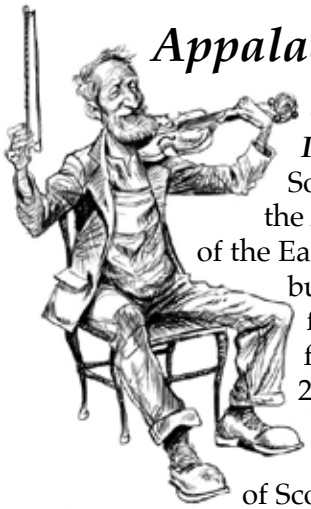
Styles & Genres

American Music: Old Time 2



Appalachian Mountain Music

OLD TIME MUSIC IS HARD to define. Some say it's music from the Appalachian region of the Eastern United States, but it's really American folk music from the first forty years of the 20th century. Much of it is rooted in the traditional music of Scotland, Ireland and England, but there are other influences to be heard as well.

The reason that Appalachia is most often identified as the home of Old-time music is because as a region it was isolated much longer than other areas due to its rugged, mountainous terrain. Because there was significant immigration into Appalachia by the Scots and Scotch-Irish, it had a huge influence on the development of American Oldtime music.

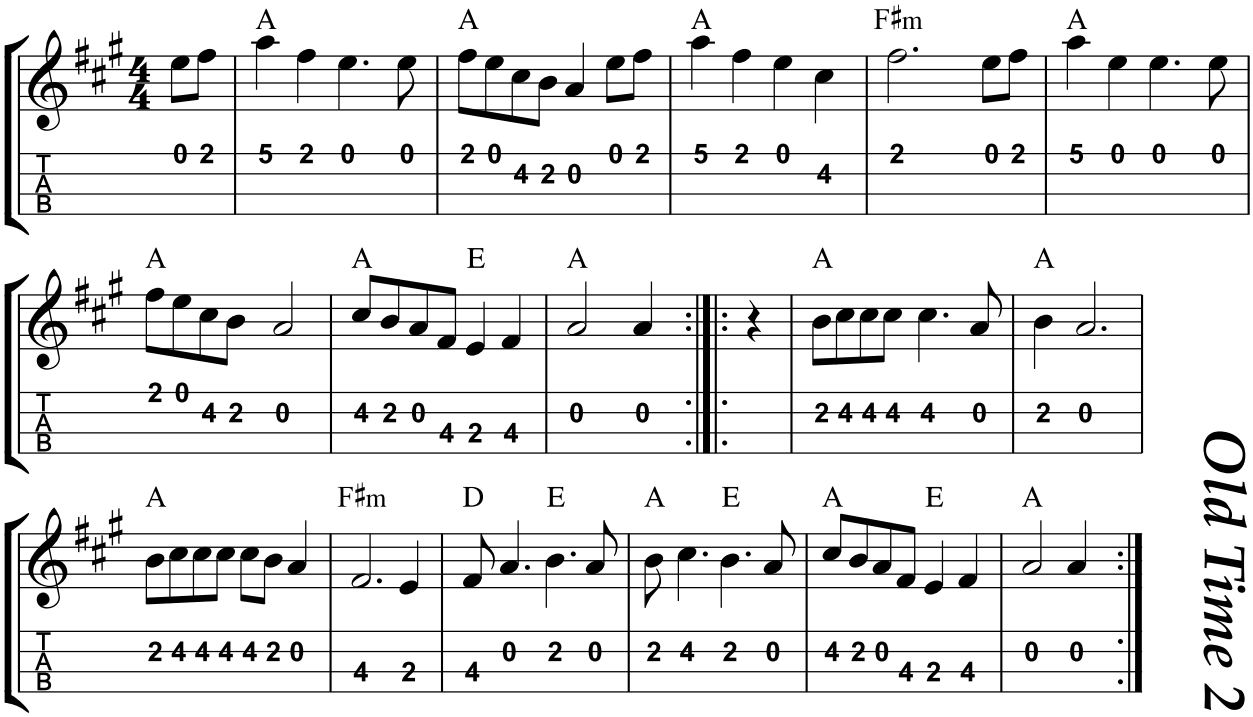
There was a revival of interest in Old-time music in the 1960s and 70s, leading to a few well-known revival bands such as *The New Lost City Ramblers, The Fuzzy Mountain String Band, The Highwoods String Band, The Red Clay Ramblers, The Hollow Rock String Band,* and so on. Now Old-time is enjoyed by many musicians and learners around the world.

The Mandolin in Old Time Music

The mandolin arrived in America with immigrant Germans and ltalians. These instruments were bowl-backed designs of the classic Italian shapes, and were called *tater bugs* by the rural musicians, after a parasitic insect which fed on potato plants. At the end of the 19th century, Orville Gibson revolutionised the shape of the mandolin, borrowing from his knowledge of guitar building. Gibson's mandolins had a flat back, and now most players of the mandolin use flatbacked instruments.

When the popularity of mandolin orchestras began to fall, their mandolins began to filter to the country areas, where they were eagerly used in rural music; thus began the rise of the mandolin in oldtime music. Guitar and mandolin duets were popular, especially the Monroe Brothers. The mandolinist in that duo was Bill Monroe, who went on to be called "the Father of Bluegrass", but the history of Bluegrass music is a story all to itself!

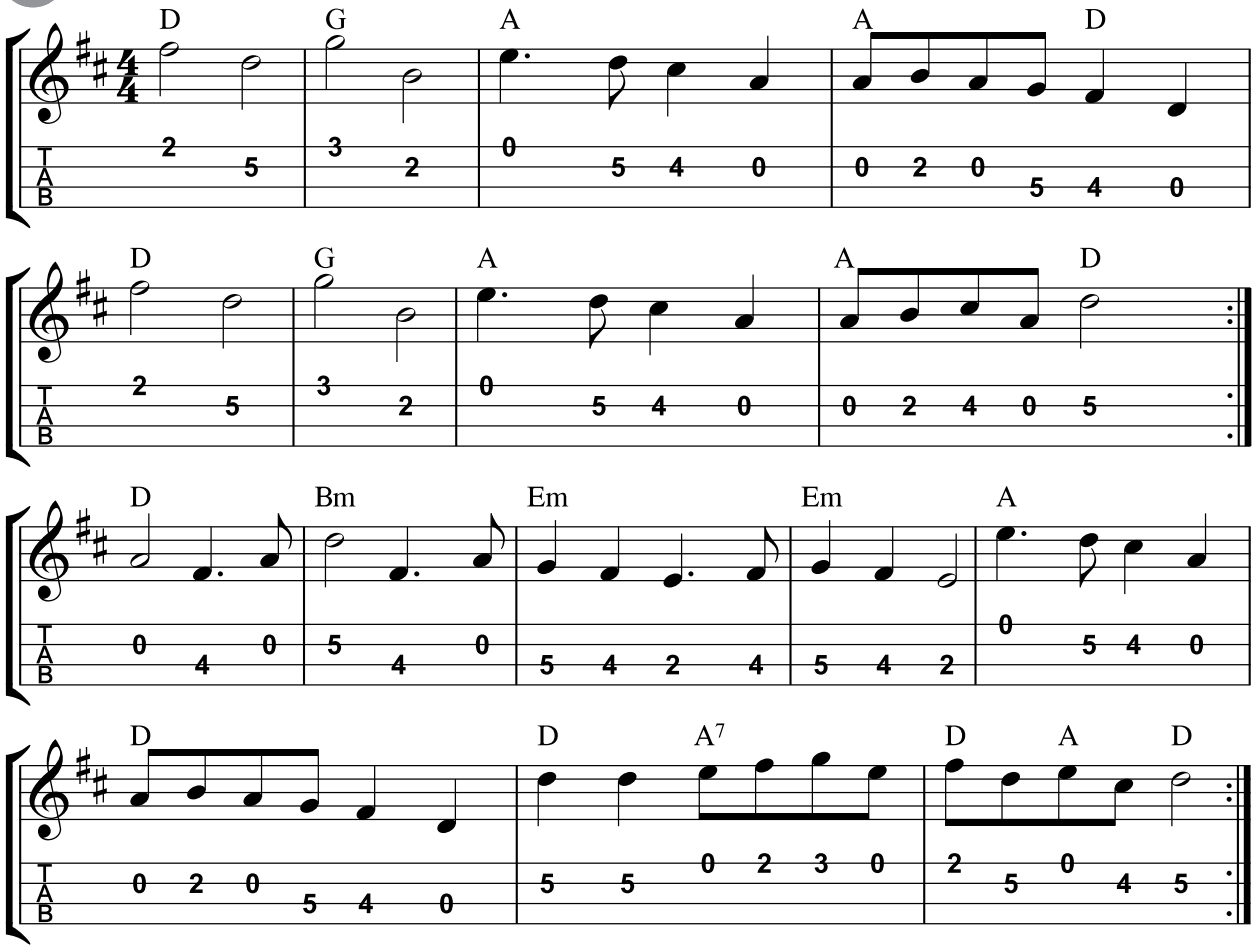
Little Liza Jane *(traditional)*



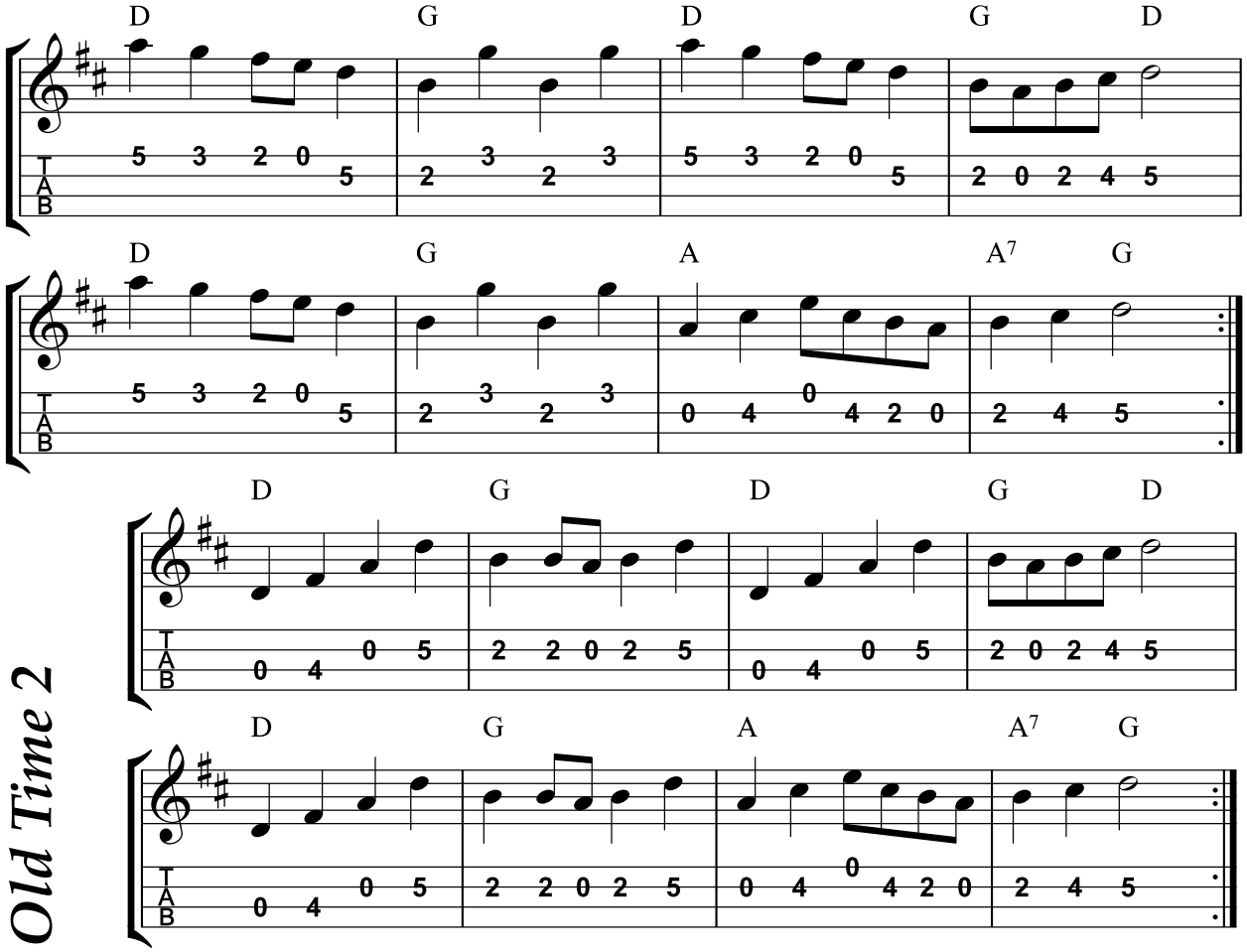
© Nigel Gatherer 2018

Latest edit: 07/10/18

West Fork Girls *(traditional)*



Needlecase *(traditional)*



Old Time 2