

FOREWORD

The average player of Tenor Banjo prefers to practice studies of the pretty, melodious type rather than the common monotonous exercises. In arranging this material for your perusal, I have been careful to bear this point in mind.

Step by step, I have endeavored to impart the secrets of single-note technique, and have also occasionally introduced melody combined with four-note chords, using as part of my material violin duets that were written by the famous composers PLEYEL and MAZAS.

To make this work more interesting, I have arranged a teacher's or 2nd Banjo Part. The 2nd part, which you will find as an insert to this book, contains Chords, Arpeggios and Counterpoint. It is advised that the scholar practice both parts; on finishing these duets he will find himself benefited noticeably in more ways than one. His task will be agreeable and very satisfactory.

He will learn to perform his own part and eventually will not be confused or bewildered by listening to the counterpoint that appears in the accompaniment. He will have played in a variety of rhythms, and, if he has done well, he will have learned to play his part strictly in time, regardless, in a sense, of what his companion is doing. He will have become more musical and proficient

I maintain that there is less work in chord playing than in single-note technique. To single-pick the strings in a snappy and clear manner it is obvious that the player must have considerable training. Synchronizing the fingers of the left hand and the pick of the right hand necessitates delicate control, and this can only be attained by plentiful practice of systematically arranged studies.

Inasmuch as it is not practical to present all this material under one cover, I have found it necessary to confine this work to two volumes _Book 1 (Graded: Easy to Medium)_ Book 2 (Graded: Medium to Difficult). The scope of these two volumes, together with my well-known McNeil Chord System for Tenor Banjo, covers every phase of Tenor Banjo playing in use today.

If the student will conscientiously follow the instructions as herein set forth, he will eventually become a competent player and will be able to "hold his own" among top-notch musicians.

I take this means of wishing you abundant success.

Charles McNeil

Book No.2

(Sequel to Book No.1)

Book No.2 of Mc Neil's Progressive Studies for Tenor Banjo is for Students who have acquired a rudimentary knowledge of music, had sufficient preliminary training in single-note technique, easy chords in the 1st position and can play music graded - *easy to medium*.

If the Student is not qualified to render music as outlined above, he is advised to study Book No.1 of McNeil's Progressive Studies for Tenor Banjo, which he will find a preliminary treatise to this book.

SYNOPSIS of BOOK No.1



How to Hold the Banjo (illustrated); the Right Hand (ill.); correct size of plectrum (pick) and proper way to hold it (ill.); How to tune the tenor banjo, with professional advice and tests; Rudiments of Music; lesson on Time- Time-signatures, etc; Octave pitch and Actual pitch notations fully explained; when and where to use either clef; diagram of fingerboard and corresponding notes of the staff; system of fingering used in the 1st position; construction of the major scale; C major scale, finger, frets and strokes marked; general rules for stroking; easy exercise on the 4th string, written in quarter-note rhythm; easy exercise on 3d string; easy exercise on 2d string; easy exercise on 1st string; easy and comprehensive exercises on all strings, with quarter-note and gradual eighth-note rhythm; key of C major, thorough studies in the 1st position; tremolo explained, when to use it and avoid it; studies in G major; eighth and sixteenth-notes carefully introduced, with necessary stroking and fingering marked; G major scale. F major scale and studies; occasional easy chords introduced, study of triplets written in an Andante movement, $\frac{3}{4}$ Time; study in $\frac{6}{8}$ Time - rule of stroking for this kind of Time. D major scale and studies - passages in the 2d position gradually introduced with fingering and stroking marked; studies reviewing the keys of C, G and D major; B^b major scale and study in the key of G and B^b; syncopation gradually introduced and counting marked.


Step by step, I have arranged the material to impart the secrets of single-note technique and also, I have occasionally introduced 3 and 4-tone chords with the top-note as the melody.

To make the work more interesting, I have arranged a teacher's or 2d banjo part to all the studies, which is included as an insert - a book within a book. It contains Chords, Arpeggios and Counterpoint, affording the student ample material for study - after he has learned the 1st part or Student's Part. These studies arranged in duet form for two tenor banjos are an adaptation of the famous violin duets written by the masters, PLEYEL and MAZAS which have been standard material for over a hundred years in the studios of the foremost teachers of Violin. They are wonderful Studies and will never grow old.

Octave Notation and Actual Pitch Notation

This whole question was settled logically some time ago by the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists and Guitarists. It may be true that most of the new crop of Tenor Banjo players and arrangers have never heard of this organization, but just the same it has been in existence since 1902 and has always included in its membership those who understand fully the three families of fretted instruments mentioned in its title. It was, of course, functioning actively long before the Tenor Banjo grew popular, but about fifteen years ago, when the necessity became apparent of providing some simple, consistent notation system, the Octave Notation was selected. Since then, the trend has changed. Modern arrangers of orchestral music have dictated the use of Actual Notation, especially in Tenor Banjo Parts.

Briefly, the Octave Notation provides that music for the Tenor Banjo below the 10th-fret, 1st string, be governed by the Octave Notation tenor clef-sign, thus: , which indicates that it is to be played so it *sounds an octave lower* than it would if governed by the usual treble clef-sign, thus: .


This allows the pitch of the lowest string (C) to be written on the 1st added-line below the staff, and so does away with an awkward number of ledger-lines below the staff. When the pitch higher than the 10th fret, 1st string, is to be used for some length of time, the clef-sign is changed to the G or treble clef: , which indicates that the notes are to be played Actual Pitch. With this clef-sign, the pitch represented by the 15th-fret (C) of the 1st string needs but two ledger-lines above the staff. The acceptance of these two clefs makes it possible for the Tenor Banjoist to know where the notes are to be played without a preliminary survey of his part.

For the benefit of students, teachers, popular music arrangers and publishers, I submit herewith a chart that shows how the Octave Notation is to be used. It is compared with the treble clef notation (Actual), and the notes given under each clef-sign and their equivalents in each measure and count where they appear are the same in sound.

G is the highest note usually shown in Octave Notation


Ex.1

Octave Notation



Ex.2

Actual Pitch Notation



G is the lowest note usually shown in Actual Notation.

Ex. 1 - shows the clef-sign used for the Octave Notation tenor clef (the G-clef sign with a bar across it) and the notes from the lowest to the highest for the Tenor Banjo when written with this clef-sign.

Ex. 2 - shows the treble or G-clef sign with the same notes as they are written with the G-clef sign. The string on the Tenor Banjo where each note is found is shown, while the figures near the notes show the fret on the fingerboard where that note is located.

I will employ both notations in this treatise and humbly request that students will refer to the above chart often enough to become thoroughly familiar with the range of the two clefs.

The Merits of Both Clefs

OCTAVE PITCH is good to express the lower and intermediate tones of the Tenor Banjo. (Eliminates extremely low ledger- lines and spaces.)

ACTUAL PITCH is excellent to express the higher tones of the instrument and to interpret the tones as shown in popular piano song copies. (Eliminates extremely high ledger-lines and spaces).

Banjo Orchestrations are printed in both clefs, with the majority of parts arranged in *Actual Pitch*.

Note: This subject was discussed by Mr. L. Loar in an article published by Jacobs Orchestra Monthly.

2d BANJO PART

(The 2d Banjo Part should also be studied by the Student).

<p>Mc Neil's</p> <p>Progressive</p> <p>Studies for</p> <p>Tenor Banjo</p> <p><i>Arranged in duets for two Tenor Banjos</i></p>
--

Vol. II

Copyright MCMXXVII
by
FORSTER MUSIC PUBLISHER, Inc.
218 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill.

MADE IN U.S.A

TO TEACHERS:

How often have you been asked the following question: "How can I learn to read Tenor Banjo parts at sight?" The logical answer is, by the following methods: (1) Long experience: (2) Constant study - Since the first method is the hardest and longest route, it devolves upon the student to resort to study and practice, which, in the final analysis, will prove more satisfactory.

The method of learning to read Tenor Banjo chords may be compared to the analogous method employed in learning to read English. First each letter of the alphabet is learned thoroughly, then the letters are placed in combinations forming words, which are at first spelled out. Eventually, after much study, one glance at a word and it is instantly recognized, not by spelling it out but by its general appearance as a combination of letters.

For example, the word "tenor", is no more difficult to identify than the letter "e" to the experienced reader. The same principle applies to Tenor Banjo chords. Knowing the LOOKS of the vertical group of notes (*chord images*) should be the criterion in the development of facility in reading. I have met Piano players who are good readers, yet they had little or no knowledge of harmony or letter-names of chords. To them the chords become known at sight according to the distances of the notes from each other, their places occupied on the staff, the possible accidentals appearing in the chord and in fact their *general appearance*. A facile-reader knows the IMAGES of the various groups of notes he constantly encounters, and those images working through the eye to the mind cause a muscular reaction resulting in the proper technical requirements. As we may know a person on the street without knowing his name, so we may know a group of notes or chord without knowing its name in harmony.

On the other hand knowledge of business harmony will improve the banjoist's agility in any direction and should in no way be underestimated. The McNeil Chord System for Tenor Banjo teaches short-cut Harmony; its complete chord-charts shows all the chords and inversions, gathered into "family groups" (Tonic, Subdominant and Dominant seventh-chords). It is the only book of its kind that teaches the chords throughout the entire scale of the instrument. With manuscript paper and using the complete chord-charts as a guide the Student is advised to write out all the chords and their inversions employing both clefs, Actual and Universal. This results in the pupil absolutely knowing the LOOKS of the banjo chords in either notation without the assistance of the symbols.

Harmony and theory will broaden the view of music in general as no other element can. The McNeil Chord System for Tenor Banjo (or Plectrum Banjo) is a "gold mine" of banjo knowledge and should be the text-book for the Amateur and the reference book for the Professional and Arranger.

One of the Greatest of Modern Opportunities in the Musical World

During the last few years the Musician has certainly come into his own. He is no longer a man of uncertain future who lives in a dusty attic on a crust of bread and wears thread-bare clothes. He is a man whose future is assured abundantly by an ever increasing opportunity to use his talent and to be paid generously for doing so.

Thousands of up-to-date music stores employ music teachers. Thousands of theatres throughout the country employ orchestras. Hundreds of orchestras go on tours of the country as professional entertainers and find warm welcome and keen appreciation from the public. These people are all well paid. Their services are in great demand and the future before them is unlimited, for the motion picture theatres are increasing rapidly everywhere and all the better ones have their own orchestras.

Probably there is no instrument that is more popular in the MODERN ORCHESTRA than the TENOR and PLECTRUM BANJO - the playing of these instruments in a real musicianly manner offers a field that is not over crowded. In proof of this the Violinists, 'Cellists, etc., of the theatre orchestras are taking up the study of the Banjo to meet the demand and at the same time increase their salaries. The Banjoist who is trained to play properly has before him a future of genuine opportunity and is promised splendid remuneration for his efforts.

Dance Music

For thousands of years young people have danced, joyously, innocently, madly or indifferently, and they will continue to dance until the end of time. Dancing is natural from baby-hood up, and there will always be rhythmical music required to fill the need. Dance music can be made beautiful by constructive study and attention. It is life, youth, beauty and art in cadence. Let us take a little time off the higher forms of music, if necessary, and learn to appreciate the BANJO which is without doubt the most rhythmical, har-

mony-producing instrument of the modern orchestra. This typically American instrument is the means of helping lots of young folks attain financial success. A number of young students come from homes burdened with debt and the heavy responsibility to properly educate large families. A great many of these young men would have been compelled to drop their education in grammar schools or high schools at an early age and go into factories, shops, offices etc., to make their own way, had they not been educated to play good dance music.

If they had spent all their time learning the higher forms of music, such as, Sonatas, Concertos and Symphonies, there would have been no position that they could hold down open to them.

Instead they have learned to play the good old Banjo in a typically American style, with the result they are qualified to fill a definite sphere in the musical evolution of the age. They are well paid and happy in their chosen vocation. The dance work or teaching that they are doing broadens and humanizes them. In many instances the Banjo has been the means of obtaining their cherished ideals - perhaps a college education, an automobile or a home of their own.

The chief requisite for this style of playing is a thorough knowledge of all the chords and their inversions throughout the entire scale of the instrument. If the student is well versed in the study of chords and short-cut harmony, his greatest difficulty in mastering this style of playing is solved.

The Modern Way

The modern way of doing things is to do them with the greatest ease and results - and QUICKLY.

If you want to do your teaching and Banjo playing that way, you can. Use the McNEIL CHORD SYSTEM, which is published for either Banjo, Tenor or Plectrum.

The synopsis of this 100-page book is advertised on the back cover.