

Variations on a Tune

*How to make a tune sound fresh and new!
(How to keep your audience - and you - from getting bored)*

DAD tuning
*(capo - nice to have
but not required)*

Mountain Dulcimer Workshop
presented by
Carol Walker

Some easy basic things that will work most of the time:

1. Play the melody on the bass string -- use the same fingering as melody string (in DAD)
2. Play the melody one octave higher on the melody string -- get acquainted with your "other" dulcimer at the top (right) end of your fretboard
3. Use a noter
4. Add passing tones; upper/lower neighbors
5. Add fillers, riffs, licks
6. Use hammer-ons and pull-offs
7. Vary the strum
8. Flat pick the melody
9. Fingerpick the melody
10. Vary the tempo
11. Change the time signature
12. Use a capo -- changes the key (mode) and the timbre
13. Use different chord positions: 013, 310, 335, 765, etc. are all variations of a G chord
14. Add "delicious" chords (substitute minor for major, etc.)

Combine these elements. For example (in a typical AABB tune):

- A1 - Introduce the melody
- A2 - change the octave
- B1 - Introduce the melody
- B2 - add fillers

Old Joe Clark

Melody on melody string (upper and lower), and bass string
Counter melody: in parallel motion (thirds or sixths); contrary motion (up/down, down/up)
Add hammer-ons, pull-offs, passing tones, grace notes ("bagpipe" notes)

John Brown's March

Melody as usual on melody and bass strings
Harmony -- add middle string harmonies
Walking bass line

Columbus Stockade Blues

Melody -- double in certain sections -- both melody and bass strings in unison
Counter melody -- see above in Old Joe Clark
Chord Substitution -- B-minor at measure 12, instead of G

Old Joe Clark -- melody string / bass string (*using same tab numbers*)

Old Joe Clark -- melody string - upper fretboard

Old Joe Clark -- countermelody
(play this as a duet with a partner, or SING the melody while playing this -- FUN!!)

Old Joe Clark -- all dressed up....

(with fillers, riffs, and licks)

Melody notes are larger -- smaller notes are upper/lower neighbors and passing tones -- add hammer-ons and pull-offs for even more variety

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and common time. The melody is written on a treble clef staff. The guitar accompaniment is shown on a six-string staff with fret numbers below the strings. Measures 1-4 show a sequence of chords and melodic lines. Measure 1: G4 (0), A4 (4), B4 (5), A4-G4 (6-5), F#4-A4 (6-5). Measure 2: G4 (0), A4 (4), B4 (5), A4-G4 (4-3), F#4-A4 (2-2), G4 (3). Measure 3: G4 (0), A4 (4), B4 (5), A4-G4 (6-7), F#4-A4 (6-5). Measure 4: G4 (4), A4 (4), B4 (4).

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Measure 5: G4 (0), A4 (4), B4 (5), A4-G4 (6-5), F#4-A4 (6-5). Measure 6: G4 (0), A4 (4), B4 (5), A4-G4 (4-3), F#4-A4 (2-0), G4 (1). Measure 7: G4 (0), A4 (1), B4 (0), A4-G4 (2-1), F#4-A4 (2-1), G4 (1). Measure 8: G4 (0), A4 (0), B4 (0), G4 (0).

A dashed box encloses measures 7 and 8, with the text "all hammers and pulls" written below it.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. Measure 9: G4 (0), A4 (0), B4 (0), A4-G4 (2). Measure 10: G4 (0), A4 (4), B4 (5), A4-G4 (4-3), F#4-A4 (2-2), G4 (1). Measure 11: G4 (0), A4 (1), B4 (2), G4 (0). Measure 12: G4 (1), A4 (0), B4 (2), A4-G4 (1-0).

Musical notation for measures 13-16. Measure 13: G4 (0), A4 (0), B4 (0), A4-G4 (2). Measure 14: G4 (0), A4 (4), B4 (5), A4-G4 (4-3), F#4-A4 (2-0), G4 (1). Measure 15: G4 (0), A4 (1), B4 (0), A4-G4 (2-1), F#4-A4 (2-1), G4 (1). Measure 16: G4 (0), A4 (2), B4 (4), G4 (7).

Waltz at Joe's

For exclusive use in Carol's workshop -
"Variations on the Tune."
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Arr. Carol Walker

D C/D D G D C/D D A

D A D

9 D C/D D G D D/F# A7/G D/F# D

17 G D/F A7/E D D/F# A/E A

25 G Bm Em Bm G A7/G D/F# A/E D

Jiggin' Joe

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Arr. Carol Walker

D A D

D A D

9 D Am D A D

17 A

25 D A D

Joe's Dirge

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very slow and ponderous -- like a New Orleans funeral procession

Arr. Carol Walker

D
A
D

5

9

13

Columbus Stockade Blues -- Basic (Plain)

A

D A D

A

D A

B

G D G

A

D A

Columbus Stockade Blues -- with Fillers

A

D A D

A

A

B

G D G A

B

D A D

Columbus Stockade Blues -- Variation

Same as Basic Version w/fillers

5 *Passing tones added (UN / LN)* *UN added* *UN / LN*

9 *basic* *UN* *basic* *double slides*

13 *passing tones, harmony, walking bass*

John Brown's March - Basic

A

D B m

0 1 | 0 0 0 1 2 3 | 4 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 3 2 1 | 2 2

A

5 D A D

0 0 0 0 1 2 3 | 4 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 3 2 1 | 0 0

B

9 G D

0 0 0 0 0 0 | 6 6 5 7 8 7 5 | 4 4 5 4 2 1 0 | 2 3 4

B

13 G D A D

0 0 0 0 0 0 | 6 6 5 7 8 7 5 | 4 4 5 4 2 1 2 | 0 0

John Brown's March - Variations (A-part)

Melody on melody string

D
A
D

A1

5

middle string harmonies

bass string harmonies

"walking" arpeggio

9

Melody on bass string

A2

13

treble string harmonies

John Brown's March -- Variations (B-part)

17 *Melody on treble string*

B1

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 2
6 6 6 6 5 5 5 3 4
7 5 5 7 8 7 5 4 4 5 4 2 1 0 2 3 4

bass string harmonies

21

"walking bass"

0 0 0 0 0 1 2 1 0
6 6 6 6 5 0 2 1 0
7 5 5 7 8 7 5 4 4 5 4 2 1 0 0

25 *Melody on bass string with middle string harmonies*

B2

7 5 5 7 8 7 5 4 4 5 4 2 1 0 2 3 4
6 6 6 6 6 6 5 5 5 4 2 1 0 3 4 5
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

29

7 5 5 7 8 7 5 4 4 5 4 2 1 0 2 0
6 6 6 6 6 6 5 5 5 0 0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0