



Junior Hoedowner

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Why Learn Music Theory?

"Have you ever needed to play a familiar song in a different key? Have you ever wanted to play your favorite fiddle or mandolin tune a little differently than you have in the past? Do you want to play your mandolin or fiddle with a friend who plays guitar and sings? Have you heard a song but did not know how to figure out the chords? When you understand music theory, you will be able to do these and more. A musician who knows music theory understands how music works. This knowledge helps a musician to play in different situations, with new people, on tunes and songs he may never have played or heard before. Music is a series of events. In music theory you will dissect and study these events. You will learn to apply terms to these events so you can talk about them. When you encounter the same event at a later date, you will know what to do when that event happens. In today's music, most good players have a working knowledge of music theory. To play . . . you need not acquire extensive theory knowledge (like a jazz player must), only basic knowledge of scales, chord construction and arpeggios.

SCALES!!! CHORD CONSTRUCTION??? ARPEGGIOS!?!?!?

"Just the thought of these is enough to send shivers down the spines of many players. . . . Theory is not difficult to learn. It does not require hours of study. It does require consistent, applied study. Ten minutes before your daily practice session (you do practice daily, do you not?) will show results in a cassette tape

(information later on this). You will learn music concepts and at the end of this book show how to put these concepts into real playing situations. These concepts will be applicable to all the music styles listed above.

"Theory is not difficult to learn. It does not require hours of study. It does require consistent, applied study. Ten minutes before your daily practice session (you do practice daily, do you not?) will show results in a few short weeks. Your friends will be amazed. . . . Your vocabulary will grow (you will understand what people mean by a I, IV, V chord progression) and your confidence on the instrument will grow. You will understand your playing, know why certain note combinations sound good to you, and be able to put those notes into other pieces."

Pete continues: "I have written this book as a result of teaching music theory in private lessons and group workshops around the Northwest for many years. I would appreciate any comments you may have on this course. Drop me a line at the address below. Thank you and good music to all."

We want to recognize and thank Pete Martin for allowing us to use material and tune from his books, "Easy Music Theory for Fiddle and Mandolin." Information about Pete's books (Easy Music Theory for Fiddle and Mandolin (CD also available), Oldtime Tunes for Fiddle and Mandolin, Volume 1 Oldtime Tunes for Fiddle and Mandolin, Volume 2) can be found on his web site. www.petimarpress.com

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Tune of the Month

Angeline the Baker as currently played, is a modified version of a tune written by Stephen Foster before the Civil War, when it was performed by the original New Christie Minstrels. The music reproduced below is the modern version, and even includes a mandolin tab, something some of us could use a lot more of!

Angeline The Baker

Traditional

The image displays a musical score for the tune 'Angeline The Baker'. It is presented in two systems, each with a Fiddle staff and a Mandolin Tablature staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The Fiddle staff uses a treble clef and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs. The Mandolin Tablature staff uses a standard six-string layout (E, A, D, G) and contains numerical fret numbers (0, 2, 3, 4, 5) and other symbols like 'V' for vibrato and 'D' for double stops. The score is divided into four measures per system, with repeat signs at the beginning and end of each system.

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