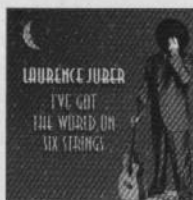


If I Only Had a Brain

Words by E.Y. Harburg, music by Harold Arlen,
from the Laurence Juber album *I've Got the World on Six Strings*



ognized composer—and I devoted my latest CD, *I've Got the World On Six Strings* (Solid Air), to his music.

"If I Only Had a Brain," from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), is one of Arlen's most recognized tunes. Harmonically, the tune is quite straightforward, although the melodic motifs interact with the underlying chords to create tension. For example, the four eighth notes in bar 1—D, F \sharp , D, and E—are shifted down a minor third in bar 2—F \sharp , D, B, and C \sharp —while the harmony shifts up a second to E minor, so that the melody outlines an Em9 chord, with the C \sharp as the Lydian $\sharp 4$.

In this arrangement, the turnaround that starts on the last eighth note of bar 3 is a typical D A D G A D fingering, spread across four strings. Let the notes ring out here.

I've voiced the melody and harmony high on the fingerboard in measures 5 and 6, which allows me to walk down the fifth string with the bass line—it's mostly the third finger. Make the bass notes short and bouncy.

The B section in bar 10 starts with a four-fret stretch G-B between the sixth and first strings. Prepare the upper note and stretch back to the lower—it's physically easier to reach back than up. This bridge section offers two back-to-back sequences, iii-vi-vi-V7-I (bars 11-12) and vii-III-vi-II-V (bars 14-17), setting up the return to D for the repeat of the A section.

Bars 18 and 19 are the trickiest and can be taken a little rubato, especially the transition from beat four of bar 18 into 19. Lead with the melody, lose the seventh fret barre on beat three, and mute the bass note on beat four.

Practice slowly until you have all the moves under your fingers, then bring it up to tempo—but not too fast. Above all, have fun with this masterful composition!

—LAURENCE JUBER

Tuning: D A D G A D

Swing (♩ = 138) % D G/B Em A D loco

1 2 4 4 3 2 3

let ring

To Coda ⊕

GD/F# Em D A G D/F# Em D G D/F# C# F Em A

1. Em D G A

2. Em D G A

B IX F#m7 B VII Bm7 Em7 A7 D C#m7/5 F#7 Bm Bm7/A

E9 A7 D.S. al Coda

Coda B VII * A F# Bm loco

G A13 D A13D A13 A7 D

* Eighth notes played straight (not swung).

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