Cara Howard

50 Simple Tunes For The Tin Whistle

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by

EITHNE and BRIAN
VALLELY

83 MULLACREEVIE PARK, ARMAGH

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50 Simple tunes for TIN WHISTLE
(or other instrument)

INTRODUCTION

WHY ANOTHER TIN WHISTLE BOOK?

After more than 7 years since the publication of our 'Learn to play the Tin Whistle' series of 3 books and in response to many letters from teachers, music class organisers, band leaders etc., we feel that a new look at Tin Whistle teaching is required.

From correspondence and from our own class experience we are very aware of the wide gap between the beginner stage and that of the experienced player, and this is further reflected in the amount of printed music available for each group. The experienced player can draw on dozens of sources for new tunes but the beginner has few sources to turn to. In this book we include many of the popular marches, song tunes and simple polkas currently played. The tunes are arranged with the first 20 including numbers to help the complete beginner get straight into playing. The final 30 tunes are arranged without numbers and in order to facilitate the reading of music there are 7 distinct groupings covering the complete collection. Each grouping includes most of the notes within a certain range with the final 15 tunes including the full range.

USING THE BOOK

A cassette can be bought which includes a recording of all the tunes in the book. This cassette is essential if the beginner is working outside a class and has no previous experience of tunes. Before learning any tune the beginner should become familiar with the sound and rhythm of the tune by listening to the tape. Only when the sound has been fixed in your head should you take up the whistle.

Pages 4 — 7 inclusive contain all the theory you will require in learning to read music. Pages 8 — 10 inclusive deal with the Tin Whistle and give detailed instructions on how to hold, how to blow, where the notes are found on the instrument, their names and respective numbers, and this is perhaps the most important part of the book.

Teachers using the book should play each tune for the class and then take the class through the tune phrase by phrase without the book. This is particularly important with regard to the polkas.

WHY POLKAS?

We selected polkas for the final section of the book to give an introduction to dance music. Polkas, of all the various rhythms of dance music, do not require ornamentation and are therefore relatively simple to play. The polka tunes themselves are very catchy and we have found them very popular in our classes. As a further help to your playing listen to the music of some of the famous Kerry & Cork musicians who specialize in Polkas. This is the area where this music has always been played for dancing.

LOOKING AHEAD

We hope that this book will have stimulated your interest in traditional Irish music and that having mastered all the tunes here you will want to continue to add to your repertoire. Traditional music is played all over Ireland and each region has its own distinctive style. There are opportunities all the year round to listen to and play music. By travelling around and listening you can add to your repertoire very quickly. Try always and hear a tune played before looking at the music. There are many great collections of music now available as well as fine recordings. Among Tin Whistle recordings there are records by Mary Bergin and Doncha O'Briain on the Gael Linn sleeve, Tom McHale on the Outlet sleeve and the Claddagh label record of Paddy Moloney and Sean Potts. There are two extensive music collections published by Government publications, Dublin, by Breandán Breathnach entitled Ceol Rinnce na hÉireann Parts 1 & 2. Then there are the Armagh Pipers Club Publications, all of which contain good collections of music suitable for all instruments. Learn to play the Tin Whistle, a 3 part series: Sing a Song and play it, a 3 part series with a Teachers Handbook containing all 3 parts and detailed notes: Learn to play the Fiddle, I part: and finally Learn to play Uilleann Pipes, I part. All these books are available direct from Armagh Pipers Club or in most music shops.

LIST OF TUNES

No.		Page	No.		Page
1.	Deus Meus Adiuva Me	11	26.	An tSeanbhean Bhocht	21
2.	Eileen Aroon	11	27.	Éiníní	21
3.	The Dawning of the Day	11	28.	Seán Ó Dí	21
4.	I Know Where I'm Going	12	29.	Éamonn á Chnoic	22
5.	Banna Strand	12	30.	Billy Byrne of Ballymanus	22
6.	Bog Braon don tSeanduine	12	31.	Wrap the Green Flag	23
7.	Níl sé 'na Lá	13	32.	Clare's Dragoons	23
8.	Príosún Chluain Meala	13	33.	An Drúcht Ceoidh	24
9.	Mo Ghile Mear	13	34.	Step Together	24
10.	Cailín na Gruaige Doinne	14	35.	The Star of the Co. Down	25
11.	Enniskillen Dragoons	14	36.	Henry Joy	25
12.	The Bard of Armagh	14	37.	The Croppy Boy	26
13.	Bheir Mé Ó	15	38.	A Nation Once Again	26
14.	Roddy McCorley	15	39.	Rosc Catha na Mumhan	27
15.	My Singing Bird	15	40.	The Mountains of Pomeroy	27
16.	Tipperary So Far Away	16	41.	The Three Flowers	28
17.	Suantraí na Maighdine	16	42.	Who Fears to Speak?	28
18.	The Battle of Aughrim	17	43.	O'Neill's March	29
19.	Spancil Hill	17	44.	Out on the Ice	29
20.	The Bold Fenian Men	18	45.	Britches Full of Stitches	30
21.	The Irish Rover	18	46.	Kerry Polka	30
22.	O'Donnell Abu	19	47.	Ryan's Polka	30
23.	The Boys of Wexford	19	48.	Maggie in the Wood	31
24.	The Jackets Green	20	49.	St. Mary's Polka	31
25.	Kelly from Killanne	20	50.	Amhrán na bhFiann	32

TUNE NUMBER	RANGE OF NOTES
No. 1	D – C
Nos. 2 – 8	D – D'
Nos. 9 – 17	D – E'
Nos. 18 – 22	D – F#'
Nos. 23 – 30	D – G'
Nos. 31 – 35	D – A'
Nos. 36 – 50	D – B'

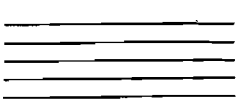
Musical Notation

There are two factors which music notation must indicate pitch and rhythm.

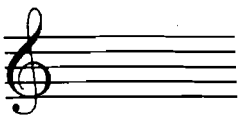
PITCH

The relative highness or lowness of a note is known as *The Pitch.*

Music is usually written on 5 lines called *The Stave* and these lines indicate the pitch of each tone.

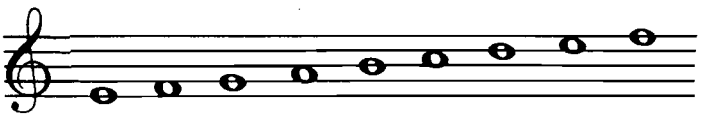


The following symbol will be seen on the Stave at the beginning of each tune to be played on the tin whistle.



This symbol is derived from the letter G and gives its name to the *treble or 'G' Clef.* The notes are written on the 5 lines and in the spaces between them.

The notes on the Treble Clef are as follows.

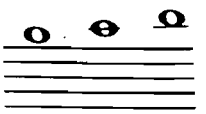


E F G A B C D E F

To help you remember these positions, the notes in the spaces are **F A C E** and on the five lines **E G B D F.** (Learn the mnemonic Every Good Boy Deserves Fruit).

Extra notes can be placed in the spaces above and below the stave and on extra lines called Leger Lines.

G A B C D



G A B

THE SCALE

A Major Scale is made up of 8 notes e.g. C D E F G A B C. The interval between the first and second, second and third, fourth and fifth, and sixth and seventh notes on a Major Scale is called a **Tone,** while the interval between the third and fourth and between the seventh and eighth notes is a **Semi-tone.**

C D E F G A B C
½ ½

This Scale, the Scale of C Major, can be played entirely on the white keys of the piano. Notice that there are no black keys between E and F or between B and C.

If we try to construct a new scale beginning on G and play the notes G A B C D E F G we will see that one of the semi-tones occurs in the wrong place i.e. between the sixth and seventh notes instead of the seventh and eighth notes. To give us a correct major scale, we must raise the seventh note of the scale by a semi-tone. On the piano this is done by playing the black note just above F. We call this note F Sharp (F ♯) To sharpen a note is to raise it by a semi-tone. Our correct scale now is G A B C E F♯ G

When a tune is played in this Scale or Key of G, the F Sharp is indicated by the symbol on the fifth line of the stave. This makes it unnecessary to put the symbol before every F in the tune. This is called a **KEY SIGNATURE** and tells us in which Key or Scale the tune is based.

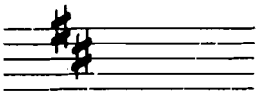
If we play a scale on the white notes beginning on D

D E F G A B C D

we see that once again the semi-tones are in the wrong places. We must sharpen the third and seventh notes of this scale and so we get —

D E F♯ G A B C♯ D

The Key Signature for the Scale of D then is



The majority of Irish traditional music is in either the Key of G or the Key of D and most of the tunes in this book are in those keys.

ACCIDENTALS

Occasionally you will find a flat or sharp note in a tune which is not part of the Key Signature. This note is called an **Accidental** and is indicated by either a flat or sharp symbol placed immediately in front of it. When the tune returns to the original note again, the accidental is cancelled out by placing a Natural symbol (♮) in front of it. Similarly if the Accidental involves lowering a note which is already sharp, or raising a note which is already flat, the Natural symbol is also used.

The length of each note is indicated by different symbols. These are as follows –

SEMIBREVE		4 beats
MINUM		2 beats
CROTCHET		1 beat
QUAVER		½ beat
SEMI-QUAVER		¼ beat

Two or more quavers written together are usually joined thus

" " semi-quavers written together are usually joined thus

Any of the above notes followed by a dot is increased in length by half the value of the note.

e.g. = 3 beats

 = 1½ "

= ¾ "

Three notes joined by this symbol form a triplet and are played in the time of one beat.

TIME SIGNATURES

A tune is divided by vertical lines into **BARS** and these show us the rhythm of the tune. The emphasis or the beat falls on the first note in each bar. The number of beats in the bar is indicated by a number found at the beginning of the tune. This is called the **TIME SIGNATURE**. Here are the usual time signatures found in traditional music :–

$\frac{2}{4}$ = 2 beats in the bar (found in polkas and some reels)

$\frac{3}{4}$ = 3 " " (found in many airs and songs)

$\frac{4}{4}$ = 4 " " (found in marches, hornpipes, reels and many set dances)

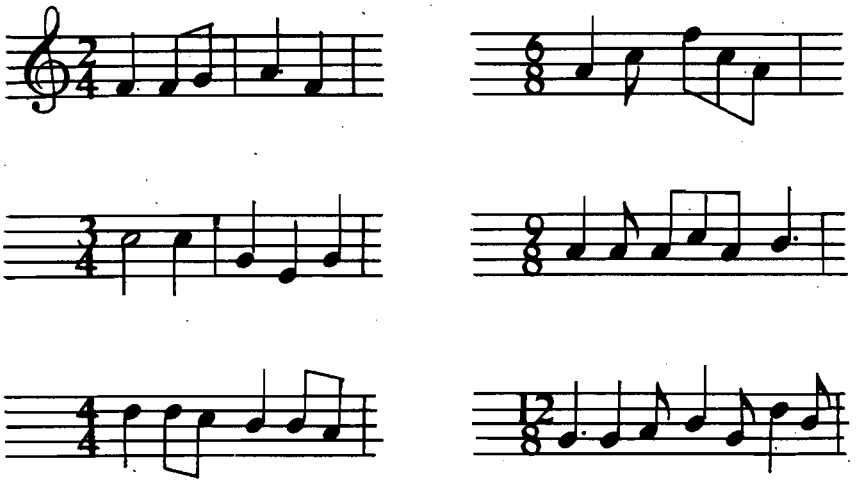
$\frac{4}{4}$ time is often called Common Time, and indicated by the letter C in the Time Signature.

$\frac{6}{8}$ = 6 quavers in the bar (found in double jibs and some set dances)

$\frac{9}{8}$ = 9 " " (found in slip jigs)

$\frac{12}{8}$ = 12 " " (found in some slides and single jigs)

Here are some examples of music with different time signatures.

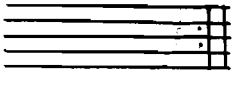


Many traditional tunes begin on the last beat of a bar. The tune is then balanced by having one beat less in the final bar.

DOUBLE BAR LINE

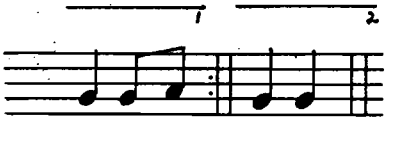
The end of a tune or of a complete part of a tune is indicated by a **Double Bar Line.**

When this Double Bar Line is preceded by two dots, the piece must be repeated. This is very common in dance music, where there are usually two or more parts, each played twice.



ENDINGS

Most dance tunes are played with each part repeated. Occasionally the endings vary slightly each time in order to lead into the first or second parts. The 1st ending is indicated by a line placed over the last bar with the number 1 and the 2nd by a line with number 2.

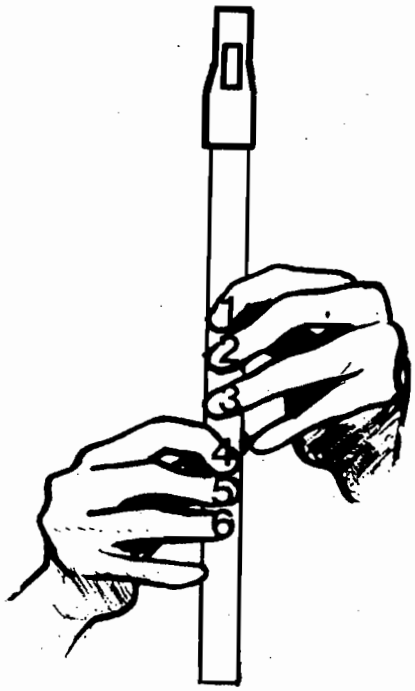


HOW TO PLAY

The tin whistle which we use in this course is in the key of D and this is one which we recommend.

If you look at your whistle you will notice that it consists of a cylindrical metal tube with six finger holes and a plastic mouthpiece.

HOW TO HOLD



LEFT HAND
3 MIDDLE FINGERS

RIGHT HAND
3 MIDDLE FINGERS

The tin whistle is held as in the diagram with both thumbs on the back to support it. The little fingers which are not used for playing can also help to balance the whistle.

HOW TO BLOW . . .

Place the mouthpiece between the lips and blow gently, without covering any of the finger-holes. Concentrate on getting an even steady note. If you are getting a high-pitched, shrill sound, you are blowing too hard.

The notes are obtained by covering and uncovering the 6 holes on the front of the whistle and blowing gently.

Left Hand Notes

(LH = left hand, RH = right hand)

TO PLAY

B

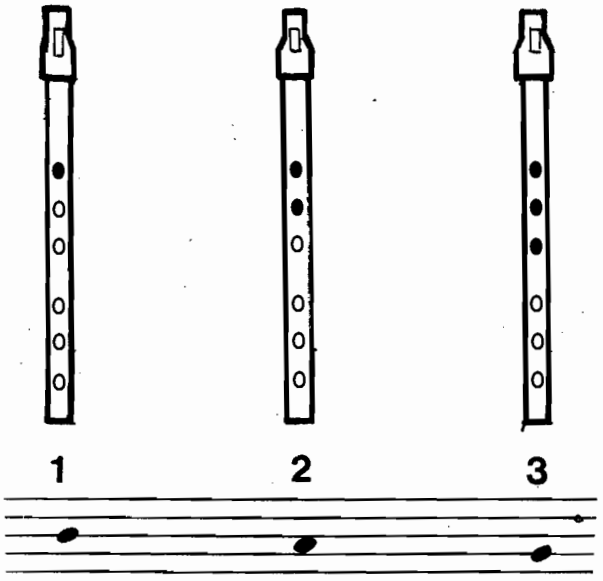
Put the 1st finger of your LH on the top finger hole nearest the mouthpiece, keeping the left thumb on the back for support. Make sure that the hole is completely covered by your finger.

TO PLAY
A

Keeping the top hole covered, cover the 2nd hole with the 2nd finger of the LH. This will give you A.

TO PLAY
G

Keeping the top 2 holes covered, place the 3rd finger of the LH on the 3rd hole from the top. This will give you G.



Practice these 3 notes until they sound as they do on the tape. If you are still producing squeaky notes, you are probably not covering the holes completely. When you are satisfied that you are getting the LH notes correctly, you can go on to the RH notes.

Right Hand Notes

TO PLAY
F#

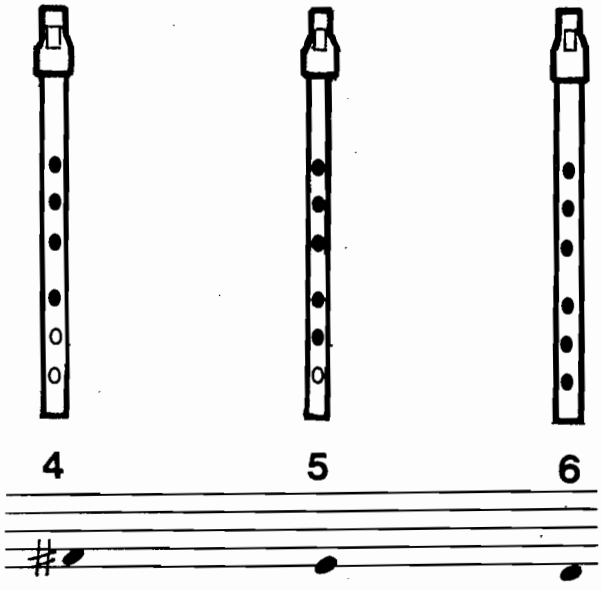
Keeping the top 3 holes covered, place the 1st finger of the RH on the 4th hole, using the right thumb to balance it at the back. This will give you the note F#

TO PLAY
E

E is produced by covering the 5th hole with the 2nd finger of the RH keeping all the notes above it covered as before.

TO PLAY
D

Now cover the 6th hole with the 3rd finger of the RH keeping all the holes above it covered also. This will give you D.



TO PLAY **C**

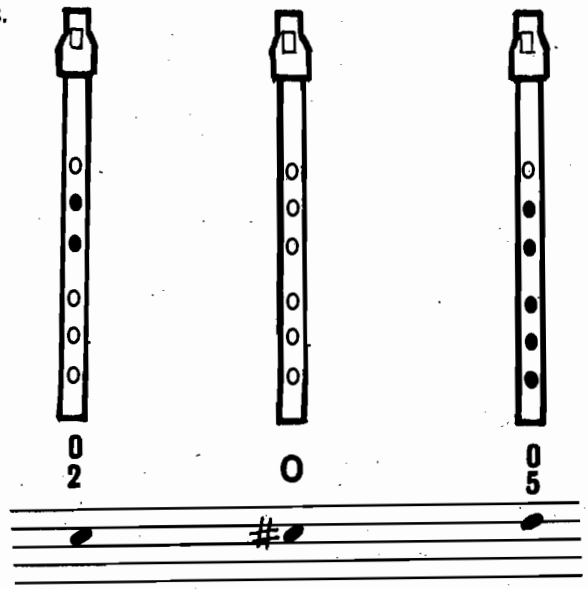
C or C natural is played by covering the 2nd and 3rd holes with 2nd and 3rd fingers of LH (C natural occurs in tunes in the key of G:- those which have one sharp (♯) at the beginning .)

TO PLAY **C♯**

C sharp is played with all the finger holes uncovered. (This note occurs in tunes in the key of D:- those with 2 sharps at the beginning.)

TO PLAY HIGH **D**

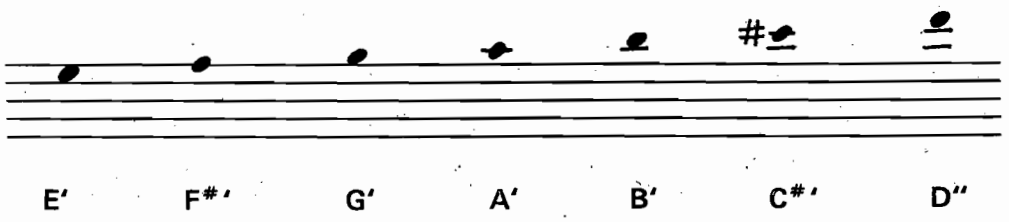
High D is obtained by covering all holes except the top one with the correct fingers.



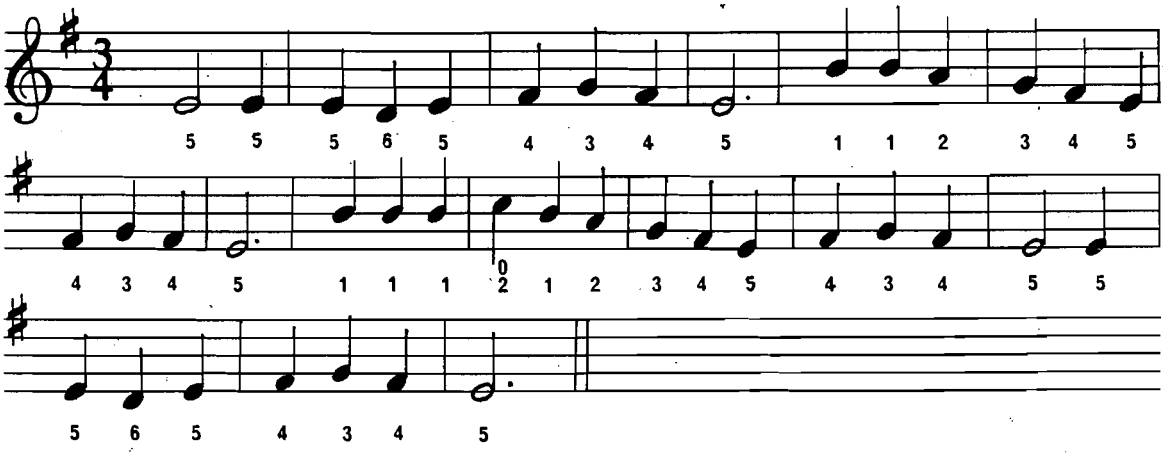
These notes, D to high D, are the 1st octave.

2nd OCTAVE

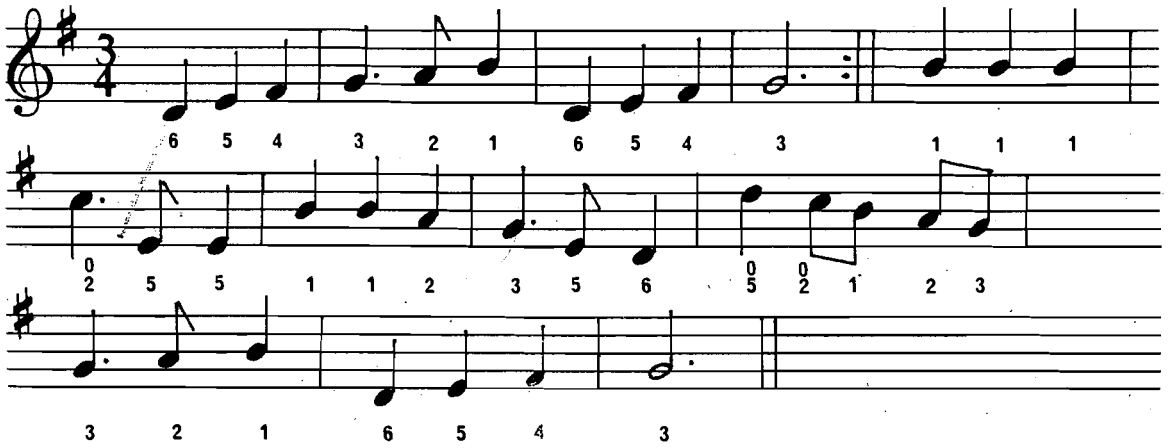
The second octave is obtained by using the same fingering as the first octave but blowing harder. Listen to the tape again and play the notes from high E to top D.



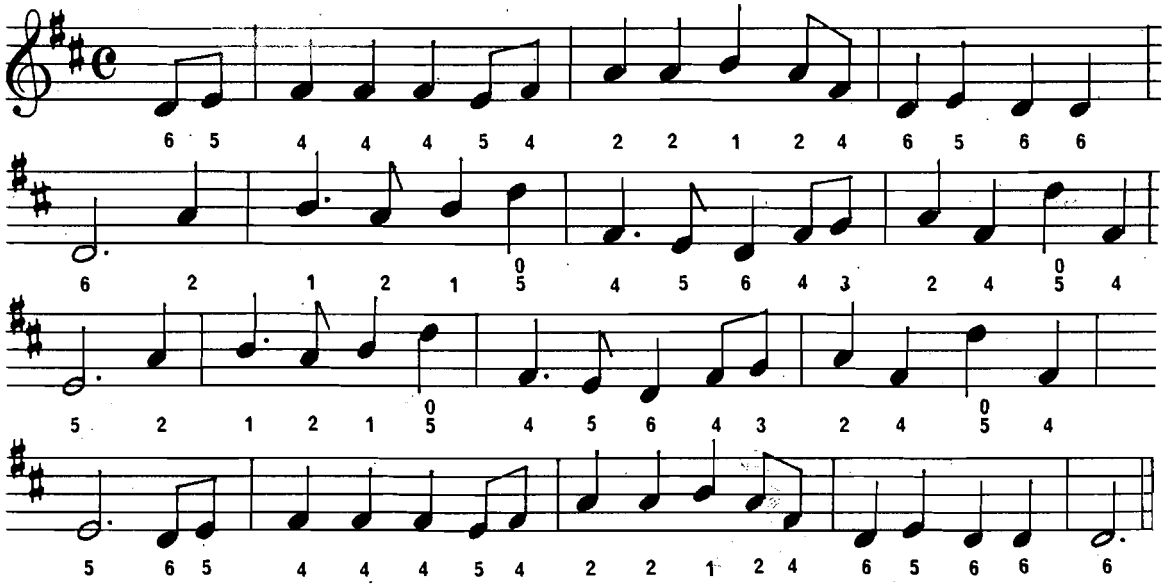
Deus Meus Adiuva Me



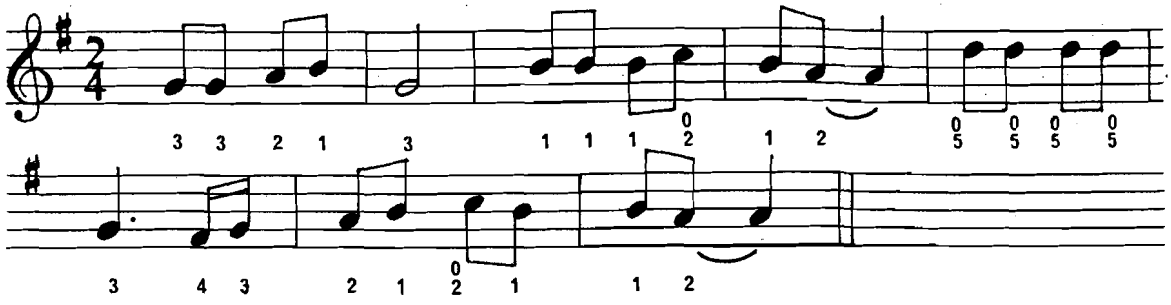
Eileen Aroon



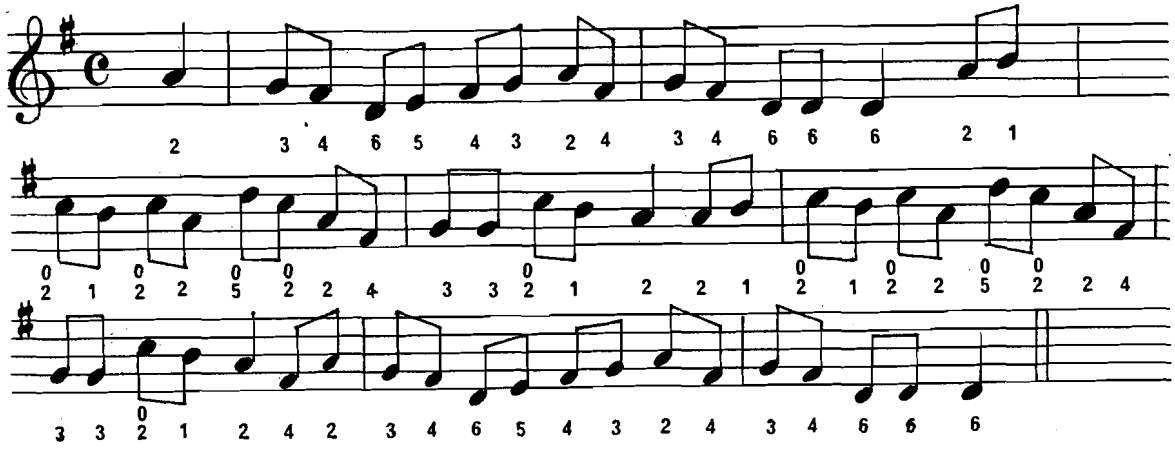
The Dawning of the Day



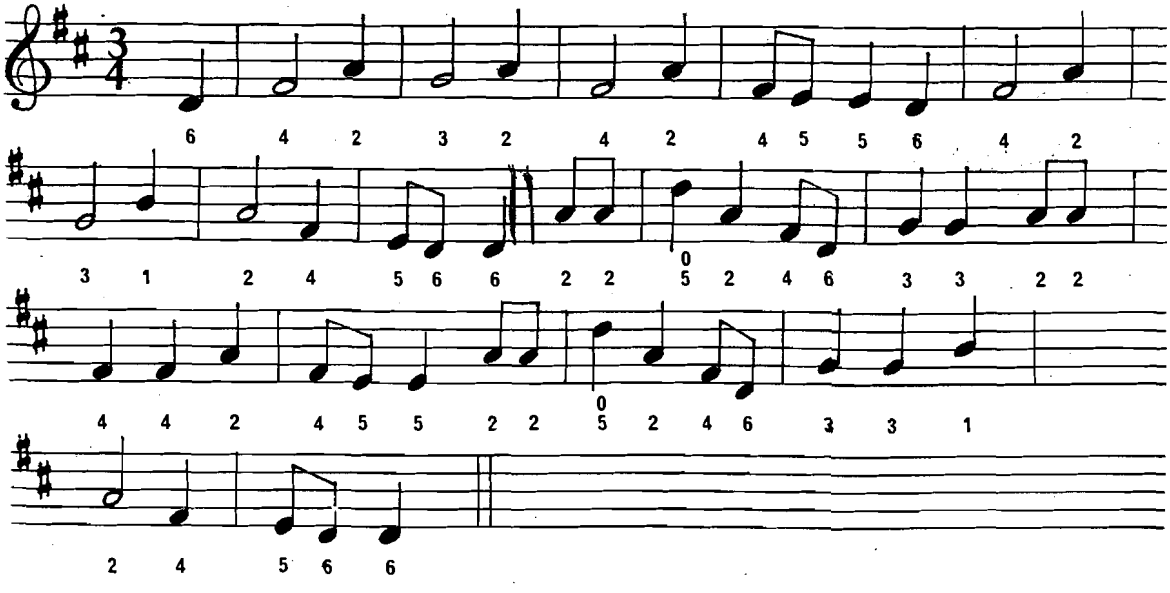
I Know Where I'm Going



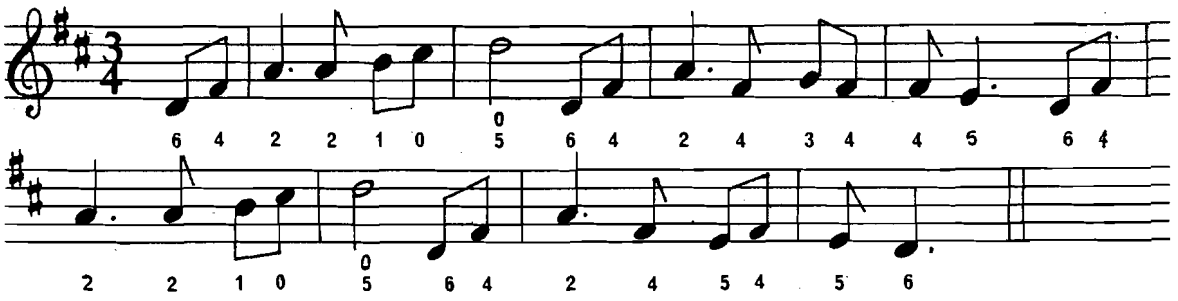
Banna Strand



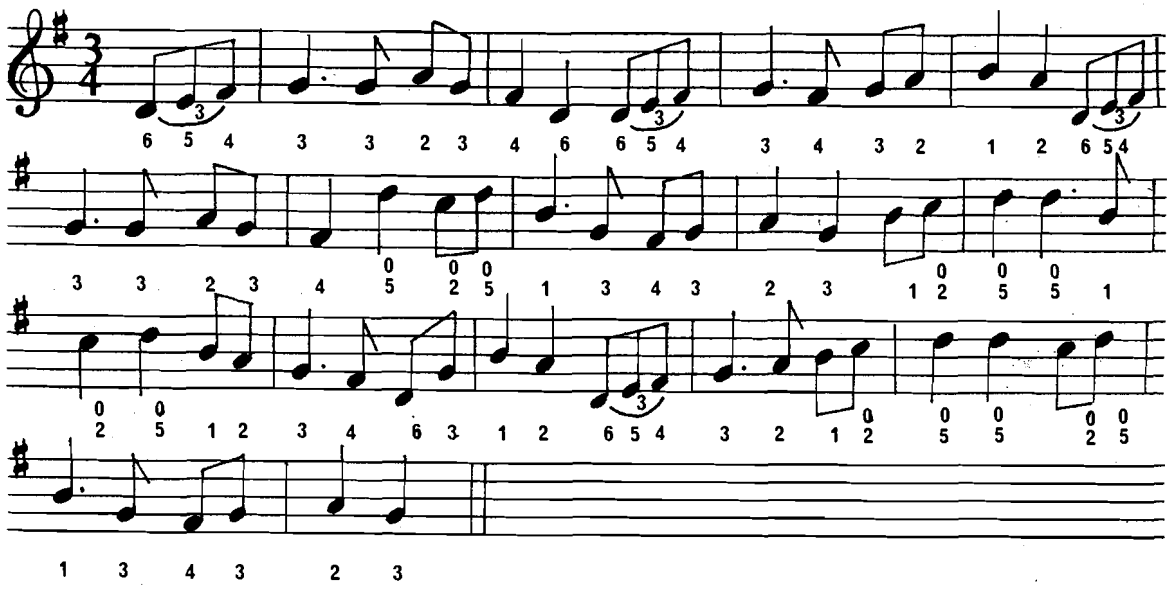
Bog Braon don tSeanduine



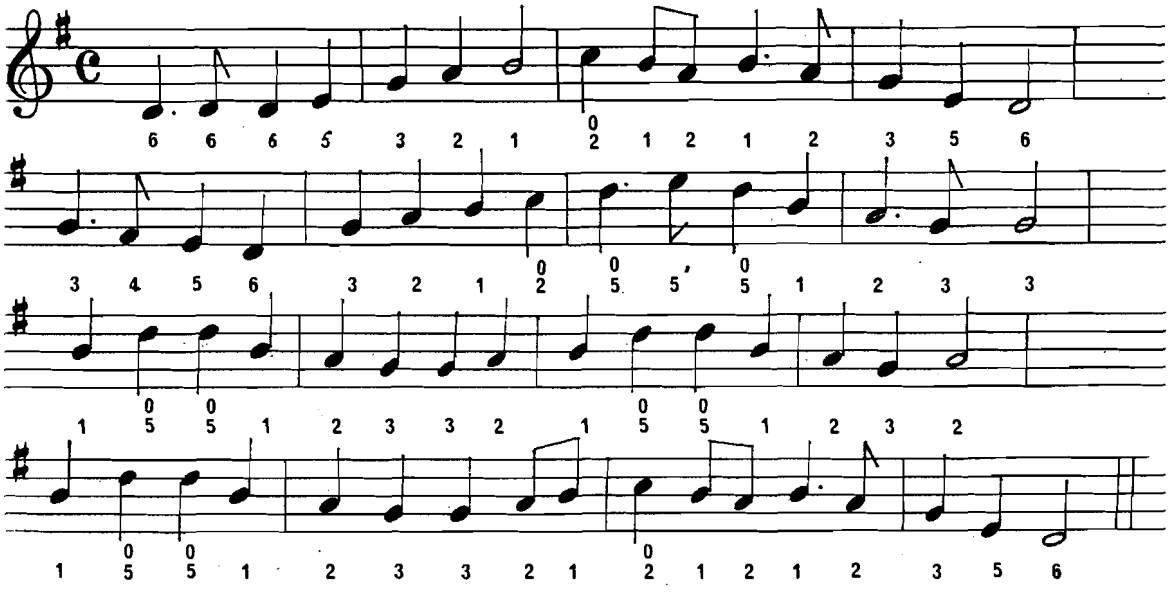
Níl sé 'na Lá



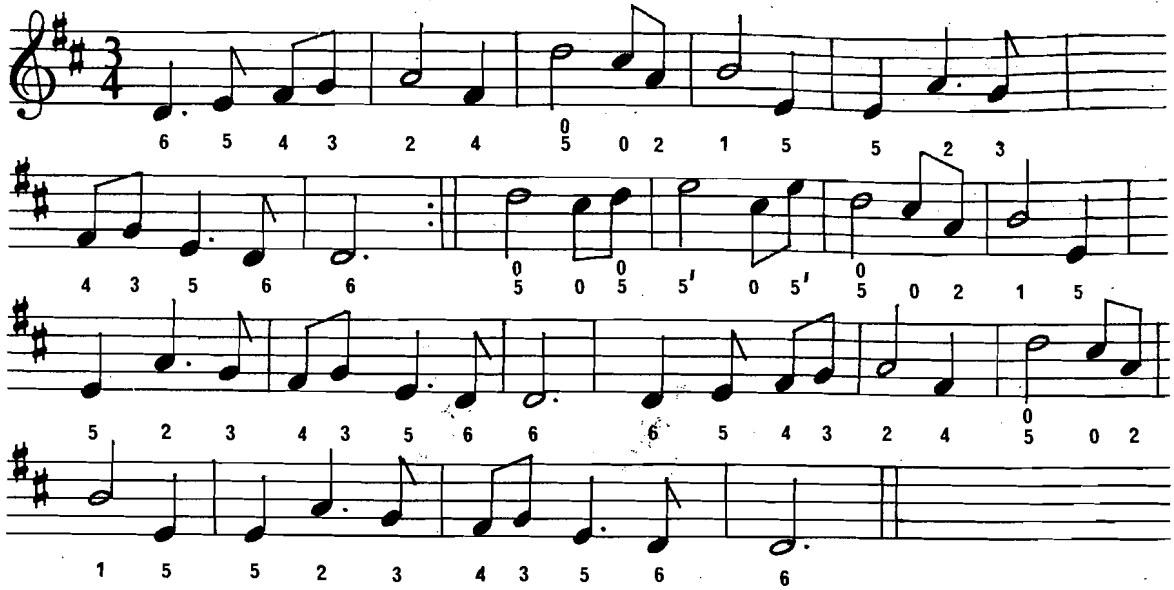
Príosún Chluain Meala



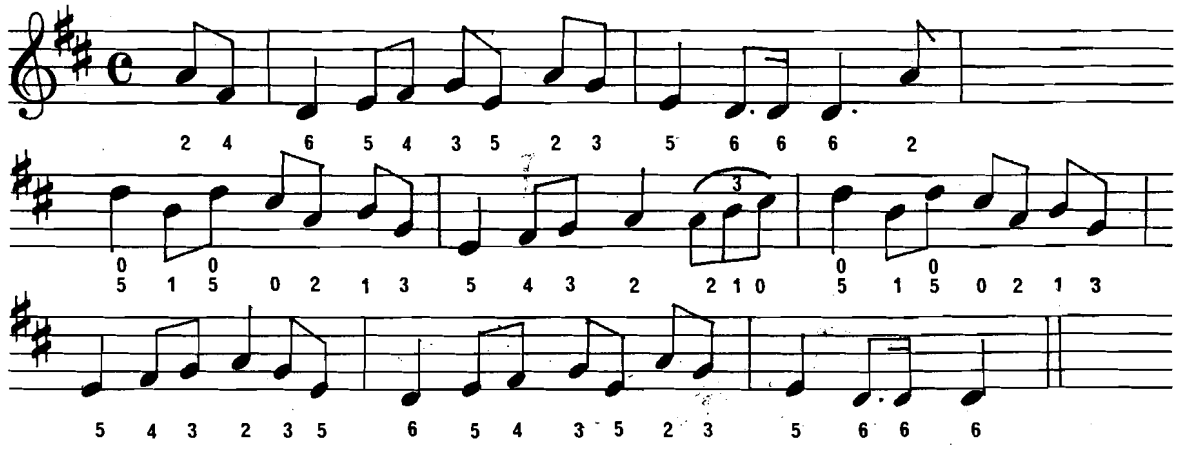
Mo Ghile Mear



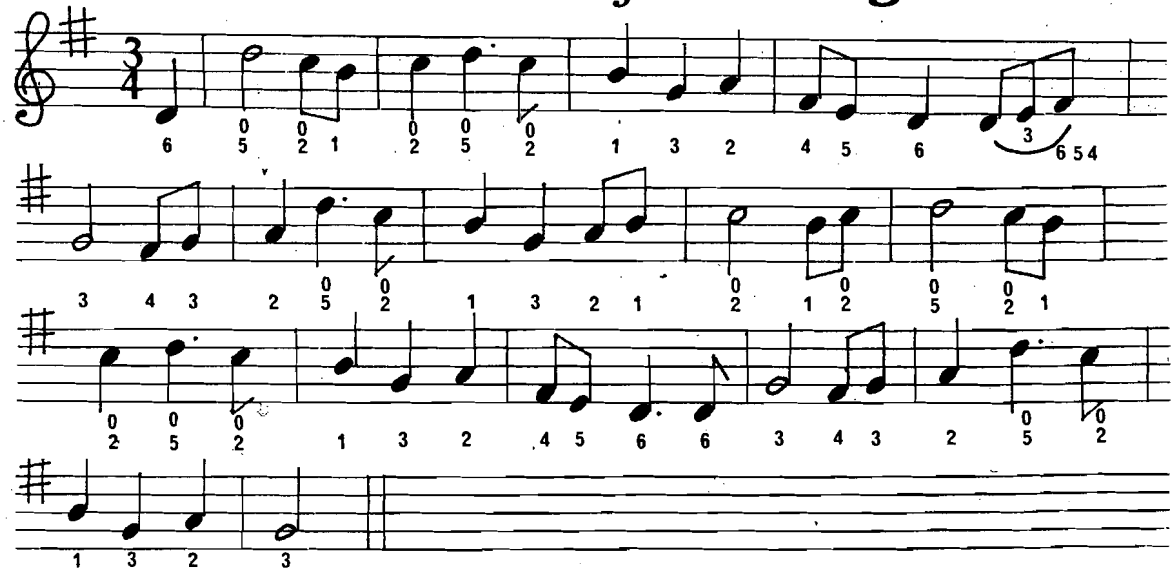
Cailín na Gruaige Doinne



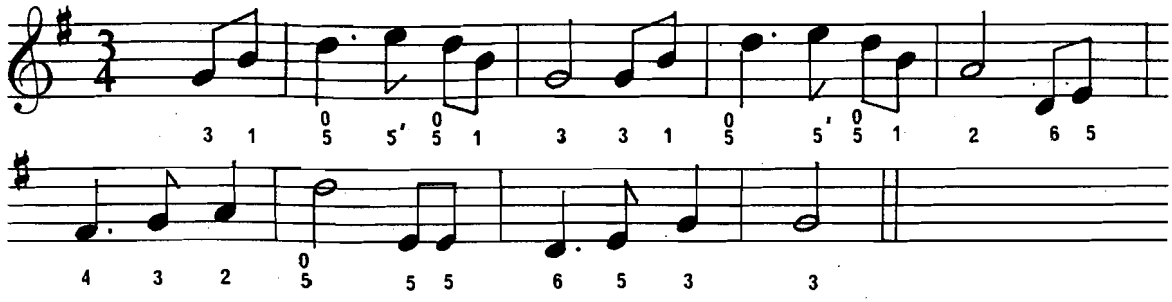
Enniskillen Dragoons



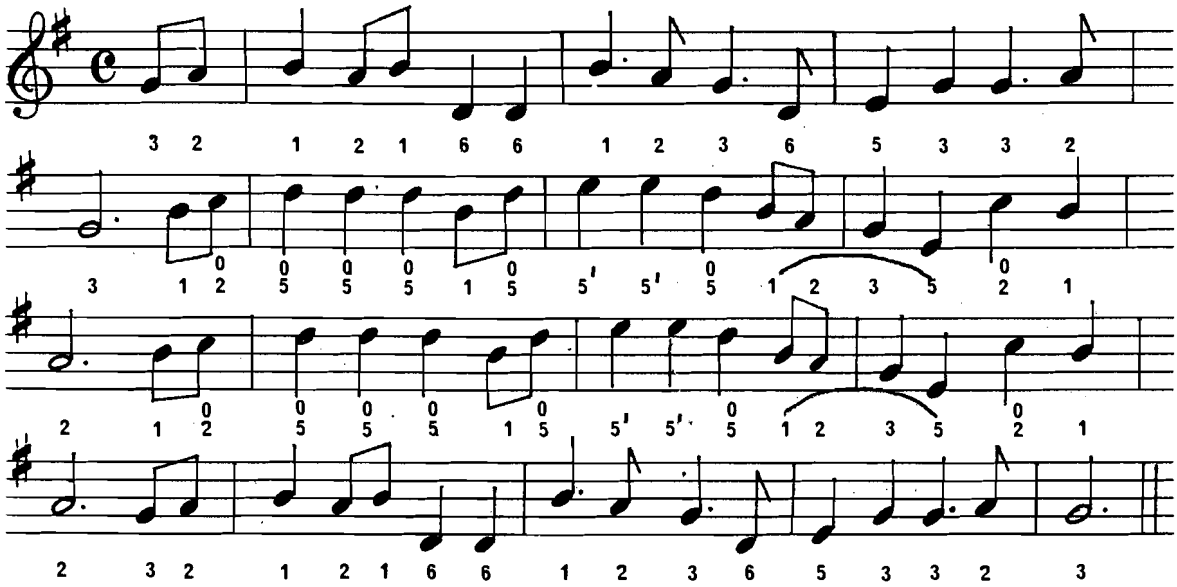
The Bard of Armagh



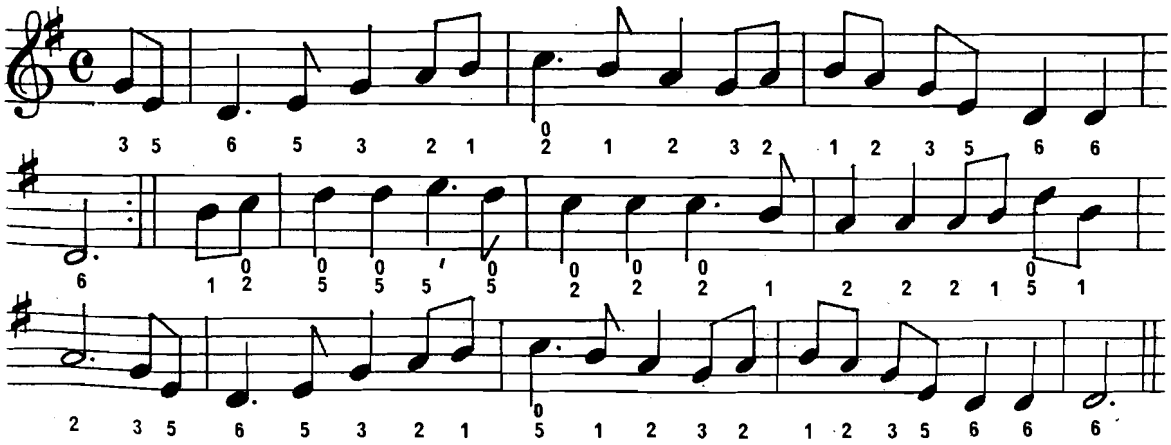
Bheir Mé Ó



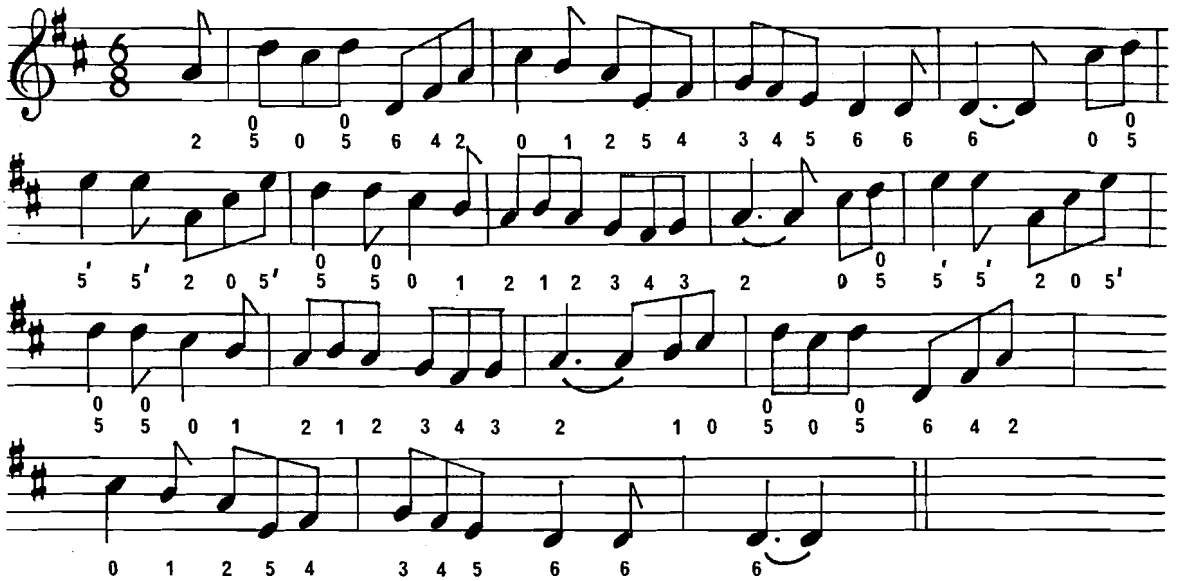
Roddy McCorley



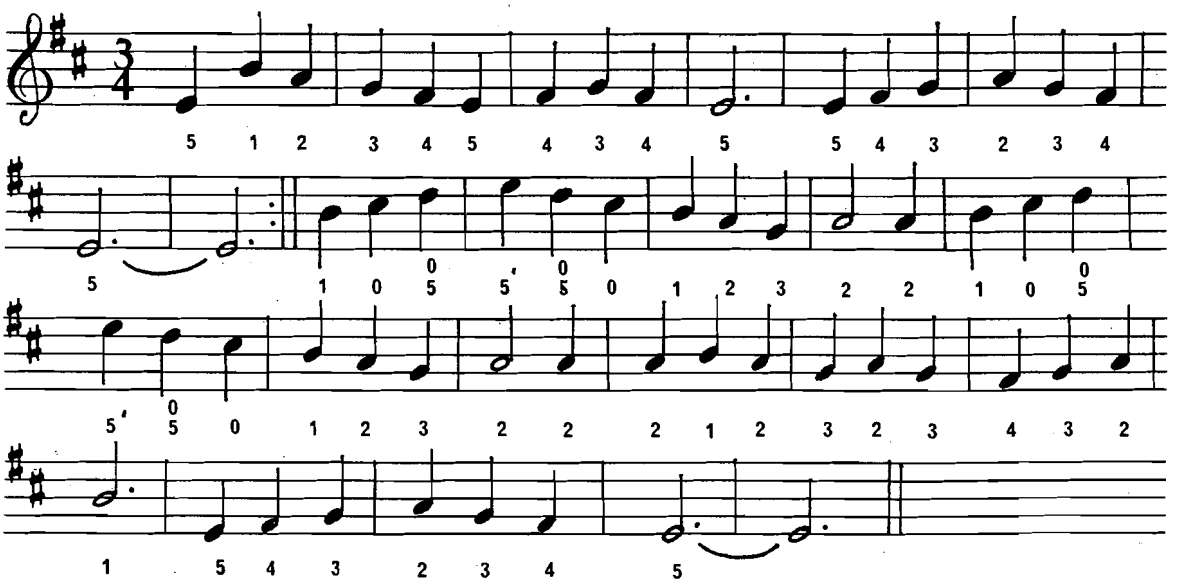
My Singing Bird



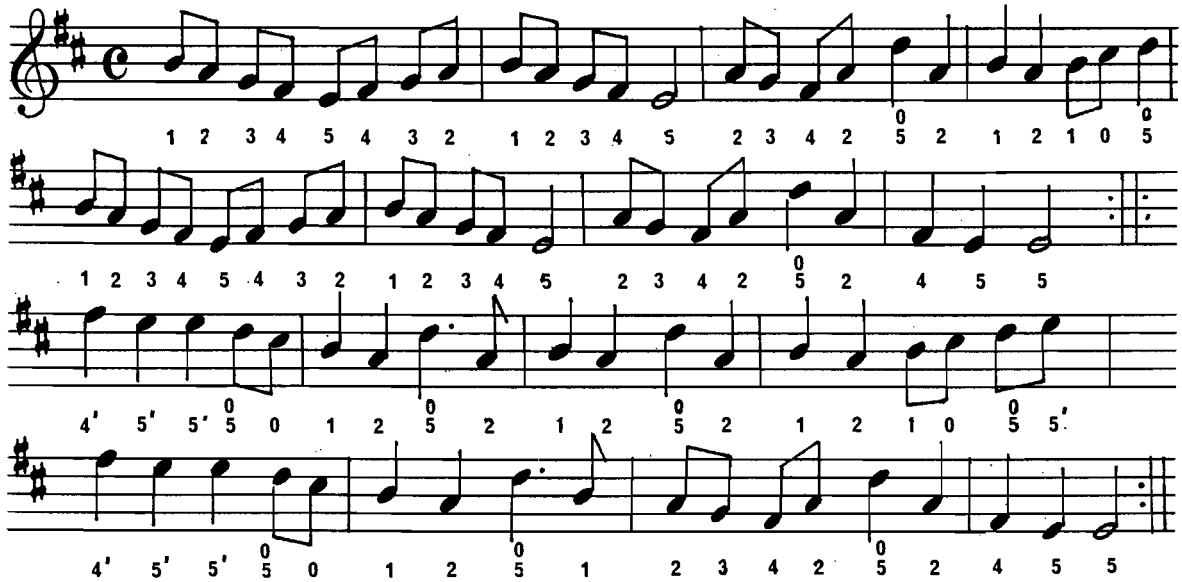
Tipperary So Far Away



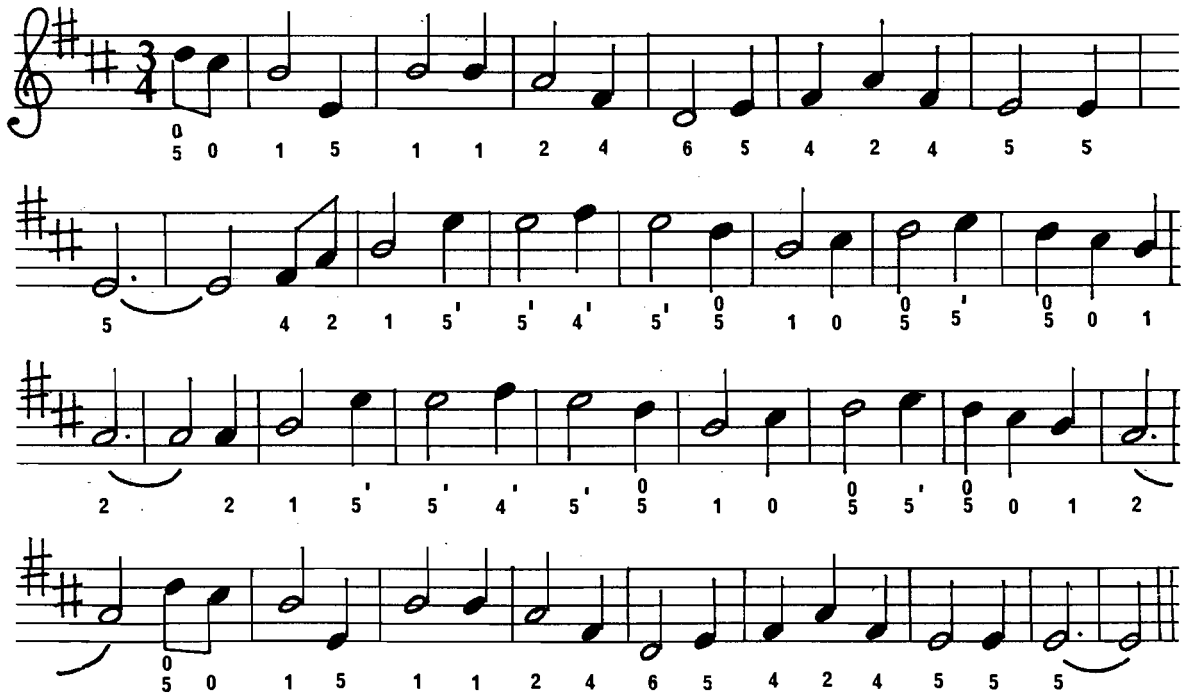
Suantraí na Maighdine



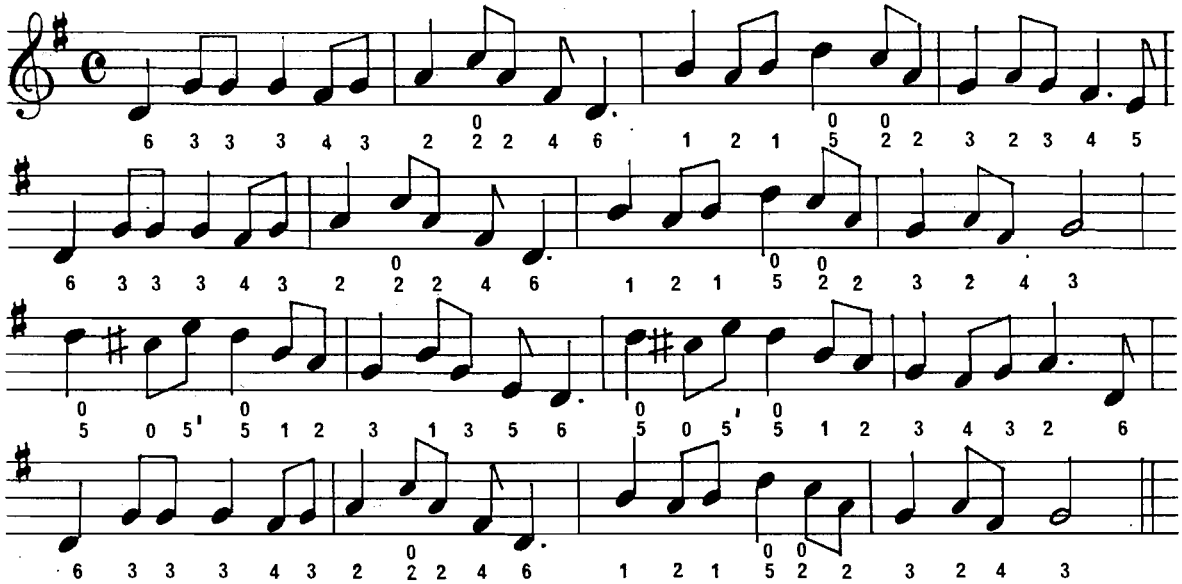
The Battle of Aughrim



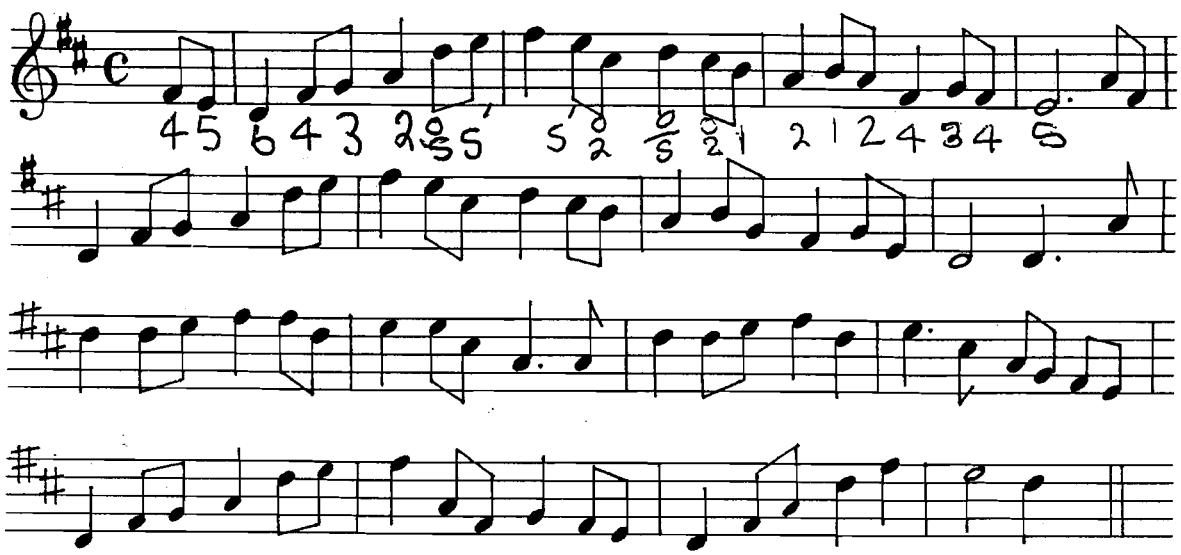
Spancil Hill



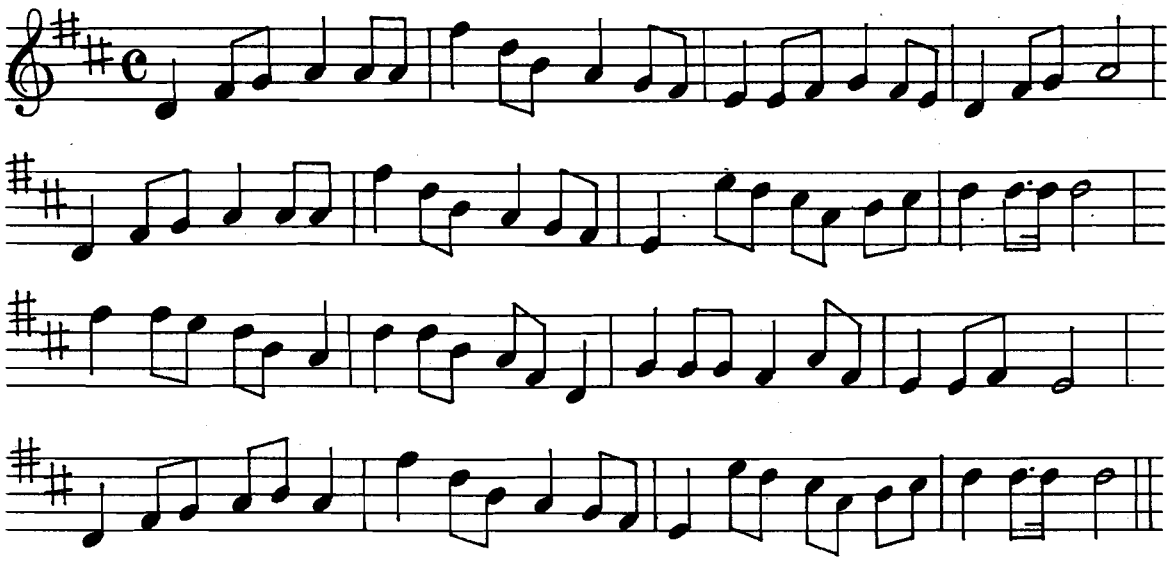
The Bold Fenian Men



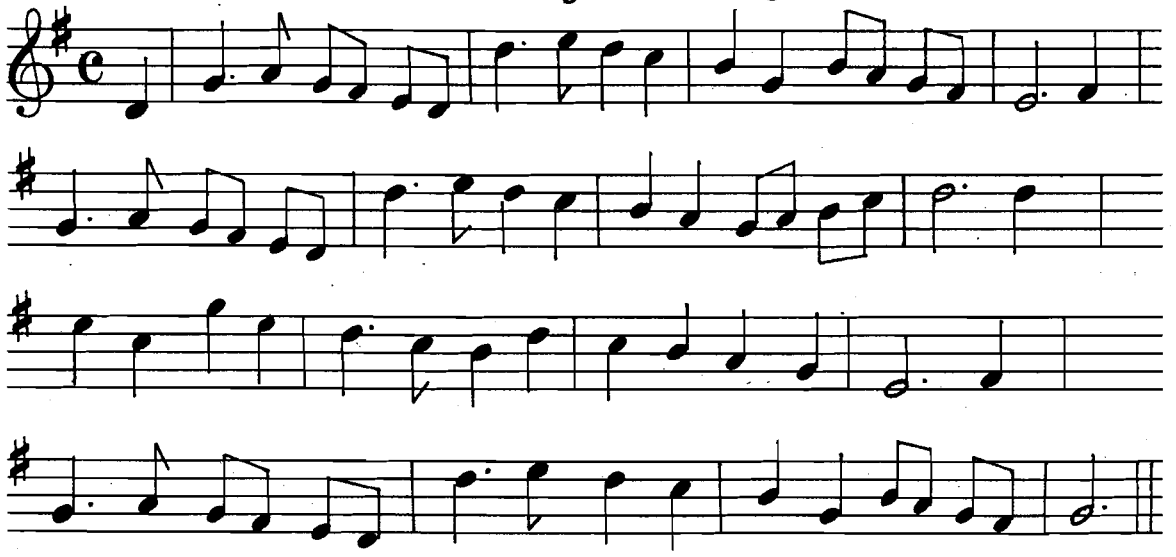
The Irish Rover



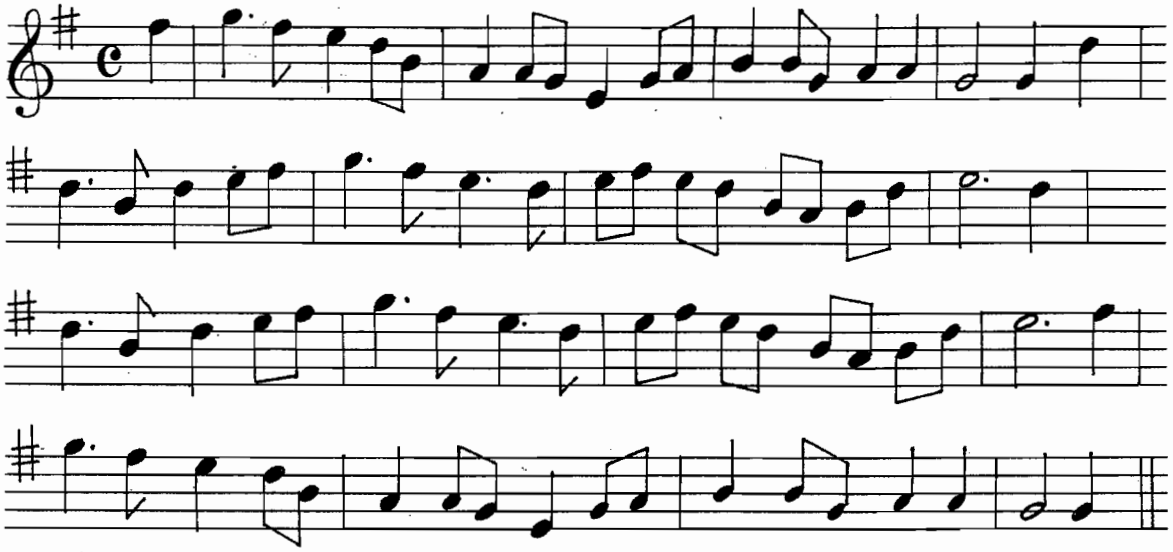
O'Donnell Abu



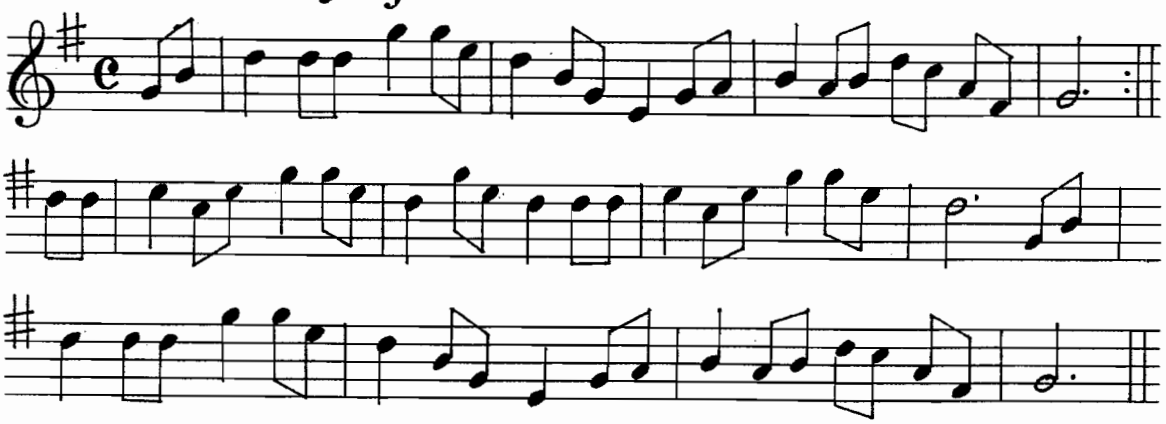
The Boys of Wexford



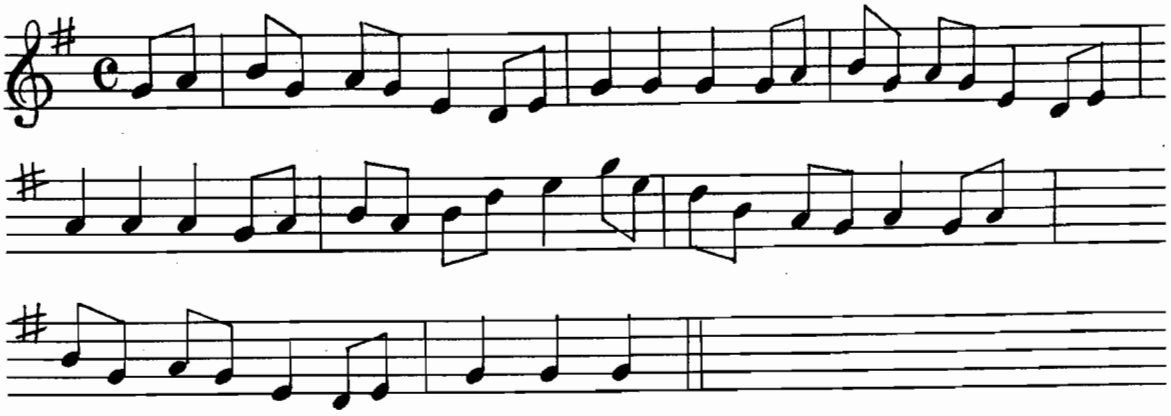
The Jackets Green



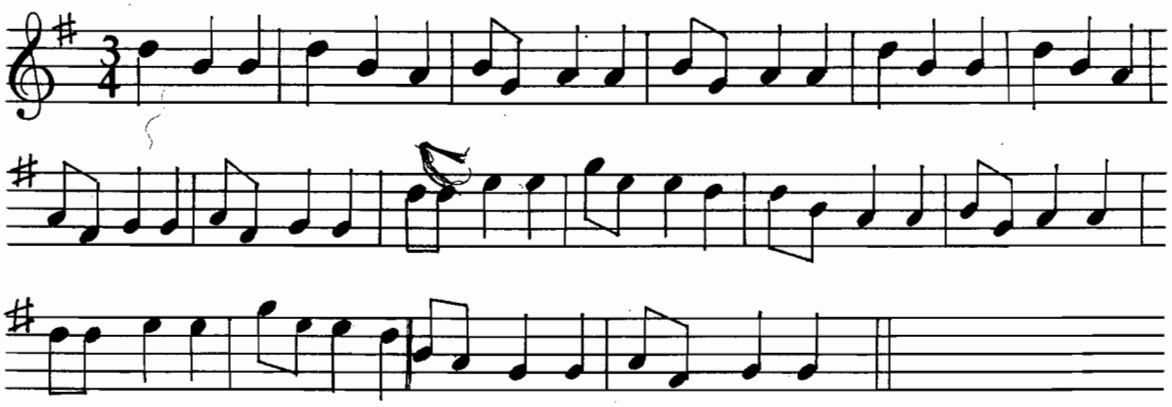
Kelly from Killanne



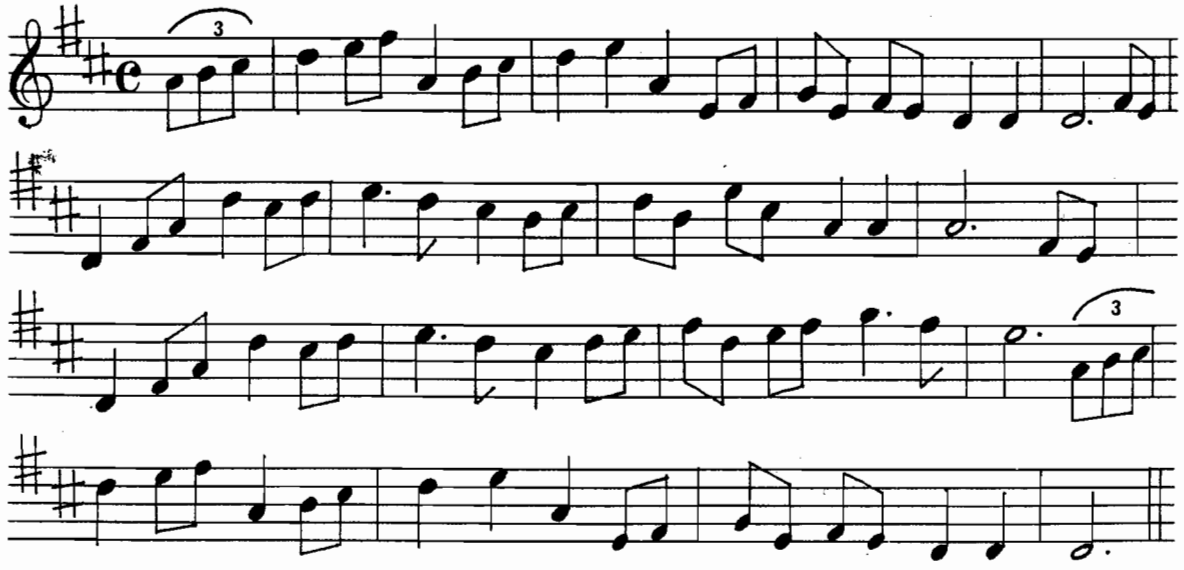
An tSeanbhean Bhocht



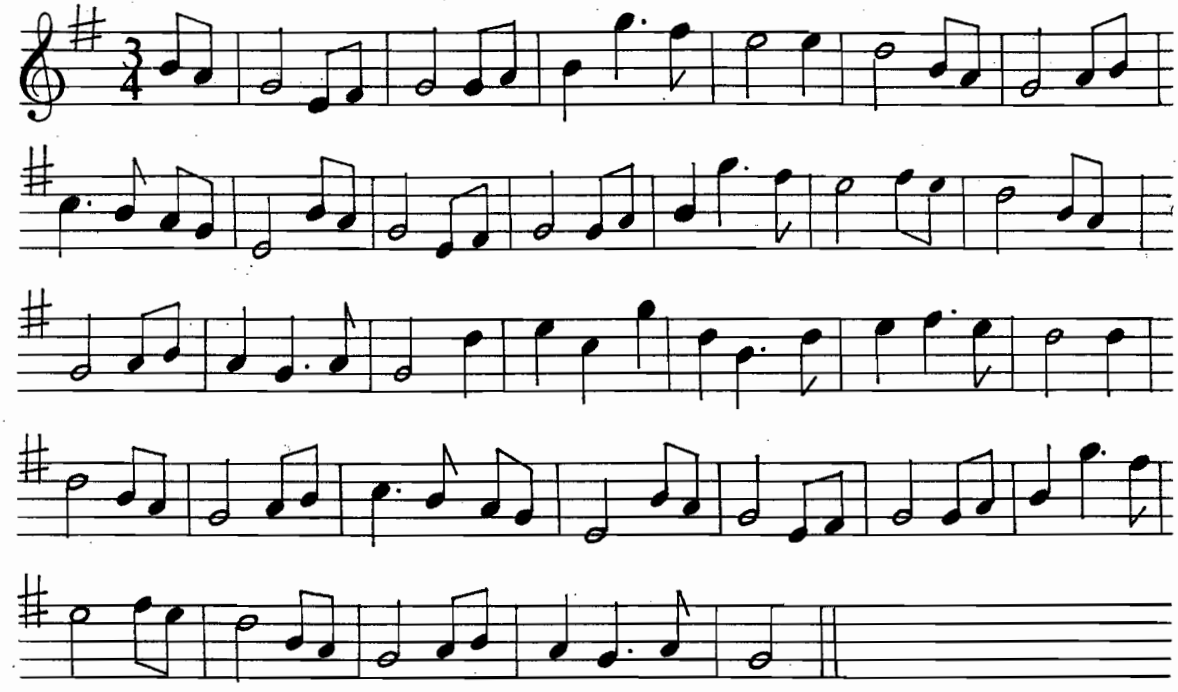
Éiníní



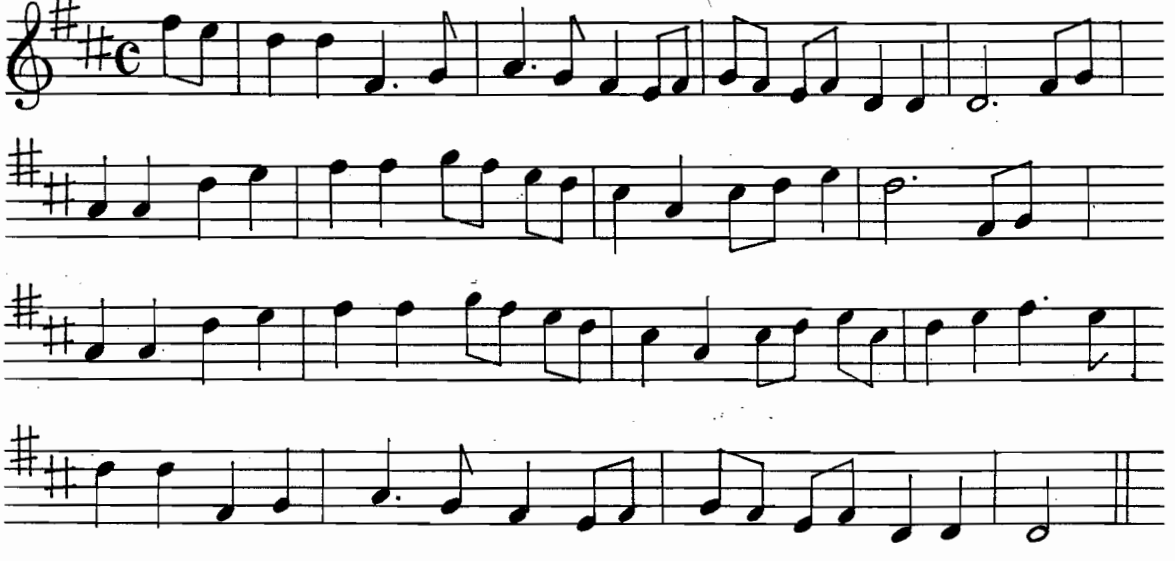
Seán Ó Dí



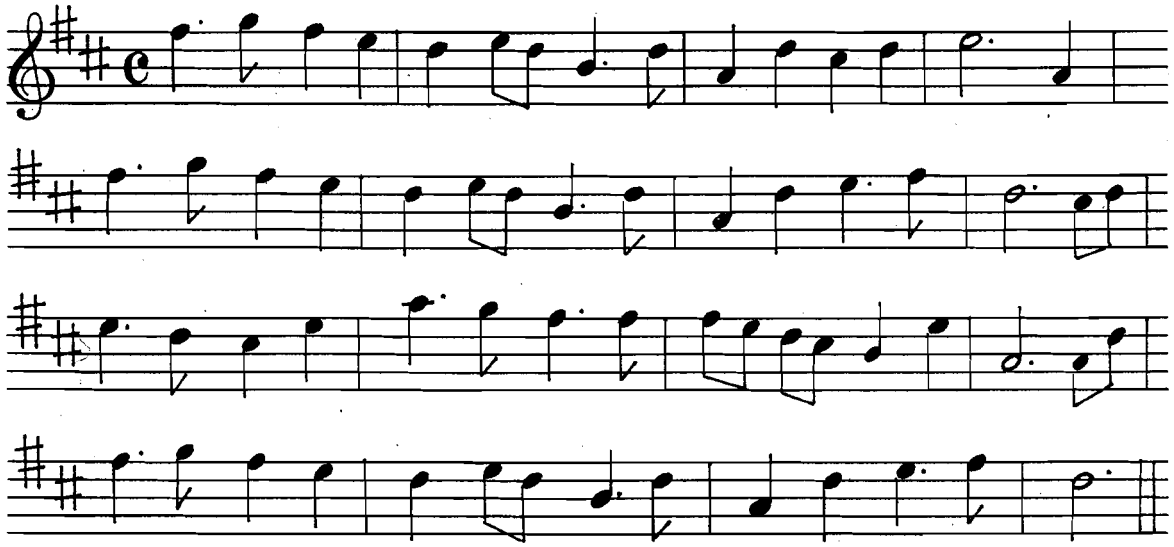
Éamonn a' Chnoic



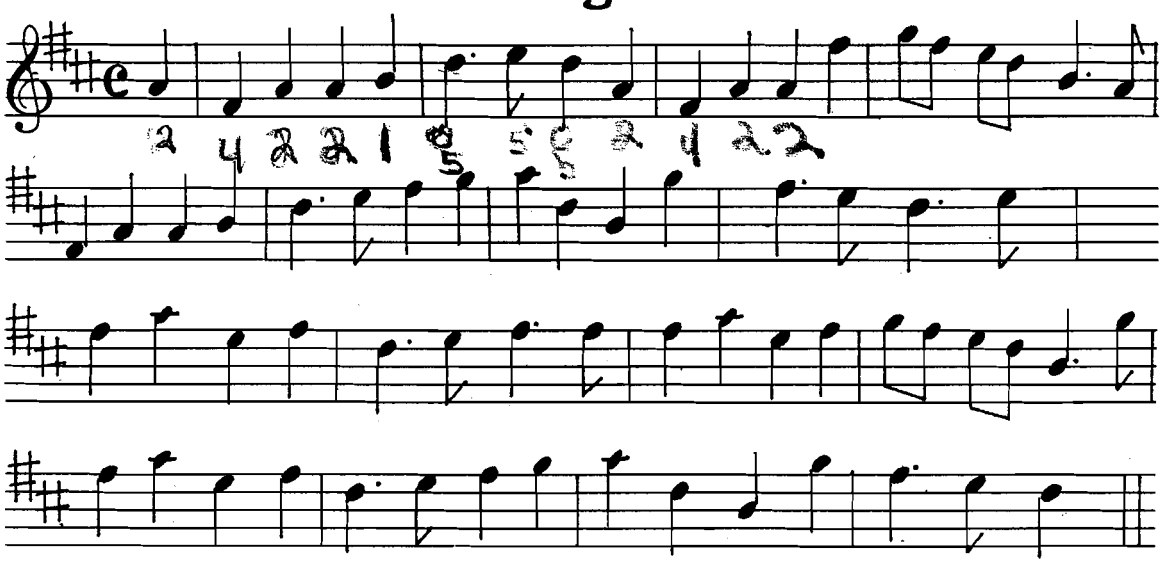
Billy Byrne of Ballymanus



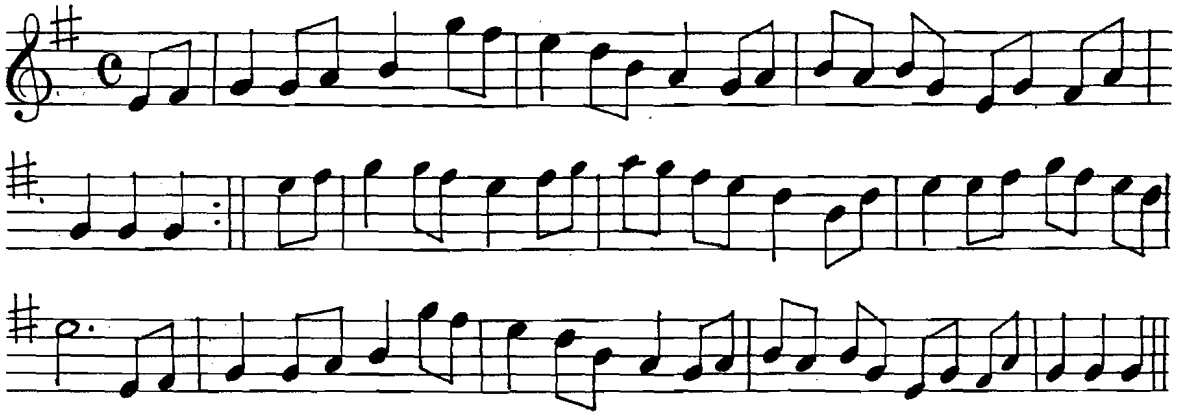
Wrap the Green Flag



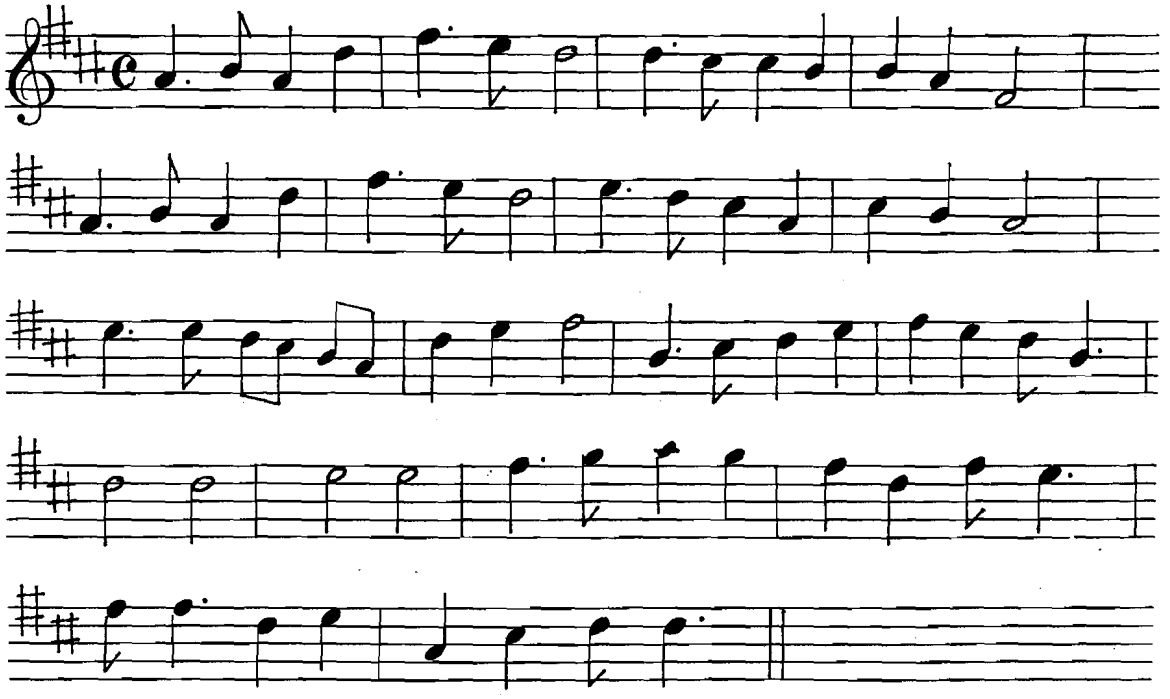
Clare's Dragoons



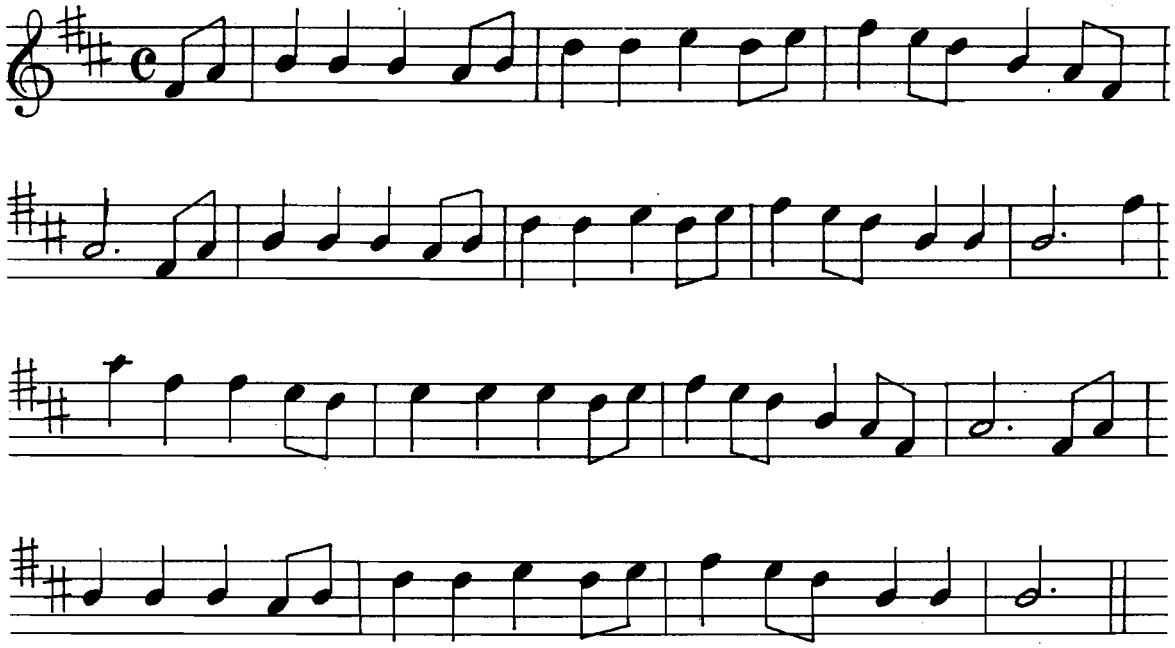
An Drúcht Ceoidh



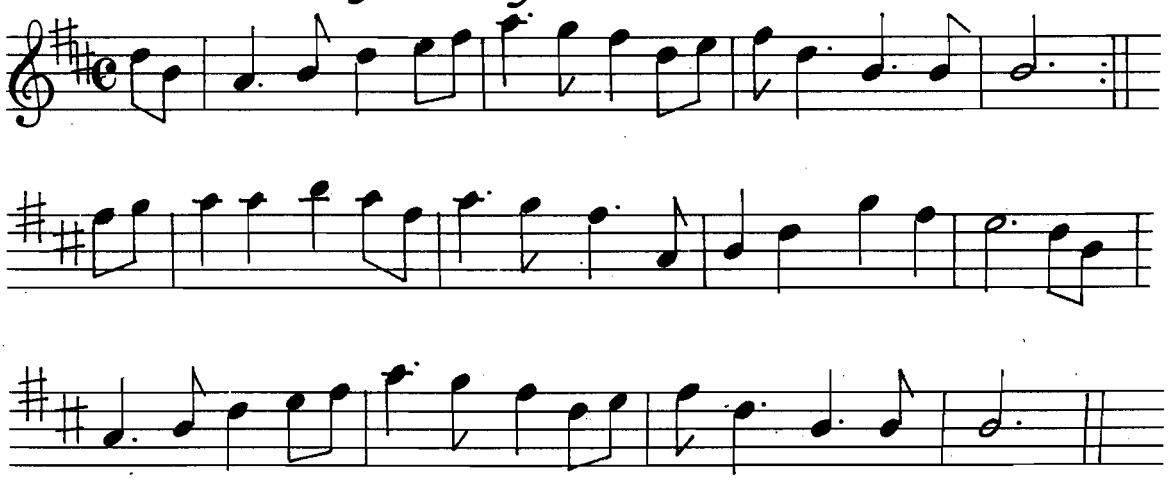
Step Together



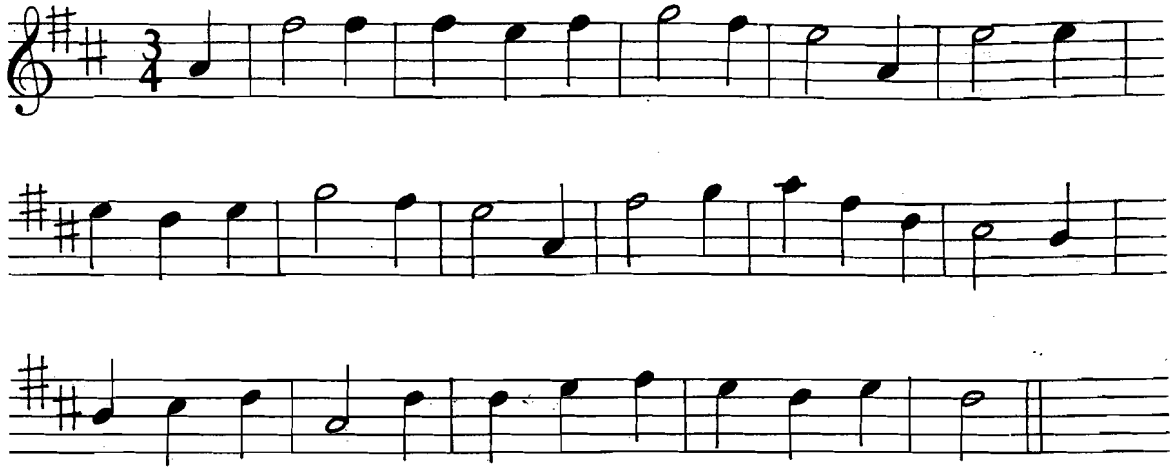
The Star of the Co. Down



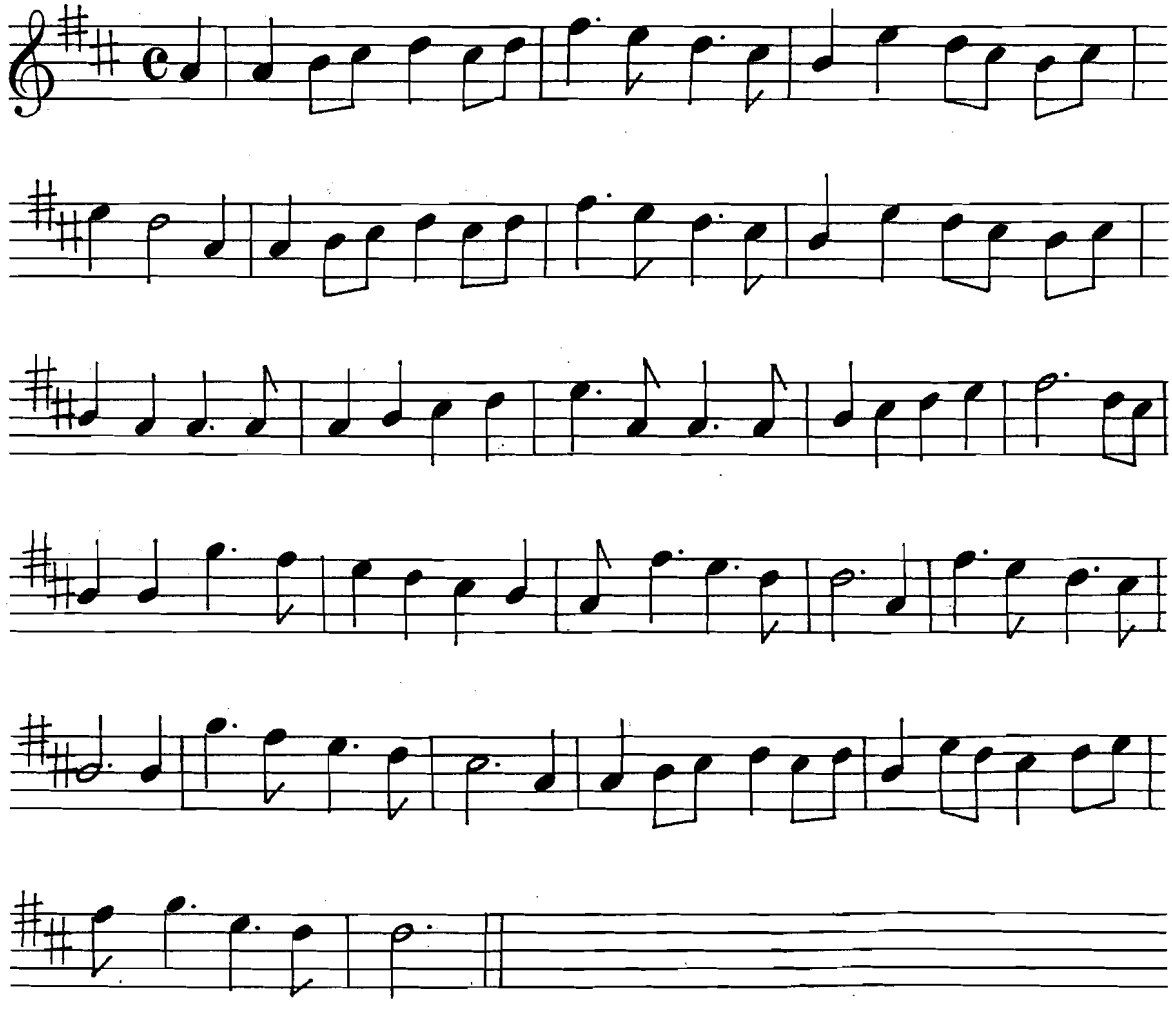
Henry Joy



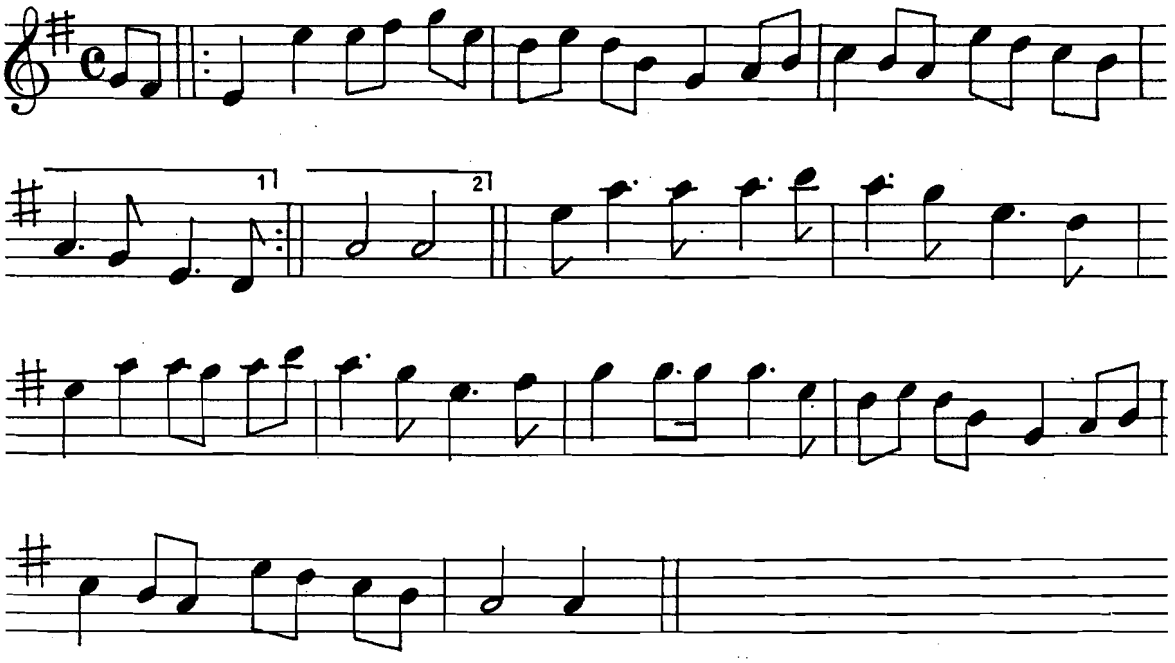
The Croppy Boy



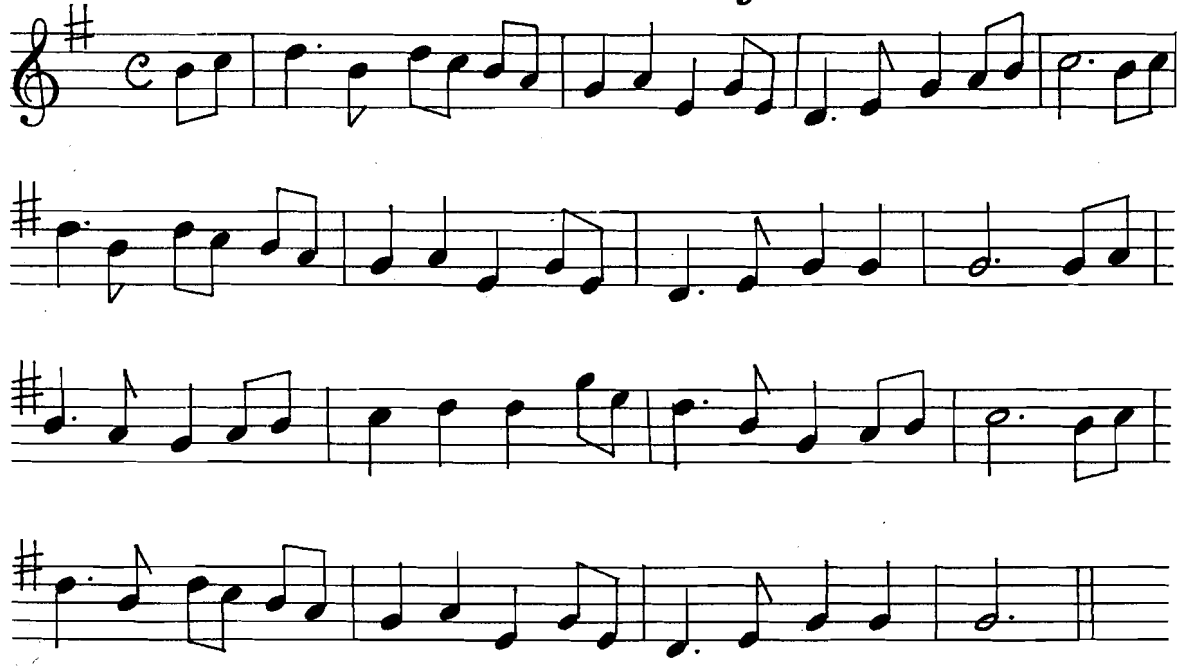
A Nation Once Again



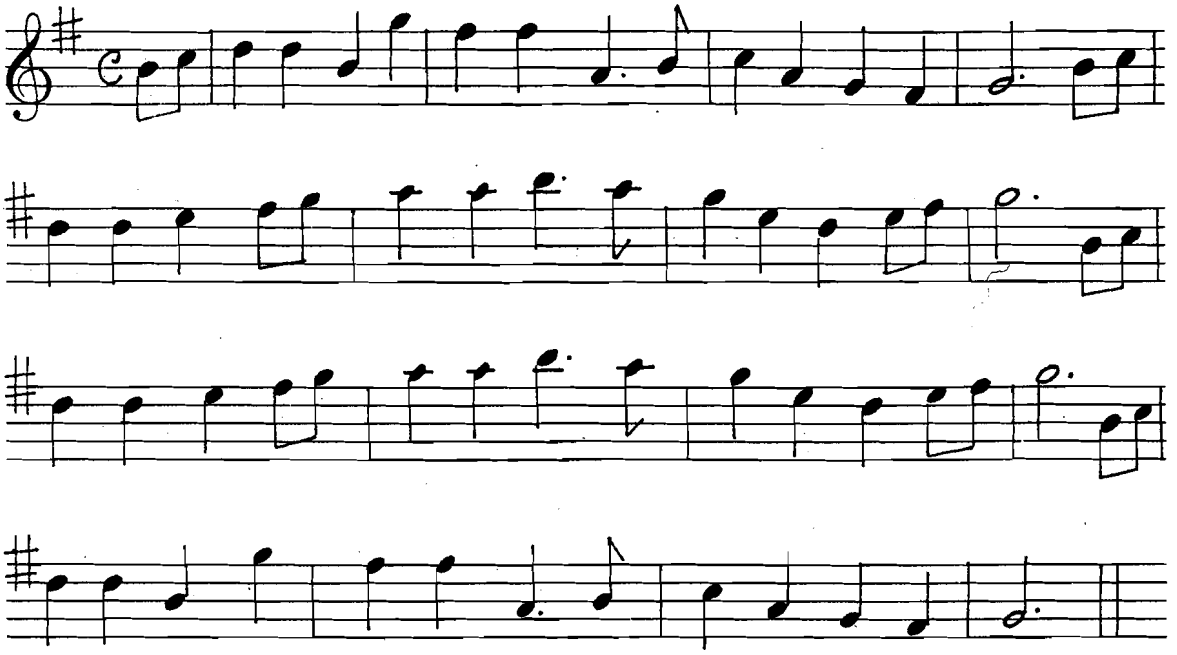
Rosc Catha na Mumhan



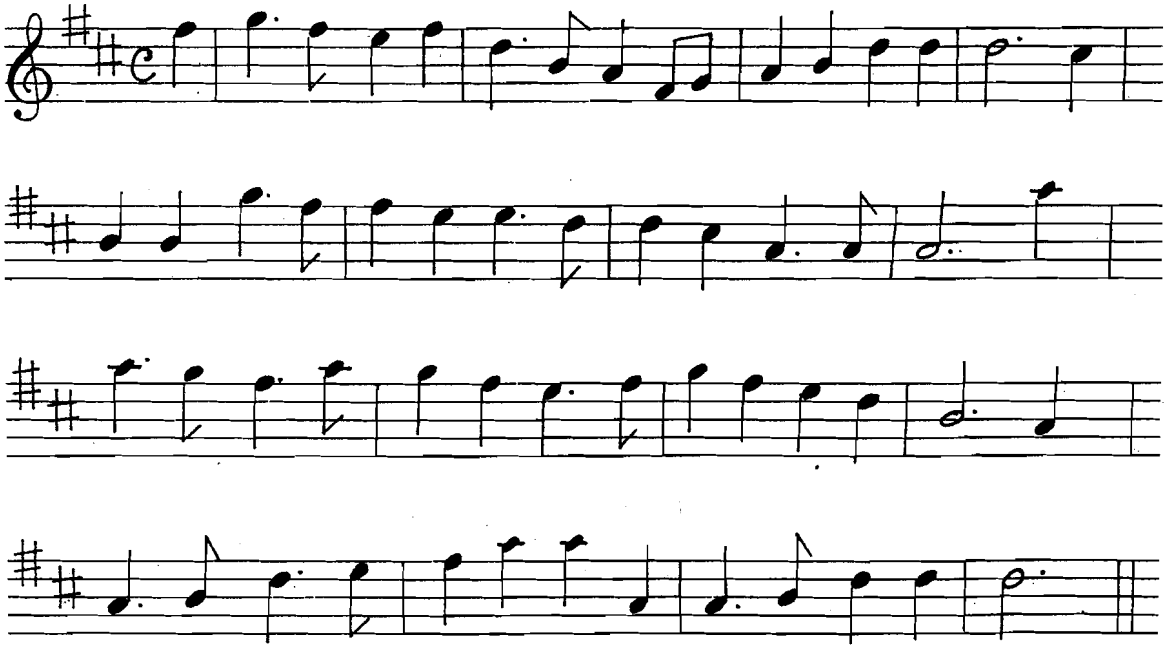
The Mountains of Pomeroy



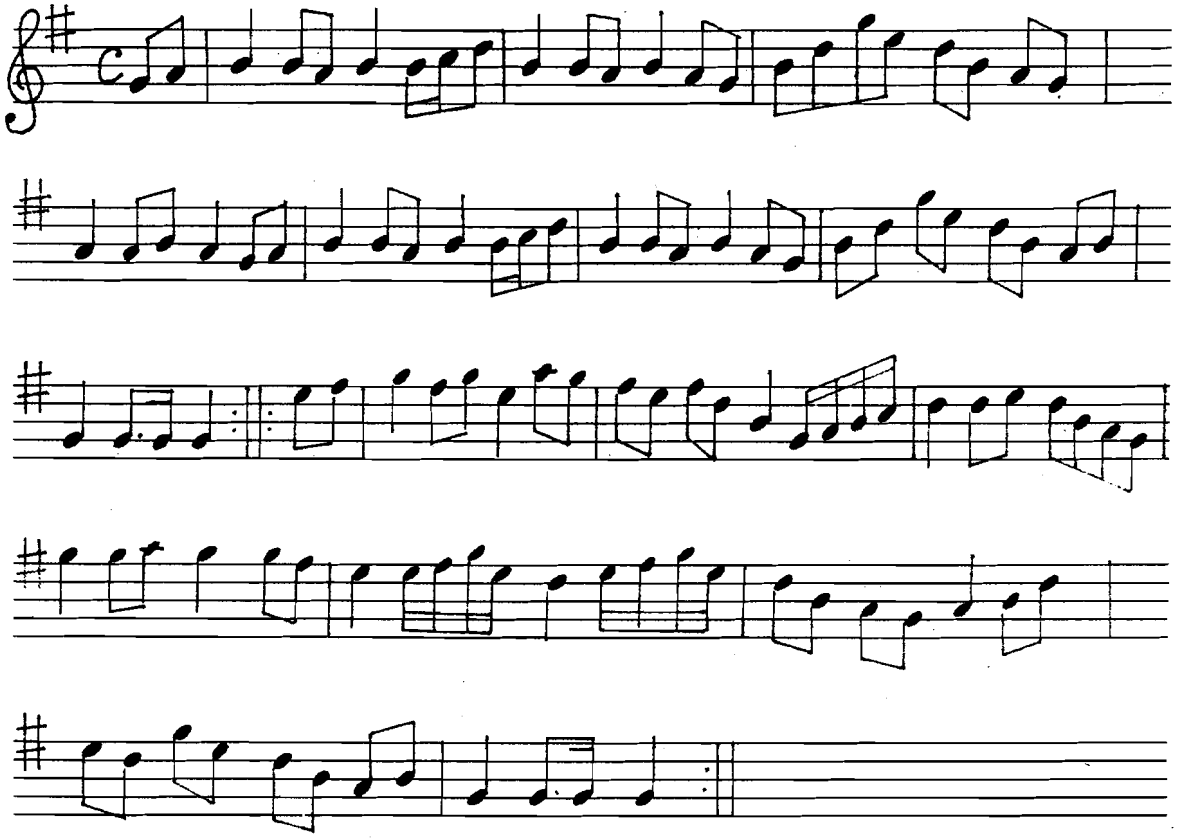
The Three Flowers



Who Fears to Speak ?

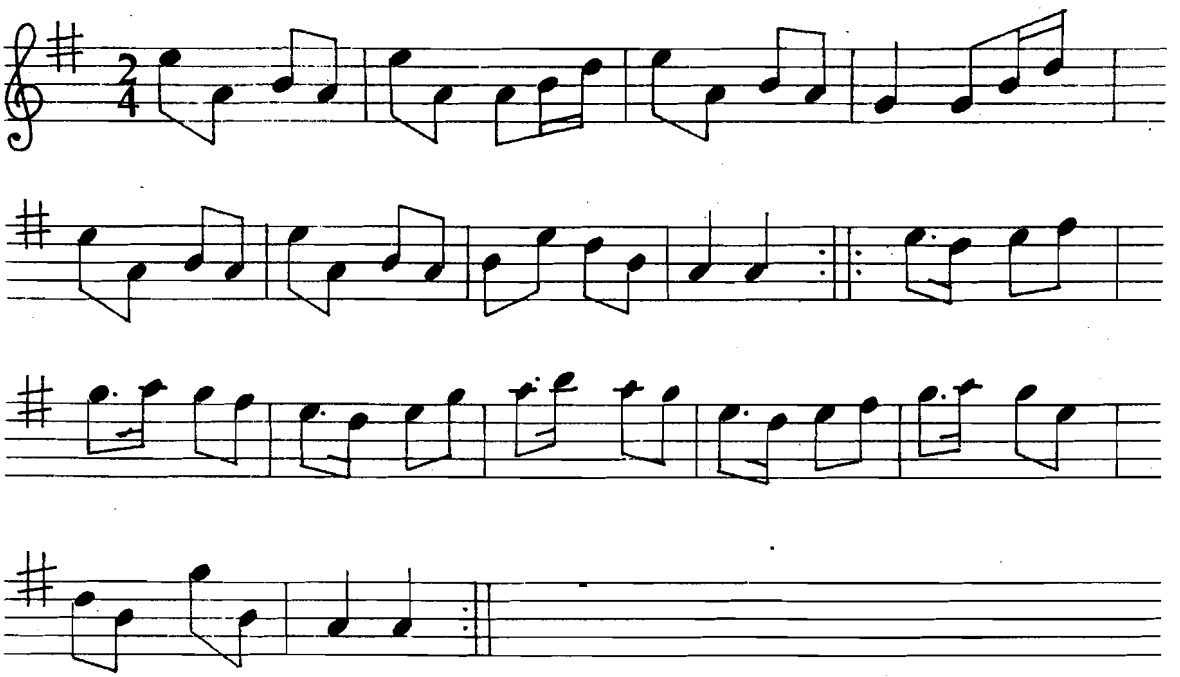


O'Neill's March

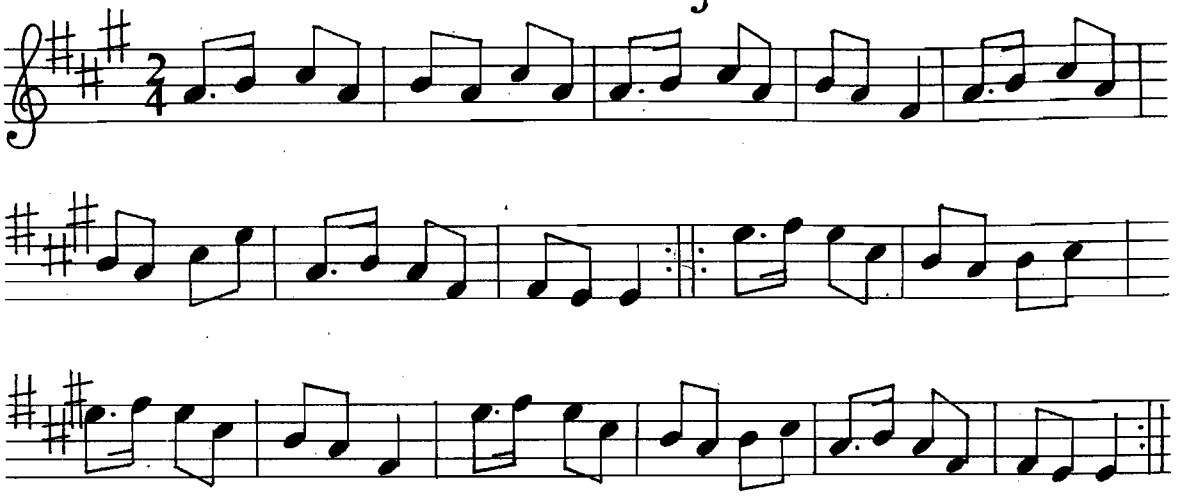


SIX POLKAS

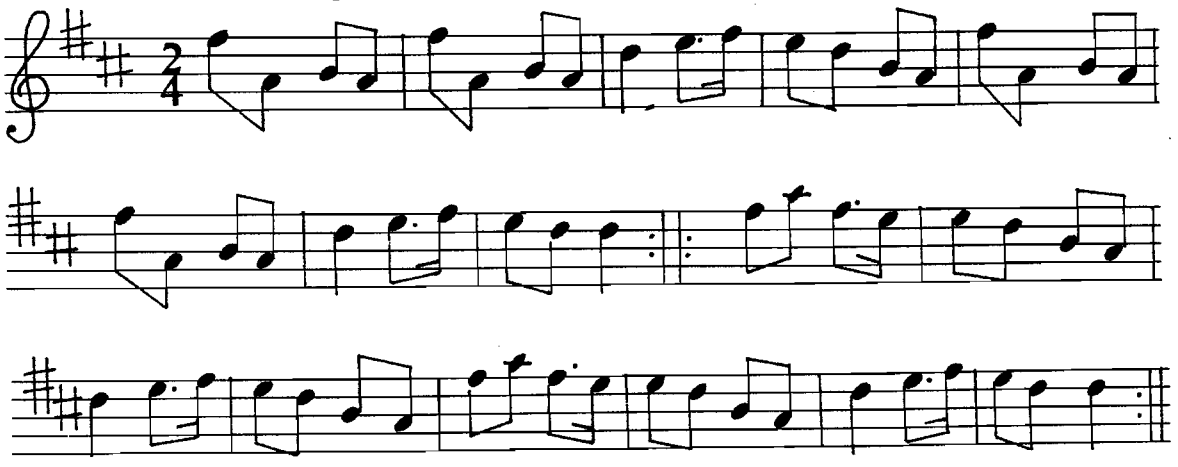
Out on the Ice



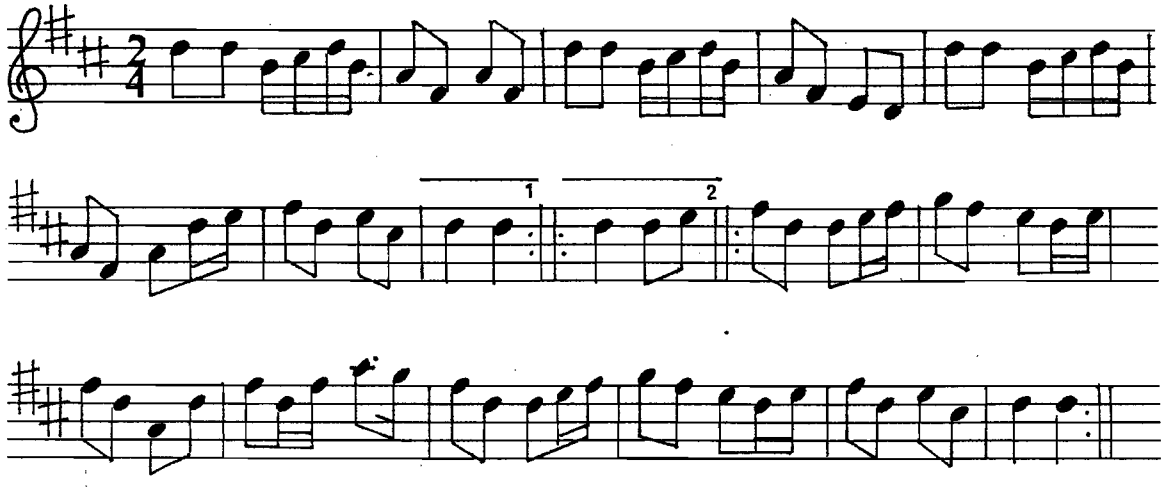
Britches Full of Stitches



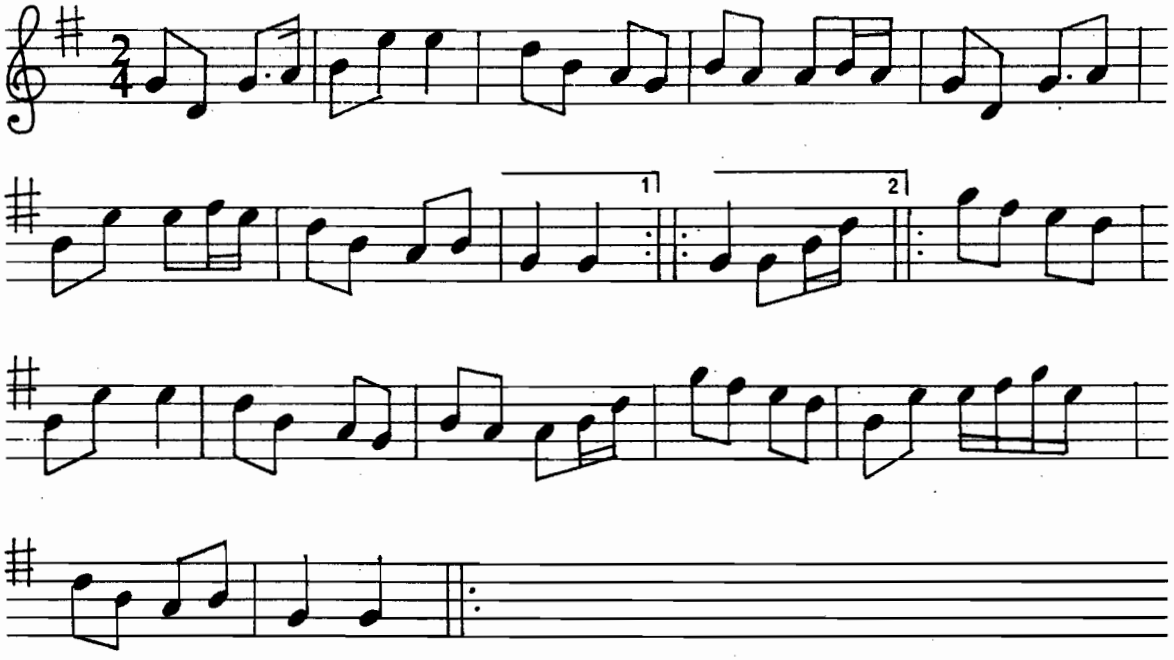
Kerry Polka



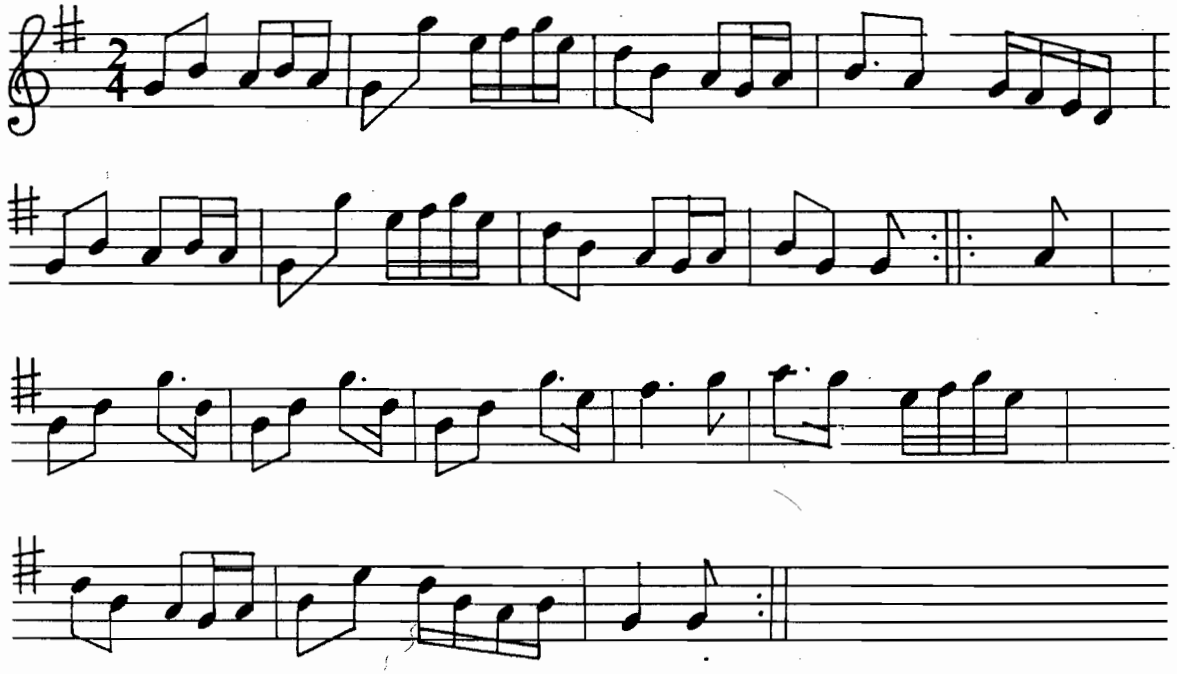
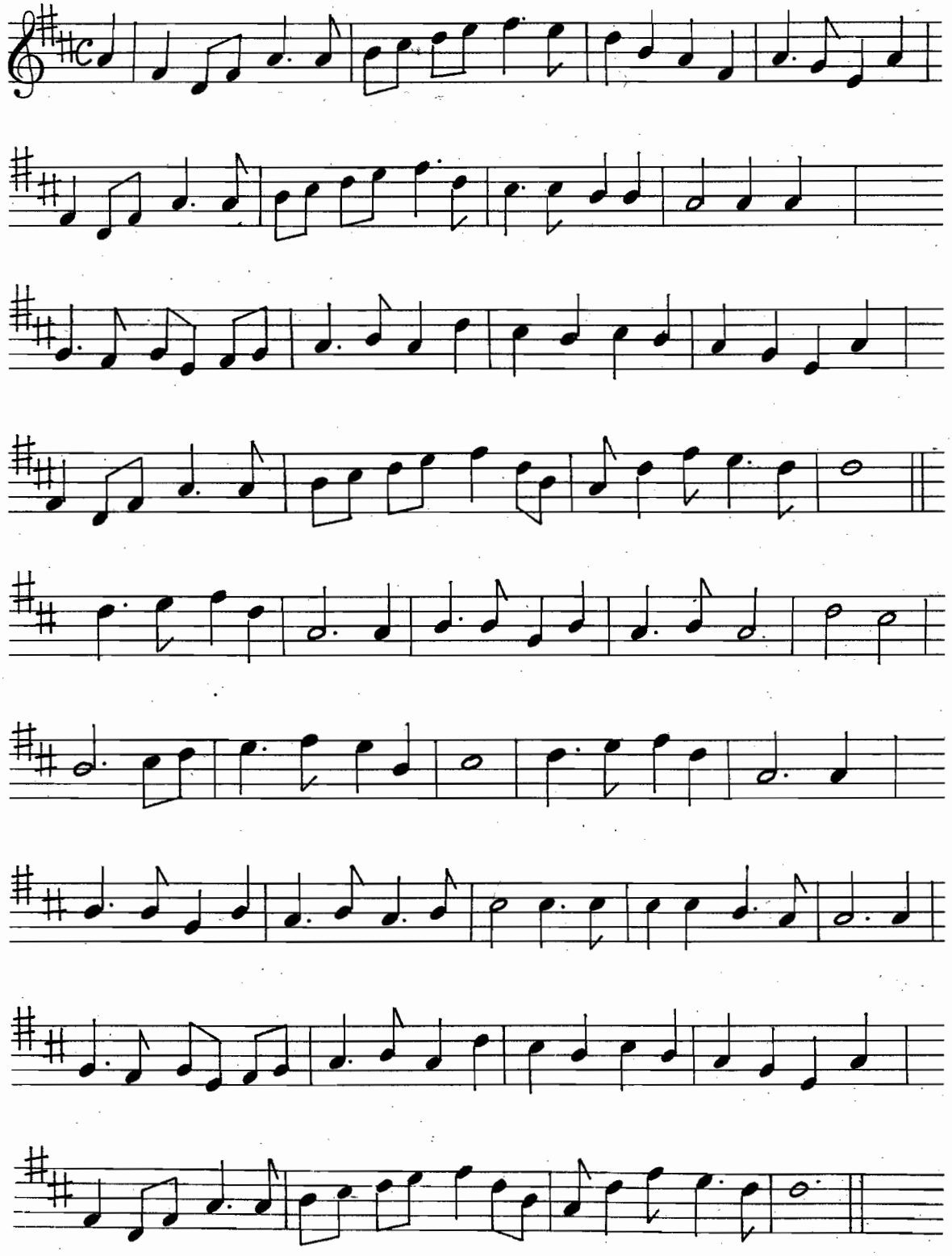
Ryan's Polka



Maggie in the Wood



St. Mary's Polka



Amhrán na bhFiann