

Alfred's

Teach Yourself To Play Mandolin

DAN FOX

Everything you need to know
to start playing now!



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QuickTime 7.6.7 or higher
1.8 GHz processor or faster
900 MB hard drive space
2 GB RAM minimum
DVD drive for installation
Speakers or headphones
Internet access for updates

Macintosh

OS 10.4 and higher (Intel only)
QuickTime 7.6.7 or higher
900 MB hard drive space
2 GB RAM minimum
DVD drive for installation
Speakers or headphones
Internet access for updates



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GETTING
STARTED

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MANDOLIN

The modern mandolin developed from an earlier family of lute-like fretted instruments called mandores. Although at first there were several different types of mandolins, some having as many as eight sets of double strings, the one that is universally used today for Italian, bluegrass and classical music is the Neapolitan mandolin. This instrument can have either a flat back with *f*-holes (preferred by bluegrass players) or a rounded back with a round hole (preferred by those who enjoy playing Italian songs). Classical players are divided in their choices.

The mandolin has four double sets of strings, each attached to its own tuning peg. The strings are attached to a tailpiece, cross over a bridge, and then stretch over a fingerboard that usually contains 20 frets. Markers (sometimes mother-of-pearl) are set into the fingerboard to help the player find a particular fret. These markers are usually at the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 10th, 12th and 15th frets.

The mandolin was developed in Italy in the early part of the 18th century. Vivaldi's concerto for the

instrument, which dates from this time, was the main theme of the 1979 film *Kramer vs. Kramer*. Although the concerto had been little known until this time, its use in the film made it popular and stirred up renewed interest in the mandolin as a classical instrument. Other composers who wrote for the mandolin include Handel, Grétry, Paesiello (who used it in his *Barber of Seville* and also wrote a concerto for it), Mozart (*Don Giovanni*), Beethoven (Five pieces for mandolin and piano), Verdi (*Otello*), Mahler (*Das Lied von der Erde*), and Schoenberg (*Serenade*).

Today there are many all-mandolin orchestras which use mandolins to play the violin parts, mandolas for the viola parts, mando-cellos for cello parts, and mando-basses for the bass parts. These orchestras play everything from symphonies to show tunes.



The popularity of the mandolin as a classical instrument and as an instrument on which to play folk songs is easily understood, but no one could have predicted how the mandolin has become such an important part of country music.

The bluegrass phenomenon started in the late 1920s with Bill Monroe, continued through the virtuosic Flatt and Scruggs, and today encompasses hundreds of groups usually featuring a mandolin, five-string banjo, fiddle, guitar and bass. There are dozens of great bluegrass mandolin players today bringing the instrument to new heights of virtuosity.

In this book you'll receive a thorough grounding in the basics of mandolin playing. Whether your interest is classical, folk, alternative rock, bluegrass or even jazz, the fundamentals of playing the instrument are the same. After completion of *Teach Yourself to Play Mandolin* you'll be ready to excel in whatever music you're interested in.

MINI MUSIC LESSON

16TH NOTES

A 16th note looks like  or  when it stands alone. When they are written in groups of two or more, 16th notes look like this:



A 16th note is played twice as quickly as an eighth note and four times as quickly as a quarter note. In $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$ times there are four 16th notes in each beat. Count them as 1 e & uh, 2 e & uh, etc.

Always play 16th notes with alternating down- and upstrokes of the pick.

Make sure you can play the exercises on this page before attempting the tunes that follow.

      *etc.*

Count: 1 e & uh 2 e & uh 1 e & uh 2 e & uh 3 e & uh 1 e & uh 2 e & uh 3 e & uh 4

      *etc.*

1 e & uh 2 & 1 e & uh 2 &

1 e & uh 2 3 e & uh 4

CROSSPICKING

Crosspicking refers to picking that moves from string to string. It's one of the harder things to do on the mandolin, but is a wonderful effect when you master it. Here are

two old fiddle tunes that require a lot of crosspicking. Learn them at a very slow tempo paying great attention to details such as fingering, picking, and of course,

tone. Once you have mastered the basics, start increasing the tempo gradually till you can play it at about ♩ = 80 to 100.

Soldier's Joy



Traditional

mf

Cincinnati Hornpipe



Traditional

mf

f



COMMON TIME AND CUT TIME

The symbol **C** used as a time signature is another way of saying $\frac{4}{4}$ time.

The symbol **C** calls for "cut time." It means to play the same number of notes per measure as $\frac{4}{4}$, but to count only two beats to each measure. This is especially useful when the tempo gets fast enough to make counting four beats to the measure awkward. Cut time is used for fast show tunes, marches and other music meant to be played brightly. Play this famous march in cut time. Count as indicated, and keep the tempo bright ($\text{♩} = 96-120$).

The Stars and Stripes Forever Track 95

John Philip Sousa

Tremolo as desired

Count: 2 1 2 & 1 2 & 1 2 1 2 &

uh 1 2 1 2 &

mf

crescendo

ff

1 & 2 & 1 & 2 & 1 2 1 2