

The Laird o' Drumblair

The musical score for "The Laird o' Drumblair" is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The chords and triplets are as follows:

- Staff 1: A, D, E7, D, A₃
- Staff 2: E7, A₃, E7, A
- Staff 3: D, A, D, A₃, E7, A, A
- Staff 4: E7
- Staff 5: A, E7, A, D, E7, D, A₃
- Staff 6: E7, A

"The Laird o' Drumblair" is a Scottish strathspey or schottische in A Major (Alburger, Bain, Brody, Cranford, Emmerson, Phillips, Skinner) or G Major (McCutcheon). It is played in standard or AEae (recommended by Skinner in 1904) fiddle tunings. The parts are played AB (Alburger, Hardie, Hunter, Johnson, Skinner), AA'B (Emmerson), AABB (Bain, Brody, Cranford, Phillips) or AA'BB' (Perlman).

The mansion of Drumblair lies in the Parish of Fergie, on the north-western borders of Aberdeenshire in the North West of Scotland.

The tune was composed by J. Scott Skinner (1843–1927) for his friend and benefactor William F. McHardy of Drumblair, who gave Skinner use of a rent-free cottage for many years to support his art. In his autobiography *My Life and Adventures*, Skinner wrote that McHardy, the Laird, was so impressed with the composition that for the remaining 15 years of his life he sent Skinner a thank-you check at Christmas-time. McHardy could apparently well afford to be magnanimous, for he had made a fortune of over 100,000 pounds in South America with engineering enterprises before returning to live at Fergie near Huntly. The tune is considered one of the finest and most famous of Skinner's 600 compositions and appears in his **Harp and Claymore** collection. It was one of the tunes included by him later in his career in the 1921 concert set "Warblings From the Hills".

Skinner, writing in his autobiography **My Life and Adventures** described his inspiration for the tune:

Suddenly [one night] a tune, 'pat' and complete, flashed into my head in his honour. I jumped out of bed [looking for music manuscript paper]...but a search produced nothing better than a piece of soap paper and on this I promptly dashed off 'The Laird o' Drumblair.' And the tune was dispatched as it had been written." "Ye're no' gaun tae send that awfy-like paper tae the Laird," protested his wife, "He'll jist licht his pipe wi' it!" It was sent anyway.

Skinner also rendered the same melodic motif as a reel called "Angus Campbell" and the two were written as companion pieces (the reel following the strathspey).

It was printed in Alburger's **Scottish Fiddlers and Their Music** (1982), Bain's **50 Fiddle Solos** (1989), Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Cranford's **Winston Fitzgerald: A Collection of Fiddle Tunes** (1997), Emmerson's **Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String** (1971), Hardie's **Caledonian Companion** (1992), Hunter's **Fiddle Music of Scotland** (1988), S. Johnson's **A Twenty Year Anniversary Collection** (2003), Perlman's **The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island** (1996), Phillips' **Fiddle Case Tunebook: British Isles** (1989), Skinner's **The Scottish Violinist** (1900) and **Harp and Claymore** (1904).

It was recorded by James Morrison (fiddle) & Tom Carmody (accordion) (78 RPM) (1935 2nd tune in medley called "Bed of Roses"), The Bothy Band on **1975** (fiddler Tommy Peoples renders it as a strathspey, then a reel). Silly Wizard on **Golden, Golden** (1985), John McCutcheon on **How Can I Keep From Singing** (1975), Jean Carignan on **Jean Carignan** (appears as third tune of "J. Scott Skinner Medley"), Boys of the Lough on **Lochaber No More** (1976) and J. Scott Skinner on **The Strathspey King** (1975 rerelease).