

**Flatpicking Guitar Magazine**  
**Free Monthly Lesson - October 2020**

**New Five Cent Piece**

**Arranged by Mickey Abraham**

Hello and welcome once again to Flatpicking Guitar Magazine's free lesson portion of our monthly newsletter. This month I offer you two versions of a great fiddle tune entitled the "New Five Cent Piece." "New Five Cent Piece" is a tune I have run into at jam sessions over the years. While I never learned the exact melody (until recently) I always enjoyed jamming over it using fiddle tune language from other similar tunes I know. When I did finally delve into the actually melodic content of the "New Five Cents" I became more and more intrigued by the tune's unique order of notes. As with any fiddle tune, no two people play it the same. I based my lesson version on the way traditional old time fiddlers play it mixed with the playing of the great Adam Steffey.

The chords to the "New Five Cent Piece" are very basic and also very typical of the best fiddle tunes. The A section can be thought of as a the same form as "Bile 'em Cabbage" which to many is considered the quintessential fiddle tune chord form. The simple and catchy nature of the chords to "New Five Cent Piece" are one of the reasons it is such a great tune and fun to play.

When students want to learn how to improvise and make up their own versions of fiddle tunes it is often explained to "outline" the chord changes. This can be a very elusive concept for some folks as there are many ways to bring out the chord changes in your variations. When learning bluegrass it is often taught to play over the changes by playing C licks, F licks, and G licks over each chord as they show up. While this is done and is correct sometimes the correct method is to ignore the chord changes and stick to one scale rather than changing scales or licks over each chord. Some tunes make great use of one major scale and just land on the chord tones as each chord shows up.

"New Five Cents" makes great use of just one C major scale position (Capo II key of D). By doing this a very interesting thing happens from a music theory perspective. When we play our C major scale over the F chord (the IV chord) we experience the lydian mode (major scale with a #4). This is interesting to me as the lydian mode is often considered modern and futuristic sounding but here it sounds like perfect old-time American melody.

When I realized this property of classic melodies it helped me with my improvisation and helped we with coming up with cool new ways to play over fiddle tunes. The idea is that when you are on the IV chord you just keep playing the scale of the I. It amazes me that this holds true for many tunes but not for others. Your ear will have to be the test. Likewise, If we keep playing our C major scale over the G chord we are playing the G mixolydian mode (major scale with a b7). Many fiddle tunes make use of this melodic concept: I chord = major scale sound, IV chord = lydian sound, and V chord = mixolydian sound. I will explore this idea further in future lessons.

Don't worry if this seems like a lot of theory. The point is that it sounds cool! Make sure to click on the included lesson mp3 to hear the chords and melody to the "New Five Cent Piece" in action. As always should you have any questions or comments on this lesson just drop me a line at [michabraham@comcast.net](mailto:michabraham@comcast.net). Also, Skype and Zoom private lessons are going great! It's been rewarding to connected with students from all over the world. Please contact me if you'd like more information about setting up private virtual lessons.

# New Five Cent Piece

Arranged by Mickey Abraham

1 C F C G

TAB

6 C F C G C C

11 C G

15 C F C G C C

20 C F C G

# New Five Cent Piece (con't)

24 **C** **F** **C** **G** **C** **C**

0 0 3 0 1 0 | 1 2 0 2 0 1 2 | 0 1 0 3 2 3 0 2 | 3 3 3 3 | 2 3 3 3 0 2

29 **C** **G**

0 2 2 2 0 2 | 0 2 2 2 0 2 | 0 2 2 3 2 | 0 3 5 0 5 0 2

33 **C** **F** **C** **G** **C** **C**

0 2 2 2 0 2 | 3 2 3 0 2 0 1 2 | 0 1 0 2 0 3 2 0 | 2 3 3 3 0 2 | 2 3 3 3 0 2 | 0 1 0 2 2 3 | 0 1 0 2 2 3