



Snowbird

by Seth Austen

The northeast is blanketed in snow as I'm writing this month's column. Looking out my window at the falling snow, this lovely old time tune *Snowbird* comes to mind. Perhaps some of you might still have some snow on the ground as you're reading this. I learned this version of *Snowbird* from two cassette recordings by fiddler Bruce Greene, *Vintage Fiddle Tunes and Fiddler's Dozen; A Year of Tunes*. There is another unrelated tune in G, also called *Snowbird*, which some old time musicians play.

Be very careful with pick direction when playing *Snowbird*, all quarter notes should be played as down picks, and continuous eighth notes should be alternate picking, down on first 1/8 note, up on second 1/8, and so on. This does create a challenge for mandolinists as you'll have to play a down pick for an eighth note on the E string, followed by an up pick on the A string in various sections of this tune. Here's an exercise to help you get ready for this. Using open E and A strings, play continuous eighth notes, down picks on the E string, and up picks on the A. You can try this exercise on any two adjacent strings, as this sort of thing often shows up in other fiddle tunes.

I've written the melody without double stops, however I often add them when playing this tune. When adding in double stops, I use either open D or A strings, generally below the melody.

For accompaniment, on one of the tapes the guitarist played a C chord in the second measure of the B part, and on the other tape played a G chord at the same spot. Either works, I wrote it as G in the music, but try them both and see which you prefer.

I hope you enjoy learning *Snowbird*.

Seth

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trad. arr. Seth Austen

0 2 5 0 5 2 5 | 3 5 3 5 2 5 0 | 5 5 0 5 2 5 | 0 2 0 0

5 D G A D

0 2 5 0 5 5 | 3 2 3 5 3 2 3 | 5 5 7 5 2 0 3 | 2 5 5 5

9 D G D A

0 0 0 4 0 4 | 5 2 5 3 2 | 0 0 0 4 0 4 | 2 4 2

13 D G A D

0 0 0 4 0 3 | 2 5 5 5 4 5 | 0 0 2 3 2 0 3 | 2 5 5 5

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