

Auld Lang Syne – aka “The New Year’s Song”

DADGAD arrangement by Jim Deeming

This tune is sung or played in many countries at the stroke of midnight on New Year’s Day every year. The lyrics are from a Scottish poem written by Robert Burns in 1788, set to a traditional folk song. The title literally translates to “old long since”. Modern English equivalents would be “long long ago” or “days gone by”. The Wikipedia page on this song covers an amazingly long list of uses for this melody in countries all around the world.

I chose to arrange this song in DADGAD to keep the Scottish flavor, but found it fit well with the up-tempo alternating thumb-style as well as a “Maybelle Carter” right hand technique so both feels are used.

There are two arrangements provided – one for beginners and one for intermediate to advanced players. The beginner version uses a minimum number of chords and is an excellent introduction to DADGAD. The most commonly sung lyrics are included on this version.

The advanced version is based on my YouTube video you may have seen although as always, subtle changes creep in over time. In particular, this version makes use of walking bass lines – the biggest one is a descending run of almost two octaves, spanning the last six measures of the verse.

The tablature is written in standard pitch DADGAD tuning, however I enjoy the sound of this arrangement with a capo at the second fret, making the song in the key of E. If you want to do this, simply read the tablature fret numbers as relative from your capo, rather than the nut.