

Ballinasloe Fair

The musical score for "Ballinasloe Fair" is written in treble clef and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a key signature change to A minor (Am) and contains a first ending bracket labeled '1.' with chords Em, Am, and G. The second staff contains a second ending bracket labeled '2.' and a section labeled 'B' with chords Em, Am, C, Am, C, G, C, and Am. The third staff continues with chords Em, Am, C, Am, C, G, and Am. The fourth staff concludes with a 'D.S. al Fine' instruction, a C major chord, and a final 'Fine' marking with an Am chord.

"Ballinasloe Fair", in Gaelic "*Aonach Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe*" or "*Aonac Bel-Ata-Na Sluaigead*", also known as "The Blackpool", "The Fair of Ballinasloe", "The Leitrim Thrush" or "Rita Keane's" is an Irish reel in A Dorian ('A' part) & C Major ('B' part) [O'Neill/Krassen], A Minor ('A' part) & C Major ('B' part) [Breathnach, Miller & Perron, O'Neill/1850 & 1001]. The parts are played AB (Breathnach), AAB (Miller & Perron/1977, Krassen/O'Neill), AA'B (O'Neill/1850 & 1001) or ABB' (Miller & Perron/2006, Valley).

There is an annual horse fair at Ballinasloe, the second largest town in County Galway, in the western part of Ireland. It is one of Europe's oldest and largest Horse Fairs, dating back to the 18th century and is held in October. Along with horses, other livestock was traded at the fair. Famed County Sligo fiddler Michael Coleman (1891-1945) recorded the tune in 1927 in New York in a medley as the second tune, following "Lord McDonald". O'Neill also printed a variant as "The Leitrim Thrush".

It was printed in Breathnach's *Ceol Rince na hÉireann III* (1985), Lyth's **Bowing Styles in Irish Fiddle Playing, vol. 1** (1981), Miller & Perron's **Irish Traditional Fiddle Music** (1977) and **Irish Traditional Fiddle Music, 2nd Edition** (2006), Krassen's **O'Neill's Music of Ireland** (1976), **O'Neill's Music of Ireland: 1850 Melodies** (1903) and **Dance Music of Ireland: 1001 Gems** (1907), Valley's **Learn to Play the Fiddle with Armagh Pipers Club** (1977).

It was recorded by The Chieftains on **Boil the Breakfast Early** (1980) and **The Best of the Chieftains** (1992), Martin Wynne on **My Love is in America: The Boston College Irish Fiddle Festival** (1991), Michael Coleman on **The Heyday of Michael Coleman** (1973) and **The Classic Recordings of Michael Coleman** (1979), Davy Spillane on **Pipedreams** and Vincent Griffin on **Traditional Fiddle Music from County Clare** (1977).