

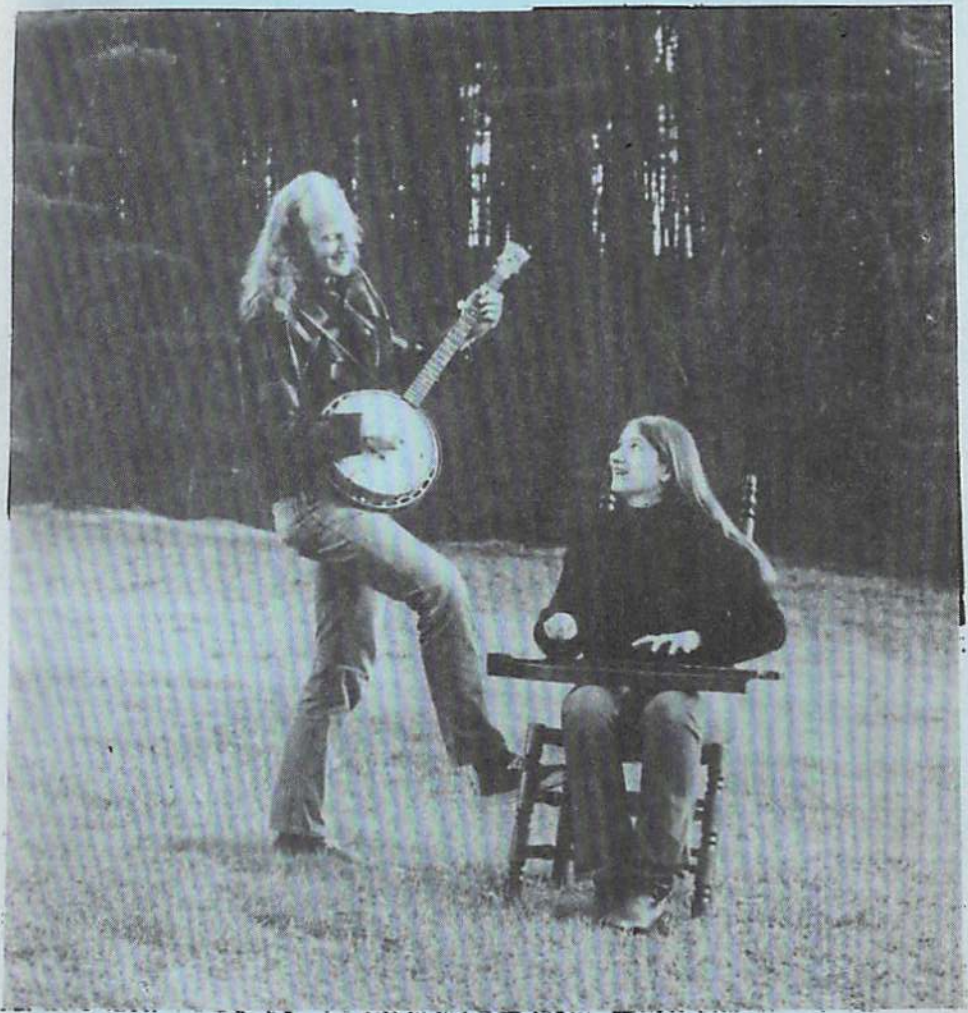
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THE DULCIMER PLAYERS NEWS

Volume 1, Number 4

May-June 1975

THE INFORMATION MAGAZINE
DULCIMERS * FOLK MUSIC * FRETLESS BANJO * BUILDERS



RICK and LORRAINE LEE



THE
GULCHER PLAYERS
NEWS

Volume 1, Number 1

1952

THE GULCHER PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

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THE GULCHER PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

No
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Please address all correspondence to:
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IN THIS ISSUE

The Market Place (our new advertising page)
The Feedback Letter
Dulcimer Album Review - B. Rodriguez
My Style of Dulcimer Playing - Holly Tannen
Dulcimer: Old Roots & New Roots - R. Nicholson
Dulcimers in the Smithsonian Collection
More on the Building With Plywood Story
Playing The Dulcimer - Dr. John F. Moe M.D.
The Fretless Banjo Page (tablatures)
The Builders Page - Songs - Tunes - & more

CIRCULATION THIS ISSUE 550 COPIES

COVER PHOTO

Our cover photo for this issue is of two fine musicians, Rick and Lorraine Lee, playing America's two native stringed instruments - the plucked dulcimer and the 5-string banjo.

Incidentally, Lorraine is playing a Jeffrey's dulcimer, and is one of the few women in the country who makes her living exclusively from playing, teaching; and otherwise being involved with the dulcimer. (see Market Place Page for their address and phone.)

WE NEED PHOTOS (black & white) for both the cover and other pages of the D.P.N. Send in what you can - we'll use it sometime for sure.

THE FEEDBACK LETTER

Dear Readers:

A great big, hearty thanks to all of you readers and friends who have so enthusiastically been supporting and passing on the word about the D.P.N. Its working, its heart-warming, and new friends just keep a-comin' in. I'd also like to welcome our new readers to this issue and point out that we are into this thing to provide a flow of information on all phases of the Plucked Mountain Dulcimer (both traditional and contemporary), and folk music itself in general. Anyone who has any info to pass on is certainly welcome to do so through the pages of The Dulcimer Players News - in short, its your magazine. We welcome the opportunity to correspond with one and all who are into the dulcimer, and share our interests.

We have changed our format a bit beginning with this issue (trying to look more attractive) and we've also begun to devote 1 tiny page to the fretless banjo (America's original banjo form). Besides sharing the instrumental interests, along with the dulcimer (of course) of the editor, it seems appropriate to cover something on this instrument, which, along with the dulcimer, comprise the only two instruments of a folk character which are native to America. So, if there are any fretless banjo freaks out there let us hear from you - this info is a bit scarce (just like chicken teeth).

This month we have a few more good points to pass along on some plywood feedback sparked by Don Romine's catalog reprint in our last issue. It seems there is no argument with Don's basic position about plywood dulcimers in general, but they do bring to light some areas where the plywood dulcimer might indeed have a rightful, useful, and proper niche.

Incidentally, Dr. Moe who authored one of the plywood articles (see address on Page 20) also sells Langelieks and passes on a good source of instrument woods for builders.

Well, things are humming and there's lots of real news to pass along so I won't take up much more space here. Hope you enjoy the issue! And do keep passing the word - its our best way to let folks know we're around.

PEACE & HARMONY- Phil Mason

P.S. You'll notice we've sent each subscriber a subscription blank and flyer for Sing Out! (The Folk Song Magazine) If you are not familiar with it its a fine publication, and sometimes they even include a little record with an issue. They have been very kind, friendly, and more than willing to help with our efforts here at the D.P.N. You will find that they do a lot to further the Folk Scene! - the People's scene.

BIG TIME DULCIMER BUILDER

At the D.P.N. we are more or less into furthering the cause of the small, individual craftsman who make dulcimers because they love to and want to. Our task is pretty easy in this respect because the individual craftsman is the way it is in the dulcimer building community. This fact is directly responsible for there being a very high quality (generally) line of dulcimers available in this country at a very reasonable (often dirt-cheap) price.

There is, however, at least one dulcimer workshop in the U.S. that is into dulcimers in a big way. The J.C. Shellnutt Co. makes both a high quality line of instruments, as well as a line of laminated (fancy term for plywood?) models. J.C. Shellnutt is the maker of "Magic Mountain" dulcimers (P.O. Box 548; Mill Valley, Calif. 94941. They are available

continued:

on a nationwide basis through the regular music trade and will send their catalog to anyone who requests it. They are moving soon to a new facility (4000 Sq. ft.) and feel that they will now become the largest dulcimer manufacturer in the country - if not the world. They offer special discounts for those who order direct from the factory. They have 6 models to choose from and also produce a "Presentation" model on special factory order. Mr. Shellnutt has been most helpful to the efforts of the D.P.N. and has sent us some nice photos of dulcimers which we'll be running soon.

3. STRAY NOTES

* SOURCES FOR WOODS & MATERIALS

Gurian Guitars Ltd. (see page 21)
Craftsmen Wood Service Co. 2727 S. Mary St.;
Chicago, Ill. 60608
Paxton Lumber Co. 6311 John St.; Kansas
City, Missouri 64123
Bill Lewis; 3607 W. Broadway; Vancouver B.C.
Guitar Center; Box 15444; Tulsa, Ok. 74115

* FOR ANOTHER SOURCE listing of builders supplies, etc. you might want to look into "The Luthiers Supply Directory". For details on this publication, write to: Greenleaf Music Limited; Rt 2, Box 149Y; Greenville, N.Y. 12083

* DAVID COLBURN of The Vintage Fret Shop (3 So. Main St.; Ashland, N.H. 03217) buys and sells vintage fretted instruments and also does restoration work. Dave says he is always looking for quality instruments (dulcimers) for re-sale in his shop. Phone (603)968-3983



MASON TUNING (10-11-12)

CORNSTALK FIDDLE
TRAD

4/4

Had a lit-tle fight with my moth-er in law

pushed her in-to the Ark-an-saw. Little old

la-dy she could swim, climbed right out and

pushed me in. Corn-stalk fid-dle cot-ton-

tail bow, heel and toe and a-way we go.

- (2) Had a little gal and her name was Sue,
She felt something in her shoe;
Took it off and found a dime,
Now she's barefoot all the time. (chorus)
- (3) Worked on the farm for my maw and paw,
On the banks of the Arkansas;
Hauled my corn with a mangy plug,
Sold my crop in a gallon jug. (chorus)

This tablature shows the melody string notation and musical rhythm (notes line) for the old favorite tune Cornstalk Fiddle. See page 12 for this tune in banjo tablature.



LAMENT FOR RICHARD FARINA

© SCRATCHWOOD MUSIC 1974

BY ROGER NICHOLSON

IONIAN TUNING
4/4 TIME

7	7	7	7	6	6	6	6						
5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4						
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
7	7	7	7	5	5	5	5						
5	5	5	5	3	3	3	3						
0	0	0	0	0	4-H-5	4							
5	5	5	5	7	7	7	7						
3	3	3	3	5	5	5	5						
0	4-H-5	4		0	0	0	0						
10	10	10	Roll 10	10	10	10	Roll 10						
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8						
0	10	11	12	12	11	10	11	12	12				
10	7	7	7	5	7	7	6	6	5	5			
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5				
11	8	0	0	0	5-6	7	8	8	5				
4	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	5	5	4	4	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3				
4-5	6	7	7	7	3-4	5	6	6	6				
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	2	1		
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1				
2-3	4	5-4	3	6-5	4	2-3	4	3	3	3	1-2	3	
3	3	2	2	1	1	2	4	4	3	3	2	2	0
1	1	1	2	2	2	0							
4	4	4	2-3	4	5	5	5	2-3	4				
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	1	0	0	
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
5-4	3	6-5	4	2-3	4	3	3	3	3	3			
1	1	1											
7	5												

LAST TIME →

NOTE: SEE ROGERS ARTICLE ON PAGE 22 FOR AN FURTHER EXPLANATION OF TABLATURE

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Soc. of Greater Washington Vol 5 # 6 Feb 1969

FRANK SCOTT of J&F Record Sales; 4501 Rising-
hill Rd.; Altadena, Calif. 91001 has informed
us that they stock all the records (still in
print) which we have listed on our several
quite extensive discographies (see D.P.N.
Vol. 1, No. 1) - including the English imports
by Roger Nicholson, Tim Hart, & Maddy Prior.
Write for their catalogs of American and English
folk music. These folks also stock the D.P.N.
in their retail store located at 44 N. Lake;
Pasadena, Calif. 91001.

NONESUCH FOR DULCIMER

A Review by Robert Rodriguez

One of the more interesting albums to come out of the current folk music revival in Great Britain in recent years is a record entitled "Nonesuch for Dulcimer", recorded by Roger Nicholson (Trailer LER 3034). This record would be interesting if for no other reason than the fact that it is one of the very few dulcimer records to be recorded outside of the U.S.A. With the exception of an old record of Irish folksongs done on dulcimer a number of years ago on the Traditional Label, Nicholson's album is perhaps the only album which features a predominance of dulcimer songs and solos outside the American folk revival. There is some use of the dulcimer on scattered discs by such performers as Tim Hart from Steeleye-Span, Ewan McCall, and Marty Carthy, but these are small in comparison to the overwhelming number of records currently available in the British Isles.

Roger Nicholson's record, however, is an interesting study in contrast. It consists of a number of tunes, mostly traditional in nature, featuring the dulcimer and a great deal of back-up guitar accompaniment. The tunes range the spectrum from songs within the British tradition to pieces that are classical in nature to tunes which are part of the American folk tradition itself. The album contains such songs as Good Old Colony Days, Newlan Town, I am a Brisk Lad, the Ladeley Worm, (all vocals), plus a number of pieces including Nonesuch, the title tune, Appalachian Medley, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, and several pieces from the classical repertoire. In general this album is rather good, but I think it has 1 or 2 deficiencies. The major one in my opinion is the overuse of the guitar accompaniments, particularly on the vocal pieces. On such cuts as the Ladeley Worm

and I am a Brisk Lad it is almost impossible to hear the dulcimer at all, which somehow spoils what is otherwise a good attempt to blend various styles of dulcimer playing into one cohesive recording effort. The instrumental pieces for the most part show the various styles and modes of playing the dulcimer and with its use as an accompaniment to traditional ballads; and also its use in traditional dance tunes such as Rakes of Mallow and other pieces it is shown in many of its aspects as an instrument of great versatility. On the whole I think this album, while containing some instrumental problems, nevertheless still comes across as a rather good album for anyone wishing to enjoy good and solidly traditional music from both sides of the Atlantic; not perfect, but nevertheless good all-round.

NOTE: Bob Rodriguez's head is a vast storehouse of knowledge on musical folklore, and folk ways in general. Bob is into teaching and broadcasting (has a radio show in N.Y.), as well as writing and other scholarly pursuits. We sure look forward to hearing from this great guy in future issues of the D.P.N.

KATHIE CLARK wrote in to let us know that she has been making and selling quilted drawstring dulcimer carrying cases (only \$15). So far, she reports, she has been selling enough to pay for her dulcimer collection - she's got 6 now and is now looking for a 7th. Her address is: 7923 Bainbridge Road; Alexandria, Va. 22308.

PLANS * PLANS* PLANS

Scott Antes (Rt. 1, Box 130; Hanover, Ind. 47243) sells about the best (and least expensive) plans that I know of for all sorts of great instruments, including both plucked and hammered dulcimers. He has also promised to do a plan for the D.P.N. if he can get the time.



OUR NEW AD POLICY

Beginning with this issue the D.P.N. will accept advertising in order to help with the expense of upgrading the printing quality, and also to meet the many requests we have received from both the readers who want to know what's available and small business folks who need to get their message to those readers. Please write for requirements on display ads. Classified rates will be 20¢ per word. Discounts available.



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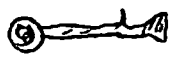
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THE FRETLESS BANJO PAGE

The requirements for executing the mechanics of fretless banjo playing are mostly kept very simple by even advanced players. (Its how the techniques are used that makes a virtuoso - not overnight, of course). Try the following banjo tune "Cornstalk Fiddle" (on fretted inst. if you like). Its in the downpicking style (clawhammer and the words can be found on the dulcimer page carrying the same tune in dulcimer tablature. TUNING GCGCD.

Try an occassional single string playing instead of a brush stroke on the second down pick of the index finger in the basic strum.
 WE SEEK FRETLESS BANJO INFO FOR THIS PAGE



John A. Moe, M.D. has been most kind in sending us much interesting info which we will be printing from time to time. He runs a small home mail-order business (see address on P. 20).

PLAYING THE DULCIMER

By Dr. Jack Moe

"If you can count to nine" you can be a Dulcimer Player some mountain folk are supposed to have said - that's not quite true - you should be able to carry a tune also, and if you can't do that, better buy a clog doll instead. But if you have an ear for music, you're all set.

First off, if you should happen to want a standard tuning in musical terms, you can tune to the key of G by tuning the bass string to G below middle C and the rest of the strings to D above middle C. You will (no doubt!) recognize this as the Ionian tuning, but this time specifically in the Key of G. The flash of insight that should strike you about now is that, aha, I can tune to any mode in any key! And that is so close to correct that I won't discourage you - at least you can tune to any mode starting on any note you wish. Anyhow, tuned to G as above, you can now play along with a guitar playing in G, or with a banjo in its G tuning. There's something a little strange about an autoharp played together with a dulcimer, but many find it interesting.

Take a whack at "Mary Had a Little Lamb". The scale starts, remember, at the third fret in Ionian tuning. Most folks who get this far can noodle it out from here, and I'm not going to press on with playing instructions. It probably will just "come natural" and of course there ain't no substitute for practice. You can play tunes out of your head - almost anything you know - and there are lots of Dulcimer books full of songs.

continued:

on p. 27

E	F [#]	G	A	B	C	C [#]	D				
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DULCIMER FRETBOARD - OPEN STRINGS TUNED TO D

In this tuning I can follow tunes in D, G, A, and E minor without retuning. All the chords are there for American and Irish Fiddle tunes, many Elizabethan and medieval dances, even ragtime. If I want to play in C or F, I tune all three strings down a whole note. My fretboard now looks like this:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	7			
D	E	F	G	A	B ^b	B	C				

DULCIMER FRETBOARD - OPEN STRINGS TUNED TO C

I fret with the ring finger and thumb of my left hand. The other two fingers I use to hold down the middle and bass strings when I play chords. Some players also use these two fingers on the first string; someday I'll teach myself to do that. I discourage students from attempting to play with one finger only, as it limits them unnecessarily. A noter, or small piece of dowl or bamboo to fret with, creates a slidey effect; I find it awkward to handle, and it prevents me hammering on and pulling off, two of my favorite effects. I am learning to imitate the sound of a noter by sliding with the side of my thumbnail; I don't have a callus there yet so this technique is still in the pain stage.

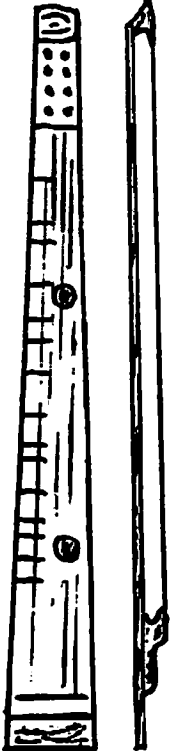
When I play American music I use the traditional "bombydy-bomp", down-down-up, down-down-up style I learned from The Dulcimer Book. In waltzes (3/4 time) this becomes down-down-up-down. ("Down" is a stroke toward me; "up" a stroke away.) When playing behind a melody instrument or a voice, I keep my accompaniment as simple as possible, using heavy downstrokes to accent important words or beats. In John Poole's song Jack The Lad, the first line of the first verse (repeated again at end of song) has a different rhythm than the first lines of the other verses. I play all downstrokes behind it to give it power:

Where's Jack the Lad, then? - Snuffed it, ain't he?

When you first begin to get proficient on an instrument, there's a tendency towards hot licks; to prove to yourself and your friends that you can really do it. This is fine; your own style will develop out of it. Later on, however, you may find that you want to simplify, especially when several instruments and voices are working together; the cleanest sound will result from mercilessly culling out all superficial notes. This gives the remaining notes space to breathe: like pruning a tree.

Some interesting new sounds have been coming out of my fingers recently. I've been moving away from chords, back into a more ancient modal sound. I've been playing more low notes on the bass string, and integrating syncopation and counter-rhythms.

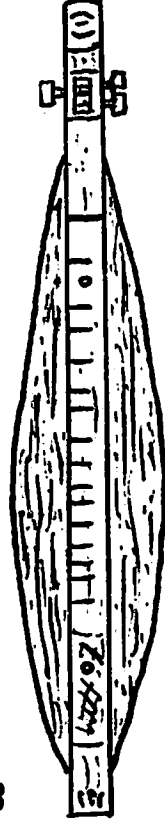
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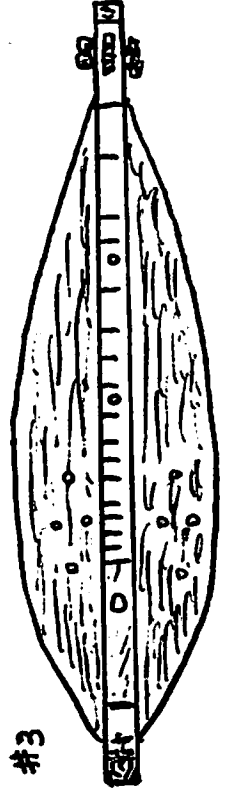
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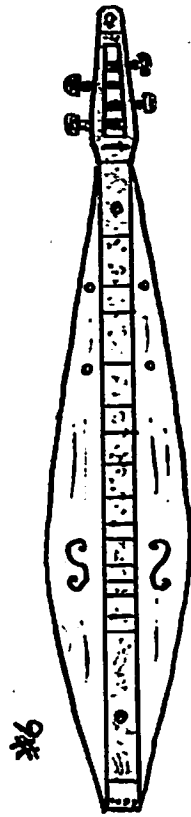
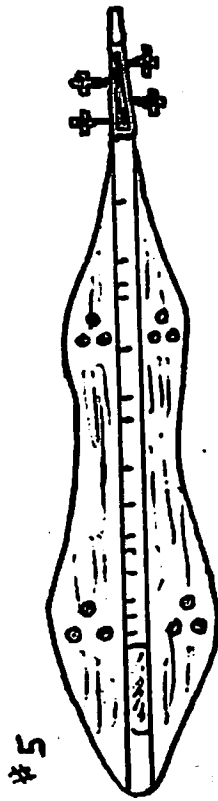
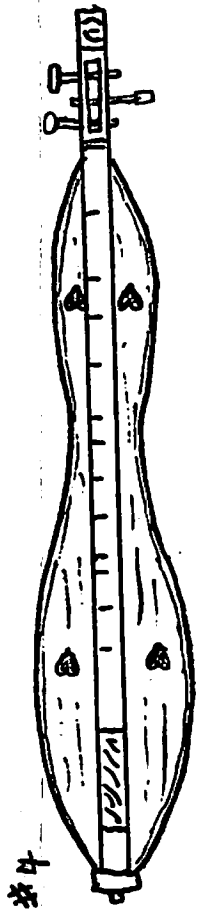
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#3



A



DULCIMERS IN THE SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION

Submitted by Roger Nicholson

Picture #1-A (see centerfold). Dulcimer and bow - George Daugherty, Grinder, Ky. 19th century. Caption reads: "This dulcimer is almost indistinguishable from the German Scheitholt, and reflects the influence of the many German settlers in the Southern Highlands."

COMMENTARY - Instrument has 8 strings, of which apparently two were used for melody. The bow seems to be the chief method of playing the scheitholt; it is the only method that I have seen mentioned in any source.

Picture #1-B. Epinette de Vosges - France, 19th century. Caption reads: "Used by peasants in the Vosges mountains of France, this is one of several northern European ancestors of the Appalachian dulcimer". COMMENTARY - This instrument also has eight strings, with a double melody string. However, sources indicate that it was played with a noting stick and a goose-quill pick, rather than a bow.

Picture #2. Dulcimer and bow - A.J. Willey, Grayson County, Va., circa 1875. Caption reads: "Made by the grandson of a German soldier in Cornwallis's army, according to family tradition, this dulcimer had two old quill picks and a noting stick still rattling around in it. It was sometimes played with a bow." COMMENTARY - This dulcimer is half-fretted, and equipped with only three strings. The most interesting point is that there are no holes on the soundboard itself, but only two small ones directly under the strings. The holes do not appear to enter the body of the dulcimer itself, but work only through the hollow fingerboard. I would not like to be the person who had to fish out a noting stick and two picks from that small cavity, as the caption indicates.

Incidentally, I sometimes wonder how one holds a dulcimer being played with a bow. Jean Ritchie shows a photo of a woman playing one with the dulcimer propped up against the table, facing the player. However, I feel that it would be possible to play the instrument on the lap, using the bow in the right hand with a back & forth sawing motion. A very flexible bow, such as the one Bob beers used for fiddle would make this easier. Have you ever tried playing with a bow? It is a very strang sound.

Picture #3. Dulcimer - Jacob Melton, Carroll County, Va., circa 1950. Caption reads: "Mr. Melton made many dulcimers for friends and relatives. He tuned all four strings to the same note (D), and fretted two strings together to play the melody." COMMENTARY - This four stringed instrument also has the main sound holes on a hollow fingerboard, but if you look carefully, you will see 4 small holes (about $\frac{1}{4}$ " dia.) drilled into the soundboard on either side of the fingerboard in a diamond pattern. I don't think that those holes particularly improved the resonance or projection, but there you have it.

Picture #4. Dulcimer - J.E. Thomas, Bath, Ky., 1927. Caption reads: "Mr. Thomas was an unusually productive dulcimer maker who sold his instruments by mail and to his neighbors." COMMENTARY - John Edward Thomas is, of course, mentioned by Jean Ritchie as one of the most prolific makers of dulcimers in Kentucky. He may have produced as many as 1500 instruments between 1850 and 1933. Jethro

CONTINUED →

Amberg, the man who made my dulcimer, said that he learned how from Mr. Thomas. It is also apparent that many of Ms. Ritchie's own dulcimers are styled after the Thomas pattern, especially in shape and proportion. The one most interesting characteristic of a Thomas type dulcimer is the method of attaching the strings at the bridge end. One small stick is all that is used. This is very compact, but it makes it difficult to change a single string.

Picture #5. Dulcimer - Maker Unknown - Glendonin, W. Va. 1875.
COMMENTARY - This is a nicely finished instrument, with a much more elaborate design than most of the others in the collection. The pegs are still hand-carved friction pegs, and the depth of the soundbox, plus the large triple holes in the soundboard would give this dulcimer a fairly good projection. It is still only half-fretted, with a double melody string.

Picture #6. Dulcimer - Kyle Triplet, Galax, Va. 1964. Caption reads: "Mr. Triplet made this dulcimer for himself and patterned it after one owned and played by a friend." COMMENTARY - This is the most recent dulcimer in the collection. It is very well finished, and is the only one in the collection that shows the use of power tools or any machinery. The pegs were definitely turned on a lathe. It is full-fretted, and aside from the f-holes in the body, and the smaller holes toward the top, the holes in the hollow fingerboard go through to the soundbox. Note the quill and noting stick at the bottom hollow? It is strange though, that the box in this instrument is much shallower than that on the older instruments.

NOTE: The COMMENTARY in this article is by Steve Greenburg, who says "All commentary on these dulcimers is based on my own observations at the Smithsonian Institution, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Smithsonian. I can't vouch for them, and they won't vouch for me!"

My style of dulcimer playing

♥ By Holly TANNEN

When I acquired my first dulcimer ten years ago, I also got Jean Ritchie's book. Following her, I tuned to D, A, & D an octave below. This gave me a mixolydian mode; by tuning the 1st string down a whole note, I could get a minor scale or aeolian mode. I played in this set of tunings for several years, until one night by the ocean in Big Sur I chanced to tune the middle string up to the high D. The first song I played was "Rovin' Gambler". It sounded so bright and clear that I've stayed in that tuning ever since; occasionally tuning the first string down a note for a minor, as I did before. When I discovered fiddles, I found that this tuning facilitated playing back-up to fiddle tunes. Any chord can be made simply by putting three fingers down on the fret of the same name (see Figure 1).

continued next page:

My first suggestion to anyone wishing to expand his or her style is still, as always, to find people whose music you like and jam with them. You will experience barriers to letting the music flow: self-doubt, fear of looking foolish, frustration at your inability to get in tune or play as well as you think you ought to. Rather than ignoring or resisting these feelings, take note of them, then put them aside for the duration of the session. Confront them afterwards: they'll teach you a lot about yourself. END

Holly Tannen will be doing a concert at The Chelsea House Cafe & Folklore Center in Brattleboro, Vermont on May 30-31. If you're in that area do stop in (8:00 & 10:00PM). Then we hear she will be off to England for a long stay?



MORE ON BUILDING WITH PLYWOOD

By R.L. Robinson - Editor
"Folk Harp Journal"

Dear Phillip Mason:

I note with interest the comments by Don Romine about the "vile abomination" of the use of plywood in dulcimer making - and other instruments. Insofar as he is referring to the use of Doorskin for this purpose, I agree. . .

The only real problem with cheap plywood in soundboards, is the pithy core, which absorbs vibrations like a blotter.

However, it is possible to obtain very fine plywood which makes superb instruments - soundboards included. Imported Finnish Birch Ply is available in thicknesses from 1/16" up. I use 1/8" 5-ply on my smaller harps, and up to 1/4" on larger ones. A great many very reputable instrument makers are now using this material for soundboards, including harpischord makers. This material has no soft core, all layers are

hard wood, and, of course, it finishes up beautifully. There is absolutely no shrinkage.

I think that Don, and other readers should express themselves frankly, but they also should try to teach in the process, i.e. why is it bad, what is better, and what does he use, and why? I also believe that there are lots of people who cannot afford finer instruments like Don's, and if they can get "through the door" with a cheepy, why not? Sooner or later they'll come to Don for one of his good ones.

At least one harp maker in the U.S. makes doorskin harps on a production line basis. And he sells them by the hundreds. The printed word cannot express my opinion of these instruments, yet a lot of people have gotten their start on them, and many have subsequently bought one of mine. When the time comes that there are enough makers to wholesale through dealers, and dealers have a wide selection on the shelf, then the general public will be able to see the difference, and make a choice according to their taste, and pocket book.

Sincerely, R.L. Robinson
Mt. Laguna, CA

P.S. You might find it interesting that I use Plywood for my harp necks and pedestals. It's available from C.A. Geers in Cleves, Ohio -- Panels come 40" X 56" X 1 3/8 for \$238.70! Did you say cheap plywood??

AND A WORD FOR THE PLYWOOD DULCIMER FROM:

Dr. J.F. Moe, M.D.
3500 Lafayette
Ind., Ind. 46222
"FLYING THINGS"

I enjoyed your Vol. #3 very much! I agree with Don Romine, but I would like to put in a word for the plywood dulcimer. It does have a place.

continued:

It is my view that the plywood kits we sell represent an opening of the opportunity to own a dulcimer to a wider group of people, and we sell them on this basis. I do not regard this as a lowering of standards when its handled in this way. Let's face it - there are more people who can afford one of our \$15-\$30 kits than can pay double to triple that amount for a better instrument - and then, at least they've got a dulcimer & can have FUN with it!!

My first dulcimer was a plywood kit dulcimer from McSpadden. I had a ball assembling it, and I thought it sounded great until I got a chance to play a better one. And this is an other important point: ANY dulcimer will sound good to you when you play it at home, for yourself alone. I still sit down with my McSpadden and it still sounds good - and it only cost me \$35.00.

So in summary, I think the plywood kit is a good, cheap place to start - learn how the dulcimer is built - learn how to play it - and then, graduate to one of the many fine custom-made instruments available. If you can start at the top, that's great! But so many of us just cannot.

I know Don Romine was discussing plywood ready-made dulcimers, but I'd hate to have a shadow cast on the kits - they are so neat!

EDITORS NOTE: Dr. Moe also sells top quality dulcimers (finished) by some of the very best craftsmen in the country, besides his neat kits. He also gives out the hint that you can put a pruce top on instead of the plywood one for a better tone. A suitable piece can be ordered from: Gurian Guitars Ltd., Inc.; Canal Street; Hinsdale, N.H. 03051 (These folks are a good source for a lot of musical instrument woods.) Dr. Moe even sends tapes of his instruments.

Greetings from England! This is by way of an introduction to a series of articles which I hope to contribute to The Dulcimer Players News (may it increase and prosper) during the next few months. These will cover a variety of related (and even obscure) topics including: "The Origins of Modal Music and its use in English Traditional Music", "Bach on the Dulcimer", "Comparisons Between the Dulcimer and the Sitar", "The Dulcinet", and other odds & ends.

My involvement with the dulcimer began in 1967 shortly after seeing one at the first Keele Folk Festival, I immediately related to it in a much more positive way than the guitar which I had been playing, and apart from its obvious visual attraction, was drawn by the quiet, introspective sound which seemed to have the same qualities as the lute and clavichord. Since that time the dulcimer has been a constant delight to me, and at various times has found itself involved in many kinds of music ranging from Bach to Blues.

My approach is mainly fingerstyle initially through the influence and encouragement of Howie Mitchell, the finest dulcimer player I've heard, with whom I had a series of happy correspondence, and from several other sources, including Indian sitar styles which with their use of hammered notes, pull offs, slides, and ornamentation, can be readily adapted to the dulcimer.

The solo music I play falls into three overlapping types; traditional tunes, early music, and my own pieces. The latter came about from a need to play music that was entirely dulcimer oriented, as opposed to things adapted from other instruments. So, by way of a start (and getting tired of the sound of my own writing) here are two pieces (see pages 7 & 24) which I hope you will enjoy playing, - 22-

both are in the Ionian mode and use three fingers of the right hand (thumb 1st string, index 2nd string, middle 3rd string) with a fairly complex left hand technique involving chord and counterpoint patterns. Neither use the 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ or "B" fret, as my dulcimers all have the standard fretting.

"Lament for Richard Farina" is circa 1970, it is a slow quiet tune and the middle section involves using the little finger of the left hand as a barre on descending phrases.

"Wyatt's Jigg" is more difficult, but being in the style of an Elizabethan jig is not as fast as the Irish variety.

More of these tablatures are available in two printed collections, "Nonesuch for Dulcimer" and "Musicks Delite" published by Scratchwood Music Ltd.; 138/140 Charing Cross Road; London, W.C. 2 - and I have also recorded them on corresponding records "Nonesuch for Dulcimer" (Trailer LER 3034) and "The Gentle Sound of the Dulcimer" (Argo ZDA 204).

Peace and best wishes,
Roger Nicholson

Editors Note: The D.P.N. is in possession of Roger's "Gentle Sounds" album, and the book of tablatures which comprise the album. We can certainly recommend it for those who want to listen to, and learn, some really fine music. Also, see the review elsewhere in this issue of Roger's other album, "Nonesuch for Dulcimer" by "Folklorist-extraordinary" Bob Rodriguez. The D.P.N. is real pleased to have these fine contributions from our English friend of the Dulcimer and its music. (Modal Music next issue)

WYATTS JIG

© Scratchwood Music 74
ROGER NICHOLSON

IONIAN (MAJOR) TUNING

(A)

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5 4 3	4 5	0 7	0 5	7	6 5	7 5
6 5	5 6 7	8 6	5 6 7	7 5	0 3	2 4 1
0 2 3	4 3 2	0 0	2 0	4	0 0	5 4 5 6
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COMING UP NEXT ISSUE: SOME MUSIC BY
JEAN SCHILLING



THE BUILDERS PAGE(S)

I'm mostly a Guitar and Mandolin maker but have made quite a few dulcimers on special order. Maybe I could give you a run down on the materials used, etc.

The backs and sides are East Indian Rosewood (Brazilian on request) Silver spruce tops or Cedar (your preference) Honduras Mahogany head and neck with rosewood fingerboard. Pearl inlays on the fingerboard, Grover rotomatics mounted on a contemporary head (but still retaining the traditional look), "floating" neck which I've had excellent results with. It increases the volume and response remarkably. I use a laquer finish, buffed to a high gloss. I will make them in 3-6 string models. The volume I receive from them is well suited to stage playing. The design is contemporary teardrop shape.

Yours truly, Peter Allan Sawchyn
2747 Wallace St.
Regina, Saskatchewan,
Canada S4N 3B9

Next issue we will run more builders on these pages but in the meantime you might like to know the addresses of some recent ones we've come across who will send prompt and often very interesting information.

Dick Manley

Route 129 & E. Mt. Airy Road
Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y. 10520

Incidentally, Dick Manley supplied the material for the Time-Life series called "The Family Creative Workshop" on the "How to Build a Dulcimer" section in Book #5. This book which covers more than just dulcimers is available for \$4.95 from Time-Life Books; Time-Life Bldg; Chicago, Ill 60611

Dick makes Guitars as well as Dulcimers (uses lots of nice woods too!).

Builders Page continued:

Scott Antes who we've mentioned elsewhere in this issue (the nice plans man) is also a builder of dulcimers, and is the new Secretary of The Guild of American Luthiers. They've got a great newsletter with highly interesting DATA SHEETS pertaining to the luthiers trade. Write for particulars and membership blank to Tim Olson, Editor; G of A.L. Newsletter; 8222 S. Park Ave.; Tacoma, Washington 98408.

E. Lourldey (Dervish Dulcimers) c/o Music Strings & Things; 1810 S. Woodward; Birmingham, Mich. 48011 is a Scotsman recently come to the U.S. to learn more about building dulcimers. We will be running a feature on his interesting letter recently recieved in the next issue.

THE SMITHVILLE JAMBOREE
(Ametuer Dulcimer Contest)

At Smithville, Tenn. on July 4-5 is held the largest combination old-time country music show and craft exhibit in the south (40,000 people last year).

Mr. Berry Williams, the director, has cordially invited all dulcimer players to attend (its free too!) their show this year. Berry is a dulcimer fan and feels that the dulcimer adds a lot to the show. There will be a TV show made of the event also for Educational Network showing all around the country. It should help to spread the word about dulcimers if enough of them show up.

Berry will also get any dulcimer player that wants to attend some free publicity, so drop him a line and some photos (with a short write-up) fro particulars. He's in a rush to get this stuff out. Write: Berry Williams, Director, P.O. Box 327; Smithville, Tenn, 37166 Its an ametuer contest for dulcimer as well as dozens of other categories of old-time music.

HAMMERED DULCIMER BUILDER

Don Round (6470 8th Ave; Grandville, Mich 49419) is a hammered dulcimer builder and makes a chromatically tuned instrument of all hardwoods - completely wood doveled. Don's son, Jay Round, has a terrific album out of very clear hammer dulcimer playing. Its called "Jay Round & His Friends" and is available from Don. Jay will have another album out sometime in late June.

* KIT CATALOG - You might be interested in the Pietro Derio Catalog (133 7th Ave. S.; N.Y., N.Y. 10014) its got lots of neat, inexpensive kits - double dulcimer, dulcimer, church dulcimer, folk haps, sitars, mountain banjos, (fretted or fretless) balalaikas, and lots of other stuff. Most kits run about \$30 - cheap enough for anyone to get a start on a "folk" instrument.

* DULCIMER BUILDING PLANS appear in this months issue of WORKBENCH mag. (vol. 31, no. 3) You can get a copy for 50¢ from: Modern Handicraft Inc.; 4251 Pennsylvania; K.C., Mo. 64111.

Playing The Dulcimer continued:

Playing the melody of a song is the most common way of making dulcimer music. Another attractive method is to play a countermelody or harmony part while singing the melody line. Mix it up some; play and sing the melody on one verse; then play it without vocal; then play a harmony while singing the melody - makes a much more pleasing and listenable performance.

It is possible to strum chords on a full-fretted dulcimer, and it only takes three chords. to play along with literally hundreds of songs. "Fingerpicking" can also be a useful variation that ties in nicely with chording. See especially McSpadden or Putnam for these techniques.

END

-27-

CONCERT AND WORKSHOP REVIEW
Phil Mason

Bless the Chelsea House Cafe and Folklore Center in Brattleboro, Vt. - they are doing the very finest kind of work there to promote all sorts of music of the folks. I had the pleasure of attending an afternoon dulcimer workshop & evening concert given by Rick & Lorraine Lee (our cover pic) and a wonderful young dulcimer musician named Kevin Roth on April 12th, and I came away from the whole affair very much inspired.

The workshop went pretty well and I think everyone came away with lots of new ideas and a greater appreciation for the possibilities of the dulcimer. Both Lorraine and Kevin play in a more or less complex chording style, but at the same time seem to be able to maintain some of the droning qualities so characteristic of the traditional instrument. (so-called)

It was the evening concert, however, which brought the essence of these fine performers music across. Rick and Lorraine combine the electric piano with the dulcimer and intersperse it with some of Rick's fine banjo playing. I must admit that I did not know what to expect of the dulcimer-piano combo, but it turned out to sound better than my beforehand imagination could have possibly comprehended. The ease and naturalness of it was quite logical, clear, and very consistently blended, which left me with much personal enjoyment - just a great sound! I understand they will have an album out soon, and you will, it to hear this great sound they've put together.

Then came Kevin Roth - solo on the dulcimer - and I found his music equally enjoyable! Kevin seems to have a special understanding for each piece he plays and maintains a very good rapport with his audience - involving them totally in what he's doing. He says

he does not know what to label his music, but I think its because he is into so many kinds of music that a "brand-name" just does not fit very comfortably - traditional, contemporary, and "other-such" are part of his repertoire. Besides writing some of his own music, Kevin performs some really fine pieces that you will not hear many performers doing these days,

Needless to say, this is a good review, and a good time was had by all in attendance.

COMING UP

DULCIMER RADIO SHOW - INFO WANTED !!

Kevin Roth is now working on a radio program called "The Dulcimer: its Music & its People" to be aired in late Summer over WHUY (90.9 Pitts. Pa.). This program should be a dynamite one with some of the planned features being both live and recorded music, histories, building ideas, interviews, record info, and info on dulcimer players around the country.

Kevin is actively seeking articles, tapes, and any other information that might be of help in putting this show together (it might even turn into a series - syndicated?). Kevin can be contacted at RD #1; Kennett Sq., Pa. 19348 - phone (215) 793-1498. All queries to Kevin about this most interesting project will bring a prompt reply, and we wish him all the good luck with his many fine endeavors on behalf of the dulcimer and its people.

Incidentally, Kevin is an avid collector of dulcimers and hopes to someday have on display the very finest representative collection of the dulcimer building art in existance. Of course he can't afford to buy dulcimers on a grand scale, but will be more than happy to make some arrangement with any builder who would like to be represented in his collection. Its a worthy project and perhaps Kevin will allow us to do a photo story on it in a future issue?

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!! BACK ISSUES !!

Since the demand is so high for all the many articles, bibliographies, discographies, playing tips, building info, songs, etc., that we have printed since our beginning in January of 1975, we are going to try to keep back issues available for all of those new readers who come along and want to know what we've been up to since starting this thing. Please send us a query for their availability and such.

OUR BOOKS & DEALERS INQUIRIES

We also publish and sell (which helps with the "News" costs) The Dulcimer Players Bible (\$4.95) and "How to Make and Play the Fretless Banjo" (\$3.50). We also welcome dealers inquiries regarding all of our publications - Free samples for all dealers inquiries first, of course!

SEE YA' NEXT ISSUE

HAPPY DAYS & HAPPY PICKIN' ! !

The Dulcimer Players News
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Bangor, Maine 04401



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