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Do you know a first position C, F and G chord? If so, then this collection of fingerpicking arrangements is custom made for you. Have you thought about tackling fingerpicking but were afraid of the "complexities"? Well, put all your worries into that proverbial suitcase as fingerpicking guitar is one of the simplest styles to master that I have encountered as a guitarist and teacher.

Rev. Gary Davis, a legendary figure in the story of fingerpicking guitar used to remark that to play the guitar you had to imitate the piano! What he meant, was that fingerpicking techniques orchestrate musical ideas onto the six strings of the guitar. The piano playing of the turn of the century is a good starting place. Infact, most American fingerpicking techniques are based on this approach. The tunes in this collection are all derived from this period. Try to hear the guitar sounds of Chet Atkins, Merle Travis, John Fahey, Happy Traum, Dave Van Ronk or myself and you will probably be attracted to a certain rhythmic bass sound and feeling. I call it "bum-chick." A more proper title for this sound is an alternating bass. It is this alternating bass that imitates the turn of the century piano music.

Imagine a piano player. He has his left hand ready to play a bass pattern. During the ragtime era this would usually follow a definite format of a single note being played on the odd beats and a triad (chord) being played on the even beats. The right hand of our imaginary pianist would be playing a melody. The pianist uses two hands to produce his overall musical sound. Rev. Davis used to say that guitarists could use THREE HANDS! Your right hand thumb would play the bass pattern easily enough by just alternating between two bass strings. Your index finger of your right hand would pick out the melody on the high strings while your left hand was free to finger chords. Putting it all together and you can see Rev. Davis' three hands!

Sounds pretty simply! And in fact, it is very easy. There is just a basic lesson - let's call it "Basic Lesson One for beginner to advanced players." This is a lesson that becomes a message when I am teaching. I repeat it over and over again as it holds the key to good playing techniques. That "bum-chick" must sound like a "bum-chick." Sounds funny but it is so important. And how can we achieve this? Finger a first position G chord. Do this by having your ring finger on the third fret/sixth string; middle finger on the second fret/fifth string and little finger (pinky) on the third fret/first string. With your right hand thumb hit the sixth and then fourth strings. This will be your alternating bass. However, we must control this sound and be able to accent it so that it reproduces our required "bum-chick"! One helpful advice would be to

rest your little and/or ring finger on the face of the guitar. This will put your picking hand into the proper position. Almost all the fingerpickers I have known from Mississippi John Hurt to Skip James to David Bromberg to John Fahey to myself use this hand position. This position will help you to control the power and precision of your right hand thumb.

If you hit the sixth and fourth strings with the same power the end result will be a very balanced sound, almost like a "bum-bum." We want to accent the second beat-the fourth string. So when hitting this string put more power and punch into your thumb stroke. Try this over and over again and soon you will hear that piano like "bum-chick."

This is our "Basic Lesson One." The alternating bass is the key to fingerpicking techniques. It must be strong and pronounced.

Rev. Davis used only his index finger for playing melody lines. When asked about why he did this, he replied that he needed only two fingers - his thumb and index to play guitar! And Rev. Davis was perhaps the most complicated guitarist to have ever performed. Even Doc Watson uses only two fingers for his picking style. But we mere mortals can use our middle and even ring finger when needed. I tend to approach my right hand as the thumb being for the bass and the index finger for melody with the help of my middle finger and ring when called for. This is quite a different approach than the classical one but remember we are trying to imitate a piano and we are not searching for a balanced classical sound. If anything we are looking for an unbalanced sound as our alternating bass will be the most prominent feature. Don't worry! Your melody lines will be heard easily enough but without that carpet of our "bum-chick" it would get lost. In a way we are playing dance music and we must establish a strong rhythmic foundation for our dancers.

This collection brings together the playing of four guitarists - Happy Traum, Dave Van Ronk, John Fahey and myself. We have all musically grown through the folk process. Our roots are all based in American folk, blues and ragtime styles. Our playing can be very complex at times as well as very basic. Yet don't let the words "complex" and "basic" confuse you. It is much easier to play a complex arrangement than a simple elegant guitar solo! When you have lots to do - counter-point, single string runs, quick chord changes etc. - the guitarists' mind sometimes gets more involved in the technique and not the music." When an arrangement is basic and without frills we are left with only the music in our hands and we must shape and communicate this. Again this brings us back to our "Basic Lesson One."

EXPLANATION OF THE TAB SYSTEM

".....Learning from listening is unquestionably the best way, the only way that suits this kind of music. You are setting the notes down for a record of what happened, a record that can be studied, preserved and so on, a necessary and useful companion to the recordings of the actual sounds. I keep thinking of this as I transcribe; if you could do it, it would be good to have a legend across each page reading: "Listen to the record if you want to learn the song."

Hally Wood (taken from the Publisher's Foreword to the New Lost City Ramblers Songbook.)

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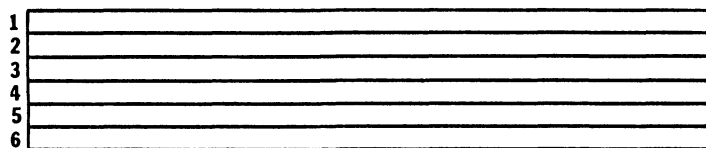
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These words are most suitable for introducing the tablature system, for tablature is just a guide and should be used in conjunction with the recordings. Tablature is not like music notation, however the combination of tab and music in an arrangement forms a complete language. Used together and with the original recordings they give a total picture of the music.

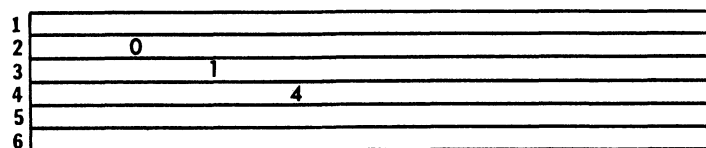
The tab system does not attempt to show rhythms or accents. These can be found on the music or heard on the recordings. Music notation tackles these articulations to a degree, but the overall sensations, the feel and the soul of music cannot be wholly captured on the written page. In the words of the great Sufi Hazrat Inayat Khan: ".....The traditional ancient songs of India composed by great Masters have been handed down from father to son. The way music is taught is different from the Western way. It is not always written, but is taught by imitation. The teacher sings and the pupil imitates and the intricacies and subtleties are learned by imitation."

This is the theme I've tried to interpolate into the tablature. Tablature is the roadmap and you are the driver. Now to the tab:

Each space indicates a string. The top space represents the first string, second space the second string, etc. A zero means an open string, a number in the space indicates the fretted position for instance a 1 in a space indicates the first fret of that string.

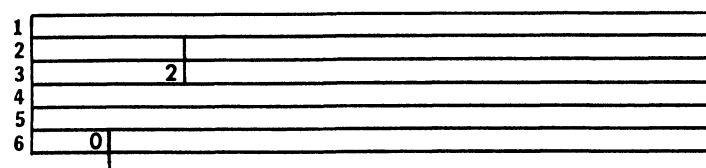


In the diagram below the zero is on the second string and indicates the open second string is played. The 1 is placed on the third string's space and signifies the first fret of the third string. Likewise, the 4 is in the fourth space and indicates the fourth fret of the fourth string.



Generally for fingerpicking styles you will be playing the thumb, index and middle fingers of your picking hand. To indicate the picking finger in tab the stems go up and line up down from the numbers:

- A stem down means that your thumb strikes the note.
- If a stem is up, your index or middle finger strikes the note. The choice of finger is left up to you, as your fingers will dictate what is most comfortable, especially when playing a song up to tempo!
- The diagram below shows an open sixth string played with the thumb followed by second fret of the third string played with the index or middle finger:

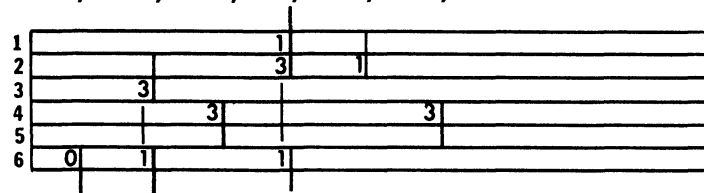


In most cases the thumb will play an alternating bass pattern, usually on the bass strings. The index and middle fingers play melodic notes on the first, second and third strings. Please remember, this is not a rule; there are many exceptions.

In fingerpicking there are two "picking" styles: Regular picking and "pinching" two notes together. A pinch is shown in the tab by a line connecting two notes. A variation of this can also be two treble notes pinched with a bass note. Follow the example below from left to right:

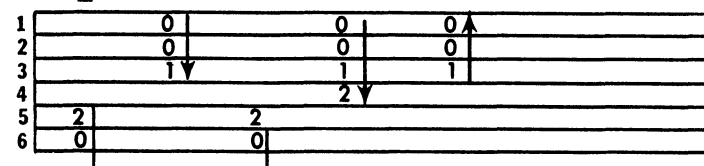
- The open sixth string is played with the thumb.
- The first fret of the sixth string is pinched together with the third fret of the third string. The sixth string is played with the thumb, the third string with the index finger.
- The thumb strikes the third fret of the fourth string.
- The first fret/sixth string is played with the thumb; it's pinched with two notes in the treble. The index and middle fingers strike the first fret/first string and the third fret/second string.
- The next note is the index finger hitting the first fret/second string.
- Lastly, the bass note is played with the thumb on the third fret/fourth string.

1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6)



There are certain places in blues and contemporary guitar that call for the use of either strumming techniques or accented bass notes. The tab illustrates these as follows:

1) 2) 3) 4) 5)
E



- The thumb hits the open sixth string and the second fret on the fifth string should also sound. For example, play an E chord. Now strike the open sixth string and vary the force of your attack. Try hitting it hard enough so that the fifth string vibrates as well. This technique is very important for developing a full sound and the right alternating bass sound.
- Next the arrow notation indicates a brush and the arrowhead indicates the direction of the brush.
 - If the arrowhead is pointed down, the hand brushes up toward the sixth string.
 - If pointed up, the hand brushes down toward the first string.
 - The number of strings to be played by the brush is shown by the length of the arrow. For example, this arrow shows a brush up toward the sixth string, but indicates to strike only the first, second and third strings.
 - The brush can be done with your whole hand, index finger or middle and ring finger. Let comfort plus a full and "right" sound guide your choice.
- The third set of notes again shows the sixth string/open bass note played with the thumb and being struck hard enough to make the fifth string/second fretted position sound.
- Once more an arrow pointed downward indicates a brush up. This example forms an E chord and the brush up includes the first, second, third and fourth strings.
- The last set of notes has an arrow pointed upward, indicating a brush downward striking the first, second and third strings.

Delia

CAPO 2
REGULAR
TUNING:
EADGBE

FIRST SECTION

TRADITIONAL
Arranged by STEFAN GROSSMAN

FIRST SECTION

EADGBE

G

C

C