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**TG**  **On the CD**

**THE BEATLES**

**B L A C K B I R D**

**ROD SINCLAIR** takes you into the light of the dark black night with a full transcription of this fingerstyle 1968 McCartney favourite.

**B**LACKBIRD is often the first complete fingerstyle piece that guitarists learn. It is relatively simple to play, is easily recognisable, and the guitar part stands up on its own without any accompaniment. Of course, if you can sing like McCartney, it does help...

The picking pattern isn't too difficult – it consists of two notes picked together using the thumb and one finger, alternating with a G 'drone' note on the open third string. The coda section can be played using thumb and two fingers – or as McCartney plays it, by brushing the first finger down over both strings then back up, hitting several strings with one finger, and giving the part a more strummed feel.

*Blackbird* isn't 'fingerstyle' in the true sense – ie it doesn't use an alternating thumb pattern between two strings in the style of players like Chet Atkins or Bert Jansch. McCartney's technique here uses the thumb playing only four

notes to the bar, usually on just one string. All the syncopation and rhythmic interest is provided by two fingers or the strummed first finger technique described above. I've written out the whole of the guitar line and recorded it on this month's cover CD (CD TRACK 24). I've also included the tapped footsteps which appear on the White album version.

**DONOVAN'S INFLUENCE**

Paul McCartney and John Lennon learned their fingerpicking styles from 60's folk singer Donovan during 1968 when they were staying with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in India. Both guitarists took Martin D-28 acoustic guitars, which they had bought in 1967. As well as *Blackbird*, you can hear Donovan's influence all over the White album, particularly on Lennon's *Dear Prudence* and *Julia*, and McCartney's *Mother Nature's Son* and *I Will*. **TG**

**TRACK 24**

*Blackbird* played at normal speed, with 'footsteps' accompaniment, as on the original 1968 recording.

The performance on the CD, you will notice, is much 'freer' than the notation implies, and closer to McCartney's original – the first finger is brushing a couple of strings. Our transcription is designed to be easy to read, so we haven't shown each and every subtle note of the first finger strummed part. Learn the transcription, then try to add your own feel to the track.

The guitar used was a Takamine EN10C, recorded direct to tape through its own pickup, and a digital reverb was added.

Guitar: Rod Sinclair



Paul McCartney and John Lennon with Donovan in India, 1968. This is the period when both Beatles learned to play fingerstyle.

**THE LYRICS**

*Blackbird singing in the dead of night  
Take these broken wings  
and learn to fly  
All your life  
You were only  
waiting for this  
moment to arrive*

*Blackbird singing in the dead of night  
Take these sunken eyes  
and learn to see  
All your life, you were  
only waiting for this  
moment to be free*

*Blackbird fly  
Blackbird fly  
Into the light of the  
dark black night*

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**TG** On the CD

**THE BEATLES**

» THE BEATLES: Blackbird

CD TRACK 24

1

C G/B A7 D7 G

0 3 0 2 0 2 2 0 | 1 0 1 1 0 0 0 0 |

3 2 0 0 | 0 0 0 3 3

2

F C/E Dm G Bb6 C

10 0 8 0 6 0 5 0 | 3 0 3 3 0 5 0 5 0 |

8 7 5 3 | 1 1 3 3

F C/E Dm C Bb6 A7

10 0 8 0 6 0 5 0 | 3 0 3 3 0 2 0 2 0 |

8 7 5 3 | 1 1 0 0

D7 G Am G/B G

1 0 1 1 0 | 0 0 1 0 3 | 12 0 12 12 0 12 0 12 |

0 0 | 3 5 7 | 10 10 10 10 |

(2nd time)

1

C A7/C# D B7/D# Em Em(maj7)/D# D A7/C#

0 3 2 5 3 3 3 3 3 3 | 2 3 |

0 0 0 0 | 2 0 2 0 1 0 1 0 | 0 0 0 |

3 4 0 6 | 0 0 1 0 1 0 | 0 4 |





**On the CD**



» THE BEATLES: Blackbird

CD TRACK 24 »

C Cm G/B A7 D7 G

G

G Am G/B C G/B A7 D7 D.S. al  $\text{\textcircled{C}}$

$\text{\textcircled{C}}$  Coda C G/B A7 D7 G

C G/B A7 D7 G