



Roots and Blues Fingerstyle Guitar

THE COMPLETE EDITION

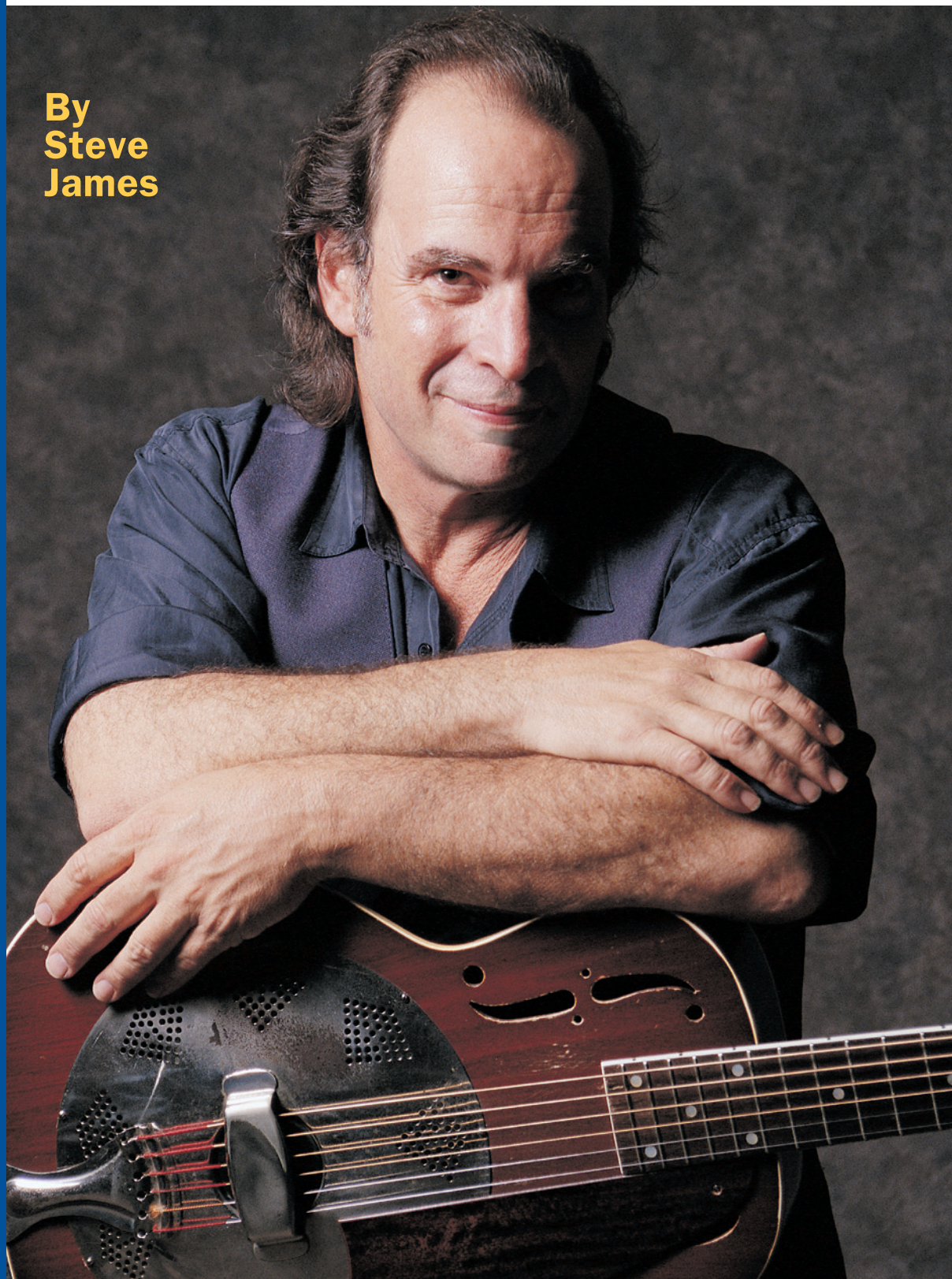
LEARN TO
FINGERPICK
THE 12
BLUES SONGS
INCLUDING

Take Me Back,
Milwaukee Blues,
Railroad Bill,
Things About
Comin' My Way,
Way Out on the
Desert, Spanish
Fandango,
and more



166 minutes
of video
instruction
and detailed
notation
and tab

By
**Steve
James**



Take Me Back

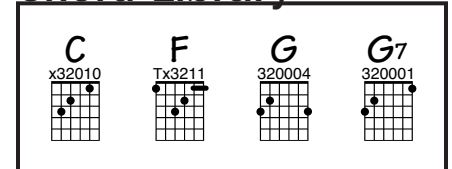
Traditional, arranged by Steve James

When learning to fingerpick American folk songs, blues, and other forms of roots music, it's both instructive and diverting to listen to themes that were popular a century or more ago when the guitar was gaining greater currency in American rural music. Many of these songs practically play themselves when they are arranged fingerstyle, and since some exist in numerous recorded versions, players intent on adding to their bag of tricks can gain a lot by comparing the various approaches employed by charter members of the Big Thumb Society.

The venerable "Take Me Back," a favorite of the ragtime era, is such a piece. It's been recorded by Texas greats Mance Lipscomb and Lemon Jefferson (who called it "Beggin' Back") and Memphis master Frank Stokes. Primal songster and one-man band Henry Thomas used its circular melody in his "Bob McKinney," and it bears a strong resemblance to other 19th-century standards—notably "Creole Belles."

Each of these guitarists had a unique version, and while some used a capo to raise the actual pitch, they all played "Take Me Back" in the key of C. We're going to do the same, starting by playing the melody against a simple alternating bass line and then adding "color notes" and rhythmic variations to give the arrangement depth and variety.

Chord Library



Take Me Back

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

Guitar Solo

F **C**

G7 **C**

F **C**

G7 **C**

The image displays a guitar solo for the song 'Take Me Back'. It is written in 4/4 time and consists of four systems of music. Each system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The solo is divided into four systems, each containing four measures. The first system is marked with a 'Guitar Solo' label and a '4' in the treble staff. The second system is marked with a '8' in the treble staff. The third system is marked with a '12' in the treble staff. The fourth system is marked with a '16' in the treble staff. The solo is written in a fingerstyle guitar style, using a mix of natural harmonics (H), plectrum (P), and fingerpicking (F) techniques. The notation includes various fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and string numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) to indicate specific notes and techniques. The solo is divided into four systems, each containing four measures. The first system is marked with a 'Guitar Solo' label and a '4' in the treble staff. The second system is marked with a '8' in the treble staff. The third system is marked with a '12' in the treble staff. The fourth system is marked with a '16' in the treble staff. The solo is written in a fingerstyle guitar style, using a mix of natural harmonics (H), plectrum (P), and fingerpicking (F) techniques. The notation includes various fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and string numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) to indicate specific notes and techniques.

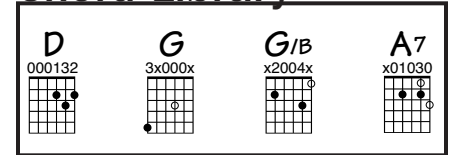
Milwaukee Blues

Traditional, adapted from Charlie Poole by Steve James

One of the best and most prolific of the early recording string bands was Charlie Poole's North Carolina Ramblers. Unified by Poole's unmistakable vocal style and idiosyncratic banjo playing, the band's floating membership included the bluesy, melodic fiddler Posey Rorer and guitarist Roy Harvey, who was one of old-time music's great fingerstylists. It's from the Ramblers' repertoire that I adapted this song.

In devising this arrangement, I tried to incorporate elements of Rorer's fiddle lead, Poole's banjo filigree, and Harvey's distinctive guitar fills. I recorded it on my *Two Track Mind* album, and it's often requested at clinics. It employs an alternating bass line and some easily played first-position chord shapes. First notice the altered tuning—the low E string dropped a whole step to D. (Note: when I recorded this arrangement on *Two Track Mind*, I capoed at the fourth fret—raising the actual key to F[♯].) This tuning makes it easier to play a strong octave bass line under the D chord, but requires altered fingerings of the G and A7 chords to sound the right bass notes on the low string.

Chord Library



Milwaukee Blues

Traditional, adapted from Charlie Poole by Steve James

Tuning: $\text{D} \text{ A} \text{ D} \text{ G} \text{ B} \text{ E}$

The musical score for "Milwaukee Blues" is written in D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It is a fingerstyle guitar piece. The score is divided into four systems, each with a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar staff shows the melody and harmony, while the bass staff shows the bass line and fingerings. Chords are indicated above the guitar staff: D, G, G/B, A7, and D. The bass staff shows fingerings and techniques like P (pull), H (hammer), and S (slide). The score includes a repeat sign at the end of the third system.

Milwaukee Blues

1. LATE LAST TUESDAY COME A SHOWERS OF RAIN OUT THE SPUR COME AN OLD FREIGHT TRAIN
2-5. See additional lyrics.

5 RID - IN' THAT TRAIN WAS OLD BILL JONES GOOD OLD HO - BO TRY - IN' TO GET HOME HE'S

9 TRY - IN' TO GET HOME JUST TRY - IN' TO GET HOME

12 WELL HE'S A GOOD OLD HO - BO TRY - IN' TO GET HOME

1. LATE LAST TUESDAY COME A SHOWERS OF RAIN
OUT THE SPUR COME AN OLD FREIGHT TRAIN
RIDIN' THAT TRAIN WAS OLD BILL JONES
A GOOD OLD HOBO TRYIN' TO GET HOME
HE'S TRYIN' TO GET HOME, JUST TRYIN' TO GET HOME
WELL, HE'S A GOOD OLD HOBO TRYIN' TO GET HOME
2. WAY DOWN IN GEORGIA ON A TRAMP
ROAD GETTIN' MUDDY AND THE LEAVES GETTIN' DAMP
GOTTA CATCH A FREIGHT TRAIN LEAVIN' THIS TOWN
THEY DON'T LIKE THE HOBOS HANGIN' AROUND
HANGIN' AROUND, JUST HANGIN' AROUND
THEY DON'T LIKE THE HOBOS HANGIN' AROUND

3. I LEFT ATLANTA ONE MORNIN' 'FORE DAY
BRAKEMAN SAID, "YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY"
I HAD NO MONEY BUT I PAWNED MY SHOES
I WANT TO GO WEST, I GOT THE MILWAUKEE BLUES
4. OLD BILL JONES SAID BEFORE HE DIED
"FIX THE ROAD SO THE BUMS CAN RIDE
WHEN THEY RIDE THEY'RE GONNA RIDE THE RODS
THEY'LL PUT ALL THEIR TRUST IN THE HANDS OF GOD"
5. OLD BILL JONES SAID BEFORE HE DIED
THERE'S TWO MORE ROADS HE'D LIKE TO RIDE
FIREMAN SAID, "WHAT ROADS CAN IT BE?"
SOUTHERN PACIFIC AND THE SANTA FE

Railroad Bill

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

While the steel-drivin' John Henry was a legendary character brought to life in song, Morris Slater (aka Railroad Bill) was flesh and blood—a black Alabaman who killed a sheriff in 1895 and, for the next year until he was killed by bounty hunters, eluded capture and was credited with a number of daring train robberies.

A standard for five-string banjo, “Railroad Bill” also works well for slide guitar in G tuning. Starting with a slurred third played with the slide against open bass strings, this melodic arrangement includes a bottleneck barre of five strings (bars 7 and 8). Practice moving your slide laterally to open up the fifth string for a beat while maintaining the thumb pattern. In bar 10 play the sixth and fourth strings open while using the end of your slide to play the phrase on the top two strings. Note how the melody resolves on the root (first string at the fifth fret) in the last bar.

Railroad Bill

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

Tuning: $\text{D } \text{G } \text{D } \text{G } \text{B } \text{D}$

G

with slide

The musical score for "Railroad Bill" is written in 4/4 time and features a guitar and bass arrangement. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the tuning is D G D G B D. The score is divided into three systems, each with a guitar staff (treble clef) and a bass staff (bass clef).

System 1: The guitar staff begins with a G chord (indicated by a 'G' above the staff) and a slide technique (indicated by a 'with slide' note). The bass staff features a 7-9-9 pattern in the first measure, followed by a 7-9-9 pattern in the second measure, and a 7-9-12 pattern in the third measure. The fourth measure shows a 7-9 pattern. The guitar staff has a melodic line with a slide, and the bass staff has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

System 2: The guitar staff continues with a melodic line, and the bass staff features a 7-9-9 pattern in the first measure, followed by a 9-7 pattern in the second measure, and a 3-5-5 pattern in the third measure. The fourth measure shows a 5-5-7 pattern. The guitar staff has a melodic line with a slide, and the bass staff has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

System 3: The guitar staff begins with a G chord (indicated by a 'G' above the staff) and a slide technique (indicated by a 'with slide' note). The bass staff features a 7-9-9 pattern in the first measure, followed by a 6-7-6 pattern in the second measure, and a 9-7-7 pattern in the third measure. The fourth measure shows a 7-5 pattern. The guitar staff has a melodic line with a slide, and the bass staff has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Railroad Bill

G

1. RAIL - ROAD BILL LIVED ON THE HILL HE
2-4. See additional lyrics.

C

5. NEV - ER WORKED AND HE NEV - ER WILL CRY - ING

G D D

9. RIDE RAIL - ROAD BILL

1. RAILROAD BILL LIVED ON THE HILL
HE NEVER WORKED AND HE NEVER WILL
CRYING RIDE
RAILROAD BILL
2. BUY ME A PISTOL AS LONG AS MY ARM
KILL EVERYBODY THAT DONE ME WRONG
GONNA RIDE
RAILROAD BILL

3. THIRTY-EIGHT SPECIAL ON A FORTY-FOUR FRAME
HOW CAN I MISS WHEN I GOT DEAD AIM
GONNA RIDE
RAILROAD BILL
4. RAILROAD BILL STANDING IN THE RAIN
GONNA PULL OUT HIS PISTOL AND ROB SOME
PASSENGER TRAIN
GONNA RIDE
RAILROAD BILL

Things About Comin' My Way

Music by Tampa Red

The single most influential slide guitarist in the history of the blues is certainly Tampa Red (né Hudson Whitaker 1904–81). His playing with pianist Thomas A. Dorsey on their 1928 smash “Tight Like That” revived the credibility of slide guitar in popular music. Subsequently, Red’s liquid tone, wide vibrato, laconic phrasing, and perfect pitch control directly influenced the playing of Robert Nighthawk, Muddy Waters, Earl Hooker, and Elmore James, plus a host to follow.

This transcription is based on ten bars of his 1934 recording of “Things About Comin’ My Way” (aka “Sittin’ on Top of the World”). Tampa tuned in Vastopol for this one—with the root note an F! Check the way he slides in and out of the third, fourth, and fifth degrees of the scale and uses the tritone (see measures 3 and 4). We’re don’t stick to alternating-bass picking here; the interpolated chords, especially in the fifth bar, are pure Tampa Red. Be sure to listen to what happens when you resolve to the root by sliding into the fifth fret on the second string (see measure 8 and 9).

Things About Comin' My Way

Music by Tampa Red

Tuning: $\text{D} \text{ A} \text{ D} \text{ F}\# \text{ A} \text{ D}$

Swing ($\text{♩} = \text{♩}^{\text{3}}$)

with slide

D

G/B **D** **A7**

D **A7**

Jack O' Diamonds

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

One of the centerpieces of Mance Lipscomb's show was when he'd pull out his big buck knife to play this nodal, modal gambler's blues. Fret everything with your slider except the suspended G note on the third string, first fret (measures 3, 4, 7, etc.). Play your thirds way flat—closer to F than F[#]—to give this a hollow sound. I can't play guitar in this style without thinking of Blind Willie Johnson, and I put a couple of his simpler devices in here. The "ghost notes" in bars 7–11 (the notes in parentheses) are played by covering two strings with the slide but only striking the upper one. The eight-bar guitar solo that follows the vocal accompaniment is another Johnson-ism; drop the melody you played on the first and second strings down an octave by playing the same pattern on the fourth and fifth strings. In addition to muting with your fretting hand, try chocking the bass strings with the heel of your picking hand to give the tune a little more "chunk." Do this by rocking your palm inward so the heel of your hand mutes the bass strings; this is especially effective after the thumb strokes that fall on the second and fourth beats of each measure.

Jack O' Diamonds

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

Tuning: D A D F# A D

D
with slide

* Slide slightly past the third fret.

Jack O'Diamonds

Melody

D

17

S S S S S S S S

21

S S P S S S S S P

Chorus

D

1. JACK O' DIA - MONDS A JACK O' DIA - - -
2-8. See additional lyrics.

4

MONDS JACK O' DIA - MONDS IS A HARD CARD TO PLAY

Verse

8

1. WELL I PLAYED HIM IN THE SPRING AND HE NEV - ER WON A DOG - GONE
2-8. See additional lyrics.

12

(THING) JACK O' DIA - MONDS IS A HARD CARD TO PLAY

Jack O'Diamonds

JACK O' DIAMONDS, JACK O' DIAMONDS
JACK O' DIAMONDS IS A HARD CARD TO PLAY

1. WELL, I PLAYED HIM IN THE SPRING
AND HE NEVER WON A DOGGONE THING
JACK O' DIAMONDS IS A HARD CARD TO PLAY
2. WELL, I PLAYED HIM IN THE FALL
AND HE NEVER WON AT ALL
JACK O' DIAMONDS IS A HARD CARD TO PLAY
3. WELL, I PLAYED HIM AGAINST THE ACE
STARVATION IN MY FACE
JACK O' DIAMONDS IS A HARD CARD TO PLAY
4. I PLAYED HIM AGAINST THE DEUCE
PUT THE JACK WHERE IT WASN'T NO USE
JACK O' DIAMONDS IS A HARD CARD TO PLAY

5. I PLAYED THE JACK AGAINST THE SIX
IT LEFT ME IN A TERRIBLE FIX
JACK O' DIAMONDS IS A HARD CARD TO PLAY
6. I PLAYED HIM AGAINST THE KING
AND IT MADE THE DEALER SING
JACK O' DIAMONDS IS A HARD CARD TO PLAY
7. I PLAYED HIM AGAINST THE QUEEN
AND IT TURNED MY MONEY GREEN
JACK O' DIAMONDS IS A HARD CARD TO PLAY
8. I TOLD YOU LAST WEEK
ABOUT AS PLAIN AS A MAN COULD SPEAK
GONNA SEND YOU TO YOUR PAPA PAYDAY

CHORUS

Way Out on the Desert

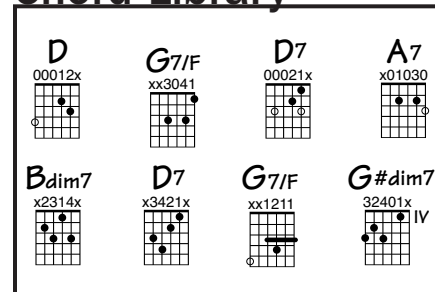
Music by Roosevelt T. Williams, arranged by Steve James

For years before his death at age 92, in July of 1996, Roosevelt T. Williams (aka Grey Ghost) led a loose aggregation of musicians in Austin known as the Grey Ghost Orchestra, and of which I was an occasional member. Even at an advanced age, Mr. Williams had formidable piano skills and could occupy the bandstand for hours spinning out blues, boogie, and jazz standards.

Grey Ghost generally didn't like to play in guitar-friendly keys like C or G (he called them "child chords") and would even transpose songs usually played in those keys to B \flat or E. One exception was his rocking stomp "Way Out on the Desert," which he played in D.

Arranging piano blues for guitar presents some challenges. It's hard to attain the wide tonal range of the keyboard without sacrificing drive, so it's often expedient to pitch the higher and lower voices an octave closer together. "Way Out on the Desert" includes a series of bluesy phrases and seventh chords. The chords are struck against a striding alternating bass with ascending and descending figures in the lower voice. The song also employs thumb rolls and diminished chord inversions, especially in the turnaround that concludes the 12-bar structure.

Chord Library



Way Out on the Desert

Music by Roosevelt T. Williams, arranged by Steve James

Tuning: D A D G B E

Swing ($\text{♩} = \text{♩}^{\sim 3}$)

Chords: D D/F# G7/F D D/F# D7/A G7/B

Chords: G7/F D D/F# D7/A A

Chords: B^{dim}7 A7 D C^{dim}7 B^{dim}7 A7 D A D

The musical score is written for guitar and bass. The guitar staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The bass staff is in bass clef. The score is divided into three systems. The first system contains four measures of music. The second system contains five measures. The third system contains six measures. Chords are indicated above the guitar staff. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 on the guitar staff and 1-5 on the bass staff. There are also some slurs and ties in the guitar staff.

Stomp Time Break

Chords: D D/F# G7 G#^{dim} D/A D/F#

The Stomp Time Break section consists of six measures of music. The guitar staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps. The bass staff is in bass clef. Chords are indicated above the guitar staff. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 on the guitar staff and 1-5 on the bass staff. There are also some slurs and ties in the guitar staff.

Way Out on the Desert

17


D D/F# G7 G/D G#dim D/A D/F# D Cdim7/Eb

22

A Bdim7 A7 D Cdim7 Bdim7 A7 D A

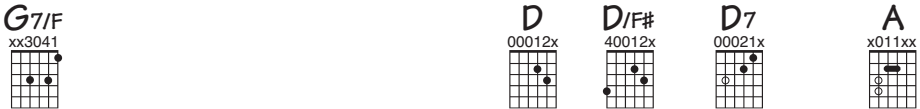
The musical score is written for guitar and bass. The guitar staff (top) uses a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass staff (bottom) uses a bass clef. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 17-21) features a series of chords: D, D/F#, G7, G/D, G#dim, D/A, D/F#, D, and Cdim7/Eb. The second system (measures 22-26) features a series of chords: A, Bdim7, A7, D, Cdim7, Bdim7, A7, D, and A. The bass staff includes fingerings (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and techniques (H for harmonic, O for open string). The guitar staff includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and techniques (H for harmonic, O for open string).

Way Out on the Desert

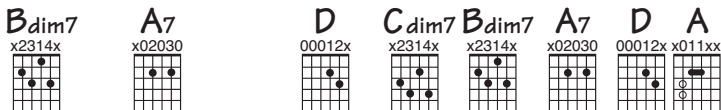


1. WAY OUT ON THE DES-ERT LOOK-ING AT THE BURN - ING SUN ____ WAY

2-5. See additional lyrics.



5 OUT ON THE DES-ERT LOOK-ING AT THE BURN - ING SUN ____ CAN'T



9 NO - BOD - Y LOVE ME LIKE ____ MY BA - BY DONE ____

1. WAY OUT ON THE DESERT
LOOKING AT THE BURNIN' SUN
WAY OUT ON THE DESERT
LOOKING AT THE BURNIN' SUN
CAN'T NOBODY LOVE ME
LIKE MY BABY DONE

2. HEY, HEY
OUT ON THE WESTERN PLAINS
WAY OUT ON THE DESERT
OUT ON THE WESTERN PLAINS
CAN'T FIND NOBODY
KNOWS MY BABY'S NAME

3. IT'S A LOWDOWN
LOWDOWN DIRTY SHAME
IT'S A LOWDOWN

LOWDOWN DIRTY SHAME
CRAZY 'BOUT THAT WOMAN
SCARED TO CALL HER NAME

4. GONNA LEAVE
GONNA LEAVE YOUR NO GOOD TOWN
GONNA LEAVE,
GONNA LEAVE YOUR NO GOOD TOWN
EVERYBODY GONNA MISS ME
WHEN THEY DON'T SEE ME HANGIN' AROUND

5. I'M GONNA SING THIS VERSE
SWEAR I WON'T SING NOTHIN' ELSE
I'M GONNA SING THIS VERSE
SWEAR I WON'T SING NOTHIN' ELSE
IF YOU WANT ANYMORE
YOU SURE GOTTA SING IT YOURSELF

Spanish Fandango

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

This four-part slide guitar arrangement was derived from a 1927 recording entitled “Logan County Blues” by the remarkable West Virginia singer/instrumentalist Frank Hutchison. His version of “Fandango” is unique among the many extant—at once quirky and close to the 19th-century version (right down to the inclusion of the B chord in the fourth part). The one liberty I’ve taken is to substitute a three-note arpeggio in the bass for Hutchison’s looser, strummed approach to waltz time. All the notes on the first string, save the pull-off in the third measure of part three, are played with the slide. Everything else, including the barre chords, is fretted. Like the original Spanish dance and later derivations, Hutchison’s version is played at a fair clip (*allegro*). Although it may be less conducive to dancers’ “indecent positions,” I prefer a slower tempo.

I like this song so much I’ve recorded it twice—once solo and once as a duet with dobro, Hawaiian, and steel guitarist Cindy Cashdollar.

Spanish Fandango

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

Tuning: $\text{D } \text{G} \text{D } \text{G } \text{B } \text{D}$

Part One

G

First system of musical notation (measures 1-6). The treble clef staff shows a melody starting on G4, with notes G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The bass clef staff shows a bass line with notes G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2. Fingering numbers (5, 9, 12, 7) are indicated above the bass line notes. A capo or fret indicator 'G' is shown above the first measure.

Second system of musical notation (measures 7-12). The treble clef staff shows a melody starting on G4, with notes G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The bass clef staff shows a bass line with notes G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2. Fingering numbers (5, 7, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5) are indicated above the bass line notes. Capo or fret indicators 'C', 'G/B', and 'G' are shown above the first, fifth, and ninth measures respectively.

Third system of musical notation (measures 13-18). The treble clef staff shows a melody starting on G4, with notes G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The bass clef staff shows a bass line with notes G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2. Fingering numbers (5, 9, 12, 5, 12, 9, 7, 9, 7, 9, 5) are indicated above the bass line notes. A measure number '13' is written at the start of the first measure.

Fourth system of musical notation (measures 19-22). The treble clef staff shows a melody starting on G4, with notes G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The bass clef staff shows a bass line with notes G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2, G2, B1, D2. Fingering numbers (7, 7, 7, 9, 7, 7, 7, 7, 0, 0, 0, 0, 5) are indicated above the bass line notes. A measure number '19' is written at the start of the first measure.

Spanish Fandango

Part Two

G

23

5 2-5 5 5-7 7-9 0 0 0 0 5 5 5 7

G/B G

28

5 5 5 0 0 0 5 0 2-5 5-7 7-9 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

D G

34

0 0 0 7 7 7 9 7 7 7 0 0 0 5 0 0 0

Part Three

G C

39

5 4-5 4 0 1 2-0 1 2-5 0 0 0 0 5 5 5 7

G/B G

44

5 5 5 0 0 0 5 4-5 4 0 0 1 0 0 0 0

Spanish Fandango

49

D G

Part Four

55

D7 G B

61

C D G

Liberty

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

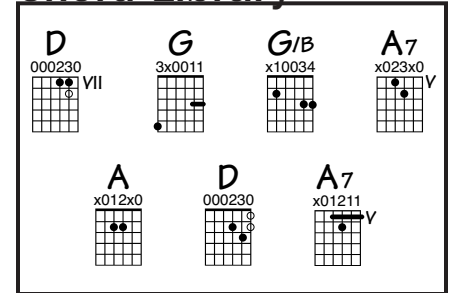
If you had to explain what a fiddle tune was to somebody who'd never heard one before, this reel would be a good place to start. Unlike a lot of fiddle repertoire, "Liberty" also works well for fingerstyle guitar; its tempo (fast, but not too fast) and simple, symmetrical melody lend themselves to the technique.

Tune your low string down to D and let an alternating bass line ring. The partial D chord stopped at the seventh fret with the middle and ring fingers facilitates the pull-off on the second string and the use of the open first string (E) in the melody. Two fingerings of the G chord allow an ascending and descending bass figure to be played inside the alternating line.

The hammer-on to the F[#] melody note on the fourth string in the second part (bars 17, 21, and 29) is played with the thumb, and falls handily on the fourth beat of the measure.

I've recorded this tune as a guitar duet with string wizard Danny Barnes on my *Art and Grit* album.

Chord Library



Liberty

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

Tuning: D A D G B E

Part One

The musical score for "Liberty" is written for guitar and bass in D major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The piece is arranged by Steve James and is a traditional tune. The score is divided into four systems, each with a guitar staff (treble clef) and a bass staff (bass clef). The guitar staff uses a standard tuning of D A D G B E. The bass staff uses a standard tuning of E A D G B E. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings. Chords are indicated by letters above the guitar staff: D, G, G/A, A, and D. The bass staff includes fingerings for the left hand (numbers 1-4) and the right hand (numbers 1-5). The piece starts with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The first system is marked with a "D" chord. The second system is marked with "G", "G/A", and "D" chords. The third system is marked with "A" and "D" chords. The fourth system is marked with "G", "G/A", and "G" chords. The piece ends with a "D" chord. The score is labeled "Part One" and "Tuning: D A D G B E".

Liberty

Part Two

D

17

S S H

2-3 2-3 1-2 1-2 0 3-4

2 0 3 1-2 2 3 0 2

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

P H H

3 0 2 3 0 2 3-4

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

A

D

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, and then a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bass staff features a double bass clef and a common time signature. It includes a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing rests. The second system continues the melody in the treble staff, featuring a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bass staff continues with a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, including some measures with rests. The score is marked with various musical notations, including slurs, ties, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano).

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, marked with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The piano accompaniment is written in the bass staff, and the guitar part is indicated by fret numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4) on a single staff. The melody is written in the treble staff. The second system continues the piece, and the third system shows the end of the piece, marked with a double bar line. The guitar part includes fret numbers and a final chord (0, 1, 2, 3, 4).

A

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 26 through 28. The second system contains measures 29 through 31. The music is written for a single melodic line in treble clef and a bass line in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing beamed eighth notes. The bass line consists of whole and half notes, often with fingerings indicated below the notes. Measure numbers 26, 29, and 32 are placed at the beginning of their respective systems. The piece concludes with a final double bar line at the end of measure 31.

D

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 29 through 32. The second system contains measures 33 through 36. The melody is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass line is written in bass clef. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano) and 'S' (sforzando). The lyrics 'The Rose Tree' are written below the bass line, with some words appearing in a larger, stylized font.

Bear Creek Hop

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

I first heard this Texas variant of “Buffalo Gals” played by San Antonio fiddler Bobby Rogers. He liked to break it out at Saturday night country functions where delighted crowd members would launch into a set dance of the same name. On the third part, Rogers would play a series of two-bar plucked and bowed figures and everybody would . . . well, they’d hop!

What inspired me to adapt this tune to fingerstyle and bottleneck guitar playing is something I could die happy without knowing. To play the hopping part, I strum down with my thumb while touching the strings lightly with the heel of my picking hand at the 12th fret—a palm harmonic. The same effect works when you fret the D7 if you slant your palm to touch the harmonic around the 13th and 14th frets. Alternate these with strummed open chords, and you’re getting the feel. Full of octave slides and banjoistic hammers and pulls, this arrangement works with or without a slide on your finger. I recorded a version for my *American Primitive* album.

Bear Creek Hop

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

Tuning: $\text{D} \ \text{G} \ \text{D} \ \text{G} \ \text{B} \ \text{D}$

Part One

G **C** **G** **C/E** **G** **D7** **G**

with slide

G **C** **G** **C/E** **G** **D7** **G**

Part Two

G **C/E** **G** **D7** **G**

G **C/E** **G** **D7** **G**

Bear Creek Hop

Part Three

17

G
8va - - 1

8va - - 1

8va - - 1

D7/A
8va

8va₁

8va

*Palm Harmonics
(12 frets above notes)*

P

H

21

G
8va - - 1

8va - - 1

8va - - 1

D7

G

P

H

H

H

P

Amos Johnson Rag

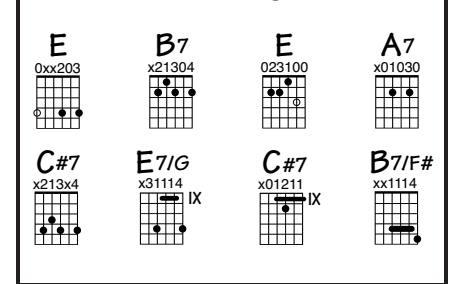
Traditional, arranged by Steve James

The introduction of ragtime into the country music vocabulary was concurrent with the more common use of the guitar. Here is a rag that originated with the guitar, rather than being adapted from piano or band music. Sam McGee recorded a version of the “Amos Johnson Rag” on guitar-banjo for an album he made with his brother Kirk and Fiddlin’ Arthur Smith in the ’60s (*Milk ’Em in the Evenin’ Blues*). When I met Sam, I asked him to show it to me. I didn’t have a guitar-banjo at the time, so I slowed the song down a little, added some bass notes and diminished chord passages to “guitarize” the number.

Later, I learned that Amos Johnson was a well known African-American guitarist from western Kentucky. He died in 1952 and never recorded, but even Merle Travis cited him as an influence.

“Amos Johnson Rag” starts with a familiar E chord shape. Fret the bass notes on the low string with your thumb. The first eight bars of part two involve ascending and descending voices (contrary motion) played off an E chord inversion played around frets 9–12. The last eight bars of part two are the same as those in part one.

Chord Library



Amos Johnson Rag

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

Swing (♩=♩³)

Part One

E **B₇** **E₇**

A **E** **C_{#7}** **B₇**

E **B₇** **E₇**

A **E** **C_{#7}** **B₇** **E**

Amos Johnson Rag

Part Two

Chords: E7 A/C# C7 E/B C#dim7/B B7/A E7/G#

Chords: E7 A/C# C7 E/B C#dim7/B A dim7 B7/A B7/F#

Chords: E B7 E7

Chords: A E C#7 B7 E

Guitar Rag

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

Sylvester Weaver (1896–1960) is often credited as the first recording blues guitarist because of his 1923 sessions with singer Sara Martin. From then until 1928, when he retired from professional music, Weaver recorded several guitar instrumentals, one of which was very influential on country music. “Guitar Rag,” which he waxed in 1923 and again in 1927 with partner Walter Beasley, was a theme often covered or adapted (as in Bob Wills’ 1936 “Steel Guitar Rag”).

Okeh Records’ publicity from 1924 claims that Weaver played by “sliding a knife up and down the strings.” Here is “Guitar Rag” as a bottleneck-style solo in open-D tuning. Use a combination of slide and fretted notes and chords. The barres in part two are done with the slide; the hammer-on at frets eight and nine on the second string (measures 19 and 26) is fingered. This allows the shift back down to open position.

Guitar Rag

Traditional, arranged by Steve James

Tuning: $\text{D} \ \text{A} \ \text{D} \ \text{F}\sharp \ \text{A} \ \text{D}$

Part One

D
with slide

4

8

12

A

D

A

D

Guitar Rag

Part Two **G**

First system of music for Part Two, starting at measure 17. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The system includes a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a bass line. Chord symbols **G** and **D** are indicated above the staff. The bass line features various fret numbers (5, 7, 9, 0, 2, 4) and techniques like slides (s) and hammer-ons (H).

Second system of music, starting at measure 21. Chord symbols **E/B**, **A**, and **A^b** are indicated above the staff. The bass line continues with fret numbers and techniques like slides (s) and hammer-ons (H).

Third system of music, starting at measure 25. Chord symbols **G** and **D** are indicated above the staff. The bass line continues with fret numbers and techniques like slides (s) and hammer-ons (H).

Fourth system of music, starting at measure 29. Chord symbols **E/B**, **A**, and **D** are indicated above the staff. The bass line continues with fret numbers and techniques like slides (s) and hammer-ons (H).

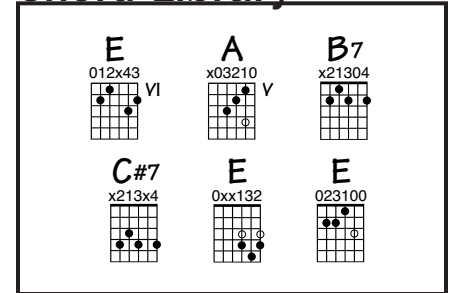
Railroad Blues

Music by Sam McGee

Sam McGee (1894–1975) drew his prodigious guitar style from early influences: his father’s fiddling, a man on a neighboring farm who showed him some chords, a doctor in town who played “parlor” style. He often recalled the black musicians who frequented the nearby community of Perry where his father once managed a store. From them, notably a guitarist named Jim Sapp, he learned the rudiments of country blues.

In the first part of his masterpiece, Railroad Blues,” notice the variant on alternating-bass picking used to simulate the sound of a train; it’s the use of one low bass note followed by three higher chord partials to mark the four-beat measure. Finger the E chord at the beginning of part two with your index, middle, and pinky fingers, leaving the pinky stationary on the root note while the other two fingers slide into fret four on the third and first strings (you’re playing the tritone and slurred third). He leaves breathing space after the double bent notes in part two (measures 23 and 24) as well as in the single-note solo—high-level musicianship throughout.

Chord Library



Railroad Blues

Music by Sam McGee

Part One

The musical score for "Railroad Blues" (Part One) is written for guitar and bass. It is in the key of E major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#) and 4/4 time. The score is divided into four systems, each with a guitar staff and a bass staff.

- System 1:** The guitar staff begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note E, a quarter note G#, and a half note E. The bass staff starts with a 5-fingered E, followed by a 7-fingered G# and an 8-fingered E. Chords are indicated as E and A7.
- System 2:** The guitar staff continues with a half note E, a quarter note G#, and a half note E. The bass staff features a 7-fingered G# and an 8-fingered E. Chords are indicated as E and A7.
- System 3:** The guitar staff begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note E, a quarter note G#, and a half note E. The bass staff starts with a 5-fingered E, followed by a 7-fingered G# and an 8-fingered E. Chords are indicated as E and A7.
- System 4:** The guitar staff begins with a whole rest, followed by a half note E, a quarter note G#, and a half note E. The bass staff starts with a 5-fingered E, followed by a 7-fingered G# and an 8-fingered E. Chords are indicated as E, B7, C#7, B7, and E.

The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, and fingerings (e.g., 5, 7, 8, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7) to guide the performer.

Railroad Blues

Part Two

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in three systems. The first system begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody is written on a single staff, starting with a whole rest followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics 'The Rose Tree' are written below the staff. The second system continues the melody with the lyrics 'The Rose Tree'. The third system concludes the piece with the lyrics 'The Rose Tree'. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, and bar lines.

The musical score for 'A' is written in 2/4 time. The treble staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody starts on a whole note, followed by a half note, and then a series of eighth notes. There are two slurs over the eighth notes, each marked with a 1/4. The word 'ritard' is written below the staff. The bass staff begins with a bass clef and contains a series of whole notes, each marked with a 1/4. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. It features two staves: a guitar staff (top) and a bass staff (bottom). The guitar staff is in treble clef and the bass staff is in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into three measures. Above the guitar staff, the chords C#7, B7, and E are indicated. The guitar staff contains a melody line with eighth and quarter notes, and a bass line with quarter and eighth notes. The bass staff contains a bass line with quarter and eighth notes. The score is marked with a rehearsal mark 30 at the beginning of the first measure.

Single-Note Solo

33

E

12 12 12

7 9 7

7 7 0 7

Railroad Blues

37

Vocal Accompaniment

41

E E7

45

A

49

E B7

53

C#7 B7 E

Railroad Blues

E
0xx132

1. YOU CAN'T DO ME LIKE YOU DONE POOR SHINE YOU

2-5. See additional lyrics.

A
x03210 V

CAN'T DO ME LIKE YOU DONE POOR SHINE

B7
x21304

YOU TOOK POOR SHINE'S WO - MAN BUT YOU

C#7
x21304

SURE CAN'T TAKE MINE

E
023100

1. YOU CAN'T DO ME LIKE YOU DONE POOR SHINE
YOU CAN'T DO ME LIKE YOU DONE POOR SHINE
YOU TOOK POOR SHINE'S WOMAN
BUT YOU SURE CAN'T TAKE MINE

2. WENT TO THE DEPOT, LOOKED UP ON THE BOARD
WENT TO THE DEPOT, LOOKED UP ON THE BOARD
IT READ GOOD TIMES HERE, BROTHER,
BETTER DOWN THE ROAD

3. WHERE WAS YOU, MAMA, WHEN THE TRAIN LEFT THE SHED
WHERE WAS YOU, MAMA, WHEN THE TRAIN LEFT THE SHED
STANDIN' IN MY BACK DOOR
WISHIN' I WAS DEAD

4. TWO LITTLE MONKEYS PLAYIN' UP IN A TREE
TWO LITTLE MONKEYS PLAYIN' UP IN A TREE
SAID ONE TO THE OTHER
"C'MON, LET'S MAKE WHOOPEE"

5. I MET A LITTLE GYPSY IN A FORTUNE TELLIN' PLACE
I MET A LITTLE GYPSY IN A FORTUNE TELLIN' PLACE
SHE READ MY MIND
THEN SHE SLAPPED MY FACE

ROOTS AND BLUES FINGERSTYLE GUITAR



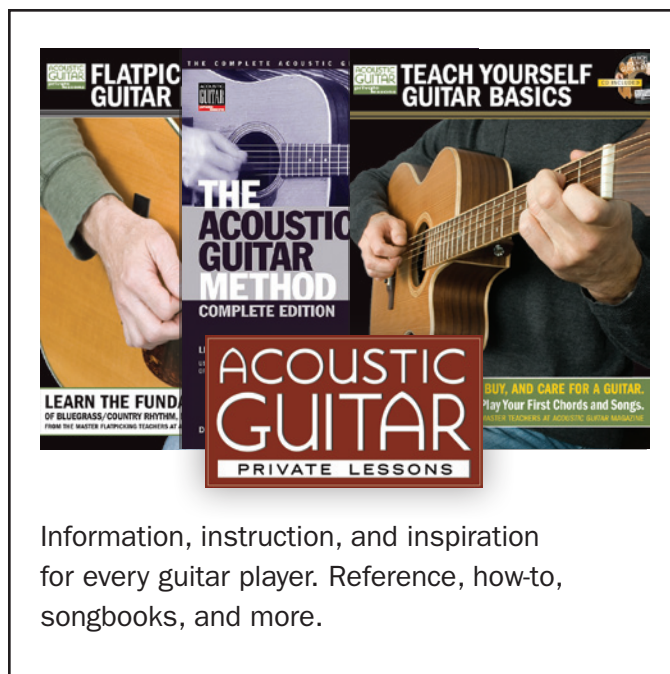
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