Flop Eared Mule

Traditional

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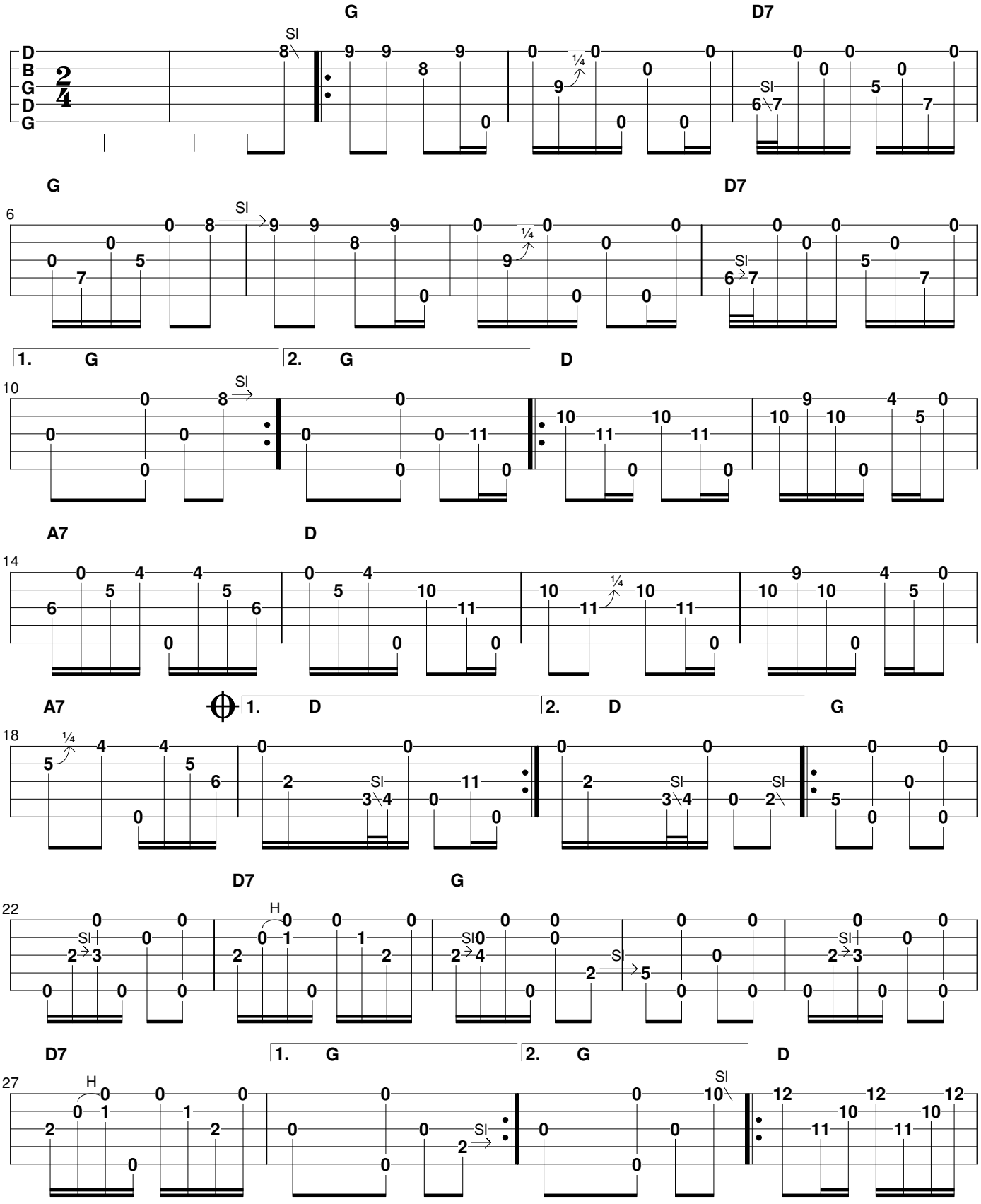

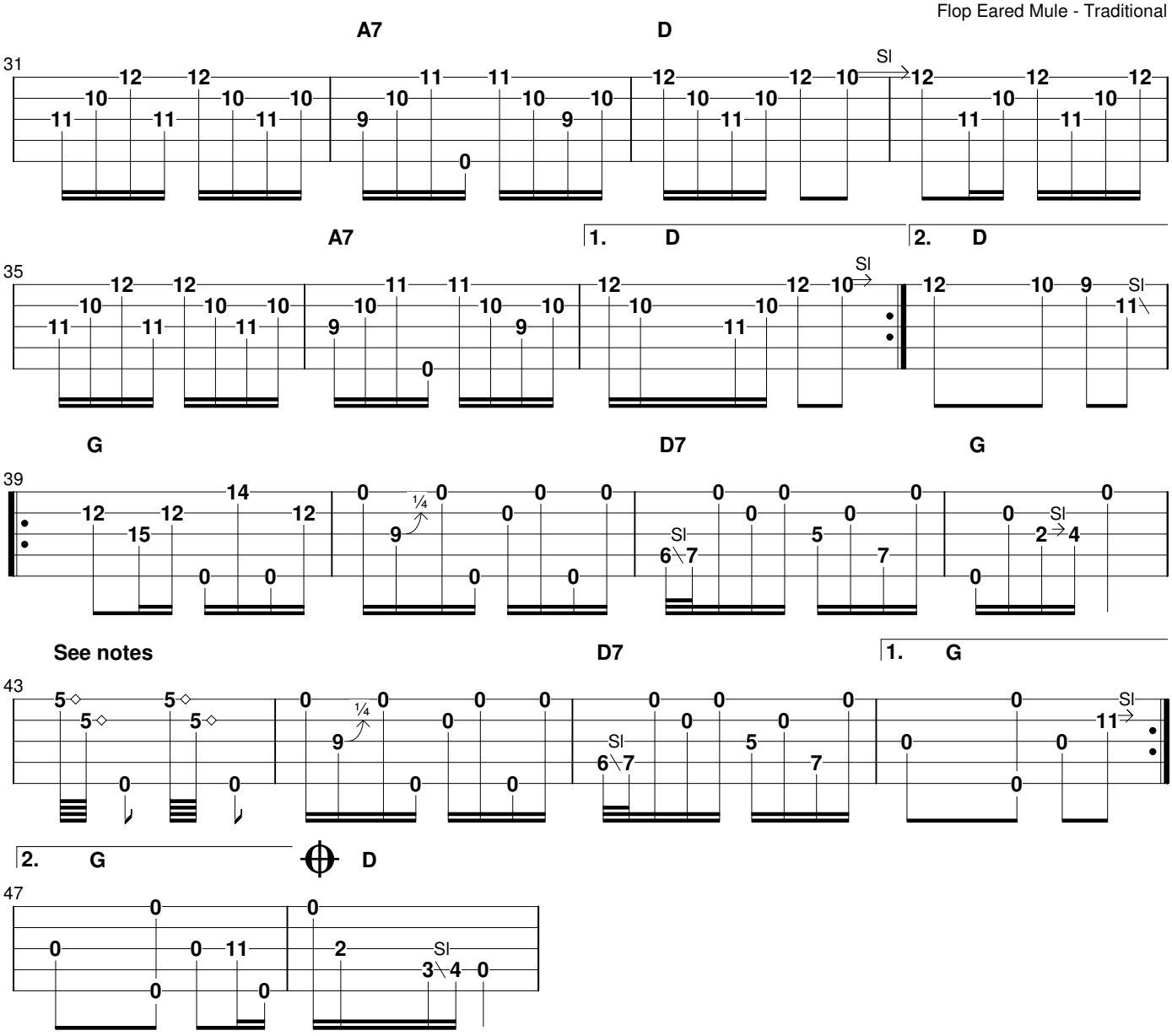

Bluegrass pickers usually to play this tune with a lot of Dillard type patterns (MIMT) coming down the neck, and I used to play it that way too, until I heard a recording of Snuffy Jenkins playing this with Pappy Sherill. As i recall, they played it in the key of D, but it is usually played out of G. It is set here in the key of G, in regular open G tuning, and while these aren't the notes Snuffy plays, I think the opening notes at least get some of the feel for the tune that he had.

The B part is entirely melodic, something I don't do that often anymore. I have tried to incorporate a few rolls into this part, but I haven't come up with anything I really liked. The right hand pattern just moves down the neck, with the index finger anchored first on the ninth fret, and then moving down to the fourth fret.

There is a neat little variation of the A part which starts in measure 38. Note in particular measure 43, which shows a quick little double harmonic at the fifth fret. This is actualy a stand in for a different technique, which Doug Dillard used in the tune Whoa Mule, brushing, scraping really, the first one or two strings behind the bridge with the index or index and ring fingers, followed by the thumb picking the fifth string. This imitates the "hee-haw" if the mule. Problem is, you can't tab that out very well, so I wrote it out this way, istead, because it comes close to imitating the sound.

This tune demonstrates that an arrangement doesn't have to be complicated to sound good.