

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine
Free Monthly Flatpicking Lesson
April 2011

Boston Boy

arranged by Mickey Abraham

Hello and welcome once again to FGM's free flatpicking lesson portion of our monthly newsletter. This month I bring to you "Boston Boy," a tune made famous by Bill Monroe in his lyrics to the iconic "Uncle Pen." Monroe's song makes reference to his fiddle playing uncle and the fiddle tunes that he liked to play. "Boston Boy" was on his list! If the tune is good enough for Uncle Pen to play, and good enough for Bill to sing about, then it is worthy of being taught here.

"Boston Boy" is a typical AABB structured fiddle tune with an incredibly groovy melody. This traditional form makes the tune great for parking lot picking sessions and old-time dances. The chord backup is in the key of C and is very straightforward. The "A" section is done with only two chords (I and V), and the "B" section circles around the I, IV, and IV. For those of you that keep up with all my FGM lessons, you will note how much I love tunes with a simple chord structure. They really convey a message without much fuss, and lend themselves to melodic variations.

While playing the melody to the "A" section, your left hand will be jumping between first and third positions. This is another one of those situations where striking the open high "e" string will be the moment when your hand jumps up two frets. When you play the second to last note in measure two (open "e" string), shift up to second position so that you can play the fifth fret with you ring finger. Then, after playing the last note in measure three (fifth fret "g" string), shift back down to complete the line. This technique is very common when exploring fiddle tunes on the guitar neck. What is done in one position on the fiddle/mandolin neck is often two or three positions when arranged on the guitar neck.

I hope you enjoy working on this fantastic old-time fiddle tune. Once you learn it, teach it to your picking buddies and call it at the next jam! If you have any questions or comments on this e-lesson, or great ideas for tunes you'd like to see featured here, just drop me a line at michabraham@comcast.net

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1 **C** **G** **C**

TAB: 0 1 | 0 3 1 0 1 3 0 3 5 0 3 5 3 0 | 3 5 0 2 0 4 0 2 0 1 | 3 0 1 3 1 0 1

6 **G** **C** **C**

TAB: 0 3 1 0 1 3 0 3 5 0 3 5 3 0 | 3 5 0 2 0 4 0 2 0 1 | 0 1 0 2 3 3 0 2

11 **C** **F** **G** **C**

TAB: 3 2 3 0 2 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 4 | 0 4 0 2 0 2 0 1 0 1 3 1 0 2 0

15 **F** **G** **C** **C**

TAB: 1 0 1 3 1 3 2 0 | 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 4 0 4 0 2 4 2 0 | 0 2 3 3 0 2 0 2 3 3