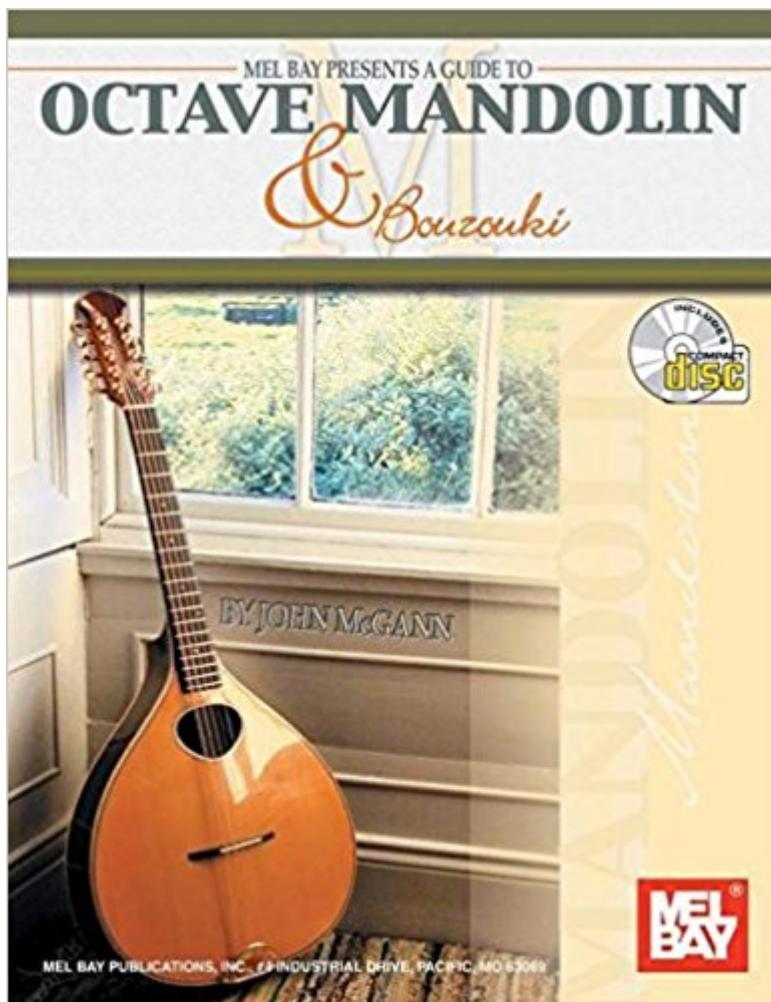


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# Mel Bay A Guide To Octave Mandolin & Bouzouki



## **Synopsis**

Twenty tunes in styles from Irish to American, in a variety of tunings, melody and accompaniment, presented in standard notation and tablature, with a stereo CD (left channel melody, right channel accompaniment). Left and right hand techniques and chord voicings are thoroughly discussed. For the first time, the Celtic style woven texture accompaniment unique to the instrument is fully notated. Unique to the book are melodic Irish ornamentation, blues, jazz, American fiddle tunes with variations and improvisations (all fully notated), and a chapter Breaking Away From Block Chords extending knowledge of the fingerboard.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Mel Bay Publications, Inc.; Pap/Com edition (September 24, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786666056

ISBN-13: 978-0786666058

Product Dimensions: 11 x 8.4 x 0.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #764,008 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #76 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Instruments > Strings > Mandolins #1935 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Instruments > Guitar

## **Customer Reviews**

John McGann is a Boston-based internationally renown mandolinist and guitarist, composer, arranger, and transcriber; Professor of Strings at Berklee College of Music and New England Conservatory; and is a founding member of The Wayfaring Strangers, Celtic Fiddle Festival, The Boston Edge, Classical Tangent and other groups . He won 1st Place at the National Mandolin Championship, Winfield Kansas (1985). John writes for Flatpicking Guitar Magazine, Mandolin Magazine, and Acoustic Guitar Magazine as well as Mel Bay Publications. He is the staff transcriber for David Grisman's Acoustic Disc website

I was initially attracted by the Stefan Sobell octave mandolin on the cover. Actually, this is a 23" scale five course cittern (use your browser to search on "stefan sobell guitars" and then go to Instruments > Citterns and octave mandolins). I was very pleasantly surprised when I listened to the

CD. This is some of the best Irish mandolin music I've heard, and definitely the very best melody flat picking I've ever heard. The accompanying CD has two people playing together, or maybe it's John McGann dubbing over himself. One part plays accompaniment while the other part plays melody. Both accompaniment and melody parts are presented in full in this book using standard music notation and TAB. This book is a must have. Don't pay any attention to the reviewers who say that it's too challenging for beginners. What John McGann is doing here is too challenging for almost everyone, not just beginners. The biggest challenge is probably memorizing the notes and getting up to speed. Everybody goes slow at first to make sure they're getting it right. Many of us use a metronome to get up to speed once we've learned the patterns sufficiently. There's some finger stretching, and there's also some ornamentation that might initially be a bit tricky. I recommend the "Learn to Play the Irish Bouzouki" DVD by Zan McLeod to get started. You can find this DVD on . Then follow that with "The Irish Bouzouki Tutorial" by Ralf P. Wackers (with CD). Wackers book covers basic accompaniment and melody fundamentals really well if you have the patience to stay with it. The section about rhythm is excellent. There's a version in English. This book can be VERY DIFFICULT to find. As of the time of this writing (July 2015), I found my copy in English at one of Ralf P. Wacker's websites (use your browser to search on "ralf p wacker irish bouzouki" to begin your search). It ships from Germany and takes a couple of weeks to get to California. You can pay with PayPal (Jetzt kaufen). At some point in time, hopefully you'll feel comfortable enough to try "Octave Mandolin & Bouzouki" by John McGann.

Written by late John McGann (1960-2012), noted and beloved multi-instrumentalist and professor at the Berklee School of Music, this book, like the man who wrote it, transcends categories. It provides 20 tightly arranged and highly educational pieces, mostly but not all Celtic, and a beautifully produced CD that is inspiring, seemingly effortless and masterful in delivery. Each song is accompanied by a short essay that highlights teaching points, technical challenges and pointers on style. There is both notation and tablature for two OM's, melody and accompaniment. What this is NOT is a beginner's book. It assumes that the reader is at the intermediate skill level or higher, and truly stretches that student's technique and musicianship STARTING at that level. However, if you are up for a challenge and ready to be taught by a master musician, if you want to go beyond the basics of the Octave Mandolin (a/k/a Irish Bouzouki), buy this wonderful book. Beginners and early intermediate players: check out Roger Landes's "Hal Leonard Irish Bouzouki Method", also highly recommended!

The CD that comes with this is awesome! Haunting and compelling.I see the book itself, however, as a waste of time. It's almost like the authors were showing off. It's just songs, no instruction.The level is advanced. So advanced that anybody capable of playing these songs would have no need of this book! Which is why the title, "A Guide To . . ." is misleading at best. It's certainly not a method.On the plus side, the CD that comes with it was done right. You can isolate the melody on the right track or the accompaniment on the left track. Many of these books have CDs whose audio tracks do not have the lead melody and the accompaniment separated on their own tracks, but this one does.Note: all the songs in here can be played by mandolin as well. The bouzouki tuning they're using is GDAD, so in case you think this book is going to be spoilt by a bunch of songs possible on the bouzouki but not the mandolin, that's not the case. The octave mandolin can play everything in here (melodies and accompaniments), though the bouzouki can't.

The book arrived from with no CD in it even though it is advertised as having a CD with it. I contacted and they replaced it with another book at no cost. However, the book still did not have a CD in it. So I contacted John McGann and he arranged for Mel Bay to send a replacement with a CD. It has arrived just now so I am able to give a brief review.John McGann's general introduction and introduction to every tune is very thorough and informative. However, it would have been nice to have had a bit more information about the style of playing even though ornamentation on the octave mandolin is well covered. I found that there is a sameness to the tunes perhaps because the harmonic accompaniment is on an octave mandolin as well. I felt that there could have been more variation in tone and style. However, John's blues and jazz compositions at the end are far more interesting and varied and gave a lift to the overall impression of the book and CD.

This book is great if you have picked up an octave mandolin as a 2nd or 3rd instrument.It helps you explore OM techniques (accompaniment especially) thru songs. This is not a lesson book, it is a song book that explores different OM playing styles.The CD is well recorded and good to listen to on its own. The only instrument on the CD is an OM. Melody in the left channel, accompaniment in the right.

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