

Maid Behind the Bar

Arranged by Mickey Abraham

Welcome, once again, to FGM's free e-lesson. Every month, when you click here, you will find a new tune, musical concept, or guitar exercise designed to improve your skills as a flatpicker. This month I present to you a beautiful Irish tune called "The Maid Behind the Bar."

This tune is considered a reel. A reel is a folk dance as well as a style of tune -- In Scottish dancing, the reel is one of the four traditional dances, the others being the jig, the strathspey, and the waltz. At traditional Irish sessions it is very common to medley tunes together often switching keys to add harmonic interest from tune to tune. You may hear a "set of reels" or a "set of jigs." In the months to come, I will teach you a couple more great reels and we will be on our way to flatpicking a set of Irish reels.

Being in the key of "D," I flatpick this melody out of second position. When picking a D major scale in open position the first fret is never used -- so, it seems logical to me to play all the second fret notes with my index finger. When the fifth fret appears you should play this note with your pinky. In the "B" section there is one spot where you must quickly jump your pinky to the seventh fret and then use your pinky again on the very next note (fifth fret). Other than that, the entire tune is picked with ease out of second position.

I love this tune because of its melodic use of eighth notes. The melody is very busy with notes and yet it has a very lyrical quality. The notes of the tune are not extraneous filler. In order for us to achieve the best sound when playing tunes that have extended eighth note passages, it is important to accent the first and third beats of each measure with a heavier down stroke. Listen to the mp3 and you will notice a pulse to my eighth notes. I am purposely striking the 1 and the 3 with more force. Further, I like to put a slight swing into the eighth notes, giving the tune a happy bounce. Make sure you play every note clean, for the chain of eighth notes is only as strong as its weakest link.

When playing back-up to this tune you will find some sections that switch chords every two beats. This happens first at the four chord turnaround to the "A" section - Bm, G, A, D. If you are unsure of how to play a cool Bm I suggest using a Bm7. It is easier and sounds better (in most cases) than a tradition Bm bar shape. Put your index on the 2nd fret of the A string. Then, put your middle on the 2nd fret of the G string. Finally, put your pinky (or ring) on the 3rd fret of the B string -- make sure to mute the D string and don't play either of the E strings! This is a popular voicing of a Bm7 chord and it sounds great when used in conjunction with D, G, and A style chords. You may even notice that this new chord shape has many of the same tones as your D chord. Sometimes the chords come at you fast in this tune but they sound great and are well worth the effort.

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1

D Bm A

6/4

TAB

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

Detailed description: This system contains the first five measures of the piece. The treble clef staff shows a melody starting with a whole rest, followed by eighth notes. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 6/4. Chords D, Bm, and A are indicated above the staff. The guitar tablature below shows the fretting for each measure.

6

D Bm G A D

Detailed description: This system contains measures 6 through 10. The melody continues with eighth notes. Chords D, Bm, G, A, and D are indicated above the staff. The guitar tablature shows the fretting for these measures.

10

D Bm A

Detailed description: This system contains measures 11 through 14. The melody continues with eighth notes. Chords D, Bm, and A are indicated above the staff. The guitar tablature shows the fretting for these measures.

14

D Bm G A D

Detailed description: This system contains measures 15 through 18. The melody continues with eighth notes. Chords D, Bm, G, A, and D are indicated above the staff. The guitar tablature shows the fretting for these measures, ending with a double bar line.

18 **D** **Em** **A**

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

22 **D** **G** **D** **A** **Bm** **G** **A** **D**

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

26 **D** **Em** **A**

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

30 **D** **G** **D** **Bm** **G** **A** **D**

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