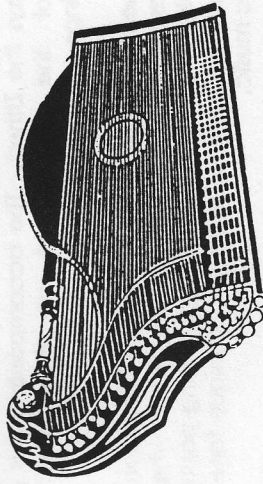


The  
German Society of Pennsylvania  
Founded in Philadelphia on December 26, 1764, for the Purpose of "Contributing to the Relief  
of Distressed Germans in Pennsylvania."  
Presents a

# ZITHER CONCERT

of

## The Philadelphia Zither Ensemble



Sunday, March 15, 1998  
at 3 p.m.

in the  
Albert and Hete Barthelmes Auditorium  
of the Society  
611 Spring Garden Street

### The Philadelphia Zither Ensemble

Since the zither originated as a folk instrument in the German speaking Alpine regions of Europe, it is to be expected that immigrants to the United States from these regions would have brought this instrument to these shores. In Philadelphia during the 20's and 30's there was a group known as the "Isartaler", consisting of two zithers (Tom Mathauser and Peter Haberl) and a contra-guitar (Sepp Gsinn) which played regularly at the Fairmount Liedertafel in Brewerytown during and after Three Act plays performed in the Bavarian dialect.

But it was not until Leonhard Zapf came to Philadelphia in 1924 from Bayreuth that Zither instruction was imparted on a regular basis to young and old. For ten cents a lesson, school children were taught fundamentals of zither playing according to the classical school of Richard Grünwald. It was Leonhard Zapf who was instrumental in organizing the Philadelphia Zither Club which sponsored the zither instruction and held zither concerts on a regular basis.

His son, Sofian, continued the traditions of his father, both as zither virtuoso and teacher. He was instrumental in organizing a zither concert at the German Society in 1985.

The catalyst for the renaissance of zither music in Philadelphia was the arrival of the Zither Trio München (Robert Popp, Hannes Popp, Lothar Lägell) who were sent here by the Federal Republic of Germany in 1983 to provide musical contributions for the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the first German settlement in America, Germantown.

After Sofian's untimely death in 1988, Zither Seminars continued to be held and in 1993 a group of zitherists decided to meet regularly and offer concerts. Musical direction was provided by another member of the Zapf family, Leonard Zapf, Sr., who is a professional instrument repair man, in addition to being a zither virtuoso. He and his son Leonard Jr., on bass, have been playing duets for many years.

This group, known as the Philadelphia Zither Ensemble, provided the music for the field Mass at which the new flag of the United German Hungarian Club was dedicated. They also played for the Franklinville Quartette Club, The Delaware Sängerbund, the Immanuel Lutheran German Language School, the Augustus Lutheran Church of Trappe and the Tabor Lutheran Church. A Quintette of the Philadelphia Zither Ensemble presented a concert at the German American Society of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Members of the Philadelphia Zither Ensemble are,

George Beichl	John Beyer	Ellen George
Dave Harton	Irmgard Heinrichs	Kurt Maute
Maria Skowronek	William Tundermann	Toni Walter
Leonard Zapf, Sr.	Leonard Zapf, Jr.	

## The Concert Zither

The music of a country gives an insight into the character of its people and often can serve as a means of identifying a geographic area. This is especially true when the music is played on an instrument that is rarely heard outside that area. The unique tones of a bagpipe immediately conjure up visions of the highlands of Scotland or the rolling hills of Ireland just as the strings of the ballalika unmistakably identify with the folk music of the Ukraine or Russia. Another instrument that is unique to one geographic area is the zither, which is native to the German-speaking regions of the Alps--Germany proper, Austria and the German-speaking part of Switzerland.

The zither, or more accurately the concert zither, is a relatively modern instrument having only reached its full development in the latter half of the nineteenth century. There were instruments called zithers that existed in the 18th century, but they bear only a minimal resemblance to the modern zither. Some trace the origin of the zither to the Greek "kithara" which was played 2,000 years ago, but such a relationship is only etymological. The same "kithara" also became "guitarra" in Spanish, that is, our modern guitar.

The concert zither is an instrument which consists of a fingerboard containing five strings. a. a. d. g. c--(the same strings found on a viola)--and thirty-six strings beyond the fingerboard which serve primarily as accompaniment. The melody is produced by the fingers of the left hand pressing down on the strings in the spaces between the frets of the fingerboard while the thumb of the right hand, which is fitted with a metal pick, strikes the string. In fact, in German you can say that a person "schlaegt die Zither" (strikes the zither), which is the same as "spielt die Zither" (plays the Zither). The accompaniment is produced by the remaining fingers of the right hand as they pluck the so-called "accompaniment" strings.

The zither is an instrument that was played when the herdsman and the herdgirls drove the cattle to pasture in the Alps. It was also played when the Alpine men and women sang their yodels, which is a type of singing popular in that region. It then found its way into the larger cities where its unique tone made it an ideal instrument for romantic music.

It was from Vienna that the first virtuoso came, Johann Petzmayer (1803-1888), who set the stage for the modern zither. He played in his father's inn and was so proficient that he was invited to play for the emperor. Before long he was invited to neighboring Bavaria where he again became the idol of the court. Here his playing affected one member of the royal family to such an extent that the man, Duke Maximilian, decided to learn the instrument himself. With Petzmayer as teacher he soon became adept enough to play duets with his teacher. This they did, not only in Bavaria, but on a tour that reached Egypt, and Asia Minor. Before long the zither became popular not only among the peasants but also among the nobility--Queen Marie of Naples, Crown Princess Alexandra of England, and princess Beatrice of Wales. Even Empress Elisabeth of Austria became adept at playing the zither. But then, of course, this is readily

understandable since she was the daughter of Duke Maximilian. Once, while playing the zither in the Alps, someone mistook her for a peasant and deposited a coin on the table as a tip. She saved this coin and often remarked that it was the only money she had ever earned.

As the zither gained in popularity, improvements were made in its construction so that by 1870 the concert zither as we know it today had reached its full development. Many of the early zither virtuosi were accomplished musicians on other instruments and had studied music theory. They also became prolific composers for the zither. For example, Josef Hausteiner (1849-1926), who had studied composition under Anton Bruckner in Vienna, composed three hundred pieces for the zither. Ferdinand Kollmanek (1871-1941) had 700 compositions to his credit.

It seems strange that the zither never retained its popularity. With its 188 tones it is more versatile than the piano with its 88 keys or the guitar with its 138 tones. But it must be admitted that it is a difficult instrument to learn. It requires the synchronization of movements which are of a different nature for each hand. Still, there have been periods in which interest in the zither has been revived. The movie, "The Third Man", which still appears on occasion as the Late Movie on TV, has as its background music the zither played by Anton Karas.

After the film was completed, Carol Reed, the director, visited a Viennese cafe where he heard zither music for the first time. He was so impressed with the music that he asked the zitherist, Anton Karas, to compose music for the film. Karas viewed the film 200 times in a projection booth. The result was the composition of several pieces including the Third Man Theme and the Cafe Mozart Waltz. These were dubbed into the film. The haunting refrains of this music stimulated a resurgence of interest in the instrument which was reflected in the sale of recordings of zither music.

A new renaissance of the zither is being experienced in Germany where young people in large numbers are finding the zither not only ideal for folk music but also for classical music that was composed for melody instruments--other than the zither. One of the leading zither orchestras is the Zitherorchester Muenchen-Pasing.

The description of an instrument which you have never heard is as unsatisfying as the description of a food you have never tasted. To really appreciate the zither you must hear it. After you have heard this music, you will agree with the Bavarian poet Franz von Cobell.

"Die Zither is' a Zauberin  
Sie hat mir g'fangen, Herz und Sinn".

"The zither plays a charmer's role  
She holds me captive heart and soul."

## Program

Grüss mir mein München ..... Alfons Bauer  
Lustige Fahrt ..... Georg Freundorfer  
Leben und Lieben..... Zither Bearbeitung Alfons Schmidseher  
Anton Stelzl

Zither Ensemble

Almrausch..... Ralph Siegel  
Cafe Mozart Waltz ..... Anton Karas

Leonard Zapf, Sr. and Leonard Zapf, Jr.  
Zither and Bass Duet

Schermfelder Walzer ..... Traditional Folk Melody  
D'Waldlerbuam ..... August Reifer  
Turmschreiber Stückl ..... Art. Karlheinz Schickhaus

Zither Ensemble

INTERMISSION

## Program

Wien bleibt Wien ..... Johannes Schrammel  
Grüsse aus dem Inntal ..... Karl Zahaberger  
Tempo der Zeit ..... Georg Freundorfer

Zither Ensemble

Übermut ..... Georg Freundorfer  
Der Weg zum Herzen ..... Georg Freundorfer

Trio, George Beichl, Leonard Zapf, Sr., Leonard Zapf, Jr.

Dinsitag ..... Wegscheider Volksmusikanten  
Edelweiss ..... Art. Mollli Makh  
Third Man Theme ..... Anton Karas

Zither Ensemble

## PROGRAM NOTES

Although zither music originated in the Alps, two urban centers provide a disproportionate number of virtuosos and composers of zither music. They are Munich and Vienna.

Grüss mir mein München Greet my Munich for Me.

Alfons Bauer, a native of Munich, composed many pieces for the zither that he had also recorded even before World War II.

Lustige Fahrt Jolly Ride

Leben und Lieben To Live and Love

Anton Stezl (1878-1942), a native of Munich, played frequently on German radio programs.

Almrausch A red alpine flower

Schermfelder Walzer A traditional folk melody

D'Waldlerbuam The boys from the forest (Bayerischer Wald and Böhmerwald)

Turmschreiber Stückl Tower Scribe Piece This piece is typical of "Hausmusik" (house music) or in Bavarian, "Stubenmusi", literally, room music.

Wien Bleibt Wien Vienna remains Vienna

Johann Schrammel (1850-1897) was the founder of the Schrammel quartet, (two violins, an accordion and a contra-guitar.) Their music, Schrammel music, is still popular in Vienna.

Grüsse aus dem Innthal - Greetings from the Inn valley

Karl Zahaberger An Austrian who visited Philadelphia in 1950 with the Austrian Student Goodwill Tour.

Übermut High Spirits

Der Weg zum Herzen The way to the heart

Dinsltag - (Dinzeitag) Annual guild holiday in Upper Bavaria, usually opening with Mass, followed by a business meeting and a dinner, but always ending with music and dancing.

Edelweiss is the white flower that grows high in the Alps. The song is from Rogers and Hammerstein's "Sound of Music."

George Freundorfer (1881-1940), a native of Munich, learned the beer brewing trade at the Löwenbräu Brewery. He taught himself to play the zither and by the time he became a teenager, he was a zither virtuoso, although he never learned to read a note. He decided to become a professional musician and played at various resorts. On the island of Sylt, North Germany, he met Bernhard Derksen, a concert pianist. They formed a duet and subsequently an orchestra. Since this music was so well received in North Germany and Berlin was a thriving metropolis, Feundorfer and his wife moved to Berlin in 1912, although he would play summer engagements in the Bavarian Alps. At this time, he started composing his own pieces, which eventually numbered over 100. Since he could not read music, Derksen would listen to Feundorfer's music and write down the notes and scores for the entire orchestra. The beauty of this music is reflected in the pieces selected by the Ensemble.