

I'm sitting in the guest room in the "small house" of Herbert Grünwald - to my left are at least a couple of hundred bagpipes from all over Europe; to my right about 75 citterns, most of them waldzithers. Herbert is a passionate collector of pipes, flutes, citterns and other instruments, an accomplished musician, and the man to whom the Fifth Bi-Annual Cittern Symposium in Suhl, Germany was dedicated. The best citterns from his collection are currently on display in the Suhl museum - Hamburg and Thuringer waldzithers, Halszithers and other Swiss citterns, "English Guitars" and an arch cittern - a wonderful exhibition and a small testament to a man who has dedicated his life to music and musical instruments.

Martina Rosenberger founded the symposium in 2003, and I have had the pleasure to attend 3 of the 5 meetings. It's been interesting to watch how the people who have attended faithfully have improved as players and broadened their musical horizons. This year there were two concerts - the first featuring Martina, myself, and Pedro and Simão Cabral; the second featuring any symposium participant who cared to share their music with the rest of us. Children from the local music school performed everything from folk songs to a cover of the RHC's "Californication"; we heard the music of G. B. Marella performed on a rare 18th-c William Gibson cittern with added soundposts by Caget, and baroque guitar, played by Wolfgang Meyer and Jurgen Schloëber of the German Lute Society; there was Swiss music from Marcel Renggli and a show-stopping performance by Thomas Keller; all of the ensembles that formed for this Saturday evening performance delighted an audience that really didn't know what to expect, and that was thrilled with the variety of music and the level of performance.

The rest of the weekend featured workshops that also reflected the range of music now played on the cittern - fingerpicking, bottleneck, celtic music and dedillo technique. The curiosity and enthusiasm of the participants really impressed me. Several builders were also there, and here, too, the range of instruments and level of craftsmanship was stunning - everything from early reproductions to traditional waldzithers to semi-acoustic experiments.

This was Martina's last year as chief organizer - the success of this year's symposium is a fitting close to her and Doris Eckhardt's dedication, but I'd also like to add my personal thanks to Martina for great weekend of music and conversation - it was like being in cittern heaven.