

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine

Free Lesson

Ashokan Farewell

By Jay Unger

Arranged by Mickey Abraham

Hello and welcome once again to Flatpicking Guitar Magazine's free lesson portion of our monthly newsletter. This month I present to you two passes of the classic Jay Unger tune "Ashokan Farewell." The first pass is a simple melody version that sticks very close to the way Jay Unger wrote the tune. The second pass has more variations and is influenced by the great Bobby Osborne. Many folks associate "Ashokan Farewell" with the Ken Burns Civil War documentaries. It was used as the main theme and seems to fit that time period exceptionally well.

While the chords to "Ashokan Farewell" are simple they do come in an interesting order. The chords don't repeat themselves very often if at all. I recommend humming the melody while playing the chords to hear how the chord pattern matches up perfectly with the melody. The chords will begin to not seem so random and you will soon have the lengthy chord progression memorized. I especially enjoy the use of the C chord (bVII chord in the key of D) at measure 26. This is the only time that the C chord is used and it adds an amazing effect that makes you want to hear it again.

I have always enjoyed the version of "Ashokan Farewell" that is on David Grisman's "Mandolin Extravaganza" album. The track features Del McCoury on rhythm guitar and Bobby Osborne on mandolin. Bobby has some great ideas and I personally relate to his version even more than the original melody.

For this lesson I decided to try to arrange Bobby's amazing mandolin rendition for flatpicking guitar. There were some tricky parts — especially in the timing. Make sure you click on the included lesson mp3 to hear the ideas. Bobby is very free with his timing. His slides, 16th note flurries, and blues licks sound incredible. Perhaps most impressive is how he never really leaves the melody while adding in his array of spices.

I hope you enjoy working on "Ashokan Farewell" and adding it to your list of tunes. Chances are you will make your audience shed a tear when you break into "Ashokan Farewell." Even if one has never heard the song or seen the the Civil War documentaries they will still have a nostalgic feeling when hearing this tune — it seems to have a magical quality that conjures of memories and past events. Jay Unger wrote a true classic with this one!

Ashokan Farewell

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1 **D D7 G Em**

TAB

6 **D Bm G A D**

TAB

11 **D7 G Em D Bm**

TAB

16 **A D D7 G**

TAB

21 **D Bm A**

TAB

Ashokan Farewell (con't)

26 **D C G D**

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

31 **Bm A D D7**

2 3 4 | 2 0 4 | 0 4 6 7 6 4 7 | 4 4 2 4

36 **G Em D Bm G**

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

41 **A D D7 G Em**

0 2 5 5 5 2 0 2 | 3 2 0 2 0 2 | 4 4 2 4 2 4 5 | 4 2 4 2 0 | 2 5 5 2

46 **D Bm A D**

0 0 0 7 4 | 2 3 3 3 2 3 4 | 2 2 2 0 | 3 4 7 7 7 | 4 0 4 2

Ashokan Farewell (con't)

51 **D7** **G 3** **D** **Bm**

3 2 2 3 2 1 0 0 2 0 2 3 2 4 4 7 2 4 2 4 2 0 2 5 2 2

56 **A** **D** **C** **G 3**

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

61 **D** **Bm** **A** **D**

2 4 4 0 0 0 4 7 7 7 2 4 2 2 0 4 0