

Red Haired Boy

Traditional

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Ukulele sheet music for "Red Haired Boy" in 2/4 time. The score is written on a four-line staff with a G-C-G-D tuning. It includes chord diagrams above the staff and fret numbers below. The music is divided into measures, with measure numbers 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, and 26 indicated. Chords are labeled as A(G), D(C), G(F), and A(G). The score includes various techniques such as hammer-ons (H), pull-offs (Po), slides (Sl), and triplets. A key signature change to one sharp (F#) is indicated by a circle with a cross symbol. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Red Haired Boy - Traditional
G (F)

30

G (F) D (C) A (G)

34

A (G) D (C) A (G) G (F) 1. A (G)

2. A (G) D (C) A (G)

38

G (F) A (G) D (C) A (G) G (F)

42

1. A (G) 2. A (G) G (F) D (C) A (G)

46

G (F) A (G) D (C) A (G) G (F)

51

1. A (G) 2. A (G) A (G)

55

This arrangement is a significant departure from the conventional melodic arrangement of Red Haired Boy. First, it is arranged in Sawmill, or Mountain Minor tuning, with the second string raised one-half step to a C. This rings as a drone on occasion throughout the tune, and emphasizes the sub-dominant tone of the scale, changing the whole tonal quality of the tune. Second, and just as important, the arrangement relies a lot on the quasi-clawhammer right hand rhythmic pattern which I often use, rather than on more linear melodic phrasing. The purpose is to bring more of a rhythmic drive to the tune.

Note the double hammer in measure 3 (actually the first measure of the tune) and measure 7 and 16. Both hammers are executed at the same time, the fourth string hammer waits until after the second string is plucked by the right hand.

The guitar lead which succeeds the banjo lead follows the original Irish melody very closely. This gives me the opportunity to demonstrate how I often play back up, with a combination of Scruggs-style rolls and clawhammer-like patterns, roughly following in the treble what the guitar base line might be doing in a lower register while playing rhythm. This works well, as long as it is played quietly. It is very easy for the banjo to overpower the guitar, especially if the guitar player flatpicks with a light touch, as many do.

The up the neck break is a little tricky. When you reach the D note in measure 22, at the 2nd string, 12th fret, make sure you fret the note with the middle finger. This will allow you to place the middle finger at the 11th fret, right behind it, and the ring finger right next to it, at the 1st string, 12th fret, in order to set you up for the hammer that follows. Then just move the index down to the 2nd string, 9th fret, and the middle finger to the 3rd string, 10th fret, to complete the measure. In measure 27, I slide up with that ring finger to the 17th fret. The middle finger then goes down right next to it, at the 2nd string, 17th fret, and the pinky takes the 3rd string, 19th fret. That's the hardest move in the whole arrangement.

This tune is also sometimes called Gilderoy's Reel, or There Once Was A Soldier Who Had a Wooden Leg. Under the latter title, there are actually lyrics:

There was an old soldier and he had a wooden leg,
He had not ta'baccy, no ta'baccy could he beg,
The second old soldier, just as sly as a fox,
He always had ta'baccy in his old ta'baccy box.

Said the first old soldier, "Will you give me a chew?"
Said the second old soldier, "I'll be hanged if I do!
"Stay out of gin mills and save up your rocks,
"And you'll always have ta'baccy in your old ta'baccy box."

Well the first old soldier he was feeling mighty bad,
He said, "I'll get even, I will, begad,"
He goes to the corner, takes a rifle from the peg,
And stabs the other soldier with a splinter from his leg.

Now there was an old hen, and she had a wooden foot,
And she made up her nest by the mulberry root,
She laid more eggs than any hen on the farm,
And another wooden leg wouldn't do her any harm.