

Say Old Man, Can You Play the Fiddle?

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef. It begins in the key of D major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The score is divided into five sections labeled A, B, C, D, and E. Section A (measures 1-8) is in D major. Section B (measures 9-16) is also in D major. Section C (measures 17-24) changes to the key of F# major (three sharps). Section D (measures 25-32) is in F# major and includes a first ending bracket (1.) over measures 29-32. Section E (measures 33-40) is in F# major and includes a second ending bracket (2.) over measures 33-36. The piece concludes with a final measure in D major.

"Say Old Man Can You Play the Fiddle?", also known as "Say Old Man Can You Play a Fiddle?" or "Ladies Fancy" is an American reel in cut time in E Minor ('A', 'B' and 'E' parts) & E Major or E Mixolydian ('C' and 'D' parts). It is sometimes played in EDae fiddle tuning. The parts are played ABC (Christeson), ABBCC (Brody) or AABBCCDDEE.

"Say Old Man can You Play the Fiddle" is known in Texas, Virginia and North Carolina. Joe Burke tells the story that Slim Rutland went looking for interesting musicians in the Dallas area and was pointed to Luke Thomasson, Benny Thomasson's father. Benny Thomasson referred to the tune as "Lady's Fancy". Paul Wells notes a relationship between the 'A' part of "Say Old Man" and one of the strains of Kentucky fiddler Luther Strong's version of "Glory in the Meetinghouse" (recorded for the Library of Congress in 1937).

Sometimes the following is sung as a verse:

Say old man can you play the fiddle?

I don't know, I might play a little.

It was printed in Brody's **Fiddler's Fakebook** (1983), R.P. Christeson's **Old Time Fiddlers Repertory, vol. 1** (1973) and Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 2** (1995).

It was recorded by American Heritage on **Poor Richard's Almanac** (appears as "Lady's Fancy"), The Mando Mafia on **Get Up in the Cool**, Eck Robertson on **Eck Robertson (Tx): Famous Cowboy Fiddler**, Benny Thomasson on **Texas Hoedown** and **Say Old Man, Can You Play the Fiddle?**, Buddy Spicher on **Me and My Heroes**, Tommy Hunter on **Deep in Tradition** (1976), Glen Smith on **Say Old Man** (1990), Jay Ungar & Lyn Hardy on **Songs, Ballads & Fiddle Tunes** (1975), Mark O'Conner on **National Junior Fiddle Champion**, Dan Crary on **Lady's Fancy** (appears as "Lady's Fancy") and Gene Goforth on **Emminence Breakdown** (1997).