



A Publication
of Your
Nashville
Old-Time
String Band
Association

UPCOMING
ASSOCIATION
EVENTS



Thursday
September 1
Slow Jam
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Stratford High
Cafeteria



Thursday
September 8
Regular Jam
6:30 to 8:30 PM
Stratford High
Cafeteria



September 25
4th-Sunday Jam
1 to 5 PM,
Nashville Zoo
Directions: Page 7

Old-Time Times

September 2005

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EVENTS

Tennessee

Fall Creek Falls 27th Annual Mountain Festival

September 9-11

Near Pikeville, TN. Music, pioneer skills demonstrations, crafts and great country cooking. Kicks off Friday night with a square dance featuring music by the Roan Mountain Hilltoppers and the Blue Creek Ramblers (featuring Rebekah Weiler on banjo. For details, visit the Festivals & Contests page at www.nashvilleoldtime.org

Old-Time Music Festival

September 9 & 10

Jackson, TN, behind Casey Jones Village. Old-Time string music, Bluegrass, gospel. Rough camping available. Shade-tree pickin', crafts displays. For details, visit the Festivals & Contests page at our NOTSBA Website, www.nashvilleoldtime.org

Kentucky

JP Fraley's Mountain Music Festival

September 8-12

Olive Hill, KY, at Carter Caves State Park. Old-time music, stage performances, jamming. For details, visit the Festivals & Contests page at our NOTSBA Website, www.nashvilleoldtime.org.

Kentucky Folklife Festival

September 15-17

Downtown Frankfort, Ky. Music, concerts, dance, food, and fun. For details, visit the Festivals & Contests page at our NOTSBA Website, www.nashvilleoldtime.org.

What is “Swannanoa Old-Time Week?” ~Don Kent

Swannanoa (‘swann uh no-a) Possibly Cherokee in origin, meaning “more old-time music than you can play or even listen to in a single week.”

Situated on the beautiful 1100-acre forested campus of Warren Wilson College near Asheville, North Carolina, the Old-Time Week at Swannanoa was a veritable feast of old time music. Up to three class periods per day could be filled with instruction on your instrument(s) of choice, singing, dancing or music-related study, like the history of Old-Time music. Some of the instructors included Alan Jabour, Brad Leftwich, Ron Pen, The Canote Brothers, Shelia Kay Adams, and Joe Newberry.

Guest master artists gave presentations each day at 1:15 p.m. These featured banjo picking styles, gospel harmony, and traditional fiddle playing and clogging. This year, a couple of the showcase performances featured by our good friend Charlie Accuff, and on another afternoon was by Benton Flippen. Singing was also featured one day.

Various instructors led your choice of slow jam tunes under the Pickin’ Tent from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Dances in the old Bryson Gym followed on a couple of the evenings. On Monday and Wednesday night, the staff and instructors presented an enjoyable concert in the Kittredge Theater. Their commitment to excellence in performing and preserving old time music and the folk arts was impressive. Thursday afternoon featured a big barbeque dinner by the pond, and swimming for the aquatic oriented folks. A final Friday night Old Farmer’s Ball was held and later a Honkey Tonk. A good time was had by all. Friday evening featured the “Student Showcase” of obvious, and in some cases, not so obvious, talent (like mine for instance).

Some of the most memorable events for me were the evening jam sessions under the hundred-year-old poplar trees. The jam sessions presented opportunities to play, listen, and learn new tunes. On most evenings, several outdoor jams are typically underway around the campus, starting around 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. until 1:00 a.m. or later. Swannanoa is a good place to meet many new friends and also to see old buddies

The food service and quality was outstanding. Warren Wilson’s campus has over 25 miles of hiking trails. I went with the sincere expectation of hiking at least a few miles during the week. No Way!!! This preconceived notion met a sudden demise. Not only was there no time to hike, or even practice, but it was also a struggle just to find enough time to sleep! There was just too much good music to experience and be involved in at Swannanoa. Extraneous activities like practicing, hiking, and sleeping, played second fiddle all week! Jamming ruled!

There are several good music camp opportunities during the summer months that one should consider. In addition to the Swannanoa Gathering, music camps are also held at Mars Hill College in Mars Hill, NC; and the Augusta Heritage Workshop at Davis and Elkins College in West Virginia. My advice is to “take your fun seriously” and attend an old-time music camp, a workshop or a festival soon. □

Mystery Photo? See Page 7



Five-Fingered Music Theory: Building Double-Stops

~Phil Sparks

First, here's a correction to last month's "Five-Fingered" article. I wrote this:

When Nashville session musicians write chord sequences, they don't write

G G D G G C D G

Instead, they write

1 1 4 1 1 5 4 1

As Kurt Andersen so kindly pointed out, the last two lines should read this way:

Instead, they write

1 1 5 1 1 4 5 1

I must have crossed my fingers before I counted.

On to Double-Stops! Last month's article was for all old-time pickers. This one is strictly for fiddlers. Caution, this stuff sounds complicated, but it's simple once you've digested it. You might want to keep a fiddle in your hands as you read this article.

Strictly speaking, a "double-stop" occurs when we stop (put fingers on) two adjacent strings and bow them both. A "drone" occurs when we stop one string but bow an open string along with that stop. In this article, a drone is just another type of double-stop. Old-timers often refer to drones and double stops as "chords," though these chords are obviously limited to two notes.

NOTE: It is said the Eck Robertson used to put a matchstick under his E string to make it level with the D and A strings. That way, he could play triple-stops.

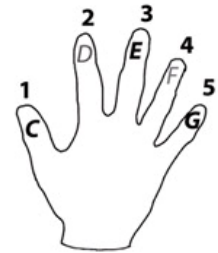
I know a perfectly good fiddler who abhors double-stops and never uses them. I've listened to other fiddlers who use them almost constantly. Alan Jabbour says Henry Reed used them just "sometimes" but almost always when he held a note for all or half of a

measure. That's the approach my mentor, Dave Edmundson, uses, and I try to follow his lead. It has been said that it ain't old-time banjo without some drop thumbing. I say that it ain't old-time fiddle without some double-stops.

How to Build Double Stops

Let's start with the key of C, just because it doesn't use any sharps (black keys). If you open your left hand so you can see the palm and use my five-fingered music theory from the last issue, you will discover that the chords in C are C, F, and G (the 1, 4 and 5 chords). Each of these chords is built with the 1, 3, and 5 notes.

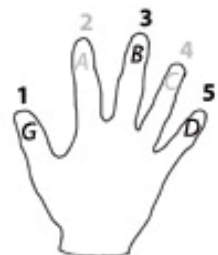
- To build a C chord, we need the C (1 note, represented by the thumb), the E (3 note, represented by the middle finger), and the G (5 note, represented by the pinky).



- To build an F chord, it's the F (1 note, represented by the thumb), the A (3 note, represented by the middle finger), and the C (5 note, represented by the pinky).



- To build a G chord, it's the G (1 note, represented by the thumb), the B (3 note, represented by the middle finger), and the D (5 note, represented by the pinky).



If you are playing a tune in C and you need a C double-stop, you must use a C note and one more note. You can do that three ways.

1. You can simply play two C notes. That won't work for this key in standard tuning, at least not in first position.
2. Second, you can play the thumb and the pinky, the C and the G. That works in a couple of places.
3. Finally, you can use the notes represented by the thumb and the middle finger, the C and the E. That works fine on the G and D strings, the D and A strings, and the A and E strings. One of those ought to fit into your tune.

NOTE: You can also make a double-stop using the 3 and 5 notes--if it pleases your ear. Sometimes they sound right, and sometimes they don't. For now, we'll leave the 3-5 double stops alone.

If you need an F chord, the five-fingered theory tells you that thumb is F, the middle finger is A, and the pinky is C. To build the double-stop F, you could:

1. Use two Fs, but that won't work in standard tuning, at least not in first position.
2. Use the F and C. This combination works all over the place, but I find them a bit awkward.
3. That leaves F and A. Those combinations work well.

Finally for the key of C, let's look at the G chord and possibilities for its three main components: G, D, and B.

1. Two Gs would work on the G and D strings but nowhere else.
2. G and D work all over the place, but they are difficult to finger while playing a tune.
3. That leaves the G and B, which works well.

I remember once telling Julie Mavity-Hudson that the trouble with the key of C is that there aren't any convenient double-stops. She must have thought I was nuts. Actually I just had not yet mastered five-fingered music theory.

Now let's try the same logic on the key of D, where the chords are D, G, and A. I hate this, but if you're going to build double-stops in D, you'll just have to remember that in the key of D, the C note is actually a C sharp and the F note is actually an F sharp. (See the final section of this article for a discussion of sharps in chords.)

Using the five-fingered music theory, the D chord is comprised of D (the 1 note, represented by the thumb), F# (the 3 note, or the middle finger), and A (5 note, or pinky finger.) The double-stop possibilities are:

1. Two Ds, which work fine on the G and D strings and the D and A strings.
2. D and A, which work great on the open D and A strings but not so well on the A and E strings.
3. D and F# work fine on the A and E strings—and there you have the most popular of all double-stops. I wish I had just one penny for every potato that has been sawed using that particular double-stop.

As for the G chord, you already know from our discussion of building double-stops for the key of C how to build double-stops for the G chord.

For an A chord, the thumb is A, the middle finger is C#, and the pinky is E. To build an A chord double-stop:

1. Two As can be found all over the place, but they are most convenient on the D and A strings and the A and E strings.
2. A and E are easiest on the open A and E strings but also work well on the G and D strings.

3. A and C# can be had on the D and A strings, but it's awkward. You can also note the C# on the A string and the A on the E string. That one's popular, but I have a hard time avoiding sour notes when I use it.

The same logic can be applied the key of G if you remember that its F is actually an F#.

The same logic can be applied to the key of A if you remember that it uses F#, C#, and G#.

What about minor chords?

Just think of the 1, 3, 5 notes in a normal chord and drop the 3 note a half step. In the Key of C, the minor is Am. Since the A chord is A, C#, E, the Am chord is A, C, E. So, the Am chord can be made up of two As, an A and a C, or an A and an E. The easiest combinations come with two As or an A and an E.

In building minor double-stops for the key of D (as well as A and G), working with the middle finger becomes too complicated for my little brain, so I use two thumbs or a thumb and a pinky.

How To Remember the Sharps

Here's how I remember which sharps go with which keys: If we number the fiddle strings G (1), D (2), A (3), and E (4), we can remember that the key of G uses one sharp, D uses two, A uses three, and E uses four.

The key of C has no sharps. That's easy. Next, I just have to remember that the key of G has an F#. That's not too hard.

But which notes are sharp in keys D, A, and E?

My memory tool works like this:

I picture the strings on a standard-tuned five-string fiddle: C, G, D, A, E.

1. C has no sharps, no problemo.
2. G has an F#, as mentioned above, which is the starting assumption.
3. D keeps the F# and adds one more, C#, the sharp of the lowest string on a five-string fiddle. So the two sharps in D are F# and C#.
4. A keeps the F# and the C# and adds one more—the sharp of the next string on the five-string fiddle, G#. The three sharps in the key of A are F#, C#, and G#.
5. The key of E keeps the F#, C#, and G# and adds one more—the sharp of the next string on the five-string fiddle, A#. The four sharps in the key of E are F#, C#, G#, and A#.

And that's all I've ever needed to know about fiddle keys and their double-stops. Now that I understand all that stuff, I just wish I could play the fiddle.

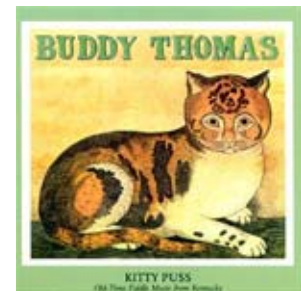
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CD Review:

Kitty Puss – Old-Time Music From Kentucky (Buddy Thomas)

~Ed Gregory

I discovered the Rounder Records re-release of this 1974 album while searching online for a recording of *Briar Picker Brown*. I found that and a whole lot more in *Kitty Puss*.



More experienced old-timers already knew

about Buddy Thomas, but I had not heard of him. So many fiddlers, so little time.

His fiddling has a flavor I couldn't put my hand on it until I discovered an old article in the Old-Time Herald which says he combines the trills of Portsmouth (Ohio) fiddling with the long bow of Doc Roberts and Ed Haley.

The result more than does them credit. The 16 tunes on this CD, some of which we play regularly at NOTSBA jams, include:

1. Nine Miles Out of Louisville
2. Frankie
3. John Rawl Jamieson
4. Sheeps and Hogs Walking through the Pasture
5. Georgia Row
6. Briar Picker Brown
7. Stillhouse Branch
8. The Blue Goose
9. Yellow Barber
10. 'Possum Up a 'Simmon Tree
11. Kitty Puss
12. Martha Campbell
13. Turkey in a Pea Patch
14. Big Indian Hornpipe
15. Brown Button Shoes
16. The Sweet Sunny South.

Buddy Thomas and this CD are now near the top of my list for fiddle listening and learning.

□

Please Contribute to Your Newsletter!

If you have information you want to submit, or if you have ideas for improving the newsletter, contact Ed Gregory.

If you are willing to review a CD or a book, contact Ed Gregory.

If you have a tidbit on picking, learning tunes, caring for instruments, etc, please submit it for the "A Penny Learned" article.

HELP!!!! If you know about an upcoming old-time music event, don't assume that we already know about it. If it's not posted on our Web site (www.nashvilleoldtime.org), we need the information desperately. *Please help us keep our old-time community informed.*

You can reach Ed at:

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or

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or

Ed Gregory

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Playing Out:

Who is Playing Where When

~Ed Gregory

Editor's Note:

After the formal NOTSBA membership program is rolled out, this new feature will be restricted to reporting playing dates of members of NOTSBA. For the time being, it is open to people who regularly play at NOTSBA jams and events.

Sept. 9 & 10

– **Blue Creek Ramblers**, including Rebekah Weiler, perform at the annual *Mountain Festival* at Fall Creek Falls.

Sept. 17

– Dave Cannon, Jim Hornsby, Mike Anderson, and Roy Turrentine will play the *North Alabama Country Dance Society* dance in Huntsville.

Sept. 22-23

– **NOTSBA Performance Band**, *Southern Folk Life Festival*, Carnton Mansion, Franklin. 9 am till noon each day. For info, contact dkent@nashvilleoldtime.org.

Sept. 23

– **NOTSBA Performance Band**, *Governor's Conference on Tourism*, Carnton Mansion, Franklin. Starting at 5:15 pm. Private event.

Sept. 23

– **Small-Time String Band**, featuring a core group of the regulars at the Pegram Jam, perform at the *Woodbine Contra Dance*.

□

Fourth Sunday Jam, September 25, 2005: NASHVILLE ZOO at GRASSMERE!!

September 23
- 25

Harvest
Days

Taking place on the lawn of our beautiful Grassmere Historic Home, this celebration of harvest will include 19th century craft demonstrations, historic reenactments, and participation in the harvesting of the historic gardens.

We're part of the entertainment/color background for the public on Sunday, the final day of this three-day event. We'll have details on what you need to bring (chairs, etcetera) before the event. The entrance is off of Nolensville Road between Harding Place and Thompson Lane.

