

Red River Jig

The musical score for "Red River Jig" is written in D major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is primarily eighth-note based. Above the first staff, the chord "D" is written above the first measure, and "A7 D" is written above the second and third measures. A square box containing the letter "A" is positioned above the second measure. The second staff continues the melody, with "A7 D" written above the first and second measures. The third staff begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a square box containing the letter "B". Above this staff, "D" is written above the first measure, "A7" above the second, and "D" above the third. The fourth staff continues the melody, with "D" above the first, "A7" above the second, "D" above the third, "G" above the fourth, and "A7 D" above the fifth. The fifth staff begins with a square box containing the letter "C". Above this staff, "D" is written above the first, "A7 D" above the second, "A7 D" above the third, and "A7" above the fourth. The sixth and final staff continues the melody, with "D" above the first, "A7" above the second, "D" above the third, and "A7 D" above the fourth. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

"Red River Jig", also known as "*La Grande Gigue Simple*" ("The Great Single Step Dance"), "*Gigue Simple*", "*La Grande Rouge*" or "*La Jig du Bas-Canada*" is a French-Canadian reel in 3/4, or 6/4 and 3/2 time and D Major. The parts are played one part (Carlin), AA'BB' (Hart & Sandell), ABCD (Reiner & Anick) or ABCCD (Remon & Bouchard). It is often played in ADad or ADae fiddle tunings.

This triple-time reel is probably the most popular and famous solo step-dance tune for virtuosic stepping in French-Canadian tradition, though it is in actuality not a jig (*'gigue'*) but a reel. It is performed at a variety of tempos, depending on the taste of the fiddler or the step-dancer for whom it is played.

Guy Bouchard states that the tune is made up of repetitive phrases, the melodic line is somewhat free-form and each fiddler seems to have his or her own version.

Métis fiddlers from Manitoba play it under the title "Red River Jig" and there the tune is perhaps the most popular vehicle for step dancing. Anne Lederman (in her entry on "Fiddling" in the **Encyclopedia of Music in Canada**, 1992) states that this tune and its cognates were one of two important step-dance tunes in the repertoire of the 18th and 19th century fur-trade in Canada, along with the reel "Drops of Brandy" (unrelated to the Irish slip-jig of the same name). She suggests "*La Grande Gigue Simple*" (and cognates) may originally have been Scottish hornpipes in 6/4 time (i.e., 'Old' or 'Triple' Hornpipe time).

Hart & Sandell (2001) note that fiddler Isidore Soucy recorded the tune on 78 RPM discs five times between 1927 and 1952. The "*La Grande Rouge*" title seems to be a regional Gaspé title for this tune and perhaps is associated with the Manitoba title through the word 'red' (*rouge*).

The Red River of the North flows through Manitoba and the Métis lands and forms the border between North Dakota and Minnesota. It empties into Lake Winnipeg, whose waters join the Nelson River and ultimately flow into Hudson Bay.

It was printed in Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1** (1994), Gibbons' **Folk Fiddling in Canada** (1981).

It was recorded by Don Messer and His Islanders (45 RPM), Chirps Smith on **Chirps Smith** (2015), Andy De Jarlis on **Fiddle Legends** (2000), Léon Robert Goulet (1928) (78 RPM), A.J. Boulay (1930) (78 RPM) and Myllie Barron on **Riding on a Handcar** (2004).