Tunes from the 2010 Youth Camp CD

I wanted to write a few notes about the notation of these tunes. There's no one "right way" for these tunes to go; the actual notes will vary from person to person, and even in one single person's playing as he changes the tune from one repeat to another. So what's written here is one way that you could play the tune. It's usually good to learn it just one way at first, and then you can start making small changes to it as you hear other people playing it and get some ideas for varying the tune. Sometimes what I have written here differs a little bit from how it's played on the CD. A lot of these differences have to do with how the tune would have to be changed slightly to be played on different instruments. The flute often has to leave out notes in order to have time for a breath, so I have put some of those notes back in, for the benefit of others who don't have those constraints. Likewise, the fiddle often goes too low for the flute's range, so flutists have to make adjustments for that. Or at the opposite end of the range spectrum, the accordion plays some high D's in Scattery Island, that would require fiddle players to shift to another position to reach them. So most fiddlers would just change that note to one they can reach in first position. If there are other differences between this sheet music and the recordings on the CD, feel free to choose the version you like best and learn it that way!

I have included suggested bowings here for the benefit of fiddle players who are learning Irish bowing styles. Bowing is extremely important in getting the right sound in Irish music, so if you're new to Irish music, try out these slurring patterns so your right arm can get used to them. These are only an example, of course-- once you get the idea of what kind of slurs to use and where to put them, you can move them around and improvise as you like. The main thing is to **vary** what bowing you are using-- repeating the same pattern too much (like all separate or all slurred) sounds more like classical music than like Irish style.

Lastly, even though I've written this sheet music down for you, I want to encourage each of you to work on developing your skills of learning music by ear. Not only is that a very common learning method in Irish music, but there are many nuances of style that you can pick up when you learn music by ear, that you will miss if you only learn these tunes from a piece of paper. (The one exception to this is fiddle bowings, which are probably easier to learn when written down than trying to pick them up from a CD recording, at least at first.) So I'd encourage you to try learning at least one tune from the CD, without looking at the music. The best way to do this is to listen to the tune over and over (you can listen in the car or while you're doing chores), until you know the tune so well that you could whistle or sing it. Then try it on your instrument-- just hunt around until you find the first note, then play that one again and try to find the second one, etc. It helps if you think about whether the notes go up or down, and whether they sound like a scale pattern (every note in order) or whether there are notes skipped over. That will help you know which direction to look in, and how far away from the previous note you should look. If you get lost and can't remember where you are in the tune, just go back to the beginning and start over. If you get the notes in the first phrase, then repeat that a bunch of times till you have it down, so you don't forget it when you start on the second phrase. And just remember that Irish music tends to reuse phrases of music throughout the tune, so once you get one or two phrases, sometimes you know almost half the song already!

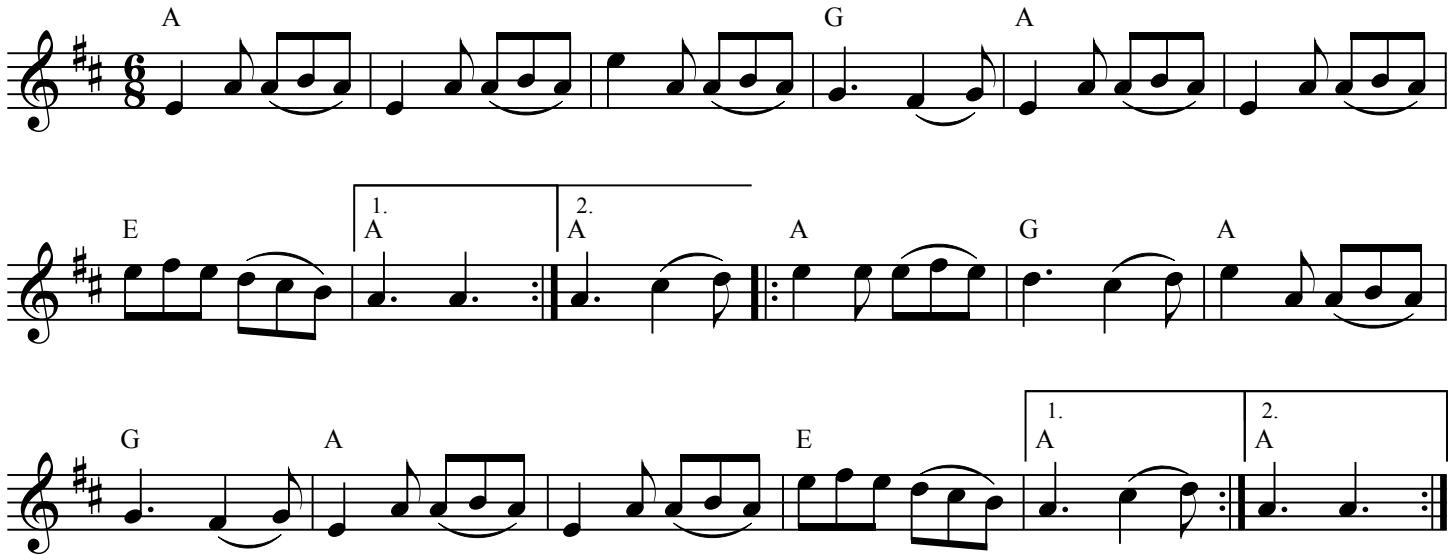
So give it a try, and just keep working till you get it! Learning by ear isn't nearly as hard as it seems-- the first couple of songs you try might seem kind of difficult, but it just gets easier and easier to do. Above all, have fun with this music, and we'll hope to see you again at sessions or at next year's camp!

Have a great year,
Clare Cason

Dinny O'Keefe's

A Slide in the key of A Mixolydian

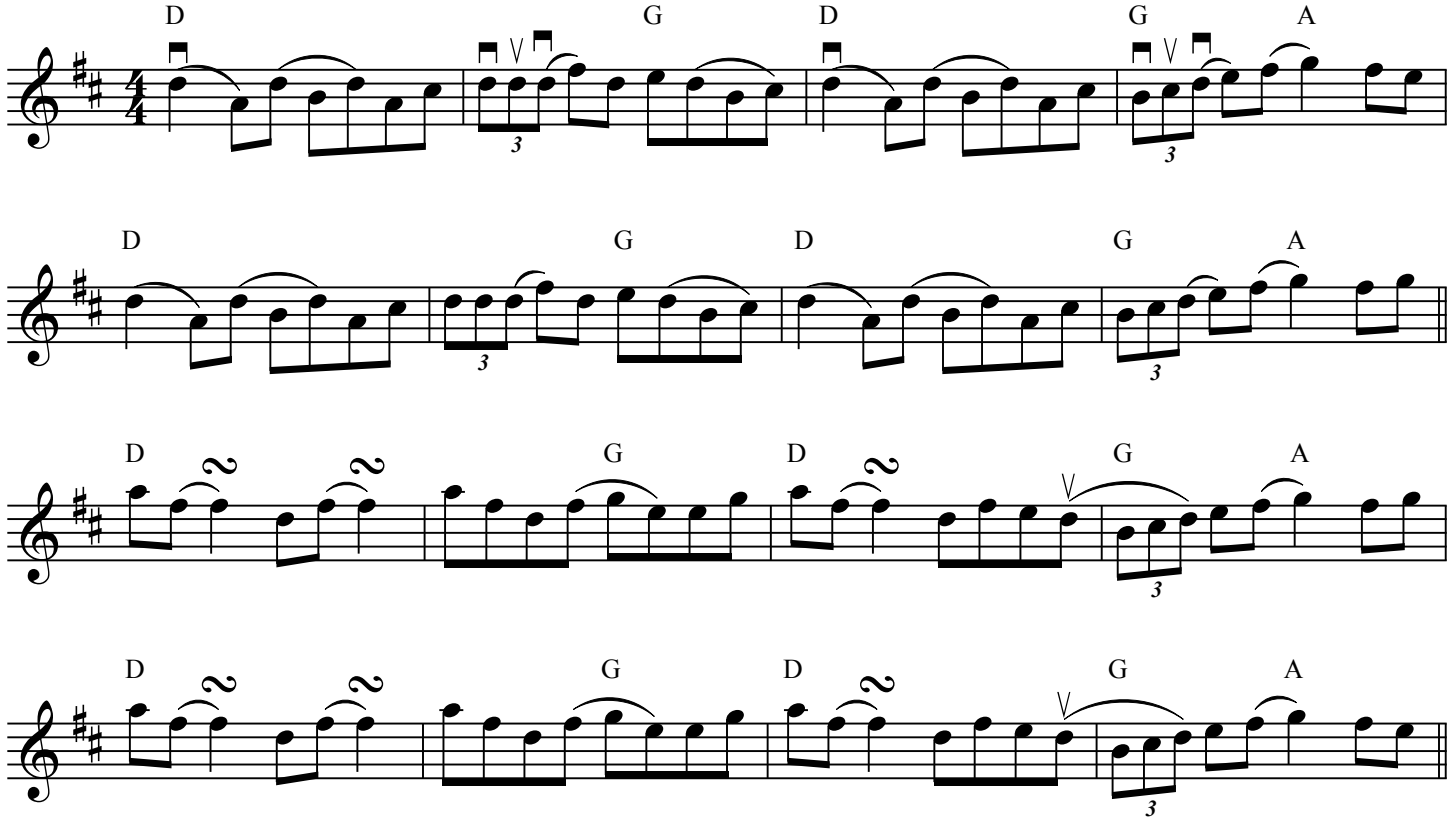
Tracks 1-2



The Humours of Tulla

A Reel in the Key of D

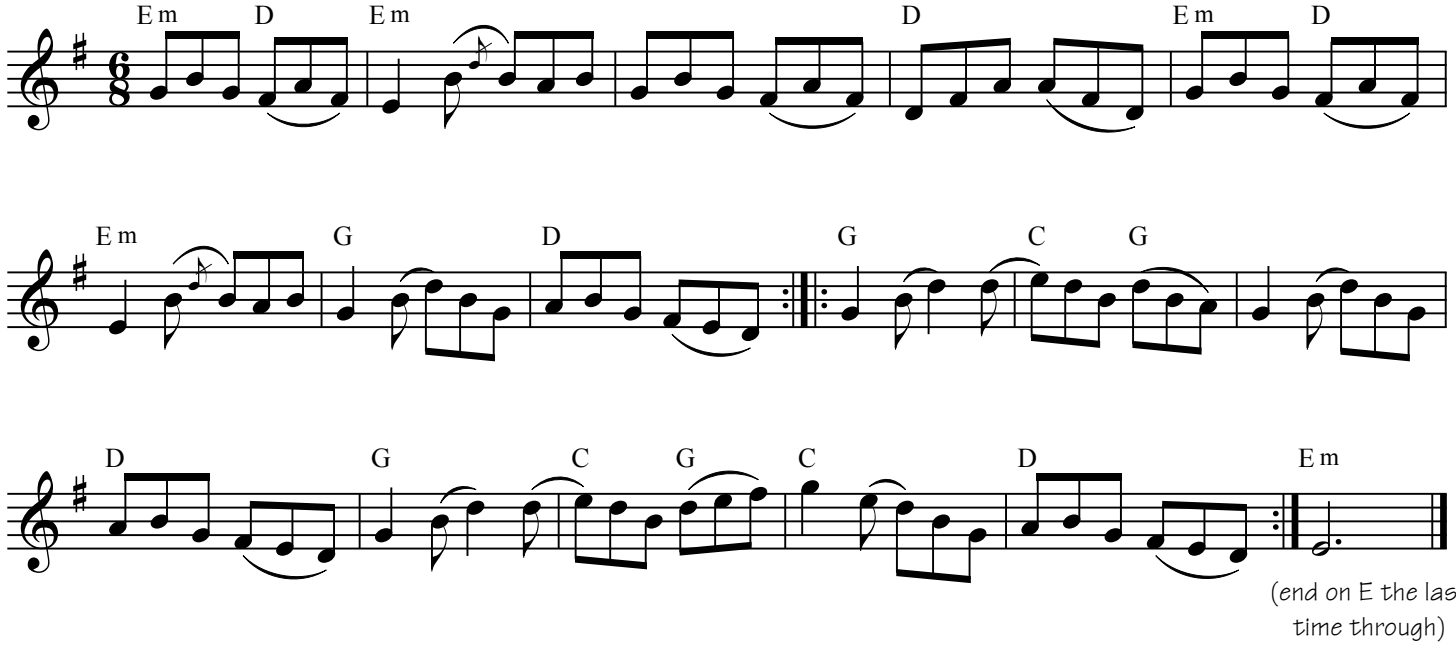
Tracks 3-4



The Leitrim Fancy

A Jig in the key of e minor

Tracks 5-6

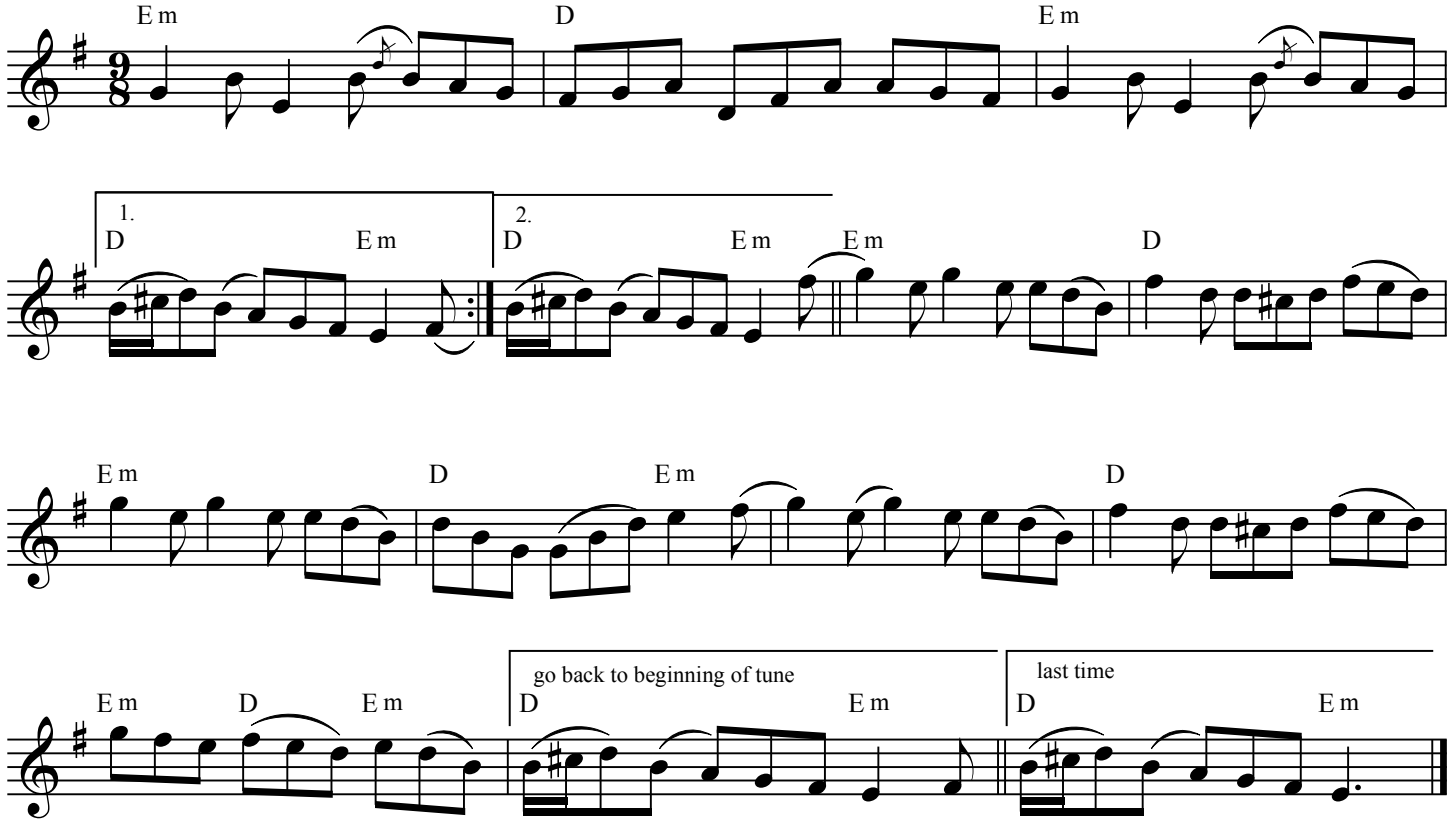


(end on E the last time through)

A Fig for a Kiss

A Slip Jig in E Dorian

Tracks 7-8

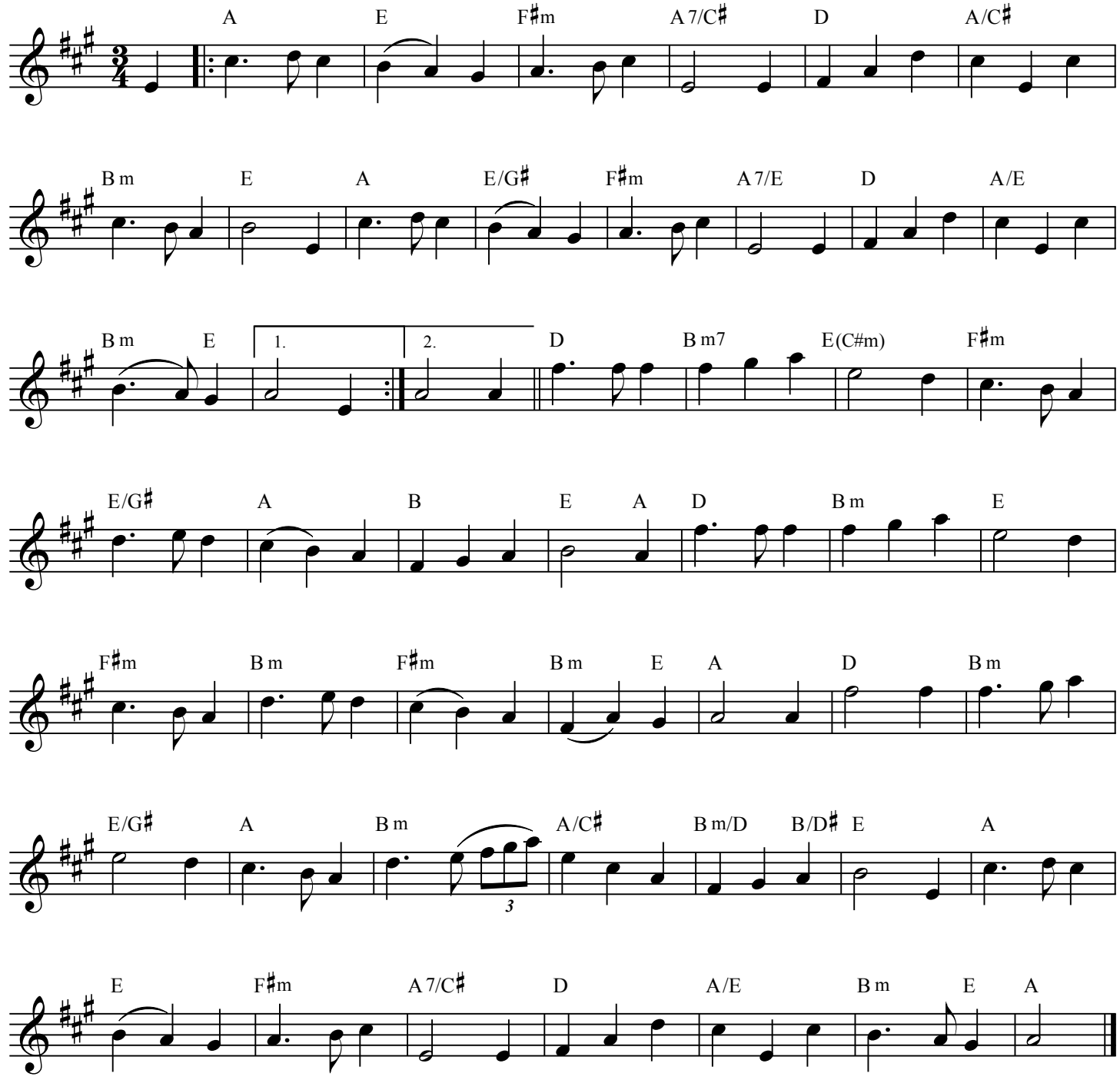


Genevieve's Waltz

in the key of A major

Manus McGuire

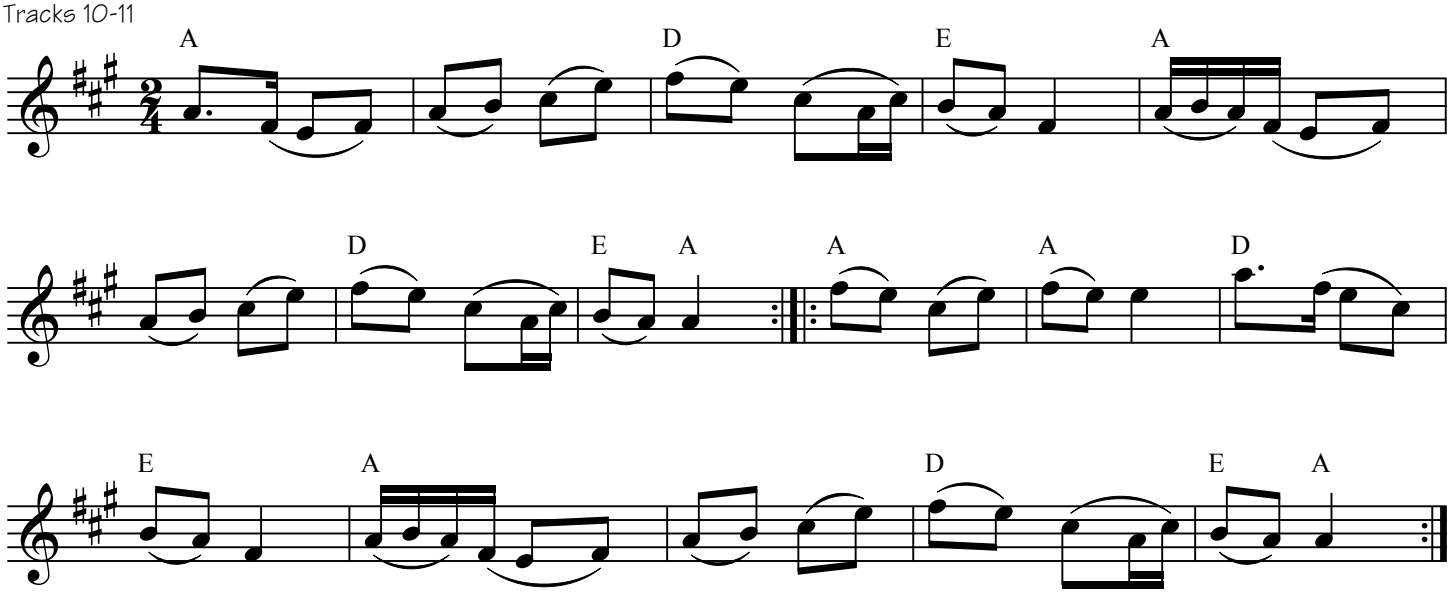
Track 9



Art O'Keefe's Polka

in the key of A major

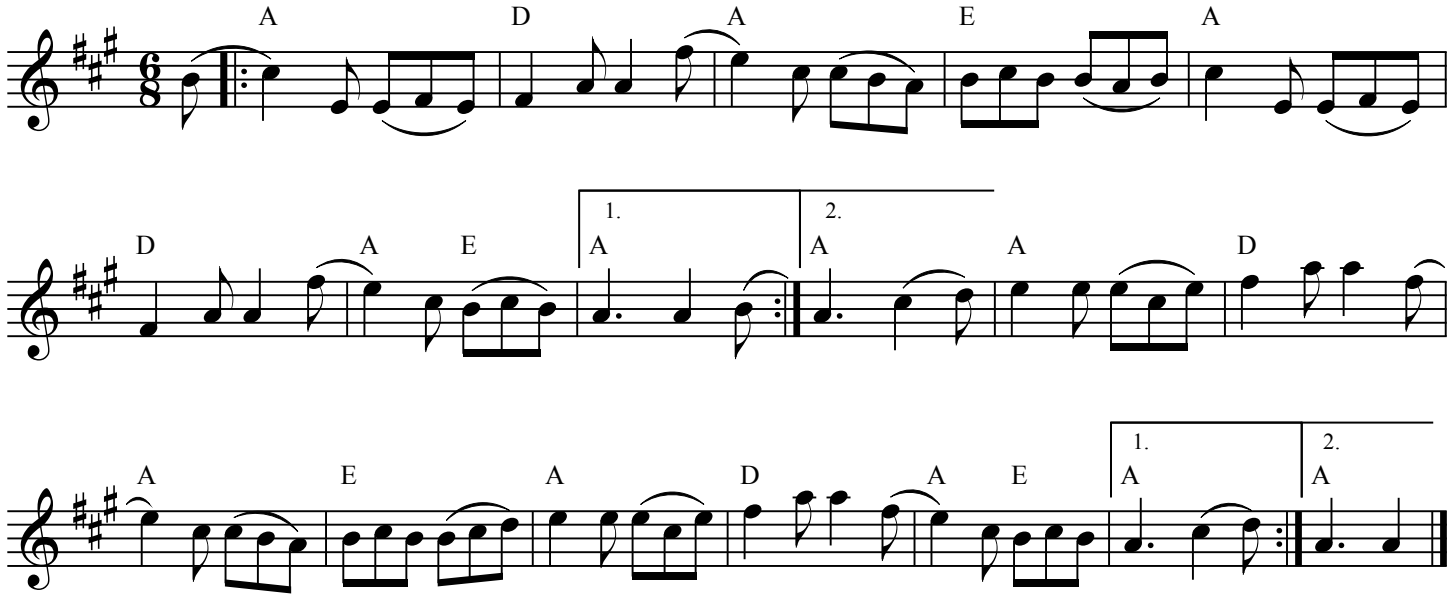
Tracks 10-11



Hundred Pipers

A Jig in A major

Tracks 12-13

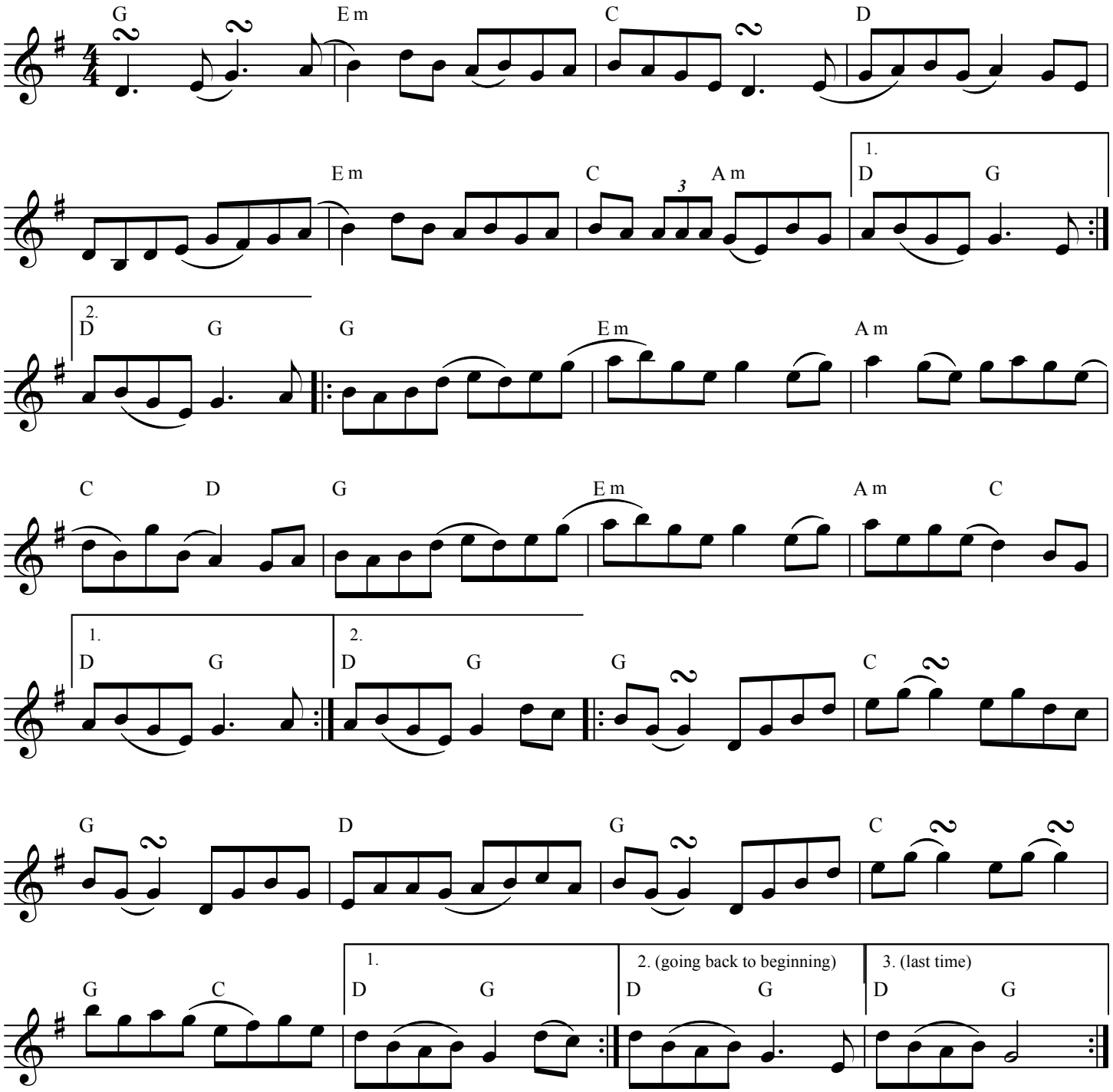


Note for melody players: there are often a number of different versions of each tune, as the tunes were passed down from player to player, and musicians would make small changes to the tune either intentionally or unintentionally. You can really hear these differences in this reel on the Youth Camp CD-- Janis plays the tune on her flute as roughly outlined below, whereas the version Gordon plays on the slow track is the way he learned it, with a lot of differences in the choices of melody note. You can make a note of these differences and use them to vary the tune from one repeat to another, or just learn it one way for now if that seems like enough of a challenge! I did write measures 1 and 5 differently to give you two different options-- if you don't know how to do rolls yet (the ornament in bar 1), you could play measures 1 and 5 with 8th notes, like it's written in bar 5.

Christmas Eve

A Reel in the key of G major

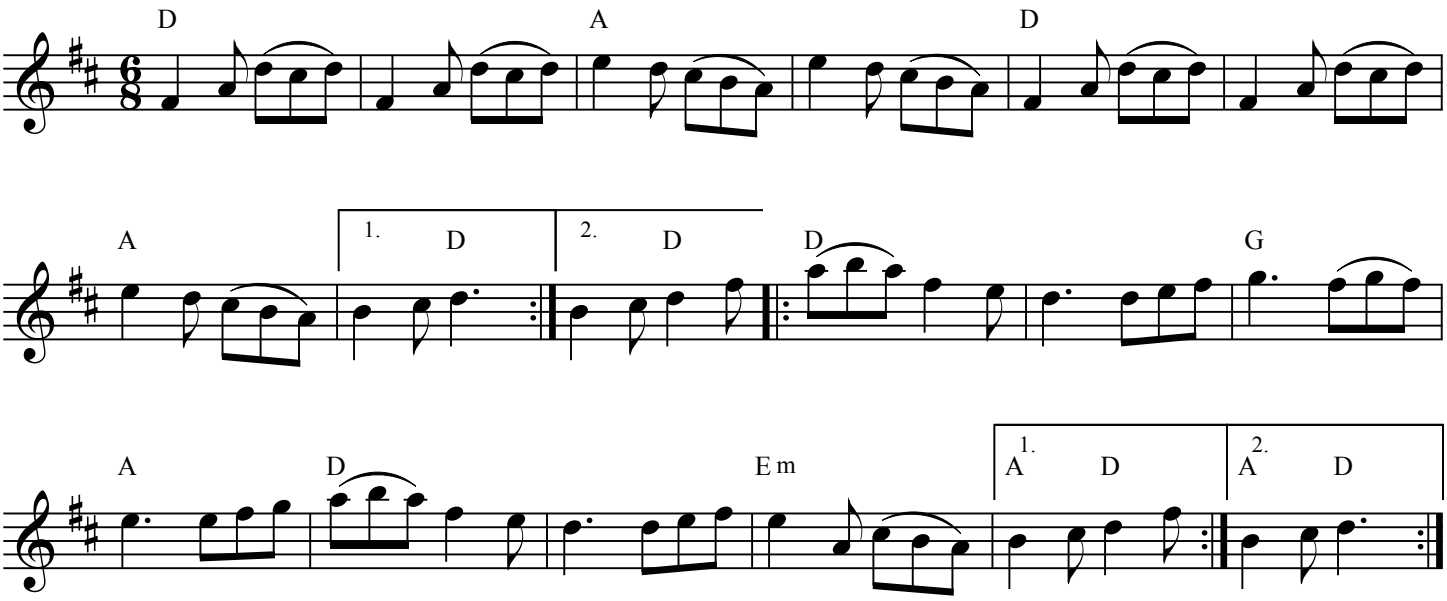
Tracks 14-15



Scattery Island

A Slide in the Key of D major

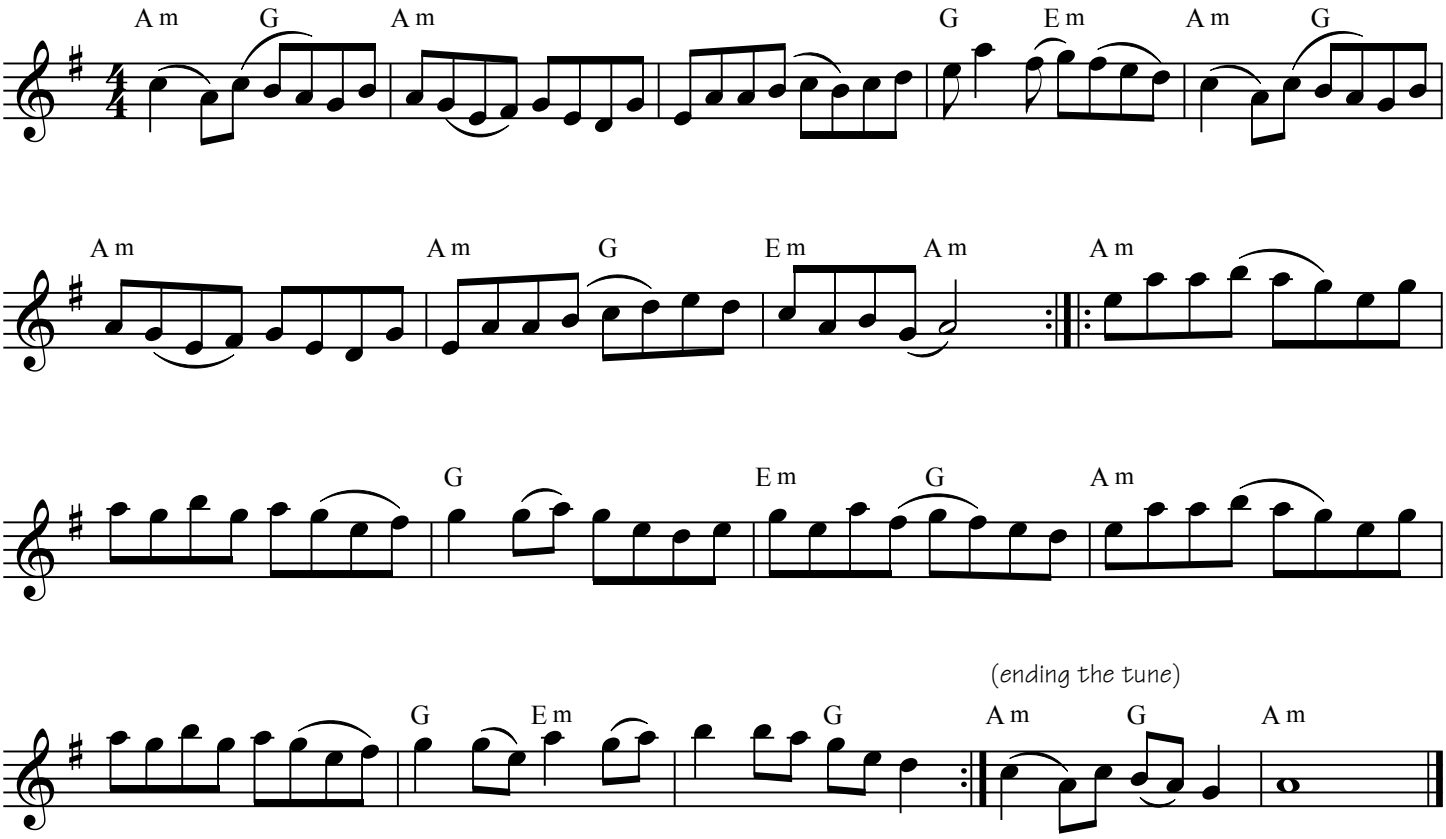
Tracks 16-17



The Star of Munster

A Reel in the key of A Dorian

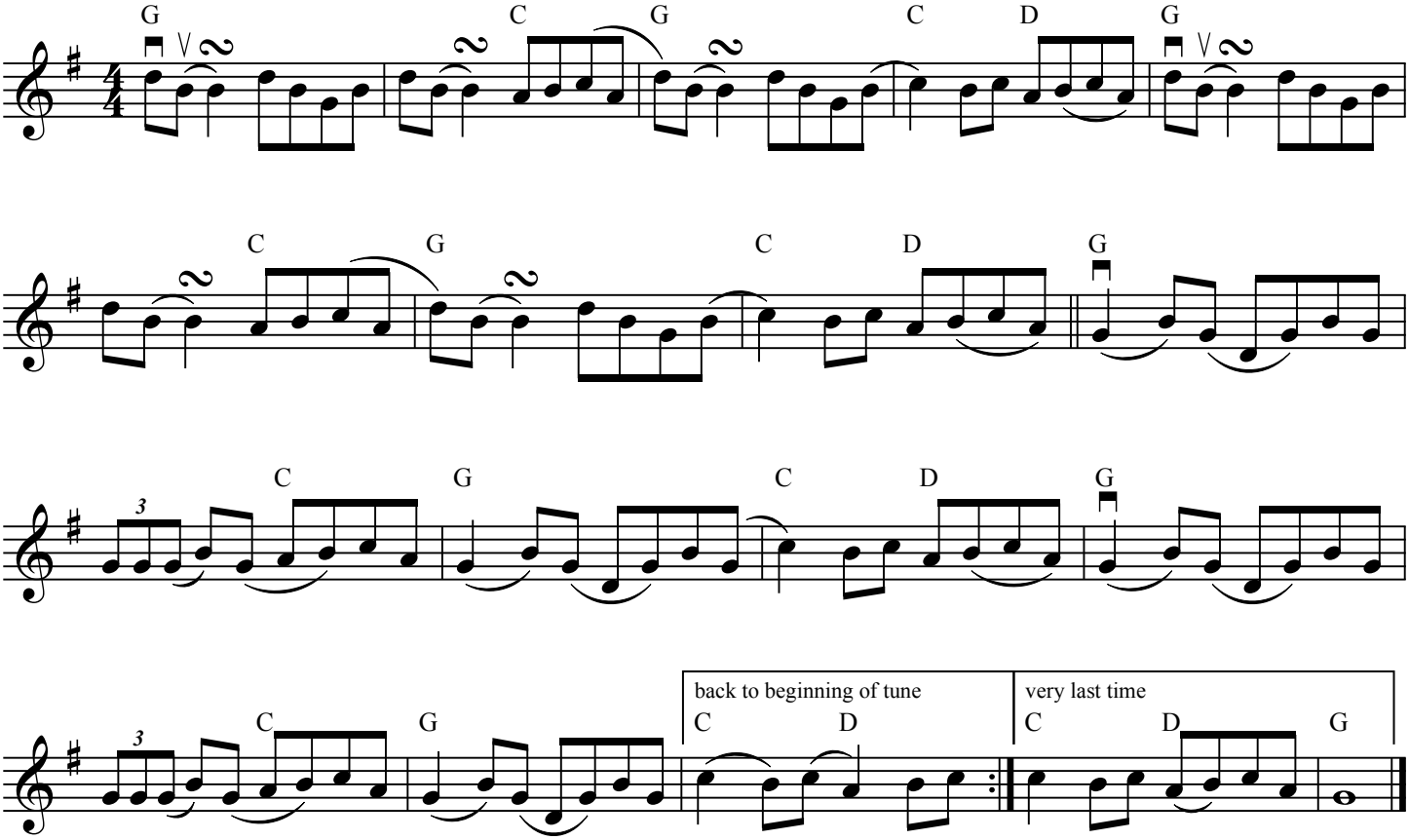
Tracks 18-19



The Blacksmith's Daughter

A Reel in the key of G major

Tracks 20-21



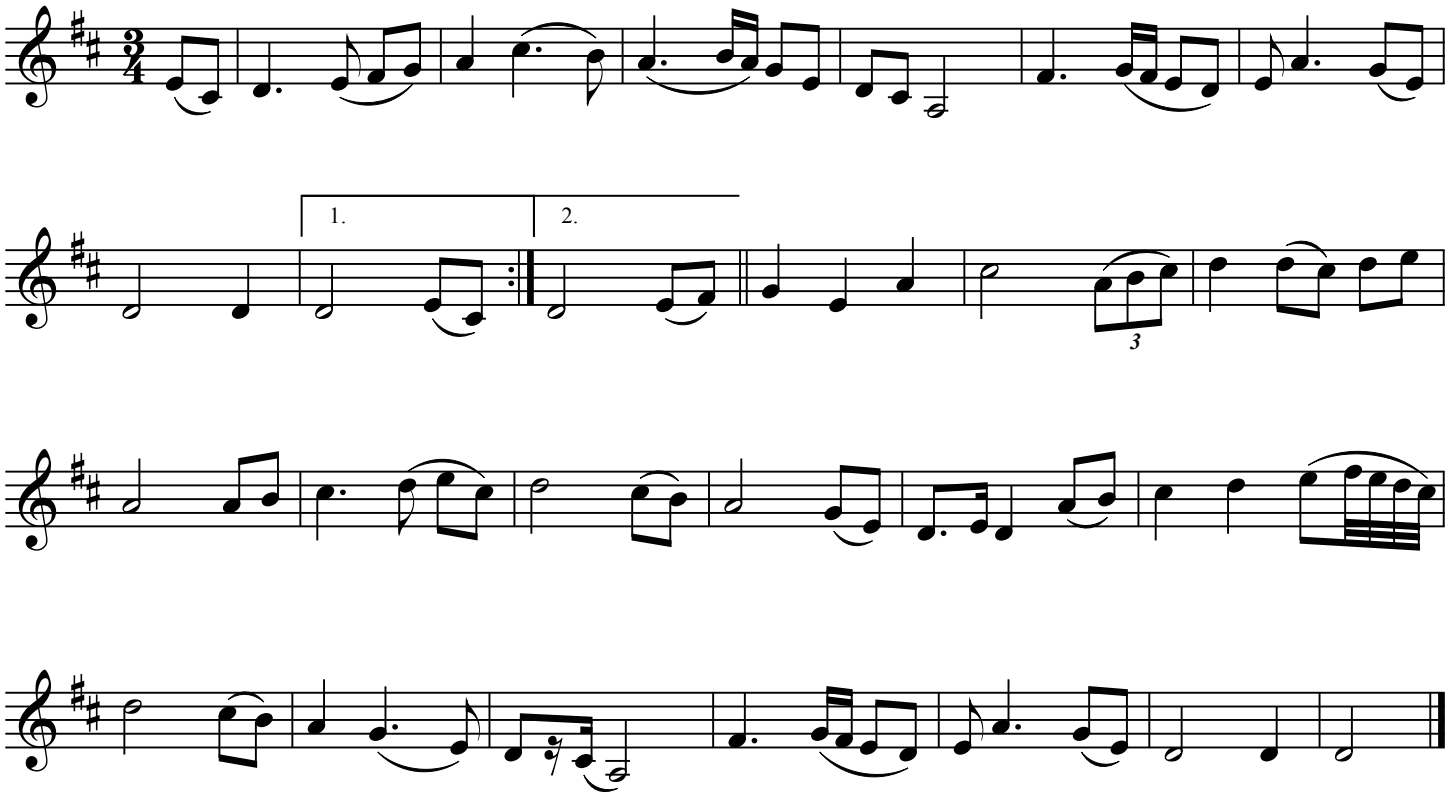
Slow airs were originally songs in Gaelic, which began to be played later as solo instrumental pieces. They are played with very free rhythm, with lots of ornamentation. I have notated a fairly simple version of the tune here; feel free to listen to the CD and add more ormaments if you like.

This song is a dream poem, in which the speaker relates a vision of a beautiful woman who represents free Ireland. The Irish struggled with England for freedom for many centuries, so this longing for their own free nation is a recurring theme in Irish songs.

Táimse im' Chodladh

A Slow Air in the Key of D

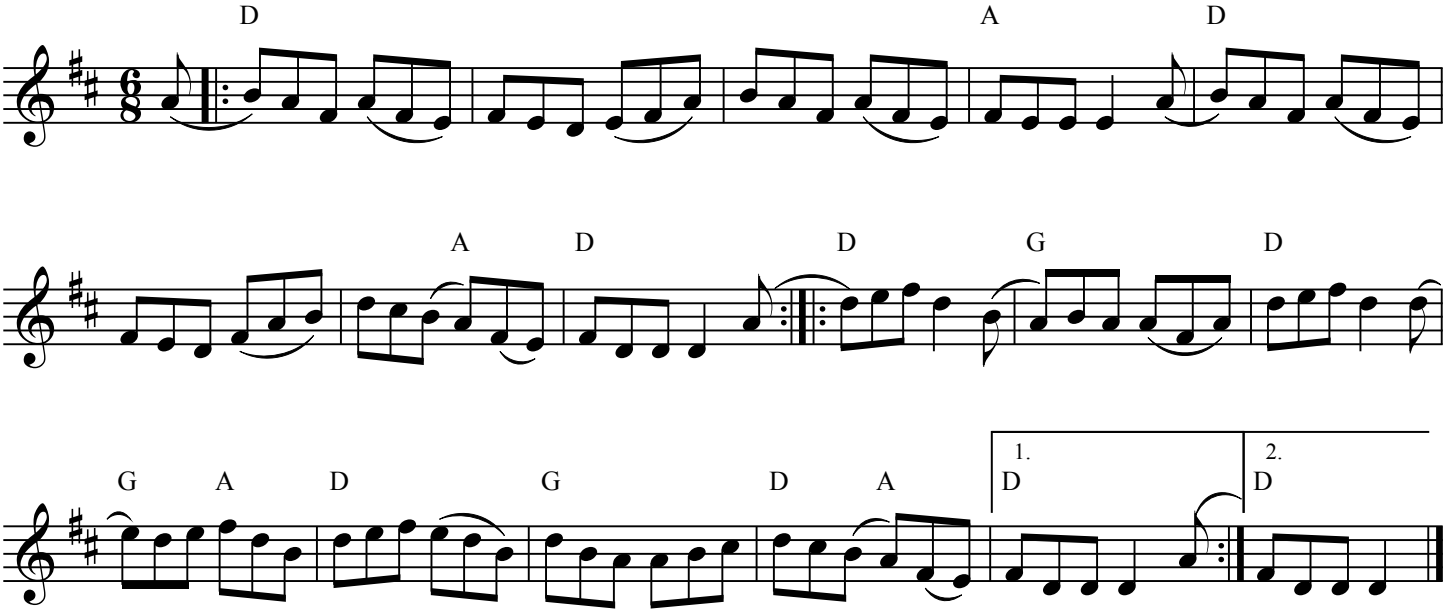
Track 22



The Humours of Glendart

A Jig in the Key of D

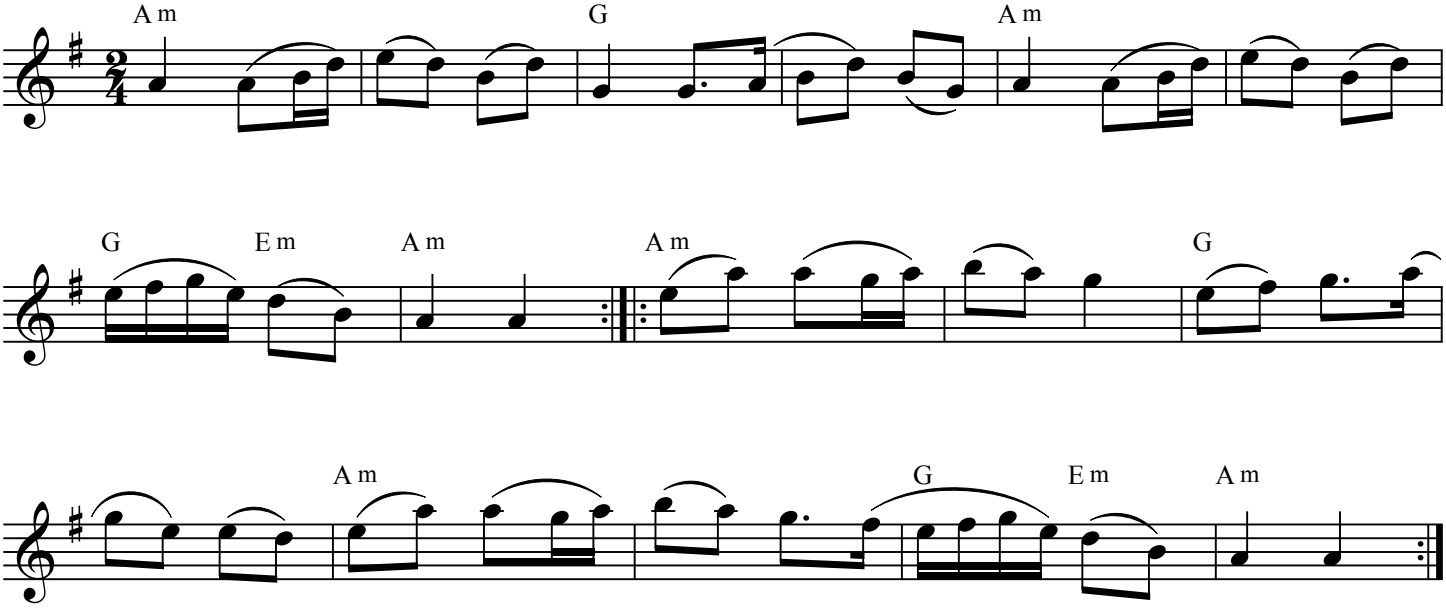
Tracks 23-24



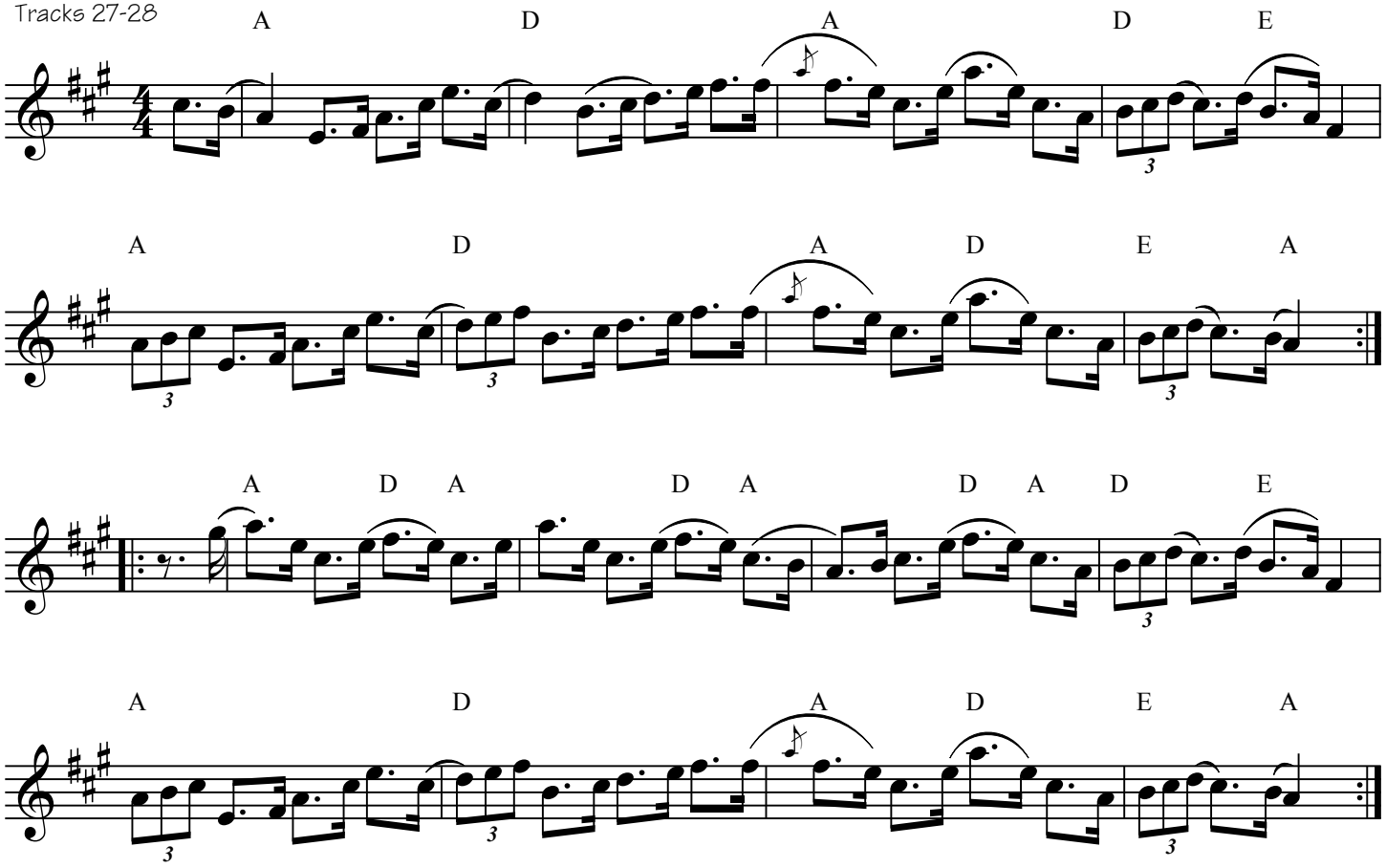
The Top of Maol

A Polka in the Key of A

Tracks 25-26



Walsh's Hornpipe

in the key of A major

Tracks 27-28