

Bonaparte's March

Traditional

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The musical score is written for guitar in 2/4 time. It consists of 27 measures across seven systems. The notation includes standard guitar symbols: D, A, G, D, G for strings; H for harmonics; SI for slides; and numbers for fret positions. Chord changes are indicated above the staff. The score includes first and second endings, a key signature change to B-flat major, and an 'Up the neck break' section. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Measures 1-5: Gm (Am) | B♭ (C)

Measures 6-9: C (D) | Gm (Am) | B♭ (C) | 1. C (D)

Measures 10-13: Gm (Am) | 2. C (D) | Gm (Am) | G (A)

Measures 14-17: F (G) | Gm (Am) | B♭ (C) | 1. C (D) | Gm (Am) | 2. C (D)

Measures 18-21: Gm (Am) | Up the neck break | B♭ (C) | C (D)

Measures 22-26: Gm (Am) | B♭ (C) | C (D) | 1. Gm (Am)

Measures 27-27: Gm (Am)

2. Gm (Am) G (A) P₀ F (G)

31

Gm (Am) B \flat (C) C (D) 1. Gm (Am)

36

2. Gm (Am) C (D) Gm (Am)

40

I first heard this tune from an MP# file posted on the Banjo hangout by BHO member Sean Barth. Barth reported learning the tune from Illinois fiddler Harvey "Pappy" Taylor. Searching around, I found another fine version posted on the Fiddle Hangout, by Mary Pat Klewin. The two Hangouts have become a great source of tunes.

After working on this for awhile, I realized that it may be a simpler, more archaic version of Bonaparte Crossing the Rocky Mountains (or the Alps). I like the simplicity of it. One of the obvious parallels is the modal ambiguity that both share at the beginning of the B part. The A part is in Dorian mode, employing a flatted third and a flatted seventh. In the second measure of the B part (measures 14 and 33), however, the fiddle moves in the direction of the major third, making the first half of the B part sound Mixolydian, instead.