



Overture - Cotton Avenue

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CGCFAC, 'Joni' Tuning: C75543

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This is the most difficult Joni Mitchell song I have ever tried to transcribe and to play without any kind of backup. I spent months of listening to the recording and trying various tunings until I decided upon this one. I think what makes tuning determination so difficult for this song is the fact that there is at least one other guitar in a completely different tuning filling out the Overture in places.

Ken Slarty believes that Jim Leahy's tuning of C75435 is the correct one; however, with only one guitar, the harmonics at minute 2:02 (on the CD counter) cannot be achieved with Jim's tuning, but they can be achieved with mine. Since I don't have anyone to play the other guitar, I have created a tab in the tuning of C75543 which I feel captures reasonably accurately for one guitar what is happening musically in the recording with two (and possibly even more) guitars. I feel this transcription in C75543 captures some important musical elements that are lost when the tuning of C75435 is used.

I recently (at London Jonifest 2000) had the good fortune to play this with the talented bass player, Chris Marshall, who flawlessly reproduced Jaco Pastorius' bass line. The bass really rounded out and completed the sound.

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NOTE: I have used letters A, B, C, etc. in the tab to indicate frets above fret 9 sequentially as follows: A=10, B=11, C=12, etc.

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          harmonics
    |-----|      slide
C-----*5-----5===>7--(7)----(5)--5-----7--5----8--8--A-----|
A-----5-----5--3---6--6--8----|
F-----*7-----6-----6--4---7--7--9----|
C-----*7-----0-----|
G-----7-----|
C-----7-----|

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C---7--7-----8-----8-----8-----C-C-C-C-----|
 A---5--5-----6--8-----7-8-----A-A-A-A-----|
slide
 F---6--6-----7-----7-7-7-7====>B-B-B-B-----|
 C---0--0-----|
 G---7--7---7--5--8-----|
 C-----|

etc. etc.

C-----C-C-C-C-----C-C-C-----|
 A-----A-A-A-A-----D-D-D-----|
 F-----B-B-B-B-----C-C-C-----|
 C-----|
 G--0---0-----|
 C-----0-----|

C---7-----7-----5-9-9-5---7---7-----9-9-----A--A-A-----|
 A---7-----7-----5-5-5-5---6-6-6---8-8-8-8---8-8-8-8-----|
 F---7---7-(7)-----5-5-----7---7---9-9---9-----|
 C---4---4-----|
 G----- (A) -----|
 C-----|

C---7-----7---9---B--B-----7-7-----8-----A-A-A-A-|
 A---5-----6--8---A--A-----5-5-----6-----8-8-8-8-|
 F---6-----7---9---B---B-----6-6-----7-----9-9-9-9-|
 C---0-----7---9---B---B---0-0-----0-----0-0-0-0-|
 G---7---7-7---7-7---7-7-----7-7---8-----A-----|
 C-----|

C---7-----C--C-----C--C-----C--C-----|
 A---5-----A--A-----A--A-----A--A-----|
 F---6-----B--B---B--B---B---B---B-----|
 C---0---0-----0-----0----- (0) (0) -- (0) (0) (0) -- (0) (0) (0) -----|
 G---7-----7-7---8-8---A-A-----|
 C-----0-----|

C-----0-----0-0-----0-----0-0---9-9---5-5-----|
 A---8---8-8---7---7-7---8-8---4-4-----|
 F---9-9-9-9-9---7-7-7-7-7---9-9---5-5-----|
 C---9---9-----0-----0-----9-9---5-5-----|
 G---(0)---(0)----- (0)---(0)-----|
 C-----|

C----9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9-----|
 A----7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7-----|
 F----0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0--0-----|
 C----9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9-----|
 G----9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9--9-----|
 C-----|

C-----9--9-----9--9-----9--9-----9--9-----|
 A----7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7--7-----|
 F-----0--0-----0--0-----0--0-----0--0-----|
 C----9-----9-----9-----9-----|
 G-----|
 C-----|

C----7-7-7---8-8-8---A-A-A-A--A--A--A---A-A-A-A----|
 A----5-5-5---6-6-6---8-8-8-8--8--8--8---8-8-8-8----|
 F----6-6-6---7-7-7---9-9-9-9--9--9--9---8-8-8-9----|
 C----0-0-0---0-0-0---0-0-0-0--0--0--0---9-----A----|
 G----7-7-7---8-8-8---A-A-A-A--A--A--A-----|
 C-----|

C----7--7--C-----8-----A-A-A-A-----E-----C-----C-C-----|
 A----5--5-----6-----8-8-8-8-----F-----B--B--A-A-A-A----|
 F----6--6-----7-----9-9-9-9-----D-----C--C--B-----B-B--|
 C----0--0-----0-----0-0-0-0-----0-----0-----C-----|
 G----7--7-----7-8-8--8-A-A-A-A-----0-----|
 C-----0-----|

C----9-----9-9----- (9) (9) -- (9) (9) -----C-----C-----|
 A----8----8--7-7-7-7-----8--8-----8--8-----B-----B-----|
 F-----9--8-----8-8-----9--9-----9--9-----C-----C-----|
 C-----9- (9) ----- (9) --9--9-----9--9-----C--C-----C-----|
 G-----|
 C-----|

harmonics
 |-----|

C-----0-----*5--*7-----|
 A-----3-----*5--*7-----|
 F-----2-----*5--*7-----|
 C--- (0) -----*5--*7-----|
 G-----0-----*5--*7-----|
 C----0-----5-5-5-5--- (*5) - (*7) -----0-3--5-5-5-5-5-----|

harmonics

```

|-----|
C----*C----*5---*7-----|
A----*C----*5---*7-----|
F----*C----*5---*7-----|
C----*C----*5---*7-----|
G----*C----*5---*7-----|
C--- (*C) -- (*5) - (*7) ----0-3-5-5-5---0-5-5---0-7-7---|

```

```

C-----C-C-C-C-C-C-C-C-C-C-C-----|
A-----A-A-A-A-A-A-A-A-A-A-A-----|
F-----B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-----|
C-----|
G-----|
C----0-----|

```

```

C----7--8--A-A-A----8-A-----7--8--A----7--8--A---A-A-----|
A----5--6--8-8-8----6-8-----5--6--8----5--6--8---8-8-----|
F----6--7--9-9-9----7-9-----6--7--9----6--7--9---9-9-----|
C-----|
G-----|
C-----|

```

```

C----7--8--7--8--A--7--8--A-A-A-A-A---7-(7)---8-(8)---A-A---8-8--A---|
A----5--6--5--6--8--5--6--8-8-8-8-8---5-(5)---6-(6)---8-8---6-6--8---|
F----6--7--6--7--9--6--7--9-9-9-9-9---6-(6)---7-(7)---9-9---7-7--9---|
C-----|
G-----|
C-----|

```

harmonics

```

|-----|
C-----*5-----*7-----|
A-----*5-----*7-----|
F-----*5-----*7-----|
C-----*5-----*7-----|
G-----*5-----*7-----|
C----3---0-----0-3---5-5-5-5-5--- (*5) --- (*7) ---|

```

C----- (*7) -----C----- |
 A----- (*7) -----A----- |
 F----- (*7) -----B----- |
 C----- (*7) -----0----- |
 G----- (*7) ----- |
 C---0-3---5-5-5-5-5---3---0- (*7) ---0-3-5-5-5---0-5-5---0-7-7----- |

|||||
 000BAC
 |||||
 A red sun came rolling down

|||||
 0A098A
 |||||
 a grey sky and the

|||||
 050435
 |||||
 frogs and dogs and night

|||||
 080768
 |||||
 birds then started up singing

harmonics

|-----|

C-----*7----- |
 A-----*7----- |
 F-----*7----- |
 C-----*7----- |
 G-----*7----- |
 C---3---0----- (*7) ---5-5-5-5----- |

sweet country lullaby

||||||

000BAC

||||||

(You) see that patch of city lights

||||||

00098A

||||||

Somewhere in there's Cotton Avenue

||||||

050435

||||||

That's where I'm going to take myself tonight with a

||||||

080768

||||||

spit shine

harmonics

|-----|

C-----*7-----|
A-----*7-----|
F-----*7-----|
C-----*7-----|
G-----*7-----|
C----3---0-----(*7)-----|

on my dancing shoes

harmonics

|-----|

C-----*5--*7-----|
A-----*5--*7-----|
F-----*5--*7-----|
C-----*5--*7-----|
G-----*5--*7-----|
C----5-5-5-5----*5-(*7)----0-3--5-5--5-5-----|

||||||
0AA980
||||||

If you've got a place like that to go

||||||
0CCBA0
||||||

You just have to go there

||||||
080768
||||||

If you've got no place special

||||||
00AAAA
||||||

Well then you just go no place

||||||
000230
||||||
special

harmonics

|-----|

C-----*5---*7-----|
A-----*5---*7-----|
F-----*5---*7-----|
C-----*5---*7-----|
G-----*5---*7-----|
C----5-5-5-5---(*5)-(*7)-----0-3--5-5--5-5-----|

harmonics

|-----|

C-----*7-----|
A-----*7-----|
F-----*7-----|
C-----*7-----|
G-----*7-----|
C----3---0----- (*7) -----0-3-5-5---0-5-5---0-7-7---

||||||
088760
||||||

I guess it's just the

|||||| ||||||
0AA980 0CCBA0
|||||| ||||||
summer in the young blood

|||||| |||||| ||||||
050435 090879 079980
|||||| |||||| ||||||
Ripe and juicy in the young blood

||||||
0ACCB0
||||||
Teasing to go down to

harmonics

|-----|

C-----*7-----|
A-----*7-----|
F-----*7-----|
C-----*7-----|
G-----*7-----|
C----3---0----- (*7) -----|

Cotton Avenue

C-----|
A-----|
F-----|
C-----|
G-----|
C---5-5--0-7-7-----|

|||||
088760
|||||

To hear the

||||| |||||
0AA980 0CCBA0
||||| |||||
shiny shiny music

||||| ||||| |||||
050435 090879 079980
||||| ||||| |||||
See all the shiny people dancing to it

|||||
0ACCB0
|||||
Anytime you go to

harmonics

|-----|

C-----*7-----|
A-----*7-----|
F-----*7-----|
C-----*7-----|
G-----*7-----|
C---3---0-----(*7)-----|

Cotton Avenue

harmonics

|-----|

C-----*5---*7-----|
A-----*5---*7-----|
F-----*5---*7-----|
C-----*5---*7-----|
G-----*5---*7-----|
C----5-5-5-5--- (*5) - (*7) -----0-3--5-5-5-5-----|

|||||

0AA980

|||||

If you've got a place like that to go

|||||

0CCBA0

|||||

You know you've got to go there

|||||

080768

|||||

If you've got no place special

|||||

00AAAA

|||||

Well then you just go no place

|||||

000230

|||||

special

harmonics

|-----|

C-----*5---*7-----|
A-----*5---*7-----|
F-----*5---*7-----|
C-----*5---*7-----|
G-----*5---*7-----|
C----5-5-5-5--- (*5) - (*7) -----0-3--5-5-5-5-----|

|||||
088760

|||||
You see that summer storm

|||||
0AA980

|||||
brewing

|||||
0CCBA0

|||||
in the southern sky

|||||
050435

|||||
By the time it

|||||
090879

|||||
hits here I'll be

|||||
079980

|||||
dancing high and

|||||
0ACCB0

|||||
dry to rhythm and blues on

harmonics

|-----|

C-----*7-----|
A-----*7-----|
F-----*7-----|
C-----*7-----|
G-----*7-----|
C----3---0----- (*7)-----|

Cotton Avenue

C-----|
A-----|
F-----|
C-----|
G-----|
C----5-5--0-7-7-----|

|||||
088760
|||||
Poor boys'll be

|||||
0AA980
|||||
hanging around out-

|||||
0CCBA0
|||||
side in the street

|||||
050435
|||||
They've got all the latest words they're

|||||
090879
|||||
dancing to the

||||||
079980
||||||
latest beat while they're

||||||
0ACCB0
||||||
hustling and jiving you on

harmonics

|-----|
C-----*7-----|
A-----*7-----|
F-----*7-----|
C-----*7-----|
G-----*7-----|
C----3---0-----(*7)-----|

Cotton Avenue

harmonics

|-----|
C-----*5---*7-----|
A-----*5---*7-----|
F-----*5---*7-----|
C-----*5---*7-----|
G-----*5---*7-----|
C----5-5-5-5---(*5)-(*7)-----0-3--5-5-5-5-5-----|

||||||
0AA980
||||||
If you've got a place like that to go

||||||
0CCBA0
||||||
You just have to go there

||||||
080768
||||||
If you've got no place special

||||||
00AAAA
||||||
Well my dear, you just go no place

||||||
000230
||||||
special

Outtro:

C-----|
A-----|
F-----|
C-----|
G-----|
C---5-5---|

Repeat 6 times:

 harmonics
 |-----|
C-----*7-----|
A-----*7-----|
F-----*7-----|
C-----*7-----|
G-----*7-----|
C-----3--0--- (*7) -----5-5-5-5---|

Fade out with:

C-----|
A-----|
F-----|
C-----|
G-----|
C---5^6---5^6---5^6---5^6---|