

# Flatpicking Guitar Magazine

## Free Lesson

June 2013

# Whiskey Before Breakfast

by Mickey Abraham

Hello and welcome once again to *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine's* free lesson portion of our monthly newsletter. Each month when you click here you can be sure find a cool new melody to add to your constantly growing list of flatpicking tunes. Those of you who regularly follow my e-lessons know that I often delve into the never-ending abyss of fiddle tunes in hopes of offering obscure tunes that don't get played very often. This month's tunes is... not that. "Whiskey Before Breakfast" is one of the most popular fiddle tunes of all time. Irish players enjoy picking the melody while bluegrass players have taken this tune to the jam stratosphere. For this lesson I have included three versions of the classic "Whiskey Before Breakfast."

The first pass is based strongly on the tune's beautiful melody. If for some reason you have never learned this tune, stop reading now and begin working on it! If you are already familiar with this tune and comfortable improvising over it, I feel you will benefit from working through the ideas in my variations. It is not essential to learn my variations note for note. I jam packed these measures with cool and challenging ideas. You may find that you really dig a certain tag or a certain lick in which case I encourage you to steal the phrase and insert it into your own playing. My ideas are all ones that I've picked up from listening to other great musicians.

When arranging solos and variations for tunes like "Whiskey Before Breakfast" I try to stay away from playing random bluegrass runs and blues licks. My goal is to keep with the flavor of the tune's original melody while exploring lines that fit through the chord changes. My ideas are based on major scales and chord arpeggios rather than inserted blues licks. "Whiskey Before Breakfast" is a tune that I have thought about a lot. I use this tune as a basis for all fiddle tune improvisation and see other tunes as a variation of it.

On the third pass, I strayed from the melody and tried to incorporate cool single note lines. Seasoned flatpickers might note that these lines are not the usual stock bluegrass licks. These lines are meant to sound a bit more modern and jazzy as they utilize a different language. These may be the lines you have been searching for to spice up your playing. Remember to "lay back" on your eighth notes to give your lines feel and life. You don't wanna be a one of those rapid-machine-gun-robot pickers. Take a listen to the included lesson mp3 to hear the melody and variations in action.

I hope you enjoy working on "Whiskey Before Breakfast." Lots to explore here! As always, if you have any questions or comments on this e-lesson or any ideas for tunes you would like to see here in the future just drop me a line at [michabraham@comcast.net](mailto:michabraham@comcast.net)

# Whiskey Before Breakfast

Arranged by Mickey Abraham

1

D G D A

TAB

5

D G D A D A D

TAB

10

D Em A

TAB

14

D A G D G D A D A D

TAB

19

D G D A

TAB

# Whiskey Before Breakfast (con't)

23 D G D A D

Musical notation for measures 23-26. The treble clef staff shows a melody in D major with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The bass clef staff shows a guitar accompaniment with fret numbers: 0 2 4 0 2 0 4 0 | 2 3 0 3 2 2 3 5 | 0 0 2 3 0 2 4 0 | 2 0 4 2 0 2 1.

27 D G D A

Musical notation for measures 27-30. The treble clef staff shows a melody in D major. The bass clef staff shows a guitar accompaniment with fret numbers: 0 2 4 0 2 1 2 4 | 2 3 0 3 2 4 0 4 | 0 0 3 3 2 3 2 4 | 2 2 0 3 2 0 2.

31 D G D A D

Musical notation for measures 31-34. The treble clef staff shows a melody in D major. The bass clef staff shows a guitar accompaniment with fret numbers: 3 2 4 2 0 7 7 | 7 10 10 7 7 7 9 | 0 0 3 3 2 3 2 4 | 2 0 4 2 0 4 2.

35 D Em A

Musical notation for measures 35-38. The treble clef staff shows a melody in D major. The bass clef staff shows a guitar accompaniment with fret numbers: 0 4 2 3 3 3 | 3 3 2 3 0 3 2 4 | 2 0 0 3 2 0 3 2 3 | 2 3 0 2 0 2 0.

39 D A G D G D A D

Musical notation for measures 39-42. The treble clef staff shows a melody in D major. The bass clef staff shows a guitar accompaniment with fret numbers: 3 0 2 3 2 3 0 2 | 0 3 3 3 2 3 2 4 | 0 0 3 3 2 3 2 4 | 2 0 4 2 0 3 0.

# Whiskey Before Breakfast (con't)

43 D Em A

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

47 D A G D G D A D

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

51 D G D A

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

55 D G D A D

9 7 10 7 7 8 6 9 7 8 6 9 7 5 4 5 6 4 7 5 4 7 5 4 0 2 4 2 0

59 D G D A Bbdim

S S 10/11 10 9 7 9 7 7 9 7 9 8 7 10 8 7 10 8 S 10 11 10 9 12 10 9 10 12

# Whiskey Before Breakfast (con't)

63 Bm7 D G D A D

67 D Em A

71 D A G D G D A D

75 D Em A

79 D A G D G D A D