

## The Boatman's Dance

The musical score for 'The Boatman's Dance' is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five parts:

- Part A:** 8 measures of eighth-note runs, starting with a G chord.
- Part B:** 8 measures of eighth-note runs, alternating between C and G chords, ending with a D7 chord.
- Part C:** 4 measures of eighth-note runs, starting with a G chord.
- Part D:** 4 measures of eighth-note runs, starting with a G chord.
- Part E:** 4 measures of eighth-note runs, starting with a C chord.

1. The boatman dance, the boatman sing,  
The boatman do 'most anything,  
And when the boatman get on shore,  
He spends his cash and works for more.  
**Chorus:**  
Dance, boatman, dance,  
Dance, boatman, dance,  
Dance all night till the broad daylight,  
Go home with the gals in the morning.  
Hi, ho, the boatman row,  
Sailing down the river on the Ohio,  
Hi, ho, the boatman row,  
Sailing down the river on the Ohio.
2. The boatman is a thrifty man,  
There's none can do as the boatman can.  
I never saw a pretty girl in my life  
But that she was a boatman's wife.
3. I went on board the other day  
To see what the boatman had to say,  
And there I let my passion loose;  
They crammed me in the calaboose.
4. When you go to the boatman's ball,  
Dance with your wife or not at all.  
Sky-blue jacket, tarpaulin hat,  
Look out, boys, for the nine-tailed cat.
5. When the boatman blows his horn,  
Look out, old man, your daughter's gone.  
He stole my sheep, he stole my goat,  
He put 'em in a bag and took 'em to the boat.

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"The Boatman's Dance", also known as "Dance Boatman Dance" is an American (originally) and English minstrel song, step-dance and morris dance in 2/4 time and G Major. The parts are played AABB (Wade), ABCC or AABBCCEEE (my version).

It is an American blackface minstrel tune with words, also used as a vehicle for step dancing. In England "Boatman's Dance" was employed as a vehicle for a morris dance in North-West Morris, for either a polka step or a single step.

It was written by Daniel Emmett before 1843. He also wrote "Dixie" and "Jimmy Crack Corn". It is a celebration of the Ohio River boatmen.

In 1950 it was revived and arranged by Aaron Copland as part of his set of **Old American Songs**.

I learned this from many and various sources, so my version is a conglomeration of them all.

It was printed in Gumbo Chaff's **The Complete Preceptor for the Banjo** (1851) and Wade's **Mally's North West Morris Book** (1988).

It has been recorded by many musicians.