

# Autoharp Quarterly®

The International  
Magazine  
Dedicated to the  
Autoharp Enthusiast

Spring, 1996  
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(A History of the  
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featuring  
Jack Bourdess



Mike Fenton

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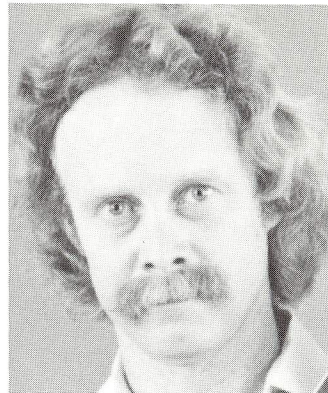
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SPRING 1996



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**Autoharp Quarterly.**  
The International Magazine Dedicated to the Autoharp Enthusiast

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# To And From / The Editors

Mary Lou  Wan

## Dear Readers:

We have finally entered the age of the Internet! Our e-mail address is: <autoharp@pa.net>. The man who taught Mary Lou how to use this twisted contrivance of modern science is recovering (finally) in a nearby rest home. At the same time, the poor soul also brought her a new modem and new fax software. Now, we're really in business! Well, not really, exactly. Mary Lou hasn't figured out how to use the fax portion of the software, so Ivan still dutifully takes all the faxes at his number (610 935-9062). Unfortunately, Ivan's wife hasn't learned the fax software at his place, so you have to make sure Ivan is there first. Oh well, sometimes progress is just a bit slower than we'd prefer.

This issue begins a multi-part article on the history of the autoharp in Germany. We've known since 1991 that the autoharp originally came from Germany, but until now, very little of the history on that side of the ocean had been revealed. We have a true friend in Mike Fenton for doing all the research on this fine article. Little by little, the complete history of the autoharp is still being uncovered.

Bob Taylor joins us this issue with an article on how to fix uneven bridge pins, a common problem with some 'harps. Bob is a fine autoharp luthier and a former employee of Oscar Schmidt, International. We look forward to future contributions from him.

And, speaking of the future, Will Smith is feverishly working on a series of articles covering the autoharp in Nashville, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Look for that coming soon.

Someone say "feverishly?" Everyone here is up to his eyeballs in details for the upcoming Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering. See page seven for a schedule of what's happening. We also just got the scoop on the home-cooked fare being offered by the Oliver Grange. Plan ahead with the menu in the AQ Postscripts (page 39).

Right now, it's hard to imagine the July temperatures when it snowed today (Easter) and several days following. But we know it's coming! Looking forward to seeing you in July.

## Dear Editors:

NO LOCUSTS - YET!

Please renew my subscription. I'm looking forward to the next AQ. Sorry to hear about the floods [and plagues] going on in your state.

I am really enjoying the Oscar Schmidt story. I own two 15-chord 'harps from about the 60s to 70s, a 21-chord OS Limited Edition, and a good, old Ukelin.

Stay warm and dry.

Barbara Guernsey

PLEASE FORGIVE HIM, JAN!

Wow! Am I in trouble. My wife has said she will wrap the G string of my string bass around my neck - if I don't renew her AQ right away. Enclosed is my check. Please send the Winter issue by celestial harp express ASAP - Strike a chord for my survival - soon!

With fear and respect,

Brian A Knight

ANOTHER CLOSET LUTHIER

I got such a kick out of the article in the Winter '96 AQ, "Eccentric Luthier Builds Erratic Mountain Laurel 'Harp." I reminds me so much of myself. I still fool around making 'harps, and every one I make is an experiment. Some turn out fairly well, and some don't. Some I can redo and fix up, and some I can't. But it's such fun to be in my small workshop alone. No one sees me, and there I design 'harps and install in them these big ideas I constantly keep getting.

Lou Stump

Keep it up, Lou! Without folks like you, we'd still be in the Stone Age - and horrors (!) without the Internet

(can you imagine that)!

Editors

YOU'RE WELCOME!

Just had to tell you how much 'Harps Plus enjoyed pages 55 and 56 from your songbook in the last issue. Every song can be used in our performances... We had fun teaching those old songs to our younger members!...

My only problem is that some of these tunes are pitched too high for sing-along situations. Do we have your permission to change keys?

Loren and Marie Wells

Of course you may, folks! That songbook is for you to enjoy. If a key is too squeaky, or not on your 'harp, just change it! No problem. - And enjoy.

Editors

UN Sung HEROS

I'm a new 'harper (love that sound!) and new subscriber. I've been working away to learn the instrument and trying to solve the mysteries of melody picking.

I'm thankful I live close to Cathy Britell. She spends untold hours promoting the 'harp and helping beginners like me; she gives lessons, advice, and opens her home for jams. Frankly, she deserves a medal!

I'm beginning to think all 'harpers are friendly, giving folk. I wrote to Lyman Taylor ordering a tape. I received the tape, a personal letter speaking to my questions, reprints, strings, and offers of more help if needed.

And AQ is so very helpful. With all this great help, I ought to progress!

Bob Weltzien

You ran into the best, Bob! They are both super people! And, you will find that autoharpers, as you said, are like that. They love the 'harp and are anxious to have others share in that appreciation.

Editors

PICKS, - AND

As an autoharper who backs up a hammered dulcimer player (my husband), I am often forced to get as much volume from my instrument as possible. Although frequently amplified, there are times when it isn't possible or desirable. I play a heavy thumb. We frequently play for long events (festivals, etc.) where we go on for hours. I've always had a problem with thumb picks. They tend to turn on my thumb. I can get them pretty tight, but eventually they twist and I end up playing with the side of my finger which (after hours of abuse), ends up being pretty painful to say the least.

I've used some sticky stuff designed to help "pickers" hold onto guitar picks, but it created other problems. Because the pick is then firmly anchored to my finger, it seems to "jar" my whole thumb and eventually, the upper joint gets sore. Also the sticky stuff usually gets on my keys which is horrid to remove.

A few weeks ago, I mislaid the sticky stuff and my husband improvised with some silicone clay-like material that is intended to be used as a "tacking" agent to mount posters etc. without marring the wall. It looks sort of like a used blob of chewing gum. It isn't really sticky, but it adheres to various surfaces, yet is removable. With a pea-sized piece mused inside my pick, it didn't twist. Not only that, but it provided a cushion, absorbing some of the "jarring" effect of the pick.

Has anyone else ever tried anything similar to cushion/adhere to a pick?

Sharon Skaryd

*Twisting thumb picks is not uncommon. Joe Riggs solves this problem with his thumb screw (See The Thumb Screw - a New Twist for Picks, AQ, Vol. VII, No. 3.) His approach could be considered radical and not for everyone, but we never know what will work for whom. Your solution seems as though it should work quite well, without going through the tortures of the damned.*

Editors

MORE PICKS

I would like to read more about picks, shapes, keeping them on, the

best materials, where to get them, how many to use, etc.

Jane Kuhlman

*Now you've opened a can of worms! Some of the material you ask about was covered in an article entitled, "Take Your Pick," AQ, Vol. VII, No. 3. A new line of picks is covered in the "I'll Buy That" column in this issue. Obviously, everyone has a favorite pick or picks. You should try as many different picks as you can to determine the best for you and your sound. See the letter just before yours for a unique way to keep the thumb pick where it belongs. As for as your other questions, we'll try to get the answers and have them for all our readers in a future article.*

Editors

MILK BY MOZART

A friend sent a bunch of interesting bits of information to us, amongst which was the following. Having just read "The Savage Breast" editorial, I thought you might enjoy it.

"A study released by a German agricultural federation and Purdue University concludes that cows respond well to the sound of Mozart, and show their appreciation by producing more milk. A Mozart melody in the manger resulted in 'substantially more milk,' said the Purdue experts who carried out the study for the WLV federation in the city of Münster. To test their theory, scientists pumped up the volume in the barn with a blast of heavy metal from the rock group, Kiss. The cows moored in disapproval and milk production declined."

Bill Clifton

*Thanks for your mooooving testimony for the finer things of life, Bill!*

Editors

HELP!

Please renew my subscription and send my new felts and strings ASAP before I lose my nerve. I just have to keep remembering "I can do this! I CAN do this!" But with the AQ instructions in one hand, and a tool in the other, how do I hold onto my 'harp?

Carina LaMay

*A toughie, Carina, so we asked*

*George this very technical question. He said you should hold the instructions in your teeth. This will free up that hand. Now, wasn't that easy? He's such a fount of information!*

Editors

HOOVER, USA

Living in an autoharp vacuum has not been easy. Becky Askey's articles on theory have given me new insight into the subject, but one thing is bothering me - it's starting to make sense! Is it me, or have I contracted some strange owl's disease?

Peggy Craig

*Peggy, we thought we'd better pass this one on to "Hooter." He says that you should force fluids and stay warm. There is no cure - you can only minimize the symptoms. And, quoting "Hooter," "So, there!"*

Editors

ROSES TO US - THANKS!

Now that I have my taxes done and can do fun things, I thought I'd send you...my checks for renewal of *Autoharp Quarterly*, and the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering. It's hard to believe that summer will be here so fast and that we'll be back in Pennsylvania at the Gathering of lots of special people...

I always enjoy your publication; it is so professional and it addresses so many subjects from which all levels of players can enjoy and learn...

Bea Gluck (and Art)

PETERSON'S PAPERS

I have felt as though I have been peering over Glen Peterson's shoulder after reading the on-going Oscar Schmidt article. All the "inside" information is certainly enlightening. I wonder how the autoharp has managed to survive all the "corporate" decisions that ultimately changed the instrument into what we play today...

Bill Auer

*Wonder you may, Bill. But, survive, it did. We also feel as though we have been given a real treasure in this story. Our thanks go, again, to Meg Peterson for sharing this bit of autoharp history with us.*

Editors

I've played autoharp since 1968, following the inspirational exposure to the music of Bill Clifton, Mike Seeger, the Stoneman Family, and a telling meeting with Mother Maybelle at a Johnny Cash concert that year. I purchased my first instrument in a music store in downtown Middlesborough, the northern industrial town where I grew up in England. This first 'harp was all I could easily obtain in my homeland at that time, a primitive 12-chord instrument painted black with a rose transfer behind the strings. It was German in origin – I knew this because its chord labels used “dur” for major and “moll” for minor, and more especially because it bore the rather anonymous legend “Made in Germany” on the label that was visible on the rear soundboard through the sound hole.

That first 'harp had its limitations, of course, although I was blissfully unaware of them when I first obtained it. What is a total mystery to me these days is that I learned to tune it and pinch some of the Maybelle Carter techniques I wanted to emulate within a short space of time, but I can't recall much about actually *how* I went about doing those things! No one showed me, but I must have accomplished them very quickly because there are in existence recordings of me playing this 'harp, sounding very in tune and presenting a very full melodic style. My first autoharp was designed for lap playing, something I never did as I'd heard and seen Mother Maybelle's Appalachian style (I always felt that describing the upright manner of holding the autoharp as “Appalachian” something of a misnomer – I always reasoned that surely it would be more logical to give that title to lap style as this position was the one used by all the Appalachian players during that period between the two World Wars when the autoharp flourished there – Pop Stoneman being the obvious example – only Kilby Snow comes to mind as a player who did not use the basic lap position and he was a subject apart.)

The tuning holding on my new “Rosen,” as they apparently became known, was not good, and its chord layout very strange – back then all I had was a basic knowledge of guitar chord positions, but even at that stage I

knew it was a heck of a stretch to reach the F chord from C. The scale could be best described as “semi-chromatic” – there were no B $\flat$ , G $\sharp$  and D $\sharp$  notes and just basic chording was provided in the keys of C, G, and D. I wasn't over-bothered by such things at that time, of course, and it never occurred to me until much later that you could actually *switch the chords around!* I could play the Carter Family songs I wanted to master – *Gold Watch 'n' Chain*, *You've Been a Friend to Me*, and *Amber Tresses Tied in Blue* – that was all that mattered then. I've developed a soft spot for those autoharps that came out of East Germany in the 60s – my Rosen was all I had to start on and I loved it. I remember a musician friend of mine speaking in awe of a friend's wife who owned an Oscar Schmidt. I do still own several Rosens, but that first one was traded off in 1972 on my first USA trip – I gave it plus \$25 for my first Schmidt 15-chorder, and was immediately delighted to find that I could at last play *Victory Rag* – my Rosen harp's main limitation had been its total failure to provide a III $\sharp$  chord in any of its available keys, thus rendering that famous tune impossible.

Down through the years, times in which the autoharp has changed my life forever, I became aware that the role of Germany in the history of the autoharp was far more than many folk realise. Through the German 'harps I have owned and seen in antique shops, through pages from old music catalogues, and through hazy references to Saxony and the indisputable fact that our instrument was clearly descended

## Mission to Saxony

by Mike Fenton



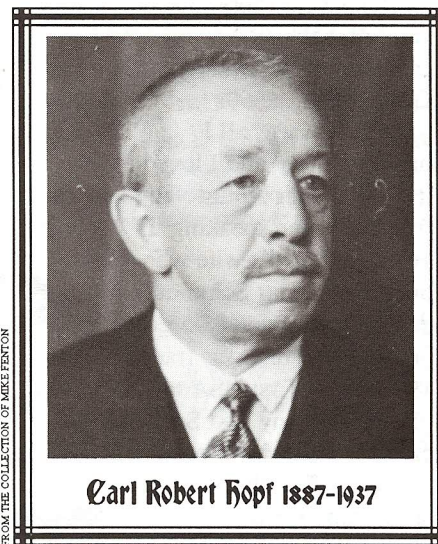
Mike Fenton in July, 1970 with his first Rosen 12-chord autoharp with its typical rose transfer behind the strings.

from the zither, an important folk instrument in Germany and Austria, I came to see that the German connection was one to be explored. There was a whole story waiting to be told. And yet, why were the German 'harps I had played so lacking in quality, why had they apparently been produced with so little consideration for how they might be used? Why had I never heard of a German autoharp player? And why did all major historical works in respect of the autoharp concentrate almost entirely on the American side of things? I knew that, for more than a century, autoharps had been produced in Germany and there was a vast array of most elaborate models, stunning creations with beautiful motifs, levers for switching bar positions, detachable chord bar brackets enabling you to play six chords in *any* key, huge bodies containing two sound-holes. But there had apparently been little progress, little improvement, in the standard of the autoharps coming out of Germany since World War II. In my early days as an autoharper, I had little interest in or knowledge of European politics, but I now know that the political situation that existed in Eastern Europe until 1989 held the key to many of my questions.

Three major occurrences have at last unlocked the door for me to the mystery that is German autoharp history, and begun to answer some of those things about which I have wondered for years. Firstly, the fall of the Berlin Wall in autumn 1989: secondly, the publication of Ivan Stiles' research on the origins of the autoharp in this very journal in April 1991: and thirdly, my first meeting with Gudrun Derlin in August 1995. Gudrun is now the major autoharp coordinator in Germany, and through her I have at last been able to visit that region of Germany from whence came the autoharp, and at last I begin to understand – not understand all things, by any means – but the jigsaw now does become clearer. Karl Gütter, the autoharp's inventor, came from Markneukirchen; Charles Zimmermann, its major developer in the USA once he had taken Gütter's ideas on board, came from the town of Morgenröthe; and the factory that has produced autoharps and zithers in their thousands in Germany

since the turn of the century, C. Robert Hopf, is based in Klingenthal. What many folk outside Germany won't realise, as you would be unable to deduce this from looking at a standard Atlas map of the country, is that these three towns, all with strong autoharp associations, are all in southern Saxony in a region of mountains close to the border with the Czech Republic, and all three are within 15 miles of each other! So you see, many things begin to fall into place.

In order to appreciate the environment in which autoharps were produced in Germany, and in order to understand the problems there, it is necessary to look at the politics of the old East Germany and know something of the history of the C. Robert Hopf Company. Before 1989 it was almost impos-



sible to obtain any contact with institutions behind the Iron Curtain, and thus all my overtures via embassies, libraries, museums, and musical distributors came to nought.

The Communists came to power in East Germany in 1952 and from then on contact with the West was shunned. Autoharps were therefore produced for a period spanning four decades with little chance of any input coming in from abroad that might have assisted the Hopf company in particular in upgrading their product. I now know that my first autoharp bore the words "Made in Germany" on it simply because "Hopf" was not allowed to appear on it – to have the company name upon it was a capitalist attitude to be frowned upon.

The neighbouring towns of Kling-

enthal and Markneukirchen have a long history in musical instrument production. Stringed and woodwind instruments have been made there for centuries, as well as accordions and harmonicas. The Hopf family had produced violins here before Carl Robert Hopf founded his factory in Brundöbra, a district of Klingenthal, in 1901, with a view to production of mainly zithers. Other goods, such as billiard tables were made (1910-1940), accordions (1930s-1960s), and later, from 1978-1985, bodies and necks for electric guitars. It is not known for certain what proportion of the productions was autoharps, nor is it known for certain when autoharp production began and what models were made, and when by the Hopf concern. There were other firms in Klingenthal and its region, and beyond (Dresden, for example, ) that were producing the autoharp in a variety of designs, and we know that the instrument was produced there in the late 19th Century. Many different types of autoharp made in Germany have been found in the British Isles in a variety of locations – museums, antique shops, private homes, Victorian theme parks, schools – however, there being no known body of German players of the instrument, it is clear that the production of the autoharp emanating from Saxony has always been primarily for export.

The 1920s were busy years for the Hopf company. A sawmill was established in 1925, together with drying ovens and a steam engine to generate electricity. In 1929, Arno Willi Hopf became a partner in the operation. Major expansion of the company took place in 1938, with purchase of further buildings on Falkensteiner Street and the beginning of accordion production. This was despite the death of the founder, Carl Robert, the previous year, November 28th, 1937. During the late 30s, the work force numbered in excess of 70. Zither production continued during World War II, and a new source of revenue at this time was the production of boxes for ammunition. However, the outcome of the war had terrible repercussions for the Hopf factory. The company had passed to Arno Willi Hopf, who it is known had ambitious plans for the firm. However, with the coming of the Communist regime



Arno Willie Hopf 1906 - 1959

FROM THE COLLECTION OF MIKE FENTON

truth the company was never really his during those dark years, culminating in complete state takeover in 1972. So while my horizons were expanding significantly that year, the region that first produced the autoharp was in the depths of depression. Ironic that I should bring my German autoharp to the USA and play it in Virginia in the "Land of the Free." The C. Robert Hopf company became part of the nationalised combined works "VEB (Business for the People) Musikinstrumentenbau Markneukirchen" by 1974, and it was during this period that the Rosens disappeared to be superseded by a newer model of the auto-

harp sometimes bearing the VEB logo MUSIMA inside the sound-hole on a label, sometimes bearing a metal plate behind the strings bearing the name "auto harp" or "Chordharp." ❖  
To be continued



GERMANY  
The Klingenthal area, as shown on the accompanying map, is here. ➔

and the partition of Germany into East and West in 1952, Arno was imprisoned and dispossessed by the Communists as a capitalist. Years of incarceration in a concentration camp broke him, and he died on November 11, 1959, for the apparent crime of failing to register assets. This was a terrible reflection of those brutal years of oppression in the East, the way in which anyone with a spark of initiative or creativity could be squashed by the state. With sad irony, following the later fall of the Wall and with the Hopfs once more in charge of their own company, Arno Willi Hopf was declared innocent by a Dresden court in 1992 and cleared of all charges.

I realise now why those German autoharps I first came across in the 1960s were so primitive, and why they failed to show much progress. Those decorated with the rose transfer were very attractive instruments and had a good sound, especially in the keys of D and C when in tune. (You can hear one of these 'harps on my first album, "My Privilege," the modified "Clawtoharp," which is a Rosen with short drone strings added), but they were simply mass-produced for export and no feedback ever reached the Hopfs. There are hundreds of these autoharps to be found in Britain, mainly in schools, many in cupboards, and very few of them in use. Even by the mid-70s, I could have advised the Hopfs to a limited degree, but I had no idea how to go about it. The GDR was a closed avenue.

Following the death of Arno, the company had passed to Roland Hopf, but the sawmill closed in 1964 and in



# WALNUT VALLEY FESTIVAL

## 25<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL FLAT-PICKING CHAMPIONSHIPS

### September 19, 20, 21, 22, 1996

### Winfield, Kansas



#### Featuring in Person:

- Bryan Bowers
- John McCutcheon
- Blue Highway
- Mike Cross
- Marley's Ghost
- Tom Paxton
- The New Tradition
- Dan Crary
- Bluestem
- Nickel Creek
- Ivan Stiles
- Cherish the Ladies
- The Eddie Adcock Band
- Tom Chapin  
with Michael Mark
- Spontaneous Combustion
- Beppe Gambetta
- Aileen & Elkin Thomas
- Steve Kaufman
- Cathy Barton & Dave Para
- The Karen Mueller Trio
- Winfield Regional Symphony
- Andy May
- Revival
- Julie Davis
- Roz Brown
- Linda Tilton
- Bill Barwick
- Barry Patton
- and Many More



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Ticket Prices	Advance	Gate
Weekend (4 Day)	\$50	\$60
2-Day Fri-Sat	38	45
Sat-Sun	28	35
Fri or Sat	20	25
Sun (Gate Only)		12

\*Children ages 6-11 \$5 each, payable at gate upon initial entry. NOT payable in advance.  
\*Children under 6 admitted free with adult.

No Mail orders after Aug. 31. Orders received after Sept. 1 will be held at Gate.  
NO REFUNDS

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MIDNIGHT THURS., SEPT. 19.  
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ADMISSION

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\$40,000 In Cash Prizes,  
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**The 25th International Convention for acoustic string musicians!!**



# Annual Events Guide

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

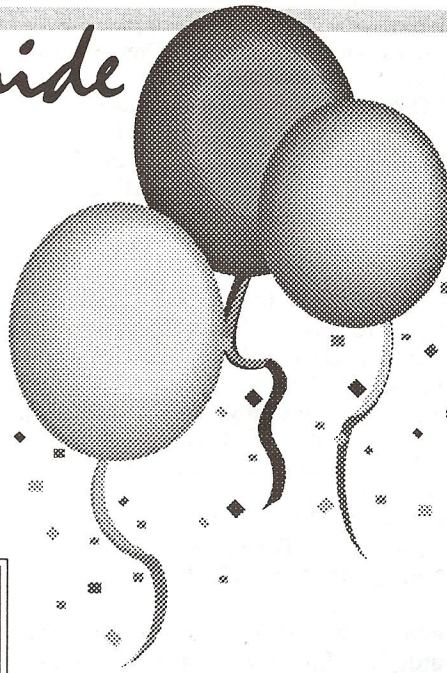
*The following are 1996 major events which feature the autoharp in contest, workshop, and/or performance. If you know of an event that we have not included, please send the information to the Events Editors. The complete events list is published every Spring, and seasonally repeated and updated in every issue.*

## CODE:

AC ..... Autoharp Contest  
AP ..... Autoharp Performance  
AW ..... Autoharp Workshop

## MAY

- ▶ **Old Capitol Traditional Music Festival**, May 11; **Corydon, IN**; Code: **AW** (Lisa Gottlieb-Kinnaid); Contact 812 246-2430
- ▶ **Folk Heritage Festival**, May 11; **San Diego, CA**; Code: **AW** (Steve Young); Contact 6500 Nancy Rd., Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90274
- ▶ **International Mozart Festival**, May 11; **Bartlesville, OK**; Code: **AP** (Fran Stallings); Contact 918 333-7390
- ▶ **Lone Star State Dulcimer Festival**, May 11-12; **Glen Rose, TX**; Code: **AP** (Charles Whitmer); Contact 713 367-6260 (evenings)
- ▶ **Claremont Folk Festival**, May 18,19; **Claremont, CA**; Code: **AP** (Evo Bluestein); Contact 209 297-8966
- ▶ **Oakdale, California Hershey Chocolate Festival**, May 19; **Oakdale, CA**; Code: **AP** (Tina Louise Barr); Contact 209 522-6548
- ▶ **Ole Time Fiddler's & Bluegrass Festival**, May 24-26; **Fiddler's Grove Campground, Union Grove, NC**; Code: **AC, AW**; c/o Harper Van Hoy, PO Box 11, Union Grove, NC 28689 704 539-4417
- ▶ **44th Annual Florida Folk Festival**, May 24-26; **Stephen Foster State Park, White Springs, FL**; Code: **AP** (Mark and Linda Fackeldey); Contact 813 237-5832
- ▶ **Philadelphia Folk Festival Spring Thing**, May 24-26; **Greenlane, PA**; Code: **AP** (Drew Smith); Contact 201 444-2833
- ▶ **Dulci-More Festival 2**, May 24-27; **Rainbow Lakes Campground in Franklin Square, Leetonia, OH**; Code: **AP, AW** (Bill Schilling); Contact Bill Schilling, 984 Homewood Ave., Salem, OH 44460-3816



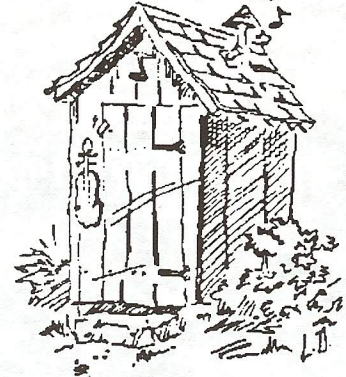
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- ▶ **Memorial Day Stringalong**, May 24-27; **Edwards Conference Center on Lake Beulah, East Troy, WI**; Code: **AP, AW** (Alex Usher, Ann Schmid); Must preregister, Contact Ann Schmid, UW-M Folk Center, Fine Arts-Music 130, PO Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201 800 636-FOLK or 414 229-4622
- ▶ **Sunfest**, May 31-June 2; **Bartlesville, OK**; Code: **AP** (Fran Stallings); Contact 918 333-7390

## JUNE

- ▶ **Wild Iris Folk Festival**, June 1-2; **Mendocino County Apple Fairground, Boonville, CA**; Code: **AP** (Mike Seeger); Contact 707 895-2966
- ▶ **Silver Dollar City Folk Music Festival**, June 3; **Branson, MO**; Code: **AP** (Laurie Sky); Contact 615 859-1419
- ▶ **Ozark Folk Center Beginners' Autoharp Workshops**, June 3-6; **Ozark Folk Center, Mountain View, AR**; Code: **AP, AW** (Charles Whitmer); Contact Elliott Hancock, Ozark Folk Center, Box 500, Mountain View, AR 72560 501 269-385
- ▶ **24th Annual Bluegrass and Old-Time Fiddlers Convention**, June 7-8; **Veterans Memorial Park, Mt. Airy, NC**; Code: **AC**; Jack E. Jones, 319 W. Oakdale St., Mt. Airy, NC 27030 910 786-6830
- ▶ **Animas River Music Festival**, June 7-8; **Farmington, NM**; Code: **AP** (Laurie Sky); Contact 615 859-1419
- ▶ **Rosegarden Children's Festival**, June 7-8; **Bethlehem, PA**; Code: **AP** (Janet Schreiner); Contact 215 649-0732
- ▶ **Wind Gap Bluegrass Festival**, June 7-8; **Wind Gap, PA**; Code: **AP, AW** (Judie Pagter); Contact 804 985-3551

## July 5, 6, 7 SUMMERFEST 1996



### Performances & Workshops By:

Cathy Barton & Dave Para  
David Moran ■ Plaid Family  
Nonesuch ■ Gallier Brothers  
Scott Odena ■ Judy Schmidt  
Anita Roesler ■ Jim Curley  
Fran Stallings & Gail Huggett  
The Johnson Family

### Workshops:

Mountain & Hammered  
Dulcimers ■ Autoharp  
Fiddle ■ Guitar ■ Accordion  
Saw ■ Spoons ■ Mouth Bow  
Banjo ■ Leaf ■ Yodeling

### Admission:

Entire Weekend  
\$20 with workshops  
\$10 without workshops  
(Children under 12 free with adult.)

**Family Entertainment!**  
**Bring your instruments**  
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**alcoholic beverages.**

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**Lloyd & Joyce Woods:**  
**316 389-2377**  
**Elaine Smith:**  
**417 624-3580**  
**Judy Johnston:**  
**417 624-2387**

# Summer Stringalong

Autoharp  
Singing  
Dulcimer  
Guitar  
Dancing  
Concerts



H. Dulcimer  
Mandolin  
Crafts  
Storytelling  
Harmonica  
Gospel

June 22 to 27, 1996



Charles Whitmer, Larkin Bryant  
David Schnauffer, John Knowles  
Joel Mabus, Rick Thum, Nick Page  
Jane Sapp, Will & Ann Schmid

Lake Geneva, WI

☎ 1(800) 393-FOLK

- ▶ **Good Ole Days**; June 8-9; Fort Scott, KS; Code: AP (Win Grace); Contact 573 443-2819
- ▶ **Birds of a Feather Festival**; June 8-9; Westbrook, ME; Code: AP (Drew Smith); Contact 201 444-2833
- ▶ **Ozark Folk Center Intermediate Autoharp Workshops**; June 10-13; Ozark Folk Center, Mountain View, AR; Code: AP, AW (Charles Whitmer); Contact Elliott Hancock, Ozark Folk Center, Box 500, Mountain View, AR 72560 501 269-3851
- ▶ **Bloomsday Festival**; June 14-15; Kansas City, MO; Code: AP (Tom Schroeder); Contact Tom Schroeder, 819 W. 77th Street, Kansas City, MO 64114
- ▶ **20th Annual Cosby Dulcimer and Harp Festival**; June 14-15; Cosby, TN; Code: AP, AW (Steve Mayfield, Gregg Averett); Contact Jean and Lee Schilling, PO Box 8, Cosby, TN 37722 423 487-5543
- ▶ **Fort Ridgely Festival**; June 15; near Fairax, MN; Code: AP (Win Grace); Contact 573 443-2819
- ▶ **Northwest Folklife Festival**; June 18; Seattle, WA; Code: AP, AW (Les Gustafson-Zook); Contact 503 235-3094
- ▶ **Southern Michigan Dulcimer Festival**; June 21-23; Barry Expo Center, Hastings, MI; Code: AP, AW; Contact Warren Guiles, 9575 Peach Ridge, Sparta, MI, 49345 616 887-9436
- ▶ **Summer Stringalong**; June 22-27, Con-

ference Point Center on Lake Geneva, WI; Code: AP, AW (Charles Whitmer, Ann Schmid); Must preregister. Contact Ann Schmid, Music Workshops Ltd., 2851 N. Farwell, Milwaukee, WI 53211 800 393-FOLK or 414 332-2277

- ▶ **16th Annual Summer Solstice Folk Music, Dance, and Storytelling Festival**; June 21-23; Campus of Soka University, Calabasas, CA; Code: AP, AW (Julie Davis, Tom Schroeder, Steve Young, Terri Griffin); Contact California Traditional Music Society, 4401 Trancas Place, Tarzana, CA 91356-5399 818 342-7664 ctms@lafn.org
- ▶ **Old Songs Festival of Traditional Music and Dance**; June 28-30; Altamont Fairgrounds, Altamont, NY; Code: AP (Karen Mueller); Contact Andy Spence, Old Songs, Inc., PO Box 399, Guiderland, NY 12084 518 765-2815
- ▶ **Burns Lake Bluegrass Festival**; June 28-30; Burns Lake, BC; Code: AP (Laurie Sky); Contact 615 859-1419

## JULY

- ▶ **Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering**; July 4-7; Orthey Farm, Newport, PA; Code: AC (Mountain Laurel Autoharp Championship), AP, AW; (Lindsay Haisley, Charles Whitmer, Lucille Reilly, John & Kathie Hollandsworth, Orchard Grass Band, Tina Louise Barr, Patsy Stoneman, Judie Pagter, Mike Fenton, Steve Young, Les Gustafson-Zook, Alex

# AUTOHARP WORKSHOPS & PERFORMANCES

at the

**16th ANNUAL SUMMER SOLSTICE**

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E-mail: ctms@lafn.org

Usher, Bob Lewis, George Foss, Mary Umbarger, Betty Waldron, Linda Huber, & more); Contact Limberjack Productions, PO Box A, Newport, PA, 17074 717 567-9469 autoharp@pa.net

► **Ozark Dulcimer Festival**; July 5-6; **Carthage, MO**; Code: **AP** (Fran Stallings); Contact 918 333-7390

► **5th Annual Summerfest 1996**; July 5-7; **Carthage, MO**; Code: **AP, AW** (Cathy Barton, Anita Roesler, Fran Stallings and Gail Huggett); Contact 417 624-3580

► **Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops**; July 7-August 11; Davis & Elkins College, **Elkins, WV**; Code: (during selected weeks only) **AW** (Will Smith, Karen Mueller, John Hollandsworth); Free catalog available; Contact Registrar, Augusta Heritage Center, D. & E. College, Elkins, WV 26241 304 637-1209

► **Live Oak Music Festival**; July 10; **Santa Barbara, CA**; Code: **AP** (Bryan Bowers); Contact 719 635-7776

► **Indiana Fiddlers' Gathering**; July 11-14; **Battleground, IN**; Code: **AP** (Win Grace); Contact 573 443-2819

► **Peaceful Valley Bluegrass Festival**; July 18-21; Peaceful Valley Campground, **Shinopple, NY**; Code: **AP, AW** (Julie Pagter); Contact Arnold Banker, HC 89, Box 56, Downsville, NY 13755 607 363-2211

► **Essex Maritime Festival**; July 20; **Essex, NY**; Code: **AP** (Stan Ransom); Contact 518 563-5719

► **24th Annual Original Dulcimer Players Club Funfest**; July 18-21; FFA Fairgrounds, **Evart, MI**; Code: **AP, AW** (Carole Spicer, Lucille Reilly, Lou Ann Jerome, Carolyn Egelski, Kathy Wieland); Contact Donna Beckwith, 817 Innes NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 616 459-6716

► **The Swannanoa Gathering Old Time Music and Dance Week**; July 21-27; **Swannanoa, NC**; Code: **AP, AW** (Evo Bluestein and Guest Master Artist, Janette Carter); Contact The Swannanoa Gathering, Warren Wilson College, PO Box 9000, Asheville, NC 28815 704 298-3325, extension 426 gathering@warren-wilson.edu

► **SAM Fest (Summer Acoustic Music Festival)**; July 25-27; St. Mark Lutheran Church, **Houston, TX**; Code: **AC** (Texas State sanctioned by Winfield), **AP, AW** (Charles Whitmer); Contact Peggy Carter, 16142 Hexham, Spring, TX 77379 713 370-9495 carterm@spring-branch.isd.tenet.edu

► **20th Annual Cranberry Dulcimer Gathering**; July 26-28; Unitarian Universalist Church, 183 Riverside Drive, **Binghamton, NY**; Code: **AP, AW** (Neal Walters, Drew Smith); Contact Ed Ware, 1259 Fowler Place, Binghamton, NY 13903-6036 607 669-4653

► **Cripple Creek Music Festival**; July 27-28; **Morden, Manitoba**; Code: **AP** (Laurie Sky); Contact 615 859-1419

► **Winnipeg Folk Festival**; July 28; Bird's Hill Park, **Winnipeg, Manitoba**; Code: **AP** (Win Grace); Contact 573 443-2819

## AUGUST

► **Carter Family Memorial Festival**; August 2-3; Carter Fold, **Hiltons, VA**; Code: **AP** (Janette Carter); Contact Carter Fold, PO Box 111, Hiltons, VA 24258

► **Overton Bluegrass Festival**; August 3; **Overton, TX**; Code: **AP** (Bryan Bowers); Contact 719 635-7776

► **Minnesota Bluegrass and Old-Time Music Fest**; Aug. 2-4; Camp In The Woods Resort, **Zimmerman, MN**; Code: **AW**; Contact Jed Malischke, PO Box 480, Spooner, WI 54801 715 635-2479

► **60th Annual Galax Oldtime Fiddlers' Convention**; August 7-10; Felt's Park, **Galax, VA**; Code: **AC, AW** (Drew Smith); Preregistration required for contest; Contact PO Box 655, Galax, VA 24333

► **Kentucky Folk Week**; August 8-10; **Louisville-Bardstown, KY**; Code: **AP, AW** (Evo Bluestein); Contact 209 297-8966

► **3rd Annual Willamette Valley Autoharp Gathering**; August 9-11; Nofzinger Farm, **Albany OR**; Code: **AP AW** (Bryan Bowers, Tina Louise Barr, Meryle Korn, Les Gustafson-Zook, Cathy Britell, Jon ten Broek, John Arthur, and more!); Contact John Arthur, 6596 NW Niagra Drive, Corvallis, OR 97330 541 745-7568 or 503 745-7568 jra@ece.orst.edu

► **29th Annual Willow Folk Festival**; August 10-11; **Stockton, IL**; Code: **AP**;

## THE EIGHTH ANNUAL

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## Third Annual WILLAMETTE VALLEY AUTOHARP GATHERING

August 9-11, 1996

~ Nofziger Farm ~

34825 Tangent Drive, Albany, Oregon

Workshops, open stages, jamming, singing, evening concerts, and more. Performing artists and workshop leaders include:

**Bryan Bowers • Tina Louise Barr  
Meryle Korn • Les Gustafson-Zook  
Cathy Britell • Jon ten Broek**

Fees: \$25 per person for the weekend, \$15 per day includes all concerts and workshops. Camping and RV space (self-contained) is available, \$5 per vehicle per night camping fee. No drugs, alcohol, pets. Children must be closely supervised; this is a working farm. For additional information, to register, or to get directions, contact Les [gustazook@eworld.com](mailto:gustazook@eworld.com) (503) 235-3094 or John [jra@ece.orst.edu](mailto:jra@ece.orst.edu) (503) 745-7568. By mail contact John Arthur, 6596 NW Niagara Drive, Corvallis, OR 97330



August 2, 3, 4, 1996

Camp In The Woods Resort  
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The Renegades**

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**Laurie Lewis & The Grant Street Band  
Parmley, Vestal & Continental Divide  
Blue Highway - Alan Munde & Joe Carr  
Bluegrass Patriots - The Bob Lewis Family  
Many More Regional Acts**

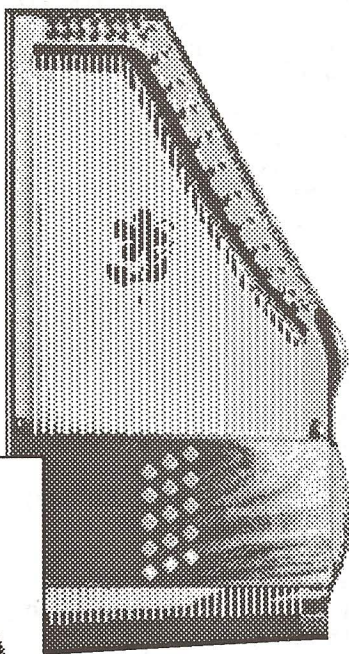
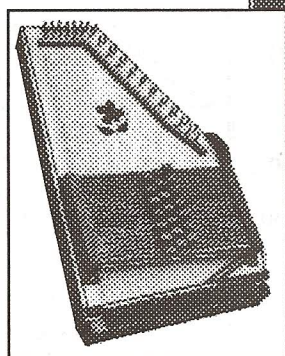
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Camping Registration, Evelyn Schlafer, 237 N. Simmons, Stockton, IL 61085

► **Autoharp Jamboree**; August 8-10; Ozark Folk Center, **Mountain View, AR**; Code: **AP, AW** (Evo Bluestein, Margie Earles, Tom Schroeder, Ivan Stiles, Ron Wall, Charles Whitmer); Contact Elliott Hancock, Ozark Folk Center, Box 500, Mountain View, AR 72560 501 269-3851

► **John C. Campbell Folk School**; August 18-24; **Brasstown, NC**; Code: **AP, AW** (Ivan Stiles); Contact Bob Dalsemer, John C. Campbell Folk School; Rt. 1, Box 14A, Brasstown, NC 28902 800 365-5724

► **The Antique Car, Antique Tractor, Flea Market, Folk Music and Dulcimer Gathering**; August 23, 24, 25; Midland County Fairgrounds, **Midland MI**; Code: **AW**; Contact Terry Brugger, 5568 W. River Road, Weidman, MI 48893 517 772-5473 or 517 644-3058

► **Old-Time Country Music Contest & Festival**; August 26-September 2; Pottawattamie Fairgrounds, **Avoca, IA**; Code: **AC, AP, AW**; Contact Bob Everhart, PO Box 438, Walnut, IA 51577 712 784-3001

► **Thomas Paint Beach Bluegrass Festival**; August 29-September 2; **Thomas Paint Beach ME**; Code: **AP, AW** (Judie Pagter); Contact 804 985-3551

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## SEPTEMBER

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► **25th Annual Walnut Valley Festival & National Flatpicking Championships**; September 19-22; Cowley County Fairgrounds, **Winfield, KS**; Code: **AC** (International Autoharp Championship), **AP, AW** (Bryan Bowers, John McCutcheon, Ivan Stiles, Karen Mueller, Julie Davis, Roz Brown, Cathy Barton); Contact Bob Redford, Walnut Valley Assn., PO Box 245, Winfield, KS 67156 316 221-3250

► **8th Annual Memphis Dulcimer Festival**; September 26-28; **Memphis, TN**; Code: **AP, AW**; Contact Larkin Kelley Bryant, 95 N. Evergreen St., Memphis, TN 38104

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## OCTOBER

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► **Tennessee Fall Homecoming**; October 10-13; Museum of Appalachia, **Norris, TN**; Code: **AP** (Janette Carter, Judie Pagter, Ron Wall, & many others); Contact John Rice Irwin, PO Box 0318, Norris, TN 37828 423 494-7680

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## NOVEMBER

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► **Stringalong Weekend**; Nov 1-3; Edwards Conference Center on Lake Beulah, **East Troy, WI**; Code: **AP, AW**; Must preregister, Contact Ann Schmid, UW-M Folk Center, Fine Arts-Music 130, PO Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201 800 636-FOLK or 414 229-4622



# 1996 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS 96



**MOUNTAIN LAUREL  
AUTOHARP GATHERING**

## T • H • U • R • S • D • A • Y

	Main Tent	Pole Barn
9:00	Meet The Workshop Leaders	
10:00	Alex Usher: From The Beginning	Bob Lewis: Learn A Song
11:00	Charles Whitmer: Strum The Beginning	Judie Pagter: Learn A Song
12:00	Lunch & Open Stage	
1:00	Watermelon Seedspitting Contest	
2:00	Lucille Reilly: Let Your Fingers Do The Walking	Les Gustafson-Zook: Variations On A Theme
3:00	Tina Louise Barr: Cut-A-Rug Rhythm	George Orthey/John Arthur: Siliconing Felts*
4:00	The Bazaar Autoharp/Jam Sessions	Jam Sessions
5:00	George Foss: It's Not Theory - It's A Fact!	Betty Waldron: Learn A Song
6:00	Dinner & Open Stage	
7:30	Concert Tina Louise Barr • John & Kathie Hollandsworth Charles Whitmer • Lindsay Haisley	

## F • R • I • D • A • Y

	Main Tent	Pole Barn
9:00	Mary Umbarger: Get With "The Program"	Patsy Stoneman: Learn A Song
10:00	George Orthey/John Arthur: Siliconing Felts*	Tina Louise Barr: Cut-A-Rug Rhythm
11:00	The Bazaar Autoharp/Jam Sessions	Jam Sessions
12:00	Lunch & Open Stage	
1:00	Lindsay Haisley: Wildwood Flower Arranging	Mike Fenton: Open Chord Embellishments
2:00	Workshop Leaders Round Robin	
3:00	Steve Young: Diabolic, or Diatonic?	Linda Huber: Grab Your Partner!
4:00	Betty Waldron: Learn A Song	George Foss: It's Not Theory - It's A Fact!
5:00	Ultra-tonic Autoharp Symposium	
6:00	Dinner & Open Stage	
7:30	Mountain Laurel Autoharp Championship Sign-up deadline: Friday, 6:30 p.m.	

## S • A • T • U • R • D • A • Y

	Main Tent	Pole Barn
9:00	Bob Lewis: Learn A Song	Alex Usher: From The Beginning
10:00	Judie Pagter: Learn A Song	Charles Whitmer: Strum The Beginning
11:00	Les Gustafson-Zook: Variations On A Theme	Lucille Reilly: Let Your Fingers Do The Walking
12:00	Lunch & Open Stage	
1:00	Most Harps - World Record Attempt	
2:00	Workshop Leaders Round Robin	
3:00	The Bazaar Autoharp/Jam Sessions	Jam Sessions
4:00	Invitational Concert	
5:00	John Hollandsworth: Slow Jam	Rhoda Kemp: Strike Up The Band!
6:00	Dinner & Open Stage	
7:30	Concert Lucille Reilly • Orchard Grass Band John & Kathie Hollandsworth • Lindsay Haisley	

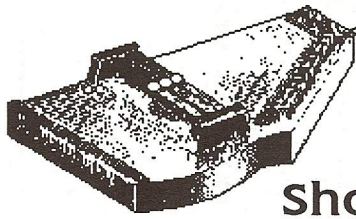
## S • U • N • D • A • Y

	Main Tent	Pole Barn
9:00	Linda Huber: Grab Your Partner!	Steve Young: Diabolic, or Diatonic?
10:00	Mike Fenton: Open Chord Embellishments	Lindsay Haisley: Wildwood Flower Arranging
11:00	Gospel Program: Orchard Grass Band	
12:00	Lunch & Open Stage	
1:00	Patsy Stoneman: Learn A Song	Mary Umbarger: Get With "The Program"
2:00	Rhoda Kemp: Strike Up The Band!	John Hollandsworth: Slow Jam
3:00	Concert	
4:00	Lucille Reilly • Charles Whitmer	
5:00	John & Kathie Hollandsworth • Lindsay Haisley	
6:00	Dinner & Farewells See you next year July 3, 4, 5, & 6, 1997	

**HOME COOKIN' FROM THE OLIVER GRANGE**  
 Thursday: Kettle-cooked Beef Pot Pie  
 Friday: Hot Turkey Sandwich  
 Saturday: Barbequed Chicken  
 Sunday: A la carte Selections

\*\*\*\*\* HOME OF THE MOUNTAIN LAUREL AUTOHARP CHAMPIONSHIP \*\*\*\*\*

\*This workshop will convene outside the Orthey Instruments barn across from the Main Tent.  
 Schedule subject to change.



## It Can't Be Played Well on the Autoharp and/or Shouldn't Be Played on the 'Harp Under Any Circumstance – Re: Not On MY Harp!



The Cyberpluckers  
cyberpluckers@fmp.com  
Castle of the Flying Mouse

*We thank these 'harp-crazy, perspicacious folk for having bestowed upon us their gracious permission to print this never-before published, significant list. This permission is just one of the many earth-moving subjects encountered daily by this gentry in their expatiations.*

*Editors*

It all started when David wrote: "I think it'd be interesting to list the songs that can't be played well on an autoharp, or for the sake of us all should never be played on the instrument. For openers, I suggest: 1. *Feelings* and 2. *Freebird*." You could just hear the creative juices flowing all over this world when the Cyberpluckers, one by one, read his message.

Pete and Dan jumped right in there with 3. *Stairway to Heaven*. Mary Radspinner and Fuey Herring announced that they have backed this one up on stage.

On the side, BanjerBob asked if anyone knew what Ricky Scaggs named his daughter.

David (of P&D Highland) suggested 4. *If I Had to Do It All Over Again, I'd Do It All Over You*. More than one Cyberperson cast a jaundiced eye on this, as they did on the next one – 5. *You're the Only Thing That's Risen in the Sourdough of Life*.

6. *The Hallelujah Chorus* was mentioned, but it was pointed out by John Hook that Gil Palley is a master of that one. His thought was seconded by BanjerBob.

Co-leader of the pack, the effulgent, beautiful, and extremely capable Cathy Britell entered 7. *Orange Blossom Special*, but was gunned down by

her co-leader, Lindsay, who said he'd play it for her at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering. BanjerBob said Marty Shuman did this tune justice without blinking an eye, and then he offered that well-known (?) 8. *Alabama Song*.

In the wings, Pete was daring Bill Blohm to learn *Freebird* on his 'harp; John and Sharon Skyard were plugging their very fine OPDC Evert, Michigan festival; Stew Schneider was asked a question about copyright law, and wrote – "(Screwing old horsehair wig onto his furrowed brow) <Ahem!> Yes – Copyright! As your lawyer, I would advise that whatever you intended to do, don't do it. Don't do anything other than what you've done already, and don't do some of that, either. Much safer that way. – That'll be \$700."

Sometime along here, 9. *Flight of the Bumblebee* was suggested, and Lindsay replied he has thought about this one, but didn't have the ambition to try it, or number 10. *Sabre Dance*.

No one knew what Ricky Scaggs had named his kid, so BanjerBob gave the answer – Amanda Lynn. (The groans were almost audible.)

In a burst of creativity, Cathy said "Howzabout 11. *Twenty Naked Pentecostals in a Pontiac!*" She swears it's a real song.

12. *La Bamba* was suggested, and started a feeding frenzy.

But in the meantime, Bill and Pete are still strutting their stuff over *Freebird*. Bill's daughter's boyfriend brought a CD over so he could hear this song. Bill gulped and then ordered the sheet music. These guys are serious!

Stew pipes in (to a beginner):

"There's only one way to learn an instrument in my opinion – sit in a room by yourself and make mistakes. Then sit in a room with other folks and make the same mistakes in public. In time you learn both your instrument and humility."

Somewhere in the middle of it all, David (of Pand D) announces that P just told him she is going to have a baby! Congratulations and advice (about carrying your autoharp and putting the baby in the case) abound, and Carey and Les drop in for a quiet "Hi!"

By now, everyone is wound up about *La Bamba*. Dan reports: "When I was in the high school talent show (9th, maybe 10th grade) the hosts asked me to stay on stage after my two songs, and one of them asked me to teach him to play *La Bamba* on the autoharp. I had him hold the harp, told him which buttons to press, and did it in about two minutes. The crowd erupted! – sigh – Life is so dull when you hit your peak at 15!"

Cathy said she taught her Cub Scouts to play *La Bamba* on their own handmade instruments and a bottle flute. She proudly announced they earned a merit badge for their effort.

Someone displayed on their signature "Perfect Pitch – when you throw an accordion into a dumpster and hit a banjo," while BanjerBob added 13. *In a Godda da Vida* and 14. *Thus Sprach Zarathustra*, and then asked how to spell it. Stew came up with "<Ahem> *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (he said, gazing raptly at the bust of Nietzsche, which gazes vacantly back). 'Cheers' had Cliffe. Cyberpluckers have me."

David Highland, (the dad-to-be),

wrote "Because of my thoughtless action, we apparently have 'harpers all over the country practicing *Stairway to Heaven*. (Gee, just can't get enough of that tune.) My only solace now is that no one suggested taking on *Feelings*. (There truly is a God.)"

Back to the subject at hand, Neal said that Tina Louise Barr plays *La Bamba*, and played it at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering contest last year to an enthusiastic crowd. Mark said, "No, not then. She wasn't there last year. The year before. 1994 —"

BanjerBob, not to be upstaged, started a Comet list, in honor of the comet everyone (except Stewart. He needed help) found and Oohed! and Ahhed! over. So far, on *that* list there's *Comet! Makes your teeth turn green. Comet! Tastes like gasoline* etc.; Pete added "that Boy George song *Comet Comet Comet Comet Chameleon*;" Bob Salpas added *When Halley Comes to Jackson*; DonRuthD chimed in with *Dasher, Dancer, Comet and Cupid*; and Lindsay, being the leader he is, brilliantly added, "Well if we're getting into Christmas songs, how 'bout *O Comet Ye Faithful!*" Later Stew asked if we knew "Olive," the other reindeer.

You know, 'Olive, the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names.'" Lewislake came in with *Breaking up is hard to do, comet, comet, dum-dubie-du-dum-dum*," and Tull added a new gospel song *When You See Those Flying Saucers*. (This, while someone was chiding Stew for having that squirrel permanently "screwed into his furrowed brow," and Cathy was defending her *20 Naked Pentecostals in a Pontiac*.)

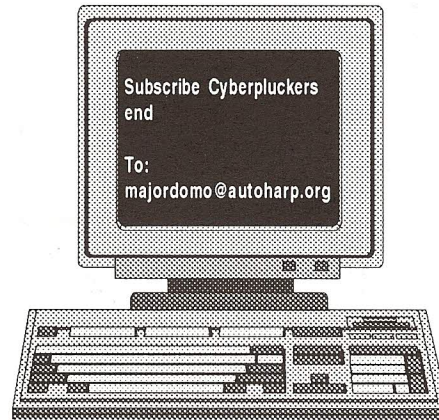
This group not only shares its most profound thoughts, but also the necessary ones: John Arthur is working on a formula of stuff to put on bar felts that is "squickless" (!) and longer-lasting; Cathy ("Czarina of the Logos and Shirts") is trying to organize the group to vote for an official logo, and what color of T-shirt should it be put on; beginners want to know how to get started on their 'harp; copyright information gets bantered about; everyone has something to say about how he cuts bar felts; in-depth discussions about the meaning of songs; a soul-searching dialog concerning how they play their 'harp; to and for nature; Stew Schneider, having just been voted "Cyberjig Czar"

for the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering wanted to know – if he takes on this responsibility, will he hafta get a crazy monk to advise his wife and more to the point, does he get any of those neat eggs?

O, these Cyberpluckers are a hardy lot – the leaders of today and tomorrow, the hope of the world. And they are always looking for more folks with whom to share their innermost thoughts. Come on in! Join the wave of the future! You'll never, no never regret it.



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Traditional

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System 1: A D A7 D | A7 D A | / D A7 D | E7

System 2: A D A7 D | A7 D A | / / E7 / | A

System 3: A / / ☆ | / D A ☆ | / / / / | G

System 4: A / / | / D A | / / E7 / | A

Arrangement © 1990 John Hollandsworth

Syncopation licks for ☆ measures.

Diagram showing syncopation licks for the star-marked measures. It includes musical notation and fretting diagrams.





# REPLACING UNEVEN BRIDGE PINS

by Bob Taylor

I have had the (mixed) pleasure of fixing uneven bridge pins on OSI "B" model 'harps, and would like to offer a few suggestions to those of you who could use a few pointers on this subject:

1. Have a supply of spare pins (from OSI, Stew-mac, Elderly, *AQ*) on hand before attempting to raise or lower pins – it's easy to deform the string groove and increase string breakage.

2. Pull the low pins up with vice grips padded with leather, or a drill press chuck. If all else fails, I use a small modified claw hammer, with a well-padded caul, pivoting over the frame area only!

3. If using new pins, check that the string groove is the same distance from the pin top – file or shim as needed in the next step.

4. It is much easier to seat the pins level with their neighbors with a small arbor press, or even in a large vise with one large steel jaw and one well-padded jaw, than to hammer the pins in. Try to cover three or four pins on each side of the pin to be set. One pin will go in easily; when the neighboring pins are reached, the press will stop.

5. If repinning the whole 'harp, or a large section, make a "stop" for the press. I use 1/4" plexiglass and several layers of thin felt. This sheet is drilled to accommodate the pins and is laid on the 'harp's face. It stops the press a uniform distance above the 'harp's top. This is how OSI sets the pins – or did prior to 1984. They are not bottomed out in their holes, but are pressed in through a spacer.

I believe that the bridge pins and metal anchor (or fine tuners) at the bottom end account for most of the difference in sound between the "A" and "B" OSIs. In the "A" model, the string vibrations are transmitted through several mediums to the frame: the metal or plastic bridge saddle, the wooden bridge, and the 'harp top. This produces the complicated, edgy, slightly percussive attack typical of the model

"A," compared to the more organ-like, instant attack of the "B," with its direct string-pin-frame connection. I think the mass of the pins gives the "B" slightly more sustain and sweetness, at the expense of volume and "punch." Both sounds have their fans.

Finally, the OSI "B" was designed and in production before the Zagar gang drill. Originally, the silk screen used for the note names and logo also contained dots where the holes were to be located, and workers sat at drill presses drilling 72 holes in each 'harp body – what an exacting, boring job! On early "B"s you can see the irregularity in the rows of pins, especially when the drillers had too much coffee. The Zagar was subsequently designed and built, and was a blessing! ❖



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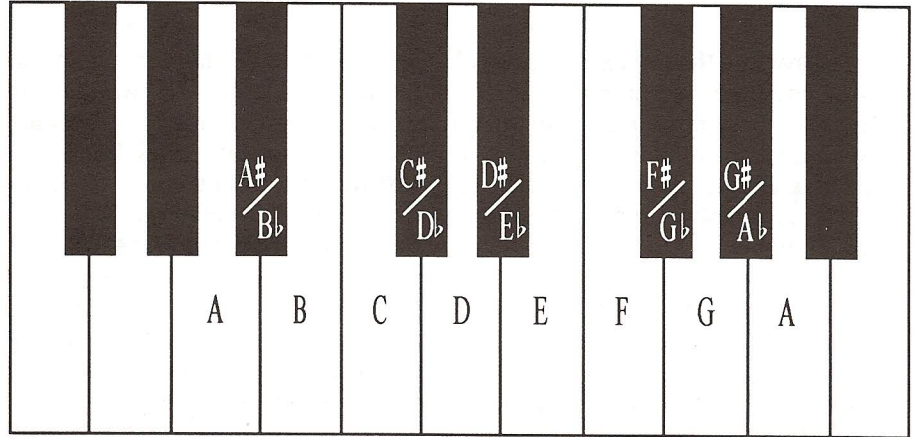
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# Theoretically Speaking

by "Hooter" the Owl as told to Becky Askey



## LESSON FOUR



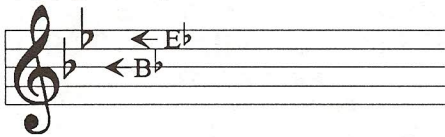
Welcome back to these lessons on music theory. Enough of the niceties.

Last issue's homework was the key of B $\flat$  and the key of E $\flat$ .

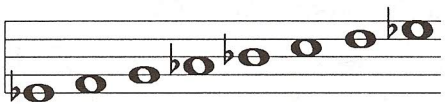
Here is the key of B $\flat$



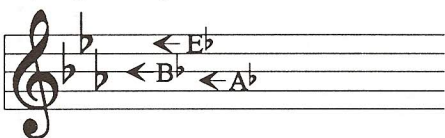
Key signature for B $\flat$



Key of E $\flat$



Key signature for E $\flat$



You add the flats into the key signatures the same way you did for sharps. You always start with the first one, which was B $\flat$ , and then add the second, which was E $\flat$ , then the third, A $\flat$ , and also the fourth, D $\flat$ . They always go in the same order and move to the right.

A B $\flat$  chord would consist of: B $\flat$ , D, and F.

An E $\flat$  chord would consist of: E $\flat$ , G, and B $\flat$ .

I can hear most of you out there fussing, "What does this stuff have to do with *anything*?" Yes, I know, when you depress your chord bar it automatically gives you the chord you want, right? Well, perhaps you would like to cut a new chord bar for yourself. One that isn't available on a standard 'harp. If you know what notes you need in each chord, it is super easy to do this. Also, if you are working out a song that has some accidentals in the melody, you can come up with a way to get that particular note by using a chord that has that note in it. Of course, this necessitates some brain work on your part instead of the usual "by guess and by golly."

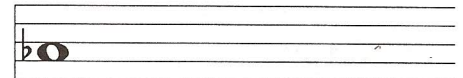
Now, just to make things a little more tricky, we have notes that are called "enharmonic." What this means is that they are the same pitch but are notated differently depending on what key they are in. For instance, in the key of E, the third note is a G $\sharp$ . Well, the very first note of the A $\flat$  scale is on that very same note, but now it is called an A $\flat$ . *Quit blaming me! It's not my fault!* It works out if you pay attention. Anyhow, let's say you have a song that you are playing in the key of F and they

suddenly throw the note A $\flat$  into the melody. If you don't have an A $\flat$  chord bar, how could you get that note? Well, one way is to pull it out from an open tuning. But if you feel safer using a chord, you need to know which chord has that note in it. Remember, an A $\flat$  is also a G $\sharp$ . An E chord has a G $\sharp$  in it but most people have the E7 instead of the E, so use that. The chord itself may sound just fine, but if it doesn't, you can carefully pull out just the G $\sharp$  (A $\flat$ ) for that melody note.

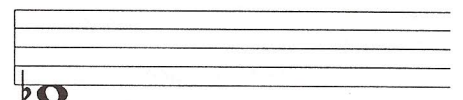
See, I told you there was a good reason for all this stuff. You will probably want to make yourself a little chart of all the notes in the chords. Wouldn't that be fun, kids? *Yea!*

So, your next scales will be the remaining scales using flats. They will be:

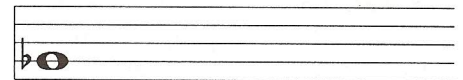
Key of A $\flat$



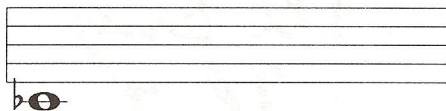
Key of D $\flat$



Key of G $\flat$



Key of C



Watch out for the last two scales. You will have a situation like you had in the keys of F# and C#. For instance, in the key of G $\flat$ , you will have to move a half step from B $\flat$  and you end up on B. Well, you can't have a B $\flat$  and a B in the same scale – everything must be kept in alphabetical order, so you must call the B a C. The same will happen in the key of C. It sounds confusing, but it really isn't. Just think of it this way. You call your mother "Mom," but someone else calls her "Mrs. Soandso." She is still the same person and you don't get confused about that, do you? You do? I should have known. You are pitiful.

Now, you will have finished all the Major scales and next time we will start working on the relative minors. Each major scale has a relative minor. Isn't that exciting? Doesn't that make you shiver with anticipation? A relative minor! Ooooooooooooo!

I would suggest that you get a tablet of manuscript paper (available at the music store) and write each scale that we have done into this book, starting with C, on a separate page. That way you will have all that stuff that we do with each separate scale on it's own page. Put your major scale on the top staff of the page and don't forget to put in the little whole and half steps. Right underneath that will be the relative minors (when we do them).

What? You don't want to do that? Then don't. What good are ya anyway?



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### Autoharping the Gospels

ISBN 0-7866-0496-4  
Author: Carol Stober  
Publisher: Mel Bay



# Club News

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## NEW CLUBS:

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### Ozark Wilderness Dulcimer Club

2nd Tuesday each month, 6:00 PM;  
High School, Joplin, MO; c/o Joyce &  
Lloyd Woods, Box 158 Crestline, KS  
66728 316 389-2377

### Angel Strings Autoharp Club

1st Monday of month, 6:00 PM - 9 PM;  
Home of Linda Huber; c/o Linda S.  
Huber, RD 3, Box 357, Hanover, PA  
17331 717 637-6857

### Rackensack Society of Pulaski

1st Monday of month, Art Center at  
McArthur Park, Little Rock, AR  
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## Club Telephone and Name Updates

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### 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  
817 387-4001

### Capital 'Harpers Autoharp Club

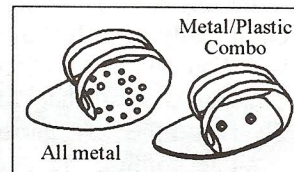
3rd weekend each month; c/o *Connie*  
& *Nathan Grace*; 7903 Central Park  
Circle, Alexandria, VA 22309  
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# I'll Buy That

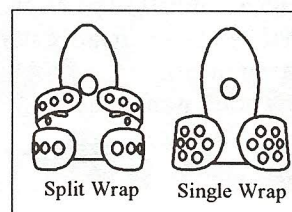
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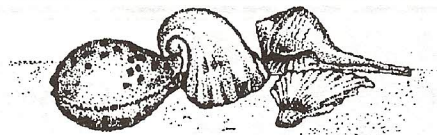
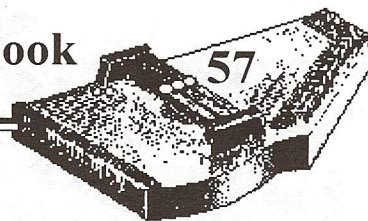
The most interesting variation is the split wrap versus the single wrap. The split wrap is particularly good for



people who have problems with the wrap digging into the cuticle.

In general, the picks were easily formed around the fingers and just plain felt good. These picks are a bit pricier than most, but the quality and comfort should more than make up for the added cost.

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## Blow the Man Down (3)

G G/[C G]G G G G/[C]G G//  
As I was a'-walk-ing down Pa - ra - dise Street,

G//C//D7 [G] D7 D7//  
Yo, ho! Blow the man down!

D7 D7 [G] D7 D7 D7 D7 D7 [G] D7 D7//  
A pret - ty young dam-sel I chanced for to meet,

D7 D7 D7 D7/D7 G/[D7] G G//  
Give me some time to blow the man down.

Chorus:  
G G/[C G] G G G/[C] G G//  
Oh blow the man down bul-lies, Blow the man down,

G//C//D7 [G] D7 D7//  
Yo, ho! Blow the man down,

D7 D7 [G] D7 D7 D7 D7 D7 [G] D7 D7//  
Oh blow the man down bul-lies, Blow him a - way,

D7 D7 D7 D7/D7 G/[D7] G G//  
Give me some time to blow the man down.

Verse 2.  
She hailed me with her flipper, I took her in tow,  
Yo, ho! Blow the man down,  
Yardarm to yardarm away we did go.  
Give me some time to blow the man down.

Chorus:

Verse 3.

As soon as that Packet was clear of the bar,  
Yo, ho! Blow the man down,  
The mate knocked me down with the end of a spar,  
Give me some time to blow the man down.

Chorus:

Verse 4.

Its yardarm to yardarm  
away you will sprawl,  
Yo, ho! Blow the man down,  
For kicking Jack Rogers  
commands the Black Ball.  
Give me some time  
to blow the man down.



## The Eddystone Light (2)

[D D] [D D] [D D] [D D] [D A7] [D D] G D  
Oh me fa-ther was the keep-er of the Ed-dy-stone Light,

[D D] G [G G] A7 A7 D D D  
And he mar-ried a mer-maid one fine night.

D D D G D G D/  
From this u-nion there came three,

G [G G] [A7 A7] [A7 A7] D D D  
Two lit-tle fish-ies and the third was me.

Chorus:  
[D D] A A A/[D] A7 A7 A7//  
Sing-in' yo, ho, ho! The wind blows free.

A7 [A7 A7] A7 [G A7] D D D  
Oh, for the life of the roll-in' sea!

Verse 2.  
One night, as I was a-trimmin' of the glim,  
Singin' a verse from the evenin' hymn,  
A voice on the starboard shouted "Ahoy!"  
And there was me mother, a-sittin' on a bouy.

Chorus:

Verse 3.

"Oh, where are the rest of my children three?"  
Me mother then she asked of me.  
"One's in a circus as a talkin' fish,  
And the other was served on a chafin' dish."

Chorus:

Verse 4.

Then the phosphorous flashed in her seaweed hair.  
I looked again, and me mother wasn't there.  
But her voice came a-echoin' in the night,  
"To hell with the keeper of the Eddystone Light!"

Chorus:

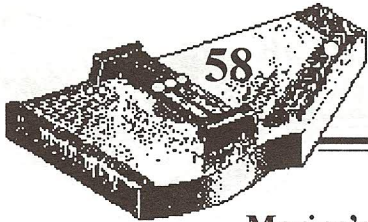
*This is an easy sea chantey. Repeat lines as indicated, keeping the tune constant, and fitting the words to the rhythm of the music.*

Lines 1-2, 3-4



Chorus:





# Autoharp Songbook

© 1996, Limberjack Productions

## Marine's Hymn (2)

▼  
[D D] D D A7 A7 D [/D] D  
From the halls of Mon-te - zu - ma

[D A7] D D A7 A7 D //  
To the shores of Trip-o - li

[D D] D D A7 A7 D [/D] D  
We will fight our coun-try's bat - tles,

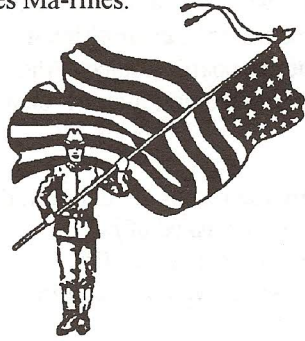
[D A7] D D A7 A7 D //  
On the land and on the sea.

[D A7] G G G G D [/G] D  
First to fight for right and free - dom,

[D A7] G G G G D /A7  
And to keep our hon-or clean:

[D D] D D A7 A7 D [/D] D  
We are proud to claim the ti - tle

[D A7] D D A7 A7 D //  
of U - ni-ted States Ma-rines.



## Anchors Aweigh (2)

▼  
C / C C Am [/ Am] Am /C / G7 G7 C ///  
An-chors a-weigh, my boys, An-chors a - weigh.

F / F F C F G7 C D7 D7 D7 D7 G GF G7  
Fare- well to col-lege joys, We sail at break of da - - y,

C / C C Am [/ Am] Am / C / G7 G7 C ///  
On our last night on shore, Drink to the foam

F / F F C F G7  
And till we meet once more,

C [C C] [D7 C] [G7 G7] [D7 G7] C ///  
Here's wish-ing you a hap-py voy-age home.

## Caissons Go Rolling Along (2)

▼  
[F F] F [FF] F [F F] [F Bb] [F F] F  
O-ver hill, o-ver dale, as we hit the dust-y trail

[F C7] [F C7] [/C7] [C7 C7] [/C7] F //  
And the cais-sons go roll-ing a - long.

[F F] F [F F] F [F F] [F Bb] [F F] F  
In and out, hear them shout, coun-ter march and right a -bout

[F C7] [F C7] [/C7] [C7 C7] [/C7] F //  
And the cais-sons go roll-ing a - long.

[F F] F F F [F F] [Bb C7] [Bb Bb] F /  
Then it's hi! hi! hee! in the field ar - til -ler -y

[Dm Dm] [/ Am] [Dm Am] [Dm Dm] C //  
Shout out your num-bers loud and strong.

[C C] F F C7 / [Bb C7] [Bb Bb] F  
For where-e'er you go, You will al -ways know

[F C7] [F C7] [/C7] [C7 C7] [/C7] F //  
That the cais-sons go roll-ing a - long.

## The Army Air Corps Song (2)

▼  
[C C] C / [G7 C G7] C F D7 C  
Up we go in -to the wild blue yon-der

[F F] F / [G7 F F] C ///  
Fly-ing high in -to the sun.

[C C] C / [G7 C G7] C F D7 C  
Here they come, zoom-ing to meet our thun-der

[G G] G / [D7 G] D7 G [G G G] G7 G7  
At-ta boy, give 'em the gun! (give 'em the gun, now)

[C C] C / [G7 C G7] C F D7 C  
Down we dive, spout-ing our flame from un-der,

[F F] F / [F G7 F] E7 //  
Off on one hell-u - va roar.

E7 Am [/ Am] D [D D] Dm [/Dm] F7 F7  
We live in fame or go down in flame, for

[C G7 C] [C C] [C C] G7 C ///  
Noth-ing can stop the Arm-y Air Corps!

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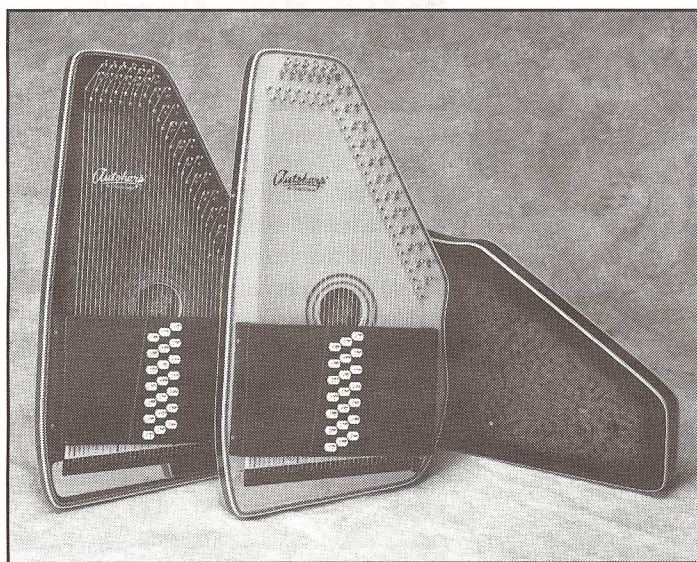
Being an innovator himself, Mr. Zimmerman would appreciate the Professional Series' *fine tuning system* and smooth-action chord assembly. He would also admire the traditional use of beautiful birdseye maple and spruce woods accented with abalone, hardwood or multi-ply bindings. Most of all, he would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

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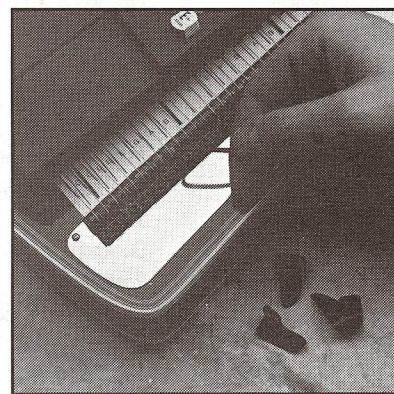
Left: OS110 Ozark with solid spruce back  
Right: OS115 Alpine with solid spruce top



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

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# 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**  
10691 N. Madsen  
Clovis, CA 93611  
209 297-8966  
Pro-File:  
AQ October 88  
Schedule:  
May 18-19  
Claremont Folk Festival  
Claremont, CA  
July 21-27  
Swannanoa Gathering  
Old-Time Week  
Swannanoa, NC  
July 26-August 2  
Kentucky Folk Week  
Louisville-  
Bardstown, KY

Klawock, AK  
May 17  
Craig City Gym  
Craig, AK  
June 14-16  
Live Oak  
Music Festival  
Santa Barbara, CA  
July 10  
Laurel Theater  
Knoxville, TN  
July 11  
Vino's  
Little Rock, AR  
July 12, 13  
Overton  
Bluegrass Festival  
Overton, TX

Swallow Hill  
Music Center  
Denver, CO  
June 21-23  
California Traditional  
Music Society Summer  
Solstice Festival  
Calabasas, CA

**WANDA DEGAN**  
1271 Deerpath Lane  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
517 337-2264

Pro-File: AQ July 90  
Schedule:  
May 10  
with Kitty Donohoe  
Cappucino Cafe  
Okemos, MI

May 23  
with Kitty Donohoe  
Cappucino Cafe  
East Lansing, MI  
June 1  
with Kitty Donohoe  
Cappucino Cafe  
Okemos, MI

June 6, 14, 20  
with Kitty Donohoe  
Cappucino Cafe  
East Lansing, MI

June 22  
with Catkin, a Celtic  
American Trio  
Ann Street Plaza  
East Lansing, MI  
July 2  
with Catkin, a Celtic  
American Trio  
Montague Band Shell  
Montague, MI

**PAUL and WIN  
GRACE and FAMILY**  
11990 Barnes Chapel  
Columbia, MO 65201  
573 443-2819

Pro-File:  
AQ October 88  
Schedule:  
May 4  
Lake Street Church  
Evanston, IL  
May 14  
"Paul Pepper Show"  
9-10 am KOMU-TV  
Columbia, MO  
May 18, 19

Le Fete a Renault  
Old Mines, MO

May 26  
Arrow Rock, MO  
June 1, 2  
Good Ole Days  
Fort Scott, KS  
June 8, 9

Fort Ridgely Festival  
near Fairfax, MN  
June 15  
Focal Point  
Webster Groves, MO  
June 21  
Sam A. Baker State Park  
near Patterson, MO

June 22  
Lake Wappapello  
State Park  
Poplar Bluff, MO  
June 23

Bollinger Mill State  
Historic Site  
Burfordville, MO  
June 28-30  
Indiana Fiddler's  
Gathering  
Battleground, IN  
July 11-14

Winnipeg Folk Festival  
Bird's Hill Park  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
July 28  
Shelter Gardens  
Columbia, MO

**LES  
GUSTAFSON-ZOOK**  
1316 SE 35th Street  
Portland, OR 97214  
503 235-3094

Pro-File: AQ April 94  
Schedule:

May 19  
Albany  
Mennonite Church  
Albany, OR  
May 25-27  
Northwest  
Folklife Festival  
Seattle, WA

June 18  
Woodstock  
Public Library  
Portland, OR

July 4-6  
Mountain Laurel  
Autoharp Gathering  
Newport, PA



**ALAN MAGER** is the 1993 International Autoharp Champ, and the only player to have taken 3rd, 2nd, and 1st places in that competition in successive years. He has also taken 2nd and 3rd place honors in the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Championship. In addition to his playing skills, Alan is much in demand as an instructor. He has presented workshops at numerous venues including the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering, Augusta, Winfield, Stringalong Weekend, the Washington Folk Festival, and the Cranberry Dulcimer Gathering. Alan has been on the staff of *Autoharp Quarterly* as Interaction Editor since 1989. He

has also contributed musical arrangements and articles to other publications. He plays a wide variety of music on both chromatic and diatonic instruments, as demonstrated in his solo album "The Fairhaired Boy." His new album, "Hear the Colors," will be released later this year and will feature everything from O'Carolan to tunes from the ragtime era. For more information: Alan Mager  
PO Box 1221  
Annandale, VA 22003  
703 256-1068  
Schedule:  
July 26-28  
Cranberry Dulcimer  
Gathering  
Binghamton, NY

**KAREN MUELLER**  
PO Box 80565  
Minneapolis,  
MN 55408  
612 649-4493  
Pro-File:  
AQ January 90  
Schedule:

June 8  
Folklore Center  
Warrenville, IL  
June 9  
Celebration of the Arts  
Elmhurst, IL  
June 28-30  
Old Songs Festival  
Guilford, NY  
July 29-August 2  
Augusta Heritage  
Arts Center  
Elkins, WV

**STANLEY A. RANSOM**  
*The Connecticut Peddler*  
39 Broad Street  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901  
518 563-5719  
Pro-File: AQ Winter 95  
Schedule:  
July 20  
Essex Maritime Festival  
Essex, NY



**ANITA ROESLER**

823 NW 43rd Street  
Oklahoma City,  
OK 73118  
405 524-5334

Pro-File: AQ April 91

Schedule:

July 5-7

Summerfest  
Carthage, MO

**JANET SCHREINER**

*The Cats Pajamas*  
514 Ballytore Road  
Wynnewood,  
PA 19096

215 649-0732

Pro-File:

AQ January 92

Schedule:

June 7

Rosegarden  
Children's Festival  
Bethlehem, PA

June 8

Main Line Art Center  
Children's Art Festival  
Haverford, PA

July 1

Upper Dublin Library  
Summer Reading  
Program

Fort Washington, PA

July 4

Pennywynne  
Civic Association

July 4 Celebration

Wynnewood, PA

July 8

Lansdale Park &  
Recreation Department  
Lansdale, PA

July 19

Lansdowne  
Recreation Department  
Lansdowne, PA

July 24

Easttown Library &  
Recreation Program  
Berwyn, PA

**TOM SCHROEDER**

819 W. 77th Street  
Kansas City,  
MO 64114

Pro-File:

AQ October 88

Schedule:

June 14-15

Bloomsday Festival  
Kansas City, MO

June 21-23

California Traditional  
Music Society Summer  
Solstice Festival  
Calabasas, CA

**BILL & LAURIE SKY**

PO Box 70060

Nashville,

TN 37207-0060

615 859-1419

Pro-File: AQ April 90

Schedule:

May 5

Pohick Bay Church  
Lorton, VA

May 7

North Tazewell  
Elementary School  
Tazewell, VA

May 18

Winning Way

Auditorium  
Bossier City, LA

May 19

Shreveport, LA

June 1

Bell Buckle Cafe  
Bell Buckle, TN

June 2

Canaan Baptist Church  
Ashland, MS

June 3

Silver Dollar City  
Folk Music Festival  
Branson, MO

June 7-8

Animas River  
Music Festival

Farmington, NM

June 9

Kingman, AZ

June 21

Loveland, CO

June 23

Crossroads  
Baptist Church

Rose Lake  
(Couer d'Alene), ID

June 24-26

Enumclaw, WA

June 28-30

Burns Lake  
Bluegrass Festival

Burns Lake,  
British Columbia

July 27-28

Cripple Creek  
Music Festival  
Morden, Manitoba

**DREW SMITH**

529 Ardmore Road  
Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423  
201 444-2833

Pro-File: AQ July 89

Schedule:

May 24-26

Philadelphia  
Folk Festival  
"Spring Thing"

Greenlane, PA

June 8-9

"Birds of a Feather"  
Festival

Westbrook, ME

July 26-28

Cranberry  
Dulcimer Gathering  
Binghamton, NY

**FRAN STALLINGS**

1406 Macklyn Lane

Bartlesville,

OK 74006-5419

918 333-7390

Pro-File: AQ April 92

Schedule:

May 5

Unitarian Fellowship  
Lawton, OK

May 11-12

International  
Mozart Festival

Bartlesville, OK

May 31-June 2

Sunfest  
Bartlesville, OK

June 5

South Broken Arrow  
Library

Broken Arrow, OK

June 13

Harvard Library  
Gamett Library

Tulsa, OK

June 17

Bartlesville Library  
Bartlesville, OK

June 29

Cat Collectors National  
Conference Dinner

Detroit, MI

July 1

Ann Arbor  
Public Library

Ann Arbor, MI

July 5-6

Ozark Dulcimer  
Festival

Carthage, MO

**CAROL STOBER**

*Maiden Heaven Band*  
Box 1275  
Talladega, AL 35160

205 362-6471

Pro-File:

AQ October 88

Schedule:

May 10

Hill Elementary

Arts Fair

Mumford, AL

**ALEX USHER**

216 N. Elm Avenue  
Webster Groves, MO

63119-2420

314 961-8631

Pro-File: AQ Winter 96

Schedule:

May 24-27

UW-Milwaukee Folk  
Center Stringalong

Weekend

East Troy, WI

July 4-7

Mountain Laurel  
Autoharp Gathering

Newport, PA

**CHARLES WHITMER**

25650 IH 45N #1107

Spring, TX 77386

713 367-6260

(evenings)

Pro-File: AQ April 93

Schedule:

May 11-12

Lone Star State  
Dulcimer Festival

Glen Rose, TX

June 3-6

New Player/Beginner  
Autoharp Week

Mountain View, AR

June 10-13

Intermediate  
Autoharp Week

Mountain View, AR

June 22-27

Summer Stringalong  
Williams Bay, WI

July 4-7

Mountain Laurel  
Autoharp Gathering

Newport, PA

July 26-27

Summer Acoustic  
Music Festival

Houston, TX

# Breakin' Tradition



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## ROZ BROWN

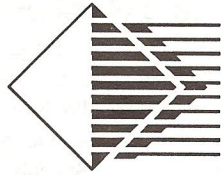
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# Interaction



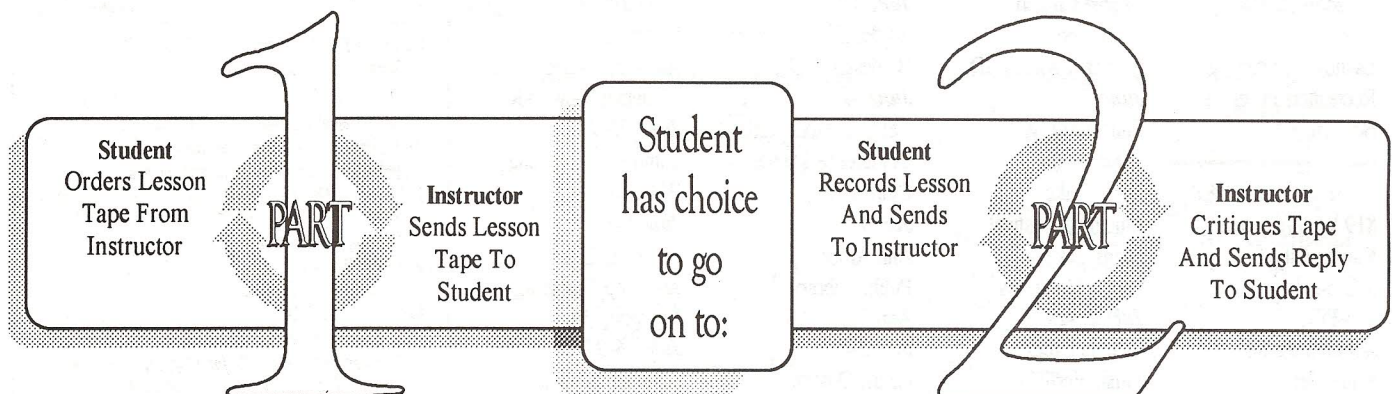
## YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERACTIVE LESSON WITH MARY UMBARGER

**M**ary Umbarger has been playing autoharp since 1989 and now plays with "The Front Porch Strings." This group has recorded *As You Like It*. As a soloist, Mary performs in her area for many different functions.

Mary won first place in the autoharp competition at Galax, Virginia and also in the instrumental category at the North Carolina State Fair in 1985. She has taken second and third places in the autoharp contest at Fiddlers Grove in Mt. Airy, North Carolina, as well as being a finalist in the International Autoharp Championship in Winfield, Kansas in 1994. As a teacher, Mary is often called upon to give workshops in addition to her private lessons for autoharp and piano.

A highlight for Mary was performing on the TV series *Music in the Mountains* where she played a 30-minute set. This was followed by a set with a classical harpist.

Mary is married and has a son and four grandchildren. She says that one of her greatest loves is being associated with the super folk that she meets via the autoharp.



*Are you interested in becoming an Interaction instructor? We'd like to hear from you.  
For information, write to Alan Mager, PO Box 1221, Annandale, VA 22003*

## HERE'S HOW THE INTERACTION TWO-PART FORMAT WORKS

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### Part Two

Record your rendition of the lesson on the reverse side of the tape along with any questions, and return it to the instructor with an additional check for

\$8. The instructor will listen to your recording and following it will critique your playing, answer you questions and, if necessary, demonstrate the lesson further. The instructor will mail the tape back to you. You will receive your personalized reply in 3 to 4 weeks.

## THE INTERACTION LESSON "DA SLOCKIT LIGHT"

Mary Umbarger • 144 Umbarger Road • Harmony, NC 28634

*Da Slockit Light* is the song I chose to use in one of the "Learn-A-Song" workshops at the 1995 Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering. It was so well received that I thought those who missed it might like a chance to learn it.

The evolution of a folk song is most amazing! It's like the old game of "Gossip," in which a statement, perhaps "Ivan loves to hear Mary play a tune," is whispered to a player at a jam session. After being passed on via whispering from player to player until all have heard, it is understood as, "Ivan says Mary plays like a goon!"

*Da Slockit Light* is one such misunderstood song. The fiddle player in our group, "The Front Porch Strings," brought this back from a Scottish fiddle workshop at the Loch Normon Scottish Games. She was told that it was written by Tom Anderson and Ed Pearlman in memory of Tom's wife.

Recently, I have learned, through a write-up on this song, that it was written as a result of Tom having visited the small island where he grew up. Finding it abandoned, he wrote of the "light going out on his boyhood home." Oh well, it is certainly a lovely, slow, Scottish aire, and with the harmony, is hauntingly beautiful on the autoharp.

Some of you have your own "method" for learning a new song. Just in case you need to adopt one, I'll tell you what works for me. I firmly contend that *how* you learn a song is the factor that separates a great musical outcome from a mediocre one!

My first step – always – is to learn

the tune – I listen, I hum, I sing. I listen more – over and over until I finally don't even have to think about how it goes.

If this is a song on which there are no chords written, I then work out the chording. Then I practice *slowly*, a section (phrase) at a time, until I have it to a comfortable level and then go on to the next section.

After the entire piece is learned at a slow tempo, I then progress to the correct tempo. By learning a song like this, there are few times I have to re-learn some part because I'm playing the wrong melody note. This works nine out of ten times for me – try it! Now, let's get into the nuts and bolts of *Da Slockit Light*.

Part A Melody has a nice pitch range and shouldn't give any problems. Remember to keep it slow and sweet. Part B Melody has a high "A," so be sure you reach the correct string.

The light thumb/finger brush is a beautiful sound. Practice this stroke until the thumb brush is extremely light or you will have a heavy sound.

Part A and B Harmony can be a challenge if you are a "stuck-in-the-middle-of-your-'harp" player. This will most definitely get you playing those neglected strings. The harmony notes go from bottom bass strings to, again, the high "A." I found, when learning

this piece, that the low note gives the most grief because we normally do not play melody notes that low. It's a great training exercise and you'll be proud when you have it mastered.

Find a partner, practice, learn. I hope to hear *Da Slockit Light* at the 1996 Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering jams!

### TABLATURE

T = Thumb  
M = Middle finger  
I = Index finger

↑  
T = Upward thumb strum

↓  
I = Downward finger flick  
(always with index finger)

M  
↓  
T = Pinch with thumb  
and middle finger

M  
↑  
T = Lightly brush thumb as it meets the middle finger in a pinch. No more than 10-12 strings are used including coming up with thumb and down with middle finger.

↑  
T = Long strum – used at end of Part B only

A7  
○ = Indicates diatonic open chord. Chromatic players should ignore this throughout and press bar down.

○  
M = Finger pluck with middle finger

○  
I = Finger pluck with index finger

○ = Sustain. No action taken.





Ed Pearlman

PART A - Harmony

Musical notation for Part A, first system. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff are guitar chords and a TAB line with fret numbers and pick directions.

Chords: D A7, D, / / /, / A7 D A7 D /, G / D /, G D A7 D A / G A

Musical notation for Part A, second system. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. The staff contains a melodic line. Below the staff are guitar chords and a TAB line.

Chords: D / / /, / / / /, G / / A /, D

PART B

Musical notation for Part B, first system. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 7/8 time signature. The staff contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. Below the staff are guitar chords and a TAB line.

Chords: A7, D, A, Bm, A, Bm A, Bm, A, E7, A, A7

Musical notation for Part B, second system. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 7/8 time signature. The staff contains a melodic line. Below the staff are guitar chords and a TAB line.

Chords: D / A7 /, Bm, A7 Bm A7 G D, G / / A /, D, A7

Musical notation for Part B, third system. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 7/8 time signature. The staff contains a melodic line. Below the staff are guitar chords and a TAB line.

Chords: D / A /, Bm / G / D, G / D /, G A / / G A

Musical notation for Part B, fourth system. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 7/8 time signature. The staff contains a melodic line. Below the staff are guitar chords and a TAB line.

Chords: D / / /, / A7 D A D /, G / / A A7, D

## The Use of

# LAVALIERE MICROPHONES

## with the Autoharp

by Lindsay Haisley

The autoharp sounds weird! No, don't shoot me! I didn't say it didn't sound nice, just that it sounds weird. I'm not talking from the point of view of an audient (the singular of "audience"), but from the point of view of a sound technician who is also a performer who cares about the way the instrument sounds when amplified or recorded – a reality in most performances since the invention of the PA system back before most of us were born.

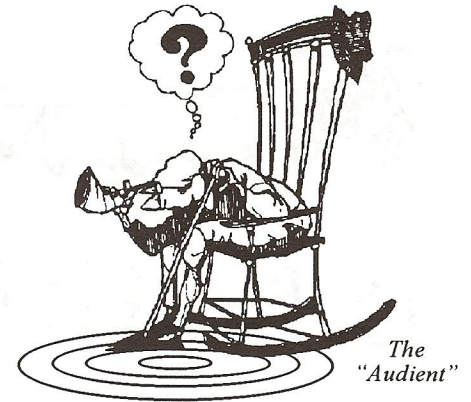
So having stuck my neck out, let me qualify myself a bit. An instrument such as a trombone is easy to amplify. Just stick a microphone at a reasonable distance in front of the bell and you've got it. A guitar is a little more difficult, but still a question of where to place a microphone in front of the instrument to get the truest sound.

The autoharp is a horse of a different color in many respects. By nature, it's a quiet instrument compared to most stringed instruments. Its voice comes frequently from both its front and back. What comes off of the front of the instrument is mixed with the sounds of picks (if one uses them) and the sounds of the chord bar action, which varies with the quality and make of the instrument. So where does one put a microphone in order to best reproduce the sound of the instrument? In recording sessions, I have often used a mix of microphones, one in front of the instrument (the pick noises can give a sense of presence to the amplified sound) and one in back, over my left shoulder, so that it picks up something of the back sound of the instrument which often has a smoother quality than the sound from the instrument front. This works well for recording, but is an impractical solution for per-

forming where the freedom to move around stage can be important. For many years, the solution which I adopted was to use a combination of a front microphone and an OS electronic pickup. The latter can, and in fact must be equalized to produce a pleasing sound, but with this done, a magnetic electronic pickup can produce a rich, full sound with a deep and true bass, something lacking in the acoustic sound of the instrument owing to its geometry and small size.

I'd been listening to Bryan Bowers for many years, and had done guest spots on his shows in the Seattle area and talked to him about my pickup/mike arrangement. "It makes the autoharp sound like an organ," I told him. "I don't want it to sound like an organ, I want it to sound like an autoharp," he replied. Bryan relies heavily on a Sony lavalier microphone fastened to his chest. It's a good microphone and makes his 'harps sound pretty good too. When I got my first Orthey Instruments autoharp I decided to take advantage of the superior tone and voice of the instrument and see what I could do along the same lines. I was not disappointed.

Lavalier microphones are generally used for amplifying speech, although they're often used for singers as well. They're made to be hung on a tie or pinned on one's chest or collar and be unobtrusive while still faithfully reproducing vocal sound as would a larger conventional front microphone. While you can buy a cheap lavalier mike at Radio Shack for \$30 or so, one generally gets what one pays for with these little microphones, just as with any other microphone. A good lavalier microphone will cost in the neighborhood of \$200 – similar in cost



to any quality microphone. The active element in these microphones is usually a small condenser element, meaning that an external power supply is required for the microphone. One usually has the choice of using "phantom power" – provided by the unit into which the microphone is plugged, or a battery power pack which has to be kept supplied with a good battery and worn on one's belt or autoharp strap. Although the battery power pack is less convenient, one can by no means count on all sound systems to provide power to microphones. Although this is becoming more common on modern sound systems, many cheaper systems and many of the good older systems aren't capable of powering a microphone, so the battery system is a sure bet. The output of good lavalier microphones, like that of all quality microphones, is low impedance, requiring an XLR (3 prong) socket or an adapter to a high impedance socket if required.

These little microphones are generally about the size of a slip-on pencil eraser and come provided with various clips and pins for fastening onto clothing, strap, or whatever is convenient. Because one's lungs constitute a "resonant cavity," such a microphone is generally engineered to compensate for the acoustics of being close to one's chest.

Use of a lavalier microphone with an autoharp is not difficult, but does require a bit of planning. The microphone needs to be close to the back of the 'harp, but needs to be kept from banging into it as the instrument is moved. As with most microphones, wind screens are available for lavalier microphones and are often provided as part of the kit with a good microphone. There's generally not much wind be-

tween one's chest and one's autoharp, but these screens are made of soft foam which can cushion contact with the back of a 'harp quite nicely. Soft, acoustically transparent foam is also available from good music stores and can be used for the same purpose.

Placement of a lavalier microphone offers some choices. Some performers prefer to fasten the microphone to his or her chest about four inches below the left shoulder. I have my lavalier mike (a Shure SM84) clipped to a slit in my strap so that it's always within an inch or two of the back of my instrument, pointed toward it. Lavalier microphones generally have a "supercardioid" pattern – most sensitivity in front and very little in back – which gives them good noise and feedback rejection qualities.

The strongest sound from the back of a 'harp is from the middle of the instrument, so the best combination of 'harp and microphone placement generally involves holding one's 'harp fairly high. A little experimentation here will help you find the right combination.

I've been very satisfied with my Shure SM84 microphone, and found it better in many respects than other amplification schemes I've used, although I still like the sound of my electric pickup when combined with a front microphone. A lavalier mike has the advantage of extreme simplicity – almost too much in some ways, since one has little or no control over volume or tone without stopping to commune with the sound technician during a performance. The sound is *good*, with rich bass and smooth tone over pretty much the full range of the instrument.

If you're interested in trying out a lavalier microphone, a good music store which deals in musical electronics should be able to help you out. If at all possible, try before you buy. Bring your 'harp with a strap and be prepared to put some holes or slits in your strap to try out different placements. Don't settle for second-class quality in your microphone. Consider major brands (Sony, Audio-Technica, Shure, etc.) which are known for quality. Select a battery powered microphone rather than a phantom powered microphone (unless you *always* plan to plug into a sound system which can provide microphone power). I guarantee that you'll like what you and your audiences will hear. ❖

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# Kidstock

by Bonnie Phipps

Hay, there! Ready for another song? This is a song I wrote, and I perform it with my band, "The Elastic Band." It's also on my recording, "Monster's Holiday." (I know, I'm shameless, but it's a great tape. It won two national awards!) When I was a kid, I always had a

best friend. Do you have a best friend? This song has chord movements to make it "swing." It's arranged here somewhat the way it's played on my recording, and is approximately at an intermediate level. Hint: you can make it swing more by taking this strum pattern:  $\uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow$  and *slightly stopping* (S) the chord after the second and fourth beats of each measure. For instance, in the first measure of the song, after you strum the second beat, then slightly (but not completely) stop the C chord by pressing

the next chord your are to play (F) on the upbeat of that second beat. Do not strum yet, just press the chord. This gives a stopping sound, but doesn't completely blank out the strings. Then strum the F chord on the third and fourth beats. Keep this up, and you'll get a para/suito swing sound. It looks like this on the tab:  $\uparrow \uparrow(s) \uparrow \uparrow(s)$  (The next issue will have a song that is very easy to play - I promise!) Does this all make sense, or am I speaking in tongues? Good luck!

## BEST FRIENDS

Lively rock beat with drive  
To be sung an octave lower

Bonnie Phipps

C / F / G / F / C / F / G / F /

TAB

C / F / G / F / C / F / G / F /

1. Best friends, we're al - ways to - ge - ther. Best friends, birds of a fea - ther. Like  
2. Best friends, we're al - ways to - ge - ther. Best friends, birds of a fea - ther. -

TAB

*poco rit. - legato* C / / / C7 / / / F / / / *rit.* Bb

ta - bles and chairs, - forks and spoons - . We be - long to - ge - ther like the sun and the mo - on,  
I'll wear your red socks, you wear my blue, - - You pre - tend you're me - and I'll pretend I'm you -

TAB

*a tempo* Bb / / C / F / G / F / C / F /

'cause we're best friends - - :  
'cause we're best friends - - :

TAB





G / C / F / C / F / C / F /

If I were the wind -,  
If I were the sun - shine,

you could be the kite.  
you could be the flow - er.

TAB ↑ ↑(S) - - ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

C / F / G / C / G / C / G / Bb F

If you were the stars -,  
If you were the mi - nutes - ,

I could be the night.  
I could be the hour.

If you were the  
If I were a

TAB ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

C / F / C / F / C / F / C / F /

leaves -,  
pic - nic,

I could be the tree.  
you could be the ants.

TAB ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

G / / / G7 / / / G / / / 1 C / F /

If you were a boat -, then  
If you were the mu - sic, then

I could be the sea,  
I could be the dance,

'cause we're  
'cause we're

TAB ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ - - - :

2 C / F / G / F / C / F / G / F /

Best friends, we're al - ways to - ge - ther - .

Best friends, birds of a fea - ther - .

TAB ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

32 *AQ* *poco rit. - legato*

C	C7	F	<i>rit.</i> Bb
I like you,	you like me,	That's the way it'-ll	al - ways be -.
TAB	TAB	TAB	TAB
↑ — — —	↑ — — —	↑ — — —	↑ — — —

*a tempo*

Bb / /	C / F /	G / F /	C / F /
'Cause we're	best friends		
TAB	TAB	TAB	TAB
↑(S) ↑(S) ↑ —	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

G / F /	C / F /	G / F /	C / F /
um um	best friends,		best friends...
TAB	TAB	TAB	TAB
↑ ↑ ↑ ↑	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

G / F /	C / F /	G /
um um	best friends,	
TAB	TAB	TAB
↑ ↑ ↑ ↑	↑ ↑ ↑ ↑	↑ ↑(S)



Music, words, arrangement © by Bonnie Phipps

### ABOUT THE TAB

Arpeggio. Play the chord slowly, sounding every string, making a harp-like sound.

(S) Stop the sound of the chord right away by pressing about three chord bars down at the same time.

— This signifies a silent beat. For example, ↑ — — — means strum the chord and then let it ring for three more beats.

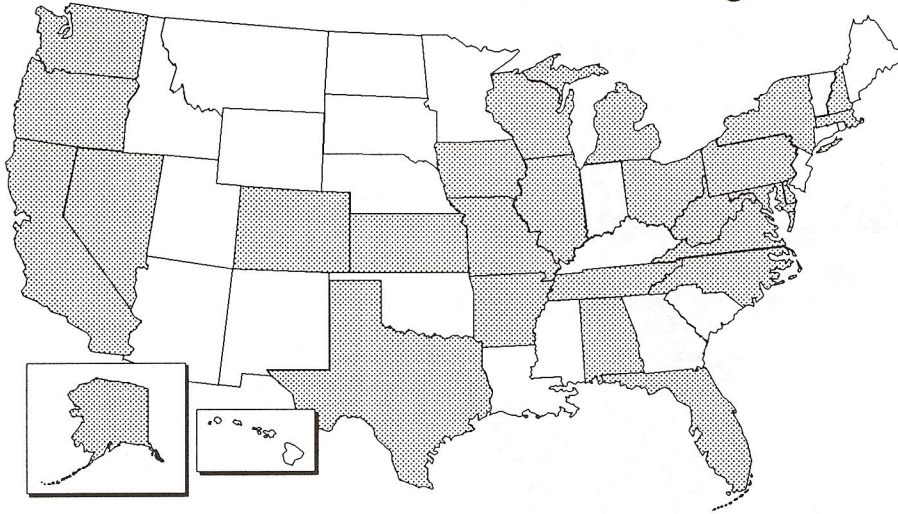
↓ Shows that the *strum* is on the upbeat. When a *note* is to be played on the upbeat, it looks like this —○. And  
 ↑↓↑ means that the strum begins on the “&” of the second beat and strums the down beat of the third and fourth beats in that measure.

This shows the movement of the strum on the strings. This strum pattern begins in the bass area of the strings, and moves up to the high area and then back down again for the last strum.

↑(S) ↑(S) ↑ This measure occurs in the arrangement. On the first beat, strum and then completely stop the sound. On the second beat, do the same thing. On the third beat, strum and let it ring through the fourth beat. It should give a “bahp bahp baaaaaah” sound.

P.S. You can get a cassette lesson of me playing the autoharp tab on “Best Friends” 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.

# 'Harpers-At-Large



*On-Site Reports of Concerts, Workshops, Festivals, and Other Major Autoharp Events*



**Bryan Bowers Concert**  
Place: Grinnell College, IA  
Reporting: Dora Miller  
Newton, IA

On the very cold winter night of January 22, the Grinnell College students returned to college from their winter break to a very warm and enjoyable concert by Bryan Bowers, sponsored by the Iowa Arts Council.

Bryan started his program by playing several songs on his mandocello. One of my favorites was *The Old, Old House*. There was no question at the end of this concert that the autoharp can be played in any style of music, from a fast fiddle tune like *The Red Haired Boy*, to a hornpipe, to the classical *Ode to Joy*. Everyone enjoyed *Dog*, singing the round, *I'm a Poor Boy*, *Walking to Jeru-salem*, and the slow ballads, *Old Lovers* and *Hard Times* were also well received by everyone.

All too soon the concert was over, and it was time to brave the cold, but the concert gave us warm feelings in our hearts.



**Ivan Stiles Workshop**  
Place: Naples, FL  
Reporting: Mary Costello  
Newfane, NY

My sister, Pat Koger, came from Terre Haute, Indiana, for a visit with us in Florida. The day before she came,

she received her winter copy of *AQ*, and in it was Ivan's schedule for Florida in February. He was to play in a cafe in Sarasota on a Friday evening, two days after she arrived. Since Sarasota is only 20 miles from us, we drove up to hear him. When we arrived, we learned he wasn't scheduled until 9 PM. There had been a terrible accident on the south-bound lane, and we knew there would be a delay of up to two hours in returning home, so we couldn't wait for the performance. But, we saw his van and waited for him to return. We knocked on his door, and he most graciously invited us in. We no more than sat down, and he offered to play for us. We didn't even have to ask. My husband doesn't play the autoharp, but he enjoyed it as much as we did. It was a wonderful private concert.

The following Sunday, Ivan was having a workshop in Naples, 80 miles from us. This was to be held in the home of Mark Lindner. We called

Mark, and he told us we could attend. So, on Sunday, Pat and I drove to Naples for a wonderful afternoon. Ivan is a great teacher, and anyone who attends one of his workshops is bound to learn to play the autoharp. All of this happened because Pat received her *AQ* the day before she came to Florida.

Thank you, Mark, for opening your home to us for the workshop, and thank you, Ivan, for your help and your beautiful music. It was an experience we will never forget.



**Bryan Bowers Concert**  
Place: Bellingham, WA  
Reporting: Rob Lopresti  
Bellingham, WA

Bryan Bowers played to a standing-room-only crowd at the Roeder Home on February 28 as part of the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society series. I was in the second row. Watching someone like him I don't know whether to be inspired by what a 'harp can do or depressed by the fact that mine never will. Oh well.

Bowers played the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* and, just as on one of his albums, he went finger by finger explaining what each of his digits was doing. At the end of the tune I turned to my friend, who also plays the autoharp and said: "Now you can go home and do it just like him!" She didn't believe me.

Reminds me of the time someone told Donald E. Westlake it must be easy for him to write mystery novels; he just had to follow a formula. "I'll give you a formula for running a four minute mile," he replied. "Run each quarter in less than a minute."

Bryan continues to run rings around most of us. ❖

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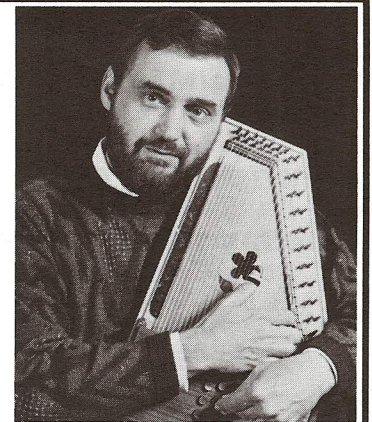
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# Picker's Portrait

Jack Bourdess  
Bellevue ❖ Nebraska



**M**y musical career began early. I was singing three part harmony with my sisters when I was ten, and my youngest sister was five years old. Joy was too little to read the part, so mother taught her by rote. We were singing in churches and on the radio at an early age.

In high school, I played French horn and won a scholarship to the college of music in Cincinnati. I also studied horn with Mr. Schnable. He said that the horn saved his life. He had been in the German army in the first world war, and was taken out of the trenches to play in a military band in Berlin. He was also a fine zitherist. He got me my first zither and gave me lessons on that instrument as well.

Now this narrative speeds up.

Three years in the Air Force, six years in college, 21 years with the Omaha symphony, and 38 years teaching music in public schools. I'm now retired. How time flies!

Here in Omaha, I met Mr. Scharber who had been a professional zitherist in his youth. I studied with him for a while, but the poor man was in his dotage, and he got mixed up sometimes. He kept saying, "Just be patient – the zither is coming back!" He died and the zither still is not back.

Now comes a bad time. Because of a debilitating illness, I can no longer play the horn. It is very hard to give up something that has been your very life. My whole musical world collapsed. So, if wind instruments are no longer possible, there are a lot of stringed instruments I can look into. I studied viola for a year – studied harp for a year and a half. I play mountain dulcimer, hammered dulcimer, Koto, recorder, and of course, the zither. I own 13 zithers!

Last summer I attended an autoharp class taught by Charles Whitmer. He is a wonderful teacher and player. He changed my thinking about the autoharp. Now I own three autoharps. This is my latest musical activity.

I just got back from Chicago where I played a concert with the Chicago Zither Club. Next month, some of my harp students and I perform here in Bellevue. I'm playing harp with a horn-playing buddy of mine. I sing in a folk singers group and with the shaped note singers in Omaha. So I still have a lot of musical activity.

I'd like to start an autoharp group in Omaha. There's a zither club in Nebraska – we have five members. We all live in the eastern part of the state and get together two times a year. There are folk harpists in Omaha, some of them my students, but they aren't organized yet. I'd like to study banjo, classical guitar, or do some composing and arranging. There just isn't enough time to do it all, but I try! ❖

# Oscar Schmidt

## 1879 – 1975

written by Glen R. Peterson  
in 1975

*This series of articles is 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 are copied verbatim, and are interlaced with each other, allowing the articles to follow a chronological order as much as is possible. The words 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 Electroharp that had been made for Sears Roebuck Company had a microphone for amplification, creating problems with noise from chord bars. A magnetic pickup was clearly in order and experiments began.*

*The most significant change ever to be made in the physical design of the Autoharp came in mid-1967 with the first "B-model" harps. An ad in the September 1967 issue of Music Educators Journal proudly announced that the Autoharp had "been completely redesigned." There were four major changes in the B-model Autoharps: 1) The pin block was laminated maple, originally 4-ply, but later increased to 8-ply; 2) The strings no longer went around the end of the Autoharp to hook over the end pins. A slotted aluminum string anchor was fitted into a special groove routed into the lower frame of the harp; 3) The upper sound-board bridge was replaced by individual guide posts (bridge pins) for each string; 4) The tuning pins no longer slanted backwards at an angle,*

### Part Four

*but were perpendicular to the sound-board. A new machine accurately drilled all 72 holes for the tuning pins and guide posts at the same time... efficiently and precisely.*

*The new B-model harps came in the same four styles as the previous A-model harps: 12-chord, two types of 15-chord standard models, and the 15-chord "Appalachian" model. Only the Appalachian model had a sound-hole.*

*Special A-model harps were still produced for Sears and Wards. In 1968 Sears started using their own "Silver-tone" brand logo on the harps. In 1972 Sears began to offer the B-model harps in their general catalogs, and no more A-model harps were made. Wards also used their own "Airline" brand on their special A-model harps during this period. Special blackbody B-model harps were made for J. C. Penny, and Autoharps were also offered in the Spiegel catalog.*

*During 1967-68 the solid-body electric models were developed and ready for the consumer market. On January 25, 1967, Summit Musical Instruments was incorporated. A brochure explained the purpose of the new company:*

*"Instruments like these, and a market potential that big, called for the formation of a new marketing organization. Summit Musical Instruments is it. Summit will market these Autoharps exclusively through musical instrument retailers. They will not be sold through any other outlets. Our goal is to build a dealer organization composed of wide awake hustlers who see the potential in these instruments and then go out and get fat selling them."*

*Patent number 3,499,357 (filed July 21, 1967, and issued March 10, 1970) shows the Cutlass model with two pickups: one bass and one treble.*

*Both the Cutlass and the single pickup Lancer were 21-chord models. They were the first to be introduced with the new interchangeable chord bars and plastic chord bar cover. The less-popular and more expensive Cutlass model was dropped in the early seventies.*

*Two other patents were applied for and successfully granted: One was the logical follow-up to the new electric Autoharps, and another was for a specially designed styrofoam carrying case.*

*Both the pickup accessory and the styrofoam case appear in the 1969 brochure for the new "BH" model Autoharps. For all practical purposes, the BH models were simply B-models which now had sound-holes in them. The sound-hole breakthrough was attributed to the discovery of the trademarked "Acoustiwood," which one can only assume comes from "Acousti-trees" and is naturally suited for the making of "Acousti-instruments." This hard maple made it possible to completely eliminate the internal structural braces. The air cavity was thus enlarged to its maximum, and the sound-board and back could oscillate separately. The Appalachian, of course, already had a sound-hole, but the sound-board was changed from spruce to maple and the interior braces removed. The first acoustic/electric instrument was offered as an option for the Appalachian 15-chord BH model, bringing the Autoharp line to five models.*

*Advertisements were not as frequent after 1969, the feeling of the company being that they weren't effective, and most promotion efforts were done by direct mail from that time until 1978. Much of the company's energy in the early seventies was spent in dealing with the newly introduced ChromAharp. The ChromAharp was a Japanese import that was distributed in the United States by Rhythm Band,*

Inc. at prices substantially below the Schmidt Autoharp. The ChromAharp was the first serious competitor to the Autoharp brand and had an immediate effect on Autoharp sales, particularly in the large educational market.

Peterson's response was to diversify the product line and to do that by going into direct competition with his ChroAharp tormentors. A new company would enter the school marketing field – and Schmidt would build many of its products.

On January 12, 1971, another corporation was formed, Music Education Group, more commonly known by its acronym, MEG. McKay designed the logo and laid out the catalog, and MEG in a very few months became a power in the school marketing business. MEG Autoharps were identical to all others. The only difference was that they had a MEG logo rather than the regular Schmidt logo. Many of these MEG harps found their way into the recreational music market when school teachers sold them to friends, or bought them for friends at a school discount through the MEG catalog.

MEG was formed to diversify "Oscar" and make full use of the factory. "Oscar" made most of the products for MEG, but MEG was a separate company aimed directly at music educators. It carried a full line of school musical instruments, including the ever-popular classroom Autoharp. MEG permitted Schmidt to experiment with various models to test market reaction. A 21-chord model, not then available to regular music stores, was introduced. Also an electronic version of this instrument was introduced. These were basically "B" models with the 21-chord system and Peterson termed them "C" models. The 15-chord model with three diminished chords was dropped from the line because there was very little demand for it. Perhaps most importantly, in 1973 Schmidt introduced the "Attache" Autoharp. Peterson thought he saw a market for a "backwards" Autoharp (with the player depressing the chords with their left hand and stroking with their right hands without crossing the hands), built into its own molded plastic case. He knew that countless repairs to harps resulted from people buying an expensive instrument and then trans-

porting it in a cheap cardboard case, or even in the original corrugated shipping carton. The Attache would solve those problems. McKay again added his talents and hand-made the first Attache. Later, the Attache was made available to the general retail trade and a 21-chord model was developed.

Company records indicate that by 1978 more than half of all Autoharp sales were 21-chord models. Peterson's reasoning (going back to 1963), and he is not a musician, was that the more flexibility the Autoharp had, the more he would sell. This was why he abolished the 5-chord harp, why he invested heavily in the 15-chord harp, and later bet the chips on the 21-chord harp.

[Re: taking over a line of recorders, which added profit volume to OSI, and at the time, they needed it.]

Perhaps more importantly the recorders also made the task of putting us into the educational sales business much easier. We already could supply Autoharps which are a big part of the market. We could now supply recorders, which, while they are not a big market item in the elementary schools, are never the less a must if you are going to offer a complete product line. To go without recorders would be like running a super market where you could buy food but couldn't buy a box of laundry soap.

To round out the essential product line, we had to internally develop the capability of making school-type tone bar instruments – commonly called xylophones. They are pictured in the Music Education Group catalog. The remainder of the products necessary for such a sales effort could be obtained at the necessary prices from conventional sources.

Accordingly, we began developing these xylophones. One might raise the question of the wisdom of "doing it yourself" and suggest that the fast and inexpensive way would be to buy them from someone else. The reality is that there is no company anywhere in the world which makes these particular bells other than our two competitors, RBI and Peripole. RBI's are made in Japan, and Peripole's are partially sub-contracted because they have neither the competence nor the manufacturing capability of producing them. It may

not sound credible, but if we had to have bells (which we did) we had to make them ourselves.

It, again, may sound incredible, but all of the bell sets were designed in one summer by my teenage daughter, and the teenage son of a neighbor. They drew specs and then reduced the specs to a manufacturing process which permits us to make such tone bars better, faster, and cheaper than anyone else in the world.

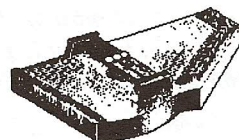
Musical instrument dealers had been unable to compete because they were unable and unwilling to stock the approximately 1,000 separate items required to service this market. My MEG plan offered them a central national inventory, drop shipment to the schools, and billing to the dealer by MEG. It also offered them ready made know-how in the elementary market, an area in which even the educational music store was and is woefully weak because the mail order companies had effectively kept them out of it. They knew how to sell horns and violins; but they didn't know how to sell flutophones and resonator bells.

My MEG plan shifted the cost of catalog preparation, plus mail distribution, plus the capital requirements for carrying school credit from MEG to the participating dealer. Schools are not fast players and this latter aspect was crucial to the success of the venture.

Thus, with a minimum cash investment, with the use of the Oscar Schmidt credit line, and with the good wishes and help of almost the entire music industry, the MEG operation was launched and is now a provable success – not only in its basic goal of saving Oscar Schmidt – but in its conventional function as a business.

Dealers were very carefully chosen. There are less than 100 of them. In Georgia, Ken Stanton Music owns school music in Georgia. Our dealer in Minnesota has a free incoming WATTS line for educators. Our one dealer in South Carolina owns educational music in that state. Our dealer in Columbus, Ohio, is national president of NAMM. ❖

To be  
concluded



# 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.



## Bob's Choice

Bob Woodcock

**Frolicsome**  
(A Christmas Collection With a Difference)  
Autoharp: Mike Fenton

*Brightest and Best* • *In the Bleak Mid-Winter* • *Villagers All* • *Go Tell it on the Mountain* • *I Wonder How it Was* • *Hydom Hydom* • *The O'Rourke's Feast* • *I Saw Three Ships* • *Calypso Carol* • *A Starry Night* • *Patapan* • *Mary Had a Baby* • *Oh What Fun (Jingle Bells)* • *Away in a Manger* • *Christmas Tree Stomp* • *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas* • *Mary's Boy Child*

It seems to me that we 'harpers are always trying something new, experimenting with new forms, new tunes, new picks. Maybe it comes with the territory; we have chosen a rather unorthodox instrument. So long about the second week of December we are faced with an annual problem – what to do with the same old Yuletide tunes. Especially if we have to perform, say in church or for a school group.

Mike Fenton has offered a delightful solution. This tape contains 17 Christmas tunes, most of them I would guess unfamiliar to even the most experienced musicians on this side of the Atlantic. Many of the tunes hail from the British Isles (as does Mike); others come from France, Moldavia-Slovakia and the Caribbean.

This is not, strictly speaking, an autoharp recording. The 'harp, in Mike's hands, is played masterfully, as we have come to expect from past recordings. Mostly it is used for background, but check out *The O'Rourke's*

*Feast* or *In the Bleak Mid-Winter* if you want to hear some gorgeous diatonic harp (the latter also features a welcome return by Mike's daughter Natalie on flute). Mike also provides nice backups on slide guitar, lap dulcimer, jaw harp, and a British cousin of the mouth bow called a "humdrum."

Side B was recorded live at an elementary school in Kent, England. I feel that this side should be mandatory listening for anybody who plays with children. Mike is a master at this genre; indeed, this is how he makes his living. He never talks down to the audience, and he doesn't act "cutesy" or childish. He's an adult singing to, and with, children. He is solid, he directs them, he invites and he brings out their wonder. They seem to love it. I sure do.

Mike Fenton delivers what he promises, "a Christmas collection with a difference." It is well produced and performed, in keeping with Mike's past offerings. There are some first-class tunes on this tape; *Brightest and Best* stands out as my favorite. His work with the children is delightful. Recommended without reservation.



## Mike's Choice

Mike Herr

**Breakin' Tradition**

Tina Louise Barr  
1801 H Street, Suite B-5 #225  
Modesto, CA 95354

*Breakin' Out the Bubbly* • *Off She Goes/Trippin' Up the Stairs* • *Flowers of Edinburgh* • *Sidh Beag Sidh Mor* • *Doggy Doin's* • *Cielito Lindo* • *A March in Time Medley* • *Endearing Young Charms* • *Cherokee Shuffle* •

*Riding a Wave to Scotland the Brave* • *La Bamba*

Aicheetwawa! Here she comes! Tina Louise Barr has burst onto the recording scene with a most accomplished entree. We are served generous helpings of her spicy specialties that nobody else has tackled, like the Spanish-sounding *Cielito Lindo* and her signature contest tune, *La Bamba*. Plus, we're treated to the opening appetizer of her original tune, *Breakin' Out The Bubbly*.

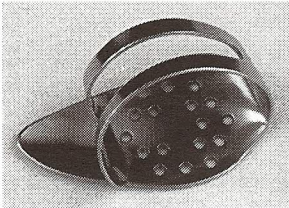
Tina gets high marks for many aspects of this tape, not the least of which is the fact that she plays almost all of the rhythm instruments (okay, so somebody else plays the maracas). Her bass playing is the most noticeable, most interesting, and most varied of the accompanying parts. She uses the traditional off-and-on-beat style most of the time but does a great "walking bass" line on *I've Been Working on the Railroad* and keeps things mixed up in the *Cherokee Shuffle* by alternately patting the bass and patting the autoharp. Likewise, the bodhran adds an effective rhythm structure and tweaks at the ears.

Tina's autoharp style is characterized by two main variants – very clean single-note picking and a typical double-pinch style. She "lets loose" now and then and exhibits some of her unique finger-rolls and licks which help to spice up some of the longer pieces. The most technically difficult passage has to be the end of *La Bamba* in which she kicks into overdrive and scorches those picks like some hot chili peppers.

It's always fun to hear a familiar tune with an unfamiliar twist, and those of you familiar with *O'Carolán's Concerto* will detect an unusual chord in the middle of the A part – is it an E? Tina also presents one of the many variations of *Sidh Beag Sidh Mor*,

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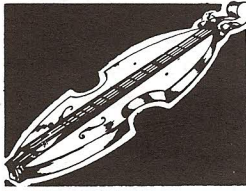
proving that the folk process is alive and kicking.

It's very apparent that the coordination among musical parts was planned and well thought out – there is plenty of variation in sound between tunes to allow a successful thumbs up in that old bugaboo department of homogeneity.

I have only a few suggestions for Tina in her next outing to studio-land. First – try to recapture that drama/excitement/spontaneity of live performances if at all possible. The risk of all the pre-planning is to sound a little too careful. Second – try to vary the tempos within the tunes even more. I know, it's just one more variable to have to remember. And lastly, not counting the medley, I found my attention wandering during several tunes like *Scotland the Brave* and even *La Bamba*, as they are very repetitive tunes and lasted a bit too long.

All in all, Tina's oodles of work are well worth the effort, her multi-instrument talents are well-deserving of much praise and I dare say her tape will end up in the drawer labeled "to-be-listened-to-often."





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# AQ

## Postscripts

FROM HARPLAND

*Do you have some news to share with the autoharp community? Send it to:*  
 Mary Umbarger  
 144 Umbarger Road  
 Harmony, NC 28634

Are you ready? I just perused my calendar and for the next six months I can see that I will lose a lot of sleep due to those midnight jams, gain weight due to the "jammin' junk food," and literally walk with a lopsided gait because of the autoharp that hangs from my shoulder. I feel like a race horse must as it stands at the starting gate, prancing and fidgeting and biting at the bit to go. Festival time is here – *Let the music begin!*

**P.S.**

**Alex Usher** has accomplished yet another first. We know how she travels around winning competitions, holding workshops, and performing – she even has a following of prairie dogs, birds, reptiles, and bugs. Now she is working on "Basic Melodic Autoharp Solos" to be published by Mel Bay. She and Rich also are the proud grandparents of their first granddaughter, Malenie Nichole. Congratulations!

**P.S.**

**Mary Ann Johnston's** doctors are just as pleased as punch with her progress since her first hip replacement, which was done last October. They are scheduling her second replacement for some time in June. This means that she and Jack will not be at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering. *They will be missed!*

**P.S.**

The **Old-Time Music and Radio Conference** is planned for June 4-6 in Mt. Airy, North Carolina. There will be panel discussions, seminars, and workshops addressing topics such as "How To Start an Old-Time Music Radio Program," "How To Make a Band Work," "Archival Issues," and more. The conference will be addressed by Alan Jabbour, the director of the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress, and will have musi-

cal performances by many well-known performers, including David Holt. This conference is a way to broaden public access to Traditional American Music through expanded radio play. Contact John Lilly 304 637-1350.

**P.S.**

**John Hook** now rates international recognition with his autoharp. He took his autoharp (Is there any other way to travel?) to a business meeting in Nice, France, where he just happened to be available, willing, and certainly able to play and entertain one evening of the conference. Right on, John!

**P.S.**

**Will Smith's** song, *Swept Away* is on **Cathryn Craig's** (a popular European country singer) new release, "Porch Songs." This recording is receiving rave reviews in the major country magazines in England. The picture on the cover was taken on Will's front porch, when she visited him to record his song. Will, we're proud of you!

**P.S.**

**Mike Fenton** had sinus surgery on April 1. He is doing just fine, and he expects to be at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering in July.

**P.S.**

Our very own **Joe Riggs** was honored by WBTV in Charlotte, North Carolina as "Teacher of the Week." Joe teaches English as a Second Language (ESL) in the school system there. In October, he was dubbed "Teacher of the Month" at Eastway Middle School.

Because of the excellence of his work in ESL, he will take part in a panel to discuss methods of setting up an ESL program. A series of six videos will be made from this panel's discussion, and distributed to school systems throughout the state which are in need of the program. Wow, Joe, we thought you only played autoharp and invented "screwy" finger picks! Congratulations!

**P.S.**

**Alan Mager** announces that he is working on a new tape, "Hear the Colors," which will feature music from O'Carolans to ragtime tunes. He expects it to be released later this year.

**P.S.**

Following are the winners of the Old Time Florida Music Championship contest for autoharp, March 29, 1996.  
 First Place: **Cheryl Belanger**  
 Second Place: **Vgo** (pronounced Veego)

Third Place: **Sue Bullock**

Fourth Place: **Rima Olsen**

**P.S.**

**A smattering of the menu at the '96 Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering:**  
 Breakfast selections: (7A.M. to 10A.M.)  
 eggs, toast, bacon, sausage, french toast, fruit, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, assorted fruit juices.

Lunch selections: soup of the day, salad, hot dog, hot sausage, hamburger, cheeseburger, pita pockets, chicken patty sandwich, fresh fruit, coffee, iced tea, lemonade, sodas, bottled spring water and assorted fruit juices.

Evening meals, served with your choice of coffee, tea, or lemonade:  
 Thursday – kettle cooked beef pot-pie, slaw, fruit, tea-roll. Friday – hot turkey sandwich, peas, cranberry sauce, tea-roll. Saturday – barbecued chicken, baked beans, applesauce, tea-roll. Sunday lunch – swiss steak, rice pilaf, hot vegetable, tea-roll. Sunday evening – a la carte. Homemade pies, ice cream, and frozen yogurt will be available for desserts.

**P.S.**

**Iowa Public Television's Old-Time Country Music** is being offered to PBS television stations by the Central Education Network (CEN) during May, 1996. Suggested playback dates are for the summer. Satellite feeds will begin May 4. This is the third *Old-Time Country Music* series offered to PBS affiliates.

The new series of nine shows includes **Cathy Barton** and **Dave Para**. This duo from Booneville, Missouri is well-known for traditional country and folk music. Cathy and Dave have been entertaining audiences for over eighteen years and are collectors' and performers of old-time folk music originating in the Ozark Mountains and the rural midwest. Songs include: *Happy on the Mississippi Shore, Wakefield, Mike Fink, Quindero Hornpipe, Staten Island Hornpipe, Maple Sugar, Liberty, and Listen to the Mockingbird*. The last two series have included **Bryan Bowers** and others. These older programs may be broadcast at a future date as decided by the local PBS station.

For more information about individual programs, contact: Mark Foust, Iowa Public Television, PO Box 6450, Johnston, IA 50131



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*Grizzly Flat 'Harper #1\**  
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- Bill Clifton**  
*Autoharp Centennial Celebration\**
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*Traveling Light*  
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- Margie Earles**  
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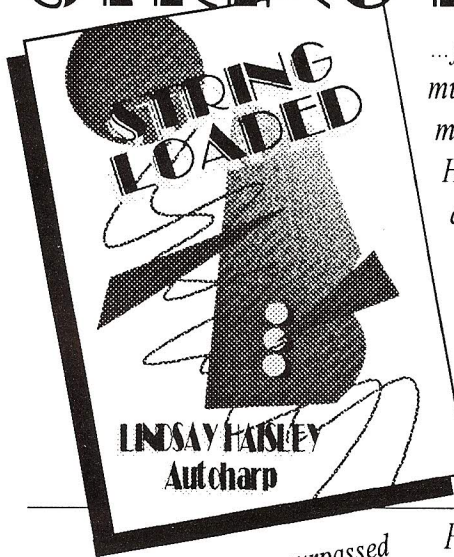
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