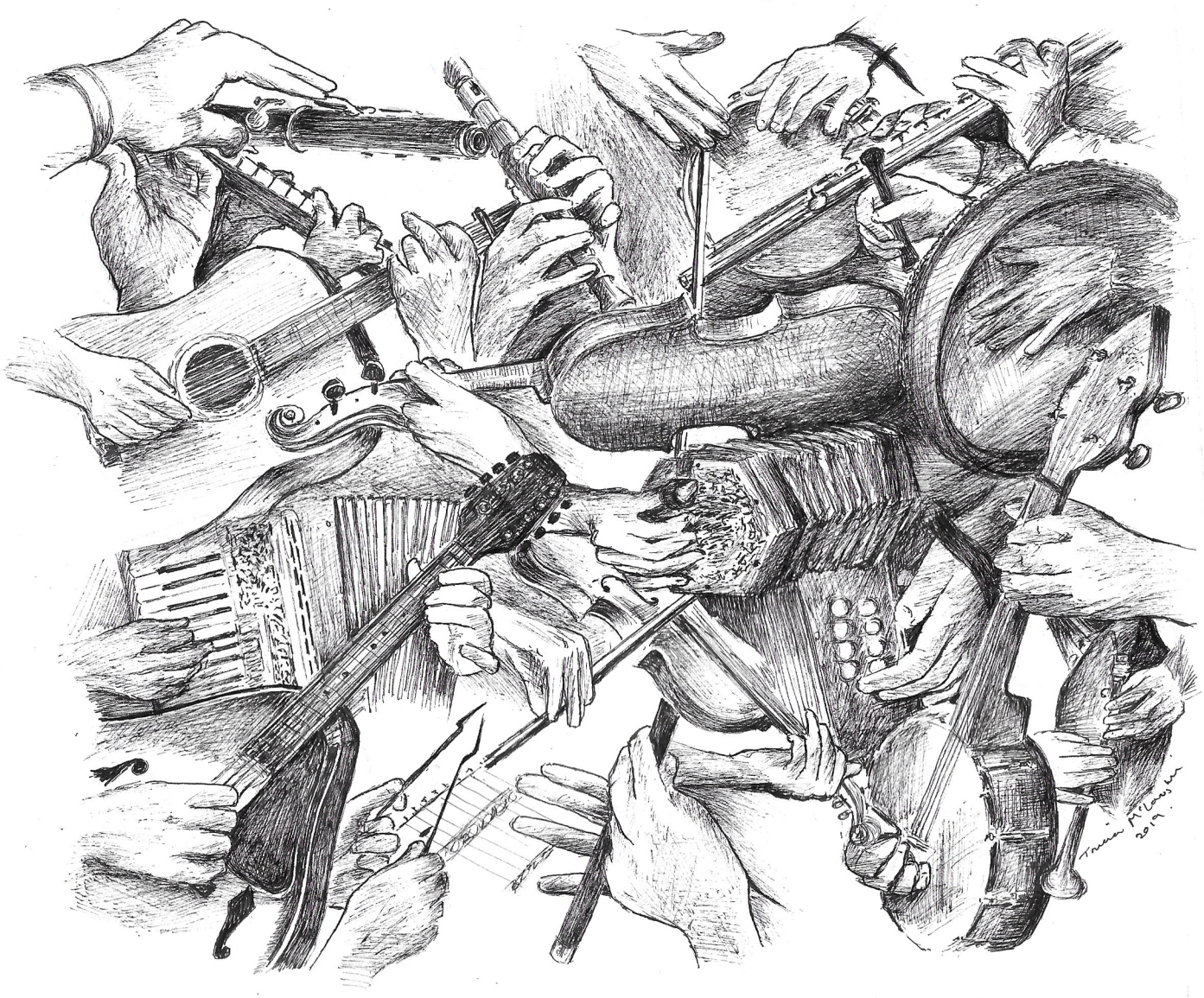
The Tuneworks Tunebook



Learn it, love it, pass it on...

Why Tuneworks?

Because of people…

…being able to play a bit, but not having anyone with whom to share learning tunes
…taking instruments to traditional music festivals, but not having the opportunity to play traditional music
…sitting outside the tent playing a few tunes alone, but not feeling confident to play with anyone else
…standing at the back of a session, feeling too intimidated to get the instrument out of its case
…getting the instrument out but not knowing any of the tunes
…knowing the tunes, but not being able to join in as they're played so fast.

Lots of us were in this position. We don't want you to stay there longer than necessary.

Because playing music together is, really, *the best activity in the world*.

Learn it, love it, pass it on…

Playing traditional music is not an elite activity, it's for anybody. It belongs to everyone who plays it and loves it. Every time you play a tune with others, or pass on a tune you've learnt, you are part of making the tradition live.

Tunes and chords: how right is right?

The tunes in the book are session standards, and you're likely to hear most of them in local sessions at some point.

No two people will play a tune exactly alike. The 'same' tune will vary according to where in the world you are, what city or region, what pub you're in and who you're playing with.

In a session it's good to try and follow the version of the person who started the tune: as well as it usually sounding better if you're playing the same notes, you'll learn a new version.

The versions we've put in here are what we're most used to playing, and which we think are fairly common, but there are no 'right' or 'wrong' versions of traditional tunes. The fact that they change according to time, place and person is part of what makes them 'traditional'.

There are also no right chords, but there are plenty of wrong ones. The chords used in the tune book are a starting point, but you can find what works for you and what you think lifts the tune. As with tunes, for a session it's good to also develop the ability to play the same notes as other chord players.

Learning from dots and learning by ear

You can learn tunes however you like! Reading written music (the dots), learning from players in sessions, and from recordings. None of these is better or worse than any other. Whatever works for you is good. You can learn from recordings by playing along on your instrument, or by singing or whistling along, then working it out on your instrument once it's in your head.

If you learn from dots, don't let yourself be dependent on them. They're a learning tool, but they're not the tune itself. That only exists in your head, your heart, your fingers and when you play it. So try playing without the dots sooner than you think you're ready, as you'll internalise

it better that way, develop your ability to remember by ear, and learn from other people more quickly.

In the Tuneworks 'beginners' sessions, we play tunes over enough times for you to learn them by ear as well as from the dots. We will also try to get everyone playing without the dots.

Session etiquette

A session is more than some people, in the same room, playing stuff at the same time.

It's people making music together, and that needs everyone to look at and listen to everyone else. We're not that keen on rules, but these work:

Rule 1: Listen before you join in.
Rule 2: Listen while you are playing.
Rule 3: Make eye contact
Rule 4: Smile!

When a player starts a tune, the speed they play at is the speed it should go. This may not be the speed you're used to, but it's their tune, so their version and their speed.

Most players speed up even if they don't mean to, and most people will follow the fastest player. This can be difficult if you started the tune at the speed you wanted to stay at.

As well as listening, watch the person playing, to see the speed they are trying to keep to.

If you start a tune and other players speed it up, you could a) try to keep up with them, b) stop playing or c) make a clear signal of the speed you want to play at, by making eye contact with other players and using your body to indicate the rhythm.

Learning and joining in with tunes in a session

If a player starts a tune you don't know well, listen to it once through before joining in. This gives you time to

- work out the key. The 'b' (second) part of the tune will often be in a different key to the 'a' (first) part.
- identify any repeated patterns or parts where you can join in.

It's fine to drop in and out and play bits of a tune when you're learning it in a session. However at this point you're playing for and to yourself rather than to others, so play quietly until you're confident you have it right.

Putting together sets of tunes

Having two or three sets of tunes ready is part of contributing to the session, and of sharing your favourites with others.

A set is usually two or three tunes of the same kind, (eg three reels or three jigs) which all work well at the same speed. You'll know if this is the case when you play them and they move smoothly from one to the other. It's more exciting if they're in different but related keys, such as G, D and A. Most sessions will play each tune three times through before moving on.

The tricky bit is the joins between the tunes, as it's hard to think about the next tune while you're still playing the first one. Practice the join over and over until you can move easily into the next tune without having to think too hard.

Some sessions have sets which they play regularly. The same tunes will be in completely different sets in a different session. There is no 'right' version of how tunes are put together in sets, it's individual choice, and local tradition. Always follow the person who started the set... until the 'lead' passes to someone else.

Resources for learning tunes

Finding tunes online

The Session allows you to search for tunes by name or key, find sheet music, lists of recordings of a tune or player, and download midi files to listen to: **https://thesession.org/**

If you know the name, or an artist that pays a given tune, you will often find a version of the tune on **YouTube**, allowing you to sing, whistle or play along.

If you know the first few bars of a tune but can't remember how the rest of it goes and you don't know the name, try **http://folktunefinder.com/**

For Welsh tunes, try **http://www.sesiwn.com/sesiwn/Tunes/Tunesal.html**

Setting up or finding sessions

Join Beginners and Improvers Tune Sessions (BITS), on Facebook at

https://www.facebook.com/groups/502906953217878/

A growing list of dates and venues for 'Slow and Steady', 'Tune learning' or 'Beginners / Improvers' sessions across the country, plus discussion on setting up sessions and learning tunes.

Some people have made existing sessions beginner or improver-friendly by starting an hour or so earlier, and agreeing beforehand that tunes will be played at a steady pace in that part of the session.

The Session (session.org) has a list of sessions, searchable by location. If it's an old listing it's a good idea to ring the pub (or other venue) beforehand to find out if it's still going.

Using the book / Tuneworks sessions

We've combined the old 'beginners' and 'improvers' books into one book. There are also some changes and corrections from previous editions.

The tunes, of course, don't know that they're a 'beginners' or 'improvers' tune. They're just happy being tunes, and would like to be played.

Beginners' sessions:

These are aimed at people who can play the notes on their instrument, but don't necessarily know any traditional tunes. They're also good for practicing playing slowly and steadily, playing with others, and for concentrating on the quality of your sound as well as the notes.

we'll use the first section of the book, so you don't have to print out the whole thing if you're only coming to beginners' sessions.

We'll play each tune a lot of times through, starting off very slowly, listening for and practising the tricky bits, then putting two tunes together.

Improvers' sessions:

In these we'll play tunes from both the beginners' and improvers' sections, in sets. We'll try to play at 'ceilidh speed', or dance speed, which is a bit slower than in many sessions, and

perfectly lovely. We'll start off more slowly and practice tricky bits if most people don't know the tune, and start including basic ornaments.

You don't have to know all the tunes, or be able to play them all, to join in. It's about learning, as well as what you already know. Picking up little phrases, dropping in and out, having a go and getting it completely wrong are all very welcome.

The book is downloadable from http://www.tuneworks.co.uk/.

Please feel free to use it as widely as you like.

Contents

Beginners' session tunes

1. Speed the Plough / Morpeth Rant / Winster Gallop: reels.
2. Rattling Bog / The Sloe
3. The Blackthorn Stick / The Rakes of Kildare: jigs.
4. Harvest Home / Off to California: hornpipes.

Improvers' session tunes

Reels

5. Willafjord / Spootiskerry
6. The Maid Behind the Bar / The Flowers of Edinburgh / Staten Island
7. Over the Moor to Maggie / Miss McLeod's
8. The Merry Blacksmith / The Banshee / St Kilda Wedding
9. St Anne's / The Sally Gardens
10. The Scholar / The Teetotaller's
11. My Love is But a Lassie Yet / Durham Rangers / Three Around Three
12. Cooley's / Swinging on the Gate
13. The Bear Dance / Horse's Bransle
14. The Silver Spire / Jer the Rigger

Jigs

15. The Irish Washerwoman / Smash the Windows
16. The Blarney Pilgrim / Saddle the Pony
17. Donnybrook Fair / Banish Misfortune
18. Father O'Flynn / My Darling Asleep / Morrison's
19. Tobin's Favourite / The Tenpenny Bit / The Lark in the Morning
20. The Kesh / The Connaughtman's Rambles
21. Out on the Ocean / The Frost is All Over
22. Scarce O'Tatties / Tripping Upstairs / Haste to the Wedding

Slip Jigs

23. The Foxhunter's / The Drops of Brandy / The Kid on the Mountain

Hornpipes

24. The Boys of Bluehill / Liverpool Hornpipe
25. The Rights of Man / The Home Ruler

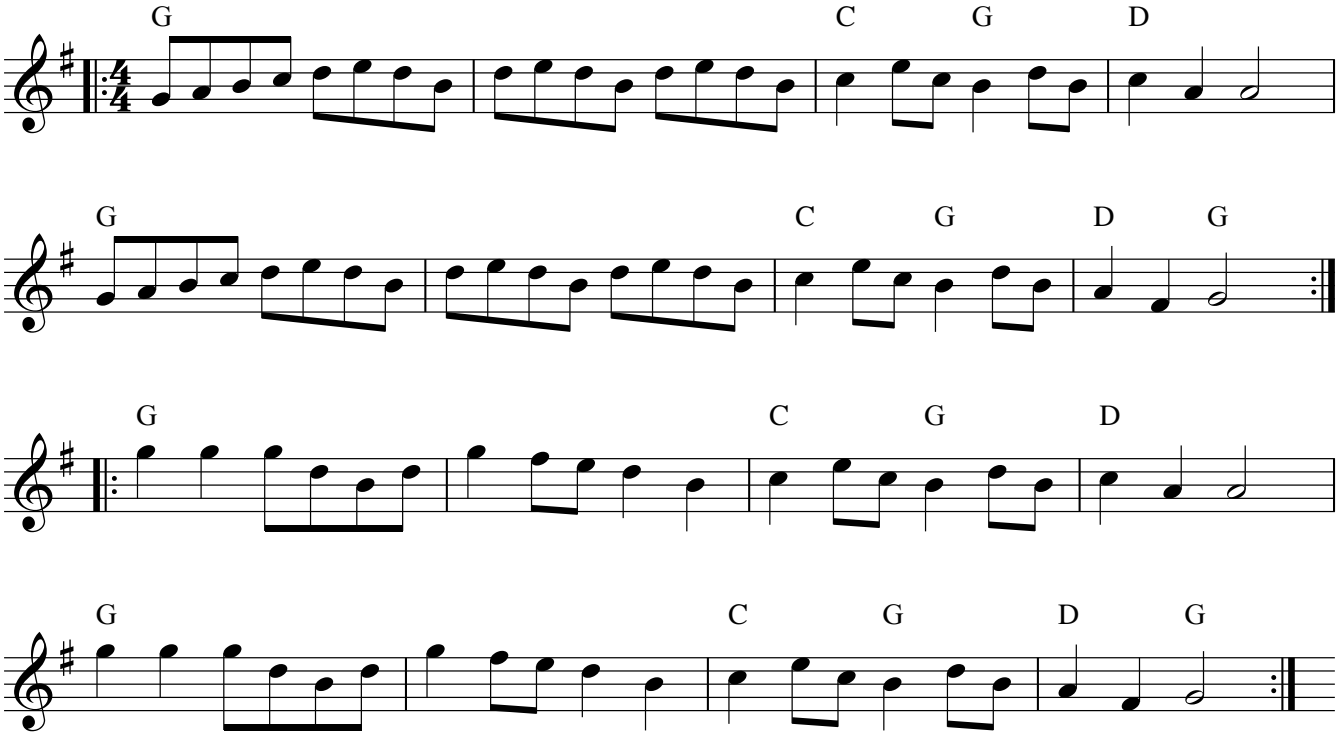
Polkas

26. The Ballydesmond No. 1 / Ballydesmond No. 2 / Dennis Murphy's / The Scartaglen

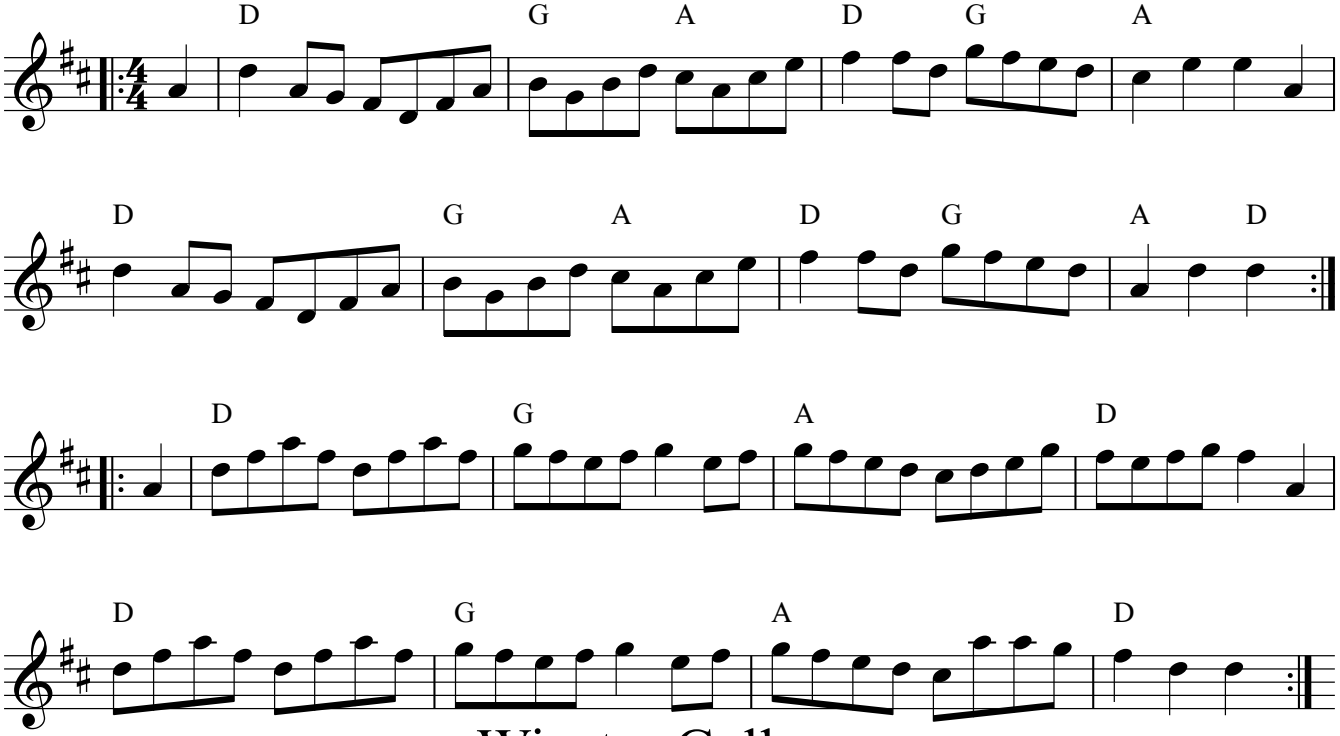
Waltzes

27. Si Bheag, Si Mhor / Fanny Power

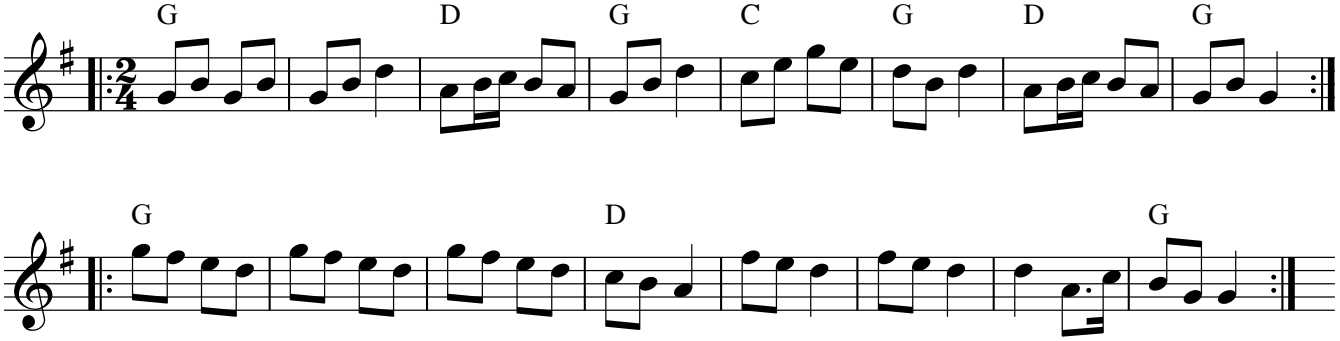
Speed The Plough



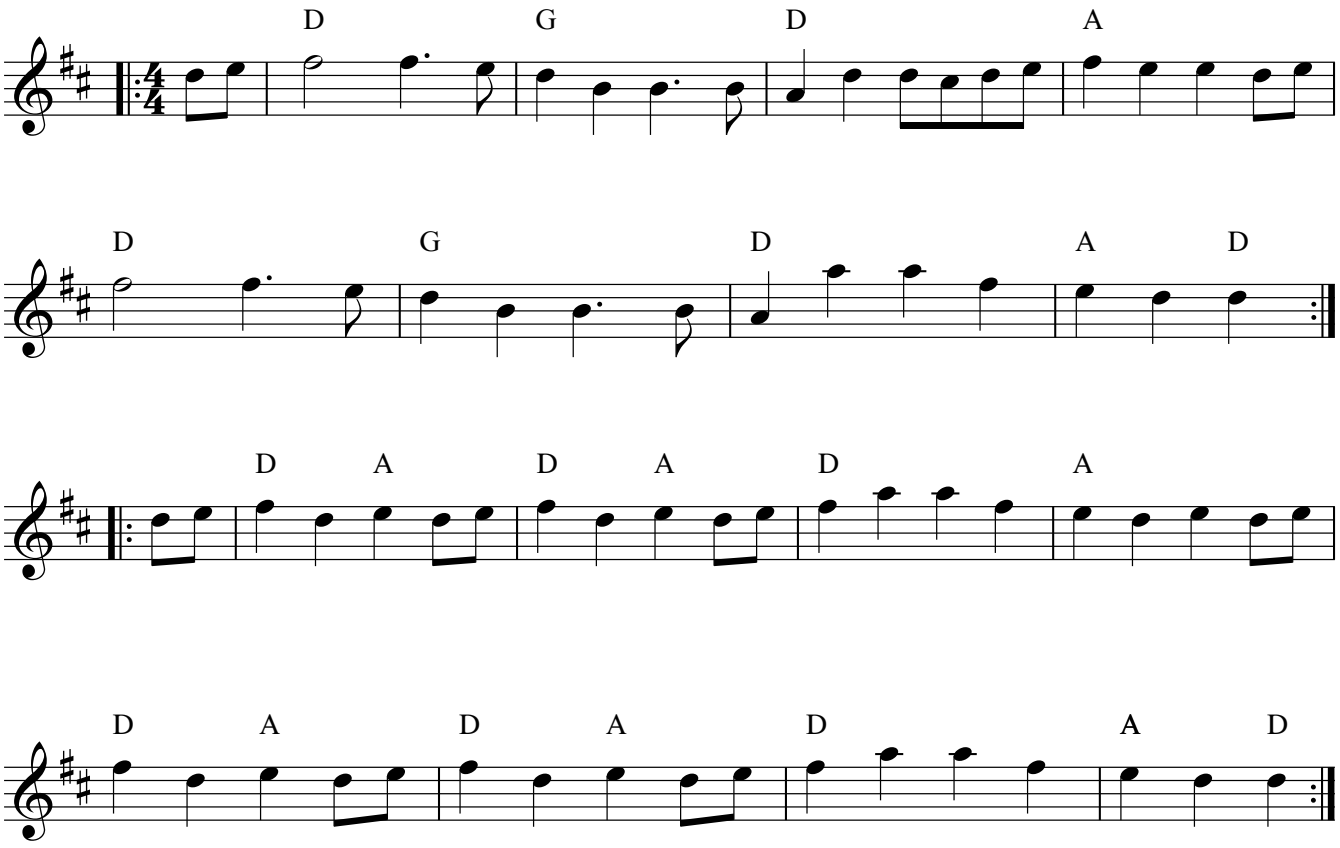
Morpeth Rant



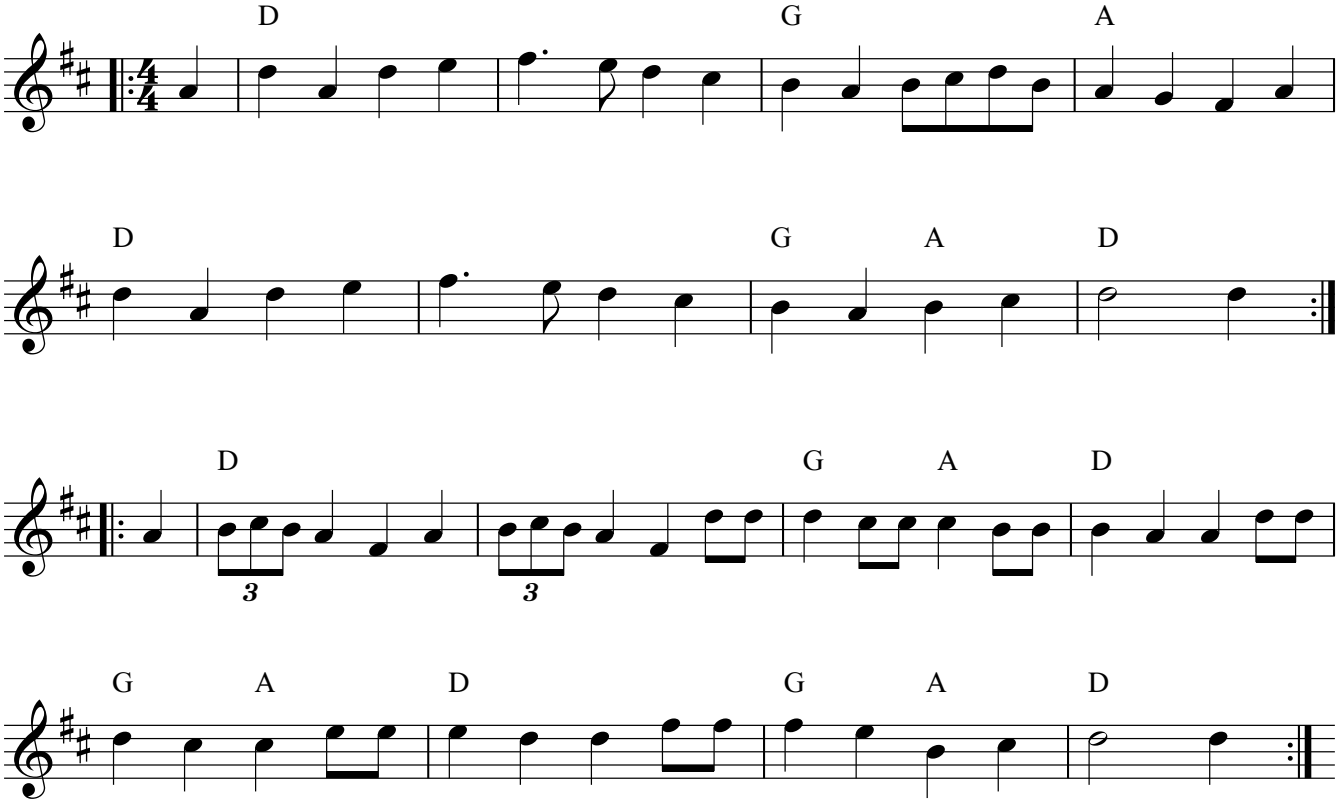
Winster Gallop



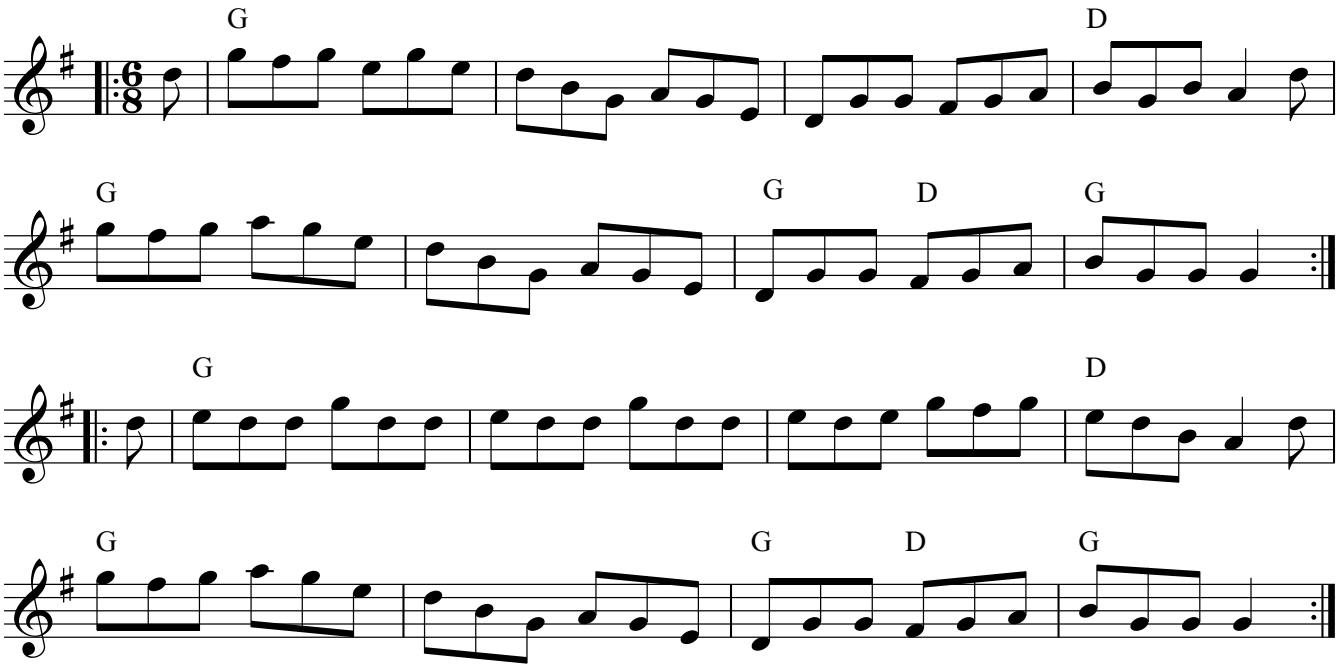
Rattling Bog



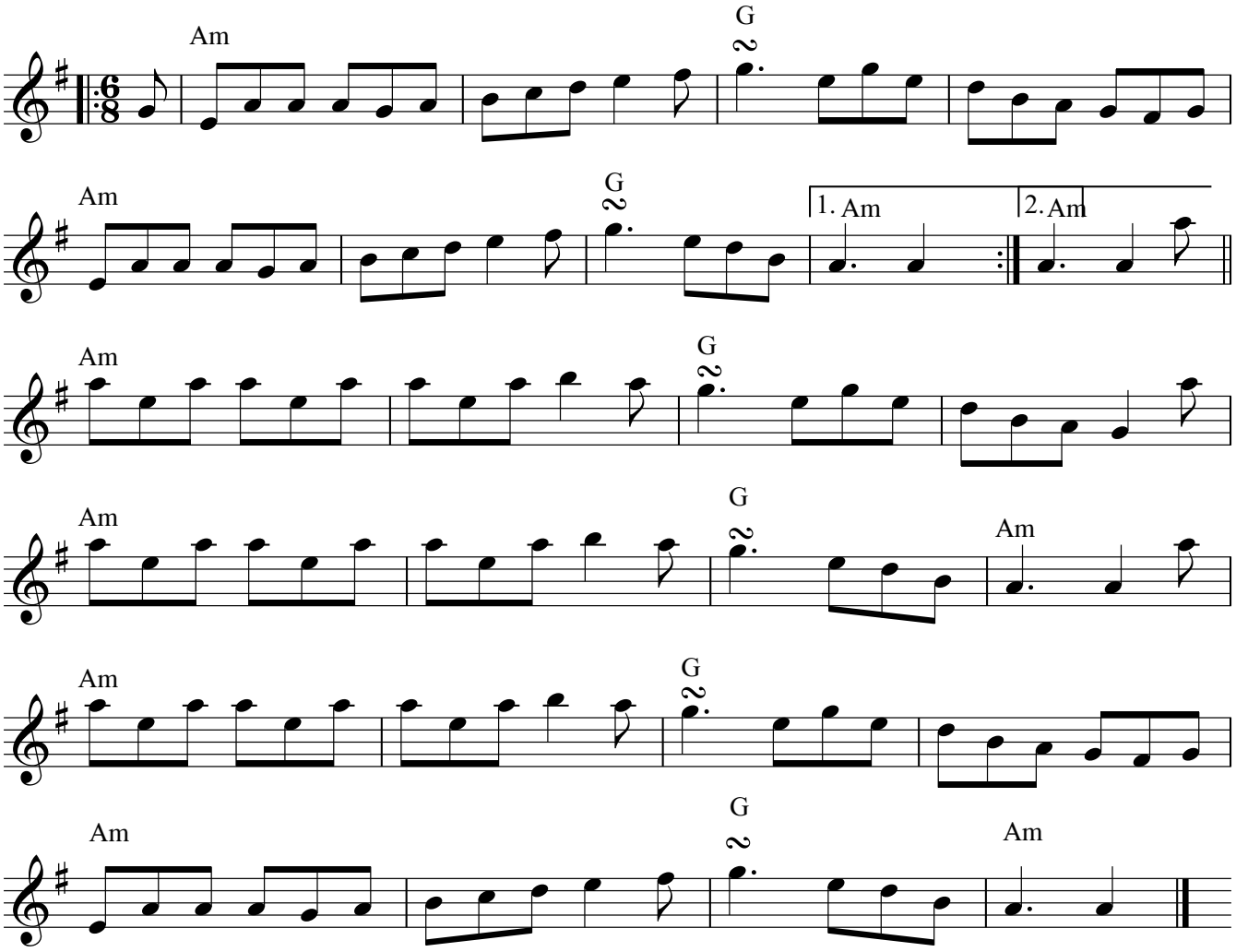
The Sloe



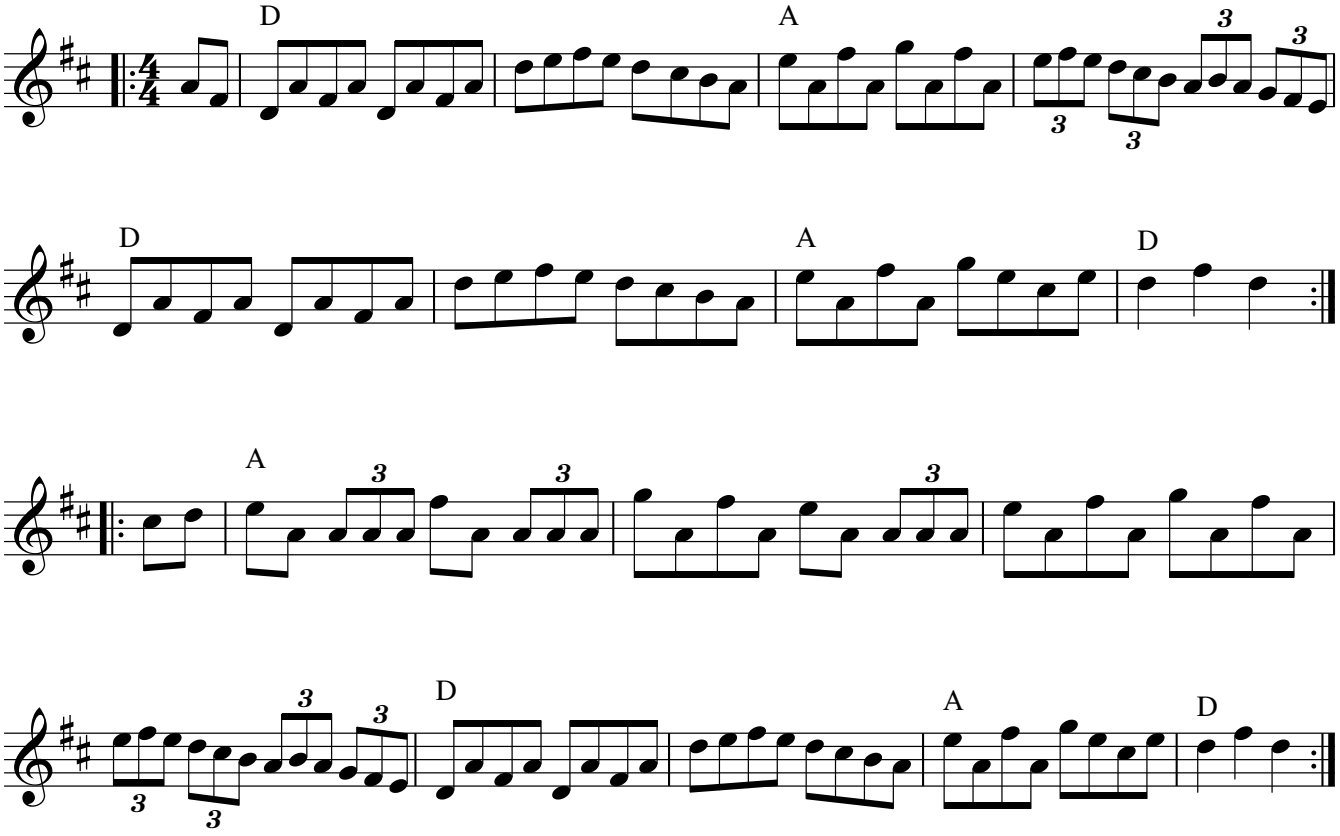
The Blackthorn Stick



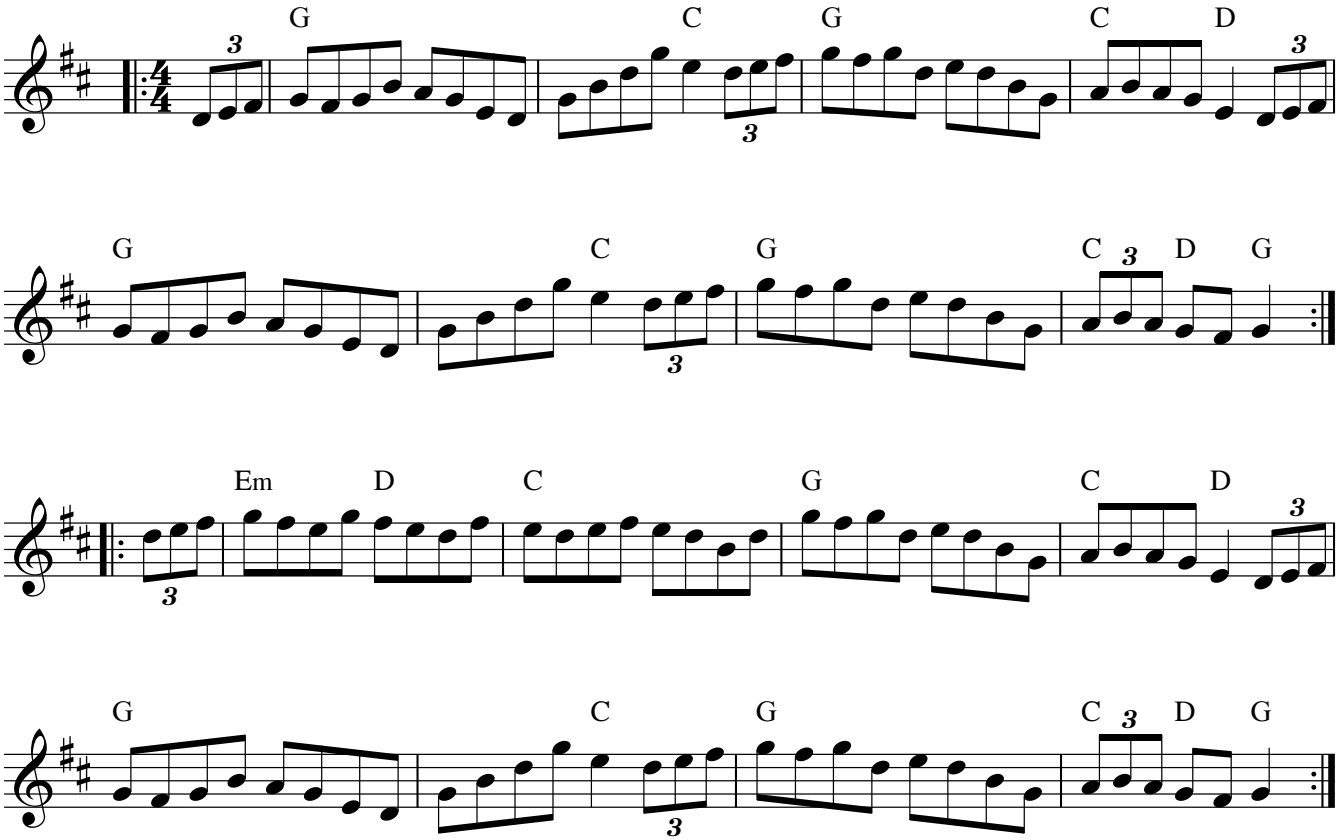
The Rakes of Kildare



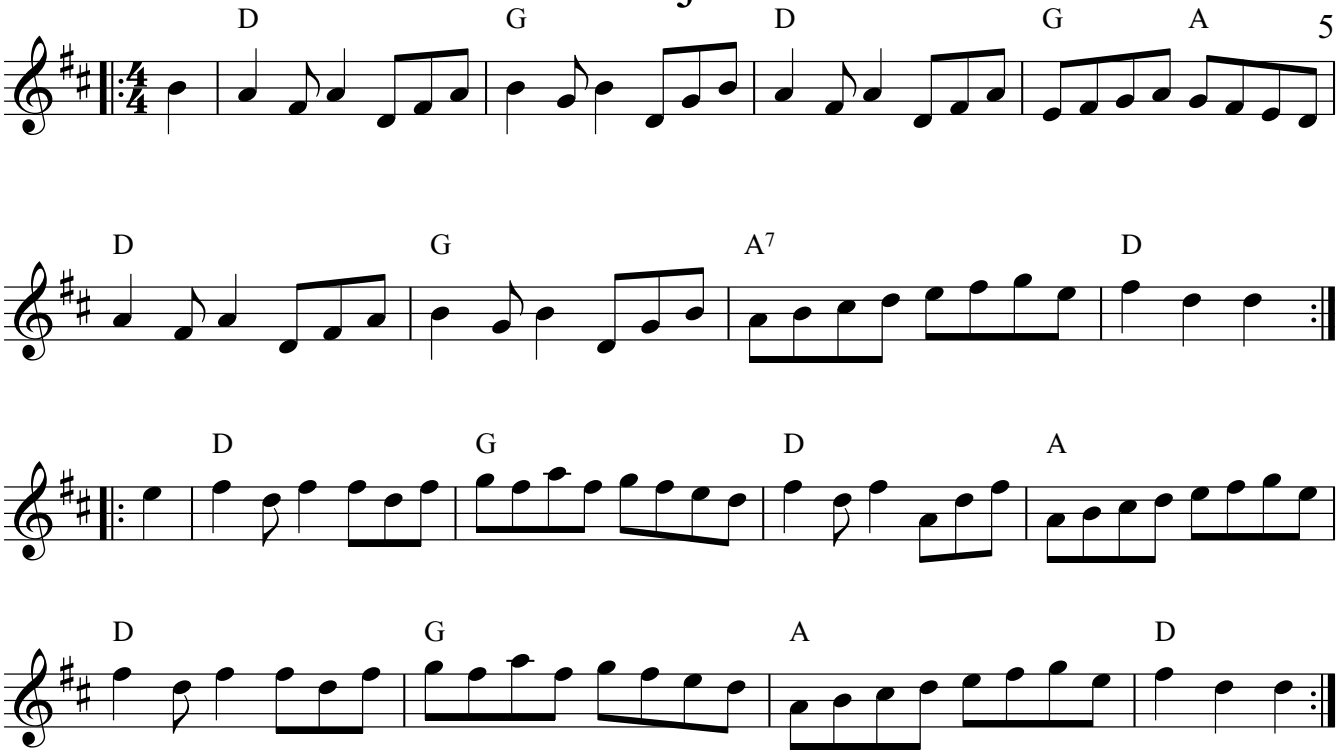
Harvest Home



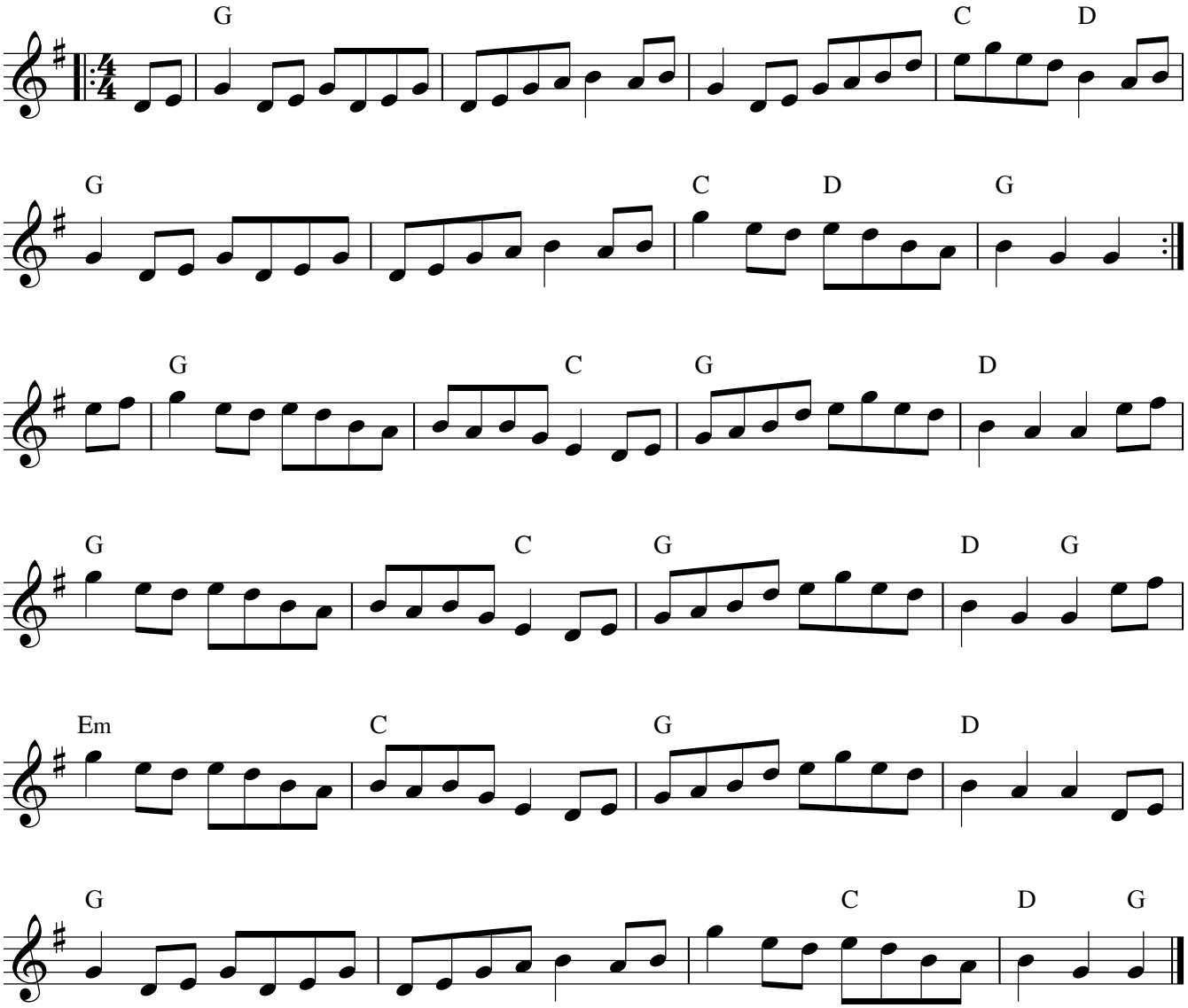
Off to California



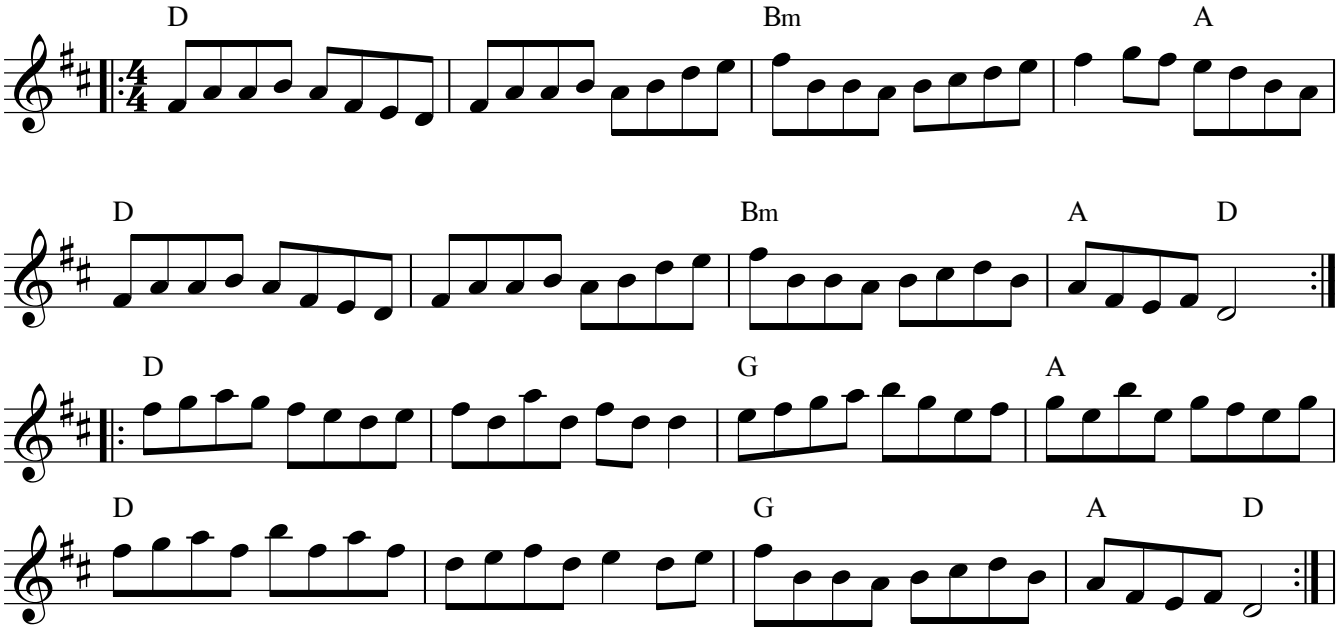
Willafjord



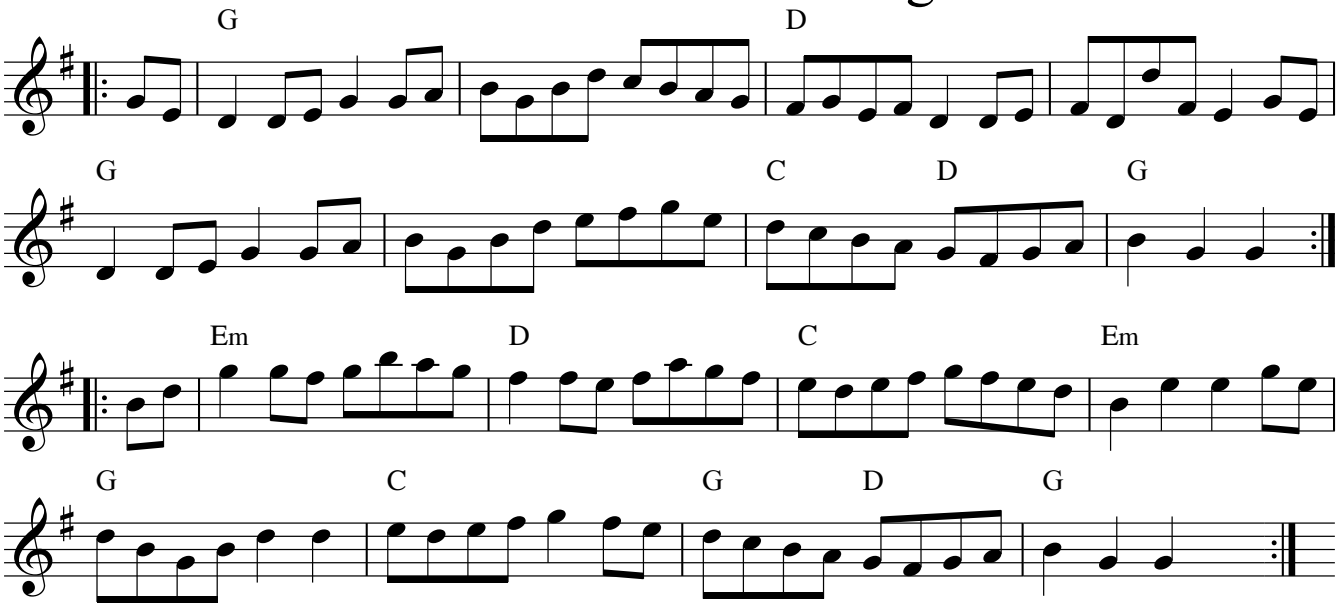
Spootiskerry



The Maid Behind The Bar



The Flowers of Edinburgh



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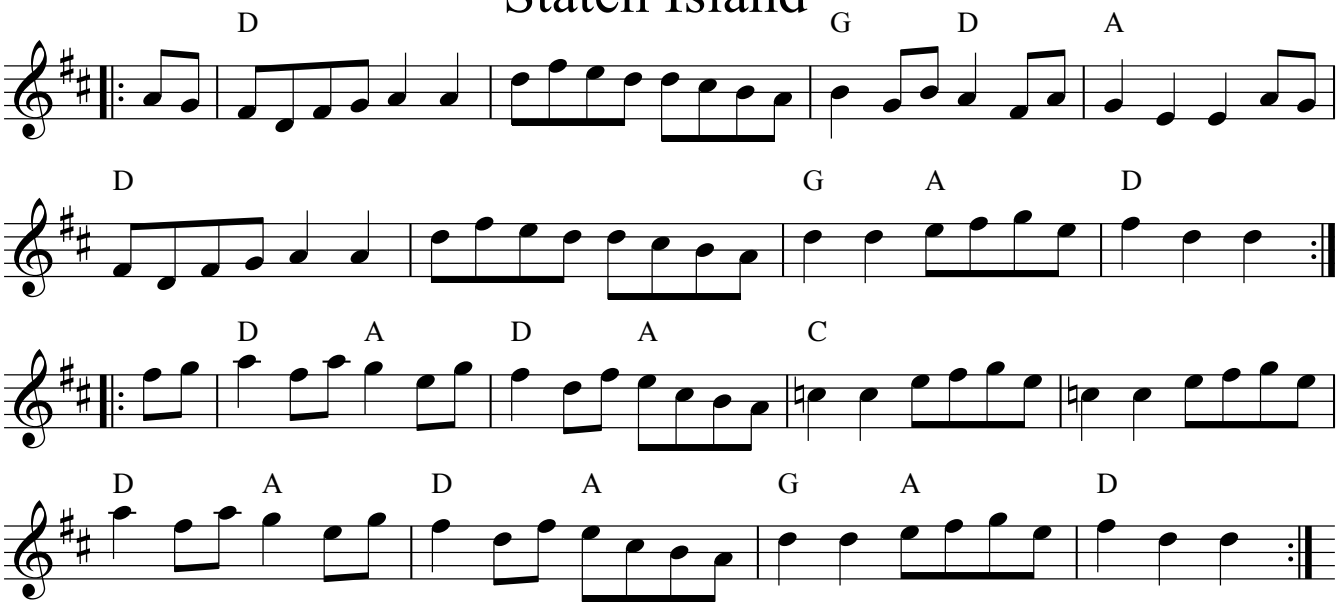
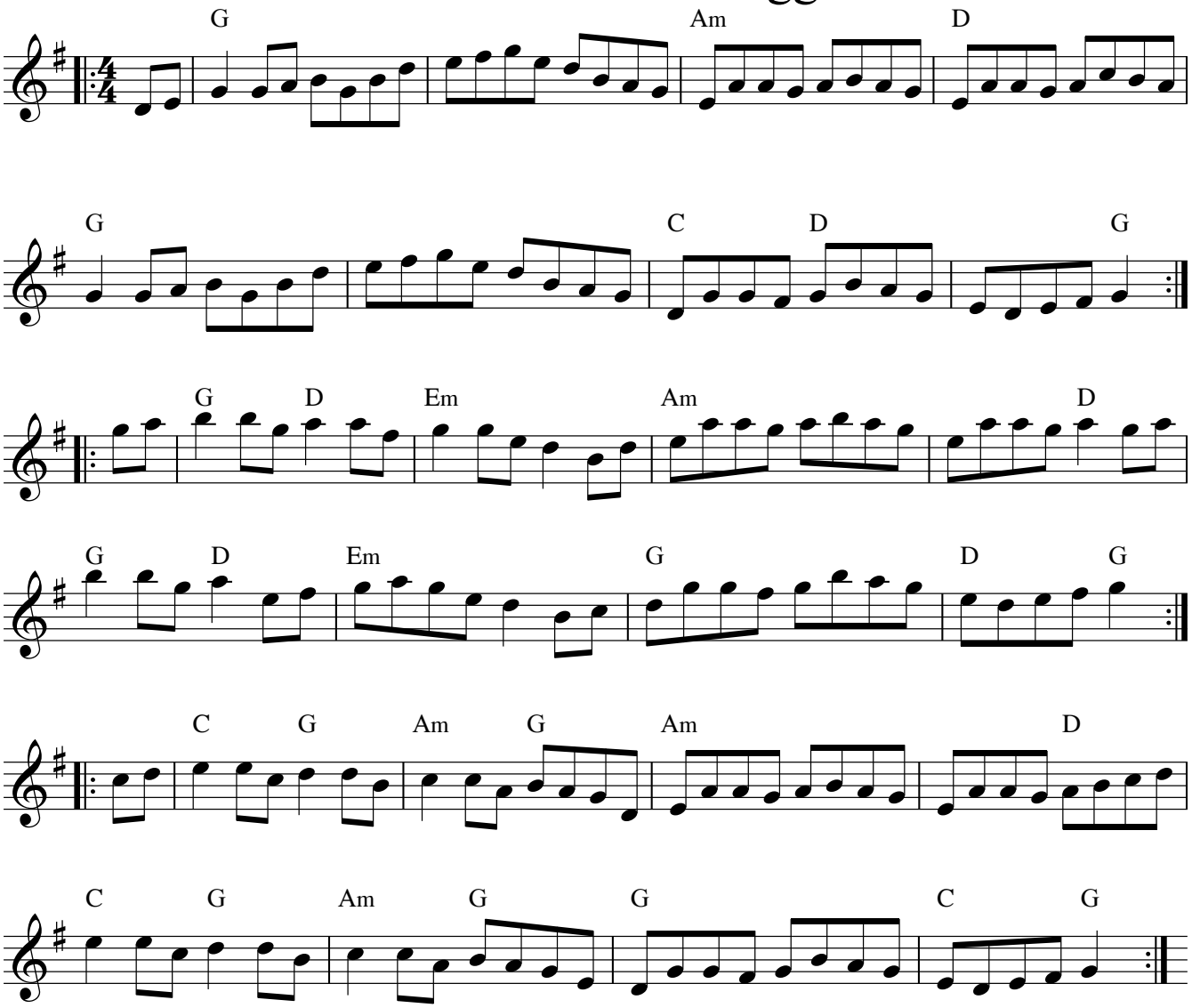
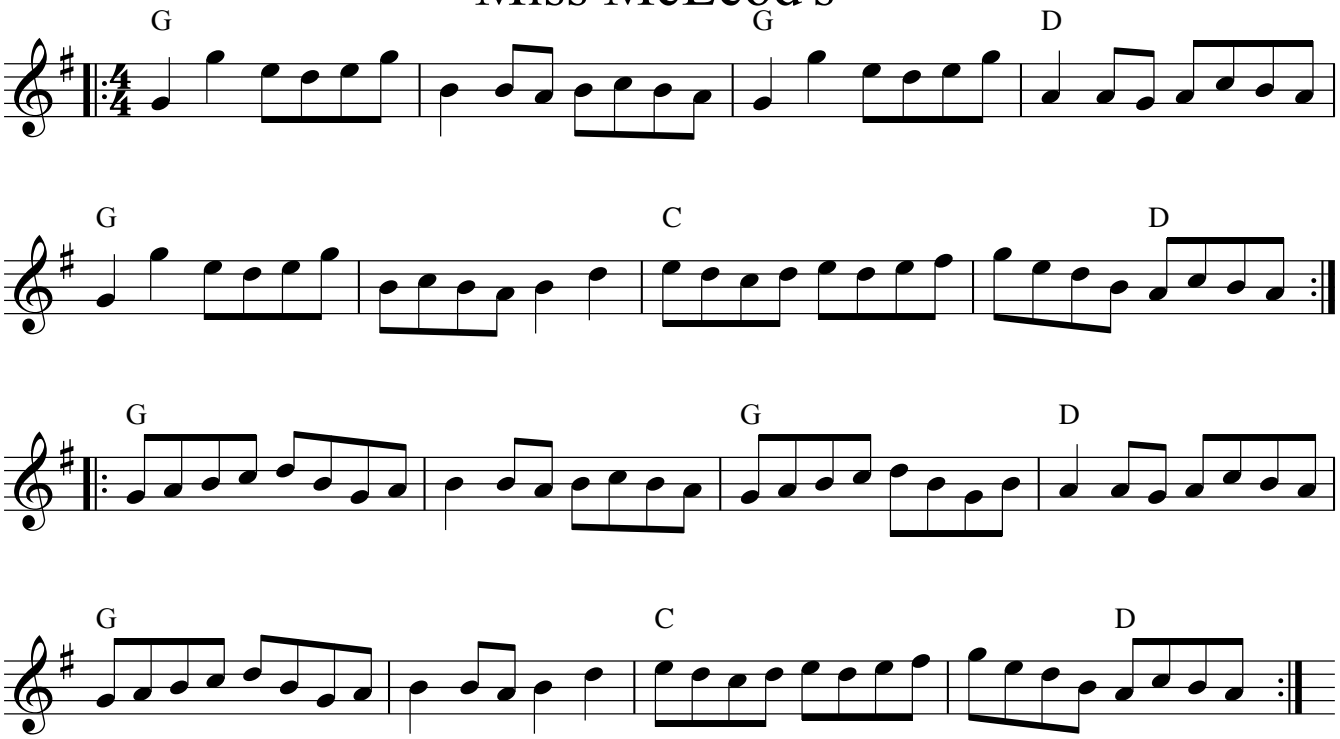


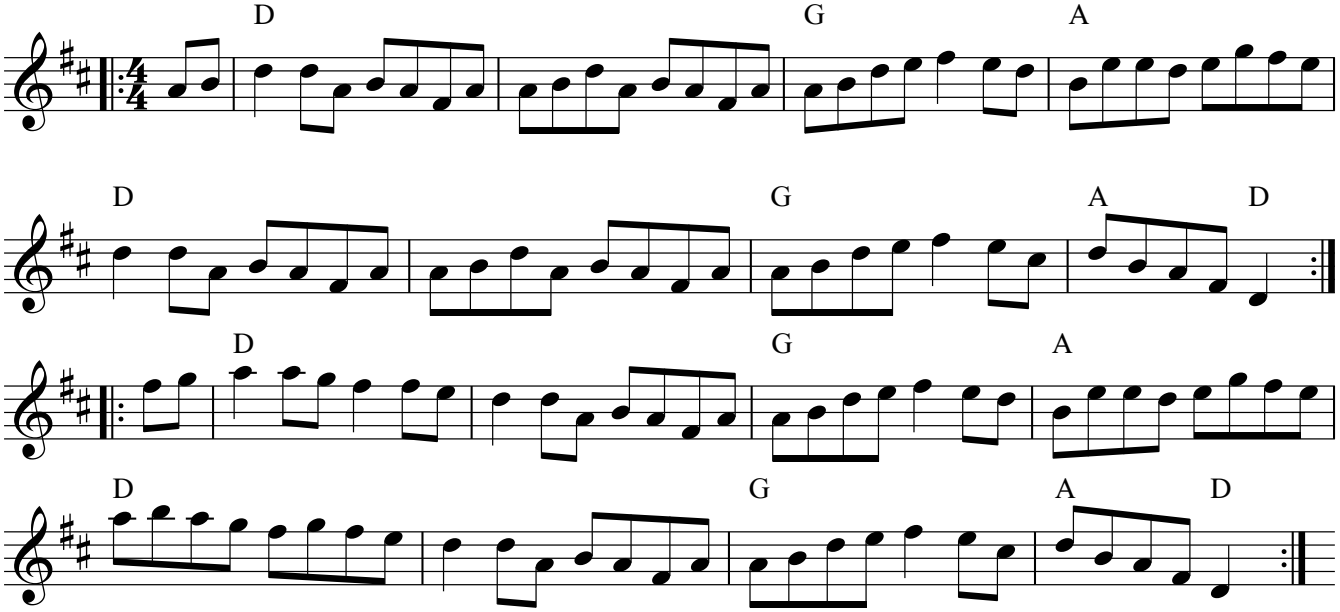
Over the Moor To Maggie



Miss McLeod's



The Merry Blacksmith



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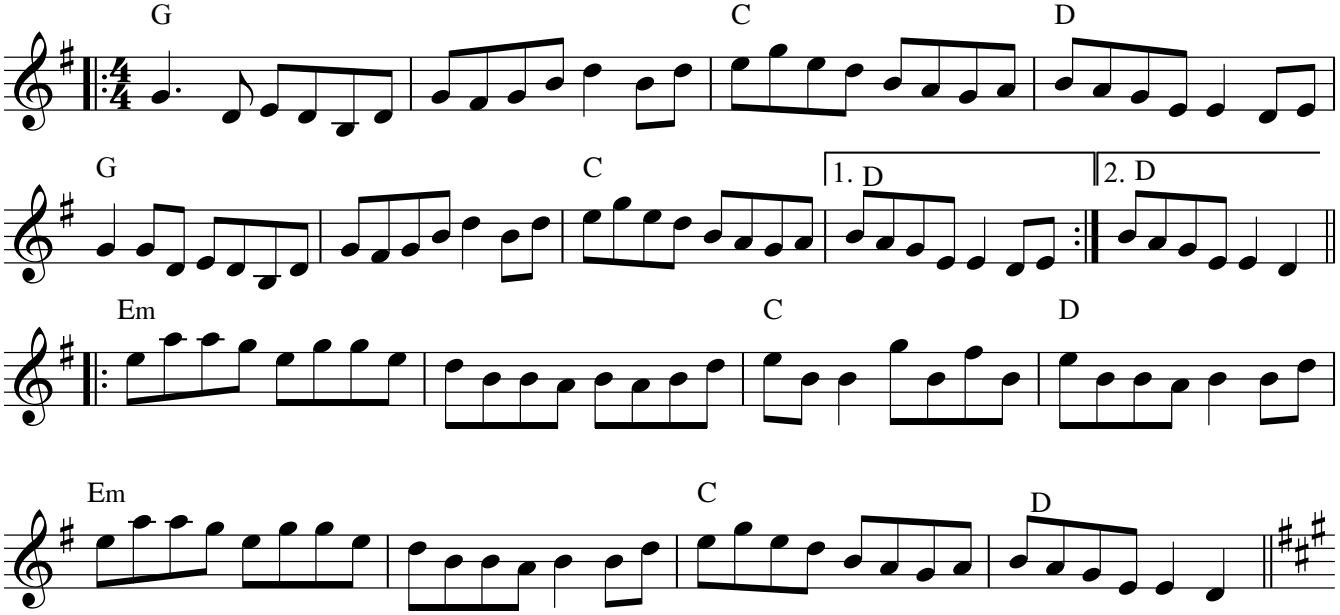
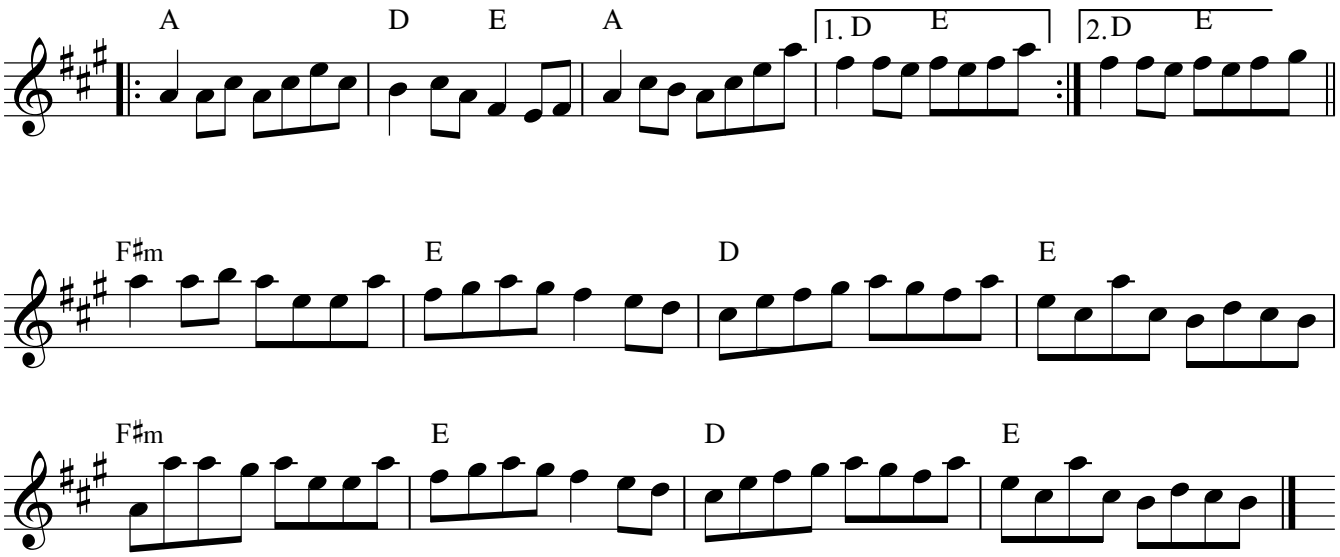
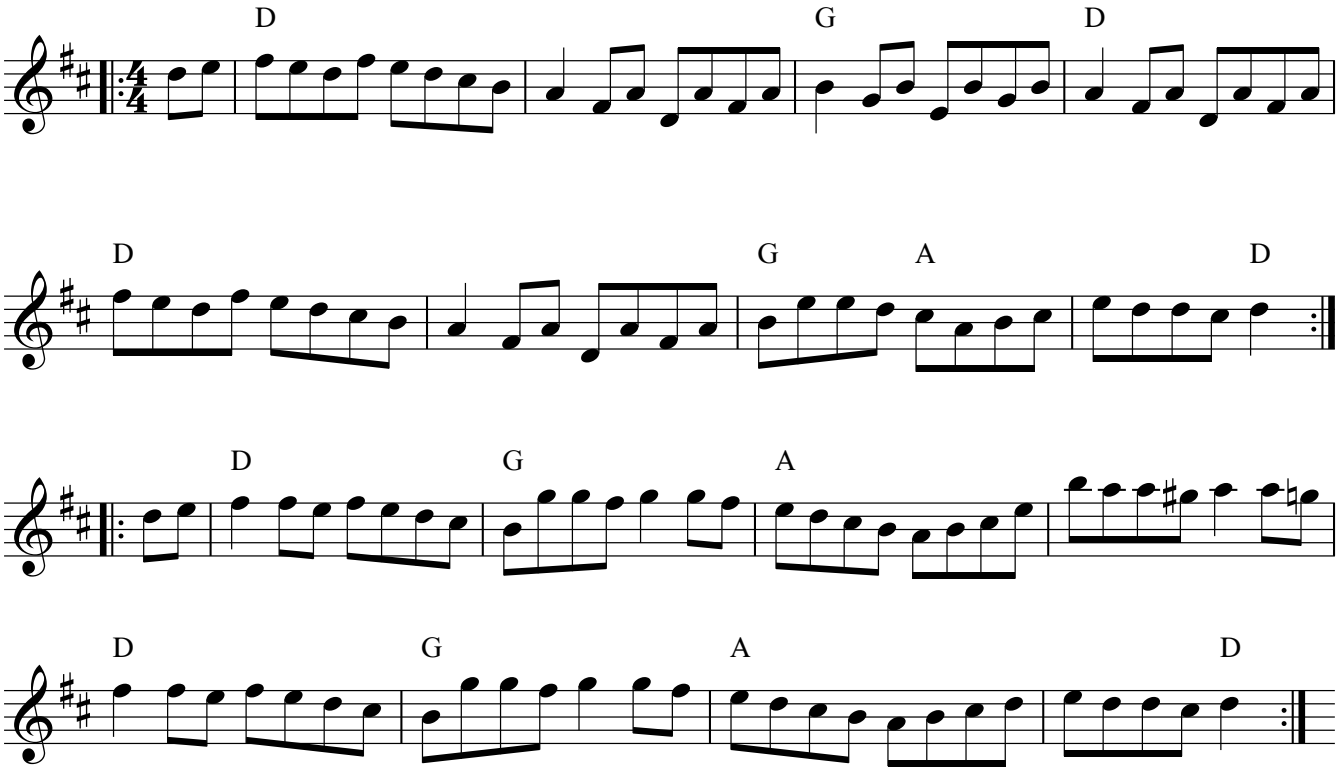


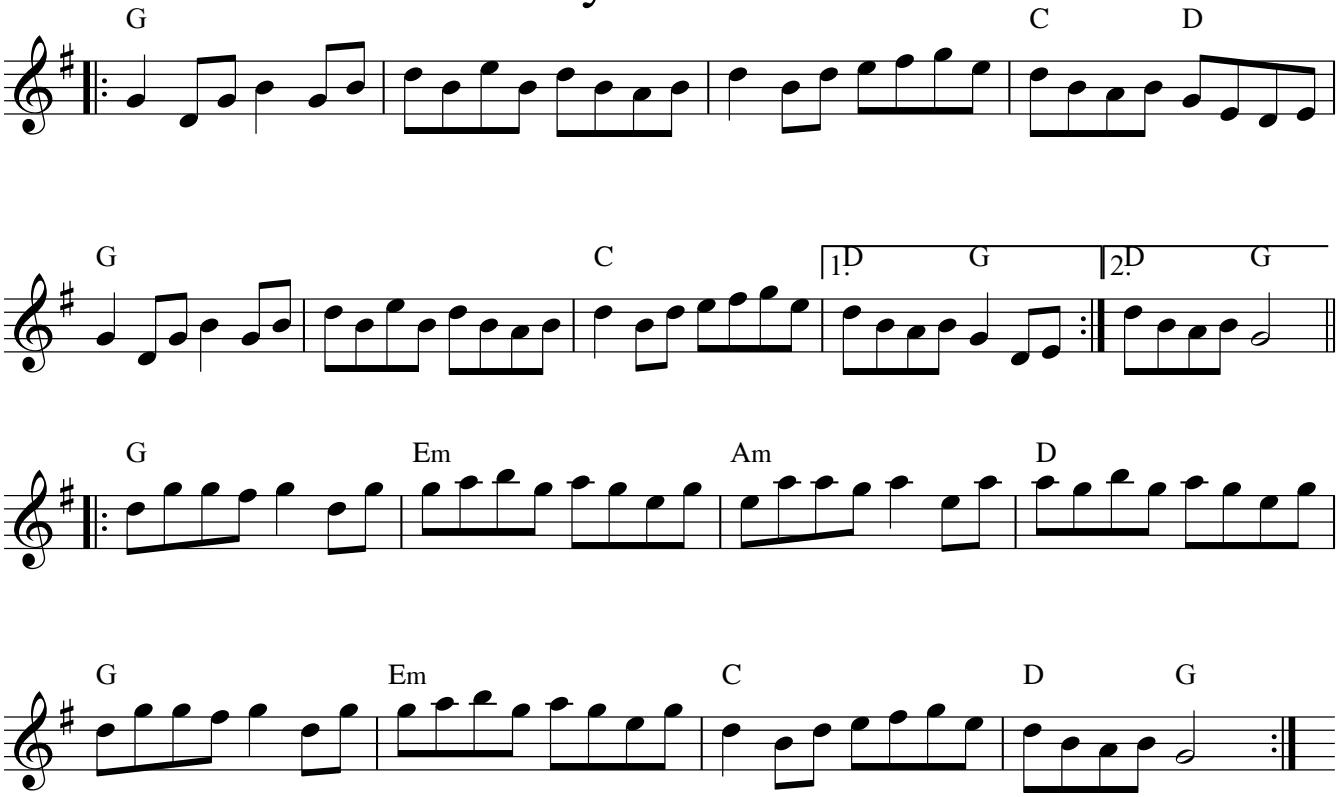
St. Kilda Wedding



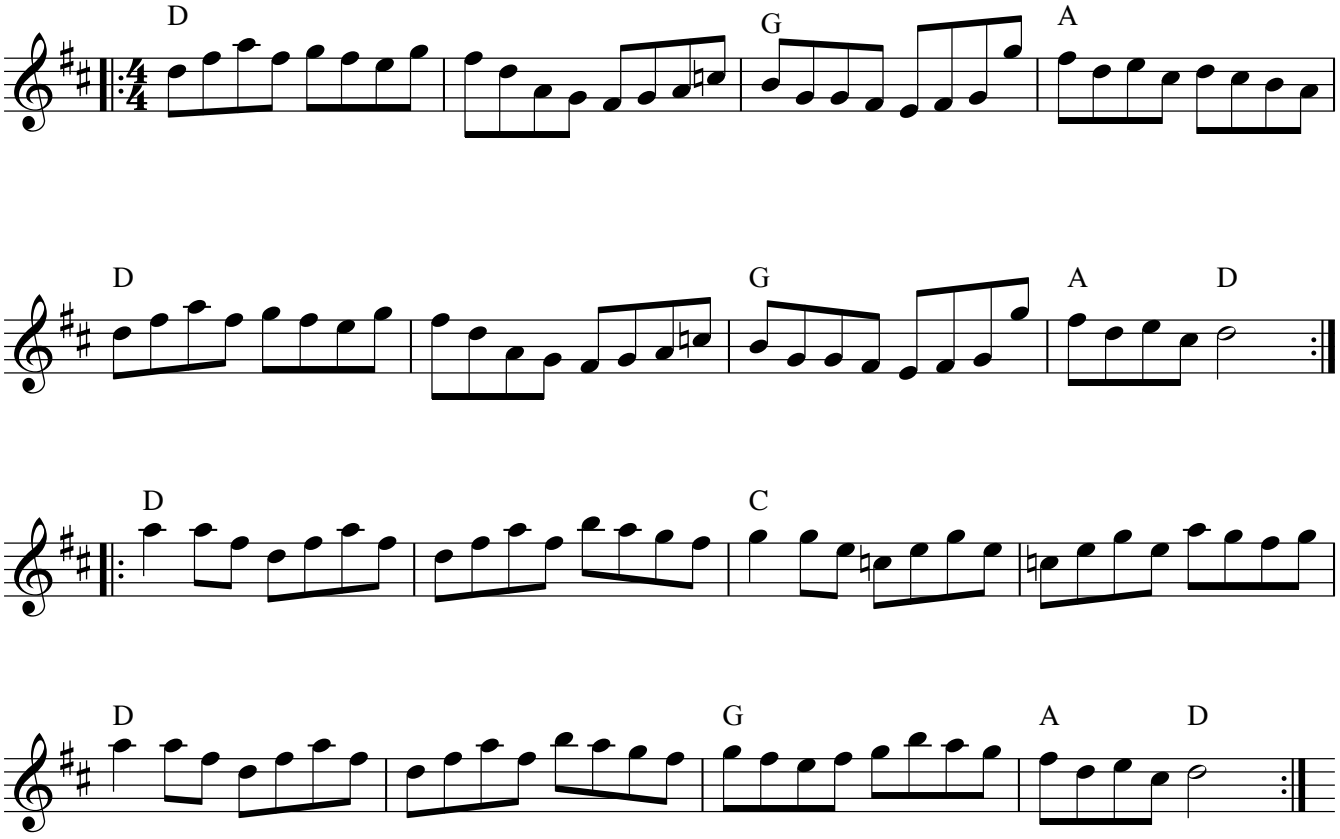
Saint Anne's



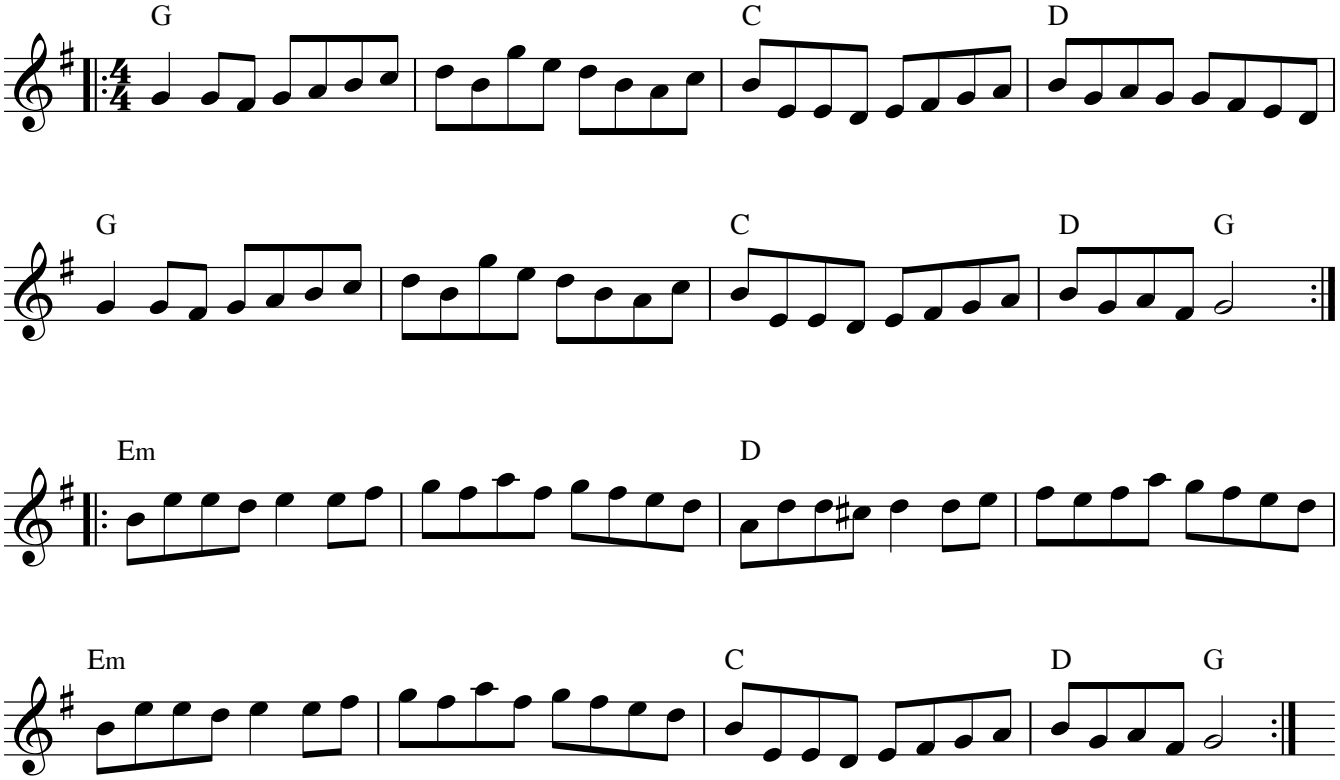
Sally Gardens



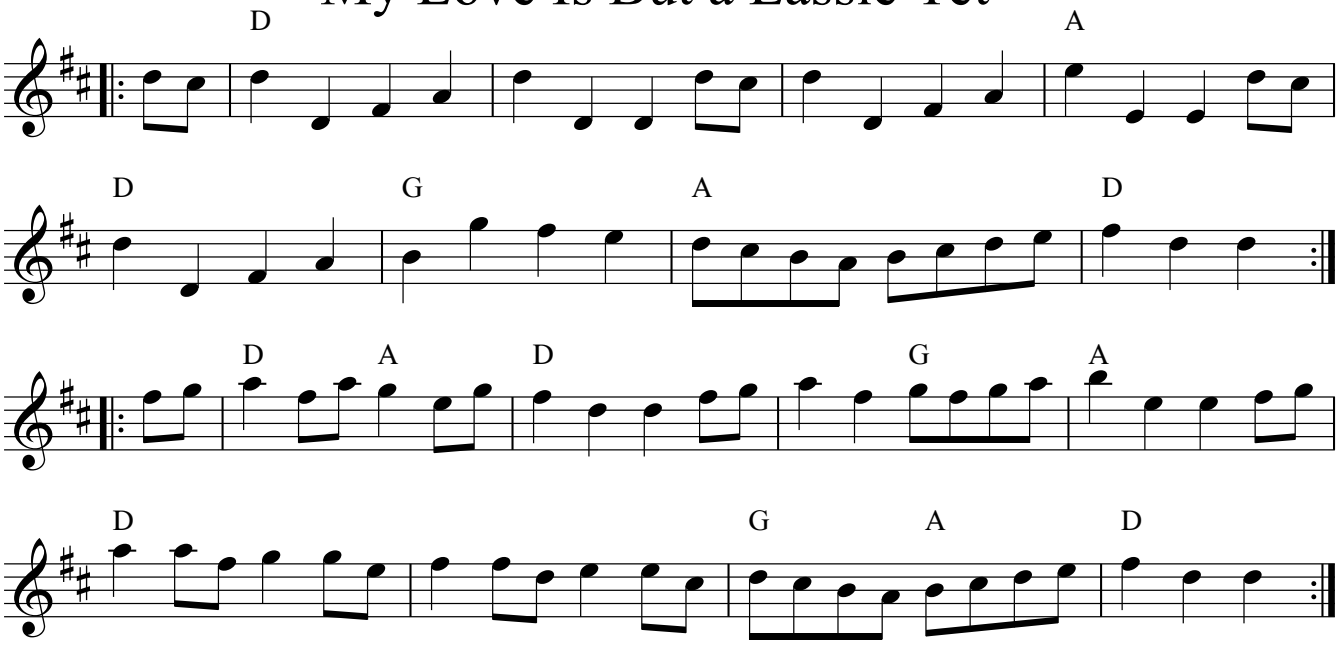
The Scholar



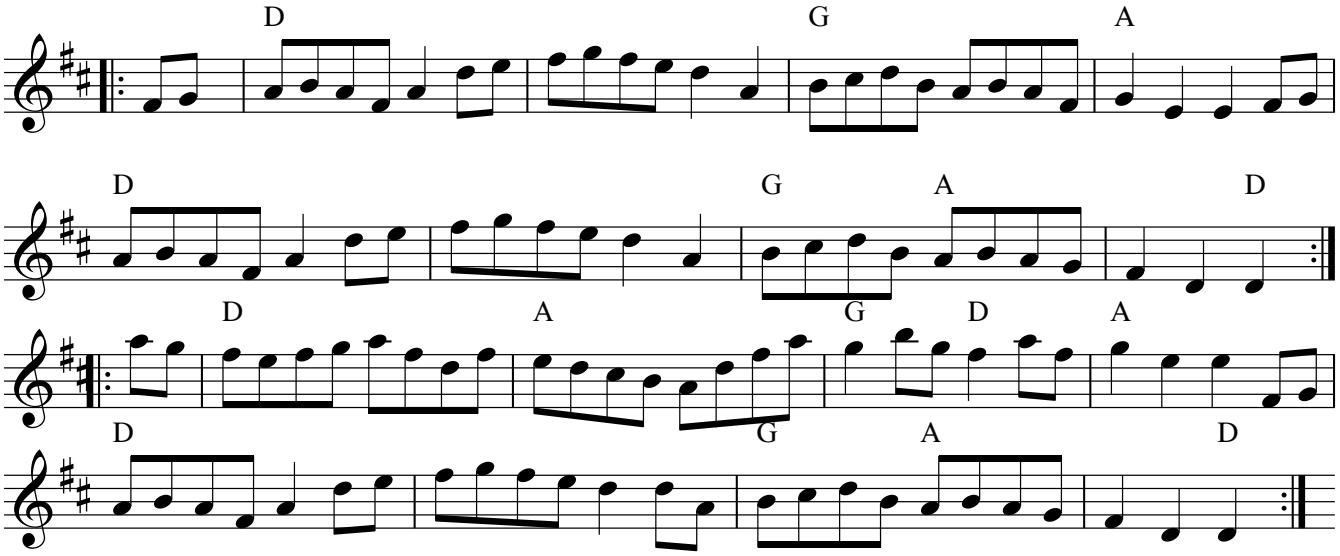
The Teetotaller's



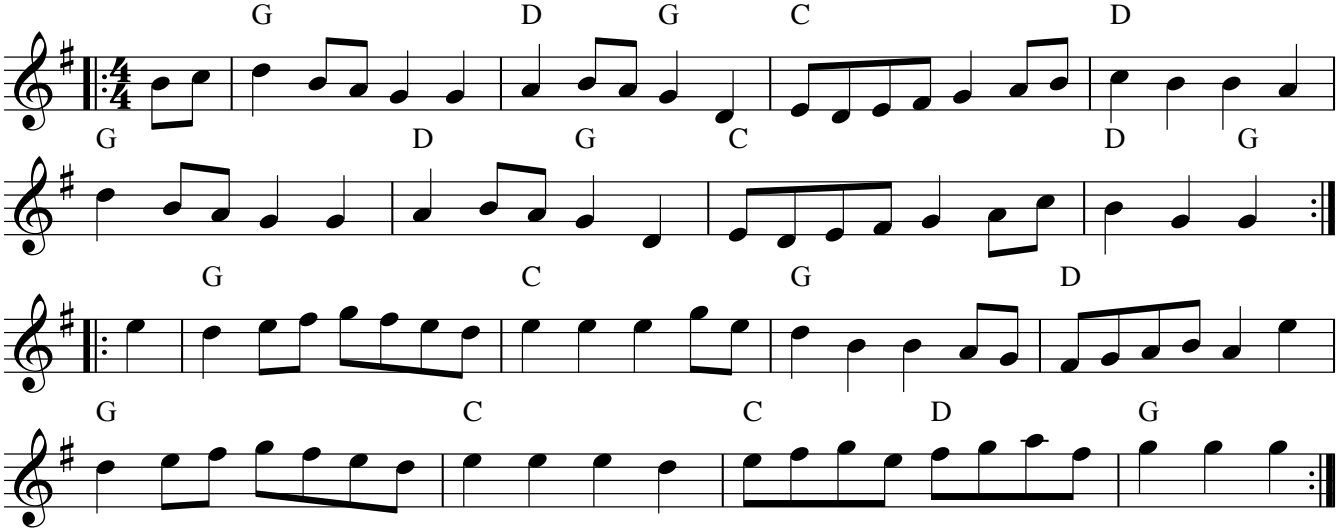
My Love Is But a Lassie Yet



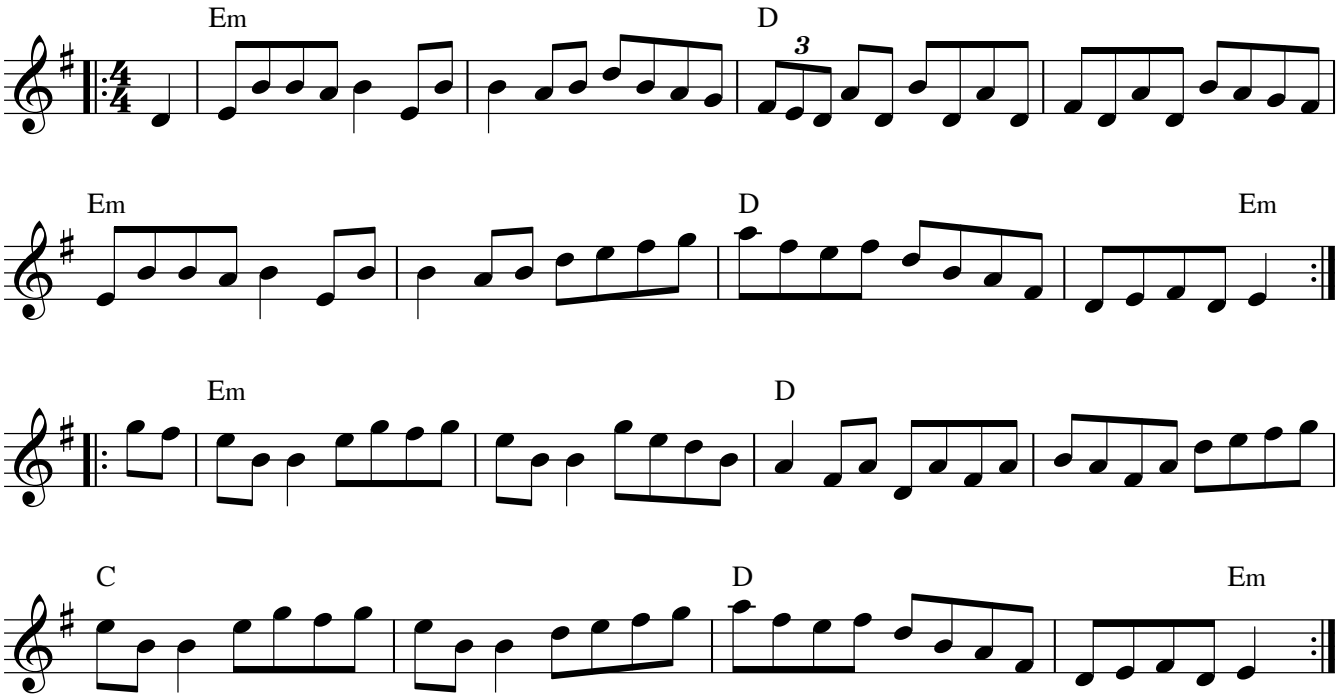
Durham Rangers



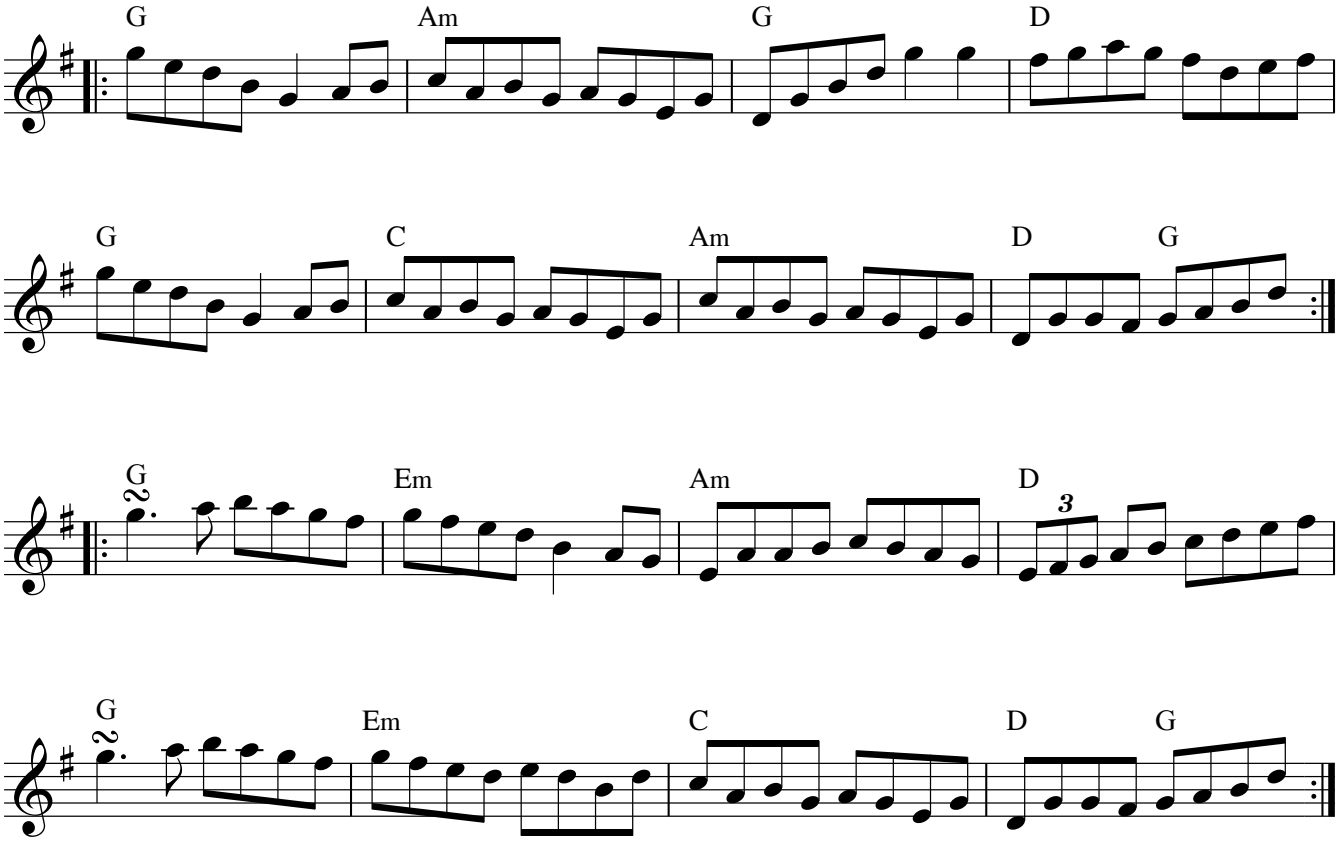
Three Around Three



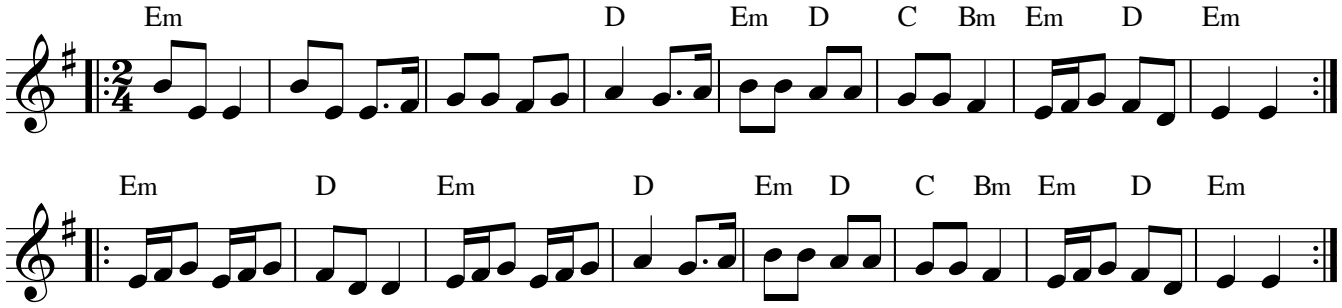
Cooley's



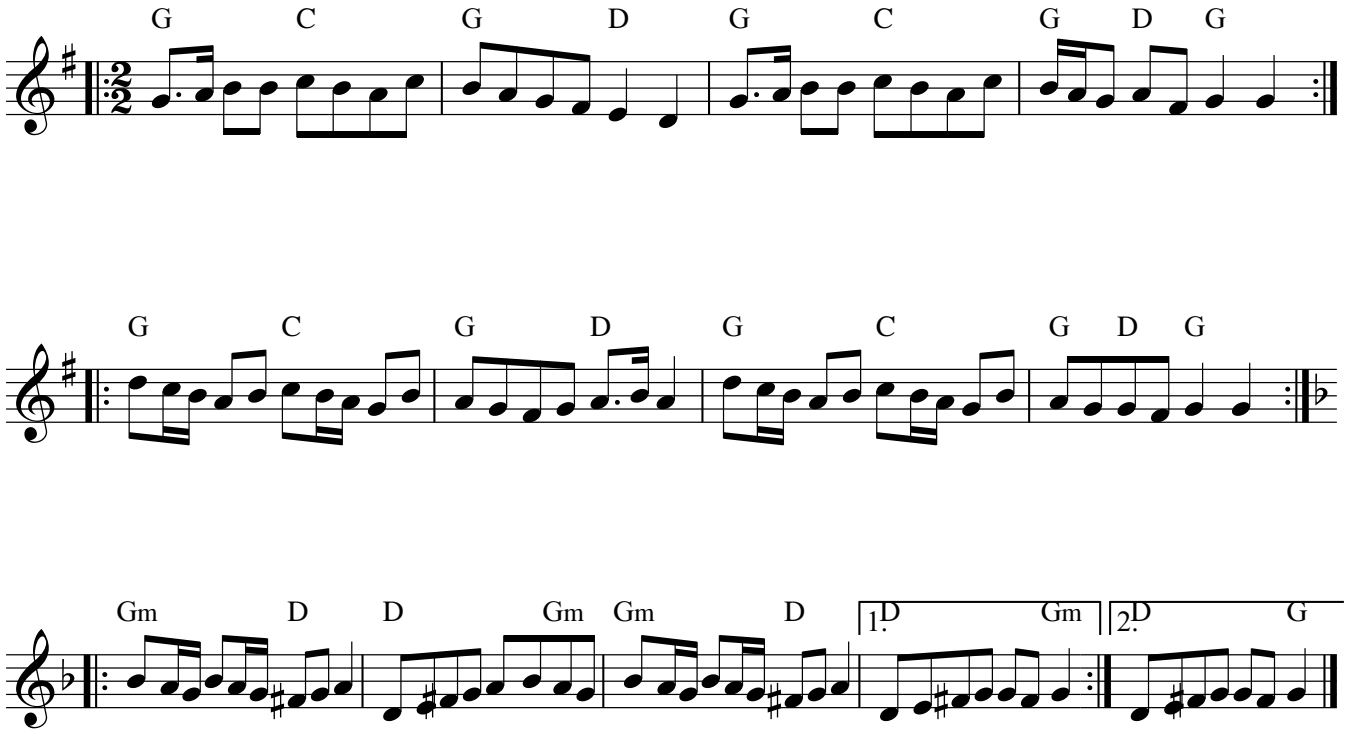
Swinging On The Gate



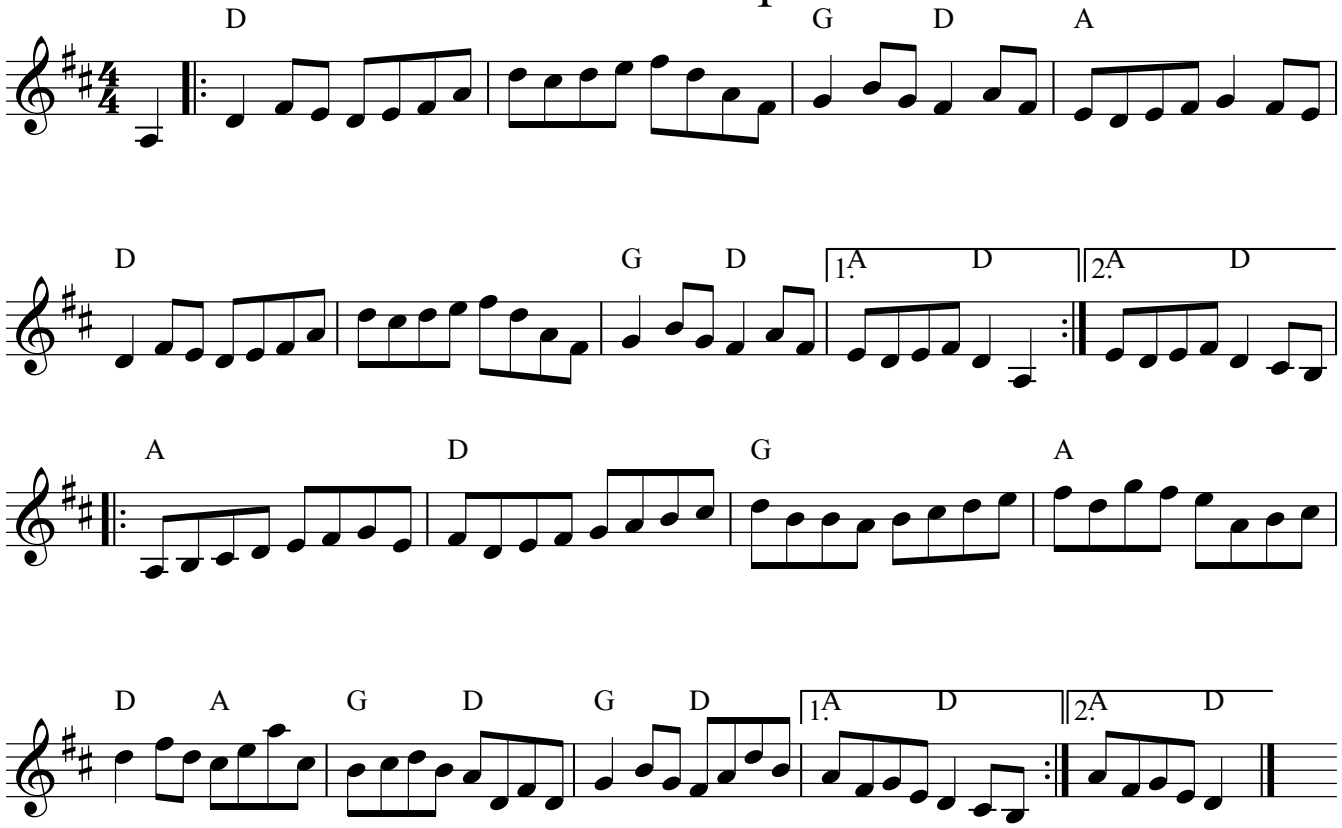
The Bear Dance



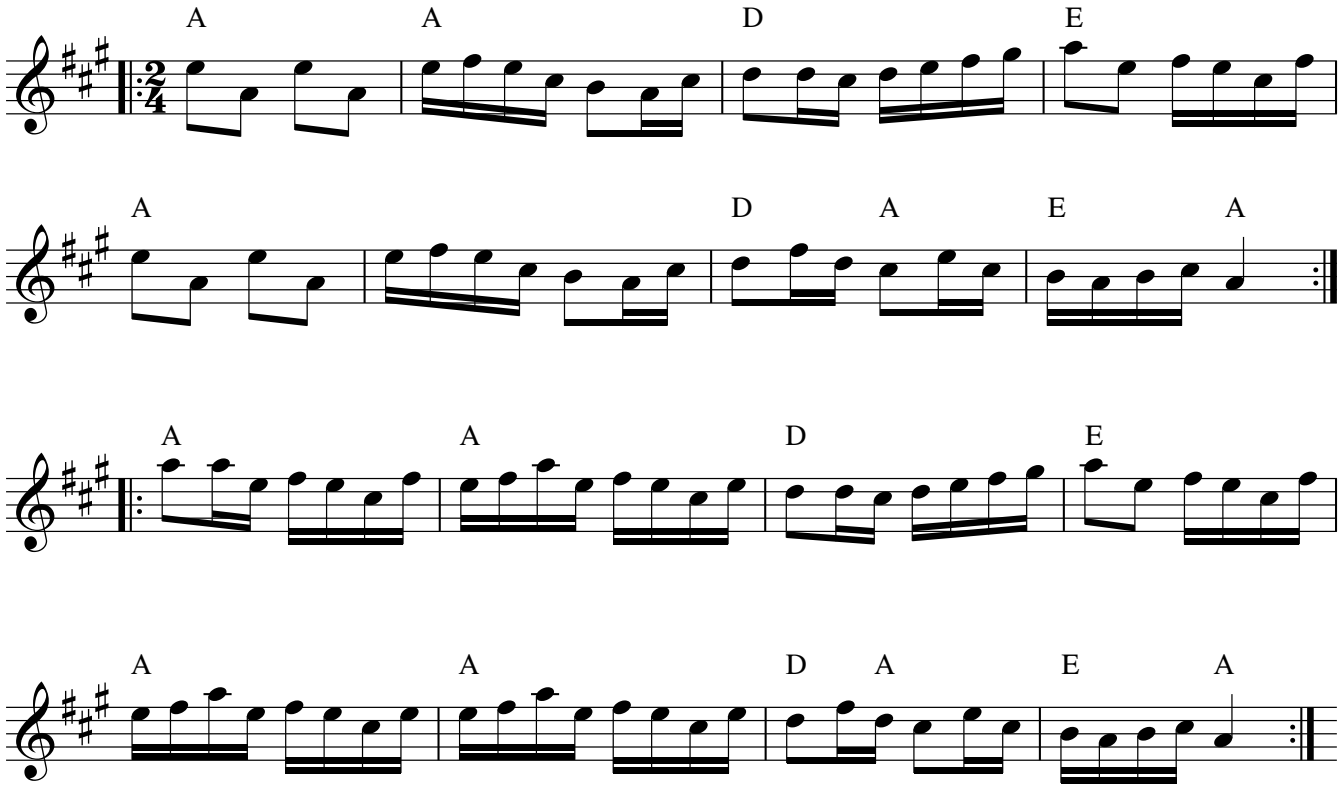
Horse's Bransle



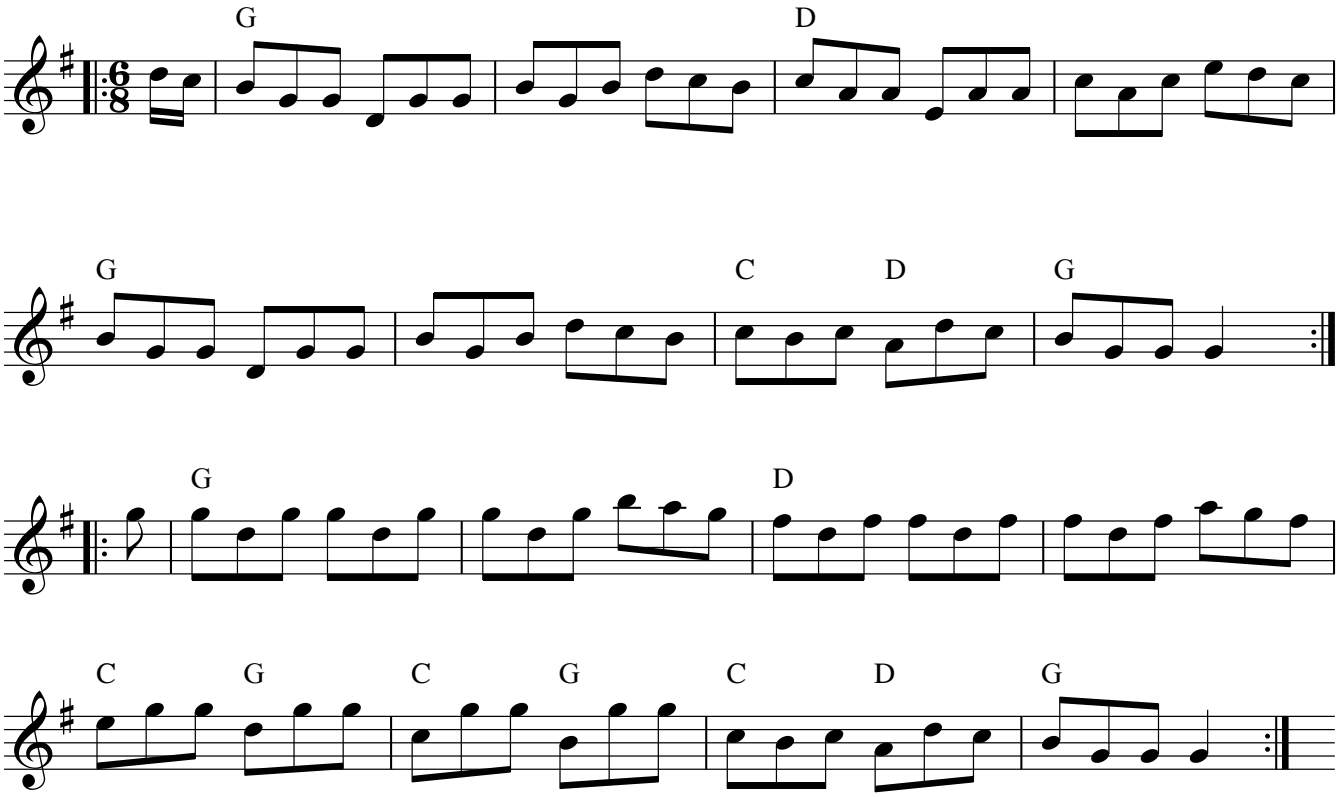
The Silver Spire



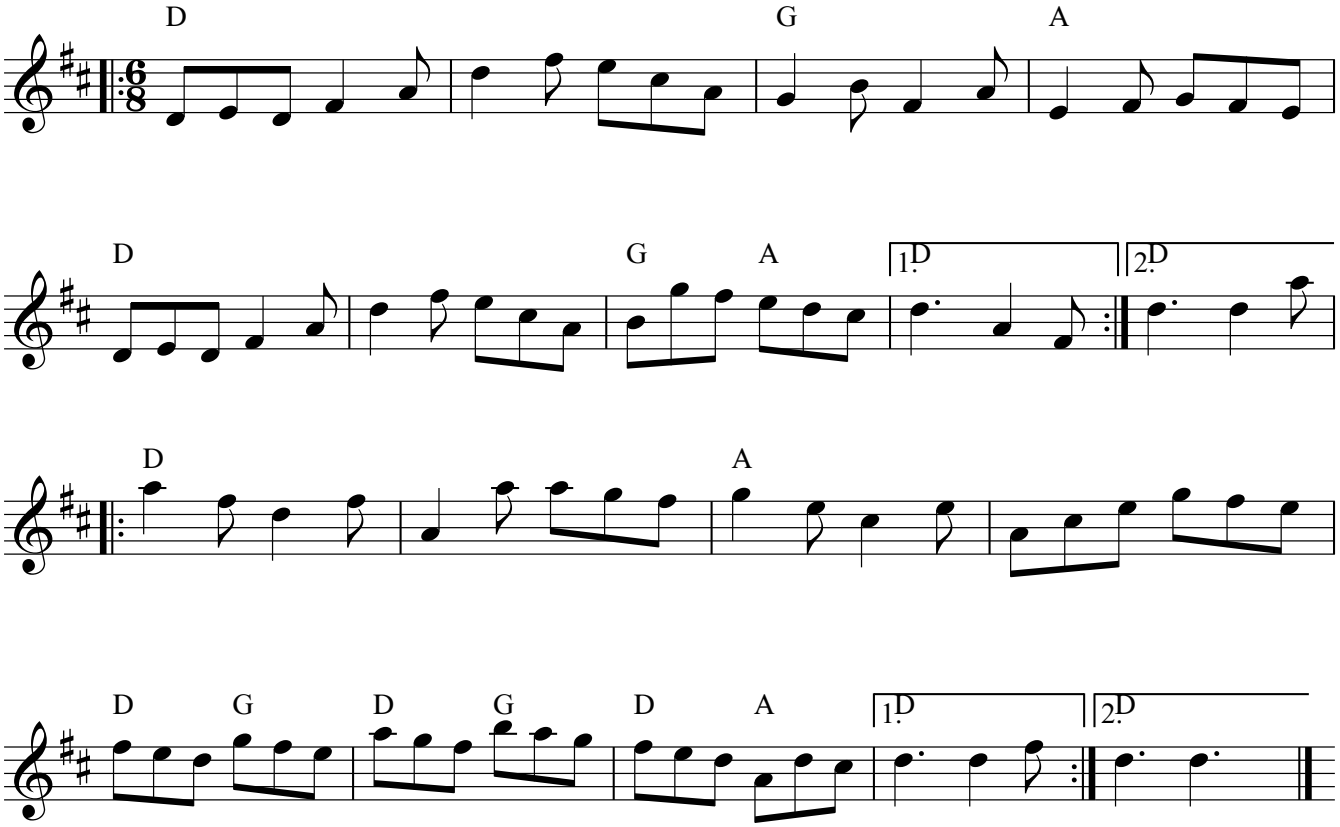
Jer the Rigger



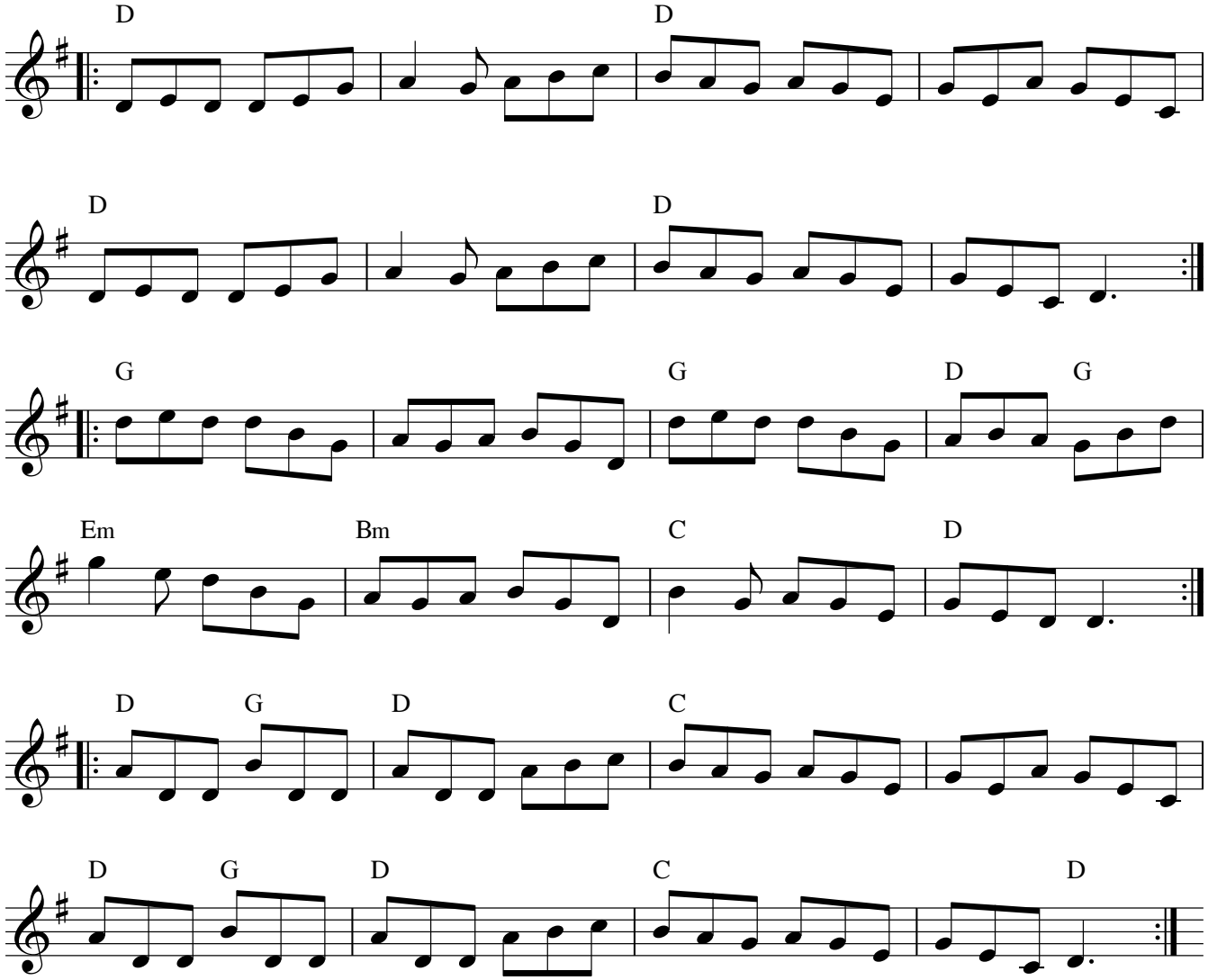
The Irish Washerwoman



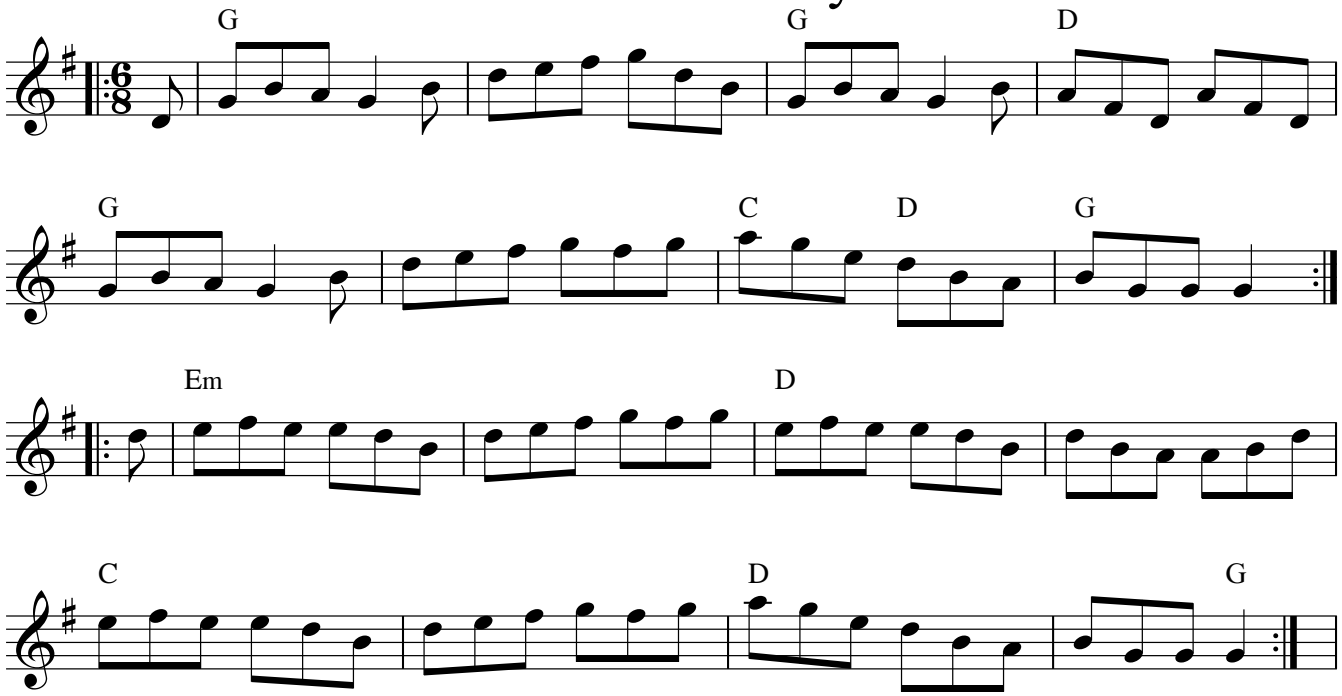
Smash The Windows



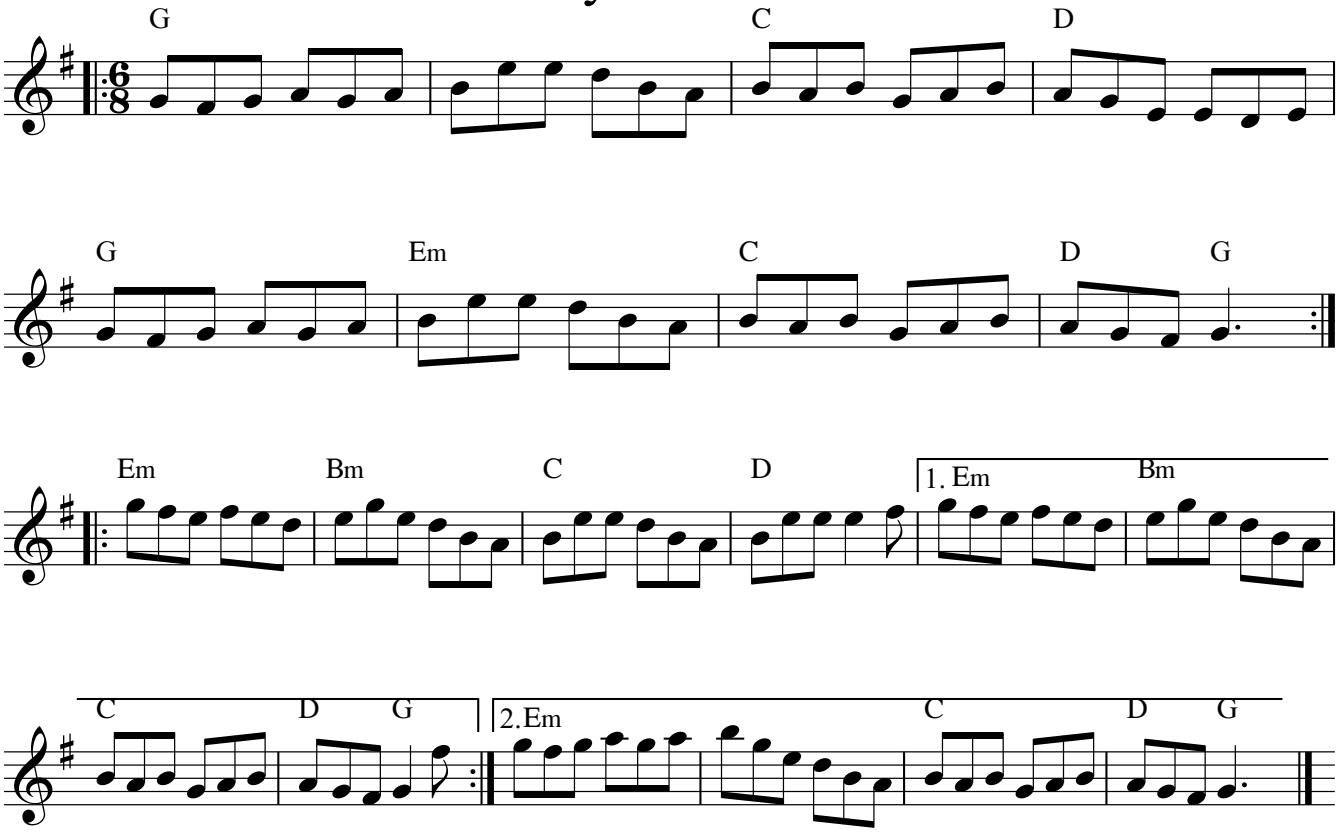
The Blarney Pilgrim



Saddle The Pony



Donnybrook Fair



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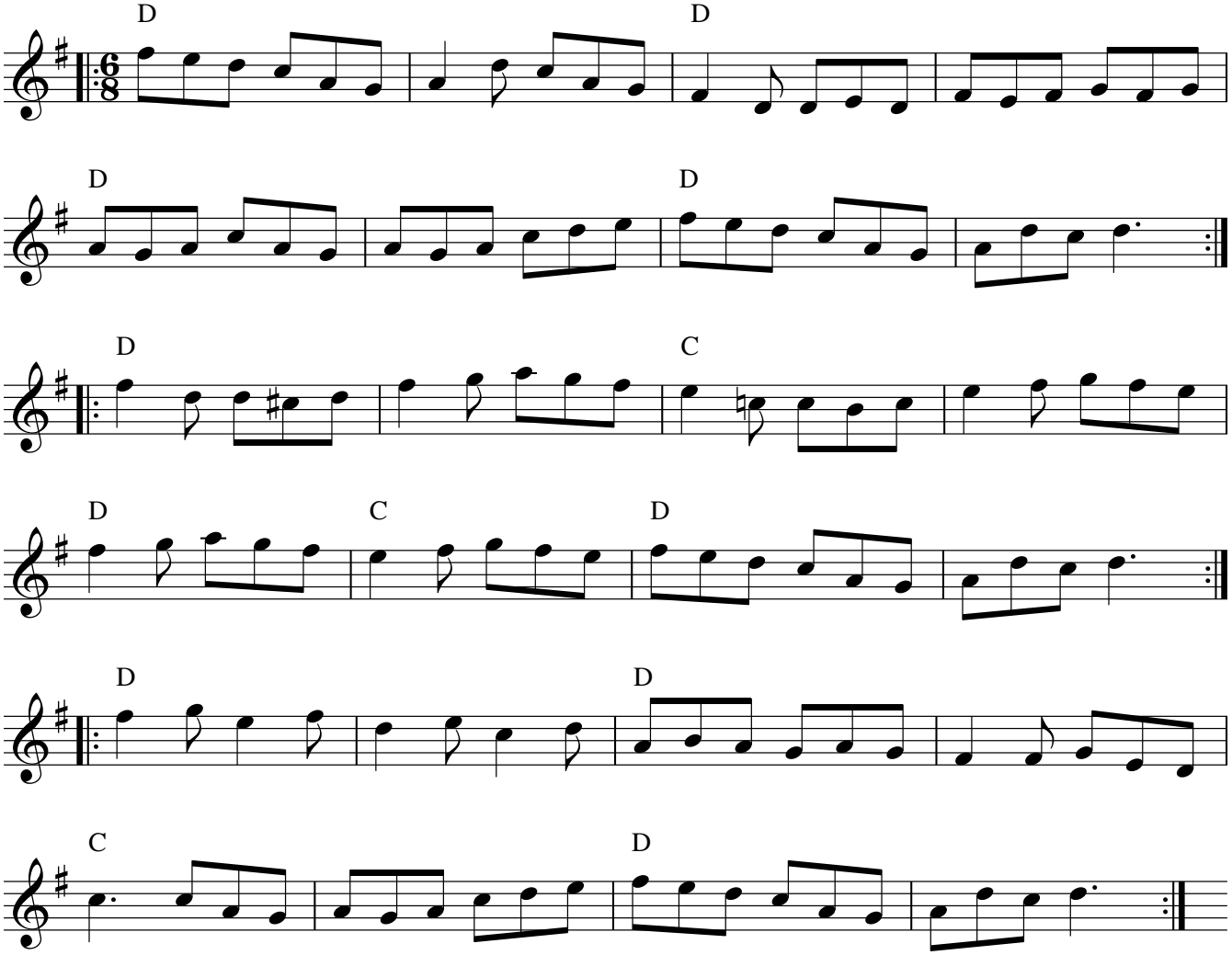

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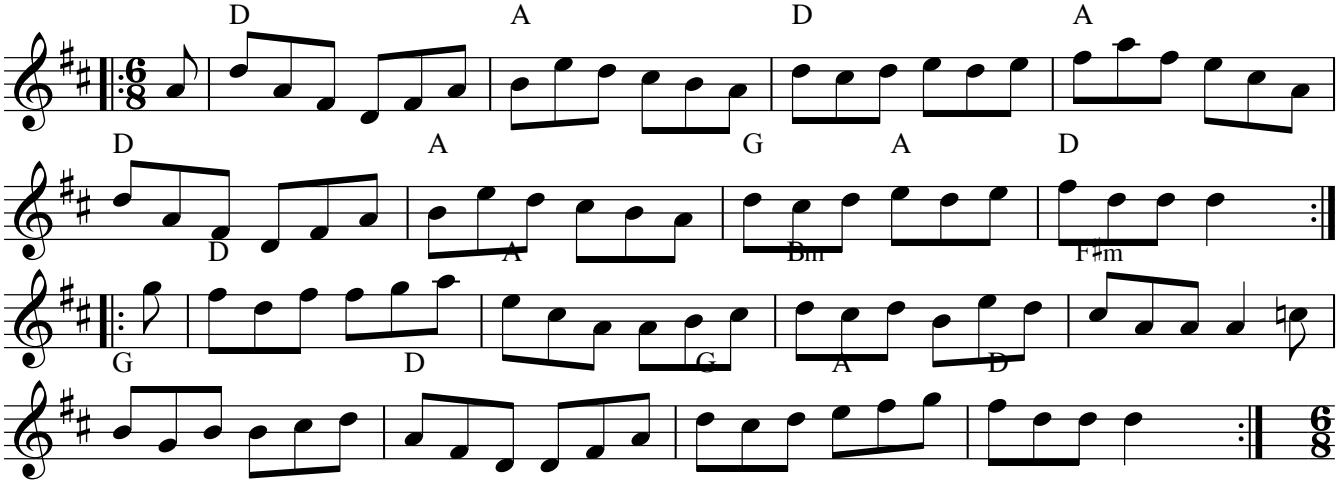

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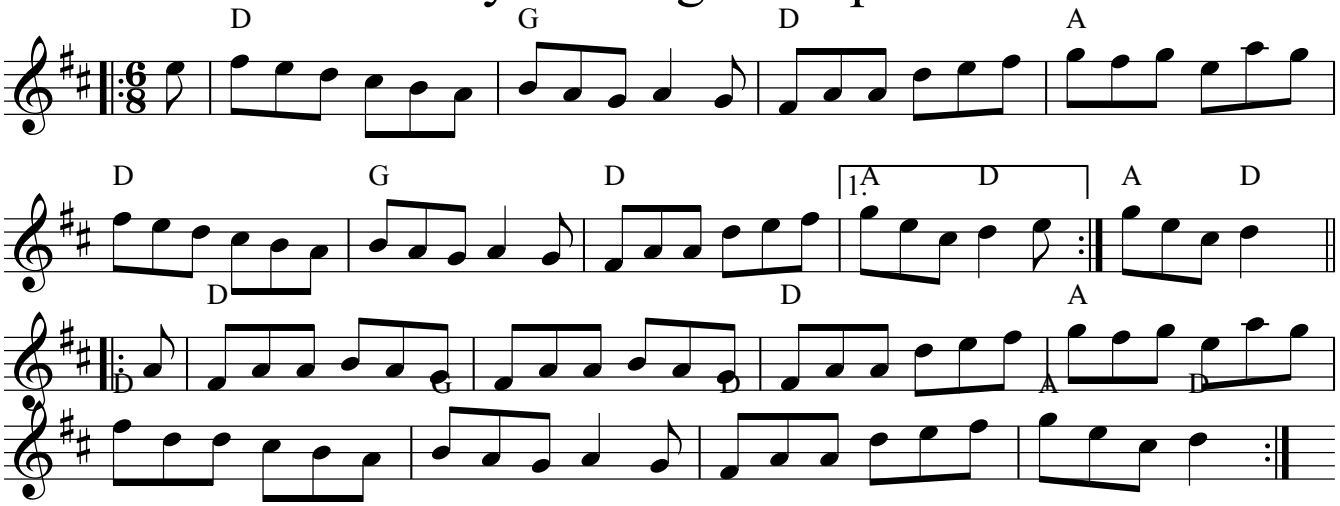

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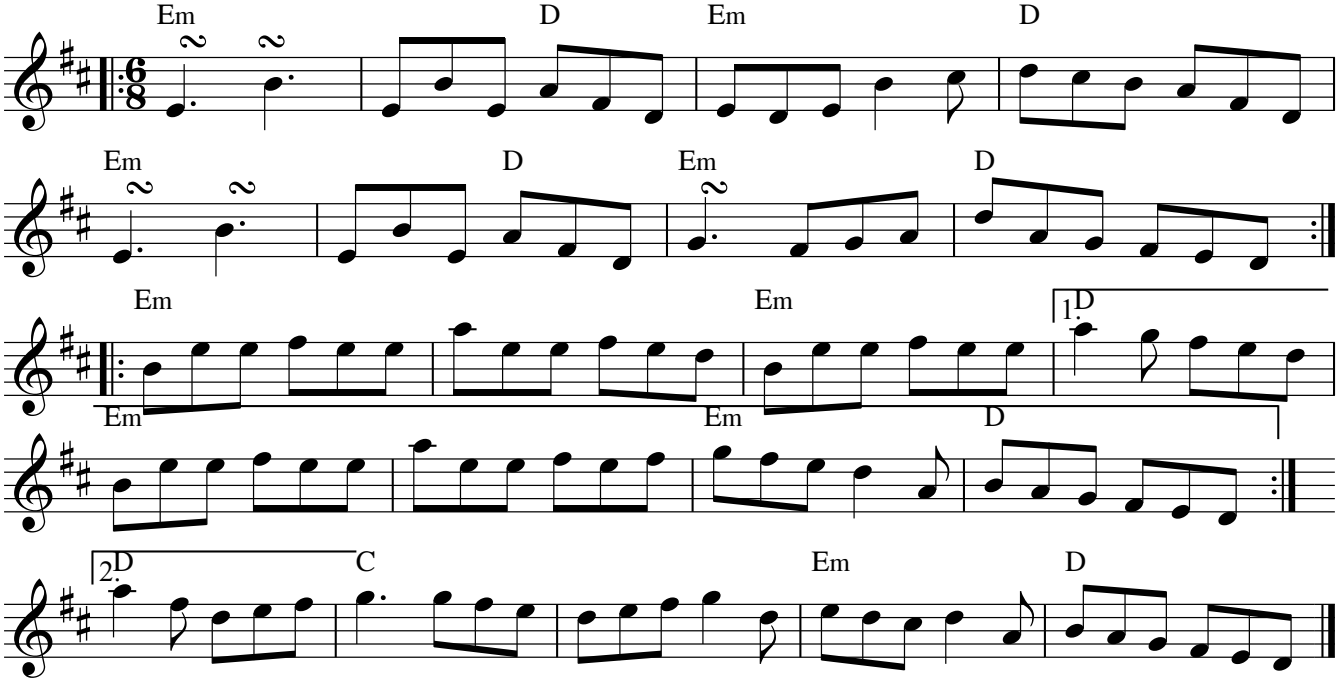

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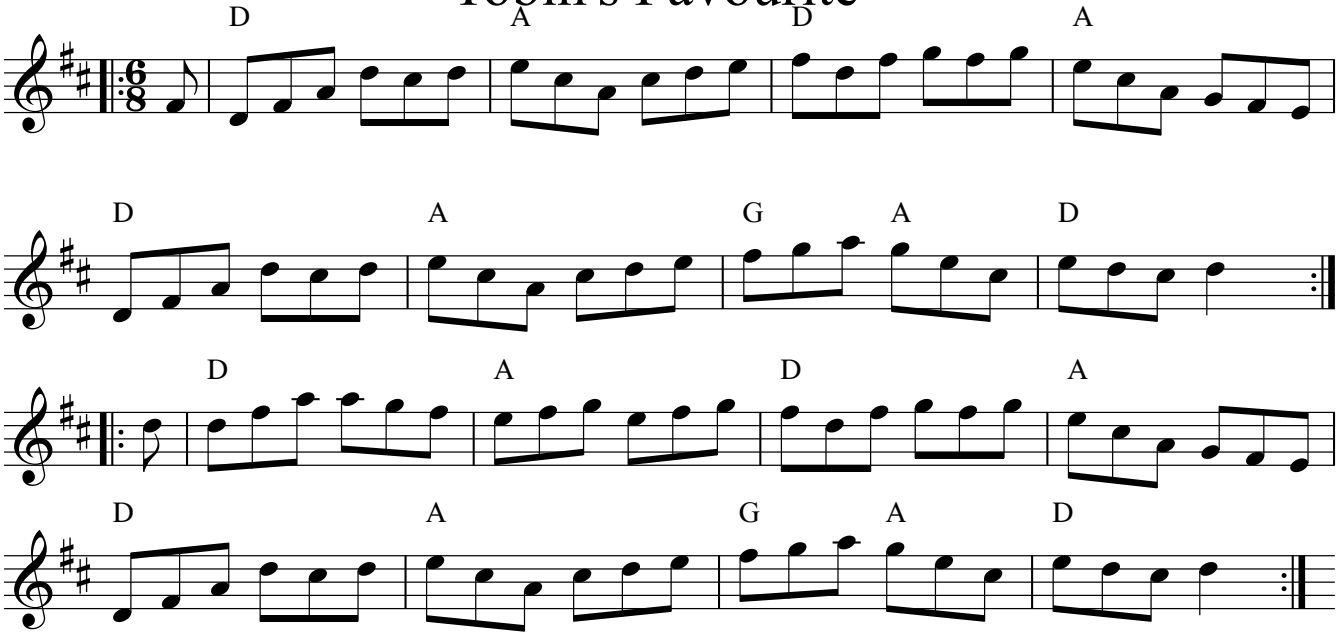

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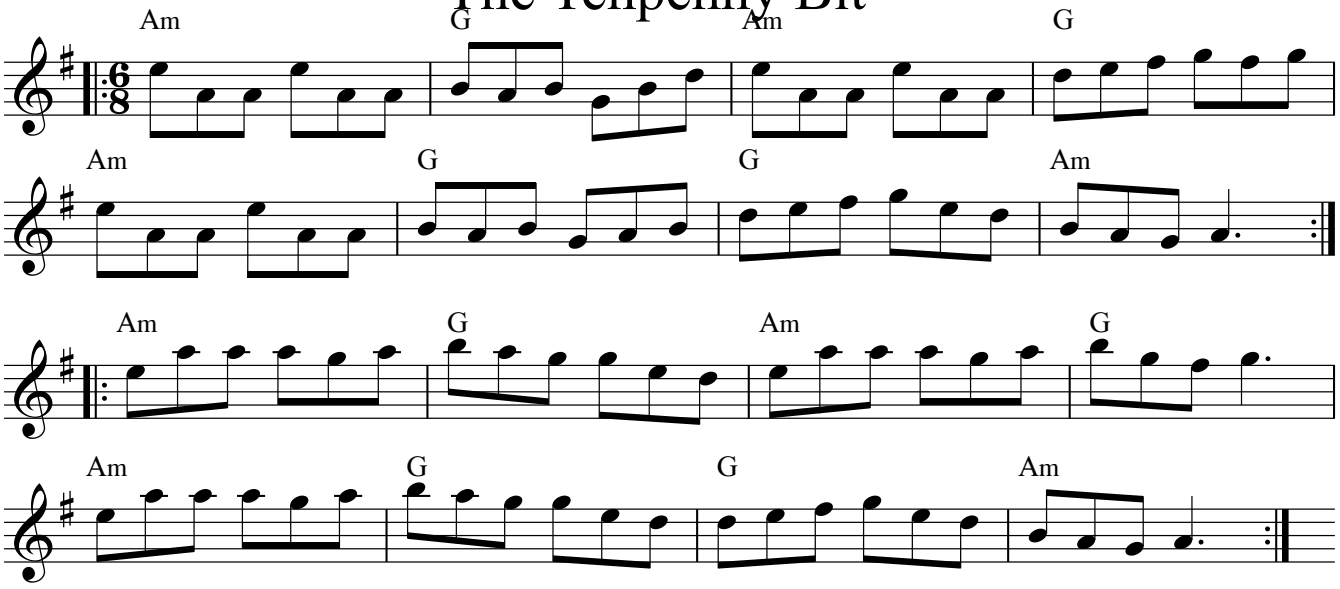

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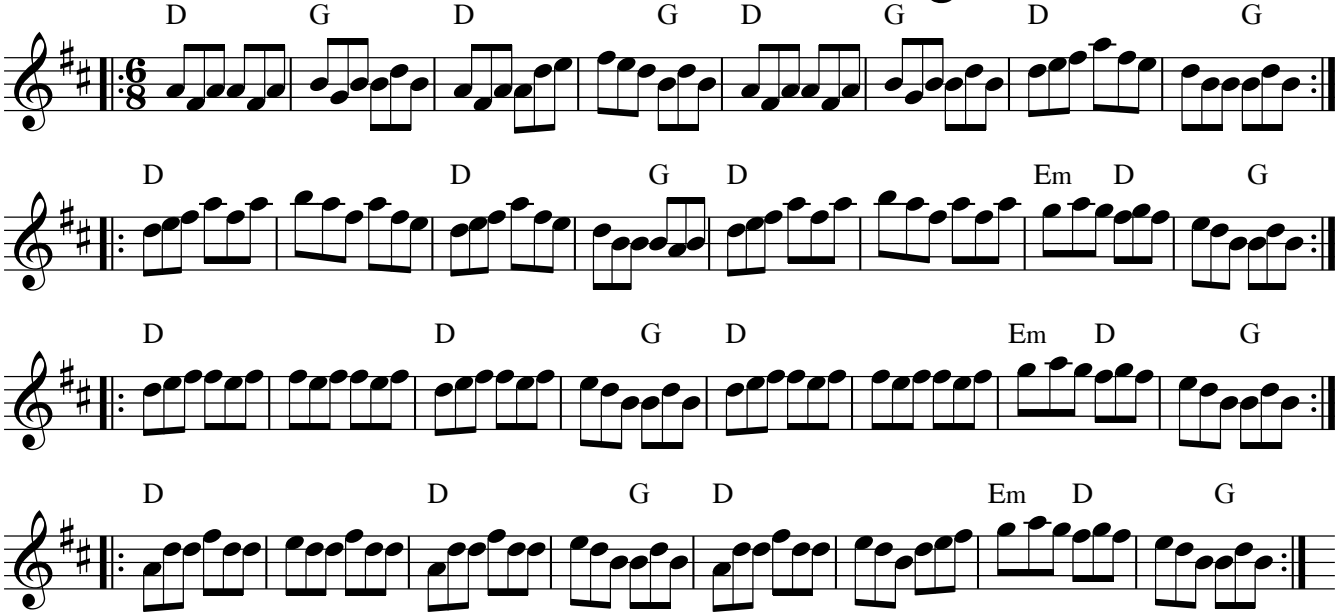

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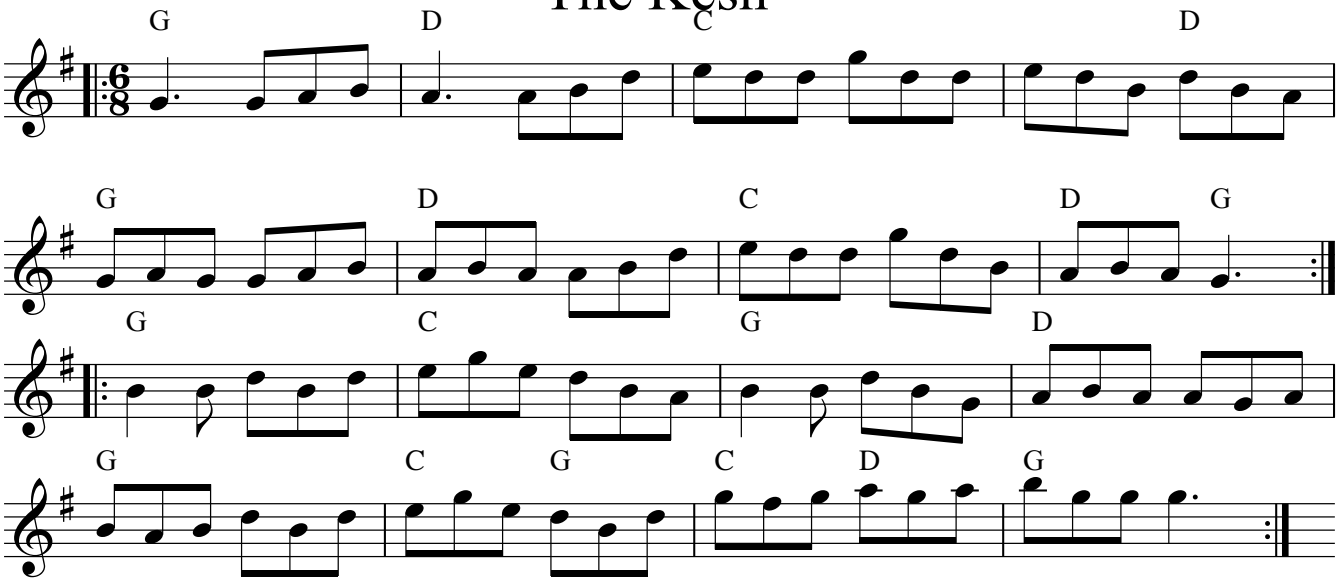

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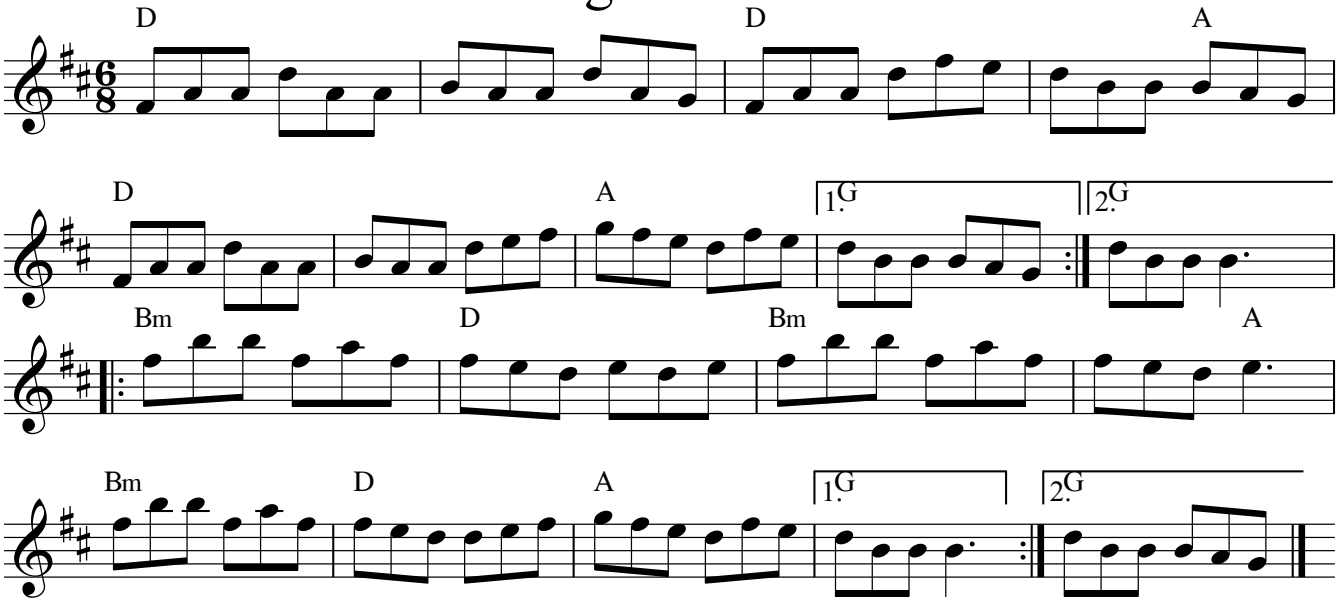

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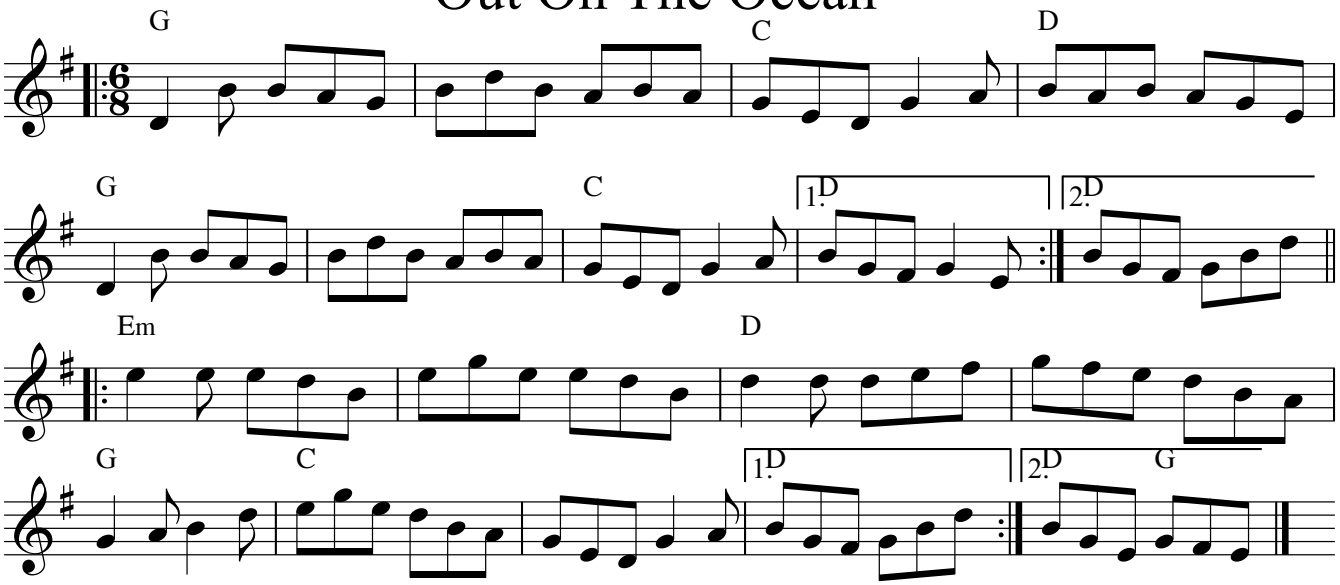

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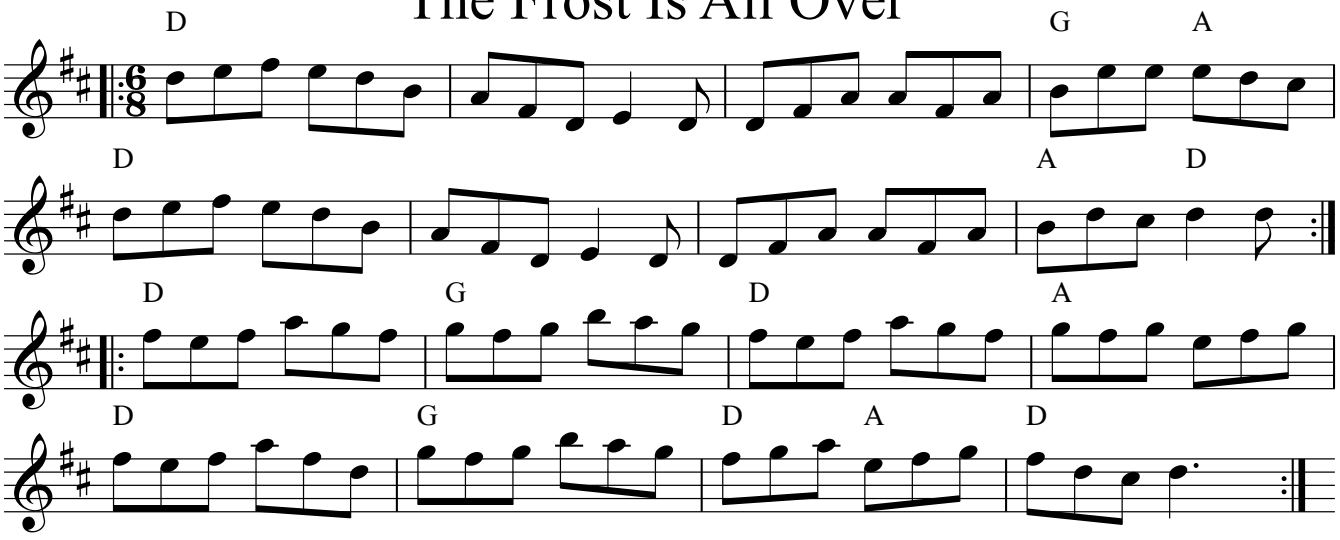

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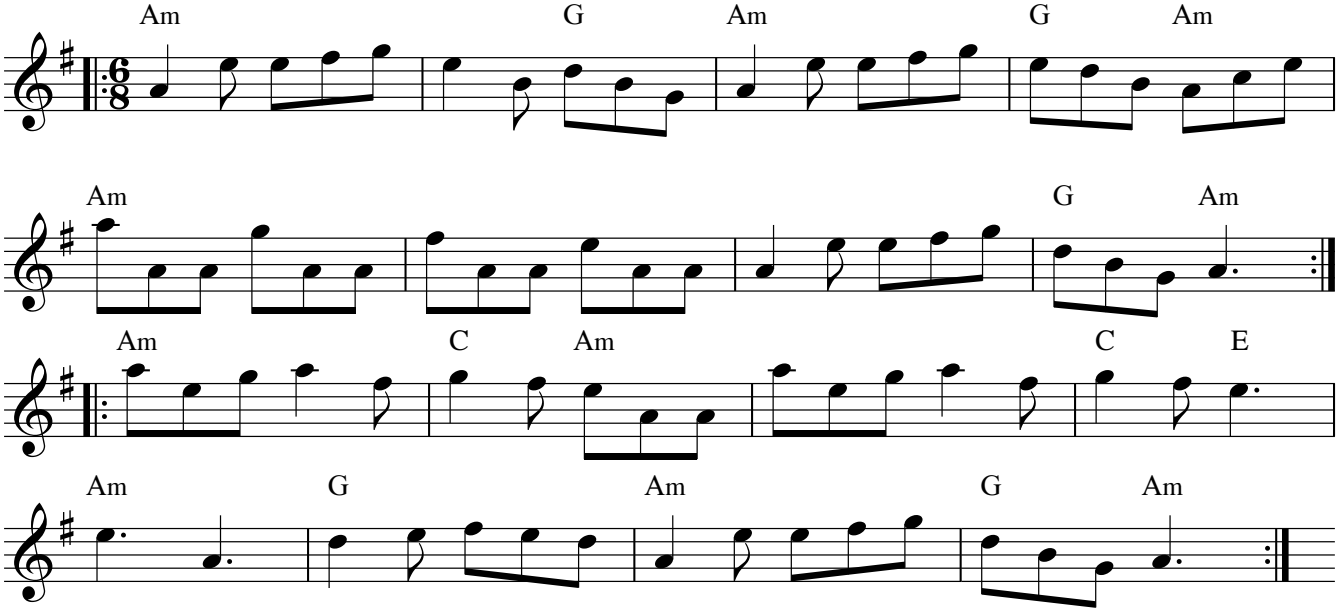

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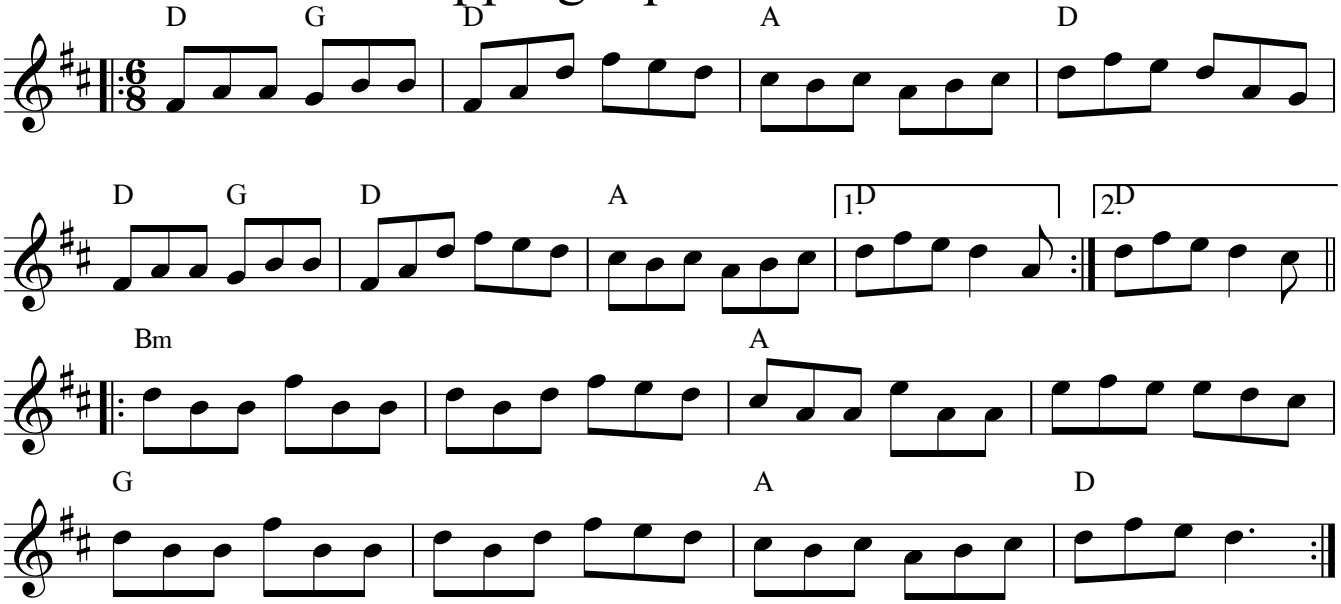

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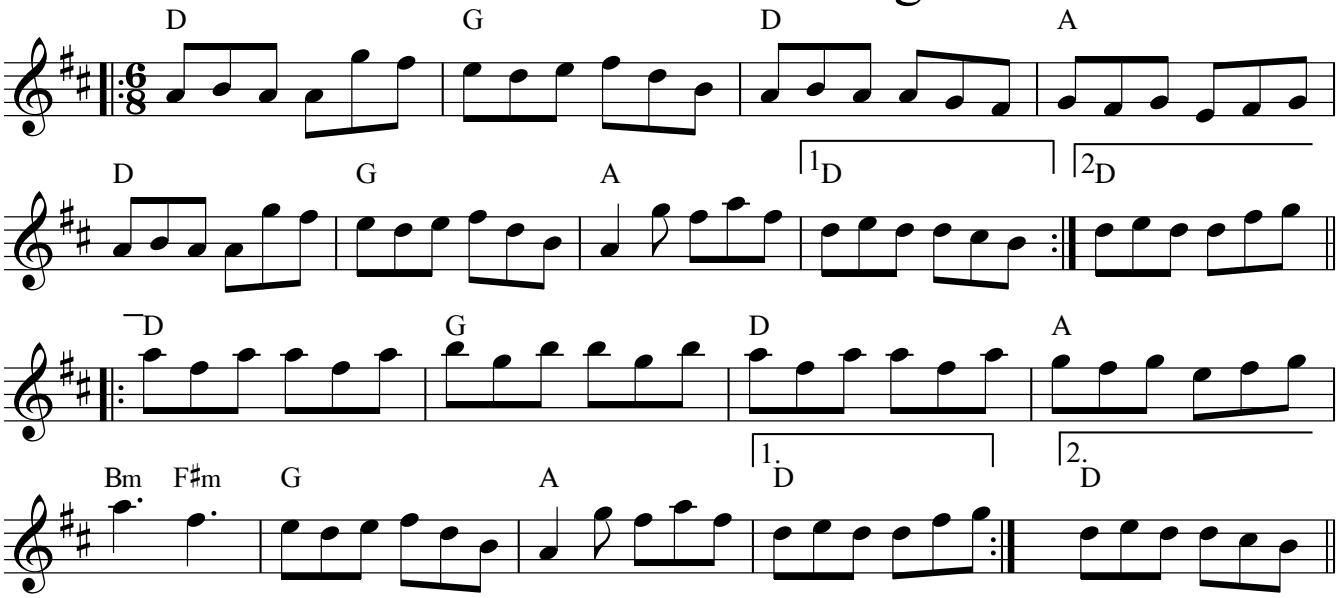
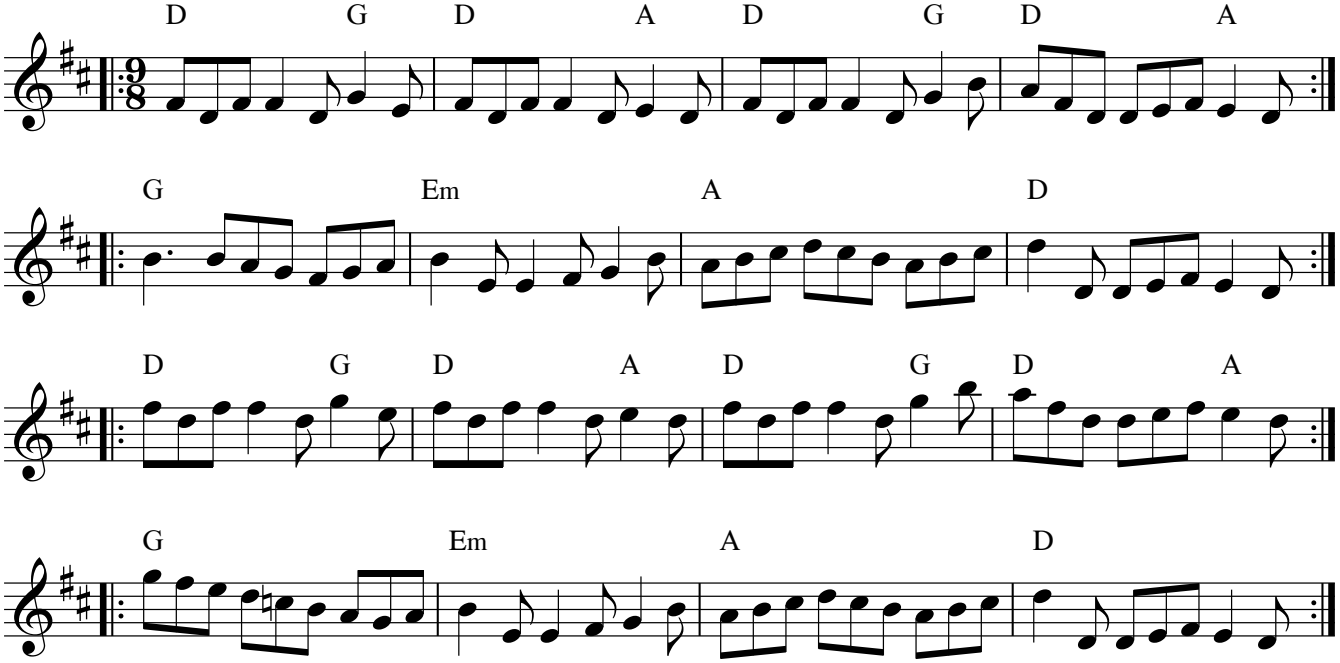


The Foxhunter's



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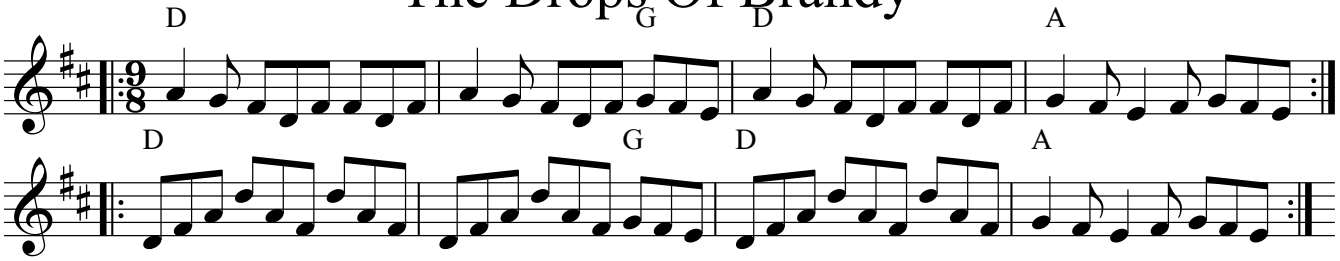

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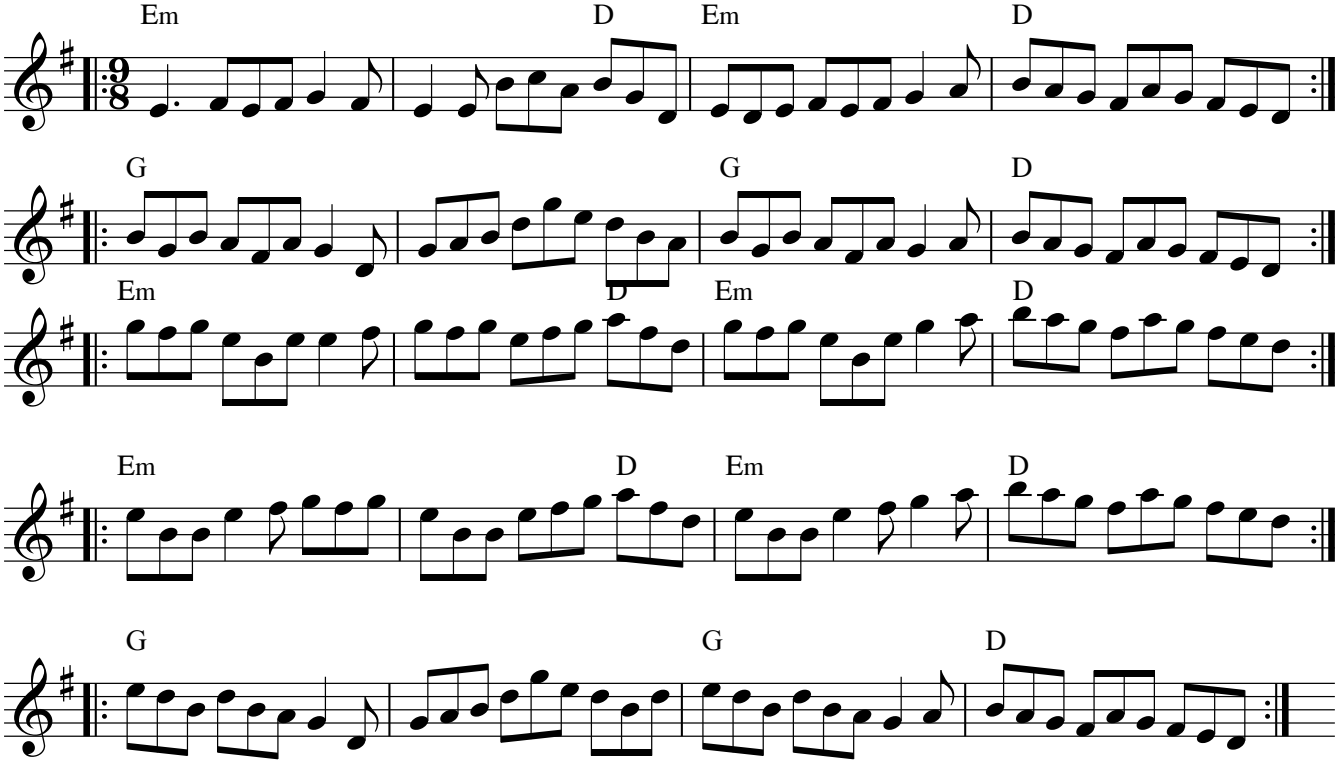

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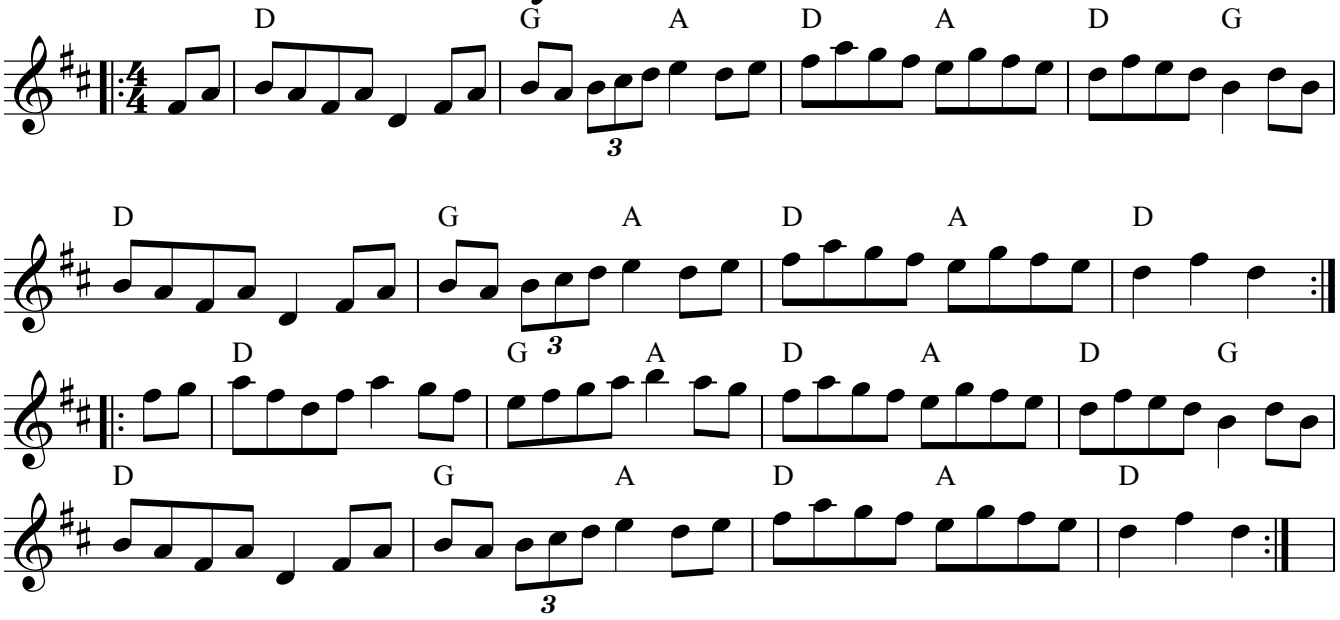

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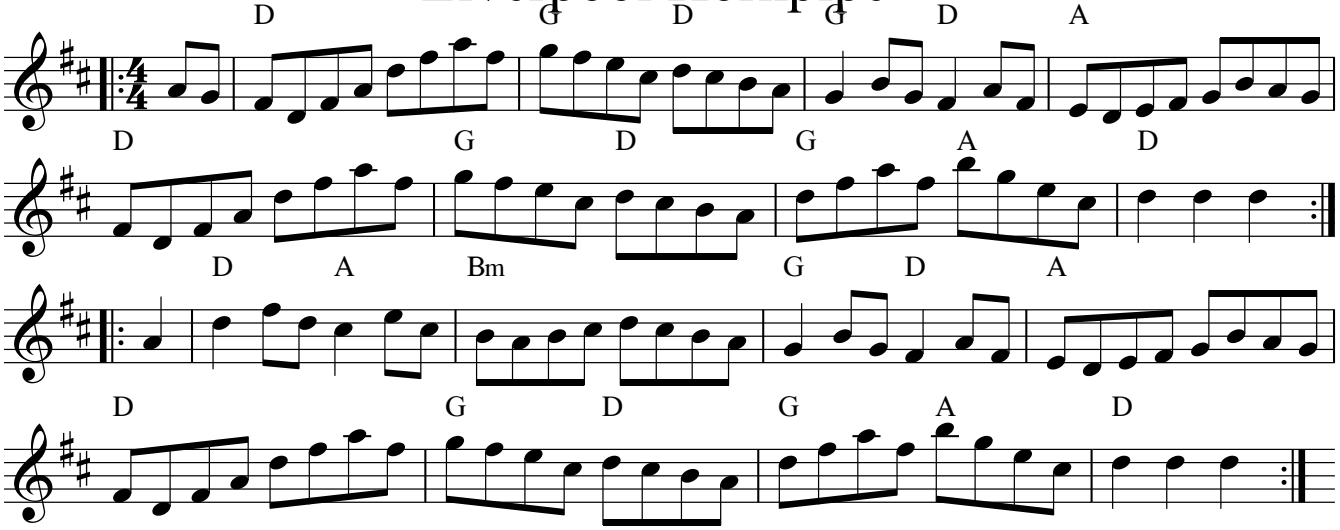
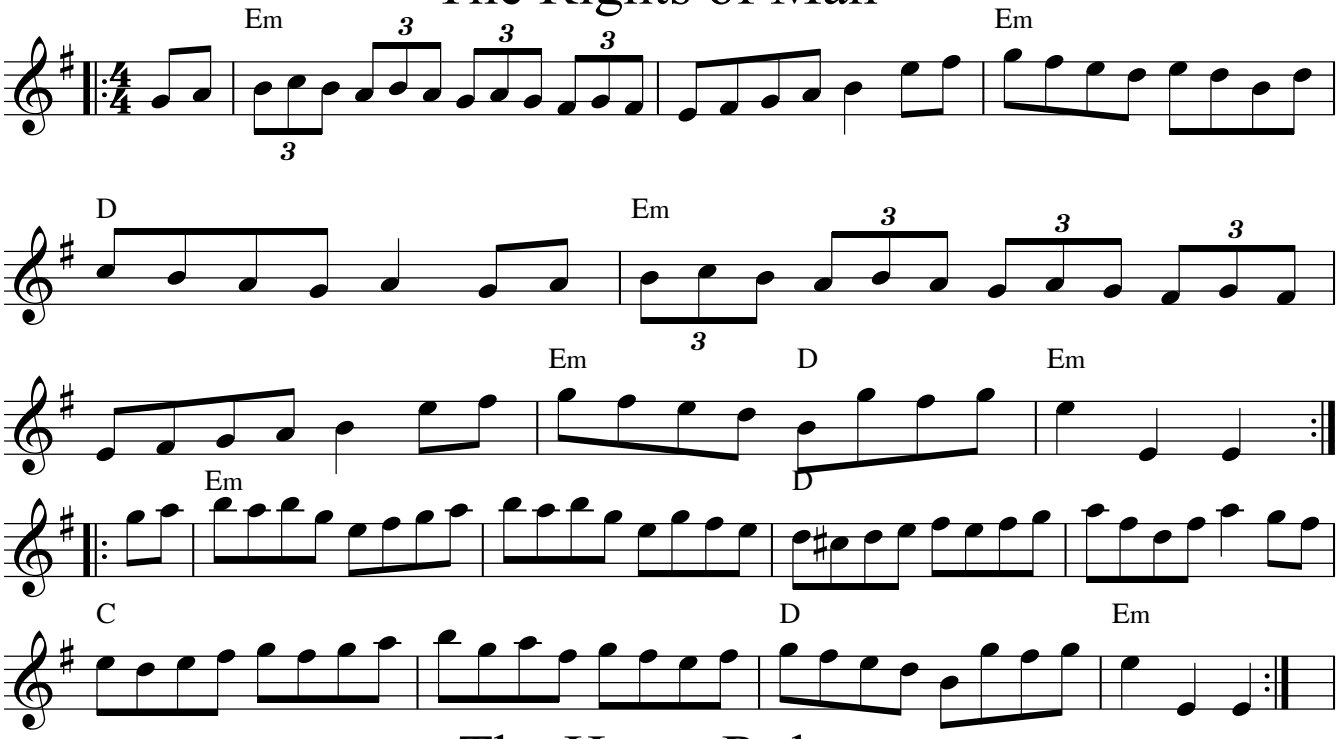


The Rights of Man



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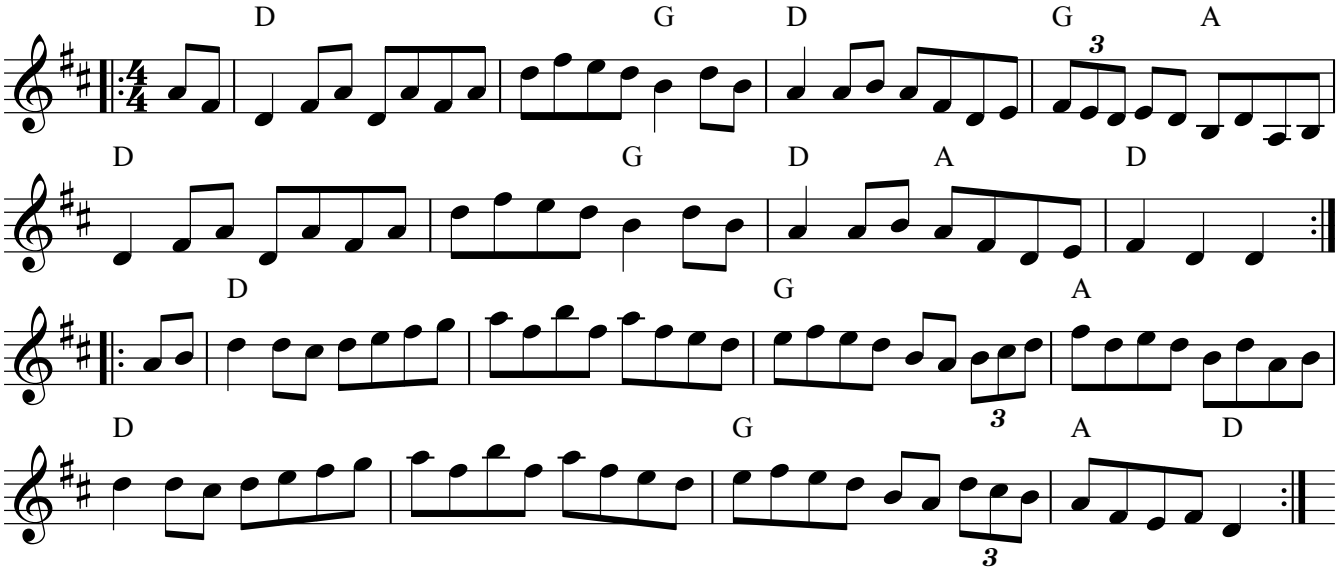

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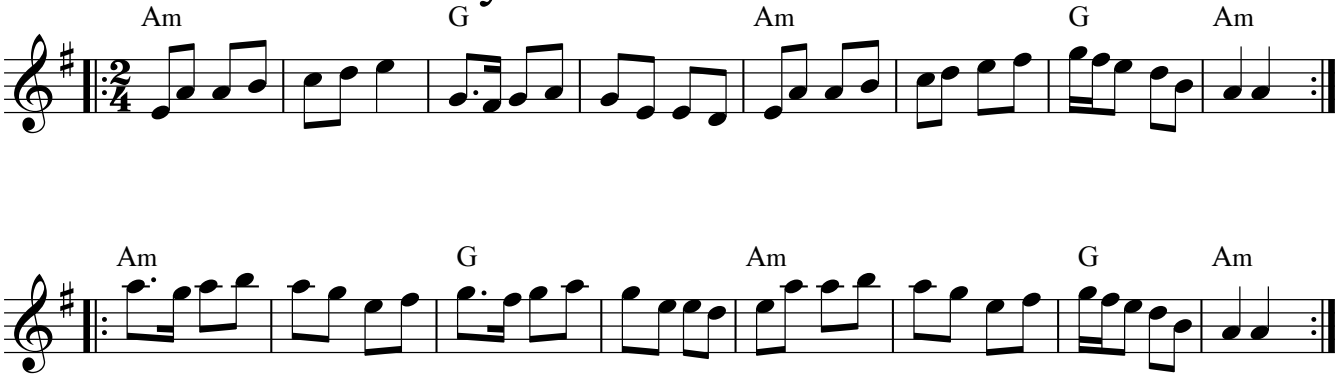

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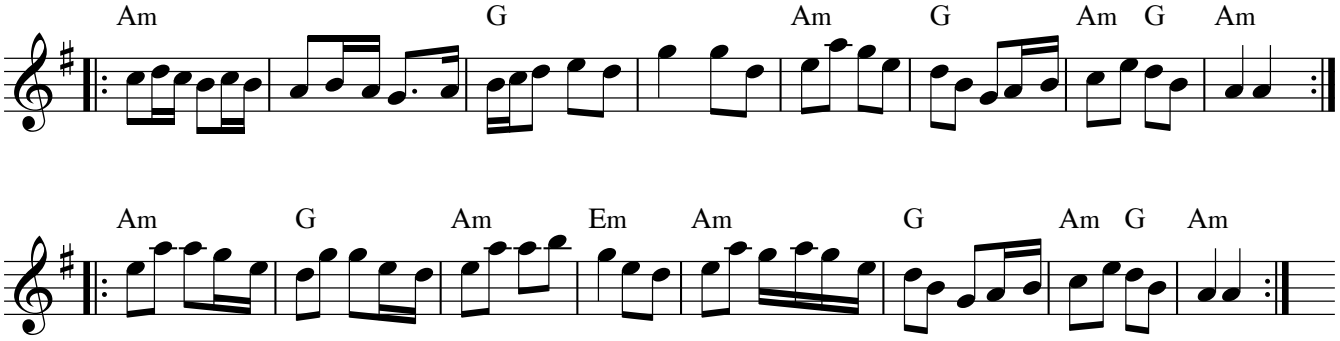
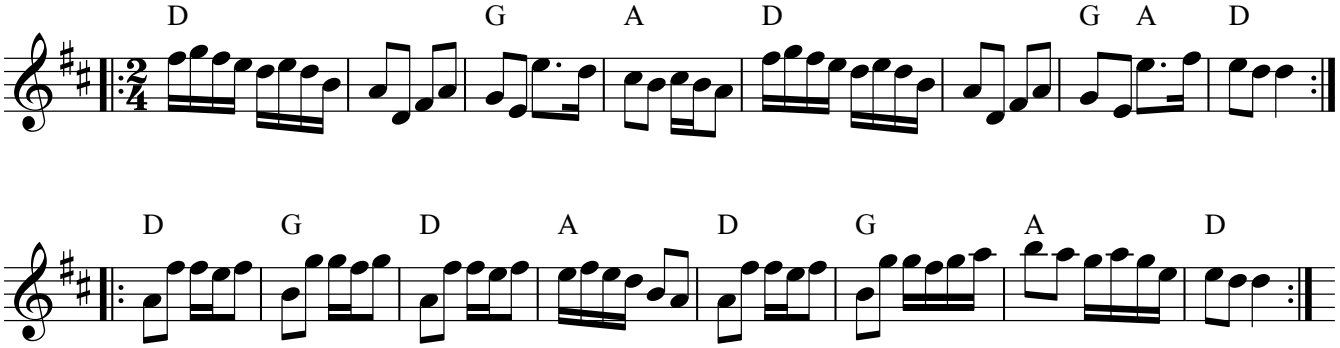


Dennis Murphy's



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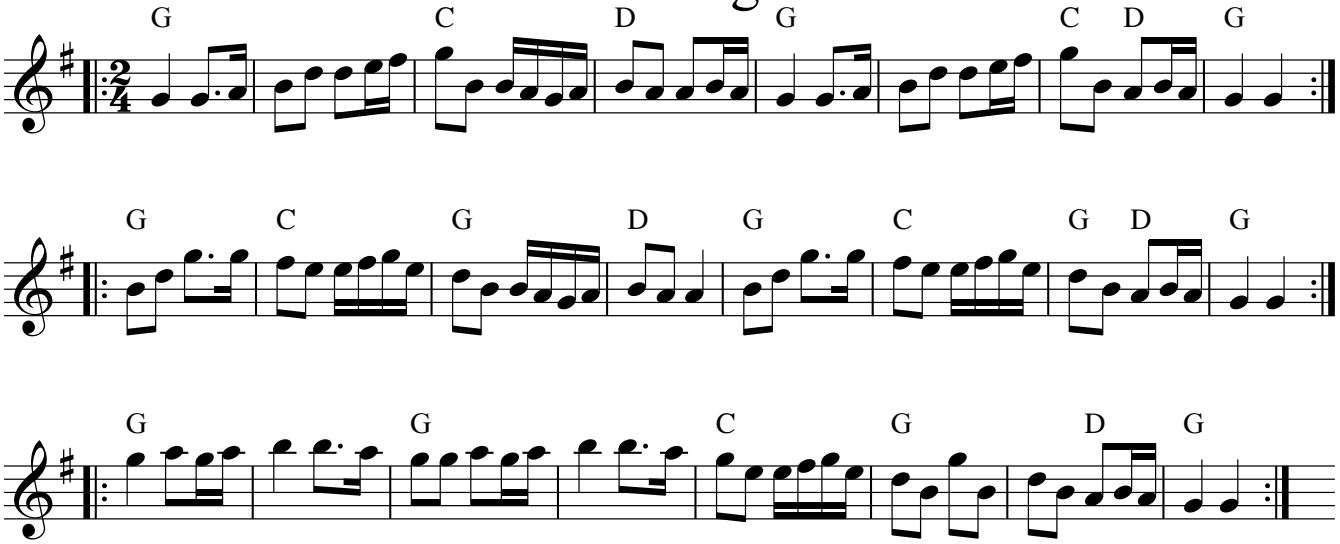
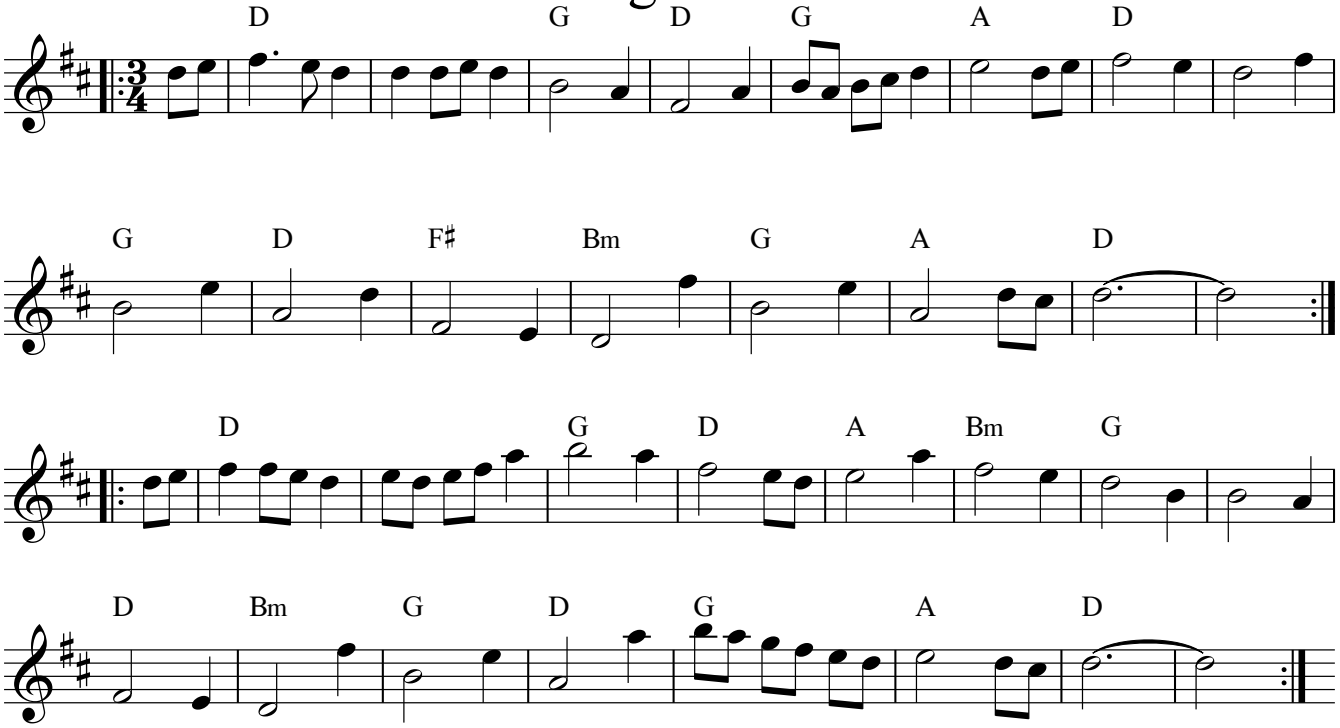
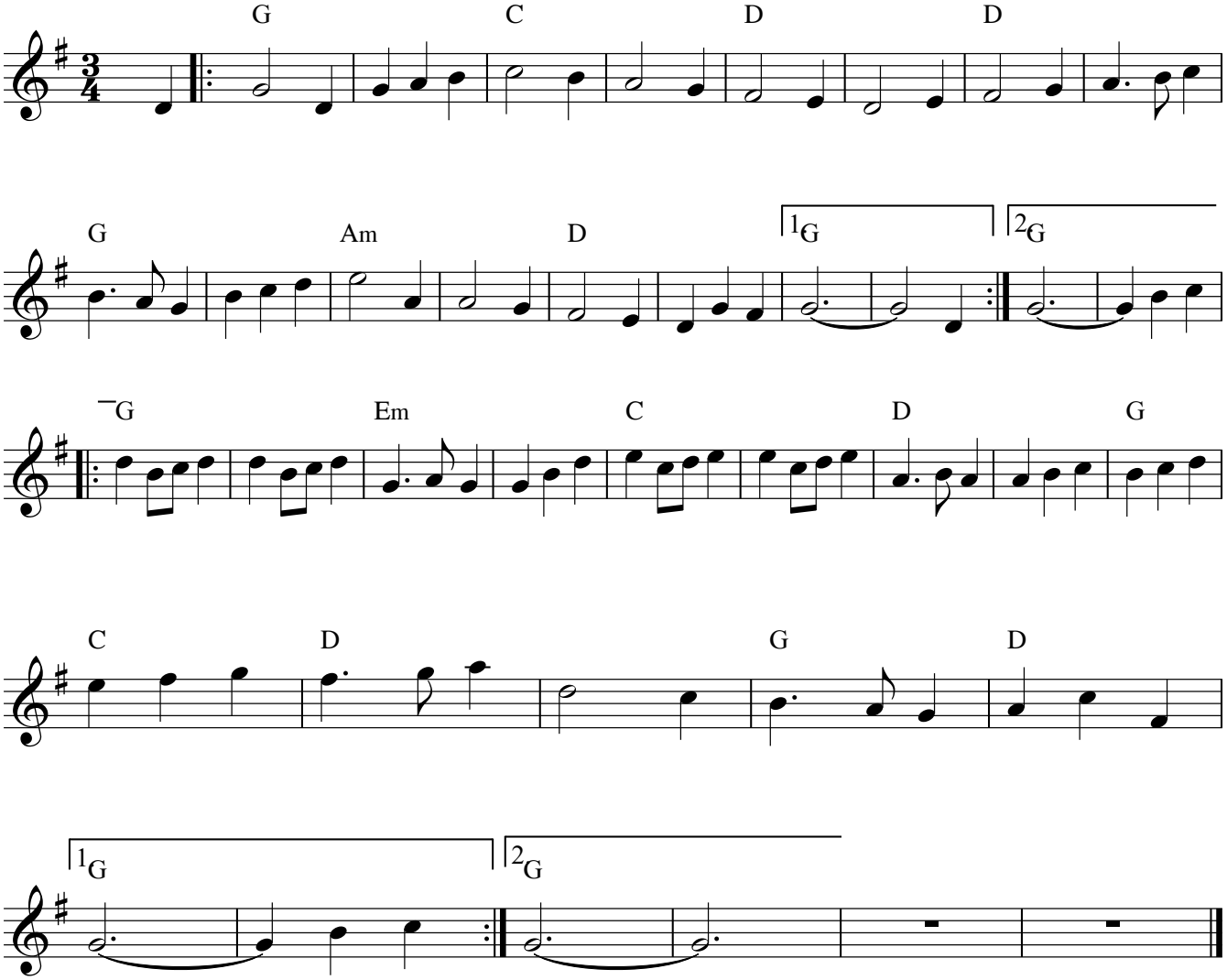


Si Bheag Si Mhor



Fanny Power



Index

Ballydesmond No. 1, The 26
Ballydesmond No. 2, The 26
Banish Misfortune 17
Banshee, The 8
Bear Dance, The 13
Blackthorn Stick, The 3
Blarney Pilgrim, The 16
Boys of Bluehill, The 24
Connaughtman's Rambles, The 20
Cooley's 12
Dennis Murphy's 26
Donnybrook Fair 17
Drops of Brandy, The 23
Durham Rangers 11
Fanny Power 27
Father O'Flynn 18
Flowers of Edinburgh, The 6
Foxhunter's, The 23
Frost is All Over, The 21
Harvest Home 4
Haste to the Wedding 22
Home Ruler, The 25
Horse's Bransle 13
Irish Washerwoman, The 15
Jer the Rigger 14
Kesh, The 20
Kid on the Mountain, The 23
Lark in the Morning, The 19
Liverpool Hornpipe 24
Maid Behind the Bar, The 6
Merry Blacksmith, The 8
Miss McLeod's 7
Morpeth Rant 1
Morrison's 18
My Darling Asleep 18
My Love is But a Lassie Yet 11
Off to California 4
Out on the Ocean 21
Over the Moor to Maggie 7
Rakes of Kildare, The 3
Rattling Bog 2
Rights of Man, The 25
Saddle the Pony 16
Sally Gardens, The 9
Scarce O'Tatties 22
Scartaglen, The 26
Scholar, The 10
Si Bheag, Si Mhor 27
Silver Spire, The 14
Sloe, The 2
Smash the Windows 15
Speed the Plough 1
Spootiskerry 5
St Anne's 9
St Kilda Wedding 8
Staten Island 6
Swinging on the Gate 12
Teetotaller's, The 10
Tenpenny Bit, The 19
Three Around Three 11
Tobin's Favourite 19
Tripping Upstairs 22
Willafjord 5
Winster Gallop 1