

## How to Navigate this Digital Version of *Waltzes for Mountain Dulcimers*

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## A Word from the Author



The greatest compliment I ever received for my dancing was from a high school sweetheart. After a dance one evening, she told me that I had done well. She followed it up with a very quick, “I wasn’t even ashamed to be with you!” That was the highlight of my dancing accolades. Although I have only caught them a few times, I am sure many have laughed at my paltry attempts at the art.

Although I do not move with a lot of grace myself, I love watching those who do. I am amazed at those who seem to do it effortlessly. From the greats like Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, and Ginger Rogers from the classic era of Hollywood musicals to TV’s “Dancing with the Stars,” all make me wish that my body were more in touch with what I hear in the music. But, alas, I am 64-years old now, and it is doubtful that I will ever dance well.

What I lack in dancing ability, I hope I can make up for in enthusiasm for music to which people can move their bodies. I like most kinds of music, but the music that inspires and is inspired by dance is special, both classic and modern. While I appreciate jazz and modern pieces that experiment with difficult timing and rhythms, I prefer regular rhythms and beautiful melodies.

This collection pays homage to a style of dance that evolved in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Germany and Austria from regional social dances. It was written in triple meter and involved couples rotating/twirling together on the dance floor. At first, the waltz was relatively shocking in polite society, even banned in some places, because of the intimacy between partners. However, it became the staple of ballroom dancing.

The music in this book ranges from country folk waltzes to more classically inspired ones. About half of them are my original pieces, while others have been collected from childhood memories, books, and Youtube. My hope is that you will enjoy them, dance to them (if you can), and play them for others (if you are like me and do not dance well yourself).

God bless,

Joe Collins



## How to Read Tablature in This Book

Tablature has been written for many centuries for a wide variety of instruments. It uses numbers or symbols to guide the musician instead of standard musical notation. Most mountain dulcimer tablature is relatively simple because only three strings are involved. Each line represents a string or double set of strings. The top line represents the bass string. The middle line represents the middle string, and the bottom line represents the melody string or the double set of melody strings.

Bass String
Middle String
Melody String(s) - often a double set

The numbers on the tablature represent fret numbers. Therefore, if the number 4 is on the bottom line, the musician would press the melody strings (those closest to him or her) down just to the left of the 4<sup>th</sup> fret. (If one is playing a left-handed dulcimer, then it would be just to the right of the 4<sup>th</sup> fret.)

**Tablature**

5		
4		

A "4" on the bottom line means to place finger here.

A "5" on the middle line means to place finger here.

**Neck of the Dulcimer**

Fret #	1	2	3	4	5	6	6+	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	13+	14			

### Special Notes:

- A unique characteristic of this tablature is that melody notes are in larger, bolder numerals.
- The number "0" means that you are to play that string "open," not pressing it down at all.
- The letter "X" appears occasionally on some pieces. This means that you are to avoid hitting that string at all as you play that set of notes. Unless an "X" appears, assume that you can strum all of the strings as you play.
- Parentheses ( ) around a numeral means that the fret number within it is an alternative note if the other proves too difficult for smooth playing.
- In the interest of avoiding unnecessary clutter, I choose to not place full chords under every note.  
**If only one numeral appears under a note, it does not mean that you have to play only one string.**
- Assume that you continue to hold the previous chord on the other two strings until the next chord is played.

The following tablature includes the melody line written in standard notation on the top staff and dulcimer tablature underneath. The vertical lines in modern dulcimer tablature indicate the beginning and ending of measures as they do in standard notation. All songs have suggested chords written above the upper staff. If a friend plays guitar, banjo, mandolin, or other instrument, he/she can use these chords to accompany you as you astound thousands with beautiful waltzes. This is standard format for most modern dulcimer tablature.