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Angy Palumbo: The pen name that was real – Further glimpses

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1903 - The Oldest Fretted Instrument Magazine In The World - 2016



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BANJO

MANDOLIN

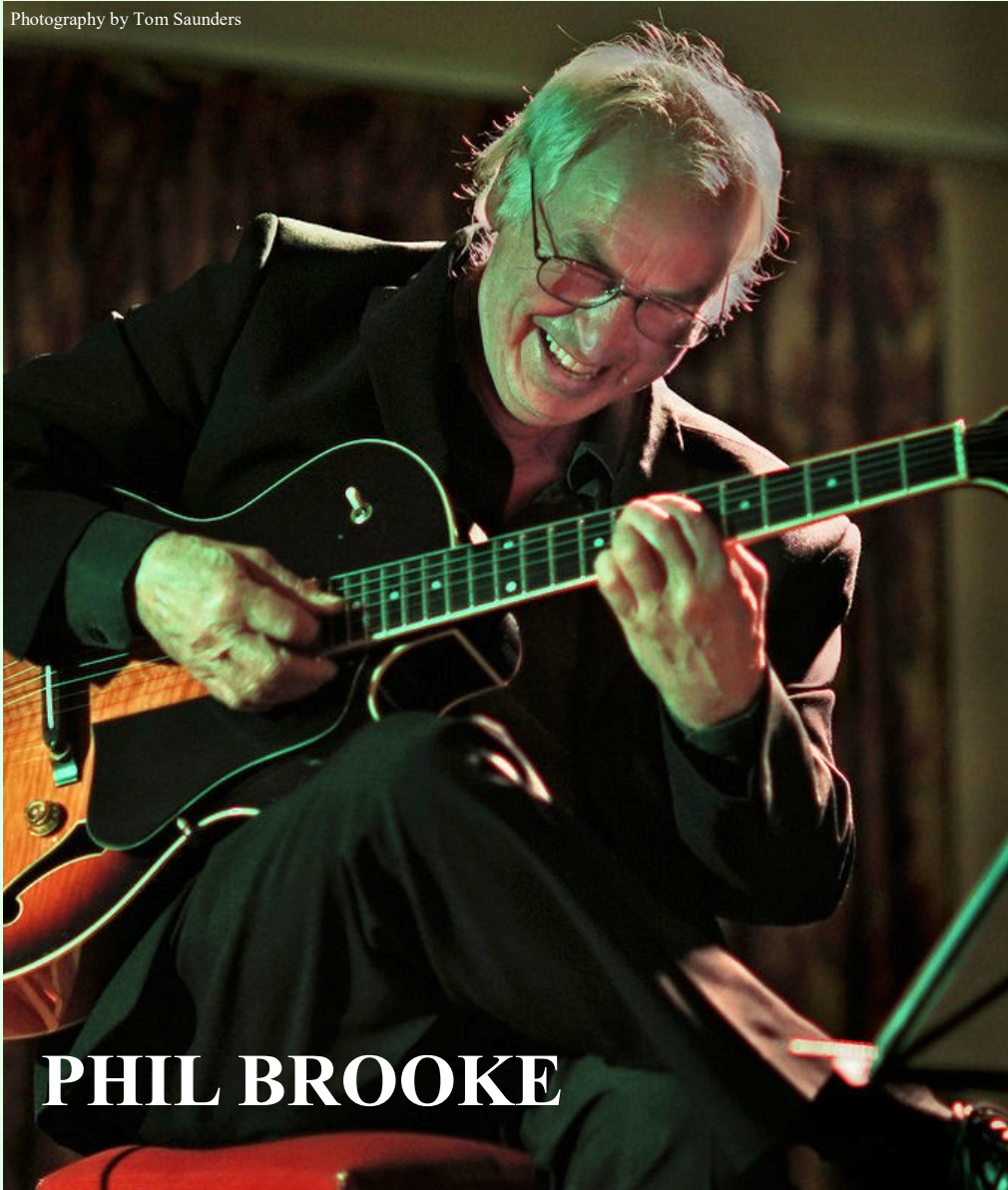
GUITAR

No. 884

Winter 2016

£5.00

Photography by Tom Saunders



PHIL BROOKE

Music in this issue

Guitar: Prelude 2 (*Peter Pope*); **Bluegrass Mandolin:** Bill Cheatham (*arr. John Baldry*);
Banjo: The A 1 Sand Dance (*George Eaton*); **Steel Guitar:** Ula No Weo (*arr. Maurice Hipkiss*);
Mandolin and Guitar: La Tourterelle (*Traditional*)

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1903

Hands Across the Sea

2016

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No. 884	Winter 2016
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May I and all the Writers and Team who make 'B.M.G.' possible, Wish All Our Readers a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

My profound apologies for the lateness of this issue, I began November with a particularly nasty bout of flu, quickly followed by a very unpleasant virus. I do not remember very much about November at all, apart from spending my waking hours wandering around as if sleep walking. I finally started work on BMG well into December. I am pleased to report that I am now fully recovered.

This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the passing of our founder Clifford Essex, consequently I have deliberately included much nostalgia in this issue. He was a great man indeed, and I have reprinted a tribute to him by A. P. Sharpe originally published in the March 1946 edition of BMG. While typing the contents it became very clear to me that Clifford Essex was undoubtedly AP's mentor, just as AP was mine.

Our cover picture is of jazz guitarist Phil Brooke. I had the pleasure of attending one of his concerts during the summer. He is, without doubt, one of the finest jazz guitarists I have ever encountered, and believe me, I have seen a few. If ever you see Phil advertised in your area be sure to go and see him, he is a very remarkable player.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



This instalment continues my detailing of the activities of **Bill**

Brown, a Knoxville, Tennessee based banjoist, ‘roots music’ researcher, and creator of websites devoted to bluegrass music. With Kentucky banjo maker **Arthur Hatfield**, Brown has also effected the restoration or repurposing of at least fifteen old banjos manufactured by **Gibson/Kalamazoo**, as well as the Asian manufacturers **Gold Star** (Saga) and **Aria**.

As related in Part One, Brown, who retired from teaching and administrative work three-and-a-half years ago, forwards banjos he wishes to have repurposed to **Hatfield**, the 66 years old proprietor of **Hatfield Banjos** (hatfieldbanjos.com), for the actual conversion work. Hatfield’s banjo workshop is located in the **west-central Kentucky countryside** approximately 203 miles northwest of Knoxville. During a trip to Nashville and neighbouring south-central

Kentucky in early June 2016, I had hoped to visit Arthur Hatfield ‘in the field’, but a bronchitis flare-up prevented that. In lieu of a personal visit, I was able to glean good information on Hatfield and his banjo production from a radio interview conducted with Hatfield in 2010 by **former BBC employee Rachel Hopkin**. UK born Hopkin worked for the BBC in London and Cardiff before moving to the U.S. to study American folklore, first at Western Kentucky University (a mere 24 miles southwest of Hatfield’s workshop), then Ohio State University, where she is currently reading for a PhD in Folklore. While at WKU, Hopkin produced a series of pieces about local folk life for WKU’s public radio FM-station, including ‘Banjo Maker Arthur Hatfield’, which was broadcast on 7th October 2011. Posted at wkyufm.org/post/banjo-maker-arthur-hatfield#stream/0. Hatfield related to Hopkin that his banjo making workshop is

next door to the house-trailer in which he and his family currently reside. This on the ‘old home place’, a ninety-acre family farm, (originally without running water or electricity), on which he was raised, and is located on the north side of Burton Ridge Road, south of the crossroads of Rocky Hill in rural western Barren County, Kentucky.



When asked about her impressions of driving out to Rocky Hill to interview Hatfield, Hopkin recalled in a 17th July 2016 e-mail: “All of south-central Kentucky is utterly beautiful and strangely similar in topography to where I’m from in the UK, which is the Kent and Sussex border region, — the same green rolling hills”. Regarding her memories of Hatfield, Rachel recalled: “Arthur was friendly and kind to an interviewer who knew so little about his craft. He struck me as unassuming and perhaps seemed somewhat bemused to be the focus of so much attention from **Amanda Hardeman** [Rachel’s photographer] and I showing up and spending all this time with him. He definitely knew his stuff both in terms of music and the instrument making, and took such care with the craft”.



Arthur Hatfield in his Workshop

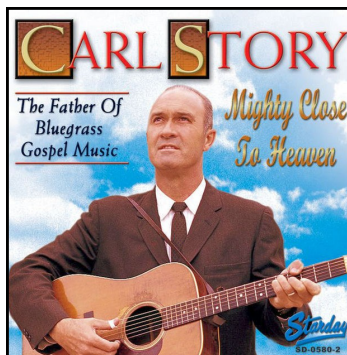


Rachel Hopkin with Arthur Hatfield

In his interview, Hatfield relayed to Hopkin that his father played banjo in the frailing/clawhammer style, which he wanted his son to learn, but Hatfield was enamoured with the 'three finger' banjo-picking style then being spotlighted by Earl Scruggs on 1950s 'Grand Ole Opry' radio-broadcasts, which the Hatfield family listened to on Saturday nights in their TV-less household. (The first banjo tune Hatfield learned was 'Cripple Creek'.) Hatfield began experimenting with banjo building as a teenager, fashioning his first banjo out of an automobile brake-drum (the cast-iron drum attached to a wheel-hub) and a neck made from an old piece of oak. By the 1980s, he was making two or three banjos a year.

As a youth, Hatfield also learned to play the upright bass and mandolin. After performing as a bassist with the **Roane County Boys**, (a bluegrass quintet including his uncle), he played mandolin in a mandolin/banjo duo called **The New Sounds of Bluegrass** with a friend. The duo played for 'ice-cream suppers', family reunions, and various gatherings in the Rocky Hill area. Hatfield received a break when he landed a gig playing mandolin with multi-instrumentalist **Carl Story** (1916-1995) and **His Rambling Mountaineers** from 1974-75.

Multi-instrumentalist Story, with his many religious-themed recordings, has been called the 'father of bluegrass gospel music'. Hatfield recalled being initially fascinated with Story's constant touring, but he quickly grew tired of life on the road.



<http://countrydiscography2.blogspot.com/2013/11/carl-story.html>

He left Story to pursue cabinetry-work, including trim-work and cabinet building in homes for a livelihood. Around 2001, Hatfield realized he was getting too old to be constantly crawling around houses with his cabinetry work, so he decided to devote himself full-time to **banjo-making, repairing, and refashioning/repurposing**, which led him to establish his Barren County workshop. Hatfield does continue to perform in his spare time, in the bluegrass quartet **Buck Creek**, formed in 1994; Hopkin, having the chance to hear the group, described them as "great fun".

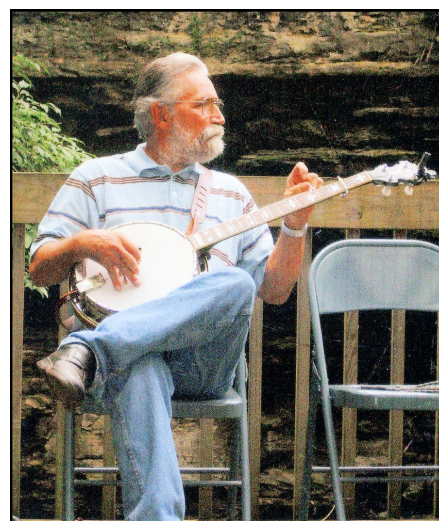


Arthur Hatfield (left) with Buck Creek

During a 23rd February 2016 broadcast of WKU's 'Main Street' television program, Hatfield related that the first professional banjoist to play one of his banjos was **Dale Perry** (who was then playing and singing with Doyle Lawson in the bluegrass gospel-oriented sextet **Quicksilver**). Perry took home one of Hatfield's banjos in 2002, after meeting him at a music festival in the Great Smoky Mountains. Hatfield remarked: "I was more happy when he took one of my banjos to play than anybody". The WKU program, 'Arthur Hatfield and Hatfield Banjos' is posted at: [youtube.com/watch?v=8IOU7yqHlsM&feature=share](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IOU7yqHlsM&feature=share)

In an e-mail of 22nd July 2016, **Amanda Hardeman**, now State Folklorist with the Florida Folklife Program, kindly supplied me with internet links and photographs she took during Rachel Hopkins' 16th September 2010 interview with Arthur Hatfield, as well as a 2nd October 2010 performance of Hatfield's bluegrass quintet **Buck Creek**.

Next issue: Detailed information about a few of Bill Brown / Arthur Hatfield's specific restoration projects.



Arthur Hatfield

(From the Library Special Collections, Western Kentucky University)



In Winter 2009 and Spring

2010, *BMG* published two articles about a little-known composer of mandolin and guitar pieces, Angy Palumbo. A few decades earlier, one of these compositions, 'Petite Bolero', had been discovered by the novelist and amateur mandolinist Louis de Bernières in a volume of mandolin pieces, and he included Palumbo's name in his *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*. A number of other compositions by Palumbo have been published by Clifford Essex and are listed in the British Library online catalogue: 'Take It Easy' (1939), 'Segoviana' (1939), 'Marcietta Espagnol' (1965), 'Penelope' (1965), 'Party Waltz' (1966), 'Carminetta' (1967), 'Lazy Moments' (1967).

The composer's identity remained a mystery, though. Interestingly, several musicologists speculated that Angy Palumbo was a pen name for a composer who was unable to publish works under his own name for contractual reasons. However, in the two *BMG* articles I was able to publish statements to the contrary from two former pupils of Palumbo's as well as to cite a number of old *BMG* clippings about Palumbo (including pieces of his music): Angy Palumbo was indeed the name of a real person, a composer, musician and music teacher, living at 10 Navarino Road, Hackney, London. Among other things, he

performed with Troise and his Mandoliers.

In later years, in response to these articles, I have been contacted by Angy Palumbo's two granddaughters Valerie Poulter and Penny (Penelope) Goater and by his sister's grandson David Romano. Based on information generously provided by them, I now see myself in a position to present a somewhat richer picture of the composer.

David Romano has kindly provided me with the results of his genealogical mappings of the Palumbo family history. It should be noted that the results so far contain some contradictory issues and the full picture is still somewhat obscure. But it seems probable that Giovanni (John) Angelo Palumbo was born in London on 28 July 1883. (Later on in life, however, his birthdate was given as 22 July 1884.)

His parents Antonio Palumbo, a fruiterer, and Trofimena Palumbo (formerly Apicella) lived at 21 Vine Street, Westminster. Not many years earlier, the family had arrived in England from Italy. One of Angelo's several siblings, his elder sister Anna, was born in 1876 in Minori, a small and impoverished fishing village on the Sorrento peninsula, province of Salerno, south of Naples.

Angelo attended Penton Grove School (re-named White Lion Street School in 1899). On 25 June 1910, in Saint Jude's Church, Grays Inn Road, he married Florence Emily Hale

and moved in with her at 340 Grays Inn Road. At the time, he is listed as a violinist.

Florence Emily passed away on 24 January 1954, and Angelo on 21 October 1960. They had two daughters: Olive Laura Florence, born in 1913, and Joan Yolanda, born in 1921.

Olive was a violinist and singer. In 1935 she married Arthur Beale, a clergyman who was blinded in one eye at Dunkirk. He wrote the lyrics to one piece by Angy Palumbo, 'It's up to you', which was published by Bosworth in 1940. Their daughter Valerie Poulter has also been working in music.

Yolanda was a pianist and singer. Her daughter Penny Goater wrote to me: "I am the granddaughter of Angelo Palumbo and the 'Penelope' of his music composition!"

Valerie Poulter has informed me that as a result of a car accident, Angy Palumbo had one leg shorter than the other. His knee-cap was badly damaged and the leg mangled badly. Valerie also has related a few further glimpses of Angy Palumbo told to her by her mother:

"She always said that her father could play any instrument he found but that her mother forbade him to try the bagpipes! She also said that her first memory was of Armistice night in 1918 when my grandfather was playing in a band (afraid I don't know which one) at a very fashionable restaurant in Piccadilly, the Long Bar of the Criterion Hotel, known as the 'Cri'; he took her along because

it was such a special night. At the beginning of the evening a silver salver was put on the edge of the stage in front of the band which, by the end of the evening, was piled high with £5.00 notes – worth a great deal in 1918.

He was very successful, ‘fixing’ [placing] bands and orchestras in hotels, (I believe he ‘fixed’ the Savoy Orpheans) and he played with Troise and his Mandoliers. My mother also said that at one time he had played with Stéphane Grappelli. He played in hotels and restaurants and provided musicians for dances in many private houses all over the West End of London between the wars. The car accident which so damaged his leg really put paid to his career – I think he was unable to work for two years and of course that was a disaster financially. Oh, — and my mother also said that he had been taught to play the violin by John Barbirolli’s father! He and his wife and Yolanda were interned on the Isle of Man at the start of the war as enemy aliens; he always said it had given him lots of work from the contacts he made there!”

I am grateful to Valerie Poulter, Penny Goater and David Romano for sharing their family history and for making it possible for *BMG* readers to get a somewhat closer picture of Angy Palumbo – the pen name that was real.



This photograph shows Angelo Palumbo seated in the middle, with his wife on his left, and his sister Anna on his right. It was probably taken on his fiftieth birthday.

BMG TAPE CLUB

Hawaiian Guitar Section by John Marsden

My good friend Alan Morgan in Australia has for many years researched rare film and video clips of Hawaiian (and other) musicians. He has most generously put together a two-DVD compilation for Tape Club members. This is an astonishing opportunity to see performers ranging from Sol Hoopii, Andy Iona, Roland Peachey and Harry Brooker to Herb Remington, Alvino Rey, Buddy Merrill and Buddy Emmons. Who would have imagined, even a few years ago, that such treasures would become available? The

club owes Alan its warmest thanks.

Thanks also to Tony Docherty for another of his entertaining home-recorded CDs, with its mixture of unusual material, all very well arranged and played.

A small correction should be made to a printing error in the Autumn notes - Bern (not ‘Ber’) Causley. Bern and his brother Ken pioneered the pedal steel in this country with their ‘Chordmaster’, an instrument documented in *BMG*, July 1949 and April 1974.

Ending on a sad note, our condolences go to Pete Lake (London) on the loss of his beloved wife, Margaret, on 1st September, following a heart attack. Margaret had suffered several health issues for some time. Although not a Club member, Pete has sent us numerous tapes, CDs and a DVD, and his playing, often reminiscent of the late, great Wout Steenhuis, is always much appreciated by our membership.

A Thought For Christmas

*A bad attitude is like
a flat tyre.*

*You can't go
anywhere until you
change it.*





Bluegrass Banjo: 24 by David Cotton

Developing Right Hand Technique

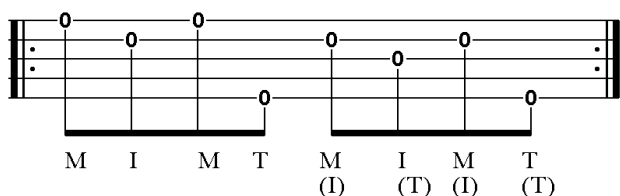
The art of great bluegrass playing lies more in the right hand than in the left. Up to an intermediate stage, once you have mastered hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides and some basic chord shapes, the left hand will pretty much take care of itself. The drive and syncopation come from the right hand and it's really important to be able to move with ease from any string to another and to be able to emphasise any note in a right hand roll (repeated pattern). A melody note can fall on any beat and the listener wants to hear a melody plucked out from a flurry of notes. In this issue, let's concentrate on developing your right hand technique and next time we'll move on to a more complex tune which requires a strong right hand.

The 16 patterns which follow are all based on open strings. Practise them first very slowly and fluidly, using only open strings, and picking out each note clearly. Then try them again, still slowly, emphasising each note in turn throughout a pattern, or the first in each group of four, then the second note in each group and so on, until you are confident that you can add weight to any note at will. Then try them a little faster, at first playing each note with equal weight and then emphasise selected notes in each roll. Finally, when you can do this at speed, repeat each pattern whilst changing the chord with your left hand, then change chords midway through a bar.

If you practise this diligently, you'll be astonished at what you can achieve when you add more complexity in the left hand. You might like to record yourself playing, and listen carefully to test that you are genuinely giving emphasis to certain notes in a roll.

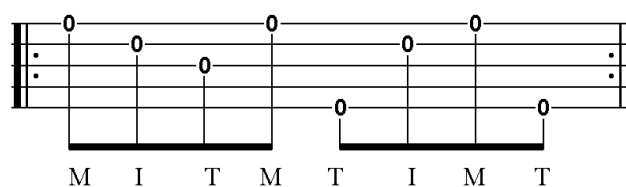
If any of our readers who are classic banjo players have strayed in here, you are very welcome, and you will find right hand patterns that serve you well in your own playing.

1.



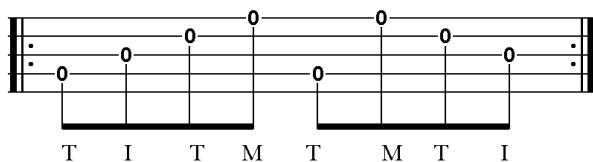
Middle finger drops to second string

2.



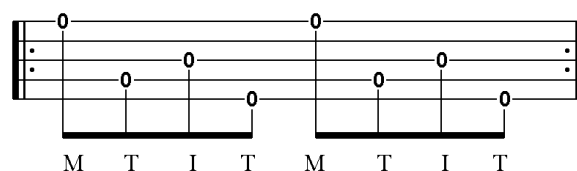
Mixed pattern—it's less usual to play backward rolls (descending arpeggios) than forward rolls, yet they can be strikingly effective.

3.



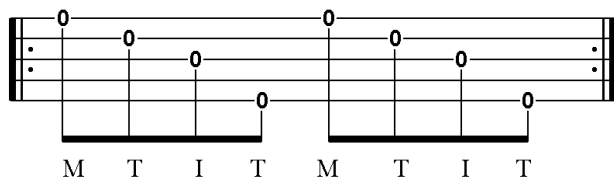
Thumb crosses from 4th to 2nd string on both ascending and descending roll.

4.

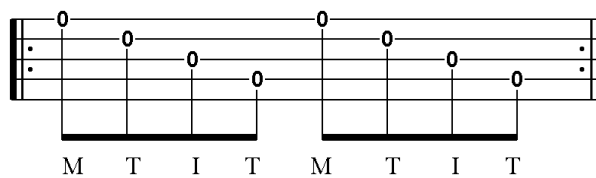


Nothing too difficult here, but an unusual pattern. How many new patterns can you discover?

5.



6.



Backward rolls, requiring your thumb to go over to the 2nd string then to the 5th.



FROM A BATH CHAIR

by Richard Ineson

The sad news has just reached me that Gordon Dando, the well known Bath

banjo player and antique dealer, has died at the age of 94. Gordon was a lifelong supporter of the banjo over many years and attended and played at, the Backwell Banjo Rallies up to a couple of years ago.

In his real life Gordon was a well respected antique dealer, his business, from which he retired in 1993, being founded in Midsomer Norton, in 1915.



Gordon Dando

Gordon served in His Majesty's Forces during the 2nd World War as a radio operator, and skills learned at this time were turned to use in his banjo activities when he was put in charge of the B.M.G. embryo Tape Club where he was dubbed the 'Tapeworm' by Tarrant Bailey Senior.

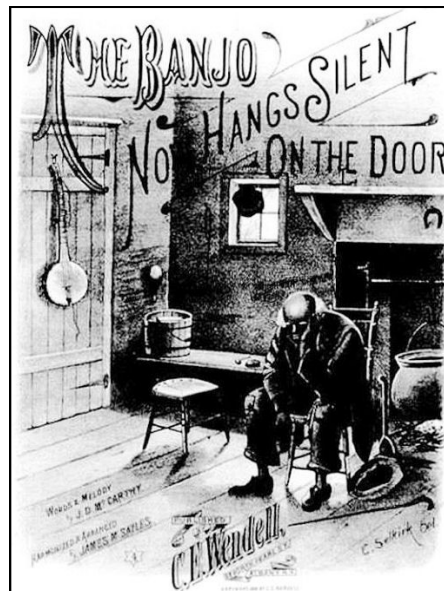
Gordon took banjo lessons from the Tarrant Baileys, and was a great friend of the late Bill Ball, a Bristol banjoist with whom he played over many years.

Amongst his other interests was miniature railways, and he had built an extensive layout in his garden, often inviting fellow rail and banjo enthusiasts to share a day controlling the engines.

A keen collector of banjos and other fretted instruments, he owned one of Eddie Lang's

guitars with which he often used to accompany the banjo playing at Backwell. At these events he also played his own arrangements of popular songs, with his long-time playing partner Terry Woodgate.

Gordon was a very likeable, kind, and affable character who loved the banjo. My main memories of Gordon are of seeing him at Backwell relating a selection from his endless fund of jokes and stories to a crowd of banjo enthusiasts before taking the stage. A true legend of the banjo. R.I.P.



Another year is drawing to a close, the customary 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness' is upon us and my wife's thoughts are turning to the controls of the central heating system, in particular, the 'on' switch. Meanwhile, my thoughts are concentrated on other things, mainly involving the world of the fretted instruments. Last month my wife and I were fortunate enough to have presented to us two tickets for a performance of the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain, in Reading, which we much enjoyed.

I was surprised to hear that this Orchestra has been performing together for thirty one years, and I well remember my wife and I seeing them for the first time, which must have been some twenty or so, years ago, when we were all a lot younger.

I am sure that their public performances have done much to popularise the ukulele in recent times, every town seems to have a ukulele club and the instrument is enjoying a remarkable revival in its fortunes.

The UOOGB has an extensive and eclectic repertoire, Kate Bush's 'Wuthering Heights', The Shadow's 'Wonderful Land', The music from 'Dick Barton, Special Agent' otherwise known as 'The Devil's Gallop', David Bowie's 'Life on Mars' this song being cleverly accompanied by members of the orchestra singing other songs such as 'My Way', 'For Once in my Life', and 'Substitute'. Another amusing melange is entitled 'Fly Me off the Handel' all put over in a very relaxed style which belies the musicianship involved.

If they are down your way don't miss them, there is much to be learned from these entertaining musicians.

As a result of my meander down 'Memory Lane' in my last two Bath Chair outings, a reader (I sometimes think that I should say THE READER) has asked me if Clifford Essex had a life as a performer, before establishing his Pierrot troupe in 1891. The answer of course, is yes, and by coincidence, our editor has reprinted A.P. Sharpe's tribute to him, written in the March, 1946 issue of BMG. There, you can read more of the details, but here

I can give you an account of the play which Clifford Essex saw.

The production was a mime play starring Madame Schmidt as Pierrette, Monsieur Courtes as Pierrot, and Mademoiselle Jane May as Pierrot Jnr.

Here is how a newspaper of the time reported it: —

“The story, which is necessarily very simple, is a rather Frenchified version of the great parable, and may be told in a very few words. Pierrot the younger, keeping house with his well-to-do parents, and being an only child and spoilt, waxes fat and kicks. In fad, he runs off with a pretty washerwoman, with whom he carries on, presumably in Paris, having provided the needful funds by breaking open the parental till. When the money is exhausted, the washerwoman naturally takes up with somebody else, and the prodigal son has nothing for it but to return home in a starving condition. His mother receives him joyfully, but the elder Pierrot, being cast in a sterner mould than his Scriptural prototype, altogether refuses to kill any sort of calf, and, in fact, nearly has a fit of apoplexy on seeing his son.”



**Schmidt, Jane May & Courtes
June 1891**

Fortunately, the drums of a passing regiment are heard, and the prodigal expresses his determination to enlist in it. The patriotic resolve softens the father, and the prodigal son is understood to be forgiven as the curtain falls”.

The word ‘Pierrot’ is not a demonymic, meaning someone who lives on a pier, as has been put forward in some academic circles, but it is rather, a hypocorism, — a ‘pet’ name, ‘nickname’ or soubriquet, meaning ‘little Pierre’. The origin of the character is from the Italian, Commedia D’ Elle Arte which began in the sixteenth century.

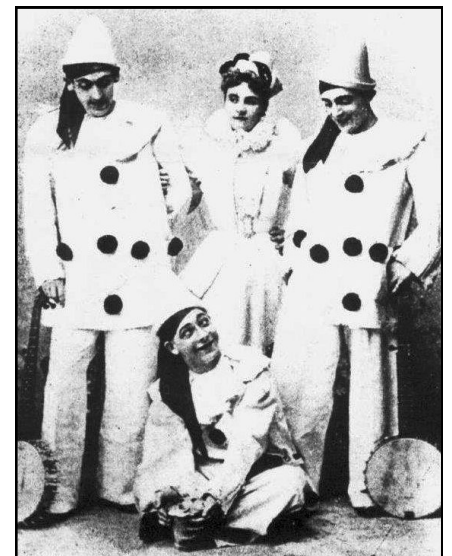
The characters of the Commedia usually represent fixed social types, — foolish old men, posturing windbags (AKA politicians), devious servants, or military officers full of false bravado. Characters such as Pantalone, the miserly Venetian merchant; Dottore Graziano, the pedant from Bologna; or Arlecchino, (Harlequin in French), the mischievous servant from Bergamo; and Pierrot the sad clown, all began as satires on Italian ‘types’ and became the archetypes of many of the favourite characters of 17th and 18th century European theatre.

The newspaper report went on:-
“In conclusion, we affirm that L’Enfant Prodigue, as given at the Prince of Wales’s Theatre, is both in conception and execution one of the most artistic and delightful works that has ever been put upon the stage. No one who has seen it will ever forget the picture of the father, mother, and son sitting at table when the curtain rises on the first act, or the touching meeting in the third act of the repentant prodigal and his mother”.

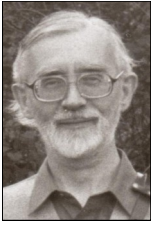
The play, presented in June, 1981, was very well received, Mademoiselle Jane May receiving particular acclaim. She obviously made an impression upon Cliff, because he proceeded to have the necessary Pierrot costumes run up for his troupe, and took instruction in the art of making and applying the necessary white-face make-up.

He must have worked fast, because the Henley Regatta takes place in the first week of July, and he had to organise the punt, the ‘clean river lad’ to punt the punt, the Japanese lanterns which adorned the punt, the lodgings, — which, in fact, were rooms in the Henley gas works offices, — and also get the band members rehearsed and ready for action. Finally, he had to fit a harmonium in the punt, for Francine Dewhurst to play the accompaniments.

Just like Tarrant Bailey and his Television appearance which I described in the last issue, Cliff pulled it all off by the skin of his teeth, and the rest, as they say, is history.



**The Clifford Essex Pierrots
about 1893.
L. to R: Will Pepper, Francine
Dewhurst, Clifford Essex, with
Jimmy Blakely seated**



Bluegrass Mandolin

by John Baldry

Bill Cheatham

A fiddle tune in A

Bill Cheatham is one of the most popular American old time fiddle tunes. There is a classic early recording by A. C. (Eck) Robertson who included it as part of his *Brilliancy Medley*, recorded in Dallas, Texas, in 1929. Tony Russell, in his definitive *Country Music Records Discography 1921-1942*, also lists an earlier unissued recording by Eck Robertson in 1922 called *Brilliancy and Cheatum*. There has been considerable variation in the spelling over the years; for example the Red Headed Fiddlers recorded it as *Cheat 'Em*, also in 1929. It's a sprightly tune with a bit of pace, and has been taken over by old time and bluegrass players as a regular jam session tune. You need to have some ideas ready if you get the nod to take a break. Here are a couple of variations to get you started.

The first break is quite close to what might be played on the fiddle. There are some quick chord changes, particularly in Part 2. In the second break I freely admit to being influenced by other tunes, including *Whiskey Before Breakfast*, *Big Sandy River*, *Stoney Creek* and *Monroe's Hornpipe*. In the second part I've deliberately utilised the fourth string, to avoid staying in the high register all the time, as many tunes in A tend to do.

I hope you have fun with this tune. You will find much further inspiration for playing *Bill Cheatham* on YouTube. Adam Steffey and Danny Roberts turn the tune upside down and inside out as they jam on their mandolins at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNzNwPDvkVg> And in contrast don't forget to listen to Eck Robertson's *Brilliancy Medley* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4i8vKiedxqU> He works *Bill Cheatham* in half way through the medley. For a discussion about all the tunes in the medley see <http://www.fiddlehangout.com/archive/33692>

Review of Mullen 'Discovery' Pedal Steel Guitar

by Maurice Hipkiss



There is not much I can say about this guitar that has not already been said, it's great!

Mullen call it their 'flight' model, hence the name 'Discovery'.

They have made this guitar as light as possible, so it is completely suitable for carrying on the airlines, which also makes it excellent as a 'Road' guitar.

They have achieved this by putting a wooden neck on it instead of a metal one, and taking the 'split' tuning mechanism from the changer unit, (not a great loss). In order to keep the tone like their 'Royal Precision' and 'G2' models Mullen have given the pickup a few more windings, therefore making it hotter. Body and Neck are made of Maple which gives really good sustain. The underneath mechanism is the same as the Royal Precision model and all the metal parts, pedals and knee levers etc., are also the same.

The quality is excellent everywhere on the guitar and the Mica finish is also very good.

This guitar is equally at home, both on the road and in the studio.

Bill Cheatham

An American old time fiddle tune

Arr. for mandolin by John Baldry

First break
Part 1

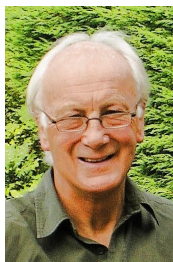
7

13

19 Second Break
Part 1

25

31



CD REVIEW - CELEDONIO ROMERO

by Allan Brace - The BMG Scout

This article, and a follow up to last quarter's BMG article on Remi

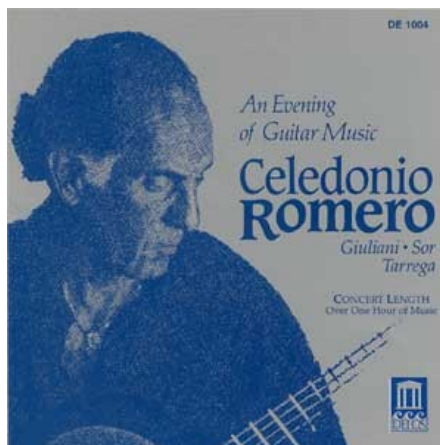
Harris's latest CD, is focussed on (a) the late Spanish guitarist Celedonio Romero, 1913 to 1996, and (b) his excellent recording in 1986 called 'An Evening of Guitar Music' issued by Delos on DE1004.

An unofficial re-issue was made in 1996, following his passing, and was by way of the popular issue in those days of 'free', or 'pay post only' offers, by many newspapers, and I took up the Sunday Times offer for the guitar part of its 'Classical Solo Instruments' range on Conifer STCD225, which was a cut down version of the Delos CD.

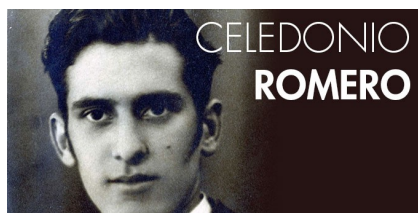
At the time I bought the Times' CD purely for its music content, having no idea of the player, and I continued to take almost no notice of the player's name which was simply written on the CDs back sleeve, and without any further reference in the accompanying liner notes. I only noticed that track 1 (not on the Delos CD) noted a transcription by Pepe Romero, who I'd known about from the mid-sixties as an American-Spanish classical guitarist.

After a rather shallow period in terms of my active interest in the guitar, my attention was redrawn to the exquisite playing of the guitar on this CD, encouraged by my return to enjoying the romantic and energised guitar performances of Julian Bream, particularly with Spanish composers like Sor, Tárrega and Rodrigo.

I realised at that point that Celedonio – hardly a household



name in the UK – was Pepe's father and that Pepe also had brothers Celin and Angel, all of whom attained high performance standards, and played in Celedonio's outstanding contribution to guitar music performance, i.e., the 1960 founding of the Romero Quartet, which performs to this day.



A Young Celedonio



Romero Quartet + Angelita

Celedonio was Spanish, but due to his father's profession as an international civil engineer, had been born in Cuba. In early youth his musical potential was recognised, and he duly studied music theory in Malaga and Madrid before making his first public guitar recital in 1935. He became a professional player of renown in Spain and was

allowed to perform in neighbouring France and Italy. In the era of Franco's dictatorship and restrictive control of the Spanish peoples' activities, Celedonio was unable to take on wider continental musical tours. However, under the ruse of needing to attend a sick relative in Portugal, he and his family were able in 1957 to take a one-way flight to California, USA and, as it were, take up an uninterrupted musical life. This was successful and, as his children reached suitable ages and became notable players, the Romero Quartet came into being and has now been joined by Celedonio's grandchildren – it's worth using YouTube to watch and listen to excerpts of their performances.

Thus, Celedonio became immersed in the Quartet and in furthering his noted compositional skills which have been well respected by the likes of Rodrigo; however, the USA apart, his international recognition was not widespread. Beneficially, Spain, in its post-Franco era, also came to openly acknowledge his contribution to guitar music and to its Spanish heritage, and King Juan Carlos I inducted him into the Orden de Isabel la Católica.

The Delos CD, DE1004 was recorded in 1986 when Celedonio was already 73 years old, but shows a clarity and vigour of playing, and his great ability to bring out all the tonal colours of the Spanish guitar. There is a beautiful range of delicacy in the musical passages, which is supplanted by a storm and flurry of notes played with speed and crescendo – really

exciting and gripping! I find so much classical guitar is more of a technical exercise rather than an absorbing and invigorating listen and appreciation. This applies to both composition and arrangement, as well as to the manner and determined focus of the delivery. This CD is just a perfect example of the latter.

The track listing is:

1. Giuliani – Variations on a theme of Handel, Op 107 (7mins, 5secs)
2. Giuliani – Grande Ouverture, Op 61 (7.10)
3. Sor – Variations on a theme of Mozart, Op 9 (6.57)
4. Sor – Guitar Sonata in C Major, Op 15, No 2 (7.54)
5. Sor – Sonata Op 25, No 2 (22.58)
6. Tárrega – Valse – Las dos hermanitas (2.38)
7. Tárrega – Tango – Maria (2.15)
8. Tárrega – Recuerdos de la Alhambra (4.33)

Recorded in 1986 in Spain while on tour and released 1990; playing time 62 minutes.

The CD is in scarce supply these days and can be expensive, but is worth looking out for from the likes of Amazon or private/semipro sellers on eBay, although many are in the USA. There are a number of earlier Celedonio CDs available and also many of the Romero Quartet recordings — or simply buy downloads.

NORFOLK TALENT

by Mike Peters

Ed & Laura



Jazz guitarist Eddie Reed remembers BMG from when he was much younger and just getting into music, many years ago in the sixties when anything connected with playing stringed instruments simply mesmerised him. This included instruments, music shops, plectrums, records, tuition books (of which there were few) and good old BMG, offering maybe slightly older style advice but with very interesting articles on how the ‘influential old guys’ used to play things. It was a monthly

magazine then, which he looked forward to with eager anticipation, especially anything describing jazzy chords and how they fitted into chord patterns. The years rolled by and Ed made a living playing folk, country, pop, blues & jazz. Ed was saddened by the demise of BMG in the seventies, but other tuition books were published and an old (and current) favourite was Mickey Baker’s ‘Complete Course in Jazz Guitar’.

It came as a complete surprise when Ed learned a few months ago that BMG is not only back, but published just a couple of villages away from where he lives!

It came as even more of a surprise when BMG editor Clem Vickery walked into the ‘Fox & Hounds’ in Heacham, Norfolk, to listen to the Sunday afternoon jazz session.

His reaction: “Great fun, loves his music, and fully intends to start gigging again!”

After playing in a great many different bands over the years Ed’s favourite current combo to play in is the ‘Ed & Laura’ music duo from North Norfolk, with Laura handling most of the vocals while Ed accompanies on guitar using no backing tracks.

Laura has enjoyed singing all of her life without feeling the need to be a semi pro, but is always happy to take a singing lead at family parties, local drama productions and with friends’ close harmony groups, although she did busk a little on her travels around France, and while at University.

A few years ago she met Ed, who felt they could do gigs together, and found his ability to play most genres of music useful as she doesn’t have a favourite genre and just sings anything she feels is good. That means the repertoire can cover a whole evening of jazz standards, 50s, 60s, and 70s pop, or more modern songs, although mostly they like to mix things up to suit their audiences.

Pubs, restaurants, weddings, private parties and all functions are the mainstay of their work. They can augment the band with superb musicians for any occasion.

Check out Ed & Laura’s forthcoming gigs in the Norfolk Gig Guide:

<http://www.norfolkgiguide.com>

Then type in Ed & Laura in the bottom left hand search field.

Christmas gift suggestions:

- “To your enemy, forgiveness.
- To an opponent, tolerance.
- To a friend, your heart.
- To a customer, service.
- To all, charity.
- To every child, a good example.
- To yourself, respect”.

Oren Arnold

Mary Beth Cross

Mary Beth Cross is a Denver based singer-songwriter currently making a name for herself by creating a musical blend of folk and bluegrass. She has recently released a six track EP: 'Feels Like Home', which is her fifth release coming two years since her well received CD 'Beyond Good and Evil' in 2014. (Folk Country CD of the year, Rural Roots Music Commission).

The Denver artist's music is influenced by the rural farmland and forests of her Wisconsin upbringing and the Rocky Mountains where she currently resides.

"My music comes from inspiration found in the beauty of nature and the human spirit" said Mary Beth, who has recorded four albums of originals and covers of some of her favourite songs. "I work with all kinds of people, and I write songs to hopefully touch others and make them feel something".

Mary Beth's superb guitar/banjo playing is supported by mandolin, fiddle and double bass as she presents some beautifully crafted original songs alongside the more well known such as Paul Simon's 'Kathy's Song'. She takes us to her grandparents' dairy farm back in the 1940s with 'Threshing Time', a tune she co-wrote with her 85 year old father. This is followed by a lovely version of 'Shady Grove'. Mary Beth gives a new breath to Gary White's 'Long, Long Time' and takes the Linda Ronstadt cover and places it in a bluegrass arrangement. She then leads you slowly into the later hours of the evening (to the bedroom) with 'The Medley', and concludes with an original ditty welcoming the morning and the gift of a new day with 'Cottonwood Creek'.

Mary Beth's growing popularity has led to performances at venues and events such as Folk Alliance International in Toronto and Kansas City, the Denver Coliseum, and the Colorado Association of School Nurses. Mary Beth's EP and her CDs can be obtained via iTunes; CD Baby; Amazon and Rhapsody.



Fun with the Ukulele by Ray Woods Let It Be Me

'Let it be me', although popularised by the Everley Brothers, first appeared in French in 1955 as *Je t'appartiens* (I belong to you). The music was written by Gilbert Bécaud, with lyrics by Pierre Delanoë. The English lyrics were penned by Mann Curtis.

Play single notes with your index and middle fingers and strum the chords with your thumb.

A B \flat F Gm Dm E \flat B \flat

E \flat F 7 B \flat **B** B \flat F Gm Dm

E \flat B \flat E \flat F 7 B \flat **C** E \flat Dm

Dm B \flat E \flat B \flat E \flat D 7

Repeat A section

PRELUDE 2

Guitar

Peter Pope

The first system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff is in guitar notation, with strings labeled E, B, G, D, A, E from top to bottom. It shows fingerings for the first four measures, including a 4-finger barre on the B string in the first measure.

The second system begins with a measure rest labeled '3', indicating a triplet. The melodic line continues with eighth notes. The guitar notation shows complex fingerings, including a 5-finger barre on the B string and various fretted notes on the other strings.

The third system features a melodic line with eighth notes and chords. The guitar notation includes a 5-finger barre on the B string and various fretted notes, with some strings being muted or played with specific techniques.

The fourth system concludes the piece. It features a melodic line with eighth notes and chords. The guitar notation includes a 5-finger barre on the B string and various fretted notes, with some strings being muted or played with specific techniques. The system ends with a double bar line.

LA TOURTERELLE

Mandolin and Guitar

Traditional

♩ = 66

Dolce

The first system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 6/8 time signature. It begins with a whole rest for two measures, followed by a melodic line starting on D4. The bottom staff is a guitar or mandolin tablature with strings E, A, D, and G labeled. It shows fret numbers (0, 4, 5, 2, 0, 4, 2, 0, 2, 4, 4, 2, 0, 0, 0) and fingerings (2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 0, 0, 2, 0, 2).

7

The second system of music consists of two staves. The top staff continues the melody from the first system, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. It features a melodic line with a slur over the final two notes. The bottom staff continues the guitar/mandolin accompaniment, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. It includes various chordal textures and fingerings (2, 3, 0, 2, 0, 2, 3, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2, 2, 0, 2, 3, 2).

12

The third system of music consists of two staves. The top staff continues the melody, ending with a whole rest for two measures. The bottom staff continues the accompaniment, marked with a *ritardando* instruction. It features a melodic line with a slur over the final two notes and a whole rest for two measures. Fingerings (2, 3, 2, 2, 0, 0, 2, 0, 2, 0, 2, 0, 2, 2, 0, 0) are indicated throughout.

THE A 1 SAND DANCE

Banjo Solo

George Eaton

Moderato

Musical notation for measures 1-3. The system includes a treble clef staff with a 2/4 time signature and a bass clef staff with a 2/4 time signature. The treble staff contains a melody with triplets and slurs. The bass staff contains a bass line with triplets and slurs. Fingering numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4) are indicated above notes. A capo position of 8 is indicated at the beginning.

Musical notation for measures 4-7. The system includes a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melody with triplets and slurs. The bass staff contains a bass line with triplets and slurs. Fingering numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4) are indicated above notes. A capo position of 8 is indicated at the beginning.

Musical notation for measures 8-11. The system includes a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melody with triplets and slurs. The bass staff contains a bass line with triplets and slurs. Fingering numbers (0, 1, 2, 3) are indicated above notes. A capo position of 8 is indicated at the beginning. The word "Fine" is written below the treble staff in measure 9.

Musical notation for measures 12-14. The system includes a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melody with triplets and slurs. The bass staff contains a bass line with triplets and slurs. Fingering numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4) are indicated above notes. A capo position of 8 is indicated at the beginning.

Musical notation for measures 15-18. The system includes a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melody with triplets and slurs. The bass staff contains a bass line with triplets and slurs. Fingering numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) are indicated above notes. A capo position of 8 is indicated at the beginning. The word "D.C. al Fine" is written below the treble staff in measure 18.



With a Banjo on my Knee by Alan Middleton

Occasionally the Editor receives letters asking for specific titles which are not listed in the C.E. catalogues, and usually he does his best to supply them. Recently he received an email from a reader asking if we took requests for particular pieces, and in this particular case the question came from American banjoist Robert Minato of Salem, Oregon, who obligingly sent scans of the two solos which he thought would be of interest to other banjoists.

As most readers will know, I have been responsible for sub-editing the BMG music supplement since its revival in 2009, and I have also provided the majority of titles in the 'Tablature and Notation' series of fingerstyle banjo solos by copying original publications from my collection to the 'Sibelius' music program, and adding the tablature. Not surprisingly, therefore, I have recently added two more titles to the list, courtesy of Robert Minato; they are 'Alabama Sand Dance' by Oscar Chilton, and 'The Bobolink' by George L. Lansing, and both are typical old-time banjo solos. Kentucky born Chilton, (1878 - 1961), was a music teacher who played several instruments in addition to the banjo.

The 'sand dance', — similar to 'soft shoe' dancing, — was different from tap dancing, where the rhythm was deliberately accentuated by having small metal plates fitted to the sole of the shoe at the heel and toe. Tap and clog dancing were much more energetic compared with 'soft shoe', which was usually characterised by fairly slow, brushing movements of the feet, and for sand dancing, the shuffling motion was helped by sprinkling sand on the ground first. If you have a copy of Joe Morley's 'Sunbeam Sand Dance' you will know that it is full of triplet groups which help to make the melody flow, and even the dotted quaver and semiquaver groups impart a smooth feeling to the rhythm. The same thing applies to Oscar Chilton's 'Alabama Sand Dance', and playing the piece at a moderate tempo certainly conjures up the image of a dancer providing this kind of entertainment which was popular in the last quarter of the nineteenth century on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

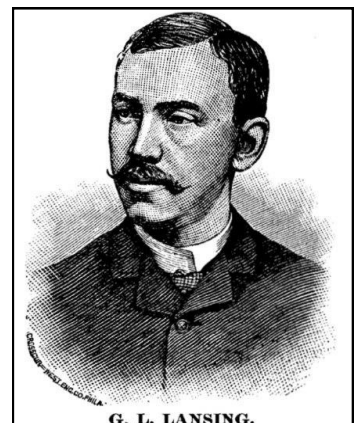
Another thing I noticed in the Sand Dance was the word 'Trio' at the beginning of the third section. This can be seen in many old banjo solos, and one suggestion is that about the end of the eighteenth century it was common practice for composers of orchestral music to score the middle section of a piece, — particularly in minuets — for only three instruments, as a way of introducing contrast. Thus the word 'Trio' would be written at the beginning of that section, and the habit continued with other music, including, according to one authority, the middle section of a march. So, as well as referring to the number of instruments playing, the term then became used to describe the third section of a piece, regardless of how many instruments were involved.

If the sections of a solo are thought of as A, B, and C, then the basic pattern of playing many banjo pieces would be A, B, C, B, A, with some variations of the repeated parts, and this applies to Chilton's 'Alabama Sand Dance'.

Another Sand Dance in my collection is by George Eaton, and appears in an album entitled 'Turner's Banjo Monthly' Number 28, which seems to have been printed about 1900, — a time when publishers such as Turner, Clifford Essex and Cammeyer could rely on the sales of this type of collection, which usually consisted of ten or more solos, duets, or songs with banjo accompaniment.

George Eaton's piece, 'The A 1 Sand Dance', only consists of two sections, but has a sting in the tail of the second section for the unwary player who ignores the '*Moderato*' indication at the beginning. It is shown on the opposite page, and I suggest that players should adopt the fingering indicated, especially for the second repeat bar, number 18, unless they play it *very* slowly.

'The Bobolink', by the well-known American composer George L. Lansing, is sub-titled 'Caprice or Fox Trot', and it certainly has some unexpected moments which I may have made more capricious by marking some notes (in the third movement) to be played on different strings from the obvious ones. For non-ornithologists I should explain that the bobolink is a small American grassland bird with what is described as 'a bubbling song'. I have not heard the song of a bobolink, and can only assume that Lansing has imitated its call in the first two bars of the second section, where he writes the name as a sub-heading.





Plectrum Banjo Technique

The Importance of Scales to Music - Part 2

by Ron Hinkle

Imagine this: While listening to an unaccompanied melody, being able to ‘hear’ the chords that go along with it. The common belief is that “*you either have it or you don’t.*” I was apparently ‘born’ with the ability; as a teacher—because I take it for granted—I struggle with how to teach it to those who weren’t so blessed. I like to think that I may be on to something here though; I believe it *can* be taught, and that scales are the ‘key’!

In my last article (BMG, Autumn 2016), I introduced the idea of the ‘chord-function’ approach to scale study. In summary, every note of a scale should be heard in the context of an implied chord (Tonic, Dominant, or Sub-Dominant—or simply ‘T-D-S’ for the purposes of this essay); again, *I believe this can be learned.* The same can be said for melodies, which are nothing but elaborated scales/arpeggios (reason enough to *learn your scales and arpeggios!*). These implied chords give structure and direction to the music, and allow the perceptive musician to ‘predict’ which chord is coming next, based on the melody. Spend enough time practicing and listening to scales and well-written melodies, and you will begin to hear this connection. My intent here is to ‘put a bug in your ear,’ and perhaps give you a shortcut to this aural understanding.

Eddie Peabody taught the T-D-S approach in relation to his chord melody technique; here is the illustration from his method book. As you can see, he played a chord with each scale note, and they were all T-D-S chords (C, G7, C, F, C, F, G7, C). The only difference between this and what I wrote in the last article is the chord for the G (fifth chord from the left); that *note* by itself is *the Dominant*, and should thus be represented by a Dominant 7th chord (G7).

C SCALE IN CHORDS

The diagram illustrates the C scale in chords across 12 fretboards. Each fretboard shows the fretting for a specific chord corresponding to a note in the C scale. The fretboards are numbered 1 through 12. Below the fretboards is a musical staff labeled 'C Scale Melody' showing the notes of the C scale in a treble clef.

However; it sounds fine as a Tonic chord, because it (the G) is played together with the two Tonic notes (C and E). Take away the C and E however, and the G becomes a very un-stable note. To illustrate this, play both of these chord-scales; A is of course exactly the same as above (in one octave), while B uses the Dominant 7 chord in place of the Tonic. Hesitate on that fifth chord in each example and *listen* (technically, the other G chords should be 7th chords as well, but I wanted to keep this simple):

Two musical examples, A and B, showing chord progressions in 4/4 time. Example A: C, G, C, F, C, F, G, C. Example B: C, G, C, F, G⁷, F, G, C. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a bass staff with fingerings for strings D, B, G, and C.

They are both ‘correct’ in context; you should learn to hear that note as a Tonic *and/or* a Dominant note, depending on where the music is going. This process will exercise your ear and allow you to decide which to use, depending on the situation. Practice this series of chords, keeping that all-important scale note (the highest note in this example) in your ear for each one; obviously, the more you play them, the better you’ll hear it! And remember, hearing scale notes in T-D-S context is the whole point of this.

The plectrum banjo chord melody technique is based on playing chords that have the melody on the highest string, but what would happen if we put the melody (in this case, the scale) on another string? In this next example, I have moved the scale to the 4th string, with the T-D-S chords on the other three. In this inversion, the Tonic C chord (in place of the circled Dominant chord) would sound out of place (try it!), and thus **wrong**.

Musical notation for a chord progression in 4/4 time: C, G⁷, C, F, G⁷, F, G⁷, C. The G⁷ chord in the fifth measure is circled. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a bass staff with fingerings for strings D, B, G, and C.

Try this with simple melodies; play just the melody without the accompanying chords, and try to ‘hear’ the chord that would ‘naturally’ be there. Alternate between playing the melody with and without chords, and see if you can begin to make this aural connection. For an interesting experiment, play a *wrong* chord occasionally (with the correct melody note). Being able to hear (and identify) what’s obviously ‘wrong’ is a strong step toward hearing what’s ‘right!’ Once you have trained yourself to predict the *correct* chords, then it’s simply a matter of learning a few standard, *predictable* ‘chord progressions’ (a subject for another article, perhaps?). This is the very definition of playing by ear!

Part 3 will cover another distinct ‘way of thinking’ about this; the more-difficult ‘Modal’ chord-scale approach. This way is more pure musically, and is based on playing two, three, or four unique *scales* together to form a series of ‘Diatonic’ (as opposed to T-D-S) *chords*. This comes from Classical music theory, and is thus how music for the pre-Jazz Age ‘classic’ banjo (Grimshaw, Cammeyer, etc.) was written; it is also the standard approach for modern jazz. Both approaches apply to the banjo—in different contexts—and are thus both important to learn.

I hope this adds fuel to the scale-learning fire; there simply is *no getting around* them, *if you want to truly learn about music!*

PLECTRUM BANJO TUTORIAL

CONTACT RON HINKLE

Email: banjoplayer1@yahoo.com



Plectrum Guitar Technique: 6 Mike Chapman

Technical study

Hello again. Here's a nice little plectrum study that should keep you out of any mischief until the next time we meet.

The steel strung guitar has been around now for about a century and, despite its worldwide popularity, I have yet to see a worthwhile set of studies written for our instrument. In fact, most of the plectrum instrument family, the classical mandolin being the one exception, seem poorly served in this area, probably because, until recently, they have never been studied 'seriously' in the music colleges.

I've discussed this fact with other players and teachers, and most have made adaptations of clarinet material, as it has a similar written range, to use as technical exercises. I also like the Hinke oboe method as it has lots of useful exercises and surprisingly, has a short piece in every key. D# minor anyone?

I have adapted this study from classical mandolin literature, as it is a good all round workout for both hands and should improve one's tone, fluency, left and right hand accuracy, and fretboard knowledge. In fact, just about everything!

Alternate picking should be used throughout, (down on the beat and up off the beat) regardless of the large leaps in bars 17-21, and especially in the scalar patterns of bars 5-7 and 24-31. All the notes, except the excursions down to bottom E, are playable in the 5th position (1st finger on the 5th fret).

But how best to approach a study such as this?

Have a good look at the music before you start. Can you see that this piece can be broken down into sections? Bars 1-4 are scalar runs. Bars 5-11 are a scalar pattern. Bars 12-23 are more scalar runs. Bars 24-31 are a different scalar pattern and Bars 32-36 are scalar runs again.

All of these individual sections could be worked on separately. Certainly, the two sections of scalar patterns present different problems, and will need careful work to get them flowing nicely. The runs of scales are all very similar, and should therefore take less time. (That said, when I tried playing this study for this article I kept getting caught in bar 19.)

Try doing it this way:

Practise each section until you can play it through at a constant slow tempo, ideally using a metronome, without a mistake or swearword. If you find there are particular bars that are giving you trouble, isolate and bully them until you are happy.

Play these troublesome bars with a few bars either side until you can play the entire section smoothly.

Connect up adjacent sections, making sure that they join up smoothly by playing "over the joins".

Practise until you can go right through the entire study at this tempo, still using the metronome, without mishap.

Then, again using the metronome, increase the tempo just a notch or two and repeat.

With patience, you should be able to increase the tempo gradually until you are satisfied. The common fault here is to speed things up too quickly. (We are all guilty of this!)

If you find things are getting worse instead of better, then stop, take a break, and try again later.

Try to remember how much the instrument cost before you throw it across the room!

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Plectrum Guitar Study

M. Chapman

Allegro $\wedge \vee \wedge \vee$ throughout

Measures 1-5 of the Plectrum Guitar Study. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 4/4 time signature. The music features a melodic line in the treble clef and a corresponding guitar tablature in the bass clef. The tablature uses numbers 4, 5, 6, 7 to indicate fret positions. The melodic line consists of eighth-note patterns, and the tablature shows the fretting for these notes.

Measures 6-10 of the Plectrum Guitar Study. The notation continues with the same key signature and time signature. The melodic line and tablature show a continuation of the eighth-note patterns, with some variations in fretting and phrasing.

Measures 11-15 of the Plectrum Guitar Study. The notation continues with the same key signature and time signature. The melodic line and tablature show a continuation of the eighth-note patterns, with some variations in fretting and phrasing.

Measures 16-20 of the Plectrum Guitar Study. The notation continues with the same key signature and time signature. The melodic line and tablature show a continuation of the eighth-note patterns, with some variations in fretting and phrasing.

Measures 21-25 of the Plectrum Guitar Study. The notation continues with the same key signature and time signature. The melodic line and tablature show a continuation of the eighth-note patterns, with some variations in fretting and phrasing.

Measures 26-30 of the Plectrum Guitar Study. The notation continues with the same key signature and time signature. The melodic line and tablature show a continuation of the eighth-note patterns, with some variations in fretting and phrasing.

Measures 31-35 of the Plectrum Guitar Study. The notation continues with the same key signature and time signature. The melodic line and tablature show a continuation of the eighth-note patterns, with some variations in fretting and phrasing.

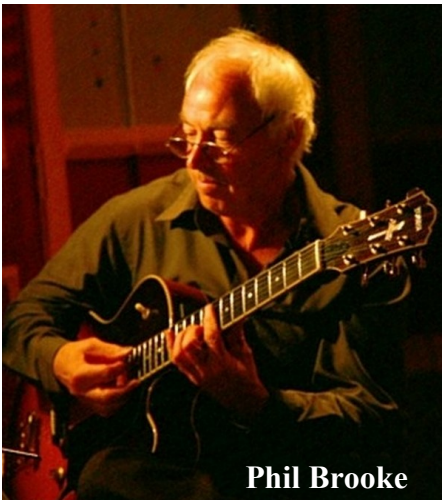
This Issue's Cover Picture

Phil Brooke

I started to play guitar in the early sixties, inevitably that involved listening to Rock and Roll and the guitar based groups such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, etc.. Fortunately, for those of us drawn towards interesting harmony, other influences were still around: Chet Atkins was doing different things and there were a number Segovia LPs available, (on which the nylon-strung instrument sounds appealingly fragile) all of which confirmed the possibilities of polyphony on the guitar.

There was no longer 'Lead' or 'Rhythm' guitar but a complete sound! So called 'Standard' tunes still had a tenuous hold on the market and the woody sound of the archtop guitar was very seductive, though acquiring the necessary technique to justify owning and playing one seemed very elusive. An early favourite album of mine was the 1967 Verve LP, 'Johnny Smith', featuring unforgettable versions of 'On a Clear Day', 'Manha de Carnaval', 'The Girl from Ipanema' — and probably most impressive, the chord solo treatment of Lennon and McCartney's 'Yesterday' and 'Michelle', there was something almost magical about Smith's realisations. In Lin Flanagan's biography of Smith, ('Moonlight in Vermont'), virtually all of the latter's contemporaries testify to his abilities; he took on the guitar part in Schoenberg's 'Serenade for Septet and Baritone Voice, Op. 24' consolidating his role of musician as well as guitarist.

Gradually recordings and transcriptions of all the great jazz players of the period became available: Tal Farlow; Jimmy Rainey; Barry Galbraith; Jim Hall; Barney Kessel; Billy Bauer and Wes Montgomery. This led, inevitably to Charlie Christian, Django Reinhardt and the often a little underrated Eddie Lang.



Phil Brooke

The most appealing aspects for me have always been finger-style chord solos and comping with a near-classical right hand technique, epitomised in the solo work of Joe Pass, especially the 'Virtuoso' album, and probably even more so by (Sir/Dr) Martin Taylor.

It's significant that the Yamaha Martin Taylor guitar has a fingerboard that widens considerably from nut to body thereby allowing maximum space for right hand fingers. I have used one of these guitars for over 15 years and trying to replace it with a high end American model has been almost impossible due to the narrower string spacing.

Some would assert, probably correctly, that using the right-hand fingers exclusively means losing the fundamental 'jazz guitar sound', and that there is a case for using a plectrum for single note passages.

In the late 60's and early 70's making a living from playing in the provinces was difficult but not impossible. 'Mecca' ballrooms in every major town provided work for journeyman musicians, and learning to read conventional staff notation, (often quite low on a guitarist's priorities), was a must. This tended to happen 'on the stand', often accompanied by unsympathetic noises from those instrumentalists, (brass, reeds and keyboard players), who had benefitted from a more comprehensive musical background!

Early bands that I played with included Colin Hume's, (a cultured alto saxophonist) in Nottingham and Bob Taggart, a fine pianist who led the house band at the 'Talk of the Midlands' in Derby. These were the days of the Cabaret Clubs and part of the job was backing the headline acts such as: Ken Dodd, Mike Yarwood, *et al.* This always brings to mind Derek Bailey, the 'free jazz' guitar player, taken to task by the comedians Morecambe and Wise for practising in the orchestra pit during their act — the mind boggles as to what *interesting* noises he was making at the time! Well worth checking out is 'Ballads' by Derek Bailey, (who sadly died a couple of years ago) it sounds like he's playing his Epiphone Triumph Regent (I think), which he said was the loudest guitar he'd had. On 'Ballads' he plays all the standard tunes you know and they are amazingly instantly recognisable yet totally 'Bailey-esque'.

A highlight at the Derby club was the visit of the Buddy Rich Big Band, even then full of young virtuosi, all products of the American Jazz Education system. Eventually the Music Colleges in the UK latched onto this with jazz and popular music courses initially at Leeds and Newcastle and then everywhere.

Before I became involved in this, I had a spell in London included stints at the Hilton Hotel, The Lyceum

and the Café de Paris, and during this period I developed a greater interest in Classical Guitar, this was around the time when Julian Bream and John Williams helped turn the nylon-strung instrument into a voice with almost universal popular appeal. I gained an LTCL Teachers' Diploma, and later an AMusTCL as well as an Open University Arts Degree which gave me the comforting illusion of some sort of musical legitimacy, and teaching has remained part of my activities ever since, — chiefly as a member of the Guitar Department at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, for 10 years.

Fortunately gigs, however unpredictable, have never dried up completely and the freelance world has provided some interesting situations: playing in the Royal Box at a rainy Wimbledon Tennis tournament, (just trombone and guitar !); the bass guitar chair in the pit for Circus Krone in Munich (not sure what the Lions would have made of Derek Bailey); duos with Dave Cliff and Phil Lee; a project for Plectrum Guitar Quartet resulting in a CD and a BBC Radio 3 Jazz Line-up airplay; a Dankworth Wavendon Workshop where Ike Isaacs was an inspiring presence; fronting a quartet for a session with visiting American players including Bob Wilber and Harry Allen at the Norwich Jazz Party, and playing Banjo in Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue'; (regrettably this was with full Orchestra, not the original chamber version arranged by Grofé for Paul Whiteman).

I've been very lucky in sometimes getting the call as part of the house band at the various East Anglia jazz venues and as a result have played with quite a selection of respected figures: Acker Bilk, Kenny Ball, Kenny Baker, Harry Becket, Alan Barnes, Steve Brown, Jack Parnell, Karen Sharp, Roy Williams, Digby Fairweather and violinists Chris Garrick and Tim Kliphuis.

Current projects include 'The Art of the Trio', partially re-creating the drum-less trios of the 40s onwards such as those led by Oscar Peterson, Red Norvo, Nat King Cole, George Shearing and Monty Alexander. Some duo gigs in North Norfolk with bass player John Clark.

I have finally recorded all 13 guitar and 2 bass parts for Steve Reich's Electric Counterpoint, and which, hopefully, with some arrangements of Bach Preludes and Fugues should complete a CD.

CDs include 'Alone Together' — solos, and some double- and treble-tracked pieces, including 'Alfie' and 'On Green Dolphin Street'.

'Classical Guitar' featuring works by Tarrega, Turina, Villa-Lobos etc.

'When Day Is Done', a Latin CD by vocalist Saskia. I play nylon-strung guitar; pieces include Desafinado, Photograph, and Agua De Beber.

'Electric Counterpoint' and Bach Preludes and Fugues will be ready soon.

For current availability. Email: philbrooke48@gmail.com

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Clifford Essex Passes

by A. P. Sharpe - Reprinted from the BMG of March 1946

The whole fretted instrument world will mourn the passing of Clifford Essex, who died on February 2nd at the age of 87. For some time past his health had been failing, although I heard from him quite recently when he wrote that he was looking forward to the summer when he could attend to his beloved garden. (His one hobby during the past ten years was his garden).

So many players have written to me expressing their sincere regrets at his passing, and many of these correspondents have asked me to give a résumé of Mr. Essex's career.

Although I have only been associated with Clifford Essex since January, 1925, during the last 21 years I have been given many opportunities of learning of his early struggles and successes. It was his habit to make friends of his employees, and I was no exception. Many times I have sat in his private office, listening enthralled to his reminiscences of the past.

He was born in London on July 12th, 1858, and his first musical instrument was the piano, which he started to study at the age of five. He was educated at Highgate and Rugby, and whilst at the latter school he bought a banjo for 15 shillings (75 pence - Ed).

His parents wished him to become a solicitor, and on leaving Rugby he duly served his articles with a large London firm. Despite the frowns of his family, he continued to play the banjo and never lost an opportunity to meet other players of the instrument.

Two of his particular playing friends were Walter Pallant and Arthur Corbett, and they formed an amateur trio, playing at parties. Clifford Essex was often asked to give tuition on the banjo at these social functions, and finally he decided that the world of music appealed to him more than life in a solicitor's dusty office.

Deciding that the best place to start a teaching studio was a University town, the young Clifford Essex took premises at Cambridge under a six months' lease. But, making it known that he was ready to give lessons on the banjo, he received more requests for tuition from London. Paying the six months' rent of his Cambridge studio, he returned to the Metropolis and gave lessons at his pupils' residences.

START OF THE PIERROTS

A Stock Exchange friend suggested that Mr. Essex should take the banjo to Henley Regatta and the two of them began to discuss details. Consulting his friend Arthur Collins (of Drury Lane Theatre), he was told it had possibilities.

Previously Clifford Essex had witnessed the performance of Mlle. Jane May in L'Enfant Prodigue at the Prince of Wales Theatre, and the pierrot costume in the play gave him the idea of the dress for their river debut.

Costumes procured, Clifford Essex, his friend, and Francine Dewhurst (a female singer who stayed with the Pierrots for eight years) journeyed to Henley. In a punt painted black and lit by Chinese lanterns and propelled by a boatman dressed in white flannels, the Pierrots drifted

among the houseboats playing the banjo and singing the popular songs of the day. The clean appearance of the party and the high-class entertainment appealed to the type of people that used to assemble for this great river spectacle, and at the end of the Regatta it was clear that the new form of entertainment was a success.



Francine Dewhurst

The 'Pierrot Banjo Team' (as Clifford called his party) was the forerunner of all concert parties. Previous outdoor entertainment was given by tawdry (and often vulgar) 'buskers'.

Following their success at Henley, the Pierrots travelled to Cowes on the suggestion of a stockbroker on one of the houseboats at Henley, and on the third day of their entertainment at the Isle of Wight resort (August 3rd) were invited on the Royal Yacht 'Osborne' to perform for the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII). So well received was their entertainment that they were commanded to give a repeat performance that same evening.



HMY Osborne

ENTERS BUSINESS

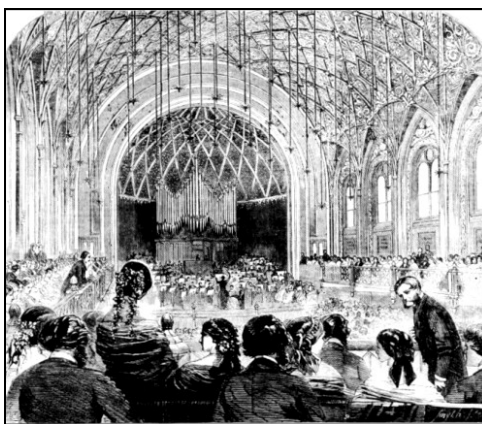
After a most successful season at Cowes, when the Pierrots appeared at the Royal Yacht Squadron Headquarters and performed on all the large yachts anchored in the harbour, Clifford Essex returned to London and, thanks to the recommendations of his banjo pupils, he was able to enter into partnership with Alfred D. Cammeyer, and the firm of Essex & Cammeyer came into being with premises at 59, Piccadilly. Within eight years the firm had a clientele of over 13,000. The partnership was dissolved in 1900, and Clifford Essex immediately started his own business at 15a, Grafton Street, three years later publishing the first issue of BMG with Sir (then Mr.) Home Gordon, Bart., as Editor.

Each year Clifford Essex took his 'Royal Pierrots' for a summer tour (visiting the main South and East coast towns), and there is little doubt that he did much to popularise the banjo by his public appearances. The instruments bearing his name (which were always of the highest class) and his personal tuition raised the status of the banjo everywhere.

People of title came to him for lessons, and a list of the names of titled nobility who have learned to play the banjo under the guidance of Clifford Essex would read like a page from the 'Blue Book'.

FAMOUS CONCERTS
In the winter of 1891 Mr. Essex started his popular fretted instrument concerts (the first was given in the Portman Rooms, at which the 'Royal Pierrots' made their first London appearance), and for 30-

odd years the Clifford Essex Concerts at St. James' Hall, Piccadilly, and the Kensington Town Hall were eagerly looked forward to.



St. James' Hall, Piccadilly

At these concerts every soloist of note (both English and American) appeared. Olly Oakley, Joe Morley, Doris Walthew, Senor Obregon, the Luton Mandolin Orchestra, Vess Ossman, A. A. Farland, Joseph Bull, Bert Bassett, Charlie Rogers, John Pidoux are just a few of the artists heard at the concerts.



Vess Ossman

When Monsieur W. W. Andreeff brought his Imperial Russian Balalaika Orchestra to this country in 1909 Clifford Essex immediately saw the possibilities of the national instrument of Russia and had lessons on the instrument.

Later he formed the Clifford Essex Balalaika Orchestra and, conducted by H.R.H. Prince Tchagadaeff, it appeared all over the country for many years.

Despite the success of the Balalaika Orchestra, Clifford Essex still took his Pierrots on tour each summer, and when World War I started they were on the East coast. Immediately Mr. Essex declared that all profits from the tour would be handed to the Prince of Wales National Relief Fund, and when he returned to London all his time was devoted to running his ever-increasing business.

STARTS DANCE BANDS

In 1917 he entered the dance-band business — as a 'sideline' to supplying instruments, music and accessories to fretted instrument players all over the world - and it is interesting to note that Clifford Essex bands have played for every hostess of note in every part of the country. At one time Clifford Essex bands played for over 60 Hunt Balls in one season.

During his career Clifford Essex has launched many variety artists on the road to fame. Ella Barkley (later known as Katie Moss, composer of 'The Floral Dance'), Margaret Cooper, Ivy St. Helier, Fred Rome, Selwyn Drive, Harry Hemsley, Jimmie Blakely, Steve Fitzgerald all appeared with the 'Royal Pierrots', and famous banjoists who played with the team included Will Pepper, Joe Morley, Doris Walthew, Bert

Continued on the next page.

Bassett, Charlie Rogers, etc.. In his hey-day Clifford Essex (who was no mean singer) was the means of making many songs popular; among his successes being 'The Honeysuckle and the Bee', 'Oyuchasan, Belle of Japan', 'I Wouldn't Leave My Little Wooden Hut', 'By the Water Melon Vine', and many more too numerous to mention.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

Throughout his career Clifford Essex was never too busy to meet his customers personally or to write them a personal letter discussing their difficulties. Many players must treasure letters written in Mr. Essex's own handwriting. As a personality he was generous to a fault, and I have never known an old 'pro' spin a 'hard luck' story and go away empty-handed. In business he was a stickler for method (a heritage from his days in the solicitor's office), and, even though his business had reached such huge proportions, he insisted on opening every letter received. He spent a full day at the office, six days a week and in later years the only holidays he took were at Seaview, Isle of Wight, supervising his season of dances at the Pier Hotel.

Fastidious in dress himself, he abhorred slovenliness in his staff, and I have known him to pay for a new hat or coat for a clerk if his wearing apparel was not in keeping with his standards.

It will be obvious to anyone who has known Clifford Essex since his name first became associated with fretted instruments and has read his many reminiscent articles in these pages in the past, that this sketch of his life is far from complete. Exigencies of space prevent a fuller story

being given. If I have omitted anything that it is felt should have been told, I apologise.

Clifford Essex leaves a son and three daughters, to whom I am sure all players will join with me in offering sincere condolences in their loss. If it is any consolation, their father's name will live for ever and will always be remembered with esteem and, in many cases, affection.

The Jazz Age & Depression Era

by Anthony Lis

While returning from a 'mini-vacation' in southern Minnesota the weekend of 15 July, I spent several days in the pleasant, hilly, wooded college town of **Mankato**, home to **Minnesota State University-Mankato** (currently Minnesota's second-largest public university). One reason I stopped in Mankato was to peruse items related to plectrum instruments and the steel guitar in the university's Memorial Library. The Memorial Library's online catalogue also alerted me that the library held **microfilm copies of BMG dating back to February 1921**, which certainly sounded like something worth investigating; after careful searching at worldcat.org (a global catalogue of library collections), I was surprised to learn that MSU-Mankato is apparently one of only eleven American libraries holding **BMG** microfilms.

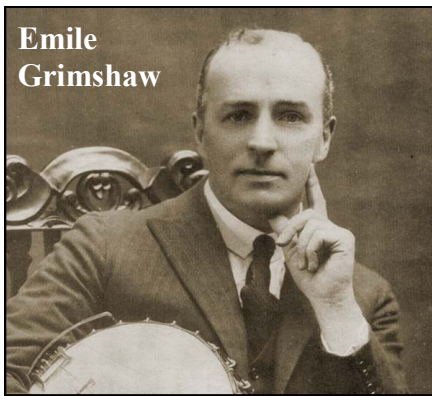
I asked a Memorial Library reference librarian if it could be determined when and from what source the library acquired the three reels of **BMG** microfilms they hold (spanning February 1921-March 1950); she answered that the absence of

such information in the library's online records indicates the microfilms were acquired in the 'pre-internet' days. The labeling 'Memorial Library, Mankato State University' on the film boxes perhaps indicates the microfilms were acquired between 1975 and 1998 (1975 being the year that the former Mankato State College changed its name to Mankato State University, and 1998 being when MSU became Minnesota State University-Mankato). Judging from the rather-worn state of the boxes, the mid-to-late 1970s would seem to be the best estimate for an acquisition-date.

I only had time to peruse MSU-Mankato's first microfilm reel, covering **February 1921 through March 1937**. While viewing, I learned that the microfilms were, unfortunately, incomplete, with *portions* of years (e.g., October - December 1926 and January - April 1929), as well as *entire* years (e.g., 1930 and 1931) missing. That said, it was still rather amazing to be sitting in an academic library in southern Minnesota, over four thousand miles from London, journeying 'back in time', as it were, to view British **BMGs** from the second and third decades of the previous century.

At the time of the publication of the February-March 1921 issue, **BMG's** editor was banjoist/composer **Emile Grimshaw** (1880-1943); single copies of the magazine (then being published bi-monthly) could be had for one shilling, with a subscription costing seven shillings. Then — as now — there was American interest in the publication, and overseas subscriptions were available for \$1.75 USD. **BMG** founder and banjoist/music teacher/instrument-maker

Clifford Essex (1869-1946) advertised his company, recently re-named **Clifford Essex & Son**, as being located at **15a Grafton Street in West London** (just northeast of Berkely Square Gardens). The August 1926 issue included a photograph of one of the quite well-furnished Clifford Essex teaching-studios, complete with what appears to be a glass table, a rather elaborate music stand, an acoustic guitar propped up in a leisure-chair, and, to the left, a fireplace.



The classified advertisements in the February-March 1921 issue reflected the reach-of-influence of the British Empire, with listings originating in locales such as Capetown and Durban in **South Africa**, Columbo in **Ceylon**, Melbourne in **Australia** and Winnipeg in **Canada**.

Skimming through the subsequent issues on the Memorial Library's first microfilm-reel, the author spotted such articles, editorials, and instructional-pieces as 'The Future of the Banjo' (Emile Grimshaw, May 1923), 'When to Tremolo on the Mandolin' (F.W., July 1926), 'On the Hawaiian Guitar' (Bert Redstone, March 1935), 'Modernism and the Mandolin Orchestra' (William Sewall March, April 1935) and William Kamoku's 'The Witchery of Hawaiian Music and Dancing' (June 1935).

Elsewhere, Roy Smeck, at Emile Grimshaw's urging, related his 'life story' (in a two-part 'Stringing Along' article stretching across the April and May 1935 issues); Eddie Peabody 'touched base' with his constituency (in December 1935's 'Hello, Folks!'), and T. E. Doy sang the praises of Peter Hodgkinson in 'The English Sol Hoopii' (also in the December 1935 issue).

The author noted that different British cities appeared to be in different stages of the 'BMG movement', the March 1935 issue relayed word of a proposal to form a 'B, M, and G' club in **Sheffield**, while the same issue included a report on a Valentine's Day concert given by the well-established BMG club in **Lewisham**, which drew an audience of over eleven hundred to the Lewisham Town Hall. (Concert-attendees were entertained by finger-style banjoists, a mandolinist, and both the club's 'banjo team' [augmented with vocalists] and mandolin and guitar ensemble).

Elsewhere, music theory matters were discussed in articles such as the February 1935 reprinting of Clifford Essex's popular 'Chords and Their Inversions' (which originally appeared in the January 1918 issue); in October 1935, newly appointed associate editor **A. P. Sharpe** (1906-1967) premiered a multi-part thirty-year *BMG* retrospective titled '03 to 33: Thirty Years of 'BMG.' (A useful feature of early *BMG*'s were the annual indexes, which appeared every twelve months to summarize the topics covered in each volume).

A 'Fretted Instrument Records of the Month' feature consisted of record reviews (penned by

Alauris) critiquing the efforts of musicians ranging from American hillbilly music pioneer **Jimmie Rodgers** to Italian born, Paris based banjoist and Hawaiian guitarist **Gino Bordin**. Alauris could be both severely critical and fickle . . . Rodgers was chided, roughly twenty seven months after his death, for using the usual elementary guitar accompaniments and bass runs in his final Victor release 'Years Ago / Jimmie Rodgers's Last Blue Yodel' in the July 1935 issue, while Bordin was criticized for his 'extremely dull and uninteresting' playing in the November 1935 issue, then praised for his 'quite pleasing' renditions of 'Hawaiian Berceuse' and 'Tears of Love' in the following issue. Other reviews evaluated releases by such British acts as **Andy's Southern Serenaders** (led by Harry Leader); the **Radio Rhythm Rascals** (which Alauris dubbed 'The English answer to Sol Hoopii'); the youthful London born pianist **Phil Green and His Orchestra**; as well as **Pickard's Chinese Syncopators** (actually a Chinese/American bandurria ensemble, led by Honolulu born singer James H. Pickard) and Hawaiian born **Andy Iona and his Islanders**.



Andy Iona



A Study of Style : Bobby Hicks

by Nick DiSebastian

Bobby Hicks is a living fiddle legend. He has played as a member of Bill Monroe & The Bluegrass Boys, Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder, and the Bluegrass Album Band. His fiddle playing has been a monumental influence on the sound of bluegrass fiddling.

Bobby's style encompasses elements of bluegrass, country, swing, and old time. He is always true to the melody of the song, with the ability to drive or swing a song with effortless force. His fills during verses seem to be perfect compliments to the vocalists. I've always been intrigued with incorporating Bobby's double stops on the mandolin. The second solo on Bobby's album 'Fiddle Patch' is a fine example - 'Faded Love'. Rarely is he simply harmonizing a melody note with a neighbouring chord tone. He uses dense harmonies and chord substitutions (indicated in parenthesis) to make this simple song a



Bobby Hicks

lush soundscape.

He begins the solo by playing a descending line cliché beneath the melody note. He follows that with the same idea on the G chord, then plays notes that imply a C#7 before going back to a D chord. This creates a really unique tension and release. He then adds chord substitutions using secondary dominance. This is the idea of using dominant 7 chords that resolve down a fifth to create an interesting chord progression. This concept is common in jazz and swing. As he moves onto the E chord, he plays parallel thirds in a creative way. Throughout the solo, he continues to use these concepts while always mixing up the phrasing which keeps him from exhausting any of the techniques. When it comes to playing it on the mandolin, I

decided to use a tremolo picking technique to emulate Bobby's double stops that are sustained for more than a beat. Another approach would be to cross pick the double stops.

A transcription of 'Faded Love' is available for free email: (nickdisebastian@gmail.com).

Here is the link to a video of me playing it (second mandolin solo of the video) :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-twGucD5Gw>

About The Author: Nick DiSebastian is a musician residing in Atlanta, GA, USA. He is a performer, educator, and transcriber. His business: 'Built To Last Music Notes', provides custom transcriptions to customers of their favourite music. For more information visit: <http://www.btlmusicnotes.com>

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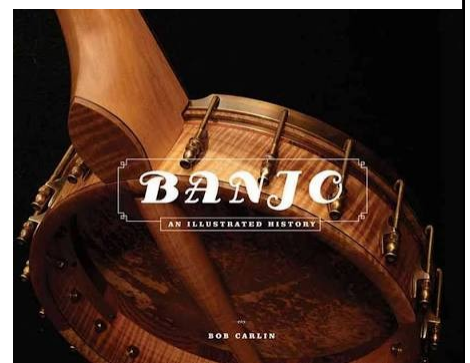
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The Banjo: An Illustrated History by Bob Carlin

As the season of good will approaches and many of our loved ones will be fretting about the difficulties facing them in choosing a suitable Christmas present for the banjo fan in their lives, I must draw your attention to a lavishly illustrated and banjo fact filled, new book about banjo history, written by acclaimed banjo historian and fine banjo player, Bob Carlin whose previous book 'The Birth Of The Banjo' (which is still available) proved to be such an absorbing read. Bob Carlin's new book, which has only just dropped through my letterbox, is beautifully produced and is lavishly illustrated throughout with many photographs of banjos of which we can only dream.

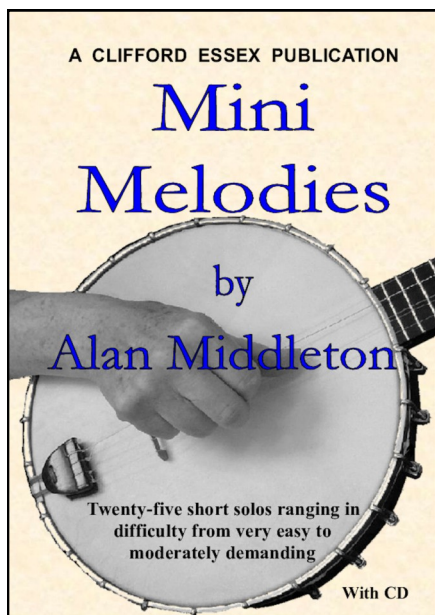


Richard Ineson

On searching the internet I found: 'Banjo: An Illustrated History' from: <https://wordery.com/> by Bob Carlin · Hal Leonard · Hardback · 256 pages · ISBN 1495011240. £18.73 + Free Shipping Worldwide. RRP £30.00 You save £11.27 (37%).

Editor

NEW ... MINI MELODIES by ALAN MIDDLETON

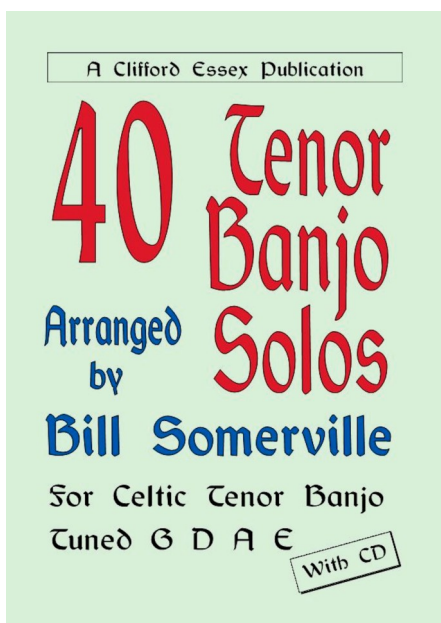


This is an Album of twenty-five short pieces written for the fingerstyle banjo in notation and tab by Alan Middleton who, in his own words “has been learning to play the banjo for over seventy years”. He first broadcast aged seventeen, and subsequently broadcast and appeared on television several times as a member of the famous ‘London Banjo Club’. He qualified as a music teacher, and taught it as a classroom subject for thirty years, while also teaching the banjo, the classical guitar, and harp in his spare time. The Clifford Essex Company published his comprehensive Banjo Tutor in 2011, and has recently re-published two Albums of his original banjo solos with the title ‘Banjo Bonanza’.

The pieces in this Album range in difficulty from ‘very easy’ to ‘moderately difficult’ and are intended for banjoists who want to improve their technique by playing short tuneful solos as a change from scales and arpeggios. There is an accompanying CD, recorded by the composer.

£12.00 + £2.00 postage.

NEW ... FORTY IRISH TENOR BANJO SOLOS WRITTEN IN NOTATION & TAB. COMPLETE WITH CD. COMPILED BY BILL SOMERVILLE



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CONTENTS

A. A. Gladstone (Edinburgh), The Atholl Highlanders, The Boys of Bluehill, The Butterfly, The Circassian Circle, Cork Hill, Crossing the Minch, The Cuckoo’s Nest, Cutting Bracken, The Curlew, The De’il Among the Tailors, Dennis Murphy’s Polka, The Derry Hornpipe, The Donegal Traveller, The Duke of Perth, The Earl’s Chair, Evan’s Slip, The Fairy Dance, Full Force, Hamilton House, High Level, The Humours of Whiskey, The Irish Washerwoman, Itchy Fingers, Jacky Tar, John Paterson’s Mare, Last Night’s Fun, The Liberton Pipe Band, Merryn’s Reel, Paddy’s Leather Brecks. The Piper of Drummond. The Rakes of Kildare, The Rothiemurchus Rant, The Seagull, The Showman’s Fancy, The Sound of Sleat, The Stool of Repentance, The Tenpenny Bit, Timor the Tartar, Toss the Feathers.



A ‘Must Have’ for all Irish Tenor Banjo Players. G D A E Tuning

Greetings to all tenor banjo players in the GDAE tuning, sometimes called Irish or Celtic banjo.

I have compiled and arranged 40 pieces of music covering Reels, Jigs, Slip Jigs, Hornpipes and Polkas which are eminently suitable for playing on this instrument. As I also play the Highland Bagpipe, I have, where possible, attempted to include the doublings and other movements associated with this instrument, which I feel gives greater effect to how the tune sounds. In saying this there is one movement – the ‘Birl’ which it is impossible to replicate on the banjo, but where I have included an effect to emulate it, the sound is good. There are many of the tunes which could make use of ‘hammering on’ ‘pulling off’ or ‘slides’, but I feel that the player will find those places where such an effect can be used. Likewise, I have not included any ‘double stopping’ or chords, which will depend on the players ability, but there are a number of places where these could be added.

Bill Somerville



THE BANJO STORY PART 19 by A. P. Sharpe

Readers are reminded that these instalments are updated from A.P. Sharpe's original typescript. His footnotes are shown between square brackets, and comments by the present editor are printed in italics between curved brackets.)

Realising their popularity with the British public, Raynor sent offers to leading American minstrels to come over and join him. News of Raynor's offer reached the ears of George Washington Moore, who had not received one of the invitations, but nevertheless boarded the next boat for England. Raynor engaged him, and his first appearance with the troupe was in June 1859. Moore was later to play a big part in the story of the Minstrels in Great Britain.



George Washington Moore

The St. James's Hall Concert Rooms (to give the edifice its correct title) were first opened to the public on 25th March 1858; the smaller hall on the ground floor with its entrance at Number 28 Piccadilly (to become famous as the 'home' of minstrelsy) opening a little later. The seating capacity of the smaller hall was at first about 550 and the stage of minute dimensions, but the site was good — right in the heart of the amusement world of London. For nearly forty years the smaller St. James's Hall in

Piccadilly was associated with burnt-cork minstrelsy. The first regular minstrel entertainment to be given in this building was, as mentioned above, Raynor and Pierce's Christy Minstrels in 1859, but it was George Washington 'Pony' Moore who could claim to have started the long continuous run of minstrelsy at this venue by opening with his company on 18th September 1865. The last minstrel show to be given there was on 9th April 1904, prior to the building being demolished to make way for the present Piccadilly Hotel. During those thirty-nine years, the walls of this little hall — to become famous the world over as the British Home of Ethiopian Minstrelsy — had resounded to the music and mirth of the minstrel men.

Company after company of minstrels followed each other at the St. James's Hall, organisations with such famous names as Moore; Crocker; Ritter; Hamilton; Christy; Moore & Burgess; the Mohawks, etc., and the early successes of some of these troupes paved the way for the reconstruction of the 'Minstrel Hall'. A new and enlarged stage was provided and a gallery erected so that the seating capacity was brought up to almost nine hundred. Many other innovations were effected and the hall was improved beyond all recognition by the 'regulars'. The original prices of admission to the minstrel shows remained at three, two and one shilling, but after the alterations several rows of armchair stalls at five shillings were added.

It is interesting to note that the rent of the hall at the beginning was fixed at £25 per week, and it was never increased beyond £40 at any time during the run of the minstrel shows.

It should be mentioned that immediately above the 'minstrel' hall was the St. James's Hall proper, the whole building having been built by Messrs. Lucas from designs by the architect Owen Jones. The cost was covered by a limited company formed by Messrs Beale & Chappell of Regent Street and Messrs. Chappell & Co. of New Bond Street. T.F. Beale and W. Chappell, the well known music publishers, were the actual tenants of the Crown for the land, holding it in trust for the Company. When the great hall, with over 2,000 seats, was opened to the public on 25th March 1858 with a 'Grand Concert' for the benefit of the Middlesex Hospital, the Prince Consort headed the distinguished audience. Some of the most famous composers and artists of the day performed in the St. James's Hall, where a much-publicised and well-attended series of 'Popular Ballad Concerts' were held regularly. Charles Dickens gave some of his famous 'readings' there, and Gladstone used the hall during his political campaigns. It was also the venue for the highly popular Essex & Cammeyer fretted instrument 'Festivals' from 1881 to 1900, and the minstrel shows would 'come upstairs' at Christmas times so that they could play to bigger audiences.

(To be continued)



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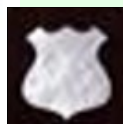
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Titles with an asterisk * are in the Ragtime Series. The most recent additions are in **Bold type**. List

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