

The Eagle's Whistle

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"The Eagle's Whistle", in Gaelic "*Fead an Iolair*" or "*Fead an Fhiolair*" is also known as "The Eagle's Tune" is an Irish march in 2/4 time and G Major. The parts are played: One part (Vally) or AAB (Joyce, O'Neill). Joyce (1873) identifies this as the marching tune of the O'Donovans whose ancient lands consisted of the territory of Hy Fidhgheinte, a district lying west of the river Maigue in county Limerick. Joyce states "I gave a setting of this in my **Ancient Irish Music** and there are two others in the **Stanford-Petrie Collection**. These three are in 3/4 time: whereas this setting is in 2/4, which is no doubt the proper original form, inasmuch as this was the marching tune of the O'Donovans (see my **Ancient Irish Music**, p. 53). **The Cork MS.** has this remark:—"The legend tells that with this tune the eagle whistles his young to rest".

Bayard believes this tune to be the common ancestor to the "Bonaparte's Retreat" family of tunes (see Bayard's **Hill Country Tunes**, 1944 note for "Bonaparte's Retreat," No. 87), even though most Irish versions seem to be in triple meter.

I have not found an indicated meter for this so I have set it in grand march time for the midi file. It was printed in Hannagan and Clandillon's *Londubh an Chairn*, Henebry's **A Handbook of Irish Music** (1928), Joyce's **Ancient Irish Music** (1872), Joyce's **Old Irish Folk Music and Song** (1909), O'Neill's **O'Neill's Irish Music** (1915) (appears as "The Eagle's Tune"), Stanford/Petrie's **The Complete Collection of Irish Music** (1905), Vally's **Learn to Play the Fiddle with Armagh Pipers Club** (197?).

It was recorded by Robin Williamson on **Winter's Turning** (1986), Frank Ferrel on **Yankee Dreams: Wicked Good Fiddling from New England** (1991), Sharon Shannon on **The Best of Sharon Shannon: Spellbound** (1999) (appears as "*Fead an Fhiolair*/Cry of the Eagles").