

John's Tune

From the fiddling of Ralph Roberts

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The musical score is written for guitar in 2/4 time. It consists of 24 measures across four systems. The fretboard diagrams show fingerings for the left hand, with numbers 1-4 indicating fingers. The right hand part includes various techniques: 'Sl' (slide), 'Po' (pull-off), and 'H' (hammer-on). Chord progressions are indicated by letters G, C, D7, and (C) above the staff. Measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21 are placed at the start of their respective systems. A first ending bracket is shown above measures 13 and 14.

System 1 (Measures 1-4):
Measures 1-2: G chord, notes 0-0-0-0.
Measure 3: C chord, notes 1-0-2-0.
Measure 4: G chord, notes 0-2-0-0.

System 2 (Measures 5-8):
Measure 5: G chord, notes 0-0-0-0, with 'Sl' and 'Po' markings.
Measure 6: D7 chord, notes 1-0-0-0, with 'Po' marking.
Measure 7: G chord, notes 0-0-0-0, with 'Sl' and 'Po' markings.
Measure 8: C chord, notes 1-0-2-0, with 'H' marking.

System 3 (Measures 9-12):
Measure 9: G chord, notes 0-0-0-0, with 'H' marking.
Measure 10: D7 chord, notes 0-2-0-0, with 'H' marking.
Measure 11: G chord, notes 0-0-0-0, with 'Sl' and 'Po' markings.
Measure 12: D7 chord, notes 2-0-2-0, with 'Po' marking.

System 4 (Measures 13-16):
Measure 13: G chord, notes 0-0-0-0, with 'Sl' and 'Po' markings.
Measure 14: D7 chord, notes 2-0-4-0, with 'Po' marking.
Measure 15: G chord, notes 0-0-0-0, with 'Sl' and 'Po' markings.
Measure 16: C chord, notes 1-0-2-0, with 'H' marking.

System 5 (Measures 17-20):
Measure 17: G chord, notes 1-0-0-0, with 'Sl' marking.
Measure 18: D7 chord, notes 8-0-0-0, with 'Sl' marking.
Measure 19: G chord, notes 1-0-0-0, with 'Sl' marking.
Measure 20: D7 chord, notes 2-0-0-0, with 'Sl' marking.

System 6 (Measures 21-24):
Measure 21: G chord, notes 0-0-0-0, with 'Po' marking.
Measure 22: D7 chord, notes 0-2-0-0, with 'H' marking.
Measure 23: G chord, notes 0-0-0-0, with 'Sl' and 'Po' markings.
Measure 24: C chord, notes 0-2-0-0, with 'H' marking.

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G D7 G 2. G

I picked up this compelling little tune from West Virginia old time fiddler Ralph Roberts, while playing with him the last evening at Clifftop, 2012. It doesn't really have a second part, the last strain of the melody is just repeated a couple of extra times to serve as a bridge back to the top. This is what Ralph had to say about it: "This is the first tune my grandpaw always played. He loved this tune, but he didn't know the name for it, so we just named it John's Tune, because John was the name of my grandpaw."

Note the ghost hammer in measure 9. The ghost note in parentheses is not played, it is there to make sure the hammer-on sounds in the MIDI playback. A ghost hammer is a hammer onto a string that has not first been picked by the right hand. Since it is not already agitated, you have to smack it pretty good with the left hand finger, to make sure that it sounds loud enough.