



Mike Mullins



8-String Sketches

1. Three Tunes by Turlough O'Carolan (6:52)
2. Tears in Heaven (3:19)
3. Contra Dance Set (4:13)
4. Beneath the Skye the Water is Wide (2:48)
5. Early California Dance Medley (6:10)
6. Hey There Delilah (4:11)
7. Hallelujah (3:37)
8. For All We Know (3:17)
9. Russian Interference (4:26)
10. Caroline's Vals (4:07)

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Three Tunes by Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738)

- i. *O'Carolan's Receipt*
- ii. *Eleanor Plunkett*
- iii. *O'Carolan's Concerto (Mrs. Poer)*

Long beloved as "the last bard of Ireland," harpist Turlough O'Carolan's music is still widely played, and over 230 of his compositions survive. In 2019, we visited O'Carolan's grave at Kilonan Abbey in County Roscommon, and I played this medley for the sleeping bard.

Tears in Heaven (Eric Clapton)

I adapted this tune for mandolin after hearing Tommy Emmanuel's beautiful instrumental guitar version.

Contra Dance Set

- i. *Fermat's Farewell (Michael Mendelson)*
- ii. *Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine (Trad. Ireland)*
- iii. *Colored Aristocracy (Trad. Reconstruction Era)*

I enjoy grinding out fiddletunes, so playing contra dances is my idea of a fine time. "Fermat's Farewell" was composed by my good friend, fiddler and musicologist Michael Mendelson, with whom I have played many a dance. Tunes are normally done in sets of three, hence the trifecta of reels presented here.

Beneath the Skye the Water is Wide (Trad.)

A gentle melding of Scottish favorites, "The Skye Boat Song" with "The Water is Wide."

Early California Dance Medley

- i. *Jota (Trad.)*
- ii. *La Cachucha (Trad.)*
- iii. *La Primavera (Trad.)*

The early-to-mid 1800s was the heyday of early California "ranchos" and this period gave birth to a rich tradition of "Alta California" dance music. This lively genre draws from Spanish, Mexican, European, and American Folk influences, and

often included humorous or irreverent lyrics. I learned these tunes from my good friend and longtime musical partner, Luis Moreno, and relish playing them at every opportunity.

Hey There Delilah (Tom Higgenson)

A folksy pop tune by the Plain White T's, learned from my son, Tim, during his high school days. I really like the melody, and it somehow wound up as an 8-string sketch.

Hallelujah (Leonard Cohen)

An anthemic song that everyone either loves or loves not. I humbly offer this less-polarizing instrumental version.

For All We Know (J. Fred Coots, Sam M. Lewis)

A wonderful 1934 ballad that my mother performed at a San Francisco talent contest at age 15, and won! I was unaware of this song's existence until a jazz choir sang it at my son's 2009 high school graduation, which made my mother tear up. I had to learn it after that.

This one is for you, Mom.

Russian Interference

- i. *Alone I Stand On the Road (Trad.)*
- ii. *Korobushka (Trad.)*
- iii. *Arkan (Trad. Ukrainian)*

A trio of Russian folk tunes from a soundtrack I recorded in 1982. They've stuck with me like a vodka hangover and I revived them for this project.

Caroline's Vals (Waltz) (Jan Ekedahl)

A wistful, haunting waltz by Swedish guitarist Jan Ekedahl. Thanks to Lena Jonsson and Dominick Leslie for sharing this gem at a Santa Barbara house concert.

8-String Sketches — A Solo Mandolin Collection of Tunes from Around the World and Across Time

In my four-plus decades as a student of the mandolin, my natural comfort zone has always veered toward ensemble playing. However, over the past several years, an increasing number of tunes I've learned (or in some cases already knew), evolved into solo mandolin "sketches." Eventually, these unaccompanied arrangements charmed their way into my set list, and onto this project.

Represented herein are some familiar and lesser-known tunes from Ireland, Scotland, England, Canada, Early California, America, Russia, and Sweden, with a few contemporary offerings sprinkled in. There is also a dose of time travel involved, ranging from the 17th century through the early 2000s.

I am ever grateful to everyone listening, and I hope you enjoy wandering the gallery of "sketches."

Huge Thanks to David West and Emmet Sargeant for doing such an impeccable job behind the console, and to my beautiful wife Laura for the endless encouragement and inspiration.

Special Thanks to David and Tracy Grisman, Craig Miller, and Acoustic Disc Records.

Dedicated with all my love to my mother, Eleanor Mullins (1920-2019)

Engineered by David West at Studio Z, Santa Barbara CA, May 2018-March 2020
www.davidwest.com

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Gearhead Stuff:

Mandolin used on all tracks: 1937 Gibson F-7, re-necked to F-5 specs. (My primary instrument since 1991.)
Microphones: 1960s Neumann U-67 tube (one side), ADK Custom Shop T-12 tube (other side). An AKG-414 mic was used on Track 9.



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