

Fretbow

Coulter's Candy

*Traditional Scottish Folk Song
Arranged for Fretted Dulcimer by Theo Elsey*

- 1) **Introduction** **Pages 2 - 3**
 - a) *Beginners - A few useful pointers in helping you get started including - tuning, reading tablature and playing chords.* Pages 2 - 3
 - b) *Intermediate to Advanced Players - Additional information enabling you to make the most of the fingerpicked arrangements to this song.* Page 3
- 2) **Basic dulcimer arrangement.** **Page 4**

A simple melody arrangement set on just the first string. Chords are Included for dulcimer or another accompanying instrument.
- 3) **Arrangements for Intermediate and advanced players.** **Pages 5 - 6**
 - a) *A fingerpicked arrangement for the intermediate player in both music notation and tablature.* Page 5
 - b) *A fingerpicked arrangement for both the intermediate and advanced player.* Page 6
- 4) **Tablature.** **Page 7**

All three arrangements in tablature, set out conveniently on just one page, ideal for printing out.
- 5) **Closing Comments** **Page 8**

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 4. If you find the music too difficult to understand 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.

Tuning the Dulcimer

The Hills of Connemara is in D- A- d tuning, this is probably the most common tuning used by fretted dulcimer players, the majority of FMA's dulcimer arrangements are also in this tuning. 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, picking the first string(s) out with your Right Hand Thumb. Make sure you fret accurately, the 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 4.

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 →

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(s) 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 to the mp3 audio track.

Chord symbols are given as bold type letter names above the music notation (see page 4). 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

D Chord

A Chord

G Chord

Left hand fingering.

Rhythm

Coulter's Candy 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>	<i>Eighth Notes Grouped</i>	
		Eighth Note (Quaver) = Half (1/2) a beat		
		Quarter Note (Crotchet) = One beat	Eighth Notes can be grouped, in each of these groups there are two half beat notes.	
		Half Note (Minim) = Two beats	<i>Dotted Quarter Note</i>	
		The dot extends the note by half its time again: = One and a Half beats.		

INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED ARRANGEMENTS

The basic beginners version is played entirely on the first string(s) using only the Right Hand Thumb to pick out the melody. The intermediate and advanced versions however require the additional use of the index and middle fingers.

Right hand fingering

- m* = string played with Right Hand Middle Finger
- i* = string played with Right Hand Index Finger
- T* = string played with Right Hand Thumb

Coulter's Candy can be played with the following right hand rule:

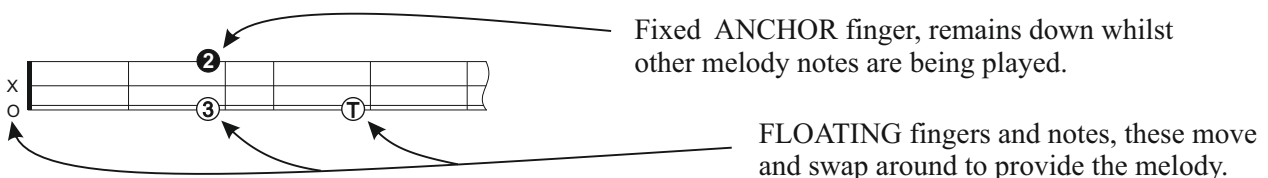
- m* plays 3rd string notes
- i* plays 2nd string notes
- T* plays 1st string notes



A spread or brushed chord, usually played by drawing the right hand index finger across all strings towards yourself. The notes should drag a little and have slight separation from each other.

Left hand 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.



Coulter's Candy

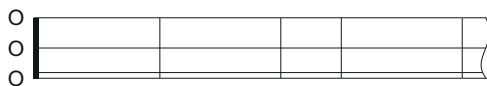
BASIC MELODY WITH CHORD ACCOMPANIMENT

Tuning: D - A - d

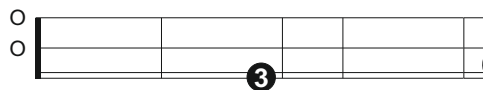
Traditional Scottish Folk Song

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.

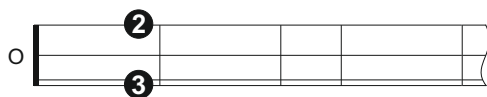
D chord



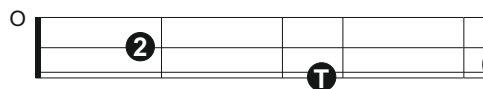
D chord (alternative)



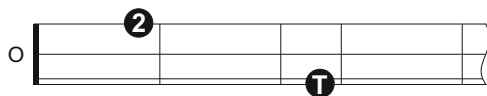
A chord



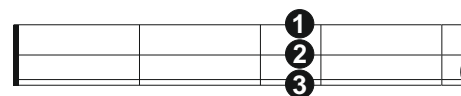
G chord



A7 chord (alternative to A)



G chord (alternative)



Coulter's Candy

ARRANGEMENT ONE

Tuning: D - A - d

Traditional Scottish Folk Song
arrangement for dulcimer by Theo Elsey

1

2

3

4

5

Coulter's Candy

Tuning: D - A - d

Traditional Scottish Folk Song

BASIC MELODY AND CHORDS

D G D G A

D A D

ARRANGEMENT ONE

Traditional Scottish Folk Song
arrangement for dulcimer by Theo Elsey

ARRANGEMENT TWO

Traditional Scottish Folk Song
arrangement for dulcimer by Theo Elsey

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 It is recommended that you also look at the two other titles, *Dance to Your Daddy* and *Rosewood Casket*, these are all set at an entry level suitable for beginners.

Theo Elsey

August 2001 Revised edition - February 2026