

technique: **acoustic master**

Chet Atkins CGP
- the grandfather
of fingerstyle.

Maybelle

CHET ATKINS

Chet Atkins is possibly the world's best-known fingerpicker. KIT MORGAN transcribes one of his finest tunes.

THE word 'genius' is not one I like to bestow on anyone, but when it comes to Chet Atkins, few other descriptions seem adequate. The godfather of the 'Nashville Sound'. His phenomenal technique, immense musicality and supreme skills as an arranger have been an inspiration to musicians for decades.

Maybelle was written in honour of his fingerstyle contemporary Maybelle Carter. "I think I recorded it in '62 or '63, I don't know which album - they're not available now anyway... except at garage sales, I'm big at garage sales."

In order to best achieve the fearsome co-ordination required, watch out for the phrasing of the melody against the bass notes; notice when

melody notes fall in *with* the bass notes and when they're *between* bass notes. You'll find that you'll have to alter some fingerings of familiar chords in order to accommodate the melody - for example the F chord in bar 6.

BANJO ROLLS

The most difficult part of the track is the horrendous lick at bars 68 and 69. It starts with a straight scale, using open strings where possible, then a 'banjo roll' for the triplets. This is achieved by using the thumbpick and two fingers across adjacent strings in a 'rolling' motion. (subscribers can check out our technique special on banjo rolls in this month's Subs Club newsletter).

The main piece ends in true cowboy style with a quote from the traditional country tune *Wildwood Flower*. This uses a technique called 'Carter picking' (the style is named after Maybelle herself) - the tune is played in the bass and chords are strummed in the gaps. Although it looks difficult in the tab, most people actually find Carter picking easier than straight fingerstyle.

To play *Maybelle* exactly right, I'd recommend spending at least a month on it - even more if you're a less experienced fingerstyle player. And if you get stuck on that banjo roll, remember Chet's tip: "...it's difficult, but you can do it - hey, if I can do it, anybody can." Yeah, thanks Chet. **TGM**

T G COMPETITION

Win Chet Atkins videos!

Maybelle appears on the video *The Guitar Of Chet Atkins*, in which Chet talks you through nine of his favourite pieces; an 80-page tab book is supplied with full transcriptions. We've got ten copies to give away, worth £24.95 each, courtesy of the nice people at Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop (for more info on this and other acoustic-related vids, call them on 01732 353 252). All you have to do is tell us - what guitar manufacturer was the first to make a Chet Atkins model? Answers on a postcard to the usual address before 12th September.

CHET ATKINS: *Maybelle*

CD TRACK 24 -

acoustic master: technique

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NC

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