

# Bones and the Man Toward a History of Bones Playing

*Robert E. McDowell*

When I was eleven, in a small town in Iowa, I decided to become a bones player. Inspired by an evangelist bones player visiting Brother Welch's little Foursquare Church of the Open Bible, I carved a crude set of bones from wooden laths and began to master a few basic rhythms. Forty years later, I am still at it—my country neighbors and I in East Texas get together every other week to amuse ourselves by playing folk music.

Not many of us do play the bones these days. Only a few solitary artists and their archaic instruments are still around. Those few virtuosos who remain tend to be well known, however—people like "Bones" Noble of Beaumont, Texas, who annually exhibits his skill at the Texas Folklife Festival. Or Percy Danforth of Ann Arbor, Michigan, who learned to play the bones in Washington, D.C., shortly after the turn of the century and who has worked vigorously to make "the bones live again."<sup>1</sup>

Nowadays the bones are made of almost everything: wood, bone, ivory, and—invariably—plastic.<sup>2</sup> Naturally, bones in America were originally fashioned from animal ribs—those of a sheep, cow or horse. Music historians label such percussion instruments "concussion idiophones," that is, similar objects sounded when struck against each other.<sup>3</sup> All bones are curved for better grip. One piece is held rigid, another loose and usually slightly lower; players do not move their fingers, but rather make the bones vibrate through violent gyrations of the wrist, arm and shoulder. The great performer Frank Brower, who introduced bones to the professional minstrel stage in 1841, sawed into twelve-inch lengths the rib-bones of a horse.<sup>4</sup> However, Brower's twelve-inch bones did not long endure. Bones were steadily reduced from ten or twelve inches to six or eight inches, a more manageable size. Daily Paskman, describing an old-time player, says that the talented end man would toss bones in the air and catch them between his fingers, much as some jazz drummers did the drumsticks. This was certainly an impressive feat, considering the foot-long instruments used by Brower and others in the mid-nineteenth century, and considering, too, that most Americans have always preferred to play with both hands, unlike the English and Irish who work only one set of bones.

The nineteenth-century minstrel extravaganza was, of course, the most conspicuous, the most popular, and most profitable arena for bones players. From the beginning, bones were central to minstrelsy:

The bones produced single clicks as well as "trills" or shakes of short or long duration. Their crispness was varied by dynamic shading ranging from pianissimo to fortissimo. It was the precision of the clicks which lent articulation to the ensemble. In the main the bone player followed the meter, but like the banjoist and fiddler, he may have occasionally disturbed it by entering on ordinarily accented beats.<sup>5</sup>

The bones player was not only the key percussionist of the minstrel show, he was also the end man, the "Mr. Bones" who exchanged witticisms with the Interlocutor and Tambo, the other end man. This pattern—tambourine and bones players at either end of a row of four or five performers—became the stock lineup. Mark Twain, who saw his first minstrels in the 1840s, describes a group:

Bones sat at one end of the row of minstrels, "Banjo" sat at the other end, and the dainty gentleman... sat in the middle. This middle-man was the spokesman of the show. The neatness and elegance of his dress, the studied courtliness of his manners and speech and the shapeliness of his undoctored features made him a contrast to the rest of the troupe and particularly to "Bones" and "Banjo." "Bones" and "Banjo" were the prime jokers....<sup>6</sup>

These were white performers in blackface; before Negro performers in numbers got to the stage in the 1860s, these men evolved the standard presentation consisting of three parts. The "First Part" showed off the whole company in a semi-circle, with the Interlocutor carrying on conversation with the raggedy-pants end men; there were both comic and sentimental songs; and the First Part ended with a rousing "walk around." Tambo and Bones hit their stride in this finale of part one:

The final "walk-around" rises to a frenzied pandemonium.... Bones and Tambo, leaning at an angle of forty-five degrees, and holding their noise makers high in the air, sustain the climax as long as body and soul can stand the strain.<sup>7</sup>

The second part, the Olio, included a variety of acts—singing, dancing and speaking. Finally, the Afterpiece attempted to "reproduce dramatically the mingled simplicity and cunning of the Negro...."<sup>8</sup>

If the exaggerated physical contortions of the performers did not convince audiences that black people were fun-loving and loose at the expense of all else, the song lyrics did:

Now darkies, sing and play, and make a little fun;  
We'll dance upon de green, and beat de Congo drum

We're happy set ob darkies, and we're 'sembled here to play,  
So strike de bones and tambourine and drive dull care away.<sup>9</sup>

Analyzing Christy's minstrel song book or any of a hundred other anthologies now, we are stunned to find how corny, dull and racist minstrelsy was:<sup>10</sup> the performers were for the most part white northerners affecting heavy dialect, even heavier jokes, and spouting broad political satire, frequently unimaginative songs, doggerel, loutish sexual innuendoes, and crude mock sermons and acting out sentimental playlets.<sup>11</sup> The well-documented enthusiasm of the performers perhaps explains much of the success of minstrelsy. But there had to be more.

White Americans seem always to have had an irrepressible interest in anything they believed to be Negro. In addition to this, there was the class satire inherent in minstrelsy. Our folklore has it that high-class people are stiff, inhuman, even fools: this is very likely the ordinary theater-goer's only revenge against the more fortunate elite. Clearly Tambo and Bones, with their home-made instruments and their ratty dress and crude speech represent the lower classes, but in a typical exchange come off less foolish than the pompous Interlocutor with his ridiculously mangled version of "correct" speech.

In the 1880s, when professional minstrelsy's heyday was over, new patterns were appearing; one began to see all sorts of burlesque and variety acts: freaks, contortionists, military drill teams, Siamese twins, animal acts, illusionists, jugglers, etc.<sup>12</sup> And the dimensions as well as the nature of the minstrel show changed. Haverly's Mastodon Minstrels, playing in the Drury Lane, delighted the English with a score of end men with tambourines and bones. Tambo and Bones had evolved into six end men coming on stage in relays—thus there were in Haverly's group fresh sets of tambourines and bones to accost the ear when players flagged.<sup>13</sup>

When finally the profits stopped for professionals, amateurs continued the minstrel show well into the 1950s. There was probably not a town or village which did not experience an amateur minstrel show with its stock players—Interlocutor, Tambo and Bones. Wittke, in 1930, called minstrelsy the

...chief indoor sport for amateurs [and] a leading source of revenue for the "benefits" of all kinds of organizations... from Ladies of the Mystic Shrine, Kiwanis Clubs and Elks to policemen's and firemen's mutual insurance and protective associations.<sup>14</sup>

Beyond doubt, the racial upheavals of the late 1950s and 1960s and the subsequent social engineering

undertaken in America would seem to guarantee that minstrelsy will not experience a comeback.

Nonetheless, it is extraordinary that minstrelsy, professional and amateur, endured in this country for well over a century. Much of the explanation for its longevity is explained by the rare entertainment talents of stage performers.<sup>15</sup> It is almost certain that Dan Emmett, Frank Brower, Bill Whitlock, and Dick Pelham, the Virginia Minstrels (fiddle, bones, banjo and tambourine), were the first to take minstrelsy to the stage—though E.P. Christy claimed that he organized slightly ahead of them with his Christy's Original Band of Virginia Minstrels in 1842.<sup>16</sup>

Dan Emmett (who in 1859 composed "Dixie" for the minstrel stage) was probably the most important early popularizing force behind the growth of minstrel companies. His group's first performance was in Bartlett's pool hall in the Bowery. According to Emmett's account, "many in the audience were disposed to ridicule the new experiment in theatricals, and the show began with the crowd jeering this new and strange musical combination of violin, banjo, bones and tambourine."<sup>17</sup> But the crowd warmed to the show as it progressed.

No small part of this group's success stemmed from the popular performances of Frank Brower, America's first bones virtuoso on the professional stage. Brower's initial performance was in a Philadelphia song and dance act in 1838; his last was in the same city thirty years later. Singer, comedian and bones player, "Uncle Frank" Brower was an enormous hit. According to a contemporary account,

When Brower "trucked" around a bit the clicks of his bones would mingle with the heavy thud of his boots. He and Pelham (tambourine) sometimes burst into breakdowns, usually without ceasing to keep their instruments in motion.<sup>18</sup>

With the hundreds of minstrel groups in the nineteenth century, one is not surprised to hear of a number of other artists on the bones. We might mention a few of the most popular. After the California Gold rush of 1849, minstrels went to the West Coast, and several San Francisco theaters were given over entirely to minstrelsy.<sup>19</sup> Joe Murphy became "the champion bone player of the West Coast."<sup>20</sup> Murphy was a favorite on stage, and also sang and performed on bones at auctions and parties. Chuck Atkinson, one of the very early minstrels, was labeled "the peerless bone player." Dave Reed, an end man and bones player, appeared with Dan Bryant's group in the 1850s and 1860s and became famous for his rendition of "Sally Come Up" and "Shoo Fly." E. Freeman Dixey, like Brower, started playing at age eighteen; he first performed in

Boston and then became a partner in Carncross and Dixey's Minstrels, one of the century's most successful groups. A member of James Buckley's New Orleans Serenaders (Buckley and his three sons) was talented on the bones, and with them cleverly imitated drums, marching soldiers and horse racing.<sup>21</sup>

Of course many of these bones players, and other minstrels, could play several instruments. Trotter reports, for instance, that the Georgia Minstrels in 1877 had twenty-one men who could play instruments; one was superior on four, and could play twelve "fairly well"; several were excellent on two or three instruments.<sup>22</sup>

All of these performers were whites in blackface. Indeed, almost no black performers made it to the minstrel stage in the 1840s, though one outstanding dancer did—he was "Master Juba" (William Henry Lane) who traveled to London in 1848 and joined Pell's Ethiopian Serenaders.<sup>23</sup> Juba danced a stiff-bodied "Irish" number which everyone understood to be in part an imitation of the rapid rhythm of the bones, and he was universally known as "the greatest dancer of his time."<sup>24</sup>

A few black performers and a great many whites took minstrelsy around the world to wherever the English language was understood—to England, Australia, New Zealand and India, with most of the groups claiming in their handbills all the while that they were treating their audiences to authentic plantation Negro dance and song. But colonial American slaves would hardly have recognized their musical instruments and their dances in the renditions of blackface performers, especially as the nineteenth century drew to a close, even, one might add in the renditions of Negro minstrels who, curiously enough, blacked up, used the same grotesque, exaggerated facial makeup as the whites had.<sup>25</sup> Most likely, the decline of minstrelsy was hastened by the success on stage of black groups—not such companies as Callendars or Henderson's Colored Minstrels—but black performers who were not minstrels: the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the North Carolinians, etc., who attempted more faithful displays of Negro music and dance.

While the bones were made a popular instrument through the prodigious talents of men who participated in the peculiar institution of minstrelsy, they were used for other purposes. In dance houses, for instance, and in medicine shows. We know about men like George Walker, a black who worked in medicine shows:

Walker would sing, dance, and play the tambourine and bones until enough people gathered so that the quack doctor could profitably make his pitch.

Walker said of this act:

"...the fact that I could entertain that way as no white boy could made me valuable."<sup>26</sup>

In a Virginia Writers' Project publication, *Negro in Virginia*, one Betty Jones remembers some country fun:

Anyhow we'd go to dese dances. Ev'y gal wid her beau, an' sech music! Had two fiddles, two tangerines [sic], two banjos, an' two sets of bones.<sup>27</sup>

All the instruments mentioned by Betty Jones were a part of the life of southern slaves; slaves made them: a gourd and three strings for a banjo and the ribs of a cow for bones.

Joel Chandler Harris dissents in this matter of origins, however, writing in the *Critic* in 1883 that, "I have never seen a banjo, or a tambourine, or a pair of bones, in the hands of a plantation—Negro." Harris does add that this may be explained by his experience having been restricted to Georgia plantations.<sup>28</sup>

The truth about plantation music is more likely found in James Weldon Johnson's statement that

Every plantation had its talented band that could crack Negro jokes, and sing and dance to the accompaniment of the banjo and the bones—the bones being the actual ribs of a sheep or some other small animal, cut the proper length, scraped clean and bleached in the sun. When the wealthy plantation owner wished to entertain and amuse his guests, he needed only to call for his troupe of black minstrels.

Johnson adds that, in a sense, these players were semi-professional, since customarily they were rented out to perform around the countryside.<sup>29</sup>

The more deeply a phenomenon fades into the historical abyss the more curious we are to know its origins. The most widely-held assumption about bones, because of their appearance among black plantation slaves in America, and perhaps the West Indies,<sup>30</sup> is that they surely must have come to the New World from Africa. But the popular idea does not hold up in the face of evidence. Harold Courlander, in noting that both African instruments and European musical instruments influenced black Americans and West Indians, gets us on the right track.

We have a great deal of information on music from late eighteenth century explorers of Africa—Robert Norris, Mungo Park, Thomas Edward Bowdich, etc. Bowdich, for instance, reports on an enormous variety of West African musical instruments. His large drawing (published 2 Dec. 1818 in London) depicts the first day of the yam festival among the Ashanti, and shows the Ashantis in Kumasi (Ghana) playing on skulls and holding various instruments which appear to be bone or ivory.<sup>31</sup> But nothing precisely resembling the bones

that we know today are described by observers of West Africa, the area which supplied the overwhelming majority of slaves for America.

Interestingly, the bones are used in southern Africa, a region whose inhabitants did not man the plantations of America. Among South Africans, both the Zula and Chwana play the bones. The Zula call them "amatambo" and make them from the rib bones of cattle and use them to accompany singing. The Chwana call them "marapo." Photographs in Percival Kirby's excellent musical study show a Chwana girl holding bones the same size and shape of most today and holding them exactly as one would today. While the Zulu claim no knowledge of the origin of the bones, the Chwana are convinced that the instruments came from Europeans.<sup>32</sup> Since the bones were played in Europe in the middle ages, it is reasonable to assume that the Chwana are correct, that colonial administrators, or missionaries, or other European travelers or settlers introduced the bones into southern Africa. And evidence suggests that they were taken there in relatively recent times.

On the other hand, there is a great deal of testimony to their use in northern Europe at least as early as the twelfth century. *The Book of Leinster* (ca. 1160) describes an unsavory crew of performers: "Pipes, fiddle, men of no valour, bone-players and pipe-players, a crowd hideous, noisy, profane, shriekers and shouters."<sup>33</sup> Bones, incidentally, were utilized in the middle ages not only for music, but also as clappers to scare birds and to sound the approach of lepers—much as Untouchables in India were once compelled to clap warnings of their approach.<sup>34</sup> Music historians have concluded that the bones were brought north to England by jongleurs from ancient Rome.<sup>35</sup> They caught on very early with certain occupational groups—we know that they were in the traditional music of English and Scots butchers, who, to say the least, had easy access to the raw materials of which the bones were finished.<sup>36</sup> We see them in a 1538 engraving by Holbein, the great German artist who was court painter for Henry VIII: "The Wedding of the Industrious Apprentice to his Master's Daughter." They were certainly still in use in Shakespeare's day, for in *A Midsummer—Night's Dream* (IV,i) we hear Bottom declare, "I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the bones." A seventeenth century English picture called "The Beggars" shows a peg-legged man playing a crude fiddle while his wife with a begging bowl accompanies him, rattling the bones.<sup>37</sup> The bones have demonstrated great staying power in Britain; even today the bones are common in northern England and in Ireland where they are played in pubs to accompany dancing.

The much-traveled Romans had ample

opportunity to make acquaintance with the bones throughout the territories touching the Mediterranean, in the near East, Egypt, etc. Art works from Ur in Mesopotamia show the bones (in University Museum in Philadelphia there is an archaic seal from the Royal Cemetery in Ur, dating approximately 2,700 B.C., and showing a small animal playing bone clappers).

Egyptian vases dating slightly earlier depict female dancers playing the bones.<sup>38</sup> In ancient Greece, the bones were connected with religious ceremonies, associated particularly with the worship of a fertility goddess, Athor or Hathor. Similarly, bones seem to have been a part of ritual in Egypt where they were played to protect crops.

Beyond the ancient Mediterranean and the Near East, the earliest evidence of bones playing seems to come from China. In contemporary China there are at least two percussion instruments resembling the bones: the shou-pan and the p'ai-pan, clappers half-way between bones and castanets; while they are shaped and elongated like bones, they are tied together at the top with a cord. Olive Logan, in a piece of research most interesting because it relies heavily on frescoes, drawings, bas relief and sculpture, notes that the bones were invented as musical instruments by the Chinese ruler Fou Hi. The bones date, she concludes, from 3,468 B.C., when Fou Hi ordered bones made from "the right shank of infants of good ancestry specially massacred in the neatest way."<sup>39</sup> In a portrait in the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris, Fou Hi sits amidst some of his musical marvels. While there may be some fanciful aspects to Logan's "history," it should not surprise us to hear Fou Hi called "the father of music" when we recall that "the Chinese were writing learned works on music and musical instruments at the time when the Pharaohs were building the pyramids."<sup>40</sup> Fou Hi, indeed, may well be the original Brother Bones. At any rate, he is a traditional, legendary ruler described by the earliest Chinese historians, and accredited by them with accomplishments such as the domestication of animals, and the invention of writing, music and marriage. If he could do all these things, I am willing to concede to this Chinese potentate the invention of the bones.

Clearly the bones have ancient lineage. They, and other bone instruments such as the sistrum (a slingshot-shaped device with a string of bone discs attached across the "Y"), are known to have been employed in ancient Egypt, Rome, Ethiopia, Mesopotamia, the Caucasus, Malaya, North America and China. There is abundant evidence from mankind's earliest records that bones have always been carved, drilled, punctured, decorated—and employed in ritual and in music-making for some





*The Bone Player*

William Sidney Mount (1807-1868), oil on canvas, 36 x 29 in. (91.4 x 73.6 cm.) signed and dated lower right: Wm. S. Mount 1856. Inscribed on back: The Bone Player, Wm. S. Mount, 1856. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. M. and M. Karolik Collection.

magical powers they were believed to hold. Bones were associated with the hunting of animals, with food and famine, with life and death. Whether ancient man or woman danced with bones tied to the bare thigh or sounded them by hand, bones in ancient societies were significant cultural symbols, regarded with awe and reverence.

In the history of mankind, Brother Bones has demonstrated extraordinary endurance and versatility and a capability for infinite transformation. He has visited the most remote recesses of our civilization—from the Australian Outback to Brother Welch's little Foursquare Church of the Open Bible. Like Tiresias, he has "seen" all—mourning and mirth, delight and dread. And he has become so imbedded in our folklore that we respond intuitively to the sounds he makes in the sophisticated "Dream Songs" of poet John Berryman:

—You feelin' bad, Mr. Bones? You don't look good.

—Do I looking like a man spent years in Hell?<sup>41</sup>

What a bizarre journey—from Fou Hi to Berryman, a span of nearly five-and-one-half-thousand years, a voyage in time marked with blood ritual and cruelty, a journey shrouded at times in mystery, marked at times by barbarism. But it is also a journey betraying amazing human energy and inventiveness and artistry, and one encompassing moments of sheer ecstasy derived from hearing the rattle of bones.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>L.E. McCullough, *The Complete Irish Tinwhistle Tutor* (Pittsburgh: Silver Spear Publications, 1976), p. 5. He notes that "the last few years have also seen a revival of interest in the Irish harp, bodhran and bones—three ancient Irish instruments...."

<sup>2</sup>One can purchase black plastic bones patented by "Joe Birl, the Rhythm Bone King." Bones hewn of pine, maple and walnut can be procured from Elderly Instruments, P.O. Box 1795, 541 East Grand River, East Lansing, MI. 48823. Recordings have been made of bones playing: Louis Beaudoin on Philo Record 2000, and the Chieftains on five Claddagh Records (imported).

<sup>3</sup>See a germinal work on instrumental classification: Erich M. von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs, "Classification of Musical Instruments," trans. from the original German by Anthony Baines and Klaus P. Wachsmann. *The Galpin Society Journal* 14 (1961), 3-29. (Orig. 1914)

<sup>4</sup>Daily Paskman, "Gentlemen Be Seated!" *A Parade of the American Minstrels* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1976), p. 26. (Orig. 1928)

<sup>5</sup>Hans Nathan, *Dan Emmett and the Rise of Early Negro Minstrelsy* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1962), p. 127.

<sup>6</sup>Mark Twain, *The Autobiography of Mark Twain. Including Chapters Now Published for the First Time*, ed. Charles Neider (New York: Harper, 1959), p. 60.

<sup>7</sup>Paskman, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup>Lynne Fauley Emery, *Black Dance in the United States from 1619 to 1970* (Palo Alto: National Press Books, 1972), p. 191.

<sup>9</sup>Byron E. Christy and William E. Christy, *Christy's New Songster and Black Joker Containing all the Most Popular and Original Songs, Choruses, Stump Speeches, Witticisms, Jokes, Conundrums, Etc., Etc., Compiled and Arranged by E. Byron Christy & William E. Christy, Successors to the Late Edwin P. Christy* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald Publishers, 1863).

<sup>10</sup>Alexander Saxton, "Blackface Minstrelsy and Jacksonian Ideology," *American Quarterly* XXVII, No. 1 (March 1975), 26-28. Saxton accurately notes that the Indian removal, white supremacy in the South, and Chinese exclusion were all on the program supported by the performers on stage who acted out "the most appalling aspects of Jacksonian ideology."

<sup>11</sup>James Weldon Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968), pp. 87 & 93. Johnson comments on minstrelsy as at best a mixed blessing for blacks: It "...fixed the tradition of the Negro as only an irrepressible, happy-go-lucky, wide-grinning, loud-laughing, shuffling, banjo-playing, singing, dancing sort of being." But, he adds, it provided them with valuable stage training and opened careers for them in the performing arts.

<sup>12</sup>Carl Wittke, *Tambo and Bones. A History of the American Minstrel Stage* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1930), p. 104.

<sup>13</sup>Brander Matthews, "Banjo and Bones," *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art* (London) 57, No. 1,493 (June 1884), 740.

<sup>14</sup>Wittke, p. 126.

<sup>15</sup>It is worth noting that Stephen Foster was not the only rare musical talent to write for the minstrel stage. Minstrelsy was a boon as well to some black composers—most notably James Bland, who wrote dozens of songs, including "In the Evening by the Moonlight," "Oh, dem Golden Slippers," and the Virginia state song, "Carry Me Back to Ole Virginny."

<sup>16</sup>Nathan, p. 146. <sup>17</sup>Wittke, p. 43. <sup>18</sup>Quoted in Nathan, p. 125.

<sup>19</sup>Wittke, pp. 76-7. <sup>20</sup>Wittke, p. 233. <sup>21</sup>Wittke, pp. 57, 210, 223, 226.

<sup>22</sup>James M. Trotter, *Music and Some Highly Musical People* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1883), p. 50.

<sup>23</sup>Emery, p. 185.

<sup>24</sup>He is probably the dancer Dickens reports seeing in both New York and London. Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation and Pictures from Italy* (London: Chapman & Hall; New York: Scribners, 1914) and "Boz," *Illustrated London News*, 24 June 1848, p. 404. Juba may well have taken his stage name from "patting juba," the folk practice of clapping time.

<sup>25</sup>Matthews, p. 739. The author reports seeing the Negro staff of a Saratoga, N.Y., hotel present in 1881 a minstrel show in which all of the black minstrels "blackened up" for the production.

<sup>26</sup>Emery, p. 210. <sup>27</sup>Emery, pp. 92-3.

<sup>28</sup>Quoted in Matthews, p. 740. <sup>29</sup>Johnson, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup>See M.G. Lewis, *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor 1815-17* (London: Routledge and Sons, 1929). Several places in this book, Monk Lewis mentions the musical instrument "kitty-katties." Also, James Blades, *Percussion Instruments and their History* (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 195. Blades notes that bones in the nineteenth century were sometimes called "knicky-knackers" and "nigger bones."

<sup>31</sup>Thomas Edward Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashante* (London: Frank Cass, 1966), Chap. 10. (Orig. 1819)

<sup>32</sup>Percival R. Kirby, *The Musical Instruments of the Native Races of South Africa* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand Univ. Press, 1965), p. 10. See also Plates 5-A and 5-B.

<sup>33</sup>Quoted in McCullough. The passage in the original can be seen in *The Book of Leinster. Formerly: Leabar Na Nuachongbala*. Two volumes, ed. R.I. Best, Osborn Bergin, and M.A. O'Brien (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1954).

<sup>34</sup>Alan Kendall, *The World of Musical Instruments* (New York: Hamlyn, 1972), pp. 80-86. See also, Blades, p. 195—"In medieval times, in addition to their use as instruments of music, clappers were used as bird scarers and by lepers as a warning." Blades notes that there is in Rijks Museum (Amsterdam) a painting of a leprous Lazarus shaking a pair of clappers.

<sup>35</sup>Sibyl Marcuse, *Musical Instruments: A Comprehensive Dictionary* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), p. 61.

<sup>36</sup>Blades, p. 195.

<sup>37</sup>Olive Logan, "The Ancestry of Brudder Bones," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, LVIII (Dec. 1878-May 1879). See Plate on p. 691.

<sup>38</sup>Dallas Cline, ed. *How To Play Nearly Everything* (New York: Oak Publications, 1977), p. 7.

<sup>39</sup>Logan, p. 690. <sup>40</sup>Blades, p. 120.

<sup>41</sup>John Berryman, "Dream Song 353," in *The Dream Songs* w York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1969, p. 375.