

### **FOREWORD**

A plain and simple instructor in the art of playing modern music on the Tenor Banjo.

Ragging, jazzing, and filling in, rhythm, melody and harmony made easy.

An instructor that contains direct information that you can grasp at once, the new ideas in music.

Contains the greatest collection of trick solos and stunts.

THE EDITOR.

# Jazzing and Ragging the Tenor Banjo

And Tenor Guitar

By

FRANK LITTIG

## Modern Orchestration

In the modern orchestra, either for concert or dance the instrumentation should be in the following order where such is possible. Piano, Banjo, Drums, Saxophone, Xylophone, Trombone, Violin. These rank in importance in the order named.

For a larger orchestra other instruments can be added. The piano leads. Banjo fills in with harmony and runs helping on the melody at times. Sax takes a tenor part. Xylophone is best for intervals, carrying inner harmony. Trombone either in the bass, or melody in upper register. Only use violin where the violinist can play chords, double stops and arpeggios.

The old fashioned violin on lead is not necessary. Tolerated, because we have many violins.

The standard for modern musicians is high and getting higher as we advance further and further into rag, jazz and blues. Old times and easy simple stuff are on the back shelf.

The musician to day must know harmony to a certain extent. He is supposed to add what the arranger has left out or arrange the music himself. Most orchestras get everything from the piano score or song copy. Classic as well as popular music is used this way. An up to date orchestra leader arranges his music along modern lines and racks his brain for new and original ideas. The player should listen in at every opportunity. Other orchestras, phonographs and the Radio will tell you what is doing. But do not imitate the other fellow or steal his originality. What he originates and puts over belongs to him. Let him have all that is his. There is plenty room for new stunts. Use your own noodle and you will not trail along the rear. This book furnishes the key to the new idea.

Many leaders of small orchestras are putting a lot of life into otherwise dead music. Standard and classics are brought up to date. Played in an interesting manner. We just have to take notice. Occasionally we play an old fashioned tune in the old fashioned way. We will always have old fashioned people with us and we must serve them as well. And by the way if you are a musician that can only play classics do not knock the modern music. We have just as good composers to-day as ever lived and they are writing just as good music. It takes a little more technic for modern music and is more difficult to render in strict time. I like classics and I like modern music. We use all kinds in our house.

After you put an audience to sleep with a classic number it is a good idea to wake them up with a good rag or inject a little jazz. They will like it better all around. A little dope along this line should go with every music lesson. Play everything and please every body. The world is just beginning to understand the value of music. One fellow even states there is a melody for the cure of every ill. So it behooves us to absorb more music and enjoy better health. For the good of your health,

take the Littig Practical Tenor Banjo Method. Price \$1.00.

# Hints

For ordinary modern playing scale and chord practice will keep a tenor banjo player in fair shape. The old idea of working on technic studies and exercises three fourths of your life is fast disappearing. If intent of becoming a finger acrobat, it will be better and easier to employ the whole body and join a circus. Play a piece of music as soon as you possibly can and spend most of your time that way. A little technic is necessary and that should be mostly mind technic.

If a passage of music seems difficult, play it over in your mind several times and it will be easy to get on the banjo. Running the scales and the triads (1st, 3rd and 5th tone of the scale) is the quickest way of keeping the fingers nimble. Keep scales and triads under your fingers.

Where one has plenty of time there is plenty of speedy stuff written for violin that can be played on the tenor banjo. Eat as much of this as you like.

A study of a cello method will acquaint tenor banjoists with the bass and tenor clef. It is well also to play thru a piano instruction book. Every tenor banjoist should be able to read from piano music. It will be found easy when you go after it. You can always get a piano copy of any piece of music. Keep your eyes and ears open and do not hesitate to learn anything you see or hear. Get acquainted with all the tricks whether they meet your approval or not.

You will find good and bad in all classes of music. Music is really human.

One kind is just as good as the other, makes no difference if it is classic, standard or popular.

Play all of it and never knock any. It shows certain limitations to gush over one particular kind of music. One must indulge in variety, to do justice to life.

Meet all music with an open mind and always play to the best of your ability any number placed before you. Make every listener like it.

The banjo is now found in the very best orchestras. It is in importance next to the piano and is being played by some of the greatest musicians that ever lived, young as it is.

While some orchestrations have tenor banjo parts they are seldom worth while unless written by a banjo player. For that reason a banjo player must arrange his own part to get the best results. This becomes easy with practice. An understanding of harmony will help. This has been acquired by many players simply by the study of piano scores and in arguments with other musicians.

All the harmony is there on the piano score or song copy. That is why the piano leads in the modern orchestra. The banjo comes next because it can play four parts.

As a solo instrument the banjo can also carry the harmony in various ways. Duets, trios, quartettes, Duo style, Melody with Staccato accompaniment, different arpeggios and other styles of music are within easy reach on the banjo. As a solo instrument it far excels all the melody or single tone instruments. The banjo is very, very sensitive.

A harmony instrument requires more study and a greater knowledge of music but this is repaid by more pleasure from the results.

The most wonderful musicians are those that play for their own amusement. Play to yourself and learn to be a severe critic.

Practice before a mirror and learn a big music lesson.

# Harmonizing

The most asked question by music students is, "Professor, how can I tell what chord or note to use for harmonizing"? The answer is, you can use any note or chord any place, as long as you play it with the proper degree of intensity. That covers the entire field of harmony. It rests on your experience and general make up as to using the best accompaniment. We learn one rule in harmony and then break it. After we learn all the rules we cast them aside. We learn in the beginning that we harmonize the keynote with the tonic chord, and still in time we will find that same note harmonized with every other chord and note we play. What harmony to use depends on our ability and the kind of music we have been playing. Who ever can write the most awful dischord and resolve it into a pleasant conchord can call himself a harmonist or arranger of music.

Some classic enthusiasts howl at jazz, and yet one of the greatest classic writers who is a long time dead, in one place used the whole major scale for a chord. Had he lived long enough he would have made use of the twelve tones of the chromatic scale for one chord. If you have a seven or twelve piece orchestra try this out and see if you can resolve either scale into an agreeable conchord. (consonant) You will be going the limit, but it can be done.

After we get acquainted with the satisfactory Major common chord, the first dischord we meet is the Dominant Seventh chord, an unsatisfactory chord that resolves easily into a common chord, not quite so easily into another seventh chord, and not so easy into a hundred thousand other different and remote chords. No limit. Whenever we play a dominant seventh chord, no matter how far we wander, the tonic or keynote of the chord into which this chord should resolve directly must be heard before we close. When any note is played on most every instrument the overtones or remaining notes of the chord are also produced and heard in a satisfactory manner. Some writers even go so far as to rely on an overtone for satisfaction. Another thing which bothers many musicians are forbidden consecutive fifths. Consecutive fifths are disagreeable to the ear, but it is not wrong to use them when you want to convey the effect they produce. Any one that says it is wrong to use consecutive fifths needs a little more harmony study. Consecutive fifths are least offensive when appearing in chromatic order. More disagreeable as the distance between them grows larger. Figure this out to your own satisfaction. Next to the dominant seventh chord comes the common minor chord for simple resolution. It resolves easiest into a major chord by raising the third a half step. Then it also can go into many different directions. These remarks can also be applied to all other chords and dischords. It seems nature provides disagreeable sounds so we can the more appreciate agreeable sounds when they arrive. All of life seems to be so affected. You can not rest long. Must get up and go. Show a lot of pep. Maybe because the other fellow is going some.

The remarks here on harmony are written to show that any chord can be used any place but there is still always a better one. There is always room for improvement. However, it is not justice, to any composer to change the original melody or harmony which he has used in a composition. You gain your experience by practice.

# New Ideas

Until the banjo and saxophone came forward there was very little interest paid to music and even the best orchestras found it a hard struggle to keep alive. It took banjo players and saxophone players to put the music business on a level with other lines. Of course they have had to drag others along to success. The banjo and sax is earning a lot of money for players of other instruments by playing with them. As a general rule piano players make the best leaders in an orchestra on account of their knowledge of harmony. Banjo players come next, and banjo players should run their own orchestra where they understand harmony better than the piano player. Most sax players know harmony. The lack of a knowledge of harmony keeps back a lot of old time musicians, and in olden days this is what kept the public from patronizing musicians as much as they should. The more you know about music the better it can be played.

The banjo, sax, drums and xylophone blend most perfect with the piano. Cornets, clarinets and such instruments are band instruments and do not blend well with a piano. A mute helps, but when you have to use a mute it is best to lay that instrument aside. It is far better to play a saxophone than to try and imitate with another instrument. While the banjo is wonderful, do not knock the old fashioned "bird" that still saws on a fiddle, Occasionally we find a violin player that can put his stuff over. And at that the violin is not as important as the piano, sax, banjo, drums and xylophone. A good piano player can handle the lead and also fill in. Some prominent music publishers are dropping Cello and Flute parts from their orchestrations and adding more sax parts as well as banjo parts. And some publishers are putting out good orchestrations at four times the cost of old time orchestrations. This is done for those that have not the time for arranging. Get some number published this way and note the difference. You will see at a glance why the old fashioned orchestra did not amount to much. They were not giving the public all they could give. Of course old timers were handicapped by the lack of sax and banjo players. But now they have no excuse for not sitting up straight and helping to put stuff over. And they can lay their old instrument aside, pick up a banjo, sax, drum, xylophone or piano and become useful citizens. The wise "birds" got a divorce from old ideas early in the game.

Above all things memorize your music. No one can play good music with their eyes glued to a piece of paper. You cannot play a piece of music until you have it memorized. In this way it becomes a part of yourself. Concert and vaudeville artists perform from memory. It looks just as bad for an orchestra to have sheet music before them as it would for a soloist to appear on the stage with a music stand and sheet music. Good music readers just play notes, not music. Many play from memory that do not fake. Altho, improvising or faking is an accomplishment beyond reading. Many fakers put over their stuff where note readers fail. Reason, they know their stuff. Readers seldom know their stuff unless they have memorized. Cultivate a good memory. Besides making better music it saves the eyes, and strain from constant reading.

Always aim to become a better player than yourself. This takes a lot of practice. No matter who you are you will never be the greatest of them all. The whole of music is too much for any one human being to conquer. Use a lot of rag and Jazz to keep yourself and the world young. Nobody gets old any more.