

The Gold Ring

The musical score for "The Gold Ring" is written in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It consists of eight staves of music. The chords and first/second endings are as follows:

- Staff 1: Chords D, A, G, Am, D.
- Staff 2 (measures 6-8): Chords Am, D, G (first ending), G (second ending), G, B.
- Staff 3 (measures 11-13): Chords D, G, D.
- Staff 4 (measures 17-20): Chords G (first ending), G (second ending), Em, C, G, Em.
- Staff 5 (measures 21-25): Chords D, G, D, G (first ending).
- Staff 6 (measures 26-30): Chords G (second ending), G, D, D, G, D, G (first ending).
- Staff 7 (measures 31-36): Chords G (second ending), D, E, G, Am, D.
- Staff 8 (measures 37-40): Chords Am, D, G (first ending), G (second ending).

"The Gold Ring" (in Gaelic "*Fáinne n-Oir*" or "*Fáinne Óir*") is also known as "Fermanagh Gold Ring", "Lasses of Limerick", "*Faire! Faire! ar Aghaidh! ar Aghaidh!*" or "*Tá Fáinne Air*" is a multiple part Irish double jig in D Mixolydian ('A' and 'B' parts) & G Major ('C', 'D', and 'E' parts). The parts are played AABBCCDDEEFF (Boys/Lough): AABBCCDDEE (Brody): AABBCCDDEEFFGG (Mallinson, O'Neill): AABCC'DD'EEFG (Mitchell): AABB'CCDD'EEFFGG (Taylor): AABBCCDDEE (Williamson).

Seamus Ennis tells a story of a piper who had the courage to spend a night hiding near a fairy rath to listen to the wonderful music of the little folk. As usual they returned to the rath at sunrise to sleep, the nights' festivity over, and the piper crept out from hiding. On close investigation of the site he found a tiny gold ring on the ground, dropped by a fairy reveler. The very next evening he returned to the rath and hid in the same place to listen again to the music of the wee folk but this time he also overheard the lamenting of a fairy piper over the loss of the ring. The fairy cried that he would grant any wish to get it back, upon which he man stepped from hiding and offered to return the ring, explaining how he found it lost. True to his word the fairy granted the human one wish, and asked the piper to name it. 'The jig I heard the other night,' said the man, who added he could not quite remember it (due to the fairies blocking the memory of their tunes), and the fairy piper granted the wish on the spot-the tune that has ever since been called in memory of the incident "The Gold Ring".

The version given here is from Williamson and includes an unusually short part D part (4 measures). All parts are in the key of G.

It was printed in Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), O'Neill's **Music of Ireland: 1850 Melodies** (1903), O'Neill's **Dance Music of Ireland: 1001 Gems** (1907), Mitchell's **Dance Music of Willie Clancy** (1993), Taylor's **Music for the Sets: Blue Book** (1995), Vallely's **Learn to Play the Tin Whistle with the Armagh Pipers Club, vol. 3** and Williamson's **English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish Fiddle Tunes** (1976).

It was recorded by Jordi Savall on **The Celtic Viol. II** (2010), Sean Keane on **Gusty's Frolics, The Piping of Willie Clancy, Vol. 2** (1993), Conal O'Grada on **Top of the Croom** (1990), Seamus Ennis on **Ceolta, Scealta agus Amhrain**, Tony MacMahon & Noel Hill on **I gCnoc na Graí** ('In Knocknagree'), Seamus Creagh & Aidan Coffey on **Traditional Music from Ireland**, The Chieftains on **Cotton Eyed Joe**, Paul O'Shaughnessy on **Stay Another While** (1999), The Boys of the Lough on **Second Album** (1974), Liam O'Flynn on **The Piper's Call**, Brian Mac Aodha on **Throw Away the Keys** and others.