

The Sailor's Bonnet

The musical score for "The Sailor's Bonnet" is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a boxed section marker 'A' above a D chord. The second staff continues the melody with chords G, D, A7, G, D, and A7. The third staff features a double bar line with repeat dots, followed by a boxed section marker 'B' above a D chord, and ends with a fermata over a G chord. The fourth staff contains two triplet markings over eighth notes, with chords D, G, A7, and D. The fifth staff concludes the piece with chords G, D, G, and D, ending with a double bar line and repeat dots.

"The Sailor's Bonnet" in Gaelic "*Bairéad an mháirnéalaigh*" or "*Boinéad na tSeoltóra*" also known as "Highlander's Bonnet" is an Irish reel in D Major. The parts are played ABB (Reiner & Anick), AABB (most versions) or AAB B' (Moylan).

The "Sailor's Bonnet" is the third tune of a famous medley by Sligo fiddler Michael Coleman (1891-1945) (following "The Tarbolton" and "Longford Collector"), a recording that was so influential that the medley is still played at Irish sessions.

The first part of the tune is sometimes played single and the second part doubled, totaling eight and sixteen bars, respectively. Harry Bradshaw and Jackie Small note that, while Coleman helped to popularize it, "The Sailor's Bonnet" had been comparatively unknown until the 1929 78 RPM recording of it by the duet of Leitrim flute player John McKenna (1880-1947) and Sligo fiddler James Morrison (d. 1947), which predates Coleman's 1934 recording.

The second strain of "Sailor's Bonnet" is similar to the second part of the American breakdown "Billy in the Lowground".

It was printed in Breathnach's **CRÉ I** (1963), Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Harker's **300 Tunes from Mike Rafferty** (2005), Lyth's **Bowing Styles in Irish Fiddle Playing, vol. 1** (1981), Mallinson's **100 Essential** (1995), Miller & Perron's **Irish Traditional Fiddle Music, vol. 1** (1977), Miller & Perron's **Irish Traditional Fiddle Music, 2nd Edition** (2006), Moylan's **Johnny O'Leary** (1994), Reiner & Anick's **Old Time Fiddling Across America** (1989), Sullivan's **Session Tunes, vol. 2**, Taylor's **Through the Half-door** (1992) and Tubridy's **Irish Traditional Music, vol. 1** (1999).

It was recorded by Andy Davey (1928-2005) on **The Coleman Archive, vol. 2: The Home Place** (2005), James Morrison & Michael McKenna (1929), Micheal Coleman (1934), Kevin Burke on **Sweeney's Dream**, Paddy Keenan (1975), Johnny Cronin, Paddy Cronin, James Kelly & Johnny McGreevy on **My Love is in America: The Boston College Irish Fiddle Festival** (1991), The Bothy Band on **1975**, Jean Carignan (appears as third tune of "Tarbolton Reel Medley" and learned from a Michael Coleman record made in the mid 1930's), Michael Coleman on **The Wheels of the World** and Shaskeen on **Shaskeen Live**.