

The Swallow's Tail Reel

A
Am Em7
G₃ Am
Em7 D Em7 1. Am
2. Am **B** Em7
G Am
Em7 Am G Em7 1. Am
2. Am

"The Swallow's Tail Reel", in Gaelic "*Eireaball na fáinleg*", also known as "Swallowtail Reel", "The Pigeon's Tail", "The Swallowtail Coat", "Take Your Hand Away", "Village Reel" and other names is an Irish, New England and Shetland reel in A Dorian. The parts are played AB (O'Neill/1850) or AABB (Allan, Breathnach, Brody, Flaherty, Mallinson, Miller & Perron, O'Neill/Krassen, Sweet, Tolman, Tubridy).

"The Swallow's Tail" is a widespread reel with many variants and titles and is current in several traditions. The settings vary from dorian to mixolydian modes, with some a mixture of both (O'Neill set the tune in mixolydian in his *Music of Ireland* (1903) and in minor in his *Dance Music in Ireland* (1907)). It is related to "Pride of the Ball".

The oldest version of the tune with the "Swallow's Tail" title is in Book 2 of the c. 1883 music manuscript collection of County Leitrim piper and fiddler Stephen Grier (c. 1824-1894), although close versions were printed almost simultaneously in Ryan's **Mammoth Collection** (1883) under other titles.

P.W. Joyce collected the tune in the mid-19th century in Kilkenny and printed it as an untitled reel in D Mixolydian in his **Old Irish Folk Music and Songs** (1909).

The earliest sound recording of the tune may have been by O'Neill himself, who, in the first years of the 20th century, recorded on a cylinder machine a performance of the reel by Chicago fiddler John McFadden (who played a mixolydian version).

It was printed in Breathnach's **CRÉ III** (1985), Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), Flaherty's **Trip to Sligo** (1990), Giblin's **Collection of Traditional Irish Dance Music** (1928), Lyth's **Bowing Styles in Irish Fiddle Playing, vol. 1** (1981), Mallinson's **100 Enduring** (1995), McDermott's **Allan's Irish Fiddler** (c. 1920's), Miller & Perron's **New England Fiddlers Repertoire** (1983), Mulvihill's **1st Collection** (1986), O'Neill (Krassen) (1976), O'Neill's **Music of Ireland: 1850 Melodies** (1903), O'Neill's **Dance Music of Ireland: 1001 Gems** (1907), Sweet's **Fifer's Delight** (1965/1981), Tolman's **Nelson Music Collection** (1969), Tubridy's **Irish Traditional Music, vol. 1** (1999).

It was recorded by John H. Kimmel (1918), Barry, Gorman, Ennis, and Heaney on **Irish Music in London Pubs**, Paddy Keenan on **Paddy Keenan** (1975), The Kerry Fiddle Trio on **The Rushy Mountain** (1994), Michael Coleman on **The Legacy of Michael Coleman**, Dave Swarbrick and Friends on **The Ceilidh Album**, K. Scanlon on **Irish Dance Music** (1995) and Davie Rogerson (et al) on **Ranting and Reeling: Dance Music of the north of England** (1998).