

The Tennessee Wagoner

Arranged by: Mickey Abraham

Welcome to FGM's free lesson portion of our monthly e-newsletter. Every month I feature new tunes, picking techniques, and musical ideas -- I even try to throw in some sound flatpicking wisdom every now and then. It is my continued goal as your e-instructor to load up eager flatpickers with new melodies, cool arrangements of flatpicking standards, and to instill an overall creative approach to your practicing and playing. This month I'd like to present you with the "Tennessee Wagoner," a melody that, to me, has a great flatpicking groove and the chords are easy!

Depending on who you pick with, the "Tennessee Wagoner" may or may not seem like an obscure old-time tune. This melody, although not as often picked as "Arkansas Traveler" or "Red Haired Boy," has made its way from complete obscurity to enjoy somewhat of a resurgence. One of my favorite recorded versions is found on an Acoustic Disc release entitled *Doc and Dawg*. Doc Watson, Jack Lawrence and David Grisman are picking an old-time medley and this tune is found sandwiched between the "East Tennessee Blues" and the "Beaumont Rag." From the first time I heard it I knew that I would have to learn to pick that song on the guitar.

Although the chord progression in my arrangement consists of only two simple chords, (G and C) I still find the backup to be extremely interesting -- The musical relationship between the I chord (C) and the V chord (G) is the purest resolution that exists in music. If a song is going to have just two chords, the I and the V are the two to have -- in fact, this song is a perfect example of how a two chord song with a I and a V can sound so pleasing.

When dealing with such a simple chord structure, the rhythmic groove becomes extremely important because all we have harmonically are those two chords -- we are trying to get as much rhythmic emotion out of the I - V relationship as we can. One should never find playing flatpicking backup to be lackluster; rather, one should seek to find the subtlety and nuance of even the most simple two chord songs.

The melody is a great example of one of my favorite ideas -- the question and answer idea! A great fiddle tune usually consists of four sentences. The first phrase can be thought of as a musical question. In this case, the question is stated over a C chord. Next, we play a musical answer -- for the "Tennessee Wagoner," our question is played by doing the same "lick" over a G chord. For the third sentence it is very customary to repeat the initial question and finally finish up with the fourth sentence which is a more defined answer commonly called the "Tag." By doing this we are allowing the music to tell a story. I look at fiddle tunes like short stories -- as compared to the "novel" of a classical piece.

One particular point of interest that I would like to point out is in the tag of the "A" section where we play an 'A' note over the G chord. For those of you that are into theory you will note that this is playing the 2nd or 9th over the G chord. We are always taught to outline chord tones, but in this case, the 9th is really carrying its own weight. To me, it authentically turns it into an old-time tag! Some might refer to this unexplainable coolness to be redneck-jazz.

I hope you all enjoy practicing this tune and adding it to your list. It's simple enough to share with any local jam session and has endless room for jamming capabilities. Drop me a line at michabraham@comcast.net. What tunes would you like to see featured here in the future?

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1 C G

Tablature for measures 1-5. Measure 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter rest, eighth note G, quarter note A, eighth note B, quarter note C. Measure 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note D, quarter note E, quarter note F, quarter note G. Measure 3: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note A, quarter note B, quarter note C, quarter note D. Measure 4: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note E, quarter note F, quarter note G, quarter note A. Measure 5: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note B, quarter note C, quarter note D, quarter note E. Tablature: Measure 1: - 3 1. Measure 2: 0 1 1 0 2. Measure 3: 1 3 0 1 3 0 3 1. Measure 4: 0 0 0 0 2. Measure 5: 0 2 0 1 3 0 3 1.

6 C G C

Tablature for measures 6-10. Measure 6: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note D, quarter note E, quarter note F, quarter note G. Measure 7: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note A, quarter note B, quarter note C, quarter note D. Measure 8: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note E, quarter note F, quarter note G, quarter note A. Measure 9: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note B, quarter note C, quarter note D, quarter note E. Measure 10: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note F, quarter note G, quarter note A, quarter note B. Tablature: Measure 6: 0 1 1 0 2. Measure 7: 1 3 0 1 3 0. Measure 8: S 3/5 5 5 5 7 5 3. Measure 9: 0 1 1 3 1 0. Measure 10: 1 1 0 2.

11 G C

Tablature for measures 11-15. Measure 11: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note D, quarter note E, quarter note F, quarter note G. Measure 12: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note A, quarter note B, quarter note C, quarter note D. Measure 13: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note E, quarter note F, quarter note G, quarter note A. Measure 14: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note B, quarter note C, quarter note D, quarter note E. Measure 15: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note F, quarter note G, quarter note A, quarter note B. Tablature: Measure 11: 1 3 0 1 3 3 1. Measure 12: 0 0 0 0 2. Measure 13: 0 2 0 1 3 0 3 1 0. Measure 14: 1 1 0 2. Measure 15: 1 3 0 1 3.

16 G C G

Tablature for measures 16-20. Measure 16: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note D, quarter note E, quarter note F, quarter note G. Measure 17: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note A, quarter note B, quarter note C, quarter note D. Measure 18: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note E, quarter note F, quarter note G, quarter note A. Measure 19: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note B, quarter note C, quarter note D, quarter note E. Measure 20: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note F, quarter note G, quarter note A, quarter note B. Tablature: Measure 16: S 3/5 5 5 5 7 5 3. Measure 17: 0 1 1. Measure 18: 0 2 3 3 0 2 0 2 0. Measure 19: 1 1 3 1 0 2 1. Measure 20: 0 S 4/5 0 0 0 2.

21 C G C

Tablature for measures 21-25. Measure 21: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note D, quarter note E, quarter note F, quarter note G. Measure 22: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note A, quarter note B, quarter note C, quarter note D. Measure 23: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note E, quarter note F, quarter note G, quarter note A. Measure 24: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note B, quarter note C, quarter note D, quarter note E. Measure 25: Treble clef, 4/4 time, quarter note F, quarter note G, quarter note A, quarter note B. Tablature: Measure 21: 4 4 2 0 2 0 2. Measure 22: 3 3 0 2 0 2 0. Measure 23: 1 0 1 3 1 0 2 1. Measure 24: 0 S 4/5 0 0 2 0. Measure 25: 3 0 2.

The Tennessee Wagoner (con't)

26 C G

30 C G C