

JRHOEDOWNER

Volume 12, No. 11

December 2018

Tune of the Month Suggested by Melinda Grant (District 4)

'Breaking Up Christmas' is a widely played old time standard. It refers to a tradition in the Blue Ridge Mountains that involves a 12-day celebration between Christmas and January 6, the day known as "Old Christmas" or Epiphany. This old Christmas party tradition originated in the 1920s and comes from the areas of Northwest North Carolina in Surry County and nearby Southwest Virginia. Before the days of television and electricity, people would gather for the twelve days between Christmas and January 6 for socializing, food, dancing, and old-time string music. The event would move from house to house and the party would go on past midnight. Thus the people "broke up" Christmas into many days of shared celebration.



Tommy Jarrell, North Carolina fiddler



Melinda Grant, District 4

Breaking Up Christmas

traditional (from Tommy Jarrell)

This tune is best played in cross-A: AEAE. Tune your G string up to an A and your D string up to an E. (Some people don't like to tune strings higher, so you can instead tune your A string down to a G and your E string down to a D, GDGD.) And of course it can be played out of straight tuning (but it won't sound as good!) Part B is a rhythmic riff, so give yourself time to get into the groove. A zillion great vids of this on YouTube; be sure to watch the one of Tommy Jarrell - awesome! And if you search YouTube for Breaking Up Christmas and Erynn Marshall or Sophie's Sunday Fiddlers, you'll find a couple of great tutorials. And you don't have to wait for Christmas, this one is played year round.