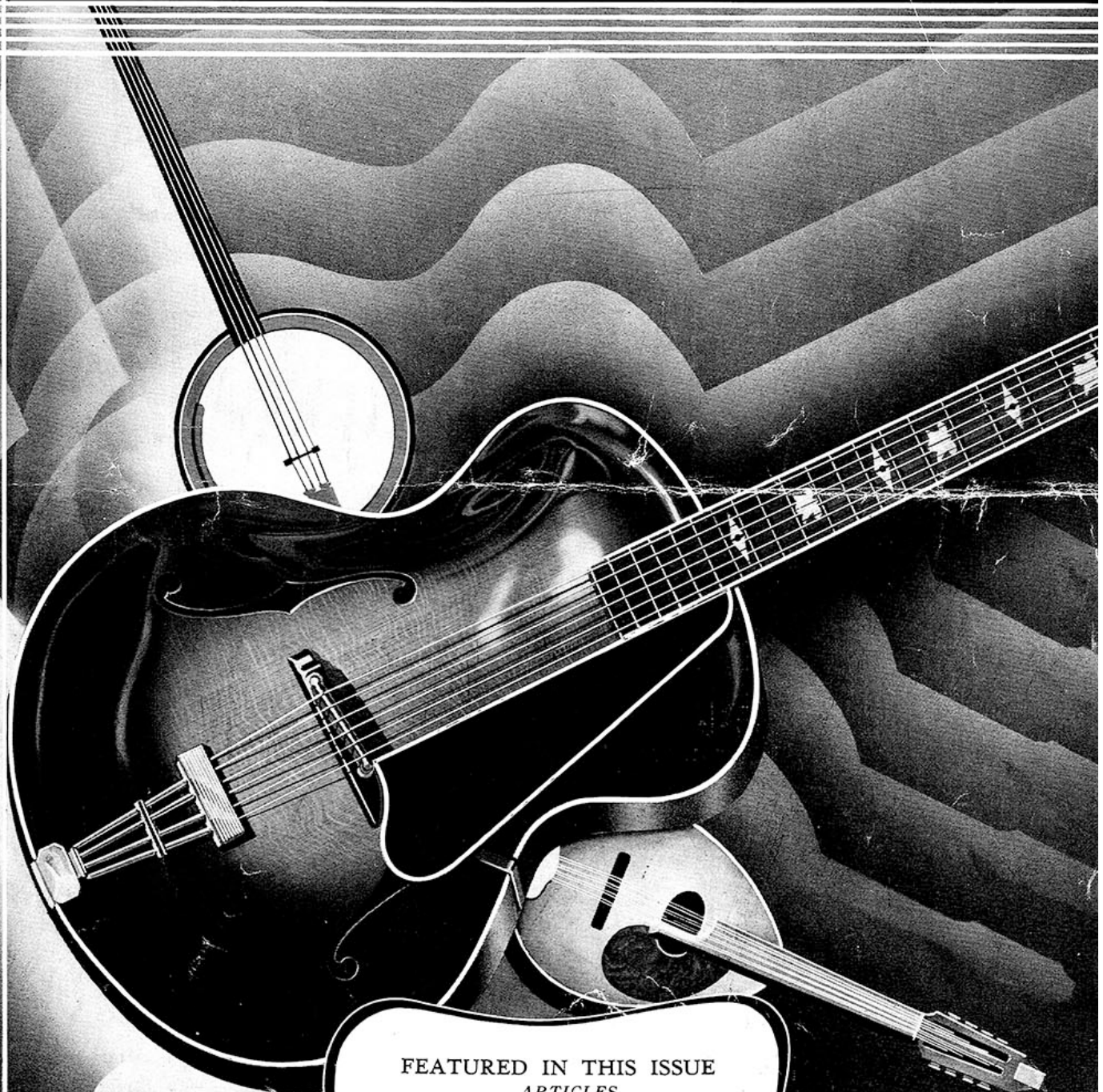


fretted harmony

No. 16

NOVEMBER—DECEMBER, 1938

Price Threepence



FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

ARTICLES

- "UTILITY" PHRASES - - - *Jack Whitfield*
DANCE BAND PRACTICE - - - *Charlie Scott*
BANJO STYLES - - - *Tarrant Bailey, Jr.*

MUSIC

- "TAKE IT EASY" (Tenor Guitar) - - *Barney Wood*
"CHINESE LAUNDRY BLUES" (Hawaiian Guitar)
Cyril de Vekey
"MINIATURE RAG" (Banjo) - - - *K. Enderby*
"BLUE SHELLING" (Plectrum Guitar) *Arthur Ingham*

Plectrum Guitar Music

(with grades of difficulty)

* No piano acc. to these numbers		(a) EASY	(b) MODERATE	(c) DIFFICULT	
a	ADELITA	2.0	c	LOVELESS LOVE	2.0
a	ADIOS MUCHACOS	1.0	c	MELODY MAN'S DREAM	2.0
a	A MEDIA LUZ	1.0	a	MOONGLOW	1.0
b	APRIL KISSES	3.0	a	MOONLIGHT AND YOU	2.0
a	A TELEPHONE CALL	1.0	a	MY FANCY	1.0
a	AT SUNSET	1.0	a	MYSTIC MELODY	1.0
b	AUTUMN HARVEST	2.0	a	NEGRA CONSENTIDA	1.0
a	BANJOLIERS	1.0	b	NIGHTBIRD	1.0
a	BARCAROLLE	2.0	b	NOCTURNE	1.0
b	BASS BLUES	1.0	a	O' MARINARIELLO	2.0
c	BEALE ST. BLUES	2.6	a	ON VENICE WATERS	2.0
a	BEAUTIFUL DREAMLAND	1.0	b	OPERATIC MEMORIES	2.0
b	BED OF ROSES	2.0	c	PARAPHRASE ON RACHMANINOFF'S PRELUDE	2.0
b	BLACK EYES	1.0	b	PEPPER POT	2.0
a	BLACK EYES	1.0	c	PERFECT	2.0
a	BLUE HUES	2.0	b	PETITE SOUBRETTE	1.0
a	BLUE STRINGS	2.0	b	PICK IT AND PLAY IT	2.0
b	BLUENLIED	1.0	a	PICKING THE GUITAR	3.0
a	CHAMPAGNE TANGO	1.0	a	PICKIN' MY WAY	2.0
a	CHOP SUEY	2.0	c	PLAY IT AGAIN	2.0
a	COMMUNITY MEDLEY	2.0	a	QUEJA PAMPERA	2.0
a	CONGO CAPERS	1.0	b	RACHMANINOFF'S PRELUDE	2.0
b	COURANTE MODERNE	2.0			
b	CUBAN SWING	1.0			
b	DAIQUIRI	2.0	b	RAINBOW'S END	3.0
c	DANZON	3.0	c	RED HEELS	1.0
c	DEDICATION (To ED. LANG)	2.0	a	REVERIE BLUES	1.0
a	DEEP HARMONY	1.0	a	RUMBA RHYTHM	1.0
c	EDDIE'S TWISTER	3.0	a	SAILORS DON'T CARE	2.0
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b	ETUDE I	2.0	a	SCOTCH BROTH	2.0
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a	GAY NINETIES	2.0	b	SOLITUDE	1.0
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b	HARRIS IN WONDERLAND	1.0	b	STUDY IN 3	2.0
a	HAVANA MOON	2.0	b	SUGAR	2.0
b	HESITATING BLUES	2.0	c	SUMMER MADNESS	2.0
c	HIGH TEMPERATURE	1.6	b	SWEET MUSIC	2.0
a	HOT COPPERS	2.0	b	SWEET STRINGS	3.0
h	IDIOMENTS	2.0	b	SWINGING THE SCALE	3.0
b	IN 'A'	2.0	a	TANGO DELLE ROSE	1.0
b	INTRODUCTION AND VALSE	2.0	b	TEASING THE Frets	3.0
b	JAZZ ETUDE I	2.0	a	THE BROADSIDE	1.0
b	JUNE MEMORIES	2.0	b	THREE BLIND MICE	2.0
b	JUST A MATTER OF CHORDS	2.0			
c	KALEIDOSCOPE	1.0	a	TODA VA BIEN	1.0
a	LA BORRACHITA	1.0	b	TWO GUITARS	1.0
b	LACRIME	1.0	a	TWO GUITARS	1.6
b	LA CHAPARRITA	1.0	b	VENETIA	2.0
b	LA PALOMA	1.0	a	VODKA	2.0
b	LA PALOMA	1.0	b	VOLPETTE	2.0
a	LA SERENATA	1.0	a	WANDERLUST	1.0
b	LA SPAGNOLA	2.0	b	WEEK-END	2.0
a	LESLIE STUART MEDLEY	2.0	a	WEEH YOU AND MY GUITAR	1.0
a	LAUGHING GUITAR	1.0	c	WYOMING JOE	1.0
a	LIEBESTRAUME	1.0			
a	LONDONDERRY AIR	1.0	c	YANKEE DOODLE PLAYS A FUGUE	1.0
			b	YELLOW DOG BLUES	2.0

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:: INSTRUMENTS ::

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No. 16

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1938

Price Threepence

— TARRANT BAILEY Jr. STARS —

THE photo herewith was taken at the rehearsal of the Paramount Stage Show, at the Paramount Theatre, Birmingham, which was produced by Leslie Holderness to celebrate the anniversary of the opening of the theatre by Sydney Howard in 1937. Tarrant Bailey, Jr. (in white shirt, to left of photo), was the star of this show, which broke all financial records of previous stage or film shows at this theatre. The cast of eighty people included a band of thirty-five which featured a banjo section directed by Tarrant Bailey, Jr., the players being Fred Taylor (known mainly as a crack guitarist), Ronald Oddy (see elsewhere in this issue), and Frank Thompson (instructor at Kay Westworths. Messrs. Kay Westworth rendered valuable help and publicity to the banjo, featuring a fine window display in conjunction with the show, and exhibiting one of the new Abbott Monarchs such as were used by Tarrant Bailey and his pupils Messrs. Taylor and Oddy on the Paramount stage, and which aroused a great deal of interest and excited admiration amongst local players. By the time this is in print, this "Monarch" and many other new sensational Abbott models will be available to the public.

IN NEW PARAMOUNT STAGE SHOW



"GUITAR SOLO" COMPETITION

TWENTY-FIVE entries for the Competition announced in last issue were received, five of which were good, and the others . . . well, we'll just let it go at that! Of the five selected for reviewing, it was exceedingly difficult to decide which effort was the best. None of the compositions were suitable for publication in their presented form, and in the case of the winner (Mr. Arthur Ingham of Boarshurst, Greenfield, Oldham, Lancs), slight alterations in both harmony and melody were necessary before publication was possible.

Originality was sadly lacking in all efforts (including Mr. Ingham's), and judging had to be based almost entirely on phrase procedures and selection of harmonies. Bar 5 of Mr. Ingham's "Blue Shelling" showed

greatest possibilities, and the middle sixteen bars of this arrangement were fairly well phrased.

"Rhythm-Mania," by Walter H. Seabrook. Quite as good as "Blue Shelling," but not a "blues" as specified! A good rhythm number, original in parts, but middle eight bars flavours somewhat of "I Saw Stars." There is no harm in using the chord sequences that have been hackneyed since time immemorial from the jazz classics to present-day popular tunes, in fact, the novice composer would do well to base his melodies on these, striving for greater originality later on. Far better do this than stumble on the first chord that occurs to him. Intro. of "Rhythm Mania" is good. Harmony of Bar 4 of chorus is not incorrect, but A.7 would be "more" correct, and sound better; no need to change melody here. G.7 harmony is

right for Bar 6, but melody line is bad. Better to play this bar on G.9 chord, using melody note E on first string, down to D. Suggest C and C dim. chords for Bar 7, leading to G.7 in next bar. These symbol references to harmony are, of course, only a matter of convenience, and concern the fundamental chords only. Useful criticisms are very difficult here, and future competitors would do well to bear in mind that manuscripts are returned bearing suggestions and alterations of the judges.

"Sincerity," by H. G. Morden.

A very "sincere" and pleasing contribution, but definitely not a "blues" or rhythm number. Had the competition been for the best easy and tuneful guitar composition in common time, Mr. Morden would have won! However, it wasn't! There are a few

(cont. on page 13)

RECORDS

REVIEWED



TERRY USHER

There are so many records this time, that I have had the deuce of a job to discriminate between them from the point of view of eliminating those for which there isn't room in this Review. Mark you, this is most definitely *not* a complaint: the more the merrier, so far as I am concerned, for it points to the continued increase in the popularity of the guitar as a solo instrument.

I suppose we must start our list with:—

H.M.V. B.8778. "Eddie's Blues."

Eddie South (Violin) accompanied by Django Reinhardt.

Eddie shows himself the master of Grappelly on this disc, though I still deem Eddie inferior to the king of all rhythmic violinists, Stuff Smith (not forgetting Venuti, who is not the inspired player he was, now that Ed Lang has gone). Django plays a lovely eight-in-a-bar accompaniment in bass and chords, which irresistibly reminds me of the one and only Eddie Lang. Even his tone and chord changes, though not cribbed note for note, are of the authentic Lang idiom. Here and there, however, there creeps in an alien chord shape to remind us it is Django, not Eddie, who is with us. Take particular note of the grand guitar coda! The reverse, "Sweet Georgia Brown," hasn't the same strong appeal, but then I was always a "blues" fan! This is a record for the collection!

'Scene' in Hyde Park, Crisis Week



Guitarist: "Say Bill, is that a 'Dual-purpose' pick?"
Bill: "Yus, both ends!"

COLUMBIA F.B.2010. "You couldn't be Cuter." Ray Noble.

Those who are stirred by Goodman and yet appreciate Ambrose will find their ideal in the new Ray Noble band, and as an introduction to the Noble style, I couldn't recommend a better record than this. It comes in strongly with a beautiful guitar introduction in Van Eps' own inimitable manner, and a pleasing four-bar break precedes the vocal. Ray Noble intelligently uses Van Eps as the asset to the band which he undoubtedly is as a solo guitarist.

PARLOPHONE R.2562. Boswell Sisters singing "Dinah" with Guitar accompaniment.

This re-issued disc is likely to be new to the majority of guitarists, and features, or I'm a Dutchman, the late Dick McDonough in an accompaniment which except for the tonal quality is worthy of Lang, plus, of course, Dick's own not-to-be-underestimated ideas into the bargain. This is a record not to be missed.

In addition to the above, there are two further re-issues on Parlophone Rhythm Style Series:—

No. 181/2. *Feelin' My Way.*
Picking My Way.

Ed. Lang and Carl Kress.

These guitar duets are the best known rhythmic duets issued to date, and to listen to the playing of their composers is to appreciate just how they *should* be played.

No. 177/178. *Beating the Dog: Kicking the Cat.* Venuti's Blue Four.

This record represents the Blue Four in one of their wilder moments, in which it was every man for himself. Many say that this record marked the highest point reached by jazz of the more spontaneous type. In any case, no one should fail to add it to the collection.

COMPETITION WINNER

Arthur Ingham, winner of the Plectrum Guitar Solo Competition, whose own composition, "Blue Shelling," appears in this issue is engaged in the engineering industry, and began his fretted activities some eleven years ago on the ukulele. He graduated from this to the Tenor Banjo, and for several years was busy with local amateur dance band playing, entering the Oldham Dance Band Contest in 1932, and winning the individual prize as the best banjoist. Tiring of band playing he became interested in the Hawaiian guitar, purely for home amusement, and two years later acquired a Plectrum Guitar, which has remained his "pet" instrument ever since.

The Editor's Column

COMPETITION

Full details and results of the Guitar Solo Competition announced in the last issue of *Fretted Harmony* appear on another page. This was such a success that we are encouraged to hold another—this time for the best accompaniment to an evergreen all plectrum guitarists should know by heart—"Dinah."

Similar rules will apply, but for the benefit of new readers I will repeat them: featured accompaniment only on one chorus of "Dinah," medium tempo, any key, approximately "B" grade (intermediate technical standard). The winner will receive a voucher value 10s. 6d., with which he may purchase any goods to this amount from the Besson catalogues. Efforts must arrive at the editorial office not later than December 2nd. Competitors must be either amateurs or semi-pros, and not professionals. Although only one prize, *all* contributions which "come near the mark" will be reviewed by the judges (Archie Slavin, Terry Usher and myself) in *Fretted Harmony* No. 17.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

So earnest in the desire to promote fretted interest, and sincere in the belief that *Fretted Harmony* can best do this, a number of our readers have gone a step beyond introducing this paper to their friends, neighbours, acquaintances and business colleagues by sending us Gift Subscriptions.

Such splendid co-operation has encouraged us to include in this and future issues a special Gift Subscription Coupon, showing special rates for the donor.

ARCHIE SLAVIN

Thanks to all those readers who wrote in appreciation of Archie Slavin's article, "What to Practice." Armed with these letters, I have been able to persuade Archie to get busy with more, the first to appear in forthcoming issue of *Fretted Harmony*.

APOLOGY

Tarrant Bailey, Jr., asks me to apologize on his behalf for being unable to announce the Banjo Solo Competition in this issue as promised—pressure of so much professional work affording him no time for the necessary arrangements. Full details of this competition, however, will appear in "Banjo Comments" of next issue for certain.

"GIFT"

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"BLUE SHELLING"

Plectrum Guitar Solo by Arthur Ingham

The musical score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes with various fret numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) and a 'TO CODA' marking. The second staff continues the melody with similar notation. The third staff includes a 'TO CODA' marking and a 'CODA' section. The fourth and fifth staves conclude the piece with final notes and fret markings.

"UTILITY PHRASES" by JACK WHITFIELD cont. from page 6

Incidentally, you will find this chord can be played at the first, fifth and ninth positions—but that is a subject for another talk. The same applies to other chords, and if you investigate these for yourself, you'll find it most interesting.

To revert to your "tune," you now have the notes F, A, C, D, and C sharp (or D flat) on which to build.

If you examine Ex. 1, you will see one tune which you might use.

Ex. 2 shows a fill-in built on the C seventh chord—containing the actual notes of the chord, and an added note—in this case the "ninth" (D).

Ex. 3 deals with the augmented chord, and Ex. 4 with the diminished seventh chord. Analysing the examples, you will find the phrases are constructed of the harmonies of the chord, and "added" notes.

These examples are designed for simplicity. I have marked them fully to this end, and would advise alternate up and down stroking. Practise them hard, playing slowly at first, and repeat each example backwards. Such examples not only serve to improve your knowledge and add to your repertoire of useful phrases, but (what is as important as anything) afford good training for both hands.

Now a word about their use. "Moderation in all things" is as good a maxim in guitar filling-in or improvising, as in anything else. If you memorize these phrases parrot-like, and churn out Ex. 1 when you come across an F chord, Ex. 2 when you meet a C7 chord, and so on—this article will have been wasted on you.

Firstly, you can alter the phrasing to suit different measures of time; secondly, you can, by playing in different positions, make them suit other keys. In performing the latter function, don't do it mechanically. If you play the first example, say, in G, by using the same sequence two frets higher, write out the phrase as you finger it. By doing this you will consolidate your knowledge of the finger board, as well as of the new key.

What else can you do? You can build new phrases of your own—that is most important of all. I have purposely dealt with only the top three strings, not because I couldn't have gone further, but because I am leaving you to do a little for yourself. Try and incorporate phrases on the bottom three strings—again, as well as giving you more "utility" phrases, this will improve your general knowledge.

And now, if you have begun to be interested in this new aspect of playing, get hold of a copy of the Jan.-Feb. (1938) and study Terry Usher's article on improvisation—worth the price of a year's subs in itself.

I have tried to tempt your appetite with an easily digestible morsel. The full meal has already been cooked, and I'm not going to waste space by cooking it again. If you find these examples a little difficult at first, remember how, when you picked up your guitar for the first time, you would have sworn it was humanly impossible to play a four-finger major chord—and go to it again.

If you are still having difficulty in memorizing your finger-board, draw a diagram of it, mark each fret with its note, and

have it beside you when you are playing.

A word to the dance band boys. When you embark upon filling-in, your first and foremost idea will be to introduce them on the stand. Well, if you do, drag your pianist into a corner and come to a gentleman's agreement, as to who is going to fill in, and when. If he wants to flourish, let him, and you stick to your chords. If he doesn't mind sticking to the rhythm now and again, there's your chance. But don't fill in haphazardly, because you'll find that his ideas as to the best phases and your ideas are not the same, and in any case, if you're playing against the piano and a bevy of the front line blow-boys, you're wasting energy, because you can't be heard . . . unless you commandeer the mike.

Ex. 5. The first four bars are built on a sequence which you played in your first hill-billy and have met umpteen times since. I want you to notice the second and third bars particularly, paying due attention to the accented notes, and I think you will find them a tuneful, if straightforward fill-in, and a useful one too. Again, though the passage is written in waltz time, you can adapt it to other measures. And what I said about the pianist still goes.

Finally, a word of thanks to those who wrote in appreciation of my last article. But we (that's the Editor and me) want brickbats (if any) as well as bouquets, so if you don't like these articles . . . we can take it! Remember, the best way to get what you want is to ask for it, but the Editor can't give you what you want in "Fretted Harmony" unless he *knows* what you want. And you can send a postcard for a penny.

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“ TAKE IT EASY ”

TENOR GUITAR or MUTED TENOR BANJO SOLO

(Specially composed for "Fretted Harmony")

By
BARNEY WOOD

The musical score is written for tenor guitar or muted tenor banjo. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Fingering numbers (1-4) are indicated throughout. There are also some performance markings such as 'Snap' and '8va' (octave). The score concludes with a double bar line.

IT CHEERED UP LOST EXPLORERS!

I SAW a banjo to-day (writes a representative of the *Evening News*), but it isn't an ordinary banjo and the man who owns it, Dr. L. D. A. Hussey, Clapham Road, Wandsworth, is not an ordinary man.

This banjo has frightened Antarctic penguins, has cheered a band of Polar explorers marooned for six solid months on an ice floe in sub-zero weather, and has guaranteed its player a passport of safety in the event of a "holy war" in the Sudan.

All said and done, that is quite a record for any musical instrument, and has possibly never been equalled by anything but the bagpipes!

Dr. Hussey, who is 47, twice accompanied Sir Ernest Shackleton on South Polar expeditions and played by request on this same weather-beaten instrument to that famous explorer.

"I went on Sir Ernest's Antarctic expedition in 1914-16," he said to-day. "We lost the ship, the *Endurance*, when it was crushed by the ice in October, 1915. The vessel had been crushed just like you would crush a matchbox in your hand, when Sir Ernest raced aboard for the last time. He grabbed the banjo, which was not damaged. It was pretty well all we did manage to save.

"Well, I played that banjo through Christmas for six straight months before we were picked up. When I played ordinary music the penguins didn't seem to mind. Then I played Scottish music, and they ran away in horror!

"Shackleton called the banjo 'vital mental medicine,' and said that he'd rather have had that thing than food!"

Dr. Hussey recalled an expedition to the Sudan twenty-five years ago with the late Sir Henry Wellcome. "I had this same banjo," he remarked. "The natives wouldn't come within 30 yards of me while

I was playing. They thought it was the devil.

"They loved it, but they were dead scared of it. They promised me that if another 'holy war' broke out, as in General Gordon's time, I and my banjo would get through safely. (Cont. Col. 1. next page)

ISSUED SINCE 1903

B.M.G.

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IT CHEERED UP LOST EXPLORERS

(Cont. from page 7)

"I took another banjo when I went in the *Quest* with Sir Ernest Shackleton to the South Pole in 1921.

"The night before Sir Ernest died he called me into his cabin at 11 o'clock, and asked me to play some of the old tunes. At three o'clock the next morning, January 4th, he suffered a sudden heart attack and died.

"It hasn't any tone now, but—" here the doctor patted the autographed head and drew his hands idly across the strings—"it's a wonderful souvenir."

"Opinions" SIFTED by the EDITOR

From RAY HIGGINS, West Bromwich.

Here's a photograph of four enthusiastic readers of *Fretted Harmony*, generally known as the "South Sea Islanders"! Other readers may be interested in the following details concerning our activities in West Bromwich and district—so here goes: the Quartet is led by myself on the Hawaiian electric guitar (my own make and design!); James Mansell is the plectrum guitarist, using an Aristone LW3 Model (he says there's no finer instrument on the market, regardless of price; the ease of action and wide tonal range is most useful in a combination of our type, and the solo choruses which Jim frequently features certainly bear this out). The player of the Hawaiian Ukulele is Bill Teddington. Vocal items are by our bass player, Selwyn Ray. We're kept busy right through the season with cabaret, dance and variety work, much to the annoyance of several conventional dance band outfits!

(Photograph on page 5. Ed.)

From KURT SCHULZ, Stargarder Str. 39, Berlin N.58.

I am a professional musician, and as a very enthusiastic reader of your magazine, I want you to do me a great favour. It is my wish to correspond direct with a plectrum guitarist who can write and understand German, and if you could publish this wish of mine and my address in *Fretted Harmony* I should be greatly indebted to you. It may interest other readers to know that I have *Fretted Harmony* translated for me, every issue, which costs a lot more than I can really afford! But I think it's worth it, and that's all that matters.

From J. F. NICKERK, 4 Malan Street, South Africa.

I am one of the overseas readers of *Fretted Harmony*, and have enjoyed every edition you have published. Although interested in all fretted instruments, I am actually a Tenor Banjo player, and, naturally enough, would like to see "something" for this instrument in your columns. I see that other readers have written in asking for what they want, so here's a cry, even if a distant one, on behalf of Tenor lovers. . . . "Don't give the Plectrum Guitar ALL the breaks!"

We have persuaded Barney Wood, that fine all-round fretted player, to write a series of modern style Tenor Guitar (or muted Tenor banjo) solos, specially for "Fretted Harmony." The first one is in this issue; how's that for service?—ED.

From H. G. HORNBY, Boscombe, Bourne mouth.

I was disappointed when I first noted your intentions to provide material for all fretted instruments, but subsequent issues soon proved that you hadn't forsaken the Plectrum Guitar in any way. In fact, what you said in the first place has come to be true—it has enhanced the interest of the paper and the additional support got us sixteen pages. There is more guitaristic matter now in *Fretted Harmony* than in our lost friend *The Modern Guitarist*!

"*Modern Guitarist*" isn't lost . . . you'll find it nestling under "Fretted Harmony" caption on page 3.—ED.



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REPORT on RECENT BROADCASTS of "PETER SLOANE'S GUITAR TRIO"

(Personnel: PETER SLOAN, TERRY USHER, HAROLD EARL, with HURST TOPHAM at the piano.)

THE second broadcast of the Peter Sloan Guitar Trio took place recently and the general opinion, with which I quite agree, was that the Trio had been able to effect an improvement upon their first broadcast.

The balancing was much better, though still leaving something to be desired, and the arrangements had been "cleaned up" so far as the second parts and accompaniments

were concerned, giving a much more snappy rendering in all the concerted items. The pianist, Hurst Topham, did not play in any of the guitar numbers except the rumba, and it was demonstrated once more than piano tone and guitar tone do not mix well, as this rumba was the most confused from an accompaniment standpoint, of all the items in this broadcast.

Especially notable was the arrangement of *Blue Skies* for three guitars, which was an outstanding success from all points of view; it is the first time this type of arrangement

has been attempted on three plectrum guitars over the air from a British station, and we want more, please, Mr. Sloan!

The complete programme is given below:

The third, and definitely the most successful, broadcast of the Trio was given on Monday, October 10th. For the first time the balance was perfect, and the difference this made was astounding! It changed the whole aspect of the arrangements and demonstrated how really good they must have been in the other broadcasts, but ruined by the poorly balanced effect. Reports on this broadcast contain hardly any criticisms except that the programme didn't last long enough, and this of course is for the B.B.C. to answer.

An excellent arrangement of *Love Walked In* pleased those who like a sweet melody with a lilting rhythm behind, and in this number the beautiful tone of Terry's Aristone "Crown" was most evident (Terry played the solo in this and in the classical minuet). An ultra-modern version of *Between the Devil and the Deep*, an old favourite from the rhythmic point of view, was given by Peter Sloan, accompanied by Terry, and we must congratulate Peter on its fine phrasing. Terry played with confident touch that beautiful air the *Gavotte from "Mignon,"* to an excellent accompaniment by Harold Earl, and Harold himself took the lead in that old favourite tango, *La Comparsita*. Hurst Topham played piano in solos only—and they were live-wire solos too—and a welcome guest artist was Komoku, the Hawaiian guitarist, who gave a most tasteful rendering of his own composition, *Lonely*, which featured some amazing artificial harmonics. We hope to hear this trio on the air again in a few weeks' time—keep your eye on the *Radio Times*. (Len Williams)

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BANJO COMMENTS by TARRANT BAILEY Jr.

SIGNS that the keenly anticipated recovery and boom of the banjo is at hand, are manifesting themselves. Fretted instrument teachers are reporting that whereas one year ago nineteen out of every twenty new pupils was a guitarist, one quarter of their enquiries now come from banjoists, and the house of Besson is able to inform readers that far more Abbott banjos have been sold since January than in the two preceding years put together. Small traders who formerly displayed only the guitar family are again introducing the banjo into their windows. This should make grand reading for banjoists.

A Foolish Misconception

which may possibly have prevented some of the younger and more sensitive prospective banjoists from joining the playing ranks is a belief that to be studious is to be unmanly. I well remember that at school, when I was already broadcasting, and recording for a French company, that until I exercised a little violence to correct the impression, I was regarded as something of a cissie because I preferred to practise rather than wallow in mud on a football field. It quite beats me how a nation that finds such satisfaction in a reputation for sportsmanship, and whose people spend so much time in training the body, can (generally speaking) so rejoice in sloppy and uncultured minds. I can appreciate the scientific craftsmanship exercised by a well-trained football team as well as anyone, and I do not see why others should not appreciate the scientific craftsmanship of a well-played banjo solo. Yet countless thousands will attend football matches every week this winter, whereas the total number of people at fretted instrument concerts in a year is insignificant. Moreover, your man in the street can distinguish the difference



between good and bad football, billiards, etc., but is quite unable to do so in any of the arts, as illustrated by the way bad banjo playing is put over by showmanship. Observe also that it is the most stupid man, who most needs education, who boasts "the public (himself) wants to be entertained, not educated." Revelling in ignorance is that man's hobby.

A writer who has recently assumed an extremely ill-fitting mantle of authority regarding matters banjorial has advocated

that the finger banjo be brought "up to date" by the removal of what he fondly terms "that nauseating octave string." This "advice" comes from the same gentleman who solicited my support to an article of his entitled "Hands off the Spanish Guitar" (in *Rhythm*, April, 1933) when a number of people were advocating a four- rather than six-string plectrum guitar. Of course, the writer's performance on the banjo may be none the worse for his abandoning a few strings, but I do most earnestly suggest that next time he suffers from nausea he would be wiser to suspect constitutional disorder rather than blame the octave string.

As many of you know, I always do anything I can to help banjoists and the banjo cause, but I find some players rather ungrateful in exploiting my reputation in this respect. I am only too pleased to do any banjoist a good turn, such as dropping him a short note to help him over some difficulty. I cannot, however, enter into what is virtually a free correspondence course of lessons, nor shall I repeat my line of action in cases similar to two I will mention. The first was an application from a young man out of work, asking for "one of my old banjos, not more than thirty shillings" (my old banjos are the ten-year-old Abbott, and fifteen-year-old Weaver in which I broadcast), but eventually I sent him a 'jo at a loss to myself. The second was an application from a reader asking me to write the names of chords on a medley of some sixteen choruses, which, owing to his financial position, I also did free. In neither of these cases was any sign of gratitude forthcoming, and to save any misunderstanding I must now point out that in future I must put all such services under a business heading, regardless of all conditions.

RONALD ODDY



THIS month I am happy to introduce to readers two young banjoists whom I feel certain are at the outset of distinguished careers with the instrument. Both are under nineteen, but have considerable experience of public playing.

Rex Downes, a brilliant finger style performer, has won an enviable reputation as a concert performer in the neighbourhood of

his home, Midsomer Norton, Somerset, and plays first banjo with the Bath Banjo Band, and is a prominent soloist in the local banjo club. His clean picking and rapid technique do full justice to the difficult numbers in his repertoire, including as it does solos such as Patrol Comique.

STARS OF THE FUTURE

Ronald Oddy, who is pictured with his new Monarch de luxe Abbott banjo, was playing last week in the banjo trio which was a feature of the big orchestra in the Birmingham Paramount Birthday Week Stage Show, and which accompanied me in my banjo solo act also. Ronald, a grand plectrum player, does not worry about the fact that the banjo has ceased to find its place in gig bands, and instead of bemoaning this, he has set to work and outdone many gigsters in his profitable club and concert connection in the neighbourhood of his home, 37 Far Gosford Street, Coventry. In this work he is aided by also having a bass-baritone voice, which he uses to fine advantage with his own banjo accom-

REX DOWNES



paniments. But Ronald is no faking showman; with A and B diplomas to his credit he might be satisfied, but will not until he has the coveted C.

Congratulations Rex, Congratulations Ronald. Shall look forward to hearing you on the air some time.—Tarrant Bailey, Jr.

"MINIATURE RAG"

Banjo Solo by E. Enderby

BANJO STYLES by TARRANT BAILEY, Jr.

IN previous articles I have pointed out that apart from the numerous types of banjos, banjolins, and banjuleles, etc., there are almost as many different styles of playing on these instruments as there are leading exponents of them. One of these must be the model upon which you found your own playing, and I propose to show you the ideas which influenced my own choice, in order that you may be guided in cultivating your own style.

Now in the first place we obviously have two distinct schools of thought in the banjo world, one of which takes the banjo to its heart for its delightful happy-go-lucky staccato and brilliant tonal characteristics, and whose leading exponents constantly strive for even more clean-cut crisp attack.

The other regards this snappy tone as a limitation and spends the biggest part of its time in trying to overcome it. In the first line of thought is Reser, and in the second is Harvey, who told me that he was constantly striving to obtain legato effect, his argument being that all standard music, other than banjo music, contains sustained phrases. It is obvious that this divergence of opinion is as old as the banjo, as we have only to recall that in the finger banjo world Morley and Cammeyer were fighting out the same battle years ago on the ordinary and zither.

Some people are so constructed that the staccato of brass sections or the snap of a banjo irritates their nerves exceedingly, and those are the people who cannot possibly understand anyone hearing any music in the

banjo (they could truthfully add that they heard no music in anything of an excessively percussive nature). These same folk will thoroughly appreciate the steel guitar, violin, or any legato instrument, whilst to their opposites (myself amongst them) a surfeit of excessively dreary soothing music is literally sickening. Whilst realizing this, I have no definite theory on the subject other than that I feel sure that some people's nerves respond to an invigorating tonic or stimulant (staccato), and others to a drug (legato).

If you are of the last-mentioned kind, I cannot understand why you have chosen the banjo for your instrument at all, but having done so, you can find an admirable model in Ken Harvey, and a host of other much less admirable models who mostly achieve their "fill-in" on sustained beats by a lot of slithering about and an interminable tremolo. In justice to Mr. Harvey, I would add that he has a number of tricks worth anyone's study, even if they do belong to the "legato" school. Other methods of overcoming banjo snap are the use of a mute, finger tremolo, superfine wire strings, excessively low action.

Should you be another died-in-the-wool real banjoist like myself, the fact that you cannot play sustained music should not be unduly upsetting in view of the vast library of fine solos written for the instrument *which no other instrument can render properly because it would be insufficiently snappy*. If, however, you wish to play other music, you can emulate Reser plectrum style, or Van Eps' finger style, by filling any sustained beat by a series of notes conforming to the correct harmony, each note being crystal clear and distinct in itself, the whole preserving the unity of the phrasing, and at the same time the arrangement conforming to banjo ideals, yet preserving the stimulating and crisp effect. This will make your popular music into a real banjo solo at the same time, though it will be unfavourably regarded by the swing sophisticates on the one hand, and the very simple (music) minded on the other.

Should you consider cultivating showmanship and incorporating that into your banjo performance, bear in mind that showmanship and virtuosity are diametrically opposed. A perfect performance is due to the complete subnegation of a person's individuality, owing to intense concentration of himself in his work. If you are thinking of the impression you are making on others when you play, your playing is below peak—that is why so many can play well in their own homes, yet fumble with nervousness when striving to play to others. No man struggling to reach the greatest heights ever had time to show off at the same time, and though the public demands showmanship, I would commend everyone of you to play as well as you can before cultivating it, as your divided concentration will profit you little artistic advance afterwards.

Lastly, there are a number of guitarists at large just now, trying to tell banjoists how to play the banjo, possibly because they realize there may be money in the banjo business again, and they wish to be known as authorities. Have none of them, because although they may mean well, their fundamental desire is to hear the banjo sound like a guitar.

FOURTH FINGER STUDY

AS I know readers of *Fretted Harmony* look forward to the technical literature of their paper, and as owing to pressure of other material this has suffered somewhat this month, I include here an extremely valuable exercise for the left hand little finger, which merits daily practice. It is for either

plectrum or finger style, and is marked accordingly. Note that the first chord should be held down throughout. To avoid monotony (but only when you have mastered the "figure") repeat the study in all positions—moving one fret at a time.—*Tarrant Bailey, Jr.*

DANCE BAND PRACTICE FOR THE BEGINNER

YOUR preliminary practice for band playing should be to take any chord and play as many inversions as you can of that chord. Be sure to get every chord clear. If you cannot get a certain four-string chord clearly and quickly it is better to get a three-string one. Many beginners find difficulty in changing quickly to the augmented shape on four strings, and here, for example, it is preferable that you play a clear three-string chord. When you feel fairly confident of the chord changes get a few band parts; usually these consist of tenor banjo chords with guitar symbols appended. First take the chorus, as other parts of the orchestration may be confusing to the beginner. Make a habit of noting immediately the time, signature and key. The chorus should be practised several times, striving always for good clean chords. Once mastered, the introductory passages, modulations and coda may be attempted. The beginner in band work will often find that on the bridge passages and modulations he will lose his place and have difficulty in picking up again. Therefore a player should always ascertain before playing with a band what sequence the band will play; some bands use the full orchestration, while others play "intro. and three," i.e., introduction and three choruses. The latter will inspire more confidence in the beginner, as the intricate bridge passages have not to be negotiated.

If you cannot play the band part at speed when practising at home don't despair; you will often find when actually on the stand with others present that you can play the chords quite easily to correct tempo. I don't know why this should be, but it is so. At first you may simplify any difficult chords

By
CHARLIE SCOTT
Instructor for the
MAMELOK SCHOOL OF GUITAR MUSIC



with added notes; thus for G9 or G13 you can play G7, or when you read Emi7 you may play Emi. As you advance, memorize the chord sequences of old tunes, such as *Dinah, Sweet Sue, Whispering*, etc. Often at dances a band will have to play impromptu (say as an encore), and knowledge of these tunes, in the usual keys, is more than useful.

Now for rhythm. When you first play with a band you will perhaps not be able to hear yourself, and as a result will attempt to strike chords as hard as possible. Resist this temptation; it only obliterates the tone of the instrument. Concentrate instead on producing a clean rhythm and holding the chords firmly and carefully with the left hand. Remember, your job is to blend with the rhythm section.

Don't tinkle about in an endeavour to demonstrate your technique; your fellow-bandsmen will think more of you if you can get that little extra "lift" which a guitar gives to the rhythm section. Solo playing and feature accompaniment playing can always be attempted at a later date—when you are more competent.

In quick-step time accent the first and third beats by allowing them to ring slightly more than the second and fourth. All chords are of course "damped," i.e., made staccato or sharp by lifting the left hand fingers as soon as played. The finest practice for doing this effectively is to "hammer" the chords with the left hand. Try holding a diminished chord and "hammering" it sharply down on to the fingerboard, not using the right hand at all. Remember that you do not need to lift the hand too much between chords; keep the fingers close to the fingerboard most of the time.

In slow foxtrot time the first and third beats are usually accented, as in quickstep tempo. For waltz time accent the first or play evenly. Much of my advice to the beginner must, of course, be compromised with individual tastes.

Tango playing is slightly different; it is still four-in-a-bar, but you should accent the first and fourth, sustaining the last. Thus the beats in the tango are; 1st strong, 2nd staccato, 3rd medium, 4th strong and not damped.

Summarizing: produce nice clean chords, free from rattle or bad tone; try to "swing" without "thrashing"; look pleasant, don't wear a frown of concentrations, and look as though you are enjoying it.

Ask the **ANSWER** Men

BANJO—Tarrant Bailey, Jr. PLECTRUM GUITAR—Terry Usher
MANDOLIN and HAWAIIAN GUITAR—A de VEKEY

GUITAR

S. B. CLAY (Northampton), asks why his guitar is always going out of tune. He mentions that when he turns the machines it takes nearly a full turn before the strings start to alter their pitch, and that this happens whether he is tightening or slackening them, but more noticeably when slackening them.

I think we can explain this quite simply. It seems obvious that there are two contributory causes of the phenomenon:

1. The stem of the machine (through the hole in which the string passes) is too tight a fit in its bearings. Try the application of good machine oil liberally to all the metal parts of the machine head: if this does not bring about an improvement, take out the stems from

their bearings and carefully emery them until they rotate freely in the bearing. On cheap guitars the stem passes direct through the wood of the head, but in good instruments there is a special metal collar to support the stem.

2. With a triangular file, widen the notches in the bone nut, over which the strings pass. Be very careful only to widen them and not to deepen them, and only widen them sufficiently to allow the string to slide freely through them. After filing, smooth off the notches with fine glass-paper. These two processes will definitely effect a complete cure.

HAWAIIAN

E.S. (Glasgow), writes: "I see that there are unpleen tunings for the Hawaiian Guitar. Which would you advise? At present I am learning the 'A,' but am anxious to know if I am correct in doing this."

Yes, you are certainly right in learning the "A" tuning—every player must know it.

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QUERIES - cont. from page 12

Later, if you wish, you can try the others, but I would point out that very little music exists for the Hawaiian guitar except in the standard tuning. There is a tutor for the "A" 7th, and a few solos for this and the "E" 7th. Also of course the "A" minor; the latter, however, is but a slight alteration of one string, whether standard or "A" tuning.

It would not be difficult, and certainly quite interesting, to try a few unorthodox tunings, but learn the "A" tuning first.

Some of these unorthodox tunings need a change of string for certain notes, but this is somewhat of a nuisance, and I can't see many players doing it to any extent. Altering one or more strings to another note is a different matter; it can be done in a few moments. If the unorthodox library were fairly extensive it would perhaps be worth while, but to have the bother of changing strings for an odd number of so certainly does not find favour with many. An alternative is to have two guitars, one for the standard, and one for the "others!"

Banjo

J.K. (Liverpool), writes: "I have been thinking of going in for my banjo B.M.G. diplomas. Do you think it is worth it?"

Most definitely I do. Whilst you will play none the worse by not taking them (provided you are the type who does not need keeping up to scratch), if you do take them successfully, you have definite proof of your ability. This would be most useful if you ever decide to take up teaching, and in any case should benefit you by aiding "self-esteem" and "playing-confidence." So far as my experience goes, these examinations are singularly estimable, having been influential in raising the playing standards of many a former aimless beginner; and despite the fact that I feel the examinations are open to certain miscarriages of justice, I have never come across one instance where the examiner deliberately abused his privileges, and on the whole it would be hard to give anything but praise for the way the idea has been developed. The only improvement I should personally like to see would be the addition of a "D" grade, for the really outstanding young player, or alternatively that the "C" grade be made more difficult where the standard of solo playing is concerned.

COMPETITION cont. from page 3

mistakes in time; for example, six crotchets in Bar 2! The first chord in this bar is intended to be sustained for three beats, but this can't be done while playing the following notes. "B" descending is B^b, not A sharp; this is a minor point though.

The first chord in Bar 8 keeps popping up all through the number. It bears the symbol "D," but it certainly isn't D major. Whatever it is, it sounds bad in Bar 8. The chord is Emi 9th, a very pleasant chord in its right place, but no substitute for D major. Another chord has been suggested on returned MSS.

"HARMONY BLUES." By Syd Kerr, Stirling.

This composition is noteworthy for intelligent use of "three-in-two" crotchets—

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