

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine
Email Newsletter
Free Lesson

Grandfather's Clock

By Mickey Abraham

Hello and welcome once again to Flatpicking Guitar Magazine's free lesson portion of our monthly newsletter. I am very proud to offer the melody to "Grandfather's Clock" as this month's tune. My mother plays a really cool version of "Grandfather's Clock" on the banjo and even when I was into Led Zeppelin and Nirvana in high school, I was still obsessed with hearing her play the melody to this song. I remember figuring it out on my guitar and playing it for my parents.

"Grandfather's" Clock" is not an AABB fiddle tune. It was originally a song with words written by Henry Clay Work back in 1876. Over time bluegrass players have turned this classic song into a jam tune. Here's a taste of the first verse:

My grandfather's clock was too large for the shelf,
So it stood ninety years on the floor;
It was taller by half than the old man himself,
Though it weighed not a pennyweight more.
It was bought on the morn of the day that he was born,
And was always his treasure and pride;
But it stopped short - never to go again -
When the old man died

The song is told from the perspective of the grandson. The clock is purchased on the morning of the grandfather's birth. It worked for ninety years. When the grandfather brings his bride into the house, the clock rings twenty-four chimes. When the grandfather dies, the clock stops. It's a pretty sad song.

My goal for this lesson was to really convey the tune's beautiful melody in a way that is easily accessible and enjoyable. My banjo-ish kick-off along with a few banjo fills are most probably in my head from hearing my mother's banjo version growing up.

I feel if you listen to the included lesson mp3 you will have no problem playing this arrangement of "Grandfather's Clock." As always, if you have any questions or comments on this e-lesson or any ideas for cool tunes you'd like to see here in the future just drop me a line at michabraham@comcast.net

Grandfather's Clock

Arranged by Mickey Abraham

1

G D G C

This system contains the first four measures of the piece. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. Measure 1 starts with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 2 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 3 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 4 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bottom staff is a six-string guitar tablature with fret numbers 0, 2, 4, 0, 2, 4, 1, 0, 2, 2.

6

G D G G

This system contains measures 5 through 8. Measure 5 has a whole note G4. Measure 6 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 7 has a whole rest. Measure 8 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bottom staff has fret numbers 0, 4, 2, 0, 0, 0, 2, 4, 0, 2.

11

G G7 C

This system contains measures 9 through 12. Measure 9 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 10 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 11 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 12 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bottom staff has fret numbers 0, 0, 1, 2, 3, 0, 2, 0, 4, 0, 2, 0, 4, 2.

15

G D

This system contains measures 13 through 16. Measure 13 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 14 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 15 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 16 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bottom staff has fret numbers 0, 0, 1, 2, 3, 0, 2, 0, 4, 0, 2, 2, 2, 3.

19

G D G

This system contains measures 17 through 20. Measure 17 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 18 has a whole note G4. Measure 19 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 20 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5. The bottom staff has fret numbers 4, 0, 2, 2, 0, 2, 4, 4, 5, 0, 2.

Grandfather's Clock (con't)

23 C G D G

2 2 0 4 2 0 0

27 G C G

0 0 0 2 2 0 12 12

Harmonics.....

31 C G

12 0 0 0 0 0 2 2 0 12 12

Harmonics

Harmonics.....

35 D G C

12 0 2 4 0 4 0 2 0 2 4 5 0 2 2

Harmonics

40 G D G

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

S