

Steel Guitarist

No. 5, May 1980

For the Player and Enthusiast

BUDDY EMMONS
New Column, Page 15

The Ralph Mooney Story

History of the Lap Steel Guitar

Detesto Numbers

The Making of "Honky Cat"

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Steel Guitarist

The Magazine For The Player And Enthusiast

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ARTICLES AND MANUSCRIPTS

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Cover Photo by Richard Young

From The Publisher

Buddy Emmons Joins SG . . .

● With this issue, Buddy Emmons becomes a columnist and Advisory Board member. Needless to say, a lengthy introduction of Buddy is not necessary. His omnipresence in the world of steel guitar has existed for well over two decades,

Buddy's column will cover a variety of topics as he shares his talent and years of playing experience. As an Advisory Board member, he will contribute to the growth and direction of the publication.

About The Accompanying Long Play Album . . .

● The phonograph record that accompanies this issue of SG is an added benefit for readers who have always wished they could hear an album before buying it. This album by Bobby Black was produced by the magazine in hopes of partly offsetting publication losses of the first four issues. Any business, and in particular a magazine, tends to fail in its first year. SG did not fold, but it experienced problems. The accompanying record is a way for readers to support the magazine and, at the same time, acquire a great deal of listening enjoyment. Bobby Black is

not as well known as other performers that have been recorded, but his music is as fine. He takes the steel guitar to another threshold, as he reveals his talent for today's popular music. If you appreciate his efforts, SG asks that you keep the record and send payment for it. If, however, it is not the music you prefer, just exercise the free return privilege, and use the box it came in to mail it back.

WANTED . . .

● Steel Guitarist magazine wants pictures of steel players who performed with Hank Penny. Preferred are pictures of those players appearing (See PUBLISHER on page 59.)

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Editorial

EDITORIALS: “Points Of View”

It is apparent that the past four editorials have truly involved readers, something few publications ever achieve. Readers are not simply entertained. They have thoughtfully contemplated the issues raised by these editorials. We at SG are quite happy about this because it is infinitely more rewarding to write for a readership of thinking people who cannot be “sold a bill of goods” or mentally arm-twisted into anything.

The Editorial on Taping Records

Most readers agreed with SG's first editorial. However, they felt things would not change: people would keep on saving a few dollars by not buying steel guitar albums (and would just tape their friends' copies) because they would not believe their “isolated” acts of copying would reduce, limit, and ultimately prevent the production of new steel guitar records. Yet some readers commented they would never allow one of their records to be taped again. We continue to believe that the taping of records that could be purchased inhibits the production of new steel guitar records. Of course, this is just a **point of view**.

The Editorial on Orchestrating the Steel Guitar

Reader response was in absolute agreement with SG's position. There was not a dissenting “vote.” Everyone seemed to recognize that steel players have (with just a few exceptions) played deadpan roles as musical performers. SG admits that our instrument requires a lot of concentration. Its players, however, do not have to appear welded to it. SG just wants livelier players who project the instrument (and themselves) so the public will come to recognize us more, as well as the instrument we play. That is our **point of view**.

SG vs. the CMA

When SG took the CMA to task over their award procedures (primarily their Instrumentalist Of The Year award), the reader response was “hit 'em again, harder, harder.” This was to be expected since we all have a vested interest in the steel and its players receiving recognition. SG's main position, however, was to question the CMA's award **process** and award **title**, rather than just to get a steel player the award. If the CMA wants to award an instrumentalist via a popular vote, they should call the award “The Most Popular Instrumentalist Of The Year.” Implying that any of their awards is for other than popularity is inaccurate. Never did SG expect the CMA (or any of the other award groups whose misleading shows are so often seen on television) to change. SG's goal was to share the **point of view** that these productions are a kind of propaganda.

The Stereotyping Editorial

With the “Stereotyping” editorial you **really** “came alive.” Your “point of view” surfaced! Interestingly, many readers

stated they had never even thought of the examples presented by SG. Yet once aware, they either opposed SG's position or supported it, usually quite forcefully. There was little middle ground. Regardless of SG's position, all readers are correct, valid in their position, and are absolutely right! Why?

An editorial is just a **point of view** of the management of a publication (newspaper, magazine, newsletter, etc.). SG could have a column titled “The Forum” and use it to say the same thing. One of the magazine's writers could use his column for that purpose. Actually, our “Bar Chatter” is a reader's editorial column. Even writers of feature stories include some editorializing, that is, their **point of view** on the topic they are covering. For writers not to editorialize is to have textbook commentary that leads a reader to yawn and move on to another article or column. SG feels that its readers can spot this form of opinionating without always labeling it as a “point of view,” “a position,” or a “subjective feeling.”

Actually, everything said or written is subjective. The very decision to say one thing instead of another involves subjective determination. Even presenting only facts can be deadly, as Mark Antony's famous speech in **Julius Caesar** proves. In contrast, SG's editorials were all straightforward. We do not budge from the positions taken. We do want everyone to accept what we said as just one **point of view**, no more, no less. If it informs, entertains, and instructs, we are pleased. If it happens to stimulate thoughtful contemplation, we are delighted.

One fear an editor has is to be misunderstood. Much was read **into** the Stereotyping editorial that was not there. It was said that SG hates Country music. Not so! We do not like poorly played Country music (or poorly played any kind of music). It was said that we “put down” the players of the steel guitar who played Country music. Not so again! We said the public could do this by the steel's association with those aspects of Country music which painted such distorted pictures of seamy aspects of life, and through that music's so-frequent emphasis, that listeners come to view the Country music fan **and player** as forever absorbed in those aspects. When that kind of identification occurs, the steel guitar and its players are dumped into the same barrel. SG does not want that to happen.

In conclusion, we ask that readers recognize editorials simply as positions on a subject. Just weigh and consider those positions. Take from them what you want, reject what you will. Just be able to listen to a **point of view**. ■

The letters (articles!) on the following pages were selected from the scores received which commented on the “Stereotyping” editorial. These tend to capture these reader's points of view on SG's point of view.

Significant Responses to "The Stereotyped Steel Guitar"

"Bravo" . . .

I just have to tell you how close to my heart are your comments on the grade and quality of music that the steel guitar accompanies. I say "bravo" for SG. ...Eddie Alkire, Easton, Pennsylvania

"Kicking The Steel" . . .

As usual, your last editorial was running country music into the ground. As you are continually saying it is the player's fault for promoting this sound, why don't you and the rest of your group of merchandisers and manufacturers stop selling E9th guitars, records, instructional materials, etc.? This would be a big help to stop the "wailing sounds" that are filling your wallets. The two pages you wasted could have been used to expand on Anderson's article on the Universal E9th. Two pages could have given me a basic idea of how to use it. Tell me how to get a few 6th sounds on my guitar. Use two pages for that! Not all of us are friends with all the professionals. Some of us, like myself, might get to talk to another steel player once a year, at best. I feel you are underestimating country steel. If you keep kicking it, you will start losing subscriptions. ...Jerry Deschler, Franksville, Wisconsin

Cleaning It Up . . .

I agree with you 100%. Instead of limiting it to the steel, I would like to see all Country music cleaned up and some dignity, pride, and self-respect shown by players, writers, and listeners. I get so tired of hearing the same "seedy" stories time after time. It is a shame how boxed in Country music has become. As a Christian, I find it difficult to use a lot of music in our teaching program. Our customers and students that are Christian find it very distasteful, too. I was happy to see someone in the business speak out on the subject. I doubt that we will ever see it changed, but perhaps our kids will. ...Kathy Davis, Lima, Ohio

Roll Over Beethoven . . .

In reference to your blistering critique of the world's greatest music, it is too bad you West Coast people are not hearing the beautiful sounds that flow into Ohio. The steel guitar gained its prominence in Country music. The pedal steel created the "Nashville Sound" and, by doing so, has established for itself a place in the sun.

From time to time people have attempted to remove the steel guitar from its natural habitat. When this occurs, its popularity withers, for there is no sound on earth as refreshing and exhilarating as the haunting strains of a good whisky-drinking, home-wrecking Country steel guitar. Us Buckeyes can't get enough of it! So, in closing, may I remind you, if Beethoven were living today, we'd find him on pedal steel, half drunk, in a rustic roadside tavern. ... Jay Hannan, Columbus, Ohio

It's Where It's At! . . .

I disagree with some of the comments in your latest editorial. I listen to country music for more than one reason. Many of the reasons you characterize as detrimental to the image of the steel guitar are the very reasons I prefer country music. I do not play steel, but I am among its most ardent admirers!

Country music is a wonderful free-form expression of love, honor, and disrespect for anything that exists. As David Allen Coe has said, the perfect country song must contain references to many familiar subjects. The steel guitar

is the perfect foil for these subjects. As a non-player, I can feel the love, pathos, and happiness the players express in many songs. All really good steelers can convey emotions, even if they are backing up "You Stepped On My Heart And Stomped That Sucker Flat" or "Drop Kick Me, Jesus, Through the Goal Posts Of Life." These are great songs! Grammatically poor, but fun!

Think about it; most of these songs also employ at least a guitar, drums, piano (or keyboard of some kind), and lots of back up for the vocals. Has anyone said that these other instruments are being ridiculed by the same tunes and words? Frankly, most of country music would be really dull — without the steel! ...Cathy Schmitz, Redondo Beach, California

"A Cheap Shot . . ."

Come on SG. Time to get down off your soap box and get in touch with reality. Pretty soon you will have the sweet potato players of America screaming that their instrument is stereotyped, too.

It is beginning to look as if you have created a platform with this magazine on which to vent personal frustrations on us supposedly apathetic players because our beloved instrument, according to you, has not been able to escape the musical boundaries within which it was created. Is it solely the players' fault when instructional material and steel recordings available today still offer the likes of "Crazy Arms" and "Cheatin' Heart," while steel's jazz proponents still play tepid be-bop arrangements from a bygone era?

I do not feel that this "stereotyping" falls solely on the players' shoulders as much as you imply, especially in light of the aforementioned statement. If someone other than the steel players themselves, i.e., record companies, producers, promoters, etc., thought that there was a buck to be made by utilizing the pedal steel in some other musical idiom, you would see 'public acceptance' grow in leaps and bounds, proportional to the amount of product released. The same goes for any other 'stereotyped' instrument.

You should face it: there are some musical instruments which are, and always have been, accepted universally, regardless of musical categorizing, i.e., piano, bass, guitar, and drums. One can find these instruments at the forefront of every musical style from Bach to rock and everything in between. To expect all musical instruments to share the acceptance and popularity of these instruments is absurd.

Of course, there are dozens of musical instruments one might classify as 'specialty' instruments, one of which would be the pedal steel. Why you have singled out the pedal steel as the "oppressed" specialty instrument is beyond me. Frankly, I think it is a cheap shot to use a magazine, supposedly dedicated to the steel and its players, to knock us in your editorials.

Washboard players of the world, arise! Push your instrument into all the "other musical spheres it is so capable of influencing and enhancing," but beware! Not of yourselves, mind you, but of an apathetic public and dishpan hands. ... Barry Blackwood, San Jose, CA

Hearing With The Eyes . . .

Your editorial was great! And, I might add, it took no little guts to print it. You left out only one thing: most people hear with their eyes, instead of with their ears. You can have a steel, piano, bass, drums, and sax playing Perdido in a club, and, if the people dancing are wearing

Cont. on page 9

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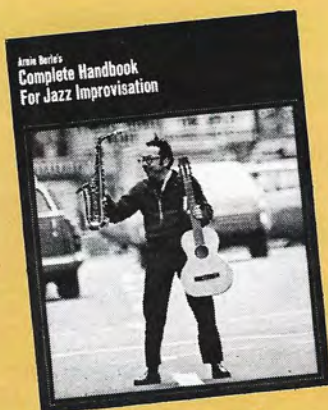
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cowboy hats, people arriving will say, "Kee-rye-st, I can't take cowboy music." You take the same 5 musicians, dress them in tuxedos, and have them play the same tune, and the same people will come in and say "Now, that's what I call music." Stereotyping can take on a form that is damaging to the steel guitar in other ways. . . . Dave Lemke, Pendleton, Oregon

Stepping On Toes . . .

SG's editorial would leave us only the gospel groups, with which we might regain and hold on to our steel guitar's virtue. First of all, whatever we fancy ourselves, SG would agree we are entertainers. No matter what the words of a song, with the rest of the band and singers, we play whatever compliments the song and entertains the listener. One can image Emmons, Green, or Rugg first reading the lyrics, then refusing a session because of the writer's demeanor!

SG really stepped on my hillbilly toes by its condemnation of our manner of speech. You simply mistake dialect peculiar to a region for "altering the language." Most of us in this corner of the continent feel more comfortable with our idioms and colloquialisms than with trying to mimic, say, West Coast brogue. But law me! I done digressed off'n what I'se aimin' to say, and that is: music speaks a universal language surmounting oceans, continents, and other great barriers. Southeastern or West Coast people share a certain dialogue. What is to say, I git the drift of your melodic messages, and you know what a "winder" is, OK?

Moreover, Country music began in this 'cain't" and "winder" part of the world, y'all. This is where writers and singers actually were born, grew up, and lived in the isolated backwoods-dusty-roads-poor-places known as "country," and there are those of us who believe that somewhere under all that might lie something worth preserving that could be considered—perhaps pondered upon—rather than derided.

Last is my whole reason for disagreement: whatever the message or non-message contained in a song, a good steel guitarist, worth being heard at all, can make felt the presence of the steel guitar as he or she interprets the mood of that song. Also, to the contrary, a truly POOR steel guitarist ("Jambalaya"—Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and "Fire On The Mountain"—Marshall Tucker Band) can be totally ruinous to a song and, even worse, that steel guitar image with which you are so besotted.

In closing, 1) You have founded a great steel guitar journal, and I look forward to each edition. 2) You don't really believe your editorial! . . . Jack Lewis, Berea, Kentucky

No Melodrama . . .

Thanks for speaking out on the stereotyped steel, as well as the sad state of Country music. By the way, I did not think the editorial was melodramatic. It was to the point! . . . Dan Morris, Euclid, Ohio

It Happens All Over . . .

Concerning the editorial on stereotyping, I agree that some steelers are being put in a box for not playing all types of music. Because of this box, other musicians will not give us a chance. Did you ever try cracking the other types of music and get told you cannot cut it because you (a) are not into pot or uppers or worse; (b) are over the age of 35 and do not understand hard rock; (c) do not have a musical degree; and, (d) are not serious about music because you have got to work days to keep body and soul together? One statement is as "good" as the other. Those who work solely within one category of music tend to stereotype other categories, so it is not just the country boys who have been put down. Concerning your list of stupid country lyrics, look at these

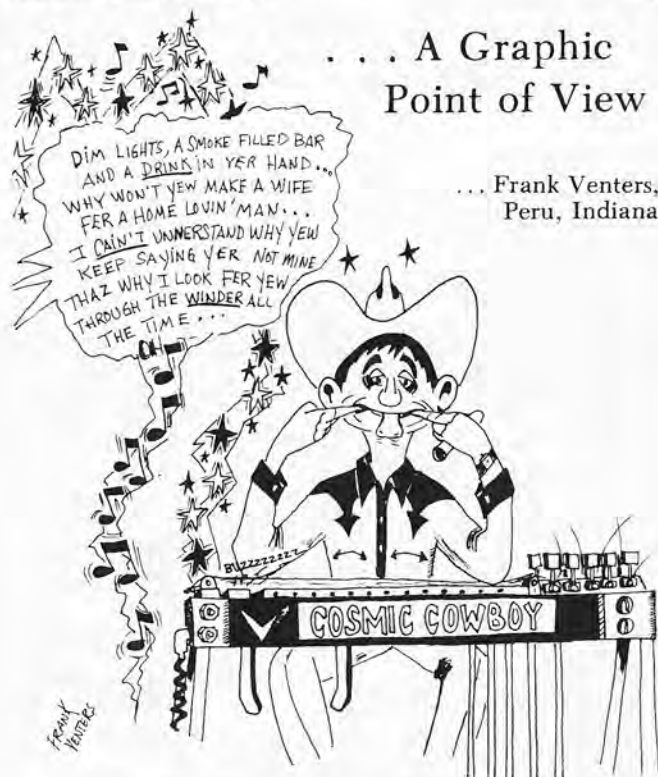
non-country idiocies: "Come on, come on, let's make a baby," "Boogie oogie oogie till you can't boogie no mo'," "Let me go up on your mountains and fly down in your canyon," and "Oooooooooh, it's so good, it's so good, it's so goooooo!" Some have orgasmic breathing in the background. The country boys at least try to keep that stuff under cover, if you will pardon the play on words.

In addition, many of rock's steel pickers really depend on gadgets to make the other boys pay attention to them. When they do get a chance to solo, they have to play some stuff that country boys outgrew in the early '60s, before the "hot licks" school came to Nashville. I am not criticizing people who use effects, because I use them; and, sad to say, the only time other musicians seem to respect me is when I put fuzz and faze on and try to blow them off the bandstand. I hate it, but it seems the steelers are supposed to sound like lead, while the lead men want to sound like steel.

I'm not trying to cut you down. If I had wanted to, I would not have renewed my subscription. . . . George Smith, Marshall, Texas

It Needed To Be Said . . .

I appreciated your last editorial. It said a number of things that needed to be said about some of the negative company the steel guitar has kept, while those of us who are identified with moralizing cannot say it. . . . Fred Layman, Nicholasville, Kentucky



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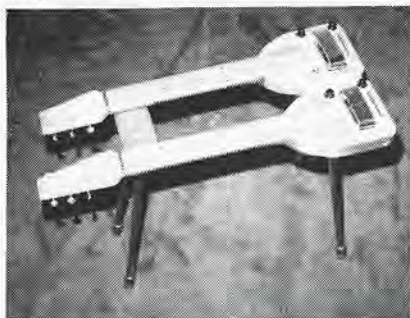
Bar Chatter

Steel "Rebirth," Winnie Winston, and SG mentioned . . .

● SG should be aware that Rolling Stone magazine recently devoted a full page to their apparent "discovery" that the steel guitar is back (they must be kidding!). The article by one Chet Flippo was well done, with his mentioning of Ralph Mooney, too. Winnie Winston was covered in a feature story in Guitar Player magazine recently, as well as the mention of SG's existence. Does this mean we are getting on the musical map? . . . Roy Rochelle, Pittsburg, California

More Information On The Trotmore Steel . . .

● Adding to your past discussion, I have supplied a photo of probably one of the rarest of all the Trotmore's. This was built in approximately 1955 by Ira Trotmore, an engineer at WLAC-TV, Nashville. . . . Bill Joerger, Dumfries, Virginia



Faster Faster Left Hand Speed . . .

● I keep a small rag moistened with "Armorall" to wipe the strings of my steel. This treatment speeds up my left hand movement and reduces string wear. My tone and string response are not affected. . . . Eldon DeCami, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Bonvillion Is Finally Recognized . . .

● It was very good to read about Johnny Bonvillion (Western Swing Steel in SG #4). I knew him personally, and he is everything Ralph Sheets said he is. It feels good to hear about some of us Louisiana boys making it good. . . . George Smith, Marshall, Texas

Left Handed Thumb Picks Wanted . . .

● Where can I purchase left-handed thumbpicks? I am desperate! Danny Osborne, Route 2, Box 293, Wilkesboro, North Carolina 28697.

Slim Pickin's in Western Australia . . .

● There are less than a dozen of us pedal steel "tryers" in this state in Australia, with just over a million people. I know nearly all of them personally. Two I have only spoken to on the phone. One of these, I hear, is a great C6th player and the other plays a four pedal E9th. Our best local steeler is Allan Eamons (C6th and E9th), and he plays with a local group called Branded Country. Lucky Oceans is spending six months here, but I have not caught up with him yet, but hope to soon. We have a little C & W club here, where I back up the singers (good and bad) on lead guitar and E9th pedal steel. It is a lot of fun and good experience, but my throne could be toppled by a couple of budding lead players and a Hawaiian player (Bill Stacey) who is converting to pedals. Actually, I would like to see more steel players come along so I could listen and compare myself to them (players of my caliber). Brilliant players blind me with the "science" of their work. . . . Wally Harland, Bicton, Western Australia

Words On The C-6th Column . . .

● Congratulations on the addition of the Herbie Wallace C6th column. For many of us bedroom pickers, learning C6th is like becoming conversant in Sanskrit. E-9th, unfortunately, lulls us into a feeling we can force all we need from one tuning. I heard Herbie pick in Atlantast last year at a local steel fest, and I have been uncomfortable ever since. Listening to Chalker only adds to my discomfort with E9th as a sole mode.

Space is precious in your magazine, and I would urge your contributing writers and editors to pare down the material as much as possible in the educational columns and save the opinion for the editorial columns. As we hungrily hang onto each word you publish, we sometimes are left unsatisfied at the 30 mark of each article. There should be no limit to the material available to you. Your current writers are doing a fine job, but have them keep the opinion and personal feeling spartan and the information gushing.

You have embarked on an enterprise that fills a void. Luckily for you, the void is unfillable. . . . Wade Medlock, Stone Mountain, Georgia

Additional "Rare AX" Entry and Some Korea Nostalgia . . .

● "Rare Ax" enthusiasts may be interested in this 1940s model Epiphone, twin-8 lap steel. It had no legs. Later, I built a cabinet on which it could rest and be elevated for playing. It had a beautiful rose finish with a sunburst finish on top. Interestingly, I bought it in a music shop in Tokyo in 1950 for \$90.00.



The group may offer a bit of nostalgia for some readers who played during those years. We called ourselves the "Starlite Playboys." We were featured every morning on the Far East Network for the Pacific Theater during the Korean War. We were all attached to the 5th Air Force, 35th Fighter Wing, in Japan and Korea. We toured both places, as well as the Philippines and other Far East bases. We were featured in *Country Song Roundup* magazine in an article which appeared after we had been shipped home and broke up. In the photo, left to right, are Rollie Sheets, Johnny Taylor, me (squatting), ? Woods, and Red? I cannot recall some of their names: it has been a long time! . . . Neal Gray, Channelview, Texas

In Memorium . . .

● One of our greatest and best steel guitarists in the Jacksonville, Florida, area passed away January 3, 1980 (rather unexpectedly in a local hospital following surgery complications). His name was Wally Yancey, and he came here from Memphis, Tennessee, a few years ago. Wally was only 42 years old and very active. He will be missed by those friends who appreciated him for the fine man he was, as well as the fine music he provided. . . . Bill Echols, Atlantic Beach, Florida

(See **BAR CHATTER** on page 55)



Roots Of Steel

The Ch'in

Retracing the Ancestry of the Steel Guitar

This column has discussed how the Yamoto-goto (SG #3) and the Gottuvadjam (SG #4) have been played with a bar-like accessory to chance the string pitch and provide a glissando effect. I have not been able to get a date for the development of the Gottuvadjam, though the Yamoto-goto is better documented.

The Yamoto-goto

This instrument has been in use in Japan for about 2000 years and has only fallen from general use within the last 50 years. The earliest record I have found is in the *Montoku Jitsuroko*. (These are historical notes written in Chinese which cover the period from 850 A.D. to 858 A.D.) These notes mention that, in 853 A.D., a Courtier called Sekio excelled in playing the Kin. (Kin, or Ch'in, are the names of the Chinese instruments that become the Koto and the Yamoto-goto in Japan.) A quote from the notes indicates, "Sekio especially loved to play the Kin, and the Emperor presented him with a secret handbook for the instrument." This shows that by the year 853 A.D. the Yamoto-goto and the Koto were well established in Japan.

The Gottuvadjam

The following notes were discovered in the book by George S. Kanahale titled *Hawaiian Music And Musicians*, 1979, University Press of Hawaii, pp. 96-97.

"The *gottuvadjam* and the *vichitra veena* [also an eight-stringed Indian instrument] have a common playing technique but are structurally different. The former is a concert instrument found in the southern peninsula of India; the latter is a concert instrument of the north. Both are plucked, but the melody is produced by sliding an ebony rod or glass ball over the strings. Pitch variations are obtained by changing the pressure on the string [pressing it with the rod or ball]. If the *gottuvadjam* can be called a lute without frets, the *vichitra veena* is a zither without frets. The name *gottuvadjam* is derived from *kodu* [the small slide rod] and *vadyam* [instrument]. The instrument probably came to India with the people of Gandhara in the 3rd century.

"The *kodu* [slider] used with such instruments was originally called *kamrika* [a small bamboo length of 15 to 25 cm] and is mentioned along with the *ekatantri* by the writer Nanya Deva in the 11th century A.D. The *ekatantri* was a single-stringed zither, with one gourd, held across the body. The string was plucked with one hand and the *kamrika* moved over it with the other. The sliding technique used with the *gottuvadjam* and the *vichitra veena* — and the steel guitar — is historically as old as the 6th century A.D. at least; and, if the even earlier *ghosha* [a zither-like instrument] used the *kamrika*, it is as ancient as 200 B.C.

"Whether there is a definite link between the *gottuvadjam* and the steel guitar is an intriguing question. It has been raised in particular by historians of the steel guitar because of the claim that Gabriel Davion, a musician who came to Hawai'i from India in the late 1800s, was the inventor of the steel guitar."

The Ch'in

On this instrument, which in Japan became the Yamoto-goto, information is sparser. This is because musicologists tend to classify instruments in a way that suits their own needs or they have a basic misunderstanding of the instrument. Thus, the Yamoto-goto is listed as a zither or harp, neither of which it is, and the Ch'in is listed as a lute, which it is not. The drawings that I have found seem to show the Ch'in as being played like a steel, though no mention can be found of the use of a bar.



The only left hand techniques I could find for the Ch'in were for producing harmonic tones. I did find the following quote that is of interest: "One of the greatest peculiarities in the playing of the Ch'in is the sliding of the left hand fingers." This is from a book written in the early 1800s and makes me wonder whether a small bar or stick was used but not noted by the writer. The age of the Ch'in is not covered by anything that I could find, but here is another writer's quote: "This instrument was played upon by Confucious and the sages at antiquity."

References: *The Chinese Long Zither*, by Fredric Lieberman, and *The Lore Of The Chinese Lute*, author unknown.

The Hawaiian Guitar

I have heard and read various accounts of how the Hawaiian guitar was "discovered" or created. All of these stories are similar. Credit for the Hawaiian style of playing and Hawaiian guitar itself is always given to Joseph Kekuku around the year 1800. Here are some of the various versions of the story of its origin:

1. Joseph Kekuku was adjusting the nut of his guitar with a pocket knife when he accidentally dropped the knife down the strings, producing a glissando. He was so delighted with the sound that he went to the machine shop in his school and made a steel bar.

2. At the age of eleven, Joseph was playing a guitar with his cousin, Sam Nainoa, a violinist. Joseph liked the soothing sounds of the violin. He wanted to get those sounds on his guitar but thought his fingers absorbed the vibrations. He decided to try to stop the strings with something different, and so he used a comb. He liked the effect that he got and later began using a glass tumbler, the tone of which he found to be superior.

3. Joseph was sitting with his guitar across his lap as he opened a gift. The present proved to be a pocket knife which he accidentally dropped. As it slid down the neck of his guitar, it produced a sliding chord. He liked the sound so much that he had a friend make a bar for him. The rest is history.

Joseph Kekuku lived for many years and surely provided an authentic version of how he "invented," or "discovered," or "created" the Hawaiian steel guitar. It is strange to me that, even with his many years of touring and playing, various versions of his discovery have come to us today. Frankly, I view all these stories as unlikely. If you doubt this, drop a knife down the neck of your guitar, and see what you get.

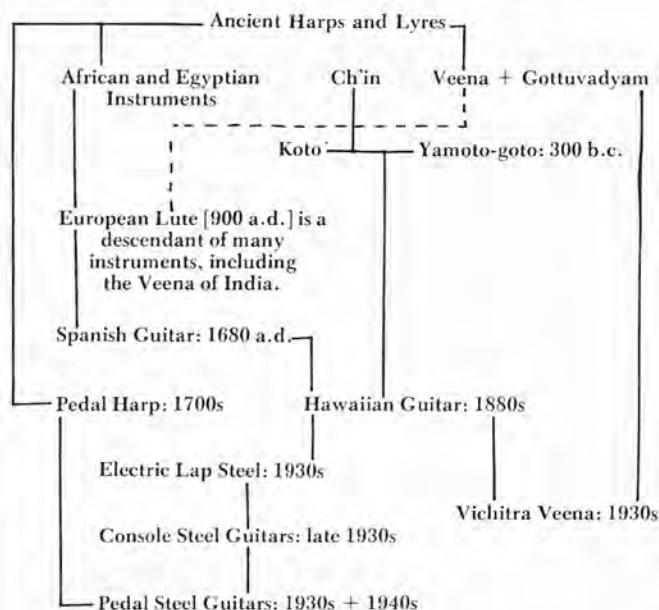
It is not my intent to take any glory from Kekuku. Any one of the previous explanations could be accurate, and, in reality, Kekuku probably had a lot to do with the Hawaiian steel guitar as we know it today. However, consider Kekuku's contributions in light of some Japanese history as it reflects on the Yamoto-goto already mentioned. During the 1700s, there was a lot of concern in Japan that foreigners were ruining Japanese culture, so the country was closed. For a long time, no one entered or left Japan. The only exception to this was the all-important trade with China, and that was restricted to the port of Nagasaki.

All during this time, there were power struggles between the reigning Shoguns and the Emperors. When, in 1868, the Emperor regained his power, he reopened the country to trade and travel. At this time, many Japanese left Japan to live and work in other countries. One of the places was Hawaii. As a result, the 1870s saw many Japanese settle in Hawaii and bring with them their trades, religions, arts, music, and, no doubt, the Yamoto-goto, which, as I said, was used in their religious ceremonies. Interestingly, two things happened within ten years of each other: (1) The Japanese (with their Yamoto-goto) settled in the Hawaiian islands (in the 1870s); and (2) Joseph Kekuku "invented" the steel guitar (in the 1880s). See what I am driving at? Many people have claimed many ideas as their own, though they only adapted the idea for their own use. I have little doubt that Joseph Kekuku developed the Hawaiian style of playing guitar (no small feat in itself), but I find it hard to believe that he invented the whole thing on his own. Before the Europeans arrived in Hawaii, the only native instruments were crude rhythm instruments. The Portuguese brought various instruments to Hawaii, including the guitar and another instrument, the braga, which the Hawaiian's turned into the ukelele.

Wrap Up

The resource information provided in this and the previous "Roots . . ." columns was obtained from the San Francisco City Library and the University of California (Berkeley) library, including the latter's music library. After eight days of reading everything related to, or distantly related to, the steel guitar, I now conclude that each writer drew heavily from each other writer preceeding him. The result is that few credible sources exist that provide detailed, or even documented, history of this instrument. The information contained in this and the prior "Roots . . ." columns is all the "meat" there appears to be. Little of this history can be proved or disproved because it is no vague Nothing can be taken for granted as truth and fact,

Line of Ancestry of the Steel Guitar



including my conclusions, and I expect many to challenge them. I hope this will give you food for thought. Perhaps others will discover things I have been unable to find. ...Andy DePaule

Editor's Note: This ends "Roots . . ." for Andy. He wishes to pursue other topics and will probably appear in a forthcoming issue with another column by another name. Rest assured, Andy will remain with us. ■

"STEEL WOOL"

From the author of the most popular steel guitar manual of all time ["Pedal Steel Guitar"], now comes "Steel Wool." This album takes the steel guitarist to new areas of adventure in playing and listening. Twelve of the tunes are diagrammed with the music notation included with the diagrams! It's all in the E9th copedent.



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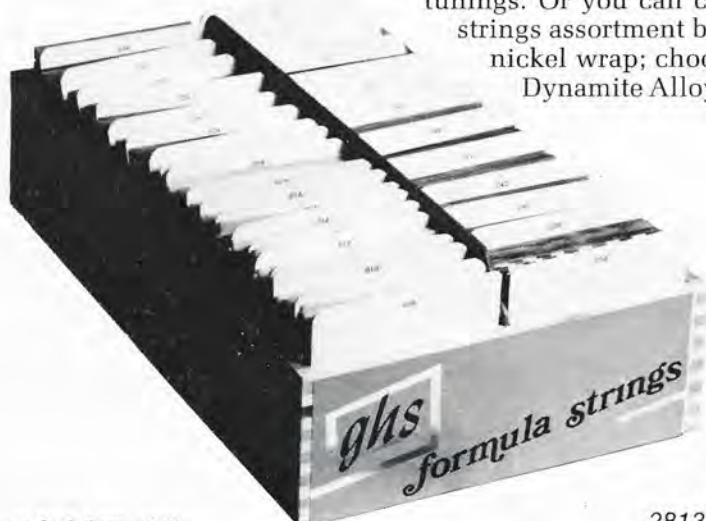
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At E's

The Pocket Corner

Have you ever painted yourself into a musical corner? Every now and then I get involved in a playing situation with much enthusiasm, as well as abandon. I paint myself into a corner somewhere in the heat of a battle with single string runs. Not to come out of this is to be left feeling somewhat akin to the village idiot. Many people are not aware that I do this, believing that I always know what I am doing and have my approach to playing well planned. This is just partly true, but I, too, am human. To explain further: I am frequently asked, after jamming on the C6th neck, "What do you think about during your solos?" I usually answer, "Nothing in particular," which sounds as if my mind is completely blank. That is not so. I have my pet licks to cover many awkward situations, but my best refuge is certain areas on the fretboard I refer to as "pockets." I know where they are. I always try to approach them from different angles. Otherwise I could never show much originality.

The purpose of this first get together is to introduce and refer you to positions, or pockets, on the fretboard. If a player knows the positions and sounds of a given chord, he will be able to escape a lot of "painted-in corners."

The Corners Of The Pockets

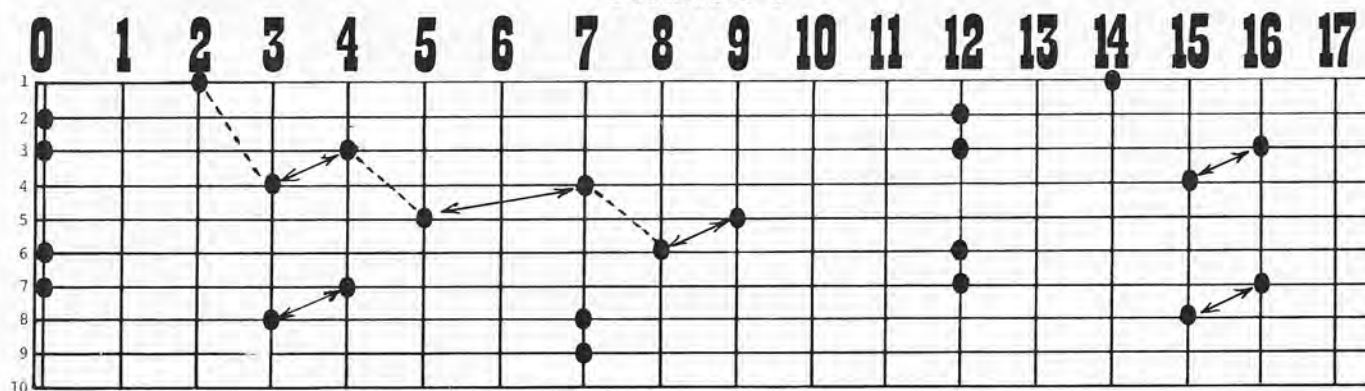
Consider a diagram of a fretboard (Fretboard 1). Observe the intervals between the E and C notes of the C chord

shown on the second, third, sixth, and seventh strings in the open position (C6th tuning). The E and C notes are thereafter identified at the other string positions up the neck. You must become familiar with these positions and be able to recall them when you hear them (in your mind) and need to use them. Incidentally, the C and E are the root and third tones of the C major chord. Try playing these notes in any pattern. Practice is the only way to locate quickly the positions of these notes.

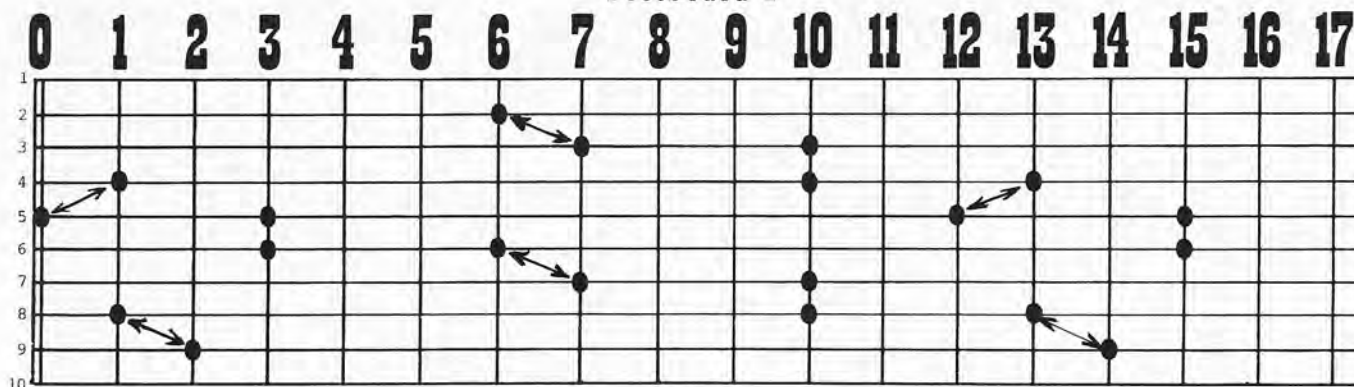
The second fretboard (Fretboard 2) shows the intervals of G and Bb, which, in this case, added to the C and E notes in the previous figure, complete the C7th chord (C E G Bb). When you learn the sounds and positions of each set of intervals, put them together (I have only listed the C7th positions on various parts of the fretboard up to the 16th fret). After learning the intervals of the notes on the two separate charts, mix them together. Play them at any tempo and note value you wish. This can result in any number of bluesy, single string riffs, runs, or routines. Imagination is all you need.

Next, learn the intervals diagrammed in Fretboards 3 and 4 (separately). The first interval routine (Fretboard 3) is another variation of E and G, as originally provided in Fretboard 1. Fretboard 4 is the intervals of the 7th and 9th tones of the C chord. Remember, it is important to learn the intervals separately, at first. This is part of the "painting

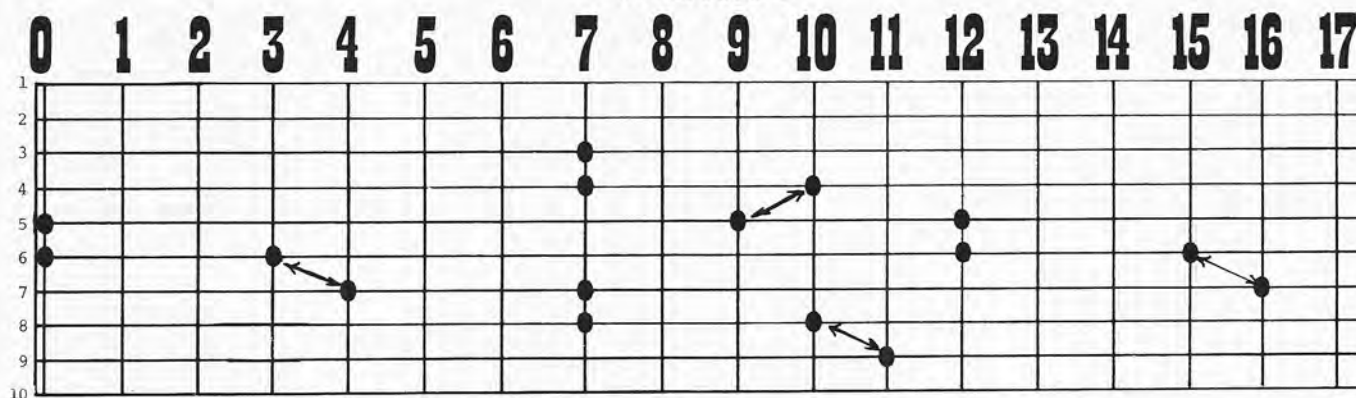
Fretboard 1



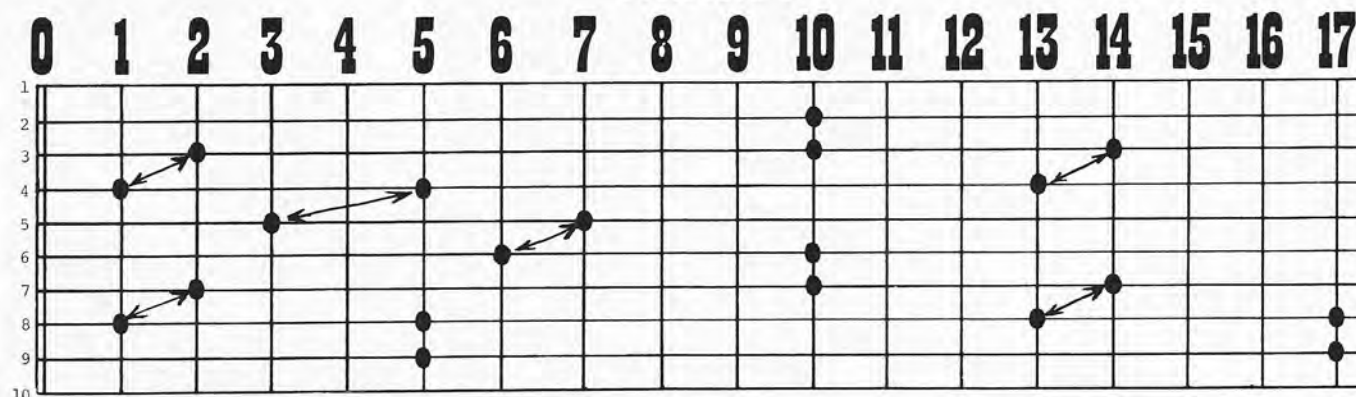
Fretboard 2



Fretboard 3



Fretboard 4



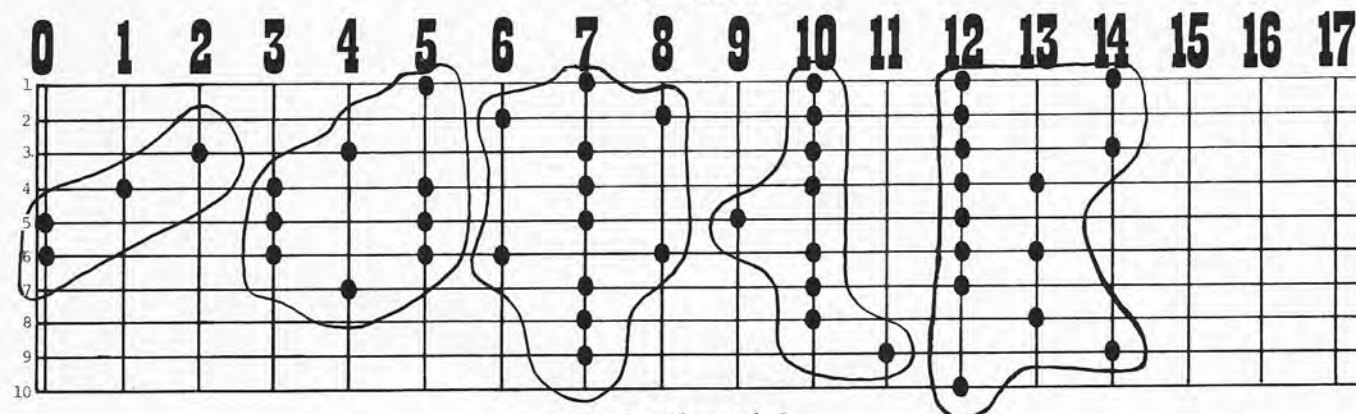
out" process that will be helpful when you get yourself "painted in!" You must also be able to "hear" mentally these tones in relation to the C chord (without having to play them). When you accomplish this, you will be able to look at the fretboard and know where the root, third, fifth, seventh, and ninth tones are.

My "Pockets"

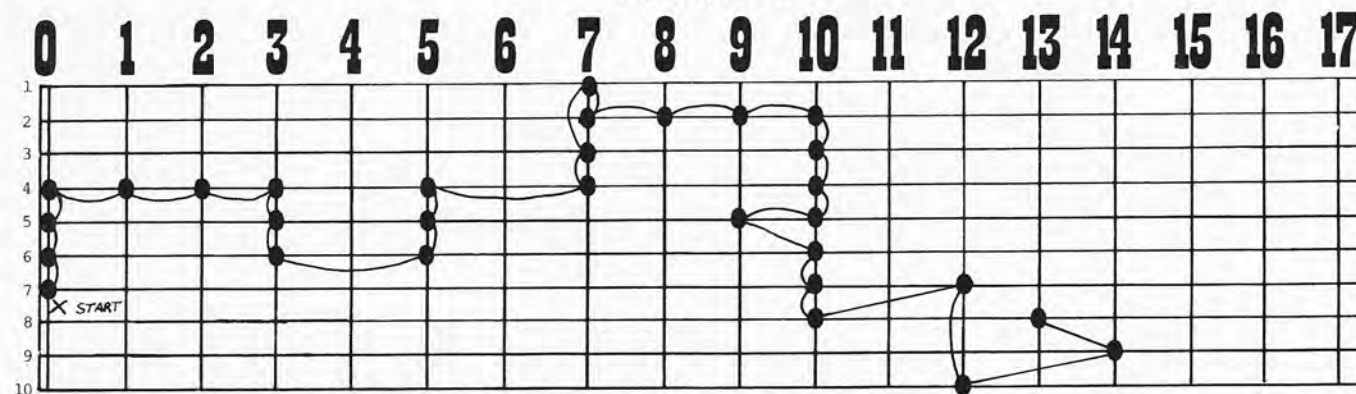
These circled groups of notes in Fretboard 5 are some of the pockets I work in, and out of, when soloing. The tuning I use is C6th, but with a D on the first string, rather than the more common G. In the pockets I have isolated (circled) are all different tones of the C chord. There are 7th, 9th, and

(Cont. on page 18)

Fretboard 5



Fretboard 6



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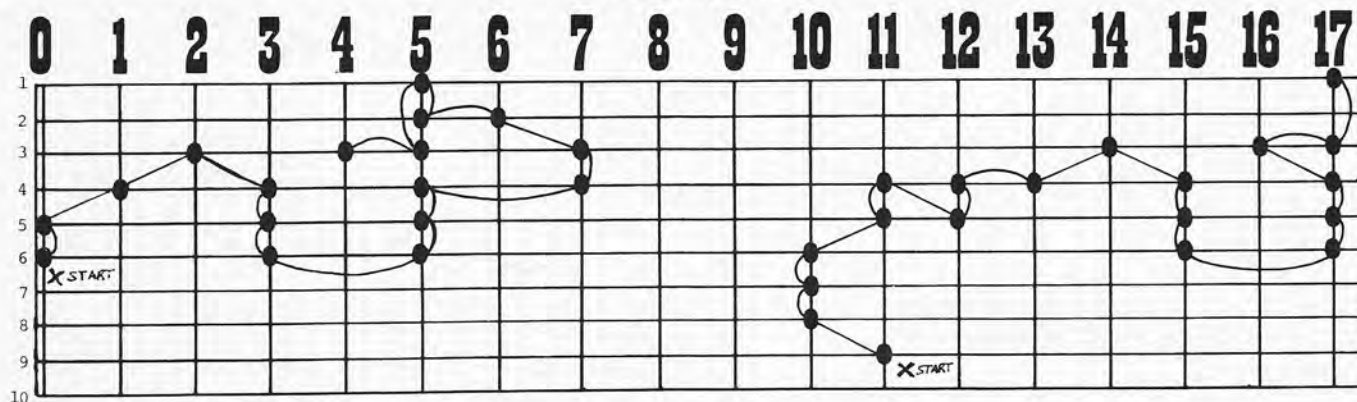


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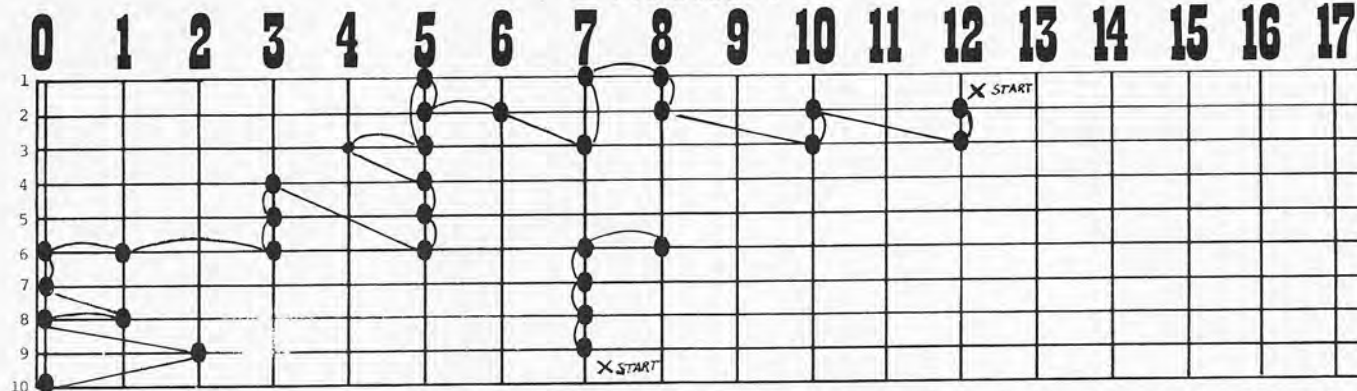


For complete information, write for the Peavey Session 500 New Product Information Bulletin.

Fretboard 7



Fretboard 8

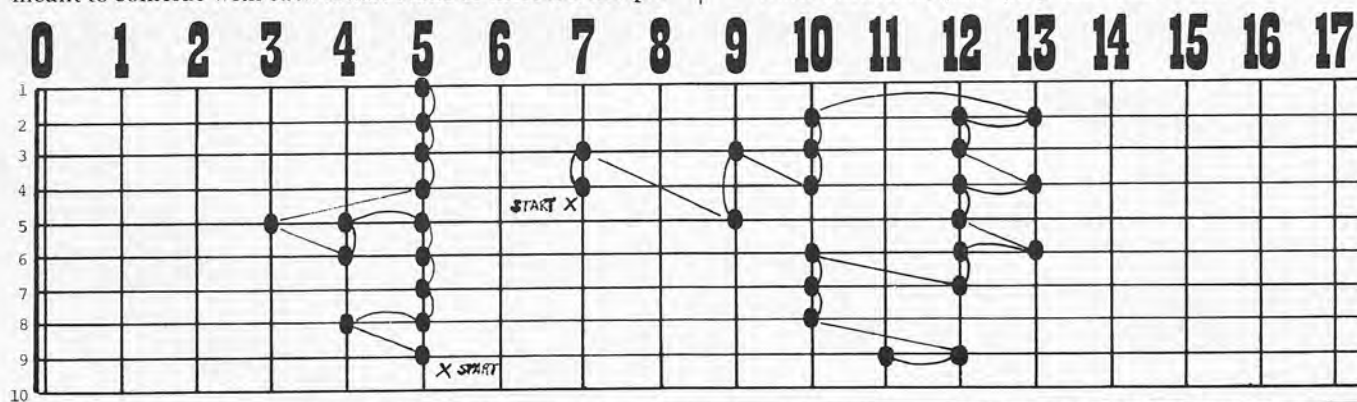


6th tones, too, giving a good variety from which to draw. After learning each set of pocket notes, tie the pockets together. I do it this way in my mind (as in Fretboard 6, 7, 8, and 9). I sort of "knit" the pockets together.

Fretboard 7, 8, and 9 are simply different "knittings," not meant to coincide with each other. None of these is a lick per

se, but can be used as such if started and stopped in different spots. They are, for the most part, lines which can be used in the C7th chord. Naturally, they can be transposed to other chords in which one might be playing, simply by "pocketing" them at different frets.

Until next time, just "play the blues" with these! ■



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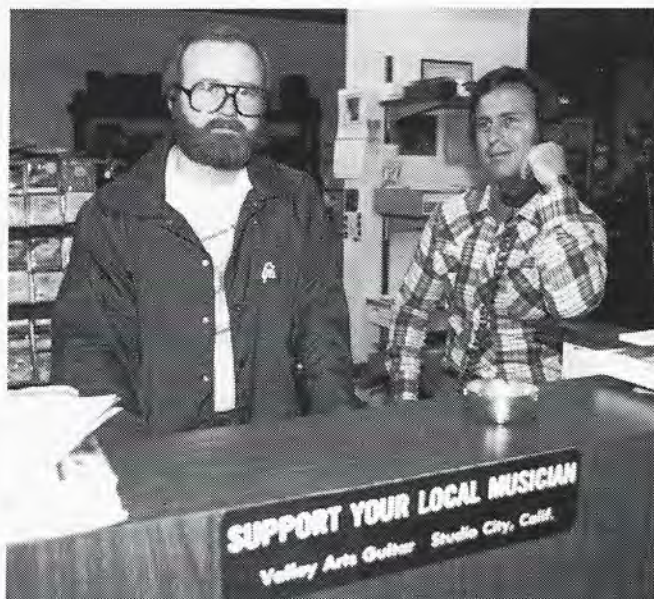
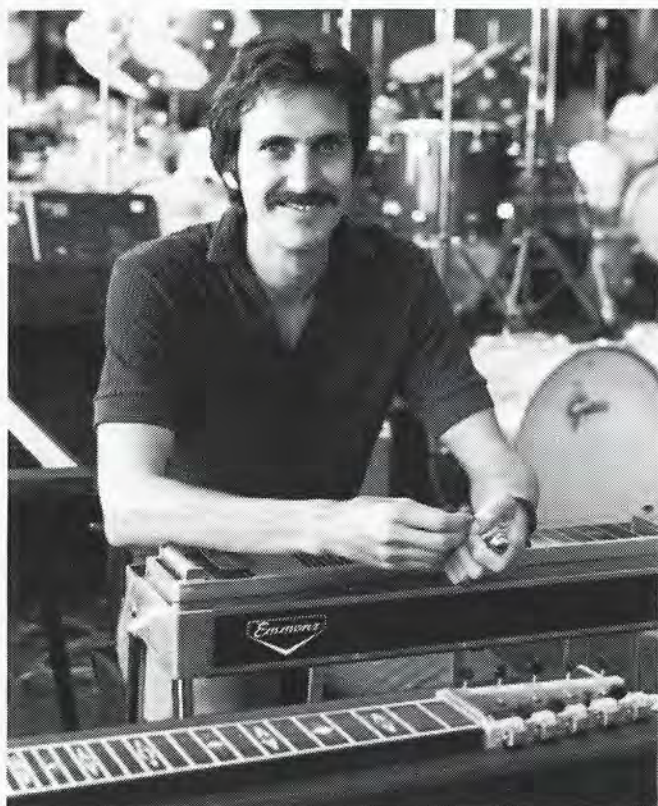
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RETAILER OF THE ISSUE

Valley Arts GUITAR



Steel players in the Los Angeles area looking for good service, fair prices, and a large stock of guitars and parts are turning, for their musical needs, to **Valley Arts Guitar** in Studio City — just north of Hollywood.

For 15 years the owner/operator partners, Al Carness and Mike McGuire, of **Valley Arts** have featured a large stock of guitars, amps, drums, keyboards, and accessories, and have actively served steel guitarists. Their resident steel expert, John Bidasio, joined them ten years ago. John is an excellent steel player and runs the steel guitar "department" of **Valley Arts**. John offers private lessons, expert repairs, knowledgeable advice and, most importantly, a good attitude. "I don't want anyone turned off or turned away from steel guitar because of money," he states, and for that reason the store offers a unique service: steel guitar rentals! "You can rent a student model guitar for \$25 a month — and give steel a try, without the large investment it takes to buy one. After a couple of months and several lessons, a person can decide if he wants to pursue it. If so, the rental cost is applied to the purchase of a guitar. If not, he has only paid the price of the rental and lessons, and he has satisfied his curiosity about the steel guitar."

Bidasio is one of L.A.'s most respected steel guitar repairmen, and works on virtually all makes. The store carries a full line of Emmons, Sho-Bud, MSA, and Dekley guitars. All the parts for those brands are likewise stocked. Normally you will find several used steels, of various makes, on the floor. A full line of steel guitar records and lesson materials is also available.

Valley Arts maintains a mailing list of local players, and last April (1979) hosted two one-week Jeffran College—"West" seminars. "Jeff Newman brought all his teaching aids and equipment out and conducted his 'college' right in the store for West coast players," explains Bidasio. "It was a huge success, and we plan to repeat it every other year."

Among **Valley Arts'** more noted clientele are Rusty Young (Poco), Sneaky Pete Kleinow (Flying Burrito Bros.), Steve Fishell (Commander Cody), and Ed Black (Karla Bonoff).

Valley Arts Guitar is located at 12162 Ventura Blvd., Studio City, CA 91604, phone (213) 763-3383. Be sure and pay them a visit when you're in the Los Angeles area!

ABOVE: John Bidasio, steel guitar instructor, repairman and advisor. LEFT: Mike McGuire and Al Carness, co-owners of Valley Arts Guitar.

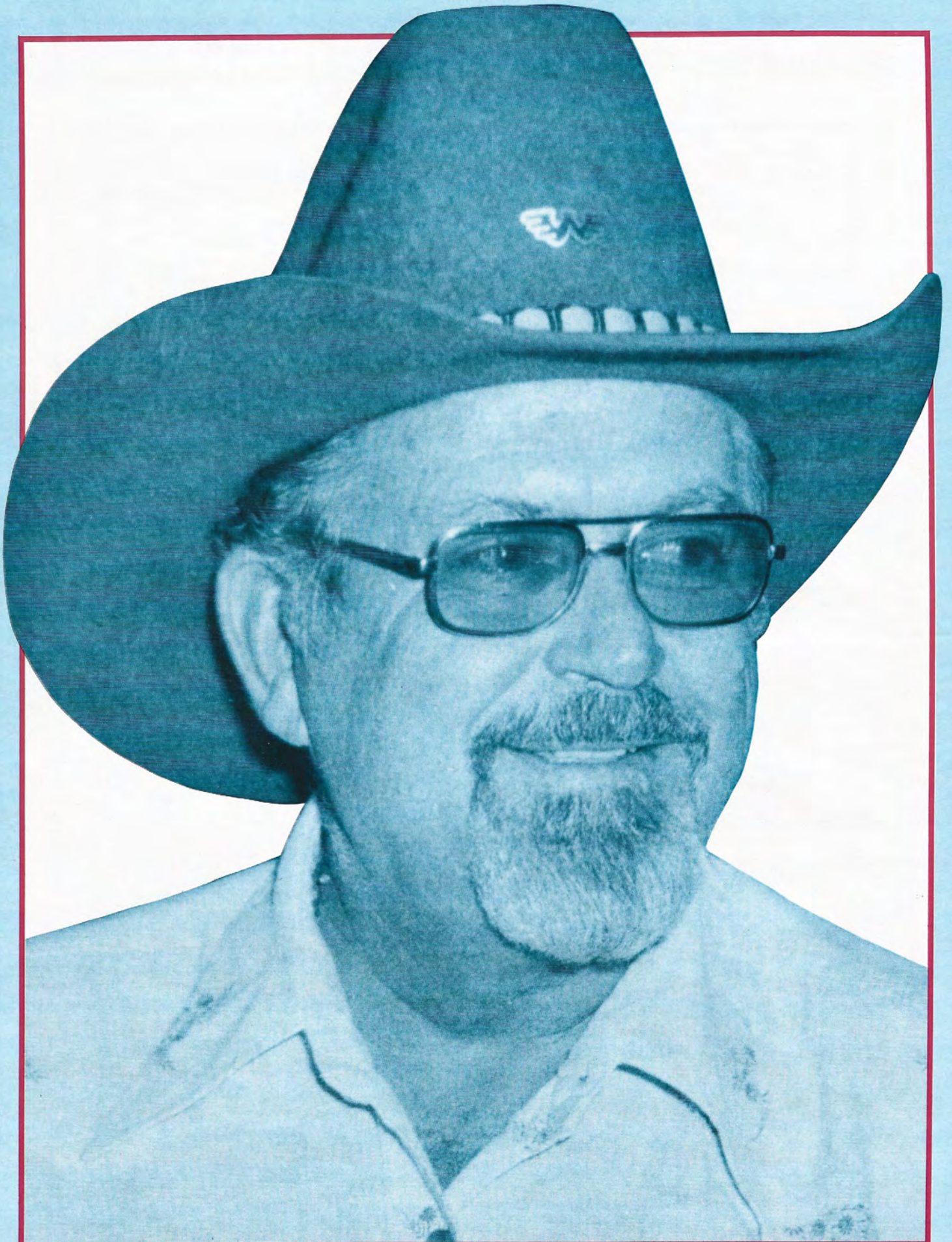


Photo by Richard Young

The Ralph Mooney Story

From "Crazy Arms" to Waylon Jennings

by Bill Carter, with James Sallis

TODAY'S WORLD OF PROFESSIONAL steel guitar is a microcosm of America's own melting pot and the diversity of its musics, populated by commercial artists, teachers, renegade banjo players, corporation presidents, good ol' boys, and jazzmen. The instrument itself is probably experiencing its greatest period of development since coming to the fore in Western swing of the late '40s and '50s, and activity around it is at a high level and wide-ranging. The steel has found temporary shelter in much popular music, set up housekeeping in some, and in a couple of cases even mailed in the down payment on a mortgage. The number of players coming to steel has increased dramatically in recent years, as have the availability of instruments, the quality of those instruments, and access to instruction material and lessons.

BEGINNINGS

Ralph was born in Duncan, Oklahoma, in September 1928. He was playing rhythm guitar by the time he was six and would sneak out and play dances at night until his father would miss him and come after him. He first became interested in steel guitar after hearing Leon McAuliffe, who is still a favorite. (Ralph says that the last time he saw Leon, Leon was practicing on a pedal guitar and made him promise not to let it get out.) He went home and taught himself to play "Steel Guitar Rag" on a standard guitar, using a Case knife to fret it, and thought he was so good he rode 12 miles on his bicycle with the guitar on his back to show his sister. "I was ready to go pick," he says. Some time later an itinerant teacher came to the door and signed Ralph up for lessons, but Ralph quit after hearing him play "Steel

Guitar Rag" that first day; he felt he could play it better than the teacher! Steel was just something that came natural to him, and Ralph progressed quickly on the instrument.

Noel Boggs was the second major influence on Ralph's playing, and Ralph speaks of Boggs in awed, almost reverential terms still. He has had the pickups on his Sho-Bud rewound to old Fender specs to get that same sound. "Noel's was the most beautiful sound I had ever heard in my life; it made me cry," Ralph recalls. He eventually got his own Fender, trading a guitar he had made himself, and later on got Noel Boggs' bird's-eye maple amp when he traded it in, having the speaker and chassis chrome-plated.

OL' WAYLON JENNINGS

PHOTO BY CASS



Ralph moved to Bell, California, during World War II. He lived across the street from bandleader Merle Lindsey, and this led to his first professional job. "I used to play that old guitar as loud as I could," Ralph says, "so he'd hear me." One evening Lindsey came over and asked Ralph whether he could play that night; the regular steel player could not make it. So, Ralph reported to the club that night in his ill-fitting band uniform and played with Lindsey's 10-piece Oklahoma Nightriders. "They kind of held me down; they didn't know whether I could pick or not," Ralph remembers. "I was pretty country, anyhow, too country for Merle Lindsey. But that was the first bandstand I was ever on." The year was 1942.

DEVELOPING A STYLE

Ralph was playing straight steel when he moved to California, "real corny steel guitar," he says, staying pretty close to the melody in the manner of the older Hawaiian players. In the mid-Forties, however, he met fiddler Jesse Ashlock, and this soon turned him around. Ashlock, who had worked for many years with Bob Wills' band, introduced him to improvisation and the Southwest take-off style, what some older musicians called "playing around the melody." That was the beginning of the Mooney style.

Catching Moon was not easy. Special thanks to Bill Carter in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, for interviewing Ralph following a Waylon Jennings concert, to Richard Young in Jennings, Louisiana for arranging to get the cover photo, and to James Sallis, of Duncanville, Texas, for putting together the story in its written form. Ed.

"That just kind of set me free," Ralph says now. "It really got me going."

Ralph's style developed gradually with recording work over the following years, and he credits singer Wynn Stewart as a major factor. Stewart, looking for a new sound on his records, kept asking Ralph to play something a little different, maybe something Cajun-sounding; and Ralph eventually came up with "kind of a rolling thing" that led to his distinctive sound. He was also working with Skeets McDonald, playing without pedals for him, and Stewart would tell him, "Don't use the new thing on Skeets' records, now, that's my style." "I had a certain sound for Skeets', a certain sound for Wynn Stewart, a certain sound for everyone," Ralph says. "And you can't do that; finally something's gonna bust loose. So I just put it all together." Heavy recording work with Buck Owens, Merle Haggard, and many others throughout the '50s and '60s led to further refinement of the Mooney style.

THE MOONEY TUNING

A major component in that style, of course, is Ralph's tuning. Essentially, it is an E9 without the "chromatic strings" (the top Eb and F#), and a remnant, hybrid 6th tuning on the bottom three strings. (Another way to think of this tuning is as an E9 with a flatted 5th.) "I stuck with what I started out with," Ralph remarks, moving from his original A6 to an E6 when he added pedals, settling quickly on the tuning which has remained constant through most of his career. He was probably the first to add a high G# string, using a .009 gauge banjo string at the time since guitar strings did not come in suitable gauges. He credits the idea to a Buddy Emmons lick on an old Ernest Tubb song. At any rate, it soon became standard. When he added the high G#, he staggered two six-pole Magnatone pickups to cover the strings. Fender eventually borrowed that guitar and kept it over two years, trying, Ralph says, to discover why it kept its tune so well: "There wasn't no way it could go out of tune. Up or down, it would just go back to perfect pitch." Fender gave Ralph one of their top-line steels in exchange and finally returned his guitar. He had it in his garage one day when the mower exploded, burning up the guitar and setting fire to the house. Ralph buried it in the desert to puzzle future archaeologists.

Ralph claims he does not know one note from another or even his tuning, "just that it's an E9th without those chromatic strings." His Sho-Buds have five pedals and one knee lever, and he uses Sho-Bud strings running from a .012 down to a .064 gauge. The second neck of his guitar, which he rarely uses, is in a dobro tuning (G major).

EQUIPMENT

For approximately nine years Ralph has played Sho-Bud guitars exclusively. The company replaces his instrument each time it brings out a new model, and he currently plays a cut-down, compact black model he feels is just right for road work. As noted earlier, the pickups for Ralph's guitars are custom-wound to approximate the old Fender spec's. He plays with a thumbpick and two fingerpicks ("when I can keep them on") through a Fender Twin, with a Sho-Bud as a monitor beside him ("so I can hear myself"). Generally, the Fender Twin is set on "no tone, and a whole bunch of volume — 9½ of volume."

Ralph cares little for effects devices, what he calls "trick things," though he does run his steel routinely through an MXR digital delay. Barney Robertson, piano player with the Jennings band, introduced him to this device, and Ralph likes the depth it gives his steel. He never uses a Boss Tone or other distortion/gain, but at one point made some use of a wah-wah pedal. This was shortly after the pedals came out, and guitarist James Burton had used one on their duo album *Corn Pickin' and Slick Slidin'*. So, when Ralph was playing alone, he used a wah-wah to play Burton's guitar parts on steel.

MOVING UP

Ralph moved to California in 1940 and, except for a brief period around 1950, lived there until 1960. His one-night stand with Merle Lindsey's band was followed by lots of woodshedding, and by 1946 he was playing pretty regularly with various area bands. He joined the Musician's Union in 1947, and after that, he says, things really picked up.

In 1960 he moved to Las Vegas to play the Nashville Nevada Club with Wynn Stewart. Then, after Stewart returned to California, Ralph continued to work around Vegas with Bobby Austin, Roy Nichols, and others at the Nashville Nevada, the Silver Dollar, and the Roundup Club. By 1968, though, he was tired of playing clubs and wanted to get back on the road. He moved to Fort Worth, Texas, and very soon began playing with Waylon Jennings.

Ralph has never bought a steel guitar. He built his first one, using two huge four-inch slabs of birch for the body, coat hangers for pullers, and thick steel rods (the kind you hang clothes on in your closet) for legs. The legs were not bolted, but simply fit into retaining rings. Ralph likes to tell how Buddy Emmons used to come to the club he was working in Long Beach (about 1959) just to watch him pack up: he'd pull the guitar up, and these big steel legs would fall out and roll around and clang and "just make an awful racket."

FAVORITE PLAYERS

Curly Chalker is Ralph's favorite steel player. "I can just sit and listen to him for hours and hours on end," he says, "he's so versatile." Ralph also admires Lloyd Green, Jimmy Day, Buddy Emmons, and "all those great players." A favorite story concerns Emmons, Chalker, and another player coming into a club Ralph was working in Vegas in 1960 and knocking all his rods loose from the pedals during a chorus, leaving him to fake his way through it.

Ralph enjoys being on the road, though preferably not too long at one time, and he left Merle Haggard's road band



Ralph Mooney, Skeeter Shepherd, Hal Metzger, Hollywood on the Pike Corral, Long Beach, California, 1948.

after three months in the '60s because the band worked too much for him. At home he enjoys gardening, raising a couple of steers, and "messaging" with cars. Cars have always been a hobby, and he currently has six cars and a couple of trucks, the latest addition to the collection being a little red Cadillac presented to him by Waylon as a ten-year award.

OTHER RECORDING

While continuing to travel and recording with Jennings, Ralph still does occasional sessions with Buck Owens, Merle Haggard, and others with whom he worked in previous years. He has recorded with well over 70 musicians. He was on Buck Owens' first records, which included songs like "Under Your Spell Again," "Foolin' Around," and "Sweethearts in Heaven" (on the last of these he had to copy Fuzzy Owens' copy of his own steel playing for a reissue!). Ralph is also on Buck's recent "In the Palm of Your Hands." He played on Merle Haggard's first record and worked with him steadily for nearly four years. The steel on Donna Fargo's first release belonged to Ralph, as it did on many recordings by others such as Rose Maddox, Bobby Austin, Wynn Stewart, Bonny Owens, LaWanda Jackson, George Hamilton IV, and Hoyt Axton.

Ralph cut several instrumentals, including "Moonshine" and "Release Me," for Joe Johnson at Challenge Records in the '50s, and for ten or twelve years in the '50s and '60s he was more or less a staff musician for Capitol Records. This let to his collaboration with James Burton. "Corn Pickin'" and



Early '50s. Los Angeles, at the Hillbilly Ranch with Gene Davis [notice the beer bottle used as a bar—"a customer stole mine that night"].



1947, Billings, Montana. Lucky Psegler and the Rocky Mountain Riders: l. to r.: Lucky, Chuck Peters, Jimmy Simmons, Buddy Kelly, Eve Kelly, and Ralph Mooney.

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Slick Slidin' was cut in three sections: Ralph, Burton, and producer Ken Nelson each selected three numbers. The two guitarists worked very well together, playing off loose head arrangements, and this album has become a classic. Unfortunately, although Capitol had them under contract for three years, Burton and Ralph never again worked together.

"CRAZY ARMS"

A highlight of this period turned out to be Ralph's hit song "Crazy Arms." It was 1950, and he was living in Vegas with his wife and three-year-old daughter, drinking heavily. "I used to get crawling, falling-down drunk, thought that was the only way to live," Ralph says. "You can't live like that." It grew *too much* for Mrs. "Moon", and, after he disappeared from the grocery store while they were shopping together one morning, she left him. He had a Martin guitar, and he went back to the house and wrote the song on it. "A Martin really rings out, you know; just that E chord is enough to almost make you cry." So, with tears on the paper and a ringing guitar, he wrote "Crazy Arms." When he moved back to Los Angeles, a promoter named Chuck Seals heard the song and thought it should be recorded. Ralph did not think it was that great but gave Seals half the song for placing it with Jimmy Wakeley.



Muletown Club, Los Angeles, in about 1949. L. to R.

Wakeley never got around to recording it, and some quick footwork on Seal's part eventually led to Ray Price recording it on Columbia — and to a lawsuit, since Wakeley had never given the release rights. The judgement was in Ralph's favor, and he lost only eight hundred or so on lawyer's fees.

Over the years Ralph has written a lot of songs, many of which have been recorded by Jennings, Haggard, Bobby Austin, Skeets McDonald, Wynn Stewart, and others with whom he has worked; but none has caught on as has "Crazy Arms." One of Ralph's own favorites is "Falling for You," recorded by Stewart. He is also proud of a new one called "Foolin'," which Waylon's guitar player, Gordon Payne, just cut. "It's a good song, real country," and features the late Tommy Jackson playing twin fiddle parts. Ralph believes this may be among the last playing Jackson did.

The band has also been involved in some movie and TV work in recent years, including the soundtrack for Roy Rogers' movie "McIntosh and T.J." and another movie titled "Moonrunners." Ralph wrote some of the material for "Moonrunners" and, he thinks, about half the pieces for "McIntosh and T.J." (one of them a waltz to be played behind a love scene, which Waylon dubbed "Mrs. Moon"). The band also did tracks for the first two or three "Dukes of Hazzard" TV shows, and the show is still using those cuts.



Ralph Mooney, Joe Sisk, Buddy Houston, and Shorty Marcus.

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Ralph has never favored instrumentals, believing people do not like them that well, and has no plans for an album or any other extended activity in this regard. He has cut a number of instrumentals with Waylon's band, however, and they will be coming out from time to time. ("I don't like to get in any hurry about things," he says, typically.) One which will be out shortly is a multi-track instrumental of Jesse Colter's "Storms Never Last." "There's about six steel guitars on it," Ralph says, "all played by me. Waylon sits in there and tells me what to do, what part to play and all." Ralph's version will be a cover of Waylon's own recording of the song, scheduled for release in April.

Ralph seems today quite pleased with his work and place in the Waylon Jennings band, and, of course, his contributions to the sound and success of that band are considerable. Waylon tours just about enough for him and takes his time getting things done. Ralph is working with people he likes and respects as musicians and is playing the kind of steel he wants. Asked about the possibility of retiring (he will be 52 in September), Ralph grins and says: "You got to be tired before you can retire. I ain't tired yet." At the time he said this he was on the downhill side of one of the band's longest tours, in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, headed up towards Jackson, Tennessee, and (in a couple more weeks) towards Fort Worth and home. ■

Ralph Mooney's Copedent

String Gauge						
1 .012	G#	G		A		
2 .014	E		F#			F
3 .017	B				C#	
4 .020	G#					A
5 .036W	F#					
6 .040	E					Eb
7 .050	D					
8 .054	C#					
9 .060	A#					
10 .064	E					Eb
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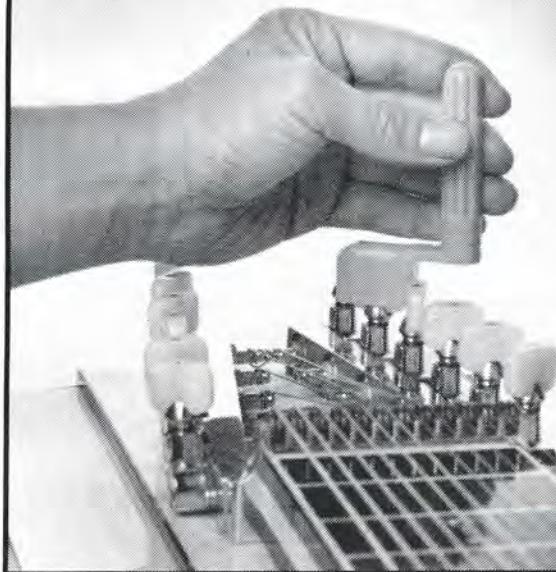
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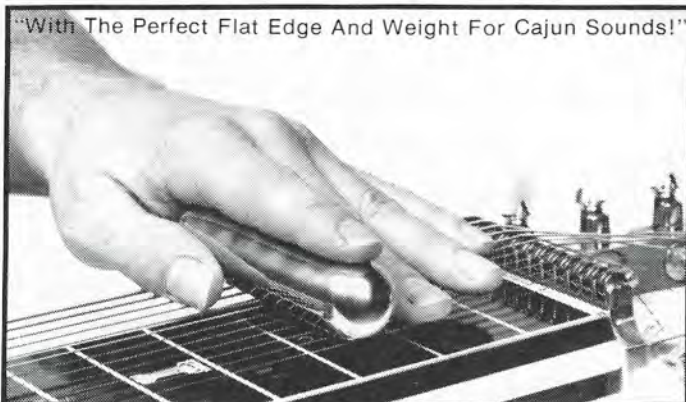


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D		A	
1			1
2			2
3			3
4			4
5			5
6	3 3	3 3 3	6
7	3 3	1 1-0 0	7
8		0	8
9			9
10	2-3 3 3 3	0A	10
11	3 3	0B 0B 0A 0B 6A	11

First system of musical notation (Bass clef, key signature of two sharps). Chords: E7, D, A. Includes a triplet of eighth notes. Fingering numbers 1-11 are provided below the staff.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

0 0 0 0 0 0 4

0A-0A 0A-0A 0A 5

6B-7B 6B-7B 6

1 0 h 1 P 0 0

7A 7A 7A 7A-5A 5A 5A 5A 0A 0B 0B 0B

Second system of musical notation (Treble clef, key signature of two sharps). Includes triplets of eighth notes. Fingering numbers 1-11 are provided below the staff.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

0 0 0 0 0 0 0

0A 0A 0A 0A 0A 0A 0A

0B h 3B P 0B 0B 0B h 2B P 0B 0B 0B h 3B P 0B 0B 0B h 2B P 0B 0B

Third system of musical notation (Treble clef, key signature of two sharps). Chords: D, A. Includes a triplet of eighth notes. Fingering numbers 1-11 are provided below the staff.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

5 3 4 3 5 3 4 3 0A 0A 3A P 0A 0A 3A P 0A 0A 3 P 0A

5 3 4 3 5 3 4 3 0B 0B 3B 0B 0B 3B 0B 0B 3 0B

5 5 5 4 5 5 5 0 0 0 0 0 0 4

Fourth system of musical notation (Treble clef, key signature of two sharps). Chords: E, D, A. Includes a triplet of eighth notes. Fingering numbers 1-11 are provided below the staff.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

5A 5 5A 5 5 4 5 3 3A 0A h 3A P 0A

5B 5 5B 5 5 4 5 3 0B 3B 0B 3B 0B 3B

5 5 5 6 5 5 5 0 0 0 0

11

1											1
2											2
3											3
4	0										4
5	12A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8 7 7A-7
6		12	12A	12	12A	12	12A	12A	12A	12A	8 7 7-7
7		12B	12B	12B	12B	12B	12B	12B	12B	12B	
8											8
9											10-9 8 7 7-7 8
10											10
11											11

1		E7
2		
3		
4		0—0 0—0 0
5	8 8 7 7A—7 6 5 5A—5	5 6 5 5A—5 6A—7A 6A—7A 0A 7A 0A
6	8 8 7 7—7 6 5 5—5	5 6 5 5—5 7B 7B 2—
7		
8		
9	8 8 7—7 7—6 6 5 5—5	5 6 5 5 5—5
10		
11		

B	E
A	
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10
11	11

11

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

0 — 0 — 0 — 0 — 0 — 0 — 0 — 0 $\underline{h}$ 5 $\underline{p}$ 0 0

0B $\underline{h}$ 7B 0B $\underline{h}$ 5B 4B 0B 3B—4B 5B 0B $\underline{h}$ 7B 0B

11

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

5 5 3 5 5 3 5 4—5 3 5—3 7B 5B 7B—5B 7B 7B 5B 7B—5B

5 5 3 5 5 3 5 4—5 3 5—3 7 5 7—5 7 7 5 7—5

7—7A $\frac{1}{2}$ 7A $\frac{1}{2}$ 5A $\frac{1}{2}$ 7A $\frac{1}{2}$ —5A $\frac{1}{2}$ 7A $\frac{1}{2}$ 7A $\frac{1}{2}$ 5A $\frac{1}{2}$ 7A $\frac{1}{2}$ —5A $\frac{1}{2}$

11

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

5—5D 4B 0 0A 0A $\underline{h}$ 0A $\underline{p}$ 0A 0A 0A $\underline{h}$ 0A $\underline{p}$ 0A 0A 0A $\underline{h}$ 0A $\underline{p}$ 0A 0A

5B 5B 5B—5B 4B 4B 4B 0B 0B—4B—0B 3B 0B—4B—0B 3B 0B—4B—0B 4B

5 5 4

OTHER LEAD BREAK

11

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Re-play ten measures of the verse of the song. This follows the original introduction.

Next: replay the introduction. Now, proceed to the two measures to the right.

5 5 5—5A 5A 5A—5 12 12—12A 5 12 12—12B

5 5 5 5—5B 5 5B 5B—5 12 12—12B

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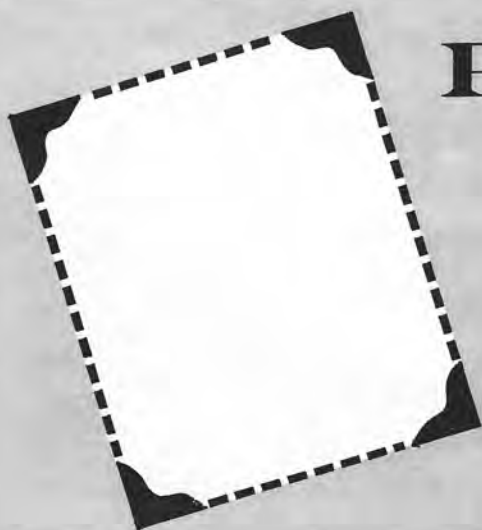
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Honky Cat

THE MAKING OF A STEEL GUITAR ALBUM

by Bob Berry

Bobby Black and I had known each other for several years. We had worked together on numerous sessions, during which I had gained a good knowledge of his musical taste and playing style. On one tune of his *California Freedom* album, he had asked me to lay down all the tracks. The results of that effort ("Midnight At The Oasis") led him to mention that, if he ever got a chance to do a second album, he wanted every tune put together that way. That idea appealed to me. I had done this on several other albums, but never with the steel as the sole lead instrument. As it finally developed, *Honky Cat* is the first steel album to have a "one man band," or so the producer informed me.

Initial Planning

This past fall, Bobby told me he was going to do the album, and the producer had accepted the idea of my doing all the parts. The concept of the album was to be pop-rock, with a definite beat and very danceable music. We hoped to show that the steel guitar could compete in discoteques and rock & roll night clubs. Bobby had been playing a lot of that music in the San Jose, California area when not touring with Commander Cody or Asleep At The Wheel. The concept appealed to me. In my years of working as a recording engineer, I had never had a steel guitar on a hard-rock or pop-rock album. Producers had only wanted it on Country sessions.

Bobby provided a cassette tape of 20 tunes the producer had selected. Each tune had been in the top of the pop-rock charts. Ten were to be chosen from that group. The twenty were interesting, and most were quite involved, in terms of the many background instruments used in their original scorings. They impressed me as easy to do, but time-consuming.

One initial problem concerned listening to the sounds and mentally removing the words. In doing so, I discovered most of the musical phrases were made up of three to five note spans. Although they were interesting songs with the words still in them, most were very bland when the words had been omitted. Remaining, though, were the beat and dance flavor, the qualities originally sought for the album. Also, the tunes picked from the twenty had to have a compatibility that would let Bobby's feel for this music become obvious to the listener. Too wide a range of pop-rock types would come off like an effort to display Bobby's talent for the spectrum of this music, not his known talent for playing without pretentiousness. Thus, we needed a unit that flowed evenly with a variety of beats and a similarity of styles.

After Bobby and the producer had chosen the tunes, I arranged the background instrumentation and, naturally, the instruments to be used. I considered both a scoring with total originality, and one sounding like the original recordings—with all the lead instruments and voices removed. Bobby would then supply his own originality to the songs. I decided on the latter, "sound-a-like," approach. I did not want the listener to have to accept a whole new sound for the background music, besides having the steel replace all the vocals. I knew Bobby would play the melody and make the tunes legitimate reflections of their written form. Beyond that, I knew Bobby's originality would 'stretch out' quite frequently.

The Studio Equipment

Sphere Console 24x16	Eventide Harmonizer
Ampex MM 1100 Recorder	Teletronics Limiter
Ampex 440 2 Track Recorder	URE: Time Aligned Speakers
Ampex 456 2" & 1/4" Mastering Tap	BGW V Power Ampe 750
Audio Design Compex	Mikes: = Seinhauser 421, E.V. RE 20, Shure SM 57, Newman U 67, Beyer (no number), Altec AKG D19C
Limiter Vocal Stresser	Direct Boxes
Audio Design Flangers, Noise Gates and, Parametric EQ	EMT Stereo Reverb #140
MXR Flanger	Auratone Studio Speakers

Recording Procedures

As indicated, the album was recorded on an Ampex 16 track recorder. The simpler tunes used up to 14 tracks, but on some of the larger productions, such as "Love In The Shadows," 16 tracks were barely sufficient. When recording all the instruments separately, I used a guide track for reference. On this track, I used an electronic metronome to keep the timing consistent. I played a "worked piano" part there so I would know the structure of the song. It was very important to have each introduction, verse, chorus, instrumental bridge, and ending worked out exactly as the finished song was expected to be. With this reference track, all the other instruments would be built, one by one.

In past recordings I have found that the rhythm track must be good and tight, or the whole production becomes flabby, with good material actually sounding bad. Therefore, I recorded the drums first. I wanted a flat, punchy sound on the bass drum, a deep, but cutting, sound to the snare, and a nice round sound on the toms. For this I used Seinhauser mikes. The bass came next: a 1961 Fender Precision, processed through an Audio Design vocal stresser

and plugged directly into the recording board via a direct box. [A direct box is a matching device which takes the high impedance signal from a pickup and changes it to low impedance. This permits plugging directly into the mike channel of the recording console.] The vocal stresser has a limiter section that is very effective at giving the bass a solid sound. I switched from a pick to my bare fingers, depending on what kind of sound seemed to be needed.

Following the bass, all of the keyboard instruments were added. The acoustic piano, Fender Rhodes piano, and clavinet were applied as needed.

The electric guitar was a 1962 Fender Telecaster. I ran it direct for a clean sound and used a Fender Twin Reverb amp for the more powerful tube distortion sound. The amp was miked from the front and back, with two RE-20 Electrovoice mikes. They recorded simultaneously on one track. Because the number of available tracks was beginning to decrease, I recorded the background vocals next. I did three separate harmony vocals on three separate tracks and then mixed them together on one track. I doubled that track on a separate track by using an Eventide digital delay unit. This made my original three voices appear as six. Much care was taken to get the original sound of singers.

The most involved recording efforts were with the horns and strings. All the strings, violin, viola, and cello, were done on the Arp Omni. Special attention to the attack and equalization settings helped deliver a believable string sound from this synthesizer. All the horn parts were created on an instrument called a Prophet Five. The Prophet is a five voice polyphonic synthesizer that can create about any sound from a helicopter to a bassoon. The horn sounds have fooled most of the horn players who have heard recordings made with the Prophet! With these instruments taking up three tracks, only two tracks for Bobby's steel (on most selections) remained. I did keep one additional track open, but knew this would probably have to be used for an acoustic guitar, percussion, or some special effects that I would select after listening to the whole production in a rough playback.

Constant Concerns

Throughout the over-dubbing of the different instruments, I had to keep in mind the octave spacing of each sound. The pitch and tone could not interfere with Bobby's steel. From past experience, I knew that some instruments conflict with the steel's tone. For example, an electric piano can compete with low steel chords. The electric and acoustic guitars can confuse the clarity of a steel's tone. Additionally, I chose to add some lead guitar lines on one track in case they were needed. Special attention was given to the lead guitar tone to make sure it would not detract from the steel sound. [Nothing sounds worse than having a beautiful steel tone competing with a "buzz-fan" electric guitar sound periodically jumping in.]

Preparation And Processes

A basic knowledge of the playing mechanics and accessories of a pedal steel guitarist is a must for a recording engineer. I recommend that any engineer reading this observe a pedal steel player before recording them "cold." To create most of the sustain, steel players use a volume pedal. I, and every other recording engineer I know, view these pedals as tiny monsters intent on causing fade-out, clipping notes, and providing uncontrollable volume swells. [Bobby, though, is one exception to that statement]. Additionally, one of the hardest things to get from the pedal steel is presence. This is not because the instrument is incapable of it, but because most players seem to like a rich, mellow tone with lots of reverb. I suspect that steel players do not hear their sound as others do, because it is not easy to get them to brighten their tone for a recording. [See also: "What You Hear vs. What Is Heard," SG #2, p. 44 Ed.] Bobby was honest about this and said he had grown very tired of the biting tone required on a bandstand to cut through a group's flooding sound. In recording, however,

by the time ten other instruments are added to a tape and mixed down from 16 tracks to a 2 track master, at least 5% of the top-end treble is lost. The engineer must plan ahead for the sound desired in the final mix. To accomplish this, I selected the microphones listed in the "recording equipment" section of this discussion. I rejected, after trying, a Shure SM-57, a Neuman U67, and a Sennheiser 421; they either lacked midrange or sufficient presence of the steel. The mikes ultimately used were two Electrovoice RE 20's. For the recording, I placed one mike to the rear of the amp and one directly on the front speaker. The back mike was to pick up the warm, deep tones, and the front mike was to get the high end presence. A direct box (described earlier) was not used because it makes the steel sound too sterile. I used a limiter (on the mikes) to hold down the peaks. A parametric equalizer was used to boost the presence a bit. The input tone was changed from time to time in accordance with what Bobby thought the tunes "feel" required.

A few technical problems were also encountered during the recording of the steel tracks. Double neck steels have decidedly different tonal qualities between tunings. This is either string gauge or basic tuning differences, although I am hardly qualified to conclude the reasons. The problem for me was the tone change that occurred when Bobby switched from one neck to the other, which was often. Some care was necessary to match up the volume differences on the tape, as well as the thin-to-thick fall-out problems that can crop with such volume losses.



BOB BERRY, recording engineer and "one-man band" behind "Honky Cat."

A Webb amp was used. Two other brands were tried, but they either lacked fullness or were not clear on the high ends. Each failed to handle the full chord sound. Bobby set the Webb with bass and treble half way up and the midrange on full. The tone selector switch was in the #2 position.

A known problem for all recording engineers (although steel players are more aware of it than are engineers) is the inaccuracy of intonation, which is not a design fault but a characteristic of all string instruments. Such instruments cannot be tuned perfectly in all positions at the same time. It would be impractical to have tempered frets on such instruments since a player would need a separate instrument for every key in which he chose to play! Truly gifted players recognize this and play off the fret wherever necessary to have an in-tune sound. I appreciate that talent in Bobby.

Another concern somehow disappeared during the over-dubbing on a second steel track mixed as a unison sound with the first. It is almost impossible for most players to match up their vibrato with the first tracks. A player would have to begin his vibrato starting in the same

direction with exactly the same speed and width. I was somewhat amazed when this did not prove to be a problem on this album.

Adding Bobby

When Bobby actually got down to recording his tracks, I wanted him to be as comfortable as possible. Instead of positioning him in the studio with a pair of headphones, I had him sit in the control room, right between a small set of Auratone playback speakers. His amp, though, was placed in the studio so I could mike it without having feedback problems. This also eliminated any chance of picking up any mechanical noises from the pedal mechanism of his steel. Bobby was able to hear this steel just as it sounded through the mikes. Otherwise, he would have been setting his amp the way the amp sounded in its raw output, not as it would have been recorded.

There were very few special effects used on the steel. A few tracks employed an Eventide Harmonizer to double the steel on selected portions of some tunes. This gave an effect somewhat like a 12 string guitar. Additionally, an Audio Design flanger and a Boss Tone fuzz unit were used in selected spots. On some tunes, a slow echo delay was used. It adequately simulated an Echoplex sound.

The hardest part of the whole album was getting each verse of the songs to sound interesting. With melodies that repeat their verse and chorus two or three times, exactly the same, something is needed to keep them interesting as instrumentals. This is not a problem when the words of a song keep changing for the listener! When there are no words, it takes a lot of tasty and creative playing. When you listen to Bobby's album, keep that in mind. I think you will agree that Bobby did his job well. His improvising of the melody and chord inversions, without the annoying pick and bar noises so common to many breaks steel players record, make this quite an impressive accomplishment on the steel guitar.

Conclusion

Every effort was made to have all the instrumentation, including the steel, recorded with octave and audio spacing in mind. This made for a very precise, audible, and fairly simple mix. The lows are low and the highs are high. The steel solos are excellent, and the concept comes across beautifully (even if I do say so). I feel we achieved exactly what we set out to achieve. I am sure this project will help bring the pedal steel to yet another level of achievement and acceptance. **Honky Cat** was well planned from beginning to end. I feel fortunate to have been responsible for the middle. ■

About The Author

Bob Berry resides in San Jose, California, where he works as chief engineer for Tiki Sound Studios. In that capacity, he records most groups and vocalists who choose to use this 16 track studio. Bob joined Tiki 8 years ago when he was 20 and Tiki was an 8 track studio. During those years, he has been the musical director of a score of albums and innumerable singles, while continuing his day-to-day work of recording and mixing.

Bob did not get into recording by accident. His parents had a dance band which toured the United States, and they eventually entered the retail music business. Surrounded by instruments, Bob's musical interests blossomed as he learned the drums, guitar, bass, trumpet, harmonica, and organ.

Following high school and a number of rock bands, Bob broadened his knowledge of instruments at San Jose State College, learning the French horn, trombone, string bass, and violin, as well as seriously studying theory and arranging.

Today, Bob is a leader of Hush, a rock group that has just completed its second album.

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The Lap Steel Guitar

Historical Insights, Part One

by James Sallis

Few things are as malleable as musical fashion. Tastes and strains of influence rise and fall like the tides, and often just as powerfully. Hundreds of *fin de siècle* mandolin orchestras disappear, it seems, overnight, and the mandolin (mandola, mandocello, etc.) is almost lost to contemporary music. The 5-string banjo yields to its derivative but dissimilar tenor cousin (an instrument better able to hold its own in the jump jazz bands of the time) and to rising interest in the newcomer guitar, and the 5-string is all but fatally misplaced. Last year's rages (swing, bebop, raga) are the stalest wine, defunct or so absorbed and transmuted as to be beyond recognition.

Another example, the one with which we are here concerned, is the Hawaiian guitar. Coming to vogue just after the first World War, when groups of Hawaiian musicians began touring the U.S., it was soon dominant. Everyone, it seemed, played his guitar flat in his lap, fretting with a bar on raised strings while picking melodic runs with the fingers of the other hand. **Roy Smeck**, one of the finest musicians of the period — the first professional, in fact, to become popular in vaudeville solely as an instrumentalist — began playing Hawaiian style after early exposure to **Sol Hoopii** and had no apparent interest in standard guitar until encountering Eddie Lang in the late



The great Sol Hoopii in 1949 [photo courtesy of Charles Moore].



Roy Smeck [photo courtesy of O.T. Coffin].

Twenties. During the same period, steel bars came as accessories with all mail-order guitars, and salesmen roamed the country offering Hawaiian guitars or nut adapters for converting standard guitars, even throwing in a few basic lessons, all for four dollars. Most sheet music even carried "Hawaiian guitar" parts, though generally just the chord symbols (I, IV, V), which remain on the fretboards of many period guitars.

Today few know much of all this, but, as with other passing fashions, some essential thread held, and a legacy has come down to us bearing at least traces of the old style's potential. Thus, today we hear the pedal steel on Nashville recordings, Dobro on others, and even occasional bottleneck blues. A renewal of interest in the Dobro is apparent, and instruments identical to those of the Thirties are again in production by the **Dopera** family, while the instrument itself is heard on recordings of increasingly variant material. Country "slide guitar" has found some favor through such musicians as John Hammond, Ry Cooder, and Johnny Winter. Michael Bloomfield and David Lindley, among others, have generated interest in electric slide.

Until recently, there was little available information on the Hawaiian (or slide) guitar. In the best folk tradition, knowledge of the instrument passed from player to player, or reconstructed individually by trial and error. Even now, with two excellent books in print, **The Dobro Book** by Stacy Phillips and **Slide Guitar** by Arlen Roth, as well as numerous less comprehensive publications, confusion is widespread, knowledge spotty.

For the purpose of this article, which uses the general definition, "lap guitar" is used to indicate a mode of playing, not a style. Styles are diverse, from swooping Hawaiian melodies to hard blues and jazz, in which the guitar is tuned to an open chord and "fretted" with a steel bar or similar "slide" while the right thumb and fingers pick individual notes and chords.

It matters little whether the guitar has 6, 8, or 10 strings, is tuned to E9, A7, or G, or acoustic, electric, or "resonophonic." The essential distinction is "Spanish" interval tuning and left-hand "closing" or fingering. It is not necessary actually to position the guitar across the lap, and many contemporary players find it more comfortable (as did early bluesmen) in the conventional upright position. Still, it is surprising for most of us, when we first attempt this mode, to find our guitars so much changed, and the new orientation and "thinking in different categories" so essential.

The Lap Steel's Origins

There is some uncertainty as to the origin of the Hawaiian guitar. **Joseph Kekuku**, who toured the U.S. and Europe very successfully from 1904 to 1919, is often credited with having developed it in the 1880's, but evidence suggests that others, among them **James Hoa** and **Gabriel Davion**, may have been playing slide even earlier and that Kekuku was simply the first to popularize the instrument. At any rate, it came into popular use at King Kalakaua's Jubilee Celebration in November, 1886. The intent from the first seems to have been increased flexibility of tone and range in emulation of the violin and other strings, as well as a general movement from chordal towards melodic approaches.

When the U.S. assumed control of the Hawaiian islands in 1898, a fad for things Hawaiian ensued, and shortly the sound of slide guitar was everywhere. Hawaiian guitarists were fixtures in vaudeville circuits and tent shows, they soon supplanted the violin as the lead in most dance bands, and many early movie and cartoon sound tracks featured the playing of Roy Smeck, Sol Hoopii, and others. A large number of 78's produced early in the century highlight performers like **Frank Ferera**, who originated many of today's slide-guitar clichés.

By the time this trend had passed from mainstream American culture, it was just reaching the mountains, where rural musicians embraced it and, finally, returned it to us. (It was in these same mountains and rural areas that the American guitar came into its own as a primary instrument and the 5-string banjo and mandolin were preserved with a remarkable heritage of ancient ballads.)

April, 1927, became a key date with the first country recording of the Hawaiian guitar by **Frank Hutchison** of West Virginia. Release of "Birmingham Jail" and "Columbus Stockade Blues" by Tom Darby and Jimmie Tarlton soon followed. The coincident development of this music and southern blues — Jimmie Rodgers and Robert Johnson were, after all, first recorded by the same man — was emphasized by the heavily blues-influenced playing of **Cliff Carlisle** behind Jimmie Rodgers. Lap guitar became once again a viable and popular instrument.

Nationals and Dobros

In many ways, the subsequent history of lap guitar is the history of the National and Dobro (and National-Dobro) companies. Most companies were involved in the manufacture of Hawaiian guitars, and players could choose a Gibson HG, one of Martin's koawood models, a Weissenbourn, a Stella, a Regal, or even an authentic Hilo Hawaiian. It was National, however, who went beyond raising the strings and hollowing out the neck. National made not one but several quantum jumps and transformed the lap guitar.

The first "National" (or resonator) instrument was a banjo, built in 1923 by the Dopyera Brothers in their family music store. Setting an aluminum resonator into a sound



Photo courtesy of Jerry Hopkins

well and suspending the bridge above it, they created an amplified instrument with remarkable punch and sustain, ideal for both melodic and backup work.

The name "National" was appropriated from a sportscar of the period, and in 1925 the first guitar was built. It reached the market in June, 1926, and by 1927 demands were high for the new instruments. The first were all triple-resonator (or tri-cone) guitars with square ("Hawaiian") necks, and Sol Hoopii was among the first to adopt the guitar. However, the tri-cone proved too expensive, and in 1929 single resonator guitars appeared, soon dominating the market.

National guitars were issued in a wide range of styles and forms. (Banjos, mandolins, tenor guitars, ukeleles, and other instruments accounted for approximately 20% of total production.) Made of galvanized steel, the Duolian was the cheapest of the line, selling for \$32.50. The Style 0 was the most expensive, selling for \$65; its body was made of heavily chrome-plated bell brass with a palm-tree scene etched into the finish. (A duolian today brings about \$250-300, a Style 0 about \$500-700.) All models were available with round or square necks. Generally, the square ("Hawaiian") necks were for slide playing only, while the round ("Spanish") necks for standard playing, though the round necks could easily be converted for slide. Generally, too, wood-body resonator guitars are referred to as "Dobros," and steel-body guitars are called "Nationals." There are significant differences in sound, regardless of the manufacturer. Dobros typically had a throaty, hollow sound and became popular with country players. The National Steels had a brassier, bolder tone and gained quick acceptance with early bluesmen and street singers.

National was producing 38 to 42 instruments a day. Dobro 18 to 24. In the peak years after merger in the summer of 1934, National-Dobro was turning out approximately 70 instruments each day and, in fact, outsold both Martin and Gibson. By 1939, electrics dominated their catalog. The pickups were quite sophisticated, and the guitars themselves were as highly respected as ever by professional musicians. Owing to wartime shortages of metal, the company was largely out of business by 1940, though even in the Fifties, electrics with the names Supro, Valco, and National continued sporadically to surface.

Other Makes and Styles

Interestingly, the first commercially available electrics were Hawaiian guitars, what we generally call lap steels, necessitating use of an ES (Electric Spanish) designation on later acoustic-electrics, retained to this day on some models. Rickenbacker's "Frying Pan" (1931) was really the first and introduced the electro-magnetic pickups which became prototypes for virtually all electrics. Earlier electrics had been available, notably those of **Lloyd Loar**, the man responsible for the Mastertone banjo and F-5 mandolin, who left Gibson in 1924 to produce electrically amplified instruments rejected by his employer. The Frying Pan attracted considerable attention, however, and soon other manufacturers were following Rickenbacker's lead. The Rowe-DeArmond company was formed early in this decade, and both Gibson and National marketed a variety of electric Hawaiians. Limited numbers of acoustic-electric guitars were also being produced, but interest in these was minimal until the late Thirties, when Charlie Christian's work with the Benny Goodman band began to alter radically the future course of the guitar.

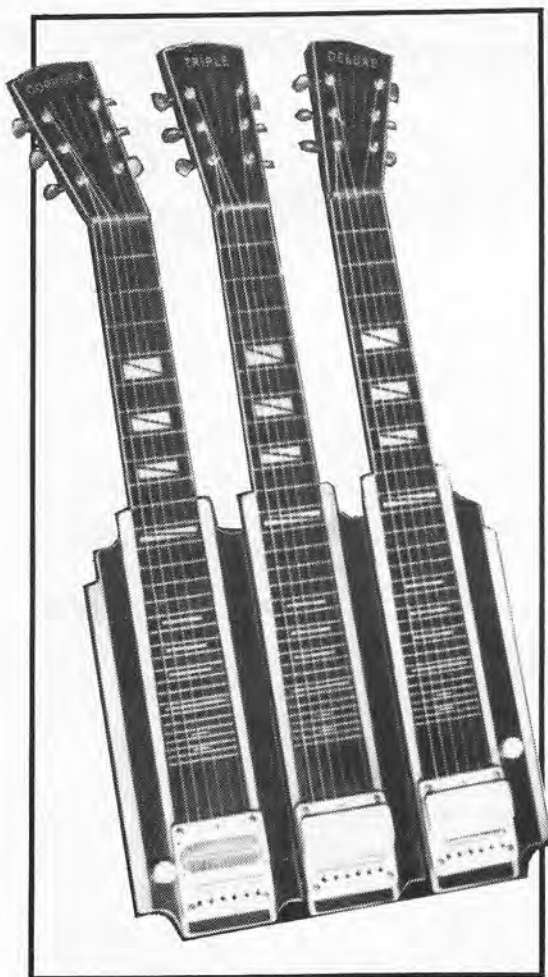
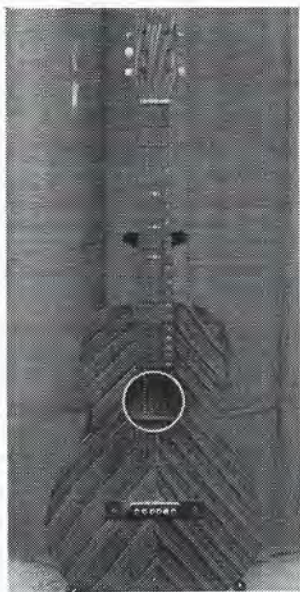


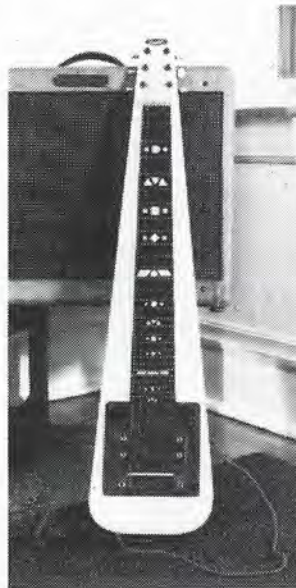
Photo courtesy of Michael Allan



LEFT TO RIGHT: Joseph Kekuku; National custom triple neck steel, manufacture date unknown; Jerry Byrd with a National tri-cone guitar and a Rickenbacker fry pan.



LEFT: Regal square neck lap steel; 1940's Gibson steel guitar [photos courtesy of Michael Allen].



LEFT: Supro lap steel made in the 1950's; Valco steel made for Montgomery Wards under the Airline brand [photos courtesy of Michael Allen].

NEXT IN **Steel Guitarist**

The Steel Guitar Players of Hank Penny

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Also, about this time, Les Paul mounted two pickups on a 4"x4" and originated the solid-body concept. Paul Bigsby was doing similar work in the Forties, and Leo Fender built his earliest guitars, K&F lap steels, in his home garage. John Moore's submission to Gibson of a console-mounted electric Hawaiian, with provision for changing pitch of individual strings, brought the currently popular pedal steel onto the scene as well.

An evolution similar to that of the instrument itself was experienced, quite naturally, by many players of the time. Hence, just as Cliff Carlisle moved from his early Martin guitar with nut adapter to a National steel-body and, finally, an electric lap steel, so the dominant music segued from country through blues towards swing and jazz, ever more sophisticated.

In future issues I will: touch on these developments in style and in the instruments themselves; discuss major players (Tarleton-Darby, Bob Dunn, Cliff Carlisle, Pete Kirby, Hoopii, Smeck), tunings and techniques; and briefly present some historical steel guitars. ■

About the author

JAMES SALLIS resides in Duncanville, Texas, is 34 years old, and has worked full-time as a writer for 12 years. He has freelanced, edited, and at the present time, is working on a book. He has stories, articles, and reviews in everything from men's magazines and science fiction periodicals to *Prairie Schooner* and *Transatlantic Review*. He edited *New Worlds* magazine [in London] for a year, edited two "theme" anthologies: *The War Book* and *The Shores Beneath*, wrote a book of short stories, taught writing at Clarion College, the University of Washington, and Tulane, and has done articles for *Pickin'* and *Frets* magazines.

James plays guitar, mandolin, Dobro, and lap steel. He collects and resells instruments in need of restoration. His music interests run from pre-baroque harp to jazz and country blues.

James has provided editing of some previous *SG* articles. He assembled the Ralph Mooney story in this issue. James will continue to assist *SG* in many future articles.



THE RICKENBACKER FRYING PAN

Adolph Rickenbacker is shown holding his first handmade model of the electric steel guitar. This instrument was the beginning of the first popular electric guitar in the world.

The instrument was invented in collaboration with George Beauchamp, who spent countless days and nights experimenting with various magnets and winding coils on his sewing machine. The Rickenbacker Company was principally a tool and die shop at that time where metal guitar bodies and parts were stamped out for many other manufacturers. Upon completion of the guitar, Adolph Rickenbacker financed and formed the company that produced the instrument.

After its introduction in 1931, the musicians nicknamed the instrument the "Frying Pan" or "Pancake" guitar. This guitar was soon used in many large orchestras throughout the country and the new sound of the amplified guitar quickly caught on with a great number of Hawaiian artists.

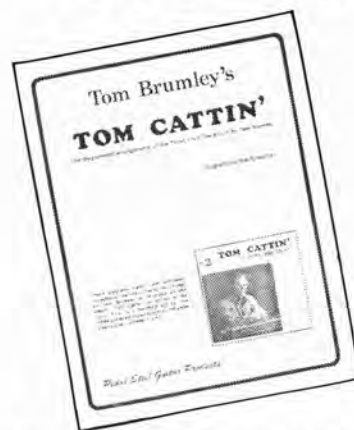
Sold in conjunction with the original little "Black Box" amplifier, this set retailed for \$125.00 and sold individually for \$62.50. The early guitars were cast aluminum polished to a luster. Aluminum was chosen for the body because it was strong, yet lightweight, and held a good tone. Later, technology facilitated the use of bakelite. This early Electro guitar had a longer, narrower neck than the later model and had 3/8" thick magnets made of tungsten steel.

The Rickenbacker trade name was soon adopted because it was unusual and easy to remember. During the early years, the "H" spelling was used interchangeably with the correct "K" spelling. Within a few years, Rickenbacker electric Spanish style guitars premiered as the forerunner of today's Rickenbacker products.

This historic instrument is on display at the company headquarters in Santa Ana, California, where all Rickenbacker products continue to be manufactured.

[Photo courtesy of Rickenbacker Co.]

Fourteen easy ways to get that West Coast sound

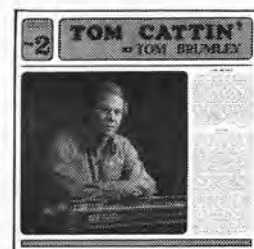


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Here Come DETOSTO

Frankie Detesto was a remarkably accomplished musician I met in 1970. We ran into each other at a bluegrass festival in Hugo, Oklahoma. I was in awe at his musicianship, especially on the banjo. Because of his musical talent I ate up every word he said, and what he kept saying was, "Yeah, bluegrass is great, but I love pedal steel." That attitude was like a seed planted in musician's heads, and since he traveled the east and west coast festivals wowing musicians, he sowed a lot of those seeds. He was an older fellow, and I have heard that he has since passed away. He would stay up all night talking chords and songs none of us had ever heard of before. He was the kind of guy who lived to play music, never made it big, but knew what life was about — another Clayton Delaney!

For years, a patron saint of steel players has been a person who would never have believed he could have reached that position: Frankie Detesto. Although he kept the C6th and the other tunings in obscurity and confusion, he has now shown us the "true language" of the steel guitar. His "Detesto Numbers" help players to talk about and quickly compare copedents. With the greatest of ease, we can now find chords, compare tunings, and fluidly discuss our ideas.

When the components of chords are discussed, numbers are used:

major:	1 3 5	major 7th:	1 3 5 7
minor:	1 3b 5	minor 7th:	1 3b 5 7b
Dominant 7th:	1 3 5 7b	Augmented:	1 3 5#

major 6th:	1 3 5 6
minor 6th:	1 3b 5 6
Diminished:	1 3b 5b

In this way, any chord can be written, easily described, and made familiar to most (you have seen them written — as shown above — this way before!). Frankie, however, urged writing all these numbers out in a line. The result is the Detesto Number Scale (again, familiar, right?):

1 1# 2 3b 4 5b 5 5# 6 7b 7

If your copedent is written in these Detesto numbers, the chords and the tuning itself have the *same language*. If another copedent is written in the same way, they can be compared quickly and easily. Their similarities and differences will "jump right out at you" because they are both in the same language.

To illustrate, I will rewrite the standard C6th copedent in Detesto numbers and remove the confusion. Here is the copedent, plus 3 additional knee levers:

C6th Copedent									
	1	2	3	4	5	←	→	←	→
G		G#							
E			F					F	
C				D		B			
A	B			B			Bb		
G		F#							G#
E			Eb					F	
C					C#				
A	B						Bb		
F		F#			E				
C		D			A				

To rewrite this in Detesto numbers, first write a chromatic scale, and under it, write the Detesto scale numbers:

C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B (C chromatic scale)
1 1# 2 3b 3 4 5b 5 5# 6 7b 7 (C scale in Detesto)

Now, write out the copedent, substituting the numbers, and you have this:

C Chords									
	1	2	3	4	5	←	→	←	→
5			5#						
3			4					4	
1				2		7			
6	7			7			7b		
5		5b						5#	
3			3b					4	
1					1#				
6	7						7b		
4		5b			3				
1		2			6				

What you see is your copedent written out in terms of chords. The chords you want to find, and the tuning and pedals, are all in the same language. Just pick out a chord from the list, and locate it on the copedent. Easy?

Since the copedent has been rewritten with C equalling 1, only the C chords are provided. The possibilities and limitations of your pedals can be easily seen. Other chords can also be played out of this layout. Winnie Winston calls this the "layering" of the steel guitar. I could play out of an A chord or an F chord with equal ease. These are two layers to which I can easily go.

Detesto Numbers!

A quick, easy way to
translate copedents into
meaningful terms

by Greg Estes

Also, the location of those A and F chords can be found by use of the Detesto numbers again. Consider the A chords. Rewrite your C6th copedent in terms of A chords (A=1). Write your chromatic scale again and the Detesto scale under it:

C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B (C chromatic scale)
3b 3 4 5b 5 5# 6 7b 7 1 1# 2 (A scale in Detesto)

Convert these numbers to the A in this C6th copedent, and you have this:

A Chords:									
	1	2	3	4	5	←	→	←	→
7b		7							
5			5#					5#	
3b				4	2				
1	2			2			1#		
7b		6							7
5			5b					5#	
3b					3				
1	2						1#		
5#		6			5				
3b		4			1				

All the A chords are now staring you in the face. Pick out any chord you want from the list, and find the same numbers on the listed copedent. Note that you can even see the inversions available.

Look at one more layer of chords. Playing out of F is easy, so let us rewrite our copedent in terms of F chords. Write out the chromatic scale with F equalling 1 in the Detesto scale:

C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B (C chromatic scale)
5 5# 6 7b 7 1 1# 2 3b 3 4 5b (F scale in Detesto)

Convert these numbers to the F in this C6th copedent and you have:

	1	2	3	4	5	←	→	←	→
2									
7		3b						1	
5			1		6		5b		
3	5b			5b				4	
2		1#							3b
7			7b					1	
5					5#				
3	5b						4		
1		1#		7					
5		6		3					

You now see how easy it is to find the chords you want if you rewrite your copedent in Detesto numbers. This has always been confusing because previously, whenever someone tried to tell you where to find a chord, he would get bogged down in music terms, relative keys, etc.

More Benefits

Frankie Detesto's greatest gift to us was not just his number system. The most significant uses of these numbers are revealed when two copedents are compared. Have you been wondering what to do with all those fascinating copedents of the top players? Well, wonder no more! Any

Cont. on page 46

SCOTTY'S 9TH I

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(DETESTO NUMBERS from page 43)

copedent you wish to understand and compare need only be written in Detesto numbers for the whole mess to become crystal clear. All discussions of copedents should make use of Detesto numbers to avoid any transposing or thinking in different ways. One language for all, in other words.

Consider briefly our C6th copedent and two other copedents, all written out in Detesto numbers. Spend some time comparing the pedals on one copedent to the pedals on the other and to the tuning itself. Then, compare them with your other favorite steelers'. All copedents should be translated with their key name equal to 1 in the Detesto scale as follows:

First, our C6th:

C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B (C chromatic scale)
1 1# 2 3b 3 4 5b 5 5# 6 7b 7 (C scale in Detesto)

(Note: Refer to first listed layout of C6th copedent)

Compare it to Maurice Anderson's Bb6th copedent:

C C# D D# E F F# G G# A Bb B (C chromatic scale)
2 3b 3 4 5b 5 5# 6 7b 7 1 1# (Bb scale in Detesto)

Maurice Anderson's Bb6th:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	←	↑	→	←	→
D					Eb							C#	
G		G#					G#			F#			
F				E									
D					C#		D#					D#	C
Bb	C		A			C		A					
G		G#				A				F#			
F				E							Eb		
D			C		C#		C					D#	
Bb	C		A			B							
G		G#	F			G#				F#			
Eb				E			D						
C					C#		C#	D					Bb

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	←	↑	→	←	→
3					4							3b	
6		7b					7b			5#			
5				5b									
3					3b		4					4	2
1	2		7			2		7					
6		7b				7				5#			
5				5b							4		
3			2		3b		2					4	
1	2		7				1#						
6		7b	5			7b				5#			
4				5b			3						
2					3b		1	3					

Now, compare both previously listed copedents with Doug Jernigan's copedent:

C C# D D# E F F# G G# A Eb B
1 1# 2 3b 3 4 5b 5 5# 6 7b 7

Doug Jernigan's C6th

	1	2	3	4	5	6	←	↑	→	←	→	←	→
G		G#											
E			F			D		Eb					
C					D							B	
A				B					Bb		Ab		
G		F#									F		
E		F		Eb		F		D					
C		C#			C#								
A		Bb				Bb				Ab			
F		Eb	F#		E								
C			D		A								

	1	2	3	4	5	6	←	↑	→	←	→	←	→
5		5#											
3			4			2		3b					
1				2								7	
6				7				7b		5#			
5		5b									4		
3	4		3b				4		2				
1	1#				1#								
6	7b							7b		5#			
4	3b	5b			3								
1		2			6								

Instead of talking about pedals in reference to their positions on the floor, refer to them by what they do. Look at pedal one on the standard C6th layout (original diagram). Instead of calling it pedal one, read it from top to bottom and call it a "7 7" pedal. Pedal two will be called the "5# 5b 5b 2" pedal. The next pedal is a "4 3b" pedal, after which we have a "2 7" pedal, a "1# 3 6" pedal, a "7" pedal, etc. Get the idea?

Compilation

Yet, what do we have when all of the copedents in Detesto numbers are scrutinized? Everybody has: a "2 7" pedal, a "5b 5b" pedal, a "3b 3b" pedal (or a "4 3b" pedal), and some form of a "7b 7b" pedal; a "1#" pedal, a "4 4" pedal, a "5#" pedal, a "2" or "2 2" pedal, and a "7" or "7 7" pedal. Most of the difference here depends upon whether one has a single- or double-pull for the change.

The other unique things are a couple of "7 2 7" pedals on Anderson's copedent. Also, Jernigan has a "4 1# 7b 3b" pedal and a "3b 4" pedal. From here on, you are on your own. I wonder what you can discover of interest by "taking apart" Chalker's copedent, for instance? What does Emmons have that is unusual?

Conclusion

Frankie Detesto gave us his number system so we could all finally talk about tunings easily. There is no longer a reason to get bogged down in relative keys or transposing. List every copedent in musical notation, followed by Detesto numbers, make them understandable and comparable. We use tablature so that we do not have to learn music. Now we have Detesto numbers, so we do not have to talk in relative keys, just one scale for the whole schmeer!

[Special thanks to Winnie Winston for his idea of layering, to John Helak for his article in the PSGA Newsletter with the same vision, and to Frankie Detesto, that great steel player in the sky.]

About the author

Greg Estes began his music career in the 5th grade, playing coronet, in Lawrence, Kansas. He graduated from Kansas University with a B.A. in English in 1968. His interest in bluegrass banjo developed in his last year of college, and he performed with a number of bands. In 1972 he entered the Peace Corps and spent two years in Nepal. Following his return to the U.S. he worked in a number of states, and finally settling in Eugene, Oregon. Nepal still beckoned and he took a job as a trek guide for expeditions of climbers who wished to hike to the Mt. Everest base camp, while his wife taught grade school at the American Embassy there. He had begun pedal steel before the Nepal departure, and played Kathmandu's "Carnegie Hall" with a local Nepali rock band. Now back in Oregon, Greg is finishing up on a computer programmer's degree. Ed.



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Jeff Newman's Nitty Gritty

Stock Intro's

If you are at ease on the bandstand, the whole group can feel it in your playing. The audience can even feel it because the group plays better when everyone is working together and no one is "up tight" and out of place. Often, what makes us feel awkward is having to take the lead on the intro' of a song. You can always tell when the steel player does not know what he is doing. When it comes time to kick off the song, the whole band falls apart for a second or so, until someone feels the beat and gets the works going. Your job is to get the works going and not let that brief muddle happen at all. If you are insecure about what you are going to play, then so are they, because they are following you.

It is easy just to drift along with the chord progression behind the singer because you can follow *them* all the way. It is the intro' and the turnaround that put you on the spot. The problem may not be that you cannot play, but that you just do not know what you are going to do for sure, and that traps you.

Introductions to songs can be standard ideas. That is, you can work out several themes, runs, licks, or whatever you want to imagine them, and use them over and over in all sorts of songs. You can speed them up, slow them down, and re-phrase a note or two. Usually no one would ever know you are playing the same intro' you did 10 minutes before. If you change keys very often, it is even better. So, the thing to do is work on some stock themes to use when you need a stock intro', out of the blue. Obviously, if the tune you are to introduce has a steel guitar intro' on the original record, and you have time to learn the intro' exactly as recorded, play that one. If not, you have to come up with something stock that everyone can follow.

I sit in with bands wherever I go and often have to play intro's to tunes I have never heard. All I need is the key and

tempo. When in doubt about the melody, do as I do: just ask the singer to sing quickly (and softly!) the last line of the song to you. You will get the tempo, the key, and the song's mood all in one 5 second "crash" course.

You should keep such stock intro's to a minimum of fret movements. That way, when you change the key, you will not get lost. If you can keep the complete intro' to a short two to five fret move, you can easily go to almost any key in a hurry and not blow the frets.

Let me give you a few good examples of "stock intro's" you can use for slow, medium, and even fast songs. I will put them in the key of "C", and you can put them into any key. Remember, these are stock intro's, **not the particular intro to any song**. The purpose of these intro's is to permit you to be so definite with the melody and the chord work that everyone else in the band can feel and hear exactly what you are doing and follow you to the letter. If you then *play* timidly and without authority, the leadership will not be there, and it will be every man for himself.

These work! I have used them many times. Each one has two fiddle-like, pick-up notes on the beginning. This gives the band the definite beat because you are playing two beats of rhythm before they come in. You have to count it off "1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2," and start your pick-up notes. They start two beats after you do, on the "1" of the next measure.

Notice: there are two different styles of chord progressions used in these intro's. Nos. 1 and 2 are the standard C - G7 - C - C progression. Nos. 3 and 4 are also standard, but they start in the dominant seventh position of the G7 root chord. The chords for these intro's are G7 - G7 - C - C. You will

(See NEWMAN on page 62)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	8	C	8	G7		2	C	G7	C
2				8—6	8				
3		8	8	8B—6			8	8B—10B	8 7 6
4	8	8		8	8		8	8D—10	8D 7D 6D 8
5	8	8		8A—6	8A	8	8A	8 8	8A—10A 8 7 6 8
6	8B			8B	8		8B	8 8	8
7									
8	PICK-UP					PICK-UP			
9	NOTES					NOTES			
10									10

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	G7		8	C	4	G7		13	C
2								13	
3	8B 9B	10B 9B 8B 8	7—6					13—15	15B3
4	8 9	10 9D 8D 8D	7D—6D 8	8				13 13—15	4
5	8A 9A	10A 9A 8A 8	7—6 8A	8	15		15—15A	13A	15A5
6			8B	8	15 15B	15 15B	15—15B		6
7					15	15			7
8	PICK-UP				PICK-UP	15			8
9	NOTES				NOTES				9
10									10



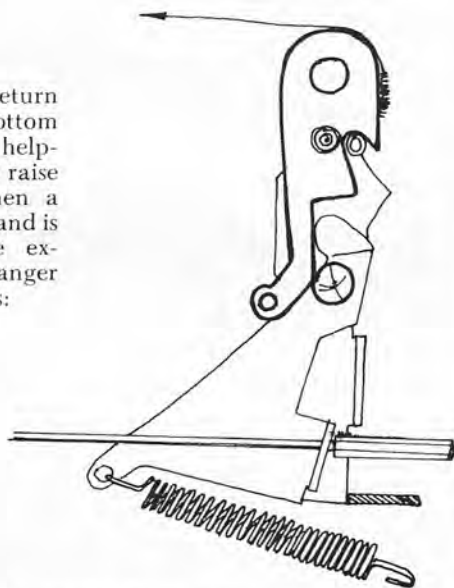
Winnie Winston's Pedal Steel Workshop

Correcting Lowering Problems On Sho-Bud's

Many people who own newer Sho-Bud guitars experience problems when they try to lower a string more than a half-tone. This problem is most evident on the E9th when you want to lower the second string from D# to C# or the 6th string from G# to F#. A look at the Sho-Bud changer will show you why the problem occurs. The changer is made of three parts, like this:



There is a return spring at the bottom and sometimes a helper spring for the raise on the top. When a string is lowered and is actuated to the extreme, the changer will look like this:



As you can see, the bridge finger is running into the rivet (which acts as a swivel for the lowering finger), preventing itself from lowering any more. On some of the earlier models, with a similar changer, the raising finger will run into the lowering finger before it gets to the rivet and have even less travel. Whichever the case, you will find that, if you continue to pull, the string will begin to raise, since you are pulling the whole unit up.

There are several solutions to this problem:

1. You can try a different gauged string to see whether it will let you lower to the same pitch with less travel.
2. Recognize that the helper spring may be too strong and is not letting the string lower all the way. If this is the case, you can correct it by reaching under the steel with

needle-nose pliers and pulling the helper spring out. Give it a yank, and out it comes!

3. Major surgery! Now, do not be frightened by this. I am going to tell you how to dig in with those tools and let you lower to your heart's content!

What you have to do is remove the changer finger in question. For our example, look at the operation on the second string.

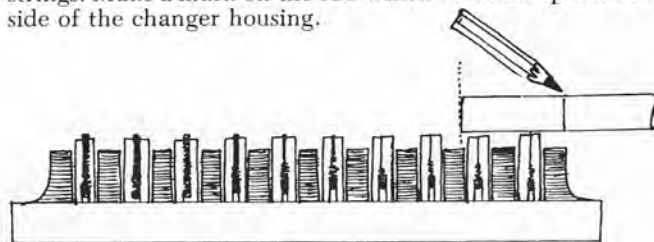
Step 1: Loosen all the strings on the neck until they are slack; no need to remove them.

Step 2: Remove the second string and pull out all the rods going to that finger.

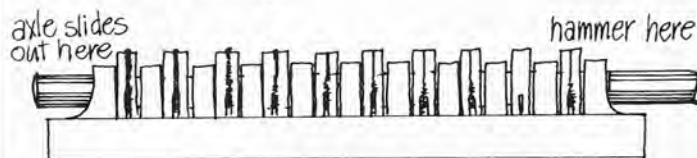
Step 3: Unhook the return spring from the changer finger.

For the next operation you will need a length of 5/16th inch diameter rod. This is the same diameter as the axle of the changer.

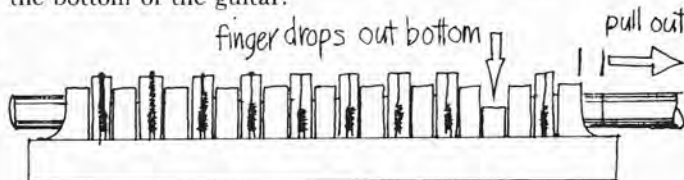
Step 4: Place the rod over the changer unit and move it in until it lines up with the space between the second and third strings. Make a mark on the rod which will line up with the side of the changer housing.



Step 5: Starting from the outside of the housing (next to the first string), lightly hammer the rod against the axle. What you are doing is pushing the axle through the changer housing, and replacing it with the rod. As you do this, you will notice the changer axle begin to slide out the other side. Tap the rod in until the mark you have made lines up with the side of the housing.



Step 6: Pull the rod back out. Pull it just enough so that it pulls through the second string, but stop before it pulls out of the first string. This distance will be about one-quarter inch. When you do this, the changer finger will drop out of the bottom of the guitar.



(Continued on next page)

Step 7: Study the finger unit. You will have to cut off a piece of the bridge finger like this:

You can use a hacksaw or jeweler's saw. Be careful not to crush the rivet or bend any other part if you are holding it in a vise.

You must be very careful not to cut off too much, or it will not be able to lower at all. File the rough edge to remove all burrs you might have caused in the cutting.



Step 8: Put the finger back in from the underside of the guitar. When it is lined up, tap the axle back through it. Continue tapping until the axle feeds itself back through the changer lever assembly of the first string and gets to its original position.

Step 9: Rehook the balance return spring to the finger.

Step 10: Replace the string and pull rods. Tighten all other strings back to pitch.

I have performed this operation on several Sho-Bud guitars, and it is quite simple to do. If you are having problems with a string not lowering all the way, and you find that the helper spring is not at fault, you might consider these steps as the solution to your problem.

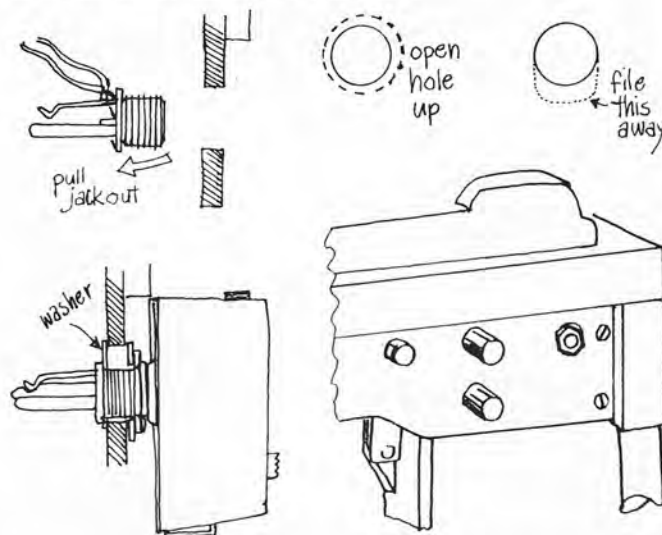
Accommodating Boss Tones On MSA Guitars

If you have an MSA, you will find that you cannot use a Boss Tone unit with it, because the Boss Tone will not plug

into the output jack (the endplate or a toggle switch is in the way) on the right side of the back apron. The solution is to lower the output jack about 1/16th inch. Do this by:

1. Removing the jack — just unscrew the hold-on nut and push it into the guitar. There is no need to unsolder anything.

2. Using a round file, or using a half-inch drill to enlarge the hole, lower the opening like this:



You can then reinstall the jack slightly lower, and the Boss Tone should fit right in. You may wish to use some larger washers on the inside and outside of the jack so it will tighten down properly. ■



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No pedals are used in this arrangement. The bar slants (measure 3, 4, 7, and 12) add an authentic touch by altering the string length. Pedal slides change string tension which sounds different. A simple uncluttered delivery is most effective. A little rhythm guitar backing up the steel and you will have an arrangement which the Herr sisters, Betty and Jean, might have done in the golden era of Hawaiian Music.



Standard E9th capedent.

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Chords	G7	C			G	D7			G	G7
1										1
2										2
3										3
4				7-8		6-7			7-8	8-7
5	3	8	7-8	8		7-8	8	10	10	3
6	3	8	8	8-6	5-6	7-8	10-8	10-8	10	7-8
7				8						6-4
8		8		8-7			10-8	10		8
9	3									3
10										10

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Chords	C		G		D7		G			
1										1
2										2
3				3	6-7		7-8			3
4			8-7-8	3	7-8	8	10	3	15	4
5		8	8-7-7	3	5-6	7-8	8	10	15	5
6	7-8	8					10	3	15	6
7			3				10	3	15	7
8	7-8		8				10	3	15	8
9							10			9
10							10			10

Public Domain melody.



Fred Layman Layman's Ledger

Steel Guitar As A Home Instrument

The manufacturers of keyboard instruments recognized quite early that the major market for their product was not with the touring musician. The instruments were too bulky and heavy for convenient portability. It was much easier to place pianos in concert halls and move musicians to them. Yet even this "solution" limited the market for keyboard instruments to the traveling professional. Thus, the modern industry has come to focus on designing and promoting pianos and organs as instruments for use in the home, with an appeal to the non-professional who plays for his own enjoyment whether he has an audience or not.

The Steel Guitar Market

The non-professional home player is also the major consumer for the steel guitar for a variety of reasons. In my area, less than ten percent of the steel players perform with professional or semi-professional bands, and most of them do not play regularly. I suspect this is the case nationally. The commercial demand for steel guitarists limits the number of working musicians. In addition, many otherwise good steel musicians have simply opted out of the bar and club scene. Incompatible personalities and uneven talent in the band, exploitive club owners, unappreciative patrons who would not know good music if they heard it, conflict with other time demands, and increasing marital tensions create stress levels that are not worth the wear and tear. These players have concluded that, for them, Clayton Delaney's maxim is true: "There ain't no money in it, and it'll lead you to an early grave."

Still, demand limitations and value priorities are probably not the main reasons that most steel guitarists are home musicians. Rather, I have the feeling (based on acquaintance with a number of players in this country) that the majority of people who buy a steel guitar do so out of a love for the sound of the instrument and the creative challenges involved in learning to play it, rather than from aspirations about becoming a road musician. If a band comes along, okay; but that is secondary to learning to play the instrument for personal pleasure.

I want to slant this article toward this "silent majority" of steel guitar players. My intent is not to discourage the musician who aspires to become a traveling professional. We owe a great deal to the professional steel guitarists who continue to be the trend setters for our instrument. My intent here is simply to encourage the home player and to point out some creative ways he can use his time and increase his playing skills.

Getting Over Guilt

First of all, stop feeling guilty! You have been told so long that the only way to become a good steel player is to join a group that you are probably feeling like a middle-aged spinster waiting for a suitor to come along and claim her. Do not be apologetic! You belong to the great majority of steel guitarists. You even have some advantages that the road musician lacks. So, do not be tyrannized by feeling inferior to the club musician. You probably have as much potential as he!

For one thing, you will probably find more time and

energy for practice than the traveling musician. I notice when I am playing with a group my practice time declines. It is easier to leave the guitar in the case until playing time than to break it down, take it home, set it up, practice, break it back down, take it to a gig, set it up, and play. The lack of practice accounts for a lot of the mediocrity in country bands. When your guitar is left sitting up at home, however, there is a greater incentive to find practice time. This is a good argument in favor of the professional having two steels — one at his job and one at home!

Creating Your Own Band

Let it be conceded, however, that the alleged limitations of learning by yourself are valid. Certainly every musician worth his salt has to spend many hours alone "woodshedding" at his instrument. Yet hearing only yourself can get very monotonous and discourage the desire to practice. Thankfully, it is now possible to import your own band, over which you have complete control! Most of the available arrangements for the pedal steel come with a record or tape which puts the band on one channel and the steel on a second. When you have learned the steel part, you can then tune the steel channel out and play along with the band by yourself. This does wonders for your technique and timing and stimulates continued interest during practice.

You are not limited to available steel arrangements in order to have a recorded band. Steel players should not overlook the **Music Minus One** guitar albums as a good source for learning while playing with a recorded band. These albums also put the band on a channel separate from the guitar. The albums (usually with guitar arrangements) are produced for the electric guitar, but they are adaptable to the steel. They run the gamut from country to pop to blues and can be used with either the E9th or the C6th. **Music Minus One** albums can be ordered through local music stores, or you can send for a catalog to Musician's Supply Inc., P.O. Box 4507, San Diego, Ca. 92104.

Your own record and tape library may be a good place to look for useful rhythm tracks. Older stereo records, in particular, emphasized separation of sound as a desirable quality for stereo and often placed rhythm and solo instruments on different channels. If you listen to records and tapes you already own, you will probably find many with good intros, rhythm channels, turn arounds, and endings which, with a few recording tricks, can be worked up into good rhythm tapes.

You might want to produce your own rhythm tracks if you have the necessary equipment. Some steel players also play rhythm guitar, bass, or drums. If you do not play any of these instruments, you no doubt have friends who do. Ideally, you need a four-track tape player for this, putting one instrument on each channel. By a process of over-dubbing and remixing, however, you can also do it with some two-track machines.

Recording Equipment

All of this leads up to saying that the home steel guitarist will want to invest in some record and tape playing
(See LAYMAN on page 54)



Herby
Wallace

Sixth Sense

Chords On The C6th Neck With and Without Pedals

My approach to the C6th neck is to learn as many basic chord positions as possible. When learning a new tune it is necessary to know these positions to decide which one may best fit each particular situation. In this article I will try to cover some of the most common chord positions with and without the use of pedals. Of course, there are so many chords that can be found on the C6th neck it would be impossible to list every one. I still discover new ones from time to time.

In the previous issue of Steel Guitarist Magazine, I discussed major and minor chords in the open position and also expanding them to sixth chords and minor seventh chords still in the open position without pedals. As I said, on any of these chord voicings, the ninth string was to be omitted.

Many people, of course, will ask why the ninth string (F note) is there. This note is used as a root for many different chords. My approach is to think of it as the fourth tone of the C scale (or the fourth or IV chord of a progression in the key of C).

There are many chord positions to be learned and memorized on the C6th neck. It is important to learn how to relate them for memory purposes. Taking the standard C6th tuning (see fig. 1), you can see there are several possibilities for an F major chord (F A C) in an open position. Also, there are two E notes which would be the major seventh tones in the F scale. The two G notes would be the ninth tones in an F scale. So, if you look at the tuning from this angle, you have F major chords, F major seventh chords, and F major ninth chords, still without the use of pedals in an open position.

Of course, you must use your own musical taste in choosing the best chord voicing for a particular situation. As long as you are aware of what notes form the particular chord being played, it is not always necessary to play every note in the chord. Even the root may be omitted, as long as someone else in the band is playing it. Again, musical taste is the big factor. I have found many cases where, maybe, a three note voicing of a chord, which legitimately should contain five or six notes, may actually sound better than playing all of the notes of that chord!

Concerning the pedals on the C6th and their functions, I will be using a standard setup with five pedals and one knee lever (see fig. 1 for copedent).

Figure 1 - C6th Copedent

	A	B	C	D	E	KL
1-G		+ G#				
2-E			+ F			
3-C				+ D		-B
4-A	+ B			+ B		
5-G		- F#				
6-E			- Eb			
7-C					+ C#	
8-A	+ B					
9-F		+ F#			- E	
10-C		+ D			- A	

PEDAL A - This pedal raises the fourth and eighth strings a whole tone. There are three basic chords for which I use this pedal. First, I think of it as a C position (as a C major seventh chord); the B notes would be the natural seventh tones. The second possibility with this pedal is to think of the two B notes as the ninth tones of the A scale, which would form an A minor 9th chord. Of course, your A note (root) will have to be omitted when playing the various voicings of this chord, but this is all right, as long as someone else in the band is playing it. There are also several voicings of an E minor chord in the open position with this pedal.

PEDAL B - This pedal which changes four strings (see fig. 1) is used primarily for chords based off the D note (root) on the tenth string. There are several voicings possible: D major chords, D seventh chords, and D ninth chords. There are also several voicings of an A minor sixth chord, still in the open position. The first string (G#) would be the flatted fifth tone against a D chord, or the augmented fifth tone relating it to C. However, this string is not used too often.

PEDAL C - This pedal raises the second string and lowers the sixth string and is used mostly as the base off an F note (root), as discussed earlier in this article. The second string (F) would be the first tone of the scale to be used in many voicings. The sixth string (Eb) would be the dominant seventh tone and can be used to form seventh chords and, with the G notes in this position, to form complete ninth chords. Another possibility with this pedal is to think of the sixth string (Eb) as the flatted third tone of the C scale for a C minor chord in an open position. There are also many voicings possible.

PEDAL D - This pedal raises the third and fourth strings a whole tone each, offering several possibilities. The fourth string (B), which is the natural seventh tone in a C scale, can be used to form a major seventh chord as was done with pedal A. However, with this pedal, the third string (D), which would be the ninth tone in a C scale, can be played with the fourth string, and the other notes of the chord, to form a complete major ninth chord with several different voicings possible. Another possibility with this pedal is to think of it with G being the root in an open position. There are several voicings of a G major chord possible. In addition, the E notes would become the sixth tones of the G scale to form G sixth chords. There are other possibilities for this position since the dominant seventh, ninth, and eleventh tones are present (see fig. 1). There are several voicings of E minor and E minor seventh chords available with this pedal.

PEDAL E - This pedal changes three strings (see fig. 1) and is usually used to form chords based off an A note (root). There are several voicings possible for A major and A seventh chords, since all of the required notes are present. A very common use of this pedal is for an A seventh augmented ninth chord. This is possible since the C and C# notes are both available in this position.

KNEE LEVER - The knee lever used in this copedent lowers the third string a half tone. It may be used as a floor

(See WALLACE on page 54)

(WALLACE from page 53.)

pedal, but I recommend it as a knee lever since it is used in conjunction with several other pedals from time to time. There are two basic uses for this knee lever when used by itself. The first is another way to play C major seventh chords, with the third string (B) being the major seventh tone of the C scale. The other is to use it for voicings of an E minor chord, since all the notes are there.

After you have come familiar with all of these chords in the open position, they should be memorized all the way up the neck, so they can be played without having to hunt for them. As you can see, there are an endless number of chords to be found on the C6th neck. In this article, I have covered just what each pedal does individually; however, there are still many more chords to be learned by combining pedals and also the knee lever. Hang in there. I will be going into them as we move along.

For those who are anxious for the "heavy" chord voicings as they apply to a number of good tunes, that will come. You should know what you are playing, though, before you decide to just play sounds.

About The Columnist

Herby Wallace is no newcomer to the steel guitar. He has been playing since the age of 9, beginning on lap steel and quickly progressing to pedal steel by the age of 13. That is when he began playing professionally! After graduating from high school, he toured with the likes of Duane Dee, Leroy VanDyke, Nat Stuckey, Donna Fargo, and Jody Miller. During that time and for the past 15 years he has taught pedal steel. He has over 600 recording sessions to his credit, put out two instruction courses when associated with the Emmons Guitar Company and Scotty's music, and now has a series of instruction courses available from his own

publishing company [see Herby's ad in this issue of SG]. Although not touring in recent years, Herby does special playing engagements in and around Chattanooga, Tennessee [his home], continues with his session work, and teaches pedal steel. Herby now performs at the Steel Guitar Convention each year, and to hear him is to recognize he is a premier performer. His approach to the C6th neck is a remarkable listening experience for those in attendance. Ed. ■

(LAYMAN from page 52)

equipment. Stereo machines are a must in order to separate the steel or other solo instruments from the rhythm channel. Yet such equipment need not be expensive, especially if you intend to play it through your guitar amplifier. Perfectly acceptable sound can be produced by cassette players costing less than \$100.

Remember not to plug your tape machine directly into the guitar amplifier; this overloads the amplifier and distorts the sound. You can purchase an inexpensive (usually under \$20) battery-operated microphone mixer at most radio and electronic supply stores. Plug your tape player (and your guitar, if you wish) into the mike mixer, and connect the mike mixer to the input jacks on your amplifier. You can then balance the volume of the taped rhythm track with your guitar volume.

These are but a few ways you can become a one-man band, playing along with some of the top musicians. You will enjoy practicing much more and find your playing skills developing more rapidly; and in the process, you never left your own playing room. ■



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SG Complimented...

● The quality of writing in SG in its first year was excellent. It is a pleasure to re-subscribe. The articles were informative and transcended the usual focus on picks, strings, and amps that tend to make stories about musicians all sound the same. I am sorry to see the classified ad idea fail. It helps provide some of the financial support only someone else in the publishing business can fully appreciate. I want to commend you on the broad spectrum approach to the instrument. There are too many steel players who refuse to listen to more than one kind of music. I hope SG changes that attitude. ... Jack Hume, Managing Editor, Schenectady Gazette, Schenectady, New York

Information About Compensator Rods Wanted...

● I hope a future issue will include information on how the different pro's use compensator rods. A compensator rod (a strategically placed extra pulling train) will make one chord perfectly in tune and another one very much out of tune. I know in most cases it is obvious which chord is more important, but not always. It would be great to get specific examples of how, why, when, and where they should be used. ... Don McClellan, Burlingame, California. That will definitely be covered in a future article. Ed.

Enough Of Convention News and on to More Important Matters...

● It seems to me there is an inordinate amount of space given to Scotty's Convention. The affair may be the biggest thing to steel players, but I do not see the need to hear about it months before and months after. I would like to see more extensive interviews dealing with specifics, as do the articles in *Guitar Player* magazine. In my playing situation, I value things that help me, that are practical, such as columns about licks, songs, and practical theory, and so on.

Also, take a closer look at records and products. Being critical does not mean negative or downgrading. We need advice. We could run out and buy certain brands of instruments, accessories, albums, teaching aids, etc., and discover they are not what we had been told (or sold). A comparative choice would, at least, put the entire decision on our shoulders; reliable information is needed. Almost every record you guys review is said to be good! You guys could be objective in your evaluation of products. *Frets* magazine manages to do it! This tendency never to address the shortcomings of musical equipment reminds me of the comment by one reader in a prior issue that the industry is "inward looking." I would call it "protective." ... Tim Orien, Los Angeles, California

Omitted Paragraph In Last Issue's "From The Advisory Board" column, Maurice Anderson's Views On The Universal E9th...

○ Ed. Note: *For reason's unknown, an important paragraph was omitted from the narrative by Maurice Anderson. As Maurice was talking, he commented on the locking devices that can be installed, allowing the universal tuning to be held in position when playing in the 6th chord mode. Anderson does not subscribe to such a locking device, and his remarks are as follows:*

● "Employing a locking device, to hold the Eb's in a firm position, places the same restrictions on the single neck as does having a double neck guitar. This procedure deprives the player of the freedom to have the entire concept of a dual-purpose tuning at his fingertips all the time. With a universal tuning, the player not only has the benefit of playing in the E9th and the 6th modes, but also the opportunity to innovate through the hybrid capacity such a new-concept tuning affords." ... Maurice Anderson

○ Additional Ed. Note: *The Anderson universal tuning had an error in its layout: Pedal No. 6 should have shown the 8th string being lowered to a D, not an Eb.*

No Changes For SG, Please...

● For a long time, there have been (and still are!) plenty of music magazines which cover nearly every instrument available—except pedal steel! We in Australia have scrounged around, looking for just one article that would relate to our instrument. Now we have a magazine devoted to it: Wow!

In your questionnaire in the last issue, you stated that, even if another instrument were added, no changes in format would occur. I hope you keep that commitment (although I don't want another instrument included) because I believe there should be a "steelers" magazine, as SG now is. If SG had not been born, we would still be scrounging around, sifting, and sniffing. ... Warren Dunn, Sydney, Australia

Articles About Amateurs Wanted...

● As I read SG, all the attention seems focused on the professional players. They are deserving, but I feel it would be beneficial to print a few articles on the amateurs. Many who have been inspired by "professionals" are just as good. Though they might not be able to produce licks that the pro's have not played, they would feel more a part of SG if some recognition were given them. ... Gary A. Preston, Columbus, Ohio. Good point Gary. Ed.

Convention Disappointment...

● This past year's Steel Guitar Convention in St. Louis was a real disappointment for me. Except for a few surprises, like Herbie Wallace, it was a real drag. After I had spent a lot of money to get there, I was treated to the same old stuff by the same old people in the same old way. I feel I could be more fulfilled by going to Dallas to listen to Anderson or to Chattanooga to hear Wallace, and do it for a lot less money! Granted, the greats are great, but if they can't change their repetitious act, they had better keep moving. If I hear "Faded Love" again, I will scream! ... Dick Shea, Longview, Washington

Some Thoughts On 'Root'...

● I was happy to find out I was not wrong on the "pocket knife" starting all this "steeling." However, the Portuguese must have had a hand in it. When we toured Spain and Portugal in 1973, I was very much surprised after checking into the Lutecia Hotel in Lisbon and availing myself of the selections of the "Entertainment Panel." I pushed the button for "Contemporary Music," and it played a Hawaiian piece with a very good steel player on every fifth or sixth song. At the time, I could not tie in the relationship between Spanish and Hawaiian music. Since the piped in music was MUZAK, there appears to be a demand for it in Portugal. It appears that the Portuguese sailors carried a lot of the Hawaiian music back with them because it is still there! ... Stanley Monk, Bogota, New Jersey

Correction In Issue No. 4...

● On page 27 of SG #4, the picture of Duke Dumas is reversed with that of Dave Otterdahl on page 26. Switch the names and their comments on the convention, and it will be correct. Sorry for the mixup. Ed. ■

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ELEMENTARY CONCEPTS

Look at some of the basic principles of music theory all musicians, including steel players, should know. **SOUND** is the result of vibrations of air. Regular vibrations give a musical sound called **TONE**. The varying height or depth of a tone, called **PITCH**, is caused by the difference in the rapidity of these vibrations: the more rapid the vibrations, the higher the tone. Tones are arranged into ascending and descending patterns which are called **SCALES**. A scale will have one particular tone as a starting point, the **keynote**. The first seven letters of the alphabet are used to express the different tones (notes), and the reappearance of the same note at a higher or lower pitch produces what is known as an **OCTAVE**. The word "key" refers to the tones of a scale in relation to the keynote. If a melody is written, for example, in the key of G, then G is the keynote, the tonal center.

CHORD THEORY

A chord is simply three notes sounding together. Chords are built upon scales and the notes within the scales. For example, a C scale is made up of the notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B, and C. The spaces between the notes (intervals) are not the same. C to D is a **whole step**, or the equivalent of two frets on the steel guitar, and E to F is a **half step**, or the equivalent of one fret on the steel guitar. The relationship of whole steps and half steps can be illustrated:

C Major Scale - Intervals

C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
W	W	H	W	W	W	H	
1	1	½	1	1	1	½	

This **pattern** of whole steps and half steps remains the same for any major scale. For example, an E scale would go as follows:

E Major Scale - Intervals

E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#	E
W	W	H	W	W	W	H	
1	1	½	1	1	1	½	

To find the three notes of **any** major chord, simply lay out the major scale, **following the above pattern** of whole steps and half steps, and play the notes that occupy the 1st, 3rd, and 5th degrees of that scale. All major chords are made up of the 1st, 3rd, and 5th degrees of the major scale. These three tones are commonly called a **major triad**. With the E scale the three notes are E, G#, and B. These three notes make up an E chord. The C chord is made up of the notes C, E, and G, the 1st, 3rd, and 5th degrees of the C scale.

Other Chords

All other types of chords are formed by either modifying or adding to the three notes of the major chord. For example, a minor chord is created by lowering the 3rd tone (of a major chord) a half step. An E major chord (E, G#, B) becomes an E minor when the G# is lowered to G. A C major chord (C, E, G) becomes a C minor when the E is lowered to Eb. A 6th chord is created by simply adding the 6th note of a major chord. An E6 chord is formed when C# (the 6th note of the E scale) is added to the E major chord. Below is a listing of the "formulas" for the main chord types:

Major	1, 3, 5
Minor	1, 3b, 5
Augmented	1, 3, 5#
Diminished	1, 3b, 5b
Sixth	1, 3, 5, 6
Dominant Seventh	1, 3, 5, 7b

Basics Of The Number System

Every key has a certain group of chords common to that key. These chords are related in a logical fashion, based upon the scale of the key. In general, there are **three principal**

chords in each key. If you were playing a song in the key of G, for example, the G chord would be called the **I** chord, since its root note is G, the first note in the scale. In the key of G, the other two principal chords are C and D. If you count up the scale, starting with G as **I**, you will see that the C note is in the fourth spot. Because C is four places (in the scale) above G, it is called the **IV** chord. The D is called the **V** chord since it is based on the D note, the fifth note in the G scale.

Summary

The three principal chords in **any** key are the **I, IV, and V** chords, based upon the major scale for that key. If a fellow musician tells you that a song has a **I, IV, V** chord progression in the key of A, you will know that the chords are A, D, and E, in that order. If the chord progression is a **I, V, I** in the key of C, you know that the chords are C, G, and C, in that order. Knowledge of this number system is a must for working musicians, even those who sit at home a lot!

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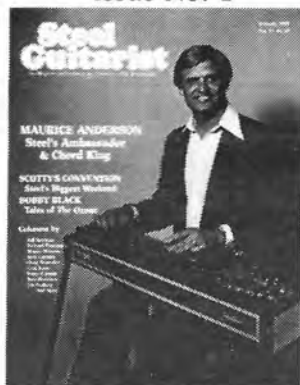
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(2 Records)

Steel Guitar Jazz & Four Wheel Drive

Ever wonder how a player gets his reputation for being "hot?" This double album provides the answer in the case of Buddy Emmons. "Steel Guitar Jazz" is Buddy's very first solo LP, recorded in 1963 at the tender age of 26, and consists of 11 jazz tunes in a combo setting. It's super hot, even by today's standards! "Four Wheel Drive" brings together various instrumentals Buddy cut early in his career. Styles include Western swing, country, Hawaiian, bluegrass, etc. The playing is exemplary, and shows the musical roots behind the Emmons style. Buddy's musical life story fills up the album jacket, inside and out, and we feel that no Emmons collection is complete without this landmark 2-record set.



Steel Guitar

"Steel Guitar" marks the beginning of Emmons' current recording period, and was cut in 1975 for Flying Fish. The range of material is wide — a beautiful medley of steel guitar classics (including "That's the Hawaiian in Me", "Steel Guitar Rag" and "Bud's Bounce"), then "Orange Blossom Special", and "Canon in D Major", a classical piece by Pachelbel, among others. For this album he played a custom 12-string guitar with three pickups. This is Emmons at his most versatile.

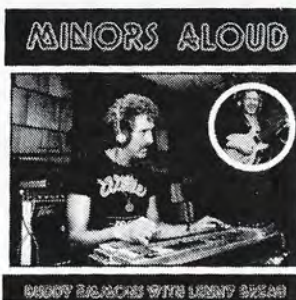
\$7⁰⁰

Minors Aloud

Buddy Emmons & Lenny Breau

This is Buddy's latest album on Flying Fish records, and it's all jazz, blowing hot and cold. Buddy collaborates with guitar giant Lenny Breau to create a fine album in the true jazz mold, and Emmons gets some unusual tones and textures using his phase shifter and equalizer. It's all C6, there's nothing "Nashville" about this baby, but if jazz is your bag, this record's a "must."

\$7⁰⁰



Nashville Bar Association



Buddy Emmons, Sonny Garrish, Jimmy Crawford, Russ Hicks & John Hughey

\$7⁰⁰

When this album was released in 1977, it startled many of us with its polished production, unusual tunes and radically different use of steel as solo and rhythm instrument. Three years later, the record holds up exceedingly well, and can be clearly seen as a pioneer effort to expand the steel guitar's modern recording potential. It's truly a group effort, with excellent playing by all five pickers, and arrangements that'll blow you away. To see where steel is headed in the 80's, start with this album!



"Four Wheel Drive" T-Shirt — \$5⁵⁰

Show the world you're a Buddy Emmons fan! These high quality T-shirts shrink very little and wear quite well. Order by men's size: Small (34-36), Med. (38-40), Large (42-44) and X-Large (46).

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(PUBLISHER from page 3.)

with the Penny band. However, any pictures of those players as they were during those particular years (1937 thru 1962) would be appreciated. The steel players whose pictures are desired are:

Sammy Forsmark	Noel Boggs
Eddie Duncan	Dick Roberts
Ralph Miele	Eddie Martin
Speedy West	Herb Remington
Joaquin Murphy	Curly Chalker

A forthcoming article will discuss these players and their playing experiences with Penny. Your help in this matter will be greatly appreciated. If you cannot let us keep the original print or negative, simply let us know: we will return those you loan us. Send to Box 931, Concord, California 94522.

A Column Ends . . .

● Sonny Garrish has found the recording studios of Nashville require more time than he had anticipated before he joined the magazine's columnists. Still, Sonny regrets his departure, as do we. Sonny offered important insights into the world of the studio musician. We appreciate his contributions as we know all the readers have.

Please Be Prompt . . .

● We have been supplied with replies or additions to articles written in issues other than the most recent. To address many topics that are 8 months old by the time the comment is printed, would be discussing a "dead" subject. Therefore, please supply your written material promptly. In view of our publication schedule being every 4 months, responses to most articles must appear in the next published issue.

Questionnaire Results . . .

● In the last issue, a questionnaire was provided all subscribers. While most readers did not object to another instrument possibly sharing billing with the steel guitar, many preferred the magazine as it is. Adding the dobro was viewed as very appropriate. Slide guitar was also suggested. Even providing articles on other instruments, as they related to the steel, was deemed relevant. Some respondents felt other music magazines adequately cover the lead guitar, and, there was considerable concern that SG should not become a magazine like those "other ones." Maintaining SG's identity and uniqueness was characterized as important.

Considering this response we should add that, for the present, SG has no plans to change its format. ■



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Steel Guitar Word Search

by David Grisdale

Hidden within this jumbled mass of letters are the names of 80 prominent steel guitarists. (All have recorded under their own name and/or been featured at the International Steel Guitar Convention in St. Louis, Missouri). The names may be spelled forward, backward, vertically, horizontally, or diagonally.

The following word search was constructed by David Grisdale of Norristown, Pennsylvania. Thanks, David, for sharing your efforts with the magazine's readers. Ed.

N O T S N I W N R O B I T A I L L E A L
W A I R A T A E U S H K C O C N A H C I
E C A L L A W X E C C A R O G E R S R N
H A T L E I C U L A A B O I T R Y K E D
A S B E G H S T L Y Z G B T O N E L M G
G N I G L C M B R H O D E S N N L E I R
A S I R A U A C O P L N R O I L I N E
R N S A R G E C A R R E T T O C S N G N
S A S E V A R G S U M E S T W U L O T I
B I E L N M G H B M L G T A D R A W O H
A N E W M A N J E R N I G A N F L A N Z
M O O N E Y M W A I U O F U J I I L E K
K S U S T I E H V B N M D F R H U R T S
I R A N D G C I E E L H L A E B W E S T
T E A O O U L T R A E I A E Y P I K L E
C D S M I T H E S A K C I R Y M R L K W
H N C M D E F H B E C K D I T S M A D A
I A O E L L L U I W I S G G O B R H H R
N O X A S E O T C R A W F O R D I C A T
G N U O Y E H G U H M Y F R A N K L I N

(Answers on page 61)

MUSIC THEORY IS EASY!

"BASIC MUSIC THEORY: A Simplified Approach" makes understanding music theory a breeze. This new book by steel player Jim Molberg takes you step by step through chords, substitutions, scales, transposing, rhythm, time signatures and more. It is very clearly written and designed to eliminate much of the fear and confusion surrounding music theory. Recommended for the beginner to intermediate player.

\$700

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Ned Selfe's

Disc Break

Randy Beavers
"Vintage Steel"
 Zanbeck ZR RB 10/12/78

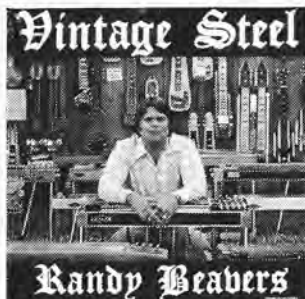
If you have been to the Steel Guitar Convention in the last couple of years, you are bound to remember some truly memorable performances turned in by a young player named Randy Beavers. As a long time protege of Zane Beck, Randy got an early start when Zane built a Z.B. for him when he was only ten years old. Since then, he has obviously come a long way. All of which brings us to "Vintage Steel," an album that certainly showcases Randy's considerable technical abilities but somehow fails to convey a sense of personal style. It is evident Beavers has mastered a variety of playing styles, and his influences run the gamut from Emmons and Jernigan to Brumley and Green (and, of course, Zane Beck), but this disc falls short of exhibiting the readily identifiable stamp that is apparent in Randy's live performances.

"Steel Mill," the one Beavers original, displays plenty of 'hot licks,' as do "Beaumont" and "Silver Bells." However, the phrasing needs to be developed beyond the point of long strings of sixteenth notes, no matter how fast they are played, in order to give contrasts and highlights to the tune instead of the technique. One of the strong points of the album is Randy's good taste in choosing his material — Jobim's "Wave," a lovely Latin ballad, is a superb choice for a steel instrumental, as is the classic "Somewhere Over The Rainbow." Charlie Parker's "Au Privave" is an excellent chance for a vigorous be-bop workout reminiscent of Emmons, while "The Entertainer" rivals Jernigan's "Sugar-foot Rag" as an impressive solo *tour de force* of moving voices.

This record is an impressive first album from a very impressive young picker, despite some shortcomings. Randy has the talent, technique, and taste to become a grand master. He needs only a little seasoning in order to develop a stronger sense of personal style. Then: look out world!

Mike Auldridge,
Jeff Newman
"Slidin' Smoke"
 Flying Fish FF-080

This album is a bit puzzling. The Newman column in SG #1, entitled "Lay Out, Lay Back, or Laid Off," might provide a good clue. That article emphasized the importance of knowing when not to play and being content to play only the simplest, tastiest licks in just the right places (when you do play). This is certainly a valid point and a lesson all should take pains to remember on the bandstand or in the studio. In the case of *Slidin' Smoke*, however, this advice appears to have been taken a bit too seriously. Although Jeff's technique is, for the most part,



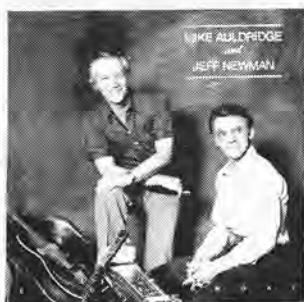
precise, it sounds stilted and squared-off, as if he were reading tablature. His concepts, however, are sound; his note and lick choices are, perhaps unfortunately, strictly standard. This would make a great instructional album because one can almost hear Newman thinking "... Emmons lick, Chalker lick, Green lick ..." as he sticks with the safe, tried, and true. Still, it sounds as if he is straining on some of the fast passages, and the body is lacking in a lot of places. By any means, this is not to say that everything one plays has to be a startling innovation, but, on the other hand, there is more to good music than the recitation of scale tones and licks.

Mike Auldridge's performance is generally more satisfying. His pleasantly sophisticated instrumental style and rich acoustic dobro tone combine with the sextet of veteran Nashville session players to produce an upbeat and palatable brand of music calculated to appeal to most everyone. Yet it does not quite catch fire either. Auldridge sings on two of the cuts with a vocal style that is tentative and not unpleasant, but it fails to add much to the production. He deserves points for trying, however, and for recognizing that most instrumental albums suffer from the lack of vocals. While the three Newman/Auldridge originals are fairly strong and have a nice style about them, something is really missing in the chunky, marching arrangement of "Blue Bayou," and Sondheim's "Send In The Clowns" (straightened out from its original 7/8 time and "countrified") should be re-titled "Send In The Cows."

One of the nice things about this album is Jeff and Mike's readiness to play over minor chords and make the inherent tension work for them, as in "Summer Thunder" and "Spanish Folk Song" — welcome relief from the usual strict Country reliance on major I-IV-V progressions. Overall, however, this disc plays it a little too safe and restrained for its own good and ultimately fails to exhibit that oh-so-necessary spark of originality.

Noel Boggs & Friends
"On Stage - Live"
 Shasta LP 531

This collection of excerpts from the Jimmy Wakely CBS radio shows of the fifties includes Noel Boggs, one of the "Big Three" of Western Swing steel (along with Joaquin Murphy and Herb Remington). Boggs was a very influential figure in that genre and played with everyone from Bob Wills and Spade Cooley to Wade Ray and Roy Rogers. (For more info, see "A History Of Western Swing Steel - Part II" in the Sept. '79 issue of SG). These particular selections from the later part of Noel's career demonstrate his technical prowess in full bloom and leave no question as to why he was so highly respected. Boggs was best known for his complex chordal work and the deft use of different necks to obtain very unique sounds on songs like "On The Alamo" and "When I Lost You." That he was no slouch on his single string work is clearly displayed on "Sheik of Araby" and "Blues Boogie," while "Birth of the Blues" sees him combine the two techniques to great advantage and listening



enjoyment. The ever popular Hawaiian style of playing is dreamily represented by "Blue Hawaii" and "Magic Isle." Perhaps the most striking aspect of these performances, especially in light of the present day pre-occupation with speed and hot licks, is the incredible variety of sounds and tones he used which complimented the song and singer, instead of drawing attention solely to the steel.

Throughout it all is Boggs' smooth rich tone trademark which has been often imitated but never copied. The introductions by Jimmy Wakely and the applause remind you these are live broadcasts, but they are kept to a minimum, while the recording quality, mix, and pressing are excellent. If you are a true Boggs fan, you will want these sessions to complete your collection. If you are not, this is a good sampler to introduce you to one of the all-time greats of the steel guitar.

Herb Remington
"Remington Road"
Stoneway #STY-176



In a career spanning nearly 35 years, Herb Remington has done a lot of different things. After knocking around with a high school Hawaiian band in Indiana during the early 1940's, Herb moved to California and hooked up with Ray Whitley and a then-unknown young guitar player named Merle Travis. That stint was cut short by the draft, but the day he got out of the army, Herb auditioned for Bob Wills and ended up joining the Texas Playboys for four years. Although his technique had not yet matured, his instrumental style quickly earned him a reputation as one of the "big three" of Western Swing steel players, along with Noel Boggs and Joaquin Murphy. Since then, Herb has remained an influential player and stylist, working mainly with his own band based out of Houston, Texas.

All of which brings us to his latest album, "Remington Road," a collection of classic and contemporary songs that does not quite live up to the standards Herb has set for himself over the years. Although this record contains some pleasant listening, it lacks the fire and originality of his previous work. Remington's tone seems subdued and muted. Even though his technique and delivery are stronger and smoother than in earlier days, this disc fails to provide the necessary musical punch, which is shown in the re-make of "Playboy Chimes."

The main flaw in the album seems to be the poor choice of material and failure to arrange that material effectively. The musical talent shines through at times, but the total product does not do credit to that talent.

Doug Jernigan,
Bucky Pizzarelli
"Doug & Bucky"
Flying Fish FF-043



The password here is "jazz" (and plenty of it), so, if you are not a heavy jazz fan, this disc might not interest you. However, this is an important album for several reasons, not the least of which is the importance of the players involved. As the title implies, Jernigan and Pizzarelli are all alone on this one without any accompaniment (or overdubbing). Their performance is so

riveting, however, that you might not notice the absence of bass and drums until after repeated listening. Most steel players are familiar with Doug Jernigan, but 7-string guitar whiz Bucky Pizzarelli is much better known in jazz circles for his impressive chordal work with many of the great jazz players. Although by SG standards this is technically not a steel guitar album (since Jernigan only plays on about 40% of the music), it is a pleasure to hear the steel used so eloquently and convincingly in a strictly jazz context, both in playing the instrumental 'heads' and comping behind Bucky's amazing chordal solos. Doug goes beyond merely bending the same old country licks to fit the idiom. The result is a striking demonstration that the steel can be just as expressive within an authentic jazz framework as other instruments.

Since Bucky dominates the proceedings, the selections are heavily steeped in the 'cool jazz' school; but there are nonetheless some very lively moments on tunes like "Honeysuckle Rose" and "Limehouse Blues," wherein Pizzarelli uses his extra bass string to demonstrate the fine art of walking a bass line while chording a melody. Bucky's arrangement of "Slow Burning" is a perfect example of mellow solo jazz guitar work, and the duet on "Sweet Lorraine" is enough to convince anyone that Jernigan is just as comfortable in this format as in any other. If you like good, mellow jazz, you will not find much better than this. If we are lucky, this will be the muzak they play in the elevator to steel guitar heaven.

The reviewed records are available as follows: "On Stage - Live," "Doug & Bucky," "Vintage Steel," and "Slidin' Smoke" from P.S.G. Products, Box 931, Concord, CA 94522 [\$7.00 each]; "Remington Road" [\$7.00] from Stoneway Records, 2817 Laura Koppe, Houston, Texas 77093.

Word Search Solution

(from page 59)

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Adams | 28. Green | 55. Newman |
| 2. Anderson | 29. Hagar | 56. Reams |
| 3. Beavers | 30. Hancock | 57. Remington |
| 4. Beck | 31. Helms | 58. Rey |
| 5. Bethel | 32. Hicke | 59. Rheinhardt |
| 6. Biel | 33. Howard | 60. Rhodes |
| 7. Black | 34. Hudson | 61. Roberts |
| 8. Boggs | 35. Hughey | 62. Robitaille |
| 9. Brumley | 36. Hurt | 63. Rogers |
| 10. Burnette | 37. Isaacs | 64. Rugg |
| 11. Byrd | 38. Jernigan | 65. Saxon |
| 12. Cage | 39. Keith | 66. Scott |
| 13. Carie | 40. Kelii | 67. Smith |
| 14. Chalker | 41. Kitching | 68. Stewart |
| 15. Charleton | 42. Kleinow | 69. Tharpe |
| 16. Cox | 43. Lashley | 70. Tuxen |
| 17. Crawford | 44. Lindgren | 71. Ufton |
| 18. Day | 45. Livingston | 72. Wagoner |
| 19. Drake | 46. Lozach | 73. Wairata |
| 20. Elliott | 47. Lucier | 74. Wallace |
| 21. Emmons | 48. Maickel | 75. West |
| 22. Flanz | 49. Maness | 76. White |
| 23. Franklin | 50. McAuliffe | 77. Wiggins |
| 24. Fujii | 51. Mooney | 78. Winston |
| 25. Garrett | 52. Murphy | 79. Yamaguchi |
| 26. Garrish | 53. Musgrave | 80. Young |
| 27. Goldmark | 54. Myrick | |

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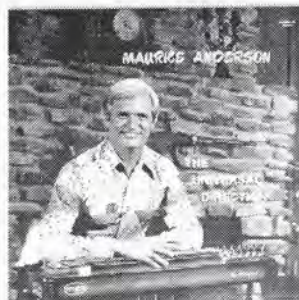
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(NEWMAN from page 48)

find millions of songs that start with one or the other of those chord progressions. Even if the tunes you introduce do not go like these, you can use these for the intro's, in spite of the song! There are no laws or rules you have to follow, as long as the band follows you.

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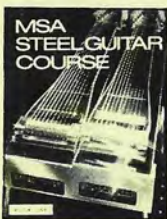
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