

## **Songs in Open D**

Although I had been playing the guitar since my early teens, at least after a fashion, it was not until 1969, at the age of 20, that I decided to dedicate myself to becoming an accomplished rhythm acoustic guitarist. My initial emphasis, which carried through several years of dedicated effort and practice, was on mastering both of the two main styles of play (flatpick and fingerstyle), and on the use of alternate tunings, which I used very frequently early on. Until fairly recently my preferred tuning, which I used far and away more than any other tuning, was D pedal tuning (D-A-D-G-B-D). Actually for many years I referred to this tuning as D Modal tuning, but I abandoned that name in favor of D pedal tuning in the late 2000's, upon learning that D Modal is a widely accepted alternate name for the popular tuning (especially among Irish acoustic guitarists) also known as DADGAD tuning. In any case, I have never used D Modal (DADGAD) tuning, except for one song that I wrote fairly recently, and I had only used open D tuning (D-A-D-F#-A-D) for a few songs before retiring from performing in the small club/lounge circuit in the early 1980's.

I got away from the use of alternate tunings almost altogether for the next couple of decades or so, during which time I seldom played at all (except for a recording binge in 1989). When I did play, and it was not often as I was otherwise occupied with running a business and raising a family, it was invariably either in standard tuning or in D pedal tuning. Then around 2010 I became more closely acquainted with open D tuning when I was figuring out the songs in the Popular Music Catalog, five of which are played in open D. Around that same time I wrote "Which Way We Go", which is played in open D tuning even though it is in the key of b minor, and which is the only song that is included twice in the D.L.Stieg Catalog ("Ghost Riders In The Sky" is the only

song included twice in the 2014 Catalog). I also used open D tuning on several other songs in the D.L. Stieg Catalog, mainly for duet arrangements, but then in January 2013 I decided to play in open D exclusively for a while, determined to find out if I could find ways to make greater use of this versatile and well-balanced tuning.

The open D guitar arrangements for the 6 original songs on this album were all written in January 2013, in the space of only a few days, and recorded on a miniature recorder possessed of just enough fidelity to allow for remembering what the arrangements sounded like. It was not until a little over a year later that I went back to those recordings, composed a vocal melody and lyrics, and recorded the songs for this album. I had also been regularly playing four of the cover songs, three of which are included in the Popular Music Catalog, since early 2013, which facilitated the matter of recording them for this album. I devised the guitar arrangements for the other two cover songs (“Ghost Riders In The Sky” and “Hotel California”) while I was finalizing and recording this album. Both songs employ somewhat unusual open D arrangements, since they are both in the key of d minor and not D Major. In addition, two of the original songs (“Everyone Needs (Everyone Wants)” and “Cherish The Good Times”), as well as two of the cover songs (“Sailing” and “Song For A Winter’s Night”), feature similarly unusual open D arrangements, since they are all in the key of A.