

songs and toods

Larry Polansky
2005

for the Lou Harrison National Guitar
(or conventionally fretted guitar, except for tood: 85 Chords ("The Historic Tuning Problem"))

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(or conventionally fretted guitar, except for *tood*: *85 Chords* (“*The Historic Tuning Problem*”))

5/19/06

Larry Polansky

tood: *schneidertood*

Tune, or detune, the strings of the guitar as distinctly as possible, not necessarily to any specific tempered or just intervals. Try to tune the instrument so that no fretted note on any string is the same as any other fretted note on any other string. That is, for example all “Es” on the VI string should be different from all “Es” (and any octaves) on the V, IV, III, II, and I string. This should be true for all “pitch classes” (fretted notes). In other words, no specific pitch should be duplicated on any two strings of the guitar. A conventionally tuned guitar tuned in $1/6^{\text{th}}$ or quartertones would not have this property, nor would the Lou Harrison National if any given string is tuned to some fretted note on any other string.

The score is written as if the guitar is tuned to conventionally: E-A-D-G-B-E.

Accented and non-accented notes

Accented notes (larger noteheads, with an accent mark) should be *much* louder than other pitches. Non-accented notes (smaller noteheads) should be treated as “shadow notes” —they may be slurred, hammered, tapped, plucked with the left hand, or any combination of these techniques. What’s important is that the accented notes should be heard as a kind of melody distinct from the rest of the pitches. All accented notes should be attacked.

Some ways to emphasize this might be:

- play the accented notes with a pick, non-accented with the fingers
- play the accented notes at the bridge, non-accented at the neck
- use a volume pedal or footswitch to sustain or bring out the sound of the accented notes

All *harmonics* are accented, and should be loud, resonant, and might be played with still a third kind of sound. They are written as the node to be fingered on the indicated string (their sounding pitch will depend on the tuning). Only the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th harmonics are used.

Accented notes and harmonics should be sustained as long as possible (through the succeeding rhythms).

String indications are extremely important. Because of the tuning system, they are not optional. They ensure that every accented note gets played once, and that each accented note is different (because of the retuning). Only the accented notes and harmonics have string indications: the non-accented notes may be played on any string.

Rhythm

There are two versions of the score, one with specific rhythms, another with those same rhythms but beams and stems removed. The second version is a kind of spatial notation. Either version might be used.

Although in the first version the rhythms look somewhat difficult, they should not be treated as an onerous, exacting requirement. Duration is more important than “rhythmic” exactness. In addition, the rhythmic notation should not be taken to determine sustain, but simply time between notes. The pulse and the measure should be respected, but within that, the player should not feel unnecessarily burdened by the complex rhythmic notation, and may use it as a guideline.

Dotted notes are shorter, and can be even quieter than the other non-accented notes. Any note can be held thru other notes before releasing, except those marked with a dot.

song: *Sweet Betsy from Pike*

For Lou Harrison and William 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).

For guitar and voice.

For all the songs, the voice should be untrained, but strong: a clear, simple sound. No affectation. Except for the first verse, the tune is not written out. The singer should know it in his own way. Preferably, the guitarist should sing, but a second performer might be used as well. While the vocal part is notated, that should be treated as a "lead sheet" of the folk song, and may be freely (but simply) interpreted by the singer.

This piece is written for the Lou Harrison National, based on my own improvisations with the guitar. As in 4 out of 5 of these songs and toods, it may also be played on an equal-tempered guitar. Steel string (acoustic or electric) is preferable.

Most of the piece assumes that the thumb of the RH will be playing simple "drop thumb" accompaniment, although this is seldom notated. The guitarist might stick to the I-V-IV-I scheme of the tune, or play with that. But in general, except where notated (and where clearly impractical), it's nice to have a resonant drone under the melodies.

"Sweet Betsy from Pike"

Ruth Crawford Seeger, 1938

Library of Congress Manuscript

O don't you remember sweet Betsy from Pike
Who crossed the wide prairies with her lover Ike,
With two yoke of cattle and one spotted hog
A tall shanghai rooster and an old yeller dog?

The shanghai ran off and the cattle all died;
The last piece of bacon that morning was fried.
Poor Ike got discouraged and Betsy got mad,
And the dog wagged his tail and looked wonderful sad.

The alkali desert was burning and bare,
And Isaac's soul shrank from the death that was there;
"Dear old Pike county, I'll go back to you"
Said Betsy "You'll go by yo'self if you do"

They soon reached the desert where Betsy gave out,
And down in the sand she lay rolling about;
When Ike in great terror looked on in surprise,
Saying, "Betsy, get up you'll get sand in your eyes"

Sweet Betsy got up in a great deal of pain,

And declared she'd go back to Pike Country again;
Then Ike heaved a sigh and they fondly embraced
And she traveled along with his arm round her waist.

They swam the wide rivers and crossed the tall peaks
And camped on the prairies for weeks upon weeks,
Starvation and cholera and hard work and slaughter
They reached California spite of hell and high water.

One morning they climbed up a very high hill,
And with wonder looked down on old Placerville;
Ike shouted and said, as he cast his eyes down,
"Sweet Betsy, my darling, we've got to Hongtown".

Long Ike and sweet Betsy attended a dance,
Where Ike wore a pair of his Pike Country pants,
Sweet Betsy was covered with ribbons and rings,
Quote Ike "You're an angel, but where are your wings?"
]

Dennis Bathory-Kitsz engraved the score.

song: *Eskimo Lullaby*

From *Folk Songs of Canada*, by Ruth Fulton Fowke and Richard Johnston, Waterloo Music Company, Waterloo, Ontario, 1954.

For Michael Byron

For the Lou Harrison National or any other guitar (electric or acoustic).

Tuning: G-A-D-G-A-D

(VI string down to G)

Thanks to Eric Richards for giving me this book, and to my daughter Anna, for singing this song often with me. Dennis Bathory-Kitsz engraved the score.

“Eskimo Lullaby”

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

Thanks to Dennis Bathory-Kitsz for helping to copy this score.

tood: *85 Chords (The Historical Tuning Problem)*

(for the Lou Harrison National Guitar, digital delay, and sustaining instruments or voices)
for jim tenney

Any type of delay might be used (on the guitar only). The intention is simply to sustain the harmonies.

Guitar tuning:

VI: D (1/1)
V: A (3/2)
IV: C (7/4)
III: F# (5/4)
II: Ab (11/8)
I: D (1)

The score is written as sounds as if the fundamentals and frets were tempered. That is, an E on the VI string is played on the second (or 14th) fret, an F-natural on the III string is played on the 11th fret, etc. Note that, because of the fretting of the guitar, especially on the III and IV strings (but on others as well), the notation of pitches will often differ from their closest tempered pitches. For example, the 6th fret of the II string is the ratio 121/64, sounds much closer to a tempered B, but it is notated as a C to avoid confusion. Open strings (of which there are many) are given no special notation. The guitarist simply needs to remember the “name” of the string in its new tuning, and play the notes on it as if that string and the fretting were in equal-temperament.

The notated fingerings are a tablature, and crucial to the piece.

Harmonics are notated by small diamonds above the actual sounding pitch (on the specified string). The only harmonics used are those played on the 5th (double octave), 7th (octave and a P5th), and 12th (octave) frets.

Any quiet sustaining instrument(s), or voice (optimally, the guitarist himself), can perform the sustained pitches. These should be gentle, understated, and can come in and out in any way, and should serve to help sustain the harmony. They should be in tune with the guitar. Any pitches may be doubled at any time, but pitches held through from one measure to the next (marked as white notes in the measure in which they begin), should get priority.

The piece is a set of 85 arpeggios. Each measure (arpeggio, chord) may be repeated as many times as the guitarist wants. The arpeggios do not have to be even, but measures should be of roughly equal length. The pitches of the arpeggios may be played in any order within the measure, and that may change freely over the repetitions of the measure. The guitarist should try to mark, or accent the beginning of a new measure in some way, whether by a significantly

louder note, some simple, recognizable rhythmic figure, or even by a gentle percussive tap somewhere on the guitar itself.

The fingerings of the chords/arpeggios are (more or less) meant to be held through the measure. In other words every new measure is a new fingering. If some of them prove too difficult because of the spread, the guitarist should still try and create the effect of a single chord fingering. When there are six notes in the chord, the fingering not notated, but is always VI -> I from left to right.

Tempo should be comfortable, not too fast, not too slow. But steady.

Explanation of the piece: fingering, tuning function (reference earlier pieces).

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.

Guitar tuning: D-A-D-G-G↓-C↓

I string (C): Tuned to the 7th harmonic (10th fret) of the low D strings (IV or VI), about 31¢ flat of ET. (7/4)

II string (A): Tuned to the 3rd harmonic (perfect fifth) of the retuned I string, about 19¢ flat of ET, and about 17¢ flat of the III string (G). (21/16).

Harmonics in the introduction and final B section should be played very close to the bridge. Marking the strings with colored chalk can make these harmonics easier to find.

“Dismission of Great I”

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

Larry Polansky
2005

schneidertood

polansky

as fast as possible, tempo constant
(at least ♩ = 120)

The musical score is written for guitar in 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music, each containing a line of notation with guitar-specific markings. The notation includes notes, rests, and accidentals, with dynamics such as accents (>) and a piano marking (p). Fingering is indicated by Roman numerals (I-VI) placed below the notes. Some notes have a 'v' above them, likely indicating vibrato. Bar lines are numbered 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30. Specific fingering techniques are marked with brackets and numbers: a triplet of three notes (3), a seven-note run (7), and a five-note run (5). The key signature has one sharp (F#).

(Accidentals hold through the measure)

35

III VI II V

40

II I V II

45

III IV VI V I II III

50

IV V VI IV V

54

VI II III

57

IV V VI I III

61

VI I

65

II III VI I IV

69

V II IV V VI

73

I 3 II 5 III

76

II 3 I 5 II 7 III

79

I 3 III 7

82

II 5 I 7 IV 3

84

II 5 7 III 3 II

86

III 3 5 3 II 7

89

III 3 I 5 7 3 V

92

VI 3 7 7 II 5 III

95

III 7 5 3 7 3 IV

98 7 3 3 3 5 7 5 IV V 7 5 II

101 7 3 7 7 IV II 7 7

104 5 5 7 7 VI III I

107 3 3 5 5 5 5 I IV 5 5 5

lp
hanover
9/1/05
rev. 1/23/06

schneidertood

(no rhythms)

polansky

as fast as possible, tempo constant
(at least ♩ = 120)

The musical score consists of six staves of music, each containing a melodic line and a corresponding line of fingerings. The fingerings are indicated by Roman numerals (I-VI) and are often accompanied by vertical lines representing the strings. Accents (>) are placed above many notes. The score is written in a single system with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The measures are numbered 1 through 30. The fingerings for each measure are as follows:

Measure	Fingerings
1	V VI I I II
2	IV I III
3	IV VI V
4	I II I II IV V I
5	II VI I VI III IV V
6	I III VI III IV
7	VI II III IV V VI
8	I II V VI IV
9	III II I IV V

(Accidentals hold through the measure)

35

III VI II V

40

II I V II

45

III IV VI V I II III

50

IV V VI IV V

54

VI II III

57

IV V VI I III

61

VI I

65

II III VI I IV

69

V II IV V VI

73 I II III

76 II I II III

79 I III

82 II I IV

84 II III II

86 III I II

89 III I V

92 VI II III

95 III IV

Detailed description: This page of a musical score for guitar contains nine staves of music, numbered 73 through 95. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is written in a rhythmic style with eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in pairs or fours. Fingerings are indicated by Roman numerals (I-IV) below the notes. Accents (>) are placed above certain notes. Bar lines are used to divide the measures. The sequence of fingerings across the staves is: Staff 73 (I, II, III), Staff 76 (II, I, II, III), Staff 79 (I, III), Staff 82 (II, I, IV), Staff 84 (II, III, II), Staff 86 (III, I, II), Staff 89 (III, I, V), Staff 92 (VI, II, III), and Staff 95 (III, IV).

98

IV V II

101

IV II

104

III I

107

VI I IV

lp
hanover
9/1/05
rev. 1/23/06

song: Sweet Betsy from Pike

Larry Polansky
2005

Sweet Betsy from Pike

Polansky

Opening

Verse 1

Oh — Don't you re - mem - ber sweet Bet - sy from

vamp till ready (let other open strings ring ad lib.)

attack first note only

Pike who crossed the wide prair-ies with her lo - ver Ike, with two yoke of cat - tle and one spot - ted

hog, a - tall Shang hai roost - er and an old yel - ler dog.

r.h. other strings ad lib.

Solo 1

vamp till ready

(all hammer except 1st note)

RH.....

* All harmonics are notated as sounding pitch and string.
Fret numbers are sometimes given (parenthetically, in arabic numerals) for clarification.

(pull-off from harmonic)

II (pull-off) III

Verse 5

Sweet Bet-sy got up in a great deal of pain, and

rubato

RH, pluck *pp*

de - clared she'd go back to Pike Coun-ty a - gain, then Ike heard a sigh and they

ff

(snap 2nd finger "thwack" of RH to hit the accented notes, like forcefully flicking off a bug.)

(I)

(slightly slower) $\frac{3}{4} = \frac{2\frac{1}{2}}{4}$

out of time, very fast LH pull-offs

fond-ly em - braced and she trav-elled a - long with his arm 'round her waist. They—

relax

RH harmonics

(no attack)

RH finger, pluck

(RH hold on neck)

(Hammer with LH)

Verse 6 (Waltz)

swam the wide riv - er and crossed the tall peaks, and camped on the prair - ies for

(in general, hold finger positions. . .)

weeks up - on weeks. Star - va - tion and chol - e - ra and hard work and

RH pluck

(quiet)

(only accent low notes) (top of chord lightly)

slaught-er, they — reached Cal - i - for - nia spite of hell and high wa - ter.

VI V (either, both) quietly

freely, as an interlude, no meter

quiet

Solo 4 (No free thumb low notes in the solo) slight

+ : damp notes, maybe play with a pick

(maybe strum lightly)

(ord.) VI

(steady)

(all LH pulloffs, no RH) (p.o)

(LH)

(2nd finger "thwack")

fast, furious, resonant (LH p.o)

RH tap hard (unmetered)

R L R L R L R L

repeat and fade ad lib

(tap, alternate RH/LH, ghostlike, let "split tones" ring if they want to)

Bluesy

really bend, make it howl

pull off

(sustain by III bending)

slower, calm

sub mf

Slowly, quietly, late night-ish, out of time.

sub p

(all harmonics) slow, at your own pace

quiet

8va

Back to song tempo

Verse 7

morn-ing they climbed up a ver - y high hill, and with won - der looked down on

(bass ad lib...)

(thumb bass notes ad lib.)

old Pla- cer - ville. Ike shout-ed and said as he cast his eyes down, "Sweet—hammer

RH harmonics (9th)

(RH)

Bet - sy my dar - ling, we've got to Hong - town.

(thumb bass ad lib.)

Interlude *(let all ring)* *(Fast and free...)*

Long Ike and sweet Bet-sy at -

repeat each a few times

(12th)

(9th)

quiet, repeat 4-5x, tempo flexible

tend-ed a dance, where Ike wore a pair of his Pike count-y - pants. Sweet Bet-sy was cov-ered with rib-bons and

(II)

(IV)

(VI)

(V)

rings, Quote— Ike you're an an - gel but where are your wings?

(9th fr.)

(5th fr.)

* A nice way to play these measures: finger low note with LH middle finger and harmonics with pinky. Normal RH.

song: Eskimo Lullaby

Larry Polansky
2005

Eskimo Lullaby

for michael byron

polansky

Intro

Slow, gentle (let things ring)

VI = G (Tuning: G-A-D-G-A-D)

(9th fret)

1.

(D not harmonic)

(no r.h. attack)

slower

2.

r.h. pluck

r.h. pluck

Verse

Voice

still, now, and hear my

Guitar

(no harm.)

3.

(Repeat 1.)

r.h. pluck both while playing harmonic

(◡)

sing-ing. sleep through the night, my dar - ling.

r.h.

We have a ti - ny daugh-ter. Thanks be to

(soft, brush lightly)

(no arp.)

God who sent her.

(near bridge)

(12th) — (7th)

(r.h. harm.)

(or III, RH pluck near bridge)

ppp

Go back and repeat intro.

lp
3/16/06

song: Dismission of Great I

Larry Polansky
2005

Dismissal of Great I

Polansky

Intro

all harmonics (sounding an octave higher)

VI v VI IV V VI V VI

not loud (probably with a pick, close to the bridge. LH touch harmonics)

(still harmonics)

V IV V IV V IV V VI

A

Go — off Great I and come not nigh — but quit my hab - i -

Song

vamp, repeat till ready

Lightly, back of pinky (RH)

IV
V
VI

A'

ta-tion and come no more with - in my door, cor - rupting my sen - sa - tion. Go — off great I and come not nigh — but

I
IV
VI
IV
V

use either D or E in this chord, on IV

B'

quit my hab - i - ta - tion and come no more with - in my door, cor - rup - ting my sen - sa-tion. De - part I

VI
V
IV
VI
V

(let everything ring that can)

say, flee far a - way — Your ways no more — I'll prac - tice. For all who try to be Great I are vi - cious

VI V VI V VI IV III II I II I III VI V VI V IV V VI V IV III II I III

proud and fract - ious. De - part I say flee far a - way Your ways no more— I'll prac -

II IV V IV VI V VI V VI V IV IV V IV III IV III II III

tice. For all who try to be Great I are vi - cious loud and fract - ious.

V IV VI V V IV III V IV II II III I II III V IV

Solo

A 1 →

vamp till ready

back of pinky, RH near bridge, almost as an afterthought

IV III II IV

A'

(I) (I) P.O

IV III V IV VI V III III

B

all on IV (V, VI droning to taste)

L.V

II III II VI V IV III II I

B'

soft III II III I II III

(softer)

(repeat until ready)

A, A'

Voice

Go off Great I and come not nigh but quit my hab - i - tat - ion and come no more with - in my door, cor -

slide a lot, string noise no problem

B

rupting my sens - a - tion. De - part I say flee far a - way your ways no more I'll prac - tice, for all who

(all ring!)

B'

try to be Great I are vic - ious proud, and fract - ious. De - part I say flee far a - way your ways no

8va (repeat 3-4 times until ready)

quiet

more I'll pract - ice for all who try to be Great I are vic - ious proud and fract - ious.

(8va)

tood: 85 Chords
("The Historical Tuning Problem")

Larry Polansky
2005

85 Chords (The Historical Tuning Problem)

polansky

(each measure more or less the same duration)

VI VI VI I VI VI I I V I

V V VI V I V III V IV V II V II

V III V I VI V II VI V II VI IV I V IV II

V IV II VI V III II VI V III II I VI V IV III II

VI V III II I VI IV III II I V IV III II I

VI V IV III II

V IV III II I

V IV III II I

46

50

V IV III II I

55

VI IV III II I VI V IV III II VI V IV III II

60

VI V IV II I VI V IV II I VI IV III II I

65

VI V IV III V IV III I V IV III II V IV III II V IV III I VI V IV III I

71

VI V IV I VI IV I VI IV VI IV I V I VI V I

77

IV VI IV IV VI V I VI I VI VI I VI