

Bristlecone Pine (Hugh Prestwood)

During a periodic review of my tablature projects I noticed a few things in this song that were in error. My apologies. This is my second (and hopefully last) iteration of Bristlecone Pine.

I have fixed up some wrong notes, and also added my fingering to some tablature passages for assistance.

So, moving on. In my opinion this prophetic song is a 'signature' song for Michael Johnson. A fitting end to a life well and truly lived.

On the one hand it was a difficult song to tab in that I know of at least six versions, in which each case Michael plays different fingerings. So I picked and chose what will give a good overall flow. On the other hand it's an easy song to play since these fingerings are all slight variations of the same or slightly different chords. So once you have the basic pattern you can substitute other fingerings and it can sound equally great in your performance of the tune.

I also had an issue with the appropriate time signature; 3/4 waltz, or 6/8. Not having access to the sheet music, (internet searches weren't much help either) I settled on a 6/8 time signature. The tempo is set at 92 bpm where these are counted on the first and fourth beat – **1**-2-3-**4**-5-6. And I have written the tab for the introduction and ending as accurately as I could as to how Michael plays them...generally...sometimes, as well as an 'acceptable' rendering of the first verse and chorus.

This song benefits from the constant steady rhythm and it helps if you can remain in tempo, whatever tempo you choose. The alternating base should be second nature and if you're not used to it, with practice it will be.

I don't go in for labels; beginner, novice, advanced sort of thing. From what I've seen of Michael's songs his fingering is not complicated, just a bit 'tricky' at times so his tab should be accessible with a little dedication and practice.

The song progression is Intro, verses 1 and 2, chorus, verses 3 and 4, chorus, end.

And of course my thanks to Paul Ashley who gave me the idea to do this in the first place.

Enjoy,

Dale Dickson

March 2019

Amended June 2020

<https://youtu.be/Ec1tAM9BOPM>

<https://youtu.be/aGT3EHa2BDk>

BRISTLECOMB PINE (Hugh Prestwood)

MICHAEL JOHNSON

INSTRUMENTAL ⇒

Tuning - Drop D
 Capo - 2
 Tempo - 92/3:50

Intro

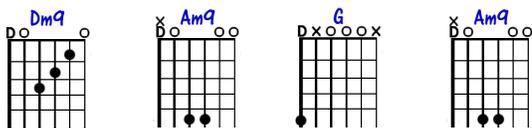
1. Way up in the mountains on the high timberline

There's a twisted old tree called the bristlecone pine

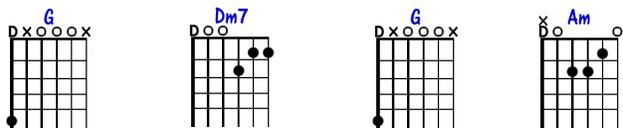
The wind there is bitter, it cuts like a knife

And it keeps that tree holding on for dear life

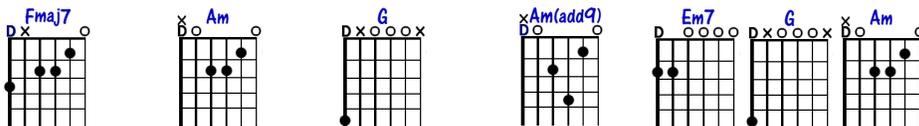
BRISTLECOMB PINE - 2



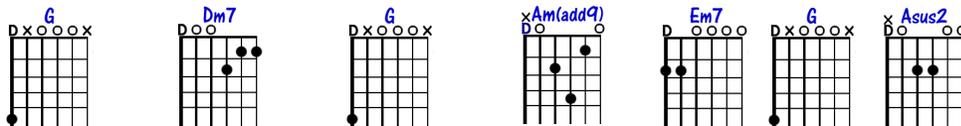
2. But hold on it does, standing its ground
3. For as I would slowly return to the earth
4. And who knows but that as the centuries turn



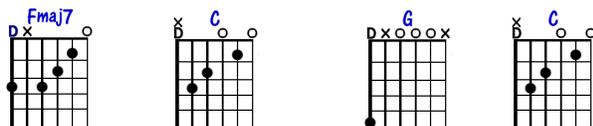
Standing as empires rise and fall down
 What little this body of mine might be worth
 A small spark of me might continue to burn



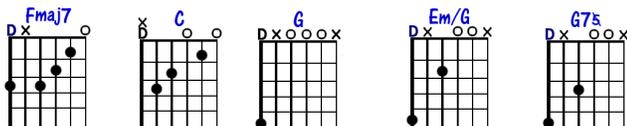
When Jesus was gathering lambs to his fold
 Would soon start to nourish the roots of that tree
 As long as the sun does continue to shine



The tree was already a thousand years old
 And it would partake of the essence of me
 Down on the limbs of the bristlecone pine



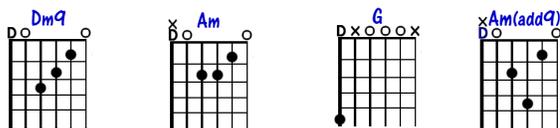
CHORUS - Now the way I have lived there ain't no way to tell



When I die if I'm going to heav.....en or hell



1. So I'd just as soon serve out eternity's time
2. So when I'm laid to rest it would suit me just fine



To sleep at the feet of the bristlecone pine

**Continue with verses 3 and 4,
 then Chorus 2, and end below.**



Bristlecone Pine

by Hugh Prestwood

(DADGBE)

6/8

capo 2
tempo 92

arr. Michael Johnson
tabature by Dale Dickson

1 of 3

Intro

E B G D A D

Verses

1. Way up in the moun...tains on the high tim...ber...line there's a
 2. But hold on it does stand...ing its ground as Jes...us was
 3. For as I would slow...ly as the ret...urn to the earth would so...on start to
 4. And who knows but that as the cen...tur...ies the earth turn what a

twist...ed old tree called the bristle...cone pine the wind there is
 stand...ing as emp...ires rise and fall pine down as Jes...us was
 lit...tle this bo...dy of mine con...tin...ue might be worth would so...on start to
 small spark of me might to burn as long as the

bit...ter it cuts like a kni...fe and it tree fold
 gath...er...ing lambs to his tree shine
 nour...ish the roots of that
 sun does con...tin...ue to

Bristlecone Pine

by Hugh Prestwood

(DADGBE)

6/8

capo 2
tempo 92

arr. Michael Johnson
tabature by Dale Dickson
2 of 3

→ 2, 3 & 4

keeps that tree hold.....ing
the tree was al.....re.....ady
and it would par.....take of
down on the limbs of
a on for dear
the ess...ence sand years
the bris...tle.....cone of

1 & 3

life.
me. old.
pine.

Go back to Verses

2 & 4

Now the...

Go to Chorus below

Chorus

...way I have lived, there ain't no way to tell when I die if I'm

go.....in' to hea...ven or hell (1) so I'd just as soon serve out
(2) so when I'm laid to re....st it would

et.....er.....ni....ty's ti.....me fine a...
me just fine to

sleep at the feet of the bris...tle.....cone pine.

after 1st Chorus, go back to Verse 3
after 2nd Chorus, continue ahead →

to sle.....ep at the

AB Bristlecone Pine

by Hugh Prestwood

(DADGBE)

6/8

capo 2
tempo 92

arr. Michael Johnson
tabature by Dale Dickson
3 of 3

E B G D A D

feet of the bris...tle...cone.....

Go to End below

pine.

End