

# Angel Band *key of G*

“Angel Band” is a beautiful song in 3/4 or waltz time. Long a classic of American music, it was popularized by The Stanley Brothers and has been a bluegrass and country standard since.

The form of the vocal part of the song is verse followed by chorus, and each part has a different melody and chord progression. The solos could follow the same pattern with one instrumentalist taking both parts, or they could be split between two players. What’s usually done though is to have the soloists play over just the verse after the vocal verse/choruses. That’s what we’ll do on the recordings.

The backup rhythm to “Angel Band” is quite similar to “All the Good Times are Past and Gone.” Look at the suggested part on page 33 and adapt it to “Angel Band.”

The mandolin kicks off “Angel Band” with a I–V–I (“one–five–one”) turnaround. The lyrics here would be “To my immortal home.” The mandolin continues with backup behind the first verse. The banjo then takes over the backup chores and plays behind the first chorus.

I think you’ll find the solo to “Angel Band” to be relatively easy. In measure six you’ll use your pinkie for one note. If this is difficult, then you need to exercise it more! There’s also a nice run in measure 7. You can lift this out and use it in the backup parts to other 3/4 songs in the key of G. Try improvising or composing your own solos over the open chorus spaces.

The banjo outro on the regular speed track is played over the last vocal phrase: “Bear me away on your snow white wings./ To my immortal home.” The chords are IV, I, V, I, or C, G, D, G. It’s not really a turnaround, it’s just, well, the last eight measures of the song.

The slow track is in the verse/chorus format, and you’ll get to hear and play along with both the mandolin and banjo as they back up the choruses.

*Dix Bruce and Julie Cline on vocals.*

          G          C          G  
1. My latest sun is sinking fast,  
          D          G  
My race is nearly run,  
                  C          G  
My strongest trials now are past,  
          D          G  
My triumph has begun.

          D          G  
Chorus: Oh come angel band,  
D          G  
Come and around me stand,  
          C                  G  
Oh bear me away on your snow white wings,  
          D          G  
To my immortal home.  
(Repeat last two lines.)

2. Oh, bear my longing heart to Him,  
Who bled and died for me.  
Whose blood now cleanses from all sin,  
And gives me victory.

3. I know I’m nearing the holy ranks,  
Of friends and kindred dear.  
I’ve brushed the dew on Jordan’s banks,  
The crossing must be near.

4. I’ve almost gained my heavenly home,  
My spirit loudly sings,  
Thy holy ones, behold, they come,  
I hear the noise of wings.