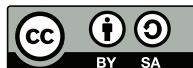




## SLOWER THAN DIRT TUNEBOOK

This tunebook contains a core repertoire of tunes to be played at the Slower Than Dirt slow/beginner old-time jam in Seattle. Tunes from this book will be played at every Slower Than Dirt jam; which ones will be announced in advance each month on the related mailing list and web site.

Tools used in the preparation of this tunebook include `abcm2ps`, `EasyABC` and `LATEX`. The idea came from Paul Hardy's tunebooks at <http://www.pghardy.net/concertina/tunebooks/>, and assistance with ABC formatting came from Pete Showman and his South Bay Old-Time Jam transcriptions. There is a GitHub repository of files at <https://github.com/rjl20/abc-tunebook> containing the source code for this book.



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If you are a composer or musician whose intellectual property is being used here without permission, please let us know by emailing [copyright@slowerthandirt.org](mailto:copyright@slowerthandirt.org) we'd really like to know when something that we think of as "traditional" is actually a recent composition, so we can get permission and give appropriate credit or remove the tune as necessary.

Neither of the founders of Slower Than Dirt is a lawyer. None of this is legal advice. For a canned rant about how the Copyright Act of 1976 outlawed folk music, talk to Josh using either of the contact methods above.

## Why a tune book?

Some people will tell you that sheet music has no place in old-time. These people are wrong. I can think of a few tunes popular in jam sessions and at square dances right now which are almost certainly out in the world because someone found them in an old manuscript, tried them out, and liked them enough to keep playing them. With no recordings and nobody passing the tune along through direct transmission, these tunes would be lost if they hadn't been written down and then read and reinterpreted later.

That's not what this book is for. But it's not axiomatic that old-time and sheet music are at odds.

Some people will tell you that you can't learn a tune from sheet music, because the essence of a tune is in the nuances of the performance—the subtle details and variations that sheet music can't capture. They're not wrong, exactly, because it's true that it's very difficult to capture much of the nuance of a performance in standard notation. But I think they misunderstand what sheet music is for, what a musician's relationship to sheet music is. A musician is not a machine for turning sheet music into sound. We have actual machines for that. When I'm reading a new-to-me tune from sheet music, I'm bringing my understanding of what this kind of music usually sounds like, or how I like it to sound, with me. I am *interpreting* the sheet music, not *executing* it. I'm probably not going to play the tune the way you learned it from Uncle "Vern" Hotchkiss, but this isn't an imitation contest; that's ok.

On the other hand, there is definitely a danger to thinking that any particular book's version of a tune is authoritatively "how the tune goes", or in always trying to play it exactly how it appears, note for note. Once you've learned a tune, sheet music can be a useful reminder of how the tune goes if you get lost, but learning a tune involves making it your own. Play it how it sounds in your head, not how it looks on the page. (If you're at a jam, make sure to pay attention to whether how it sounds in your head works with how the tune leader is playing it.) If you're reading it off the page every time, think about whether you're actually learning and playing the tune, or if you're making yourself into a machine for turning sheet music into sound. There's nothing wrong with sight-reading, but part of the point of this jam is for people to learn and practice a new way of learning.

So what is this book for? Learning music by ear is a different skill than learning from sheet music. And most jams, including Slower Than Dirt, aren't really teaching sessions, where a tune gets broken into parts and taught phrase by phrase. When you're a beginning musician and haven't yet picked up the skill of learning a tune on the fly, going to a jam where you don't know any of the tunes can be frustrating. So this book contains a core repertoire from which some number of tunes will be picked each month and definitely played at the Slower Than Dirt jam. If you want, you can practice some of them at home in advance and know that you'll be able to play along.

Some of the transcriptions in this book attempt to capture the essence of an individual performance, while some of them are stripped down to what I consider the bones of the tune. We may not play a tune exactly as it's written here at the jam, so you can think of this book as more a cheat sheet than Holy Writ. How I lead a tune at the jam will at least resemble the version here, though, so at least you won't run into the problem of "oh, this is the other tune with that name".

## On learning by ear

I don't know how other people do it, but I can tell you what worked for me. I listened to a ton of old-time music. Constantly. On the bus, walking around, at home while catching up on facebook: all the time. For months. If I wasn't doing something else that required attention, I was probably listening to old-time music on headphones. I wasn't necessarily paying a lot of attention to the music, but it was a constant presence.

The first few months got me used to some of the musical conventions of old-time. I started being able to identify phrases or riffs I'd heard before in other tunes. I started being able to predict what general shape a tune might have. What those first months of listening got me was a basic understanding that I didn't get by growing up with that music all around me in my community. It got me familiarity.

Eventually, instead of listening to the entire collection on shuffle, I picked a dozen tunes I liked and put them in a playlist, and listened to nothing but them for a month. I must have listened to those dozen tunes a hundred times. Each. But by the end of that month, I could hear those tunes in my head. I could hum along. I hadn't set out to learn the tunes, at least not in a way I understood as intentional learning. But I knew those tunes. Not that I could play them on an instrument, but humming them was the important part.

Once you can hum a tune, you can compare what's happening with your instrument when you play it against what's happening in your head. It can be frustrating to know how a thing ought to work but not to

be able to make it happen, but that's a mechanical issue with your instrument and gets better with practice. Once I could hum the tunes from my playlist, and actually kind of play a couple of them on the fiddle, I picked another dozen tunes and made a new playlist and repeated the process.

I did this four or five times, listening only to a dozen or so tunes at a time until they were in my head enough that I could hum or whistle them. And patterns started to emerge. There were phrases that appeared across tunes, little ornaments that could be stacked in different ways to produce different effects. I started hearing the pieces the tunes were built from. It was like slowly discovering the shapes of a lego set. I could start swapping different blocks in and seeing how they worked. Meanwhile, I was practicing playing tunes from earlier in the cycle, building the actual fiddling skill.

I don't think I'm a particularly good fiddler still, but I think I may now be fairly decent at picking up a new tune, as long as it's in an idiom I've been immersing myself in. I'm not going to pick up a Cajun tune as quickly, or a Brazilian choro piece. For Appalachian and midwestern old-time, though, I can identify the building blocks of a tune I haven't heard before and assemble them in my head, rather than trying to take in a whole tune all at once or note by note. What I'm getting at is that, for me at least, "playing the fiddle" and "learning new tunes" are almost completely separate skills. I can't say that what's worked for me will work for you, but I do think that the critical piece is being able to hear a tune in your head before trying to play it on an instrument. Whatever gets you there, do that. And do it a lot, because just like learning the physical skill of playing an instrument, it's something that takes practice.

## Tunes By Key

### Key of A

* Bile 'Em Cabbage Down .....	2	Cripple Creek .....	4
* Billy Wilson .....	7	Little Billie Wilson .....	7
Boatman .....	2	McClanahan's March .....	7
Boil Them Cabbage Down .....	2		

### Key of A Dorian

Cluck Old Hen .....	3	Cold Frosty Morning .....	4
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### Key of A Mixolydian

Old Joe Clark .....	9	Sandy Boys .....	11
Red-Haired Boy .....	11		

### Key of D

Angeline The Baker .....	1	Needle Case .....	9
Arkansas Traveler .....	1	Soldier's Joy .....	13
Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine .....	3	Spotted Pony .....	13
Johnny Don't Get Drunk .....	6	St. Anne's Reel .....	14
Lily of the Valley .....	6	Swannanoa Waltz .....	14
Mississippi Sawyer .....	8		

### Key of G

* ...a Little Further in the Fire .....	12	Seneca Square Dance .....	12
Golden Slippers .....	5	Shove That Pig's Foot .....	12
Jeff City .....	5	Tombigbee Waltz .....	15
Nail That Catfish to a Tree .....	8	Turkey in the Straw .....	15
Possum up a Gum Stump .....	10	* Union Maid .....	10
Red Wing .....	10	* Waiting for the Federals .....	12

## Tunes By Title

* ...a Little Further in the Fire (G) .....	12	Nail That Catfish to a Tree (G).....	8
Angeline The Baker (D) .....	1	Needle Case (D) .....	9
Arkansas Traveler (D) .....	1	Old Joe Clark (A Mixolydian) .....	9
* Bile 'Em Cabbage Down (A).....	2	Possum up a Gum Stump (G) .....	10
* Billy Wilson (A) .....	7	Red-Haired Boy (A Mixolydian) .....	11
Boatman (A) .....	2	Red Wing (G).....	10
Boil Them Cabbage Down (A).....	2	Sandy Boys (A Mixolydian).....	11
Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine (D).....	3	Seneca Square Dance (G).....	12
Cluck Old Hen (A Dorian).....	3	Shove That Pig's Foot... (G).....	12
Cold Frosty Morning (A Dorian).....	4	Soldier's Joy (D).....	13
Cripple Creek (A) .....	4	Spotted Pony (D).....	13
Golden Slippers (G) .....	5	St. Anne's Reel (D) .....	14
Jeff City (G).....	5	Swannanoa Waltz (D) .....	14
Johnny Don't Get Drunk (D) .....	6	Tombigbee Waltz (G).....	15
Lily of the Valley (D).....	6	Turkey in the Straw (G).....	15
Little Billie Wilson (A) .....	7	* Union Maid (G) .....	10
McClanahan's March (A) .....	7	* Waiting for the Federals (G).....	12
Mississippi Sawyer (D).....	8		

Key: D

## ANGELINE THE BAKER

Musical score for "Angeline the Baker" in D major, 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems, each with two staves. The first system (measures 1-8) is marked with a box 'A' and the second system (measures 9-16) is marked with a box 'B'. Chords are indicated above the notes.

Measure numbers: 1, 6, 10, 15.

Chords: D, G, A.

Key: D

## ARKANSAS TRAVELER

Musical score for "Arkansas Traveler" in D major, 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems, each with two staves. The first system (measures 1-8) is marked with a box 'A' and the second system (measures 9-16) is marked with a box 'B'. Chords are indicated above the notes.

Measure numbers: 1, 6, 10, 15.

Chords: D, G, A.

Key: A

# BOATMAN

DANCE, BOATMAN, DANCE

Dan Emmett (1843)

5

9

13

17

Aural Source: <https://youtu.be/8lhS9xpybII>

Key: A

# BOIL THEM CABBAGE DOWN

BILE 'EM CABBAGE DOWN

6

10

14

Aural Source: Sarah Comer



Key: D

## BONAPARTE CROSSING THE RHINE

6

10

15

Key: A Dorian

## CLUCK OLD HEN

5

9

Aural Source: Sarah Comer

Note: The Cs with upwards slides indicate a kind of half-sharp, or slid up C.

Key: A Dorian

## COLD FROSTY MORNING

Musical score for "Cold Frosty Morning" in A Dorian. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a boxed 'A' and an 'Am' chord. The second staff begins with a '5' and an 'Am' chord. The third staff begins with a '9' and a boxed 'B' and an 'Am' chord. The fourth staff begins with a '13' and an 'Am' chord. Chords 'G' and 'Am' are also indicated above the notes in various measures. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Key: A

## CRIPPLE CREEK

Musical score for "Cripple Creek" in A major. The score consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a boxed 'A' and an 'A' chord. The second staff begins with a '5' and a boxed 'B' and an 'A' chord. Chords 'D', 'A', 'E7', and 'A' are also indicated above the notes in various measures. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).

Note: There are a ton of melody variations for this tune. This is just one of them.

Key: G

## GOLDEN SLIPPERS

*James A. Bland (1879)*

Musical score for "Golden Slippers" in G major. The score consists of six staves of music, each with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The music is written in treble clef. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: A, G, D, G, C, D, G, C, D, G. The score includes a repeat sign at the beginning and end of the first staff.

Key: G

## JEFF CITY

*from Bill Katon*

Musical score for "Jeff City" in G major. The score consists of four staves of music, each with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The music is written in treble clef. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: A, G, C, D, G, D, G, C, D, G. The score includes a repeat sign at the beginning and end of the first staff.

Aural Source: Caleb Klauder Country Band, Subdued Stringband Jamboree 2015

Key: D

## JOHNNY DON'T GET DRUNK



Aural Source: Rachel Eddy, <https://youtu.be/2WvaeilpcRc>

Key: D

## LILY OF THE VALLEY

*from Luther Davis*



Aural Source: Get Up In The Cool Podcast, with Cameron DeWhitt and Adam Hurt  
<http://www.camerondewhitt.com/getupinthecool/adamhurt>

Note: Adam says this comes by way of Dan Gellert.

Key: A

## LITTLE BILLIE WILSON

BILLY WILSON

3 3

Key: A

## MCCLANAHAN'S MARCH

F#m F#m

Written Source: Sarah Comer's second-Sunday jam

Key: D

## MISSISSIPPI SAWYER

Musical score for "Mississippi Sawyer" in D major. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a key signature of two sharps (D major). The melody is written in treble clef. Chords D and G are indicated above the first two measures. The second staff starts at measure 6 and includes chords D, G, A, and D. The third staff starts at measure 10 and includes chords D and A. The fourth staff starts at measure 15 and includes chords D, G, A, and D. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Key: G

## NAIL THAT CATFISH TO A TREE

*Steve Rosen*

Musical score for "Nail That Catfish to a Tree" in G major. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a key signature of one sharp (G major). The melody is written in treble clef. Chords A, G, and D are indicated above the first three measures. The second staff starts at measure 6 and includes chords G, D, and a first ending bracket labeled "1 G" followed by a second ending bracket labeled "2 G". The third staff starts at measure 10 and includes chords B, C, D, and C. The fourth staff starts at measure 15 and includes chords 1 D, G, 2 D, and G. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Aural Source: Steve Rosen, <http://nailthatcatfish.tripod.com/catfishmed.mp3>

Note: See <http://nailthatcatfish.tripod.com/nailthatcat.html> for T-shirts and more.

Key: D

## NEEDLE CASE

Musical score for "Needle Case" in D major. The score consists of four staves of music, each with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first staff is marked with a box 'A' and contains measures 1-5. The second staff is marked with a box 'A' and contains measures 6-10. The third staff is marked with a box 'B' and contains measures 11-15. The fourth staff is marked with a box 'B' and contains measures 16-20. Chord symbols (D, G, A) are placed above the notes. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

An alternate ending phrase  
for either part:

Alternate ending phrase musical notation in D major, consisting of four measures.

Key: A Mixolydian

## OLD JOE CLARK

Musical score for "Old Joe Clark" in A Mixolydian. The score consists of four staves of music, each with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff is marked with a box 'A' and contains measures 1-4. The second staff is marked with a box 'A' and contains measures 5-8. The third staff is marked with a box 'B' and contains measures 9-12. The fourth staff is marked with a box 'B' and contains measures 13-16. Chord symbols (A, E, G) are placed above the notes. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Aural Source: Sarah Comer

Key: G

## POSSUM UP A GUM STUMP

Musical score for "POSSUM UP A GUM STUMP" in G major. The score consists of four staves of music, each with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The first staff begins with a boxed 'A' and contains measures 1-5. The second staff begins with measure 6 and contains measures 6-9. The third staff begins with measure 10 and contains measures 10-14. The fourth staff begins with measure 15 and contains measures 15-18. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: G, C, G, D, G, C, D7, G, G, C, D7, G. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' over the first three notes of measure 10.

Key: G

## RED WING UNION MAID

Kerry Mills (1907)

Musical score for "RED WING UNION MAID" in G major. The score consists of four staves of music, each with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The first staff begins with a boxed 'A' and contains measures 1-5. The second staff begins with measure 6 and contains measures 6-10. The third staff begins with measure 10 and contains measures 10-14. The fourth staff begins with measure 15 and contains measures 15-19. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: G, G7, C, G, D7, G, A7, D7, A7, D7, G, C, G, D7, G. The score includes first and second endings for measures 10-11 and 15-16.



Key: A Mixolydian

## RED-HAIRED BOY

Musical score for "RED-HAIRED BOY" in A Mixolydian key. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a boxed "A" above the first measure. Chords are indicated above the notes: A, D, A, G. The second staff starts at measure 6 and ends with a double bar line. Chords are A, D, A, E, A. The third staff starts at measure 10 and begins with a boxed "B". Chords are G, D, A, G. The fourth staff starts at measure 15 and ends with a double bar line. Chords are A, D, A, E, A.

Key: A Mixolydian

## SANDY BOYS

Musical score for "SANDY BOYS" in A Mixolydian key. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a boxed "A" above the first measure. Chords are A, G. The second staff starts at measure 6 and ends with a double bar line. Chords are A, E7, A. The third staff starts at measure 10 and begins with a boxed "B". Chords are A, A, D, A, D. The fourth staff starts at measure 15 and ends with a double bar line. Chords are A, E7, A.

Key: G

## SENECA SQUARE DANCE

WAITING FOR THE FEDERALS

Musical notation for the first piece, "Seneca Square Dance" (Waiting for the Federals). The key signature is G major (one sharp). The notation is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves of music. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: G, C, G, D, G, G, Em, C, G, D, G. The piece is marked with a repeat sign at the beginning and end.

Swing the eighths  
Key: G

## SHOVE THAT PIG'S FOOT...

...A LITTLE FURTHER IN THE FIRE

Musical notation for the second piece, "Shove That Pig's Foot..." (A Little Further in the Fire). The key signature is G major (one sharp). The notation is in 4/4 time and consists of four staves of music. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: G, C, G, D, G, C, G, D, G, G, D, G, G, D, G. The piece is marked with a repeat sign at the beginning and end.

Aural Source: Bruce Molsky, <https://youtu.be/vBljR39WYfM>

Key: D

## SOLDIER'S JOY

Musical score for **SOLDIER'S JOY** in D major. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1-10, and the second system contains measures 11-20. The key signature is D major (two sharps). The score includes chord markings (D, G, A) and section markers (A, B). Measure numbers 6, 10, and 15 are indicated at the start of their respective staves.

Key: D

## SPOTTED PONY

Musical score for **SPOTTED PONY** in D major. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1-8, and the second system contains measures 9-16. The key signature is D major (two sharps). The score includes chord markings (D, G, A) and section markers (A, B). Measure numbers 5, 9, and 13 are indicated at the start of their respective staves.

Note: Most people play this in the opposite order, with the A and B parts swapped.  
That is how it appears on older recordings where the tune is called "Snowshoes".

Key: D

## ST. ANNE'S REEL

Key: D

St. Anne's Reel

Chords: D, G, A, Em

Waltz  
Key: D

## SWANNANOA WALTZ

Rayna Gellert

Key: D

Swannanoa Waltz

Chords: D, G, A

NB: Dotted pairs should be played in triplet time.

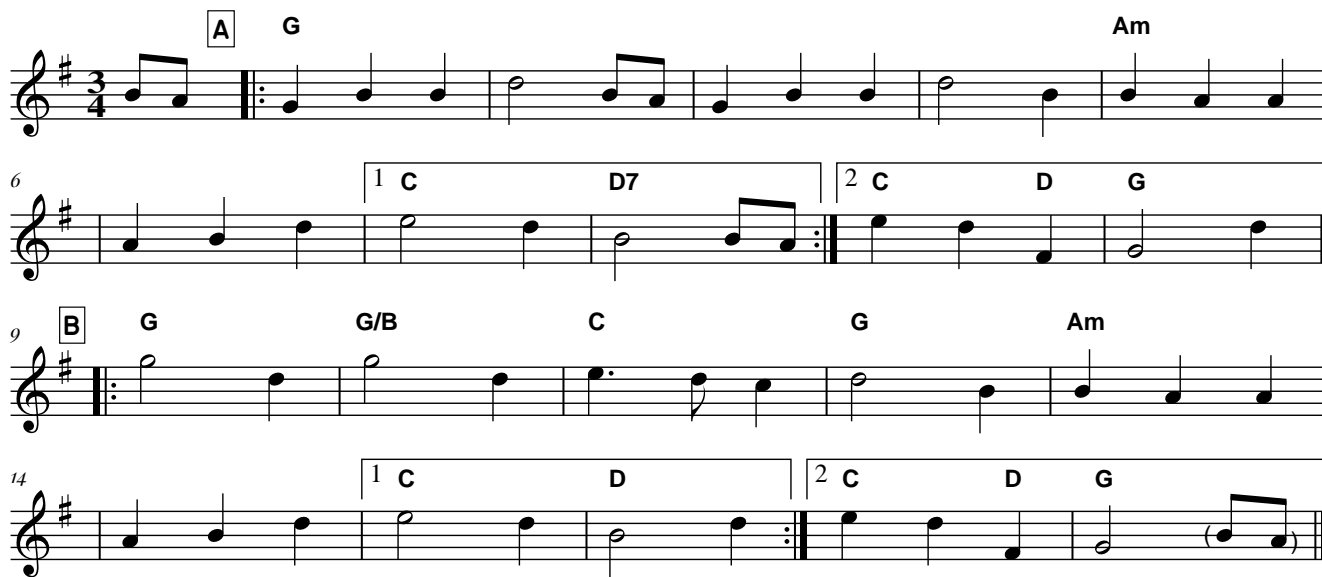
Written as:  Played as: 

Aural Source: Rayna Gellert, Ways of the World  
<https://youtu.be/BrNdEIFrIp4>

Note: In the original, the fiddle is tuned ADAE with drones and double stops throughout.

Waltz  
Key: G

## TOMBIGBEE WALTZ



Musical score for Tombigbee Waltz, Key: G, 3/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It features a repeat sign followed by a measure of G4, then a series of eighth and quarter notes. Above the staff, a box labeled 'A' is positioned over the first measure, and a 'G' chord symbol is above the second measure. The second staff continues the melody, with a first ending bracket over measures 5 and 6 (C4, D4, E4) and a second ending bracket over measures 7 and 8 (C4, D4, G4). Above the staff, a 'G' chord symbol is above the first measure, and 'Am' is above the eighth measure. The third staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 3/4 time signature. It features a repeat sign followed by a measure of G4, then a series of eighth and quarter notes. Above the staff, a box labeled 'B' is positioned over the first measure, and 'G', 'G/B', 'C', 'G', and 'Am' chord symbols are above the subsequent measures. The fourth staff continues the melody, with a first ending bracket over measures 13 and 14 (C4, D4) and a second ending bracket over measures 15 and 16 (C4, D4, G4). Above the staff, a 'G' chord symbol is above the first measure, and 'C', 'D', and 'G' chord symbols are above the subsequent measures.

Key: G

## TURKEY IN THE STRAW



Musical score for Turkey in the Straw, Key: G, 3/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It features a repeat sign followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. Above the staff, a 'G' chord symbol is above the first measure, and a 'D' chord symbol is above the eighth measure. The second staff continues the melody, with a first ending bracket over measures 5 and 6 (D4, G4) and a second ending bracket over measures 7 and 8 (D4, G4). Above the staff, 'G' and 'C' chord symbols are above the first two measures, and 'D' and 'G' chord symbols are above the subsequent measures. The third staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 3/4 time signature. It features a repeat sign followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. Above the staff, 'G' and 'C' chord symbols are above the first two measures. The fourth staff continues the melody, with a first ending bracket over measures 13 and 14 (D4, G4) and a second ending bracket over measures 15 and 16 (D4, G4). Above the staff, 'G' and 'D' chord symbols are above the first two measures, and 'G' and 'D' chord symbols are above the subsequent measures.

Written Source: Sarah Comer, Dusty Strings dance band class.