

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS

B.M.G.

BANJO
MANDOLIN
GUITAR

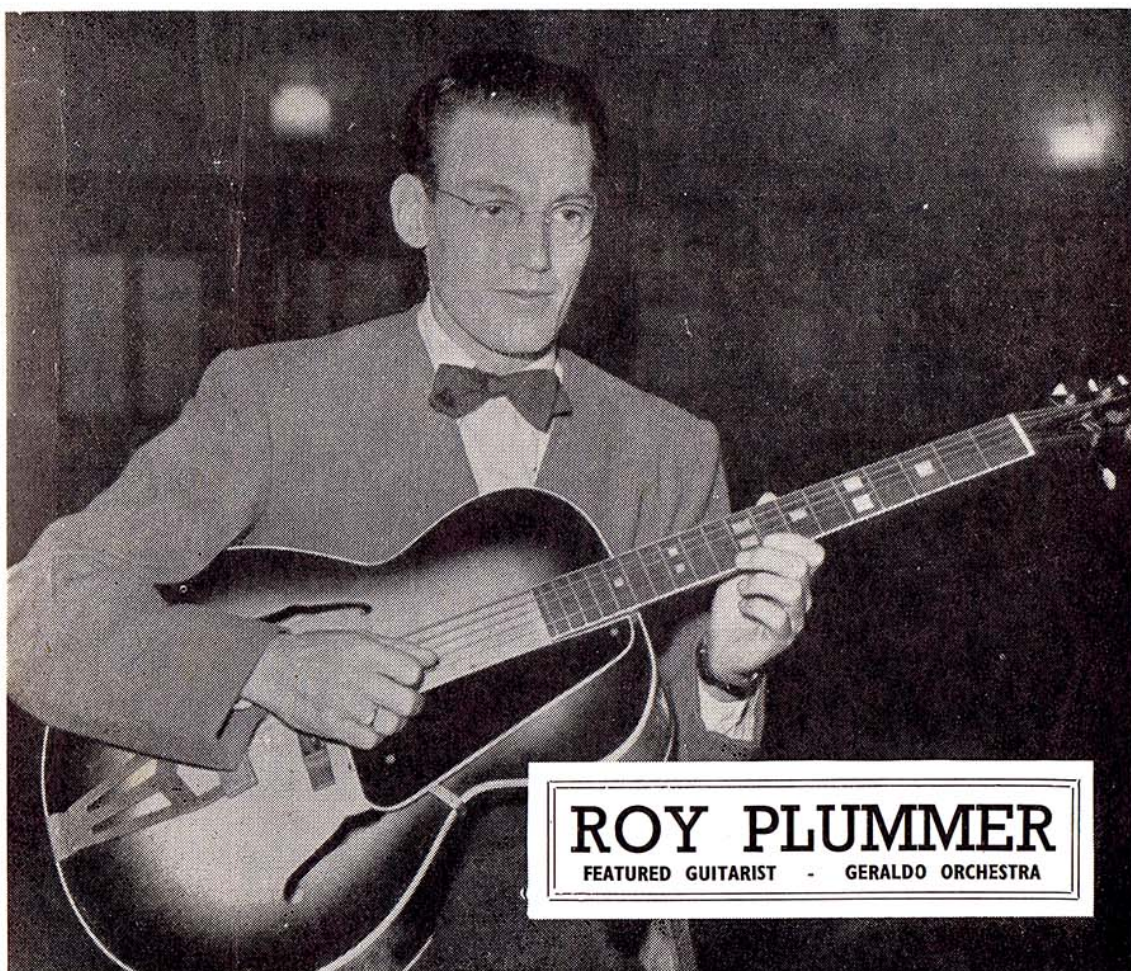
OF THE BANJO, MANDOLIN, GUITAR AND KINDRED INSTRUMENTS

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

Vol. LII. No. 594

OCTOBER 1954

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Music in this issue

HAWAIIAN GUITAR SOLO: "Ua Like No a Like"
SPANISH GUITAR SOLO: "Prelude" (Chopin)
BANJO SOLO: "Brave and Bold"
MANDOLIN SOLO: "Maqueda"
PLECTRUM GUITAR SOLO: "La Cucaracha"

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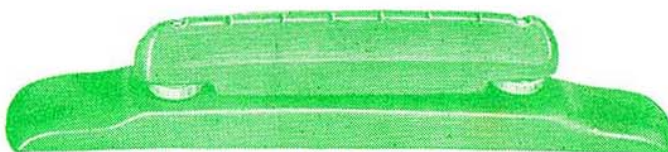


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• FIFTY-SECOND YEAR •

B.M.G.

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OCTOBER 1954

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Notes and Comments

By THE EDITOR

YOU will probably remember that in the August issue I wrote at some length about a new banjo record issued in this country. Many readers wrote and thanked me for drawing their attention to the record; and quite a number spoke about the difficulty they encountered in finding a stockist of the particular label on which this record is issued!

However, you cannot stop an enthusiast, if he wants something hard enough. On quite good authority I am told that "Good Time Jazz" records are obtainable in most cities and big towns. It is just a matter of trying—and breaking through the shield of secrecy with which the manufacturers appear to cover their

products.

I sent a marked copy of the August "B.M.G." to Vogue Records Ltd. in London (the Company responsible for the issue of "Good Time Jazz" records in England). I did not even receive an acknowledgment! Although I am not surprised. Our record reviewer "Discus" tells me that this particular company is one of the few which will not send him any records for review.

Of course, I realise it is possible that this company already sells all the records it wants to and does not want the embarrassment of publicity which would create a bigger demand! I have discovered (purely by chance) that another record by

"The Banjo Kings" has been issued over here—before the one I mentioned last August. One would have thought that Vogue would have pointed this out to me!

The titles are: "Banjo Bounce" and "Stephen Foster Medley No. 2"—"Good Time Jazz" GV.2177.

Purchasers of the other record will need no urging from me to get this one. If you have yet to listen to "The Banjo Kings"—get them both. (The other number is GV.2209.)

Do not let the trouble it takes to buy the records put you off. I had to visit four West End gramophone dealers before I found one with the earlier record in stock!

In contrast to the "couldn't care less" attitude of the English company, "Good Time Jazz" of America—the company that actually recorded "The Banjo

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DICK ROBERTS,
Tenor-Banjoist



RED ROUNDTREE,
Plectrum-Banjoist

Kings"—wrote me a charming letter, thanking me for the write-up I had given Dick Roberts and Red Roundtree and sent me the photographs reproduced on the previous page. In addition, they are sending me two LP. discs by the "Kings," which it will be my pleasure to review for the benefit of our many U.S. readers. We might even persuade the English company to issue more, for it is obvious other titles are available.

The American company also tells me they have signed up plectrum guitarist Barney Kessel and will be issuing two LP. discs by him in the near future. I would be pleased to give these records every publicity—in the same way as I am always pleased to draw attention to discs made by fretted instrumentalists. I only hope readers of "B.M.G." avail themselves of these issues—for good sales of f.i. discs pave the way for more issues.

Right from the Start

By JACK WHITFIELD

(Continued from last month's issue)



THE study in triplets, to which Harry Young's Master Method takes you next, is not as easy in execution as might appear at first glance. For most of the way, it is the right hand which will face the stiffest task.

You will be tempted to play a down stroke on the first note of each triplet. Resist the temptation. That does not mean that such a routine would be "incorrect"; many experienced players would adopt it but the purpose of the study is quite clearly to develop right-hand fluency and co-ordination of the two hands, rather than give any special exercise to the left hand, whose work is fairly simple.

Note the asterisk and explanatory line at the bottom of the page! You are now in the first stage of development of knowledge of frets above the third and you should pay particular attention to "new" notes—or rather, new positions—as you meet them.

You should, by now, be fairly familiar with notes at the first three frets on all strings and extended knowledge of the fingerboard will come more quickly by real activity than by attempts at parrot-like learning.

We shall provide a little more "real activity" before the end of this lesson!

A word to the beginner who knows no other kind of triplets than those in the Beverley Sisters' ditty.

A triplet in music is a group of three notes, played in the time of one beat. Thus, for four-in-the-bar, you would count: "one-and-a, two-and-a, three-and-a, four-and-a . . ."; marked groups of three notes, with the accent on the first of each group.

You will observe, incidentally, that the stroking in the 5th, 6th and 7th bars of our study departs from the normal routine. There is an explanatory note below the exercise—glide the pick across two strings. This glide is followed by an up stroke.

BE CAREFUL

Be careful not to *press* the plectrum on to the strings: this will give bad tone and prevent a smooth up stroke on the third notes of the triplets. But avoid the other extreme—which is to "feather" the strings with the plectrum.

Rather let the weight of the hand carry the plectrum across the strings, with moderately firm grip and not too much plectrum point. The hand should then be nicely poised for the up stroke to be executed with a flick from the wrist. This is not an easy operation and will require a good deal of practice before it can be performed smoothly.

You should aim to give even tone and volume to each note, apart from the slight accent on the first of each group.

This seems to be a good point at which to recall your motto for this course: TRAVEL SLOWLY.

It certainly applies to the next "stretch"—for which you turn to Page 47 for a "pattern" scale of G major. This is the further "real activity" I promised earlier.

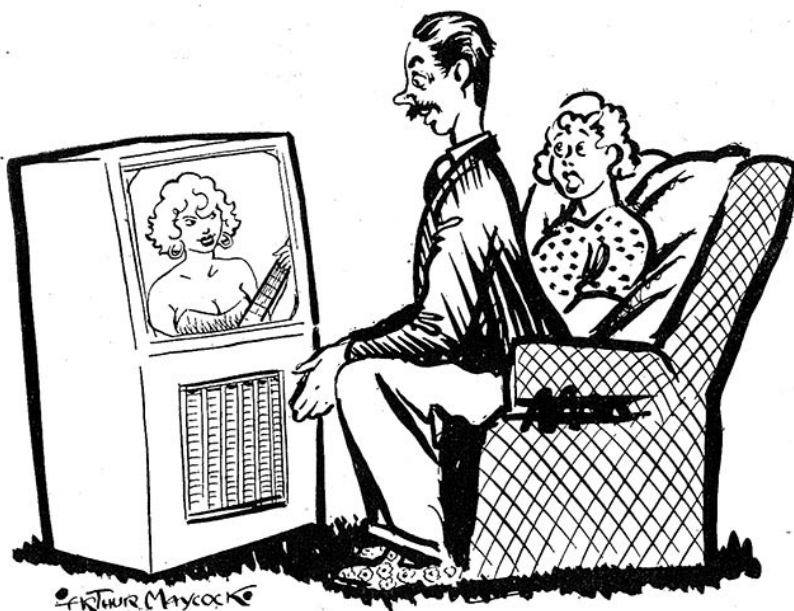
Skip the preamble for the time being and master the scale as given. G—6th string, 3rd fret, 2nd finger; A—6th string, 5th fret, 4th finger; B—5th string, 2nd fret, 1st finger; C—5th string, 3rd fret, 2nd finger; D—5th string, 5th fret, 4th finger; E—4th string, 2nd fret, 1st finger; F#—4th string, 4th fret, 3rd finger; G—4th string, 5th fret, 4th finger; A—3rd string, 2nd fret, 1st finger; B—3rd string, 4th fret, 3rd finger; C—3rd string, 5th fret, 4th finger; D—2nd string, 3rd fret, 2nd finger; E—2nd string, 5th fret, 4th finger; F#—1st string, 2nd fret, 1st finger; G—1st string, 3rd fret, 2nd finger.

WORK SLOWLY

Work slowly through that and you will find you have performed a two-octave scale without moving your right hand—a demonstration of the "productive capacity" of the guitar. First-rate exercise for the left hand and your first real venture into that basic operation, "position" playing.

A "recap" is called for.

Remember that in executing the scale, the tips of the left-hand fingers should come up to the frets (this will become automatic if you concentrate at this stage



"YOU NEVER LIKED HER PLAYING ON THE RADIO!"

of your playing); and that you should not transfer a finger until it is absolutely necessary to do so. (This ensures that one note will "run into" the next, while "clipped" notes will be the result if you raise the fingers immediately the note has been played.)

Concentrate, for the time being, on the left hand and content yourself with down strokes with the right. If you can play the scale (ascending and descending) smoothly, with down strokes, by the time the next issue of "B.M.G." appears you will have done well—and you will be ready for more!

(NOTE: This course is intended to help self-teaching plectrum guitar students and in no way is a substitute for personal tuition for which there is, indeed, no substitute. The course commenced in the March 1954 issue and the Clifford Essex Co. would be pleased to advise new readers, who wish to start the course from the beginning, what back issues from that date are still available.)

(To be continued)

The Banjo in Britain

By W. M. BREWER.

(Mr. Brewer is continuing his series of articles by presenting, as far as possible in alphabetical order, biographies of well-known British players of the banjo.—EDITOR.)



AN old-time banjoist of merit was **William Edward Ballantine**, who established "The City Banjo and Guitar Studio," at 9, St. Mary Axe, London, E.C., in 1874. His association in business with a Scottish publisher suggests he may have been born in Scotland, but diligent research has

failed to reveal anything of Ballantine's life before 1874.

Mention is made in "The Daily Telegraph" of December 23, 1880, of "Sentimental and comic songs arranged by Ballantine (banjoist)," which lends support to the authenticity of paragraphs in the June, 1894, issue of "The Jo" that "Professor Ballantine, England's premier banjoist, was the first to write banjo music in England. His No. 1 Banjo Gems was the first piece of sheet music we believe published for the banjo."

Advertisements of the period show that Ballantine's Banjo Gems were issued "in ten parts, each part complete in itself and containing selections, variations, breakdowns, songs with banjo accompaniment, etc."



PHIL BARKER

Among W. E. Ballantine's other instruction books (on the cover of one of which is an etching of him) were (1) a Tutor for banjos with 5, 6 and 7 strings, published by John Cameron, of 83, Dunlop St., Glasgow, in 1883; (2) a Tutor published by John Alvey Turner in 1884; (3) "Ballantine's Banjo Treasury," containing 20 original compositions; and (4) a Banjo Journal.

An 1890 issue of the latter contained "20 vocal items with accompaniments arranged expressly for the banjo."

Among Ballantine's patrons and pupils were H.R.H. the Princess Caroline Murat, Her Grace the Duchess of Leeds, the



BERT BASSETT
(age 13)

This photograph was taken at the time he made his records for the Jumbo Co. who used it in their publicity matter.

Marchioness of Ripon, the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Dalkeith, the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Dunraven, Lord Ernest Hamilton and many other titled people.

He earned high praise from Walter Howard of the Mohawk Minstrels and the "Musical Opinion and Music Trades Review" (October, 1888), stated that "for artistic playing and really converting the banjo into a musical instrument, we must bestow our praises on Mr. W. E. Ballantine."

For some years, Ballantine was banjo and guitar master at the Hyde Park Academy of Music for Ladies; the London International College; and the Kensington School of Music. He wrote a tutor for the guitar.

A FINE PLAYER

I am informed by a banjoist who knew Ballantine that he was a fine player. At one concert, where some 40 of his pupils appeared as an ensemble, he gave expert demonstrations of "rolling" playing.

Ballantine maintained his studio at 9, St. Mary Axe until 1900 and resided at 23, Myddleton Square, nearby until 1905, but search at Somerset House has failed to discover the date of his demise.

* * *

Philip ("Phil") Stanley Barker was born on May 21, 1913, at Earl Shilton, in Leicestershire. His first banjo, which cost him 2s. 6d.! had a smooth fingerboard, which he afterwards "rectified" by breaking up one of his father's cigar boxes to make frets.

At the age of 16 he took lessons from J. Chamberlain of Leicester, to whom he is greatly indebted for launching him on a successful career.

A subsequent broadcast from the B.B.C.'s Midland studios induced Phil Barker's father (an A.R.C.O.) to look more kindly on his banjo activities, which had hitherto been regarded with some disfavour.

As is now well known, Phil Barker has become a front-rank player of the plectrum-banjo. His compositions published in "B.M.G." music supplements have included: "Etude in F," "Andante in C," "Idyll," "Fancy That," "Impromptu," "Nocturne in D," "Under Drake's Command," "Flag of England," "Scaramouche," "On the Hop," "Tickled Pink," "Up and Doing," "Concert Grand" and "Airs and Graces." The title of "Concert Grand" was originally "Sweet Sorrow."

His "Jackpot" (issued by the Clifford Essex Co.) has been published for banjo, plectrum-banjo, mandolin and other club

parts, while "Introduction and Gavotte," "Pickwick Papers (Suite)," "Regency Days," "Honour and Glory," "All the Best," "Pick 'em Out," "Period Piece in Canon," "Touch and Go," "Nobody's Business," and "Madinette," are still in MS. His brass band compositions are two marches, "The Tattered Barn" and "England's Glory," and a cornet duet, "Tit for Tat."

Phil Barker has played at more than 40 theatres in England; 10 in Germany; four in Canada; and one in Belgium. His radio appearances include 13 for the B.B.C., two for B.F.N., Hamburg, and four in Canada. As a conductor, he has broadcast with the Gloucester B. M. & G. Club in the B.B.C. feature "In Town Tonight" and has appeared with Troise and his Banjoliers in performances given at the Plymouth, Bristol and Leeds studios of the B.B.C.

During the war, Phil Barker was in the Navy for five years (three of which were spent at sea in a corvette) which, no doubt, accounts for the nautical titles of some of his compositions.

He has acted as adjudicator at Federation Rallies every year since 1949.

* * *

Bert Bassett (whose full name was Albert Thomas Bassett) was born in London in 1894. As a youth, he was employed on the regular staff of Clifford Essex, to whom he was introduced by his father, who played the banjo.

Bert first appeared in public at a Kensington Town Hall concert in 1905. In 1910 he was prima balalaika player in the Clifford Essex Russian Balalaika Orchestra and, in 1912, became a star artist with Joe Morley, Will Blanche and George Morris in the Palladium Minstrels, which featured a team of 34 banjoists.

FIRST DANCE BAND

In 1913, Bert Bassett appeared at the "400 Club" in New Bond Street, London, in the first dance band in England to include a plectrum-banjo. Playing plectrum-banjo with him in the band was Nicholas Kovac, who is now a leading member of the Classic Guitar Society of New York.

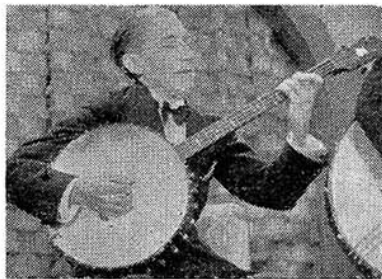
Later, Bert Bassett, who was also a fine player of the 'cello and piano, appeared on the Music Halls in a double act with George Morris. One of their successes was Morley's "Bagpipe Patrol," in which Bert played a 'cello obbligato to George's solo.

In 1915, Bert was entertaining the

troops with his banjo and a year later became leading banjoist in "La Belle Leonora's Ragtime Band" at the London Coliseum—an act that subsequently went to Paris for a period.

Shortly afterwards, back in England, Bert Bassett was employed by the Admiralty, but in 1917 he joined Miss Jenkinson's fashionable dance band at Eastbourne.

During his career Bert Bassett appeared in two Gaumont British and Pathé films and he made dozens of records for the old Jumbo Record Co., some of the titles being "Mississippi Bubble," "Georgian Breeze," "Plantation Symphony," "Honolulu Cake Walk," "Darktown Dandies," "Coloured Major," "Coon Band Contest" and "Whistling Rufus." He was a member of "Raymonde and his Band o' Banjos" and played the bass banjo on the Regal-Zonophone records made by this band. In the "Minstrel Medley" he played "Poor Old Joe" as a bass



BERT BASSETT

A "still" from the Pathé film made by "Raymonde and his Band o' Banjos."

banjo solo with exquisite taste.

Bert Bassett, who died from tuberculosis on April 21, 1937, was editor of "B.M.G." from March, 1933, to March, 1937. His published compositions for the banjo include: "Admiral Andy," "Bushrangers' March," "Call o' Erin," "Chanson d'Ete," "Coon Slumbers," "Danse Columbine," "Jumbo Rag," "Lazy Rhythm," "L'Automne," "Pata-gonian Picnic," "Southern Festival" and "Water Lilies." Every one can be recommended.

* * *

A versatile fretted instrumentalist, well-known in British recording and broadcasting circles, is **William ("Billy") Bell**, who was born in London on January 12, 1911. He started to play the banjo at the age of nine under instruction from his father. After playing finger-style for two years, Billy Bell took up the plectrum-banjo in 1922 and the tenor-banjo a year later.

To these attributes he added the plectrum

guitar and Hawaiian guitar in 1928 and 1930, respectively.

His first broadcast was in 1932 with Troise and his Mandoliers (playing plectrum guitar). Since then he has made over 2,000 broadcasts with various orchestras and today is one of the busiest of "session" men in broadcasting and recording studios.

Billy Bell's mastery of the banjo has been demonstrated in broadcasts by Troise and his Banjoliers, with whom he has played "Banjo Oddity" and "Donkey Laugh." He has also played "Crazy Joe" as a plectrum-banjo solo and "Pickins" on the tenor-banjo in these programmes.

One of his finest efforts, in my opinion, was the soulful background he provided on plectrum-banjo to the musical items in the 1951 radio play "The Minstrel Boy," based on the life of Stephen Collins Foster. Although using a plectrum (which is not relevant to the days of Foster), Billy Bell achieved the atmosphere of Foster's time and helped to maintain the gripping interest which characterised the play throughout.

(To be continued)

Mandolin Technique

By V. J. PARSLER

HAVING progressed so far in our studies of various aspects of mandolin playing, I am forcibly reminded that the majority who read these articles are still in the elementary stage.

Judging by the letters I receive, I should say that a great many are self-taught—and that so often means badly taught!

I do not pretend to teach anybody to play the mandolin, just by writing about it. Some subjects *can* be taught by correspondence but, with a musical instrument, it is far better to see the pupil, how he holds the instrument, how he fingers the strings, and correct his mistakes before they grow into bad habits.

The writer of an article points the way and warns against likely errors. He cannot see how the player carries out his suggestions. So, at the risk of some repetition, I am going to revert to studies in the first position occasionally.

There is, of course, also the new reader to consider.

Now for some exercises.

The "25 Melodious Studies," by Raoul Clifford, are in the form of duets for two mandolins but as both parts are about the same degree of difficulty, they can be attempted with advantage.

Study No. 2 is useful for time and rhythm—especially for pupils still in the process of mastering the first position. For a start, play it with one down stroke to each note, including the crotchets. Master the time and rhythm first and then add the accents.

In several places there is an extension of the first finger to F on the second string. Try to reach this note with the little finger without moving the hand from the first position. Players with small hands find this a difficult stretch but it is worth trying for as it will be a great help in the more difficult studies later on.

In playing this study with down strokes, keep the plectrum over at an angle—say about 60 degrees—leaning away from the player. The left wrist must also be curved outward so that the fingers can fall comfortably on to the fourth string. If the little finger can find the notes without discomfort on this string there will be no difficulty with the others.

TWO MAIN ERRORS

There are two main errors with beginners: (1) A stiff right wrist. (2) The left hand under the fingerboard with the fingers too flat. Avoid these and the battle is half won.

These remarks are intended mainly for the newcomer to the instrument and to "B.M.G." (Incidentally, the reader who asks about my earlier articles may still be able to buy back numbers of "B.M.G." It is worth the inquiry.)

Now for a solo that incorporates some of the things we have been doing. I have chosen Vess Ossman's "Leisure Moments" as it is very tuneful, not difficult if one is familiar with the first position, and has sufficient variety of styles to be a good exercise.

Have a good look at this solo before attempting to play it.

The first line is an Introduction, finishing on a pause. Notice how many of the quavers in this piece are marked to be played with a down stroke. Keep the plectrum leaning away from the body and a good even tone should result.

The second line introduces some simple two-note chords but as these conveniently coincide with a *rit.* there is enough time to get the fingers into position. Should you encounter any difficulty in playing a tremolo on two strings at once, strike the lower note and carry the plectrum straight across to tremolo the top note.

This is a "Half-way house" method of getting the right notes first and then acquiring the greater flexibility of wrist later.

The groups of notes, usually quavers,

grouped under a curved line should be played with alternate down and up strokes to produce as smooth a run as possible.

The Trio introduces some interesting reversed octaves and then a few more chords. For the sixth bar there is a chord using the third finger on A on the third string and the fourth finger on F on the second string. This is an easy stretch—but to reach back for the A in the next chord is more difficult and it may be better to bring the second finger up to take this note.

In the next bar there is also an uneasy stretch for the third and fourth fingers. Have you noticed that if the third finger is pressed down quite firmly the fourth finger seems more uncontrollable? It takes a long time to overcome this, so persevere with the exercises.



KEITH JONES

who plays the guitar at the Royal Restaurant, Liverpool. He is a pupil of Pierre Bethell.

To finish the run of chords ending in the "first time" bar, play the group of three with the fourth and third; the third and second; and finally the second and first fingers.

After the repeat there is a Coda that repeats the original theme; finishing with an *accelerando* played with all down strokes.

I will conclude this month by replying to a reader who writes: "I want to practice very quietly in the evenings so as not to wake the baby. I have tried to mute the mandolin by stuffing a duster in it but it is still too loud. I cannot get a satisfactory mute to stay on the strings—so please suggest something. It has got to be soft playing or no playing for me."

Most of us are up against this difficulty at one time or other but mandolinists less than most instrumentalists. The mandolin is an instrument of the quieter type—but even the quietest of soft plectrums will

sometimes awaken his lordship the baby, so try this.

Instead of using a plectrum, use the index finger of the right hand. Treat the tip of the finger as if it were a plectrum, by supporting it with the tips of the other fingers. If the nail projects a little, a clearer tone will result. Discarding the plectrum will certainly reduce the volume to tolerable proportions.

The left-hand technique will lose nothing by this method but do not discard the plectrum too much or plectrum control will suffer.

(To be continued)

Playing the Hawaiian Guitar

By BASIL KING



IN view of the many tunings now in use, the only way to arrange Hawaiian guitar music for general publication would appear to be to write a melody line with chord symbols—the symbols being carefully selected to help the

player as much as possible.

A helpful addition to a solo published in such a way would be a list of the symbols used in the solo, giving the group of notes each symbol represents.

Many popular songs already give a melody line and chord symbols, besides the piano arrangement. Also, by combining the violin and piano parts with the guitar part from a set of band parts, one again secures a melody line and chord symbols.

Thus "arrangements" for the Hawaiian guitar are already available for many tunes.

Because of this, I propose giving the H.G. student some guidance in playing from a melody with chord symbols.

ANOTHER WAY

Let me first point out that there is another way of adapting popular piano copies and violin band parts to the H.G. This consists simply of picking out the printed harmony notes you can play with the melody—and which gives an effective-sounding arrangement. However, chord symbols will help you to make better use of your own particular tuning and for the benefit of those knowing little or nothing

about chord symbols, we will make a simple start.

Can you write out an ascending scale of C major? If not, see if there is one in your H.G. tutor, or get a musical friend to show you. The notes will be: C. D. E. F. G. A. B. C.

With the scale in front of you, you can see that the 1st (or *root*) note of the scale is C. The root, third and fifth notes of the scale are C. E. and G. Now these notes make a C major chord—and they are called the root, 3rd and 5th notes of the chord.

The chord symbol for a major chord is simply the name of its root note. Thus the symbol for a C major chord is—C.

If you use the High Bass tuning you will find the notes of the C chord at the third fret (and, of course, the 15th fret). On the E and E7th tunings, they are at the eighth fret. On the E6th and E13th tunings, at least two of the notes will be found at the 8th fret.

ANY ORDER

It does not matter in what order the notes C. E. and G. are placed—they still make a C chord. Suppose a melody starts with the note C (an octave above middle C) and the chord symbol under the melody is also C. On the High Bass tuning, you can play the melody note at the 15th fret (3rd string) and add the notes G. and E. beneath it (4th and 5th strings) and this will give you the required C harmony with the melody note.

On the E and E7th tunings you can do the same thing at the 8th fret—with the melody note on the first string.

Try it—and write down the chord you

play, so that you can see what it looks like.

In actual pitch notation (which I advise you to use) you should have E on the bottom line of the treble staff; G on the next line up; and C in the third space from the bottom.

The next step is to find out what to do if your tuning will not give you the complete C chord—or if it is inconvenient to play the complete C chord.

THE THIRD IS IMPORTANT

All you have to do is to *remember that the third note of any major scale is the most important note in the chord*. In our C chord the "third" is E. If, then, the melody note is C and you cannot play the complete chord, which note should you add for harmony? The answer is, of course, E!

Similarly, if the melody note is G and you cannot play the complete C chord, then you should add E as harmony note. If the melody note is E, then you can add C or G as the harmony note; whichever is the most effective.

Try harmonising a C melody note with a G; and a G melody note with a C—just to hear what the effect is. Music is not made of rules; it is made of *sounds*.

If you want to learn what you have been reading so far, get out your guitar and try everything and listen to it. Get some MS. paper and write everything down to help you understand and remember it.

So far we have only considered the C major chord but any other major chord can be made and used in the same way.

Suppose you want a G major chord.

Take the root, third and fifth notes from the G major scale and these are the root, 3rd and 5th notes of the chord. The notes will be: G. B. and D. and the symbol G.

For the chord of F the notes will be: F. A. and C.

What are the notes in the following major chords and which is the most important in each chord: D. A. E. B ♭. E ♯. and A ♯? Get out that manuscript paper and work them out. I will check the answers with you next month.

Write out the following few bars of melody, putting the chord symbols underneath the melody notes and make a nice job of playing it on your tuning. It is the first few bars of "Aloha Oe":

Crotchet G on the second line up of the treble staff, with chord symbol C underneath. Bar line. Minim A with chord symbol F. Minim C (chord symbol F still applies but there is no need to write it down again). Bar line. Dotted-minim F. Crotchet A. Bar line. Minim G, with chord symbol C. (You should be back on the second line of the treble staff now!) Minim C. Bar line. Dotted-minim E.

I have given that in actual pitch. If you are not sufficiently sure of such things as crotchets, minims, bar lines, etc., then please learn about them. They are some of the rudiments of music and you should know about them.

I am now back in England, having returned from the U.S.A., but hope to give you some more American news in the future and eventually return to the States.

(To be continued)

Banjo & Zither-Banjo Causerie

By J. McNAUGHTON



SOME time ago, in his "B.M.G." articles entitled "The Two Macs," R. Tarrant Bailey described the "Magnophone" for which so many memorable cylinder records were made at his Park St. studios in Bath—a remarkable efficient machine that still works perfectly.

I last heard it operating some six years ago, so when I heard recently that R. J. R. White was *en route* for the Bailey ménage, I decided to drop in uninvited in the hope of sharing in the fun.

The "Magnophone" was in full cry



"HE WAS HERE A MINUTE AGO!"

when I arrived, to be greeted by the two humorists of "B.M.G." and, when order was restored, we gave our undivided attention to the cylinders White and I had requested.

Puffing happily at his beloved pipe ("I grow the stuff myself, laddie!") the sprightly author of "Fifty Years a Banjo Teacher" kept the machine working, despite the number of our requests—a number that would have been regarded as downright inconsiderate by any other "septuagenarian"; as T.B. might describe himself.

There were polkas and marches by Morley; MS. pieces by J. P. Cuninghame (whom many believe to have been the equal of Morley); duets in which Tarrant Bailey partnered S. E. Turner, or Cuninghame, or Clifford Essex; solos by Tarrant Bailey Jnr.; and a gem of a balalaika solo, exquisitely played; plus many impromptu efforts punctuated with the laughter of Morley and others in those halcyon days.

INCREDIBLE SKILL

I was too intent on the incredible skill evinced by these great players to make notes during the two hours' session, for the pace was often terrific and the technique sheer wizardry.

Such attainments are beyond words but doubtless many of the solos will revive happy memories among the Morley fans. Here, as I recall them, are the titles of all the cylinders we heard at the Bath home of R. Tarrant Bailey:

Morley solos: "Andante and Waltz," "Banjo Diversion," "Blackbird," "Butterfly," "Colombine," "Cuninghame's Return," "Joy Ride," "Kaffir Walk-

round," "Olympian March," "Polka," "Popinjay Polka," "Shuffle Along," "Twiddle Bit," "Tarantella."

Morley, Cuninghame and Tarrant Bailey: "Jovial Huntsman."

Cuninghame and Tarrant Bailey: "St. Louis Rag."

Cuninghame and Tarrant Bailey Jnr.: "Minuet" (Morley).

J. P. Cuninghame (playing his own compositions): "Easy Stunts," "One and Two," "Myfanwy," "Pimpernel," "Minuet," "Somerset March."

S. E. Turner and Clifford Essex: "Bunch of Rags."

Tarrant Bailey Jnr.: "Banjo Dream," "Coming Out," "Minuet," "Mind the Paint," "Something Different," "Electra Polka," "Twiddle Polka," "Tomato Polka," "Mazeppa."

Tarrant Bailey: Andreff's "Valse Caprice" as a balalaika solo.

SMALL WONDER

It is small wonder that I was disappointed when my proposed recital of these unique recordings did not take place in London as I intended. Tarrant Bailey gave me the fullest co-operation but our opposite numbers failed to organise their side of the arrangements, unfortunately.

Some enthusiast, or fretted instrument organisation, may yet save the day however, for I understand that the "Magnetophone" with all its historic cylinders is to be offered to the highest bidder. Perhaps the newly formed Associated Banjo Circle (of which I hear such glowing accounts) might be persuaded to have a "whip round" and acquire what would be the nucleus of a valuable museum of

strictly banjo interests!

Returning at long last to our right-hand studies, on this page we have a few short examples that, though self-explanatory, will be found useful in furthering the adaptability we are seeking. Once again, the student is reminded that these seemingly simple exercises, if practised until no conscious effort is required, will improve right-hand technique.

(To be continued)

The ELECTRIC Spectrum Guitar

By JACK DUARTE



A FEW months ago I wrote complaining of the present day neglect of chords in guitar solo passages (rhythm section chording is one thing, the use of chords for musical purposes is another), and to judge by the letters I have received from interested readers, I am not alone in this view.

The problem itself has two aspects: (1) the publication of music for free sale, and (2) the training of future (and present) guitarists in the use of chords in solo playing.

The first question looks quite an easy one on the face of it and some readers have suggested that guitar arrangements of popular tunes might be published in the same way as piano copies are at present. Whilst I agree wholly with this in principle, I gravely doubt its practicability. Copyright fees and restrictions are, on current material, too severe for it to be undertaken by anyone other than the publishers of the music itself and this would mean the provision by publishers of special arrangements for the guitar (which would have to be made by first-class guitarists—whereas those for the pianoforte do not) and we guitarists are very much of a minority—too much so for this course to appeal readily to music publishers.

I will, in the next month or two, ascertain from the publishers themselves their own views on this, but I fear that we already know the answer—though nobody would be more pleased than I to be

Ex. 8

Ex. 9

Ex. 10

Ex. 11

Ex. 12

proved wrong in this.

The second matter, namely, that of instilling the chordal approach into new players, is also no light matter.

In this country the majority of guitarists who have any degree of mastery of (or interest in) the chord/single note type of playing are of pre-war vintage and not all are teachers. What is required is a nucleus of teachers who have the know-how—the modern harmonic knowledge—and the ability to inspire their pupils.

The last-named quality is essential here more than anywhere else, because the mastery of this highly effective style of playing requires far more ability (both musical and technical) than any other department of guitar playing.

It was hard enough before the late war when our popular musical language was rather more simple than it is now, but in these times it calls for a wide chordal knowledge and a musical approach well in excess of pre-war requirements.

OUTWARD SIMPLICITY

The end result need not be terribly difficult, technically speaking, but that outward simplicity may mask a great deal of knowledge and skill in the making of the arrangement. There is only one road which leads to even a modest level of ability in this field of guitar playing, and that is via **HARD WORK and STUDY.**

Do not for one moment expect to arrive at the objective by means of short cuts; a fully musical knowledge and approach is essential and unless you either have or acquire this, then frankly you are wasting your time.

It is perhaps no coincidence that two of the guitarists at present at the top of the American tree (and make no mistake, the American players are still the touchstones in every way), Tal Farlow and Johnny Smith, both use chords freely in their playing—the former mainly in background work, the latter in solos. In doing this they are furnishing something for which there is a real demand and are showing their fellows the way they should go.

Perhaps Johnny Smith has made the bigger impact in this country even though his released records are few, and although he has also a formidable single-string technique (and a few tricks which he shows signs of using too often) it is the lazy, smooth, full-bodied chording of his solos which marks him off from everyone else.

In point of fact, the Johnny Smith solos are based on the free use of chords which are so difficult to hold that few players indeed at any level could use him as a

model, or could base themselves on the exact quality of sound which he produces.

Nevertheless, the broad basis of his style—which is no more or less than that which I have always advocated—can be followed by any player of sufficient ability, modified suitably.

I would here underline that unless you have a good technique and can make a fair pass at "B.M.G." Grade "c" solos, you are not ready to face up to the job we are discussing.

When listening to Johnny Smith (and bearing in mind the types of chord he uses) it is tempting to wonder whether he uses a short-scale fingerboard but there is a certain carefulness and artistic leisure about the way in which he times the hardest chords, that suggests he may well use a normal fingerboard and that he finds these chords a trifle tough also.

Whilst I do not suggest that you try to copy Smith (and please do not confuse him with that coarse, corny comedian Arthur "Guitar Boogie" Smith) I do earnestly urge you to get as many of his records as you can.

RAVE NOTICE

Last May "Discus" reviewed "Tabou" and "Moonlight in Vermont," by Johnny Smith (on Vogue V.2137, 78 r.p.m., 10 in.), giving it a well-deserved rave notice. I have arranged with "Discus" not to duplicate record mentions, so can add now to this solitary record, two others since released. The same combination, the Johnny Smith Quintet with Stan Getz, are also to be heard on Vogue V.2204 (10 in., 78 r.p.m.) playing "Where or When" and "A Ghost of a Chance." In the second-named side, there is more of the wonderful chording which made "Vermont" such a landmark in modern e.p.g.

TROUBADOURS !

The remarkable increase in singing to one's own guitar accompaniment—with its own special problems—has prompted us to persuade John Cavall to conduct a "Troubadours Column" in "B.M.G." If you have any queries regarding singing to the guitar, write to John Cavall, c/o "B.M.G." and your queries will be answered—direct if you enclose a S.A.E.

playing. The single-string solos are below the standard of the chord passages—no one else takes a solo in "Ghost of a Chance"—and though they reveal a marvellously clean and quick technique, they lack the musical magic of the chords.

Long tracts of Johnny Smith's playing are liberally distributed throughout a new L.P. record (Brunswick LAT.8036; 12 in., 33 r.p.m.) entitled "The Jazz Studio 1." Each side is a marathon performance, one contains nearly 40 choruses of "Tenderly," the other over 60 choruses of a 12-bar blues called "Let's Split."

The main interest to us is in "Tenderly," which is opened by Johnny Smith playing an unaccompanied and free-tempo version of the tune, and similarly closed with a half-chorus. These, in my opinion, are his finest work to date—though in chord work his standard is so high at all times that I would not press the point to the verge of argument!

POINTING THE WAY

Here, suitably tempered to the shorn lamb, is surely the type of arrangement which so many of you would give so much to make and/or play. Both sides are well laced with single-string solos (most of which compare well with the best of today's crop), but the beginning and end of "Tenderly" surely points the way for future guitar style.

Next month I will discuss and list the recordings in which Tal Farlow is featured with the Red Norvo Trio and in December I shall begin a series of articles in which this question of chord-use will be discussed. This will not form a course in itself, and will not enable any Tom, Dick or Harry to develop a chordal style (or make such arrangements) but it will provide, for anyone with the ability and the will to work, with a basis which is more clearly directed and more thorough than any so far published.

It will be pre-supposed that the reader knows the elements of harmony; the construction of common chords as far as the 13th; and the general principles of unessential notes and chromatic alterations to diatonic chords.

Thus equipped, the seeker may look forward to some positive guidance. Those not so equipped have two months to rectify the deficiency—if this is too short a time, then they must aim, for the present, at much more simple objectives. The beginner, pure and simple, is being very well catered for elsewhere in these pages.

(To be continued)

The MODERN Hawaiian Guitar

By FRANK BAKER

A COMMON fault of players who try a new tuning is that little study of the tuning is made before attempting to play one's favourite solos in the new tuning. Generally it follows on these lines: The player, having heard others play numbers he knows in this new tuning—let us say the E7th, for example—sits down with his guitar and alters the tuning accordingly. After a few chords to satisfy himself the instrument is in tune, he immediately launches into an attempt to play such-and-such a solo.

Needless to say, after a bar or two he is completely lost or, at best, succeeds in playing a very poor version; usually with wrong harmony in many places. After half an hour or so of doodling about he decides that the tuning is beyond his capabilities and reverts to his previous one.

Let us take the example of a saxophone player who decided to take up the clarinet. The method of playing is similar—but the fingering (note positions) is quite different and his first step is to learn the fingering and try a few scales—not attempting to play tunes immediately.

EQUALLY APPLICABLE

I am sure this is the course most teachers recommend—and the theory is equally applicable to the Hawaiian guitarist who tries a new tuning.

In previous articles I have stressed the advantage of studying a diagram of the tuning before attempting to play to any considerable extent and would not press this point again unless I thought it necessary. There can be no doubt that a fingerboard diagram is of great assistance and the player who cannot be bothered to draw out a fair-sized one for himself would be better if he dropped the whole idea of using another tuning.

Having drawn the diagram and studied the position of various notes and chord theoretically, the first attempt at playing should be at scales. This may seem an awful bore at first—especially to the player who already performs well on another tuning—but it is well worth while as it is one of the quickest ways of getting to know the note positions on altered strings. It should not take long and the ability to play several scales inspires confidence to proceed with other examples, such as double-stopping and chords.

I am not advocating hours and hours on scales alone; just enough to have the necessary effect of making your study of

the E7th tuning start with a few basic principles that will stand you in good stead as we go along.

In Exercises 1 and 2 on this page I give two scales and the average player will see that these scale positions may readily be extended up the fingerboard. For example, the scale of E \flat (or D \sharp) may be easily played by placing the steel one fret higher than the positions given for D major.

Try this and attempt writing out the scale in diagram form as given here. The more ambitious player can proceed further and write out the musical notation.

I have purposely written these in diagram form to help those Hawaiian guitarists who are still struggling to read musical notation and I have decided that most of the examples to follow will include number or diagram indications, as well as musical notation, for this reason.

SECOND STAGE

The second stage is really easy, as it only requires the player to memorise the chord obtainable with the straight barré at each fret—and as the major and seventh chords are indicated by the note on the first string (which is tuned to E as in the standard or High Bass tuning) these chords are easily placed.

Ex. 3 shows the names of major chords, seventh chords, and three-note diminished chords obtainable at each fret with the straight barré.

Strings 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 give the major chord with three inversions of three-note chords, whilst adding string 5 to any of

these gives the seventh chord. In the case of the lowest major inversion, gap picking is required, i.e. 3, 4 and 6 are picked with the 2nd and 1st fingers and thumb respectively—care being taken not to sound string 5.

The three-note diminished chords are played on strings 2, 3 and 5, picking as described above. These will sound rather incomplete until played with an accompaniment but will be found to be most useful later on in solos, etc.

FOR CLARITY

For the sake of clarity I have only shown one name for each diminished chord, i.e. the name taken from the note on the second string but, as most players will be aware, the name of these chords written as chord symbols may be any of the three notes. For instance, the name of the diminished chord at the first fret could be Cdim., Adim., or E \flat dim.

Set yourself a few exercises this month by picking these various chords and inversions. For example, play first at fret one and then, in your own time, move to fret three; then fret eight; and, finally, fret one again—and so on.

The second time, make it fret one, then fret six, back to fret one and finish on fret 13.

We will continue with more examples next month.

Now some good news for guitarists interested in band work. Recently I have come across a number of orchestral parts where the guitar copy has the melody line written in as well as the symbols. This might become general if the guitar is featured more and more in bands on the

Ex. 1. (C major scale—no sharps or flats).

Frets:—	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
E.			G.		A.		B.	C.
B.	C.		D.		E.	F.		
G \sharp .	A.		B.					
E.	F.		G.					
D.		E.						
B.	C.		D.					

Ex. 2. (D major scale—one sharp, F \sharp).

Frets:—	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
E.		F \sharp .	G.		A.		B.	C.		D.
B.	C.		D.		E.					
G \sharp .	A.		B.							
E.	F \sharp .		G.							
D.		E.								
B.	C.		D.							

Ex. 3.

Frets:—	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.
Major chords:	F.	F \sharp .	G.	G \sharp .	A.	B \flat .	B.	C.	D \flat .	D.	E \flat .	E.	F.
7th chords:	F7.	F \sharp 7.	G7.	G \sharp 7.	A7.	B \flat 7.	B7.	C7.	D \flat 7.	D7.	E \flat 7.	E7.	F7.
Dim. chords:	C.	C \sharp .	D.	D \sharp .	E.	F.	F \sharp .	G.	A \flat .	A.	B \flat .	B.	C.

air, recordings, etc., so the player who can read a melody line will probably be the one most sought after.

If this is truly an indication of things to come it will behove all players to concentrate on sight reading as much as possible.

(To be continued)

NEW GUITAR MUSIC

By PETER SENSIER

THREE new Vienna publications for guitar are now available in this country; the composers of two of these being well known to British guitarists.

"Russian Folk Song" arranged and fingered by Dr. Boris Perott. Here, for lovers of Russian music, is a piece that is easy, effective and typical.

"Silent Forests" by Ernest Sperling once again falls into the not too difficult category and has some pleasing variations of tempo and key.

"16 Easy Solos for Guitar" by Ferdinand Rebay (fingered by Gertha Hammer-schmied) consists of fifteen mainly easy solos and a set of six easy variations on the theme "Schlief, Kindlein, Schlief" for guitar and piano.

We now come to the music published by the Clifford Essex Music Co. which makes up their list of standard guitar solos. All this music is well printed, is supplied in a serviceable cover, and is reasonable in price.

Here we go, alphabetically by composers:

"Etude Brillante" (Aguado). A pretty piece and technically not difficult fundamentally but, when played *allegro vivo* as indicated, one has to move around.

"Arpeggio Etude" (Aguado). A bright and easy little study for thumb, first and second fingers.

"Adagio" (Aguado). Edited and fingered by Julian Bream, this is a pleasant study in 6/8 that keeps both hands occupied—but is worth the trouble.

"Für Elise" (Beethoven). This is arranged by Norman C. Lees and is *not* easy—but if you are a transcription fan you will find it worth battling with.

"Ba'let" (Carulli). A simple piece in E major which romps along in typical Carulli fashion.

"Etude, from Op. 10. No. 3" (Chopin). Arranged by Alonso Medio, here is an easy arrangement of this well-known piece under its popular title of "So Deep is the Night" with only a few excursions into moderately high positions.

"Etude in A" (Napoleon Coste). Edited and fingered by Alonso Medio, this is a bright and fairly simple piece based on a continually repeated rhythmic bass patterns played staccato.

"Allegretto in E Major" (André de Vekey). Not too difficult, this piece is based mainly on chords in various positions up to the 10th.

"Andrylla, Capriccio" (André de Vekey). A fair companion piece to the aforementioned but a little more difficult and more interesting.

"Barcarolle" (A. de Vekey). Fairly easy, tuneful and lives up to its title admirably.

"Allegretto, Op. 147, No. 9 (Giuliani). A typical and tuneful Giulianesque solo that moves around the fingerboard but is certainly not difficult.

"Andantino Op. 147, No. 5" (Giuliani). From the same work. The same remarks apply except that this solo in A is a little more difficult.

"Andantino Op. 147, No. 2" (Giuliani). Easier than the two foregoing pieces but possibly not so well known. Written in F, this piece does not go higher than the fifth position.

"Chit Chat" (Giuliani). A rather different kettle of fish. This piece is a brilliant little parcel of fun by the composer in his sunniest mood. Definitely not for beginners.

"Danse Nord" (Giuliani). A frequently-played piece but usually taken at a more accommodating tempo than the *allegro vivace* called for. However, it is pleasant either way and basically it is not difficult to play.

"Etude Spirituoso" (Giuliani). One of the first guitar solos of which I heard a "live" performance and one I much prefer played *allegro con grazioso* than *con spirito* as marked. Of course, at the first-named tempo it does make it a little easier!

(To be continued)

PROPER PRACTICE

CONCENTRATED thought during a practice period will enable a student to derive more lasting benefit from an hour's work than endless hours of slipshod study.

The wise student devotes a regular time each day to practising. That period must be absolutely lost to every other pursuit. The time spent in practice must be spent profitably and if the student makes up his mind to do his best, the irksomeness of the task is soon over and much is accomplished.

If he just dawdles away his time, the period is used up just the same, but with no beneficial results.

It is just as true that no matter how little a student feels like practising, he can overcome this distaste within the first fifteen minutes if he will do his best to arouse his interest and will conscientiously make up his mind to derive the most benefit from his practice.

By concentrating on the work in hand he automatically, as it were, overcomes the disinterest and he finds himself really striving to master the difficulties before him.

NOT SO EASY

It is making up his mind to approach the study period in a receptive frame of mind which is hard. It will be of help if you approach the practice period systematically. Sit down for a few moments and consider the work to be accomplished. Once that is clear in your mind, prepare your instrument. Arrange the exercises or solo you are to tackle. Place the chair in its right position. Leave the room and wash the hands. Then back to the study room and concentrate on the job in hand!

Form the habit throughout the practice period of checking your thoughts. See if your attention is absolutely on the subject or wandering afield. Do this frequently during the first few weeks of practising until the art of concentration is acquired.

When away from the instrument—out walking or riding on a train—the art of concentrating can be developed. Just place your attention on some object and see how long you can keep your mind from wandering. This training will be of material assistance during practice.

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

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

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

POST AS EARLY IN THE
MONTH AS POSSIBLE

Ua Like No a Like

Arranged by
JOHNNY KENT

Hawaiian Guitar Solo
(High Bass Tuning)

TRAD.

Slow Fox-trot

Prelude

Arranged by
Thornhill J. Nicholas

Spanish Guitar Solo

CHOPIN Op. 28, No. 7

Maqueda

Mandolin Solo

C. DE RANO

Moderately slow (*con espress*)



Tempo di Valse Espagnole



Fine

La Cucaracha

Mexican Folk Song

Plectrum Guitar Solo or Duet

Arranged by
VINCE MILLER

Allegretto

1st

2nd

G

G

G

D7

D7

D7

G

D7

G

Fine

The musical score is written for plectrum guitar, featuring a first and second part. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The score consists of five systems of two staves each. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The second system continues the melody and includes a G chord. The third system includes a D7 chord. The fourth system includes a G chord. The fifth system concludes the piece with a 'Fine' marking and a G chord. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals, as well as guitar-specific markings like 'V' for vibrato.

Brave and Bold

Banjo Solo

FRED J. SHAW

Tempo di Marcia

The main body of the Banjo Solo consists of 24 measures across eight staves. The music is in 6/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a *ff* dynamic and includes various performance markings such as *mf*, *cresc.*, and *ff*. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 above notes. Percussion-like techniques are marked with 'P' (e.g., 3P, 7P, 12PB, 10PB, 9P, 7PB, 10P, 7PB, 5P, 10B) and 'Ex' (e.g., Ex, Ex, Ex). The section concludes with a double bar line and the word *Fine*.

Trio

The Trio section consists of 12 measures across five staves. It begins with a *p-f* dynamic. The music continues with similar notation to the main body, including fingerings, 'P' and 'Ex' markings (e.g., 3P, 7P, 10B, 5P, 18P), and a final double bar line with the word *Fine*.

D.C. al Fine

MINSTRELSY IN RUSSIA

By R. A. BIRSE

IN England, we are told, minstrelsy reached its peak in the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries and during that period there were many minstrels held in high esteem. There are entries of payments made to minstrels in the 16th century but the art of minstrelsy at that time was in its decline and was eventually destroyed by the introduction of the printed word.

A charter of Edward IV (1469) formed the royal minstrels into a Guild and a new charter was conferred in 1604 when its jurisdiction was limited to the City of London. This corporation still exists, I believe, under the style of the Corporation of the Master, Wardens and Commonalty of the Art or Science of the Musicians of London.

In Russia, minstrelsy appears to have survived a little longer than it did in this country and probably the two best known minstrels in old Russia were Savoska and Paramoshka. There is a drawing extant of these two: Paramoshka playing the so-called "spoons with bells" and Savoska playing the *gudok*.

The "spoons with bells" was an unusual instrument—eight little bells affixed to the handle of a spoon (four on each side) and two spoons were held in each hand and shaken, thus producing a jingling sound. The *gudok* was played with a bow after the style of a violin but the neck of the instrument was held at the level of the chest.

Entries relating to payments to minstrels also appear in Russian archives: "June 9, 1632. Paid blind domra player, Gavrilka, one rouble. July 11, 1635. Paid blind Lukash and his friends, for strings, 4 altins. Oct. 10, 1636. Paid blind Luka for domra strings, 3 altins."

However, most Russian minstrels wandered from village to village and from town to town like the European troubadours. Quickly they would rig up their rods with linen-cloth and rags over them; boxes would be emptied of their amusing dolls; and while the *Petrushka* man was busy erecting his "theatre" (Punch and Judy) the domra would be jingling, the *volynka* (bag-pipes) snuffling and the *boobni* ringing.

When the performance took place in a remote village, the minstrels gave news from the towns and related much of what was happening in the world around. In-

deed, the minstrels were a link between the villages and the outside world.

The Tartars, Kalmucks, Kirghiz and other Asiatic peoples had string instruments—more or less similar to the bala-laika—called *dumbra*, *domr*, and *dombur*. When some 600 years ago the Russians became better acquainted with their Asiatic neighbours, the minstrels copied this "new music" (as the Russians called it) and it became popular. Many Russians learned to play their neighbours' instruments: the *goosli*, the *gudok*, etc.

The church, however, stepped in and there started a bitter struggle to suppress the "wicked, unholy music." The church acted with the approval of the Czar or Kniaz (prince) and the people were ordered to sing only church music and hymns.

NOT SO EASY

However, it was not so easy to put such a decree into practice. The ordinary people liked their folk songs and preferred them to church music. So did the powerful Boyards. Even the Czar used to listen to them with his whole household. John the Terrible, on returning from church and having divested himself of his under-cassock and monk's calotte (skull-cap), used to call for his minstrels to play and sing something jolly. Often he would join in himself.

So the decree was not taken too seriously and the pleading and threats on the part of the clergy had little or no effect. The people simply *would* go on singing, dancing and playing what they pleased.

At last the priests persuaded the Czar to take more drastic steps. One ukaz (decree) followed another and anyone heard singing or playing "these satanic songs" (as the priests called them) was heavily fined and given severe chastisement.

INSTRUMENTS BURNT

When even that failed to produce the desired result, the church decided to have all the illegal instruments burnt. The instruments were collected in the towns and they perished in huge bonfires. The domra, goosli, gudok, boobni, bala-laika, volynka, breika, svirel, zhaleika, surni, dudka and others perished in the flames. They vanished from the towns and, with them, the minstrels.

These instruments remained extinct for quite a considerable time until some lucky chance brought them to life again. Although the instruments in the towns were destroyed, some still survived in far distant villages where the peasants con-



"YOU CAN HEAR OUR FRED! HE'S THE ONLY ONE IN TUNE."

tinued to live as before and no one worried them in such remote places.

Gradually—years later—when the old instruments were found in these villages, they came into their own again.

When reading about such past events Russians now exclaim: "Can you imagine such a picture? You go out into your garden with a balalaika in your hand. Your neighbours join you. You play the balalaika and they sing. Suddenly the police arrive and you are arrested and taken to the nearest police station and mercilessly flogged! Why should you be punished? Your neighbours didn't object to the music; they even asked you to play something jolly! How things have changed. It couldn't happen to us in these days!"

I wonder.

MANDOLIN MASTERS (3)

By JOHN ANSON

"OPEN confession, they say, is good for the soul, so I do not mind confessing that the mandolin has never been one of my favourite instruments. Yet I must admit that if it were always as well played as it was by Mario de Pietro last week I should have good cause to change my opinion as to its value as a medium for the discoursing of sweet music. Signor Pietro is certainly a Master Mandolinist."

That was one of many similar comments by the Press, hailing another mandolin master on one of his first appearances in this country in 1920. It was after his appearance at the Victoria Palace. Previous to this, Mario de Pietro had appeared at the London Coliseum when one newspaper "hailed the newcomer, Mario de Pietro, as an unusually skilful mandolinist who fully tests the capacity of his instrument in the course of a performance that is evidently to the liking of the house."

Before he visited England, Mario de Pietro had appeared at some of the best concerts and vaudeville performances in Italy and was a special favourite at the Kursaal Italia and Sala Maddaloni.

GREAT FAVOURITE

Within three years he became a great favourite in this country, where he appeared at most of the leading Music Halls in London and the Provinces. He also originated a spectacular "act" which he called "The Vesuvians" which was produced at the Kennington Theatre in August, 1923. In addition to Mario as solo mandolinist, this "act" included

players on guitar, balalaika and tenor mandola, with soprano singer and dancer.

About that time he made his first solo mandolin records—and then returned to Italy to appear at a special concert.

Mario de Pietro's first big concert in England was in April, 1921, at the Aeolian Hall in Bond Street, London, after which he was hailed as the Paganini of the Mandolin. The "Westminster Gazette" said: "One may readily recognise Mr. Pietro's great skill as an executant. He played Vieuxtemp's familiar 'Ballade and Polonaise' for the violin in a manner which was quite astonishing and which certainly gave one a new impression as to the capabilities of the instrument in the technical sense."

In "The Morning Post" the same day, a writer said: "As far as we know in this country the mandolin is not a remarkably effective instrument since it often lacks variety and colour. But Signor Mario de Pietro, who made his first concert appearance yesterday, puts it into an entirely new category. In his hands it becomes a thing of life, capable of great variety of tone and making an appeal that is irresistible. Strung and tuned like the violin, the mandolin as played by Signor Pietro is made to achieve quite as much. But then he is an executant of uncommon skill and a player who never forgets that he is a musician."

VIOLIN PIECES

"Most of his solos were well-known violin pieces like the 'Ballade and Polonaise' of Vieuxtemp's, Wieniawski's 'Mazurka' and the Hubay arrangement of the Brahms Hungarian Dances. These, with other pieces he gave in acknowledgement of the enthusiasm of the audience, were played with all the effect they would have made if they were the work of a great violinist. Yet Signor Pietro retains the individuality of the instrument all through, just as his technique of right and left hand fails."

"Highly esteemed in his native Naples, this performer is likely to win like renown in this country and at the same time to bring credit on a typical but much-misunderstood instrument."

What a wonderful tribute to a great artist—and true prophesy. On his return to London early in 1924, Mario de Pietro

was quickly in demand for At Homes, Concerts, Banquets, etc. He arranged a brilliant B. M. & G. Concert in the King George's Hall, London, on May 20, 1924, when, besides playing classical and popular numbers on the mandolin and tenor-banjo, he also conducted a B. M. & G. Orchestra of 30. Among the other famous artists "on the bill" were Joe Morley (banjoist) and A. F. Cramer (Hawaiian guitarist).

It was on the radio that Mario did his best work in helping to make the mandolin more popular, and he became really famous for his many broadcasts. I suppose with the possible exception of Troise (conductor of the famous "Mandoliers" and "Banjoliers") Mario de Pietro did more than any other soloist to interest the public in the mandolin's capabilities.

TALKED ABOUT

He got the mandolin talked about to its advantage by giving so much pleasurable listening. He also helped to encourage players of the instrument by showing how it could be played. To these enthusiasts, Mario de Pietro's playing was a real tonic.

In remembering what we mandolinists owe to Mario de Pietro I always picture him as shown in the photograph that appeared in the January, 1924, issue of "B.M.G." Here we saw a studious and thoughtful-looking young man, holding his beloved mandolin—but not in playing position. He is standing and looking with intense pride and admiration at the mandolin he holds so gently in his hands. Mario's father was a maker of mandolins and made the instrument Mario played so excellently.

Looking at the picture one can imagine Mario paying tribute to his father's craftsmanship and saying to himself: "This is my favourite instrument—my beloved mandolin—and I will show the world what lovely music I can play on it." And he did.

HIS SOLOS

Let us look at some of the mandolin music Mario de Pietro played so well.

First, three of his own compositions which, although varied in character, are all typical Pietro.

"Sunshine of Naples." This is a lively and lovely waltz, written as a tribute to his birthplace. Plenty of practice needed here to achieve that wonderful tremolo.

"L'Appassionata." A tuneful tango. This is a showy solo and is good practice for right and left hands. It is a lively tune with a beautiful rhythm. There are

★ Whilst the Editor is only too pleased to give information on any matters connected with the fretted instruments he regrets that letters unaccompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope cannot be answered.

All letters are answered as quickly as possible, but readers are asked to be tolerant for any delay.

plenty of grace notes to show off but it is not difficult.

"Viva la Liberta." A lively march. Those thrilling runs in triplets that Mario loved are all in this solo. It is not difficult to play at an average speed.

Among other pieces I always enjoyed Mario playing were favourite pieces by Elgar and Kreisler but I think the best of all was to hear him play Calace's "Danza dei Nani." This I consider to be one of the best pieces ever written for the mandolin—a solo of real class to show off the performer's technique and give pleasure to the listener.

There is a great deal to learn by remembering the Mandolin Masters. Thanks for the memory of great players like Francia, Persichini and Pietro. They are gone from us but remain very much alive in our hearts; inspiring us by memories of their brilliant playing and glorious music. May their skill inspire us to improve our own playing so that when we play our best we hear people say in admiration: "I never knew the mandolin could sound like that!"

THE Guitar on Wax

By "Discus"

"Kashmir" and "Evening in Paris," and "Harem Scarem" and "Pakistan." Victor Feldman Modern Jazz Quartet. Esquire 10-364 and 10-374 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

We suspect the instrumentation of this quartet to be vibes, e.g., bass and drums, but execrable recording does not help our guesswork. In truth the front-line instrumentation sounds more like a banjo (with the strings being plucked hard into the fingerboard) and a man striking empty beer bottles with toffee hammers. Since these effects are magnified tenfold in the "eastern" numbers, it would seem that a superficial imitation of vinas, rebabs, qonams and the like is intended. This distorted noise, with the addition of a large gong in "Kashmir" and some rather epileptic rhythms, is apparently Indian musical fertilisation of modern jazz. It is all very naïve and infinitely less stimulating than the real thing. "Harem Scarem"—fast, as its name suggests—and "Evening in Paris"—which might just as well be called "Morning in Archer Street"—are much better jazz, though they are still marred by the recording and a horrid and pointless wavering of volume from the vibes (clearly intentional). Stan Watson plays adequate but rather one-legged guitar, both solo and chorded. How much better this band

might be if it stopped trying to be too pretentious.

"Concert Creations for Guitar." Laurindo Almeida. Capitol LC. 6669 (10 in.; 33 r.p.m.).

This unique and delightful record was reviewed here some time ago when it was released on American Capitol and we welcome it now as issued in this country. Light music verging on jazz is a great rarity in the world of the authentic Spanish guitar, let alone recorded by such a beautiful player as Almeida. The eight tracks range from Bach (a Bourrée, played too slowly) to "Tea for Two," and include four originals by L. A., of which "Brazilliance" is easily the most captivating. All the pieces are, of course, unaccompanied and for the guitar lover who wants something really different, this record is the Must of the Month. Recording is perfect. More, please!

A few sides were recently reviewed, on the Durium label, of Roberto Murolo, the Italian Gavall. The same company has now released, all at once, so many sides by this artist that individual review is quite impossible. What we said of him previously still stands, and although he now appears to us to be an artist of pleasant voice (though not faultless intonation) and rather limited range, 34 sides of any such artist, all at once, is a wickedly severe test. In most of the sides there appears to be an additional accompanying guitar and would-be troubadours will find in these sides an elegant sufficiency of ideas for simple guitar accompaniments. The first four listed records were our own personal favourites, but others may think otherwise. All are on 10 in., 78 r.p.m., and on the Durium label.

"Tu Si' Nata 'O Mese 'E Marzo" and "Catene" (DC. 16539); "Docchie Nire" and "Luna Rossa" (DC. 16524); "Chitarra Romana" and "Vola Colomba" (DC. 16527); "Comme, Facette Mammata" and "Prima, Seconda, E Terza" (DC. 16514); the other sides are on DC. 16513, 5, 6, 8, 9, 20, 21, 22, 23, 28, 37, 38, 41.

One side of DC. 16516 is given to the

TEACHERS!

More and more people are taking up the study of a fretted instrument—we are still receiving enquiries for the name and address of a local teacher. If YOU teach the banjo, mandolin or guitar, you should (in your own interests) have your name and address in our Teachers' Directory.

IS YOUR TOWN REPRESENTED IN OUR DIRECTORY?

old favourite "Sorrento."

"Spring is Here" and "Easy to Love." George Shearing Quintet. MGM. 741 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.) and MGM-SP. 1090 (7 in.; 45 r.p.m.).

Two average, agreeable sides with the guitar heard in (but confined to) the ensembles.

"Guitar Boogie" and "Steel Guitar Rag." Les Paul Trio. Brunswick 05311. (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

A reissue of Brunswick 04798, from the same master. A welcome backward look at the Les Paul Trio of the pre-gimmick age and vastly preferable to Arthur Smith's offerings of similar title.

"Music of Africa Series No. 5—The Guitars of Africa." Decca LF. 1170. (10 in.; 33 r.p.m.).

To those who identify African music with wild drum rhythms and primitive chanting this record will come as something of a surprise and as a reminder of the origins both of jazz and of the West Indian Calypso. The guitar-accompanied songs of several African folk singers, covering a number of tribes, make an interesting addition to anyone's collection and the album is accompanied by an excellent and informative written account. This is something of unusual interest to the student of songs with the guitar.

"Lady is a Tramp" and "I'll Remember April." Teddy Charles Trio. Esquire 10-384 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

The first side is the better, and contains a clean and musicianly guitar solo by Don Roberts. "April" is clearly derived from the Red Norvo Trio recorded version (their instrumentation is the same) but retains enough charm to make the record a good buy and to suggest that we should hear more of Don Roberts.

"I Get So Lonely" and "Outboard." Arthur Smith and his Crackerjacks. MGM. 755 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.) and MGM. SP-1096 (7 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

Two corny and graceless sides; the former mainly vocal. There is not the slightest inventiveness, subtlety, or shadow of expression to redeem either side.

"Touch of Genius." George Shearing Quintet. MGM. D 129 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

Another L.P. album containing eight tracks, seven previously unissued (the eighth is "They All Laughed," which Shearing is said to consider to be his best side). The recording is fuzzy and does not help the overall sound—which has an aura of tiredness about it. The guitar solos are consistently good and amongst the best things on the record. If this review seems lukewarm, it should be remembered that even when below par (as

in this album) this outfit is still utterly musical and has a liberal supply of that little "something" which its many imitators have not . . . that Touch of Genius.

"Goodbye Blues" and "Lazy Woman Blues," and "Salty Dog" and "Old Home Blues." Ralph Willis and Brownie McGhee. Esquire 10-370 and 10-384 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

Ralph Willis is described as a Blues Shouter but his voice has, for its kind, a most pleasing quality—and his guitar playing likewise. It is possible to be authentic without being tonally offensive—other than to the ears of the folk addict. "Goodbye Blues" is not the old tune known to most of us but a 12-bar original—like the other three. Our favourite with the "Old Home Blues." Brownie McGhee plays accompanying guitar.

"Sally" and "Petite Ballerina." Max Jaffa and Bert Weedon. Columbia DB. 3484 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

Still reluctant to return to their "April in Paris" standard and still inclined to ride the gimmick wagon, this capable duo has at least eschewed the banality of "Dancing Duck" and given us two sides which are pleasing if uneventful—unless you can call another dose of the now familiar dubbing technique an event (this is in "Sally")—and free from musical adolescence. Cordially recommended to those who "like a nice tune."

Eddy Arnold, the Tennessee Plowboy. HMV. 7EG8020 (7 in.; 45 r.p.m. E.P.).

Four simple songs sung artlessly by a pseudo-unsophisticate and suitable for simple souls. Somewhere in the vicinity, an E.H.G. is tortured into confederacy.

"Sky Blue Shirt and a Rainbow Tie." Ray Ellington Quartet. Columbia DB. 3500 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

A lively side, well up to current standards, with some outstanding guitar-piano figuration to tickle the ears. On the flip-over, Ray Ellington extolls the virtues of his mother's eyes but the rest of the quartet appears to play no bigger part than a misleading legend on the label!

"Crazy Rhythm" and "Mountain High, Valley Low." Dorothy Collins. London HL. 8069 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

In "Crazy Rhythm," Miss Collins provides, with the aid of guitarist George Barnes, direct competition for the Mary Ford/Les Paul trick factory. This side has life, drive and freshness while Dorothy Collins has a more versatile approach and more expressive voice than Mary Ford. On the back, the voice is dubbed numerous times and in the centre

IT WILL HELP US

keep down increasing overhead expenses if subscribers to "B.M.C." will send their renewals promptly. You are always advised the month before your subscription expires.

section there is some effective acoustic p.g. accompaniment. This is a highly unusual and beautiful side. On the whole, this record deserves good sales figures . . . better than it will probably achieve.

Nat King Cole—10th Anniversary. Capitol LCT. 6003 (12 in.; 33 r.p.m.).

Capitol have celebrated the 10th anniversary of Cole's association with them by issuing this selection of 16 hitherto unissued items. One side is given over to Cole in his present-day role as vocal idol but the other is devoted to records made with the trio. These latter contain a good deal of attractive guitar playing, even though they are not the best waxed by this unit. One track is purely instrumental and we could have done with more in this vein. When will Capitol give us the pleasure of an instrumental Cole album, I wonder?

"I Remember Harlem" and "Swinging the Blues." Paul Quinichette Quintet. Brunswick 05292 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

"Harlem" has a good relaxed atmosphere and there is tasteful guitar soloing from Squeeter Best. Quinichette's tenor is faintly out of tune. Regrettably, the over-side is not worth the wax it occupies and the guitar solos are the most offensive of all, being cheaply and drably laden with "quotes" from anything and everything which does not matter in jazz.

"Regarde Moi" and "Ghislaine." Hubert Rostaing and his Orchestra. Felsted 80003 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

Two average sides of commercial status, by a French band—Hubert Rostaing played clarinet in the last Hot Club of France, with Reinhardt—there being a fine guitar solo in the modern vein in "Ghislaine."

"Caravan" and "Adios." Joe Burton Quartet. London HL. 8075 (10 in.; 78 r.p.m.).

A piano-c.p.g.-bass-drums group, producing inoffensive music of the kind to which any reasonable bunch of semi-pros might aspire. No more to be said.

(To be continued)

The Art of Flamenco

By MICHAEL E. FISHER

IN previous articles I have discussed the ways in which various *rasgueado* sounds may be produced. Often a chord once sounded is left to die away naturally with the resonance of the instrument or to sound right up to the striking of the next chord.

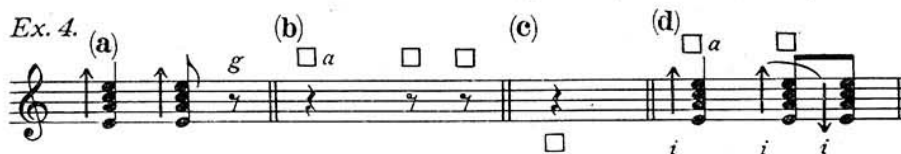
Using the *cifra* (*) notation it is an understood convention that each note should be allowed to sound for as long as possible, i.e., either until it fades naturally or until another note is required on the same string. In practice, a similar convention is usually applied by classical guitarists to music written in standard notation.

The effect of allowing notes to continue sounding to the full imparts a smooth *legato* effect to the music. On occasions, however, the reverse effect (i.e., staccato) is required. Here the sound is cut off artificially and not replaced immediately by a new note.

In flamenco, staccato is especially used in certain styles of accompaniment and in crisp rhythms.

There are various ways of indicating the effect in the music. In classical guitar methods the standard convention of a dot above the note (or notes) in question is used to indicate *sons étouffé*, or "stifled sounds."

In classical playing the staccato may be achieved by relaxing the pressure of the left (*). See my article in the July issue.



hand fingers against the fingerboard so that the strings come away from the frets, but remain in contact with the fingers. In most flamenco playing a more abrupt method of cutting off the sound is commonly used.

This can be shown in the music as follows: Suppose that in the tempo being played the sound of a note will last for the time value of one crotchet. Then a quaver chord followed by a quaver rest must indicate the sound has to be artificially cut short. (See Ex. 4(a)).

A staccato chord or note is indicated in *cifra* notation (and some Spanish music) by the word *seco* (meaning "dry") written beside it.

TWO METHODS

When playing *rasgueado*, two methods of silencing chords are used. In the first, shown in Ex. 4(a) by the letter *g* above the rest sign, the chord is firstly struck with the right hand and then silenced by laying the palm and fingers of this hand flat across all the strings a few inches from the bridge. This produces a sharp break in the sound, which is much used in accompanying dances where the dancer "freezes" in a statuesque pose at the break before continuing or starting a fresh dance.

To lay the flat of the hand across the strings it is necessary to lower the right wrist to the level of the strings. Before continuing to play, the wrist must be raised and restored to its arched position. The time taken to do this, even with practice, precludes the use of this method of silencing if a really rapid succession of staccato chords is required.

Flamenco players, to overcome this snag, have evolved a method of silencing chords with the left hand alone.

In many common guitar chords, such as E major and A minor, the fourth (or little) finger of the left hand is not required to stop a string. This finger can be used to cut off the sound rapidly by bringing it down parallel to fingerboard and frets to touch the vibrating lengths of all the strings. The remaining fingers should continue to hold the original chord.

TAKE CARE

Care must be taken to see that the fourth finger touches the strings just sufficiently firmly to damp the sound. If the strings are forced down on to the fingerboard by the finger the effect is of a slur producing new, unwanted, notes as well as ending the old!

I have indicated this method in the music by a figure 4 above the rest sign instead of the letter *g* used for the right-hand method. See the second bar of Ex. 5.

In Ex. 5 the use of these two methods of silencing chords is illustrated in a standard *rasgueado* for the Farruca. This is a moderately slow flamenco dance in 4/4 time, traditionally danced by a woman in riding costume—narrow split skirt, with a short jacket and broad brimmed hat. Many of its steps are symbolic of the bull fight.

The various *rasgueados* used in Ex. 5 are those explained in my last two articles where they were illustrated by the Tanguillo rhythm which, except for its greater speed, has many resemblances to that of the Farruca.

A point to watch in Ex. 5 is that the up stroke with the index finger in the last bar is an accented stroke on the beat. This is in contrast to the other up strokes which occur off the beat. Similarly, the preceding down stroke is relatively unaccented since it occurs off the beat.

In (b), (c) and (d) of Ex. 4 symbols for taps with the nails on the tapping plates, or *golpeadores*, stuck to the face of the guitar are

shown. The squares above the staves in (b) indicate taps on the treble side of the strings, whilst in (c) the square below represents a tap with the thumb nail on the smaller bass tapping plate.

The time values of the taps are indicated by the appropriate rest signs.

Taps may be executed alone or at the time as chords are being strummed (Ex. 4(d)). In next month's article I will explain how these taps are executed and used to enhance the rhythms.

(To be continued)

Guitar News from Overseas

Collected by PETER SENSIER

Finland. Ivan Putlin, the distinguished Finnish guitarist, recently visited Stockholm and Oslo. In the former city he visited Mme. Svea Hammarberg-Kritschefsky, the guitar teacher who specialises in music from the XVIIIth century.

He also made some transcriptions for broadcasting which included "Prelude No. 4" (Villa-Lobos), "El Testamento de N'Amelia" (Llobet) and "Gavotte" and two mazurkas (Tarrega).

Germany. "Der Gitarre-Freund" published in Munich, consists of fourteen pages packed with news and articles about the guitar and its personalities. Fritz Czernuschka writes on "The Guitar in Chamber Music" and "Joh. Christian Hoffman, Lute and Guitar Maker" is dealt with by Josef Mueh.

Information is also given of two L.P. and two 78 r.p.m. discs recently made by Luise Walker for the Philips label. (What about the English Co. re-issuing these discs in England?)

Also listed are seventeen past radio programmes by both local and visiting guitarists.

Italy. "L'Arte Chitarristica," the official organ of the Italian Guitar Association, recently organised a competition for guitar-composers, the results of which are given in the current issue. The following compositions received prizes: "Chiave di Violino (Suite in

C)" by José de Azpiasu (Switzerland), "Guitare 1954/III (Fevilles d'Espagne)" by Stefan Urban (Czechoslovakia), "Ritornado All'Antico (Vecchie Xilografie)" by Gianni Nadir Ferracin (Italy), "Disegno del Metronomo" by Miguel Abloniz (Italy) and "20 Variations on a Theme of Paganini" by Jironakano (Japan).

Miguel Abloniz, the Greek guitarist-composer-teacher who was well-known for some years in Cairo, is now established as a teacher in Milan where he conducts the "Scuola de Perfezionamento."

Japan. There seems little doubt that interest in the guitar is really flourishing in Japan. This is certainly assisted by the regular publication of "Armonia" which deals solely with the guitar. The current issue includes six articles, musical supplement "Noche en Villareal de los Infantes" (by Patricio Galindo), and a glossy photograph of Vicente Gomez.

There is also a foreign news section, the size and scope of which makes me quite envious. British guitarists mentioned are Victoria Kingsley, John Gavall, John Runge, Desmond Dupré, Dr. Boris Perott, Julian Bream, Len and John Williams and my humble self and partner Dorothy Dries.

At the Yamaha Hall, Tokyo, a guitar recital was recently given by Japanese Srta. Hisako Morito. From the look of the programme—consisting mainly of works by Spanish composers—she must be an accomplished player.

Although Maria Luisa Anido's concert tour of Japan was undoubtedly a success, it appears the financial side of it was only straightened out after the Argentine Ambassador lent a hand in the business proceedings. She will, however, be returning to Japan before or after her February/March, 1955 visit to Europe.

The programme produced for Anido's Japanese concerts is certainly the most luxurious and beautifully laid-out thing of its kind I have ever seen. Consisting of ten pages of glossy paper, it included six photographs, biographical data, and copious programmes notes.

Incidentally, one photograph shows her playing at a recital—and in front of her are three microphones! I wish more recital guitarists would follow her example in large halls.

Brazil. Sao Paulo is the home of Roncel Simoes, that indefatigable propagandist for the guitar, who periodically sends me news of the violao, as the Spanish guitar is called in Portuguese. Three programmes were enclosed with his most recent letter, the first being that of Guimaraes Santos, the 40th recital given under the auspices of the Associação Cultural do Violao. It consisted of music by Bach, Beethoven, Sor, Albeniz, Schumann, Gallo, Czibulka, Brahms, Aimeré, Pernambuco and Nazareth.

In Recital No. 41, Othon Salleiro was the soloist, playing pieces by Sor, Aguado, Beethoven, Bach, Barrios, Mendelssohn, Albeniz, Debussy, etc.

The third programme was the First Recital by pupils of the Academia Brasileira de Violao, the Director of which is Atilio Bernardini. Held under the auspices of the Instituto de Educacao, the concert was divided into four sections: (1) 7 soloists. (2) 5 duettists. (3) 3 trios and 4 quartets. (4) three pieces by a group of 10 guitarists.

Roncel Simoes writes a regular guitar column in the Sao Paulo newspaper "A Gazeta". Most recently received cuttings included a report of Anido's triumphant tour of Japan.

(To be continued)

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Federation News

(Southern Section)

First I must announce that this is the last time I shall have the privilege of addressing you through the medium of "B.M.G." After October 2, you will have a new secretary. I hope I shall not lose touch with the many friends I have made during my four years in office. Whilst on the subject of a new secretary and the chance of meeting you I must remind you of the Annual General Meeting. This is planned for Saturday, October 2 at 5 p.m. and will be held in the large hall of St. Brides Institute, near Ludgate Circus, London, E.C.4. The agenda has been prepared and will include, in addition to the usual items "Minutes of the last A.G.M.", the chairman's address and reports, and the discussion of the balance statement. Here I am pleased to announce that the balance is again a healthy one. There will also be a report of the Special Delegate Meeting to be held in the afternoon of October 2.

We shall seek authority to purchase a new Challenge Trophy, out of Federation funds, to replace the existing 1st Division Shield. Unfortunately this trophy (presented as long ago as 1931 by Messrs. John Alvey Turner) has no more room on which to engrave the name of the winner. The Federation has prolonged its life by the addition of six silver scrolls and one miniature shield. There is now no room for further additions and we learn that it would be a costly job to remount the centre shield and the miniature shields and scrolls on to a larger wooden surround and have several more miniature shields and/or scrolls fixed. Again the life of the John Alvey Turner Shield would be limited by the number of shields and scrolls which can be so affixed to the new mount. It is intended that the shield shall be exhibited at all Federation festivals and can be held during the year by one of the winners of the shield in past years.

The election of the executive committee will have to be confirmed by the general meeting. The executive committee is comprised of chairman, vice-chairman, honorary secretary and honorary treasurer, in addition, two unattached members representatives are elected. In accordance with rule 5 the executive officers automatically retire at the end of their term of office, but may, if they so desire, be regarded as eligible for re-election. W. T. Hill, your present chairman regrets that he is unable to take office again. He is confident that his successor will be enabled, by your support, to continue from where he leaves off. I myself will not seek re-election as secretary for reasons made clear last month. All other members of the committee have signified their willingness to stand again if nominated and elected.

We are pleased to announce that once again St. Pancras Town Hall has been booked for the annual festival at the same reduced charge as granted in previous years. The date is Saturday, March 19, 1955. Test pieces for the orchestral contests have been chosen. For the 1st Division: "In A Persian Market"; for the 2nd Division: "Ben Hur." Parts of both

numbers are available now and may be obtained from your usual music dealer. Both numbers are interesting to play and have much to recommend them. They are both descriptive pieces and contain several changes in mood and tempo. "Ben Hur" is the easier of the two numbers and we feel sure will attract all clubs who are eligible to compete in Division 2. Only the clubs who were placed first in Division 1 and 2, Southern Section Festival 1954 and those placed 1st in Class A and B in the Northern Section Festival 1954 are barred from Division 2 in 1955. All others are eligible for Division 2. All clubs competing in either Division 1 or 2 are eligible to compete in Division 3. From the time you read this until the day of the festival you have 5½ months in which to perfect your rendition of both the set test piece and your chosen optional test piece. "Go to it."

K. MARSH.

By the Way

Early in 1953, Kealoha Life returned to South Africa on contract to the Hendrik Susan Radio Orchestra in Johannesburg and after four months replaced Len Fillis at the Sheraton Hotel, where he stayed for a year under four successive band-leaders. Following a season with the Jacaranda orchestra in Windhoek, S.W. Africa, he is now back in Johannesburg as staff studio guitarist for Gallo-Africa Ltd. who release titles on several record labels.

W. H. Harper of 26, Vauban Estate, Spa Road, Bermondsey, S.E.16, is anxious to contact players interested in joining a proposed B. M. and G. orchestra.

Les Paul—who is reported to be considering several offers to tour Europe—may become involved in trouble for making records in his home. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has called for action to take up the matter of these sessions, which the union claims is "unfair to professional engineers."

Following an engagement on the Riviera, Ana Marly (who sings to her own guitar accompaniment and has a big reputation on the Continent as a singer and composer) opened at London's Dorchester Hotel late in August.

Two recently issued L.P. records were: "Concierto de Aranjuez" played by Narciso Yepes with the Orquesta de Camara de Madrid (London TW.91019) and "An Andres Segovia Programme" (Brunswick AXTL.1060).

Oliver Messel, the famous designer, left for New York on August 26 to do the scenery for a new musical called "House of Flowers." It is a three or four months' job and we are told that Mr. Messel's relaxation in the U.S. will be, as in England, playing his banjo.

Freddie Phillips' background guitar music to the TV play "If It's a Rose..." on August 24 received special praise from *Daily Mirror* critic who said it "seemed just right for the occasion."

Two of Sophocles Papas' former pupils attended the Siena School in Italy this summer. Grace Schwab (of Pennsylvania) and Charles Byrd (of Virginia) will surely benefit from their month under the tutelage of Andres Segovia.

The "Havana" mute is an indispensable accessory for every player of the banjo. The

effects it can produce are numerous. It can be obtained from the Clifford Essex Co., price 4s. 3d. post free.

Ray Kirkwood has been leading the orchestra at the Hotel de France, Jersey, during the summer. He has also been giving lessons on the electric Hawaiian guitar whilst resident in the Channel Islands.

Naples has been temporarily deprived of one of its traditional features by a strike of the mandolin and guitar players who move from restaurant to restaurant playing to foreign tourists. These poor but proud musicians—some of them hold diplomas—decided that it is a humiliation to have to "take round the hat" during their performances, a method "used by beggars and incompatible with the dignity of any worker."

Club Notes

The Associated Banjo Circle met again on September 3 with an increased membership, with the result that the number of solos played reads almost like a publisher's list! Bill Goudge played "Banshee," "Life in Louisiana," "Minstrel Man" and "Jovial Huntsman"; Alan Middleton, "Banjo Boogie," "Gavotte" and "Minuet"; L. E. Trimmer, "Beat As You Go," "Colonial Boys" and "Coonland Memories"; W. M. Brewer, "American Medley," "Rendezvous" and "Mignonette"; Gerry Garden (acc. by C. G. Fitzpatrick), "Danse Arlequin," "Gypsy Queen" and "Humoresque"; C. G. Fitzpatrick, "En Evant," "Moonlight Revels" and (with Gerry Garden) "Dance Bizarre"; C. H. Phillips, "Smoky Mokes," "Cupid's Arrow," "Blaze Away" and "Margie"; Charles Bramley, "Whistling Rufus," "Return of the Regiment" and "Rugby Parade"; J. F. Rivers and H. J. Ruth, "Pierrot's Serenade," "Banjo Patrol" and "Mr. Shufflebottom"; R. J. Bunn, "La Marguerite"; H. J. Ruth, "To the Front" and "L'Hirondelle." The commanding tones of George Morris were noticeably absent as he was on holiday, but members were pleased to welcome Dr. Hussey, who came to listen and said he enjoyed himself.

The Bournemouth Club visited Winchester Prison recently and gave a concert. Items included: "Show Boat," "Evergreen Waltzes" and "Leslie Stuart Medley." The Bourne Players played "Danse Petite" and "Society Belle" and the Southern Banjoliars, "Happy Go Lucky" and "Donkey Laugh."

The Hackney Club continues to enjoy good attendances at its meetings. A concert was given at the Darby and Joan Club, Ilford, on August 27, and the items played included: The Clubmen, "Just One Of Those Things," "Sunny Side of the Street," "That's Amoré," and "Swedish Rhapsody"; H. Keen (B.), A. Hatfield (B.) and W. McMinnies (T.B.), "Prairie Life" and a selection of choruses;

CLUB MEETINGS

Details of B.M. & G. club meetings—time, day and place—can be obtained by writing to the Secretary (name and address will be found in our Club Directory), enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. Most clubs are only too happy to welcome visitors and are always pleased to enrol new members.

"B.M.G." CONTRIBUTORS

are always pleased to have readers 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.

Mandolin Section (leader, Michael Ronga), "Remembrance" and "Nina Pancha"; Mrs. Fournaise (T.B.), Miss Fournaise (B.) and Mrs. Baraclough (B.), "Beat As You Go"; Gladys Percy (M.), "Serenata."

Items played during September included: "Española," "Strauss Waltzes," "Federation March," "Ben Hur," "Sousa Scrap Book," "Everlasting Waltz," "Whistling Rufus," "Sullivan Selection," "Lustspiel Overture" and "El Relicario."

B.M.G. Diplomas

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

The following candidates have been awarded diplomas:—

Stephen West, of Breaston, "B" Grade (Plectrum guitar).

Teacher: Elsie Dawson.

Examiner: Sanders Papworth.

Hubert Philip Harris, of London, "A" Grade (Banjo).

Teacher: Vince Miller.

Examiner: Geoff Sisley.

Edward Robert Gray, of Riverstone, N.S.W., "A" Grade (Plectrum guitar).

Noel George Letson, of Riverstone, N.S.W., "A" Grade (Plectrum guitar).

Jane Vikitsreth, of Bangkok, "A" and "B" Grades (El. Hawaiian guitar).

Teacher: Roy Royston.

Examiner: H. Phillips Skinner.

Brenda Brammer, of Fishpool, "A" Grade (Plectrum guitar).

Joan Moore, of Lenton, "A" Grade (Spanish guitar).

Teacher: Sanders Papworth.

Examiner: Elsie Dawson.

Denise M. Woodward, of Birmingham, "B" Grade (Mandolin).

Teacher: Ida Neroda.

Examiner: S. G. Hull.

Michael Cordingley, of Sandiacre, "A" Grade (Hawaiian guitar).

Teacher: Elsie Dawson.

Examiner: Sanders Papworth.

Correspondence

Dear Sir,—I have followed the correspondence started by V. Stanley with some interest, for I have seriously studied the guitar and built one, like my mandolin masterpiece, in accordance with my strongly established mandolin findings—and have produced a "test" instrument that yields the same phenomenal tonal results. This indicates clearly that your correspondent is "in reverse gear" and is altogether wrong in his deductions on the use of heavy metal rigidity for guitar improvement. Indeed, the opposite is required—lightness!

As a piano man, in mentioning the heavy frame support, he does not seem to realize that it is a case of mechanical necessity to use such heavy cast-iron framing to ensure tonal stability of the piano, whose combined string tension is sufficient to move 2½ freight cars in tandem! Considering the enormous weight of the piano, plus the fact that these instruments

at and above middle C use three comparatively long wire strings tuned in unison, the piano is an inefficient transmitter of vibration and, like the guitar, is 300 years behind in acoustical perfection.

Obviously we cannot borrow from the technically impoverished piano when it is in need of rejuvenation itself. Its "input" is out of proportion to its "output."

About the middle of the 16th century, Gasparo Buttolotti (better known as Gasparo di Salo) of Brescia, Lombardy, invented the first true *tuned air chamber* for his early violins and established a precedent that was accepted by other luthiers of genuine rating, such as Stradivarius, Amati, Guarneri and Stainer, whose very specifications and measurements have been repeatedly copied down to the present day with departures almost imperceptible of appreciable change from the original Bertalotti pattern. Any of these old master violin patterns are readily available today. They are each time-tested and have established a solid foundation for their slightly different characteristics that have defied improvement to date.

Is it not logical that this is the bank to guarantee the future of the measured (fretted) instruments? The bank of the violin.

The piano does not have a tuned air chamber—an established quantity of air capable of transmitting specific vibrations with the highest efficiency—as does the violin or my mandolin. We cannot look to the foundry for guitar improvement but a sharp eye should focus on the violin family and the solidity it represents.

For further proof of the requirement for lightness in construction of Spanish guitars, one needs only to exchange the steel strings of the plectrum guitar for nylon or gut. The loss in volume is quite surprising, making the otherwise desirable interchangeability so impractical.

In the fabrication of my lightweight Spanish carved guitar as a "test" instrument, it yields a powerfully pleasant tone, nearly double the volume of a well-known conventional Spanish guitar by unmistakable audiometer test. I am now building another Spanish guitar (a little lighter) for still greater volume in the upper register and to be created as a masterpiece—that is, offering every practical improvement that the guitarist has ever dreamed of—as in my mandolin. The task, already started, will take about another year and, upon completion, the news will be forwarded to you.

Mr. Stanley, although totally wrong, has served a good purpose in arousing considerable controversial interest which would otherwise, perhaps, not have seen the light of day. In other words, in this matter it is far better to say something wrong when you think you are right, than to say nothing when you know you are positively right. Mr. Stanley is, therefore, a constructive thinker but not a positive thinker like R. A. Calverley (August "B.M.G."). His letter goes to the very bottom of the course for our present stagnated measured (fretted)

instruments and states what I have been saying for years.

Your readers will notice that I use the word "measured" instead of "fretted." I dislike the ill-chosen psychologically indefinite words "fret" and "fretted" and have substituted the definite word "measured."

In conclusion, the guitar will unfortunately remain embryonically primitive in its 300 years' traditional status of stagnation until, in the world of the luthier, such a lingering disease called "conventionalitis" is obliterated. Since this malady has a co-ordinated and related disease known as "posterioritis" the ensuing complication precludes any improvement in the foreseeable future.—HARRY GARMONT.

Dear Sir,—Perhaps I can answer A. W. Lane's query re "Dolly Gray." This was published by Sheards, formerly of High Holborn. They published quite a lot of Sousa's marches, also, and advertised them (among others) as "Banjo Marches" with a separate banjo part for each. Included in this series were a few, the banjo parts of which were arranged by Parke Hunter using his initials "M.P." (Hunter). Those arranged by him were each enclosed in a striking red cover which carried a good clear photograph of Mays and Hunter as they played on the stage. In some of their early stage appearances they "came on" dressed in opera cloaks and opera hats and wore buttoned boots (very stylish in those days!) and the photograph showed them thus dressed.

"Dolly Gray" was not in that series and was, I believe, signed "Parke Hunter (of Mays and Hunter)." The cover was quite different and had on it a full length picture of a "C.I.V." embracing a charming "Dolly Gray." As Mr. Lane says, an excerpt from the "Sousa Girl" was in the solo but the charm from my point of view at the time, was the *chorus* of "Dolly"; being in the true Hunter vein. It was written around the year 1900.

I am writing from memory (my music is locked up in a repository) but there were three I recall: "Girls of America" (March); "Filipino Shuffle" and "(something) Barbecue," all of which had red covers and photographs of Mays and Hunter as mentioned above.

Included in the green covers of the "Banjo Marches" was one—"Flying Colours March"—which was a lively march whose banjo part (like all the others, Hunter's excluded) was most elementary but it was later arranged by H. J. Fiske and issued as a supplement to the old "Banjo News" (and, later still, in sheet form by Temlett). In its sheet form it was titled "Yacht Club March."

Mr. Lane should add to his list "Parktown Polka." This Parke Hunter solo is of (b) grade difficulty and Turner's should know something about it for it was issued as a supplement to "Keynotes" about the same time as "La Papillon"—1928/1929.

There must be quite a fair amount of Hunter's arrangements, etc., about as he did some work for J. E. Dallas, Turner's and Cammeyer. The latter helped Hunter whenever possible; lending him a room for practice and quiet work and even booking him for a concert, only to find at the last minute that he (Hunter) had sailed for home without saying anything to anyone. This was given to me in a letter from Cammeyer just before he died.

Hunter also made arrangements of some of "Rosey's" music. Two I remember Mays and Hunter playing were "Handicap March" and "Anniversary March." Another I was very fond of, "Chinatown March," bore no arranger's name but suggested Hunter.—J. W. WHITTAKER.

ARE YOU HELPING
TO BRING "B.M.G."
TO THE NOTICE OF
OTHER PLAYERS

?

Dear Sir,—I have greatly enjoyed the contributions to "B.M.G." by your new writer J. Elmer Dexull for it is obvious that he has given some thought to the study of the banjo and can express his ideas in a way that makes the reader think.

One thing intrigues me. Who is J. Elmer Dexull? Personally, I had never heard of him before his articles began to appear in your magazine and I am sure that other readers would like to know something about this writer. Please enlighten us with relevant details of his banjo career and, if possible, a photograph.—LESLIE CARRADINE.

(I am unable to give any details of Mr. Dexull. He has submitted his articles through the post in the normal way and, as far as I am aware, I have never met him. Perhaps he will let me have a photograph with some biographical details for publication.—EDITOR.)

Dear Sir,—Thanks to J. Elmer Dexull's article "That Left Hand" in the September "B.M.G.," I have discovered a grand solo—"A Darkey's Romance." May we hope for further articles from his pen in which he recommends worth-playing solos?—P. LUCKHURST.

Dear Sir,—Last month I visited Cheltenham and took the opportunity to call on S. E. Turner whom many of your readers will remember as a banjo playing member of the once famous "Clifford Essex Royal Pierrots." Sid Turner is now a veteran but remains youthful in mind and still composes banjo solos. He took his instrument out of its case and rattled off several solos he "had written for the average student." His playing proved he is youthful in mind and still agile with his fingers.

In the course of conversation I asked him if he had ever heard anything about Mr. Wentworth, once a well-known figure in the busking fraternity dating back to the last century. I was told that "I read something about him in an evening paper some time ago. He is in a rest home for aged people. He is now 99 years of age."

Wentworth was the busker who first took Joe Morley on the road. Joe was a stripling at that time and the team worked the streets of many towns and the principal seaside resorts of North Wales during the summer season. This was before Morley became a member of a minstrel troupe at Margate.

During the time Joe Morley was with Wentworth and his partners, he was composing and playing many of his own banjo compositions. He was considered a better player than a "bottler"; the latter being a specialised business and an important one. If the team was to exist, the "bottler" had to possess geniality, tact, confidence and the ability to charm the coppers from an audience.

The day of the old-time busker is now past. In their day they were a grand lot of troupers

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Our monthly "Correspondence" pages are the views and comments of our readers on current fretted instrument topics. YOU can state your views on any subject by writing a "Letter to the Editor."

who provided joy and merriment to a large section of the community whose source of entertainment depended almost entirely on itinerant singers and musicians.

I hope Mr. Wentworth will reach his century and more. I take my hat off to him.—FRED SHEWRING.

Dear Sir,—A few years ago Peter Sensier brought José de Azpiazu to see me and I formed the opinion that he was one of the best teachers of the guitar I have met. I was therefore pleased to read Nicholas Carroll's article about his success as professor of the guitar at the Geneva Conservatoire.

Your readers will also be pleased to hear of another country where the guitar is recognised. There is a guitar chair at the Music Conservatoire in Czechoslovakia in the town of Prague.

Last spring I was there on business and a meeting was arranged between Stefan Urban and myself. Stefan Urban is the professor of the guitar at the Prague Conservatoire. Although he does not play with the high wrist of the Tarrega-Segovia school, his technique is very good. He has written a Method for the guitar and some compositions; the latest of which he has entered for a competition in an Italian Music Festival.

There is a lot of interest in the guitar in Czechoslovakia and Mr. Mettal (the master maker of Spanish guitars in Czechoslovakia) and his daughter have played a number of concerts in their home town of Luby as well as in Prague. Mr. Mettal plays all the Segovia arrangements of the classical and other guitar works and has an extensive repertoire. His daughter was taught by him.

There is one handicap for guitarists in Czechoslovakia and that is the unobtainability of nylon strings.

Since Switzerland and Czechoslovakia are almost neighbours it would be a good idea for Azpiazu and Urban to get together. I am sure

it would help the popularity of the guitar in Europe.

Turning to another subject: In his criticism of the "Melody Maker" poll winners' record "For Voters Only," your record critic "Discus" says that Bill McGuffie and myself prepared our solos. He bases his assertion on the fact that he listened to two different "takes" and the solos were the same.

For all I know, "Discus" could have been present at the recording. If he had been, he would have seen that the whole session took about three hours; that much of the time was wasted because of late arrivals; that nobody knew what was going to be played until it was decided to play it; and that very little time was taken on balance.

Most of the players were tired and when any player did not care for his own or other solos when listening to the playback, modesty forbade him to say anything.

When one extemporises a solo it is possible to remember a commencing sequence and, for safety, play it in a second "take" but I will wager that "Discus" is absolutely wrong when he says the solos were the same or identical in both "takes"! They were certainly not written down or worked out beforehand as no more than fifteen minutes or so went to the making of the title.

Some critics can be a little too smart and smug.—IVOR MAIRANTS.

Dear Sir,—Thanks to your note in a recent issue of "B.M.G." I have met quite a lot of fretted instrument enthusiasts during my seasonal engagement at Butlin's Holiday Camp, Skegness.—CYRIL PROCTOR.

(The Paul Sangé Quartet, with which Mr. Proctor played, performed at the Celebrity Concerts in the Butlin Theatre (said to be the largest air-conditioned theatre in Europe). He featured the electric plectrum guitar at these concerts and was well received.—EDITOR.)

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