

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine

Email Newsletter Free Lesson

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Nashville Pickin'

Arranged by Mickey Abraham

Hello and welcome once again to *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine's* free lesson portion of our monthly newsletter. This month I am very excited to share my arrangement of "Nashville Pickin'," a tune made famous by Doc Watson. I first learned this tune many years ago from the great Florida flatpicker, Gabriel Valla. He called it "Interstate Rag." I tend to call it "Interstate Rag" in homage to Gabe although I would know exactly what tune you were talking about if you said "Lets' jam that Doc tune 'Nashville Pickin.'" In reality, I feel "Interstate Rag" is a different tune with the same chord progression and very similar A section that involves a cross-picking technique.

Doc jams out hard on this tune and it really showcases the jazz/swing influence in his note choice. The chords and form of the tune are extremely simple, and yet the melody and feel implies so much more than what is actually on. Everyone who I share this tune with finds something about it that is addictive and musically valuable.

This lesson, although inspired by Doc's version, is not a Doc transcription. I chose to come up with my own licks that fit over the chord changes. Some of the ideas, like the altered G run in measure 75 and the whole tone movement in measures 49-53, are inspired by my friend and great guitarist, Brett Allan. If you listen to Texas style fiddling and swing you will encounter phrases like the ones heard in this arrangement.

In the back-up I have notated a few "chord extensions." These bizarre chord names imply what the lead is playing and are not necessary to be played in the chord. If it says G7 alt, you can just play G7. This tune has a lot of seventh chords which brings out the blues/jazz nature of the piece. Chords like D7, G7, and A7 are used in bluegrass and fiddle tunes all the time.

When I prepare licks for these e-lessons I try to come up with stuff that you guys will find interesting to practice and learn. The fun part is to try to throw in hip ideas but surround them with solid, time-tested phrases. When you hear the music, your ear begins to digest a musical lick you have "heard before." You are now prepared for what might happen next. The altered phrase acts as a harmonic surprise, which then leads you back into a predictable phrase. If the variation begins on an altered lick, this may be to confusing to follow. Likewise, if your altered phrase is not resolved to a more familiar one, this too will sound unsettling. It is an ongoing musical challenge for me to explore lines which sneak inside and outside the chord forms and try to make them sound musically correct. Click on the lesson mp3 to hear the interest the altered phrases add to the arrangement.

I hope you enjoy working on "Nashville Pickin'" and adding it to your list of great jam tunes. If you have friends that play banjo, mandolin, or fiddle I know they will be dying to a break over these changes. It's so simple and yet so full of room to explore. As always if you have any questions to comments on this e-lesson just drop me a line at michabraham@comcast.net

Nashville Pickin' (con't)

22 D A7 D

H P
2 4 2 3 3 3 0 1 2 1 2 1 0 3 0 2 0 3 2 4 2 3 4

26 D7 G7

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

30 D A7 D

0 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 0 4 0 2 4 2 0 4 2 0 4 2 0 2 4 2 0 2 0 S 0 2 0 1/2

34 D7 G7

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

38 D A7 D

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

Nashville Pickin' (con't)

42 **D7** **G7** **D**

5 3 5 3 6 5 6 6 5 6 5 3 3 2 5 2 3 4 2 5 3 4 0 2 0

46 **E7** **A7(#5)**

0 7 4 5 6 4 7 5 6 2 4 2 2 4 2 5 6 4 7 4 5 6 8 10 8

50 **D7(#9)** **G7(#5)**

10 8 10 8 10 9 8 10 11 10 10 8 8 9 7 6 6 4 4 5 5 7 7 9 6 8 8 10 4 6 6 8

54 **D** **A7** **D**

9 10 12 12 14 8 11 12 14 13 14 14 13 12 13 12 11 12 10 10 13 12 10 12 10 11

58 **D7** **G7**

12 10 12 10 13 14 10 12 10 13 14 10 12 10 12 13

Nashville Pickin' (con't)

62

D A7 D

66

D7 G7(b9) S

70

D A7 D S

74

D7 G7alt D

78

E7 A7(b9)

Nashville Pickin' (con't)

82

D G7

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

D A7 D

86

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

90

D6

3 | 3 4 4 5 | 3 4 4 5