Turlough O’Carolan (1670 - 1738)

– Morgan Magan –

Banjo solo by Jean Louis Thiry

This is a sample tune from:

“Jiggin’ Banjo, Sélection de Morceaux Ternaires & Syncopés”,

a collection of tunes played or written in triple meter (ternaire) and syncopated like, jigs, blues, marches, French bourrées, ragtime, waltzes, schottisches, farandole, and more… like this Turlough O’Carolan’s tunes, Sir Arthur Shaen, a curious funeral march where the last beat of most bars is silent. Rarely heard in Irish sessions, this peaceful tune has a nice Chinese music feeling. Mountain minor tuning, best sounding without a capo.

All the tunes in this all-tablature clawhammer banjo songbook make an extensive use of what I call “arpege” (represented by the symbol ▲ in the tablature above) consisting in playing several consecutive notes on adjacent strings with the index (or medium) finger as you would do with a flat pick and allows you to play more complex rhythms and melodies. Texts are written in French, but music has no frontier and is one language. For a lighter look of the tabs, I opted for the classic banjo sheet music fingerings, “+” for the thumb and “.” for index.

Most of the tunes are played without a capo and use the following tunings: G-tuning, Standard C-tuning (bass to C), Mountain Minor, Double-C and my favorite and most melodious above all: #DGBD (Tourdion Tuning) for an easy playing in Bm, D, bluesy D and related.

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Pouce • Index • Majeur • Arpège • Po Pull off • H Hammer on