

# Folklore Society

## of Greater Washington



Vol. I, No. 3

December 7, 1964

ANYTHING BUT A CONCERT is the Society's program for December: a lecture-program-discussion-demonstration-workshop on the Appalachian dulcimer will be presented by two local experts, Howard W. Mitchell and John F. Putnam, Saturday evening, December 19, at the auditorium of the new Hawthorne School (6th & I, S W, near Arena Stage). Membership meeting will begin at 8 p.m., program at 8:30. As usual, admission is free to members; for non-members, donation is \$1.00, applicable to membership dues within 30 days.

John Putnam will present slides from his collection to illustrate the history of the dulcimer, traditional modes of construction and playing, and the function of the instrument among the people who make and play it. Howie Mitchell will describe his techniques for constructing dulcimers, with several of his own innovations, and will demonstrate some ways of producing music, assisted by his wife, Martha Ann. Some dulcimers and illustrative materials will be displayed, and questions welcomed.

Howie Mitchell is a graduate of Cornell University and a science teacher at the Hawthorne School. He has studied dulcimer construction and playing technique for over 10 years; he has built over 50 instruments and developed several new ideas in design, such as the "free-swinging tailpiece" and the "elbuodremiclude" or "Twicimer," one of the instruments to be demonstrated. He has written a booklet (now out of print) on building dulcimers; a revision is planned to be issued with a new record to be produced by Folk-Legacy Records. He has produced one solo record, "Howie Mitchell" (Folk-Legacy), and appears on "The Appalachian Dulcimer," by Jean Ritchie (Folkways), and "Golden Ring: A Gathering of Friends for Making Music" (Folk-Legacy).

John Putnam is a specialist in education with the U.S. Office of Education. He wrote his PhD dissertation on "Folklore in Elementary Education," has conducted 3 annual summer workshops on "The Living Folk Arts of the Southern Appalachian Mountain People" at Boone, N.C., and is the author of "The Plucked Dulcimer and How To Play It" (Berea, Ky.: Council of the Southern Mountains, Inc., 1961) and of articles on the dulcimer and on folklore and education. He has collected slide photographs, descriptions, and construction details for over 100 dulcimers made all over the United States.

TWO AMENDMENTS to the By-Laws of the Society were proposed and read at the November meeting and will be presented for adoption December 19:

1. To Section II (Purpose): add "The Society shall be a non-profit organization."
2. In Section X (Financial...affairs) A.: Amend the phrase "...insured by the Federal Government..." to read "...insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation...."

Approval of two-thirds of a quorum of the membership is required to amend the By-Laws, copies of which are available upon request.

MOVING ALONG are plans for future activities of the Society:

A FOLK STING celebrating the 8th of January is scheduled for 8:15 p.m. on that Friday evening at the Alexandria Recreation Center at Cameron and Harvard Streets. Participation rather than performance will be emphasized, and all are welcome; donations 50¢ for members and 75¢ for non-members. For further information call George Simpson, EM 5-5996 evenings.

JANUARY'S PROGRAM will be another non-concert on local Negro blues and gospel musicians, arranged and moderated by Ed Morris. Scheduled for Saturday, January 23, at 8:30 p.m., the workshop-demonstration-etc. will feature Flora Holton, Ed Green, and John Jackson, all residents of the Washington area.

HELP! for our new-and-growing organization is always welcome, especially:

1. PROGRAM -- Suggestions for and information on possible programs, and volunteers for the committee. Call Joe Hickerson, 483-3707 evenings.
2. PUBLICITY -- Volunteers to help produce and distribute the newsletter and posters, especially to local universities, school papers and organizations, music stores, etc.; ideas and suggestions for expansion of coverage and distribution. Call Carol Lee, 385-8341.
3. MEMBERSHIP -- Ways to gain new members (essential to support and expand activities of the Society!) and suggestions for advantages (discounts and other privileges) for members. Call Jim Lee, 385-8341.

A REMINDER that meetings of the Executive Board are generally open to visitors and kibitzers; call Leni Herrmann, YE 1-LLOW, or any Board member for information.

NOTE: The Beers family is scheduled to appear on the "Tonight" show Christmas eve.