

Zither News Letter

OF U.S.A.

\$2.00

Spring, 1989

ZITHER OR STUFFED ANIMAL HEAD

by Graham Johnson

(Graham Johnson has gone to considerable trouble to find his zithers. He lives in Los Angeles and studies with King Keyes. He is also a contributor to "Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians")

This is a story of my efforts to buy a zither. My first acquaintance with the instrument was when I read the Darr method ten years ago, a minimal aid without a zither. Last spring I found a zither in good condition at a low price in an antique store. I pondered for weeks whether or not to buy it and was about to offer a trade of a stuffed animal head when someone else bought it. Two months later I patronized a swap meet where a zither was for sale. When I asked the price the seller said he was reducing the price from \$175 to \$75 for me because I was the first person that day to know that the instrument was a zither. I would have been satisfied with \$175, but who was I to question his wisdom. As I carefully inspected and explained the instrument, he lowered the price another \$5. I would have felt guilty with a lower price so I figured that it was time to pay him.

This first acquisition was just the beginning of my challenges. The first challenge took me ten years. The following challenges were quicker but labor intensive. Next I had to locate a pick. No music store in Los Angeles had a zither pick and almost none knew what it was. A co-worker was going on vacation in Switzerland, so I asked him to bring some back. He brought six picks for \$5. (con't page 2)

Zither Practice - Oh! My Head!

Okay, here we go. Let's start.
 Keep that thumb over the fretboard.
 Keep that arm up.
 Ah, ah - keep those fingers down.
 Ooops! - Wrong note !*###!
 Watch the angle of your left wrist.
 Relax your right arm.
Those knuckles have to bend inward.
 Strike at the instant you press your string.
 Where am I? Oh, here.
 Remember the anchor fingers and pivots.
 Don't lift that pressure too soon.
 No breaks between notes.
 Keep that thumb over the fretboard.
 Which string am I on? Oh, here.
 The finger you just played rests on the string next to it.
 Keep that bass little finger right with the fourth finger.
 Keep that elbow up.
 Keep those fingers down.
 Knuckles inward.
 That's a half note and a rest.
 Oh, darn, I lost my place again!
 The thumb - the thumb. Fingers down.
 Gosh, will I ever, ever, ever learn to play this zither?

Dene Voigt
 Chicago, Illinois

(Editors note: As Dene's teacher we can assure you she is doing great and she is learning to play very nicely!)



CALLING ALL ZITHER PLAYERS

Come to the FIGA Convention '89 at the Toronto Hilton International Hotel - July 12 - 16. 1989. Call or write Newsletter office for information and registration forms.

CONCERTS! WORKSHOPS!
 ENSEMBLES! INSTRUCTION! ORCHESTRA!

Zither - Stuffed Animal Head, (continued)

My next task was to find a zither teacher. I found one through the local Musician's Union. He was an easily found needle in a haystack. What a gem; I am lucky. My teacher advised me that I bought an alt_ zither and that most literature was not written for that register, but that the instrument could be used.

Another task, now, was to buy a discant zither. The local pawn shops and antique dealers that I contacted did not have one, but the swap meet dealer did. He sold me a zither that graced his living room for eight years. It was one of the most ornate and beautiful looking instruments that I ever saw. The deal was fair. I took the new zither to my next lesson. The instrument looked much better than it sounded. It looked beautiful. Minor problems intermittently pestered me. Repair was practical but regardless, the tone would never approach that of my teacher's harp Meinel. The tonal comparison was painful.

It was time to buy my third zither. The great adventure began in earnest. I called 100 pawn shops and used instrument dealers in my area and also called or wrote to 30 of the most prominent stringed instrument dealers and private collectors across the US. I also called the German Consul in Los Angeles which provided the names and addresses of 27 local German oriented organizations to which I wrote. One organization even had "zither" in its name but they knew of no player nor instrument. The German Consul in New York provided a list of US cities with large German populations, but with 52% of US residents claiming German ancestry, no city seemed to be left off the list. The list identified areas where I would concentrate my zither search. The local library had out-of-state telephone directories which listed used instrument dealers and pawn shops to which I wrote. I advertised in two German language newspapers for two months and read German language newspapers from four cities even though I do not read German, but can understand "zither" and a telephone number. Most of their advertisers received letters from me, including radio programs (one wrote me that my request was broadcast but without audience response), a funeral director in anticipation of a zither being exchanged for a harp (a good lead came of this) and to churches asking that my request be posted on their bulletin boards (another response received) and advertised in a Musician Union's publication. The National Association of Music Merchants offers a list of 10,000 instrument dealers for \$100, but I did not take advantage of that ambitious opportunity.

An unusual experience was dealing with a woman in San Diego with a Spanish last name who claimed to offer a Schwarzer for sale. Fortunately I knew certain questions to ask from reading the Schwarzer articles in ZNUSA. The seller was unable to correctly advise the shape of the paper label, the state of manufacture (Seattle, Washington!!) the number of strings, the style of instrument and the serial number. She called back to say that she could not possibly sell her zither because she just realized that its serial number was the same as her lucky number.

My efforts did reward me with a good instrument at a low price. That was zither number three. I have since traded zither number 2 toward the cost of a much better instrument - my zither number four. To be in the right place at the right time generally requires being in many different potentially right places as often as possible and being prepared with money, time and transportation to seize the opportunity.

The zither Newsletter of the USA is published and edited by Janet Stessl as a service and information link for zither players in the USA, Canada, Japan, United Kingdom, Netherlands, West Germany, and anywhere else you would like us to send it. Your comments, articles, listing of events, classified ads are welcome. Advertising rates on request. Annual subscription rates are \$8.00 domestic and \$14.00 foreign air mail. Newsletter is published quarterly, on or about February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1. Copy requested six weeks prior. Back issues available for \$2.00 each. Mailing address: 6173 N. McClellan Ave., Chicago, IL 60646. Telephone: 312-631-2854

ZITHER CONCERT

Chicago Zither Quartett
and friends

Sunday May 21 3:00 PM

Edgebrook Clubhouse

6100 N. Central Ave., Chicago IL.

Tickets: \$5.00 advance \$6.00 at door
312-631-2854 or 774-4594

The Teacher's Table talks about

ZITHER TABLES

The question of zither tables arises very early in a student's zither lessons. Often on the second lesson, because they have gone home to practice their new instrument and are suddenly faced with the question, "What shall I put it on?". We've noticed that the true ingenuity of zither players comes out at this time. Aunt Mildred's old dressing table is brought down from the attic, old card tables are retrieved from the junk yard, dilapidated coffee tables are sized up - could the legs be extended or should I sit on the floor?

Old pictures, lithos, sheet music, etc. often show zither players with the zither on their lap. Here in America, Appalachian dulcimer players sit with instrument on their lap, in what appears to be a comfortable position. It is possible to play on your lap, even with our larger harp zithers. You must be careful not to push it off onto the floor, and you might wish you had a leather apron to protect your thighs from the stability needle points on the feet, and I wouldn't say there is a whole lot of resonance in your knees, but it can be held that way, if you absolutely can't find a table. Last year, someone told me that styrofoam has resonance qualities. I raced home to put a 3" thick piece of rectangular styrofoam on my lap, to place the zither upon, but couldn't discern any particular resonance enhancement. We still harbor some hope of developing the Ultimate Lap Zither Table.

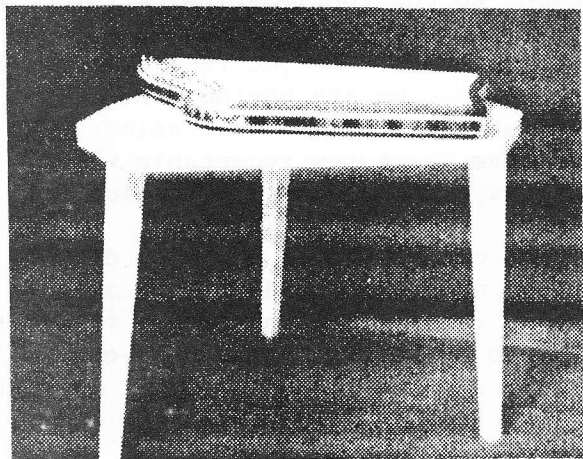
We also admire European zither players who carry small protective pads of various materials i.e. leather, cork, rubber, measuring about 1" or 2" square which are placed between table and zither feet to protect valuable table surfaces. Even formica, which can prove slippery, can be pressed into heartily enough to hold the zither steady and still not damage the formica finish and the little pads are not necessary in this case. Here at home in our zither studio, we have a pine kitchen table, purchased from Pier One for \$150. We have shortened the legs by about 2½", and we simply don't care if marks are left on the table by zither feet. It gives it a "certain character". The table is large enough for two, even three, with careful planning, zither players. Those of you who have our videos, "Introduction to Zither # 1 and # 2" see the table used in the films. However, being 32" by 48" it is not in the portable category. In fact, we have problems getting it from the basement to the parlor for our house concerts.

The members of the Chicago Zither Club play on three legged tables with a definite slant, downward away from the player. The legs are removable, fitting inside for easy portability. They seem to have evolved from a table style built by Tony Godetz, Chicago, in the '20's and '30's. Godetz's slant was nearly a 45° angle, but the club has modified the slant, yet it is enough that a pencil rolls off the table. Godetz must have had some resonance theories (he was also an instrument builder) that have been lost in the intervening years as we notice that current models do not have the sound enhancement qualities that his early tables had. (1)

Three legged tables are popular - with good reason, they're always even. (2) Illustrated is one being built in Munich, West Germany by Heinz Vogt, zither builder.

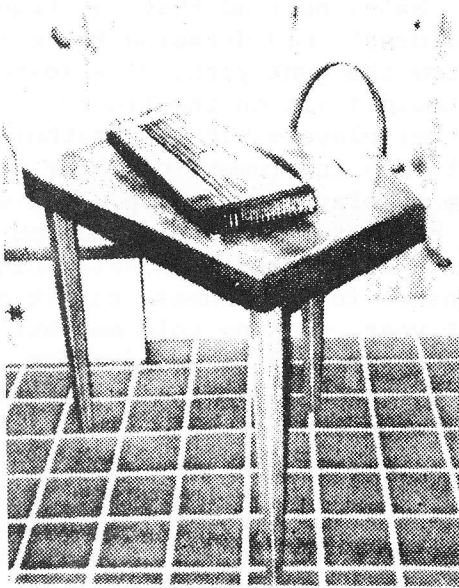


(1) Chicago Zither Club



(2) Heinz Vogt Table

Glen Wendler, Amana, Iowa, is also partial to the three legged variety, and his is curved on the far side of the table and has a curved, attached music stand. (3) Glen used three woods, redwood, pine and oak. The sides are ¾" redwood and legs of oak. The bottom and top are ⅜" pine, glued directly to the sides. The table has good sound qualities, but he says he might increase the size of the "fiddle" holes on the next model. Overall height is 27", front width 30", sides 16½" to 22" center width and 3" deep.



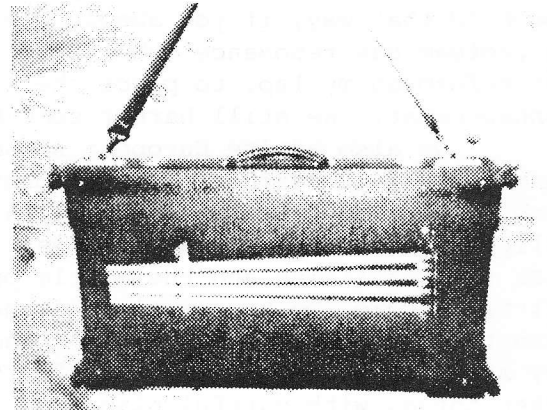
(3) Glen Wendler, Amana, Iowa



(5) Carrying case - Table combination

Rudy Wacek, Chicago Zither Club member of 65 years, and famous inventor of his own electric zither and pickups, built combination table-carrying cases. They have level surface, and used metal legs which are unscrewed and packed in the case with great compactness and ease. Ernst Obermaier, Seattle Washington, is using a similar case/table with metal legs. (4 & 5) Ernst says you may need a machine shop to build it. It's compactness rates highly, and he uses an electric pick-up, so resonance is not a high priority.

The Milwaukee Zither Club members have also used a combination carrying case/table for many years. Our recollection is that they had wooden legs and the entire case was constructed of wood, creating a rather heavy package, but convenient, and its one piece to



(4) Ernst Obermaier carry. We have recently seen a table from Connecticut which was of the same combination, but large enough to accept a harp zither, in its own instrument case, inside, with four wooden legs, one of which had an adjustment caster for adapting to uneven floor situations. We don't know what kind of wood was used, but we found it a manageable weight, even at a size of 22" x 32". And very good sound qualities.

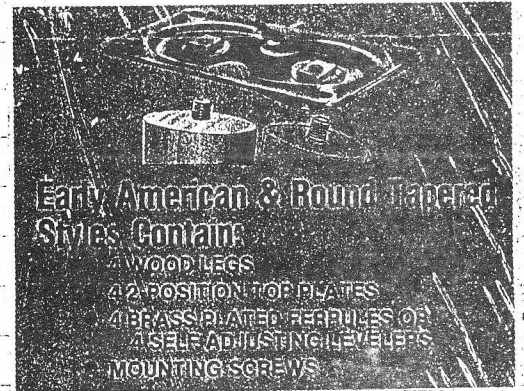
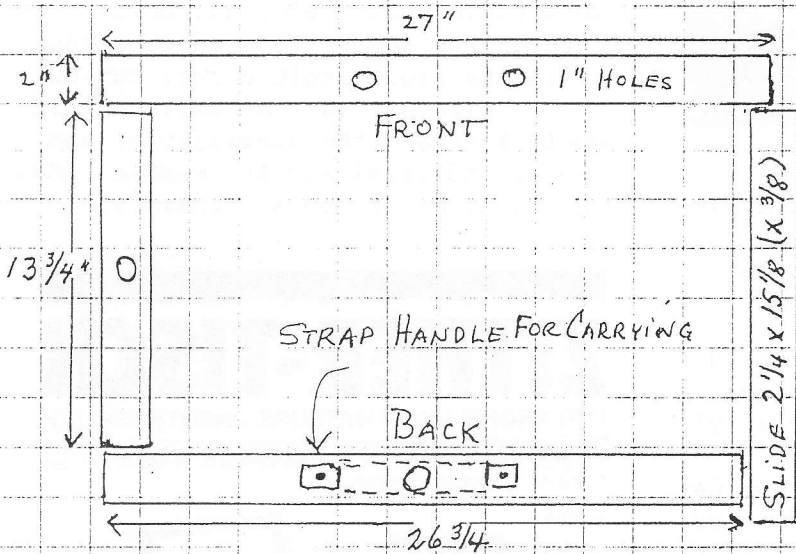
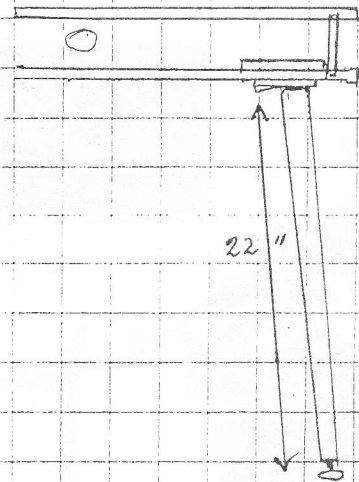
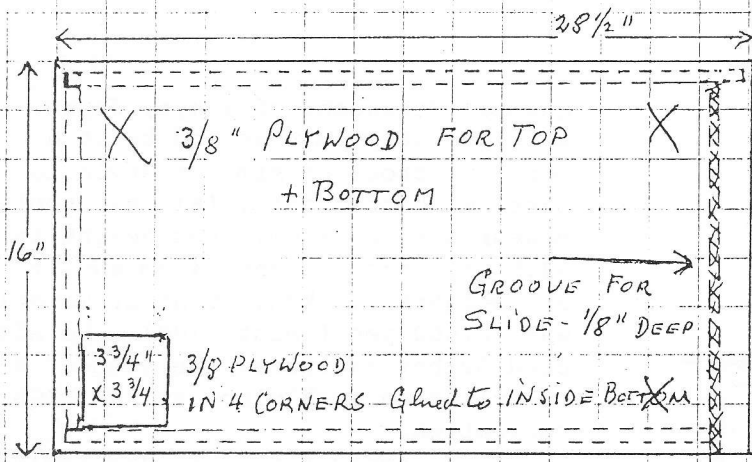
Operating on the theory that curved tables are better for sound resonance (just as sides of instruments are curved) and that depth is important, we recently had some tables built on those principles. We are satisfied that they do increase the sound of the zither, but since we didn't want to break the wooden curve, we have no arrangement to put the legs inside for carrying, although they are removable, having been attached with Gerber fasteners. As you read on you will

see that other zither players have discovered Gerber fasteners also. We are having a negative experience with Gerbers - that sometimes the leg screw backs out and stays in the fastener, instead of in the leg, as you expect. The alternative is to have the screw receptacle built into the table block, or as Glen Wendler suggested, the legs have wooden dowel ends which fit into the blocks.

Leonard Zapf, of Zapf's Music Store, Philadelphia, PA, contributed a complete diagram for building a portable zither table. This looks excellent for size (16" x 28½") and carrying convenience, and Leonard says it increases the sound, also. He is recommending Gerber fasteners, and they are convenient, inexpensive method of fastening legs to table. Certainly for ease of carrying to the job, or to FIGA convention, as Leonard did last summer in Baltimore, it is fine.

(see next page)

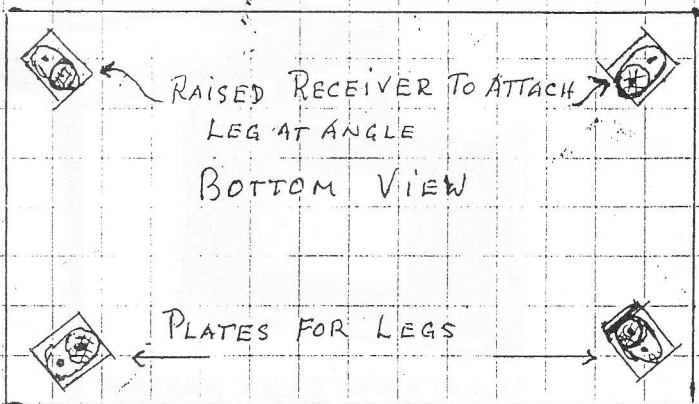
PORTABEL ZITHER TABLE



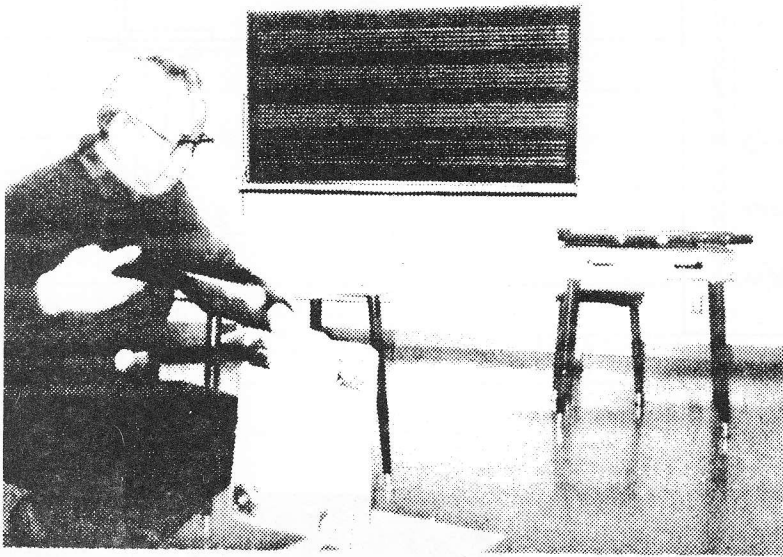
GERBER INDUSTRIES, INC.

#1 GERBER INDUSTRIAL DRIVE

ST. PETERS, MO. 63776



For sides use 1"x2" white pine or spruce.
 For Top & Bottom use 3/8"plywood.
 for slide use 3/8x2 1/2" white pine or spruce.
 Legs & plates are available in hardware or lumber stores.
 All joints should be glued.
 Actual thickness of 1x2" = 3/4"
 All wood should be finished with several coats of white shellac or suitable clear varnish or lacquer.
 For strap handle use Peavy Amplifier handle, available at some music stores.
 for transport legs can be stored inside table with slide closed.
 There is also room for 2 Hamilton #2 Music stands (in their boxes).
 Table will improve the sound of your instrument.



(6) Shimazo Uchikoshi, Tokyo, Japan

Another German built zither table is the Riedl Resonance Table (8) also seen in the Saitenspiel. These tables are remarkably good for resonance, but quite large (is this the source of the resonance?) and clumsy to transport. The Riedl table does not have legs, per se, but at either end there are solid panels which fold in like wings when being carried. Bob Stykemain, Toledo, Ohio, uses a similar table (9) and shows diagram (10). His table is 20" x 30", 3" enclosed space for sound chamber and 10" side boards which act to enclose the folding leg system. He says it is very sturdy and has never "wiggled". Its major drawback is, however, its weight.

Jane Curtis added a solid panel to the front of her zither table (diagram 11) to compensate for the skirt problem which women zither players have. Especially when fashions dictate mini skirts, we girls have a problem with some of the table configurations.

Harold Leighnor, La Paz, Mexico, made a table from a piano sounding board. (12) The sound quality is excellent, and it is very stable. Weight is only 7 pounds. It is 26" high, and top is 24" x 35". He regrets, however, that it isn't folding or removable legs.

Table height, or lack of it, also causes some problems for women players. Tables have to be at least 22" to the bottom of the table, or else we have to sit in a twisted back posture (oh! my sacroiliac!) or wear blue jeans to perform so that we can straddle the right leg of the table like our male counterparts.

Shimazo Uchikoshi of Tokyo, Japan, went one step further and built a portable stool of similar style to carry with his table. (6) His table measures 60 x 35 cm. Leg height is 54.5 cm, stool height 44 cm and it all weights 7.5 kgs. Cost of materials was 12,000 yen (about \$100). He also used Gerber fasteners. We suspect a consultation took place at the FIGA convention.

Another four legged table variety appeared in an advertisement in the Saitenspiel recently. (7) This table uses a wing-nut bolt through the square leg, which holds it in the right angle corner cut-out to the size of leg. We believe this would increase the stability of the table, and eliminate the wobble tendencies of other leg attachments.

ZITHER-TISCH

FÜR PROFIS UND AMATEURE UNENTBEHRLICH

Die Tischplatte aus massivem, astreinem Kiefernholz verbessert Klangfülle und Resonanz. In Sekundenschnelle zerlegbar für den Transport. Einfachste Handhabung. Preis einschl. Notenständer ab Werk

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(einschl. MwSt. und Verpackung)



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(7) Advertisement from Saitenspiel

Eine ideale Ergänzung zu Ihrem Instrument:

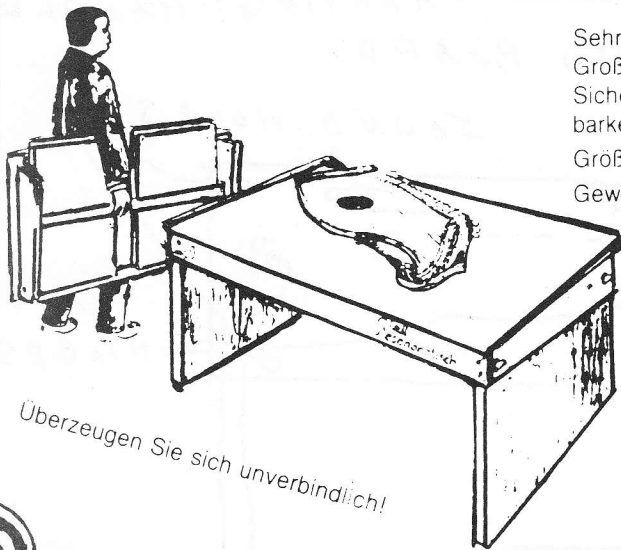
Der RIEDL-Resonanztisch

Sehr gute Klangeigenschaften
Große Tragweite
Sicherer Stand und leichte Zerlegbarkeit durch perfekte Bauweise
Größe 120x60 cm, 65 cm hoch
Gewicht: ca. 13 kg

E. F. Riedl

8044 LOHHOF
Lohwaldstraße 12
Tel. 089/3107330

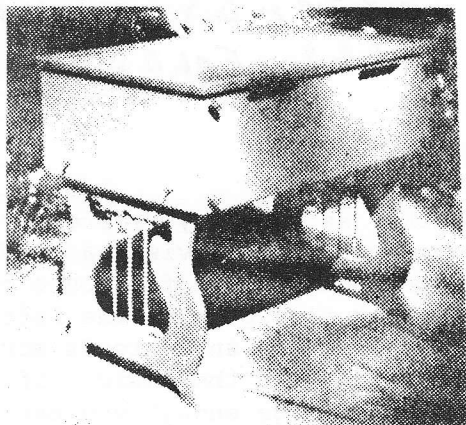
Neuheiten und Forschung
für und um die Zither.



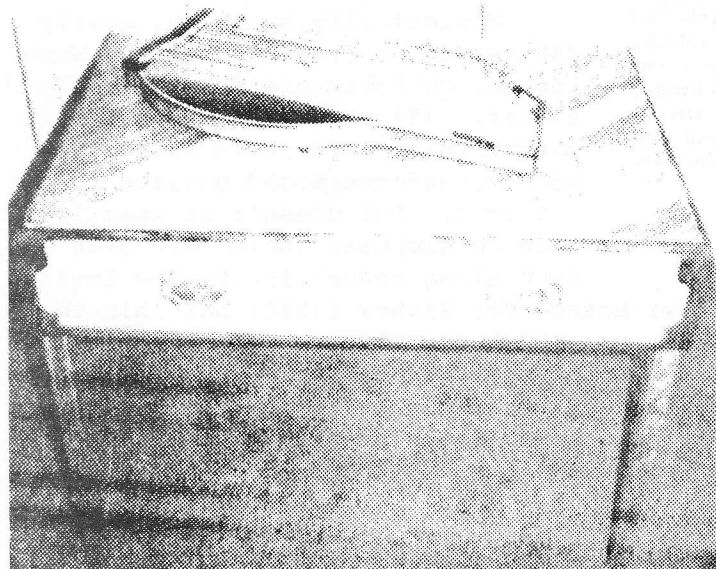
Überzeugen Sie sich unverbindlich!

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Teacher's Tip: Don't get so tied to one table (thumb pick, chair, light, etc.) that you have difficulty playing in other circumstances. Change your environment once in a while, so you will have a flexible attitude.
!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

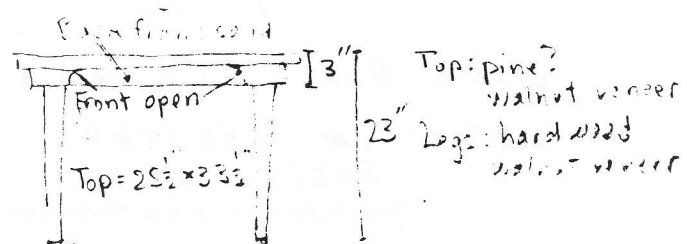
(8)



(9)



(12)

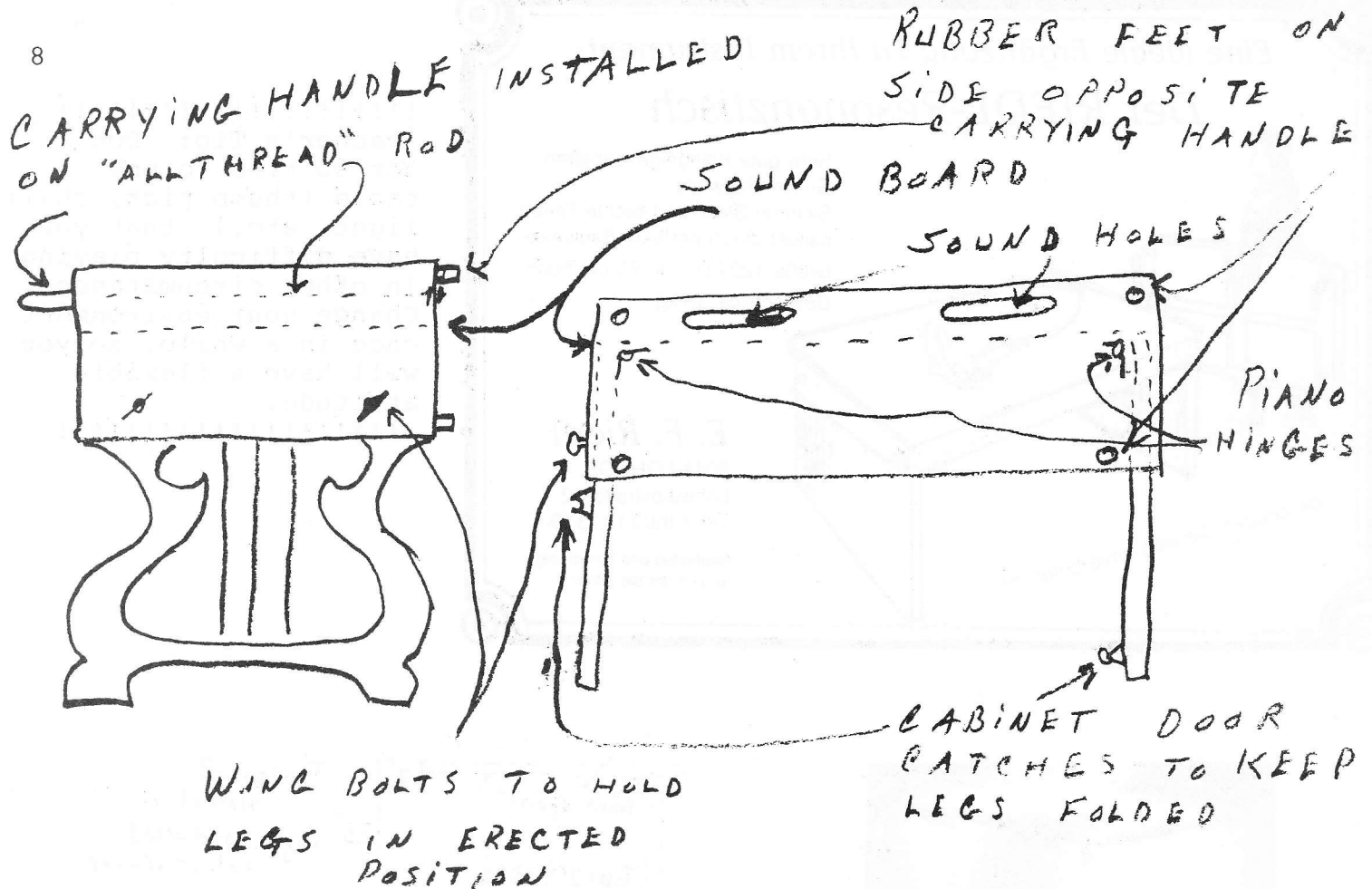


I added a piece of paneling wood that covers the wide back. I also nailed a piece of wood down the front edge, 15 to side and 10 to come almost to front.

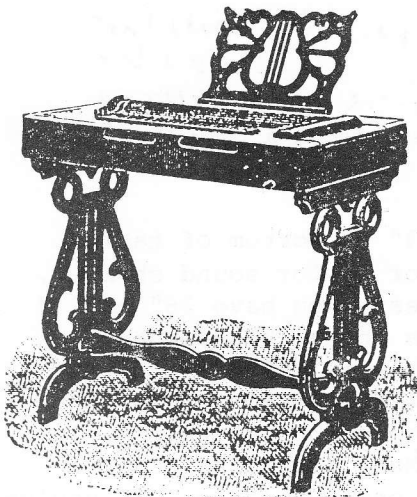
(11)

If you have 22" or 23" to bottom of table, and then you add 2" or 3" for sound chamber, and some wood thickness, you have 26" or 27" table height which is about recommended height. A dining table is 29" high, but if you can stick a 3" to 5" cushion under your derriere you are in a good relative position to the instrument. Many times the cushion solution is the only one available; if you've taken your zither on vacation, but not your table, or you're visiting Auntie Mabel and she "just wants you to play a tune or two", or you've just started lessons and haven't coped with the table question yet.

Music stands can be attached to the table in some method for easy removal and transportation and storage. Some folks use a one-hole dowel rod (metal or wooden) others have devised two or more attachment locations. Many players are partial to a free standing music stand because an attached stand will



(10) Diagram from Bob Stykemian



(13)

SCHWARZER FOLDING TABLE ZITHER

Patented August 28, 1893, this style zither was a professional model, built primarily for the traveling zither player who was always handicapped by the lack of a suitable resonant table or a chair high enough to perform properly. But its advantages also appealed to the semi-professional player. The cross bars were removable and fit beside the hinged legs, folding flush under the lower edge of the zither. The music rack was hinged to the top and laid on the strings when not in use. The hand rest was hinged, giving easy access to the strings for restringing.

"shake" as you play vigorously. John Roeder has devised a brass "L" shaped stand which fits onto one of the tuning pegs on the left side of your zither and extends across zither to hold the music. If your table is large enough you can use a folding table top stand, made of wood or metal.

Historically speaking, nearly 100 years ago Franz Schwarzer, Washington, MO built his folding table (13) zither. 151 were made and they are museum/collectors items now. They wobble, and the sound quality is not good. But doesn't it seem like more development could have been done along these lines? The English

translation by Carl Fischer, Inc. (1888) of the A. Darr Method for Zither (1866) has this to say about tables: "Of special importance is the table upon which one plays. Those so often praised resounding-tables, namely the transportable, the feet of which can be unscrewed, have nearly all the fault not to stand firm in consequence of which the surety of the play is injured. A firm standing table not too small with a fir-plate and empty drawer is always to prefer." Presumably the empty drawer is a sound chamber, unless, of course, you fill it with music, tuning keys, strings, pencils, erasers, etc. etc.

In conclusion, we think the perfect zither table has not been built yet. You may, as many of us do, settle into two tables, one for acoustical properties, and one handy carrying table for trips, jobs, etc. Many thanks to all of you who contributed to this article. Keep us informed if you develop some more ideas.

Nikolaus Schaack on
The Zither and Polyphonic Baroque Music

by Jane Curtis

In the mid 1960's, Nikolaus Schaack sent Saitenspiel a long article on the zither and polyphonic Baroque music. For various reasons it was not published before his death but eventually appeared in two parts in the first two issues for 1982. It contains much of interest not only to zither players but to anyone interested in Baroque music and instruments. To make the article more accessible, it has been translated, edited, and reduced in length by summarizing some parts and omitting others not of direct interest. Passages quoted directly from the text are enclosed in quotation marks.

Schaack rejected criticism that polyphonic Bach works should not be played on the zither. He found the real question to be whether they can be played on the zither, whether it is technically possible and sounds right, a question he answered in the positive on grounds of professional performances by Grunwald and others. Each himself transcribed his own and other composers' works for other instruments, usually changing the key to suit the nature and playing technique of the second instrument. Moreover the first independent works for instruments (as distinct from their merely accompanying role as long as vocal music was predominant, up to the beginning of the 17th century) did not specify the exact instrumentation or consciously exploit the sound qualities of the various instruments, even in solo works or parts. Choice of instrument was not important, because polyphonic Baroque music (including Bach) was intellectually structured and architectural. Only with the rise of monodic (harmonic-melodic) music, concentrating the musical content in a single leading voice, were instruments specified and each individual timbre (tone color) exploited.

To further justify performing Bach works on the zither, Schaack describes the stringed keyboard instruments available to Bach and continues with a detailed discussion of the clavichord. Because of its structure, "no loud, long-sounding tone could be achieved, but it guaranteed the modest beauty of a living tone. The vibration of a clavichord tone lasts at most five seconds in the high range and about eight in the bass. Not only at the moment of striking" are you in almost direct touch with the string by means of key and tangent, "but you can maintain this intimate connection through continuing pressure for as long as the string should and can sound. This makes possible a further influencing or modulation of the vibrating tone with vibrato, also familiar to zither players, a technique that has given the clavichord a reputation as the most alive and sensitive of the stringed keyboard instruments." As noted by C.P.E. Bach, the clavichord is also well adapted for playing portato, a sort of tremolo "with only one volume increase in the middle of the note, a legato in which every tone is stressed, without interrupting the melodic line. The delicate,

highly simple mechanism of the clavichord produces a tone free of disturbing subsidiary sounds, so that the tones seem to be conjured from the realm of the supernatural, as is also true of the zither.

"Just as with the bowed instruments and the zither, the clavichord's tone is not ready-made but is molded and formed by the player. The sound of the clavichord is normally delicate, bright, transparent, softly metallic, and silvery," with a rich range of overtones and a clear tone profile enabling themes to stand out in polyphonic works, not just through volume but through differences in tone character as well. "Because of this Schweitzer calls the clavichord 'a string quartet in miniature, every detail stands out three-dimensionally on it'. This highlighting of the voices is also supported by the gradations in brightness of tone that are perceptible on the clavichord without mechanical assistance (damper or gear assembly), just as they are on the zither between fingerboard strings and free-swinging strings. The middle, low, and high positions do not all have a single standardized sound like the modern piano, but—recalling the delicate differences in register—a deep full bass, a lovely singing silvery middle range, and a clear flute-like soprano." This again is like the zither.

There were clavichords with devices allowing the sound to be further modulated, for example a lute stop (which Schaack explains) and a so-called "zither effect", produced by striking a key with the left hand and then stroking the two strings, near the tangent, with the second or third finger of the right hand. Schaack does not say when or by whom this term was first used. I have tried the technique on my clavichord (modeled after a surviving instrument from Bach's day) and do not find any of the interesting results zitherlike. Schaack also describes how to produce harmonics on the clavichord; on my instrument they are more delicate and ghostly than on the zither, as the tone in general. He mentions other devices to influence timbre and reduce volume, quoting Neupert's comment:

When we go to the instrument itself and fully comprehend such attempts to make the clavichord (already quiet by today's standards) even quieter, we realize how much our modern ear has been dulled and how quiet those times must have been to be satisfied by a dynamic range covering such low volumes.

He follows this further with a quotation from the English musicologist Fuller-Maitland (1902), noting its application to the zither as well:

The clavichord, to be sure, has only a minimum of power. But between its loudest and softest tones lie almost infinitely many gradations, exceeding all the possibilities of a modern piano in this regard. Within its modest bounds, every shading is attainable—and with so wonderful a clarity that in polyphonic playing every voice rings out as though played on a separate instrument. The instrument is the ideal communicator for all that is metaphysical, intimate, and especially expressive.

The clavichord discussion concludes with testimonials from Mozart and Haydn, both of whom composed on and traveled with a "Clavir", and from Bach, who preferred it over all other instruments for performing and studying the richest in tone nuances, the most expressive, and

and found it

otherwise
 as are possible only in an orchestra; the very same chord, for example, can be formed in more than thirty different combinations. And by striking the strings at a different point, the zitherist can also shade the sound in all gradations or, as it were, pull out stops as on the harpsichord or the organ. The various ways of striking the fingerboard strings—with the ring or the soft fingertip (pizzicato)—and of articulating (hammer-on, ring-binding, pull-off, sliding) as well as the production of harmonics (bell tones, flageolets) on both the fingerboard and the free-swinging strings, greatly increase the zither's capabilities for expression. I would like to draw attention to yet another particular timbre on the fingerboard, which, so far as I know, has never been exploited. It corresponds approximately to what harpists call 'étouffé' (smothered), which is done by placing the finger on the string over the fret of the tone to be played but not pressing hard on the string, and then striking with the ring. The pressure on the string must be enough that it does not buzz, resulting in a short "smothered" tone. This timbre is singularly effective in ensemble playing and when appropriately applied.

"The only thing the zither 'lacks' in comparison with the above instruments is the piano's volume, and we affirm this with satisfaction, for it is exactly this exaggerated culture of loudness in today's concert usage that has ruined the public's sense of hearing. But even so, the zither's tone is significantly louder than that of the clavichord and at least as loud as that of the harpsichord. There is thus no doubt that both polyphonic Baroque works and works in the Classic, Romantic, and even many contemporary styles can be performed satisfactorily on the zither with regard to sound—so far as allowed by the mechanics of playing the zither. Both styles are possible technically on the modern piano," but it lacks the zither's transparency and timbre range and cannot reproduce polyphonic music adequately.

"That Bach, who felt particularly drawn to the clavichord for his private musical entertainment, because the other keyboard instruments were too soulless for him and he held it to be the best suited for performing his most refined ideas"; that Bach, who composed and transcribed for the lute, much poorer in sound than the zither; "that Bach would be the last one to entrust his works to an instrument like the zither, with its even richer possibilities for expression than the clavichord" or the lute: "this is patently absurd."

Toward the end of the article, Schaack mentions the technical limitations to playing Bach on the zither. Without going into detail, he recognizes that "since the technique of zither playing is basically different from that of keyboard instruments, only a few keyboard works from the musical treasure of Bach's time can be performed on the zither. Nevertheless there are some, such as the great C-major toccata for organ, that except for a few measures fit the zither as though Bach had written them especially for it. There are also his works for violin and cello, most of which can be arranged to conform to the sound and playing technique of the zither as though originally composed for it."

(Editor's Note: This article is illustrated by music in this issue; one page of J.S. Bach Prelude and Fugue from First Violin Sonata, arranged for zither by N. Schaack, is reprinted. While this piece is quite difficult, we would like to recommend the following pieces, available from Grünwald Publishing or through the Newsletter for any subscribers wishing to follow this line of study: Practice in Baroque Style, A-27, Suite in F (Weiss) B-50, J. C. Bach Aria Cantabile C-17 and J. S. Bach Cello Suite III (Bwv 1009) B-46.)

extraordinarily flexible within its limits.

Schaack continues with a detailed discussion of the harpsichord, a plucked instrument having little or nothing in common with the zither. The only point of interest for us here is that it can be played only piano or forte, with no gradations in between—no disadvantage in performing polyphonic Baroque music, but a fatal drawback as the highly intellectualized and stylized forms gave way to harmonic-melodic (monodic) music. The new style was to concentrate musical content into one voice instead of many, to convey feelings, to appeal to the emotions not the intellect. The new art form required new means of performance, to provide above all tone nuances and gradual crescendos and diminuendos. The harpsichord thus delined in popularity and usage; and although the clavichord could satisfy the new demands of monodic music, it could not provide the increased volume and fullness of tone required as music moved out of the private home or palace and into the large concert hall. This led to the development of the pianoforte, which pushed the harpsichord out of general usage by 1770 and the clavichord at the end of the 18th century, after it had reached its high point in the decades after 1750.

"Physical analyses of the timbre of various stringed keyboard instruments by Meyer and Buchmann in 1931"...."show that the clavichord sound is richest in overtones. The harpsichord has proportionately stronger high overtones than the clavichord because of the plucking. As for the zither, the timbre of its fingerboard tones can normally be classed between those of the clavichord and the harpsichord, while that of the unstopped strings will lie between the harpsichord and the modern grand piano. It is thus clear that the piano cannot replace the sound value of the old instruments or that of the zither; in polyphonic music requiring a clearly profiled distinct line for the individual voices, it sounds dull and colorless. The hammer mechanism allows neither the fine expressive qualities of the clavichord nor the harpsichord's range of timbre, both of which are essential for reproducing Bach's keyboard works. The piano produces a conglomerate of sounds, not a plastic interweaving of voices. Audiences accept it because, "accustomed to the exaggerated emphasis on the effective (emotional) through the heaping up of sound masses, they have unlearned the art of listening to music intellectually. And so it could happen that a well-known composer wrote me, upon publication of my zither arrangement of a Bach chorale, that he congratulated me on this outstanding work but found it a sacrilege against Bach to reproduce his music on an instrument whose task was to create atmosphere at heurigen festivals; that such a work could only come into its own on the piano, that Bach would have been the last to entrust it to an instrument as sound-poor as the zither."

"...."The zither in fact possesses all of the qualities that musicians and instrumentmakers vainly sought to unite in one instrument" after the development of monodic music. "The zither has an even more expressive and modulatable tone than the clavichord, since the tones are produced directly by the fingers, without the intercession of tangents. And its tone can, as on the clavichord and the piano, be nuanced in all possible volume gradations, both gradually and suddenly. Its strings, including silk (nylon), gut, brass, and steel, produce an even more timbred sound than the harpsichord. Its playing technique allows timbre mixtures in infinite combination, such

Fuge

Allegro

D G 1 2 3

2 4 1 3 4

3 1 1 2 1 4 1 2 3 1 2 1 3 4 1 3 2 4

2 2 3

4 3 2 4 1 1 3 4 4 1 4 1

Narcissus!

BLUMEN-GAVOTTE.

Introduction.

Henry Wormsbacher, Op. 74.

* Gavotte.

Musikverlag „Mandelmanns“, Berlin N.W.21, Turmar. 61.

Copyright 1924 by H. Wormsbacher.

H. R. 808

Henry Wormsbacher (1866-1933). Born in Giessen an der Lahn, Wormsbacher began zither lessons at age 9 from G. Sonntag, director of Giessener Zither Club and later from Phil. Grasmann in Frankfurt am Main. He immigrated to America in 1887 and founded the Jersey City Columbia Zither Club and remained director for 25 years. During this time he was also a teacher of zither at the New Jersey Conservatory of Music. In 1915 he moved to Cleveland, Ohio and assumed directorship of the Cleveland Zither Club. For many years he was the president of the American Zither Society. He composed about 70 pieces, including Klänge vom Frieese, Zur Frühlingszeit, Im Lindenhain, Erinnerung an die Niagara-Fälle, Herzlich Willkommen. (Source: Illustriertes Lexicon der Deutschen Zitherschaft, Franz Fiedler 1924) Zither II part available from Zither Newsletter USA.

Zither I.

TRIO.

⇨ CODA.

D. S. al Coda

H. R. 808

**NEWS & NOTES
HEARD HERE AND THERE**

Helen Smith, Wheaton, IL. came up with a photo of the Edelweis Zither Club of 1904 in Chicago. Her father and aunt are both in the picture. **Rose** and **Hans Gassner** of the Milwaukee Zither Club want to remind you of their concert on Sunday, October 15, 1989. Hold the date - details in Summer '89 issue of newsletter. **Jeanette Chattin** of Mulberry, Florida, went to see Sepp Diepolder play at the Matterhorn Restaurant in Tampa, Florida while he was performing there in winter season. **Heinrich Rostek** of Columbus, Ohio writes, "Danke für die Zither Zeitung, hab die ganzen Berichte durch gelesen. Ihr habt ja eine schöne wundervolle Zöst verlebt. Es Erinert mich an meine jugentzeit wenn wir die zither concerte hatten. Man kann das nie vergessen. Die zither ist für mich ein stück alte heimat." **Carl Mittelhammer** got "that call" to perform the zither solos in Tales of Vienna Wood by Johan Strauss, son, while playing at a restaurant on New Year's Eve - and the performance was the next day! The harpist who usually did the solos was sick. We're certain Carl did an excellent job for the orchestra - a regional orchestra in New Jersey area. **Janet Stessl**, studying in string ensemble class at Northeastern Illinois University this winter arranged a bass zither part for Corelli (1653-1713) trio sonata Op. 4, Sonata II. Originally published in 1689 for two violins and basso continuo, modern printed editions include a piano and a cello part which approximate the figured bass as utilized in this period. The teacher, **Dr. Sylvia Kovals** was excited as the zither part more nearly approximates its original form. **King Keyes** visited **Harold Leighnor** in La Paz, Mexico recently. They gave a complimentary concert for the owners of "La Casita" lounge and later a concert at the same place for government officials. They are in demand for a return engagement and the owners wife wants to take zither lessons!! Now that's what we call spreading out to new markets!!!! **John Roeder** Columbus, Ohio, will play on Sunday, April 23 for the Anniversary Banquet of the Columbus Germaniua Gesangverein. **Monika Fischer**, Munich, West Germany, will be visiting USA this summer. Stopping in Chicago first, she will share an engagement at the Black Forest Chalet Restaurant, Morton Grove, IL with Janet Stessl (Zither Hands Across the Ocean), teach a group at FIGA convention and do a workshop at hammered dulcimer festival before she goes on to California.

**DULCIMER FESTIVAL
includes
ZITHER WORKSHOP**

A Dulcimer Festival sponsored by HANDS of Illinois, Inc. will include a short program and zither workshop when it is held this summer, July 8-9 at the Gebhard Woods State Park in Morris, Illinois. Top national and local musicians of both hammered and mountain dulcimer will be present for two days of workshops, folk dancing, jam sessions and more. **Monika Fischer** and **Janet Stessl** will present the zither workshop. For more information call 815-942-0609 or 312-456-6292. Lodging at nearby motel or camping facilities. Zither workshop will be on Sunday, July 9.

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NEWS FROM GERMANY****The Pasing-Munich Zither Orchestra participated in an unusual TV program on February 25, 1989. In the TV show "Vier gegen Willi" the orchestra played two pieces: "Song for Eileen" by Freddy Golden and a special arrangement of "Third Man Theme" also by Freddy Golden. The special arrangement consisted of the 23 zither players of the orchestra being divided as follows: 3 zither players were playing the "Third Man Theme" and the other 20 were playing 18 different melodies - and the contestants on the show had to find the players who played the Third Man Theme. As they found players who were playing other themes, they asked that player to stop playing, until they had narrowed it down to the correct three playing the Third Man Theme. The other melodies being played included theme from Dr. Zhivago, Berliner Luft, Tom Dooly, In München steht ein Hofbräuhaus, In the Mood, etc. The zither players were dressed as secret agents: trenchcoats, Humphrey Bogart style hats, dark glasses! Sounds like fun. That must have been **some** arrangement Freddy put together!

Two articles reprinted here and next page are taken from Four Seasons, Winter, 1989, a quarterly printed by Englmeier Druck GMBH, Bad Aibling for BAS Special Services, by permission.

The Zither

A Bavarian romance

By BOB HOYER

THAT HAUNTING zither theme from The Third Man, one of the world's classic crime films, is the kind of music that gets under the skin.

Once heard, it is never forgotten.

Critics call it the perfect tune played on the perfect instrument to accompany the clandestine capers of Orson Welles and Joseph Cotten in the spooky underworld of post World War II Vienna.

Played with a special verve and style by Anton Karas, the music, the instrument and the player became world famous.

For millions The Third Man theme song served as an introduction to the zither, an instrument that plucks at the heart and soul of Bavarian and Austrian folk music.

Throughout Austria and south Germany the zither is a traditional favorite. Zither concerts draw large audiences. Clubs and restaurants feature the zither.

Through concerts and records Karas, Munich's Rudi Knabl and a handful of virtuosos have become international stars.

A new generation of artists, best exemplified by the Popp and Laegel trio, now continues to uphold the traditions of zither music.

The brothers Johannes and Robert Popp of Munich and Lothar Laegel from Augsburg have been serious zither

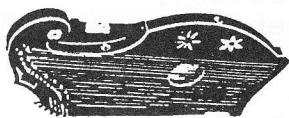
students for years. Their concerts, a blend of classical and folk music, attract an avid following.

"With musicians of this caliber the future of the zither is in good hands," says Bad Aibling's Ludwig Englmeier.

"If Rudi Knabl represents the old guard you can say the Popp and Lothar Laegel represent the new guard."

Englmeier himself stands between the old and new.

Among a dozen prominent zither artists in Bad Aibling, he plays regularly at area concerts.



In 1987 he performed with the Belgrade Symphony under conductor Sandor Weinger and he's scheduled for a similar performance in Belgrade again this year.

Although he reads music, Englmeier commits all concert works to memory, a habit that is not uncommon with zither players.

"That's something I got into while playing in Sweden where the zither is considered an exotic instrument," Englmeier says.

While working in Sweden in the 1950s as a printer, Englmeier rediscovered the music he took to only half-heartedly as a boy.

"I began zither lessons at 12, but wasn't serious about music," Englmeier says.

"On the days I was supposed to be taking my lessons I was playing soccer instead.

"When I failed to make progress my mother asked the teacher what was wrong. When she learned what I was doing, my lessons came to an end."

A decade later in Sweden Englmeier resumed play on a small instrument sent to him by his mother.

"With time on my hands I became serious about learning the zither," he says.

"The chance to play at local concerts made me work that much harder. Repeated practice improved my technique and my repertoire."

Like all good artists, Englmeier stresses the importance of technique. And good technique can take years to develop.

Shallow, flat, box-shaped and made of wood, the zither is played on a table or the musician's lap.

A sound hole similar to that of a guitar and 30 to 45 wire strings give the zither its distinctive tone.

The player's left hand fingers five strings to produce the melody. A metal plectrum worn on the right hand picks out accompanying chords.

The origins of the zither seem to run back to mankind's earliest attempts to

make music. The name probably derives from the Greek word Kithara.

For centuries plucked zithers were common in China, where they still exist.

Most musicologists now believe the crude forerunners of the contemporary instrument came to medieval Europe from the Middle East.

Early settlers took the zither with them to America where the Pennsylvania Dutch *zitter* is derived from a German model.

The Popp/Laegel trio found a lively interest in the zither last summer during a U.S. tour that included stops in Chicago, Washington, Philadelphia and Ephrata, Pa.

"Everywhere we were pleased by the response to our music," Robert Popp said.

Karas, the man who brought the zither to millions, died in 1985. But The Third Man theme remains alive, and that's good news to zither players everywhere.



Ludwig Englmeier practices daily in the family living room for a spring concert.

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Five kinds of wood--beech, pear, pine, maple and palisander--are used in the production of most zithers.

Thinly cut mellow pine is crucial to the zither's resonant tone. Gruber says only knot-free, fine-grained pine is acceptable. And it must be cured for six years.

The pine playing surface of a Gruber zither is covered by a veneer of palisander, a handsome dark brown wood.

The outer ribs supporting the top and bottom of the zither are fashioned from tough maple root wood.

Buyers of Gruber instruments must be patient. Five to six months of work by Gruber and an assistant go into each zither.

As an instrument is finished a tiny mother-of-pearl lyre--Gruber's trademark--is inlaid in the surface.

The prices of Gruber zithers range from 2,500 to 4,000DM.

Just 34, Gruber has been building and repairing zithers for 16 years. He learned his craft in Ingolstadt and East Germany where Wuensche and Meinel zithers cost from 3,000 to 5,000DM.

Most Gruber customers are regional. But artists from many lands, including Americans from Chicago and Philadelphia own Gruber zithers.

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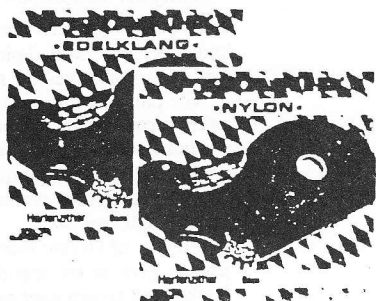
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