

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine

Free Email Newsletter Lesson

July 2012

Watson Hornpipe
Arranged for FGM by Mickey Abraham

Hello and welcome once again to *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine's* free lesson portion of our monthly newsletter. After four years of offering great traditional tunes ranging from old-time to bluegrass and klezmer to Irish, I have finally decided to offer one of my own original flatpicking tunes entitled the "Watson Hornpipe." The "Watson Hornpipe" was actually one of the first flatpicking tunes I ever wrote and I recorded on the Panhandle String Band release "Hanglider's Lullaby" back in 2004.

When I was beginning to learn how to solo over fiddle tunes my improvisations often turned into melodic ideas that, to me, could stand alone as the framework for new tunes. I came up with the ideas in the "Watson Hornpipe" after studying melodies like "Cotton Patch Rag" and "Black Mt. Rag." My goal was to follow the chord changes using melodic ideas combined with the cool flatpicking licks I was working on at the time.

I was always fascinated by the way flatpickers use notes that are not in the major scale to give their lines a hip chromatic sound. Notice in measure 1 where I play the first fret of the G string -- this is usually a really "weird" note when played over a C chord, but when used as a passing tone it gives the line great feel and flavor. I tried to base the melody around these cool passing tones in a way that does not sound too jarring, while at the same time adding interest to the song.

In the B section you will encounter a couple cool arpeggio shapes that go up the neck. Take a look at measure 13. The technique used here involves striking the open g string which allows your hand a second to shift up to the 7th position. This is one of a flatpickers favorite ways of getting up the neck with ease. The result is a clean shift without hearing all the string noise. These arpeggios are not too hard to play and they really give the tune a wide tonal range.

At the conclusion of the B section is your typical "rag turnaround" (measures 23-26). The lick I play over this sequence is particularly interesting as it follows the chord changes directly. The result is a hip line that sounds like you know what you're doing!

Finally, The C section or "Bridge" enters into a cool Dm passage which was inspired by the bridge of David Grisman's "Cedar Hill." I felt the addition of a third part really gave the tune a sense of completion and closer. Check out the lesson mp3 to hear all the licks in action and to absorb the form of the tune. I see the form as follows:

AA
B1
B2
C (which concludes with the A section once)

All of the licks in this tune are, in a sense, designed for you to steal and use in other places. The use of chromatic passing tones will add movement and interest into your lines and make you sound more fluid. Furthermore, the overall chord structure and form of the tune is fairly common which will make it easy for your bluegrass friends to play along with and jam over.

I hope you enjoy working on the "Watson Hornpipe" and find the tune challenging and exciting to play. If you have any questions or comments on the "Watson Hornpipe" or if you have any great ideas for lessons you would like to see here in the future just drop me a line at michabraham@comcast.net

Watson Hornpipe

Written by Mickey Abraham

1

3 7

C

G

T
A
B

H

0 2 0

1 0 2 1 0 0 1 3

0 4 3 1 0 2 1

0 0 2 0 3 0 2

0 2 0 3 2 0 2

3 7

The first system of the musical score for 'The Rose Tree' consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains four measures of music. Above the staff, the chords C, F, C, and G are indicated. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains four measures of music, with fingerings (numbers 1-5) written below the notes. The melody in the top staff begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The bass line begins with a quarter note G2, followed by a quarter note F2, a quarter note E2, and a quarter note D2.

Watson Hornpipe (con't)

Musical notation for measures 18-21. Chords: C, F, G. Fingerings: 13, 11 12, 11 12, 0 1, 2 1 2 0, 1 0, 0 1, 2 1 2 1, 1 0, 3 1, 0 3, 0 2, 0 2, 0 3.

Musical notation for measures 22-25. Chords: C, C7, F, F#dim, C, A7, D, G. Fingerings: 1 3, 1 0, 3 0, 3 1, 2 1, 2 4, 1 2, 4 1, 2 0, 2 3, 4 2, 3 4, 3 5, 3 4, 0 2.

Musical notation for measures 26-29. Chords: C, Dm, C. Fingerings: 1 2, 3 2, 3 0, 1 0, 4 5, 0 1, 3 0, 1 0, 3 4, 0 3, 0 3, 1 0, 1 3.

Musical notation for measures 30-33. Chords: Dm, D, G. Fingerings: 0 5, 3 4, 0 3, 1 2, 3 2, 3 0, 1 0, 3 2, 3 2, 3 0, 2 3, 0 2, 3 0, 1 0, 3 0, 1 2.

Watson Hornpipe (con't)

34 ^{G7} C G

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

38 C G C

0 2 0 | 3 2 0 4 3 2 3 0 | 2 1 2 0 3 2 0 4 | 3 2 0 3 2 3 | 3 8 7 7 8