

DustyHarpZiggy's First Selection of German Folk Songs

(Preliminary remark: Last time, DustyHarpZiggy revealed the reason for the dust on his 'harp. This time it's revelation time again, namely concerning his real name: It is of course Ziggy Harpdust! Then there is also his pen name, which you'll find on the sheet music shown below. ☺)

Remembering SFOW 2008

A few weeks before the past **Sore Fingers October Weekend** (24 – 26 October 2008) Cindy Harris, our American guest tutor for the weekend, asked me to bring a few German folksongs (deutsche Volkslieder) to Kingham because she wanted to expand her repertoire. But the weekend was so densely packed that we didn't really find time for a private session; so it was decided that I'd present these songs to her during class, thus also filling a slot in the regular program and having the participants also profiting from my preparation. (I hope they actually did so!)

This little piece presents on paper¹ the songs I presented in the class on that Sunday afternoon in Kingham Hill School.

Selection criteria

Since Cindy hadn't stated any preference, I chose from the ones I personally love most, among them one for the season, autumn. (Recall that it was an October weekend.) This one, the first one presented here, and the next two are dear to me because they all are truly chromatic in that they employ necessarily chords that belong not to the I, IV and V of their respective key. They need those extra chords because they modulate (for a very short stretch or for whole parts) into another key. I learned recently that such behaviour of a tune is properly called "tonicization" (cf. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tonicization>), so I won't use any longer my old term "intermediate modulation" when a tune wanders off its "home key" into another one but returns to the home key before the end of the tune.

The fourth tune became part of the selection because of the way it moved into the scope of my awareness. During past summer I was leafing through some Autoharpoholic numbers when an article by Mark Fackeldey caught my eye, "Chords for Improvisation" (Autoharpoholic, Vol. 10, No. 3, Summer 1989), where he recommends to use the I and ii chords for going rapidly up and down the scale. Fooling around with this idea, I suddenly seemed to recognize the beginning of a tune I recalled from my school days. So I looked it up in one of my music books. And there I spotted some accidentals in the staves' accompaniment part, which piqued my interest even more. The result of this incident will be found at the end of this paper.

Bunt sind schon die Wälder (Colourful are already the forests)

This autumn song originates from the end of the 18th century. The words of it paint in the first verse a rather gloomy picture, speaking of coloured forests, yellow stubble fields, falling red leaves, wafting grey mists and colder wind. In accordance with this (and usual arrangements!) I assigned quite a few minor chords, although the other verses praise the benefits of autumn, the harvest, and especially the wine and the lovely image of young female harvesters in the vineyards! (Oh, oh, those poets!)²

Naturally I won't neglect to direct your attention to the start of the second stave (in the picture below) where I explicitly marked the tonicization into the immediately neighbouring key, in other words, where the tonic of the V chord (in the key of G) becomes the tonic of the tune for two measures. Therefore you find the D chord (instead of the D7, normal for the key of G) and the A7 chord in this part.

¹ At the time you are reading this, MIDI versions of the songs will be found on the UK Autoharps Web site.

² All the German words are on the Web: <http://www.ingeb.org/Lieder/buntsind.html>

A practical reason for explicitly marking the measures of tonicization is that it helps the autoharp player with positioning the chording hand (the left one for the "righties"): With a chord bar arrangement reflecting the Circle of Fifths (e.g. a standard OS or Chromaharp factory layout or the "Bryan Bowers layout") you simply move your hand one position (to the right or the left) with the start of the tune's move into the neighbouring key and one position back (to the left or to the right) at the end of the tonicization.

This occurrence reminds me once more to point out that usage of the V7 chord is much more common in German folk music and music in Germany generally than usage of the plain V. In a purely diatonic tune (i.e. one that uses only notes of one scale) an arranger would here make use of the plain V chord only for special effect!

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Bunt sind schon die Wälder

Chorded for autoharp melody playing by Siegfried Knöpfler

The image shows a musical score for the song "Bunt sind schon die Wälder". It consists of three staves of music in G major, 6/8 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. Chords are indicated above the notes. The first staff has chords G, D7, G, D7, G, Em, Am Em, Am, Em. The second staff has chords D, G, A7, D, D7, G, D7, G, D7, C. The third staff has chords Am, Em, Am, Em, D, D7, G, D7, C, D7, G.

Bunt sind schon_ die Wäl - der, gelb die Stop_ - pel - fel - der,
 und der Herbst_ be - ginnt. Ro - te Blät - ter fal - len,
 grau - e Ne_ - bel wal - len, küh_ - ler weht_ der Wind.

Ach wie ist's möglich dann (Ah, how is it possible [that I can leave you])

This tune is one of those I learned to play very early in my autoharp "career". When I explained the principles of the autoharp, I often used to use this tune for showing how one can play a melody by just strumming upwards from the bass strings, because the chords change with nearly every note. Of course, I play it normally with pinch and pluck.

This song is a love song from around 1825. The singer says in three verses that he/she can never leave his/her lover, that there can be no end to his/her love, that even death can't change a thing!³

I love this tune for the richness of its chords. I think that there is also tonicization at work, especially in the second stave (in the picture below), but here I did not mark it explicitly because marking wouldn't help much with chording hand positioning.

But all these chords are actually needed here in order to support the melody and the flow of the chord sequence. As such, these chords are definitely functional, not "colour" chords. The latter are indeed often found on diatonic 'harps and often employed for tunes in places where they are not functional, i.e. not necessary for playing the melody, but, oh, so interestingly sounding! As an example, Mike Fenton has put on my F/C diatonic in addition to the needed functional chords the

³ All the German words are on the Web: <http://www.ingeb.org/Lieder/Achwieis.html>

chords F#sus4, C#sus4 and G#sus4, which are clearly colour chords, and F6, C6, Gm7 and Dm7⁴, where the situation is not so clear: How often did I wish I had a C6 on my chromatic in order to be able to play an 'a' note against a C chord! (Substituting an Am chord for a C6 seems often wrong.) Obviously, what makes a chord a colour chord or a functional one depends often on the situation.

Ach, wie ist's möglich dann

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Chorded for autoharp melody playing by Siegfried Knöpfler

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Ach, wie ist's möglich dann'. It consists of four staves of music in G major, 2/4 time. The melody is written on a treble clef. Chords are indicated above the notes. The lyrics are in German and are written below the notes.

Chords: G, C, G, D7, G, D7, G, C, G, A7, G, C, G, A7, E7, A7, D, D7, G, D7, C, G, E7, Am, E7, Am, E7, Am, D7, C, D7, G, D7, G, A7, C, D7, G.

Lyrics: Ach, wie ist's mög-lich dann, dass ich dich las-sen kann? Hab' dich von Her-zen lieb, das glau-be mir! Du hast die See-le mein so ganz ge-nom-men ein, dass ich kein' and'-re lieb' als dich al-lein.

Ännchen von Tharau (Little Annie from Tharau)

This is a most amazing tune! Every player and every arranger agrees that this tune modulates into the key of the V chord (with respect to the home key), and does so for several stretches, including a rather long one. But looking at its notes there is not the slightest trace of indication for these tonicization occurrences!

The song is also from the beginning of the 19th century. It praises a certain Little Annie from Tharau as being all the singer's possession, treasures and money, his soul and his live, his flesh and his blood (and all this in the first verse only, and then there are so many additional ones!).⁵

If you look (in the following picture) at the chords I assigned, you will notice here indeed some colour chords: The minor chords in measures 2, 10 and 22 are there only for colour, as are the four chords in measure 13 and start of measure 14. Since the melody notes in the second stave are exactly the same as in the fourth stave, I thought that a little variation is called for.

And then I'd like to draw your attention to measures 8 and 20 where I use the G7 chord functioning as I7 chord, thus leading back from the key of G to the key of C. This is of course a very common trick, which I made use of also in both of the earlier discussed tunes. (A related common trick is the use of the C7 chord in measure 21: Here we pretend to move the tonic, only to land on the completely innocent IV chord, thus adding drama (colour!) to a standard situation!)

⁴ You are certainly amused that Mike put the same chord twice on my 'harp, namely Dm7 = F6! And the labels for C6 and Gm7 could have been as well Am7 and Bb6, respectively.

⁵ All the German words are on the Web: <http://www.ingeb.org/Lieder/Annchenv.html>

Ännchen von Tharau

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Chorded for autoharp melody playing by Siegfried Knöpfler

1 C F C Am G7 C G7 C
Änn - chen von Tha - rau ist's, die mir ge - fällt,

5 G D7 G D7 G D7 G7
sie ist mein Le - ben, mein Gut und mein Geld.

9 C F C Am G7 C G7 C
Änn - chen von Tha - rau hat wie - der ihr Herz

13 Em B7 E7 D D7 G D7 G D7 G
auf mich ge - rich - tet in Lieb' und in Schmerz.

17 G D7 G D7 G D7 G7
Änn - chen von Tha - rau, mein Reich - tum, mein Gut,

21 C G7 C7 F C Dm C G7 C
du mei - ne See - le, mein Fleisch und mein Blut.

Horch was kommt von draußen rein (Listen what is coming in)

The last song in this selection is a bit different from the others: There is indeed also tonicization (perhaps not really?), but while also thematising love, this song tells of unrequited love, of "the

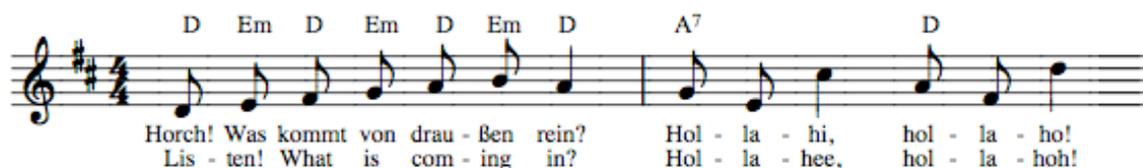
pangs of disprized love" (as Hamlet puts it), but it does so with a surprisingly merry dancing tune.⁶ (None of my sources gives a date of origin; I think it is from early 18th century.)

In the first two staves (in the picture below) you can see, what I was initially talking about, namely alternately using the I chord and the ii chord for playing the notes of a scale in rapid succession. The other interesting place is in the first two measures of stave 3 and 4, each, where the tonicization from the key of D into the key of G is probably only for "colour" effect. (Only one of my sources hints at this tonicization.)

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Horch, was kommt von draußen rein

Chorded for autoharp melody playing (and English words) by Siegfried Knöpfler



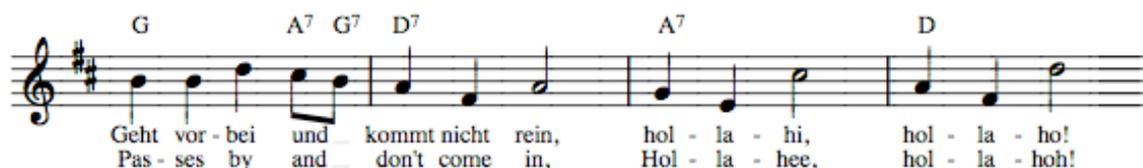
D Em D Em D Em D A⁷ D

Horch! Was kommt von draußen rein? Lis - ten! What is com - ing in? Hol - la - hi, hol - la - ho!
Hol - la - hee, hol - la - hoh!



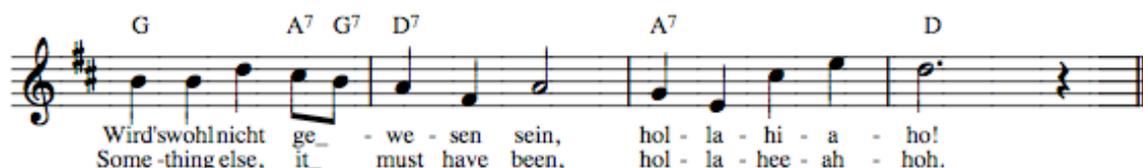
D Em D Em D Em D A⁷ D

Wird wohl mein Feins - lieb - chen sein. Does my dar - ling make that din? Hol - la - hi - a - ho!
Hol - la - hee - ah - hoh!



G A⁷ G⁷ D⁷ A⁷ D

Geht vor - bei und kommt nicht rein, Pas - ses by and don't come in, hol - la - hi, hol - la - ho!
Hol - la - hee, hol - la - hoh!



G A⁷ G⁷ D⁷ A⁷ D

Wird's wohl nicht ge - we - sen sein, Some - thing else, it_ must have been, hol - la - hi - a - ho!
hol - la - hee - ah - hoh.

This last song now completes Ziggy Harpdust's first selection of German folksongs. There are of course a lot of them; I have material for quite a few more selections! If you are interested in getting more, tell me so or tell the editor. Anyway, I hope you have fun with what you got today. (And I hope you don't mind my music theory discussions; sorry, but I just have a weakness for strong theory!)

⁶ All the German words are on the Web: <http://www.ingeb.org/Lieder/HorchWas.html> (Yes, indeed, Ingeborg has the largest Volkslieder archive that I know of!)