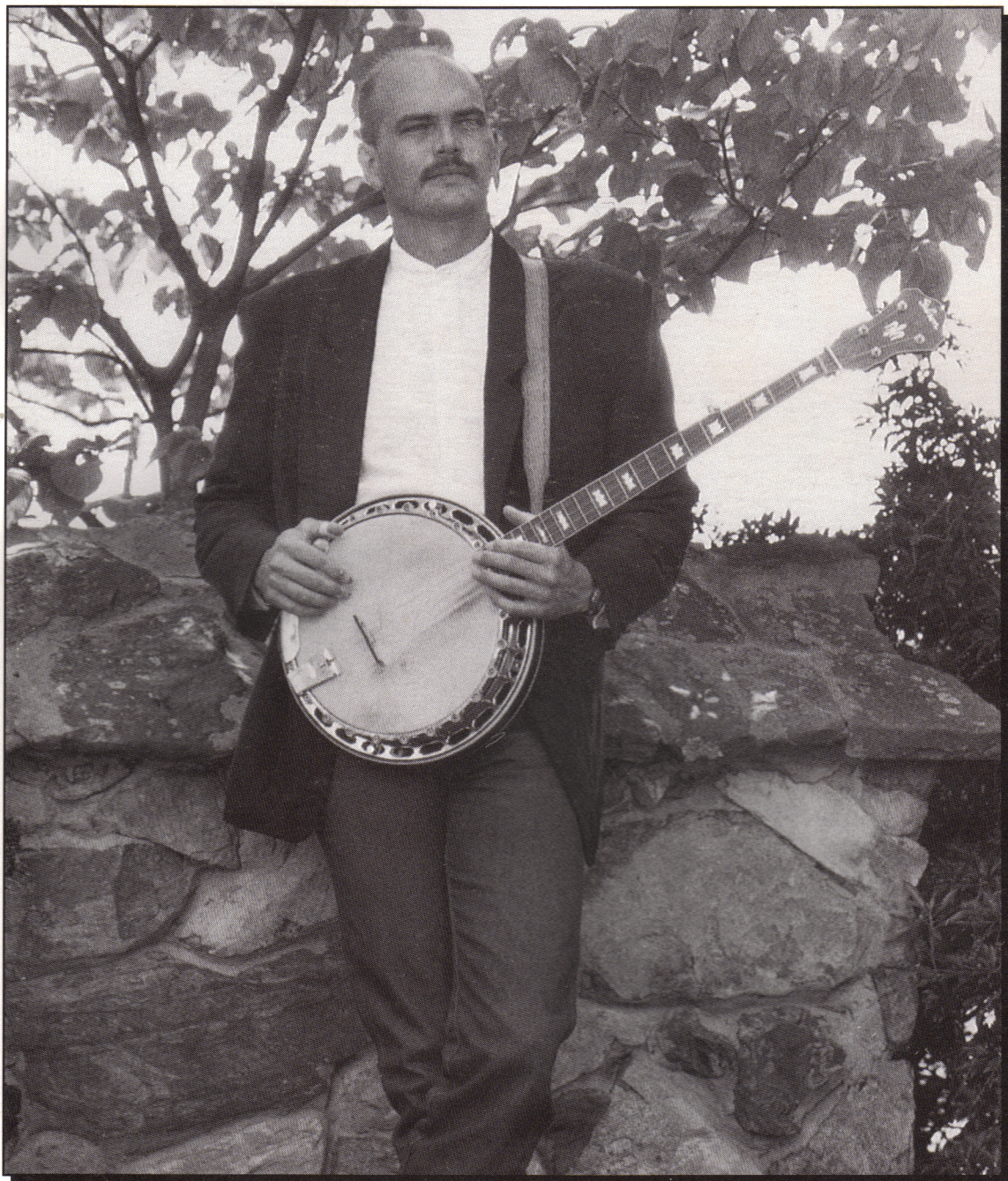


Sammy Shelor



AcuTab transcriptions Vol. I

Complete tablature for all of Sammy's banjo solos from The Lonesome River Band's **Carrying The Tradition** and **Old Country Town**

The Recordings – Ordering Information

Both of the recordings from which these transcriptions were taken should be available wherever fine bluegrass music is sold. Check your favorite record store or mail-order catalog. If you are still unable to find them, the record company should be able to direct you a local source, or ship the product to you themselves, or you can order from the Lonesome River Band (address below).

Carrying The Tradition (Rebel-1690)

Rebel Records
P.O. Box 3057
Roanoke, VA 24015

Old Country Town (Sugar Hill-3818)

Sugar Hill Records
P.O. Box 55300
Durham, NC 27717-5300

Booking information:

Acoustigrass Entertainment, Ltd.
P.O. Box 106
Strasburg, VA 22657-0106
703-465-4252

Product ordering information:

The Lonesome River Band
P.O. Box 787
Meadows of Dan, VA 24120
540-952-2189

Cover photo by Tony Rice

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The transcriptions from "Carrying The Tradition" appear courtesy of Rebel Records. Those from "Old Country Town" appear courtesy of Sugar Hill Records.



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SAMMY SHELOR

AcuTab transcriptions

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Complete tablature for all of the banjo solos contained in the two Lonesome River Band recordings, "Carrying The Tradition" and "Old Country Town."

Foreword

First of all, I want to thank you for thinking enough of my playing to pick up this book. When I first started playing banjo twenty six years ago, there weren't any books like this. If you wanted to learn something off a record, you had to sit by the turntable for hours on end, trying to get it right. I hope you find things in here that will help you.

Luckily for me, my two grandfathers provided me with all the support I could have hoped for as I was learning to play. My grandfather Howell was a big influence on my deciding to pick up the banjo when I was five years old. He played himself, and got me started out on the right track. My grandfather Shelor made it possible for me to see and hear the music up close, driving me to festivals and shows, and later on to my first gigs.

My grandfathers were the difference for me, both in helping me to learn, and in encouraging me to "stay after it" when it got tough. I mostly grew up around old time players, but when I was ten years old, I came across guys like J.D. Crowe, Terry Baucom, and Ben Eldridge, and I was hooked.

I guess that the solos from these two albums contain little pieces from all the great banjo players I have listened to over the years. I rarely try to sound like any one in particular, but there are two exceptions worth pointing out.

When we were ready to cut the song "Old Country Town," it struck me as a song that Gene Parker really would have shone on. Gene is one of my all-time favorite banjo players, and I approached the tune trying to do what Gene might have done. This is one of the few breaks from either album that is "worked out," and which I pretty much play the same way every time.

On "I'll Take The Blame," I was definitely thinking Scruggs! I must have listened to the original F & S recording about twenty times before we put ours down. This one is also planned out, especially the second break, with the stop and the slides.

Most of the rest of the breaks in this book are just what I played off the top of my head - some of them came out of nowhere. "I Can't Get You Off Of My Mind" was a one take deal. All the rhythm tracks were done, and I told Dan, "turn it on, hit record, and whatever good comes out, we'll keep." The first take was good, so it's on the record.

I hope you enjoy working through these solos. If you haven't been playing too long, perhaps you should start with "Heartless Love," "Fireball Mail," "I'm Coming Back," and maybe "Long Gone." If some of them seem weird, just "stay after them" yourself. Thanks again, and come out and see us and let me know what you think.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sammy". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned at the bottom right of the page.

Table of Contents

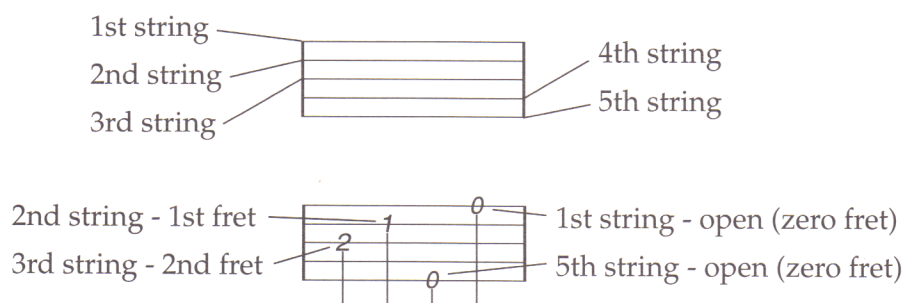
Foreword	4
Introduction	5
Notes on the tablature	6
Notes on the songs	8
 Songs from <i>Carrying The Tradition</i>:	9
Sitting On Top Of The World	10
I Can't Get You Off Of My Mind	12
Heartless Love	13
You Gotta Do What You Gotta Do	14
The Game Is Over	15
Cabin Of Love	16
Money In The Bank	17
Fireball Mail	18
I'm Coming Back (But I Don't Know When)	19
Counting The Days	20
My Sweet Blue-Eyed Darlin'	21
 Songs From <i>Old Country Town</i>:	23
Highway Paved With Pain	24
Old Country Town	25
Tears Are Blinding Me	26
Long Gone	27
Who Needs You	28
The Game (I Can't Win)	29
Running Hard On A Broken Heart	30
Solid Rock	31
I'll Take The Blame	32
Old Lonesome, Welcome Back	34

Notes on the tablature

The tablature used in this book should be familiar to anyone who has used this system of notation in the past. It corresponds almost exactly to that used in *The Banjo NewsLetter* and, as such, makes it as close to a standardized system as we have in the banjo world. The controversy continues unabated as to whether tab 'on the lines' or 'in the spaces' is to be preferred. Without coming down firmly on either side of this crucial question, this book is presented in 'on the line' tablature, owing primarily to the availability of typesetting software.

Perhaps it is a good idea to review the basic components of banjo tablature for those who may not be familiar with it. If you are an experienced tab reader, a brief skim through this section might still be worthwhile, if only to familiarize yourself with any notational variations between what we use and that to which you are accustomed. If this system is new to you, a careful study of these basics is a must.

In tablature, each of the five lines of the musical staff represent one of the five strings of the banjo. Numerals placed on those lines indicate that the note is to be played on the string corresponding with the line on which it is placed, and at the fret corresponding with the numeral placed there. Examples follow:

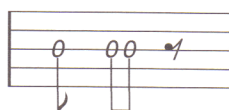


Timing is indicated in tablature just as it is in standard musical notation. Each numeral placed on the staff will have a stem attached, indicating the duration of the note. In this book, we will be working primarily in 4/4 time, which we will describe as consisting of eight, evenly-spaced eighth notes, each receiving one single count. This could more accurately be described as 8/8 time - for the sake of notational purists - but since bluegrass banjo typically plays in 'double time,' or two notes played for each actual musical beat, it serves our purposes to describe a measure of 4/4 time as eight, eighth notes. Think of each beat being equal to two counts. One song is in 3/4 time, giving each measure six eighth notes (three beats - six counts).

For the most part, we will encounter three different types of notes, which we will describe as follows: the quarter note receives two counts (two eighths equal one quarter), the eighth receives one count, and the sixteenth receives one half of one count (two sixteenths equal one eighth). A quarter note is a numeral with a single stem attached; an eighth note has either a single stem with a flag attached, or is joined across the bottom by a single line (in groups of two or more); sixteenth notes are joined across the bottom by a double line. We will also encounter quarter and eighth note rests, which indicate one or two beats of silence. Examples follow:



Quarter note/rest
2 counts



Eighth note/rest
1 count



Sixteenth notes
1/2 count each

Introduction

From subtle nuances to flat-out drive, Sammy Shelor's banjo is at the heart of the sound of Virginia's great Lonesome River Band, one of the 1990's top bluegrass groups. In this book Sammy offers you a generous sampling of the kind of playing that's made him one of the most admired banjo players in bluegrass today.

When learning to play the banjo (or learn any skill, really) its good to have someone to take after. You want someone who has the command of all the aspects that made you love the banjo in the first place. For me, bluegrass banjo playing needs smoothness, good tone, solid timing, and that creative spark that keeps you paying attention. I'd say that Sammy has all those qualities, and he's as fine a choice as I can think of for a "roll model" (pardon the pun!).

Banjo players of all different skill levels will get a lot from this book. Many of Sammy's arrangements are based around the straightforward delivery of the melody, and Sam points out which are the best for a novice picker to tackle. Then there are some with tricky phrasings of the melody and variations that will challenge the most advanced player. All of the solos are, in Sammy's hands, vehicles for the great sound and that popping rhythmic pulse he puts out. The challenge for all players is to make the banjo talk. Sammy provides the fingerings. Now do what you can to sound like him.

One of Sammy's biggest fans,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pete Wernick". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Pete" and "Wernick" being capitalized and prominent.

Pete Wernick ("Dr. Banjo")

Editor's note

Throughout the book, you will find a number of unattributed comments, set in this italic type. These are Sammy's remarks and recollections about particular tunes.

If you had seen an earlier edition of this book, you may notice that this one has a different front cover and a number of design and layout modifications. No changes have been made in the tabs – except for error corrections – or in the text. The only real addition is the inclusion of metronome settings for each tune.

Notes on the songs

All of the chords indicated within the individual transcriptions are noted in the key in which the song is played relative to the capo. In other words, if a song is played in the key of B, with the capo at the fourth fret, the chords will be indicated in the key of G - the key in which the banjo is "thinking." If the capo is not used, it will be indicated that the song is played "open." You will need to transpose these chord progressions in order to play the songs in the proper key with other instruments which do not utilize the capo. The songs are all performed in standard G - tuning (g DGBD), except where otherwise indicated.

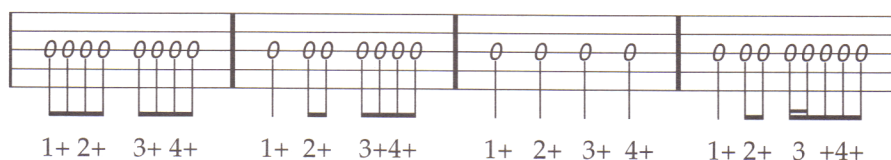
Most of the tabs will begin with what is called a pick up measure. This measure is not counted as a full measure, and generally indicates the introductory or kick-off lick. If the break in question is at the very beginning of a tune, the pick up measure will include the kick-off lick. If the break occurs within the body of the song, the pick up measure will usually begin at that point where the banjo break is first clearly evident.

Sammy approaches a number of common techniques in ways which may differ slightly from the manner in which you may have learned them. One example would be the hammer-on from the 2nd to 3rd fret of the second string, which Sammy plays as a slide. Likewise, Sammy uses a hammer-on rather than a slide going from the 2nd to 3rd fret on the third string where many pickers more commonly use a slide. They are noted in the book just as they were played, primarily in the interest of accuracy. If you are more comfortable with one over the other, there is no need to switch to play these tunes.

It is presumed that those using these transcriptions have a basic familiarity with bluegrass banjo. Performance notes are added only in instances where the fingering is markedly different from what might have been expected, or where the techniques involved are from outside the realm of common banjo usage. If you have specific questions about any piece featured in this book, please contact us and we will make a sincere effort to provide answers for you. If possible, it is recommended that you work through these songs with a qualified instructor if they are confusing or difficult in any way.

Metronome settings are given for each tune. These are not meant to represent historical certainty, but a close representation of the speed at which each song was recorded. For the songs in 4/4 time, they are indicated as ♩ = X bpm. This means that you set the metronome to the speed setting shown, clicking on the half note, or twice each measure (on the 'one' and 'three' beats). In 3/4 time, it will be shown as ♩ = X bpm. Here, set it to click three times per measure, once for each quarter note ('one,' 'two,' and 'three' beats).

Perhaps the most useful tools in attempting to learn these tunes would be the recordings from which they were taken. Many common banjo techniques involve rhythmic or dynamic nuances which do not translate well into simple written notation and which, in many cases, are difficult to define and describe in any language. Accenting certain notes over others or playing with a dotted or "swing" feel are two examples which occur regularly. Listening carefully to Sammy playing these tunes should aid you in picking up these subtle, but very important aspects of his style. It can also be very helpful to those who are not especially familiar with reading tablature.

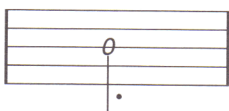


The four measures above show four different combinations of quarters, eighths, and sixteenths, all of which equal out to the same number of beats ($4/4 =$ eight, eighth notes per measure).

In the first measure above, there are eight, eighth notes, each receiving one even count. In the second measure, there are still four, even beats (eight counts), but only seven notes. The first note, a quarter note, receives two counts, and the six remaining eighth notes each receive one count, for a total of eight counts (four beats). The third measure is made up of four quarter notes, each receiving two counts. The fourth measure introduces the sixteenth notes, the pair of which together receives one count.

If you are uncertain about timing, try counting the measures out loud, using the words 'one-and-two-and-three-and-four-and.' This will give you the eight even counts. An eighth note gets one of these counts ('one' or 'and'), the quarter note gets two counts ('one' and 'and'), and the sixteenth, which will almost always appear in pairs, gets one half of a count ('one' or 'and' split between two notes). An easy way to count sixteenths is to separate the word 'one' or 'and' into two syllables, and make them fit into the space of one beat. Many people have found that tapping the foot while counting can be a big help. Tap down on the 'one' count and up on the 'and.' With some practice, you will get the hang of it.

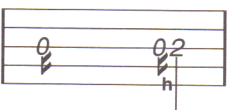
Here are four other notations which you will encounter:



Dotted note – gets one and one half its marked time value. A dotted quarter note equals three counts (1 quarter + 1 eighth).



Tied notes – ring for the duration of both notes, but the second note is not sounded anew. Pick the first note, and then count the value of the tied note before moving on to the next note.



Grace notes – sounded so quickly as to have no time value. The right hand picks the string as though no grace note was indicated, and the hammer (or slide, pull-off, choke, etc.) is sounded immediately after the note is picked.



Triplet – three notes squeezed into the space of two. An eighth note triplet equals two eighths, a quarter note triplet equals two quarters. Try saying the word 'trip-o-let' in the space where you would have said 'one-and.'

Sitting On Top Of The World

Key of C
Capo 5, play in G
♩ = 150 bpm

written by L. Carter and W. Jacobs
publisher not found

First break

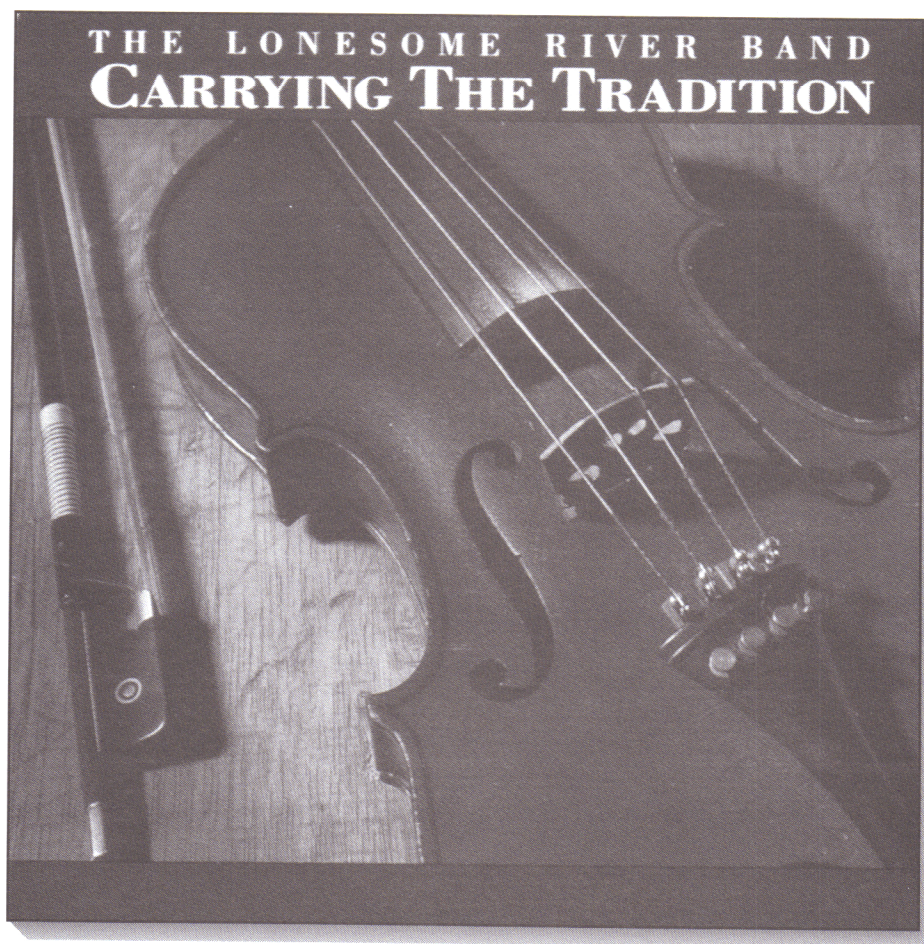
The first break is written in 4/4 time, capoed at 5 (playing in G). It consists of three lines of tablature. The first line starts with a G chord and contains measures 1-4. The second line continues with measures 5-8, featuring a G chord at the start and a C chord at the end. The third line contains measures 9-12, featuring a D chord at the start and a G chord at the end. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0-5), accidentals (sharps, flats), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). Fingering numbers (1-4) are provided for many notes. The piece concludes with a single measure on a new line, showing a treble clef and a single note on the first line (F#4).

"This song became the 'signature song' for the album as soon as we cut it. Cabin Of Love was the first tune we cut for Carrying The Tradition, and we had in mind for it to be a pretty traditional record. But the more we put down, the more Lonesome River Band filtered into everything we recorded. Sitting On Top is a good example of that."

Songs from:

The Lonesome River Band's

Carrying The Tradition



Rebel-1690

Carrying The Tradition was Sammy's first recording with the Lonesome River Band. It was recorded in 1990-91, and released in 1991. The album was an 'instant hit' on the bluegrass sales charts and radio play lists, spending six months at the #1 spot on the Bluegrass Unlimited Top 10 Album Chart. In addition, it was chosen by the voting membership of the International Bluegrass Music Association as its 'Album Of The Year' for 1992.

Two songs from the album, *Listen To The Word Of God* and *Hobo Blues* contain no banjo, so they are not included in this book.

I Can't Get You Off Of My Mind

Key of E
Capo 2, play in D
♩ = 79 bpm

written by Hank Williams
© Acuff/Rose – BMI
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This tune utilizes a number of unusual, guitar-like techniques which may prove to be tricky when you first attempt them. Be careful with the timing, listen to the recorded break, and pay attention to the details.

In the second measure after the pickup (the A chord), the first note is a hammer-on. Be sure to let the final eighth note of the previous measure receive its full beat before hammering the first note of the new measure.

The lick that spans the last two measures of the first line and the first measure of the second line may be easier if you envision it working out of a D-position G chord (7th, 8th, and 9th fret). The last note of the first line and the first note of the second, both of which are indicated as chokes, are tied and really form one choke. Choke the note up for the last note of one measure, and then let it back down for the first note in the next. Each choke (up/back) gets one eighth beat.

The tune is played with what is called a 'dotted feel.' What this means is that in each group of two eighth notes, half of the value of the second note is actually given to the first. This gives a swing beat, made up of a pattern of 'long-short, long-short, long-short.' The music can be written to indicate this, but it can be very cumbersome to read. If you listen, you should hear it.

Sitting On Top Of The World

Second break

Second break musical notation. The first staff begins with a G chord and ends with a C chord. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff starts with a D chord and ends with a G chord. The notation includes fingerings (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), string numbers (1, 2, 3, 4), and articulation marks (s, h, p, c).

The choke in the last measure of the first line only involves the second string. Pick both notes, but choke the second string only.

Third break

Third break musical notation. The first staff begins with a G chord and ends with a C chord. The second staff continues the melody. The notation includes fingerings (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7), string numbers (1, 2, 3, 4), and articulation marks (s, h, p, c).

You Gotta Do What You Gotta Do

Key of B
Capo 4, play in G
♩ = 106 bpm

written by William Franklin Bowman
© Doobie Shea Music – BMI
used by permission

First break

First break guitar tablature in 4/4 time, key of G (Capo 4). The piece consists of four lines of music. The first line has five measures with chords G, C, G, C, G. The second line has five measures with chords A, D, G, C, G. The third line has five measures with chords Em, C, D, G. The fourth line has three measures with chords C, D, G. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0-4), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and fingerings (i, m, t, h, p, s). The piece ends with a double bar line.

Second break

Second break guitar tablature in 4/4 time, key of G (Capo 4). The piece consists of two lines of music. The first line has four measures with chords G, C, G, Em. The second line has five measures with chords C, D, G, C, D. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0-5), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and fingerings (i, m, t, h, p, s). The piece ends with a double bar line.

Heartless Love

Key of A
Capo 2, play in G
♩ = 108 bpm

written by William Dale Perry
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used by permission

[illegible]

Sammy with The Seldom Scene at the Birchmere

1994 Felicia Shelor

Cabin Of Love

Key of G
Play open in G
♩ = 135 bpm

written by Birch Monroe
© Peer International – BMI
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First break

First break guitar tablature in 4/4 time, key of G. The piece consists of four lines of music. The first line starts with a C chord and ends with a G chord. The second line starts with a D chord and ends with a C chord. The third line starts with a D chord and ends with a G chord. The fourth line is a short phrase ending with a G chord. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0-5), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). Fingering numbers (1-4) are provided for many notes.

Second break

Second break guitar tablature in 4/4 time, key of G. The piece consists of two lines of music. The first line starts with a G chord and ends with a D chord. The second line starts with a G chord and ends with a G chord. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0-5), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). Fingering numbers (1-4) are provided for many notes.

Ending

Ending guitar tablature in 4/4 time, key of G. The piece consists of one line of music. It starts with a D chord and ends with a G chord. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0-5), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). Fingering numbers (1-4) are provided for many notes.

The Game Is Over

Key of B
Capo 4, play in G
♩ = 116 bpm

written by David Carroll
© Doobie Shea Music – BMI
used by permission

First break

First break guitar tablature. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a capo at the 4th fret, resulting in a key of G. The first break consists of three lines of music. The first line starts with a G chord and contains six measures. The second line starts with a C chord and contains six measures. The third line starts with a C chord and contains six measures. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0-5), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). The piece ends with a final measure on the third line.

Second break

Second break guitar tablature. This section consists of two lines of music. The first line starts with a G chord and contains six measures. The second line starts with a C chord and contains four measures. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0-5), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). The piece ends with a final measure on the second line.

Ending

Ending guitar tablature. This section consists of one line of music with five measures. It starts with a G chord and ends with a G chord. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0-5), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). The piece ends with a final measure on the first line.

Fireball Mail

Key of A
Capo 2, play in G
♩ = 122 bpm

written by Fred Rose
© Milene Music – ASCAP
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First break

The first break consists of three lines of guitar tablature in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 122 bpm. The key is G major (Capo 2, play in G). The first line starts with a G chord and contains 12 measures. The second line starts with a D chord and contains 12 measures. The third line starts with a D chord and contains 12 measures. The tablature includes various fret numbers (0-5), string numbers (1-6), and fingerings (t, i, m, t, p, h, c). The first line ends with a double bar line. The second line ends with a double bar line. The third line ends with a double bar line.

The second break for Fireball Mail is exactly the same as the first, with these exceptions: the single measure (above left) is substituted for the first measure of the second line; the four measures (above right) are substituted for the last two measures of the third line.

Money In The Bank

Key of A
Capo 2, play in G
♩ = 100 bpm

written by Daniel John Tyminski
and Timothy Joe Stafford
© Doobie Shea Music
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Watch out for the change in time signature which occurs in the first two measures of the third line. The first measure of the line is just half as long.



Sammy with The Tony Rice Unit in King, NC

003 John | awlase

Counting The Days

Key of C
Capo 5, play in G
♩ = 120 bpm

written by Dee Stone
© Lynn Music – BMI
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First break

First break guitar tablature in 4/4 time. The piece is in G major with a capo at the 5th fret. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is 120 bpm. The tablature is written on a single staff with fret numbers 0-5 and includes various techniques: natural harmonics (h), palm muting (p), and slurs. The key signature changes to C major (no sharps or flats) for the final measure of the first line. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Second break – last part of fiddle break

Second break guitar tablature in 4/4 time. The piece is in G major with a capo at the 5th fret. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo is 120 bpm. The tablature is written on a single staff with fret numbers 0-5 and includes various techniques: natural harmonics (h), palm muting (p), and slurs. The key signature changes to C major (no sharps or flats) for the final measure of the first line. The piece ends with a double bar line.

I'm Coming Back (But I Don't Know When)

Key of A
Capo 2, play in G
♩ = 101 bpm

written by Charlie Monroe
publisher not found

Musical notation for the song "I'm Coming Back (But I Don't Know When)". The notation is in 4/4 time, key of G (with Capo 2), and 101 bpm. The melody is written on a single staff with fingerings and fret numbers indicated. Chords G, C, and D are marked above the staff. The notation includes various fret numbers (0, 2, 3, 4) and fingerings (t, i, m, p, h, s) for the left hand. The melody is as follows:

Staff 1: G (0, 2, 0, 0 | 2, 3, 0, 0 | 3, 2, 0, 0 | 2, 2, 0, 0 | C (0, 1, 2, 2 | 0, 1, 0, 0 | 0, 2, 0, 0 | 3, 4, 0, 0 | D (2, 0, 2, 0 | 3, 4, 0, 0 | 2, 0, 2, 0 | 3, 4, 0, 0)

Staff 2: G (0, 2, 0, 0 | 3, 2, 0, 0 | 2, 0, 2, 0 | 0, 2, 3, 0 | 2, 0, 0, 0 | 0, 0, 0, 0)



1994 John Lawless

Sammy at Graves Mountain, VA

My Sweet Blue-Eyed Darlin'

Second break

Ending

[illegible]

My Sweet Blue-Eyed Darlin'

Key of B
Capo 4, play in G
♩ = 148 bpm

written by Bill Monroe
© Bill Monroe Music – BMI
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First break

The musical notation for the first break is presented across three staves. The first staff begins with a G chord and contains measures 1 through 4. The second staff contains measures 5 through 8, with a C chord indicated above measure 7. The third staff contains measures 9 through 12, with C, D, and G chords indicated above measures 9, 10, and 11 respectively. The notation includes fingerings (0-4), slurs, and articulation marks (t, m, i, s, h, p). A final measure on a separate staff shows a single note with a 't' articulation mark.

"This is one where I tried to play as straight ahead as possible. The two breaks and the ending were not worked out ahead of time... this is what came out off the top of my head. I did this whole song in one take in the studio, maybe on the fourth or fifth time through."

Highway Paved With Pain

Key of B
Capo 4, play in G
♩ = 122 bpm

written by Mike Casstevens
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First break

The first break consists of four staves of mandolin notation. The first staff is in G major and contains measures 1-4. The second staff contains measures 5-8. The third staff contains measures 9-12. The fourth staff contains measures 13-16. The notation includes various fret numbers (0-5), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). Fingering numbers (1-4) are provided for many notes. Chord symbols G, F, D, C, and G are placed above the staves to indicate the harmonic structure.

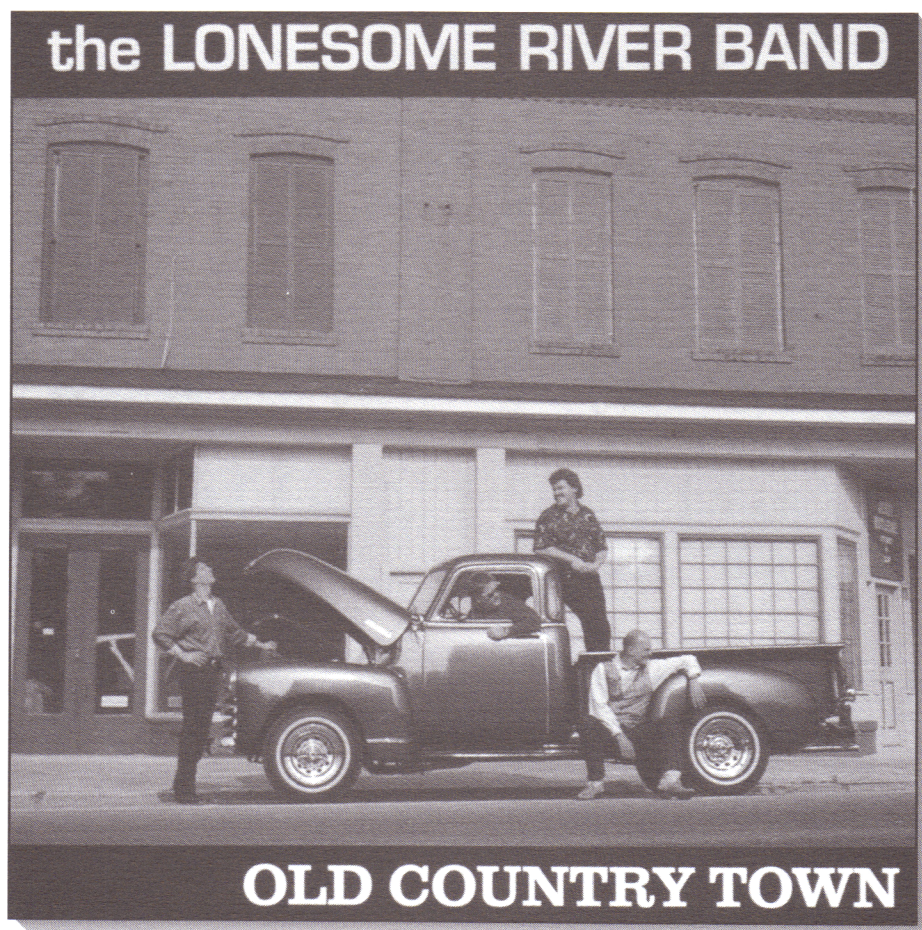
Second break - second half of mandolin break

The second break consists of two staves of mandolin notation. The first staff contains measures 17-20. The second staff contains measures 21-24. The notation includes various fret numbers (0-5), accidentals (sharps, naturals), and articulation marks (accents, slurs). Fingering numbers (1-4) are provided for many notes. Chord symbols G, F, and D are placed above the staves to indicate the harmonic structure. The word "Ending" is written below the first staff of this section.

Songs from:

The Lonesome River Band's

Old Country Town



Sugar Hill-3818

Old Country Town is the most recent (1994) release from The Lonesome River Band, and contains some of Sammy's most interesting and inspired playing. It was recorded over a period of nearly two years, during which time, some of the banjo parts were cut three times. Sammy recorded the original parts, which were recut by Steve Dilling during his brief tenure with the band. Sammy recut them yet again when he returned to the Lonesome River Band in 1993.

As this book went to press, *Old Country Town* had been nominated as 'Album Of The Year' for 1994 by the International Bluegrass Music Association. In addition, Sammy was nominated as Instrumental Performer Of The Year in the banjo category.

Two of the songs, *Listen To The Old Man* and *She's About Trouble* contain no banjo, and are not included in this book.

Tears Are Blinding Me

Key of D

Play open in D

5th string capoed at the 7th fret

♩ = 109 bpm

written by Harry Carpenter Sisk, Jr.

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The tablature is written for a 5-string banjo in 3/4 time. It consists of two lines of music. The first line starts with a G chord and includes a pickup measure with a triplet of eighth notes (7, 9, 7) on the 5th string. The second line starts with a C chord and includes a triplet of eighth notes (12, 14, 14) on the 5th string. The tablature uses various fret numbers (7-17) and includes techniques such as triplets, slides, and pinches. Chord changes are indicated by letters G, D, A, C, and G above the staff. The piece ends with a final measure on the 5th string.

This wonderfully bluesy break relies very little on standard, roll-style banjo technique. In fact, Sammy says that this one was inspired by Dan Tyminski's unique banjo style.

If you are not an experienced tab reader, it would be a good idea to familiarize yourself thoroughly with the sound of this break before trying to play it from tab. There are many stylistic flourishes that are not easily transcribed, and they may appear odd in the printed music.

Remember that grace notes are essentially played so quickly as to have no time value. For instance, the slide on the second string in the first measure following the pickup, is made as soon as you pick the note. Another example would be the hammer at the beginning of the third measure. You pinch the first two strings, and then hammer immediately at the 15th fret. The two strings are picked at the time when you would expect the first eighth note to be sounded, followed by the hammer. The grace note can be an awkward way to indicate this technique, but if you listen to the break carefully, you should be able to get it.

Be careful with the chokes in the second measure of the second line. As soon as you pinch the first note, choke the second string up. The second note of the measure is the same pinch, but without the choke. The fourth and fifth notes of this measure involve pinching the 2nd and 3rd strings while choking the 3rd string up both times.

The last note in the third measure of the second line is another one that is indicated oddly. A grace note really should be shown before the last note of the triplet, but this was another awkward situation. Just hammer immediately from the 10th to the 11th fret, as if the 10th fret note was shown as the grace note.

Old Country Town

Key of D
Capo 2, play in C
tune 4th string to C
♩ = 102 bpm

written by William Bowman
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First break

The first break is a 24-measure piece in 4/4 time, starting with a C chord. The tablature is written on a single staff with fret numbers and picking notation (t, m, i, mt, m, tm, s, h, p). The key signature is C major. The first six measures are: C (0, 1, 2), C (3, 5, 5, 5, 7), C (5, 5, 4, 5), C (7, 5, 4, 0), C (1, 1, 2, 1, 0), C (3, 5, 5, 5, 7). The next six measures are: C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0). The next six measures are: C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0). The final six measures are: C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0).

Second break

The second break is a 12-measure piece in 4/4 time, starting with a C chord. The tablature is written on a single staff with fret numbers and picking notation (t, m, i, mt, m, tm, s, h, p). The key signature is C major. The first six measures are: C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0). The next six measures are: C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0), C (0, 0, 0, 0, 0).

The second break is played during the fade-out. It is the same as the first except for the section above, which is substituted for the last six measures of the first break, starting with the measure marked with an *.

That same marked measure features a technique which is difficult to indicate in tablature. The first note of the measure is a two-finger 'C' chord which is slid back down the neck as soon as it is sounded. If you slide all the way back to the 5th fret, it puts you in an ideal position for the pull-off lick at the end of the measure.

Who Needs You

Key of A
Capo 2, play in G
♩ = 113 bpm

written by Curtis Wright
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The notation is fingerstyle guitar notation for the song "Who Needs You". It is written in G major with a capo at the second fret, meaning the music is played in G major but sounds in A major. The time signature is 4/4, and the tempo is 113 bpm. The piece is divided into five lines of music. The first line starts with a G chord and contains six measures. The second line has a C chord and five measures. The third line has G and D chords and six measures. The fourth line has a G chord and six measures. The fifth line is a short phrase with four measures. The notation includes various picking patterns (e.g., i m t i, m t i m, t i t i, m i t m, c t c, t i m t, s o, h o, p), fingerings (e.g., 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), and accents (e.g., m, h, s, p).

"This song is as good an example of what my picking style is all about as any I can think of. Dan engineered on this one and had some input on the solo, too."

Long Gone

Key of B \flat
Capo 3, play in G
♩ = 125 bpm

written by Don Reno
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4/4

G

C

G

D

G

t

"This is a Reno & Smiley song, but you really don't hear much Reno in my banjo playing on this one. To me, the rolling start seemed to feel better with the rhythm of the song than the standard kick-off lick."

"I think that this was the first song we cut for Old Country Town... I know it was one of the first solos I recorded. This song sounds different to me than all the others on the record. Maybe it's because we recorded it in a different room than the rest of the album. Maybe it's just because my banjo sounds so different in B \flat ."

Running Hard On A Broken Heart

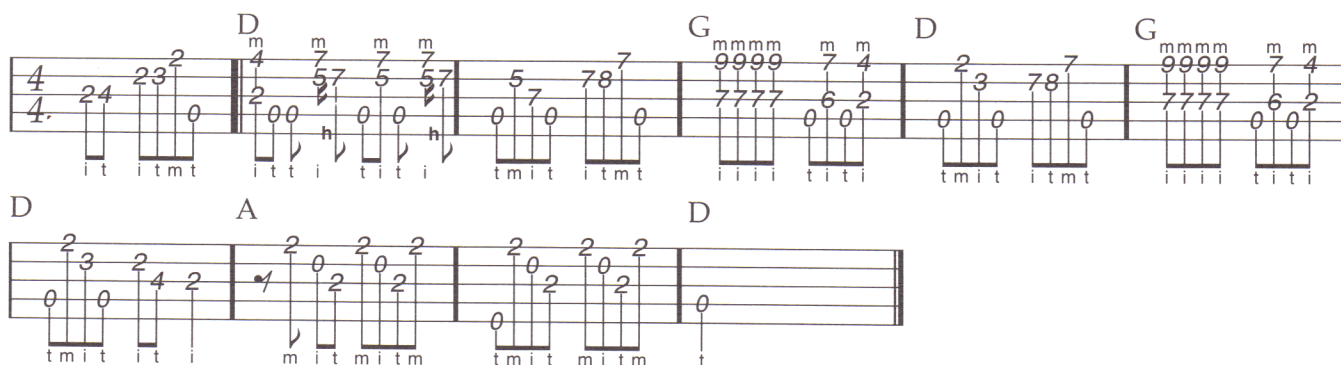
Key of F
Capo 3, play in D
5th string capoed at the 10th fret
♩ = 65 bpm

written by Charles Constantino
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Intro



Break



This song utilizes a variety of standard banjo techniques, including both single string and roll-style playing. Since it is played at a slower tempo, you should be able to manage picking the same strings repeatedly with the same fingers.

The grace note hammers in the second measure of the break are designed for a 'pedal steel' effect. Be sure to count the eighth note rest at the beginning of the second measure of the second line.

"This song shows the mellow, guitar-player side of my picking."

The Game (I Can't Win)

Key of B
Capo 4, play in G
♩ = 104 bpm

written by Harry Carpenter Sisk, Jr.
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The technique that spans the transition between the fifth and sixth measures of the second line is another one that is difficult to notate exactly as it is played. It involves the slide from the 2nd to 5th fret on the 4th string and, though it is marked as a 'brush' (b), it is closer to something which is often called a 'rake.'

To play this as it is sounded, strike the note on the 2nd fret with your thumb, and then brush across the remaining strings in such a way as to fill up the two beats of the quarter note with the brush. If you do it correctly, you will complete the brush and the slide to the 5th fret at the same time, that is, at the beginning of the new measure.

If you listen carefully to the recording, it should become clear.

I'll Take The Blame

Key of B
Capo 4, play in G
♩ = 92 bpm

written by Louise Cirtain,
Gladys Stacey, and James Clackly
publisher not found

First break

The musical notation for the first break is written on four staves in 4/4 time. The key signature is G major (one sharp, F#). The tempo is 92 bpm. The notation includes various guitar techniques such as hammer-ons (h), pull-offs (p), slides (s), and triplets (3). Fingering numbers (1-4) are indicated above the notes. Chord symbols G, C, D, and G are placed above the staves to indicate the harmonic structure. The first staff contains measures 1-4, the second staff contains measures 5-8, the third staff contains measures 9-12, and the fourth staff contains measures 13-14. The notation is a guitar-specific arrangement, likely for a fingerstyle or hybrid picking style.

This one also features a couple of unique twists that might require special attention. Sammy uses a very distinctive lick in the 1st three measures of the 3rd line which mixes roll and single-string techniques. The right hand fingering indicated is the way that Sammy plays it, but the repeated use of the thumb and index fingers on the same string may be troublesome. It will take some getting used to either way.

Also, note the double pull-off in the 5th measure of the same line. You pull-off from the 3rd to the 2nd fret, and then from the 2nd fret to open. Remember that the triplet makes three notes fit into the space where two eighth notes would normally go.

Solid Rock

Key of B
Capo 4, play in G
♩ = 123 bpm

written by Harry Carpenter Sisk, Jr.
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The diagram shows a fingerboard for a guitar in G major, with a capo at the 4th fret. The music is written in 4/4 time. The first line contains measures 1-4, the second line measures 5-8, the third line measures 9-12, and the fourth line measures 13-16. Chord changes are indicated by letters G, C, D, and F# above the staff. Fingerings are indicated by letters t, i, m, p, h, s, and numbers 1-5 below the staff. The piece ends with a double bar line at the end of the fourth line.

There are two tricky spots in this tune that should be noted. The roll that makes up the two measures of D in the second line does not 'follow the rules.' Watch it carefully. Also, watch for the quick single-string lick in the 5th measure of the third line.

written by Emma Smith
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Lonesome River Band in Lyons, CO

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Peer review:

"Since first hearing The Lonesome River Band, I've been a fan of Sammy Shelor. His solid style speaks with a southern accent, and appeals to the bluegrass soul in all of us. And this book of tabs of his best-known recordings will make it easier to learn the fine points of Sammy's music."

Bill Keith

"Sammy has been one of my favorite banjo pickers for years. He is one of the great, great players, who not enough people know about."

Ben Eldridge

"Sammy is the best of his generation of banjo players."

Bill Emerson

"Banjo players of all different skill levels will get a lot from this book."

Pete Wernick

"Shelor is one of the most tasteful, inventive banjoists around..."

Bluegrass Unlimited

"Sammy is one of the brightest stars in bluegrass today."

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