

The Broken Pledge

The musical score for "The Broken Pledge" is presented in five staves of music. The key signature is D Dorian (one flat) and the time signature is 2/2. The first staff begins with a boxed 'A' and contains the notes D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, with chords Dm, Am7, and Dm. The second staff continues with Am7, Dm, Am7, and Dm. The third staff starts with Am7, Dm, and a boxed 'B', followed by Dm, Am7, Dm, Am7, and G. The fourth staff features Am7, Dm, Am7, Dm, Am7, and Dm. The fifth staff concludes with Am7 and Dm. Ornaments (sharps) are placed above the notes in the third and fourth staves. Trills are indicated by a '3' over the notes in the first and second staves. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

"The Broken Pledge", in Gaelic "*An geall briste*" is an Irish reel in D Dorian (Flaherty, Taylor/Tweed), D Mixolydian (O'Neill/Krassen, Williamson), D Mixolydian/Dorian (Cranitch) or D Major (O'Neill/1850 & 1001). The parts are played AABB.

There are several possibilities for the origin of the title. One is that the pledge refers to a love pledge, in which a young couple, soon to be parted due to sea or military service, pledge their affection for one another and promise to remain faithful during the interim. It is also said the title refers to a failed temperance pledge, from the days of the temperance movement. A related Irish tradition says that the Church asks children at the age of 11 or 12 to promise not to drink before they reach the age of twenty.

Occasionally the tune is played in the key of E Minor.

The 'F' notes are usually played natural, but pipers often play the tune with 'F' sharps, and occasionally the sharp and natural notes were alternated in the tune.

It was printed in Cranitch's **Irish Fiddle Book** (1996), Cranitch's **Irish Session Tunes: Red Book** (2000), Flaherty's **Trip to Sligo** (1990), O'Malley's **Luke O'Malley's Collection of Irish Music, vol. 1** (1976), O'Neill (Krassen) (1976), O'Neill's **Music of Ireland: 1850 Melodies** (1903), O'Neill's **Dance Music of Ireland: 1001 Gems** (1907), Taylor's **Traditional Irish Music: Karen Tweed's Irish Choice** (1994) and Williamson's **English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish Fiddle Tunes** (1976).

It was recorded by Martin Hayes & Dennis Cahill on **The Lonesome Touch** (1997), Leo Rowsome on **Sunshine** (1944), De Danann on **Selected Jigs, Reels and Songs** (1976), Séamus Ennis on **Forty Years of Irish Piping** (1977), Jimmy O'Brien-Moran on **Seán Reid's Favourite** (1996) and Andy McGann, Joe Burke, Felix Dolan on **A Tribute to Michael Coleman** (1965).