

Nashville Acoustic Camps: “Dobro Crash Course 3” with Ivan Rosenberg
Class 4 Review and Homework
June 27

Today we learned some convenient ways of playing in the key of Bm

Review the provided charts and compare them to the charts for the key of G/Em and C/Am (I made you a collage of the C/Am and D/Bm charts for easy comparison). Notice that the overall patterns and sequence of shapes are the same, but ‘home base’ shifts to accommodate new keys. For example, in the keys of C and Am, our straight-bar 1-chord at the 5th fret was home base. For the key of D, relative to C/Am, everything has shifted up 2 frets to accommodate our new home base at the 7th fret straight-bar D position. It’s also worth considering that the keys of G/Em, C/Am, and D/Bm share most of the same notes. The key of C/Am has no sharps or flats, The key of G/Em has just one sharp (F#), and the key of D has two sharps (F# and C#).

Hymn of Ordinary Motion

This is a beautiful Russ Barenberg tune that makes the most of what’s available in B minor. Notice that Bm is the only minor key where the open high string is the minor third of the chord – that’s one of the things that makes it such an interesting key on Dobro. Take some time to drill the Bm arpeggio on strings 6-4-3-1 using thumb for the three lower strings, and then also practice it as T T I M. Do whichever you like best. Jerry uses TTTM, but it’s great to be able to do both without any thinking or effort. The challenge will be coordinating arpeggiated chords with melody notes. Give it time. Pay attention to your attack on the high string: don’t pick it too hard and don’t let your middle finger get too close to the bridge, which will create an undesirable tinny, nasal tone compared to the other strings. Also don’t let your picking hand tense up while playing tunes like this. It’s important to relax your arm, wrist, hand, and fingers so you get pleasant tone and a flowing, fluid sound.

The Creptid Mule

For those of you who want to try this tune, tab is provided (old tab – sorry, I write cleaner and more accurate tab nowadays, but you’ll get the gist), and you have a recording of the video lesson of me playing along at slower tempo. Here’s a link to the tune online:
<https://ivanrosenberg1.bandcamp.com/track/the-creptid-mule>

There are some nice B minor licks in this tune, but you’ll never meet anyone else who plays it – I can’t even get anyone to play it with me!

Walk On Boy

I don’t love this song in Bm—Am is clearly better—but try it out in Bm anyway just for the practice.

Wayfaring Stranger

I think this song is perfect in B minor. Review the class recording and see what you can come up for a solo in this key.

Bright Sunny South in B minor

Not bad in this key! Check the recorded class video to see how many of the ideas we've been using on this song in other keys can be transmogrified for use in B minor. You'll have to get used to some quick bar work on strings 3 and 4 for closed-position licks between the 2nd and 4th frets for certain Bm phrases where we could use open strings in the keys of Em and Am.

Spotify Playlist

If you don't have this already from my previous workshops, here's a 20+ hour Dobro playlist I made on Spotify just for my Nashville Acoustic Camps students. Enjoy!

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6U3qLPXCStkvpZEstalfNL?si=f12270dc2ef94536&pt=682ff3a6b7a061d5202c2c4ab91704f0>

The playlist is far from comprehensive, and please don't take offense if your favorite players aren't on there. It started chronologically with early country and bluegrass Dobro players (Brother Oz, Uncle Josh, Mike Auldridge etc.) but then it soon became just a random playlist. Jerry Douglas and Rob Ickes are somewhat over-represented, but they're my two favorites. I'm mostly keeping it to songs where the Dobro is in G major tuning since that's the only tuning I'm teaching, but there are a few songs in open D tuning. If you don't have a paid account on Spotify, you can open a free (ad-supported) account. The ads are extremely annoying, but it's worth it to hear all this good Dobro music. Enjoy!

Speaking of Spotify, it makes the creation of a playlist like this so easy, but I nevertheless despise its business model, which has decimated the independent recorded music economy (including my own – I used to make several thousand dollars per year from online downloads plus CD orders, and that's down a couple hundred bucks in a good year since streaming took over). Artists and songwriters get paid close to zero for streams, and it actually costs us money just to get on streaming platforms, so it's a "you have to spend money to lose money" proposition for most of us. All by way of saying that if you really enjoy any of these artists, you can always buy CDs/downloads – it's more appreciated than you know. My albums are all available on Bandcamp:

<https://ivanrosenberg1.bandcamp.com>

Strings: I have an endorsement with Straight Up Strings and really like their resophonic guitar set, especially the evenness in tone from string to string, the responsiveness of the B (2nd string), and their warmth and longevity. I got through the first three classes with the same set of strings, and I play a couple hours per day on average. If I'm gigging or recording I change strings much more often, but not as often as I needed to with other sets. Straight Up Strings is a family-run business in California, and they've put a lot of consideration into developing Dobro strings. Like any other set, they won't sound perfect on every guitar or for every player's style, but I can wholeheartedly recommend that you at least try a set and see if you like them, or they have six packs that are less costly per set. FYI, the company

loses a bit of money overall on orders of just one set of strings when factoring in salaried order processing and time spent getting it in the mail, so consider getting a six-pack. It's never a bad thing to have extra strings, even if they turn out not to be your favs. Here's a link if you want to check them out.

<https://straightupstrings.com/collections/resophonic-guitar-strings/products/straight-up-strings-for-resophonic-guitar>

Tech note: a great free video player for slowing down videos and even audio files is VLC Media Player. It has a slider in the playback menu for changing the speed without changing the pitch – very convenient for learning. <https://www.videolan.org>. I've used it for years with no issues. Note: I will sound very drunk if you slow down my speech in the videos.

Bonus Q&A Session is June 29th at 7:30PM central time

Sorry, I was hoping to do this in a better day and time slot, but summer's getting busy! I hope some of you can make it live. If you can't (or even if you can), feel free to email me ahead of time at ivanDrosenberg@gmail.com with any questions along with any songs in minor keys or with minor chords that you'd like me to discuss.

For this session, everyone will get a chance to unmute. It's important that your Zoom audio settings are such that your Dobro playing won't cut out. In your Zoom audio settings, please make sure "Original Sound for Musicians" is **ON**. You can also have "Echo cancellation" ON. Please **disable/uncheck** "Automatically adjust microphone volume," "Zoom background noise removal," and "Personalized audio isolation." Zoom is clunky about saving preferences, so you'll have to get your audio preferences set as soon as you join our Q&A session. Thanks – see you soon!

