

MAKING SCALES INTERESTING

By PAUL MINERS

FOR my first article in THE ACCORDION WORLD I shall attempt to enlighten the many students of the accordion on a subject of extreme importance. Namely: The playing of scales.

Scale study is generally conceded to be a very dry study. But in reality, if they are studied properly, scales can be most interesting. If a student takes the attitude that scales are not particularly important and proceeds to go through that with the "I may as well get them over with" attitude he is truly starting a lot of grief for himself particularly with the left hand.

STUDYING THE LEFT HAND

After learning the scale of C major on the basses the next scale to be learned is the scale of G major. Oftentimes

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that swing music has among accordions in England was shown by the fact that some 65 per cent stated that they liked it. How this statement can be reconciled with the previous voting on favourite music is a little difficult, for such standard jazz tunes as "Tiger Rag" were placed very low.

The strength of the feeling that the accordion should hold a recognized position in the general world of music is very great. Nearly eighty per cent of the replies stated that they thought the accordion was indispensable in the dance band, while the percentage of people who considered that the accordion had a place in the symphony orchestra was only slightly lower.

At present the accordion is only used in leading dance bands for special feature numbers and is not in general use by the best known bands, while it has never been used in a symphony orchestra.

Finally, an average mean of players' tastes and likes was taken from which it appeared that the average accordionist in Britain is aged about 24, has been playing rather under three years and plays a 41/120 bass model and also plays the piano. He is not a member of any club, but has learned to play the instrument under a private teacher; and though he visits accordion contests, does not generally participate in them as a competitor.

*Do you concentrate enough to know which scale you are practicing?
Intelligent application will make the study of scales not only
interesting but of real value to any student*

the student, discovering that the routine of fingering is identical to the fingering of the C scale, discontinues thinking in the key of G and rattles away unconsciously. He thinks of the notes as being in the key of C; plays it by ear; or doesn't bother to think at all.

Next in turn is the D major scale, and the same thing happens all over again. Thus after the scales in several keys have been apparently studied and the student comes across an exercise containing an accidental that he should be able to locate at the snap of a finger (having played said accidental many times in the previously studied scales) he cannot locate it quickly to save himself.

This manner of studying scales is not the least beneficial; in fact it greatly retards progress.

If you are playing your scales in this manner, stop right now! Go back to the scale of C major and name *aloud* the name of each and every note as you play it. When you can name these forward and backward, take the scale of G major in like manner, and observe



THE ACCORDION WORLD feels privileged to bring to its readers articles by Paul Miners, thus bringing them into contact with another leading authority on accordion instruction. Having already enjoyed outstanding success in concert and radio work, Mr. Miners is now devoting his time to arranging, composing, and teaching. The regard with which he is held in this latter field was attested when he was selected last summer to conduct the Accordion Course at the Interlochen Music Camp, Lake Michigan.



that the note "A" used in the G scale is not the same one we used in the C scale. In the scale of C we used the "A" employed as in the 2nd or fundamental-bass row. Next in turn, we have the D scale. Continue naming the notes aloud, this time observing that the "E" bass in the 2nd row is used instead of the "E" in the counter-bass row that was used in the G scale.

Continue on throughout the circle of keys in this manner. Having completed these you may try the relative minor scales.

Another way of learning your bass keyboard is to memorize the fundamental-bass (2nd) row to the point where you can call them off in rapid succession; then memorize the counter-bass of each button in the fundamental-bass row.

Get yourself a good scale book and a book of exercises that will illustrate the various ways in which scales and passages can be played in various ways. Above everything, *concentrate!*

STUDYING THE RIGHT HAND

When commencing to combine the right and left hands, each should be well studied to the point of memorization. Otherwise confusion is bound to exist.

Before starting to play a scale, find out which note the fourth finger plays and *keep that note in mind*. In all the major and minor (harmonic) scales, the fourth finger is used but once. When you are definitely sure of which note your fourth finger plays, you need not worry about passing the thumb under at the wrong time, nor crossing the third finger over when you should be crossing the fourth over, and vice versa. In the melodic minor scales the fourth finger sometimes plays two different notes due to the fact that these scales have a different succession of notes when descending than when ascending.

And above all; SAY THE NAMES OF THE NOTES ALOUD WHEN LEARNING SCALES.