

Red Haired Boy

Irish/American Reel

"Red Haired Boy" is a reel of Irish origin found in the United States and in the British Isles under a number of titles. In Ireland it is sung as "Little Beggarmen." "Soldier With A Wooden Leg" and "Red Haired Boy" are instrumental versions. Fretted dulcimer pioneer, Richard Fariña, recorded it as "Tommy Makem Fantasy." In the US it is a very common string band piece.

Arrangement for Dulcimers © Bonnie Carol 2001

Key of A
Mixolydian Melody
Tune D A DD, Capo 4
Strummed

$\text{♩} = 100$

Capo 4

The first system of musical notation is in 4/4 time, key of A (three sharps). It consists of a treble clef staff with a melody and three bass clef staves for fretting. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5, and a quarter rest. A double bar line with repeat dots follows. The second measure of the melody is a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and a quarter note B4. The third measure is a quarter note A4, followed by quarter notes G4, F4, and a quarter note E4. The fourth measure is a quarter note D4, followed by quarter notes C4, B3, and a quarter note A3. The fretting staves are: Bass D (11 9 | 8 0 0 ETC.), Middle A (0 0 | 0 0 0 ETC.), and Treble DD (0 0 | 0 0 0 5 6+ 7 | 8 9 8 6+ 7 6+ 7).

The second system continues the melody. The first measure is a quarter note A4, followed by quarter notes G4, F4, and a quarter note E4. The second measure is a quarter note D4, followed by quarter notes C4, B3, and a quarter note A3. The fretting staves are: Bass D (8 9 10 9), Middle A (5 0 0 0 0), and Treble DD (8 0 0 5 6+ | 5 0 0 0 0).

The third system continues the melody. The first measure is a quarter note A4, followed by quarter notes G4, F4, and a quarter note E4. The second measure is a quarter note D4, followed by quarter notes C4, B3, and a quarter note A3. The fretting staves are: Bass D (8 0 ETC.), Middle A (0 0 0 5 6+ 7 | 8 9 8 6+ 7 6+ 7), and Treble DD (0 0 0 5 6+ 7 | 8 9 8 6+ 7 6+ 7).

The fourth system continues the melody. The first measure is a quarter note A4, followed by quarter notes G4, F4, and a quarter note E4. The second measure is a quarter note D4, followed by quarter notes C4, B3, and a quarter note A3. The third measure is a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and a quarter note C5. The fourth measure is a quarter note B4, followed by quarter notes A4, G4, and a quarter note F4. The fifth measure is a quarter note E4, followed by quarter notes D4, C4, and a quarter note B3. The fretting staves are: Bass D (11 9 | 0 ETC.), Middle A (6+ 0 0 0 0 | 6+ 0 0 8 9), and Treble DD (8 11 11 9 8 7 | 6+ 0 0 0 0 | 6+ 0 0 8 9).

The Little Beggarman Lyrics:

*I am a little beggarman a beggin' I have been
For three score and more in this little Isle of Green.
And up to the Liffey and down to Tessague,
And I'm known by the name of the Bold Johnnie Dhu.*

*I slept last night in a barn at Currabawn.
A wet night came on and I slipped through the door.
Holes in me shoes and the toes peepin' through
Singin' skiddy-me-re-me-doodlum for old Johnnie Dhu.*

CHORUS:

*Of all the trades that's goin' sure a beggin' is the best,
For when a man is tired he can sit down have a rest.
He begs for his dinner, he has nothing else to do
Only cut around the corner with his old Ricadoo.*

*I must be gettin' home for it's gettin' late at night.
The fire's all raked and there isn't any light.
And now you've heard me story of the old Ricadoo,
It's good-night and God bless you from old Johnnie Dhu.*