

You Are My Sunshine

MandoLessons Lesson Supplement

As I have mentioned in previous lessons, the most important way to learn to play music is to learn to play by ear. This means that you listen to the music and then reproduce it without the aid of written notes. This may seem daunting at first, but you will catch on quickly.

One of the easiest ways to learn by ear is to start with a song that you already know. In this lesson, I will be using You Are My Sunshine as an example because it is almost universally known. If you do not know the tune, search around on the internet or just ask someone you know and they will probably know it by heart. The chords to You Are My Sunshine are also conducive to this lesson as there are only three chords for the entire song and they are all chords we already have learned in previous lessons; G major, C major, and D major (I, IV, V for those of you interested in music theory).

Lets start with the words and chords. For this song, the chords are the same for the verse and chorus, so I will use the chorus as an example. The letters in red above the text are the chords that go along with the melody, and each chord is repeated until the next chord comes along.

G

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine

C

G

You make me happy when skies are gray

C

G

You'll never know dear, how much I love you

D

G

Please don't take my sunshine away

Take some time to play and sing the song a couple times to get comfortable with the way it sounds and the way the melody works with the chords. Below are the remainder of the chords for your convenience. Remember, the chords are the same for the verse and the chorus (the part that repeats).

See if you can get to the point where you can play the chords without relying on the placement of the chord as they are written above.

**The other night dear, as I lay sleeping
I dreamed I held you in my arms
But when I awoke, dear, I was mistaken
So I hung my head and I cried.**

**You are my sunshine, my only sunshine
You make me happy when skies are gray
You'll never know dear, how much I love you
Please don't take my sunshine away**

**I'll always love you and make you happy,
If you will only say the same.
But if you leave me and love another,
You'll regret it all some day:**

**You are my sunshine, my only sunshine
You make me happy when skies are gray
You'll never know dear, how much I love you
Please don't take my sunshine away**

**You told me once, dear, you really loved me
And no one else could come between.
But not you've left me and love another;
You have shattered all of my dreams:**

**You are my sunshine, my only sunshine
You make me happy when skies are gray
You'll never know dear, how much I love you
Please don't take my sunshine away**

**In all my dreams, dear, you seem to leave me
When I awake my poor heart pains.
So when you come back and make me happy
I'll forgive you dear, I'll take all the blame.**

**You are my sunshine, my only sunshine
You make me happy when skies are gray
You'll never know dear, how much I love you
Please don't take my sunshine away**

Now that you have a grasp of the chords and can sing the melody (or at least hear it in your head), lets move onto the music itself. From here on, watch the video and listen hard and you will pick up the notes in no time. If you get totally stuck and read music or tablature, here is a PDF of the music from traditionalmusic.co.uk. The music there has one different note from the way I play it. The "O" of "Only" in "My Only sunshine" is notated as an A sharp (first fret), but I play it as an A natural (open A string). Again, only use the music as the last resort and push yourself to learn it entirely by ear, it is a rewarding process.

http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/mandolin-tab/mandolin-tab-pdf/You_Are_My_Sunshine-mandolin-tab.pdf