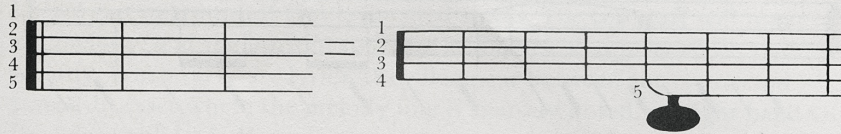
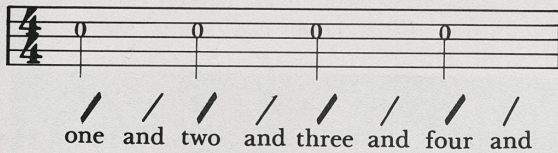


Tablature and Timing

All of the tunes in this book are written out in tablature. This is a simple system of notation which relates specifically to the instrument for which it is written. For instance, we'll be using a five line staff—one line for each string of the banjo.



The vertical lines intersecting the staff above are called bar lines. They divide the staff into measures. Each measure in a particular tune will have the same time value, be it $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{4}$, or whatever. Now let me explain what this means. Most of the tunes you'll be playing will be in $\frac{4}{4}$ time: in other words, there will be four quarter notes per measure.



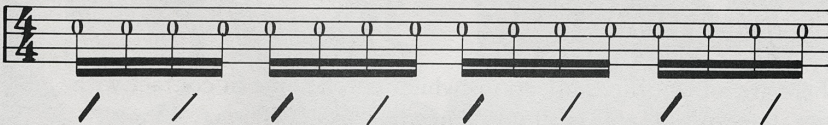
As I mentioned in the chord section, the dark strokes are the beats and the light strokes are the off-beats.

You can divide those quarter notes into smaller units called eighth notes. Eight eighth notes = four quarter notes.

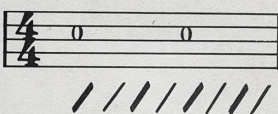


This is the configuration you'll come across most often in this book.

Occasionally, we'll be dealing with sixteenth notes. Sixteen sixteenth notes = eight eighth notes, etc. Whereas eighth notes are connected by a single line (or beam), sixteenth notes are branded with a double line.



The final note we'll be dealing with is the half note. The half note is the equivalent of two quarter notes and will be indicated here simply by a number with no stem and no beams.



By now your mind is probably swimming with all of this new information. But stick with it. After a few songs you'll get the feel for it.

From time to time you'll see two notes connected with a loop (or tie).

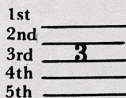


This indicates that you should pick only the first note but allow it to ring for the time value of both (in this case two beats).

Here's an example that will get you more in touch with counting time.



So far this has all sounded suspiciously like standard musical notation. But here's the difference. Instead of using actual music, notes will be indicated in terms of numbers. These numbers represent the fret on the fingerboard which the left hand is to play. For instance:



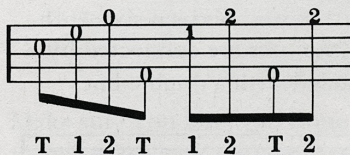
This means you'll pick the third fret of the third string. Other indications: a zero (0) represents an open string and an X on the third string represents a sixteenth note rest (or space where no note is played). Directly underneath the numbers will be the right-hand fingerings, designated thusly:

T = thumb

1 = index finger

2 = middle finger

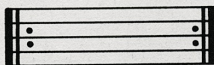
Here's an example:



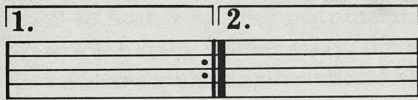
There are a few other indications which you'll come in contact with later, but for now this is all you'll need.

One other symbol you'll need to know is the repeat sign.

This designation will be used when an entire section of a piece (part A or part B) is to be repeated. That section will be enclosed within these two signs:



Sometimes the section will have two endings, indicated like this:



When you see this, start at the beginning of the section and play through the first ending. Then go back to the beginning of the same section and play it again, this time skipping the first ending and playing the second.

Finally, a word about the general format of the music. Each song will be laid out in groups of two connected staves. The top staff will feature the melody, and the bottom staff the lead break that is based on that melody. When there are lyrics, they'll appear between the connected staves. In cases where the melody line is sparsely noted, no right hand fingerings will be indicated.

Now that we've established the ground rules let's get started.

