

OLD MADERA WALTZ

French gypsy tune

arr. by Jay Ungar & Molly Mason

Chord symbols: G, Gmaj7, G7, C, G, C, D7, G, C, Am7, G/B, C, Em, C, D7, G, G.

Every summer for the past 20 years we've been blessed to be able to attend Jay Ungar and Molly Mason's *Ashokan Northern Week* music and dance camp. One of the special treats has been to hear Jay and Molly play beautiful music all week long in the workshops as well as the performances and evening dances. One of the tunes we've often heard there is *Old Madera Waltz*. The transcription above is based on their recording of the tune on their CD *Relax Your Mind* (2003). Jay learned it from the recording by the Farr Brothers, a Texas jazz fiddle and guitar duo, on their LP *Texas Crapshooter*. These brothers became long-time members of *The Sons of the Pioneers*.

This waltz has a bluesy, French-gypsy swing feel to it — probably because the brothers prided themselves on keeping up with the latest music on the radio and 78 rpm records during the 1920s and 30s. They were very familiar with the recordings of Joe Venuti, Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli. There's a fascinating history of the Farr Brothers written by Michael Mendelson at his website, slidingscalemusic.com. It's a story of a couple of small-town, hard-working country boys growing up in the early decades of the 20th century, who then make their way into the world of music during the swing era.

Though it's been published and recorded numerous times, I really like the way Jay plays it. The eighth notes in the transcription should be played as swung eighths, as you'd hear in jazz. Stacy Phillips has also published versions of this tune in several of his tune books, such as *Favorite American Waltzes for Fiddle* (Mel Bay). The tune is sometimes called *Old Madeira Waltz* or *Old Maderia Waltz*. Jay and Molly's recordings are available at their website, www.jayandmolly.com.