

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS

BMG

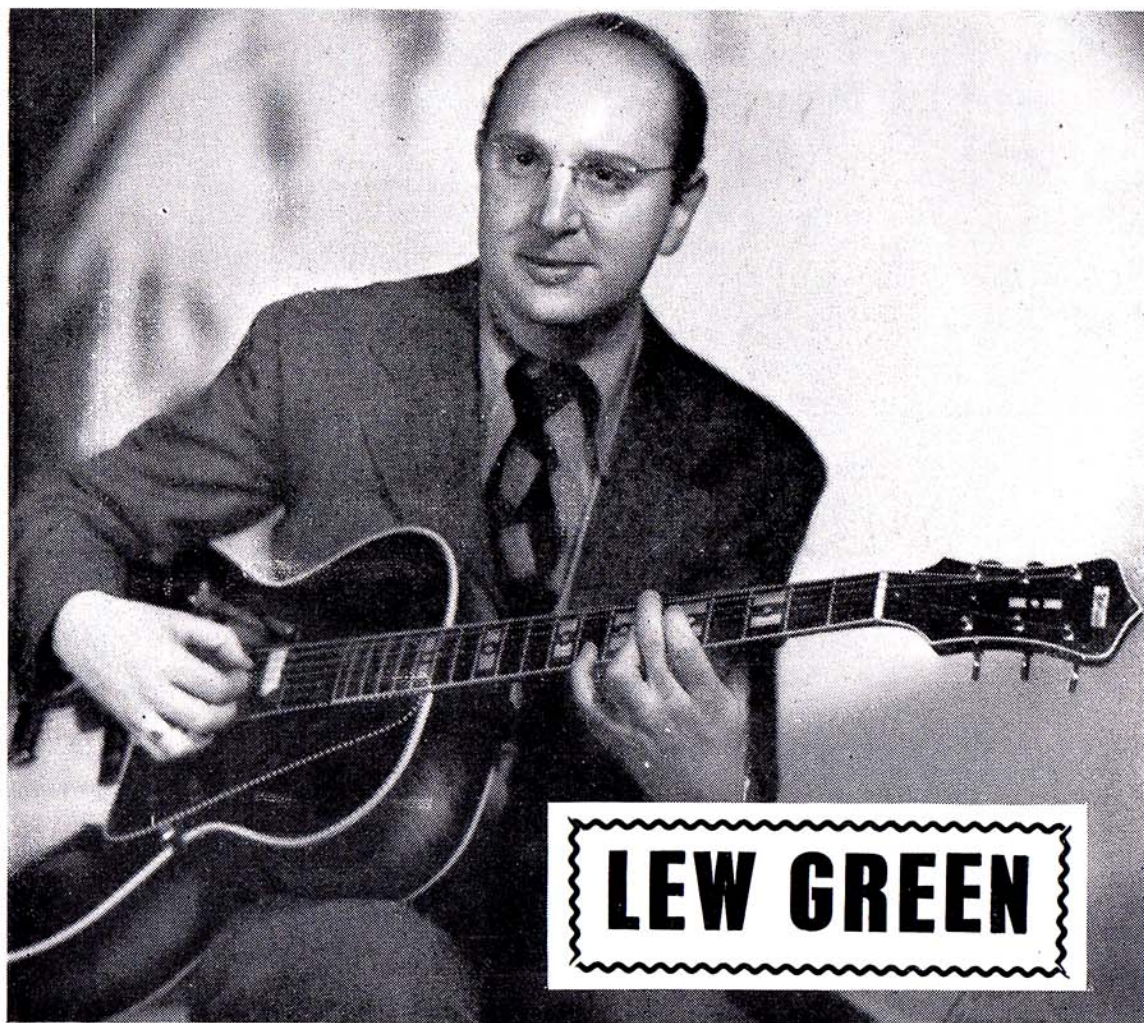
BANJO
MANDOLIN
GUITAR

The Oldest Established and Most Widely-read Fretted Instrument Magazine in the World

Vol. XLVIII. No. 551

MARCH 1951

Price One Shilling



LEW GREEN

Music in this issue

MANDOLIN SOLO (with gtr. accomp.): "Neapolitan Song" (Tchaikowsky)
SPANISH GUITAR SOLO: "Danse Fantastique"
PLECTRUM GUITAR SOLO: "Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair"
ZITHER-BANJO SOLO: "Prelude in C Minor"
HAWAIIAN GUITAR SOLO: "Royal Hawaiian Hotel"
SONG WITH BANJO ACCOMPANIMENT: "Maggie Murphy"

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B.M.G.

The Monthly Magazine devoted to the interests of the Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar and Kindred Instruments

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A. P. SHARPE

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The Editor does not necessarily agree with the opinions expressed by his contributors.

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All news items submitted for the next issue must arrive at this office not later than the 10th.

ADVERTISING RATES
ON REQUEST

Vol. XLVIII. No. 551]

MARCH 1951

[Price One Shilling

Compiling "B.M.G."

By ALAN V. MIDDLETON

MANY people express surprise when they are told that the Editor types practically every word that appears in "B.M.G."

When a contributor sends in an article for publication (more often than not, written in ink) it is first read by the Editor and, if suitable, filed for attention. When he is preparing "copy" for the printers, a clean *typed* page has to be produced, and, in this process, the Editor corrects any spelling and grammatical mistakes and deletes any libellous material—perhaps re-wording a phrase here and there to improve the article. Never does he alter the context of an article to suit his own particular views. All contributors to "B.M.G." are entitled to express their own views on any subject.

The typescript copies of the articles are sent to the printers throughout the month (contrary to beliefs held by many people, they are not amassed and sent off in one glorious bundle). By the 8th or 9th of the month the bulk of the matter to appear in the next issue has been sent to the printers. On the morning of the 10th (press day!) he adds the final Club Note or Small Advertisement to the pages which have been growing since the last issue went to press, and "final copy ready" is the message to the printers.

Here one would expect the Editor to sit back for a well-earned rest, but actually his work of producing the next "B.M.G." has only just started.

Before any editor can send his articles to the printer he must have answered a number of important questions. What will be the size of his magazine? What kind of paper will he use? What sort of type? What will be the general layout?

Some of these questions have been de-

cided in the past and hold for each subsequent issue, but others re-occur each month.

The choice of paper used in the magazine is governed by the uses to which it will be put. Not only printed articles but photographs and musical examples are to be used, so the paper chosen must be suitable for all these purposes. The reader will notice that the cover (known as "Art" paper) gives better reproduction of a photograph than that used for the inside pages. It is, however, more costly, and, besides suffering quickly from any dampness in the air, would be too heavy for exclusive use throughout the magazine.

This paper has what is known as a "coated" surface, being made of straw with a coating of Cornish china clay; and although the smooth surface makes it suitable for illustrations, a very light type

impression is required or the letters may become blurred.

NEWSPRINT

A paper almost at the other end of the scale to "Art" paper is what is known as "Newsprint" (used for your daily newspaper). This is made chiefly from wood—millions of tiny fibres. If you look closely at the paper the fibres can be plainly seen.

Photographic blocks effective on "Art" paper do not reproduce well on "Newsprint," and blocks with a coarser "screen" have to be prepared. Many readers will remember the war-time issues of "B.M.G." Because of the acute shortage of paper during those trying years, the magazine had to be printed on "Newsprint." How "dirty" the whole magazine looked; how "muddy" the pictures were!

As newspapers are not required to last for any length of time, the paper used for them is not hard-wearing, nor is it good writing paper. However, it absorbs printing ink rapidly and its quick-drying properties make it admirable for the speedily-produced newspaper.

Having decided on the paper he will use, the Editor has had to direct his attention to the choice of printing type.

There are many types available; all used for some specific purpose for which they were designed and cast. The various type "faces" are called "founts"; the word being derived from a Latin verb meaning "to found" or "cast."

If you look at this page of this issue you will see nearly a dozen different sizes and founts. The size of a type face is measured in "points," there being 72 "points" to an inch. Right at the top of the page are the words "FORTY-SEVENTH YEAR." This is set in 12-point Rockwell Medium. "Rockwell" is the name given to the type; its size is

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12-point; and it is of medium thickness.

There are three terms used to designate the thickness of a type face: "light," "medium" and "bold." An example of a bold type appears under the "B.M.G." heading, beginning "The Monthly Magazine . . ." This is set in 18-point Bodoni bold—"Bodoni," again, being the name of the type face.

Beneath these two lines are the words, "Edited by" and "A. P. Sharpe," which are still in Bodoni; the first set in 14-point italic and the latter in 14-point medium.

All these different shapes and sizes serve to make the reading easier and show the relative importance of the titles and subtitles.

MAIN ARTICLES

The main articles in "B.M.G." are printed in "New Times Roman" 9 on 10, which means the base of the type is 10-point, but the actual type face is only 9-point. This has the effect of slightly increasing the space between the lines and therefore makes the type clearer to read.

The fount "New Times Roman" is based on Roman lettering (as the name suggests) and is used extensively in magazines.

It is an axiom in magazine work that body matter should always be in a light-faced Roman type, unless some sufficient reason exists for using one of the three alternatives—light-faced italic, heavy-faced Roman or heavy-faced italic. Light-faced Roman type is infinitely more readable than any other face, because habit has made it so.

Bold-faced types, such as this, are not easy to read in mass, particularly in the smaller sizes, because our eyes are unaccustomed to its heaviness.

The same applies, though in a lesser degree, to light-faced italic, especially when the face chosen, as here, is one of fanciful design.

"Club Notes," "By the Way," "Correspondence," etc., are printed in the same fount as the main articles but are a 7-point face on an 8-point base. "Small Advertisements" appear in 6-point.

Being a progressive magazine, "B.M.G." accepts advertisements from any outside firm. The "copy" for these advertisements is sent to the Editor by the firm or their agents, together with any illustration blocks they want used. In many cases, the types to be used are indicated on the copy, but often it is left to the printers to

choose the type cognisant with the desires of the advertiser.

To set up the articles in type, Messrs. Peverleys use "Linotype" machines which weigh over a ton each and are worked from a keyboard something like a typewriter. These machines cast lines of type one at a time called "slugs." If only one letter in a line is set wrongly, the whole line must be reset.

The lines of type are placed beneath one another in a frame, inked-up and a proof rolled off—this proof being sent, in due course, to the Editor.

The frames are only one-column wide, but sometimes as much as two feet long. Proofs are taken on a strip of paper about four inches wide, and these proofs are



DON SANFORD

Featured player of the plectrum guitar with Don Smith and his Music at the Astoria Ballroom, Nottingham.

called "galleys." Often a complete article will appear on one "galley."

The galley proofs are read and checked for mistakes and then put on one side ready for the time when the Editor "makes up" the next issue.

'B.M.G.' CLOSES FOR PRESS ON THE 10th OF EACH MONTH

(If the 10th of the month falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the magazine goes to press on the preceding Friday)

TO ENSURE PUBLICATION OF YOUR CLUB
NOTES, NEWS, LETTERS, ADVERTS. ETC.

POST AS EARLY IN THE
MONTH AS POSSIBLE

The photographs appearing in "B.M.G." are printed from what is known as "half-tone blocks." It is not necessary to explain the process used to make these blocks, but it will suffice to observe that the Editor has to exercise a great deal of care in his choice of photographs which will appear in print. A small illustration, say, column-width by three inches high, costs about 35s., so he wants to be sure that the picture submitted to him is worth the outlay. Some pictures are so bad, photographically, that it is not worth the expense.

Musical examples used are first engraved in the usual way and then a good clear print is taken on "Art" paper and sent to the blockmakers for a "line" block to be made. In the same way, the article headings, such as "Mandolin Miscellany," "The Banjo and You," "Playing the Hawaiian Guitar," etc. (as well as the sketches appearing beneath them), are drawn by an artist before being sent to the blockmakers, who return metal "negatives" neatly mounted on a wooden base exactly the same height as the metal type.

EDITOR'S HEADACHE

With galley proofs of all the copy he has sent to the printers in his hands, and "pulls" of all blocks to be used, the Editor's job really begins.

He takes a recent copy of "B.M.G." and begins to paste the galley proofs on the pages; cutting the proof at the bottom of one column and starting again at the top of the next, thus ensuring the columns are always the same length. He starts on the first page with the Editorial (if there is one) and then fits in all the regular articles in turn; pasting in photographs where they are required.

Many of the photographs are more than a column wide, so the Editor has to cut the galleys on either side and have the type reset into shorter lines; allowing for the extra length required on the column.

When all the regular articles are fitted in, the Editor turns to the back and the "Club Directory" and "Teachers' Addresses" are brought up to date. Next, "Small Advertisements" and any display advertisements take their place and, still working backwards, "Correspondence," "Club Notes," etc., and other 8-point matter is allocated space; cut up into the required length and pasted in.

(Readers will not be surprised to learn that an Editor's job is often referred to as "Scissors and Paste.")

When the regular features and articles are in, the Editor then fills up the remaining space with articles he has had set up.

The completed "paste up" (as it is called) is sent to the printers who break up the galleys as indicated by the Editor, forming new frames the size of a page. At the same time the photographic and line blocks are inserted and the type reset round them where necessary; proofs being taken of each page as it is completed.

These "page proofs"—a sort of loose-leaf edition of "B.M.G."—are then sent to the Editor who re-checks them and makes any further corrections; returning them to the printers with his blessing.

MUSIC SUPPLEMENT

In his spare (?) time the Editor has chosen the music to appear in this issue, and the MSS. sent to a firm of engravers. The music is engraved on pewter plates, and, after correction, these plates are sent to a firm of music printers.

Messrs. Peverleys collect the printed sheets and then the job of making up an issue takes place. Deft-fingered girls collect a set of pages, insert the music supplement; and hand a complete issue to the people who manipulate the machine which stitches the pages together.

Passing through a huge guillotine, which trims the three sides of the magazine, copies are ready for tying up in bundles. A van then delivers copies to the "B.M.G." offices. From there, copies are sent to you and hundreds of teachers, music dealers, etc.

By the time you are reading the latest issue, the Editor has forgotten what it contains—he is already half-way through the next month's "B.M.G."

An Editor's work is never done.

The ELECTRIC Spectrum Guitar

By JACK DUARTE



LAST month I broke off with the provocative statement that, in my opinion (and not mine alone), improvisation cannot be taught. In the light of what has gone before in these articles. I hope I may now say that I am referring to true creative improvisation and *not* to note-spinning or mere temporising, without undue risk of being misunderstood.

Given the will to learn, note-spinning may successfully be taught to all but the dullest among us.

How often do we hear it said that "It takes all sorts to make a world—and

thank goodness we are not all alike!"? Few would, I think, seriously maintain we *are* all alike or that we *would* all be alike if given equal opportunity—not, that is, equally good at the same things.

The statement is particularly true of those things calling for creative originality; whether they be the Arts or the activities of those mysterious men known as Inventors.

The creative artist has much in common with the inventor, or the man (it might be *you*) who has a small genius for making gadgets about the house or doing a necessary job with some material which just happens to be at hand at the time; but they differ in that the artist is also open to criticism on those abstract (but real) grounds described broadly as Aesthetics. But we must not digress too far.



THE TOONE TWINS

These 17-year-old twin sisters (pupils of Sanders Papworth, of Nottingham) will be heard playing "Stars and Stripes" as a tenor-banjo duet in the "Opportunity Knocks" programme broadcast from Radio Luxembourg on March 4th (4.30 p.m.)

There is little doubt that the creative spark is born in some of us and not in others. When present, it varies in intensity from one person to another. *That spark cannot be put into anybody by tuition.* Where nature has not made it strong, it can be assisted materially by

TESTIMONY

From: F. S. Stuckes, Sec. The Apsley Players, Bristol.

"I should like, on behalf of the "Apsley Players," to congratulate the Clifford Essex Co., and the arranger, Arthur Stanley, on the two latest publications, "Guild March" and "Sullivan Selection"—the latter being a long-awaited treat.

"They are most welcome and diverse additions to our repertoire and are enjoyed as much by our hearers as by the players themselves. Please go on producing such fine numbers and we—and, I hope, all other clubs—will be glad to purchase them."

the right kind of teaching and guidance but in many of us it does not and never will exist insofar as music is concerned.

ABILITY TO IMPROVISE

The ability to improvise really creatively and artistically differs only from the quality of genius *in degree*. A genius merely possesses the ability *in excelsis* and demonstrates with great clarity the intangible and unteachable quality of original artistic thought. It is doubtful whether any one has ever become a good soloist entirely by virtue of tuition received and it is certain that no one has ever reached the level of genius by this means!

Tuition can only equip a musician with the tools of his trade—theory, technicalities and like matters are only the raw materials.

Having become possessed of these a player will put them to whatever use nature has best suited him. If the creative spark is there to begin with, study and teaching will (in most cases) make it much more effective by allying it to knowledge. Instinct is most effective when reinforced with basic knowledge.

Where the ability to improvise is of a high order and is found in an untutored musician who knows nothing of notation or theory, there is always the danger that his natural gift will become atrophied by pre-occupation with the intellectual approach.

Django Reinhardt has not, in my opinion, improved one whit by his long-standing contact with sophisticated and more academically sound musicians—indeed, it is a moot point whether he has deteriorated or not. *But*—such men are the exception and I, for one, do not feel justified in conducting my music on the assumption that I am an unrecognised Reinhardt.

A FEEBLE EXCUSE

With the vast majority, the plea that theoretical knowledge and study will atrophy our gift of free expression is no more than a feeble excuse for not taking the trouble to "get down to it" and put in some honest effort!

In the early days of jazz evolution the musically informed and trained player was the exception rather than the rule but the top-line soloists and players of today reverse that state of affairs and the purely instinctive player must be outstanding indeed if he wishes to earn a living.

Coming more closely to grips with our subject, the question often arises: "How much recorded jazz solo work is purely spontaneous?" and "What about learning good solos, written or recorded by other people, and playing those?"

We shall never know the answer to the first question statistically but some kind of answer may be ventured. The extent of preparation depends mainly on two things: (1) The occasion, and (2) the cumulative effect of many playings of the same arrangement by a band.

It is probably true to say that in a free-for-all session, when musicians are playing for their own enjoyment and without regard for posterity, no reputable stylist will play pre-arranged solos or choruses; although he will naturally make use of his own pet phrases, clichés and methods of treatment.

I do not suppose for a moment that Roy Plummer or Sam Adams played a single prepared chorus in the session concluding the recent F.I.G. Guitar Festival—any more than I did—but had they faced the same numbers at a recording session (particularly with a band playing from arrangements) I feel certain they would at least have prepared their solos in outline—even if they did not dot every “i” and cross every “t” beforehand.

LACK OF SPONTANEITY

For normal professional work, most soloists do prepare choruses rather than leave them to chance: Ivor Mairants, George Shearing (I suspect), Dizzy Gillespie, Ralph Sharon and many others do this because the lack of spontaneity is, professionally speaking, more than offset by the fact that mistakes and uncertainties are reduced to a minimum—or to zero.

One is apt, in the heat of the moment, to conceive ideas which outstrip one's technical ability to carry them out and in performance (especially the endless repetition of a recording) to a non-specialised audience, these valiant failures gain no medals!

Another factor is that when a band plays the same arrangement repeatedly, always leaving the same solo spot in the same context to the same man, there is a tendency for the soloist to standardise his solo; especially if he has prepared it in outline to begin with.

That solo gradually becomes his formalised contribution to the whole performance and the ease and certainty which result from this allow him to make the most of it artistically speaking—even if the temperature cools a little in consequence.

The objection to this can be but slight because the solo is still of his own creation and is his own personal expression refined by second thoughts. If the player is an artist of any stature he will not allow this standardisation to make him con-

temptuously familiar or let it show in his playing as “off-handedness.” I find it hard to believe that all the subtleties of attack, accent and phrasing which characterise George Shearing's solos have not resulted from such crystallisation of his solos beforehand.

This procedure is not suited, however, to the temperament of all men; even cultured musicians. Irving Ashby chafes painfully under the yoke of having to learn his own recorded solos and play them note-for-note thereafter but Nat Cole, his boss, insists that he does so. One must live. There we must rest matters till next month.

SOME RECORDS

Here are some records you would find interesting. On Capital CL.13392 the King Cole Trio (guitarist Irving Ashby) share, with Stan Kenton's orchestra, what must be the most successful experiment of its kind ever made. The contrast between the large and small units is fascinatingly exploited—the Trio, easeful and relaxed and the Kenton band tense and spectacular. “Orange Coloured Sky” might have been written for the purpose.

There is a nice solo from Ashby in “A Way With Women” (Capitol CL.13422), and the same player can be heard to advantage in “Still Leaping” and “Here's Prez” by Lester Young and his Band (Esquire 10-088). In the latter sides he has long solos which, although not his best, sound more modern than Young's tenor sax, which is period stuff—though none the worse for that.

The immaculate Ivor Mairants comes clearly through the Geraldo Orchestra with a solo on each side of Parlophone F.2434; the tunes being those worthy old-timers “Only Have Eyes for You” and “Once in a While.”

(To be continued)

Amusing Experiences

MOST players have experienced at least one amusing experience connected with their playing of the banjo, mandolin or guitar. “B.M.G.” cartoonist Arthur Maycock invites readers to tell him of any amusing experience which, if suitable, he will illustrate for reproduction in these pages.

Players should give all details and explain fully the experience which they found amusing.

Address your letter to: Arthur Maycock, c/o “B.M.G.”, 8, New Compton St., London, W.C.2.

For Tenor-Banjoists

By ARTHUR STANLEY

THE possession of a good right-hand technique is as necessary as the possession of a good left hand so this month I am going to see if I can pass on a few hints for the development of the right hand.

All players of the tenor-banjo are conversant with the first position of their instrument but how many have studied the third, fourth and fifth positions—apart from an occasional excursion on the first string to a note unobtainable in the lower position?

Let us see if we can remedy this.

First, we must practise moving—easily and surely—from one position to another. Take from the first position to the third. On the first string, place your second left-hand finger on the third fret (C) and then move to the fifth fret (D), which is taken with the first finger. Play these alternately until you can do so smoothly and, if possible, without looking at the fingerboard.

Make sure your thumb moves up and down with the hand.

Practise the same fingering on all four strings, each in turn, and from the fourth (with the third finger) to the fifth fret with the first finger (C# to D on the first string).

Now play your scales, which is the basis of a good technique.

If you have a copy of Emile Grimshaw's “How to Master the Tenor-Banjo” (and it is a book I can thoroughly recommend!), turn to page 32 and practise the major and minor scales of G. There should be no hesitation when changing positions.

There is one snag when playing in the third and fourth positions: if you have a normal stretch you will find it impossible to carry out earlier instruction to keep the fingers down when ascending a scale passage. You can overcome this difficulty and keep your position by keeping the ball of the thumb fixed to its position on the arm of the instrument, just stretching the hand to the required frets.

Practise on the first string: first finger on D, second on E. Now raise the first finger, keeping the thumb fixed, and play F# with the third finger and G with the fourth. Now descend the scale from G to D again.

Practise until you can do this easily, then play the whole scale of two octaves without looking at the fingerboard.

A VARIATION

A variation of this would be to change the position on the second string from F# to G, playing the whole of the second octave in the third position.

Many correspondents have written on the lack of new tenor-banjo solos; some have suggested titles of old favourites they would like arranged for the instrument. Most of the titles suggested are the copyright property of publishers who will not, or cannot (because of American rights), give the necessary permission.

However, we are doing our best to get more solos published. Tenor-banjo solo parts are available to the two latest additions to the Clifford Essex catalogue ("Guild March" and "Sullivan Selection"), and all orchestral numbers published by the C. E. Co. will, in future, include a solo part for the tenor-banjo.

This is a start. It is up to players themselves to show there is a demand for solo parts for the tenor-banjo. Get these solos now and help us in the good work for the tenor-banjo. The C. E. Co. has asked me to arrange solo parts for "Evergreen Waltzes," "American Medley" and other recently issued numbers. If you buy "Guild March" and "Sullivan Selection," these additional parts will be issued in the near future. It is up to you.

(To be continued)

THE Banjo and You

By BERNARD SHEAFF



Questions About six- and seven-string banjos still occasionally reach me, although both these instruments have, to all intents and purposes, been obsolete in this country for well over fifty years.

A recent request for information having reached me, it is possible that some comments in this column may be of general interest.

"Comments" is used advisedly, for I cannot claim to be fully cognisant with the history of these predecessors of the five-string instrument. Nor do I know if the five-string banjo was, in fact, evolved last.

An American, Joe Sweeney, is credited with the flash of inventive genius that added the short "octave" string to the

banjo, but I have never heard if this furnished him with a five-, six- or seven-string instrument. Was it, in fact, the five-string banjo Sweeney created by this addition of the short high G string, and were six- and seven-string models later attempts to improve the banjo?

Perhaps somebody would kindly tell me which of the three came first!

Whichever way it was, it would seem that in the 80's all three types were in general use, for about this time Herbert J. Ellis's epoch-making "Thorough School for the Five-String Banjo" was first published, and with it John Alvey Turner issued an equally imposing companion-work by the same author, "Thorough School for the Six- and Seven-String Banjo."

The latter, however, comparatively soon, ceased reprinting and I have never seen a copy.

Turner's also published a lower-priced, less-elaborate "six- and seven-string" tutor by Ellis. This I have seen, for the book was reprinted many times, finally selling out of all available copies in the 1930's. For many years, nearly all were exported to India—the multi-stringed banjo's last stronghold!

WOULD BE INTERESTING

It would be interesting to know how these old obsolete banjos got to India in the first place, for no English maker, in my time, catalogued anything except

THIS MONTH'S COVER PORTRAIT

Lew Green was born in London in 1924 and first took an interest in the guitar at the age of 13. Apart from a few preliminary lessons, he is self taught.

Soon after leaving school he secured his first professional engagement and played at several of London's West End night clubs and led a Trio for Mecca. He then joined George Scott-Wood's "Six Swingers" and was with this popular band-leader until called up during the war. At first with the Royal Fusiliers he was soon transferred to "Stars in Battledress" with the Sid Millward Band, the first dance band to play in liberated Europe; landing on the Normandy beach-head a few days after D-Day.

While in Brussels the band undertook several broadcasts over the Belgium radio.

After leaving the Forces in 1947, Lew Green re-joined Sid Millward's stage band ("The Nitwits"), playing plectrum guitar and tenor-banjo.

Recently his activities have been confined to free-lancing with well-known band-leaders; including George Scott-Wood, Jack Simpson, etc.

He is emigrating to the U.S.A. sometime this year and we wish Lew Green every success in America.

five-string banjos and zither-banjos and these were sent to India in substantial quantities.

Probably the six- and seven-string instruments in use there were old smooth-arm banjos imported in a previous generation, with some additional instruments made to the same pattern by native craftsmen.

It is likely, too, that they were used mainly by the people of India themselves, for on the smooth fingerboard it would of course be possible to play actual Indian music, which has intervals of less than a semitone—a feat impossible on the modern fretted banjo.

To return to this country, both Cammeyer and Morley first became acquainted with the banjo as a six-string instrument, but both changed to a five-string model early in their careers. Who was the first of the performers of note to sponsor the latter instrument and demonstrate its greater potentialities as a solo instrument?—again I do not know.

There appears to be no recorded instance of virtuosity on the six- or seven-string banjo (as such), and it seems clear that brilliant solo playing blossomed with the five-string banjo's rise to eminence.

CONFIRMATION

A perusal of the cheaper Ellis Tutor already mentioned tends to confirm this, for the book shows the extra bass string(s) functioned only in playing accompaniments.

Further confirmation is found in the fact that Ellis's more ambitious solos and arrangements for the five-string banjo are truly remarkable if allowance is made for the fact that the banjo was in its infancy when they were written. However, neither he nor anyone else (as far as I know) made similar use of the six- or seven-string instrument.

Now for a few facts of a more practical nature.

The tuning of the seven-string banjo was always the same: 1st, 2nd and 3rd strings, D, B and G respectively, as for the banjo. The 4th string D, 5th C, 6th G (an octave lower than the 3rd string)—and the usual short octave G string for the 7th.

It is interesting to note that until a few years before the last war it was still possible to buy a silk-covered low G string made expressly for the banjo! A Spanish guitar silk-covered 4th string, however, is suitable, provided it is long enough. The usual silk 4th was used for both 4th and 5th.

The six-string banjo is rather more curious because there are two ways of

stringing and tuning. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd and short G string are the same as above for either way, one of which uses the usual string for the 4th, tuned to C or G as required (like the present banjo) and the low G for the 5th.

A GOOD RANGE

This gives a good range and makes the extra string worth while. Oddly enough, however, the few six-string diehards I ran against in my early days preferred the 4th and 5th strings tuned at D and C respectively—with no low G!

I could never see any reason for this, unless it is the rather footling one that both C-bass and D-bass solos could be played without an alteration of pitch.

A fact to be borne in mind is that the addition of extra strings—particularly bass—reduces the power and brilliance of the other strings. A six-string banjo, therefore, is always inferior on the top strings and is lacking in this respect for solo work.

The seven-string banjo has this defect in an even more marked degree; moreover the width of fingerboard necessary to accommodate seven strings makes it bad to play. It is well confined to oblivion.

The six-string banjo with the low G string, however, has something to it, I think. It would probably be most effective in the banjo section of the B. M. & G. orchestra if specially prepared second banjo accompaniments (using the lower bass notes) were allocated to it.

So next time you chance upon a six-string banjo, do not chop it up until it has been given a trial in this way.

(To be continued)

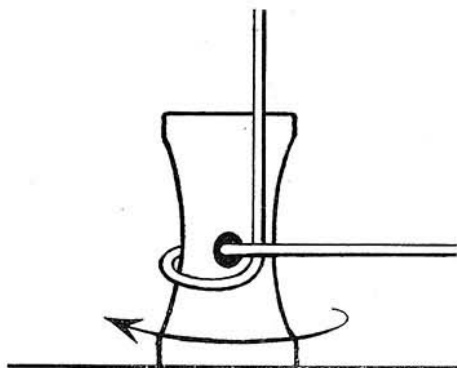
Playing the Hawaiian Guitar

By BASIL KING



PUTTING on a string is not so simple; hence the slipping strings some players experience and the untidy tangles of wire round the machines seen on some players' guitars.

A reader asks me how to put a string on easily and effectively. He says he has never seen an article in "B.M.G." explaining how to do this. Here is the method I use to fit all but the thickest bass strings.



First, turn the machine so that the hole through it is in line with the head-to-tail-piece line of the guitar. Now thread the ball-end of the string into place and hold the string with a little tension on it, to stop the ball-end from slipping out of place.

Thread the free end of the string through the hole in the machine; pulling it through so that there is still a little tension on it.

Check now that you have the main part of the string in place; from the ball-end of the string, over the bridge and nut of the guitar, to the machine.

Next, thread the free end of the string under the main part and pull it upwards (away from the guitar) as shown in the accompanying diagram, and hold it up.

Now turn the machine in the direction indicated in the diagram so that the main part of the string clamps over the free end. You can now tighten the string up to pitch and then cut off the surplus. The string will not slip.

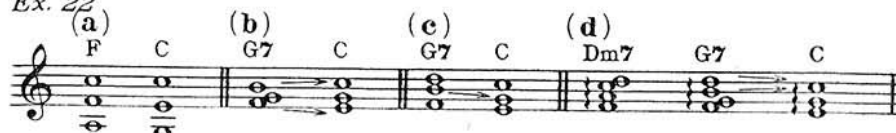
With the thicker strings (such as a 5th or 6th) I repeat the above as far as threading the free end of the string through the hole in the machine and checking that the main part is in place. Now simply bend the free end up away from the guitar. Hold it up and tighten the string; getting the main part, as it winds round the machine, to press hard against the free end where it is bent.

This will stop a thick string from slipping.

CONCORD AND DISCORDS

Whilst we have been considering chords and harmony parts in recent articles, you may have noticed that some of the chords (such as C or F major) sound *complete* but some chords (such as G7th) sound *unfinished*.

Ex. 22



The chords that sound complete are called *concord*s (spelt without an "h") and the chords which sound unfinished are called *discord*s.

A discord must be followed, in a suitable way, by a concord before we eliminate the unfinished effect.

This following of a discord by a concord is called *resolution*.

The resolution you will encounter most often is the one from the dominant-seventh chord (a discord) to the tonic chord (a concord) in any key. This would be from G7th to C major in the key of C, for example.

It is usual for the third note of the dominant-seventh chord to go up to the root note of the tonic chord, while the seventh note of the former goes down to the third note of the latter.

There is an example of this in (b) Ex. 22.

This is not just a rule. You can *hear* the third and seventh notes of the dominant-seventh chord *wanting* to move thus if you listen carefully.

Sometimes, to avoid producing the tonic chord with its fifth note missing, we have to let the third note go *down* to the fifth note. There is an example of this in (c) Ex. 22.

In (d) the G7th chord can be resolved in the usual way. The notes B and D both go to the note C in the C major chord.

Incidentally, all of Ex. 22 is playable in the High Bass tuning. I gave examples of the chords and how to play them in the October "B.M.G."

HAWAIIAN EFFECT

Where the melody goes from the leading note of the key to the tonic note and the harmony goes from the dominant-seventh to the tonic as in (b) and the leading note is of *short duration*, the playing can often be simplified (and a Hawaiian effect obtained) by harmonising the leading note with a chord like the tonic chord but one fret lower.

If we did this in (b) we should play a B major chord instead of the proper G7th chord and only have to move up one fret to produce the C major chord.

This does not always work. Where it sounds wrong, it *is* wrong—but it often does work where the leading note is of short duration.

It will work in double-stopping as well as in chords. It will also work in the

E6th type tuning; still with the reservation that where it sounds wrong it is wrong.

The dominant-seventh/tonic chord resolution is quite important—it leads us to the next step of our study, *modulation*, so re-read the above and examine (b), (c) and (d) in our example carefully and *play* the chords; listening to them with a critical ear.

This will help you to develop both a knowledge of music and a good ear for it—and you need both to be a good musician.

(To be continued)

Zither-Banjo Causerie

By J. McNAUGHTON



ALTHOUGH most of us are aware of the necessity for periodical “stock-taking” we are rather inclined to lose the intention to improve our playing and put off the essential studies in favour of more congenial solos. Admittedly this is a natural tendency, but whenever someone tells me he never makes a resolution to improve his playing I am prompted to assume he is quite satisfied with himself as he is—and to leave him floating on the “perilous foam” of a sea of self-sufficiency.

Each of us has his own particular problems. Our “attack” may not be quite satisfactory or, perhaps, our tone production could be improved; or again, some solid practice to “clean up” our chromatics and general skill in position playing may be indicated.

The resolve to overcome the insidious indolence which lies behind all procrastination in these matters must be maintained until the faults, whatever they are, have been eradicated.

Perhaps the most common weakness among finger-stylists generally is to be found in the right hand—as most teachers and pupils know to their cost—and it does appear to be difficult to acquire the classic style, “stance” and action in the early stages of study.

Example always being better than precept, the student will gain far more from watching a first-class soloist than from his own unaided efforts to transform the cold print of his instruction book into the correct approach which results in a commendable style.

A useful and profitable comparison

can be made by noting the manner in which the various players who have compiled the Tutors, on which most of us were “brought up,” have depicted their right-hand “action” in photogravure.

It will be apparent that there is an individual variation present in all these “stills” and it is interesting to note the difference between the stance of Clifford Essex (in the Essex and Cammeyer Tutor) and that of Emile Grimshaw in the earlier editions of the “Banjo and How to Play It.”

DIFFERENT ANGLE

The hand of Joe Morley, by contrast, indicates in repose a somewhat different angle of attack from that of his colleagues, whilst the style favoured by Cammeyer (shown in the E. & C. Tutor and his “Cultivation of the Hands”) displays



CHARLES KOHLHOFF & MOLLY HUNTLY-PECK
(from India)

Mr. Kohlhoff has recently appeared in the West End of London and has now formed his own outfit—the “Hawaiian Echoes.” He would always be pleased to meet any Hawaiian enthusiast back stage.

the “points” of the classic style to perfection.

When we examine these contrasting styles we note, in the out-thrust thumb of Clifford Essex, the perfect approach to the strings: i.e., *in line with them*, and in the complete right-angled action of the fingers we see the correct theory of striking *straight across* the strings, parallel to the “bridge line.”

The wrist, mark you, is flat, whereas Emile Grimshaw’s photograph shows a compromise between this and the arched wrist of Cammeyer; yet Grimshaw did not sacrifice the proper approach to the strings.

On scrutinising the Morley picture we find not only very little extensions of the thumb (compared to Essex and Cam-

meyer) but also a more oblique “grip” on the upper strings.

If the student is puzzled by these differences I can only ascribe them to the physical variations in hand formation between these players. Certainly no *banjoist* has produced better tone than Morley at his best, despite the seeming evidence of his oblique approach with the first and second fingers!

I never had the good fortune to watch Morley play, therefore I cannot say if the photograph shows his normal playing position or whether his right hand assumed that same stance when in action. Whatever approach he favoured, the results eloquently spoke for themselves.

All of which reminds me of the retort of the young batsman to the elderly stylist who had criticised one of his “boundary” strokes: “Never mind how I hold the bat, look where the ball went!”

JOY TO BEHOLD

Front-rank finger-stylists such as Tarrant Bailey, Jr., George Morris or Alfred Lloyd display a “copy book” right-hand technique which “goes like clockwork,” geared to all speeds, whilst the inherent artistry in the impeccable “action” of the classic exponents of zither-banjo style—Messrs. Sheaff, Musselbrook and Middleton—is always a joy to behold.

Accordingly, I urge all enthusiasts to seize every opportunity of attending the all-too-rare Banjo Concerts (whenever and wherever they are organised) and, in this connection, I would like to record my regret on learning that the recent concert sponsored by the Fretted Instrument Guild was so poorly attended; in spite of a most attractive programme.

It is hoped that better support will be accorded such events in the future.

(To be continued)

The Spanish Guitar

By WILFRID M. APPLEBY

ABOUT four years ago a parcel of MS. guitar music was sent to me to look at. The transcriptions were much better than most and the original compositions were definitely interesting as modern music for the guitar. The fingering and arrangement showed this was the work of one who had studied the guitar profoundly and it demanded a high standard of skill to play as fingered.

The following year, 1948, I met the man whose name was on those MSS.—Miguel Abloniz—one of the most

interesting personalities of the modern guitar-world.

Miguel Abloniz was born in Cairo, Egypt, in May, 1917, and commenced his musical education when ten years old with piano and, later, the violin, but from the age of seventeen the guitar claimed his strongest interest.

Having studied harmony with the Swiss organist-composer Marc Briquet, he wrote to Emilio Pujol, who was then (in 1937) living in Paris. Prof. Pujol sent him a copy of his Method (*Escuela Razonada*) and advised him to become a member of "Les Amis de la Guitare." He joined this Society and a most interesting correspondence developed with Andre Verdier; more than a hundred of whose letters (full of valuable advice on how and what to study) are treasured by Abloniz.

He also corresponded with the Italian guitarists Prof. B. Terzi and the late R. Vaccari, who at that time were publishing the Italian guitar review "La Chitarra." A "Prelude" and a "Minuet" by Abloniz were published in that magazine in 1940.

RECITALS AND BROADCASTS

During the war he commenced recitals and broadcasts, frequently entertaining troops in the Middle East. He made many transcriptions, including one of the "Suite in A," by L. S. Weiss, which was copied entirely from Segovia's recording.

In 1946 he went to Barcelona and entered the *Escuela Municipal de Musica*, being admitted to the guitar class of Prof. Juan Parras de Moral. He was also admitted to Prof. Pujol's "Vihuela" class at the same Conservatory and this included studying and transcriptions of the tablature in which the older guitar and vihuela music was written.

For many months he studied the guitar privately with Prof. Pujol and had flamenco lessons from Señora Pujol (Matilde Cuervas).

In 1947 Miguel Abloniz went to Madrid and spent many hours with Daniel Fortea.

While at the house of some friends in Barcelona, Abloniz met a lady who was introduced to him as "Señora de Tarrega." "Which Tarrega?" he exclaimed. "De Francisco Tarrega, the son," she replied.

He realised that this was the daughter-in-law of the great Tarrega. The son bore the same Christian name as his father and Abloniz was invited to lunch with them on the following day. He was shown many photographs and souvenirs but there were no guitars; the host explained that his sister had kept the last of their father's guitars.

Señor Francisco Tarrega said that when he was a child he commenced to study the guitar, but his father considered he had no special aptitude for the instrument and advised him to abandon it. However, at the rare times his father was out of the house he, Francisco Junior, used to take his father's guitar from its case and try out some arpeggios while his sister, Maria, would keep watch from the balcony, for their father did not like anyone to touch his guitar.

TARREGA ANECDOTE

Abloniz's host told the following anecdote about the Maestro: When he was a lad he used to play each evening at a restaurant in a part of Barcelona some distance from his home. One stormy night, after playing until very late, the



MIGUEL ABLONIZ
(See article on this page)

young guitarist asked the proprietor if he would allow him to spend the night there. He agreed but charged the boy a sum equal to his earnings for the evening.

When the young guitarist woke the following day he found the first and fourth strings of his guitar had broken—probably due to the dampness of the place. Not being able to obtain strings by that evening he had to improvise on the remaining four strings; but he did so with such remarkable skill and success that the audience showered money on the lad.

When Emilio Pujol was mentioned in conversation, Señor Francisco Tarrega, Jr., said: "I think he has more right than I to be called my father's son"—alluding to the importance of Pujol's work in immortalising the Tarrega principles in his "*Escuela Razonada da la Guitarra*."

For many years it had been Miguel Abloniz's greatest desire to meet Andres Segovia. Hearing that Segovia was to give recitals at the Edinburgh Festival in 1948, he came from Cairo to Britain and realised this dream.

"In a few lessons," he said, "Segovia made me see clearly . . . what the guitar is; what we should ask from it and how

to achieve this. He is not only a great artist but a great man; most human, understanding, sympathising, kind and disinterested."

VISITS LONDON

While in London, Abloniz visited Dr. Perott and the late Harry Bream, often playing duets with Julian Bream.

Although he had corresponded with Mons. Verdier for twelve years, Abloniz did not meet the "directeur" of "Les Amis de la Guitare" until after his visit to Britain. He met other guitarists in Paris. Of Ida Presti, who has included some of his transcriptions and compositions in her repertoire, he says (referring to my article in the October "B.M.G."): "I agree with you about her artistry." He heard her play many times.

He also met the veteran guitarist Jean Lafon, over 70, but still (as Andre Verdier calls him) "the King of the Arpeggio."

Mons. Lafon remembers many guitarists and it was indeed a compliment for Abloniz to be praised by him for the excellence of his left-hand technique.

Abloniz is careful to keep some fingers on their place for the right length of time while other fingers move on. He prepares some fingers long before they are needed and, when the music demands it, strives to create the "pedal" effect (so marvelously achieved by Segovia) by letting some notes of one chord continue to vibrate while the notes of the following chord are struck.

Robert Bouchet was another of the guitarists in Paris who evoked the admiration of the visiting Abloniz, who describes him as "artist, luthier and musician."

During the past summer Miguel Abloniz visited Italy, spending six weeks with the guitarists in Milan. The leader of the Friends of the Guitar (*Amici della Chitarra*) in Milan is Signor E. Remo Roveri, who organised the recent Guitar Festival there. Prof. Terzi and two of his former pupils—Dr. Craveri and Signor A. Barbieri—impressed the visitor as outstanding guitarists.

Several well-known guitarists have lived in Cairo, including the famous Neapolitan, Teresa de Rogatis, Prof. Costa Proakis and others. Miguel Abloniz should make the Egyptian city a stronghold of the guitar—unless he decides to accept an important teaching position in another land to which he has been invited.

TARREGA DAY

From Spain and South America reports have been received which show that December 15, the anniversary of the

death of Francisco Tarrega, is being marked as a special occasion for homage and grateful memory of the great and beloved Maestro, whose lifework for the guitar has been so largely responsible for the modern advancement of this delicate and beautiful instrument.

It is suggested that all guitarists throughout the world should keep December 15 as "Tarrega Day" and honour the memory of this great musician-guitarist by some act which will stimulate interest or intensify the movement towards better understanding and appreciation of the guitar.

Societies could organise a special meeting or recital. Individuals could purchase a new guitar solo or gramophone record. Other ways will, no doubt, suggest themselves.

Will those who agree with this suggestion please write to me c/o "B.M.G."

(To be continued)

Spectrum Guitar Forum

Conducted by JACK WHITFIELD

THE request of a Hull reader, that the Forum try to put him in touch with a playing partner, reminds me of a little service I was able to perform for Servicemen (during the war) through the columns of "B.M.G."—and I see no reason why we should not revive it.

When the lads were scattered far afield we managed to link one or two who did not know of each other's proximity until a plea by one or other for fretted companionship was made known through these columns.

My Hull correspondent would like to know of someone in the city or at hand who is keen on solo (or rather duet) playing and reasonably competent. He emphasises that he himself is "not brilliant" and is not asking for a second Ivor Mairants to come forward, but he is not in a position to teach a beginner. Any one enthusiastic for the guitar as a musical instrument and able to handle medium grade compositions would be ideal.

If this note catches the eye of someone in that category in Hull or the East Riding, will he write to me (c/o "B.M.G."), giving name, address and, if possible, telephone number? I will pass his letter on.

If any readers in other parts of the country are in the same position as this correspondent I hope they will not hesitate to write in. It would be as well, I think, if those seeking to be put in touch with playing partners indicated their own

abilities and the type of number in which they are interested; with any other details they feel might help.

Reader R.G. (Birmingham) has encountered in a dance-band guitar part the chord symbol "E♭"—followed by a small circle, and it "has him stumped."

A small circle after the symbol indicates a diminished chord, R.G.—and a word of apology for not treating your query as a matter of urgency. Your letter somehow got mixed up with the "less urgent" file.

At any rate, I hope the information is in time to be useful. Thanks for raising the point, because I have no doubt other readers have encountered the same mystery.

STANDARD SYMBOLS

Such mysteries there should not be. It is time we had a standard schedule of chord symbols. The diminished chord is usually indicated by an abbreviation or a minus sign; thus Adim. or A—for A diminished. Now we have a little circle to complicate matters still further.

Since the Americans often use a minus sign to indicate a minor chord, small wonder that confusion arises.

We already have two methods of abbreviating the chord of the augmented fifth—"aug" and a plus sign. Having acquired a little circle for a diminished chord, it only remains for someone to start using a little square for the augmented chord and guitarists will wish they had taken up the fiddle.

I respectfully suggest that the Fretted Instrument Guild and its American counterpart get together in an approach to the publishers on this matter. It may not be so acute at present but one of these days, I suppose, we shall be able to get American music in full measure again.

Judging from the detailed instructions in pre-war American music, one can only imagine they have been up against this problem before. Of two copies I have looked up, one contains an inside page of the cover filled with explanatory notes on the signs and symbols to be found in the piece; another explains them in some detail on the first page of the music.

I remember one or two English compositions which carried similar explanations.

All this is, I am sure, bad for the fretted family in their fight for recognition as accepted musical instruments. No one can quarrel with fingering instructions (these are known and taken as a matter of course by all exponents of "hand-played" instruments). Occasional (but not too frequent) guidance on strings

is not out of place; the circled figure is not unsightly.

SUPERFICIAL DIFFERENCE

The more the superficial difference between our music and that of other instruments the less acceptable it becomes to the pianist, the violinist and their well-established kind. Music cluttered up with signs, diagrams, symbols and instructions can only indicate a freak instrument to the average musician.

Our "beginners corner" for this and next month will be devoted mainly to ways and means of improving left-hand technique in single-string playing.

Many beginners come to the guitar via the ukulele, with some knowledge of chord shapes. After adapting themselves to the bigger fingerboard of the guitar, they jump into a dance band at the first chance and cash in on their hobby.

No one blames them for doing that, provided they do it efficiently, but this commercial attraction often detracts from—and sometimes kills altogether—their enthusiasm for the guitar as a solo instrument; so much so, that they cannot even play a single-string chorus in the dance band itself.

A sad state of affairs but more prevalent than you might think.

A semi-pro dance-band leader recently told me that his guitarist was excellent on chords but could not play a single-string chorus to save his life!

There is an important argument against being purely a chordster, in addition to the paramount consideration that you are using the guitar as little more than a musical drum. What would you think of a pianist who could only play chords?

MORE DIFFICULT

Chord playing on its own "sets" the hand and works against the independence between fingers which is necessary to play any type of solo—even one composed mainly of chords! The longer you are simply a chord player, the more difficult it becomes to "catch up" in the other direction.

So if you are one of the new generation of guitar students to whom I referred recently and have ambitions to enter a dance band, pursue them by all means and make yourself efficient in chord execution; but remember that such a course will never make you a guitarist worth the name. Get cracking at the same time on general instruction and especially single-string practice.

Incidentally, in the course of the next article or two I shall be answering requests from a number of beginners for information and guidance on tutors. Meantime, the ensuing notes on the left

hand will provide exercise.

In most people, the left-hand fingers are not naturally the strongest. The wise beginner will therefore devote time to strengthening them. Watch an experienced player and you will feel that behind the apparently smooth and easy movement of his fingers there is a quiet sense of power. Any person who tries to press the strings of a guitar for the first time recognises what power is required.

One of the best ways of getting the left hand into good condition is to spend a period each day on exercise without the guitar. A friend of mine, even when a proficient player, used to carry a rubber ball in his pocket and, in spare moments, "played" on it with his fingers "chords" and "single-string runs"!

FINGER DRILL

In a "B.M.G." article some years ago, Roy F. Bell suggested, among several other finger-drill exercises, this one: "Place the tips of the fingers and thumb on any surface; a table if handy or even the knee. The ends of the fingers should be vertical, the back of the hand horizontal. Without raising the remaining fingers, tap once with the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th; then give four taps with the 1st; tap once with the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 1st; then give four taps with the 2nd, and so on. Repeat the round until the fingers ache."

Another drill I have found useful runs as follows: Bring together the ball of the thumb and the fourth finger of the right hand; insert the "wedge" thus formed between the 1st and 2nd fingers of the left hand, level with the bottom of the knuckles. Now try to open the right hand. This has the effect of pressing the two left-hand fingers away from each other; giving the maximum span.

Repeat the dose with the 2nd and 3rd fingers of the left hand and the 3rd and 4th.

The enterprising student should have no difficulty in dreaming up other exercises to develop his left hand, bearing in mind the primary objectives of strength, reach and independence of finger action.

Next month we will suggest one or two single-string exercises.

(To be continued)

PRICE INCREASE?

As most readers will know, there has recently been a big increase in the price of paper. This extra cost means that the bill for producing "B.M.G." is much higher. YOU can help us to avoid a rise in the selling price of the magazine by helping us secure new readers. TELL YOUR PLAYING FRIENDS.

Mandolin Miscellany

By E. J. TYRRELL

(Continued from the February issue)



FAR too abruptly (for so much more could have been said) we turn now to the fascinating question of varnish. It would be judicious, I think, merely to say that Harry Garmont's opinion of cellulose

spray finish approximates (with perhaps slightly greater emphasis) to his observations upon the electric mandolin. In any case, he maintains that the finest "varnish" of this description, in the most favourable circumstances, will never give life of more than 15-20 years, whereas a first-class mandolin (with necessary renovation through wear) should last for generations.

Neither is he enamoured of french polish which, he believes, gives a harsh tone and a duration of only 30 years or so.

Harry Garmont's enthusiasm becomes infectious as he describes his discovery of the varnish which suddenly gave a "soul" to the instrument on which he had laboured for so long—after the trivial detail of applying nine slow-drying coats at monthly intervals in a dust-free laboratory with humidity and temperature automatically controlled.

There have, of course, been almost as many "discoveries" of the secret of the Stradivarius varnish as of perpetual motion—one of the shrewdest being, I believe, Charles Reade, the celebrated Victorian novelist, and the Garmont claim (which is almost tantamount to this) may understandably be greeted with scepticism.

Nevertheless, here we have a professional of outstanding qualifications who from the outset has worked with the aid of modern equipment, including electronic apparatus for measuring vibrational acoustic results—equipment undreamt of by earlier investigators whose experiments were necessarily of the "hit or miss" variety.

FAIRLY CERTAIN

In any case, the details already divulged to me make it fairly certain that Mr. Garmont has worked on divergent lines to all his predecessors but, pending receipt of the treatise he is now preparing on "Mandolin Varnish," further particulars are scarcely called for.

He claims quite definitely, however, that the correct application of this varnish to ordinary commercial mandolins, apart from improving tone, increases volume by 50 per cent.

I claim no pontifical infallibility for Mr. Garmont, of course, but as far as I am aware he is the only research worker on scientific lines aiming at the betterment of the mandolin. If there are others—perhaps with the same high qualifications—this article will not have been in vain if it brings them into the open to exchange views with Mr. Garmont and elucidate mutual problems.

I am fully aware that I have given little tangible information, for that is the province of the investigator himself—but I have his promise that when, in the near future, he writes fully on this fascinating subject he will also place at the disposal of the Editor of "B.M.G." the first set of photographs of this mandolin ever to be released.

INTERESTING MATERIAL

As I draw to a close I become painfully aware of how much interesting material I have omitted but it does indeed seem fitting that what appears to be a giant stride forward in mandolin development should emanate from St. Augustine, almost the first European settlement in the United States, where Ponce de Léon landed from Spain in 1512, at the very moment when in the Latin countries the mandola and mandolin were being evolved from the lute.

I cannot do better than conclude, as an apology for this article, with the inspiring words of that great authority of international repute: Giuseppe Pettine:

"The making of a musical instrument is an art, not an industry. . . . The best stringed instruments of the past were made by individuals, NOT corporations. A person working at something artistic must satisfy his innate love for beauty and art and to him money becomes a by-product of his endeavours." (F.I.N., Jan./Feb., 1949.)

(To be continued)

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Song with Banjo accompaniment

CHARLES E. SHAW

INTRO

Moderato

§ CHORUS

VOICE

BANJO

Oh, Meggie Mur - phy

I love you so, You are the neat-est, sweet-est girl I know.

You'll drive me cra - zy, my love will grow Be-cause its ai - sy

To love you so - - o oh - - o - oh.....

FINE

VERSE

1. Ev - 'ry hour all day long You will hear me sing this song,
2. All day long, all night through, I am dream - ing just of you;

Ev - 'ry morn, ev - 'ning too, This is what I think of you.
Some say that dreams don't mean a thing, But in my dreams I al - ways sing.

D.S. twice al Fine

Zither-Banjo Solo

Andante cantabile

Royal Hawaiian Hotel

Arranged by
BASIL KING

Moderato

*Do not pick

Danse Fantastique

Spanish Guitar Solo

R. ALLEN

Moderato

Allegretto

Basso marcato

5P.

10P.

Fine

Slower

rall.

a tempo

rall.

a tempo

D.S. al Fine

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Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair

Slowly with expression

Plectrum Guitar Solo

S. C. FOSTER

Arr. by ÅKE ROSWALD

6P.

2P.

7P.

6P.

2P.

2P.

5P.

9P.

7P.

5P.

2P.

5P.

7P.

2P.

6P.

2P.

7P.

9P.

5P.

To the Members of the Mandolin-Guitar Society

Transcribed by
Esther Simon

Neapolitan Song

TSCHAIKOWSKY

Mandolin Solo with Guitar accompaniment

Allegretto

MAND. 

GUITAR 

p













f

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Banjo Technique

By LESLIE KAYE

(Continued from the February issue)

THE orthodox approach to the banjo, as treated in all printed tutors, is via the right hand.

It has been well said that the left hand plays the notes but the right hand plays the banjo. It is certainly true that no amount of left-hand technique can compensate for a faulty action of the right hand.

It is noteworthy that the preliminary exercises in all tutors are devoted to the exercise of the right-hand fingers alone. Even when the left-hand fingers come into play to stop the notes, the initial movements are simple. This gives the opportunity of concentrating the fullest measure of attention to the production of clear notes from the start.

Unfortunately, all too frequently—in the student's haste to progress to something more interesting—these initial exercises fail to receive the attention they merit.

The strings should be vibrated by the extreme tips of the right-hand fingers. The movement should be downward towards the vellum and a crisp, firm action is desirable—if not essential. This action should resemble somewhat the action of the little hammers which vibrate the strings of a piano.

This action must be carefully cultivated, as the ultimate attitude of the student will depend on the tone produced.

To this end the ear must be constantly attuned and any slips or false notes must be practised until they can be sounded with clarity and certainty. The ideal is to make every note sound like an un-stopped string and, although this is by no means easy, it is well worth any expenditure of effort.

Once the habit has been formed it becomes second nature to produce good tone, and one of the fundamental lessons of banjo playing will have been well and truly learned.

In his excellent work "How to Excel on the Banjo," Emile Grimshaw has devoted a whole section to exercises for developing right-hand technique. Every exercise is worthy of careful study and will, if conscientiously practised, impart a sound knowledge of right-hand fingering.

AVOID SLIPSHOD HABITS

In the early stages of study it is easy to fall into slipshod habits of fingering.

There is nothing so detrimental to easy, effortless execution and good tone as slovenly fingering.

At the same time, it is just as easy to start to assimilate good habits and correct methods.

When taking up these studies, careful attention should be paid to mastering the fingering as marked by the composer.

All the exercises in "How to Excel on the Banjo" will be found to reflect the difficulties encountered in various solos, and it is only necessary to adapt the fingering thus acquired to give a smooth rendition to any number.

Take, for example, Ex. 18—embodying alternate fingering on scale runs. This sort of thing is encountered in numerous solos: to mention but one, "Dixie Medley."

This sort of study makes for intelligent practice which is vitally necessary if real progress is to be made.

Ex. 19 is devoted to triplets. These are encountered frequently in most solos and nothing sounds more effective than cleanly-executed triplets.

Nevertheless, diligent practice on this difficulty is well repaid in the long run and, incidentally, it is well to remember that triplets can be executed both upwards and downwards.

Ex. 23 in "How to Excel" exemplifies this, and whilst the downward triplet will generally be found more difficult of execution it is essential that it be practised until it can be performed with facility.

THIRDS AND SIXTHS

The playing of thirds and sixths is another aspect of technique which requires careful practice.

Whilst exercises will be found for this difficulty in Grimshaw's books, I incline to the opinion that Joe Morley's Tutor treats this most exhaustively and thoroughly. In this respect I find Nos. 9 and 10 extremely useful.

There is one point about all the exercises in Morley's Tutor: every one demands close attention if it is to be properly executed.

It will be noted that Joe Morley favoured the use of right-hand thumb and first finger. At the same time, the alternative use of thumb and first and second fingers is indicated to those to whom it appeals.

The fingering in all his exercises is plainly indicated and is an object lesson in correctness.

Rapidly repeated notes on the first string with thumb accompaniment are often encountered, particularly in works by the older composers and arrangers.

Perfect freedom of movement of the right-hand fingers can make effects more delightful and satisfying to the player and listener alike.

Finally, of course, we have finger tremolo, with or without thumb accompaniment.

This is a beautiful effect, indeed, but rarely encountered.

Finger tremolo is not really difficult, but it does require diligent practice and, for a long time, no *apparent* progress is made. No doubt this explains why many fall by the wayside in this particular, for the majority of banjoists do not consider it worth the effort.

The foregoing mainly summarises the work and the difficulties of the right hand but there is nothing which cannot be surmounted by patient and persevering practice.

In this matter of difficulties it is a good idea to go through Grimshaw's and Morley's books and make a list of the exercises dealing with each aspect. If you refer to them and practise them systematically the benefit is bound to be apparent in a comparatively short time.

Before I leave the subject of the right hand there is one point I would like to make. In some cases the difficulty can have a mental rather than a physical existence. In my own case, I found this to be so in the movement at the top of the second page of "Jacko On Parade."

The only thing to do in a case like this is to practise the right hand alone to get the "feel of it." Then, when it is played in conjunction with the left hand, the difficulty will be found to have largely disappeared.

Next month we will deal with the left hand.

(To be continued)

Two Arts Combined

By PETER SENSIER

THE numerous similarities between music and the visual arts have quite frequently led to combinations of both or representations of one by the other.

The latest and most successful attempt in this is a film—"The Feast of St. Isidore and the Horrors of War"—currently showing at the Academy Cinema, Oxford Street, London.

Although the film might claim attention because it possesses what is probably the longest title of any showing in London, it will be of interest to all players and lovers of the Spanish guitar for another reason.

It consists of the musical interpretation

by Andres Segovia of extracts from the paintings, etchings and drawings of Francisco Goya. The film owes its somewhat original title to Goya's vast canvas, "The Feast of St. Isidore" and "The Horrors of War"—the latter, a series of etchings, depicting the unsuccessful attempt of the Spaniards to oust the occupation troops of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Also represented in the film is Goya's pictorial commentary on the life, beauty and misdeeds of the Duchess of Alba (with whom the painter was apparently not unfamiliar) and the famous "Nightmare" etchings.

Behind all this wealth of pictorial art, there is a continuous and apt musical commentary by Segovia.

As always, the maestro plays with that wealth, tone colour and lush expression that have frequently led critics to complain of his treatment of Bach and the earlier composers. Here, however, such criticism cannot apply, for he is playing the music of Spain which demands those dynamics and tonal variations at which he is so able. Solos played include "Granada" and "Prelude" (Albeniz), "Danza" (Torroba) and "Recuerdos de la Alhambra" (Tarrega).

PHYSICAL IMPACT

This music, combined with the often forceful illustrations of Goya, produces at times an almost physical impact, and the finale, "Recuerdos de la Alhambra," although not in itself a momentous piece of music, seems to express the nostalgia felt by Goya (the true Spaniard) living in exile in France.

At the beginning of the film, guitarists will be intrigued by the fine "close ups" of Segovia's hands as he plays the opening bars of music.

Credit for the production of this interesting and wholly enjoyable film goes to producer Sergio Amidei, of Colonna Film Productions; the Italian Company responsible for those two brilliant celluloid commentaries on Italian life, "Bicycle Thieves" and "Sunday in August." The fact that the visual part of the film was shot entirely from picture postcards makes it an even more creditable effort.

The film is now available for general distribution, so players all over the country should watch their local cinema for its appearance.

MODERN PLAYING FOR *Plectrum Banjoists*

By ROY BURNHAM



BEFORE I return to practical articles, some points raised by correspondents during the past two months are of general interest.

One reader has trouble holding his banjo. He complains (a) the arm of his instrument drops towards the ground and if he tries to support it with his left hand he cannot finger properly and the arm slips between his thumb and first finger. (b) If he tries to hold the banjo in position with his right forearm, as his printed tutor recommends, then he pulls the arm away from his body and so cramps the action of his right hand that it is practically impossible to play at all.

I strongly suspect his banjo is the culprit; particularly as he tells me the size of the hoop is smaller than normal.

All reputable makes of banjos I have played "balance" of their own accord and no real "holding" in position is necessary. This is because the hoop is naturally heavier than the arm.

Experiment this way. Place the hoop of your banjo on your right thigh with its arm horizontal. Then gradually raise the arm towards your left shoulder until you find it remains in position without support for a few seconds before dropping back towards the ground.

This is in a position somewhere between 55 and 60 degrees from the horizontal.

In other words, at this particular angle the banjo is just on the point of balancing of its own accord—and this is the natural playing position.

The very touch of the left hand keeps the instrument balanced without the necessity of support, and, although the right forearm does rest lightly on the hoop, one has no sense of "holding" the instrument in position.

Incidentally, a little experimenting without the banjo demonstrates quite clearly why it is easier to play the instrument with the arm at an angle nearer the vertical than horizontal.

Hold your left hand as though fingering an imaginary banjo—about four inches to the left of your left shoulder—

and move it up and down in the direction of your right thigh. Then repeat the action commencing eight—and then twelve—inches from your shoulder. Each time you will find the hand and forearm apparently getting heavier and the movement is more tiring.

So you see that when the banjo "balances," your arm balances, too. My sister-in-law—a B.Sc.—says it's all to do with the "law of moments."

ORTHODOX METHOD

Appropos the position of the banjo, the orthodox method is to balance the instrument on the right thigh, but I know of several excellent players (notably Al. Jeffery) who hold the instrument in the lap. I think it is purely a matter of personal choice and a question of habit—which leads me to my next query.

A reader complains that although playing well at home, he fluffs all manner of things when playing at occasional concerts or even parties. He adds that he never seems to feel comfortable on the chairs in halls and theatres.

I asked him where he sat when practising at home, and he replied: "On the settee in the sitting-room."

That was the answer to his problem. The settee is considerably lower than the average chair. His whole playing technique had become accustomed to his sitting in a relatively low position.

I suggested he should acquire a stool the same height as his settee and use it when playing out—it is quite a useful adjunct to stage presentation—and it would certainly be easier than re-adjusting himself by playing *always* seated on a chair of normal height.

Even chairs can be tricky. I remember a broadcast in which I took a muted solo. There was a four-bar Intro in quickstep tempo which allowed me comfortable time to put on a bridge mute. At the rehearsal, however, the producer felt I should be nearer the microphone for the solo, and asked me to stand up and put my foot on the chair.

This went quite well in the "run through," but during the broadcast I put the mute on happily and got my foot on the chair just in time—but I did not put the foot in the centre of the chair; and it had a canvas seat!

It was the most uncomfortable solo I have ever played. What a mess, I thought. Yet I was told that no one noticed the odd little fluffs—but no more canvas seats for me!

MUTES

I used a bridge mute on this occasion; a plastic banjo mute. I mention this

TELL YOUR PLAYING FRIENDS
ABOUT "B.M.G."

because a lady reader of this column asks me what mute I could recommend and if such an accessory is worth using.

My reply is: use all the mutes you can acquire. You will find that each mute gives a different tone and effect, and the more one acquires, the more variety one can add to one's playing.

The "Havana" mute is ideal for muting quickly while playing, but care must be taken to see that it is making proper contact with the bridge, otherwise a rattle will be produced.

Bridge mutes of the "clip on" type vary considerably, and one can experiment with violin and viola mutes—in addition to the banjo mutes. These can be obtained in plastic, wood and metal, and all produce a different tone. The one essential is to ensure they fit firmly, otherwise they will have a tendency to fly off halfway through a number, with disconcerting results.

There is also the "wedge" mute, which slides under the bridge (on top of the vellum). A completely different effect is obtained by stuffing a duster under the strings behind the bridge.

As for effect, I think some of the most delightful plectrum-banjo music is played when the instrument is muted.

(To be continued)

"You have to MAKE IT UP"

By JOHN HYNAM

IF it were possible to print bright red danger signals round this article, I would ask our long-suffering Editor to do it because all you up-and-coming technicians have never had such a trap of error and bad taste laid in front of you as this which I am going to talk about.

I do not pretend it is original (even though Marcel Bossu and I did work it out on our own in 1946) but I do claim that, if used with taste and discretion, it

Ex. 1



Ex. 2



can considerably widen one's basis of improvisation. Joe Deniz, Lauderic Caton and Reg Coleman (to name three) support this view; always with the proviso that it must be worked at and worked at until it becomes a part of your musical make-up.

So far, we know what notes we can use in any given set of circumstances but in the "added arpeggio" idea the horizon broadens.

Look at Ex. 1. Here is a rhythmic succession of notes on a basic harmony which, owing to previous study of these articles you will consider to be quite reasonable.

Ex. 2, on the same basic harmony, would appear to be far from reasonable—but before you shout too loudly, play the exercise at about 40 bars to the minute with an accompanist and see if you can actually "get away with" some of those outlandishly placed notes. You will find you can!

I hope you are convinced now that this system, if really learned and *not* over-worked, can widen your basis of improvising to a great extent.

Until next month, when I shall give you the whole thing, I would like to suggest you see how you get on by asking your accompanist to keep playing the chord of G major and then work out for yourself some exercises that pass through these chords (not necessarily in this order): Bm6, Bm7, Em6, Em7, D9+, Fdim, Gdim and F9 ♭ 5.

When you have assimilated these, see what good things you can produce using this idea.

There is really nothing new in it, is there? Composers for many years have been writing the arpeggio of one chord against the harmony of another.

When you have done some exercises like this, you will soon see where the great danger of this system lies. The first line of next month's article will confirm

the conclusion at which I am sure you will arrive.

(To be continued)

Loss Of Tone

By E. GATES

THE other day a banjoist asked me if I could suggest a reason for the deterioration in the tone of his instrument. He said the quality and quantity of tone of his banjo is not nearly so good as it was twelve months ago.

I asked him the make of his banjo, because the possibility of a cheap or unnamed instrument deteriorating is, of course, much greater than if the banjo is of high quality and by a maker of repute. He told me the make (a really first-class instrument)—but even the best of instruments will deteriorate if not intelligently cared for.

A few moments' conversation with this player soon enabled me to give him a few hints on the possible cause of his trouble. Perhaps the things I said may be of help to other players of instruments with vellum soundboards.

First of all, the vellum of a banjo must be kept taut—really hard; only just "giving" to hard pressure of the thumb. A vellum on a banjo gradually stretches, with a consequent diminution in both quality and quantity of tone unless the vellum is tightened to compensate for this gradual stretching.

After a few months, the tone of a vellum is gradually lost and no vellum should be kept on an instrument longer than twelve months. Even if the banjo is not played on, the elasticity of the skin lessens and it is this capacity for vibrating that gives tone to a banjo.

It is a simple matter to fit a new vellum to a banjo and, considering that the vellum is the "heart" of the instrument, money spent on this vital accessory is well spent. The improvement in tone (and appearance!) is well worth the expense.

It has often been said that a good banjo improves with playing. Unless a player watches his instrument closely and makes the little adjustments necessary from time to time, I cannot see how any fretted instrument can improve with use.

THE FRETS

Many players do not realise what a vital part the frets play in the production of good tone. Badly worn frets will impair tone. Look at the frets of *your* banjo; if they are worn or notched

through contact with the strings, the tone of the instrument *must* suffer. The instrument will lack its former brilliance and power because it requires re-fretting.

Re-fretting is not an expensive job and is really a simple operation *to a craftsman who knows what he is doing*. Some players attempt to re-fret their own banjos. In some cases they make a passable job of it—in others, the whole fingerboard is ruined.

Re-fretting a fingerboard is not merely a matter of knocking in new frets—to the craftsman that is only the preliminary simple operation. The real job comes *after* the frets are in position; the alignment of each fret to the next so that a string stopped at any one fret does not buzz on the fret above it.

No banjoist would continue to wear shoes requiring re-soling or down at heel. Why should he continue to play on an instrument which requires new frets?

The cost of a re-fret is quite reasonable and the instrument can be back in your hands within a week—but do not entrust your banjo to any but a firm who *know* what they are doing.

There are many other reasons why a good banjo might lose tone.

The wedges, for example, should be hammered in tight from time to time. Perhaps thicker wedges are required on *your* instrument. They are cheap enough.

Players should at least once a year take the whole of their instrument to pieces. Clean every part; remove all dust and dirt; put a spot of thin oil on all brackets and nuts; and give all woodwork a polish with a good furniture cream.

Players must take an intelligent interest in their instruments and keep them fit if they expect the best results from them. The tone of any banjo will gradually deteriorate if this is not done. Perhaps the player will not be aware of this gradual change, but there will come a day when he suddenly realises his instrument is not as good as it used to be. Do not wait for this day to arrive.



JULIAN BREAM

who has just completed seven new arrangements for Spanish guitar for the Clifford Essex Co. These will probably be ready some time next month. Players of the Spanish guitar should watch for details.

THE Fretted Instrument Guild

This month we have three important announcements to make. In June the Guild is holding a **CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP CONTEST**. This is something entirely new in fretted instrument contests and will give all clubs competing the opportunity of giving their best. Each club will present a self-contained 15- to 20-minute programme in which soloists, small ensembles and vocalists may be featured if desired. The clubs have a free choice in the numbers they will play and the arrangement of their programme.

Adjudicators are: Dr. Leslie Russell (Music Adviser to the L.C.C. Education Officer), Pat Brand (Editor of the *Melody Maker*), and Bernard Sheaff, Guild Chairman.

Clubs which have expressed their desire to enter are: Aston, Croydon, Gloucester, the Grafton Estudiantina, Islington, London, Watford and West London.

Fuller details and venue will be given in next month's "B.M.G."

First Guild Record. The first Guild gramophone record is in course of preparation. It will feature the Roy Plummer Trio, which was such a "hit" at the recent Guitar Festival. This is the culmination of the Guild's efforts over several months to issue gramophone records at a reasonable price and so fill one of the enthusiast's greatest needs at the present time.

Full details of the titles, price and how to obtain Guild records will be available shortly. If you want to be sure of obtaining a copy from the first pressings, send a postcard to V. J. Parsler, 127, Bethune Road, London, N.16, and you will receive particulars as soon as these are ready.

B. M. & G. Festival in Yorkshire. An important Northern newspaper has discussed with the Guild the possibility of sponsoring a B. M. & G. Festival (including contests) in Leeds this year. This is one of the most important developments since the Guild's formation. I have worked (in my normal business) in association with this newspaper on other schemes and I know what a tremendous interest it arouses among the general public and what a high standard of organisation and efficiency it sets.

At a meeting of Guild Directors it was considered a matter of such importance to the fretted instruments as a whole that an invitation has been extended to the Federation Northern Section to join in the project and share the benefits.

At this juncture all players and clubs within travelling distance of Leeds can play a part in ensuring the success of such a venture by letting us know (as soon as possible) of their interest. Just send a postcard to W. H. James, 98, Avenue Road, Erith, Kent, stating whether you would like the opportunity to compete in a contest or whether you would be interested in attending such an event.

ROY BURNHAM.

BY the WAY

R. E. McCaughey and Miss E. M. Hannah, zither-banjo duettists of Liverpool, have appeared at several Merseyside concerts recently; including appearances at the Gladstone Hall, Tranmere, and Atlantic House, Liverpool.

A full two-hours programme was presented by Danny Mitchell and his Hawaiians at the Essoldo Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on January 7. The work of Jack Serato and Brian Kahini (electric guitars) was a highlight of the show.

After an absence of seven months (confined to a hospital bed for the greater part of this period) guitarist Bert Weedon made his return to the profession last month by playing the background music to a BBC play.

On February 12 Julian Bream played the Kohut "Guitar Concerto" with an orchestra composed of fellow students of the Royal College of Music at the Queen Alexander House, Kensington. This work was originally written for lute and string trio; Julian Bream re-arranging and orchestrating the work for this concert.

Congratulations to "B.M.G." contributor Jack Duarte, whose wife Dorothy presented him with a 7lb. son on January 14 last. We hope William Ivor Duarte will eventually follow in his father's footsteps.

On January 18, Geoff. Sisley paid a return visit to the Beckenham Music Group and gave a programme of guitar solos; both classical and plectrum solos being featured. A local newspaper reports: "Mr. Sisley's sensitive playing is always a pleasure to hear, and the enjoyment of the evening was enhanced by Miss Marjorie Sisley, who introduced each item and told the audience something of the personalities of the guitar world."

Robert A. Birse's "Balalaika Players" will broadcast at 5.0 p.m. on March 20 in the B.B.C. Home Service.

NYLON STRINGS

We have been advised that NYLON is going to be in short supply due to the demands of the Services in the rearmament programme. Players of the Banjo and Spanish Guitar are advised to order while stocks are available.

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Billy Norman's five-piece dance band has been re-booked to play for the summer season at Pontins Holiday Camp, Bracklesham Bay, Sussex. Mr. Norman plays the electric Hawaiian guitar. At the present time he is being kept busy with one-night engagements and every Sunday he plays at the Forces N.A.A.F.I. Club, Portsmouth, where he is always pleased to meet Hawaiian fans.

Have you sent for your copies of the two recently-issued numbers: "Guild March" and "Sullivan Selection"? Both these numbers are enjoying large sales, and players everywhere are finding enjoyment in playing them.

The Clifford Essex Co. remind readers of "B.M.G." that the rising cost (and shortage) of all materials means that most accessories and strings will have to be increased in price when present stocks are depleted.

Desmond Dupré recently played the guitar part in a Quintet by Boccherini and a Quartet by Paganini for a B.B.C. recording to be used in the European Service (224 metres).

On January 19, Vrouyr Mazmanian and partner gave a recital of music transcribed by him for violin and guitar at the American School for Girls in Beyrouth. The duets included works by Bach, Handel and Rameau and were enthusiastically received.

On February 20, Julian Bream was the featured artist in one of the regular "Lunch-time Concerts" held at the Bishopsgate Institute, London.

B.M.G. Diplomas

A COPY OF THE TESTS NECESSARY TO SECURE "B.M.G." DIPLOMAS can be obtained free of charge by applying to the Editor, "B.M.G.," 8 New Compton Street, London, W.C.2.

The following candidates have been awarded Diplomas:—

Clara Potts, of Bolton, "A" and "B" Grades (Banjo).

Teacher: Barbara Lobb.

Examiner: T. Harker.

John Graham, of London, "A" Grade (Plectrum Guitar).

Teacher: Chas. Johnson.

Examiner: Bernard Sheaff.

Club Notes

The **Birmingham** Club has recently appeared at concerts held at the Birmingham Blue Coat School, Birmingham Skin Hospital, the British Red Cross at Shirley, the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital, "The Woodlands," Northfield. In all cases, further appearances were requested.

The Club still has vacancies for plectrum-banjoists, mandolinists and guitarists.

Duets for two guitars are nearly always included in the programmes of the **Cheltenham** Guitar Circle meetings. At the January meeting, Mr. and Mrs. Appleby played a Sonatine by Beethoven (arr. R. Esenbel); an Argentine Zamba by Cabrera (arr. H. Leloup) and two Polish airs, including a lively Kujiawiak (arr. Appleby). Soloists included: C. E. Robins,

"Larghetto" (*Borghesi*) and "Adagio" (*Mertz*); Mrs. Kay Appleby, "Premier Chagrin" (*Schumann, arr. Savio*), "Endecha" and "Oremus" (*Tarrega*); W. M. Appleby, "Sara-bande" (*Bach, arr. Fortea*) and "Minuetto" (*Scarlatti, arr. Savio*).

At last month's meetings of the **Leigh-on-Sea** Club the following individual items were played: L. Behar (banjo) "Introduction and Quickstep"; H. Ballard (banjo) "Speedwell"; A. C. Mansell (banjo) "Mazeppa" and "Thumbs Up"; W. Readman (banjo), "Southern Festival"; Mrs. Day, Messrs. Behar and Mansell (banjos) "Egyptian Princess," "Zarana" and "Jacko on Parade"; Jack Taylor (mandolin) "Toselli's Serenade" and "Spick and Spanish"; Mr. and Mrs. H. Wright (mandolins) "Show Boat" and "Musical Memories"; Mrs. Casey (Spanish guitar) "Nocturne" and "Vodka."

The club gave a successful concert at the Argyll Road Methodist Church Hall, Westcliff, recently.

The **Lewisham** and **Excelsior** Clubs combined on the occasion of a Concert and Presentation to S. Sedwell, retiring principal of the Lewisham and Downham Men's Evening Institutes, at the Theatre, Downham Tavern, Bromley, on January 27th. The combined bands played "Man the Guns," "Everlasting Waltz" and "Show Boat," which were enthusiastically applauded.

The **Croydon** Club continues its frequent visits to "Darby and Joan" and "Over 60" Clubs in the district, affording pleasure to the old folks. The most popular numbers are those the elderly folk can sing to and the club is fortunate in having a vocalist to assist it in these afternoon shows.

Another visit has been paid to the Netherne Hospital; the programme including "Blaze Away," "Community Medley," "Show Boat," "Gems from the Overtures," "Marital Moments," "Scotch Broth" and "Man the Guns."

The test piece chosen for the Coulsdon and Purley Musical Festival on March 17th is "Moonlight and You."

The **Manchester** Guitar Circle welcomed Ronald Moore as its guest on January 10. Music played during the evening included: J. Ridging, "Two Preludes" (*Chopin*) and "Double" (*Bach*); B. Beckton, "Studies Nos. 17 and 22" and "Minuet in A Major" (*Sor*); Ronald Moore, "Prelude" (*Tarrega*), "Granada" (*Albeniz*), "La fille au Cheveux de Lin" (*Debussy*) and "Petite Valse" (*Ponce*); Jack Duarte, "Two Preludes" (*Ponce*); Terry Usher and Jack Duarte, "Minuet" (*Mozart*), "Minuet" (*Haydn*), "Sarabande and Variations" (*Handel*), "Fugue in E Minor" (*Bach*), "Romance and Minuet" (*Mozart*), "A Fancy and A Toy for 2 Lutes" (*Robinson*) and "Chanson" (*Duarte*); Terry Usher, "Prelude No. 8" and "Bist Du Bei Mir" (*Bach*) and "Canconcine" (*Usher*). Miss Joan Sellers sang several songs accompanied on the guitar by Jack Duarte.

Last month the **North London** Club gave a concert at Enfield Grammar School to raise funds for the St. John Ambulance group. The Club received an enthusiastic reception. Closely following this was a concert at St. James' Hall, Edmonton, for the local Scout group. Again the efforts of the club were well received. Numbers played on these occasions included: "Man the Guns," "Lancashire Clogs,"

"American Medley," "Spick and Spanish," "Shuffle Along," "Hungarian Rhapsody," "Musical Memories," "Blaze Away," "Strauss Waltzes," "Skaters' Waltz," "Georgia Medley," "Operatic Memories," "Show Boat," "Whistling Rufus," "Community Medley" and "Everlasting Waltz."

The **Plymouth** Club gave a successful concert for the Tavistock Road Trader's Association at the Belmont Youth Hall, Stoke, on January 15th. The Association has engaged the Club to play for its open-air event during the Festival of Britain Week in Plymouth.

Another new member, A. J. Collinge (guitar), has been enrolled.

On January 15th the **Ilford** Club gave two 20-minute shows at the Stratford Town Hall for the "Daily Herald" Award Dance and Social. On February 2nd the club appeared at a concert held in the Barking Baths Hall for the Barking F.C. Dance. Items played included: "Man the Guns," "Classical Snack-bar," "Vodka" and "Musical Memories."

The club would welcome all players, particularly mandolinists.

The **Omega (Plymouth)** Club has recently visited Swilly Hospital (for the third time), Ford Baptist Hall, Stoke Military Hospital, Montpelier Schools, South Down Social Club (fourth visit) and Peverell Park Lecture Hall. The club has also assisted at entertainments in aid of Landrake Football Club and appeared at the Royal Sussex Regt. O.C.A. Annual Dinner (for the second time).

The number of places the club visits (some as many as nine times) shows that its popularity continues.

The **Bournemouth** Club has given concerts at the Unitarian Hall, St. Joseph's Convent and Parkstone Congregational Hall during the past month. Community items played included: "Scotch Broth," "American Medley," "Gay 90's" etc. Miss M. Burgess and Mrs. Bland (mandolins) played "Frine" and "Stars are Shining," and the Southern Banjoliers played "Footlight Favourite" and "Sailors Don't Care."

The **York** Club gives a half-hour programme at a concert being held in Rowntree's Theatre on March 2nd.

Individual items played during the past month have included: H. Cole (banjo) "Queen of the Burlesque," "Valse Gaieté," "Twinkletoes," "White Coons," and "Radio Jig"; H. Wickens (plectrum-banjo) "Middy March," "Rugby Parade" and "Fashionette"; W. Wrigley (zither-banjo) "Humoresque" and "It's Monday Night"; H. Taylor (plectrum guitar) "Wanderlust," "Musical Memories" and "Feeling My Way."

At the February meeting of the **Philharmonic Society of Guitarists**, Hugh Waters sang, to his own guitar accompaniment, folk songs of many countries, including "Porque no Engreso," "Los Ejés" and "Torna a Sorriento"; Peter Sensier and Ray Dempsey, guitar duets, "Le Rosignol" and a "Suite of Dances"; Deric Kennard and Julian Bream, guitar duets, "Rondo" (*Carulli*), "Tiento" (*Carezom*) and "Minuet in Cannon" (*Adolf*); Julian Bream solo, "Study in D Major" (*Sor*).

It was a great pleasure to welcome Mons. Nobla as a guest, and he delighted everyone present with charming French songs to his own guitar accompaniments and excellent rendition of a tremolo solo. Mons. Nobla (who was appearing at Olympia) is the great attraction

at the "Lapin Agile" in Montmartre, Paris.

The Secretary reminds all members that the Annual General Meeting takes place on March 10th—7.0 to 10.0 p.m.

The London Club visited King George V Boys' Hostel at Stockwell recently at which members were civically received by the Mayor and Mayoress of Lambeth. The programme was received with great enthusiasm by the packed audience.

The club is to pay a visit to St. Dunstan's in the near future and is busy rehearsing a complete new programme with a view to a Jubilee Concert in the autumn.

It is proposed to start a club in Woking. Interested players should contact Mr. V. Oliver, "Amberley," Bury Lane, Horsell, Woking.

The Orrell Mandoliers are as busy as ever, with recent shows at Bootle Town Hall, Bootle Hospital, West Derby Village Hall and Blair Hall.

On March 27th the club is presenting a special concert in Crane Theatre, Liverpool, at which (in addition to the "Mandoliers") Al. Roy ("Variety Bandbox" Comedian); the Cleveleys Hawaiian Trio and zither-banjoist Brenda Auden will appear. This will be the biggest fretted instrument concert yet presented in Liverpool. Full details can be obtained from the Hon. Sec. (See Club Directory.)

Correspondence

Dear Sir,—Referring to A. W. Lane's letter and Bernard Sheaff's article a few months ago in connection with the *nom de plumes* Cammeyer used, there is one instance I would like to quote in which Cammeyer apparently used the name of "A. E. Nickolds."

We were discussing the very question of *nom de plumes*, and I suggested to Cammeyer that the waltz "In Cloverland" was his and not Nickolds', as the Cammeyer "touch" ran through the whole piece (in my opinion). His reply was, to use his own words: "Well, Nickolds came into my office one day whistling an air I liked and I straight away built it up into 'In Cloverland.'" I asked him why he used so many pseudonyms and he replied: "When I do a solo and it does not come up to the standard I set myself, I give it another name. The strange thing is that the solos published under other names were often my best sellers, so there you are!"

Perhaps some of your readers could give us similar cases.

Another point: could any of your readers say whether there was such a composer of banjo solos as "C. J. Gilbert." There are two solos in my little library, "Madala Waltz" and "Dorothea Waltz," both bearing the composer's name, C. J. Gilbert.

In my opinion the Cammeyer "touch" runs through both. By that I mean the style that Cammeyer used in his earlier days—say, 1900—as he undoubtedly changed his style in later years and gave us real "banjo compositions" as compared with the compositions of his early days when his composing was, in my opinion again, influenced by his violin education and, I think, the time when his fount of inspiration was at its best, judging by his melodies.

I had a letter ready to send him, asking the question of "Gilbert," when I received news of his passing, so if no one can help, the matter must remain one of opinion only.

Gilbert's solos, "Madala" and "Dorothea" were both supplements in 1900 issues of the

"Banjo World" and were published later in Cammeyer's list; along with two others by Gilbert.

There is another solo, "Bonita" (Edith Fieldon)—published by Turner's—in which there seems to me to be the Cammeyer influence again—or am I getting into "wishful thinking"?—J. W. WHITTAKER.

Dear Sir,—In your July, 1950, issue there is a picture of Henry Schilling, a friend of mine, captioned: "Founder of the Albert Guitar Society." I wish to make corrections to this.

We are not a Society but a simple quartet; neither have we a founder. We have no constitution with its laws and bye-laws, nor are we hampered by rules. All music is owned by members of our group; buying whatever they see fit to buy. In playing, we play whatever any member chooses, and we all take part in criticism of the diverse pieces played.

Here are the facts of our evolution to a quartet status. About four years ago Andy Restivo and I met Henry Schilling at the meeting of a local mandolin club. We talked about guitars and music. Soon after, Mr. Restivo and I visited Mr. Schilling at his house. There



(L. to r.): Fernando Schilling, Henry Schilling, Andy Restivo and Michael W. Denice.

we learned more about each other. Next, Mr. Restivo invited Henry Schilling, his uncle Fernand Schilling, and myself to his house. We all took our instruments and music; playing whatever duets, trios and quartets we then had.

After meeting at Mr. Restivo's house for several weeks, we decided to meet at each other's homes alternately.

Some months ago we decided we ought to give ourselves a name. The "Albert Guitar Quartet" (suggested by myself) was selected because we had more trios and quartets by this composer than by any other.

That is a résumé of our group. In all fairness to all members we would appreciate a correction of your error. Julio Prol took the place of Mr. Restivo, who was away at school when

PLEASE!

On my desk I have 47 letters (all received in the last three weeks) which will not be answered because the writers failed to enclose a stamped, addressed envelope.

I am only too pleased to answer readers' letters and give every help I can—but our postage bill is already very high and I cannot afford to answer letters unless the usual s.a.e. is enclosed.

THE EDITOR.

the published photograph was taken. He is no longer with us. I enclose a more recent photograph of our group; taken in October, 1950.—MICHAEL W. DENICE.

* * *

Dear Sir,—I feel that the remarks of Mr. Appleby, anent the broadcast from the F.I.G. "Guitar Festival," although obviously inspired by a genuine love of the Spanish guitar (which I deeply respect), may, if misunderstood, do serious harm to the cause of the guitar.

From a purely aesthetic standpoint it is impossible to disagree with Mr. Appleby; the much wider scope of the traditional guitar, together with its wonderful emotional eloquence and tonal variety, varying from a tender sweetness at one extreme of its tonal range to an almost intoxicating brilliance at the other, are sufficient guarantees of its acknowledged superiority in the realm of serious music.

However, in the more limited sphere of popular light music the plectrum and Hawaiian guitars hold an honoured and established position and to suggest, as your contributor appears to do, that they are "novelty variants" of the standard instrument is to do them less than justice. In their own sphere they are surely more successful than the traditional guitar could ever be—just as a dance band is better suited to the sort of music it seeks to interpret than, let us say, a chamber orchestra.

At the same time it must be admitted that a greater proportion of the programme devoted to the Spanish guitar would have given the non-guitaristic listener a much truer conception of the role of the guitar in music.

I do not know to what extent my reaction is coloured by personal taste, but I found the broadcast disappointing in spite of the wealth of technical wizardry displayed!—J. T. LYNAS-GRAY.

* * *

Dear Sir,—The brief answer to F. T. Webber, who kindly names Jack Duarte and I as likely "highlights" of the recent Guitar Festival and who regrets that we did not play the "acoustic" guitar in the broadcast, is that I *did* play the acoustic guitar and that Mr. Duarte used only the barest trifle of amplification since his instrument was strung with specially thin strings for amplified playing which would scarcely have been audible if completely unamplified. For all practical purposes, we were both unamplified.

If, of course, Mr. Webber means the finger-style guitar when he speaks of the acoustic guitar, our answer is that we played what we were asked to play by the organisers. Who are we to presume ourselves superior in judgment to the Committee which so ably organised the Festival? And who are we to suggest that our finger-style playing is worthy of broadcasting?

On matters of musical judgment we are prepared always to give our opinion, which is based on long study and careful consideration—hence the lengthy correspondence we joined recently in "B.M.G." to which Mr. Webber refers, but the adequacy of our playing of the classical guitar is a question of FACT which we ourselves are not capable of judging; only others can assess our ability. Since we were not invited to play the classical guitar (in the *broadcast*) we did not question that decision.—TERRY USHER.

* * *

Dear Sir,—Judging by correspondence this month, Mr. Appleby's comments on the "Guitar Festival" appear to have started something—and about time too.

The question is: What is and what is not a guitar?

May I suggest that apart from minor modifications the plectrum instrument retains all the

fundamental principles of the Spanish guitar and is quite acceptable as a plectrum guitar. I have nothing against the electronic instrument except that it is just that.—THOMAS O. DEAN.

Dear Sir,—Among the operas being excellently produced at Sadler's Wells is "Don Giovanni." It has been the practice to play the mandolin obbligato on the violin, but in the Sadler's Wells production a mandolin is played in the orchestra pit during the singing of the serenade by Don Giovanni.

It is good to hear Mozart's music so faithfully interpreted.

There is no excuse for departing from the composer's intentions when the result as originally conceived is so much more satisfying.—C. W. HANCOCK.

Dear Sir,—Once again the "Fingers v. Plectrum" controversy is revived. According to Mr. Lambert's letter, he is "a finger-stylist" and "hates the banjo being played with a plectrum." Why?

I had thought this attitude was dead but, apparently, there are still a few diehards around thinking the tenor-banjo is the perfect vellum instrument. Frankly, I just cannot understand a finger-stylist with such an outlook.

Regarding the first-class tenor-banjoists he mentions (not being heard by our younger players) I wonder if he has ever heard of Ken Harvey, Eddie Peabody, Harry Reser and our own Tarrant Bailey, Jr., on plectrum-banjo!

Morley's solos, which, I suppose, have a more typical "banjo flavour" than any others, can practically all be played with a plectrum; although this might incur the wrath of the purists. I remember playing a simple piece—Morley's "Banjo Oddity"—and a finger-stylist who heard me could not see my right hand. He remarked: "I didn't know you'd gone back to finger style! How do you get your triplets so clean?" I told him I played it with a plectrum and I had to repeat it so he could see me.

This style of plectrum playing calls for a much greater control of the right hand and for re-arranging of the left-hand fingering. A finger-stylist cannot expect to take a plectrum out of his waistcoat pocket and give a musical rendering unless he is prepared to devote just as much practice and study as he does to his finger-style work. For most of us one style is enough, but what does it matter what the strings are vibrated

with as long as the result is musical. Do not let us lose sight of the fact that fingers or pick are only a means to an end—music.—DAVID L. LEADBEATER.

Dear Sir,—When I hear some players of the plectrum-banjo I am amazed at the way they render a number; especially arrangements of popular songs. Quite a few just "scrub" away, losing the melody in a conglomeration of chords. Others sacrifice melody and tone in the "hotting-up" process, while many poke in a chord when they get the chance; making the whole thing sound woefully unbalanced.

Keep the melody uppermost; add the steady background rhythm and well-chosen "breaks" and strive for good tone at all times—that is my advice.—H. TARRANT.

Dear Sir,—I have read with interest Ray Higgins' notes enlarging on my "shock tactics" article. Less there should be any doubt on this serious matter, let me state quite categorically that I agree wholeheartedly with the gist of Mr. Higgins' remarks; namely that prevention is



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better than cure and that rather than trust your life to a little condenser it is better to build the unit in such a way that no exposed metal part could be connected to the live mains. However, this is not always possible in such cases where the guitars are of older design, and it is therefore advisable to check on the condenser at regular intervals.

It must be borne in mind that the purpose of a condenser is to block any DC voltage up to the maximum working voltage stated on it but to allow the AC signal to pass. Obviously if a guitar, safeguarded by such a condenser, is used on AC the mains voltage will be allowed to flow to earth if the positive side of the mains is exposed on the instrument. However, the current that can flow through that condenser is fairly small so there should be no danger of a fatal shock.

All this assumes, of course, that the condenser is perfect and the mains polarity reversed. Owners of guitars fitted with this type of condenser should, therefore, as an additional safeguard, use the neon method as described. With some ingenuity one could even build a neon

bulb into the instrument to light automatically on contact with the players' hands if in the danger position.

Mr. Higgins' remarks on the design of his unit gives me the opportunity for once to "blow my own trumpet." As readers of "B.M.G." are aware, I have for some time been working on the development of a new 6-pole induction unit which, after many abortive attempts, has now reached the market. Bearing in mind the necessity for safety, I have made full use of available plastic materials with the result that the shell of the unit as well as the volume and tone control attachment are completely free from exposed metal parts; in fact, the only metal in the unit are the six separate magnets which are effectively insulated by rubber sleeving. The attachment rod, which is of Duraluminium, is only in contact with the plastic shell so that again there is no likelihood of the mains coming into contact with the player. This unit is less than 5/16-inch in depth and only 3/4-inch wide, it thus becomes the smallest attachment unit in the world.—HENRY WEILL.

Dear Sir,—Further to the correspondence in the February issue regarding the Guitar Festival, let us look at the facts. In the November 10th issue of the *Radio Times* an article appeared under the heading "Back to Be-bop" in which it was definitely stated that Terry Usher would be heard playing works by Haydn and Schubert in a 15-minute broadcast from the Guitar Festival. Came the broadcast—and these works were omitted and a modern plectrum guitar solo substituted without explanation. Was this right or wrong?

If there are eight million readers of the *Radio Times* then eight million people were misled and the Festival itself misrepresented. A great pity, for I am told by several people who were present that the Festival was a well-balanced and organised show.—GEO. R. SPINDLER.

(I do not have a copy of the "Radio Times" by me, but I think I am right in saying that the article in question gave details of the Guitar Festival—explaining the type of music to be heard—and then said that there would be a 15-minute broadcast from the Festival. Some players appear to have read the article wrongly and expected the broadcast to be THEIR brand of guitar playing. I think my correspondent errs when he says that it stated in the "Radio

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Times" that Terry Usher would be playing works by Haydn and Schubert IN THE BROADCAST excerpt from the Festival.—EDITOR.)

Dear Sir,—I am a little perturbed at the spate of correspondence about the broadcast from the F.I.G. "Guitar Festival." As I see it, the main point is that the B.B.C. broadcast a fretted instrument show. They should have been showered with letters of appreciation—and if any player was disappointed that his particular brand of guitar playing was not heard, surely he could have added a polite request to include his favourite the next time.

Every broadcast of a fretted instrument paves the way for more fretted instrument programmes if players will only write to the B.B.C. expressing appreciation. Bigoted and vitriolic condemnation will only make B.B.C. officials wary of such future events.

I can only hope Bernard Sheaff is right when he says that the people concerned at Broadcasting House are used to this type of letter—and will ignore it.

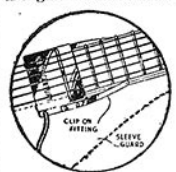
To me, the broadcast from the Festival was like the curate's egg—but I wrote praising the parts I did like.—J. M. COLLINS.

Dear Sir,—I have to thank you for your reply to Rex Morgan (February "Correspondence") but would like to thank him also for his interest. At the same time, may I assure him that the aim of the London Club is "banjo music for the banjo."

Regarding your correspondent K. Marsh: My letter regarding the tenor-banjo was not in any way intended to be aggressive nor directed at the Federation. My offer was made but I do not intend to mention any names for I fear a controversial correspondence. I will, however, write in full to the Chairman of the Federation with a view to "clearing the air."—TOM DOWNING.

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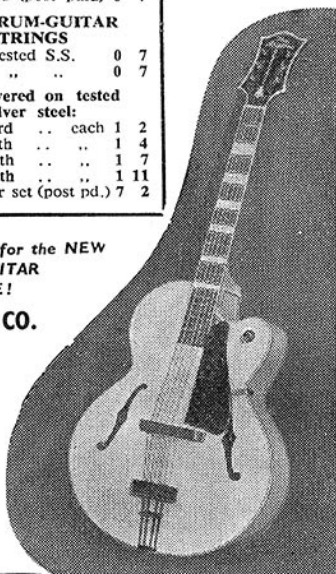
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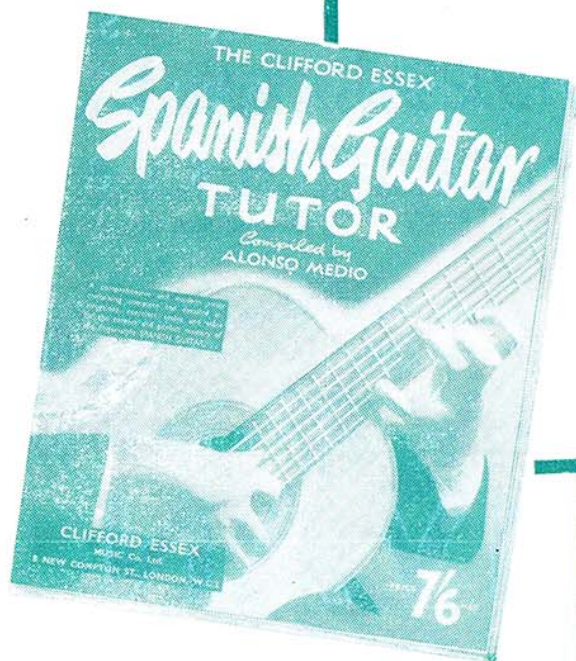
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