

The Miller's Reel

The Miller's Reel is a traditional Irish reel in D major, 4/4 time. The score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The piece is divided into two main sections, A and B, with first and second endings.

Section A: This section consists of the first two staves. It begins with a repeat sign and a box labeled 'A'. The chords are A, D, E7, A, and E7. The first ending (marked '1.') concludes the section with E7 and A.

Section B: This section consists of the last three staves. It begins with a box labeled 'B'. The chords are E7, A, A, Bm, E7, B7, E7, A, C#m, Bm, and D. The second ending (marked '2.') concludes the section with E7 and A.

The score includes various musical notations such as triplets (marked with a '3' and a bracket), first and second endings (marked with '1.' and '2.'), and repeat signs. The piece ends with a double bar line.

"Miller's Reel", also known as "The Dawn", "The Dawning of the Day", "Dusty Miller", "The Spirit of 1880", "The Twenty-Eighth of January", "The Twenty-Second of February" or "The Miller" is an American, Irish and British reel in A Major. The parts are played AB (Bayard, Silberberg), AABB (most versions) or AA'BB' (Phillips).

"Miller's Reel" is a fairly common and widely known fiddle tune in America, although it is also heard in Scotland ("The Miller") and Ireland ("The Dawn" or "The Dawning of the Day"). There seems no particular antiquity to Irish versions, however, and the provenance may be American. The melody is very similar to "The Spirit of 1880" and in modern times is also known as "The Twenty-Eighth of January".

The reel appears as "The Twenty-Second of February" in George P. Knauff's **Virginia Reels, vol. II** (1839).

The composition is credited to New England bandleader and tune composer Zeke Backus in **Ryan's Mammoth Collection** (1883), published by Elias Howe in Boston and in Coes' **Album of Jigs and Reels** (1876). Coes performed with the San Francisco Minstrels in California from 1852 to 1859.

Little is known of Backus, who seems to have been a sometime minstrel performer and apparently spent at least some time in San Francisco. "Miller's Reel" was published earlier in another of Elias Howe's publications, **1000 Jigs and Reels** (c. 1867) as an untitled 'reel' included in the section of schottisches and it may be that Howe's source for the tune in that publication was also Backus.

It was printed in Bayard's **Dance to the Fiddle** (1981)(appears as untitled reel), Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), R.P. Christeson's **Old Time Fiddler's Repertory, vol. 2** (1984), George H. Coes' **Coes Album of Jigs and Reels, something new, for professional and amateur violinists, leaders of orchestras, quadrille bands, and clog, reel and jig dancers; consisting of a Grand Collection of entirely New and Original Clog-Hornpipes, Reels, jigs, Scotch Reels, Irish Reels and Jigs, Waltzes, Walk-Arounds, etc.** (1876), Cole's **1000 Fiddle Tunes** (1940), **Frets Magazine** (February 1986), Howe's **1000 Jigs and Reels** (c. 1867)(appears as an untitled "Reel"), Jarman's **The Cornhuskers Book of Square Dance Tunes** (1944), Jarman and Hansen's **Old Time Dance Tunes** (1951), Johnson's **Kitchen Musician No. 20: A Twenty Year Anniversary Collection** (2003)(appears as "The Miller"), Messer's **Way Down East Fiddlin' Tunes, No. 13**, Miller & Perron's **New England Fiddler's Repertoire** (1983), O'Malley & Atwood's **Seventy Good Old Dances** (1919), Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1** (1994), **Ryan's Mammoth Collection** (1883), Silberberg's **Fiddle Tunes I Learned at the Tractor Tavern** (2002), Songer's Portland Collection (1997) and Sweet's **Fifer's Delight** (1964/1981).

It was recorded by Lonnie Robertson (Mo.), 1965-66, Norman Solomon on **Texas Fiddle Favorites**, F&W String Band on **F&W String Band 2**, Red Clay Ramblers (1974), The Campbell Family on **Champion Fiddlers**, Alister Anderson on **Traditional Tunes**, Byron Berline on **Dad's Favorites** and Rodney Miller on **Airplane II** (1987).