
THE ZITHERPLAYER

A Journal devoted to the interest of Zither playing.

Vol 1, No. 2

David Kyger and Heidi Lugmayer, Eds.

March, 2015

Introduction

A research interest of mine for the past several years has been an early zither player who lived in Omaha, Nebraska. Henry Schaber was born in Germany, immigrated to the US, and became one of those early pillars of the American zither community. Today, the reader is likely to conjure up a name or two of a person who has had such an influence in promoting the zither, whether mentor, advocate or famous musician.

In Omaha, Henry Schaber formed zither clubs, taught zither at a conservatory, and composed music for the instrument. Franz Schwarzer, Missouri's famous zither maker, had agents in various cities to sell his zithers. Theodor Lohr was Schwarzer's agent in New York. Henry was Schwarzer's man in Omaha. An early postcard of Henry shows him standing in front of a multitude of zither models offered by the Franz Schwarzer Company.

One endeavor of mine has been to locate his missing works, of which only one, the "Lottie Polka" has been recovered. Henry's descendants claim that he composed a song for each of his eight children, so it seems there are others to be found. An early sheet music cover, all that remains of a composition book, provides the names of several titles: "Marguerite," "Eugenie Waltz," "Henrietta Waltz," "Military March" and the "Harmonie



Zither Club March. It is hoped these have not been completely lost.

Perhaps one day Henry's missing zither compositions will turn up, possibly from an old box of sheet music held in storage for years. I have several photographs of him, and others of the zither clubs that he directed. One feature that drew my interest was a piece of jewelry that he was often shown wearing in these early photographs. The outline of a zither can be made out, and it appears to dangle from a ribbon. Was it a simple ornament, an award perhaps? These questions came to mind but never in my dreams did I imagine, after 100 years, that the answer to this question would be revealed.

Out of the blue, as sometimes happens, I received an email from one of Henry's descendants. To my amazement, the family was hoping to place one of his zither medals and, learning of my

interest in him, asked if I would be interested. A few emails were exchanged, in which I shared a



HENRY J. SCHABER.

*JAN 29 1915
eur 216*

*sent Jan 27/15 - Omaha Neb.
@ 30 dec. set + 3¢ post total .63¢
January 25/15.
Mr. Schwarzer. part bill
Yours received in good condition.
Please send me two (2) sets of # 812
Quebler zither feet by return mail
will settle on or before the 10th Feb.
Respectfully, Yours Henry J. Schaber.*

picture postcard of him holding a zither on his lap. A zither medal can be seen affixed to his lapel.

A couple of months passed until the arrival of a small package from Hawaii. The ancient zither medal worn by Henry had finally arrived. I held it in my hand, thinking how improbable it was to have

this opportunity, and read the inscription, “From Apollo Zither Club To Henry J. Schaber, Leader, 1891.” A curiosity finally answered. His missing works, for the moment, are left to the imagination.

From the Forum

YouTube Zither Music - There are a quite a number of zither videos on YouTube to enjoy, and this sometimes leads to a request for help in identifying a song. When the answer can be found, this is zither networking at its finest. Joseph Maurer helped to identify a piece from the collection of Karl Horak titled “Andante.” This work, published in “Spielmusik um 1800,” can be purchased from the [Volksmusikarchiv des Bezirks Oberbayern](#). Zither players will certainly want to explore this archive for other gems from the past.

A Zither Backpack - In the unending pursuit of making the concert zither and its requisite accessories more portable, some forum members shared photos and suggestions of how they tote



Zither in an Altieri instrument bag

their zithers. Kenneth Paul Schoenfeld has found a useful solution in a “zither backpack” made by Altieri Instrument Bags of Colorado. It is reported

to be practical but that a belt strap would have been helpful for balance.



Kenneth Paul wearing a zither backpack

A Zither Melody Conquers the World -

Have you ever searched in vain for that hard to find work by Anton Karas? If so, you will greatly appreciate “Eine Zithermelodie Erobert Die Welt” (A Zither Melody Conquers the World) by Cornelia Mayer and Manfred Hochmeister. Now, at last, the entire film score for "The Third Man" is available in a single resource. Visit Cornelia Mayer's web site, Zither in the City, for more details regarding the book. Those



interested in obtaining a copy should write to Manfred Hochmeister at m.hochmeister@chello.at.

Moving Strings

Events

German Society of Pennsylvania - On December 6th, Philadelphia Zither Ensemble members, Kurt Maute, John Snyder, Marie Skowronek, and David Kyger provided a program of zither music for the German Society of Pennsylvania's Christkindlmarkt in Philadelphia.

KWQC TV - Anne Prinz and Jeff Palenik appeared on KWQC TV, NBC's affiliate in the Quad Cities. During the interview, Jeff performed "Silent Night" for the television audience. Jeff also performed as a guest artist with the Davenport Zither Ensemble for their Christmas concert on December 7th.

Zion Church, Baltimore - On December 21st, Heidi Lugmayer, Karlheinz Skowronek, Marie Skowronek, John Snyder and David Kyger performed for a Weihnachtssingen program at historic Zion Church of the City of Baltimore. The program included several instrumentals, and also songs with zither accompaniment.

Germany Under Glass Festival - On March 7th, Kurt von Eckroth performed at the Milwaukee Park Horticultural Conservatory for this event of the German-American Societies of Milwaukee.

An Afternoon of Zither Music - On March 14th, Heidi Lugmayer and David Kyger provided a program of duets and solos at the Greenspring Retirement Community's Village Theater in Springfield, Virginia.

Meetups

Philadelphia Zither Ensemble - The Philadelphia Zither Ensemble is meeting monthly for music and coffee at the Vereinigung Erzgebirge in Warminster, Pennsylvania. Those interested in

attending may contact Kurt Maute at mautekw@yahoo.com for more information.

“Zither Sunday” Meetings - Lunch, discussions, lessons and demonstrations have been maintaining a consistent monthly occurrence in Wales, Wisconsin. All interested zither players are welcome to attend. Contact Kurt von Eckroth at keckroth@hotmail.com for information.

Springfield, Virginia - Jane Curtis hosts a monthly play day at the Greenspring Retirement Community’s Town Center Music Room. Contact Jane Curtis at zitherlady@yahoo.com for the current schedule.

Davenport, Iowa - The Davenport Zither Ensemble meets most every Saturday mornings to practice zither music from 10:00am - 11:30am at the German American Heritage Center, located at 712 W. 2nd Street, Davenport, IA 52802. All are welcome to come visit. Contact Anne Prinz at AtoZthatisme@aol.com for more information.

The Californian Zither Revival Quartet - The group is meeting once a quarter, or as often as they’re able to organize a mutually agreed upon date, since the four zitherists live in four different counties in Southern and Central California. Zitherists visiting the West Coast should contact Kenneth Paul Schoenfeld: kennethpauls@mc.com.

Upcoming Events

Sterling Zither Seminar - Those zitherists who are willing to travel to Springfield, Virginia will be looking forward eagerly to the 45th Sterling Zither Seminar, organized and led by Jane Curtis. The seminar will be held from April 10-11, 2015. All interested attendees may contact Jane Curtis at zitherlady@yahoo.com.

DZE Spring Concert - The Davenport Zither Ensemble will be having their spring concert on Sunday, May 3, 2015, at 2:00pm at the German

American Heritage Center. For more information, contact Anne Prinz at AtoZthatisme@aol.com.

A Zither saves New Year’s Eve

by Dr. William Kolb

Imagine your family owns a small hotel in the Austrian Alps and you have made all the preparations for a wonderful New Year’s Eve celebration. You have worked with the restaurant chef and have created a terrific six course menu, designed to delight even the most discriminating palate, together with wines selected from various vineyards in Germany and Austria for accompaniment. You have also contracted with two musicians to provide authentic Alpine folk music. You have advertised the event and are pleased that your restaurant will be almost full to capacity.

Now imagine it is New Year’s Eve and everything is going as planned. The restaurant is decorated, food is prepared, tables have been set. Guests have arrived and the first course is served, together with a 2013 Grüner Veltliner. Everyone seems to be having a good time. The food and wine are terrific. You hear someone say, “I’m surprised that the folk group hasn’t arrived yet. I wonder what time they start.” You check your watch and agree with what you heard. Hmmm, you too wonder what time the group will start.

The second course is served and you notice that the folk group is still nowhere to be seen. You start to hear more comments about the lack of music, followed quickly by “But the food is extraordinary!”. You start to wonder if the snow storms of the last several days may have caused issues for the musicians.

When the third course arrives and there is still no sign of any musical group, you go to the maître

d' and ask what happened to the music. He explains that they simply have no idea what happened. They have not heard from the group and no one can reach them on the telephone, they simply do not know. You explain that you are a zither player and that you just happen to have your zither in your room upstairs. You ask if the maître d' thinks it would help if you played for the guests.

It is difficult to convey the look of gratitude and relief at this suggestion but the reaction was simply, "Oh, my God, a gift from heaven! Yes, please. What do you need?" You tell him, "Just a clear table and a chair. I'll get my zither."

Five minutes later you are back in the restaurant playing, "An der Nordseeküste", "La Paloma", "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White", and you hear someone call out, "Can you play "Tief in dem Böhmerwald"?", which of course you are happy to do. And so this New Year's Eve celebration was something a bit different, the authentic Austrian folk group was not there, but an authentic alpine zither made an appearance. The bus group from Kiel enjoyed being able to make musical requests and after the excellent wine selections were quite happy in making the evening a sing-a-long.

For me, one of the highlights of the evening was when I was playing "White Roses from Athens". The maître d' came over to where I was playing, started to sing along with me (what a wonderful voice) and then started to dance with the wife of the tour leader. This really conveyed the sense of real fun that this evening with the zither created.

For me, this New Year's Eve allowed me to start 2015 doing what I love to do, play the zither and share the wonderful sound of this great instrument to people who are familiar with it, and to several people who had never heard it before.

I need to thank my wonderful wife, Rosemarie, whose support and encouragement that allows me to play the zither at various, often quite interesting, places is so very welcome. I am fortunate to have the love of this extraordinary woman.

As I was able to start 2015 doing what I love while being with the person I love, I hope that you also will be able to do what you love in 2015, while you are with those you love.

Thank you to Dr. William Kolb for sharing his New Year's story. Visit him on the web at doctorzither.com.

Jaybird

by Dr. Jane Curtis

This issue's music selection *Jaybird* dates from at least as early as the 1860s and is one that Henry Schaber, in this issue's lead article, might well have known and even played. It comes from the little collection of fife tunes acquired by my grandfather when he doubled as a fifer in the Civil War. There is a fiddle version played by an old fellow on YouTube, but it's somewhat different and is played so fast that the charm is lost. My zither version should be played as fast as possible -- but without sacrificing the tune and the clarity of technique, and that will keep it from speeding faster than the soldiers could march. Zither 1 can be played as a solo or with the plinking offbeat "banjo" accompaniment provided by Zither 2 playing pizzicato. Faster or slower, it's a real toe-tapper.

The Zitherplayer is brought to you by Heidi Lugmayer and David Kyger. Contact us at thezitherplayer@zither.us to make the community aware of what's happening in your corner of the zither world. We'll be glad to hear from you!

Jaybird

A Tune from a Civil War Fifer

ZITHER 1

Arranged for 1 or 2 zithers by Jane Curtis

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Both are in the key of D major (two sharps) and 2/4 time. The melody in the upper staff begins with a quarter note D, followed by eighth notes E, F#, G, A, B, C, D. The bass line consists of quarter notes D, G, F#, E, D, C, B, A, G, F#, E, D.

The second system continues the piece. It features a triplet of eighth notes (G, A, B) in the upper staff. The bass line continues with quarter notes G, F#, E, D, C, B, A, G, F#, E, D.

The third system includes first, second, and third endings. The first ending is a quarter note G, followed by a quarter rest. The second ending is a quarter note A, followed by a quarter rest. The third ending is a quarter note B, followed by a quarter rest. The bass line continues with quarter notes G, F#, E, D, C, B, A, G, F#, E, D.

The fourth system continues the melody and bass line. The upper staff has quarter notes G, F#, E, D, C, B, A, G, F#, E, D. The bass line has quarter notes G, F#, E, D, C, B, A, G, F#, E, D.

The fifth system features first, second, and third endings. The first ending is a quarter note G, followed by a quarter rest. The second ending is a quarter note A, followed by a quarter rest. The third ending is a quarter note B, followed by a quarter rest. The bass line continues with quarter notes G, F#, E, D, C, B, A, G, F#, E, D.

The sixth system concludes the piece. It features first, second, and third endings. The first ending is a quarter note G, followed by a quarter rest. The second ending is a quarter note A, followed by a quarter rest. The third ending is a quarter note B, followed by a quarter rest. The bass line continues with quarter notes G, F#, E, D, C, B, A, G, F#, E, D.

Jaybird

A Tune from a Civil War Fifer

ZITHER 2

Arranged for 1 or 2 zithers by Jane Curtis

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 2/4 time signature. It contains a sequence of eighth notes, each accompanied by a chord. The lower staff is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, and contains whole rests for the first six measures.

The second system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melody from the first system. The lower staff contains whole rests for the first two measures, followed by a double bar line, and then whole rests for the remaining four measures.

The third system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff features a first ending bracket over measures 3 and 4, and a second ending bracket over measures 5 and 6. The lower staff contains whole rests for the first four measures, followed by a double bar line, and then whole rests for the final two measures.

The fourth system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melody. The lower staff contains whole rests for all six measures.

The fifth system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff features a first ending bracket over measures 1 and 2, and a second ending bracket over measures 3 and 4. The lower staff contains whole rests for the first two measures, followed by a double bar line, and then whole rests for the remaining four measures.

The sixth system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff features a first ending bracket over measures 1 and 2, and a second ending bracket over measures 3 and 4. The lower staff contains whole rests for the first two measures, followed by a double bar line, and then whole rests for the remaining four measures.

