Bluegrass music—traditional instruments played like never before

. . . rapid-fire banjo picking sets a lively pace.

East Cobb County Cockfighters

Their Music 'Shore Beats LSD'

By FRANK BALLARD
of The Daily Tar Heel Staff

Dozens of Sunday afternoon strollers recently clustered around a small group of poker-faced students in McCorkle Place to listen intently to their nimble banjo and guitar picking and nasal singing.

Undoubtedly this was the first time many in the audience had been exposed to the students' special brand of music — bluegrass.

The impromtu outdoor concert resulted after members of a UNC bluegrass group, the East Cobb County Cockfighters, announced a public "pick 'n sing" outside Graham Memorial. Several string-instrument buffs showed up with guitars, a banjo and mandolins.

Joining the Cockfighters on songs they were familiar with, the students delivered a free bluegrass show that brought grins of enjoyment and tapping toes from onlookers.

The Cockfighters held the "pick 'n sing" to attract other people in this area who play bluegrass music. They may announce more "pick 'n sings" in the future and according to member Tom Glenn "we're sure to be playing in public, probably spontaneously."

Very possibly UNC's first and only student bluegrass group, the Cockfighters organized at the end of last semester. Some of their members played previously with the Six and Seven-Eighths String Band, a North Carolina State group which won last year's N.C. State Talent Show.

When the State bluegrass group disbanded, the Carolina members organized the Cockfighters. The Cockfighters consist of Glenn, who plays guitar; Al McCanless, fiddle; Ben Helms, bass, and Steve Floyd, banjo.

Polishing their performance with practice sessions several times weekly, the group has been enthusiastically received at fraternity and dorm parties and at the Toronto Exchange party.

"Bluegrass fascinates people—they've never seen it before," Glenn remarked.

The Cockfighters also delight audiences at E. G. Merritt's service station on Pittsboro Road, where they play occasionally for students, professors and anyone who happens to be sitting around watching the numbers spin off on the gas pump meters.

Merritt's is a perfect scene for bluegrass — a country store of the unchanging type that dots the rural South. It's not too big inside, but Glenn said as many 32 people have crowded around the Cockfighters, risking getting burned on the old stove that heats the place.

Drawn by the quick pickin' bluegrass music, and cold beers that can be enjoyed for twenty cents, the listeners at Merritt's appreciate the Cockfighters show immensely.

"That shore does beat LSD," one old rustic told Glenn in praise of the music.

They even participat in the lively performance. According to Glenn, every time the group plays at Merritt's a different inebriate gets carried away with the peppy music and does an old-fashioned "buck dance" on the old board floor.

Despite its decidedly rural flavor — the banjos and fiddles, whiney singing and song titles like "Salt Creek," "Wheel Hoss" and "Cabin on the Hill" bluegrass is definitely not country-Western music. Nor is it folk music.

"It's probably one of the newest kinds of music around," explained Glenn. "Banjoes, guitars, mandolins and fiddles have been played for years, but before bluegrass, nobody played them like this."

Earl Scruggs helped to start it all in 1948 when he invented the uncannily fast three-finger banjo style that has made him the world's best banjo picker.

His partner in the internationally popular bluegrass group of "Flatt and Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys" began speeding up his guitar picking to accomodate Scruggs' lightning-quick pace. Lester Flatt also adopted the difficult flat-pick guitar style which characterizes bluegrass.

The bluegrass group in which Scruggs originally developed the revolutionary picking style, "Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys," were the first popular bluegrass group.

The Cockfighters have based their repertoire on the music of both these professional groups.

Glenn and other bluegrass fans are aghast when their music is compared to the highly commercialized country-Western, which has been said to sell more records than any other kind of music. Because bluegrass calls for "a high amount of notes to the beat" and employs the difficult three-finger and flat-pick styles, it is tough to master, Glenn pointed out.

Even the atmosphere of the two styles differs greatly. Country & Western artists often use electronically amplified instruments — something which would appall bluegrass purists.

Scoffing the "sequined cowboy suits and gold boots with eagles on them" sported by flashy country-Western groups, Glenn said that bluegrass artists try to dress in the "traditional Kentucky planter style." String ties, an occasional Stetson, plain vests and unadorned boots are the garb for bluegrass groups.

Since country-Western song titles and content tend to be somewhat inane ("Don't Come Home A'Drinkin' With Lovin' on Your Mind," "I Got the Hongries for Your Lovin" and "I'm Standing in the Welfare Line of Your Heart") the Cockfighters have learned two take-offs on country-Western efforts. "They're called 'A Lot More of Jesus and a Lot Less Rock 'n Roll' and 'Father of a Honky-Tonk Girl'," announced Glenn with a slow smile.

Although Glenn thinks bluegrass hit its peak popularity in the early 1950's, the future looks bright.

The East Cobb County Cockfighters are on the rise, too. This summer they will play at Six Glags over Gerogia, a Disneyland-like amusement park near Atlanta. More dorm and fraternity jobs have been also scheduled here.

Playmakers Tryouts

The Carolina Playmakers will hold auditions for major roles in its production of the Frank Loesser musical "The Most Happy Fella" on Wednesday at 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Hall.

Directors Thomas Patterson, Professor of Dramatic Art, and Wilton Mason, Chairman of the Dept. of Music, announce early casting for the October 25-27 production because of the vocal demands of the principal roles.

Singers and actors trying out are requested to bring their own music to the audition, preferably music that will display their best vocal range and quality.

Everyone is invited to try out.

Campus Calendar

SPORTS TODAY: a varsity baseball game with N.C. State at 3 p.m.

SEX DAY sponsored by Morehead Residence College from 3 to 5 p.m. in lower quad. Food furnished.

SOLID STATE colloquium on "Ion Bombardment of Surfaces" presented by Prof. Juergen M. Schroeer of the University of Wyoming, at 4 p.m. in 233 Phillips. Coffee and tea in room 277 at 3:30 p.m.

COSMOPOLITAN CLUB invites all students to the last of its film series following supper upstairs in Lenoir Hall at 5:30 p.m. The film will be "Search for Ulysses," a CBS special tracing the wanderings of the Odyssey and attempting to identify the places of legend in the Aegean.

"ST. MARK PASSION," by Bach, will be presented at 8 p.m. in Hill Hall at the Tuesday Evening Series. The Carolina Choir, Chamber Orchestra and soloists will perform under the direction of Lara Hoggard.

Lost And Found

LOST

BROWN FRAME glasses in vicinity of Arb. Call Ed Voliva any time at 968-9077.

KEY RING with four keys. Call B. Walker, 929-3888.

BROWN LEATHER wallet. Reward.

GIRL'S GLASSES in red case. Last seen between Peabody and Alumni. Call 933-5112. Call Lin Respess, 968-9304.

WEEJUNS loafers on intramural field beside Ehringhaus. Reward. Call 933-4775 after 6 p.m.

GOLD CAMEO ring at GM or Red Carpet. Stone is brown with woman's face on it. Call Frank Ballard at 933-3374.

DARK RIMMED sunglasses in Playmakers Theatre or Bingham. Reward. Call Jim Newton at 929-3664 or 968-9305.

WALLET at Symposium Banquet in Morehead Planetarium in Rotunda. Call Landy Cohen.

"PROSE AND POETRY of Modern France" in Carroll Hall. Call Emily at 968-9316.

TAN BILLFOLD in Woollen Gym (men's locker room). Keep the money and return (by mail, postage due, if necessary) all id's, etc. to Sam Portaro, 206 Ruffin, 968-9139. No questions asked.

LADIES' BULOVA white gold watch. Reward. Call Kay McCray at 968-9030 or 966-8651.

WOMAN'S red and silver French lightweight bicycle. Taken from entrance to Medical Research Bldg. Wednesday. Call Mrs. Ruth Cain, 933-2394 or 968-3414.

WALTHAM GOLD watch lost near Woollen Gym. $5 reward from Crayne Howes, 933-3353.

ULSYSES, by James Joyce. A green hardback. Has valuable notes. Call Pat Dearborn at 942-2085 or 933-3001.

READING GLASSES with light gray tops. Call Glenn Varnum. 968-9119.

FOUND

KEY CHAIN and change purse in 302 Manning. Call 933-1343.

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10. Belonging to a Roman moon goddess
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13. Mature person
14. Guidonian note
15. Weep
16. French article
17. Chest of drawers
20. African worm
21. Jokester
22. Fate
23. Dart
26. Breaks, as day
27. Maw
28. Conjunction
29. Island
30. Romaine
34. See 14 across
35. Slice
36. Quarrel
37. Helmsman
39. Walk slowly
41. Tally
42. Highways
43. Covers with turf
44. Ages

DOWN
1. Pincerlike organ
2. Of the hours
3. Tahitian god
4. Skin tumor
5. Wing-shaped
6. Vallee
7. Sky god
8. Blimp
9. David's "good night" partner
11. Boils
15. Cam
18. Ukranian city
19. Baseball club
20. Depressed
22. Flit
23. Sea ducks
24. Reviewers
25. Cereal grain
26. Speck
28. Seine
30. Musical instruments
31. Of a city
32. Respiratory infections
33. Female sheep
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40. Low

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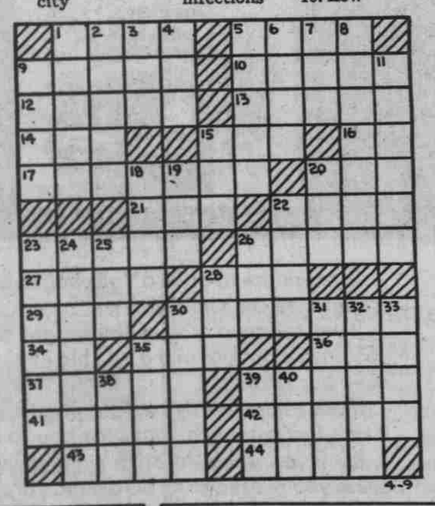

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