

H. H. GEORGE SYSTEM OF BANJO INSTRUCTION

COPYRIGHT 1925-INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT SECURED

HOLDING THE BANJO.

Place the head of the banjo squarely in your lap with the head parallel to your body and close to it, straight up and down. DO NOT tilt the top edge of the rim toward you,- keep it straight up and down.

The neck, or fingerboard, should extend toward the left at an angle of forty-five degrees and it should require no pressure from the left hand and no support of any kind. The instrument should balance itself if it is constructed properly.

THE LEFT HAND AND ARM.

The left arm should drop down naturally from the shoulder,- close to the body in an easy fashion. The left wrist should be curved slightly, the under part of the neck resting in the hand at the junction of the thumb and the first finger with the palm. The palm of the left hand should never touch the banjo. This is important,- watch it carefully.

The fingers of the left hand should be well curved, but should not strike directly on the ends, as the fingernails will then interfere. Slant them slightly, the strings being pressed about one-fourth inch from the fingernail edge.

The thumb should always be one fret further up the neck at all times than the fret in which the first finger is placed. If you are playing a chord in which the first finger is in the second fret, the thumb should be opposite the third fret and this rule holds good in every instance.

USE OF THE BARRE.

When playing a barré chord,- a chord in which more than one string is stopped with the 1st finger,- the thumb is to be placed under the neck of the banjo, the center of the neck resting on the ball of the thumb, and the thumb across the neck at right angles to the length of the fingerboard. The thumb must still be one fret higher than the 1st finger. If the first finger is barring the 2nd fret (see Lesson 2, diagram #1) the thumb will be under the neck at the 3rd fret.

You must be very careful as to the position of your thumb, as it adjusts the whole left hand. Form the correct way at the beginning and you will not have to break any bad habits later.

H. H. GEORGE SYSTEM OF BANJO INSTRUCTION

COPYRIGHT 1925-INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT SECURED

THE RIGHT HAND AND ARM

The use of the right hand and arm is perhaps harder to acquire than the left. Picking is very difficult if you do not get on the right track at the very start.

The right arm should be held close to the body and the forearm should rest on the edge of the banjo rim about two inches above the tailpiece, and should never move from this position, and all action of the pick should be made with the wrist and not the arm.

THE PICK

The pick should be fairly large and heavy, of genuine tortoise shell. Do not use makeshift picks of celluloid,-they give a "picky" sound and the tortoise shell gives a solid tone. Some banjoists find a thimble practical, but a pick seems to me to be the logical way to strike the strings. You have more flexibility in the action.

Hold the pick between the first two fingers and the thumb, with perhaps a half inch extending beyond the ends of the fingers. Curve the wrist well and strike the strings about two inches from the bridge, Playing closer to the neck gives a softer tone and nearer the bridge, a louder (more harsh) tone.

The pick should be held at an angle of forty-five degrees with the head at all times, even on an up stroke, and leave the pick very loose in your fingers,-do not hold it tight.

If your pick is the correct shape you will not drop it after a few hours of practice.

When playing a tremolo the pick must be held at right angles to the head, but very, very loosely.

The whole secret of fast picking is "looseness." If you hold the pick tight the muscles of the wrist will tighten instinctively-relaxation is the secret of picking.

At first the pick will slide around in the fingers, but persevere and in a short time it will become second nature to hold the pick correctly.