

Pretty Little Widow

The musical score for "Pretty Little Widow" is presented in three staves. The first staff, labeled 'A', contains the first 8 measures of the piece. The second and third staves, labeled 'B', contain the next 8 measures. The key signature is A Major (two sharps). Chord symbols are placed above the notes: A, D, A, D, E7, A in the first staff; A, E7, A, E7, A in the second staff; E7, A, E7, A in the third staff.

"Pretty Little Widow" is an American reel in cut time and A Major (Phillips), A Mixolydian ('A' part) & A Major ('B' part) (Titon) or D Major. It is played in Standard or AEae fiddle tunings. The parts are played AAB (Titon) or AABB (Phillips).

There are several versions of the reel with tonalities running from primarily major to mixed-mode mixolydian/dorian.

The banjo tablature by John Letscher is in D Major.

The tune is known in Arkansas, Kentucky, Virginia, north Georgia and Missouri. It was famously recorded in October 1928 by The Skillet Lickers on Vocalion 02948-A. North Georgia fiddler Clayton McMichen claimed his father composed "Pretty Little Widow". "Pretty Little Widow" was recorded for the Library of Congress by musicologist/folklorist Vance Randolph from the playing of Ozarks Mountains fiddlers in the early 1940's. The melody is similar to Hark Garland's 1950's hit "Sugar Foot Rag."

It was printed in Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1** (1994) and Titon's **Old Time Kentucky Fiddle Tunes** (2001).

It was recorded by The Skillet Lickers (78 RPM)(1928), Gid Tanner & Clayton McMichen on **The Skillet Lickers, vol. 2** (1973), Joe Drye on **The Mountain Ramblers** (1969), John Ashby & the Free State Ramblers on **Down on Ashby's Farm** (1974), Bruce Greene on **Vintage Fiddle Tunes** (1987), W.H. Stepp (1937) (Library of Congress), Delbert McGrath (1942) (Library of Congress), Glen Smith on **Say Old Man** (1990), A.A. Gray (appears as first tune of "A Georgia Barbecue at Stone Mountain")(78 RPM) and Gerry Milnes & Lorraine Lee Hammond on **Hell Up Coal Holler** (1999).