

Tunings

Nick Drake

From: Harlan L Thompson

BEST GUESSES ON NICK DRAKE TUNINGS:

--SONG-----TUNING-----CAPO?-----AT OLGA?----|
 ----FIVE LEAVES LEFT-----|

Time Has Told Me	D A D G D F#	3rd fret	yes
River Man	standard	3rd fret	yes
Three Hours	C G C F C E	? no	
Way To Blue	standard	no	
Day is Done	C G C F G C	? no	
Cello Song	C G C F C E	1st fret	yes
The Thoughts of Mary Jane	D A D G D F#	1st fret	
Man in G Shed	C G C F C F	? no	
Fruit Tree	C F C C G C	2nd fret	yes
Saturday Sun	standard	no	yes

----BRYTER LAYTER----

Introduction	C G C F C E	? no	
Hazy Jane II	Bb F Bb Eb Bb D	no	yes
At the Chime of a City Clock	standard	down 1 fret	yes
One of These Things First	standard	? no	
Hazy Jane I	C G C F C E	no	
Bryter Layter	C F C C G C	? 3st fret	? no
Fly	C G C F C F	1st fret	yes
Poor Boy	standard	? no	
Northern Sky	C G C F C E	1st fret	yes
Sunday	C F C C G C	? 1st	

----PINK MOON----

Pink Moon	C G C F C E	1st fret	yes
Place to Be	C G C F G E	3rd fret	yes
Road	C F C C G C	3rd fret	yes
Which Will	Bb F Bb Eb Bb D	no	yes
Horn	standard	down one	
Things Behind the Sun	D G D D A D	6th fret	yes
Know	standard	no	yes
Parasite	C G C F C E	2nd fret	yes
Ride	Bb F Bb Eb Bb D	no	
Harvest Breed	C G C F C E	1st fret	yes
>From the Morning	Bb F Bb Eb Bb Eb	no	yes

----TIME OF NO REPLY----

Time of No Reply	standard	down 2 frets	
I Was Made to Love Magic	D G D G A D	? no ?	
Joey	C F C F G C	5th fret	yes
Clothes of Sand	C F C F G C	3rd fret	yes

Mayfair	standard ? 3rd fret
Been Smoking Too Long	standard 2nd fret
Strange Meeting II	standard 2nd fret
Rider on the Wheel	standard ? down one ?
Black Eyed Dog	standard 3rd fret
Hanging on G Star	Bb F Bb Eb Bb D down 1 fret
Voice From the Mountain	standard no yes

NOTES: This list is nothing more than a best guess at this point. I don't actually know how to play any of the songs that are not marked as being at Olga. Some of these are marked with a ? which means I really am best guessing and some are not which means I'm fairly certain but could still be wrong. It's impossible to tell until the song is actually figured out cos some of the tunings (DADGDF# and DADGAF# for instance) are so similar to each other. Hopefully in the future this list can be corrected and eventually most Drake songs actually figured out (someday!).

NOTES ON D A D G D F# AND IT'S VARIATIONS: Note that this tuning and DADGDG are the same as CGCFCE and CGCFCF, just two half-notes apart. If you try tuning to DADGDF# and/or DADGDG, I warn that your odds of breaking a string are quite good. Personally I always tune to CGCFCE and/or CGCFCF- then I can strap a capo on the second fret and it's exactly the same as DADGDF# and/or DADGDG. This is probably what Nick Drake often did- one song (Hanging on a Star) is even tuned lower than that!

TUNING TO **Bb F Bb Eb Bb D**

Note that the 1st string (E) is already where you want it. NEVER change this string and it will be easier to get back into standard tuning later. To tune the other strings, I would recommend tuning the 4th string (D) down to C first. This can be done by checking with other C notes on other strings, such as the 9th fret of the first string or the 1st fret of the second string. Then, drop the 6th string (E) down four frets to C and raise the second string (B) up one fret to C. So now just the 5th and 3rd string are off. The nice thing about having the 4th string in C early is that the relationship between this string and the 5th and 3rd is the same as before, just two frets lower. So, you can use harmonics and the usual 5th string / open string test to bring the 5th and 3rd string into line. Both the 5th and 3rd string need to go down two half notes. So to make sure everything is okay at the end of your tuning, you can play-

6th and 5th strings: 7th fret note (6th string) with open note (5th string)
 5th and 4th strings: 5th fret note (5th string) and open note (4th string) plus the 5th fret harmonic (5th string) and 7th fret harmonic (4th string)
 4th and 3rd strings: 5th fret note (4th string) and open note (3rd string) plus the 5th and 7th harmonics as in the string before.
 3rd and 2nd strings: 7th fret note (3rd string) and 2nd string open note.
 2nd and 1st strings: 4th fret note (2nd string) and 1st string open note.

Some double checking techniques:

3rd and 1st strings: the open third string should be the same as the 1st

fret note of the first string.

Obviously, make sure all three C strings sound good together.

The 12th fret harmonic on the 6th string should sound good with the open note of the second string.

Once you re in CGCFCE, getting to CGCFCF is a piece of cake- just tune the first string up one, by comparing it with the open third string.

GETTING BACK: Once you re in CGCFCE, getting back isn t so tough, if the 1st string E has not been tampered with. Using this E, tune the 6th string (now at C) way back up to E. Once that is done, getting the 5th string up to A should be easy (same technique as normal tuning), then the 4th string can follow and so on. After you ve done this awhile, it s better to work on several strings at once rather than one at a time so you don t move too quickly on any one string and break it (ditto with tuning down).

FINAL NOTES: Comments and/or improvements on this tuning list are greatly appreciated. I hope this inspires those who have never done so before to try and figure out Nick Drake songs themselves. As far as the songs I ve posted go, I m better at figuring out chord shapes than figuring out picking patterns, so I hope some other people can improve on those especially. Also, Drake tends to through in all kinds of extra notes and tricky bits- if any one can post these kinda things, much less figure them out, my hat s off to you.

Harlan (at harlant@hawaii.edu)