

# The Pidgeon on the Gate

The musical score for "The Pidgeon on the Gate" is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, and then a series of eighth notes: A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. Above the staff, the chord Em is indicated, with a circled letter 'A' above it. The second staff continues the melody with similar eighth-note patterns. Above the staff, the chords Em, Bm, A, and Bm are indicated. The staff ends with a first ending bracket over the notes B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, with the chord Em below. The third staff begins with a second ending bracket over the notes B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, with the chord Bm below. The melody then continues with eighth notes: B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. Above the staff, the chords Em, Em, and Bm are indicated. A circled letter 'B' is placed above the second Em chord. The fourth staff continues the melody with eighth notes: B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. Above the staff, the chords Em, A, and Bm are indicated. The fifth staff begins with a first ending bracket over the notes B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, with the chord Em below. It then has a second ending bracket over the notes B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, also with the chord Em below.

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"Pigeon on the Gate", in Gaelic "*An Colúr ar an nGeata*", also known as "Atholl Braes", "Bank of Ireland", "The Drinking Reel", "The Drunken Tailor", "Gallagher's Best", "Hills of Clogher", "Lagan Slashers", "Pigeon on the Pier", "Reidy's Reel", "Roddy Joe's Reel", "The Scotch Braes" or "The Wandering Tinker" is an Irish reel in E Dorian. The parts are played AB (Goodman, Miller & Perron, Roche), AABB (Cranitch, Mallinson, Mulvihill, O'Neill/Krassen, Taylor, Tubridy), AA'BB (Breathnach), AAB'B (Flaherty, Phillips) or AA'BB' (Brody, Taylor, Vallely).

The melody is at least as old as the mid-19th century, when it was entered into the large music manuscript collection of County Cork uilleann piper Canon James Goodman. The reel was also mentioned by Francis O'Neill (*Irish Minstrels and Musicians*, 1913) in his brief sketch of uilleann piper and fiddler William F. Hanafin (a Callinafercy, Kilcoleman, County Kerry, musician born in 1875 who emigrated to Massachusetts in his adolescence), as one of the first reels he learned as a boy. The "Pigeon on the Gate" title for this tune dates only to the beginning of the 20th century, however. Francis O'Neill (1922) remarks: "Altho' this splendid reel does not appear in the Bunting, Petrie or Joyce Collections, it was pretty generally known to the pipers and fiddlers of Chicago, hailing from the west and south of Ireland and always by the same name (i.e. "Pigeon on the Gate"). It is a popular session tune in its many variations and variants, although two main strains, in E modal and A modal, predominate. "Pigeon on the Gate" is a popularreel in many versions in Donegal, although usually known as "The Swallowtail".

It was printed in Breathnach's **CRÉ 2** (1976), Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Bulmer & Sharpley's **Music from Ireland, vol. 3** (1976), Cranitch's **The Irish Fiddle Book** (1996), Flaherty's **Trip to Sligo** (1990), Jordan's **Whistle and Sing!** (1975), Mallinson's **100 Essential** (1995), Miller & Perron's **Irish Traditional Fiddle Music** (1977/2006), Mulvihill's **1st Collection** (1986), Krassen's **O'Neill** (1976), O'Neill's **Waifs and Strays of Gaelic Melody** (1922), Phillips' **Fiddle Case Tunebook: British Isles** (1989), Roche's **Collection of Traditional Irish Music, vol. 1** (1912), Taylor's **Through the Half-Door** (1992) and Tubridy's **Irish Traditional Music, vol. 2** (1999).

It was recorded by The Riendeau Family on **Old-Time Fiddling**, Jean Carignan on **Old Time Fiddle Tunes** (1968), Brendan Mulvihill on **The Flax in Bloom**, Liz Carroll on **Liz Carroll** (1988), Liz Carroll on **The Celts Rise Again** (1990), The Chieftains on **Bonaparte's Retreat** (1976), Kevin Burke on **Promenade**, Proinsias O Maonaigh, Mairead Ni Mhaonaigh, Paula Doohan, Liz Doherty on **Fiddle Sticks: Irish Traditional Music from Donegal** (1991) and Sean McGuire on **Irish Jigs and Reels**.