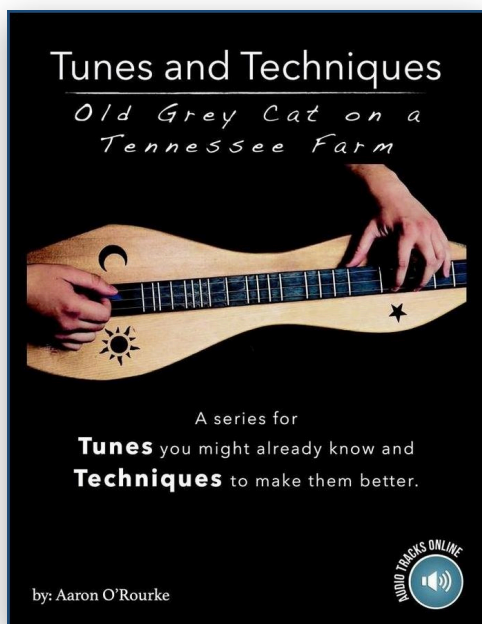




FINGERS OF STEEL® PUBLICATIONS

Tunes And Techniques - Old Grey Cat On A Tennessee Farm

by Aaron O'Rourke



"Old Grey Cat On A Tennessee Farm" is the core tune of this book in Aaron O'Rourke's five-part Tunes And Techniques series for mountain dulcimer.

Rather than just handing you the tab, Aaron uses the old-time tune to teach techniques, from fundamentals to a few advanced moves, so the lessons stick because they're tied to real music.

[Free demo audio](#)

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Aaron O'Rourke
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Moving a tune into a different octave

It's a good idea to learn a tune in as many different places on the fretboard as possible. However, it's not always practical to shift the entire tune into a different octave, particularly the higher octave. If we were to play the A part an octave higher, this particular melody would go all the way up to the 16th fret! That can push the comfort of our ears (and fingers) to spend a significant amount of time that high. On the bright side, the B part of "Old Grey Cat" is a lot more manageable.

Because notes tend to cut through in the higher octave, it's a great place to do some "notey" playing. Here are a couple different ways to play the B part in the higher octave.

High Octave B Part
Simple Version

CD Track 7

High Octave B Part
Fancy Version

CD Track 8

If we want to fill in even more space, let's add another string into the mix and turn this into a picking pattern. After playing the melody string, immediately follow that up with the open middle string. That will look something like this...

Finally, let's take this one step further and play with phrasing. Instead of playing some melody notes on the beat they are supposed to be played on, start a note below and do a hammer-on up to the melody. This approach will look something like this...

Essentially what's happening here is that certain melody notes are coming in a little later than your ear is anticipating them. I usually refer to them as "delayed notes."

For the sake of creating an interesting arrangement, I encourage you not to stick with just one of these approaches but to incorporate all of them. In the following arrangement on page 17, you'll find that the version incorporates some of the ideas from the spicy flatpicking arrangement along with reference notes, picking patterns, and delayed notes for a more fleshed out take on what's possible with this song. I encourage you to use these ideas and piece together a version that works for you.

But first, let's take a close look at the picking patterns we'll be using...



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