

Birdie

Musical score for "Birdie" in 2/2 time. The score consists of six staves of music. The melody is written in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is written in bass clef. Chord markings are placed above the staff. Section A is marked with a box around the letter 'A' at the beginning of the first staff. Section B is marked with a box around the letter 'B' at the beginning of the fourth staff. The score includes first and second endings, indicated by '1.' and '2.' with repeat signs. The key signature is one flat (Bb), and the time signature is 2/2.

Chord markings: C, F, G7, C, F, G7, C, G7, C, G7, C, G7.

Section A: Measures 1-4.

Section B: Measures 14-17.

First ending: Measures 14-15.

Second ending: Measures 16-17.

Measures 19-22: G7, C, G7.

Measures 23-26: C, G7, C, C.

"Birdie", also known as "Put Me in My Little Bed" is an old-time breakdown known in Kentucky and West Virginia in C Major. The parts are played ABB.

"Birdie" has been called "the state anthem" of West Virginia. Charles Wolfe in **Mountains of Music** (1999) lists this as one of the West Virginia-Kentucky fiddle tunes learned by Kanawha County, West Virginia, fiddler Clark Kessinger (1986-1975) while growing up in the Kanawha Valley. John Hartford (1996) traces this tune to a song composed in 1870 by C.A. White and Dexter Smith called "Put Me in My Little Bed"; Alan Jabbour gives the composers names as White, Smith and Perry of the same date. There is some disagreement as to whether the "Little Bed" tune is ancestral. Ira Ford prints the following verse:

Oh Birdie I am tired now,
I do not care to hear you sing;
You've sung your happy songs all day,
Now put your head beneath your wing.

In addition to the Kessinger 78 RPM made for Brunswick in 1930, other early recordings were made by the West Virginia band The Tweedy Brothers and by Jess Johnson and Roy Harvey (calling themselves the West Virginia Ramblers and backing the tune with "O Dem Golden Slippers"). The Bing Brothers learned their version of the tune from the late Portsmouth, Ohio, fiddler Jimmie Wheeler leading to it being called "Wheeler's Birdie" in some circles (Wheeler himself simply called it "Birdie"). Brody's and Ford's versions are quite different. Kentucky fiddler J.P. Fraley shifts into the 3rd position to play some of the unison 'e' notes and stays in that position for some succeeding notes.

It was printed in Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983) and Ford's **Traditional Music in America** (1940) (Appears as "Put Me in My Little Bed").

It was recorded by Roy Harvey (1925 and 1928), Tweedy Brothers (Charles, George, and Harry, W.Va. brothers who played twin fiddles and piano.), J.P. and Annadeene Fraley on **Wild Rose of the Mountain** (learned by Fraley from the playing of his father) and John Hartford on **Wild Hog in the Red Brush (and a Bunch of Others You Might Not Have Heard)** (1996).