

Tune of the Month : "Seamus O'Brien"

I remember hearing this tune from Paul Lakey of Drain. This version comes from the Evergreen Fiddler Tunebook, Vol. III, edited by my old friend Stuart Williams of Seattle. Henry McVeigh turns it into a nicely bouncy waltz. It goes back to an 1870 composition by William Shakespeare Hayes. Another version can be found in O'Neill's Music of Ireland, where a perfectly good Irish name is given its English form: "James O'Brien."

~ Linda Danielson



Linda Danielson

On YouTube there are numerous recordings of this tune, some with words that tell a broken-heart story of wishing Seamus to come back home:

*O, Shamus O'Brien, why don't you come home?
And you don't know how happy I'll be;
I've got one darling wish and that is that you'll come,
And forever be happy with me.*

Waltz

"Seamus O'Brien"

by William Shakespeare Hays
from Henry McVeigh
Tacoma, WA

The musical score is written on nine staves. The first staff starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Chords are indicated by letters above the staff: G, C, G, G, Em, Am, D7, G, C, Am, G, D7, G, C, Em, B7, C, Em, D, D7, G, C, Am C#d7, D, G, D7, G. There are triplets marked with a '3' in several places. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.