with traditional folk music and also classical guitar music.

Prominent guitarists such as Luise Walker and Karl Scheit in Vienna or Heinrich Albert and Heinrich Scherrer in Munich were rooted in the “Wandervogel” movement.

In Tyrol, this movement was particularly embodied by Emil Winkler, Franz Moll and Josef Pöll; the tradition extended through Josef Weingartner, Karl Blum, Robert Berchtold and Hermann Heinrich still into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The role of the guitar for the national singers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was, of course, primarily that of an accompanying instrument, both for singing and in instrumental performances. But individual concert programs and reviews also show solo performances of guitar duets, some requiring technical skills that go far beyond the skills of average amateur accompanists. However, this primarily concerns those “Tyrolese Minstrels made in USA”, who appeared in America before the Rainer family and especially in their wake and performed their own compositions such as “The French Revolution, a Characteristic Fantasy for Guitar”.<sup>14</sup> Even if the Rainers themselves were not virtuosos, their influence on the development of guitar playing in America is insignificant, as described by David Bradford:

FIG.9

THE MELODIES OF THE

JOSEPH.      MARIE.      FRANZ.      THERESE.      GEORGE.

## HAUSER FAMILY.

ARRANGED FOR THE  
*Piano Forte.*

<p><i>Not for gold or precious stones. The Hauser Polka song. Tyrolian Fatherland. The Styrian Exile, or longing for home. The Happy Mountaineer.</i></p>	<p><i>The Nightingale. Better than gold. What said he, or the sweetheart. The Alpine Horn.</i></p>
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BOSTON  
Published by **OLIVER DITSON** 115 Washington St.

Entered according to act of congress in the year 1848 by Oliver Ditson in the Clerk's office of the District Court of Mass.

J.H. Bufford & Co. Lith.

Pr 25 cts. nett.

Title page of *The Melodies of the Hauser Family, Arranged for the Piano Forte*, published by Oliver Ditson, Boston, c. 1848. While the depiction of the guitar does not reveal a sufficient amount of details to ascertain its origin, the dark side paired with a black neck could hint at an American-made guitar, which the Hausers would have borrowed or acquired on tour. Private collection David Kyger.

FIG.10

## BRINLEY HALL!

### CONCERT

— OF THE —

## HAUSER FAMILY,

— OR —  
ELTON

### TYROLESE MINSTRELS,

Who beg leave to inform the citizens of Worcester that they will have the honor of appearing before them at the above-named place

**ON MONDAY AND TUESDAY EVENINGS,  
DECEMBER 11 and 12,  
AND SING A VARIETY OF**

## SOLOS, DUETS, QUARTETS, AND MELODIES OF THE ALPS, IN THEIR NATIONAL COSTUME.

THE FAMILY CONSISTS OF

Miss <b>TERESA HAUSER,</b>	Soprano.
Mrs. <b>MARIA HAUSER,</b>	Contralto.
Mr. <b>FRANZ HAUSER,</b>	Tenor.
Mr. <b>SEPPA HAUSER,</b>	Baritone.
Mr. <b>Geo. HAUSER,</b>	Bass.

### PROGRAMME.

PART I.

SOLO—"The Wild Hunter of Tyrol." Song by the whole Family.	HAUSER.
DUET—"The Loving Shepherds." Song by Miss Teresa and Mr. Franz, with Zither and Guitar accompaniment.	HAUSER.
BASS SOLO AND CHORUS—"The Nightingale."	HAUSER.
QUINTET—"The Hauser Polka." For the Zither and Guitar, from different Airs and Songs. Arranged by	HAUSER.

PART II.

QUINTET—"The Alpine Horn." . . . . .	HAUSER.
SOLO AND CHORUS—"What does he say?" English Comic. . . . .	HAUSER.
SOLO—"Not for Gold nor Precious Stone." In English. . . . .	HAUSER.

<p><small>Not for gold nor precious stone; Would I change my mountain home; High upon the Alps all alone, Is carried my soul still higher on. The air is purer on high, The heart with unknown pleasures swells;</small></p>	<p><small>To better spirits one feels sigh, Whispering in future happy spells. There would I forever stay, With gladness my heart warm; And when my hour comes, the day To wake in angel's arms.</small></p>
--	--

DUET—"The Drunken Man," with Laughing Chorus. . . . . HAUSER.

THE GRAND HAUSER MARCH—For Zither and Guitar. . . . . HAUSER.

PART III.

QUINTET—"The German Flag of Liberty," in English. . . . . HAUSER.	
When once the black, the red and gold, Should by freemen's hands, Shall stream in light each graceful fold, O'er all the German land, Dignity and shame shall pass away; In chains no longer bound, Shall freemen hail the dawning day, With freedom's promise crown'd.	<p>No more they'll stand in mock and scorn, As playthings of an hour, But now 'tis right, they'll dare to turn Head to their tyrant's power; They raise the flag, and set each fold No longer to rattle, But forest the black, the red, and gold, In Freedom to the wind.</p>
TERZET—"The Lovers Quarrel," with Chorus. . . . . HAUSER.	
TERZET—"The Rhine Echo" . . . . . HAUSER.	
THE MUSICAL MARGARETTA—Comic. . . . . HAUSER.	

**5 TICKETS TWENTY-FIVE CENTS, 2**

CHILDREN, accompanied by their Parents, HALF PRICE. Tickets to be obtained at the principal Hotels, Book Stores, and the Door.

Doors open at 6 1-2.—To commence at 7 1-2 o'clock, precisely.

COSHING & GREENISH, Printers, No. 10 Central Exchange, Worcester.

Songs & Songs, &c. by W. D. Ditson, 1847.

Advertisement for a concert of the Hauser Family at Brinley Hall, Worcester (Massachusetts) on 1 January 1848. Private collection David Kyger.



THE TYROLESE MINSTRELS.—FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY BEARD, BY DESIRE OF H. R. H. THE DUCHESS OF KENT.

#### THE TYROLESE MINSTRELS.

THE company of *artistes* who sing the music of the Tyrol comprise Mdlle. Margreiter, Simon, Holans, Veit, Ludwig Rainer, and Kleir. Their performances commenced on the 28th ult. at the St. James's Theatre, under the patronage of the Duchess of Somerset. The Tyrolese Minstrels have sung at Windsor Castle and Frogmore House, in the presence of her Majesty, Prince Albert, and the Duchess of Kent; and recently at the Pavilion, Brighton, before the Duchess of Gloucester. Testimonials of the Master and Comptroller of the Royal Households, expressive of the gratification of the Queen, Prince Albert, and the Duchess of Kent, have been granted to the singers, and they are also bearers of testimonials from the Emperors of Russia and Austria, the Kings of Bavaria, Saxony, and Wir-

temberg, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, &c. Nothing can be more picturesque than the costumes of the Tyrolese Minstrels, and nothing can be more curious and original than the harmonised melodies which they interpret. amateurs who are curious in studying musical nationalities, will find suggestive matter in listening to the music of the Tyrol.

This singing *troupe* are natives of the valley of Tullerthal; they came to England to see the Great Exhibition. Two of this company belong to the Rifleman corps of the Tyrol, and are decorated with silver medals from the Emperor of Austria. The bass singer, Herr Hokaüs, has travelled with the celebrated Rainer family through the United States of America, where they have met with the greatest success. M. Rainer, the son of the celebrated Rainer family, is in possession of a Tyrolean belt presented from George IV. to his father. The belt has in front the Royal arms, and is of the most handsome workmanship.

“The Tyrolese Minstrels”, newspaper article in the “Illustrated London News” of 6 December 1851, reporting of the group’s recent performances, in particular those “at Windsor Castle and Frogmore House, in the presence of her Majesty”. Davenport Collection, N1998 Ep.EH52 ([www.davenportcollection.co.uk](http://www.davenportcollection.co.uk)).



FIG.12

Tyrolese Singers, daguerotype by Richard Beard, London 1851/52.  
The Royal Collection Trust, London.



FIG.13

Floral mother-of-pearl inlay  
in the fretboard of a guitar  
by Glaesel. Private collection  
and photo Christof Hanusch.

“Broadly speaking, all subsequent singing groups using the guitar as the principal accompaniment instrument, including modern rock & roll and country bands, owe a debt to these European groups.”<sup>15</sup>

A name that appears often in the national singers' concert programs is that of Johann Decker-Schenk (1826-1899), son of the Viennese guitar maker Friedrich Schenk and a travelling guitar virtuoso, singer and composer. As the director of an opera ensemble, he travelled through Russia in the 1860s and married in St. Petersburg, where (after an intermezzo of several years in Tiflis) he worked as a theatre director and guitar teacher until the end of his life. The Rainer family worked with him during their stay in Russia,<sup>16</sup> and we can also find guitar duets and other compositions by Decker-Schenk in the programs of American vocal ensembles in Tyrolean costumes.

also of high quality. In contrast to the design of Brunner's standard model as shown in the label below [Fig.14], the “Seegner model” is based on the “Legnani model” by Johann Georg Stauffer<sup>18</sup> (also see the guitar in the engraved portrait of the Rainers, made in London in 1827 in London) [Fig. 3]. The bridge was changed later: the enhancement of the Rainer family’s photographic carte de visite reveals the original one. [Fig.17]

FIG.14



2) The guitar of the Leo family (Museum in der Widumspfiste Fügen, on loan from the Leo family in Zellberg). It is not signed, but the shape of the body, inlays and head are features that strongly remind of the Placht brothers' production from around 1850. They originated from Schönbach in Bohemia and had departments in Vienna and Pesh. It is again a “Legnani model” with a floating fingerboard, but bears only 21 frets. [Fig. 20, 21]

No other guitars from the first generation of national singers are known. Written sources and documents with informations pertaining to such instruments have not yet been found, which is why iconography remains the most important source. There are numerous images of Tyrolese minstrels – lithographs, daguerreotypes, photographs, postcards. Most of

## THE INSTRUMENTS

Two guitars from the 19<sup>th</sup> century that belonged to Tyrolese Minstrel groups still remain:

1) Theres Prantl's guitar [Fig. 16-19]. Theres Prantl (1839-1932) was the main attraction of the Rainer Singers (known as the “Tyrolean Nightingale”) since the 1850s and an excellent guitarist who also performed Ländler of her own composition.<sup>17</sup> Her instrument is a Viennese guitar by Franz Brunner (1786-1840), probably from around 1822. This is an extremely rare model with the label “Nach Angaben von Franz Gr. Seegner” (Seegner, 1795-1876, was a prominent Viennese composer and guitarist who published a guitar method and other works for guitar in the 1820s and 30s). Brunner was mainly known for his harps, but the few guitars from his workshop known today are



Fig.15

“Die Tiroler Familie Rainer in St. Petersburg”, photograph of unknown origin, St. Petersburg, c. 1860. Tiroler Landesmuseum/Volkskunstmuseum.



Photographic *carte de visite* of the “Sängergesellschaft Ludwig Rainer”, Hermann Blum, Stuttgart, c. 1885. Tiroler Landesmuseum/Volkskunstmuseum



Fig.16



FIG.18



FIG.17

Guitar by Franz Brunner (Vienna, probably around 1822) from the estate of Theres Prantl. Heimatmuseum Kufstein, inv. no. 8.25 (photos: Stefan Hackl).



FIG.19

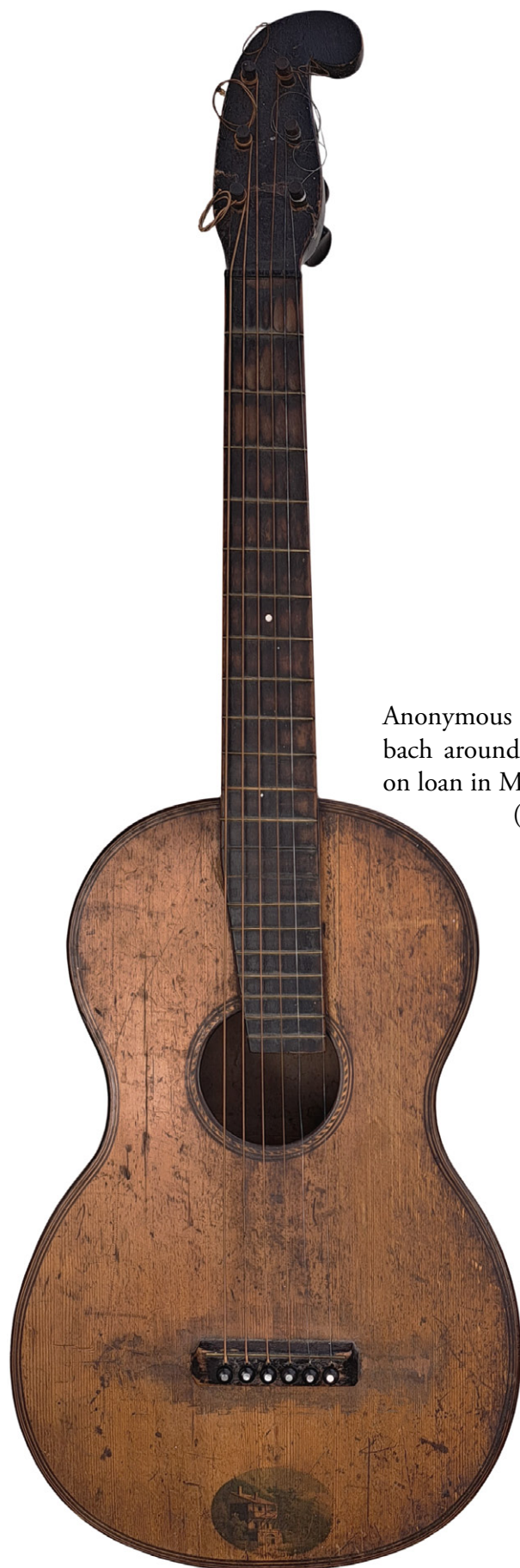


FIG.20

Anonymous guitar, probably made in Schön-  
bach around 1850, owned by the Leo family,  
on loan in Museum in der Widumspfiste Fügen  
(photos: Stefan Hackl).



FIG.21

them feature at least one guitar, some even two. Many of the guitars can be assigned to a specific model or type, and some of them can be identified with a certain degree of accuracy. In many cases those are plain instruments, predominantly providing from larger manufactures located in the Vogtland or in Mittenwald. [Fig. 40]

But some guitars stand out: One of the most iconic images of the Rainer family dates back from their first tour in England (1827). [Fig. 3] They are wearing fantasy costumes made by a London tailor, and the guitar in Maria Rainer's hands reminds the work of the Viennese master Johann Georg Stauffer (1778-1853) – again a “Legnani model”. In cooperation with the Italian virtuoso Luigi Legnani (1790-1877), Stauffer had developed a model that featured some innovation innovations, such as the raised fingerboard with 22 frets, which were patented in 1822. Another trademark of the most expensive Stauffer guitars was the volute-shaped head with lateral tuning machines – a design that became the emblem of American electric guitars almost a century and a half later.<sup>19</sup>

On the lithographed frontispieces of sheet music editions of the Rainer family in Boston, around 1840, respectively Margarethe Sprenger and Simon Halaus are shown playing the guitar, yet unidentifiable plain models with wooden pegs. [Fig. 7, 8] Photographs from Rainer's trip to Russia (1858-1868) show Isabella Prantl (Theres and Anna Prantl's sister, see above) with a seven-string guitar. [Fig. 22, 24] Since c. 1800, an idiosyncratic guitar playing tradition had developed in Russia, based on a 7 strings configuration tuned in open G major (D, G, B, d, g, b, d').<sup>20</sup> The guitar in her portraits displays another noteworthy detail, which is a right hand rest – a highly specific device which is also depicted in a painting by Konstantin Makovsky (1839-1915) from 1856, [Fig. 23] featuring what is certainly a guitar by Ivan Krasnoschekov (1798-1875).



FIG.22

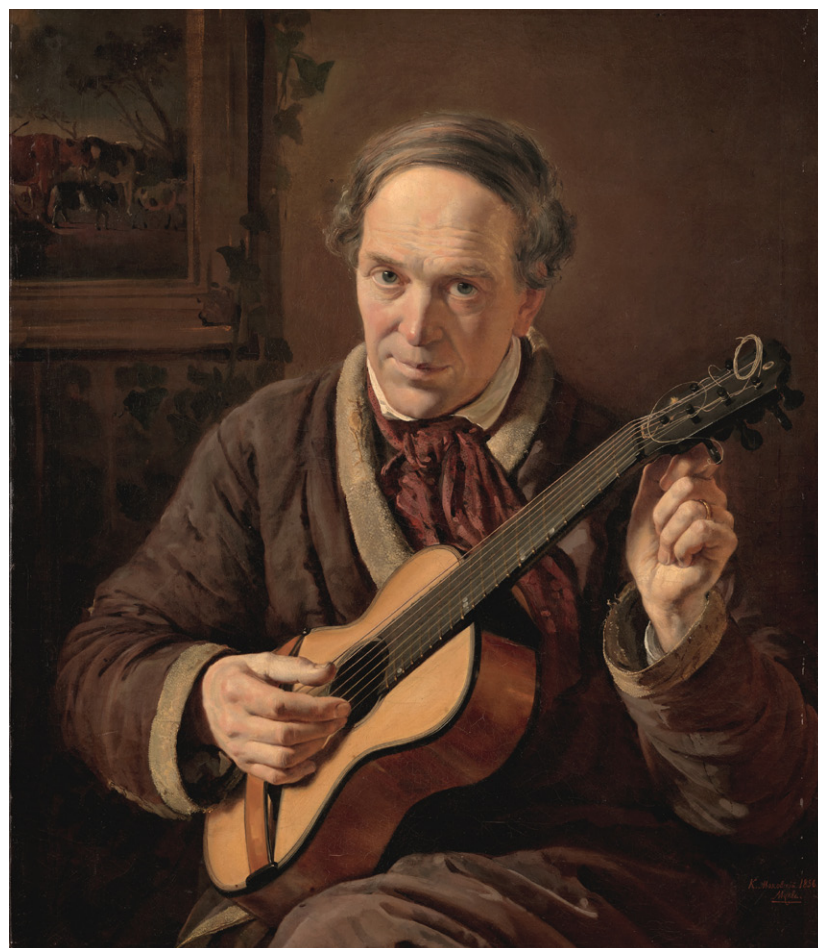


FIG.23

**OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP):** Isabella Prantl with a Russian guitar, hand-coloured photograph, St-Petersburg, c.1865. Private collection Martin Reiter.



**OPPOSITE PAGE (BOTTOM):** Portrait of Yegor Makovsky, oil painting by Konstantin Makovsky (1839-1915), Russia 1856. Tretyakov Gallery Moscow, inv. no. 9210.

Isabella Prantl with a Russian guitar, hand-coloured photograph, St-Petersburg, c.1865. Private collection Martin Reiter.



FIG.25

“Chanteurs tyroliens”, engraved group portrait of the Oettl family, published in the magazine *L'illustration, journal universel* (Paris) on 11 April 1846. Although the depiction of the guitar is not detailed and accurate enough to clearly identify the instrument, it appears to be of French making. The accompanying caption reports that the ensemble composed by Franz, Josef, Ludwig and Katherina Oettl recently toured through parts of France and just arrived in Paris. They are hailed for their vocal performances, which described as follows: “They utter those guttural sounds and lines (*jodlen*) that are part of nearly all refrains of their airs tyroliens with such surprising ease and audacity, that they seem to recreate the singing of their native mountains’ birds. One of the group members accompanies the songs by playing chords on a guitar.” Private collection Erik Pierre Hofmann.



FIG.26

Guitar by Jean-François Lavigne, Paris, c.1810. The general outline and proportions of this model seem to match the instrument represented above. Courtesy of Erik Pierre Hofmann.



Fig.27

The Holaus family, cabinet card portrait by Cyrus Voss Bark, Clifton/Bristol 1868. The guitar in the picture is evidently an English guitar in the style of Louis Panormo. Interestingly, another photographic portrait of the Holaus family from roughly the same time period shows them with a French guitar. Private collection James Westbrook.

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Guitar by Louis Panormo, London 1838. While chances are slim that this could be the exact instrument from the picture above, it is the very same model. Courtesy of Erik Pierre Hofmann.



FIG.28

The various guitars played by Simon Halaus (several pictures show him with a guitar) probably come from the Vogtland, as ornaments and structural details suggest. Since local instrument makers were not permitted to sign their instruments – for this was a dealer’s privilege – they can rarely be attributed to a specific workshop with absolute certainty. Vogtland-made instruments were inexpensive and distributed basically everywhere where there was demand in sturdy, inexpensive guitars; they were distributed in numbers by Johann Groß in Innsbruck.

In the guitar in the English daguerreotype from 1850, an inlaid flower motif in the fingerboard on the top is noticeable. [Fig.12] This was a trademark of the Klingenthal guitar makers (as for example Christian Friedrich Bauer) around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and occasionally also used by makers from Markneukirchen. [Fig.13] In this case, some stylistic elements and ornaments point to a member of the Glaesel family.

In another picture from the Halaus family's trip to England, the guitar is clearly identifiable as an English product. [Fig. 27] The head and bridge recall the work of the Panormo family [Fig. 28], well-known for their guitars “in the Spanish style” (as an inscription on the engraved labels claimed).

Around the turn of the century, the Rainers used a contra guitar as accompanying instrument. Franz Rainer is shown in several photographs with a 15-string contra guitar. [Fig. 39] It appears to be a Bavarian school instrument, built around 1900, possibly by Ignaz Roider or Hans Raab.

In general, from 1900 onwards guitars with additional bass strings (contra guitars) were often used, [Fig. 31-34, 37, 39] as well as (bass) lutes in guitar tuning. One bass lute for example can be seen in a postcard of the Tyrolean ensemble “D’Echten Fernstoaner”. [Fig. 38] And a particularly rare bass guitar model is displayed on the cover of a collection of songs

by the singing duo Dr. Mahrenberger-Cutic [Fig. 32]: it is a 10-string “Bogengitarre” with an extended resonance body, based on the model by Friedrich Schenk (Vienna 1844), as it was copied at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by southern German guitar makers such as Hans Raab, Paul Kochendörfer or the Unico-Hensel company in Munich. [Fig. 33]

Finally, let us have a look at two personalities from the 20<sup>th</sup> century who are closely linked (but not to be reduced) to the “Nationalsänger” fashion: Jakob Ortner (born 1879 in Innsbruck, died 1959 in Payerbach),<sup>21</sup> accompanied the “Nationalsänger Egger-Rieser” for almost two decades and owned his place in history as the world's first professor for guitar playing. Song accompaniment played an important role in his teaching at the Vienna Academy and in the “Österreichische Gitarre-Zeitschrift” (Austrian guitar magazine) he edited, as the academic curriculum issued in 1924 shows. His wife Hermine Ortner-Lener performed as a lute singer and made the songs of Josef Pöll and Franz Moll known beyond Tyrol. The photograph shows Ortner with a contra guitar by Ludwig Reisinger. [Fig. 34] In addition to this he owned a guitar in the Innsbruck shape [Fig. 29, 30],<sup>22</sup> various Viennese guitars and even a Tieffenbrucker lute. Since 1930 he mostly played a guitar by Alfred Vidoudez (Geneva 1929).

Fritz Engel (born 1904 in Berlin, died 2004 in Reutte) and his family<sup>23</sup> became the most prominent representatives of Tyrolean folk music in the post-war period and travelled the world, holding high the tradition of the Tyrolean minstrels. [Fig. 35] Fritz Engel was originally a concert guitarist, and as such played a guitar by Francisco Simplicio (Barcelona 1929). His daughter Helga Engel (born 1939) also studied classical guitar. As a child she played a terz guitar by Richard Jacob “Weissgerber” (Markneukirchen 1926). [Fig. 36]





FIG.29

Cabinet card portrait of the “Erlacher Trio”, Tyrol or southern Bavaria, 1880. Maria Erlacher plays a guitar from Mittenwald in the distinctive style of the instruments made in the 1820s by Johann Fritz (see guitar opposite) and Victorin Drassegg. Private collection Erik Pierre Hofmann.

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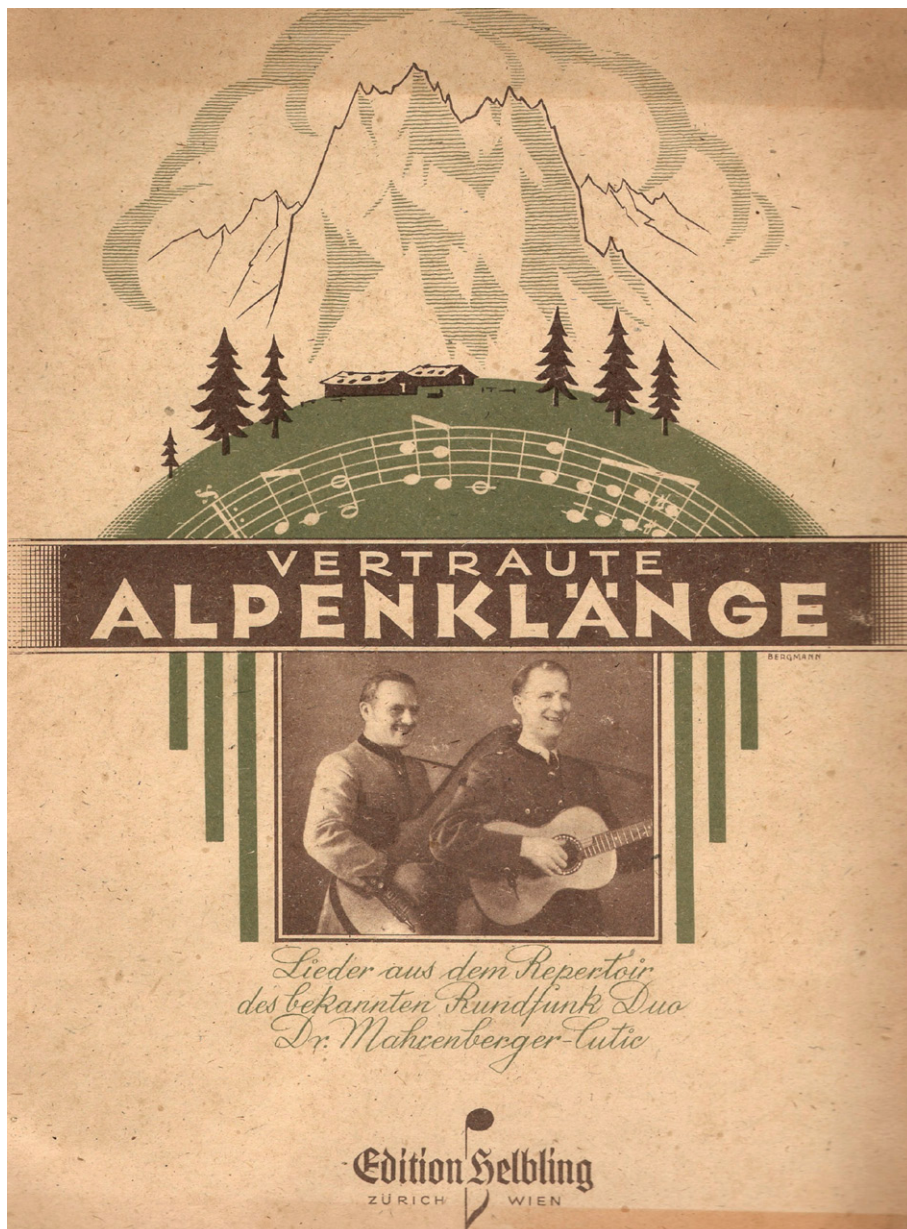
Guitar by Johann Fritz, Innsbruck, c. 1820. Private collection of the author.



FIG.30



Postcard of the ensemble “Altmühlthaler W. Bittl-Truppe”, Bavaria 1911. This colourful ensemble originated from Regensburg in Bavaria, but maintained the tradition of the Tyrolese “Nationalsänger”. They played songs and dance music (“Schrammelmusik”) from Bavaria, Tyrol, Styria and Vienna. Their instrumentarium was accordingly abundant: violin, bandoneon, upright bass, three different types of citherns, two so-called “Hölzerne Glachter” (xylophones from the Zillertal), a true arsenal of cow bells and chimes and, last but not least, not less than three guitars! Two of these being contra guitars (with respectively 13 and 15 strings), the third a Viennese-style six-string guitar with adjustable neck. While the contra guitar on the left could be one made in Mittenwald, the one on the right could be by Hans Raab. Private collection Erik Pierre Hofmann.



Title page of “Vertraute Alpenklänge” (“Familiar sounds from the Alps”), a collection of songs from the repertoire of the duo Dr. Mahrenberger-Cutic, Innsbruck 1957. Private collection of the author.

FIG.32



*Bogengitarre* by Hans Raab (based on a model built by Friedrich Schenk in 1844), Munich 1904. Private collection of the author.

FIG.33

Further illustrations of “Nationalsänger” with guitars can be found in the above mentioned publications by Reiter and Hupfau, the exhibition catalogue “Wir Tiroler sind lustig”<sup>24</sup> and in *The Renewed Guitar – The Instrument's Evolution Seen Through Period Pictures 1775-1925*.<sup>25</sup>

The websites <http://www.78erPlatten.at/tirol%20nationalsaenger.html> and <http://www.tirol-schellack.at/Sammlung.html> are excellent sources for photos and sound recordings, while [https://www.sagen.at/doku/Tiroler\\_Nationalsaenger/Geschichte\\_Tiroler\\_Nationalsaengertum.html](https://www.sagen.at/doku/Tiroler_Nationalsaenger/Geschichte_Tiroler_Nationalsaengertum.html) features a lot of additional informations and material on the subject.

## CONCLUSION

When interest in folk music and the first heyday of the guitar came together in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century,

the guitar became the most important accompanying instrument for travelling folk singers. The songs made famous by the Rainer and Halaus families and other ensembles appeared in numerous arrangements and variations for the guitar, and the spread of the guitar was particularly stimulated in America by “Tyrolese Minstrels”.

The guitar is represented in a large number of historical images of national singing groups, and some of the instruments depicted are still preserved. The majority of those guitars on display are plain instruments that perfectly serve the purpose of simple song accompaniment. However, economic success may have made it possible for some players to purchase quality instruments. The guitars of the Rainer and Halaus families were all of good quality, some were even master instruments. On their travels, some brought their own instruments, while others either bought or borrowed (a) guitar(s) locally.



FIG.34

Postcard of the “Egger-Rieser” ensemble, featuring Jakob Ortner playing a contra guitar by Ludwig Reisinger (Vienna, c. 1900), Innsbruck, c. 1910. Courtesy of Edmund Palfinger.



FIG.35

Excerpt of an article on the Engel family from Reutte (Tirol) in the *Wiener Kurier* (1954). Trained by their parents, the seven children play over 120 different instruments. The youngest is portrayed holding a *terz guitar* by Richard Jacob “Weissgerber” (Markneukirchen 1926), who is also the maker of the lute in the foreground. Fritz Engel holds his guitar by Francisco Simplicio (Barcelona 1929). The maker of the guitar on the right is unknown, but it appears to be yet another instrument from the Vogtland region. Private archive of the Engel family.

*Terz guitar* by Richard Jacob “Weissgerber”, Markneukirchen 1926. This is the very same guitar as in the picture above. Private collection of the author.



FIG.36



FIG.37

Postcard of the ensemble "Tobias Wilhelms Tiroler Gruppe", Tyrol, c.1920. The special shape of the double-neck guitars suggests that it is of German make. Private collection Edmund Palfinger.



FIG.38

Gesang-, Musik- und Tänzer-Truppe  
D'echten Fernstoaner aus Tirol. Dir.: A. Scheiring.

Postcard of the ensemble "D'echten Fernstoaner", Zirl, c.1925. Private collection Edmund Palfinger.

FIG.39

Postcard of the “Tyroler Concertsänger- und Tänzer-Gesellschaft Franz Rainer”, Dortmund 1902. Private collection of the author.



Tyroler Concertsänger- und Tänzer-Gesellschaft Franz Rainer.

FIG.40

Postcard of the ensemble “Förg’s echte Tyroler-Gesellschaft”, Silz, c. 1930. This one features a simple six-string guitar, probably made in Mittenwald. Private collection Edmund Palfinger.



Förg's echte Tyroler-Gesellschaft aus Silz Oberinntal, Tyrol.

Ganz im Oberinntal  
oben in der Mittenwald  
in der G. G. G. G. G.  
Palmse der alle G. G. G.

1. Martin Reiter: *Die Zillertaler Nationalsänger im 19. Jahrhundert*. Ried im Zillertal, self published, 1989. Martin Reiter: *Ludwig Rainer - Viel gereist und viel gesungen*, Reith i. A., Edition Tirol, 2018.
2. Sandra Hupfaut: *Die Tourneen der Geschwister Rainer und Rainer Family - Rekonstruktion der ersten ‚Kunstreisen‘ als Sozialgeschichte eines kulturellen Transfers im frühen 19. Jahrhundert*. Diss., Universität Innsbruck, 2016. Sandra Hupfaut: *Die Lieder der Geschwister Rainer und „Rainer Family“ aus dem Zillertal (1822-1843). Untersuchungen zur Popularisierung von Tiroler Liedern in Deutschland, England und Amerika*, ed. by Thomas Nussbaumer, Innsbruck, Universitätsverlag Wagner, 2016.
3. Karl C. Berger: „Zur Ausstellung ‚Wir Tiroler sind lustig““. In: „Wir Tiroler sind lustig“ – *Die Rolle der Volksmusik für den Tourismus*. Catalog of the exhibition (ed. by Sonja Ortner), Innsbruck, Tiroler Landesmuseen, 2022, p. 5.
4. Franz Ziska and Max Julius Schottky: *Österreichische Volkslieder mit ihren Singweisen*, Pesth, Hartleben, 1819. Anton Diabelli: 24 Originalländler für den Csakan mit willkürlicher Begleitung der Gitarre. Nach den beliebtesten österreichischen Volksweisen bearbeitet von Anton Diabelli, Wien, A. Diabelli & Comp., 1820.
5. Paul Schonner: *Tyroloer Alpengesänge*, Wien, Diabelli & Comp., 1830.
6. Ignaz Moscheles: *The Tyrolese Melodies Arranged for One or Four Voices with Accompaniment for the Piano Forte*. 3 vols., London, I. Willis & Co., 1827-1829.
7. Carl Eulenstein: *The Tyrolese Melodies Arranged in an easy style for the Spanish Guitar*, London, Robert Cocks & Co., c. 1850.
8. See Stefan Hackl: *Die Gitarre in Österreich – von Abate Costa bis Zykan*. Innsbruck, StudienVerlag, 2011, pp. 26-111 and 189-193.
9. Johann Baptist Gänsbacher: *Denkwürdigkeiten aus meinem Leben*, ed. by Walter Senn, Thaur, Österreichischer Kulturverlag, 1986, p. 24.
10. See Reiter 1989, p. 163, and Andreas Holzmann: *Besaitete Tasteninstrumente in Tirol im 17., 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert als Elemente des kulturellen Transfers*, diss., Universität Innsbruck, 2021, pp. 73-129.
11. „beliebt, weil billig, [...] für leichte Dilettantenunterhaltung, namentlich im Freien, zweckdienlich und ergötzlich“ (Gustav Schilling, Gustav: *Encyclopädie der gesammten musikalischen Wissenschaften, oder Universal-Lexicon der Tonkunst*, Stuttgart, Köhler, 1836, vol. 4, p. 399).
12. „Nie macht die Gitarre auf Zuhörer einen wirklich Empfindungen erregenderen Eindruck als in der Nacht, besonders wenn diese finster und dadurch der Spieler beinahe unsichtbar ist. Damals greifen ihre melancholisch sanften Töne weit in die Nacht hin, und selten widersteht Jemand den hinreissenden, sanft klagenden Tönen derselben, die auf den noch so entfernt Wandelnden eine dem Magnete ähnliche Anziehungskraft selbst bei mittelmäßiger Behandlung äußern.“ (August Swoboda: *Gitarren-*
- Schule für Damen*, Vienna, self published 1826).
13. The Wandervogelbewegung, founded 1896 in Berlin-Steglitz, was a predominantly middle-class youth movement which defined itself as opposed to materialism and inexorable industrialisation. It was devoted to the ideals of the romantic era in Germany, as well as nature and progressive education. Young people gathered outdoors in great numbers, singing songs they accompanied on guitars. The movement was musically characterised by its attachment to folk songs and the rediscovery of the ancient art of lute-playing (translated from Stefan Hackl, *Die Gitarre in Österreich*, p. 96).
14. See Walter Meixner: „The Tyrolese Minstrels - Made in USA 1831-1833. Konzertleben und Repertoireveränderungen bei den Tiroler Nationalsängern in Amerika“. In: *Jahrbuch des Österreichischen Volksliedwerkes*, vol. 37/38 (1987/88), pp. 191-200.
15. David Bradford: „Yodeling Mountaineers: The Alpine Roots of the American Guitar“. <http://www.19thcenturyguitar.com>, accessed 23.1.2009.
16. See Franz Gratl: „Zum Repertoire der Rainer-Sänger in Russland (1858-1868)“. In: „Wir Tiroler sind lustig“ – *Die Rolle der Volksmusik für den Tourismus*. Catalog of the exhibition (ed. by Sonja Ortner), Innsbruck, Tiroler Landesmuseen, 2022, pp. 11-34.
17. See Reiter 1989, pp. 162-168.
18. See Erik Pierre Hofmann, Pascal Mougin and Stefan Hackl, *Staufer & Co. - The Viennese Guitar of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Germolles sur-Grosne: Les Éditions des Robins, 2012, pp. 52-60.
19. See Jadran Jeić: *Franz Fink (1790-1872) - A Disciple of Johann Georg Staufer and the First Professional Stringed Musical Instrument Maker in Zagreb*, Trambly, Les Editions des Robins, 2022, pp. 28-33 (<https://www.fine-antique-and-classical-guitars.com>).
20. See Oleg Timofeyev: *The Seven-String Guitar in Russia: Its Origins, Repertoire, and Performance Practice, 1800-1850*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023.
21. See Lois Köll: *Der Gitarrist Jakob Ortner. Zum 75. Geburtstag am 11. Juli 1954. Zur Geschichte der Gitarristik in Österreich, sonderlich in Tirol*, Innsbruck, 1954 (typoscript, Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum Innsbruck).
22. See the photo of Alois Götz and Jakob Ortner in Hofmann/Mougin/Hackl 2012, p. 299.
23. Silvia Albrich-Warger: *Die Engel-Familie. Musikanten aus Reutte in Tirol erobern die Welt*, Innsbruck, Haymon, 1998.
24. Sonja Ortner (ed.): „Wir Tiroler sind lustig“ – *Die Rolle der Volksmusik für den Tourismus*, exhibition catalogue, Innsbruck, Tiroler Landesmuseen, 2022.
25. Erik Pierre Hofmann and Stefan Hackl: *The Renewed Guitar - The Instrument's Evolution Seen Through Period Pictures 1775-1925*, Trambly, Les Éditions des Robins, 2021.



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