

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine
E-Mail Newsletter Free Flatpicking Lesson
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Pilgrimage to Jerusalem

Arranged for FGM by Mickey Abraham

Hello and welcome back to the free flatpicking lesson portion of our monthly newsletter. Each month, when you click here, you will find a great new tune to add to your repertoire. This month, in an attempt to offer tune diversity, I dug deep into my collection of great tradition melodies. I dug past the bluegrass and the old-time tunes, past the Irish sets, and even past the swing standards to arrive at “Pilgrimage to Jerusalem,” a tradition Klezmer melody. Klezmer music is often described as Eastern European folk music, making it the bluegrass of Eastern Europe. Similar to a typical fiddle tune, “Pilgrimage to Jerusalem” has two parts, each of which are repeated, making the form AABB. I love the minor flavored vibe of this tune, and feel that you will enjoy the sound as well. As fans of American folk music, I feel it is important to respect and learn folk styles from all over the world, and understand how these cultures inspired American legends like Bill Monroe, Ralph Stanley, and Doc Watson.

The Chords:

Like the majority of Klezmer tunes, “Pilgrimage to Jerusalem” is played in a minor key. Minor keys are often used to express a dark or introspective quality in a piece of music. One unique aspect of this tune however, is the way in which the D major chord is used. Check out the lesson mp3 to hear the unexpected excitement the D minor to D major change brings to a tune that is based on the I, IV, V (Dm, Gm, A7) chords of the D harmonic minor scale.

Most of the chords for this tune can be made with standard open shapes. The only chord that may be a barre chord for you is Gm, the IV chord of Dm. To finger Gm, a lot of folks might play an “Em” barre shape at the third fret. If you want to avoid barre shapes, try playing a chord shape where you are holding the third fret of the high e, b, and g strings, as well as the bass note g on the low e string. Muffle the A string and you will have a pretty nifty sounding open Gm chord shape.

For the second part, you will encounter a fantastic sounding chord called Bbmaj7. This is not a barre shape, but it has no open strings -- I am using only my fingertips to depress the chord, with no barre of any kind. To make the Bbmaj7 chord, place your index on the first fret ‘a’ string, ring finger third fret ‘d’ string, middle finger second fret ‘g’ string, and finally pinky on the third fret ‘b’ string. Strum the Bbmaj7 and sit back and here the beauty!

The Melody:

Due to the large amount of space between certain notes in the melody, the pick direction and timing is crucial to making the tune sound correct. First, you should notice how the pick-up notes begin on an upstroke. Next, in measure 2, the first note is a down stroke, while the next note (on the “and” of beat 3) will be an upstroke. Please refer back to my pickstroke theory lesson if you are unsure of when and why to use a down or upstroke with your pick.

The B section begins to take on more of a straight eighth note feel. I love how the use of doubled notes cross over the bar line, carrying the soaring melody over the chord progression. To me, the melody is musically unexpected and predictable at the same time! I know this seems strange, but take a listen to the lesson mp3 and see if you can hear it. It almost like the tune is telling a story you have never heard before, but have experienced.

I hope you enjoy adding this minor flavored Klezmer melody to your list of songs. As always, if you have any questions or comments on this e-lesson, or any cool ideas you would like to see featured here in the future, just drop me a line at michabraham@comcast.net

Pilgrimage to Jerusalem

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1 **Dm** **A7**

T
A
B

6 **Dm**

T
A
B

10 **D7** **Gm**

T
A
B

14 **Dm** **Gm** **A7** **A7** **D7**

T
A
B

Pilgrimage to Jerusalem (con't)

19 **Gm** **C7** **F** **B♭maj7**

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

23 **Gm** **A7** **Dm** **A7** **Dm** **D**

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

27 **Gm** **C7** **F** **B♭maj7**

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

31 **Gm** **A7** **Gm** **A7** **Dm** **Dm**

2 0 0 | 3 3 2 2 3 | 0 2 2 2 | 2 0 | 3 2 0 4 | 0 0 0 | 3 1 | 2