A Louth Lilt

Original Compositions by
Adèle Commins and Daithí Kearney

A collection of tunes in the Irish traditional idiom
composed by Adèle Commins and Daithí Kearney.

First published in May 2017 by
Dundalk Institute of Technology

All tunes composed by Adèle Commins and Daithí Kearney
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Foreward

Adèle and Daithí selected this collection of tunes from a variety of pieces that they have composed over the past two decades. Most remained private for many years, while others gradually disseminated through friends, sessions and shows. Having played music together in a variety of contexts over the past few years and sharing our tunes with each other, we decided to develop the *A Louth Lilt* project in 2016. For our first album, we selected thirty-three tunes to record that we are delighted to present in this book, on our website and on CD.

The ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl (1990: 5) notes that the initial impetus to compose tunes in traditional music is often a personal exercise. We hope that through sharing our tunes here, which were born out of our personal experiences and impetus, they will be enhanced through a new life in the hands of others. Already, we have influenced each other, as others we have played with and learned from have influenced us. Recently, Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin (2016) has highlighted the nomadic nature of Irish traditional music and its existence as musical practice around the globe, the connections between music and places and the influence of personalities on its ongoing evolution. This collection includes jigs, reels, hornpipes, polkas, marches, a waltz, an air, a planxty and some others influenced by our musical travels. Some of the tunes draw their inspiration from our relationship, our friends and family and places close to us. Others were written on planes, trains and automobiles on our travels.

There are many great composers in the Irish tradition whose tunes have been assimilated into the tradition. We have enjoyed playing tunes by Ed Reavy, Paddy O'Brien, Seán Ryan, Paddy Fahy, Charlie Lennon, John Brady, Tommy Peoples, Brendan McGlinchey, Peadar O'Riada, Liz Carroll and many more alongside tunes whose composers have been forgotten by the tradition. Friends Brian O'Kane, Josephine Keegan, Tommie Cunniffe, Rory Kennedy, James Alexander, Nicky McAulliffe and Tom Hanafin have composed tunes that we play and teach in our sessions, performance and classes. We hope that our tunes can become part of this ever-broadening soundscape and are enjoyed by people all around the world.

This booklet is only one step in a process. As Dowling notes, 'the vast majority of new compositions languish in printed collections, on commercial CDs, or in the repertoire of isolated practitioners' (2011: 154). We hope that you will help give these tunes life beyond these pages in new places around the world. We will be delighted if, as Andrew Hillhouse notes in his dissertation, musicians at sessions use our recordings to learn new tunes that become assimilated into local scenes and communities based on the tastes and choices of those communities. We hope that this publication enables those who like our compositions to learn and share the music, choosing what they themselves like for inclusion. We hope that you will 'vote collectively with your fingers' (Dowling, 2011: 154) and chose to perform and play these tunes as part of your repertoire. Perhaps we will meet and share a few tunes in a session soon.

Adèle and Daithí, May 2017

References:

Dowling, Martin, 2011. 'Composers and Composition' in *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music*, 153-154. Ed. Fintan Vallely. Cork: Cork University Press.
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Nettl, Bruno, 1990. *Folk and Traditional Music of the Western Continents.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Ó hAllmhuráin, Gearóid, 2016. *Flowing Tides: History and Memory in an Irish Soundscape*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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Adèle Commins and Daithí Kearney

Musicologist Dr Adèle Commins is Head of Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music at Dundalk Institute of Technology. A graduate of NUI Maynooth with first class honours degrees in Music and Irish and Higher Diploma in Education, she also holds an ALCM and LGSMD in piano performance and performs regularly in two local churches. Recordings include a track on the *Bunch of Keys Volume 3* (2014) and as lead soloist on 'Wake up the World', included on the *Journey to Your Heart* (2016) compilation CD. Growing up in Louth, Adèle developed a deep love of local heritage and of traditional music under the influence of her teacher Rory Kennedy. Playing both piano and piano accordion, she began composing at a young age, with many of her tunes inspired by the people and places around her, as well as her experiences of playing in local céilí bands.

Ethnomusicologist and geographer Dr Daithí Kearney is a graduate of University College Cork and director of the DkIT *Ceol Oirghialla* Traditional Ensemble. An All-Ireland champion musician, he has toured and recorded as a musician, singer and dancer with a number of groups including Siamsa Tíre, The National Folk Theatre of Ireland, and performed for President Obama in The White House. A former member of the band Nuada (*Open the Door for 3*, 2004), he recorded the critically acclaimed album *Midleton Rare* with accordion player John Cronin in 2012 and continues to tour regularly. In 2013 he performed with Conor Moriarty (button accordion) and Leonard Casey (guitar, vocals) at the National Folk Festival of Australia. Daithí has taught with a number of branches of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann throughout Ireland.

Both Adèle and Daithí toured North and South America in 2014; France, Canada and Scotland in 2016; and Norway in 2017 and their publications include contributions to *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (ed. Vallely, 2012) and the *Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland* (ed. White and Boydell, 2013). Their research interests expand beyond Irish traditional music to include the music of Irish composers, the scholarship of teaching and learning and new creative arts practices. They supervise postgraduate research in music and at all times hope to disseminate the outcomes of their research amongst their communities.

Acknowledgements

We are indebted to the support of our parents and families, our teachers, students and those who shared their music with us.

We would also like to thank the support of Dundalk Institute of Technology, in particular Dr Gerard Bob McKiernan and the School of Informatics and Creative Arts, Dr Tim McCormac and the Research Office, Stephanie Caffrey, Hannah Conroy, Derek Farrell, Seán Keegan, John McCallig, Lorna O'Connor, JJ Quinlan, Joske Slabbers, Terri Smith and Kial Wallace.

The audio recordings of these tunes were made with support from the DkIT Research Office under the Summer Undergraduate Research Programme and are available on the album *A Louth Lilt*.

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Tune Information

1. Porto Alegre's Dream 2 / The Bus Ticket / The Priest's Polka
The first set begins with a tune composed for our friends in Bando Celta in Brazil where we were fortunate to travel to in 2014. It is followed by two tunes composed for a stage production entitled *To Stay or Leave* (2005). The first was notated on the back of a bus ticket on a journey between Cork and Tralee and finishes with a tune dedicated to Pat Ahern, a significant influence on Daithí.

2. Life is for Learning / Life is for Living
'Life is for Learning' was composed for the retirement in 2013 of Dr John Dallat, our colleague at Dundalk Institute of Technology, and recognises our role as educators. Life is also for living and we must remember to make the most of life, learning as we go.

3. Blue Boats / Lough Ennell
In Brian Friel's play *Philadelphia Here I Come*, the character Gar remembers a happy day with his father in a blue boat. These tunes were composed on a particularly happy day in 2014 as we sat and relaxed on a quiet pier by a lake. The boat may have been blue.

4. From Kerry with Love / From Louth with Love
This waltz and march were composed as gifts for our parents as a special memory of our wedding in 2015.

5. Trip to Tivoli / Porchetta Reel
The 'Italian Reels' were composed during a memorable trip to Italy in 2007 when Daithí stayed with Vincenzo Appolini. They were inspired by a visit to the Tivoli Gardens and a wonderful lunch provided by Marco Fabri at the school of music.

6. Bluebells of Love / Rí an Rátha
Patrick Kavanagh's poem 'Bluebells for Love' was published in June 1945, inspired by a walk he took with his love Hilda Moriarty in the wooded demesne of Lord Dunsany's estate in Co. Meath. We have encountered the poem in various contexts, including at Dublin Airport and on a card and the tune itself was composed after a performance at the Patrick Kavanagh Centre in Inniskeen, Co. Monaghan in 2014. 'Rí an Rátha' refers to a fort at the back of Adèle's childhood home near Tallanstown, Co. Louth and was composed in 2002.

7. Durham Bells / A Brazilian Adventure / Coming Home Soon
The first of these polkas was inspired by the wonderful cathedral in Durham which both Adèle and Daithí have visited on various occasions during music conferences, including in 2010 when this was composed. 'A Brazilian Adventure' was started in Cork while teaching for Music Generation and completed a few days later during a trip to Brazil with a group of students from Dundalk Institute of Technology in 2014. The final tune from 2016 reminds us that while travelling is all well and good, it is nice to come home too!

8. Away Too Long / Teachers Can't Count / Ryan's Hospitality
'Away Too Long' was written in 2016 during Daithí's first extended stay away from Adèle after their wedding. It is followed by two jigs he previously recorded with the band Nuada on the album *Open the Door for 3* in 2004. The first was named by bandmate Jeremy Spencer during a frustrating rehearsal and the second is dedicated to Matt and Bid Ryan in New Ross with whom Daithí stayed with while in the south east.

9. Road to Dundalk / Ferdia's Battle
Adèle has always enjoyed marches fondly recounting playing marches during her céilí band days as a teenager under the influence of Rory Kennedy. The first was written in 1997 as a girl living on the road to Dundalk, not far from Ardee where Ferdia's heroic battle with Cú Chulainn took place in the Táin legend.

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10. A Telemark Tune
'A Telemark Tune' was written in the dormitory of the Rauland campus during a memorable Erasmus teaching visit in 2015 and inspired by the white landscapes of the Norwegian winter and evenings surrounded by Hardanger fiddlers. It is dedicated to Anon Egeland and Frode Nyvold who warmly welcomed Daithí.

11. Shoreside Strolls / Rocky Road to Kansas
Blackrock is a beautiful village near Dundalk where shoreside strolls offer beautiful views. The first was composed for Daithí's birthday in 2014. The march was written on a somewhat rocky flight from New York to Kansas where we performed at the retirement of our good friend Ray James of Baker University in 2014.

12. Sleepy Joe / Ballyholland Maiden
Adèle composed these jigs for her parents Joe and Josephine. [Although Joe is far from sleepy!]

13. Late Night Rambles to the Moon
These tunes were composed while lying awake one night thinking of the wonderful adventures life brings.

14. Porto Alegre's Dream 1 / Holding Firm / Kansas Set 2
Finishing as we started, the first is a polka inspired by our trip to Porto Alegre in 2014, a place famous for sunsets. The second tune was composed on the occasion of Adèle's Godson Michael taking his first steps in 2015. The final tune was written during our Kansas adventure in 2014, one of many wonderful trips around the world that inspired some of the music on this album.

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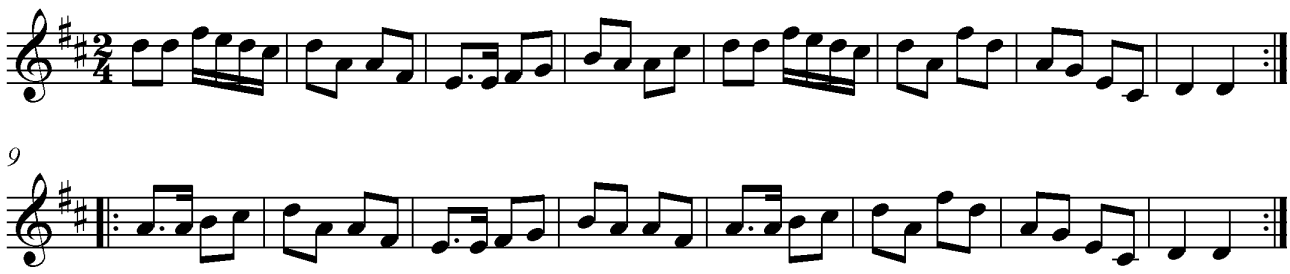
For Bando Celta

Porto Alegre's Dream 2

Adèle Commins
Porto Alegre, 19 July 2014

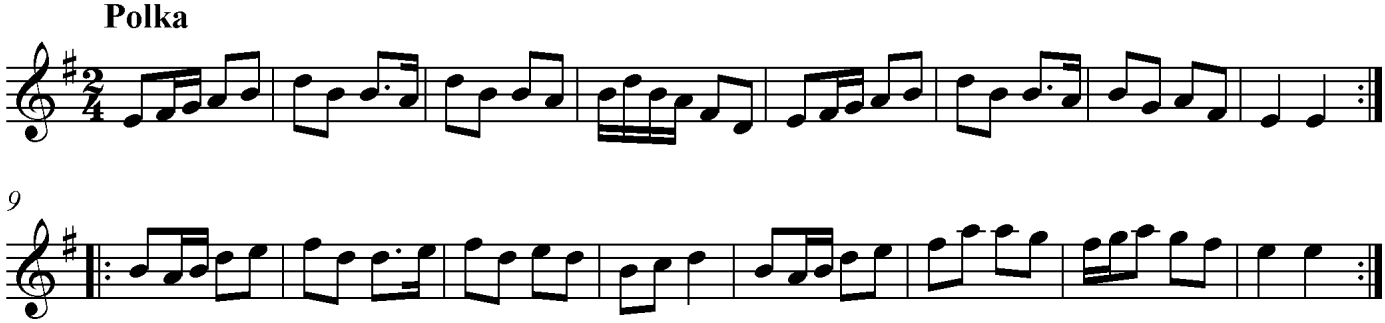
Polka



The Bus Ticket

Daithí Kearney
Cork to Tralee, *c.*2004

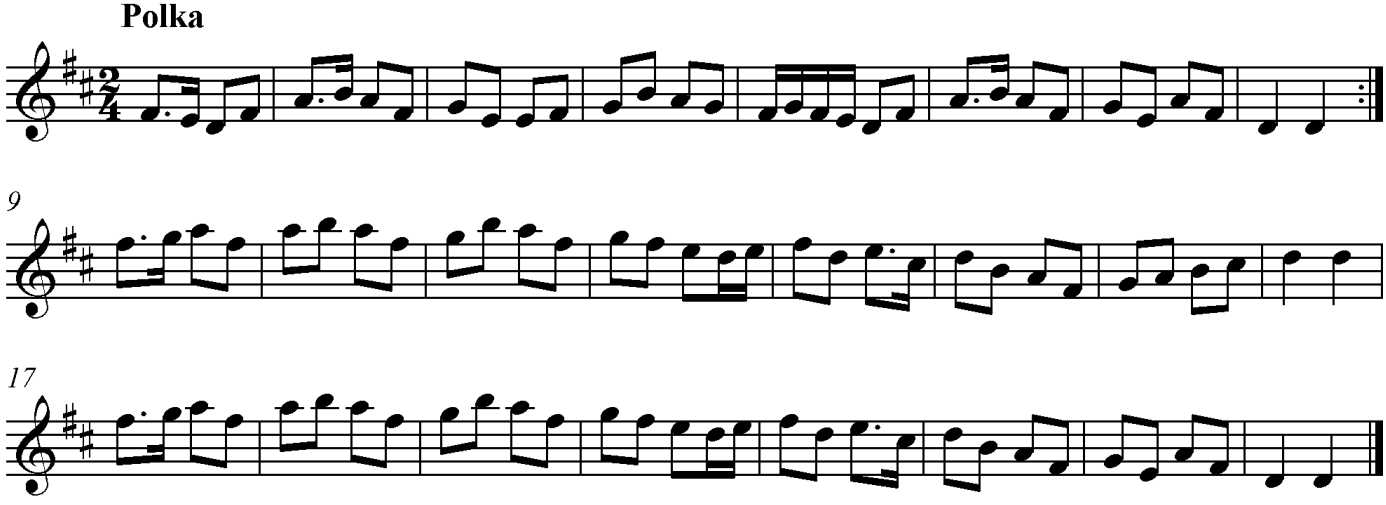
Polka



The Priest's Polka

Daithí Kearney
Cork to Tralee, *c.*2004

Polka



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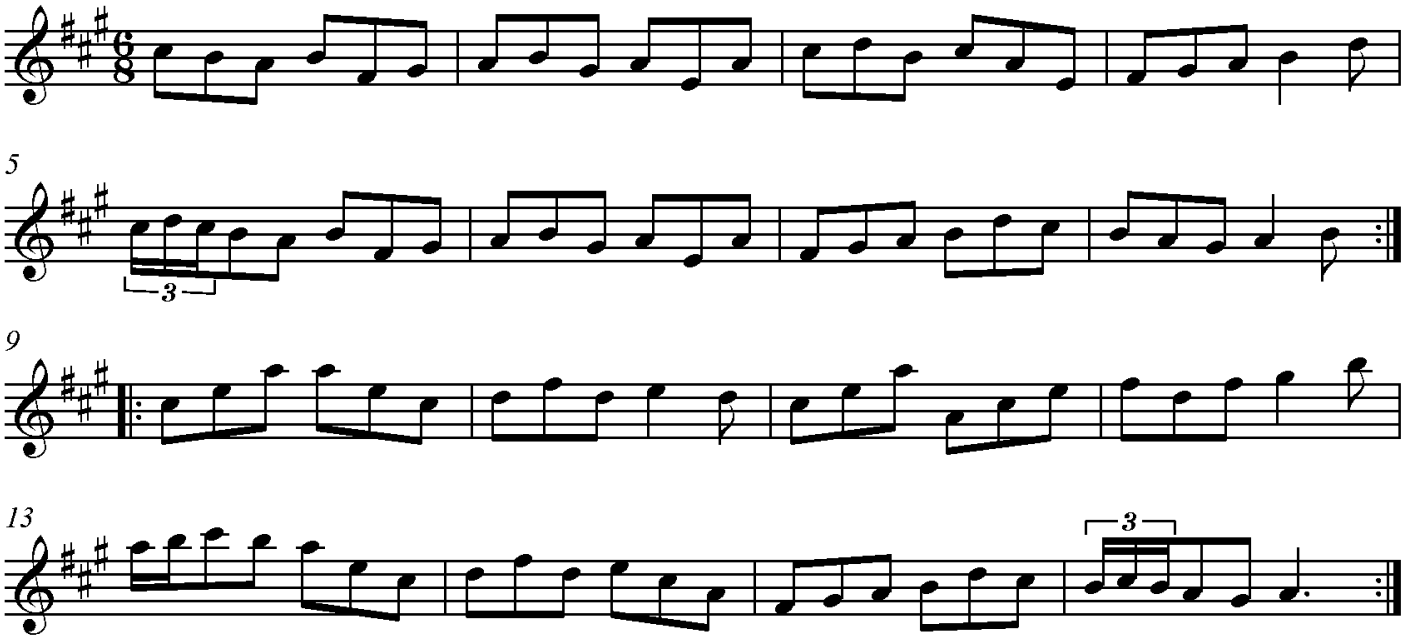
To John Dallat
to mark the occasion of his retirement from Dundalk Institute of Technology

Life is for Learning

Adèle Commins
Dundalk, June 2014

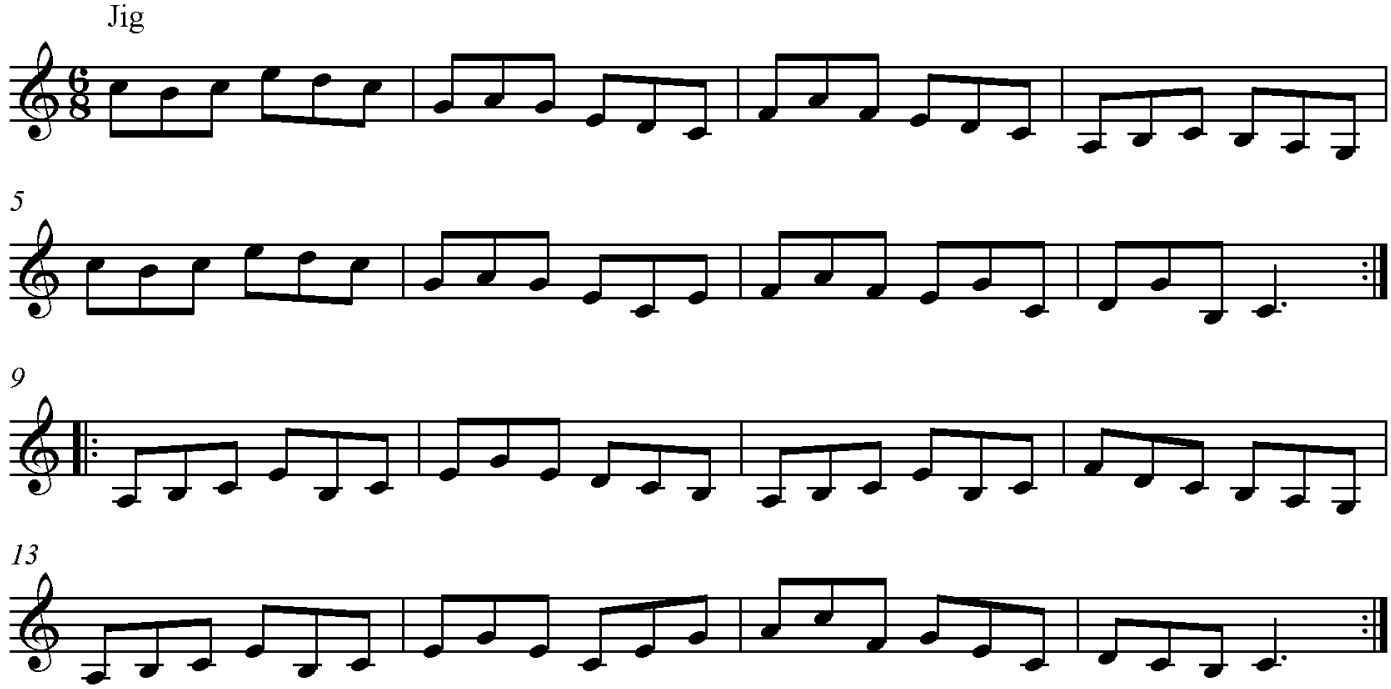
Jig



Life is for Living

Adèle Commins
Pepperstown, 18 June 2015

Jig



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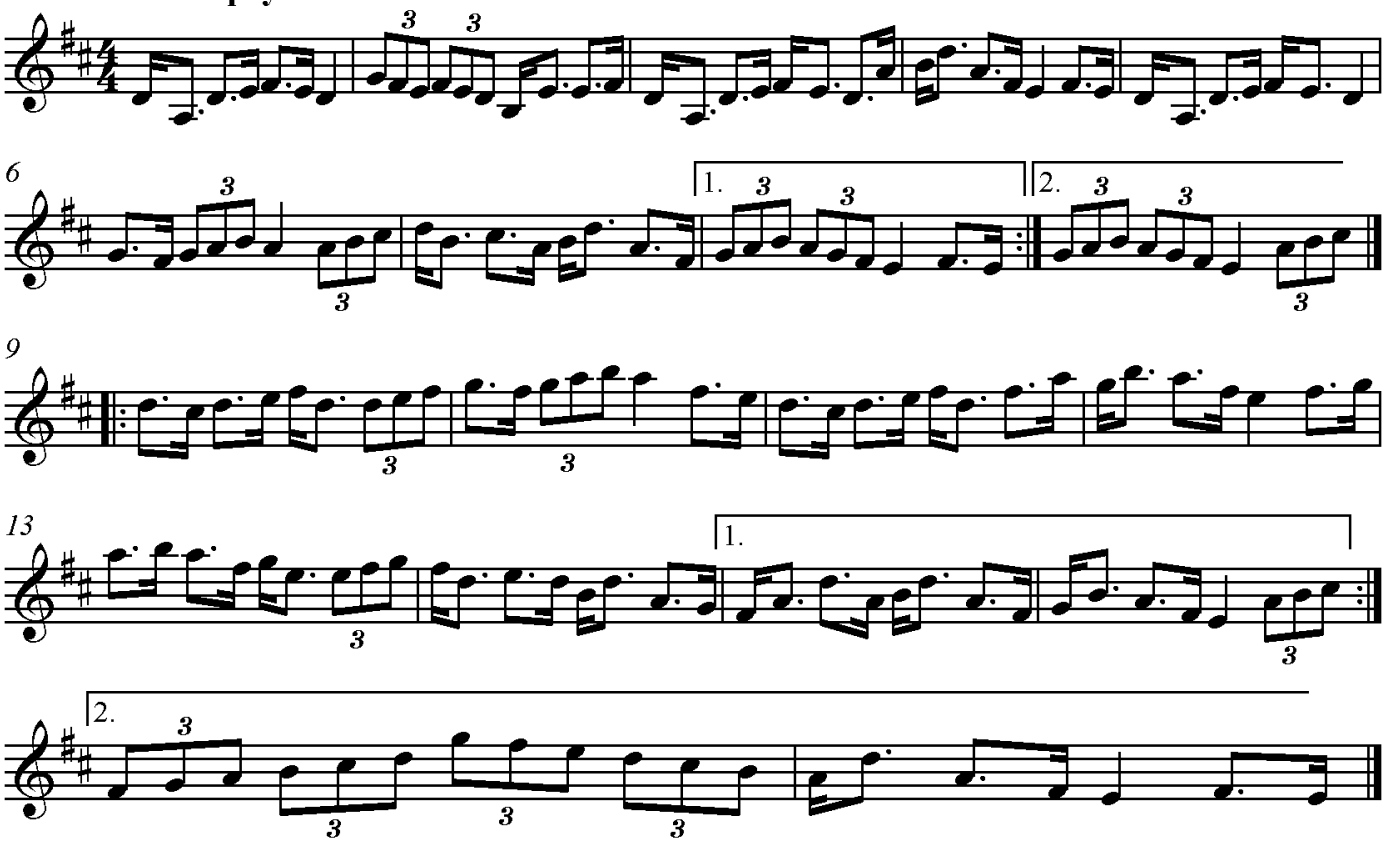
Blue Boats

Daithí Kearney
Blackrock, May 2013

Strathspey



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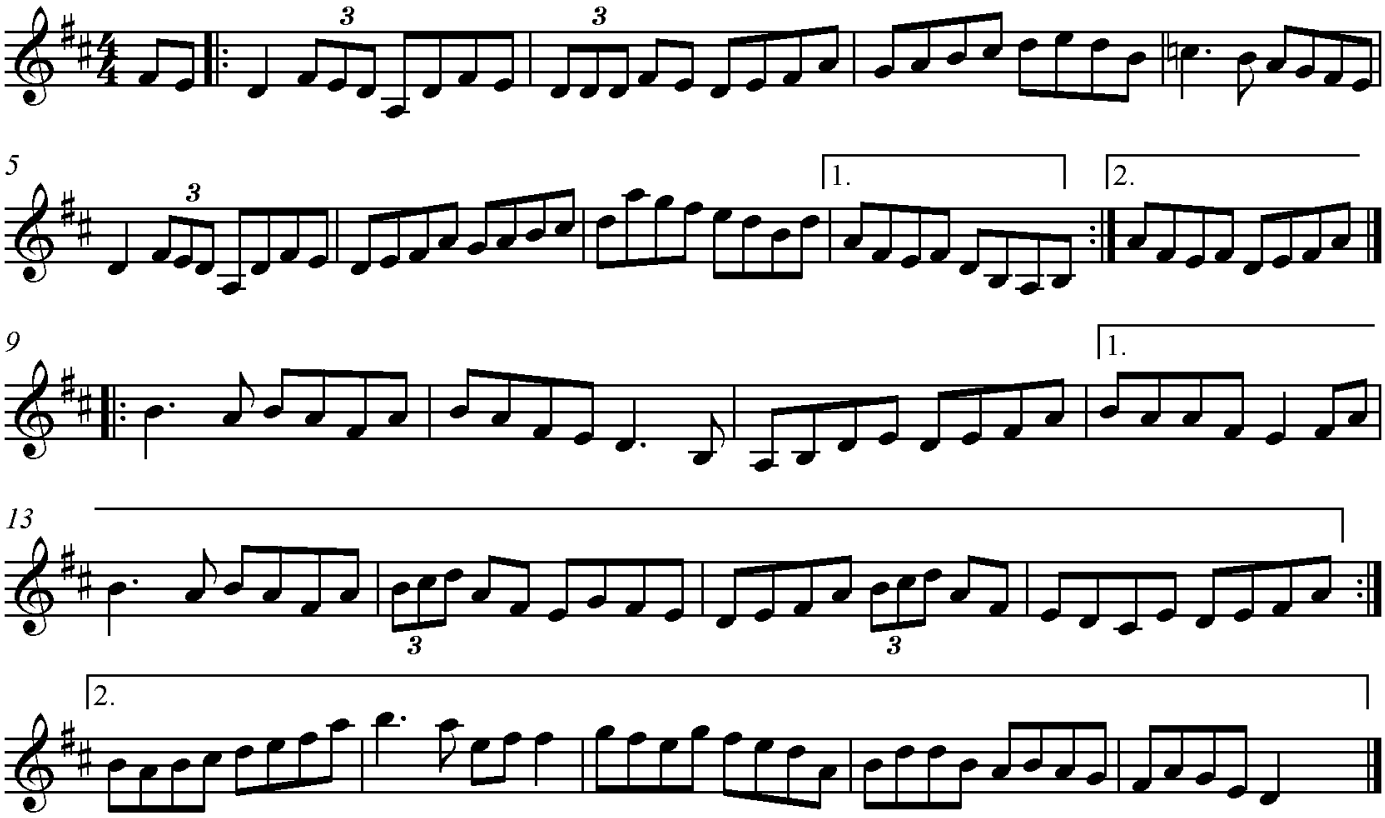
Lough Ennell

Daithí Kearney
Blackrock, May 2013

Reel



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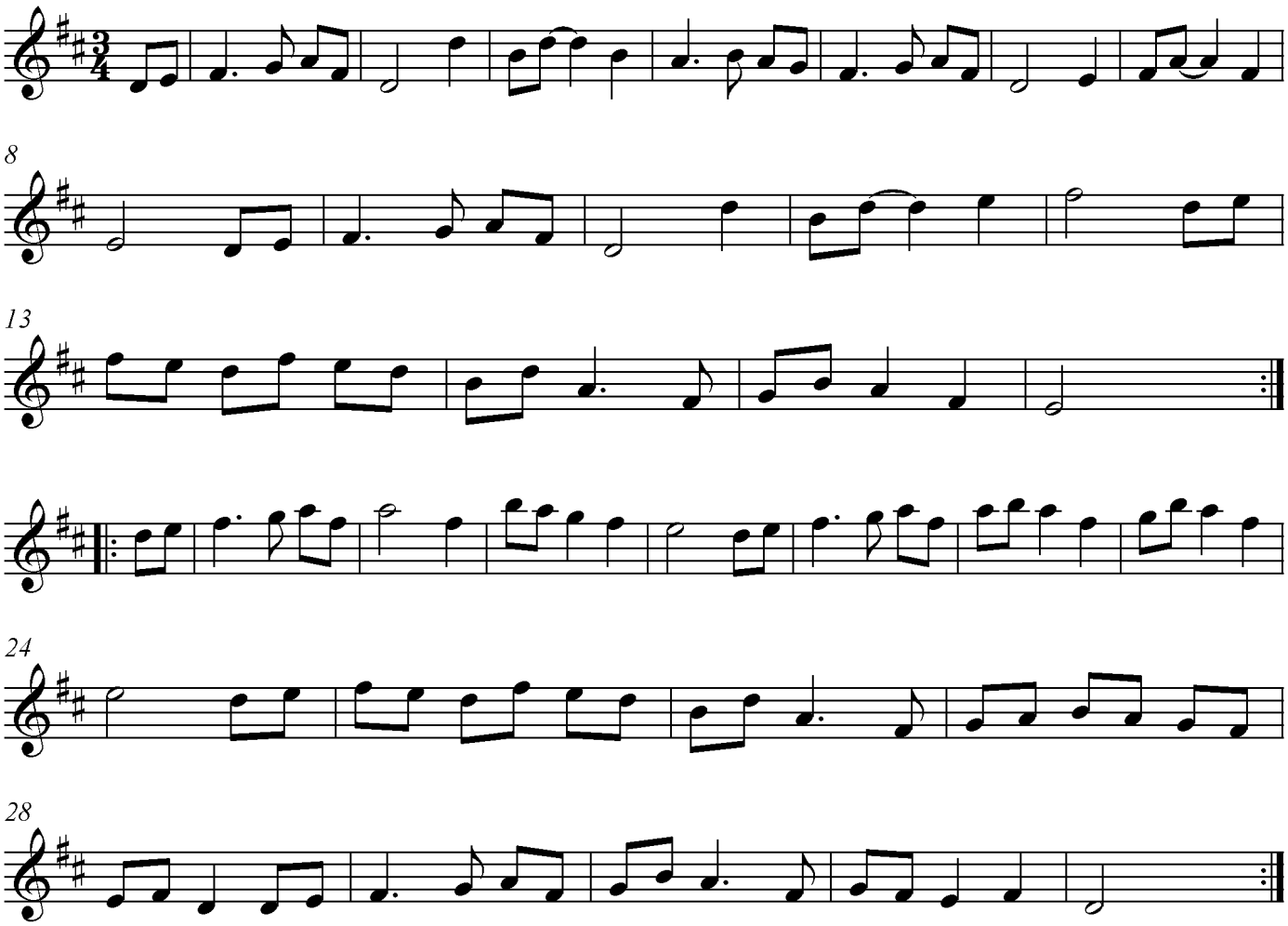
For Joe and Josephine Commins marking the wedding of Adèle and Daithí

From Tralee with Love

Daithí Kearney
Blackrock, December 2015

Waltz



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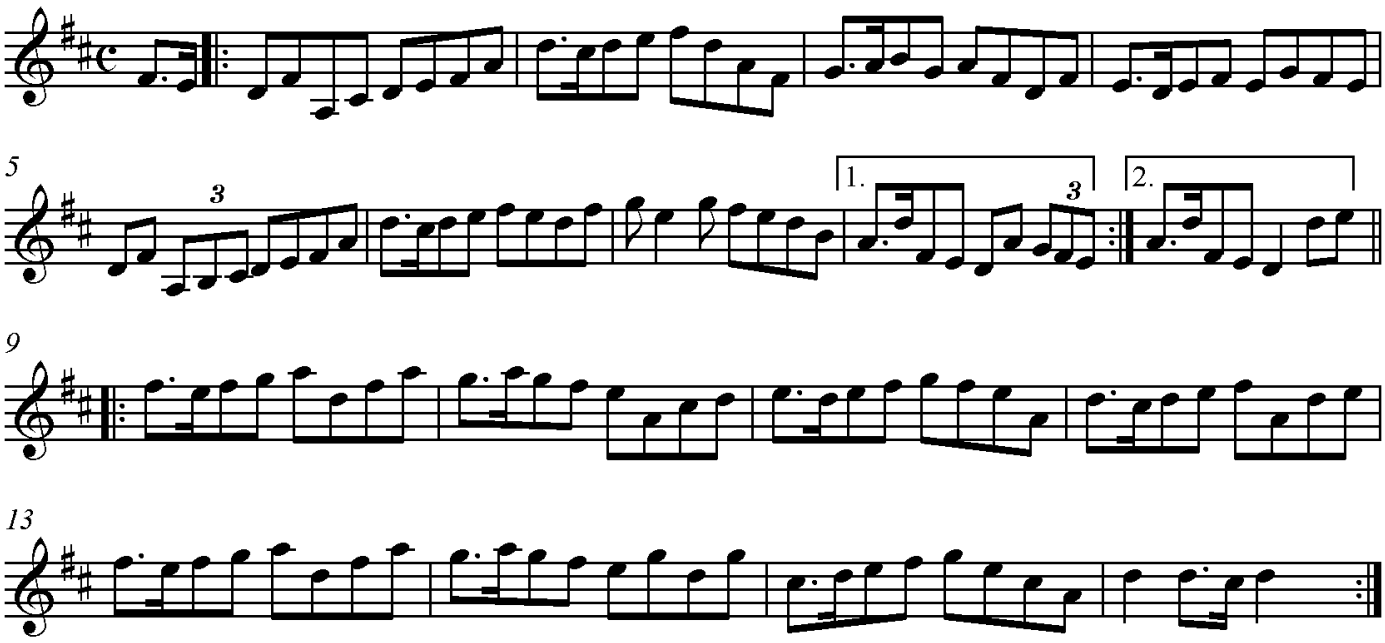
To Vincent and Breed Kearney marking the wedding of Adèle to Daithí

From Louth with Love

Adèle Commins
Pepperstown, 29 December 2015

March



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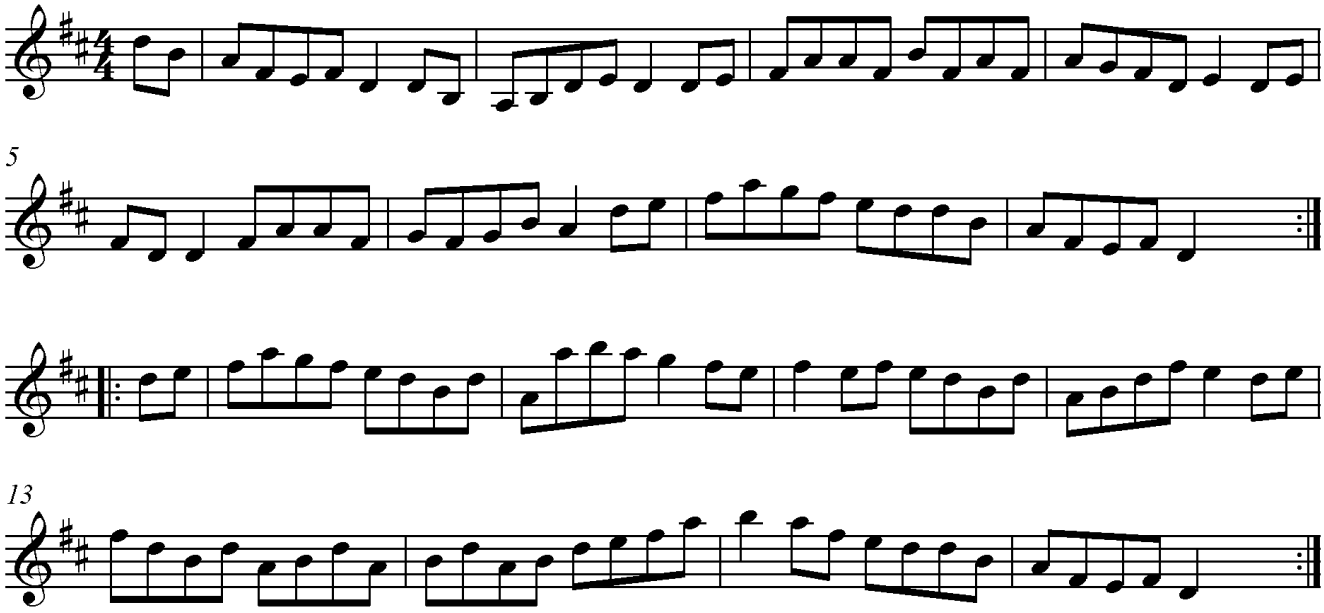
To Vincenzo Appolini for his wonderful hospitality

Trip to Tivoli

Daithí Kearney
Rome, 2007

Reel

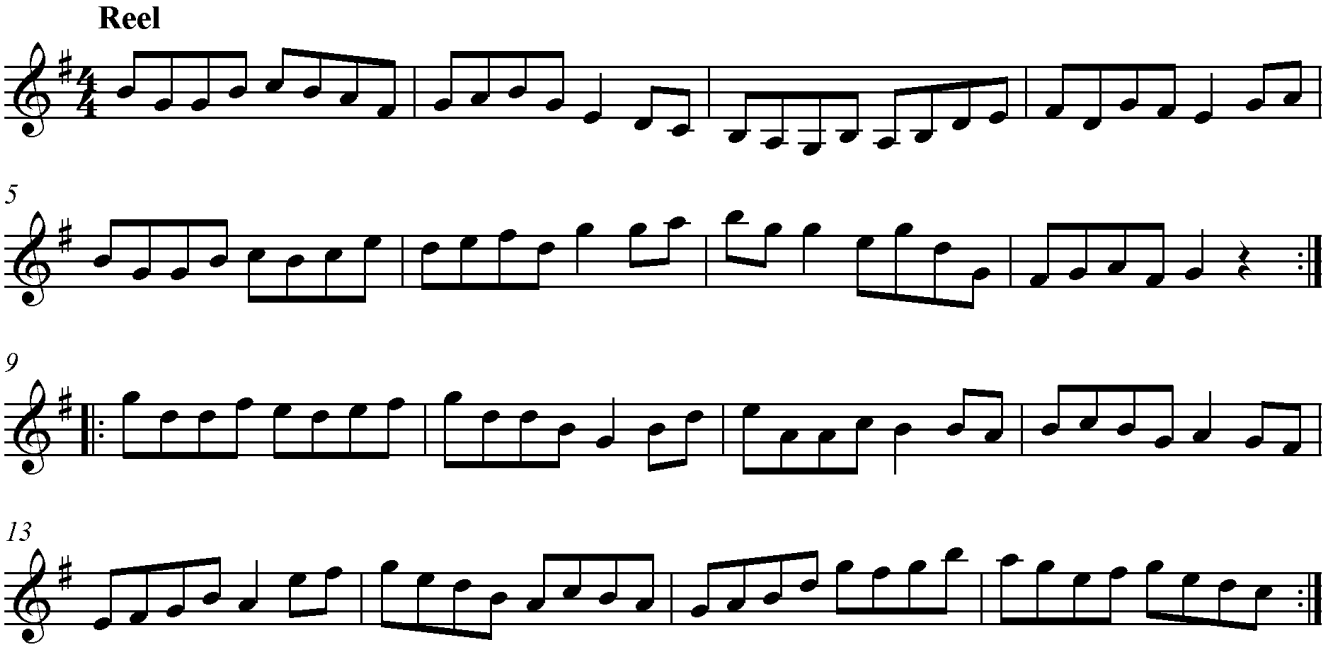


To Francesca, Pierluigi, Pino, Marco and all the gang at the Rome Fleadh

The Porchetta Reel

Daithí Kearney
Rome, 2007

Reel



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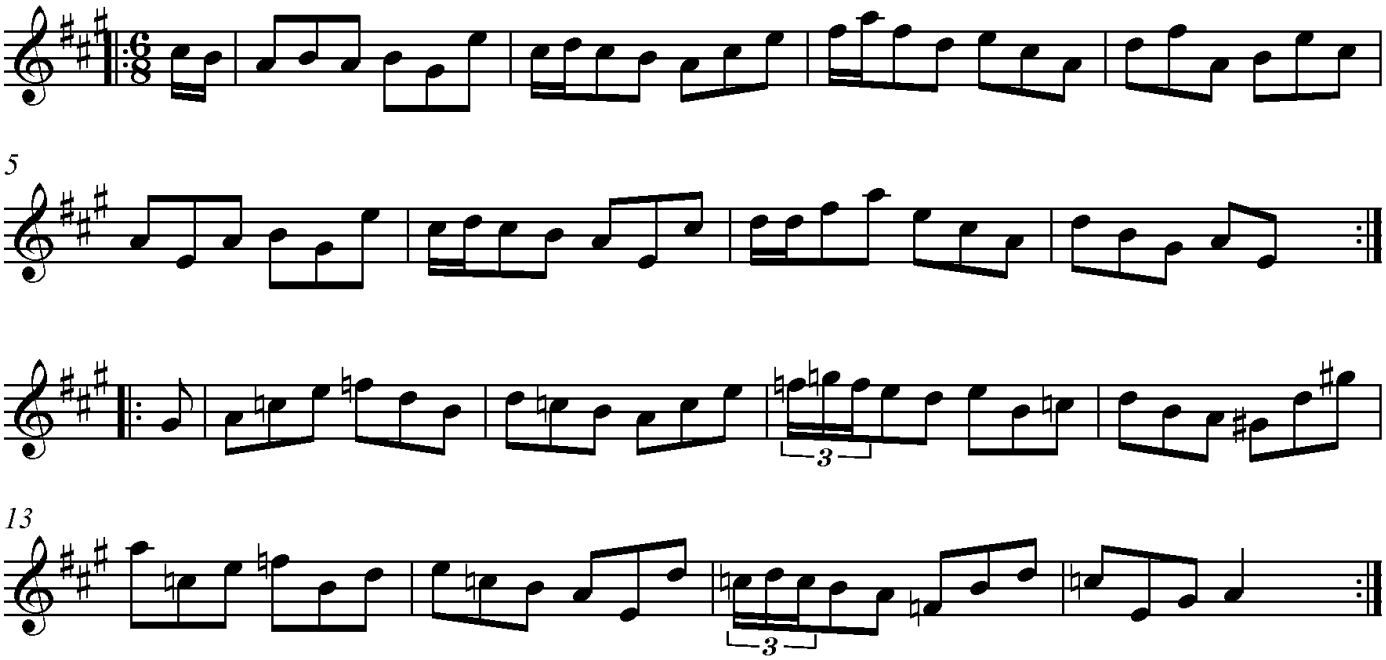
Rí an Rátha

Adèle Commins
Rathbrist, January 2002

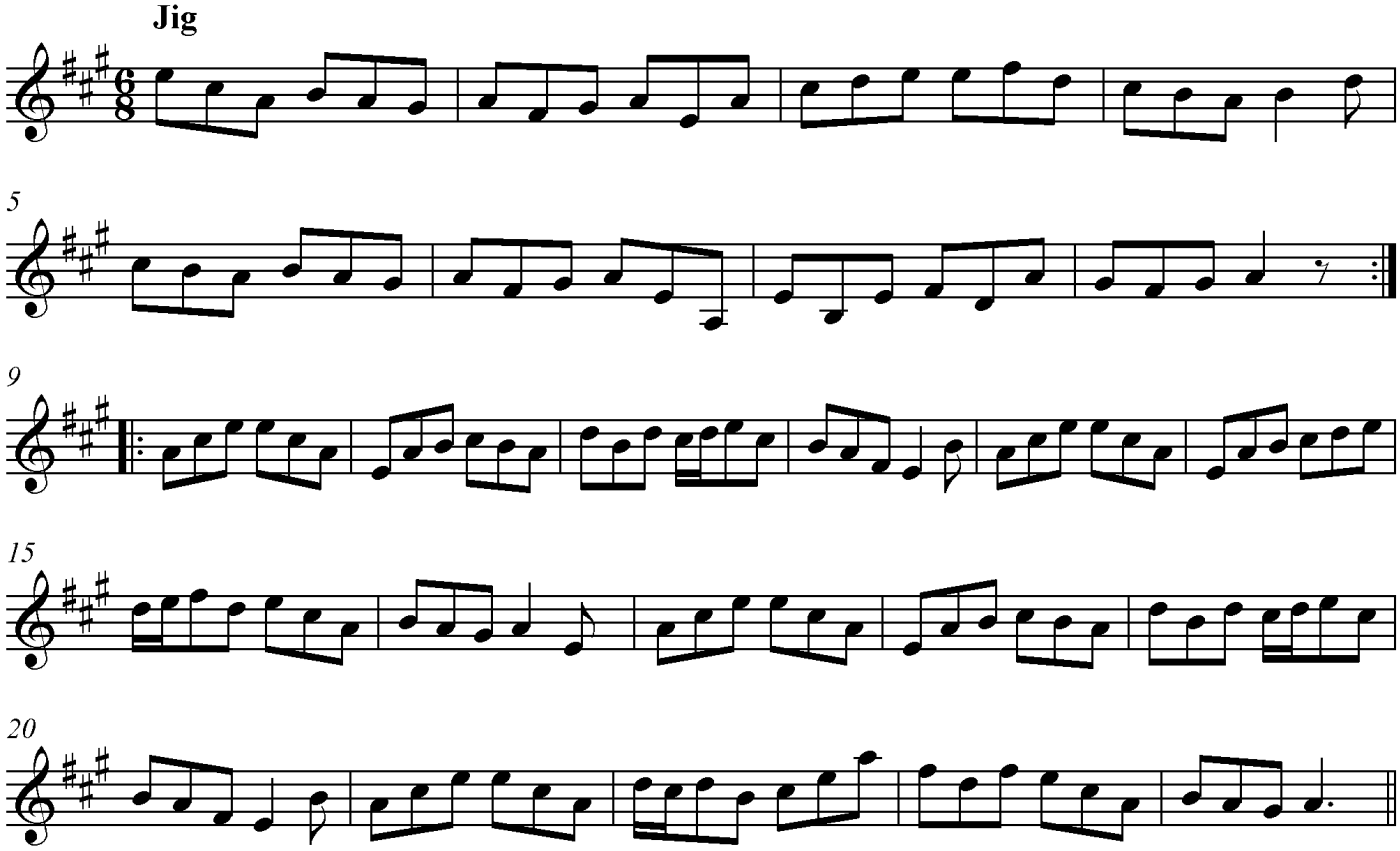
Planxty



Bluebells of Love

Adèle Commins
Pepperstown, 9 April 2014

Jig



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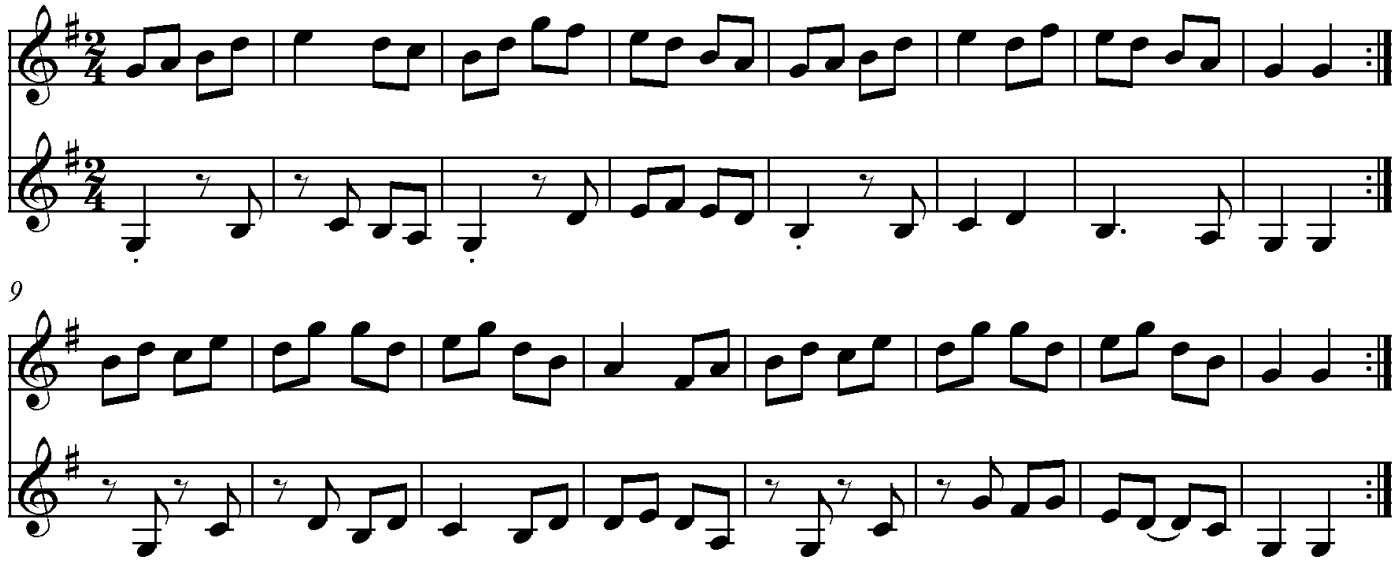
Durham Bells

Daithí Kearney
Durham, 30 March 2012

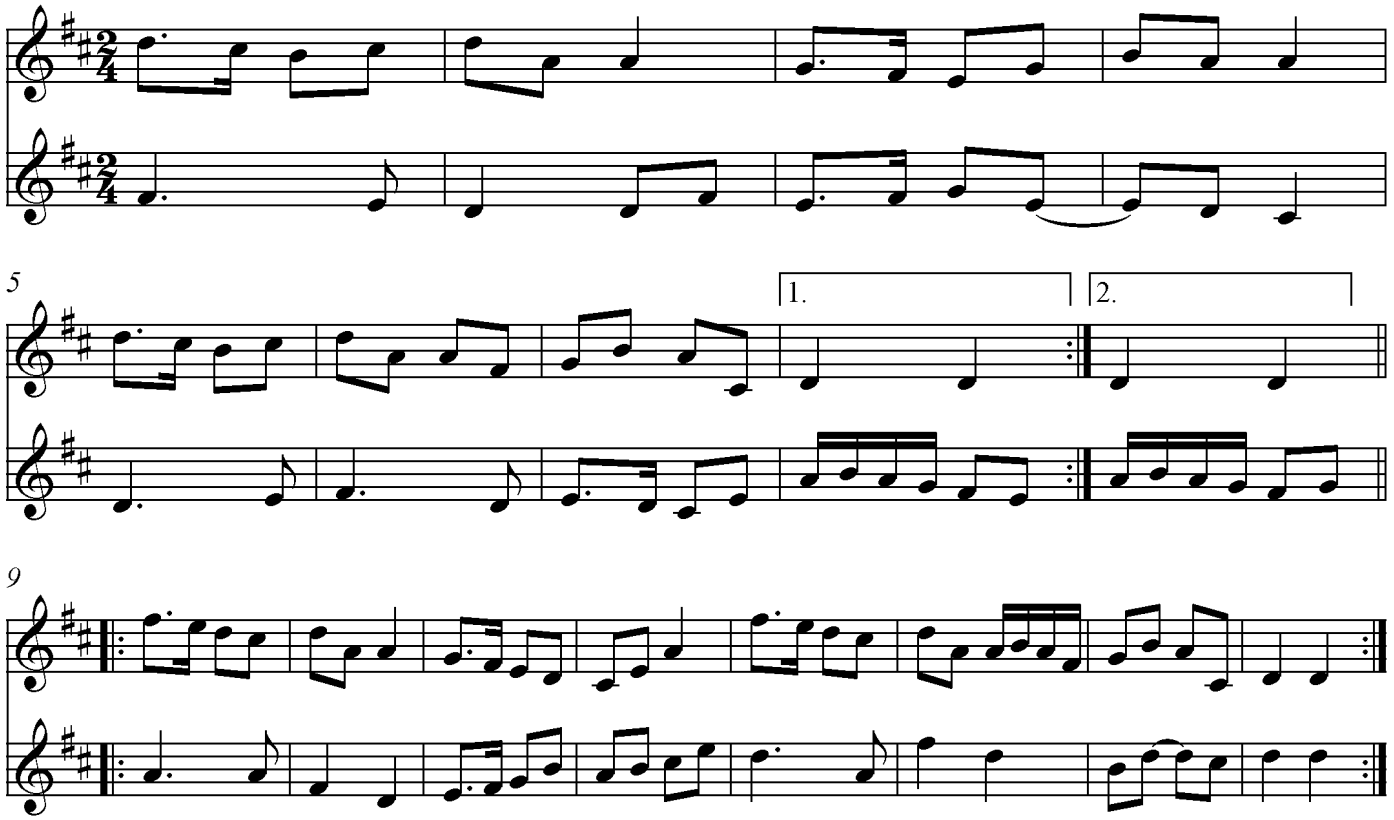
Polka



A Brazilian Adventure

Adèle Commins
Cork and Sao Paolo, 16 & 19 July 2014

Polka



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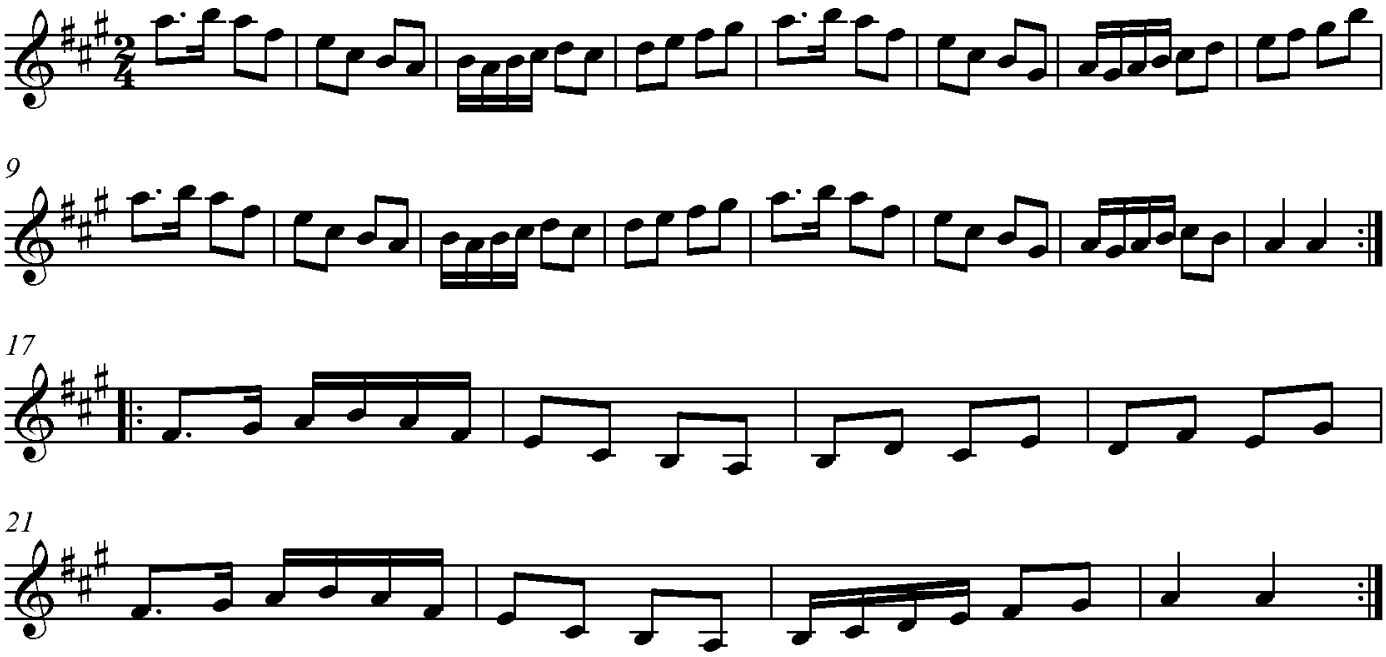
Coming Home Soon

Daithí Kearney
Tralee, 27 June 2016

Polka



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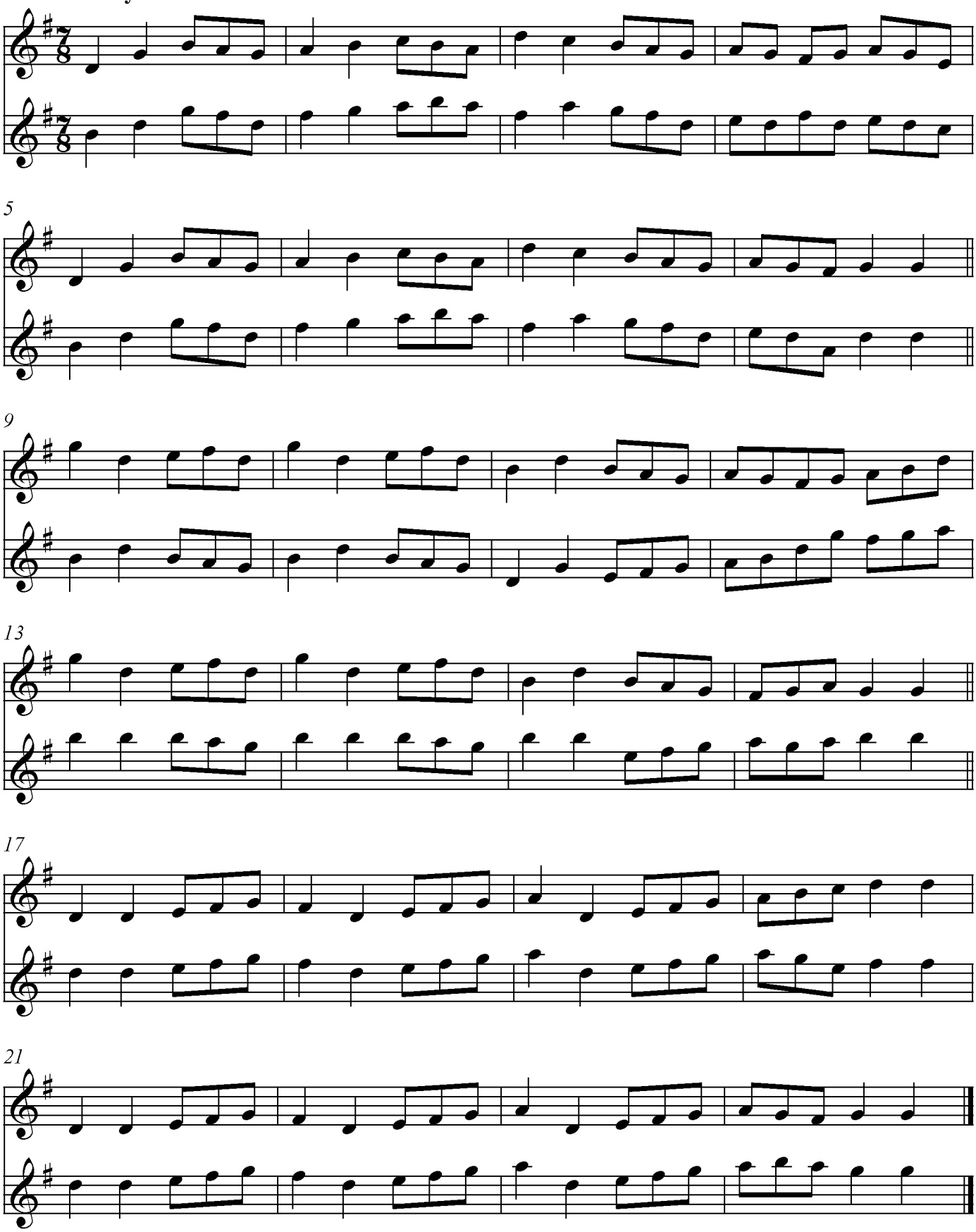
Away Too Long

Daithí Kearney
International Ballad Commission Conference, University of Limerick, 27 June 2016

Lively



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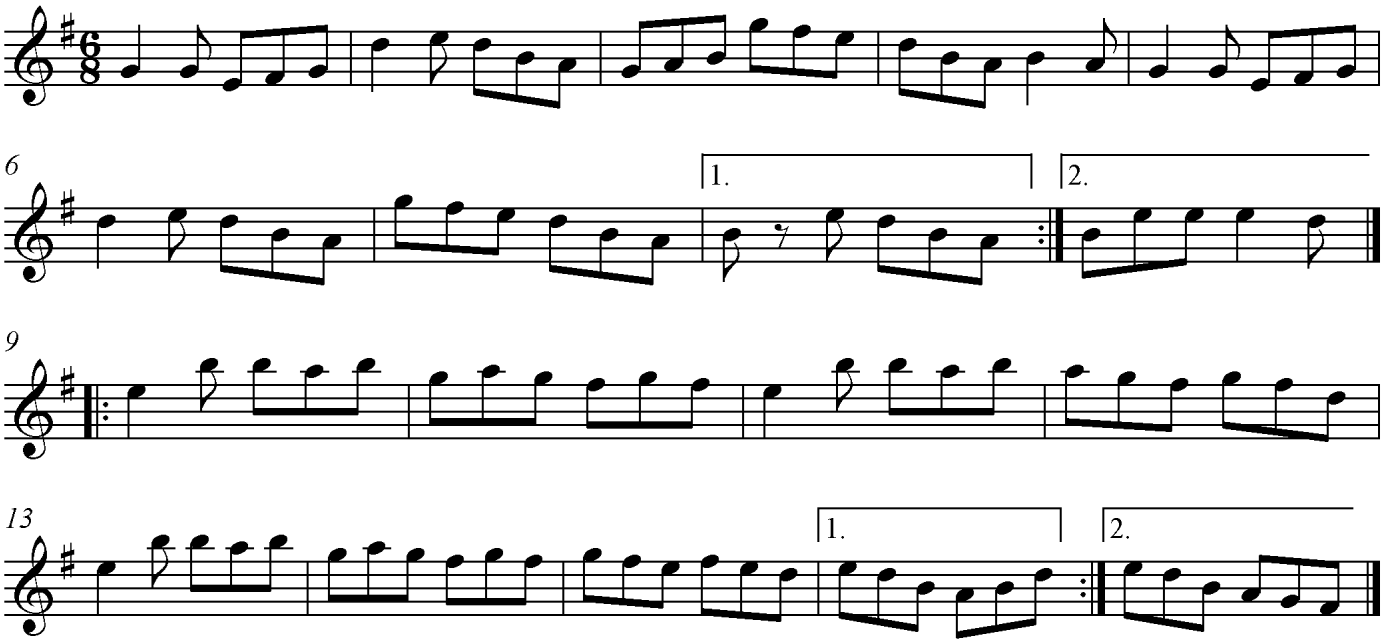
Teachers Can't Count

Daithí Kearney
Cork, *c.*2003

Jig

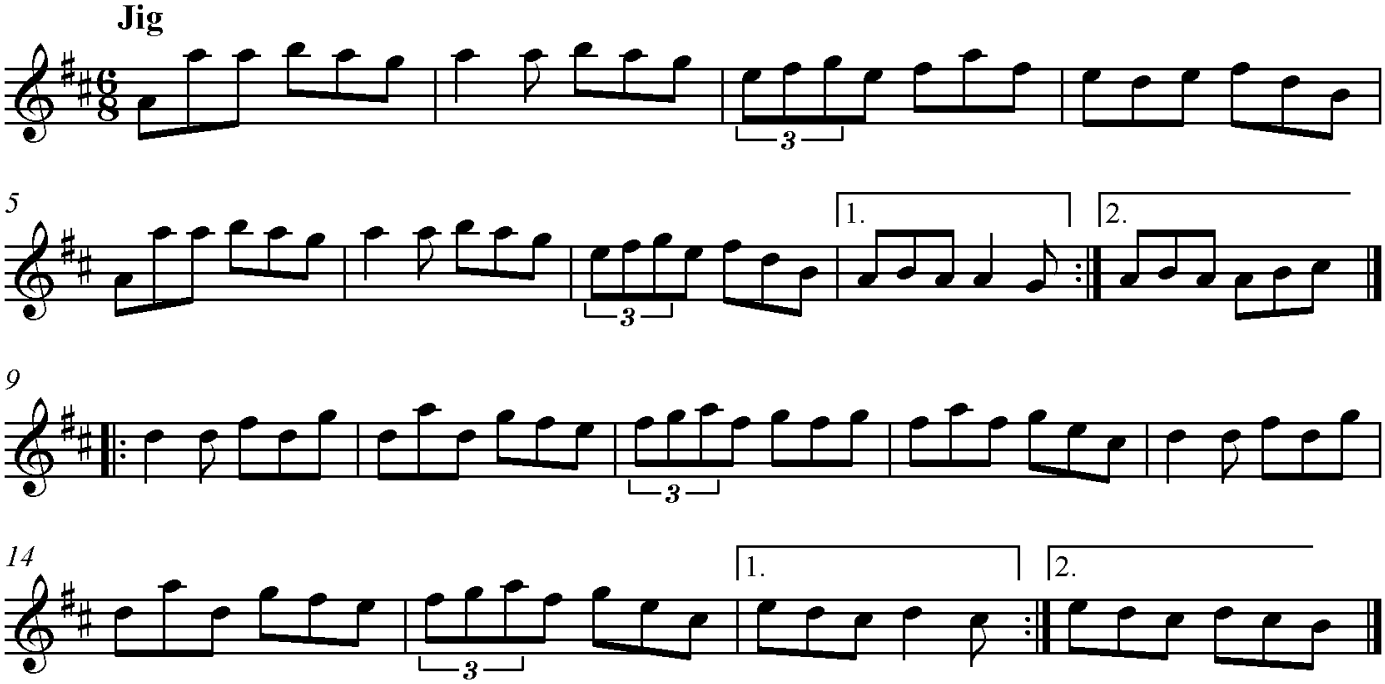


For Matt and Bid Ryan, New Ross, Co. Wexford

Ryan's Hospitality

Daithí Kearney
Cork, *c.*2003

Jig



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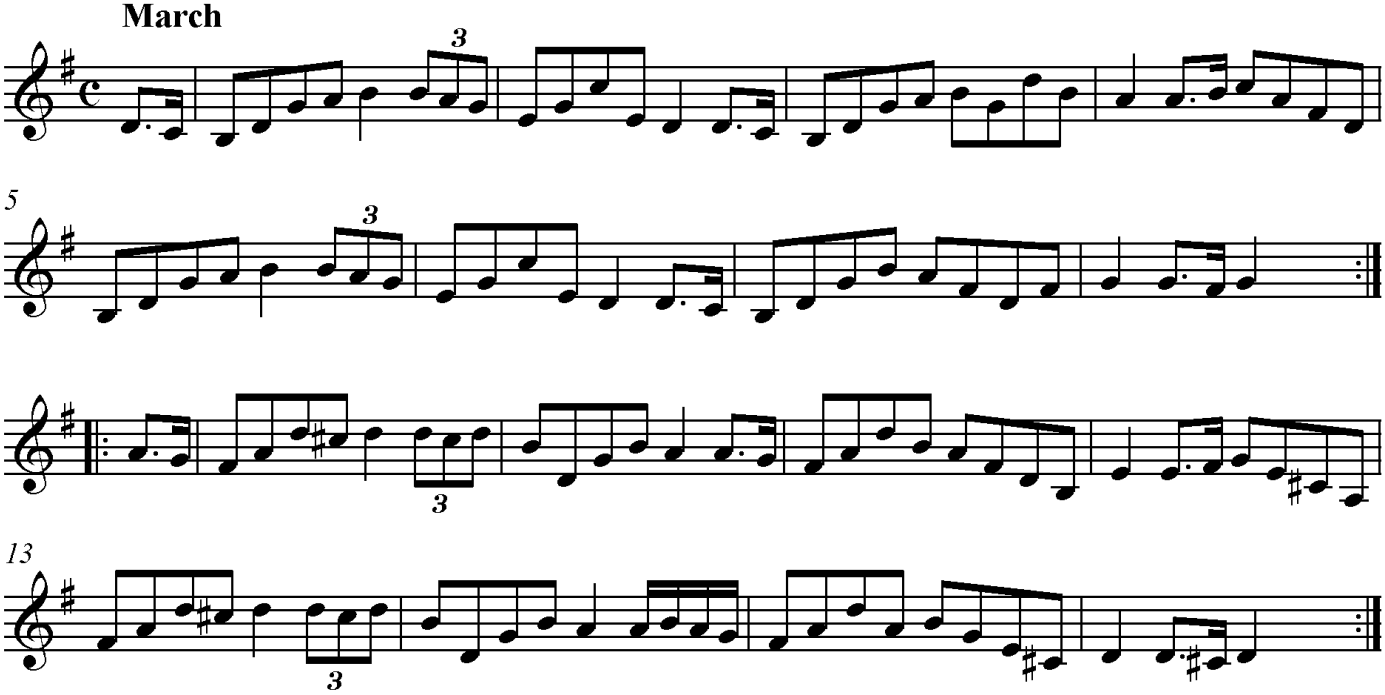
Road to Dundalk

Adèle Commins
Rathbrist, 19 February 1996

March

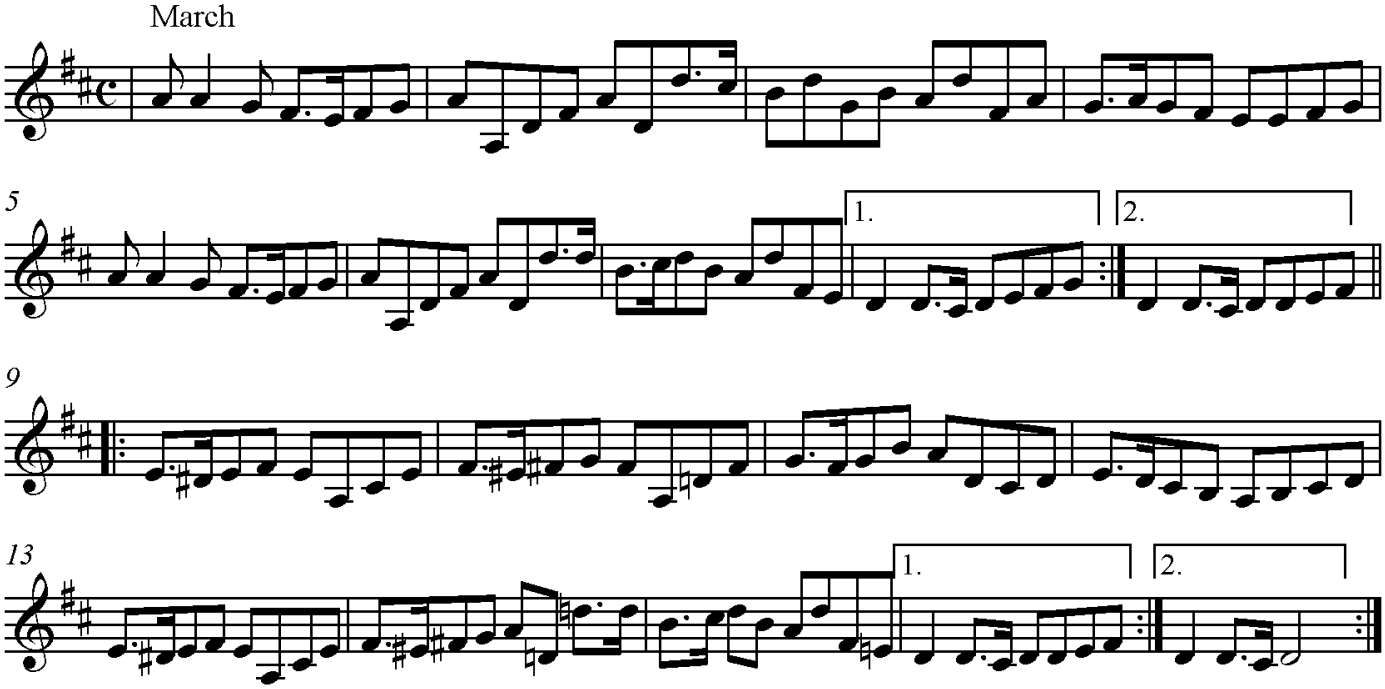


Ferdia's Battle

(After Ferdia and Cú Chulainn's Statue in Ardee)

Adèle Commins
Pepperstown, 28 August 2013

March



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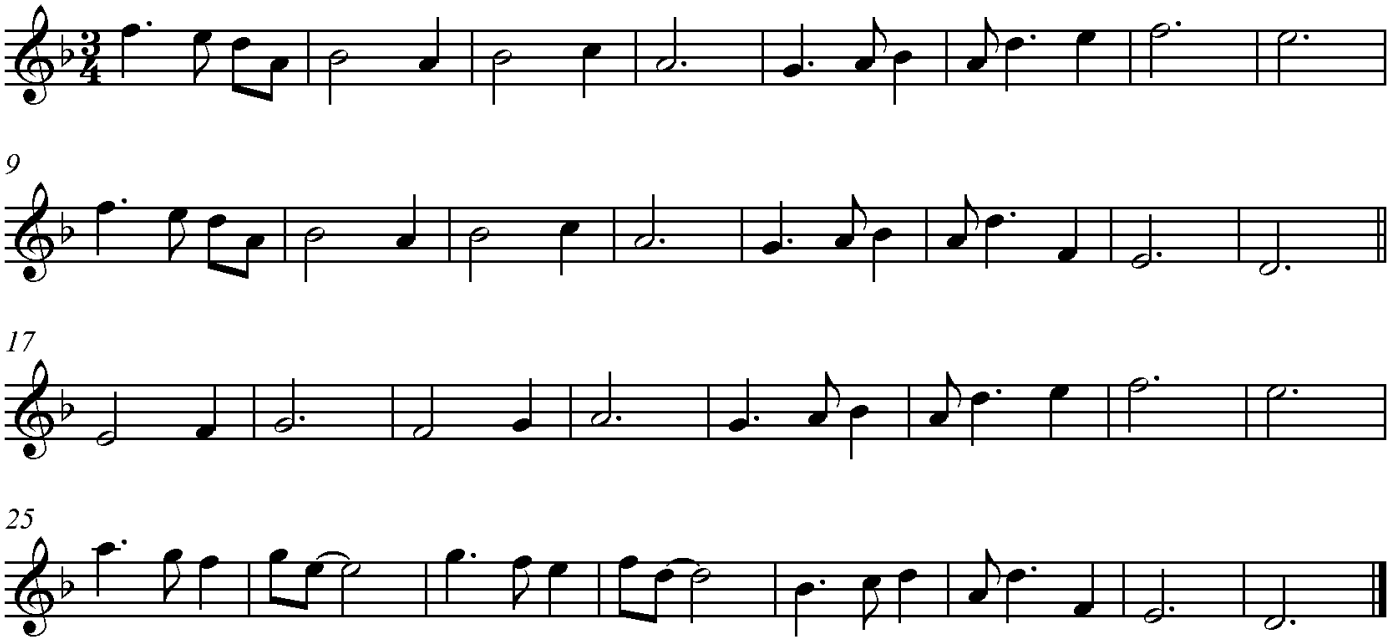
A Telemark Air

Daithí Kearney
Rauland Campus Accomodation, 6 Febuary 2015

Norwegian Air



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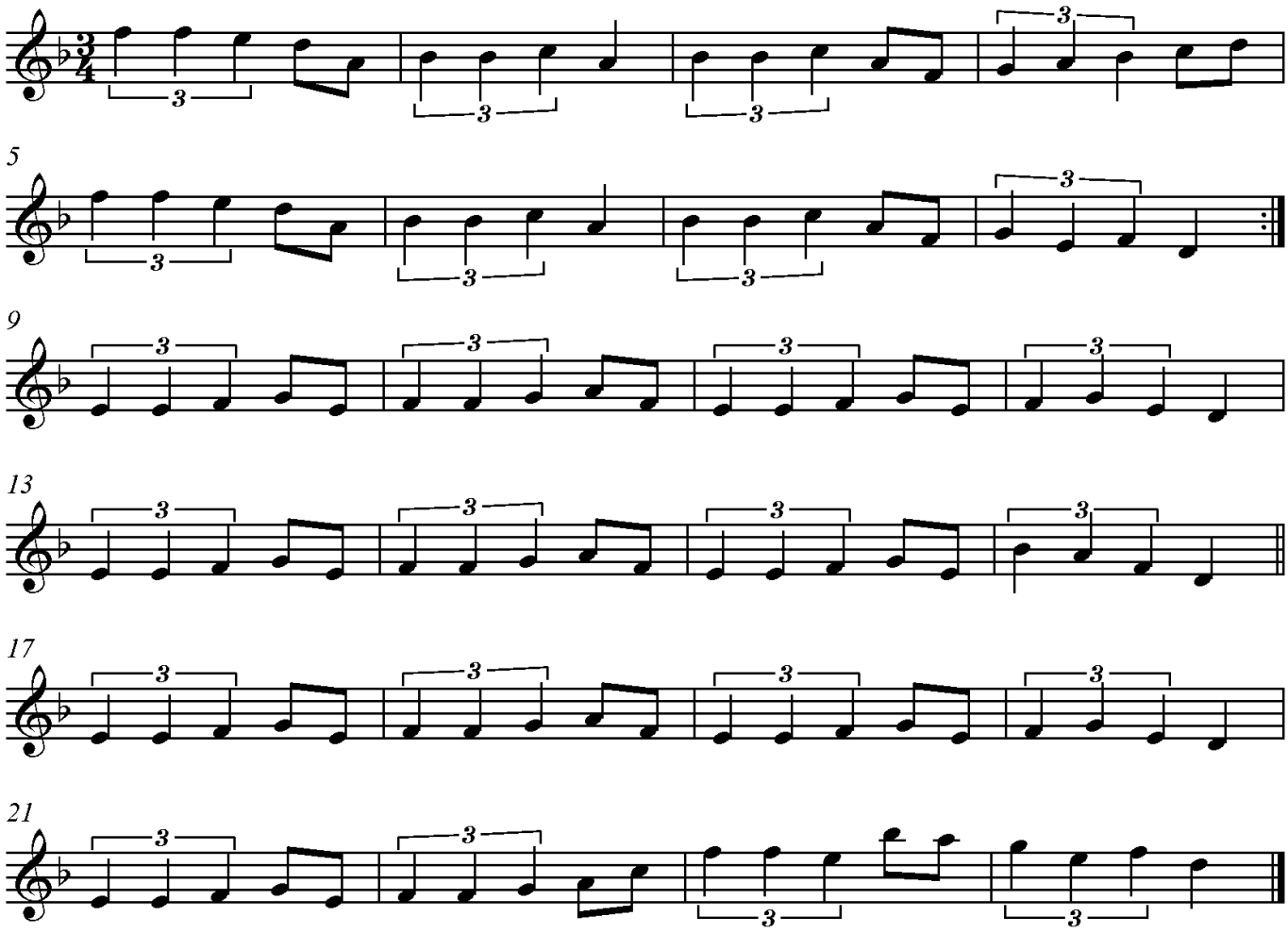
A Telemark Tune

Daithí Kearney
Rauland Campus Accomodation, 6 February 2015



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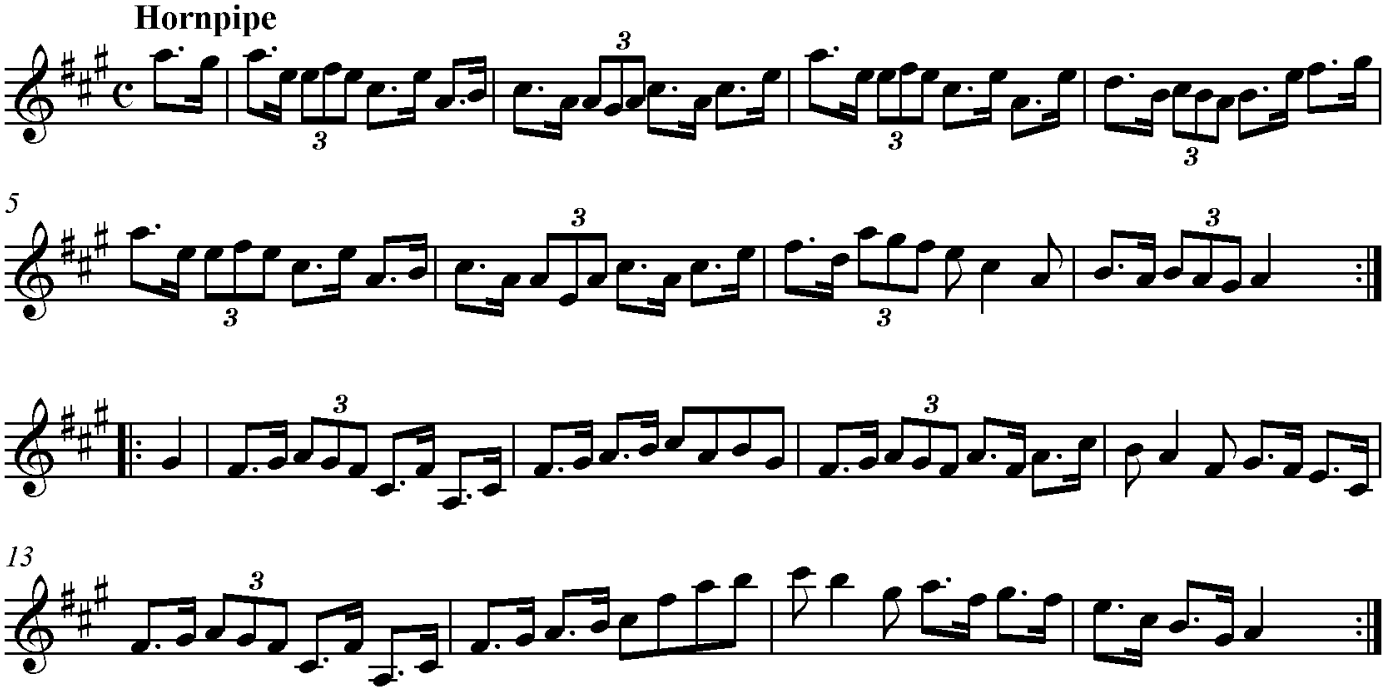
To Daithí Kearney on the occasion of his birthday

Shoreside Strolls

Adèle Commins
Pepperstown, 15 June 2014

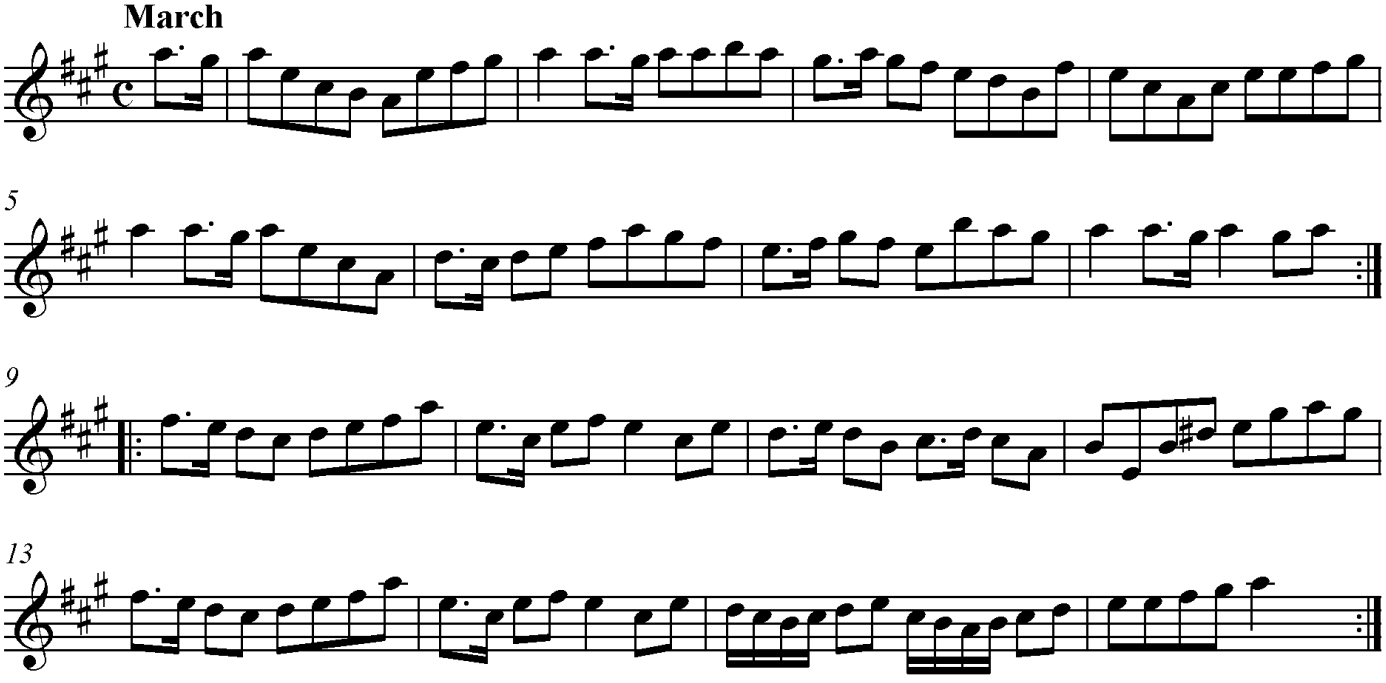
Hornpipe



Rocky Road to Kansas

Adèle Commins
Flight from Newark to Kansas, 1 May 2014

March



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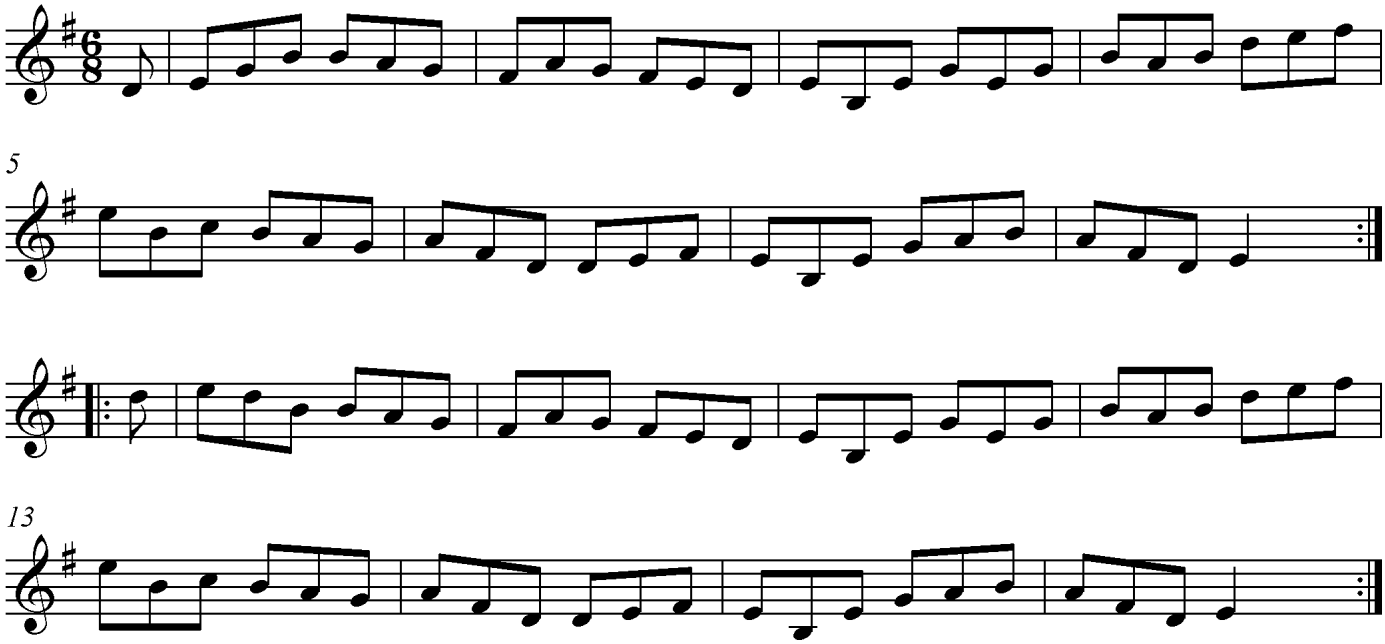
For my father Joe Commins

Sleepy Joe

Adèle Commins
Rathbrist, 5 June 1996

Jig

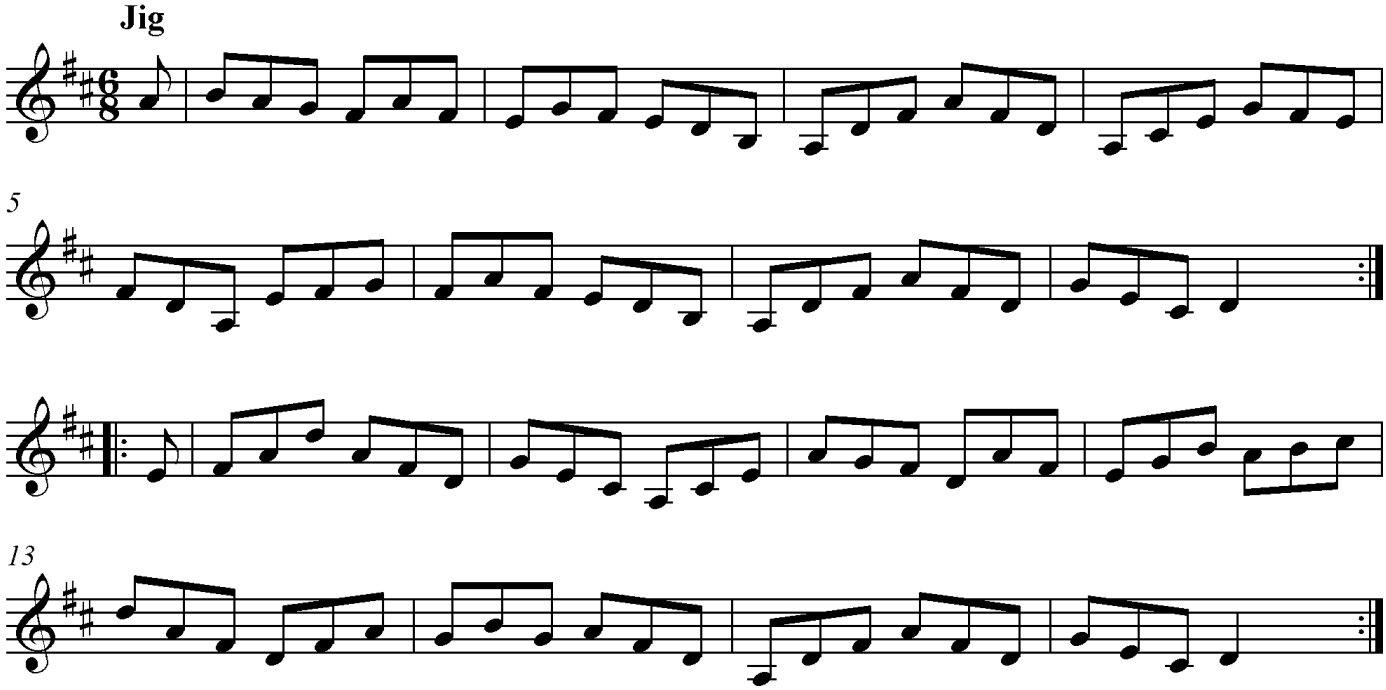


For my mother Josephine Commins

Ballyholland Maiden

Adèle Commins
Rathbrist, 9 July 1996

Jig



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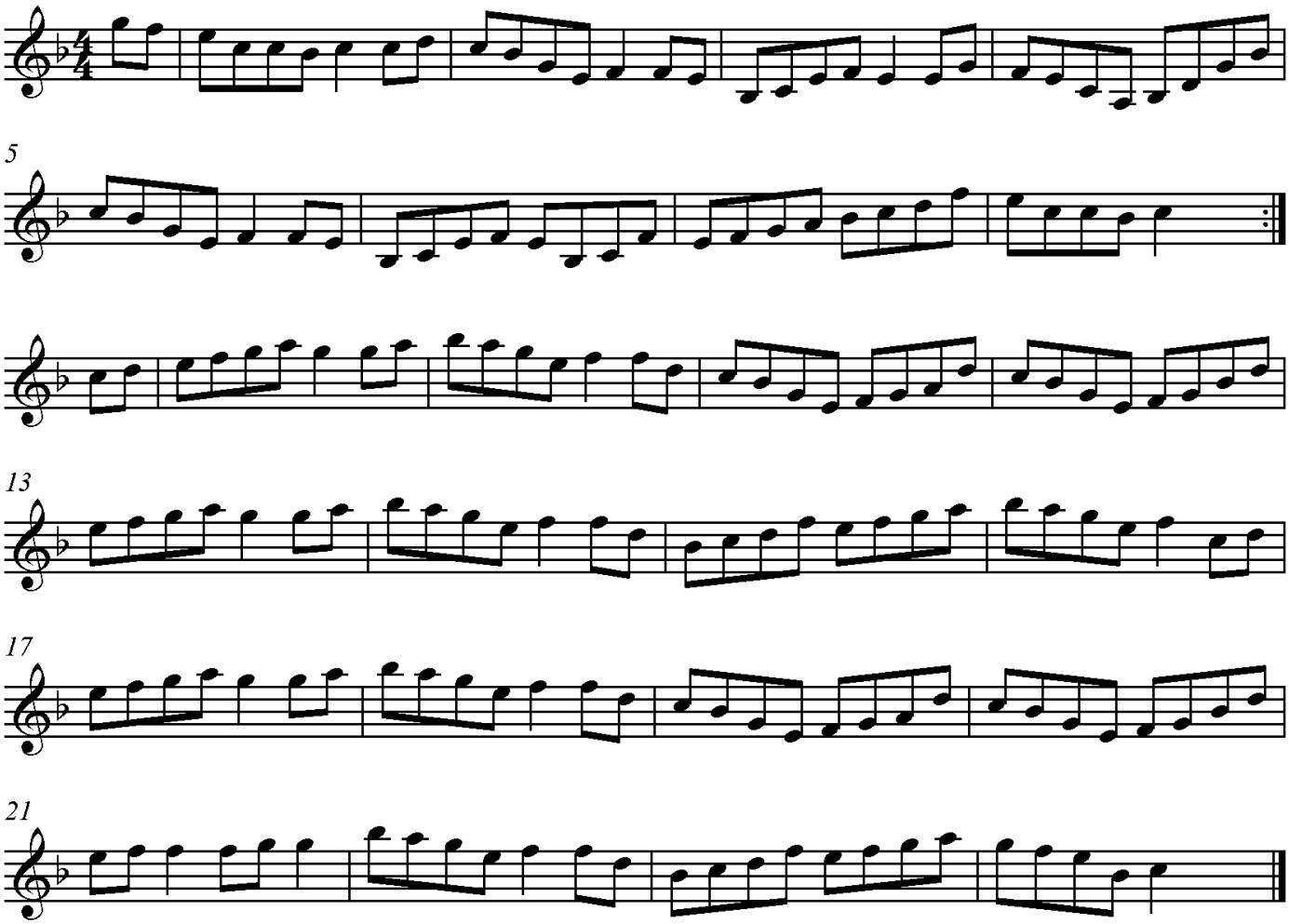
Late Night Rambles

Daithí Kearney
Blackrock, May 2015

Reel



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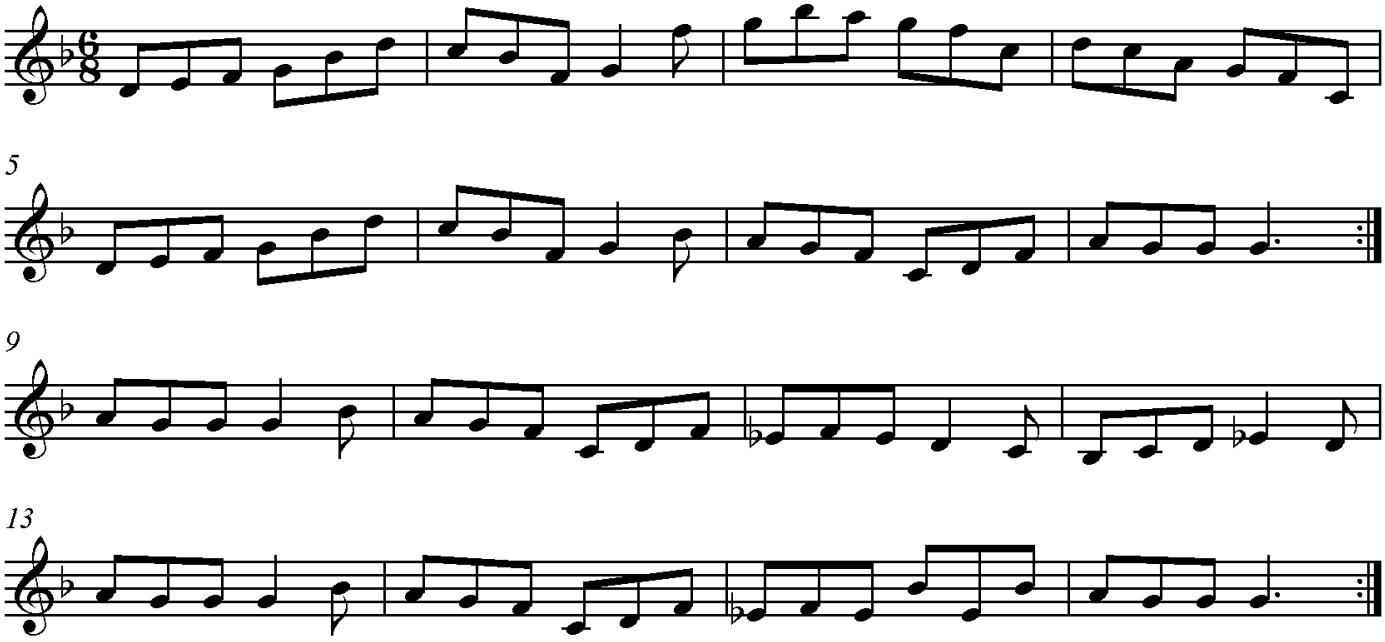
Rambles to the Moon

Daithí Kearney
Blackrock, May 2015

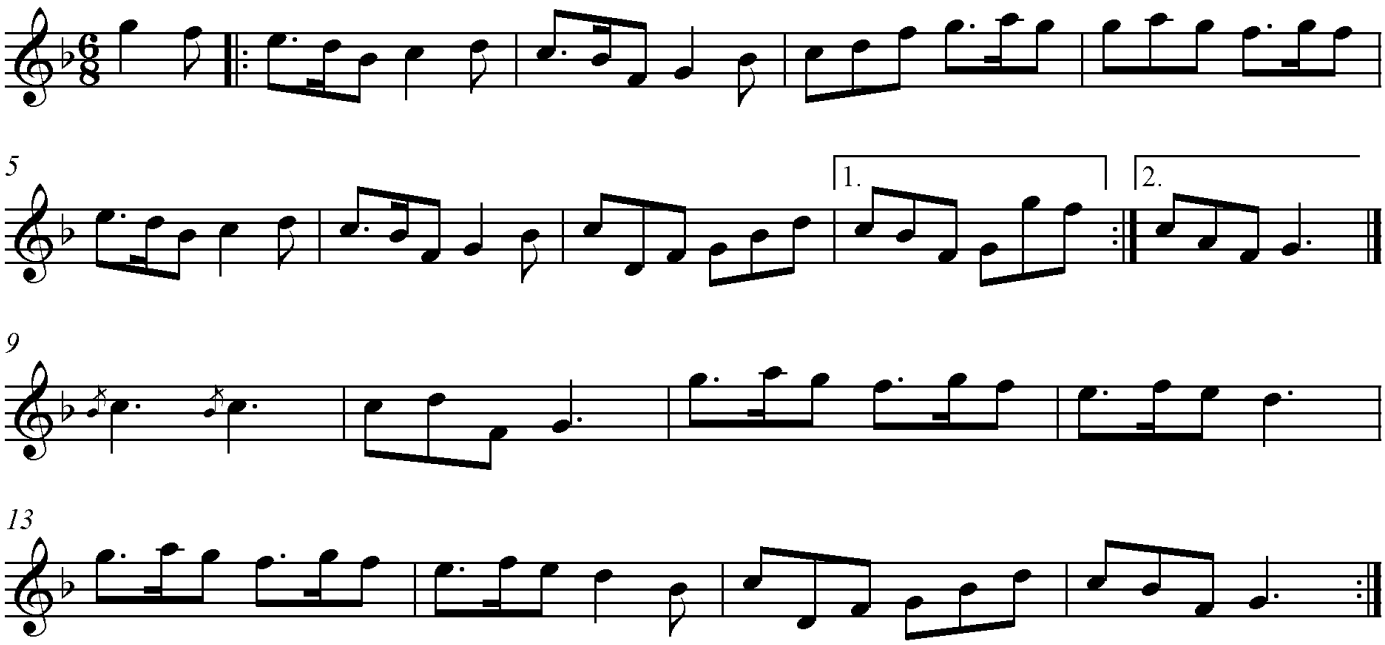
Jig



Moonlit March

Daithí Kearney
Blackrock, May 2015

Clan March



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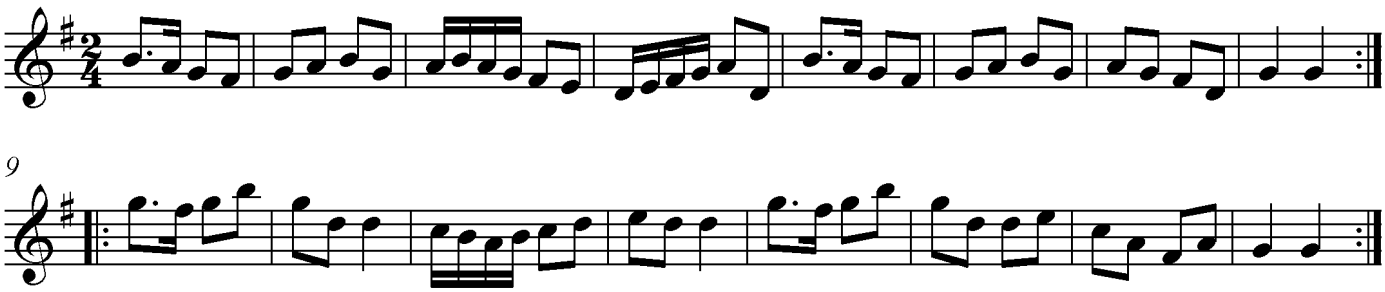
For Bando Celta

Porto Alegre's Dream 1

Adèle Commins
Porto Alegre, 19 July 2014

Polka

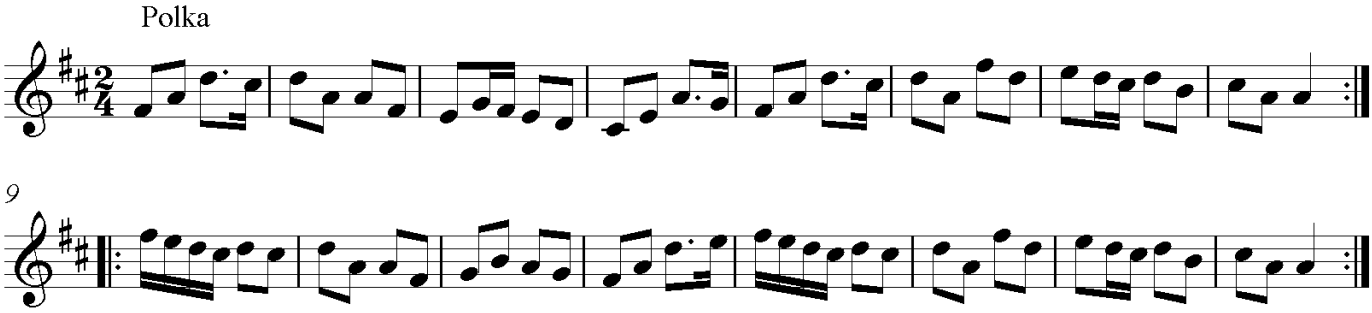


For Michael Commins standing up tall taking his first steps

Holding Firm

Adèle Commins
Pepperstown, 8 & 9 April 2014

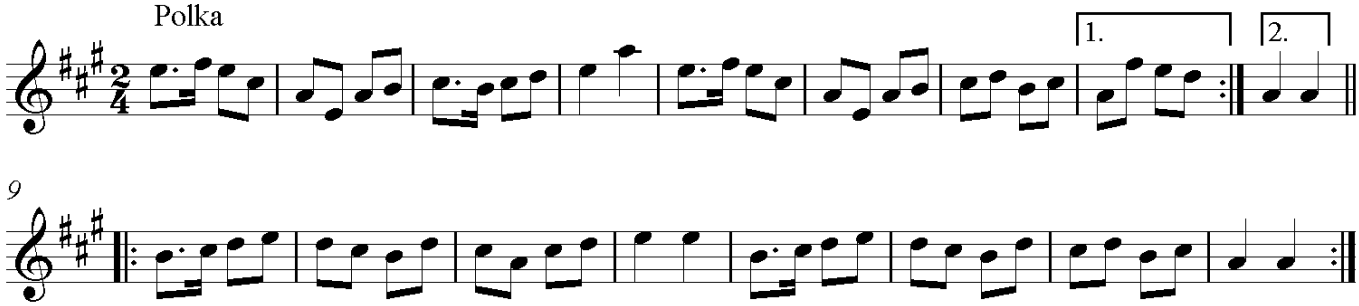
Polka



Kansas Set 2

Adèle Commins
Flight from Kansas to Toronto, 5 May 2014

Polka



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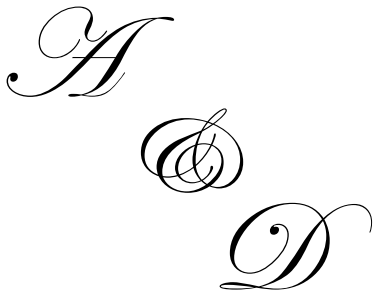

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