

# Fretbow

## Rosewood Casket

*Traditional American Old-Time Ballad  
arranged for Fretted Dulcimer by Theo Elsey*

- |    |  |                    |
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Fretbow's dulcimer arrangements originally were written for players who already had some experience in playing the dulcimer. In these latest editions every song title has both an intermediate and beginners version of the music. It is suggested that you study the following tips and advice and then try getting started with the basic melody and chords arrangement on page 5. If you find the music too difficult to follow then consider finding a dulcimer teacher, alternatively you could purchase a good beginners book.

## Sitting with your Dulcimer

The Fretted Dulcimer is normally played flat on the player's lap. As you sit with your dulcimer, the head (the end with the tuning pegs) should be to your left. Just to the right of the head you will see a narrow strip of plastic (or bone) that holds the strings in place, this is called the *Nut*. Parallel with the nut are metal strips positioned in the wood fingerboard, these are called *Frets* and are numbered starting with fret number one, this is closest to the nut. The dulcimer has a unique fretting pattern that's different from other fretted instruments like the guitar. One peculiarity is the addition of the  $6\frac{1}{2}$  fret, if you don't know about this then you'll get caught out when counting any fret numbers higher than the 6th fret. The highest fret number in *Rosewood Casket* is at the 4th fret, so at this stage of learning the dulcimer it doesn't really apply.

## Tuning the Dulcimer

*Rosewood Casket* is in D- A- d tuning, and is the most common tuning used by fretted dulcimer players. Here's how to tune to D- A- d :-

Play the 3rd string (heaviest Bass string) at 4th Fret, now tune the 2nd string open (middle string) to sound the same. Next, play the 2nd string at 3rd fret, this is the correct pitch to tune the first string open. Please note, many dulcimers have two first strings that are set close together, these are tuned exactly the same and played as one.

## Reading Tablature

The example to the right shows two systems of written music, each represents exactly the same arrangement of melody, the tablature system is the easiest method to learn from.

Study the diagram and then try playing a few of the tablature notes, be sure to fret accurately, your left hand finger tip should position just to the left hand side of the fret. Easy? The rest of this music can be found on page 5.

It may also be helpful for you to check out your knowledge on time values and rhythm, this is fully explained on the next page.

Music Notation →

Tablature →

1. There's a lit tle

D  
A  
d

0 2 4 2

Numbers show the fret positions for each note, the first note is a *Zero fret* or *open string*, for this one just play the first string without fretting it. The horizontal lines represent the strings, in this example all notes are played on the first string, this is the highest sounding and nearest string to you.

Try playing each note in turn, just gently pick the 1st string for each note with your right hand thumb. Above the first string are two remaining horizontal lines, these are for the middle and bass strings (2nd and 3rd), in this example they have no fret numbers written on them, these strings are not to be played.

## Chords

Chords can give a satisfying alternative to playing the melody. Learn these chords and try strumming along with the melody from the mp3 audio track that comes with this PDF music file. Chord symbols are given as bold type letter names above the music (see pages 5 and 6). The three chords of D, G and A are frequently used in the D - A - d tuning.

Open strings (to be played)

STRINGS

D 3  
A 2  
d 1

NUT 1st fret 2nd fret 3rd fret

**A Chord**

Left hand fingering.














**D Chord**

**G Chord**

## Rhythm

*Rosewood Casket* is in 4/4 time, that is to say 4 beats to a bar or measure ( | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | ). All notes in the basic version of this arrangement are played to varying lengths of time, some study of the following chart should help you understand the different note values used for this song.

### Note Values

<i>Music</i>	<i>Tablature</i>	<i>VALUE</i>		
		Eighth Note (Quaver) = Half (½) a beat	<i>Eighth Notes Grouped</i>	
		Quarter Note (Crotchet) = One beat		
		Half Note (Minim) = Two beats	<i>Dotted Quarter Note</i>	
		Whole Note (Semibreve) = four beats		
			<i>Dotted Half Note</i>	
				
<u>The Tied Note</u>			<u>The Quarter Note Rest</u>	
				
In this example the tied note lasts for 5 beats.			This is the quarter note rest symbol, when you see this in the music simply rest for one beat.	
<u>One note</u> sounding for the total time of the two notes shown.				

## Left and Right hand fingering

### LEFT HAND

In the basic arrangement of *Rosewood Casket* there is no suggested left hand fingering for playing the melody, you can decide for yourself the best fingers to use. Having said this, there are a few points worth mentioning to the complete novice. Some dulcimer styles use a wooden noter that slides up and down the first string for all the notes. This is a fun way to play but you are limited to playing notes on the first string only, in this music we have one note towards the end that is played on the second string - this means you will have to use your left hand fingers, using a noter on this occasion will not be of much help to you! A common mistake of many beginners is in attempting to play the different fret positions with the same left hand finger, this may seem to be the easiest thing to do but in the long run will do nothing in helping you develop a good playing style. Try and use a spread of different fingers as you work through the frets, the left hand thumb can also be used, especially on the higher fret positions.

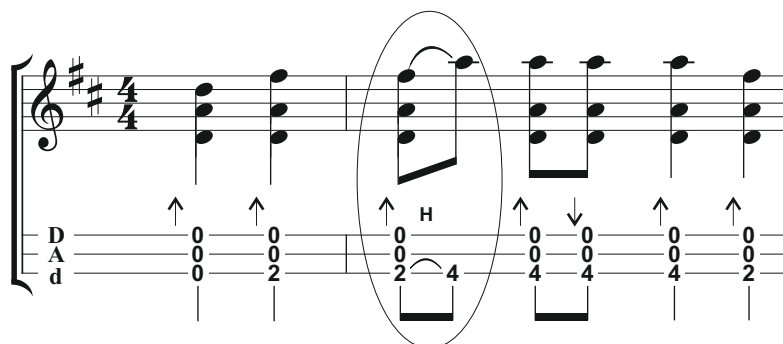
### RIGHT HAND

The basic version of *Rosewood Casket* allows you a choice of right hand playing methods, you can either pick the notes out using your right hand thumb, or you could use a plectrum (flatpick). If you don't have a plectrum then take a trip to your local music store, a regular guitar plectrum of medium thickness is recommended.

# INTERMEDIATE PLAYERS

## RIGHT HAND

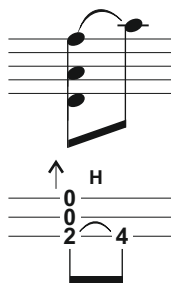
The main arrangement of *Rosewood Casket* is played in a flatpick/strum style using a flatpick or plectrum that strums across all strings. The longer duration notes and chords (half note and quarter note) are played strumming away from you (↑), the faster strums (Eighth notes), are played with a return strum that comes towards you (↓). There is one exception to this rule and this is when a chord is followed immediately by a hammered note, the action of this is performed by the right hand playing one strum only for the chord, the second hammered note is then activated by the left hand (see description in the paragraph on the left hand).



The hammered chord has one strum only.

## LEFT HAND

### Hammered chords

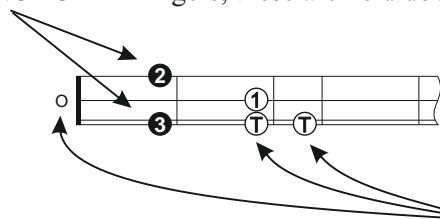


Here is an example of a hammered chord. First of all, strum with the plectrum across all three strings, then whilst still holding down the first string, 2nd fret, “hammer” (fretting with another left hand finger with some strength and force) behind the 4th fret. When correctly played a second note will sound, the whole action of the chord and hammered note is the result of having strummed the strings just once.

### Fingering Diagrams

These essentially are the same as the chord diagrams described on page 2. The main difference is in the use of left hand finger symbols shown in both black and white circles. The black are for fingers fixed down, these are anchored fingers that remain down whilst the other floating fingers (white circles) move around, reading the tablature will tell you when the floating notes should be played.

ANCHORED fingers, these are held down all the time.



FLOATING fingers and notes, these move and swap around to provide the melody.

# Rosewood Casket

BASIC MELODY WITH CHORD ACCOMPANIMENT

Traditional American melody

Tuning: D - A - d

**Chords:** D, A, D, A, D, G, D, A, D

**Lyrics:**  
 1. There's a lit — tle rose — wood — cask — et, Lay — ing  
 on a marb — le stand, And a  
 pack — age of love — let — ters Writ — ten  
 by my true loves — hand.

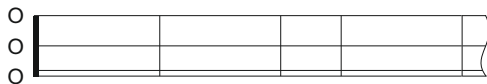
**Fretboard Diagram (DAD Tuning):**  
 The fretboard diagram shows the fret numbers for each string (D, A, d) across the measures. Circled numbers indicate specific frets for the melody notes.  
 Measure 1: D (0), A (2), d (4)  
 Measure 2: D (2), A (3), d (2)  
 Measure 3: D (1), A (0), d (2)  
 Measure 4: D (2), A (2), d (0)  
 Measure 5: D (0), A (2), d (0)  
 Measure 6: A (4), D (2), d (3)  
 Measure 7: A (3), D (4), d (3)  
 Measure 8: A (2), D (2), d (0)  
 Measure 9: A (0), D (0), d (2)  
 Measure 10: G (4), D (7), d (3)  
 Measure 11: G (4), D (3), d (4)  
 Measure 12: G (3), D (2), d (4)  
 Measure 13: G (4), D (4), d (0)  
 Measure 14: G (0), D (0), d (2)  
 Measure 15: A (1), D (2), d (3)  
 Measure 16: A (2), D (1), d (0)  
 Measure 17: A (0), D (0), d (0)

## Rosewood Casket

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. There's a little rosewood casket,<br/>Laying on a marble stand<br/>And a package of old letters,<br/>Written by my true love's hand.</p>      | <p>4. Read them over to me sister<br/>While I gently fall asleep,<br/>Fall asleep to wake in Jesus;<br/>Dearest sister do not weep.</p>        |
| <p>2. Go and get them for me sister,<br/>Read them o'er and o'er to me,<br/>I have often tried to read them,<br/>But for tears I could not see.</p> | <p>5. Tell him sister if you see him<br/>That I never ceased to love,<br/>That my dying prayer's to meet him<br/>In a better world above.</p>  |
| <p>3. Go and get them for me sister<br/>Let me lean upon your breast,<br/>For the tide of life is ebbing<br/>And soon I'll be at rest.</p>          | <p>6. There's a little rosewood casket,<br/>Laying on a marble stand<br/>And a package of old letters,<br/>Written by my true love's hand.</p> |

The following chords can be used as a simple accompaniment to the melody. There are alternatives to the D and G chords and the A can be substituted for an A7, a little experimentation should give you a progression that you will be happy with.

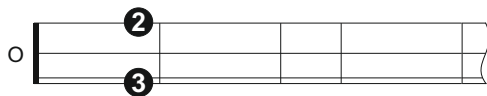
### D chord



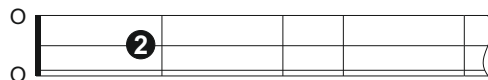
### D chord ( alternative )



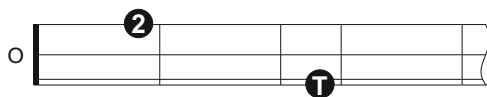
### A chord



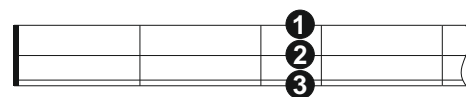
### G chord



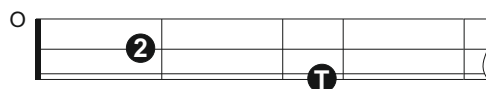
### A7 chord ( alternative to A )



### G chord ( alternative )



### G chord ( alternative )



# Rosewood Casket

## MAIN ARRANGEMENT

Tuning: D - A - d

Traditional American melody  
arrangement for dulcimer by Theo Elsey

The musical score for 'Rosewood Casket' is presented in four systems. Each system consists of a treble staff and a three-string dulcimer staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The dulcimer staff shows fret numbers (0-7) and fingerings (1-4) for strings D, A, and d. A dashed line with a box containing '1' indicates a first ending, and another dashed line with a box containing '2' indicates a second ending. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and accidentals.

*Rosewood Casket - continuation of main arrangement*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7



# Rosewood Casket

## MAIN ARRANGEMENT

Traditional American melody  
arrangement for dulcimer by Theo Elsey

Tuning: D - A - d

↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑

H

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 1

4 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

4 0 2 2 4 4 4 2 3 3 3 2 1

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

0 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

0 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

1 1 1 1 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

3 3 3 4 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

0 0 0 0 0 3 3 3 3 3 3 2 2

4 4 4 7 7 5 5 5 3 3 3 2 4

2 2 2 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

4 4 0 2 1 1 1 1 2 3 3 2 1

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

0 3 0

## CLOSING COMMENTS

This complete file has been created as one of three Fretted Dulcimer samplers made freely available for download from Fretbow's website: [www.fretbow.co.uk](http://www.fretbow.co.uk) It is recommended that you also look at the two other titles, *Dance to Your Daddy* and *The Hills of Connemara*, these are all set at an entry level suitable for beginners.

Theo Elsey

August 2001    Revised edition - February 2025