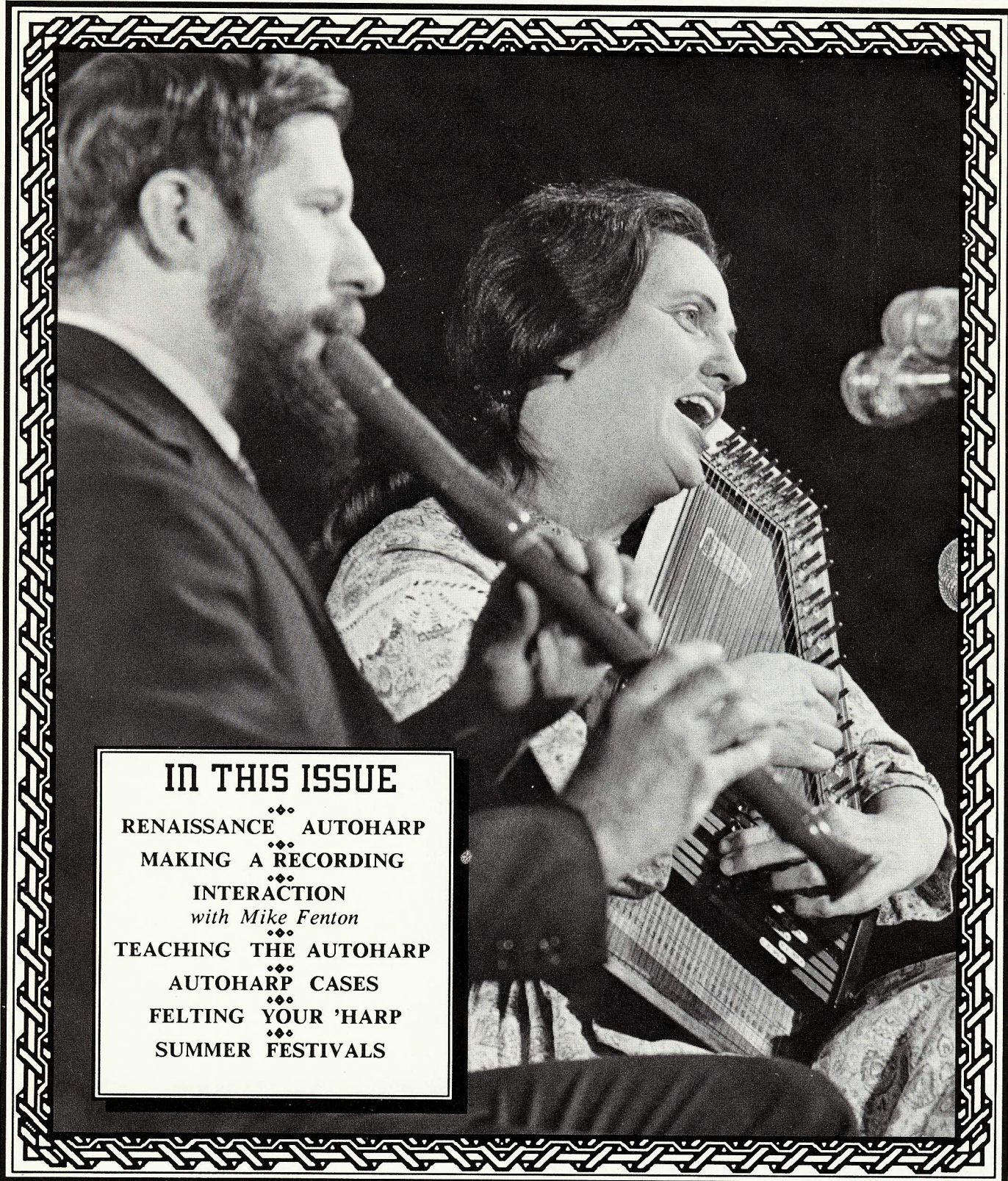


AUTOHARP QUARTERLY

THE • MAGAZINE • DEDICATED • TO • THE • AUTOHARP • ENTHUSIAST



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**AUTOHARP
QUARTERLY**
THE • MAGAZINE • DEDICATED • TO
THE • AUTOHARP • ENTHUSIAST

Volume Four, Number Four
July, 1992

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Autoharp Quarterly is published four times yearly and mailed first class to subscribers the first week of January, April, July, and October. Subscriptions in the United States are \$18. Canada: \$20 (US). Europe: \$22 (US), air mail. Asia: \$24 (US), air mail. Individual issues in US: \$5.

Published by:

Limberjack Productions

PO Box A

Newport, PA 17074

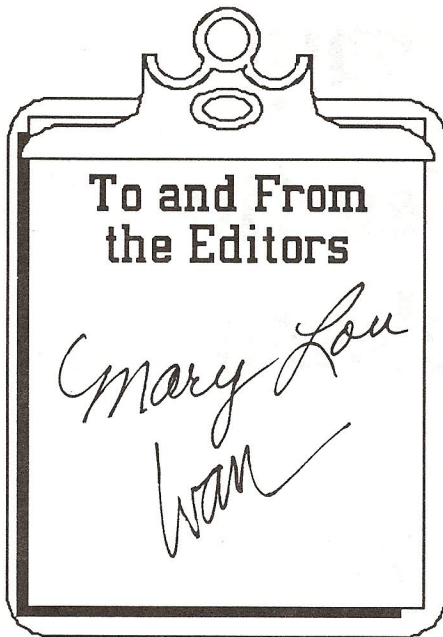
717 567-9469

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On the Cover:
Jean and Lee Schilling,
Cosby, Tennessee





DEAR READERS:

We've had a busy time. Between the two of us, we have made four tapes; put this special issue together; helped to plan and coordinate the 1992 Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering -- and in our spare time, Ivan made a concert/workshop trip to Michigan and Wisconsin, and Mary Lou helped paint/decorate/landscape a new guest cottage to house the performers at the Gathering.

Each of us made an individual tape with Jim Hudson, a fine recording engineer/hammered dulcimer player. And along with our staffer, Alan Mager, we completed "Music from Autoharp Quarterly, Volume Two" and "Music from Autoharp Quarterly, Volume Three." The AQ tapes are learning tapes. All the tunes are played in the same manner and keys as the written music published in volumes two and three of this magazine. They are for sale in "The Market Place."

You'll notice a special pull-out section in this issue. That's your new AQ Buyer's Guide. We hope you'll make frequent reference to it in your buying decisions -- and that you'll remind our advertisers that you saw their name in AQ. This

special edition of 3,250 copies will be distributed throughout the summer to an autoharp community of almost 2,000 readers.

We're looking forward to the Gathering, Galax, Winfield, and all the other exciting places we will be meeting with you this summer. Come by and see us at these festivals -- sit down and play a tune with us!

DEAR EDITORS:

I would like to thank you folks for sending me the music I ordered and the information I asked for so promptly. It is very seldom that you get answers to questions and help of any nature from most concerns and places of business. I really appreciate your quick reply, and thank you for your suggestions, and for being so helpful and extravagant with your knowledge.

In the last issue, I particularly enjoyed the article about the panel of builders and their experiences with trying to put a good instrument on the market. I especially got a charge out of the comment George Orthey made: "You out there expect a grand piano you can carry under your arm!"

You guys are really on the ball. I'm sure glad I read the story about you in *Bluegrass Unlimited*!

Do you know any players in southwestern Massachusetts?

Dana S. Urban

If anyone knows a 'harper in that area of Massachusetts, please let us know. We'll pass the information on to Dana.

--Editors

The article in *Bluegrass Unlimited* (February '92) was great! You are a really big link in our autoharp family.

Carol Stober

I saw you at a festival last spring, and you suggested Evo

Bluestein's video tape as one that might help me. I sent for the tape and find it most useful. Thanks for your interest and help shown to me!

Roy Bethel

I'm sending along a couple of pictures of the 'harp I made from the Mountain Laurel kit. I think it came out quite well, and it has a great sound.

Larry Barringer



Sylvia Barringer with her Mountain Laurel 'Harp

I'm really looking forward to the Gathering! I'm likely to have two big hits memorized by July -- "I Lost My Wedding Ring in the Compost Pile," and "I Sent My First Fax Today."

Joe Riggs

-- And, we're really looking forward to hearing those two tunes, Joe!

--Editors

After I read Lindsay Haisley's article, "Electronic Pickups for the Autoharp," (AQ Volume Four, Numbers Two and Three), I decided to give it a try. I ran into real problems finding dipole magnetic strip material. After a call to Lindsay, I found what I needed at Master Magnetics Inc., 800 525-3536. This company will only sell in bulk. I purchased a quantity and have some on hand for sale. If anyone is interested in buying a small amount of this material, contact me at 717 567-6406.

George Orthey

If Henry VIII Played the Autoharp . . .



The history of music is often a puzzling and difficult study. The history of musical instruments is worse; stupefying to impossible. So it was with deep appreciation of the task that I read Ivan Stiles' sleuthing into the murky origins of the Autoharp. But I smile bemusedly when I try to imagine some poor musicology student a few hundred years from now trying to classify, catalogue, and authoritatively describe that prolific phenomenon of the 20th century; the a, (small 'a'), autoharp. That poor wretch will find no two instruments alike. Each will have its own tuning, its own number and selection of chords, its own self-restricting musical idiom, etc. Some will be tuned high, some will be tuned low, some will be double strung, some will be electric, and some will hang on walls with philodendrons growing from them. It will be a researcher's nightmare. Marty Schuman's "ultrasonic" and Lindsay Haisley's chromatic (with all sorts of extras) bear only superficial similarity. A "bare bones" diatonic with a six-bar top is a very different animal from the twenty-one-bar chromatic that many folks consider "standard."

I frequently receive letters from 'harpers telling me of some innovation or theory

planned for their 'harp, sometimes asking advice or support. ("Do you think it would work if I . . . ?") Some players wish to explore unusual tuning or key combinations. ("How about a triple diatonic in D, Eb, and C?") Some ask about the best selection of chords to make their 'harp ideal for Blues or Ragtime or Dixieland or Classical. I heard from Lyman Taylor with his plans for the 'harp with the necessary sounds to faithfully present the Jazz idiom. (See AQ Vol. 4, No. 3.) These are all most intriguing and have led me to the conclusion that soon there will be more styles and types of 'harp than there are 'harpers.

Mea culpa! I too am guilty. Of my seven 'harp, two are pure diatonics, two are pentatonic 'harp, two are a variation of diatonics I call "Renaissance" models, and one has a philodendron growing from it. I've always been partial to minor melodies and wished to modify a 'harp so as to take best advantage of the minor scale and its harmonies. So I returned and voiced two 'harp to enhance the minor side of the instrument. Also being a fan of the lovely minor tunes of the English Renaissance (1400-1600), I included the necessary touches to turn my autoharp into a time machine and take me

back to Tudor England. Henry the Eighth, born 500 years ago this year, was an accomplished musician and composer. He and his daughter, Elizabeth, (born to Henry's second wife, Anne Boleyn), reigned over the last glorious century of the English Renaissance. They played their music on virginals, lutes, rebecs, gambas, and other string instruments of the time. But what if Henry had had an autoharp?

Music in the Renaissance, especially in England, was wonderfully volatile and exciting. The modal systems which dominated music in the Middle Ages were in a state of decay and the tonal system would not be fully evolved until the Baroque period. The Renaissance was a time of experimentation and change. During the reign of Elizabeth I, composers like John Dowland, Thomas Campion, and William Byrd composed wonderful songs to entertain the Lords and Laydes of the Royal Court. These were often accompanied by the most popular instrument of the day, the lute. These popular songs (literally the "Top 40" of the time), are still referred to generically as "Elizabethan lute songs." Here can be found the deepest roots of some of our oldest folksongs and traditional ballads.

A strong characteristic of these late Renaissance English

songs was a lush interplay between the song's minor key and the relative Major key. Also the minor portions of the song would utilize both the *natural* (or modal) minor form and the *melodic* minor form

scale in the very best Renaissance style. (See Fig. C)

In order to be able to play pieces in this Renaissance style and still maintain the sonority and range of a diatonic 'harp, take a 'harp body,

(Fig. F), and a tune which is well-suited for this instrument.

A Renaissance 'harp in G Major/e minor can be made using a standard 36-string 'harp body with a standard set of Oscar Schmidt strings. The top

would he have needed six wives?

by George Foss

of the scale. In theory, the *natural* form of the minor scale contains the same seven tones as the relative Major scale, but begins two tones below the Major scale. Thus the two related keys of G Major and e minor, (*natural* form), would be made up of the same seven tones; g, a, b, c, d, e, f#. (See Fig. A)

The *melodic* form of the minor scale is altered by raising the sixth and seventh tones a half-step. The *melodic* minor scale is further complicated by using different tones when it is ascending and when it is descending. The ascending *melodic* minor has the raised sixth and seventh steps while the descending *melodic* minor is the same as the *natural* minor. (See Fig. B)

The harmonization of this *melodic* minor scale requires these two raised tones in addition to the seven diatonic tones of the *natural* minor and the relative Major scale. The sixth and seventh degrees of the scale are usually harmonized with the IV (Subdominant) and V (Dominant) chords respectively. We must have Major IV and V chords for the *melodic* minor ascending, and minor IV and V chords for the *melodic* minor descending. In the key of our example, e minor, we need both Major and minor A chords and Major and minor B chords. Then we can harmonize the *melodic* minor

retune, and refelt the chord bars and come up with a Renaissance model autoharp. I described one such modification in my book, "Going Diatonic." That version was in C Major/a minor (with emphasis on the a minor). My other Renaissance 'harp is in G Major/e minor. It is for this version I have included suggestions for a practical arrangement of the chord bars and the retuning scheme. (See Figs. D and E) At the end of this article, there are also chord-bar patterns,

must have ten (at least) chord bars, one of which is used as a "lockout" bar to cancel the C# and D# when playing more traditional tunes in G Major or e *natural* minor. This design worked out well and the 'harp is an excellent G diatonic instrument that can be played in an "open chording" style when the lock-out is engaged. Since there is an A Major chord present on the instrument, it can be used in the key of D Major using a slightly different fingering pattern for the I, IV, and V chords.

Fig. A

G Major scale: G A B C D E F#
 e *natural* minor scale: e f# g a b c d

Fig. B

e *melodic* minor scale: e f# g a b c# d# e (ascending)
 e d c b a g f# e (descending)

Fig. C

I V I IV I IV #6 V #7 I V IV I IV I V I

em bm em am em AM BM em bm am em am em bm em

Fig. D

	A Maj.	
	C Maj.	
	a min.	
	G Maj.	
	e min.	
	D Maj.	
	b min.	
	D7	
	B Maj.	
Lock-outs C# and D#		

Bass

Treble

Fig. E

Bass Strings

Treble Strings

E G A B C D E F# G A B C C# D D# E E F# F# G G A A B B C C# D D# E F# G A B C D

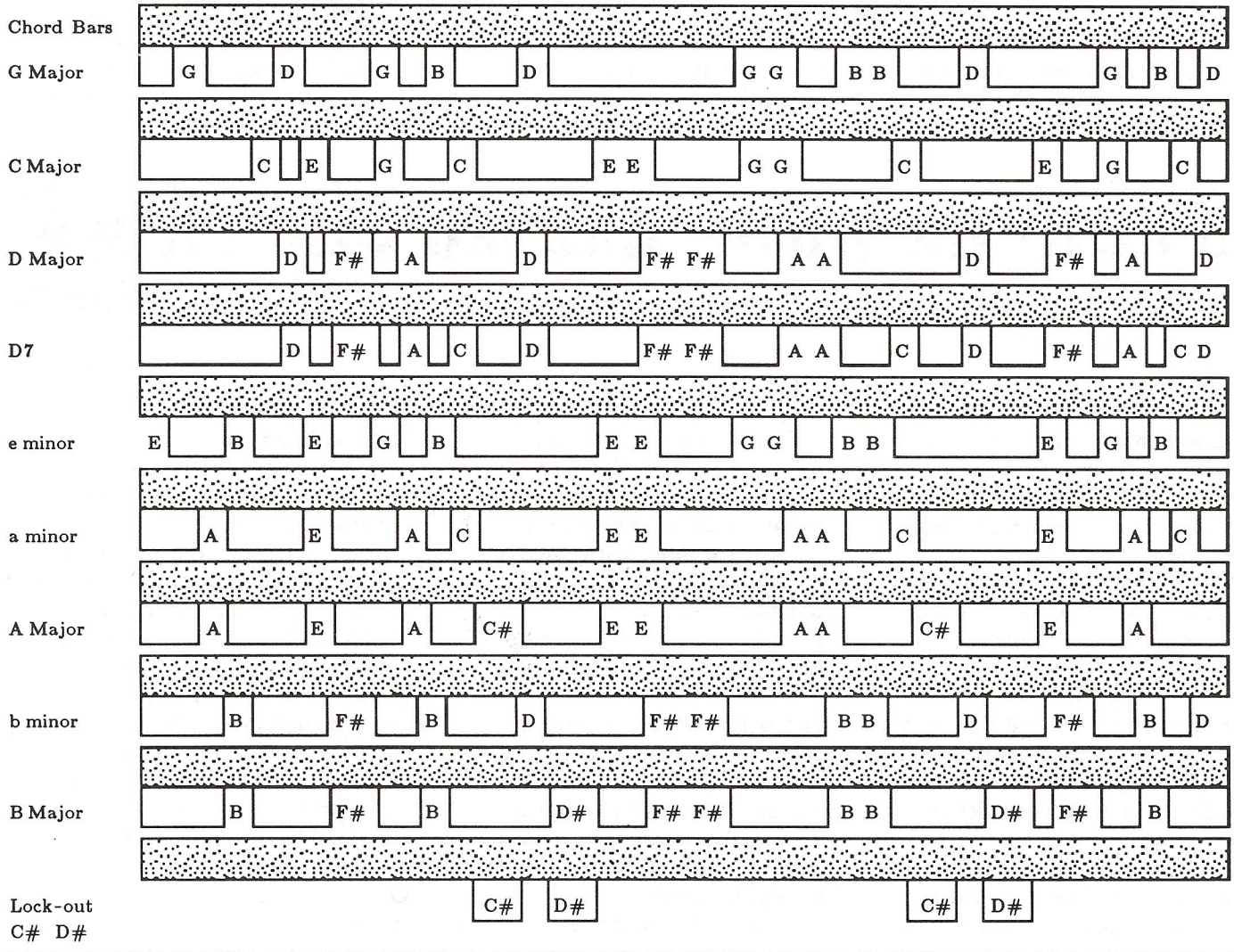
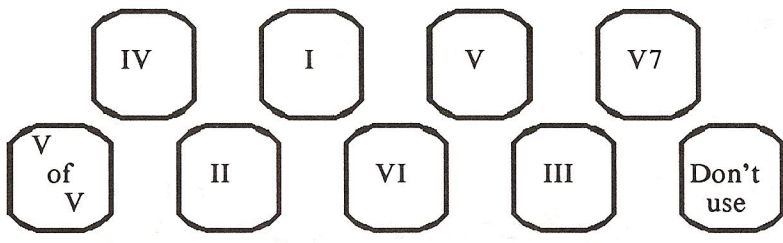


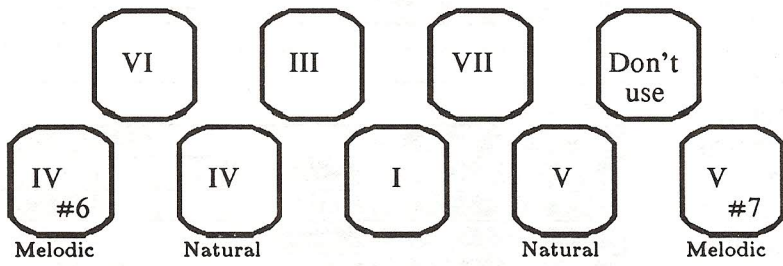
Fig. F

G Major



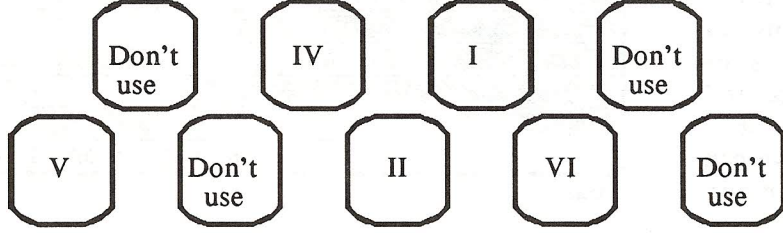
Lock-out C# - D#

e minor



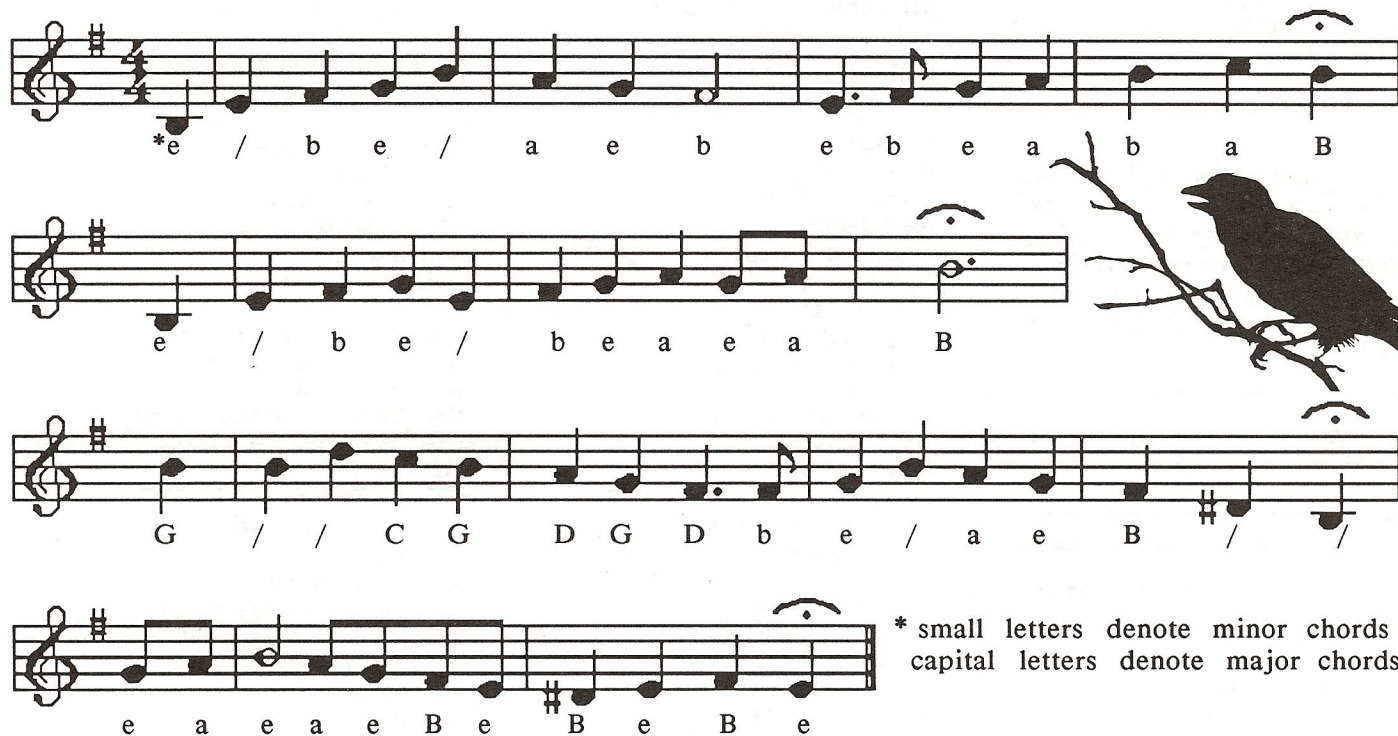
C# - D# open

D Major



Lock-out C# - D#

The Three Ravens



*e / b e / a e b e b e a b a B

e / b e / b e a e a B

G / / C G D G D b e / a e B # /

e a e a e B e # B e B e

* small letters denote minor chords
capital letters denote major chords

First printed in Thomas Ravenscroft's *Melismata* (1611), this is the ancestral version of traditional ballads found in Scotland ("The Twa Corbies") and still found in the Appalachian and Ozark Mountains ("The Two Black Crows"). The main folklore element of this ballad is the importance of a proper burial so that the body of the deceased is safe from scavengers.

There were three rauens sat on a tree
Downe a downe hay down, hay downe
They were as blacke as they might be
With a downe
The one of them said to his mate
"Where shall we our breakefast take?"
With a downe, derrie, derrie, derrie downe,
downe

"Down in yonder greene field"
Downe a downe hay down, hay downe
"There lies a knight slain under his shield"
With a downe
"His hounds they lie downe at his feete
So well they can their master keepe"
With a downe, derrie, derrie, derrie downe,
downe

"His haukes they fly so eagerly"
Downe a downe hay down, hay downe
"There's no fowle dare him come nie"
With a downe
"Downe there comes a fallow doe
As great with yong as she might goe"
With a downe, derrie, derrie, derrie downe,
downe

She lift up his bloody hed
Downe a downe hay down, hay downe
And kist his wounds that were so red
With a downe
She got him up upon her backe
And carried him to earthen lake*
With a downe, derrie, derrie, derrie downe,
downe

She buried him before the prime
Downe a downe hay down, hay downe
She was dead herselfe ere even-song time
With a downe
God send every gentleman
Such haukes, such hounds, and such a leman**
With a downe, derrie, derrie, derrie downe,
downe

*earthen lake -- a bog or moor of soft earth or mud.

** leman -- a lover or mistress with the connotation of possessing powers of witchcraft or magic, in this case allowing the knight's lover to transform herself into a deer to have the strength to carry his body to a place of easy burial. ■

SUMMER FESTIVALS

Festivals Editor:
 Ubi Adams
 2659 Kissel Hill Road
 Lititz, PA 17543

This is an updated list of the 1992 summer festivals which feature autoharp in workshop, concert, and/or contest. The complete festival list is published each year in the January issue.

CODE :

AC Autoharp Contest
 AP Autoharp Performance
 AW Autoharp Workshop

JULY

**Mountain Laurel
 Autoharp Gathering**

Date: July 2, 3, 4, 5
 Place: Newport, PA
 Code: AC (The Mountain Laurel Autoharp Championship), AP, AW (Bryan Bowers, Joe Carter and Janette Carter, Lindsay Haisley, The Bill Sky Family, Judie Pagter, John Hollandsworth, Julie Davis, Ivan Stiles, Alan Mager, Fran Stallings, The DeBusk/Weaver Family, Jim Hudson, Pleasant Valley Audio)
 Contact: Limberjack Productions
 PO Box A
 Newport, PA 17074
 717 567-9469

**Red, White, and Bluegrass
 Festival**

Date: July 4, 5
 Place: Sebastopol, CA
 Code: AP (Bryan Bowers)

**Augusta Heritage
 Arts Workshops**

Date: July 5 - July 31
 Place: Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV
 Code: AW (Becky Blackley, Tom Schroeder, Charles Whitmer)
 Contact: Doug Hill
 Davis & Elkins College
 Elkins, WV 26241-3996

Winnipeg Folk Festival

Date: July 9, 10, 11, 12
 Place: Bird's Provincial Park
 Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
 Code: AP (Paul and Win Grace)

Down East Dulcimer Festival

Date: July 10, 11, 12
 Place: Bar Harbor, ME
 Code: AP (Lucille Reilly)
 Contact: 207 288-5653

Brookings Art Festival

Date: July 11, 12
 Place: Brookings, SD
 Code: AP (Bryan Bowers)
**4th Annual Warrenville
 Folk Music Festival**
 Date: July 11, 12
 Place: Warrenville, IL
 Code: AP, AW
 Contact: Donna Benkert
 PO Box 248
 Warrenville, IL 60548
 708 717-8495

**Gebhard Woods
 Dulcimer Festival**

Date: July 11, 12
 Place: Gebhard Woods
 State Park, Morris, IL
 Code: AP, AW
 Contact: 815 942-0113

Vail Arts Festival

Date: July 11, 12
 Place: Vail, CO
 Code: AP (Julie Davis)
ODPC Funfest

Date: July 16, 17, 18, 19
 Place: Toledo, OH
 Code: AP (Lucille Reilly)
 Contact: Leslie Linenkugel
 1411 Ogontz Street
 Toledo, OH 43614

**20th Annual Non-Electrical
 Musical Funfest**

Date: July 16, 17, 18
 Place: Osceola County Fairgrounds
 Evart, MI
 Code: AP, AW
 Contact: Donna Beckwith
 817 Innes NE
 Grand Rapids, MI 49503
 616 459-6716

Sunflower Festival

Date: July 24, 25
 Place: Altona, Manitoba, Canada
 Code: AP (The Bill Sky Family)

Cranberry

Dulcimer Gathering
 Date: July 24, 25, 26
 Place: Binghamton, NY
 Code: AP, AW (John Hollandsworth, Eileen Kozloff-Abrams, George Orthey, Drew Smith, Ivan Stiles, Charlene Thomson, Lee Vaccaro)
 Contact: Ed Ware
 329 Marion Avenue
 Endwell, NY 13760
 607 669-4653

**Rockford Folk Museum
 Festival**

Date: July 25, 26
 Place: Rockford Museum
 Rockford, IL
 Code: AP, AW (Paul & Win Grace)
 Contact: 800 521-0849

Cripple Creek Festival

Date: July 26
 Place: Morden, Manitoba, Canada
 Code: AP (The Bill Sky Family)

**Carter Family
 Memorial Festival**

Date: July 31, August 1
 Place: Maces Springs, VA
 Code: AP (Janette Carter, Mike Fenton)
**Minnesota Bluegrass and
 Old-Time Music Festival**
 Date: July 31, August 1, 2
 Place: Princeton, MN
 Code: AP, AW (Mike Seeger, Paul and Win Grace)
 Contact: Jed Malischke
 RR 3, Box 3119
 Spooner, WI 54801
 715 635-2479

Swallow Hill Folk-a-thon

Date: July 31, August 1, 2
 Place: Denver, CO
 Code: AP (Paul and Win Grace)

AUGUST

Lamb's Farm Festival

Date: August 2
 Place: Libertyville, IL
 Code: AP (The Bill Sky Family)
**56th Annual Galax Oldtime
 Fiddlers' Convention**
 Date: August 5, 6, 7, 8
 Place: Galax, VA
 Code: AC, AW
 Contact: Oscar Hall
 328 A Kenbrook Dr.
 Galax, VA 24333

Cypress Creek Park Festival

Date: August 6
 Place: Adona, AR
 Code: AP (The Bill Sky Family)
Bluegrass Festival

Date: August 7, 8
 Place: Hugo, OK
 Code: AP (Judie Pagter)

**12th Annual Dow Gardens
 Folk Festival**

Date: August 8
 Place: Dow Gardens, Midland, MI
 Code: AP (Ruffwater String Band, Wanda Degan)
 Contact: Bill Kuhlman
 2769 South Homer Road
 Midland, MI 48604
 517 835-5085

**25th Annual
 Willow Folk Festival**

Date: August 8, 9
 Place: Stockton, IL
 Code: AP
 Contact: 312 861-0798

**Ozark Folk Center
 Autoharp Jamboree**

Date: August 13, 14, 15
 Place: Ozark Folk Center
 Code: AP, AW (Becky Blackley, Mike Fenton, George Foss, Lindsay Haisley, Charles Whitmer)
 Contact: Ozark Folk Center
 Box 500, Mountain View, AR 72560

Bluegrass Festival

Date: August 14, 15
Place: Petersburg, MI
Code: AP (Judie Pagter)

Old Time Fiddlers and Bluegrass Convention

Date: August 14, 15
Place: Fries, VA
Code: AC, AP
Contact: Fries Volunteer Fire Dep't.
Fries, VA 24330 703744-2242

Salt River Folklife Festival

Date: August 15, 16
Place: Florida, MO
Code: AP (Paul and Win Grace)
Contact: 314 565-3449

Bethlehem Musikfest

Date: August 19, 20, 21
Place: Bethlehem, PA
Code: AP (Paul and Win Grace)
Contact: 215 861-0678

SEPTEMBER

Solom Old Judge Days

Date: September 4, 5
Place: Mammoth Springs, AR
Code: AC
Contact: Jean Pace
501 625-3378

17th Old-Time Country Music Contest and Festival and Pioneer Expo of Arts and Crafts

Date: September 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Place: Pottowattamie Frgrnds, Avoca, IA
Code: AC (National Autoharp Contest), AP, AW (Laurie Sky, George Orthey)
Contact: Bob Everhart

PO Box 438, Walnut, IA 51577

14th Annual Fox Valley Folk Festival

Date: September 5, 6
Place: Island Park, Geneva, IL
Code: AP, AW
Contact: Juel Ulven
755 N. Evanslawn Ave.

Aurora, IL 60506 708 897-3655

Great River Festival of Traditional Music and Crafts

Date: September 5, 6
Place: U of WI campus, LaCrosse, WI
Code: AP (Paul and Win Grace)
Contact: 608 785-1434

National Traditional Music Performer Awards

Date: September 11, 12, 13
Place: Crawford Frgrnds, Denison, IA
Code: AC
Contact: Bob Everhart

PO Box 438, Walnut, IA 51577

American Music Festival

Date: September 11
Place: Oregon, MO
Code: AP (Paul and Win Grace)
Contact: 314 882-6296

Booneslick Country Folk Festival

Date: September 12
Place: Arrow Rock, MO
Code: AP (Paul and Win Grace)

Doc Boggs Memorial Festival

Date: September 12
Place: Wise County Frgrnds, Wise, VA
Code: AP

Contact: Anna Breeding
PO Box 67, Wise, VA 24293

Wheatland Music Festival

Date: September 12, 13
Place: Remus, MI
Code: AP (Bryan Bowers, Wanda Degan)

Johnny Applesseed Festival

Date: September 19, 20
Place: Fort Wayne, IN
Code: AP (Paul and Win Grace)
Contact: 219 483-0057 or 483-4768

Walnut Valley Festival

Date: September 17, 18, 19, 20
Place: Winfield, KS
Code: AC (International Autoharp Championship) AP, AW (Roz Brown, Julie Davis, Karen Mueller, Alan Mager, Ivan Stiles)
Contact: Walnut Valley Association
PO Box 245, Winfield, KS 67156
316 221-3250

Mill Pond Music Festival

Date: September 19, 20
Place: Bishop, CA
Code: AP (Bryan Bowers)

Cider Fest

Date: September 26, 27
Place: Lewisburg Cider Mill, Lewisburg, KS
Code: AP (Paul and Win Grace)
Contact: 913 837-5202



July 31, August 1 & 2

**Camp in the Woods Resort,
Zimmerman, MN**

Featuring: California
(formerly Berline/Crary/Hickman)

**Mike Seeger
Front Range**

**Petticoat Junction
Bluegrass Patriots
Ralph Blizard & the
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**The Bone Tones
The Grace Family**

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Sun., 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Ticket Info:

3-Day*: \$31 adv., \$34 gate
2-Day*: \$22 adv., \$24 gate
Fri./Sun.: \$9 adv., \$10 gate
Sat.: \$9 adv., \$12 gate
(*includes rough camping)

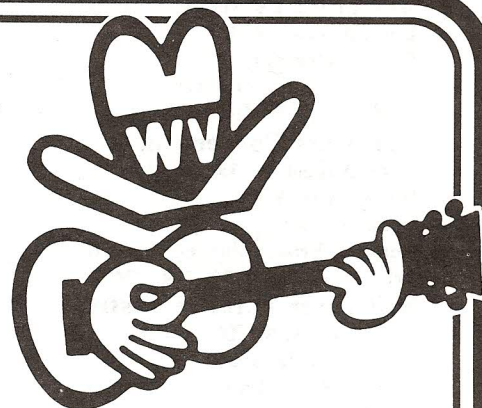
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Cadenza Music

**For More Information:
715-635-2479**

WALNUT VALLEY FESTIVAL

21ST NATIONAL FLAT-PICKING CHAMPIONSHIPS
 SEPTEMBER 17, 18, 19, 20, 1992
 WINFIELD, KANSAS



FEATURING IN PERSON:

- MIKE CROSS
- PAUL ADKINS & THE BORDERLINE BAND
- BLUESTEM
- NO STRINGS ATTACHED
- FRONT RANGE
- STEVE GILLETTE & CINDY MANGSEN
- BEPPE GAMBETTA
- THE ANDY OWENS PROJECT
- LILAH GILLET
- DENNIS DOYLE
- JANE GILLMAN
- TOM CHAPIN
- JOHN McCUTCHEON
- AILEEN & ELKIN THOMAS
- COLCANNON
- LAUGHING MATTERS
- STEVE KAUFMAN
- FRIEDLANDER & HALL
- ANDY MAY
- LINDA TILTON
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Walnut Valley Kansas is hosting another **Barnburner**, and we are hitched up and rarin' to join in the festivities!

The autoharp will again be well represented at Winfield. The prestigious, **sizzling International Autoharp Championship** will be held at 12 pm on Thursday, September 17th. Registrations will be accepted until one hour before the contest, or until 40 contestants are registered. The entry fee is \$10 and contestants may pre-register by mail. Prizes for the contest include two Autoharps by Oscar Schmidt, a Dulci-Harp by Orthey Instruments, cash prizes, and trophies.

Orthey Instruments, Oscar Schmidt, and *Autoharp Quarterly* will again have booths at the festival to display their wares and offer assistance to 'harpers.

Thursday evening, following the regularly scheduled Winfield events, a **red-hot jam session** will be held to honor the '92 winners. An invitation is extended to everyone for this popular event by the hosts, *Autoharp Quarterly* and Orthey Instruments. Bring your 'harp and join the Winfield Winners! **Blazing autoharp workshops** will be offered during the festival weekend by many Winfield favorites. These will all be hands-on workshops. Bring your 'harps, a chair, and be prepared to learn a lot from the best!

Further information concerning the jam sessions and workshops will be available at the *Autoharp Quarterly* booth at the festival.

We're all fired up about this one! -- And we're looking forward to seeing you there. ■

RECORDINGS

Recordings Editor
Mary Ann Johnston
RD3, Box 190-A
New Cumberland, WV 26047

Features autoharp

HARPER'S FERRY
Autoharp: Alex Usher
216 N. Elm Street
Webster Groves, MO 62119

**MUSIC FROM AUTOHARP
QUARTERLY, VOLUME ONE**
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Limberjack Productions
PO Box A, Newport, PA 17074

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Autoharp: Ivan Stiles
Route 29 -- RD2
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1863 - SONGS FROM HOME
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CLUB NEWS

Clubs Editor:
Ubi Adams
2659 Kissel Hill Road
Lititz, PA 17543

*The complete autoharp club list
is published every January.
Please send club information to
the Clubs Editor.*

The Capital 'Harpers Autoharp Club (VA) meets on the third weekend of each month at the home of one of its members. Typical activities include open stage, informal jamming, a song swap, and a pot-luck supper. The club will host an all-level workshop by Mike Fenton on August 22, 1992. Contact Alan Mager, 703 256-1068.

The Happy Hearts Autoharp Club (IA) calendar of events includes: the bluegrass festival at Guthrie Center, July 2-5; an all-day picnic for family and friends at the Living History Farms near Des Moines, Aug. 1; the Old Time Country Music Festival and Contest at Avoca, Sept. 2-7. The club's meeting dates have been changed to the first Saturday of the month. Contact Dora Miller, 515 792-3977.



HANDLE WITH CARE

—————
 Serious Protection For Your Autoharp

By Roger Lipera

Damage to or destruction of a musical instrument during shipment is just about the worst nightmare a musician can have. Upon seeing a bashed box or case slide down a moving baggage belt to the airport carousel, an artist's heart will shudder. The look of anguish upon the owner's face is terrible to behold. If the instrument inside is discovered to be broken or wrecked, the wailing can be heard in the next county.

The danger is magnified if a musician travels extensively with an instrument. Each shipment is another opportunity to have the autoharp smashed or crunched. The simple facts are that cardboard boxes and most standard instrument cases will not stand up to repeated abuse. And it is certain that neither cardboard nor leatherette will repel the tusks of a forklift that have been repeatedly sharpened on a concrete warehouse floor.

Rock and roll roadies have long known that nothing protects guitars better than a properly designed reusable transit case. These cases are available from a number of sources, and can be obtained for any instrument, whether it is a piccolo, autoharp, or grand piano. Finding a supplier is not that difficult, usually a walk through the yellow pages will turn up several dealers.

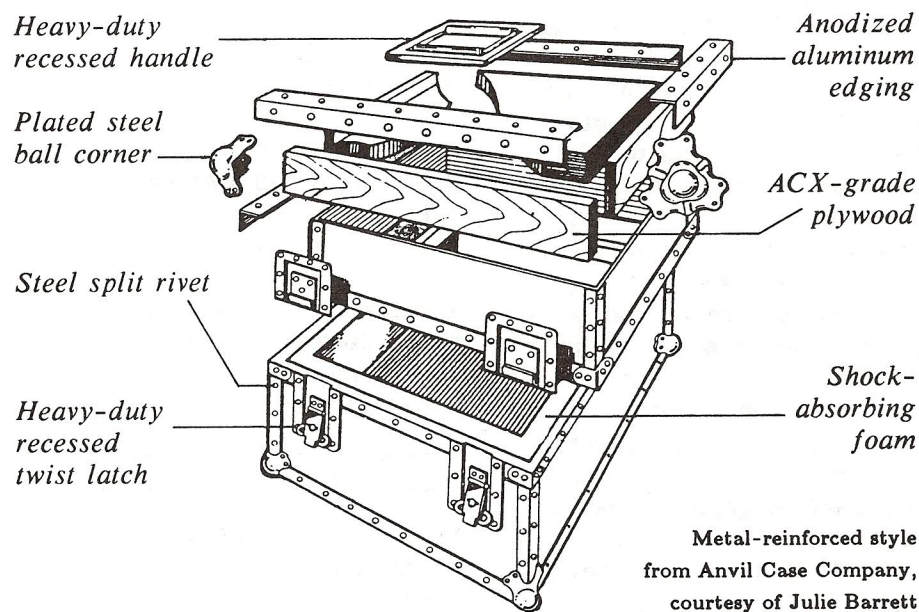
The hard part, however, is making sense of the various claims and understanding the choices available.

The Air Transport Association has developed a set of specifications relating to shipments by air or common carrier such as UPS, Federal Express, or truck freight. ATA Specification 300 is the one most frequently cited. Cases that are built to ATA Specification 300 are designed to last about 100 normal round trips. And if there are no unusual events, such as the case being dropped from a moving baggage truck, it probably will last that long.

Many companies build what they call "ATA" cases. What a buyer must be aware of is that ATA stands for Air

Transport Association. Anybody who uses a term such as Air Transport *Approved* is not being totally truthful. The ATA does not approve anything, and it is obvious that the "approvals" are invented. A good manufacturer will build a case that "meets or exceeds" ATA Specification 300, or is "built to" that specification. Ideally, the manufacturer's case construction techniques will have been tested by an outside testing laboratory.

Most ATA-style cases utilize similar construction methods. ABS plastic, fiberglass or aluminum sheet is laminated to some sort of plywood-type material. The major manufacturers use special pressure machines and glues which prevent the



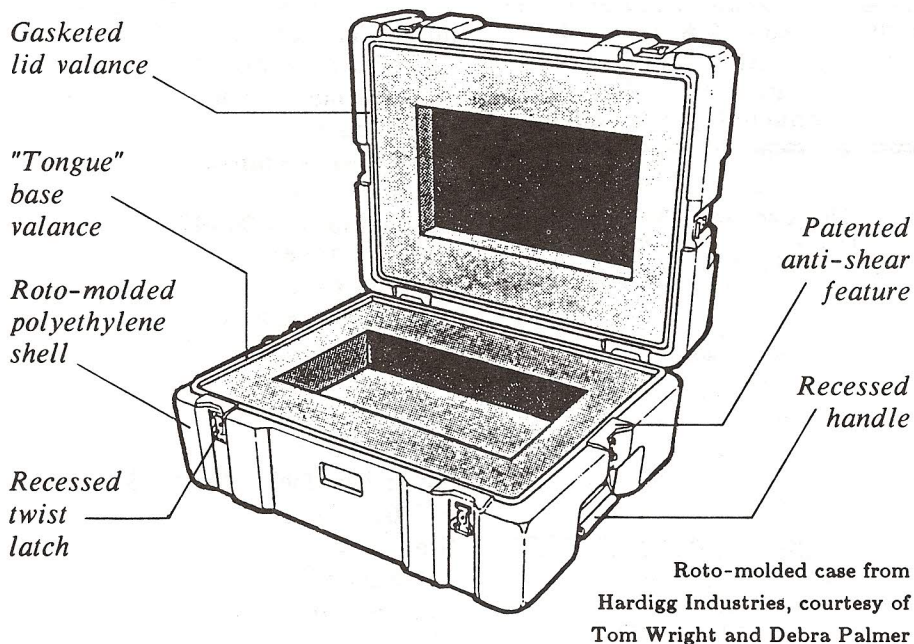
laminations from bubbling later. Metal edges and heavy duty corners secure the exterior panels. The most popular methods involve tremendously strong steel split rivets or special edge extrusions and glue. There is much debate in the industry as to which is better, and many musicians have a personal preference. Currently, the strongest wood material in use is ACX grade plywood. Some companies use less expensive and slightly less strong luan plywood. Beware of manufacturers who use "furniture grade" plywood. Remember, you want to protect a valuable instrument, not build a coffee table.

The latest method of building an ATA-style case comes from the plastic industry. Case shells made from a plastic material are fitted with custom interiors. Many shells are made by vacuum forming. However, the strongest of all shells are made by a process called roto-molding.

Roto-molded cases start out as granulated polyethylene which is poured into a mold. The mold is rotated in an oven, causing the plastic to flow into all areas of the mold as it melts. Roto-molded cases

are tremendously strong. While the plastic cases are lighter in weight than comparably-sized laminate and plywood containers, they may not be smaller or are they likely to be less expensive. This is because the number of shell sizes is relatively limited and custom shells cannot be built for less than many thousands of dollars.

The interiors of the ATA-style case will have specially chosen foam. The foam will be cut to fit the shape of your particular instrument. The best cases will have foam which is lined with velour. Working from a tracing of your instrument, the manufacturer will be able to make a nearly perfect fit. Most case companies have experienced sales and engineering staffs to assist you in obtaining a properly-sized case. The biggest and best companies have networks of trained dealers who will be able to examine and measure your instrument for you at no extra charge. They will then provide you with correct pricing and delivery information. Many music dealers handle ATA-style cases and usually have the required know-how. If you



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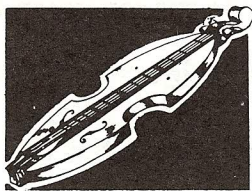
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are in doubt, you can contact a manufacturer directly and they will put you in touch with the proper people.

The major case companies all offer a range of containers. They can assist you in choosing the case which best meets your requirements. If you do not ship your autoharp or check it as luggage, you probably will not need an ATA-style case.

But, every musician knows that an instrument can suffer much abuse from simply riding in a car or van. By discussing your situation with a knowledgeable case specialist you will be able to match the level of protection offered with price and needs. A hard-style custom-fit case made from light weight materials will keep your instrument from being banged about in the trunk of the car.

A transit case should be considered a form of insurance. The cost of the case is small when measured against the cost of instrument repair, the price of a new instrument, or the aggravation associated with an autoharp that arrives at a destination in an unplayable condition.

The easiest way to find a local case dealer is to look in the yellow pages under "Custom Packaging, "Musical Instruments," or even "Video Equipment." You can also ask the manufacturers for their advice and assistance. Among the most respected are:

Anvil Case Company
PO Box 1201
La Puente, CA 91747
800 359-2684

Calzone Cases
225 Black Rock Avenue
Bridgeport, CT
800 243-5152

Hardigg Industries
PO Box 201
South Deerfield, MA 01373
413 665-2163

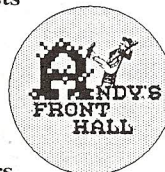
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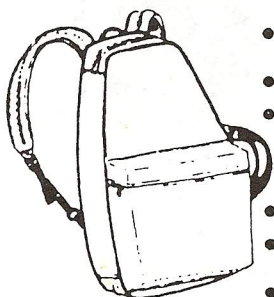
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O'Carolan

The musical score consists of ten staves of music in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes standard musical notation with treble clefs and a series of chord symbols placed above the notes. The chord symbols include D, (G D), A7, G, D, A7, D, Bm, Em, and (A7). The rhythm is indicated by note values and rests, with some rests marked with a slash (/) or the letter 'O'. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

*From the book Forty Three Arrangements Of O'Carolan Tunes For Diatonic Autoharp
played in the open-chording style by Stephen J. Young*

Chord-symbol means to press that chord bar. "/" means to press the last named chord bar. "O" means to play with no chord bar pressed. Other than this notation, no other indications of playing technique are given. The right-hand style used is at the discretion of the player. Suggested accompaniment chords are placed above the standard notation. Chord sequences within parentheses are optional variations. Copyright 1991 by Stephen J. Young. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

CRITICS' CHOICE



Judie Pagter



Mike Herr



Bob Woodcock

If you have a recording you would like to have considered for review, please send it to Autoharp Quarterly, PO Box A, Newport, PA 17074. Submitted recordings cannot not be returned.

Mike's Choice

**The Grizzly Flat Harper
Volume 2, Hymns**
Bill Bryant

PO Box 280, Grizzly Flats, CA 95636

Morning Has Broken; Because He Lives; He is My Strength; O, Lord You're Beautiful; What a Friend We Have in Jesus; Will the Circle be Unbroken; Father I Adore You; The Old Rugged Cross; Swing Low Sweet Chariot; Wayfaring Stranger; Glorify His Name; Kum Ba Yah; Open My Eyes, Lord; Just a Closer Walk With Thee; Thy Loving Kindness; For Those Tears I Died; Amazing Grace

Bill Bryant has a right to be proud of this tape. From a technical standpoint, hymns are relatively easy to play. The effort here has been geared to creating the reverence that one feels when approaching the Divine. And Bill's done it. Quite simply, this music is Beautiful.

From a technical standpoint, Bill's playing is very clean and free of bothersome pick-clicking. There are very, very few glitches, and those I thought I heard were well-covered. During the relatively slow melody lines, there is ample time for fill-strokes, and Bill uses two distinctly different types. One is a constant with-the-beat chain of notes, that "means some-

thing." It's an additional melody line, if you will. The second fill-stroke is a fast double-beat filler, made possible by some double-sided picks. Bill uses these picks to make a to-and-fro movement, which is impossible to duplicate with regular picks. I like this second effect, and I commend him for keeping this energetic sound tasteful and under control. One can especially note this "fast-fill" during "He is My Strength" and "Wayfaring Stranger."

Several songs brought back the plain, simple feeling of the Mennonite Church services of my youth, such as "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and "How Great Thou Art." The last tune just mentioned caused my wife to spontaneously burst into vocal accompaniment -- what more need I say?

I noticed a particularly rich and beautiful bass line in the songs Bill plays on his Oscar Schmidt Wildwood Flower -- "O, Lord You're Beautiful," "Father, I Adore You," "Kum Ba Yah," etc.

Bill plays a harmonica on "I Love You, Lord," "Glorify His Name," and "How Great Thou Art." The sound is simple and well-balanced with the 'harp. The two complement each other well.

Likewise, the only vocal

selection, "Just a Closer Walk With Thee," is well-balanced and well-mixed. The rhythm chosen for this tune is a welcome change, consisting of almost a calypso beat, with stops on the two and four counts of each measure. One thing that stylistically bothered me in this cut is his phrasing or timing of the words. He seems to have started each new line on the fourth beat of the measure instead of waiting until the first beat of the next measure. Maybe this is the "correct" pattern -- maybe Bill was trying something new -- but I was mildly annoyed. You'll have to make up your own mind.

There's a markedly different sound that I instantly noticed on "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "Amazing Grace." I couldn't tell if Bill used a chorus pedal or some other electronics effect during the mixing, or whether this sound is simply what he coaxed out of his 'harp. Whatever it is, it's Gorgeous.

Bill did a particularly good job keeping "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" interesting with nice "slurs," and good arrangement and chord selection.

Over all, I found this tape a good representation of why Bill was the 1990 International Autoharp Champion. The arrangements are well thought out, the melody lines are "right there," and the overall taste is extremely pleasing. ■

Bob's Choice

Pickin' Time; John and Kathy Hollandsworth and Friends

700 Tower Rd., Christiansburg, VA 23073

Wreck of the 97; Hewlett; Trail of the Lonesome Pine; Bully of the Town; Far Away in Australia; Victory Rag; Peach Pickin' Time in Georgia; Down Yonder; Ninety Nine and Ninety; Soldier's Joy; Hard Times/Year of Jubilo; My Name is Morgan

It takes little effort to imagine that the fourteen songs on this recording are being performed on a Saturday evening in your living room by your friends, the Hollandsworths. They care deeply for this music, and it shows. Tunes have been chosen and arranged with care and the sidemen complement rather than overshadow the music. Sound quality, mixing and packaging is quite good, and a vast improvement over their last tape. The songs are a mix of old and new, traditional and popular, funny and serious. There is a nice instrument balance with autoharp featured heavily and hammered dulcimer, harmonica, guitar, bass, and banjo-mandolin taking turns center stage.

John is familiar to many 'harpers. He has placed or won in most of the autoharp competitions, including the number one spot at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering in 1991. His playing is as clean, clear, and precise as you will find.

The other half of this team, Kathy, provides the vocals, bass, and wonderful hammered dulcimer. Her vocals are, to this reviewer, one of the nicest parts of this recording. This is not a city, nor a Nashville voice, nor is it like the voices of the great mountain singers like Aunt Molly Jackson. It is clear and somewhat reserved, yet every note

carries the echos of the Great Smokies. I'd compare it to a creek, with its roots high in the mountains, but filtered and refined by time and distance.

"And Friends" of the title include Ed Ogle on some first-rate mouth-harp, Dempsey Patton on guitar, and Jim Lloyd of guitar and mandolin-banjo.

There are some real highlights in this evening with John and Kathy, and there are a few low spots, too. The medley, "Hard Times/Year of Jubilo" stands out as one of the best pieces on the recording. Even though the banjo-mandolin seems to drag just a tiny bit, the piece works wonderfully, evoking a feel of late 19th century America. Stephen Foster, who said that "Hard Times" was the best piece he had ever written, would have been pleased. "My Name is Morgan, but It Ain't J.P." is a delightful '20s music hall piece. I can actually hear Kathy smile as she sings this, and the smile is contagious. "Hewlett," the majestic dance tune written by O'Carolan, is shared by John's 'harp and Kathy's full, rich hammered dulcimer. My favorite is Kathy's version of an ancient English riddle song, "Ninety Nine and Ninety."

My biggest criticism of this recording is that at several points, the vocals seem to beg for some harmony. Another voice singing a quiet, high, third-interval part would put some of these tunes into orbit. Some of the fiddle tunes, like "Soldier's Joy" and "Down Yonder" might be a little brighter with a few more instruments. Also, it's a shame that it is so expensive to do liner notes on these cassette tapes. They would add a lot.

This is a memorable evening with some great musicians. You'll learn a few tunes, you'll hear some old favorites, and you'll smile. ■

Judie's Choice

Just a Rose Will Do Betty and Mark Waldron Outlet 1053

Outlet Recordings, Ferrum VA 24088

Just a Rose Will Do; Jesus Have Mercy on Me; He Will Set Your Fields on Fire; Fill My Cup Lord; Wayfaring Stranger; Hold to God's Unchanging Hand; Jesus Is Right; The Royal Telephone; Whispering Hope; Life's Railway to Heaven; Old Time Religion; When the Saints Go Marching In

Well, folks, it's time for another review. This one is centered around mother and son, Betty and Mark Waldron. Betty plays autoharp; Mark, the guitar.

The title song is decently done, with Betty leading off with the 'harp. They swap vocal leads, and they modulate to another key during this song, as they do in "He Will Set Your Field on Fire." Betty and Mark play a nice rendition of the latter, and there is some pretty 'harp in this song. Mark takes vocal lead on "Wayfaring Stranger." This beautiful old song has lots of pleasing 'harp in the background. "Jesus Have Mercy on Me" is not one of my favorites, although it is done well. "Hold to God's Unchanging Hand" is not a familiar tune and most certainly is not over-done. Betty sings lead with Mark harmonizing. I like the changes of keys and the way the song is laid out. Another song I sure never heard before is "The Royal Telephone." There is some nice autoharp work on this one. "Jesus Is Right" has some very inspirational words. Nice. Betty's 'harp also shines in "Whispering Hope," which they treat as an instrumental. I love the tune, "Old Time Religion." The autoharp has some great breaks on this cut, and also on "When the Saints Go Marching In." They do a good "bouncy" version of this song.

There you have it, folks. All in all, this is a very nice soothing gospel tape -- one you'll be sure to enjoy time after time. ■

FELT BAD ABOUT YOUR DAMPED 'HARP? MP

by Dr. George Orthey

"How often should I refelt my 'harp bars?" is a question I get a lot in workshops. "How often" is mainly a factor of "how hard" and "how much" you play. I have an 1890s Dolgeville 'harp that plays reasonably well with its original felts. On the other hand, I have seen Laurie Sky and Judie Pagter wear felts half-way to the bars in six months.

Signs of needing new felts are: having to push the bars too hard; a fuzzy "zip" sound made by some damped strings when you push the bar down; and the damped strings still make a faint fuzzy note with the bar down. This wear is most evident in the mid-range of the instrument, where you do most of your playing.

If you still need some help deciding, check one of your most-used chord bars. Push down gently on the bar while looking through underneath where the felt meets the strings. If you see sharp, peaked notches (like a knife cut) cut into the felt by the damped strings, it's time to refelt.

It is not necessary to refelt all the bars. Just do the ones that show significant wear. Felts used to replace worn bars should be like the other felts still on the 'harp. If they are not, you may find an unacceptable difference in action and touch.

Another question I hear frequently -- "How about

silicone glue?" There is no question that heavily siliconed bar felt is almost indestructable. (If you're going to use silicone on your felts, it's best to put it on after you have the felt on the bars, and before you notch them.)

The big "however" with silicone is the *squick!* and *sprong!* you get from the bars going on and off the string bed. Bryan Bowers puts it on like he is caulking seams in his fishing boat. Ivan Stiles' teeth split and his hair stands on end at the first *squick!* without even getting to the *sprong!*, which inevitably follows.

Squicks! and *sprongs!* notwithstanding, (your decision), I'll try to guide you through the delicate subject of improving your damped 'harp by refelting those bars.

BEFORE REMOVING THE BARS

1.) Write down the order of the chord bars so you can get them all back in the right place when you're done with the felting process.

2.) Before removing the bars from the combs in the 21-bar 'harp, check to see that the chords are marked on the bars. They are usually marked on the side or bottom near the "round hole" end of the bar. If they are not marked, do so with a glass writing pen or other fine point pen (*not wax*

pencil or ball-point pen). Use a pen that does not wipe off after it dries.

BEFORE REMOVING OLD BAR FELT



1.) Place each bar back on the 'harp in its proper location one at a time. With the same pen used above, mark a line on the side of the bar directly above each string that is open. This line will be your reference for cutting the new felt.

REMOVING BAR FELTS FROM A 15-BAR 'HARP



1.) I prefer here to straighten the bars. These bars in most cases are slightly curved, so that when placed against a straight edge, the ends of the bar do not touch the straight edge. This discrepancy can be corrected now, if you wish. (If you don't want to be so fussy, stop here and go on to #2 under this sub-title.)

To straighten these bars, tear off the old felt leaving the residue that sticks to the bar in place. Very gently sand the face of the bar using a long strip of sand paper on a flat surface (use a belt sander if you have one). Don't rock the bar back and forth. Keep it flat. You will find that the residue comes off the mid-portion of the bar, but not the ends. Stop when the mid-portion is cleaned down to base shiny metal. If you check the bar with a straight edge now, it

should be flat from end to end. Coat the prepared surface of the straightened bars with contact cement. Make sure that the areas where the old felt base remains near the ends of the bar have been coated well. Let this coating dry completely, and apply the felt as described in "Applying Bar Felts" below.

2.) If you don't want to straighten the bars, just remove all of the old felt and felt base by scraping it with the edge of a stout knife or chisel. Note that the felt base is a piece of cellophane tape much like two-sided Scotch tape. All of this plastic tape strip should be removed..

REMOVING BAR FELTS FROM A 21-BAR 'HARP



1.) On ChromAharp-type instruments, where the bars are metal and plastic, the felt and felt base should be scraped off as above. On OSI 21-bar and Festival 'harps, where the bars are entirely aluminum, the bars can be heated. The felt strip glue is a hot melt glue. Heat the bars hotter than you can touch, but not red hot. When these bars are heated on a very low stove burner, the felt and felt base can be scraped off easily. The easiest way to handle a hot bar is to hold it at one end with a pair of needle-nosed pliers. Note: if you get the bars hot enough that the glue on them starts to smoke, they're too hot.

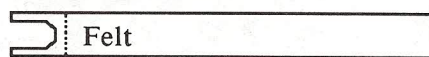
APPLYING BAR FELTS



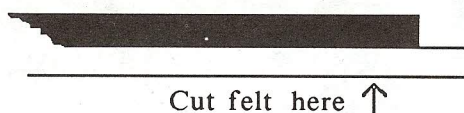
1.) Felt sizes: 21-bar and Festival 'harp bars are normally 1/4" wide by 3/16" thick. 15-bar instrument bars are 5/16" wide by 1/4" thick. All felt strips come backed with pressure-sensitive glue, which is covered with a strip of waxed paper.
2.) Remove the waxed paper.

Be sure not to remove the felt base cellophane film!

3.) On a 21-bar-style chord bar, carefully align the felt with the bar at the "U" end, just short of the "U."



Lay the felt along the bar, keeping it aligned on each side until you reach the other end. The felt will be longer than the bar. After it is in place, cut off the long end of the felt strip, about 1/4" onto the bar.



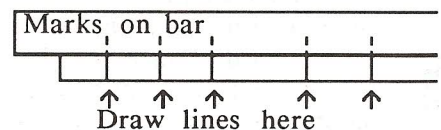
Firmly press the felt in place so the sticky face is solidly attached to the bar.

On a 15-bar-style chord bar, the felt should be aligned with the end of the chord bar. Lay the felt along the bar, keeping it aligned on each side until you reach the other end. Trim any excess off the end so that the bar and felt strip are of equal length.

NOTCHING THE BAR FELTS

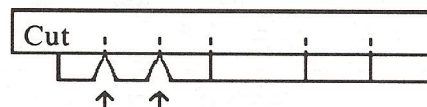


1.) The marks you made on the bars earlier should be clearly present. Draw a straight line down onto the felt from those lines on the side of the bar.



2.) Now we cut the felts. An extremely sharp knife is needed here. I use an old straight razor that I keep honed and stropped shaving-sharp. Single-edge commercial razor blades will also work. The edge should be sharp enough so that you don't need to saw back and forth to cut.

Make an inverted "V" cut at each mark on the felt. Since the lines on the bars were placed exactly over the strings on your 'harp, the cuts you will make on the new felts can be relatively narrow (1/8" to 3/16" wide). Better to cut them a bit narrow than too wide.



3.) Now put the bar in place on your 'harp and check to see that each "player" string is clear of the felt. If a notch is too narrow, trim off a bit more felt. If the notch is too wide, glue a notch piece back in with silicone glue, making sure it is just flush with the face of the bar felt. Recut this notch in a few hours after the glue is set.
4.) Put your damped autoharp back together and enjoy! (I felt good helping you with this. I hope you felt better, too!) ■



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mike Fenton is England's leading autoharp enthusiast, his playing experience dating back to 1968. He is a three-time autoharp champion at the Galax Oldtime Fiddlers' Convention, and won the International Autoharp Championship in Winfield, Kansas in 1987. He is known for the variety of his styles and his open-string, diatonic techniques, with a particular flair for fast fiddle tunes.

A former school principal, Mike has made his living since 1987 by providing autoharp concerts and workshops in English primary schools. He visits the U.S.A. for up to two months a year for concerts, workshops, festivals, school visits, and recording. In 1991, Mike appeared on stage with Bryan Bowers at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering and the Walnut Valley Festival, events he regards as the musical highlights of his life.

Mike has several albums to his credit, including a children's collection. He also appears on Drew Smith's "Winfield Winners" tapes, and produced the acclaimed "Galax International" double LP of worldwide oldtime and bluegrass music. Mike has a new cassette scheduled for release this summer titled "Accent on 'Harp."

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THE INTERACTION LESSON: "THE WATER IS WIDE"

Mike Fenton

High Park Cottage

Pershore Road, Whittington

Worcester, Worcs. WR5 2RT, England

Ever since I made my first forays into exploring diatonic autoharp, I have been *quite* fascinated by the qualities of the strings when played open, that is, plucked or stroked without the assistance of a chord bar to mute the unwanted strings. On the diatonic scale, the discordant half-steps are not present and thus the "risk factor" is removed. On the autoharp tuned in this way, there appears to be harmony everywhere. Just try employing a pinch technique on undamped strings and moving the pinch around to different areas and you'll see what I mean. The effects are very pleasing and therapeutic.

In employing these techniques, the basic idea is to use a slow melodic tune or song, in which there are many sustained notes which provide the opportunity to improvise with open string fills. the techniques are exploratory and

experimental in character, with an element of improvisation -- ideas which are difficult to show in tab. I've used the well-known old English folk song "The Water Is Wide" as an ideal vehicle to illustrate the possibilities for using open-string work to enhance both accompaniment and melody.

The melody of the piece is played in a simple pinch-pluck style, using a mixture of open chording and melody chording. (Open chords are designated by an "O," rather than by a standard chord letter.) Whenever a whole note is reached (in every even-numbered measure), the chord bars are released to open all the strings. While the whole note continues to ring, open strings are plucked, more or less randomly, to fill the four beats of the measure. Following the numerous whole notes, I've shown a number of possible rhythm patterns, in

parentheses, for these open plucks. Try these and make up others of your own.

Although I can accomplish this open plucking using one or more fingers or even by using tightly controlled pinches, I have a preference for using the thumb in the lower ranges of the 'harp. This technique has been described as the "walking thumb" as it provides a gently "walking" counterpoint. Although it is initially an experimental, exploratory style, with practice you can develop great accuracy and obtain the precise counterpoint notes that you require, all the while safe in the knowledge that if you hit a "wrong 'un" it will at least still be within the given scale for that key and therefore not total disaster.

"The Water Is Wide" is very possibly my favourite all-time song. There's more than a hint of autobiography in it; and with authorship being

lost, I can at least arrange it, give it my own touch and regard it as "mine" to a degree. One of the qualities it possesses that I really enjoy is that it is possible to utilise all three minor chords (Gm, Dm, and Am) in the F major diatonic scale to harmonise the melody. In fact, without the use of all these chords, the tune, to me, sounds empty and unfulfilling. In addition to the three primary major chords and the three minors, I also make use of the C7 (V7) chord and delight in using the C suspended 4th chord (Vsus4), as the authority and texture this brings to the last line of each verse are quite stunning.

You may notice on the tape that my Gm (IIIm) chord has an extra little "open" texture in it. This is because I have added to it the 7th note of the G scale, the F, to change the Gm chord to Gm7. It has a wider, spacier, more accommodating texture which I find useful in this and other singable songs such as "Sailing" and "The Skye Boat Song." The plain Gm will work just fine in "The Water Is Wide," but if you want an extra special sound, take your Gm bar and cut notches for the F strings, giving you the Gm7 chord.

A word about the Csus4 chord in measure 14 is in order. You can if you wish, simply drop down straight onto the C chord on the word "row," as the melody note is C. But I find it beautiful and staggeringly effective to introduce the delaying tactic of the suspended chord. It literally does create suspense and provides a melodic "stepping-stone" between the progression from Dm to the C -- a kind of "harmonic bridge," if you like.

To construct a suspended 4th chord from a major chord, simply replace the 3rd note of

the scale in the chord with the fourth note of the scale. Thus, substituting the F note for E, the C major chord (C, E, G) becomes Csus4 (C, F, G). I find the I and V suspended chords to be the most useful, and most of my one-key diatonic 'harps are fitted with these chords. With accurate "walking thumb" and controlled pinches, you can also hint at these chords by playing "open-string suspensions." I play a lot of open strings as ornaments at the end of lines or verses. Open seconds or fourths (the G and Bb notes in the key of F) work very well to achieve this "suspended" texture.

I believe this style really developed as an emotional expression of what I wanted to hear from the autoharp. It's a technique for quiet moments and subdued lights. It also came from a need simply to do more between vocal lines. OK, I could have simply filled using a melodic pinch or maybe just strummed with a different emphasis, but exploring the open strings with their unique harmonic qualities began to produce a quite conversational flavour between voice and 'harp. If you use it on vocal pieces, you'll find you are duetting with yourself. I should stress that your chord bars are still vital -- they serve as a kind of consolidating agent to allow the tune to maintain its structure, most notably at the beginning and end of lines. It is also important to remember that this style works best on a *one-key* diatonic. This is because there are no muted strings at all whenever you release all chord bars. It works less satisfactorily on chromatic 'harps using lock-bars to mute all the discordant strings. You simply keep getting the dull

impediment of the locked strings. I found I could reproduce the walking counterpoint style quite satisfactorily on a G-D-A diatonic, with just a few locked-out strings, but it took a bit of practice.

As a gentle entry into the open-string style as described here, I advise using simple tunes which you know very well, and in which the melody is discernible just from hearing the strummed chords. "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and "Canon in D" are good examples. Try such tunes using gentle thumb strokes and finger-picking actions with the first and second fingers ("walking fingers" on open strings), and explore the open strings between the melody notes. Find out which strings provide the best links between the melody notes and chord changes, and most of all provide the harmonies and textures you want. If you are using a "wandering pinch" (you can hear this on the lesson tape) it's best to ensure that the thumb and first or second finger, whichever, are slightly stiffened and kept a uniform distance apart, as your 'harp strings are uniform in their spacing and you'll therefore obtain the most pleasing filler harmonies.

In the tab for this lesson, I have shown basic pinch and open notes where I think desirable, but you will appreciate that the tab only shows a fraction of what is possible with this style. You really need to listen to the lesson tape to take in more of the possibilities. I recommend that you send for the tape, so you can hear what this style can do with a simple song. The song is also available in fuller form with autoharp, guitar, flute, and synthesiser on my

new tape.

Open-string techniques are very rewarding to try -- with practice you can produce a beautiful, free-spirited sound

which will transport you to a different plane! When my F diatonic is ringing just right, when it's sounding as perfectly in tune as it can be, I have

a hard time putting it down once I get started on "The Water Is Wide." So relax those chord bars, you diatonic players, and let those strings flow!

THE WATER IS WIDE

Traditional Arrangement by Mike Fenton

The wa - ter is	wide,	I can -not cross	o'er,
F / / O	F (O / /)	Bb O / Bb /	F (O / / /)
TAB * * *	TAB * (o o o)	TAB o o o o	TAB * (o o o o)
And nei - ther	have	I ... wings to ...	fly.
F / / C	Dm (O / / / /)	/) Dm O Dm O Dm	Gm7 (O / / /)
TAB * * *	TAB * (o o o o)	TAB * o * o o o	TAB * (o o o o)
Give me a	boat	that will car - ry	two,
C / F Bb	Am (O / / /)	Gm7 / O Gm7 /	Dm (O / / /)
TAB * * *	TAB * (o o o o)	TAB * o o o o	TAB * (o o o o)
And ... both shall	row,	my love and	I.
/) Dm O Dm /	Csus4 (O / / / /)	C / O C7	F (O / /) F
TAB o) * o * o	TAB * (o o o o)	TAB * o o o	TAB * (o o o)

The water is wide, I cannot cross o'er,
And neither have I wings to fly,
Give me a boat that will carry two,
And both shall row, my love and I.

A ship there is and she sails the sea,
She's loaded deep, as deep can be,
But not so deep as the love I'm in,
I know not if I sink or swim.

I leaned my back up against an oak,
Thinking he was a trusty tree,
But first he bent, and then he broke,
And thus did my false love to me.

I put my hand into some soft bush,
Thinking the fairest flower to find,
I pricked my finger to the bone,
And left the fairest flower alone.

Repeat first verse.

Oh, love is handsome, and love is fine,
Bright as a jewel when first it's new,
But love grows old and waxes cold,
And fades away like morning dew.

My love is like the lofty trees,
It shudders fierce and then sways free,
If it should fade when the summer's through,
It'll bloom again when spring shines through.

Repeat first verse.



PRO-FILES

If you are a professional auto-harp and wish to be featured, please send your picture, biography, and schedule to:

Mary Ann Johnston
RD 3, Box 190-A
New Cumberland, WV 26047

BRYAN BOWERS

c/o Scott O'Malley & Asso.
PO Box 9188
Colorado Springs, CO 80932
719 635-7776

Pro-File: AQ January 89

Performance Schedule:

July 2 & 3
Mountain Laurel
Autoharp Gathering
Newport, PA
July 4 & 5
Red, White, &
Bluegrass Festival
Sebastopol, CA
July 11 & 12
Brookings Art Festival
Brookings, SD
August 9
J.C. Park
Las Vegas, NV
August 16
Kent Senior Activities Center
Kent, WA
September 12 & 13
Wheatland Music Festival
Remus, MI
September 19 & 20
Mill Pond Music Festival
Bishop, CA

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303 969-9645

Pro-File: AQ October 89

Performance Schedule:

Buckhorn Exchange Restaurant
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Saturday night

JULIE DAVIS

PO Box 1302
Nederland, CO 80466
303 258-3444

Pro-File: AQ July 91

Performance Schedule:

July 2, 3, 4, & 5
Mountain Laurel
Autoharp Gathering
Newport, PA
July 11 & 12
Vail Arts Festival
Vail, CO
July 13
Children's
Sing-a-long Concert
Swallow Hill
Denver, CO
July 23
Mercury Cafe
Denver, CO
July 31 & August 2
First Annual
Swallow Hill Folk-a-thon
Denver, CO
August 5
Workshop: Introduction
to the Autoharp
Swallow Hill
Denver, CO
August 8
River Sage Concert
Evergreen, CO
August 13, 14, & 15
Rocky Mountain
Storytelling Conference
Palmer, CO
September 17, 18, 19, & 20
Walnut Valley Festival
Winfield, KS

MIKE FENTON

High Park Cottage,
Persnore Road
Whittington, Worcester
England WR5 2RT
0905 354822

Pro-File: AQ October 88

Performance Schedule:

July 31 & August 1
Carter Family
Memorial Festival
Maces Springs, VA
August 13, 14, & 15
Autoharp Jamboree
Mountain View, AR
August 22
Workshop presentation
with the Capitol 'Harpers
Annandale, VA
703 256-1068 for information
August 29
Shalom Hall
Myers Park Baptist Church
Charlotte, NC
August 31, September 1, 2, & 3
Floyd County Schools, VA
September 4
Roanoke College
Salem, VA
September 5
Fiddle & Banjo Club
Civic Center Auditorium
Roanoke, VA

PAUL and WIN GRACE

Route 1, Box 182
11990 Barnes Chapel
Columbia, MO 65201
314 443-2819

Pro-File: AQ October 88

Performance Schedule:

July 9, 10, 11, & 12
Winnipeg Folk Festival
Bird's Provincial Park
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
July 25 & 26
Rockford Folk Festival
Midway Village
Rockford, IL
August 1 & 2
Minnesota Bluegrass
& Oldtime Music Festival
Camp in the Woods
Princeton, MN
August 9
Concert in the Gardens
with Beth Horner
Shelter Gardens
Columbia, MO
August 15 & 16
Salt River Folklife Festival
Florida, MO
August 19, 20, & 21
Bethlehem Musikfest
Bethlehem, PA



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La Crosse, WI
September 11
Radio Station KVNO
Omaha, NB
September 11
American Music Festival
Oregon, MO
September 12
Booneslick Country
Folk Festival
Arrow Rock, MO
September 15
Quentin Primary School
Crystal Lake, IL
September 17
Haver Hill School
Fort Wayne, IN
September 19 & 20
Johnny Appleseed Festival
Johnny Appleseed Park
Fort Wayne, IN
September 26 & 27
Cider Fest
Louisburg Cider Mill
Between Louisburg
and Paola, KS

LINDSAY HAISLEY

Further Music Productions
14206 Spreading Oaks
Leander, TX 78641
Pro-File: AQ April 91
Performance Schedule:
July 2, 3, 4, & 5
Mountain Laurel
Autoharp Gathering
Newport, PA

LITTLE ROY LEWIS

The Lewis Family
Route 1, Box 75
Lincolnton, GA 30817
404 359-3767
Pro-File: AQ January 90
Performance Schedule:
July 3
Cherokee Fiddlers Park
Grove, OK
July 4
Festival Site
Renfro Valley, KY
July 5
Thrashers Reunion
Denton, NC
July 10
Boone County Fairgrounds
Burlington, KY
July 11 & 12
Peaceful Valley
Shinhopple, NY

July 14
Performing Arts Center
Oakland Community College
Union Lake, MI
July 17
Earl's Drive-Inn
Chaffee, NY
July 18
Little Eagle's Creek
Westfield, IN
July 23
Shriners Bluegrass Festival
Olive Hill, KY
July 24
Paradise Lake Park
Bristolville, OH
July 25 & 26
Old Bedford Village
Bedford, PA
July 30
Harper's Memorial Park
Shade Gap, PA
July 31
Fairgrounds
Lawrenceville, GA
August 1
White's Farmers Market
Brookville, IN
August 2
Fairgrounds
Columbia, KY
August 8
Rodeo Arena
Springdale, AR
August 9
Salt Creek Park
Hugo, OK
August 11
Chenango Fairgrounds
Norwich, NY
August 14
Lester Flatt Memorial Park
Otto, AR
August 15
Wierd's Orchard,
Ypsilanti, MI
August 16
Comer Festival Grounds
Darlington, MD
August 20
Pebblebrook High School
Mableton, GA
August 21
Hallelujah Supper Club
Newton, NC
August 22
Fairgrounds
Georgetown, OH
August 27 & 28
Happy Holiday Park
Cherokee, NC
August 29
Mt. Paron North
Church of God
Marietta, GA

August 30
Jamestown, KY
September 4
Campgrounds
Kempton, PA
September 6
Rocky Mountain Music Park
Aliquippa, PA
September 7
Union Fire & Hose #1
Dover, PA
September 11 & 12
Grandfather Mountain
Linville, NC
September 18
Joyful Noise
East Point, GA
September 20
Granite Hills Campgrounds
Gettysburg, PA
September 21
Fairgrounds
Wilson, NC
September 25
Hamby Mountain
Baldwin, GA
September 27
Russell Park
Oak Grove, LA
September 29
Fairgrounds
Comer, GA

JUDIE PAGTER

Country Ham
Route 1, Box 280
Barboursville, VA 22923
804 985-3551
Pro-File: AQ April 90
Performance Schedule:
July 3, 4, & 5
Mountain Laurel
Autoharp Gathering
Newport, PA
July 11 & 12
Peaceful Valley
Shinhopple, NY
August 7 & 8
Bluegrass Festival
Hugo, OK
August 14 & 15
Bluegrass Festival
Petersburg, MI

LUCILLE REILLY

P.O. Box 49
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
908 604-9743
Pro-File: AQ April 92
Performance Schedule:
July 10, 11 & 12
Down East Dulcimer Festival
Bar Harbor, ME

July 16, 17, 18, & 19
 ODPC Funfest
 Toledo, OH
August 18
 First Presbyterian Church
 Cape May, NJ
 August 25
 Longwood Gardens
 Kennett Square, PA

THE BILL SKY FAMILY

PO Box 3496
 Batesville, AR 72503
 501 264-9382 (Ans. Service)
 Pro-File: AQ April 90
 Performance Schedule:
 July 2, 3, 4, & 5
 Mountain Laurel
 Autoharp Gathering
 Newport, PA
 July 8, 9, & 10
 Huntington, WV
 July 12
 "Entertainment in the Park"
 Milaca, MN
 July 18
 Walnut Opera House
 Walnut, IA
 July 19
 "Country Roots Today"
 WOW Radio
 Omaha, NE

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 Brookings, SD
 July 22
 Edmore, ND
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 Sunflower Festival
 Altona, Manitoba, Canada
 July 26
 Cripple Creek Festival
 Morden, Manitoba, Canada
 July 31
 Jimmy Driftwood
 Folk Hall of Fame
 Mountain View, AR
 August 2
 Lamb's Farm Festival
 Libertyville, IL
 August 6
 Cypress Creek Park Festival
 Adona, AR
 August 7
 Jimmy Driftwood
 Folk Hall of Fame
 Mountain View, AR
 August 9
 Jimmy Driftwood
 Folk Hall of Fame
 Mountain View, AR
 August 16
 Watson, OK
 August 17 & 18
 Mena, AR
 August 22
 Concordville, AR
 August 23
 Jimmy Driftwood
 Folk Hall of Fame
 Mountain View, AR
 August 28
 Jimmy Driftwood
 Folk Hall of Fame
 Mountain View, AR
 September 5 & 6
 National Traditional
 Country Music Festival
 Avoca, IA
 September 11
 Jimmy Driftwood
 Folk Hall of Fame
 Mountain View, AR
 September 18
 Jimmy Driftwood
 Folk Hall of Fame
 Mountain View, AR
 September 19
 Pioneer Days
 Maynard, AR
 September 22
 Greers Ferry Visitor Center
 Heber Springs, AR
 September 24, 25, 26, 27,
 28, 29, & 30
 Deridder, LA

FRAN STALLINGS
 1406 Macklyn Lane
 Bartlesville, OK 74006-5419
 918 333-7390
 Pro-File: AQ April 92
 Performance Schedule:
 July 2, 3, 4, & 5
 Mountain Laurel
 Autoharp Gathering
 Newport, PA
 July 17, 18, & 19
 OKon Science Fiction
 Convention
 Tulsa, OK
 July 21 & 22
 Bartlesville Public Library
 Bartlesville, OK
 September 25, 26, & 27
 Tellers of Tales Conference
 Superstition Mountains, AZ

IVAN STILES

Route 29, RD2
 Phoenixville, PA 19460
 215 935-9062
 Pro-File: AQ October 88
 Performance Schedule:
 July 2, 3, 4, & 5
 Mountain Laurel
 Autoharp Gathering
 Newport, PA
 July 17
 Red Raven Coffeehouse
 Kimberton, PA
 July 24, 25, & 26
 Cranberry
 Dulcimer Gathering
 Binghamton, NY
 September 12
 Swallow Hill
 Denver, CO

CAROL STOBER

Maiden Heaven Band
 Box 1275
 Talladega, AL 35160
 205 362-6471
 Pro-File: AQ October 88
 Performance Schedule:
 July 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, & 31
 New Autoharp Workshop
 South Plains College
 Levelland, TX

Note: Date changes and additions or cancellation of events can occur. Please contact performer for details before travelling long distances.



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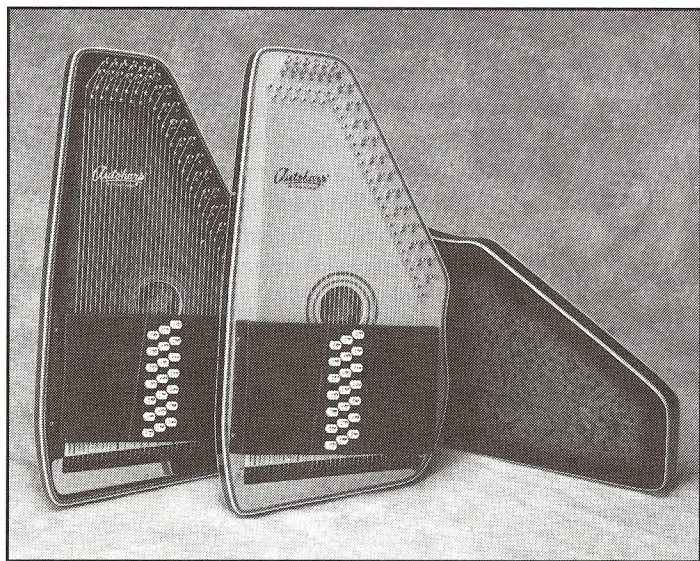
Being an innovator himself, Mr. Zimmerman would appreciate the Professional Series' *fine tuning system* and smooth-action chord assembly. He would also admire the traditional use of beautiful birdseye maple and spruce woods accented with abalone, hardwood or multi-ply bindings. Most of all, he would love the full, singing tone produced by these instruments which is the hallmark of his design.

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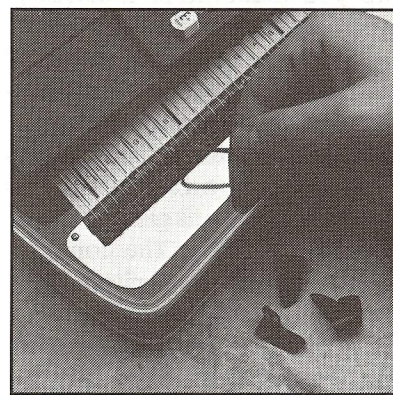
*Left: OS110 Ozark with solid spruce back
Right: OS115 Alpine with solid spruce top*



*Left: OS120 Smoky Mountain with birdseye top and back
Right: OS120 Adirondack with spruce top and birdseye back*

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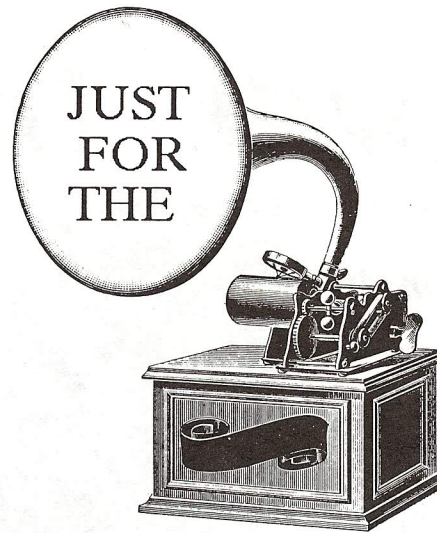
Jim Hudson is a well-known hammered dulcimer performer, and is founder of Hudson Dulcimers. He is also a professional sound engineer, who has been making his own recordings for several years. When he is not performing or working in his recording studio, he travels to festivals and trade fairs selling his many tapes. --Editors

My reason to make recordings has been to share my music with those who want to hear it. If that sounds a bit altruistic, it is. There is another reason I make my tapes. As much as I love my hammered dulcimer (and now my autoharp), I reached a point when I desired more than a beans and weenies lifestyle. People who play traditional music with folk instruments do not get rich. I had a choice -- market my music via tapes, or pick up my guitar and play country music. I have written this series of articles to help you climb out of the beans and weenies syndrome. If you're already happy with your lot in life, these articles may at least help you make more musically satisfying tapes.

So many questions came to mind when I began to outline what has now become three separate articles on making and marketing a recording. It was difficult to narrow such a broad topic onto the confined space of the written page. My first question -- where should I start? I decided to begin by discussing the most important aspect of the entire recording process:

Practice, Practice.

If you have to try to learn your tunes or struggle your way through your lead breaks in the recording studio, you are going down that expensive road to failure. Practice is the only way to prevent this. In most studio cases, you begin



RECORD

PART ONE

by Jim Hudson

paying for time from the moment you walk in until you walk out. This includes all the time you spend tuning, warming up, practicing, drinking coffee, and shooting the breeze with your fellow musicians and the engineer.

The next most important preparation for recording is:

Selection of Tunes.

It all started as a big happy accident that I ever discovered this priceless bit of marketing information. I had to pay for it with a bit of failure, but I'll give it to you free.

When you have made the commitment to record, list all of your best tunes and then begin to look for a general theme or category they may fall into. Let me explain. When I recorded my first tape, I had been playing about seven months. All I knew were ten or twelve gospel tunes. I couldn't play fast, and I couldn't play fancy. This is still one of my best selling cassettes. The next recording was a mixture of different tunes and styles. My thought was to give a great deal of variety to the recording. So, I recorded 1950 tunes,

Sousa marches, waltzes, Irish favorites, and a little Latin. It was just so much fun putting it all together, but no fun at all to watch it all fall apart sales-wise. It sells some, but not like most of my other tapes. The problem is, it doesn't set any kind of mood. It is slow, then fast, then Irish, then '50s. People will walk up to my booth, pick up the tape because it has a well-known song as the title and a real nice cover. They read the play list and say "This one has some real good tunes on it," then lay it back down, and choose one of my other tapes which falls into a specific category.

I guess what I'm trying to say is, rifle your ideas into a general area. Don't try to shotgun them out in a broad pattern. You will experience much better sales with a more narrow approach to topic and mood.

While we're on the subject of song selection, here's another thought. Many of us have a lot of tunes we have written. Good for us! Original material is fantastic, but take care to mix it in among other better known tunes. For some reason, people would rather hear five hundred daring renditions of "Golden Slippers" than to buy a cassette that doesn't contain some material that is familiar to them.

-- And, then, of course, you can't just go into a studio and play anything you feel like recording. You must do your

Research.

Many great tunes are under copyright. You need written permission to use them, or you must file a royalty payment agreement with the owners of the copyrights. This is a set fee of five cents per song per cassette tape *produced* (not per cassette sold). If you have 1000 tapes printed, you owe \$50.00 for each song under copyright

on your tape. You may need to go to your local public library or contact the Harry Fox Agency, 212 370-5330. (See "Sound Judgment" *AQ* Vol. 4, No. 1.) I have never called them, but I am told they can get information on any tune that has ever been copyrighted.

The next important consideration in this process is

How Many Tunes?

From my experiences, you don't want to do very many eight- to nine-minute songs on your recording. For the most part, a three-minute tune is just right. Much over this begins to push it over the boundaries of monotony.

Folks used to expect a 30-minute cassette, but now they want a little bit more for their money, so 40 to 45 minutes is probably a better idea. So, you can figure an average of 15 to 18 songs to get a nice length tape.

Jumping a little ahead of myself, let me add that you can get a 45-minute tape duplicated for about the same cost as a 32-minute tape. (More on that in a later issue.)

Now it's time to bite the bullet in deciding --

Instrumental or Vocal?

My view of this is quite well defined, and quite narrow. Countless times during a festival I am asked "Does this 'un here have any sangin' on it, 'cuz I don't want it if it does."

Now, now, settle down! I enjoy vocals just as much as the next guy, but the cold hard facts are, *our audience likes the unique instruments we play*. They want autoharp or dulcimer tapes, not vocal tapes. If you decide to do vocals on your recording project, prepare to resolve yourself to a very slow selling cassette. Yes, you will sell some, but

mostly it will be to friends and neighbors who want to be kind and try to keep you from loosing quite so much money, or to people who have just heard you sing in a live performance situation. (This all applies, unless, of course, you are primarily known as a vocalist, and use your autoharp as a back-up to your voice.) I don't have accurate figures, but I can safely say that over 90% of my tape sales are made

"Does this
'un here have
any sangin' on
it, 'cuz
I don't want it
if it does."



in shops, by people who have never heard me play in concert. Many have never met me, so my natural charm, good looks, and tactful way of turning a phrase have nothing to do with how well my music sells. Each cassette must carry its own weight.

Also, many of you may have heard John McCutcheon comment on his "Long playing, short selling children's tape." Yes, children's music is great fun and of course, it is our earliest influences, but it is by far too specialized a market. How many two-year-olds do you know with ten or twenty dollars in expendable cash? If you just *must* do a children's recording, wait until you are independently wealthy from the sales of all your other recordings.

Now that you've decided *what*, you must decide *how*:

The Arrangement.

If you don't know how you want the tune to start and end, stay home! When you begin to put down your basic tracks, everyone needs to either start together or there will be an unplanned pick-up note. You need to be aware of how each tune is going to fit together. If you intend to play multiple instruments on your tape, you can record your basic lead tracks at home on just about anything you have that will record so you can see how everything fits together. The same principle applies to the ending.

You need to have some concept of how you want a tune to "shape up." Part of your job as a musician is to "do your own thing." Why should you pay to hear me try to copy what John McCutcheon or Bryan Bowers has done, when for the same money, you can hear them do their own thing? Be original. Create your own arrangements. If you just *have* to steal, at least be content to only steal a phrase, or a lick or two. But while you're at it, steal from *several* people so it will be more difficult to know from whom you were stealing. For some of us, and I include myself, this is how our particular style of playing came about -- steal a little here, a little there, and then change it around some to try to hide the fact that you stole it in the first place. (You see, there *can* be honor among thieves!)

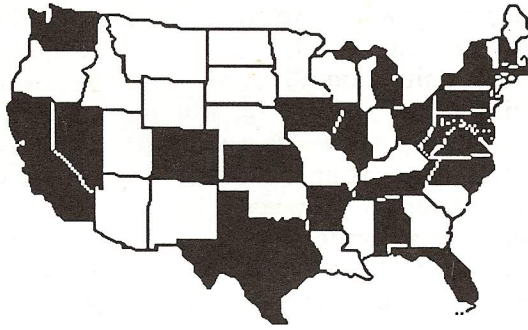
Post Script

In the next issue, we'll talk about choosing a studio and an engineer; studio rates; recording costs, etc. In the third article, I'll discuss mixing; duplication; J-cards, etc.

For me, a chance to record is a chance to create. With my recordings, I hope to make people smile, and bring joy to their hearts. ■

'HARPERS-AT-LARGE

On-The-Spot Reports from Festivals, Concerts, Workshops, and other Autoharp Events

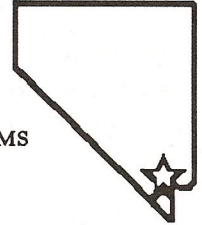


Concert: Whitewater String Band for the Boy Scouts of America

Place: Overton, Nevada

Reporting:
Bob Dodge

Reprinted from SNBMS
Bluegrass News



It was supposed to be an easy gig. Play a few songs for the Boy Scouts. Influence the young people of the country. OK. I'll play for the largest crowd of my musical career. I knew we were in trouble when the road turned to mud and started forking every twenty feet. Jim said look for the two big tepees -- there were hundreds of big tepees. And everywhere were scouts with knives and hatchets. They were searching for wood and anything that would burn. To scouts, a Martin guitar is kindling, a mandolin is for roasting hot dogs. They were all under 5'6" tall -- our autoharp player, Laura Newton, felt like an equal.

Things got worse. The stage was made of wet bales of hay, splintered plywood and mud. As we were setting up, several scouts asked if we knew any country music. You know, like songs by Garth Brooks and Tanya Tucker. Laura said we knew some country songs by Merle Travis and Maybelle Carter. The scouts weren't impressed. They asked if we knew any rock music. You know, songs by Metallica or AC/DC. Phil said we knew some Grateful Dead. The scouts were less impressed.

Things got worse. The two huge stacks of wood wouldn't light despite the use of a 1/4 stick of dynamite soaking in a cup of gasoline. It seems the electrical charge wouldn't zap the hidden explosive. After several requests to borrow an autoharp for kindling, a five

Workshop: Autoharp Workshop for Charlotte, NC elementary school teachers
Place: Elizabeth Traditional Elementary School



Staff Report

In January, Doctors Reta Phifer and Joe Riggs, and Michele Keenan presented an in-depth autoharp workshop for elementary teachers.

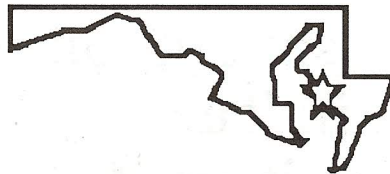
Dr. Phifer discussed autoharp materials available -- instruments, books, journals, picks, and replacement strings. She conducted the Elizabeth Elementary Autoharp Club in a demonstration of playing and singing. She then illustrated initial learning processes, using overhead transparencies, and practice ChromAharp cardboard replicas.

Dr. Riggs covered the maintenance aspect of the instrument -- string and felt replacement and general autoharp upkeep.

Tuning autoharps using the piano, and a discussion of tuners was conducted by all three workshop leaders.

The workshop, entitled Autoharp Renaissance, was very well attended, and accepted with interest.

Open House: Autoharp Clearinghouse
Place: Stevensville, MD



Reporting: Kathy Thorpe
Alexandria, VA

On Sunday, February 23rd, members of the Capital 'Harpers Autoharp Club met at Eileen Roys' house for the AC open house. Thirty-seven people were in attendance, some as far away as Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Florida.

Among those in attendance were Ivan Stiles and Alan Mager. They gave the group an opportunity to examine the instruments they won in Winfield, Kansas. They also treated our ears to some beautiful music.

The 'harp players were joined by a guitar, and lap and hammered dulcimers. There was an open stage during which quite a few folks let their talents shine. The theme for the day was "Songs of Love and Friendship," and many members shared songs along that line.

There was a delicious pot-luck lunch, and time for visiting and jamming. It was truly an enjoyable day!

gallon can of kerosene was applied, and the piles of wood were ignited using highway flares.

Things got worse. The first act was Indian dancers complete with a big drum and Indian chants. They performed an endless string of dances and chants while the fires grew bigger and hotter. About the time the mud had soaked through the bottom of my shoes and all the instruments were out of tune due to the falling temperature, we were introduced. Then the wind shifted. The smoke and glowing embers blew right at us. The idea of playing fifty feet away from two raging fires knowing two sticks of dynamite were waiting to explode, was too much for me to handle. Every time Pete thumped his bass, I flinched. When he accidentally kicked it, I went flying under a bale of hay. I thought I was the only one kissing the earth until I realized Phil and Mark and two Eagle Scouts had beat me there.

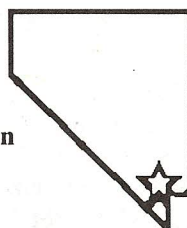
Things got worse. The fires burned hotter and the sweat ran down my arms. The heat dried the mud, and the dust blew around us and caked upon our skin and clothes. We played three sets to a steadily decreasing audience of sleepy, cold, smoked-out scouts. During the second set, the fires started to burn out and it got cold. Cold that only a sweat-soaked picker can relate to. Then the generator blew a circuit. Things were quiet -- too quiet. Quiet to scouts is like sugar water to a hummingbird. They crowded closer to the fires and the stage, armed with knives and hatchets and toads and things too disgusting to mention. We played as hard as we could, but they crowded closer and closer. And then, just before we were surrounded by bored

teenagers, Jim fixed the generator, and the wall of bluegrass music blew them back behind the fires.

Then things got better. The highlight of the evening-- I mean besides leaving -- was when we played "Will the Circle be Unbroken" with everyone around a glowing fire. Surprisingly, most of them knew the words, even the verses. All in all, it was a night to be remembered.

**Festival: Desert Oasis
Bluegrass Festival**
Place: Fallon, NV

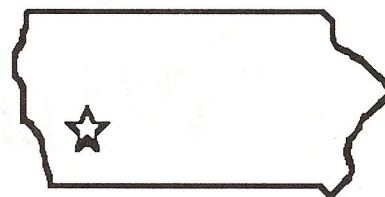
Reporting:
Laura Newton
Las Vegas, NV



This festival had something for everyone. Headliner for the event was folksinger, Glen Yarborough, formerly with the Limelighters, a different twist for a bluegrass festival. There was a good representation of bluegrass, and two old-time music bands, Country Ham and Piney Creek Weasels. Being an old-time music lover, I could have listened to Country Ham and Judie Pagter's great old-time autoharp all evening. An autoharp workshop topping it off would have been perfect. Maybe next time.

Meeting some new friends of traditional music who were playing for the contra dance after the performances, allowed Dona Bledsoe, fellow Whitewater String Band member, Terry Griffin, and me to sit in on a few tunes with our 'harps. Having never heard us play, I believe they were doubtful the 'harps could hang in there with the fiddle tunes. But once again, the autoharp came through as a legitimate and versatile instrument!

Concert and Workshop:
The Bill Sky Family
Place: Newton Inn, Newton, IA



Reporting: Dora Miller
Newton, IA

The Bill Sky Family was at the Newton Inn to help the Happy Hearts Autoharp Club celebrate its third anniversary. Laurie taught a wonderful workshop -- "Picking Variations on the Autoharp." The workshop explored techniques to help improve dynamics, by providing variations in fingering patterns.

After a ten minute break, Bill and Laurie began their concert. They sang and played many songs from their tapes. Laurie played several instrumentals on the autoharp including "The Bells of St. Mary" and "The Old Spinning Wheel."

Most everyone then met beside the inside swimming pool for refreshments, (which included an autoharp cake), and a jam session.

We will be looking forward to seeing The Bill Sky Family back in Iowa at the Avoca Festival in September.



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Oh, I'll Twine With My Mingles

P A R T O N E

This is the first in a series of articles concerning the idioms in traditional American music.

Old-time Tradition by Bill Clifton, The Railroad by Joe Riggs,

The Irish by Mike Herr, and The Sea by Bob Cohen will follow in later issues.

T H E O L D W E S T

by ROZ BROWN

According to "Folk Songs of North America" by Alan Lomax, "The West" includes the states across the Mississippi, with the exception of Louisiana, parts of the Midwest, (which belong to the North), and the Spanish Southwest. On the whole, the West was settled by an overflow of adventurous, rebellious males from both North and South. Every "furriner" represented a threat to their free-and-easy way of life, as witness this bit of dialogue from Ozark folklore:

Traveller: Hello, stranger.

Squatter: Hello, yourself.

Traveller: Live around here?

Squatter: I don't live nowheres else.

Traveller: Where's this road go?

Squatter: It ain't going nowhere since I been here.

Traveller: How far is it to the next tavern?

Squatter: It's upwards of some distance.

Traveller: How long will it take to get there?

Squatter: A hell of a while, if ye stay foolin' here.

But the West loved its music. Its songs are notable for their easy-going virility. "I Ride an Ol' Paint" was probably written around the year 1900 or shortly after. In his

book, "He Was Singin' This Song," my friend, Jim Bob Tinsley says, "I Ride an Ol' Paint" was popularized by balladeer Margaret Larkin and playwright Lynn Riggs.

Larkin and Riggs collected cowboy songs and took them back East to present them in cafes and in the theater. They produced a play on Broadway called "Green Grow the Lilacs" in 1931. Later, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein used the play in their first joint effort and presented it as "Oklahoma!"

Because "I Ride an Ol' Paint" was not written down until Larkin and Riggs collected it, words were changed and added in the singing and playing of the song. Thus, the verses tend to be disconnected from each other in their meaning.

Some of the cowboy slang terms used in this song help approximate the time when it was first sung. Thanks to Jim Bob Tinsley's book, which is the encyclopædia of cowboy songs, and several other library books, I can explain some of these slang terms: *Paint* -- The coloring of a horse, also known as a Pinto; a white horse with irregular

patches of black or brown color.

Dan -- probably originated from the term "dam" which refers to the female parent of a horse.

Hoolihan -- an illegal throw in rodeo bulldogging; also can refer to going to town to raise hell (heck) or paint the town red.

Coulee -- a natural depression in the rolling prairie where water stands during spring and the grass grows lush all summer.

Draw -- Deeper than a coulee, almost a ravine. Water runs or stands in it at some times of the year. It is not a continuous water course.

Dogies (pronounced with long "o") -- A calf whose mamma has gone off and left it; a mean yearling or any young animal; an affectionate term used by cowboys when referring to the whole herd as all the little dogies.

Fiery and Snuffy -- the disposition of horses that have been dragged out of their rope corral, saddled, and are rarin' to be mounted and rarin' to go.

Ol' Bill Jones -- a ubiquitous, mythical cowboy.

Finally, note that this is a dedicated cowboy to suggest that his bones be tied on his horse to ride the plains forever. ■

I RIDE AN OL' PAINT



(1) I ride an old paint,
I lead an old Dan,
I'm off to Montan'
For to throw the hoolian.
They feed in the coulees,
They water in the draw,
Their tails are all matted,
Their backs are all raw.

Chorus:

Ride around little dogies,
Ride around them slow,
For the fiery and snuffy
Are a-rarin' to go.

(2) Old Bill Jones
Had two daughters & a song,
One went to Denver,
And the other went wrong,
His wife she died
In a poolroom fight,
And he sings this song
From morning 'til night.

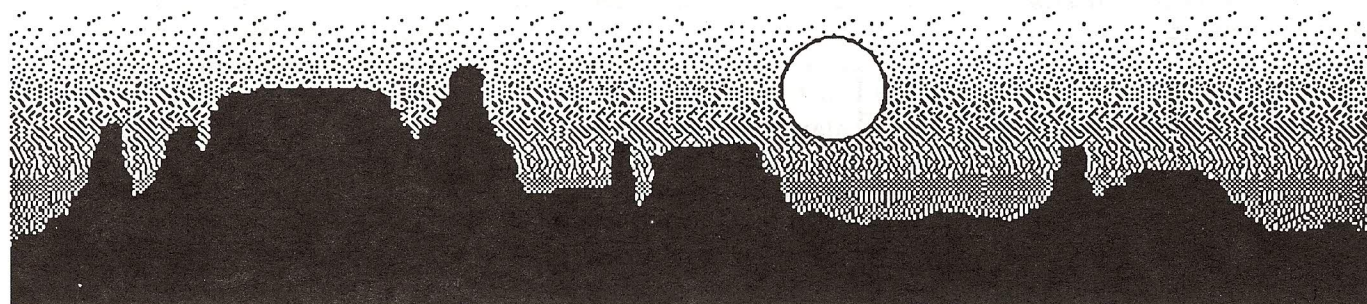
Chorus:

Ride around little dogies,
Ride around them slow,
For the fiery and snuffy
Are a-rarin' to go.

(3) Oh, when I die,
Take my saddle from the wall,
Put it on my pony,
And lead him from the stall,
Tie my bones to his back,
Turn our faces to the west,
And we'll ride the prairies
We love the best.

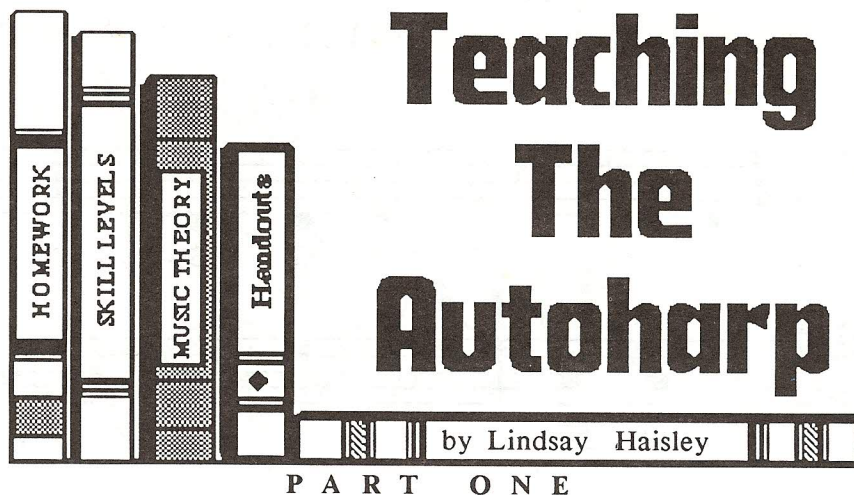
Chorus:

Ride around little dogies,
Ride around them slow,
For the fiery and snuffy
Are a-rarin' to go.



The autoharp, being the eclectic musical machine that it is, attracts an eclectic collection of musical folk who come to the instrument from diverse musical and non-musical backgrounds. During the years that I have been playing the 'harp, I've often been asked to teach the instrument to many of these people. Some folks want private lessons, which is often as easy as sitting down and sharing tunes with a friend, or may perhaps involve helping a student find material which can be practiced and mastered at home. Much more challenging is the group instruction which is becoming popular at festivals and at folk instruction seminars around the country. While group instruction is always more challenging than individual instruction, teaching folk instruments, and in particular the autoharp, has its own special set of problems. This article will discuss some of the problems, challenges and opportunities involved in teaching the 'harp in "workshop" or seminar situations. While many folk festivals have been presenting folk instrumental "workshops" for years, these have mostly been in the format of demonstration workshops -- a collection of performers showing off their chops round-robin style for an audience of "students." Real instructional workshops with hands-on instruction are a fairly new phenomenon of the past fifteen years or so -- one which is still evolving.

The autoharp, being the relatively new instrument that it is, doesn't have the large body of standard tunes associated with it that an instrument such as the fiddle does. Likewise, there are not a large number of recognized masters, as on the folk guitar,



Teaching The Autoharp

by Lindsay Haisley

PART ONE

whose recordings are widely distributed and whose styles can be studied and emulated. Add to this the fact that there is no standard chord layout for the instrument and not really even any standard tuning. The playing field is open, and the rules of the game are up for grabs! Isn't it wonderful!

In addition, students of the 'harp come from an exceptionally wide variety of musical backgrounds. Because the instrument has been a music teachers' tool for many years, many elementary education music teachers want to learn more about it. These are often folks who are proficient on several other instruments and need only some introduction to the possibilities inherent in the 'harp so that they can go home and work with it on their own. On the other end of the spectrum are people such as those whose spouses play folk music, know next to nothing about it, but want to play *something* so as not to be left out of the fun. (The 'harp is an "easy" instrument, right?)

Am I a beginner, intermediate, or advanced player?

Defining skill levels is a recurring problem. Presenters are caught between a rock and a hard place. On the

one hand, putting labels such as intermediate and advanced on classes can scare folks away who might otherwise enjoy and benefit from a workshop. Failure to do so can saddle an instructor with an impossible mixture of students. Even if classes are labeled by skill level, many people have no yardstick against which to measure their skills, and end up in the wrong department. A useful compromise mirrors education in other fields. The more "beginning" you are, the more general your instruction should be. Advanced students are generally more interested in instruction on a particular topic -- the more advanced, the more particular. "Beginning Autoharp" says much more about what's taught than "Advanced Autoharp." Presenters would do well to note this. I've taught at festivals which labeled autoharp workshops only as "beginning, intermediate, and advanced," the latter two labels being somewhat less than helpful. Many advanced students, in addition, are looking for specific skills from specific instructors and want to see class descriptions such as "Abusing Diminished Chords with Lindsay Haisley" or "High Velocity Diatonic Melody Picking with Bonnie Phipps."

Elliot Hancock, music di-

rector of the Ozark Folk Center, tells me that over the past fifteen years, students of all folk instruments have become more demanding. Whereas ten years ago, most students were content to simply request "more of the same" on their course evaluations, they are increasingly requesting more coverage of specific topics. The skill of reading music, once the anathema to true "folk" musicians, is also increasingly in demand as people realize that music literacy is the key to an incredible volume of musical tradition and instruction. We are all, hopefully, becoming "advanced" in more than just age.

I can't understand a thing about music theory.

I find a lot of students tune out when the subject of music theory comes up. This is unfortunate since some knowledge of music theory is necessary to make the best use of any instrument. The autoharp especially, as a chord based instrument, requires an understanding of chords and how they work together in music -- the heart and soul of music theory. The good news is that the 'harp is an excellent instrument on which to learn and teach chord theory. I can think of few on which the task is easier. This is one of the better excuses for having the names of all the chords on the chord bar buttons.

I suspect that some of the problem students have with music theory may lie in the fact that it's called music theory. This sounds like the title of a college course, probably taught just down the hall from a course in theoretical physics -- an unfortunate association. Music "theory" is not at all "theoretical," but very practical knowledge about how music is put to-

gether. One often finds that good "genuine" folk musicians (musical folk from parts of our culture which have no access to formal musical training) frequently develop their own vocabulary for dealing with the subject. They usually have an implicit understanding of the concepts and terms in spite of their lack of formal training.

I find that a discussion of relative major and minor keys and some graphic examples of the circle of fifths and how it can be used are pretty basic and can usually be mastered by even beginning students, although some may complain a bit. I always provide charts (big ones!) for this kind of study. A circle of fifths chart can be used to teach chord theory, transposition, major and minor mode relationships and much more.

Teach up -- teach down.

How does one handle teaching autoharp in a class of students whose skill levels and interests are extremely diverse? If you teach to the beginners, the advanced students will get bored. If you teach to the advanced students, the beginners will get lost. I basically start with the assumption that what I'm going to teach is fundamentally simple, no matter how difficult it may be to master in practice. My job as a teacher is then to convince everyone of the simplicity of what I'm teaching and to make sure that everyone has both an *understanding* of the knowledge presented in class and the *materials* (in the form of handouts) to pursue and master the subject independently. I also feel strongly that I have a responsibility to everyone in the class (including the rawest beginner) to put some real substance into my class presentation and to see that

everyone is challenged in some way. If I'm teaching beginning autoharp, for instance, I'm seldom content to teach two-chord songs. I'll often end up having the class learn songs with four or five chords knowing that even those who might not fully understand the use of all the chords will be excited (I hope!) by the possibilities and will go home and practice what I've taught until they get it. I know teachers who take the opposite approach. They will assess the minimum skill level in the class and will teach so that *everyone* from this level up can master the material presented during the class time. The more advanced students are inclined to get pretty bored. My autoharp classes are real music classes which would do credit to any continuing education program. One of my biggest complaints is with presenters who expect an autoharp class to be the musical equivalent of Tree Climbing 101 -- an easy, confidence-builder for people looking for the least challenging class on the program.

Homework ...

One of the keys to my teaching technique is my handouts. It is my handouts (which usually follow my lectures and demonstrations fairly closely) that enable everyone who doesn't immediately assimilate material presented in class to go home and practice it until they do. If they understand what I've said and then go home and do their "homework assignment," it's a pretty good bet that they have the situation under control. Since my time with students in faraway places is pretty limited, the "homework assignments" are pretty important. ■

*To be continued --
"Teaching the Autoharp -- Part Two" will appear in the next issue of Autoharp Quarterly.*

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AQ POSTSCRIPTS

PS.

Congratulations to Mike Seeger for his 1991 Grammy nomination which he received for his effort -- *Solo: Old-time Country Music* (Rounder 0278). The award category was Best Traditional Folk Album. Mike recorded the tape at his home. He made the tape completely by himself, with no overdubs, electronic effects, or splices. This was his first solo recording in eighteen years.

PS.

Congratulations to Sue Bullock for her first place win in the autoharp contest at the Pioneer Florida Old-Time Music Festival in Dade City.

PS.

After having done fifteen years of research, Mike

Fenton has published a railroad history book entitled "The Malmesbury Branch." The book is the story of an English country railway, 1877-1962. It is packed with old photographs and is an English social history. The 280-page volume is available from Mike for \$32. plus shipping. Write to him at Pershore Road, Whittington, Worcester, WR5 2RT, England.

PS.

Congratulations to Joe Riggs for being nominated for the "Teacher of the Year" award in Charlotte, North Carolina.

PS.

Congratulations to Carole Outwater for her second-year-in-a-row championship win at the autoharp contest at Fiddlers' Grove, Union Grove, North Carolina. And, further kudos to Joe Riggs, second place, and Mary Umbarger, third place winners!

PS.

AQ staff member, Dr. Richard Norris, has been recruited by the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Washington, D.C. to direct the new National Arts Medicine Center, a division of NRH. The Center's staff consists of specially trained physicians, therapists, psychologists, and movement re-education experts. It will serve musicians and artists from the southeastern United States. Focus will be on diagnosis and rehabilitation of neuromuscular and orthopedic disorders as well as psychology services for performance anxiety, creative block and support groups for injured artists.

An article by Dr. Norris will appear in the next issue of *Autoharp Quarterly*.

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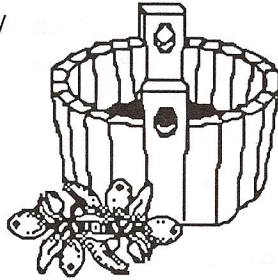
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Alouette (2)

↓
 G [/D7] G G [D7 G] [D7 G] G G
 A - lou- et-te, gen-tile A - lou-et-te,
 G [/D7] G G [D7 G] [D7 G] G /
 A - lou- et-te, Je te plu-me-rai.
 [G D7] [G D7] [G G] G
 Je te plu-me - rai la tete,
 [G C] [G D7] [G D7] G
 Je te plu-me - rai la tete,
 [G G] G [D7 D7] D7 D7 ///
 Et la tete, Et la tete. Oh!
 G [/D7] G G [D7 G] [D7 G] G G
 A - lou- et-te, gen-tile A - lou-et-te,
 G [/D7] G G [D7 G] [D7 G] G /
 A - lou- et-te, Je te plu-me-rai.



The Old Oaken Bucket (3)

↓
 C C [/G7] C C [/G7] C G7 [/F] G7 C C
 How dear to my heart are the scenes of my child-hood
 C F [/G7] F C C C G7 [/F] G7 C /
 When fond rec-ol-lec-tion pre-sents them to view!
 C C [/G7] C C [/G7] C G7 [/F] G7 C C
 The or - chard, the mead - ow, the deep tan-gled wild-wood
 C F [/G7] F C C C G7 [/F] G7 C /
 And ev - 'ry loved spot which my in - fan - cy knew;
 C G7 G7 G7 F G7 G7 C C C C C
 The wide spread - ing pond, and the mill that stood by it,
 C G7 G7 G7 C [/G7] C G G D7 G /
 The bridge and the rock where the cat-a-ract fell;
 G G7 G7 G7 F G7 G7 C C C C C
 The cot of my fa-ther, the dai-ry house nigh it,
 C G7 G7 G7 C [/G7] C G G D7 G /
 And e'en the rude buck - et that hung in the well,
 Chorus:
 G7 C [/G7] C C [/G7] C G7 [/F] G7 C C
 The old oak-en buck - et, the i - ron bound buck-et,
 C F [/G7] F C C C G7 [/F] G7 C /
 The moss cov-ered buck-et that hung in the well.

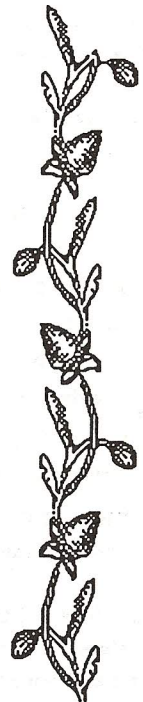
The Little Brown Church in the Vale (2)

↓
 [C C] C [F C] [C C] [C G7] C / G7
 There's a church in the val-ley by the wild - wood,
 G7 G7 [G7 C] G7 [C G7] C / /
 No lov-li - er place in the dale;
 [C G7] F [F G7] F [G7 F] C C C
 No spot is so dear to my child - hood
 [G7 F] [G7 G7] G7 G7 [G7 G7] C / /
 As the lit-tle brown church in the vale.
 Chorus:
 [C G7] C C C C
 O , come, come, come, come,
 C [F C] C [C G7] C / G7
 Come to the church in the wild - wood,
 G7 G7 [G7 C] G7 [C G7] C / /
 O come to the church in the dale;
 [C G7] F [F G7] F [G7 F] C C C
 No - spot is so dear to my child - hood
 [G7 F] [G7 G7] G7 G7 [F G7] C / /
 As the lit-tle brown church in the vale.

How sweet on a bright Sabbath morning
 To list to the clear ringing bell;
 Its tones so sweetly are calling,
 O come to the church in the vale.
 Chorus:

Long, Long Ago (2)

↓
 G / G D7 G / G D7 G / C G G / / /
 Tell me the tales that to me were so dear,
 G / D7 G D7 / / /
 Long, long a - go,
 D7 / G D7 G / / /
 Long long a - go;
 G / G D7 G / G D7 G / C G G / / /
 Sing me the songs I de - light - ed to hear,
 G / D7 G D7 / G D7 G / / /
 Long, long a - go, long a - go.
 G / D7 G D7 / D7 D7 D7 / G D7 G / / /
 Now you are come, all my grief is re - moved,
 G / D7 G D7 / D7 D7 D7 / G D7 G / / /
 Let me for-get that so long you have rov'd
 G / G D7 G / G D7 G / C G G / / /
 Let me be - lieve that you love as you loved
 G / D7 G D7 / G D7 G / / /
 Long, long a - go, long a - go.





Autoharp Songbook

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Flow Gently, Sweet Afton (3)

↓

G G G [G D7] G G G C C C G /
Flow gen-tly, sweet Af-ton, a- mong thy green braes,
G G G D7 G G G G G D7 /
Flow gent-ly, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
D7 G G [G D7] G G G C C C G /
My Ma-ry's a - sleep by thy mur-mur-ing stream,
G G G D7 G G C G G D7 G /
Flow gen-tly, sweet Af-ton, dis-turb not her dream.
[D A7] D D D D D D D A7 A7 D /
Thou stock-dove, whose ech-o re-sounds thru the glen,
[D A7] D D D D D
Ye wild whist-ling black-birds
D [G D] [G D] [G A7] D /
in yon thorn - y den,
[D D7] G G [G D7] G G
Thou green crest- ed lap-wing,
G C C C G /
thy scream-ing for-bear,
G G G D7 G G C G G D7 G /
I charge you, dis-turb not my slum-ber-ing fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighboring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear winding rills!
There daily I wander, as morn rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.
How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the wood-lands the primroses blow!
There oft, as mild evening creeps over the lea,
The sweet scented bark shades my Mary and me.

How Can I Leave Thee (2)

↓

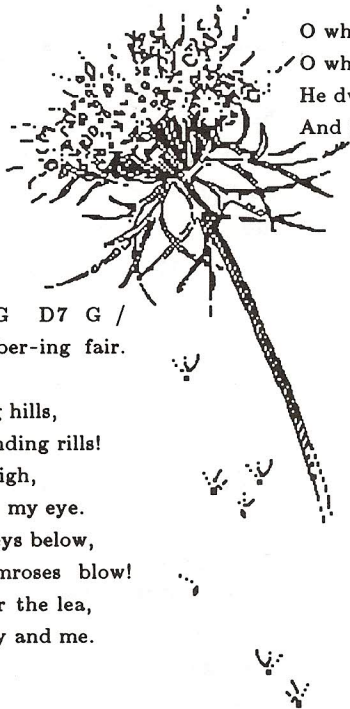
F / F Bb F F F / C7 / Bb C7 F Bb F /
How can I leave thee? How can I from thee part?
F / G7 F Bb Bb F / G7 / F G7 C7 / / /
Thou on-ly hast my heart, Dear one, be-lieve.
C7 / F C7 F Bb F / F / Bb F G7 F G7 /
Thou hast this soul of mine, So close-ly bound to thine,
C7 / Bb C7 F Bb F / G7 / G7 C7 F / / /
No oth-er can I love, Save thee a-lone.

Blue is a flow'ret, Called the For-get-me-not.
Wear it upon thy heart, And think of me.
Flow'ret and hope may die, Yet love with us shall stay,
That cannot pass away, Dear one believe.

The Blue Bell of Scotland (2)

↓

CC / G7 F C / F [G7 F] C C G7 G7 C / /
O where, and O where is your High-land lad-die gone?
CC / G7 F C / F [G7 F] C C G7 G7 C / /
O where, and O where is your High-land lad-die gone?
C C C C C Am /
He's gone to fight the foe
Am [Em Am] G G D7 D7 G7 /
for King George up - on the throne;
F G7 C / G7 F C / F [G7 F] C C G7 G7 C / /
And it's oh! in my heart, how I wish him safe at home.
O where, and O where does your Highland laddie dwell?
O where, and O where does your Highland laddie dwell?
He dwelt in merry Scotland at the sign of the Blue Bell;
And it's oh! in my heart that I love my laddie well.



My Bonnie (3)

↓

C C [/ G7] C G7 F F C C / / /
My Bon-nie is o- ver the o-cean,
C C [/ G7] C C G7 C G7 / / / /
My Bon-nie is o- ver the sea;
G7 C [/ G7] C G7 F F C C / / /
My Bon-nie is o- ver the o-cean,
CF G7 F G7 F G7 C / / / / /
O bring back my Bon-nie to me.
Chorus:
C // C // F // Dm /
Bring back, bring back,
D7 G7 G7 G7 G7 F G7 C / G7 C / /
O bring back my Bon-nie to me, to me,
C // C // F // Dm /
Bring back, bring back,
D7 G7 G7 G7 G7 F G7 C / / / / /
O bring back my Bon-nie to me.
Oh, blow, ye winds, over the ocean,
And blow, ye winds, over the sea,
Oh blow, ye winds, over the ocean,
And bring back my Bonnie to me. Chorus:

The winds have blown over the ocean,
The winds have blown over the sea.
The winds have blown over the ocean,
And bro't back my bonnie to me. Chorus:

COCOAHOUSE

We are deviating from our normal *CocoaHouse* format in this issue to share the following series of letters with you. Fred Koch, *Children's Editor*, promises another one of your song requests, "Heart And Soul," for the October AQ. --Editors



Dear Editors:

I want to teach dulcimer and autoharp to several children who are sight-impaired. My request to you folks -- can you send me some music geared to children starting with first grade and on? One little boy with low vision is very gifted, and one little girl has an autoharp which she plays a bit. I would appreciate any help you could give me.

-- Gene Newman

Dear Gene:

We have sent your request to a friend, subscriber, and sight-impaired autoharp performer, Marie Wells. She is a recently-retired teacher, as well, and we think she can help you more than anyone else we know.

-- Editors

Dear Gene:

The editors of *AQ* sent your letter to me, since I am legally blind, and I taught elementary vocal music for twenty-nine years.

I had only one child in all of my teaching with a visual problem. He had a special teacher assigned to him, who checked with all teachers each week and enlarged materials for him, in advance.

Most school systems have a music series selected which covers kindergarten through

eight grades. There are many excellent series available. I would go through the particular grade level in which you're interested. Most will have autoharp chords marked for the songs.

When I was teaching, I would select one-, two-, and three-chord songs the children loved, or that I wanted them to learn (e.g. holiday songs). With preschoolers, I would push the buttons and let them strum, sometimes using a clean chalk board eraser or thumb pick, or fingers. As children progressed in ability and age, I would let them push the buttons. I began with the 'harp on the floor or in their laps. The older the kids got, the more I tried getting it into their arms (third or fourth grade).

With sight-impaired children, braille letters could be placed on the buttons of the chord bars. You could also use something tactile (masking tape, sandpaper, etc.) on the bars to help students find the chords you want to use. Memorizing the arrangements of the chords would work best. However, students need to know that chord bars are not arranged the same on all 'harps. They can't expect to find their progressions the same places on all 'harps.

I generally began with the songs, "Brother John," "Row Your Boat," and "Three Blind Mice" in the key of C. I often showed them that these one-chord songs can be played in other keys as well. (I used C because it was easier to reach on the school 'harps, that key being on the end.)

The "Wee Sing Series" would be so helpful to you. The tapes are a neat way for the children to learn the

songs. The voices of the children are excellent. This series of cassettes and songbooks is by Pamela Conn Beall and Hagen Nipp, and can be obtained through Price/Stern/Sloan Publishers Inc., in Los Angeles, California.

The "CocoaHouse" in *Autoharp Quarterly* is a fine resource for "learnable," usable children's songs as well.

I would also like to suggest an excellent book with ideas for all types of handicaps: "Reaching the Special Learner Through Music" by Sona D. Nocera, Silver Burdett Company, 1979.

I have found with the two blind ladies in our 'Harps Plus Club that sometimes I need to call out chord changes as we are playing a song. With sighted children, I used to use one finger for the I chord, four fingers for the IV chord, and all five fingers for the V7 chord. This may work with your child with low vision.

After your kids become used to all this, you'll probably need to just tell them the key of the song and chords to be used as well as the time signature.

I've not mentioned strums at all. I just used a very basic plain strum across the 'harp on each beat with my younger children.

I've given you a lot of my ideas that I used with "normal" students. There really isn't a lot of difference in teaching normally-sighted or sight-impaired children. I do hope my letter is a help to you.

Sincerely,

-- Marie Wells



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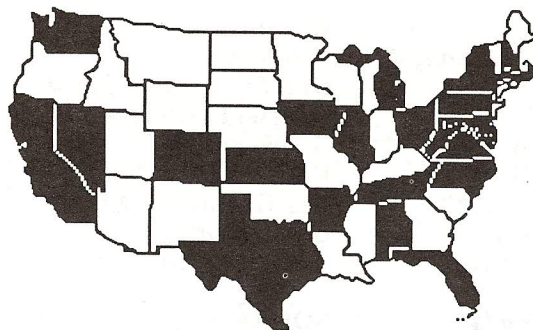
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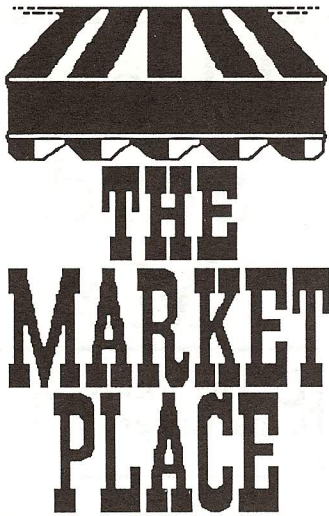
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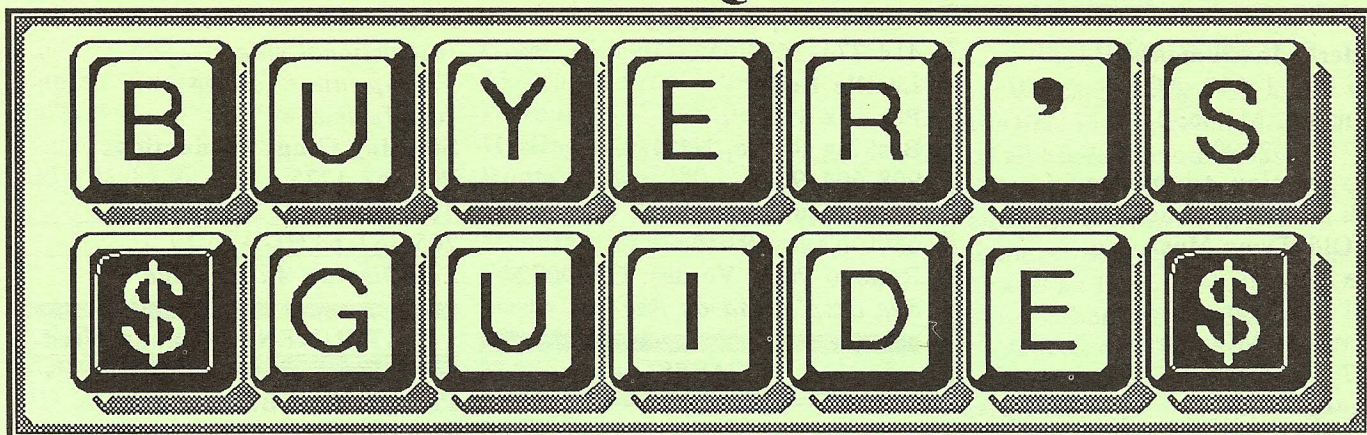
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ABOUT THE GUIDE

The purchase of a reliable instrument and regular maintenance are the keys to optimum autoharp performance. *Autoharp Quarterly* has published many articles about luthiers, repair, and maintenance; and now it brings you a consolidated source book for instruments, parts, services, and autoharp-related items. Many of the merchants in this guide deal in a wide variety of merchandise for the autoharp. We recommend that you write for their catalogs and/or

sales material. In addition, these merchants will be very willing to talk to you about any special needs for your autoharp. When corresponding with these merchants, we'd appreciate it if you would please take the time to tell them that you saw their names in the *Autoharp Quarterly Buyer's Guide*.

If you need a part or service not listed in the *Buyer's Guide*, call AQ at 717 567-9469. We may know of an unusual source to fill your need.

MAINTAINING YOUR 'HARP

Strings and felts are the most common replacement parts bought for autoharp maintenance. As a general rule, strings should be replaced every year or two. Strings that go "dead" should be replaced at once. Felts should be replaced whenever they exhibit the tell-tale grooves worn into the surface which contacts the strings. Before ordering these parts, you must know which type of 'harp you own.

TYPES OF AUTOHARPS

Oscar Schmidt Autoharps
A Model Autoharp

These instruments were produced prior to 1968. They were typically painted black, although some were a natural wood tone and many of those sold through Sears & Roebuck were silver-finished. The A

Model Autoharp can be identified by the fact that the strings wrap over the bottom end of the 'harp and anchor onto pins which are driven into the end of the 'harp.

B and C Model Autoharps

The major difference between these models and the A Model is that the strings do not go all the way to the bottom end of the 'harp. Instead, the strings are anchored into an aluminum bar or fine tuner system which is mortised into the face of the instrument close to the bottom end. The B Model has exposed chord bars. The C Model (commonly the 21-bar and Festival series) has a cover over the chord bars.

ChromAharps

These instruments are produced by Rhythm Band, Inc. and their design is based on the A Model 'harp with the strings extending over the bottom edge of the 'harp.

Handcrafted Instruments

These instruments can be based on the A, B, or C Model 'harp or any combination thereof. Whenever possible, you should check with the maker for specifications on your particular 'harp.

WHICH STRINGS/FELTS?

Strings are available from three major sources: Oscar Schmidt, ChromAharp (Rhythm Band), and La Bella.

Continued on Page 8

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 Lansing, MI 48901
 517 372-7890
See Display Ad on Page 4

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 201 744-0804

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 203 379-9857

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 703 986-1044

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Stillwater, MN 55082
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RD 1, Box 34A
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717 567-6406
See Display Ad on Page 7

INSTRUMENTS-New & Used

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Buck Musical Instruments
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215 345-9442
Elderly Instruments
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See Display Ad on Page 4
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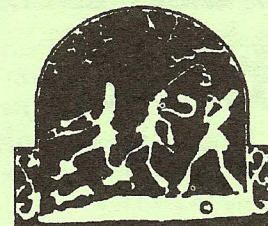
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category beginning on this page

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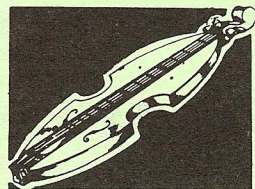
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MAINTAINING YOUR 'HARP

Continued from Page 1

Oscar Schmidt and ChromA-harp distribute strings specifically made for their instruments. See below for La Bella string use.

Oscar Schmidt Strings
A Model Strings: A Model
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B Model Strings: B and C
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*Note: La Bella numbers its
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Autoharps

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Oscar Schmidt Autoharps

D Model Felt, 5/16"W x 3/16"D
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Always check with the luthier to determine which strings or felts were used in the making of your 'harp. The same is true for any replacement parts for a handcrafted instrument. The luthier should have specific details on your autoharp.

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