

Essential Theory for Mandolin is a program designed to help a first year student to learn how to play from the heart and not rely on printed sheet music and tablature. It is a practical application of music theory using bluegrass music examples that can be applied to real life jam sessions.

When folks learn a musical instrument, often times they use a book and learn by himself or herself and/or with the aid of a teacher. In the last decade or so, music instruction books have been aided with audio and video recordings. This has greatly increased the speed at which a student can understand and interpret the written page. If a competent teacher is available, progress is at its maximum.

However, even musicians that are technically advanced by book reading, never wean themselves away from the sheet music or tablature. They are consistently trapped to paper and ink and if an arrangement is not written out for them, they cannot learn a new song. If you have ever watched a professional band (a group that is *paid to play*) live, it is very doubtful that they will have sheet music on the stage. If you ever get a chance to speak to the performers after the show in the band that do use sheet music on stage, ask them if they 'read music', 9.9 times out of 10, they will either say, 'No', or, 'not enough to hurt my playing'. They may know the basics of music but they do not rely exclusively on sheet music.

Even more intriguing, is when a group of musicians will get together, perhaps for the first time, and play a song together that has not been rehearsed and it sounds like they have played it as a professional group for years. This is called 'playing by ear'.

How do they do that? What is the secret to improvising, playing a song for the very first time and not get lost in the mix? How is it possible to join in with a group of musicians that you have never met, play a song that you have never heard and still sound as though you wrote the tune?

These 'Musical Magicians' are using Music Theory to 'map out' the song in their minds. They are improvising the CHORDS, MELODY and RHYTHM as they continue through the arrangement. This may sound daunting; a No-Mans-Land to those that have never tried this before. The truth of the matter is that, any musician, with basic instrumental skills and a working knowledge of Essential Music Theory can learn the art of Improvising.

That is what this Book, '**Essential Theory for Mandolin**', is all about.

This program is designed to help the *Advanced Beginner*, someone that has been playing for about a year, to grasp the concepts of improvising. The material throughout this series will be progressive but you will not have to be concerned about forgetting important concepts that you have learned earlier. As this course progresses, you will be given reviews periodically to refresh your short-term memory and more examples to drive the points home.

Each section will be built on previously covered material and concepts so that in the end, you

will eventually develop a 'feel' for music and begin to see it in your mind. This will help you get away from the printed page. Over time and of course, with experience, you will actually be able to play your music freely and from the heart. This will not be automatic but it will come in time as you work through all of the examples.

Included with the book are many play along audio examples. These are mp3s that you will download from the web. This is a free download. Detailed instructions are in the book.

Here is the Table of Contents for Level 1: Forward, How to Use This Course, The Elements of Music, Understanding Rhythm and Harmony, Chord Progressions, The Nashville Numbering System, Finding the Key, Anticipating Chord Changes, Primary Chords, Watching for Repetition, Checklist for Primary Chords, Secondary Chords, Relative Major and Minor Chords, Watching Guitar Chords, Understanding Melody and Lead, Call and Response #1, Seeing the Music in Your Mind, The Major Pentatonic Scale, Target Tones, Creating a Professional Arrangement, The Harmonized Scale, Blue Notes, Playing in Different Keys, Closed Scales, Call and Response #2.

Here is the table of Contents for Level 2: Creative Thinking, Improvising with Rhythm, Improvising with the Nashville Shuffle, Improvising with Syncopation, Call and Response #1, Ear Training, Upper and Lower Neighbors, Speaking in Longer Phrases, Meandering – Thinking like a Four-Year-Old, Charting Paths, Key of D, Call and Response #2, A Major Diatonic and Pentatonic Scales, More Practice with Upper and Lower Neighbors, Musical Grammar, Scales 101, Minor Scales, Where to Go From Here.

Songs include: Hot Corn, Cold Corn, Roll On Buddy, Letter From My Darling, Pig in a Pen, Sourwood Mountain, Old Rattler, O Sole Mio, Neighborly Waltz, Long Long Ago, Simple Gifts, Rakes of Mallow, Old Rattler, Columbus Stockade blues, Minor Attempt at a Major Thing, House of the Rising Sun, Soldiers Joy, Soldiers Sorrow, Torna a Surriento.

The songs are written in Standard Music Notation and Mandolin Tablature with Chords. The book is attractively bound with durable plastic covers and spiral binding so that it will stay open on a music stand. 175 pages.