

# WABASH CANNONBALL

This arrangement introduces sound effect techniques which are for the most part extraneous to the melody. Along with an assortment of rapid hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides (glissandos), triplets, and chimes, there is a strong "steam locomotive" backbeat accomplished by hitting the strings extra hard every fourth beat. As the tempo increases, this back-beat accelerates and gives motion to the song. The melody is played four times with different timing variations. We have notated the recorded second version because it is easier to follow than the more ornamented variations. The cut-time effect of the second variation is achieved by pulling off of the string between every melody note.

The entire song is a fine example of strumming the melody strings at an angle while only occasionally hitting the drones. In this way the melody stands out more distinctly. The subsequent variations have increasingly faster tempos. The shift to the bass string signals the upcoming final and fastest version. Following this, the sound effect techniques ease the tune to a close.

*Wabash* is a genuine hobo ballad about a mythical train that runs everywhere. The lyrics we're presenting are a combination of the words collected by Alan Lomax in 1960, those sung by Tommy Davis in 1941, and those remembered by ourselves from Dizzy Dean on the "Baseball Game of the Week". Adaptations such as this are what make folksongs stand the test of time — continually reinventing themselves to fit the tastes of the people. Robert's performance of this tune won the 1971 Southern Highlands dulcimer championship in Cosby, Tennessee.

## WABASH CANNONBALL RIFFS

### 1 Puffing up Steam:



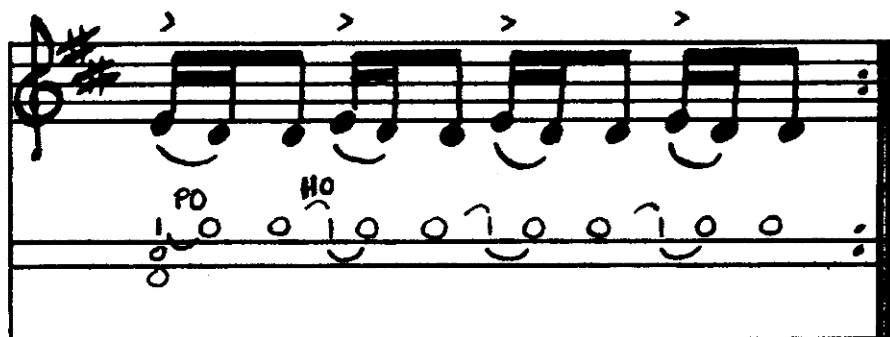
**Learning to walk the strings**  
**Keeping the treble position down throughout.**

## 2 Tooting the Whistle:



A slide with vibrato on half-note ( 3 ).

## 3 Spinning the Wheels:



Hammering on (HO) to bass string and pulling off (PO) across all strings from bass to treble.

## 4 Ringing the Bell:



Long slide with harmonic.

**EACH RIFF IS PLAYED ABOUT 4 TIMES.**

**SEQUENCE: 1,2,1,3,4.**

# WABASH CANNONBALL

American Traditional

Arr. R. Force

Key: D

tuning: ddAD

5<sup>th</sup> drone.....

0  
0  
4 4 7 7 9 9 11 9

0  
0  
8 7 7 5 4 4 4 7

0  
0  
8 8 8 8 9 9 8 8

0  
0  
7 7 7 5 4 4 4 5

0  
0  
4 4 7 7 9 9 11 11

0  
0  
11 11 12 11 8 8 8 9

2. AS RECORDED

2. ALTERNATE ENDING

0  
0  
11 11 12 11 9 8 7 5

0  
0  
4 5 4 2 1 1

0  
0  
1 0

0  
0  
4 2 1 2 0

# LYRICS

From the great Atlantic Ocean to the wild Pacific shore,  
From sunny California to ice-bound Labrador,  
She's might tall and handsome, she's known quite well by all,  
She's the hoboes 'commodation called the Wabash Cannonball.

Chorus:

Listen to the jingle, the rumble and the roar,  
As she glides along the woodlands, through the hills and by the shore,  
Hear the mighty rush of the engine, hear the lonesome hoboes squall,  
While traveling through the jungle on the Wabash Cannonball.

This train she runs to Memphis, Mattoon, and Mexico,  
She rolls through East St. Louis and she never does it slow,  
As she flies through Colorado, she gives an awful squawl,  
They tell her by her whistle — the Wabash Cannonball. (Chorus)

Our Eastern states are dandy, so all the people say,  
From New York to St. Louis and Chicago by the way,  
From the hills of Minnesota where the rippling waters fall,  
No changes can be taken on the Wabash Cannonball. (Chorus)

She come down from Birmingham one cold December day,  
As she rolled into the station you could hear the people say,  
She's long and tall and handsome, she's known quite well by all,  
She's the modern combination called the Wabash Cannonball. (Chorus)

Here's to Daddy Klaxton, may his name forever stand,  
And always be remembered in the halls throughout the land,  
His earthly days are over and the curtain 'round him falls,  
We'll carry him home to victory on the Wabash Cannonball. (Chorus)