Olli Soikkelli’s solo on ‘Joseph-Joseph’ Transcription & analysis by Barry Wahrhaftig

‘Joseph-Joseph,’ is a well-known to players and fans of Gypsy Jazz. The Klezmer style song has morphed quite

a bit thru the years, going from pop song to Gypsy Jazz standard, much in the way ‘Bei Mir Bis Du Schӧne’ has.

It was a hit for the Andrew Sisters in 1937, charting at # 18, written by Nellie Casman, Sammy Cahn, and Saul Chaplin.

‘Bei Mir Bis Du Schӧne,’ was # 1 in the US, and was popular all over the world in 1937.[[1]](#endnote-1) Sammy Cahn wrote English Lyrics for ‘Bis Du Schӧne,’ which originally had all Yiddish lyrics. Both songs are great vehicles for Gypsy Jazz players. They are in minor keys, and have a bluesy feel. Most Jazz Manouche players play the songs with slightly different changes and melodies, which is typical of the style.

The Hot Club de Europe’s version is quite nice. It features the guitar playing of Olli Soikkeli and Paulus Schäfer,

from the 2012 release ‘Kouvola Junction.’ [Reviewed in JJG]. For the CD they came up with a very nice arrangement of the piece, combining it with the stunning slow movement from Rodrigo’s ‘Concierto de Aranjuaz.’[[2]](#endnote-2)

The intro for ‘Joseph-Joseph,’ starts at around 2:49:53. The piece is in A minor. Olli’s solo starts with a smokin’ harmonic minor lick, starting two bars before the top of the form at letter ‘A’. He starts with a triplet on an implied E7, [V7], chord, starting on D natural. The Db after the ‘D’ is a passing tone, and the last two quarter notes in bar two are upper and lower neighbors to set up the tonic ‘A’ natural, 1st beat of bar 3. Bar four uses an A minor chord shape, followed by typical enclosure ideas found until bar seven. The enclosure bits work well to add some flavor to the tonic A minor change, which last for four bars. It’s a bit of a challenge to play interesting ideas over changes that are a bit static. [It’s easier to solo over songs that have more changes like ‘Autumn Leaves. More a challenge to create interest and be coherent over fewer changes]. Bars 11-15 are examples of open E ‘Gypsy Dominant sounds, staples of the Jazz Manouche style. Olli uses a partial chromatic scale, starting on the open 6th low ‘E’ in bar 16, ending with a Django-style fast chromatic scale on the 12th fret high ‘E,’ on the 1st string. He plays an A minor chord shape/scale in bar 21, then plays leading tone of A minor [G#], in bar 22, to A natural-Bb in Bar 23. All of that helps to create tension in outlining the change from Ami-A7, especially by the use of the Bb, which is the flat 9 of the A7 chord. [The change of Ami to A7 is typical of Jazz Manouche songs, where the tonic minor becomes the Secondary Dominant of the iv chord]. Nice use of enclosure in bars 25 & 27, [implied dmi-G7 in both 2 bar ideas]. Lower neighbor D# at the end of bar 28 sets up Ami chord shape in bar 30, then ‘A’ Dorian idea at end of bar 30 to bar 31. The notes in Bar 31 basically anticipate the E7 in the next bar, rather than outlining the F7, which is a pretty common device also in this style. It works because of the fast tempo, and it helps to give a sense of forward movement.[[3]](#endnote-3)

Olli is a young virtuoso player from Finland. He has performed with players like Bucky Pizzarelli, Stephane Wrembel, and recently was included in the last Django All-stars show at Birdland, last July. The group was led Samson Schmitt. It was a rare thing to see a player that young throwing fire with Samson’s crew.

Mr Soikkeli will be in the US for a few years, and that’s a good thing for us! He recording with and touring with ‘Rhythm Future,’ a group that includes Violin prodigy Jason Anick, guitar whiz Vinny Raniolo, and bassist Greg Loughman. Their self-titled CD is very good, and the band kicks butt. For CDs and tour dates and bookings go to [www.RhythmFutureQuartet.com](http://www.RhythmFutureQuartet.com) Olli’s website is www.Ollisoikkeli.com

There is a YouTube clip of Paulus and Olli playing their arrangement of the above piece, [not the same solo, but it’s burnin’]! He is playing an AJL Guitar. They are amazing guitars. [I play one too. I am not a paid endorser, they are just killer guitars]. www.AJL-guitars.com

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1. The Andrew Sisters were the biggest selling Girl Group of the 1st half of the 20th Century. ‘Bis Du Shone,’ was such an international hit, it was popular in Germany until Hitler learned that it was of Jewish origin. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The same theme was used by Miles Davis on his ‘Sketches of Spain’ record, and also by Chick Corea as the basis for his iconic piece called ‘Spain.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. I didn’t include the melody to ‘Joseph-Joseph.’ I have a basic chart on my blog. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)