

## The Minstrel Boy

Musical score for "The Minstrel Boy" in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a boxed 'A' and contains measures with chords G, C, D7, G, Em, C, and G. The second staff has a first ending (1.) with chords D7 and G, followed by a second ending (2.) with chords D7, G, and a boxed 'B' with chords G, D7, C, D7, C, and D7. The third staff continues with chords Em, C, G, C, and G. The fourth staff concludes with chords C, G, D7, and G.

1. The minstrel boy to the war is gone,  
In the ranks of death you'll find him;  
His father's sword he hath girded on,  
And his wild harp slung behind him;  
"Land of Song!" cried the warrior bard,  
"Tho' all the world betrays thee,  
One sword, at least, thy rights shall guard,  
One faithful harp shall praise thee!"
2. The Minstrel fell! But the foeman's steel  
Could not bring that proud soul under;  
The harp he lov'd ne'er spoke again,  
For he tore its chords asunder;  
And said "No chains shall sully thee,  
Thou soul of love and brav'ry!  
Thy songs were made for the pure and free  
They shall never sound in slavery!"

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"The Minstrel Boy", in Gaelic "*Laoc Na Rann*", also known as "The Lover's Lute", "The Móirín", "Moreen" or "Then soldier come fill high the wine" is an Irish air, reel or march in 4/4 time and G Major. The parts are played AAB.

This title is from a song set to the air, written by Thomas Moore (1779–1852), first published in *A Selection of Irish Melodies* (1813), though the original melody is an older tune called "Moreen" or "Móirín".

It is widely believed that Moore composed the song in remembrance of a number of his friends, whom he met while studying at Trinity College, Dublin and who had participated in (and were killed during) the Irish Rebellion of 1798.

Charles Villier Stanford in his edition of Moore's *Irish Melodies* (1895) said that the melody "is a reel-tune, altered by Moore into a march" Although it is an older air, O'Neill gives source credit to fiddler and collaborator James O'Neill in his *Music of Ireland* (1903).

The title appears in a list of tunes in his repertoire brought by Philip Goodman, the last professional and traditional piper in Farney, Louth, to the *Feis Ceoil* in Belfast in 1898 (Breathnach, 1997). While mostly traditional in his repertoire, Goodman regularly played several novelty or 'popular' tunes.

The melody is a staple of Irish Great (Highland) Pipe bands.

It was played at the funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother in London on April 9, 2002 by the Pipes and Drums of the Irish and Scottish Regiments during the procession from Westminster Hall to Westminster Abbey.

It is in the **Roud Folk Song Index** as #13867.

It was printed in A.S. Bowman's **J.W. Pepper Collection of Five Hundred Reels, Jigs, etc.** (1908), Johnson's **The Kitchen Musician No. 5: Mostly Irish Airs** (1985) (revised 2000), O'Neill's **Music of Ireland: 1850 Melodies** (1903), Sweet's **Fifer's Delight** (1965/1981).

It was been recorded by Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem on **Rising of the Moon** (1956), Limeliters on **Folk Matinee** (1962), Dick Rosmini on **Adventures for 12 String, 6 String and Banjo** (1964), Paul Robeson on **Carnegie Hall Concert, Vol. 2** (1965), The Corrs on **Forgiven, Not Forgotten** (1995), James Galway with The Chieftains on **The Celtic Minstrel** (1996) and many other performers.