

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine's
Free Email Newsletter Lesson
January 2011

President Garfield's Hornpipe
arranged by Mickey Abraham

Thanks for clicking on this month's free lesson. Every month, when you click here, you will find a great new tune to add to your list and help develop your overall flatpicking technique and knowledge. This month I have dug out an old fiddle tune in Bb called "President Garfield's Hornpipe." Some great tunes don't get played nearly enough as they should and, to me, this is certainly one of them. But, be forewarned, although the melody sounds so pleasing to the ear, it is actually quite tricky to play on the guitar.

This tune was written in the key of Bb on the fiddle. We, as flatpicking guitarist, do not really spend much time working on Bb licks and scales, but this is not a problem. To play tunes in Bb, most bluegrass guitarists place their capo on the third fret. This turns your G, C, and D chord shapes into Bb, Eb, and F! Now, all your classic bluegrass runs are magically in the key of Bb. I have actually arranged this tune in "open" Bb and it works alright, but the capo will give you a more authentic sound. I enjoy playing songs on my guitar with the capo on the third fret as it produces a completely different timbre. Lastly, if you jam with folks who like to sing bluegrass songs, you will most likely encounter lots of tunes in Bb, or perhaps even up one more fret to the great bluegrass key of B.

"President Garfield's" is perhaps one of the most intricate right hand melodies I have ever played. Almost the entire tune is made up of crosspicking patterns. If you find these crosspicking patterns to be easy, you are one of the lucky few! Most players find it more difficult to alternate their pick strokes while constantly switching strings. It is much more natural to play on one or two strings. When you add in that third, fourth, or fifth string to the picking pattern, the alternate picking becomes much more physically demanding. I think it's important to be aware of what chord is going on in the backup while you are learning the melody. This way, you can reference little chord shapes to help memorize the patterns. You will notice that in the "A" section the crosspicking occurs over a three string G chord (open G, open D, and 2nd fret A strings) and a three string D chord (3rd fret B, 2nd fret G, and 4th fret D).

In the "B" section, you will notice how the crosspicking incorporates the entire C chord shape. Watch your pick direction and make sure you are still alternating your strokes even though you will be changing strings each stroke. I recommend that you keep your left hand on the chord the whole time to keep your notes ringing. To me, it is amazing how intricate the notes of the G, C, and D chords can actually get. Next time your buddy says, "that song is easy, it's only G, C, and D, lay this melody on 'em!"

Have Fun practicing this right hand workout! As always, if you have any questions or comments on this FGM e-lesson, or any great ideas for tunes you'd like to see posted here in the future, just drop me a line at michabraham@comcast.net

President Garfield's Hornpipe

Capo 3

Arranged by Mickey Abraham

1

G D

TAB

6

G D G

TAB

10

G D

TAB

14

G D G

TAB

18

C G D G

TAB

President Garfield's Hornpipe (con't)

22 C G D G

0 1 0 2 3 2 0 1 | 3 0 0 0 0 0 | 1 2 0 3 1 0 2 | 0 4/5 5 0 3 2

26 C G D G

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

30 C G D G

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