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B.M.G.

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GUITAR

Vol. LIX. No. 681

JANUARY 1962

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SPANISH GUITAR SOLO: "Sarabande" (from Greig's 'Holberg Suite)

BANJO SOLO: "Memories"

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Vol. LIX. No. 681

JANUARY 1962

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Our Cover

By THE EDITOR

THERE is little glamour in the life of a provincial guitar player," said Jack Toogood when I asked him for some details of his career. There is little acclaim, too, he might have added.

His name has been well known in and around Bristol since the war—playing "gigs," the occasional broadcast from the Western Region station and, of course, pupils. Then in February 1959 "Guitar Club" went to Bristol and the name of Jack Toogood was heard all over the country. His playing so impressed "G. C." producer John Kingdon that he was given a second broadcast in the programme from London and, later, several guest spots in the Monday late-night "Stringalong" programmes.

These broadcasts led to Jack's association with violinist Leslie Baker and the formation of the "Swingtette" (based on the Hot Club of France Quintet) which was featured for thirteen weeks in the "Stringalong" series.

MORNING MUSIC

"Stringalong" went off the air on Sept. 25th but every Saturday morning since then Leslie Baker and Jack Toogood (with the "Swingtette") have been heard in Morning Music.

Today the tasteful guitar playing of Jack Toogood is a topic of conversation among enthusiasts who recognise first-class execution and real guitar tone.

Jack Toogood started his musical career at the age of seven—learning the

**YOUR EDITOR
HOPES
EVERY READER
WILL ENJOY
A HAPPY AND
PROSPEROUS
1962**

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play the latest "pops" and, looking back, he realises this helped him to keep what little reading ability he had acquired.

At the age of thirteen he was smitten with the ukulele craze—after seeing some of George Formby's films and listening to this famous star's many recordings. He taught himself by the aid of every ukulele tutor he could lay his hands on. He admits that in his early 'teens he simply "lived" for the ukulele.

At the age of 15 he was a junior clerk in a Bristol insurance office and one day he was delivering letters when he passed a newsagent's and saw a copy of "B.M.G." in the window. The subtitle: "Devoted to the Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar and kindred instruments" caught his eye and thinking here might be a chance to learn something more about his beloved "uke" he bought his first copy. He even remembers the date: January 1940.

TAKES LESSONS

Within two months he had commenced taking lessons on plectrum guitar from Horace Craddy (whose address was in our Teacher's pages) and stayed with him until his army call-up in November 1942. Mr. Toogood emphasises the fact that the real foundation for his subsequent musical success came from the instruction he received from Horace Craddy. From his teacher he also became aware of Lang, Kress, McDonough and, later, Reinhardt and he started collecting the recordings of these famous players of the plectrum guitar which have so influenced his own style of execution.

Jack Toogood recalls that studying anything at this period was far from easy. It was wartime and he was re-

quired to take the insurance examinations by his employers and had to study for these at the same time as he was struggling with the guitar. He said he made the fatal mistake of resting his insurance test papers on a copy of Eddie Lang's "Fingerboard Harmony!"

He took a guitar with him into the army and managed to find time to further his studies, apart from playing for his fellow soldiers at sing-songs, etc. When hostilities ceased in Europe his unit was in Germany and soon he was transferred to the Brigade Concert (103 A.A. Brigade, R.A.). When the unit was disbanded he was fortunate in being posted to the 49th Div. Road Show—the "Polar Stars"—with a fine dance band under the leadership of Stan Butcher, now staff arranger for Campbell Connelly & Co.

Mr. Toogood recalls it was excellent training for him as there were many first-class musicians with the band from time to time. (Don Lusher—now with the Ted Heath Band—was first trombone).

At one stage the band lacked a good jazz man for second trumpet—and Jack took the trumpet solos on electric plectrum guitar! He recalls it was most enjoyable to have a full scored backing instead of the more usual rhythm section only.

FIRST BROADCAST

It was while he was playing with the "Polar Stars" he experienced his first broadcast (from BFN. Hamburg); experience that was to prove invaluable a few years later back in "civvy street."

After demobilisation there were tentative arrangements for a small unit of the "Polar Stars" to play professionally but owing to conflicting demob. dates the idea fell through. Back in his home town of Bristol, Jack Toogood decided to try to exist as a professional—but he says it was hard for a time. However, gigs became more frequent; pupils increased and there was always the occasional local broadcast to help.

Then "Guitar Club" went to Bristol—and Jack Toogood has never looked back.

Two highlights of Mr. Toogood's career has been backing Joseph Reinhardt in one of the "Stringalong" programmes and playing solo guitar in the Light Programme's "Trad Tavern" on Nov. 11th, when he was backed by Diz Dingley and the Chris Barber rhythm section.

One final comment from Jack Toogood himself: "There is no doubt the

extra publicity I have enjoyed during the past couple of years has been almost entirely due to my playing a round soundhole acoustic guitar and producing something resembling the Django Reinhardt sound. This proves to my mind there is still a public for this kind of music, a fact borne out by the many appreciative letters I received during the "Stringalong" series.

This being so I deplore the frequent knocks by certain people aimed at anyone who plays in this idiom. After all, 90% of the players of the electric guitar in this country sound like would-be copyists of Barney Kessel, Tal Farlow, Johnny Smith, *et al* (who, in turn, sound very much like each other) and nobody appears to think *they* are committing any crime!"

I, personally, enjoy hearing the impeccable playing of Jack Toogood, for to my ears he produces a worth-hearing sound that is unmistakably *guitar*.

The Brotherhood

By JEFFREY POCOCK

HAVE you ever stopped to think what being a fretted instrumentalist can mean? Have you ever considered your instrument as a membership card to what is, perhaps, one of the most exclusive Clubs in existence? The name of the Club?

It has no name except for one title frequently heard; "The Brotherhood of Fretted Instrumentalists." And it is a brotherhood (and sisterhood, too) despite its unofficial nature.

It has its disagreements, too, and no doubt will continue to have them for as long as fretted instruments and their owners are in being.

In no other section of the musical world exists a parallel and if proof be needed one has only to attend a Federation Rally.

Despite all that has appeared in these pages, I do not remember reading exactly what constitutes a Rally. To the uninitiated the word "rally" may conjure up images of cars bearing numbered labels or dashing to and fro collecting beer mats or road signs—or, at best, an exclusive gathering of some nebulous body known vaguely as "The Federation" whose activities are not for the average player, anyway.

Until one has attended such an event one cannot fully realise the meaning of

that phrase; "The Brotherhood of Fretted Instrumentalists."

I come from an area not noted for the numerical strength of the fretted fraternity. Perhaps because of our small numbers, the majority of fretted instrument players are known to each other without the existence of a "Club." Outside our comparatively small circle it can be difficult to understand how universal is the fellowship that exists.

Let us take a look inside the building where a Rally is in full swing. Everyone present is the owner (or is associated with the owner) of a fretted instrument. Here you may talk freely of nuts, bridges, perch-poles, guts and nylons and be understood. For some nine hours—more or less—one may listen to or ignore the many contests which are the reason (not to mention the excuse) for the gathering beneath one roof of more amateur players of the "Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar and Kindred Instruments" than one hitherto imagined.

In the tuning rooms we may see a fantastic collection of oddly-shaped cases, ancient and modern, and—with the popularity of the electric instrument still on the increase—a variety of amplifiers. One feels (and indeed is) free to talk, uninitiated, to other instrumentalists.

SMALL MINORITY

There may, perhaps, be a small, hardy minority able to sit through the entire proceedings without becoming bored but constant repetition of some of the test pieces makes this unlikely.

Despite this there is something for everyone, if taken in not-too-large doses, and one does not need to remain in the concert hall the whole of the time.

I well remember the impact of my first Rally three years ago. At that time I knew but few of "The Brotherhood" and it is true to say that on arrival I knew only one person present. On leaving, however, I had increased the number of my acquaintances and have continued to do so at each successive event.

For me this is the part I look forward to most of all; the annual meeting with friends. Friends who, I know, will not be bored by constant talk of things associated with music—from players to performances; instruments to amplifiers.

What *really* compels so many to attend? By bus, car, motor cycle and train—many travelling overnight, to

return home unrefreshed by lack of sleep—they make their annual pilgrimage to be irritated, entertained, bored and delighted, in turn, by their pet hates and favourites of the fretted instrument family.

Young and old; polished performer and mere novice—all are to be found here. Other types of music may have their adherents—jazz festivals, brass band contests and other kinds of musical activity—but here is a festival with a difference, for the great majority of those present are not only interested spectators but, in varying degrees, instrumentalists also.

The hall empties and the caretaker's staff moves in. Outside is a buzz of conversation from the departing crowds. In a 12-seater minibus someone is playing the banjo to the amusement of his companions. And as they leave, already the losers are planning next year's assault on the trophies. For in most of us there is just a little of the "Walter Mitty"—if only for one day each year.

From a Bath Chair

By R. TARRANT BAILEY

THE Christmas number of "B.M.G." is one of the things from which I expect to derive satisfaction, thrills and delight. To me its perusal (*what a pretty word!*) provides a sort of Christmas Party atmosphere where old friends gather round in a slightly more frivolous mood than usual.

It grieves me, therefore, to picture the Editor proposing a toast of "Absent Friends," especially when these happen to be the people who, when present, give me very real pleasure. I look forward to meeting them each and every month and for this reason the sudden announcement of their absence from the Yuletide Gathering knocks some of the berries off the holly.

For Jeffrey Pocock there is some excuse for missing his train, as he does the work of three ordinary men *all* the time and is justified in oversleeping occasionally but I can imagine the disappointment of the Electrical Engineering Section of "B.M.G." readers who probably take the magazine especially to read "Tape Recording" and the Tape Club Report. Let us hope none of them

short-circuited themselves into Eternity during the Yuletide Revels for lack of good advice early in December.

For Paul Ludgate I can think of no extenuating circumstances whatsoever calculated to properly account for his absence from the Party. One of his closest relations was there and would, I feel sure, have called for our Tenor Tamer on the way had he but been asked so to do. What is to happen to the cotton crop with no one to whip the slaves into properly gathering it?

And how sadly the young serious guitar students in the early throes of musical mystification must have missed the helpful, understanding, guiding hand of James O'Brien whose clear, correct and really helpful teaching is better than anything the average "Instruction Book" has ever offered them. He explains how to arrive at the right result with the clarity only a master of his subject can provide—and without all the elaborate complications only those already well versed in matters musical can understand.

* * *

We must not dwell too long upon disappointment or the Happy New Year touch will be marred by Editorial frowns, entirely spoiling the Bath Chair's second birthday and encouraging the cultivation of raspberries to an even greater extent than usual.

AN ECHO

Until the Editor unearthed "Why the Banjo Died" from the Oct. 1907 issue of "B.M.G." I was unaware my comments upon attempts to "elevate" the banjo were an echo of views held by that truly great zither-banjoist and "Tune-4th-to-D" composer A. H. Nassau-Kennedy.

How his name recalled my early days on the concert platform some sixty years ago when his "Galop de Concert," "Highland Dance" and "Bonnie Scotland" were easily the top three of the "Top Ten." I am proud indeed to know the views I expressed in the November issue were first presented by a far finer musician than I, so long ago as 1907.

* * *

How splendidly that "Rewarding Search" was written. Frank Hickinbottom takes us *with* him. I felt I too was tip-toeing across the floor of the New York Public Library, tense with fear lest I should cough or sneeze.

You would not listen to me when I told you I thought the Editor might

write "The Banjo and Where to Put It" or something, but you see I was right after all and there *is* a Banjo Book in the offing. From the list of American publications in "Banjo Methods" it would seem not only is the preparation of the Banjo Book making rapid and satisfactory progress but that poor old Higgy has been told to do most of the donkey work! I trust the Editor did not defray *all* Mr. Hickinbottom's expenses on this New York and Hollywood lark because if so our "B.M.G." is going to cost us about two guineas per copy at no very distant date!

To look into that satchel before its owner left the New York Library was indeed a wise precaution on the part of the door-keeper, as Mr. Hickinbottom is notoriously forgetful and is constantly leaving things behind. On one occasion he actually departed from Ensleigh Lodge without his camera tripod, necessitating one of my finest sprint-cycling efforts to ensure he was overtaken before departing to London without this necessary adjunct to the tools of his trade.

The Editor and he laughed heartily at the episode and doubtless I should have contributed to their boisterous hilarity had the journey been shorter and the pace somewhat less terrific.

In my, far from sufficiently humble, opinion "Rewarding Search" should share with the American Library calligraphic the distinguishing mark "Rare Material."

* * *

Now back to 1828-9 and that delightful gentleman leaving Salisbury for Bath. His chronicler need have no fear. That photograph was misleading, I admit, as I am not one hundred and thirty-five years old but a mere stripling of seventy-six.

Possibly, however, my sight is failing for although I have gazed, first with my eagle eye, then with my benevolent one and finally, in desperation, with both, I cannot find that Cathedral. From the 750-foot altitude of Ensleigh Lodge one looks down (with the utmost disdain, I may say) upon the City of Bath—and wonders. The pump Room, the Roman Baths, the Abbey and what Hitler left of the Assembly Rooms are all there but we still have to go to Bristol to see the nearest Cathedral. Bad luck, dear Juan, you will have to write it off with the subscriptions for the Relief of Spanish and Italian Emigrants!

Nothing appears in grandmamma's

diary about Captain Charles Cochrane and the nearest reference I can make is to recall that round about 1907, when I was teaching the banjo at 32 Park Street, Miss Cocksedge was teaching the guitar at forty-two Park Street. This lady was a justly celebrated guitarist in her day and a close friend of Madame Sidney Pratten. When Miss Cocksedge retired from the music teaching profession I bought all her guitar music and this included many autographed copies of Madame Pratten's compositions for the guitar.

Did I but know the time of arrival it would be my pleasure to endeavour to meet that coach at the Saracen's Head, hoping for the privilege of quaffing a stoup of ale with the gallant Captain who, methinks, one may now regard as an old friend.

The "Buy a Broom" reference took me back seventy years, for at the age of six I was trying the patience and endurance of a Miss Willis in her futile endeavour to enlighten me as to the charm of performing upon the piano-forte. I can picture again the old Broadwood "square" grand that was not square at all but about nine feet by three and with a "Honky Tonk" tone that would have turned Winifred Atwell and Russ Conway green with envy.

ATTRACTIVE BAIT

My performance was, alas, unworthy of so beautiful an instrument.

But that memory of mine is running away with me again. What I meant to tell you was that "Buy a Broom" was one of the attractive baits poor Miss Willis used in her unsuccessful endeavour to arouse my interest in harmony and counterpoint. As I glowered at and fumbled upon the very yellow ivory keys she, poor soul, would sing the words of "Buy a Broom" but all I can remember of these is: "And a large one for the Lady: and a small one for the Baby."

The ghastly tune, however, haunts me to this day!

* * *

As recently as June last I wrote in "B.M.G.": "Having a very long time ago reached the age when a camera or a looking glass causes me to shy like a startled mustang . . ."

Look at Page 76 of the Christmas number and you will immediately understand exactly why.

That photograph of the Editor and I was intended for his amusement ex-

clusively and I did not even send a copy to the photographer.

The whole thing is entirely the fault of the Hickinbottom person who should not have been lounging on the beach at Miami or somewhere instead of attending the Annual Summer Outing of the "B.M.G." Office Staff.

In his absence and feeling the highlights of the function should be pictorially recorded I blew the cobwebs off one of my ancient cameras and took several photographs, secure in the knowledge I could not possibly be both sides of the lens.

Alas, however, Mr. Fourfarthings' daughter was one of the visiting party and Mr. Fourfarthings' daughter is young and passing fair. So young and fair indeed that he would be a churlish and unworthy knave, utterly lacking in gallantry, who could decline her behest.

That darned Spanish Minstrel seems to be affecting my typewriter!

Where were we?

Oh yes, I remember. Well, then, when Mr. Fourfarthings' daughter asked me to let her have my camera for a moment I handed it over like a lamb: that is if lambs ever do hand over cameras.

The result you have seen.

My friendly critic, Mr. Att Wood, has said he thought the picture a most deathlike portrait and remarked it reminded him of a recently exhumed and slightly decomposed tortoise. One should, of course, refrain from allowing flattery of this kind to turn one's head.

* * *

That Office Boy wants watching. I thought so at the Staff Outing and kept my eye upon him whensoever I could spare it from contemplation of Mr. Fourfarthings' daughter. The lad must be a direct descendant of the Editor of "The Winning Post" or "Town Topics" and will probably complete his career in the publishing offices of "For Men Only" or "Reveille."

Happy New Year to you all.

(To be continued)

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Folk Forum

By MIKE ASTON

MANY readers have expressed a desire for technical details on the playing of the banjo as an accompaniment for folk-singing. It is only possible to give a little guidance in the space available—but here goes.

Before I can demonstrate any folk-banjo picking rhythms on paper I must outline a system of music writing used by lute players some 400 years ago. It is called tablature and consists of five parallel lines, in our case each representing a string of the banjo.

Reading from the bottom line, they are: 5th string (G—a fifth above middle C); 4th string (C—an octave below middle C); 3rd string (G—a fourth below middle C); 2nd string (B—one note below middle C); and the 1st string (E—one note above middle C).

Here is how the chord of C would look, using tablature:



The numbers refer to the frets and an O indicates an open string.

Underneath each chord or note in our tablature there appears a letter or sign indicating the mode of right-hand action. The most common used will be I—index finger of the right hand, plucking upwards. B—right-hand fingers brushing down across all strings (this tends to become one finger only with practice). + — the thumb striking the fifth string. H—hammer-on with the fingers of the left hand. P—pulling-off with the fingers of the left hand.

That should be sufficient for the moment.

Now the basic banjo-picking strum goes as follows:

- (i) Pick up on first string only (assuming chord shape C).
- (ii) Brush down across all strings.
- (iii) Strike the fifth string with the thumb.

Repeat all three over and over again and the rhythm to aim at is: bump-tiddy, bump-tiddy . . .

Here is how it would be shown in tablature:





We will assume you either know or have access to the main chord patterns so above I give you a well-known banjo tune to practice on.

As Pete Seeger puts it—take it easy but take it!

Talking about Pete, by the time you read this column he will be back in the States fighting in the Law Courts for his freedom. This is not the place to discuss the charge hanging over his head but it is the place to thank him for all he has done for Folk Music in this country and throughout the world. I was lucky enough to have the privilege to sing with him at a festival in Wellingborough, Northants, and the experience was unforgettable. I hope you did not miss him if he visited your town.

Christmas is a time when one can do a tremendous amount of good if you sing and play the banjo or guitar. There are many institutions, such as Children's Homes, Parties for the Blind, Old Folks Concerts and a host more which really appreciate a little concert of folk songs. I hope you did not forget them when you arranged your Christmas "dates" and I would like to hear of any unusual "good turns" please.

(To be continued)

Banjo Technique

By CYRIL PHILLIPS

MANY years ago when I was studying art I was lucky enough to mix with a crowd of enthusiastic students who constantly bubbled over with new ideas in "technique." Almost every day, before classes com-

menced, one of them would rush in shouting: "Hey, chaps, I've just discovered a new technique" and would then demonstrate his latest method of using paint or colour to get a particular effect.

Indeed, it is characteristic of artists that they are always seeking new methods.

Would it not be wonderful if we banjoists could bring some of this spirit of enthusiastic experiment into our playing?



One has the impression that banjo technique has not only remained static during the last half century but has, in some ways, actually deteriorated. This is not perhaps the fault of the banjoist but is probably because very little really worthwhile music has been composed for the instrument in recent years. If no music becomes available to make exceptional demands on the player, then progress comes to a halt.

From time to time in the history of music an outstanding genius appears on the scene, someone combining supernormal technical ability with an equally brilliant concept of the potentialities of his instrument. Paganini on the violin; Mozart on the keyboard instruments; Louis Armstrong on the trumpet; Segovia on the Spanish guitar are a few examples. Reinhardt on the plectrum guitar is surely the most singular phenomenon of all. Here we had a man with a crippled left hand playing an instrument upon which such a disability would normally be considered an insuperable obstacle, not only equalling but actually surpassing the technique of his contemporaries and creating, into the bargain, a completely new approach to guitar playing.

NO OUTSTANDING FIGURE

Unfortunately the banjo—although it has produced some excellent musicians—has not brought forth an outstanding figure of this type since its very early days. It is doubtful, surely, whether any player has ever made any decisive advance on the techniques used by Vess Ossman, Parke Hunter *et al.* Fred van Eps, it is true, perfected an exceptionally competent style towards the end of his career, although his playing seems to me to have been so individualistic it does not offer much help to the struggling amateur.

Having said this I must admit, somewhat lamely, that destructive criticism is easier than constructive suggestion and the reader may feel entitled to ask why, if I feel so strongly about this situation, I do not do something to correct it.

I do not really consider myself qualified to revolutionise banjo technique but there are one or two small ideas I would like to put forward that will be well worth while if they encourage other players to follow this line of thought and start experimenting for themselves.

Triple fingering—wherein the first, second and third fingers of the right

hand are used to play chromatic passages—seems to be regarded as a recent invention, although in fact a description of this system was contained in Parke Hunter's *Studies* before the turn of the century. I suppose so many players use Morley's thumb-and-first-finger method they had completely forgotten there was any other approved way of doing it.

It is not so terribly difficult to learn triple fingering and it certainly makes for facile execution in those tricky bits in solos like "Mazeppa," "El Contrabandista" and "L'Infanta."

While on the subject of triple fingering I think it worth mentioning I see no reason for adhering to the sequence thumb, first finger and second finger if any other sequence comes more easily. I, for instance, find it much easier to play thumb, second finger and first finger. (See Ex. 1 on previous page).

Since the thumb is the strongest digit with the second finger the next strongest this seems quite a logical method, although it may not suit everyone.

One thing that strikes me as curious is that octave passages in most banjo solos are written for the first and fourth string—although it is much easier, when using the C-bass tuning, to play them on the second and fourth strings, using the first and third left-hand fingers. (See Ex. 2).

I can practically guarantee good results from this tip—try it on the Trio of "Torchlight Parade." (If you do not play this solo, you should!)

ANOTHER CONVENTION

Another convention used in dozens of solos is the repeated triplet on the octave G. Usually this effect is written for the first and fifth strings and involves a great deal of twiddling with the first two fingers of the right hand. There is no earthly reason why the G's on the first and second strings should not be stopped simultaneously so the player has three identical G's at his disposal. (See Ex. 3).

Another curiosity is the "snap." Although this effect can facilitate the playing of rapid quadruplets in the upper register it is most commonly found in banjo music as an E-to-D snap on the open first string. This is a rather clumsy cliché and, since an open string is being used, often results in a dissonant twang instead of a clear-cut note.

Whenever you encounter the open-string snap, try picking the open D

instead—it usually sounds much better.

If you own a tape recorder you can verify this quite easily!

One often finds in early solos that the fingering marked makes no provision for the difference in sound between a ringing note (*i.e.* when the finger remains on a stopped string) and a damped note (*i.e.* when the finger has to be removed quickly to play another note). A good example of this is the opening bar of "Dixie Medley" where it will be found this passage is considerably more effective if the D is played on the second string (being stopped by the third finger) while the first and second fingers remain on the C and E in the first position. (See Ex. 4).

The above points are, I suppose, of minor importance—but there are much weightier matters to discuss.

Tremolo, for instance, has the most enormous possibilities and yet there is hardly a player of any standing today who really seems to have taken advantage of all the effects it has to offer.

In fact, composers have been so reluctant to incorporate this technique in a solo that we find such soulful melodies as "Annie Laurie" being played in a sort of *legato* tiddly-pom style—and I have even heard "Just a Song at Twilight" being played in single *staccato* chords with painful intervals between each.

NOT IMPOSSIBLE

A good tremolo is difficult to acquire but not by any means impossible. In fact, a good finger tremolo can sound much sweeter and more even than the plectrum variety.

A usual cause of difficulty is the player finds it awkward to change over from finger picking to tremolo (and back again) in the middle of a solo. Once again, this is the kind of thing that can be perfected by practise and the result can be used in many ways to enrich solos in which slow passages occur.

One which comes immediately to mind is the ballad movement in Grimshaw's "Minstrel Man."

Although I may be sticking my neck out, I say that single-string tremolo on the finger-played banjo is quite within the average player's ability and can be used effectively if you take the trouble to master it.

As far as I know there are not more than a handful of solos using the duo-style *sostenuto*, where the melody is played by repeated notes on the first

string with single-note accompaniment played by the thumb on the other three strings.

Usually, solos written in this style appear frighteningly complex in musical notation—the S. E. Turner arrangement of "Home, Sweet Home" in the Clifford Essex lists looks completely unplayable at first glance!

However, the principle is quite easy to grasp and when once this technique has become an easy habit as the well-known Morley triplet it can be used in almost any passage where four-note chords occur. (See Ex. 5).

Strangely enough, the tremolo technique of brushing one finger across several strings can be used to produce rhythmic and syncopated effects similar to the plectrum-banjo idiom.

Chord syncopation is, of course, a sadly-neglected aspect of finger-style banjo playing. When chords follow one another rapidly in a syncopated movement, banjoists using conventional technique are hampered by the habit of using one finger per string when pulling chords—since it is difficult to make any one finger repeat precisely the same movement at high speed.

WORTH INVESTIGATING

However, it is well worth investigating the use of the first and second fingers in an upward triple-string stroke whilst playing a passing melody note on the first string with the disengaged finger.

Compare examples A and B in Ex. 6. It might be difficult to "get the hang" of B but if you persevere I think you will agree that the facility, crispness and rhythmic punch is far superior to the finger-breaking tug-of-war of example A.

Even on professional recordings passages like the first example always seem to drag noticeably.

The foregoing suggestions, some of which are easy and some rather difficult, can all be used in published solos—but the richest rewards come to the player who, by mastering some of the more unorthodox techniques, can adapt current popular songs (and other types of instrumental music) to the banjo.

There are some things I would like to say about arranging popular songs for the banjo but these must wait for a future article.

Taming the Tenor

By PAUL LUDGATE

(Continued from the November issue)

THE trouble with education," I pontificated, "is its complete lack of example that work is good for the soul."

I dodged the Virgil hurled with unladylike force and proceeded. "You are no sooner back at the desks than it is half-term . . ."

"Teachers' rest!" student daughter's younger sister corrected.

"And you've broken up for the Christmas hols. in time to hawk Guy Fawkes through the streets . . ."

"A terminological inexactitude!"

"You are so thoroughly bored because you have nothing to do that you embroil me and your mother and the entire entourage of camp followers in this escapade."

Beloved spouse edged in with motherly balm: "But it is in aid of the Royal Empire Cancer Campaign; and after all, poor grandpa . . ."

She need say no more. All the same, it had come as rather a shock to discover advance publicity for a Christmas concert that included in the bill: "The Ludgate Lunatics: Pa Ludgate and The Squirrel on tenor-banjos; Tizzy recorder; Sis bazooka; Augustin John Spanish guitar; Ma Ludgate knitting machine."

"Who is Augustin John?" I asked.

"Sis's latest rave," said student daughter.

And eyeing beloved spouse I asked "What is all this knitting machine nonsense?"

She smiled, "Well, dear, I thought a washboard rather dated, or should it be square? This has got much more . . . I mean I dig this crazy beat," and she whipped the slide of the knitting machine up and down the beds in a samba rhythm that made me start.

"Anyway," said student daughter. "It's only a lark. We're not going to take it seriously."

That is where we had the first real disagreement.

Now Ludgate maintains that many good intentioned souls who perform or organise charity concerts get their motives a little mixed. If one is doing it "to help out," to keep up with the Joneses; to show what a clever performer one is; for personal kudos; or

just for a lark—then one should not be doing it at all.

If one is going to take money from an audience (whatever the cause) then the audience have a right to be *entertained*. They also have a right to expect that every performer or act has sufficient talent to justify appearing in public at all—and that proper rehearsal, costume and showmanship is forthcoming.

Thus it was Ludgate found, to his amazement, that his favourite rehearsal rooms—Charles Dickens' former residence—had been pulled down to make way for new London skyscrapers; but had found less nostalgic premises round several corners and down several roads. He also found a kindly arranger acquaintance who was prepared to orchestrate for this unique combination and a free dinner at his favourite Italian restaurant.

The theatrical costumiers were even more expensive but they produced on hire an array that made the "Temperance Seven" an outfit with most conservative sartorial tastes.

SENSE OF HUMOUR

This included a turquoise velvet smoking jacket and skull cap for the leading tenor banjo; a purple check cloak and deer-stalker for the second tenor banjo; a bustle for the recorder; a flat straw hat with long ribbons, a frilly dress and calf-length lace-trimmed pantaloons for the bazooka; an outsize "Little Lord Fauntleroy" for the Spanish guitar; and a crimson velvet Edwardian evening dress with bosom overgrown with lace for the knitting machine.

The arranger had a sense of humour, too; although it seemed to be a little lacking among the Ludgate Lunatics as they travelled to the rehearsal rooms every alternate night for a fortnight.

But Ludgate, with grim severity, countered all mutinous comments such as "We can rehearse just as well at home," with "and who would switch on the telly for 'Rawhide'?"

For Ludgate has a thing about craftsmanship. He feels we are in danger of losing it. We build teenage idols too rapidly, not on merit but through slick sales promotion. The ephemeral television belies adequate rehearsal. Informality, off-the-cuff, replaces cold blooded professionalism.

So we rehearsed—and we worked—and suddenly everybody loved it.

It went down with the audience rather well, too. And as we humped our instruments back through the frosty air to our own awaiting Christmas tree, one could sense the glow of satisfaction of a job well done.

Ludgate had a fleeting touch of sorrow at the thought of the rehearsal rooms that had fallen to the bulldozers and he thought of its former owner and his craftsmanship:

"Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one; and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass. Two tumblers and a custard-cup without a handle.

"These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed:

"A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God Bless us!"

"Which all the family re-echoed.

"God bless us every one!" said Tiny Tim, the last of all."

(To be continued)

Hawaiian Guitar Tunings

By EDWARD KIRKMAN

RECENTLY I paid one of my occasional visits to London and the Clifford Essex Co. I found, the Editor jubilant at having published the original "Hawaiian War Song," which he assured me was "the real thing"—the word "trad" for once having no connection with mainstream jazz.

While in London I was able to hear one of the Hawaiian groups mentioned in "B.M.G."—Charles Kohlhoff and the Pearl Hawaiians, who play on Wednesday evenings at "The Star," Feltham.

I also discovered that another group, with Ray Crosby on the E.H.G., was playing on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at the "Duke of Fife," between Forest Gate and West Ham, from 8 to 10.30 p.m.

At "The Star" the quartet includes two plectrum guitars and the personnel behind the bar dress for "South Seas night" in appropriate costume.

Charles, a player for 26 years now, uses a triple-neck guitar with each eight-string neck "live," skipping easily from one tuning to another in mid-solo.

Favouring the "native" style, he played beautiful versions of such favourites as "Lovely Hula Hands" and manages to impart atmosphere to request tunes such as "Sailor."

Ray, who was visiting Feltham, uses a six-string C6th tuning, (from sixth string to first: G. C. E. G. A. C.) and inclines towards more "commercial" numbers. His hot version of "Tiger Rag," which had an enthusiastic reception, and his "Indian Love Call" showed, I thought, the influence of Roland Peachy.

I played the two numbers I have given as examples in "B.M.G." for the tuning C#. E. F. G#. B. C#. E. F. and others at Charles's request while he switched over to ukulele.

MINIMUM MOVEMENT

Two general comments were on the minimum of movement of the steel in this tuning—in which, as I have already explained, there are major chords in two keys at each fret with the dominant seventh only two frets away from the tonic chord—and on the few slants.

The latter is achieved by having the second and first (and seventh and sixth) strings tuned a semitone apart.

However, as was pointed out, you must be careful when (for instance) playing passages of thirds on the top three strings, to damp the strings behind the steel properly when moving from major to minor thirds or *vice versa*.

A chord enthusiast, Charles Kohlhoff was interested in the F13 harmony possible in the sixth bar of "Pagan Love Song" (October issue) because of the low C# string.

"Now is the Hour," surprisingly, brought a request for more. Many three-note chords are possible in this number, which can be played almost entirely between the fifth and tenth frets.

Using full major chords with the third at the top and three-note sixth chords on the seventh, fifth and third strings, helps to bring out the haunting qualities of the Maori song.

I was asked about diminished chords in this tuning. In these, all the intervals are a minor third apart. It simplifies things to remember there are really only three different diminished chords

—G#. B. D. F., F#. A. C. E. D. and C#. E. G. B.—and each may be named after any of the notes the chord contains.

Three-note diminished chords are available, when convenient, on the sixth, fifth and fourth strings.

I took as an example the first few bars of "A Song of Old Hawaii" (from Roy Smeck's "Hawaiian Guitar Solos" album) in which, after the lead-in, the harmony is: first bar, F; second, Fdim, F, Fdim, F; third, C7.

You can play the F chords, if you like, at the 13th fret; the diminished chords at the 12th fret; and the C7 chords at the 11th.

On returning to the West I fear I committed *lese majeste* by playing in Bath; that bastion of the banjo and home of our revered contributor R. Tarrant Bailey.

Not, I hasten to add, at Ensligh.

I remember only too well Mr. Bailey's account, in one of his inimitable articles, of how Clifford Essex supplied Mrs. Bailey with an Hawaiian guitar; how he was disgustedly forced to play it; and how frequent playing of one South Seas' recording drove him out to mow the lawn for an hour and a half!

And his opinion of the instrument and its vibrato: "My one desire is to help it bear the pain it appears to be suffering!"

NOT VERY WIDE

I can say, however, without wishing to enter the lists in the vibrato feud which has been raging in the "Correspondence" columns, that I do not generally use a very wide vibrato.

The occasion was the Sunday night farewell of banjoist and plectrum guitarist Fred Bedborough after seven years as landlord of "The Three Crowns," Coombe Down.

The Hawaiian quartet in which Fred, among his other engagements, plays, had gathered there, led by Clem White on E.P.G. and featuring Maurice Dicker on the Hawaiian guitar.

Maurice's interest in South Seas' music began when he was stationed in Hawaii for two years during the war. Though using a flat steel he is an agile player in fast numbers such as "Calcutta" and produces effective harmonics in, for instance, "Sweet Hawaiian Chimes."

He uses a D13th tuning (from sixth string to first: C. D. F#. A. B. D.)

so using his guitar I took "My Isle of Golden Dreams" up a tone from C to D, thus using the same fret positions as for a D version of my tuning.

This enables the first 12 bars, as written, to be played in third intervals entirely on the top three strings.

One advantage of the D version of the tuning is that low C and C7 chords can be played at the first fret.

We will continue the New Year by examining existing tunings from the standpoint of both six and eight-string players.

Reading Quickly

By the late ZARH M. BICKFORD

THE real secret of reading readily and quickly can almost be given in a single sentence—to see and grasp, mentally, as many notes ahead as possible and to always read in *groups* instead of single notes.

Reading music is exactly like reading words as far as the action of the eye and the perceptive faculty is concerned. Were the child to continue to spell out each word, letter by letter, he would never become a fluent reader.

Another faculty almost equally important is the development of a strong rhythmic sense and the constant operation of this faculty when reading (thus actually compelling the eye, brain and fingers to be constantly on the alert) prepares these for what is coming and enables the fingers to reach the proper spot at just the right time, because it is time and because time cannot wait and *must* not be broken.

The constant exercise of this faculty never fails to develop rapid readers.

Developing speed in playing involves three things. First, the mental grasp and conception of the group of notes and the rhythmic divisions. Second, the necessary dexterity and muscular development of the left-hand fingers to actually do the work in the specified time. Third, the absolutely uniform movement of the two hands together—in other words, the *synchronising* of the movements of the two hands.

Learning with Lucas

By JACK WHITFIELD

(Continued from last month's issue)

(A series of monthly lessons for plectrum guitar beginners, using as text-book the Nick Lucas Method).

THE reader who asked for an explanation of alternate down-and-up stroking on chords has a problem quite common to beginners.

If the right hand is operating correctly, down strokes on chords soon come easily and down-and-up strokes on single strings present no real difficulty. But even when the rules for right hand are applied without blemish—movement from a free wrist, as if flicking a cigarette card—many players never really master the art of achieving a smooth up stroke on a chord.

The natural tendency is a "scoop" upwards at the strings and the result is a ragged, uneven arpeggio from which, as often as not, the lower strings are missing altogether.

The essence of a correct up stroke is it should differ from the down stroke only in direction. There should be no change in grip on the plectrum; no change in the "structure" of the hand; no change in the power of the stroke.

NO CHANGE

If the plectrum is held loosely enough it should "give" slightly to the strings on the down stroke, tilting a little with the point uppermost. On the up stroke, it should also "give," but this time the point is downwards.

The arc described by the plectrum should never extend more than, say, half an inch beyond the first and sixth strings when a six-string chord is played. With a chord of fewer notes it is necessary to clear strings which must not sound and this is done by pulling the hand (with the wrist as pivot) a shade outwards from the strings; that is, away from the face of the guitar.

The effect of this action is to produce an element of "bounce" into the stroke. The best practice routine I can recommend is as follows:

Deadens the first string with the first finger of the left hand and play a few down-and-up strokes on it. If your

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stroking is inaccurate, the second string will sound.

Now extend the first finger of the left hand to deaden the first two strings and play down-and-up strokes on them. If you go wrong, you will hit at least the third string, which will sound to correct you.

Next, the left hand damps the top three strings and if the plectrum strays beyond the deadened "chord," the fourth string will tell you.

And so on, until you are playing all six "dead" strings.

Having tried this routine a few times free the sixth string, fifth, fourth and so on, in turn, keeping the right hand working without break.

HAPPY ROUTINE

If you "play" lightly enough, this is a scheme you can practise happily even while watching the television!

Next work on up strokes alone, playing a regular rhythm.

Remember in practising down-and-up strokes that each stroke should give quaver value.

The dotted-crotchet rhythm is comparatively easy and does not call for any real degree of plectrum control on the up stroke.

Include the routine suggested above in all your practice periods for the next few months. Do not bore yourself stiff with it. A few minutes a day will suffice and I think you will be pleasantly surprised by the results.

Now for the month's work.

First week: Page 51 of the tutor. The march, "Ever So Good," another "melody-in-the-bass" effort, should be easy. Make it sound like a march, with the beat well-marked. On Page 52, Lucas briefly explains syncopation and introduces tied notes (marked with a cross). It should be fairly clear that in each case the crotchet is held to give a note of the duration of a minim. "Battle Axe" and "Jazz King" require no explanation.

Second week: Page 53. Modulation is the change from one key to another. In Ex. 1 ("Key of C") the first chord is C Major. C7 (the second chord in the first bar) is the stepping stone to

the chord of F Major (first in the second bar) and, by way of F Minor (second chord in the second bar), we move back to C. And so on.

Complete the page this week, giving each item about 15 minutes a day and where you come across unfamiliar fingering, give special attention to the passage until you can maintain even tempo throughout.

Third week: "Rudy," on Page 54, sounds a little "thin" if played as a solo but the practice afforded is well worth while. For the first time, you come up against the higher reaches of the fingerboard. Work to get a bell-like quality into these high notes and do not "clip" them. This requires good plectrum control and co-ordination and I would say there is a good week's work in this piece. Take the first nine bars on the first day; the next 12 on the second; the next 12 on the third; the remainder on the fourth. For the rest of the week work on the whole piece.

Fourth week: General recap on the month's work and earlier scales, studies and solos.

(To be continued)

The "Spanish" Minstrel's Tour (1828-9)

By ERNEST J. TYRRELL

(Continued from last month's issue)

HAVING mounted the "Pickwick" Coach at Salisbury (well-horsed, as were all the coaches of Moses Pickwick) Juan de Vega reached Bath at eventide, after a journey of thirty-eight miles, during which he skirted the stately pile of Wilton House (crammed with the art treasures of the Earl of Pembroke) and the even vaster palace of the Marquess of Bath, at Longleat near Warminster, some twenty miles farther on.

Of the many villages lining the route Juan's memory must surely have been most keenly stirred by that of Deptford (with its well-known posting inn at the cross-roads) for at the outset of his adventure, now over three months behind him, he had passed through its London namesake, with all its naval associations, within the first hour or so.

The coach stopped outside Bath's famous "White Hart" Inn, with its many Dickensian associations and which, like the coach itself, was owned by Moses Pickwick.

The moment seems fitting to recall that although the leading lights of the little village of Pickwick, just north-east of Bath, were then Captain Fenton of Pickwick Lodge and C. W. Loscombe Esq., of Pickwick House, yet it was thanks to a foundling abandoned on a doorstep in the village (hence, no doubt, that "Moses") that the name "Pickwick" was known the length and breadth of the Kingdom.

The waif prospered, becoming a hotel proprietor and running coaches on 25 long-distance routes throughout the country; he also seems to have had a sardonic sense of humour when one recalls the coaching fatalities (largely through competitive racing) then recorded daily in the press—for in type bolder than all the coach schedules on his time-table was the concluding announcement: "BLACK CARRIAGES AND HORSES FOR FUNERALS."

Juan's purse, of course, prohibited a stay at the "White Hart" but he found very comfortable quarters at what seems to have been the "Bear" Inn, an old and picturesque hostelry.

This inn sign was not uncommon, the origin usually being ascribed to the performing bears, complete with chain and collar, made to go through their act at such places for centuries until the year 1910 or thereabouts.

WORTH REPEATING

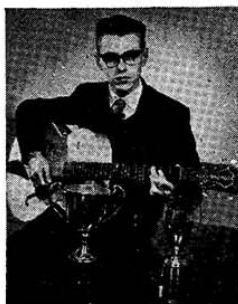
An anecdote of one West Country "Bear Inn"—perhaps this very one—may be worth repeating.

A needy artist was unable to settle his score for refreshments and made a bargain with the landlord to repaint his weather-beaten sign instead. When about to start he proposed, in return for half a guinea, to furnish it with a handsome gold collar and chain, but the nig-gardly proprietor refused.

The task finished, the painter took to the highway but, to the chagrin of mine host, the first heavy downpour entirely obliterated the animal—for the artist had painted Bruin in tinted distemper!

It so chanced that the landlord encountered the painter soon afterwards in a neighbouring village and demanded furiously an explanation. "Well," said the artist knowingly, "if only he had had that gold chain and collar, rest assured he would never have got away!"

The next morning Juan set out to



BRIAN CHELL

Winner of the R. S. Kitchen Cup at Birmingham on Oct. 29th. Only 15½ years of age, Brian also won the Abbott Challenge Cup in London last year

enjoy the beauties of Bath and my own limited acquaintance with the "Queen City of the West" conjures up much the same vision as our Minstrel's description over 130 years ago. He says: "It is magnificent, the view from the hill on the right of the London road being specially delightful(*). The town is elegantly built of light stone, spreading over the undulating surface of an extensive theatre formed by the surrounding hills, the deep sombre tint of which at this late season of the year displayed a striking contrast to the brilliant sky."

GRAVE AND GAY

After further rhapsodising upon the surrounding country and mansions Juan, as one might anticipate, reverts to his adventures in Bath, both grave and gay, and during his somewhat lengthy stay nothing is further heard of the city's topography.

I trust my Jewish friends—and I have several—will not take amiss Juan's reference to one or two incidents during his stay in Bath (not that they are particularly lurid) but as a faithful chronicler I cannot pass them over, although as far as I can I shall use the minstrel's own words.

Upon the evening of his arrival he struck up acquaintance with a Jew who invited Juan home. When on the morrow the minstrel called on his new acquaintance he was introduced to several of his host's compatriots. Three tankards of porter were sent out for, so that they could exchange toasts—and out of courtesy Juan managed to swallow the mixture.

(*) R. Tarrant Bailey's cottage is sited on the top of this very hill and I can vouch for the fact that the view from Enleigh Lodge is truly "delightful."—EDITOR.

This tippie, at any rate in the good old days, was a potent and bitter beverage made partly from charred hops and from 1727 onwards had been the favourite gullet lubricant of porters and labourers, as the name implies. It by no means appealed to Juan's cultured palate, still less so when he was asked to settle the full score!

He ruminated: "If this is a specimen of Jewish hospitality, the next time I have to settle I'll take the liberty of calling for something I can drink myself."

"However," he consoled himself, "I was well recompensed for he introduced me to a pretty girl among the party, with whom I flirted mildly for three quarters of an hour, to the annoyance of her old father. I left with a promise she would see me when next I paid a visit to the Israelite."

FAIR SUCCESS

The following morning Juan played his guitar in various parts of the City with fair success but without incident, until he commenced to serenade a house in the Royal Crescent—described as "a splendid pile of palatial residences, justly regarded as the gem of Bath architecture, elliptical in form, with a grand colonnade in the Ionic order, erected in 1769."

So stood Royal Crescent, mellowing with time but otherwise unchanged, until the three "Baedeker" raids of April 1942. Among the houses gutted was No. 17, the home for many years (until his death in 1897) of Sir Isaac Pitman, inventor of the most widely-used system of shorthand.

Needless to say the description just quoted is not that of Juan and, in any case, the minstrel was too preoccupied by a forcible expostulation that the "palatial residences" and their occupants had no use for itinerant troubadours.

Juan's own picturesque account merits quotation: "A liveried street-keeper came up and desired me not to play in the streets. I affected not to understand but, putting his hand on me, he gave proof that he would, *vi et armis*, put his commands into execution. I was much astonished at his salutation and fancied he was exceeding his duty. I knew that vendors of fruit were obliged to toddle on at the impressive voice of the policeman, as well as the 'night fairies,' but I never dreamt that musicians, particularly minstrels, were condemned to such regulations. I

found however that there was less importance in my profession than I had been in the habit of arrogating to it, and had nearly determined to pawn or sell my beloved guitar and return in despair to Westminster, when happily a gentleman and some ladies came up, one even halting her chairmen and alighting from a Sedan chair, all enquiring into the nature of our dispute.

"The Dogberry (a cant term for an ignorant consequential official, derived from the constable in 'Much Ado About Nothing,' E. J. T.) and de Vega both gave their explanation and an arrangement was made that the street-keeper should bring me before the magistrates to ask permission to play."

This chimed well with Juan's own wishes and as the procession wended its way to the Guildhall the ladies, becoming more interested in the guitar—and perhaps the player, pressed him, as they chanced to pass one of their houses, to enter and give a recital, which was so prolonged that when he left, the Court had risen for the day—so Juan made his way back to the inn.

Just what the irate "Dogberry" was doing all this time is left to the imagination.

(To be continued)

Brent Hayes' Story

By J. McNAUGHTON

(Continued from last month's issue)

THE Lone Star State of Texas is indissolubly linked, in the minds of "Western" devotees, with visions cast in the moulds of Hollywood, where the eternal kaleidoscope contributes its subliminal fragments to the saga of the six-gun; where the posse rides thisaway and the road agent thataway; where mavericks moo 'mong the mesas and tall tophands deftly manipulate "the makin's" with one hand whilst calming their pintos with the other; where the sardonic raffish gun-toter casts a chill over victim and audience alike as his sun-cracked lips emit the time-honoured formula: "Ah said fer yuh t'draw."

If the luck of the draw had not been with Brent Hayes one Monday night in September 1916, when he reached Houston in Texas, his biography would have ended abruptly in Room 321 and a certain silver-plated Colt .45 would not have completed the stage outfit of a

banjoist whose North West Mounted Police uniform was about to make its first appearance in Vaudeville.

Room 321 was in a hotel conveniently near the theatre but as it overlooked Main Street and was therefore too noisy for him, Hayes asked for another room—and was given one on the fourth floor, to which he moved to prepare for rehearsal. Ninety minutes later, as he waited for the elevator to take him to street level, a fusillade of revolver shots reverberated through the building.

HYSTERICAL SCREAMS

As Hayes dashed down the staircase to the floor below he could hear hysterical screams from the female staff. He found them staring horror-stricken at a huge, raw-boned Texan standing astride the shattered body of a man—a body that lay across the threshold of Room 321.

Muttering something about having shot the wrong man, the Texan calmly strode off in search of a policeman.

Here is Brent Hayes account of the incident: "It seems the Texan was a rich cattle rancher who suspected his wife of infidelity—she was supposed to be involved with a medico, a certain Doctor Bertrand Hayes who was known locally as Dr. Bert Hayes. The Texan had been told they had gone to Houston together.

With fury in his heart and a 'forty-five' in his pocket he had set off to search the hotels of Houston for the alleged deceivers.

By the time he had reached my hotel an insurance agent had moved in to Room 321, only a few minutes after I had vacated it. The Texan scanned the hotel register and, in his rage, misreading Brent Hayes for Bert Hayes had made the third floor. His unwitting



ALAN COMBER

Age 17, winner of the Barbara Lobb Challenge Trophy at the recent Birmingham Rally, he was also winner of the Adeline Boule Cup at last year's Southern Rally

victim heard his knock, then the heavy calibre bullets tore through the unopened door and into his chest. As the man fell the Texan flung open the door and emptied the remaining cylinders of his revolver into the dying body slumped across the threshold.

The poor fellow's chest was almost completely shot away. It was a ghastly sight and the hallway was in a shocking state.

It transpired that the Texan's suspicions were totally unfounded—the doctor was at that very hour performing a major operation in a Dallas hospital while the supposedly erring wife was visiting her mother in Fort Worth.

By paying seventy-five thousand dollars to the widow of the insurance man the Texan satisfied the demands of the State law—and within three weeks I met him again.

MAD-BLIND WITH RAGE

I was at the Majestic Theatre in San Antonio, Texas. I was donning my Mounties' uniform for the first time when the manager sent for me. There, in his office, was Mr. C*****, the Texan. He told me how miserable he felt; how he had realised I might have been his victim. He said he had been mad-blind with rage at the thought of what he had been told by the busybody whose gossip had sown the seeds of suspicion in his mind. He also revealed—not surprisingly—that his wife was about to divorce him!

Then he handed me a leather holster containing the silver-plated and ornately engraved revolver which had fired the fatal shots. 'Here, take it' he said, 'and use it in your act with that uniform.'

I hardly knew what to say but the manager nodded to me to accept the gun. So, to spare C's feelings, I took it. I had the cylinder removed before including it in my 'properties,' however, for I always had a feeling of revulsion about it. Of course, only the butt and hammer were visible in the holster when I was on stage so the absence of the cylinder probably went unnoticed.

Soon afterwards I parted with the Colt—I had a relative who collected firearms. It certainly was a beautifully engraved and finely-finished weapon but its tragic significance for the unfortunate man from Chicago, whose dreadful fate might well have been my own made possession of it unbearable for me."

(To be continued)

The Modern Hawaiian Guitar

By FRANK BAKER

(Continued from last month's issue)

THIS being the time of "good resolutions" it might be a good idea to resolve to check one's electrical equipment so I would like to again discuss the merits of AD/DC amplifiers when used with electronic instruments.

At least twice a year it is worth while to check one's mains lead for wear or breaking away of insulation—and this applies to *inside* the mains plug, where continual twisting and pulling on the lead can result in considerable wear on the section of the lead that is not readily visible.

This applies particularly to the two-pin type of plug which has no cord grip.

Dismantle the plug and make sure the plastic or rubber insulation is intact and covers the wires right up to the point where they are held in the plug pins—also check that the wire-retaining screws are tight and doing their job.

Check also all jack plugs and leads to make sure nothing is hanging by a bare thread of wire!

NO SIGNAL

Should the centre lead connection be broken you will get no signal at all through your amplifier, likewise the screening connection becoming disconnected will also give rise to considerable hum.

If possible, check that all valves are properly "seated" in their respective sockets. The modern miniature type of valve is rather more prone to come loose during transportation than the older type "octal" based valve.

The above checks are necessary on both AC-only and AC/DC amplifiers—the danger in the latter lies in the fact that the metal chassis of the amplifier is connected *directly* to one side of the mains—and although safely(?) protected in a case, anything such as a guitar unit or microphone connected by wires to that chassis becomes an extension of one mains lead.

Provided the mains plug is inserted the correct way round, the chassis and units are on the neutral side of the

When you are in doubt . . .

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mains supply, i.e. approximately at earth potential, so there is little point in adding an earth lead to a three-pin plug if one is used. It merely prevents inserting the plug the wrong way round.

Three-way mains lead can be most dangerous on this type of amplifier when used at other than "home" location as there is no *guarantee* that other mains sockets are wired correctly. In certain circumstances the third (earth) lead can be directly connected to the live side of the mains, bringing forth a considerable flash and consequent blowing of fuses when the plug is inserted.

Many television and radio receivers, using AC/DC technique, carry implicit instructions that no separate "earth" must be used for this reason.

My advice is to use a twin-plug two-pin connector at the end of your mains lead—and this can be arranged to interconnect with other leads and plugs of different types where their use becomes necessary. The two-way 5-amp connector is then easily reversible and the use of a small neon tester (to find the "live" side of the mains) should always be used.

Needless to say, any other electrical equipment (such as microphones or another guitarist's instrument in use at the same time as your own) should also be checked with the tester, which should not normally light up when equipment is correctly connected to the mains.

Disregarding the above has been the reason for most of the fatal accidents in the past.

Taking any two items of AC/DC equipment: if *one* is connected to the mains the wrong way round and you handle equipment with metal parts connected to both (such as a microphone to A and a guitar to B) it is exactly equivalent to holding a wire from each side of the mains in each hand. As the human body provides a fairly easy path

a large current will flow and although you may have withstood several thousand volts from "shocking coils" at school (in the science class) at practically zero current, I can assure you approximately 250 volts at several amperes passing through the body is sufficient to effectively discourage most people from ever trying again!

If you own an AC/DC amplifier, be careful and observe the few precautions I have outlined. You will probably then live to see the standardisation of mains to 240 volts AC become general throughout the country, thus rendering AC/DC amplifiers unnecessary.

A word if you are contemplating buying a new amplifier. Avoid the AC/DC (sometimes dubbed "universal") type unless you are likely to play in an area where there is only a DC mains supply. The slight extra expense in acquiring an AC-only amplifier is more than justified by the complete freedom from the aforementioned dangers.

AN EXPLANATION

An explanation for the non-electrically minded reader. The reason why certain AC equipment (such as electric irons, fires, washing machines and similar metal-cased items) are earthed to a three-pin plug is to avoid the metal case becoming "live" in the event of a physical breakdown of the relative heating element or wiring—which could short-circuit the case.

As the case is earthed, it cannot become "live" and dangerous. In the circumstances described, the mains fuse would invariably "blow."

This technique *cannot* be applied to the AC/DC amplifiers satisfactorily as *one side of the chassis* (i.e. case) is *already connected to the mains* whereas, as in the case of electric irons, etc., only the heating element is connected to the two mains lead: LIVE and NEUTRAL. The case (or chassis), having no electrical connection, can be independently earthed through the third wire.

Having cleared up, I hope, this problem for a number of readers let us now turn to the question of using three finger picks with modern tunings.

One cannot expect to just fit three finger picks and play four-note chords in conjunction with the thumb pick. It must be remembered that the third finger is completely untrained and it is advisable to start by playing single-note passages and double-stopping, using the third finger wherever possible. If

necessary, revert to a few scales, gradually advancing to your usual solos.

Play sixths or thirds, using thumb and *third* finger, alternating with first and *third* or second and *third* fingers. After a week or two you will find the *third* finger is gradually developing to the stage where there is little to choose between the first, second or *third* finger in picking strength during the usual single-string and double-stopping phrases.

Then is the time to start on four-note chords—and here the *third* finger will normally pick the highest string, the second finger the next lowest, and so on.

(To be continued)

Take Your Pick

By ROY BURNHAM

(Continued from last month's issue)

“**B** OHEMIAN GIRL” makes the climax to “Overture Medley.” The section chosen by Emile Grimshaw builds up steadily to a fitting ending for this concert piece, which is fundamentally showmanship rather than musicianship (in its strictly purist sense) and calling for considerable banjo-manship or a strong injection of plectromania bugs.

The first section is notable for its contrasts in both delicate single-note passages played *piano*, *crescendo* chords and *double-forte* phrases.

It is essential to make this contrast most evident. That is not easy.

It is an *allegro* passage; and the contrast in volume requires considerable plectrum control.

Although there is nothing to indicate it, it is desirable to play the whole of this section rather *staccato*.

Although fingering is indicated this should not necessarily be taken as the only way of playing the passage. Because of the tuning of the banjo there are many ways of fingering any given passage and one can be just as effective as another. Much depends on the player's personal preference and individual style.

Much also depends on whether one uses the D-bass tuning or not.

However it is advisable to play the Gm. chord in bar three on the inside strings and use the covered third and fourth strings for the run down to get the full-blooded tone that the *ff* phrase

TELL ALL YOUR PLAYING FRIENDS ABOUT “B.M.G.”

requires. This procedure should be adopted wherever the phrase repeats.

The next movement in G requires a change in technique. *Staccato* gives way to *legato*. The opening two bars are more of a tremolo. Bar two, however, provides a difficulty. This double melody note, commencing on a half-beat, is a brute. It must be phrased off into pairs—BA:AG: etc. Some players will find they can do this with right-hand accent alone, by emphasising the down strokes so that it is the second A and the second G and the second F that predominate.

REAL MUSIC

Others may find some assistance is required from the left hand. This is a perfectly legitimate thing to do; for it is the co-ordination of both hands that provides real music.

In this case I would suggest the following fingering 2 1 : 2 1 : 2 1 etc. for each phrased pair of notes. This means one changes from the A, fingered with the first finger, to A, fingered with the second finger; to G, fingered with the first finger and G, fingered with the second finger.

This technique of changing the fingering while maintaining the same melody note may be new to plectrum banjoists but it is common practice to players of the violin family of instruments.

The same technique may be adopted in Bar 6 of this movement.

The next four bars—the third movement—often prove the player's undoing. Remember they are merely sustaining harmony while the piano provides a bass melody—and in this concert solo are merely transposing the string orchestral parts to the banjo. So please do not breathe in relief at finishing the difficult bits and pound out the simple chords of G and A. Keep them a little restrained and mellow and let the pianist take the lead.

Then gradually take control from Bar 5 to 8 so that by Bar 9 you can really come in with this crisp, clean chord progression.

It will be improved by making the whole thing a four-note chord progression—provided you can finger the

chords cleanly and change from one to another smoothly.

Here again the D-bass tuning is an advantage because it allows you to play the melody in octaves.

Finally the *allegro vivace*. This can be a fitting ending or ruin the whole performance. It will ruin the performance if it is so loud that the tone becomes harsh. It will ruin the performance if the tremolo runs the whole melody into an indistinct blur. Each chord is accented. Play tremolo—but use the left hand to damp the chords just as you would when playing rhythm.

The *finale staccato accelerando* should really build up—and here again four-note chords make all the difference: a prelude to thunderous applause!

(To be continued)

Guitar Technique

By JAMES O'BRIEN

THERE was a slight mis-print at the very end of my November article. The sentence should have read “... complete and utter concentration”—not relaxation.

While I do not want to enter the realms of psychology unnecessarily, here is an instance where concentration is essential to acquire a relaxed fingertip.

As we are on the subject of relaxation it should be pointed out that while the whole hand is relaxed in the sense that it is not tense, it is the distal joint (the one nearest the tip) that is completely relaxed so that the tip bends *outwards* when the point of the finger comes into contact with the string.

Once this is understood the production of a good tone becomes more easily attainable.

I should like to go into this matter of tone thoroughly because—I know you will agree—without a good tone your guitar-playing is simply not worth listening to.

Let us take it for granted you have a reasonably good instrument and none of the strings are false.

For a plectrum-guitarist the first essential is a good plectrum—and that nicely bevelled and polished. Our plectrum is a smooth fingertip combined with a well-polished and rounded fingernail. Just as a plectrum-player will not use a rough or badly-shaped plectrum, neither should we be content with rough or badly-shaped nails!

Having gone into this matter rather thoroughly about a year ago, I will give you, just briefly, the main points to remember.

A rounded nail will always produce a better tone than a pointed one. Shape the nail into a curve with a fine emery board—such as you can buy in any chemist's shop—and polish the edge well afterwards on a piece of soft leather. Take it as a general rule that the nail projects about 1/32-inch beyond the fingertip and that it is curved to follow the outline of the tip also.

If, however, you have hooked nails—that is, nails which, if allowed to grow to an enormous length, would curl right back into the palm!—you could flatten this curve somewhat. I, personally, not only do this but I also file the first and second fingernails more on the left side. This produces a better tone from these fingers which, in normal playing, are not in an upright position but lean towards the nut.

IMPORTANT THING

Now to produce that tone we *know* our guitar possesses!

Speed of striking is the first and most important thing. Many self-taught players *imagine* they are striking the string but what they are actually doing is this. The fingertip is lowered on to the string; it rests there for a split second and is then pulled off again. No muscular effort is used in placing the finger on the string—only in pulling it off.

Strange as it may seem, fear is the main reason for this incorrect method of vibrating the strings. Consciously or subconsciously we are afraid of striking the wrong string and so we carefully lower the finger onto the correct string, check it is the right one (and not the wrong one!) and proceed as above!

Try it this way.

Place the finger-tip in position, *i.e.* about half-an-inch in front of the string and about a quarter-inch above it. Now imagine for a moment your finger is a little hammer and you are going to drive a nail into the side of the string.

Do you bring it down gently against the string and then—push?

No! You make a swing at it! *All* the muscular force is used at the commencement of the stroke; the impetus given to the finger-tip at that stage carries it right against the string and beyond it.

The shorter the period of time the tip (and nail) is in contact with the string

the better the tone, the 'cleaner' the note.

This applies also to the matter of *legato*; the guitar is a *legato* instrument and notes and chords should follow each other smoothly. Continuity of sound—the minimum of break between succeeding notes—depends entirely (where the right-hand is concerned) on how long your fingertip remains in contact with the string.

During that brief moment when the tip is resting on the string all sound ceases.

Obviously then, no matter how long it takes we must cultivate a fast movement of the fingertip, aiming at a speed so high that normal eyesight will not be able to follow the movement.

If you have difficulty in doing this, here are two simple exercises that may help.

Place the three right-hand fingers lightly on the third string and the thumb on a lower string. Now lift the third finger and play the second string repeatedly with it. Keep a close watch on two things; first, that the third finger performs the stroke with a swift action—the impetus given at the beginning of the stroke and with absolutely *no* resting period at point of contact and, second, that the other fingers and thumb do not either leave the strings or depress them or push them aside in any way.

NOT EASY

Simple as it is, you may not find this easy to do. Its purpose is to ensure that the third finger is performing the stroke completely independent of the other fingers.

Next, replace the third finger on the third string and play the second string with the second finger: the same with the first finger. Finally the thumb.

Keeping the three fingers on the third (or any of the upper strings), play the bass strings with the same quick movement.

Take particular note of the following: if the fingers are pushed off the upper string by the thumb-stroke you are partly using the *hand* to augment the action of the thumb. If, on the other hand, the fingers are pressed hard against the string on which they are resting you are using them to *pull* the thumb through the stroke.

I hope this is not terribly involved—it is meant to be exhaustive—not exhausting!

The second exercise is as follows. With the finger in position to make the

stroke, *i.e.* half-an-inch away from the string, commence counting 1. 2. 3. 4. at an absolutely even metronomic speed.

After a bar or two of this accurate counting commence the strokes.

You must see the *commencement* of the stroke and the actual sounding of the note coincide with the counting. In other words while you are counting 1. the finger moves from half-an-inch in front of the string to a half-an-inch behind it—*instantaneously*.

This is not impossible, though it may seem to be in theory.

The time taken by the finger-tip to traverse that inch should not be more than a hundredth of a second; if the impetus is given at the beginning that is all it will take.

Try to complete the stroke, that is place the finger-tip back in position again for the next stroke, in as short a time as possible. Practise this as much as you can and, eventually, you will find that not only is tone-production improved but you will get greater speed.

HIT HARDER

I do not have to tell you what this will mean where tunes and pieces—at present outside your right-hand technique—are concerned!

There is little to say about volume. If you want more volume—hit the strings harder! But remember, no insidious assistance from the hand; make the fingers alone do the work.

You will produce more volume with the *apoyando* so you can always use this stroke where single-note passages demand plenty of emphasis. It is also used extensively where the melody is in single notes and the accompaniment is in either chordal or arpeggio form.

Accuracy is the result of plenty of careful practice. Avoid moving the fingers more than the half-inch to either side of the string. Keep the hand perfectly steady.

Think of all the time and effort you waste trying to compensate with the fingers all the unnecessary movements of the hand. It is like trying to draw a straight line on a piece of paper on a wobbly table!

Practice always on the inside strings. If—reverting again to the hammer-like aspect of the stroke—you imagine the string you are going to strike is bounded on each side by strings made of *glass* you will be very careful not to hit either of these strings.

(To be continued)

Sarabande

(from Greig's "Holberg" Suite)
Spanish Guitar Solo

Arranged by
ERNEST GJERTSEN

Andante espressivo

p

mf

pp

cresc.

p

cresc.

ff

p cantabile dolce

f

Memories

Banjo Solo

HARRY EVERETT

Tempo di Valse

mf

3B 3PB 5P

1 3PB 2 3PB Più mosso 3P

5PB 3PB

3PB 10B

5B 5P 2P

5B 4B 6P 4P 5PB 5B 5P

5B 4B 7PB

3P

5PB 3PB

3PB 10B

Legato

p-f

3PB 2P 7PB 3PB

5B 5PB 2P 3PB 2P 7PB

3P 1B 6P 3PB 4P 2P 2PB 1 2 6P

Fine

Plectrum Guitar Solo

D. W. ROBERTS

12PB 7P 7P

f Em

12PB 12P 12PB 9P 12P 8P 7P 12P 9P

p Em Am Em *mf accel.* B7 B7b9 B7 Em B7

12P 8P 7P 8P 7P

B7 B7b9 B7 B+ Em B7 B7b9 B7

rall. p a tempo

7P

Em Am *rall.* *f* E7 E7b9

5PB 5P 7PB

E7 Am Bbdim B7 Em6 *marcato* Am6 Am D7

7P 5P 3PB 8P 5P 5PB 8P 5PB

f dolce G Fdim Am7 Ab7b9 G Am E7 Am G7 *cresc.* C

3PB 5P 3PB 12P 9PB 8P 12P 12PB

Cmaj7 Am7 G Ebdim D7 G *mf* C E7 Am B7 Em

dim.

8P 5PB 9P 10PB 5P 3PB 2PB 7P

B7 C *dim.* Am Am7 Ddim D7 Ebdim D7 G B7 *p* Em

rall. ff Em

South Sea Hula

Hawaiian Guitar Solo
(D6 Tuning)

H. MARTINEZ

The musical score for "South Sea Hula" is written for a Hawaiian guitar in D6 tuning. It consists of 12 staves of music. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various chords: G, A7, D7, G9, and C. There are also triplets indicated by a '3' over a group of notes. Two sections of the score are marked "Guitar tacet" with a dotted line indicating the duration of the silence. The music is a solo piece, and the notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth, quarter, and half notes, as well as rests.

Harmony for Guitarists

By JACK DUARTE

(Continued from last month's issue)

TO greet the New Year we have our second collection of doubly-incomplete dominant eleventh—those deprived of their third and ninth degrees. Although the characteristic ninth is lacking the residue is strong, dynamic and important.

One consequence of the omission of the ninth as well as the third is that the residual chord is exactly the same in both modes—only the ninth differentiates the major- and minor-type chords in the previous examples.

Something of the strength of this chord stems from the fact that it embraces twin perfect fifths—between root and fifth, and seventh and eleventh. (See Ex. 387).

Five- and six-string forms are not really plentiful but on the whole they are effective in sound. These are in Ex. 388.

The residue proper is, of course, of four notes only (five- and six-string forms involve doubling) and it is in four-note forms the chord reaches its

most valuable expression on the guitar. These important distributions are given in Ex. 389.

There remains one important four-note form of this chord (incomplete dominant seventh lacking two degrees) and it is an exception that proves the "rule"—that regarding the omission of the third degree.

If we omit the fifth and ninth degrees the remainder can be effectively distributed as in Ex. 390—but when we come to study the disposal and resolution of the dominant eleventh we shall find this is a slightly different proposition from the other partial forms.

A few other distributions are possible, involving the same fund of notes, but apart from the special-case fingerings of those included in Ex. 390, they are not important.

DISPOSAL

The dominant eleventh is predominantly an *appoggiatura* chord; the eleventh itself has a powerful inclination to fall a semitone, disclosing the underlying chord of the seventh or ninth. Otherwise stated, the dominant eleventh resolves steadily upon the ninth or seventh upon which it is founded. This gives importance to the fingerings of this chord that enable one to make the resolution according to method (see Sept. 1961), in which the eleventh can be resolved whilst holding the remainder of the harmony undisturbed.

TWO ALTERNATIVES

Once the eleventh has been resolved the remaining seventh or ninth can be treated in any of the usual manners. In a full close (Authentic Cadence) there are two alternatives worth noting:

- (ii) In *any* form the eleventh can be left unresolved in the usual sense, merely being retained to become the tonic note of the scale and the root of the tonic chord (Ex. 392b).

An extension of this is possible, by realising that the eleventh degree

(tonic note) is present also in the subdominant chord of a key. The IV—V^{II}—I progression could thus be expressed in such a way as shown in Ex. 393, with the note concerned being held constant.

In June last we noted that the tonic ninth chord may be dissected as (in incomplete form) dominant harmony over a tonic pedal. We may now see the dominant eleventh in a similar light.

Ex. 394 shows that the form lacking the third and ninth degrees can be shown as the tonic note held suspended over an incomplete but utterly characteristic dominant seventh.

FREQUENTLY USED

If we now imagine an innocuous V—I cadence from the dominant seventh—and imagine, also, that the leading note makes its resolution too hastily: when this happens the result is something like Ex. 392b. This anticipation is in fact frequently used in serious music and, historically, it probably arose in just that way—through the over-anxiety of a singer or instrumentalist, followed by the realisation that this is a striking effect, worth pursuing deliberately for its own effect. Ex. 395 shows the process.

It is worth noting, in passing, that this process can be inverted (though we cannot, in all conscience, regard this as a case of an inverted dominant eleventh!), placing the tonic note in the bass. In this form the cadence abounds in the music of composers of the late 17th to early 19th centuries in particular.

Ex. 396 is a feminine cadence (Authentic) that positively breathes Mozart.

(To be continued)

Ex. 387

Ex. 388

Ex. 389

Ex. 390

Ex. 391

Ex. 392

Tape Recording

By JEFFREY POCOCC

BEFORE attempting to make good recordings it is most important to have one's equipment in good working order. Many tape recorder faults lie outside the scope of the average owner—yet the correction of many minor faults is well within the capabilities of the majority.

Frequently a little thought will reveal the origin of the trouble and much expense can be saved.

The importance of, for example, cleaning oxide deposit from record and erase heads may appear to be over-rated, yet time after time I am called upon to attend to tape recorders that; "will play back, but won't record."

In a surprisingly-large number of cases the fault lies in a heavy encrustation of oxide over the head gap.

Needless to say, the removal of this not only enables the machine to again record but improves the playback also—the gradual deterioration having passed unnoticed.

It is, in fact, surprising how this gradual deterioration can become acceptable and only receive attention in the event of what seems to be a complete breakdown.

MOST CRITICAL

The effect of oxide on a tape being recorded is considerably greater than on playing back a known good recording for not only does the recorded signal pass the head gap separated by the film of oxide but it has already been weakened by having been recorded through the same thickness.

Owners of 4-track machines will find this most critical.

A recent experience with a Philips EL3515 may be of interest—though I prefer to think of this as an isolated example—and the principles involved may well give a clue to similar faults arising on other models.

This particular tape recorder was a 4-track model and fairly new. It had, however, a most distressing "wow" and a tendency towards slow running.

On this model the take-up spool works by friction only—depending upon the weight of the spool. This was checked for freedom of "slip" and found normal. The left-hand turntable

carrying the full spool was also able to slip freely (any drag here could cause "wow" and slow running) and my attention was now turned to what would normally have been the last item likely—on this model—to cause wow.

This was the pressure roller. Examination revealed this to be out of shape—a common cause for wow—and here it must be remarked there is no excuse for leaving this roller in contact with the capstan while the machine is not running. This is almost always the reason for a mis-shapen pressure roller.

At this point I changed the pressure roller and the trouble *should* have been at an end. Alas, it was not!

I finally located the trouble. On this machine is a pause control. When this key is depressed a lever lifts the roller-arm clear from the heads and capstan. This had somehow become out of adjustment, with the result that it was permanently in such a position as to *slightly* lift the roller-arm and the roller could not make normal contact with the capstan!

Bending this arm back to its normal position immediately effected a cure—though not before some time and patience had been wasted.

ANOTHER FAULT

Another simple fault met with on this type of recorder (and on many recent Philips, Cossor and Stella models) concerns the re-wind mechanism. It sometimes happens that a spool of tape will slow down when approaching the end of a re-wind.

To understand what happens it is necessary for us to understand how the re-wind mechanism works.

On these machines the capstan and turntables are driven from one motor. A continuous belt passes around the pulleys in such a way that the two turntables (or spool-carriers) rotate in opposite directions. During playback or record these spool-carriers are not integral with the driving pulley—the only contact between the two being by underside of the spool-carriers and resting on a plastic disc rotating with the pulley.

This gives an easy "slip" to the spool-carriers without impeding the transit of the tape—but also without giving a positive drive for re-winding!

To obtain this drive an ingeniously-simple method is employed. Slightly below the level of the plastic disc are three soft plastic pads, or "clutch linings." Pressing the appropriate re-wind

key causes the spool-carrier to be slightly lowered—just enough, in fact, for it to rest by its own weight on the soft pads. As these engage with the smooth under-surface of the spool-carrier they provide a firm and positive grip, causing the spool-carrier to rotate with the pulley.

The opposite spool revolves freely on its felt washer but the process is reversed when the other re-wind key is depressed.

Most cases of slow re-wind can be traced to grease or dirt on the plastic pads or the underside of the spool-carriers.

To remove these, proceed as follows: Remove control knobs by pulling off. Remove plastic front cover in the case of the Philips, then the whole of the deck cover plate. Now remove the indicator drive belt. The two brake-levers are forked to prevent the spool-carriers coming away. These levers should be lifted clear of the edges of the spool-carriers, which will then lift off. This should be done with the machine disconnected from the mains and in the "play" position to release the brakes.

After cleaning the pads and the underside of the spool-carrier, a little thin oil may be smeared on the spindle, which should be rotated to make sure the oil goes in to the full extent. Be sure to keep oil from frictional surfaces and the drive belt.

Why not tell me about your recording problems? Apart from a direct "airing" in these pages, a reply will be sent to those enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope.

(To be continued)

Three Little Words

By RON HIGGINSON

I ONCE heard a professional guitarist play an astonishingly interesting accompaniment to someone's singing. I listened spellbound. The playing was as closely related to bom-ching as the moon is to cheese. It was a swinging background with all the stops pulled out.

When he had finished playing I congratulated him and expressed my amazement. He smiled and shrugged as he said simply: "That's the guitar."

It was a plain statement of fact. He had just shown what the guitar is capable of producing when played by a master.

I often think of his words when I hear different sounds from the guitar. Josh White, for example, has his own easily-recognisable style of playing. Good examples of this style can be heard on Melodisc 8008: "Mean Mistreatin' Woman" backed by "Baby, Baby"—and there is a Josh White Guitar Method published for those with a leaning towards that type of music.

It is not easy to acquire the ability to accompany one's own singing with an independent and individual style of single-string playing such as Josh's but if you listen carefully to his records you will find he repeats certain phrases in different numbers.

With the aid of his tutor and perhaps some flair for blues playing it should be possible to capture something of his style.

A ballad singer from the U.S.A. who accompanied himself on guitar during his stage tour of England was known as "The Wayfaring Stranger," otherwise Burl Ives. Today, of course, he is better known as an actor but in his ballad-singing days I saw his act. His guitar accompaniments were unobtrusive but adequate. No collection of Burl Ives records is complete without "Mr. Froggie Went A-Courtin'", with fill-ins by that well-known American guitarist Tony Mottola.

There is a folio of Burl Ives songs published containing chord symbols for many of his most famous folk songs and ballads.

INTENSE GLEAM

I remember once glancing in a music shop window and a casual glance became an intense gleam. There, among all the "pop" sheet music, was a book of Jimmie Rogers Songs. He used to record on the old Regal-Zonophone label in the early 30's. I bought all his available records in those days, mainly hobo songs, blue yodels and pathetic ballads. His guitar playing was mostly bass-string-and-chord style—with the exception of some Hawaiian tunes when he was accompanied by an Hawaiian outfit.

Although there was nothing outstanding in his playing it was immediately recognisable Jimmie Rogers style and suited his singing. He was born in Meridian, U.S.A. and there is a Rogers Memorial Day on May 26th each year held in his home town.

Yes! I nipped into that music shop and bought the book!

When one compares the playing of Josh White, Burl Ives, Jimmie Rogers, Big Bill Broonzy, Tal Farlow, Herb Ellis, Django Reinhardt, Teddy Bunn and Charlie Christian—to name a few outstanding guitarists with an individual style—it is easy to agree with the player who said: "That's the Guitar!"

THE Guitar on Wax

By "DISCUS"

"Scandinavian Shuffle"—The Swedanes. Warner Bros. WEP. 6017. 7", EP.

Pure entertainment and with a sparkling polish at that. Violinist Svend Asmussen, guitarist Ulrick Neumann (who plays finger-style) and vocalist extraordinary, Alice Baba, bounce their way through four tracks that make the most of these limited resources, in a way that provides a lesson for others who employ steam-hammers to crack peanuts. Strongly recommended for the lighter moments.

"Sinner Man" & "Loch Ness Monster"—Robin Hall and Jimmie MacGregor. Decca 45-F. 11340. 7", 45 rpm.

They're at it, at last! A very good, unpretentious pair of self-accompanied singers are now collecting the support of the window dressers. The unnecessary backings are by Ian Fraser and, in the second side, the suspicion of a "big guitar" sound rears its dreary head. Perhaps this is the elusive "monster," if so it should submerge and stay that way.

"Django Reinhardt Memorial." Vogue LAE. 12251. 12", 33 rpm.

Yet another compendium of previously-unissued tracks by an unusually prolific genius. These date from late 1947 and are interesting in two respects: They show Reinhardt making his earliest flirtations with the new developments in jazz (not always with satisfaction or success but always in an absorbing way), they also show him making his earliest efforts to come to terms with the amplified guitar—again with limited success. The results remain unparalleled in their interest and individuality.

"Latin Contrasts" — Laurindo Almeida and Bud Shanks. Vogue LAE. 12248. 12", 33 rpm.

The essence of delicate invention and immaculate taste, expressed in sounds that are to be heard nowhere else. The

partnership is not only unusual, it has also proved durable and successful. Nothing here for the sensation-seeker but plenty for the musician—especially in the lovely "Round About Midnight." Wonderful relief from electronic diseases.

"Roots of the Blues." Recordings by Alan Lomax. London LTZ-K. 15211. 12", 33 rpm.

"Leadbelly" — Leadbelly. Capitol EAP. 20111. 7", EP.

Both these records will appeal to the fundamentalist. Leadbelly has achieved an almost commercial success, uncompromising as he is, and the tracks included here are some of his best. The Lomax recordings are memorable indeed. Itinerant and amateur artists, reaching in these recordings perhaps the zenith of their existence, provide a wide range and moving variety of the songs that are an integral part of the fabric of their lives. Naturally the guitar finds rough and ready use in ways that the singers have found complementary to their modes of expression. The fascination of many tracks is truly hypnotic.

"Guitar Recital" — Narciso Yepes. Decca CEP. 694. 7", EP.

A "Rondo" by Sor, "Malaguena" by Albeniz, "Two Levantines" by Espla, and Falla's "Homage to Debussy" receive competent but cold and somewhat unimaginative performances. The tone is varied but without warmth or depth. Albeniz receives the best performance. In summary, Mr. Yepes has good hands but little heart.

"Folk Songs"—Wilfrid Brown and John Williams. L'Oiseau-Lyre OL. 50203. 12", 33 rpm.

To add to the famous partnership of Peter Pears and Julian Bream there is now that of Wilfrid Brown and John Williams, who also make many concert appearances together. This must be the most varied and interesting collection of folk songs on record. All are sung with consummate artistry and control, some unaccompanied (the *acid* test of a singer) and they are drawn from many European countries. Their range is from the mischievous "The Crow" from Denmark to "Maria im Dornwald," a German Nativity song of great beauty. John Williams accompanies impeccably but is under-recorded—the only flaw in a truly fine record.

"The Art of Julian Bream." RCA. RB. 16239. 12", 33 rpm.

This record is truly titled. Faithful recording enshrines some subtle and exquisite guitar playing in a largely unfamiliar programme: "Air and

variations" (*Frescobaldi*), "Sonata" (*Mateo Albeniz*), "Two Sonatas in E Minor" (*D. Scarlatti*), "Sonatas in A and C# Minor" (*Cimarosa*), "Sonatina" (*Lennox Berkeley*), "En Los Triguales" (*Rodrigo*), "Segovia" (*Rousset*) and "Pavane for a Dead Infant" (*Ravel*). It is difficult to highlight particular works in such a record but the delicate transcription of Ravel's "Pavane" is especially worth mention—as is the lovely playing it receives.

The Cimarosa works are good additions to the repertoire which, to date, has passed this composer by. Lennox Berkeley's "Sonatina" is a difficult work for the player and its third movement does not share the quality of the other two; it does, however, break new ground and this is too seldom done in a worthwhile fashion.

One discordant note is struck by the Scarlatti "Sonata" transcribed by Segovia. Bream plays this at a pace that suits the harpsichord but which does not come off successfully on the guitar. The effect is of one running after a bus with a guitar case in each hand!

"Nola." Les Paul & Mary Ford. Capital EAPI-20145. 7", EP.

Four old tracks by the early master of the gimmick. "Nola" is treated in the only valid way, more or less reproducing the original, with the aid of speed-change. There are also "Meet Mr. Callaghan," "Little Rock Getaway" and "Johnny is the Boy for Me." Whatever we may have felt about him ten years ago, he now shines forth as a light in comparison with the sick twanging and jangling that now passes for guitar playing. We could do much worse than re-issue his records as a reminder to the new generation of how far we have travelled (backwards) in the popularisation of the guitar.

(To be continued)

Guitar News from Overseas

Collected by PETER SENSER

Belgium. Singer-guitarist May Dale is the entertainer and host at the "Open Hazard," Statieplein 12, Heide, a popular Belgium night spot.

France. The Flagey Trio from Holland, Dirk Alma (flute), Herman Weigmans (violin) and Dick Visser (guitar), will visit Paris on Feb. 13th to give a concert at the Netherlands Institute. The Trio's programme will include a new work by Henk Badings.

Holland. On Oct. 29th a "Guitar Festival" was held at the "Goois Muzieklyceum" in

Hilversum. Those taking part were Nicolas Alfonso, Wouter Paap, Julian Coco and Hans Verzijl.

Ida Presti and Alexandre Lagoya are to give a recital at the Kleine Zaal, Amsterdam, on Jan. 28th.

The U.S. guitarist Rey de la Torre is also expected to visit Holland this year.

Italy. On Oct. 8th a competitive Guitar Festival was held in Bologna at the "Conservatorio Musicale G. B. Martini." Among the obligatory pieces competitors had to play were "Andante Largo from Sonata No. 2, Op. 7" (*Sor*), "Rondo" (from the second part of the Carulli Method), "Allegro Spirituoso, Op. 148" (*Guiliani*), "Tarantella" (*Desderi*), "Carovana" (*Murtula*) and "La Ronde Folle" (*Gagny*).

Prizes were diplomas and medals to the value of 15,000 lira, 10,000 lira and 5,000 lira.

Japan. There is to be an International Guitar Congress held in Japan in February.

Mexico. The Argentine guitarist Manuel Lopez Ramos presided over a classical guitar course at the University of Mexico during August and September.

U.S.A. Washington, D.C. On Oct. 23rd David R. Arnold (a pupil of Sophocles Papas) gave a recital of guitar music at Clendenen Hall. The programme consisted of "Four Lute Pieces" (*Milan-Chilesotti*), "Prelude, Sarabande, Minuet & Gavotte" (*Kuhnan*), "Gavotte" (*Scarlatti*), "Prelude" & "Capriccio Arabe" (*Tarrega*), "Etude" & "Variations on a Theme by Mozart" (*Sor*), "Los Mayos," "Burgalesa" & "Albada" (*Torroba*), "Etudes 1 & 2" (*Villa-Lobos*) and "Granada" & "Asturias" (*Albeniz*).

Paul Hume reports in the "Washington Post" (15/10/61) that the coming concert season at the Lisner Auditorium already includes four guitar recitals: Julian Bream (also featuring lute), Carlos Montoya (flamenco), Ida Presti & Alexandre Lagoya, and Segovia.

Next year Washington, D.C. teacher Sophocles Papas celebrates his fortieth year of teaching and playing the guitar.

Foreign Guitar Journals. The following periodicals have been received:

From Austria: "Die Volksmusik," a magazine dealing with all aspects of Austrian folk music, including sections relating to the guitar.

From Holland: A new and well-produced guitar magazine "Kithara," edited by Dick Visser and Anneke van Setten, which is the official organ of the "Constantyn Huygens" guitar society. First published in January of last year. "Kithara" also carries lute news, etc. and is issued every two months. The copies I have seen contain local and foreign news, technical articles, record and music reviews, biographies of composers and performers, advertisements and a number of good pictures.

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The Editor will be pleased to send a free specimen copy of "B.M.G." to any player you know who does not read the magazine. Send us his name and address and state the instrument he or she plays.

From Italy: No. 73 of the long-established and interesting "L'Arte Chitarristica" contains news and articles on music, personalities, records and technique.

Also from Italy a new magazine "L'Eco Della Musica," issued every two months. Although this magazine includes articles of general musical interest it is concerned mainly with the guitar—both finger-style and plectrum. It is a well-produced and attractive magazine, concerned largely with news and personalities.

(To be continued)

"B.M.G." Diplomas

A COPY OF THE TESTS NECESSARY TO SECURE "B.M.G." DIPLOMAS

can be obtained on receipt of a self-addressed envelope by applying to the Editor, "B.M.G.", 20 Earham St., London, W.C.2.

The following candidates have been awarded Diplomas.

M. J. Carr, of Wednesbury, "A" Grade (Plectrum Guitar).

Teacher: Stan Hopentt.

Examiner: Sydney G. Hull.

Neville Blatt, of Johannesburg, "A" Grade (Plectrum Guitar).

Teacher: Gilbert Stroud.

Examiner: Chas. Macrow.

Alan Arrowsmith, of Leigh, "A" Grade (Plectrum Guitar).

Teacher: Arthur Ranicar.

Examiner: Barbara Lobb.

Vincent Jasper, of Harlesden, "A" Grade (Plectrum Guitar).

Teacher: Gilbert Stroud.

Ian Morris, of Greenford, "B" Grade (Plectrum Guitar).

Teacher: John Davis.

Examiner: Geoff. Sisley.

Clive Martin, of Johannesburg, "B" Grade (Plectrum-banjo).

Teacher: Chas. Macrow.

Examiner: Gilbert Stroud.

J. A. Titmus, of Birmingham, "B" Grade (Plectrum guitar).

Examiner: B. Taylor.

William Cartwright, of Astley, "A" Grade (Plectrum guitar).

Teacher: A. Ranicar.

Examiner: Barbara Lobb.

Ralph Denton Ingram, of Kogarah, "A" Grade (Plectrum guitar).

Teacher: Gilbert Stroud.

Paul William McCabe, of Brighton-le-Sands, "A" Grade (Plectrum guitar).

Teacher: Gilbert Stroud.

Peter Herman, of Randwick, "A" Grade (Spanish guitar).

Teacher: Gilbert Stroud.

Kenneth Bird, of Kensington, N.S.W., "A" Grade (Plectrum guitar).

Teacher: Gilbert Stroud.

Valda Nan Hammick, of Potts Point, "A" Grade (Plectrum guitar).

Teacher: Gilbert Stroud.

Graham Donovan Hollick, of Bulawayo, "A" Grade (Plectrum guitar).

Teacher: Mike Barker.

Examiner: J. P. D. van Heerden.

B. M. & G. Tape Club

With the coming of the darker evenings we have reached the season when there comes a quickening of interest in Club affairs—as reflected in the rapidly-swelling postbag your Secretary is endeavouring to cope with! Normally the time taken up in answering correspondence detracts from the amount of attention I can give to keeping tapes on the move. The time is approaching, however, when Group Circulation will be of the utmost assistance in this but until almost all circulation is on this basis, then there is bound to be some temporary disruption as lists are revised and selected for Circulation Groups. Once a particular group is established it is hoped to keep feeding tapes to the first on the list, when continued circulation will be automatic. Naturally, the human element may cause some teething trouble and it is hoped all those receiving tapes with a Group list will co-operate in this scheme. As the complete Club directory list is due for revision I will take the opportunity of including a leaflet explaining how Group Circulation works. This will be circulated to all members with the new lists.

First tape to arrive this month comes from Norman Simper—one of our new members. This is a lively tape of banjo music with Mr. Simper on plectrum-banjo and Lillian Simper on piano. This recording is on a 5 1/2" reel at 7 1/2 ips. Our second tape of the month comes from George Spindler—whose playing is already well-known among our members. This is a 3" reel at 3 1/2 ips of zither-banjo solos. Also on this tape are dubbings from discs, the discs in question being private recording made by Mr. Spindler before he owned a tape recorder. Which, according to my information, must have been quite some time ago.

Judging by the Tape Club members who forgot—at the recent Northern Federation Rally—to bring a piece of tape for identification, some sort of permanent Tape Club badge is indicated. Fortunately I happened to have some spare tape, and this quickly made its appearance as an adornment on several members. I should like to have members' reactions to the idea of a badge. If the response is heavy I cannot guarantee to reply to all suggestions, though I will try to do so. If there is sufficient interest in this idea, then we can take steps to have our own badge. It should not be expensive and would facilitate identification of our members.

The above column was crowded out of the December issue and since writing it I have had a most pleasant surprise. With the most complete secrecy (as far as your Sec. was concerned) a number of members headed by Les. Pratt (one of the first to join) have subscribed towards a gift in, as Mr. Pratt puts it: "appreciation of your efforts." I am deeply touched by the kindness and friendliness displayed by all members with whom it has been my pleasure to correspond. For me this has always been ample reward for the work involved and I have made many friends.

In saying a sincere "thank you" I might add that the sum will be spent on power

tool equipment (I am an inveterate hobbyist when time permits) and that I will continue to co-operate with you all in any matters connected with the Tape Club—be they individual problems or Club matters in general.

JEFFREY POCOCK.

The Fretted Instrument Guild

Members and friends will have missed the customary announcements in recent months and an explanation is certainly due.

The Guild's activities are severely hampered by a shortage of people willing and able to give a lot of spare-time work and skill to its affairs. As time goes on we lose workers through advancing years, ill health and other causes and have not been able to recruit enough people to make good these deficiencies. Our Hon. Treasurer has battled on despite ill health; our Secretary has had to withdraw and is no longer available to us; our Chairman wished to retire in 1960 but has been holding on to try to keep the Guild functioning.

We can be helped to continue if two or three active people, with an interest in the spread of knowledge about fretted instruments and their music, would join us and take a hand in the work. No glory; no pay—only the satisfaction of a job well done in a worthwhile cause.

Any offers should be sent to me c/o the Editor.

N. F. PHILLIPS
(Acting Secretary)

Federation News

(Northern Section)

January 1962 brings us new things to which to look forward. First: our Annual General Meeting which is to be held on Sunday, Jan. 28th at 3.0 p.m. at the Conservative Club, Edith Road, Wallasey. We hope at this meeting, with other things, to decide the Test Piece for Class "B" orchestras. Class "A" has already been chosen and is "Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna" (Suppé), parts of which are now ready.

At the 1962 Rally, wherever it may be held, we shall be offering a new trophy presented to us by the Jack Woodroffe Organisation of Birmingham. Known as "The Woodroffe Cup" a small replica will be kept permanently by the winner. This is just what we needed for the new class formed in last year's syllabus: Electric Plectrum Guitar Solo Contest.

This now means we only need seven more trophies to complete our first list.

F. PHILLIPS.

(Southern Section)

At our December Committee meeting further plans were laid for our forthcoming Festival and Rally being held at the St. Pancras Town Hall on Saturday May 19th. I am pleased to say that in response to my appeal, two guitars have been promised as prizes with the result that, in addition to the usual Contests, there will be two special

competitions for "Rock Groups" and "Ballads and Blues," with a guitar as first prize in each. By the time these notes appear members will have received a syllabus. All others interested can obtain a copy upon application. (S.A.E. please).

Our next Committee meeting will be held at my office on Thursday Jan. 11th when further arrangements will be made concerning the Festival and Rally. All those interested in helping are invited to attend (dare I hope this will include a Secretary-shorthand/typist?).

On March 2nd we shall be holding our Annual General Meeting, which will be followed by a "Get Together" and concert, introducing some of our leading players and recent Festival Contest winners. Make a note of the date.

1962 subscriptions are now due and all members are requested to forward these as soon as possible, either to Mr. Carter or myself.

BERTIE OWEN.

By the Way

Terence Blackwell, 23-years-old art teacher at the William Penn Secondary School, Slough, learned to play the guitar whilst he was in the Forces. Now the school's music room echoes to the sound of guitars after hours for he has started a guitar group for the boys. He confines his instruction to the rudimentary principles of guitar playing—"what the boys do at home," he says, in their business."

Players of the mandolin would be interested in a new 7" EP record recently issued on the "Collector" label (JEP 3008). Called "Italy in Song" it features four Italian songs by Giovanni Giglio, accompanied by three mandolins, guitar and harp. There are solo mandolin passages by Hugo D'Alton; mandolin duet passages by Hugo and Terry D'Alton; and interesting accompaniments by the whole ensemble. The third mandolin is played by Steve Gauna, Chic Lavel plays the guitar while Sheila Bromberg plays the harp. Altogether, an interesting record.

The Dec. 3rd issue of the "Sunday Telegraph" included an article by Ian Christie entitled "Now 'Trad' Toes the Commercial Line" in which the writer says: "The banjo is the rock on which 'Trad' is built and without a banjo a band is automatically disqualified from the race to the Top 10. No band can risk this so that even musicians who hate the sound of the instrument will not relinquish it. Maybe the only solution is to hold a disarmament conference at which bandleaders will renounce its use and destroy their existing stocks."

Once again an unenlightened writer damns an instrument because of the incompetence of the majority of its players—in "Trad" bands!

New recorded plectrum guitar solos now available include: "Border Patrol" (Dennis Newey) and "China Doll" (Bert Weedon) price 2/9d. each; and "Fury" (Bert Weedon) price 3/3d., all post free. All these are obtainable from the Clifford Essex Music Co. Ltd.

Club Notes

The November meeting of the **London Guitar Society** at the Caxton Hall began with solos from Stella Mackenzie: "Sarabande" (Corelli), "Minuet" (A. Scarlatti), "Pavane" (Galilei), "Two Waltzes" (Sor) and "El Abejorro" (Pujol). On the credit side, excellent tone, intelligent phrasing and sound underlying technique; on the debit, more nervousness than her abilities merit. There followed duets by Brian Newman and Albert Riley, newcomers to the platform and only a few weeks in partnership. They played with a unanimity and mutual adjustment that should at least encourage them to continue—and regular duo partnerships are rare at present. They played "Andante and Allegro" (Teleman), "Pavan" and "Galliard" (Byrd, arr. Riley) and two Spanish traditional dances (arr. Len Williams). The approach to the interval was made by Jack Duarte: Technique, eccentric; manner, informal; music, unfamiliar—two pieces having first outings: "Sarabande" from 4th. Unaccompanied Cello Suite (Bach, arr. Duarte), 17th. Century Air "Flon Flon" (anon.) and Four Variations and Finale on an American Folk Song (Duarte—written for "Guitar Review" Contest).

Following the break, John Varde gave his best playing to date; he gains in confidence and musicianship with every appearance. His programme was: "Two pieces" (Galilei), "La Frescobalda" (Frescobaldi) and "Impromptu" (Pujol). The remainder of the evening was occupied by two old friends (not long back in this country) Anatole Regnier and Jiro Matsuda. They played first solos and then duets. Anatole Regnier played: "Four pieces" (Galilei) and "Courante" from 3rd. Unaccompanied Cello Suite (Bach). Jiro Matsuda played: "Etude" and "Prelude" (Villa-Lobos) and "Pasacaglia" (De Visee). The contrast was striking, though each is a player of considerable ability. Regnier plays with great elan and strength, obviously enjoying his dexterity, whilst Matsuda has developed into a strong but fastidious and sensitive player, immeasurably aided by his stay in London and his visits to Siena and Santiago to study with Diaz and Segovia. His playing now has the professional look of ease and relaxation that will no doubt come to Anatole Regnier by the time he has completed his studies at the Royal College of Music. The same contrast was apparent in their duets: "Two-part Invention" (Bach) and "Souvenir of Russia" (Sor), both of which called for techniques well above the average. The Sor is an unfamiliar and rather long-winded set of variations which sustained interest solely by the technical feats it demanded of the players; these were met almost nonchalantly.

The **Bournemouth Club** has given several concerts recently, including appearances at St. Joseph's Convent and Old People's Homes. Items played included: "Blush Rose," "Cossack Memories," "In a Monastery Garden," etc. "The Bourne Players" contributed "Love's Old Sweet Song" and "Sonatina"; "The Southern Hawaiians," "Kalua Calling" and "Hula Medley"; "The Southern Banjoliers," "Danse Bon-Bon," "Pasadena" and "Chinese Patrol." Solo items were given by Malcolm Coulson and Robert Hooper.

Correspondence

Dear Sir,—To answer the query in Alonso Medio's "History" article in the November issue: I can state that the Clifford Essex Balalaika Tutor was not the only one published in English. I have a tutor for the balalaika by Hawkes & Son, published in 1911 in the "Simplicity Series."

Perhaps the best tutor ever published for balalaika students was W. Nassonow's "Praktische Schule zum Selbstunterricht für Balalaika." This was published in two volumes (German and English text) by Heinrich Zimmerman.—W. PRINCE.

Dear Sir,—I have been a reader of "B.M.G." for over twenty years and although

I have been tempted at times to put pen to paper I have never done so. The article on Ike Isaacs in the November issue has prompted me to write for I would like to congratulate Mr. Duarte. Having had the pleasure of Ike's company on many occasions, I can only say how accurate Mr. Duarte's article is.

During the period of "Guitar Club" I felt a lot of criticism was levelled at this programme which was a little unfair and did nothing to show the true merit and quality of Ike Isaacs' playing.

The article by Jack Duarte should show some of your critical readers, who helped to kill "Guitar Club," Mr. Isaacs' true position as a fine guitarist and a fine person in every sense of the word.

It was a pleasure to read about a musician

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who deserves some acclaim instead of some of the more publicised who are not worthy to tune his instrument.—C. F. WILSON.

Dear Sir,—When writing articles for "B.M.G." there is always the possibility one may be misunderstood. Nevertheless, it comes as a surprise to me that my September article on "Guitar Technique" should prove to be "disgusting beyond measure" to anyone. Criticism of one's articles is always welcome—at least it shows someone reads them!—and if this criticism is offensive it does not matter in the least, for the only one harmed in the long run is the critic.

It is when the critics attribute something to a writer he did not write and then become offensive about it that damage is done to the article in question.

I refer, of course, to the letter by Messrs. J. C. Fraser and G. R. Radford. They quote me as saying that "... self-taught guitarists can develop only to a point of mediocrity and that further development requires a tutor." I did not say this. What was implied

(without quoting the whole paragraph) was that all self-taught guitarists come to realise at some time or another that their technique is not sufficient to meet the demands of the music they wish to play.

The genius will realise this at an early stage and his genius will enable him to overcome the difficulties involved. The ordinary self-taught players—those for whom my articles are written—may never overcome these difficulties unless they receive help from a competent teacher—and if they do overcome them it will be at the expense of time in the trial-and-error method.

Segovia is quoted as saying: "He who teaches himself has the world's most incom-

petent teacher." May I remind Messrs Fraser and Radford that Segovia is also a self-taught player?—JAMES O'BRIEN.

Dear Sir,—There is now being formed a completely new fretted instrument orchestra that will in no way interfere with the valuable work now being done by existing B. M. & G. orchestras but will rather assist them by introducing the instruments to a wider audience.

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Dear Sir,—The development of the solid-body guitar seems to be progressing by leaps and bounds. Manufacturers are producing more fantastic shapes than ever before, with three and even four pick-ups built in,

coupled with an awesome array of control knobs, switches and usually a vibrato "gear lever" thrown in.

Do all these pick-ups and switches produce worthwhile tonal variations? Perhaps a reader who has tried these new models can tell us whether it is all window-dressing or if we should indeed spend our hard-earned savings on the latest monstrosity to get the most out of our solo electric guitar playing! —P. O'CALLAGHAN.

Dear Sir,—As an avid reader of "B.M.G." (I read it from cover to cover, adverts and all!) I would like to express my disappointment regarding a statement made in "By the Way" in the November issue. It stated that Pete Seeger would be in Dundee (twenty minutes by train from where I live) on Nov. 4th. Seeing this I was overcome. At last a real folk-singer and musician finds time to visit Dundee! On going the rounds of the booking offices etc. nobody had even heard of the name of Seeger let alone a recital by him! So, disappointed, I went back home and put on a couple of records of "The

Weavers" (a poor compensation) for missing Seeger.

In Dundee I am sure many people would have gone to a recital by Pete Seeger; in fact, a recital by any known folk singer would be welcome.

Please, some folk singer, start a club, similar to Edinburgh's Howff, in Dundee and you will be my friend for life as well as me being your best customer. And please, "B.M.G.," get your facts right next time as I am sure I am not the only reader in this district who thought he would see Seeger.

Despite this oversight I still vote "B.M.G." the best one-and-threepence-worth going, even when it drops its folk column!—RUSS PATERSON.

(The dates of Seeger's concerts were supplied to us but last-minute arrangements [too late for us to publish] necessitated changes.—EDITOR).

Dear Sir,—Broadminded as the vast majority of your readers undoubtedly are, the feature "We Tell You" in your December issue is an insult to them and in the worst possible taste.

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Whoever written by, the mentality of the person sanctioning it for publication is certainly that of an office boy—and a pretty immature and smutty one at that!

I do not buy "B.M.G." to obtain this sort of thing and unless some sort of assurance is given that it will not be repeated you need not send me a renewal form when my subscription expires.

You claim your magazine goes all over the world and caters for fretted instrument players of all ages and both sexes. Be ashamed of yourself then.—JOHN DIXON.

Dear Sir—As the point has been raised may I say that Segovia has, for more years

than he cares to think, been contracted to a world-famous publishing house to produce his Method. In the limited time available to him he has worked on this but unless the position has changed since he last spoke of it to me it is not yet ready by any means. Had he been as dynamic a commercialist as others one could bring to mind the "job" might have been pushed on to an eager market years ago; as it is we can hope only that he will eventually win his race against time.

The Maestro thus disagrees with Mr. Hall when he doubts the method could be committed to paper satisfactorily—if I read his letter aright.

Segovia is first and foremost a great artist (the only guitarist, for instance, to attain place in the late series of books "The Great Interpreters"—and the only one to achieve billing as his surname only!); secondly the world's greatest—indeed, history's greatest—guitarist, a legend in his own lifetime and against the background of his concert-giving (the dimensions of which would kill any other guitarist living) the extremely limited time he has free is naturally devoted to helping those best able to benefit from it.

No one could blame him if he claimed the time for complete relaxation and rest but he gives of his energies and help as freely as he can. Only the "fleas," as Mr. Hall so

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aptly describes them, could possibly "take him to task" for the things he just cannot fit in. Mr. Hall (and others) may rest assured that whatever Segovia does and whatever changes he may make in his playing mechanisms, everything is based on penetrating and relentless logic.

I am in complete accord with Mr. Hall in his final paragraph, down to the last detail. Anyone who reads Mr. Clinton's letters cannot escape this conclusion. There is an underlying bitterness—to which I would add viciousness. Perhaps this stems, in part, from (or may even be in part the cause of) the fact that at the age of 31 he has not been able to make a significant contribution to the guitar (other than as a modest player) and has achieved little more reputation than his letters have given him. What other quality than viciousness could, for instance, account for the parenthetic doubt he casts on the truth of a simple and harmless statement I made when introducing him at the London Guitar Society—why should I be wrong in saying the work had not been played before at those meetings—and what matter if I was? I was not!

Some of your readers may wonder if the late disagreement between Mr. Clinton and myself had some personal basis (from his letters one may be pardoned for thinking so). I have met Mr. Clinton only twice: The first time when he played at the L.G.S. (the occasion, I think, to which he refers), upon which I introduced him with every courtesy. Even Mr. Clinton himself does not know that the favourable write-up of his perform-

ance that later appeared in "B.M.G." was from my pen. Some time later he played again and though he did not play as well, my write-up did not contain one word of derogation. On neither occasion did he show sufficient friendliness to establish a social contact, but I did not take any note of it at the time.

Earlier this year, when his "assault" was already under way, he was to have played for the Society again and I fully intended to introduce him as before, with every courtesy. Unfortunately at the last minute he opted to attend a Union meeting of some sort and I was deprived of the pleasure. No one, even Mr. Clinton, should think for one moment I am irritated by him. I am in fact sorry for him.

I was interested to read Ivor Mairants' article on Eythor Thorlak. Of course I remember him well, both in relation to jazz sessions and from the days when the Manchester Guitar Circle met in my home. If he reads this, perhaps he will look me up when next in London.

Thanks, Mr. Hopkinson! I will try not to forget again.—JACK DUARTE.

Dear Sir,—It seems to me (and he can correct me if I am wrong) that Mr. Hall, in his December letter, is seeking to justify his advertising to teach the Segovia-Tarrega method. Judging from his own words the most important aspect of his advert would seem to be that the words "Segovia-Tarrega" imply, as if by magic, he knows nothing

about flamenco, song accompaniment or the plectrum guitar.

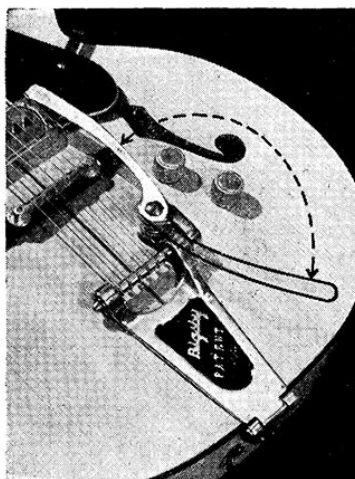
In other words he mainly uses the word as a ploy to keep away the unwanted. Personally I should have thought the words "classic guitar" would have been lucid enough—but no matter. He did say, however, he honestly believed he justified his claim, although he did not say how—unless it was the fact he doubted whether Segovia's method could be expressed in a book. I wish Mr. Hall would tell us why not! While he is about it perhaps he will also tell us what he means by "the Segovia method of logic as applied to guitar techniques" and how he got hold of it, notwithstanding the fact that the "Tarrega" half of the method has never been published except in the methods of his pupils such as Pujol!

He lists his own qualifications to teach the "Segovia-Tarrega" method as being "pitch-forked into teaching" after studying five years and being able to fumble his way through the Bach "Chaconne!"

Also his remark that "there are accepted principles of technique whereby any two of the world's foremost players would use an almost identical fingering for a given passage" is surely a little thoughtless because, taking it to its logical conclusion, this means that all the leading players finger all the same passages the same way—which I very much doubt. I realise Mr. Hall says "almost identical fingering." If he really meant this then, of course, it nullifies his argument as "almost," applied to the fingering of notes, can mean anything or nothing—but never "almost."

In conclusion: Contrary to Mr. Hall's assumption I think I am a merry sort of chap and I only hope he continues to make his pupils happy and contented with his own pleasurable and delightful injections.—GEORGE CLINTON.

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(Readers seeking advice are invited to send their problems. A stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply by post. Problems of general interest will be summarised in this feature without the sender's name and address being disclosed.—EDITOR.)

F. T. (Hayes)—"Song of the Islands" and "Now is the Hour" have been re-printed for Hawaiian guitar. The Clifford Essex Co. can supply copies, price 2/9d. each post free.

K. F. (Yiewsley)—May we suggest you form your own opinion? We are quite aware of the statements by the person in question but do not propose to do anything about them. It reminds us of the saying of Sousa, who said: "I know a man of some talent and capacity who kept himself so busy knocking the ones who had succeeded

in his profession that he had no time to build a reputation for himself."

A. J. S. (Edinburgh)—Your "nearest examiner" will be found in the Teachers' pages of "B.M.G." All examiners are obliged to maintain a teacher's card so it is easy for anyone to make arrangements for an examination with the nearest to him.

E. R. (Mansfield)—For the High Bass tuning we recommend a *plectrum guitar* 5th for the 5th string and a Hawaiian guitar 5th for the 6th. The only benefit from having a twin-neck instrument is to give you another tuning. "Human voice" effects are usually achieved by the use of a throat mike coupled to the amplifier. We do not know of any firm selling complete fingerboards: it is usual to fit the frets *after* the fingerboard has been glued to the neck. A list of the available back numbers of "B.M.G." was printed in the September issue.

H. N. (Liverpool)—If you write to the Clifford Essex Co. they would be pleased to send you a list of all the available tenor-banjo solos. We would advise using an ebony-insert "de luxe" bridge for your instrument.

I. L. (Aberdeen)—It is impossible to say without first examining the guitar. The cracks would have to be very bad for it to be impossible to affect a repair. Why not send the instrument to the Clifford Essex Co. for a quotation?

J. A. (Hull)—As you will see, Peter Sennier is now back from his tour of Mexico and we hope to continue his monthly column from now on.

P. T. (Cheltenham)—The Clifford Essex Co. can supply the book mentioned. Its correct title is "Adele Kramer's Scales for Spanish Guitar." It is 8/4d. post free.



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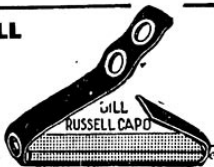
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