Zither News Letter OF U.S.A.

Winter 1988



ZUBIN MEHTA

JANET STESSL

Twice Told

TALES OF VIENNA WOODS

Two major orchestras of the United States featured zither solos in renditions of the Strauss waltz, "Tale of Vienna Woods" in New Years Eve concerts this year.

The New York Philharmonic, under the direction of Zubin Mehta featured Janet Stessl on zither in four concerts, December 29, 30, 31, and January 2.

The New Years Eve concert was broadcast on national public television, "Live from Lincoln Center".

The Philadelphia Orchestra also featured the zither solos in the waltz with Kurt von Eckroth of Oconomowoc, Wisconsin performing on New Years Eve under the direction of William Smith, Assistant Conductor in the Academy of Music.

Kurt said, "It's such a thrill to be downstage!" and Janet can only say, "Amen!" to that remark. The difference between a large symphonic orchestra and the soft, delicate zither is one of the most startling contrasts possible. Those of us who have performed these solos feel the awe of the impact perhaps more than anyone else. We feel a sense of excitement everytime we hear the flute cadenza preceding the first solo, or the thunderous conclusion of the coda shortly before the second solo which closes the piece.

Unfortunately this waltz is performed too often without the zither solos or else they are performed by other instruments: violins, harps, cellos. They are not too difficult to play, but the key factor seems to be the "fortitude" it takes to get up on a concert stage and perform them. We zither players are not accustomed to that environment - being more comcontinued on page 7

editorial page editorial page editorial page editorial

This is the fourth issue of the Zither Newsletter of USA. Being a quarterly publication, this means that subscriptions are due and payable for the next issue, Spring, 1988. Some of you may have paid your subscription late in 1987, but we believe you have all received all four issues for the \$8.00 subscription rate. If not, just let us know and we'll send you the back issues so you are up to date.

For the sake of office efficiency, we would like to keep the subscriptions on an annual billing basis, with renewal always in the Spring of the year.

Some of you have paid your 1988 renewal subscriptions already, and we are delighted at your vote of confidence that your payment relayed to us. Special thanks to you!

There are others . . .unfortunately, we have had to drop from the mailing list for lack of payment. Many of the names we dropped are known zither players, and we are disappointed that they didn't see fit to subscribe, even after a reminder. If any of these people are acquaintances of yours, please ask them if they would reconsider and subscribe.

Please use the subscription form on the last page of the newsletter, and renew now. We'd also be happy if you'd send along names of potential subscribers and we'll send them a sample copy of the Newsletter.

The Zither Newsletter of the USA is published and edited by Janet Stessl as a service and information link for zitrher players in the United State of America and Canada. Your comments, articles, listing of events, classified ads are welcome. Subscription rate is \$8.00 domestic and \$12.50 foreign. Advertising rates: business card \$10, 1/8 page \$15, 1/4 page \$25, four issue discounts available. Newsletter is published quarterly on or about February 1, May 1, August 1 and November 1. Copy requested six weeks prior to publishing. 6173 N. McClellan Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60646, USA Tel. 312-631-2854



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THE TEACHER'S TABLE

BY JANET STESSL

Article originally written for FIGA

ZITHER players are often asked, "What kind of music do you play on that instrument?" and it is not a strange question. Many people have a recollection of a simplified zither type instrument which used various notation methods. The autoharp with its chord buttons comes to mind, as do several other varieties of instruments of the zither genre which utilized slip-under-the-strings types of music sheets with letters, numbers, notes and all manner of symbols for "easy playing." On the wall of our family room we have a "chord zither" which has notes, letter identification and treble clefs printed under each string.

At a recent seminar at the Bavarian Music Academy in Marktoberdorf, West Germany we heard Frau Lilli Grünwald-Brandlmeier pose the question, "What is zither music?" After nearly a lifetime of teaching and playing the zither, she defined it as three voice music - melody, accompaniment and bass: the melody is usually, but not always, played on the fretboard in one, two, or three voice harmony, the middle range accompaniment played on the closer open harp-like strings and the bass line played on the farther, lower range strings. Even within this definition we have some differences which are interesting to examine. When a person wants to know what zither music looks like he probably wants to know if it looks like piano music, double staff, violin music, single staff, accordion music, tablature or what else. Zither players are faced with several variations, and we'll try to demonstrate some of the many faces of zither music.

For example, Fig. 1 is taken from the A. Darr Method for Zither published by Carl Fischer, Inc. in the United States in 1888 in an English and German version which was a revision of an earlier (1867) method in German. In zither nomenclature this is a treble clef school because the lower staff where ordinarily you would have a bass clef sign you have notes written in treble clef. They are actually an octave higher than the note heard when you pluck the indicated string. The Darr method and several others have been used extensively in teaching zither, here and in Europe. The Darr school is for all practical purposes the only English school available in the United States. You can

still buy the 1950 revision which Carl Fischer reissued in 1950 just in time for "The Third Man."

These treble clef schools are usually associated with the "bass-chord" type of accompaniment pattern, as you see here beginning of the Darr lessons with G and D chords. The melody lines become more elaborate, and minor chords are introduced. Some of our most beloved zither pieces are written in treble clef notation. All of Georg Freundorfer's compositions, for example, are written in treble clef.

Figure 1



Figure 2

Die singende Zither

Marsch



The Singing Zither is one of our mainstays of zither repertoire. In Fig. 2 you see the introduction as published by Max Hieber Music Publisher of Munich in 1956. They have indicated the treble clef (lower) will sound an octave lower when played by placing an 8 under that clef sign, but this usually does not appear. Incidentally, Freundorfer did not read music and all his compositions were set to paper by friends and transcribers.

A frequent variation of the bass-chord rhythm pattern is the broken chords which follow the same pattern of the chords, but are plucked individually instead of simultaneously and plucked in the sequence in which they occur on the zither. Fig. 3 is from Book 3 of the Albrecht Zither School, another respected treble clef school. The example incorporates both broken chords and chords.

Now, to make matters more unsimple, there has always been, in the zither world, music utilizing treble and bass clef which resembles piano music. This development might be associated with "classical" zither music, but I wouldn't want to be held to that statement, even though historical evidence seems to indicate a case for it. We find treble/bass staffs in the music written by Josef Haustein in Vienna in the 1870s. He was a classically educated bass violin player who also composed an impressive amount of zither music pedagogically organized.

In the early part of the 20th century Richard Grünwald (Lilli Grünwald Brandlemeier's father) developed his zither instruction method in treble/bass clef. Fig. 4 is an early exercise from his method where both hands are combined and might correspond to the Darr method illustrated in Fig. 1.





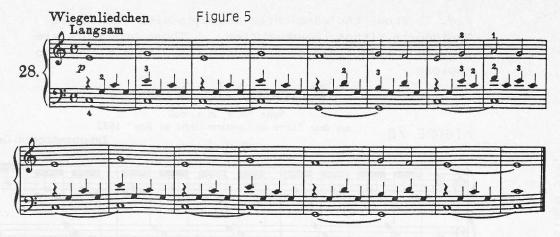
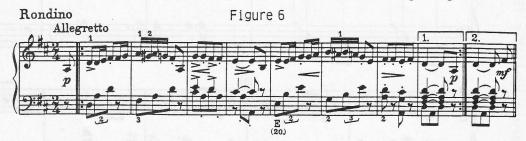


Fig. 5 is Schneider's exercise #28, just a little beyond combining both hands, and we clearly see the three voice music which Frau Brandlmeier referred to: the melody is written on the treble clef staff and played on the fretboard of the zither by pressing the proper fret with the left hand and striking the correct string with the thumb pick on the right hand. In the bass clef line we see the other two voices, bass whole notes being plucked in the open strings with the fourth finger, and the accompaniment quarter notes in the middle range being plucked by the second and third fingers right hand.



Before too long Schneider's school has the student playing nice little pieces as in Fig. 6 with combinations of chords and single string work — which resembles piano music.

Recent innovations in the zither world, as it struggles to express its art, have been transcriptions of baroque and renaissance music for the zither. It is temp-

ting to think of our zither an an ancient instrument, but it is not old. It is a young instrument as these things are measured, having developed from a simple diatonic alpine folk instrument in the 1820s to the 41 string chromatic instrument of today in 1860s. Hence, there is no music composed for zither earlier then the 1830s of which we have verified records. However,

since earlier instruments were all various manner of plucked instruments, zither scholars have discovered that much of this body of music transcribes well for the zither.

A recent publication of the Suite No. 1 in A Minor by Robert de Visée from his Book of Guitar 1682 was transcribed by Georg Glasl, a young classical zither player in West Germany, published by Josef Preissler Music Publisher of Munich. The work was written for baroque guitar which had a different tuning pattern than modern guitar, and it also had a basso continuo part. Fig. 7a shows the original tablature for baroque guitar, and then the modern guitar transcription.



Fig. 7b shows the same three measures with the entire Prelude in zither transcription. These endeavors are proving a rich field of new music for zither players to explore.

Robert de Visée



* Die in eckigen Klammern stehenden Noten sind gegenüber dem Original eine Oktave tiefer gesetzt, siehe Vorwort.

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J. STRAUSS, JR. "Mein Herr Marquis" from "Die Fledermaus"

LEHAR "Vilia" from "The Merry Widow"

J. STRAUSS, JR. Waltz, "Tales from the Vienna Woods"

JANET STESSL, Zither

*Recorded by the New York Philharmonic and currently available

"Tales of Vienna Woods (continued from page 1)

fortable in cozier settings - house music, small ensembles, little cafes, etc. Nevertheless, this is a nice opportunity we have to present our instrument to entirely new audiences. If you have a chance to perform these solos with a local orchestra - high school, community, whatever - please take it. It's good training in case a "big chance" comes along, and you, too, will enjoy the thrill.

Janet Stessl would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the many letters, telephone calls, and even flowers sent anonymously! It was a memorable experience and we're happy so many of you shared it with us.

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Zithermusiktage'88

Zither Music Days '88, the quadrennial meeting of the German Zither Society (DZB) will be held in Augsburg West Germany Friday, October 28 to Monday, October 31, 1988. The Society cordially invites all active and passive friends of zither to join them at this important zither event.

Events scheduled include a Youth Concert, Chamber Music Matinee, Cetra Nova (new music for zithers) a Fest Concert with international participants, Breakfast with a Zither Builder. The gathering will be followed by a Zither Seminar beginning on the evening of Monday, October 31 til afternoon of November 2.

The München-Passing Zither Orchestra, Musical Directors Toni Gösswein and Robert Popp, will hold a concert on Tuesday, October 25 in Munich. You may want to expand your travel plans to include this fine orchestra's concert.

Additional information on Zither Music Days '88 registration, room accommodations, and participation in concerts available from Zither Newsletter in USA or contact Michael Brandlmeier, DZB Landes-verband Bayern-Süs, Ysenburgstrasse 9/0, 8000 Munich 19, West Germany. Tel. 089/168 88 46 and 16 72 70.



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You are c ordially invited to attend concert given by the Chicago Zither quartett on Sunday, March 6, 1988.

REGISTRATION FOR FIGA CONVENTION

BALTIMORE, MD. JULY 6 - 10, 1988

Now is the time to register for the Fretted Instrument Guild of America national convention to be held at the Inner Harbor Holiday Inn, Baltimore, Maryland, July 6 - 10, 1988. All zither players are invited to attend

as a schedule of workshops and performances is being developed.

Johannes Popp, Lothar Lägel and Lilli Grünwald-Brandlmeier are coming from West Germany to perform and conduct workshops. This is a rare opportunity to join with other zither players in North America for zither playing pleasure, getting to know each other better, and preserve and perpetuate zither music.



Lothar Lägel

Johannes Popp

FIGA convention registration fee is \$15 for members and \$21 for non members which is a very reasonable fee considering all the workshops and concerts are free. Special hotel rates for FIGA convention only are \$50/single and \$55/double - also a very reasonable rate. The convention schedule includes banjo and mandolin en masse orchestras, and we would like to have enough zithers to also have an en masse zither orchestra - rehearsals to be at the convention. If you attend, then we'll be able to do that.

Write or call for convention and hotel registration forms and information packet which includes convention schedule, airline and car rental discounts, special excursions (boat cruise, Washington DC tour): Zither Newsletter of USA, Janet Stessl, Editor, 6173 N. McClellan Ave., Chicago, IL. 60646 Tel. 312-631-2854.

NOTES HEARD HERE AND THERE

Bill Stykemian, Trudy Kahn and Bill Pagels played at the Lucas County Public Library in Toledo, Ohio for the Christmas Concert series. They played Ein Tag in Innsbruck, Gemütlich im Schwung, Deutschmeister Regiments Marsch, Wedding of the Winds, Ein Hoch der Zither Verein March, Alpenstimmung aus Oesterreicht, Wien Bleibt Wien, Die Untersberger, Münchener Hetz und GAudi, Mit Chic und Schneid, Cafe Mozart, Tiroler Holzhackerbuam, Landjäger Marsch, Tenbusch March. Bill Stykemian also played at the Historical Society Museum in Maumee, Ohio on December 13. Toni Noichl played at the Texas State Fair in Dallas last October, and with the Stratton Mountain Boys in Captiva, Florida and then 5 days at the New Braunfels, Texas Wurstfest. Around New Years Toni was playing at the Cafe Mozart in Stowe, Vermont. his Hungarian boss, Julius Tarlos, is a good cook. And on the other side of the country, in another Cafe Mozart, Fritz Tatzer plays Friday nights at 31952 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, California, just one minute off the San Diego Freeway. Fritz is from Salzburg, and he features his original Tyrolean and Bavarian music with zither and guitar. Jack Bourdess took his Die Mädchen group of school girls to Des Moines, Iowa to play for a State School Superintendents meeting. They had zither, violin, harp and string John Roeder played for the Germania Singing Society in Columbus, Ohio on November 15. Leonard Zapf with son Lenny Zapf on string bass have played several occasions the last few months: a wedding at the German-Hungarian Club, 56th Anniversary Banquet at Vereinigung Erzgebirge and their Lichtl Abend (Christmas program), and at the banquet of the Alphorn Ski Club. He reports that Sofian Zapf, although still not able to speak, is feeling slightly better. They are hoping for a miracle and we do too. We're happy that Leonard is able to continue the zither business at Zapf's Music Store in their good tradition.

Jay Andre, disc jockey at classical music station WNIB IN Chicago played two selections from the Telemann Consort record album flauto ... e cetra. In case you've forgotten, the Telemann Consort is the Popp/Lägel Zither Trio of Munich combined with two recorder players. Andre played Trio-Sonata in A Minor by Telemann and Serenade No. IV kv 439 in C by Mozart. He also gave the Zither Newsletter a nice mention, but you had to be up early in the morning on December 10 to hear all this. He seemed genuinely interested in having classical zither music to play on the air. What's happening with your local radio stations? Is zither music, classical, folk or any kind getting any air time?

FRANZ SCHWARZER ZITHER COMPANY PILGRIMAGE

Zither players and friends came from three directions, converging on Washington, Missouri. Eleven of us met on the weekend of November 21 - 22 to touch a bit of American zither history - the Franz Schwarzer Zither Company.

Jack Bourdess of Omaha, Nebraska, and Art and Isabel Anderson, Chicago, were already at the beautiful Schwegmann House Bed and Breakfast Inn when Lou and Janet Stessl arrived from Chicago. We had a "jam session" that evening, Jack proudly exhibiting his newly restrung Schwarzer Perfecta zither. The next morning Phil and Charlotte Geib arrived from Chicago, driving with Carl and Erna Kandlbinder, and also Gus and Anne Canelos from nearby Truxton, Missouri.

Our first stop on Saturday afternoon was the Washington Public Library where we were greeted by the gracious Carolyn Witt. Carolyn had helped us with many of the tour arrangements so it was nice to meet her in person and find she was just as nice as she sounded on the telephone.

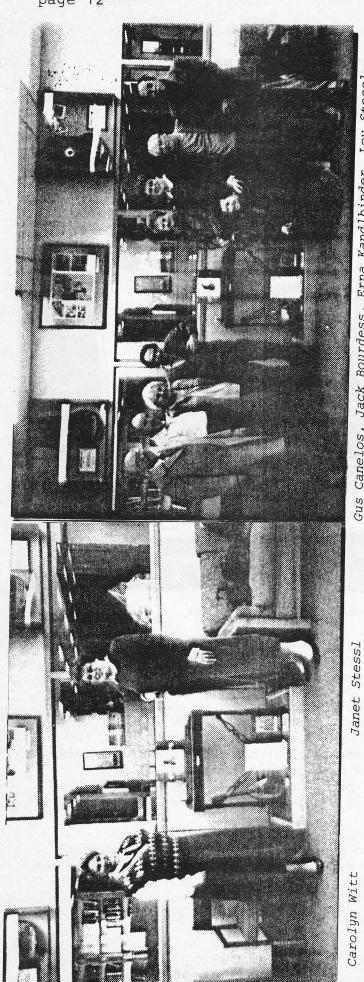
The library has three zithers on display: a table zither, a lady's style zither (slightly smaller) and an Arion No. 60 along with related papers and photographs.



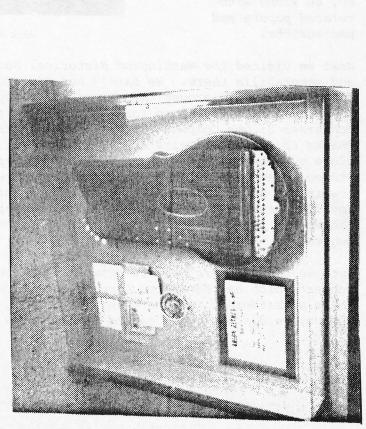
Jack Bourdess and Schwarzer Perfecta

Next we visited the Washington Historical Society Museum to see the Schwarzer zithers and memorabilia there. We barely had time to squeeze in some time for antiquing and other sightseeing around the charming Washington and surrounding area along the wide Missouri. Late afternoon found us visiting the Schwarzer home, also the site of the Schwarzer Zither Company factory (now demolished) which had stood on the same grounds. Thanks to the kind invitation of the current owners, the Diamond family, we felt very close to Schwarzer as we trod in his footsteps. The original portion (two room, two storey) frame home whichFranz Schwarzer rented and then purchased are clearly visible, now in use as kitchen an family room. The brick home added to the original is a lovely Victorian home complete with lyre shaped porch ballustrades from the table zither leg pattern. It's nice to see the home in the hands of preservation sensitive owners.

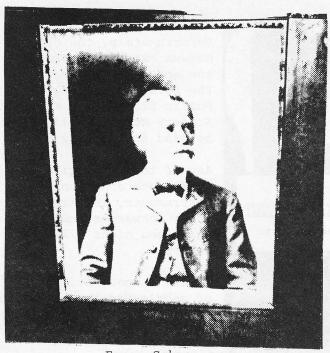
But, we had to hurry back to Schwegmann House to practice our music for the impromptu concert which had developed, and in the process we enjoyed George Bocklage's hospitality while we zithered. At the evening musicale, held at the Washington Historical Society Museum, we discovered a packed house of new zither friends. We were thrilled at our



Gus Canelos, Jack Bourdess, Erna Kandlbinder, Lou Stessl Anne Canelos, Janet Stessl, Carl Kandlbinder, Phil Geib, kneeling, Charlotte Geib



Carolyn Witt Washington Public Library



Franz Schwarzer

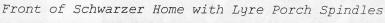
reception. In spite of their local history, many had never heard zithers played. We were glad for the chance to play for them. We accepted their invitation to return for more concerts.

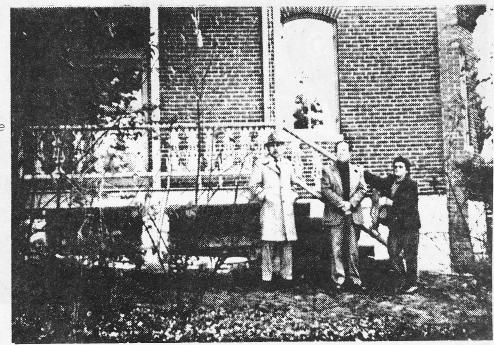
Sunday morning we drove to Jefferson City to see the Schwarzer zither exhibit in the Capital Museum. There we saw the Gold Medal of the 1873 Vienna Exhibition that had been awared to Schwarzer Zither Company. We could scarcely we were actually looking at it, having read of it playing such a prominent role in ther company's development.

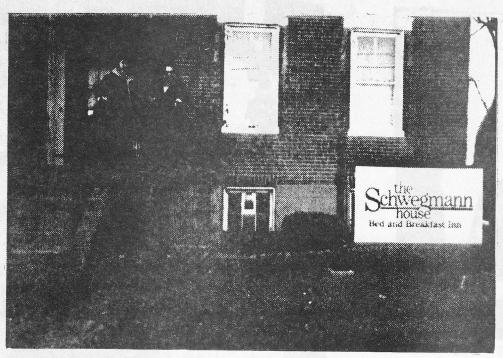
Also at the Capital Museum, were Schwarzer's "home-made" early zither, his personal zither, and one of the more elaborately decorated zithers, for which the company became famous. Two staff members were good enough to meet us to dialogue the exhibit for us, and to show us some of their material not on display, such as one of Schwarzer's composition books.



Karen Diamond







Jack Bourdess and Lou Stessl at Schwegmann House

Unfortunately, the Capital Museum exhibit closed at the end of the year, but the folks at Washington Public Library and Historical Society Museum would always be glad to have you visit.

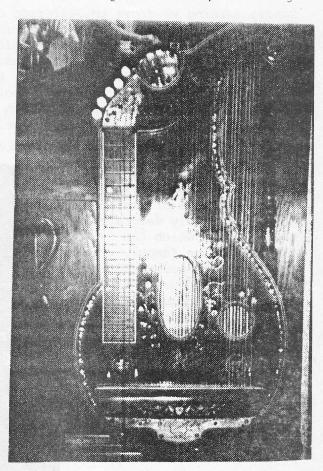
Any of these locations would appreciate donations of instruments, letters, or other Schwarzer memorabilia which you might like to donate.

It was a wonderful weekend of middle Missouri hospitality and zither history. We hope the link strengthens and grows in the coming years.



Chicago Zither Quartett on Staircase of Schwegmann House

Elaborately Decorated Zither State Capital Museum, Jeff City



OUR READERS WRITE

....In Vienna I did not get to see Liesl and Karl Jancik because they were on tour in Japan; but I made several new zither contacts: Anna and Franz Loibl and the members of the excellent small zither club "Harmonie". The Loibls are a charming couple with a deep love for the zither and for all music. Herr Loibl is the zither referent for VAMÖ, an organization to further playing among the workers of Austria; he gives final instruction and training for those who wish to become accredited as zither teachers in Vienna; and he is a central reference point for zither notes in Austria. They took me to a meeting of the "Harmonie" club and asked Sieglinde Köberl to come early so that we could play some of my two part arrangements together, which, as you can well imagine, I enjoyed very much. After the meeting we went to a neighborhood inn and indulged cozily in good conversation and various beverages.

Other zither news from my trip includes playing in several other places. We go every year for a week or more to a small inn in the Black Forest, and I play there in the Stube or in the garden. There is a zither club in Maulburg. We spent two weeks in the South Tirol at another family-run inn between two towns in the mountains way up over Bozen(Bolzano). We spent an afternoon and an evening in their Stube playing, occasionally humming along, recording, nibbling, and having a wonderful time. Another guest, a lady from Germany, played the recorder, and we enjoyed playing classical and folk music together.

Jane Curtis

Most of what I play on the instrument might be considered a little unusual. I was a jazz horn player when I was young and thus my zither playing reflects my early musical training. I am self-taught on the instrument and probably use some techniques which are not entirely orthodox. Most of my arrangements are based on the fact that on an instrument rich in overtones like the zither, you only need three notes in context to suggest any chord. Also, the tonal difference between the fingerboard and other strings helps with pleasing voicings of fairly dissonant chords. I usually try to perform accoustically, but when I play with a band I have a Wacek pickup for my zither.

Ken Bloom

We have finished the concert tour of the Zither Solo-Quartett Vienna. The 1,300 seats for the two concerts were completely sold out, and many people were sorry they could not get tickets. The public has great interest in Viennese music as many records of the Vienna Philharmonic were sold, in which Karl Jancik was zither soloist for 30 years.

Japan Viscountess Toshiko von Naito

The most beautiful Schwarzer (zither) that I have ever seen was one of those owned by Gordon Looney. It was a late one, probably manufactured in the thirties, of the Perfecta style and very elaborate. It had an ivory pillar and an ivory scroll, plus gobs of inlay work on the top. It had gold inlay position dots on the fingerboard and a beautiful tuning machine also probably gold plated. Unfortunately it had spent the last years of its existence in a shadow box decoration on the wall of a home. It probably went to the British West Indies with them when they went there. I have not heard about or from them for a long time.

Bob Stykemain

Nederlandse Cither Bond



Programma Muzikale Voordracht t.g.v. 15-jarig bestaan Nederlandse Cither Bond Zaterdag 17 oktober 1987

1. Het trio Schut bestaande uit Lidy Schut-hackbrett Herman Schut-cither en Ben Smeenk-gitaar

a. Schlafata

T.Reiser

b. Durnholzer Ländler

K.Gleixner

0 - 0

2. Onze gastspelers -uit eigen land Annemarie Jansen-cither Michel van Veldhoven-cither/bascither Anne van der Meer-cither

a. Amalien-Polka

Hertog Max

- b. Selectie uit Barokmuziek
- c. Rossignol uit Luitboek Jane Pickering

arr: R.Meyer-Thibaut

d. Intrada uit Neurenberger Luitboek

arr: R.Meyer-Thibaut

e. Deccapedia

F.Golden

f. Just a simple love song

L. van Rooyen arr: F.Golden

3. Laurent van Beek-cither

Twee Rondino's uit op. 59

J. Haustein

4. Onze Duitse gastspelers Hans Krasser-cither 1 Karlheinz Wolski-cither 2 Willibald Ohrndorf-gitaar August Lammert-bandoneon en Peter Kremer-bas

a. Andachts-Menuett M. Schwab b. Oberach-Ländler G. Sauter

c. Hagrain-Boarischer M. Schwah d. Halbwalzer G. Sauter

0 - 0

e. Hafenegger-Polka

G. Sauter

5. Willy Meder-cither en Piet van Buul-cither

Sonate in Bes gr. t.

Ign.Plevel

arr: G.Sauter

PAUZEE

6. Voor de 2e maal onze Nederlandse gasten

a. Hansen-Ländler

W.Scheck

b. Menuet

J. Haydn

arr: W.Schäffer c. Walzer Rondo uit de sonatine in a kl.t.

W.Schäffer

d. Courante uit Suite in a kl.t. S.L.Weiss

arr: P.Suitner

e. Zuid Afrikaanse verrassing

F.Golden

f.Midnight Rambler

R.Knabl

arr: B. Hilbich

7. Trio Schut aangevuld met Laurent van Beek

a. Lustige Hütten-Polka L.Briechle

b. Boarischer K.II.Schickhaus

Y.Gleixner c. Wildschützen-Polka

8. Ineke de Bruyn-cither en Piet van Buul-cither

a. Menuet (Werk 62 nr 1) R.Grünwald

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