

Leather Britches

Arranged by Mickey Abraham

Hello to all FGM e-news readers. Welcome, once again, to the free lesson portion of our newsletter. It is my continued goal as your e-lesson instructor to offer a little something for everyone. Last month, I went out on a limb with a cool flatpicking arrangement of a David Grisman classic called “Dawgwood.” This month, I have returned to the flatpicking roots with a tried and true fiddle tune entitled “Leather Britches.”

I first learned “Leather Britches” from Tallahassee bluegrass legend, Gordon Scott, while teaching guitar at his music store. I have since come across countless versions of this fantastic tune, and I feel the version presented here is a combination of all the versions that I have been exposed to through the years. To this day, when we are at a jam session, Gordon always calls this tune first.

For this lesson, I have included two passes for the tune. First, I have arranged the melody and then I took an improvised break. I tried to incorporate Tony Rice style phrasing in the solo without actually copying any Tony phrases note-for-note. To me, this is more musical than learning a “solo” from beginning to end. I encourage you to do the same with my break. You can learn the whole thing if you’d like, but, if you like just one or two of the ideas, just take ‘em, and use it somewhere else in another tune.

Most of the ideas I use will work well in any bluegrass fiddle tune in G! To me, one thing that makes a great flatpicker, is being able to use your favorite and most creative licks in as many tunes as possible.

Lesson Tips:

- 1) In measure 17, I am using the open G string as more of a time keeper than part of the melody. Keep the third fret of the B string fretted while picking out the open G -- the sound will be fiddle-like and yet also achieve that “floating” sound that most of us flatpickers love to hear.
- 2) In the third beat Measure 22, try using your middle finger on the high E third fret and creeping your Index to the third fret of the B string. This may help make this phrase smooth. Another option is to use your middle finger for both notes!

When tackling the solo, remember that this is not meant to learn from beginning to end like a melody. Feel free to do so, but, to me, this is more of an insight into how some of these bluegrass licks are applied to a G melody. Those of you who are familiar with this style playing will even recognize some of these ideas from other times and places!

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1 **G** **D** **G**

5 **C** **D** **G**

9 **D** **G**

13 **C** **D** **G**

Leather Britches (con't)

17

0 3 0 0 3 0 2 3 2 3 5 3 0 3 0 3 0 0 3 0 2 3 0 3 0 2 0 0

21

C D G

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

25

D G

0 3 0 0 3 0 2 3 2 3 5 3 0 3 0 3 0 0 3 0 2 3 0 3 0 2 0 0

29

G Em Am D G

0 3 0 0 3 0 2 3 3 5 3 5 7 5 3 5 3 0 3 0 2 0 0

Leather Britches (con't)

33 **G** **D** **G**

7 4 0 4 5 4 0 5 | 4 5 0 4 5 4 0 5 | 4 5 0 4 3 4 0 3 | 2 2 0 3 0 2 3 5

37 **C** **D** **G**

H P **H P** **P** **P**

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

41 **D** **G**

H **S** **S** **P** **S**

0 2 0 2 4 3 4 | 3 4 5 3 5/8 6 7 | 8 6 5 7 6 5 5 7 5 0 3 4 0 0 3 0

45 **C** **D** **G**

S **P** **P** **S** **S**

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

Leather Britches (con't)

49

P P S H S P

53

C D G

P P S

57

D G

P P S P

61

Em Am D G

S S S P S P