

The Plectrum Banjo is a long neck four-string banjo that is played with a single pick. It is customarily tuned CGBD with the fourth or bass string tuned to C below middle C on the piano. The plectrum banjo usually features a nineteen inch or slightly longer fretboard, 22 frets, and an eleven inch rim. When chorded and strummed its long strings and tuning produce an earthy resonant tone. Years ago the plectrum banjo was popular in vaudeville and in the 1920's dance orchestras. It experienced modest revivals in the mid fifties and again in the sixties and seventies. Today, most people recognize it as a "Dixieland" banjo. Fundamentally, the plectrum banjo is a five-string banjo minus the short fifth string. With the true plectrum banjo, however, the fifth string peg is absent and the fingerboard is narrower than the five-string. Despite these differences it is clear that the plectrum banjo evolved directly from the five-string banjo. The old saw that the five-string banjo is the granddaddy of them all is decidedly true when tracing the origins of the plectrum banjo.

For the most part, the evolution and blossoming of the five-string banjo took place in the nineteenth century. It began as a primitive African plantation banjo. Over the course of the ensuing 100 years it evolved into a banjo that would compare favorably with some of luthiery's finest stringed instruments. Initially, the plantation banjo of 1800 consisted of a hollowed gourd body, an animal skin stretched and tacked over it, with an arm to accommodate strings of hemp, hair, or gut. It was a rustic, agrarian instrument. Though rudimentary, this banjo attracted a few who saw its potential for entertaining. As it happened, blackface caricature comedy emerged and became popular in the early 1800's. It wasn't long before the plunky tones of the plantation banjo joined forces with theatrical burnt-cork dancing and comedy. By 1840, improved wood rim five-string banjos were being played in blackface skits on city stages and in town squares. These early performances were the first to present the unique flavor of the banjo to the public.

By the early 1840's, the occasional banjo and blackface skit evolved into the minstrel show. Minstrelsy took America by storm and remained a leading form of theatrical entertainment for about forty years. The musical "banjo, bone and tambourine extravaganzas" central to the show's theme created further interest in banjos and demand for them increased. Originally, banjo performers made their own instruments or had them made by individual craftsmen. As the popularity of minstrelsy gained momentum, improved shop-made banjos began to appear to satisfy the growing call for instruments. There were milestones in the evolution of the five-string banjo. In the late 1840's, William Boucher, Jr. improved the banjo rim and introduced the modern method for tensioning the head. About a decade later, James Ashborn employed guitar technology to perfect tuning pegs. By the late 1850's, the early bulky neck had assumed symmetrical proportions and, soon after, frets were added to the previously smooth fingerboard. By the 1870's, several urban east coast banjo makers were producing comparatively modern appearing, well crafted five-string banjos for the burgeoning market.

Five-string banjo popularity reached its zenith during the period 1880-1900. It was during this time that Samuel Swaim (S. S.) Stewart rose to prominence in the banjo world. Stewart was a five-string banjo manufacturer and outspoken advocate for the instrument. He sought to establish the banjo as a legitimate musical instrument and distance it from its comedic minstrel image. In addition to championing the banjo through his essays and a bi-monthly journal, Stewart built stylish "silver rim" light weight instruments that were ideal for clubs and as home companions. Commencing in about 1870, and continuing during Stewart's era, the manner of

playing the five-string banjo changed from a simple two-finger "stroke style" characteristic of minstrelsy to a more refined three-finger "classical style". The three finger approach was similar to guitar technique and enabled the banjoist to execute more complex musical pieces. Music publishers embraced the enlightened five-string banjo and issued popular and semi-classical arrangements for classical style banjo. Stewart's vision that the banjo should be welcome in the urbane parlor was adopted by the fretted instrument community and flourished for several decades. George L. Lansing, a respected composer and musician, said of Stewart: "In 1879 the late S. S. Stewart of Philadelphia took the reins of banjoism in his hands and it is to him more than anyone else that we owe a debt of gratitude for the popularity of the instrument."¹[Lansing].

In about 1880, vaudeville replaced minstrelsy as America's favorite theatrical entertainment. In essence, vaudeville was a variety show. It was family oriented "where any child could bring his parents." It was respectable, clean, and geared toward middle-class America. It was also rapid fire entertainment with each "turn" comprising about twelve to fifteen minutes. On any typical bill one might find a song and dance routine, comedians, magicians, an animal act, acrobats, and occasionally, a five-string banjoist. In the 1880's banjo players were popular in vaudeville and in 1882 about fifty were on tour. The early vaudeville banjoists played in either the stroke or finger style on gut strings. As time progressed and venues and audiences grew larger more volume was needed from the five-string banjo. Someone discovered that the solution was to play it with a pick (plectrum). No one knows who first played the five-string banjo with a plectrum but commentator Thos. J. Armstrong wrote in 1913 that: "He was probably a mandolinist, or a vaudeville artist, or some other daring fellow with plenty of nerve."²[Armstrong]. Audacity was certainly required of the five-string banjoist who dared play with a plectrum. At the outset, the old guard insisted that the only proper way to play the banjo was with the fingers and railed against the plectrum. "Why try to make an instrument that which it is not?" they asked.³[Odell]. The plectrum technique was called a monstrosity and those who employed it were termed freaks. Looking back, it appears that criticism of plectrum technique by the entrenched finger stylists discouraged many from exploring its possibilities and likely slowed the development of the plectrum banjo.

By the 1890's, the form of the five-string banjo had become fully mature. The 22 fret "three octave neck" and approximate eleven inch open-back rim had become the standard. These characteristics would eventually form the foundation for the plectrum banjo. Conversely, the five-string banjoists of the late nineties took two divergent paths. The first avenue carried the finger style classical banjo into the twentieth century. By far, the majority of five-string banjoists chose to play with three fingers on gut strings. Magazine editorials, banjo teachers, banjo clubs, and the staunch old guard all urged five-string banjoists to play in the classical finger style as it was said to be the only correct way to play the banjo. In addition, virtuosi like A. A. Farland, Vess Ossman, Fred Van Eps and Fred Bacon took the finger style of play to great heights which reinforced the majority's message. Manufacturers like S. S. Stewart and A. C. Fairbanks made ornamented presentation banjo masterpieces for the upper crust parlor, further cementing the image of the propriety of the classical banjo. The second path was occupied by the lowly vaudevillians. They were in the minority but in order to satisfy their audiences with volume and pep they strung their five-string banjos with wire strings and played it with a pick. The short or fifth string was not used with plectrum playing and could be discordant if left in place. Therefore, many vaudeville players completely discarded the short string and played the

five-string banjo with just the four long melody strings intact. So it was that the plectrum banjo was conceived in vaudeville.

In 1900 the editor of *The Cadenza* magazine, Clarence L. Partee, complained that: "So many of the vaudeville players have adopted the mandolin style of playing that it has become decidedly tiresome."⁴[Partee]. Vaudeville audiences apparently disagreed and intrepid plectrum method five-string banjoists persisted. By 1904, a more upbeat correspondent observed that: "I have heard very fair plectrum playing on the vaudeville stage..."⁵[Keats]. During this time, the vaudeville banjo continued to retain the physical form of the five-string banjo though it was played with just the four long strings. This manner of play became known as the "plectrum style" to distinguish it from the classical three finger technique. Vaudeville banjoists used the plectrum primarily to increase volume and to facilitate the playing of popular music. The pick enabled players to more easily sustain notes with the tremolo. This was particularly important in playing slow tunes and waltzes. The finger style tremolo was substantially more difficult to execute. By 1910, banjoist John Douglas writing for *The Cadenza* magazine observed: "How times do change! Yesterday, the idea of playing a banjo with a plectrum, or mandolin pick, was pronounced ridiculous. Today, try and get a decent vaudeville engagement as a finger player, and see what you'll be up against. If you are not a plectrum banjoist you will not be regarded with favor..."⁶[Douglas].

The period 1900 to 1910 also witnessed the heady rise in popularity of ragtime music and social dancing. Ragtime music had that certain beat that moved people to dance. Social dancing soon became a nationwide phenomenon. As a result, small dance orchestras proliferated and dancing music poured from Tin Pan Alley. It was during this time that classical finger style five-string banjos were tried in dance orchestras. They were not welcome. The unique tuning for the five-string banjo made it hard for the player to read and play from orchestra arrangements. The five-string banjo was simply not a sight reading instrument. In addition, because of its tuning the five-string banjoist was required to shift left hand positions constantly and "skate" all over the fingerboard in order to play the notes for popular melodies. And finally, the average finger style player had difficulty consistently executing the tremolo. A search for a dance band banjo resulted. Mandolinists and violinists seized the day and forged a new banjo that was tuned in fifths and compatible with orchestra arrangements. This new banjo was named the tenor banjo.⁷[Bollman/McNeil]. It was initially conceived to play the melody notes of popular tunes on single strings. The tenor banjo took its place in the dance orchestra and went on to become exceedingly popular. At the same time, interest in the classical finger style five-string banjo began to decline.

It was during the teens that the five-string banjo played plectrum style received more attention. Its exposure to the public was enhanced by appearances in vaudeville and a bit later in dance orchestras. The style received a boost when finger style virtuoso, A. A. Farland, began playing with a pick due to the onset of a handicap. Farland spoke highly of the plectrum style. In July 1911, one of the first advertisements for a home-study course for playing the five-string banjo with a plectrum appeared in *The Cadenza* magazine. Directed to the hobbyist, the ad promised that the lessons were not "the coarse, scratchy pick playing you may have heard at some Vaudeville Theatre."⁸[Shaw]. In May 1913, *The Cadenza* magazine published its first five-string banjo solo arranged for plectrum playing for its general readership. The tune was "Under The Spell" by Thos. S. Allen and arranged by Walter Jacobs. Banjo music written for plectrum style

differed from music for the classical finger technique. Passages with runs of short duration notes that were quickly and easily played with three fingers could not be executed with a single plectrum. Therefore, banjo music written for the plectrum style was modified to enable the player to efficiently carry the melody, finger the appropriate note(s), and simultaneously strike the string(s) with just one pick.

By 1915, the five-string banjo had at last gained a foothold in the dance orchestra. The plectrum style paved the way. Columnists of the day cautioned that for the five-string banjoist to be successful in the dance band the plectrum was "indispensable". "He [the banjoist] must learn to play the Tango, Fox Trot and latest dances and the only way to do this is by...using the plectrum."⁹[Knipfer]. Notwithstanding this growth in plectrum style banjo, the Guild representing the fretted instrument community passed a resolution naming and identifying the instruments in the banjo family in April 1915. The "Plectrum Banjo" was not listed. No banjo manufacturer had, as yet, originated and offered the true plectrum banjo as part of its regular line of instruments. Even so, by 1915 at least one manufacturer, The Vega Company, had conceived and produced a proper plectrum banjo evidently in response to a special order from a pioneering banjoist.¹⁰[Bollman].

November 1916 represented a watershed moment for recognition of plectrum style playing on the five-string banjo. The editor for *The Cadenza* magazine, Walter Jacobs, exclaimed in an editorial: "What a change! In spite of the kicks and knocks, the jolts and jabs, the butts and bumps...in spite of it all, plectrum playing for the banjo is here, and here it is likely to stay..."¹¹[Jacobs]. Thereafter, sheet music sub-titled "Banjo Solo (plectrum style)" began to appear with much more frequency in *The Cadenza* magazine. Plectrum style banjoists also received mention. Vaudeville artists like Alice Allison and Brent Hayes were termed "very fine performers who use the plectrum."¹²[Lansing]. Allison played the traditional frame five-string banjo. Hayes, on the other hand, used a specially designed banjo with five full length strings with an extra low base string. The tuner for the fifth string was placed in the center of the peghead. Hayes' fingerboard was extended to incorporate extra frets and his banjo rim was larger than the norm. Hayes' banjo is sometimes called a "Plectrum Five" and was a specialty banjo somewhat outside the thread that led to the creation of the true four string plectrum banjo.

The first banjo manufacturer to offer the true plectrum banjo as part its standard line was the New York firm of Rettberg & Lange. This company was well known for its family of fine Orpheum banjos. In an advertisement appearing in *The Cadenza* magazine in June 1918 Rettberg & Lange announced: "We are now manufacturing an instrument known as Orpheum Plectrum Banjo. This Banjo is constructed with 4 strings, eliminating the (short) 5th string."¹³[Rettberg]. Except for the neck, the new Orpheum plectrum banjo retained the same basic characteristics as the firm's traditional open-back five-string banjo. The name "plectrum banjo" originated with the manner of playing the five-string banjo "plectrum style". Columnist W. M. Rice explained: "Originally, the idea was that if the banjo was played with the fingers it was called a regular banjo, if played with a pick it was called a plectrum banjo..."¹⁴[Rice]. The announcement heralding the availability of the plectrum banjo did not assure its success. The plectrum banjo was competing with the tenor banjo. The tenor banjo was already established and its popularity was burgeoning. It held sway in the dance orchestras which influenced many potential players to take up the tenor rather than the plectrum. As a consequence, the plectrum banjo would dwell in the shadow of the tenor banjo throughout the twenties.¹⁵[Bradbury].

In 1920, The Vega Company added "Vega Plectrum Banjos" to its catalog. The Vega catalog recited that its plectrum banjos were "made up...having regular long Banjo neck without short fifth String."¹⁶[Vega]. In the beginning, Vega appears to have been cautious about committing resources to the plectrum banjo as it offered it in only two models. A year later, Vega featured its first vaudeville plectrum banjo act, the Mitchell Brothers, in its magazine advertising. The Mitchell Brothers were a popular vaudeville duo that combined singing and banjo playing. The advertisement depicted the performers holding two top of the line open-back Vega true plectrum banjos. By mid-1922, Vega had increased its plectrum banjo offerings to six models ranging in price from \$50 to \$430. In 1923, columnist W. M. Rice reported that he had purchased a plectrum banjo from a "well known manufacturer" and in March of that year provided a column about stringing and tuning the instrument.¹⁷[Rice]. Interest in the plectrum banjo appears to have been on the rise during the early 1920's.

Also, by the early twenties dance orchestras no longer used the tenor banjo as a melody instrument. Jazz age dancing demanded a solid beat and the tenor banjo joined the rhythm section to bark out rhythm with chord accompaniment. This adjustment benefited the plectrum banjo. Some orchestra leaders, mainly on the west coast, found the plectrum banjo to be superior to the tenor banjo for supplying chord accompaniment. Writing for *The Cadenza* magazine in 1923, A. J. Weidt noted: "From reports in the West the plectrum (standard) banjo is becoming popular in the professional orchestras for straight chord accompaniment work. For this special purpose the standard banjo is rated superior to the tenor because: First: The longer neck gives it the real banjo tone. Second: Chords are easier to play. Third: The close harmony sounds better than dispersed harmony a la tenor banjo."¹⁸[Weidt].

By July 1924, the plectrum banjo had become sufficiently mature to rate inclusion in the list of instruments comprising the banjo family. Thomas J. Armstrong supplied a definition in *The Crescendo* magazine. He wrote: "Plectrum Banjo: A regulation size banjo without the thumb string. The four strings, reading upward, are C, G, B, D. It has more carrying power than the tenor banjo; in fact, a greater volume of tone can be obtained from a plectrum banjo than from any other member of the banjo family. As a melodic instrument it has its limitations, but when used as an harmonic instrument it is unsurpassed."¹⁹[Armstrong]. It was also in the mid-twenties that Eddie Peabody came to New York City to launch his exceptional banjo career. Peabody could play several string instruments but by the mid-twenties had settled on the plectrum banjo. He developed a unique plectrum banjo style for playing chord melodies – fast and jazzy. The public was fascinated and Peabody was soon dubbed: "The King of the Banjo". Peabody and his plectrum banjo were featured in vaudeville, in movies, on recordings and on the radio. Eddie Peabody gave the plectrum banjo a tremendous boost. His play, though sometimes criticized for being imprecise, would bridge the decades and he became the most famous plectrum banjo entertainer in modern times.

The middle to late twenties signified the heyday for four-string banjos in the jazz era. This was the age of the Charleston. Social dancing was immensely popular. As a result, dance orchestras and dance halls increased in size. Ample volume then became a key feature in a desirable four-string banjo. Manufacturers answered the call by abandoning the open-back rim and producing banjos with extended resonators that propelled sound out toward the audience. In addition, a variety of tone ring designs were employed to increase brilliancy and carrying power. By now, all of the principal banjo manufacturers were offering plectrum banjos even though the tenor

remained the more popular of the two.²⁰[Bradbury]. Plectrum banjos were usually available in the same models as the tenor banjo and encompassed the spectrum from the very basic to the most opulent. This included instruments made with the innovative resonators, flanges and tone rings. Many well designed and appealing plectrum banjos were made during this era and, for some models like the B&D Silver Bell, their qualities have proved to be timeless.

In the later twenties the prospects for the plectrum banjo appeared encouraging. Talented performers like vaudevillian Joe Roberts had begun to explore the instrument's potential, and listeners found that the plectrum banjo could be made to sound exceptionally "musical". Later, "the boy with a thousand fingers", plectrum banjoist Perry Bechtel, showed the plectrum banjo to be worthy of the standing ovation. Bechtel was the banjoist for the Phil Spitalny band. His outstanding technique and thoughtful musicianship expanded the breadth and repertoire for the instrument. Then, just as the plectrum banjo began to be appreciated it encountered two obstacles that would spell its demise. First, in 1927 talking movies debuted and became an overnight success. As talking pictures gained momentum vaudeville swiftly went into decline. The "talkies" robbed vaudeville of its theatre audiences and stripped the places for plectrum banjoists to perform. At the same time, in the dance hall, popular music mellowed and the tempo slowed. Dance steps became less frantic and more romantic. Bandleaders discovered that the acoustic guitar was better suited for the new music. By the early thirties the guitar had supplanted banjos in the dance orchestra. Plectrum banjoist Eddie Connors recalled: "In 1930, I don't think you could have found a banjo in more than five bands in the United States".²¹[Abrams]. The guitar simply supplied the desired smooth, rich texture for the new dance music and, for the time being, four-string banjos toppled into obscurity.

Tenor and plectrum banjos remained passé and absent from the country's musical mainstream for about twenty years from 1935 to 1955. The tenor banjo was heard briefly in 1948 when the recording, "I'm Looking Over A Four Leaf Clover", reached Billboard's number one. Interest, however, quickly passed. Then, in 1955 an outpouring of banjo recordings fueled a more hearty four-string resurgence. Theresa Brewer sang "The Banjo's Back In Town" and it surely was with some big banjo hits that year. Somthin' Smith played his tenor banjo in "It's A Sin To Tell A Lie". Freddy Morgan's tenor joined with Jad Paul's plectrum in "Hey, Mr. Banjo". The Ferko String Band with a mix of tenor and plectrum banjos provided "Alabama Jubilee". Suddenly, four-string banjos had become big business and prompted an article in *The Wall Street Journal* chronicling upward banjo interest and sales. The plectrum banjo was well represented in the fifties revival. In 1955 Eddie Peabody recorded "Eddie Peabody: Man With The Banjo". Perry Bechtel followed in 1958 with "Perry Bechtel: The Greatest Of Them All". Peabody was the supreme plectrum banjo entertainer and Bechtel the dexterous plectrum banjo innovator. Though the fifties revival sputtered, these two recordings did much to highlight the plectrum banjo's appeal after so many years of silence.

It was in California, where the plectrum banjo had been popular in the twenties, that the next four-string banjo boom would arise. It happened in the sixties and seventies and was occasioned by the dawning of two kinds of specialty night spots: the honky tonk pizza parlor and the "roaring twenties" night club. It began with Sacramento's Shakey's pizza in 1954 and was followed by the Red Garter club that opened in San Francisco in 1958. The Red Garter featured entertainment "in the roaring style of the good old days." The theme incorporated beer, banjos, and lusty sing-a-longs. By the early 1960's this sort of entertainment had become popular and

imitators appeared in many major cities. The east coast Red Garter turned into the Your Father's Mustache in 1964. In addition to house entertainers, Red Garter and Father's Mustache sponsored Dixieland-type bands that made occasional appearances on national television. Shakey's pizza featured honky tonk piano, banjos and Dixieland jazz for its patrons. Shakey's enjoyed vast popularity with nationwide locations. Many good plectrum banjo players found opportunities to play at these establishments creating a fraternity of four string banjo players and a legion of fans. Banjo making also experienced a revival in the seventies. The five-string Bluegrass era was in full swing. New banjo makers emerged to provide instruments for the growing number of five-string enthusiasts. The plectrum banjo profited as well. A few makers, notably Ome and Richelieu, combined jazz age design strategies with modern methods to create handsome and rich sounding plectrum banjos that are prized by many plectrum banjoists.

As so often happens in the entertainment world, tastes ultimately change. So it was that in the mid-seventies patrons defected and the sun set on the banjo and beer night clubs. Shakey's departed in the eighties. There has not been another four-string banjo revival since. The plectrum banjo has continued only in the hands of the few and faithful. In October 2011, many of the banjo alumni of Your Fathers' Mustache gathered to play at Carnegie Hall for the 50th anniversary of the club. It was a sentimental event – and perhaps that was apropos. For, when four-string banjos reappeared in the mid-fifties and again in the sixties and seventies they were already, and immediately, cast as old fashioned. The so-called "Gay Nineties" and "Roaring Twenties" repertoire chosen for the four-string banjo was its allure but also imposed a stereotype. In the latter twentieth century the plectrum banjo has been destined to provide a bit of musical nostalgia for oldsters and a glimpse of the past for the young. Only time will tell what the future has in store for the plectrum banjo in the twenty-first century.

¹ George L. Lansing, "Banjoists Round Table: A Review of the Past," *The Crescendo*, v. 12, n. 7 (January, 1920): p. 20.

² Thos. J. Armstrong, "Banjoists Round Table: The Banjo Tremolo," *The Crescendo*, v. 6, n. 6 (Dec., 1913): p. 24.

³ Herbert Forrest Odell, "Editorial," *The Crescendo*, v. 3, n. 5 (November, 1910): p. 10. Odell insisted: "The banjo was intended to be played with the fingers."

⁴ Clarence L. Partee, "Banjoisms," *The Cadenza*, v. 6, n. 6 (July-August, 1900): pp. 2-4.

⁵ F. L. Keats, "The Banjo and the Plectrum," *The Cadenza*, v. 11, n. 3 (November, 1904): p. 19, 24.

⁶ John Douglas, "Banjo Talks," *The Cadenza* v. 17, n. 2 (August, 1910): pp. 10-11.

⁷ The Vega Company made the first tenor banjo, likely a special order circa 1908, as per copious data collected by Fairbanks/Vega authority, James F. Bollman. James Bollman email message to author March 3, 2010. Consistent with this data, Charles McNeil, professional banjoist, reported that he had Vega make a tenor banjo for him in October, 1909. See: "Origin of the Tenor Banjo," *Jacobs Orchestra Monthly* v. XVIII, n. 9 (September, 1927): p. 72. In 1908 Vega also produced a "tenor banjo mandola". See: Eli Kaufman, "The Fairbanks & Vega Companies," *Mugwumps* v.6, n.2 (Spring, 1978): pp. 18-20.

⁸ A. J. Shaw, "Pick or Plectrum Banjo Playing," *The Cadenza* v. 18, n. 1 (July, 1911): p. 3.

⁹ W. C. Knipfer, "The Future of the Banjo," *The Cadenza*, v. 21, n. 5 (November, 1914): p. 16, 33.

¹⁰ Fairbanks/Vega expert, James F. Bollman, has recorded and cataloged a Vega Tubaphone plectrum banjo manufactured circa 1915. Email message to author May 14, 2012. See also: Jim Bollman, Dick Kimmel, and Doug Unger, "A History of Vega/Fairbanks Banjos," *Pickin'* v. 5, n. 5 (June, 1978): pp. 26-38 and pp. 40-48. Vega was notorious for making special order instruments.

¹¹ Walter Jacobs, "Editorial: What a Change!," *The Cadenza*, v. 23, n. 5 (November 1916): p. 14.

¹² G. L. Lansing, "Banjoists Round Table: Banjo Individuality," *The Crescendo*, v. 9, n. 7 (January, 1917): p. 20.

¹³ Rettberg & Lange, "Orpheum Plectrum Banjo," *The Cadenza*, v. 25, n. 6 (June, 1918): p. 19. The advertisement also offered the Plectrum-Five model.

¹⁴ W. M. Rice, "The Banjoist: Regular and Plectrum Banjo," *The Cadenza*, v. 29, n. 3 (March, 1922): p. 34.

¹⁵ Some might claim that the origin of the plectrum banjo pre-dated the advent of the tenor. See: Frank C. Bradbury, "Banjoists and Tenor Banjoists Round Table," *The Crescendo*, v. 19, n. 3 (September, 1926): p. 24 wherein Bradbury asserts: "Thus the plectrum banjo is, in reality, an older model than the tenor, being introduced by many players (five-string) who wished to use the pick long before the tenor was in existence."

¹⁶ The Vega Company, *Vega* (Boston, MA: The Vega Co. 1920), p. 16.

¹⁷ W. M. Rice, "The Banjoist: Standard Banjo is not Tenor Banjo," *The Cadenza*, v. 30, n. 3 (March, 1923): p. 41.

¹⁸ A. J. Weidt, "The Tenor Banjoist: Questions and Answers," *The Cadenza*, v. 30, n. 8 (August, 1923): p. 40.

¹⁹ Thomas J. Armstrong, "Banjoists Round Table," *The Crescendo*, v. 17, n. 1 (July, 1924): p. 24.

²⁰ For a summary of the historical tribulations of the plectrum banjo and its advantages as well see: Frank C. Bradbury, "Banjoists and Tenor Banjoists Round Table: The Plectrum Banjo," *The Crescendo*, v. 19, n. 12 (June, 1927): p. 24. Mr. Bradbury wrote, in part: "The plectrum, though, has had a hard 'pull' to gain its rightful place. First, it was 'shot to pieces,' or we might say, 'shot at,' by the finger players. Second, it suffered popularity later by the overwhelming demand at large for the tenor banjo."

²¹ Rick Abrams, "Mr. Banjo is Alive and Picking," *St. Petersburg Times* (March 1, 1978): p. D1.

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