

Irish Guitar Podcast

Book 2

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Introduction

Welcome to Book 2 of the Irish Guitar Podcast.

Audio files for all the tunes in this book can be downloaded free of charge from www.irishguitarpod.com. You can listen to them on your computer or MP3 player.

We hope you'll find this a useful resource for learning to play traditional Irish music on the guitar.

This book follows on from Book 1. In general, explanations are not repeated, so we recommend you start with the tunes in Book 1.

Book 1 covered lessons 1 to 18; this book contains lessons 19 to 36.

Lesson 19 – Andy McGann’s Jig

Andy McGann was a fiddler from New York. He was born in West Harlem and composed a number of great tunes.

His parents were both from Sligo.

His first teacher was a fiddler named Katherine Brennan, and he was a pupil of Michael Coleman.

He also met and was influenced by Lad O’Beirne. Tony’s favourite track of his is a recording he made with Joe Burke of ‘The Humours of Westport’ and ‘The Swallow’, both tunes played in their ‘correct’ key of F Major.

There was an Andy McGann tribute on RTE in 2004: <http://tinyurl.com/2eputt>

He also recorded ‘It’s A Hard Road To Travel’ with Paul Brady (on Shanachie Records).

Playing the Tune

You’ll remember from Book 1 that each bar in an Irish jig contains 2 groups of 3 short notes (quavers) or the equivalent – and this gives the jig its characteristic rhythm. When counting, you would normally say:

One and a **Two** and a...

There’s an emphasis on the first note in each set of three.

When you’re using your pick, you go:

Down up down **Down** up down

Even though this is not the most efficient way to pick (because there are consecutive down strokes) it will nevertheless give you the correct lilt or feel – so make sure you put the effort into doing this correctly.

This tune is normally played in G, but Tony’s version is in C, with the capo on the second fret, making it in the key of D. Tony plays it in D because he originally learned it on the banjo in D.

Accompanying the Tune

Another recap from Book 1: There are a few ways to accompany jigs but the most basic form is to play a bass note of a chord held for the length of two of two quavers (a crotchet), followed by a not too heavy strum of the chord.

You count **One-a Two-a** for each bar.

The chords in this tune are C, G, F and Dm.

Reading the Sheet Music – Recap

If you don't read sheet music, don't worry. As you progress through the lessons, you'll find that you begin to pick it up little by little. For now, all you need to know is how the fingering is indicated. This is shown on the tablature, or tab – which is the lower part of each line of the sheet music.

The image shows a musical score with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 6/8 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Above the staff, the chords G and C are indicated. Below the staff, a tablature line shows the following fret numbers: 3, 3, 2, 3, 0, 3, 0. The numbers 3, 2, 3, 0, 3, 0 are highlighted in a white box.

You'll notice numbers on the lower part of each line of music (highlighted in the diagram above). These refer to your fingers. The index finger is 1, the middle finger is 2, the ring finger is 3 and the little finger is 4. Where you see a zero, that means you play the string open – without any finger on it.

The lines in the tablature refer to the strings on your guitar. An easy way to remember which string is which, just remember that the highest link in the tablature is the highest pitched string (E) – also referred so as the first string. The second line down is the second highest (B) and so on.

For most of the lessons, we use standard tuning, so from first to sixth strings, the notes are: E, B, G, D, A, E. (Where tuning is different, we'll talk about that during the lesson.)

So the very first note is played with your third finger on the second string, then:

- third finger on the first string
- second finger on the first string
- third finger on the first string
- first string open (no finger)

... and so on.

The chords, you'll notice, are above each line in the sheet music, as shown below (chords G and C appear above the line).

Andy McGann's Jig – Sheet Music

Capo 2

Composed by Andy McGann

The sheet music is arranged in five systems, each with a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The time signature is 6/8. Chords are indicated above the treble staff. The tablature includes fret numbers (0-3) and techniques such as triplets (3) and slurs.

System 1: Chords: C, G, C, F, C, Dm, G. Tablature: 3 3 0-2-0 3-0 3 2 0 1-0-1 3-1 2-0 2 0 2-0 2

System 2: Chords: C, G, C, F, C, G, C, C, G. Tablature: 3 0-2-0 3-0 3 2 0 1-0-1 3-1 2-0 2-0 2 3-3-3 0 1-3 3-1-3

System 3: Chords: C, F, C, Dm, G, C, G, C. Tablature: 0 1 2-0 2 0 2 2-0 2 0 2 2-0-0-0 0 1-3 3-1-3 0 1 2-0 2 0

System 4: Chords: F, C, G, C, C, G, C, F, C. Tablature: 2 1 2-0 2-0 2-0 2 3-3-3 0 1-3 3-1-3 0 1 2-0 2 0 1-0 2-0 2 3

System 5: Chords: G, C, F, C, G, C. Tablature: 2 0 2 0-2 3 0-2 0-1 0 3-1 2-0 2 0 2-0 2 0-2 0 3-2-3