



Mandolin Blues

The Music of Johnny Young – Rich DelGrosso

When I first heard *Bumblebee* on *Mandolin Blues*, Testament Records 1967, I was struck by how remarkable the mandolin sounded with the piano.

The timbre and tone of the instruments complimented each other so well! Johnny Young's mandolin riffs weaved in and out of Jimmy Walker's walking bass on the keyboard. And as both players built the dynamics, the chords rang out, tugging at each other. It was then I realized that the mandolin had a place in the blues and it sparked my search for more.

This arrangement that I call *Bumblebee Outro* is the ending of the Young recording. The arrangement is a twelve-bar shuffle in the key of G with a turnaround

There are two ways to write an arrangement with a "shuffle" tempo (a popular dance rhythm in the blues). Twelve/eight is the more accurate, creating the "shuffle" by replacing the middle eighth note in each set of three with an eighth rest.

In my world we call the final verse the "outro," opposite of the intro, and in this recording the musicians were building the dynamics to the climax. The

mandolin picks up with the high soaring triple eighth notes on the G-doublestop. In measure two, Young works the dissonance by alternating the G and the F-sharp and then returns to the doublestops in measure three. The flurry slows to a walk down to the root in measure four and sets up for the transition to the four-seven (IV7).

The pick-ups at the end of measure four have a nice rocking, "walking-up" feel. Young used this phrase often when making chord changes. Note the same technique picking-up to measure nine as the progression changes from the one (I) to the five-seven (V7). Here the melody is slightly different, a chromatic phrase, but the effect is the same.

On the four-seven (IV7) chord (measure five) you play a melody born out of the C-seven doublestop with a phrase that trips down to the root. In measure six he changed it up, pulling the riff out of the G-seven doublestop instead, adding further dissonance to the music.

The music on the five-seven (V7 — measure nine) is born out of a D-seven chord: C-natural on the fourth string, F-sharp on the third and D on the second. In measure 10 you return to the

C-seven voicing, and the triplets warble you down to the root in measure 11.

Throughout the piece Young would play the phrase in measure 11, that begins on the second beat, as doublestops, with tremolo walking down from F-natural to E to D. In this outro his change-up is a signal to the band that he is ending the song; breaking up the rhythm and slowing it down slightly, ending with a big tremolo finish.

Chicago blues on the mandolin by big Johnny Young! ♪

Rich DelGrosso is a performer and teacher — a specialist in blues guitar and mandolin styles.

He has taught music for more than 25 years. For 10 years he coordinated the W.C. Handy Award-winning Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop: Bluesweek in Elkins, West Virginia, teaching classes in bottleneck slide, mandolin and blues band labs. He has taught at the Port Townsend Bluesweek and served on the faculty of the Puget Sound Guitar Workshop and the California Coast Music Camp.

Rich has been a writer for Blues Revue magazine since 1991 and an associate editor since 1996. His Mandolin Method, prepared for Hal Leonard in 1986, is unique as it offers students duets for teacher/student practice.

Bumblebee

Outro Solo

The Music of Johnny Young
arr Rich DelGrosso,

♩.=63

G

The first system of music is in G major and 12/8 time. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line starting with a series of eighth notes, followed by a descending eighth-note line, and ending with a series of eighth notes. The bass clef staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment consisting of a series of eighth notes, with some triplets and a few accidentals.

C7

The second system of music is in C7. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with a descending eighth-note line and a final quarter note. The bass clef staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment with a series of eighth notes and a few accidentals.

G7

D7

The third system of music is in G7 and D7. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with a descending eighth-note line and a final quarter note. The bass clef staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment with a series of eighth notes and a few accidentals.

C7

G7

The fourth system of music is in C7 and G7. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with a descending eighth-note line and a final quarter note. The bass clef staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment with a series of eighth notes and a few accidentals.