

Old Joe Clark

Traditional

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G (A)

2/4

D7 (E7)

G (A)

D7 (E7)

1. G (A)

2. G (A)

F (G)

G (A)

D7 (E7)



1. G (A)

2. G (A)

D7 (E7)

G (A)

D7 (E7)

1. G (A)

2. G (A)

32 F (G) G (A)

36 D7 (E7) 1. G (A) 2. G (A)

40 D7 (E7) 1. G (A) 2. G (A)

45 F (G) G (A)

49 D7 (E7) 1. G (A) 2. G (A)

53 D7 (E7)

57

Detailed description: This is a guitar fingerboard diagram for the song 'Old Joe Clark'. It shows fret numbers (0-17) on a six-string guitar. The diagram is organized into measures, with measure numbers 32, 36, 40, 45, 49, 53, and 57 indicated. Chord changes are noted above the staff: F (G), G (A), D7 (E7), and F (G). The diagram includes various techniques such as triplets (3), hammer-ons (H), pull-offs (Po), slides (Sl), and grace notes (1/4). There are also repeat signs and first/second ending brackets. The diagram is presented on a white background with black lines and text.

61 G (A) D7 (E7) 1. G (A) 2. G (A)

66 F (G) D7 (E7) 1. G (A) 2. G (A)

70 G (A) D7 (E7) 1. G (A) 2. G (A)

75 G (A)

I must admit, if there is one standard arrangement I have tired of playing over the years, it's the conventional version of Old Joe Clark, which just about every bluegrass picker knows. (I've included this standard arrangement starting in measure 21, for comparison.) Straight melodic versions never really inspired me, either, even during my more melodic years. I liked the tune a little more when I started it off with a drone phrasing, which replaced the usual kick-off notes. By moving the standard phrasing to the second string, I could also leave the first string open, to create an open position dulcimer roll. Much better, but it still felt a little repetitious. One day, though, not long ago, I heard a recording of Wade Ward's classic clawhammer version. Actually, I was hearing it again, since one of the first records I ever owned was a Library of Congress recording with his version on it. I remember that the record was made out of a translucent red polymer, and his playing, in particular, was hypnotic. The record got lost years ago in one of my many moves, and somehow I had forgotten about it, and Ward's wonderfully idiosyncratic rendition. When I heard it again, I worked up a three finger interpretation of some of his phrasing, and combined it with my drone-mutated standard version. Now, at least for the moment, I am content.

In order to try to synthesize the drone sound, I've added some tied notes in measures 3, 5, and 7. These are the notes in parenthesis. They are just added to simulate the sustain in the MIDI playback, they are not intended to be picked.

This tune is the archtypical mixolidian mode tune; the scale has a major third, but a flatted seventh. However, I've laid out the guitar rhythm in the customary way, with the guitar going to an F chord in the second part, in measure 15, but otherwise using a D7 chord at the end of each of the phrases. The D7 chord, of course, uses an F# instead of the F one would use to build the chord off of the mixolidian scale. In both of these changes, the banjo melody is ambiguous, employing neither the F or the F#. Thus, if you wanted to substitute the F chord for the D7, it would sound fine.