

Magpie Traditional

Arrangement (c) copyright 2008 by Donald J. Borchelt
All rights reserved.

G

D7

G

D7

G

C

D7

G

D7



1.

G

2.

G

D7

The image displays a five-line banjo tablature for the tune 'Magpie'. The notation is organized into four horizontal systems, each representing a line of music. Chord symbols (G, D7, C) are placed above the staff to indicate the harmonic structure. Technical markings include 'Sl' (slide), 'H' (hammer-on), and 'Po' (pull-off). Fret numbers (0-21) are placed above the lines to indicate finger positions. The first system (measures 1-8) starts with a G chord and includes a slide on the 10th fret and a hammer-on on the 12th fret. The second system (measures 9-16) features a hammer-on on the 12th fret and a pull-off on the 14th fret. The third system (measures 17-24) includes a slide on the 17th fret and a hammer-on on the 19th fret. The fourth system (measures 25-32) begins with a first ending bracket labeled '1.' and ends with a double bar line. A 'G' chord symbol is placed above the first ending, and a 'G' chord symbol is placed above the second ending. A 'G' chord symbol is also placed above the final measure, which is marked with a circled 'X' and '2'.

Most old time musicians first heard this catchy tune from the Fuzzy Mountain Stringband's first album, which came out in 1978. Virtually every tune on that album became part of everyone's repertoire. Old time music owes a great debt to fiddler and collector Alan Jabbour and banjo picker Tommy Thompson, who saved many a beautiful old-time tune from obscurity.

I got interested in this tune again from listening to Donald Zepp's interesting clawhammer rendition which he posted on the Banjo Hangout website. The Zepp took a few liberties with the original melody, and I've borrowed a few of those twists for this setting. This is a relatively easy number, except perhaps for the walk up to the 21st fret with the pinky finger. At the 20th measure, I am barring the first and second strings with the index finger, and using the ring finger to get the 3rd string, 14th fret. That leaves the index finger to do the hammering on the 2nd string, 13th fret. Not too tough.