

BILL BLACK'S MOSTLY GEMS OLD & NEW

"F" Tunes

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The FAIRHAVEN Hornpipe

Tune 3 of the South Coast Hornpipe Set

© B.Black 10/20

Am G G Em Am G Am

Am G Em Am C Em Am

Am C D C Am G C G

Am G C Am Am G G Am

Situated on the South Coast just east of New Bedford, Fairhaven has a protected harbor and a lively maritime industry. My beloved "Island Queen" goes to a shipyard there every so often for a winter "make-over". Many other "summer" boats also shelter there during the off-season.

The FALL RIVER JIG

© BB

G C Am G Am G D
 G C Am G Am7 D G
 G Em G G C Am D
 G D7 C Em G Am D G

Fall River (home town of that interesting lady Lizzie Borden, who took an axe etc etc) is a former mill town between Providence and Cape Cod waiting to find some way of having a renaissance (unfortunately it's not alone in that respect). In pre-pandemi days there was a very good weekly session there, and this tune was written in hono of the musicians who had kept it going over the years. (FYI Lizzie's house was a bed & breakfast for a while, but it's been up for sale recently. Any bidders?)

FAREWELL to KERRY (reel)

© BB 2009

Dm Am C Am Dm Am C Dm
 Dm Am C Am Dm C Am Dm
 Dm C F Dm C Dm
 Dm C Am7 Dm Am7 Dm

For fiddler Kerry Elkin, fine player in many different genres. RIP.

FATHER STEWART'S JIG

© BB

D Am C D Am7 C D Am7

D Am C D G C A A

D C D Am7 D C D Am

D C D Am | 1 D C A | 2 D Am D

This is a kind of odd little tune that you either love or hate. If I hadn't already named the tune for a friend I might have called it "The Sardine", something else you either love or hate (I'm okay with them, if anybody cares).

FERMANAGH'S LOVELIEST (hornpipe)

© BB

D G A Bm G Bm Em A7
 D G A Bm G A D A D
 Bm A7 Bm D G
 Bm A7 D G A D A D

Ireland certainly has its share of beautiful women, no question. And most counties have a tune to proclaim this fact (e.g. "The Pretty Girls of Mayo") but since I couldn't find one for Fermanagh, I thought I'd compose my own! (The truth is that I couldn't find ANY tune with "Fermanagh" in the title, with or without the pretty girls.)

The FIDDLE on the WALL (reel)

Larry Reynolds' Reel

© BB

Am G Am G

Am G Am Am7 Em7 Am

Am G Am Em G

Am C G Am Am7 Em Am

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There might be people who have done more for Irish music in the Boston area than Larry and his family, but I sincerely doubt it. Irish culture in general, and CCE in particular, owe a large debt of gratitude to Larry for his untiring efforts on their behalf over the years. Larry passed away in October 2012 and this tune was re-named at that time. (Larry's son Seán has the fiddle now, so it's in good hands and waiting to be passed on to a younger musician.)

The FIGHTING FISH (reel)

© BB 2009

Am G Am G Am Dm Em

Am G Am G F G Em Am

A Bm A F#m D A E

A Bm A F#m Bm D E A

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Around Saint Patrick's Day of 2009 we did a session in a local Chinese restaurant. I was pretty convinced that the management had no idea what I was talking about when I asked about playing there, but they heard "music" and figured "what the heck" (or whatever the Mandarin equivalent is). As it turned out we had about eight musicians playing in a space in front of the fish tank that could accommodate maybe three comfortably. The patrons were naturally surprised (Irish music in the Peking Palace?) but seemed to enjoy it, as did the fish (it looked like they actually stopped fighting to listen).

The FIRST GRANDCHILD (reel)

© BB

The musical score consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time, written in a key with one flat (B-flat). The chords for each staff are as follows:

- Staff 1: Dm, Am, G, Am7, F, Dm, F, Am7
- Staff 2: Dm, Dm, Am7, Dm, C, Am7, Dm
- Staff 3: Dm, Am7, Dm, C, Dm, Am, C
- Staff 4: D, C, Am, D, Dm, Am7, Dm

The music is a reel, characterized by its rhythmic and melodic structure. The fourth staff concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots, indicating the end of the piece.

When some friends of ours welcomed the arrival of their first grandchild some years ago, it seemed to be a pretty big deal to them, so I wrote this tune in commemoration of the event. Then when our own First Grandchild (note the capital letters) arrived in February 2008, guess what - it really WAS a big deal!

The FIRST PRIZE (reel)

© BB 2012

The musical score consists of four staves of music in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in eighth notes, with a grace note on the first eighth note of the first measure. The chords are: D (first measure), G (second measure), D (third measure), Em (fourth measure), and G (fifth measure). The second staff continues the melody with chords: D (first measure), G (second measure), D (third measure), G (fourth measure), A (fifth measure), and D (sixth measure). The third staff has chords: D (first measure), D (second measure), Em (third measure), D (fourth measure), Em (fifth measure), and A (sixth measure). The fourth staff has chords: D (first measure), Bm (second measure), Em (third measure), Bm (fourth measure), D (fifth measure), A (sixth measure), and D (seventh measure). The piece concludes with a double bar line.

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For our "niece" Vanessa Millar, in honor of her taking the first prize in senior accordion at the 2011 All-Ireland. It was great having her visit the Cape for a while a few years ago, and we hope she makes it back for a stay some time soon.

FISHAMBLE STREET (jig)

© BB

G Am D7 G G C D G
 Em Am D G G Am D G
 Cm Gm Gm F Gm
 Gm F Gm Dm Gm Gm

Fishamble Street is a non-descript little street near Dublin's Christ Church Cathedral that is known to history for one thing: its "Great Music Hall" was the site of the first performance of Handel's "Messiah" in April 1742, a year prior to its London debut. It was a fund-raising concert and was expected to be a great success - in order to ensure room for everyone in the hall, gentlemen were requested not to wear their swords and ladies not to wear hoops (good advice even today!) The "Great Music Hall" is long gone, although the building evidently still stands.

The FIVE HOUSES (jig)

© BB

Bm D G D Bm D Bm A
 Bm G D G D A7 D
 D A D A G Em D A
 D A G A D G A D

A tribute to the fine musicians of "PEI" - Prince Edward Island in the Canadian Maritimes. It always amazes me that there's so much talent in such a small area! (And a special "tip of the hat" to Cape Cod's own John MacDonald, a fine musician himself, whose roots are from this area of Canada.)

The FIVE LAMPS (jig)

© BB

D A D C C
 D C G A D A D
 D G D C C
 D G D Em D A D

The "Five Lamps" refers to a part of Dublin north of the Liffey, not far from the Amiens St. train station. It's an area that has had an interesting history (to put it politely) but like many other Dublin locales, it has been "gentrified" quite a bit recently.

The FLOCK of BUDGIES (hornpipe)

© BB

G Am7 Em7 D7 G C Am7 D7
 G Am7 Em G D G D G
 G Am G Bm A A7 D
 G Am G Bm Em7 D G D G

Anyone who may be interested in finding out more about the title of this tune is invited to find and watch a very funny movie called "The Commitments". Or you can just enjoy the tune with the knowledge that a budgie is basically a Celtic parakeet. (But it's still a great movie!)

The FLY UPON the BAR (jig)

Phil Taylor's Fancy

© BB

D D A D Bm A
 D G D G A D
 D A Em Bm D G Bm A
 G A D Em D A D

Phil Taylor is the man responsible for the "BarFly" ABC program that I have used and really come to appreciate over the years. He has been very patient with my questions and suggestions, and this tune is by way of thanks to him for that and for all the work he has done for ABC. Unfortunately it appears that Apple's constant tinkering with its operating system has rung the death knell for BarFly, but fortunately other good folks like Mike Eskin have taken up where Phil left off.

The FLYING SQUIRREL (polka)

© BB

G Em D G Am G Em
 G Em Am D7 G
 G D
 C G D7 G

Many unnaturally curious people (even those who should know better) have asked if this tune refers to any particular flying squirrel. The answer is most emphatically no (or emphatically NO). Right, Rocky?

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE (reel)

© BB

The musical score is written in D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The chords and other markings are as follows:

- Staff 1: D Bm D G D Bm D G
- Staff 2: D Bm D A7 D F#m G A D
- Staff 3: A D A D
- Staff 4: A D G A G A D

There are triplets (marked with '3') on the following notes:

- Staff 3: 3rd and 4th notes of the first measure.
- Staff 3: 3rd and 4th notes of the second measure.
- Staff 3: 3rd and 4th notes of the third measure.
- Staff 3: 3rd and 4th notes of the fourth measure.
- Staff 4: 3rd note of the second measure.

I wrote this tune years back as a kind of wedding gift for some friends of ours. Unfortunately the marriage didn't last (so what else is new?) He got the dog, the busted space-heater, and the 2008 Camry, she got everything else (including the tune). She remarried (her orthodontist), he's still trying to figure out how dating apps work. Sad.

The FORTUNE COOKIE (reel)

© BB 2009

The musical score for 'The Fortune Cookie' is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The chords indicated above the notes are: Em, G, D, Em, G, D, Em, D; G, C, Em, G, Em, D, Em; Em, C, Bm, Em, G, D; and Em, C, Bm, Em, D, Em. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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Did you ever bite into a fortune cookie before you remembered there was a little strip of paper inside with your very own lucky number? The number that, if you hit it, would make you very wealthy for the rest of your life? On that little piece of paper you have now sogged up and made unreadable? But you could see enough to know that the first three lucky numbers were 5, 9, and 12, and those were the first three numbers of the five that actually won tonight? And maybe the other two winning numbers were on that piece of paper you almost swallowed?

FRANKIE O'NEILL'S (jig)

© BB

The musical score for "Frankie O'Neill's (jig)" is presented in four staves of music. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 6/8. The melody is written in treble clef. Chord annotations are placed above the notes to indicate the harmonic accompaniment.

Staff 1: Dm Am C Dm Am7 C

Staff 2: Dm Am7 C Dm C Dm

Staff 3: Dm C Dm C

Staff 4: Dm C Am7 C Dm

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Frankie was the older brother and musical inspiration of the late NY fiddler Keith O'Neill, one of the founding members of the Northeast Ceili Band. Frankie passed away all too young a few years ago, and this tune is dedicated to his memory. (There's a tune for Keith in this collection as well - #12321). May both brothers rest in peace.

The FROGS & SNAKES of GALWAY (hornpipe)

© BB

D Bm D Em7 D Bm D A

D Bm D Em7 G D A D

Bm Em A A7 G A7

Bm Em A G A7 D

There's a very long and ultimately boring story that goes with the title of this little opus that involves a complete failure on my part to understand the name of a tune shouted at me during a loud session. But give me a break and admit it - "Docks and Quays" CAN sound a lot like "Frogs and Snakes", right? Or maybe you just had to be there . . .