

The Darkies' Dream

The musical score for "The Darkies' Dream" is written in D major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of eight staves of music. The chords and their positions are as follows:

- Staff 1: Chords **A** (D), A7, D, A7.
- Staff 2: Chords D, A7, D, and a first ending bracket containing G and D.
- Staff 3: Chords D (with a second ending bracket), A7, **B** (D), A7, D. Fingering '3' is shown under the first and last notes of the second ending.
- Staff 4: Chords A7, D, A7, D, A7, G, A7. Fingering '3' is shown under the first and last notes of the second ending.
- Staff 5: Chords G (with a first ending bracket), D (with a first ending bracket), A7, D, **A** (D), A7, D. Fingering '3' is shown under the first and last notes of the first ending.
- Staff 6: Chords A7, D, A7, D.
- Staff 7: Chords G, D.

"The Darkies' Dream", also known as "Darky's Dream", "Acorn Stomp", "Darkey Dan", "Offally Favorite", "The Wind That Blows You Away" is an American reel or schottische in D Major (Bayard, Beisswenger & McCann/Goforth, Roche), F Major (Phillips) or G Major (Beisswenger & McCann/Robertson).

The parts are played AAB (Roche), AA'B (Bayard, Phillips), AA'BB'CC (Beisswenger & McCann/Robertson), AABBCD (Beisswenger & McCann/Goforth).

I have repeated the A part at the end.

The first strain appears to be fairly uniform among fiddlers' versions of this tune, although the second strain sometimes varies quite a bit.

"Darkie's Dream" was identified by John Hartford as a Missouri tune similar to "Essence of Sugar Cane" which is known to have inspired the three-part "Darkie's Dream" composed by George L. Lansing (1860-1923) in 1887. Lansing's composition was recorded by the leading banjo soloists of the early 20th century, Fred Van Eps and Ruby Brooks. Lansing himself was a white classical banjo player in Boston in the 1880's, who also composed "Darkie's Awakening" and "Drowsy Dempsy".

This was Lansing's most popular composition and was widely disseminated, even enjoying popularity overseas. Over the years it has been set as a schottische, barn dance and reel, the latter particularly in American "old-time" vernacular.

Bayard (1981) noted that Pennsylvania fiddlers played this tune with a variety of tempos and styles and he too mentions that the schottische style was common. Other melodies that bear a general or part similarity are "Always Welcome", "The Butcher's Row", "Essence of Sugar Cane" and "Old Yaller Hound." "Darky's Dream" was the repertoire of Pocahontas County, West Virginia, fiddler Burl Hammons (1908-1993), who learned it from African-American musician Grafton Lacey. An early version of the Missouri variant appears in W.H. Morris' *Old Time Violin Melodies*, printed in St. Joseph in 1927, and it was played by several later Missouri fiddlers such as Gene Goforth.

The original tune was picked up, relatively intact, by musicians in Ireland and appears in Frank and John Roche's early 20th century (1927) collection (although in a section headed "Old Dances, not Irish by origin"). "Darkey's Dream" was recorded by fiddler Michael Gorman as "Jamesy Gannon's Favorite" and by James Morrison's student, Timmy Cronin, as "Offally Favorite" in 1957.

It was printed in Bayard's **Dance to the Fiddle** (1981), Beisswenger & McCann's **Ozarks Fiddle Music** (2008), Stephen F. Davis in **The Devil's Box, vol. 26, No. 4**, Winter 1992, Stephen F. Davis in **The Devil's Box, vol. 30, No. 4**, Winter 1996, Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 2** (1995), Roche's **Collection of Traditional Irish Music, vol. 3** (1927).

It was recorded by Lonnie Robertson on **Lonnie's Breakdown** (1996, originally recorded 1966), Gene Goforth on **Traditional Fiddle Music of the Ozarks vol. 1: Along the Eastern Crescent** (1999), Clarke Buehling and the Skirt Lifters on **A Ragtime Episode** (2004) (listed as "The Old Man's Dream" but subtitled "The Darkies' Dream" and attributed to George Lansing) and Grant Lamb on **Manitoba Fiddler** (1974).