

# Autoharp Quarterly®

*The International  
Magazine  
Dedicated to the  
Autoharp Enthusiast*

*Fall '99  
Volume Twelve, Number One  
Six Dollars*

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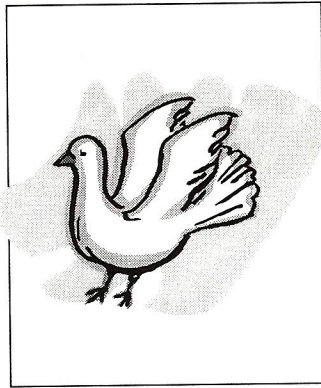
**Togetherness, autoharp style.**

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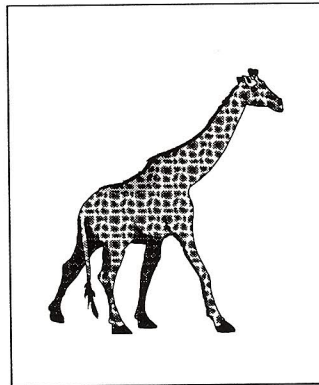
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**Autoharp Quarterly**  
The International Magazine Dedicated to the Autoharp Enthusiast

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# To And From The Editor



## Dear Readers:

Well, the festival season is drawing to a close and it's about time to pick a spot to hibernate and start practicing up those new songs for next year. I'm glad I got the chance to see some of you and exchange ideas and pick a little.

Is it my imagination (or wishful thinking) or are our numbers growing larger and larger each day? Do you suppose the day will come when everyone will know what an autoharp is and not confuse it with a banjo? Let's all work on it.

If any of you know of a school with a good music program and a teacher that is willing to use an autoharp as part of the music program, please let us know. We want to find a way to encourage them. Some years ago, Joe Marlin Riggs put *AQ* in touch with such a school and we "adopted" them. I hope they are still 'harping.

For those of you who asked, the Folk Artist News is out of circulation. The Houston Area Acoustic Music Society still meets and still sponsors the SAMfest each year, but the magazine has ceased publication.

This issue we have something I don't think we've ever had before – an obituary page. I hope we never have to have one again. We have lost three members of our musical family – Anita Carter, Donnie Weaver and Andy Boorman. Each was very special in their own way and we shall miss them.

Yes, I know *Go Tell Aunt Rhody* is used twice in this issue. I wonder what the odds are of two people, working independently of each other, deciding on the same song? But now, when a beginner is at a jam and some of the more advanced players try their hand at Skip's finger-picking techniques, they will be able to strum along with confidence.

House concerts are springing up all across the country, and that's great!! If you have never been to one, go! If you have never hosted one, do it!! Just ask one of your favorite performers to come to your house and do an informal concert and/or a workshop. Tell all your friends and relatives and enjoy! Anything from a pot of coffee and some to cookies to a full-blown pot-luck and you are in business. It's a great way to promote the music we love

surrounded by the folks we like best.

Our February issue promises some new things. For one thing, Carl Pagter, whose lovely wife, Judie, is one of our Reviewers, will share some of his thoughts on music with us and we hope to have something of the history of the autoharp with a little different twist.

And, of course, we hope you all remember to keep us posted on all the goings on in your area.

Mary Ann

## Dear Editor:

It was a delight to see my song, *The Skylark Sings Anyway*, in your summer issue. Since I don't read music, it is amazing to see all those notes – did I do that?

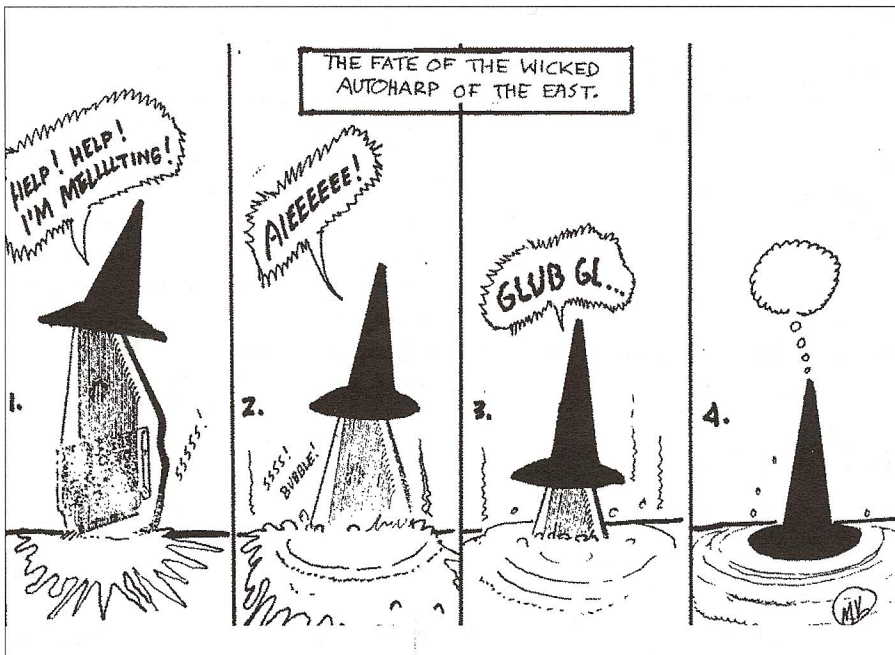
If anyone tried to sing that song, they might wonder why the skylark ran out of words. The third verse should read:

You might think that it's not too bright  
To waste your breath in the middle of a fight  
But the skylark knows this is time to talk  
And here's what he says when he sings to the hawk:

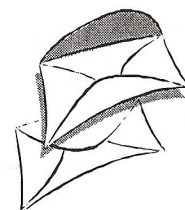
I'm not tired, just hear my song  
You won't catch me, cause I'm too strong  
The hawk gives up, he wants weaker prey  
And the skylark sings anyway  
Yes, the skylark sings anyway.

And, if anyone wants to hear it, the song appears on my tape, *The Same Old Surprise*.

Rob Lopresti



Michael King sent us this original cartoon some time ago and although Halloween is over, I thought there might be some lingering ghosties or ghoulies. Thanks, Michael.



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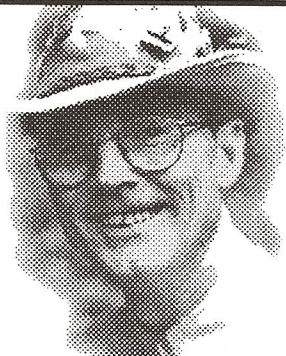
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## Harpers E-Mail

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

[apenovich@aol.com](mailto:apenovich@aol.com), Alice Penovich  
[drewharpsmith@netzero.net](mailto:drewharpsmith@netzero.net), Drew Smith

## Events

### NOVEMBER

► **Beginning Autoharp II**; November 8  
– December 13 (6 Tuesday nights); Mag  
Hayden; **Swallow Hill, Denver, Colorado**;  
Phone 303-777-1003.

## Recordings

**Skip To My Lou**,  
Songs of the Pioneers  
**Autoharp: Les Gustafson-Zook**  
212 E. Douglas  
Goshen, Indiana 46526

**Free Range Autoharp**  
**Autoharp: Mark Fackeldey**  
206 W. Flora Street  
Tampa, Florida 33604

**Press On**  
**Autoharp: June Carter Cash**  
Risk Records

**Just Pickin'**  
**Autoharp: Dan Arterburn**  
HC 81 Box 655  
Questa, New Mexico 87556

**An Artistic Autoharp**  
**Autoharp: Tom Schroeder**  
300 W. 113th Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64114  
[anartauto@hotmail.com](mailto:anartauto@hotmail.com)

**Old Time Saturday Night**  
Afton Mountain String Band  
**Autoharp: Victoria Young**  
Fiddletop  
1779 Mountain Road  
Afton, Virginia 22920  
540-456-8120

**Christmas As You Like It**  
The Front Porch Strings  
**Autoharp: Mary Umbarger**  
114 Umbarger Road  
Harmony, North Carolina 28634  
[Maryonharp@YadTel.net](mailto:Maryonharp@YadTel.net)

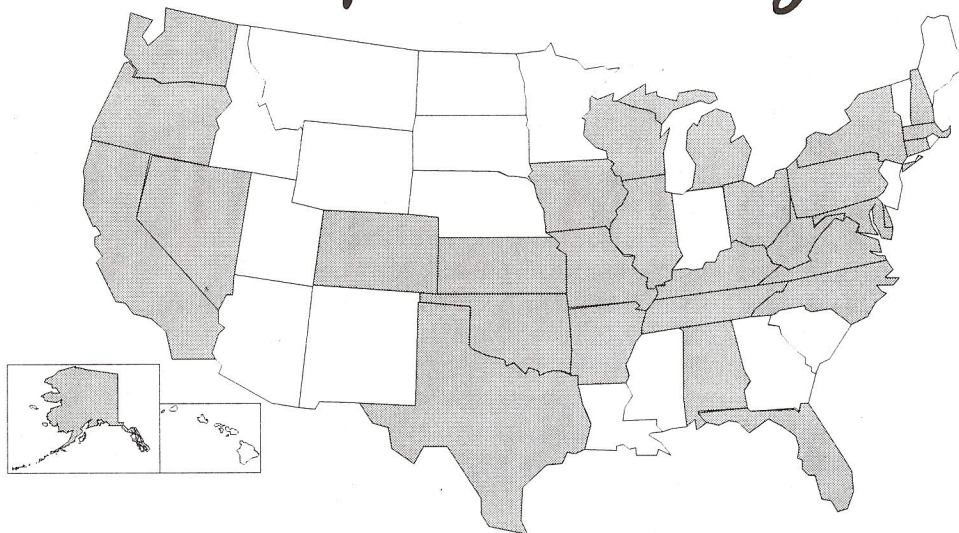
**Galax International**  
Various Artists  
Bobby Patterson  
4729 Coal Creek Road  
Galax, Virginia 24333

## Clubs

**Barbara Barr** reports: September 14  
and 15 the Winfield Autoharp Club invited  
two excellent 'harpers to teach workshops.  
We have had these extra workshops now for  
three years with good attendance. This year  
Karen Daniels' workshop included how to  
tab a song that only has rhythm chords or  
no chords at all. Karen had excellent hand-  
outs with many hours of hard work to as-  
semble these valuable worksheets. Les Gus-  
tafson-Zook had our Wednesday class and  
we got the basics of how/when to put in  
"stops", how to change the flavor of a tune  
by accenting different beats ... AND how to  
march in step with an autoharp. Thus, our  
year 2000 marching band at Winfield. We'll  
probably do it the day before the festival  
actually begins. Or, what the heck, we  
might do it the first day of the Festival and  
have the winner of the International Auto-  
harp Championship lead the parade. How's  
that for added pressure? Y'all come join in,  
and email me your suggestions for tunes for  
us to march to. We want everyone to be at  
least somewhat familiar with the tunes.  
Email me at [barr@southwind.net](mailto:barr@southwind.net).

**Katie B.** reports: The Georgia' Harpers  
are grateful to Laurie Searle for having  
given us the impetus to become known  
to each other and for having formed the  
Georgia Autoharp "pinch, paw and strum-  
a-ditty" group. We are meeting once a  
month on a formal gathering basis and are  
meeting at the "drop of a fingerpick" to jam  
together at individual homes. If we have a  
problem ... it might be that we are growing  
at quite a rapid rate ... we have even had a  
ten member group from Chattanooga request  
that we keep them informed of our meeting  
times and places, so they can plan to meet  
with us from time to time. And we are al-  
ways to have all 'harpers throw in their hats  
... and if ya have to come in to get it, you  
know you are welcome to stay.

# 'Harpers-At-Large



## **Georgia Autoharpers Mini Workshop** Norcross, Georgia **Reporting: Katie B.**

Ever since the Georgia Autoharpers started meeting, we've been missing one of our more well known members of Cyberpluckers due to his busy weekend work schedule. So imagine our delight when Gregg Averett agreed to host a week night workshop for our group at Anne and Robert Martin's house in Norcross, Georgia. Now multiply our delight by 10 when we learned Gregg had invited Mark Fackeldey to come and play us a few tunes.

Gregg's hour-long workshop was well prepared as he narrowed his focus by teaching four different rhythm strums to the all popular tune *Pick a Bale of Cotton*. Gregg demonstrated a basic rhythm strum, a kinder, gentler bum-ditty strum, and two different washboard style strums. When we put it all together and added the lyrics, foot stompin' and hand clappin', it brought images of Steve Martin in the closing scene of the movie, "The Jerk." (Gregg said this movie was the inspiration for this workshop.)

After the workshop and refreshments, Mark Fackeldey amazed us with his classical guitar style of finger picking. Mark played flawlessly for the next hour and demonstrated different styles of autoharp playing on the many wonderful instruments he's made. After the concert, someone started a mock auction of one of Mark's autoharps. Things got a little out of hand, and before we knew it, Laurie Simpson was

the proud owner of a Mark Fackeldey Blues autoharp. The moral of the story? Give your workshop leaders wine and cheese plus a club t-shirt, and anything can happen.

Another member who has not been able to attend the regular monthly meetings was in attendance too, Pat Bryant. Other guests included one from Chattanooga, Tennessee, Linda Haas, and Rebecca Hile from Pennsylvania who was visiting her friend Beth who lives in Sharpsburg, GA.

## **Lucille Reilly Concert** San Francisco, California **Reporting: Carey Dubbert** Occidental, California

Wednesday, August 18, I went to San Francisco to hear Lucille Reilly play. It was delightful. Lucille had written on my invitation to please not bring any recording devices, so I left my pencil at home. Some details, like tune names, may be missing.

It was an intimate concert in a small club which served food, drinks and desserts. Lucille began with a very sweet playing of *Si Baeg Si Mor* on the hammered dulcimer and continued with some very wonderful pieces on the hammered dulcimer including a lovely rendition of *Greensleeves*. She switched to the autoharp and played a great set including *O'Carolans Concerto* and *Robby Robertson's March* which were beautiful. Lucille's picking is impeccably clean, and she is a master (mistress) at bringing out the melody and sweetening it with the harmonies. On her ultrasonic 'harp, Lucille played a number of pieces including the *Skye Boat Song* and *Let All Mortal Flesh*

*Keep Silence*. when this last piece was announced, my friend Jim, who had just finished a bowl of chili, commented, "Don't you hate it when you've just finished a bowl of vegetarian chili and they announce that song?"

It seemed all too soon when Lucille announced her last piece, which was *Fisher's Hornpipe* which she played on the hammered dulcimer. Her arrangement was so cleanly played and was a great end to a very entertaining evening.

The concert was best described to me by my friend Jim, who had never heard Lucille play before. He said, "I feel like I was a part of one of the best kept secrets in San Francisco, and I was honored to be present.

## **Neal and Colleen Walters Concert** Springfield, Virginia **Reporting: Kathy Ferguson** Springfield, Virginia

Neal and Colleen presented an outstanding concert August 27th at Green-spring Village. This is a new retirement community in Springfield, Virginia. Many of the local autoharp and dulcimer players joined the residents to hear their unique sound. Neal played several different lap dulcimers, the autoharp, banjo and steel guitar (in a truly knock-your-socks-off fashion). Colleen played bass and sang harmony to many of the songs. Since these instruments were new to most of the audience, Neal gave some background information on them and invited questions.

Among the songs they sang were the

perky *You're Going to Miss Me When I'm Gone*, the melancholy *Late In the Day*, the beautiful and sad *Loch Tay Boat Song* about a man's longing for the red-haired girl he loved to be true, and another love song *New Harmony* in which the singer reflects on time spent with his father. But I guess my all-time favorite was *Will There Be Chickens In Paradise?* with the chorus: "Will there be chickens in Paradise, Perched on the throne of our Lord? Hatching and laying, pecking and praying, And crowing that heavenly chord?" You can tell they love their music and have fun sharing it.

They closed the concert with the audience joining in on *Singing Them Cheerful Songs* sung a capella. It was a delightful concert, and as one of the attendees said: A wonderful way to end an week and start a weekend.

**Willamette Valley Autoharp Gathering**  
Albany, Oregon  
**Reporting: Carole Outwater**  
Charlotte, North Carolina

The gathering in Oregon was pretty small as festivals go. It felt like 75-85 people. At first there was a sea of unfamiliar faces mixed in with a dozen or so friends and some familiar other Mt. Laurel 'harpers. But before the first day ended, I was getting to meet some pretty interesting and appealing people. And there were lots of beginners which is so exciting! So many things helped make this friendly spirit abound and bubble over into each event. The weather was absolutely perfect, the setting ... well, grassy fields, shade trees, fragrant flower gardens, old fashioned rope swing, twinkle lights on the swinging bridge over to the day parking ... the farm could make a layout in *House and Garden* magazine, there was a good balance between workshops/performances and "get up and move around" things like a 'harper's bazaar, marching autoharp bands and learning trees. The meals were social gatherings and the food was very good. We sat together at big tables inside a beautiful garden.

The schedule seemed well thought out, well timed and I guess, laid back, like things were planned to give you breathing room ... time to finish one thing before you went on to the next. (Could this be a "west coast" thing?)

The concerts were special. The intimate nature of the setting and the friendly, openness of people attending seemed to en-

courage a real authentic rapport between the audience and those performing or running the stage. How could you miss with Bryan, Les, Mike, Jon, Cathy, Mary Lou and George, Stew, Gregg, Carey, Adam and Laura, Fuey and the Cyberpluckers, John, Willie/Bill, Maryle among others. Like most of us attending festivals and gatherings, there were some great moments and times shared that can be taken out and remembered in the dead of winter ... for me, times like ... working it out with Mary Lou, Cathy B. and John A. to actually make it to WVAG, Bill and Sharon Bryant's care for their aging dog, Sharon's beautiful stained glass angels playing autoharps, getting to hear Bill play again, hearing three of those wide body Orthey 'harps at the same festival (Bryan, Bill and Carey), laughing with Mary Lou and Fuey, Meryle's songs and her dynamite picking on that black 'harp, Bryan's narrative about the love shared between his two friends, playing music with friends a few at a time, Jane and Lois so excited about beginning, getting to share stage time with Mike, Les, Gregg, Carey and Bryan. Fun evening jams. And I got such a kick out of Mike Herr and Les G-Z, cohorts in creating unbridled laughter. They really know how to play! Book them together and watch the creative juices go wild!

Can you tell I hope to go back again? If you ever have an opportunity to attend the WVAG, go!

**The Swannanoa Gathering**  
Asheville, North Carolina  
**Reporting: Brenda Price**  
Pfafftown, North Carolina

My husband, Bobby, and I spent our vacation this year as "first timers" at the Swannanoa Gathering's Old Time Music Week - me as a student in Mike Fenton's Autoharp I Class and Bobby floating between old time fiddle and autoharp.

Mike's classes were well organized with lots of handouts consisting of good music, scales, chord conversion, etc. He displayed a genuine interest in his students and an eagerness to share his expertise. I have no original words of praise for Mike "the instructor" or Mike the "musician" - they've all been used. I will, however, comment on Mike "the person." Mike was exhausted from already having been in the States three weeks prior to this last assignment at The Swannanoa Gathering. He was scheduled to teach only two classes per day and could have used his free time for resting. Instead,

he chose to spend it with his students, giving private lessons, reserving stage time/tent time for the autoharp group, etc. We saw total dedication from an "all around good guy."

The many highlights of this special week included the autoharp group's performance in the student showcase with Mike leading us in *Angel Band*. And who could forget Honky Tonk night with Mike's rendition, complete with guitar and cowboy hat, of *Hey, Good Lookin'*. The ultimate highlight, however, was the night our autoharp group had its own tent, which Mike had reserved for us. Our jam session attracted fiddles, banjos, lap dulcimer, harmonica and even a juice harp. We had a wonderful two hours of playing and singing old time Gospel favorites. Mike called this "two hours of magic."

At the close of the week, Bobby and I lingered on, helping Mike carry his belongings to his car and saying our goodbyes. Many comments were made by fellow students as we were turning in our keys and Evaluation Forms. One student who had never missed a year at Swannanoa had written two additional pages. She had not been an autoharp student, however she had observed and commented on the amount of time Mike had spent with his students.

Another comment came from a letter we received from Jeanie Daves (Clarksville, Georgia). This was Jeanie's fifth year at Swannanoa. She wrote, "It was nice ..... especially to play a bit that last night under the tent with the autoharp group ... that was a fabulous experience ... bringing all those different instruments and voices together. Mike Fenton has an extraordinary talent for that. It was really the most fellowship I have ever seen at Swannanoa. I hope he comes again."

After spending a week in Mike's class, our interest in the autoharp has definitely changed to a more serious one. I now practice with more determination and Bobby has just completed my first diatonic 'harp and is in the process of making two more. Thanks for a wonderful week, Mike! See you next year!

**Memphis Dulcimer Festival**  
Memphis, Tennessee  
**Reporting: Gordon Baker**  
Amelia, Ohio

The 11th Festival was held at Idlewild Presbyterian Church in Memphis on September 23, 24, 25. Friday and Saturday were

two full days of workshops and concerts. There were about 110 scheduled workshops on a grand variety of acoustic music topics. The church was a great facility, with plenty of space for workshops and various performances. Mountain and hammer dulcimers were the main topics, but the autoharp was well represented with five fine workshops led by Karen Mueller and a friendly song list jam led by the Memphis 'Harpers. The 'Harpers, led by Martha Taylor, also held a strong and loving Carter Family sing-a-long with a row of singing 'harps front and center. A special spice to the festival was a set of presentations by Andy Cohan on the life and music of the great blues guitarist, Rev. Gary Davis.

Karen's workshops covered the range from a new player's boot camp to a couple of jigs and fiddle tunes. She gave us just the right mix of information, advice and inspiration, with some dandy tune sheets to pursue at home. Karen was also featured at one of the mid-day concerts where she played mountain dulcimer and a lotta 'harp.

The evening concerts included performances by R.P. Hale, Susan Trump, a band led by Tony Ellis, Don Pedi, Cooper and Nelson, and Hesperus.

A special thanks to Larkin Bryant Cohan and Dennis Batson and their team for creating this terrific festival for acoustic music.

**Autoharp Day, 25th. September 1999**  
Drayton School, Oxfordshire, England  
**Reporting: Sue Edwards**  
Stroud, Gloucestershire, England

After reading Nadine's report on the Sore fingers Autoharp Week, I was looking forward to the Autoharp Day at Drayton with even greater anticipation! This workshop, organised by Mike Fenton and Nadine Stah White, was able to offer a greater number of enthusiasts the chance of meeting up to share ideas and music, and to experience a formal tuition session with Mike. In fact, we numbered 27 including Mike, the most at any UK gathering to date. We were joined in the evening by some friends and relatives who came to hear the concert.

We ranged from very experienced players who had been to every residential course (I'm green with envy!) to complete beginners. The morning was an informal session when we swapped ideas and playing techniques, sorted out tuning and maintenance

with Mike, and if we remembered, ate our packed lunches! I had traveled from Stroud with two other players, so our town was well represented. Some people had to travel a long distance and just made it in time for lunch. One autoharp enthusiast had come from Cologne, Germany!

Mike took a formal workshop from one until three – now I know why the residential workshop has its name of sore fingers – we certainly worked hard on rhythms and three-quarter time, which we then had to use whilst Mike was playing and singing – without looking at the chord bars! (I regret I could not find E minor!)

We then had time to share our experiences, practise our techniques, and pluck up courage to volunteer to play a solo duet item in the evening showcase. There were also various items for sale – straps, tuners, picks, music books, some lovely tape recordings and two autoharps. I bought a lovely diatonic in G and D with many custom features, including fine tuners! I had already changed my Oscar Schmidt 21 chord to a diatonic in F, so I was thrilled to be able to get this one, with Orthey chord-bar cover and lock bars, and electronic pickup built in. (I use a microphone fixed on the back of my other 'harp – it works, but sometimes can fall off!)

At five thirty, all the items of food which we had brought to make a scrumptious 'pot luck' meal were eagerly consumed, followed by a special autoharp cake – yummy! Some of us cleared the plates, whilst others arranged the chairs for the evening concert. First we all joined in a slow jam session with Mike leading most of the songs and tunes. We then took part in individual or duet items – it's funny how a piece you know blindfolded can suddenly go wrong. When it was my go, my fingers were 'walking' the wrong way! However, everyone was most encouraging and perhaps it will be easier next time. Nadine then played Mike's lovely tune *Polly Swallow* superbly and Mike finished off the showcase with *My Grandfather's Clock*. Interestingly, I see that he had written the fascinating story of the origin of this well-known song in a previous *Autoharp Quarterly*. The evening finished at eight to allow folk who had to drive a long way home to get back before midnight.

We all wanted to do another Autoharp Day, and there will be one on Saturday, 19th. February 2000 at Drayton – hooray! Contact Nadine White for details – Tel/Ans. (01235) 531559 or Fax (01235) 535981, or

you can email her on [nadine@ifwtech.-demon.co.uk](mailto:nadine@ifwtech.-demon.co.uk). I shall certainly be there.

As to the next Sore Fingers Week – the autoharp section is already fully booked – GRRR!!!

**Walnut Valley Festival**  
Winfield, Kansas  
**Reporting: Karen Nickel**  
Winfield, Kansas

The Winfield Music Festival was held the third week in September. It was preceded by two workshops presented by Karen Daniels and Les Gustafson-Zook. They were both well attended and much appreciated by the participants. Ivan Stiles took center stage as the autoharp representative at the festival. He appeared on several different stages and gave some great performances. John McCutcheon also played on stage, along with a myriad of instruments.

The autoharp contest was won by JoAnn Smith of Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Les Gustafson-Zook, from Goshen, Indiana took second place and Alex Usher, from Webster Groves, Missouri, was an excited third. Alex had a pick break while using the patting method during her performance and had to hurry off stage to get a replacement before playing her second piece.

The *Autoharp Quarterly* sponsored approximately 5 one hour workshops during the festival. All the autoharp players were very appreciative of these workshops. They covered different subjects and we learned something at each one. Thanks much to *Autoharp Quarterly* and the presenters.

Some pretty fancy picking took place after hours when Tina Louise Barr and her husband, John Gwinner, wowed some of the campground folks with her wonderful fiddle tunes on her autoharp and his mandolin. Les also roamed the campground to help expose the autoharp as a "real" instrument. Thanks, Les, for spreading the word that the autoharp is an instrument to be reckoned with.

There were a number of beginning autoharp players at the festival. In Winfield, we have several new beginners as a result of the festival. All of us need to nurture the beginners and help them progress so they will have the opportunity to enjoy and learn to love the autoharp (as we do). Hope to see a lot more of you at Winfield next year!!



# Critics' Choice



## Stew's Choice

Stew Schneider

### Skip To My Lou

Songs of the Pioneers

#### Autoharp: Les Gustafson-Zook

with Edwin Layer, fiddle

*She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain • Golden Slippers • Buffalo Gals • Wait For the Wagon • Oh Susannah • Home On the Range • Yankee Doodle • Liza Jane • Camptown Races • Soldier's Joy • Old Joe Clark • Arkansas Traveler • Red River Valley • Red Wing • Shortnin Bread • Turkey In the Straw • Polly Wolly Doodle • Skip To My Lou • Jenny Lind Polka*

Sometimes "children's album" just means "we didn't practice very much", and that's a shame. Kids have special needs when it comes to music, and those musicians who set about to address those needs should do so thoughtfully. That's just what Les has done in this very nice work.

The album notes indicate that Les and wife Gwen put together an elementary school assembly in 1991 to introduce instruments in their collection to the school children and to encourage the children to sing some of the old folk songs. The preparation time is evident. The program is well designed and well executed. I particularly like the way Les has throttled his approach to gear the arrangement to kids. Anyone who's been around Les when he has a head of steam up knows that he can play eighty-two notes per measure without breaking a sweat if he chooses. I'd think the temptation would be to do that on all projects, but Les wisely uses primary colors that will appeal to kids rather than involved arrangements that might impress adults. This honors his audience more than anything he could do and is the mark of a true craftsman.

Which is not to say that the music is simple. It's not. Les has put together high energy arrangements that skillfully blend the instruments and which emphasize each instrument's unique contributions. All of

Les's playing is up to his usual standards. The only weak point is Edwin Layer's fiddle. Edwin is a fine player, and I've been honored to play with him several times, but on this CD, his playing isn't as strong as Les's.

Nevertheless, this should be a real winner with kids everywhere. Les has done a fine job. My mule, Aunt Sukey, gives it two ears up.

### Free Range Autoharp

with Ellie Daulton and Doug Travers

#### Autoharp: Mark Fackeldey

*E. Mariposa • Chuck Old Velociraptor • American Patrol Carousel • Santy Anno • Temporal • Metsakukia Waltz • Saint Basil's Hymn • My Dear Missed the Plane • Over the Rainbow • Anarchist • Dunno*

We have to get one thing straight, right from the first: this is not your father's autoharp recording. In fact, it could be argued that this isn't an autoharp recording at all. In Mark's hands, the autoharp becomes by turns a carousal organ, a harp, a percussion instrument, an organ and the Jurassic growlings of a dinosaur. Everything that comes to Mark's hand gets a half turn to the left and a touch of sparkles. *Cluck Old Hen* becomes *Cluck Old Velociraptor*, *Bei Mir Bist du Schon* becomes *My Dear Missed the Plane*.

In a time when most autoharp recordings are composed of re-arrangements of standards and the sometimes uncomfortable fitting of tunes unfitted to our instrument, Mark steps boldly in a new direction, and the results are evolutionary in the same way that Marty Schuman's *Autoharpistry* was. Mark's playing and his approach to the instrument point beyond its presently imagined limitations and give us a look at what might be. The difference is between "this is how this tune sounds on an autoharp" and "this is how an autoharp can be made to sound for this tune." The effect is magical and the different colors Mark coaxes out of 37 strings is amazing.

But, as in the case of many creations of individual genius, "Free Range Autoharp" may not appeal to the casual listener. I've listened to it perhaps 20 times, and I'm

fascinated all over again each time. For me, the CD has an almost mystical appeal, and it remains one of my favorite recordings. Others that I've played it for, however, have not found it equally appealing.

To my mind, however, "Free Range Autoharp" is not only an important recording which should be in every serious harper's possession, but an intriguing and captivating look at the autoharp in the hands of a much under-appreciated player. Aunt Sukey gives it two ears up and a whinny.

### Christmas As You Like It

The Front Porch Strings

#### Autoharp: Mary Umbarger

*Ding Dong Merrily On High • Sleep Of The Infant Jesus/Pretty Little Baby • Sing Noel/Deck the Halls/God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman/Good King Wenceslas/Joy To The world • Lo, How Arose E'er Blooming • Angels We Have Heard On High • Silent Night • Christmas In Killarney/Morning Star Jig/Larry O'Gaff • Il Est Ne Jeanette Isabella • Carol Of The Bells • Breaking Up Christmas • Away In The Manger/Cradle Song/Luther's Cradle Hymn • Judah's Land • Waltz Of The Toys • St. Anne's Reel*

Sometimes, just sometimes I get an assignment that's really easy to do, and this is one of 'em. Mary Umbarger and crew have done just an extraordinary job of producing a Christmas album. From the beautiful cover to the very complete historical notes inside, to the glorious arrangements of the tunes, this is one classy CD.

The Front Porch Strings have gathered dulcimers of both flavors, glockenspiel, guitar, bass, fiddle, cymbals, bodhran, bells, washboard, tongue drum and autoharp together, stirred with very good taste indeed, and produced a CD that had my mule, Aunt Sukey, frisking like a colt in the morning, and that's a sure sign of quality.

The thing about Christmas music is that it isn't easy. It sounds easy, but if you want to make something of it, as opposed to just hammering out *Jingle Bells* (which tune is, thankfully, not on this CD), it's hard as the dickens. For one thing, to do it right, you have to start at a time when nobody's in a Christmas mood. The time these folks



have invested in this CD really shows. Timing is well nigh perfect and the arrangements invoke the Christmas season without running treacle out your ears. The instruments are handled with consummate skill.

The music they have chosen comes from Africa, America, Ireland, Scotland, the Ukraine and France, and it was chosen with particular care to highlight the instruments. I especially liked *Ding Dong Merrily On High* and the *Carol Of The Bells*, but *Breaking Up Christmas* is a hoot, and Aunt Sukey thought *Silent Night* was just beautiful. The exquisite flute and piccolo of Gay Tatman particularly caught my ear. The pairing of a wind instrument with the strings results in an exquisite sound.

This CD should do very well, and I have no reluctance in recommending to every lover of traditional music. It will brighten many a holiday heart. Aunt Sukey gives it a big whinny and two ears up.



**Bob's  
Choice**  
Bob Woodcock

**Press On  
Autoharp: June Carter Cash**

*Diamonds in the Rough* • *Ring of Fire* • *Far Side Banks of Jordan* • *Losin' You* • *Gatsby's Restaurant* • *Wings of Angels* • *The L & N Don't Stop Here Anymore* • *Once Before I Die* • *I Used To Be A Somebody* • *Tall Lover Man* • *Tiffany Anastasia Lowe* • *Meeting In The Air* • *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*

June Cartner Cash has a lot going for her: she's the daughter of Mother Maybelle Carter, she's the wife of Johnny Cash, she's been in the center of the Nashville music scene for over 60 years. Now, I may wind up in the bottom of some Tennessee river wearing concrete finger picks if I say this, but the woman should know better. She has released one of the most annoying and unprofessional recordings I have ever heard. I mean painfully bad. Please remember, friends, this is only one person's opinion. Your dislike may vary.

It seems that this recording was the inspiration of its producer, Vicky Hamilton. Her background was in heavy metal recordings until she met June through Tom Petty. "Let's make a recording, June", she said.

The concept was based on the best selling LP of the late 70s, "Will The Circle Be Unbroken", by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. The musicians all sat around and drank coffee and chewed the fat and laughed and grabbed a tune out of the air and everyone sort of ran with it. So Vicky assembled a host of top-notch musicians, including Norman Blake, Marty Stuart, Rodney Crowell and Dave Rowe, in a log cabin owned by the Cashes' near Nashville. And so it began ...

OK, let's talk about the autoharp. Well, it *was* in tune. And it's a great sounding 'harp. June really doesn't play it much, she just sorta strums along, more or less in time. So why is the 'harp miked so loud as to be one of the dominating sounds?? And why do over half the songs begin with a very loud and very annoying glissando?? This can be a nice touch (listen to Foot In The Air do *Cabri Waltz*) but on song after song after song? Now the backup musicians consist of some of the greats. Blake's guitar and Dobro, Stuart's mandolin, Rowe's sensitive, creative bass runs are all worthy of high praise. So why don't we get to hear them?? The great instrument leads are usually drowned out by the drums, cymbals and tambourines, or by the over-miked autoharp.

"And what of the songs?", you ask. Well, indeed, there are some dandy songs on this recording. *Diamonds in the Rough ... Meeting ... Ring of Fire ...* are all wonderful selections. *The L & N Don't Stop Here Anymore* is a classic and *Far Side Banks of Jordan* is maybe my favorite song on the CD. Sad to say that every one of these gems is so poorly arranged and mixed that it hurts my ears when I listen. June has included a number of songs that are so bad that I was actually embarrassed to listen to them. *Losing You*, a song of infidelity, has the charming chorus, "I'd like to take that man I made and choke him on the bed we laid, 'cuz he ain't worth the price I paid of losing you." *Gatsby's Restaurant* is a fantasy (??) about riding a horse into an Italian restaurant in New York City. Listen to this: "Twenty big Italians had me bent down on my knees, and I yelled 'Oh, ouch, help me Lord. Mamma mia please'." And then there's *Tiffany Anastasia Lowe*, I gather June wrote this one for her granddaughter of the same name. It's sort of a free flowing warning to the aspiring young actress to avoid Quinton Tarantino because he makes his women mean and you'd be better off playing Mother Maybelles guitar instead. It

actually falls apart in the middle and June breaks out in an embarrassed laugh. It then falls apart even further and degenerates into a sort of stream of consciousness ramble. I won't go on.

I wish I could find some redeeming value to this poor, poor recording effort. Even the liner notes are so small I had to use a magnifying glass. I have listened and searched and thought and cannot come up with one good reason why you should buy this CD.

**Galax International**

Old Time, Mountain, and Bluegrass Music by International Visitors to Galax, Virginia. Produced by Bobby Patterson and Mike Fenton  
Various Artists

*Give Me the Roses* • *Polly Put the Kettle On* • *Border Ride* • *Somebody Loves You Darlin* • *Chilly Winds* • *When the Wagon Was New* • *Four Cent Cotton* • *Honey Mule* • *Crowed Creek* • *When the Band Is Playing Dixie* • *Another Broken Heart* • *Granny Does Yer Dog Bite* • *Valley Of Peace* • *Train On the Island* • *Sockeye* • *High On a Mountain* • *Tennessee Blues* • *Joke On the Puppy* • *Purple Robe* • *Oh, Mary Don't You Weep* • *St. Anne's Reel* • *Kitty And I* • *June Apple* • *A Bad Old Lonesome Night* • *Year Of Jubilo* • *(Johnny) Don't Come Home Drunk* • *Blue Ridge Cabin Home* • *Old Country Boat-swain* • *Fannie Hill* • *Florida Blues* • *Rochester Schottish* • *Sheep Shell Corn By the Rattlin' of His Horn* • *Rock the Cradle Joe* • *Shady Grove* • *Chinquapin Hunting* • *Mississippi Sawyer*

Not too long after Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering '99, while in the middle of my usual 3 things at once, I got this phone call:

MF – (in sotto voce) "HeymateitsMikeFentonheahhowahya?"

CRASH!! (coffee cup falling on Speedo the Wonderdog's head, hammer hitting nail (the one on my finger)).

RW – "Say what??"

MF – "It's Mike Fenton here." (the usualy formalities here ...) "Look, I've got this LP I'd like you to review. We did them just before cassettes became popular so now we have a bunch left that we can sell at a real bargain."

RW – "So what's on them??"

MF – "It's an anthology of many of the international visitors to Galax, folks who

traveled around the world to compete and play. I did it with Bobby Patterson.

RW – (at this point a half a dozen thoughts all jumped into my brain) ... Bobby Patterson is sort of a legend in that area, and Mike's no slouch himself. "LPs. eh? Who's gonna be able to play them, especially in a car." Finally I can use the word 'record' in a review and not change it. International, eh? I've heard enough versions of "Rampa Riting Time Inna Barrey" to be a little wary. So, I says, "Sure, Mike, I'll give it a go. Remember, if I don't like it, I'll say so."

MF – "Of course, mate."

(more pleasantries and goodbyes)

So, here it is. A two album set, 36 cuts, nine countries, a ton of great tunes and songs. Bluegrass, Gospel, old-timey. Before I get to the musical specifics, let me address some of your concerns. First, you are going to tape these albums. The entire set (both albums) fit perfectly on a 90 minute cassette. Assuming that you use a good quality tape and recorder, the sound will be very good. I have praised the acoustic quality of the Heritage recordings in the past and this effort is no exception. Another bonus – the columns containing the tune list on the dust jacket are just shy of four inches wide – I photocopied the back and used the copy as a j-card. And everything, *everything* you want to know about the performers and the music is contained in the extensive enclosed booklet.

O.K., let's talk about the "Rampa Riting Time ..." problem. I respect and admire those from over the Big Pond that love and perform our music. I am deeply flattered that they have chosen the music of my homeland. In this light, an accent or inflection doesn't bother me in the least. But to pay for a recording of less than perfect imitations gives me second thoughts. I fear that I would be too caught up in the imperfections and miss the strengths of the work. But fear not, brave listener. To paraphrase the notes, most of us reading this review would consider themselves darn lucky to sound this good. They are the cream of the international crop, among the best in the world, and can stand shoulder to shoulder with the best of the homegrown.

Many of these names are familiar to me, both from my Galactic days and from the old time music community in general. Mike Fenton needs no introduction, so he won't get one. He appears on six cuts, both vocal and instrumental. He does an instrumental with Paul Brown and the late Tommy Jarrell (considered to be an icon of

Round Peak fiddling), quite possibly the only recording with Jarrell and the autoharp. They included his signature *Rock the Cradle Joe*. While an excellent performance, it should be compared to a recent recording just to appreciate how far Mike has taken his style in over 10 years.

Rafe Stephanini liked the music so much he moved to Philly, where he continues to teach, perform and make violins. His name is well-known to fans of old-timey music. I remember Ken Inoue very well from Galax. I watched meltdown-level jams with Ken on banjo – I even got to sit in a few. One year, he and his brother Sumio on fiddle had the winning old-time band playing *Sake In The Gourd*. As I read the booklet, many other names popped out at me, and I remember them all as first rate musicians.

So how can you lose? You really can't. This is a record (there! I got to say it!) chock full of top-shelf old-timey and bluegrass music. Selections range from the utterly familiar (*Shady Grove*) to I-just-gotta-learn-that (*When the Wagon Was New, Four Cent Cotton*) to the strangest-tune-title-I-ever-heard (*Sheep Shell Corn By the Rattle Of His Horn*). This is a well conceived, and well executed record, well worth twice the price. If you like old-time or bluegrass music, act now. I think quantities are limited. \*

*Editor:* If you are interested in this 2 record set, send \$8.50 (this includes postage) to: Bobby Patterson  
4729 Coal Creek Road  
Galax, Virginia 24333

### Old Time Saturday Night

The Afton Mountain String Band

**Autoharp: Victoria Young**

Fiddletop

1779 Mountain Road

Afton, Virginia 22920

540-456-8120

*Storms On the Ocean • Hard Times • County Line • Distant Land To Roam • Meet Me Where the Jordan River Winds • Richlands Woman's Blues • Orphan Girl • Railroad Through Georgia • Ways Of the World • Old-Time Saturday Night • Barabbas • I Had But Fifty Cents • No Telephone In Heaven • Little Billie Wilson • My Clinch Mountain Home • On This Your Wedding Day • Otto Wood the Bandit • Pass Me Not • (The New) Frankie and Johnny*

For several years, at the old-time music gathering at Clifftop, West Virginia, near the basketball courts, next to the road, I would take notice of this husband/wife duet. He looked a bit like Wilford Brimley – you know, the Quaker Oats "It's the right thing to do" guy. She ... ah, she looked like an angel who came for a visit to this rustic and ragged concatenation, 'harp in hand. But, lordy me, what music! What singing! I was actually too shy to ask to sit down and join in, and it takes a lot to make me shy. Dang intimidated, I was.

Fast forward the tape a few years to Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering '99 (referring to both the year and the thermometer). I heard something wonderful coming from down by Marty's tree. I went down to investigate, accompanied by my friend, Pete. Well, jump in my jiminy. It was them. It seems that June Maugery convinced 'em that there really was some good music north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Well, we sang for a while, we talked for a while, we missed a bunch of workshops and sang some more. I ended up with some great memories and one of the best CDs in my collection.

Harrington and Young have been together for about 10 years and have become a polished, professional duo. He plays guitar and fiddle, she plays autoharp and lap dulcimer, and both sing. Mark Beall on bass and Judy Chaudet on clawhammer banjo round out the band.

Victoria's 'harp playing is straightforward, no frills pinch-and-pluck, mostly backup, a little lead. But it's done cleanly and confidently and very well and adds a great deal to the sound. I suspect that a lot more could come out of the 'harp with a little prodding. Dick's guitar lead and backup work is probably the instrumental highlight of this recording. He is comfortable in old-timey, blues, ragtime, flat and finger-picking. He knows when to shine and when to hold back. Dick is also an accomplished fiddler with a nice, easy, lilting style. Judy's banjo and Mark's bass are both rock solid.

But this entire recording is about the vocals. Victoria has a voice that is strong and well-controlled, but never sounds forced. She is able to find some of the most creative and powerful harmonies I have heard. Her subtle slurs and cross-overs weave around Dick's powerful bass, resulting in a complex, gorgeous duet.

The selections are mostly from the "traditional" genre: fiddle tunes, a ballad or two, Carter Family, blues and Gospel. And

Dick has even committed songwriting on two of the cuts. One piece, *Meet Me Where the Jordan River Winds*, one of those 'I'll meet you in heaven' songs, could become a classic. And, speaking of songwriting, Gillian Welsh's *Orphan Girl* is by far my favorite cut and worth the price of the CD. Then there's the jazzed up, in overdrive, *Frankie and Johnnie* (actually written in 1960 by Bob Gibson as "The New Frankie and Johnnie). Or the amusing *I Had But Fifty Cents*, the Binkley Brothers answer to *My Name Is Morgan* ... And the soul shaking Gospel number, *Pass Me Not*.

I was talking to a fellow reviewer about this recording. This chap, who we'll call Incognito (he's a shy sort ...) also has a radio show and has been giving Harrington and Young a good bit of air play. Seems as a listener called up and expressed some dislike for this duo, sez my friend Incog. Well, we munched over this for a bit, examined it from all angles, then thought a little more. We both came to the same conclusion: What's not to like??? We could not imagine a human being with two reasonably functioning ears not at least enjoying, if not going nuts, for this recording. We 'harpers tend to enjoy singing and this CD has some of the best around.



Les'  
Choice

Les Gustafson-Zook

### Dulcimer Dan Arterburn

*Just Pickin'*

**Autoharp: Dan Arterburn**

HC 81, Box 655

Questa, New Mexico 87556

*Redwing • When the Cimarron Was Red and On the Rise • Simple Gifts • Streamlined Cannonball • Greensleeves • Hog Eye • Hamish • Golden Slippers • Fanny Slapper • Gold Watch and Chain • Over the Waterfall • Dubuque/ Buffalo Nickel/ June Apple • You Ain't Goin' Nowhere • Sweet Georgia Brown • Hamish (reprise)*

Most likely Dulcimer Dan Arterburn won't be familiar to many of you, unless

you frequent the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas when Dan materializes out of the campgrounds to compete in the autoharp contest. Then you recognize him as the tall, genteel, bearded guy playing the Oscar chromatic with enthusiasm and a nice dose of musicality. After the contest, he melts back into the campgrounds, not to be seen again in the autoharp circles.

Dan hails from Questa, New Mexico and proves with this album to be a competent multi-instrumentalist. The recording is all instrumental music and features a diverse collection of instruments, all played by Dan, including autoharp, hammered dulcimer, mountain dulcimer, banjo, dobro, mandolin, banjeaurine and "Kerrtar" (Yamaha guitar salvaged from a Kerrville Folk Festival campsite). The autoharp is featured on 4 tracks and provides backup for another 2 of the 15 tracks on the CD.

Dan's autoharp playing is solid, musical and enjoyable to listen to. You won't find any cutting edge stuff here, but it makes a real nice contribution for the overall recording. He plays several tunes we've heard in the contest and does a nice job of them. They include *When the Cimarron Was Red and On the Rise*, *Hamish and Gold Watch and Chain*. To be truthful, what I find to be more exciting is Dan's mandolin and banjo playing. He does a great job on mandolin on *Sweet Georgia Brown* and the medley of *Dubuque, Buffalo Nickel* and *June Apple*. His banjo and banjeaurine playing on the *Streamlined Cannonball* and self-composed *Fanny Slapper* is also very impressive.

I can easily recommend this album as an enjoyable listening experience for anyone who enjoys traditional music. The variation in instrumentation, the well produced recording, and Dan's competence in playing these instruments all make for a nice collection of tunes to enjoy.

### Tom Schroeder

**An Artistic Autoharp**

**Autoharp: Tom Schroeder**

300 W. 113th Street

Kansas City, Missouri 64114-5319

[AnArtAuto@hotmail.com](mailto:AnArtAuto@hotmail.com)

*Humors Of Ballydehob • Shove that Pigs Foot Further Into the Fire/ The Go-Between/ The New Room • Orvetta Waltz • Farewell to Whiskey • Pachelbel's/Hewlette Waltz • St. Anne's Reel • Claire's Hambo • Farewell To Cragie Dhu • Whiskey Before Breakfast*

*Waltz/Over The Waterfall Waltz • Smokey Mokes • Clinch Mountain Backstep/Kiowa Special/Cold Frosty Morning/Forked Deer • Hornpipes: Strike The Harp/Ruby/Kinda Cuckoo • Boda Waltz • Shall The Harp Then Be Silent/Swallowtail Jig • Federal House*

Most of you are probably familiar with Tom Schroeder, having seen him at various festivals, read his articles in the autoharp magazines or heard his recordings. He is the only two time International Autoharp Champion and one of the autoharp's best players and instructors. Tom is joined on a number of tracks in this all instrumental recording by members of his dance band, Calliope. This includes Jill Allen on piano, Dave Agee – fiddle, bodhran, bones, Frank Martin – pennywhistle, flute, banjo, and Chris Martin – accordion.

Strengths of this recording are Tom's clean and lyrical autoharp playing, his well crafted arrangements and plenty of Tom's trademark patting techniques. It is nice that it includes some of Tom's current favorite performance and contest pieces. The inclusion of his friends on this recording fills out the arrangement on many of the songs, providing a good and fresh energy.

My favorite tracks on this recording are *St. Anne's Reel* – a peppy version of a standard and the Clinch Mountain medley – some great tunes performed wonderfully on the 'harp. *Pachelbel's/Hewlette Waltz* is a pleasant arrangement and well played piece. I really liked *Smokey Mokes*, too. It's a neat tune with a calypso flavor.

My only complaint about this recording is how the piano and autoharp relate occasionally. On the opening track, *Humors of Ballydehob*, when the piano enters, it overpowers and muddies up (it almost sounds distorted) what I remember as a powerful solo contest tune.

In all, this recording is enjoyable to listen to and a great way to get more familiar with Tom's playing and his variety of styles. I highly recommend it. There is also a companion book available. Music for An Artistic Autoharp contains 14 tunes from the CD arranged for autoharp. It is available at the above address.

\*For detailed information from Mike on the making of these albums, see page 23.



# CLASSIC SIMPLY.

by Linda Huber

Johann Strauss Jr. was born in Vienna, Austria in 1825. His father, Johann Strauss, Sr. was known as "The Father of the Waltz". Johann Sr. was a conductor and composer himself and did not like the idea of having a rival within his own family. He pointed young Johann toward a business career. The young man's mother privately encouraged

her son's musical interests and in time he became his father's most powerful rival.

Strauss created a type of waltz characterized by grace, lightness and melodic charm which became world-known as the "Viennese Waltz." He never ran out of melodies and set them down with great speed. He would start to write a new waltz in the

morning and by early afternoon his orchestra members would assemble to copy and rehearse parts. That evening the work would be premiered with Strauss himself conducting, fiddle and bow in hand. Having written almost 500 waltzes, he became known as the "Waltz King."

## "Emperor Waltz"

by Johann Strauss, Jr. (1825-1899)

First system of musical notation for "Emperor Waltz". The top staff is in treble clef, 3/4 time, showing the melody. The bottom staff is a guitar chord diagram with strings T, A, B labeled. Chords are indicated below the staff: C / / G7, C / / G7, F / G7, C, G7 / / C.

Second system of musical notation for "Emperor Waltz". The top staff continues the melody. The bottom staff is a guitar chord diagram. Chords are indicated below the staff: / / / G7, Am / / Dm, F / G7 / Dm, G7 / / C.

Third system of musical notation for "Emperor Waltz". The top staff continues the melody. The bottom staff is a guitar chord diagram. Chords are indicated below the staff: / / Em / G / / / Dm, G7 / Dm / Am / / / C.

*ritard*

Chord progression: / / Em / G / / / Dm / Em / Dm Am / Dm G7 C /

Chord progression: / / / / / / G7 / / / C

TABLATURE

↓ ×	∧	○	┌ └
Pinch	Strum	Pluck	Rhythm Bracket

Arrangement ©1999 by Linda Huber



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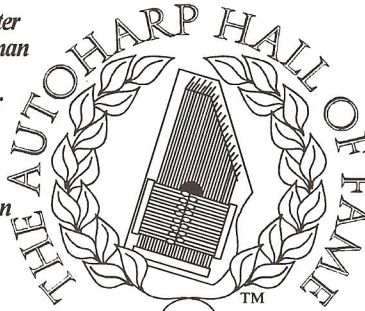
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Mike Seeger  
Meg Peterson  
Becky Blackley  
Mike Fenton  
George Orthey  
Mary Lou Orthey  
Patsy Stoneman

## 2000 NOMINATION FORM

Nominations for the 2000 inductees into The Autoharp Hall of Fame will be accepted by Limberjack Productions from September 1, 1999 until May 1, 2000. 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, 2000. The honorees shall be installed into The Autoharp Hall of Fame at the 2000 Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering, and announced in the Summer 2000 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.**

# Melancholy Musings

by Tom Schroeder

Yesterday my autoharp wept. No tears were shed, but it wept. We were thinking of old friends we saw this summer that we won't see for awhile. We were recalling opportunities that we've missed. We were remembering people dear to us who have died. We were playing *Emma's Waltz* and we wept.

Getting your autoharp to weep can be challenging because it involves not only the right attitude but also a change in your normal tempo, volume and accompaniment. Consider these ideas and your autoharp will be weeping right along with mine.

Listen to your heart to set the tempo. Let your pulse be your metronome. Your autoharp cannot weep when played at a moderate or fast tempo. Put your fingers on your wrist and tap your foot to the tempo of your pulse. That is the speed you should play at. It will seem too slow at first until you become comfortable with weeping and know how to fill the emptiness.

Weeping is both quiet and loud but is never just one volume. Most autoharp players play loud well. Practice playing at a quiet volume. It involves control and accuracy which only come through practice. When you play a tune, let the volume swell and decline over the musical piece depending on how you feel while playing.

Try playing an easy tune you already know. Play it quietly at the heart-beat tempo. Do not do any rhythm accompaniment. You should notice there are long pauses. That is good. Relax during them. Do nothing. Let your autoharp ring until the vibrations stop. Reflect. Fight the urge to do a thumbstroke.

To get your autoharp to weep, you have to allow pauses in the music. The

problem with pauses is autoharps do not have much sustain so the sound quickly dies. There are a few playing techniques that can help you increase your instrument's sustain.

One technique is the "thumbrun". A thumbrun is a type of pinch where the bass tones are enhanced. This helps increase the sustain of your instrument. To do a thumbrun, you start a thumbstroke on the bass strings and then continue the movement into a pinch of the melody note. It is one continuous movement. It kind of sounds like "burr-rump". "Burr (the thumbstroke) – rump (the pinch)". You have to start the movement just a fraction earlier than you would a pinch. A pinch just sounds like "rump" and has some sustain but a thumbrun sounds like "burr – rump" and has a lot of sustain.

Another technique to increase sustain is an "arpeggio". An arpeggio is a thumbstroke that ends on the melody string you are playing in the melody. To do an arpeggio, hold down the chord that you need to play the melody note. Then start a thumbstroke on the bass strings. The thumbstroke is continued across the strings until you reach the melody note you wish to play. At this point, you lift your thumbpick off the strings. The melody note is the last string to be played. It kind of sounds like "burrrrrr" and the last tone you hear is the melody string.

The thumbrun and arpeggio are used to play the note in a melody where you have to pause for several counts of the music. They allow your instrument to sustain the tone over those several counts. Give them a try with an easy tune you already know. Look for a half note, a dotted half note or a whole note in the music and play it using one of these techniques. Re-

member, use your heart for the tempo and do not do rhythm fill.

A third way to fill the time, during those long pauses in the music, is to do a "double pluck". With this technique, you pinch the melody note with your second finger and thumb. Then you pluck that same melody note with your first finger. Then for every count of music that you would normally just pause for, you pluck that same melody note twice. The first pluck is with your second finger and the second pluck is with your first finger.

The timing is like the following. Say you had a dotted half note or three counts of music. You would count it "one and two and three and". On "one" you pinch the melody note. On "and" you pluck that same melody note with your first finger. On "two" you pluck that same melody note with your second finger. On the next "and" you pluck the same melody note with your first finger. On "three" you pluck the same melody note with your second finger. On the next "and" you pluck the same melody note with your first finger. Thus, you are doing two plucks for every count of music – double plucking. It would be the same for a whole note or four counts of music, you would just do two more plucks. Using double plucking, there is a series of plucks that fill the time you would normally pause.

The autoharp can weep in both major and minor keys. It can weep when playing fast tunes slow, hymns, airs, song melodies, or in other words, most tunes. Just remember to let your heart set the tempo, vary the volume, do not do traditional rhythm fills, and use thumbruns, arpeggios and double plucks to sustain the sound during the pauses.

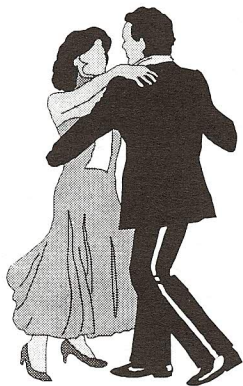
*Emma's Waltz* is a beautiful and

14 A Q

easy tune from Finland that I learned from Drew Smith. Drew says in Finland it is played by repeating the first part twice and the second part three times. I have written it out in the more

common way of repeating the first part twice and the second part twice. To play it in the Finnish tradition just repeat one of the second parts again. Yesterday my autoharp wept. To-

morrow it may laugh or dance or sing. Let your autoharp express a range of emotions. ❖  
 (Tom can be reached at: [AnArtAuto@hotmail.com](mailto:AnArtAuto@hotmail.com) .



# Emma's Waltz

Finland

Musical score for Emma's Waltz, featuring a treble clef, 3/4 time signature, and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The score is divided into three systems, each with a melody line and an autoharp accompaniment line. The accompaniment line includes chord symbols (Dm, A7) and fingerings for the strings (T, A, B).

**System 1:** Melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4-B4, quarter note C5, eighth notes B4-A4, quarter note G4, eighth notes F4-E4, quarter note D4, eighth notes C4-B3, quarter note A3. Chord symbols: Dm / / / / / / / / / / / / / / A7 / /

**System 2:** Melody starts with quarter notes G4-F4, eighth notes E4-D4, quarter note C4, eighth notes B3-A3, quarter note G3, eighth notes F3-E3, quarter note D3, eighth notes C3-B2, quarter note A2, eighth notes G2-F2, quarter note E2. Chord symbols: / Dm A7 Dm / A7 Dm / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

**System 3:** Melody starts with quarter notes D3-C3, eighth notes B2-A2, quarter note G2, eighth notes F2-E2, quarter note D2, eighth notes C2-B1, quarter note A1, eighth notes G1-F1, quarter note E1, eighth notes D1-C1, quarter note B1. Chord symbols: / / / A7 / / / Dm A7 Dm / A7 Dm



Gm / / / D7 Gm Dm / / / A7 Dm A7 / / / Dm A7

Dm / A7 Dm / / Bb / / / D7 Bb Dm / /

/ A7 Dm A7 / / / Dm A7 Dm / A7 Dm

**TABLATURE**

Thumbrun Arpeggio Double Pluck Pause

1999 Arrangement by Tom Schroeder



# Sacred 'Harp



The First Freewill Baptist of Mountain City, Tennessee

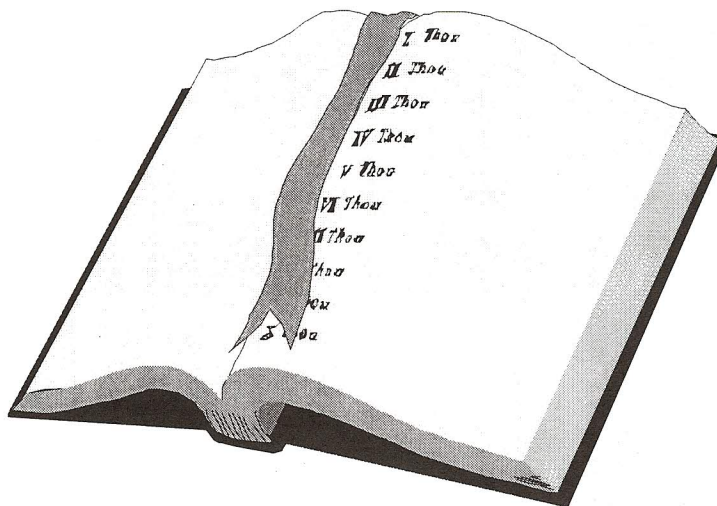
The First Freewill Baptist Church of Mountain City, Tennessee had its beginning about 1944 when local people began to meet in private homes for services. Later, a small block building was rented, but within a few months, Sunday services were resumed in the homes of the group. By the spring of 1959, John Horne had donated land and a building was started. At first, there was only a basement with a tar paper roof.

Financing, never easy, was always a problem. But God continued to bless the work and more members were added. By early summer, the building was far enough along to conduct a revival. The revival was a success and several members were added including some prominent families of the area, who joined the church at this time.

By fall of 1959, the basement was topped by a small, but neat, white church

house. The congregation has continued to grow over the years and today is the largest in Johnson County.

In May 1995 construction on the current building began. It was completed in mid-September 1996. It was an exciting time for the members who feel that their greatest challenge lies ahead: the challenge to grow and continue to minister to the people of Mountain City and Johnson County.



# Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

words and music by Helen H. Lemmel

G B $\flat$  G C G Em Am

O soul, are you wea - ry and trou - bled? No  
 Thru death in - to life ev - er - last - ing He  
 His word shall not fail you He prom - ised; Be -

G D7 G D7 G B $\flat$  G

light in the dark - ness you see? There's light for a  
 passed, and we fol - low Him there; O - ver us sin no  
 lieve Him, and all will be well; Than go to a

Em Bm Em D G A G D A7 D C D7

look at the Sav - ior, And life more a - bun - dant and free!  
 more hat do - min - ion For more than con - q'rors we are! -  
 world that is dy - ing, His per - fect sal - va - tion to tell!

G D7 Em C

Turn your eyes up - on Je - sus, Look full in His

G Am D7 Am D7 G D7 G D7

won - der - ful face And the things of earth will grow  
 (won - der - ful face)

Em C D7 G D7 G Am Bm D7 G

strange - ly dim In the light of His glo - ry and grace.

# 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  
kdaniels@gvi.net

*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.*

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## EVO BLUESTEIN

10691 N. Madsen  
Clovis, California 93612  
559-297-8966; Fax 559-297-8966

[evo@evobluestein.com](mailto:evo@evobluestein.com) or  
[evob@csufresno.edu](mailto:evob@csufresno.edu)  
<http://evobluestein.com>

**Pro-file:** AQ October '88

Performance schedule:

*November 6*

Beginning Autoharp Class  
California State University, Hayward  
Loaner 'harps available.

To register, call: 510-885-3605

*November 13*

California Polytechnical University  
San Luis Obispo, California  
Loaner 'harps available.

To register, call: 805-756-2053.

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## BRYAN BOWERS

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

[somagency@aol.com](mailto:somagency@aol.com)

**Pro-File:** AQ January '89

Performance schedule:

*November 4*

Assonet, Massachusetts (TBA)

*November 6*

Godfrey Daniels  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

*November 7*

Woods Hole Community Hall  
Woods Hole, Massachusetts

*November 9*

Reston, Virginia (TBA)

*November 12*

Tidewater Friends of Folk Music  
Virginia Beach, Virginia

*November 13*

First Church of Christ Congregational  
West Hartford, Connecticut

*November 19*

Focal Point  
St. Louis, Missouri

*November 20*

Lawrence, Kansas (TBA)

*November 21*

Iron Horse  
El Dorado, Kansas

*November 22*

Whittier School  
Winfield, Kansas

*November 23*

Victor Ornelas Elementary & Garfield  
Elementary Schools  
Garden City, Kansas

*November 24*

Jennie Barker Elementary School  
Garden City, Kansas

*November 27*

Teikyo Loretto Heights Theater  
Denver, Colorado

*November 28*

Fossil County Museum  
Kemmerer, Wyoming

*November 30*

Long Haul  
Big Water, Utah

*December 1*

Flagstaff, Arizona (TBA)

*December 4*

Sand De Guido  
Encinatas, California

*December 7*

Ojai Valley Women's Club  
Ojai, California

*December 10*

Toledo, Oregon (TBA)

*December 12*

McMenamin's Pub  
Portland, Oregon

*December 17*

Crossroads Mall  
Bellevue, Washington

*December 18*

Traditions Cafe  
Olympia, Washington

*December 19*

Bainbridge Island, Washington (TBA)

*January 7, 2000*

Friendship Hall  
Mt. Prospect, Illinois

*January 8, 2000*

Lake St. Church  
Evanston, Illinois

*January 15, 2000*

Van Andle Museum  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

*January 20, 2000*

Co-Ho Grill  
Columbia, Maryland

*January 20, 2000*

Leonia Public Library  
Leonia, New Jersey

*January 21, 2000*

Christ Congregational Church  
Princeton, New Jersey

*January 28*

Ten Pound Fiddle  
East Lansing, Michigan

*January 29, 2000*

Elderly Instruments  
East Lansing, Michigan

*January 29*

Kalamazoo, Michigan (TBA)

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## ROZ BROWN

1549 S. Holland Court  
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303 969-9645

[rozzie@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rozzie@ix.netcom.com)

<http://www.rozbrown.com>

**Pro-File:** AQ October '89

Performance schedule:

Every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and

Saturday night at the  
Buckhorn Exchange Restaurant  
1000 Osage Street

Denver, Colorado. Phone: 303 534-9505

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## JULIE DAVIS

PO Box 1302  
Nederland, Colorado 80466  
303-258-3444

[jdavis@indra.com](mailto:jdavis@indra.com)

**Pro-File:** AQ July '91

Performance schedule:

*November 21*

Park Hill Congregational Church, concert  
Denver, Colorado

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## PAUL and WIN GRACE

11990 Barnes Chapel Road  
Columbia, Missouri 65201

573-443-2819

[pgrace@mail.co.in.missouri.edu](mailto:pgrace@mail.co.in.missouri.edu)[www.folkfire.org/graces](http://www.folkfire.org/graces)**Pro-File:** AQ October '88

Performanceschedule:

*November 6*

Heartland Studios (7pm)

Chicago, Illinois

Contact: Howard Marshall 573-642-6226

**LUCILLE REILLY**

PO Box 7338

Denver, Colorado 80207

303-829-2000

[lucille@dulcimerlady.com](mailto:lucille@dulcimerlady.com)**Pro-File:** AQ April '92

Performanceschedule:

*November 9*

St. John's Cathedral (at noon)

Denver, Colorado

*December 8*

1999 Broadway Building (11:30am-1pm)

Denver, Colorado

*December 12*

Lessons and Carols (4pm-7pm)

St. John's Cathedral

Denver, Colorado

*December 16*

1999 Broadway Building (11:30am-1pm)

**BETH HORNER**

PO Box 836

Columbia, Missouri 65205

573-443-3816 or

PO Box 540

Wilmette, Illinois 60091

847-864-9588

[bhorner1@hotmail.com](mailto:bhorner1@hotmail.com)**Pro-File:** AQ Spring '99

Performanceschedule:

*December 31*

First Night

Columbia, Missouri

**KAREN MUELLER**

PO Box 80565

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408

[Kmharp0@aol.com](mailto:Kmharp0@aol.com)<http://shorock.com/folk/karen>**Pro-File:** AQ July '93

Performanceschedule:

*November 19-21*

North Georgia Foothills Dulcimer Assoc.

Fall Festival (Autoharp Instruction)

Unicoi State Park

Helen, Georgia

*November 28*

Minnesota History Center (afternoon)

St. Paul, Minnesota

*December 5*

Moose Lake, Minnesota (area)

**STANLEY A. RANSOM**

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39 Broad Street

Plattsburgh, New York 12901

518 563-5719

[rsansom@northnet.org](mailto:rsansom@northnet.org)[www.stanransom.com](http://www.stanransom.com)**Pro-File:** AQ Winter '95

Performanceschedule:

*November 15*

Stony Brook Museums

Stony Brook, New York

**HARVEY REID**

Woodpecker Records

PO Box 815

York, Maine 03909

[info@woodpecker.com](mailto:info@woodpecker.com)**Pro-File:** AQ January '89

Performanceschedule:

*November 5*

Uncle Calvin's Coffeehouse

Dallas, Texas

*November 6*

Good Folk Productions

Fayetteville, Arkansas

*November 7*

Rocky's Bricktown Music Hall

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

*November 12*

Sarasota Visual Art Center

Sarasota, Florida

*November 13-14*

Wings and Strings Festival

Polk City, Florida

*November 19*

Walpole Unitarian Church

Walpole, New Hampshire

*November 20*

One World Conference

First Universalist Church

Essex, Massachusetts

*December 3*

Connecticut Audubon Center

Glastonbury, Connecticut

*December 4*

St. James Church

Amesbury, Massachusetts

*December 9*

Paul Smiths College

Paul Smiths, New York

*December 10*

Blackstone River Theater

Cumberland, Rhode Island

*December 11-12*

Orange County Community College

Middletown, New York

*December 16*

Four Corners Grill

New London, New Hampshire

*December 17*

First Parish Church

Dover, New Hampshire

*December 18*

Watch City Arts Holiday concert

Waltham, Massachusetts

*December 19*

Cornish Town Hall

Cornish, Maine

*January 8, 2000*

Muse Coffeehouse

Londonderry, New Hampshire

**TOM SCHROEDER**

300 W. 113th Street

Kansas City, Missouri 64114-5319

[anartauto@hotmail.com](mailto:anartauto@hotmail.com)**Pro-File:** AQ October '88

Performanceschedule:

*December 4*

M.V.F.S. Barn Dance

Merriam, Kansas

**BILL and LAURIE SKY**

PO Box 70060

Nashville, Tennessee 37207-0060

615-859-1419

[billandlauriesky@hotmail.com](mailto:billandlauriesky@hotmail.com)**Pro-File:** AQ April '90

Performanceschedule:

*November 4*

West Lake Baptist Church

Doyline, Louisiana

*November 5*

Indian Nation RV Resort

Thackerville, Oklahoma

*November 6 & 7*

Bethel Baptist Church

Shreveport, Louisiana

*November 9-14*

Hattiesburg, Mississippi

*November 19*

Rhonda's Diner

St. George, Georgia

and

Mt. Olive Baptist Church

Monroeville, Alabama

*November 21*

Panacea, Florida

*December 1-5*

Hattiesburg, Mississippi

*January 7-14, 2000*

St. David, Arizona

*January 17, 2000*

Cocopah Bend RV and Golf Resort

Yuma, Arizona

*January 21, 2000*

Fortuna de Oro RV Resort (7pm)

Yuma, Arizona

## AUTOHARP PLAYERS

### Would you like to play any chord?

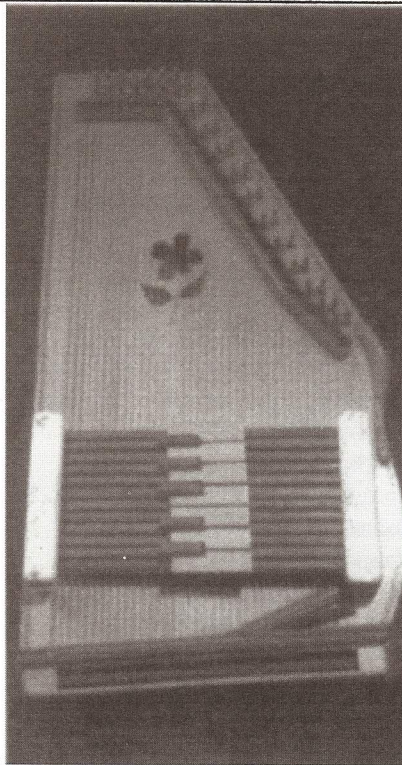
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 Restaurant  
 Yuma, Arizona  
*January 23, 2000*  
 Araby Acres  
 Yuma, Arizona  
*January 24, 2000*  
 River's Edge Resort  
 Yuma, Arizona  
*January 27, 2000*  
 Imperial Hot Mineral Spa  
 Niland, California  
*January 28, 2000*  
 Sky Valley Park  
 Desert Hot Springs, California  
*February 3, 2000*  
 Britain's Tumbleweed Chuckwagon  
 Restaurant  
 Yuma, Arizona  
*February 4*  
 Pleasant Harbor RV Resort (7pm)  
 Peoria, Arizona

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**DREW SMITH**  
 529 Ardmore Road  
 Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey 07423  
 201-444-2833

**Pro-File:** AQ July '89  
**Performance schedule:**  
*November 6 & 7*  
 Nomad Festival  
 Sandy Hook, Connecticut  
*November 14*  
 Helen Hays Rehabilitation Hospital  
 West Haverstraw, New York  
*December 21*  
 Bergenfield Library Senior Center  
 Christmas Party  
 Bergenfield, New Jersey  
*December 31*  
 "First Night" Concert (6:30pm)  
 Teaneck, New Jersey  
*December 31*  
 "First Night" Concert (9:30 and 10:30pm)  
 Ridgewood, New Jersey

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**FRAN STALLINGS**  
 1406 Macklyn Lane  
 Bartlesville, Oklahoma 74006-5419  
 918-333-7390  
[ignatz@ionet.net](mailto:ignatz@ionet.net)  
**Pro-File:** AQ April '92  
**Performance schedule:**  
*November 1-18*  
 Autoharp performances/Workshops  
 Kaashiwa, Tokyo, Miharu, Fukushima,  
 Sendai, Fukuoka - Japan  
 Call/fax 011-81-471-48-0673 for details

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# IN THE BEGINNING.....

by Mary J. Park

## Strumming Chords on the Autoharp ..... The Thumb Strum

I know you probably acquired your first autoharp because you couldn't resist that wonderful sound you get when you press down a chord bar and run your fingers or a pick across the strings. The question now is how do you turn that into real music. Being able to strum chords as backup to other instruments and/or yours or someone else's voice is a very important and satisfying skill.

The first thing you need to be able to do is keep a steady beat to music. If you find this a challenge, spend time just tapping to the beat of music on your knee with your right hand. As I have told students, you can do this while you are in the car on your way to or from work or anywhere else you like to listen to music. Using the right hand is important as this is the hand you will use to keep this beat on the autoharp. You can also practice singing and keeping the beat, but remember it is important to keep a good steady tempo.

Once you have accomplished keeping a good steady beat, it is time to move to the autoharp. Before you can actually get

into strumming, you will have to decide how to hold the autoharp. The older, more traditional, way is to set the 'harp flat on a table or on your lap. In this style, you need to cross over your left hand, which is used for pressing the chord buttons, and strum with your right hand. Most autoharps today hold the instrument against their chest in what is called Appalachian style. In actuality you will be hugging your 'harp. In this position, you will still use your left hand for chording and your right hand for strumming, but they will not cross each other.

Now find a song that you know well and one which has only two or three different chords. In this way you will be able to concentrate more on your right hand instead of on your chording hand. We will begin with the thumb strum as it uses only one digit (you could also use a flat pick for this strum). Look at the strings of your autoharp. You will want to divide them into approximately three sections; the low strings (the largest wrapped ones), the middle strings and the high strings. For the

first beat of any measure, you will want to strum across the low strings and at least part of the middle area. This is the longest and hardest stroke you will make, as you want to accentuate the first beat. The other beats of the measure will only go across the middle or high strings.

In the examples below, when you see the thumb strum symbol (it looks like a stick on top of an upside down V), you will strum the section of the 'harp indicated by the placement of the symbol on the staff. If it is at the bottom of the staff, you will strum the low strings. If it is in the middle, you will strum the middle strings. And, if it is near the top, you will strum the high strings. The first line shows one pattern and the second line shows another. If performing this song, you would probably choose one of the patterns to use for the entire song. The numbers below the staff indicate how to count the beats of the measure. The \* by number 1 indicates that this beat should be accentuated.

### Go Tell Aunt Rhodie

Musical notation for the first line of the song. It consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in quarter notes. Below the staff, the lyrics are: "Go tell Aunt Rhodie, Go tell Aunt Rhodie,". Chord symbols D, A7, and D are placed under the lyrics. Below the staff is a TAB line with strumming symbols (upward triangles) and a count: 1\* 2 3 4 1\* 2 3 4 1\* 2 3 4 1\* 2 3 4.

Musical notation for the second line of the song. It consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in quarter notes. Below the staff, the lyrics are: "Go tell Aunt Rhodie Her old graygoose is dead." Chord symbols A7 and D are placed under the lyrics. Below the staff is a TAB line with strumming symbols (upward triangles) and a count: 1\* 2 3 4 1\* 2 3 4 1\* 2 3 4 1\* 2 3 4.

# Horizontal 'Harpin'

by Gordon Baker

I suppose it got started when my dear wife became attracted to the hammered dulcimer. We began going to dulcimer festivals, and I saw autoharps in bands, such as Sweetwater. Workshops by Bryan Bowers and Karen Mueller and a radio show that featured Bryan really boosted my interest, showing how much music's in the autoharp. I wasn't looking for another instrument to not give enough time to, but I yielded at last to an old OS 21 on an orphan instrument table.

As a new player, I found that playing the 'harp held upright was awkward. Laying the 'harp on my lap felt more familiar, a bit like the mountain dulcimer. Through *Autoharp Quarterly*, the *Cyberpluckers* and *The Autoharp Book* I learned about the original horizontal playing and about the start of Appalachian vertical style.

I'm right handed, and playing cross-handed soon felt pretty restrictive. I've built things about all my life,

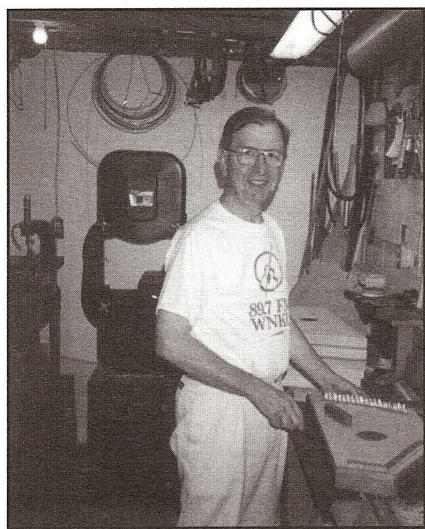
and I thought I'd try to make an autoharp intended just for my lap playing. While designing, I considered the current left-handed 'harps, but I felt that the location of the strumming path was more awkward than I liked. I decided to angle the chord bars across the strings to better the right arm's sweep, and I built a 'harp around that. I included a tuning pick-up, a lap board to keep the instrument back from being damped against my legs, carrying holes, and fence boards at the ends to protect the pins. I doubled the end chord bars, and I made the interior volume a little deeper and larger in total – aiming for a bass sound that I didn't have to dig so much for.

The instrument surely suits me, and as I've gone around to festivals, I've found that there always seems to be someone in a workshop struggling with vertical playing. Some had trouble holding the weight, some with maintaining a good playing angle, and

some got numbness in the left arm and wrist. I began to think that a few other people might like a lap instrument, so I've started to build some to offer this fall along with a special case by Peg Earl. I do some dulcimer products now, so my workshop is extra active these weeks.

It's been wonderful to meet some of the good natured and generous folks in the autoharp community. I'm particularly grateful to Bob Lewis and to the Ortheys and the Lumberts for their help and encouragement, and thanks to all those workshop leaders who show us what can be done. I'm sure looking forward to more 'harping festivals.

Gordon Baker  
1262 Elm Ridge Drive  
Amelia, Ohio 45102  
513 753-9457  
[glbaker@fuse.net](mailto:glbaker@fuse.net)



Gordon in his "sawdust room".



The 'harp in action.



The Gordon Baker "lap" 'harp.



## Making GALAX INTERNATIONAL

by Mike Fenton

During the 70s and 80s, in order to follow up my interest in American old-time music, I made many visits to Galax, Virginia, and attended and participated on many occasions in the Old Fiddlers Convention which has been held there every August since the mid-30s. My first visit there was in '72, and over the ensuing years it became obvious that many more folk were coming from overseas, being lured by the fine old-time and bluegrass music to be heard and played there. I was not the first non-American there by any means. I competed in guitar, folk song, clawhammer banjo and, of course, from '82 in autoharp, which was introduced as a new contest there on Drew Smith's instigation in 1981.

During the mid-80s, with the evident increase in foreign visitors to the Galax convention, Bobby Patterson remarked to me one day, "What a fine record all these boys from overseas could put together." I was immediately taken with the idea and, working together, we spent a couple of years coordinating tapes, photographs and biographical information to produce a double LP collection entitled "Galax International", a collection of old-time and bluegrass music by Galax's foreign visitors – bluegrass and old-timey by Japanese players, a Swedish old-time band, clawhammer banjo from Australia, a dynamic Swiss mandolinist, and seven tracks in which I am featured, which will interest autoharp recording collectors.

I even kept all the foreign stamps from the correspondence to form an artistic border on the backliner. The 2-LP set came out in 1989 with descriptive booklet included and received a great HIGHLIGHT review from Bluegrass Unlimited. Unfortunately, it came out in vinyl at a time when the CD and tape format was becoming more popular, but neither I nor the company foresaw the great shift towards CDs. We went with the LP format because we felt to go on CD would lose all the art

work and information, as inserts and booklets for CD were not really developed at that time. I remain very proud of the collection, but because we mistimed its release in a format which was shortly to go out of fashion, there remain a large number of Galax International in the Heritage vaults at Woodlawn, near Galax.

I remain very grateful to my friends in the Galax area for the great encouragement I have had there over the years, a recognition of my skills within their culture which has meant a lot to me, and in that respect James Lindsey, Willard Gayheart and Bobby Patterson merit special mention – James has led the Mountain Ramblers band for more than four decades in the Galax area, Willard is well known as a fine singer and bluegrass musician, and has achieved great success in recent years as a pencil artist – his views of the Appalachians and convention picking sessions will be familiar to most of you. Bobby is boss of Heritage Records, he has always loved the autoharp and really knows how to record it.

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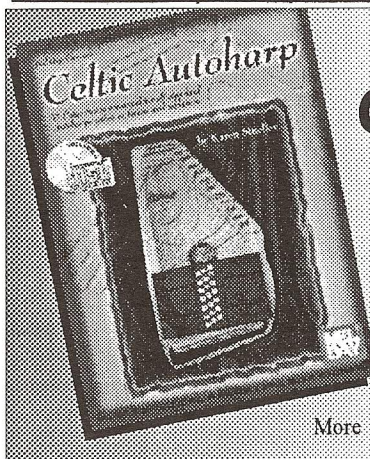
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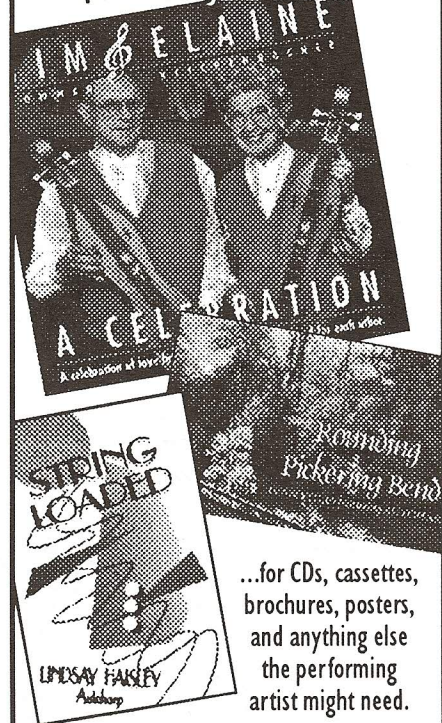
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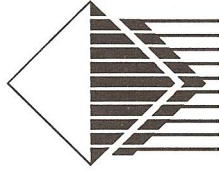
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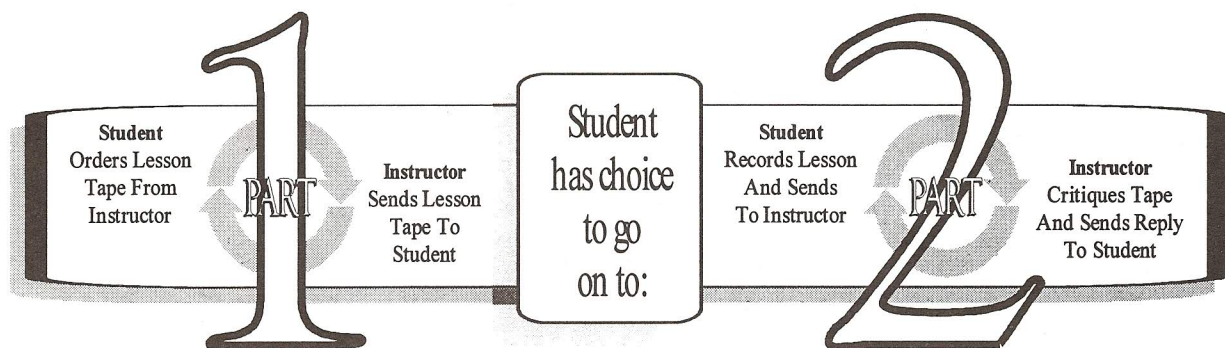
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Skip Beltz has been playing autoharp for over thirty years. There have been times of organized musical collaborations, but mostly he has played informally with friends. In 1998, at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering, he heard the autoharp played by someone else for the first time and discovered the autoharp community. He entered his first competition at The Gathering and placed third.

Skip plays many types of music but concentrates on folk, blues, bluegrass and old-timey. He resides in Rochester, New York, with his wife Debbie.

Skip hopes to do more workshops and articles, and find someone who shares his drive to perform and record the music of America.

(To read more of Skip Beltz' work, see "Newbie" in Volume 11, #3 and "Building the Base" in Volume 11, #4)



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## THE INTERACTION LESSON

Skip Beltz, 410 Oxford Street, Apt. #2, Rochester, New York 14607-2738

This lesson is geared toward the 'harper who does not read music. I do not mean to alienate the musically literate, but I want to reach all who wish to learn.

We all have different styles of playing, developed either through organized learning experiences or acquired over time as we struggle to come to terms with the instrument we love. Some seek to strum a pleasing rhythm, others the heightened explosive turbulence of red hot fiddle music. There is another avenue to consider, that being the full sound of guitar-style finger picking. This style can be applied to any form of music, as it utilizes finger patterns not unlike those used by banjo players. Now we all know that banjo players are the lowest form of pond life, so if they can do it, surely, friends and neighbors, so can we. In this Interactive lesson I want to give you the basic pattern I use. Before I tell you what it is, let me say what it isn't. It isn't something you'll pick up in ten minutes. It isn't something you learn and repeat back exactly the way it was presented; the patterns and variations are endless. Best of all, it isn't hard to acquire – it just takes practice.

OK, so much for the negative, how about the positive! Finger picking will allow you to play a melody line, bass line and har-

mony or grace notes at the same time, just like a good finger picking guitarist does. Applied to fiddle tunes, it will allow lightning fast leads. In a bluegrass scenario you can play like a mandolin or banjo. And if blues is your thing, finger picking will open up a whole new musical experience to you. So enough talk, let's get into it.

Since this is all pattern-based, let's assign numbers to fingers. The thumb is 1, the index finger 2, the middle finger 3. We will deal with just these fingers in this lesson. Next we need to establish a beat. Start out with a moderate beat that is slow but steady. You count 1,2,3,4 – 1,2,3,4. This will be the beat we will use, a 4 – count. You are going to pluck one string on each beat. Now, don't worry if you hit more than one string or hit strings that are damped, just try it. On beat one, pinch with the thumb (1) and middle finger (3), henceforth called, you guessed it, a pinch! On beat 2, let your thumb hit the next highest string after the string it struck on the pinch. On beat 3, your index finger (2) plucks the string your middle finger struck on the pinch, and beat 4 is your middle finger (3) plucking the next highest undamped string. Expressed in finger numbers, to a 4 count beat, it would be (1–3 pinch)–1–2–3. You are only actually playing four notes. You are pinching

the first two on the first beat (playing a bass note with the thumb) then another bass note on the second beat with the thumb. ON the third beat you play the same note that your #2 finger played in the pinch, then on the fourth beat, the next highest undamped note is played with finger #3. Got it? Try it some more ...

OK, if you are to the point where the pattern is familiar to you, you're ready to play melody lines. Your third finger is going to be the melody line finger. Use the same pattern as you have been using, but move up the 'harp to play higher notes and down to play lower ones. A good exercise is to do scales. Move up one note on the scale with every 4 – count, using the third finger as the melody finger to access the next note ... pinch – 2 – 3 – do, pinch – 2 – 3 – re, pinch – 2 – 3 – mi, pinch – 2 – 3 – fa, and so on. This will give you a fine feel for moving up and down the scale.

Now, as far as variations go, that will be up to you, or in another lesson. A hint to the adventurous: by adding another pinch and a fourth finger to play melody you can achieve a banjo-like sound that is just the bomb for bluegrass picking. It's up to you to figure out where to place it.



# Go Tell Aunt Rhody

arr. Skip Beltz

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics are: Go tell Aunt Rhody, with a long dash under 'Rhody'.

Go tell Aunt Rhody,  
P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics are: Go tell Aunt Rhody, with a long dash under 'Rhody'.

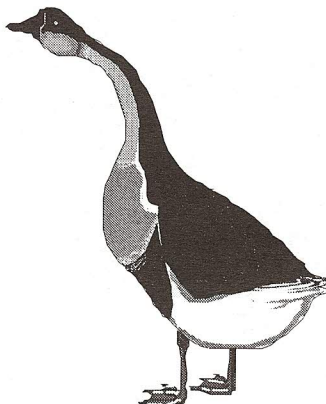
Go tell Aunt Rhody,  
P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics are: Go tell Aunt Rhody the, with a long dash under 'Rhody'.

Go tell Aunt Rhody the  
P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps, 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics are: old grey goose is dead. with a long dash under 'dead'.

old grey goose is dead.  
P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3 P-1-2-3



# Fancy That...

## Artwork on Autoharps

by Karen Daniels

Art work on autoharps has often been discussed among autoharpers and continues to be of interest to this unique sector of musicians. After all, art forms and beautifying our lives as well as our belongings appeals to the basic nature of humans. "Fancying" up our autoharps is another expression of that desire to enhance.

Whenever the subject of putting art work onto an autoharp comes up, I immediately think of Fredona Currie of Heber Springs, Arkansas. From my very first year at the Autoharp Jamboree at the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, Arkansas, some years back, Fredona's 'harp caught my eye. ("Thou shalt not covet," said I to self.) Her autoharps had black backgrounds with exquisite, quality art work over the entire top done in gold reverse work painting.

Many persons have been curious as to the preparation of the 'harp body for doing artistic designs on the face, as well as the art work itself, and when the topic surfaced on the internet once more, I decided to ask Fredona about her 'harps. In talking with Fredona, I learned that her very talented sister, Chere (pronounced Sherry) Nicholson, had actually done the art work on the autoharps.

The second of Fredona's 'harps to be painted by Chere was prepared first by Dutch Wigman, of Mountain View, Arkansas. Dutch, an instrument builder, woodworker and craftsman for many years, received a B model 'harp from Fredona. He completely removed the strings, all the hardware, bridge-work, everything that was non-wood, from the 'harp body. Using a standard paint stripper, he removed as much of the finish off the 'harp as possible then used a sander to take it down to the bare wood. Because the 'harp was an older model, it still had the sharp

edges. With a router, the edges were rounded off on both the front and the back so that it was smooth and comfortable to play.

Any holes (from chord bar holders, etc.) in the 'harp that were visible at the time of refinishing were mudded in with wood fillers or putty then sanded out and the 'harp was given a coat of regular wood sanding sealer to fill in the wood pores. Upon drying, it was sanded smooth. The wood generally determines how many coats of sealer to put on as a base coat. If the wood is soft, it would probably be better to do two or three coats with sanding in-between each one whereas hard wood would not take as much sealer due to the grains or pores of the wood being much tighter, in which case one good coat would be sufficient.

Four to five coats of black lacquer, matte finish, were sprayed onto the 'harp body, with drying between coats. Black lacquer was the background for the art work, but it could be any color. The first two of Fredona's 'harps have black while a third one, being worked on now, has a burgundy background. After the final coat of lacquer was applied and dried, a finish coat of Deft was put only on the sides and back of the instrument with the top left unsealed so that the art work could be done.

At this point, the 'harp was given over to Chere, Fredona's sister, for the art work. The art work on the first two 'harps was done with iridescent gold oil paints. Because of the reverse painting technique that was used and the black background, there was no way to sketch the basic design in. Using fine detail paint brushes dipped in the gold oil paint, the art design was outlined and then the details were filled in wherever needed. All the

shadows, dark portions of the art, were left blank because of the black background, leaving the highlighted gold parts of the design. Very fine brushes were used for most of the painting, though for bigger areas, a larger brush was sometimes called for. Toothpicks were even used to etch out the very fine details that are called for in reverse painting. If there are any flaws, mars or scratches in the autoharp body, Chere incorporates them into the art work in some way to help cover up or minimize the flaws. The art work can also be worked around the sound holes.

After Chere did the art work, the 'harp was then turned back over to Dutch for the finishing touches. For the final sealer, two or three fine coats of Deft were sprayed on the top of the 'harp then rubbed down gently with fine steel wool (0000) between coats so that it hits only the high spots and leaves the art work undamaged. The main purpose is not to take much off of the finish, but to leave a good build-up. The hardware was polished up, fine tuners were added in place of the standard wire bar, new pins were used, bridges realigned, everything was put back together, the 'harp was re-strung and made into a C diatonic. All dressed and ready to go!

One word of caution, however, for those who are unfamiliar with stripping an autoharp down to the wood body and reassembling all the parts back on to the instrument, this might best be left to an expert to do for you. That is, unless you would like to do it as a learning experience.

The first 'harp that was painted was prepped with a base coat of seven coats of black lacquer. The third 'harp, currently in Chere's hands for her work-in-progress, was prepared by Fredona. Following the former steps

of stripping and sanding, she used a burgundy colored Krylon Spray Enamel to apply four or five coats to the 'harp body, letting it dry and cure for two days between each coat. Fine steel wool (0000) was used between the coats except for the final one. Then the 'harp was given to Chere for her touch.

As for durability, the autoharps and their finishes have held up well over time and the artwork itself is protected by the strings, so basically that area is not being affected at all.

Fredona Currie and Chere Nicholson, sisters, grew up in a musical family. Their father, Mert Keith, had a country and western band when they were growing up in Houston, Texas. Fredona had a talent for singing and won various competitions, and Chere harmonized with Fredona when they frequently sang together. Occasionally they would sing on the Ricky Ware Show in San Antonio, Texas (similar to the American Bandstand Show which was popular at that time). The family eventually moved to Mountain View, Arkansas, except for Chere who remained in Houston. Fredona, Mert, and later Fredona's son, Britt, all became involved at the Ozark Folk Center. In 1988, Fredona won second place at the International autoharp competition in Winfield, Kansas. She is still very involved with the Ozark Folk Center as an emcee and performer for the shows and, on occasion, instructing workshops at the Autoharp Jamboree.

Chere's real talent, however, was art rather than music. When she was about 5 years old, her mother discovered Chere drawing cartoons all over cardboard boxes. She started drawing horses first, and then people. Because she has never been a big landscape artist, she continues to primarily paint animals and people. She took art in high school and won a competition to design the Lyndon B. Johnson Memorial on the school grounds at the high school in Houston where LBJ was, at one time, a principal. The Memorial is still there. Other competitions were entered and won as well.

She won a scholarship in graphic

arts to a state university but was unable to attend because of extenuating circumstances. At this point, Chere went to work at a hospital and ended up with a career in respiratory therapy, though she continued to do art on the side. After working at the hospital for five years, a change was needed and so Chere got into graphic arts by way of employment in the Geological – Geophysical Drafting Department for Tex. Gulf Oil and Gas in Houston. After nine and a half years she moved to Arkansas and went back into respiratory therapy because “nobody needed a geological-geophysical drafter in this area.” Again, she continued to do art work and paintings.

One day, Fredona got the idea of having her sister paint her autoharp, and that's how the idea was started. Fredona brings the 'harps to Chere all prepped, primed and ready to have the painting done on it. On the first 'harp that was done, a chromatic, Fredona left the design entirely up to her sister. At the time, Chere was involved in the Arts Council and was trying to work up something for a competition that they were having (when she wasn't working). She had a Roman/Greek sort of thing going through her mind. The design for Fredona's 'harp came about from that process and ended up being a woman playing a lyre with her three sons around her, since Fredona has three sons who are all musical also. It was a very family-oriented painting with a twist of the Roman idea.

Chere's favorite 'harp that she painted for Fredona was the one based on Michaelangelo's “The Creation.” Chere's thinking was, “Where the two fingers touch – especially with Fredona, her sons and our Dad with their musical talent – there's just something that God gives to people – just a spark of some sort, this talent. They've been touched. And that's why I did that painting. Of course, I've always liked Michaelangelo.”

She is now working on Fredona's third 'harp, which will become a D diatonic. It is different in that this is the first one to be done in colors rather than the gold and black reverse painting. It is a picture of an angel, based

upon a statue that was given to Fredona by her daughter-in-law.

All of the art work and painting is done with oil-based paints and though acrylics can be used, Chere prefers the oils as acrylics dry too fast and oils seem to turn out better. However, if the design is going to be a relief (reverse type), then acrylics would be acceptable.

If anyone is interested in having quality art work done on their 'harps, Chere has said that she is available to do so. Before the 'harps are sent to her, they need to be stripped down to the wood and the 'harp body prepared and primed with a background color of the person's choice. If you have something in mind for the painting, jot it down, send pictures, a copy of the design or try to draw it out yourself to send to Chere. Or, you can call and talk over the ideas with her as she paints just about anything. If you have only a general idea of what you want on your 'harp or would like to leave it up to the artist, then she would like to have a synopsis about yourself – things you like, what appeals to you, your interests. Depending on the difficulty of the art work to be done and the time factor, the price would range anywhere from \$150 to \$200.

She will need to know exactly where the chord bar holders went across the 'harp, because that lets her know how far down she can paint. Also, you will want to let her know whether or not you want the letters of the different strings painted in after the painting is done and if so, she will need a specific diagram of what they are.

Chere Nicholson may be reached at 449 Nicholson Road, Floral, Arkansas 72534 or phone 870 668-3596.

For those of you have been wanting to try “fancying” your 'harps up a bit, you now have a start with these guidelines. As with anything in life, there are many different approaches to any given subject and, as with playing the autoharp, there is no hard and fast rule. So feel free to use whatever note strikes your bell in getting your 'harp dressed up. Then everyone who sees your autoharp will say, “*Fancy that!*”



The 'harp done during Chere's "Roman" period. A mother playing lyre surrounded by her three sons.



Chere's interpretation of Michaelangelo's "Creation." Notice how she worked around the sound hole.

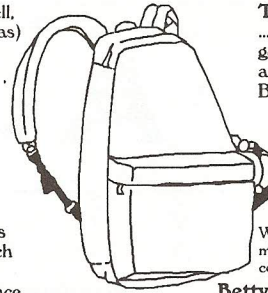


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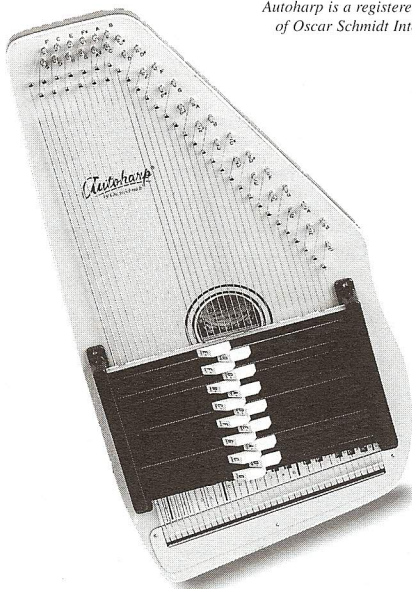
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# An Instrument of Peace

by Alex Usher

Now what's a brave little autoharp doing poking its nose into a gathering of the big fellows – pedal and folk-harps? It all happened because several years ago someone sent me an article about Ron Price of the group “just folks” who started an organization called “Healing Harps.” Ron had noticed that playing his big harp really helped some physical problems he had, and wanted to share his findings with others. He worked not just with people with physical problems, but with, among others, a group of severely emotionally stressed children, and found the harp a catalyst to healing. This movement of using harps in a variety of therapeutic situations has grown since then, culminating in harpists assembling in Richmond, Virginia in mid-March this year for the first International Harp Therapy Conference. The venue was in a Baptist church. I was the lone autoharpist.

In the past I've had some pretty remarkable things happen when I was playing in hospitals, including rousing a woman from a coma and getting a man to talk who hadn't said anything for two weeks. Since I often work professionally and sometimes as a volunteer in nursing and retirement homes, it seemed like a good thing for me to attend. It would serve the dual purpose of giving me new knowledge, perceptions and insights to use in my work, as well as introduce to others the autoharp as a viable instrument for use in this field. (My hat is off to the dedicated big harpists who stalwartly tote their lovely instruments on their missions of mercy – everything from folk harps of all sizes to full-sized pedal concert harps. Wow!)

The conference sessions were almost all taught by degreed professionals in the fields of neuroscience, nursing, music therapy, psychology, education and medicine. They included

a wide variety of topics having to do with the palliative use of the harp to provide an atmosphere conducive to healing, and to ease the discomforts of illness, stress and dying.

The first night keynote address by neuroscientist Don Estes from California was a cutting edge crystallization of twenty years of work in the field of sympathetic vibratory physics. Much of his talk was lost on my unscientific mind, especially when he unveiled his “absolute scale of cosmic reality” chart, but the next day when he gave a session about his VibraSound table, I got some of the gist of his work.

The table has a fluid-filled mattress with enclosed speakers that respond to every sound frequency. The subject lies on it, is fitted with earphones and a mask that rapidly flashes red lights on his closed eyes, which produces a dream state. The therapist can concentrate the sonic vibrations on various parts of the body that are in special need of healing. The harp (or other live or recorded music) is played into the wired system providing a plethora of vibratory stimulation, and the subject eases into a state of relaxed ecstasy. To the observers nothing much seems to be happening, but the fellow who was the guinea pig for our class described his experience as quite extraordinary. I think he got a year's worth of endorphins in five minutes, and his back ache was gone.

Estes explained that all parts of the body, large and small, are resonant cavities and the consciousness of each part, whether it's an individual cell or a large organ, is on the membrane. Membranes have fundamental resonant frequencies – the larger the mass the lower the frequency, and the smaller the mass the higher the frequency. Tightness is a factor, too, with a looser membrane having a lower frequency. By working the controls on

the VibraSound bed, the therapist can target the appropriate frequency vibrations, and the subject achieves a pain-free, nirvana-like peace and relaxation.

I find myself being hesitant to endorse a technique that zaps the pleasure centers of the mind so dramatically. Could this lead to dependency problems? Therapists could certainly establish an addicted clientele! The technique is interesting, however, in terms of how the vibrations of sound affect the body, and perhaps gives insight into why the harp (autoharps included!) with its wide range of frequencies seems to produce a more euphoric effect on a listener than a trumpet.

The opening concert of the conference in the sanctuary of the Grace Baptist Church was spectacular. For openers, there were twenty-six huge harps on the raised stage with twenty-six shiny-faced, Richmond city public school girls playing them, and they did a fine job of it, much to the credit of Lynnelle Ediger-Kordzaia, their director and the organizer of the conference.

Perhaps some of you have seen television footage showing harpists working in hospice with people who are dying – “transition” work it is called – and with those who are terminally ill. There were several people at the conference who talked about their experiences and insights into this kind of calling. The object is to provide comfort in body, mind and spirit for the dying person and his or her family. Somehow the medium of music opens doors to addressing issues that might otherwise go unspoken with patients who have only a short time to live. Music can comfort when words are inadequate or impossible. This is an area in which music therapists work, coordinating with other health-care professionals, and planning individual music

interventions with goals and objectives. Unlike recreational music for entertainment and relaxation, this music is carefully designed for a specific purpose to unblock doors and deal with unfinished business.

Playing for the living evokes a response, but playing for the dying is meant to liberate. One school of current thinking says that in the final moments of life the appropriate music should be in minor modes with periods of silence, and with rhythm broken up to match the last gasps of life. I hope no one does that to me. I want to be piped out with something beautiful, so that I sweep down that golden shaft on lyrical wings of song and, if you mess up the rhythm, I'll come back to haunt you! Another school of thought says that you should only use a specific repertory of plainsong music played for the dying by the monks centuries ago! No thank you, I'm a twentieth-century girl.

My own thoughts on this are that one should be in tune with the tastes of the patient and his family, and try to provide a gentle, loving, silently prayerful musical backdrop to the scene. Certainly playing Gospel hymns, no matter how beautifully would not be appropriate at a Jewish vigil. As a musician, I would not want anyone who was not proficient or had an out-of-tune instrument invading my final earthly space. It was mentioned that singing was wonderfully palliative. I quite agree, but only if the singer were the equivalent of Jean Redpath singing a gentle lullaby. I'd settle for taped music any day rather than listen to something live, but abrasive.

I have never played for anyone in his final minutes, but I have played in intensive care for a comatose lady who died several days later – I hope not because of my playing! It is a well-documented fact, which I noted on the monitors, that music played in such circumstances produces positive effects. The pulse becomes more regular, blood pressure drops and the blood oxygen level increases. It is because of this phenomenon that harp-playing is beginning to be utilized in the operating room, as well as in pre-op and

post-op areas. No, you don't have to "scrub" the instrument!

A nurse-harpist described her experiences with this. She scrubbed, but had her instrument outside of the sterile area. She coordinated with the anesthesiologist who gave cues as to the state of the patient, so she could play music of an appropriate tempo and mood. She described playing for an eye operation performed on a five-year-old boy who was pretty apprehensive as he came into the operating room. She chatted with him for a moment, then asked him what he would like her to play. "Play now!", said the little fellow, and it really broke the stress level when she ripped off a tune. The total preparation time for his surgery from the time he was wheeled into the operating room until he was completely under was only ten minutes. She played a cradle song lullaby that any child would respond to. As an experiment, the surgeon had her stop playing for a moment during the operation and the child's blood pressure and heart rate increased only to subside to normal within two minutes when she resumed playing. The same thing happened later when the same experiment was tried on an adult who was sedated.

How does it work? The limbic system at the base of the neck processes both music and pain. Since the thalamus can't process both at once, music can mitigate pain and stress. It's said that thirty minutes of music is equal to ten milligrams of valium.

Anesthesiologists have noted that they can give a third less sedation when music is played. This can be especially important when the patients are high risk; the elderly with cardiovascular or respiratory diseases for example. The other benefit of playing in the operating room is that it has a calming effect on the doctors and nurses.

The selections chosen for playing in these situations should be unfamiliar, to avoid running into playing something with emotional hooks, and the music should be played softly since the tiled operating room environment is very "live."

Should you decide to do some work in any of these areas, it's impor-

tant to coordinate your work with the hospital team – the doctor, anesthesiologist, nurse and chaplain, for you're doing something *for* the patient, not something *with* him.

Some musicians have played in neonatal divisions, and the benefits for the tiny babies are amazing. They gain weight faster and go home an average of five days earlier. The sense of hearing is the first to develop in the fetus (and the last to leave when people die). A three month old baby can actually distinguish tunes!

Research is being done in the area of comparing live and recorded music. First reports indicate that live music is preferable. Not only can it be tailored to fit the individual situation, but there is something special about the flow of energy between people, and the physical vibrations of the live sound. There is definitely a place for taped music in recovery and pain relief, however, and it even has an edge for terminal patients in giving them a small modicum of choice when their lives are spinning out of control.

One of the most unusual presentations at the conference was given by Sue Raimond, whose father wrote *You Are My Sunshine*. She has been doing some fascinating work with animals. Now, we've all heard about playing music for milking cows, but Sue has gone to the dogs – and birds and wolves and fish – with hers. She lives in the California mountains, works for the local fire department as an emergency medical person, and plays a folk harp. Having observed that her music seemed to have a calming effect on animals, she got a mobile grooming truck to carry a tape of her music on its rounds. When the groomers played the music the dogs calmed down considerably, and when they didn't, those pups yipped and jittered all over the place. A local veterinarian has used her tape in the operating room and finds that the animals awoke when the tape stopped. While the music was playing, the heart rate and pulse rate went down and the blood oxygen level went up – same as humans.

She went to an animal mall and played her harp live. After ten minutes

all the barking and agitation stopped and at the end of twenty minutes the kitties and dogs were all asleep, the birds had all puffed their feathers and gone to roost and the fish had all sunk quietly to the bottom of their tanks. Well, the word spread around and the local TV station picked up on the story, and made a date to tape her doing her stuff. Fine and dandy, but the smarty pants interviewer got to the place first, and by the time she got there he had added interest by riling up the dogs until they were bouncing off the walls in excitement. Sue could hardly hear her harp with the cacophony of yelping and barking, but guess what? At the end of ten minutes they were calm, and at the end of twenty minutes they were asleep!

Animals don't seem to have a repertory preference, and repetition is fine with them. Since they don't have any emotional baggage attached to certain tunes or music, you can play anything you want for as long as you want. They do seem to have a preference as to key, however. On her folk harp, F was the favorite, followed by A and then C. Here then is a perfect place for you to do some 'harp therapy. The next time a thunderstorm comes up and your dog starts to go crazy, just get out your 'harp and go to work.

The future of harp therapy work is good. Hospitals are opening up to it and courses are available for those who wish to pursue it professionally. It will only be as good as its practitioners, however - that dedicated band of selfless souls who put aside their egos, and reach out in love and compassion to ease the pain of their fellow human beings.

(Editor's note: If you would like to read about how Alex plays to the animals, check "Music Hath Charms" in Volume 8, Number 1 of AQ.)



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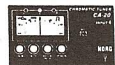
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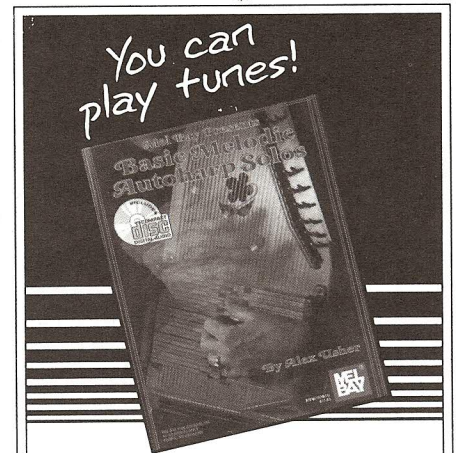
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**Anita Carter****July 29, 1999**

Anita Carter, a member of the Carter Family, died in July at the age of 66. She played stand-up bass and sang with the Family group.

She had been suffering from rheumatoid arthritis for some time. Her sister, June Carter Cash, and June's husband, Johnny Cash were with her when she died.

Born in Maces Springs, Virginia, Anita joined the family music group in 1938. In the beginning, the group consisted of Maybelle Carter, Anita, and her cousins. Later, sisters June and Helen and guitarist Chet Atkins joined the group.

In 1951, her duets with Hank Snow, *Down the Trail of Achin' Hearts* and *Bluebird Island* were Top 5 country hits.

In 1950, the group became members of the Grand Ole Opry and in 1956-1957 toured with Elvis Presley. Beginning in 1961, they were part of the Johnny Cash tour.

With Anita's passing, her sister June Carter Cash becomes the sole survivor of the second generation Carter Family.

**Andy Boarman****August 26, 1999**

Andy Boarman died August 26, 1999 at the age of 88. Andy's record "Mountain State Music" released in 1978, was done at a time when few autoharp recordings were available. In 1989, he was featured in a video, "Catching Up With Yesterday." Boarman's autoharp ability was an inspiration and influence on many beginning 'harpers. He will certainly be missed.

**Donald R. (Ole 'Harpweaver) Weaver****January 1, 1945 – September 5, 1999**

Donnie Weaver, a member of the DeBusk-Weaver Family, passed away in September. Donnie was the heart-beat of this popular Gospel/old-time group, and a fine old-time autoharp player.

The DeBusk-Weaver Family began singing in church and at home to entertain friends and neighbors. In 1971, they took a tape to a radio station in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, which immediately sensed a spark in their music and invited them to appear on the popular country-blue-grass-Gospel TV show "Shindig in the Barn." That launched a successful part-time musical career for the father, mother, daughter and son-in-law.

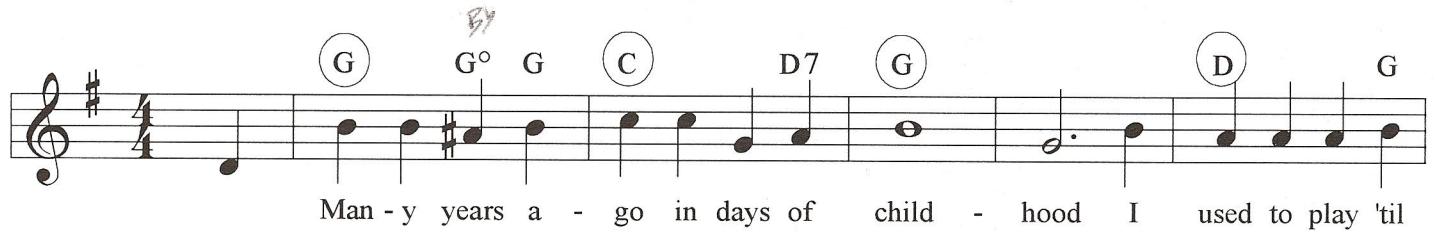
Donnie was raised in southeastern Pennsylvania; but because his father had migrated from Ashe County, North Carolina during the depression, Donnie grew up with the Original Carter Family music in his home. The DeBusk Family roots also go back to the region of the Carter Family. Because of this, the DeBusk-Weaver's music is heavily inspired by the Carters. Thier music, resonant with the "Poor Valley sound," has accrued a large and devoted audience.

Donnie Weaver – leader, dreamer, musician, friend – has built a proud legacy for his family – his wife, Linda DeBusk Weaver; Burton and Elizabeth DeBusk; and his children, Donald Jr., Adam Wade, and Johanna. He has also left an everlasting memory for us in the autoharp community. His enthusiasm, friendliness and musicianship have filled many bright days. We will sorely miss him.

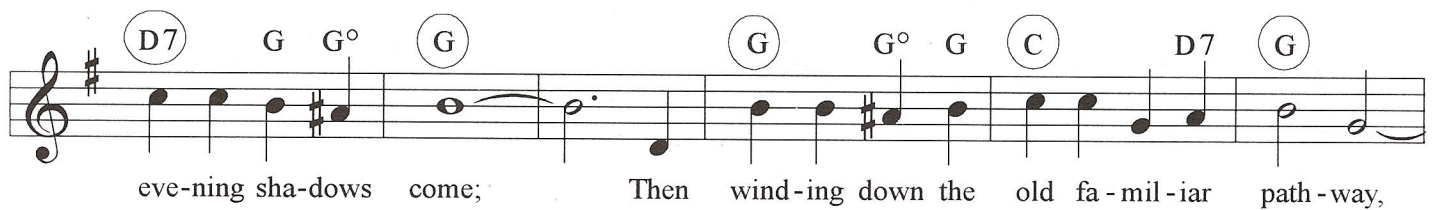


# Supper Time

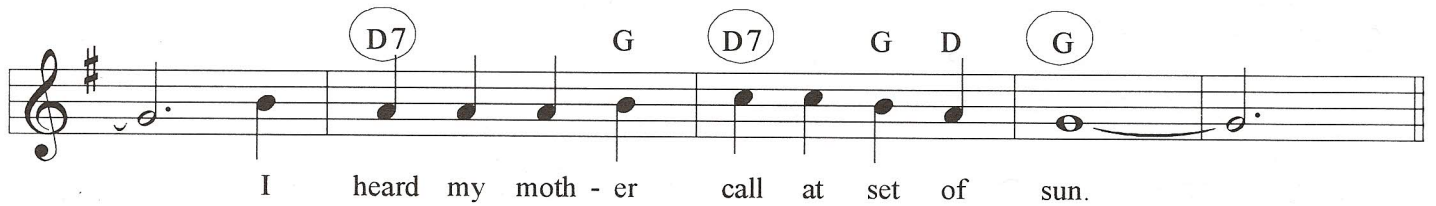
Words and music by Ira F. Stamphill



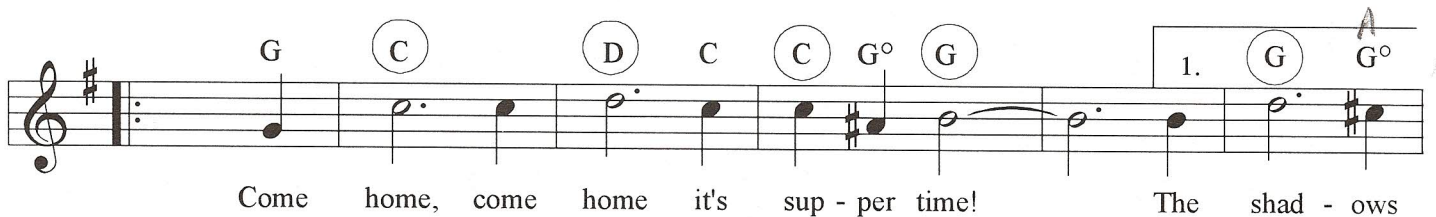
Man - y years a - go in days of child - hood I used to play 'til



eve-ning sha-dows come; Then wind-ing down the old fa-mil-iar path-way,



I heard my moth - er call at set of sun.



Come home, come home it's sup - per time! The shad - ows



length-en fast; We're go - ing home at last.

2.

One day beside her bedside I was kneeling,  
And angel wings were winnowing the air;  
She heard the call for supper time in heaven,  
And now I know she's waiting for me there.

3.

In visions now I see her standing yonder,  
and her familiar voice I hear once more;  
The banquet table's ready up in heaven,  
It's supper time upon the golden shore.

# Under the Double Eagle

Josef Franz Wagner, 1856-1908

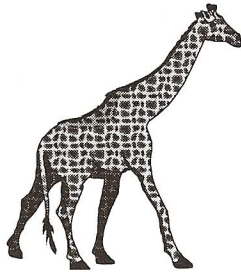
D G A7 D / / / A7 D G D / A7  
 / / D A7 / D / / G A7  
 D / / / A7 D G D / A7  
 / / D A7 / D *1. Fine*

2.  
 D D7 G C G /  
 G C G / C G C G / /  
 / / / C G / /  
 D7 / C D7 C D7 / /  
 / C D7 / C D7  
 G / C G C G / /

The musical score is arranged for autoharp and consists of three staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#), indicating the key of G major. The first staff contains a melody with notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The second staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The third staff continues the melody with notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Chord symbols are placed below the notes: /, /, C, G, /, G7, C, /, D7, C, /, D7, C, /, G, /, D7, G, D7, G, A7. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the instruction "D. C. al Fine".

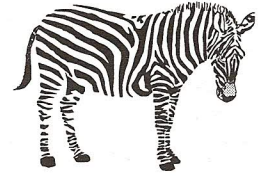
Arranged for autoharp by Ivan Stiles. ©1999, Ivan Stiles. All rights reserved. Used by permission.





# Out of $\wedge$ into Africa

by Verla Boyd



For eight months, we planned our trip to Africa. We started by just talking about it, then on to the purchase of the airplane tickets, next came the series of inoculation shots and pills. Finally the paaaaaaaaacking, well you know, you have all been on long trips. There were two things that I dreaded from the very beginning: 1. getting through customs and 2. not being able to play my autoharp for three weeks. We were taking a lot of surgical instruments and a lot of valuable tools and parts for broken tools already there. I was afraid of large duty fees on these items and not being able to get them to the hospital. I also knew that we were going to be visiting mission churches and I really wanted to participate with my autoharp. I had prayed about these before leaving and God was gracious and good – and was one step ahead of me. When we went through customs in Nairobi, we were asked what we were carrying into the country and we told them about the surgical supplies. “Welcome to Kenya and have a good visit” was the response. I started to say, “Don’t you want to see?”, but thought otherwise.

We stayed in Nairobi a couple of days to rest, buy food supplies and visit the city. Nairobi, like any other big city, has its share of poverty and needs. We then headed west about 100 miles – that took four to five hours on some really bad dirt roads – to Tenwek Mission Hospital near Bomet. Jim and I, with our son, Dale, were traveling with a couple from our church. Their daughter and son-in-law and grandchildren are short-term missionaries working with the hospital. They met us at the airport and drove for us. For much of the trip, the roads were either a path, a gully or ruts and rocks.

Shortly after arriving, I visited the school the missionary children attend.

Looking around, I saw no piano. Then something just came over me and I asked the teacher, Miss Parks, about music classes and if there was an autoharp. She said yes, but she didn’t know how to use it. She retrieved it and we blew the dust off the case. I could hardly wait to see what was inside. What would I find, an Orthey, Fladmark, Lumbert, Oscar Schmidt? (I get a little excited at times.) Well, what I found was a black 15 chord O.S. model 15BB, and one plastic thumb pick.

I sat down to play and was surprised that it was in tune enough that Miss Parks recognized the melody I was playing. She then asked if I would have music classes with the children while we were there. I tuned the autoharp to a chromatic scale played on a guitar by the son of this missionary couple. Not expecting to play in Africa, I had no music with me. I took the ’harp back to where we were staying and closed my eyes and visualized Bonnie Phipps’ beginning autoharp book and Les Gustafson-Zook’s new CD and chose some fun songs that I thought they would like to learn if they didn’t already know them. We made a skipping game out of *Skip To My Lou*, creating our own verses as well; *She’ll Be Coming Around the Mountain*, with more creative verses, *Turkey In the Straw*, and others. We played musical chairs and London Bridge. I taught them a traditional thanksgiving song that has been in my family for at least six generations. We sang some Gospel choruses as well. It was so much fun watching them sing and laugh. The day we left, they gave me thank-you notes that they had made. I should have given them thank-you notes because it was such an addition to the trip.

I was told about one of the mis-

sionary nurses who had an autoharp, so I went to visit her. She had a 21 chord O.S. that she uses for singing in her Bible study group. I played hers and she said she had never seen one played cradled in the arms and had never heard melody played on an autoharp. I told her I would send her a book so she could learn to play melody.

I was asked to play for the hospital mission church on Sunday. I said to Jim, my husband, “I sure wish I had two finger picks.” He responded by asking, “For which two fingers?” I held them up and he said, “I’ll be back.” He left, and came back with two perfect-fitting picks that he had made out of sheet metal with a pair of tin snips in one of the missionary’s workshop. It gave an interesting sound to that old ’harp, as well as some volume. I played a medley of hymns that I had played for our church two weeks earlier. Following the services, another missionary nurse came up and said she had an autoharp that she used for singing in her Bible study group, but didn’t know it could play melody and had not seen it played upright. Perhaps this opened up a whole new playing concept for these two nurses, which they may develop together.. There were kind compliments and questions about the autoharp throughout the week.

While we were in Africa, Jim worked on broken tools and did some repairs for the hospital. We were given a tour of the hospital and arrangements were made for me to observe surgery, and go out and help with a prenatal clinic at a Kipsige village. I visited the children that were patients in the hospital and would sit with them, communicating with them through smiles and touches. I saw surgeries, illness and injuries that are not



common here in the states. We went on three safari drives and saw hundreds of animals in their natural habitat. We got lost on the Serengeti plains, got stuck in mud going to a bamboo forest and visited missionaries and their mission churches in remote areas. We experienced a goat roast with a Maasai tribe and listened to a lion roar in the background during prayer. He was sure welcome to my goat soup. And I knew just how many steps it was going to take me to get inside to safety if the roars got any closer.

There was beauty everywhere we looked. The plains, the mountains, the sunsets were all as beautiful and refreshing as the smiles of the Kenyan people. The fellowship with the missionaries was just precious. They were as much of a blessing to us as we hope we were to them. I certainly have a renewed respect and appreciation for those willing to take the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the world as Jesus commanded.

This was certainly an incredible trip and I am grateful for the opportunity to have gone – and the autoharp was just the icing on top. The mountains of pictures will never tell the whole story. You just have to be there to see, hear, feel, taste and smell Africa.

*Verla Boyd*

After receiving Verla's story of her African adventures, I was reminded of an email note I received from Jolene Krausher some time ago. In it, she told of finding reference to the "harepa" while thumbing through the book "World Music – The Rough Guide." From there, the note went to Kelly Williams who supplied two web sites for possible searches. I wrote to both and what follows is I what learned from these web addresses —

It seems that in the nineteenth century, Lutheran missionaries brought their German autoharps with them to South Africa. The autoharp was introduced to a particular part of South Africa, that of the Pedi (or Northern Sotho) people who live in what is now called Northern Province,

north of Pretoria, centered on Pietersburg.

The Pedi call the autoharp "harepa." They usually remove the chord bars, retune the strings to their own near-equi-spaced pentatonic tuning, and play it by plucking the strings with the thumb and forefinger of both hands. Occasionally they will make the instrument for themselves, but mostly they prefer to buy it and immediately remove the chord bars. It was once highly popular among the Pedi, but as with most solo instruments in South Africa that do not have the religious, social or political connections that would guarantee their continued use, it is now hard to find, and most of the players are old.

It is played, like most other solo instruments, in an ostinato (a melody phrase repeated over and over in the same tone) style, usually to accompany the player's voice with perhaps one or two others to sing the answer-

ing parts. The songs are very often sad, but dance music was also played. Much of the repertoire was taken from the original Pedi instrument, the "dipela", a member of the mbira or plucked lamelophone family, which is now even more scarce than the harepa.

*Mary Ann*



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## AQ

## Postscripts

FROM HARPLAND  
by Mary Umbarger

If you have news you would like to share with your 'harper friends, send it to Mary Umbarger, 114 Umbarger Road, Harmony, North Carolina 28634-9300. Or you can email Mary at: [Maryonharp@YadTel.net](mailto:Maryonharp@YadTel.net)

Dut-ta-da-da-Dut-ta-da, Dut-ta-da-da-da-Dut-ta-da!  
Did you hear that? It was the sound of Summer retreating to stage right and Fall, in full color, moving in – stage left!!! Here we stand at attention with autoharps hugged to our bosoms, just waiting – Hear the command? “ATEASE” (ya'al). Let's just relax and play music.

Seems like that some folks have spent most of the summer at one festival or another (this is garnered from Cyberplucker documents). I do believe that **Stew Schneider, Mike Herr, Cindy Harris, and Clarence and Bobbie Roberts** have been to one every weekend since Memorial Day!! (Envy, envy, envy!)

♫. **Lyn Kally** (Australia) and **Kerry Taylor** (New Zealand), were married aboard the M.V. Fiesta, near the mouth of the Tamaki River, Auckland, on FRIDAY 13TH (!!!) of August. By the time you read this, they will have had a wonderful wedding party (October 30) in Brisbane. I do hope the ship had a chorus of autoharps to play wedding music for them! Much joy and happiness!

♫. **Pete Daigle** has a new grandson. He was born on August 24. Remember, Pete, he gets his first autoharp for Christmas this year, just to be sure his addiction starts early. Congratulations!

♫. **Karen Daniels** (International Autoharp Champion 1997) was in an auto accident recently. She had injuries to her head and arm, other cuts and bruises. She is healing nicely, but her arm will need reconstructive surgery in a few months. In a recent posting Karen says, with much relief, “I can still play the autoharp!” Hang in there, Karen.

♫. **Karen Daniels** does more than play a sweet autoharp! Last year she began work with the school system in Mountain View, Arkansas, to start a folk music program offering instruction in folk instruments, which includes the autoharp. Karen managed to get autoharps donated and husband, **Chuck**, repaired them. The children did not have the financial means to buy one of their own. Karen says that the enthusiasm of the students was high and that teaching them was a joy. This program has been included this year also in the public schools in Mountain View. The governor, who is a “music buff” himself, visited the schools recently and I understand they had a special program for him.

♫. Does this give you any ideas for your area? You may already be exposing your children to autoharp in school. If so, let me know specifics and we can share them in this column. Also, if you have any 'harps you could donate to Karen, I'm sure she still needs some.

♫. **Carol Stober** has a new music book out titled “Cowboy Songs For Autoharp”. It contains not only lots of old and new cowboy songs, but also poetry and anecdotes, plus some really neat artwork.

♫. **Cindy Harris** that **Gil Palley** was featured in the magazine “Medical Economics” an article titled “Doctor Who Goes the Extra Mile.” It reported on Gil's use of juggling and music (autoharp, of course) in the ER to help patients relax.

♫. AUTOHARP SIGHTINGS:

ON THE ROAD – **Judy Austin** caught **June Carter Cash** at her concert in Atlanta with autoharp ringing; TNN's special “Grassroots to Bluegrass” featured **Patsy Stoneman, Janette Carter, Mike Seeger, Bill Clifton** and **Little Roy Lewis** playing autoharp. There may have been more, but these are the ones that were reported to us from those ‘fortunates’ that watched. **Jean Ritchie** played her autoharp at the National City Kentucky Music Weekend.

UNUSUAL VENUES:

An autoharp and trombone playing back-up to the group “They Might BE Giants” on Nightline Primetime – Autoharp in the song *A Place Called Tomorrow Land*, in the movie “A Night to Remember” –

**Collin Raye** used an autoharp prominently in “Love Remains.”

NOT-SO-UNUSUAL VENUES:

**Cyberpluckers** on stage at Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering playing their autoharps and anybody's guess what else, led by the infamous **Nadine Stah White** and organized by (?) **Cybermama Cathy Britell!!**

Keep in tune and play sweet music, for it is:

*The speech of angels* – “Music is well said to be the speech of angels; in fact, nothing among the utterances allowed to man is felt to be so Divine. It brings us near to the Infinite; we look for moments across the cloudy elements into the eternal light, when song leads and inspires us. Serious nations, all nations that can listen to the mandate of nature, have prized song and music as a vehicle for worship, for prophecy and for whatsoever in them was Divine. – *Carlyle*

More of this summer's contest winners:

Samfest in Houston:

1st Place, **Glenn Flesher**

2nd Place, **Mary Elford**

3rd Place, **Hollis Wright**

Galax Old Time Fiddlers Convention:

1st Place, **John Hollandsworth**

2nd Place, **Dave Kilby**

3rd Place, **Glenna Anderson**

Fries, Virginia Fiddler's Convention

1st Place, **JoAnn Redd**

2nd Place, **Evelyn Farmer**

3rd Place, **Lou Beasley**

Fiddlers Convention, Marion, Virginia:

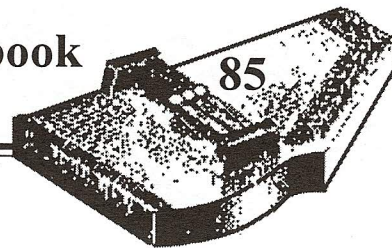
1st Place, **JoAnn Redd**

2nd Place, **Bobbi Roberts**

3rd Place, **Mary Umbarger**

CONGRATULATIONS TO ONE AND ALL !!!

The Marion, Virginia festival is a first time event. Bobbi reports that, when she went on stage to perform, Mary thanked the promoters for including autoharp and remarked that she hoped the music was pleasant to their ears. Bobbi reminded us that we have to keep plugging away for festivals to include autoharp in their program. (Editor: *Way to go, girls!!!*)



## If You Were The Only Girl In The World (3) F

▼  
 / F / / / D7 / / G7 / [ / ] / /  
 If you were the on - ly girl in the world

G7 C7 [ / / ] / / / F // C7 //  
 And I were the on - ly boy,

F / [ / / ] / / [ / / ] Gm / / / / /  
 No - thing else would mat - ter in the world to - day,

C7 / [ / / ] C / [ / / ] F / / / /  
 We could go on lo - ving in the same old way.

F // [ / / ] D7 // G7 / [ / / ] //  
 A Gar - den of E - den just made for two,

G7 C7 / [ / / ] // / F // C7 //  
 With no - thing to mar our joy.

Dm / / / / [Am / ] [ / / ] / / / /  
 I would say such won - der - ful things to you,

B<sup>b</sup> / / C7 / / [Am / ] [ / / ] / D7 /  
 There would be such won - der - ful things to do.

D7 B<sup>b</sup> / [ / / ] // / F [ / / ] D /  
 If you were the on - ly girl in the world

D7 G7 / [ / / ] C7 // F // //  
 And I were the on - ly boy.

## I Wonder What's Become Of Sally (3) G

▼  
 / G [ / / ] / / / / A7 // //  
 I won - der what's be - come of Sal - ly,

A7 D7 // // / G // //  
 That old gal of mine ?

G / [ / / ] / / / Gm D // B7 //  
 The sun - shine's miss - ing from our al - ley,

Em [ / / ] / A7 // D7 [ / / ] // //  
 Ev - ver since the day Sal - ly went a - way;

D7 [ G7 / ] / / / / [ C / ] / / //  
 No mat - ter what she is, where - ev - er she may be,

C [ E7 / ] / / / / [ A7 / ] / / D7 //  
 If no one wants her now, please send her home to me.

D7 G [ / / ] / / / / E7 // //  
 I'll al - ways wel - come back my Sal - ly,

E7 Am // D7 // G /  
 That old gal of mine.

## Moonlight Bay (2) C

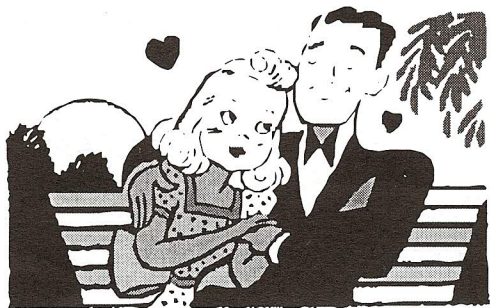
C [ / / ] / / / / / / F / C / F / C  
 We were sail - ing a - long on Moon - light Bay

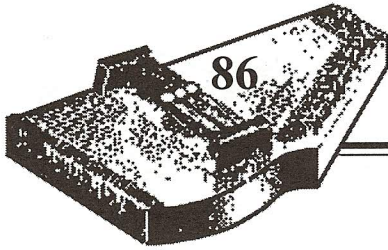
[ C / ] [ / / ] / / G7 / / / / / / C // /  
 We could hear the voi - ces ring - ing, they seemed to say,

[ C / ] [ / / ] / / / / / F / C / F / C /  
 "You have stol - en my heart, now don't go 'way;

C / G7 / / / / / / / C //  
 As we sang love's old sweet song on Moon - light Bay.

This page is perforated for your convenience.





# Autoharp Songbook

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## It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (3) C

G7 C / / F / / C / F C /  
It came up - on the mid - night clear,

C F / / D7 / / G // G7  
That glo - ri - ous song of old,

G7 C / / F / / C / F C //  
From an - gels bend - ing near the earth

C F / Dm G7 / / C // //  
To touch their harps of gold.

C E7 / / / / / Am / E Am /  
Peace on the earth, good - will to men

C G / / D7 / / G // G7 /  
From hea - ven's all gra - cious king.

G7 C / / F / / C / F C /  
The world in so - lemn still - ness lay

C F / Dm G7 / / C //  
To hear the an - gels sing.



## O, Come All Ye Faithful (2) F

F F / / / C / // F C F C7 F / C  
O come all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - umph - ant

Dm G7 / C G7 C F C F C / G7 / C // /  
O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem.

F / C7 F C7 / F / C F Dm G C / /  
Come and be - hold him, Born the King of An - gels.

F / C F C7 F / / / / C F C7 F / C  
O come let us a - dore him, O come let us a - dore him

F C7 F C G7 C7 / FGm F / C7 / F // /  
O come let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

## Jolly Old St.. Nicholas (2) C

C / / / G7 / / / Am / / / // /  
Jol - ly old Saint Nich - o - las, Lean your ear this way,

F / / / C / // G D7 G C G // /  
Don't you tell a sin - gle soul what I'm going to say.

C / / / G / // Am / / / Em // /  
Christ - mas Eve is com - ing soon, Now you dear old man,

F / / / C / // G C G C // /  
Whis - per what you'll bring to me, tell me if you can.

When the clock is striking twelve, when I'm fast asleep,  
Down the chimney broad and black, with your pack you'll  
creep.

All the stockings you will find, hanging in a row,  
Mine will be the shortest one, you'll be sure to know.

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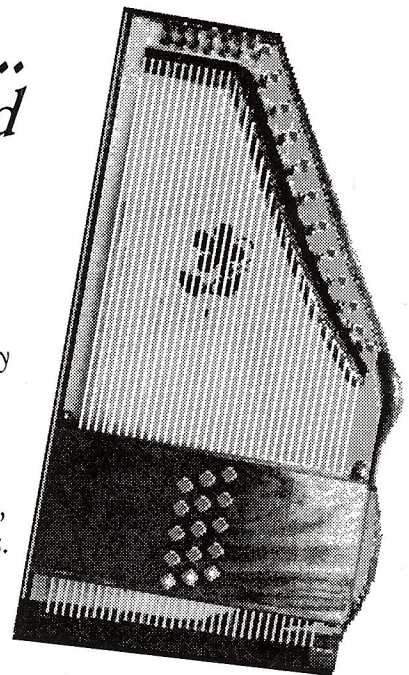
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