

## **FOREWORD**

All teachers know how easy it is to get difficult music, but that it is difficult to get easy studies and that for the average pupil nothing can be too easy. Not only in the first lessons but as the work progresses the lessons must be clearly understood and the exercises and pieces of such an arrangement and character that unnecessary difficulties are eliminated.

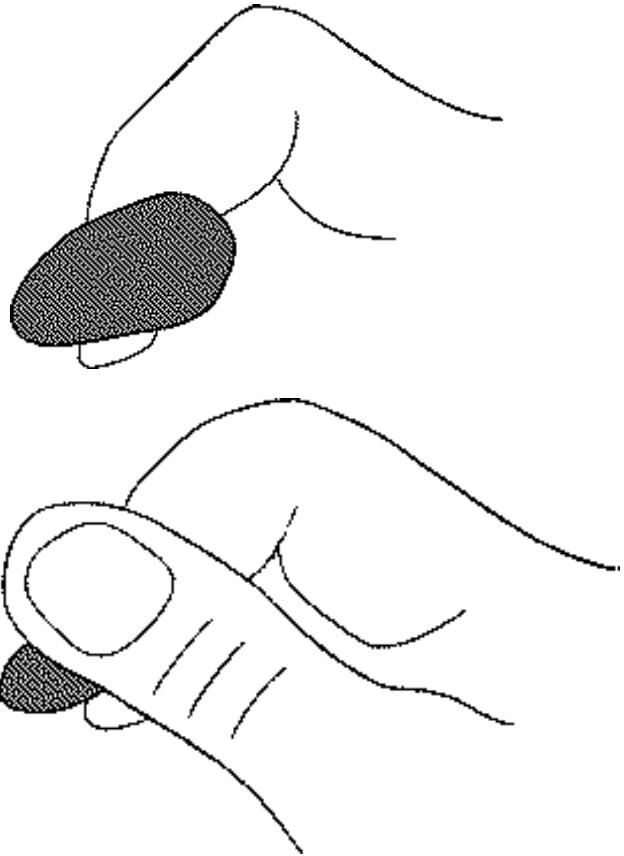
Consistent progress is not made by leaps and bounds, but by gradual steps and the mastery of each elementary feature while seemingly of little importance at times is a matter of the greatest moment and leads to virtuosity. This method covers every detail of plectrum playing, solos and duets of a decidedly interesting character. Chord building orchestra playing is given particular attention and every banjo player should have this book.

THE EDITOR

### HOLDING THE PLECTRUM

The plectrum is held with the thumb and first finger of the right hand - see diagram - The movement of the plectrum must be parallel with the strings and the wrist must not be arched more than a trifle. The forearm swings from the elbow. This is the only way in which the plectrum will travel in a line parallel with the strings. To arch the wrist and swing the hand like a pendulum causes the plectrum to describe a slight circle (an arc) with the result that the tremolo is not smooth. The hand must move in the manner of a smoothing plane and not a circular saw.

1



2



**Holding the Banjo**

## THE STRINGS OF THE BANJO AND HOW TO TUNE

The regular banjo has five strings. The names of which are G c g b d.

The short string (G) is the fifth string. In playing plectrum style it is best to remove the string and use only four being sure to remove the peg of the 5th string.

...

Good strings must be used. For plectrum playing a wire string will give more satisfaction and service. Use a stiff plectrum, genuine tortoise shell is the very best where lots of volume is needed.

Hold the banjo as in illustration and do not grasp the neck tightly. The left hand should be free to move up and down to all positions without in any way interfering with the position of the banjo. Before attempting to play, the student should hold the banjo in position and become accustomed to shifting the hand to all points on the fingerboard. The weight of the instrument will hold it in position with a little assistance from the pressure of the right forearm which holds the head firmly against the body of the player.

Now grasp the plectrum between the thumb and first finger of the right hand as illustrated. Strike each string a firm down stroke followed by an up stroke. The sign  $\downarrow$  will be used to designate a down stroke and this sign  $\uparrow$  for the up stroke.

Spend a few moments doing this to get accustomed to the swing of the arm, the movement being from the elbow. And a word right here: get yourself accustomed to striking the strings at the start without looking at them. Keep your eyes upon your music.

...

Perfect control of the plectrum is essential. Hold the plectrum with the thumb curved slightly inwards so that the edge and not the flat side of the pick or plectrum will strike the strings. This gives a smoother tone and not so loud. Thumb control will be treated later. The different shades of tone i.e. loud and soft-are obtained by simply turning the plectrum at different angles of contact.