

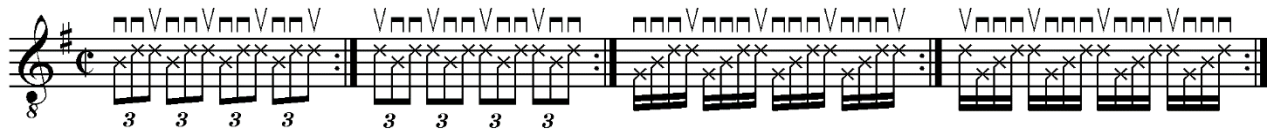
Hello, this is Ron Hinkle again, with another plectrum banjo video tutorial. The subject of this one is Duo Style, and is meant to support my latest technique article in the Spring 2016 edition of BMG magazine. If you don't get that magazine, I highly recommend it; you can find subscription information on Clifford Essex's website: cliffordessex.net. You don't need the magazine to learn from this video, however.

Duo Style is simply the technique of making one banjo sound like two; it is also sometimes called cross picking. Its foundations were laid long before the Jazz Age, but it remains a very uncommon banjo technique. Emile Grimshaw covered the basics; his material—along with the material presented here—is in his newly-updated *Plectrum Playing for Modern Banjoists*, also available on the Clifford Essex website. I guarantee that if you master it, you will be one of the few! I also guarantee that it will transform your picking hand like nothing else!

I first learned Duo Style by copying a recording of Liebestraum by the great Buddy Wachter 25 years ago. I took his workshop a few times, and learned even more about it; my understanding of it continues to evolve, and my picking hand continues to improve. So these are Buddy's methods—I must give credit where it is due—but they have been modified a bit by me over the years.

For a PDF of this presentation, go to www.banjosnob.com, click on the Technique tab, and open the file entitled Duo Style. There you will also find an arrangement of Liebestraum to use as a learning song.

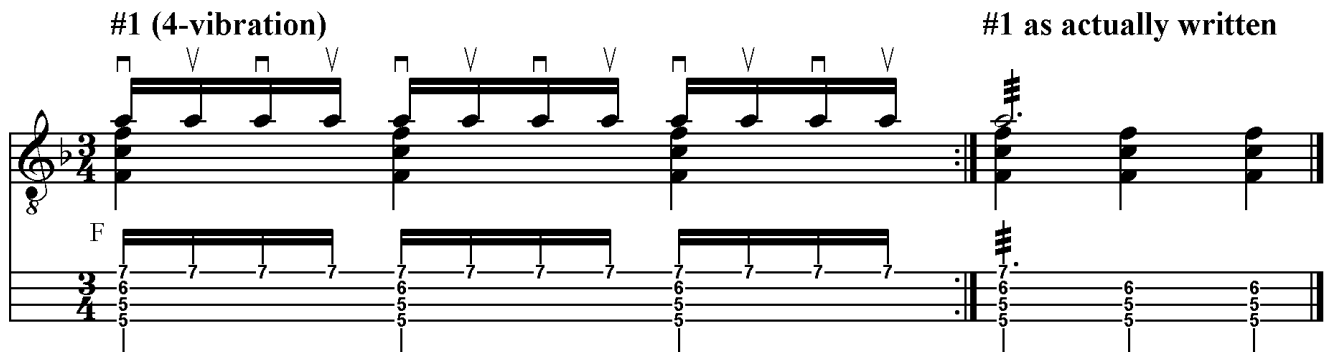
A basic understanding of tremolo is helpful, but that will improve as a side-product of Duo Style. We will start with Broken Chord Strokes. Here they are; the X's in place of the note heads means to deaden the strings with your fretting hand. At this time, we don't want the chord notes to distract you from the task at hand; your picking hand technique! Strive for machine-gun like precision. Though the music only shows it on the top strings, I demonstrate them on all two-string combinations. As always, use a metronome! For this demonstration, I have mine set at 80 bpm; as you can imagine (so, needless to say. . .), the more you practice this, the better you'll get!



Notice that I maintain head contact at all times; it can be done without head contact, but that is more difficult, and why make it more difficult than it has to be? No head contact is used for the Eddie Peabody style of playing, as shown in my previous video tutorials; I advocate head contact for everything else. Note that the last Broken Chord Stroke is used for the intro and outro (and in a couple of other short places) of my Liebestraum video example.

Now for the Duo-Style strokes. As I said before, I'm still learning after more than 25 years of playing them; in fact, after I wrote the magazine article, I discovered a couple of steps that make it easier to learn.

Duo-Style #1 is simply a strum with a tremolo. I will show two variations; "4-vibration," and "6-vibration." Learn both; appropriate use depends on the tempo of the music (4 = faster, 6 = slower), and your skill level. I am using a seventh fret F chord for all of these demos; it is the first chord of Liebestraum. Writing it out literally is very cumbersome; the last measure shows how it would actually be found in music; the accompaniment notes below, and a tremoloed dotted half-note above.



#1 (6-vibration) **#1 as actually written**

Duo-Style #2 (now different from the BMG article) introduces a basic “accompaniment” pattern. First learn this pattern.

Accompaniment #2 #3

♩ = 80

Now, add in alternating up-strokes on the first string (pictured above); this is the “melody.”

Duo-Style #3 (pictured above) is a triplet; a down-stroke on the accompaniment note, and a down-up on the melody.

Duo-Style #4 is a quintuplet; a down-stroke on the accompaniment note, and down-up-down-up on the melody; count 1-2-3-4-5 while playing. This is where it starts to truly sound like two banjos, and is the pattern I play on the first eight bars of the Liebestraum video example.

#4 **#4 as actually written**

Duo-Style #5 introduces a new eighth-note accompaniment pattern and is all down-strokes; learn this pattern first.

Accompaniment #5

Next, add in alternating up-strokes on the melody string (pictured above).

Duo-Style #6 is sixteenth-note triplets. This is the picking pattern I use on the rest of the Liebestraum example. It sounds like the hardest stroke, but is actually the easiest once you have mastered it. I also use this stroke to play Recuerdos de la Alhambra.

#6 #6 as actually written

Here is a bonus Duo Style Stroke; it is a variation on #4.

Variation #1 (based on #4) As written

Here is another bonus stroke; this one is based on #6.

Variation #2 (based on #6) As written

When you have these learned at a comfortable level, simply plug them into Liebestraum (below) or any other similar tune in 3/4 time. With modifications, they can be used in many different types of music.

Thank you for watching; I hope these techniques prove to be as transformational for you as they have been for me.

If you have difficulty with this—or any other plectrum banjo technique—I am available for private lessons via Skype; contact me at banjoplayer1@yahoo.com for more information. If you have never before taken private lessons, I encourage you to try it; there are many great teachers out there, just waiting for the opportunity to help you improve your banjo playing! Thank you and enjoy!