



Cluck Old Hen

American Bluegrass is rooted in the music of Scottish and Irish immigrants along with blues and Jazz. Typical instruments include dulcimer, fiddle, guitar, banjo and upright bass.

Cluck old Hen is a well-known Appalachian fiddle and banjo tune, sung, or played as instrumental. This nonsense song derives from the traditional nursery rhyme

Higgledy Piggledy
My black hen
She lays eggs
For gentlemen
Sometimes nine
And sometimes ten
Higgledy Piggledy
My black hen

Performers generally adapt or make up lyrics. Encourage singers to do the same

e.g.

My old hen died
What'll I do?
Guess I'll have some chicken stew!

Fiddlers' Notes

Appalachian and Bluegrass fiddlers would imitate the clucking of a hen by plucking the strings*

Beginner violinists might try plucking D and G strings alternately as an accompaniment to the song, or bowing the two strings to create a drone

A variety of bowing patterns are characteristic of Bluegrass fiddle. These include:

- The Saw stroke – change the direction of the bow for each note
- Nashville shuffle – a long bow followed by two short bows

Bluegrass characteristics include

- Sliding up to a note
- Playing two notes at once (double stopping)

* Listen also to how the violin imitates a hen in Saint Saens' *Carnival of the Animals*