

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 77 (2011)  
**Heft:** [1]

**Artikel:** Hackbrett - hammered dulcimer  
**Autor:** [s.n.]  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-943325>

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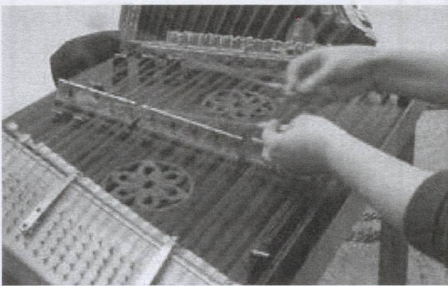
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## Hackbrett - Hammered dulcimer

The hammered dulcimer is a stringed musical instrument with the strings stretched over a trapezoidal sounding board. Typically, the hammered dulcimer is set on a stand, at an angle, before the musician, who holds small mallet hammers in each hand to strike the strings.

The dulcimer's origin is uncertain, but tradition holds it was invented in Persia some 2000 years ago.

Various types of hammered dulcimers are traditionally played in India, Southwest Asia, China and parts of Southeast Asia, Central, Northern and Eastern Europe.



The hammered dulcimer comes in various sizes, identified by the number of strings that cross each of the bridges. The strings of a hammered dulcimer are usually found in pairs, two strings for each note (though some instruments have three or four strings per note). As with a piano, the purpose of using multiple strings

is to make the instrument louder, although as they are rarely in perfect unison, a chorus effect usually results. A hammered dulcimer requires a tuning wrench for tuning, since the dulcimer's strings are wound around tuning pins with square heads.

The strings of the hammered dulcimer are often tuned diatonically.

In the Alps chromatic dulcimers with crossed strings can also be found.

The hammered dulcimer derives its name from the small mallets that players use to strike the strings, called hammers. Hammers are usually made of hard wood, but can also be made from any material, including metal and plastic. The head of the hammer can be left bare for a sharp attack sound, or can be covered with adhesive tape, leather, or fabric for a softer sound. Two-sided hammers are also available, with usually one side bare wood while the other side may be covered in leather or a softer material such as piano felt. *from the internet*

## Where is Wienacht?



Wienacht-Tobel with vineyard; the AR wine grows here

Everybody knows when Wienacht, Christmas, is - but do you know where it is? Geography was never my strongest subject, but I know where Wienacht is, as I grew up within walking distance of this 'Heritage Site of National Significance'. It is half way between Rorschach and Heiden (whose Biedemeier village around the church square is listed as another heritage site of national significance).

Wienacht is a small hamlet with a train station of the Rorschach-Heiden Railway. And one year, when I was about 7 years old, I saw Saint Nicholas gather twigs for Fitze there. I made sure he didn't see me. *tb*

## A forgotten poet: Robert Walser

1878 - 1956

Walser was born in Biel, to a large family. He served an office apprenticeship and then went to Stuttgart and worked at the Cotta'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung. In 1898, the influential critic Joseph Victor Widmann published a series of poems by Walser. In 1904, his first book, 'Fritz Kochers Aufsätze', appeared in the Insel Verlag. Walser's next books were published by Bruno Cassirer, where Christian Morgenstern worked as editor. Robert Musil and Kurt Tucholsky stated their admiration for Walser's prose, and authors like Hermann Hesse and Franz Kafka counted him among their favorite writers.

In the beginning of 1929, Walser went to the Bernese mental hospital Waldau. He soon became better and wrote poems and prose in a diminutive hand, with letters only a millimeter high.

When Walser was, against his will, moved to the sanatorium of Herisau, he quit writing, later telling Carl Seelig he was there to be crazy, not to write. Another reason might have been that with the rise of the Nazis in Germany, his works could no longer be published in any case.

Seelig tried to revive interest in Walser's work by re-issuing some of his writings. Though free of outward signs of mental illness for a long time, Walser repeatedly refused to leave the sanatorium.

Robert Walser loved long, lonely walks. On the 25th of December 1956 he was found in a field of snow near the asylum.

Today, Walser's texts, completely re-edited since the 1970s, are regarded as among the most important writings of literary modernism.

*from the internet*