

# “Flamingo” Instructions

*(HSGA Quarterly, Fall 2013 Arrangement)*

## OVERVIEW

“Flamingo” is a great tune for playing Hawaiian style. The version in the newsletter is a literal rendering of the melody—that is, every melody note corresponds to a vocal syllable. In practice, you’ll often want to enhance the melody with lead-ins and fill-in notes between vocal phrases to fill out the arrangement. I’m including a second version of the tune with these “extras” thrown in. It does make the arrangement harder to play, however.

The arrangement is also a great example of how good the steel guitar is at creating very modern sounding chords and chord progressions with a minimum of difficulty. That’s what I had in mind with the intro and ending of “Flamingo,” portions of which can be heard in various recordings of the tune—check these out on YouTube:

- [Duke Ellington](#) version with Herb Jeffries on vocal.
- [Dick James](#) vocal with Geraldo and his Orchestra – my ending is based on the ending chords at 0:2:50.

You’ll have access to the following files:

- ‘FlamingoNewsletterAudio’ — the audio that matches the arrangement in the Fall 2013 issue.
- ‘FlamingoAdvancedTab’ — tablature of the fuller, more advanced version.
- ‘FlamingoAdvancedAudio’ — audio that matches the more advanced version.

## GENERAL NOTES

1. Notes in the tablature that have parentheses are optional.
2. The squiggly lines in measures 1, 3, and 5 of the tablature (and all throughout) represent strums. Use your thumb to rake across the strings. It is a brilliant effect to slow down your strumming to achieve a harp-like effect. The climax of the tune is the series of strums and slides in measure 34 — it is very important to play strums accurately with your thumb. You strum the first three chords in that measure and then slide your bar up to the 10th fret and then up to the 14th fret. The slashes tell you to slide up. Whenever you see slashes in between two notes (or chords), you pick the first note and then slide the bar to the fret of the second note without picking again.
3. The finger harmonics at the end are tough! With the bar at the 9th fret, you pick each string indicated using your thumb and at the same time lightly bounce off that string at the 21st fret using the tip of your pinky, fourth finger, or a knuckle. The timing is critical—you have to pick and bounce at the same instant. The last two notes are called second-order harmonics—notated as ‘F.H.(2)’—and they are the same except you bounce at the 16th fret instead of the 21st fret. The key to achieving a chilling harp-like effect is to play the harmonics so they all ring together. You do that by making sure that when you bounce off a string with your finger (or knuckle), you do not cancel any other string that is already ringing. Tough, but rewarding!

## ADVANCED ARRANGEMENT NOTES

1. The intro and ending in the advanced arrangement have fuller harmony involving slant bar work. When you do the so-called “split slants” (e.g. the very first chord in the intro), you use the nose of the bar to balance the pitch of the top two strings.
2. The only other major difference is the addition of fill-in notes between vocal phrases in measures 7-8, 15-16, 31-32 and the first measure of the bridge. The notated fingering will help you execute this single-note material (see the tablature key for explanation of the fingering symbols). These additions are what really turns a basic arrangement into a much more professional rendering.
3. At the last half of measure 24, you pick strings 1 and 2 at the 12th fret, slide the bar downward to a slant position at frets 9 and 10 (a forward slant) without picking and then straighten your bar out (again, without picking) at fret 9, which drops the melody note to the correct note.
4. The single-note phrase beginning at measure 31 uses “cross-picking”—strictly alternating your thumb and finger—which gives you the speed you need, but is awkward and takes some getting used to. The awkward part is picking the first note of measure 32 on string 4 with your finger and then “crossing over” to string 2 with your thumb. Again, tough, but rewarding!