

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine
Free Monthly Lesson
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“Over the Waterfall”

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 two versions of the popular old-time fiddle tune “Over the Waterfall.” The first time through is a beginner version and then I added some more notes and licks to spice up the second pass. I am certain you will enjoy working through this arrangement of “Over the Waterfall” and adding to your list of great flatpicking tunes.

“Over the Waterfall” is a typical AABB style fiddle tune with a beautiful melody and interesting chords. I like the use of the C chord in the A section. In the key of D the C chord acts as chord bVII and adds some flavor to the typical I, IV, and V chords (D, G and A). Other flatpicking standards that utilize chord bVII are “Red Haired Boy,” “Cuckoo’s Nest,” and even “Old Joe Clark.” I like to think of the bVII chord as always being the I chord two frets back! This movement will always give the song a bluesy flavor.

The melody to “Over the Waterfall” seems to flow like a waterfall. I can see how the tune picked up its name. I’d like to draw attention to the lick I used in measure 4. If you follow all my lessons you will recognize this 5 note lick as the “Adam Steffey” lick. I use this lick often. To me, this idea turns one melody note into 5 picks. What makes this idea so interesting is how the downbeat is not the melody note. The note your ear wants to hear comes one eighth note later! When my students see this lick in a tab they often think it is a mistake but once you understand how the lick sounds in context you will hear how this phrase works. Many pickers use this kind of phrase to add picked eighth notes to an arrangement. Make sure to click on the included lesson mp3 to hear the arrangement in action.

I hope you enjoy working on these two versions of “Over the Waterfall.” Should you have any questions or comments just drop me a line at michabraham@comcat.net

Over The Waterfall

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1

D G D D G D

T
A
B

6

D G D C G G

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

11

D G D D A D

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

15

D G D D A D D

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

20

D G D D G D

2 3 5 2 3 2 0 S 0 2 3 3 0 2 0 3 0 2 3 5 2 3 2 0 3 0 2 2 3 2 3 0

Over The Waterfall (con't)

24 **D G D C G G**

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

29 **D G D D A D**

. 2 0 0 0 4 0 0 0 2 4 2 0 4 3 4 0 2 1 2 3 2 3 0 2 2 3 3 3 4 0

33 **D G D D A D D**

S 1/2 4 2 3 4 3 2 0 2 4 0 2 0 4 2 4 0 0 2 0 4 2 2 3 2 3 2 0