

Hello banjo friends,

Has the boat(s)man turned up yet, or are you/we still waiting? Hopefully your upcoming practice of this sweet-but-tricky tune will hasten his arrival. I'm still smiling as I think about those few-dozen fretting hands visibly sliding right along with mine--what fun this Zoom workshop format can be!

As you get more familiar with Waiting for the Boatsman, do monitor timing in the first two highly syncopated phrases of the B part. Here I find it imperative to really keep my right hand moving (not just imagining it moving, while it actually hovers in place) through the various ghost-stroked beats. Remember that temporarily filling ANY of those syncopated spaces with finger-struck content--and then removing it again once the music starts flowing--can be a handy stepping stone toward learning the more rhythmically challenging version of a given passage.

When we next meet, please come with your banjos still tuned to double-D tuning, aDADE, so that we can work on my preferred "final ending" to tonight's tune. Then, as a group, we will retune to a special (and possibly unfamiliar) tuning for our next tune of a very different and moodier flavor!

In the meantime, though, here are two fine renditions of Waiting for the Boatsman:

-fiddler Melvin Wine, from Braxton County, West Virginia, recorded in 1975: <https://www.slippery-hill.com/content/waiting-boatsman>

-fiddler Clare Milliner with Walt Koken on banjo in a recent video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWD_KVDZ-kc

...and here is a collection of Melvin Wine fiddling many of his most beloved tunes (be sure to flip through the multiple pages!): <https://www.slippery-hill.com/source/melvin-wine>

As always, please feel free to reach out with any questions or thoughts that this month's tunes might inspire--or to just talk banjo!

Cheers,
Adam