

# **HARMONY TENOR BANJO INSTRUCTOR BY FRANK LITTIG**

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## **HOLDING THE TENOR BANJO**

Rest the rim on the right thigh. Place the ball of the thumb of left hand under the neck with tips of fingers curved above the fingerboard. Rest the right forearm on rim near tailpiece. Hold the pick or plectrum between thumb and first finger of right hand and strike strings about three inches from the bridge for ordinary playing.

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## GENERAL HINTS

Playing up any string from C or any other note for twelve frets gives you the chromatic scale. Keep this scale in mind when transposing as it applies to chords and keys as well as the scale. Learn to read from piano score. When playing Tenor Banjo from piano copy get the same notes on the banjo as near as possible. Raise or lower a note an octave if necessary. There are only two strokes to learn, the down and the up stroke. Always use the down stroke where it is necessary to accent. The strokes to use are in the piano score and is pointed out by the rhythm or "swing". The rhythm is more important than Melody or Harmony. When we play with an orchestra it is best to pick out the best player and follow him whether there is a Director or not. Most orchestras lead their Director.

The Tenor Banjo is used more for harmony playing than melody. It is not a lead instrument. Either as a solo or orchestra instrument it is in demand for the harmony it can produce. Hence the necessity of knowing the chords used in an accompaniment. Playing single notes after each other is called melody. When playing two notes we play intervals. Three notes or more is a chord. An accompaniment should contain melody, intervals and chords. To change from one common chord to another as from C to F or C to E<sup>b</sup> flat is called progression. When we change keys via a chord of more than three notes it is called Modulation. Never try to play louder than the other fellow. Let the lead stand above the harmony, but let the harmony be heard. A great Artist told me that he selected eight numbers for his Concert Tour. He played these numbers eight hours a day for six months before the public heard them. Business players call this "nursing". A business player is one that can drop into any ensemble and play his part from anything that is handed to him, any time at any place. To be either requires considerable work. A Symphony is a sound picture. When a Symphony Orchestra plays a Symphony called "April Showers" it should bring that picture to the mind of every one who listens. No Symphony Orchestra has ever done that. A good or bad Jazz Orchestra can make any one see things. That is why Jazz gets the money while Symphonies go begging. There is a difference between Jazz Music and Jazz musicians however. Still, remember the popular music of the day is the Classic of to-morrow.