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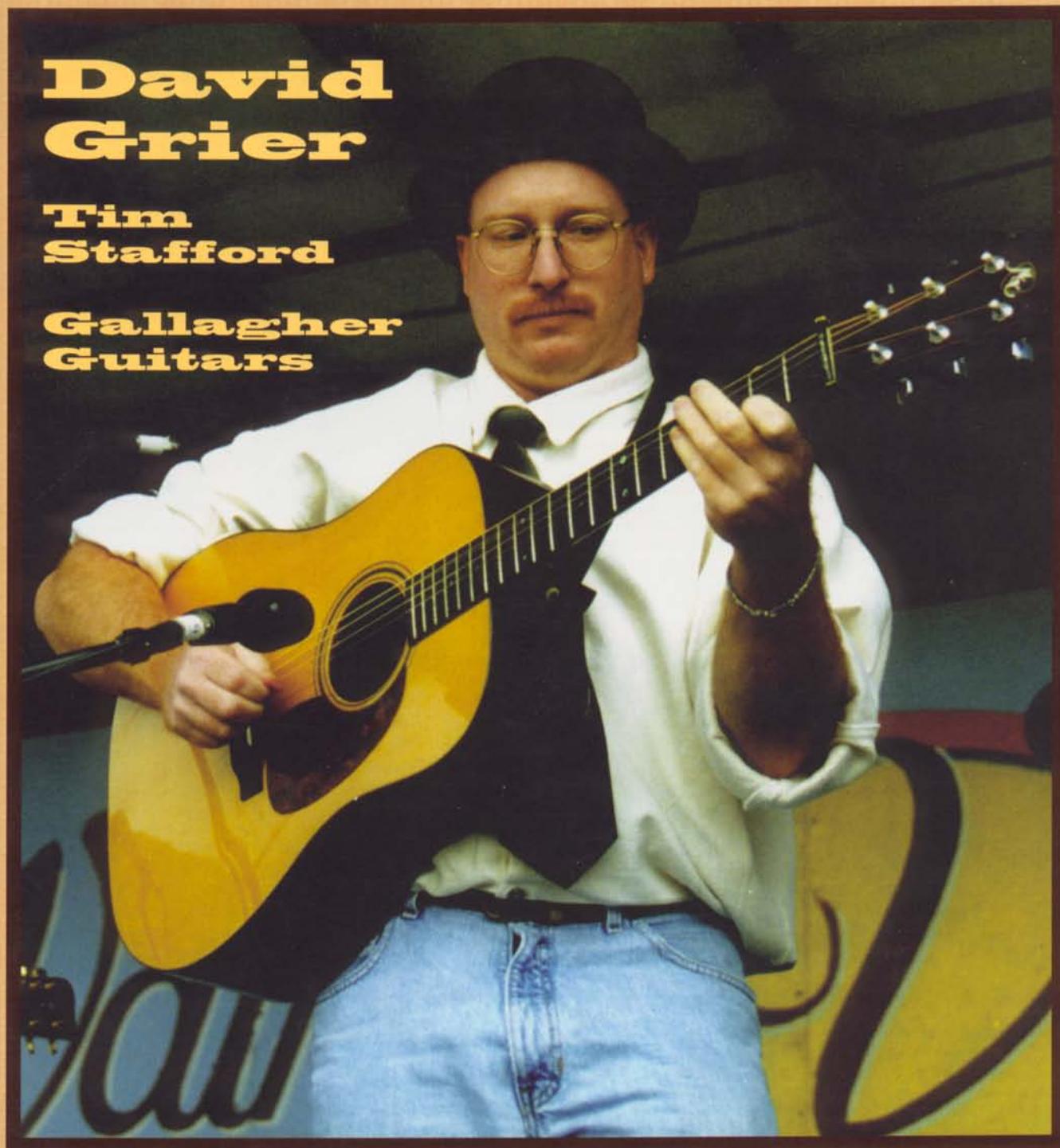
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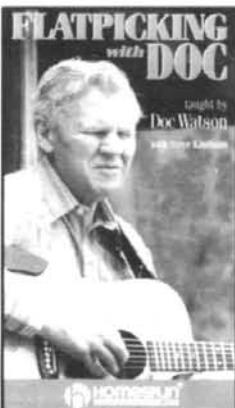
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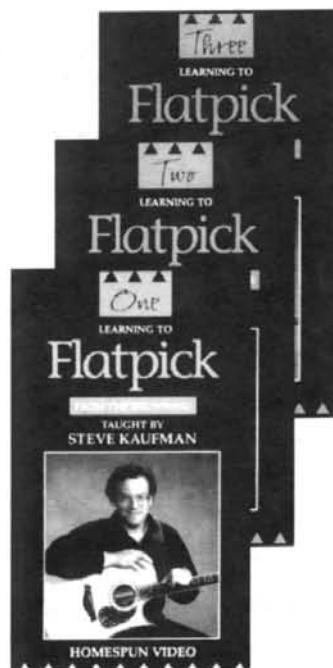
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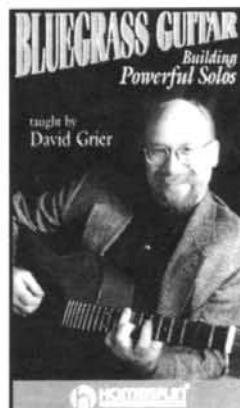
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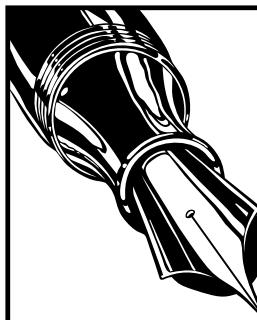
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EDITOR'S PAGE

Greetings and welcome to our second issue. Shortly after we sent our first issue out to subscribers we left our home in California and drove across the country, stopping at Winfield, Owensboro, and visiting folks at festivals and music stores throughout places like Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. One of the most frequent comments we heard was, "This is a great magazine, but can you continue to produce this much material in every issue?" Well, you hold the answer to that question in your hands. You will notice that here in our second issue we have included material from all of the columnists that appeared in the first issue, plus much more.

One thing that you will notice is that we have added several new features to this issue. In addition to our cover story (David Grier), our guitar builder piece (Gallagher Guitars), our CD highlight (Robin Kessinger) and our event article (Winfield 96), we have also added a new feature column which highlights rhythm guitar players (Tim Stafford), a columnist profile (Adam Granger), and a "Local Heroes" column (Susan Snyder). Additionally, we have added a new column on Celtic guitar written by John McGann.

One thing that I discovered during our cross country trip was that there are a lot of really great flatpickers out there. Because we only publish 6 times a year, I realized that we could not sufficiently highlight all of the players that deserve to be featured in this magazine if the only player we highlighted was the one on our cover. By adding the three new columns, I think we can do a better job letting our readers know who the great players are and what kind of ideas they have that will improve your playing. I am especially proud to add the "Masters of Rhythm Guitar" column as I feel that rhythm playing is a vital, and sometimes overlooked, part of the art of flatpicking guitar. In the next issue this column will feature Kenny Smith of the Lonesome River Band. In future issues I hope to highlight other great rhythm players such as Del McCoury, Jim McReynolds, Charlie Waller, Larry Sparks, and Jimmy Martin.

I want to send out a special thanks to all of you who took the time to write, email, and phone to give us feedback on the first issue. We appreciate the comments and suggestions and we will try our best to incorporate all of the great ideas. Keep them coming!

Dan Miller
Editor and Publisher



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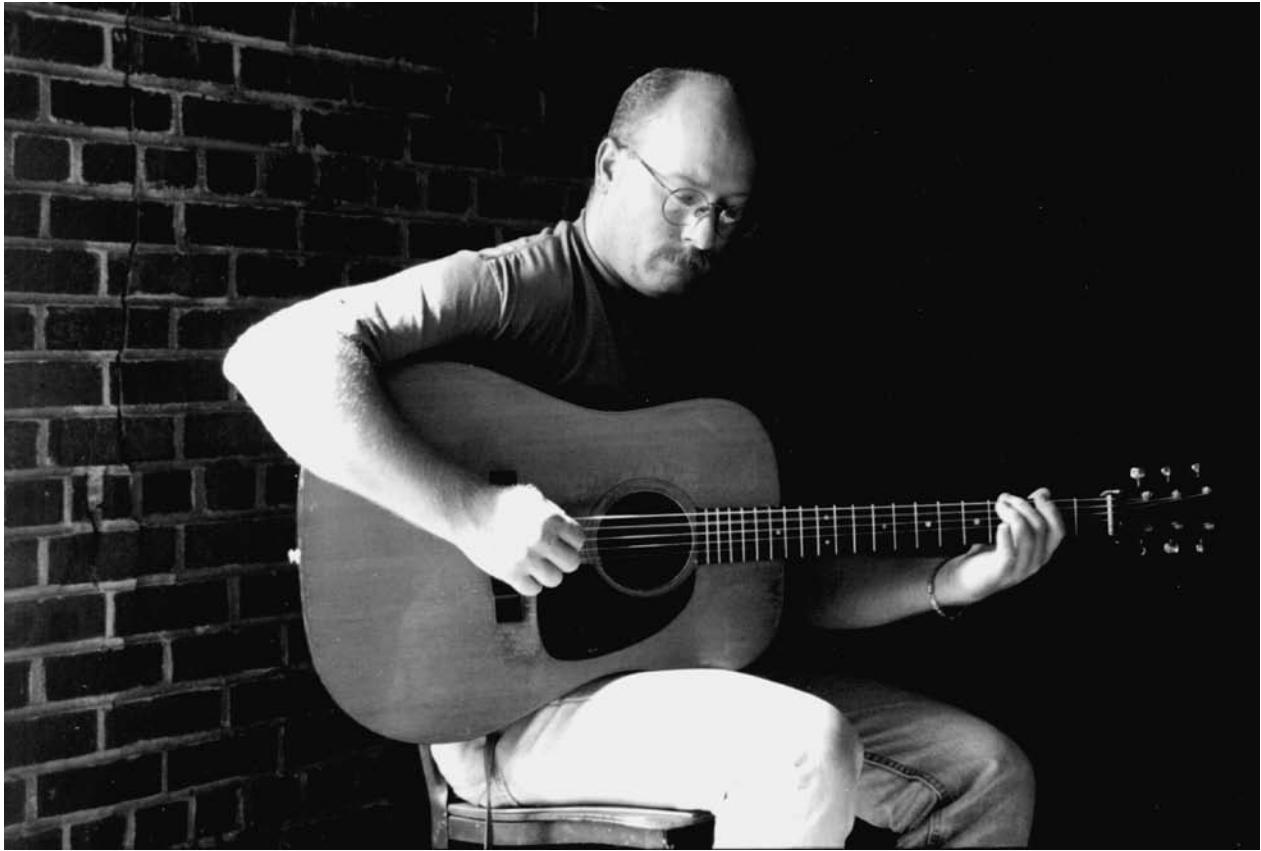
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Three-Time Flatpicking Guitarist



How much practice does it take to become three time IBMA "Guitar Player of the Year"? Ask 1992, 1993 and 1995 winner David Grier and his answer will be, "I never practice, I just play. 'Practice' sounds too much like work. 'Playing' sounds like you're having fun."

Although considered a young flatpicker when compared to legends such as Tony Rice, Doc Watson, Norman Blake, and Dan Crary, Grier has now been "playing" and "having fun" on the guitar for the past thirty years and has earned himself the same degree of respect and admiration that has been bestowed upon the afore mentioned giants. Three time National flatpick champion Steve Kaufman says, "David Grier is the best player out there today because he is so versatile. I call his style the 'jeet-kuen-do' of flatpicking. It is the 'style of no style.' He can tastefully adapt his style to fit any situation or any musical context." Butch Baldassari, mandolin player and Grier's former bandmate in The Grass is Greener, says, "I heard someone recently compare David Grier's playing to that of a guy who is a grand master chess player who is about 20 moves ahead at all times when he is playing the game. I think Grier's playing is like that. I don't think he consciously thinks twenty or thirty moves ahead, but his mind works that way. His mind is so far ahead and so advanced of everything that is happening. His variations and improvisations are endless."

You could say that David Grier was born into Bluegrass. The son of renowned banjo player Lamar Grier, David was born in Washington, D.C. in 1961. When he was just four years old his father got a job playing banjo with Bill Monroe and the family moved to Nashville.

David's pre-school education came from hanging around backstage at the Grand Ole Opry, attending bluegrass concerts and festivals, and riding down the road with the Blue Grass Boys on Bill Monroe's bus. It was during this time, when he was five or six years old, that David started playing the guitar. When asked what drew him to the guitar versus a banjo or any of the other instruments he was exposed to at that age, Grier says that it was his Dad who pointed him in the direction of the guitar. He says, "Dad thought that the guitar was a more versatile instrument than the banjo and that I could do more with it. If I chose, I could do blues, jazz, classical, country, bluegrass, rock and roll, or whatever. With a banjo you are pretty limited."

When asked what he remembers about those days backstage at the Grand Ole Opry, Grier says that on one occasion the Osborne Brothers were on stage performing and he was standing in the wings. He noticed that Sonny Osborne was playing a banjo just like his Dad. The young Grier yelled out, "Sonny!" Osborne looked over and David said, "Sonny, come here!" Osborne ignored the boy and continued with the show. David persisted, "Sonny, come here!" Finally, Osborne, perhaps thinking that there was some emergency, left the stage to see what David was so excited about. Sonny approached the boy and said, "What is it David?" David said "Follow me!" and proceeded to move back towards the dressing rooms. Sonny followed David to Lamar Grier's dressing room. When they reached their destination David pointed at his Dad's banjo and said, "Look! My Dad plays a banjo just like yours!"

Learning to Play the Guitar

Because Grier does not read standard music notation or tablature and has never really had any formal instruction, yet is so versatile and creative and plays with such fluidity and effortlessness, many have labeled him a “natural” player, as if to say he was born with this talent. But this talent did not just fall into David’s lap. He has definitely put his time in behind his guitar and his father, Lamar, was a guiding influence in developing David’s talent. When David was five or six, his father showed him his first few chords and then let David run with it. He allowed David the freedom to explore the instrument on his own terms and create his own breaks to songs, but also gave him pointers along the way. Lamar Grier told *Flatpicking Guitar* that all of David’s drive, enthusiasm, and motivation for playing the guitar was his own. The elder Grier says that he neither encouraged nor discouraged David’s playing. He would answer questions when David had them, but otherwise left David alone to discover the guitar on his own.

While it is true that Grier has never really had a formal flatpicking guitar lesson per se, David says that his father taught him how to listen to the music and develop important fundamentals such as tone, timing, and taste. They would sit together and listen to tapes of live shows and his father would say, “Listen to the way this guy starts his solo,” or he would point out things that Clarence White was doing, “Did you hear that? Let’s listen to that again.” David says his father would even point out things that Django Rienhardt was doing, but he adds, “I didn’t like it because at the time I just couldn’t understand it.”

When David was playing his guitar at home, his father would sometimes keep an ear bent in David’s direction and lend him advice. David says, “I can’t tell you how many times I heard my Dad say, ‘That’s not the melody. It might be something, but it is not the melody.’ I’d be playing and say, ‘Dad, what do you think of this?’ He would say, ‘What is that?’ I’d say, ‘That was Salt Creek.’ He’d say, ‘It might be something, but that’s not Salt Creek.’ ” Then David would be left alone to discover how to get it right. His father would rarely show him exactly what notes to play unless there was a particular lick that was giving him a lot of trouble.

Someone else who David credits for helping him develop his guitar playing talent is Roland White. While Roland did

not teach David how to play the guitar or show him what to play, he would sit and pick with David whenever he came to the house to visit with David’s father. David says, “I thought that was pretty cool. Here I was just a kid trying to learn how to play and Roland had the patience to sit and pick with me for hours.” The one thing that Roland did suggest of David was that he not play in B flat so often. David recalls, “When I was young it was much easier for me to play when I put the capo on the third fret because the frets are closer together up the neck. I just got used to always playing that way.”

Because his father encouraged him to explore playing his own breaks to songs from an early age, David never developed a habit of copying other players. He does credit many players as having influenced him and says that he spent time listening to tapes and records to try and hear what others were doing, but he has never restricted himself to playing other players licks and breaks or memorizing a break to a song. David says, “Copying a lick from another player is a good way of learning, but eventually you make it your own by exploring variations of that lick. You exhaust all possibilities. You might reach a plateau for a while, but then later something new will pop out that is all your own. I like to fool around with a tune and see how

many different ways I can play it. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve been sitting around the house noodling and I’ll come across something new.” He continues by adding, “If you just memorized some solo and play it the same way every time because you think those are the coolest licks, that makes sense until you make a mistake. If you go off the pattern you memorized, you are behind and have to catch up. If you don’t have anything memorized, it is easier to keep up even when you make a mistake. I never have an arrangement figured out before going on stage. I know the song melody, but that’s it.”

David’s early guitar influences were players like Tony Rice, Doc Watson, and family friend Clarence White. When he was about 16 or 17 years old he also began playing the telecaster and says that when he started playing electric guitar he was influenced by players such as Don Rich, who had played with Buck Owens; Roy Nichols, who played with Merle Haggard; Albert Lee, who at that time was playing with either Emmy Lou Harris or Eric Clapton; Eric Clapton himself; Ry Cooder; Mark Knopfler of Dire Straights; Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones; Hendricks; Clarence White’s electric guitar work; and Amos Garrett. He states that besides broadening his musical exposure, the most valuable thing about playing electric guitar



A twelve year old David Grier, with his Dad, Lamar, and Clarence White, navigates around a “resting” festival attendee



Grier performs with the Grass is Greener at Winfield, 1996

was learning how to play up-the-neck.

Although Grier had occasionally been on stage with his Dad when the elder Grier was playing in local bands, he was never really in a band himself until he was old enough to leave home and got a job playing electric guitar in a country rock band. But he obviously hadn't given up on the acoustic guitar or bluegrass because in 1980 he took a trip out to Winfield and placed 2nd in the National Flatpicking Championships. David's excellent showing at Winfield helped to convince him that he could probably make a living playing the guitar and so around 1984 he packed up and moved back to Nashville (after Lamar Grier finished his two year stint with Bill Monroe, he had moved the family back to Laurel, Maryland, and that is where David had lived most of his life). Upon arrival in Nashville, David began playing out as much as possible in order to show the Nashville music community what he could do. During his early years in Nashville he played with Gene Wooten, Roland White's New Kentucky Colonels, and the Doug Dillard Band, to name a few. He was also doing some session work and soon began building a reputation for himself in the music city.

Today Grier is in great demand. He currently plays in the band, Psychograss, with Darol Anger, Mike Marshall, Todd Phillips, and Tony Trischka, and has recently left The Grass is Greener, with Richard Greene, Butch Baldassari, Tony Trischka, and Buell Neidlinger. He occasionally plays duet gigs with such notables as Butch Baldassari, Tony Furtado, Tony Trischka,

and Mike Compton and he also performs as a solo act at many venues. He has recorded two highly acclaimed solo albums, *Freewheeling* and *Lone Soldier*, as well as a project with mandolin player Mike Compton. In addition to the above mentioned performing and recording, Grier also does session work in his spare time. His guitar work can be heard on over 75 recordings, including the Grammy Winning *Great Dobro Sessions*.

Having won the IBMA "Guitar Player of the Year" award three of the last five years, it is obvious that bluegrass fans have responded with great enthusiasm to Grier's work. However, Grier is also a "musician's musician." Richard Greene, who played with Bill Monroe in the mid-sixties and was in the band Muleskinner with Clarence White, says, "David Grier is the worlds best player of fiddle tunes and fiddle music on guitar. Clarence White started it off and David Grier finished the job." Tony Trischka, who has played in a duo setting with David, and has played with David in both Psychograss and The Grass is Greener states, "David's ability to think on his feet is amazing. He is an absolutely inventive guitar player and the next great guitar player in the evolutionary cycle. There was Doc, Clarence, Tony, and now David." Mandolinist Butch Baldassari says, "I have heard a lot of other guitar players say, and I agree with them, that Grier is on a level all of his own with very few people even close by. His playing is really advanced and very complete, from top to bottom."

In the following interview, David Grier comments about his playing style, discusses how he composes his own tunes, and lends advice to aspiring flatpickers.

How would you define your style of flatpicking?

My style is a cross between the fiddle and banjo played on the guitar. I have the rolls of the banjo expressed in my crosspicking and the variation of the old time fiddle players who could take a tune and play it forever.

You have become quite well known for your crosspicking abilities. How did that develop?

When I was young I sat and played a lot of guitar by myself. Crosspicking became a way to fill things out when I was playing alone. I also use a drone string a lot. The reason I do that is to leave something ringing so it doesn't sound so staccato. If you leave one string ringing it will fill in the dead spaces so things will flow together smoother and it won't sound so choppy. I use crosspicking the same way. You let something ring while you are trying to get the other note. You can also do that by strumming chords while you are picking. Sometimes I strum through the chords while playing the melody. This breaks it up so that I don't have just a bunch of single line stuff. That is boring. You play differently when you are playing with a band. You have other band members fulfilling those roles, so you are able to one-string it. But it doesn't sound good when you are by yourself. When you are playing by yourself, you have to figure out how to break it up so that it is not boring.

So then the techniques you use in your solos when you are playing with a band, or in a duo, or by yourself, will vary with the setting.

Yes. You know, I used to dislike the fact that I wasn't in a band and that the band didn't get to grow and things didn't get to gel and get real tight. The more I look at it, I see that what I'm doing now gives me a chance to play differently in each setting and so I never get bored. I'm always learning new things and it remains interesting to me. I try to play a new way each time so I don't get bored with it and then the audience will not get bored with it. If I'm bored, it will be expressed to the audience. If I remain interested in what I'm playing,

the audience will like it better.

You have been playing with some great musicians in Psychograss and The Grass is Greener. Do you learn new things from listening to what those guys are doing?

The musicians I like to get stuff from are the ones that think along the same lines as I do. Someone like Stuart Duncan, to me, is a perfect musician. In his playing you hear things like jazz and blues, but it all comes out Bluegrass and sounds great. You hear all of these different influences that are not direct cops of licks, but have that feeling. I like to do the same thing. I like blending different styles of music to make my own style - that is what Clarence did. Matt Glaser told me, "You know, you play all of this different stuff, but it comes out pure Bluegrass, which is cool."

Do you do that intentionally?

Yes, I sure do. I like to listen to all sorts of music and get ideas, but I am a bluegrass player. If I tried to play straight blues or jazz, it wouldn't sound like blues or jazz, it would sound like a bluegrass player trying to play blues or jazz because I'd throw a G-run or something in the middle of it.

What is your process when you are writing an original tune?

Like Keith Richards said, "There are two ways you can write a song. You can work all day at your office and sit there with your pad of paper and your pen and try to write a song, or you can sit there and play your guitar. The secret there is that you have to know when you've stumbled across something." Which is really cool, because that is the way I do it.

Sometimes I'll be sitting around the house playing and I'll play some stuff and I won't know a song that goes like that so I'll write one. That's the way I do it. The first part of my song "Wheeling" just came out when I was warming up in my dressing room before a show. But I couldn't figure out a second part. I sat for a couple of weeks and tried to come up with something that would work with it. One night I was sitting on the couch watching TV, playing the guitar, talking on the phone, and then my roommate came in and started talking to me. I had four things going on and before I knew it the second part came out and it fit perfect. That is how "Wheeling" came about.

Some of your songs have pretty creative titles. How do you come up with the names for your songs, like "Big Dirt Clod" for instance?

I usually wait until the song is finished before I give it a name. For that particular song, I was touring in North Carolina with Tony Furtado and I showed him this tune. We were playing it, but it didn't have a name so I said, I'll just name it "Big Dirt Clod." Everyone kind of laughed and it always got a big chuckle, so I thought it should stick. There are some goofy titles.

When did you start writing your own material?

Right from the beginning when I first started to play.

When you are getting ready to record a new CD, do you write songs specifically for that project or do you have a backlog of tunes that you've written.

Both. I have written a lot of songs, but some I wouldn't want to record. Jason Carter, the fiddle player for Del McCoury, just cut three of my songs on his new album, two of them had never been recorded. It will be out later this fall.

Does it give you a sense of accomplishment when other artists cover your tunes?

Yes, because you never know if they are any good or not.

Can you talk about the guitars you play?

Right now I'm playing a guitar that was made by Marty Lanham of the Nashville

Guitar Company. Before I got this guitar I played a 1955 Martin D-18 that was given to me by my father. If the Nashville guitar is in the shop, I'll still play the D-18.

What do you like about Nashville Guitar Company guitar?

Marty Lanham had shown me one of his guitars years ago. It was a nice guitar, but I wasn't interested in playing it because I liked my D-18. He asked me what I was looking for in a guitar and I told him that if I played a new guitar it would have to have a neck like my D-18 because I was used to that neck and it was very comfortable. I was also looking for something that was "bassy" like my D-18, but not boomy like a D-28. Marty built a new guitar to my specifications, but I didn't really think anything would replace my D-18. Well, one day I get this call from Mike Compton and he says, "David, Marty has built this guitar for you, but if you don't want it, I'm going to buy it." I figured if Mike liked it so much it must be a good guitar so I tried it out and it was just what I was looking for. It is bassier and louder than my D-18, has a good high end, and a lot of sustain. So I play this all the time now.

Previous to getting the Nashville guitar, how long had you been playing the D-18?

When I was old enough to carry it down the hall without knocking into the wall was when I began playing the D-18. I was probably about 12 years old. The D-18 is a 1955 model that my father traded for a tape player. Whoever had it before Dad had had someone replace the bridge. If you



Grier performing with Psychograss at the Strawberry Festival in California, May 1996.

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look close you can see two circles where someone had bolted the bridge to the top. It has been that way ever since I had it. Last week I finally had that taken out. I was afraid to before, but it worked out OK and now it rings more without that weight to keep it from vibrating. Over here there is a big scratch (points to the lower part of the top), I did that one time when I was young and my Dad made me mad. I took my pick and made this scratch, not knowing that someday the guitar would be mine.

What recommendation do you have for individuals who are trying to learn how to flatpick?

The only way you are really going to improve is by putting the guitar in your hands and working with it. My guitar is never in the case, its always in the house on the couch or somewhere. Sometimes I'll have two or three lying around. If I have to take out the trash, but walk by and see my guitar lying there, I'll sit and play the guitar for 15 or 20 minutes. If you have a chance to take out the trash or play the guitar, what are you going to do? You play the guitar.

When I sit down to play, I just play tunes. I don't have warm-ups, I don't play scales. I don't want to sit and practice scales, I just want to play. I never played scales. You just play and have fun. I never looked at it as practice. It sounds to much like work. I just play. "Playing" sounds like you're having fun. Of course, when I was learning, I had the advantage of being young and not having a job. I'd come home from school and play until dinner, then play until time for bed.

David Grier uses D'Addario J-14 strings and a very heavy Golden Gate style pick (tri-corner with very rounded corners). He chooses this combination of

strings and pick because he likes a "woody" tone and does not like his guitar to sound too bright. I might have continued this interview and asked David more details about his picks, strings, right hand technique, and pick direction, however, having attended a number of his workshops, I know that his answer to these detailed questions would be something to the effect that it does not matter what he uses or what he does because everybody needs to find their own way of doing it, that which feels natural and comfortable to them.

David is not one to elaborate on the exact way he holds the pick or attacks the strings because it is likely to change from one solo to the next depending on the sound he is trying to create or the tone he is pulling out of the guitar in that moment. Grier's playing is innovative, creative, and versatile. He allows himself freedom in everything he does by not getting locked into any particular technique or style. To learn from David Grier means to listen to what he does and try to absorb how he does it without getting caught up in the details.

For those who may be interested in learning how to play some of David's original tunes, please refer to his Texas Music and Video instructional video "Flatpicking with David Grier," his new Homespun instructional tape "Bluegrass Guitar - Building Powerful Solos" (see review on page 61), or his tab book for his *Lone Soldier* CD (see review on page 62 and ad on page 45).

On the following page, we have provided a tab for one of David's tunes "A Blue Midnight Star." The tab represents the first break as recorded on David's first solo project, *Freewheeling*, Rounder 0250. We thank John McGann for the transcription.



A Blue Midnight Star

written by David Grier (Fine Flatpickin' Music ASCAP)

Transcribed by John McGann

(As played by David Grier on his CD "Freewheeling," Rounder 0250)

First Break

1 Em9 3
Em

Part A1

0 0 4 2 3 2 0 0 2 4 0 0 H 0 2 0 0 0 2 0 0 2 0 2

5 D A7 Em

0 0 0 2 0 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2

9 D Em Em

0 0 0 0 2 0 1 0 3 0 0 2 2 2 0 2 0 0 2 0 2 0 2

13 D A7 Em

0 3 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 2 2 0 2 0 2 2 0 2

16

B7 Em Em

Part B1

20 G A Em

SL SL

24 Em B7 Em Em

Part B2

G D

SL SL

31 Am D Em

P



In the Studio

by Craig Vance

In this article, I'd like to share with you some important and helpful tips on preparing to record in a studio. There are several areas to consider that can be crucial for saving time and money. We musicians can benefit from the saving of both, since they are some scarce commodities.

Selecting a Studio Suitable for You or Your Band

Trying to figure out where to do a decent recording that fits the cost for a beginning band with a flickering budget, can be frightening. I tend to think of the whole thing as I would if I were looking for a place to take my Buick to get it worked on. You want a person who's not out to rip you off, but you also want someone who's capable of opening the hood without a crowbar. The best way to find someone like that would be to ask somebody who has done business with a person of that nature, and has come away satisfied (and not in debtors prison).

Pick out a club where a local musician has played, and who has also spent a few good hours in a nearby studio. Offer to buy the person a cup of coffee for a few minutes of their time, and jot down any information they can give you; names, numbers, facts & figures, etc. If you get nowhere that way, call a local radio station that plays your favorites, and tell them exactly what you're looking for. (Get to know the DJ for future use in publicizing your soon-to-be recorded material. If your local college campus has a radio station, that would be a great place to begin your search, and generally they're happy to be of help).

Time Saving Tips

Before a studio session it is essential to have a format of the material with the vital charts and all applicable information at hand. Example:

NINE POUND HAMMER

KEY OF "A" (CAPO 2nd FRET IN "G")

BANJO INTRO

VERSE

CHORUS

FIDDLE SOLO

VERSE

CHORUS

GUITAR SOLO

VERSE

CHORUS

DOBRO SOLO

CHORUS with a stop before "When the wheel won't roll"

LESTER FLATT "G" RUNS FOR OUTRO.

Something similar to that. Some layouts will be more complicated than others, but just having a sheet for each member eliminates time-consuming confusion.

Since each musician has their own method of chord diagramming (and possibly transposing against a guitar with a CAPO), it's best to leave that to each member to chart out.

It's ALWAYS a good idea to have your live recordings taped by either the sound man or a fan. You can benefit tremendously by reviewing these tapes and working out the bad bugs before going into the studio. No one wants to sit in the studio and watch another trying to figure out their part. Here are a few other time savers:

- 1) Use one tuner to tune each instrument, since tuners can vary somewhat according to age and use, and proper calibration.
- 2) If you have changed strings on the instrument you're intending to use in the studio that day, play it for at least a half hour before recording. This will help to prevent several retunings in the studio.
- 3) If you have certain doubts about an

instrumental break that you've recorded, get right back in there and make another pass at that break using another available track. Then you can choose between the two, and sometimes, use parts of both tracks.

4) Whenever possible, leave a little space between segments of the break. This makes for easier punch-ins, and often a part of a solo will be a one-of-a-kind hot lick that you will definitely want to keep on tape. Keep in mind that punching in parts can also eat up lots of time, so do this as sparingly as possible.

Live Recording

Recording live in the studio helps to give the recording the live feel and energy of a live performance. Total separation from the other instruments is essential to prevent microphone leakage on other tracks. Separate rooms normally work the best. One person will count to the kickoff of the tune, and with each player having their tune outline sheet, there should be no confusion as to what is happening, and who gets the next lead. Having that total separation also allows each musician to correct their parts without disturbing the other recorded tracks. For instance, if the mandolin buzzed on three notes, that person could go back in and replace their track, leaving the other tracks fully in tact.

Just because the term LIVE RECORDING is used, does not necessarily render the piece 'etched in stone'.

Be prepared to spend more hours in the studio than you thought. Getting the desired levels for your headphone mix, and the monitor mix for the engineer, all take several minutes. You will be surprised how fast the clock spins when you're in there. It is a major learning experience...and with each new venture into a studio you will be that much wiser, and more confident about your scope of possibilities.

Another important aspect to keep in mind would be that YOU are not the machine...the machine can only perform one function, whereas you can master many. After the material is on tape, the engineers can put THEIR machines to use to obtain the best quality sound possible.

Keep it in Tune!



Beginner's Page

by Dan Huckabee



This issue we are going to learn to play an easy solo for "You Are My Sunshine." This arrangement is made up of the simple melody line, with chords fitted in where pauses normally would be. The chord/melody technique is generally referred to as "Carter Family Style," and it's most famous example is "Wildwood Flower."

The easiest way to learn anything is a little bit at a time, so try the melody (alone) several times, before putting it together with the chords. (In other words, leave out the multi-layered notes). By doing this, you've separated the problem into its component parts. (Divide and conquer is really true when it comes to learning

guitar). Next we need to be able to play the chords, which are C, F, and G. The chord names are written above the melody, so that you can try to hold the chord down, as you move through the melody notes. This means your fingers will be ready (in advance) to strum the chords as they come up. The adventure to this lesson, is to discover which of the melody notes are simply notes in the chord you're holding down, and which require you to remove part of the chord that you're holding down. (The notes that aren't part of the chord are called "Passing Tones"). With a little practice, you'll see the jigsaw puzzle

starting to take shape. That's when you'll experience that chemical reaction that tells you, "Hey, this is Cool!"

Although your heroes may play fancier stuff, you may be surprised to know that they make a blueprint first, just like this simple version of "You Are My Sunshine." They pick out the simple melody, then they strum the chords, then they put it all together, all before they start fitting in those blistering impressive hot licks. In other words, you gotta get the simple melody and chords down first (as a foundation), before you start throwing in the hot stuff. So hey, you're not learning a "sissy version," you're just laying the foundation for your "Monster Solo."

Hold on, I'm not letting you off the hook that easy this month. I want you to take a plain old song, pick out the melody, find the chords, and design a "Carter Family Classic" complete with melody and strums mixed together. If you don't succeed the first time, check out my 10 song book and cassette called "Easy Guitar Solos." It's got me playing each song slow, fast, and teaching it phrase by phrase on the tape. It contains "You Are My Sunshine" and 9 others. See ya next issue.

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You Are My Sunshine

Arrangement by Dan Huckabee

1 C

5 F C

9 F C

13 G7 C

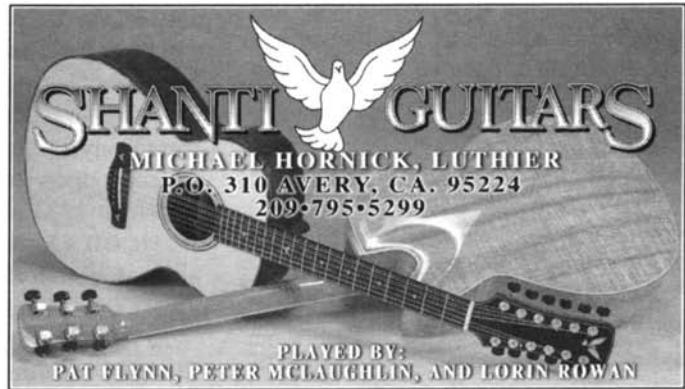
The guitar tablature consists of four staves, each with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first staff starts with a C chord. The second staff starts with an F chord. The third staff starts with an F chord. The fourth staff starts with a G7 chord. Each staff has a corresponding fretboard diagram below it, showing fingerings for each note.

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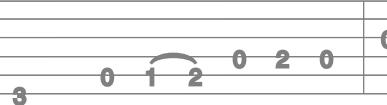
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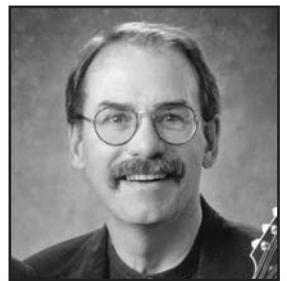


Flatpick Rhythm Guitar

H.O.



by Joe Carr



Two Early Giants of Flatpick Guitar: Riley Puckett and Jimmy Rodgers

Flatpick style acoustic guitar was established early this century with the recording of country music in the 1920s. As phonograph records became more popular, recorded artists influenced musicians far beyond their radio broadcast and touring areas.

Riley Puckett

Riley Puckett was an early influential guitarist from Georgia. Accidentally blinded at the age of three months, Puckett began a musical career soon after he graduated from school. His recording career began in 1924 and he was an original member of the well known Georgia string band - Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers during the late 1920s and early 1930s.

The Skillet Lickers consisted of two fiddles, banjo and guitar. Puckett's bass/strum style provided much of the drive and all of the "bottom" for the band. The band's many live, radio and recorded performances insured that Puckett's style was heard and copied by many players in the 1930s and 40s.

"Molly Put the Kettle On" was recorded in 1931 and is in the key of C. After a solo guitar intro, Puckett builds interest with bass runs on this simple two chord song. Measures 5-8 feature alternating bass/strum type rhythm. In measure 10, a passing note (Eb) is followed by a strum of only two strings or so. Strum these open strings while you are moving your fingers to the G7 chord. Measures 23-16 contains a useful rhythm lick and measures 17-20 are a variation of that phrase. To get the most from this transcription, transpose the licks to other common keys ~G, A, D)

Puckett laid the groundwork for modern flatpicking and bluegrass rhythm styles. Edd Mayfield (featured in last issue) was one of the many players he influenced.

Recorded Sources: Puckett's original recordings were made on 78's. There were some compilations on lp, but most of these are out of print. Check the big mail order, old timey music supplier's (Elderly, County Sales) for CD reissues.

Jimmie Rodgers - The Singing Brakeman

Jimmie Rodgers has been called the first true singing "star" in country music. Nearly every major country singer of the 1930s and 40s began their career imitating Rodgers' unique style and his blue yodel. He was born near Meridian, Mississippi in 1897 and during his brief but meteoric career (1927-1933) he sold millions of records including such classics as "Blue Yodel" (T for Texas), "Miss the Mississippi and You," "Waiting for a Train," and "Peach Picking Time in Georgia."

Rodgers accompanied himself in live performance and on many of his recordings on guitar. His strong rhythm and interesting lead style worked well in a solo setting. His influence on succeeding generations of country guitarists can not be overstated. More than any other performer, Rodgers is responsible for establishing the image of a country singer accompanying himself with a guitar. Rodgers died of tuberculosis in 1933 at the age of 36. He left a legacy and a legion of imitators including Ernest Tubb, Hank Snow and Gene Autry.

Rodgers recorded a total of twelve "Blues Yodels." Most of these are known by other names such as "Muleskinner Blues" (#8). The following is a transcription of Rodgers' guitar introduction. The licks that walk to each chord are now staples of flatpicked rhythm. Pay special attention to the timing of measures 6-8.

Sources: Check out Rounders' excellent series of Jimmie Rodgers recordings.

Next Issue: We will study the great rhythm style of IBMA Hall of Famer and bluegrass legend, Jimmy Martin.



Jimmy Rodgers

Molly Put The Kettle On

Riley Puckett - Guitar

Transcribed by Joe Carr

C

The tablature consists of six staves of guitar notation. The first staff shows an 'Intro' section with a treble clef, 4/4 time, and a six-string guitar neck. The second staff begins at measure 5 with a treble clef and a 'C' chord. The third staff begins at measure 9 with a treble clef and a 'G7' chord. The fourth staff begins at measure 13 with a treble clef and a 'C' chord. The fifth staff begins at measure 17 with a treble clef and a 'G' chord. The sixth staff continues from the fifth staff. Each staff includes a numbered fret diagram below the neck.

1 Intro

5 C

9 G7 C

13 C

17 G C

Blue Yodel No. 8 - "Muleskinner Blues"

Jimmy Rodgers

Transcribed by Joe Carr

1

C G7 C

A A7 D7 G7 C G7 C

5

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Flatpicking & Folk/Acoustic Rock

by John Tindel

There may come a time in our musical meanderings when we imagine that a flat-picked-style solo would be just dandy in a folk or acoustic rock setting. Rather than trying to dispense a specific series of notes or runs it might prove more helpful to talk about a couple of "filters" that can be used when thinking about note selection. In my first column I talked about some of the general parameters of solid soloing. Now let's delve into some specific things you can experiment with when your solo is in the "under construction" phase. Granted, sometimes it's great to just let the notes fly where they will. When the spirit of the "great solo gods" shines upon us, an improvised, inspired lead break can elevate us to places where mere mortals seldom tread. On the other hand, the solo gods have to be in a lot of places at once, especially on weekends, so a rehearsed solo with the basic elements pre-planned and in place can be a very comforting backup indeed.

With that in mind, let's start with the concept of "Tension & Release." This basic yet important principle can be found in many diverse styles of music through out the world and can and should be used to good effect as part of the savvy soloists arsenal.

Every time you hit a Dsus chord (see chord chart shown at right), you're tapping into the power of tension and release. The feeling of tension is created by the dissonance of the 4th tone buzzing against the 1 and 5 tones. The release is achieved when the original 1-3-5 triad is restored in all its pristine glory (if your B-string isn't out, that is!).

Example A:

Now I'm sure we've all played a million sus chords; what you may not have toyed with is the idea of extending that tension by arpeggiating the chord that is implied by the raised 4th tone. Take the afore mentioned Dsus chord for example; the raised 4th would be a G note. Arpeggiate the notes of a G major chord over a D pedal tone then let it resolve into a D major arpeggio (see example A below).

Work up and down the neck in this fashion using all the different positions that you know for G and D. You can substitute an A chord as the tonic and work D arpeggios resolving back to A. Or C arpeggios resolving to G. Once you get used to hearing how this change sounds, you can start working it into solos whenever you want.

My solo in the RST song "La Strata" illustrates this concept in action (example B on the next page). I always look forward to this fun, fast little solo, especially the hammer-on descending line down the strings with the 7th fret harmonics at the end. The first phrase is played with the first finger bridging the E and B strings on the 10th fret, reaching up to the 14th fret with the pinky finger. To hear the solo, call our RST hotline at (408) 685-3736 for a recorded snippet of the song, or get the CD "How Do We Get There?" (Box 1793 Aptos, CA 95011 or lennox@cruzio.com).

As you play this solo, listen for the places where the sus chord tension and release concept is utilized, there are a few.

Concept Two: Dynamics. How many times have you looked down and realized that you've been playing everything the

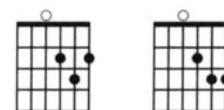


same volume, not thinking enough about dynamics? Always look for a place where you can bring dynamics into create tension and release. Let your playing ebb and flow in volume like the natural cycles and rhythms of life, instead of staying at a static level, a slave to technique or speed. A fast passage played quietly can draw the listener in, make them lean in and pay attention.

Utilize these two concepts both separately and together, with either already existing solos or those in the process of creation. Tension and release and dynamics can be powerful tools in the shaping of the kind of solos you've always wanted to play. Good luck, and until next issue, good pickin'!.

About the Author: John Tindel plays guitar and piano in the Santa Cruz, California-based trio RST. He plays Martin guitars, or any other ones he can get his hands on. He also enjoys subjecting the unsuspecting world to his views on guitar playing and Life in general. Come visit down by the old Web Site for more on John or RST.

D Dsus⁴



Example B: Solo from La Strada

A

D

harmonics



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Gallagher Guitars

By JOHN CALLOW

Okay, raise your hands. How many of you are flatpickers because of Doc Watson? Bunch of you, I bet. And how many of you know about Gallagher guitars because Doc plays one? It's all right to 'fess up, because some of the greatest flatpickers at work today will answer the same ways. Yet in many respects Don Gallagher, the "& Son" of J.W. Gallagher & Son, Wartrace, Tenn., is a mystery man and his guitars a well kept secret. After 30-plus years of turning out some of the finest instruments in the world, the secrets are about to be told. The first secret is that Don Gallagher is very much alive and well and still turning out great guitars. He is, characteristically, modest yet proud of his instruments. "we're building potential," he says. "But the realization is whose hands it falls into. There's no substitute for playing." Despite carrying a low profile for many years, Don Gallagher and his instruments are finally winning the recognition they have deserved virtually from the first guitar in 1965.

How did you and your dad get started making guitars?

My father started making furniture in 1939. In the '50s he worked at the Arnold Engineering and Development Center at Tullahoma, Tenn., making scale models for the wind tunnel down there. Early in the '60s we were building a building outback behind the shop here in Wartrace for a dry kiln — he was still making furniture on the side — and we were poring concrete for a slab roof. A scaffold broke and my father broke his ankle and had to quit his job at the AEDC. He got into guitars because of the folk music boom of the early '60s and the demand for guitars it created. The Slingerland Drum Company had a plant in Shelbyville (about 10 miles from Wartrace) where they manufactured drum sticks and drum heads. The company had some extra capacity in the plant so decided they wanted to use it to make guitars. The plant manager was an expert in machine operations, but didn't have any experience in woodworking. He knew my father from the car club and knew he was into woodworking, so



he came over here and talked to my father about setting up a production line. That was in the spring of 1963.

So his first guitar's weren't Gallaghers?
No, they were Shelby's. After he got the line set up, my first job was to apply the lacquer finish and teach the guys on the line how to do it. We've got a Shelby I made while I was working over there in the summer before my junior year in high school on display here in the shop.

There's something vaguely familiar about that guitar.

You're talking about the headstock. The first Shelby headstocks had the French curve at the top that's become our trademark. My grandmother had a paisley dress and she came in here one day wearing it. There was a design in that dress that inspired the headstock. We were playing around with different ideas. We were looking for something distinctive, easily recognizable, yet conservative and tasteful. The Shelby's were a plywood guitar aiming at a student market. That ran against my father's grain.

He was used to making fine furniture and those guitars offended his sensibilities.

So when and how did the first Gallagher guitar happen?

He came back over here in the spring of 1965 and built No. 1, the first G-50. The "G" is for "Gallagher" and "50" because my dad was 50 when we built it. The interesting thing, though, is we were approaching it from a woodworking standpoint. We had no more idea about Martin's or Gibson's or anything. For example in the first year or so, we made about a half-dozen D-17s with the Shelby body and the G-50 neck. The "D" was for "Don" and the 17 because I was 17 when we made the first ones. We stopped making the D-17 when we found out Martin had a model D-18.

But a Martin catalog figured in a feature which is distinctive to Gallagher.

I wasn't really happy with the pick guard on the original G-50. In fact when I took it off to college, I took the pickguard off of it. But we were sitting at the table one morning and I had a Martin catalog. I sketched an alternative shape on a picture in the book and my dad liked it. We're still using the shape and we've still got that catalog in the archives.

How do those early Gallagher's compare with what you're producing now?

From 1965 to 1970 there were quite a few changes, particularly in bracing patterns. Those guitars are distinctively different. From then to now there has been a constant progression.

What was Doc Watson's first Gallagher, the one he called "Ole Hoss" and played on the "Will the Circle Be Unbroken" album?

That guitar is a G-50 we finished in the spring of 1968. It was the first guitar we started in 1968 and it has the serial number 68001. I was making the bodies then. We took it over to a fiddlers' convention at Union Grove, N.C. around Easter. Daddy said we weren't going to sell it. I'd cracked

the side and Daddy fixed it. Doc and Merle were playing under a tree. Dad introduced himself to Merle. We stopped at their home on the way out of town and Dad took out the guitar to show Doc. We had several guitars, including a rosewood G-70, but Doc said he liked the sound of the mahogany guitar. He made a comment that it had a real ivory nut. He could tell by how smooth it sounded. Dad mentioned the crack to Doc. "Shucks, son," he said. "I can't see it anyhow." Dad told Doc he could use it with no strings attached except the ones on the guitar. He just asked Doc to return it if he ever decided not to play it anymore.

So how did the Gallagher Doc Watson model happen?

In 1974 Doc contacted us to build a new guitar. Merle brought a Les Paul Gibson, an electric, over for us to look at. Doc liked the neck 1 3/4 inches wide instead of the 1 11/16 inches on the G-50. You can feel the difference, much more than you can see it. We made him a new guitar. We stayed with Honduras mahogany and dressed it up a little. (In the mid-70s we started changing to African mahogany. It's a little harder wood with better projection and real character in the grain.) When we finished the new guitar, he sent the old G-50 to the shop. Diane Johnson, who was with the Country Music Hall of Fame then saw the guitar and said it was something they needed for their collection. My father said it was fine with him if it was all right with Doc. Doc said he guessed it was okay, but it was a

waste of a mighty fine guitar.

Let's go back to some of those differences. What about sound?

Back in '65 to '70 we were playing around a lot with bracing. We made a lot of changes in the tops, but we've made changes to the tops in the last years. Another difference is in the back. It's slightly arched which means the sound projects better back toward the top. That's something we've become more sensitive to in recent years. I love angles and I'm always looking at how angles affect the sound. Within the last year I have become more sensitive to the angle of the strings breaking over the saddle. After the body is together, fitting the neck is crucial. That's the beginning of the action. The neck angle and the angle of the strings on the saddle can have a profound affect on sound. Years ago I noticed a little bow back in the neck to pull the strings off the sound board sounded better. Now we set the neck angle and the height of the bridge so when we put the saddle in there will be a sharp angle. What we're trying to do utilize the pull of the strings for maximum effect.

What about wood? I have one of those early Gallaghers and it took 10 years to get the sound some of these guitars coming out of the shop today already have. The wood in a 1968 Gallagher might have been six months old. One of the advantages of surviving 30 years is building an inventory of wood. That building I

mentioned earlier — the one my father broke his ankle building? — that's where we store our wood and age it. Some of the wood in there is more than 10-years-old. We buy from several mills, one in Germany, one in Oregon and one down in Louisiana. I try to stay backlogged for several years. I also try to take advantage of good buying situations. For instance I bought rosewood in the '80s when Gibson closed the Kalamazoo plant. Good wood at reasonable prices help us keep our prices reasonable.

You talked about the woodworking aspect earlier.

Building a guitar is still basically a woodworking project. All the fancy inlays are nice, but in our progression woodworking comes first, then the sound. The last thing in the progression is embellishments.

Has the sound changed over 30-plus years? In terms of sound, the guitars have evolved because of what people came to us wanting. The sound has been adjusted through the input of people like Doc and other musicians and our own ear. Even with those changes, though, our guitars have a distinctive characteristic sound and that's not an accident. Historically the guitar was a rhythm instrument with a booming bass to back up a fiddle. In the mid-'60s the steel string acoustic was just beginning to come into its own which brought a different demand — balance across the ranges. From the beginning our guitar was built to accommodate what has become flatpicking. One reason our mahogany guitar has always been so popular is because of its clear note definition. Rosewood has a bassier sound. I wonder what some of these guitars are going to sound like in 20 years. I know the new ones are better now than the 1968 model was in 1968.

Would your dad recognize today's product? I'd have to explain a lot. There's the guitar. Then there are the nuances. That's where the real changes have come. The shop itself is virtually the same as when he died in 1979. He set a goal in 1965 to do it for 10 years. In 1975 when we were within the 800s in serial numbers, he pretty much was no longer active on a day-to-day basis. He really retired when we did No. 1,000 sometime in 1976. Something he would recognize is the way we build the guitars. The structure we've always had is a "small shop" concept, three or four people work-



J.W. Gallagher circa 1969

ing on the instruments with one person overseeing the operation. Most of the guitars in the 1960s I made the bodies, Robert Reed made the necks and my dad did the finish work and supervised.

You built #1000 in 1976. Where does output stand 20 years later?

We're getting close to #2400. We've worked on a low profile with minimal advertising. Our focus has been to make guitars on a limited basis geared to the individual. We've relied on one guitar selling another. On one hand we're not as well known as some of the other manufacturers, but in certain circles, we're very well known. We get inquiries from all over the world and ship guitars all over the world. One day last week, we sent out four guitars, one to Japan, one to Germany, one to Ohio and another to Oklahoma.

What about plans for the future?

Wartrace is really a laid back place, but even so, we have some really neat things coming up. Last summer we did the prototype for a new guitar body we're calling the Grand Auditorium. I'm really excited about it because I've incorporated some of those neck angle theories we talked about earlier. We showed it at the Chet Atkins Appreciation Society and it really got people excited. The prototype was built using some walnut I found up in the attic that dad squirreled away probably 40 years ago. Steve Kaufman and I have been working together for the last year to develop what we hope will be the "Steve Kaufman" signature model. We're still working out the details on this one, but I'm hoping to have a prototype to take to the winter NAMM show in January. The reasons we're doing the NAMM show is part of a new marketing strategy we adopted last spring. We're adding a very select number of dealers. We'll still be working direct on custom orders, but we all know a lot of guitars find new homes because someone likes the sound when they play it in a music store. We're targeting areas where we haven't had a strong direct presence.

Does this mean the famous Gallagher attention to individuals is history?

Not at all. We just want to enlarge the family. I've had a lot of people who play our guitars tell me there's kind of a brotherhood of Gallagher players. I hope so. Last year for the 30th anniversary we had a birthday



Don Gallagher holds a guitar which was built by three generations of Gallaghers, J.W., Don, and Don's son, Wesley

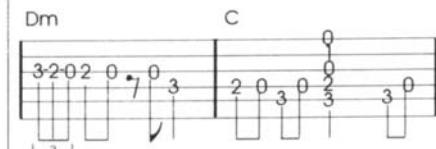
party in Wartrace which Doc headlined. We had an open house at the shop and then during the concert, we took a birthday picture with Doc and myself and all the Gallagher owners together. It was great. We're doing the birthday party again in May of 1997 but it will be a two day affair this time. Doc will headline Saturday and Claire Lynch and the Front Porch String Band are headlining Friday. Claire plays a Gallagher. All the guitar players on the show, from Steve Kaufman and Chris Jones, to the people who'll get a chance to perform during our open mike segment will be playing Gallaghers. The last thing I'll mention is our newsletter. We got the first one in the mail just before we went to Winfield in September and we expect to have a second one ready by the end of the year. We're trying to get it out to everyone who plays a Gallagher, whether you bought it new or used, from us or from a shop. If you're a Gallagher owner or enthusiast and didn't get the first one, drop us a line in Wartrace with your address.

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Steve Kaufman's Right Hand

In the last issue of *Flatpicking Guitar*, we provided an introduction to Steve Kaufman's instructional method and promised that there would be more to come. In this article we provide you with some excerpts transcribed from a seminar Steve gave in Santa Cruz, California, last July. We have selected some of Steve's words which specifically pertain to the use of the right hand in flatpicking. Following the excerpts, Steve presents a tab of "Devil's Dream" and explains how you can utilize this tab in an exercise to work on your right hand technique.

The Pick

I use a medium gauge (73 mm) pick made out of delrin (TM) material. It gives me a lot of flexibility in the tone that I want to get. The pick makes a big difference in the tone. A medium pick is bright. People make the mistake of thinking that a heavy pick is louder, but there is no difference in volume. But what happens is that by using a heavy pick you loose your highs. This is the treble all the way across all of the strings. Not just in the treble strings. When your highs get cut off you loose a little bit of the brightness that a medium pick will give you. You will get a "woodier" tone with a thick pick, but to me the medium pick is clearer. It all depends on what you like.

I am a jammer from way back and so what I need to do is to be heard in a jam session, or else be ignored. To me it is more fun to be heard than ignored. The medium pick is going to give you more of a "bite" or a "cut."

The reason I use the medium gauge picks made out of the delrin (TM) material versus a plastic Fender type medium gauge is that with the momentum I use in my right hand, I'd break one of those plastic picks in about three or four songs. They don't last me. When I play, I sink the pick into the strings about a half inch and I drive through the string with a lot of momentum. If I use a really heavy pick, it would get stuck at the string and I wouldn't be able to drive through it at a high rate of speed. The heavy picks make me work too hard.

The Grip

I hold my pick with my thumb and index finger forming a cross shape on either side of the pick (see photo below).



The Attack

When I'm playing, I use a real wide swing and sink about a half inch of pick into those strings (see photo below). If I don't have some momentum to drive through that string, I'm going to get stuck. For those of you who get stuck on your upswings, that could be a big part of it. You have to build the right hand up so that you can hit the strings with momentum.

I come from way out about an inch and a half or two inches from my target and drive through the target, as if it wasn't there, by letting the weight of my hand drop down. Then I come back about the same amount on the upswing. That means that I really didn't use any muscle, which means I am not going to get tired. This wide swing works at a slow speed and the faster you play the narrower the swing arc will be but you will keep the momentum and play with drive.

The other thing I do in my attack, is roll my pick forward at an angle so that I get about a twenty degree forward angle. That is going to really make that medium gauge pick have the feel of a heavy pick



(see photo above). I am not pushing it flat against the string, I have it tilted at this 20 degree angle so this, in effect, makes it a stiffer pick. The down swing and the upswing are basically on the same angle. You will shave off the bottom of the left edge and the top of the right edge. If you are crashing at the same place in a song, it is usually due to a mechanical error in the right hand. It is either getting stuck on an upswing because it is not driving through with enough force, or you've hit two downs or two ups in a row where they should be straight down-ups. When I practice, I play very slowly with a very wide over-swing. I start about two inches from the target and move through and past the target about two inches. Of course, as you speed up, this distance gets smaller and smaller.

The Hand Position

I let my little finger glide on the top and that is the only part of my hand that touches the top. I don't rest on the bridge or the bridge pins. My little finger does not stay in one place, it is going to glide along the top. If it stays in one place it is what we would call an "anchor" and you don't want to anchor if you playing with my style of attack. If you anchor the little finger in one spot and you move your wrist around a lot, that means that you are actually pivoting around the point of that anchor and you don't want that to happen. What you want to try and do is have that little finger touching the top, but have it glide along the top as your wrist moves.

The Pick Direction

My instructional rule is that for eighth notes, the pick direction always alternates. If you had a string of eighth notes, the first one is down, the next one is up, the next one is down, etc. Or you can say that in 4/4 time, the numbered notes are your downs and your "ands" are your ups. If you always do it that way, then your quarter notes are always going to be played with a down stroke. They are down beats, so it is natural to make them down swings with the pick.

You have more power on the down swing. It makes things real simple. If you always follow this rule, you will never have to sit down and try to work out your pick direction. To me, the right hand is the metronome. If you follow the simple down-up rule you can keep your right hand clicking along like a metronome, and it works out very well that way. You will be able to play through the most complicated, syncopated passages if you stop to work on your count $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +$. Your wrist is going to go down up all the time. Your mind just chooses which notes your hand

is going to hit.

Devil's Dream

The reason I like to use this tune in my workshops and clinics is because of it's repetition. If the melody of a song is easy to recognize, you will be able to hum it quicker. Therefor be able to play the melody faster and concentrate more on the technique rather than the melody (which we will get back to after the technique is solid).

Practice playing this tune with a very wide picking hand swing. Start about 2

inches from the targeted string and swing through the string and past about 2 inches. You can only do this if you are playing slowly. Practice this technique with any song that you have memorized but at about 60-70 beats per minute. Be sure to hit all notes solid and as if you really mean to hit them.

Note: This version of “Devil’s Dream” is adapted from the book *Mel Bay’s Complete Flatpicking Guitar Book* by Steve Kaufman. Mel Bay Publications, Inc. #4 Industrial Dr., Pacific, MO 63069-0066. Used by Permission.

Devil's Dream

Arranged by Steve Kaufman



NASHVILLE FLAT TOP

by Brad Davis



What would flatpicking be if, the greats had just copied everyone else? I have some pickers ask me how many techniques should a picker use to form a style? I respond by saying, "most well rounded flatpickers know how to crosspick and (traditional) flatpick." I would not be the player I am today if it weren't for the techniques of Clarence White, Norman Blake, Tony Rice and Dan Crary just to name a few.

My ultimate goal as a young flatpicker was to successfully mimic my heroes and then later develop my very own technique that would set me apart from all the other players. The double-down-up technique has given me that original identifiable edge. The pattern alone creates a very distinct sound, not to mention the notes and scales that evolve from this new technique. In the examples below you'll find d-d-up licks in two different keys, and a traditional bluegrass instrumental

titled "Black Mountain Rag". Hopefully most of you know this song well enough to have played the original melody. My version of this song is written with d-d-ups, although both d-up-d and d-d-up techniques are combined together, this version will show you that using more than one technique can be very effective.

NOTE - Below each measure the finger positioning is the white type in the black box. The O's represent no finger. *Thanks for the input fellow flatpickers.*

Double-down-up licks (Ex.1- key of G)

(Ex.2 - key of C)

Ex.2 Key of C										Ex.3 Key of G														
V V A V V A V V A V V A V					V V A V V A V V A V V A V					V V A V V A V V A V V A V					V V A V V A V V A V V A V									
1															0	3	1	0		1	0			
2															0	3	1	3		3		3	1	1
3										0	2		0	2		0	2						4	
4					0	2		0	1	2			3											
5	0	2	3	2	3																			
6																								
	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+
	0	2	3	2	3	0	2	3	0	1	2	0	2	3	0	2	0	3	1	0	3	1	4	1

Key of (G)-line 1

HERE THE FRET
NUMBERS ARE THE
FINGER POSITIONS

Key of G (Part one)										Key of G (Part one)										
	H									V	V	A	V	V	A	V	V	A	V	
1					3					0	5		3	5	3	0				
2				3						0	5		3	5	3	0				
3			0		0					0	2	4		4			4	0	5	3
4	4	5			5			4	5			5					4		4	3
5																				
6																				
	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+
	3	3	0	1	3				3	3	0	1	3		0	1	3	0	2	3

Black Mountain Rag

(G) Part one

Black Mountain Rag Con't.

(G)-line 2

	(G)											
	P						P					
1												
2	3	5	3	0	3	0						0 2
3			4		4		2	0	0	0	2	
4							2	0			4	
5											4	
6												
	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+
	1	3	1	0	2	1	0	3	2	0	3	0
	1	3	1	0	2	1	0	3	2	0	3	0

(G)-line 3

	(G)-Part two											
	P						P					
1	3	0	2	0								
2		3		3	0							
3				4	2	0	0			0	2	4
4					2	0		0				0
5												
6												
	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+
	2	0	2	1	0	2	0	3	2	0	3	0
	1	3	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	3	1	0

(G)-line 4

	(G)											
	P						H					
1												
2												
3	5	4	0	4	0	4	2	0	0	0	2	4
4		7		5				2	0			
5									2 3			
6												
	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+
	2	1	4	0	1	2	0	3	1	0	1	3
	1	3	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	2	0	2

(G)-line 5

	(G)-Part three											
	V						V					
1												
2												
3	5	4	0	4	0	5	0	2	0	0	2	4
4		7		5			3		3			
5										0	3	2
6								0	2	3	2	0
	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+
	2	1	4	0	1	2	0	3	1	0	1	3
	1	3	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	2	0	2

(C)-line 6

	(G)											
	V						V					
1												
2												
3							0	2	5			
4			0	2	0	1	2		5			
5	3	2	3		3					2	0	0 2
6												
	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+
	2	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	4	4	3	1
	1	0	2	0	3	0	1	2	4	2	3	0

(D)-line 7

	(G)											
	V						V					
1												
2												
3		2	0		4	2	0		0	4	5	7
4	4			4	2	0	0	4	5	4	5	10
5					4		2	0		5		8
6												7 9
	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+
	3	1	0	3	1	3	0	3	1	2	4	2
	1	3	1	0	3	1	2	1	3	1	4	3
	1	3	1	0	3	1	2	1	3	1	4	0

Black Mountain Rag Con't.

(C)-line 8

	V V ^ V ^ V ^ V ^ V ^ V ^										(G)										
	^ V					V V					V ^					V ^ V ^					P
1																					
2	6		0	5	4	3		4	3			5	2	5	0	2	3	2	0	2	0
3		7					5			5	2		5	0	2	3	2	0	3	0	0 4
4										5							3	0	3	0	
5																	3		3	0	
6																			3	0	
	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+		1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+
	1	2	0	3	2	1	3	2		1	4	1	4	4	0	1	2	1	0	2	0

(G)-line 9 P

H

The End

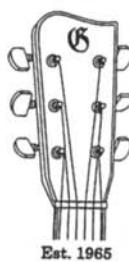
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About the author: Brad Davis has many years of experience as an acclaimed bluegrass and country guitarist. With several albums to his credit, Brad's most widely heard guitar work is on Marty Stuart's gold record "This Ones Gonna Hurt You" and on Marty's most recent album "Honky Tonkin's What I Do Best." Brad Debuted his patented "Brad Bender," the string bender for acoustic guitars, and the unique style it offers, on countless national television shows with the Sweethearts of the Rodeo - bluegrass band. In addition to currently touring with Marty Stuart, Brad also spent several years on the road with the Forester Sisters. Songwriting, record production, and the production of instructional material for the guitar are also wedged into his tight schedule. Brad's up and coming projects include an instrumental album of twelve original flatpicking tunes titled "Climbin' Cole Hill," and an album titled "No Gold On The Highway" with his new acoustic band "wHITE wATER" both of these projects on Raisin' Cain Records. He is also working on a sixty page flatpicking instructional book titled "The Acoustic Speed Picking Blue Book featuring his "Double-Down-Up" speed picking technique.

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6 p.m.-10:30 p.m. Performances

SATURDAY, MAY 17:

8:30 - 10:00 a.m. Breakfast - Gallagher Guitar Owners Walking Horse Hotel/Wartrace

12:00 - 10:00 p.m. Performances

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Break Time

by Chris Jones



When preparing to play a break to a song, whether improvising one on the spot (with band members staring at you, waiting to be dazzled), or putting one together for future use, you need a place to start.

In my previous column, I touched on the idea of centering breaks on the melody of the song as opposed to stringing licks together. In order to do this, it follows that you need to be able to hear what the melody is, get an idea of the melodic direction of the song, then find that for yourself on the guitar. We'll get into this topic in depth in future issues, but for now we're going to focus on how the melody of a given song starts, and how to use that knowledge to kick off a break.

Every song has a first "strong" note and unless it's a really strange song it's going to be on the one, three or five of the chord that's being played. For example, in "Your Love Is Like A Flower" (see tablature), the song's first emphasized note is a B note against a G chord (if you're playing it in the key of G, or in G position with your capo in the fret position of your choice). If you're familiar with the lyrics, it's the note of the word "long" from "It was LONG long ago...". The B note in this case would be the third (with G being one and D being five). This means that when you kick off the break, you are going to want your intro notes to lead you to that B note. This is by no means a rule of bluegrass guitar playing, but if you kick off "Your Love Is Like A Flower" and your intro notes take you to the first note of "Rocky Top", you should have a good creative reason (besides being mad at the banjo player).

It is then up to you to determine how to get to that note. One way is to simply lead up to it the way the song itself does (i.e. play the notes of "It was...", a D and a G). However, most experienced flatpickers will want to come up with something a little more exciting than this. Another idea is to base your lead in to the B note on the D and G that I just referred to (this is what I did in example #1). Or, you can use some other intro lick that works for you. If you really want to be unique, you can leave out the intro notes entirely and just come in on the strong B note. This works well in blues, but in bluegrass, people usually just think you forgot it was your turn to play.

Below are three examples of kick-offs to "Your Love Is Like A Flower", with one kick-off to another bluegrass standard, "No Mother Or Dad", which has a one of the chord (G in this case) as its first "strong" or emphasized note. Each example ends with the first emphasized note; after that you're on your own. I hope this will give you some ideas for getting a break started out in the right direction.



Example 1

1
4/4
S

0 0 0 2 0 0 2/4

Example 2

1
4/4
S

0 2 0 2 0 0 2/4

Example 3

1
4/4
S S

3 1 3/4 0 0 1/2 3/4

No Mother or Dad

1
4/4
H

0 2 3 0 2 0 0 4 5

About the Author: Bluegrass Veteran, Chris Jones, currently fronts an exciting new band Chris Jones and the Night Drivers, featuring great new material, some of bluegrass's finest instrumentalists and tight harmony vocals led by Chris's traditional, country flavored lead singing. Chris is known most recently for his work with The Lynn Morris Band and with Weary Hearts with whom he recorded the critically acclaimed "By Heart" album for Flying Fish Records. In addition, Chris has toured and recorded with groups as diverse as Chicago's Special Consensus and Warner Brothers Country hitmakers The McCarters. He has also performed on the Grand Ole Opry with Laurie Lewis, Lynn Morris and the Whitstein Brothers.

Masters of Rhythm Guitar

Blue Highway's Tim Stafford

Welcome to Flatpicking Guitar's new feature column on rhythm guitar. In each issue we intend to highlight flatpick rhythm guitar playing by presenting an interview which focuses on the rhythm techniques of some of today's living legends. This is not to say that many of the artists highlighted here are not hot lead players, nor is it to say that the players highlighted elsewhere in the magazine are not great rhythm players. The artists we will highlight in this column are those who are currently playing in bands which predominantly feature vocal music and thus these players will talk about how their guitar is utilized in the band setting to help embellish and highlight the singers and other instrumentalists in the band. In this, the first appearance of this column, we are proud to present Tim Stafford, one of the finest rhythm players in bluegrass music. Through his work with bands such as, *The Boys in the Band*, *Dusty Miller*, *Alison Krauss and Union Station*, and most recently, *Blue Highway*, Tim has gained a reputation as being one of today's top bluegrass guitarists.

Tim Stafford began his musical career playing the banjo when he was in high school. Tim explains that his first real exposure to bluegrass music occurred as a freshman in high school when he walked into his concert choir class and heard some guys playing mandolin and guitar. He says, "I thought it was the greatest music I had ever heard. I wanted to pick with these guys at school and so I needed to learn how to play something that they didn't have, which was a banjo. I talked my Dad into getting me a cheap banjo and I tried to teach myself how to play by listening to records." Similarly, Tim's transition to the guitar came about due to the needs of a band. Tim explains that about three years after he had first started learning how to play banjo, he was playing banjo in a small band when they all met a really good banjo player from Bluff City who wanted to be in the band. The band members agreed that this guy would be a great addition

to the band, and then they looked at Tim and said, "Now what are you going to play?" Tim said, "I guess I'll play guitar." Although he had never played guitar before, Tim states, "I knew that three of the strings on the guitar were like the banjo, so I just went from there."

Tim never had anyone teach him how to hold chords or play leads on either the banjo or guitar. He has totally taught himself by ear from the very beginning. He says, "The first person that ever showed me a chord was David Grier and that was just a few years ago at Owensboro. He showed me one of these funny chords that he makes, and he was the first person that ever did that." Tim continues by saying, "I'm still needing a teacher real bad if anybody's interested."

Although none of the bluegrass recordings that he had been exposed to at that point in his life featured lead guitar playing, Tim says that he has played lead guitar from the very beginning. He states, "I thought that I had discovered this new way of playing guitar. I did not realize that there was such a thing as lead flatpick playing. Later, I heard a Bluegrass Alliance record with Dan Crary on it and that just blew me away." Up to that point, Tim's lead guitar playing had been based on material that he had transferred over from his banjo playing. Chromatic style banjo was the craze back in those days and so in order to teach himself lead guitar, he simply tried to transfer the sound of his chromatic banjo runs onto the guitar. After hearing Crary play, Tim said he entered a "Dan Crary phase" and tried to learn a lot of the songs off of Crary's albums, *Lady's Fancy* being his favorite.

Shortly after Tim discovered Dan Crary, he began playing with a group called "The Boys in the Band" and once again began concentrating on playing in a band context. He said that it was at this point (early 1980s) that he started really seriously thinking about his back-up and rhythm playing. The emphasis on rhythm playing has lasted to this day. Tim says, "When I

Photo: Trisha Tubbs



Tim Stafford of Blue Highway

was a beginner I tended to look at rhythm playing as something I was doing in-between breaks. A lot of flatpickers make this mistake. If you look at it in a bluegrass context, you are probably going to be playing rhythm 75 to 90 percent of the time. You have to do things that are going to make the band sound good. It suddenly clicked into my mind that I could do some things as a rhythm guitar player that could totally change the sound of the band. It was at that point that I began to enjoy concentrating on the rhythm playing more than on a contest style "flashy" kind of flatpicking. As a guitar player in a band, you have a real big job and need to think about what you are doing every second of the song, not just when you are playing lead."

Tim stayed with *The Boys in the Band* from 1980 through 1984 and then moved to Ohio to attend graduate school. In 1986, he returned to Tennessee and rejoined the group for a couple more years. When he left *The Boys in the Band*, he had the opportunity to play in a band called *Dusty Miller*, which stayed together for two years. Tim said that Alison Krauss was a fan of that band, but had first heard him play with *The Boys in the Band* at the SPBGMA contest in Nashville. She had called him a few weeks later and asked if he would be interested in joining *Union Station*. He couldn't do it at the time, but he says that when he finally was able to join *Union Station*, the timing was just right because two of his bandmates from *Dusty Miller*, Adam Steffey and Bill Bales, joined *Union Station* at the same time.

Tim stayed with Alison Krauss for two years and says that he would probably still be with her today except that after his son Daniel was born in January of 1992, he felt that the busy road schedule took him away from his family too often. At that time he had fully intended to quit playing all together, but then found out that he just could not give it up. Tim says, "I don't know what it is about this music. It could probably be compared to a virus. It gets in your blood and you can't get it out." In order to get his "bluegrass fix," Tim had intended to get some friends together and just play at the house occasionally. That was about two years ago and, as Tim says, "things just snowballed." What started out as a few friends getting together to pick on weekends has turned into Blue Highway, voted 1996 IBMA "Emerging Artist of the Year" and winner of the IBMA 1996 "Album of the Year" with their first release "It's A Long, Long Road."

While Tim Stafford is a very talented lead guitarist, the focus of his guitar playing is not in trying to showcase his flatpicking talent, but in making the band sound good. Tim says, "We only put guitar breaks in the songs where we think they will fit. I will never lobby for a guitar break. If the song would sound good with a guitar break, then I will take one. However, it doesn't bother me if I don't get to take a break. I enjoy doing it when I get the chance, but I would much rather stay busy back there trying to make the banjo sound good or whatever." In the following interview, Tim talks about his rhythm playing and lends advice to those who are trying to improve their rhythm guitar technique.

When you first began to focus on your rhythm playing, how did you begin to teach yourself to become a better rhythm player. Were you listening to other rhythm players to get ideas?

By that time I had listened to players like Tony Rice, Charlie Waller, Del McCoury, Larry Sparks, Edd Mayfield, Jimmy Martin, Norman Blake, and others who I thought were really good rhythm guitars players, so much that I am sure that some of what they were doing had rubbed off, but I don't ever remember trying to sit down and consciously try and learn a rhythm lick. I experimented and found that certain things work well behind certain instruments and certain players. It is a difficult job because you have to listen to what they are doing and play off of what they are doing and

make them sound better. But you also have to listen to yourself and you have to keep steady time. If you listen too much to the other players you might get out of time. If you listen too much to yourself, you might stay in time, but it is not going to sound distinctive, it is going to be too boring, and it is not going to add to the sound of the band. It is a complicated thing to balance.

When you are playing with a band, are there different things you would do in your rhythm playing behind say a mandolin versus a banjo, dobro, or fiddle?

Absolutely. Your goal as the guitar player in a band is to make the band sound good. For instance, when the mandolin takes a break, that percussive, off-beat chop stops. That mandolin chop is like the snare drum of a bluegrass band, and you can't have that drummer just stop. So what I would usually do during the mandolin break is pick up the off-beat chop by accenting the off-beat on the guitar. In our current band, we have the dobro also accenting that off-beat, so I don't have to do it as much now.

Things that sound really good behind the banjo are things that accent the banjo roll. If you have somebody that does some real syncopated things on the banjo, then you can learn to play off of that. I love playing behind banjos, especially playing with someone who is a good driving banjo player like Jason Burleson. I will occasionally do some cross-picking things behind

the banjo and dobro breaks, just some short phrases every now and then. I've heard Tony Rice do the same thing on occasion. I think that if you listen to Tony Rice's back up you will hear that his rhythm style was influenced by J. D. Crowe's banjo playing.

In the band context, I'll just try different things. I work with each instrument when we practice and I'll try it a different way each time and figure out what sounds best. There are a million different rhythm things that you can do. I wish I was sophisticated enough musically to tell you exactly what it is, but I can't. I can hear it and feel it, but I can't really describe it.

In our band, we try to play to the song. If we feel like a song needs something and would sound good a certain way, we will do it. Certain songs are going to dictate certain things. For instance, when I was working with Alison Krauss and we worked up the Sidney Cox song "Last Love Letter" I found that I could not play a strum rhythm to that song, so I ended up rolling all the way through it. The whole thing is a rolling style back-up. When we did "New Fool," which is more of a country type song, I found that I needed to do more of a heavy type off beat. So, the song usually dictates what happens.

Did the rhythm style you used when you were playing with Alison Krauss and Union Station differ significantly from what you are doing today with Blue Highway?

I really haven't changed much in the



Tim Stafford (center) teaching a flatpicking guitar workshop with Steve Kaufman (left) and David Grier (right) in Owensboro, KY, 1996



Blue Highway playing at the 1996 IMBA awards show

last three bands I've been in. In Alison's band we did more songs without the banjo. In many of her songs, the banjo player will pick up a guitar and the song will be played with two guitars. When you are playing with two guitars, you try not to do what the other guitar is doing and he tries not to do what you are doing. Ron Block was real sensitive to that. We would always try to get the guitars into two different positions, for instance if the song is in E, like "Steel Rails," I would play it capoed at the fourth fret in the C position and Ron would play it in the D position, or he would play it open in E. That helps to give two different voices to the guitars. If the guitars sound the same, there can really be a clash.

When you are playing rhythm, do you do much up the neck?

No. In a straight bluegrass type song you don't worry about changing out of first position too much. There is a few times you might go up the neck. But when you are playing in a band, you have to go back to this concept of being part of the rhythm section. If the rhythm section gets too far out, you will start to loose it. You have to keep the beat and you have to keep it solid. So, I don't try to go too far out on a limb.

When you are singing, do you have to simplify what you are doing on your guitar?

Yes, quite a bit. It is real hard for me to do the things that I normally do on the guitar for rhythm when I am singing. It takes all of my concentration to sing. I have had to work with either a metronome or records and watch myself in the mirror to make sure I don't drop the beat while I'm singing. I have worked real hard at that and I still work at it.

Having focused on your rhythm for so many years and having done it so well, is there any advice you can lend to our readers who might be trying to improve their rhythm playing?

I recommend that you learn how to listen to everything that is going on around you and that you don't try to play too hard. That is one thing I used to do, play too hard. A lot of that is born out of the frustration of not being able to hear the guitar in the monitors. Finally I decided to get in there and play what fits and not beat it to death. Your instrument is not going to sound good when you play it too hard.

Young players are usually focused on technique. That is good to a certain point. It keeps your mind going and your enthusiasm up. But you have to realize that the older you get, the more you need to start to pay attention to things like tone and timing. Tone literally means "what the guitar sounds like." A lot of people don't even pay attention to what their guitar sounds like. Does it have a deep resonant sound? Is it thin? Are the notes brittle? Are they jumbled together? This is true in both rhythm and lead playing. And then timing is everything. If you don't have timing you can't even talk about the other "T's."

As far as rhythm techniques, I always found that if I feel I have gotten kind of stale in my playing, I'll go back and get some records that I feel have a really good groove and I'll play along with them. It really rejuvenates me to do that sort of thing. I find that when I come back to the next show, I'll be a lot more solid. The records I always go back to are things by J.D. Crowe and the New South, the Bluegrass Album Band, the Lonesome River Band, and other bands that I know are just going to be solid as a rock.

I also recommend that those who are trying to improve their rhythm playing work

with a metronome. The type of metronome I recommend is the kind that have the swinging pendulum because this adds a visual aspect to it that helps you play. Watching that pendulum swing back and forth, having that visual reference, will really help your timing.

If you don't have a good straight sense of timing, in other words, knowing where the beats come right on the quarter notes or the eighth notes, then there is no way you are ever going to be able to syncopate. Syncopation is a relative term. It doesn't make any sense if it is taken out of the context of the beat. It is the same way with these rhythm licks. If you don't have a real strong sense of the beat and the off-beat, then you are not going to be able to throw in syncopated things and rhythmic techniques that sort of play with the beat.

It is the same with lead playing. Being able to play an entire break from beginning to end with no rush spots or drag spots inside the break is important. A lot of players will rush certain passages. They don't generally rush the song, but they rush one or two things in it and then they wonder why it doesn't sound quite as good.

Tim Stafford plays a Dearstone guitar built by Ray Dearstone of Blountville, Tennessee. Tim's Dearstone has Indian rosewood back and sides and an Adirondack Spruce top. Tim says, "I was looking around for a good rosewood guitar and had heard a guitar that Ray had built. I told him that if he could build me one like that, I would take it. He did, and I've been playing it ever since."

Prior to the Dearstone, Tim was playing a 1955 D-18. He had borrowed Greg Luck's 1936 D-28 to record some of the cuts of Blue Highways new release *Wind To The West*, Tim states, "It totally spoiled me. I could not go back to playing that mahogany guitar. The mahogany guitars are good for lead playing, there is no doubt about it, but there is something about the warmth and depth of that rosewood for rhythm that I just love." Tim uses D'Addario strings, J-17, medium gauge. He likes a heavy 1.55 gauge pick and currently plays a Clayton nylon, although he states that he is constantly changing picks. He plays with the edge of the pick instead of the point and he likes an edge that has been worn down with use. Tim says that he plays with a heavy gauge pick and uses the edge of the pick because he likes the tone that it produces for rhythm.

The 25th Annual Flatpicking Championships at Winfield, Kansas

It's Friday morning, 20 September 1996, at the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas, home of the National Flatpicking Guitar Championships. Dan Crary is on stage flanked on his left by Tim Stafford and David Grier and on his right by Beppe Gambetta and Steve Kaufman. Crary looks to his right and left and says something like, "I'm the old guy up here. If Scott Nygaard could have been with us up here today with this group (Nygaard had played with Tim and Mollie O'Brien the previous evening), you would be looking at the best of today's young flatpickers." The five of them then spent the next hour and forty-five minutes jamming with each other, taking turns playing solo, and answering questions from the audience proving Crary's statement to be absolutely true. It just doesn't get much better.

During one segment of the workshop, Dan Crary, the workshop leader, had asked all of the players to play a tune that they had "in the works," something they were still in the process of writing. When it came time for David Grier to take his turn, Grier says, "How about if I just make one up." He looks to the audience, "Someone call out a chord." The audience starts yelling out chord names. Grier picks the first three chords he hears, strums through a rhythm pattern long enough for Tim Stafford to pick it up, and then launches into a completely improvised solo, effortlessly playing it as if it had been a tune he'd known his whole life. Jaws dropped and people shook their heads in amazement. After Grier finishes the solo, Steve Kaufman leans into his microphone and says, "What do you call that one David?" Grier looks to the audience and says, "I don't know. . . Someone call out a letter."

Winfield is a flatpicker's paradise. From the pros on stage, to the pros and amateurs in the campground, to the fierce competition of the flatpicking contest, Winfield represents the best of the best. At any given time on one of the four official, and two unofficial, stages one might catch: Scott Nygaard playing with Tim and Mollie

O'Brien, David Grier with The Grass is Greener, Tim Stafford with Blue Highway, or Dan Crary, Beppe Gambetta, and Steve Kaufman each performing solo and bringing up others to accompany them during their shows. Kaufman brought up Grier during one show and Crary and Robin Kessinger during another. Gambetta and Crary performed together and Gambetta, Crary, and Kaufman also played a set together. If that wasn't enough, Kaufman backed up Tom Paxton during all of Paxton's shows, and a hot young picker named Sean Watkins, with the band Nickel Creek, proved that the next generation of flatpickers is on its way.

Although the stage shows did not start until Thursday, 19 September, Steve Kaufman was there teaching a two day workshop to the early birds on Monday and Tuesday. This kick-off not only gave flatpickers the opportunity to attend another of Kaufman's great workshops, it was also a terrific opportunity to meet with other pickers and find out where all the great jam sessions were happening. But of course, they were happening everywhere and a lot of the picking at the jams sessions could easily rival what was happening on stage. Steve Kaufman and Robin Kessinger were

known to pop in on a jam or two, guys like Dave McCarty, Tom Dillon, Van Hunter, and Bryan Kimsey were heating things up around the stage six area, and some of the hot contest pickers such as Allen Shadd, Tim Harbin, Adam Wright, Cody Kilby, Matthew Wingate, Dan Kessinger, and Mark Cosgrove (the 1995 Winfield champion) kept things constantly hopping over at the Gallagher Guitar booth.

The 25th annual flatpicking guitar contest itself occurred on Saturday morning. There were approximately thirty contestants this year and the competition was tough. Each contestant came on stage with a back-up player and performed two songs. The judges were in an isolated area. They could not see the contestants and only the contestants guitar was piped into the judges room. The judges could not hear the back-up player. After the contest was over, one contestant walked away shaking his head saying, "There was no room for error in this one. You had to play perfect just to make the cut." Five individuals made the cut and were allowed to come up and play again. After the dust settled, the results were as follows:



Steve Kaufman, Beppe Gambetta, Dan Crary, Tim Stafford, and David Grier teaching a flatpicking workshop at Winfield '96



Gary Cook, 1996 Winfield flatpicking champion brought home his second Winfield win. He also won the contest in 1989.

First Place:
Gary Cook of Durango, CO
Second Place:
Allen Shadd of Jacksonville, FL
Third Place:
Cody Kilby of Cowan, TN

After Gary Cook played his set in the finals, Steve Kaufman said, "If the judges are looking for speed, Gary has smoked them. I'm glad I don't have to play that fast any more." Cook's final performance was lightning fast, yet the notes rang clear and the delivery was smooth. He looked comfortable and well at ease during the performance. A well deserved Winfield victory, the second for Cook who was also a winner in 1989.

The 1996 Walnut Valley Festival was my first and now, like thousands of others who attend each year, I am hooked. I know I will keep going back as long as they have them. But next year I will arrive there even earlier and I will bring my mud boots.

Twenty Five years of Winners at Winfield

- 1972 - Jimmy Gyles
- 1973 - Jimmy Gyles
- 1974 - Rick George
- 1975 - Mark O'Connor
- 1976 - Orrin Star
- 1977 - Mark O'Connor
- 1978 - Steve Kaufman
- 1979 - Roger Ferguson
- 1980 - Roy Curry
- 1981 - Richard Gulley
- 1982 - Mitch Corbin
- 1983 - Robert Shafer
- 1984 - Steve Kaufman
- 1985 - Robin Kessinger
- 1986 - Steve Kaufman
- 1987 - Stephen Bennett
- 1988 - Peter McLaughlin
- 1989 - Gary Cook
- 1990 - Randy Rogers
- 1991 - Roy Curry
- 1992 - John Shaw
- 1993 - Jason Shaw
- 1994 - Mike Whitehead
- 1995 - Mark Cosgrove
- 1996 - Gary Cook

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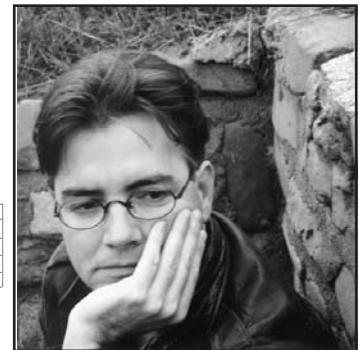
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What Is This Thing Called Jazz?

This column begins the first in a series of randomly occurring explorations of the mysteries of jazz. This will not be an attempt to cover the subject exhaustively; there are plenty of books, schools and instructors for anyone who wishes to become exhausted. Rather this will be geared towards the kind of guitarist who wants to, as a student of mine once said, "learn some of that jazzy stuff you do without having to learn how to play jazz." Granted, this is a little like the classically trained violinist who wishes to play some fiddle tunes without learning how to play like a bluegrass or old-time fiddler, and we all know how that turns out. But, I'm going to assume that some knowledge of jazz and swing can be useful and enjoyable to those who don't want to take the time to acquire the encyclopedic knowledge of scales, arpeggios, and stock phrases which constitutes basic training for the contemporary jazz guitarist.

In this column we'll concentrate on phrasing and the elusive quality known as swing. For our purposes here we'll define swing as a rhythmic style rather than the style of big band music popular in the thirties and forties. Swing can be thought of in a couple of different ways. One defines the way in which eighth notes are played. Generally jazz musicians refer to two types of time: straight-eighths (Ex. 1) — in which each eighth note has the same duration (a sound characteristic of latin music and most rock and roll), and swing, which is closer to a shuffle (Ex. 2) — in which the eighth notes are played almost as if the quarter notes are divided into triplets with the first eighth note having the duration of two triplets and the second having the duration of one. Swing actually falls somewhere in between straight-eighths and a shuffle. (When swing is written out, most people simply indicate that the eighth notes are to be

swung, rather than make the reader navigate a confusing assemblage of triplets.)

The other important and less easily defined characteristic of swing deals with phrasing and syncopation. This is also what really distinguishes jazz and swing from other kinds of music. A lot of common phrases or licks turn up in all sorts of music. In Lester Young's classic solo on Lady Be Good, which he recorded in a wonderful late '30's trio date with Count Basie, Young plays a phrase which is virtually identical to the famed Lester Flatt G-run. When you hear Young's solo you don't think that he is quoting Lester Flatt, because this phrase sounds totally different in another context; it turns out that this is a very common phrase in 30's and 40's swing music. What makes it different is the phrasing; you can think of this as speaking with a musical accent. Young's solo on Lady Be Good is a classic of the genre, and should be required learning (or at least listening) for any serious student of jazz. But if you were to look at or learn this solo, you would see that the harmonic basis of everything he plays is not much further from the harmonic basis of most country music and bluegrass. The difference is in the way he phrases and syncopates what he plays. Of course, the best way to learn this is to listen to a lot of jazz and swing (imagine trying to describe in words how to speak English with a Southern or New York accent). The more you listen, the more the jazz language will come naturally to you and you'll be able to turn musical phrases you already know into jazz.

I'll illustrate this by taking the melody of Panhandle Rag and notating it with bluegrass phrasing (measures 1-9) and with swing phrasing (measures 10-18). Compare the first two phrases (measures 1-4 and 10-13). The melody notes are virtually identical, but the phrasing is very different. The first phrase in the swing version is simply a syncopated version of the opening phrase in the bluegrass version. One thing to pay attention to here is the duration of the notes.

The end-point of the note is just as important as the beginning. This helps to explain why most jazz guitarists avoid open strings. It is harder to control the length of a note played on an open string than a fretted note. The bluegrass habit of letting notes ring into each other creates a smooth sound that is at odds with the syncopated, rhythmic sound of jazz.

The last four bars of each version are quite different. The swing version takes the initial melodic idea (measure #6), modifies it slightly, repeats it in "3 against 2" phrasing and then uses it to create an entirely new phrase (measure #16), ending with a syncopated phrase that emphasizes the sixth of the scale. I suppose this illustrates the jazz players reluctance to stick to the melody for too long.

Well, enough analysis. You'll notice that we've created a nice little eight bar jazz line without any talk of scales, arpeggios or fermented and demolished chords. Jazz is not something you learn in a theory classroom. You learn it just like you learn any kind of music — by listening.

Scott Nygaard is one of the premier guitarists on the bluegrass/acoustic music scene today. He is in great demand among the cream of the crop of modern bluegrass artists, as a quick glance at his recording credits will attest. His solos, a seamless amalgam of bluegrass, folk and jazz influences, shift easily from breathtaking virtuosity to soulful melodic musings and his accompaniment is always intriguing, supportive and propulsive. He has been the guitarist with Tim O'Brien's band, The O'Boys, since 1992, a plum position that followed three years with Laurie Lewis's band Grant Street. Initially influenced by Doc Watson, Clarence White, Django Reinhardt and Riley Puckett, Nygaard spent many years wandering the sea of American music which includes bluegrass, jazz, Cajun, western swing and rock and roll. This diverse musical education, which primarily took place in the fertile Pacific Northwest, helped form a style which can truly be called Nygaard's own. He currently resides in San Francisco with his wife Anne and son Josef, though he is most often

Ex. 1 (Straight-Eighths)



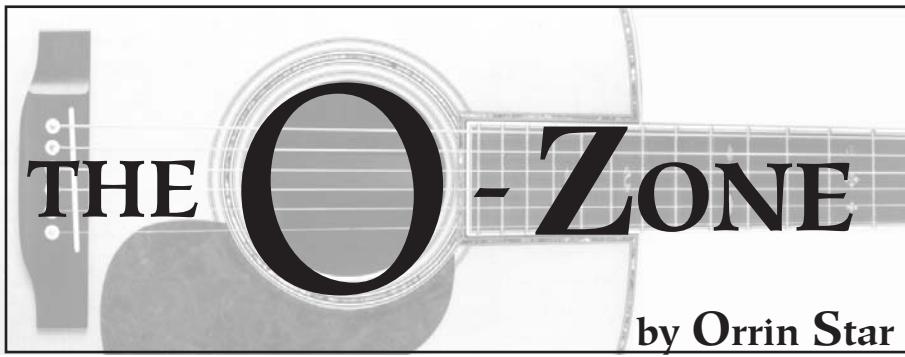
Ex. 2 (Shuffle)

PANHANDLE RAG

Solo Arr. Scott Nygaard

The sheet music for "Panhandle Rag" consists of six staves of flatpicking guitar notation. Each staff includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F# major), and a common time signature. The notation includes various弓 (bends), slurs, and grace notes. Tablature is provided below each staff, indicating fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) and hammer-ons (H). The piece is divided into sections labeled G, C, G, D, G, C, G, and D, with specific measures numbered (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 15).

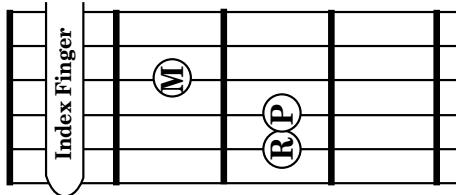
heard on the road at one of the top acoustic music festivals or venues around the globe. His long awaited second album 'Dreamer's Waltz', an intriguing mix of original and traditional tunes, was recently released on Rounder Records.



Playing Up the Neck-II

In last issue's inaugural column I pointed out that the basic guitar chords we already know (and the licks associated with them) imply barred positions which can be moved anywhere on the fretboard. And I showed how this would work with the 'G' and 'C' chords.

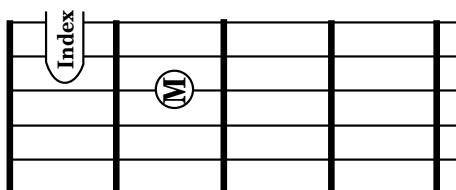
This month we turn to the mother of all closed positions, the F-chord.



As the only basic chord which is closed to begin with, the F is a great vehicle to illustrate positional movements and relationships. (Hint: the F is actually an open E chord barred on the first fret.)

I noted last issue that we often employ abbreviated versions of positions ("mini-bars") as a practical shorthand for the whole position, and the F is no exception.

The Mini-Bar



One classic use of this mini-bar is in the second phrase of Doc Watson's "June Apple":

As with any closed lick, this one can be moved anywhere. Here it is up two frets (in the key of G):

Here are three favorite F position licks (located on the third fret as well). (The second is a swingy one I copped from jazz guitar great Charlie Parker.)

F Position Example 1:

F Position Example 2:

F Position Example 3:

But the real fun starts when you begin to the the *vertical* connections which exist between positions. Play this lick:

Did you notice how it moved back and forth between the open G position and the F position on the third fret?

These kind of moves between positions are what playing up the neck is really all about. And each player develops his or her own favorite ways of doing these.

But there's an even larger issue at hand: Did you realize that the relationship between the G and F positions we just witnessed applies everywhere? That if you move your G position up the neck there is always an F position in the same key three frets above it? (Try playing this lick up two frets in the key of A.)

About the Author: Orrin Star has been performing professionally since the early seventies. His musical history includes three bluegrass bands, a summer with banjo great Bill Keith, and eight years in a duo with Gary Mehalick. In 1976 he won the National Flatpicking Championship in Winfield, Kansas. Star has appeared on *A Prairie Home Companion*, has three albums on Flying Fish Records, and is the author of *Hot Licks for Bluegrass Guitar*. He currently performs both solo and with his group, Orrin Star & the Sultans of String. He lives in Brooklyn, NY, and can be emailed at orhay@aol.com.

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Beginning Cross Picking

by Dix Bruce

I first heard about cross-picking in the early 1970s from a friend who was studying Jesse McReynolds' version of the technique on mandolin. After seeing it demonstrated slowly, I was completely amazed and mystified. So many notes in such rapid succession with the melody always in the forefront! I learned that this is Jesse's way of playing a five-string, three-finger banjo-type roll on the mandolin with a flatpick. Each melody note is surrounded by a pattern of eighth note chord tones. These accompanying chord tones are usually played on other strings while the melody note is held and allowed to ring as long as possible. Jesse mastered the technique and integrated it into an incredibly rich and complex method of playing a tune. He adapted the sound of the five-string banjo roll to the mandolin and pioneered a completely new sound.

I was instantly smitten with "McReynolds Picking" and eager to try the technique on the guitar. Having barely a clue as to how to proceed, I immediately hit the brick wall of limited technique! And, unfortunately, I didn't know of anyone who could teach me crosspicking on guitar. Other players

suggested that I listen to George Shuffler, the legendary crosspicking guitarist with the Stanley Brothers, and Doc Watson for ideas. I sought out the recordings, listened to them, was amazed anew, but still couldn't quite get a handle on the technique.

Eventually I found myself at my first real bluegrass concert with Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys, at that time made up of Ralph on banjo, Jack Cooke on bass, Curly Ray Cline on fiddle, Roy Lee Centers on guitar, a very young Ricky Skaggs on mandolin and fiddle and an equally youthful Keith Whitley also on guitar.

That concert was a milestone in my musical development for many reasons, but when I heard and saw Keith Whitley crosspick several entire solos on the Carter Family standard "Will You Miss Me?", I was simply blown away! Finally, I had seen crosspicking live and in person on the guitar! Though I was still a little in the dark as to the specifics of the technique, seeing Keith crosspick was a breakthrough for me and my enthusiasm exploded. The local folklore society that had presented

the concert had also taped it, with Ralph's permission, and later made the tapes available. These were the dark days before cassette recordings were widely popular and the recording was offered on a 7" reel to reel tape. I eagerly played the tape and studied "Will You Miss Me?" at regular and slow speeds. With the help of my first guitar teacher, the great Mike Dowling, I worked out a passable rendition of the song. Below is an excerpt showing two different picking patterns which we'll discuss later.

Many of the notes were difficult to hear on the tape so I filled in a few on my own. The basic pattern of Keith Whitley's pick direction seemed to be "down-down-up," (notated immediately under the notes) which in the first full measure of the excerpt would be played on strings 4, 3, and 2 respectively. Mike Dowling, my teacher, who is currently a composer and musician in Nashville, suggested changing my picking pattern to a strict alternate down/up pick (shown below the previously described pattern). In this example I would pick down

Will You Miss Me (excerpt)

The musical notation consists of two staves of music for guitar. The top staff starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. Both staves show a melody line with various notes and rests, and a harmonic line with chords indicated by letters G, C, and F#.

Below the staves, there are two sets of instructions:

- The first set, labeled "down-down-up pattern", shows a sequence of three vertical bars: a square (representing a down stroke), a triangle (representing an up stroke), and another square.
- The second set, labeled "alternating pattern", shows a sequence of two vertical bars: a triangle (representing an up stroke) followed by a square (representing a down stroke).

At the bottom of the page, there is a legend: a square with a diagonal line through it followed by the text "down stroke" and a triangle with a diagonal line through it followed by the text "up stroke".



on string 4, up on 3, down on 2, and then up on 4, always alternating. The idea was to smooth out my timing which was tending to fall forward a bit when I used the “down-down-up” pattern. Over the years I’ve learned that few other bluegrass players use the alternating pattern, but I’m used to it and like it!

As I delved more into crosspicking, I found that players tended to use one of three different patterns and string combinations. The first is Whitley’s “down-down-up” on descending string numbers, e.g., down on string 4, down on string 3, up on string 2,

back to down on string 4 and so on. The second is the basic McReynolds version: “down-up-up”: down on string 3, up on string 1, up on string 2, down on string 3 again. The third is the alternating “down-up-down-up” pattern on, for example, strings 4, 3, and 2: down on 4, up on 3, down on 2, up again on 4. Of course the actual set of three strings the pattern is played on depends upon where the melody note falls. One can play the patterns on any group of three adjacent strings. I’ve also heard some very interesting patterns played on non-adjacent strings. You can hear a whole range of cross-picking

from nearly all the guitar greats from Doc Watson to Clarence White to Tony Rice and beyond.

Let’s look at the familiar old tune “Home Sweet Home” and develop its melody into a cross picking solo. I’m well-acquainted with this tune from working on it with guitarist Jim Nunally for our CD “From Fathers to Sons” (Musix 104). First let’s look at the melody, which is derived from the original tune, sometimes dated to 1823.

First play through the version that is presented here by only playing the notes

Home Sweet Home (Carter-Style with melody in bold)

Traditional 1823
Arranged by Dix Bruce

The tablature shows the following fingerings for the melody:

- Staff 1: Rest, Dotted Half Note, Quarter Note, Eighth Note
- Staff 2: Bolded C, F Chord, Bolded C
- Staff 3: G7 Chord, 1. (C, E, G), 2. (C, E, G)
- Staff 4: F Chord, G7 Chord, C Chord
- Staff 5: G7 Chord, 1. (C, E, G), 2. (C, E, G)
- Staff 6: Bolded C, F Chord, Bolded C

that are in large bold print (the melody notes). Take note of where the melody notes fall on the fretboard. It's essential that you memorize this simple melody line before attempting to add the embellishments. Once you can play it from memory, try working out the Carter-style melody and accompaniment by adding the additional notes and strums that are shown along with the melody notes in the arrangement you just practiced.

Finally, let's look at the cross picking version of "Home Sweet Home" shown below. I've arranged it with the alternating picking pattern in mind, but you should feel encouraged to try the other patterns mentioned above as well as your own ideas. The "down-up-up" pattern will involve you changing around the notes quite a bit, but if you hold the chords shown and play the melody, you can probably figure out a useable pattern with a little bit of effort.

In the cross picked version of "Home Sweet Home," pick direction is determined by which part of the beat a given note falls on. Think of the measure in terms of eight eighth notes: "1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and". If the note falls on beat 1, 2, 3, or 4, play it with a down stroke. If it falls on any of the "ands," use an upstroke. In this piece all the quarter and half notes begin on either beat 1, 2, 3, or 4, so they'll always be played with a downstroke. If that weren't the case and a quarter note began on an "and," we'd want to play it with an upstroke.

For most of the first part, the pattern is played on strings 4, 3, and 2. You'll notice that there are several places where that pattern is modified slightly. For example, in measure 2 on the F chord, we play the notes on strings 4, 3, 2, 4, 3, 2, 3, 2, but we maintain our alternating down-up pick directions. This was done to better serve the melody. In the second part, beginning in measure 18, the pattern shifts to strings 3, 2, and 1 at times. You will have to shift your picking hand a bit and it may be a challenge to move back and forth between the two sets of strings. Just take it slow and concentrate on coordinating the picking.

In measure one I added a hammer on the first note. Leave it out until you feel comfortable playing the whole piece without it. Likewise the hammer/pull triplets in measures 16 and 32 may be a bit of a challenge at first but they'll be worth the work in the long run. Part 2 begins with a slide up to a closed position F chord and a C melody note played at the fifth fret on the third string. The chord itself (see the diagram) is simply the familiar D chord moved up the neck three frets though we use a different fingering. Following that is a partial G chord, also shown in the diagram.

The small numbers above or below some notes, as in measure 3, show what fretting hand finger to use to play a note that's not part of the chord you are holding. I

only added these in instances where finger choice might not be obvious. Be sure to keep your hand in the general shape of the chord you are playing while you reach for the note.

When Jim and I recorded "Home Sweet Home," I played this cross picking solo while he played similar patterns an octave higher. In some places he went into a tenor harmony that was light and complemented the melody perfectly. Jim generally crosspicks using the "down-down'up" pattern. Incidentally, we play the song in the Key of D, capoed at the second fret.

As you work out your own version, remember to keep the melody in the forefront of the pattern. If you're new to the technique of crosspicking, give your hands and brain lots of time to adjust to the new moves they'll have to make. Concentrate on playing with an even rhythm and volume across all the strings. Eventually you'll want to accent the pattern something like this: "one-and-TWO-and-three-AND-four-and-ONE-and-two-AND-three-and-FOUR" etc. It's a little bit like the rhythm on "In the Mood." Listen to how other players approach crosspicking, especially guitarists you admire, in concert and on record. I'm a huge fan of George Shuffler, Clarence White, Tony Rice and Doc Watson. Get those CDs and study them carefully. Half speed is highly recommended. Above all, have fun!

Home Sweet Home (Cross-picked)

Traditional 1823
Arranged by Dix Bruce

Home Sweet Home (Continued)

11 F C G G7

16 C C7 Part 2 F G

H P S

20 C G G7 C

25 C7 F G7 C

G G7 C

30 G G7 C

40 H P

The sheet music consists of six staves of guitar tablature. The top staff shows a melody line with chords F, C, G, and G7. The second staff continues with chords C, C7, and then begins 'Part 2' with chords F, G, and G7. The third staff features a 'H P' (Hammer-on/Pull-off) technique. The fourth staff concludes with chord C. The fifth staff begins with chord C7 and ends with chord C. The sixth staff concludes with chord G. The bottom staff provides a harmonic foundation with chords G, G7, and C.

Columnist Profile:

Adam Granger

by Joe Carr

Readers of this magazine may be most familiar with Adam Granger as the author of the definitive *Granger's Fiddle Tunes for Guitar*. Granger is a talented singer, songwriter and guitarist who has enjoyed an active musical performance, recording and teaching career beginning the 1960s. He is an exceptional flatpicker whose playing combines an understanding and commitment to tradition and creative swing style improvisation. Like many guitarists who write for this publication, he was inspired to flatpick first by Doc Watson and later, Dan Crary.

Born in Norman, Oklahoma in 1949, Adam's interest in the guitar started around 1959 after his older brother began playing. Adam taught himself from chord books and songbooks with chords. He also spent many hours playing along with the radio - a practice he wishes more of his students would try. He played various styles of guitar music ranging from rock and roll to blues to folk and in 1967, started taking banjo lessons from fellow Norman resident and Banjo wiz Alan Munde. "I think I was Alan's first banjo student," Granger recalled. "I remember him painstakingly writing out tab on a sheet of paper on the

back of his resonator without timing or anything. He had never done it before."

Several years later, Alan and Adam were both living in Nashville when Alan got a call from Byron Berline to form the bluegrass band Country Gazette in California. "Alan was about to start playing with a guy named Marvin Muffknuckle (Chance Fallon). I took the job instead." By 1971, Adam had moved back to Norman. Several events conspired to launch his flatpicking career.

Adam knew Dudley Murphy of Tulsa, Oklahoma, who was a friend of Dan Crary's. Murphy was flatpicking fiddle tunes as early as the mid 1960s. "Dudley was the first one I ever saw do that solo flatpick thing like Little Sadie, where you play the solos and sing," Adam recalled. "I remember being mighty impressed with the prospect of being able to do that." Adam really got the bug when he heard the Folkways album "The Essential Doc Watson." "That really blew me away," recalled Granger. "It had Salt Creek, Bill Cheatem, Billy in the Low Ground and all those standards." Soon afterward, Adam got Dan Crary's first album and he quickly learned nearly every song on these two

albums. By 1972, Adam had formed a bluegrass band called the Upper Middle Grass with Dick Nunneley, Ken Landreth and Bob Cuadrado. The high quality of the musicians in this group encouraged Adam to develop his chops quickly. In the fall of 1972, at the first Winfield, KS festival, Adam saw his heroes Doc Watson, Dan Crary, and Norman Blake in person - a real inspiration for the budding flatpicker.

Adam played a Martin D-28 guitar and used Fender heavy or extra heavy picks during this period. Shortly after he began to flatpick, Adam remembers having to stop and rework his picking direction to be "in sync" with the beat. "There weren't many flatpickers around Oklahoma back in those days," Adam explained. "Dudley, the Clark Brothers, Jimmy Giles and I were about it."

In 1974, Adam moved to Minneapolis working as a solo performer in various coffeehouse venues. In 1976, he and fellow picker Dudley Murphy recorded the landmark "Twin Picking" album released by Slim Richey's Ridge Runner label. The album was a great collection of flatpicking guitar duets and came with tablature - a unique resource for flatpickers at the time.

Also in 1976, Adam was asked by Garrison Keillor of "A Prairie Home Companion" fame to help form a house band for the show. "The show covered a five state region at the time and there was no regular band on the program." Adam explained. He joined the A Prairie Home Companion "Powdermilk Biscuit Band" which also included Mary DuShane, Bob Douglas, and Dick Rees. Adam remembered this experience fondly and between performing, learning new material, touring, recording and sometimes writing comedy material and performing on stage with program host Keillor, it was a full time job.

The book *Granger's Fiddle Tunes for Guitar* was born during the Prairie Home Companion days. Adam recalled, "We were learning many tunes each week and I started keeping a notebook of the tunes I collected for the program." Eventually this grew into a project and the goal was to collect 500 tunes. The first edition sold out in 1993 and with the help of a partner, Paul Christianson, the second edition has seen greater distribution and shows signs of becoming a standard reference for flatpickers.

In 1979 with the A Prairie Home Companion about to go national, Adam



Adam Granger (far left) with the Norman High School "7 Uppers", 1966.

decided to leave the program. "It was a gruelling schedule and I knew it would only get worse. It would be harder to quit after the program was national." Adam wasn't out of a music job long. Old friend Dick Nunneley moved to Minneapolis in 1980 and they formed the Eclectic Brothers. This group performed a unique mixture of bluegrass, original songs and swing music throughout the midwest until 1988.

Adam got into swing guitar in the early 1970s. He heard a Django Reinhardt recording on the radio in 1973 and as he remembered, "I was floored . . . it knocked my socks off!" He soon found that the style was completely compatible with flatpicking. He bought every Reinhardt record he could find and immersed himself - just as he was to do with fiddle tunes a few years later. As a result, Adam's guitar playing took on an infectious swing and a playfulness evident whether he is playing a swing standard or a traditional fiddle tune.

Adam has given a lot of thought to teaching guitar. He started teaching in Norman in 1972. He stresses good alternating picking and timing. He feels good rhythm guitar skills are important and are overlooked by many student guitarists. His advice to guitar students is expressed in his song "GO HOME AND PRACTICE!"

"He says, 'Man, it's almost happening for me, I just got to get over the hump, I've got a week's vacation coming up in June, Do you think that I can make it in one big jump? There must be something that you tell your serious students, That you're



Garrison Keillor (left) and the Powdermilk Biscuit Band - Mary DuShane, Bob Douglas, and Adam Granger, 1976

keeping from the rank and file, Just that one little thing that ties it all together.' I just looked at him with a smile. I told him 'Go home and practice! That's what I do, I go home and practice and you can do it too, We can talk all day but the fact is, You got to go home and practice'." by Adam Granger 1990 Granger Publications, BMI

Today Adam plays a 1989 Santa Cruz Tony Rice model guitar for bluegrass and fiddle tunes and a 1971 Jacques Favino for swing. Favino bought the shop of Mario Maccaferri, who made guitars for Django Reinhardt.

To function in swing music, Adam learned major scales in five positions and began to "fold" these scales in three and four note patterns in every key up and down the neck. He believes this is a practical basis for understanding the fingerboard. In a recent workshop at South Plains College in Levelland, Texas, Adam explained the "CAGED" fingerboard approach to the advanced guitarists.

"The term "CAGED" was probably coined by jazz guitarist Howard Roberts," Adam explained. "It is a way to visualize the open positions of C, A, G, E and D at "capoed" positions up the neck - thus the name "CAGED." Adam said that while the concept can be explained in twenty minutes or so, it takes a year of concentrated work to be able to apply the concept well.

Adam is excited today about guitar playing. He feels he is now in a very creative and productive period. He has plans for new books on different topics including rhythm, fiddle tune variations and metronome use. He also plans to record an album of fiddle tunes and a Christmas guitar album. He continues to teach at workshops throughout the year. Twenty-five plus years of flatpicking have given Adam a perspective on the music. While he is amazed by many of today's young guitarists, he observed, "Their technique sometimes overpowers wisdom. That's what the more experienced players like Dan Crary have - - great technique combined with wisdom."



Adam Granger, Peter Ostroushko, Greg Cahill - Milwaukee, Wisc., 1995

MUSIC THEORY

BY DAVE BRICKER

In my last installment, we covered the concept of intervals and how to use them to create major scales. Now, we'll use the scales to build chords and apply our knowledge of intervals to discover what kind of chords they are.

First, let's take a G Major Scale -

G A B C D E F# G

To produce chords, we'll re-order the scale which is a string of minor and major second intervals. Chords use the same tones as the scale, but are organized in consecutive minor and major third intervals. This just means using every other note until you've used all seven scale tones.

Here's G major again written out twice to cover two octaves -

**G A B C D E F# G A B C D
E F# G**

Use every other tone (the underlined ones) to get the first chord-

G B D F# A C E

All of our G major scale tones are used, but they are ordered in thirds. Each note has a name:

Root, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th

You might wonder why there's no 2nd, 4th or 6th. While there are uses for 2,4 and 6, the 9, 11 and 13 indicate that the 2,4 and 6 are played in the octave above the root, third, fifth and seventh of the chord and are considered to be chord **extensions**. Generally speaking, these are used as color tones and an improvisor will have some choice about which color tones sound appropriate or best.

Let's focus on our root, 3rd, 5th and seventh. These are the determiners of **chord quality** (what kind of chord is it?). Look at our first G chord which is right from the G major scale. Then we'll modify our G major7 chord to produce other types of chords. We'll also look at the interval structure of the chords - that is to say, what combinations of major and minor thirds make up the different types of chords.

You may notice that there are certain combinations of minor and major thirds that are not included in this chart. (For example, there's no combination of three

minor thirds.) These other types have names and uses but the following four types of chords are the only ones which occur when we make chords from a major scale.

G B D F# G major7
R 3 5 7 M3 m3 M3

G B D F G7
R 3 5 b7 M3 m3 m3

G Bb D F G min7
R b3 5 b7 m3 M3 m3

G Bb Db F Gmin7b5
R b3 b5 b7 m3 m3 M3

Now that we have a reference to use, let's go back to our G major scale and make a seventh chord based on each note of the scale.

**G B D F#
A C E G
B D F# A
C E G B
D F# A C
E G B D
F# A C E**

Let's examine the chords we've made and draw some conclusions based on the intervals between the notes. Remember that because our G Major scale has the same interval structure as the other 11 major scales, whatever we find out will be applicable to any other major scale.

I	G B D F#	M3 m3 M3	Gmajor7
ii	A C E G	m3 M3 m3	Aminor7
iii	B D F# A	m3 M3 m3	Bminor7
IV	C E G B	M3 m3 M3	Cmajor7
V	D F# A C	M3 m3 m3	D7
vi	E G B D	m3 M3 m3	Emin7
vii	F# A C E	m3 m3 M3	F#min7b5 (also called 1/2 diminished 7)

So, in any major scale, the first chord will always be a major seventh, the second and third chords will always be minor seventh chords and so on. Typically, these chords can be referred to by an upper or lower case roman numeral which corresponds to its scale degree as in the chart above. Upper case numbers are for major chords and lower case numbers are

for minor chords.

Before we move on in the world of theory, let's get some practice. If we can hear some of these ideas, we'll be able to play them instead of just talk about them. The examples are printed on the following page.

(Ex. 1) First, play a G major scale to get the sound of it in your head.

(Ex.2) Now, let's take a common voicing for a G major7 chord and change it into the other chord types. If we understand which notes of the chord are the root, third, fifth and seventh, we should be able to move our fingers up or down a fret as needed to change the major 7 chord into a minor seventh chord, a seventh chord or a minor7flat5 chord.

(Ex.3) Now, let's take our G major seventh chord and move it up the neck along the G major scale so that we are playing a scale composed entirely of different kinds of seventh chords.

(Ex.4) Here are some other ways to play the same thing - different strings / same notes.

(Ex.5) Here's a different way to play our chord scale. Now, the roots are on top instead of down underneath in the bass. You can hear the same G major scale up in the top of the chord progression. We're just using different voicings.

(Ex.6) If the seventh chords sound too "jazzy", you can apply the same logic to triads which use only the root third and fifth. Try running this progression up the neck while someone plays a G chord rhythm backup.

Notice how we can get a less jazzy sound by leaving the seventh and the extensions off the chord? We can alter the "flavor" of our music by using chords with different qualities.

Now let's add some extensions and learn what all those numbers mean when we name chords. There are many more and many ways to play each of these but the general rules for naming chords are quite simple.

1) If the chord name doesn't specify major or minor, you can assume that the third is major but the seventh is flat (dominant 7).

2) The numbers are used to specify what extensions are used and any alteration to the chord tones. These are compared to what the tones would be if the chord were derived from a major scale.

Start with some major chords;

G B D F# A Gmajor9

G B D F# A C Gmajor11

G B D F# A C E Gmajor13

Now some seventh chords;

G B D F G7

G B D F A G9

G B D F C G13

Flat the third to get minor chords;

G Bb D F A Gminor9

G Bb D F C Gminor11

A minor 7 chord with a b5 and natural 9;

G Bb Db F A Gminor9b5

A few more that don't come from a major scale;

G B D F Ab G7b9

G B D F C# G7#11

Again, the idea is to hear and play this stuff so we can use it. Generally speaking, guitar voicings sound best when we use three or four notes. To do this, we typically use the root, 3rd, 7th and a color tone (unless we want to play a min7b5 chord in which case we include the b5).

On the next page are some common voicings for various chords arranged in a fairly typical progression. They're all closed position chords which can be moved up and down the neck. The notes that make them up are also written on the staff.

As you practice, it's good to become acquainted with where the various tones are relative to the root. That way, you'll be able to see where the ninth is or know instantly how to change a major 7 to a minor 7 chord. If you find that all the numbers are a bit confusing, don't get discouraged. In the beginning, there's a lot of counting and comparing that happens when we attempt to give a chord a name;

Let's see . . . B7b9 . . . that's B plus a major third which is two whole steps which would be D#, and then we'll skip the fifth and go to the seventh which would be . . . hmmmm . . . a whole step down from the root which is A, and then we need a flat 9 which is a half step less than a whole step above the root. A whole step above B is C# so the flat 9 would

Example 1:

Example 2:

Example 3:

Example 4:

Example 5:

Example 6:

The first set of tabs shows chords Am9, Dmaj13, Gmaj9, Cmaj13, F#m7(b5), B7(b5), Em9, and E7(b5) with corresponding fingerings (e.g., 9, 13, 9, 13, 3, b5, 13, 9, 9, 13, 7, 10, 8, 7). The second set shows chords Am7, D9, Gmaj13, Cmaj9, F#m7(b5)/A, B7(b5), and Em7 with fingerings (e.g., 5, 9, 13, 9, 7, b5, 13, 9, 7, 10, 8, 7, 5, 9, 13, 7, 10, 8, 7).

be C natural. Now, let's see what were the third and seventh again?

One trick is to memorize the spellings of the dominant seventh chords in the natural keys.

C E G Bb	D F# A C
E G# B D	F A C Eb
G B D F	A C# E G
B D# F# A	

If you know these seven chords, it's easy to use them as reference points to get any chord you want.

Ultimately, you'll find that learning theory is a bit like learning tunes. The first few tunes are difficult but as the material becomes more and more familiar, your speed increases. We'll continue to add new chords and voicings to our vocabulary and as we do, the numbers will make more and more sense.

So to sum things up, we've taken a major scale and restructured it to make chords. We've analyzed the four basic chord forms that come from the scale and learned how chords are named. We've learned a bit about voicings and played some colorful chords.

Next, we'll look at improvising with scale modes and look at how chords fit

together to make chord progressions.

About the Author: *Dave Bricker lives in Miami, Florida where he owns a graphic design and marketing company. He studied jazz guitar and bass at the University of Miami School of Music and plays in a variety of styles.*



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PICKIN' FIDDLE TUNES

by Adam Granger

A LITTLE CHAT ABOUT JIGS

Hello flatpickers one and all! Sit down and we'll talk about jigs for a while. Jigs are far less-commonly played by flatpickers than reels, hoedowns and breakdowns (which, of course, makes them perfect fodder for exploitation by us all). There is a wealth of great jigs out there, and we're going to talk about how to make them work on the guitar.

THE RIGHT HAND: HOW TO PICK JIGS

There are two approaches to picking jigs which I'm tempted to label the right way and the wrong way, but since that would then mean that I myself pick jigs the wrong way, I think I'll call them, er, the traditional way and the alternate-picked way. Yeah, that's good; I like those names.

The more "jig-like" way to pick jigs is to give each triplet a down-up-down treatment. The obvious difficulty here is that the hand has to hitch back quickly on the sets of adjacent downs, i.e., "down-up-down down-up-down down-up-down..."

Irish pickers and others who have been "down-up-downing" all their lives can do so with lightning speed. Picking jigs this way gives the proper lilt. It also drives the

There are three kinds of jigs: the single jig, the double jig and the slip-jig. All jigs share an eighth-note triplet foundation:

"ONE-two-three ONE-two-three..."

The type of jig one is playing depends on how this pattern is treated.

We're going to take a look at a double jig, a single jig and finally a slip-jig, but first, a primer on picking jigs.



READING EASYTAB

Easytab is like conventional tablature, except that timing notation has been streamlined and simplified. Since fiddle tunes are comprised mainly of eighth notes, *Easytab* uses the eighth note as its basic unit. An eighth rest is indicated by a dot. Therefore, a note with a dot after it is a quarter note, and a note with three dots after it is a half note. There is a total of eight notes and rests per measure.

FOR BEGINNERS

Pick with an alternating style: down-up-down-up-down-up etc. The first note of each measure should be a downstroke, the last an upstroke. **Include rests** in this alternating pattern. This keeps you "in sync", playing downstrokes on the beats, so that, no matter what the configuration of notes and rests in an eight-unit measure, the right hand plays them down-up-down-up-down-up-down-up.

NOTE

Rules are, of course, made to be broken: see "How to Pick Jigs", left.

DOUBLE JIG: THE IRISH WASHERWOMAN

We'll start with the double jig because it's the easiest to explain. The double jig is set in 6/8 time, with a measure consisting of two sets of eighth-note triplets. The first note of each triplet is the "beat note", so a measure is counted "ONE-two-three TWO-two-three."

A common double jig you may have heard is *The Irish Washerwoman*. (Even if you don't know it by name, you're very likely to recognize the melody).

Note that the first four bars of the second part happen in the dreaded "up-the-neck zone". Be not afraid. Place your left hand over the seventh-through-tenth fret area and employ "zone coverage" (first finger for seventh fret notes; second finger for eighth fret notes, etc.) and you'll be fine.

I G

Am D G

II G

D

C G Am G

C D G

*not to be confused with the popular D Jig of the same name

DID YOU KNOW...
...The Irish Washerwoman is also known as The Big Jig, Haste to the Wed-ding*, The Irish Washerwoman, Jackson's Delight and The Washerwoman.

SINGLE JIG: POP GOES THE WEASEL

The simple definition of a single jig is that it's a double jig with some of the notes missing. As a rule, the second note of the triplet is the one excised, giving the following pattern: DOWN (up) DOWN DOWN (up) DOWN where the (up)s are not picked.

SLIP-JIG: ELLEN O'GRADY

Finally, we are left with the slip-jig. This is the most exotic and least-common type of jig. It has three triplets per measure, which puts it in 9/8 time. This sounds scary, but it simply means that a measure of a slip-jig is counted "ONE-two-three TWO-two-three THREE-two-three".

Well, there's your intro to jigs. You may now know more about them than you wanted, but I hope not! Jigs are a wonderful way to break up sets of reels and hoedowns and, for those of you who are lucky enough to play contra dances, they work great in that setting also. If you're thirsting for more, *Granger's Fiddle Tunes for Guitar* (see ad elsewhere in this issue), offers dozens of Irish, Canadian, Northern and French-Canadian jigs. Until next time, keep on pickin'!

About the author: Adam Granger has been playing guitar since 1959. After playing guitar and banjo in his native Oklahoma, Arkansas and Tennessee, he moved to Minnesota to work with Garrison Keillor on *A Prairie Home Companion* as leader of the house band, *The Powdermilk Biscuit Band*. He has judged the National Flatpick Guitar Contest in Winfield, Kansas, and serves on the faculties of The Puget Sound Guitar Workshop, Camp Bluegrass in Levelland, Texas and The Stringalong Workshop in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

He has recorded seven albums, including "Twin Picking", an all instrumental flatpick album with Dudley Murphy, two with *The Powdermilk Biscuit Band*, two solo albums of original material, and a swing album with mandolinist Dick Nunneley, as the Eclectic Brothers.

His book, *Granger's Fiddle Tunes for Guitar*, is the largest collections of fiddle tunes in guitar tablature, and, along with the accompanying set of recordings of the 508 tunes, it comprises the largest source of fiddle tunes in the world.

Weasel.

Note that if you're going to pick this tune the "traditional" way (see "How to Pick Jigs", on preceding page), there are only going to be two notes in the entire piece which will be played with upstrokes (the second notes in the second and sixth measures of the first part)

For a cassette tape of the music in this column, send \$8 to: Granger Publications, Box 26115, Shoreview, Mn 55126.

Beginning Clarence White Style Bluegrass Guitar

by Steve Pottier

In my last column I discussed a technique that allows you to play important notes on the upbeat, an important element of Clarence White style guitar. I never really got to something that would sound like Clarence, however. This time I'll try to show you something more Clarence-esque.

Style is a tricky thing to talk about (or write about), but I'll start by saying that style emerges from what you have learned, and is molded by your personality and your physical limitations. Clarence was clearly influenced by Lester Flatt, Don Reno, Earl Scruggs, George Shuffler, Lightnin' Hopkins and Django Reinhardt among others. His early playing shows a more straight ahead approach to lead and rhythm playing, but it didn't take long to hear things in his playing that showed he had something special. Yet even when he goes out on a limb, you can hear the roots of his musical heritage, and it makes the music all the more

profound. An example here is the Crawdad song, which I think came to Clarence via Doc Watson. Clarence moved several of Doc's tunes into his repertoire and made them his own. I've gone over several recordings of Doc Watson and come up with a composite "Doc-esque" break, and I've done the same thing with recordings of Clarence to make a "Clarence-esque" break. I thought it would be interesting to see how Clarence's version compares with Doc's (remember, these versions are composites of what they actually played, so they are more instructive than historical).

I love Doc's playing. He is a master of taste and tone. In the years I've heard him play I've only heard him muff five notes, and three of those don't really count because he muffed one note, then had to go back and play that note again three more times so it sounded like he meant to do it (true story). I've never heard him play anything that wasn't appropriate to the music he was playing. Wish I could say the same for me!

Anyway, this version of Crawdad starts with a straight bass run lead-in to the Doc Watson strum melody (from last column). Notice in measure 2 that the two melody notes at the end are both on the down beat. When he

gets to G (measure 7-8), his playing really emphasizes the melody- no extra notes here to cloud it up. The C-F measures are really

interesting. The run in 9 is repeated in 10 and 11 is repeated in 12. Also note that 10-11 kind of sounds like 9-10 in another place on the neck. This is called a sequence-a motif repeated in another chord. It gives structure to the song so that it is easier for a listener to grasp the line you are playing. Very cool, and a great thing to use when your improvising. The last G section is really a doubling of the fiddle line as close as Doc could get it, followed by a characteristic tag in C.

Clarence's lead-in is almost the same as Doc's except that it starts with an upstroke, giving the run a little more push at the beginning. He goes into a very similar Doc Watson style strum, but note that in measure 2 he plays the last melody note on the up beat using the Doc Watson strum. The last note in measure 3 is actually an anticipated note for the start of the next measure, a device used again in measure 9. This is very much a part of Clarence's style and he uses it when playing rhythm as well. Measure 4 has a true Clarence signature lick, with a hammer on and a triplet pull-off. The "roll" at the end of measure 5 is a quick downward strum ending on the first note of the next measure, a kind of "zip" sound. Measure 7 is also very Clarence, a slide to the open string which starts on an upbeat.

The next measure, in which Doc played just strums, is filled with a very smooth chromatic run from the G up to C. At the F chord, Clarence starts with Doc's lick, then finishes with a very bluesy slide up

and back down. In measure 14 we see the signature Clarence lick from measure 4. The tag starts off like Doc's, but ends with the same signature lick from 14 but slid over rhythmically so that the final C note lands on the upbeat, anticipating the downbeat of the next measure.

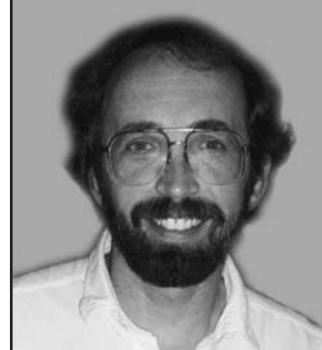
A couple of playing tips. Learn Doc's version first. For both versions, follow the down-up pick directions. To get the feel of Clarence's signature lick leave out the pull-off at first (and the open string note in the middle of the triplet) to get the timing and pick direction. Then add the pull-off and practice getting as much volume and tone as you can out of the lick.

Analyzing the music is kind of interesting, but it leaves me feeling a little cold as far as playing. It's main usefulness for me is in awareness of what's going on. After that, the goal to transfer the awareness to how it FEELS to play it.

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Steve Pottier has been playing bluegrass music for more than 25 years. He has recorded with High Country and Done Gone, as well as his most recent project with Sandy Rothman "Bluegrass Guitar Duets" on the Sierra label. He currently plays a 1948 Martin D28. His main guitar inspirations are Doc Watson, Clarence White, and Larry Sparks. He can be reached via email at: spottier@netcom.com

In the next issue of
Flatpicking
Guitar:
Jack Lawrence
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and much more!



Crawdad (Doc Watson Style)

Arranged by Steve Pottier

The figure displays four staves of guitar tablature for the national anthem of the United States. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (4/4). It features a 'C' chord at the start, followed by a series of eighth-note patterns. The second staff starts with a 'G' chord, and the third with an 'F' chord. The fourth staff begins with a 'G' chord and ends with a 'C' chord. Each staff includes a strumming pattern indicated by vertical strokes below the tab lines. Chord names are placed above the staff, and measure numbers (1, 6, 11, 15) are positioned to the left of the first note of each staff.

■ = down stroke

\ = up stroke

/ = strum

Crawdad (Clarence White Style)

Arranged by Steve Pottier

Sheet music for guitar with tablature, measures 1-16. The music is in common time (indicated by '4'). The first measure starts with a grace note followed by eighth notes. Measures 2-4 show sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 5 begins with a 'roll' (indicated by '(roll)'). Measures 6-8 continue with sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 9 starts with a grace note followed by eighth notes. Measures 10-12 show sixteenth-note patterns. Measure 13 begins with a grace note followed by eighth notes. Measures 14-16 show sixteenth-note patterns.

■ = down stroke

↖ = up stroke

/ = strum

Local Heroes: Profile of Susan Snyder

By Chad Ward

Like Doc Watson, one of her primary influences, Susan Snyder doesn't stray far from the heart of a tune, but the way she plays the melody reminds you why it is a standard in the first place. She plays with the drive and speed of a hardcore bluegrass player, but her touch is light and there is a lilting bounce to her playing. She skims along on top of the rhythm like a stone skipping across a pond. The warm, smooth tone of her Lowden, which nearly dwarfs her, would not be out of place on a Wes Montgomery record. But make no mistake, this is flatpicking at its finest.

Susan began playing guitar at age nine. She was good enough to start teaching when she was 17. At 41 she has taught more students to pick than most folks have had hot meals. Susan plays lead guitar and sings with the 5th String Bluegrass Band. She is also the owner of 5th String Music, a cozy acoustic music shop in Greenville, South Carolina. Players come here for everything from a set of strings to a high-end Taylor, Lowden or the occasional used Martin. Sometimes two or three regulars will gather at lunchtime to visit and pick for a few minutes before going back to work. Everyone seems to know everyone else. This is bluegrass central in Upstate

South Carolina.

The Upstate, the upper western third of the state, borders on both North Carolina and Tennessee. The area has a strong tradition of nurturing great guitar players. Piedmont blues began here. Its masters, Pink Anderson and the Rev. Gary Davis, are from Spartanburg and Greenville, respectively. There are dozens of local bluegrass bands and a double-handful of hot flatpickers. Susan Snyder is one of the best.

Like many Southerners, Susan grew up surrounded by music, primarily gospel and old-time music. "My great-uncle Mac Gosnell and my uncle Gene Batson, my mother's brother, both played. There was always a guitar somewhere at everybody's house. Every time we'd get together for Sunday gatherings, somebody would pull out the guitar. If there was a piano in the house, it would be piano and guitar, but there was always somebody playing and singing."

"I just thought that was a lot of fun. And after they would get finished playing, somebody would put me up in their lap and let me hold the guitar. Of course I'd just beat and bang on it and didn't know what I was doing."

"My mother finally said, 'Do you want to take lessons?' and I said 'Shoot yeah.'"

Susan began playing at the age of nine, taking lessons from a local music teacher, Ms. Dyer, who taught piano, banjo, bass, guitar, mandolin and accordion. Susan took guitar and her sister took accordion. At age 12 she began taking lessons from jazz guitarist Charles Wood, a Greenville native who had been a staple of New York's 52nd Street jazz scene in the 1940s and 50s.

She played her first paying job at age 14. "Me and another girl played together. She would play the rhythm and I would play the lead on an electric guitar. Our first job was a bridal shower and we got paid \$5



Susan Snyder of Greenville, SC

and food. We played things off the radio -- Linda Ronstadt, Anne Murray, *Do You Know the Way to San Jose*, *Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head*, things like that. I would play some of the instrumentals then she and I would sing in harmony together. We just thought we were wonderful."

Susan continued to play barbeques, backyard parties and fashion shows, where she would play instrumentals as the models walked down the runway. When she was 17 she began singing old standards with Charlie Wood's jazz band. "I did that for about two or three years. I didn't start playing bars until I got into bluegrass music when I was 20. I don't know if that's good or bad, but that's how it happened."

She heard her first bluegrass band, Stoney Creek, while on a date and fell in love with the music. "I loved the banjo sound, the mandolin sound, and, of course, the guitar when it was playing lead. That was the first bluegrass I'd heard."

Then she saw Jack Lawrence and Joe Smothers at a small club in Spartanburg, where she first heard Black Mountain Rag, Salt Creek and other old fiddle tunes played on the guitar. "This guy just smoked them. That was when I really got inspired. Just to sit down and watch Jack play was incredible. And I wanted to do it. I went home after the show that night and sat up until five o'clock in the morning playing guitar." So she started buying all the



A guitar hero in the making



Susan Snyder on stage with Steve Kaufman at The Handlebar, Greenville, South Carolina

bluegrass albums she could find. Her first acquisition was *Will the Circle Be Unbroken* by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. She began going to festivals to hear Bill Monroe, Doc Watson, Flatt & Scruggs and learned all the songs they performed.

"The records I learned the most from were Norman Blake's *Blackberry Blossom*; Doc Watson, *Live on Stage*; *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*, Dan Crary's *Bluegrass Guitar* -- you know the one where he's sitting under the tree and he had hair -- I think I learned every song on that one."

But the main influence was Doc Watson. "I sat with *Will the Circle Be Unbroken* until I about wore a hole in it trying to learn Black Mountain Rag note for note. I was determined that I was going to get that one down or die trying." Her style still reflects Doc Watson's influence, strong playing with plenty of slides, slurs and pull-offs, all firmly centered around the melody. "Doc will fancy a song up just enough around the edges to make it sound really nice, but you can still tell what song it is if you walked in on the middle. Sometimes Tony Rice begins improvising from beginning to end, so you never know if its *Little Cabin Home on the Hill* or *Blue Ridge Cabin Home* until they start singing again."

Her current favorites are Peter McLaughlin and Steve Kaufman. "Doc is still up there high on the list. But Peter has really gotten my attention, especially when we got to see him with Laurie Lewis at Wilkesboro [the Merle Watson Memorial Festival]. We followed them around to all the different stages all weekend. It's just incredible

how he attacks the string; it's just crystal clear."

There were few women in bluegrass when Susan began playing, and none who played guitar as a lead instrument. She never felt intimidated or that she was breaking new ground, but she did have to get used to hearing, "You play pretty good for a girl." Though Susan wasn't intimidated, others were not always as comfortable with the idea.

"I wasn't trying to stand out, I just wanted to play and have a good time. Sometimes that didn't happen just because I was a girl. People would say, 'Hey come look at this girl play' like I was some kind of sideshow."

"When we went to the SPBGMA competition in the early 80s, there were only four women in bands there. One played upright bass, one played rhythm guitar and the other one played the tambourine. Then there was me. I was the only girl who played any lead instrument, and I was the only person there with a Lowden guitar, everybody else had the mandatory Martin, so I really stuck out."

"Everybody was picking and jamming in the halls, but nobody would ask me to play. But after my band was on stage and I did some flatpicking, there were people asking about my guitar and wanting to pick. Like I could join the club now, I was okay, because I had shown that I could pick. That was really the only time I've felt under pressure because I was a girl."

The 5th String Bluegrass Band performs regularly at regional festivals and clubs.

While Susan is happy to sing all the traditional heart wrenching bluegrass songs, when the band does an instrumental she prefers something with plenty of life to it. "I like a lot of little hammer ons, slides and pull-offs and instrumentals that are peppy and upbeat. So many bluegrass songs, are all so sad. 'I lost my darling when she fell off the mountain,' that kind of thing. I guess that's why so many instrumentals are happy tunes, because so many of the other bluegrass songs are so depressing."

The band plays a steady stream of gigs, but Susan's main focus is teaching and running her store. She teaches 60 or more students a week everything from Stanley Brothers tunes to Green Day. While she is teaching more flatpickers than ever these days, the number is still small. Only about 10% are learning to flatpick. "The last five or six years I've had more flatpickers, which is fun for me because it makes me work a little harder." She is pleased that of the six flatpicking students now on her schedule, three are women. Susan suspects that more women don't flatpick because of the relative newness of the guitar as a lead instrument in bluegrass. "Most of the time when there is a girl in the band, she is the singer. And, traditionally, the singer in a bluegrass band is the one who plays rhythm guitar, or doesn't play anything. That's just the way it's been. I wish there were more women who did play lead. It's not the easiest thing in the world, but look at all the female fiddlers who play so well."

Susan teaches her students to break songs into phrases while they are learning a song. When first learning a tune, she advises, work on two measures at a time, concentrating on strict down-up-down-up picking. She says that if you don't get the pick direction right in the beginning the tune will never come up to speed properly. The right hand rhythm will be off and you will have to learn the tune all over again.

"After you get all the phrases put together and can play the song slowly, then you memorize the song and put the TAB away. That's when you work on making it smooth and can start to put little variations in there. That way when you start to get some speed, the song is different, it's yours instead of just the way it's written on the paper."

Good tone, she says, comes from holding the pick tilted slightly forward with the other fingers lightly touching the top just below the sound hole. "You should

just use your fingers for a little support, so you are hovering over all six strings with the pick and attacking the strings at an angle. You don't attack with the pick going straight in."

"Of course you are working your wrist, moving up and down from the wrist more than from your elbow. Your arm will move from the elbow, but you shouldn't be like a robot moving your whole arm up and down. Your wrist is where you get your bounce. If you stiffen up your wrist or hold your pick too hard, then you get that "ticky ticky ticky" sound instead of making a clean sweep through your strings. And I'm guilty of that too. If the band has been playing all night or if I'm tired and kind of dragging and we kick into a really fast song, I'll feel my wrist tighten up and you can hear it plain as day."

"I always encourage my students to come up with their own breaks, to understand what key and scale that they're playing through to get the melody notes and little licks. After a while that's where improvising comes along, by hearing different licks and putting them in new songs. That's what I do now. I hear all these licks that I feel like I'm stealing from other songs, but when you put them in a new situation or turn them around, you've come up with something of your own."

"Sometimes it's hard not to copy a lick that you've heard because, well, it sounds like it was just meant to be there. And some people try to cop out by just learning one version of the song and then they don't want to venture into doing something else with that song. That's where learning scales up and down the neck comes in. Tony Rice can start on the first fret and end up on the twelfth just playing a G run. You don't have to go that far, but knowing some of the different scales lets you start improvising and putting licks in different places. That is what makes flatpicking so much fun and such a challenge."

Gear List: Susan Snyder is known for her Lowden guitars. She has a distinctive southern drawl and at a recent workshop, Steve Kaufman joked that, "When I first met Susan I'd never seen a Lowden before, so I asked her what kind of guitar she was playing. She said, 'It's a Lowden,' and with her accent I thought she said, 'It's a loud'un'. So I said, 'It sure is!'"

She got her first Lowden in 1983. She had played a 1969 D-28 for six or seven years, but her band was playing so much, two or three jobs every weekend, in addition to her teaching 60 to 70 students a week, that Susan was afraid she was going to get arthritis or tendinitis. "I love Martin guitars, but my D-28 had a V neck and it

was just like trying to play a barbed wire fence."

She had a friend who worked at a music store in Spartanburg and told him that if he ran across anything comparable to the volume and tone of a Martin to call her. One day he called to say that he had six Lowden guitars. "I'd never heard of one, but I went up there to check them out. I took my D-28 to compare and the 025C really caught my ear. I'd never even really thought about a cutaway, but that was the one that sounded the best and felt good. I got that one in June of '83."

Susan's primary guitar is a Lowden O25C with a cedar top, rosewood back and sides, and an ebony fingerboard, which she has owned since 1983. She also plays a Lowden F27 with a spruce top, rosewood back and sides. She just purchased her third Lowden, an 032, cutaway with rosewood back and sides and a spruce top. Susan will sometimes record with her '74 Martin D-18. Her teaching guitar is a 3/4 Aria slot-head parlor guitar that she's had since 1978. It is easier and more comfortable to teach on than the bigger guitars. She plays a Taylor 712C with an L.R. Baggs pickup for solo & fingerstyle gigs. She uses John Pearse phosphor bronze medium strings, .88mm D'Andrea picks (green) and Victor capos.

Capo 2

Gold Rush

Arranged by Susan Snyder

1 Part A G

S

6 G

D

G

Gold Rush (con't)

10 G

Part B

15 G D G G C G

19 H

20 G C G D

25 G C G

30 G D G

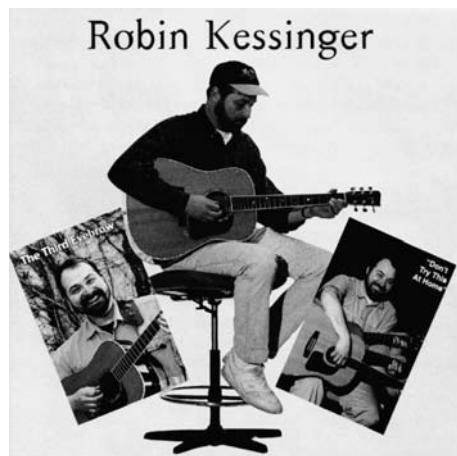
New Release Highlight

Robin Kessinger's "Third Eyebrow" and "Don't Try This At Home" on CD

I'll have to admit, prior to signing up for Steve Kaufman's Flatpicking Camp last summer, I was not familiar with Robin Kessinger. I now realize that had I ever climbed out of my flatpicking hole and made the trip to Winfield, or Galax, or any of the other prominent contest in the country, I would have been very familiar with him. But at the time I hadn't, and so the name Robin Kessinger did not mean anything to me. After signing up for the camp, I decided to do some research and find out what I could about Robin since I would be attending his classes and I wanted to know what to expect. I searched through my back issues of *Bluegrass Unlimited* and found an article about Robin in the August 1992 issue called "Keeping the Tradition."

What the *Bluegrass Unlimited* article told me was that Robin Kessinger came from a famous musical family in the old time music tradition. His great uncle was the legendary fiddler Clark Kessinger who, along with Robin's Dad's first cousin Luke Kessinger, played together as the "Kessinger Brothers." Robin's grandfather, Everette Kessinger was a well known banjo player, and his father, Bob Kessinger, played mandolin with the "Moutaineers" in the 1940s. The article went on to talk about how Robin was keeping the family tradition alive in his guitar playing, mentioned that Robin had won Winfield in 1985 and Galax in both 1988 and 1989, and talked about how Robin was working to pass along old-time music to new generations of music enthusiasts.

After reading the article, I was impressed with Robin's background and looked forward to learning to play some old-time tunes on the guitar when I attended his classes at the camp. When I attended Robin's first class, I noticed in the tab book that he had indeed presented some great old-time fiddle tunes, however, the first song he taught us was "African Melody" in four part harmony with a great syncopated rhythm backup. A fantastic tune, great fun to play, but certainly not what I expected after reading the *BU* article. What I learned over the course of the week, especially



at Robin's concert where he and his son Luke tore the house down, was that this is a man who is incredibly versatile, enjoys flatpicking a very wide variety of musical styles and does all of it very well.

Robin says that his versatility stems from the fact that he likes to "mix up" the tunes or he will get bored and states, "I like to play all sorts of different things. I can't sit and play old-time scratchy fiddle tunes for hours on end and I can't sit and play bluegrass for a long stretch of time." He adds, "I enjoy playing all styles of music as long as it is smooth, I can understand every note, and it is playable to me."

When asked what he thought the difference was between old-time music and bluegrass, Robin said, "For much of it there is no difference, however, if you are going to talk stereotype, in old-time music the guitar is strictly back-up and the fiddle player chokes way up on the bow. That isn't for me. Stereotypical bluegrass is played fast and loud, I don't like that either. I like the happy medium." When discussing the old-time music played by his family, Robin is quick to point out that the stuff his great uncle Clark was playing back in the twenties would not be considered old-timey if he were still alive and playing that music today. Robin says, "He was too smooth for his music to be considered the stereotypical old-time style."

Although Clark Kessinger was quite old and not able to play much fiddle when Robin was learning how to pick the guitar, he did get the opportunity to briefly jam

with the legendary fiddler. Robin's guitar style was influenced by Clark's fiddle playing in both a direct and a round-about way. Robin says that the first person he heard flatpicking fiddle tunes on a guitar was Robert Rutland, a music store owner in Valdosta, Georgia, who was a good friend of Robin's father. Although Robin only met Rutland on one occasion, and that was before he ever started picking a guitar, Robin says that Rutland and his father would frequently exchange music on home-made tapes they sent to each other.

When Rutland heard that Robin was learning how to play the guitar, he started sending tapes with him playing fiddle tunes on his guitar. Robin says, "The way I use a pick and the way I think about phrasing comes from what I learned from Robert Rutland's tapes." It turns out that Rutland was a big fan of Clark Kessinger and Clark's fiddle playing had influenced Rutland's musical style. So Clark's fiddle playing had reached Robin's guitar in more ways than one.

What impresses me about Robin's playing is not only his ability to play comfortably in a variety of musical contexts, effortlessly changing gears from old-time fiddle tunes, to Latin rhythms, to Irish jigs, to waltzes, to rags, etc., but his ability to apply tasteful variation within each of those contexts is impressive. His ability to play in a variety of musical styles and display great versatility within those styles is showcased on his new CD "Robin Kessinger." This CD is a compilation of two of his earlier works which were only released on tape, "Don't Try This At Home" 1994, and "The Third Eyebrow" 1995.

One only need scan the song list to know that this CD provides a great deal of musical variety:

Song List:

Arkansas Traveler
Marquis of Huntley
Midnight On the Water
Flannery's Dream
Doc Harris Hornpipe
Dry and Dusty
Greek Melody
Alabama Jubilee

Devil's Dream/ Mason's Apron
 Planxty George Brabazon
 The Third Eyebrow
 Red Haired Boy
 Shebeg An She Mor/March Of King Laois
 Birdie
 Vinton's Hornpipe
 Rutland's Reel
 Bye Bye Blues
 Maple Leaf Rag
 O'Brian's Jig
 Spotted Pony
 African Guitar Melody
 Brilliancy
 La Bonne Riviere
 Blue Railroad Train

Although Kessinger does get some help from his son Luke on bass and Joe Adkins lends an extra guitar on Robin's original tune, "The Third Eyebrow," everything else you hear on this CD is Robin.

Strap on your seat-belts folks, this CD takes you everywhere. From the Latin rhythms of "The Third Eyebrow" to the fiddle tune tradition of "Arkansas Traveler" to Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag", to the slow waltz "Midnight on the Water" to the aggressive and lively "Flannery's Dream" to the fun of "Alabama Jubilee" (which Robin sings), to "Greek Melody", and back

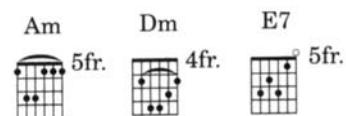
around the horn again.

To me, this CD is a flatpicking gold mine. If you are interested in new ideas for playing old standards such as Arkansas Traveler and Red Haired Boy, Robin gives you an earful. If you are looking to expand your flatpicking repertoire and stray from the standard fiddle tunes without leaving the realms of good taste and tradition, you will be amazed at Robin's versatility, taste, tone, clarity, and technique. If you are looking for something that will help spice up your rhythm playing, you have hit the jackpot here.

Growing up around fiddlers, mandolin players, and banjo players, Robin had plenty of opportunity to practice and refine his rhythm playing. But he has also expanded his rhythmic feel beyond that found in straight old-time and bluegrass playing. He enjoys incorporating western, Irish, and Latin rhythms into his music as well. Robin says that he has been interested in Latin rhythms since being introduced to them by his good friend Joe Adkins. He had been listening to Irish music and some of the rhythm playing in the Latin music Joe was listening to reminded him of Irish rhythm and he started playing around with it.

In order to introduce readers to the Latin feel, Robin has provided a tab to his original tune "The Third Eyebrow." Robin says that when he is playing this song, "I always think about the lady dancing with fruit on her head." For those of you not familiar with Carmen, Robin says that there is a "Bugs Bunny cartoon where Bugs does a good impression."

Robin says that the most important, and most difficult, part of playing this song is getting the rhythm right. When playing the rhythm parts, he plays barr chords up the neck to back up parts A, B and D. The positions he uses for the barr chords are shown below:



Those who are interested in ordering this CD can send \$17.00 (\$15.00 for the CD and \$2.00 postage) to:

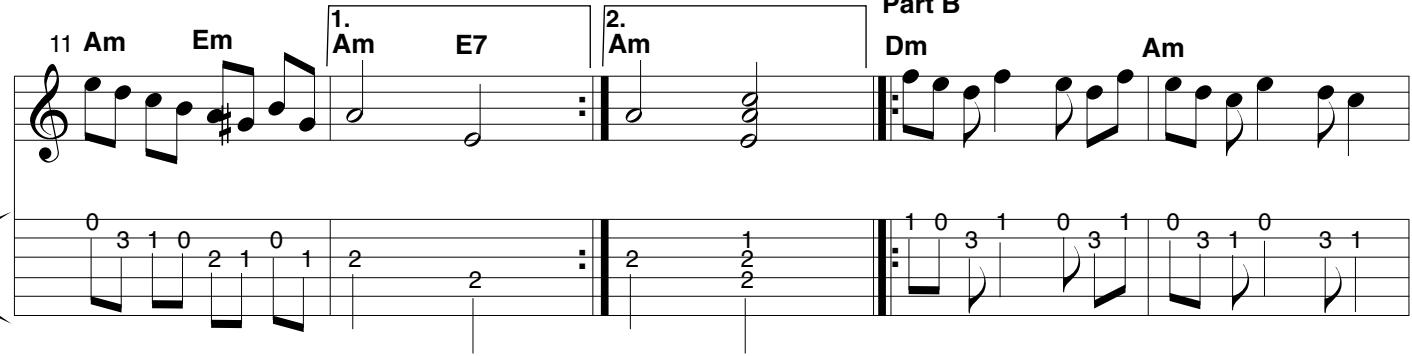
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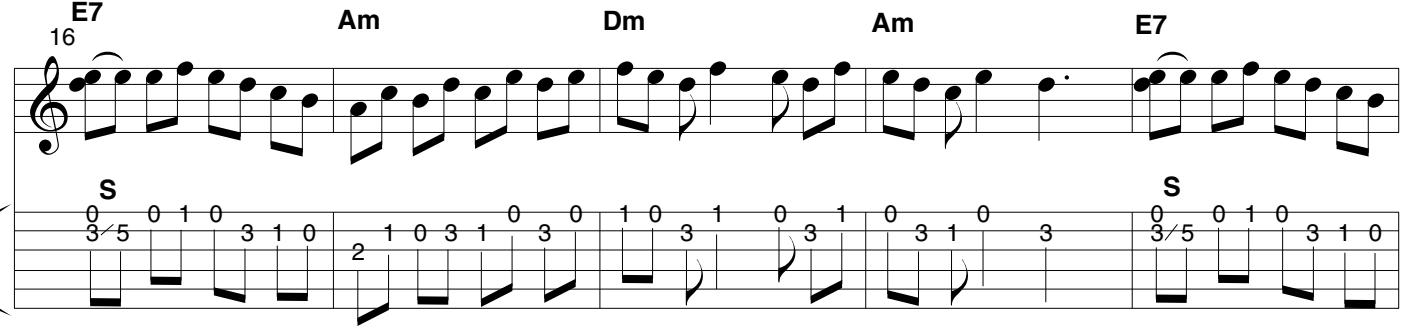
The Third Eyebrow

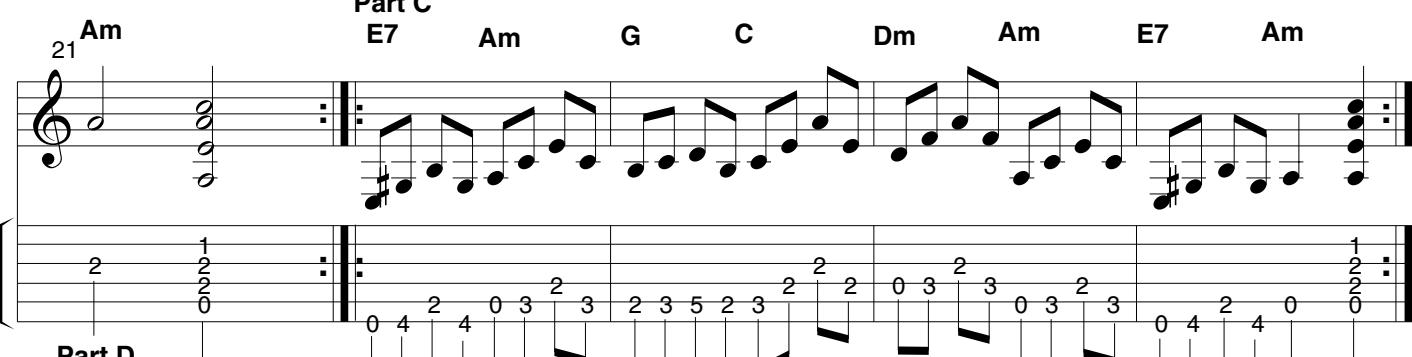
Robin Kessinger

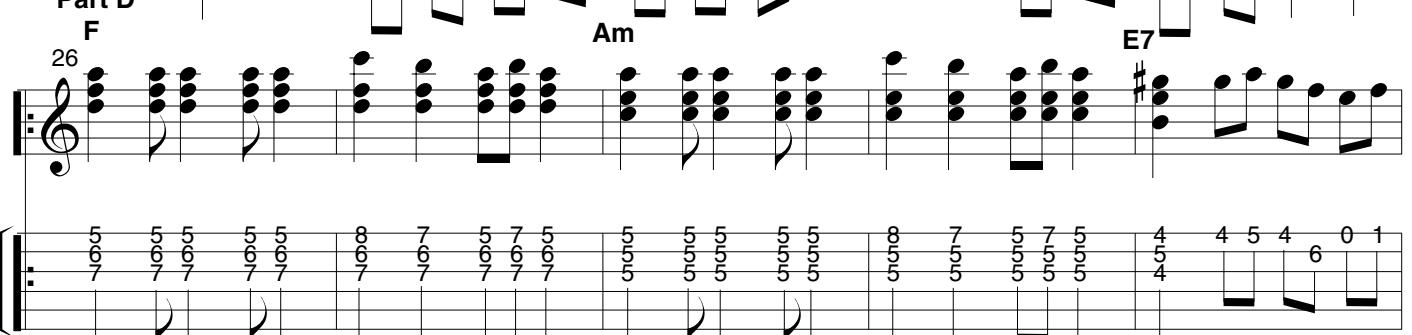
(As Played by Robin Kessinger on his tape "The Third Eyebrow" and CD "Robin Kessinger")

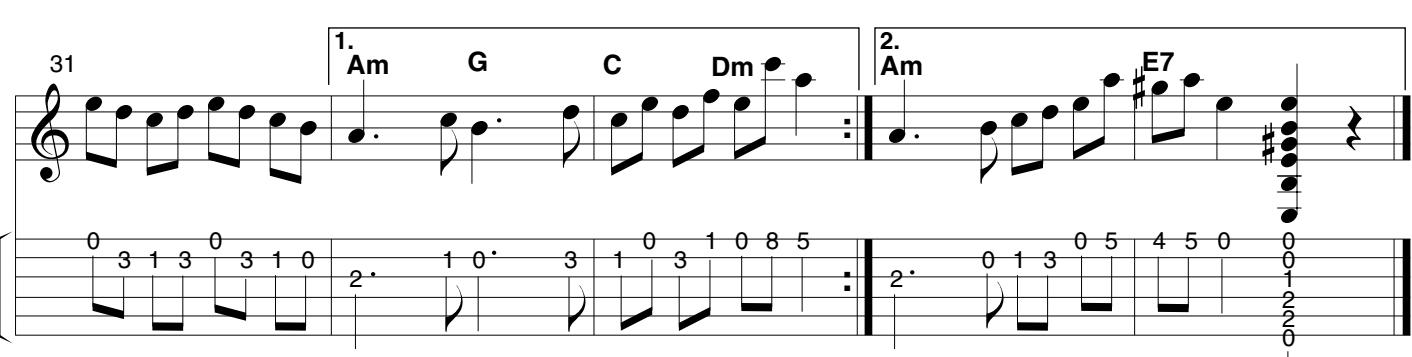
Third Eyebrow (Con't)

11 Am Em 1. Am E7 | 2. Am | Part B


16 E7 Am Dm Am E7


21 Am E7 Am G C Dm Am E7 Am | Part C


Part D F Am E7 |


31 1. Am G C Dm E7 | 2. Am E7 |


Reviews

CD/Audio Tape Reviews

Slavek Hanzlik- Summer Solstice
© Sierra Records



Reviewed by Bryan Kimsey

I first heard of Slavek Hanzlik from Joel Kaserman, formerly of Loose Ties, who showed me a video of him and Hanzlik jamming in Canada. I was duly impressed and over the years heard him with the Emory Lester group and became more impressed. Now here I am with his second solo CD in hand, and I'm still impressed. Hanzlik is accompanied by a great band of supporting musicians including Bela Fleck, Stuart Duncan, Mark Schatz, Rob Ickes, Tim O'Brien, and Mark Howard. "Gee, with a band like that even I'd sound good!", you might say. Well, yes, you might, but in addition to adding his guitar to the mix, Hanzlik has penned every tune on the album and there's not a weak one in the bunch.

And Hanzlik has done quite a bit more than merely add his guitar to the mix, I will quickly and firmly add. His D-18 drives the music with a crisp, punchy tone and it's clear that Hanzlik is firmly in the driver's seat. His playing on "Harvest of Change", a slower tune, is sweet and full and perfectly complements Stuart Duncan's expressive fiddle break. "Pauper's Cotillion" is a darker Old-World sounding tune that made me check for wolves outside the door, and here Hanzlik makes his guitar bark and growl appropriately. While much of this album has a distinct "new acoustic music" feel, "Potzelbaum" comes closest to sounding like a traditional fiddle tune and features just Slavek on guitar. "Spirit

of the South" is the other bluegrass tune and this one features the whole band.

This is an album of great music. It will definitely expose your flatpicking to some new ideas and sounds and is a great introduction to Slavek Hanzlik's playing. If new acoustic guitar lights your fire this album will fan the flames and is highly recommended.

Blinded by the Rose - Chris Jones
© 1995 Strictly Country Records



Reviewed by Mike Wright

This is a vocal album - there are no instrumentals at all - but Chris Jones does take guitar breaks on half of the songs. Ron Block, who mostly plays banjo and sings great tenor, also plays lead guitar on Merle Haggard's House of Memories.

Lots of beginning flatpickers nowadays seem to play nothing but fiddle tunes, but I personally find instrumental breaks to vocals more interesting in some ways. One thing is the contrast with the singing. Another is the potential freedom to improvise. I am much more hesitant to improvise a fiddle tune than a break on a vocal. This album is a good example of how nice such breaks can be.

Jones' guitar style is reminiscent of Tony Rice's Bluegrass playing. Although you would never mistake Jones for Rice in the details of his playing, his lead playing has the same level of clarity, fluidity, and confidence. He comes into his breaks at full volume and with complete authority. On the other hand, you don't notice his rhythm backup at all. I'm sure it's there, but you don't hear all the little offbeat runs and

syncopations that are so typical of Rice and Clarence White.

A number of the tunes, especially several of those written by Jones, have that bluesy, lonesome, modal sound that resembles what I think is the best of Bill Monroe and the Stanley Brothers. My favorites in this class are Dark Wind of Missouri and Will You Be There. His version of John Henry (the tab for which appeared in the previous issue of this magazine) also has much more of that high lonesome sound than do the usual high speed versions. His breaks on these songs combine rippling runs containing lots of hammer-ons and pull-offs with contrasting empty spaces. The result is much more interesting and emotionally powerful than an endless stream of notes would have been.

I've concentrated on the guitar portion of the album, but there's also lots of great singing. The other instrumentalists also contribute a great deal to the overall sound of the music. As far as I can tell, the production is flawless. Each instrumental break stands out crystal clear above the backup. But in spite of this, the music still has that Bluegrass edge.

The Tunes:

You Can Take Your Time
Dark Wind of Missouri
House of Memories
John Henry
Will You Be There
Blinded by the Rose
Looks Like the Blues to Me
You'll Lay It All Down
Alone With You
Dark Side of the Moon
Georgie Buck
Zion's Hill

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Bluegrass Guitar Duets -
Sandy Rothman and Steve Pottier
© 1991,1993 Sierra Records



Reviewed by Mike Wright

If only I had gotten this CD when it came out in 1993, and if I had listened to it every day since then, maybe by now I would have a pretty good grasp of everything that's on it. In addition to being extremely interesting to listen to, it is full of musical ideas that can be swiped by the aspiring flatpicker.

The CD liner notes include quite a bit about each performer's background by Neil Rosenberg, as well as notes about the project by both of the participants. Steve Pottier has also written a brief note about each of the songs. The influence of the late Clarence White is repeatedly mentioned. My favorite bit is from Sandy Rothman's note:

These are not Clarence's numbers, for the most part; although his playing enlightened both of us tremendously, neither one of us plays like him — "because we can't," says Steve. Funny, that's exactly the reason that I don't play like Clarence. Still, it's not much solace, because I can't play like Pottier and Rothman, either.

Although they generally take turns playing lead, they both tend to play lots of licks during backup, so that most of the album is more like twin guitars than just alternating solos. This intricate interplay is part of what keeps the music sounding fresh after repeated listenings. There is so much going on that you can't absorb it all at once.

The material is all traditional, except for Blue Guitar Yodel, which they wrote, but even that sounds traditional. Only five of the tunes are fiddle tunes, the rest being based on songs. There is a great deal of variety to the selections - fast and slow, melodic and bluesy - which also contributes to the freshness of the album as a whole. I'm going to be listening to this one for a

long time, hoping to absorb some of the style and some of the licks.

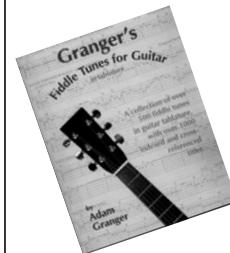
The Tunes:
 Little Annie
 Brown's Ferry Guitar
 Denver Belle
 In the Pines
 Flop-Eared Mule
 What a Friend We Have in Jesus
 Blue Guitar Yodel
 Lonesome Road Blues
 Billy in the Lowground
 Forsaken Love
 Buffalo Gals
 When You and I Were Young, Maggie
 Black Mountain Rag
 The Storms Are on the Ocean
 Weeping Willow
 Precious Memories

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Waltz". His version of "I am a Pilgrim" owes a lot to Clarence White, but Adkins plays it well and adds a few touches of his own.

The other band members are no slouches either. Both from in-person and from this CD I like the solid banjo playing of the other Dale, Dale Williams. As evidenced by the two duets with Adkins, Williams can handle a flatpick as well as fingerpicks. Dan Postrel handles the mandolin duties quite well and gets a good woody sound from his 8-stringer, while Paul Schoenlaub's vocals are more than adequate.

If you're tired of the same ol' guitar pickers, pick up this album and check out Out of the Blue. I think you'll be pleased.

Video Tape Reviews

Norman and Nancy Blake The Video Collection 1980-1995 Vestapol 13059



Reviewed by Joel Stein

There is little need to question Norman Blake's picking prowess, this collection is full of examples of his talents on guitar, mandolin, fiddle and plectrum banjo. Along with wife Nancy (on cello, guitar and mandolin) and an uncredited James Bryan (fiddle) on half of the program, Blake mixes the traditional (Done Gone, Jordan Am A Hard Road To Travel, The Kitchen Girl) with the neo traditional tunes of his own invention (Randall Collins, Gray Coat Soldiers).

As those familiar with Blake's playing would guess, Blake possesses, to quote the

too brief liner notes "...a certain traditional quality most of the time and total quality all the time." True enough, but ultimately this video collection works better as an audio tape than a video tape. The Blake's music is an intimate affair, whether in the Rising Fawn Ensemble or on their own. It's a stripped down, bare performance that allows the music to breathe. On this particular tape, with its jarring fade at the conclusion of each cut, no song introductions or acknowledgement of the viewers (save for a smiling Norman exclaiming "all right" at the conclusion of "Jordan") makes for a very cold and lifeless presentation in direct conflict with Blake's style and persona.

The video box gives us a list of states and years the selections were drawn from. Missing from the actual tape are the song titles, dates, credits and other information. A simple crawl at the bottom of the screen for each title and its source would improve the format. At a minimum, acknowledging James Bryan on fiddle and the Rising Fawn Ensemble would seem appropriate.

It's unclear whether the producers of this project were aiming this video at guitarists, though it's sure to be a safe bet. Why then the shoddy liner notes? The Blake notes are far more comprehensive of the Legends Of Flat picking Guitar (Vestapol 13005). There is no information about the instruments (sunburst slope D, natural slope D, Gibson plectrum banjo, Gibson F and A shape mandolins), something that would no doubt be of interest to many guitarists. Since all the source video comes from public television, it's easy to understand why the camera work frustrates the viewer from studying Blake's fret work. As typifies performance video made for TV, the camera is often slow to pan to the soloist, the camera angles (the most popular here is a view of Blake's fingers dancing along the fret board from the vantage of the nut) are annoying, the mike stands block otherwise good opportunities to see Blake's hands.

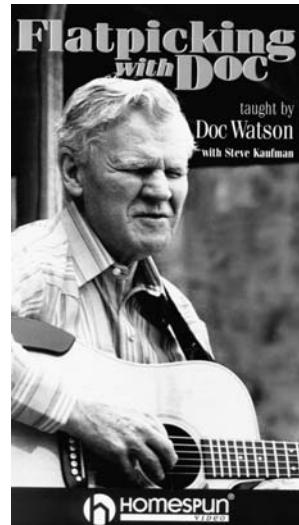
That said, there are more than enough opportunities to watch close ups of one of the finest right hands ever to bring a pick to strings. Norman Blake's right hand technique is remarkable. Still, it's not enough reason to rush out and get this video collection. The music, on the other hand, might be.

As with many performance videos, Norman & Nancy Blake The Video Collection 1980-1995 is no substitute for seeing a live performance. Rather, the video is a cold artifact of a living and breathing art

form. Given the Blake's infrequent tours (at least in the Northeast) this video offers a hint at what a concert offers. As an audio overview of fifteen years in the performing careers of Norman and Nancy Blake, this video is rewarding listening.

Instructional Material Reviews

Flatpicking with Doc- Homespun Video with Steve Kaufman and Richard Watson



Reviewed by Bryan Kimsey

Song List:

Open Up Them Pearly Gates
Little Sadie
More Pretty Girls than One
New River Train
White House Blues
Open Up Them Pearly Gates
Salt Creek
Ragtime Annie
Goodnight Waltz
When It's Peach Picking Time
Sweet Georgia Brown
Walk On, Boy
Chicago Blues
Summertime

With two of the best flatpickers in the world- Doc Watson and Steve Kaufman- on the same video, how can you go wrong? The short answer is: you can't! "Flatpicking with Doc" is a terrific sampler of the Doc Watson style with Doc performing a generous slice of his repertoire. Kaufman plays rhythm guitar and takes several breaks. On the last three songs, Kaufman is replaced by Doc's grandson, Richard Watson, for 2 blues duets. The third song, "Summertime", plays as the credits roll.

The video opens with Doc and Steve trading breaks on "Ragtime Annie". After this warm-up, there's the obligatory tuning section and then the lessons get started, beginning with "Pearly Gates". The flatpickers play each tune through at full tempo and then go back and slow things down. All of Doc's breaks are tabbed out in an accompanying booklet. Kaufman's are not, but the camera generally shows enough of his hands that advanced (and persistent) viewers can figure out what he's doing. Richard Watson's breaks are tabbed and his pentatonic-based blues style is an interesting contrast to Doc's chord-based crosspicking.

Kaufman's presence is a great aid on this video. He knows the right questions to ask of Doc and just as you're thinking "Now, how did Doc do that?", Steve asks that very question. As with many natural musicians, Doc sometimes doesn't know exactly why or how he does something, and Steve often asks Doc for clarification until the question is fully and completely answered. There is plenty of technique and equipment discussion on the video, including details on Doc's picks, amplifier, guitar, strings, and crosspicking approach.

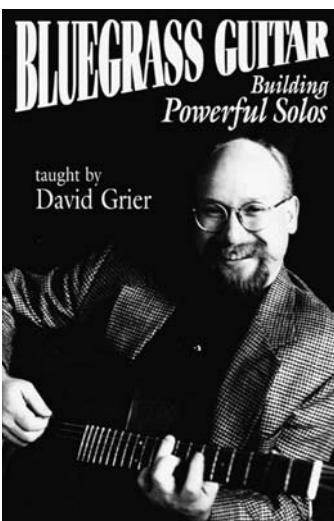
The overall atmosphere of the video is very relaxed and the musicians trade jokes and anecdotes as they cover the tunes. I found the pace of the video to be more appropriate to intermediate/advanced flatpickers, since there's none of the "place this finger there" instruction required for beginners. Doc plays his licks and you need to be able to grasp what he's doing. On the upside, this means that the video can and does present quite a bit of material. The sound and video quality of the tape are excellent, as we've come to expect from Homespun.

My quibbles include the split screen presentation which doesn't seem to kick in on the first tune. It's almost as if someone forgot to get the second camera rolling. After the intro, though, the split screen is excellent and clearly shows both hands without obscuring either. Lyrics in the tab booklet would have been nice, as would chord shapes for some of the jazzier tunes. Both of these are easily enough figured out from the video, though. Titles for the tunes would have been useful when fast-forwarding through the tape in search of a specific section.

Suggestions aside, "Flatpicking with Doc" is an excellent study of Doc Watson's

flatpicking techniques and is highly recommended to flatpickers. Besides the educational value of the tape, I greatly appreciate the documentation of Doc's flatpicking. Just think how much richer we'd be if the great Clarence White had sat down for a Homespun video taping! Fortunately, all the current masters of the plectrum are well-represented on video; this tape contributes greatly to that collection and belongs in yours.

**"Bluegrass Guitar -
Building Powerful Solos,"
taught by David Grier.
Homespun Video, VD-GRR-GT01.
75-minutes.**



Reviewed by Dave McCarty

Over the last several years, David Grier has emerged as the flatpicking guitarist who's most often pushed back the boundaries of acoustic music and bluegrass on guitar into areas never before explored. His unorthodox, unbounded technical approach to guitar and endlessly vivid musical imagination have earned him critical acclaim and made him perhaps the most sought-after flatpicking guitarist working today. No one who has heard his cliche-defying solos and backup work with The Grass Is Greener and the newest Psychograss release will fail to be impressed.

Capturing that kind of eclectic musical technique as instructional material, however, has posed quite a challenge. When you don't play by the rules, it's harder for other guitarists to figure out how you're producing the licks and runs populating your guitar work. Fortunately, Grier has grown and matured not just as a musician, but as a teacher able to share his unique

perspective on guitar with the rest of the flatpicking community.

On this, his second instruction video, Grier tackles what I've always felt to be the most difficult and challenging problem facing any musical star trying to relate their musical approach to an outside audience - how to avoid "clone" solos which merely reproduce note-for-note the solos played on record. Grier's first video took that approach and presented a lot of excellent material, but left it to the student to try to sort out the individual phrases and licks comprising Grier's distinctive musical vocabulary.

Here, with help from Homespun founder and instruction tape guru Happy Traum, Grier convincingly breaks down and demonstrates many of the technical tricks of the trade he employs in his solos. The tape starts out immediately working on cross-picking patterns using "Bill Cheatam" and "Liberty" as musical reference points, stopping to work on specific techniques as needed. Other techniques, such as his frequent use of slides, double stops, bends, slurs and a technique he calls "raking," which is more commonly referred to by guitarists as sweep picking, all are clearly covered and documented.

Natural players like Grier who don't typically plot out precise solos they can repeat often have difficulty exactly repeating an entire solo, but Grier does a fine job here playing solos and exercises up to speed and then reproducing them exactly at slow speed. It's obvious that a couple of years of doing workshops and camps has helped him develop better teaching skills. The tunes presented here accurately reflect David's different styles. The gorgeous "Engagement Waltz" reveals much about how he thinks about the fingerboard and its impact on composing guitar tunes. "The Meeting" is just a great tune, although since it's not likely to become a jam session standard one could question why it was selected over some others. As always, Homespun has put together a great package here, with an excellent tab/notation booklet that includes most, but not all, of the material David presents on the tape. Homespun's typically excellent video and audio work make it easy to check both Grier's left and right hands as he's playing to reveal pick direction and fingering for the more difficult passages. The limitations of linear, analog recording media, however, remain unaddressed here. Including title

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slides between songs to allow the user to search for specific portions of the tape more easily would have been helpful. What I'd really like to see (besides some future digital video format) would be the use of on-screen transparent icons like the network logos with the titles of each section or tune included so there'd be no doubt what section of the tape was being displayed.

Minor technical quibbles aside, "Bluegrass Guitar - Building Powerful Solos" exactly lives up to its title. Grier is focused here on presenting highly useful, accurate examples of many of the types of runs, licks and techniques he uses to create his distinctive sound. Watching this video won't let you match David Grier's instinctive ability to break boundaries and reinvent old approaches to flatpicking guitar, but it certainly will give any guitarist who appreciates his style an enormous amount of useful material to study and use

Grier Lone Soldier Tab Book

Review By Dave McCarty

Only a handful of flatpicking guitar albums ever truly reach a wide audience or draw the interest of many fans outside the cloistered realm of guitarists themselves. But David Grier's IBMA-winning "Lone Soldier" on Rounder Records certainly broke out of the pack and drew enormous attention to his brilliant guitar playing and impressive compositional skills.

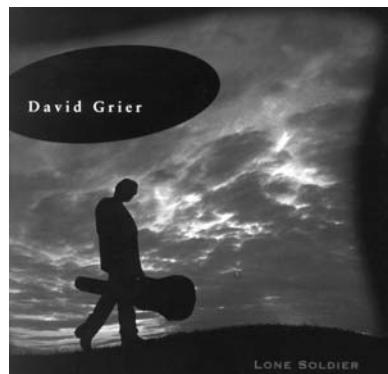
Even before its release, guitarists were bringing Grier-penned tunes like "Wheelin'," "Bluegrass Itch," "Old Hotel Rag" and others into hot picking sessions at festivals around the country. Capturing the exact melodies and intricate changes of his newer, often more challenging work, required even greater perseverance. I'm sure I'm not the only guitarist out there who's puzzled over Grier's arrangements of "Pockchops & Applesauce" or "Eye of the Hurricane" by taping the songs and slowing them to half speed.

That learning process ought to accelerate with the release of this book including all the songs off "Lone Soldier." Superbly transcribed by Matt Flinner, a former Winfield champion on mandolin and member of Tony Furtado's blazing bluegrass ensemble, Sugarbeat, this book is a must-have for anyone seeking to unlock the mysteries of David Grier's musical genius.

Unlike other "personality" books that often only tab out one solo per song, Flinner has painstakingly notated the melody and every solo Grier plays on all 11 tunes from the CD. Presented in both tablature and standard notation, the music is printed in a very clear, easily readable format. The music also indicates some of Grier's trademark licks and tricks (many of which are documented in his new Homespun Video reviewed elsewhere in this issue), such as the G chord "rakes" he uses in the third solo on "Smith Chapel."

Other symbols indicate David's "pre-bends" where he bends the string first, then picks and releases it, as well as heavy vibrato and his "wiggle" technique where he slides rapidly up and down one fret. The notation for "Pockchops & Applesauce" looks like no tab you've ever read.

Having access to material like this is just a treasure for guitarists today. My only suggestion would be that David and Matt team up again quickly to provide another book like this for "Freewheelin'" and some of his other work. Well done, boys!



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Gear Review

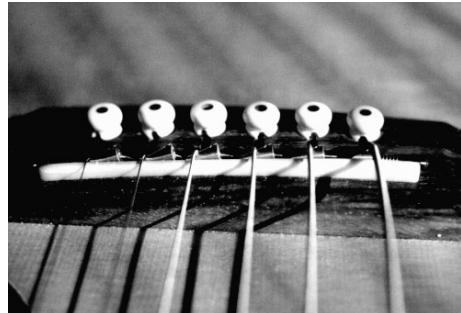
by Bryan Kimsey

Product Review: The Enhancer

Most flatpickers are constantly looking for ways to increase the sustain, volume, and resonance of their particular instrument(s). The Enhancer, from Smith Family Music, is a simple device which claims to do all of those things. The Enhancer is a set of six metal cones connected by spring wire and designed to fit directly behind the saddle of an acoustic guitar. String pressure behind the saddle holds the Enhancer in place, the idea being that the cones will transmit additional vibrations from the strings to the guitar top. Enhancers come in three flavors: a Red Tip version which uses solid brass cones and which is designed for finger-picking; a Yellow Tip version using brass cones for the wound strings and stainless steel cones for the treble strings; and a Blue Tip version with mixed alloys designed for lead playing. All come with detailed instructions and an 800 number in case you need more help.

I tested all three versions for several weeks on 2 different guitars that I play regularly- a 93 1935 Reissue D-28 and a 95 000-1R, both Martins. The Reissue D-28 is a very bassy guitar and I was curious to see if the Enhancer would give it more mid-range and treble. The 000-1R is tonally balanced very well, and I mostly wanted additional volume from it. I was unable to fit the Enhancer to a third guitar, a 73 D-28 which has had the saddle slot moved rearward, but that is no fault of the Enhancer- there simply is no room between the saddle and the bridge pins to place anything on that particular guitar. I ended up using this guitar as a standard to compare the others against. I installed the Enhancer on each guitar, played it for several songs for an audience of musicians and non-musicians, removed the Enhancer, and then played again and requested feedback. I also left the Enhancer on each guitar for a period of time and noted my own observations. Over the course of several weeks I was able to use all 3 Enhancers on both guitars.

The Enhancer performed as claimed and increased resonance, volume, brilliance, and sustain on both guitars. There was more difference between the guitar with and without the Enhancer than there was



The Enhancer installed on Bryan Kimsey's 000-1R Martin

between versions of Enhancer, although the Red Tip seemed to increase volume the most. The increase in volume was quite noticeable on the 000-1R and it competed quite well with the un-Enhanced 73 D-28. The Reissue D-28 became even louder than it already was, and the mid-range did indeed become clearer. However, the tone of both guitars changed, and the audience disagreed as to whether the change was desirable or not. The Enhancer definitely added a metallic edge to the sound and one audience member compared the Enhancer-ed sound to a resonator guitar. When I removed the Enhancer and played the guitar again, all listeners commented on the change in volume, but also mentioned the "woody" sound of the guitar sans Enhancer. The change in volume was noticeable, but not overly dramatic; if forced to put a number on it, I'd say overall volume increase by 10% or so.

I also contacted several other Enhancer users for their experiences. The Enhancer seemed to help mid-price range guitars more than high-dollar instruments, and smaller instruments more than larger ones. Theoretically, if the saddle is working correctly, all vibration should stop at the saddle and should be transmitted to the bridge. In practice, when I exchanged the synthetic saddle on the 000-1R for a high quality bone one, the Enhancer's effect was lessened. The Reissue D-28 already had a very dense bone saddle and the Enhancer's effect was not so noticeable there, however, the difference in size between it and the 000 prevent a direct comparison.

I had a few quibbles with the Enhancer. The bottoms of the cones are flat and this

flat surface is supposed to rest squarely on the bridge. In addition, the cone should fit snuggly under the string behind the saddle. A special tool is provided to help move the cones in place, and a strip of tape is also provided to fit between the cones and the saddle itself to help protect the latter from scratches. I had trouble moving the cones with the tape in place- they tended to stick to the tape and cause it to bunch up or tear. The other users I contacted also mentioned this problem. Without the tape, the cones scratched the bridge of both guitars. Once installed, the large end of the cones stuck up above the saddle. I play with my right hand almost brushing the saddle and I could definitely feel the sharp edge of the cones beneath my hand. A little filing would probably take care of this problem, but might lessen the effect of the Enhancer. Finally, with the Enhancer installed, I had a buzz that I could not get rid of by adjusting the cones; another user also reported buzzes that went away only when they removed the Enhancer.

After testing, I removed the Enhancer and liked the sound of the guitar better without it. For me, the Enhancer added too much resonance and too much of a metallic sound for my tastes on the guitars I used. The overall sound was sort of "heavy" instead of crisp and punchy. I've noticed the same sort of change when playing with brass bridge pins and saddles, and even ivory saddles, all of which are denser and heavier materials than the bone and ebony appointments I normally use. The former increase sustain, but the latter seem more responsive. If you like the heavier, more metallic sound, the Enhancer will definitely give it to you. I would certainly give them a try on a mid-priced guitar, or one which needs some extra volume or brightness. I suggest trying the standard Red Tip all-brass model (also the cheapest), or the Yellow Tip. The mixed alloy of the Blue Tip didn't work as well with either of my guitars, although it certainly might for yours. Your best bet might be to find an accomodating music store that will let you try all three on your particular instrument.

Vintage Voice

by Buddy Summer



No matter what one's interest may be it seems as if when one least expects it a great opportunity presents itself. This holds especially true if one's interest happens to be in acquiring a fine vintage musical instrument, such as a vintage guitar. All of a sudden, there it is. Someone has changed life styles and now their priorities have shifted and they want to sell their vintage guitar. This unexpected opportunity often presents itself when someone inherits a highly desirable vintage guitar and their interest differs from the interest of the previous owner. Now the prize vintage guitar is for sale. Collectors spend many years accumulating rare vintage guitars and at some point in time these wonderful old pieces of American culture will be available.

Although many have departed our country for new homes in a distant land and others are being shipped overseas at an alarming rate, there are many fine vintage guitars still available today. If one has an interest in acquiring a fine vintage guitar then one should . . . be prepared. The opportunity will present itself sooner or later.

Continuing with the "Vintage Guitar Checklist," the main topic of "Vintage Voice" in the last issue, it would seem appropriate to list some of the checklist items and elaborate some on each item in this issue and the next several issues until the checklist is covered completely.

Vintage Guitar Checklist Item #1: Finish Original? It may take some experience to be able to detect an old "factory" refinish as some may be as close to perfect as the original finish. Examining the finish in full sun light, as opposed to lesser light, usually helps detect sanding marks and nicks or dings that are filled with lacquer when they should not be! Sometimes a magnifying glass will help to get a better look at a questionable area. Capo and belt

buckle scratches, finish cracks, and/or repaired wood cracks that are completely smooth to the feel of the fingertips as well as finish inconsistency over the entire instrument could indicate that the instrument may have been "over sprayed." If one could compare a known refinished guitar with a known factory original guitar one would probably notice a slight rounding of some edges, especially around the headstock, of the known refinished guitar that doesn't exist on the factory original guitar. These slightly rounded edges usually indicate more sanding was required to remove the original finish. A recently refinished or oversprayed instrument usually has a more dominate lacquer odor than an older finish that has had time to dry. The "Black Light" check that some professional vintage instrument dealers use where the instrument's finish is examined under a black light in a dark room and causes finish inconsistencies to be readily apparent is also a very helpful way to determine finish originality.

Poorly refinished instruments are easily detected as such since they appear to have been refinished by someone with a paint brush and a bucket of lacquer. An old, professional refinish, in my opinion, does not necessarily destroy the acoustic value of the guitar, it just destroys the originality and should therefore be reflected in the price. There are some highly desirable, great sounding, refinished old guitars available that I'd be proud to own . . . such as my 1934 C.F. Martin 000-28 with the long scale.

Vintage Guitar Checklist Item #2 - Check tuners . . . Originality of tuners, decals and/or stamps. On the C.F. Martin products, with which I am more familiar, the guitars from the 1920's were twelve frets clear of the body, slotted peghead small bodied guitars with no "C.F. Martin & Co." decal on the front of the headstock.

This headstock decal was introduced in 1932 and is still in use today. The 1920's guitars had a "C.F. Martin & Co. - Nazareth, PA" stamp on the back of the headstock. This stamp was discontinued in 1935 with some of the 1935 guitars having the stamp while others from 1935 do not.

The tuners from the 1920's guitars are mostly three-on-a plate side mounted tuners similar to the Ervin Sloan tuners available today. The tuner shaft extends through the slot in the headstock and the tuner knobs extended to the back of the headstock. Pickguards were not used on the 1920's guitars except as special order. With the introduction of the orchestra model in 1929, the guitars changed some.

Most of the 1930's guitars had pickguards which became standard in about 1932 and after 1933 were fourteen frets clear of the body type guitars. After 1933, most tuners were open back Grover single tuners that mounted on the back of the headstock with the tuner shafts extending through the headstock. These tuners had small "butter-bean" type medal turning knobs until about 1942.

The 1942 through 1945 Grover open back tuners mostly had small "butter-bean" ivoried type tuner knobs as the medal was used for the war effort. The small medal "butter-bean" tuner knobs were re-introduced in 1946 and continued until 1958 at which time larger medal tuner knobs were used on closed back Grover tuners. The late 1940's was a transitional time for the tuners and by 1947 mostly closed back Klunson tuners were used.

The 1947 model also used any one of three different back strips on the outside back of the guitar. By 1950, the Martin D-28 had the ribbed back Klunson tuners until 1958 while the Martin D-18's used a slightly different non-ribbed back closed Klunson tuner. From 1958 the D-28's used the closed back Grover tuners with the larger tuning knobs through mostly the

1970's while the D-18's continued to use the slightly different Klunson tuners with the smaller medal butter-bean type tuning knobs through the mid 1960's.

When original tuners have been changed to non-original type tuners there is usually an impression of the original tuner left in the finish on the back of the headstock. Sometimes new tuner screw holes have to be made to accommodate the new tuners. If such is not the case, the switch back to original type tuners is simple if one can find the original type tuners. Any degree of non-originality should be reflected in the purchase price of the guitar.

Vintage Guitar Checklist Item #3.- Check for "E" string and/or pick guard cracks. The pickguard area of older guitars is an area where minor top cracks often occur. These cracks are usually caused from shrinkage of the pickguard itself over time, are minor in nature and are easily repaired. The crack is usually filled with super glue, pressed together again and cleated from underneath the top. Tone is often unaffected and if properly repaired at an early stage these minor cracks have little detrimental effect on the guitar. It should be noted that early attention should be given "E" string and pickguard cracks to prevent the condition from worsening. A flashlight and mirror with an extendible handle is considered standard equipment for checking inside the box of a guitar and is an absolute necessity.

Vintage Guitar Checklist Item #4.-Check for neck reset. How does neck join the guitar body? Many vintage guitars were equipped with an adjustable truss rod built into the neck that made neck angle adjustment as simple as adjusting a bolt under the truss rod cover on the peghead. Vintage Martin Guitars did not have this adjustable truss rod and therefore the only way to adjust the neck angle was to remove the neck from the guitar body. After proper neck removal, shims are used at the dove tail joint to properly reset the neck angle in order to re-establish good playing action. Once this proper neck angle has been re-established, the neck is reglued to the body of the guitar.

A properly reset neck does not have a detrimental effect on the guitar and improves playability tremendously. The main concern here is to ascertain that the neck removal was properly done and no shorts cuts were taken. A shortcut would be to cut the fretboard at

the 14th fret so there would be no need to remove the portion of the fretboard that is glued to the guitar top. When this short cut is taken it seems as if the fretboard is never completely straight again. Sometimes the saddle is shaved down closer to the bridge so as to lower the playing action. When the saddle is shaved too close, the guitar then needs a neck set and a new saddle. Any vintage guitar that hasn't had a neck set probably needs one. The cost is approximately \$200 if the neck has to be removed from the guitar body. Any additional repair cost that the guitar needs has to be added to the investment in the guitar.

Vintage Guitar Checklist Item #5.

Check action. When the neck angle is at proper adjustment for good playing action, a nickel resting flatly on top of the frets at the 12th position should fit between the fretboard and the strings with very little room to spare. Two nickel widths would indicate that the playing action is too high and that a neck set is probably required. Some flatpickers like the playing action a little high as this seems to produce more volume; however, when playing action is excessive, playability suffers. The neck and fretboard should have enough of a dip so as not to allow the strings to touch the 5th, 6th, and 7th frets when the string is simultaneously fretted at the 1st and 12th positions. Excessive indentations in the fretboard should be filled and sanded smooth. Frets with little wear can be dressed while excessively worn frets need to be replaced. Bar frets were used on the Martin Guitars prior to 1934 with "T" frets being introduced in 1934. Checking the playing action would be an excellent time to examine the fretboard at the 12th or 14th fret position to make sure it hasn't been cut for a neck set. A nut with the string slots cut too deeply or a saddle shaved too close will allow the strings to vibrate against the frets and produce a string buzz. If such is the case the nut and/or saddle need to be replaced. Although the expense involved in fret or fingerboard dressing or nut and saddle replacement is small, this cost has to be added to the investment in the instrument.

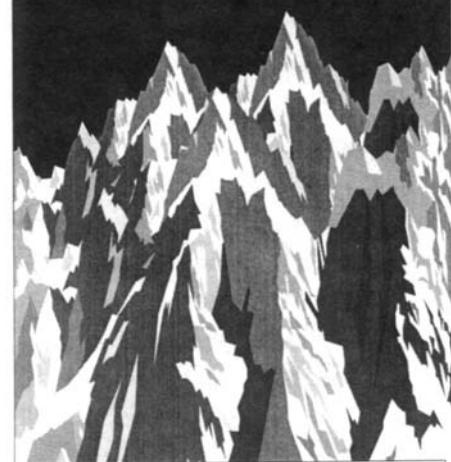
Vintage Guitar Checklist Item #6.-

A Quarter Sawn or slab cut wood? On vintage Martin Guitars the back and sides were mostly constructed of either mahogany wood or Brazilian Rosewood. Adirondack (red) Spruce wood was used for the tops until 1946 at which time a change to Sitka

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Spruce wood was made. In 1930 the "size and style stamp" was added to the neck block where the serial number had been appearing since 1898. The "size and style stamp" consists of a letter, or group of letters, followed by a hyphen and then a number, such as "D-28" or "000-45" and indicates the size and degree of ornamentation of the guitar. A Martin "D-28" is size "Dreadnought" and style 28 (degree of ornateness). Any style number less than 21 is a mahogany back and sides guitar and any style number of 21 or higher is a Brazilian Rosewood back and sides guitar until very late 1969. In very late 1969, a switch was made from Brazilian Rosewood to East Indian Rosewood on the rosewood guitars due mainly to a lack of availability of Brazilian Rosewood in log form.

The manner in which the wood is cut is extremely important to the acoustic value of the guitar as the wood must be allowed to vibrate to produce good tone. Straight-grain, quarter-sawn wood is considered the most suitable for its maximum vibrating ability. Although the back and sides of the guitar are considered secondary to the top in their need to vibrate, it would be helpful to good tone if the back and sides also had good vibrating ability.

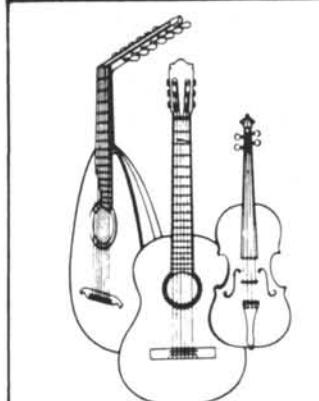
Figured (slab-cut) Brazilian Rosewood is sometimes preferred by some flatpickers over straight-grained wood because of the design and natural beauty of the wood whereas some flatpickers prefer the plainer more traditional look of the quarter-sawn wood. In either case, Brazilian Rosewood is hard, dense, rare, desirable, and excellent tone-wood and commands very high prices. Guitars with mahogany back and sides are sometimes preferred over Rosewood Guitars because their tone seems to be brighter and they seem to "mic" better. Rosewood Guitars are often considered more "bassy" and better rhythm guitars.

Between issues of *Flatpicking Guitar*, I'd be happy to share my knowledge and experience of this wonderful hobby of vintage guitars with anyone interested. I may be reached at 423/983-5533 (EST, please). I'd also appreciate your feedback on "Vintage Voice."

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WORLD OF STRING



Irish traditional dance music

the basics

by John McGann

“Flatpicking guitar” is a label usually associated with American guitar styles like bluegrass and fiddle tune playing, representing a style of music rather than a technique of guitar playing. The flattop dreadnought guitar is the usual chosen instrument.

To me, “flatpicking guitar” means exactly that, regardless of style. In columns to come, I’ll discuss a variety of music that works well with a flatpick (or a combination of flatpick and fingers). I’ll start with a series of articles covering a variety of styles, feels and tunings used in Celtic music.

Celtic music, which includes a wide variety of styles of music from Ireland, Scotland, Shetland, Cape Breton, and Brittany, is one of the root sources of our American flatpicking styles. It is relatively recently that musicians in these styles have become performers, as the music was usually played for dances. We are lucky to live in a time where access to international music is easy, and there are plenty of recordings and concert events. You may also find a local Irish session—“session” is the equivalent of a bluegrass jam session, with one important distinction—there are no soloists. The melodic instruments play the melody in unison (more or less) with the guitar usually taking a supportive role of rhythm playing.

The reason the guitar is not heard as a lead voice at a session is lack of volume. This shouldn’t discourage us, as there are other settings in which to play melody. Playing in sessions is an essential way to get a feel for the music, a great way to meet other musicians, and a good excuse to have a nice pint.

The guitar does not have a particularly distinctive heritage in Celtic music; in fact there are only a handful of albums that feature guitar up front as a lead voice. The all important rhythm guitar is a bit more common, and as usual, can be hard to hear in the mix. On some older recordings such as fiddler Michael Coleman’s 30’s and 40’s sessions, the guitarist or pianist doesn’t have a clue what’s going on—these poor folks were pulled in from a local dance

studio by the record producer and told to ‘get on with it’. Some of the great guitarists to listen for are Paul Brady, Daithi Sproule, Arty McGlynn, Dave MacIssac, Randall Bays, Ged Foley, John Doyle etc. Some of these players fingerpick as well as flatpick.

DADGAD tuning has become very popular both as a lead and accompaniment tuning. Many excellent Celtic musicians use this tuning exclusively. I use it on occasion, but more frequently stay in standard tuning or dropped D, as I find it easier to modulate to other keys more effectively. I have also adapted some DADGAD concepts to standard tuning. In future articles I’ll present some ideas in DADGAD.

As a lead voice, the fact that there isn’t a widely established tradition of lead playing in these styles gives us the responsibility of looking to other instruments for clues in how to ornament tunes—the little turns, triplets etc. that are so characteristic of these styles. I’ve used two obvious sources—Irish banjo for right hand picking techniques, and fiddle for left hand slurs.

It is a good idea to immerse yourself in recordings of great players. Don’t limit yourself to the handful of guitarists in the forefront—pay close attention to the other instruments, especially the melodic ones. Even if you choose to remain a rhythm player and play no melody ever, you should still have the tune “in your head” as you play a supportive role underneath it. If you are lucky enough to live in an area where Irish musicians gather for sessions, by all means, go and listen, and play.

Focusing on Irish music, there are several essential types of dance tunes in the repertoire, the most common being reels, jigs, hornpipes and slow airs. Reels are the faster 4/4 tunes. Jigs are in 6/8 time. Hornpipes are in a slower, swinging 4/4. Slow airs are played rubato (out of meter) and are beautiful, expressive pieces, sometimes played unaccompanied. This month I’m presenting a common Irish session reel “Drowsy Maggie”, in the flatpicker-friendly key of D, played in C with a capo

at the 2nd fret.

If you have experience playing American fiddle tunes and bluegrass, you’ll find the melody and note choices to be familiar. Version #1 presents the basic unornamented version; apply the usual pattern of alternate picking (down stroke on the beat, upstroke on the offbeats). In the B part, I’ve indicated fingering the C note on the 3rd string to avoid string skipping and right hand contortions.

Version #2 gives you an ornamented version. Bar 3 uses a ‘slurred triplet’, with the pattern down/pull/up. This style of triplet allows your right hand to continue the flow of alternate picking, and has a smoother effect than having all three notes picked. Bar 4 presents a version of a fiddle ‘turn’—the A note is followed by the higher scale tone B, back to A, then the lower G, back to A. If A is the target note, the pattern is target/upper/target/lower/target. This ‘turn’ is also found in jazz and classical music. To get the smoothest sound, we can downstroke the 1st note, hammer/pull the 2nd and 3rd, upstroke the 4th and resume the usual alternate picking pattern on the 5th note with a downstroke.

The B section begins with the most common banjo-style ornament, the picked triplet. We begin by keeping the alternate picking pattern down/up/down, within the space of one full beat—in other words in the space of the usual down/up. To get back to the alternate picking pattern, we need to begin the 2nd beat with a downstroke; otherwise we’ll turn the pattern around, which would sound weak. So, after the 3rd triplet note, follow through with the downstroke to attack the 3rd string. You don’t need to think of beat two as a brand new downstroke, just follow through from the 4th string to the 3rd. This technique will give you the rapid-fire triplets often played by great banjo players like Seamus Egan and Mick Moloney.

Next issue, we’ll explore some rhythm guitar concepts for the various styles of Celtic music. Meanwhile, do a lot of listening, and have fun!

Capo 2

Drowsy Maggie

Traditional
Arr. J. McGann

Version 1, Part A

1

1 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 1 0 1 0 1 3 0 2 0 2 0 1 0 2 0 1 0 1 3 0

Part B

6

1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 1 2 0 2 0 1 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 5 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 3

Version 2, Part A

11

2 5 0 2 0 2 0 2 4 5 0 2 1 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 0 1 3 0

16 [3]

HP
2 4 5 0 2 0 1 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 0 1 3 0 2 4 5 0 2 0

Part B

21 [3] [3] [3] [3]

HP
0 0 0 2 0 5 0 2 0 0 0 0 2 0 0 2 3 2 0 0 0 2 0 5 0 2 0 2 4 5 0 2 0

The Tuning of the Monster

by David Moultrup

Even if you've tuned a guitar a bazillion times over forty years of guitar playing, you may want to check out some invaluable tricks used by professional tuners.

Tuning remains one of the great mysteries in the performer's world. Most musicians have what could be called a personal relationship with tuning. Some tackle it with obsessive determination, some with anxiety, some with exasperation and frustration. That it remains so mysterious for so many is interesting, considering the immense amount of time and energy invested in practicing instruments and preparing performances. If it is too mysterious, it also can be a problem, for example, for other musicians on the gig who are cursed with ears that can hear an out of tune string from across the hall.

Improved technology has helped rescue people who consider themselves frequency-impaired. Those fancy little boxes with lights are great at noisy jam sessions, clubs, and stages that echo like canyons. But there's still ample reason to consider that a good pair of ears, in a quiet room, could out-do the best technology. Those ears, though, need a little bit of training to do their job. More training, that is, than "match the tone at the 5th fret with the next higher string".

But there's not all that much to know! For everybody getting ready to bail out now, take a deep breath, and grab hold of the side of the chair. A little knowledge about tuning can actually go a long way, and you may be pleasantly surprised with the feeling of control over the instrument that comes with actually being able to tune the monster on your own.

The Basics

Tuning is based on two interacting elements, physics and established customs. The physics of tuning is a hazardous topic which, for safety reasons, will but briefly be acknowledged. The topic seems to

trigger acute allergic reactions among many musicians. For example, one fellow was practically hospitalized with something that looked like anaphylactic shock when he heard the phrase "natural overtone series" related to one of his strings. He started to recuperate when he realized that the overtone series was directly related to those pretty harmonics he loved to use.

Another guitarist broke out in hives when he was informed that the frequency of his G string (how many times it wiggled back and forth) was double the frequency of the G found at the 3rd fret of his bottom string, and half the frequency of the G found at the 3rd fret of the top string. It didn't seem to matter that all octaves had that relationship with each other, he just never was able to recover. Some people, for unknown reasons, have found the topic interesting, and claim that it helps to round out their understanding of music. Those who are intrigued with that idea, and who are willing to enter the treacherous territory of the physics of sound on their own, are referred to the card catalogue of their local library.

Customs in western music have evolved to divide the space between the octaves into twelve semi-tones, or half steps. These half steps are the same as going from one fret to the next on a guitar or mandolin, or going from one key to the next on a piano. This twelve step custom is decidedly different than in other cultures, where many more steps have been established, with many "micro-tones".

There is, however, a relatively new custom related to dividing the octave into twelve steps. Years ago, in harpsichord times, notes were tuned to perfectly correspond to the natural overtone series. But if the strings were in tune for one key, this would leave them naturally out of tune for some different keys. It was a bit of a drag to take time to tune several times in the middle of a performance. (Banjo players, take note). Thus evolved what is currently called "tempered tuning", where, in effect, all of the notes other than A440 are fudged a little bit, so that the instruments can be heard to be "in tune" for every key, without being re-tuned.

This notion of tempered tuning may be of particular interest to those of you who have



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noticed that your favorite guitars seem to have the problem of being in tune for one key, and out of tune for another key.

Tuning Principles

Imagine two notes having a certain "space" between them. This is not the number of 32nds/inch between any two strings, but the invisible space between two sounds. An in-tune instrument has the "right" amount of space between each of the different notes. Admittedly, "right" is relative, and even a little bit personal, in that different people may have different preferences as to how to compromise. But there are generally accepted standards, which is what we will be using here.

The space between the two sounds, being invisible as it is, happens to have a different measuring tool available, by way of our ears. This measuring tool is a pulsing sound, called "beats", which can be heard when sounds are played together.

You can hear beats for the first time by playing the top two strings of the guitar at the same time, and changing the tuning of one of the strings ever so slightly. As you change that string, you will hear beats "above" the sound of the strings. Don't listen to the pitch of either string separately, listen to the beats generated by the two sounds together. These beats are the key to good, accurate tuning.

Certain intervals - unisons, fourths, fifths, and octaves, when tuned perfectly, will have "no beats" in the interval. If the two notes are too far apart, or too wide, there will be beats. Likewise, there will be beats if they are too narrow. The further away from perfect, the faster the beats. As the two notes get closer, the beats will slow down, and eventually stop completely. Since these intervals have no beats when tuned perfectly, they are the intervals which can be used to achieve the most accurate tuning for an instrument.

All other intervals will naturally have beats. This is particularly critical for the guitar as it relates to the 3rd and 2nd string, from G to B. This is a major 3rd, which has beats in it naturally. In effect, a major 3rd is too forgiving of an interval, and as such isn't a suitable citizen for being tuned. Basically, because of the natural beats, it is possible for these strings to sound OK relative to each other, even when one or both of them may be off relative to the other intervals on the guitar, which are much more critical to the overall tuning of the instrument.

There is one last, and extremely important tuning principle to mention. Although 4ths and 5ths can be tuned perfectly, with no beats, good tempered tuning intentionally puts very slight, slow beats in these intervals. Fourths are made "wide", and fifths are correspondingly made "narrow". Octaves and unisons (e.g., think of a twelve string guitar) are tuned perfectly, with no beats.

A Tuning Routine

- Begin with an A440 Tuning Fork, whack it on your knee, and hold the bottom end between your teeth. With the fork still vibrating, hit the 5th fret harmonic on the 5th string, the A string. Do Not listen to the two sounds separately. Listen for the beats. Just in case you can't find them, they should be vibrating through your head about this time. Tune the string until there are no beats. Whack the fork a second time if you need to, but don't forget to take it out of your mouth when you're done.

- Hit the 5th fret harmonic on the 5th string, and match it to the 7th fret harmonic on the 4th string, the D string. This time, after you have gotten the D string to be perfect, with no beats, *stretch* the interval slightly wide, by moving the D string up a tiny bit. Moving up means tightening the string, and making it more sharp.

There will be some play in the string, where you will be able to move the tuner and still not begin to get beats. Depending on your guitar, you may only need to move the D string up to the "high" side of the no-beat area, or you may need to move it so that you actually hear a very slow beat - less than one beat/second.

- Repeat this last process with the G string, with exactly the same goals and outcome.
- Match the open top E string with the 7th fret harmonic of the A string, which was the string originally tuned to the fork. Again, listen for beats and not for pitch.
- Tune the 2nd string, B, to the 1st string, E, using the 5th fret harmonic on the B string and 7th fret harmonic on the E string.
- Finally, tune the 6th string, the bottom E, by again matching the 5th fret harmonic on the 6th string to the 7th fret harmonic on the 5th string.

Be careful. With both the 2nd and 6th strings, it is now the top string that stays constant, and the bottom string that is adjusted. Thus, to make these intervals wider, the lower string will need to be lowered a tiny bit, rather than raising the upper string, as was done with D and G.

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As you undoubtedly noticed, no direct tuning happened between the 3rd and 2nd strings, again related to the natural beats in this interval. If all else came out right, this interval should have taken care of itself.

Debugging and Cross-Checking

Most of us seem to have the capacity to make a mistake here and there in this process. As you practice this routine, see if you can discover your own weak spots, and work to eliminate them. For example, I know I have a tendency to tune the top E slightly sharp relative to the A string, so I intentionally watch that and monitor it.

In doing cross-checking, examine the intervals that need to be as close to perfect as possible, the octaves, fifths and fourths. These intervals, of course, are found all over the guitar. For example, there is a fifth found between the 3rd fret of the 6th string, and the 4th string open. Generally, the fifths and fourths in the bass area need to have no beats in them. They need to be "dead" intervals.

The octaves should also be dead. This is particularly critical as it relates to playing octaves on the guitar, with the 1st and 3rd strings, 2nd and 4th strings, and so on. Take the 1st and 3rd strings as an example. If the tuning was done well, the G string will have been stretched up enough that the octave with the 1st string will sound clean, with no beats. This can be checked initially with the 12 fret harmonic on the G string, and the 3rd fret of the 1st string. Further checking happens with any combination where the 1st string is fretted three frets higher than the 3rd string (e.g. 5th fret of 3rd string, and 8th fret of 1st string.)

Multiple Strings

On instruments with sets of multiple strings, such as 12 string guitars and mandolins, this same basic procedure can be followed. It is crucial, however, to tune one of the two strings to a reference string, then tune the set with itself. An out of tune unison or octave will be much more noticeable than an interval that is slightly off with the rest of the instrument. The trick, again, is to not listen to the two pitches separately, but to listen to the beats created by the two strings together.

Further Horizons

Tuning lore has many more stories. For example, there are those who don't like

to tune with harmonics. Certainly, "hearing" the intervals with the beats, without the harmonics, is a useful skill. It would give you that many more options when faced with a stubbornly out-of-tune guitar. In any case, being grounded in basic tuning principles will give you the tools to tune your monster.

David Moultrip is a musician from Lexington, MA. He has a private practice in psychotherapy and has published in the mental health literature. In a past life, he was a piano tuner.

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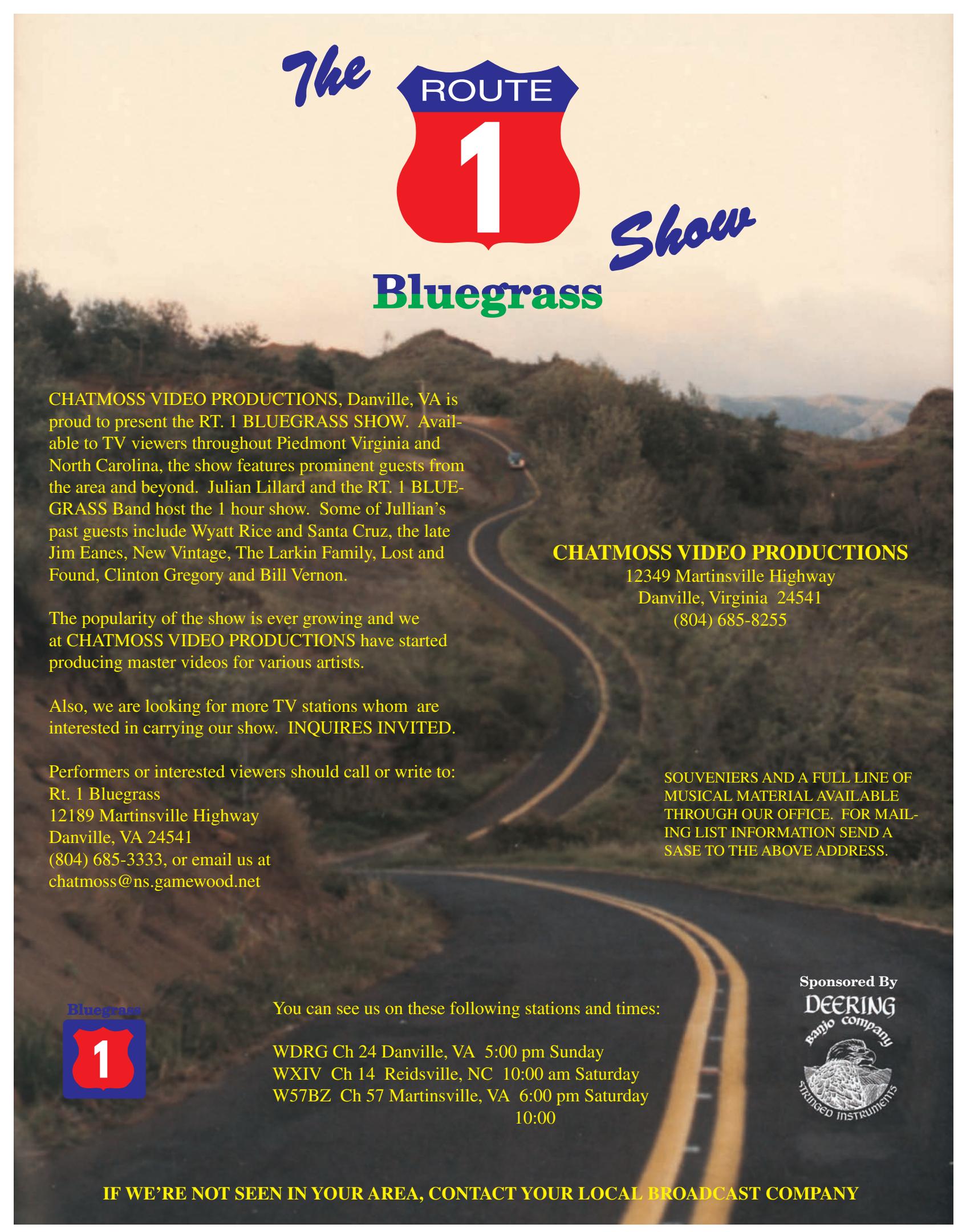
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