

The background of the cover is a photograph of two dulcimers resting in a large pile of golden straw. One dulcimer is positioned vertically on the right side, leaning against a wooden structure. The other is positioned horizontally on the left side. Both instruments are made of light-colored wood and feature decorative diamond-shaped cutouts on their soundboards. The lighting is warm, highlighting the texture of the straw and the grain of the wood.

Galax

Dulcimer

A Job of Journey Work

Phyllis Gaskins



Beatin' Path Publications, LLC BPP-TGDB

Play Along CD Included



Track List

Each tune is played slowly one time on the first cut with no repeats of Parts A and B. The second cut of each tune is more up tempo with the tune played as written in the book.

D Tunes

1. Big Liza Jane
2. Big Liza Jane
3. Black-Eyed Susie
4. Black-Eyed Susie
5. Chapel Hill March
6. Ducks on the Millpond
7. Fortune
8. Fortune
9. Green Willis
10. Green Willis
11. Job of Journey Work
12. Job of Journey Work
13. Julie Ann Johnson
14. Julie Ann Johnson
15. Katy Cline
16. Luther's Walkin' in the Parlor
17. Luther's Walkin' in the Parlor
18. Old Molly Hare
19. Old Molly Hare
20. Old Time Sally Ann
21. Old Time Sally Ann
22. Peek-a-Boo Waltz
23. Sugar Hill
24. Sugar Hill
25. Walkin' in the Parlor #1
26. Walkin' in the Parlor #1

G Tunes

27. Dance All Night with a Bottle in Your Hand
28. Dance All Night with a Bottle in Your Hand
29. Did You Ever See the Devil, Uncle Joe?
30. Did You Ever See the Devil, Uncle Joe?
31. Ebenezer
32. Ebenezer
33. Evening Star Waltz
34. The Girl I Left Behind Me
35. The Girl I Left Behind Me
36. John Brown's March

37. Long Journey Home
38. Merriweather
39. Merriweather
40. Sandy River Belle
41. Sandy River Belle
42. Seneca Square Dance
43. Seneca Square Dance
44. Silly Bill
45. Silly Bill
46. Unclouded Day
47. Unclouded Day

A Tunes

48. Breakin' Up Christmas
49. Breakin' Up Christmas
50. Cluck Ol' Hen
51. Cluck Ol' Hen
52. Cold Frosty Morning
53. Cold Frosty Morning
54. Dinah
55. Dinah
56. Falls of Richmond
57. Highlander's Farewell
58. Highlander's Farewell
59. Kitchen Girl
60. Kitchen Girl
61. New Castle (Texas)
62. New Castle (Texas)
63. Sail Away, Ladies
64. Sail Away, Ladies
65. Sally Goodin
66. Sally Goodin
67. Sally Goodin (G)
68. Sally Goodin (G)
69. Sheep Shell Corn
70. Sheep Shell Corn
71. Sugar in the Gourd
72. Sugar in the Gourd
73. Train on the Island

Two-Key Tunes

74. Flop-Eared Mule
75. Flop-Eared Mule
76. Jenny Lind Polka
77. Jenny Lind Polka

Holding the Turkey Quill or Pick

Here I strum with a turkey quill. I use the turkey quill only for demonstration purposes because I find in jam sessions and performances, the ends fray and break frequently. I also prefer the sound I get with a pick.



Here I use the pick for strumming. The first two strings are noted, and the other two strings drone. I use Jim Dunlop .46mm picks because they are very flexible, durable, and have less pick "clatter."

Holding the Noter

The traditional way of holding the noter is to press on the end of the noter with your index finger. I place the middle finger beside the noter and against the fretboard to help brace and guide the noter, so I can control it.



Using A Capo

Years ago I figured out by tuning the two drone strings on my Galax Dulcimer with its 6.5 fret up to an E, I could play virtually all "old time A" tunes by starting at the 4th fret. Some folks had started using dowel sticks attached to rubber bands as capos on their dulcimers to change keys. This didn't work on my big, ol' Galax Dulcimer, but I figured if you can change the pitch by pressing the string down, you should be able to change the pitch by lifting the string. I took an old nut, shortened the length, put it under my drones, adjusted the grooves in the nut to the correct height, and I had an E drone! I called this creation a "false nut." Using it under my drone strings at the first fret creates ddee. This saves me lots of time (no retuning and no broken strings), and I could easily go from one key to another. I can use this technique for playing Em and E Dorian tunes as well as the old time A Mixolydian and Dorian tunes. (See photo.)

Interestingly, when I came up with this idea, Raymond went home and made one, too. He tried it for a few weeks, then he stopped using it. When I asked him why he stopped using the false nut, he said, "I kept knocking the blame thing out!"

If you use a regular capo, place it at the first fret to change dddd to eeee for the key of A.

Playing D Tunes on the Galax Dulcimer

To play in the key of D on the Galax Dulcimer, tune all of the strings to the D beside of middle C on the piano. The scale will start on the open string. Use the 6+ (6.5) fret for the C#.

Note	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C	C#	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C	D
Fret	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	6+	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Scale	do	re	mi	fa	sol	la		ti	do							

Note the first two strings as your melody strings.

If you do not have a Galax Dulcimer, tune the strings to DAD. Use the same fret numbers as indicated in the music notation.

For many old time tunes, the stress/unstressed notes and the rhythmic bow licks/strumming patterns turn a simple, sparse note pattern into a great dance tune!

Tunes in the Key of D

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|-----|--------------------------------|
| 21. | Big Liza Jane | 29. | Katy Cline |
| 22. | Black-Eyed Susie | 30. | Luther's Walkin' in the Parlor |
| 23. | Chapel Hill March | 31. | Old Molly Hare |
| 24. | Ducks on the Millpond | 32. | Old Time Sally Ann |
| 25. | Fortune | 33. | Peek-a-Boo Waltz |
| 26. | Green Willis | 34. | Sugar Hill |
| 27. | Job of Journey Work | 35. | Walkin' in the Parlor #1 |
| 28. | Julie Ann Johnson | | |

Jacob Ray Melton made this dulcimer in December of 1991 for Patty Looman, a friend and dulcimer-playing treasure of West Virginia. Jacob Ray wrote his initials on the end piece. I purchased this dulcimer at an auction of some of Patty's instruments.



Big Liza Jane

Traditional
arr. Phyllis Gaskins

Tracks 1 - 2

(A)

(B)

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Just what you needed, another Liza tune! I play this tune in D as notated here. It was played SO well by the brilliant dulcimer player Bonnie Russell, her brother Roy, and her dad Roscoe. Thanks, Bonnie, for this photo of Roy, Roscoe, and you. What a treasure!



Black-Eyed Susie

Tracks 3 - 4

Traditional
arr. Phyllis Gaskins

(A)

11 11 12 11 9 9 10 10 11 10 8 9 9 10 9 7 5 4 2 4

(B)

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

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Verses (sung on the repeat of Part A)

Love my wife, and I love my baby,
Love my biscuits sopped in gravy.

Chorus (sung on 1st time through Part B)

Hey, Hey, Black-Eyed Susie!
Hey, Hey, Black-Eyed Susie!

All I want in God's creation
Is a pretty little wife with a big plantation.

Chorus

All I need to make me happy
Is a little bitty baby to call me Pappy.

Chorus

One named Sam and the other one Davy,
One liked ham and the other one gravy.

Chorus



We had wonderful times playing this tune and others with The Blue Sky Ramblers at the Galax Old Fiddler's Convention. Pictured here are Dea Felts (fiddle), Melvin Felts (banjo), Raymond Melton (dulcimer), and two brothers Mumford (Mumps) and Howard Dillon on guitars. What a foot-tapping old time dance band sound they had!

Playing G Tunes on the Galax Dulcimer

To play in the key of G on the Galax Dulcimer, tune all of the strings to the D beside of middle C on the piano. The scale will start on the third fret. Use the 6th fret for the C natural.

Note	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C	C#	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C	D
Fret	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	6+	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Scale				do	re	mi	fa		so	la	ti	do				

Note the first two strings as your melody strings.

If you do not have a Galax Dulcimer, tune the strings to DGD. Use the same fret numbers as indicated in the music notation.

Tunes in the Key of G

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 37. Dance All Night with a Bottle in Your Hand | 43. Long Journey Home |
| 38. Did You Ever See the Devil, Uncle Joe? | 44. Merriweather |
| 39. Ebenezer | 45. Sandy River Belle |
| 40. Evening Star Waltz | 46. Seneca Square Dance |
| 41. The Girl I Left Behind Me | 47. Silly Bill |
| 42. John Brown's March | 48. Unclouded Day |

Notice the interesting head on a very rare Raymond Melton dulcimer I purchased in an antique shop. Made around 1970-71, it might be a creative experiment or a special request. This dulcimer is the only one I have ever seen with staple frets all the way across the fretboard. It does have the 6.5 fret and is made of cherry and poplar.

Dance All Night with a Bottle in Your Hand

Traditional
arr. Phyllis Gaskins

Tracks 27 - 28

ⓐ

5 6 7 7 7 8 7 6 5 4 3 3 3 5 5 4 2 0 2 4 6 5 4 5 4 3 3 3 5 6

(10) When you repeat the tune hit the high G (10) instead of the D (7) note.

7 7 7 7 8 7 6 5 4 3 3 3 5 5 4 2 0 2 4 4 6 4 5 4 3 3 3 5 6 5 4 3 3 3 8 9

ⓑ

10 10 10 10 9 10 11 12 11 12 13 12 10 10 11 10 11 12 11 9 9 10 9 10 11 10 7 9 10 10 10 10 9 10 11

12 11 12 13 12 11 10 14 14 14 8 9 9 10 10 10 10 8 9 10 10 10 10 8 9 10 10 10 10

1. 2. D.S. Last Time

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Jacob Ray Melton, nephew of Raymond Melton, and I played this tune, a favorite of his, together on the day we drew the sketches of his dulcimer design (p. 15-16). I purchased this dulcimer from him on that same day.



Playing A / A-Modal Tunes on the Galax Dulcimer

Tunes in this section may be in A major or any of the old time A-Modal keys; therefore, key signatures vary. To play these A tunes on the Galax Dulcimer, tune all of the strings to the D beside middle C on the piano. Then either capo or use the false nut at the first fret to change the drones. The scale will start on the 4th fret. In some tunes you will use fret 6 for the C natural, in some tunes the 6+ (6.5) fret for the C#, and some tunes require both.

Note	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C	C#	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C	D
Fret	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	6+	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Scale					do	re	meh	mi	fa	sol	la	teh	do	re	meh	fa

Note the first two strings as your melody strings.

If you do not have a Galax Dulcimer, tune the strings to DGD. Place a capo at the first fret and use the same fret numbers as indicated in the music notation. If you have a capo across all of your strings at the first fret, the number 1 in the music notation is an open strum.

Tunes in the Key of A/A-Modal

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 50. Breakin' Up Christmas | 57. New Castle (Texas) |
| 51. Cluck Ol' Hen | 58. Sail Away Ladies |
| 52. Cold Frosty Morning | 59. Sally Goodin |
| 53. Dinah | 60. Sheep Shell Corn |
| 54. Falls of Richmond | 61. Sugar in the Gourd |
| 55. Highlander's Farewell | 62. Train on the Island |
| 56. Kitchen Girl | |

My cherry dulcimer made by Raymond Melton has its original tuners. It was refretted by Keith Young. I use .012 gauge strings on it and keep it tuned to C for playing in the keys of C, F, and Dm.



Breakin' Up Christmas

Tracks 48 - 49

Traditional
arr. Phyllis Gaskins

(A)

1 1 2 4 4 4 4 2 1 1 2 4 6+ 5 5 5 4

(B)

8 8 9 4 4 4 8 8 9 4 8 8 9 4 6+ 5 5 5 4

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In one of our many visits to his home, Luther Davis told us the story of when he was young and folks would celebrate the 12 days of Christmas by visiting each others' homes. The folks would travel from house to house and have nightly suppers, music, dancing, and singing until the 12 days/nights were over. They called this "breakin' up Christmas."



Some Lyrics (sung to Part A)
Sanny Claus come, done and gone,
Breakin' up Christmas right along.

Way back yonder, long time ago,
The old folks danced the dosey-do.

Hooray Jack and hooray John,
Breakin' up Christmas right along.

Jim and Luther play a tune together. When we were learning tunes from Luther, we would ask if we had it right yet. He would often reply, "No, you've not got that tune just right yet." And so we stayed longer until we had it "just right."

Cluck Ol' Hen

Traditional
arr. Phyllis Gaskins

(A)

Musical notation for Part A of 'Cluck Ol' Hen'. It consists of a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The melody is written in a simple, rhythmic style. Above the staff, there are 14 arrows indicating fingerings: down (↓) and up (↗). Below the staff, the following numbers are written: 8 11 11 10 10 11 8 11 11 7 8 11 11 10 11 10 8 7 5 4.

(B)

Musical notation for Part B of 'Cluck Ol' Hen'. It consists of a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The melody is written in a simple, rhythmic style. Above the staff, there are 14 arrows indicating fingerings: down (↓) and up (↗). Below the staff, the following numbers are written: 4 4 4 6 4 4 4 3 4 4 4 6 7 8 7 5 4.

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Chorus (Part B)

Cluck ol' hen, cluck I said,
Cluck ol' hen, your widdies are dead.

Verses (Part A)

My ol' hen is a good ol' hen,
She lays eggs for the railroad men,
Sometimes one, sometimes two,
But that's enough for the whole dang crew.

My ol' hen is a good ol' hen,
She lays eggs for the railroad men,
Sometimes eight, sometimes ten,
But that's enough for the railroad men.

Had an ol' hen and she had a wooden leg,
Best dern hen that ever laid an egg.
She laid more eggs than any hen around the barn.
Another little drink wouldn't do me any harm.

Had an ol' hen, she cackled and she flew,
If I'd a-been a rooster, I'd a-flew too.

Last Chorus

Cluck ol' hen, cluck in the lot.
The next time you cluck,
You'll cluck in the pot!

Our friend Luther Davis told us in the Galax area baby chickens were called "widdies."

Below you see a picture of Bonnie Russell when she was a child playing in the yard. That's her pet chicken, Mack, on her shoulder. Bonnie said he loved the sound of the dulcimer!



Playing Two-Key Tunes on the Galax Dulcimer

Tunes in this section are in two keys: either G for Part A and D for Part B or D for Part A and G for Part B. Tune all of the strings to the D beside of middle C on the piano. The scale for the G section will start on the third fret; use the 6th fret for the C natural. The scale for the D section will start on the open string; use the 6+ (6.5) fret for the C#.

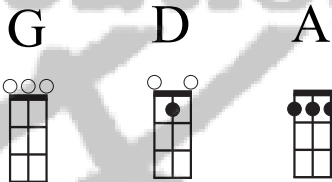
Note	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C	C#	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C	D
Fret	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	6+	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
G Scale				do	re	mi	fa		sol	la	ti	do				
D Scale	do	re	mi	fa	sol	la		ti	do							

Note the first two strings as your melody strings.

If you do not have a Galax Dulcimer, tune all of your strings to D. The bass string will be an octave lower, creating "bagpipe" tuning. Tuned this way, use the music as written.

Or if you do not have a Galax Dulcimer, tune to DGD. Use fingerings on the other strings to create a suitable drone on the middle string(s), or use chords on the part for which your dulcimer is not tuned. Play the G part in the DGD tuning, and use chords for the D part.

Simple chords for the D part could be:



Tunes in Two Keys

64. Flop-Eared Mule

65. Jenny Lind Polka

I like the traditional sound hole pattern on this poplar dulcimer made by Jacob Ray Melton. He used regular fret wire cut to fit under only the first two strings.



Flop-Eared Mule

Tracks 74 - 75

Traditional
arr. Phyllis Gaskins

(A)

10 11 12 10 7 8 7 5 5 4 6 5 4 3 4 5 6 7 10

(A)

5 12 10 7 8 7 5 5 4 6 5 4 3

(B)

2 3 4 4 4 5 4 4 4 1 3 3 2 1 1 0 1 2 3 4 2

(B)

13 4 4 4 5 4 4 4 1 3 3 2 1 1 0

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Flop-Eared Mule has been a fiddler's convention staple for years, and many dulcimer players have gotten first place with this tune including my friend, Gin Burris. Gin started playing the dulcimer in the early summer of 1978. She learned this tune from Sylvan White in 1979 and says, "It took me about 5 minutes to learn." She plays everything by ear. Thanks, Gin and Joey, for this photo. Gin is pictured here with her Roscoe Russell dulcimer, made in the early 1970s.



Published and Distributed by
Beatin' Path Publications, LLC
302 East College Street
Bridgewater, Virginia 22812
540-478-4833
beatinpath@mac.com
www.beatinpathpublications.com



ISBN: 978-0-9832648-7-3

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