New Slang

Words and music by James Mercer

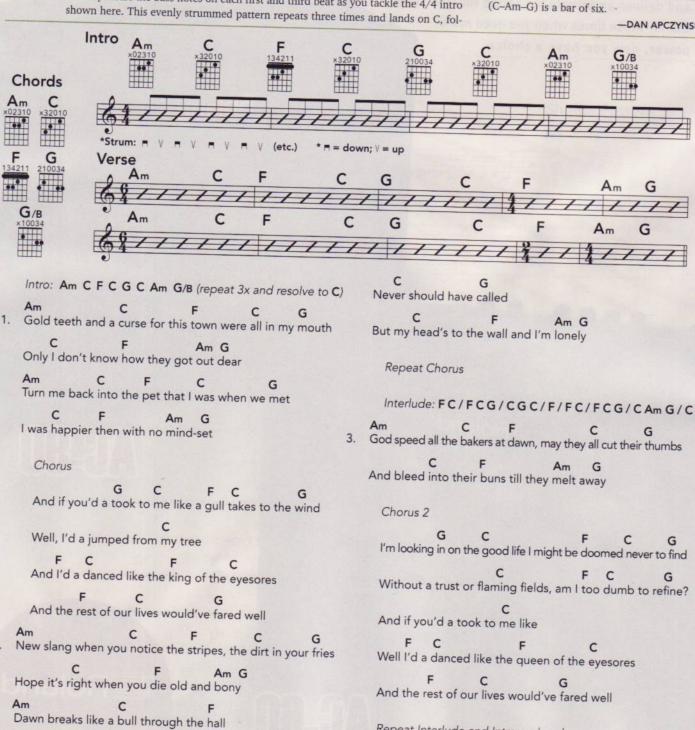


Natalie Portman may have said it best in the 2004 film, Garden State: "You gotta hear this one song—it'll change your life, I swear." Her character is referring to the Shins' "New Slang," an acoustic strummer hallmarked by mismatched time signatures and disaffected tone, both of which suit the morosely quirky movie that helped make the song famous.

Emphasize the bass notes on each first and third beat as you tackle the 4/4 intro

lowed by a fifth-string walk-down to Am to kick off the verse. The song thwarts convention by squeezing two extra beats into each of the first three verse measures, then bounces though various time signatures as shown until the lyric is finished. It may sound complicated, but it's really not bad-listen to the recording to internalize the phrasing of the melody, and the time will start to come naturally. Outside of the verse, the time stays in 4/4 for the entire song-the sole exception occurs in the interlude section, where the second to last measure (C-Am-G) is a bar of six.

-DAN APCZYNSKI



Repeat Interlude and Intro and end