

## APPENDIX III:

### STRUM ARROWS AS GUIDES TO RHYTHM

On the first tune in this book we have included "strum arrows". This system is yet a further attempt to clarify rhythmic patterns in terms of the right hand strumming. Consider this line of music from "Pack Up Your Liver"..

The numbers are added here for the sake of discussion. Consider the arrows as the motion of the strumming hand. An upward arrow  $\uparrow$  is a strum across the strings from treble to bass, or outward, away from the player. A downward arrow  $\downarrow$  is a strum toward the player, or from bass to treble. The hand makes a regular back and forth motion, indeed, a metronomical series of back and forth strokes (shown as arrows in our example). This correlates nicely with the rhythmic notation and with our counting system. Like this:

Here you have quarter notes. In this case you will not sound the strings on the inward stroke; for eighth notes the string will be sounded on both strokes, like this:

For sixteenth notes at the same tempo or rate as above, the hand must strum twice as fast, and the strumming would look like this:

In most strummed tunes the hand will maintain a constant back and forth motion emphasizing certain strokes and not sounding others to accommodate the rhythmic irregularities of the music. In the following example the silent, unsounded strokes will be in ( ) parentheses, like this:

Here's further thought about this strumming business...Dulcimer music and indeed a large amount of so-called "folk" music involves a rhythmic pattern described by some as "bum-diddy, bum-diddy, bum"...in other words, get your hand moving, imagine the kind of sound you're looking for, and let that be your guide. What feels good is what works! Playing is doing! All the descriptions in the world fall short of the thing itself!