

Mel Bay's

ANYONE CAN PLAY

COUNTRY FIDDLE

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BASIC INFORMATION FOR THE BEGINNING VIOLINIST AND FIDDLER

Welcome to Mel Bay's Anyone Can Play Country Fiddle video. My name is Cristina Seaborn. This lesson is for a beginner. In this video, we will learn backup fiddle, the G scale, and some of the fiddle tune melodies. Each one of the tunes offers a technique you can apply to country fiddling.

PARTS OF THE FIDDLE

Here are the names of different parts of the fiddle that I will be referring to: the chinrest, tailpiece, fine tuners, bridge, fingerboard, nut, peg box, and tuning pegs.

PARTS OF THE BOW

The parts of the bow are the stick (which is made of wood or fiberglass), the hair (which is made of synthetic or horse hair — you can tell by burning a hair that has broken off), tip, stick, frog, and tension screw. Rosin is a dried cake of tree sap that is put on the hair of the bow. If you are not getting any sound out of your instrument, you may need to put twenty strokes of rosin on the bow. Normally, you will only need to put five swipes of rosin on the bow. The bow hair is microscopic barbs that you've seen under a microscope on shampoo commercials. The rosin gets between these barbs which helps the barbs stand up and create friction when the bow is drawn across the string.

CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Maintenance on the fiddle is simple: keep it safe from extreme temperatures. Do not leave the fiddle in a car or in the trunk of a car. Do not put the fiddle down on its front, as the bridge could snap in half or fall down. Put the fiddle on its back or in the case. Loosen the bow when you put it away in the case. This will prevent your wooden stick from warping. Fiberglass bows rarely warp or break.

CLEANING THE FIDDLE

Use a soft cloth to wipe the rosin off the fiddle after you finish playing so that there will not be a gummy buildup. You can use lemon oil to polish the fiddle and 0000 fine steel wool to remove built-up rosin. The fingerboard and strings can be cleaned with rubbing alcohol if you cover the fiddle varnish with a protective cloth. The rubbing alcohol will remove the varnish on the wood, so do not let any drop onto the body of the instrument.

PUTTING ROSIN ON THE BOW AND BOW MAINTENANCE

Scratch up the rosin to get out the dust. Put rosin on by holding the rosin cake steady in one hand and drawing the bow across the rosin. You are not supposed to touch the hair of the bow because it will leave oil from your skin and no sound will come out of those spots on the bow. If your bow hair has black spots from where your fingers have touched it, you can wash the hairs of your bow with dish washing liquid and water. Unscrew the tension screw until the hair and the frog come out. Be careful not to get your wood stick wet. You can wash the entire fiberglass bow as water will not damage the fiberglass stick.

TUNING TRICKS

The notes on the fiddle are G, D, A, and E, from the lowest to highest string. Tuning the fiddle is difficult. The tuning pegs help when you are really out of tune. Turn the pegs towards the scroll to tighten the string and away from the scroll to loosen them. If you are not sure if your note is sharp or flat (too high or too low), loosen the string and gradually tighten rather than coming down to the note. I recommend that you install fine tuners on the tailpiece of your fiddle. Fine tuners help with getting your note perfectly in tune.

Turn away from the scroll to loosen the string (or flat the note). Turn toward the scroll to tighten the string (or sharpen the note).

The trick to using the tuning pegs is that you start below the note and gradually apply pressure as you turn the peg. The tuning pegs are tapered to fit the holes. In the peg box, one hole is larger and the other is smaller. **IMPORTANT:** Pluck or bow the string continuously as you turn or you might tighten too much and break the string! **DO NOT SHOVE THE PEG IN ONCE YOU GET TO THE NOTE.** If you jam the peg in once you reach your note, you can crack the peg box, which is a serious repair job. Instead, as you turn the peg, gradually apply pressure. When you reach the correct note, the peg should be snug. Once you get close to the note, you can use the fine tuners. Bow the string while turning the fine tuner. Bring your left arm under the violin and reach around to the fine tuner. This is difficult and takes practice. You can put the violin on your lap and pluck while turning the fine tuners, but bowing the string gives you a more accurate pitch.

You can also buy commercial tuners that will tell you the pitch and if you are sharp or flat on the note. Continually pluck or bow your string as you turn the pegs or fine tuners so that you do not go too high on your pitch.

You can put tapes on your fiddle fingerboard to help you find your notes. Measure from the nut to side of tape closest to the nut:

FINGERING TAPE MEASUREMENTS

first finger tape	1 ⁵ / ₁₆ inches
second finger tape	2 ⁹ / ₁₆ inches
third finger tape	3 ¹ / ₈ inches
fourth finger tape	4 ¹ / ₄ inches

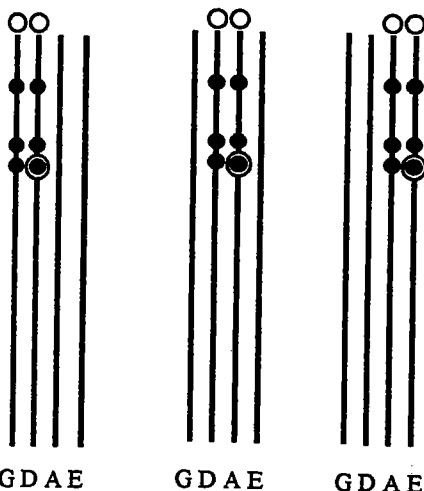
HOW TO HOLD THE FIDDLE

- Use a shoulder rest (or sponge and rubber band)
- frees the left hand to finger notes, not to hold the fiddle
- your shoulder and chin hold the fiddle
- put fiddle on its side while putting on shoulder rest
- shoulder rest goes straight across back of fiddle
- fat side of shoulder rest is on the same side as the chin rest
- Turn your head over left shoulder
- Put chin on chinrest
- Bend left elbow
- Tuck left elbow under the fiddle
- Bring left hand to fingerboard
- Your left wrist and left forearm form a straight line
- Keep space between your left wrist and the fiddle
- Place your left thumb and index finger like this:
 - thumb touches fiddle underneath the neck at the peg box
 - touch fiddle at the base of your index finger
- Keep fingers curved
- fingers close to fingerboard helps build speed in your fiddle playing
- you can see your arm slightly through the bout of the fiddle
- Keep space between your left elbow and your body
- Relax when newly used muscles feel sore. Take a break and shake out your arms.

HOW TO HOLD THE BOW

- Take time the first month to get your bow hold correct
- Tighten bow so that the hair at midway point is pinky width
- Hold the bow midway on the stick with left hand
- Place bent thumb on stick between frog and finger grip
- Wrap index finger at second joint on finger grip
- Pinky controls the bow
 - IMPORTANT to keep pinky curved and on its tip
 - Strengthen your little finger by using it!
- Relax two middle fingers on the frog
- Your wrist leads the up bow and the down bow
- Keep a loose, relaxed wrist
- Move your bow arm from elbow joint down:
 - upper arm does not move
 - Upper arm movement is for string changes; lower arm movement for up bow and down bow

G scale D Scale A Scale



G scale fingering:

G D
0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3

A scale fingering:

A E
0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3

D scale fingering:

D A
0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3

Bile Dem Cabbage Down

The musical notation consists of three staves of music in treble clef with a C-clef. Chord diagrams are placed above the notes:

- Staff 1: Chords A, D, A, E, A
- Staff 2: Chord D, then a first ending (1.) with chords A and E, followed by a second ending (2.) with chords A, A, A.
- Staff 3: Chords A, E, A, D, A, E, A

Cripple Creek

10

Musical notation for the piece "Cripple Creek". It consists of three staves of music in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The notes are: Staff 1 (measures 1-5): A, D, A, A, E, A, A. Staff 2 (measures 6-10): D, A, A, E, A, A, A. Staff 3 (measures 11-15): A, E, A, A, A, A, E, A.

Old Joe Clark

11

Musical notation for the piece "Old Joe Clark". It consists of three staves of music in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The notes are: Staff 1 (measures 1-5): A, A, A, G, A. Staff 2 (measures 6-10): A, A, G, A, A, A. Staff 3 (measures 11-15): A, G, A, A, A, G, A.

June Apple

12

Musical notation for the piece "June Apple". It consists of three staves of music in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The notes are: Staff 1 (measures 1-5): A, A, G, G, A. Staff 2 (measures 6-10): A, G, A, A, A. Staff 3 (measures 11-15): G, G, A, A, G, A.

Devil's Dream

13

1 A A Bmin Bmin E A

A1

6 A Bmin E A A A Bmin

A1 A1

12 Bmin E A A Bmin E A

A1

Amazing Grace

14

1 A A D A A

A A D A A

6 A E E A A D

A E E A A D

12 A A E A A

A A E A A

Salty Dog

15

1 G G A A

G G A A

5 D D G D

D D G D

9 G G A A

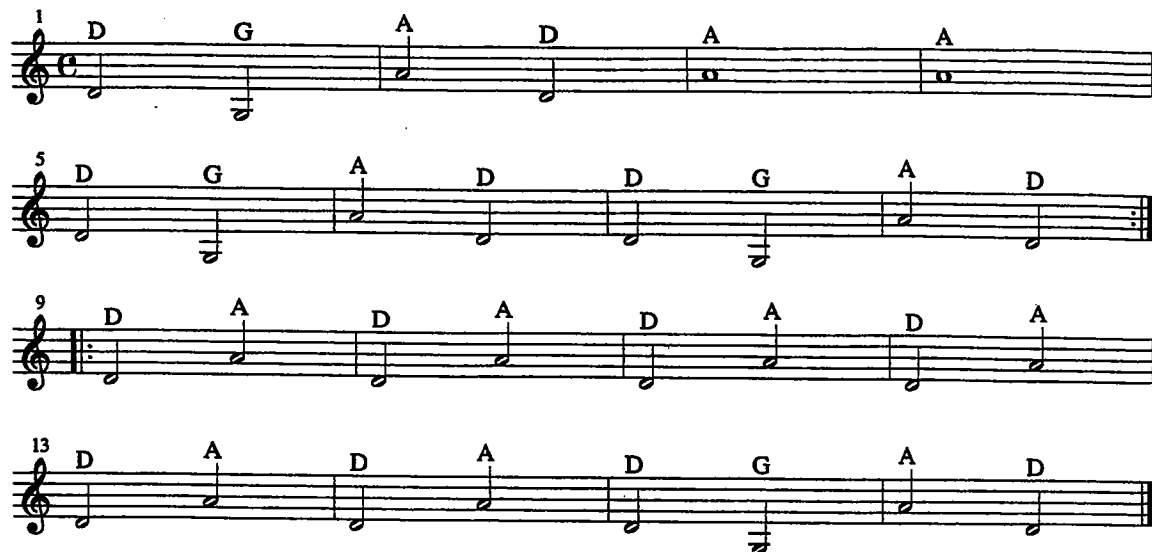
G G A A

13 D D G G

D D G G

Arkansas Traveller

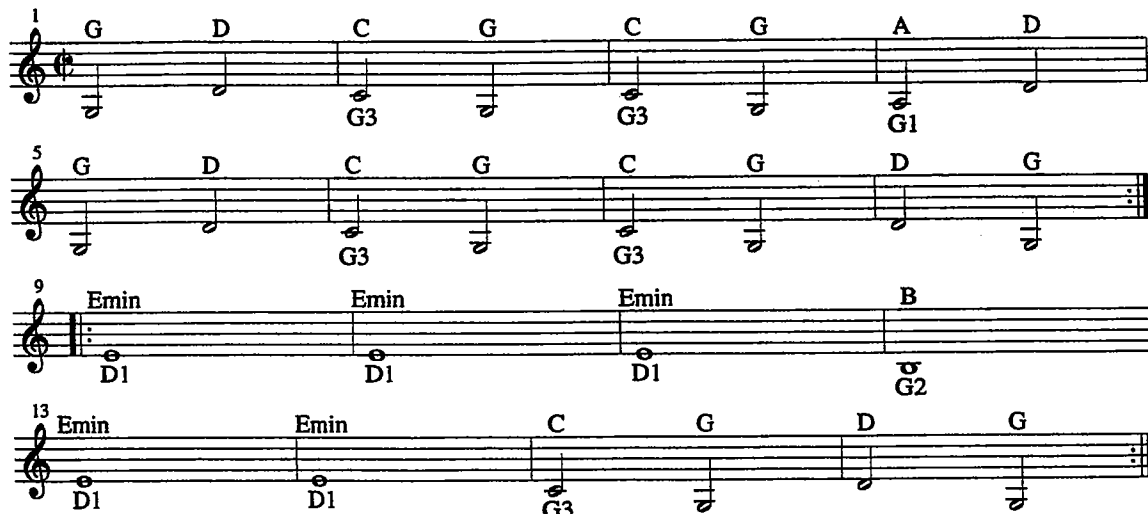
16



Musical score for "Arkansas Traveller" in G major, 2/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff starts at measure 1 with notes D, G, A, D, A, A. The second staff starts at measure 5 with notes D, G, A, D, D, G, A, D. The third staff starts at measure 9 with notes D, A, D, A, D, A, D, A. The fourth staff starts at measure 13 with notes D, A, D, A, D, G, A, D.

Blackberry Blossoms

17



Musical score for "Blackberry Blossoms" in G major, 2/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff starts at measure 1 with notes G, D, C, G, C, G, A, D. The second staff starts at measure 5 with notes G, D, C, G, C, G, D, G. The third staff starts at measure 9 with notes Emin, Emin, Emin, B. The fourth staff starts at measure 13 with notes Emin, Emin, C, G, D, G.

Whiskey Before Breakfast

18



Musical score for "Whiskey Before Breakfast" in D major, 2/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff starts at measure 1 with notes D, D, G, D, A. The second staff starts at measure 5 with notes D, D, G, D, A, D. The third staff starts at measure 9 with notes D, D, A, A. The fourth staff starts at measure 13 with notes D, A, G, D, G, D, A, D.

Notes on The Fingering Tapes

Musical notation for 'Notes on The Fingering Tapes'. The staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings (0-4) above them. Below the staff, the corresponding chord names are listed: G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, G, A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#, A, B.

Bile Dem Cabbage Down

Musical notation for 'Bile Dem Cabbage Down' (measures 1-3). The notation includes fingerings (0, 1, 2, 3) and chords (A, D, A) written above and below the staff.

Musical notation for 'Bile Dem Cabbage Down' (measures 4-6). The notation includes fingerings (1, 1, 1, 0, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1) and chords (E, A, D, A, E) written above and below the staff.

Musical notation for 'Bile Dem Cabbage Down' (measures 7-11). The notation includes fingerings (0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 2, 0, 1, 3, 1, 0, 1, 0, 2, 1, 1) and chords (A, A, A, A, E) written above and below the staff.

Musical notation for 'Bile Dem Cabbage Down' (measures 12-15). The notation includes fingerings (0, 1, 0, 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 2, 3, 0, 1, 1, 1, 0, 3, 2, 1, 0, 3, 2, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0) and chords (A, D, A, E, A) written above and below the staff.

Cripple Creek

Musical score for 'Cripple Creek' in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems. The first system has four measures with guitar fret numbers (1, 3, 3, 0, 2, 3, 1, 0, 3, 3, 0, 2, 3, 1, 0) and chords (A, D, A, A, E, A). The second system has four measures with guitar fret numbers (2, 2, 1, 0, 2, 0, 1, 2, 2, 1, 0, 1, 2, 0) and chords (A, A, A, E, A).

Old Joe Clark

Musical score for 'Old Joe Clark' in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems. The first system has eight measures with guitar fret numbers (0 1 2 1, 0 3 2, 0 1 2 1, 0, 0 1 2 1, 0 3 2, 0 2 1 3, 0) and chords (A, A, A, G, A, A, A, G, A). The second system has eight measures with guitar fret numbers (0 0 0, 0 3 2, 0 0 2 0, 3, 0 0 0, 0 3 2, 0 2 1 3, 0) and chords (A, A, A, G, A, A, A, G, A).

2 Octave G Scale

Musical score for a 2 Octave G Scale in G major. The score is written on a single staff with guitar fret numbers (0 1 2 3, 0 1 2 3, 0 1 2 3, 0) and notes (G A B C, D E F# G, A B C D, E F# G).

Amazing Grace

25

Musical score for 'Amazing Grace' in G major, 3/4 time. The score consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 1-9) features a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with chords. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-3. Chords are labeled as D, A, D, A, A, A, E, and A E. The second system (measures 10-18) continues the piece with similar notation. Chords are labeled as A, A, D, A, A, E, A, and A. Two asterisks (*) are placed above the treble staff in measures 12 and 13, with a note below the page indicating an errata.

* errata on video correct fingering here

Salty Dog

26

Musical score for 'Salty Dog' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 1-4) has a treble staff with a simple melody and a bass staff with chords G, G, A, and A. The second system (measures 5-8) includes a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.). The treble staff has a melody with triplets and a 'low' marking. The bass staff has chords D, D, G, D, G, and G.

June Apple

27

Musical score for 'June Apple' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 1-4) features a treble staff with a complex melodic line involving many triplets and bowing directions (V for up bow, v for down bow). The bass staff has chords A, A, and G. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the piece with similar notation. Chords are labeled as G, A, A, G, and A. A first ending (1.) is marked at the end of the piece.

Section **A** : One note down bow, three notes up bow.

Section **B** : One note down bow, two notes up bow.

Arkansas Traveller

1. D 0 2 1 0 2 2 1 1 0 1 2 1 2 1 0 2 1

D G A D A A

5. D 0 2 1 0 2 2 1 1 0 A 3 2 3 0 1 3 0 3 1. 2 1 0

D G A D D G A D

16. 2. D 2 1 0 E 1 2 3 2 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 0 3 1 0 3 2 0 3 3 0 0 1 0 3 1 0 1 2 low low low A E A E low

A D D A D A D A

21. E 3 2 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 0 3 1 0 3 2 0 3 2 3 0 1 3 0 3 1. 2 1 0 E low 2. D 2 1 0

D A D A D A A D A D

Blackberry Blossoms

1. low 2 3 4 low low 0 1 2 0 3 2 3 1 low A low low low 1 0 3 1 D A

G D C G C G

4. A 0 1 2 0 3 0 1 3 low 2 3 4 low low 0 1 2 0 3 2 3 1 low A low

A D G D C G

G1 G3

low low low low low 34

A E A E 2 3 4 2 3 1 2 D A D A D A

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

C G D G Emin Emin Emin

low

E 2 3 4 2 3 2 1 0 D A D A D A E low

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

G D Emin Emin D G

Whiskey Before Breakfast

35

1 G D A D A D A D G

1 2 0 1 0 0 1 2 1 0 0 1 0 2 3 1 3 2 3 0 2 1 0 1 2 1 0 2 0

D D G D A

5 G D A D A D A D

1 2 0 1 0 0 1 2 1 2 0 1 0 2 3 1 3 2 3 0 2 1 0 1 2 0

D D G D A D

9 A E low A

0 1 0 1 3 1 0 1 2 3 2 1 0 0 0 0 0 1 2 1 0 3 2 0 1 2

D D A A

13 A E A E A D A D

3 1 3 2 3 0 2 1 0 1 2 3 2 1 0 3 1 3 2 3 0 2 1 0 1 2 0

D A G D G D A D