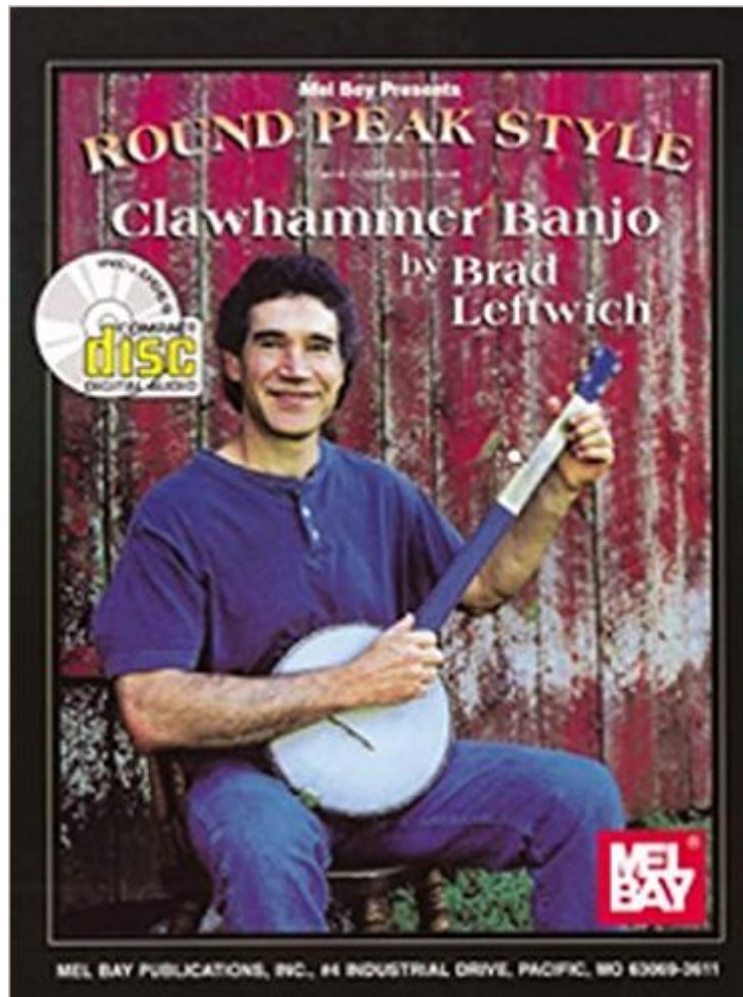


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# Mel Bay Round Peak Style Clawhammer Banjo (Mel Bay Presents)



## Synopsis

This book presents more than 70 tunes in the unique highly developed clawhammer style known as Round Peak -named after the Blue Ridge Mountain, North Carolina community where it originated. While not intended for the absolute beginner, this book will benefit players at various experience levels. Tunes in the book are organized according to the specific banjo tuning used, with A and D tunings most prominent. Much of the book's commentary and the included CD recording is directed towards the fretless variant of the 5-string banjo but as these tunes are written in standard 5-string banjo tablature, they can most definitely be played on the more common fretted instrument. Includes tune lyrics and extensive historical and biographical notes plus technical tips and a discography. Written in 5-string banjo tablature only.

## Book Information

Paperback: 104 pages

Publisher: Mel Bay Publications, Inc. (September 1, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786629029

ISBN-13: 978-0786629022

Product Dimensions: 11.7 x 8.6 x 0.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (14 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #482,584 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #53 in [Books > Arts &](#)

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## Customer Reviews

Great for someone training their ears, because the tab is so comprehensive, you wish there was an accompanying DVD so that you can see what Brad is doing. But all and all, this is one of the most valuable sources of musical literature of the 20th century within the Appalachian Music tradition. If you want to play one of the most beautiful, once geographically remote styles of American music, this is a great place to start. Although I would recommend for all those potential banjo players out there, get a book, like Wayne Erbsen's Clawhammer Banjo, before attempting the Round Peak Style. Once you've got your "bum-ditty" rhythm down along with a couple tunes, you are ready for this book. One very helpful thing about this book is the accompanying CD, although Brad is playing

the tunes up to tempo (very fast), so I would recommend downloading an app like Wavepad, where you can upload songs and vary the tempo without effecting pitch. Enjoy this awesome, historically sound, hauntingly beautiful piece of work. You'll not be disappointed.

This round peak style book is fantastic in that it has all the old time songs I have ever wanted to learn. It is not for the beginner though. The tab notation is a bit hard to figure out but it is possible.

A great addition to my collection of banjo how to books. Brad Leftwich has this sound down pat. I find the tabs easy to use, provided you read the how to part, and with the accompanying CD the banjo player can hear each tune played the way it is supposed to be played. I especially enjoyed the short stories about the history of each tune.

Brad's book offers a variety of quality tabs in the round-peak style, however I sometimes find his tablature notation a bit ambiguous -- in the introduction, he provides an explanation of the "assumed" pull-offs (after striking a string, any open note on the same string or a higher string is a pull-off) and hammer-ons (any higher note on the same string), however there are some times I found that a strict interpretation of this interfered with the natural clawhammer stroke rhythm. Perhaps I'm just not an experienced enough player to know when to use one or the other, but in an educational book the ambiguity strikes me as a bit lazy (the tablature could be annotated for clarity). That aside, the book is pretty darn good. The CD has over 80 quality recordings of each song in the book, which really helped me improve my playing style and note articulation. There are a bunch of classic tunes that I'd been wanting to learn, or had heard but didn't know the names of. However, I would say that if you've followed Rocket Science Banjo (or any other method advocating a simple index-thumb ["bum-ty"] stroke instead of the index-brush-thumb ["bum-ditty"] as the basic stroke), then there's not a whole lot in the way of new techniques in this book once you get the hang of the alternate string pull-offs, but it's more than worth it for the tablature and songs alone.

The negative reviews are correct, it is not a good clawhammer primer and it does not offer a diversity of styles. The positive reviews are correct, it delivers an outstanding collection of iconic Round Peak songs, presents tabs that offer the tunes stripped down to their essentials and provides a CD that can actually be listened to as music and that serves as a good model for the aspiring player. For someone who has their clawhammer basics down and wants a good Round Peak foundation, this is the book. Don't be put off by the fact that Leftwich is targeting fretless banjo

players. The tab is 100% applicable to fretted banjo... slide or bend and you will get as close as you need to be and if that's not close enough, be bold and get a fretless. If I were told I could keep only one of my tab books, this is the one to which I'd hold on. Choosing my second and third would be a battle.

This is a great resource for a very specific style of Old Time Music played in a small area in Appalachia. It is very technical and not a good introduction to Clawhammer banjo. I find the tabs very difficult to follow, mainly because the familiar melodies I am trying to work out are not always played on the banjo, they are played on the fiddle and the banjo is there to accompany the fiddle. Listening to the CD is good to get a feel for this style, and to hear what a fretless banjo can do, but again, not intended to be an introduction to clawhammer banjo. For me the best thing about this book is there are 70+ songs, many with lyrics included. I use the book mainly as a reference for song lyrics.

Here is another book where you listen to the authors playing and you get tabs that sort of resemble the songs being played. The tiny bit of instruction in the beginning lets you know you bought this book mostly to listen. Some interesting comments about the fretless banjo, but again, VERY little instruction and none really on the CD. At least, the author takes the time to match up the CD tracks to the tabulature in the book but all the songs are played at jam speed. On the plus side, the included CD is a good one to have. If you already know how to play clawhammer banjo you can learn a lot about Round Peak style and also pick up more than a few licks from this fat book and its 82 tunes.

This is an attempt at explaining a style that is ornamental but not essential to the player and listener both. It is an extra dollop of technique that in the right hands can set off the inner beauty of an old song. Not for the faint at heart Tab reader.

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Mel Bay Clawhammer Banjo from Scratch: A Guide for the Claw-less!  
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