

hot banjo licks

newsletter #1 - august 2006



welcome!

We would like to welcome you to the premiere Hot Banjo Licks newsletter. Our goal is to provide valuable resources for banjo players who are serious students of the instrument, and help them on their journey to better playing.

Timing.... it's everything!

You've heard the expression, "Timing is everything," but unfortunately whoever coined that phrase probably wasn't thinking about music. In music timing is the bottom line, and in bluegrass music bad timing creates a disastrous effect that some refer to as a train wreck, and to my own shame (over the years) I have been the engineer on a few trains. I credit a number of people in my life who have helped me on my journey to learn how to play. From Mitch Manns, who early on shoved a Martin guitar in my face and beat timing into my head to Mike Adams (www.mikeadamsband.com) who really helped me to isolate my inconsistencies and focus on them until they were fixed. I continue to find things to work on and fix in my playing, but with each day of focused practice, I am able to smooth out more wrinkles. Lets face it, nobody ever arrives, and if they think so, they're self-diluted.

My friend Mike introduced me to the necessity of practicing with a metronome or drum machine, and I have to say that it was an eye opening experience. The first time I played with the metronome I found myself rushing like a lawyer to an accident. It took a while but eventually I caught on, and was able to settle down and keep my rolls going in time. What really helped me to hear and feel timing better was the drum machine. It was pointed out to me that a drum machine, with the off beat, is especially helpful for banjo players since they tend to rush the index and middle fingers (keep in mind this is only the opinion of a few professional banjo players I've spoken with). After experimenting a great deal with my drum machine and my metronome, I tend to agree., the off beat seems to pave a smoother road. I am to the place where I can now use the metronome and keep time, but I love to hear the off beat of the drum machine. It gives me the feel of a solid mandolin chop, and a good mandolin chop is down and dirty awesome. The off beat seems to help put the index and middle fingers in better time.

Continued on Page 2

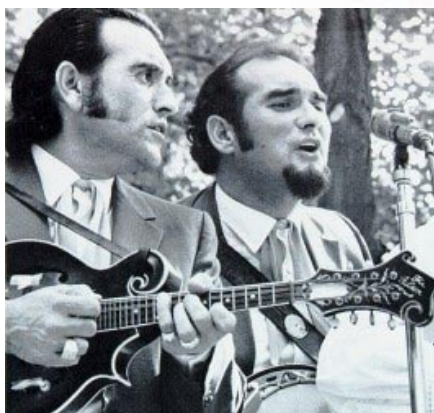
Timing.... it's everything! *Continued....*

The drum machine is only going to take you so far in your playing, and there is no replacing the positive effect of playing with a good guitar player who can keep time. The drum machine is great to help you isolate inconsistencies in your right hand roll patterns. I want to encourage you to try one out and see for yourself how much it can help you improve your timing. In our next newsletter, we're going to share some insights on timing and drive from a few veteran banjo players in the business. We have included, for our newsletter subscribers only, a free download of 13 different drum machine speeds (5 minutes each) for you to get you started. I want to encourage you to pick with a drum machine and get cracking on those areas where you need to improve. We all need to keep improving and growing.

David L. Russell

subscribers... only

Free Drum Machine Tracks



Maybe the Osbornes were on to something in bluegras.... drums!
Then again, maybe not.



Free Download
Good only for 30 days!

You may not think that drums work with traditional bluegrass and we can't agree more. However, that being said, we do think that a good drum machine track will greatly improve your timing on the banjo! The free special of the month is a great homegrown download of several drum machine tracks. Each one is 5 minutes long, enough time to give you a lot of practicing at any break, or to work on getting your backup in time. What's great about these rhythm tracks is that they mimic the sound of a mandolin chop with a solid bass beat. From 50 beats per minute up to the nearly impossible 200 beats a minutes, if you spend time every day working on your rolls, breaks and backup with a drum machine loop, you WILL improve your playing, timing and skill at the banjo!

This download has both the .WAV and .Mp3 files zipped within the folder. You can play them with any computer based audio program such as Media Player for Windows machines or Itunes for the Macs. If you burn a CD with the .WAV files only, you will be able to play the CD on any regular CD player. It's great if you find the beat you want, and then set the machine to loop, or play that track over. Sherri went and put the beats on her Ipod and she can listen to them through an earphone and pick along! We hope you'll enjoy this free download for our newsletter subscribers!

lick of the month



L.O.M. Em Lick

This lick works well with the Em phrasing in Foggy Mt. Breakdown. When played at a faster speed it takes on an eerie sound. It also works well with the Em phrasing in the song, Big Spike Hammer. You'll find this lick useful for any number of songs that contain Em chords for both leads and back-up licks.

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0 0 0 0 0 0

2 2-4 5 4 2 2-3 0 0

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.Mp3 File

Click to Download

.WAV File

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A Standard EM Lick

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HotBanjoLicks.com provides the banjo player with economical CDs and PDF e-books of the licks you want to learn and incorporate into your own style of playing.

Different volumes include:

**G Licks • Kick-offs • Endings
Back Up Licks • Tag Licks • Melodic Licks**

Hot Banjo Licks are designed for the intermediate banjo player that is looking to spice up their playing with more creative sounds to help develop their own style. Buying lots of tab books just to get that great kick-off or a tag lick can be expensive. Each of our Hot Banjo Licks collections offer you 50 great licks with an e-book of the tabbed lick as well as audio recordings of each lick played cleanly and at a medium rate for practice. All for one great low price!

Mix and match the different collections, buy just the ones that you WANT! If you only want endings, then buy just the endings volume that suits you!

And you can download them NOW! No waiting for the mail, it can be even the middle of the night or half way across the world! Or purchase them as convenient CDs mailed to you. Either way, you're ready to add the spice you've been looking for to your playing!

Be sure to sign up for our Lick of the Month newsletter! It's free! You'll get a new lick and audio recording as well as tips and information on playing the banjo! Check out the website for more information.

www.HotBanjoLicks.com