



Building a Traditional Tune Repertoire

by Wendy Anthony

Mississippi Sawyer

(Key of D)

The Tune:

Mississippi Sawyer is a fiddle tune popular in many Old-Time jams. A "Mississippi Sawyer" is a riverboat term used to describe the hazard when a large piece of wood floats below the water surface (either a shoreline tree with roots undercut by the water flow, or some driftwood hung-up in some debris), while bobbing in an up-and-down motion with the river current, like a saw-blade, or a fiddle bow, with tremendous capacity to cause damage under the boat's waterline.

Techniques:

- **Overview of Tune:** This tune has a melody with notes that go up-and-down, back-and-forth, in a saw-like fashion, just like the name might suggest. Quarter-notes are interspersed with eighth-notes, giving it a stop-and-go motion.
- **Chords:** The chord structure is similar between the parts, with the exception of the 3rd & 4th measures, which use a G chord in Part A & an A chord in Part B.

Part A: ||: D | D | G | G | D | D | D/A | D :||

Part B: ||: D | D | A | A | D | D | D/A | D :||

- **Pick Strokes:** Pick all 1/4 notes with Downstrokes & all paired 1/8 notes with Down/Upstrokes. The triplets can be picked with one pickstroke, while using a hammer-on with your left fingers, placing each finger down with a quick, firm contact, before adding the next finger, making each note ring.
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Mississippi Sawyer
Traditional OldTime

Part A

Part B

Transcribed by Wendy Anthony

Listen to the Midi: [120 bpm](#) & [160 bpm](#)