

Hello banjo friends,

What a treat to have you all in class tonight! I'm delighted to see so many familiar faces--from previous Zoom workshops as well as from "real-life" banjo events--and welcome new faces. Thanks, all, for signing up for this month of banjo music.

Lily of the Valley certainly has some challenging mechanics for the banjo, but once your fretting hand knows its way through the sequence of pull-offs both ordinary and alternate-string, the intuitive melody will carry you along. This is one of my favorite tunes to play on both banjo and fiddle; though not the flashiest tune ever, I find it somehow very satisfying and comforting to experience again and again. If you yearn for a somewhat more user-friendly A-part approach, remember our in-class substitution of fifth string for any or all of the second-fret third-string ordinary pull-offs (an option not depicted in the tab but hopefully easy for you to overwrite as you wish). Above all, imagine source fiddler Luther Davis' slow, stately pace as you play, and try to not let the tune's wheels spin off!

Here are a couple of nice renditions of Lily of the Valley to accompany your learning:

-Alice Gerrard on fiddle (sounding very much like Luther Davis, with whom she spent considerable time in the 1970s and 1980s) with Kay Justice on guitar and (my best guess) Gail Gillespie on fingerstyle banjo, from Alice and Kay's 2017 album "Tear Down the Fences" (scroll down to track

6): <https://alicegerrard.bandcamp.com/album/tear-down-the-fences>

-fiddler Nokosee Fields with his fine BOOJUM group serenading us in this recent video. I love the band's chord progression, at once dark and sweet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3ufX3m2Sk8>

Even though Mr. Davis' own recording of this tune doesn't seem to have been commercially released, you might enjoy reading this nice remembrance by Don Mussell and seeing photographs of Mr. Davis himself, his home, and some of the younger musicians who were captivated by his music and his welcoming presence: [https://people.well.com/user/dmsml/luther\\_davis/index.html](https://people.well.com/user/dmsml/luther_davis/index.html)

Here are several representative recordings of Mr. Davis' fiddling of other tunes, including some that are quite commonly-played today: <https://www.slippery-hill.com/source/luther-davis>

The Field Recorders' Collective has released one volume of Mr. Davis' fiddling, available for digital download, with accompanying information about his musical

life: <https://fieldrecorder.bandcamp.com/album/frc-745-luther-davis-old-time-galax-fiddling-recorded-by-tom-carter-blanton-owen>

Please don't be shy about contacting me with any banjo-related questions or thoughts--or contacting Megan with anything admin-related. We want you all to be happy with your experience this month!

Cheers,  
Adam