

Banks Of Sicily

Hamish Henderson

The musical score for "Banks Of Sicily" is written on seven staves in 6/8 time. The melody is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Chords are indicated by letters (C, F, G, Am) above the staff lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line on the seventh staff.

Chord progression across staves:

- Staff 1: C, F, C, G
- Staff 2: C, G, C, G, C, C, F
- Staff 3: C, F, C, G, C, F, C, Am
- Staff 4: C, G, C, C, F, C, F, C
- Staff 5: G, C, F, C, Am, C, G, C
- Staff 6: C, F, C, G, F, C, G, C, F
- Staff 7: C, G, C, G, C

The pipie is dozie, the pipie is fey,
He winna come roon' for his vino the day.
The sky ow'r Messina is unco an' grey,
An 'a' the bricht chaulmers are eerie.

Then fare weel ye banks o' Sicily,
Fare ye weel ye valley and shaw.
There's nae Jock will mourn the kyles o' ye,
Puir bliddy swaddies are wearie.
Fare weel, ye banks o' Sicily,
Fare ye weel, ye valley and shaw.
There's nae hame can smoor the wiles o' ye,
Puir bliddy swaddies are wearie.
Then doon the stair and line the waterside,
Wait your turn, the ferry's awa'.
Then doon the stair and line the waterside,
A' the bricht chaulmers are eerie.

The drummie is polisht, the drummie is braw
He cannae be seen for his webbin' ava.
He's beezed himsel' up for a photy an a'
Tae leave wi' his Lola, his dearie.

Sae fare weel, ye dives o' Sicily
(Fare ye weel, ye shieling an' ha'),
We'll a' mind shebeens and bothies
Whaur kind signorinas were cheerie.
Fare weel, ye banks o' Sicily
(Fare ye weel, ye shielings an' ha');
We'll a' mind shebeens and bothies
Whaur Jock made a date wi' his dearie.
Then tune the pipes and drub the tenor drum
(Leave your kit this side o' the wa').
Then tune the pipes and drub the tenor drum
A' the bricht chaulmers are eerie.

Vocabulary:

pipie = pipe major

dozie = sleepy

fey = acting in a strange manner (as if having a presentiment of something out of the ordinary, or of death)

unco = strange, unusual

chaulmers = rooms

kyles = straights

smoor the wiles = obliterate your fascination (literally, 'smother')

drummie = drum major

beezed = polished (**beezin** = spit and polish)

shielin = hut

byres and bothies = cow sheds and cottages

shebeens = boozers, drinking dens

"Banks of Sicily", also known as "Farewell to Sicily" and "The Highland Division's Farewell to Sicily" is a Scottish song by Hamish Henderson set to the tune "Farewell To the Creeks". It was composed while he was Intelligence Officer for the Highland Division in World War II. G. W. Lockhart (in **Fiddles and Folk**, 1998) relates that Henderson had been viewing the smoke curling from Mt. Etna's crater in the distance behind the Pipes and Drums of the division's 153 Brigade, when the band launched into "Farewell to the Creeks".

"Banks of Sicily" was the first recording made by the Scottish group the Whistlebinkies, on a Hamish Henderson compilation album in 1976.

It was printed in Hinds & Hebert's *Grumbling Old Woman* (1981) and **Sing Out! Magazine** vol 14, #4.

It was recorded by Alistair Anderson on **Traditional Tunes** (1976) and Will Atkinson (et al) on **Ranting and Reeling: Dance Music of the north of England** (1998).