

# "Lamento di Tristano"

by Roger Landes

For a bit of a departure from my previous columns, this month I'd like to introduce a new tuning and an old tune - really old - this one is from the Middle Ages!

"Lamento di Tristano" is piece of Medieval music that survives in a manuscript, now in the British Museum. It was written in the late 14th Century, about 1396. I recorded it on "The Janissary Stomp," my bouzouki duo CD with Chipper Thompson <http://janissarystomp.com> played on a 5 course bouzouki, which I usually tune GDADA, but for this piece I "split" the low G course by tuning one string down to low D and the other up to A, resulting in a nice parallel 5<sup>th</sup> drone from the lower course. So the tuning ends up as: DADADA.

A similar tuning on the mandolin works really well: First, drop both of your E strings down to D one octave above the D course, and in unison with the D on the fifth fret of the A string. You are now in GDAD - a great tuning in it's own right but we'll leave that for later explorations and go a bit further with this one. Next, drop one of your G strings to low D an octave below the D course and tune the other G up to A an octave below the A string. Now you have D/A DD AA DD. I really like this tuning as it makes the mandolin sound huge.

"Lamento di Tristano" is a three-part tune with the parts being played without repeats. The first part ends in bar 23, the second part in bar 34 and the third in bar 57. Each part ends with C#/D sequence. While the C# is outside the Dorian mode and technically inauthentic for Medieval performance practice, I think it's OK for us. I picked that phrase ending up from a recording of Henri Agnel, "Estampies Italiennes du 14<sup>th</sup> Siecle" and I've loved it ever since.

For this piece, try and keep the drone ringing below the melody notes without overpowering them. You may need to strike the open drone notes on the two lowest courses more often than I've indicated if your mandolin's sustain is such that the notes fade too quickly. Try to keep the melody out in front of the drone and as legato as possible. Feel free to tremolo or double/triple/quadruple any of the quarter, half or whole notes that you care to, in order to sustain the phrases.

The tempo for "Lamento di Tristano" can be slow and lyrical or even march-like, depending on your mood. I often play the first two parts with a lot of rubato and the third part a little more assertively. See what works for you.

# Lamento di Tristano

Anonymous, 14th C. Italian

TablEdited by Roger Landes

The first system of music features a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff, and the accompaniment is shown as a three-part chordal texture on a grand staff. Below the grand staff is a six-line guitar tablature with fret numbers 0, 2, 3, 2, 3, 5, 7, 5, 3, 2, 0, 2, 3, 5, 5, 3, 2.

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The tablature for this system includes fret numbers 3, 2, 3, 5, 7, 5, 3, 2, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 2, 0, 5, 3, 2, 3, 2, 3, 5, 5, 3, 2.

9

T 0 2 3 5 5-3-2 3-2-0 0 2

A 0 0 0 2 2 3 2

B 0 0 0 2 2 3 2

13

T 0 2 3 2 3 5 7-5-3-2 0 2-3 5 5 3 2

A 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

B 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

17

T 3-2-3-5-7-5-3-2 0 0 0-2 0-2-0 0 3-2-3-5 5-3-2

A 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

B 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

21

21

T 0 2 0 2 0 0 0 5 3 2

A 0 0 4 0 0 0 0 0 0 2

B 0 0 4 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

25

25

T 3 2 3 5 0 5 3 2 0 2 3 5 5 3 2 3 2 0 0

A 3 2 3 5 0 5 3 2 0 2 3 5 5 3 2 3 2 0 0

B 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

29

29

T 2 0 5 3 2 3 2 3 5 5 3 2 0 5 3 2 0

A 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

B 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

33

8va

T 2 0 0 0 0 2 3 2 3-2-3-5 0 5-3-5

A 4 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

B 4 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

37

8va

T 0 5 5 3 2 3-2-3-5-7-5-3-2 0 0 0 0-2

A 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 5 5

B 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

41

8va

T 0 2 0 5 3 2 3-2-3-5 5-3-2 0 2 3 0 5 5-3-2

A 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 2

B 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 2

45

T 3-2-0-0 2 0-2-3-2 3-2-3-5 0  
 A 3 2 0 0 0 5-3-5  
 B 3 2 0 0 0

49

T 0 5-5-3-2 3-2-3-5-7-5-3-2 0 0-0-0-2  
 A 0 0 0 0 0 5 5  
 B 0 0 0 0 0

53

T 0-2-0 5-3-2 3-2-3-5 5-3-2 0-2-0 2-0-0  
 A 0 0 0 0 0 4 0  
 B 0 0 0 0 0 4 0

57

8va

2/4

T

A

B

A musical score for a medieval dance tune. It features a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The notation includes a treble clef, a 2/4 time signature, and a staff with a treble clef. The notes are: a half note G (labeled '8va'), a quarter note A, a quarter note B, and a quarter note A. Below the staff, the letters T, A, and B are written on three separate lines. A vertical bar line is positioned below the staff, aligned with the first measure.

Next month we'll do another Medieval tune-a dance tune.