

As Jerry Canote puts it [in this concert with his twin brother](#), Greg, *Yell in the Shoats* is an *invigorating* tune, and he was just playing the accompanying guitar! I first heard Nick Hornbuckle and was astounded and delighted at its energy and melody. I'd heard it on Bob Carlin's seminal CD *Banging and Sawing* with Judy Hyman and Jeff Clause, but Nick somehow gave it super-life. When I gave it a try, the right-hand noting was so complex that I gave up. Eventually I thought to switch tunings and found an easier way to play it, staying in the original key of D but playing on a cello banjo tuned lower.

Adam Hurt reviewed Nick Hornbuckle's award-winning CD **Twelve by Two (Plus or Minus One)** in the February, 2021 issue of Banjo Newsletter and wrote: "My absolute favorite, though, may also be one of the most unexpected: *Yell in the Shoats*, which I had previously considered a solo fiddle tune with little potential for rearrangement, is rendered here as a melodic banjo masterpiece, respecting the rhythmic and harmonic sensibilities of the best fiddle settings yet taking the tune to an entirely new, rich place. Featuring more of Reischman's soaring accompaniment, this track has it all: beauty and drive, tradition and innovation, instrumental prowess and good taste. If one remains unsure as to whether Hornbuckle's album is worth acquiring, a single listen to *Yell in the Shoats* should swiftly vanquish any doubt."

Nick kindly answered some questions. This is what I mean when I say that wonderful pro players will help you out just for the asking. It makes volunteering to do a TOTW presentation a musical adventure. Enjoy the email interview:

Nick Hornbuckle

to me

Hi Janet,

Here are some answers to your questions....

Where did you learn the tune from?

I'm pretty sure I learned the bones of my version from the playing of my friend, Katie Davis Henderson. She has a channel on Youtube called 'New Tune A Day' <https://www.youtube.com/user/katiehendersonfiddle> that I have really enjoyed and actually learned a few other tunes from. As with all my arrangements, I'll find a tune I like, look for as many other versions as I can, then synthesize them into a version that I feel has all the best elements of the various versions along with whatever changes I feel need to be made to a) make it sound better, and b) make it playable!

Why do you like it?

I like the fact that it's a three-part tune. It seems to really lay out on the banjo very well and I can play it in two different octaves without having to go super far up the neck, which is a plus. A lot of times I'll just troll through YouTube videos

or Spotify playlists until I see an interesting tune title that piques my interest and then check out the tune to see if it's as good as the title.

As my family is basically one generation off the farm, I knew what a shoat was but it's a pretty archaic term so that initially got my attention. Also, the A part definitely sounds like someone calling in the shoats...."suuu-eeee".

What about it do you think caused Adam Hurt to recommend Yell in the Shoats as enough to convince the listener to acquire your new CD?

Ha! Well, you'd have to ask Adam! I'm not really very knowledgeable about Old Time music, having come from a pretty traditional Blue Grass background, but as I get older, I'm really learning to appreciate the subtle and idiosyncratic approaches that so many Old Time musicians have.

Since I started out by copying, as best I could, the playing of Earl Scruggs, I'm valuing the individual styles of various players and the fact that they are doing exactly what Earl did....playing it the way they think it should go, not the way that everyone else plays it.

I think that the way the tune is arranged on the album, just banjo and rhythm mandolin, is a very traditional way of presenting the tune. But since I'm playing it in my two finger style it's unique enough that it's completely different from how any other banjo player would play it....maybe it's the combination of traditional and new that attracted Adam to it.

What awards has the CD won? What has made it special?

The album this tune is on, *12 x 2(+/-1)*, is my first solo recording and was nominated in the 'Solo Instrumental Album of the Year' category by the Canadian Folk Music Association in 2015. It's difficult for me to say why it's special as it's really hard to be objective but I think because the album contains traditional tunes arranged in interesting ways, a listener's interest is hopefully kept throughout the entire album.

While the music is all traditional, I did not feel obligated to present the music in a stereotypically 'traditional' way. There are tunes that feature banjo and fiddle but also tunes that feature banjo and mandolin; banjo, cello and fiddle; banjo and piano; banjo and bass; and banjo only.

One of my earliest musical influences was the Beatles and I've always admired how they created music that used the same four or so instruments but could keep a listener engaged by using interesting arrangement ideas. *12 x 2* was not intended to be a 'field recording' but an album one could listen to many times and find something new each time...hopefully!

Is your playing style evolving?

Yes, I think so. As I learned Scruggs style first, it's very difficult to 'speak another language' but the more that I transcribe and create arrangements of Old Time tunes in my two finger style, the more ideas and techniques I discover. These discoveries lead not only to interesting ways of articulating fiddle melodies, but to ideas that I can flesh out into original compositions, which is very invigorating and satisfying.

What are your future musical plans?

I'm in the process of finishing up an album of Old Time banjo and fiddle duets and hope to have that album available in the fall or early winter 2021 on my label, *Ruby's Slipper Records*. I've written over 80 tunes so my next project after the fiddle and banjo album is to start working on a new album of original banjo tunes, then another Old Time album, then another original tune album, then...etc. The Jaybirds have several dates lined up for the fall and winter and I'm very much looking forward to playing music with my friends and getting out and meeting new people. I hope that we'll get past this last couple of years and regain some sort of 'normalcy'.

I have a small recording set up in my house and am constantly recording banjo music as well as other forms of music so who knows, you might see a heavy rock and roll album from me in the future too! I continue to create arrangements of Old Time tunes that are available on my website, <https://nickhornbuckle.com/> and I periodically put videos on [my youtube channel](#). I'm also on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/nickhornbuckle/> and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/nickhornbucklebanjo>.

The oldest recorded source may be from Garry Harrison, who learned from the playing of Cecil Seeley (1898-1988) from near Toledo, Illinois. Garry collected hundreds of fiddle tunes for the Dear Old Illinois collection, but Yell in the Shoats isn't included. He recorded with the Indian Creek Delta Boys and you can hear Garry's solo on Slippery Hill: [Garry Harrison's version](#). The tempo is as rapid as a herd of charging boars.

Okay, let's hear some of us TOTWers!



Cecil Seeley, c. 1978