# Playing Folk on a Martin OMJM: Tips and Techniques for Getting the Best Sound

**Martin OMJM** is a popular acoustic guitar model that was designed in collaboration with musician John Mayer. The guitar has gained a lot of popularity due to its unique features and versatility, making it a great choice for playing different styles of music, including folk. In this article, we will share tips and techniques on how to get the best sound out of your **Martin OMJM** when playing folk music. We'll discuss the guitar's features and specifications, techniques for playing folk music, and tips for amplifying the sound of the guitar. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced musician, this guide will help you get the most out of your **Martin OMJM** when playing folk music.

## The Martin OMJM Guitar: Features and Specifications

The Martin OMJM is a beautifully designed guitar, with a range of features that make it stand out from other acoustic guitars on the market. One of the key features of the OMJM is its smaller "orchestra" body size. This makes it easier to play and provides a more balanced tone, which is well-suited to folk music.

The guitar has a solid Sitka spruce top, which is a common material used in the construction of acoustic guitars. This top wood is known for producing a bright and clear sound with plenty of projection, making it perfect for fingerpicking and other delicate playing styles. The back and sides of the OMJM are made of East Indian rosewood, which adds warmth and depth to the tone. This gives the guitar a rich and full-bodied sound that is ideal for playing folk music.

In addition to its high-quality materials, the Martin OMJM also features a modified low oval neck shape and a 25.4" scale length. This makes it easy to play and comfortable for fingerpicking, which is a common technique used in folk music. The neck shape and scale length also make it easier to play complex chord progressions and intricate fingerstyle patterns, making it a versatile instrument for all kinds of folk music.

Overall, the Martin OMJM is a well-designed guitar that is perfect for playing folk music. With its smaller body size, solid Sitka spruce top, East Indian rosewood back and sides, modified low oval neck shape, and 25.4" scale length, it provides a balanced and rich tone that is both versatile and comfortable to play. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced player, the Martin OMJM is a great choice for anyone looking for a high-quality acoustic guitar.

## Choosing the Right Strings for Folk Music

When it comes to playing folk music on the Martin OMJM, selecting the right strings is crucial to

achieving the best sound. While personal preference plays a role, there are some general guidelines that can be followed to help find the perfect strings for your playing style and musical goals.

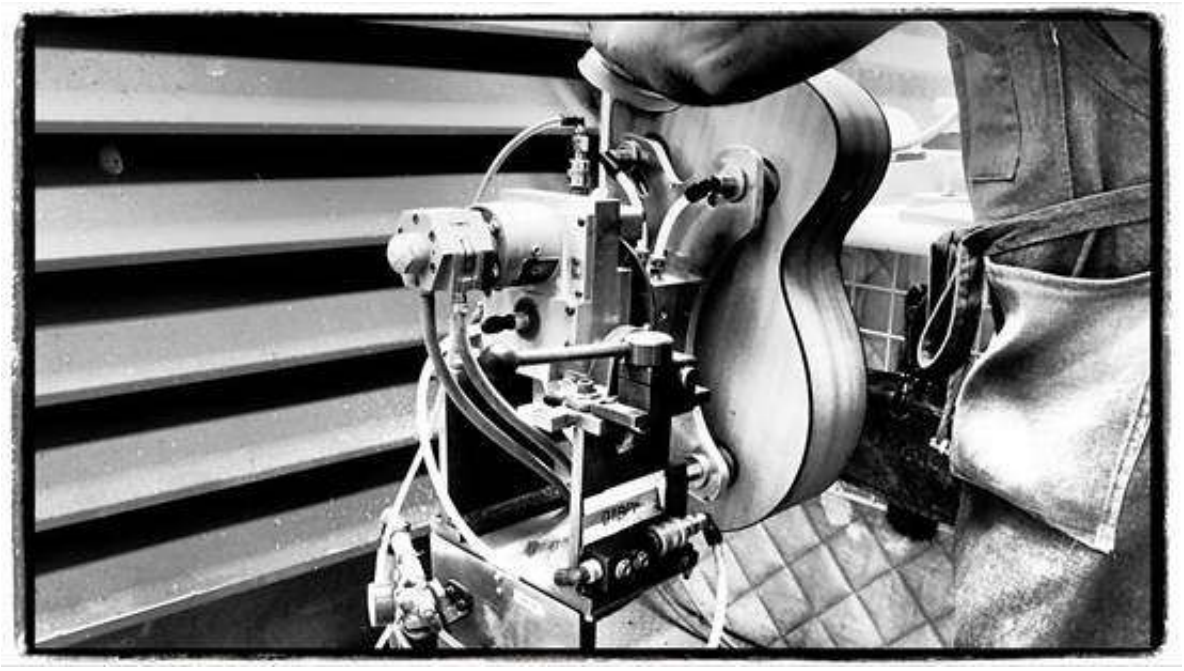
One important factor to consider is the gauge of the strings. Light gauge strings are often recommended for folk music, as they are easier to bend and vibrate, and can produce a brighter tone. This is especially important for fingerpicking, as it allows for greater control and precision.

Another consideration is the material of the strings. The most common materials used for acoustic guitar strings are bronze, phosphor bronze, and nickel-plated steel. Each material produces a slightly different tone, and the right choice will depend on your personal preference and the sound you want to achieve. Bronze strings, for example, are known for their bright and clear sound, while phosphor bronze strings offer a warmer and more mellow tone.

Popular string brands for folk music on the Martin OMJM include D'Addario, Martin, and Elixir. These brands offer a variety of string gauges and materials, so it's worth experimenting to find the right fit for your playing style.

In addition to selecting the right strings, it's important to regularly change them to maintain the best sound quality. Strings can lose their brightness and clarity over time as they accumulate dirt and oil from your fingers. As a general rule, it's recommended to change strings every few weeks or after extended periods of heavy use.

By selecting the right strings and maintaining them regularly, you can achieve the best possible sound when playing folk music on the Martin OMJM.



## Techniques for Playing Folk Music on a Martin OMJM

When it comes to playing folk music on a Martin OMJM, there are several techniques you can use to achieve the best sound. Here are some tips to help you get started:

1. Fingerpicking: Fingerpicking is a common technique used in folk music and is well-suited to the Martin OMJM's balanced tone. To get started with fingerpicking, you can begin by playing a simple pattern of alternating bass notes with your thumb and melody notes with your other fingers. As you become more comfortable with this technique, you can experiment with more complex patterns and syncopated rhythms.

2. Alternating bass patterns: Alternating bass patterns are a common technique used in folk music to create a steady rhythm while highlighting the melody. To play an alternating bass pattern, you can begin by playing the root note of the chord with your thumb, followed by a melody note with your other fingers. Repeat this pattern for each chord in the song.

3. Arpeggios: Arpeggios are another technique that can be used to highlight the melody while providing a rhythmic accompaniment. To play an arpeggio, you can begin by playing the root note of the chord with your thumb, followed by the third, fifth, and seventh notes of the chord with your other fingers. Repeat this pattern for each chord in the song.

4. Capos: Capos are frequently used in folk music and can help create a brighter tone and facilitate playing in different keys. To use a capo, simply place it on the desired fret of the guitar and play as you normally would. This will raise the pitch of the guitar and allow you to play in a higher key without having to change the fingerings of the chords.

5. Strumming: Strumming can also be effective in certain folk songs, and the OMJM's smaller body size allows for easier strumming. To strum, simply use your right hand to brush the strings up or down with a consistent motion. Experiment with different strumming patterns to find the one that works best for the song you are playing.

By incorporating these techniques into your playing, you can achieve a unique and authentic sound when playing folk music on a Martin OMJM.

## Tips for Amplifying the Martin OMJM

The Martin OMJM is an excellent guitar for playing folk music, both acoustically and amplified. When it comes to amplifying the guitar, there are several factors to consider to ensure that you are getting the best sound possible. Here are some tips for amplifying the Martin OMJM:

1. Choose an Acoustic Guitar Amplifier: An acoustic guitar amplifier is specifically designed to amplify the sound of an acoustic guitar without altering its natural tone. When choosing an amplifier for your Martin OMJM, look for one that is designed for acoustic guitars and has the necessary inputs and controls for adjusting the sound.

2. Use a Preamp: A preamp is an essential component for amplifying an acoustic guitar. It helps to boost the signal and shape the tone before it reaches the amplifier. Many acoustic guitar amplifiers have built-in preamps, but you can also purchase external preamps for added flexibility.

3. Experiment with EQ: EQ (equalization) is a way of adjusting the frequency balance of the sound. Most acoustic guitar amplifiers have built-in EQ controls that allow you to adjust the bass, midrange, and treble frequencies. Experiment with the EQ settings to find the right balance for your playing style and the tone you want to achieve.

4. Use a DI Box: A DI (direct injection) box is a device that converts the unbalanced signal from your guitar into a balanced signal that can be sent to a mixing console or recording device. DI boxes are particularly useful when playing live or recording in a studio, as they help to eliminate hum and other noise that can be picked up by the guitar's pickups.

5. Consider Using Effects: While not necessary, adding effects such as reverb, delay, and chorus can help to enhance the sound of the Martin OMJM when played through an amplifier. Experiment with different effects to find the ones that work best for your playing style and the songs you are playing.

By following these tips, you can achieve a great amplified sound with your Martin OMJM while still maintaining its natural tone and balance.

In conclusion, the Martin OMJM acoustic guitar is a versatile and well-designed instrument that is particularly well-suited to playing folk music. With its smaller "orchestra" body size, solid Sitka spruce top, and East Indian rosewood back and sides, the OMJM produces a balanced tone with plenty of projection and depth. The modified low oval neck shape and 25.4" scale length also make it easy and comfortable to play for fingerpicking techniques.

When playing folk music on a Martin OMJM, choosing the right strings is crucial, and light gauge strings from popular brands like D'Addario, Martin, and Elixir are a good choice. Fingerpicking is a common technique in folk music, and alternating bass patterns and arpeggios can be used to create a steady rhythm while highlighting the melody. Capos are frequently used in folk music and can help create a brighter tone and facilitate playing in different keys. Strumming is also effective in certain folk songs, and the OMJM's smaller body size allows for easier strumming.

For those playing in a live setting, amplifying the sound of the Martin OMJM can be accomplished using an acoustic guitar amplifier. It's important to choose an amplifier that is compatible with acoustic guitars and has the necessary inputs and controls for adjusting the sound.

Overall, the Martin OMJM is a great choice for folk musicians looking for a high-quality acoustic guitar. Experimenting with different strings, techniques, and amplification methods can help you achieve the best possible sound for your music.