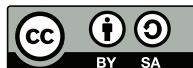




SLOWER THAN DIRT TUNEBOOK

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 L^AT_EX. 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 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

Boatman	2
Boil Them Cabbage Down	3
Cripple Creek.....	4
Little Billie Wilson	7
McClanahan's March	8

Key of A Dorian

Abe's Retreat.....	1
Cluck Old Hen.....	4

Key of A Mixolydian

Old Joe Clark	10
Red-Haired Boy	11
Sandy Boys.....	12

Key of D

Angeline The Baker.....	1
Arkansas Traveler.....	2

Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine	3
Johnny Don't Get Drunk	6
Lily of the Valley	7
Mississippi Sawyer.....	8
Needle Case	9
Soldier's Joy	13
Spotted Pony	14
St. Anne's Reel.....	14
Swannanoa Waltz.....	15

Key of G

Golden Slippers.....	5
Jeff City	5
Nail That Catfish to a Tree	9
Possum up a Gum Stump.....	10
Red Wing	11
Seneca Square Dance	12
Shove That Pig's Foot.....	13
Tombigbee Waltz	15
Turkey in the Straw	16

Tunes By Title

Abe's Retreat (A Dorian)	1	Needle Case (D)	9
Angeline The Baker (D)	1	Old Joe Clark (A Mixolydian)	10
Arkansas Traveler (D)	2	Possum up a Gum Stump (G)	10
Boatman (A)	2	Red-Haired Boy (A Mixolydian)	11
Boil Them Cabbage Down (A)	3	Red Wing (G)	11
Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine (D)	3	Sandy Boys (A Mixolydian)	12
Cluck Old Hen (A Dorian)	4	Seneca Square Dance (G)	12
Cripple Creek (A)	4	Shove That Pig's Foot... (G)	13
Golden Slippers (G)	5	Soldier's Joy (D)	13
Jeff City (G)	5	Spotted Pony (D)	14
Johnny Don't Get Drunk (D)	6	St. Anne's Reel (D)	14
Lily of the Valley (D)	7	Swannanoa Waltz (D)	15
Little Billie Wilson (A)	7	Tombigbee Waltz (G)	15
McClanahan's March (A)	8	Turkey in the Straw (G)	16
Mississippi Sawyer (D)	8		
Nail That Catfish to a Tree (G)	9		

Key: A Dorian

ABE'S RETREAT

THE BATTLE OF BULL RUN

from Dwight Diller

Aural Source: Dwight Diller, <http://youtu.be/G6mQKPkQ8eE>

Note: # notes marked with a hash above are kind of half-sharp, or slide from natural towards sharp.

Fiddle in cross-A tuning for drones and octave shifts. Standard tuning works, but isn't as fun.

This performance is all about the rhythm, so definitely watch the video.

NB: Dwight is playing it in cross-G; I've set it in A.

Key: D

ANGELINE THE BAKER

Key: D

ARKANSAS TRAVELER

5

8

13

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

Musical score for "BOIL THEM CABBAGE DOWN" in Key of A. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo/style is indicated as "Slower Than Dirt Old-Time Jam Tunebook [Feb 16, 2017]".

The score consists of two systems, each with two staves. The first system (measures 1-8) is marked with a box 'A' above the first measure. The second system (measures 9-16) is marked with a box 'B' above the first measure. The score includes various chords (A, D, E7) and a repeat sign at the end of the second system.



Aural Source: Sarah Comer

Key: D

BONAPARTE CROSSING THE RHINE

Musical score for "BONAPARTE CROSSING THE RHINE" in Key of D. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo/style is indicated as "Slower Than Dirt Old-Time Jam Tunebook [Feb 16, 2017]".

The score consists of two systems, each with two staves. The first system (measures 1-8) is marked with a box 'A' above the first measure. The second system (measures 9-16) is marked with a box 'B' above the first measure. The score includes various chords (D, G, A) and a repeat sign at the end of the second system.



Key: A Dorian

CLUCK OLD HEN

Musical notation for "Cluck Old Hen" in A Dorian. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The melody is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 8, and the second system contains measures 9 through 16. Chords are indicated by letters A, G, and E above the notes. Measure 1 is marked with a box containing the letter A. Measure 9 is marked with a box containing the letter B. The melody ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Aural Source: Sarah Comer

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

Key: A

CRIPPLE CREEK

Musical notation for "Cripple Creek" in A major. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The melody is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 8, and the second system contains measures 9 through 16. Chords are indicated by letters A, D, E7, and A above the notes. Measure 1 is marked with a box containing the letter A. Measure 9 is marked with a box containing the letter B. The melody ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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 melody is written in treble clef. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: 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 melody is written in treble clef. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: A, G, C, D, G, D, G, 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

A

Section A consists of two staves of music in D major. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4, and the second staff contains measures 5 through 8. The melody is written in treble clef. Chords D, G, and A are indicated above the notes. Measure 8 ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

B

Section B consists of two staves of music in D major. The first staff contains measures 9 through 12, and the second staff contains measures 13 through 16. The melody is written in treble clef. Chords D, G, and A are indicated above the notes. Measure 16 ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. A first ending bracket labeled '1' covers measures 14 and 15, and a second ending bracket labeled '2' covers measures 15 and 16.

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

Key: D

LILY OF THE VALLEY

from Luther Davis

5 9 13

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

5 8 12 17

Key: A

MCCLANAHAN'S MARCH

1 A A D E A D E

6 B F#m A F#m A

11 F#m A F#m D E

Written Source: Sarah Comer's second-Sunday jam

Key: D

MISSISSIPPI SAWYER

D G

6 D G A D

10 D A

15 D G A D

Key: G

NAIL THAT CATFISH TO A TREE

Steve Rosen

A

6

B

10

15

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

A

6

B

10

15

An alternate ending phrase
for either part:

Key: A Mixolydian

OLD JOE CLARK

Musical score for "Old Joe Clark" in A Mixolydian, 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The first staff starts with a boxed 'A' and has a whole note 'A' above the first measure and a whole note 'G' above the eighth measure. The second staff starts with a '5' and has whole notes 'A', 'E', and 'A' above measures 5, 8, and 9 respectively. The third staff starts with a boxed 'B' and has whole notes 'A' and 'G' above measures 10 and 13 respectively. The fourth staff has whole notes 'A', 'E', and 'A' above measures 14, 16, and 17 respectively. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 'C' for common time.

Aural Source: Sarah Comer

Key: G

POSSUM UP A GUM STUMP

Musical score for "Possum Up a Gum Stump" in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The first staff starts with a boxed 'A' and has whole notes 'G', 'C', 'G', and 'D' above measures 1, 3, 5, and 7 respectively. The second staff starts with a '6' and has whole notes 'G', 'C', 'D7', and 'G' above measures 8, 10, 12, and 14 respectively. The third staff starts with a boxed 'B' and has a triplet of eighth notes 'G' above measures 15, 16, and 17, followed by whole notes 'C', 'G', and 'D7' above measures 18, 19, and 20 respectively. The fourth staff has whole notes 'G', 'C', 'D7', and 'G' above measures 21, 23, 25, and 27 respectively. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 'C' for common time.

Key: G

RED WING

UNION MAID

Kerry Mills (1907)

Musical score for "Red Wing" in G major, C time signature. The score consists of four staves of music.

Staff 1: Measures 1-4. Chords: A (above measure 1), G (above measure 2), G7 (above measure 3), C (above measure 4), G (above measure 5).

Staff 2: Measures 5-8. Chords: D7 (above measure 5), G (above measure 6), A7 (above measure 7), D7 (above measure 8), A7 (above measure 9), D7 (above measure 10), G (above measure 11).

Staff 3: Measures 9-12. Chords: C (above measure 9), G (above measure 10).

Staff 4: Measures 13-16. Chords: D7 (above measure 13), G (above measure 14), G (above measure 15), G (above measure 16).

Key: A Mixolydian

RED-HAIRED BOY

Musical score for "Red-Haired Boy" in A Mixolydian mode. The score consists of four staves of music.

Staff 1: Measures 1-5. Chords: A (above measure 1), A (above measure 2), D (above measure 3), A (above measure 4), G (above measure 5).

Staff 2: Measures 6-9. Chords: A (above measure 6), D (above measure 7), A (above measure 8), E (above measure 9), A (above measure 10).

Staff 3: Measures 10-13. Chords: G (above measure 10), D (above measure 11), A (above measure 12), G (above measure 13).

Staff 4: Measures 14-17. Chords: A (above measure 14), D (above measure 15), A (above measure 16), E (above measure 17), A (above measure 18).

Key: A Mixolydian

SANDY BOYS



Musical score for "SANDY BOYS" in A Mixolydian. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a measure with a boxed 'A' above it. The second staff starts at measure 6 and includes a boxed 'A' above the first measure, an 'E7' above the fourth measure, and an 'A' above the fifth measure. The third staff starts at measure 10 and includes a boxed 'B' above the first measure, an 'A' above the second measure, an 'A' above the fourth measure, a 'D' above the fifth measure, an 'A' above the sixth measure, and a 'D' above the seventh measure. The fourth staff starts at measure 15 and includes an 'A' above the first measure, an 'E7' above the fourth measure, and an 'A' above the fifth measure. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Key: G

SENECA SQUARE DANCE

WAITING FOR THE FEDERALS



Musical score for "SENECA SQUARE DANCE" in G. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a measure with a boxed 'A' above it. The second staff starts at measure 6 and includes a 'G' above the first measure, a 'D' above the fourth measure, and a 'G' above the fifth measure. The third staff starts at measure 10 and includes a 'G' above the first measure, an 'Em' above the fourth measure, and a 'G' above the fifth measure. The fourth staff starts at measure 15 and includes a 'C' above the first measure, a 'G' above the second measure, a 'D' above the fourth measure, and a 'G' above the fifth measure. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Swing the eighths
Key: G

SHOVE THAT PIG'S FOOT...

... A LITTLE FURTHER IN THE FIRE

6 10 14

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

Key: D

SOLDIER'S JOY

5 8 13

Key: D

SPOTTED PONY

A

5

B

9

13

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

A

6

B

10

15

Waltz
Key: D

SWANNANOA WALTZ

Rayna Gellert

Musical score for Swannanoa Waltz, Key: D, 3/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music. Chords are indicated above the notes: D, G, D, A, D, G, A, D, A, D, G, A, D, A. The score includes a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 3/4 time signature. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplet markings (3) and repeat signs. The first staff has a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the beginning. The second staff has a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the beginning. The third staff has a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the beginning. The fourth staff has a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the beginning.

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. Chords are indicated above the notes: A, G, Am, C, D7, C, D, G, G, G/B, C, G, Am, C, D, C, D, G. The score includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplet markings (3) and repeat signs. The first staff has a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the beginning. The second staff has a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the beginning. The third staff has a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the beginning. The fourth staff has a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the beginning.

Key: G

TURKEY IN THE STRAW

5

9

13

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