

The Rogue's March

The image shows a musical score for "The Rogue's March" in G major, 6/8 time. The score consists of four staves of music, each with guitar chords indicated above the notes. The chords are G, C, G, D7, G, G, C, G, D7, D7, D7, G, D7, D7, G, D7, C, G, G, C, G, D7, G.

Staff 1: G C G D7 G G

Staff 2: 6 C G D7 G D7 D7

Staff 3: 11 G D7 C G G C G

Staff 4: 16 D7 G G C G D7 G

"The Rogue's March", also known as "Tight Little Island" is an English march in 2/4 or 6/8 time in G Major. The parts are played AAB or AB. The B part is 12 measures long.

The tune was played in the British and American armies when military and civil offenders and undesirable characters were drummed from camps and cantonments.

It appears in Chappell's **Popular Music of the Olden Time** (1859) where he says: "Why so graceful and pastoral a melody as this should have been condemned to be '*Cantio in exitu*' of deserters and reprobates who are to be drummed out of regiments, is not easily to be accounted for; but such is the case, and has been for more than a century - possibly much longer".

The music is found in a great many 18th century volumes of martial music and collections for fife and flute, as, for example, in Thompson's **Compleat Tutor for the Fife** (c. 1756).

"Rogues March" was one of the most widespread and recognized melodies in martial repertory of the era. The melody also appears in the late 18th century manuscript copybook of Henry Livingston, Jr.

About 1790 and later the air was adapted in vocal settings for several popular humorous songs, including "Robinson Crusoe", "Abraham Newland" and "Tight Little Island" (also printed in Chappell). This last song was written as "The Island" by Thomas Dibdin about 1798, and sung by a singer named Davies at Sadler's Wells that same year.

As with a great many British martial airs, "Rogues March" was adopted by the American army in the War of Independence and continued to be employed through the Civil War. This is confirmed by its appearance in Bruce and Emmett's **Drummers' and Fifers' Guide**, a manual printed in 1862 for training musicians for the Union Army. The authors (one of whom was Dan Emmett, of blackface minstrel fame) note: "This air and (drum) beat is used only to 'Drum out' of the service men that have been guilty of desertion or any other misdemeanor".

Camus (1976) states there was another informal or unofficial ceremony connected with the tune: when a soldier married the widow of a comrade he was "hoisted upon the shoulders of two stout fellows of his company, with a couple of bayonets stuck in his hat by way of horns, and preceded by a drum and fife, playing the 'Rogue's March', he is paraded in front of his regiment".

It was printed in Chappell's **Popular Music of the Olden Time** (1859), Bayard's **Dance to the Fiddle March to the Fife** (1982), Bruce & Emmett's **Drummers' and Fifers' Guide** (1862), Camus's **Military Music of the American Revolution** (1976) and Winstock's **Music of the Redcoats** (1970).