

AN EXIT: Play a few measures of backward double thumbing, counting your four equal beats all the while. Then enter the basic stroke by letting the *thumb* take the 1st beat of that stroke instead of the usual index finger. This substitution should last only for one measure, as by that time you will be back into the normal basic stroke.

Practice these five stages in sequence until they are smooth and automatic: (1) basic stroke into (2) one or two measures of ENTRANCE into (3) backward double thumbing into (4) *one* measure of EXIT into (5) the basic stroke again.

NOTE TO ALL KINDS OF DOUBLE THUMBING: Syncopation may be effected by eliminating one of the four beats, allowing a pause instead of a note. This gap is, of course, most satisfactorily placed on the weaker beats (2 and 4) - to leave out beats 1 and 3 is to throw the rhythm off balance (a real challenge to experienced musicians but a hazard to the newcomer).

Double thumbing is most effective when used in relief to, and in alternation with, the basic stroke. Some melodies are easier to pick out in backward, some in forward, double thumbing styles, depending on which strings the melody lies in and which tuning is used. Songs 1-10 adapt especially well to all the styles mentioned so far. In Song No. 11 (which is meant to be sung in recitative style against a fast accompaniment) it has been advised that the banjo play freely in backward double thumbing style. The accompaniment and the song melody will thus follow two different rhythms but will be linked together by chord changes as the banjo follows the harmony set down by the tune. The banjo player should strive to produce a swift even ripple of notes that will not distract the song or stand out too much rhythmically. Strictly speaking, this is not a traditional 5-string banjo technique, although there are styles which approach it in oral tradition. It is, however, very flexible and adaptable to slow songs of many types.

- C. FRAILING. Frailing is a rough style, very much like the basic stroke (it has the same rhythm) but less precise, a style well suited to songs needing a swift and hard-driving accompaniment.

First, clench your right hand slightly, until the first joints of your fingers are pointing back up towards the elbow, as in Plate III below.



Plate III