

The So-Called *Zigeunerstimmung* – An Old Tyrolean Style of Playing Guitar

Abstract

During my research on the history of the guitar in Tyrol in the 1990s, I came across an old style of playing guitar, far away from the mainstream of Alpine guitar playing. It took time to discover the last witnesses of this formerly widespread tradition – a few old people, some of them no longer able to play. Encounters with individual guitarists scattered throughout the Tyrolean Unterland (the districts to the east of Innsbruck) were like pieces of a puzzle which, when put together, showed a picture of a former tradition that was unique in the Alpine region. Its main characteristic is an open tuning that allows a two-part melody to be played accompanied by open bass strings and a “bourdon” (drone).

Playing the guitar as a solo instrument (which is not very common in Alpine folk music because it is technically very demanding) can be realised here in its simplest form with two fingers of each hand, in the style of a diatonic instrument. This playing style is most commonly called *Zigeunerstimmung* (literally, ‘Gypsy tuning’), which may be an expression of the strange and exotic, or it may refer to its dispersion by travelling musicians, but it has no link with ethnic groups such as the Sinti or Roma. Other designations are *freie Stimmung* (free or open tuning), *Tanzstimmung* or *Melodiestimmung* (dance tuning or melody tuning, as opposed to the standard tuning for accompaniment) and *Weana Stimmung* (as a reference to the “Viennese tuning” of the zither).

The style most likely originates from the first decades of the 19th century, when the technique and sound of the older zither was adapted for the guitar – the Tyrolean *Urgitarre* (primordial guitar). This particular tuning is ideal for making music in an intimate setting: at home, in the alpine pasture, in the tavern. The repertoire mainly consists of song arrangements (also melodies from operettas and popular music) and dances.

In the course of my research, some musicians who had already given up playing were encouraged to play again, and some young musicians became interested in this almost forgotten way of playing. Now, two and a half decades after my first publications on the subject, the old players have largely died, but numerous musicians have been inspired by this old Tyrolean style of playing guitar and continue to spread it.

1. Introduction

Over the last three decades, Austrian guitar music has been a major part of my work as a musician, teacher and researcher. In the course of my activities I have also addressed local music practices, which are an important root of the classical guitar repertoire. Very little reliable information and few editions of guitar music concerning traditional Alpine music have been available hitherto, and so I started a project to explore and document the role of the guitar in the Alpine traditional music, systematically drawing on historical sources and fieldwork. Here I came across some traces of an almost forgotten tradition, one that is very different from the mainstream guitar style of the present: the so-called *Zigeunerstimmung* (literally, ‘Gypsy tuning’).¹

This is the most common among a couple of different terms I came across. Some people called it *freie Stimmung* (free or open tuning), *Tanzlstimmung* or *Melodiestimmung* (dance tuning or melody tuning, opposed to the standard tuning for accompaniment), or *Weana Stimmung* (as a reference to the “Viennese tuning” of the zither, which is different from the *Münchner Stimmung* or “Munich tuning” used in Bavaria and western Austria), while some names referred to locations (*Angerberger Stimmung*, *Zillertaler Stimmung*). *Zigeunerstimmung*, for its part, may be an expression of the strange and exotic, or it may refer to its dispersion by travelling musicians (as reported by several people), but it has no link with ethnic groups such as the Sinti or Roma.

Zigeunerstimmung was almost unknown even among experts in Tyrolean folk music. Peter Reitmeir, Peter Moser and Otto Ehrenstrasser were aware of the fact that some guitarists had formerly played in different tunings, but they had no specific idea of the sound or style. It was only when Thomas Nußbaumer introduced me to his recent recording of the 80-year-old Willi Gianmoena (1919–2010) from Kitzbühel that I realised it was a document of a very special and fascinating tradition about to disappear. I set off immediately in order to find the last witnesses and to document and research the rest of this very individual guitar style.

2. A look back: traditional guitar music in the Alps

The guitar was established in its present shape and tuning around 1800. At that time, Vienna was a melting pot of different cultural influences from musicians from all parts of the Danubian Monarchy and also a metropolis of “Guitaromanie”:² Numerous sets of *Ländler* and many ad-

1 Though political correctness of language was not an issue at that time, I have always tried to use this term with caution. But in practice and in reception by the media, *Zigeunerisch* (‘Gypsy-like’ or ‘Gypsy-style’) has prevailed as a popular phrase. Today the use of terms with a connotation of racism may be considered problematic, but it would not make sense to avoid this particular term or replace it with a different name. It has become strongly associated with the style we are dealing with.

2 “Guitaromanie” was the title of a publication by Charles de Marescot (Paris, 1829), which ironically

adaptations of folk songs (variations on folk song melodies) by guitarists such as Anton Diabelli, Mauro Giuliani, Andreas Oberleitner and others were published at that time. After a crisis in the second half of the 19th century, the guitar saw a revival around 1900, which was inspired not least by the diverse practices of local music.

In traditional Alpine music up until the present, the guitar has been assigned the primary role of an instrument for accompanying songs and being part of various instrumental formations/ensembles. Images of Tyrolean minstrels such as the Rainer Family may serve as evidence for the use of the guitar since at least the 1820s.³

As a melody instrument, the guitar appears quite rarely. On the one hand, it is difficult to play, and on the other hand, it is not loud enough to compete with other melody instruments. Guitar solos are very unusual and mainly reserved for musicians with a background in classical guitar: Sepp Karl (1913–2003, Upper Austria), Fritz Engel (1904–2004) and his pupil Michael Haas (*1962, Tyrol). There are a few recordings with the guitar as a solo instrument, and there are some guitar duos and trios as well as some other formations in the genre of *Saitenmusik* (meaning plucked strings such as the zither, harp and dulcimer) or *Stubenmusik* (which may also include bowed instruments or woodwinds). It was largely Tobi Reiser (1907–1974, Salzburg) who determined the style of guitar accompaniment as well as of the guitar as a melody instrument in the 20th century. His influence on Austrian and Bavarian musicians was so dominant that other local styles were almost stifled.

This may be one of the reasons why the old Tyrolean style (the *Zigeunerstimmung*) fell increasingly into oblivion. Furthermore, this kind of guitar playing always belonged to the private sphere, inside the *Stube* (the living room of a farm house) and the cabins in the mountains. In public life (weddings and other social events), most of the musicians preferred louder instruments. Due to this lack of exposure, few guitarists were among the better-known musicians who broadcast on the radio or performed in front of a large audience, and it was therefore difficult to locate the last exponents of the old tradition. Little by little, often by chance, I was able to find a few people, most of them already in old age and sometimes no longer able to play. Lois Landegger (1916–1996), probably the most renowned of the old Tyrolean guitarists (and the only one to be documented on a vinyl record, see Landegger (No year), B), died a few weeks before my call. So it was high time to document the last remnants of this formerly widespread style.

It was exciting work. Much like a jigsaw puzzle, encounters with individual guitarists scattered all over the country formed the image of a singular tradition unique in the Alpine region. Nowhere else did the guitar as a solo instrument appear with such frequency.

illustrated the enormous popularity of the guitar in the early 19th century. The rise of the six-string guitar in general and particularly in Austria is represented in detail in Hackl 2011, 27–90.

3 For the history of the guitar in Tyrol, see Hackl 1996a.

3. *The research project*

Supported by Thomas Nußbaumer, I was commissioned for a research project by the Institut für Musikalische Volkskunde at the Universität Mozarteum Salzburg (department Innsbruck, led by Josef Sulz). In 1995 I began searching for information and documents in the main archives – the Tiroler Volksliedarchiv (Tyrolean Folk Song Archive) and ORF Radio Tirol – and consulted widely recognised experts on local traditions and guitar music in the Alps.

I found a few recordings of Tyrolean guitarists in the archive of the regional broadcasting studio of the ORF (Österreichischer Rundfunk, or Austrian Broadcasting Corporation) that obviously had been played in old tunings but had been adapted to the modern style by the addition of an accompaniment by another guitar. Wolfgang Neumüller, a well-known Bavarian guitarist and teacher, gave me a copy of a live recording of Hermann Landegger, broadcast but unfortunately not archived by the ORF; he also knew Willi Gianmoena because he had organised folk music workshops in his house in Kitzbühel. René Senn, a Swiss-born guitarist from Munich, took part in one of these workshops and was aware of the particular nature of Gianmoena's playing. He also indicated that one member of the Bavarian guitar trio Eitzenberger/Greiner played in the same manner. Seppi Eibl, another Bavarian guitarist who made numerous broadcasts of great importance for the BR (Bayerischer Rundfunk, or Bavarian Broadcasting), had recorded Hubert Marksteiner and Ernst König, two guitarists living near the Bavarian border.

Gerlinde Haid, a professor at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (MDW), had recorded two guitar pieces in a different tuning played by Klara Knoll (Kundl) some years ago, and she enthusiastically encouraged me to explore this style. Joachim Weißbacher, a guitarist and the vice president of the Tiroler Volksmusikverein (Tyrolean Folk Music Society), gave me a private recording of Hermann Kluckner (Telfs), whose playing was easy to identify as in the old Tyrolean style. Weißbacher also knew that some people in his home valley of Wildschönau used to play in a different tuning, and this was to become the first destination for my fieldwork.

In August 1996, Weißbacher introduced me and Thomas Nußbaumer (who assisted me in the early days) to Stanis Moser (*1930), the innkeeper of the *Sollererwirt* in Thierbach, the highest settlement in the valley. Moser had not played the guitar for at least a decade because it had fallen completely out of fashion or, as he expressed it, “because nobody has any interest in it any more” (*weil es niemanden mehr interessiert*), but he was still able to play some tunes. He explained his way of playing and the context of the guitar in this environment. The following day, we visited Gertraud Klingler (*1934) and Josef Siedler (1937–2006), who had been taught to play guitar by Moser. Toni Silberberger (*1947) from the neighbouring village of Auffach had learned from Ernst Wischatta (“Alpboden-Ernst”, 1913–1986), a mysterious foreigner living in the neighbourhood whose exciting biography I got to know some years later. Rosa Hörbiger (1919–2006) from Auffach, a native of the Zillertal valley, was introduced to the guitar in her childhood by a beggar. She had been unable to play for decades because her children had broken her guitar, but she started again at the age of 77, when they bought her a new one.

My next research trip, in September 1996, led me to Brandenburg, where Rudolf Neuhauser, a well-known singer and musician, introduced me to his brother Willi Neuhauser (*1928) and to Felix Kaindl (1925–2007), the last of a group of guitar players he knew there. Three different tunings had been used in this region.

Otto Ehrenstrasser, the official *Volksmusikpfleger* of the Land of Tyrol at the time,⁴ remembered that his uncle Peter Ehrenstrasser (1924–2010, Angerberg near Wörgl) played in an open tuning. We made some recordings with Peter and Otto Ehrenstrasser senior and with Josef Madreiter (1926–2011) from the neighbouring village of Niederbreitenbach. We received a lot of interesting information – what a pity that we were so late! Madreiter's father (Josef Madreiter senior, 1900–1980) was said to have known more than a thousand songs, and his living room was full of guitars...

From the first days of my research it was clear that all these individual examples of guitar playing, coming from different sources and using different tunings and techniques, belonged together and to the same tradition. This was strongly confirmed by the following meetings with guitarists in the eastern districts of the country (mainly the districts of Kitzbühel and Kufstein, see Figure 1).

The search for more guitar players was not easy; most of them had never played in public. For example, Hermann Kluckner (*1926) from Telfs was unknown even to Peter Reitmeir, who was the president of the Tiroler Volksmusikverein and lived in the same village. Working independently from guitarists from the eastern districts, he invented a special tuning for playing solo: the first two strings tuned to the interval of a minor sixth and the second and third string to a major third, so he could play the main intervals very easy with adjoining fingers and open bass strings. Since injuring his left hand with a circular saw some years ago, he had given up playing. Fortunately, he had previously recorded some pieces on cassette. Rudi Mair (1912–2000) from Schwoich near Kufstein could also no longer play due to a stroke, but a piece recorded on cassette recalled his previous skills (AV 19). Ernst König (*1936, Figure 2) had also given up playing after a hand injury, but he was able to demonstrate his technique with some pieces. He used an

4 The term *Volksmusikpfleger* derives from the concept of *Volksmusikpflege*. With it are meant “cultural activities and institutions which are referred to in Austria, as well as in Bavaria, as *Volksmusikpflege*. The German term *Pflege* can be translated as *care*, *nurture* or *maintenance*. It can refer, for example, to the work of a nurse or a gardener, i.e. to a well organized process of regular observation and intervention which is necessary for the good condition or even the existence of the object in question. “*Volksmusikpflege* does not really aim to revive expressive practices of the past, but to set conditions for the survival of local music making, frequently in controlled and modified forms. It is generally a process which unites individual enthusiasm within a framework created by official cultural policy. This includes the organization of festivals and competitions, the publication of sheet music and teaching materials by professional *Volksmusikpfleger*. Consequently, a high degree of standardization and regulation both of style and repertoire is typical for these activities. However, unlike the socialist model of *Revival III*, local diversity has a high priority in *Volksmusikpflege*” (Morgenstern 2017, 278).

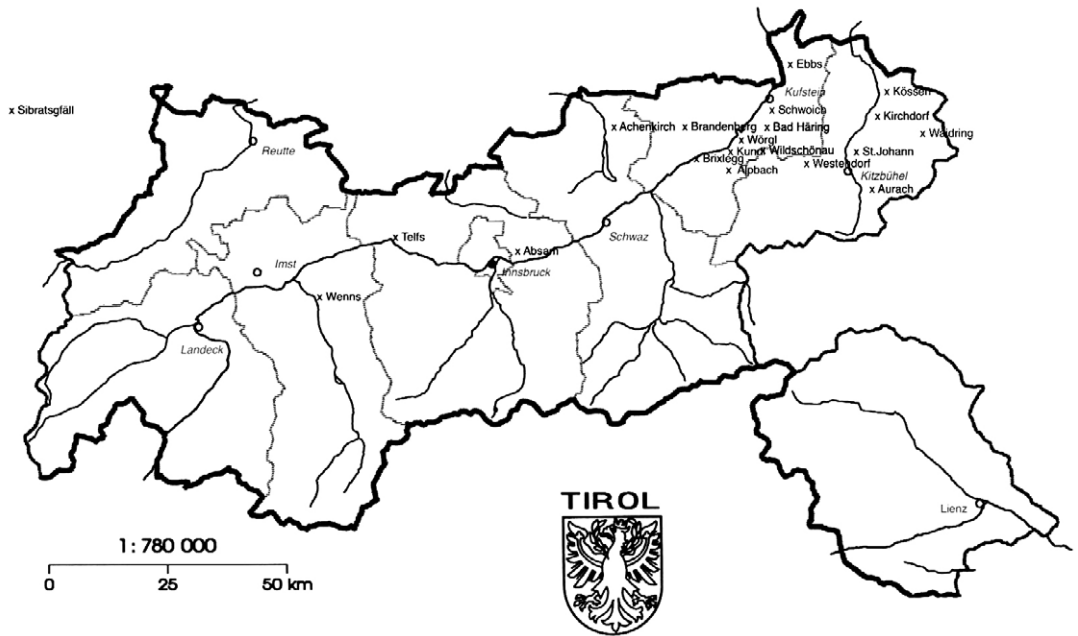


Fig. 1: A map of Tyrol, Austria, showing the main area of the *Zigeunerstimme* in the eastern districts with only a few exceptions in the west. © Stefan Hackl.

archtop jazz guitar with a cutaway, which enabled him to play in higher positions than with a normally shaped acoustic guitar. This was a crucial advantage, given that the range of the melody is limited by the use of the first and second strings alone. König had moved from Achenkirch to Kössen (as I discovered by chance), where Willi Gianmoena and Lois Landegger came from, but he was unaware that several guitar players lived there. Hermann Landegger (1922–2012), Lois' youngest brother, was the only one who was still quite active, and he played very well.

Anton Steiner (1919–2015) from Brixlegg was discovered accidentally by one of my students. In his youth, he had been impressed by a guitar player named Hetzenauer from Kufstein; fifty years later, he tried to find somebody to teach him this old style, but unfortunately failed. So he started to reinvent it himself. He remembered the open tuning and arranged some songs and dances. It was a similar case with Sepp Wörgötter (1922–2016, Figure 3) from St. Johann, who also learned this way of playing in his youth and returned to it after retiring from his profession as an agricultural expert. He made a large number of arrangements and private recordings in C tuning and took the trouble to put older and younger players in touch with one another.



Fig. 2: Ernst König with his jazz guitar in *Zigeunerstimmung*. Unknown photographer. Achenkirch, Tyrol, Austria. July 1988. Private archive of Ernst König. Used with permission of Ernst König.



Fig. 3: Sepp Wörgötter (standing left) as a young man on a mountain pasture in Jochberg near Kitzbühel, with unidentified persons. Unknown photographer, Jochberg, Tyrol, Austria. Circa 1938. Private archive of Sepp Wörgötter. Used with permission of Sepp Wörgötter.

This constituted the first phase of my research, from autumn 1996 to spring 1997. After that, the Tiroler Volksmusikverein organised some meetings at which guitarists could exchange their knowledge and play together. I taught the old Tyrolean style at several workshops and also instructed some of my students. Romana Hauser, who was 14 years old at the time, played some tunes from her home village of Kössen at the *Alpenländischer Volksmusikwettbewerb* (Alpine Folk Music Competition) in October 2002, an important competition. She had great success and was selected to play in the final concert, which was broadcast by Austrian television.

I published an article in the *Jahrbuch des Österreichischen Volksliedwerkes* (Yearbook of the Austrian Folk Song Society, see Hackl 1998 and 1999a) and a book of guitar tunes in *Zigeunerstimmung* (see Hackl 1999b and 2016). I also had several opportunities to talk about it on the radio and to participate in an ORF television feature called *Zigeunerisch g'spielt* (Playing in Gypsy Style, 1999). This publicity encouraged some of the old guitarists to refresh their skills and inspired others to try the old tunings. It also helped to get more information and to discover several other players, not only in the eastern districts.

Karl Obleitner (*1929) from Absam near Innsbruck, a well-known performer on various instruments, learned to play in the key of G (D-G-d-g-b-d') from his father while herding in the mountains. In his youth, he had known some more guitarists who used different tunings; they called it *Zigeunerstimmung* or *Bauernstimmung* ('peasant's tuning').

Gottfried Reinstadler (*1931) from Wenns in the Pitztal was still able to play, although he had lost the middle finger of his right hand. I heard his tuning G-A-d-a-c#'-e' (for the key of D) for the first time, but he assured me that several guitarists he knew had used it for playing solo. There was obviously only one village east of Innsbruck where some guitarists played in a different tuning, and he was the last of them.

Another exceptional case was Guntram Natter (*1939) from Sibratsgfall in the Bregenzerwald (Vorarlberg) – the father of Martina Natter, who worked at the Tiroler Volksliedwerk. Tyrolean woodcutters had apparently introduced the *Zigeunerstimmung* to local players, two of whom are still playing. Their tuning is a variant of the widespread C tuning (F-G-c-g-b-d'), and in terms of style the influence of Alemannic folk music is evident.

Siggi Steixner (*1956) from Innsbruck may serve as an example of a musician without any connection to traditional Alpine music (he played only blues and American folk music), who was infected by the old Tyrolean style. Now he arranges every kind of melody in C tuning, often in a very refined way with extended harmonies and interesting technical solutions.

Eugen Bär (*1951) came from Kazakhstan and lives in Dortmund (Germany). When he saw the film *Zigeunerisch g'spielt* on German television, he was strongly reminded of the musical tradition of his homeland and the approach musicians had taken during his childhood. He has dealt intensively with Tyrolean folk music and arranged numerous tunes in different styles, including that of classical guitar music, what is known as "folk music style" (*Volksmusikstil*) and popular music, for C tuning. One of his arrangements was published in *G'sungen und g'spielt*, the magazine of the Tiroler Volksmusikverein (Hackl 2007). He teaches *Zigeunerstimmung* to his pupils in Dortmund.

The most interesting person I discovered in the eastern districts in the second phase of my research was Maria Duftner (*1946) from Kundl. She remembered a couple of tunes she had learned in her childhood in Angerberg municipality. Inspired by the revival of the old guitar style, she began to arrange and invent melodies in C tuning. She expanded the traditional playing technique by also using the third string for the melody and by occasional bass lines.

Some others whom I got to know in these years were no longer capable of playing, but they contributed a great deal of information regarding the context of *Zigeunerstimmung*. Alois Pletzer (1919–2009) from Kitzbühel, a skilled performer on several instruments, reported that in his youth the guitar was very popular, a guitar hung on the wall in almost every house, and it was not used simply for accompaniment. The C tuning was not an exception but was standard for playing melodies, and thus there was no need for it to have a special name – it was simply called “playing the guitar”.

On several occasions I encountered the name of Karl Koidl (1913–1971) from Wörgl, who was considered the finest guitar player in Tyrol. Unfortunately, no documentation has survived; his recordings from the 1950s were thrown out in 1970, when the ORF radio archive moved from the Landhaus to the new building at the Rennweg in Innsbruck (this was the fate of many other recordings which represented an outdated style). At a guitar meeting in St. Johann organised by Sepp Wörgötter, I met Sepp Berger from Kitzbühel, who had learned some pieces from Koidl in his childhood. Berger, a classically trained guitarist, was able to reconstruct two pieces and preserve them for the future. My student Martina Kranebitter-Mayr transcribed it and wrote a bachelor’s thesis on Koidl (Kranebitter-Mayr 2012).

Interesting information about the life of the mysterious “Alpboden-Ernst” (Ernst Wischatta), who taught Toni Silberberger in Auffach (Wildschönau), came from several sources. In the course of recording Tyrolean guitarists alternating with the Weerberger Maultrommler (Jew’s harp players, see CD *In oaner Dur...*, 2004) Hans Knapp told me that “der krumpe Ernst” (Limping Ernst) had been living in Weerberg for some years. He was a poacher and had been shot in the knee by a hunter and did not dare to go to the doctor. Eventually, his injury worsened, and his lower leg had to be amputated in hospital. His first inquiry after waking from the anaesthetic was about his guitar. Because the doctors didn’t allow him to play guitar in bed, he bargained to get a mouth organ at the very least.

After a concert in Navis, a member of the audience told me that Wischatta had lived there some time. According to this man, he was born in Bad Häring and had been sent to Fulpmes to learn blacksmithing (there was a well-known industry for the production of iron tools). But he disliked this job and fled to Navis (in the neighbouring valley), where he survived by doing odd jobs and poaching. He was appreciated and famous for his musical skills. German tourists recorded some pieces and songs with Wischatta in the 1960s; I obtained a copy of this tape, which contains some very exciting material (AV 20 and AV 21). From the 1970s onward, he lived in the poorest of circumstances on the Alpboden farm in Auffach (Wildschönau). Biographies like Wischatta’s might have contributed to the legend that the origin of *Zigeunerstimmung* was

somehow connected to Gypsies, vagabonds, beggars and outlaws. A brief statistical summary of my fieldwork shows that between 1996 and 2002 interviews were conducted with 27 persons (three of them women), and about 35 hours of audio and video were recorded containing 368 different tunes (138 dances, 180 folk song arrangements and 50 arrangements of popular music). My questions concerned the origin of the playing (teachers and models), the context (settings and occasions) and future prospects.

4. Tuning and playing technique

Deviations from standard tuning are quite common tools to facilitate the work of the left hand in all kinds of stringed instruments and in all musical cultures; furthermore, open tunings also function to achieve more resonance (see Rônez 1998). We know them primarily from the practices of Anglo-American traditional music and country blues, and also from the Irish D-A-d-g-a-d' tuning. But *Zigeunerstimmung* is more than a *scordatura*; it is a style. At first sight, the variety of different tunings and playing techniques may be confusing, but a closer look reveals that they share a common principle: they all enable the performance of a two-part melody supported by open bass strings and auxiliary off-beat notes. In other words, the guitar is used as a diatonic instrument. This can be executed in the simplest way with two fingers on each hand: the left hand plays mainly thirds and sixths, one or two fingers of the right hand are used for the melody and auxiliary notes, and the thumb plays the bass notes. This way one can play melodies easily in a schematic way, but only in the main key and in the key of the subdominant.

Regarding right hand technique, we see a special manner of string attack that determines the typical sound; in it, the two upper strings are plucked together with one finger in a kind of clawing reminiscent of the zither style. Some players use the index finger, other use the middle finger, while Rosa Hörbiger played the two-part melody by alternating both fingers (AV 22). The auxiliary notes on the third string are always played with the index finger, the bass notes with the thumb.

The use of the fingertips is standard, and the use of fingernails is almost unknown. Occasionally, tools such as metal rings, toothpicks, matches or quills are used as a plectrum, in another reference to the zither style. An example is the recorded performance of a polka by Alois Wildauer senior and Alois Wildauer junior in the above-mentioned ORF television feature *Zigeunerisch g'spielt* from 1999. Musicians who also played the harp plucked the strings in the usual way, also using the ring finger on the first string (arpeggio style, see Figure 4). Figure 4 shows the notation of a simple *Ländler* in *Schüttelzerzen* (a pattern of thirds alternating with a drone, typical of accordion players) as played by Ernst König, who learned the piece from Sepp Moser in Achenkirch. The second part can also be played in the key of the subdominant.

Altes Tanzl

as played by *Ernst König*, Kössen, 13-01-1997

Tuning: F G c g b c' (E A d e g# c#')

transcribed by *Stefan Hackl*

The musical score for "Altes Tanzl" is presented in six staves of music. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various guitar-specific techniques such as triplets, slurs, and accents. Chord markings are placed below the staff: C, G7, and C. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Fig. 4 "Altes Tanzl". Performed by Ernst König. Kössen, Tyrol, Austria. 13 January 1997. Recorded by Stefan Hackl (Source: Universität Mozarteum, Institut für Musikalische Volkskunde, *Zigeunerstimmung*, video tape 6). Transcription by Stefan Hackl.



Fig. 5: Detail of playing technique in *Zigeunerstimmung*: left hand. Rosa Hörbiger (and some other guitarists) uses only the index and the ring finger for thirds and also for sixths. Auffach, Tyrol, Austria. Photograph by Stefan Hackl. 1 May 1998.



Fig. 6: Detail of playing technique in *Zigeunerstimmung*: barré. Gertraud Klingler plays sixths in high positions with a cello-like barré using the thumb. Oberau, Tyrol, Austria. Photograph by Stefan Hackl. 7 August 1996.

In the left hand, the thirds and sixths can be played with only two fingers (as Stanis Moser and Rosa Hörbiger did, see Figure 5) – a primitive but effective way to establish simple patterns which work for almost every melody. Playing sixths on the first and second strings is typical of the tunings in C and D and rather different from the standard technique; normally, guitarists use the first and third string to avoid stretching.

Most of the players use at least three fingers, sometimes using the thumb on the fingerboard as well. The barré with the index finger is used quite rarely; Gertraud Klingler and Gottfried Reinstadler play with a cello-like barré using the thumb for positions above the twelfth fret (see Figure 6).

The playing position is generally similar to that of other guitar styles – usually seated with the instrument supported on the left thigh (classical position) or right thigh (customary with acoustic guitar or flamenco), sometimes standing and using a strap. Josef Siedler held the guitar at a very steep angle in order to have easier access to the high positions.

The most common tuning is the C tuning (F-G-c-g-b-e'). The treble strings remain the same as in the standard tuning, while the bass strings are tuned in the key of C. This tuning is used mainly in the regions of Kufstein, Kössen and Wörgl (Angerberg).

The D tuning (G-A-d-a-b-e') is common in the regions of Wildschönau and Wörgl (Brandenberg). Only two strings have to be changed: the left hand patterns are the same as in C but two frets higher. In fact, this tuning frequently appears in the pitch of C, because the high tuning of the sixth and third string means they are at risk of breaking.

The A tuning can be found in three variants. In E-A-d-e-g#-c# (Ernst König, Achenkirch), the bass strings remain the same while the treble strings are tuned a third lower – the left hand patterns are again the same as in C tuning. In the E-A-d-e-b-e' *Weana Stimmung* (Viennese tuning, according to Klara Knoll (1921–2014), who was a native of Wildschönau), only the third string is lowered for the drone. On the first two strings, the left hand plays as it would in normal tuning. In Hermann Kluckner's E-A-e-e-g# e' tuning, almost everything is different, but it enables a comfortable performance with no stretches.

Alois Wildauer (*1931, Ebbs) normally plays in E-A-d-a-c#-e' tuning, in which the melody strings are tuned in the A-major chord and the bass strings support the main harmonies. Sometimes he lays the guitar flat on a table to play (Hawaiian style); in this case, he tunes the fourth string to e for a complete A-major chord.

The G tuning D-G-d-g-b-d' is quite rare. I found examples in Hall and in Piösmes (Pitztal), but none in the eastern districts.

There are a few more special guitar tunings used also in folk music, such as Drop D tuning (to expand the range of the bass), tunings in open chords (E or D) for easy accompaniment, and the normal tuning completely raised or lowered a semitone for accompaniment in the flat keys, but these have nothing to do with *Zigeunerstimmung*.

The origin of *Zigeunerstimmung* is certainly Tyrolean, resulting directly from the requirements of Alpine multipart music (two melody parts and a bass, see Deutsch 2017), and may date back to the 19th century, when the sound and the playing technique of the older zither was imitated by the emerging guitar. The fact that the old guitarists had learned to play from older people in their youth may suggest that *Zigeunerstimmung* is at least 120 years old. Sepp Wörgötter aptly called it the *Urgitarre* (primordial guitar). The zither style is reflected in the use of steel strings, in the occasional use of tools such as rings and plectrums, the principle of open bass strings, and in techniques such as lateral vibrato and arpeggiation from the first string downwards. Certain players' technique of laying the guitar on a table may also be inspired by the zither.⁵ The different roles of the strings for melody, bass and auxiliary notes ("bourdon" or drone) resemble the technique of plucked instruments from the Orient, and sometimes country blues and ragtime as well.

5 The close relationship between the zither and the Tyrolean guitar is also evident in the Swiss Halszithers (Grienser Zither, Glarner Zither, Toggenburger Halszither), which are equipped with steel strings and played like a guitar in a similar way as in the *Zigeunerstimmung* (Bachmann Geiser 1981).

5. Repertoire, style and social background

The repertoire of the Tyrolean guitarist includes dances (polka, march, waltz, *Ländler*, *Boarischer*), folk song arrangements (see Figure 7) and arrangements of popular music (*Schlager*, *op-eretta*, tango, foxtrot).

Der Hansl von der Kuhalm

as played by *Josef Siedler*, Thierbach, 07-08-1996

Tuning: F G c g b e' (G A d a b e') transcribed by Stefan Hackl

Fig. 7: “Der Hansl von der Kuhalm”. A folk song arrangement by Josef Siedler. Performed by Josef Siedler, Thierbach, Tyrol, Austria, 7 August 1996. Recorded by Stefan Hackl (Source: Universität Mozarteum, Institut für Musikalische Volkskunde, Zigeunerstimmung, Video tape 1). Transcription by Stefan Hackl. Siedler played it very freely, in the manner of a singer.

Alpboden-Polka

as played by *Toni Silberberger*, Auffach, 08-09-1996

Tuning: F G c g b e'

transcribed by *Stefan Hackl*

The musical score for "Alpboden-Polka" is presented in six systems of music. It is written in 2/4 time and uses a treble clef. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Chord markings (C and G7) are placed below the staff to indicate the harmonic structure. The score includes a repeat sign with first and second endings. The piece concludes with a final cadence.

Fig. 8: "Alpboden Polka". Performed by Toni Silberberger. Auffach, Tyrol, Austria. 8 September 1996. Recorded by Stefan Hackl (Source: Universität Mozarteum, Institut für Musikalische Volkskunde, Zigeunerstimmung, Video tape 4). Transcription by Stefan Hackl.

Only a few genuine guitar pieces designed for particular tunings have survived. I was able to preserve some hours of audio recordings and, to a lesser extent, video recordings. A selection of pieces has been published in my own edition and in new recordings (e.g. *In oaner Dur...* 2004 and *200 Jahre...* 2004). The most frequent tunes are "Des Jägers Abschied" (Hunter's Farewell), "Dâ drunt im Stoanagrâbn" (Down There in Stoanagrâbn), "Achenseelied" (The song of Achen-

see), “Die Gamslan schwarz und braun” (The Chamois Black and Brown) and the “Schneewalzer” (Snow Waltz). “Am Strande von Rio” (On the Beach in Rio) and “Seemann, wo ist deine Heimat” (Seaman, Where Is Your Homeland) are examples of adapted German Schlager melodies, while “Wiener Blut” (Viennese Blood) and “A lauschige Nacht” (A Cosy Night) are arias from operettas. Furthermore, pieces from the zither repertoire like “Der Weg zum Herzen” (The Way to the Heart) by Georg Freundorfer and “Der dritte Mann, or the Harry Lime Theme” by Anton Karas, brass music, like the traditional “Angather Ostertagsmarsch” (Easter Sunday March from Angather), and marches by Gottlieb Weissbacher, were probably adapted for the guitar.

Limited by the open tunings, most of the pieces have only two sections, either in the same key or with one part in the key of the subdominant (in an AABB or AABBAB structure). Some pieces combine different traditional melodies with each other or with self-composed sections. The modern three-part structure (AABBACCAC) rarely appears, because the dominant key normally used in the second part is difficult to play in open tuning. Some pieces have a special structure, e.g. the “Hopfgartner Boarischer” played by Willi Gianmoena with four sections (ABCDBBC) – three in the key of C alternating with one in F (section B). Figure 8 presents a polka as played by Toni Silberberger. In the first section, the auxiliary notes effect the characteristic rhythmic pattern of *Zigeunerstimmung*; the second part is an arrangement of a traditional song (“Du himmlischer Vater, schau oba auf mi”). In a recording from the 1960s, Ernst Wischatta, who taught the piece to Silberberger, plays two more parts, one of them in the key of F (AV 21).

For accompaniment, most of the players use the standard tuning, because the open tunings only work easily in their main keys. The use of alternating basses – a fashion of recent decades, unsuitable for most of the old tunes – is rare in solo arrangements as well as in accompaniment. When guitarists playing in open tunings are accompanied by other guitarists, the melody player often omits the bass to avoid collisions of different bass notes.

The melody is usually played in two parts – mainly thirds and sixths, occasionally also fourths, and sometimes seconds, sevenths and augmented fourths as a part of the dominant chord.

In terms of harmony, the music generally remains within the context of Alpine folk music – mainly tonic, dominant (7th) and (not too often) subdominant, with minor chords used infrequently. Influenced by popular styles represented by the “Oberkrainer” or Viennese “Schrammelmusik”, these harmonies can be more or less extended, for example, by an added sixth, a major seventh or chromatic movement. In arrangements of modern music, the harmonic style is adopted as far as possible.

The auxiliary notes played between the melody notes provide a rhythmic profile and enrich the sound. This is the main difference between the guitar solos of Fritz Engel or Sepp Karl (both classically educated musicians playing in standard tuning) and the *Zigeunerstimmung*. The auxiliary notes are always the fifth in the tonic and the octave in the dominant, and they serve as a drone. In the key of the subdominant, the open string can be used for the dominant alone;



Fig. 9: Guitarists meeting at the *Sollererwirt* in Thierbach: Hermann Landegger (foreground) with his stiff middle finger and Otto Ehrenstrasser senior (background) with his mutilated thumb. Thierbach, Tyrol, Austria. Photograph by Joachim Weißbacher. 20 March 1998. Used with permission of Joachim Weißbacher.

the tonic (e.g. F in C tuning) requires one more finger for the auxiliary notes. Some guitarists achieve this with a partial barré, while some play the open string in spite of the dissonance in order to avoid rhythmic discontinuity.

Most of the players used simple and cheap factory-made guitars – today, Spanish models of Asian origin, and formerly, *Volksgitarren* (folk guitars) from German manufacturers (Markneukirchen, Klingenthal). Only a few played instruments that equalled the standard of a good factory guitar. As far as the stringing is concerned, only steel strings can guarantee the sound ideal of the zither. Steel strings were also common among the other guitarists in folk music until the late 1950s, when nylon strings came into fashion. These supplanted not only the sensitive and expensive gut strings (which were preferred by some classical musicians, especially in the Innsbruck area (see Hackl 1996b, 4–5) but also steel strings. The modern factory guitars are equipped with nylon strings as standard and are often difficult to convert for use with steel strings, while genuine steel-string guitars are barely in stock nowadays. Nevertheless, the majority of players prefer steel strings for *Zigeunerstimmung*.

As previously noted, the open tunings mainly serve for solo performance. Here the characteristics of *Zigeunerstimmung* have the best effect. Naturally, a single guitar is not an instrument for big public events in large rooms, but it is ideal for private occasions at home, at a cabin, or in the mountains. Nevertheless, skilled guitarists could entertain a small audience; Lois Landegger, for example, was said to have played for dancing at his inn. Hermann Landegger and Ernst König often played for tourists at “Tyrolean evenings” (König even acquired an amplifier for this purpose), and Gertraud and Alfred Klingler were often hired for weddings, birthday parties and other family celebrations. The guitarists from Wildschönau used to visit each other to play and talk. When local women met for spinning (they called it *Rocknhoangart*), somebody played

guitar in the background. But many guitarists never took their guitar out of the house, playing only for themselves at home. Music was primarily a male domain, as women usually did not play in public. But the guitar also served women very well for private use at home.

When playing together with other musicians, the open tunings are more limited than the standard guitar tunings. I rarely heard a guitar in *Zigeunerstimmung* combined with different instruments. When a guitar plays the melody, the best instrument for accompaniment is another guitar (Figure 9).

6. Future prospects

A great deal has happened since I began my project more than twenty years ago. Over the course of the research, some musicians who had already abandoned playing were inspired to resume. The research has sparked the interest of young musicians to discover this almost forgotten way of playing; some of my students teach it in the music school. Romana Hauser, who was introduced to *Zigeunerstimmung* as a young girl, has visited elderly guitarists in her home region of Kössen and has played with them. She has also made some beautiful recordings and has inspired many young musicians (see *200 Jahre... 2004*; *In oaner Dur... 2004*; *Tirol isch lei oans.. 2009*; *Kaiserspiel... 2017*). She is currently a professor at the Pädagogische Hochschule Tirol (University College of Teacher Education Tirol).

The *Sollererwirt* in Thierbach (Wildschönau), the original location of my research, now hosts an annual guitar weekend, a folk music workshop that attracts participants from the entire Alpine region. *Zigeunerisch* is always present here. Stanis Moser, the old innkeeper, can no longer play since injuring his middle finger, but Gertraud and Alfred Klingler are regular contributors to the final concerts (see Klingler 2010).

Only a very few of the last representatives of this style are still alive, but many musicians have discovered a new perspective in the open tunings. During the current “ethno world music” fashion, some may have learned that original “ethnic” sounds can be found not only far away, but also right on their doorsteps.

The story of this project may therefore serve as an example of how research into and engagement with musical practices which are thought to have vanished can inspire and enrich current musical life.

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AV 18 (p. 48)

A Faroese dance to the song *Hjalgrimskvæðið* (non-congruence at phrase level)

Performers: Inhabitants of Sumba, Faroe Islands

Place of the recording: Sumba, Faroe Islands

Date of the recording: 30 January 1977

Recorded by: Egil Bakka with Eyðun Andreassen and Pauli Nielsen

Source: The 16mm film collection at the Norwegian Centre for Traditional Music and Dance.

Film number 502. In cooperation with Fróðskaparsetur Føroya (University of the Faroe Islands). <https://youtu.be/eIfOXPv65HA>

Duration: 5:51

Stefan Hackl

The So-Called Zigeunerstimmung – An Old Tyrolean Style of Playing Guitar



AV 19 (p. 147)

Waltz

Performer: Rudi Mair

Place: Kufstein, Tyrol, Austria

Date: c. 1970

Private audiocassette recording by Martha Mair

Source: Private archive of Martha Mair

Duration: 1:56



AV 20 (p. 151)

Polka

Performer: Ernst Wischatta

Place: Navis, Tyrol, Austria

Date: c. 1965

Private tape recording by Alf Roeper and Renate Prehm-Roeper

Source: Private archive of Malte Roeper

Duration: 1:20



AV 21 (p. 151, 158)

Schneewalzer

Composer: Thomas Koschat

Performer: Ernst Wischatta

Place: Navis, Tyrol, Austria

Date: c. 1965

Private tape recording by Alf Roeper and Renate Prehm-Roeper

Source: Private archive of Malte Roeper

Duration: 1:03



AV 22 (p. 152)

A Ländler played by Rosa Hörbiger, Auffach 1997 (recorded by Stefan Hackl)

Ländler

Composer: Traditional (a mouth harp tune from Rosa Hörbiger's father)

Performer: Rosa Hörbiger

Place: Auffach, Tyrol, Austria

Date: 01 May 1998

Recorded by: Stefan Hackl

Device: Canovision ExiHi video camera

Source: Universität Mozarteum, Institut für Musikalische Volkskunde, Zigeunerstimmung,
Video tape II.

Duration: 1:17