

# The Spike Island Lasses

The musical score for "The Spike Island Lasses" is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of eight staves of music. The first staff begins with a first ending bracket labeled '1.' and a 'D' chord. The second staff begins with a second ending bracket labeled '2.' and an 'A7' chord. The score includes various chords such as Am7, G, D, and A7, along with musical notations like triplets and fermatas. The piece concludes with a final staff on a D chord.

**A** Am7 G D  $\infty$  G Am7 G 1. D

**B** 2. A7 D D Am7 D  $\infty$  A7

D Am7  $\infty$  D Am7 D A7 D

**C** Am7  $\infty$  G D Am7 G

D Am7  $\infty$  G Am7 G

**D** A7 D D Am7  $\infty$  D

Am7 D Am7  $\infty$  D G D A7

D

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"Spike Island Lasses", in Gaelic "*Gearrchaile Oileán Píce*" or "*Cloichíní Beaga na Farraige*", "Reidy's Reel" or "The Small Stones of the Sea" is an Irish reel in cut time and D Mixolydian. The parts are played ABCD (Breathnach, Valley) or AA'BCD (Taylor).

Spike Island, in Cork Harbor, is the site of a former military installation and is presently used as an incarceration facility for adolescent offenders.

Leitrim uilleann piper Brian McNamara (2004) believes the melody started out as a two part reel and developed into the four-part tune that is more common today. He points out that the two-part version is associated with concertina repertoire, particularly with the playing of Mrs. Crotty.

Breathnach (1963) notes that O'Neill's "Reidy's Reel" (in O'Neill's **Waifs and Strays of Gaelic Melody** (1922)) is a version of this tune, although the second half-phrase of the 'B' part that he prints belongs with "The Bank of Ireland". Sometimes this tune is played in a medley followed by "The Dogs Among the Bushes".

It was printed in Breathnach's **Ceol Rince na hÉireann I** (1963), Taylor's **Music for the Sets: Blue Book** (1995) and Valley's **Play 50 Reels with Armagh Pipers Club** (1982).

It was recorded by Paddy O'Brien (195?), Mike McGoldrick on **Wired** (2005), Paddy O'Brien on **Irish Dance Music** (1973), The Irish Tradition on **The Corner House** (1978), Brian McNamara on **Fort of the Jewels** (2004), Paddy Keenan and Tommy O'Sullivan on **The Long Grazing Acre** (2003), James Keane on **Irish Traditional Instrumental Music, vol. 1: East Coast of America** (1987), Elizabeth Crotty on **Concertina Music from West Clare** (1999), Planxty on **Words and Music** (1982), Ronan Browne and Peter O'Loughlin on *The South West Wind* (1988), Micho Russell on **Ireland's Roving Ambassador** (1993) and Billy McComiskey (et al) on **The Big Squeeze** (1988).