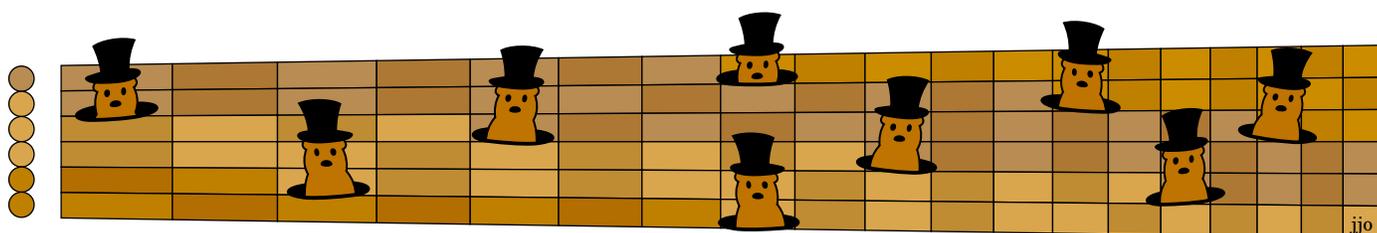


February Fretboard Exercises

Sightreads for Groundhog Day(s)



Exercise 1: I 1 II 1 III 4 IV 1 V 5 VI 3 VII 1 VIII 5 IX 1 X 5 XI 3 ④ ⑤

$\text{♩} = 60$

Exercise 2: I 1 II 1 III 5 IV 4 V 1 VI 4 VII 1 VIII 5 ⑤ ⑥

$\text{♩} = 72$

Exercise 3: I 2 II 6 III 4 IV 3 V 4 VI 5 VII 3 VIII 3 IX 2 X 5 XI 4 ③

$\text{♩} = 60$

Exercise 1	Beethoven: Marmotte, Op.52 No.7 (1793)	1
Exercise 2	Sor: Op.28, Malbrough, Theme (1827)	1
Exercise 3	Sor: Op.28, Malbrough, Var. 2 (1827)	1

Not just groundhogs. The Pennsylvania Dutch brought this weather lore from Germany where the animal was the badger and before that it was the bear, when bears were more prevalent (see Exercise 2 below). In Britain, some claim the hedgehog, and in Scotland, even a snake!

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groundhog_Day

Not just Groundhog Day. February 2nd falls half way between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. Such half-way points are known as “cross-quarter days” in Britain where their “quarter days” for repayment of debts align roughly with solistices and equinoxes. Cross-quarter days also align with old holidays like Candlemas, May Day, Lammas Day and All Hallows. Definitely more than just groundhogs.

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross-quarter_days

Exercise 1 by Beethoven and Goethe is about the marmots that poor street children trained to dance to the sound of a hurdy-gurdy for money. As a sightread, it's easily played in many positions: I, II, IV, VII and IX, which is quite unusual.

- <https://www.ffrc.org/daily-dose-of-beethoven/2020/7/3/beethoven-raritiesla-marmotte>
- <https://imslp.org/wiki/Special:ImagefromIndex/119626/hfpb> (score on IMSLP)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hz8PxZ_IOEc (voice and piano)

Exercise 2 is Fernano Sor's version of the simple French melody *Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre* (“Marlborough is going off to war”) that exploded in popularity in the 1780s in Europe. The tune was reused in “For He's a Jolly Good Fellow” and later “The Bear Went Over the Mountain”, which is where it got its connection to predictions of spring (if the bear could see over the mountain, spring would be soon, contrary to groundhog theory).

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malbrough_s%27en_va-t-en_guerre
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bear_Went_Over_the_Mountain_\(song\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bear_Went_Over_the_Mountain_(song))

For this piece, Sor wrote an Introduction, his own version of the Theme and five variations. Exercise 2 is the Theme, to which you can sing about the bear as you play. It's a very easy sightread in several positions (I, II, V and VII). Being in 6/8, it also has a remarkable similarity to Exercise 1.

Exercise 3 is Sor's minor version, perhaps for the bear on a bad day. The accidentals make it more challenging to sightread, but it's definitely doable in positions I and IX and an interesting variation on the old tune. See what you can see!

These exercises are from the yet to be released books “Diatonic Fretboard Exercises”, and “Chromatic Fretboard Exercises”, which together contain over two thousand such exercises and will be made available for free on IMSLP. The contents may be freely copied and modified, but with the condition that they be attributed to J. J. Olson (CC-BY license).

Interested? Contact Jeff Olson at jjocanoe@gmail.com

*P.S. It easiest to follow these links if you **get the pdf** as indicated on the first page.*