

Jaybird in a High Oak Tree

Traditional

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This guitar tablature is written in 2/4 time and consists of six systems of two staves each. The first staff begins with a 2/4 time signature and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piece is in G major, with a key signature of one sharp. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0-11), accidentals (sharps, naturals, flats), and articulation marks such as slurs, accents, and breath marks (Po). Chord diagrams are provided below the staves, including D7 (E7), G (A), C (D), and G (A). The piece features a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). The first ending concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign, while the second ending leads back to an earlier section. The piece ends with a final double bar line and a repeat sign.

Chord diagrams shown: D7 (E7), G (A), C (D), G (A).



Alternate melodic style phrasing for measures 12 through 15

Alternate phrasing for measures 10 and 20

M T I T I T I M T M

This tune comes from the repertoire of Kentucky fiddler Perry Riley (1893-1973), which comes to us from recordings made shortly before his death by Gus Meade and Mark Wilson. I learned the tune from Boston area old time musicians Linda Henry and Jerry Dallal, and I have set it in the G Variant tuning (gDGAD). The tune is in A, so you will have to capo at the second fret. This is a crooked tune, in that both the high and low parts appear to have an extra beat added at the end, with 17 beats in each part. However, what I think is really happening structurally is a more complex interplay of rhythm and melody. In essence, I think the high part begins at measure 12 with an extra beat, ends without one the first time through (measure 19), but adds it back in the second time through (measure 29) when returning to the high part. Adding to the melodic complexity- when the low part repeats its short melodic strain at measure 16 it does not have the extra beat found in measure 12. It takes some listening and practice to make sense and internalize this strange rhythmic/melodic structure, but once you "get it," it feels natural, and immensely satisfying.

A couple of other observations about this setting. When Riley finishes the low part the first time through, he adds the extra beat with a big "whoop" of a bow stroke across the upper strings, and he does more or less the same thing when he returns to the high part at the end of the low part. I have gotten that effect with an upward brush with my middle finger in measure 10. The timing on that brush is critical, it must flow smoothly into the pick up notes at the end of the measure. I have included an alternate approach employing a simple pinch at measure 20, and another using a forward roll in measure 27. Also, I like to break up my melodic style phrasing with liberal use of left hand techniques, hammers, pull-offs, slides, etc., but I have also included alternative melodic style phrasing for the low part starting in measure 23, for comparison.