

# **Irish Guitar Podcast**

## **Book 4**

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## Introduction

Welcome to Book 4 of the Irish Guitar Podcast.

Audio files for all the tunes in this book can be downloaded free of charge from [www.irishguitarpod.com](http://www.irishguitarpod.com). You can listen to them on your computer, iPod or MP3 player.

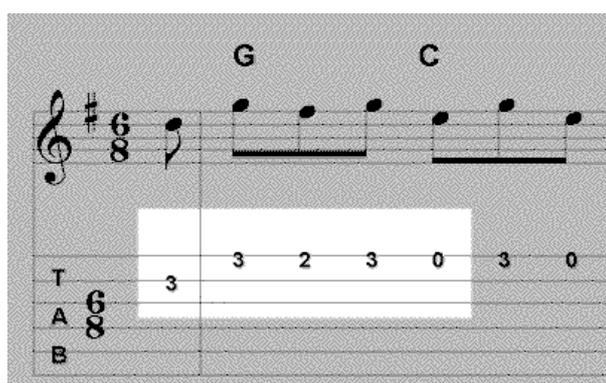
We hope you'll find this a useful resource for learning to play traditional Irish music on the guitar.

This book follows on from Books 1, 2 and 3. In general, explanations are not repeated, so we recommend you start with the tunes in previous books.

This book contains lessons 55 to 72, plus a bonus tune.

## 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.



You'll notice numbers highlighted in the diagram above. These refer to the frets. 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 line in the tablature is the highest pitched string (E) – also referred to 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 (high to low strings). Where tuning is different, we'll cover that during the lesson.

So in the example the very first note is played on the third fret on the second string, then:

- third fret on the first string
- second fret on the first string
- third fret on the first string
- first string open

... and so on.

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

The diagram illustrates a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staff contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Above the staff, a white box highlights the letters 'G' and 'C' above the first and fifth notes respectively. Below the staff, a guitar fretboard diagram shows the strings T, A, B from top to bottom. The fret numbers for each string are: T (3), A (3), B (3) for the first measure; T (3), A (2), B (3) for the second measure; T (0), A (3), B (0) for the third measure.

## Lesson 55 – Baltimore Salute

This tune is a lovely “G” reel and like a good red wine it goes well with almost anything.

Tony learned this tune from the playing of John G. Walsh from near the town of Clifden, in the west of Connemara. He is a big man with an even bigger smile. He plays a two-row Paolo Soprani accordion (B/C), and a striking feature of his technique is that he only uses three fingers. This has no effect whatsoever on his renditions of traditional Irish music; in fact it may well be said of his playing that it is as smooth and melodious as any of Ireland’s great accordionists.

In 1987 he was runner-up in the All-Ireland Senior Accordion title. In 2003 his daughter Marie won the All-Ireland Piano Accompaniment title, and one year later followed that effort by winning the Senior Accordion title that eluded her father in 1987. John G. recorded this tune on his CD “The Magpie’s Nest”, which is one of Tony’s favourite albums of traditional Irish music. His rendition has been included in the podcast. Incidentally, daughter Marie has also recorded a CD “The Red Box”. Both musicians play two-coupler Sopranis, and both of these recordings are highly recommended.

Tony spent a few days in Clifden in the summer of 2004. By day it is a compact little town, full of interesting shops for the visitor, containing many genuine products from Connemara itself. The scenery beyond the town is, as with much of Connemara, quite breathtaking. The town itself featured on the cover of one of the early “Shaskeen” records. However come night time the townsfolk metamorphose into some sort of traditional music show. Tony went to a pub session with John G. and Marie. Everybody present seemed to do something, sing, play, tell a story, dance, or quite possibly all of the above. If this is not Tír na Óg then Tony thinks it comes mighty close. But at the end of the day after all the carry on and “blarney” there can be heard some seriously good music. A visit to Clifden and a meeting with the Walshes was a wonderful experience.

And so to The Baltimore Salute...

The Baltimore in this tune probably refers to the town on the southern coast of Ireland, south west of Skibereen, Co. Cork. In Irish it is called Dún na Séad (Fort of Jewels).

### Playing the Tune

The first part of the tune can be played entirely in open position.

For the first five bars in the second part of the tune Tony plays notes on the third fret with his first finger, notes on the fourth fret with his second finger, notes on the fifth fret with his third finger, and the high B on the seventh fret with his fourth finger.

There are four A notes on the second fret of the third string in these first five bars of Part B, and these can be fingered with the first finger as they are preceded and followed by notes occurring on open strings. These open string

notes will give you enough time to move your fingers to the next sequence of notes. The last three bars of the tune can be played in open position.

It will be of great benefit to the fluidity of your playing if you are very clear about your fretting before you play the tune.

And remember, don't try and play too fast. Focus on accuracy.

## Accompanying the Tune

Tony's chord progression is identical in both the first and second parts and we've included a separate accompaniment chart with this tune.

Accompaniment for tunes needs to be studied in the same way that the melody is, even though backing up a tune is less complicated. Many's the time you'll hear guitarists in particular trying to guess where a tune is going. This approach will get you nowhere and will win you no friends amongst the melody players at a session. Guitars and guitarists are often viewed with a deal of musical suspicion, in part brought on by singers who have never bothered to make a serious effort to learn the rudiments of traditional Irish music but who want or insist in joining in on tunes, and by "guitar heroes" who seem to think the melody takes a back seat to accompaniment.

*Tony says:*

*On my first trip to Ireland I turned up at a session with my guitar and asked if I could join in. The people were too polite to say "No" but I could quite easily sense that they didn't have much confidence in guitarists and looked at me as just another "thrasher".*

*I wasn't too perturbed by this, as I knew after the first tune they would realise that I knew a little bit about Irish music. Sure enough, after the first set they wanted to know where I came from, where I'd learnt the music, and so on. In fact the first words the leader of the session said to me were "Well it's nice to see someone playing one of those who knows what they're doing". A compliment of sorts to my playing, but a sad indictment on the way the instrument is often played. I regularly meet up with these people, having become good friends with them, on my trips to Ireland and have since found out what I suspected – that many a session has been ruined by guitarists not having a clue about the music. So make the effort to learn the accompaniment, and if you find that you don't know the tune then don't play along hoping that you'll pick it up. I've never had much respect for the "Just Fake It" attitude of some musicians. It is culturally fraudulent.*

Now back to the tune. The accompaniment is fairly standard. Note that in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> bars a D chord occurs with an F# as a bass note – that is, the second fret of the sixth string.

As a music teacher of some credibility, it would be grossly improper for Tony to tell you to use your thumb to fret this note, as he does. So use your discretion.

The F# in a D Major chord as a bass note can be quite effective. Piano players do it all the time. Note the E minor chord in bars 6 and 14, added in just for a bit of melancholic flavour. Also at the very end of each section there's a crotchet chord followed by a crotchet rest, just to break the rhythm a touch.

The chords in this tune are G, C, Am, D, and Em.

Many thanks to Marie and John G. Walsh for permission to use his recording of this tune from his CD "Magpie's Nest".

## Baltimore Salute – Sheet Music

The sheet music for "Baltimore Salute" is presented in four systems. Each system consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The guitar accompaniment is shown on a six-string staff with fret numbers and chord diagrams. The chords used are G, C, G, Am, D, Em, and G.

**System 1:** Chords: G, C, G, Am, D. Fret numbers: 2, 0, 3-0, 3-0, 0-2, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 3, 3-0, 3-0, 2, 0, 2.

**System 2:** Chords: G, Em, C, G, D, G. Fret numbers: 0, 3-0, 3-0, 0-2, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 3, 3-0, 3-0, 0, 2.

**System 3:** Chords: G, C, G, Am, D. Fret numbers: 0, 0-0, 3, 0-3, 3, 3-0, 0, 2, 0, 0-2, 0, 2, 0-3, 0-5, 5-3-5, 3-5.

**System 4:** Chords: G, Em, C, G, D, G. Fret numbers: 7-3-5-7-3-0-0, 3, 0-3, 3, 3-0, 0, 2, 0-2, 0, 0, 3-0, 3-0, 0, 2, 0.

## Baltimore Salute – Accompaniment

**G C G D**

**G Em C G D G**

**G C G D**

**G Em C G D G**