

20TH CENTURY MASTERS OF FINGER-STYLE GUITAR



Transcriptions, study notes, and history by John Stropes. Biographies by Peter Lang.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

John Stropes and Peter Lang are contemporaries. They were born in the same year. They both began playing guitar at the same time. They were inspired by many of the same practitioners of this style. They share many of the same likes and dislikes. They have a sense of camaraderie.

John is a fine performer, but, unlike the others in this book, he chose a different avenue to direct his talents. He became an historian, researcher, and instructor of this style. Until now there has been little written about the history of finger-style guitar. This volume for the first time collates previously scattered information in order to bring a proper perspective to this style of guitar playing.

John Stropes was born in 1947 and grew up in a very rich and diverse musical environment. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1969. John has taught guitar for the past 20 years, and since 1976 has been on the faculty of the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. He is a director and the president of the Milwaukee Classical Guitar Society. John, and the lovely Frances Ullenberg, reside in a modest Victorian mansion off the shores of Lake Michigan with their dog, Ruby.

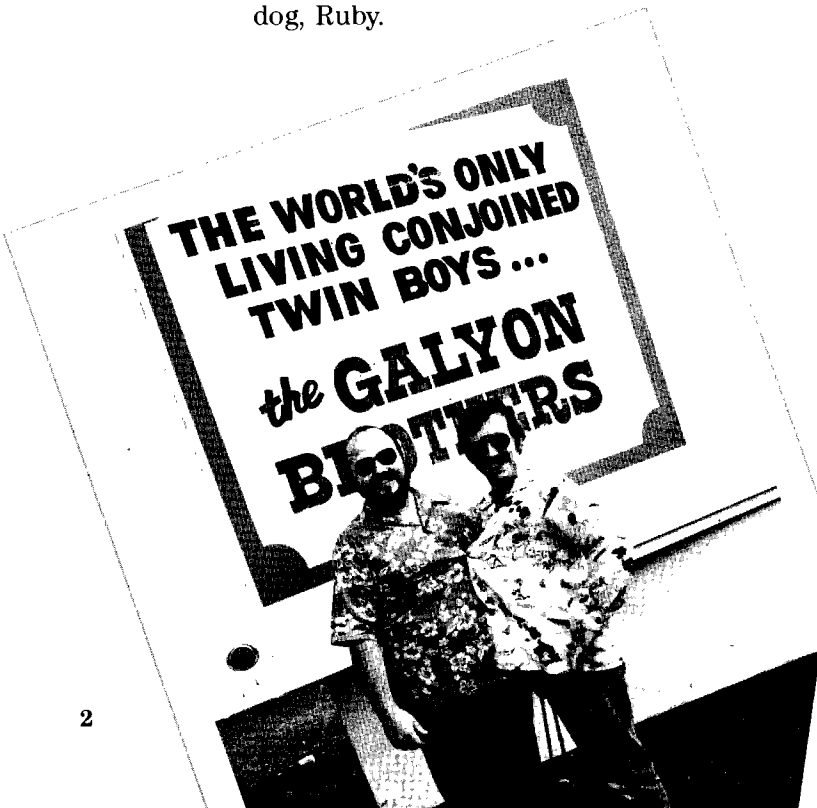
Born in Minneapolis in 1948, Peter Lang began playing the guitar during the folk boom of the late 1950's. Although influenced initially by the blues, and later by the playing of guitarists such as John Fahey, Peter's playing has always been marked not only by a strong sense of the tradition of the style but also by a willingness to experiment with new ideas.

His first album, *The Thing At The Nursery Room Window*, established him as an extraordinary guitarist. His second album, recorded jointly with Leo Kottke and John Fahey, introduced him to a much wider audience. His third album, *Lycurgus*, was nominated for a Grammy award.

Although technically one of the finest players in this style,

Peter's most important contribution to finger-style guitar has been in the area of composition. Working in standard tuning and in an imaginative variety of open tunings, he has added dozens of beautifully lyrical compositions to the repertoire of finger-style guitar.

Peter brings his personal experience as a performer and composer of this style, his knowledge of the music business generally, and a ribald sense of humor to this unique book of finger-style guitar solos.



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*This Martin guitar from 1898,
which was designed to be
strung with gut strings, would
have been used to play classical
and ragtime music as well as
the many popular guitar solos
written in open tunings.*



INTRODUCTION

OUR PURPOSE. Our purpose in writing this book is threefold: 1) to define this style of guitar playing through its history and technique in order to gain for it recognition as an important style in itself; 2) to transcribe this music, thereby making it accessible to all guitarists; and 3) to restore the quality and accuracy to published music of this style that befits the artists represented in this book and the people reading it.

Presently, there are no books dealing with this style as a popular or contemporary idiom. Most prior editions have dealt with this style only in its highly esoteric forms: the songs, although rich in historic import, have been inaccessible to the general public because either the artist's recordings were unavailable or the artists themselves were unknown and held little interest for the guitar student.

Our book is a compendium of the contemporary. The artists we have chosen are the most popular exponents of this style. They are the very best in their field and their recordings are readily available. In designing

this book we have tried to present the artists and their music in a functional and attractive way. We have included study notes for each song that provide insight into special techniques of the artists and suggestions to facilitate your playing. (Technical and historical materials, as well as the transcriptions themselves, have been written by John Stropes.) In order to help bring about a thorough understanding of the music, we've tried to tell something about the artists. (Background material on each of the artists has been written by Peter Lang.) In many cases the artists themselves have contributed material to their own chapter.

The songs in this book are note-for-note transcriptions of the recorded solos. The accuracy of these transcriptions is important for several reasons: 1) Just as you couldn't play the music of Bach from chord diagrams, it is not possible to play the music of Leo Kottke from rough or inaccurate transcriptions. 2) Although the music in this book is preserved on recordings, the technique of playing the music can only be preserved in written form through accurate

3-D stereo view card from 1900, reproduced here at actual size so you can put it in your stereoscope.



musical notation with editorial explanations.
 3) By learning to play this music exactly as the artist does, we believe it can be both understood and enjoyed more thoroughly.

lished in 1827 of his student "... Miss Wainwright, a young English Lady, whose accurate reasoning, readiness of apprehension, the conviction that my precepts were

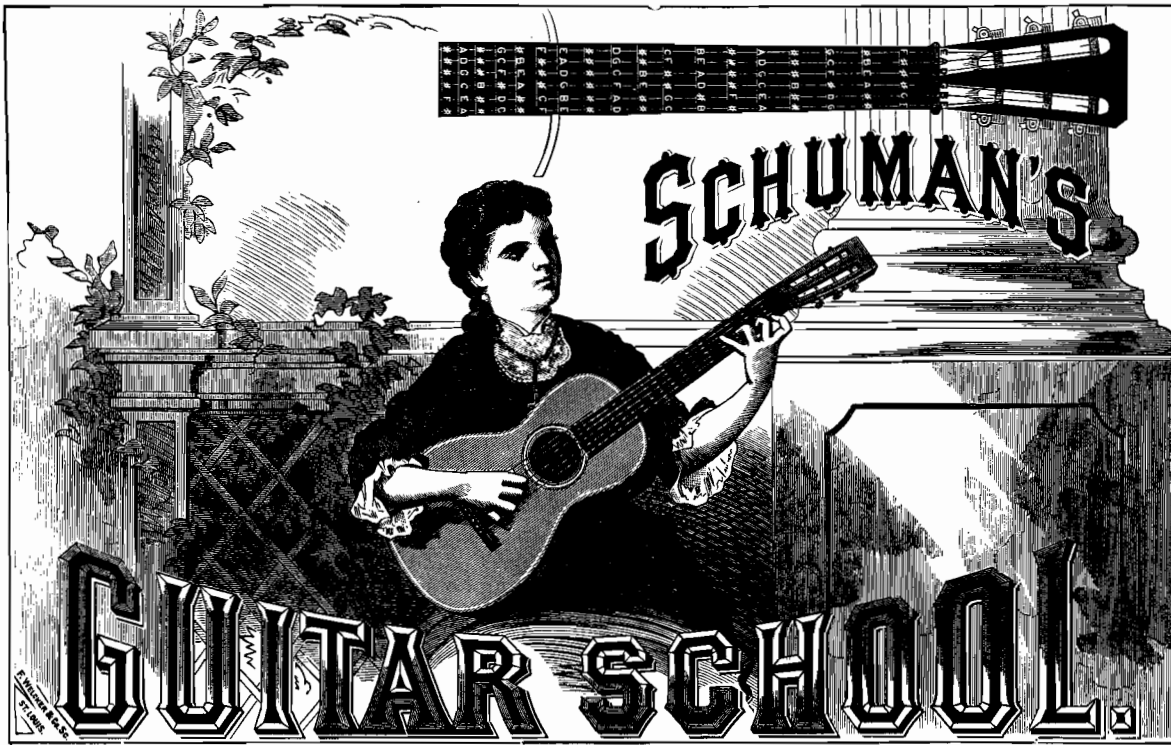


Illustration from Schuman's Self-Instructor For The Guitar, published in St. Louis by Balmer & Weber in 1870. Notice the typical shape and size of American guitars from this period.

HISTORY OF THE STYLE.

Today, the history of this style seems to be partially ignored and partially misunderstood. It did not first appear in the late 1920's coincidentally with the advent of modern recordings. This style did not start among black folk musicians just after the turn of the century. No single person such as Merle Travis (*Travis picking*) can be given credit for its origin. And this is not folk guitar. Let me go back and try to put these things into perspective.

The guitar as we know it today, having six strings tuned E A d g b e', and having approximately the same dimensions as the contemporary instrument, first appeared in Europe in about 1780. This was the height of what we now refer to as the classical period in music. In a time before the miracle of television, people were forced to entertain themselves, and the guitar was one of the most popular parlor instruments. Many of the great early virtuoso/composers for the guitar derived much of their income from teaching genteel young ladies light classical music. Fernando Sor, for example, wrote in the introduction to his guitar method pub-

the only ones that could enable her to obtain from the guitar the desired effects, and the little application that her other studies and the claims of society allowed her, produced a result so flattering to me, that in twenty-four lessons she played perfectly the six little pieces that I have dedicated to her, and understood all my twenty-four lessons so well as no longer to require any person to enable her to discover the best fingering of all imaginable positions: her figure and her hands are so placed as to serve as a model."¹

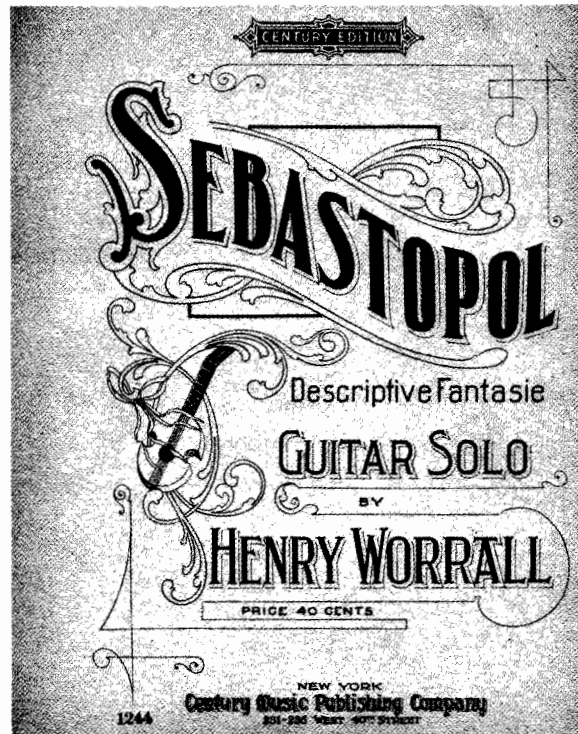


Title art from Brainard's Guitar Folio Of Instrumental Music, No. 1, published by the S. Brainard's Sons Co., New York and Chicago, 1890.

European immigrants transplanted this parlor tradition to America where it flourished throughout the 19th century. American guitar methods from this period often pictured this ideal. The end of the 19th century saw a host of popular American compositions (marches, quicksteps, fandangos, and

galops) being published for the guitar in addition to the classical music of the European masters. There was no difference in the playing technique or the type of guitar used to play this music. In the *Complete Catalogue Of Sheet Music And Musical Works, 1870*², which was published by the Board of Music Trade of the United States of America and which contained listings of the twenty leading music publishing firms in the U.S., you will find 714 titles for solo guitar and approximately 2,000 for voice with guitar accompaniment.³ (By guitar accompaniment I do not mean the sort of haphazard chord diagrams found in most sheet music published today. These guitar accompaniment parts were written out in standard notation parallel to the melody.) Many examples can be found in guitar music from this period of the right hand thumb playing a regular alternating bass line. Dropped D tuning and open tunings were very common. The guitar was experiencing a period of great vitality in America in the late 1800's.

As America adopted its own identity so did American music, and this was reflected in guitar music. When ragtime music became popular (1890-1920), the guitar was used to imitate the syncopated melodies and heavy



Cover of very popular guitar solo written in open D tuning in 1880.

bass of ragtime music. Some ragtime music was published originally for solo guitar. When W. C. Handy published "St. Louis Blues" in 1914, the great commercialization of the blues had begun, and the guitar was



Mandolin orchestra organized in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1900.

an important instrument in this style. (W.C. Handy himself played guitar.) And with the great popularity of Hawaiian music in the 1920's and 1930's, the Hawaiian techniques of slack key and slide guitar also had a significant impact on guitar playing. Up until the 1920's, finger-style guitar was really the only significant style of guitar playing. Whether you were playing the "Seige Of Sebastopol" or Giuliani's Concerto In A Major for guitar and string orchestra, the technique was basically the same.

In the 1920's, however, the notion of plectrum guitar became very popular. One reason was that mandolin orchestras were all the rage, and using a pick to play the guitar provided an articulated sound much more similar to that of a mandolin. Another was that the guitar was beginning to replace the banjo in early jazz ensembles, and a pick gave it more volume. By the time the electric guitar came onto the scene in the 1930's, plectrum guitar was the dominant style of guitar playing.

Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that it was only in the 1920's that the term *classical guitar* came into use to describe one particular type of finger-style guitar playing. Andres Segovia and others at that time sought to clearly define and intentionally segregate the style of guitar that they preferred from all the rest of guitar playing which, by that time, was showing increasing signs of diversity.

The folk boom of the late 1950's brought finger-style guitar back to the attention of the public. This encouraged a new generation to find out more about finger-style guitar; and as they looked back, a rich tradition of popular finger-style guitar began to unfold. However, there were many popular folk singers who played mediocre guitar for



The Hawaiian guitar is so fascinating that it soon gets under your skin. Its natural appeal is hard to resist and accounts for its popularity among thousands of children as well as adults.

The smiling, happy face of Robert Jeska is ample proof that he has a lot of fun and pleasure playing on his instrument.

Learn the Hawaiian guitar, and in a short time you, too, can have fun entertaining your friends at parties, picnics and other informal get-togethers.

New teaching methods, special instruments and accessories, as well as the convenience of listening to all types of music over the radio, now makes it possible for children to start their musical education at practically any age.

Five year old Judy Hinga's natural desire to play the Hawaiian guitar was easily satisfied with a three-quarter sized instrument and a steel and picks designed especially for small hands.



GIBSON SYSTEM FOR HAWAIIAN GUITAR
COPYRIGHT 1937 BY GIBSON, INC., KALAMAZOO, MICH.

accompaniment. As a result, a very low standard of musical potential was established for the guitar in the minds of many people — one which still lingers. Furthermore, the association between folk music and finger-style guitar was so close that even today, the music of such an extraordinary virtuoso as Leo Kottke is often referred to as folk guitar.

CLASSIC AMERICAN FINGER-STYLE GUITAR.

What would be an appropriate name for this style of guitar playing? Up to now the style hasn't really been defined and

recognized as an entity requiring a name. Years ago, in an attempt to address the style, John Fahey named it *American primitive guitar*, but it didn't catch on. The style has sometimes been called folk, ragtime, or country blues guitar; and while these terms all refer to specific types of music that have had an impact on this style of playing, they don't tell the whole story.

One of the purposes of this book is to address the style, and in so doing we feel we must propose a name for it. In conversation, we call this style *finger-style guitar*, which already enjoys some popular usage. However, because this term is rather general, we would like to further define the style by giving it a more descriptive, formal name to distinguish it from other forms of finger-style guitar (classical, flamenco, and bossa nova).

The formal name we propose is *classic*

American finger-style guitar. *Classic* draws attention to the early origin and enduring qualities of this style; *American* refers, somewhat nationalistically, to the country where a significant amount of its development occurred; and *finger-style* defines this style according to the technique used to play the strings and clearly distinguishes it from plectrum guitar. Furthermore, this name seems to roll off the tongue nicely.

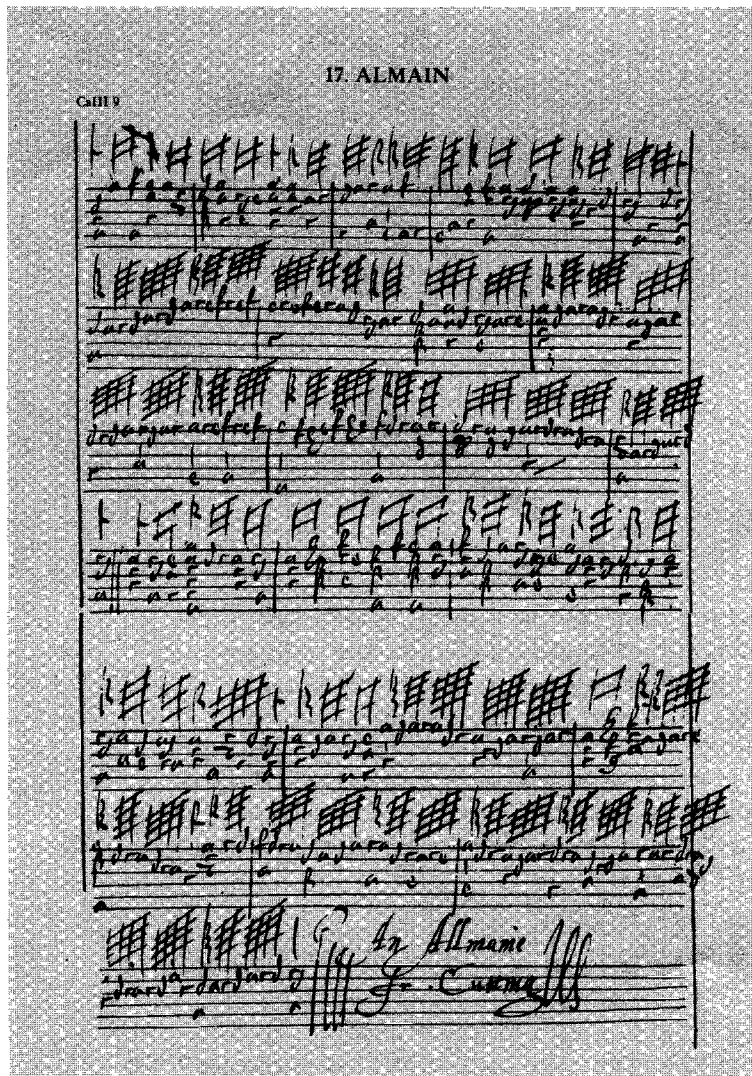
NOTATION. This is a collection of intermediate and advanced solos for finger-style guitar. Of the nine songs represented here, two are in standard tuning, two in dropped D tuning, and five are in open tunings. Those songs played in either standard tuning or in dropped D tuning are written out in both standard notation and tablature. However, when more than one string on the guitar is retuned, as is the case with open D, open G, and open C⁶ tuning, it becomes very cumbersome to read music written in standard notation because of the rethinking that is required. For this reason, the five songs that are played in open tunings are written out only in tablature.

Tablature is a thorough system of musical notation, the convenience of which has been amply demonstrated by its popularity during the many hundreds of years since it began being used for stringed instruments. In guitar tablature, the six lines of the staff represent the six strings on the guitar (the string lowest in pitch is drawn on the bottom of the staff). The numbers on the lines indicate the fret numbers that you are instructed to play. Unlike standard notation which tells you which pitches to play, tablature tells you exactly where the strings should be fretted. Standard notation is descriptive. Tablature is prescriptive.

Tablature is traditionally written in one voice (the stems which indicate time values are drawn in only one direction), and the convenience of this approach is apparent. One drawback, however, is that while this notation does tell you when a note is to be played, it does not indicate necessarily how long it should last. This is left to the experience and judgment of the performer.

Time values are indicated in tablature the same way they are in standard notation, except that in tablature there is no means for writing half notes, dotted half notes, or

Original lute tablature for a composition by Francis Cutting, 1500's.



whole notes, since you don't have the option of either filling in or not filling in a number. These time values are indicated by tying quarter notes together for the appropriate length of time.

In both standard notation and tablature, right hand fingers are, as a matter of convention, designated by the first letter of the Spanish name for the fingers: p - thumb, i - index, m - middle, and a - ring. However, some auxiliary notation is different. For example, in standard notation, left hand fingers are designated as follows: 1 - index, 2 - middle, 3 - ring, and 4 - little. In tablature, the same symbols are used to designate left hand fingers, but they are placed in a circle to clearly differentiate them from fret numbers. \textcircled{T} is used, in addition, to designate the left hand thumb. In standard notation, however, numbers in circles are used to designate string numbers.

Ascending and descending slurs are indicated by a curved line connecting two different notes. Among folk guitarists, the terms hammering-on and pulling-off are often used to describe the technique of executing such slurred notes.

A glissando, or slide, is indicated by a straight line drawn between two notes (see "Spanish Fandango" measure 27). If the second note is to be executed by the right hand, then a right hand fingering is given for it (see "Spanish Fandango" measure 75).

A grace note, a small note with a crossed tail placed before the principal note, is a note which is added as an ornament. Its time value is taken from the note which follows. In the first measure of "Great Dream From Heaven", for example, the fourth string open and the second string fifth fret would be plucked together. Then the third finger of your left hand would slide immediately up to the second string seventh fret. It is important that this type of slide be made very quickly — without lingering on the grace note.

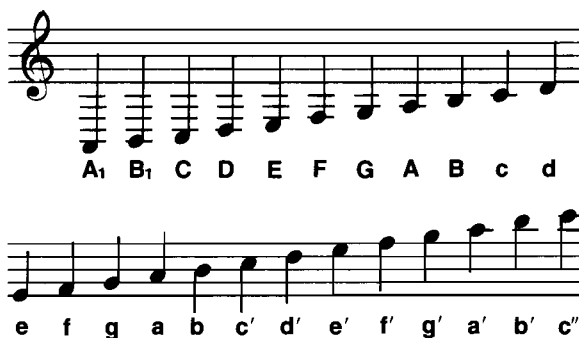
Some of the songs in this book are divided into sections which are indicated by letters enclosed by squares. This is done to facilitate reference to the sections and to point out the sectional structure of the music. If the first section of a piece, A, is repeated later with some variation, it would be indicated A'.

In both standard notation and tablature, left hand bars are indicated by C followed by

a Roman numeral indicating the fret at which the bar is to be placed. For example, C V would indicate a bar on the fifth fret. Partial bars are indicated by a fraction preceding the C. For example, $\frac{1}{2}$ C VII would indicate a bar on the seventh fret covering only the first, second, and third strings.

The abbreviated musical instructions D.C. and D.S. mean to return to the beginning and to return to the sign ($\text{\textcircled{S}}$) respectively. In these transcriptions, repeat signs and D.C. and D.S. notation are only used in instances where the repetition of a certain section does not vary more than a few notes from its original presentation.

In this book we use the following system for identifying tunings for the guitar:



Here is how the tunings used in this book would be identified using this system:

- Standard tuning — E A d g b e'
- Dropped D tuning — D A d g b e'
- Open D tuning — D A d f# a d'
- Open G tuning — D G d g b d'
- Open C⁶ tuning — C G A g c' e'

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CROSSOVER GUITARISTS.

All the guitarists in this book commonly use their left hand thumb in fingering certain chords like F and D. While this is practical on a steel string guitar where the width of the neck at the nut usually measures about $1\frac{1}{16}$ " , it is difficult on a classical guitar where this measurement is usually 2". This is an instance in which the physical dimensions of an instrument have been an important factor in the development of its music and its technique.

For example, if John Fahey consistently composes songs in which he uses his left hand thumb for fretting, and if his songs

become a standard of this style of playing, then the student is put in the position of having to utilize this technique if he or she really wants to emulate this style; and the reasoning continues along this circular path.

I would recommend that if you play a steel string guitar you use your thumb on these chords. If you are playing a classical guitar, then you may have to use bar chords or other alternate fingerings, which may not work as well.

It is interesting to note that in the early days of the 6-string guitar, 1780-1850, instruments were smaller than we know them today. Such well-known early virtuosos of the guitar as Mauro Giuliani often used their left hand thumbs for fretting. But after the famous guitar maker, Antonio Torres, began producing guitars with larger dimensions (like the typical classical guitar today), this technique was no longer feasible on this type of guitar.

For the four songs in this book that are played in either standard tuning or in dropped D tuning, the transcriptions are presented in both tablature and standard notation. This should make these songs easily accessible to guitarists who are trained in

reading standard notation (classical and jazz guitarists). Although chord symbols are, as a matter of convention, not used in standard notation for the guitar, the chord orientation of this music is none-the-less critical. Strings not plucked often begin to vibrate sympathetically. By working off of basic chord positions many bad sounds can be avoided.

A TREATISE ON TECHNIQUE.

"A man after 14 years of hard asceticism in a lonely forest obtained at last the power of walking over the waters. Overjoyed at this acquisition, he went to his guru, and told him of his grand feat. At this the master replied, 'My poor boy, what thou hast accomplished after 14 years' arduous labor, ordinary men do the same by paying a penny to the boatmen.'"⁴
Sri Ramakrishana

All the songs presented here require a certain degree of technical ability, but the technique is not the message, it is the vehicle. Remember that these songs are also pieces of art. Each one is beautiful and possesses emotion, contrast, sensitivity, and direction. A little empathy may get you farther than a lot of technique.



Excerpt from Jerry Guitar comics, a guitar method published in 1963.



NORMAN BLAKE

NORMAN BLAKE

I first heard Norman Blake in Minneapolis in 1974. Being a consummate finger-stylist and snob, I was dragged kicking and screaming to the show expecting to hear one of those flat-pickers who so often forced me to change the radio whenever they would surface during the fine polka programming which so liberally inundates the airwaves of the Great Northwest. What I was expecting to

squeeze or two and they are transplanted into the waiting ears of the listener. The surgery is a success, and the prognosis is good.

Norman is a philosopher and an explorer. He has come to realize the follies of the one-dimensional artist. He is a road-wise traveler along the avenues of other styles. With this in mind, it should come as no shock that Norman is a latent finger-picker. I know for a fact that Norman sometimes even does it in front of other people. Yes, in public. But you don't have to take my word for it, you can read it with your own peepers: *"There are plenty of people flat-picking now, and you can only stand so much of anything. There are times I get real tired of it, and as I say, I find myself going away from it. . . . Around the house I find myself playing about as much finger style, and it seems that more of my songs are starting to work out to where they lay out for finger-picks. A lot of times now, like if I want to get up on stage and play the guitar, the faster, flashier things are what people get off on. So what I'm saying is that they don't yet appreciate the more subtle things. Now some people do, but I'm talking in general. . . . I guess that always will be. Nobody ever digs the good stuff!"*¹

Born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, March 10, 1938, Norman Blake grew up in Sulphur Springs and Rising Fawn, Georgia. At the age of 16, he quit school to play mandolin in a band called the Dixie Drifters. They played the Tennessee Barndance on WNOX radio in Knoxville, Tennessee. Norman then went to work with Bob Johnson performing as the Lonesome Travelers.

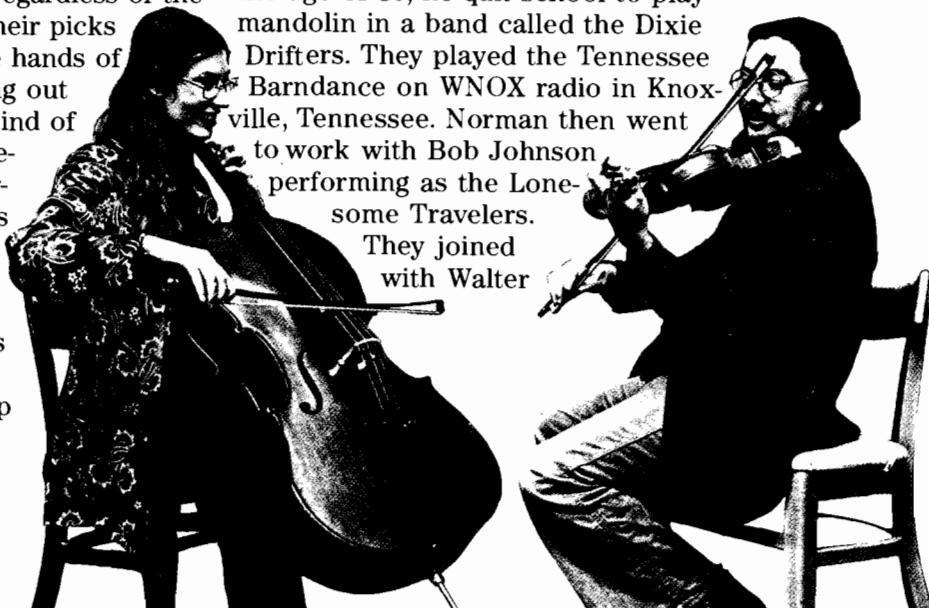
They joined with Walter



Winter '76

hear and what I actually heard were two quite different things.

One of the things I abhor about many flat-pickers is that they rate their proficiency on the instrument by how high and how fast they can stack it, regardless of the scatological implications. Their picks are used like scalpels in the hands of knife-crazed surgeons pulling out song after song like some kind of necrotic tissue till all that remains is a skeleton of a performance. Norman also uses his pick like a scalpel, but he is a sensible and moderate practitioner who carefully extracts tunes from his instruments. These are healthy organs to be held up for close examination. A





away from his fans...

Feb. '78

Forbes in making two records for R.C.A. In 1959 Norman joined Hylo Brown and the Timberliners, although he continued performing with Bob Johnson making several appearances on WSM's Grand Ole Opry.

Norman was then drafted and stationed in the Panama Canal as a radio operator. There he formed the Fort Kobbe Mountaineers, a bluegrass band in which Norman played both mandolin and fiddle. They were voted the best instrumental group in the Caribbean Command, with Norman voted the best instrumentalist.

Upon finishing military service Norman returned to the South, married, and began teaching, performing, and doing session work. For a period of time Norman played as a member of June Carter's road group. In 1969 Norman began performing on Johnny Cash's television show as a guitar and dobro player. This led to session work and road tours with the likes of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Kris Kristofferson, John Hartford, and others. He also recorded with the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and received a gold record for his work on *Will The Circle Be Unbroken*.

Norman travels with his wife Nancy who accompanies him in concert on guitar and cello. He presently resides in Georgia.

Norman's finger-style playing is linked to the past as is the "Spanish Fandango," which dates back to the early 1800's — back to the very roots of the nation. We shall pluck this tuber of American music from its rich historical furrow and expose

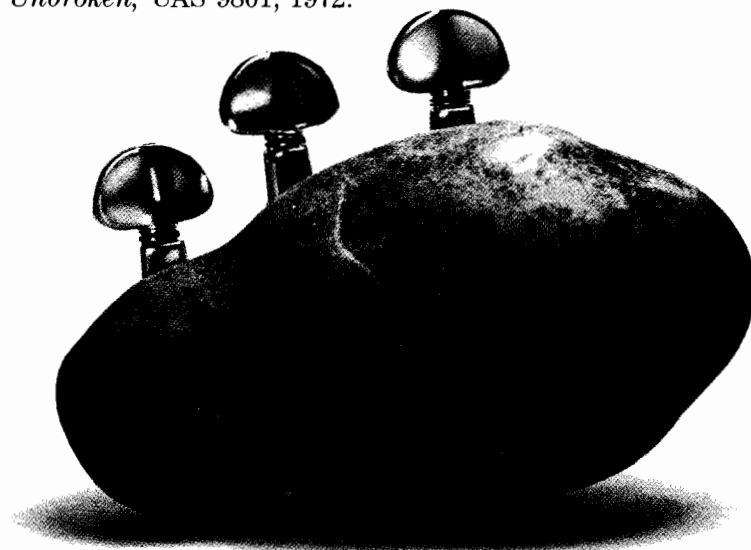
the meaty potato for all the world to see. French-fried, hash-browned, or au gratin, how do you want it? Hallelujah, and pass the potatoes!

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY.

- Norman Blake: Home in Sulphur Springs*, Rounder 0012, 1972.
The Fields Of November, Flying Fish 004, 1974.
Old And New, Flying Fish 01, 1975.
HDS Sessions, Flying Fish HDS 701, 1975.
Whiskey Before Breakfast, Rounder 0063, 1973.
Live At McCabe's, Takoma TAK 7052, 1976.
Blackberry Blossom, Flying Fish 047, 1977.
Philadelphia Folk Festival, Flying Fish 064, 1978.
Directions, Takoma TAK 7064, 1978.
The Rising Fawn String Ensemble, Rounder 0122, 1979.
 Norman Blake & The Rising Fawn String Ensemble, *Full Moon On The Farm*, Rounder 0144, 1981.

Norman has done a lot of work in recording sessions with other artists and can be heard in that capacity on the following albums:

- Bob Dylan, *Nashville Skyline*, Columbia KCS 9825, 1969.
 Tut Taylor, *Friar Tut*, Rounder 0011, 1971.
 John Hartford, *Aereo-Plain*, Warner Bros. WS 1916, 1971.
 Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, *Will The Circle Be Unbroken*, UAS 9801, 1972.



THE SPANISH FANDANGO, 1860

HISTORY. Norman Blake's recording of the "Spanish Fandango" is just one of many recordings of this song that are available today. You may find it interesting to compare his rendition with that of Elizabeth Cotten (Folkways FG 3526), John Hurt (Vanguard VSD-19/20), or Uncle Charlie (Liberty LST 7642). But the history of this song goes back at least 140 years, and, although a great deal is known about its popularity through the years, the origin of the "Spanish Fandango" has been obscured by the passing of time.

Nineteen editions of this melody arranged for solo guitar are known to have been published before 1897. The earliest of these extant versions is found in a guitar method entitled *The Elements of Guitar-Playing* written by James Ballard and published in 1838 by J. & D. Walker. In this method, the song is simply called "Fandango," and is presented as an example of a song in a "Peculiar Tuning." This appears to be the third edition of this method, and it seems reasonable that the "Fandango" ran in the earlier editions as well. Since no composer is listed for this song, it would appear that all that can be said definitely is that the

"Spanish Fandango" was written by someone before the publication of this method in 1838.

STUDY NOTES. One of the most interesting versions of this song was an arrangement by Henry Worrall published originally by A. C. & J. L. Peters in 1860. Worrall was a very influential composer and arranger of guitar music who flourished from about 1856 to 1884. He not only extended the piece with some powerful variations and a section played entirely with harmonics, but added an eight measure introduction which is as pompous as it is fun to play.

In the reproduction of this edition³ which follows, you are instructed that the guitar is to be tuned to open G, but that the notes are written as if the guitar had not been retuned. While this system does allow someone who is accustomed to reading standard notation on the guitar to learn a song in an alternate tuning with a minimum of adjustment, there are two difficulties that soon become apparent: Pitch relationships on the written page are no longer necessarily valid, and, since the intervals between the strings are not the same in open G tuning as they are in standard tuning, this music *must* be played in the positions indicated.

Several errors in this edition should be noted:

1. Both G sharps in the third measure should be F sharps.
2. The F natural in the fourth measure should be F sharp.
3. In the third measure of the finale, the notes G and B should probably be A and C, respectively.

The "Spanish Fandango," with its long-lasting popularity, has had a great impact on the development of finger-style guitar in the United States. Open G tuning is still sometimes referred to as Spanish tuning.

Curious title page from an 1856 guitar method which was also written by Henry Worrall.²

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SPANISH FANDANGO.

Arranged by HENRY WERRALL.

Guitar thus:



and finger as if tuned in the ordinary manner.

Andante.

B 7th.
G 5th.

Introduction.

FANDANGO.

Allegro.

9th. 7th. 5th.

570-2.

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8th Bar :

5th Bar :

7th Bar :

4th Bar :

5th Bar :

7th Bar :

Solo D String.

9th

7th.

5th.

Harm :

12

5th Bar :

7th Bar :

4th Bar

5th Bar :

7th Bar :

Harmonics.....

Harmonics section consisting of two staves of music. The first staff includes markings for *rnl* and *len*. The second staff includes markings for *ten* and *do.*. Fingering numbers (7, 5, 7, 19, 7) are placed below the notes.

Allegro Vivace.

5th. Bar

Finale.

Main musical notation for the *Allegro Vivace* section, consisting of eight staves. The first staff is marked *Finale.* and includes the tempo marking *Allegro Vivace.*. The section is divided into measures, with specific bar markings: 5th. Bar, 7th Bar, 4th Bar, 5th Bar, 7th Bar, and 7th Bar. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns and chordal structures.

NORMAN'S RENDITION

The “Spanish Fandango” holds particular personal significance for Norman because it was the first song he learned to play on the guitar and because his grandmother taught it to him. When Norman was eleven, his father went into town and brought back a new white Stella guitar. His grandmother knew how to play the guitar and showed Norman how to play the “Spanish Fandango.” According to Norman, his grandmother even sang words to this tune.

Norman’s recorded version of this song is a departure from earlier versions in that he plays it entirely in 4/4 time. The disadvantage is that you can no longer do the fandango to it, the fandango being traditionally a 6/8 dance form. The advantage is that it works together better with contemporary guitar technique and sounds more familiar to our contemporary ears.

This tune was transcribed from *Norman Blake: Home In Sulphur Springs*.

S**TUDY NOTES** In this piece, your right hand will occasionally have to shift from a regular alternating bass line to a roll-type pattern (see measures 1-2 and 36-37). This creates an interesting change in the accent pattern and adds a lot to the character of the piece. It is important that the transition between these different right hand techniques is smooth.

Norman Blake’s arrangement of “Spanish Fandango” is a beautiful and a simple one. To execute this piece well, you must concentrate on producing good tone quality from your guitar and on emphasizing the rich harmonies and lyrical melodies.

In measures 49, 50, and 51, Norman makes interesting use of descending slurs. In measure 49, for example, the first string ninth fret is played on the *and* of the third beat, the right hand thumb plays the third string open on the fourth beat, and finally the descending slur is executed on the *and* of the fourth beat. Initially it may seem awkward to execute this type of delayed descending slur because most guitarists are not used to plucking strings with their left hand, but with a little practice this technique will become both easy and productive.

Like the original “Spanish Fandango”, Norman’s version of this song is played in open G tuning, D G d g b d’. In the recording from which this transcription was made, Norman’s guitar is tuned one half-step below concert pitch. The result is C# F# c# f# a# c#’.

SPANISH FANDANGO

Open G tuning (one half-step low), C# F# c# f# a# c#'
♩ = 160

Traditional
Arranged by Norman Blake
Transcribed by John Stropes

A



B



B'



Musical notation for system 65, measures 1-4. Includes fingerings: 5 5 0 0, 3 4 3 4, 1 2 1 2, 2 0 0 0, 5 5 0 0.

½CVII

Musical notation for system 70, measures 1-4. Includes fingerings: 7 7 7 7, 9 9 0 0, 0 0 0 0, 12 14 12, 9 10 9.

Musical notation for system 75, measures 1-4. Includes fingerings: 5 7^m 9, 0 0 0 0, 0 1 0 1, 0 1 0 1, 5 0 0 2.

C'

Musical notation for system 80, measures 1-4. Includes fingerings: 5 5 5 5, 7 5 5 5, 5 0 0 0, m1 0 0 0, p2 0 0 0.

CVII

Musical notation for system 85, measures 1-4. Includes fingerings: 7 7 7 7, 7 7 7 7, 0 0 1 2, 0 0 0 0, 4 4 4 5, 4 4 4 4.



Musical notation for system 90, measures 1-4. Includes fingerings: 4 4 4 4, 5 5 5 7, 5 5 5 5, 4 3 4 3, 4 3 4 0, 0 2 4 2, 0 2 2 0.

A''

Musical notation for system 95, measures 1-4. Includes fingerings: 5 0 0 2, 0 0 0 0, 7 9 9 0, 0 7 0 0, 5 2 5 2, 5 2 5 2.

100

Musical notation for measure 100, consisting of two staves. The top staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 1, 0, 2, 1, 0, 2, 1, 0, 2, 1, 5, 0, 0. The bottom staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 4, 2, 0, 2, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2.

104

Musical notation for measure 104, consisting of two staves. The top staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 7-9, 9, 7, 7, 7, 7, 7, 5, 0. The bottom staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 7, 7, 7, 7, 0, 0, 4, 4, 2.

108

Musical notation for measure 108, consisting of two staves. The top staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 5, 0, 0. The bottom staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 4, 0, 2, 2, 4, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2.

112

B''

Musical notation for measure 112, consisting of two staves. A box labeled "B''" is positioned above the first measure. The top staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 5, 5, 0, 4, 3, 4, 2, 1, 2, 1. The bottom staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 4, 0, 3, 0, 3, 0, 2, 2, 1.

116

Musical notation for measure 116, consisting of two staves. The top staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 5, 0, 0, 7, 7, 7, 7, 9, 0, 9, 0. The bottom staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 7, 7, 7, 7, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.

120

Musical notation for measure 120, consisting of two staves. The top staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 12, 12, 9, 0, 0, 5, 7-9, 0. The bottom staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.

124

Musical notation for measure 124, consisting of two staves. The top staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 1, 0, 2, 1, 0, 2, 1, 0, 5, 0, 0. The bottom staff has notes with fret numbers 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 4, 2, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2.

128

C''

133

137

141

rit.

har.



JOHN FAHEY

JOHN FAHEY

John Fahey is an enigma. His influences are so varied that his music is difficult to categorize. He seems unencumbered by technical considerations guitarists often give their music. The only boundaries John puts on his renderings are the boundaries of his imagination. His style is impressionistic and therefore not always of an immediate nature. His thematic explorations

can be uncommonly structured, dissonant, wildly rhythmic, and often ponderous. Or they may be crisp, tightly structured, and very melodic. He seems to move between these extremes like a schizophrenic bather wandering from shower stall to shower stall in search of a truly gentle soap. To the uninitiated, John's music may at times appear thick and moody, but John's rabid fans

are lulled into a stupor and held captive and drooling until the last crashing strum knocks them senseless and sends them dazed into the night with glowing red noses. By John's own admission, another attempt at "audience-o-cide".

John Fahey is the modern day patriarch of finger-style guitar. He was one of the first musicians to realize that the style had a past and a future on the concert stage. For nearly a quarter of a century, John's music has been folded, compressed, and thrown against the wall to see if it would stick. It's still there and the effect has been monumental.

During John's formative years in Takoma Park, Maryland, his interest in early blues and country music recordings led him on a number of excursions through the South in search of rare 78 discs. Humming down the backroads in his '55 Chevy Belaire to a chorus of crickets and noisy lifters, John discovered an early American tradition in guitar playing that had a great impact on his own style.

EXFOLIATIVE SAPROPHAGONY OF THE EXISTENTIAL JOHN FAHEY

John Aloysius Fahey was born at Takoma Park, Maryland and Harrisburg*, Pennsylvania* on July 4, 1929, of Aloysius J. and Katherine Jane (nee Barnheart-Musselman) Fahey, an immigrant couple from the Indus Valley, whose occupation was (before he died of death on May 1, 1963, followed shortly by Katherine Jane, May 5, of the same year, of the same cause) that of cremation, an occupation he was permitted to follow in Benares because of his Kathlic Faith. Of a melancholy nature Fahey grew up uneventfully in Pennsylvania* and Northern Maryland well within "The Old-High (Pennsylvania*) German Line," growing strong on shoo-fly pies, horehounds, and learning to speak English (only German and Sanskrit were spoken in the Fahey household) by listening to the very popular radio show "Mr. Bomeriener*." His early years lacked distribution. How true of so many of us. ☉ Mr. Fahey's musical training began quite early. He was taught singing, piano, guitar, dog, and clarinet by his father, eine Meisterspeiler ihn selbst, und mit der Hiergekommende des fünft Jahr, Johann die Gitarre schon hat gemeistert. Er, in die Schuleband, auch hat gespielt, und mit die Kirchechoir hat gesangtede from grade school through high school. ☉ Always studious, attentive and star of the Hochschuler fussballe team, John, a letter man, graduated from Northwestern High School (Hyattsville, Md.) in June, 1956, first in a class of 125, and class President. He spent his summers during this period as a summer camp direktor fur die altehoch Deutsche Linie Sommerslager zum Leutes Gebrach der Thorischen und Brunhildechen Gemeinden in Nord-Amerika. Spater er is Komposition, und Harmonie am der Jullard University In New York, und Gutar und die höher Komposition hat, am die Sorbonne (mit Professor Oliver Messican) und mit Andres Segovia In Madrid, Spain, gestudiat, gelernt, gewesen, gemütlich, gescheisten. Gefrücklich, hat er Im nord-gewonnen, Ambegrissen der Boomeranger und Kantallevier, nach der Im betretulich mit Ozmaringer Katamarang sein. Eine Ozmatroid war er, Schon!¹

*genuflect here

In 1959, John Fahey started Takoma Records with a \$500 loan from an Episcopal priest. He sold his first pressing at parties and out of a gas station. As his fame spread, the label grew. Over the years Takoma has acted as a launching pad for some of the finest artists of this genre. The recording careers of both Leo Kottke and Peter Lang began on Takoma. Other artists who are or have been associated with the label include Robbie Basho, Richard Ruskin, Bola Sete, Norman Blake, Michael Bloomfield, Mike Auldridge, and Bukka White. Takoma has helped to service and to preserve an important American tradition of the guitar.

John's accomplishments are many. He re-discovered Skip James and Bukka White and helped reintroduce them to the public. He helped in the formation of the blues-rock group Canned Heat and recorded with them in the 1960's. Ry Cooder credits Fahey as the man who first introduced him to slide guitar. John has authored numerous books and articles including *Charley Patton* (Studio Vista, 1970) and a music book entitled *The Best Of John Fahey 1959-1977* (Guitar Player Books, 1978). John is a contributor to and an advisory board member of *Guitar Player* magazine. His music has been featured in both television and motion picture soundtracks including *Zabriski Point*, *The Baby Maker*, and *Straight Time*.



SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY.

- Blind Joe Death*, Takoma TAK 7002.
- Death Chants, Breakdowns & Military Waltzes*, Takoma TAK 7003.
- Dance Of Death And Other Plantation Favorites*, Takoma TAK 7004.
- The Transfiguration Of Blind Joe Death*, Takoma TAK 7015.
- The Great San Bernadino Birthday Party*, Takoma C-1008.
- Days Have Gone By*, Takoma C-1014.
- John Fahey*, Vanguard VSD-79259.
- The Yellow Princess*, Vanguard VSD-79293.
- The Voice Of The Turtle*, Takoma C-1019.
- The New Possibility*, Takoma TAK 7020, 1968.
- America*, Takoma C-1030.
- Of Rivers And Religion*, Reprise MS-2089.
- Fare Forward Voyagers*, Takoma TAK 7035.
- After The Ball*, Reprise MS 2145, 1973 (out of print).
- Leo Kottke/Peter Lang/John Fahey*, Takoma TAK 7040, 1974.
- Old Fashioned Love*, Takoma TAK 7043, 1975.
- Christmas With John Fahey, Volume II*, Takoma TAK 7045, 1975.
- The Best Of John Fahey 1959-1977*, Takoma TAK 7058.
- John Fahey Visits Washington, D.C.*, Takoma TAK 7069, 1979.
- Yes! Jesus Loves Me*, Takoma TAK 7085, 1980.
- Live In Tasmania*, Takoma TAK 7089, 1981.

In addition, John Fahey can be heard with others on the following albums:

Contemporary Guitarists.

Memphis Swamp Jam.

Jo Ann Kelly, Blue Goose 2009.

Canned Heat, Living The Blues.

IN CHRIST THERE IS NO EAST OR WEST

Since John Fahey first arranged "In Christ There Is No East Or West" for guitar it has enjoyed widespread popularity as an instrumental solo. But one can follow this tune and the lyrics from which its title derives along a convoluted path back as far as the 1880's.

No. 104. The Angels changed my Name.

1. I went to the hill side, I went to pray, I
 2. I looked at my hands and my hands were new, I

know the an - gels done changed my name, Done
 know the an - gels done changed my name, I

changed my name for the com - ing day, Thank
 looked at my feet and my feet were too, Thank

CHORUS.
 God the angels done changed my name. } Done
 God the angels done changed my name. }

changed my name for the coming day, I know the angels done

changed my name, Done changed my name for the

coming day, Thank God the angels done changed my name.

Earliest printed version of the melody of "In Christ There Is No East Or West", 1881.

THE TUNE. After the Civil War (1861-1865), a number of colleges were founded to provide higher education for black people. These insitu-

tions often found themselves in a very precarious financial situation. One of the first of these training schools, Fisk University in Nashville, decided to send a group of singers on a concert tour to raise money to finance the construction of a much-needed new building. This group, the Jubilee Singers, which was composed entirely of former slaves and children of former slaves, met with tremendous success, and in 1881 a book was published which contained background information on the Jubilee Singers and written versions of many of their songs.² If we can accept the prefatory statement of T. F. Seward regarding the derivation of these songs at face value: "Their origin is unique. They are never 'composed' after the manner of ordinary music, but spring into life, ready-made, from the white heat of religious fervor during some protracted meeting in church or camp."³ The tune of one of their songs, "The Angels Changed My Name" (see illustration⁴), came ultimately to be used for the song "In Christ There Is No East Or West".

THE LYRICS. On June 4, 1908, a great convention of Christian missionaries took place in London. Over 6,000 people listened to the opening statement presented by a young member of the government, Winston Churchill. Later that day, a "Pageant of Darkness and Light", written by John Oxenham, was presented as part of the exhibition. One short poem included in this pageant was entitled "In Christ There Is No East Or West". In 1913 this poem was published in a small book of poetry, *Bees In Amber*,⁵ which had by 1942 sold over 250,000 copies. It seemed to express a sentiment of human equality that people were looking for.

These lyrics, being well suited to presentation in the form of a hymn, were combined with various melodies since their original publication. But it was Harry Thacker Burleigh, a noted tenor singer who devoted much of his life to bringing together the beauty of black spirituals with

the beauty of Christian lyrics, who in 1939 first adapted the tune of "The Angels Changed My Name" to this evangelical poem. Since that time it has appeared in the hymnals of many different denominations.

NO EAST OR WEST

In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North,
But one great Fellowship of Love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

In Him shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find.
His service is the golden cord
Close-binding all mankind.

Join hands then, Brothers of the Faith,
Whate'er your race may be!—
Who serves my Father as a son
Is surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both East and West,
In Him meet South and North,
All Christly souls are one in Him,
Throughout the whole wide earth.

The lyrics first appeared as a poem in 1913.

JOHN'S VERSION. John Fahey first learned "In Christ There Is No East Or West" in Sunday school, singing from a 1940 Episcopal hymnal. He said, "It's one of the most beautiful melodies I've ever heard," and it was one of the first songs that he arranged for guitar. He first recorded it in 1959 on the album *John Fahey/Blind Joe Death* (only 100 copies pressed). This material was re-recorded several times and finally in 1969 it was produced in stereo.

Incidentally, Leo Kottke learned this song, along with "The Last Steam Engine Train" directly from John Fahey, and Kottke's recordings of these songs have also been very popular.

This tune was transcribed from *The Best of John Fahey 1959-1977*.

STUDY NOTES. John Fahey holds the guitar playing of Maybelle Carter in very high regard, and sections A and A' of this song are played in what might generally be termed Carter style. Because John uses a thumb pick and two fingerpicks when he performs, he generally strums down with his thumb and up

with his index finger. In situations like measure 1, you must strive to get clean and brisk sounds from both the downward and upward strums.

Throughout the song you will find instances where the right hand thumb strums down on two adjacent strings, or where the right hand index or middle finger strums up on two adjacent strings. In each case it is better to think of the strum as actually being a flamboyant attack on the first string which inadvertently includes the second than it is to be too careful about striking two and only two strings. These strums should be considered a gesture of enthusiasm and they should be executed without altering your right hand position.

The B section of this song is an excellent study for guitarists who play quickly but without power. It requires that careful attention be paid to projecting the sound of your instrument and sustaining these beautiful harmonies.

Like many steel string guitar solos, this arrangement is derived for the most part from a basic chordal accompaniment to this song. To play it well you must keep basic chord positions in mind. For example, in measure 7, it isn't enough to simply play the three notes that are indicated on the first beat: the entire first position F chord must be held down so that the remainder of the strings do not resonate dissonantly. In the tablature transcription of the first three sections of this song I have indicated the basic first position chords that you will need to keep in mind.

If you look at measures 23-24 you will notice that the change to the F chord comes a half beat before the beginning of the measure. This is very common in the playing of John Fahey and many other guitarists. It is very important that the entire F chord be fingered at that time and not just the single note that is indicated. Look for this technique throughout the song.

At the end of measure 24 you will notice that the second string is played open. This is obviously not part of either the F chord which comes before or the C chord which follows. It is in fact being played while the left hand is moving from one chord to the next. You will find that this occurs frequently in this song. Be sure to take advantage of these notes played on open strings to facilitate your chord changes.

IN CHRIST THERE IS NO EAST OR WEST

Standard tuning
♩ = 176

Traditional
Arranged by John Fahey
Transcribed by John Strope

A G D7

rit.

♩ = 138 **B** F6

3
6
9
12
15

18

D G C

1. G

21

2. G $\text{♩} = 224$ C F6 G F

24

m C Am

27

G C G

30

① C

33

G D

36

1.2. G C G 3. G C

G $\text{♩} = 144$

B'

39

42

45

48

51

A'

54

57

rit.

IN CHRIST THERE IS NO EAST OR WEST

Standard tuning
♩ = 176

Traditional
Arranged by John Fahey
Transcribed by John Stropes

A

p *p* *rit.* *p* *p* *p*

B

♩ = 138

p *m* *i* *p* *p* *p*

p *p* *p* *p*

p *p* *p* *p*

16

20

1. 2. ♩ = 224 C

24

27

30

33

WHEN YOU WORE A TULIP

In 1914 Jack Mahoney and Percy Wenrich collaborated in writing the popular song, "When You Wore A Tulip".

The composer, Percy Wenrich (1887-1952), scored many Broadway shows and wrote such other well-known tunes as "Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet" (1909), "Moonlight Bay" (1912), "Where Do We Go From Here?" (1917), and "Sail Along, Silv'ry Moon" (1937). "When You Wore A Tulip", however, was his most successful song. Popularized originally by his wife, Dolly Connolly, on the vaudeville stage, it was a favorite in the years just before America's entry into World War I. Its use over the years in motion pictures, both musical and non-musical, testifies to its great and long-lasting popularity. It can be heard in: *Larceny In Music*, sung by Allan Jones and the King Sisters (Universal, 1942); *Hello*,

1950); and *Belles On Their Toes*, starring Jeffrey Hunter, Jeanne Crain, and Myrna Loy (20th Century-Fox, 1952).

It is interesting to note that John Fahey has also arranged and recorded another song that was on the charts in 1914: W. C. Handy's "St. Louis Blues". It was the tremendous popularity of this song that opened the door to the great commercialization of the blues.

John learned to tap dance to "When You Wore A Tulip" in 1948 when he was 8 years old, and he recalls that he was pretty good at tap dancing. His cub scout troop performed this piece in a minstrel show at a local Presbyterian Church. He always loved this song and it was one of the early songs that he arranged for guitar. He worked out this arrangement from memory. If you com-



Young John Fahey tap-danced to "When You Wore A Tulip" (fifth from right).

Frisco, *Hello*, where it was used as background music for a Dutch skating routine (20th Century-Fox, 1943); *Greenwich Village*, sung by Don Ameche, William Bendix, and others (20th Century-Fox, 1944); *The Merry Monihans*, sung by Ann Blyth (Universal, 1944); *Every Sunday*, starring Dan Dailey and Celeste Holm (20th Century-Fox, 1949); *Cheaper By The Dozen*, starring Clifton Webb and Myrna Loy (20th Century-Fox,

pare it with the original sheet music you can see that John has, in fact, taken considerable liberty with the melody. In addition, he precedes this classic tune with two sections of his own composition. The first section can also be heard as part of "Spanish Dance" (side 1, band 7) on *The Best of John Fahey 1959-1977*.

This tune was transcribed from *After the Ball*.

DOLLY CONNOLLY'S BIG HIT
WHEN YOU WORE A TULIP AND
I WORE A BIG RED ROSE



ETHEL MACDONOUGH

Words by
JACK MAHONEY

Music by
PERCY WENRICH

When You Wore A Tulip

Words by JACK MAHONEY and I Wore A Big Red Rose Music by PERCY WENRICH

Tempo di marcia (Not too fast)

Till ready

I met you in a gar-den in an old Ken-tuck-y town, The sun was shin-ing down, you wore a ging-ham fal-tered thro' the years, You ban-ish all my fears, your voice like mus-ic

gown; I kissed you, as I placed a yel-low tul-ip in your hair, Up-cheers, You are the same sweet girl I knew in hap-py days of old, Your

on my coat you pinned a rose so rare. Time has not changed your lov-li-ness, your hair is sil-ver, but your heart is gold. Red ros-es blush no longer in your

poco rall

just as sweet to me, I love you yet, I can't for-get the days that used to be. cheeks so sweet and fair, It seems to me, dear, I can see white ros-es bloom-ing there.

poco rall

CHORUS *Stoaty*

When you wore a tul-ip, a sweet yel-low tul-ip, and I wore a big red rose, When you ca-ressed me, 'twas then Heav-en

blessed me, what a bles-sing, no one knows. You made life cheer-ie, when you called me dear-ie, 'twas down where the blue grass grows, —

poco rall.

Your lips were sweet-er than jul-ep, when you wore that tul-ip and

poco rall.

rit.

I wore a big red rose. When rose.

STUDY NOTES. John often uses a triplet roll in his music to create rhythmic variation. In measure 16 you will see an example of this figure. Notice that the regular alternating bass line is not interrupted by this type of roll.

In measure 8, however, the roll occurs as a series of eighth notes. This does temporarily displace the right hand thumb and the accent pattern. The surprising effect that is created, however, is well worth the extra effort.

The chord orientation of this song is, of course, obvious. Just as in "In Christ There Is No East Or West", it is important to play this song working out of basic chord forms (indicated in the tablature). For example, in measure 1 you must have the fourth and fifth strings fingered on the second fret at the beginning of the measure. After executing the ascending slur, the full E chord would be held down as indicated even though it is perfectly true that two of the three notes of the chord are not played. For someone acquainted with the style, this chord orientation is probably second nature. Classical guitarists, however, may have to pay careful attention to this. It is not enough just to play the notes indicated. Stylistic considerations are extremely important.

Original sheet music for "When You Wore A Tulip", published by Leo Feist in 1914.

© 1914 Leo Feist

WHEN YOU WORE A TULIP

Words by Jack Mahoney
Music by Percy Wenrich
Arranged by John Fahey
Transcribed by John Stropes

Standard tuning

♩ = 192

A

E ————— F

4 E ————— F

7 E

10 F

13 D7 G C

16 1. 2. F **B** Bb

19

G C F

22

B \flat C

25

1. F 2. F 3. F *Fine*

28

C

31

F

34

C

37

40 D G

43 C

46 F

49 E

52 F C

55 D G

58 C *D.S. al Fine* ♯

WHEN YOU WORE A TULIP

Words by Jack Mahoney
Music by Percy Wenrich
Arranged by John Fahey
Transcribed by John Stropes

Standard tuning
♩ = 192

A

E

F

4

8

12

p

m

16

1. m 3 2. B 3 VI

p *p* *p* *i* *p*

19

VI

23

VIII 1. 2.

27

3. Fine C

31

31

35

35

39

43

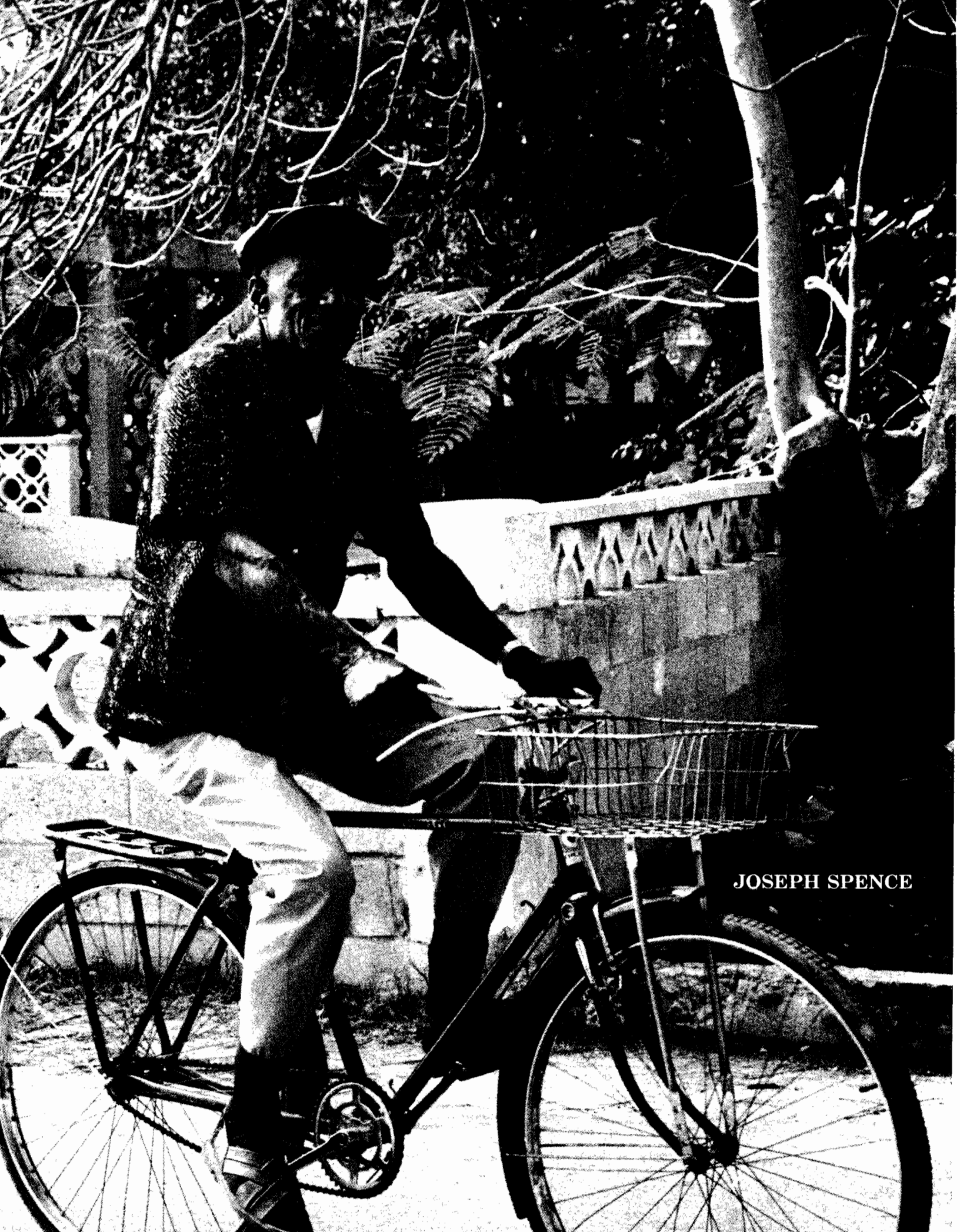
47

51

54

57

3 *D.S. al Fine*



JOSEPH SPENCE

JOSEPH SPENCE

Bahamian guitarist Joseph Spence was first brought to the attention of American guitarists by Samuel Charters who “discovered” him by chance while on an ethnomusicological egg hunt in the Bahamas in 1958. With the release of his first album in 1959, his place in the history of finger-style guitar was already assured.

Joseph Spence was born on Andros Island in 1910. When he was nine his uncle, who lived in the U.S., visited Andros and brought him a guitar. Spence taught himself to play in the rich musical environment of Andros Island. He often played for dances, strumming chords in the keys of C, G, and F. Spence grew up during the heyday of sponging, and worked as a sponge fisherman until 1938 when a blight wiped out 90 percent of the sponge population of the Bahamas. Then he and his wife, Louise, moved to Nassau.

His style is difficult to define. It is wonderfully strange and complex. Wild thematic variation and rhythmic complexity make duplication of his music intensely challenging. He is in a constant state of creation as with each new passage he issues a fresh transmutation. He often accompanies his music with undefinable guttural vocalizations, a sort of primitive scat, offering further rhythmic rumination to the already multi-rhythmic rendition.

Spence’s age separates him from the other guitarists represented in this book: the popular songs he is most familiar with are from the 1920’s, 30’s, and 40’s. He has never heard of Bob Dylan or Leo Kottke.

Furthermore, Spence has been strongly influenced by traditional Bahamian musical forms. For example, in the Bahamas there is an old style of singing called “rhyming” which flourished particularly during the sponge fishing boom of the 1930’s. Typically three men, one singing bass, one a very high part, and one singing the melody, begin with a fairly straightforward rendition of an old religious tune. After going through it a few times to get into the harmony, the lead singer begins to improvise on both the melody and the lyrics. While the melody increases in rhythmic intensity, the lyrics are

freely improvised along Biblical lines and often interspersed with a description of the day’s activities. Then, returning to the original format, the song ends.

The similarity between this traditional Bahamian singing style and Spence’s guitar



Joseph and Louise Spence in front of their house in Nassau.

style is remarkable. Although his music is primarily two voice (a coherent bass line and a melody on the treble strings), he often introduces a third voice, especially at the end of a section. The style of development is basically the same, beginning with a straightforward presentation of the theme, moving

to more exciting variations, and then returning to the original outline.

But Spence's musical influences are not entirely Bahamian. In 1944 Spence and his wife came to the U.S. to pick and pack crops as part of a government program to ease the shortage of American workers during World War II. They spent two years working in the fields of the U.S. Their travels included most of the southeast, concentrating on Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, Tennessee, and as far north as Delaware.

Spence took his guitar to the U.S. It was during this period that he discovered a hymnal called *Crown and Harmony*. He learned a lot of these songs and to this day they represent the nucleus of his repertoire. Spence was deeply involved with Southern American music: he performed many times while in the U.S., and absorbed musical styles of that period such as blues, boogie woogie, hillbilly, and early jazz.

Sometime in the 1930's, Spence developed a fondness for playing in dropped D tuning, and he's been playing in dropped D tuning exclusively ever since. He plays with a thumb pick but no fingerpicks.

Spence is an amazing man. He grew up in an extraordinarily rich musical environment and used it as a foundation for developing a highly idiosyncratic guitar style. It is full of

life and it has had a dramatic impact on finger-style guitar in the United States. Several of the artists in this book have recorded arrangements of Spence's tunes. His music is both a challenge and a joy to play.

Now in his seventies, Spence works as a night watchman at an elementary school in Nassau. He is happily married and he rarely tours. He is a consummate guitar player of the rarest kind.

DISCOGRAPHY. *Music Of The Bahamas, Volume One*, Folkways FS 3844, 1959 (recorded in 1958).

Joseph Spence - Folk Guitar/John Roberts & Frederick McQueen - Bahaman Ballads & Rhyming Spirituals, Folkways FS 3847, 1964 (recorded in 1958).

Happy All The Time, Elektra EKL-273, 1964 (out of print).

The Real Bahamas, In Music And Song, Nonesuch H-72013, 1965.

Joseph Spence, Arhoolie 1061, 1972 (recorded in 1971).

The Real Bahamas, Volume II, Nonesuch H-72078, 1978 (recorded in 1965).

Living On the Hallelujah Side, Rounder 2021, 1980 (recorded in 1972 and 1978).



GLORY GLORY

This is a very popular old religious tune that has been sung and recorded by many people. A truly inspired rendition, for example, although not particularly interesting from the standpoint of guitar playing, can be found on *Anthology of American Folk Music/Volume Two: Social Music* (Folkways FA 2952, 1952 [recorded from 1926-1935]). It is, however, fascinating to compare Spence's version with Mississippi John Hurt's recording (on *The Best Of Mississippi John Hurt*, Vanguard VSD-19/20, 1971 [recorded in 1965]) entitled "Since I've Laid This Burden Down". The remarkable difference in their approach to this song is not only a tribute to their uniqueness as artists, but also reflects differences in the musical cultures which surrounded them.

In this recording, Spence plays through the eight measure theme of this tune seventeen times, but this is not really a theme and variation in the conventional sense. Spence has a wealth of idiomatic licks in his repertoire that he uses to ornament and develop his instrumental solos. He rarely plays a song, or even a section of a song, exactly the same way twice, but constantly introduces subtle changes as the mood strikes him. This is a credit to Spence as a musician, although it may seem rather disconcerting to a student of his music. I have transcribed what I consider to be the most significant presentations of the theme: the first, third, eighth, tenth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and seventeenth. I have included the one measure which precedes each variation so that the pickup notes of the melody are appropriate.

This tune was transcribed from *Joseph Spence – Folk Guitar/John Roberts & Frederick McQueen – Bahaman Ballads & Rhyming Spirituals*.

STUDY NOTES. Every song that Spence has recorded is played in dropped D tuning, D A d g b e'. In the recording from which this transcription was made, however, Spence's guitar is tuned two half-steps below concert pitch so the strings are actually C G c f a d'.

One very unusual feature of Spence's play-

ing is his use of the right hand index finger to strum down and up quickly on a few strings to fill out the sound of his finger-style solos. This is very reminiscent of Carter style. Its application here, in the midst of intricate finger-style playing, requires great skill. On the second beat of measure 16, for example, Spence uses his index finger to strum down on two strings and then to catch one string on the way up.

Spence plays certain notes quite softly, more for their rhythmic effect than for their pitch. I have included these notes in the transcription, but it would sound peculiar if they were played with the same volume as other notes. No doubt Spence developed this technique of subtle syncopation over many years. It is especially important in learning this song to listen to the recording and try to internalize this approach. In the first two eight-measure sections I have put these notes in parentheses. Practice playing them very softly, and apply this technique to the rest of the song in similar instances.

A staccato mark, a dot placed over or under a note or group of notes, indicates that the note or group of notes is to be cut short, sustained less than its written value. (The staccato mark in measure 49 of the tablature applies only to the melody note, not to the bass note. This is an exceptional instance.)

Spence plays the guitar with a thumb pick, but no finger picks.

The use of the right hand thumb in this piece is quite a bit different than other songs in this book. Although this song is in 4/4 time, the thumb does not play a regular alternating bass line as you may have come to expect. It plays not only on the beat but also on the *and* of the beat.

Because of the rhythmic complexity of this song, it may seem more difficult than other songs in this collection when you first read through it. But let me offer this observation as encouragement: People who have learned to play any tune by Joseph Spence generally remember the experience as a turning point in the development of their art — a significant step forward.

GLORY GLORY

Dropped D tuning (two half-steps low), C G c f a d'
 ♩ = 120

Traditional
 Arranged by Joseph Spence
 Transcribed by John Stropes

The guitar tablature for "GLORY GLORY" is presented in six systems, each with two staves. Measure numbers 1, 3, 6, 9, 12, and 15 are indicated on the left side of the first staff of each system. The notation includes fret numbers, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'm' (marcato). The piece is in Dotted Quarter note, 4/4 time, and Dropped D tuning.

17

19

22

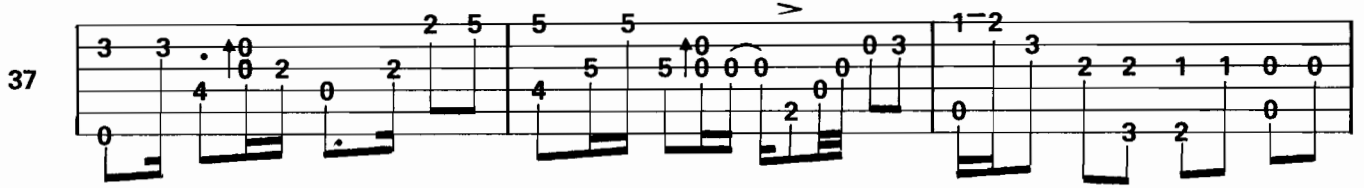
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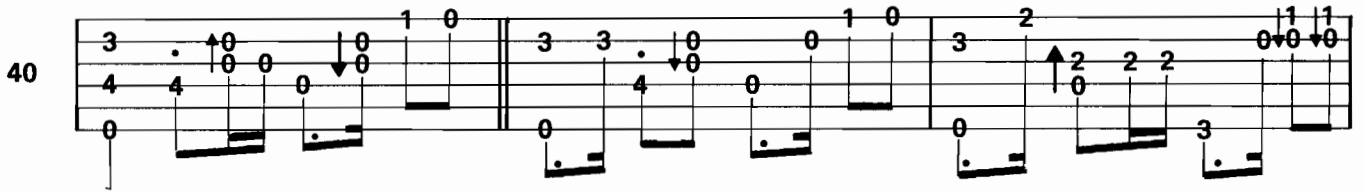
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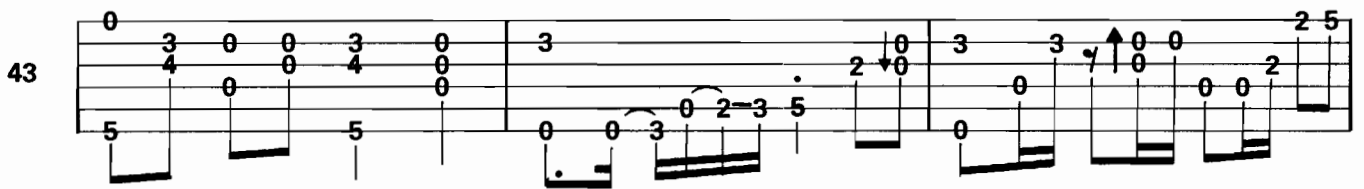
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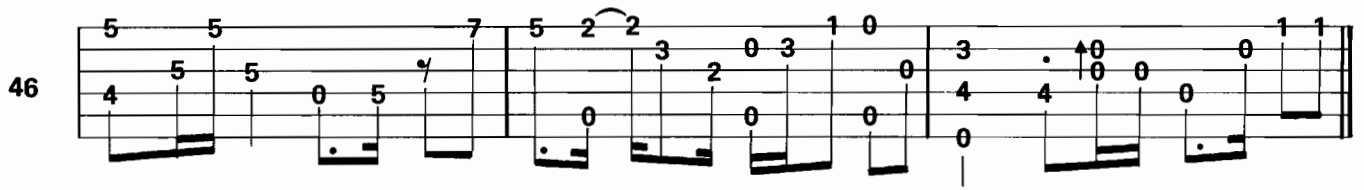
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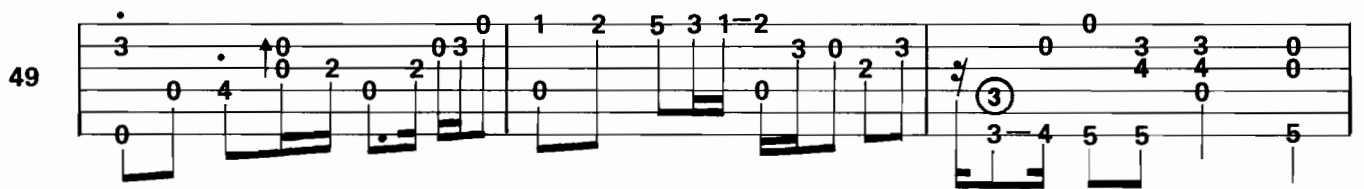
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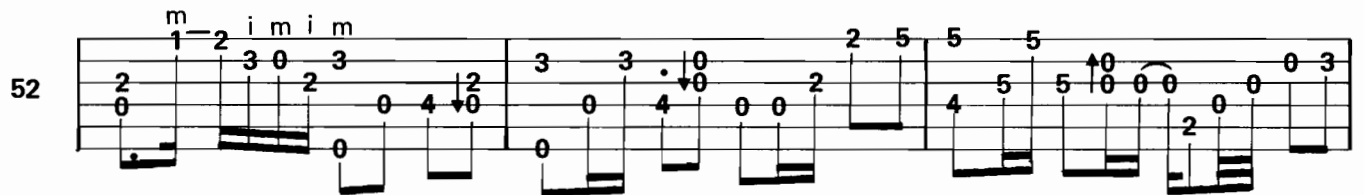
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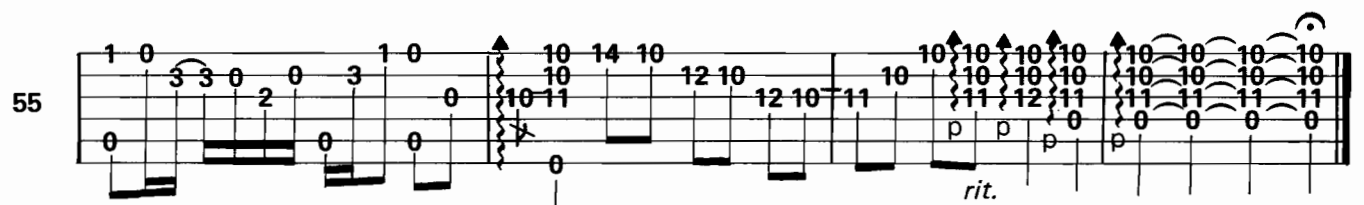
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52



55



GLORY GLORY

Dropped D tuning (two half-steps low), C G c f a d'
♩ = 120

Traditional
Arranged by Joseph Spence
Transcribed by John Stropes

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (D major). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes guitar-specific notation such as fingerings (m, i), dynamics (p), and circled numbers (5) indicating fret positions. The systems are numbered 4, 7, 10, and 13 on the left margin. The music consists of a single melodic line with a bass line of chords and single notes. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the fifth system.

16

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RY COODER

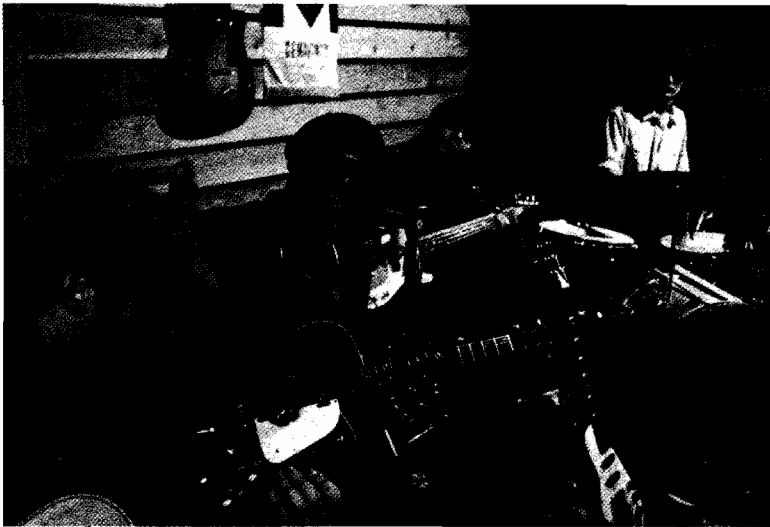
RY COODER

For years I've been trying to figure out Ry Cooder's music. The man's got more colors than a chameleon. The amazing thing is that it's got continuity. Everything he touches becomes Cooderesque. He has the ability to step inside the skin of the music and kick the guts around a bit while leaving the authenticity intact. An extremely eclectic performer, Cooder works through such styles of music as jazz, blues, Caribbean, Hawaiian, gospel, rock, and country. The man is an ethnomusicological earthworm. He wallows through the primal mud surrounding the American musical root system, digesting old and rotting musical matter and converting it to clean, rich musical topsoil. You can plant your ears in this stuff and expect a particularly good harvest. His creative process always lends a particular flavor to the meaty dishes he serves up. I wait for

It is interesting to compare, for example, Blind Blake's original recording of "Police Dog Blues" (*Blind Blake 1926-1932. Search Warrant Blues, Vol. 2, Biograph BLP 12023*) with Ry Cooder's arrangement (on *Ry Cooder*). Hear how Ry calls forth Blake's sleeping muse and, with her spirit, defines the nature of this work. It is a joyful interpretation. It is the resurrection of old Blake with his buttoned down boots and elfin smile; Blake in all his sotted glory is alive in this performance. When queried about his approach to Blake's music Ry responded, "... not note for note because it's just impossible, when it comes down to somebody like Blake or Gary Davis or somebody like that ... the notes themselves aren't the same I found out, I mean that's obvious. But I listened to Blake so much that I got into sort of the way of thinking ... I tried to think of the way that he was expressing notes and his kind of elegant way of expressing the syncopation, so I thought I understood enough just to really learn his music. I didn't learn Gary Davis very well but somehow I had some kind of feeling for Blake. I used to play that the whole time, those tunes of his like "Diddy Wah Diddy," "Early One Morning," all those nice pretty things."¹

Ry Cooder was born in Los Angeles in 1947. He began playing tenor guitar at age four and the six-string at 11. It was from his father who played the works of Woody Guthrie and music of a similar genre that Ry learned his first pieces. His parents had broad tastes in music ranging from the classics to works by such artists as Pete Seeger, Leadbelly, and Woody Guthrie.

"By that time I was about twelve and I really got into guitar playing. I tried to learn that stuff ... it was impossible, I didn't have the technique...That was about the time when mountain music was being revived so any time a record came out I got it and tried to learn it. There was that great record on the Tradition label of music from southern Appalachia [*Folk Songs And Instrumental Music Of The Southern Mountains*, Murray Hill 927950], Etta Baker [was on it] ... that



McCabe's booth at the Teenage Fair, 1964, featuring The Rising Sons: Ry Cooder, Taj Mahal, Gary "Magic" Marker, and Jesse Lee Kincaide (aka Nick Gertach).

the release of a Ry Cooder album much the way a hungry diner waits for his main course. Ah, Cooder stew — bon appetit and I know I'll never need a bromo.

Ry Cooder is an arranger of songs. His approach might be termed holistic: It combines a factual understanding of a piece of music and its instrumental technique with a spiritual affinity for this music. He breathes new life into music through his own interpretations. There are many who would attempt such resurrections but few with the mastery of Cooder.

was incredible. And then I spent about 6-8 months with that record, trying to learn it. That was a real important record; I think that's great, that woman's a fantastic musician ..."²

Ry became a regular at the now defunct Los Angeles folk club, the Ash Grove. Here he observed and learned from the legendary folk and blues musicians who passed through the doors. "Whenever there was a good guitar player there, I'd sit in the front row and watch. I got pretty good at remembering stuff. If someone like Gary Davis was in town, I'd talk to him, go to where he was staying, give him \$5 and get him to play as much as he could while I watched. About a month later, I'd find that I'd start to remember how he did things."³

In 1965 Ry Cooder joined Taj Mahal and formed The Rising Sons, one of the first blues bands on the West Coast. The band encountered some success including a recording contract with Columbia Records. Through these recording sessions Ry met Terry Melcher, producer for the Byrds, Paul Revere and the Raiders, and other popular groups of the time. Melcher capitalized on Cooder's talents and Ry became a popular session man. At about this same time Ry met Don Van Vliet, aka Captain Beefheart, and became a temporary member of the Magic Band. Cooder performed on and helped to arrange Beefheart's debut album, *Safe As Milk*. Ry became known as a bottleneck specialist and a mandolin player. Through his studio work he was introduced to producer Jack Meitzche who took him to London where he worked on the Rolling Stones album, *Let It Bleed*, and also on the soundtrack of Mick Jagger's film, *Performance*. After his return to Los Angeles Ry began studio work with Lenny Waronker and Van dyke Parks. This association led to the signing and release of Ry's blues flavored debut album, *Ry Cooder*, followed by two similar works, *Into The Purple Valley* and *Boomer's Story*.

In 1974 Ry took a fundamentally different direction with the release of *Paradise And Lunch*, a beautifully produced album which met with critical acclaim. Ry Cooder had come of age. His continued evolution took him through the ethnic traditions of Tex-Mex and Hawaiian music and led to the albums *Chicken Skin Music* and *Showtime*, a live album featuring Ry and his musicians as the

Chicken Skin Review. *Jazz*, Ry's next album, featured unique reconstructions of America's classical jazz age coupled with several orchestrated pieces of the Bahamian guitarist, Joseph Spence. In late 1979 Cooder released the album *Bop Til You Drop*, important as the first all-digital rock album.

Ry Cooder's name is synonymous with finger-style guitar in America. His studio and soundtrack work coupled with his band, orchestra, and solo performances make him one of the most glamorous guitarists in the world today and one of the most respected.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY.

- Ry Cooder*, Reprise RS 6402, 1970.
Boomer's Story, Reprise MS 2117, 1972.
Into The Purple Valley, Reprise MS 2052, 1972.
Paradise And Lunch, Reprise MS 2179, 1974.
Chicken Skin Music, Reprise MS 2254, 1976.
Show Time, Warner Bros. BS 3059, 1977 (recorded in 1976).
Jazz, Warner Bros. BSK 3197, 1978.
Bop Till You Drop, Warner Bros. BSK 3358, 1979.
Borderline, Warner Bros. BSK 3489, 1980.
- Ry has done a lot of work in recording sessions with other artists and can be heard in that capacity on the following albums:
- Randy Newman, *12 Songs*, Reprise RS 6373.
Rolling Stones, *Sticky Fingers*, Rolling Stones COC 39105.
Rolling Stones, *Let It Bleed*, London NPS-4.
Rolling Stones, *Jamming With Edward*.
Captain Beefheart, *Safe As Milk*, Buddha (out of print).
Little Feat, Warner Bros. WS 1890.
Maria Muldaur, Reprise MS 2148.
Arlo Guthrie, *Last Of The Brooklyn Cowboys*, Reprise MS-2142.
Arlo Guthrie, *Running Down The Road*, Reprise RS 6346.
Gabby Pahinui, *The Gabby Pahinui Hawaiian Band*, Warner Bros. BS-3023.
- Ry has also produced some very interesting music for movies, including:
- Blue Collar*, MCA 3034.
Performance, Atlantic K 46075 (out of print).
The Long Riders, Warner Bros. HS 3448, 1980.

GREAT DREAM FROM HEAVEN

This old religious tune was probably first stylized on guitar by Joseph Spence. You can listen to Spence playing this song on *The Real Bahamas, In Music And Song*. The influence that Spence's playing has had on Ry Cooder is enormous. Not only has Ry recorded many of Spence's songs, but he has truly integrated some of the best aspects of Spence's playing into his own style.

This tune was transcribed from *Into The Purple Valley*.

STUDY NOTES. You may have noticed that most of the instrumental solos played by guitarists in this style are in 4/4 time. Part of the reason is that most songs written these days are in 4/4 time. But it is also true that for a guitarist who is used to playing in 4/4 time, and especially one who is used to playing a regular alternating bass line with the right hand thumb, it may seem awkward initially

to play in 3/4 time: your right hand thumb needs to be more independent. It functions in a different relationship with your fingers.

One reason Ry's recording of "Great Dream From Heaven" has so much impact is that, not only is it in 3/4 time with the bass line consequently sounding a little more unusual to our ears, but, in addition, the bass line is very syncopated. At first it may seem difficult to strike bass notes off the beat (as in measure 10), and especially to strike them at eighth note intervals (as in measure 9), but this is a very important technique for every guitarist to learn. This ability to play unconventional and highly syncopated bass lines with the right hand thumb can also be heard in the playing of Joseph Spence, Blind Blake, Reverend Gary Davis, and others.

This song is played in dropped D tuning, D A d g b e'.

Rich inner harmonies, exciting syncopation, and Ry's perfect rhythmic sense make this an extraordinary song.

GREAT DREAM FROM HEAVEN

Dropped D tuning, D A d g b e'
♩ = 140

Traditional
Arranged by Ry Cooder
Transcribed by John Stropes

The image displays a guitar tablature for the song "Great Dream from Heaven". The music is written in Dropped D tuning (D A d g b e') with a tempo of 140 beats per minute. The piece is in 3/4 time and consists of 24 measures. The notation includes various fret numbers (0-7), accidentals (sharps and naturals), and articulation marks such as accents, slurs, and breath marks. A circled '3' indicates a triplet. A double bar line appears at the end of measure 13. A section starting at measure 21 is marked with a double bar line and the text "4/6C II".

25

29

33

37

41

45

49

GREAT DREAM FROM HEAVEN

Dropped D tuning, D A d g b e'
♩ = 140

Traditional
Arranged by Ry Cooder
Transcribed by John Strope

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of four systems of music, each starting with a measure number: 2, 6, 11, and 16. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. Fret numbers are indicated by circled numbers (1, 2, 3) below the notes. Dynamics like 'p' (piano) and 'm' (mezzo) are used throughout. The score includes a double bar line at the start of the 16th measure. The piece concludes with a final note in the 17th measure.

21 4/6 CI

26

31

36

41

46

51

Musical staff 51: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a bass line with quarter and eighth notes. A circled '2' is present at the end of the staff.

56

Musical staff 56: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a melodic line with eighth notes and a bass line with quarter notes. A fermata is placed over the first measure.

61

Musical staff 61: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a melodic line with eighth notes and a bass line with quarter notes. A fermata is placed over the first measure, and a 'p' dynamic marking is at the end.

66

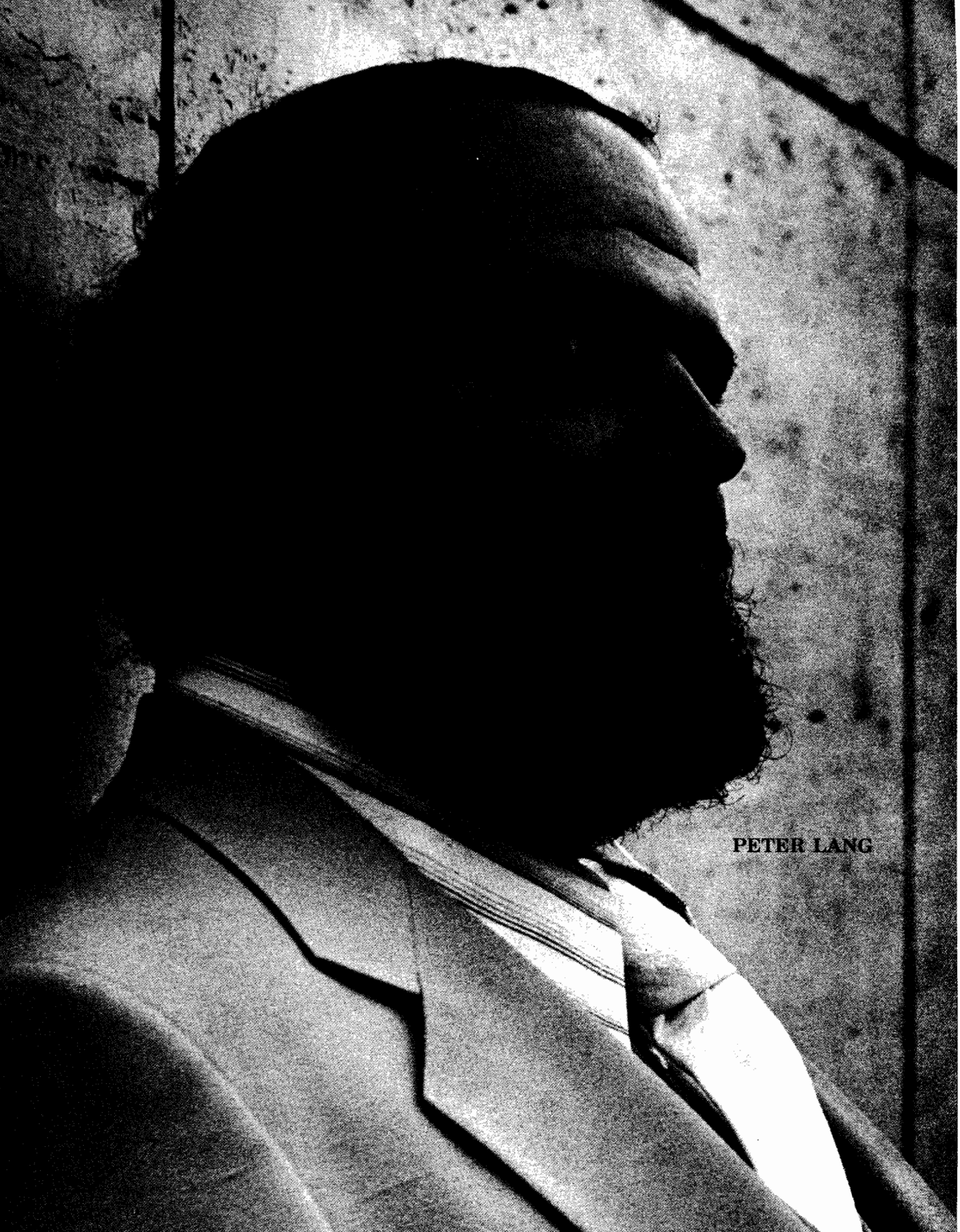
Musical staff 66: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a melodic line with eighth notes and a bass line with quarter notes. A fermata is placed over the first measure, and 'm' and 'i' markings are present.

71

Musical staff 71: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a melodic line with eighth notes and a bass line with quarter notes. A fermata is placed over the first measure, and 'm', 'p', and 'i' markings are present.

76

Musical staff 76: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a melodic line with eighth notes and a bass line with quarter notes. A fermata is placed over the first measure, and a 'rit.' marking is present.



PETER LANG

PETER LANG

My involvement as a professional of this style is merely a fluke of fate. I feel my true occupational predisposition is more closely geared toward a career in epidemiology. I dropped in and out of several major universities trying to define my life's goal, and tried my hand at many occupations. (To a certain degree I think we are all prisoners of our own freedom.) I worked construction and I am still a member of Hod Carriers local #23. For a short time I was engaged in grinding the burrs from the tops of coffee pots. There were hundreds more: soda jerk, hot dog salesman, ace gas jockey, vacuum cleaner salesman, and sewer maintenance person. During this part of my life music served as therapy, an outlet for the little frustrations which filled my life. Every time I was robbed, beaten, or bitten by a strange dog, solace was as close as the picks on my fingers. My guitar was my psychic nanny.

It was during my early residency in California that I became aware of art as a profession. I had a short engagement as the Nude Living Canvas for several of Venice, California's celebrated hickey artists, and it



was then that I realized that people were willing to pay money to see me. My hard work and persistence paid off when, in 1972, I received a contract with Takoma Records.

I've been blessed with my share of good luck — several successful records and an opportunity to travel and see the world while earning a great income and learning an exciting new career. I



think I'm a lot happier than if I'd joined the Navy, and that says a lot.

"He diggy, diggy, diggy, but no meat dar."¹
Joel Chandler Harris

In the following interview I play the part of both moderator and questionee, a rather simple task since I know all the right questions.

Moderator: First I'd like to get the usual questions out of the way. How long have you been playing the guitar?

Peter: 20 years.

Moderator: Of all the musical styles of the guitar, what led you to this particular one?

Peter: I became interested in the style during the late 1950's with the start of the folk music revival. The first group that really sparked my interest was the Kingston Trio. I was intrigued with the format and simplicity. My folks were more interested in my career as a grade school orchestra trumpet player, but the fact that the trumpet can be unnerving if the player is a beginner broke their desire to raise a young Satchmo. So as a compromise they bought me a ukelele. It was a lot of fun, and I looked great in a grass skirt, but it was a bit limiting. With a little prodding they bought me a Kay model guitar, *pedazo de caca*, as they say in Mexico. In the two years I had that turkey I learned bad habits which still haunt me today. A friend's brother had some albums by some local artists, Dave Ray, John Koerner, and Tony Glover, who were experiencing some national success. The albums were *Blues, Rags and Hollers* (Elektra 7267) and *Lots More Blues Rags and Hollers* (Elektra EKS-267). This music completely changed my direction. Here were some urban white guys trying to do accurate representations of the country blues as they were meant to be played. It was a starting point which led to the works of other popular white blues artists and eventually to the black artists who inspired their music. I'm talking about people like John Hammond, Jr., Dave Van Ronk, John Hurt, Gary Davis, and the like.

Moderator: When I listen to your music I don't hear that much blues.

Peter: Yeah, well, I was a blues artist almost exclusively until about 1965. Then I began experimenting in different directions. It's not that I was bored with the blues, it's just that the style seemed to adapt itself well to different musical forms. I started working

with open tunings, some of which I had learned from slide guitar.

Moderator: These artists that you mentioned — did they affect your style?

Peter: Yeah. I saw a lot of Dave Ray shows when I was first developing my style. John Koerner, too. I picked up some of my technical approach from watching those gentlemen.



John Koerner, Tony Glover, and Dave Ray, March 1963.

Moderator: A lot of listeners feel that you, John Fahey, and Leo Kottke sound alike and people have made a big deal of that connection. Did they influence your music?

Peter: The association is natural. There are a lot of similarities between the styles of everyone in this book. We are all to a certain extent limited by the boundaries and construction of the style. The fact that John, Leo, and I were all on Takoma Records and also on an album together helped to cement that comparison. Leo is really good, clean, fast, and aggressive. The first time I heard Kottke I was real impressed. His music is hard-driving and immediate. I think to a large part it is this immediacy which has given his music such popularity. John, on the other hand, is very impressionistic. He likes to experiment. His stuff is very cerebral. I think my music is more structured than John's and less aggressive than Leo's. John did influence my ideas of what music is. I was introduced to John's music when I signed with Takoma in 1972. Prior to that I never thought that dissonance could be musical or that space and rhythm could be such an important part of music. It broadened my horizons.



Moderator: What is your philosophy about music?

Peter: I don't know, what's yours?

Moderator: Music is an expression of humanity. The Greeks believed it to be the highest of the art forms. It is immediate and physical. It can evoke all the emotions and can offer an escape. It can relax and placate the senses, it has meditative quality, it is as essential as the breath of life. But bad music is like cheap wine — the hangover begins with the first sip.

Peter: I suppose so.

Moderator: How does one go about composing a song?

Peter: That's a good question. I don't really know. Creativity is a strange thing. It always seems to happen when you least expect it. It's very much like meditation. It usually happens after I have been practicing for several hours. I read about some tests done at an Eastern university some years ago on creativity. They monitored a number of artists in and out of creative states and found they exhibited strong alpha waves during their highly creative states. It seemed they entered these states slowly and they always were relaxed, yet if they tried to force themselves into these states it seemed they could not enter. I've noticed that I'm always relaxed when I'm being creative. The form of my pieces always seems to come from free-flow improvisation during such periods. It seems I am unable to formulate

pieces when I consciously try to do so.

Moderator: Do you practice a great deal?

Peter: No, I used to, but lately only about four hours a day. Usually I get up at four in the morning. To clear my mind I have a cup of hot water followed by an hour of yoga. In this quiet and relaxed state I practice on the average of four hours. Generally I finish this regimen with a six-pack of beer and go back to bed, although I'm usually back up in time to watch the soaps.

Moderator: What kinds of music do you listen to?

Peter: All kinds. My record collection is fairly eclectic, a little bit of everything.

Moderator: What do you see as the future of music?

Peter: If I had the answers to questions like that I'd probably be wearing Brooks Brothers instead of Fruit of the Loom.

Moderator: Let me rephrase that. What do you see as the future of this particular style of music?

Peter: It's an important style, an historic style, and I hope that it will continue to flourish. I think the most important task if this music is to survive is to make the public aware of the history and tradition of the style.

Moderator: You use open tunings almost exclusively, don't you?

Peter: No, I use standard quite a bit but I would say that a great deal of my own composition is done in open tunings. I feel open tunings provide a certain liberation from the structure and familiarity of a standard tuning which sometimes present stumbling blocks in the creative process. Working with a new tuning forces you to reach out and explore, often with surprising results. Also the sound dynamics can be greatly enhanced through the use of a different tuning. Open tunings are nothing new, they are as old as the instrument itself.

Moderator: What else say you?

Peter: Nothing for it has all been said.

DISCOGRAPHY. *The Thing At The Nursery Room Window*, Takoma TAK 7034, 1973.

Leo Kottke/Peter Lang/John Fahey, Takoma TAK 7040, 1974.

Lycurgus, Flying Fish FF 014, 1975.

Prime Cuts, Waterhouse 2, 1977.

Back To The Wall, Waterhouse 7, 1978.

WHEN KINGS COME HOME

This song was written in 1971. It's a very personal piece. It came from the same musical period that produced "Bituminous Nightmare" and "Thoth Song". The thematic considerations of this song deal with the combination of hope, sorrow, and majesty. It could be thought of as a dirge or lament. I am encouraged by the popularity of this piece. Perhaps romance is not dead.

This song was, to a degree, an experiment. I was interested in the idea of space in music. By this I mean the areas that exist between the struck notes. I was trying to accent this sense of space in order to magnify my compositional ideas. By employing long, sustained chords, the natural dynamics of the acoustic guitar (the richness that exudes from the wood) surface. We experience a rich tonality through a strong attack with natural, uninterrupted decay. Such elements are lost, to a great degree, in the more common alternating bass pattern. I feel such techniques can be helpful by allowing the student to step into a different technical

structure than one would normally encounter. I find anything which might break habitual or associated patterns in the technical presentation of a musical style to be of significant value in expanding one's perspective.

Peter Lang

This tune was transcribed from *Leo Kottke/Peter Lang/John Fahey*.

STUDY NOTES. Peter plays this song very expressively, often taking considerable liberty with the meter.

A left hand maneuver that Peter employs frequently in his compositions is found in measures 28, 29-30, 32-33, and in the repetition of these passages which occur later in the song. He first places down some left hand note or notes, then bars with his first finger behind this configuration, then removes the notes in a progressive manner until only the bar remains.

One reason that Peter is able to get such soft articulation of descending slurs such as those found in measure 2 is that he pushes up on the string with his left hand finger rather than pulling down. Although this technique is slightly unorthodox, it does have some utility here.

In measure 17, Peter strums down on the first beat, produces a percussive sound by hitting the strings with his right hand on the first half of the second beat, then strums up on the second half of the second beat.

This song is played in open D tuning, D A d f# a d'.

Some Alternate Tunings Used By Peter Lang

Name	Strings					
	6	5	4	3	2	1
Dropped D	D	A	d	g	b	e'
Open D	D	A	d	f#	a	d'
Open D ⁹	D	A	d	e	a	d'
Strange	D	A	d	e	c'	d'
Open G	D	G	d	g	b	d'
Open G ⁹	D	G	d	g	b	c#'
Open C	C	G	c	g	c'	e'
Open C ⁹	C	G	c	g	c'	d'
Open C	C	E	c	g	c'	e'
Open C ⁶	C	G	A	g	c'	e'
Open A	E	A	c#	e	a	c#'
Open E	E	G#	B	e	b	e'
Dobro	G	B	d	g	b	d'

35

Fine

37

40

42

44

46

48

D.C. al Fine

V/THE CONN. PROMISSORY RAG

This song was written in 1973. It is actually a medley of three songs which convey radically different approaches to the same musical ideas. The songs' stylings bridge classical, ragtime, contemporary, and jazz. It was composed in a unique and rarely used tuning I invented primarily for this piece. Many of the chord inversions contained in the piece would be very difficult without such a bending of the medium. Although I generally compose in standard tuning or in the more commonly used alternate tunings, I often find myself adapting these to fit certain ideas which only a variation might fully express. If we realize that there are no set rules in any form of art, we gain freedom from limitation.

This song has proved to be one of my most difficult concert pieces. I am restricted in certain aspects of left hand technique because of my relatively small hands. This is one of the reasons that open tunings have become so attractive to me. This song presents some very complex left hand configurations which may present problems to even the very long-fingered students. Take heart, for if I can play them, so can you.

Initially you may find it difficult to move smoothly from one section of this song to the next, since they represent such dramatically different styles. However, you should find, upon repeated playings, that this difficulty will abate. In the long pull, it should strengthen many technical resources necessary for the performance of a variety of pieces.

Peter Lang

This tune was transcribed from *Lycurgus*.

STUDY NOTES. Peter enjoys experimenting with unusual tunings. Open C⁶ tuning is one of several variations on open C tuning that he sometimes employs. The guitar is tuned C G A g c' e'. Note that although the second string is actually tuned higher than its normal pitch, the overall tension on the instrument is reduced.

Most guitarists are accustomed to barring with their first finger. Peter will occasionally bar with his third finger when he is prepar-

ing to use his first finger immediately after the bar. This technique is employed in measures 25, 40-41, 44, 45, and in the repetitions of these passages which occur later in the song.

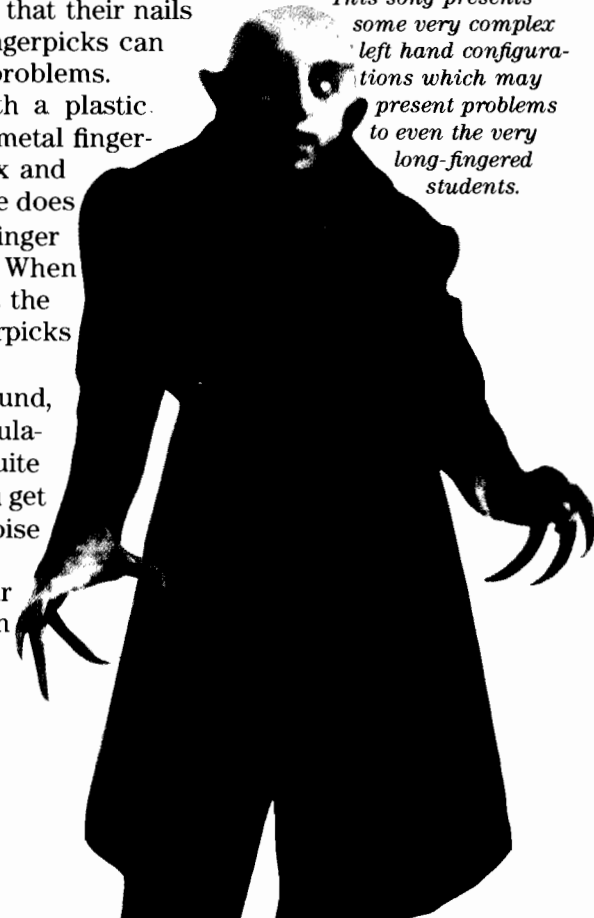
In measures 68 and 69, the notes on the third fret of the second string should be choked slightly to produce a dissonant effect.

Playing the guitar with fingerpicks has both disadvantages and advantages. In using fingerpicks you forego the very tactile approach to playing and the subtle and beautiful variations in tone color that are only possible with the fingertips. Or, as Ry Cooder says, playing the guitar with fingerpicks is like taking a bath with your socks on. The great advantage of fingerpicks is that you can produce more volume with less movement, and, by being more efficient in your right hand finger movements, you will in fact be able to play faster.

However, most people use fingerpicks not because they want to but because they need to. Either their nails don't grow well enough to be used for playing the guitar, or they perform so much that their nails don't hold up. Fingerpicks can solve these two problems.

Peter plays with a plastic thumb pick and metal fingerpicks on his index and middle fingers. (He does not use the ring finger of his right hand.) When you consider that the use of metal fingerpicks often produces a metallic, raspy sound, Peter's clear articulation of notes is quite remarkable. If you get a lot of metallic noise using fingerpicks, try modifying your right hand position slightly until this disappears.

This song presents some very complex left hand configurations which may present problems to even the very long-fingered students.



V/THE CONNECTICUT PROMISSORY RAG

Open C⁶ tuning, C G A g c' e'
♩=228

Peter Lang
Transcribed by John Stropes

7

13

19

25

32

♩=200

39

5/6C V

42

5/6C VII

45

5/6C V

48

♯

♩=164 last time only

51

3

55

3

59

3

62 *To Coda* ♯ 1. 2. ♩ = 164

66

70

74 C V

77 C VII

80 1. 2. D.S. al Coda

83 CODA rit.



LEO KOTKE

LEO KOTTKE

No musical styles remain static. They expand, grow, and develop complexity, but the whereto and the wherefrom are forever linked. It is through assimilation of stylistic influences through time that a new form of the style emerges which possesses new characteristics and techniques.

Leo Kottke may well represent the future of the form. Many of the artists in this volume have strong ties to the history and the traditions of the style. Leo, on the other hand, is less encumbered by the sense of wherefrom and tradition. He looks forward and not back. His influences come from a more current generation of guitarists. He is distinctive and extraordinary. He is an innovator.

Perhaps more than any other guitarist, it has been John Fahey who has had the most profound effect on Kottke. Over the years Kottke has recorded and performed a number of Fahey's tunes including "Poor Boy", "Last Steam Engine Train", "In Christ There Is No East Or West", and "Sail Away Ladies". "He was a heck of an influence on my imagination, on the idea of the guitar as a place. Up 'till then, I'd been blind to the fact that it was so expressive for me — I hadn't realized there were a million ways to externalize, organize, present it, enjoy it and preserve it. John was the only guy in the country who had any idea of a steel stringed acoustic guitar as a concert instrument."¹

While John Fahey may have introduced this style as serious concert music, much credit is due Kottke for its popularization. To much of the public Kottke represents the state of the art in finger-style guitar. More often than not, it is he against whom all others are measured. He has set the standard.

Leo has not only mastered the conventional techniques of this style, but has created his own. He is unencumbered by many of the restrictions of the instrument. How does he do it? Is there something we do not know? Perhaps there are Faustian implications, or what would you say to extra joints in each of his fingers? Do you think he

might be an extraterrestrial?

Kottke's music is aggressive and immediate, tempered with a sense of delicacy and balance, an interesting combination to be sure. He is perhaps best known for compositions in the genre of "Vaseline Machine Gun" and "June Bug". The power he generates from the instrument is awesome. This is reflected in the choice of the 12-string guitar as his primary performance instrument. "... I've always felt that the 12 string — if you can get a good one, one that will stay in tune and sound right — is even more of a solo instrument than the 6 string, because for me it's like going from a piano to a pipe organ."²

Leo Kottke was born in Athens, Georgia in 1945. As a child he lived in Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota (where he now resides), Oklahoma, Wyoming, and Virginia. His early influences on the guitar include Burl Ives, Pete Seeger, Fred Gerlach, Mitch Greenhill, and Dick Rosimini. Kottke credits Pete Seeger's song "Bells of Rhymney" as his first introduction to the 12-string guitar. In 1969 Kottke recorded his first album, *Leo Kottke/12 String Blues/Live At the Scholar*, on the now defunct Oblivion record label. Interestingly enough, the Scholar was the same coffee house where, a decade before, Bob Dylan began his performing career.

John Fahey recognized the tremendous talents and potential of Kottke and signed him to a recording contract with Takoma Records. This association led to the release of Kottke's most successful album, *Leo Kottke/6 And 12-String Guitar*. This was followed by *Circle 'Round The Sun* on the Symposium label. Following the success of these albums, Kottke signed with Capitol Records and recorded a string of brilliant albums including *Mudlark*, *Greenhouse*, and *Ice Water*. Kottke is at present recording for Chrysalis Records.

His 1981 release, *Guitar Music*, is a good example of the reasons for Kottke's popularity. He uses unusual, unorthodox, creative, and flashy technique: harmonics in the midst of fast arpeggios, classical-style pizzicato, flamenco-style rasgados, raising the pitch

of a harmonic with his slide. These are all unusual techniques. Some are innovative. And this highly guitaristic technique is matched by musical sensitivity. His ability to project two and even three coherent voices is amazing. The music is alive.

Leo Kottke has garnered the award "Best Folk Guitarist" for five consecutive years in the prestigious *Guitar Player* annual readers' poll. In 1977 he received a German Grammy award for "Best Instrumentalist". His music has been featured in motion pictures and television scores including soundtrack work in the movie *Days Of Heaven* which was nominated for an Academy Award for its music.

There is an easy explanation for all of Kottke's success. It can be summed up in one word — brilliance.

DISCOGRAPHY. *Leo Kottke/12 String Blues/Live At The Scholar, Oblivion*, 1968 (out of print).

Leo Kottke/6 And 12-String Guitar, Takoma TAK 7024, 1969.

Circle 'Round The Sun, Symposium SYS 2001, 1970.

"*Mudlark*", Capitol ST-682, 1971.

Greenhouse, Capitol ST-11000, 1972.

My Feet Are Smiling, Capitol ST-11164, 1973.

Ice Water, Capitol ST-11262, 1974.

Leo Kottke/Peter Lang/John Fahey, Takoma TAK 7040, 1974 (Leo Kottke material recorded in 1968).

Dreams And All That Stuff, Capitol ST-11335, 1974.

Chewing Pine, Capitol ST-11446, 1975.

Leo Kottke 1971-1976 / "Did You Hear Me?", Capitol ST-11576, 1976 (recorded in 1973, 1974, and 1975).

Leo Kottke, Chrysalis CHR 1106, 1976.

Leo Kottke - The Best, Capitol SWBC-11867, 1978 (all selections on this album were previously released on various Capitol albums).

Burnt Lips, Chrysalis CHR 1191, 1978.

Balance, Chrysalis CHR-1234, 1979.

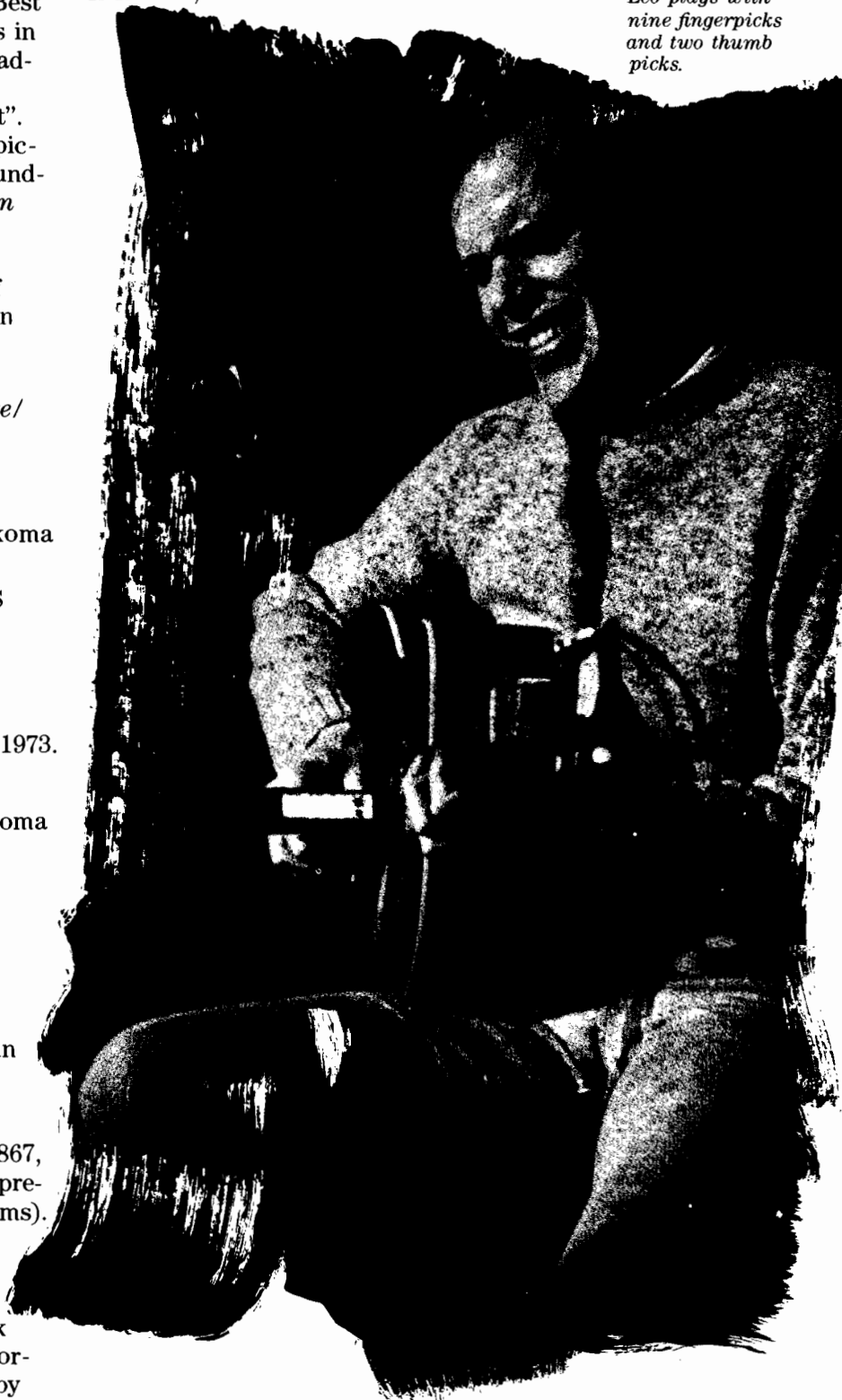
Days of Heaven (the original soundtrack from the motion picture), Pacific Arts Corporation PAC 8-128, 1979 (only one cut by Leo Kottke).

Live In Europe, Chrysalis CHR 1284 RCA, 1980.

Guitar Music, Chrysalis CHR 1328, 1981.

Leo Kottke can be heard playing back-up on Cal Hand's album *The Wylie Butler*, Takoma TAK 7056, 1977.

It has been rumored that Leo plays with nine fingerpicks and two thumb picks.



PRODIGAL GRAVE

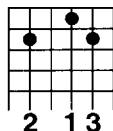
STUDY NOTES. In many ways, “Prodigal Grave” is a good example both of Leo Kottke’s early musical and technical styles. He recorded this song on his first album, *Leo Kottke/12 String Blues/Live At The Scholar*, in 1968, and rerecorded it on his third album, *Circle Round The Sun*, in 1970.

The contrast between a slowly moving melody line and a very quick finger-style accompaniment is used to great effect. He used this same general approach later in his recording of “Eight Miles High”, a very significant song in the development of his career (people could hum along to this tune): in this case he took a fairly pleasant popular tune and turned the accompaniment into a *tour de force* on the guitar.

In measure 10 you will see a glissando indication from the third string tenth fret to nowhere in particular. This is a common technique on the guitar. Play the tenth fret note and immediately slide down the neck to about the fifth fret. Pressure should be gradually decreased as the slide is executed so that by the time you get to the fifth fret your finger is no longer on the string, and while the third string open is being played, prepare to play the slide in the following measure. You should get the zipping sound of the slide without any particular pitch terminating the slide.

You will notice throughout this song the use of the right hand thumb on the third string playing the melody as opposed to simply playing an alternate bass note. This adds a great deal of interest to this tune.

Measures 19-20 may seem a little tricky the first time through. If you hold down the following chord at the beginning of measure 19 and keep it down until the *and* of the fourth beat of measure 20, moving your third finger only when it is necessary to hammer the note on the first string second fret, the fingering will be greatly simplified.



Notice how engaging the ascending bass line in measure 20 is after ten measures of a regular alternating bass line, and how ingeniously it sets the listener up for the descending motif in the following measure.

Starting in measure 71, you will notice a very interesting technique which is typical of Leo Kottke’s playing. With his right hand thumb and index finger he gets a three note bass line rolling, and then with his middle finger he adds a melody. The separation is remarkable: the bass pattern is thundering while the melody is lyrical.

This tune was transcribed from *Circle Round The Sun*. In this recording, the guitar is tuned to open D tuning, D A d f# a d', and then each string is tuned one half-step low. The result is D \flat A \flat d \flat f a \flat d \flat '. It is really not necessary to tune your guitar one half-step low unless this suits your voice.

The vocal part is written out in the key of D (2 sharps) instead of D \flat (5 flats) for ease of reading. If, for some reason, you prefer reading the vocal part in D \flat , just imagine that instead of 2 sharps there are 5 flats in the key signature and everything will work out fine.

PRODIGAL GRAVE

Open D tuning (one half-step low), D \flat A \flat d \flat f a \flat d \flat
♩ = 192

Leo Kottke
Transcribed by John Stropes

The musical score consists of six systems, each with two staves. The notation includes various fret numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12), dynamics (p, m), and articulation (accents, slurs). A small fretboard diagram is included above the fifth system.

24 The o - ceans rise

28 with a hope - less

32 sound...

36 Wa - ters born from a bro - ken

40 shore must

96 The oceans rise.

100 with a hopeless

104 sound.

108 Wa - ters born from a bro - ken

112 shore must

116

rise _____ to _____ die _____ and

120

to rise _____ once _____ more. _____

124

127

rit.



EASTER AND THE SARGASSO SEA

The Sargasso Sea is an area of the North Atlantic noted for its abundance of floating seaweed and its still waters.

Since Columbus sailed through the Sargasso Sea in 1492 there have been stories of doom-ridden waters with ships ensnared in masses of impenetrable, floating weeds. The Sargasso Sea was said to be a veritable graveyard of dead and dying ships carrying crazed sailors, gaunt from lack of food and mad from lack of water. And while this legend has been debunked by numerous scientific studies, even as late as World War II German submarines were rumored to have been trapped by this octopus-like weed.

“I was pretty disturbed about that [the Sargasso Sea] when I was a little boy, trying to figure out my radio, among other things. And it was fascinating — the idea of [sailors] staring at one another, surrounded by kelp, slowly going nuts or thinking the other guy was going nuts. It appealed to my sense of romance.”³

This tune was transcribed from *Circle Round The Sun*.

STUDY NOTES. Technically, “Easter And The Sargasso Sea” is the easiest song to play in this collection, but a fine musical sensibility is required to play it well. It is a particularly good song to work with on obtaining beautiful tone quality from your instrument. Like Peter Lang’s “When Kings Come Home”, it is a good example of the effective use of space in music.

This song has a middle section in 3/4 time which is fairly straightforward. The opening and closing sections, however, are not played in a regular meter. They should be thought of as a series of musical phrases. The time values indicated in these two sections are approximate ones, and bar lines are used merely to separate the musical phrases. Once you are familiar with the notes, the easiest approach would probably be to play along with the record in order to learn the exact phrasing.

Leo Kottke uses a very unusual technique near the end of the first section and near the

end of the last section: after striking the harmonic, he presses on the second string between the nut and the tuning post to raise the pitch of the harmonic, then he releases pressure to return the pitch to normal.

In this recording, the guitar is tuned to open G tuning, D G d g b d', and then each string is tuned four half-steps low. The result is B^b₁ E^b B^b e^b g b^b. If you try to produce the choked harmonic effect in open G tuning without tuning down, you will find it very difficult to choke the harmonic high enough. But by tuning each string down (although four half-steps is probably a little more than is necessary), it becomes much easier to choke the harmonic up to the desired pitch.

This is a very specialized technique. It does not have much general application. For example, unless your strings are tuned lower than the pitch they were designed for, it is very difficult to produce a good effect. This more-or-less limits this technique to alternate tunings. And it can really only be used on unwound strings because, although you could choke the harmonic up on a wound string, the winding of the string would inhibit its return to pitch. In this song, however, the use of the choked harmonic is very effective. The technique serves the music.

In tablature, no attempt is made to indicate the duration of notes. (To a lesser extent, even in standard notation for guitar this is left to the judgment and experience of the performer.) The last beat of the seventh phrase is a good example of this. The third string fifth fret and the sixth string open must be sustained during the second half of that beat, even though this is not indicated.

This is the only song in this book that was recorded on a 12-string guitar which would not sound completely satisfactory played on a 6-string guitar. Kottke makes good use of the idiosyncrasies of the 12-string guitar, particularly the high string in the third course, and this sound could not be duplicated exactly on the 6-string guitar without rewriting some of the music. Therefore, I would recommend that you play this song on a 12-string guitar.

EASTER AND THE SARGASSO SEA

Open G tuning (four half-steps low), B^b₁ E^b B^b e^b g b^b
♩ = 84

Leo Kottke
Transcribed by John Stropes

Very freely

9

11

14

17

20

23

26

Very freely

27

12 12 11 9 7 7 9 7 4

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

3

28

har.

5 4 5 7 7 2 5 6 6 5 7 8 7 8 7 7 5 4

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

29

har.

12 12 13 12 13 12 13 12 13 12 13 12 12 11 8 4 4 5 7 9 9

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

m

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Ferdinand Sor, *Method For The Spanish Guitar*, New York, Da Capo Press, 1971, p. 6. This is a reprint of the original English edition of Sor's method which was published in London by R. Cocks & Co.
- 2 *Complete Catalogue Of Sheet Music And Musical Works, 1870*, New York, Da Capo, 1973. This is a reprint of the original catalog.
- 3 Although we know that there was a tremendous amount of music for solo guitar published in the 1800's in the United States, it is now very difficult to locate. One readily available source, however, is an annotated collection by Peter Danner entitled *The Guitar In America* (published by Belwin-Mills).
- 4 *Teachings Of Sri Ramakrishna*, Almora: Advaita Ashrama, 1934, p. 154.

NORMAN BLAKE

- 1 Douglas Green, "Norman Blake, Bluegrass and Beyond", *Guitar Player*, January, 1975, p. 38.
- 2 Henry Worrall, *The Eclectic Guitar Instructor*, Cincinnati, W. C. Peters & Sons, 1856. The title page of this guitar method is reprinted here through the courtesy of William McClellan, Music Librarian, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where the original resides.
- 3 We have reproduced here the front cover and pages 52, 53, and 54 of the *Royal Collection of Instrumental Guitar Music*, published by Oliver Ditson Company in 1894. This was an anthology of instrumental guitar music comprised of popular tunes that had been published originally from 1856 to 1891. During this period it was not uncommon for Oliver Ditson Company to buy printing plates from other publishers and use them to reprint music in anthologies, and this anthology included the plates used by Peters in the publication of the 1860 edition. This rare collection was made available to us for reprinting by Jacob Skocir of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

JOHN FAHEY

- 1 Written by John Fahey.
- 2 J. B. T. Marsh, *The Story Of The Jubilee Singers; With Their Songs*, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., 1881.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 121.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 227.
- 5 John Oxenham, *Bees In Amber*, New York, American Tract Society, 1913.

RY COODER

- 1 Rob Fleder and Bob Norman, "It Comes From Delta Music Somehow", *Sing Out!*, Vol. 20, no. 6, 1971, p. 3.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 3 *Bio Ry Cooder*, Burbank, California, Reprise Records, October, 1970, p. 2.

PETER LANG

- 1 Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus, His Songs And His Sayings*, 1881.

LEO KOTTKE

- 1 Bill Hammond, "Leo Kottke: The King of the 12 String", *Milwaukee Sentinel*, October 6, 1978, Let's Go, p. 3.
- 2 Carl Wellesley, "I thrive on the guitar: Leo Kottke", *Guitar*, April, 1977, p. 13.
- 3 Leo Kottke, comments during concert in Seattle, December 1973.

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- p. 70 Photo: Lee Swanson, 1965.
- p. 75 From the movie *Nosferatu*.
- p. 81 Photo: Bruce Halmo

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