

Autoharp Quarterly®

Winter, 1998
Volume Ten, Number Two
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The International
Magazine
Dedicated to the
Autoharp Enthusiast

In This Issue:

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in his own words

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Whitehill*

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Reunion***
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***The Chord
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by Alan Mager

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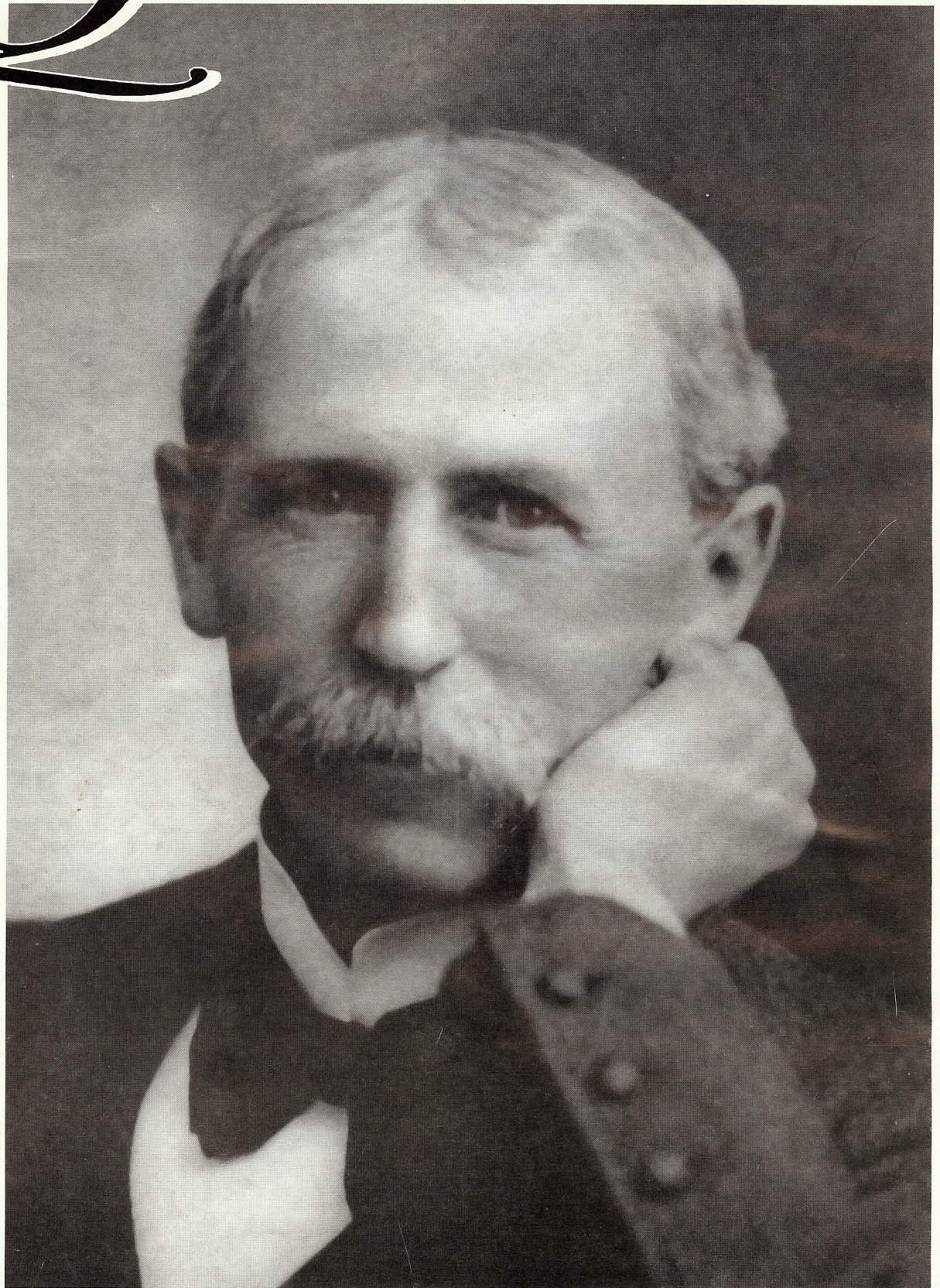
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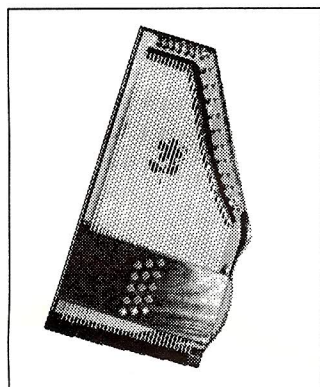


Will Thompson – 1847-1909 *Composer of "Softly and Tenderly"*

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Ceramics, East Liverpool, Ohio



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To And From The Editors



Mary Ann

W. H. ...

Dear Readers:

With everyone's help, we made it through the trauma of our first issue. Thanks to all who wrote, emailed, called, and faxed to congratulate us and wish us well. Thanks, also, to those who meant to, but didn't. Good thoughts count, too.

There are a couple of pages that will be different starting with this issue. Number one is a repositioning of the songbook page. You will notice it is now on the next to last page rather than in the middle. There is a reason it has been moved. We wanted to be able to perforate both it and the new Market Place page/order blank. (Our other difference.) The printer will do this at no extra charge if they are in this position. We hope you agree the Market Place being perforated will be a worthwhile change, as you will no longer have to cut up your magazine to use the order blank. Check it out and tell us what you think.

If you are "on line" and haven't accessed our web page, try it. We think you'll like it. Thanks to Ivan Stiles and Lindsay Haisley for all their expertise and their hard work on our behalf. The information on the page will change frequently, so tune in on a regular basis.

AQ now reaches 44 states and 12 countries, but, of course, we're not satisfied with that statistic. You can earn a one year extension of your own subscription if you are the first to get us a subscriber from North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Hawaii, Maine or Rhode Island. We want to extend our reach to all corners of the country.

Something else new is our column called *The Book Shelf*. If you read or know of a book in which the "hero/heroine's" love of music plays a part in the plot, let us know. We would like to pass the title on to others who might also enjoy reading it. If you want to write a review of the book, fine. If you would rather just tell us it is out there, that's fine, too.

And don't forget about Mary Umbarger and the Postscripts column. If you have any news to share with your autoharpin' friends, let Mary know. She'll be glad to hear from you. Everyone wants to know what you're up to.

Dear Editors:

MISCUES

Yikes!

Yes, Part II of the iii Chord was intended for diatonic autoharp.

and then

Whoops! Just took a real good look at the Part II iii Chord article and caught a minor blooper (thankfully): The footnotes to Version 1 of *All Those Endearing Young Charms* (page 27) appear under Version 2 (page 28), and the footnotes for Version 2 appear under Version 1. Footnotes 4 and 5 for Version 2 were inadvertently omitted from the music, but I hope AQ readers can find the places I spoke about via the measure numbers with each footnote explanation on page 27.

Lucille

AND from Alan Mager ...

I got an e-mail pointing out that measure 18 of *Annie Laurie* is duplicated on the following line. Sure enough! I was probably shifting measures from one line to another and forgot to delete this one after duplicating it. It's funny, though, I took this arrangement to a Capital Harper's meeting where about 20 people sat around playing it. At that time everyone, myself included, noticed the duplicated measure.

Alan

You will find the correction for *Theoretically Speaking* in this issue's column.

The Editors

WE WOULD LIKE TO SHARE a few of the notes we received from you with you ...

Great job on your first issue, by the way.

Lucille Hinds

I'm very proud of you. You've come a long way, Babe!

Mary Lou

My daughter is ten years old and much too cool to pay attention to things like mentions in international magazines. But her daddy's not. Thanks a million.

Stew Schneider

(See P.S. in Vol. 10, No. 1)

Overall it looks like a great issue and the quality and good information we're used to.

Bill Schilling

You and Alice Ann did a wonderful job with your first edition of the *Autoharp Quarterly* ...

Iva Stillwell

Congratulations on your first issue. It looks fine and reads well.

Rich Usher

Wow! You really made my article look good.

Kelly Williams

Thanks for the issue of AQ. It's everything I hoped it would be, so I am hereby subscribing.

Dave Holeton

I enjoy playing the autoharp, I mostly chord to my husband's old time fiddling. Thanks again for a fine magazine.

Shirley Lietz

Thanks for sending me a copy of AQ. It is an impressive magazine. It was fun to see the nice things said as well as how positive the review was. (See *Critic's Choice in Vol. 10, No. 1*) I really appreciate how carefully Bob listened. He picked up on a lot of details that often get missed. Please thank him for me.

Richard Scholtz

I especially enjoyed your last issue with the Carter stories.

Glenn Seabolt

Good luck with your new undertakings. Just received my issue and am pleased with all that is in the magazine.

Sandy Shaner

Looks great!

Fran Stallings

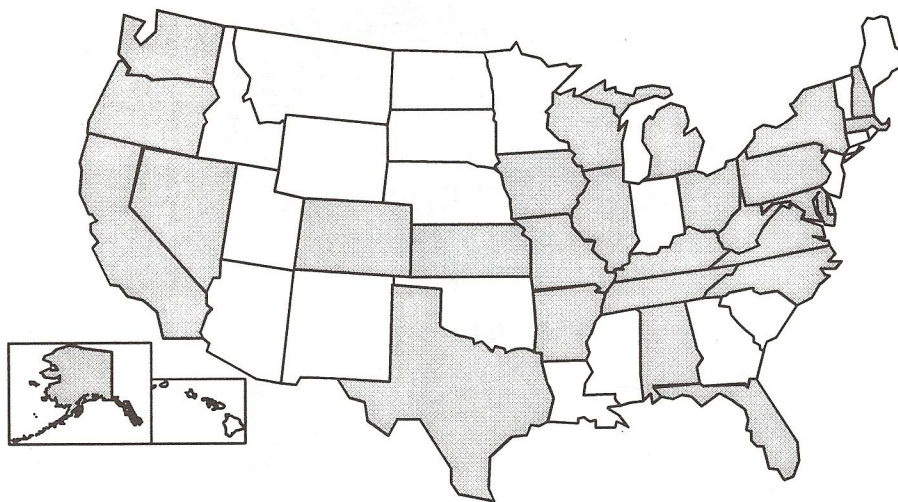
Congratulations! Really quality stuff. I'm so glad you gals were "gutsy" enough to take this on.

Mary Umbarger

Editor's note: Because of folks like you, so are we.



'Harpers-At-Large



Tennessee Fall Homecoming

Norris, Tennessee

Reporting: Mary Lou Orthey

Newport, PA

Well, the muskets went bang and the harps they sang, and the pipes did blaze away. Tennessee Fall Homecoming was holding forth in fine style. John Rice Irwin hosts this extravaganza every October when the leaves are at their most glorious. The event is held outside, and weather permitting, it can be picture perfect. This year the weather permitted, and except for the unusual heat, it was another dandy.

The three stages devoted to music were up and running, constantly competing with each other for the crowd's attention. Stage One hosted Janette Carter, singing "Keep On the Sunny Side," while Stage Two was filled with the music of Grandpa Jones. Stage Three, on the other hand, was busy with Bill and Laurie Sky. Each stage changes its performers every ten to fifteen minutes, so just about the time you get over to Stage Two to hear Grandpa, you realize he's been replaced with Mac Wiseman, John Hartford, or Raymond Fairchild, and wonders of wonders, Grandpa is now on Stage Three! Well, at least you can keep fit at this festival!

You can keep, that is, if you don't eat the goodies plied by vendors from every side. Everything from fudge to a turkey dinner, from fresh honey to cider. You can, however, keep fit by spending all of your money at the craft area. then there'll be none left for the home-made pies and hot dogs.

Autoharp music is always the order of the day for me. I spend three-quarters of my time at Judie Pagter's table, which sits pretty much in the middle of the meleé. Best place in the house. Everyone who plays/enjoys the 'harp finds me there. They bring their own autoharps, and we play great music! This year, I visited with a very large contingent of 'harp players. Tennessee Fall Homecoming is beginning to live up to its name.

The highlight of this year's doin's for me was Sunday morning, when Judie took Patsy Stoneman and me on stage for her last performance. Judie and I played autoharp and Patsy played guitar. It was a never-to-be-forgotten time for me.

This festival is as predictable as the phases of the moon. It is well-organized, music-full, and crowded. If you enjoy country and old-time music, I recommend it to you, if you only go just once. But if you do go "just once," I'll bet you'll be back again—soon.!



Tennessee Fall Homecoming

Norris, Tennessee

Reporting: Dora Miller

Newton, Iowa

My daughter Nancy and I arrived at the Norris Dam Campground on Wednesday afternoon. After getting the tents set up, we went down to the Museum of Appalachia. It was a five mile drive down the mountain. Every morning we would see deer and wild turkey by the side of the road. The museum is on 65 acres of land with the log

cabins, church, school house, saw mill and other buildings nestled among the tall trees. We picked up the schedules for the next day and located where the three stages were, looked at some of the craft area, then went back to the campground. After supper ended up in a nice jam session with some of the Tennessee dulcimer players. There were two other autoharp players in the group. We stopped at 10pm for quiet time at the campground.

Thursday morning we were at the museum at 8:30 to hear Ron Wall get the day started with his melodic autoharp. At 9:30 on stage 2 were Bill and Laurie Sky, followed by Ramona Jones with Alicia and Ron Wall. Then a run to stage 3 to check out Bill Lowe who was doing Carter songs. Janette Carter was on the main stage at 10:50. So, the day went by in a hurry from stage to stage to hear all of the wonderful music—David Holt, John Hartford, Mac Wiseman.

Friday, the weather was perfect and the music even better than the day before. Three of the most gracious and talented women on the autoharp, Janette Carter, Patsy Stoneman and Mary Lou Orthey, were there, along with Laurie Sky, Judie Pagter, the Stewart Family and Ron Wall. Friday night there was a jam session at the church in Norris—a wonderful way to end the day.

Saturday was full of great music and things to see and do. It was wonderful to meet Maurice Dill and jam with him before he left. I kept wishing my dad and uncles could have been there to hear the music they grew up with and loved. ❖ ❖ ❖

Winter Jam 97

Opryland Hotel Convention Center,
Nashville, Tennessee

Reporting: Kathy Ferguson

Fairfax, Virginia

I'm sure you all saw the ads in *AQ* and *AC* for this event. It's a shame more people didn't give it a try because it was really fun. It's the first time I'd been to the Convention Center and that is an experience in itself. It was decorated for Christmas with 2.2 million lights on the trees, a 50 foot Christmas tree and over three miles of red ribbon and green garland throughout the complex. It's the largest hotel outside of Las Vegas, and has nine acres of indoor gardens. Fancy would be an understatement – it was more like opulent/glitzy.

Anyway, to get back to the jam. This was a 7-day event starting Monday, November 24, and ending Sunday, November 30. There were workshops for guitar, fiddle, hammered dulcimer, mountain dulcimer, mandolin, banjo, and autoharp. Karen Mueller and Alan Mager taught the autoharp classes the first three days and Alan Mager and Ron Wall taught them the last four days. The classes were at three levels: Novice, Beg./Int. and Int./Adv. and included a myriad of subjects: Mastering The Basics, Christmas Tunes, Playing The Blues, Chord Substitutions, Playing Melodies, Picking Techniques and more.

In the evenings there were concerts by the instructors and other outstanding musicians. Randall Hylton had one of the funniest acts I've ever seen. Renowned guitarists Norman Blake and Steve Kaufman played several sets. Ron Wall and Alan Mager did a set trading off songs. I especially liked Ron's *I Love Those Ozark Hills* which he wrote (and taught his class), and Alan's *I Would Do It All Again* written by Charlie Groth. Lucille (Reilly) Hinds joined them for *Music Box Waltz* by Ron Wall and Mike Howard (which is in the Oct. '93 issue of *AQ*.)

Bryan Bowers was a featured performer Friday through Sunday and played the wonderful old chestnuts *Satisfied Mind*, *Walking to Jerusalem*, *Golden Slippers*, *Old Lovers*, *We Are Crossing The River* and many others in his trademark, stunning style. Lucille's skill and variety of material played on the hammered dulcimer was a real treat – both as a solo act and as part of a jam. Cyberplucker's own Jum Hudson M.C.ed several of the concerts and also

performed on the hammered dulcimer.

The Nashville Guitar Show was being held that week in the Convention Center. It featured a variety of interesting vintage and new stringed instruments. And there were great restaurants in the city to try. My favorite was *Logan's Roadhouse*, voted Nashville's Best New Restaurant (according to their ad and I wouldn't dispute it.) It's a kick-back, elbows-on-the-table, peanuts-on-the-floor kind of place which specializes in grilled beef and seafood. A close second was *Luby's*, a cheery cafeteria with umpteen choices of home-style cooked food. Since this was the first time I've been able to explore Nashville, I made a side trip to the *Ryman Auditorium*, the *Ernest Tubb Record Shop*, the Nashville zoo and even peeked into the *Planet Hollywood* restaurant – hey, why not! I may not pass this way again, though if they have a *Winter Jam '98*, I sure plan to be there.

If your state is not *darkened* on our map, it is because there has never been a Harpers-at-Large report received from that state. So, if you attend a concert, workshop, festival etc. where autoharp is played or taught, send us a report and we will see to it that your state is "greyed in."

Old Economy Village

Kindergarten Christmas Tours
Ambridge, Pennsylvania

Reporting: Sharon Antoline

Director of the Harmonie Associates

Old Economy Village, a restored 19th century German Harmonist community, in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, held its annual Kindergarten Christmas tours from December 1 through December 19. During this time, children, mostly kindergarten students from area schools, including some from the Pittsburgh area, enjoyed a special tour of the village.

This year's theme was *A Nineteenth Century Traditional German Christmas*. The children's stops included the one room school, the shoe shop and the festively decorated Great House where Alice Ann Whitehill presented a musical program. She told of the legend of the Christmas tree being a German tradition, played her autoharp (of German origin) and taught the children to sing *O, Tannenbaum*.

Alice entertained and educated more than 3,000 children and several hundred adults during this three week period. As many as 18 tours a day visited the enclave for this year's celebration



Bryan Bowers with his mando-uke and Ron Wall with his autoharp enjoy a relaxing moment at WinterJam 97. Both were featured performers at the mid-winter music festival held in Nashville, Tennessee.

(Photo by Kathy Ferguson)

'Harpers E-Mail

This is an update of the list of addresses for autoharp players and enthusiasts published in the AQ Winter '97 issue.

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Ellice Brahms

Ellice.Brahms@mercantile.net

Mary Lou Orthey

autoharp@nut-n-but.net

NEW WWW ADDRESSES

Mike Seeger

<http://mikeseeger.pair.com/html/oldtime.html>

Bryan Bowers

<http://www.otrd.state.ok.us/bluegrass/bbowers.html> (his bio)

Mark Fackeldey

<http://members.aol.com/fackeldey/zephyrhill.html>

Ralph Kanko

<http://users.erinet.com/26132>

Stew Schneider

<http://ram.ramlink.net/~stewart/harpfest.html> and

<http://ram.ramlink.net/~stewart/rogue1.html>

Dave Kilby

<http://www.itll.com/kilby/>

MORE MUSIC WWW ADDRESSES

<http://www.bright.net/~pdinfo/pdnook/> an alphabetical listing of songs in the public domain.

<http://music.netsysinc.com/> The Music Database, has music online.

<http://www.infoserve.net/quickscore/related.html> links to musical repositories.

<http://www.ptg.org/ptgtb1.htm> some elements of tuning.

<http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/ballads/earlychild/sidebar2.html> discussions on diatonic tunings as well as Child ballads.

<http://www.tns.lcs.mit.edu/harp/archives/1996.10/0373.html>

<http://ils.unc.edu/dolma/carter.html> Carter Family material



Recordings and Books

Old-Time Fiddle Tunes For Autoharp

(diatonic) Steve Young
6500 Nancy Road
Rancho Palos Verdes
CA 90275

Clubs

CLUB NEWS

Karen Nickel reports:

The Winfield Autoharp Club played on October 4 for the 50 year celebration of Camp Horizon in Arkansas City, Kansas. Camp Horizon is sponsored by the Methodist Church. **Karen Deal** brought her hammered dulcimer to the celebration along with her autoharp. Others who played with the group were **Seth Bate, Sarah Emerick, Ida Finney, Connie Haunschuld, and Connie Osborne**. The group used several songs from the *Autoharp Quarterly*. Everyone had fun playing and they received many compliments from attendees.

Margaret Bakker reports:

The Colorado Autoharp Club entertained at a nursing home on December 7. This is something groups of two or three members do on a regular basis. The Christmas party was held December 14 at the home of **Bill and Nancy Nikl**.

Bob Palmer reports:

In addition to reaching him for info about the Redwood Autoharpers at the Fontana, California elementary school, or calling 909 357-5740, you may now email him at Judd3@aol.com

Loren Wells reports:

At the November meeting of 'Harp Plus, at **Sharlene Shaffer's** suggestion, members decided to remember **Marie Wells** by playing *Keep On 'Harpin'* at their meetings. Marie composed the song shortly after the club started meeting.

The Annual Christmas Covered Dish Dinner was held on December 14 at the Immanuel Baptist Church in Wichita.

Denise Scribner led the music part of the meeting, using song sheets she had distributed at the November meeting. Denise invited the club to attend the Festival of Giving sponsored by the Wichita area Girl Scouts during which more than 10,000 toys and needed items bought or made by the girls were made available to 25 United Way agencies to pass out at the holidays. The club decided to make it a goal to provide musical entertainment and demonstrate their instruments at next year's festival.

Bill Schilling reports:

As Dulci-More members celebrated their fifth anniversary in January, they looked back at some of the things the club had accomplished during the year. They performed for audiences 37 times during 1997 (usually with 2-3 autoharps, but sometimes with more), held their third annual festival on Memorial Day weekend at a wonderful new location (Camp McKinley, near Lisbon, Ohio) where all workshops and activities were able to continue despite heavy rains on Sunday, have 123 members on the membership roster, and over 160 pages in their songbook.

Alice Ann Whitehill reports:

The Dulcimer and Autoharp Players of The Upper Ohio Valley will host a "Fun Day" on February 7, at 2pm at 450 Carolina Avenue, Chester, West Virginia. All ages will be invited and there will be mini-workshops and demonstrations in autoharp, lap dulcimer and limbertoy. Alice says they are trying to beat the winter "blahs."

Remember – send in news of what *your* club is doing. How are *you* spreading the autoharp word?

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SOME THINGS CAN'T GET ANY BETTER

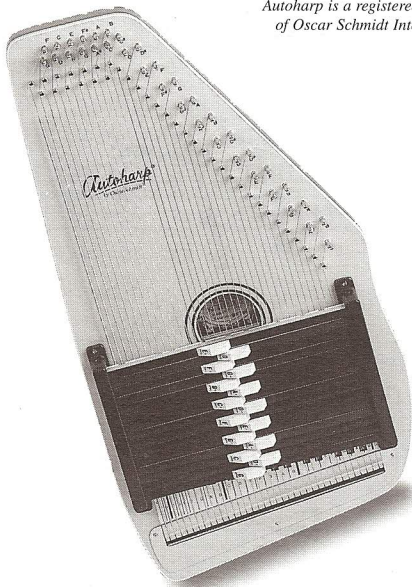


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SIMPLY. Classic

by Linda Huber

"The Bridal Chorus" from *Lohengrin*

by Richard Wagner



The opera *Lohengrin* was composed by Richard Wagner (pronounced Ree-card Vahg-ner) in the mid 1800s.

In the opera, Elsa is accused of murder-

ing her brother. She is victoriously defended in combat by a knight who arrives on a boat drawn by a swan. His name is Lohengrin, but Elsa is not allowed to ask him his name.

They are married and at that time, the *Bridal Chorus* is heard. Since its composition, this has been the choice of many brides for their processional. ❖

Bridal Chorus from *Lohengrin*

Richard Wagner

The musical score is presented in two systems. Each system consists of a treble clef staff with a 2/4 time signature and a piano accompaniment section. The piano part includes guitar chords and a corresponding guitar tablature below it, with strings T, A, and B labeled. The first system of chords is: F / / / / C7 / F / / Bb / F C7. The second system of chords is: F C7 o C7 F C7 F / / / / C7 / F / / /.

Fine

1. 2.

Am Dm / Gm C7 / F Gm C7 / F o F /

T A B

[easier version - repeat these measures - then go back to beginning] harder version continues

Bb Am o Gm / C7 F o C Bb Am o Gm / D A7 D D

T A B

/ G D G D A E7 G D / A7 D G A7 D /

T A B

/ A7 o G A7 Dm / Bb F / / G7 C7 / F Dm / G7

T A B

molto ritard *D.C. al Fine*

C C7 Am E7 D7 E7 A

T A B

TABLATURE

Pinch Strum Strum/Pluck Pluck Rhythm Bracket

GEORGE ORTHEY

AND HIS AUTOHARPS,

IN HIS OWN WORDS....

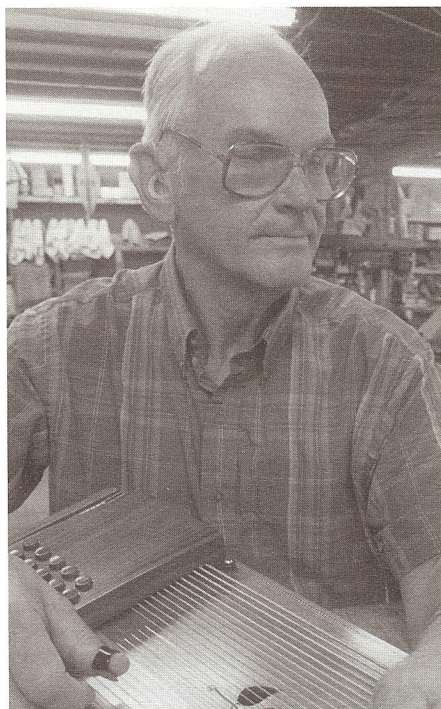


It all started with the Old Coffee Drinkin' Night Hawk, Lee Moore, of Lee and Juanita on WWVA, Wheeling West Virginia. I loved country music, and that was the only country I could get on the radio. But it only aired in New York City from midnight until 4:00 A.M. when they turned the power up to 100,000 watts. So I would wake up in the middle of the night, tuck the radio under the covers and listen to country and old-time music featuring stars like Pop Stoneman, The Original Carter Family, and Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper. To me in my early teens, that was the ultimate in cultural luxury.

So it didn't take much urging on my wife Mary Lou's part, when in 1964 she announced she wanted an Appalachian dulcimer to hang on the wall in our Washington D.C. living room. I knew if I built one, sooner or later she'd play it, and I'd again enjoy the music of the Old Coffee Drinkin' Night Hawk. I happily built one for her, then a few for her family, a few for my family, a few for friends. With the help of the Smithsonian Institution where I studied the dulcimer and Howie Mitchell who gave me my early training in instrument building, our home soon became a maze of "a few" here and "a few" there with not much room for anything else.

At Christmas time in 1965, we moved from Washington to San Antonio Texas. But the important move for me was advancing my workshop from the top of the washer and dryer to a two-car garage. This made Mary Lou ecstatic and gave me more room to expand my interests. Which I did. With vigor. Soon hammered dulcimers, mouth bows, a few guitars, and a banjo were added to my ever-growing inventory. With the constant propagation of the copious lap dulcimer, my garage was soon full to overflowing.

To make a long story short, in the next 20 years I built over 100 hammered dulcimers, 100 bowed psalteries, 50 plucked psalteries, 2 harpsichords, an assortment of banjos, guitars, mouth bows, and 1,600 Appalachian dulcimers – before Mary Lou de-



clared an edict.

By that time we were familiar vendors at large craft shows throughout the East. I built them, she sold them. Teaching 1600 souls how to play the Appalachian dulcimer had finally driven her "mad," she said. She would no longer play the dulcimer, and would only go to the craft shows if she could take her Oscar Schmidt 15-chord 'harp with her.

We soon discovered we were selling more autoharps for Oscar Schmidt than dulcimers for Orthey Instruments. And so, as night follows day, I began to build 'harps. First for her, then for friends. The story was familiar.

To date, I have crafted nearly 600 autoharps. The dulcimers, psalteries, the pot-pourri of instruments have disappeared. I've found something I enjoy building and which gives me much pleasure with its music.

THE AUTOHARPS

I handcraft my autoharps from carefully selected Appalachian Mountain hard

woods – walnut, chestnut, cherry, mulberry. This results in instruments with distinct individual personalities. The sound boards are made from fancy grade quarter sawn instrument woods, (most commonly Sitka spruce), and to insure tight fitting tuning pins, I use laminated maple pin blocks.

I'm always on the lookout for trees which would serve my purpose. I examine them carefully, harvest them, and have them quarter sawn to my specifications. The rough sawn lumber is air dried for at least five years. All parts are then roughed out and stored in my temperature/humidity controlled shop for at least six more months prior to using them in final assembly and finishing of an instrument.

I put extensive time and effort into a detailed study of the history and traditions of the autoharp. This study also includes examination of the technical aspects which led to the success of the old master luthiers. I'm constantly adding new innovations to the integrated concepts of the past to produce the highest quality I can muster in traditional workmanship and sound. Because I strive for this quality, the workmanship of my instruments is guaranteed for my lifetime.

MY INNOVATIONS, CONCEPTS FOR THE AUTOHARP

The making of an autoharp is principally a two-part process. One part is the mechanical stuff needed to play it: chord bar systems, strings, fine tuners, and such which must work smoothly, quietly, and easily. The second part is, of course, the sound box needed to enhance and project the sound of the plucked strings.

THE MECHANICS

The mechanical aspect has offered me a heyday for real playability improvement.

One of my innovations is the angled bridge in the treble octave, enabling good damping in the bass while opening up

more playing room at the top. Also, I began making wooden chord bars to match the wood in the body of the instrument. These chord bars sit on delrin plastic unbreakable combs for very smooth, easy, quiet action.

I have always put a little loop in the string that comes through the tuning pins rather than leaving that sharp wire sticking out to catch in clothes and stick fingers. All of these changes were incorporated early in my autoharp building.

The arm rest was an innovation I used on my first 'harp as well, and has stayed in a somewhat modified form. Some folks use it as a handle, so they don't pick the instrument up by its tuning pins.

A major invention which I have patented was the Orthey Bar, which enables the chromatic player to convert his instrument to a single key diatonic in a matter of seconds.

At Bryan Bower's suggestion, I started using a felt "Wolf Tamer" to damp out the stray sounds of the strings between the bridge and the tuning pins.

I designed two unique commemorative autoharps to honor the Carter and Stoneman Families. These 'harp have special characteristics related to those two dynasties of old-time country music.

Most recently I have designed and started the manufacture (in the U.S.A.) of aluminum fine tuners. They are precision machined parts which can be made to accommodate any number of strings on custom 'harp. Best of all, they take nearly one pound of weight off the big end of the 'harp, compared to the conventional brass fine tuners.

Last but not least, coming from my shop is the *Autoharp Quarterly* published Mountain Laurel Autoharp plans developed with the cooperation of Tom Fladmark during his tenure as my apprentice. (These plans were acid tested by Ivan Stiles to show that anyone could build one!) We know these plans have been the stepping stones to bring many folks into the luthiers' field.

THE SOUNDBOX

The body and soul aspect of autoharp building is a mix of science, trial and error, blended with a serious level of witchcraft. This subject is tempered by as many opinions as there are luthiers. So on this subject, I always preface everything I say with "In my hands."

Each wood has attributes of its own

which can contribute to or detract from the sound of the instrument. I have used a great variety of woods. Good perfectly quartered wood is always preferred over slab sawn wood. I like to have one face of the instrument hardwood for brilliance and clarity.

The hardwoods I use include my old mainstay Perry County curly or striped black walnut which I have used since my earliest dulcimer making days. To that I have added Joe Carter's giant mulberry tree which produces instruments with a full rich sound. Next I added the Chinese chestnut wood from trees in our own woods to make the Stoneman 'harp. These autoharps have a very bright clear sound. Most recently, I have started using Patsy Stoneman's Southern wild cherry wood which is a particularly fine wood for upside down autoharps (hardwood sound boards, spruce backs).

I prefer to have a second face of the instrument made from some kind of pine wood - Sitka spruce, redwood, or another of this family of very musically responsive light weight soft wood. This concept is as old as instrument making, and reaches back through Stradivari to the ancient times of Solomon. I think this traditional sound board wood, usually put on the top of the instrument, is what gives it sweetness, bass, richness, and is the principal area in which we see sound development with age.

IN CONCLUSION

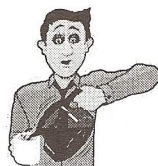
It all started with the Old Coffee Drinkin' Night Hawk, Lee Moore, of Lee and Juanita on WWVA, Wheeling West Virginia. I loved country music...

Today I still love country and old-time music, and my autoharp building has afforded me a pleasure not available to many. Little did I know as a child that I would have the honor to build instruments for the very families whose music I so enjoyed. Further, those families have become part of our own.

I now enjoy the music of the Old Coffee Drinkin' Night Hawk played on instruments of my own making. My circle is complete.



(Editor's note: Sadly, Lee Moore died in August, 1977, before seeing this article.)



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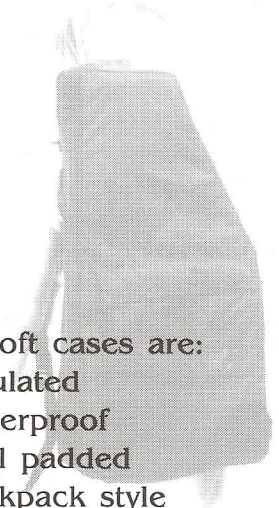
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HOW AUTOHARPERS THINK:



HARMONIC PERCEPTIONS AMONG COMPUTER~LITERATE AUTOHARPERS

By Cindy Harris

Sometime last November, Mark Fackeldey made an off-hand comment on the Cyberpluckers listserve about modal tunes. Over the year or so that I've subscribed to the list, the subject had come up a number of times, but I hadn't spent enough time thinking about the implications to give it more than cursory attention. This time, however, I asked Mark to clarify what he meant, and he responded with a detailed dissertation on what modes were and how they were put together along with some comments in passing about playing different tunes in different modes. After studying his note, I understood in theory how the modes worked, but still was completely baffled by the practical applications: I couldn't understand how Mark actually moved a tune from one mode to another so casually. The next morning, I awoke with the insight that Mark must actually think about arranging tunes for the 'harp **differently** than I did. When I asked him about this, he confirmed that he thought about his chord bars primarily as scale tones, with the harmony that they carried being a secondary factor. This was very intriguing to me, as I think of the chord bars as chords that happen to carry particular scale tones, and thinking some other way seemed to have potential for improving the quality of my arrangements. Even though I didn't really understand how he did it, it occurred to me that thinking this way also probably accounts for Mark's ease with the idifferent modes and his ability to use them so effectively in his playing.

I was also curious about how unique Mark's way of thinking was, so I decided to poll the list and see what developed. The poll asked: "Do you think about your chord bars primarily as chords that carry scale tones, or as scale tones that carry harmonies?" As I summarized the results, I referred to those who said "chords that carry scale tones" as *chordal thinkers* and those who said "scale tones that carry harmonies" as *tonal thinkers*. Twenty-one Cyberpluckers responded to the poll. Of those, six play

only diatonic, nine play primarily chromatic and six play both with relatively equal frequency. Almost all were intermediate and advanced players. From what I can tell, only two of them have been playing for less than three years, and most have been playing much longer. Ten respondents said they are chordal thinkers, seven are tonal thinkers, and four think both ways. People really weren't fuzzy about this concept, either—they answered very firmly that they were one, the other or both.

The sample size really isn't big enough to draw firm conclusions, but there are a few things that jumped out at me as food for thought. Out of nine primarily chromatic harpers, eight are chordal thinkers. That group included not only relatively inexperienced players like myself, but also experts like Alan Mager and Lindsay Haisley. On the other hand, six out of 13 diatonic players (includes those who play both) are exclusively tonal thinkers, and four more think both ways. Of the four who think both ways, all but one have been playing for a long time. Two of them had interesting comments about how their thinking changed after they started to play diatonic harps, and Mike Herr, in particular, noted that he plays both ways on both types of 'harp and even changes his approach within a given tune to add variety. (N.B. After Mike mentioned this, I went back and listened again to his playing on the 1996 MLAG contest tape, and I think you can actually hear him doing this. I'd often wondered how he went about creating such interesting-sounding variations, and I'll bet part of it has to do with this tonal vs. chordal thinking.)

After munching over all this food for thought, I had a few thoughts of my own:

a) There seems to be a close association between the type of 'harp you play and how you think about your chord bars. In particular, those who play exclusively chromatic are unlikely to be tonal thinkers.

- b) Acquiring a diatonic 'harp seems to be a trigger that starts a transition from chordal thinking to tonal thinking. Several diatonic or dual-mode thinkers commented that they used to be chordal thinkers, but that they had become tonal thinkers sometime after they started playing diatonic. Some times the transition is complete, but some 'harpers seem to retain the ability to think both ways, especially if they continue to play chromatic. It is not clear to me whether this transition is related to experience or to playing the diatonic 'harp, as no one who started playing diatonic 'harp and later picked up chromatic responded to the poll.
- c) The issue of tonal thinking vs. chordal thinking has little to do with *whether* one plays melodies on the 'harp, but a lot to do with how one arranges melodies. I think it is possible to tell whether someone is a chordal thinker or a tonal thinker by listening to their playing. I made a game out of guessing how people I'd heard play would fall out, and missed flat out in only one case out of seven: Bob Lewis, who I had picked as a tonal thinker and who actually thinks chordally (one of the few diatonic 'harpers who does). For the record, I wasn't sure about Mike Herr, but picked him as a chordal thinker, and he is both. And I've still got a few more guesses for people who aren't Cyberpluckers that I'd love to verify sometime.

Applications

After I published the results of the poll and my analysis to the Cyberpluckers, Alan Mager touched base with me off-line and voiced some interesting thoughts related to the applications of the concept of tonal/chordal thinking to the teaching of the autoharp. As a chordal thinker himself, when he first started teaching others, Alan naturally focused on teaching new players to recognize and play the basic harmony or rhythm

chords. As he himself began to focus more on melody playing, he began to transfer that enthusiasm to his students as well, eventually entirely abandoning rhythm chord notations on the pieces he prepared for them in favor of melody chords. The unfortunate result of this approach was that some students never learned to hear the basic harmony of a tune and thus had a very difficult time learning new tunes because they did not understand the relationship between the basic harmony represented by the rhythm chords and the meody chords that were noted on the music. Once he realized what was happening and that he himself was tackling new tunes as what this article refers to as a chordal thinker, he began to balance his approach, working with students to help them understand and play the basic harmony of a tune before they attempted to work out the melody chords.

Although the poll seems to indicate a relationship between diatonic playing and tonal thinking, Alan's experience tends to reinforce my intuition that the development of tonal thinking is also closely related to experience with arranging tunes for the autoharp. Perhaps a diatonic 'harp is a trigger for a new thinking process because it generally offers new harmonic possibilities (e.g. suspended fourth and major seventh chords) that are not available on a chromatic 'harp. Kathy Hollandsworth also pointed out to the Cyberpluckers that the autoharp is just about the only instrument she can think of where a player must know in which chord a melody note is contained in order to play that note. This implies that more experience with arranging melodies for autoharp also translates into a better understanding of some basic music theory wich, in combination with the single-key focus offered by a diatonic 'harp, may foster experimentation with tonal thinking.

No matter what kind of "harmonic thinker" you are, the concept of tonal versus chordal thinking offers the opportunity to take another look at both the process of arranging tunes for our favorite instrument and the chance to examine how one teaches listening, playing and arranging skills to all levels of students.



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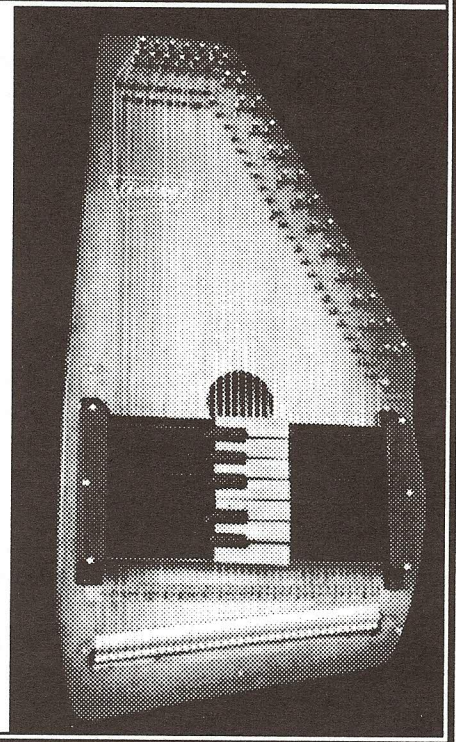
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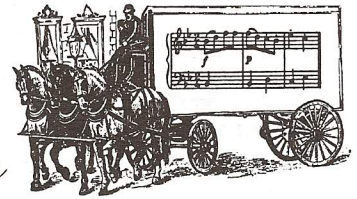
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Will L. Thompson —

More Than Just A Writer Of Songs



By Alice Ann Whitehill

1847-1909

*Softly and tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling for you and for me.
See on the portals
He's waiting and watching,
Watching for you and for me.*

These words are inscribed on a monument in the Riverview Cemetery overlooking the Ohio River in East Liverpool, Ohio. The monument is that of Will L. Thompson, East Liverpool's most famous son.

I grew up in the small river town of Chester, West Virginia, directly across the mighty Ohio from East Liverpool. At a young age, I learned the hymn *Softly And Tenderly*. I also learned that the composer was practically a neighbor. I remember stating in Sunday school, at the age of ten, to the other children, "Do you know that the man who wrote that song is from East Liverpool?"

I thought it was so special to have history such as this in my own backyard.

Just a little more than 150 years ago, William Lamartine Thompson was born in a small community just outside of East Liverpool, the fifth of seven children born to Josiah and Sarah Jackman Thompson. Before Will was a year old, his parents moved to East Liverpool. This is the city he would call home for the rest of his life.

Will was often compared to the composer Stephen Foster, who's life his paralleled, but he never became as well known as Foster, although his songs were popular throughout the country.

At an early age, Thompson showed a strong interest and ability in music. By age 16, he had composed several songs, including *Liverpool Schottische*.

After graduating from East Liverpool High School, Will attended the Beaver Academy in Beaver county, Pennsylvania, and then was graduated from Mount Union College in Alliance, Ohio. His main goal in life was to write music that would touch people's hearts.

Being from a very prosperous business family, Will started his own music company

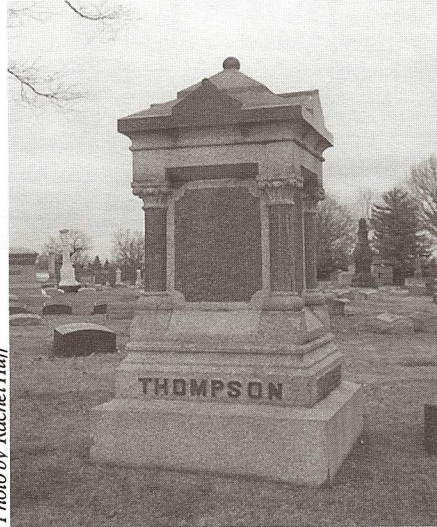


Photo by Rachel Huff

Thompson monument, Riverview Cemetery

soon after graduation in 1872. His father gave him a section of the family store from which he sold musical instruments.

When Will found sales to be slower than expected, he decided to take his wares to the people. He would load a piano or an organ on to a horse-drawn wagon and start out across the country-side. People in rural areas welcomed Thompson with open arms when he offered to play for them. Sometimes he would be asked to stay the night, and after spending the evening with the farm family, playing and singing, he would most likely leave a piano or organ, having convinced them that the purchase was well worth their money. Most of the songs he played were his own compositions and he sold many instruments in this manner.

Thompson was quite an entrepreneur: songwriter, publisher, businessman, real estate promoter, benefactor and all-around leading citizen.

In 1873, Will moved his instrument business to the Thompson Hotel, hired a manager, and returned to school, this time at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. While attending a picnic on the beach, he got the idea for what was to become his first successful song, *Gathering Shells From the Seashore*, which earned him thousands of dollars. In 1876, he traveled to Europe to study music in Leipsic, Germany.

By 1880, his business had grown so much that he built the four-story building on the corner of Fourth and Market Streets, known as the W.L. Thompson Music Co. This building now houses an antique mall.

During this period, Thompson wrote many songs, some under assumed names: James Orr, J. Calvin Bushey, Warren Bentley, S.S. Meyers, Will Baker, Will T. Meyer, John Rutledge, John Armstrong and Will Lamartine. It is impossible to determine how many songs he really composed and how many names he used, because many of his original manuscripts were destroyed in a fire several years after his death.

Under The Moonlit Sky, Harvest Time Is Passing, My Home On The Old Ohio, Lead Me Gently Home Father, The House-keeper's Complaint, My Grandpa's Advice, There's A Great Day Coming, Great Is The Lord, Glory Be To God In The Highest (a Christmas anthem) are just a few of his compositions.

Will was known to keep small slips of paper on which he had written words and phrases. These would help him in composing the lyrics and music for most of his songs.

One of the best known stories in this area is that while attending a church service, Thompson heard the minister use the phrase "softly and tenderly, Jesus is calling". Not having anything to write on, he wrote these words on the cuff of his shirt, and later used them to compose one of the most beloved hymns in the world.

In 1891, will married Elizabeth Johnston of near-by Wellsville, Ohio. They had one son, born in 1896. Also in 1891, Thompson opened a music store in Chicago to handle the large music mail order business: — sheet music and hymnals.

It is estimated that Thompson made more than a million dollars from writing and publishing popular and religious songs and hymn books, because in addition to being a gifted musician, he was a natural-born salesman. Thompson also had the idea of including the names of his *other* songs available for sale on each piece of sheet music sold.

He also handled his own affairs instead of entrusting them to others.

He reportedly offered *Gathering Shells From The Seashore, Drifting With Tide, My Home On the Old Ohio* and *Under The Moonlit Sky* to a Cleveland publisher for \$100, but was offered only \$25, which he refused. He then took the songs home and published them in New York under his own management and *Gathering Shells* became an instant hit, earning him thousands of dollars. Later, the company that offered him only \$25 for the four songs, was forced to pay \$1,000 in royalties for the use of just one of those tunes.

Thompson's brothers, Cassius and John C. both chose the pottery industry as their occupation. The city of East Liverpool was then known as the pottery capital of the world, and the Thompson Pottery was known world-wide for fine wares.

As you travel through East Liverpool, you may see that the legacy of Will Thompson lives on. He was the first and largest contributor to the building of the YMCA. The City Hospital also benefited from him. In 1899, he donated 100 acres to the city for the free use of the people – an area now known as Thompson Park. He also paid to have the road leading to the park paved for easier access.

Although said to be a shy and quiet man, Thompson was the first president of the Carnegie Public Library board of directors, the founder of the East Liverpool Historical Society and was on the board of directors of the First National Bank. His generous contributions built the Emmanuel Presbyterian church and provided many area churches with music and hymnals.

As a Civil War enthusiast, and one who lived through the stories of John Hunt Morgan, Thompson bought the land where the Confederate general surrendered. He also paid for the monument and plaque at the site, which is located several miles north of the city. The tree under which Morgan surrendered was presented to the Carnegie Library.

On May 28, 1909, Thompson and his wife boarded the steamship *Adriatic* for a trip to Europe. On September 6, he became ill while visiting Queenstown, Ireland. He was returned to New York as soon as possible, arriving on September 14. Too ill to travel any farther, he was admitted to a hospital there. His condition worsened, and he died on September 20 at the age of 61.

He was a man who was loved and admired by many and his funeral was attended

by a huge number of people from all walks of life. He shared his talent with the world, and his wealth with his neighbors. He was described by one former pastor, "He was interested in people and not in people's money or social standing, and cared little for the fancies of society".

Several years ago, my husband Earl, our friend Debbie Boyd and I had the pleasure of entertaining at a very special dinner party held in the "Thompson House". This house, owned by the East Liverpool Historical Society, was the home of C.C. Thompson, Will's brother. Although Will never lived in this house, he visited often and played the piano for many of his brother's distinguished guests. We sat in the very alcove where the grand piano once stood. What a privilege it was to play there! I hope Will was pleased with our selections.

A very special thanks to Ms. Joan Witt of the East Liverpool Historical Society for much of this information.

In our next issue, Cindy Harris will present the life and music of Stephen Foster. If there is a famous composer from your area and you would like to profile him/her, let us know.



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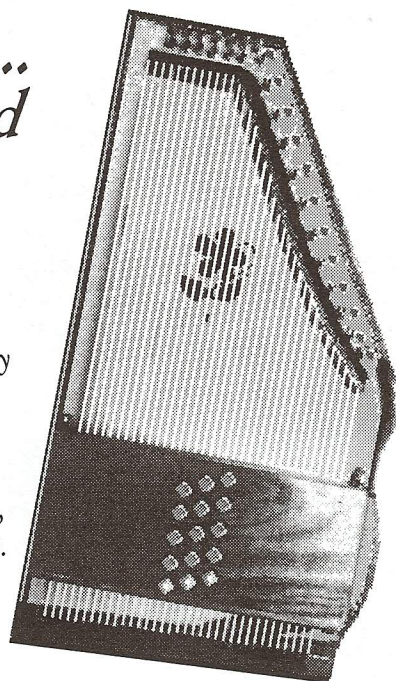
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Softly and Tenderly

Will Thompson

Verse

Soft - ly and ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, Call - ing for you and for me

Melody Chords F C7 F / C7 F Gm Bb / / F / / / Dm C7 Dm C C7

See on the por - tals He's wait - ing and watch - ing Watch - ing for you and for me Come

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

Chorus

home (come home) Come home (come home) Ye who are wear - y come home

C7 / / F / C7 F G / / F / G C7 G C7

Ear - nest - ly ten - der - ly Je - sus is call - ing, Call - ing O sin - ner, come home

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

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading
 Pleading for you and for me
 Why should we linger and heed not His mercies
 Mercies for you and for me
 (chorus)

Time now is fleeting, the moments are passing
 Passing from you and from me
 Shadows are gathering, death beds are coming
 Coming for you and for me
 (chorus)

O for the wonderful love He has promised
 Promised for you and for me
 Though we have sinned He has mercy and pardon
 Pardon for you and for me
 (chorus)

ALAN MAGER'S



CHORD CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

This is an explanation of the structure of three- and four-note chords that are commonly used on autoharps. There are many other types of chords that will not be discussed here as to certain properties of chromatic and diatonic scales before we see how the chords are actually built.

THE CHROMATIC SCALE

The chromatic scale consists of all twelve notes that occur within any octave. These notes are: C, C, D, D, E, F, F, G, G, A, A, and B. Factory-made standard autoharps are usually set up to show notes as only sharps, not flats, but for practical purposes, consider that C=D, D=E, F=G, G=A, and A=B. These note designations are used interchangeably in the discussion which follows.

Here are some terms you will need to know regarding chord construction:

- ♦ The distance between any two notes on the chromatic scale is called an "interval."
- ♦ The interval between any two adjacent notes on the scale is called a "half step."
- ♦ A distance of three half steps is a "minor third" interval.
- ♦ A distance of four half steps is a "major third" interval.

DIATONIC SCALES

Diatonic scales are the familiar 7-note do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti scales on which most music is built. The following table shows diatonic scales for the keys most commonly found on autoharps.

Scale	Degrees of the Scale						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bb major	B	C	D	E	F	G	A
G minor	G	A	B	C	D	E	F
F major	F	G	A	B	C	D	E
D minor	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
C major	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
A minor	A	B	C	D	E	F	G

Gmajor	G	A	B	C	D	E	F
E minor	E	F	G	A	B	C	D
Dmajor	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
Bminor	B	C	D	E	F	G	A
A major	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
F# minor	F	G	A	B	C	D	E
F major	F	G	A	B	C	D	E
D minor	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
C major	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
E major	E	F	G	A	B	C	D
C# minor	C	D	E	F	G	A	B

CHORDS

A chord is three or more notes that are played together. The first note of the chord, which bears the same name as the chord, is called the "root." Now let's look at the various types of chords.

Major Chords

A major chord is a three-note chord consisting of the first, third and fifth degrees of the major scale bearing the same name. This chord can also be built by taking the first note of the scale (root), adding a second note a major third above it on the chromatic scale, and then adding the third note a minor third above that. The resulting major chord is also called a "major triad." A major chord is designated by the capital letter of its name.

Examples:	Chord	Notes
	C	C, E, G
	D	D, F, A
	G	G, B, D

Minor Chords

A minor chord is a three-note chord consisting of the first, third and fifth degrees of the minor scale bearing the same name. This chord can also be built by taking the root, adding a second note a minor third above it on the chromatic scale, and then adding the third note a major third above that. The resulting minor chord is also called a "minor triad." A minor chord is designated by the capital letter of its name followed by a lowercase "m."

Examples:	Chord	Notes
	Cm	C, E, G
	Dm	D, F, A
	Gm	G, B, D

Seventh Chords

A seventh chord is a four-note chord consisting of the first, third, fifth and flatted (lowered by one-half step) seventh degrees of the major scale bearing the same name. This chord can also be built by taking the major triad of the same name and adding a fourth note a minor third above the last note of the triad. A seventh chord is designated by the capital letter of its name followed by the numeral "7."

Examples:	Chord	Notes
	C7	C, E, G, B
	D7	D, F, A, C
	G7	G, B, D, F

[Note: A seventh chord is actually built by taking the fifth (dominant) note of a diatonic scale as its root, then adding the third, fifth and seventh notes above the root to complete the chord. For this reason, seventh chords are sometimes referred to as "dominant sevenths." Although less technically correct, it may be easier to think of the chord as being built by adding the flatted seventh note of a major scale to the major triad which bears the same name as the scale.]

Major Seventh Chords

A major seventh chord is a four-note chord consisting of the first, third, fifth and seventh degrees of the major scale bearing the same name. This chord can also be built by taking the major triad of the same name and adding a fourth note a major third above the last note of the triad. A major seventh chord is designated by the capital letter of its name followed by an uppercase "M" and the numeral "7."

Examples:	Chord	Notes
-----------	-------	-------

CM7	C, E, G, B
DM7	D, F, A, C
GM7	G, B, D, F

Sixth Chords

A sixth chord is a four-note chord consisting of the first, third, fifth and sixth degrees of the major scale bearing the same name. This chord can also be built by taking the major triad of the same name and adding a fourth note two half steps on the chromatic scale above the last note of the triad. A sixth chord is designated by the capital letter of its name followed by the numeral "6."

Examples:	<u>Chord</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	C6	C, E, G, A
	D6	D, F, A, B
	G6	G, B, D, E

[Note: If the notes of a sixth chord are played in sequence starting with the sixth, the result is a minor seventh chord; that is, a minor triad with the added flatted seventh note of the scale bearing the same name.

Examples:	<u>Chord</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	C6	C, E, G, A
	Am7	A, C, E, G
	D6	D, F, A, B
	Bm7	B, D, F, A
	G6	G, B, D, E
	Em7	E, G, B, D

As with dominant seventh chords, it is more technically correct to say that a minor seventh gets its root from the fifth note of a minor scale (the D minor scale in the case of Am7) and is then built by adding the third, fifth and seventh notes above that.

Suspended Fourth Chords

A suspended fourth chord is a three-note chord consisting of the first, fourth and fifth degrees of the major scale bearing the same name. A suspended fourth chord is designated by the capital letter of its name followed by "sus4" or simply "sus."

Examples:	<u>Chord</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	Csus4	C, F, G
	Dsus4	D, G, A
	Gsus4	G, C, D

Suspended fourth chords are transition

chords used in passing from one chord to another, particularly at the end of a musical phrase, and have an unfinished sound that leaves the listener hanging (or suspended) until they are resolved into another chord. Suspended fourths are usually resolved into the major chord of the same name; e.g., Csus4 is almost always followed by C major.

Diminished Chords

A diminished chord is a three-note chord consisting of the first degree of the major scale bearing the same name followed by the flatted third and flatted fifth degrees of the scale. This chord can also be built by taking the root, adding a second note a minor third above it on the chromatic scale, and then adding the third note a minor third above that. The resulting diminished chord is also called a diminished triad." A diminished chord is designated by the capital letter of its name followed by a degree symbol "°," sometimes by a minus sign "-" or by "dim."

Examples:	<u>Chord</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	C°	C, D, F
	D°	D, F, G
	G°	G, A, C

[Note: A diminished chord is actually built by taking the seventh note of a diatonic scale as its root, then adding the third and fifth notes of that scale above the root to complete the chord. Although less technically correct, it may be easier to think of the chord as being built by adding the flatted third and fifth notes to the root of the scale bearing the same name as the chord.]

Diminished Seventh Chords

A diminished seventh chord is a four-note chord formed by taking a diminished triad and adding a fourth note a minor third above the highest note in the triad. The result is a chord in which all the intervals between the notes are minor thirds. A diminished seventh chord is designated by the capital letter of its name followed by a degree symbol, minus sign or "dim," and then the numeral "7."

Examples:	<u>Chord</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	C°7	C, D, F, A
	D°7	D, F, G, B
	G°7	G, A, C, E

If another note is added to a

diminished seventh chord a minor third above the highest note, that note is the first note of the chord. Additional notes added at minor third intervals simply repeat the notes of the chord. This means, for example, that C°7, D°7, F°7 and A°7 are all the same chord. The same holds true for the other examples of diminished seventh chords, which leads to the conclusion that there are only three diminished seventh chords. Note that all twelve notes of the chromatic scale are contained within these three chords. Because the intervals between the notes in these chords are all the same, the chords really have no beginning or end and have no true root. The names assigned to these chords depend upon the context in which they are used.

Despite the fact that one diminished triad can be made from each diatonic scale, it is not possible to make a diminished seventh chord from a diatonic scale. In fact, no diminished seventh chord can be made from even a two- or three-key diatonic string schedule. These chords are strictly for the chromatic autoharp.

Augmented Chords

An augmented chord is a three-note chord consisting of the first, third and augmented (raised one half step) fifth degrees of the major scale bearing the same name. This chord can also be built by taking the root, adding a second note a major third above it on the chromatic scale, and then adding the third note another major third above that. The resulting augmented chord is also called an "augmented triad." An augmented chord is designated by the capital letter of its name followed by a plus sign "+" or "aug."

Examples:	<u>Chord</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	C+	C, E, G
	D+	D, F, A
	F+	F, A, C
	G+	G, B, D

If another note is added to an augmented chord a major third above the highest note, that note is the first note of the chord. Additional notes added at major third intervals simply repeat the notes of the chord. This means, for example, that C+, E+ and G+ are all the same chord. The same holds true for the other examples of augmented chords, which leads to the conclusion that there are only four

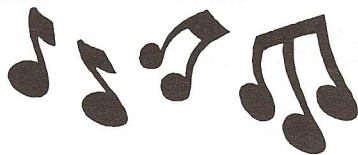
augmented chords. Note that all twelve notes of the chromatic scale are contained within these four chords. Because the intervals between the notes in these chords are all the same, the chords really have no beginning or end and have no true root. The names assigned to these chords depend upon the context in which they are used. As with diminished seventh chords, it is not possible to make an augmented chord from a diatonic scale.



The May AQ will contain the annual calendar of Events. If your favorite fair, festival, workshop, concert or contest has not been listed in the past, now is the time to speak up and tell us all about it. We try to make this list as complete as possible. The criteria is simple: is there a workshop or contest for autoharp or a concert featuring an autoharp? If so, we would like to help publicize it by including it in this column.



If you have pictures to send AQ for inclusion in an article or for consideration in our cover contest, please make sure it is not a copyrighted photo. If it was taken at a studio, chances are very good it is copyrighted and cannot be used.



WORKSHOP LEADERS FOR 1998

Do you have a good idea for a workshop you'd like to present at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering? We'd like to hear from you. Send your suggestions to Ivan Stiles, 1585 State Road, Phoenixville, PA 19460. Deadline: January 1, 1998.

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FRAN'S MOST EXCELLENT ADVENTURES

by Fran Stallings



Gail Huggett (hammered dulcimetist) and I had to quit performing together in March 1997 when Amoco transferred Gail and Tom to Cairo, Egypt. That's a little far to go for a rehearsal. But when they invited Gordon and me to visit them for three weeks this past October, we accepted with glee. In addition to the obligatory pyramids and tombs (we were at Hatshepsut's Temple a month before the terrorists), Gail and I were able to arrange two days of our "Prairie Fire" stories and songs for cosmopolitan school children at Cairo American College and at Schutz International School in Alexandria, Egypt. It was great to take "Prairie Fire" on the road again. But our most exciting autoharp-related adventure occurred at the border into Jordan. In order to visit the fabled lost city of Petra in Jordan, we drove from Cairo across the Sinai to Taba, Egypt; crossed a bit of Israel at Elat; and then entered Jordan at Aqaba. We brought one 'harp along in order to practice, since we'd been separated since March. Here's an excerpt from my journal of the day:

October 12, 1997. We had no trouble parking at Taba and loading ourselves like camels with the luggage, cameras, harp, and food and drink we had been advised to bring for the hike in Petra. Our bottled water, still solid from the Huggett's freezer, kept the fruit and cheese cool in an insulated bag. We didn't fret through the predictable delays exiting Egypt: we wanted re-entry visas, and the paperwork took a long time as each bureaucrat consulted with a dozen cousins about each page.

Entry into Israel was slow because of reduced lunchtime staff, but the officers were very professional and courteous – and female! Everywhere else we had encountered only men in positions of power. Israel had major security checks. They don't even allow toys that look like weapons. Under x-ray, the pocket on the autoharp case alarmed the inspectors: the tuner and its clip lead may have resembled a bomb, and the metal shaft on the tuning wrench looked vicious. But we demonstrated their proper use to the guard's satisfaction. Then Tom

Huggett freaked out the the metal detectors, and they took him away to be searched. He emerged sheepishly blaming his boot-lace eyelets.

A taxi took us across the Israeli port city of Elat/Eilat, past Israeli and joint peacekeeper bases, watchtowers, beach hotels and a strip mall reminiscent of San Diego. Then we dodged into irrigated orchards of citrus and palm – the No Man's Land strip – and suddenly we were at a humble checkpoint for Israeli exit (no problem) and Jordani entry (something else again). Again we walked across with our suitcases, cooler, cameras and the autoharp. Again we dealt with good ol' boys instead of Israel's sharp professionals. But this time, in addition to the official printed sign listing forbidden imports, there was a crayoned sign "No Food Or Drink".

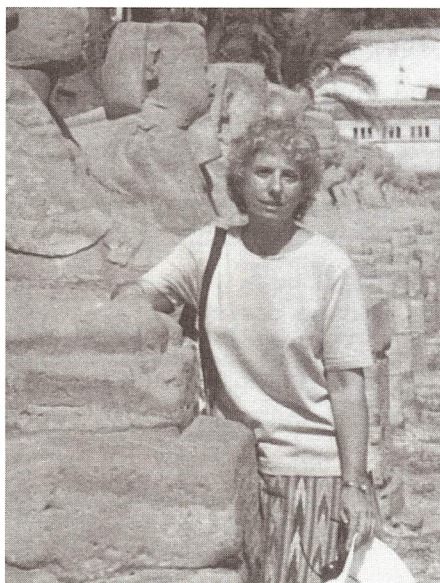
Humph. It was lunch time, so we sat down and ate all our cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers, and drank our juice boxes. If we'd brought beer, it might have been allowed under the alcohol limit! After slowly, slowly x-raying our bags and poking around

in several (were they just bored? There was no other traffic: "They are already in Petra," the security guards joked) they pounced on the autoharp. A diabolical device? Aha!! Fiendish American terrorists!! They started to fill out a pile of forms. I took it from the case and quickly played "I'll Fly Away."

Delighted, the guards demanded turns strumming and plucking the poor 'harp. I began to fear they would crayon a new sign about forbidden musical instruments, but at last they gave it back – and took our (still partially frozen) bottled water instead!! Tossed it in the trash! We suspect they retrieved and drank it as soon as we were gone. Can you believe, confiscating people's water in a desert country? Steaming, we moved on to the lairs of sluggish bureaucrats to pay our visa and entry fees, filling out many, many other forms. But at least the 'harp was still with us.

And we had a fabulous time in Petra.

(After returning home from Egypt, Fran went to Japan for a much anticipated tour with her friend, Hiroko Fujita.)



Fran beside the Sphinxes and



with husband, Gordon, near the Pyramids.

フラン スト-リソングス

Fu ra n Su ta - ri n gu su

ハ-プ

ha - pu

For several years, I have arranged American tours for Japanese storyteller Hiroko Fujita. In November, she invited me to Japan for three weeks of performing in public schools, libraries, universities and community centers.

Fujita-san introduced my stories in Japanese and then I told them in English. We carefully chose stories which could be understood by watching my gestures and facial expressions, and by listening to my vocal intonations. We also favored stories which I accompany with autoharp refrains and sound effects, figuring that the music would be interesting even if folks couldn't follow the plot. In fact, I developed several new music-stories especially for this trip.

Our strategy was very successful. Listeners of all ages were delighted with their ability to follow the tales, and the autoharp absolutely charmed them.

I know there are autoharpers in Japan, we've met three at the Mountain Laurel Festival. But of the thousands of adults and

children for whom Fujita-san and I performed, only a few had even heard of the autoharp. But, they literally adored the sound.

We began to insert into our programs a few western songs which are widely known in Japan: *Grandfather's Clock*, *You Are My Sunshine*, *Jingle Bells*, *Twinkle Little Star*. They loved singing along! And, my few flashy instrumental numbers got a workout, as I demonstrated what the harp could do on its own.

The Japanese children were fascinated with the chord bar system and the different sound effects the harp can produce. The adults appreciated the harp's dynamic range and the variety of playing styles which are possible. They were amazed that they had never heard of this thing before.

They knew the English word "harp" ("ha-a-pu") but the "auto" part was unfamiliar until they recognized the similarity to the Japanese word "oto" (sound). "Oto-ha-a-pu", "soundharp". Of course!

At smaller venues, I could let the children take turns, one strumming while another pushed buttons. Adults wanted to embrace it themselves. We often knelt on the tatami mats for a good half hour after performances, as people took turns trying to play. Thanks to their universal musical education, almost everyone quickly got the knack of changing chords to accompany a simple melody like *Twinkle*. Many were playing melody in their first minutes! I was impressed.

And they were impressed, nay, addicted. "Hoshiii, hoshiii!" ("I want, I want") they sighed as they reluctantly handed the 'harp back. Many asked the price, and when I translated Dr. Orthey's estimate into Yen, I thought that would cool their ardor. Typically, they blinked once and then said, "That is reasonable."

In three weeks we covered half of Japan, from Hokkaido to the Tokyo area, by plane, bus, car and train. The Shinkansen, Japan's high speed train, is wonderful.

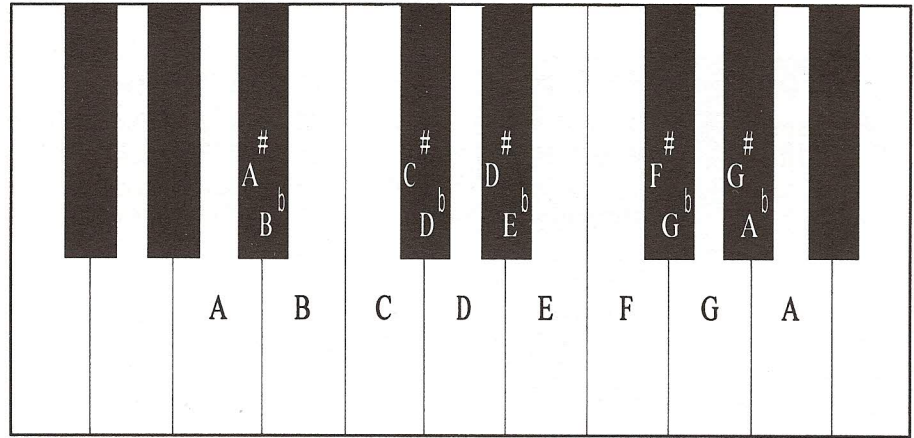


Hiroko Fujita and Fran Stallings, by Naomi Murayama

Theoretically Speaking

by "Hooter" the Owl as told to Becky Askey

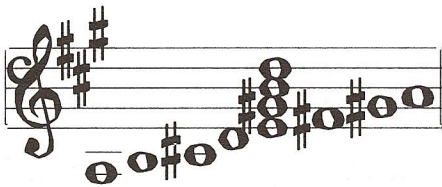
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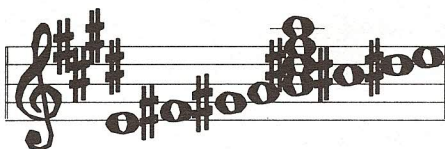
How did your 7th chords come out? You were to do the 7th chords for the keys of A and E. If you came up with an E7th in the key of A and a B7th in the key of E you are correct. Give yourself a gold star.

If you didn't get them figured out, here they are worked out for you.

Key of A



Key of E



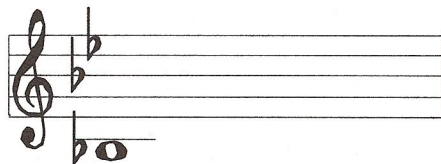
(The sharp signs are added to the music as a reminder only. They would, of course, not be necessary as they already appear in the key signature.)

Now try the same thing using some of the keys that use flats instead of sharps. You construct them exactly the same way. Build them on the 5th tone of the scale. Try building a 7th chord in the key of F.

Key of F



Key of Bb



You should go through the rest of your scales and construct the 7th chords for each scale and then you will be so *happy*. Do the rest of the sharp keys. Isn't it amazing ??? Little brain cells bursting and popping all over the place.

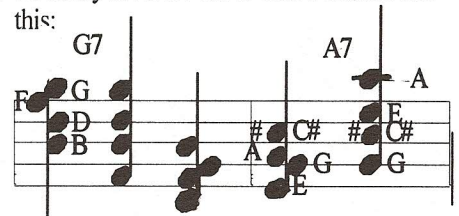
Maybe some of you have seen a chord marked in a piece of music that says: C Maj. 7th or D Maj. 7. Now, you say, what the heck is that and is it the same thing? No, nor exactly. But, it is very easy to find out what the difference is between a C7 and a C Maj. 7th and the difference is: (drum roll $\approx \approx \approx$) The top note is a half step higher. The other notes stay the same. For example, in the C7th chord you have C, E, G, B^b. In a C Maj. 7th chord you have C, E, G, B. How about that? Easy? Would I lie to you? Of course unless you have these Major 7th

cut for your autoharp, you won't be able to play them, but at least you will know what they are. They add a nice little spark and a different sound to a song. For example – in *Ashoken Farewell* there is a G Maj. 7th chord in the A part. It just doesn't sound the same with just a G chord. So there.

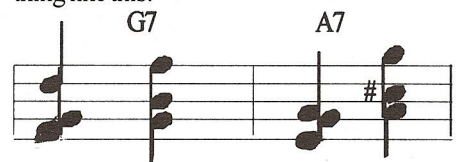
Your assignment, if you care to accept it, is to go through and see how you can change each Dominant 7th chord to a Major 7th chord. Oh, be quiet, it does too make sense. How would you like a good peck on the nose?

ERRATA: Following are the notes that should have been on the two empty staves in Lesson Ten. We apologize for the error.

You may see a G7 or A7 chord written like this:



You will even see a 7th chord that leaves out the 3rd tone or the 5th tone, looking something like this:



Picker's Portrait

Wilma Fish ❖ Gainesville, MO

Wilma Fish is well-known in the Ozark County, Missouri town of Gainesville. In fact, some say she put Gainesville on the map. But it is the small rural community of Romance (accent on the first syllable) where she grew up, that inspired the creation of her first apple dolls. Her handiwork started out as either a Red or Golden Delicious apple and turned into characters from her past or popular characters of the day, including Elvis Presley.

The "Apple Doll Lady" from Romance has a new hobby these days. After 30 years of making and selling dolls, she and her husband, Charles, have "retired". And they are busier than ever.

When the doll business first started, Wilma often found herself buying another folk instrument with her profits. Soon, the couple had amassed a collection of 30 or more instruments including both lap and hammered dulcimers, guitar, ukelele, five string banjo, mandolin, harp zither, French harp, folk harp, hurdy-gurdy, pianoette, and *autoharp*.

Wilma and Charles grew up learning to sing and play old folk tunes and Gospel songs. They both read music *and* play by ear and perform a variety of music from sad and sorrowful to fun and frisky. They like to share a bit of historical fact, an amusing anecdote, or some background on the music or instrument being played.

Since devoting all their time to their music, they now schedule at least one program a week and are booked as far as a year in advance.

Wilma is becoming something of an historian and is well known in the Ozarks for her knowledge of folk music instruments and folk music lore. As a folk musician, artist, author, and painter, Wilma is much in demand as a speaker on Ozark history. She enjoys dressing in costume befitting the "old days" and regales her audiences with tales of growing up in Romance in the days when the automobile was beginning to sound the death knell for Ozark County's small rural post offices. Opened



COURTESY WILMA FISH

Wilma Fish in her handmade gown.

in 1881, the Romance post office was once popular, especially on Valentine's day because of its backstamp proclaiming - Romance.

When the post office closed, the road sign was removed. But Wilma successfully petitioned the Highway Department to have it replaced and, once again, Romance is on the map. Wilma is a great believer in the preservation of local history and although Romance is not much more than a ghost town now, it lives on in her music and her stories.

They take their music to such places as the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, Arkansas, Mutton Hollow in Branson, Missouri, and the annual Hootin' and Hollarin' in Gainesville, as well as church gatherings, and get-togethers across a wide area. When they perform at colleges and universities throughout the Midwest, they not only play, but display, their folk instruments and explain how they work.

Listeners are transported back to a time when life was less fast-paced, and most entertainment was of the "home made" kind. Growing up during the Depression taught Wilma and Charles, as it did others, self-sufficiency.

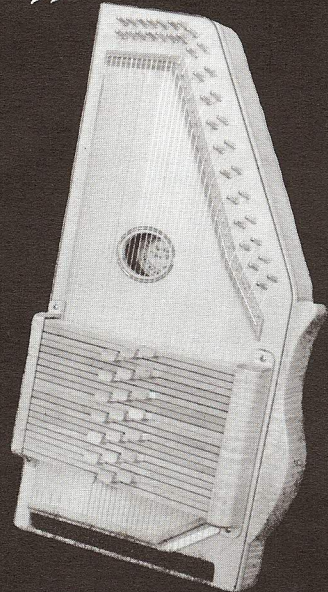
Over the years Charles became known to many as the "bloomer man" because he had the task of sewing costume parts for the apple dolls.


Wilma and Charles have always been a team whether making apple dolls or making music. Now that they have retired their teamwork has become a crowd-pleasing duet. Their musical travels have taken them on an ever widening circle around their home base of Gainesville.

While retirement for some means sitting on the porch and watching the world pass by, these seniors are taking their talents and enthusiasm out into the world and presenting an example for audiences of all ages to emulate.



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REUNION PAYS TRIBUTE TO PIONEERS OF COUNTRY MUSIC

By Joe Tennis

Patsy Stoneman smiled and choked back tears Friday night as Bristol's Birthplace of Country Music Alliance honored the musical traditions of her family – a group of early country music stars at the time Bristol's historic 1927 field recording sessions took place.

Stoneman, 72, and two of her siblings – brother Jim and sister Donna – performed songs like *Sinking Of The Titanic*, a tune that made her father, Ernest "Pop" Stoneman, a hit maker in 1925 – at a multi-bill Paramount Center concert Friday.

Sponsored by the BCMA and First American, the show – called "70th Bristol Sessions Reunion" – brought to life the early country music of the 1920s and '30s with musical performances of songs like The Carter Family's *Keep On The Sunny Side*.

Part of the Autumn Chase Festival, the concert featured members of the Carter and Stoneman families – both musical pioneers during the summer of 1927 when talent scout Ralph Peer came to Bristol looking to record "hillbilly music."

Also honoring Jimmie Rodgers – the

"Father of country Music" who made his first recordings in Bristol with Peer – Fridays Paramount show celebrated historic recordings made 70 years ago by Peer at what is now a flowerbed marked by a monument at the site of the old Taylor-Christian Hat Factory warehouse on State Street – just a couple of blocks from the Paramount doors.

Friday's show reunited descendants of those sessions – heralded by music historians as a turning point in early country music when talents like Rodgers and the Carters were discovered. The two acts would later become the first long-lasting stars of the country music industry.

Though he never achieved the same kind of long-lasting fame or success as the Carters or Rodgers, the '20s era success of Ernest Stoneman – a carpenter and musician from the Galax (Virginia) area – brought Peer to Bristol in 1927 to search for talent as a recording engineer for the Victor Talking Machine Co., a forerunner of the company which became RCA Victor.

Unlike Rodgers or the Carters, the Stonemans have never been inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame – an over-



Janette Carter and Patsy Stoneman

sight that's been a "sore spot" to Stoneman family members, Patsy Stoneman said backstage Friday.

Still, there remained a smile on the face of this autoharp strummer Friday.

That smile grew even bigger when BCMA leaders presented the Stonemans – and descendants of The Carter Family – with Lifetime Achievement Awards at Friday's show.

"This has been an honor for us," said Patsy Stoneman, a Manchester, Tennessee resident who performed *The Whippoorwill's Song*, a tune recorded by her parents at the sessions in Bristol on July 27, 1927.

The Stonemans won a standing ovation for their performance.

Doc Watson – a blind folk musician from Deep Gap, North Carolina – starred as the headlining act at Friday's show. "I feel honored and a little bit humble to be here," said Watson, taking the stage just after 10 p.m.

Folk musician Mike Seeger, who played with both original Stoneman and Carter family members during the folk revival of the '50s and '60s, also performed half a dozen tunes Friday – including *Skip To My Lou*, *My Darling*, also recorded in



Left to right: Mary Lou Orthey and Patsy, Donna and Jimmy Stoneman.

Bristol by the Stonemans. Seeger served as the show's emcee.

Like Ernest "Pop" Stoneman, Seeger is a multimusician. He used a harmonica, banjo and jaw harp to entertain on songs like *Sally Goodin* and *John Hardy*.

Paying homage to their parents, Joe and Janette Carter – children of A.P. and Sara Carter and just toddlers at the time of the sessions – performed *Bury Me Under The Weeping Willow* among other Carter Family songs Friday, with Janette's son, Dale Jett. The Carter Family recorded *Bury Me* in Bristol with Peer on August 1, 1927.

Also Friday, Wayne Henderson from Grayson County performed a medley of Carter Family tunes, as well as a fast and furious instrumental, *Steel Guitar Rag*.

(Editor's note: This account is reprinted by permission of the *Bristol Herald Courier*. Although not mentioned in this article, Mary Lou Orthey also performed on stage with Jimmie, Patsy, and Donna Stoneman. This event was September 5 and we thank Patsy for sharing this article with us.)

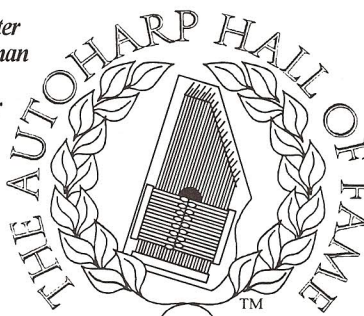


Patsy Stoneman and Mary Lou Orthey

THE AUTOHARP
HALL OF FAME MEMBERS

Maybelle Addington Carter
Ernest Van "Pop" Stoneman
John Kilby Snow
Sara Dougherty Carter
Marty Schuman
Karl August Gütter

Glen R. Peterson
Bryan Benson Bowers
Mike Seeger
Meg Peterson
Becky Blackley
Mike Fenton



1998 NOMINATION FORM

Nominations for the 1998 inductees into The Autoharp Hall of Fame will be accepted by Limberjack Productions from September 1, 1997 until May 1, 1998. Nominees should have had a significant, long-standing, positive impact on the autoharp community. Any individual wishing to submit nominations may do so by completing this form. Copies of this form are permissible. Names may be submitted for one posthumous and one contemporary nomination. Posthumous honorees must have been deceased for three years to be eligible.

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

are proficient in autoharp history. *Envelopes must contain nominations only*, and should be addressed to: **The Autoharp Hall of Fame**, Limberjack Productions, 18 Burd Road, Newport PA, 17074. These envelopes shall be forwarded, unopened, to the panel. Limberjack Productions shall be informed of the decision of the panel by the third week of May, 1998. The honorees shall be installed into The Autoharp Hall of Fame at the 1998 Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering, and announced in the Summer 1998 issue of *Autoharp Quarterly*. **When describing a nominee's contributions, specify their significance, and the nominee's leadership role in the autoharp community.**

POSTHUMOUS NOMINEE

Name of nominee: _____

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

CONTEMPORARY NOMINEE

Name of nominee: _____

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

Name, address, telephone number of person submitting nomination:

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

I am an AQ subscriber.

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

NAME _____

IMPORTANT

Form must be filled in completely and a description of achievement, contributions, and/or leadership in the autoharp community, must be completed to validate the nomination. You may submit your nomination for posthumous, contemporary, or both.

AMERICAN PATROL

F. W. Meacham (1885)

1 **D7** **G** / / **O G O G** / / **O G O G** / / **O G** /

D7 G / / D7 G D7 G / / C7 G D7 G / / A7 G /

4 / / **D7** / **O D7** / **G** / **O G** / **A7** / **D7 A7**

/ / D7 / G D7 / G / D7 G / A7 / D7 A7

8 **D7** / / **G** / / **O G O G** / / **O G O G** / / **O G** /

D7 / / G / / D7 G D7 G / / C7 G D7 G / / A7 G /

12 / / **C** **G** **D7** **G*** **D7** **G** **D7** **G*** **D7** **O D7** **D7**

/ / C G D7 G D7 G D7 G D7 G D7 G D7 G

16 **G** / / **D7** / / / / **O D7** **A7** **G** / / **O G O**

G / / D7 / / / / G D7 A7 G / / D7 G D7

20 **G** / / **D7** / / / / **O D7** **A7** **G** / / **O G O**

G / / D7 / / / / G D7 A7 G / / D7 G D7

24 **G** / / **C** / / / / **G** / / **O G** **D7** / / / /

G / / C / / / / G / / D7 G D7 / / / /

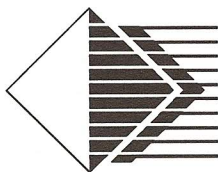
28 **Em** / / **O Em** **C** / / / / **G** / / **O G** **D7** / / / /

Em / / D7Em C / / / / G / / D7 G D7 / / / /

32 **G** / / /

G / / /

Interaction

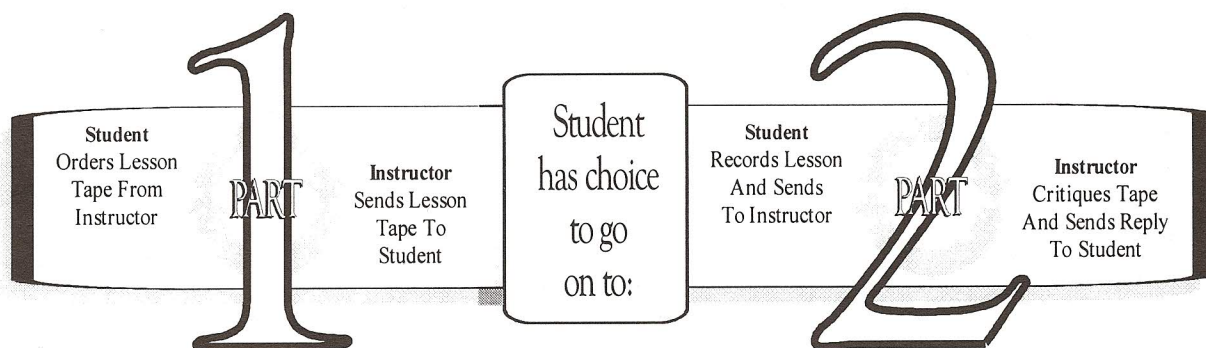


YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERACTIVE LESSON WITH ALAN MAGER

Alan Mager was the 1993 International Autoharp Champion and the only player ever to take the top three prizes in that contest at Winfield, Kansas in consecutive years. He has also taken second and third place honors in the Mt. Laurel Autoharp Championship.

Alan is a familiar face at acoustic music festivals and autoharp events throughout the eastern half of the country. He has performed and been a workshop leader at the Mt. Laurel Autoharp Gathering, Augusta Heritage Arts Workshops, Cranberry Dulcimer Gathering, Washington (DC) Folk Festival, the University of Wisconsin's Stringalong Weekend, Memphis Dulcimer Festival and others. Alan also teaches group and private lessons and many of his articles and musical arrangements for autoharp have appeared in various publications.

The Fairhaired Boy, Alan's first recorded album, showcased his versatility as a solo performer. His latest album, *Hear The Colors*, is an all-instrumental collection featuring his autoharp playing backed by other instruments. He is featured on Volumes 2 and 3 of *Music From Autoharp Quarterly* and on *Live At The Mountain Laurel Autoharp Championship 1996*.



Are you interested in becoming an Interaction instructor? We'd like to hear from you.
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HERE'S HOW THE INTERACTION TWO-PART FORMAT WORKS

Interaction is your opportunity to have a personalized lesson from a top-notch player.

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Send \$8 to the instructor for a tape of the lesson including the instructor's rendition of the tune. Make check payable to the

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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 instruc-

tor will listen to your recording and following it will critique your playing, answer your 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 "AMERICAN PATROL"

Alan Mager, PO Box 1221, Annandale, VA 22003

American Patrol, also known as *We Must Be Vigilant*, is a peppy march written in 1885 by F.W. Meacham. Anyone who ever played in a high school band will undoubtedly be familiar with this catchy tune.

To learn how to play *American Patrol*, first concentrate on the melody chords shown below the staff. The tune is played chiefly by using the I, IV and V7 chords, G, C and D7. You will note that to play the few accidental notes that appear in the piece, I have used the C7 and A7 chords. You might find other chords that will give you these notes, and if you prefer to use other chords for this purpose, please feel free to do so. The only other "odd" chord appears in measure 28 where I use Em. I really like the sound of the minor chord here, but for the sake of simplicity, you can use G instead of the Em if you wish.

Play the tune using a simple pinch-pluck technique. Count the measure as 4/4 time and pinch, with thumb and middle finger, every note that appears on a beat of the music. Pluck, with the index finger, every note that appears on a half beat. Thus, the first full measure of the music would be played: pinch, pinch, pinch, pluck, pinch, pluck. Continue this technique throughout the entire piece.

To master this lesson you must keep your pinches and plucks very small. When you pinch, try to strike only one note with the middle finger and one note with the thumb. What you want to hear is a clear, bell-like two-part harmony, not the full sound of the chord which is produced when several notes are struck. The sound of the pluck should be the sound of the index finger striking only one note. In reality, your strokes will probably hit more than one

note at a time, because the strings on either side of the "target" note are usually damped by the chord bar, the only sound you will hear is the ringing of one note. If you find your strokes are too big and too many notes are sounding, try positioning your fingers so that your picks are perpendicular to the string bed at the instant they contact the strings. This should help to make the sound cleaner.

Play the piece until you become very familiar with the tune, always striving for an extremely clean melody line. As you progress, increase the speed. At proper march tempo, *American Patrol* is played very quickly. The problem you will likely encounter as you increase the speed is that it becomes very difficult to make all the melody chord changes (and there are a lot of them in this piece) and still keep the tune flowing smoothly. When you reach this point, you are ready for the real meat of this lesson.

I have found that the only way I can play *American Patrol* smoothly and up to speed is by using the technique commonly called open chording. Open chording refers to playing the autoharp without depressing a chord bar. The technique is used most often on diatonic autoharps to enable the player to execute fast or intricate melody passages with fewer chord changes. Typically, the player bounces up and down on one chord bar playing a melody note while the chord bar is down, a second note when the bar is up (i.e. open), a third note when the bar is down again, a fourth note open, etc., alternating between open and closed positions.

Open chording works well on diatonic 'harps because they have only the notes of

one scale. If the target note is missed and a neighboring note struck instead, the "wrong" note usually doesn't sound bad because it is still in the scale in which the music is written. On chromatic 'harps, the target note's neighbors are usually *not* in the scale, and letting them sound can create severe dissonance. Because it contains several accidental notes, *American Patrol* cannot be played on a diatonic instrument. However, I have found that I can play it successfully on a chromatic autoharp using a lot of open chording – provided that I keep my strokes *extremely* small, as described above.

Now look at the chords for *American Patrol* written above the staff. The "O" symbol stands for "open" and means that the note is played without depressing a chord bar. The rhythm chords are shown in boxes, and in the open chording passages, they are the only chords you will play. For example, in measures 1-3, G is the only chord that is depressed. When you need notes that are outside that chord, you simply lift up on the chord bar and play the note without depressing a bar. With the exception of measure 15, all the "open" notes fortunately occur on half beats, which in our pinch-pluck style means that you will be plucking those notes with a single finger. This is really helpful because it minimizes the chance for error.

During the open chording passages, you will be pinching when the rhythm chord is down and plucking when it is up. Practice this technique without regard to the written music by using only the G chord bar. Play pinch-pluck, pinch-pluck, pinch-pluck, pinch-pluck with your right hand while your left hand plays G-open, G-open, G-open, G-open. Move your right hand up

and down the strings to get the feel of creating runs with this technique. Particularly when you are plucking in the open position, listen for the clear ringing of single notes. With practice, you'll start to get comfortable with the rhythm of this open-chording technique, and the notes will get clearer as you concentrate on keeping your pinches and plucks very small.

When you start to get the feel of it, transfer the technique to the written music for *American Patrol*. Work on the first three measures until you smooth out the technique, then you'll find the rest of the piece is not so difficult. I think you'll find that this technique works best when played fast. One of the best things about playing fast is that when you make a mistake, it doesn't last very long.

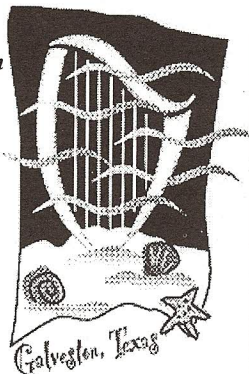
Oh, yes – what about measure 15? The “open” notes in that measure occur on the beats rather than on half beats. For me, this makes that measure extremely difficult to play using the open-chording technique. therefore, I don't use it in that measure – I find it easier to play all the melody chords instead.

Have fun experimenting with open chording on *American Patrol*. Then try this technique on other chromatic pieces. A key to tasteful open chording is to choose the right music with which to use the technique. It works best on blues, ragtime, jazz and other music that has a certain amount of dissonance in it. Sweet, flowing music does not lend itself well to chromatic open chording. Sometimes chromatic open chording can enhance a piece of music by providing a dimension that closed chording cannot.



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THE MINSTREL BOY

Thomas Moore (1779-1852)

Traditional Irish Air

F / **C Bb F C F** / **C** **Dm** **C Dm**

1. The min-strel boy ... to the war is gone, In the
 2. The min-strel fell ... but the foe-man's chain Could not

Bb **F** / **Bb F** / **C** **F** / / **C Bb F C F**

ranks of death ... you will find him. His fa-ther's sword ... he hath
 bring that proud ... soul ... un-der. The harp he loved ... ne- ver

/ **C** **Dm** **C Dm** **Bb** **F** / **Bb F** / **C** **F** /

gird- ed on, And his wild harp slung ... be- ... hind him.
 spoke a- gain, For he tore its chords ... a- ... sun- der, And

Dm **C** **Dm** **C Dm** **C** **G7** **C7** / **Dm** / / **C**

"Land of song!" said the war-rior bard, "Tho' all the world be-
 said, "No chain shall ... war-sul-ly thee, Thou soul of love and

Bb **C** **Dm** **F** / **C Bb F C F** / **C** **Dm** **C Dm**

trays ... thee, One sword at least ... thy ... rights shall guard, One ...
 brav-er-y. Thy songs were made... for the pure and free, They shall

Bb **F** / **Bb F** / **C** **F** /

faith-ful harp ... shall ... praise ... thee. "
 nev-er sound ... in ... slav-er-y. "

Annual Club Directory

Club Editor
Judy Allison
450 Carolina Avenue
Chester, WV 26034

This list is published in our Winter issue and is updated as needed in each issue. It contains autoharp clubs & clubs where autoharp players are welcome. If you know of a club we've not mentioned, please send the information to the Club Editor.

ARKANSAS

Harps of the Ouachitas
1st Monday each month,
7:00 PM
c/o Jann and
Jack Barnett
1709 Miller Avenue
Mena, AR 71953
501 394-3665

Old Time Music Association

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

CALIFORNIA

Horse and Buggy* Harpers

Every Thursday,
7:00 PM
Country Villa
Mobile Home Park
Galt, CA
c/o Melva Gass
223 Joseph Road
Manteca, CA 95336
209 239-1589

The Redwood Autoharpers

Redwood Elementary School
Fontana, CA
Second Tuesday of each month
Bob Palmer
909 357-5740 (school)

The San Diego Autoharp Club

Sometimes get-together
c/o Diane Pierreuse
431-3931
dpierreuse@aol.com

The San Diego Folk Song Society

2nd Saturday of the month, 6:45 PM.
All Souls
Episcopal Church
on Catalina Blvd.
c/o Diane Pierreuse
431-3931
dpierreuse@aol.com.

Scottish Fiddlers of Los Angeles

1 or 2 Sundays a month,
1:30 PM
c/o Jan Tappan
1938 Rose Villa St.
Pasadena, CA 91107
818 793-3716
FAX: 818 793-9401

CANADA

Kawartha Melody Makers
Every Friday, 9:30 AM
275 Queen St.
Lakefield, ON
c/o Vi Elliston
1798 Youngs Point Road
RR3
Lakefield, ON K0L 2H0
Canada
705 652-6502

COLORADO

Colorado Autoharp Club
(formerly Denver Area Autoharp Club)
2nd Sunday of month,
4:00 PM
Swallow Hill Music Asso.
1905 South Pearl
Denver, CO 80210
303 777-1003
c/o Mary Harris
303 695-9358, and
Margaret Bakker
303 986-0769
margaretbakker630@webtv.net

Pikes Peak Harpers
Every Tuesday,
7:00 - 9:00 PM
12:30 - 4:30 PM
1627 Wynkoop Drive

Colorado Springs, CO
c/o Bob Bernard
(address above)
719 596-3060 or
Maeta Goodwin
719 573-8890
FAX 719 548-4525
goodwimi@fotf.org

DELAWARE

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

ILLINOIS

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

Fox Valley Folklore Society

Every Wednesday,
8:00 PM
Mack's Silver Pheasant
(4 miles north of Rte. 64
on Rte. 25 near St. Charles,
IL)
c/o Juel Ulven
755 N. Evanslawn Ave.
Aurora, IL 60506
630 897-FOLK

Hammers and Noters Dulcimer Society of Illinois

c/o Donna Tufano
PO Box 59
Elmwood Park,
IL 60635
630 456-6292

Masthouse

1st Saturday of month,
7:00 PM
Open Stage (teens & up)
528 E. Calhoun
Woodstock, IL 60098
c/o Sylvia Francois
103 Sharon Dr.
Sleepy Hollow,
IL 60118

847 836-MAST

IOWA

Happy Hearts Autoharp Club
3rd Saturday each month,
12:30 - 4:30 PM
c/o Dora Miller
2111 N. 5th Avenue, E.
Newton, IA 50208
515 792-3977

KANSAS

'Harps Plus
3rd Sunday each month,
2:00 - 4:45 PM
Immanuel Baptist
Hillside Church
147 S. Hillside
Wichita, KS
c/o Loren Wells
10514 E. Bluestem
Wichita,
KS 67207-5761
316 682-8048

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

Winfield Autoharp Club

2nd Thursday, each month, 7:00 PM
c/o Karen Nickel
1910 W. 14th Avenue
Winfield, KS 67156
316 221-1219 or
Diane Haddock
mrfish@horizon.hit.net

KENTUCKY

Southern Strings Autoharp Club
Ronald DeVore
308 Virginia Ave.
Frankfort, KY 40601
501 223-5217

LOUISIANA

Ark-La-Tex Autoharp Club
(formerly Shreveport Autoharp society)

2nd Saturday each month, 1:00 - 4:00 PM
Brookwood
Baptist Church
8900 Kingston Road
Shreveport, LA
c/o Glenn Flesher
9534 Royalton Dr.
Shreveport, LA 71118
318 686-5727

MARYLAND

A Group of Us on the Eastern Shore of Maryland
Every other Saturday,
7:00 PM
c/o Charlie Long
410 742-6619
cklong@sae.ssu.umd.edu

MASSACHUSETTS

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

MICHIGAN

Autoharps Unlimited
2nd or 3rd Tuesday of month, 7:00 PM
c/o Kathy Wieland
2230 Blueberry Lane
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
313 769-2849
katwieland@aol.com

Jolly Hammers and Strings Dulcimer Club

4th Saturday each month,
1:00 PM
Chippewa Nature Center
400 S. Badour Road
Midland, MI
517 631-0830
c/o Jane &
Bill Kuhlman
2769 S. Homer Road
Midland, MI 48640
517 835-5085

Saginaw Subterranean Strings

3rd Friday of month,
7:00 PM, September
through May

c/o John &
Sharon Skaryd
11239 Lake Circle Dr.
N. Saginaw, MI 48609
517 781-0849

MISSOURI

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

Music Folkjam
3rd Saturday each month, 3:00 - 5:00 PM
c/o Andy or Don Ploof
8015 Big Bend Blvd.
Webster Groves,
MO 63119
314 961-2838

Singing Strings Autoharp Club
2nd Monday each month, 6:30 - 8:30 PM
c/o Alice Penovich
627 S. Newton
Springfield,
MO 65806
417 831-4913

NEW YORK

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

NORTH CAROLINA

Crystal Strings Dulcimer Club
1st Sunday of each month,
1:30 PM
Belks Plaza
Arendall St.
Morehead City, NC
c/o Donnell Meadows
919 726-7699

OHIO

Canton Folksong Society
Usually 2nd Saturday

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in McKinley
Historical Museum
800 McKinley
Memorial Dr. NW
Canton, OH 44718
330 455-7043
c/o Christina Kambrick
1707 32nd Street NE
Canton, OH 44714
330 453-5773

**Dulci-More: Folk and
Traditional Musicians**
1st Tuesday & 3rd
Wednesday each month,
7:00 PM

First United Methodist
Church of Salem
244 South Broadway
Salem, OH 44460-3816
c/o Bill Schilling
984 Homewood Ave.
Salem, OH 44460-3816
330 332-4420
billsssss@gnn.com
<http://members.gnn.com/>
billsssss/mw/dmhp.html

OKLAHOMA

**Oklahoma City
Traditional Music
Association**
1st Saturday
each month
c/o Anita Roesler

823 N.W. 43rd Street
Oklahoma City,
OK 73118
405 524-5334

OREGON

**Portland
Autoharp Group**
Normally the 2nd
Friday of each month
c/o Ellie and Ken Rice
02 SW Ridge Drive
Portland, OR 97216
rice@ssd.intel.com

PENNSYLVANIA

**Angel Strings
Autoharp Club**
1st Monday of month,
6:00–9:00 PM
c/o Linda S. Huber
RD 3, Box 357
Packing House Road
Hanover,
PA 17331-9414
717 637-6857

**Bucks County
Folk Song Society**
1st Sunday each month,
6:30 PM
Wrightstown
Friends Meeting
Route 413
Wrightstown, PA
c/o John Hook

410 Twin Streams Dr.
Warminster
c/o Helen Miller
713 Bloom St.
Danville, PA 17821
717 275-2642

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

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

**The Bar None
Autoharp Society**
c/o Bob Woodcock
268 Barren Hill Road
Conshohocken,
PA 19428
banjerbob@aol.com

TEXAS

**East Texas
Acoustic Musicians**
First Saturday each
month, 2:00–5:00 PM
Greggton 1st
Baptist Church,
4520 E. Marshall Ave.
Longview, TX 75604
c/o Donny F. Ross
3733 Linda Kaye
Longview, TX 75604
903 297-2116

**'Harp Over Texas
Autoharp Club**
4th Tuesday each month,
7:00 PM except December
c/o Nathan Sarvis
1904 Moonlight Drive
Denton, TX 76208
817 387-2020
nsarvis@tenet.edu

HAAMS

(Houston Area Acoustic
Music Society)
Acoustic Showcase: Every
4th Friday of the month
from 7:00 to 10:00 PM
Hickory Hollow
Restaurant
101 Heights Boulevard
Acoustic Jam: Every 2nd

Friday of the month from
7:00 to 10:00 PM
Pufferbellies Restaurant
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Old Town Spring
c/o Peggy Carter
16142 Hexham Drive
Spring, Texas 77379
713 370-9495
carterm@springbranch
isd.tenet.edu

**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

TENNESSEE

Folk Group
Meets monthly
c/o Bob Mead
205 922-3538 (work)
615 433-0065
bobm@camber.com

VIRGINIA

**Capital 'Harpers
Autoharp Club**
3rd weekend each month
c/o Connie &
Nathan Grace
7903 Central Park Circle
Alexandria, VA 22309
703 780-7707 or
John and Mary Dettra
703 790-1427 or
Neal Walters
nwalters@oracle.com

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

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Pro-Files

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

Karen Daniels
9002 Grandview Drive
Overland Park, KS 66212

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
FAX 209 297-8966
witsend@cybergate.com
<http://www.cybergate.com/~witsend>

Pro-File: AQ October 88

Performance Schedule:

March 6, 7

Beginning Autoharp
CA State Univ., Fresno
Extended Education Ph: 209 278-0333
(loaner autoharps available)

April 25

Beginning Autoharp
CA State Univ., Hayward
Extended Education Ph: 510 885-3605
(loaner autoharps available)

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c/o Scott O'Malley & Asso.
PO Box 9188
Colorado Springs, CO 80932
719 635-7776
somagency@aol.com
<http://www.otrd.state.ok.us/bluegrass/bbowers.html> (his bio)

Pro-File: AQ January 89

Performance Schedule:

February 6-8

Comox, BC, Canada
February 14
West University Community Center
Houston, TX
February 21
Olympia, WA
February 26
Ketchum, ID
February 27

Ponderosa Elementary School
Post Falls, ID

March 1, 2
Green River, WY

March 5
Scotts Bluff, NE
March 7

Prairie Center For The Arts
Schaumburg, IL
March 10

The Moon Dance
Richmond, VA
March 13

Godfrey Daniels
Bethlehem, PA
March 14

Trinity Church
Branford, CT
March 15

Woods Hole Folk Music School
Woods Hole, MA
March 17

Johnny D's
Somerville, MA
March 20

Morgan's Restaurant
Winston-Salem, NC
April 1

Fayetteville, AR
April 2
Winfield, KS

April 5
In-House Concert
Chuck & Karen Daniels

Overland Park, KS
April 17
Corvallis, OR

May 1
Nisswa, MN

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303 969-9645
rozzie@ix.netcom.com
<http://www.hcds.net/~amtronp/rozb/>

Pro-File: AQ October 89

Performance Schedule:

Every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday night
Buckhorn Exchange Restaurant
1000 Osage Street.
Denver, CO

JULIE DAVIS

PO Box 1302
Nederland, CO 80466
303 258-3444
jdavis@indra.com

Pro-File: AQ July 91

Performance Schedule:

February 6, 7

CCIRA Workshop/Concert
Denver Tech Center
Denver, CO

February 7

Concert at Columbine Unitarian Church
February 21

St. Cajatan Church

Auraria Campus

Denver, CO

February 28

Acoustic Coffeehouse

Nederland, CO

March 13, 14

Rocky Mountain Storytelling Conference

Loretto Heights College

Denver, CO

March 29

Collage Children's Museum

Boulder, CO

April 26

St. Andrews Church

Boulder, CO

PAUL and WIN GRACE and FAMILY

11990 Barnes Chapel Road
Columbia, MO 65201

573 443-2819

pgrace@mail.coin.missouri.edu

Pro-File: AQ October 88

Performance Schedule:

February 12-15

International Conference of the North
American Folk Music and Dance Alliance
Memphis, TN

March 23

Broadcast from Columbia, MO

"The Paul Pepper Show"

NBC, Channel 8, 9-10am

April 25-26

Keokuk, IA

LITTLE ROY LEWIS

and the Lewis Family

1635 Washington Highway

Lincolnton, GA 30817

706 359-3767

Pro-File: AQ January 90**Performance Schedule:***February 6, 7*

Yoder's Rock Oak Restaurant

Millmont, PA

February 8

Upper Daulpin High School

Elizabethville, PA

February 14, 15

Sarasota County Fairground (festival)

Sarasota, FL

February 20

Lenoir Community College Center

Kinston, NC

February 21

Mountaineer Opera House

Milton, WV

February 27

Henry VIII Hotel

St. Louis, MO

February 28

Knights of Columbus Facility (festival)

Davison, MI

March 6

Silver Spur Rodeo Grounds (festival)

Kissimmee, FL

March 12

Fiske Theater

Oak Grove, LA

March 14

Livestock Expo. Center

Columbia, MO

March 20

Clem's Shoal Creek Music Park Bldg.

Lavonia, GA

March 28-29

Withlacoochee Backwaters (festival)

Dunnellon, FL

April 2

Country Music Place

Shepherdsville, KY

April 3

Flowers Hall

Bellevue, OH

April 5

Peddler's Auction Bldg.

Goshen, IN

April 10

Cross Country Trail Ride Festival

Eminence, MO

April 19

Whitlow's Hall

Miskegon, MI

April 25

All-Purpose Bldg.

Kingfisher, OK

April 30 & May 1, 2

Elijah Clark State Park (festival)

Lincolnton, GA

HARVEY REID

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York, ME 03909

207 363-1886

info@woodpecker.com

Pro-File: AQ January 89**Performance Schedule:***February 21*

Briggs Opera House

White River Jct., VT

February 27

Mira Costa College

Encinitas, CA

March 1

Caltech Folk Music Society

Pasadena, CA

March 4

Brewery Arts Center

Carson City, NV

March 5

Martin Hotel

Winnemucca, NV

March 6

Store Creek Coffeehouse at

Maytan Music

Reno, NV

March 7

The Palms

Davis, CA

March 8

Black Bart Playhouse

Murphys, CA

March 20

Ten Pound Fiddle Coffeehouse

East Lansing, MI

March 21

Front Porch Coffeehouse

Valparaiso, IN

April 3

Mt. Wachusett Community College

Gardner, MA

April 4

Roaring Brook Nature Center

Canton, CT

BILL and LAURIE SKY

PO Box 70060

Nashville, TN 37207-0060

615 859-1419

billandlauriesky@hotmail.com

Pro-File: AQ April 90**Performance Schedule:***February 7*

San Pedro Territory

Benson, AZ

February 14

Blue River Sound Show

Durant, OK

February 15

Fellowship Bible Church (morning)

Dallas, TX

February 15

Chapel Of The Hills (6:30)

Buchanan Dam, TX

February 18

Travelers World Resort

San Antonio, TX

February 20

Denison, TX

February 21

The Cypress Center

Sulphur Springs, TX

February 22

Joaquin, TX

February 28

Carol Green Civic Center

Quitman, TX

March 3

Glenwood Christian School

Glenwood, AR

March 6

Repton, AL

March 14

J.C.'s Coffee Shop

Senatobia, MS

March 15

Carthage, MS

April 8

Okahola Baptist Church

Purvis, MS

April 18

Oran, MO

April 25

Stafford, VA

DREW SMITH

529 Ardmore Road

Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423

201 444-2833

Pro-File: AQ July 89**Performance Schedule:***February 21*

Hurdy Gurdy Club (Zeke's Place)

Paramus, NJ

March 6

Folk On Broadway (w/ Triple Play)

New York, NY

IVAN STILES

1585 State Road

Phoenixville, PA 19460

610 935-9062

pickeringbend@worldlynx.net

Pro-File: AQ October 88**Performance Schedule:***February 8*

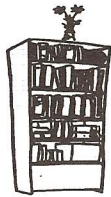
Langford Park

Orlando, FL

February 13
House Concert
Punta Gorda, FL
February 18
Tunes At Noon
Munn Park
Lakeland, FL
February 21
Lake County Folk
Eustis, FL
February 22
House Concert
Tallahassee, FL
March 4- April 22
Autoharp Class
Owen J. Roberts
Adult Education Program
Pottstown, PA



The
Book Shelf



Stories with music/musicians
in the plot.

Little House On The Prairie
by Laura Ingalls Wilder
Devil's Dream
by Lee Smith
Cold Mountain
by Charles Frazer
John the Balladeer
by Manly Wade Wellman
Rosewood Casket
by Sharyn McCrumb
A Death In The Family
by James Agee

Some of these titles were gleaned from the Cyberpluckers, some were suggested by a helpful clerk at our local Barnes and Noble bookstore. All seem to be readily available. If you know of any that should be added, please write and tell us of your favorites.



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Critics' Choice

If you have a recording you would like to have considered for review, please send it to Autoharp Quarterly, PO Box 336, New Manchester, WV 26056. Submitted recordings cannot be returned.



Mike's Choice

Mike Herr

Mel Bay Presents –
Basic Melodic Autoharp Solos
 by Alex Usher
 216 N. Elm
 Webster Groves, MO 63119

Okay, all you newbies and intermods, listen up – here's the definitive learning format. For those of you with a CD player, Alex Usher has intelligently combined the convenience of instant audio replay with the visual cues of written music. What a Smart idea!

In a very snappily-covered Mel Bay Publication, Alex starts at the *very beginning* by giving very useful tips on what you need to get going (including advice on which autoharp to buy) and how to go about it. My favorite line from the opening set of advice is as follows: "You wouldn't try to run a 400-meter race in bedroom slippers, so why would you try to play an autoharp with loose picks?"

She then reviews how to use the book and the system of reading her style of chord notation including the necessary coloring of symbols under the notes. Apparently, our brains identify quicker with colors than with symbols or names.

Starting with the simplest of tunes, *Taps*, then *Scotland's Burning*, Alex describes accurately how to play the autoharp. This is much harder to describe in words than it is to demonstrate, but she pulls it off in excellent fashion. The CD is used to hear what it sounds like as well.

From this point on, each new tune is used to build on the last, with an emphasis

on a style point, a picking tip, a musical idea or a reminder of a previous lesson. Frequently, we are reminded to *tune* the 'harp! (Great idea!) She eventually gets to tunes with different timings – some quicker in pace, some with minor chords, and finally to *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*, with no fewer than seven chords, two of them minor. Just a tad of a challenge, that one is.

All of the tunes are played on the CD once through in different keys and sometimes at a slightly quicker pace. But, never fear, she plays them at an extremely reasonable speed for anyone beginning to play and even for you intermediates when just learning a new tune.

I must admit the mind-numbing pace was made bearable by obsessively checking for any difference between the strums or picks and the tablature as she has it written down. And, yes, there were a few disparities here and there, so you purists out there will have to be satisfied with an accuracy rate of approximately 99.375% or so... The only mildly bothersome one comes very late in the book in one of the faster pieces in which she uses a picking technique that is far too complicated to notate. Oh, well, we gotta forgive her one episode to show-off, she's won all those awards and placed all those times – she's entitled!

There is one recommendation that I'm going to stick my neck out and make – not only for you folks just starting this wonderful trip down autoharp lane, but also for all, yes all, autoharpers wherever you are. Some how we've all learned the practice of "filling dead air space" (as Alex says) with a thumb strum. This occurs when there's a rest, a half note, a whole note or a dotted note. I want to state in a very clear manner – *this does not have to be done!* Although many advanced players have already come to this realization, you do not have to wait 'til you think of yourself as an advanced player to stop strumming with the thumb at every opportunity. The amount of "dead air space" in music is far less than we think. Rests, holds, and whole notes are written into the music by the composer for a reason – either we're meant to hear no sound for

an instant or we're meant to hear a continuous smooth sound, unbroken by the intrusion of a new set of vibrations. Somehow, the "sound of the autoharp" has become defined in part by that ever-present strum, on the beat, to be sure, but never ceasing.

I have a suggestion – for those who are ready to fire back a letter to the editor, telling the purpose of the strum is obviously to keep the beat – try this. Every time there is a thumb strum with no note above it, strum the air! Every time there is a thumb strum with no note above it and a rest sign, strum the air and damp the strings. A different sound (and a more pleasing one, in my opinion) awaits you.

Somehow the opportunity of this review of Alex's book got me off on this tangent. She is no more guilty than am I or anyone else who has taught the 'harp. Doesn't mean we can't all change.

This should not detract from the superb quality of Alex's teaching CD and book. I think this is the most sophisticated and user-friendly format I've ever seen. The opening section and the intros to each song are chockful of excellent advice – Alex obviously knows whereof she speaks and has mountains of experience of which you're being given a very tasty peak (peek?). She has my wholehearted recommendation for this work and I truly wish her success with this venture.

Harps of Gold

An Instrumental Autoharp Christmas
 by Alex Usher with Family and Friends

*Silent Night • O, Come All Ye Faithful • Hon-
 duran Lullaby • Joy To The World • Star Of
 Bethlehem • Angels We Have Heard On
 High • Away In A Manger • Jingle Bells •
 What Child Is This? • O Holy Night • Go
 Tell It On The Mountain • O, Little Town Of
 Bethlehem • Ding Dong Merrily On High •
 Joseph, Dearest Joseph Mine • The Virgin
 Mary Had A Baby Boy • It Came Upon A
 Midnight Clear • Christmas Is A-Comin'*

Harps Of Gold is your quintessential autoharp-centered instrumental of mostly

familiar Christmas tunes with a few nuggets of new tunes thrown in for merry measure.

If you've never heard Alex Usher's autoharp technique, you'll no doubt be amazed at how much *sound* she gets out of her harps. She plays a quick double stroke, to and fro, with accurate melody runs thrown merrily in each measure. There's a fair amount of variation from tune to tune and the solo work on *Ding Dong Merrily On High* stands out to me as the most creative and inventive of the collection.

Alex has surrounded her harp, standing Christmas-tree-like at the center, with so many instruments scattered about like gifts at the base. Including family members Rich (husband) and sons Dave and Chris, she has called on Jim Renz and Rich Thum to merrily measure the room and fill in the corners with sound. Guitar, hammered dulcimer, mandolin and harmonica are utilized.

Always the teacher, Alex uses the liner notes to enlighten us as to the history of the autoharp – a nice touch. Merrily she includes a measure of each participant's biography as well – another nice touch.

My overall impression of this tape is one of a lot of work to faithfully bring yet another rendition of mostly very familiar tunes and a few new ones. It's hard to get excited just because the material is so common, but it is good to hear Alex go full tilt and strut some of her prize-winning stuff in her own inimitable fashion. When reviewing her teaching CD recently it was apparent that she wanted to "let go" and this was her opportunity to do so.

Now let's hear some of those lesser-known polkas, hornpipes and what-not you've got in your measurably-merry stocking, Alex.



Guest Review

By Joe Marlin Riggs of Kilby Snow on Yazoo #516, by Shanachie, PO Box 208, Newton, NJ 07860.

Title: **Traditional Music Classics**

Four segments:

Doc Watson with Clint Howard, Fred Price
Roscoe Holcomb

Buell Kazee

Kilby Snow with Mike Seeger

This video runs 70 minutes, but Kilby Snow is about 30 minutes of it, with the remainder divided among the other three masters on the tape.

You will see and hear the impeccable guitar and banjo of Mike Seeger siding for Kilby, and the "impickable" music of Kilby. They open up their segment with a version of Kilby's *Autoharp Special*, slow enough to digest the chord changes and the picking and barring. After that opener, Mr. Snow almost says something, but recovers in time to keep his taciturn Kilby persona intact through the next number.

Fine camera work – about half of the footage is close-up, plain enough to see bar and pick work. Bars are clearly labeled on the 15-bar harp, but – knowing Kilby's penchant for secrecy – I wouldn't trust the button labels too far.

Through the masterful leading questions of Mike Seeger, Kilby delivers the longest and most detailed recorded description of his playing technique, set-up, drag-notes and picks, throwing in plenty of slowed-down demonstration as he goes. It is the most natural and at-ease Kilby Snow I have seen or heard. The camera is close enough to count the strings, giving the perception that the viewer is right in the studio with Kilby Snow, and – through Mike Seeger – able to ask any question at all about picks, playing, harp and drag-notes, and come away satisfied.

I cannot help but compare the footage in this historical video with the other two recent videos by Stefan Grossman's *Guitar Workshop* (reviewed *AQ*, Summer '97).

All three contain a Kilby segment along with other artist's segments.

All three show Kilby playing and singing.

Grosman's videos are performance oriented, whereas Yazoo is more like a workshop atmosphere. Grosman's videos contain booklets with various pictures and amplified descriptions of the artists; each of the two booklets has different pictures, and slightly different historical notes on Mr. Snow.

Yazoo has a good selection of pictures on the video cover, but does not have a booklet; it does have brief notes on the video cover for each artist.

All three are generous with coverage and "press" of Snow. All three are essential for any Kilby Snow fan.

Nevertheless, I found myself playing and replaying and replaying this latest Shanachie-Yazoo tape, and I tried to explain to myself why that was so, finally nailing down these reasons:


There is, first of all, a friendly feeling of connection between Snow and the audi-

ence in the latest, Yazoo, tape; there is question-and-answer with elaboration and demonstration in Yazoo, thanks to Mike Seeger as interlocutor; viewers who want to learn Snow-style playing can use Yazoo as a how-to-drag-note, how-to-play-Kilby Snow learning tool, and viewers who want to see him showboat, just enjoying the music, would likely lean toward the previous two tapes. With the Grosman videos, the viewer feels like part of the audience in two great "house concerts;" with the Yazoo video, the viewer feels like a workshop participant. If I could only have one of the three (and I am happy that I actually do not have to pick among them), I would have to pick this latest one (being a self-professed Kilby Snow impersonator.) The greatest difference stems from the presence of Mike Seeger, with his gentle probing questions that could only be put to Kilby by a trusted person, someone who is autoharp-wise, to elicit answers from a shy and private master known for his tight-lipped secrecy on tuning and techniques. To date, this Yazoo video is the most valuable information available from any source on his picks, drag-notes and style, and it is likely that whatever you want to know about Kilby's playing will be answered in this video, and whatever yet is unanswered will quite possibly remain so forever.

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A Q

Postscripts

FROM 'HARPLAND
BY Mary Umberger

Winter is a great time to "hole up", get your autoharp in good repair/tune and practice all the new music you have brought home during the year.

A real motivator is to read what some folks in 'Harpland are doing.

Several new autoharp or "includes autoharp" tapes are coming our way.
P.S.

Drew Smith has a tape completed and waiting for him to do the art work on the "J" card. (**Drew**, park the cycle and get on with it.)
P.S.

Lindsay Haisley and **Jim Hudson** will have a new tape out soon.
P.S.

Jon ten Broek's tape is on the way, hopefully with lots of autoharp!
P.S.

Stew Schneider is recording with the **Foot In The Air** band Love that name!
P.S.

The **Cyberpluckers'** new tape is here! It is a four cassette collection with a booklet filled with info on the players and the songs,
P.S.

Ivan Stiles will soon have both *Rounding Pickering Bend* and *Pickin' On the Porch* back in circulation. (Check the MarketPlace.)
P.S.

Mary Ann Johnston and grandson, **Jim Johnston**, were part of a musical program to benefit the restoration of a one-room schoolhouse in Hookstown, Pennsylvania. They helped raise \$1000 for the project.
P.S.

Kate long, of Charleston, West Virginia, recently performed for the Commission on Religion in Appalachia.
P.S.

Byrtis and **Russell Walter**, of Punta Gorda, Florida, are on a Caribbean cruise. We wish them calm waters and hope they remembered to take the autoharp along.

P.S.
Fran Stallings has been on a wonderful trip to Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Japan. thanks, **Fran**, for spreading the joy of music on the autoharp. (You can read all about **Fran's** adventures in her report on page 18 of this issue.)

P.S.
Great news for the **Augusta Workshops!** **Mike Herr** will be an instructor during Week 4, July 26-August 1. **Mike** says this is a long-time dream come true. He has plans for his classes that will enable folks to learn aspects of playing autoharp – and have fun, as well.

P.S.
Following, during Week 5, **John** and **Kathie Hollandsworth** will teach the "Old Time Repertoire" class. I can't think of any more capable and qualified teachers. **Mike** suggests that you save up and go for *both* weeks. Good idea, what?

P.S.
Lindsay and **Cheryl Haisley** were given the "Producer's Award" at the annual **Kerrville (Texas) Folk Festival**. Congratulations !!

P.S.
Evelyn Farmer, who has competed at 28 of the last 29 **Galax Old-Time Fiddler's Conventions**, missed going last summer. But, she did compete in three other local festivals and won six ribbons. Way to go, **Evelyn** !!
P.S.

Hurrah !! **Bill Bryant**, 1990 International Autoharp Champion, is back on the "harp wagon." **Bill** now lives in Marion, Montana, and I hope he has settled in enough to once again grace us with his smooth, sweet autoharp style.

P.S.
I heard tell that during **Alan** (Naughty-But-Nice) **Mager's** performance at the **Memphis Dulcimer Festival**, a lady dubbed him "Elvis Of The Autoharp." **Alan** was so humbled that he is now looking for a pink Cadillac and is talking of teaming up with "Gyrating **Lindsay Haisley**" to offer workshops in "Wiggling." Whoa !! Sign me up, **Alan** !

P.S.
A "Granddaddy Award" goes to **Chuck Schacht**, who has a new granddaughter.
P.S.
Dorothy and **George Wagner** send word they are feeling better. Great news.

P.S.
Jim Hudson is recuperating from surgery. I'll bet his audiences from now on will be in for a funny-bone treat when **Jim** relates, as only he can, about his "operation." Stay cool, **Jim**.

P.S.
If you can't lick 'em – join 'em. **Vic Gray** (of England) and his wife sold the family car and bought (shades of **Drew Smith**) a motorcycle. the 'cycle didn't quite seem to be the solution, so, they bought another car. When that didn't suit, they bought another motorcycle with (you guessed it) a side car. Top that, if you can, **Drew**.

P.S.
On December 13, **Dave Kilby** joined **Little Roy Lewis** on stage during a concert in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They entertained the crowd with several Christmas songs,

P.S.
Lane Hollandsworth tells her mother, **Kathie**, that a now-popular song by **Third Eye Blind** (honest!) starts out with someone strumming a few bars on autoharp. A recent song by **Smashing Pumpkins** also has autoharp. Who says the autoharp is not an up-to-date instrument?

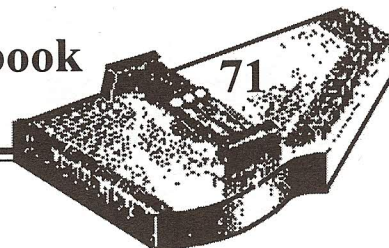
Oh, well, keep up the good work and good times, 'Harpers, and remember: The *main thing* is to keep the *main thing*. Autoharp, of course.

❖ ❖ ❖
IN MEMORIAM

We extend our condolences to **Donnie Weaver** and his family on the tragic death of **Donnie's** mother.

Our sympathy, also, to **Nancy Weber** on **Jim's** untimely death. **Jim** was an active member of the Willamette Valley harpers and will be greatly missed.

The song is ended but the melody lingers on in the hearts of those left behind.



Gypsy Love Song (2) C

▼
C G7 C / F / / / C /
Slum-ber on, my lit-tle gyp-sy sweet-heart

D7 / / G7 / / C ///
Dream of the field and the grove.

C G7 C / F / / / C /
Can you hear me, hear me in that dream-land
D7 / G7 / C ///
Where your fan-cies rove.

E7 / / / A7 / / / / /
Slum-ber on, my lit-tle gyp-sy sweet-heart

D7 / / / / G //
Wild lit-tle wood-land dove.

C G7 C / F / [/] C / /
Can you hear the song that tells you

C / G7 C G7 G
All m-y hearts true love?



My Wild Irish Rose (3) C

C / / G7 C C7 F / G7 / C //
My wild I-rish Rose, the sweetest flow'r that grows,

C / G7 / / C / G7 / / C /
You may search ev-ry-where, but none can com-pare

C / D7 / / G7 //
With my wild I-rish Rose

G7 C / G7 C C7 F / G7 / C //
My wild I-rish Rose, the dear-est flow'r that grows,

C / G7 / / C / G7 / / C /
And some day for my sake, she may let me take

[C G7] F / / D7 / G7 C ///
The bloom from my wild I-rish Rose.

(2) F

I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen

F F / Gm / / / F
I'll take you home a-gain Kath-leen.

F C7 / / / / / F
A-cross the ocean wild and wide.

F / / Gm / / / F
To where your heart has ev-er been,

F C / G7 / / / C
Since first you were my bon-ny bride.

C Gm / C7 / / / F
The ros-es all have left your cheek,

F Gm / C7 / / / F
I've watched them fade a-way and die.

F Dm / / / / / A7
Your voice is sad when-e'er you speak,

G7 / / / / / / C7
And tears be-dim your lov-ing eyes.

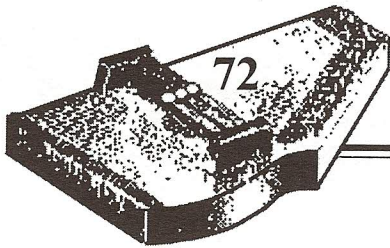
C7 F / Gm / / / F
Oh, I will take you back, Kath-leen,

F C7 / / / / / F
To where your heart will feel no pain.

F / / C / F / B^b
And when the fields are fresh and green,

[B^b] F / C7 / / / F
I'll take you to your home, Kath-leen.





Autoharp Songbook

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Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet (2) C

C / G7 C / C7 /
Put on your old grey bon-net

C7 / F / / / / /
With the blue rib-bon on it,

F / C / D7 / / / G7 ///
While I hitch old Dob-bin to the shay.

G / / C E7 Am
And through the fields of clover,

Am / F / / /
We'll drive off to Do-ver

F / C / D7 G7 C /////
On our gold-en wed-ding day.

Blest Be The Tie That Binds (3) G

▼
G G / / D7 / / G / /
Blest be the tie that binds

G C / / G / / D7 /
Our hearts in Chris-tian love

D7 / / / / / G D7 / / G /
The fel - low - ship of kin - dred minds

C G / D7 G / D7 G ///
Is li-ke to tha-t above.



Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

Were You There? (2) F

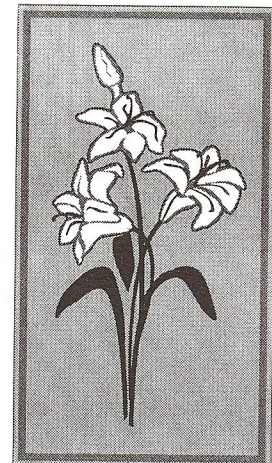
▼
F / F / / C7 F C7 / F B^b / F /
Were you there when they cru-ci-fied my Lord? (Were you there?)

F / / / / B^b F / / C G / C /
Were you there when they cru-ci-fied my Lord? (Were you there?)

F / / A7 / Dm / B^b / G7 / F / /
Some-times it caus-es me to trem-ble, trem-ble, trem-ble.

F / / / / C7 F C7 / F B^b / F /
Were you there when they cru-ci-fied my Lord? (Were you there?)

Were you there when they nailed Him to the cross? (Were you there?)
Were you there when they nailed Him to the cross? (Were you there?)
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed Him to the cross? (Were you there?)



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