

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine Free Lesson — August 2010

The Girl I Left Behind Me

arranged by Mickey Abraham

Hello and welcome back to the most clicked on part of FGM's monthly newsletter, the free flatpicking lesson! Thanks for continuing to use this on-line resource to explore new tunes and cool ideas. This month I have arranged a great old-time tune called "The Girl I Left Behind Me." As usual, I have supplied two versions of the tune. First, a basic melody, and then a more spiced up version that utilizes some more intricate picking and some hip Texas-swing style back-up.

Let's take a look at the first version. This version of the tune is very straight forward and to the point. I tried to express the tune's memorable melody with as few notes as possible—even for more advanced players, it is a good idea to be able to express your favorite fiddle tunes with "easy" versions. This way, you are certain that you understand the melody of a tune. This also makes adding more advanced licks and ornamentations easier as well as a more logical progression.

Next, even with the easy stuff, remember to keep your right hand pick strokes correct! When playing the first two pick-up notes in measure 1, you will be using down-up picking (as you would for all connected eighth notes), but when picking the second measure, you will be using four consecutive downstrokes (as you would for all quarter notes that land on consecutive downbeats). There are exceptions to every rule and I encourage you to refer back to my free FGM lesson on pick stroke theory (click lessons and tabs at the top of the flatpick.com page). Pick direction is one of the things that can keep a beginner from playing in time and with a good feel. Additionally, I pick this whole tune out of 2nd position because the first fret never shows up. This position should feel nice under your fingers and will avoid awkward pinky moves.

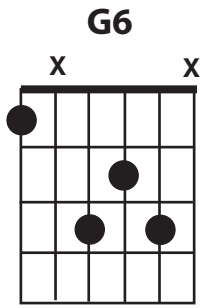
For the back-up, I feel most folks use G, C, and D for the chords to this song, but I really like the way the Am fits in. Every major chord has what musicians call a relative minor that will often take the place of a major chord in a progression. In this case, Am is the "relative" of C. Try playing a C chord in the "A" section in place of where I have notated an Am chord. They both work nice but, to me, the Am adds a little something.

Now let's focus on the second pass. One of my favorite sounds is playing one fret lower than the notes in a chord before playing the notes in a chord. I know this may sound confusing, but when you hear it, it makes perfect sense. It is very similar to a funk player sliding into a funky chord, or a bluegrass guitarist sliding into a big G chord. This concept can be applied to lead playing. My lines in the variation are based on playing notes of the chord that are a half step (one fret) below the "right" notes. This is very common in fiddle tune variations and the tension/resolution sound it creates clearly gives the lines a more jazz/swingy vibe.

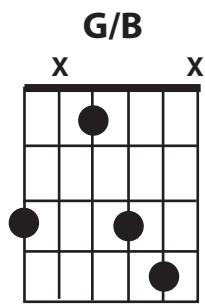
The chords are almost Texas swing 101. To some, this is how the back-up to "Sally Goodin" or "Leather Britches" is supposed to go. You can apply these style chords to almost any diatonic fiddle tune. Really, there is no right or wrong, just more great ways to play great tunes! If you are an open position chord player these chords will at first seem strange, but if you can dedicate yourself to learning a few new chord shapes, you will find a whole new world of music waiting for you to play. One technique that is of great importance when playing swing style chords is to remember to mute the strings that you are not playing. This is achieved by different parts of your left hand skin resting against the strings just enough so that they don't ring. Use your finger tips to grab the chords and the rest of your hand figuring out how to muffle the rest.

I hope you enjoy adding this classic melody to your tune list and I hope you can find other cool tunes to try these Texas style chords with. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns on this e-lesson or any great ideas for future ideas you'd like to see featured here just drop me a line at michabraham@comcast.net.

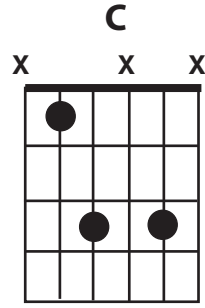
Second Arrangement Chords



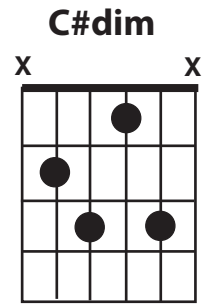
3rd Fret



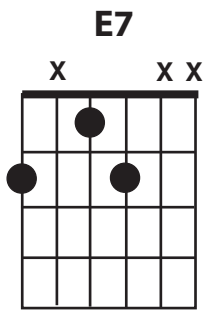
5th Fret



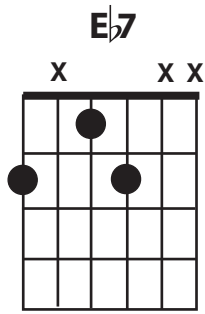
3rd Fret



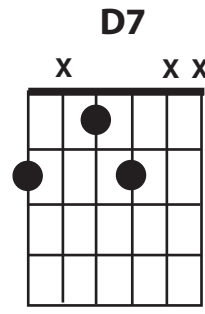
3rd Fret



6th Fret



5th Fret



4th Fret

The Girl I Left Behind Me

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1

G Am G D

TAB

6

G Am D G G

TAB

11

G D

TAB

15

G Am D G G

TAB

20

G6 G/B C C#dim G6 E7 E7 D7

TAB

The Girl I Left Behind Me (con't)

24 **G6** **G/B** **C** **C#dim** **D7** **G6** **G6**

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

29 **D7** **H P** **H P**

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

33 **G6** **G/B** **C** **C#dim** **D7** **G** **G**

0 3 0 0 2 (2) 4 2 0 H 0 4 0 2 4 0 3 2 0 0 2 0 2 3 3 3