

Autoharp Quarterly®

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*The International
Magazine
Dedicated to the
Autoharp Enthusiast*

In This Issue

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1879 - 1975
Part Three
by Glen Peterson*

*New Age Possibilities
with the Autoharp*

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*Kidstock
with Bonnie Phipps*

*Picker's Portrait
featuring Ray Sipes*



Joseph Marlin Riggs

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Autoharp Quarterly
The International
Magazine Dedicated
to the Autoharp Enthusiast

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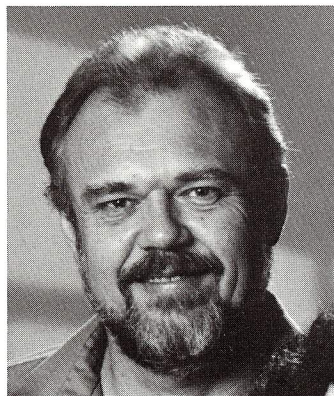
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To And From / The Editors

Mary Lou  Wan

Dear Readers:

Here amidst the winter snow – it's beautiful. This is the time of the year when we count our blessings for the scenery and the warmth of a good wood stove. Wild turkeys and pheasants are mingling with the peacocks in the front yard here in Newport, Pennsylvania. Deer come very near the house to graze, and flying squirrels empty the bird feeder at the window every night. Cardinals light on the branches of nearby trees, effortlessly creating pictures copied by artists, but never quite captured on canvas. From our vantage point on the hill, the Juniata River is a moving blue-gray ribbon surrounded by a white mantle of snow. Sounds idyllic, doesn't it? But after having just talked to our friend, Win Fromm in Ft. Myers, Florida, who has just played several sets of tennis, one wonders. Guess that's why they call this a "winter 'wonderland.'"

Mary Lou – November, 1995

Ah, Mary Lou, thou doth wax poetic. From our vantage point on the hill, the Pickering Creek is flooding, there is snow piled in every available space to keep the driveway cleared, and a two-foot diameter tree has fallen across the road taking out the electricity with it. The roof is leaking and the ice jams have blocked the back door and the septic tank has overflowed in the front yard because of the saturated ground. And besides all that, our cat died. Winter wonderland? Not! By the time you folks are reading this I will be in Florida for a three-week tour.

Ivan – January, 1996

We have recently been approached by folks who say "I'd love to send in my ballot for the Autoharp Hall of Fame, but I don't feel as if I know enough." To that statement, we say "Balderdash!" The only "qualification" needed to nominate is interest. There are so many worthy people who have contributed to the autoharp community, be it Bryan Bowers or the lady down the street. Although the panel may not know that lady, it's your job to introduce her to them. A

"name" is not important here. Honoring those who have made – and continue to make – the autoharp a major part of their lives, and, more importantly, a major part of others' lives in a significant, long-standing, positive way is the goal of the Autoharp Hall of Fame.

Although we have not been formally asked to explain the procedure used in selecting a Hall of Fame Honoree, we would like to outline this procedure to you, the autoharp community. A ballot, which is supplied in every issue of AQ, is fully completed by you, the nominator, and sent in a sealed envelope to The Autoharp Hall of Fame, PO Box A, Newport, PA 17074. This envelope is forwarded unopened to a panel which will, after all of the ballots are collected (after May 1), meet, open, and consider all ballots. This panel then appoints one contemporary and one posthumous honoree on the basis of those ballots. Remember that this is not a count of who gets the most nominations, but is a determination of who has done the most for the autoharp. The narrative description, complete in detail, of what this person has done for the autoharp is essential to validate your nomination form.

The panel is in no way connected to Limberjack Productions, which includes The Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering and Autoharp Quarterly. Its anonymity is protected to maintain the integrity of The Autoharp Hall of Fame, and the privacy of its members.

Take the time now to fill out a nomination form and send it in. This is your last chance to nominate for 1996.

We received so many "Please keep the 'Harpers-At-Large feature!" that we are sure there would be a serious uprising if we let it go. Thank you for your interest. We do appreciate your input and the feature stays!

And, Interaction is not gone, just resting for one issue.

– Editors

Dear Editors:

OUR DUTCH UNCLE

I can't believe another year has passed and renewal is once again due. I've enjoyed each and every issue, even though I myself do not play the autoharp. I read AQ from cover to cover.

I have met a lot of the people written about, from the autoharp events and workshops held here in Mountain View. I do quite a bit of autoharp repair, conversions, and maintenance for folks. I've worked with Art West, and with George Foss in learning diatonics.

I agree with George Orthey on the fine tuners. So few people that have them know how to use them right. I do not encourage folks to change for that reason. I've had to teach a few around here how to use them correctly. They get the cams screwed too tight and strip the screw...their strings buzz and [they have] uneven chords. It was a good article well overdue.

I have a large collection of autoharp tapes. Almost as large as my dulcimer tapes. I have about everything in print to learn the autoharp. But still no luck.

Enclosed you'll find my check for another year's enjoyment.

Dutch Wigman

Thanks for your support, Dutch. Even we don't read this thing from cover to cover!

Editors

STILL LEARNING

All the publicity in the latest AQ has sent me back to a renewed state of disbelief over those two wins [Mountain Laurel and International Championships]. What a strange feeling!

...I have two questions to the writers in the fall issue. They are: 1) in re to Ray Sipes' letter to the editor; What is a "17/8-key diatonic autoharp?" and, 2) in re to Carey Dubbert's article, "Anti-Mush Bars;" What is a "D 'harp with a compromised A and G?" The above terms have me puzzled – but

what they have to say makes great sense!

Lucille Reilly

Carey Dubbert's term "compromised" means that on his three-key diatonic autoharp, (e.g. G-D-A), he makes the key of D primary, and "borrows" one, possibly two C strings needed to play in the key of G from the D strength, making a weaker key of G than normal on a standard three-key instrument. Carey also "borrows" a G# string or two to be able to play in the key of A.

Ray's term, "1⁷/₈-key diatonic autoharp," was first used in AQ, Vol. I, No. 1 describing the single key 'harp with the added partial 7th chord of the next key in the circle of 5ths – i.e. the key of D has these major chords – D, G, and A7. By adding an E7 and an A, this autoharp can now play the key of A with only the third of the E7 chord missing. One out of seven notes missing? It actually adds 7/8 of the key of A. Therefore, a key of D plus 7/8 of the key of A = "1⁷/₈-key diatonic autoharp." And for those who are really picky, since there are only seven notes in an octave, it should really be a "1⁶/₇-key diatonic autoharp." Picky, picky – strum!"

Editors

NOW HEAR THIS!

I wanted to write and thank you for your friendship during the Walnut Valley Festival. My biggest apprehension regarding my trip was the fact I was going by myself and that I would likely have no friends there. I want to thank you for your warmth, generosity, and hospitality. I felt right at home and that I was among family. What a treat to play and sing with all of you!

I came for the education, not for the party; though I got plenty of both. I cannot state how much autoharp knowledge I've taken home. I learned much from watching and listening to the many talented players assembled at "Otter Harp Heaven." What a wealth of talent all in one place. I got so much more than I expected.

A question: I overheard someone talking about a person who'd suffered a hearing loss as a result of playing the autoharp (I can only surmise this was due to the close proximity of the in-

strument to the ear.) Have you ever heard of such a thing, or is this an old wives' tale?

Adam Miller

We're glad you found "built-in friends" waiting at Winfield! Well, that's something folks learn about the autoharp community. When you join, you are automatically a member of an accepting, inclusive family. Don't be reluctant to go anywhere where you know there'll be real autoharp enthusiasts. You'll always be welcome.

As for the "old wives' tale" – we have ~~an old wife~~ our medical editor, Dr. Cathy Britell, working on this one. Hopefully we'll have a definitive answer for you in the next issue.

Editors

THE SAVAGE BREAST

A newspaper article called the "Animal Doctor" was forwarded to us in regards to Alex Usher's article in the last issue, "Music Hath Charms." It seems that someone has a cat, Louey, who waves his tail like a baton in time to music. And when the tune goes higher, or lower, Louey's tail follows the beat – and the pitch! The question to the doctor was – "Is Louey conducting with his tail?" The veterinarian suggested that indeed, it could be! He said that animals are quite sensitive to music.

In that same vein, we asked another veterinarian (George F. Orthey, V.M.D.) about this phenomenon:

"It is a well-known fact that most farmers play music in their barns for the cattle. Cows who have piped-in music while being milked produce more milk. And, chickens lay more eggs if music is in their coop. It could be that the music blocks out extraneous noise in the barn/coop which could upset the occupants. But whatever the reason, music does the trick!"

Too, Garrison and Puff Catz, owners of the Orthey household, and Dave and Pumpkin, proprietors of the Stiles' domicile, prefer to be surrounded by live autoharp music when they have their druthers. They have something else to say about the bowed psaltery, musical saw, and hurdy-gurdy!

Editors

A LONELY INDIANA 'HARPER

I would like to correspond with any

serious autoharp who lives in Indiana. My preference is diatonics, but I'd be glad to correspond with chromatic players as well for purposes of exchanging information, helps, music, etc.

Maurice Dill

5019 Helmuth Ave.
Evansville, IN 47715

Alright, Indianians, you've been given the challenge. Come out of your closets and tell Maurice where you are.

Editors

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Thank you for the article about Jo Brennan (Fall '95). I love her music, and hope very much to meet her one day. Carole Outwater's article was the next best thing to being there myself.

Carole Spicer

KILBY'S OFF TO ENGLAND!

Over here in England, it's very difficult to find any recorded autoharp music, and very rare to see anyone playing. I've been playing for five years now. The chance to see some footage of a legendary 'harpist would be great! Hope you can send me details!

Carole Emerson

We've just learned that the Kilby Snow video cassette will be out in about a year. Other artists and instruments will also be included. We, too, are anxious to obtain one of these videos! And, in the meantime, in England, look up Mike Fenton, and/or Sheila Brain, to name a couple of players. They'll play their 'harps with and/or for you. – And they both have tapes!

Editors

Important Deadline Dates For Articles/Music/Information

Material for Events, Pro-Files, Clubs, Recordings/Books, and AQ Postscripts must be received by individual editors by the following dates: Winter: December 15th • Spring: March 15th • Summer: June 15th • Fall: September 15th. All other material should be sent to AQ by the same dates. All last-minute information should be sent to AQ for inclusion if possible. Music and feature articles may be submitted at any time for printing at a future date as space permits. AQ retains first rights on all submissions. Thank you.

Oscar Schmidt

1879 – 1975

written by Glen R. Peterson
in 1975

This series of articles has been taken directly from transcripts written by the late Glen Peterson and presented to Autoharp Quarterly by Meg Peterson, to document the history of the Autoharp during the Oscar Schmidt – Peterson Era. They are presented on these pages as Mr. Peterson wrote them.

This series of articles is composed of two separate reports written by Mr. Peterson in 1975. These reports have been copied verbatim, and have been interlaced with each other, allowing the articles to follow a chronological order as much as is possible. The words which are in italics, as in this paragraph, are copied from a multi-paged unnamed manuscript. The words in normal type, are copied from a report entitled "Oscar Schmidt-International, Inc. 1879-1975."

Mary Lou Orthey

The original Cutlasses were all literally hand made prototypes. The first one went to John Sebastian as a gift for being the genesis of this burst of creativity. But they didn't work perfectly and legend has it that one day aboard a chartered plane, Sebastian, trying to get it working properly, grew so frustrated with what he called the "Blue Pig" that he furiously hurled it the length of the cabin and smashed it.

The Cutlass and also the one-pickup Lancer version of the solid body harp were months late in getting into volume production because a very famous musical electronics company with which Peterson had contracted to produce the pickups failed again and again to make deliveries – and much of what they did finally ship was rejected for quality control reasons. Peterson cancelled the contract and went searching for a better supplier. He finally found one, but the "launching" of the Cutlass and Lancer had been severely crippled, all the expensive publicity was wasted because eager buyers could not find them

Part Three

in the music stores, and the scale of Summit Musical Instruments, (the company Peterson had set up to market these instruments) had to be severely cut back.

In some ways it was a blessing for Autoharps players and fans. Peterson realized that Schmidt now knew enough about building a good harp, that much of what had been learned and developed could be used for an acoustic model to finally obsolete the "A" model.

McKay went right to work on designing the shape and styling of the new "B" model. Peterson went back to the drawing board, and DiPisa struggled with the new machinery and tooling that would be required. Out of this came the one piece pin block (which solved the problem of tuning pins being placed in a glue joint as on the "A" models), the rugged tongue-in-groove frame, the rounded edges (which were intended to solve spray painting problems), and the general shape – which was intended ultimately to permit placing microelectronic components in cavities below the string anchor to create an even better "small" electronic instrument.

We were no sooner in the Union, New Jersey building and operating than we were hit by another flood of orders. This forced us on to overtime in the middle of the summer. But, despite the new building, because of the inherent design of the instrument, it wasn't possible to increase production sufficiently. We also subcontracted some body assembly, but even this was insufficient.

A few words about the significance of the back orders. Approximately one third of our sales went to the major chain store catalog operations, another third went to specialized educational supply companies selling direct mail to elementary schools, and the final third went to wholesalers and a part of that last third also eventually wound up as sales by local dealers to schools. The extreme

shortage of Autoharps was therefore well known in educational circles. This makes teachers very angry because when they make up orders in the spring, place them in the summer, they expect the instruments to be on hand when they return to school in September so they can begin the programs they planned in the spring. If they are forced to revise all their lesson plans and wait, perhaps till the following February or even longer for their instruments, they become hostile toward the marketing company they sent the order to, and toward the manufacturer who is always blamed by the marketer for the problem. Autoharps are not like TVs. If the brand of TV you want is out of stock, you can switch to another and still be satisfied. There is only one Autoharp, there is no substitute, and when the teachers can't get them, a giant problem has been created.

Compounding the back order problem was my decision in late 1966 to re-engineer and design the whole product line. (We were no longer just making one basic model. I had developed the "Appalachian" which is by now a fixture on the musical scene and played by many big-name country and western people, and also an educator model which I developed in collaboration with the major textbook publishers and which is now approximately 50% of our Autoharp sales.)

My instincts told me that we were going to get competition, that it would come from Germany, and that it would be better than our instrument. And less expensive.

We did redesign. We then had to retool the plant at substantial expense. We had to retrain our people, at a considerable loss in production efficiency. For a time, we ran both old models and new models simultaneously as we tried to phase in and debug the new model and its production system. Supervisors who could not or would not adjust to the new ways of doing things had to be replaced. Suppliers had to be changed. The

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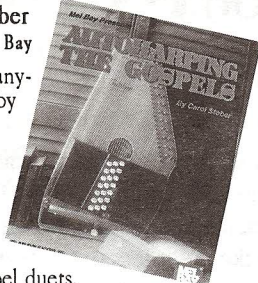
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whole company was turned upside down and inside out. It was difficult and expensive.

Peterson turned on the pressure to get the "B" model done, and history says that he was lucky he did. The month that the "B" model was announced in 1968 there also burst on the market - the ChromAharp, a Japanese-made version of the "A" model. Its importer was one of Schmidt's biggest school catalog supply companies. Prices were substantially below the Autoharp (this was prior to President Nixon's devaluation of the dollar), and ChromAharp advertising claimed that it... "stays in tune up to 60% longer..." The Oscar Schmidt Autoharp was in big trouble and Peterson knew it. His

If something drastic
wasn't done, and
promptly, there would
be no more Autoharps,
no more Oscar Schmidt-
International.

first step was litigation, charging the importer with violation of seven Schmidt patents, unfair trade practices, and a host of other charges. Schmidt also launched an advertising counterattack in both educational and trade publications. And Peterson cranked up the pressure to get the "B" models out into the market place.

We introduced the new models in February of 1968, about 14 months after we began the project. In the same month, one of my biggest school supply customers, Rhythm Band, Inc., Fort Worth, Texas, filed trademark applications for an instrument called the ChromAharp. They launched this instrument in April, 1968. I was wrong about one thing. My inevitable competition didn't come from Germany. It came from Japan and it came from one of my best customers, an aggressive outfit that had born the brunt of the back order grief and decided to capitalize on it.

On the other hand I was right about one vitally important thing. It was a better instrument than the ones we had

been making. It was our basic design but better construction, better finishing, and much more attractive. However, it was not a better instrument than our all-new models and it was this that saved us from being wiped out. Had we not redesigned, had we not retooled, had we not made the investment, there would be no Oscar Schmidt-International today.

As it was, the Texas company (known and hereafter referred to as RBI) moved onto the market ruthlessly.

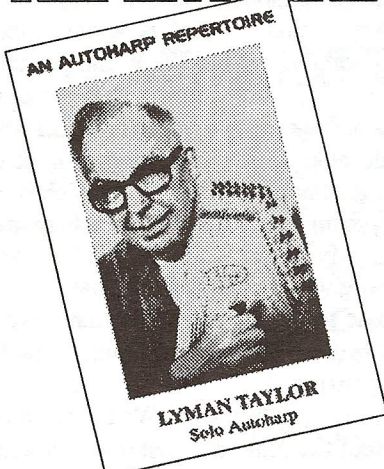
We had to go into the federal courts in Texas to put a stop to an extremely vicious advertising campaign. They not only went into the educational market via RBI but also into the conventional retail market via our wholesale customers. And they went in with prices roughly 20% lower than ours. Our sales declined but there is no way of knowing how much RBI took from us because there is no way of determining the total market. Conceivably all they took was our decrease in sales. On the other hand, if total national demand was up again in '69 and '70, they took our decrease plus the additional demand.

More than that. Another of our biggest customers, Peripole, Inc., a competitor of RBI (at that time these two companies plus a third company known as Lyons Band Instruments in Chicago, controlled at least 90% of the market for elementary musical instruments, a fact we have determined from repeated surveys among educators) began having extreme financial hard times - and was into us for approximately \$20,000. I refused to ship any more instruments.

The upshot is - we lost another big customer for Autoharps, and Peripole began selling the Japanese version. It cost us in sales volume and it cost us in cash. Our legal expenses equalled our recovery from them. This company was finally forced into reorganization, changed its name, fled from Brooklyn to New Jersey, and I believe is known to be in a precarious financial condition. They have been unable to fund a new catalog since 1968.

Ultimately, the importers of the ChromAharp agreed to cease violating Schmidt patents and desist from the tone of their advertising campaign. Schmidt knew that this all had cost a mountain of money in legal fees, but they did not know what damage had been done to sales. They saw that sales

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were now "plateauing," going neither up nor down. But they also knew that the federal government had cut back drastically on funds for elementary education, the nation was in a "recession," and sales through the Sears catalog were not encouraging. One of the encouraging facts was that Sears tested ChromAharps and decided to stick with the Schmidt Autoharp.

During the 1968-70 period, Schmidt continued to make both the new "B" models for the educational and music store trade, and the old "A" models for the major chain stores. And by now, each of the major chains had its own version.

Another big breakthrough occurred with the development of laminated maple resonant panels which Peterson, guided by his promotional spirit, felt deserved a new name - "Acoustiwood." The original maple panels were five veneers of rock maple all aligned along the same axis. Because a rash of sound hole splits developed the panels were changed to slightly skew each alternate veneer - a solution which worked and did not inhibit the superior tonal and resonant qualities of maple. Basswood had been a chronic headache for Schmidt. There was only one mill in the country which would cut it to Schmidt's specifications - and Peterson happily converted everything to maple. That included the Appalachians of that and recent years. The maple was augmented by a very thin top veneer of spruce to maintain the image of the instrument.

Traditionalist pleaded with Peterson to continue making the "original" Appalachian, but he was satisfied that it was an inherently inferior instrument so the "B" styling was adopted for the Appalachian. Peterson probably committed the ultimate crime among traditionalists by introducing an electronic version in 1970. These bursts of creativity - a new factory, new designs, more personnel, new machinery, a big inventory buildup - took a toll on Schmidt's healthy financial condition. The plateaued sales and the legal fees involved in fighting the ChromAarp made matters even worse.

Summarized, by 1970 the loss of sales to the Japanese competition, the cost of moving, redesigning and retooling, the costs of litigation, the costs of

advertising and public relations counter efforts, and especially our inability to raise prices in the face of low-ball Japanese prices, put Oscar Schmidt in a difficult and money-losing financial position. I had done all the right things. I had even cut off dividends back in 1965 in order to put money back into the company. But events beyond our control were the order of the day.

In the spring of 1970, our bank (First Jersey National) asked us to go elsewhere for our credit line. They did not shut us off. They just reduced us to an inoperable level of credit. Management spent the spring and summer of 1970 looking for a new credit line. This was the summer of Lockheed, Penn Central, brokerage back office disasters, and new stock market lows. It is my understanding that our bank was also having several internal problems that year.

Management was unable to find a new line, and in August advised the bank that they either open up the line again or sell us out. Fortunately the bank did not take the latter course. We did however agree to continue our search for a new line.

In the spring of 1970 another significant event occurred. The state of Idaho, on behalf of all of its school districts, extended a bid invitation for 600 Oscar Schmidt Autoharps, or equal. I was not aware of this. Such bid invitations are sent to sales companies, not to manufacturers. When the bids were opened, not one single company had had our Autoharps. The business went to RBI. I called the Lyons Company in Chicago and asked them why they had not bid. They told me that they had "gotten out of the bidding business because there wasn't enough profit in it." I asked why they hadn't so advised me, and they replied that they were sorry.

It was at that point that I decided that extreme steps would have to be taken to recover our educational market and, for all practical purposes, to even survive as a musical instrument manufacturing company.

Schmidt had two basic dilemmas; it had a bigger factory than it needed, and it was a one-product company. If something drastic wasn't done, and promptly, there would be no more Autoharps, no more Oscar Schmidt-International.

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Education Group. We had looked at all sorts of product diversification – furniture, toys, OEM woodworking jobs, guitars, and many other things. None of them, for one or more overriding reasons was sensible and promising of financial turnaround.

One key diversification move we had made was taking over the sales of a line of recorders (small wooden flutes) made in Israel. The man who introduced them to this country, a young Israeli, had built sales to the point where he could no longer cope with the warehousing, shipping, and marketing problems. We took over the whole operation and paid him a fixed annual sum for the use of his trade name. These instruments were and are sold to the same wholesale customers who buy our Autoharps so our actual additional costs amounted only to some catalogs and some factory floor space which we had in excess. This immediately added about \$100,000 of profitable volume to our sales, and we needed it badly.



As an aside, printed below are statements made by the Petersons in published interviews over their Oscar Schmidt years. The following statements pertain to the years 1964–1971.

By 1964 an entire new line of Autoharps was under way. The familiar scroll logo that had appeared on the harps since 1951 was replaced with a more modern trapezoid-shaped design. Rectangular buttons were put on the wooden bars. A 15-chord molded plastic chord bar holder was made which brought the 15-chord model's price down into direct competition with the 12-chord model. The old extruded plastic end pin cover was replaced with a molded plastic cover with rounded edges.

A "standard" model 15-chord harp had the three diminished seventh chords, and in 1965 another 15-chord harp with D, E^b, and F7 chords was introduced. With the Appalachian 15-chord harp, there were now three 15-chord models on the market, and their popularity soon surpassed the 12-chord model. The five-chord model was dropped in 1964. With the exception of the Appalachian model,

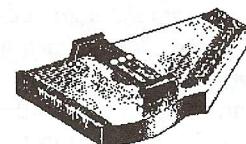
the harps still were without sound-holes, and a new "keyboard" type of music scale was added beneath the strings at the lower end of the harp.

When the new models went on the market, special models were developed for the mail-order catalogs of Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. Up until 1965 the harps in the catalogs were identical to those in music stores. After that year, however, their harps would be made especially for them. In 1964-65 Sears also had an exclusive "Electroharp" made by Oscar Schmidt, which was the forerunner of the electric Autoharps.

Also in 1964, the Guitaro was introduced. Designed by Peterson and Henry Ruckner, there were two models. One had a sound hole on the back side of the instrument and a resonator attached. The other had the sound hole in the front and no resonator. The resonator model was eventually dropped in the early 70s. The original patent for the Guitaro, filed on June 17, 1963 (issued March 1, 1966), was the first of numerous patents to be issued to the company through 1971. A Guitaro instruction book was published in 1964."

The first new item to come out of the Union factory was a new chord bar. The old wood bars were easily warped, resulting in poor contact with the strings. The new bar was made of extruded aluminum with styrene tops. The rectangular buttons could now be chemically fused to the plastic top instead of glued. The new bars were immediately put onto the Autoharps. (Patent #3,401,586 filed August 8, 1967, and issued September 17, 1968.)

"The Many Ways to Play the Autoharp" instructional books were introduced shortly after the move to Union. The new factory seemed to provide a good environment for creativity and product development. The popularity of the Lovin' Spoonful turned Peterson's thoughts to designing a good solid-body electric instrument which could be used in rock music. ❖



To be continued.

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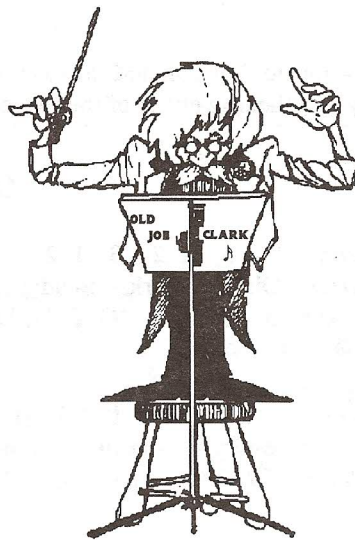
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What do you do when they want you to play lovely, elegant music for the wedding reception (church meditation, garden party), and all you know are rowdy dance tunes?

We did know a few waltzes and solemn planxtys. That's why we said "Yes" when they asked if we'd donate the ethereal sound of our auto-harp and hammered dulcimer duo to provide lovely elegant background music for their fund raiser reception. But when we ran through our repertory, the lovely elegant stuff ran no longer than half an hour, even with repeats and traded leads. We had lots of fiddle tunes, reels and hornpipes, 2/4 and 4/4 pieces which were great for contra dancing, but inappropriate amidst the azaleas. Maybe we could play them really slowly... Or, how about



Do I Hear A Waltz?

by

Fran Stallings and Gail Huggett
("Prairie-Fire")

changing the time signature? Why not let it be a waltz?

Our inspiration probably came from *Star of the County Down*, a tune we'd heard in both 4/4 and 3/4 versions. We had made an arrangement using both, and we had found it surprisingly easy to go from one rhythm to the other. Could we do that with other pieces we already knew?

We realized *Waltzing Matilda* isn't, you know. It's usually written in 2/4 time. Could we play it in 3/4? To our amazement it transformed very nicely. (See the music for this song in the Summer '95 issue.)

Other melodies fell into line. We survived that fund raiser and have enjoyed playing our mutant waltzes at many lovely, elegant events since. It is fun to watch the

Arkansas Traveler (2/4 time)

Beat: 1 & 2 & 1 2 1 2 1 2
Lyrics: Once u - pon a time in Ar - kan - sas, An
Chords: D D G G D D D D

Beat: 1 2 1 2 & 1 & 2 & 1 2
Lyrics: old man sat at his lit-tle ca-bin door and
Chords: A A D D A A G A

Beat: 1 & 2 & 1 2 & 1 2 1 2
Lyrics: fid-dled at a tune that he liked to hear, A
Chords: D D G G D D D D

Beat: 1 & 2 1 2 & 1 2 1 2 &
Lyrics: jol-ly old tune that he played by ear It was
Chords: D D G G D A D D

Beat: 1 2 1 2 & 1 & 2 1 2
Lyrics: rain - ing hard but the fid-dler did-n't care, he
Chords: D D G G D D A A

Beat: 1 2 1 2 & 1 & 2 1 2 &
Lyrics: sawed a - way at the pop-u-lar air. Tho' his
Chords: D D A A D D A A

Beat: 1 2 1 2 & 1 2 1 2
Lyrics: roof it leaked like a wa-ter-fall, That
Chords: D D G G D D D D

Beat: 1 & 2 & 1 2 & 1 2 1 2
Lyrics: did - n't seem to bo-ther the man at all.
Chords: D D G G D A D /

Waltz Across Arkansas (3/4 time)

Beat: 1 2 & 3 & 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
Lyrics: Once u - pon a time in Ar - kan-sas, An
Chords: D / D G / G D / D D / D

Beat: 1 2 3 1 2 3 & 1 2 & 3 & 1 2 3
Lyrics: old - man sat at his lit - tle ca-bin door and
Chords: A / A Bm* / Bm Em / Em A / A

Beat: 1 2 & 3 & 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
Lyrics: fid-dled at a tune that he liked to hear, A
Chords: D / D G G G D / D D / D

Beat: 1 2 3 1 2 3 & 1 2 3 1 2 3 &
Lyrics: jol-ly old tune that he played by ear. It was
Chords: D D D G / G D / A D / D

Beat: 1 2 3 1 2 3 & 1 2 & 3 & 1 2 3
Lyrics: rain - ing hard but the fid - dler did-n't care, he
Chords: F#m / F#m Em / Em Bm / Bm A / A

Beat: 1 2 3 1 2 3 & 1 2 3 & 1 2 3 &
Lyrics: sawed a - way at the pop - u - lar air. Tho' his
Chords: Bm / Bm Em / Em F#m / F#m A / A

Beat: 1 2 3 1 2 3 & 1 2 3 1 2 3
Lyrics: roof it leaked like a wa - ter-fall, That
Chords: F#m / F#m Em / Em Bm / Bm A / A

Beat: 1 2 & 3 & 1 2 3 & 1 2 3 1 2 3
Lyrics: did - n't seem to bo - ther the man at all.
Chords: D / D G / G D / A D / /

people and wait for that moment when a glazed and slightly puzzled look crosses their faces: "Shouldn't I know that tune? Nahh."

In case they ask, we like to have a suitable name handy. *Arkansas Traveler* becomes *Waltz Across Arkansas*. *Turkey in the Straw* is *Turkey in the Strauss*. *Camptown Races* could be *Doo-dah-dah*. Marty Schuman had once confided that he often played *Whiskey Before Breakfast* in a slow elegant manner, calling it *Spirits in the Morning*. In memory of Marty, we named our 3/4 version, *Waltz of the Morning Spirits*.

We mutate our pieces by trial and error, by ear. Each of us may play slightly different versions of the melody, but since we take turns on melody lead while the other plays backup chords, that works out fine. This mutation game also has been fun in play-grounds, where each player gets a chance to try his/her own 3/4 variation.

But how does one change a 2/4 or 4/4 tune into 3/4 time? Near as we can figure, *each measure of 2/4 or 4/4 music simply turns into two measures of*

3/4 music. You can add the extra beat by lengthening either of the two origi-

nal quarter notes into a half note. Try it both ways— you, too, can hear a waltz! ❖

Old Joe Waltz

Beat: 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

Lyrics: Old Joe Clark, he had a house, se - ven sto - ries high. And

Chords: D / G C / G D / CD // D / G C / G A // // D

Beat: 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

Lyrics: e-v'ry sto - ry in - that house was filled with chick - en pie.

Chords: D / G C / G D / C D / D D / D C / CD // // /

Beat: 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

Lyrics: Fare thee well, Old Joe Clark, Fare thee well, I say.

Chords: D / D D // D / C D // D / D D / D C // Am //

Beat: 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

Lyrics: Fare thee well, Old Joe Clark, I'm a - goin' a - way.

Chords: D / D D // D / C D // D / D C / C D // // /

*We shift into minor "color" chords occasionally to enhance the ethereal elegance of our newly minted waltz.

1996 GREAT PLAINS FOLK FESTIVAL NEWS

3rd Festival Focuses on Diversity

Folk, ragtime, ethnic, and bluegrass tunes are among those you'll learn at this year's *Great Plains Folk Festival, April 26-28 at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills, Illinois*.

Friday's small, intensive classes will be capped by a traditional barn dance and a special performance of folk music history with *Jean Ritchie* and *George Pickow*.

There will be Saturday

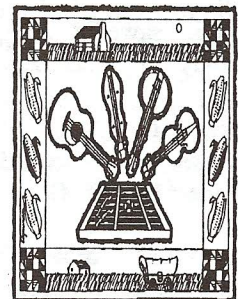
FESTIVAL HOTLINE
708 974-5745 (8 am-4 pm CST)
708 251-6618
TICKETS
708 974-5500

night and Sunday afternoon main stage concerts featuring eight acts with national reputations, plus a demo stage featuring performances by many of the players leading the 100 individual workshops which will run continuously both days.

Scheduled performers include: *Gerry Armstrong & Family*, *Aubrey Atwater*, *Janita Baker*, *Dan & Dona Benkert*, *Tina Bergmann*, *Rosamond Campbell*, *Cooper & Nelson*, *Doug Felt*, *Slavek Hanzlik*, *Diane Ippel*, *David James & Kim Hoffmann*, *Just Friends*, *Dan Levenson*, *Maddie MacNeil*, *Peter Martin*, *Karen Mueller*, *Kim Murley*, *Bill Paine*, *Neal Peck*, *Bonnie Perry*, *Jean Ritchie & George Pickow*, *Bill Robinson & Friends*, *Jerry Rockwell*, *Debbie Sanford*, *David Schnauffer*,

All This & How Much??	
<u>Weekend Package</u>	\$40
(Everything Saturday and Sunday)	
<u>Saturday OR Sunday</u>	\$20
(Workshops & Concert)	
<u>Friday Musical Heritage</u>	\$10
<u>Concert & Dance</u>	
<u>Friday Specialty Workshops</u>	\$35
<u>(3½ Hour Classes)</u>	
Pre-registration required for specialty workshops.	

Maureen Sellers, *Special Concensus*, *Spiraldanse*, *Sweetwater*, *Diane Tate*, *Susan Trump*, *Donna Tufano*, and *Ron Wall*.



Annual Club Directory

Club Editors:

George & Dorothy
Wagner
155 N. Harbor Dr. #1102
Chicago, IL
60601-7318

This list is published in our winter issue and is updated as needed in each issue. It contains autoharp clubs & clubs where autoharp players are welcome. If you know of any club we have not mentioned, send the information to the Club Editors.

ARKANSAS

Harps of the Ouachitas

1st Monday each month, 6 PM
Morrow Street Housing
Authority comm. room
c/o Jann and Jack
Barnett
1709 Miller Avenue
Mena, AR 71953
501 394-3665

Old Time Music Association

2nd Sunday each month, 1:30 - 4:30 PM
c/o Valta Sexton
3643 Wilma Avenue
Ft. Smith, AR 72904
501 782-9004 or
474-0333

CALIFORNIA

Horse and Buggy Harpers

Every Thursday, 7:00 PM
Horse and Buggy®
Music
148 McFarland Street
Galt, CA 95632-1553
209 745-3930
c/o Melva Gass
223 Joseph Road
Manteca, CA 95336
209 239-1589

Scottish Fiddlers of Los Angeles

Every other Sunday, 1:30 PM
c/o Jan Tappan
1938 Rose Villa Street
Pasadena, CA 91107
818 793-3716
FAX: 818 793-9401

CANADA

Canada Autoharp Club
c/o Vi Elliston
1798 Youngs Point
Road RR3
Lakefield, ON K0L 2H0
Canada

COLORADO

Denver Area Autoharp Club
2nd Sunday of month, 4:00 PM
Swallow Hill
Music Association
1905 S. Pearl
Denver, CO 80210
303 777-1003
c/o Margaret Bakker
1501 S. Estes Street
Lakewood, CO 80232
303 986-0769

DELAWARE

Brandywine Dulcimer Fellowship
1st Friday each month, 7:30 PM
c/o Earl Roth
2112 Peachtree Dr.
Wilmington, DE 19805
302 998-7767

ILLINOIS

David Adler Cultural Center
Every Friday except 1st Friday each month, 8:00 - 12:00 PM
c/o Paul Tyler
1700 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Libertyville, IL 60641
847 367-0707

Fox Valley Folklore Society
Every Wednesday, 8:00 PM
Mack's Silver Pheasant
(4 miles north of Rte 64 on Rte 25 near St. Charles, IL)
c/o Juell Ulven
755 N. Evanslawn Ave.
Aurora, IL 60506
708 897-FOLK
until 8/2/96
630 897-FOLK
from 8/3/96

Hammers and Noters Dulcimer Society of Illinois

c/o Donna Tufano
PO Box 59
Elmwood Park, IL 60635
708 456-6292
until 8/2/96
630 456-6292
from 8/3/96

Masthouse

1st Saturday of month, 7:00 PM
Open Stage
(teens and up)
528 E. Calhoun
Woodstock, IL
60098-4206
c/o Don Mast
815 338-0011

IOWA

Happy Hearts Autoharp Club
3rd Saturday each month

Autoharps only,
10 AM-Noon, Pot Luck
at Noon; Theme songs
session 1:00 - 4:30 PM
c/o Dora Miller
2111 N. 5th Avenue, E.
Newton, IA 50208
515 792-3977

KANSAS

Autoharp Club
2nd Thursday each month, 7 PM
c/o Karen Nickel
1910 W. 14th Street
Winfield, KS 67156
316 221-1219

Harps Plus

3rd Sunday each month, 2:00 - 4:45 PM
147 S. Hillside
Wichita, KS
c/o Loren & Marie Wells
1620 S. Longford, #205
Wichita, KS 67207
316 682-8048

LOUISIANA

Shreveport Autoharp Society
2nd Saturday each month, 2:00 - 5:00 PM
Christ Methodist Church
1204 Crabapple
Shreveport, LA 71118
c/o Glenn Flesher
9534 Royalton Drive
Shreveport, LA 71118
318 686-5727

MASSACHUSETTS

New England Folk Fest Association
1950 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140
c/o Nancy Hanssen, Pres.
617 354-1340

MICHIGAN

Autoharps Unlimited
3rd Wednesday of month, 7:00 PM
c/o Kathy Wieland
2230 Blueberry Lane
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
313 769-2849

Jolly Hammers and Strings Dulcimer Club
4th Saturday each

month, 1:00 - 4:00 PM
c/o Jane & Bill Kuhlman
2769 S. Homer Road
Midland, MI
48640-9532
517 835-5085

Saginaw Subterranean Strings
3rd Friday of month, 7:00 PM, September through May
Good Shepherd
Lutheran Church
5335 Brockway Road
Saginaw, MI 48603
For summer schedule:
John & Sharon Skaryd
11239 Lake Circle Dr., N.
Saginaw, MI 48609
517 781-0849

MISSOURI

Focal Point
Every Thursday, 7:00 PM
8158 Big Bend Blvd.
Webster Groves, MO
63119
c/o Linda Ritterbusch
314 961-7427

Music Folk

1st & 3rd Saturday each month, 3:00 - 5:00 PM
8015 Big Bend Blvd.

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month, 6:30 - 8:30 PM
c/o Alice Penovich
627 S. Newton
Springfield, MO 65806
417 831-4913

NEVADA

**Southern Nevada
Bluegrass
Music Society**
3rd Saturday each
month
c/o Monika Smith
1670 Rawhide
Henderson, NV 89015
702 564-5455

NEW YORK

**Adirondak Bluegrass
League, Inc.**
3rd or 4th Sunday
each month, 2:00 PM
c/o Irene Clothier, Pres.
PO Box 301
Corinth, NY 12822
518 747-0039

**New York Pinewoods
Folk Music Club**
Meets irregularly
817 Broadway 6th floor
New York, NY 10019
212 674-2418
c/o Heather Wood, Pres.
444 West 59th Street
New York, NY 10019
212 957-8386
Home page: <http://users.aol.com/nypinewood/club.html>

OHIO

**Canton Folksong
Society**
Usually 2nd Saturday
each month, 1:00 PM
Street of Shops in
McKinley Historical
Museum
800 McKinley
Memorial Dr. NW
Canton, OH 44718
216 455-7043
until 5/96
330 455-7043
from 3/96
c/o Christina Kambrick
1707 32nd Street NE
Canton, OH 44714
216 453-5773
until 5/96
330 453-5773
from 3/96

**Dulcimer Society
of Trumbull County**
4th Friday each month,
7:00 PM Jan.- Oct.;
3rd Friday each month,
7:00 PM Nov.-Dec.
NE Christian Church
865 Perkins-Jones Rd. NE
Warren, OH
c/o Robin Mermer
5752 State Route 7
Kinsman, OH 44428
216 772-0011
until 5/96
330 772-0011
from 3/96

**Dulci-More: Folk and
Traditional Musicians**
1st Tuesday & 3rd
Wednesday each
month, 7:00 PM
First United Methodist
Church of Salem
244 South Broadway
Salem, OH 44460-3816
c/o Bill Schilling
984 Homewood Ave.
Salem, OH 44460
216 332-4420
until 5/96
330 332-4420
from 3/96

OKLAHOMA

**Oklahoma City
Traditional Music
Association**
1st Saturday each
month
c/o Anita Roesler
823 N.W. 43rd Street
Oklahoma City, OK
73118
405 524-5334

**Tulsa Folk Music
Society**
2nd Saturday of month,
6:00 PM - 12 AM
St. Francis Church
First Street & Atlanta
Tulsa, OK
c/o Terry Aziere
5917 E. 4th Street
Tulsa, OK 74112-1262

PENNSYLVANIA

**The Bar None
Autoharp Society**
c/o Bob Woodcock
268 Barren Hill Road
Conshohocken, PA
19428

**Frosty Valley
Dulcimer Friends**
1st Monday each
month, 7:00 PM
c/o Helen Miller
713 Bloom Road
Danville, PA 17821
717 275-2642

**Lancaster County
Folk Music &
Fiddlers' Society**
2nd Sunday each
month, 2:00 PM
110 Tulane Terrace
Lancaster, PA
c/o Harry Haddon, Pres.
PO Box 4541
Lancaster, PA
17604-3003
717 396-9752

**Off-The-Wall
Dulcimer Society**
1st Sunday each
month, 2:00 - 5:00 PM
St. Stephen's
Lutheran Church
Main Street
New Kingston, PA
c/o Rebecca Askey
134 E. Winding Hill Rd.
Mechanicsburg, PA
17055
717 766-2982

TEXAS

**'Harps Over Texas
Autoharp Club**
4th Tuesday each
month, 7:00 PM except
December; for Decem-
ber information, call
Nathan Sarvis
1904 Moonlight Drive
Denton, TX 76208
817 387-2020

**Lone Star State
Dulcimer Society**
2nd Saturday each
month, 1:00 - 5:00 PM
c/o Linda Lowe
Thompson
1114 Vine Street
Denton, TX 76201
817 387-40

Tres Rios
c/o Linda Greshaw
PO Box 2112
County Road 312
Glen Rose, TX 76043
817 897-4253

VIRGINIA

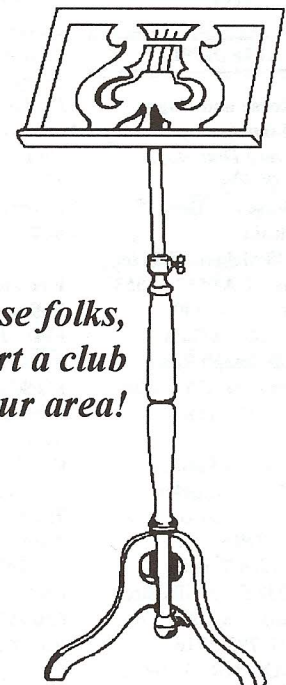
**The Blue Ridge
Autoharp Music Asso.**
Fries, VA 24330
c/o James Lindsay
139 Petty Road
Galax, VA 24333
703 236-4486

**Capital 'Harpers
Autoharp Club**
3rd weekend each
month
c/o Alan Mager
PO Box 1221
Annandale, VA 22003
703 256-1068

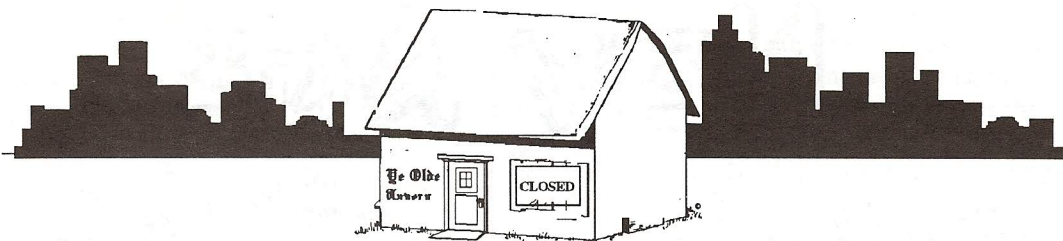
**Dulcimer
Disorganization
of Greater Washington
(DC)**
Meets now and then
c/o Keith Young
3815 Kendale Road
Annandale, VA 22003
703 941-1071

WASHINGTON

**Spokane Falls
Autoharp Club**
3rd Sunday each
month, 2:00 - 5:00 PM
c/o Leone Peterson
5605 N. Northwood Dr.
Spokane, WA 99212
509 922-7283



Join these folks,
or start a club
in your area!



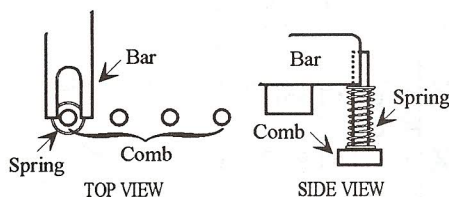
A Few More Bars... But Not Much Action

by Dr. George F. Orthey

If you're contemplating trading in your old 15-bar 'harp for a brand new 21-bar variety, here's some sound advice you'll probably be needing.

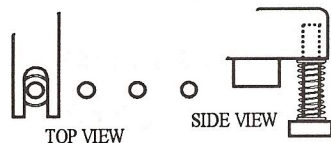
While doing some maintenance work on several OSI 21-bar 'harps, I noticed an annoying and consistently present problem. On these instruments, the chord bars are sometimes hard to push and sometimes even jam at the bass end. If you think you have this phenomenon, remove the chord bar cover and check it out.

The bass end of the chord bars in some newer 21-bar 'harps are like this:



Since the comb and springs that lift the bars are not properly located under the end of the bar, the springs sometimes slip by the end of the bar and jam.

The bass end of the chord bars should look like this:

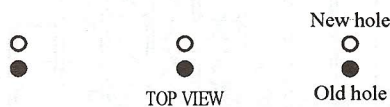


The comb should be set well into the slots in the bass ends of the bars so the springs sit firmly under the bars.

The problem is very easy to correct. Simply take the screws out of the

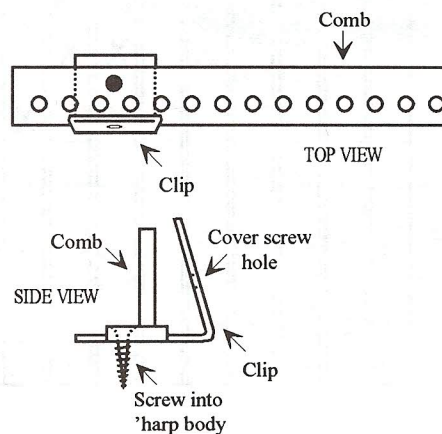
comb base and drill new holes for the screws so that the comb will sit under the bars as it should.

When you take the comb off, you'll find two or three (depending on the number of screws through the comb) holes in the 'harp body. Just drill a hole the same size approximately $\frac{3}{32}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch closer to the sound board like so:

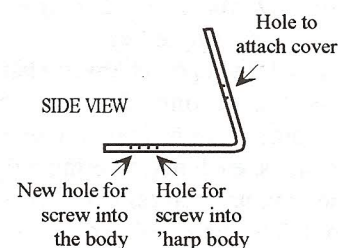


Then reinstall the comb.

You may need to drill new holes in the metal clips that go under the comb. The clips are used to attach the chord bar cover in place. They are self-evident when you take the cover off. They sit under and alongside the comb like so:



You must correct the right screw hole in the metal clip. Drill the new hole through the clip alongside the existing hole for the screw that goes through the comb and clip into the 'harp body:



Drilling this new hole in effect will leave the metal clip in the same place it was before you moved the comb closer to the sound board.

Caution! When you drill this new hole in the metal clip, hold the clip with a pair of vice grips, not with your fingers!

Now put it all back together. With the combs moved under the bass end of the chord bars, put the screws through the comb, through the new holes in the metal clips and into the new holes in the 'harp body. Put the bars and cover back in place and your "hangovers" are gone! The bars are open again! ❖

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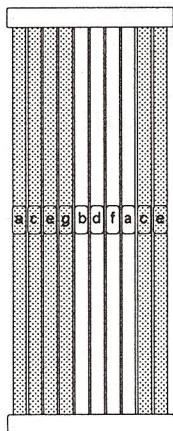
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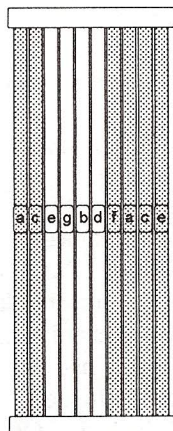
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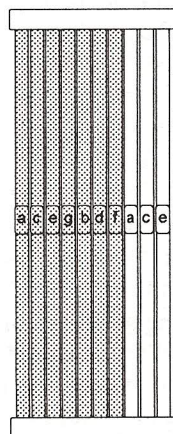
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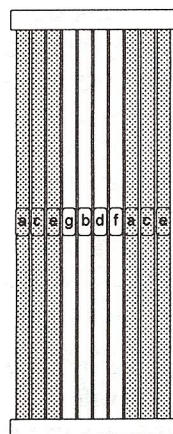
Press these four bars for the C chord



Press these four bars for the F chord



Press these three bars for the G7 chord



Press these four bars for the Am chord

As you can see, the "X" pattern for each chord *type* is identical.

This arrangement also makes it easy to remember which chord is which. For example, on each three-tone chord, the name of the chord is the same as the note of the delete bar immediately to the right of the bars being depressed. Therefore, pressing the b, d, f, and a bars produces the C chord, the same as the label on the next bar to the right.

The chords listed from G to G7 are fairly standard. From G9 on down, you'll encounter an incredible array of chords with New Age sounds. Remember, each delete bar pattern produces seven chords. Six patterns times seven chords equals 42 chords. All this from just ten bars.

SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

The first three delete bars (the repeated a, c, and e) can be eliminated, but it would make the patterns necessary far more complicated. Do-able, but not recommended.

The first delete bar (a) can be eliminated if you do not want or need a B° (diminished) chord.

IN SUMMARY

Like the original Ultratonic, this setup does not allow very rapid chord changes or single note melody picking. (Of course, through sheer obstinacy, Marty proved me wrong on this point - but, I'm talking about ordinary mortals.) It does make a fine back-up rhythm instrument that has *all* the chords for a single key. It also could provide a high bliss factor for you New Age noodlers. ❖

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Picker's Portrait

Ray Sipes ❖ Ferndale ❖ Washington



I'm new to the autoharp, and I'm not a professional musician. However, I've been designing and making stringed musical instruments for 30 years. I've made a clavichord, several zithers, many psalteries, and a ton of dulcimers and guitars, ukes and banjos, and an Idaho-shaped chording zither. Some were comedy instruments, built on toilet seats, coffee cans, hubcaps, frying pans, etc.

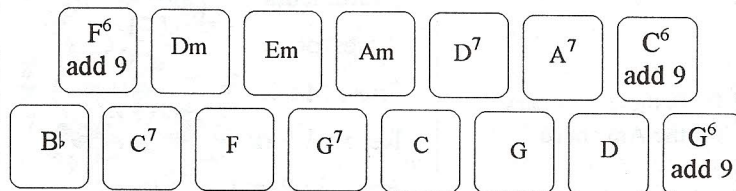
I've been in love with autoharp music since attending a Bryan Bowers concert in Seattle about 15 years ago, but I've never made a strong effort to learn how to play it until blundering into an old issue of *Autoharp Quarterly* in Hawaii last fall.

My Schmidt 'harp is a 15-bar "A" model with black back and tan top, and no sound hole. I originally found it at a flea market for \$25. The sound is now very good, but I plan to add a half-back as a body rest. I've replaced the bass strings, and some pads that weren't working well. My chord bar layout is now:

trip in Idaho, where I saw a most interesting old autoharp. It had no nameplate, but the book with it called it a "Zimmermann Autoharp." It was shiny black, with about 20 strings. The five chord bars, labeled "Major" or "seventh," had flat buttons on top, like an old-fashioned Underwood typewriter. It looked in OK shape as a collector's item, but to tune up new strings, I think the instrument should be entirely reglued. The shop came down to \$50 for it, including the book, tuning key, and picks. [If anyone is interested, write to AQ.]

A recent project of mine is another very old autoharp, in very poor shape – rusty strings, missing bars, loose joints. The tuning pegs were nails, flattened and drilled on top, holding quite well in their beds of iron oxide. I've cleaned it up and reglued it, but I don't hold much hope for it since I've seen how rough the wood is inside.

I'm a retired ex-carrier pilot, air traffic controller, and software engineer. We live near the ocean, and I enjoy



Folk music has always been "my kind." My favorites are hillbilly, ancient Irish, Scottish, modern folk-type like *Four Strong Winds* and *Scarlet Ribbons*, and some classical.

I've just returned from a foraging

swimming, paddling or sailing my home-made kayak, and music. My wife is a pianist, and a neighbor is taking up the fiddle again in his 60s with an old instrument I rebuilt for him. ❖

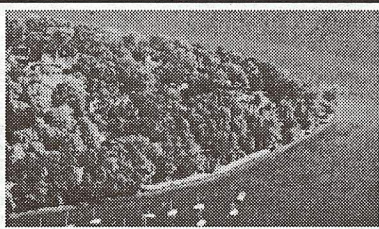
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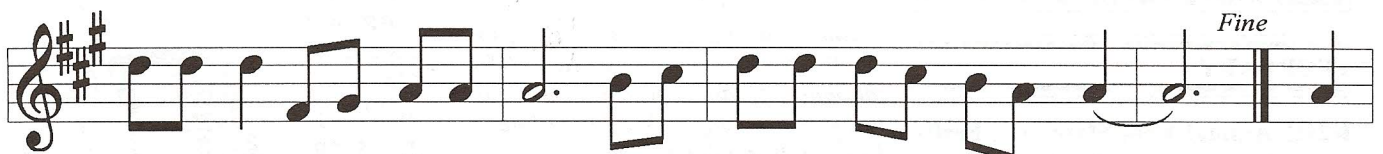


Ellice R. Brahms



G A **D** / / A **G** A **A** G A **D** / / A **A** Em **Em** G A

It's a love-ly world when you're with me. It's a love-ly world for us to see. It's a




D / / / G **A** / / G A **D** / / A **G** A **A** /

love-ly world. It's a love-ly world. It's a love-ly world when you're with me. 1. When
2. When



G A **A** **D** **D** **G** A **D** Em **Em** **A** G **D** / **A** **G** A **D** Em **A** **Em**

trees fall in - to line, Words be - gin to rhyme. Shells a - long the sea Call your name to me.
stars come out at night Al - ways shin - ing bright. Big round moon ap - pears Throw - ing out its cheers.



A G **D** / **A** **G** A **D** Em **Em** **A** G **D** / **A** **G** A **D** Em **A** **Em**

Let - ters on the wall Nev - er cease to fall. Riv - ers rol - ling high nev - er say good-bye, 'cause
Clouds drift slow - ly by, Wind whis-pers a sigh. Bright sun-shine comes out, Does - n't show a doubt, 'cause

Autoharp Events

Events Editors:

George and Dorothy Wagner
155 N. Harbor Drive #1102
Chicago, IL 60601

The following are major winter/spring events which feature the autoharp in contest, workshop, and/or performance. If you know of a major event we have not included, please send the information to the Events Editors. The complete events list is published every Spring, and seasonally repeated and updated in every issue.

CODE:

AC Autoharp Contest
AP Autoharp Performance
AW Autoharp Workshop

FEBRUARY

► **29th Annual Kent State Folk Festival**; February 9-11; Kent State University Student Center, Campus Center Drive, Kent, OH; Code: AP, AW (Bill Schilling); c/o David McElroy, ACPB Box 1, Office of Campus Life, Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242 216 672-2338 FAX 216 672-2517

► **Winter Festival of Acoustic Music**; February 10,11; Plymouth Park United Methodist Church, Irving, TX; Code: AP, AW; (Charles Whitmer, Connie Hendrickson, Nathan Sarvis); 1114 Vine St., Denton, TX 76201 817 387-4001

MARCH

► **Stringalong Weekend**; March 8-10; Edwards Conference Center on Lake Beulah, East Troy, WI; Code: AP, AW (Karen Mueller, Ann Schmidt); Must preregister; c/o Ann Schmidt, UW-Milwaukee Folk Center, Fine Arts Music 130, PO Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201, 800 636-FOLK or 414 229-4622

► **15th Annual Florida Old Time Music Championships**; March 29, 30; Sertoma Youth Ranch, FL; Code: AC; Jim Strickland, 1848 Thistle Court, Wesley Chapel, FL 33543 813 991-4774

APRIL

► **Alaska Folk Festival**; April 8-14; Centennial Hall, Juneau, AK; Code: AP, AW; (Barbara Kalen, Kid Burfl, Anne Fuller, Mary Beattie); Mike Sakarias, Box 21748, Juneau, AK 99802 907 789-0292

► **Great Plains Folk Festival**; April 26-28; Moraine Valley Community College, College Service Center, Palos Hills, IL; Code: AP, AW; (Karen Mueller, Ann Jones, Sweetwater, Ron Wall) c/o Jackie Brenchley, 1605 Wilmette Ave, Wilmette, IL 60091 847 251-6618



Recordings

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

If you know of a new or re-released recording which contains at least 50 % autoharp, please send the information to the Recordings Editor. It will be listed in this column.

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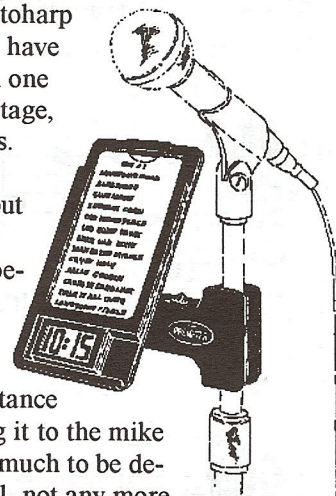
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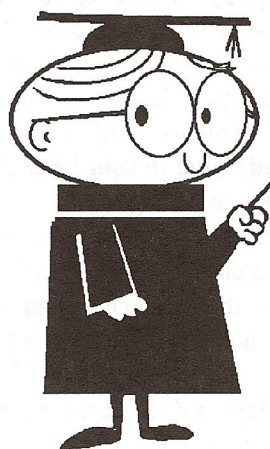
If you're like many, you don't like taping your set list to the back or side of your autoharp and if you have more than one 'harp on stage, it's useless. Also, you couldn't put the list on the floor because it was unreadable at that distance and taping it to the mike stand left much to be desired. Well, not any more.



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Musicking the Autoharp: A Contestant's Point of View

by Lucille Reilly

Lucille Reilly, 1995 Mountain Laurel Autoharp Champion, 1995 International Champion, 1994 National Autoharp Champion, and The Dulcimer Lady,[®] resides in Millington, New Jersey. She has been performing full time since 1980 and is the author of "Striking Out and Winning!" a musicmaker's guide to the hammered dulcimer.

Oh no, another how-to-win-contests article? Not quite. I will admit there are no magic formulas for contests. Each one depends on who competes, who judges, how much sleep everyone got, the weather... However, some insights and advice may be helpful, whether you perform or go the extra mile to compete.

Play what you love. It'll certainly come across! And if those pieces have all the technical and imaginative stuff you're known for, so much the better. (More on these items in a moment.)

Choose tunes that make the autoharp sing. You've discovered you can play *My Melancholy Baby*, but now ask yourself: How does it make the 'harp sound? If it sounds tinny or "grovelly," hoist a red flag. Go for pieces which play up the autoharp's sweetness and resonance.

Many of my favorite dance tunes on the dulcimer make the autoharp vibrate beyond melodic recognition. (I love sustain, but it does have its limits.) If a massive, multi-tone ring occurs too often and there's no way to break it so the melody can be clearly heard, I look for something else that dances and sings.

Choose tunes that fit the event.

Many of us contestants base our tune choices on what we think will catch the judges' ears. It often doesn't work and is usually frustrating. So, for the 1995 International Championship I took a different approach: I asked, "Does this tune feel like the Walnut Valley Festival?" (What a question!) I find there is a difference between the "Mountain Laurel sound" and the "Walnut Valley sound."

Play what you play well. It's good advice to play tunes in a contest that you've known for a while – which means anything from a month to a year, depending on your skill level and tune cache.

I know about 500 dance tunes on the dulcimer, have noodled with "remodeling" tunes since high school, and have played many contra dances with some wonderfully inventive pianists. Thusly armed (and hammered?), I made a daredevil attempt for the 1995 International Championship: I learned a new piece *three weeks* before the contest. (Why? I felt like it!) The *only* reason I took the risk was because I'd arranged the tune long ago on the dulcimer, making a respectable autoharp arrangement quick to come by.

On the other hand, *one week* before the contest, I discovered yet another dulcimer tune that sounded like a winner. This one I resisted, because there wasn't enough time to become comfortable with it, even though the arrangement was well in my ear. It became, however, a pleasant diversion from contest pieces that last week, and is now on my performance list.

Years ago I read the biography of a pianist who said that, at least two weeks before his first performance of a work, he finalized all its technical and musical details. It's advice I live by (and you can now see that a two-week cutoff for my new contest tune left one week to complete the arrangement – quite dangerous!). Arranging takes its own time and can't be rushed. I have to have a tune in my ear at least two weeks before the arrangement process can begin.

Play for the audience. A contest is also a *concert*, so consider tunes the audience will enjoy. My two pieces for each round are usually in different keys, and if they're not, the pace of each is different. How will you know what will appeal to the audience? See the next point!

Play "experienced" tunes. Your contest tunes should be those you've performed elsewhere at least once. I played my "three-week rush job" for friends and students, and for a church service postlude five days before the contest. It was a close call, but the tune got the "break-in" it needed.

If possible, play a potential contest piece for three or more separate audiences and listen to their response. If each audience swoons over that piece, it could be a winner.

Familiar vs. unknown? While I have been told consistently to play music the judges know, I have just as consistently never done that. Why?

1. Any judge worth his salt better be attentive if I'm doing a good job playing a tune he doesn't know.

2. Every contest is an opportunity to challenge the state of the art, stretching the limits of the instrument, repertoire, and performer.

Familiarity may be more important for songs, but that hasn't been an issue for me as a diatonic 'harpist playing dance music. *Feel* in dance music is a priority, followed by melodic and harmonic development.

The art of imagination. Imagination works on two levels. The first, tune choice, is only the beginning. Think again if you believe that's enough, then go to the second level: How will you *develop* this novel tune so it sounds even more novel *and* musical?

My dulcimer/piano dance band keeps getting this comment about our music from one of our fans: "It's like

you're telling a story." Now that I think of it, *all* of my autoharp arrangements tell stories, too. I never play through a tune exactly the same way twice. My best arrangements, those that catch the ear and hold on to it beyond the last chord, tend to fall out of my hands into the 'harp very quickly.

For good tunes whose story line is still forthcoming, I ask along the way: "Is the arrangement too short? Too long? Are there too few ideas? Too many?" I prune and develop, hopefully without overdoing it. The finished product musn't sound contrived. (One wonderful jig still resists arranging after two years. This may be because the melody is *too* interesting. I may have to continue enjoying it at home.)

Technique. As you envision your story line, you'll simultaneously focus on the technical details to drive it. (Special techniques sound best if they are part of your story line, rather than stuck in for the sake of doing them.)

Slow each piece down to get in touch with the fingering. (A metronome can help.) Iron out the kinks early on, and

let them teach you about fingering for the next tune that comes around. Be sure the melody rings clearly over filler chords. And what about playing from your heart? Complete all of this at least two weeks beforehand.

Technical prowess seems to depend on the autoharp you play, too. For my diatonic pick-and-pump style, the right hand is more important than the left. However, the left hand may be more important to playing a chromatic 'harp, (I don't play chromatic 'harp enough to say for sure). Whatever your 'harp, it would be great if your pieces cause the judges to think what a friend of mine exclaimed after he heard one of my contest pieces: "Wait a minute! That isn't possible on an autoharp!"

If I were a judge, a key change wouldn't impress me (the new key often doesn't play differently from the old one), *unless* the chord progression developed further in the new key or the right-hand work became more intricate. An unusual chord here or there wouldn't impress me either (the chord bars are a harmonic *fait accompli*), but an entirely different progression bringing a new kind of harmonic sense could grab my attention.

Play each piece at its natural tempo. A jig played slower than dance tempo, no matter how clean or how many chord changes, wouldn't score high with my ear, but if it dances, oh boy! A waltz played a little slower but with lots of passion and melodic frills could also do well. (Admittedly, I've never taken a chance on a slow piece in a contest, and wish they were required for the contests, because some beautiful waltzes and such are out there.) If you just play at mach five, be sure the melody remains discernible and rhythmic.

Do something different. Those who reach a contest's final round usually have a different *kind* of sound, regardless of difficulty (and some players play amazingly simply). The judges do, however, catch on to simplicity in the final round. Can you combine a new sound with dazzling technique, topped off with fun, excitement, passion, etc.?

Play the music first, then the au-

toharp. The music always starts within the player, who conveys it through the autoharp (fiddle, etc.). The results are never the same the other way around.

You'll have your best shot at this if your fingers are technically up to snuff and if you know how you want each piece to feel like and sound in your head. (If you hear blah, you'll play blah!)

Sadly, accuracy tends to override musicality in a close race. I'd excuse a glitch or two if the message behind the music sings loud and clear, but I'm not a judge (yet).

Nerves. They almost never get in my way at concerts, but that's because no one judges concerts. These last three points may help:

There is no luck in this. You say the luck of the draw makes a difference? When I took third place at Winfield in 1994, I was "Contestant Number One" in the preliminaries, and was stunned to be called back for the final round. It doesn't matter where you are in the lineup if your arrangements and playing are *hot!*

Internal drive. In 1995, I did something I've never done before: I *didn't* play any of my pieces the day of the contest! (I ran through the Mountain Laurel pieces at 10am for a 7pm contest.) I reasoned that I never practice up to the last minute before a concert, so why do it at a contest? After a warm-up on technically similar tunes, I put my 'harp down, closed my eyes and *in my mind* "played through" only the two tunes for the preliminary round, instead of all five (including two for the finals plus one in case of a dreaded tie-breaker). If a tune fell apart there, I mentally rehearsed that spot again. (This is a great way to practice on an airplane, by the way.)

One moment at a time. I prepared in advance to enjoy each note as it occurred, not considering what the judges think, or about winning, because...

The message is all-important. Music has the power to touch the soul in ways that no other art can. Touch souls and you will have won much, for the greatest prize is a supreme compliment thankfully given. ❖



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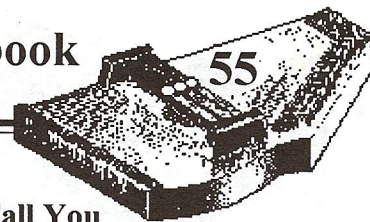
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Alexander's Ragtime Band (2)

G] [G C7] G / [G] [G C7] G // [G C7] G D7 D7 D7 G / [G]
Com'on and hear, com'on and hear A-lex-an-der's Rag-time Band

C] [C B7] C / [C] [C B7] C // [C B7] C C CC C //
Com'on and hear, com'on and hear, it's the best band in the land!

[G C] [G G] [C C] G [G C] [G G] [C C] G /
You can hear a bu-gle call like you've nev-er heard be-fore,

G [G G] G [G G] [G G] [G G] G / A7
So na-tu-al that you want to go to war; -

A7 A7 G A7 A7 G A7 D7 // [D7 G] D7 // [G]
That's just the best-est band what am, hon-ey lamb!

G] [G C7] G / [G] [G C7] G // [G C7] G D7 D7 D7 G / [G]
Com'on and hear, com'on and hear, let me take you by the hand;

C] [C B7] C // [C B7] C // [C B7] C C C C C / [G]
Up to the man, to the man who's the lead-er of the band!

G] [G C] G G G G D7 G G D7 C / C / C7 C7 [G]
And if you want to hear the *Swa-nee Ri-ver* played in rag-time,

G] [G A7] G / [G] [G A7] G // [G G] A7 A7 D7 D7 G //
Com'on and hear, com'on and hear A-lex-an-der's Rag-time Band!

By the Light of the Silvery Moon (2)

[C F] C [C F] C [C F] C
By the light (By the light, By the light)

[C G7] [C G7] C D7 // //
Of the sil-ver-y moon

D7 D7 D7 G7 // //
I'll stay and croon

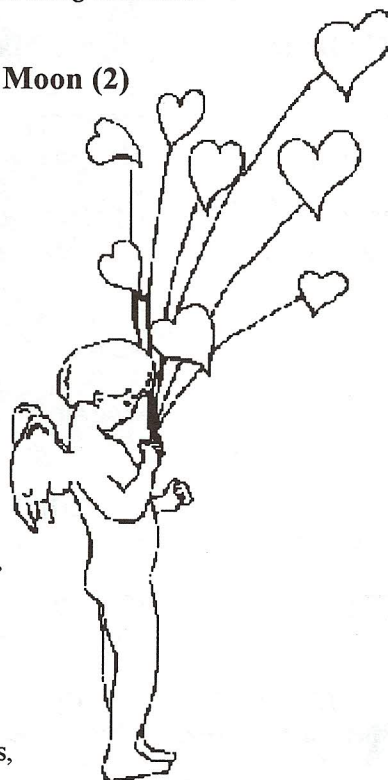
[G7 F] [G7 F] G7 F / C / G7 //
To my hon-ey I'll croon love's tune

[C F] C [C F] C [C F] C
Hon-ey moon, (Hon-ey moon, Hon-ey moon),

[C G7] [C G7] C D7 // //
Keep a' shin-in' in June.

D7 C G7 C C G7 G7 C
Your silver-y beams will bring love's dreams,

[C G7] [C G7] C A7 // // [D7] [D7 G7] [C C] G7 C // // //
We'll be cud-dl -in' soon, by the sil-ver-y moon.



Let Me Call You Sweetheart (3)

C / C C / G7 C C // D7 C F // A7 // D7 // // //
Let me call you sweet-heart, I'm in love with you;

G7 / C7 G7 / F G7 G7 //
Let me hear you whis-per

F G7 C // C7 // G7 // // //
that you love me too.

C / C C / G7 C C //
Keep the love-light shin-ing

D7 C F // A7 // D7 // // //
in your eyes so blue,

D7 / D7 G7 / D7 C C / F / C D7 // G7 // C // // //
Let me call you sweet-heart, I'm in love with you.

Down by the Old Mill Stream (3)

[G G G] G // A7 // D7 // //
Down by the old mill stream,

C D7 G // D7 // G // //
Where I first met you,

G G G // D7 // C // //
With your eyes so blue,

B7 C D7 // C // G // //
Dressed in ging-ham, too.

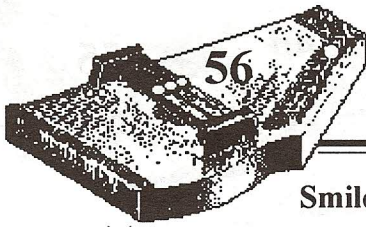
G G G // A7 // D7 // //
It was there I knew,

C D7 G // D7 // G // // //
That you loved me too.

[G D7 G] C7 // // //
You were six-teen,

[C7 B7 C7] G // // //
My vil-lage queen,

[G C G] A7 // D7 // G // // //
Down by the old mill stream.



Autoharp Songbook

© 1996, Limberjack Productions

Smiles (2)

▼
[C F] G7/[F] [G7 F] G7 G7/
There are smiles that make us hap-py,

[C G7] C/[G7] [C G7] C//
There are smiles that make us blue;

[C C] E7/[D7] [E7 D7] [E7 D7] Am Am/
There are smiles that steal a - way the tear-drops,

[Am Am] D7/[Am] [D7 D7] [G D7] G7//
As the sun - beams steal a - way the dew.

[G7 G7] C/[C] [C C] [C C] E7 E7/
There are smiles that have a ten-der mean-ing

[E7 E7] Am/[Am] [Am Am] [Am Am] F//
That the eyes of love a - lone may see,

[F G7] F/[F] [G7 F] [G7 F] C C/
But the smiles that fill my heart with sun-shine

[C D7] [G7 G7] [G7] F G7 C//
Are the smiles that you give to me.

Let the Rest of the World Go By (3)

▼
F F/[F E7] F/[F C7] [C7 B7] C7/
With some-one like you, a pal good and true,

C7 C7/[B7] [C7 F] C7/C7 F/[C7] [F C7] F/
I'd like to leave it all be-hind, and go and find

F7 Bb/ Bb Bb/ Bb F/ F F//
A place that's known to God a - lone,

G7/F G7/G7 C7/Bb C7/
just a spot to call our own.

E7 F/[F E7] F/ F C7/[C7 B7] C7/
We'll find per-fect peace, where joys nev - er cease,

C7 C7/[B7] [C7 F] C7/C7 A7//C7/
Out there be - neath the kind-ly sky.

C7 [B7 C7] F/[F E7] F/ F C7/[C7 B7] C7/
We'll build a sweet lit-tle nest, some-where in the West,

C7 [B7 C7] C7/[C7 F] C7/ Am F////
And let the rest of the world go by.

Long, Long Trail (2)

▼
[G G] G G Bm/[Bm] G7 G7/
There's a long, long trail a - wind-ing

C [G7 D7] C C/[D7 G]//
In - to the land of my dreams;

[G G] D7/[C] D7/[D7] D7 G
Where the night-in-gale is sing-ing

D7 G G/ A7/ D7//
And the white moon beams.

[G G] G G Bm/[Bm] G7 G7/
There's a long, long night of wait-ing

C [G7 D7] C C/[D7 G]//
Un-til my dreams all come true

[G G] D7/[C] D7/[D7] D7 G
Till the day when I'll be go-ing

D7 G Em Em [Bm Bm] D7 G//
Down that long, long trail - with you.

Ma, He's Making Eyes at Me! (2)

▼
C/[D7] [D7 D7] D7 D7 D7/
Ma, he's mak-ing eyes at me!

G7/[G7] [G7 G7] G7 G7 C/
Ma, he's aw-ful nice to me!

F C C C [G7 G7] [Dm Dm]//
Ma, he's al-most break-ing my heart,

G7 Dm G7 G7 [C C] [C C] [G7 G7] [F G7]
I'm be - side him, mer-cy, let his con-science guide him!

C/[D7] [D7 D7] D7 D7 D7/G7 F G7 F E7//
Ma, he wants to mar-ry me, be my hon-ey bee;

[C C] [C C] [G7 G7] [G7 G7]
Ev-ery min-ute he gets bold-er,

[C C] [C C] [G7 G7] [F G7]
Now he's lean-ing on my shoul-der

D7/[D7] [G7 G7] C//
Ma! he's kis-sing me!



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Charles Zimmerman, who invented the Autoharp 110 years ago this year, would be proud of his tradition continued in the Oscar Schmidt Professional Series Autoharps.

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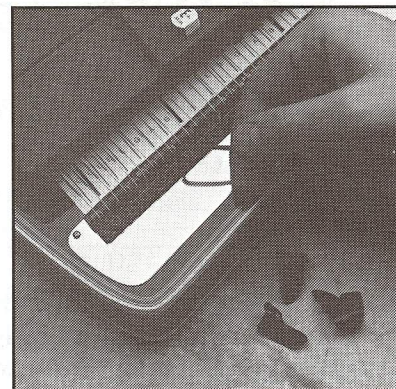
Left: OS110 Ozark with solid spruce back
Right: OS115 Alpine with solid spruce top



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

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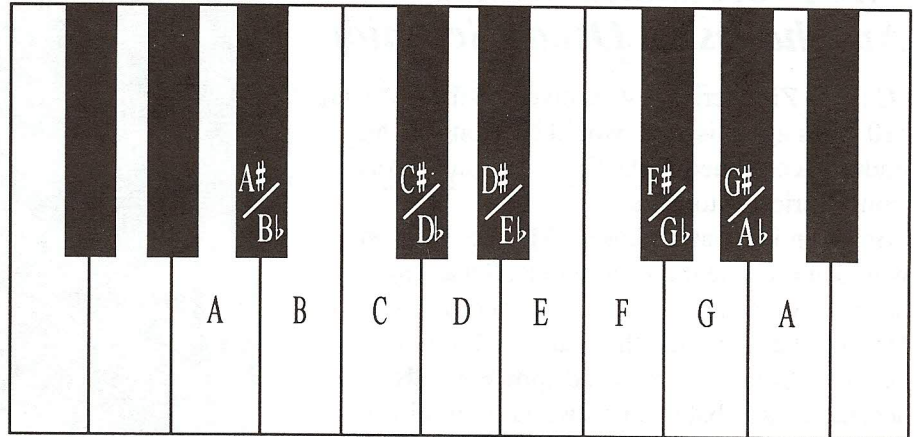
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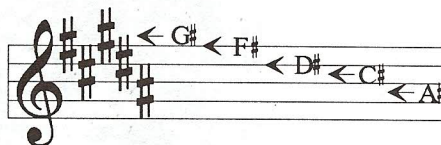
Theoretically Speaking

by "Hooter" the Owl as told to Becky Askey

LESSON THREE



The key signature for the key of B is:

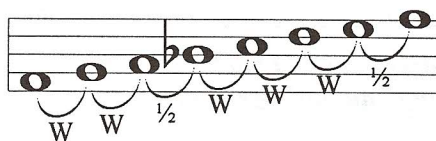


The fifth sharp is A#. The B chord will be B, D#, and F#.

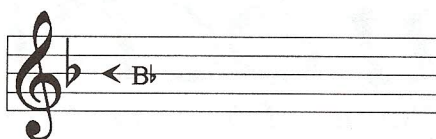
We already did the remaining sharp keys of F# and C# in the previous lesson. Now, we are going to construct the keys that use flats. A flat look like a lower case B (b). Flats work the same way as sharps, except they aren't as pointy. We start with the key of F. Use your keyboard chart the same way. (Oh, stop whining, we haven't even started the hard stuff yet!) You will have one flat (b) in your scale.

You start on F and go up a whole step to G, up a whole step to A, now a half step takes you to Bb, another whole step to C, another whole step up to D, another whole step to E, and the last half step takes you up to F.

Key of F



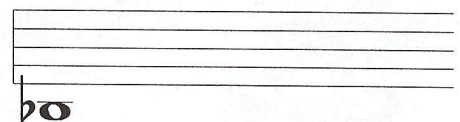
The key signature for the key of F is:



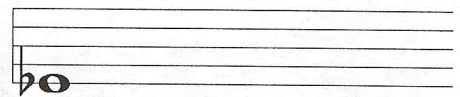
Your chord will still be the first note, third note, and fifth note of the scale: F, A, C.

Now you will construct the next two scales, which are the key of Bb and Eb. Make sure you start on the Bb, which is the black key directly to the left of the B, and the Eb which is the black key directly to the left of the E. Use the same rule of whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, whole step, half step.

Key of Bb



Key of Eb



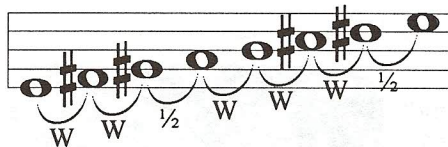
Whaddaya mean you aren't going to do it?! Do you think I'm going through all this effort just so you can sit there and say you won't do it?! Well, smarty, just remember this — When you get to heaven, the entrance exam includes a series of scales that you have to construct so that Gabriel knows you can play along with his Bb trumpet. And, when you write in the answer, "I don't know," or "Who cares," you are going to be mighty sorry when St. Pete hits that elevator button that says: DOWN. So there!



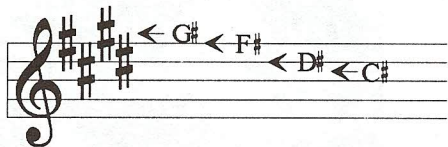
I'm glad to see that everyone is assembled for the next step in our theory lesson. First, we'll check the two scales that you were to construct in the last issue. (I'm trying to be very pleasant here. We'll see how long it lasts.)

The keys you were to construct were E and B.

Key of E



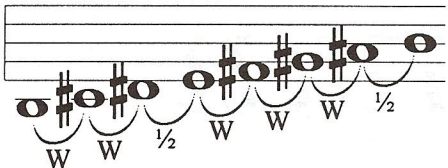
The key signature for the key of E is:



As you notice in the key signature, you continue to build on the key signatures that you built before. You already had F#, C#, and G#. You have added the fourth # which is D#.

To construct the E chord, you use the 1st, 3rd, and 5th notes and come up with E, G#, and B.

Key of B



Pro-Files

If you are a professional autoharper and wish to be featured, please send photo, biography, and schedule to:

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

NOTE: These performance and/or workshop listings are limited to those which feature at least 50% autoharp. Contact the performer for additional information. Also, cancellations and/or changes can occur. Check with the performer before traveling far.

EVO BLUESTEIN 1000 Osage Street
10691 N. Madsen Denver, CO
Clovis, CA 93611
209 297-8966

Pro-File:
AQ October 88
Schedule:
March 21
Fresno Metropolitan
Museum
Fresno, CA

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

Pro-File:
AQ January 89
Schedule:
February 16
Antique
Sandwich Shop
Tacoma, WA
February 17
Grange Hall
Olympia, WA

ROZ BROWN
1549 S. Holland Ct.
Lakewood, CO
80232
303 969-9645

Pro-File:
AQ October 89
Schedule: Every
Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday,
and Saturday night
Buckhorn Exchange
Restaurant

PAUL and
WIN GRACE
11990 Barnes Chapel
Columbia, MO
65201

Pro-File:
AQ October 88
Schedule:
April 5
West Side Folk
Lawrence, KS
April 6
Tulsa Folk
Music Society
Tulsa, OK
April 12
Uncle Calvin's
Coffeehouse
Dallas, TX
April 14
Border's Books
and Music
Fort Worth, TX
April 19
William Carl Garner
Visitor's Center
Heber Springs, AR
April 20
Ozark Folk Center
Mountain View, AR

HARVEY REID
Woodpecker Records
PO Box 1134
Portsmouth, NH
03802

Pro-File:
AQ January 89
Schedule:
February 2
Store Creek
Coffee House
Reno, NV
February 4
Black Bart
Playhouse
Murphys, CA
February 9
Winter Festival of
Acoustic Music
Irving, TX
February 17
New Moon
Coffee House
Haverhill, MA
March 2
Roaring Brook
Nature Center
Canton, CT

LES
GUSTAFSON-
ZOOK
1316 SE 35th Street
Portland, OR 97214
503 235-3094
Pro-File:
AQ April 94

JANET
SCHREINER
The Cats Pajamas
514 Ballytore Road
Wynnewood, PA
19096
215 649-0732
Pro-File:
AQ January 92
Schedule:
February 3
Norristown, PA
February 24
Harleysville, PA
March 18
Philadelphia, PA
March 25
Norristown, PA

LAURIE SKY
The Bill Sky Family
PO Box 70060
Nashville, TN
37207-0060

Pro-File:
AQ April 90
Schedule:
February 25
First Baptist Church
Haslam, TX
February 29
Glen Elementary
School
(Public invited)
Glendale, MS
March 1
Bell Buckle Cafe
Bell Buckle, TN

March 2
Mableton, GA
March 10
First Freewill
Baptist Church
O'Fallon, MO
March 16
Center, TX
March 18 - 20
Groesbeck, TX
April 5
Bell Buckle Cafe
Bell Buckle, TN
April 18, 19
Plum Creek
Bluegrass Festival
Dew, TX
April 27, 28
Hot Springs, AR
May 3
Bell Buckle Cafe

Bell Buckle, TN

IVAN STILES
Route 29, RD2
Phoenixville,
PA 19460
610 935-9062
Pro-File:
AQ October 88
Schedule:
February 2
The Worm Hole
West Palm Beach, FL
February 3
Seaview Hotel
Bal Harbour, FL
February 9
Old Packing
House Cafe
Sarasota, FL
February 10
Naples, FL
February 11
Autoharp workshop
Naples, FL
February 14
Tunes at Noon -
Munn Park
Lakeland, FL
February 16
Autoharp workshop
Eustis, FL
February 17
Yalaha Bakery
Yalaha, FL
February 17
Lake County Folk
Eustis, FL



ALEX USHER captured the National Autoharp Championship in Avoca, Iowa and 3rd place in the International Autoharp Competition at Winfield, Kansas in 1993. She has performed and given workshops at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering as

well as highly acclaimed beginner's workshops at Winfield for the last three years. Her recordings include "Harper's Ferry," a cassette of solo autoharp music, as well as a track on "The Best of The Indiana Fiddler's Gathering - 1993." A frequent contributor to AQ, she is currently preparing a new CD and cassette release, and is writing a manual on melody playing. She performs primarily in the St. Louis, Missouri area and teaches autoharp at The Music Folk.

Alex Usher
216 N. Elm Avenue
Webster Groves, MO
63119-2420
314 961-8631
Schedule:
March 9
Autoharp workshop
St. Louis, MO
March 9
The Music Folk
St. Louis, MO
March 24
COCA
St. Louis, MO

CHARLES
WHITMER
25650 IH 45N
#1107
Spring, TX 77386
713 367-6260
(evenings)
Pro-File:
AQ April 93
Schedule:
February 24
Texas State Sacred
Harp Convention
College Station, TX



The Big'un's Home!

by Steve Hinds

A "Music Hath Charms" Reprise



Steve and Reese enjoy a musical moment.

Pets have played a large part in my life since childhood. Teddy, the cocker/Scottie mix I had as a child; my first dog, Fletcher, who loved to bark at cattle and horses from my single engine Cessna; Smoky, the cat who enjoyed teasing the neighbor's three boxers by grooming himself outside their fence, inches from their reach.

Each has been special. Each has had a unique personality. And each has left a large and lasting impression on me.

At present, I have a couple of dogs, both Labradors. Hap, named for General Hap Arnold, is eight and a half years old, weighs 70 pounds, and is black with progressively more and more salt in his color. He is wired a little funny—he's very hyperactive. Hap was probably weaned too early, and since puppyhood, I have kept a few old blankets around the house which seem to give him some peace as he lies there with one in his mouth.

Reese is chocolate and peanut butter colored, and is named for Reese's peanut butter cups. He is four and a half, weighs 55 pounds, and is a delightful dog. One of his favorite things to do is to sing. Although he will sing along with my autoharp and me on *Night Rider's Lament*, *Boilerman's Waltz*, and *The Big'un's Home*, his favorite song is *How Much is that Doggie in the Window*.

As both Hap and Reese are fairly typical dogs, they go absolutely berserk when I get home. It could be that I had been overseas for decades, or it could be that I have gone to the store for some milk. Doesn't matter. The greeting I get when I get home is predictable. They both jump up and down, run around the dining room table, bark and bounce around until they have received sufficient attention. They are absolutely ecstatic to see me. As soon as I go into the living room, they know it might be their time to play, so they retrieve toys or whatever, to attract my attention.

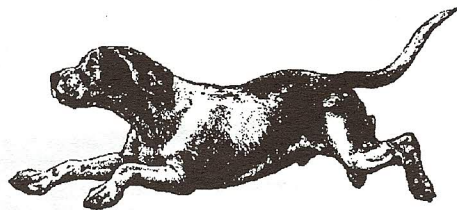
One day while practicing my auto-

harp in the living room, the "boys" were playing tug-of-war with one of Hap's old blankets. While watching them, a profound thought ran through my mind—"Who am I to my dogs?" After a little meditating about this, the thought struck me that I was the "Big'un." Within minutes, the following song, written from Reese's perspective, was done.

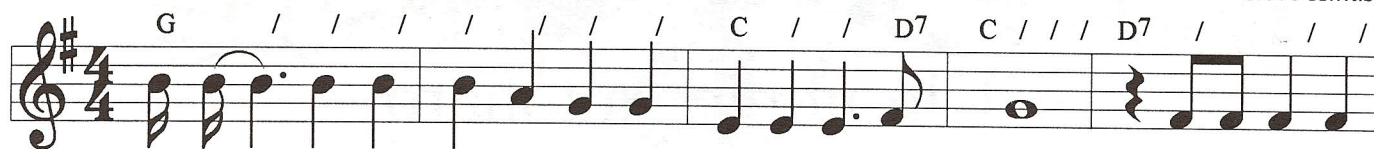
This song has brought smiles as well as tears to people when they think of their pets. On a canoe trip I guided this summer, the guests so enjoyed hearing and singing this song and talking about their dogs, that they decided to have a party a few weeks after getting off the river for the dogs. A friend of mine, the proprietor of First Frets Guitars in Parker, Colorado, heard the song a few days after having to put down their pet Rottweiler. The tears that came after hearing it were cathartic.

It has been an absolute pleasure to share this song and to share the stories and feelings it evokes in the Big'un's who hear it. ❖

The Big'un's Home!



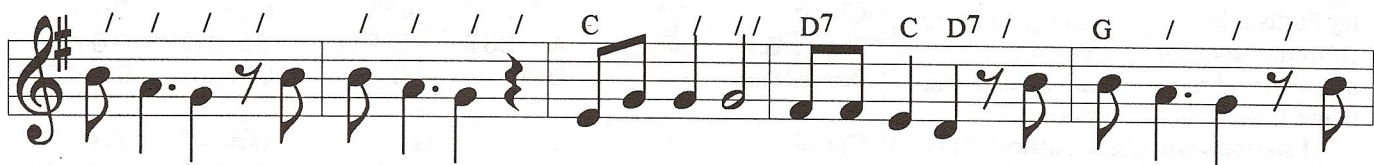
Steve Hinds



1. Come on, won't you play with me and take me for a run? I've been wait - in'
I get so all ex - ci - ted when I hear your car drive up! May - hap the



all day long, I'm read - y for some fun!
Big-'un's home to spend time with his pup - to spend time with his pup! The



Big -'un's home! The Big -'un's home! May-be a ride, may-be a bone! The Big-'un's home! The



Big-'un's home! Life couldn't be bet - ter than this - life couldn't be bet - ter than this!

2. We'll all run 'round the livin' room, playin' games of tag;
Barkin' at the windows, 'n' tuggin' on a rag.
Love it when you wrestle, with us both upon the floor;
Y' always seem to be there, a'comin' back for more
- a'comin' back for more!
3. The happiest time in your pup's life is when you're gettin' home.
Spendin' time together, when you're all alone.
Goin' for those long, long walks, ridin' in the car,
Mayhap he's got his keys and he's headed for the door
- and he's headed for the door!

Chorus:



*This song is meant to be sung
with the unbridled enthusiasm
of a happy dog. The chords shown
are for accompaniment only.*

Chorus:

4. Head hung out the window, tongue flappin' in the wind;
Pretty hard to see who is whose best friend.
The time we spend together just couldn't be replaced,
They tell you every day when they're lookin' in your face
- when they're lookin' in your face.

Chorus:

Deciphering the

Awesome

Ultratonic Autoharp

by Lucille Reilly

Now that I'm "retired" from competition (until the next century, anyway), I can afford the time to explore some areas of autoharp playing which have intrigued me for a while. One area is the late Marty Schuman's "Ultratonic" chording system. His playing continues to captivate me since I first heard him play *Ragtime Annie* at the Walnut Valley Festival in 1991. When my autoharp collection suddenly increased in 1995, a 21-chord chromatic 'harp became free to use for ultratonic purposes.

I started with Marty's article, "The Improved Ultratonic Chord System with Integrated Floating Petntatonics" (*AQ*, July 1994; what a gift he gave us to share its details!). Most of the single chord-bar tones are spelled out there, but some more translation is necessary. So allow me, just in case you want to try this and are still scratching your head!

First the key. I picked B \flat major instead of D for two reasons. First, B \flat was a nice addition to the other diatonic keys I have: A, B, C, D, E, F, and G!

The second reason was based on a trick Bob Lewis showed a few of us. He held his 1992 Mountain Laurel prize autoharp up in front of his face and sang each tone of the chromatic scale into the sound hole. He felt the 'harp vibrate in his hands the strongest on the tone E. This tone is different for every 'harp, even those built by the same luthier and cut from the same tree. My to-be-converted 'harp happened to vibrate the most on B \flat .

In the chart below I rewrote the chord names in the on-the-'harp order Marty put them in, plus some other informa-

tion. The chord names (in **boldface** type), while odd, give all the clues to spell each chord in the next row.

Tuning the new scale was easy with an electronic tuner, as the letter names on the autoharp for the chro-

Chord	G+9	G6	D6	D6+9	"C"6+9-1
Chord spelling	G B D A	G B D E	D F# A B	D F# A B E	E G A D
Damped tones	C# E F#	A C# F#	E G C#	G C#	F# B C#
Chord	D+9	A9	A6+9	G6+9	Dsus4
Chord spelling	D F# A E	A C# E G B	A C# E F# B	G B D E A	D G A
Damped tones	G B	D F#	D G	C# F	E F# B C#
Chord	D7	A7	G7	F#sus47	Em6
Chord spelling	D F# A C#	A C# E G	G B D F#	F# B C# E	E G B C#
Damped tones	E G B	B D F#	A C# E	G A D	F# A D

Row three shows all the scale tones which *do not* appear in the chord spelling. These tones are "felted out" on the chord bars. From here, I transposed the damped tones to letter names and chord names in B \flat major.

Tuning the strings. I referred to my three diatonic autoharps and George Foss' book, "Going Diatonic," to find out how much range the tuning should span. From everything, my tuning came out like this versus the original chromatic tuning:

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

Some strings from the 'harp's original tuning remain unchanged, while the rest are close.

matic tuning would become obsolete. I didn't worry about a sweet or just or other kind of tuning because the autoharp would take time to settle into its new string tension.

For the precise placement of felt on each chord bar, I made a schematic of the strings showing the new letter names. I then taped the schematic just above the chord bar cover, removed the cover, and felted the bars.

Once the 'harp was back together, I began pushing buttons and strumming without peeking at Marty's article for his "answers." I wanted to hear the chords for myself in hopes of learning chord button combinations faster.

I found that some chords could be produced with up to four different pairings of buttons! ("What was I getting myself into? And why was there so much repetition?") As I hunted further, I kept wondering: "Why press two or three

buttons to get standard chords when I can get them by depressing one button? With room for 21 chord bars on the 'harp, maybe I should rethink the chords and so refelt the bars to one familiar chord per bar? Is this ultratonic setup worth the trouble?" This, of course, made me wonder all the more how Marty came up with this system.

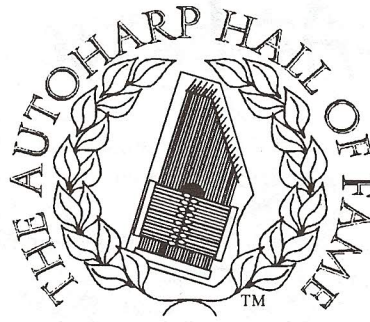
After three days of buttoning and strumming, basking in resonance, and wondering about the meaning of life and music, I overcame my fears (Who, me? Yes!) and decided to clunk through a tune. (One expects considerably more mistakes along the path of learning tunes on this autoharp than would occur on one-chord-per-bar 'harps!)

O Susanna gnawed at my mind as a good first tune. And what a surprise it gave! It became a choir whose alto and tenor voices moved *inside* the chords to "bend" the harmony of straight I, IV, and V, all by depressing *single* chord bars! For the first time in my life, I could play cocktail music and the kind of *piano* playing I could never get the hang of!

But the funniest part was the reactions of my musician friends. As they listened in awe to my limited repertoire of three tunes learned in as many days, they said, "Was that a major-seventh chord?... There was a minor-sixth... Yes, that was a major-seventh!... What in the world was *that*?"

Can I tell you something? I've had all the same music theory training as these people and *I don't care* what the names of the chords are! (It's actually dangerous to think too hard about what chords one plays on this 'harp!) I play it first by finding the tones in the melody, then by the supporting tone clusters that go with each melody note at that point in the tune. The result: I've never heard an autoharp jingle, shimmer, or laugh so much! Everyone who owns a spare 'harp should make it into an "ultraharp!"

I look forward to performing on my ultraharp on stage at the Mountain Laurel Gathering in '96, and expect that an informal demonstration will ensue at some point during the week. I would also enjoy hearing from other autoharpists currently making the ultratonic leap and hope they will bring their ultraharps to the Gathering! ❖



THE AUTOHARP
HALL OF FAME
MEMBERS
Maybelle Addington Carter
John Kilby Snow
Sara Dougherty Carter
Bryan Benson Bowers
Ernest Van "Pop" Stoneman
Mike Seeger
Meg Peterson
Marty Schuman

1996 NOMINATION FORM

Nominations for the 1996 inductees into The Autoharp Hall of Fame will be accepted by Limberjack Productions from September 1, 1995 until May 1, 1996. Nominees should have had a significant, long-standing, positive impact on the autoharp community. Any individual wishing to submit nominations may do so by completing this form. Copies of this form are permissible. Names may be submitted for one posthumous and one contemporary nomination. Posthumous honorees must have been deceased for three years to be eligible.

The honorees will be selected by a panel composed of knowledgeable autoharp musicians and enthusiasts, who are

proficient in autoharp history. *Envelopes must contain nominations only*, and should be addressed to: **The Autoharp Hall of Fame**, PO Box A, Newport PA, 17074. These envelopes shall be forwarded, unopened, to the panel. Limberjack Productions shall be informed of the decision of the panel by the third week of May, 1996. The honorees shall be installed into the Hall of Fame at the 1996 Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering, and announced in the Summer 1996 issue of *Autoharp Quarterly*. **When describing a nominee's contributions, specify the significance of those contributions, and the nominee's leadership role in the autoharp community.**

POSTHUMOUS NOMINEE

Name of nominee: _____

Use a separate piece of paper for the required description of achievement, contributions, and/or leadership in the autoharp community.

CONTEMPORARY NOMINEE

Name of nominee: _____

Use a separate piece of paper for the required description of achievement, contributions, and/or leadership in the autoharp community.

Name, address, telephone number of person submitting nomination:

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

I am an AQ subscriber.

I am not an AQ subscriber.
I received my ballot from:

NAME _____

IMPORTANT

All parts of this Nomination Form, including description of achievement, contributions, and/or leadership in the autoharp community, must be completed to validate the nomination.

Round the Mountain, and Wildwood Flower.

The intermediate class covered lots of techniques including rounds, stops, wawas, grace notes, open chording, stop and scratch (not your head), and patting.

I can't say enough good things about the Stringalong Weekend. I also took a class on making a bodrahn (completed during the weekend), and a shape note singing class with Molly Andrews. A good time was had by all.



Concerts at Living History Farms

Place: Urbandale, IA

Reporting: Dora Miller

Newton, IA

In December some members of the Happy Hearts Autoharp Club met at Living History Farms for the Farms' Victorian Christmas Celebration. Several members of the club were performing at the Church of the Land that afternoon. There were tours of the 1875 Walnut Hills Village with craft people from that area. There were also rides in the horse drawn wagons, and a taffy pull and games for the children.

At one o'clock, Homespun Harmony gave a wonderful concert in the church. Six of the seven members are club members. All seven play autoharp, and most of the group also play dulcimers. They started their concert with *Christmas Time Is Coming*. Chuck Hornback is the emcee for the group, and gave a very interesting narration about the way of life in the 1870s, which was interspersed with Christmas music. The dulcimer was featured in a few carols, and then Ron Ogden played the autoharp, and his wife Kay played the hammered dulcimer on *Beautiful Star of Bethlehem*. Jerry McGinness and Bernice Herman sang *Old Toy Trains*. The group finished its concert with several well-known carols.

At two o'clock, the Smoky Mountain Musicians from Urbandale gave a concert. This is a group of seven friends who play the recorder, autoharp (Judy Ruch), hammered dulcimer, and Celtic harp, among other instruments. The group enjoys playing classical music and Irish tunes. We were hoping to hear the group playing while we were in the basement eating our lunch of old fashioned potato soup and chili, but with the

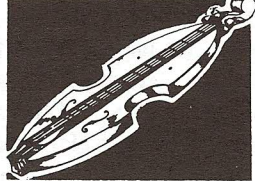
chatter and laughter, we didn't hear much of their program. I do have their tapes though, and enjoy their music.

At three o'clock, Pat Walke and Mike Mumm from Preston, Iowa gave their concert. These two, known as Pat and Mike, have presented several workshops for the club over the years. Pat is one of those talented people who can play many different instruments. The autoharps were featured in duets on *Oh Come Little Children* and *O Tannenbaum*. Pat sang both songs in German. The children were delighted when Pat

played the limberjack horse. They came to the bottom steps, watching the dancing wooden horse with fascination, and then stayed there for the rest of the program.

It was a wonderful afternoon with great music and friends. Several of us went to the Machine Shed Restaurant for supper and enjoyed more of Homespun Harmony's music. They play at that restaurant the first and third Saturdays of the month from 4 until 9 PM.





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THE WORLD ACCORDING TO HARP

by Dorothy Wagner

The first musical instrument in history was Noah's Harpk; diatonic, of course. The Harpk that Noah designed – the Black Flat-top Harp – became the standard instrument for endless generations between biblical and modern times. It's been suggested, in fact, that the color of his harp was the basis for calling much of this period the "Dark Ages."

The autoharp has a long and illustrious history around the world, but especially in France. Who can forget the great musical heroine, Joan of Harp? Or the diminutive, but powerful, Napoleon Bonaharp? (Even today, one hears of schizophrenics assuming the identity of Napoleon Bonaharp; all, of course, are harpless lunatics) – or that monument to music majesty known as the Harp de Triomphe? Great Britain has less to show for itself although the Queen continues to claim sovereignty over the Harp of Gibraltar.

In America, however, the harp has reached its greatest audience. One is reminded of the first lady of the nineteenth century stage, Miss Sarah Bernharp, who began a great tradition of harp on stage and screen. Few motion picture starlets were lovelier than Jean Harplow, and no leading man surpassed the debonair heroes played by Harp Gable. June Lockharp appeared in supporting roles, and Paulette Godharp starred almost as often. Who can forget Spencer Tracy's leading lady, Katherine Harpurn? Or the mild-mannered Jimmy Stewharp who won an Oscar for his performance in a film about a big, white rabbit named "Harpy?" Marilyn Monroe was celebrated for her role in "Some Like It Harp." (One is reminded that the heroine of the most famous movie of all

times was Scarlet O'Harpa; and the star of the greatest cult classic of all times was Humphrey Bogharp.) Cowboy sagas also had their musical heroes; the first television cowboy, Harpalong Cassidy, and the star of "Gunsmoke," James Harpness. Many film classics have featured the autoharp, ranging from Fritz Lang's 30s classic, "Met-harpolis" to the contemporary "Raiders of the Last Harp."

Many pieces of music have been written for the autoharp – in semiclassical, Gershwin's *Harpody in Blue*, in gospel, *Harp of Ages*, and in pop music, there's *Deep In the Harp of Texas*, *My Harp Belongs to Daddy*, and *Zing Went the Strings of My Harp*. Performing such songs are people such as Leon Harpbone, Harplo Guthrie, and Chicago's Harp Thieme.

Many television programs reflect a growing interest in the autoharp, beginning with the popular country music program, "Hee-Harp." On the soaps, a particularly interesting episode of a popular soap opera featured an account of open-harp surgery which took place on "General Harpspital." (Or was that "The Edge of Harpness?")

American literature, it is said, began with Harp Twain's "Harpleberry Finn." One classic story is concerned with the Old Black Harps which flourished years ago, and their use in Satanic rituals; it's entitled "The Harp of Darkness." The modern condition, circa 1950, was reflected admirably in Tennessee William's "Streetharp Named Desire." Popular fiction by Agatha Christie is known for two great creations; Miss Harple and Harpcules Poirot. Yet much remains to be written; the world should have a great work on

the life of Mata Harpi. Works on the autoharp need not be serious, of course. This is exemplified by the once popular dance, the Bunny Harp; the children's game, Harpscotch; and by the nursery rhyme, "Harp, Harp, the Dogs Do Bark."

Children have always loved the autoharp – served on a stick, it's a Harpsickle. Adults are also fond of these confections and overindulgence results in harpurn.

There are excesses, of course; people falling so harplessly in love with the instrument that they are prohibited from going into some public establishments. Some taverns for example, have been known to exclude such people – that is, they have been known to be bar harpers. The result is to end the practice of musicians moving from tavern to tavern during the course of the evening, known as bar harping. Only one town, located in Maine, has fully protected the rights of these musicians. This, of course, is Bar Harpbor. As someone once put it, barring harpers and bar harping is barred in the town of Bar Harpbor. The person who put it this way was attacked and injured by an unsympathetic mob shortly after making that convoluted statement. But, he was eventually awarded the Purple Harp, and is now working in a drive-in restaurant as a carharp. His girlfriend is working in a nearby hotel as a bellharp.

So, 'harpers, take harp. And if you look up at the moon and see someone playing a certain 37-stringed instrument, remember the song being played may well be *Shine On Harpest Moon*.

All of which makes graphic the old image of "Harp springs eternal in the human breast." ❖

Kidstock

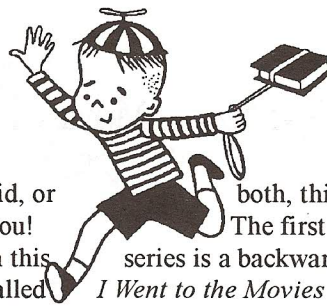
by Bonnie Phipps

Yo, kids! Please, climb down from those speakers! And don't eat the brown ice cream. It's no good. I repeat, "The brown ice cream..."

Oh, hi! Yes, this is Kidstock – a festival of songs to sing with children. So if you like to sing with kids or you

are a kid, or is for you!

The first song in this series is a backwards song called *I Went to the Movies Tomorrow*. Kids love backward songs because it lets them get in touch with their stupid, and getting in touch with



your stupid is good therapy for everyone.

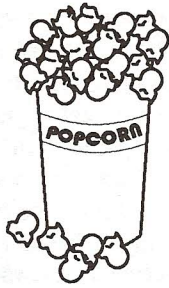
Here are two musical versions of this song. The first is a folk version in 3/4 time which is on my "Singing with Young Children" songbook/tape. For the second version, I changed it into a blues song. You can hear that version on my "Dinosaur Choir" recording. Pretty sneaky way to plug my recordings, huh? Oh, where can you get them? Well, just see the note at the bottom of this article! Enjoy –

I WENT TO THE MOVIES TOMORROW

(Folk Style)

Play with a simple 3/4 strum

Musical score for "I Went to the Movies Tomorrow" (Folk Style), 3/4 time, G major. The score consists of six staves of music with lyrics underneath. Chord symbols (D, A, A7, G) are placed above the notes. The lyrics are: "I went to the movies tomorrow I took a front seat at the back. I fell from the floor to the balcony, and broke a front bone in my back. I said to the lady behind me, 'I can not see over your hat.'" I called for a taxi and walked home, and that's why I never came back.



I WENT TO THE MOVIES TOMORROW

(Blues Style)

D C D C D (play blank strings until next chord) D C D C D (blank strings) D C D C

3	3	3	3
I			
T A B	ch-ch ch ch-ch ch ch-ch ch ○(s) ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ○ ○ ○		ch-ch ch ch-ch ch ch-ch ch ○(s) ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ○ ○ ○

D (blank strings)	F G D (blank strings)	D G F Em
I		
went to the mov-ies to - mor- row took a front seat at the back.		
T A B	ch-ch ch ch-ch ch ch ch ○(s) ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ — ↑ ↑ (s) ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ○ ○ ○ ○	

D D7 G B \flat D	A7 D C D C
I	
fell from the floor to the bal - co - ny and I broke a front bone in my back.	
T A B	↓ — ↓ — ↓ — ↑ — ↑ (s) — — — — — ↑ — ○ ○ ○ ○

D (blank strings)	F	G	D	D	G	F	Em
said to the la-dy be - hind me				I can - not see o - ver your hat! I			
ch - ch ch ch				ch ch			

D	D7	G	B \flat	D	D7
called for a tax-i and		walked home and		that's why I ne - ver	
came		back.			

Arrangements © 1996 by Bonnie Phipps

ABOUT THE TAB:

The folk version is a simple 3/4 strum. I put tab for the blues version because it is fairly complicated. It is at an intermediate/advanced level. During part of the song I have you play "blank strings." Hold three or more chord bars down and strum the strings to get a percussion effect. Listed below are the explanations of my tab:

- (S) Stop the sound of the chord right away by pressing about three chord bars down at the same time so the sound is stopped at the upbeat.
- Signifies the beat, and means there is no action to be taken with the right hand. For example, \uparrow — — — means that you would strum the chord and then let it ring for three more beats.
- \downarrow — \downarrow \uparrow \uparrow Shows that the strum is on the upbeat. When a note is to be played on the upbeat, it looks like this — \circ . And — \downarrow \uparrow \uparrow means that the strum begins on the "&" of the second beat and strums the down beat of the third and fourth beats in that measure.
- \circ — \circ — \circ This connects three notes in one beat creating triplets. All the beats are connected together by lines.
- \uparrow \downarrow A back and forth strum that occurs in one beat. Your thumb strums toward the high strings on the down beat, then your finger(s) strums toward the low strings on the upbeat.
- \uparrow (s) \uparrow (s) — This measure occurs in the arrangement. On the first beat, strum and then stop the sound. Strum again on the following "&" of the second beat, then strum on the down beat of the third beat and stop its sound. Keep the strings silent for the fourth beat.
- \downarrow \uparrow Pinch with thumb and finger

P.S. You can get a cassette lesson of me playing the autoharp tab on the blues version by sending \$6.00 to PO Box 9656, Denver Colorado, 80209. You can also order "Monster's Holiday" and "Dinosaur Choir" cassettes, which are \$10.00 each and "Singing With Young Children" book and tape for \$15.00.

Critics' Choice

If you have an autoharp-related book, or video, or a recording which is predominantly autoharp that you would like to have considered for review, please send it to Autoharp Quarterly. Submissions cannot be returned.



**Mike's
Choice**
Mike Herr

Colorado Folk Ensemble
Autoharp: Bonnie Phipps
PO Box 9656
Denver, CO 80209

Merrily Kissed the Quaker/Denny Delany
• *Banks of the Ohio* • *Jaws* • *Horse Thief/Kid on the Mountain* • *The Butterfly* • *Gone Gonna Rise Again* • *Old Joe Clark/Yearling in the Canebreak* • *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies* • *Sweet Wyoming Home* • *Keri*

OK, now we're talkin'. This is the stuff, here. Forget about all the average-type adjectives and prepare to get out the excellent level hoopla. Take your run-of-the-mill tunes like *Old Joe Clark* and stretch them into territory never before entered with professional, individualistic musicians who let themselves infiltrate the mundane with the improvisational spirit of the back porch and – get my drift?

There's a lot of classical training and know-how within the group expertise which serves to provide a wonderful depth to the arrangements, the harmonies, the intros, and the like. Eric Levine is very deserving of virtuoso-level kudos for his violin playing – and I do not use the “v” word lightly (virtuoso, not violin). (Come to think of it, I hear him playing a violin, not a fiddle, so that “v” word applies as well.) His talents are especially highlighted on *Yearling on the Canebreak*, although there are many other instances of call-and-answer, counter-melody, duets, and beautiful harmonies within and between the other instruments.

No less of an auditory delight is the cello playing of Patricia Mullen, who provides a range of musical talent from the ominous “dehhh-deh” in the theme from *Jaws* to swooping melodies and harmonies in *Merrily Kissed the Quaker*

and *Banks of the Ohio*. Not to be outdone is Scott Bennett on guitar, who easily slides through several of the toughest melodies. He also pulls off a great rendition, solo, of Tchaikovsky's *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies*; his playing reminds me of the first time I heard Leo Kottke play – how many extra fingers does this guy have?

I knew you were wondering about the autoharp player on the tape. – What about her? Huh? Aaahh, the fun-loving, eccentric, demanding, and talented Bonnie Phipps. Happily, her single-note style is well-utilized within the arrangements of these selections, and she receives equal billing, playing time, and presence to everyone else. Her superclean, effortless thumb lead style gives you the impression that the autoharp belongs as much to this type of group endeavor as does the guitar or violin. Bonnie's strong, no-holds-barred voice is also used on multiple cuts, both as a solo voice, and in harmony. No trouble with tone or tentativeness here.

As a whole, the group does an excellent job of working up introductions, harmonies in which one instrument is used at a pitch based on the third note of the scale up from the melody note, and wonderful Baroque-style melody embellishments and counter-melodies. All the other categories of review – the technical aspect of sound reproduction, the mixing, the length of tunes, the variety of tunes, etc. – are just simply top quality. I was amazed to hear the slip-jig *The Butterfly*, (popular in the Irish world), converted into a modern jazz-era type rendition in the style and timing of Dave Brubeck's *Take Five*, in five-four time and all! Just another example of the inventiveness and talent of this group.

I think I've used up all the superlatives I know, without running to the thesaurus. They are all well-deserved, in my opinion, as the Ensemble has broken new territory and has pulled off one of the hardest things to do in the musical world – they stuck out their collective necks and are still able to crane

them around to see the new landscapes (soundscapes?) opening in front of them. Show us more of what you see (hear)!



Monsters' Holiday
Autoharp: Bonnie Phipps
PO Box 9656
Denver, CO 80209

Monsters on Vacation • *Let's Go Swimmin'* • *Children Under the Bed* • *Madalina Catalina* • *Welcome to My Farm* • *The Ballad of Lucy Lum* • *I'm a Little Cookie* • *Iko Iko* • *The Three Foot Sandwich* • *A Chicken Ain't Nothin' But a Bird* • *Best Friends* • *Aardvark* • *Halloween Song* • *La Cucaracha* • *Dogs* • *Monsters' Holiday*

I hope Bonnie Phipps got a good night's sleep after putting the final tracks to bed on this tape – she deserved it! This work is a celebration of coordination, overdubbing, and cramming as many musician and tracks as possible into a cause celebre of monsterdom. I just don't know how she does it.

Bonnie sings all selections and leads a group of “little monsters” on several cuts – just coordinating them is cause for a lion's brew (Lowenbrau). She plays her special brand of autoharp on it, unfortunately on just four cuts and it's obvious that this tape was not meant to be an autoharp-centered offering. Although the mix brings out her leads in these four songs in as masterful a fashion as all the other instruments, for us 'harp lovers, there is not near enough of its presence to be able to say this is an autoharp tape. So, be forewarned – if you are looking forward to hearing *La Cucaracha* with all the wonderful instrumental stuff we heard Bonnie use at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Festival in July '95; it's just not here.

Instead, what Bonnie does bring to us is her wit, her incredible ability to march musicians on and off stage, so

to speak, her humor, and her high-energy enthusiasm and love of kids and life. There are no less than 23 different players on this tape using everything from washboard to marimba, from saxaphones to animal sounds. Each selection is a choreographer's nightmare of arrangement with a very professional job of mixing, making it all sound so smooth and simple. I can just see Bonnie begging the recording engineer to "play it just one more time with the horns just a little louder." Well, it was worth the effort, Bonnie, as this is a masterful job.



**Bob's
Choice**

Bob Woodcock

Over the Edge
Mountain Fling
Autoharp: John Hollandsworth
700 Tower Road
Christiansburg, VA 24073

The Baltimore Fire • Yellow Rose of Texas • Snow Deer • Sugar Hill/Rock the Cradle Joe • San Antonio Rose • The Blue Bird Song • St. James Infirmary • Ragtime Annie • When the Roses Bloom in Dixieland • Alabama Jubilee • Just Because Medley • Anchored in Love

Sometimes things just come out right and sometimes they don't. But, if you take all the best ingredients, put them together in the right way, at the right time, then let them work together at their own speed, chances are that you will have something great. And guess what, friends? This tape is great. To quote my eight year-old daughter, "I luuuve it!"

Ah, what ingredients? Somehow most of the songs on this tape are on my list of all-time favorites. In addition, it includes two Carter Family and two Charley Poole tunes. To sweeten the pot, Kathie includes words to selections commonly thought of as fiddle tunes. And to ice the cake, she finds an obscure verse to an old favorite and a novel addition to an old medley. The only way left to hurt this recording would be sloppy engineering or bad musicianship, but this tape contains the opposite. The playing is brilliant, and the

The Sounds of the Carter Family

Artist	Collection Title	Cassette	Album	CD
Original Carter Family	A Sacred Collection	N/A	\$7	N/A
Original Carter Family	Anchored in Love (1927-28)	\$12	N/A	\$15
Original Carter Family	Carter Family (Vol. 4)	\$7	\$7	N/A
Original Carter Family	Clinch Mountain Treasures	\$7	N/A	\$15
Original Carter Family	Country Music Hall of Fame Series	\$10	N/A	\$15
Original Carter Family	Diamonds in the Rough	\$7	N/A	\$15
Original Carter Family	Early Classics	N/A	\$7	N/A
Original Carter Family	From 1936 Radio Transcripts	\$7	\$7	N/A
Original Carter Family	Gold Watch and Chain	N/A	\$7	N/A
Original Carter Family	Last Recording (Vol. 1)	\$7	N/A	N/A
Original Carter Family	My Clinch Mountain Home (1928-29)	\$12	N/A	\$15
Original Carter Family	Original and Great Carter Family	\$7	N/A	N/A
Original Carter Family	Original Carter Family in Texas (Vol. 1)	\$7	\$7	N/A
Original Carter Family	Original Carter Family in Texas (Vol. 2)	\$7	\$7	N/A
Original Carter Family	Original Carter Family in Texas (Vol. 3)	\$7	\$7	N/A
Original Carter Family	Original Carter Family in Texas (Vol. 5)	\$7	\$7	N/A
Original Carter Family	Original Carter Family in Texas (Vol. 6)	\$7	\$7	N/A
Original Carter Family	The Carter Family in Texas (Vol. 7)	\$7	\$7	N/A
Original Carter Family	Their Last Recording	\$9	\$7	N/A
A.P., Sara, Janette & Joe	Their Last Recordings (Vol. 2)	\$7	N/A	N/A
A.P., Sara, Janette & Joe	A.P. Carter's Clinch Mountain Ballads	\$9	\$7	N/A
Sara & Maybelle Carter	Reunion	N/A	N/A	\$18
Janette Carter	Bouquet of Dandelions	\$7	N/A	N/A
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Anita Carter	Yesterday	\$13	N/A	\$15

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production values are first-rate. I can find some faults with this tape, but they are minimal and will be covered later.

Let's introduce the cast. John Holandsworth is the name that will leap out to most of you. I think of John's 'harp playing as "99 and 44/100% pure." That is, it is pure, clean, accurate, to my thinking, definitive of good autoharp. He plays the 'harp as effortlessly and as smoothly as the best fiddlers or guitar pickers master their instruments. I guess he has captured as many championships as any 'harper around. John's autoharp is the bedrock of this record-

ing, though he is not the only star in this musical constellation. His breaks are full of energy and life, with some interesting musical twists, as in *Alabama Jubilee*.

If you know John's name, then you probably know his wife, Kathie. She is a jewel in the traditional music community. She is formally trained in music (OK, I'll say it - "paper trained"), plays a variety of instruments (bass, hammered dulcimer, piano) by ear, and is constantly growing and improving her music. She knows the history behind the songs and is frequently able to dig up new verses, or variations on old ones. In *St. James Infirmary*, she sings "...and put bunches of lilies on my coffin, so they won't smell me as we go along." In a past review, I likened Kathie's voice to a mountain stream, which earned her the appellation, "babbling brook." Since then, her voice has gotten better to my ear; more confident and assured (gosh, I sure hope they don't start calling her "roaring river" ...).

Ed Ogle is one of the few harmonica players who can really play fiddle tunes on the mouth harp. Listen to what he does with *Ragtime Annie* and *Rock the Cradle Joe*. And speaking about voices getting better, Eddie's voice has taken great leaps forward; he has become a true "crooner."

And then there's Jim Lloyd. You may know him as the guitar player for the Konnarock Kritters. Jimmie's playing on this tape is nothing short of brilliant. His flat-picking guitar sounds to me like an early Chet Atkins. His work on *Alabama Jubilee* just bowls me over. His clawhammer banjo on the old Brown Family classic, *The Blue Bird Song* is perfect.

A few musical high spots should be pointed out. *Snow Deer*, a Kerry Mills (*Whistling Rufus*) classic is usually thought of as a fiddle tune. Eddie dug up the words. Likewise with the old favorite *Alabama Jubilee* with Kathie taking the vocal this time. *Just Because Medley* is a combination of tunes with a similar chord structure: *Bill Bailey*, *Just Because*, and others. Roger Sprung usually adds *The Chair Song*. I have been known to add *Meeting in the Air*. I thought we had the bases covered until I heard Kathie put in Charley Poole's *My Wife Went Away and Left Me*. Great!

So okay, critic, let's get critical. It's difficult with this tape. I can't think of any sins of commission here, only omission. I hope to hear some of Kathie's

hammered dulcimer on a future tape. I wish the liner notes were a little more expansive. And finally, Barbara, my fiddle fiancé, grumped that they play seven, count 'em, seven - fiddle tunes, and not once, *not once*, do they mention the word "fiddle" on the J-card. "Dance tunes," indeed!



*Judie's
Choice*
Judie Pagter

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Autoharp: David Kilby
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This is a very nice tape for those who enjoy gospel music as I do. I found it very relaxing and know that the boys put their heart and soul into it. You'll enjoy singing along with this tape. It is all instrumental with some very nice guitar work backing it up.

What a Friend We Have in Jesus also has a good mandolin break in it along with the 'harp and guitar. The acoustic bass is played in most of the songs.

I enjoyed the medley of the three tunes, my favorite hymns - *Washed in the Blood, Power in the Blood, and I Shall Not Be Moved*. The key changes alternately on this medley, which is very nice.

Sometimes I would have liked to hear more of the other instruments - this is basically a 'harp tape. But overall, this is a tape you will enjoy listening to. The music is nicely arranged, and they do rather fine instrumentation work.



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*Autoharp
Quarterly*

PO Box A, Newport, PA 17074

Eccentric Luthier Builds Erratic Mountain Laurel 'Harp

by Ray Sipes

Having designed several hundred instruments, I admit I approached the idea of using someone else's plans with a poor attitude. I expected to make changes at whim, and did. Not all of them worked out!

Right away, I decided to use a very pretty 1/8" door skin plywood for the top and back, instead of the 1/4" marine ply called for in the Mountain Laurel 'Harp plans. I've used door skin on many instruments before, with good results. For instance, a Ford truck hubcap banjo just doesn't sound right without it.

Here, it was a bad decision – it just wasn't stiff enough. When I tightened the strings, it started to buckle across the sound hole. From then on, I had to work with the strings loosened, but still in place. This was the first set of expensive autoharp strings I had bought, and I didn't want to risk ruining them by removing and re-installing them.

Fortunately, I've made almost every possible mistake in 30 years, and I have great experience in fixing them. I added two short braces under the buckled area, and covered the wrinkles with decorative overlays. So far, so good. Gluing over previously-lacquered areas isn't bad – you just scrape the old finish off first in the glue area.

Next, I added another complete frame onto the back, overlapping the joints in the first frame. Then, I glued on another door skin back, with four small sound holes in it. This autoharp is now so strong you could lift a bridge with it. It is also very thick and heavy, but I usually play sitting down, anyway.

So, what I have is a giant sandwich, with the top, old frame, old back, new frame, and new back. Strangely enough, it doesn't look bad at all, and it sounds

lovely. I used black walnut for the frame, chord bars, end caps, bridges, and overlays – partly because it's so beautiful, but mostly because I have a lot of it.

I did decide to go all-out with small materials, though. I bought real 'harp springs and felt, where I had previously used ball point pen springs and foam plastic. By the way, the plastic works pretty well on treble strings, but not at all on heavy wrapped ones.

I named the strings and bars with stick-ons from the sheets that come with VCR tapes, achieving the "fairly neat ransom note" effect. Based on my halfway-vast playing experience, I decided to make this 'harp an F-C-G diatonic, raising all D# strings 1/2 step, and lowering all C# and G# strings 1/2 step. I couldn't think of any way to mangle the chord bars, so they are made pretty much as written. I did use slightly thinner wood for the end caps, and shaped the ends with a step vs. the slant. Then I mounted them with short screws down through the steps. I also covered the end cap bottoms with cardboard, so I can lift the entire bar arrangement off the autoharp without losing any springs.

Oddly, although this autoharp has a second back, it still sounds even better held on my knee – away from my body. Maybe if I add a third back...

All in all, I'm very happy with my Mountain Laurel 'Harp. I should make another one now strictly by the plans – but I probably won't. I've still got most of an old spruce boat mast that I've used to make many guitar and dulcimer tops, and I'll probably use that for the next top and back. I don't know about thickness or bracing pattern, though. But I guess that's a few more mistakes to make – and fix. ❖



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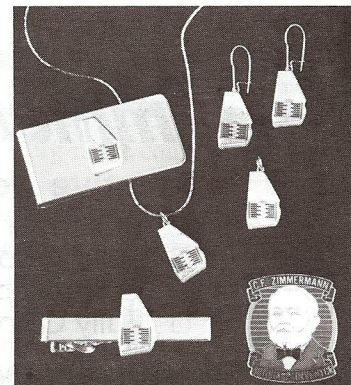
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Postscripts

FROM HARPLAND

Do you have some news to share with the autoharp community? Send it to:

Mary Umbarger
1360 Tabor Road
Harmony, NC 28634

P.S.

Loren and Marie Wells are moving to a new home. They have planned this for a long time, and are excited about it. We wish them an extended and forever happy housewarming.

P.S.

Cathy Britell had a full, adventurous summer from a visit to Siberia with her autoharp (whom she calls "Stalwart"), to a kayaking expedition in Seattle. Her husband, Jon, had open heart surgery and is recovering very nicely, for which we are all thankful.

P.S.

Info from a clipping from the Joplin

Missouri Globe tells of one **Rafael Rodriquez**, watermelon seed-spitting world champion entertaining at the Baptist Regional Health Center. Hey, Rafael, come on out to the Mountain Laurel Gathering and defend your title with the seed-spitting champs there!

P.S.

We were saddened to learn that our lives won't be brightened by the smiling face and positive, friendly personality of **Tag Duprey** in the years to come. Tag succumbed to cancer on October 18, 1995. She was a joy to know. Our heartfelt condolences to her husband, Bill.

P.S.

Dora Miller reports that her husband, Brice, who has been having a series of surgeries, finally may be seeing the light at the end of his "healing" tunnel. This is good news for everyone who knows Dora and her family.

P.S.

Adam Miller reports that **Carey Dubbert** and **Bryan Bowers** performed *Dundee's Hornpipe* as an outstanding duet on autoharp and mandocello during Bryan's December concert in Berkeley.

P.S.

Mary Ann Johnston is surprising her doctors by mending from her hip surgery much faster than they could have hoped! They just didn't know Mary Ann! They're now talking about the second operation – soon.

P.S.

Glenna Anderson sends great news! After a couple of years with her struggle with cancer, her latest report is *good!* I don't think she has missed a single festival during all that time, and she has won ribbons all over her area. Hurrah for Glenna!

P.S.

Patsy Stoneman charms the birds out of the trees, and wild dogs out of the bush. After noticing a small, starving, dog living in a stand of trees a few miles from her home, she started a relentless campaign for its trust. Four weeks later, "Foxy Lady" now lives on Patsy's front porch, and everyone – especially Patsy and "Foxy Lady" – is happy.

P.S.

Speaking of animals, The Front Porch Strings 5th Annual Ground Hog Jam took place the Saturday before Ground Hog's Day at the Union Grove Community Center. What a jam! It is a covered dish affair. Open mike is available for groups or individuals to play a couple of numbers and then lead the rest in a jamming tune. This jam grows each year. We start getting inquiries in September from folks already looking forward to attending. Why don't you start this in your area? I'll be glad to tell you how we got it going here. It's easy, inexpensive, and fun.

P.S.

I visited the North Carolina State Fair this year. The competition there is different from most. You are allowed to play any type of music on any stringed instrument. You play three times on the day you attend. For those of us who are used to the "rules of competition" in other festivals it was confusing to have all that freedom! I won first prize in the instrumental category. Go, autoharp!

P.S.

A beautiful Christmas story comes from **Jo Brennan**. Her son, Rick, whom they had lost in the spring, loved to plan and construct an elaborate Christmas light scene around their home. Jo and her hus-

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band, George, were meeting this year's holiday time with great trepidation. What a great gift Rick's friends gave them with the surprise of displaying his lights and a memorial plaque which burned brightly during the Christmas season!

P.S.

The *Postal Record* featured **John Holandsworth** and his autoharps in an article entitled "Mountain Harpist." Although the article mentioned several of his competition accomplishments, John is quoted as saying "I don't do this for the acclaim I receive. The competition keeps me at my peak level of performance... I enjoy the fellowship of other musicians and everything we learn from each other." Right on, John!

P.S.

Mel Bay has just published a new book entitled "Autoharping the Gospels" (ISBN 0-7866-0496-4), written by **Carol Stober**. She is also under contract to write a book of Appalachian autoharp songs for that company, and is starting a book of cowboy songs for the autoharp to be published at a later time.

P.S.

Joe Riggs can hardly wait until spring. He's building an 18' wooden boat. He has all of the pieces ready, but needs a big dry yard to build it on. He and **Jim Snow** had a looong autoharp jam session over the holidays.

P.S.

There is one thing I've noticed in my few short years of belonging to the autoharp community. Many autoharpers are virtual heroes and have lots of "heart." All over this great land autoharp music, played by willing volunteers, lightens the hearts and souls of folks in nursing homes, hospitals, civic organizations, etc. A good example is **Lucille Reilly**. For the past 2½ years, she has regularly entertained at an adult day care center. Other examples are **Loren and Marie Wells**, and **Dorothy Wagner**, who have been actively entertaining at nursing homes, etc. for many years. My autoharp student, **Anne Crowe**, is learning to play for the distinct purpose of sharing her music with shut-ins.

I'd really like to know the many ways this is being done. Let me hear from you and we'll pass it on, inspiring other autoharpers to begin this musical sharing.

P.S.

We received a "last-minute" telephone call from Joyce Woods in Crestline Kansas concerning her dulcimer club, where autoharps are not only welcome, but in a goodly number at the meetings. Joyce and her husband, Lloyd, are go-getters in the Missouri-Kansas scene. Since it was too late to list this club in our present "Annual Club Directory," I'll list it here for those of you who might be from their area, and assure you that it will become a permanent fixture in our club listing:

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2nd Tuesday each month, 6:00 PM
High School, Joplin, MO

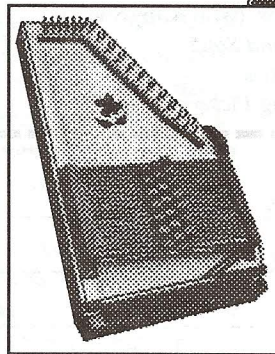
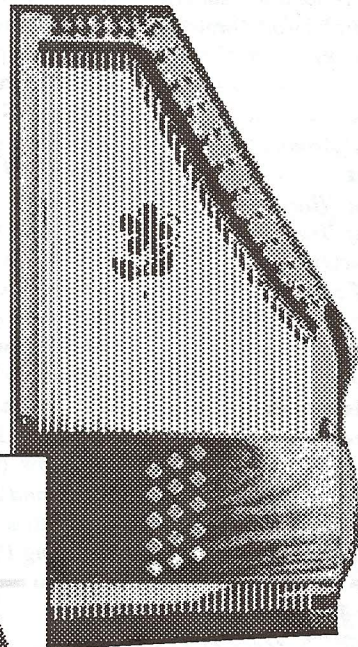
c/o Joyce and Lloyd Woods
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Crestline, KS 66728
316 389-2377 ❖

A Special P.S.

Due to the many sieges set upon our area of the country, we must apologize for the lateness of this issue. We sincerely ask you to forgive us for this inconvenience, and to pray with us that locusts aren't next on the agenda.

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