

Tabs from the recording: *"Only"*

Study Notes

I think this tabs need some explanation, as you probably noticed. There's not musical notation, you'll find "every" thing you need about this beautiful music on Tommy Emmanuel record, "Only". I say this because i think that to be the best way to really understand the music, and because i believe that the first important thing for a player is to know where to put his fingers, from the technical point of view, of course. Being able to play some "real" music, is a completely different problem, as i see it....

I'm not teaching here, so if you think you can play this tunes you won't need sheet music, and, even the less advanced players will find many great ideas , as Tommy is a great composer, and this is probably more important than the fact that he's a wonderful player. Listen closely to the music, as this is the "Only" way to really appreciate the subtlety of Tommy's playing, there are things you'll never find on paper.

I used a very simple program to tab, and many symbols are missing, but i tried the same to make them look like something you would pay for. Measures are always divided in 8ths or 16ths, except were indicated, or where you count more notes if i forgot it.

I used (g.n.) to say (grace note), a note falling slightly before or after the beat, and (16th) if the measure is divided in 8ths, but consider all these things as warnings of something going on.

Another important thing to say is that Tommy is an amazing player, so don't worry if sometimes you cannot play something. He uses is left thumb a lot on the 6th string (sometimes on the 5th!), and his right hand will create a lot of problems to everyone, but will teach many things at the same time. He plays with pick and fingers, with fingers "Only", and with a thumbpick and fingers.

When he plays with the pick i tried to understand the notes, as always, but is almost impossible to understand when is the pick and when the fingers, because he uses the pick a lot, especially to play the melody, and because he uses a very thick pick, that has the same sound of his bare fingers.

(P.m.) means (palm mute) and Tommy uses this especially when playing fast with the thumbpick. Sometimes i put notes in the same position, writing (fast arp.) above them, so arpeggiate them with an up or downstroke, generally with the pick. Sometimes you will find group of notes, i use them when i'm trying to reproduce Tommy' strumming, playing with the pick and hitting several strings everytime, this is a beautiful effect, very hard to control, and, of course, he uses it a lot.....

(n.h.) means (natural harmonic) while (a.h.) means artificial harmonic.

I tried to give notes their real value, but without musical notation i could "Only" give them a "tie" to make them last, or write "triplet" above a group of 3 notes, and not much more than this. Sometimes your guitar's pitch will not be correct with Tommy's, he loves to retune his guitar, up or down, tuning the 6th string down to "D" or using a capo.

If you find a "x" it could mean that you must hit the strings with your right hand or play some "mute" note or repeat something (in that case is indicated).

I know this tabs look "minimalist", but give them chance, there's more than you can think.

When i met Tommy here in Rome i barely finished four tunes, and i never saw him playing, so there where several mistakes (i'm still correcting) and, with my great surprise, he told me he wanted them to be on his official website.

I don't know why, still today, but probably because when i played him back some of the things he wrote, he noticed that i was trying to understand his feelings, more than his hands moving.....

I tried to tab what i heard on the record, but i know that many things are different from the "live" exhibition, and i found myself playing things not exactly as i wrote them, adapting them to my way of playing guitar, and they remain beautiful tunes, even in my hands!

Here is some little thought about this work, hope it will help.

"Those who wait"

Tune guitar down a little more than a half step.

Tune 6th string down to "D".

Play with pick and fingers. Here you'll find many of those strumming i was talking about.

Tunes like this makes Tommy the great musician he is. I personally think he gives its best playing these soulful tunes, in which you are never distracted by his incredible technique, but try to play it! I had hard times tabbing this, hope to meet Tommy sooner or later to check it out, some things are written in different positions, and if i'm not sure where to finger them, i give a couple of possibilities. As always, help yourself with your ears, its the best thing you can do. I hope i gave the main idea of the song.

I've always thought of you

Tune 6th string down to "D".

Play with pick and fingers.

Another example of Tommy's technique playing with pick and fingers, where he changes every moment his picking.

Try to keep it going, this is the main thing, many things are played with the pick, even arpeggios. I saw Tommy playing this and i'm pretty sure about the positions, even if in those moments is hard to concentrate on his hands instead of closing your eyes and let the whole thing roll.

Mombasa

Play with pick and fingers, and good luck!

You'll find many different things from what i wrote, as i do! Pay attention to the melody, let it ring, it's very simple to hear but not to play, not with this feeling at least. Listen carefully to the main voices going on, and try to give them their place. I checked this out with Tommy and i'm pretty sure about the fingerings. My first Tommy tab ever.

Timberlake road

Play this with a thumbpick.

I tab the intro in a thousand different ways, but i had to write something.... One day i hope i'll have Tommy showing this (again) to me. Last time i saw him he didn't play it at all!

I'm sure it's correct as i played it back to him (or i should say "with him" as he was playing along!), so listen carefully and pay attention (again) to the melody. Sometimes he starts the theme from the G# (3rd string, 1st fret), sometimes from the A a half step above, i "Only" wrote the G#, check out the A.....

Questions

Tune down a (almost) half step, and close your eyes.....

I never saw it and you'll probably notice it.

Many things are fingered in a weird way, and i'm not sure about all of them, but i must say that when i play this it sounds good (to me at least), so i probably caught the main sense.....

I'm not sure if it's played with bare fingers or with a pick, try different things and see what happens. Pay attention to the harmonics at the beginning and end of the song, it's two different patterns.

Luttrell

Play this with a thumbpick. As always i'm not completely sure of the intro, even if Tommy showed it to me once. Be fast! And precise too! This shows the other side of Tommy, the great fingerpicker he is.... Sometimes he opens his shows with this, and you can easily understand why!

I tried to do my best, 'cause i love this tune, and i must say i'm happy with the final result, it allowed me to play it. Tommy fingers the F's and F#'s (6th string) with his left thumb while playing the descending glissato on the main theme (2nd string), see if you can. I can't. This man has incredible hands. He should be arrested for this! The diminished measure before the single- note break is not exactly like that, but it's the "Only" way i could make it sound like something musical. The single-note break is played holding down firmly the thumbpick with the index. Lots of accents on the weak side of the beat, is difficult to keep the time going while playing all this stuff ! I "tried" to give an idea of what happens into the rythmic part where almost everything is muted by the palm of the right hand and by the left hand, and i found myself playing it everytime in a different way.

Since we met

Tommy says he wrote this in the back of a taxi.... Why humiliate us this way?

Capo at 2nd fret.

Play with fingers "Only".

There are things than can be fingered in different ways, especially the E's and B's (open strings or not? this is the problem). I saw Tommy playing this and i'm sure about almost everything. Another great melody to play, let your mind flow.

Drivetime

Tune your guitar in some place higher than 440 hz.

Play with pick & fingers.

Beautiful melody, hard to play without falling from your chair.

Another example ot Tommy's monstrous technique. Checked out with the man himself. He told me:

"This is the best Drivetime tab i saw until now".

I had troubles in keeping myself from cryin'.....

The Cm 7th 9th in the main theme is fingered (by Tommy) like this:

C# (5th string, 4th fret) with left hand thumb(!)

G# (4th str., 6th fr.) with the 4th finger

B (3rd st., 4th fr.) with 1st finger

D# (2nd st., 4th fr.) with 2nd finger

E open first string

all this while playing the melody

Train to Dusseldorf

If you think you heard someone playing fast in your life, you' d better reconsider it....

Standard tuning. Play with thumbpick.

The first time i heard it, discovering was in B Major, i thought: "No one can play a tune like this in B Major on the guitar, there must be something else going on..."

I was wrong, of course.

Checked out with Tommy. He showed me the intro, hope i remember it correct enough to be reported here.

He plays it in concert at this same speed, i never heard anyone playing so clearly all the notes at such a speed. The tune is built on very simple, standard positions, as always. I found myself playing this with some little changes, i tabbed what i heard, but maybe something is more linear than i wrote, especially after the little break on F#7. Find yourself something comfortable.

Biskie

Tune down almost a whole tone. Play with thumbpick.

Checked with Tommy, but i'm sure i'm missing something....

Very hard to tab, because of the many mute notes in it.

Rest the palm of your right hand on the bass strings to get this effect, and to give the melody more importance. The "snap" sound is obtained by Tommy with the very low action he uses on guitar sometimes, and this involves an incredible control on the instrument. I don't have much to say on this tune, better if you listen to it carefully.

Stay close to me

Capo at 1st fret, or tune up a half step.

This is probably the best example of what you need to write a wonderful, simple tune. It could be The Beatles.

I think it's "Only" played with bare fingers.

Put a left hand thumb here and there and be soulful, that's all you need to play music like this.

Ol' Brother Hubbard

Tune like "Biskie". Play with thumbpick.

Dedicated to the great Jerry Reed, is another example of Tommy's ability to write tunes in "Melody'n'Blues" style, as i call it.

I tried to do my best, but i never saw it played live, so i'm not putting my hand upon fire for it.... I can "Only" say that i play it, and it sounds like if it's done well enough to be here. I left out the first part, was too anxious to tab the melody. Sorry.

Like the Blues Brothers used to say:

"What do you want for nothing, a rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrubber biskie?"

Peace