

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR ALL FRETTED INSTRUMENT PLAYERS

BMG

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Christmas Number

DECEMBER 1970

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THOSE WERE THE DAYS — page 80

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Notes and Comments

By the Ex-Editor

CHRISTMAS is a season of rejoicing and thanksgiving. We all celebrate it in our own way, some around the fireside with the family, some with guzzling and gormandising, and the less fortunate in the crypt of the church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

If I had my own way (that'll be the day!) I would get on my bike and meander quietly through the few English lanes that are still left. That has always been what I'd like to do.

Pitiful creature

Instead, being one of those pitiful creatures, a bachelor, I generally get invited out for Christmas dinner. This also means staying on for tea which rarely appears on the scene before eight in the evening when the snoozers are just coming round. By the time I shuffle home to look for the bicarbonate it is midnight and too late to get the bike out.

"B.M.G." has celebrated sixty-seven Christmases; this one will be the sixty-eighth; for the past two I have been its Editor. In July this year I was unceremoniously jerked out of the editorial chair by a coronary and laid low for a couple of months. It would not be quite truthful to say that the fate of "B.M.G." was my first thought when this happened; but it was the second.

The dead-line for going to press was not far away; who was there to step into the breach and get the magazine out? It was a bit of luck that there happened to be on the staff of the Clifford Essex Company that well-known writer on banjo topics, J. McNaghten.

Off the deep end

Now "Mac" had never edited a magazine in his life or had one day's journalistic experience. He was pushed in off the deep end—and him not able to swim. It was totally unfair. But with a supreme effort he set to, and what's more he got "B.M.G." out on time, though with not a moment to spare. And he has continued to do so ever since.

The late A. P. Sharpe, "B.M.G.'s" editor for more than thirty years once

wrote that editing "B.M.G." was no sinecure. A masterly understatement, even for A.P. In all my thirty-six years in Fleet Street it has been the hardest job I ever had.



J. ("Mac") McNAGHTEN
Our new Editor

"Mac" has been writing for "B.M.G." for thirty-five years. He is an outstanding authority on the banjo—he knows quite a lot about the mandolin and guitar too. There are two great loves in his life—the fretted instruments and Kipling. It is hard to say which comes first.

Forced labour

During his forced labour in the editorial chair (that's not all he does by any means) "Mac" has been getting to the office at eight-thirty in the morning and leaving at ten in the evening. In our major industries this would cause a strike that would make the 1926 affair look like a Primrose League picnic.

He has also motored twice down to Southend-on-Sea in the middle of the night to deliver the "paste-up" to the printers so that it would be on time.

Of course "Mac" has made mistakes. So have I. And so has every other editor. There have been complaints from contributors that their articles have been cut. Have you ever tried

getting a quart into a pint pot? There have been irate letters from small advertisers whose ads didn't appear in the current issue. There have been the usual sleuths who, reading "B.M.G." at leisure with all the time in the world, have found a few inevitable printer's errors. This happens to all publications. In this case "Mac" wasn't familiar with the routine, and he just didn't have time to read the galley proofs. Neither had I.

But one thing is certain: if it hadn't been for "Mac" "B.M.G." would have folded up three months ago.

Rejoice!

So when we are slapping each other on the back and wishing each other a Happy Christmas, let us remember "Mac" and rejoice that he has kept "B.M.G." going and maintained its proud record of being still the world's oldest fretted instrument magazine.

May I also thank all the readers in Britain and the U.S.A. who so kindly wrote to me and sent me "Get Well" cards during my period of inactivity. A Merry Christmas to you all!

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The Clifford Essex Music Company's premises will be closed from December 25 to 28—both days inclusive.

On behalf of the entire staff of the Company, Director Kevin Keogh extends seasonal good wishes to customers and friends the world over.

GUITAR TOPICS

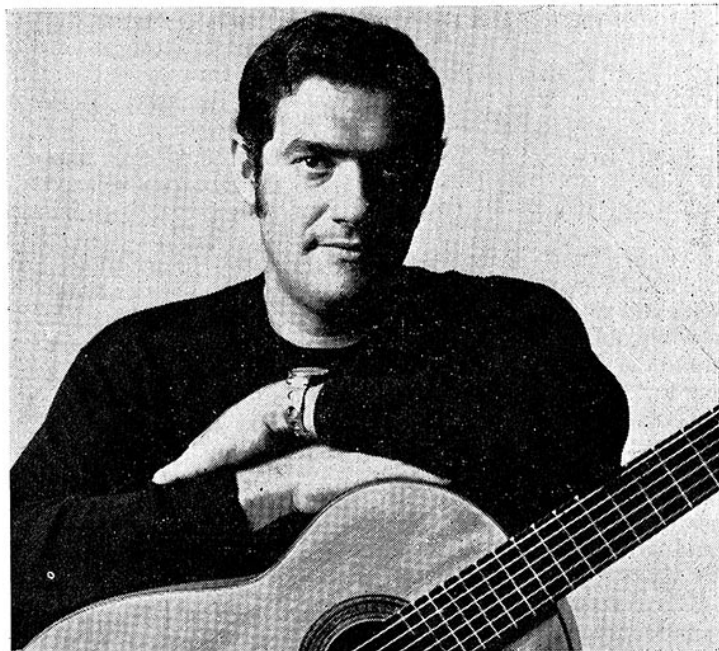
by Peter Sensier

THE GUITAR AMID THE CLATTER OF KNIVES & FORKS

NOT so many years ago a handful of London restaurants boasted guitar entertainers of some sort or another. Nowadays, guitar music or songs accompanied by guitar "while you eat" is an added attraction offered at a wide selection of the capital's eating places.

problems. You are consistently in competition with the clatter of knives, forks and plates; the chatter of customers; the bustle of waiters; the desire of some people to hear you properly, and of others who only want a murmur of music in the background.

As a result much of restaurant music is liable to be mediocre and continuous.



JUAN TEJEIRO

Generally speaking I must admit that I'm not crazy about "live" music with my food—which is probably a terrible admission from a professional musician—but if the music is good I want to listen and neglect my food; if the music is not good I find it irritating. Luckily for my fellow-musicians, I'm in the minority.

On the other hand I have experienced music-while-you-eat from the other side of the guitar, and I must say I can imagine few more thankless or unsatisfying tasks than being the musical accompaniment for *Avocado pear with gulf sauce; steak au poivre* or *fresh strawberries and cream*. Luckily for my fellow eaters-out I'm once again in the minority.

But there's no getting away from it; playing music for diners is fraught with

However, there are a few restaurants where the music is good enough to demand attention, yet intermittent enough to allow you to enjoy your food.

One of these is the delightful and intimate Costa Del Sol at 220-224 Fulham Road, London; there, amongst a changing and varied group of guitarist/singers, the permanent musical fixture is the classical and flamenco guitarist Juan Teijeiro who plays an interesting and varied repertoire that admirably fits the relaxed *ambiente* of this Spanish eating-place.

Juan Teijeiro was born in Honduras and grew up in Cuba. In 1952 he moved to Spain to study guitar in Madrid under the renowned maestro, the late Esquembre Iglesias, whose past pupils included Vicente Gomez, Angel Iglesias and William Gomez.

Esquembre died about two years ago, and his son now carries on the family name as a guitar teacher.

In 1960 Juan came to London to learn English, and he has remained here ever since, an active member of the London guitar community. Much of his time has been occupied with teaching the guitar and at the moment he is guitar teacher for Charterhouse, the famous school for boys, and Prior's Field, the well-known girls' school. Unlike many guitarists who obtain part of their living from teaching, Juan says he really enjoys it.

Nevertheless, Juan gets great enjoyment from playing in public. He was resident guitarist at Martinez' Spanish Restaurant, in London's West End, for four years; he has also appeared on various radio programmes and appeared in the Morecambe and Wise film *The Magnificent Two* but perhaps his proudest professional appearance was when he was invited to play for the Spanish Ambassador in London, His Excellency the Marques de Santa Cruz.

Juan Teijeiro has been resident for seven months at the Costa del Sol where he appears each night, Mondays excepted. His repertoire ranges from flamenco, through arrangements of popular and film music, to works from the standard classical guitar library. He is often joined by other guitarists and singers and is in fact an all-round guitarist who manages to infuse all he does with a sense of musicianship and artistry—no mean achievement in the distracting atmosphere of a restaurant.

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Guitar Solos, Studies and Tutors

Guitar Technique

by James O'Brien

THE IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT HAND POSITION

IT would be hard to over-stress the importance of correct hand position from the very beginning of learning the classical guitar. It is taken for granted (by some) that the position of the right hand as shown in the photograph of Segovia on the cover of Schott's publications is an exaggerated one—or one only to be adopted by the gifted few. Nothing could be more wrong! The correct position is correct for sound, solid and sensible reasons—to make it *easier* to play the guitar and to produce better musical results. We will start with the right hand.

As far as it is possible, the strings are struck at right angles, that is, the fingertip moves in a line parallel to the frets. In order to achieve this the hand must be bent to the right—bent at the wrist, that is—so that the fingers themselves are parallel to the frets. There are two ways in which one may arrive at this position. The first is a technical one and the second is a "natural" one.

Place the right hand flat on the strings near the end of the fingerboard, over the soundhole, in fact. Now move it to the right by bending the wrist until the first finger is in line with the 19th fret. Next, raise the wrist while keeping the bent angle intact and leave the fingers relaxed in their normal curved positions. Now place the first, second and third fingertips on the first string and the thumb on the third string. You should now be able to see under the hand and you should see the following: the third finger is upright (though bent at all joints); that is, the actual tip is pointing straight down to the soundboard. The second fingertip is leaning up towards the fingerboard; the first is leaning a little more. The thumb and first finger form a capital X between them.

Height of wrist? A fairly simple check on this is to place a matchbox on its end between the soundboard and that part of the thumb where it joins the wrist. About an inch from the actual wrist joint. The weight of the hand will keep the box in place.

You will notice that the angle of the thumb to the strings depends entirely on the height of the wrist. Now a thumb dead flat on the strings would be

utterly useless so I would suggest an angle around 45 deg. The matchbox should produce this angle—more or less. Why, the beginner may ask, is a flat angle useless? The answer is that the thumb in this position would be unable to produce any tone from the string—would, in fact, be unable to produce even a decent note. The best point of contact between the thumb and the string is about halfway between the dead centre of the top and the left edge of the nail. If you put the thumb down on a table at 45 degrees you will find this point.

The "natural" way to achieve the right-hand position serves a two-fold purpose in that it not only positions the hand but it also relaxes it. You get it like this:

Let the right hand hang as if completely "dead" — utterly relaxed. Keep the arm still resting on top of the instrument while doing this. Now bring the hand up to the strings—still "dead"—and place the fingers and thumb on the strings as before. The weight of the hand, in this case, will bend the relaxed wrist to the required degree to the right. The difficult thing here is to avoid "cheating"; so easy to UNrelax the hand and wrist at the last moment. The bend at the wrist is "natural" only as long as it is relaxed. And tension of the joints makes this angle most uncomfortable.

Some people find it difficult to relax the hand in this manner. The best way that I can think of is to imagine oneself trying to shake a sticky substance from the fingers!

The right hand will not normally play near the fingerboard—only for tone variation when and where the music requires it. The more usual position will have the first fingertip about five inches from the bridge. It should be pointed out that a thin sharp tone—again where required—can be obtained by moving the hand much nearer the bridge.

The classical guitar is played, almost universally, by the fingernails. There is no comparison between nails and bare fingertips. Nails give a wide variety of tone and great volume when properly filed and properly used. So, if you have been cutting them right down to the

last extreme, please leave them to grow for the next month and I will show you how to turn them into useful plectrums. In the meantime here is the way that the fingers and thumb strike the strings.

"Strike" is the operative word. The strings must not be pushed (by the thumb) or pulled—as a harpist plays. The action is that of a little hammer striking a nail into a wall. The string is the "nail" and the fingertip must take a little swipe at it. So must the thumb. The movement commences a short distance from the string—preferably less than half-an-inch—and the impetus given to the tip carries it right against the string and beyond. The same as striking a golf ball even when only three inches from the hole; the rules won't allow you to push it in! The same rule holds for playing the guitar, though you won't be asked to leave the club if you break it!

Three things are important. The hand must be kept relaxed, though not completely "dead" as in the relaxing exercise. The last joint of the fingers—the distal joint—must, however, be so relaxed that it bends backwards when the string is struck. This will become blatantly apparent when the fingernails are used. The thumb moves at the middle joint—NOT at the wrist joint, and DOES NOT BEND at the joint nearest the nail. This last is difficult; many pupils of mine found it almost impossible to do correctly for many months. You learn the action as follows.

Hold the hand up with the palm facing you. Now move the *whole* thumb in towards the palm. Note the large fatty base moving in as well. This is the part that must be trained NOT to move. Now try to move from the middle joint only. A relaxed hand and sheer willpower will do it. Keep the distal joint straight. Perhaps a quarter-inch will be as far as you can get it. It doesn't matter. Constant repetition will eventually enable you to move the thumb in this way without moving the distal joint or the fatty base. This base contains the thenor muscles which supply the power for the movement. Obviously, this local power is the right one to use for the job—not the muscles on the forearm. Now try it on the instrument and note the small amount of effort required to play thumb notes. Check every so often (palm facing you) that the action hasn't returned to its more natural undisciplined state.

Next month we will start on the left hand.

Musical Memories

by Eric A. Collins

RECOLLECTIONS OF A FAMOUS MUSICAL FAMILY

I DO thank you, Glyn Hughes, for your tribute to my father, Harry. As a result, upon hearing in "B.M.G.", that Mr. Kealoha Life was appearing with the Ernie Davis Trio (led by Eddie Curtiss) at Broadreeds Holiday Camp, quite near my own home here in Selsey, I paid him several visits, and was charmed by his superb guitar-playing, and his innate courtesy off-stage.

He has suggested that I jot down any items of musical interest I can recall, in which members of my family have participated; so with some trepidation, I will try to do this.

Cap and gown at twelve

At the turn of the century, two young sisters of mine, Alice and May, achieved great success in mandolin and piano on Merseyside and in North Wales; Alice gained honours with cap and gown at the London Victoria College of Music at the ripe age of 12 for mandolin; May, concentrating on solo mandolin, piano and elocution, and later teaching all three, completed this remarkable trio with their father on guitar.

Many old enthusiasts will recall their tours in Lancashire and North Wales, where one of their friends was Mrs. Novello, also many visits to Lord Derby's Knowsley Hall; when Sir Beerbohm Tree was playing in Liverpool, he engaged the trio to play the background music on guitar, mandola and mandolin for his gondola scene in the "Merchant of Venice", rendering the "Barcarolle" from "Tales of Hoffman" (recently revived with words by Donald Peers).

Tommy Handley

Alice married and lived for twenty years in St. John's, Newfoundland, where her talents were like a ray of sunshine, especially during the bitter winters there.

May, now in the 8th decade, still enjoys daily piano activities, and remembers appearing with a "talented young singer" at the Balfour Institute,

Liverpool, named Tommy Handley, later of I.T.M.A., and radio successes.

Harry Collins Junior, a fine exponent of the zither-banjo, ran several dance bands, and had a young violinist, aged 17, later to turn to comedy, and become Ted Ray of international fame.

Our attachment to strings was first inspired by banjoist uncle Will Collins, known as the "Black Storm of Dublin", no doubt for his popular Negro items, and the then young Harry (my father), learned a great deal from assisting him behind stage at the Drury Lane Theatre.

Professor Edison, when perfecting the Gramophone, asked father to give him a recording of the banjo, as the staccato notes came out so well.

I have a programme of a Collins Concert of May 9, 1898, when Professor Webber demonstrated "the latest and most wonderful talking and singing machine", the gramophone!

My own contribution as the youngest of the family, has been somewhat limited, having been a boy soloist in the Negro Minstrel Troupe, and some acting in sketches with a brother, when assisting father, but, always I have been interested in banjo and banjo playing as an amateur. Olly Oakley, that early recording banjoist, used to give a fine rendering of "Banjoista" by Harry Collins, himself.

All musicians

The remaining four members of the family were all musicians in an amateur capacity, with piano or vocal talents, so a family "musical evening" at 331 Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool, was really something to be remembered long afterwards.

In later years, and up to the present, through my wife's lifelong friendship with prima ballerina "Alice Nikitina" of the Diaghilev Ballet and Nikolai Malko, once the resident conductor of Sydney Orchestra, Australia, but equally known here too, we have followed ballet and Slavonic music, (which was Malko's speciality), in which stringed instruments play so prominent a feature.



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Literature

From a Bath Chair

by R. Tarrant Bailey

CHRISTMAS, that greatest of all Birthday Celebrations, is stated by countless publications to be "For the Children". This may be correct; but the light-hearted writers who emphasise the point neglect to mention the fact that toys that used to cost 6½d. are now 5/- each. This tends to make the Christmas Tree appear to have suffered a poor season that affected the crop. As for the pink sugar mice, at four a penny, that in olden days so decoratively and economically filled the spaces between the major offerings, they seem to have forgotten the reputation of mice in general for prolific multiplication and disappeared entirely. The little coloured wax candles, at one penny per box of six, have been replaced by yards and yards of delicate flex wire to convey very costly electricity to lots of artistic little electric lights costing merely a few pounds. But they "will do for next year".

We growing lads who are looking forward to joining in our eighty-fifth Yuletide revels, are frightful bores when recalling the old and less expensive Christmas Times. But those jolly old days *do* stick in our memories, and the ghosts of the sort of Christmas presents that used to be bestowed hang around to make us sigh.

Who, for instance, could today expect a little boy six years old to be presented with a banjo, made especially for him in the workshops of the Clifford Essex Company? But that is what once *did* happen. And here is an old, old photograph of T. B. Junior, when very junior indeed, playing that very instrument.

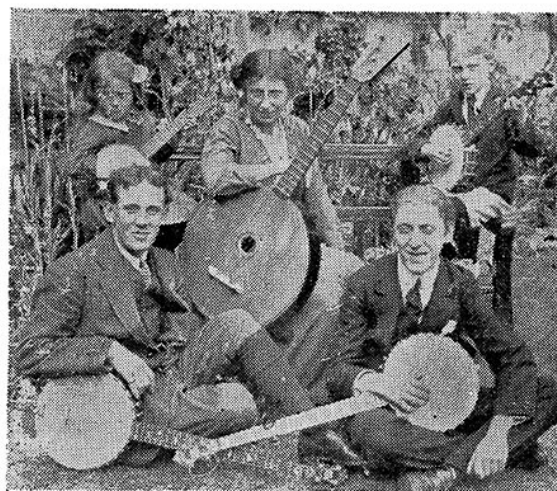
He was nearly seven years old when the picture was taken and had by that time become quite a fair performer on the little banjo Clifford Essex had given him as a Christmas present. The instrument, being so small, was of course a banjorine tuned to the fifth fret of a standard banjo; and the musical scores for the Quintette were made up as follows: Little Mouse armed with a piccolo banjo, tuned to the twelfth fret of the standard instrument, and played with all the skill that marked her brother's performance in later years; Master

Bill operating the banjorine; my wife adding depth to the sound of the Combination by the aid of a "C.E." wooden-diaphragm bass banjo; proud Pa-Pa second banjo, and that master musician Bert Basset—in later years to become Editor of "B.M.G."—first banjo.

It was a workmanlike combination, and not one of the performers was a

"L'Automne" played in this way will cause pangs of envy and jealousy in the breasts of even the finest 'cello players. I must not explain in detail how best to cultivate this grand effect, that is a privilege confined exclusively to finger-style banjoists, as I inflicted all that instruction upon long-suffering "B.M.G." readers in a special article written years ago.

It is difficult. *Very*, but I know of no other special effect that is so positively heavenly to hear. Joe Morley's "Pompador Gavotte", "Pimpernel



mere ornamental seat-warmer; as Bert Basset not only played first banjo, but composed and scored the special parts. His exceptional genius enabled him to make each and every one of the instruments effective. The dainty special bits for the piccolo banjo were his greatest joy, and I only wish they had been recorded. His "Coon Song" and "Water Lilies" were the outcome of his interest in this little banjo band.

Bert Basset was, in my opinion, one of the finest composers ever to devote his talent to the banjo. If any of you chaps who can *really* play do not include "Patagonian Picnic", "Bush-rangers' March", "Jumbo Rag" and the many other gems Bert Basset wrote, your repertoire is incomplete and you are missing one of the greatest blessings of your finger-style life.

To do that great composer's works full justice, however, you *must* cultivate the outstandingly beautiful vibrato he produced by the very rapid pressure and release of the top knuckle of his right hand little finger on the extreme righthand edge of the banjo bridge. The *andante* opening of "Patagonian Picnic" and the first movement of his

Mazurka", "Dresden China" or "Mauna Loa"; Sid Turner's "Sweet Hyacinth", "Fireside Reverie"; T. B. Junior's "Minuet", "Lilting Measure", and "My Banjo Dreams" or Jack Cuninghame's "Myfanwi" so performed would make you feel that the very painful corn on your little finger knuckle was well worth the agony of cultivation.

Alas, I am never likely to forget the year in which this photograph of what Bert called "The Bailibass" Quintette was taken, as the day after the picture was made we were all cast into gloom by the news of the sinking of the "Titanic". 1913 seems a long time ago, but the shock of that calamity in those dear old days of peace and prosperity is still all too easy to recall.

Not a very Christmassy bit, that; so let us get on to something more suggestive of Peace and Goodwill. The November "Correspondence Columns" for instance. Hick and I wish to shake hands with one of the writers therein. We *do* accept his assurance that he did not intend to be rude or unkind, and we admire the acknowledgement that his letter was open to misconstruction.

A Merry Christmas to him and to each and every other reader who has patience to read this particular part of "B.M.G."

Make the most of the jolly Festive Season, and be duly grateful for the blessing of being able still to play the

banjo. Remember too the price of the stuff these days and the fact that most of the bottles are non-returnable.

The mistletoe is under the lamp in the hall, girls.

FLAMENCO

[From "Soul of the Guitar" by Douglas Peel] *Copyright reserved*

FROM far away in North West India, their forefathers began their wanderings, sometime around about the tenth century A.D. Musicians and metal-workers, rope-makers, horse-breeders and cattlemen, they were known as the Roma (i.e. English, Romany). A travelling people, probably forced by wars and invasion to leave their native land, their camp-fires were seen brightening the nights in Persia and Armenia, then down into Ossetia. Some went southwards into Syria, Palestine and Egypt, practising their arts and trades, rootless brothers to the wind, existing sometimes prospering; welcomed here, rejected there, yet always surviving. By around the thirteenth century, the restless hooves of their ponies and cattle were heard further westward, and their encampments were scattered over Greece, Crete, Corfu and the Balkans, and later throughout Europe. Some, probably by way of North Africa and the Straits of Gibraltar, reached the shores of Southern Spain, and here, beneath the hot sun, on the coast, and among the high "Sierras" they found a life to their liking. Here they practised their livelihoods, becoming known for their skill as horse-breeders, cattlemen and metal-workers, and at night, beneath the stars they would dance to the stamping of feet and the clapping of hands, and make merry.

Because many of them spoke of coming out of Egypt, it was thought (wrongly), that they had originated there, and so they became known as Gitanos (in England, "Gypsies"). Their settlements, and "towns" sprang up outside the cities of Andalusia, and they became part of the life of the communities among whom they lived, and travelled, and just as they adopted the Spanish tongue, so did they adopt and adapt, in the manner of all gypsies, the music they encountered.

As a people of nature, they were attracted specially to the traditional folk-music of Andalusia—the Cante Hondo—a music that tells of love and hate, of wars and suffering, of joys and sorrow—a music that is, as its name signifies, deep and profound. Often, their dances would be performed to a rhythm beat out on an anvil, and even today, a gypsy troupe will often feature one or two of these traditional accompaniments as an added attraction.

Gradually, over the years, a musical tradition was forged by the Andalusian gypsy that was to become known as "Cante Flamenca". (The word Flamenca means flaming, or flamboyant.) Earliest mention of Cante Flamenca in actual print dates from less than one hundred years ago—1871, and a collection of Cante Flamencos (i.e. Flamenca Songs) was published, (words only) in 1881. The older Cante Hondo is said to owe much of its flavour to the music of the Moors and to the old chants of the Spanish Jews who entered the country centuries before the arrival of the first gypsies. Proof that Flamenca music has inherited this eastern Mediterranean influence lies in the liberal use of microtones (usually referred to as overtones) by gypsy singers, which may have come from the Arab musical scale which has intervals divided into three tones as against the two found in all western music.

Just as their "brothers" in Rumania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia adopted the violin, so the "gitano" of Southern Spain adopted the guitar, and gave to it that gift of lyrical expression that is the birthright of all gypsy musicians. Largely unwritten, even today, the music of the Flamenca guitar, although based upon certain harmonic-structure and rhythms, is still left open to the lyrical improvisations of the individual performer.

As with the Jazz of the American

south, Flamenca could never be confined within the formal bounds of written music—as an art-form, that is. A good Flamenca player will seldom perform any particular accompaniment or solo, exactly the same note for note. The performance is a reflection of the mood of the moment, nevertheless, more and more Flamenca guitar music is being taken down in notation form, and there are many albums in publication that enabled a good "Aficionado" of the style to become an exponent, providing that he has the necessary and all-important feeling for it.

How, then, is the music obtained? Apart from the few Spanish "Flamencos" who have embraced a formal musical education, and have thus been able to set down on paper some of their art, much has been achieved by good arrangers who, either by patient listening to actual live performances, or to gramophone or tape-recordings, have been able to capture some of its flavour. Bearing in mind the complexity of much Flamenca music, this is a task requiring very intimate knowledge, and even so, there remains much of the art of the authentic Flamenca guitarist which defies the pen. At its best, it is still the sole and elusive gift of the Andalusian gypsy.

Today, Flamenca dancers, singers and musicians are in great demand throughout the world as entertainers, and the rewards can be very high for top performers, who, travelling the globe, bring the colour, music and gaiety of the Fiesta and the "Juega" to other lands. As a consequence, the Flamenca guitar itself has gained great popularity—hence the increasing numbers of good soloists who now give concerts. Many "Aficionados" travel to Spain to take tuition in the fascinating style of guitar playing, often living among the "gitanos" so as to imbibe as much of the atmosphere of Flamenca as is possible, and it could well be that in future years, the art of the gypsy guitarist will have found a place in the musical academies of the world alongside of his classical "brother".

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Magic Ukulele

by Glyn Hughes

I'M happy to have further information about the new ukulele society I mentioned in this column in August. The Chairman—Mr. Roy S. Weiss, of 49 Galway Road, Redhill, Arnold, Nottingham tells me that the official name has now been decided upon and registered. It is The Ukulele Society of Great Britain. Their inaugural meeting (September 9, 1970) was a great success. Their next meeting is on Sunday, January 10, 1971, at the Y.W.C.A. Hall, Dingwall Road, Croydon. If any ukeists want further information about this society, write enclosing s.a.e. to Mr. Weiss at the above address.

* * *

UKE VERSUS MANDOLIN

Interesting letter recently from guitarist-ukuleleist, Leo Stevens, of Basildon, Essex, who tells me that ukes were enormously popular years ago with seamen and as a shipboard instrument. Mr. Stevens (a certificated ship's officer in the Merchant Navy, and now a Cargo Superintendent) says the ukulele was rivalled only by the mandolin. He recalls that it was during his seagoing days that he first encountered a uke. His old shipmate was a fine jazz uke player whose rendering of such tunes as "The Saints" and "Somebody Stole My Gal" was something to be remembered. Leo regrets that he doesn't have any snaps of the uke players he met at sea, but he thinks there must be many about. So if you've any uke snaps, please let us see them. If good enough we might be able to use them in "B.M.G."

* * *

BENNET BROS.

In a recent letter, my friend, Ted McCourt, of Belfast, asked me did I know of the Bennet Bros. I'm afraid I do not know them nor their present whereabouts. Perhaps some reader can help. Anyhow, Ted proceeded to tell me something of the brothers and also do a little looking back himself. "While touring with E.N.S.A. I met up with the Bennet Bros. The elder, Mark, played banjo and steel guitar; his brother played very good uke to piano accompaniment provided by Mark's

wife. Norman, the uke player, showed me a few chords and I remembered he had a lovely 'forward and up' roll which I have since often tried without success. He played popular numbers in chord-melody style as well as accompanying his brother, using the traditional Hawaiian Strum . . ." Ted tells me his first uke was a Keech long-scale (uke-banjo) which he bought for £4. Passing through a small village in Norfolk he looked at the cards displayed in a shop window and saw an advert "Banjo for Sale". It turned out to be the Keech uke-banjo mentioned above.

* * *

ENCHANTING SCENE

"Sadie tucked her dress up around her shapely thighs and explored further depths of the pool; Joe, with a chaplet of ferns around his head, strummed his ukulele and sang Samoan songs . . ."

From "The Real Sadie" by Wilmon Menard.

* * *

OHTA-SAN LP's

Since writing about Hawaiian ukulele virtuoso, OHTA-SAN ("B.M.G." July 1970), I have had several enquiries from readers who would like to get hold of his records. However, the LP "Hawaii Five-O" (Surfside Records SFS-107) which I mentioned with others in my article appears only to be sold in Hawaii. My copy was a gift from Mr. Sam Kamaka, of Kamaka Hawaii Inc. Honolulu, whose firm make the special koa-wood ukes played by Ohta-San. Regarding the question of availability of his records, I can do no better than quote a letter just received from Miss Kini Sullivan, for Don McDiarmid, Jr., President of Hula Records Inc. Miss Sullivan writes: "The Surfside Records label is a subsidiary to the Hula Records label. Hula features Hawaiian music by Hawaiian artists; Surfside non-Hawaiian music recorded by local artists. Sole distributors for both labels is Kona-Kai Distributing Co., P.O. Box 2135, Honolulu, Hawaii 96805 . . ."

* * *

MUSIC MASTER

The average undergraduate of the 1920's wasn't a jazz man . . . He was

considered one hell of an entertaining guy if he could do a reasonably accurate imitation of the boo-boo-boo style of crooning. A kid who could dance a bit, strum a uke, wind a victrola, was a music master . . ."

From "Sometimes I Wonder" by Hoagy Carmichael (A. Redman 1966).

* * *

KAHUNA AND MANA

According to legend, the ukulele is supposed to cast enchanting spells over men who can henceforth never get away from its music. Certainly many of us do get hooked on it in a rather strange and obsessive way. I suspect a pretty powerful "kahuna" was laid on the ukulele when it came into being, for not only does the instrument possess magic and "mana"; it also seems to confer good luck and happiness on those who take it up or who are friendly towards it. A "kahuna", by the way, is a sort of spell the Hawaiians make to ensure success when they're starting something new. "Mana" is the spirit or supernatural power that is said to emanate from "inanimate" objects.

* * *

ASTRONAUT-UKULELISTS

In 1969 we saw men walk on the moon; and we also saw Neil Armstrong, the commander of the expedition, through the window of the isolation chamber, playing a ukulele. In a recent letter Mr. Sam Kamaka, of Kamaka Hawaii, Inc., Honolulu, says: "It may be of interest to you to know that Mr. Scott Carpenter, the American astronaut, has purchased one of our custom-made Tiples. He, too, is an avid ukulele fan".

Well, that's about all for this month. Good plonking. Good luck. And the Compliments of the Season to you all.

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THE TAX MAN COMETH A Panto Parable

by Malcolm Weller

Any apparent reference to anyone living or dead from the waist up is purely of interest to a small coterie of cognoscenti.

CHORUS *Happy days are here again.*

NOW that the Pantomime season is nigh I want to relate a funny thing that happened to me on my way to the Trinity College of Music. Peter Pan, who would just never grow up—until he met Cinderella—teamed up with Jack, the so-called Giant Killer, and the idea of the MAGIC GUITAR was born. It was to play itself with the performer nonchalantly grimacing encouragement and was commissioned for a pot of gold from Pinocchio's father, Giuseppe, somewhere Over the Rainbow (where the humidity conditions are just so).

When finished it was so well put together with all the joints fitting so precisely that no glue was used at all and it just held together by atmospheric pressure.

Rare beanstalk

The top wood came from a rare beanstalk, *Leguminosus altissimus* discovered by Pinocchio who had a nose for these things, and was perfectly seasoned (with frankincense and myrrh). Giuseppe shrewdly resisted

the attempts of Sweeney Todd to tidy up the back and sides. The french polish was lovingly applied by Aladdin whose hand polishing is legendary and who eschewed the rapid spray Humpty Dumpty egg shell finish. The strings were supplied by Dick Whittington's Black Cat. The guitar could only be properly tuned against a chirp from Jimminy—the first true tone accurate pitch whistling cricket this side of Bognor Regis (and came complete with a luxury fitted case).

Three Oriental Kings

Three Oriental Kings—Kimbara, Tarada and Suzuki—who so looked forward to Christmas, were very interested in the construction but were unable to reproduce the authentic fairyland tone.

It was used in a Rock group headed by Tom Thumb the son of a distinguished Northumbrian Piper and featuring on the razzles swinging Hansel and Gretel the precocious German kids (who stayed out nights with implausible excuses). The critic Little Goody Two Face was a constant admirer and true aficionados travelled from far. In the old days the Manchester contingent used to go over in the Coach and Horses (before their road tax expired) which had been converted from a clapped out pumpkin by the good fairy from the North.

CHORUS

*Funny Little Fellow
Wears his Sister's Clothes
Don't know what to call him
But we think he's one of those.*

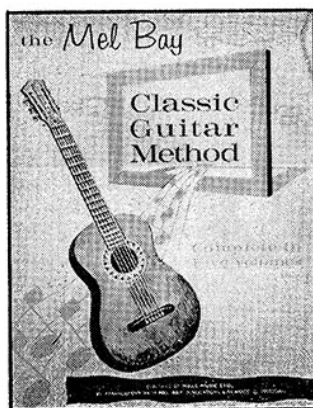
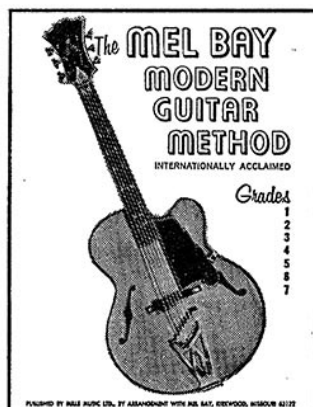
The group had the distinction of waking Rip van Winkle and the Sleeping Beauty at their carphologious Marathon Lie-In at the Morewigs Hall. They hit it off so well together that Prince Charming didn't get a look in, left Fairyland altogether and took a Public Relations job with Onassis.

Moral: *Honi soit que mal y pense.* N.B. Legal advisers point out that if the guitar was properly imported there should be a customs receipt and if it just turned up then it is treasure trove and the property of the Crown.

CHORUS *Should auld acquaintance be forgot . . .*

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Tape Recording

by Jeffrey Pocock

MORE AMBITIOUS RECORDING PROJECTS

LAST month I gave a few hints on how to make good recordings with average equipment by making the most of available conditions, i.e. room acoustics, microphone positioning, etc. A natural extension to that article is the more ambitious project of recording, say, a whole fretted instrument orchestra under rally conditions.

Many problems

There are many problems here, and perhaps not the least of these is "audience noise"—by which I mean "subdued" talking, coughing, scraping of chairs, etc., which usually goes unnoticed during the performance, because the human ear is a most discriminating asset. How else could we hold an intelligent conversation in a crowded, noisy room, if the ear and its complicated associated "circuitry" could not concentrate entirely on what we want to hear?

Take a recording of that same conversation under exactly the same conditions, and play it back in quiet surroundings, and one begins to wonder how it was ever intelligible in the first place.

Obvious moral

The moral here should be obvious; we must try to make our recording preclude as much audience noise as possible. There are two possible ways of achieving this. One is to have the microphone as close to the orchestra as possible, and the second is to use a microphone that is fairly selective. It is not difficult to understand how impractical my first suggestion is when one tries to imagine placing a microphone, say, six feet, in front of an orchestra that may occupy a "frontage" of some twenty feet. The predominating factor would be the instruments six feet from the microphone, while the two "outside ends" would be over ten feet away, and with those instruments at the rear the distance would be even greater. So much for the balance of the recording—and this method is entirely impractical. The second method is far more satisfactory, and it entails using a *cardioid* microphone in

front of and *above* the orchestra. I have described cardioid microphones often enough, but as a brief "recap" I will merely mention that this type of microphone (as close to the orchestra conditions) pick up sounds only from the front and to some extent the side areas. I have used the term "free field" so some explanation of what this means seems to be called for. In short it means that the microphone will be completely directional under conditions where there is absolutely no echo—such as in an uncluttered space out of doors, because under these conditions little or no reflected sounds from the rear of our microphone can reach the front. Indoors, on the other hand, *some* sounds may well be reflected from the rear of the stage into the *front* of the microphone, and this is why even a

cardioid of the best type, if used indoors, can pick up to some extent (even indirectly) *some* of the sounds from its rear unless the building in which we are using it is fairly acoustically "dead". All the same, the difference between a good cardioid microphone, and the usual omnidirectional general-purpose type normally used with a tape recorder is so great that it becomes a "must" for anyone with serious ambitions to make good tape recordings of groups or orchestras. Good cardioids are not cheap, since their design is fairly complex. A "starting price" could be said to be around £15, though I do know a useful model at ten guineas. Oddly enough, it seems that few tape recorder owners pay enough attention to their microphone when "budgetting" for new equipment. In fact, one of my customers—a Ferrograph owner—has only a cheap crystal microphone, and refuses to be persuaded at what he is missing! Of course, those able to "raise" a pair of cardioid microphones of identical type, plus even a simple



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two-way mixer would find themselves well equipped to record an orchestra, by using both mics suspended, say, 10 or 12 feet apart in front of (and slightly above) the orchestra.

Where room acoustics permit (and with the absence of a noisy audience) far be it from me to condemn the use of a *good* omni-directional moving coil—or a “figure eight” ribbon type, so long as this can be suspended far enough away (above and in front) to pick up all the instruments at reasonably compatible level—i.e., good balance.

Modest equipment

In a recent broadcast on tape recording I demonstrated just this by using a Grampian DP4 (one of my own) with a most indifferent tape recorder (provided for the purpose by the B.B.C.) with a view to proving that even with modest-budget equipment one *can* make good recordings. While I admittedly had the advantage of a good orchestral studio for this, my point was proved to my complete satisfaction when the playback of my own recording (of a school choir) was compared in the programme with the B.B.C.'s own recording, taken at the same time, with a high-grade ribbon microphone on a boom only about a foot away from my DP4. The same effect could have been obtained, had there been an audience, by using a cardioid to “get rid” of the audience noise.

Different proposition

To record, say, a four or five piece band is a different proposition, since it may be possible to get the group together in a prepared room. Fairly high sound-levels from the instruments (particularly if these are amplified) create further problems, and will be the subject of another article in this series. Meanwhile I will be pleased to hear from any reader who may have a problem with his recording—of whatever type.

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John Dowland

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THOSE WERE THE DAYS!

MORE NOSTALGIA BY GEORGE BARNES

YES—the good old days of 'way back—some say they were the *bad* old days; but this was certainly not so with musical entertainment.

Come to think of it, one got real value for money: Woodbines were five a penny, and ale fourpence a pint in 1912, and a seat at the local music hall was sixpence. So one could have a "night out" for less than a shilling, and the variety artists, including the fretted instrumentalists, did not look like animated white golliwogs, tramps, or smoke "pot"; nor were they awarded the M.B.E., or had any need to change their names. Talent alone was the prime factor, not gimmicks.



OLLY OAKLEY

at the height of his recording career

The artists who did appear as tramps were "speciality" acts like Sam Barton, trick cyclist, or Tom E. Hughes "The Rag-Bag-of-Variety" singing *I Wonder What it Feels Like to be Poor*. Gramophone records, from a sixpenny 5½ inch "Mimosa" to a four-and-sixpenny 12 inch "H.M.V.", were part of the shopping lists—a wealth of music of every kind, most of which, in their original condition would be worth a king's ransom today. For instance: Armstrong's "On Guard", played by Olly Oakley on a single sided 10 inch "Gramophone and Typewriter Co." record (G.C.6466) would be worth at

least £3 in a collectors' market.

In the early 'thirties, a new Clifford Essex "Regal" banjo could be had for £15, complete with case. And two from the C.E. Bargains list: a "Paragon" banjo and case, £15; and a Barnes and Mullins gold and silver-plated banjo, resonator and case, £8. Doubtless the tone—banjo tone, that is—of these instruments was superior to that of many 1970 models at £1,000!

At this time of the year, all the top-flight players like Joe Morley, Alfred D. Cammeyer, Bernard Sheaff, Mario de Pietro, Tarrant Bailey Jr., Eddie Fairs, George Morris, would be appearing at the Wigmore Hall in the heart of London's West End; and concerts by the Aston, London, Lewisham, and Ilford B.M. & G. Clubs, at Kensington and local town halls.

Even on a Sunday

There was always something going on—even on Sundays, when variety theatres were open for the National Sunday League concerts. In the early 'twenties plectrum banjoists were in great demand, for the dance band "boom" was well under way, and many five-stringers switched over to plectrum, and one can safely say that the knowledge of the banjo gained by these finger-stylists helped them to hold down good jobs with the plectrum and tenor banjo, and the switch later to plectrum guitar came much easier than starting from scratch.

The appearance of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band at London's Hammersmith Palais on October 28, 1919, started the dance band "boom". The first amongst these were Syd Roy's Lyricals at Oddenino's in 1920, Leslie Jefferies at Moon's Club in 1921, and Ben Davis at the Carlton Hotel in 1922.

Savoy Bands

But the most famous of London's hotel dance bands were of course the Savoy bands; the Savoy Havana, which started in 1922 when Bert Ralton brought to England his New York Havana Band to the Savoy Hotel; it was re-named the Savoy Havana Band; the Savoy Orpheans followed in March 1923. A "must" for a Saturday

night's "listen-in" was the regular weekly broadcasts by the Havana from the Savoy Hotel which started on October 3, 1923. But the *first* actual broadcast of a dance band was by Marius B. Winter's on March 26, 1923. Sid Firman's London Radio Dance Band did not start until February 16, 1926 from 2LO.



EMILE GRIMSHAW

Founded the Savoy Quartet in 1916

The Savoy Hotel has always been in the forefront for its dance music that goes back to 1916 with the Savoy Quartet, the banjoists being Will Blanche, Emile Grimshaw and Bert Basset. The Quartet lasted until 1920.

Famous bands like Fred Elizalde's, Gus Arnheim's Coconut Grove and André Presenti's Tango Band also appeared at the Savoy; but Havana and Orpheans are the ones that will always be remembered.

Famous names

Many famous names in the dance band world were band leaders at the Savoy, like Carroll Gibbons, Bert Ralton, Reg Batten, Rudy Vallee and Debroy Somers. Fred Elizalde and his music were years ahead of the times—the pioneer of British Jazz, and the musician all the other musicians talked about.

In 1921 Emile Grimshaw was leading the "Ragpickers" at the Hammersmith Palais, and later, his own quartet, among whom was our esteemed contributor Ivor Mairants. Many readers will no doubt have recordings of this fine quartet, on H.M.V.

A household name in British dance bands was that of Jack Hylton, who travelled thousands of miles appearing on the variety stage and in concert halls and doing many continental tours. In March, 1925 they appeared at London's Alhambra Theatre for 38 weeks—a record that has never been surpassed by any other band. Those who could not see him could hear him on records, of which, in 1929 alone, 3,180,000 were sold. His last broadcast was on April 30, 1940. A week later it was *finis*, for seven of his musicians were called up, and rather than lower the high standard of this versatile band it was disbanded.

Happy circle

Among the happy circle of banjoists and guitarists who were with London's leading dance bands were: Pete Mandell, Dave Thomas and his son Bert at the Savoy; Len Fillis, Hylton's Kit-Kat; Joe Branelly, Ambrose; Ivor Mairants, Roy Fox; Albert Harris, Lew Stone; Alan Ferguson, Spike Hughes; Harry Sherman, Carroll Gibbons; Syd Barron, Café de Paris; Pasquale Troise, Sid Firman's Radio; Jack Hill, Piccadilly Revels; Emile Grimshaw Jnr., Jack Hylton; Billy Bell Snr., Ritz Hotel; Arthur Stanley, Carlton Hotel; George Morris, Debroy Somers; Les Casey, Billy Cotton; Bill Berry, Claridge's; George Monkhouse, Fred Elizalde; George Elliott, Lew Davis; Len Shevill, Bert Hadley and Harry Young.



PETE MANDELL
of the Savoy Orpheans

None of these used a capo or needed someone else to tune their instruments and, remembering that these names included first-class soloists, composers, teachers, multi-instrumentalists and recording artists, it is no small

wonder that the "Roaring Twenties" and the "Turbulent Thirties" are always referred to as the Golden Era of popular music and musicians.



JACK HYLTON AND HIS BAND
A very early photograph

The dance band musician's "bible", the original monthly "Melody Maker", played a very important part in the mid-twenties in promoting contests for semi-pro dance bands, and many instrumentalists were "discovered" and found their way to leading professional bands.

Many talents

Ray Noble, the brilliant son of a prominent British surgeon, won the "Melody Maker" Arrangers' Contest in 1927, and this led to a job with the Lawrence Wright music publishing firm, as staff arranger with Jack Payne's band, Musical Director with H.M.V., and during the period of 1930-1934 he produced the remarkable series of "Mayfair" discs which made him a top-flight favourite throughout the world. Ray Noble led many great bands in the U.S.A. and earned fame as an actor too.

Only musicians like Stanley Black (piano), Danny Polo, Freddy Gardner, Laurie Payne, Harry Burley (saxes), Max Goldberg, Nat Gonella, Bill Shakespeare (trumpets), Lew Davis, "Jock" Fleming, Joe Ferrie, (trombones), Eric Siday, Reg Leopold (violins), Leon Goossens (oboe), Rudy Starita (drums), "Tiny" Winters (bass), and Al Bowlly (vocals, guitar), were good enough for Noble—a man of many talents indeed.

The first "Melody Maker" contest was in 1926, at the Tottenham Palais (now the Royal) and yours truly was playing with a budding young outfit

called "The Collegians". Many personalities in the dance band world were always eager to take part as judges at these contests, like Billy Mayerl, Jack Jackson, Lew Davis, Len Willis, Bert Railton, Max Bacon and, of course, the late Editor of the "M.M.", Edgar Jackson.

What became of those musicians of "way back"? Some have passed on, faded away, returned to the land of their birth—and others are still here in the profession or in business as guitar makers, importers, hotel "mine hosts".

Semi-pro dance bands were in their hundreds all over the country, and although despised by a few full-time professionals, some of these "gig" bands were really good, doing plenty of engagements for Masonic dinners and dances, "at homes", country hunt balls or local hops.

Yes, it was a great experience with plenty of fun in the 1920's and 1930's, especially with a banjo or a guitar on your knee.

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EYES RIGHT!

by J. B. Dacre

CAN YOU PLAY WITHOUT LOOKING?

GENTLE reader, can you pick up a guitar or banjo and, without a glance at the fingerboard, play any note you or somebody else may select? Can you do this accurately on any string—well above the 5th fret?

To the inexperienced player, the above query might suggest the impossible. Some might question whether I can perform this feat. The answer is—yes I can generally strike the right notes provided the circumstances are favourable.

Disadvantages

Before proceeding further, let us dwell for a moment on the disadvantages of having to gaze continually at the left hand while playing. Progress is bound to be painfully slow because of difficulties created by not being able to play and read printed music simultaneously. Worse still, we can plod on for months, always feeling unsure of ourselves. Self confidence is unlikely to be cultivated.

I mentioned above that I can generally strike pre-selected notes provided the circumstances are right. Now what are the right circumstances?

One must get to know the notes at every fret on all strings so thoroughly that the brain can locate any part of the fingerboard with lightning speed. At first one must be a finger watcher and put in plenty of practice at moving the left hand smartly to pick out a note at any desired spot. But, as soon as possible, the eyes must be diverted and more and more practice undertaken. It was in the course of practice that I made a discovery.

Exact pitch

I discovered that, when aiming at a note on the fingerboard I couldn't see, if I knew the exact pitch of the note beforehand, I tended to strike a correct note. If, however, I had for the moment lost my sense of pitch, I generally played a wrong note.

Young students who helped me with my experiments had the same experience. For this reason, we often sounded an open string and made a mental calculation to find the pitch

before aiming at the selected note.

This truth also implies that when practising sight reading, if our mind can sing the piece a split second before we play, we are likely to play with a higher degree of accuracy.

Several years ago an article by Mr. J. Duarte appeared in "B.M.G.". It was entitled "Unorthodox Practice". Its objective was to help the reader to gain a more thorough knowledge of the fingerboard. The writer advised playing single-string scale runs along the same string also picking out, with a left hand finger, the single notes that make up various chord arpeggios. Mr. Duarte wisely warned readers that this was no way to play the guitar. I tried the method advised. As a means to an end it was of enormous value.

A game

But fingerboard study can sometimes be a dull job. For this reason I have invented a game that can be played by two guitarists or banjoists.

Two players—let's call them A and B—sit facing each other. A calls on B to play a note, say G, second string 8th fret. B has to make one decisive movement of the left hand. If he strikes the right note he gains a point.

It is now B's turn to call the note and he tells A to play D on 6th string, 10th fret.

The simple rules of the game are:

1. To play for a certain number of rounds, agreed beforehand.
2. Opponents can call on each other to play any note on the fingerboard.
3. Players must not slide or slither up to a note (or count the frets). Just one movement of the left hand.
4. Eyes must be averted from the fingerboard.
5. As success depends on a sense of pitch, the string on which the note is to be played may first be sounded "open".

Educative

With this game, I have enlivened many a lesson which might otherwise incline to dullness. Pupils love the game and it is highly educative, since to play it successfully a player must know the fingerboard thoroughly and

be able to play blindfold if necessary.

A short while ago I invited eight pupils to my studio and we spent a happy and exciting evening.

After preliminary rounds, we played semi-finals, and then two young students, Jenny Jounart and David Shepard commenced the final ten rounds. Tension mounted as the game progressed, for in the first five rounds, not a mistake was made. Then David's luck deserted him and Jenny became the winner on a 9-6 score.

Since that evening I have noticed a significant rise in the standard of playing of all who took part.

Incidentally we have named the game "Wild Cat" owing to the fact that we often strike for fun.



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TWO IN ONE

by Robert White

COMPOSITE INSTRUMENTS AND THE "DYPHONE"

HYBRID fretted instruments, combining such things as a mandolin neck with a banjo hoop or a tenor-banjo neck with a guitar body, are fairly common. More unusual are instruments with several different necks fitted on to one body, or even with two more or less complete necks and bodies joined together to form one structure; yet no less than three different examples of this kind of amalgamation were shown in the November issue of "B.M.G.", which featured Giovanni Cera's combined mandolin and guitar and the two anonymous composite instruments devised and made by Roy Williamson.

These contraptions reminded me of Thomas Mace's "dyphone", illustrated in his famous book "Musick's Monument", which was published in 1676 and is now available in facsimile form produced by Broude Brothers of New York and by Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique of Paris. Some "B.M.G." readers may possibly remember that Mace was the "Old Master" in my Christmas 1967 contribution to this magazine. His book is written in a very quaint and engaging style and contains much sensible advice, based on many years of practical experience.

The soundboard of the dyphone was elliptical in outline and it was fitted to a vaulted back. ("It is in Its Body of a Perfect Pear-Mould, both Ways", wrote Mace.) There were two necks and the most notable feature of the design was that these necks were attached to opposite ends of the body, so that the pull of one set of strings was balanced by the tension on the other set. The two bridges were placed back-to-back. The soundboard was divided in two across its widest part, in the gap between the bridges, and there was "a Strong Barr, Gleded to the very Edge of each Divided Part, in That Place, which . . . is of Substantial Use for strengthening the whole".

One end of the instrument was a French lute, with 12 double courses, and the other was a theorbo, with 13

double courses. Thus, the whole thing carried no less than 50 strings. To change from lute to theorbo, or vice-versa, the performer swung his enormous device through 180 deg. and carried on regardless! Mace pointed out that "you are provided of Both the Most Compleat, and Useful Lutes in the World; and you have Them Closely Ready, upon any Contrary, and Sudden Occasion; the Majestick Theorboe, either for Voice, Organ, or Consort, etc. and The High Improved French Lute, for Airy, and Spruce, Single or Double Lessons; and is also a Most Admirable Consort Instrument, where They know how to make the Right Use of It, and not suffer It to be Over-Top'd with Squaling-Scoulding-Fiddles".

Because the strings drew "contrary ways" they could be "set up to a Stiff Lusty Pitch". This fact, allied to the very large body cavity and the sympathetic vibration of one set of strings when the other was being played, resulted in an unusually powerful sound. Volume was what poor old Mace was after, as he had the misfortune to be deaf. He described the predicament which made him devise the dyphone in these words:

"The Occasion of Its Production, was

My Necessity; viz. My Great Defect in Hearing; adjoined with My Unsatiabie Love, and Desire after the Lute; It being an Instrument so Soft, and Past my Reach of Hearing, I did Imagine, it was possible to Contrive a Louder Lute, than ever any yet had been; whereupon after divers Casts, and Contrivances, I pitch'd upon This Order; the which has (in a Great Degree) answered my Expectation; It being absolutely the Lustiest of Loudest Lute, that I ever yet heard; for although I cannot hear the least Twang of any other Lute, when I Play upon It; yet I can hear This, in a very Good Measure; yet not so Loud, as to Distinguish Every Thing I Play, without the Help of My Teeth, which when I lay Close to the Edge of It, I hear All I play distinctly; so that it is to Me (I Thank God) One of the Principal Refreshments, and Contentments I Enjoy in This World".

So please do not make too much fun of the dyphone. It was a brave attempt to make the best of the saddest affliction that can befall a musician. The original dyphone was constructed in 1672 "by a Hand, that Never (before) Attempted the Making of Any Instrument" and it lacked "Those Perfections, which a Skilful Practical Operator in such Things, would doubtless have Given It". Many Skilful Practical Operators read "B.M.G.". Perhaps at least one of them will have a very happy Christmas making a new dyphone, a mere 298 years after Thomas Mace, a Clerk of Trinity College, Cambridge, fashioned what he called "My Beloved Darling".

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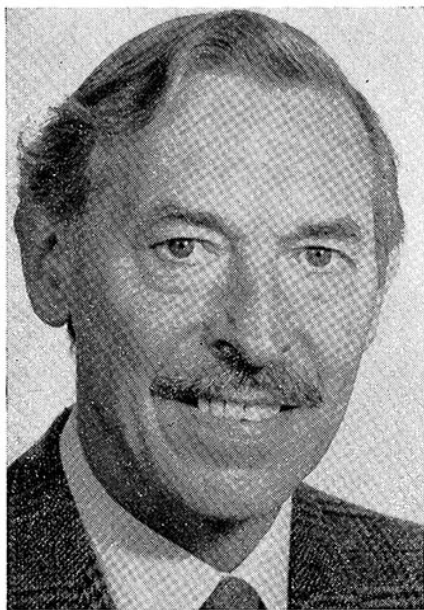
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Hawaiian Guitar News

by J. D. Marsden

THIS month I would like to feature in this column one of the best known British steel guitarists, a man whose career stretches back to Mendelssohn days and before, and who is featured on a great many current LP's, Billy Bell.



BILLY BELL

Billy started to play steel guitar when he was with Troise and the Mandoliers in about 1930. He used an acoustic model tuned to High Bass. He later adopted an electric 8-string guitar made by Jack Abbott in about 1938, and he still uses this today. Billy says he uses "La Bella" strings, and an E6th tuning which he sometimes modifies by putting the lower C# to D.

Billy played steel for Felix Mendelssohn's broadcasting combo after the War, though never did his stage dates. He also recorded the following discs with Felix: *Romantic Waltzes No. 5* (FB. 3254), *Indian Summer/Woodpecker Song* (FB. 3271), and *Blue Lagoon/Let me whisper I love you* (FB. 3491). After Felix's death, he continued with the South Sea Serenaders under the direction of Ernest Penfold. The Serenaders would frequently feature Billy with the larger combo, and Harry Brooker with the small group. After Harry's death, Eric Webb and subsequently Dennis

Brown played with the small combo, but in many broadcasts Billy himself played throughout. Wally Chapman and occasionally Don Sanford would take Billy's place with the larger group in some broadcasts.

Billy must surely be the most in demand session man in the fretted instrument field in England. In addition to steel guitar, he plays plectrum guitar, Spanish guitar, electric guitar, banjo, tenor banjo, ukulele and 12-string guitar, in addition to composing and arranging work. Billy supplied the background music for the Gaumont British Colour Feature Film of the Queen's visit to Fiji and Tonga in 1953 with original material. His well known compositions *Vanua Hula* and *Tonga Greetings* came from this film.

Billy comments that much of the recording work he has done is anonymous, and he doesn't even know the titles or the names of the bands on the finished product. For instance, he is asked to bring his instrument to the recording studio. When he arrives he is given about a dozen steel guitar parts to play with whatever combination is there—it might be a Hawaiian rhythm section or a full orchestra.

Recently he has been broadcasting with his own Hawaiian group, the Hawaiian Islanders, and he does all the arrangements for this group.

Among currently available LP's which feature Billy on steel guitar are the ones by the Big Ben Hawaiian Band:—

- Columbia
- 33SX.1527: *On the Beach at Waikiki.*
- 33SX.1641: *Hits Hawaiian Style.*
- 33SX.1713: *Blue Hawaiian Skies.*
- TWO.152: *A Taste of Hawaii.*
- TWO.205: *Hawaiian Styled.*
- TWO.262: *Hawaiian Hit Parade.*
- Polydor
- 583.084: *Hit me Hawaiian.*

These include some tasteful arrangements of good quality popular music.

Billy can also be heard on the following:— Major Minor SMCP.5032 (*Hawaiian Party* by the Paradise Islanders), Deram 1020 (*The Hawaiians from the famous Beach Hotel*), Decca PFS.4112 (*Hawaii* by Frank Chacksfield's Orch.), and Pye NSPL. 18250 (*Hawaii* by the South Sea Serenaders). Billy can also be heard in some tracks of Rediffusion ZS.45 (*Songs of the Islands* by Kana Kapiolani's Hawaiians).

Other tracks on this excellent LP appear to be by Dennis Brown. The record has very much the atmosphere of a South Sea Serenaders broadcast, and can be recommended!

In passing, I would also like to call attention to Deacon DEA.1008, *Aloha Hawaii*. This very fine new release appears to have Dennis Brown on steel, though the group is not named.

Many thanks to Billy Bell for supplying this information, and very best wishes to him for his future career. I hope his smooth and most professional steel guitar playing will be heard on many more LP's in years to come.

* * *

Danny Tigilau's luau, held in Chesterfield on October 23, turned out to be a most exciting and memorable event. It was attended by a great number of steel guitarists and Tape Club members from all over the country. There were so many friends present, I found it impossible to meet everyone properly. Among those attending were the following, most of whom will be known to the Tape Club and steel guitar world generally: Les Taylor (see photo), Pete Hughes, Bryan Lawther, Keith Wagstaff and Albatross from the "Tradewinds" (featured in one of my articles a little while ago), Bob Hasson, Geoff Worley, Ken Brooks, John Pickford, Sam Tomlin, Doug Fairfax, Tommy Clancy, John Birch, Stan Turner, Hal Organ, and a host of others.

Arthur Jones and his South Sea Serenaders provided the music, featuring the voice of Frank Kahili, plus contributions from several of those present, notably Doug Fairfax, Tommy Clancy and one of his pupils, and Ken Brooks. Ken especially delighted the gathering with superb and original renditions of *Lover, Song of the Islands* and *In the Mood*.

There were songs and dances from Danny Tigilau and Rahui, a beautiful girl from Rarotonga who not only dances the tamure and hula, but sings and plays guitar, ukulele and pahu drum! Danny's fire dance was a high spot of the evening, and another was provided by three Tongan dancers who performed to the accompaniment of Freddy Kaho and Daniel Latu.

A buffet was laid on, and I think it will be agreed by the large number of people who attended that the luau was a great success! Special mention must be made of Arthur Jones' wife, Pat, who handled the tickets so ably at the entrance. Pat and Arthur made noble contributions to the success of the

evening and in publicising it beforehand.

featured on the Tape Club LP. After adopting a more "pop" format, the

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Serenaders



AFTER THE LUAU...
LES TAYLOR and DANNY TIGILAU

It is hoped, I understand, to hold another luau later, possibly in Birmingham. I hope steel guitar fans will make a similar effort to attend. These gatherings are *most* worthwhile. To meet so many people of similar tastes to one's own, many of whom may be known to one only through photos and 'mentions' in "B.M.G.", is most exciting. When to this is added the music of a top class Hawaiian combo, such as the South Sea Serenaders, and genuine Polynesian cabaret, the occasion becomes one not to be missed on any account!

* * *

I wonder how many readers saw the "Roundabout" on "Opportunity Knocks" on October 26. This group started life as "Princess Mapuana and her Hula Hawaiians", after the break-up of the combo of the same name

name "Janet Gibson Five" was also used for certain bookings. Mapuana eventually decided to leave show-biz, and was replaced by Elizabeth Andrews, who was seen on TV. With the departure of Mapuana, the Hawaiian side of the act was also dropped, and although a few Hawaiian bookings were subsequently done, to meet agents' contracts, featuring three different dancers, including Kalena, the show became predominantly "pop". I decided to leave also, and was replaced by the organist who was featured on TV. The "Roundabout" are very well known on the Sheffield club scene now.

May I close this last article for 1970 by wishing all readers a most happy and wonderful Christmas.

Referring to my *Lani McIntire discography*, I have just spotted an error in the first instalment (July). The number of the Harmony LP (see matrices LA409 & 417) should be HL7026 not 7206. The error was my own and I apologise for it! Also, in Part 4 of the discography, the 10in. Columbia LP, CL 6117, was also issued in the U.S.A. under the number CL 2526.

J.D.M.

In the November H. G. News, p. 45, in the paragraph on Danny Tigilau, *Little Brown Jug* should read *Little Brown Girl*—Ed.

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The Guitarist's Repertoire

by Graham Wade

G. F. Handel and the Guitarist

I MUST start this month by wishing all devoted readers of this column and of course all readers of "B.M.G." a happy Christmas and may "the mornings after the nights before" not be too savage after the jollifications! It seems to me that 1970 has been a splendid year from the point of view of the guitarist. In London and the provinces plenty of guitar recitals have taken place to inspire ever more practice in amateur and professional guitarists alike and to delight the non-playing concert-goer; and in the publishing field the range of the guitarist's repertoire has continued to expand and expand with new compositions by the dozen, and many excellent transcriptions.

Career

The number of young and promising performers is steadily growing year by year, and the guitar is now more established than ever before in the musical academies and conservatoires. Consequently it is becoming increasingly possible for youngsters to contemplate taking up the classical guitar as a career either as a teacher or performer, and I hope to write an article on this subject for "B.M.G." shortly. From my own standpoint, life at the Holland County Music School (where I am Lecturer in Guitar) is a constant revelation of the tremendous enthusiasm and admiration for the guitar which exists among our school-children and the adult population; if I had the energy and capacity to work sixty hours a week I might be able to cater for *half* the people who want to learn the instrument seriously, and that in a comparatively rural area! So the guitar business is booming on all fronts, and long may it continue.

Household word

Now back to the usual business of this column. Handel's name is indeed a household word far more than Beethoven or Haydn in one sense, inasmuch as the most crashing ignoramus has heard of the Messiah

(performed throughout the land at this season sometimes with appalling results) and Handel's *Water Music*. Moreover, Handel was one of those expatriate composers who found it congenial to live in our damp, miserable climate in return for great adulation and affection from the British musical public of his day. After Queen Anne's death in 1714 Handel was offered a pension of £200 a year for life in addition to the pension the late Anne had given him, and in those days such a sum was no chickenfeed. Handel was buried in Westminster Abbey in 1759, a national hero.

Guitarists, always keen to be in on a good thing, have sniffed the air cautiously as far as Handel is concerned, and the results have not always been too good. For one thing Handel's keyboard music is inordinately complex even for the good pianist, and usually not suitable for fretted instruments. But two compositions are played by the guitarist with great delight and these constitute the recitalist's homage to Handel.

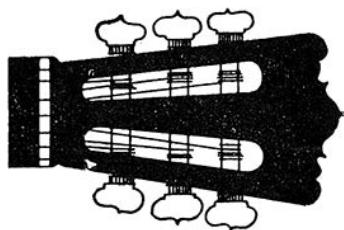
Ravishing

The first of these is *Sarabande and Variations* transcribed by Julian Bream for the Clifford Essex "Classic" series years ago, and still frequently performed in concert by the virtuoso

guitarists. The ravishing *Sarabande*, often known as *Folia d'Espagne*, is a perfect theme around which to compose variations; the harmonies are crystal clear, the tune itself is memorable but not too complex, and the rhythm has the grace and dignity of the *Sarabande* in the direct tradition of the dance. The first variation exploits the treble possibilities of the guitar, contrasting in its lively crotchet movement to the ponderous beauty of the original theme. The second variation transfers the melody line to the bass, a most effective device on the guitar, and enabling the harmonies of the *Sarabande* to be picked out in sharp chordal relief over the top of the splendidly melodious variation. The difficulty with this composition is in achieving the effortless legato possible on the keyboard and essential to the atmosphere and continuity of this kind of music. But it remains a great favourite among guitarists and should rank with *La Frescobalda* as one of the finest examples of the Variation form which sounds on occasion more fitting on the guitar than in its original setting.

Challenge

The second successful Handel offering is the transcription by Segovia of *Eight Aylesford Pieces*, comprising a short Sonata, Fughetta, Minuets I and II, *Sarabande*, Minuets I and II, Gavotte, Air, and Passepied. Altogether these pieces offer something of a challenge to the performer and are certainly not easy; I once heard Segovia make a dreadful mess of five of these pieces before returning to the platform



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BLUEGRASS

by John Atkins

TWELVE MONTHS IN RETROSPECT

to play the rest of the programme impeccably. But the Air is perhaps the most accessible of the *suite* and apart from its *lentamente* tempo, offers no great obstacle to a smooth rendition. But comparison of the other movements with similar dances by De Visée reveal the more closely-textured nature of Handel's keyboard work, or to put it another way, there are just more notes per square foot of composition, and in Handel's case all these notes are vital and significant. The Minuets for example are no toys, and considerable left hand dexterity is advisable if a legato and well-phrased rendering is to be achieved. But these eight compositions are well worth mastering and in the concert hall an audience will feel at home with a familiar name.

Magnificent work

A further Handel composition is the *Chaconne* recently transcribed for two guitars by Gilbert Biberian. This magnificent work requires two very able musicians to bring it off though some of the variations look on paper deceptively easy. Gilbert Biberian has certainly done a great service to the guitar by presenting duos with this challenge and any time spent on understanding and mastering the musical implications of this extended work will be well rewarded.

Next time I hope to look at some of the other eighteenth century masters that guitarists frequently attempt, including Mozart and Haydn.

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THE "B.M.G." Christmas edition seems as good a place as any to sum up the activities in Bluegrass music of the the past twelve months. As far as the U.K. is concerned it would be quite in order to follow that opening sentence with the note "This page has been left blank in accordance with the author's wishes". Strong memories may recall a Jimmy Martin Album on MCA, an early King reissue from the Stanley Brothers on Polydor as the last Bluegrass recordings issued over here—even these may have been in 1969 but we will include them as they are still around at the end of 1970.

Year of transition

America has presented basically the same. We were briefly excited by the emergence of Bill Emerson and Cliff Waldron as a new duo of great potential, and dampened by the news that they had "split up" after recording just three albums. Bill Monroe, to whom we all turn for news in Bluegrass, went through what could only be described as a year of transition with the new Bluegrass Boys adapting more to the vocalising of Bill's son James on an excellent single "I Haven't Seen Mary In Years". In passing, Decca gave us the greatest Bluegrass Gospel Album ever to be released "Voice From On High"—Bill Monroe, and the most refreshing new album "Kentucky Bluegrass"—Bill Monroe, so I guess the man wasn't too transitional after all.

"Flatt out"

Flatt and Scruggs both came out with their first solo albums for Columbia, "Flatt out" being the very prophetic name for Lester's album and Scruggs coming up with something that just defies description. Hopeful news is that both Lester Flatt and Jim and Jesse McReynolds have signed contracts with Capital Records, and we live in anticipation that they may recall how those gentlemen once served up pure, undiluted Bluegrass Music.

Ralph Stanley, although weakened by the departure of guitar man Larry

Sparks, still runs second to Monroe as being the person who turns out the most solid, unspoilt Bluegrass music. Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys also seem to have coined the rather dubious position of house band on the Jalyn Record label, as they are now heard backing many otherwise mediocre artistes on this label. Since Carter's death Ralph has maintained the Stanley Brothers precedent of performing good Bluegrass music and we wish him every success in the years to come.

**BILL MONROE**

Of the small label releases we were particularly taken by the House Brothers on Rural Rhythm; the Toe River Valley Boys on GHP who played good, clean music with passable Bluegrass banjo coming from Clarence Green (who must be the only person around to achieve this sound with the use of a single plectrum). Green is also a first rate guitarist in the Doc Watson mould. Small Album of the year must have been "Bluegrass Holiday" on the Lemco label by Red Allen and the Kentucky Mountain Boys. Red is one of the most dynamic singers around today and his performance never falls short of excellent; here his performance was augmented by J. D. Crowe, former Monroe and Jimmy Martin sidesman on banjo,

Doyle Lawson on mandolin and J. D. Sloane on banjo. This band are still together minus Red Allen and manage to record some solid 'grass from time to time.

Personal highlights

Personal Bluegrass highlights of 1970 came not on record but on privately recorded tapes of the various Bluegrass Festivals, fronted by the "Bluegrass Story" from Watermelon Park, Berryville, U.S.A. Hosted by Carlton Haney, Bill Monroe is joined by just about everyone in Bluegrass Music — Reno, Stanley, Red Smiley, Kenny Baker, Charley Cline, Melvyn and Ray Goins, Sonny and Bob Osborne, Tater Tate, George Shuffler, Mac Wiseman, in fact most of the sidesmen who have, at one time or another, been a part of the Bluegrass Boys. To hear this music is to hear just what Bluegrass is all about and one can but recall Charlton Haney's comparison of Monroe and Bluegrass Music to a fire and hot water. Taken off that fire the hot water can only remain hot for so long, and needs to be put back on the fire once the heat begins to go. How we wish some of those illustrious names could be treated to the warmth of the fire more often.

Incredible guitarist

Instrumentally, which is what readers of this magazine are primarily concerned with, we have lost one of the Bluegrass Banjo greats in Bill Keith (who now plays steel guitar only) and gained an incredible guitarist in Dan Crary of the Bluegrass Alliance. Bill Emerson seemed to be the man-to-watch on banjo and we wait to see if his brilliance with Cliff Waldron can be maintained or even surpassed. Doyle Lawson of the Kentucky Mountain Boys was our man on the mandolin, as he seemed one of the most exciting musicians since Frank Wakefield. Latest recording by this band has Lawson on guitar.

Country Music, as such, is a rapidly dying art, and the "in-sound" today, both here and in the States, is little more than an extension of what one Mr. Presley did some fourteen or fifteen years ago. Bluegrass seems to have little or no place in the big cruel world of success, and in a way it is amazing that a label like Decca still continues to record both Bill Monroe and Jimmy Martin. To achieve this,

both must be commercially viable propositions and we hope that just a few more like them will emerge during 1971.

In lieu of a Christmas Gift from the writer, we are pleased to announce that Bill Clifton is again a resident of the British Isles and we welcome him with

open arms. Bill is available for Folk Clubs again where he will spread the sound of good Bluegrass and Old-time Country Music and can be contacted through yours truly if in difficulty.

Focus on Folk

by Fred Osborne

TRUEST BAND OF FOLKSINGERS

COME gather round, ye folksingers all, both young and old, for as December is ushered in I am persuaded that at this season of the year I am addressing an augmented choir, and not the faithful few who patiently support this column.

Ah, yes, most gentle mistresses and gallant masters, methinks it is not amiss to remind you that all of us, at some point of our life's history, have been members of that truest band of traditional folksingers who, Christmas after Christmas, have chanted (as tunelessly as nature permitted) that brand of folksong that belongs to our most beloved heritage: the Christmas Carol.

But we will not dwell on Christmas past. What of the one which looms before us? I trust to hear, as I have before, of young folk-singers who have so generously given of their time and talents to singing in the streets and entertaining around the various hospitals in their district.

Charitable work

I was particularly interested to read in our northern press of the charitable work done by my very good friends *The Fettle's Folk Group* of Teesside. Recently, Mrs. Rita Angel, secretary of the Stockton Folk Club (the home of *The Fettle's*) presented a full-scale table tennis table, suitably inscribed, to Stockton Hard of Hearing Club, with money raised by the folk club. Mr. Etty, Welfare Officer for Teesside, pointed out that this was only one of many charitable deeds done by *The Fettle's*.

The Fettle's won the *All-England Champions* folk title in open competition at Beaulieu a couple of years ago. Do you wonder that Mr.

and Mrs. Folk-Focusser feel unduly honoured at being made Honorary Life Members of this fine and magnificent Folk Club, for services rendered to this club?

Recently I was delighted to receive a letter from Ken and Billie Ford, of Bridgend, thanking me for the mention I made of their cabaret bookings in Jersey, in my October article. They are at present doing Cabaret in South Wales Clubs, and are already re-booked again for next summer season in Jersey.

Nifty needle

Ken gives me quite an autobiographical story of the way in which he and his charming wife met and "teamed up".

Another kind reader, Brian Kell of Gateshead, keeps me posted and informs me that the clubs in his area were never more flourishing than at present. As well as being a singer himself, Brian has now joined a Country Dance Team featuring *Rapper Dances*. His young wife plays the Appalachian dulcimer, and plies a nifty needle in making the special breeches worn by Brian for these colourful old folk dances.

Well, finally, a MOST HAPPY CHRISTMAS to our Editor, his writers and to all you good and faithful readers who continue to rally round this grand old magazine. Good Cheer!

"B.M.G." CONTRIBUTORS

are usually pleased to hear from readers with comments on their articles and suggestions for future articles. If your letter requires an answer, please be sure to enclose a self-addressed and stamped envelope.

THE TENOR PATROL

by Sam Warwick

WHY PLAY THE BANJO?

“WHY on earth does anybody want to play the banjo in this day and age?” he said. And for that he won't be invited again. I am just as touchy and testy as any other Scorpio is supposed to be. You can't live with them and you can't live without them.

A school caretaker who was also a local councillor called at my house years ago and found me playing the banjo in the garden.

I played something specially for him, and his only observation was: “What good has *that* done you?”. I couldn't think of an answer that he would understand as he was also a good chapel man. Since then I have thought up a one word answer which does not rhyme with capers and I have this word read for the next fool remark.

Why does anybody want to play the tuba or the bassoon for that matter? I am not asking—I know.

At a table in a crowded restaurant I was thrown up against two strangers and in the course of conversation one turned out to be a fanatical wood carver, though a company director, the other lived and dreamed about steam engines, though he worked for the Electricity Board. So we parted never to meet again; three oddities—or some would think.

To rant about the reasons for people having unusual interests would take up more space than there is here, but may I please mention only four of the musical reasons which come to mind.

1. Pure love of music.
2. An addiction to the sounds a particular instrument makes.
3. The trend, a desire to be in the fashion. In or with it.
4. Money—the making of. By itself or as a plus.

Where do you slot in? The minstrel era banjoists of the Victorian age might come, to a certain extent, under 3. Even Queen Victoria herself fell for it and had lessons when she was quite an old lady. There is a lot of No. 3 in the pop group banjo of today. The Bluegrass banjo is obviously a No. 2 and I could fall for that anytime.

The dance band banjo men of the 'twenties and 'thirties fall largely but not entirely under No. 4 I think. In spite of the fact that I saw what music goes on at a Grammar School when I played the banjo there in the show *The Boy Friend* recently I cannot help feeling that there is less of No. 1 now than ever before. Perhaps it is the extermination of the piano which is swaying me and maybe unfairly. When I was a little boy at South Shields and my father's pay was less than 25s. a week my mother bought a new piano for £24—all for me. A few months ago the

South Shields General Hospital advertised for a piano and had 28 given to them free of charge. I saw the Hospital Secretary as I wanted one for the Red Cross. He said “Take your pick of the 27 left and in fact you will do us a favour if you take them all.”

There is a lot of music in a piano and there is a lot in the tenor banjo too but it does seem odd that an advertiser offers £200 for a second hand Tenor-banjo and I am offered 27 pianos free of charge.

I wonder how much “music” really comes into all this. A piano in a room makes the place look old-fashioned and interferes with the proper viewing of the coloured television.

“And she would not practice anyway”.

If a person spends £200 on a second hand tenor-banjo and is not going to make money out of it—well, I dare not say it—but I will eat my hat. And still I don't know why people take up the B flat Bombardon or the Tympani but if the reason is not amongst those four I mentioned what other reasons are there?

Is this someone else's

“B.M.G.” you're reading?

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TEARING OFF A STRIP

by CLUBMAN

AS readers may remember from my earlier series, my articles are mostly about actual performances around the clubs and pubs and social events, with a view to giving leads to would-be artists.

One of the most important things I have mentioned before is the subject of confirmation of bookings. It is most important to confirm any booking to the club concerned in writing as soon as possible. For once, I fell into the error of not following my own advice recently—I received a phone call from the entertainments secretary of a club to inform me that as he had not received a letter of confirmation, he had cancelled by booking and substituted another artist. The mere fact that he had done this rather unethically without checking with me first to see whether I had in fact written was apparently of no importance to him whatsoever.

Be warned!

So be warned—if you are lucky enough to be offered a paid engagement, don't forget to confirm your acceptance in writing, quickly, and preferably recorded delivery.

A few weeks ago, I went, unpaid, to be a guest artist at another venue, where the compère himself played both an Hawaiian guitar and an ordinary guitar, both plugged into the house amplifier.

He announced me twice whilst I was plugging in my own set, microphone and guitar. To my horror, not only would my mike not emit a sound, but neither would my guitar. Having formed the opinion that the amplifier was at fault, I tried plugging both into the house amplifier. Still no result, but the compère was still hopefully telling the audience that the great guest artiste would be performing at any moment.

Finally I suggested he would perhaps be kind enough to let me use his guitar, which was undoubtedly working. "Certainly", he replied "If you can play a left-handed guitar". Collapse of star guest artist!

Next day I saved myself the expense of a test-and-repair job by the simple process of switching round spare valves with the old ones until I had eliminated

the faulty one. This is, of course, one difficulty you cannot overcome on the spot, like you can with spare strings and plectrums; but at least you can save yourself money the next day as explained. The valves in your amplifier are all numbered, and it is quite easy to obtain spares of each type.

In trouble

However, on this particular occasion, I was really in trouble, because an internal connection had "gone" on my guitar as well.

Whilst this was being repaired elsewhere, I borrowed a guitar from a friend. I had fun with this during a performance when it constantly went out of tune, and I only then discovered that he had tuned the strings by turning the machine heads one way to raise the tone of some strings, and the other way to raise others. You can imagine the confused state I got into trying to work this out quickly and retune whilst actually playing!

Personally, I always tighten or raise the string by turning the machine head to the left—is this the standard way of tuning up, I wonder?

Stand in

Lately somebody asked me to stand in as an emergency measure because the pianist was not available, and in addition to playing my own numbers, this meant accompanying all and sundry, including members of the audience who volunteered to sing.

I can recommend this kind of job to any guitarist who wants to increase rapidly his ability and repertoire. Amongst others, I tried to please one of

the moderns who wanted a tune played in E major. This was done, but after a fierce exchange of remarks about whether I was playing in E or not, he airily waved me off and played the thing himself. It then became obvious he was used to the sound of open strings in the lower register, and my "closed" E major higher up the finger-board was not getting through to his ear.

One of the funnier turns was an Indian or Pakistani gentleman who sang with his shirt hanging out at front and back. When a mickey-taking Irishman in the crowd called out "Come on Paddy", the said gentleman astonished us all by singing an Irish rebel song word-perfect!

My other eye-opening experience was playing at a pub where they have strip-tease. The first night my own performance (strange although it seemed to me) went like a bomb. The second night, however, they ignored my playing and did not care for the charms of the stripper. One young man went so far as to say he could show more. In my frustration over the whole proceedings I nearly tore them all off a strip, and was probably the only performer there in danger of breaking a G string.

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B. M. G. Dec. 1970

Soleares

Guitar

Arr. by JAMES YOHAI

rasg.

The musical score for "Soleares" is written for guitar in 2/4 time. It begins with a *rasg.* (rasgueado) instruction. The first staff contains a series of upward arrows indicating rasgueado strokes, followed by a triplet of eighth notes (1, 8, 1) and a single eighth note (1). The second staff continues with a series of eighth notes, some beamed in pairs. The third staff features a B1 repeat section, followed by a measure with notes *a*, *i*, and *m*, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth staff continues with a series of eighth notes, some beamed in pairs. The fifth staff features a series of eighth notes, some beamed in pairs. The sixth staff continues with a series of eighth notes, some beamed in pairs. The seventh staff features a series of eighth notes, some beamed in pairs. The eighth staff continues with a series of eighth notes, some beamed in pairs. The ninth staff features a B1 repeat section, followed by a measure with notes *a*, *m*, and *i*, and then a triplet of eighth notes. The tenth staff continues with a series of eighth notes, some beamed in pairs. The eleventh staff features a series of eighth notes, some beamed in pairs, and ends with a *Fine* marking.

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B. M. G. Dec. 1970

The Beachboys Waltz

Hawaiian Guitar Solo

A 7th Tuning

Tune
Guitar



J. P. FOWLER

INTRO.

Valse moderato



F // C7 // F // F // F // Bb // F //

F // C7 // F // F // Bb // Bb // F // Bb // C7 //

F // F7 // Bb // F // F // Bb // C7 // C7 // F // F // Bb //

Bb // Bb // F // F // Bb // C7 // C7 // F // F //

N. B. For the A7th tuning the 6th string should be replaced with a 3rd string.

Hawaiian Rainbow

Hawaiian Guitar Solo

High Bass Tuning

Written by DENNIS CLARK
Arranged by RAY SHEPARD

Slowly with feeling



F F G7 G7 C7 C7 F F

F F G7 G7 C7 C7 F Gliss. G7 C7

F Gm Fdim Am Am Dm Dm Gm Am F F+

F F G7 G7 C7 C7 F F Fine

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B. M. G. Dec. 1970

La Papillon

Edited by
GEORGE E. MORRIS

Banjo Solo

PARKE HUNTER

Tempo di Gavotte

8P 6P 6P 5PB 45P
f + ... rall. e dim. mf cresc.
6P 12P 4P 3P
7P 5PB 7PB 7P
mf sf f
mf f
8P 6P 6P 5PB 5P 6P 12B 4P
mf cresc.
4P 3P 2PB 7P
f sf
5PB 10PB 5P 7PB 5P 5P
mf dolce mf cresc.
11PBP 5PB
f
12P 10PB 13P 6P 4P
cresc. sf ... + ... f rall. e dim.
8P 6P 45P 6P 12B 4P 3P
mf cresc.
f 7P 5PB 2PB 4P 3P
f sf Fine

Minstrel Medley

Tenor-Banjo Solo

B. M. G. Dec. 1970

Arr. by PHIL SKINNER

INTRO.

Lively

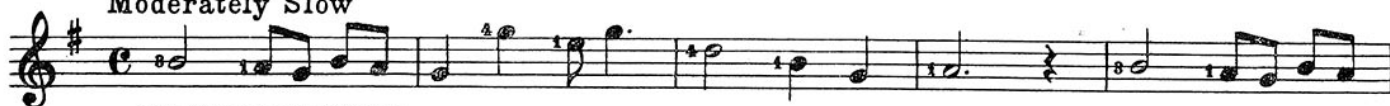
EMILE GRIMSHAW

The musical score is written for a Tenor-Banjo Solo in 2/4 time. It consists of several staves of music with various annotations. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. It starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes fingerings (1-4) and a 'V' mark. The second staff continues the melody, featuring a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a section marked with a star and the text "DE OLE BANJO". The third staff shows a first and second ending bracket. The fourth staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The fifth staff is marked "Slower" and begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The sixth staff is titled "CAMPTOWN RACES" and "Lively", starting with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic with a ritardando (*rit.*) marking. The seventh and eighth staves continue the "Camptown Races" section with various fingerings and dynamics.

*"De Ole Banjo" (Scott-Gatty) is included by permission of Messrs. Boosey & Co Ltd., owners of the Copyright.

"OLD FOLKS AT HOME"

Moderately Slow



mp Tremolo 3rd String



mf Tremolo



mp 3rd String

rit.

"OH! DEM GOLDEN SLIPPERS"

Lively



ff



"MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME"

With expression



mp Tremolo



p

cres -



- cen - do *ff* *p*

crescendo

8va

B. M. G. Dec. 1970

Fast and Furious

Banjo Solo

JOHN DENNETT

Fast

mf Melody notes well accented

5PB

8P 12P

1 2

Fine 8P 7P 8P 4PB 5PB

2P 4B 2P 2P 2B

7B 5BP 4B 8P 16P 7P 2

mf 5BP

8P 12P

1 2

5B 4B 5B 6P 5P

6P 5B 4B 5B 4B

mp *f* *mf*

5B 3B 2B 3B 1 2

D. S. $\text{\$}$ al Fine

B.M.G. Dec. 1970

Earlham Street Parade

Quick march tempo

Mandolin Solo

A. E. SHEPPARD

The musical score is written for a mandolin solo in G major, 2/4 time. It begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Quick march tempo'. The score consists of 12 staves of music. The first staff starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 2/4 time signature. The first measure is marked with a 'V' and a 'S' symbol, and the second measure is marked with a 'V' and a 'V' symbol. The first staff ends with a measure marked 'mf'. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff continues the melody. The fourth staff begins with a measure marked 'to Coda' and a 'C' symbol. The fourth staff continues with a measure marked 'f' and a measure marked 'mf'. The fifth staff continues the melody. The sixth staff begins with a measure marked '1' and a measure marked '2'. The sixth staff continues the melody. The seventh staff continues the melody. The eighth staff continues the melody. The ninth staff continues the melody. The tenth staff continues the melody. The eleventh staff begins with a measure marked 'TRIO' and a 'p-f' dynamic. The eleventh staff continues the melody. The twelfth staff begins with a measure marked '1' and a measure marked '2'. The twelfth staff continues with a measure marked 'CODA' and a 'C' symbol, and a measure marked 'ff'. The twelfth staff ends with a measure marked 'D.C. al %, then Coda'.

mf

to Coda

f

mf

1 *2*

1 *2*

TRIO

p-f

1 *2*

CODA

ff

D.C. al %, then Coda

B. M. G. Dec. 1970

Black Roses

Composed and arranged for
guitar by A. J. WOODRUFFE

Hold chords where suitable.

Moderato

9P Em9 13 12P Har. 3P G#7 5P C#dim.b9 5P A7

Em7 7P 3P D#7 G#7 F#m11addb9

2P 7P F#m(m6) G13b9Bdim Em Em6 mp

7P 5P 2P Em D#7 2P F#7+5 F#7 Bm G#7 add9 F#7 2P 8P Gliss. 3P F#7b9 +5

A13 add9 A7+5 b9 5P E9 1P Gliss. 3P 2P +5

Dmaj7 Har. Em7 12P Har. 5P F#7 maj9 2P

2P F#7b9+5 6P A13b9 5P F#7b9+5 bassa Gm6 4P Dmaj7b9 open

rit. poco a poco A7b9 D#7 2P

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RECORD RETROSPECT - 1970

by "Discus"

HAVING not found the time to make my regular reviews during 1970, the best I can do is to resolve to do better in 1971 — and to give a summary of the best the year has brought.

My No. 1 choice for the year is Alirio Diaz (**HMV HQS 1175**) in sparkling form, playing Spanish and Latin-American guitar music with great poise, vivacity, flawless taste, and a technique that is so great that it is concealed beneath the artistry of the playing. *Six Venezuelan Waltzes* by Lauro show how debilitated is the spirit of so many others who wear out the most popular one or two; no one else plays them with such relish and grace.

Where others pick and choose either the pops or the least difficult, Turibio Santos has recorded the whole 12 Studies of Villa-Lobos (**World Record Club ST 1007**); this is as the composer intended them to be played—in order and in their entirety. One or two are a little lacking in spirit but the overall achievement is considerable and the last three, which are monstrously difficult, offer a challenge that Santos meets with elan. Though short of perfection in interpretation, tone, and recording quality, this is an important and valuable aural document.

Christopher Parkening, the young American, is unique in having a publicity machine that would do credit to a commercial company; this has been supported by good reports from many informed people. At last he has made his English debut on record (**HMV HQS 1218**) and he plays a programme that contains no novelty. It is all well-tried and trusted stuff, ranging from Spanishry to the Bach *Chaconne*, all delivered with great assurance and a tone that evidences his regard for Segovia. The *Chaconne* is exceptionally well done. Nevertheless, because it is all familiar material, it is not possible to judge Parkening as an interpreter; so much can be learned by a good intelligence from existing recordings. Though good, his tone suggests that he is not a strong player and that the microphone is not far removed.

Barbara Polasek has played only once in England (her concert was reviewed in "B.M.G." by John Duarte

some years ago) and she is no self-publicist — domestic pressures have caused her to leave her concert career undeveloped internationally. Her record debut (**RCA Victor VICS 1038**) has Bach's *C-minor (A-minor for guitar) Lute Suite*, given with studied perfection, a firm and clear reading but still a feminine one, suffering from lack of tonal variety—her tone is beautiful but she varies it but little. On the other side she is joined by her ex-husband Jan, a cellist, in Sonatas by Vivaldi and Boccherini. These are memorable in balance and for the marvellous singing tone of the cello, serving a highly sensitive musical mind. One of the records of the year without doubt.

The technical miracle of the year (if not the decade) is John Williams' record of Spanish music (**CBS 72860**), ranging from a Sonata by Matteo Albeniz to modern Spanish music of the predictable kind — except for a splendid transcription of the *Valses Poeticos* of Granados. Never has there been such a display of pyrotechnics combined with sheer power and accuracy; one can imagine him running to the dictionary in search of a definition for "difficulty". The music is shaped with great intelligence and taste but little sign of affection. This impression is not alleviated by the hardest guitar sound on record; any but the most expensive equipment will translate the fortissimo passages into a mixture of guitar and percussion. As an exhibition of sheer ability this record must find a place in every collection. If only it had a heart to match...

Another fine technician with a penchant to emotional coolness is Narciso Yepes. He has recorded the Rodrigo *Concerto and Fantasia* (**DGG 139404**), both recorded more than once by others but never on the same record. To increase the multiplication, this is Yepes' third recording of the *Concerto*; this third one does not quite match the earlier ones for atmosphere (and in their day these were the best of all recordings of this much-played work) despite the technical mastery. He does some curious things with the *Fantasia* (of which Segovia's currently withdrawn recording was the touchstone) and his playing of the final cadenza takes the breath away, but it is all very cerebral and emotionally unengaged.

The mandolin has had a good year, for a change. Instead of additions to the Neapolitan popular repertoire, there have been recordings of the most important of its serious works. Jacob Thomas placed all four of Beethoven's works for mandolin and harpsichord on one record (**Oryx EXP 40**) together with a concerto, with orchestra, by the seventeenth century composer Hasse (German-born but Italian-influenced) and a *Suite Argentine* by Luis Giannone in which both mandoline and orchestra have some jolly times together. Thomas plays very musically and with a fair degree of security. Even more rewarding, three mandoline concerti by Vivaldi may be found, plus an unusual violin concerto by the same composer, on another single record (**World Record Club ST 7070**), beautifully played and recorded. One concerto plays off the mandolines against pairs of other unusual instruments in one of the most fascinating works of the period. This is not only a record of quality, it is also eminently listenable by even the most innocent middlebrow.

Still in the realm of the plucked string without frets is Nicanor Zabaleta's record (**Archive 198458**) of early Spanish harp music. Apart from the high standard of the performance it is interesting in presenting the harp music of composers such as Cabezon and Mudarra. The earliest composers regarded much of their music as equally playable on either the harp or the vihuela; as time passed the evolution of a more idiomatic style of writing for the harp becomes more evident.

Little remains in the mind in the jazz-to-light pastures. Kenny Burrell plays some fine, blues-y and moody music in *Asphalt Canyon Suite* (and other tracks) with the sort of tone one used to admire in the pre-group days. Good jazz-guitar playing is becoming thin on the ground, let's cherish what there is left. Finally let us support "home industry" with a clear conscience. Bristolian, Frank Evans has made a first-class album (**77 Records 77SEU 12/37**), supported by bass and drums in most of the purely jazz items (one is solo) and with a string quartet added for his own *Mark Twain Suite*. This last he plays on the classic guitar, being properly proficient on that instrument, with taste if not always with endearing tone; the music is nicely evocative of the cosy ambience of the America of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. A minor but notable achievement. The jazz is a pastiche of

Montgomery, Farlow, Burrell and others, with a strong Wes-ward bias, the real Frank Evans seldom standing up to be recognised. He has as highly developed technique as anyone in this country (and might well feel at home on the other side of the Drink) but his phrases do not always gel into a really continuous line and their sequential unfolding is sometimes too predictable. How nice though to hear something creative from an English guitarist in this American-dominated patch.

1970 has not been the guitar's best year on record; let's hope for a better 1971.

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MUSICAL TERMS — SOME DEFINITIONS

Contributed by John W. Duarte

Al loco—by rail.
Animando—undiscriminating spinster solo.
Augmented interval—the pub is some distance from the hall.
Castrato—our man in Havana.
Con calore—cook with gas.
Con sord—*En garde!*
Corno di caccia—painful and contagious condition of the toe.
Counterpoint—necessary follow-up to *con sord* (q.v.).
Diatonic—nasty medicine.
Double-reed instrument—bifocal glasses.
Falsetto—artificial teeth.
Forte—a snack bar.
Fugue—smoky.
Gusto—windy.
Highland fling—tossing the caber.
Holborne—where Piccadilly and Central lines cross.
Hymn—a male chorister.
Legato—on foot.
Lento—fast.
Ma non tanto—mother, not auntie.
Mean temperament—stinginess.
Metronome—spirit of the French underground.
M.f.—*pizzicato* (German: *mit Finger*).
Morendo—make it last a bit longer.
Oboi—expression of enthusiasm for double-reed instruments (q.v.).
Paso doble—give me a large Scotch.
Pavane—dad's conceited.

Pedal point—kerbside salesman's pitch.
Piano—a shipping line.
Plagal—nightclub hostess.
Plainsong—from "First Steppes in Russian Folk-music".
Pop music—market *Lieder*.
Relative major and minor—father and son.
Resolution—determination to play no more nasty chords after January 1.
Ritendo—don't make the last bit up.
Rondo alla Turca—plump as a turkey.
Rubato—a means of correcting mistakes.
Serial composition—music that leaves the listener wondering what comes next.
Sfoggiando—you can't see an arm's length in front of you.
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Slur—aspersion cast on the way some music is performed.
Sonata—before long.
Sotto voce—drunken singing, definite connection with *basso continuo*, bars, and Taverner).
Unprepared suspension—lynching (possible connection with *tre corde*).
With acknowledgment to "Music in Education" in which these terms originally appeared some time ago.

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BEETHOVEN AND THE MANDOLIN*by J. B. Nolan*

MOST mandolinists know that Beethoven composed for their instrument, but how many have heard it played or been curious enough to obtain and study it for themselves? Beethoven wrote at least four pieces for mandolin and cembalo—the latter instrument, a fore-runner of the present-day piano. They are all fairly short pieces, with the exception of the *Andante con Variazioni* which consists of theme, six variations and coda. While these pieces do not scale the heights of his duos for violin and piano, they still are pieces of high musical standard which can be played in any company if the player has the necessary skill. It is gratifying that this Titan amongst composers has recognised and honoured our chosen instrument.

For anybody who wishes to sample this music, recordings by well-known virtuosi are available. Saga (Pan 6200) contains all four pieces played by Hugo D'Alton. Giuseppe Anedda includes the Beethoven *C major Allegro* in his L.P. of pieces by Bach (The Chaconne), Lully, Calace, etc. The latest disc which includes all four of the Beethoven pieces has been done by the South American mandolinist Jacob Thomas, backed by The Heidelberg Chamber Orchestra (Oryx Expo 40—14s. 6d.).

I have just read a review of this record by "J.D." in the October issue of "Records & Recordings". My guess is that the initials are those of that well-known savant of the guitar, John Duarte. While "J.D." does not express any overwhelming enthusiasm for the mandolin he ends as follows:—"Jacob Thomas plays with great accomplishment, excellent tone and fine musicianship. A record for the mandolin lover and Beethoven collector... something unusual and civilised to play in his lighter moments".

Musically the most appealing piece is the *Adagio ma non troppo*. In the Cranz Edition, Ranieri marked the tempo Allegretto, which I personally prefer, as it gives the piece the character of a miniature mandolin concerto backed with an orchestral type piano part. Most pianists are immediately attracted to it.

"J.D." in the review said that this

piece "was unforgettable in the repertoire of the Presti-Lagoya duo" and "that the piece would work beautifully with 'cello and piano". This intrigued me, as a beautiful interpretation of it recorded by Raffaele and Maria Calace on Polydor, playing lute-mandolin and mandolin, is equally memorable to me.

A lovely orchestral version of it by "The Cecilia Mandolin Players" is presently available on an L.P. which also includes two Mozart songs with mandolin obbligato, together with other chamber music items. The tenor Paul Conrad gives a delightful rendering of the songs. The record is Philips PHS 900-049.

The *Sonatina in C minor* is a restful little number in five short movements which lends itself to the legato phrases to use of the tremolo, with

(Continued overleaf)

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discreet use of portamento for expression.

The *Allegro in C Major* is a gem for the mandolin. Played on a good instrument by someone who is up to the work it shows off the bell-like tone of the mandolin to perfection. However, there is some awkward left-hand fingering and it requires deft use of the plectrum to sustain the fine effect of the regular plectrum movement. This is the piece, I believe, which resulted in Hugo D'Alton being summoned to a command performance by a certain royal personage.

The *Andante con Variazioni* is a fairly long piece and would require a

separate article to expatiate on its merits.

For any mandolinist who has a fair technique and a leaning towards classical music it could be a rewarding experience to study these four pieces well enough to play them with either a pianist or a guitarist. I have just seen an arrangement of three of these pieces in one album by the German guitarist, Siegfried Behrend. He has introduced an interesting innovation, by adding a guitar adaption of the piano part, under the piano part. I am unable to comment, however, on the difficulty or otherwise of the guitar arrangements.

TENOR BANJO TONE

by P. M. Price

THE subject of tone and tone production on the tenor (and plectrum) banjo is always cropping up in articles in "B.M.G.", and quite often the various makes of banjos are compared tonally; some preferring one make, others another; some stand by English banjos, some by American.

Actually I have seen and heard most of the famous makes over the years, and now I am of the opinion that the tonal quality of all well-made banjos does not vary a lot. I vow that if, for instance, Harry Reser had played his famous solos on various makes of banjos (he probably did), few would notice the difference between a "Gibson", "Vega", "Paramount", "Bacon & Day" or a "Paragon".

All these are constructed basically the same. A thick, hard wood 11 inch hoop, a perfectly aligned arm and a carved hard wood resonator. Some incorporated a tone ring which sharpened the tone and made for a tighter vellum.

The price difference was caused by the ornamentation — hand carving, heavy and ornate inlays and gold plating etc. — none of which affects the tone at all. Nearly all makers constructed all their models basically the same so, tonally, there is very little difference between them. So, unless you are in show business, dear reader, do not pay the earth for "super this and that", you will not be buying the tone. To my mind there are four things affecting tone: —

1. The *player himself*. His attack,

technique and confidence are responsible for 75 per cent of the tonal quality.

2. *The vellum*. This *MUST* be of top quality and of even thickness and it must be kept drum tight; a slack vellum makes good tone impossible. I think it was Ken Harvey who put an electric bulb under the vellum an hour or so before his act in order to ensure a perfectly rigid sounding board. (He used *two* bulbs! — Ed.).
3. *The bridge*. A light, slim bridge will produce a very bright, sharp tone. A heavier one will produce a solid mellow tone more effective in chord work. It is said that Harry Reser sand-papered his bridge to almost razor thinness for his recording work; which may account for that wonderful bright tone he produced. Height is also important; a $\frac{5}{8}$ inch bridge will produce a more staccato tone than the normal $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Personally, I think $\frac{5}{8}$ inch suits the tenor best.
4. *The plectrum*. A thick completely rigid plectrum, as used for the guitar, tends to produce a solid, heavy tone and a duller tremolo. A more flexible one, as used for mandolin, will produce a lighter, brighter tone and is better for rapid single-string playing; but avoid the very thin pliable type, for this will only produce a "tinny" tone; whatever type is used, the material *MUST* be tortoiseshell.

All these, then, are the main factors in tone production on the banjo. But again I say, the most important fac-

tor is *YOURSELF!*

Knowing banjoists, I know they will go for the elaborate-looking instruments and I cannot say that I blame them; for the old pre-war banjos were certainly "Things of beauty and a joy forever" but, if you buy *any* model of a reliable make, the tone will be there, it is up to you to bring it out!

One final remark; the tone of *ANY* banjo is only brought out when the instrument is played strongly and confidently. When playing at home this is often impossible, except at the risk of irate neighbours. So whenever possible, join a club, where you can enjoy the company of other banjoists and really let your instrument "shout". There you will rapidly learn the meaning of banjo tone!

What an Afternoon!

BROWSING through some old copies of "Notes and Queries" recently, I came across an old song from a farce called, wait for it — "Cryptoconchoidsyphonostomata", which I believe was the name of a patent medicine. The song entitled "What an Afternoon" was sung by Charles Collette who accompanied himself on the banjo. The farce was put on at the Globe Theatre in 1875-78. The writer in "Notes and Queries" declared that apart from Collette no one else in the show was of any account. I wonder if by any chance anyone has the music of this old song? And what of Charles Collette? For those who are fond of nonsense songs, I give the lyric, or what I have of it:

I'll tell you a tale of my uncle Pete;
He buttoned his eyebrows round his feet;
Put his feet in hot water to keep them dry;
And he went to play on a blue tail fly;
He polished his socks with pumpkin squash;
And always sent his teeth to the wash;
He dined as a rule off a camomile pill;
On a three pair back at Haverstock Hill;
The whites of his eyes were pink and brown;
And he put his shirt on upside down;
What an afternoon!

GLYN HUGHES

THE PENTANGLE

by R. J. Bater



ON the evening of Saturday, October 17, I settled down in the somewhat cramped seating of Bristol's Colston Hall in expectation of two hours or so of pure delight. I was to have the privilege of hearing the Pentangle.

But at the projected starting time, the lights did not dim, although there was hardly a seat left to be filled. Fifteen minutes later, still, nothing had happened. Then, a rather bewildered individual sauntered almost reluctantly on-stage and, as if expecting a shower of missiles to descend upon him at any moment, announced in his broad Cockney, tinged with not a little emotion, that the concert had been cancelled.

Bomb

It was as if a bomb had fallen outside. Stunned for a moment, the audience gaped incredulously at the solitary figure at the microphone. Then disbelief turned to outrage; a few angry individuals heckled the courageous envoy, then, a few minutes later, when the whole group had confirmed the worst, the audience of about 2,000 people, long and short hair, young and middle-aged alike, filed indignantly from the hall.

I quote this little episode to illustrate the esteem in which this group of musicians is held. Far from being refused the opportunity to reinforce their neo-romantic image of the group, as is often the case with pop performances, the audience was bitter at being denied the unique musical experience offered by the Pentangle. Unique because their music is compounded with exquisite taste from the three salient non-classical traditions of the Western world—folk, jazz and blues.

Line-up

The Pentangle consists of John Renbourn and Bert Jansch (acoustic guitars), Danny Thompson (double bass), Terry Cox (drums, glockenspiel and dulcitone) and Jacqui McShee (lead vocals). John, Bert and Jacqui served their apprenticeships in folk clubs, while Danny and Terry started

in jazz bands. It is not difficult to see, therefore, how the eclectic music of the Pentangle has come about.

Solo artists

All five retain their respective capacities as solo artists outside the activities of the group, and as such, Danny and Terry do much "session" work in the recording studios, Bert and John appear as folk/blues artists and Jacqui is a traditional folk singer with a voice so clear as to put many a club performer to shame. In addition, John has had a penchant for mediaeval music for some time and, in fact, has just had an album of such material released. He features one or two sixteenth century dance tunes such as Byrd's pavan "The Earle of Salisbury" in Pentangle's act.

But despite the five individual talents which go to make up the group, the ensemble sound is a single whole, at whose centre there are the guitars of John Renbourn and Bert Jansch.

John is the lead guitarist. In this capacity, he contributes sensitive melodic comments on the folk melody of Jacqui's vocals and soaring, totally capricious strings of melody, in a true jazz vein during the instrumental interludes of their songs. His solos are replete with the tonal inflections of the blues; notes bend up, around and down into the melodic stream and it flows along as if possessed. Bert and the other two instrumentalists meanwhile, are providing a sturdy, yet flexible platform of harmony and rhythm for John's sublime counterpoint to the vocal line. This platform is usually kept to a simple ostinato figure so as not to intrude upon the more important vocal and lead guitar parts. This use of what are essentially jazz riffs is characteristic of their music, though they by no means use it exclusively.

Traditional

Most of their material is either traditional British folk song, or blues, or modern on a traditional model. On the basis of one of these, they build an elaborate network of melody and rhythm. A pure jazz number penned by Charlie Mingus and played by Bert and John may be followed by "Turn

Your Money Green", a blues; this may be succeeded by the traditional English folk song "Bruton Town" and then "Hunting Song", written by the group. This is a beautiful mosaic of quasi-traditional balladry, driven along at a trotting pace by Bert, Danny and Terry and illuminated by Jacqui's dulcet voice and John's tinkling paraphrase. "Market Song" is another of the group's songs and employs 7/4, 11/4, and 4/4 timing to good effect. In the traditional "House Carpenter", the combinations of instruments include the unlikely one of sitar and banjo.

Intricacies

But one could go on forever re-counting the intricacies of the Pentangle. What matters is that they are bringing the best of three great musical traditions to a wide audience. Their expert exploitation and fusion of these well-proven musical idioms is a welcome respite to those inured to 100 decibels or more and a delightful initiation for those whose taste is normally more reserved. This is borne out by the use of their "Light Flight" as theme tune for the T.V. series "Take Three Girls" and by their scoring of the music for the forthcoming Ava Gardner film "Tam Lin", of which an LP will be released with the film. This will show, once again, that the Pentangle is an oasis in a desert of mediocrity; no mirage, but a valid contribution to our musical tradition. N.B. You may be wondering why the Pentangle's concert was cancelled. The sad fact is that their guitars were stolen at the previous Liverpool venue. Not discovering this until just before the show, and not wanting to risk a sub-standard performance on unadjusted borrowed instruments, they chose to brave the remonstrations of the biggest audience they had ever drawn in Bristol. Somewhere in England there is a thief with two irreplaceable guitars. Look out for the wretch. There is a £100 reward for the return of either guitar.

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JOHN EDWARDS — GUITAR RECITAL

The guitar is apt to generate such enthusiasm among its devotees that many venture on to the concert platform without having put in the years of preparation and intensive study considered essential for the training of a violinist or pianist. The resulting performances are often unstylish and shift attention from the music to the instrument and its technical difficulties.

It was therefore a refreshing change when John Edwards, at his first public recital, given for the Oxford Guitar Society in October, presented himself as an already mature musician with the technique of a virtuoso. Now twenty-five, he has been studying the guitar seriously for eight years, and was a teacher at the Spanish Guitar Centre, Bristol, before moving to Oxford in 1969.

John Edwards does not lack enthusiasm, but believes in applying the same critical standards to the guitar as to other instruments. This fact was evident in his choice of programme, which avoided the usual "lollipops", concentrating instead on music always interesting, but sometimes as unfamiliar to the guitarists in the audience as to the more impartial laymen.

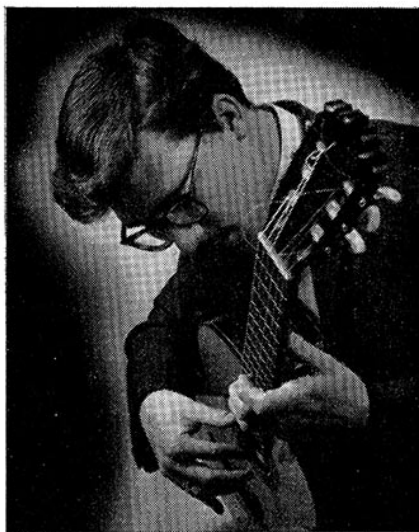
For the *aficionados*, the main point of interest was the first performance in this country of *Sechs Musiken* by Hans Erich Apostel. Each of these six pieces is developed from a purely musical idea (the sound of the note E, a sequence of six-note chords, a tone row), and all programmatic associations are avoided. The results are occasionally austere, appealing more to the intellect than the ear, but there are some exciting moments, and some of real beauty. A work of this kind naturally raises special problems for the performer: having first overcome the technical difficulties posed by this complex writing, he must interpret the music without allowing his own personality to colour it too much. John Edwards rose to the occasion, playing with commitment and complete technical assurance, but slightly understating the case, letting the music speak for itself.

This subtle understatement is a characteristic of all his playing. Undemonstrative, with economical hand movements, he offers no visual entertainment, always focusing the attention on the music. He is a strong player, often using *apoyando* in the treble and bass simultaneously, and makes full use of the tonal and dynamic resources of his Rubio guitar.

In the first half, works by Roncalli, Byrde and Philips, including the familiar *Earle of Salisbury Pavane* by William Byrde and the haunting *Chromatic Pavan* by Peter Philips, were played with taste and awareness of the style of each period. The Sonata No. 1, Op. 6, by Molino was a delight. John Edwards obviously enjoyed presenting this comparative rarity, and disposed of its virtuosic passages with good-humoured perfection.

His meticulous attention to detail was evident in Bach's First 'Cello Suite, which opened the second half. The music gained vitality through the rhythmic drive of the playing, which was also apparent in the final item, three Studies by Villa-Lobos (Nos. 8, 5 and 11). By this time John Edwards was

fully confident, and his performance of these beautiful pieces was a rare musical experience.



JOHN EDWARDS

For his encore, he finally descended to banality with *Variations on Au Clair de la Lune*, by Carcassi. Keeping the same poker face as the famous tune was subjected to more and more grotesque distortions, he gave the audience a special bonus.

After this initial success, John Edwards would like to give more recitals, and we at the Oxford Guitar Society wish him the best of luck.

JOHN TAYLOR.

Correspondence

... in which our
readers air their views

Dear Sir—I note with approval the withdrawal of Mr. Mairants from a correspondence he would have been prudent not to have initiated; he has of course not answered any of my specific questions.

Mr. Peel displays such a degree of ignorance and/or bias in relation to so many of the matters he raises that I lack the time and you the space to deal with them. His championing of Sainz de la Maza and Narciso Yepes will, if my experience is any guide, find little support elsewhere, except, by strange coincidence, from Mr. Mairants. He is as entitled to his opinion as others are to reject it. Sainz de la Maza is an excellent musician and an attractive composer; as a teacher he is of the highest order but, unfortunately, his concert-giving is not on a par with his other activities. Before trying to hit me over the head with it, Mr. Peel should enquire more deeply into the matter of the dedication of Rodrigo's *Aranjuez*. If he prefers the romantic type of review, he is welcome to it, though this stamps him as unregarding of the importance to the guitar of strict criticism and, perhaps, ignorant of the course and content of severe musical criticism during the last two centuries. On a poetic basis, the reviews and comments I have seen from people who did not really know what the guitar was about would make Sebastian Maroto the greatest player of all time. Mr. Peel's most eloquent statement as to his own power of logic is the classic *non sequitur* by which he juxtaposes my critical severity and my capabilities as musician and composer. To use his own word, "irrelevant". I assume, for instance, that since Weber, on hearing Beethoven's 7th Symphony, declared that "Beethoven is now ripe for the madhouse", he was not to be taken seriously as a composer, or that as Wagner and Brahms said rude things about one another, neither was worth Mr. Peel's consideration. Thank heavens no one has yet entrusted Mr. Peel with a critic's job.

I see little wrong with Mr. Life's grammar but he does tend to extravagance of expression—and he has a remarkable gift for standing on his head. If he will take the trouble to read the correspondence from the beginning he will see (preferably with his feet on the ground) that the first shot was

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fired by Mr. Mairants and not by me. It was, moreover, the same gentleman who accorded me the courtesy title of "self-styled expert" and who has failed to substantiate it. Nothing I have said constitutes an "attack" on Mr. Mairants, let alone a "savage" one; I have simply challenged him to prove himself correct and me wrong, even indicating how this may be done. Once again, he has declined. I simply stated what I know to be Segovia's view, it is Mr. Mairants who has done all the interpreting. In another display of courtesy, generosity and kindness, the same author accused me of setting myself up as Segovia's archivist; on this point too his evidence is conspicuously absent. He should certainly not be exempt from castigation, neither do I claim the privilege for myself; but if someone castigates me, he must be prepared to defend himself. I would hate "B.M.G." to turn into a sort of bloodless parish magazine, nor do I believe myself alone in that view.

On rereading my article on the Renaissance of the Lute I see that a loose juxtaposition may give the impression that Edgar Hunt is a fool! No one has brought this to my attention but I hasten to add that nothing was further from my intention. Mr. Hunt is a fine scholar and musician and I wanted to emphasise the disaster that can overtake even a man of this calibre when he works in a field with which he is not entirely *au fait*. Therefore, heaven help the others.

What a pleasure to turn to Michael Clayton's letter; he clearly knows what he is talking about. If I seem to have undervalued Weiss, I think that Mr. Clayton has undervalued the Ponce Suite. Weiss did write many fine works, some of which Mr. Clayton has enumerated, but the main corpus of his 600-odd works is pretty pedestrian. So far as I know, Segovia did

no more than to enhance the playability of the Suite. He has often told me how remarkably well Ponce, a non-player, wrote for the guitar, and the few original m/s I have seen bear this out.

The pre-war H.M.V. special catalogue boasted Segovia's recording of the Weiss-Ponce Suite (one 12 in. and one 10 in. 78) and the Folias Variations (two 12 in. 78s). These are long gone and, as H.M.V. have recently destroyed a considerable number of masters from that time, the prospect of a re-issue seems vanishingly small. He told me, some year ago, that before the end of his career he would record all the most important works for the guitar; the Folias set was mentioned specifically and he said that there would be variations not included in the published music (Schott GA 135). The pre-war recording contained only a selection from those published. He is currently making a set of records with 30 works by Sor, Carcassi, Giuliani and Aguado, together with an account of his early career. Lucky posterity.

I perceive nothing in the correspondence opened by either Mr. Peel or Mr. Life that justifies its extension; I would rather use the time creatively. If these, or any other correspondents, wish therefore to take this unprecedented opportunity of shooting at me, secure in the knowledge that they are safe, they may take it with my compliments.

—JOHN W. DUARTE.

Dear Sir—The article on David Rubio was of great interest to us down here (Dorset), as for a while Mr. Rubio worked in the farm buildings a stone's throw away which Julian Bream had converted into an instrument-making studio.

East End Farm is now occupied by two brilliant newcomers to the instrument-making scene, Michael Johnson and José Romanillos.

Romanillos joined the studio as guitar maker in February of this year. Five months later one of his guitars was already being played by Julian Bream, who gave on it the first performance of a new work by Peter Racine Fricker at the Aldeburgh Festival. In August, Julian Bream took the instrument to the Pollensa Festival in Majorca, and I had the great pleasure there of hearing him play a work of my own on it. The guitar is now with him on his current American tour.

Michael Johnson, for many years a keyboard instrument restorer and re-creator, this year fulfilled a cherished ambition and completed his first harpsichord. The prototype instrument has won the warm praise of George Malcolm. It incorporates a completely original technique of construction and, by the process of cross-pollination on which the arts thrive, I understand some of Johnson's ideas have exercised no small influence on David Rubio himself.

A lute maker from America is shortly joining Romanillos and Johnson. There has been talk, too, of a bassoon maker. The more the merrier.—TOM EASTWOOD.

Dear Sir—Welcome to you, our new Editor, as successor to the worthy Mr. Frank Hickinbottom, who unfortunately had to vacate the position, owing to ill-health. I wish you all success in this arduous task, at the same time wishing Mr. Hickinbottom a complete recovery. He did a splendid job whilst he was in office. I hope he will be able to resume his very entertaining "Sittin' on a Gate" series.

We readers of "B.M.G." can count ourselves fortunate that there has always been an able man to step into the breach as Editor when circumstances have demanded it.

I have been a reader of "B.M.G." since 1935. In "Correspondence" (October) Wallace G. Pfeifer (U.S.A.) remarked: "It is indeed the best magazine I have ever subscribed to." I heartily agree with him! Some time back, in a letter to me, came another tribute to "B.M.G." from Auburn, Maine (U.S.A.)—a very good pen-friend there stated: "There's no magazine to touch it in the States." It would be interesting to know how many readers there are, overseas.

During the last few months, I have written to some of the very worthy gentlemen who contribute articles to "B.M.G." Although I have confessed to them that I am a "flop" as a musician, in all cases their replies have been both kindly and lengthy, and I am extremely grateful to them.

When some readers send in correspondence to "B.M.G." I wish they would refrain from sarcasm and rude remarks. It is all so unnecessary. Fortunately this is much in the minority.

Being interested in almost all fretted instruments, there is very little indeed that I do not read in "B.M.G." My preference is for the banjo (finger or plectrum style) but I have interest and respect for the tenor-banjo, mandolin, Spanish and plectrum guitars, in the main.

A few weeks ago, following the good advice of Fred Osborne, I became a member of the "B.M.G." Tape Club, and received a friendly welcome from Wally Spranklen, Secretary of the Banjo and Mandolin Section. I now see how much pleasure I have missed by not joining years ago. In addition to the above section there are sections for guitar and Hawaiian guitar, each with its own secretary. Although this information is probably familiar to all "B.M.G." readers, I repeat it for the benefit of all lonely players. Providing they own a tape-recorder it is in their own interest to join up as soon as possible.

Two of the tapes I received featured nylon-strung, finger-style banjos—and the more I hear them the more I am becoming addicted to this style of playing and mode of stringing.

Thank you, "B.M.G." Editor and staff, all its contributors, and all the friends I have found through reading this fine magazine.—HARRY SHERRATT.

Dear Sir—It seems strange that in Clarkson Rose's fine book on the history of concert-parties, that while he mentioned subjects of great interest to banjoists, such as Clifford Essex's Royal Pierrots, with Joe Morley (he describes C.E. as "a good singer, who accompanied himself on the banjo", and Will C. Pepper as a "banjoist and harpist"), he failed to mention the linguistic

(Continued overleaf)

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origin of the "secret language" of the Pierrots, which was interestingly enough derived from an Italian jargon, and not from Cockney rhyming-slang, as would first appear, viz.:

"nanty" (Ital. "niente")—"nothing";
 "medces" (Ital. "mezze")—"halves" (probably from "mezza-corona" or "half-crown", "mezza lira" or "mezza sterlina", "half a sterling pound", thus ten shillings, or even from the monetary unit "mezzo" of the old Kingdom of Naples, if I remember rightly);
 "vardi" (Ital. "vedere")—"to look";
 "parker" (Ital. "pagare")—"to pay";
 "bevi" (Ital. "bevuta")—"a drink";
 "bevi ohmy" (Ital. "bevuta", a drink, and "uomo", man)—thus, "drunkard";
 "palari" (Ital. "parlare")—"to speak";
 "scarper the letty"—NOT derived from rhyming-slang, "Scapa Flow" meaning "to go", but from two Italian words, "scappare" (to flee, to escape) and "letti" (the plural of "bed"), so to "leave the digs" had a "moonlight flit" savour by using the Italian rendering of "to flee the beds!"
 —KEALOHA LIFE.

Dear Sir—Remembering my years of pre-war friendship with Albert Harris—the greatest plectrum guitarist Britain ever had—Ted Symonds gave me your May issue knowing that I seldom see "B.M.G.", so I am probably too late to point out the following.

Mr. Sam Warwick is right off the beam if he thinks C13 (an essentially dominant chord) has anything in common with C6 which is essentially tonic in conception. Nor is it a farce to attempt C13 on a banjo. (Mr. Warwick was, of course, writing for tenor-banjoists—Ed.) Literally C13 means example (a) which does call for a bit of pruning, probably to (b) for his instrument. But dominancy must be preserved at all costs which means whatever you do with (a) as regards inverting or pruning it, it must need resolving by following it with a tonic chord, F in this case. Conversely, C6 cannot be resolved because it is already a tonic chord and one could retire after playing it.

C13+9 must be even more confusing if a player of Mr. Warwick's stature has been misled by C13. The +9 has nothing to do with augmented intervals. It merely means that, in the process of what I have called "pruning", one must this time retain the 9th interval. So one version of C13+9 on the tenor-banjo, an instrument I have never played, would be (c). Personally I would have preferred the symbol C13 & 9, using the + sign only for augmented intervals; but who am I to gainsay Albert Harris?

(a) $\begin{Bmatrix} A \\ F \\ D \\ B\flat \\ G \\ E \\ C \end{Bmatrix}$ (Tenor-Banjo open bass)
 (b) $\begin{Bmatrix} A \\ E \\ B\flat \\ C \end{Bmatrix}$ (open bass)
 (c) $\begin{Bmatrix} A \\ D \\ B\flat \\ E \end{Bmatrix}$ (4th fret, 4th string)

Of Mr. Warwick's other samples, G7b9 I would not accept since it is B diminished, written B—. (One cannot incorporate suspensions and passing notes in symbol notation.) C6+9 is of course nonsense since

one could not tell whether the chord was fundamentally tonic or dominant. A competent arranger would never write this. He surely means C13+9.

By the way, Jeff Pocock's ukulele cum condenser microphone could not possibly work. Apart from severe intermodulation the resonant frequency would be so low as to lift the bottom end of the response curve by several db. at the expense of the top end—and a ukulele is a top-end instrument.

Unlike the guitar, no banjo is intelligently tuned for the job it has to do, e.g. a diminished chord on the banjo consists of only three instead of four different notes. This defect could be avoided by tuning the fourth string to E instead of C but "Optimum Tunings" would form an article on their own, as would my own experiences and holidays with Albert Harris. —HARRY CRAMPIN.

P.S.—Bob White's lutes can produce nothing which cannot be more easily played on a harp guitar with open diapason strings! —H.C.

(Quite a stirring effort. It will be interesting to see what this correspondent can produce when he buys "B.M.G."—Ed.)

Dear Sir—Except for the argument between two much respected leading guitarists (who could well afford to be satisfied with the laurels they have won), I am happy to note the decline of banjo bickering, guitar grousing, and mandolin malice in the correspondence columns of your magazine.

Since the purpose of music is projected through harmony, how ill attuned is the petty temperament which waits to find any adversary whose personal tastes do not exactly coincide with his own. It is a sad banjoland where tenor-banjoists can only live at the expense of banjoists. It is a sad "guitarratierra" where Reinhardt fans seek to rub out Segovia fans, and all other groups seek to belittle Hawaiian guitar or ukulele.

When I have been asked "Is the banjo difficult?", I have always replied "According to the standard you set yourself, it can be easy or difficult—a badly played violin is the easiest instrument in the world, and a well played mouthorgan can be extremely difficult." In other words, there is no superior instrument, only superiority in the man behind it. Despite the rich harmonies of a guitar, it could not sustain the melody and rhythm simultaneously of martial measures which are the perfect medium for (dare I say it?) a banjoist, whereas a banjo arrangement of a Tarrega masterpiece is a foredoomed parody. Simply, there is something for everybody. If you like Tarrega's music, why not learn the guitar instead of trying to convince folk that it sounds better on a banjo or the bagpipes?

I mentioned the "superiority of the man behind the instrument". It must be obvious that the only people really justified in "loud-speaking" their tastes are those who have proved the matter, and have achieved some eminence in so doing. One cannot decide the merits of plectrum or finger-banjo unless one plays both well, and playing both well, it would probably appear that each has something particular to recommend it.

I have never formerly made public my

own particular likes or dislikes, not because of an open mind, but because I so love music that time has seemed better invested in practising my instruments than in writing about it. But I am going to conclude by paying tribute to those whose performances have illuminated my musical pilgrimage—those to whom the "B.M.G." editorial referred in October are amongst them.

I have met or heard so many fine players, that I will head my list with those I believe to qualify for the rating of genius, being so many jumps ahead of the field, and expressing an inner fire and originality allied with all necessary technical attributes. I have never heard, and I never expect to hear, a performance more glorious than that of Pietro on mandolin (when he was young), Segovia on guitar, Reinhardt on plectrum guitar, Harry Reser with plectrum or tenor banjo or tenor guitar, and (of course) Joe Morley with his banjo.

To those who are surprised or disgusted that I have omitted Ed Lang, Van Eps and Vess Ossman, I will agree that without their influence, their superiors could not have shone forth, but nevertheless there is a monotony of style in each of them, that suggests to me the good, indeed perfect workman, but not the genius. Probably Mays and Hunter would enter my list of greats, but I never heard them.

I hope my comment will stimulate the student to look for the qualities in these great fretted instrument players, by studying their recorded artistry. Unhappily they will not find recorded evidence of Joe Morley's greatness. His very few discs display no evidence of it. To hear him at his best was to be uplifted to another plane of thought, but to hear him on an off day was to question oneself as to who on earth had taught him. Perhaps the fact that he gave the best and some of the worst public banjo performances is the reason that the far inferior Oakley "stole" the recording contracts to which later I became the heir.

To the beginner I would say that it takes years to assess good performance, much less imitate it, but the models I have mentioned offer a worthy standard which might be duplicated but never excelled. Perhaps a rather depressing thought, but not so depressing as the performances of the disc genius who took up the guitar six months ago, and is now top of the pops, and lost one of his Rolls-Royces yesterday.

I must be getting loquacious in my old age. I hope Father doesn't mind.—TARRANT BAILEY, JR.

Dear Sir—I would like to point out to Douglas Peel that John Duarte does not need to draw attention to himself by means of his criticisms, as his numerous arrangements, theoretical works and original compositions admirably speak for themselves and prove him to be probably the foremost authority on the classic guitar in this country.

Any guitarist who has played one of his works cannot fail to be impressed by the excellence of the writing and the complete mastery of the guitar idiom (both Ida Presti and Alexandre Lagoya could have verified this). His works range from little pieces especially for young children, right up to the most abstract of musical forms. (Listen to the Catalan Folk Song variations, to

name the first that comes to mind.)

It would be possible to teach a pupil of the classic guitar—from beginner to concert standard, as they say—using only those works transcribed, arranged or composed by Mr. Duarte and still maintain plenty of variety. Surely there are few other guitarists one could say this about? All this, plus his intimate friendship with most of the world's top players; and his knowledge of their views and techniques must surely make John Duarte a man to play close attention to—if we are to become any the wiser.—**JOHN EDWARDS.**

Dear Sir—Denis Bridger, guitarist, guitar-maker, and recording-company director, kindly brought to my notice an appallingly erroneous article on the Hawaiian steel guitar in the publication "Disc News", which makes one wonder whether "pop" music magazines will ever diffuse any information anent this instrument that can ever be of any value to their readers.

The columnist, by listing the "greats" of the C. & W. music field that play electric pedal-guitar and dobro acoustic steel guitar, completely overlooks probably the best of them all (Gualquene Murphy), includes Jerry Byrd (who told me personally in writing that he has never used a pedal guitar, nor ever intends to, since he uses only an 8-string standard electric steel guitar, with which to secure his masterly and musicianly style), and finally makes the most ridiculous of all statements that "according to the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, the accepted method of playing the Hawaiian, dobro, and pedal steel guitar with a metal bar, was devised by Cliff Carlisle" who "devised the unique sound by raising the bridge and strings of the instrument and became one of the first country performers to feature the steel guitar as a solo accompanying instrument".

The writer dates the history of the modern steel guitar to the invention of the dobro in 1928, whereas of course, most Hawaiian guitarists know that the method of playing the instrument with a steel bar, and raising the strings of the instrument was first originated in 1876 by James Hoa, a native Hawaiian and bandmaster of the Royal Hawaiian Band in Honolulu, after hearing homesick German and Scandinavian sailors visiting Honolulu imitate the sound of their national instruments (respectively the dulcimers called in Germany and Holland "Hummels" and their sister-instrument in Scandinavia, i.e. the "Langleik" in Norway and the "Hulme" in Sweden) by sliding the blade of their claspknives on the strings of their guitars; some Scandinavian dulcimers (all of which were played sitting down across the knees and plucked with turkey-quills) used a balalaika tuning (AAD), which indicates a Caucasian descent, while others had two "drones" in addition (tuned to A, A) as lower strings, like the sitar of India, showing their provenance from the East.

However, besides another Hawaiian, Gabriel Davion of Honolulu, the person universally credited with the instrument's "re-invention" and subsequent exploitation that made it famous was Pulu Moe's father-in-law, Hawaiian Joseph Kekuku.

Many varied stories have been published

anent the manner in which he "discovered" the instrument (e.g. a metal comb falling out of his top pocket onto the strings; using a railroad bolt, etc.), but his accompanists in England, when he visited with his group, said that he informed them that he dropped his steel-strung plectrum guitar across the rails of the little railroad in Hawaii, accidentally, while walking along the track. This was while studying at the Kamehameha Academy in 1885 (Johnny Noble, famous Hawaiian bandleader, instrumentalist and composer, puts the date at 1893). J. Kekuku was born at La'ie, Hawaii's Samoan colony.

Since the cylindrical steel was invented by native Hawaiian David Burrows in Honolulu in 1910 (q.v. Johnny Noble's fine book, "Hula Blues") this puts paid entirely to the "invention of the steel guitar in 1928" theory (or its method of playing with a steel bar at so late a date!). In fact, "bottle-neck" style on P.G. probably antedates the '30s.

In any case, it is extremely likely that Japanese immigrants brought at some time to Hawaii the Bugako-Biva lute, played with a cherrywood roller steel, and it is just within the realm of possibility that the Menehune race, of Oriental dwarf-like appearance, who built remarkable edifices on Kauai and Necker Island, and who may have been Ainus from Hokkaido (their language and customs exhibit Polynesian traits) brought the idea with them. Incidentally, there was a nice picture in a magazine recently, showing Marlon Brando at a native feast, playing (sic) a ukulele made of wickerwork—amazing, these Tahitians!

Lastly, I have had the privilege recently of hearing the finest Hawaiian falsetto singing (even eclipsing that of Geo. Kainapau) ever, from none other than our Hawaiian Tape Club Secretary/discographer/columnist John Marsden, who in addition to possessing a fine baritone voice, also plays ukulele, bass, steel, and plectrum guitars: it is a great pity that he is not heard as a falsetto vocalist on record (I for one, would buy any vocal record made by him), and I trust that he will be prevailed upon to make an L.P. of his fabulous falsetto voice on Maile Records, which so far he has only used, in a very kind manner, to record Hawaiian artists other than himself.—**KEALOHA LIFE.**

Dear Sir—There has in recent months in "B.M.G." been some discussion of the validity or otherwise of the Weiss A minor

Lute Suite, which Jack Duarte has for all time indicated as being by the greatly beloved Manuel Ponce, who even in his pastiches performed a service for lovers of the guitar.

May I scotch another falsity that at the moment is gaining some ground in circles where it should not? Advertised in Ivor Mairants' music list is a Choros No. 2 in D, allegedly by Villa-Lobos, and already this composition has been included in recitals under that great composer's name. However, Senor Abreu, father of Sergio and Eduardo, assured me nearly two years ago that this piece is in fact by Pernambuco. I wrote to tell Mr. Mairants this but received no communication from him on the subject but instead a cryptic note from Mrs. Marants. But in Mr. Mairants' lists the composition is still being accredited to Villa-Lobos. Choros No. 2 by Villa-Lobos does of course exist, and is a modernistic work for flute and clarinet; it is a great insult to both Villa-Lobos and Pernambuco to attribute the Sons de Carrilhoes Choros to the wrong man.—**GRAHAM WADE.**

Dear Sir — The arrogant and contemptuously written letter of Don Cogie in derogation of George Barnes is so strikingly similar in style, tone and temper to the person he purports to defend that one could be forgiven for believing they both sleep in the same bed! I am sure the erudite George Barnes, with his vast knowledge and experience of American literature and recordings could fell his critics with one blow.

On what premises does Don Cogie sweepingly assert that orthodox banjo playing is "outmoded"? I'll wager that the vast majority of "B.M.G." readers and players still support this style of playing. Membership of the "B.M.G." Tape Club would soon prove he was wrong. The American "Fraternity of the Five String Banjo" could prove him equally wrong about the banjo in that country. A mere handful of recordings proves nothing—the majority of players don't record. Verb sap!

What do they want, anyway? They have a special bluegrass feature in "B.M.G."; are they attempting to "hijack" the magazine by their bluff and bluster and convert it into an entirely "Country and Western" publication? I think "B.M.G." can manage very nicely with its present policy based on years of experience.—**FRED OSBORNE.**

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Hints on Balalaika Playing

(Condensed from an article by Clifford Essex in "B.M.G.", April 1913).

SEVERAL readers in the provinces and abroad having asked me to give a few hints in "B.M.G." on the playing of the balalaika and the various instruments used in the balalaika orchestra, I have much pleasure in complying with their request.

CHOICE OF AN INSTRUMENT

With regard to an instrument, it is not necessary to have an expensive one to start with, provided it be a genuine Russian balalaika, and not one of the German imitations, which give such a poor idea of the real thing.

What is the difference, you ask, between the Russian and the German make of balalaika?

Well, just *all* the difference in the world. The German makes have a different "voice" altogether, very thin and poor, and miss the mellow, woody tone of the Russian instrument.

The German balalaika, too, generally has a handle which gets thicker as it reaches the body of the instrument, and is a good deal wider at this point than at the top near the nut.

This is quite wrong, and makes playing it very difficult, as it throws the fingers out of position when ascending.

The Russian balalaika has a nice thin handle, of almost equal width from end to end, and is exceedingly easy in its action.

STRINGING

The prima balalaika is strung with a steel first string (it is important to have this of just the right gauge, neither too thick nor too thin), and two gut strings second and third. These latter are tuned in unison.

TUNING

The tuning is — $\begin{matrix} 1 & 2 & 3 \\ A & E & E \end{matrix}$

Tune the instrument like this, and then test the second and third strings by stopping them with the thumb at the fifth fret very carefully, and see that they are *in perfect unison with the open first string*.

As a further test, stop the first string at the seventh fret and see if it is an exact octave higher than the open

second and third strings. Having satisfactorily tuned your instrument, play the scale of E major on the second and first strings just to find out how the notes lie.

The frets used will be second string open = E, second fret = F#, fourth fret = G#; open first string = A, second fret = B, fourth fret = C#, sixth fret = G#, seventh fret = E. Play this up and down the scale a few times, and then make it a two-octave scale. (It is a good plan to make a little diagram of the fingerboard and write the notes against the frets.)

This much will, I hope, have given a clear insight as to how the notes lie on the fingerboard, and by working out the scale of F, from the first fret of the second string, to the eighth fret on the first string, the naturals will be found with the exception of B, which will of course be flat.

Be sure to *curve or arch the wrist* of the right hand, so that the first finger may hang loosely down. Do not let it poke stiffly out. The great thing to *avoid being any stiffness in either wrist or finger*.

Ladies learn the touch very quickly, as a rule, owing to their joints being naturally more flexible than those of men, still the latter can soon acquire flexibility after a little practice.

Practice until the "*sharp quick flick*" of the first finger across the strings has been acquired and be most careful to *strike downwards*. In that way the first or melody string will stand out.

Play exercises *without a break* many times over until the wrist seems to loosen naturally.

Be specially careful about the up stroke being as firmly struck, and as distinct a note as the down stroke. This is very often a fault one hears, the

down stroke being loud, and the up stroke not at all distinct.

The thumb of the left hand comes into operation, as it is a peculiarity of the balalaika that the thumb is used to stop the second and third strings.

This being so unusual, plenty of practice will be necessary, *in sliding the thumb from fret to fret*.

In cases where the melody notes are on the second and third strings, the right hand should be kept a little more over towards the body in order that the A or first string may not be too prominent.

This should always be borne in mind whenever the melody is not upon the first string.

A good deal depends upon how the wrist is held, and on no account should the elbow be lifted and stuck out, as it looks very ugly, and is not necessary.

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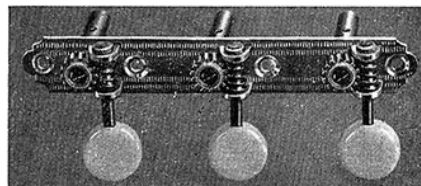
GUITAR (AND ZITHER-BANJO)

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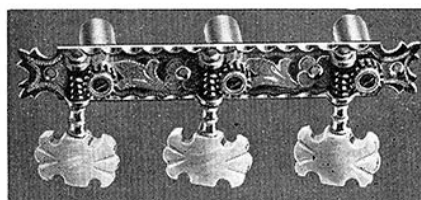
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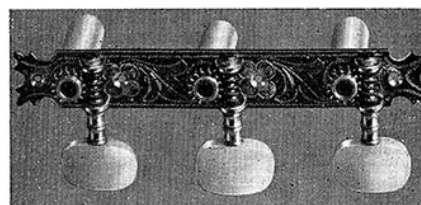
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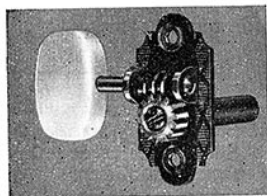
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1205	Same as 1201 but nickel-plated and ovoid buttons	£1 4 0	1215	Specification as No. 1214 (Spanish Guitar) but 1.9/16 in. centre barrel to centre barrel	£4 10 0
No. 19	Gibson-type with brass side plates. Screw-on cog wheels. Recessed string holes. White ovoid buttons. 1 1/2 in. centre barrel to centre barrel	£1 5 0	1217	Specification as No. 1216 (Spanish Guitar)	£5 15 0
No. 19a	Same as No. 19 but nickel-plated, with White oval buttons	£1 9 6	(It is emphasised that Nos. 1207/1209/1215/1217 are for VERTICAL fitting. Although the barrels are encased in "bone" they are drilled at the top to take the string.)		
1207	Specification as No. 1206 (Spanish Guitar)	£2 4 6			

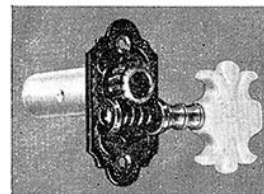
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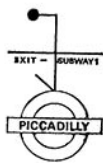
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TREVOR NASSER (crouching), ISAK KRUGER, RAYMOND SCHEP and COLLETTE NASSER. This South African group figured in the November "H.G. News".

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Federation News

Southern Section

Once again the Festival is over: the thirty-third Annual Music Festival and Rally was a great success, on Saturday, October 10th. We feel very proud of this day, always, and this year more so than ever.

The 26 contests went on smoothly and punctually, thanks to all concerned. Particular tributes must sincerely be paid to the Broad family, the Carters (especially Mr. Carter, Jnr., who was a tower of strength and of great assistance to myself on stage) and to Messrs. Blanchard and Dray, and everyone who worked so hard.

The Northern Section really came to town, and Mr. Ferryman of Liverpool staggered out laden with cups. Thank you, all you very keen types, for coming down in such strength.

There were the usual behind-the-scenes-concerts below stairs and around the trade stands, but the main business of the day, the contests, drew much support this year—95 entries—and what a pleasure to see the orchestras back again! And what a range in the entrants' ages—from 10 to 80! Our thanks, very gratefully indeed, to the adjudicators for their patience and great devotion to the task in hand.

All good things come to an end but, in this case, the end of the contests meant the beginning of our grand evening concert—a unique occasion this year, with the participation of both our President and Vice-president.

Under the able compering of Michael Jones, we led off with a very professional-sounding Watford Plectra Orchestra who included *Begin the Beguine, Vodka, and Espana* in an offering which pleased everyone.

The Taylor guitar demonstration which followed was a tribute not only to the guitar but also to the artist.

A. Hall followed, showing that the nylon-strung guitar can be very effective in a rag-time style; I found it exhilarating.

Michael Jones then did a versatile turn, showing a high standard on the tenor-banjo. Our Vice-president then came on to show, once again, that dazzling artistry of his. Thank you, Wout.

In the Beddoes' demonstration which followed, Ray Bernard showed that, far from being dead, real artistry on "the uke" is very much alive.

The Novelettes then gave us some great, concerted banjo sounds, which went down very well.

Roger Butler, folk singer of some versatility, then got everyone singing along with him.

Hugo D'Alton and Robert Calcutt then demonstrated a fine degree of togetherness, and some exquisite mandolin playing.

Antonio Albanes then gave us what must be our greatest experience yet in classic guitar; what an artist we were allowed to hear!

Then, finally, what all devotees of R. Tarrant Bailey's articles had been waiting for—W. J. Ball, fingerstyle banjo. Precision, a right and left hand that left us gasping, all these things showed in *Gunners' March, Patricia, El Contrabandista, All's Well and Cute an' Catchy*.

So once again we had regretfully to go home.

The next meeting will be announced in

We've done enough advertising this year, so thought we'd take this space just to wish all *BMG* readers, of whatsoever interest, a very hearty MERRY CHRISTMAS and all the best in good health, luck and happiness for the coming year. We think of all *BMG* readers as our close friends—it really is a fraternity of a special sort, on a world-wide basis so to all our known and unknown friends, at Home and Abroad, once again, Merry Christmas and happy playing!

MICHAEL WATSON

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R. V. SHELTON.

RALLY RESULTS

Morris Dolby Challenge Cup

1 Jean Clark, 2 A. Dawson, 3 M. Searson.

Merit Challenge Cup

1 J. Eccles, 2 A. Dawson—P. Router, 3 P. Cutler—S. King.

Adeline Boutle Challenge Cup

1 R. Bailey (one entrant).

Federation Cup

1 D. Brooke, 2 P. Cutler—S. King, 3 M. Searson—J. Eccles.

Abbott Challenge Cup

1 C. Adcock, 2 M. Bodell, 3 D. Taylor.

Fenton-Weill Challenge Cup

1 C. Adcock, 2 D. Taylor, 3 M. Bodell.

Ivor Mairants Challenge Cup

1 C. Adcock (one entrant).

George Keeler Memorial Cup

1 S. Cash, 2 C. T. Ferryman, 3 J. Allgrove.

Emile Grimshaw Cup

1 C. T. Ferryman, 2 S. Cash, 3 P. Maddison.

John Alvey Turner Cup

1 S. Cash, 2 C. T. Ferryman, 3 J. Allgrove.

Tom Downing Cup

1 C. T. Ferryman, 2 R. Charles, 3 M. Jones.

Federation Challenge Cup

1 P. Router, 2 C. T. Ferryman, 3 D. Pilley.

Marion Marlow Cup

1 C. T. Ferryman (one entrant).

Phil Barker Cup

1 S. Cash, 2 P. Maddison.

Individual Award Medal

1 J. Allgrove (one entrant).

E. J. Tyrell Cup for Composition

1 "Julie"—Mrs. E. Pakenham, 2 "Canto del Planetas"—Mr. B. Collard, 3 "Heartbeats"—Mr. S. Walker.

Veteran's Cup

1 H. Blogg, 2 E. Wood, 3 G. Weston.

Nora Bland Trophy

1 C. T. Ferryman (one entrant).

Dance Band and Jazz Musician Trophy

1 A. Hall (one entrant).

Individual Award

1 J. Kelk, 2 E. Wood.

Come-All-Ye

1 A. Hall, 2 J. Allgrove—R. Bailey.

Clifford Essex London Club Cup

1 E. Schofield and S. Dawson, 2 A. Smith and M. Dean, 3 J. and A. Bright.

S. F. Waddington Cup

1 Osborne Trio, 2 Thanet Trio, 3 Gammedia.

Clifford Essex Cup

1 Osborne Quartet, 2 Gammedia.

Francis, Day & Hunter Trophy

1 Osborne Sextet.

John Alvey Turner Shield

1 North London B.M. and G. Band.

Federation Cup

1 North London B.M. and G. Band.

Coronation Trophy

1 North London B.M. and G. Band.

Northern Section

Firstly on behalf of the Northern Section members who journeyed down to the Southern Rally on October 10, hearty congratulations to all connected with the organisation, and thanks to all of those who put in such hard work on a very enjoyable event, especially the evening concert, which was well worth the 200 mile trip each way.

We wish our Southern colleagues well in the election of new officials, so that the future of next year's Southern Festival may

be assured.

The October Delegates' Meeting was held on Sunday, October 25, and it was finally decided that the venue for the Northern Section Music Festival and Rally would be the Pembroke Halls, Worsley (same place as last year), and the date would be either April 25 or May 2 according to its availability, which had still to be settled with the manager.

The Class A orchestral test piece would be "Kismet Selection" and for Class D orchestral "Serenade for Strings". The music for these contests should be ready for mid-November, therefore will club secretaries please submit their requirements to the Federation Secretary as soon as possible, giving details of instrumentation.

Mrs. Barbara Lobb was the hostess on this occasion and a hearty vote of thanks was given for her hospitality and provision of tea.

The next meeting will be on Sunday, November 22, 1970, at 4 Coniston Avenue, Wallasey.

The Northern Section dinner was held at Bowden Hotel, Altrincham, on Saturday, October 31, and was attended by some 70 members and guests. A splendid dinner was followed by dancing to the Berlioz Trio and artists appearing were as follows:

1. Jean Eccles, classical guitar solos: "Für Elise" (Beethoven), "Spanish Gypsy Dance".
2. Mrs. S. Lees, soprano: "One Fine Day" ("Madame Butterfly"), "I was never kissed before" ("Bless the Bride").
3. Beryl Allen, mandolin, Bob Evans, accompanied: "Liebestreu" (Kreisler), "Cuckoo Waltz", Brahms' "Hungarian Dance".
4. Del Rio Quartette (B. Thurlow, T. Ferryman, M. Thurlow, E. Wood): "Avanti", "Andevja", "Gamin".
5. Howard Shepherd Trio. They came along

after their regular engagement at the "Golden Garter", Manchester, and gave a terrific 15 minutes' session which included "Indian Love Call", "Black Eyes" and "Baby Face" and finished off with a "Medley of Evergreens"; a really splendid performance.

It can be said that the entertainment alone was worth attending for, not to mention the friendly and jovial atmosphere throughout the evening.

Reminder—Don't forget York City B.M.G. Club 14th Annual Dinner, Saturday, January 23, 1971, Harlequin Restaurant, York. Tickets £1.

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THREE CLUBS "GET-TOGETHER"

Massed banjo bands are, perhaps regrettably, a thing of the past, but the nearest recent approach to such a feature occurred on Sunday, October 18, when a "get-together" was arranged between the Portsmouth and Bournemouth B.M.G. Clubs and the Aston Banjo Club.

The venue was the Drayton Institute at Cosham, Portsmouth, engaged for the occasion by Portsmouth. A coach-load some forty strong of the Aston Banjo Club, including wives and supporters, arrived about 4 p.m. (others travelling independently) followed closely by a similar coach-load from Bournemouth. Portsmouth had laid on a mouth-watering array of refreshments and, after a mass tuning of instruments, we all sat down to a right royal high tea, a good preparation for the strenuous playing to follow. By 5.30 p.m. the trestles had been cleared and the serious work began.

A considerable amount of planning had taken place prior to the evening to ensure a wide range of numbers was available that could be played by all, and we opened with "community playing", forty-five instrumentalists from the three clubs striving their best to produce a good sound—and they did!

This was followed by ten minutes from the Aston Banjo Club playing items from their repertoire, followed in turn by Bournemouth. Next, the mandolins and guitars from Portsmouth and Bournemouth united for two numbers, after which all the finger-style banjos, 19 of them, played together.

The programme of the whole session was based on this format—community playing by all, interspersed with items from the individual clubs and also items from specialised instruments. The massed playing was conducted in turn by Mr. Sherring from Bournemouth and Mr. Edwards from the Atons, with the lady pianists from each club sharing the accompaniments.

To say it was an enjoyable occasion is to be guilty of understatement! For example, except at the annual Federation Contests, I rarely if ever hear mandolins and I thoroughly enjoyed listening to the playing of the combined instruments of Portsmouth and Bournemouth. On the other hand, players from these two clubs where the

number of banjos is comparatively small told me they were thrilled to hear the banjo playing of the Atons. Above all, apart from playing happily together, we all truly appreciated meeting in such an atmosphere, fellow enthusiasts of the banjo, mandolin and guitar, talking to (and making friends with) complete strangers; boasting a little, perhaps, about our own clubs and also feeling that we were also furthering the cause of fretted instruments.

ERIC FRANKLIN.

OBITUARIES**CAPTAIN V. W. EDWARDS**

One of the oldest of British amateur banjoists, Valentine William Edwards, died on September 23 at the age of 87. He had been ill for several months following an operation.

"Val" Edwards, as he was popularly known, was the elder brother of the brilliant and versatile Walthamstow banjoist, Tom Edwards, whom he originally taught to play the five-string banjo when they lived in Weston-super-Mare.

Originally in the East Surrey Regiment, in the days when they were called the Terriers and known as "Saturday afternoon soldiers", prior to World War I, Val eventually transferred to the 4th City of London Fusiliers, the first Territorial regiment to go to France.

Throughout his army service Captain Edwards kept his banjo with him and, during his regiment's time on Salisbury Plain, he frequently acted as host to Joe Morley, who was a long established friend of the Edwards family. Lieut. ("Doc") Hussey, of Antarctic Expedition fame, was a chum from boyhood of Val's and they played banjo duets whenever possible. Fred Van Eps and R. Tarrant Bailey were also in his wide circle of friends.

Known in military circles as the owner of the finest private collection of yeomanry uniforms and accoutrements—they date back to Cromwell's time—Captain Edwards was the subject of a long article in "Soldier" in which photographs of many splendid items were reproduced with detailed descriptions.

During his tour of duty at Valetta, while acting major, he was responsible for the custody of the captain of the "Emden".

A gentle, kindly and good humoured companion, Val Edwards was a rare combination of charm, erudition and sterling worth.

To his wife and son, and to his brothers Horace and Tom, we extend our heartfelt sympathy.

MR. K. O. SAMUEL

As we go to press we learn with deep regret of the passing of Mr. K. O. Samuel, of Chislehurst, whom many readers will remember for his delightful articles entitled "Ring the Banjo", in which his experiences as an amateur banjoist were so amusingly recounted.

Although we never had the pleasure of knowing him personally, we had ample evidence of his courteous and generous nature.

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Tape Club News

Hawaiian Guitar Section

Many thanks to Bill Goudge for another selection of acoustic steel guitar solos, varied with selections on plectrum guitar and banjo. A most versatile and entertaining performance!



MERVIN WEBB

From Mervin Webb a beautiful selection of multi-recordings, featuring Danny Chapell in several items. Members will remember Danny in association with Ken Ufton. Mervin has most skilfully simulated a night club background to this charming tape.

Bern Causley has submitted a tape of his Islanders, recorded at the Country Club, Isle of Wight. As well as Bern, the tape also features the steel guitars of Frank Bock and Bob Martin. A varied and most interesting set of recordings!

I was delighted to meet so many Club members at Danny Tigilau's luau in October, and only wish I could have spent more time talking with each of the many friends who came! It was a somewhat hectic evening for me, as I had to assist with the p.a., and was asked to sit in with the South Sea Serenaders for part of the evening. I hope everyone enjoyed himself, however, and that the next luau will be as well attended.

Finally, may I wish every Tape Club member a very Mele Kalikimaka and every happiness over the festive season.

JOHN MARSDEN.

Banjo and Mandolin Section

Welcome to the following (all new members) who have been attached to Group "H": Ronald Richmond of Liverpool, Ted Gardiner of Canterbury, Klaus Zimmer of Germany, and Harry Russell of London.

Many thanks to Dorothy Parsons for an entertaining tape of the Portsmouth and Bournemouth B.M. and G. Club's "get-together" held at Portsmouth earlier this year.

Many thanks also to Ken Eccles for a very pleasant tape of banjo material.

WALLY SPRANKLEN.

PAOLO PILIA RECITAL

ON October 21, visiting the Italian Institute in Belgrave Square, by pure chance I found there was a recital by a guitarist who deserves to be better known in Britain.

I spent a pleasant time listening to the perfect technique and passionate interpretation of PAOLO PILIA, and it was a pity this was not a public concert. It is to be hoped that he will appear again in London soon, and to a wider audience.

Paolo Pilia belongs to the generation of guitarists who trained at Segovia's Master Classes in Siena. His career began about ten years ago and one of his most successful concerts was the one he gave at the Wigmore Hall. Since then he has made several tours in this country and throughout Europe and America. He has taught the guitar at the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris. This was his third recital for the Italian Institute.

GIUSEPPE CAVALLINI.

ALBANES RECITAL

ANTONIO ALBANES gave a poised assured recital in the King's Hall, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, on Saturday, November 7. The brilliance of his technique and the warmth of his tone are matched by a musical insight and intelligence which breathed new life into well-tried favourites such as the Mozart variations by Sor and Asturias by Albeniz. The most substantial works were in the first half of the programme which included movements from Lute Suites by Bach and the Courante in A Major—an outstanding item.

The warmth and enthusiasm with which he was received by the audience was evidenced by the call for three encores—The Bumble Bee, El Colibri (Humming Bird), and a Minuet by Paganini, all showpieces of virtuoso display and all brought off with gratifying mastery.

MALCOLM WELLER.

Stop Press

DEATH OF EDDIE PEABODY

On the eve of press day we learn with deep regret from George Barnes that America's most famous plectrum banjo star fell from the stage and died from a stroke at Covington, Kentucky, on November 7. He was 69. Multi-instrumentalist Eddie was an unforgettable personality and the greatest showman of the fretted world. An appreciation of this lively, genial man will appear in our January issue. R.I.P.

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NARCISO YEPES AT NEWCASTLE

Narciso Yepes flew in from Madrid, travelled up from London the next day by train, squeezed in a quick TV spot, and gave a recital in the City Hall, Newcastle, on Wednesday, October 14, as part of the Newcastle Arts Festival: flying on the next day to a recording session in Paris. Affable and charming, he spared a valuable practice hour to chat with students from Newcastle University Spanish Department. I asked him about practice and he said he did it whenever he could.

This tight itinerary no doubt contributed to a very dull and technically inadequate first half devoted to Bach, which I had been particularly looking forward to. Things brightened in the second half and by the time we got to the encores almost two hours of public limbering up revealed a performer of verve and individuality.

The last piece of Yepes' programme, *Analogias*, by Leonardo Balada, reminded me of Sir Neville Cardus' remark of Messien's Tarangila Symphony, "It's sure to be someone's cup of tea." As the first and most successful encore he played *Passa Pie*, a very guitaristic work by Salvatore Bacarisse, performed with poise, elegance and wit. The enthusiasm was such that he was recalled for two further encores before passing on his busy way.

The additional four strings of Yepes' personally commissioned Ramirez guitar were useful in the Bach transcriptions. One of the objects of the additional strings (tuned C, Bb, Ab, Gb) is to strengthen some of the weaker notes by sympathetic resonances and create a better balanced instrument. The tonal consequences were surprisingly imperceptible.

MALCOLM WELLER.

Coming Events

Artists and agents, Club Secretaries and readers are invited to send details of forthcoming events for inclusion in this feature.

December

- 1—Delphine y Domingo Flamenco. Town Hall Baths, Sutton in Ashfield.
- 3—Martin Best, songs with guitar, with Edward Flower, lute and guitar. Purcell Room, South Bank. 7.30.
- 3—The Corries. Usher Hall, Edinburgh.
- 4—The Corries. Town Hall, Birmingham.
- 5—The Corries. St. George's Hall, Liverpool.
- 7—Delphine y Domingo. Lyceum, Strand.
- 9—The Corries, Town Hall, Paisley.
- 11—Delphine y Domingo. Fortt's Restaurant, Bath.
- 12—The Corries, Town Hall, Motherwell.
- 12—Hugh Geoghegan, guitar. Wigmore Hall. 7.30.
- 13—The Corries. Beach Pavilion, Girvan.
- 14—17—The Corries. Helensburgh, Barrhead, Forfar.
- 16—Delphine y Domingo. H.M.S. Dryad, Fareham, Hants.
- 24—26—Delphine y Domingo. The Queens, Hastings.
- 27—The Corries. Odeon Cinema, Edinburgh.
- 31—Delphine y Domingo. The Queens, Hastings.

January

- 22—Ravi Shankar, sitar, Alla Rakha, tabla. Royal Festival Hall. 8 p.m.
- 24—Paco Pena. Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank. 7.15.
- 28—Anne Perrett, mezzo soprano, Rodrigo de Zayas, lute, theorbo, vihuela. Purcell Room, South Bank. 7.30.

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James Lowe, of Mosley Common, "A" and "B" Grades (Spanish Guitar).
 Teacher: Self.
 Examiner: Barbara Lobb.
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Gayle Evans, of Bolton, "A" Grade (Spanish Guitar).
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 Teacher: Robert C. Parish.
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First of all buy enough fretwire to replace all the frets needed. This fretwire is sold in yard lengths by fretted instrument firms. Fretwire is of two kinds—plain brass and, the more desirable, nickel silver. The wire is drawn in the shape of a letter "T"—the top being slightly rounded.

SERRATE IT

When you buy a length of fretwire, the first thing to do is to serrate the upright of the T by short, sharp taps with the chisel-edge of a hammer or the side of an old file. This can best be done by laying the fretwire on the surface of an old flat-iron (or similar object) and going along the entire length of the wire. (The serrations should be spaced about 1 in. apart.)

Having prepared the fretwire, the next job is to remove the old frets from the instrument's fingerboard—and here great care should be taken not to damage the fingerboard.

Go about the job this way. With a fairly stout penknife or chisel blade laying parallel to the frets, slip the edge of the blade underneath the side of the fret and lift. In no circumstances should any attempt be made to slide the fret out of the groove. If this is done, the slot will be enlarged (and possibly the fingerboard chipped) and it will be difficult to fit the new fret.

Having removed all the old frets that are to be replaced, the next step is to lay the arm of the instrument flat on a table (suitably padded with

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dusters to prevent either damage to the instrument or the table) and then lay a piece of fretwire across the fingerboard (over the slot) with the serrated edge downwards and gently tap into position with a light hammer. Do not use force. A few gentle taps should be enough to drive it in position.

It is usual for the serrated edge to be lightly coated with decorator's knotting or glue before tapping it in position. This in no way helps the fret to hold but it does fill up any spaces in the slot left by previous serrations.

With a three-cornered file, cut the fretwire close to the edge of the fingerboard.

SMOOTH THE ENDS

When all the new frets have been put in position, smooth the ends off with a fine flat-face file so that no rough edges protrude.

Once all the new frets are in position you should place a steel rule (or other perfectly straight edge) along the fingerboard to check that no single fret is higher than its neighbours. If it is found that a fret is too high, a gentle tap with the hammer or a slight rub with emery cloth will correct it.

Finally, smooth down all the new frets by placing a piece of emery cloth on a block of wood and rub up and down the whole length of the fingerboard, smoothing off the individual frets lengthways after- wards.

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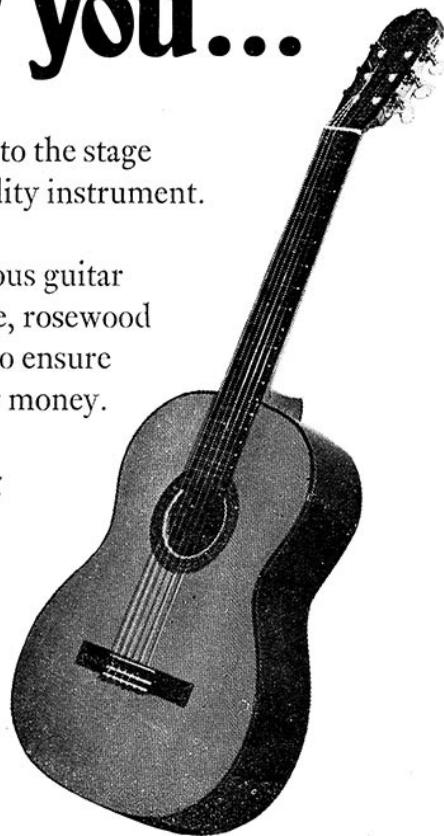


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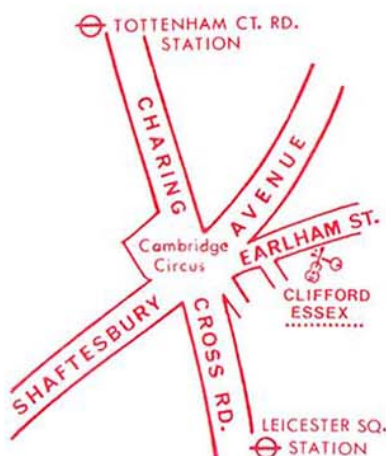
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Octave peg with white plastic button	7/6
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Matching octave peg for geared peg	10/6
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Tailpiece bracket and nut	5/-
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(Will fit Clifford Essex standard hexagon nuts)	7/6
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(State width of finger-board when ordering)	2/-
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(State width of finger-board when ordering)	3/-
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Nickel-silver fretwire (Only sold in yard lengths)	per yard 3/6
Machine heads for zither-banjo. (Various.)	
(List on application)	From per pair 18/-
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Non-tip bridges, 1/4", 5/8" and 3/4". (State whether 4-string or 5-string required when ordering)	2/-
De-luxe bridges, with ebony inset. 1/4" and 5/8". (State whether 4-string or 5-string required when ordering)	3/6
"S.X.Special" zither-banjo bridges. 1/4" and 5/8"	
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Real ivory top nut. (State which size required when ordering):—	
2 1/4" x 3/16"	3/9
2 1/2" x 3/16"	2/3
Ebony bridge pins (with mother of pearl inset)	1/6
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Rosewood saddle-type bridge. Complete with ivory saddle. (For glueing on flat-top guitars)	19/-
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3 1/4" x 1/4" x 1/4"	3/3 each
3 1/2" x 1/4" x 1/4"	
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Rosewood push-in tuning pegs for flamenco guitars	4/6
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(Detailed price list on application)

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Ebony end knobs	5/-
White plastic end knobs	3/-
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(See under PLECTRUM GUITAR for machine heads.)

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	Each
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