

# Durham's Reel

Recorded Source: Hot Rize, *Hot Rize*, Flying Fish (FF 70206)

Written by Buddy Durham

Notes by Steve Pottier:

I first met Charles Sawtelle in the late '70s in Berkeley. My first impression was that he was a very reserved quiet guy. Then when you didn't expect it, his dry sense of humor would pop out and leave you floored. When I hear him play, I find his rhythm playing doesn't dominate the band sound as it does in many bluegrass bands, but is always there with strong fills and unfailing support. The quiet guy. Then he takes a lead. Sometimes soft, sometimes driving, his guitar to the brink of distortion, he attacks a solo with fierce intent. There is no doubt in my mind that every note is coming straight from his inner being. I can hear the influence of Clarence White and the blues and - Jimi Hendrix?!? Just when you think you've got him figured out, he goes sideways on you, leaving you in a laughing, puzzled heap on the floor. I cherish those moments from Charles, even if I don't always understand them. They hit a lot deeper than pure technique and logic ever will. I find his playing a lot like his personality, which speaks volumes about his integrity as a musician. After all, isn't that the goal-behind-the-goals of musicianship, to be able to speak the truth from your heart? Charles is the personification of those values.

"Durham's Reel" is fast – deceptively so. His opening statement of the melody, which stays very straight and true, shows Charles' super fluidity, even (or perhaps especially) at high speed. This is an excellent break for an intermediate player to work on as it states the melody so directly. Once you have the break memorized, try to copy the SOUND Charles gets – the phrasing, the dynamics, and the fluid feel. This is a good lesson in how a great player can make a solo more than just the sum of the notes.

Editor's Note: During measures 27 and 28 of this song there is a "stop time" where the rhythm section stops playing and only the lead instrument is heard. Recalling Charles' "Durham's Reel" solos, Nick Forster said, "Charles literally invites disaster everytime he takes a solo. Sometimes there were disasters, especially when you have a solo like "Durham's Reel" where there is a stop time. There is a break and then a little guitar figure. In those areas where no one is playing except for Charles, sometimes that would get really dangerous. He would monkey with the time in such a way that we all wouldn't come back in time. But given the choice between something that is steady as she goes and predictable as can be and right in the pocket and repeats itself all of the time, or something that is adventurous and dangerous, I'll take danger any day."

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Capo 2

Arrangement Charles Sawtelle  
Transcribed by Steve Pottier

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