

LIMERICK'S LAMENTATION

? Myles O'Reilly (c.1636 - ?)

Gently (*mm* ~ 60)

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 3/4 time. Measure 1 starts with a treble clef and a common time signature 'C'. Measure 2 has a dynamic marking of *mp*. Measure 3 has a common time signature 'C'. Measure 4 has a 3/4 time signature. The bass line is mostly whole notes and half notes.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Measure 5 has a dynamic marking of *f*. Measure 6 has a common time signature 'C'. Measure 7 has a common time signature 'C'. Measure 8 has a common time signature 'C'. The bass line features a triplet in measure 5.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. Measure 9 has a dynamic marking of *mp*. Measure 10 has a 3/4 time signature. Measure 11 has a 3/4 time signature. Measure 12 has a common time signature 'C'. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. Measure 13 has a dynamic marking of *mf*. Measure 14 has a dynamic marking of *mf*. Measure 15 has a dynamic marking of *mf*. Measure 16 has a dynamic marking of *mf*. The bass line has a complex rhythmic pattern.

Musical notation for measures 17-20. Measure 17 has a dynamic marking of *mp*. Measure 18 has a dynamic marking of *mp*. Measure 19 has a dynamic marking of *mp*. Measure 20 has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The piece ends with a double bar line.

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Musical notation for measures 15-17. The piece is in G minor (one flat). Measure 15 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody in the treble clef begins with a dotted quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4, Bb4, and C5. The bass line consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed above the treble staff in measure 17.

Musical notation for measures 18-20. The melody continues in the treble clef. Dynamic markings of *mp* (mezzo-piano) are placed below the bass staff in measures 18 and 20, and *mf* (mezzo-forte) is placed below the bass staff in measure 19.

Musical notation for measures 21-23. The tempo marking *slower (50)* is written above the treble staff at the beginning of measure 21. Dynamic markings of *mf* (mezzo-forte) are placed below the bass staff in measures 21 and 22, and *mp* (mezzo-piano) is placed below the bass staff in measure 23. The marking *accel.* (accelerando) is placed above the treble staff in measure 23.

Musical notation for measures 24-26. Measure 24 begins with a first ending bracket labeled '1'. Measure 25 begins with a second ending bracket labeled '2'. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is placed below the bass staff in measure 25. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 26.

Unfortunately the beauty of this piece is in direct proportion to the amount of confusion surrounding its exact origins. That there is a close relationship of some sort to the Scots tune "Lochaber No More" seems not to be in dispute, but the origin of the work that is the common source for "Lochaber" and "Lamentation" is not clear.

Bunting states that "Lochaber" derives from a piece composed by the Irish harper Myles O'Reilly (born c.1635/6), while O'Neill says that the harper Thomas Connellan of Cloonmahon, County Sligo, added introductory and concluding phrases and re-named it "The Breach of Aughrim", and that it was introduced to Scotland after his death in 1698 by his brother Laurence Connellan, who was also a harper.

The references to Limerick and to Aughrim connect this moving piece with the unsuccessful 1691 attempt by Sarsfield's Irish troops to remove the English occupation forces from Connacht (western Ireland), providing a context if not an exact date for this piece.

LIMERICK'S LAMENTATION

*It is sad and lone I am today, far from dear Erin's shore
I may never, never, never see her again; I may never see her more.
In grief I think of my sweet land under cruel slave-laws that bind
I am always, always thinking of her, she is in my heart and mind.*

Although the lyrics to "Limerick's Lamentation" are seldom if ever heard these days, the melody remains one of the finest in the traditional repertoire.

Unfortunately its beauty is in direct proportion to the amount of confusion surrounding its exact origins. That there is a close relationship of some sort to the Scots tune "Lochaber No More" seems not to be in dispute, but the origin of the work that is the common source for "Lochaber" and "Lamentation" is not clear.

The *South Reading Tune Book*, referring to Andrew Kuntz' fine online reference work "Fiddler's Companion", says the following:

"Bunting (*Ancient Music of Ireland*, 1840, p. 69) states that 'Lochaber' derives from a piece composed by the Irish harper Myles O'Reilly (born c.1635/6) ... O'Neill (*Irish Minstrels and Musicians*, 1913) states that the harper Thomas Connellan of Cloonmahon, County Sligo, added introductory and concluding phrases and re-named it 'The Breach of Aughrim', and that it was introduced to Scotland after his death in 1698 by his brother Laurence Connellan, who was also a harper."

The references to Limerick and to Aughrim connect this moving piece with the unsuccessful 1691 attempt by Sarsfield's Irish troops to remove the English occupation forces from Connacht (western Ireland).

The historical reference however does not establish an exact date of composition, and it is quite conceivable that the title was applied to an existing composition of O'Reilly's whose melancholy mood would have been entirely suitable to commemoration of such a tragic setback to the cause of Irish freedom.