Tunes from the 2011 Youth Camp CD

If you're new to Irish music, take a minute to read these comments before you start on the tunes! They will explain some things that might be confusing otherwise.

First, I wanted to write a few notes about the notation of these tunes. There's no one "right way" for these tunes to go; the actual notes will vary from person to person, and even in one single person's playing as he changes the tune from one repeat to another. So what's written here is one way that you could play the tune. It's usually good to learn it just one way at first, and then you can start making small changes to it as you hear other people playing it and get some ideas for varying the tune. Sometimes what I have written here differs a little bit from how it's played on the CD. A lot of these differences have to do with how the tune would have to be changed slightly to be played on different instruments. The flute often has to leave out notes in order to have time for a breath, so I have put some of those notes back in, for the benefit of others who don't have those constraints. Likewise, the fiddle often goes too low for the flute's range, so flutists have to make adjustments for that. If there are other differences between this sheet music and the recordings on the CD, feel free to choose the version you like best and learn it that way!

I have included suggested bowings here for the benefit of fiddle players who are learning Irish bowing styles. Bowing is extremely important in getting the right sound in Irish music, so if you're new to Irish music, try out these slurring patterns so your right arm can get used to them. These are only an example, of course-- once you get the idea of what kind of slurs to use and where to put them, you can move them around and improvise as you like. The main thing is to **vary** what bowing you are using-- repeating the same pattern too much (like all separate or all slurred) sounds more like classical music than like Irish style.

Lastly, even though I've written this sheet music down for you, I want to encourage each of you to work on developing your skills of learning music by ear. Not only is that a very common learning method in Irish music, but there are many nuances of style that you can pick up when you learn music by ear, that you will miss if you only learn these tunes from a piece of paper. (The one exception to this is fiddle bowings, which are probably easier to learn when written down than trying to pick them up from a CD recording, at least at first.)

So I'd encourage you to try learning at least one tune from the CD, without looking at the music. The best way to do this is to listen to the tune over and over (you can listen in the car or while you're doing chores), until you know the tune so well that you could whistle or sing it. Then try it on your instrument-- just hunt around until you find the first note, then play that one again and try to find the second one, etc. It helps if you think about whether the notes go up or down, and whether they sound like a scale pattern (every note in order) or whether there are notes skipped over. That will help you know which direction to look in, and how far away from the previous note you should look. If you get lost and can't remember where you are in the tune, just go back to the beginning and start over. If you get the notes in the first phrase, then repeat that a bunch of times till you have it down, so you don't forget it when you start on the second phrase. And just remember that Irish music tends to reuse phrases of music throughout the tune, so once you get one or two phrases, sometimes you know almost half the song already!

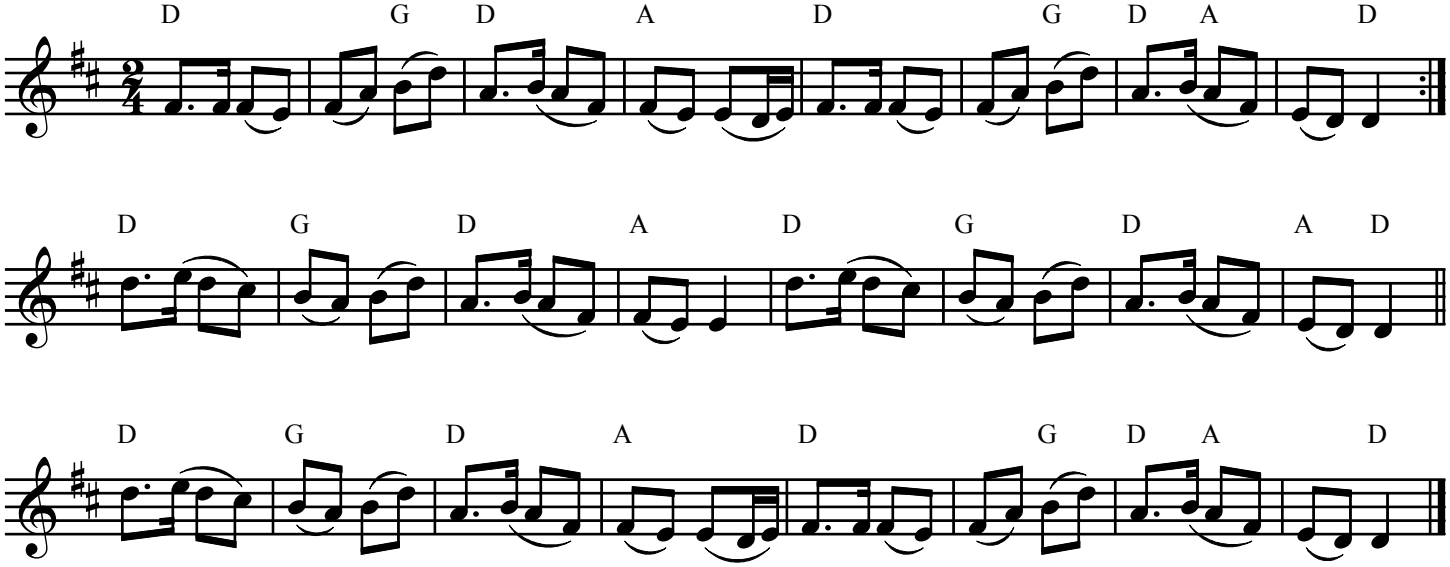
So give it a try, and just keep working till you get it! Learning by ear isn't nearly as hard as it seems-- the first couple of songs you try might seem kind of difficult, but it just gets easier and easier to do. Above all, have fun with this music, and we'll hope to see you again at sessions or at next year's camp!

Have a great year,
Clare Cason

Pa Paddy O'Sullivan's

A Polka in the Key of D major

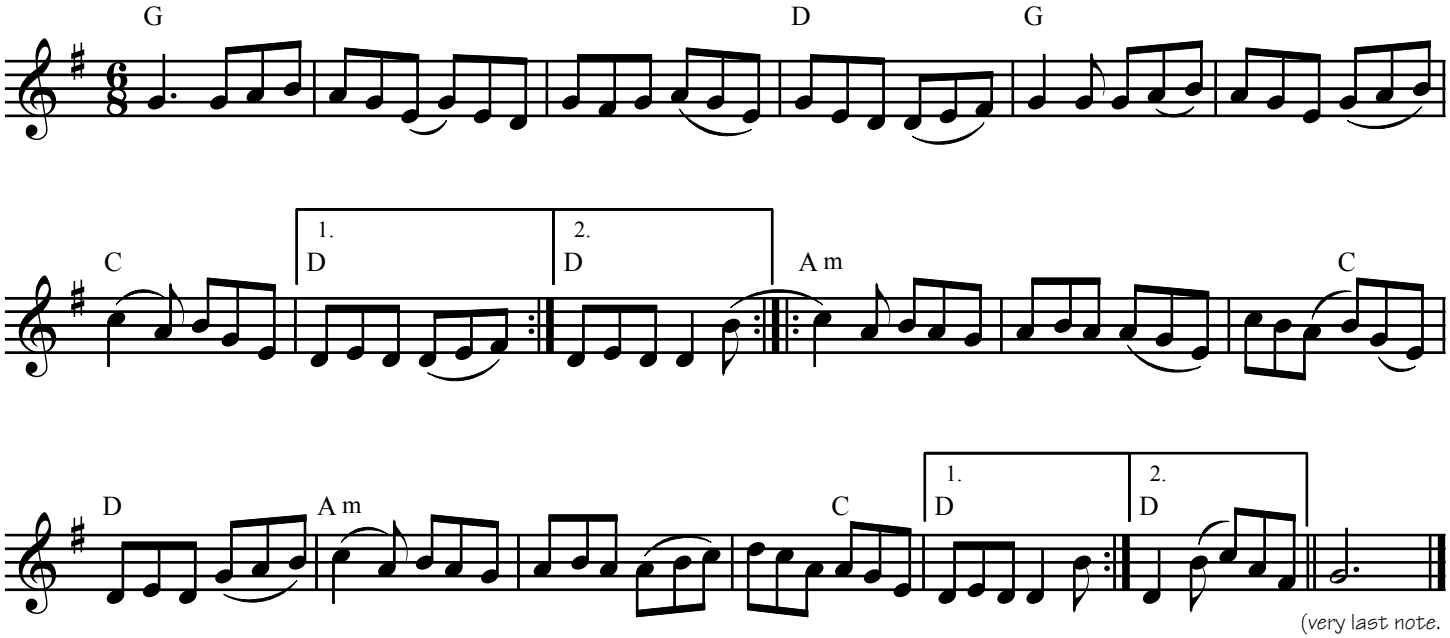
Tracks 1-2



The Clare Jig

Key of G major

Tracks 3-4



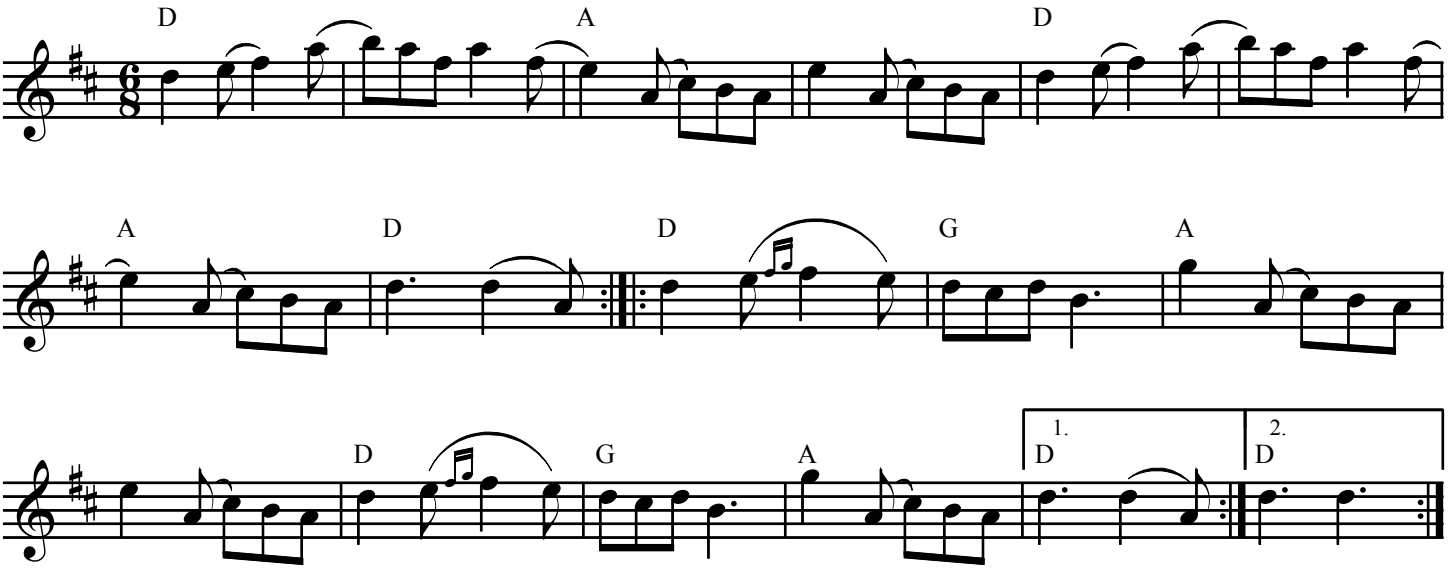
(very last note. if you're ending the tune)

Glountane Slide

(also spelled Gleanntán Slide)

Key of D major

Tracks 5-6

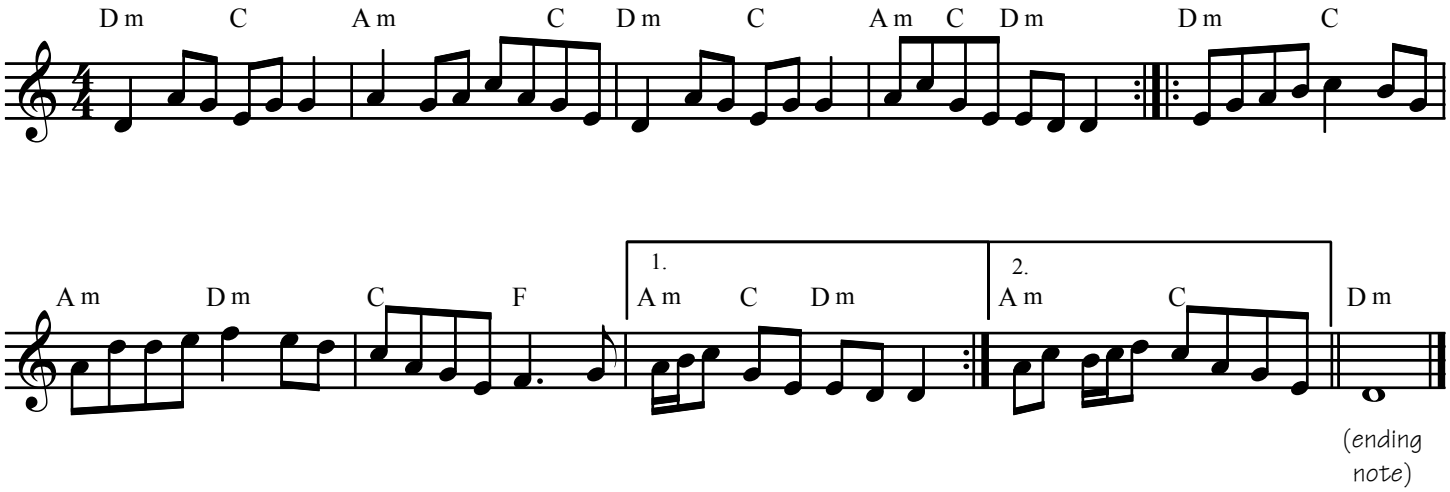


The Maids of Mitchelstown

A Slow Reel in the Key of d minor

Reels are usually fast dance tunes, but a few of them lend themselves to being played slowly and expressively as well. When they are slow, they often sound kind of moody and thoughtful.

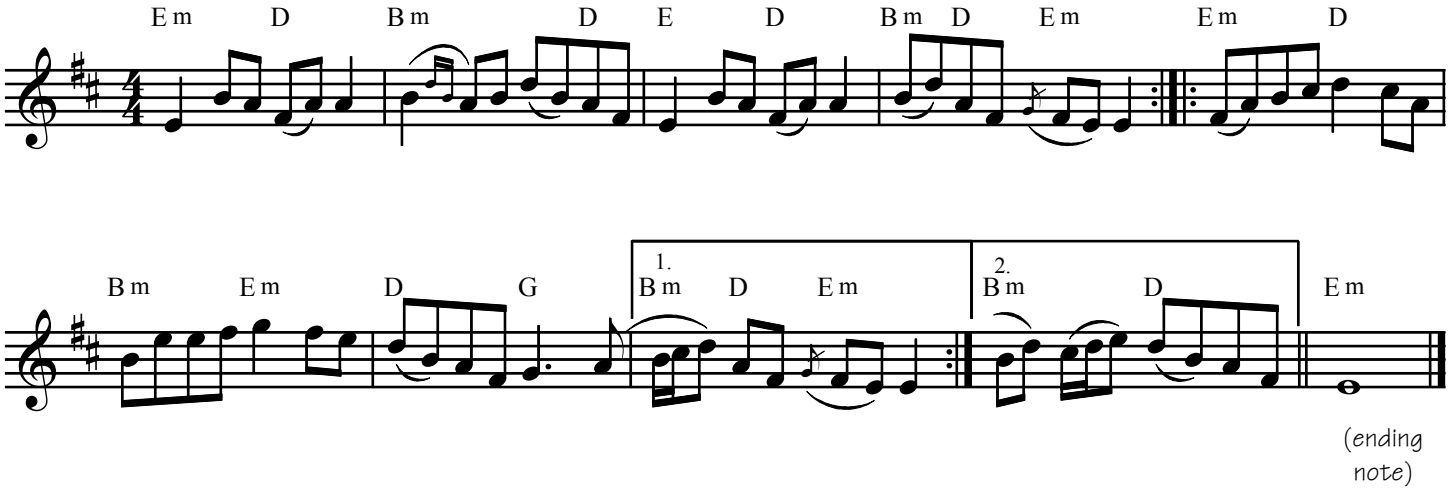
Track 7



The Maids of Mitchelstown

Key of e minor (easier for beginning fiddlers)

You might hear some Irish tunes played in different keys by different people (sometimes it has to do with what keys are easier or harder on different instruments). On the CD Daniel plays Maids of Mitchelstown in d minor. But if you are pretty new to the fiddle, you may not have played some of those notes yet. If you like, you can try the same tune one note higher in the key of e minor-- it is a little easier on the fiddle. You might hear it played in either key at a session, so learn whichever way you like (or both!).

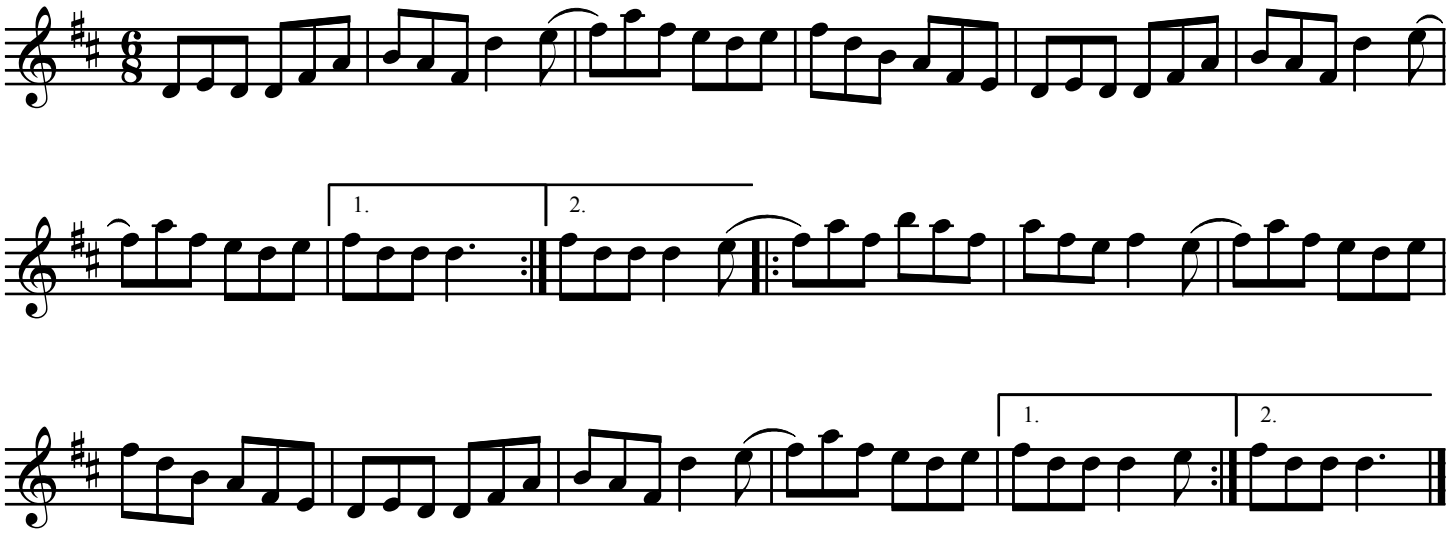


Kilglass Lakes

A Jig in the Key of D

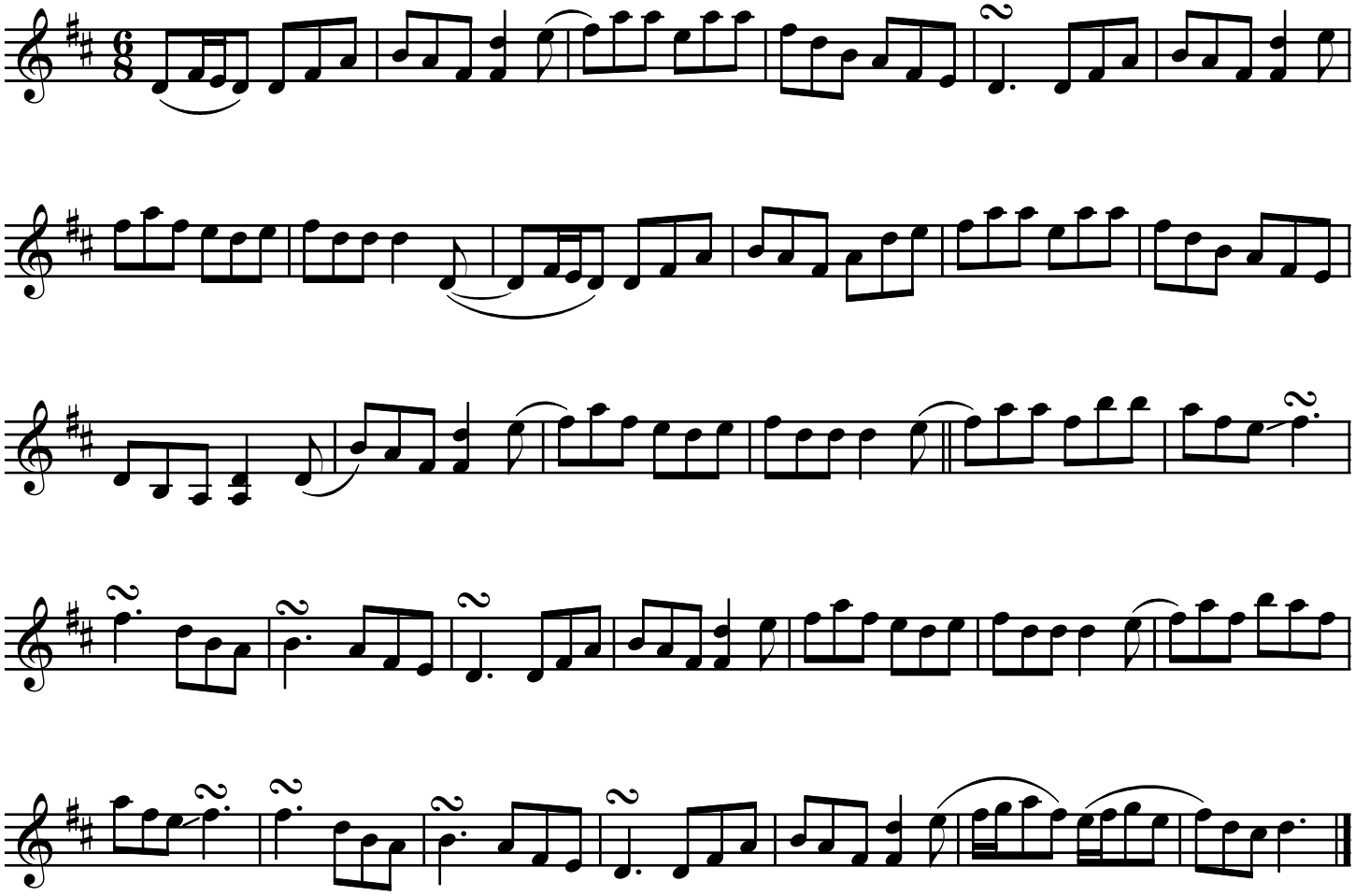
Tracks 8-9

John McEvoy



The Kilglass Lakes

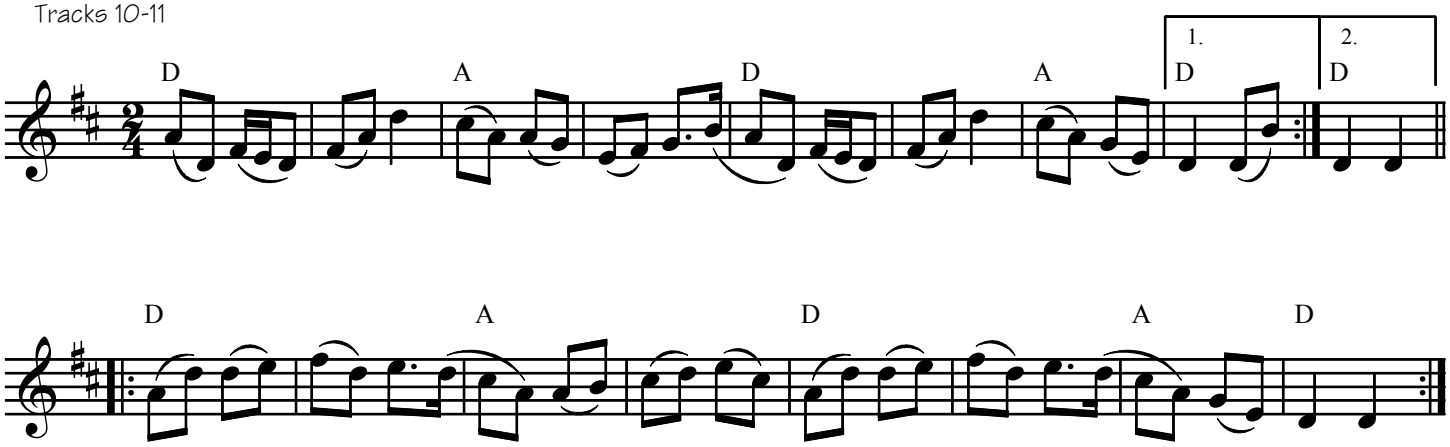
(more ornamented version)



The Blue Ocean

A Polka in the Key of D

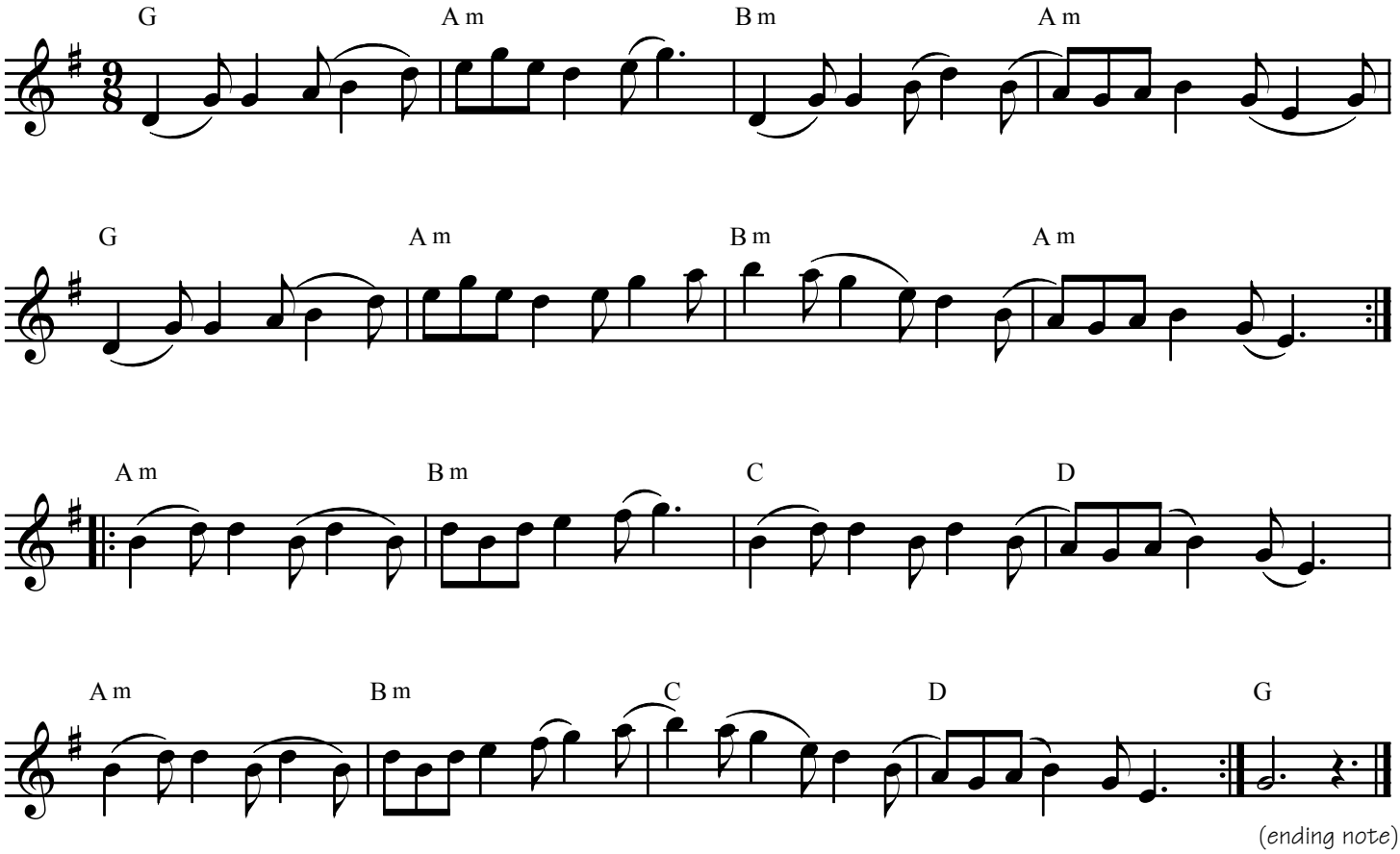
Tracks 10-11



The Boys of Ballysodare

A Slip Jig in the Key of G
(basic tune)

Tracks 12-13

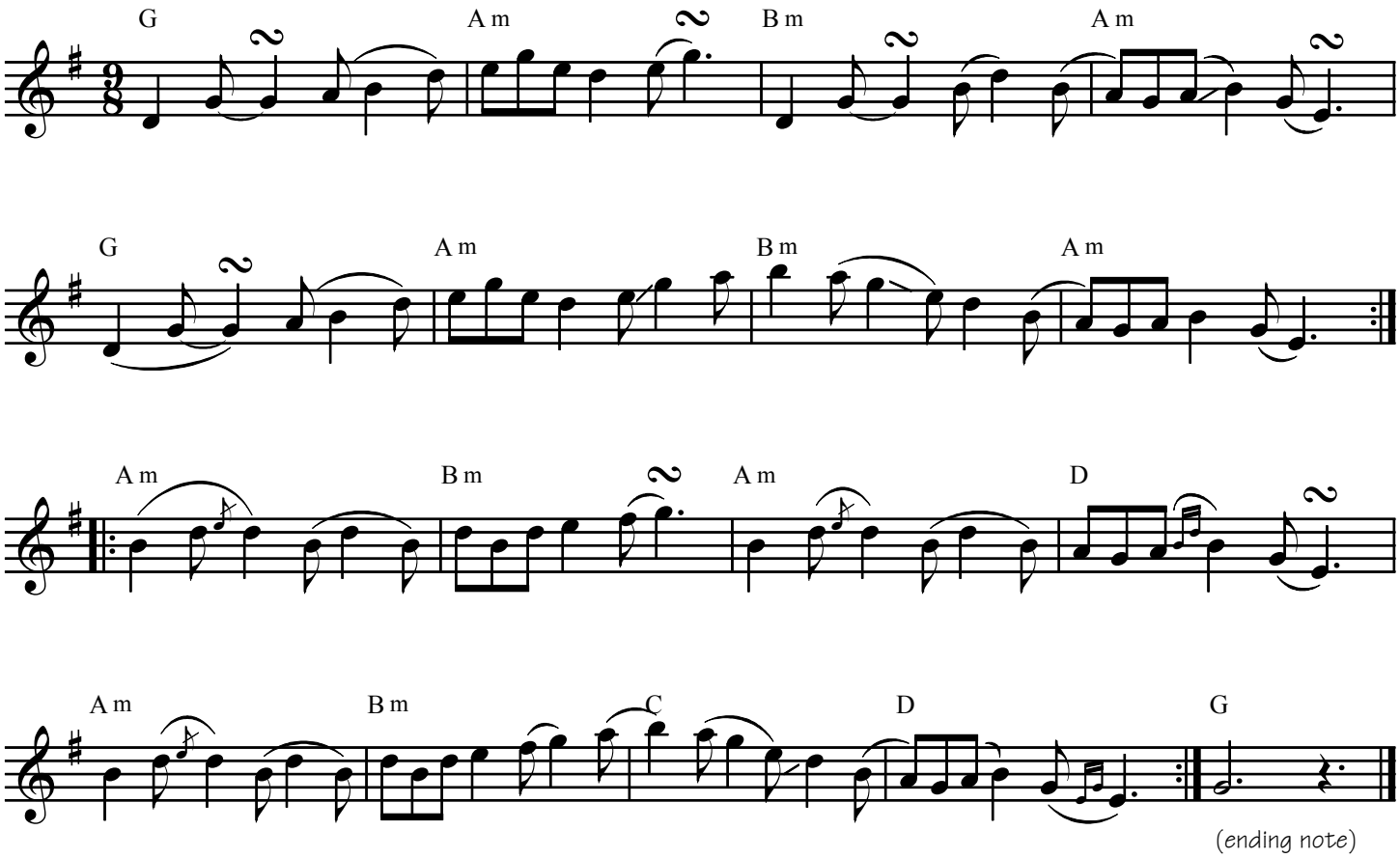


The Boys of Ballysodare

(more ornamented version)

I can't show exactly what Gordon's playing at every moment, since he plays each section four times, each time a little differently. But I have written down some samples of the bowings and ornaments he is doing, to help you figure them out if you want to fancy the tune up a bit.

Tracks 12-13



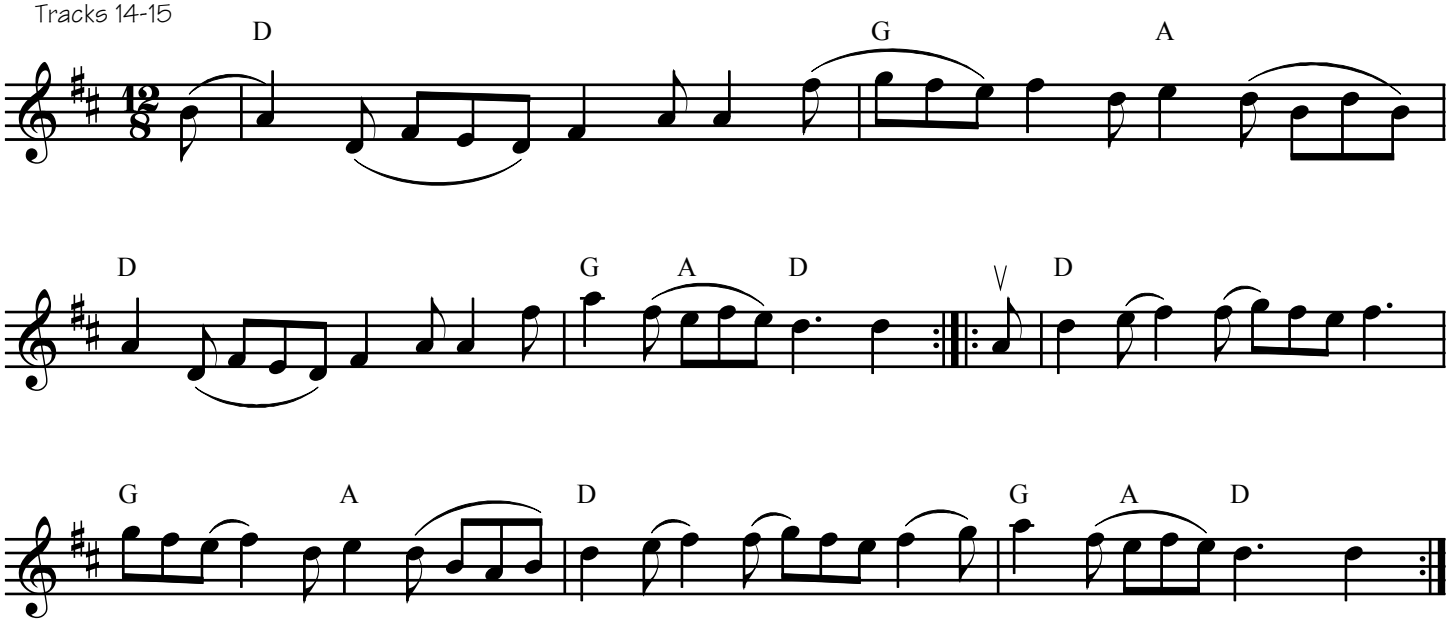
(ending note)

Denis Murphy's

A Slide in the Key of D

Denis Murphy was a well-known fiddler from the Sliabh Luachra area of Ireland where polkas and slides are frequently danced. Denis and his sister Julia Clifford learned fiddle from Padraig O'Keefe, also a well-known fiddler who wrote many tunes.

Tracks 14-15

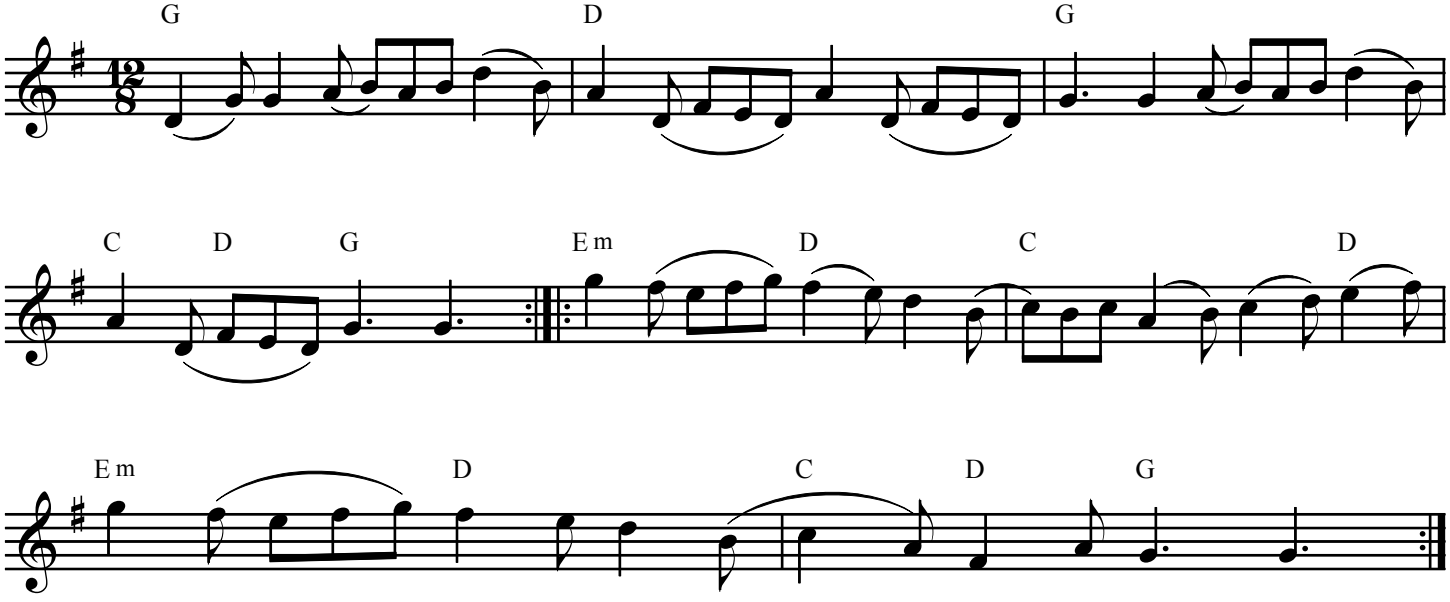


The Brosna Slide

A Slide in the Key of G

These two slides make a great set when put with Mick Duggan's Slide from the 2009 Youth Camp CD. You can try putting the tunes in different orders to see what you like best. Mick Duggan's/ Denis Murphy's/ Brosna is one order that works well.

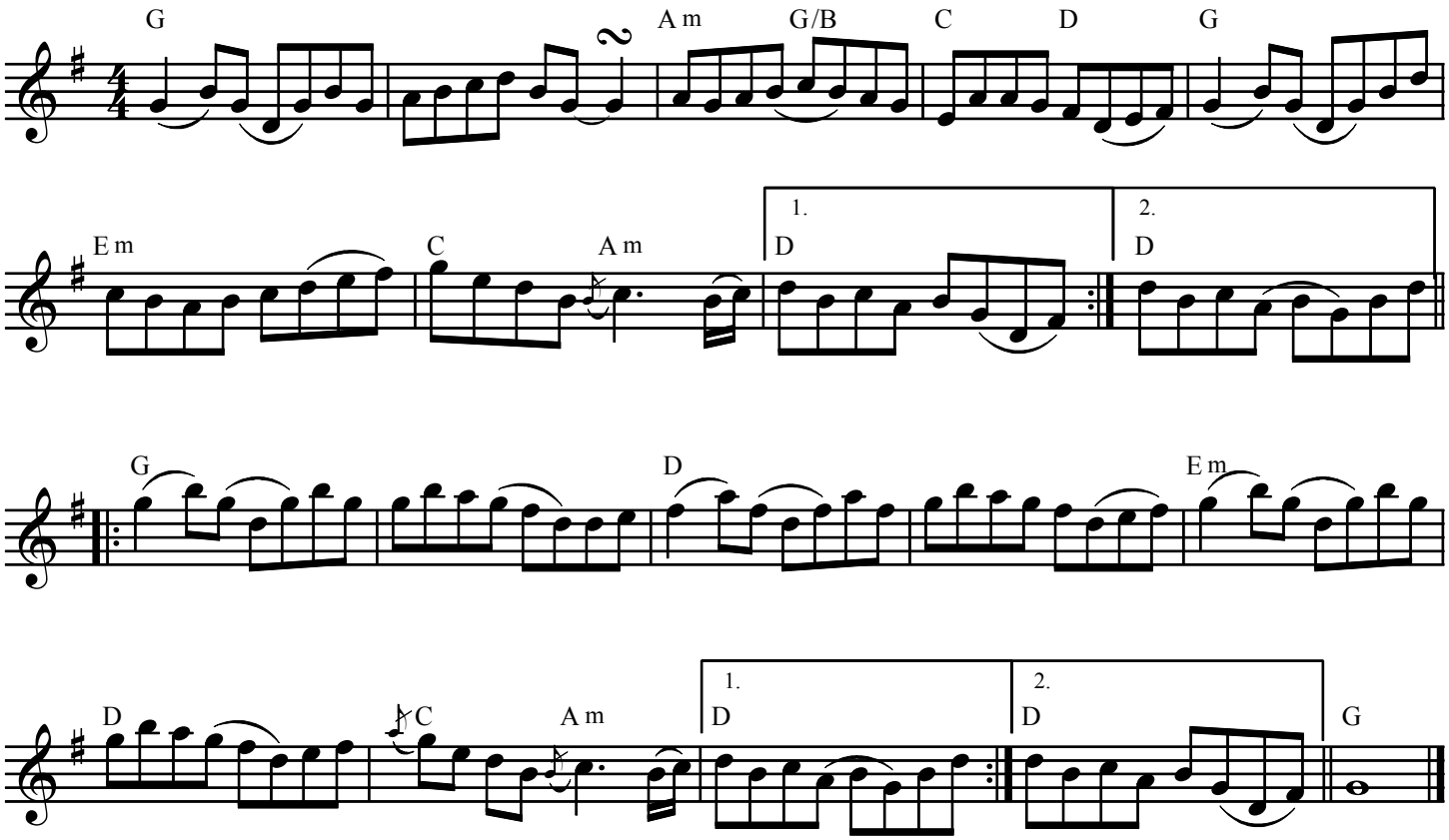
Tracks 16-17



Sheehan's

A Reel in the Key of G

Tracks 18-19

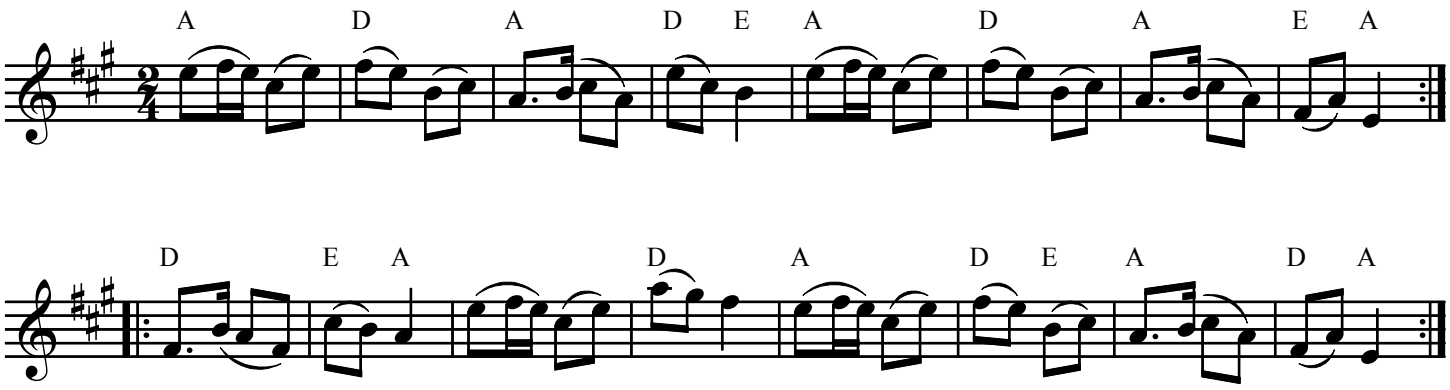


Jessica's Polka

Key of A

written by Mick Hanly for his daughter Jessica

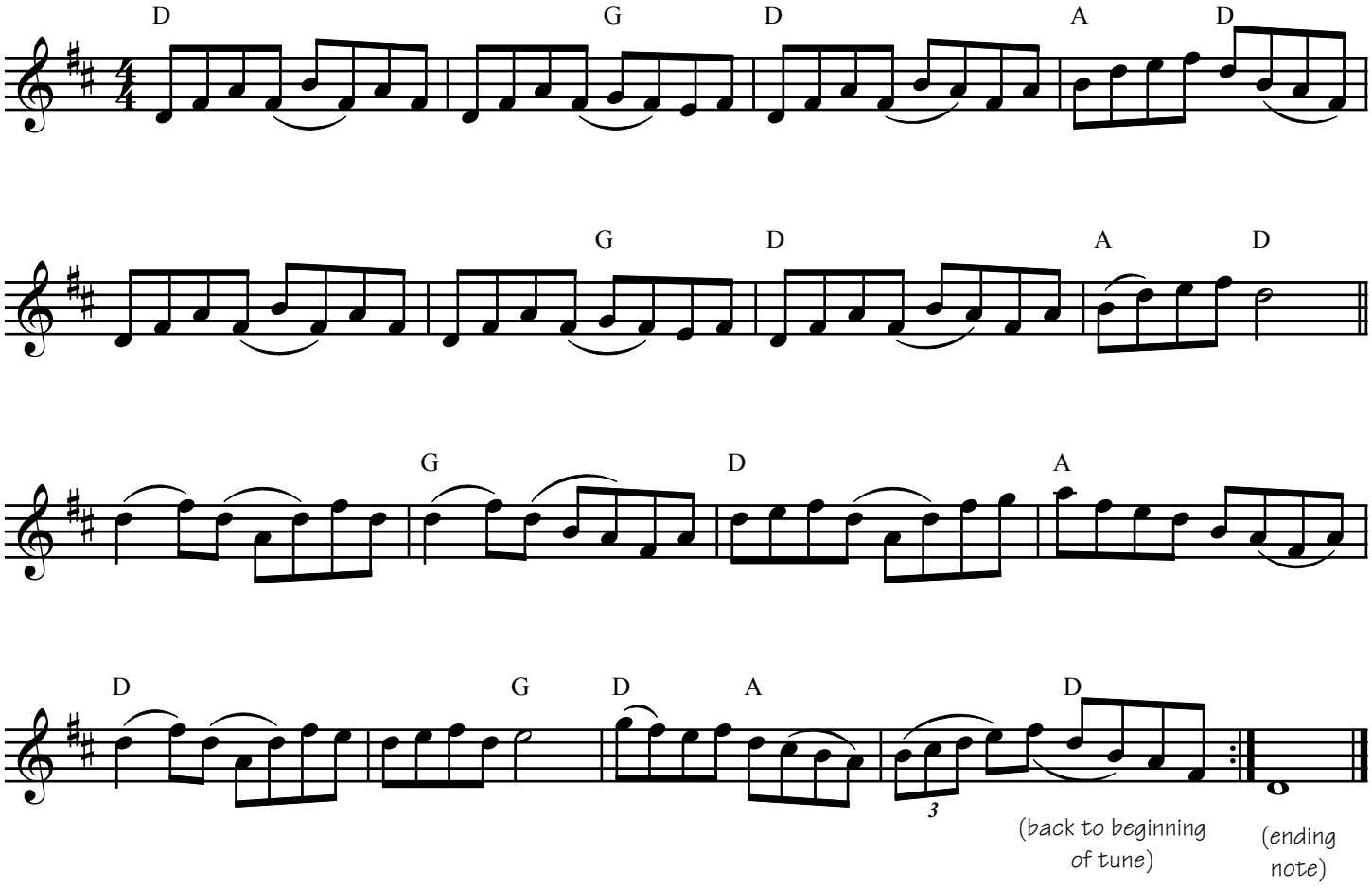
Tracks 20-21



The Doon Reel

Key of D

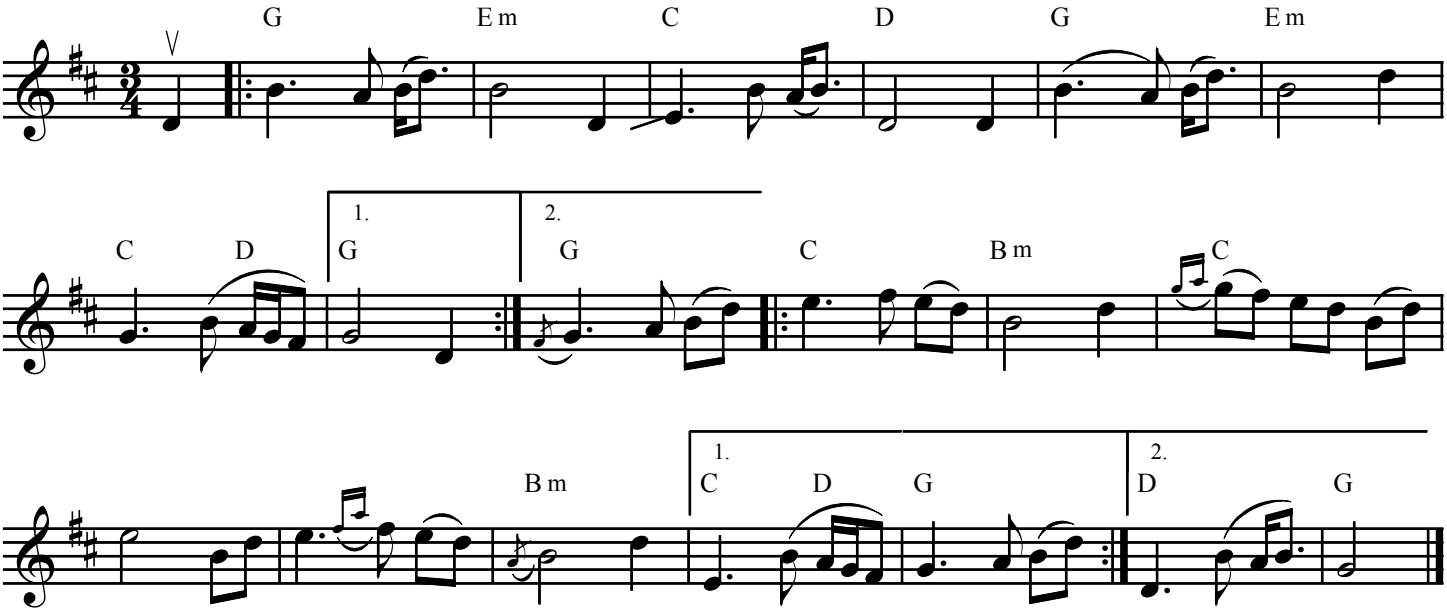
Tracks 22-23



Inisheer

A Waltz in the Key of G

Track 24

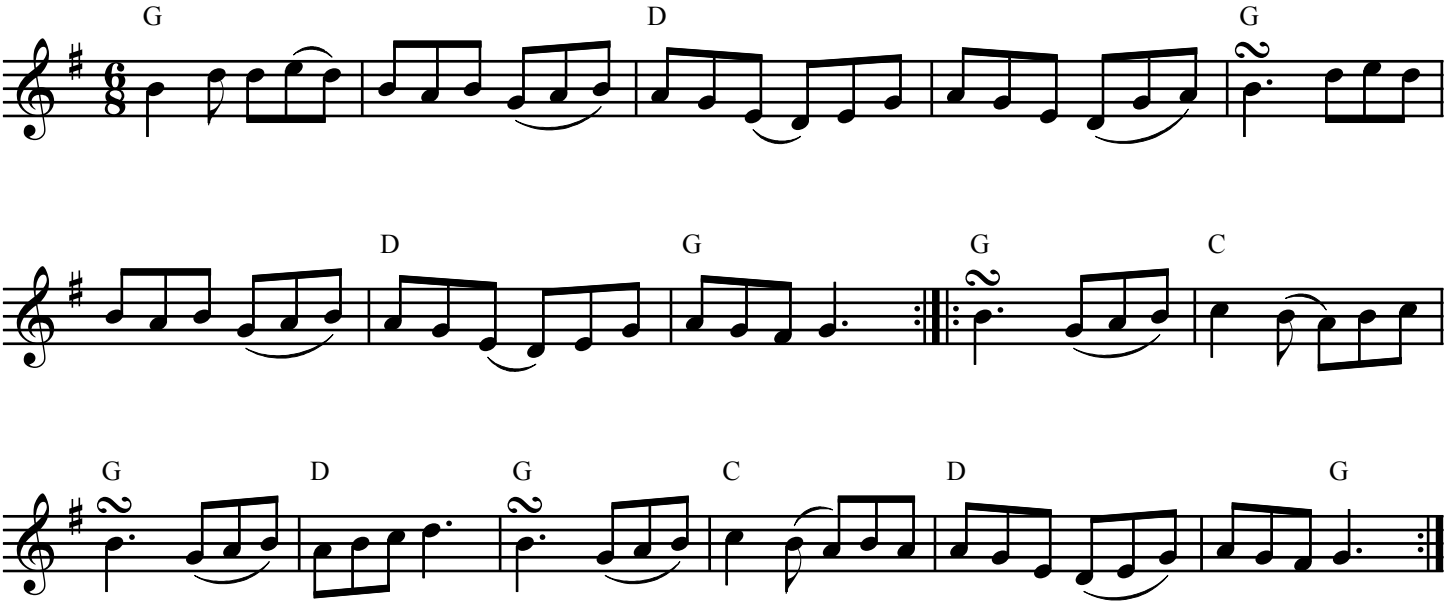


John McHugh's Jig

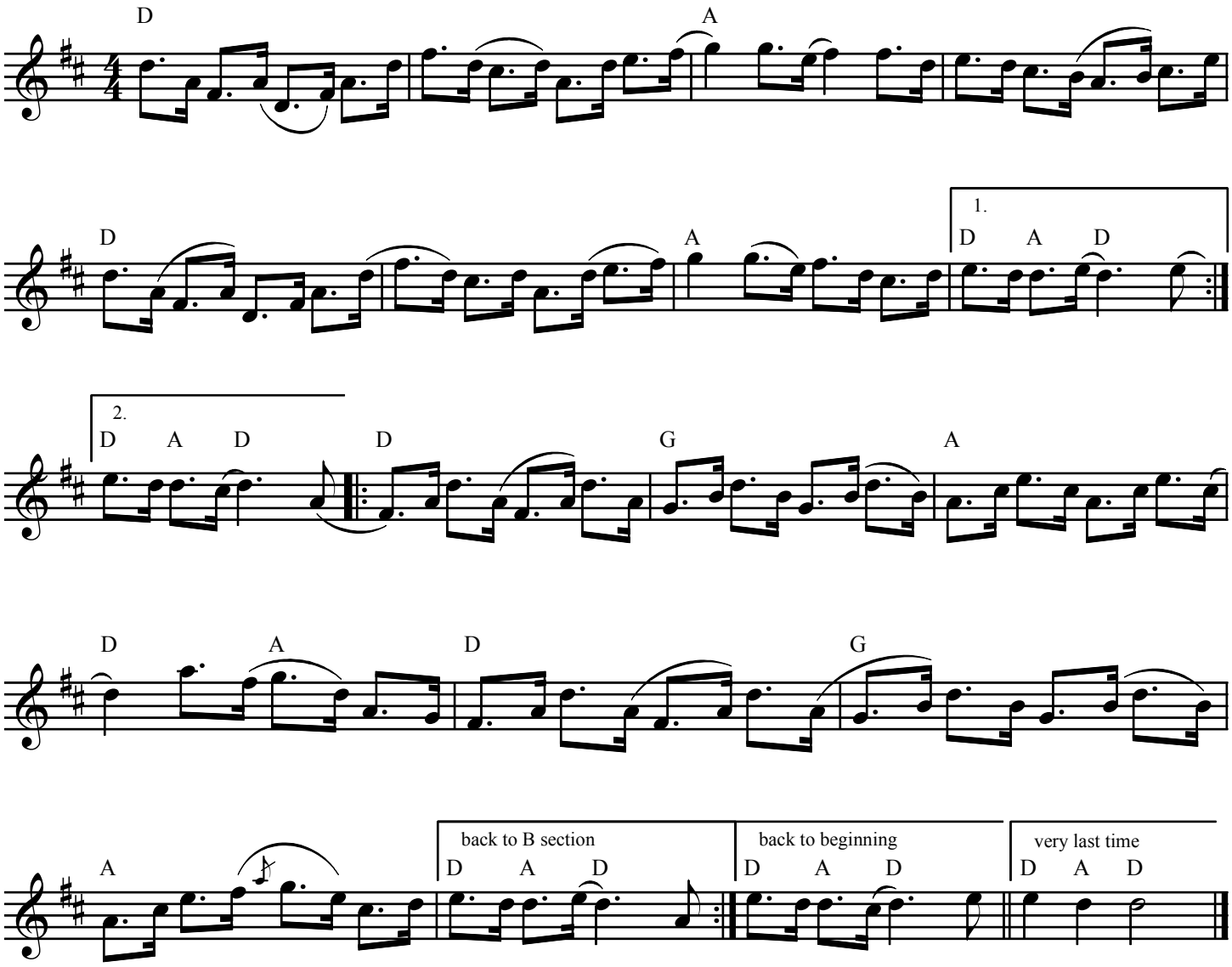
Key of G

On the CD Daniel does several interesting variations on the B's that start each phrase (beginning of measures 1, 5, 9, 13). I can't write them all down here, but see if you can figure out what he's doing by listening several times. Of course you don't have to do them exactly in the same places he does-- just try them to get an idea of some things you could substitute for what's written here.

Tracks 25-26



Alexander's Hornpipe

Key of D

Tracks 27-28