

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine E-Newsletter Free Lesson

February 2010

“Dawgwood”

by: David Grisman

Arranged for FGM by Mickey Abraham

Hello and welcome to FGM’s free flatpicking lesson. This month I present to you a true classic from the archives of the “traditional” new-grass world. In the early seventies mandolinist David Grisman was a pioneer when it came to fusing other styles of music into bluegrass. His unique fusion of jazz, latin, and swing has come to known as Dawg music (after his nickname, the Dawg), and many of his original tunes have, over time, become jam session standards. I’d like to thank Craig Miller of Acoustic Disc for allowing me and FGM permission to use “Dawgwood” in my e-lesson. I hope you have as much fun learning this tune as have had arranging and teaching it!

It is because so many of Grisman’s tunes have become standards in the bluegrass and mandolin world that I set forth my goal to spread these now famous melodies amongst us flatpicking guitarists. The melody to “Dawgwood” actually makes a fantastic flatpicking tune -- the positions feel similar to “Billy in the Low Ground” and “Beaumont Rag.” I know that once you work it out, you will be sharing this addictive tune with your friends.

“Dawgwood” is like a combination of a fiddle tune and a rag. Their may be a few more chords than you are used to, but the melody is no more technical than flatpicking standards you may already know. In fact, once you spend a little focused time on this piece, you will be amazed on how hip you can sound with a simple melody! I feel like I have heard versions of “Dawgwood” with slightly different chords, but David insists that he has not changed the chords since 1974 when he wrote the song!

The “A” section is basically the same phrase played four times with a slightly different melodic ending each time. In the back-up, you will notice that Am is changed to an A7 right before the bridge. The way I pick the reoccurring triplet in the melody is by pulling off the first fret of the “b” string to the open “b” string with one down stroke -- then, striking the “g” string open with an up stroke. This way, the triplet comes out fluid and the pick direction stays correct! I love the chord progression on the “A” section. I’m sure you have played these four chords so many times, but have you ever put them in this particular order?

The “B” section picks up the groove with a cool D7 rhythm. I especially enjoy how Grisman leaves space between the phrases. This really allows the melody to speak like a conversation. When picking the turnaround look out for the eighth note rest -- You will have to begin this phrase with an upstroke. The triplet in the turnaround is picked with one down stroke followed by a hammer and a pull-off. You achieve three notes with one pickstroke.

At the end of the turnaround, unless you are ending the tune, use the E7 chord to get back to the beginning. At the end, you must leave the E7 chord off the turnaround (landing on the C) and this will conclude “Dawgwood”! Listen to my e-lesson mp3 to hear how the E7 works in the song.

Finally, after you learn the melody, I encourage you to begin jamming solos over the song. One important staple of Grisman’s music, and all the great guitar players that have been in his band, has been the improvisational element to their music. It is within the tradition of bluegrass and Dawg music to improvise over the changes to a tune. I asked David to offer my e-lesson readers a few thoughts on improvising through the changes of “Dawgwood” and here’s what the Dawg himself had to say:

“Well, there are several approaches towards improvising or soloing. You can relate to it harmonically (staying inside or outside the changes), rhythmically, and/or melodically. I like to use a combination type process. Sometimes you want to acknowledge so to “speak” the chord changes and, at other times you want to, more or less, ignore them. Ultimately, I try to play what sounds good, based on my knowledge of the song and what I’m trying to express with it, which is at times quite personal since I’ve had the experience of writing the tune.”

I could not have said it better myself! As always, please email any questions, comments, or concerns you may have on this FGM e-lesson or any great ideas for future e-lessons to michabraham@comcast.net

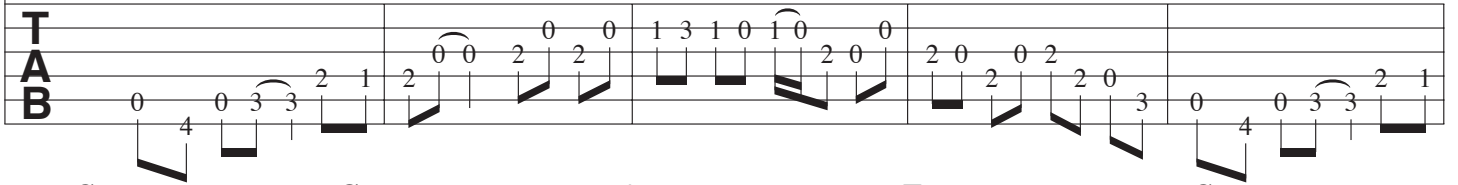
Dawgwood

written by David Grisman
arranged by Mickey Abraham

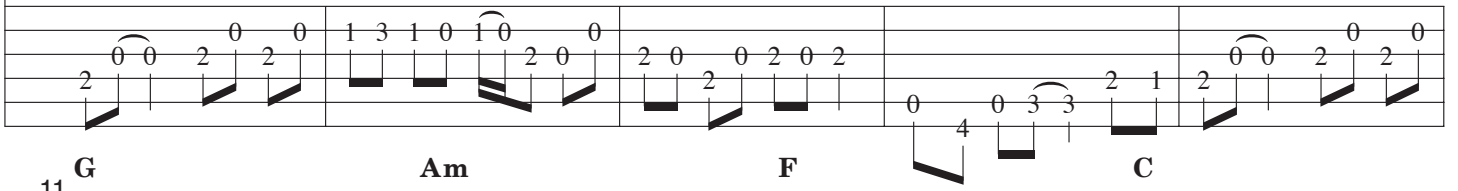
1 **F C G Am F**



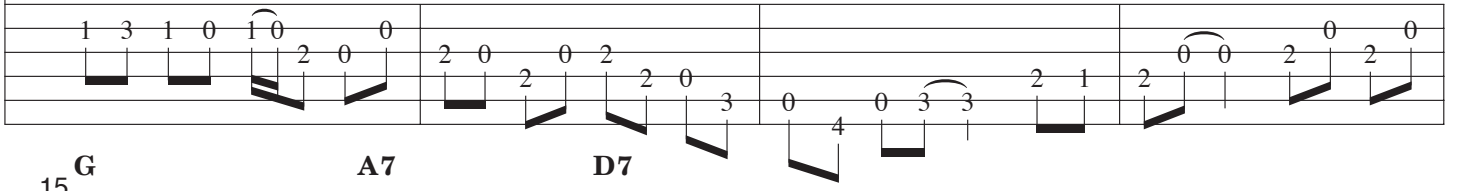
TAB



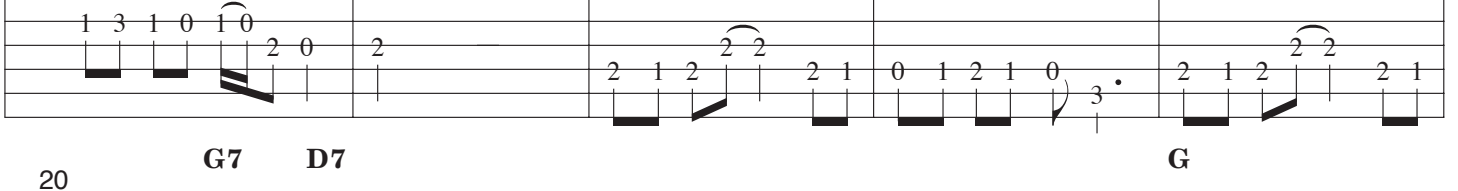
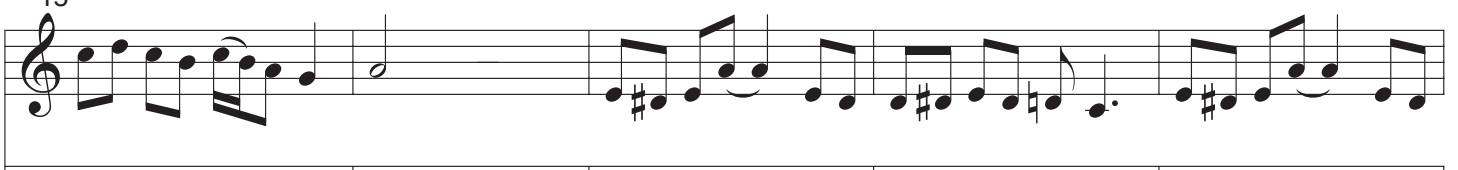
6 **C G Am F C**



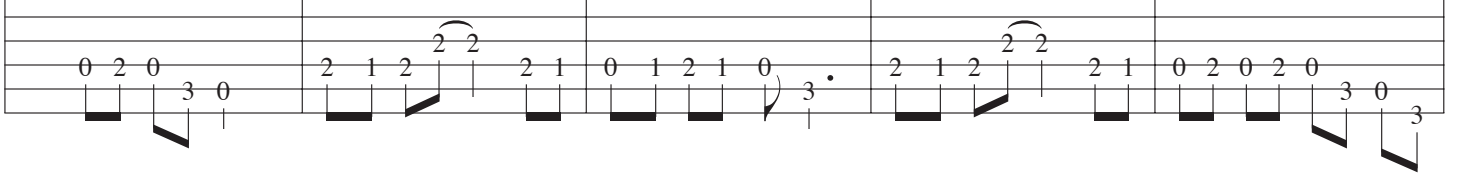
11 **G Am F C**



15 **G A7 D7**



20 **G7 D7 G**



Dawgwood (con't)

25 **F** **C** **G** **Am**

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

29 **Dm7** **G7** **Em7** **A7** **Dm7** **G7** **C** **E7**

3 1 0 3 3 0 3 0 0 0 4 2 0 2 3 2 4 2 0 2 3 5 5 2 0 2 3 2 0 3 2 2 0 2

33 **F** **C** **G** **Am**

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

37 **Dm7** **G7** **Em7** **A7** **Dm7** **G7** **C**

3 1 0 3 3 0 3 0 0 0 4 2 0 2 3 2 4 2 0 2 3 5 5 2 0 2 3 0 1 0 0 2 3