

Sleepy-Eyed Joe

The musical score for "Sleepy-Eyed Joe" is written in D major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of seven staves of music. The first staff is marked with a boxed 'A' and contains measures 1-4. The second staff contains measures 5-8, with a first ending bracket over measures 7-8. The third staff is marked with a boxed 'B' and contains measures 9-12. The fourth staff contains measures 13-16. The fifth staff is marked with a boxed 'C' and contains measures 17-18. The sixth staff contains measures 19-22. The seventh staff contains measures 23-24. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: D, A7, D, G, D, A7, D, G, D, A7, D, G, D, A7, D, G, D, A7, D.

John Ashby played this AABBC and finished by playing AAB (omitting the final note in measure 18).

"Sleepy-Eyed Joe" is an American reel in cut time and E Major (Phillips) or D Major (Hall/Addis). The parts are played AABBC.

The best-known version of the tune is from John Ashby (1915-1979) of Fauquier County, Virginia. John Ashby played this AABBC and finished by playing AAB.

Circa 1940 John Ashby formed the Free State Ramblers, a band consisting of family and musician friends. "Free State" refers to a 12 square mile area near Warrenton, Virginia that declared itself "free" in 1806, refusing to pay rent or taxes to landowner Chief Justice John Marshall.

"Sleepy Eyed Joe" is one of '100 essential Missouri tunes' listed by Missouri fiddler Charlie Walden.

The banjo tablature is by John Letscher.

It was printed in Beisswenger & McCann's **Ozarks Fiddle Music** (2008), R.P. Christeson's **Old Time Fiddler's Repertory, vol. 1** (1973), Phillips's **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1** (1994) and Lamancusa's **The Gettysburg Collection of Old-Time Fiddle Tunes** (2021).

It was recorded by John Ashby and the Free State Ramblers on **Fiddling by the Hearth** (1978), Ellis Hall and Bill Addis and **The Green Mountain Boys** (1952) (45 RPM), Norman Blake on **Whiskey Before Breakfast** (1987) and Foghorn String Band on **Weiser Sunrise** (2005).