

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine

Free Email Newsletter Lesson

“Temperance Reel”

Arranged by Mickey Abraham

Hello and welcome once again to Flatpicking Guitar Magazine’s free lesson portion of our monthly newsletter. This month I offer you a simple melodic arrangement of the classic flatpicking standard “Temperance Reel.” “Temperance Reel” is a true staple in the flatpicking universe and has been played by everyone from Tony Rice to Chris Thile. “Temperance Reel” is one of my favorite fiddle tunes and I’m certain you will enjoy working on this arrangement and adding to your constantly growing list of great flatpicking tunes.

When I first heard “Temperance Reel” it reminded me of “Billy in the Lowground” in the key of G. While the G to Em chord progression is the same as the C to Am in “Billy in the Lowground” the melody is unique and distinct. Some folks play the first lick to “Temperance Reel” in a way that sounds more like “Billy in the Lowground” than it should. To me, the distinction occurs at measure 2 where the melody goes back down a few notes instead of sandwiching the high G note (third fret of the high e string). While fiddle tunes do have limitless interpretations I’ve come to accept that the opening lick to “Temperance Reel” is different than “Billy and the Lowground.”

The B section to “Temperance Reel” is reminiscent of many traditional Irish tunes. Bill Monroe tunes such as “Kentucky Mandolin” utilize these classic chord progressions and phrases. The question/answer nature of fiddle tunes is on display on the B section of “Temperance Reel.” The Em phrase flows perfectly into the D phrase which then begs for the Em phrase to be played again. It’s really a perfectly thought out form and I can see why tunes like “Temperance Reel” have lasted the test of time.

I hope you enjoy working on this arrangement of “Temperance Reel.” Make sure to click on the included lesson mp3 to hear the chords and melody in action. As always should you have any questions or comments on this lesson just drop me a line at michabraham@comcast.net

Temperance Reel

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1

G Em

TAB

6

G Em D G D G

TAB

11

Em D

TAB

15

Em D G

TAB