

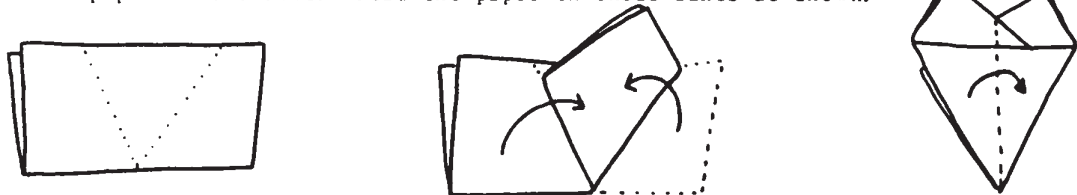
Luthier's Snowflake

Tim Olsen

To have holiday fun, you gotta have a luthier's snowflake. To make a luthier's snowflake you need the following stuff:

- 1) A sheet of drafting tissue, tracing paper, onion skin, or other very thin paper. Working with a piece less than 12" square will prove frustrating.
- 2) Good sharp scissors.
- 3) A hard leaded pencil.
- 4) A 30°/60° triangle.
- 5) a pointy X-acto knife.
- 6) Some vague idea what string instruments look like.
- 7) Winter holiday spirit.

Cut the paper into a square. Fold it in half. Find the halfway point on the folded edge and mark it lightly. Use the triangle to lightly mark the folded paper into thirds. Fold the paper on these lines as shown.



Now sketch a half outline of a string instrument on each edge. Note that this will only work properly for symmetrical instruments such as classic guitars, violin family members, A-style mandolins, and Appalachian dulcimers. Some electric guitars will work, like SGs, 335s, and Flying Vs.

If you're using a nice big sheet of paper, you might try fitting some other instrument in between. Here you can use an asymmetrical one. An F5 mandolin is good for this.

It is necessary to leave some connection between the two folded edges at the point (center), and the outside edge. This can be done in some clever way by judiciously arranging the instruments, or just by leaving a sort of geometric rim. Be sure that you are cutting through all the layers of paper at the outside edge, or the flake will have big flat sides.

When you're done snipping, unfold it carefully one fold at a time. It's real easy to tear them at this point. Press it flat with a flatiron and tape it to your shop window. I've provided a couple example patterns for you below. On the left is the simple two guitars pattern. On the right is the more advanced Dreadnaught/archtop/F5 combination. The X-acto will be essential for this one, as will a big piece of paper.

