Entering, Displaying and Finding Tunes in www.volksmusikdatenbank.at

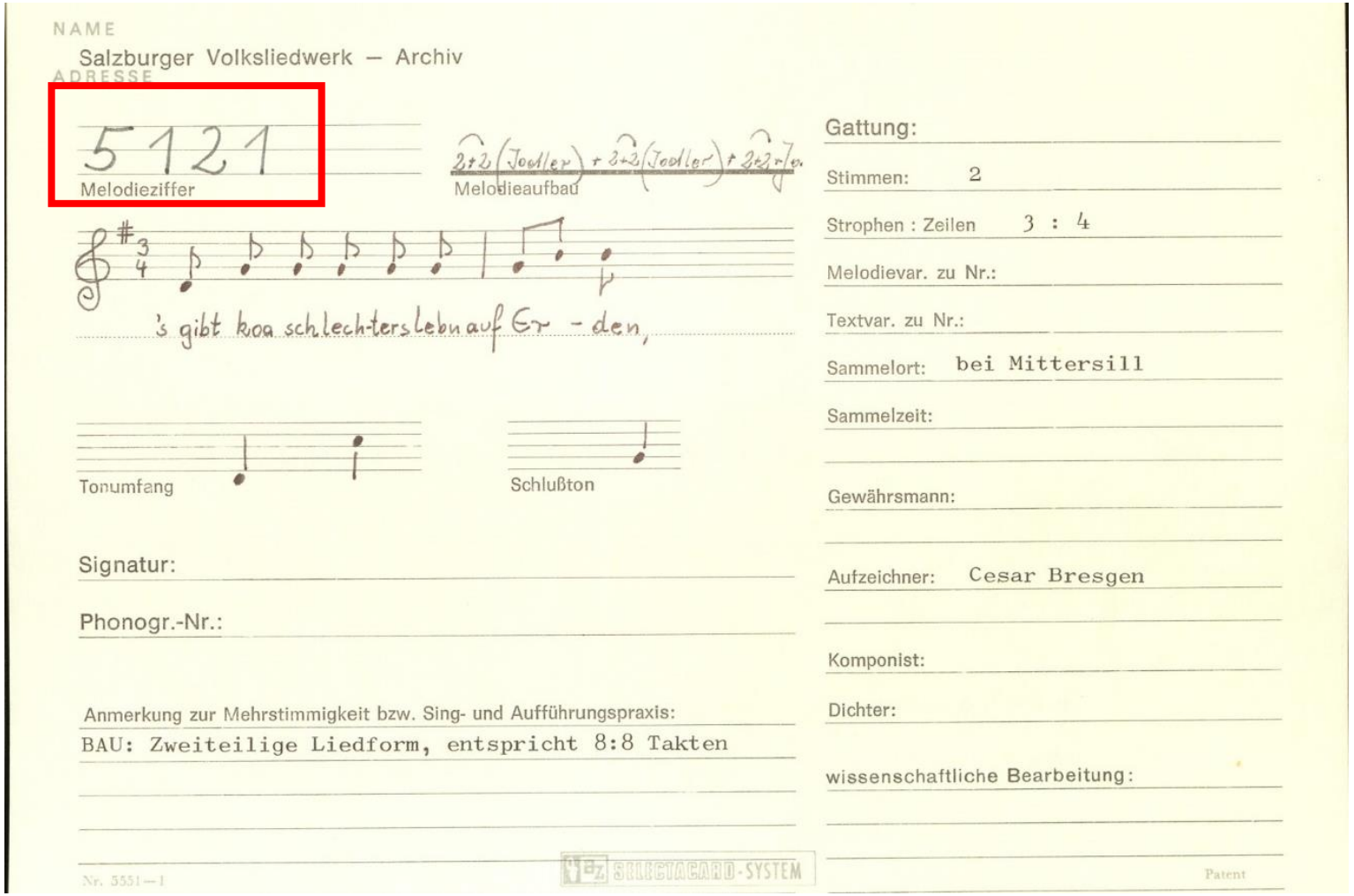
International IAML Congress Salzburg, 6.–11. July 2025

Unipark Nonntal, Friday 11 July 2025

Wolfgang Dreier-Andres

This presentation is dedicated to Prof. Walter Deutsch († 13 January 2025)

Special catalog cards for folksongs (since the 1950ies)



NAME
Salzburger Volksliedwerk – Archiv
ADRESSE

5121
Melodieziffer

2+2 (Jodler) + 3+2 (Jodler) + 2+2 (Jodler)
Melodieaufbau

's gibt koa schlechters Leb'n auf Er - den,

Tonumfang

Schlußton

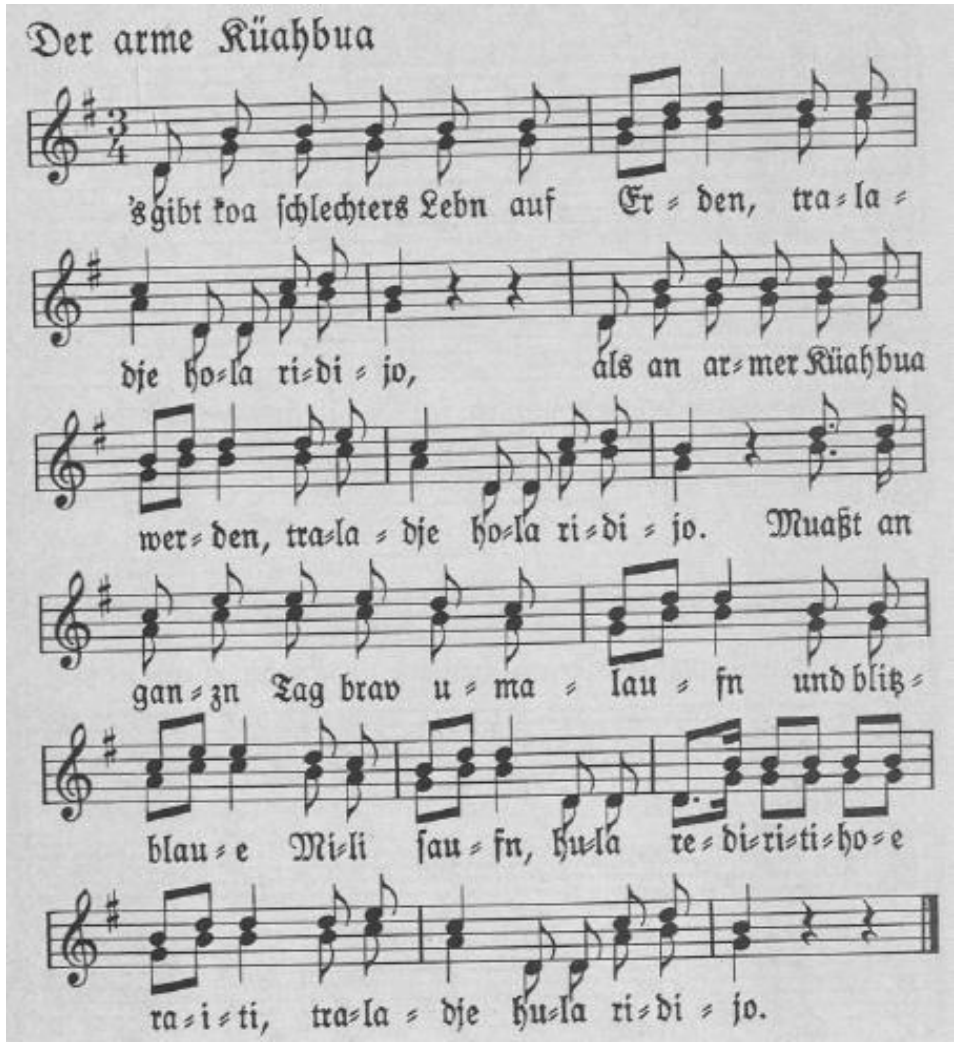
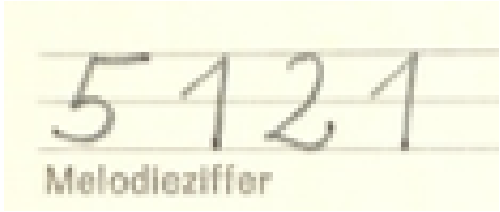
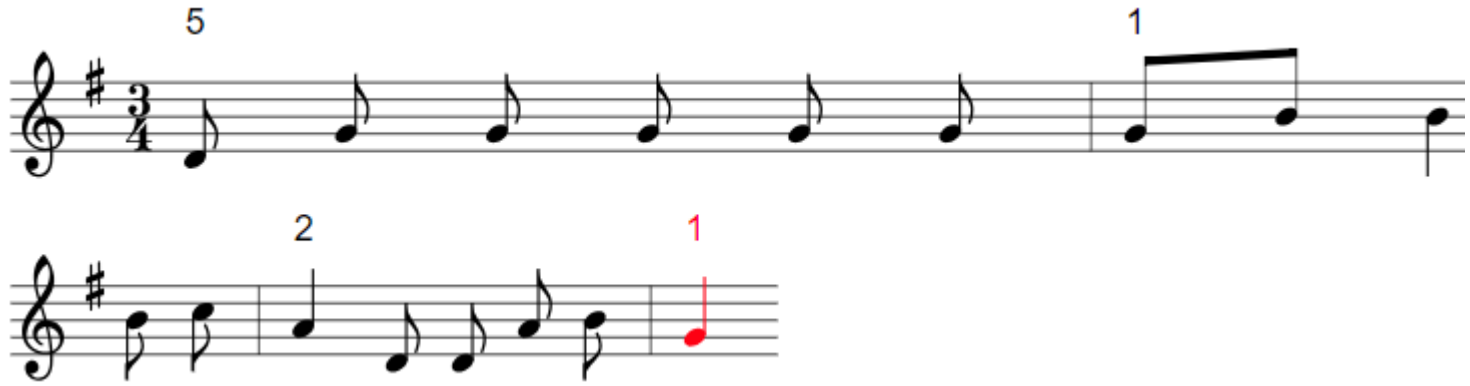
Signatur:

Phonogr.-Nr.:

Anmerkung zur Mehrstimmigkeit bzw. Sing- und Aufführungspraxis:
BAU: Zweiteilige Liedform, entspricht 8:8 Takten

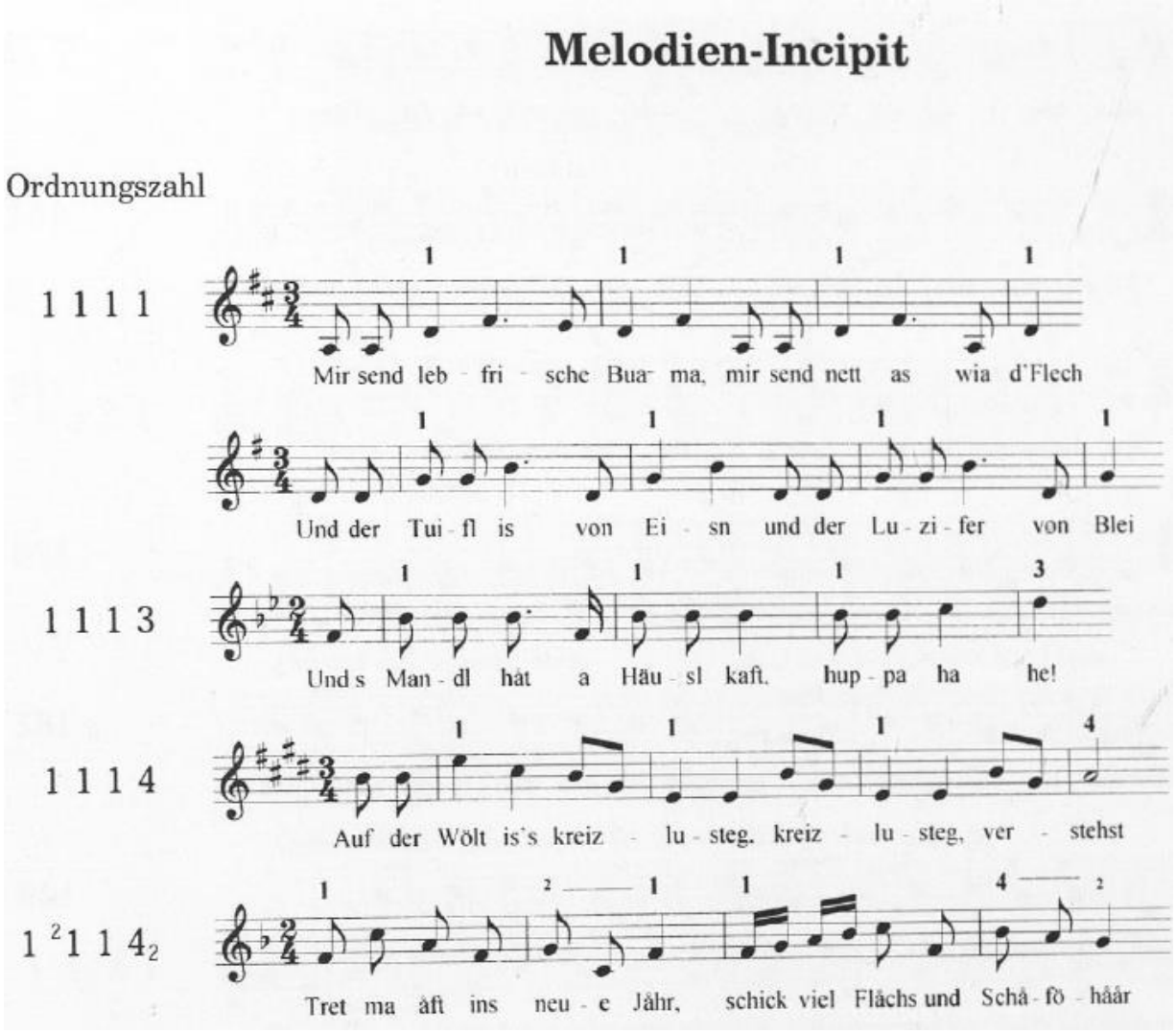
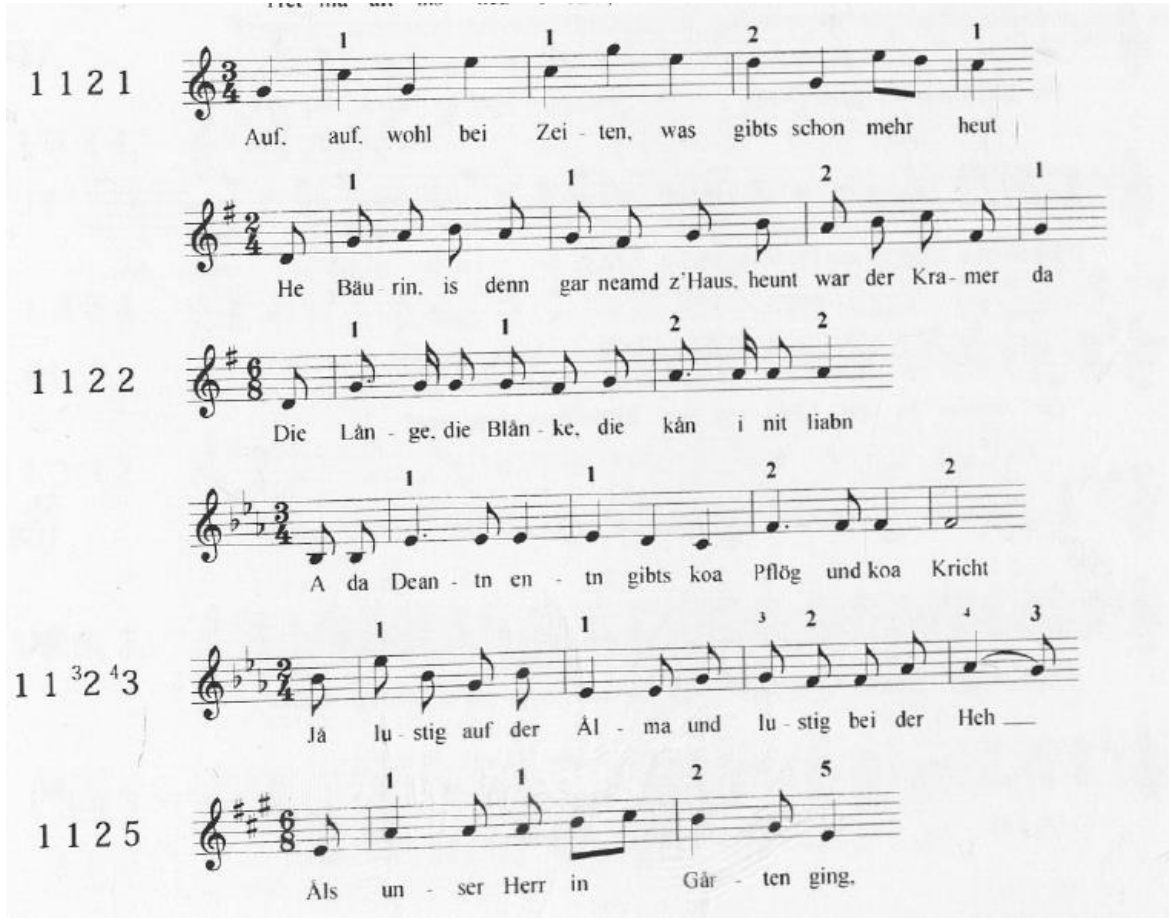
Nr. 5551—1 SELECTACARD-SYSTEM Patent

Gattung:
Stimmen: 2
Strophen : Zeilen 3 : 4
Melodievar. zu Nr.:
Textvar. zu Nr.:
Sammelort: bei Mittersill
Sammelzeit:
Gewährsmann:
Aufzeichner: Cesar Bresgen
Komponist:
Dichter:
wissenschaftliche Bearbeitung:

Ordinal number / „Melodieziffer“



“The figuring of the melody leads to the four-digit ordinal number for the card catalog of the melody register in the first place. Only secondarily, it can embrace the character of the melody, but that‘s not always the case.“

(Deutsch 1958, p. 53 [transl.: W. Dreier-Andres])

Melody register (W. Deutsch)

Parsons Code

„Write a star * for the first note of the tune, then write D if the next note goes down, R if it repeats the last note, or U if it goes up. Ignore trills, grace notes, and other ornaments. Carry on as far as you think necessary, or as far as you can, then look up the coding in alphabetical order, as if you are using a telephone directory. The five-letter groupings are merely to make the sequences easier to read.“
(Parsons/Spencer-Brown 2002, p. 9)

*UDDUU DDDUD UDU **That naughty waltz** • Sol P Levy - 1920
*UDDUU DDDUR RRD **Wheezzy Anna** • Leslie Sarony - 1933
*UDDUU DDDUU UDD **Elizabeth of Glamis** • (Three Elizbeths Suite) Eric Coates
*UDDUU DDDUU UU **Beyond the blue horizon** • Whiting/Harling - 1930
*UDDUU DDDUU UUD **Georgia (on my mind)** • Hoagy Carmichael - 1930
*UDDUU DDUDD UDU **Won't you buy my pretty flowers?** • traditional
*UDDUU DDUDD UUD **The stately homes of England** • Noel Coward - 1938
*UDDUU DDURD UDD **Oh! Darling** • Lennon/McCartney - 1969
*UDDUU DDURD URD **Silent night** • Franz Gruber - 1818
*UDDUU DDUUD DDU **My son, my son, my only one** • Geo le Brunn, music hall
*UDDUU DDUUD DUD **I can't believe that you're in love with me** • Jimmy McHugh - 1926
*UDDUU DDUUD DUD **Scarlet ribbons (for her hair)** • Evelyn Danzig - 1949
*UDDUU DDUUD RUU **Blue skies** • Irving Berlin - 1927
*UDDUU DDUUD UUD **Yearning (just for you)** • Beny Davis/Joe Burke - 1925
*UDDUU DDUUD UUU **Sunrise, sunset** • Jerry Bock - 1964
*UDDUU DDUUR RDU **The German band** • Arthur Lloyd, music hall
*UDDUU DDUUR RUU **There's a pawnshop on the corner** • Bob Merrill
*UDDUU DDUUR UDD **Amoretten Tänze/4** • It, Gung'l - 1846
*UDDUU DDUUU DDD **Don't dilly dally on the way** • Collins/Leigh - 1919
*UDDUU DRDUR DDU **Miss MacLeod's reel** •
*UDDUU DUDDD UUD **Wyoming lullaby** • Gene Williams - 1920
*UDDUU DUDUD DUU **Our love affair** • A Freed/R Edens - 1940
*UDDUU DUDUU DDU **Startime** • Eric Rogers - 1956
*UDDUU DUUDU DDD **Chinatown, my Chinatown** • Jean Schwartz - 1906
*UDDUU DUUUU UDU **Hollyhock** • piano solo, Billy Mayerl - 1927
*UDDUU RDUDD UUD **The last time I saw Paris** • Jerome Kern - 1940
*UDDUU RRDDU UDU **Champagne march** • Geoffrey Henman
*UDDUU RURDR U **Fairy on the clock** • E Reeves/S Myers - 1929
*UDDUU RUUDD UUD **You belong to my heart** • Augustin Lara - 1941
*UDDUU UDDDD UUD **Heigh-ho** • (Snow White) Frank Churchill - 1938
*UDDUU UDDRU DDD **In the good old summer time** • George Evans - 1902
*UDDUU UDDRU DDU **Castanet song** • Bizet
*UDDUU UDDRU DRU **Hi-li-li, hi-lo** • B Kaper - 1952
*UDDUU UDDUD DDD **How can I be sure** • Cavaliere/Brigati - 1967
*UDDUU UDDUD DDU **I cried for you** • Freed/Arnheim/Lyman - 1923
*UDDUU UDDUU UDD **Stage coach** • Eric Winstone - 1941
*UDDUU UDDUU UUD **Hello, Dolly** • Jerry Herman - 1963
*UDDUU UDRRR RUD **I'm Henery the Eighth, I am** • Murray/Weston - 1911
*UDDUU UDUDD DUU **Yankee Doodle - ca 1778** • (chorus) traditional - ca 1778
*UDDUU UDUDD UDD **Over the rainbow** • Harold Arlen - 1939
*UDDUU UDUUU DUD **Caravan** • Gene Williams - 1922
*UDDUU URDDD DUU **My silent love** • Dana Suesse - 1937
*UDDUU UUDDD DDU **How soon** • H Mancini - 1964
*UDDUU UUDRU DDD **Stein song** • E A Fenstad - 1910
*UDDUU UUDUD DUU **Where my caravan has rested** • Hermann Lohr - 1909

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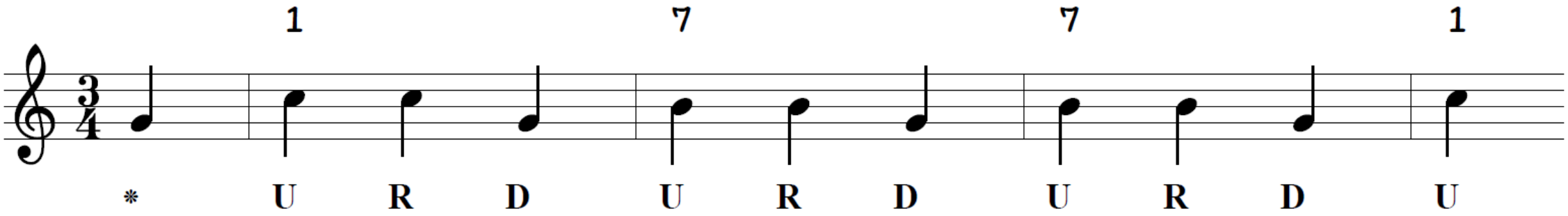
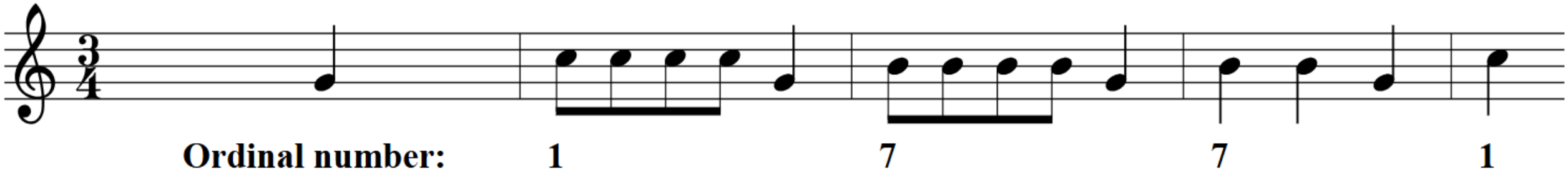
The directory of tunes and musical themes by Denys Parsons, in collaboration with George Spencer-Brown, internat. Edition, Lübeck 2002 (1st Edition Horningsham 1975).

Ordinal number versus Parsons Code



Parsons Code	Ordinal number
pickup measure included	pickup measure ignored
relative	absolute
each note	each bar resp. each half bar (e.g. in 4/4)
digitally processable	not digitally processable (many special cases)

Encoding -> from registers to databases

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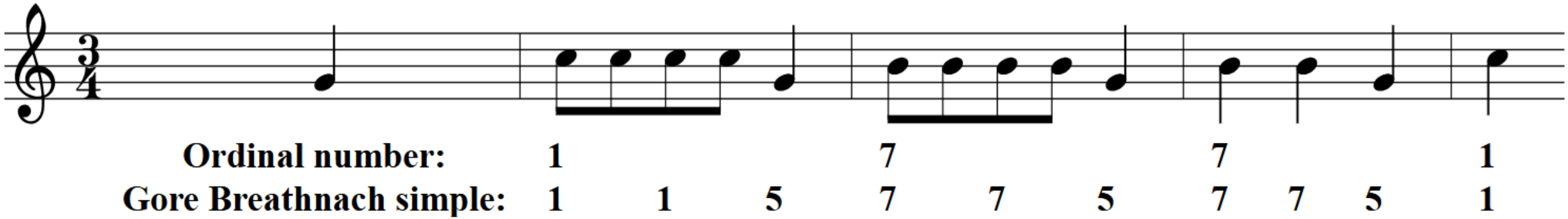
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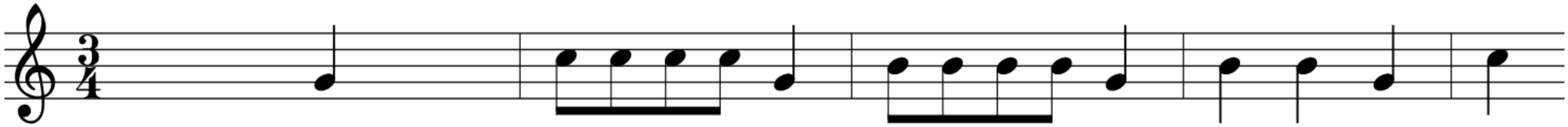
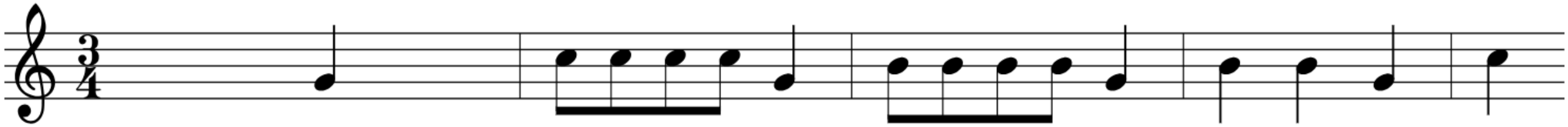

Ordinal number:	**1**					**7**					**7**					**1**				
Gore Breathnach simple:	**1**		**1**		**5**	**7**		**7**		**5**	**7**		**7**		**5**	**1**				
Parsons Code: *	**U**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**D**	**U**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**D**	**U**	**R**			**D**	**U**				

Encoding -> from registers to databases

Ordinal number:	**1**					**7**					**7**				**1**
Gore Breathnach simple:	**1**		**1**		**5**	**7**		**7**		**5**	**7**	**7**	**5**	**1**
Parsons Code: *	**U**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**D**	**U**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**D**	**U**	**R**	**D**	**U**
Parsons Code simple: *	**U**				**D**	**U**				**D**	**U**		**D**	**U**

Digital music notation

- Ideal way: plain text format and free open source software
- encoded music serves as the basis for converters and pattern searches
- Well-known systems (among others):
  - EsAC (Helmut Schaffrath (†), 1980ies: e.g. Essen Folksong Database)
  - ABC-Notation (Chris Walshaw, 1991: e.g. folktunefinder)
  - Lilypond (Han-Wen Nienhuys and Jan Nieuwenhuizen, 1997: e.g. Musipedia)
  - Plaine&Easie Code (library standard for incipits, n.d.: e.g. RISM)

ABC-Notation

abcjs quick editor

▶ Free online sheet music creation.

```
X: 1
M: 3/4
L: 1/4
K: C
G | c c G| B B G | B B G | c
```

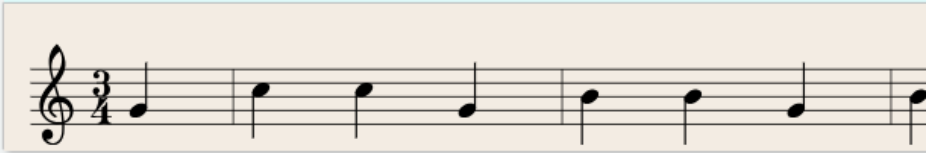
No errors

0:00 100 % (180 BPM)

Download MIDI | Download WAV | Copy Sharable Link To Clipboard

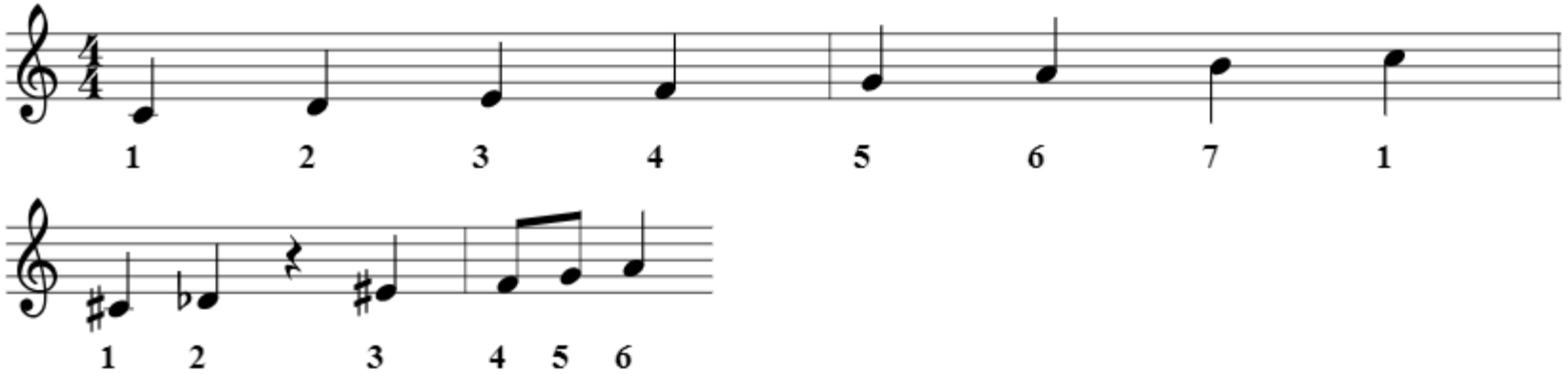
Display witness image

Drag your file here to insert image
or click to browse.



Static search codes used by us

- No algorithm, just a static string for each dataset
- extracted from ABC (manually and/or by script [vb or bash])
- Codes used by us:
  - Parsons-Code
  - „Fingerprint“ (tonal diatonic pitch class)



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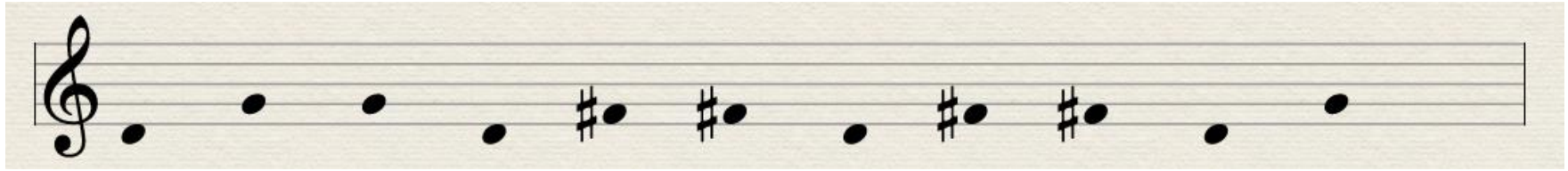
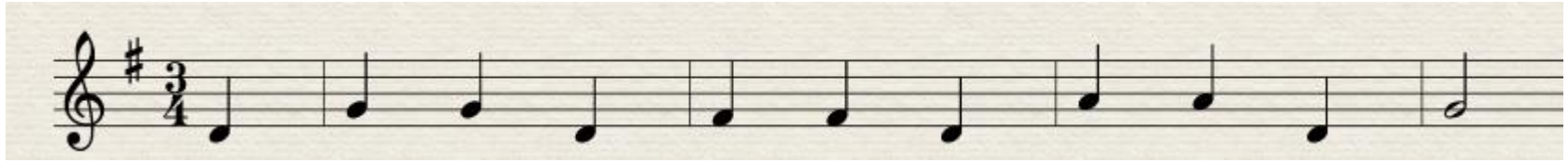
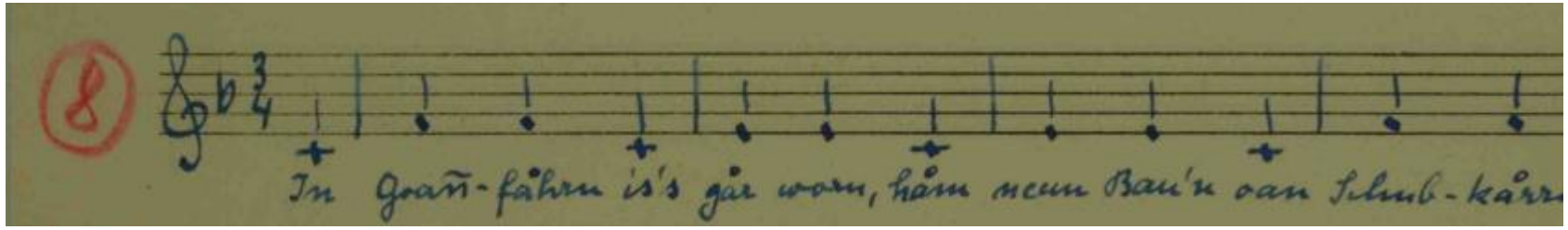
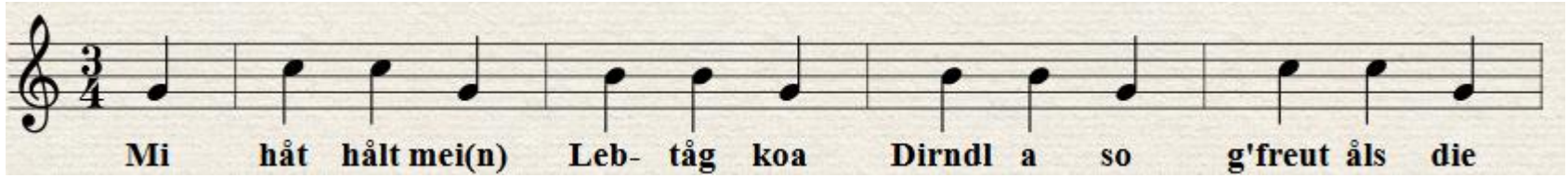
Melody search:



Active checkboxes:

- Parsons-Code
- Incipit

3 results:



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