

HOEDOWNER

Tune of the Month

Midnight on the Water was written by **Luke Thomasson**, the father of renowned fiddler **Benny Thomasson**. **Mark O'Connor** and I both learned how to play it from Benny, and he showed us how to combine it with **Bona-part's Retreat**.

Unfortunately, there are no reasonably accurate transcriptions of this tune because it was composed in what's often called the **Dead Man's Cross Tuning**. Because many fiddlers insist that cross tuning is not appropriate (Wrong!), most **OOTFA** fiddlers who play the tune refuse to play it as it was intended by the Thomasson family. This transcription shows the low D for several notes, but each fiddler can add other drones in different parts of the song. Both the **Fiddler's Fakebook** and the **Traditional Tune Archives** correctly identify the tuning. To actually play the tune as composed, a fiddler **MUST** retune to **DDAD**, or you are missing too many of the haunting tones intended for this waltz, as it was originally created. It's actually easier to play in the original tuning, and more importantly you can bring back the idea of imitating bagpipes, which was what Luke wanted to do because of their Scottish ancestry. Benny also said this tuning was frequently used by fiddlers with Scottish heritage who were trying to make an imitation of bagpipes.



Thanks to David Altman for providing this tune

To hear and see performances of **Midnight on the Water** look on **YouTube** for versions by [Benny Thomasson](#), [Mark O'Connor](#), [John Hartford](#) and others.

Midnight on the Water

Luke Thomasson

D

G D A 1 D 2 D

D Em

Bm G

D D G A D