

Songs and Toods

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For the Lou Harrison National Just Intonation Resonator Guitar
Or for conventional guitar (except *tood: 85 Chords* ("The Historic Tuning Problem"))

For John Schneider
2005

Songs and Toods consists of three settings of American "songs" and two computer-composed pieces. It was written at the request of John Schneider. The pieces may be played in any order, or in any subset. Except for *85 Chords...*, they may all be played on conventional guitar, but they are ideally intended for the specific intonations and sounds of the Lou Harrison National. Each piece is in a different guitar tuning. The two toods use quite radical retunings of the guitar, based on software models of the possibilities of the fretting. Only *Sweet Betsy...* is in the guitar's canonical tuning.

song: Sweet Betsy from Pike

for lou harrison and bill colvig

Lyrics from Ruth Crawford's Seeger arrangement of the song, from *Twenty-two American Folk Tunes*, arranged for Piano, Elementary Grades, 1938 (mss. Courtesy of the Library of Congress and the Estate of Ruth Crawford Seeger) (last verse guitar accompaniment from her LH). Based on my own improvisations on the tune (for a different version, see http://eamusic.dartmouth.edu/~larry/mp3_files/sweet_betsy_from_pike/betsy.mp3).

song: Eskimo Lullaby

for michael byron

From *Folk Songs of Canada*, by Ruth Fulton Fowke and Richard Johnston, Waterloo Music Company, Waterloo, Ontario, 1954. Thanks to Eric Richards for giving me this book, and to my daughter Anna, for singing this song often with me.

"Still now, and hear my singing.
Sleep through the night, my darling.
We have a tiny daughter.
Thanks be to god, who sent her.

song: Dismission of Great I

Shaker song, learned from Mary Ann Haagen, recorded and documented on *I Am Filled With Heavenly Treasures*, The Enfield Shaker Singers, New World CD 80617-2.

Go off, Great I, and come not nigh,
and quit my habitation.
and come no more, within my door,
corrupting my sensation.

Depart I say, flee far away,
your ways no more I'll practice.
for those who try to be Great I,
are vicious, proud and fractious.

tood: schneidertood

schneidertood is the latest in a set of pieces written in Java/JMSL which are based, quite simply, on the idea of “each note once.” In *schneidertood* (as in all of the other pieces in this set, which I informally call “onceatoods”), this idea is extended in various ways, including a kind of celebration of the many different possible intonations for each pitch on this guitar.

tood: 85 Chords (“The Historical Tuning Problem”)

for jim tenney

85 Chords... is the only one of the set that can't be played on a conventionally fretted guitar, it is designed specifically for the intonational system of the Lou Harrison National. Like my earlier works *jargon*, *yitgadal*, and a few others, its form is a simple trajectory from harmonic simplicity to harmonic complexity (and back again). The guitar is modelled in software, in terms of fingerings and tunings. The software “knows” all possible chords on the instrument, as well as their “harmonic complexity”, and creates the simple form based on that knowledge.