Shelvin' Rock

Traditional

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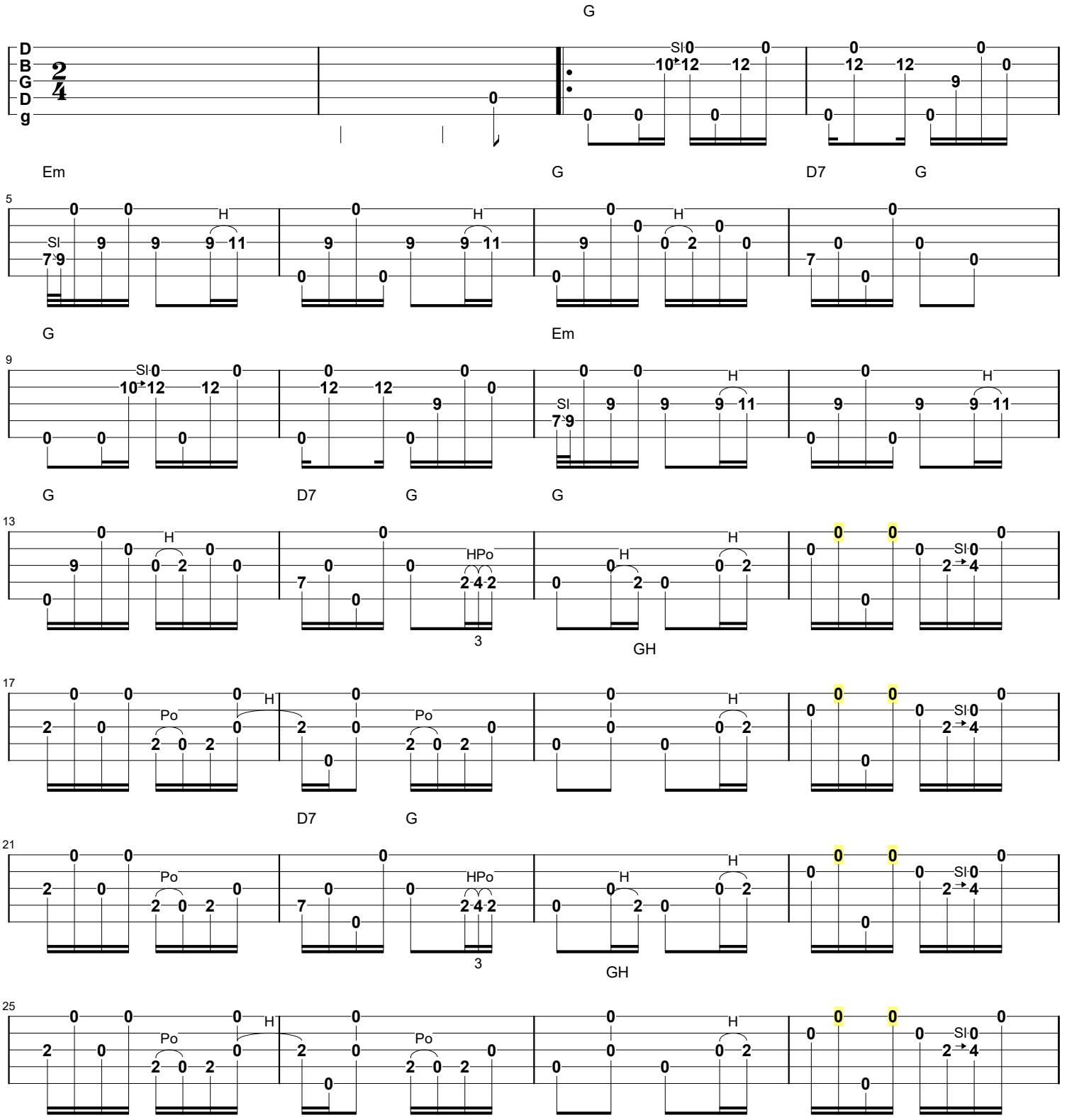

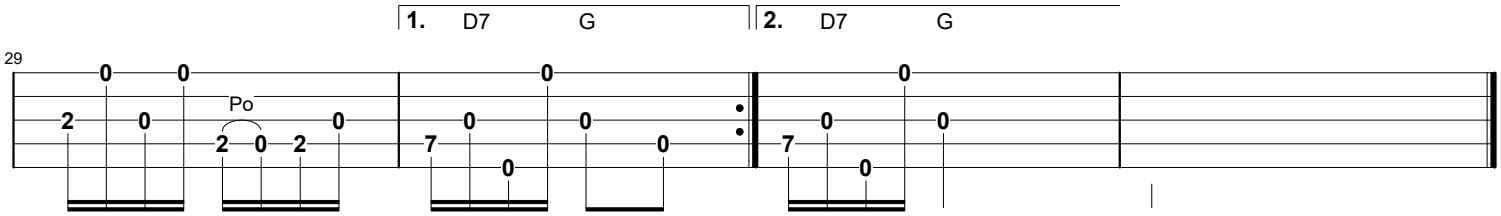

There are two or three different fiddle tunes that go by the name Shelvin' Rock; this one comes from fiddler Burl Hammons (1907-1993) of the legendary Hammons family of Pocahontas County, West Virginia. This is a very different tune from the more commonly played one called Shelvin' Rock, which comes from fiddler Ernie Carpenter, who is from another important West Virginia musical dynasty.

Some important things that need to be highlighted- The A part, the high part of the tune, is crooked, in that each strain is only twelve beats long, instead of the usual 16. The B part, the low part, is square, a full 16 beats. There is one two beat phrase that Hammons syncopates slightly. In this arrangement you will find in measures numbered 16, 20, 24, and 28. Now, Hammons varies the exactly notes that he plays quite a bit, including inserting a few trills, but the syncopation is consistent each time. I have kept it the same each time, laying out the basic melody. Listen to Burl Hammons to get a sense of how to improvise some with it. The notes highlighted in yellow should be emphasized slightly, to achieve the syncopation the phrase deserves.

Measures 15 and 23 feature a ghost hammer (GH), where you hammer onto the 4th string at the 4th fret, without picking it first with the right hand. The preceding open "ghost" note, the note in parantheses is not played, it is there to make sure the hammer-on sounds in the MIDI playback. Since you are hammering onto a string that has not first been picked by the right hand, it is not already agitated, so you have to smack it pretty good with the left hand finger, to make sure that it sounds loud enough to be heard.