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Women's Section
Edited by JOAN COOK

Dress

Happiness is sharing music

By Robyn Tucker

He is a quiet, unassuming guy. You would not guess, by just talking to him that he is the idol of millions, and one of the real "giants" in his particular field of music.

He is in Hamilton to feature in the National Banjo Pickers' Convention, and if you have not guessed by now, his name is Bill Clifton.

Bill Clifton has become as great a name in his own dimension of old-time country balladry, Bluegrass and American rural music as the late Woodie Guthrie and A. P. Carter were in their respective fields. He has developed their basic material, using his own individuality into the particular style that has become his trademark.

Since 1949 he has entertained thousands with his wide variety of American Country-folk songs, in parks and theatres, by radio and television as well as in the many folk song clubs of Great Britain.

On Sunday morning at the convention, Bill will hold a "teach-in". His topic will be the development of American country music, using live examples as well as tapes to demonstrate his instruction.

He believes emphatically, that music is meant to be shared and so should be presented naturally and with direct simplicity so that it may be enjoyed and absorbed to the fullest.

This is his first appearance in New Zealand. He said he heard about the convention a few years ago from his friend Mike Seeger who was most enthusiastic about it.

He was going to come here for a holiday last year, but postponed it so that his visit would coincide with this year's convention, as he had been asked to pay here by a co-ordinator, Michael Grace.

Bill Clifton was a founding director of the famous Newport Folk Festival and an adviser-administrator at the Keele Folk Festival in England. He recalls these events as being two of the most exciting things he has been involved with.

"The most exciting thing about music is sharing it with people who are receptive and who are open-minded," he said.

As he has been living in the Philippines he has not done any recent recording, although he has one solo album to be released.

He recorded six LPs with his old group "The Dixie Mountain Boys" from 1954 until 1963.

To work with the Performing Arts section of the Smithsonian institute is Bill's immediate ambition. He wants to get a group of American native arts and crafts-men together as a cultural package and accompany them on tours to universities and to give them the audiences which they deserve. He wants people to see the wonderful things they have to offer, things which the average commercialised groups cannot give. He would also like to see this group travel overseas.

Bill prefers to sing country songs from the mountain area of southern America. These songs

are mostly written primarily as a story with a music backdrop. "I enjoy storytelling, but I have never been able to do it well without a guitar," he said jokingly.

"I lived in Charlottesville, Virginia, 120 miles south-west of Washington DC, on the edge of the Blue-ridge Mountains," he said. "So I sing the songs I was raised on, the mountain country songs, because they are familiar and I feel more confident to work with them than with any other."

On March 3, Bill and his wife leave New Zealand for home via Australia and England, to pick up the rest of the family.

What to wear in Japan? Mrs R. Swallow, vice-president of the Japan Society of Waikato said so many people have enquired about their wardrobes for travelling to Ex-1070, a few pointers now might be in order, as to season changes and the like.

It should be understood that the seasons are opposite of ours. Spring, during March, April and May has an average temperature of 54 degrees.

Suitable clothing for these months would be light suits or skirts teamed with jumpers or cardigans. Stockings or pantyhose are necessary and flat, comfortable shoes to wear while sight-seeing. For evening - wear at night clubs etc, a short formal dress and lightweight stoles are sufficient.

Summer in June, July and August has an average temperature of 75 degrees. Frequently the humidity is high with a rainy season from June to mid-July. Cotton dresses and mesh interlock underwear are preferable. Nylon garments become clinging and sticky in the humid heat.

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BILL CLIFTON, American old-time country ballad, Bluegrass and rural folk music singer, is in Hamilton at the moment to feature in the National Banjo Pickers' Convention, 1970. He loves the mountain songs he was raised with and sings them inherently in the natural way of the genre.