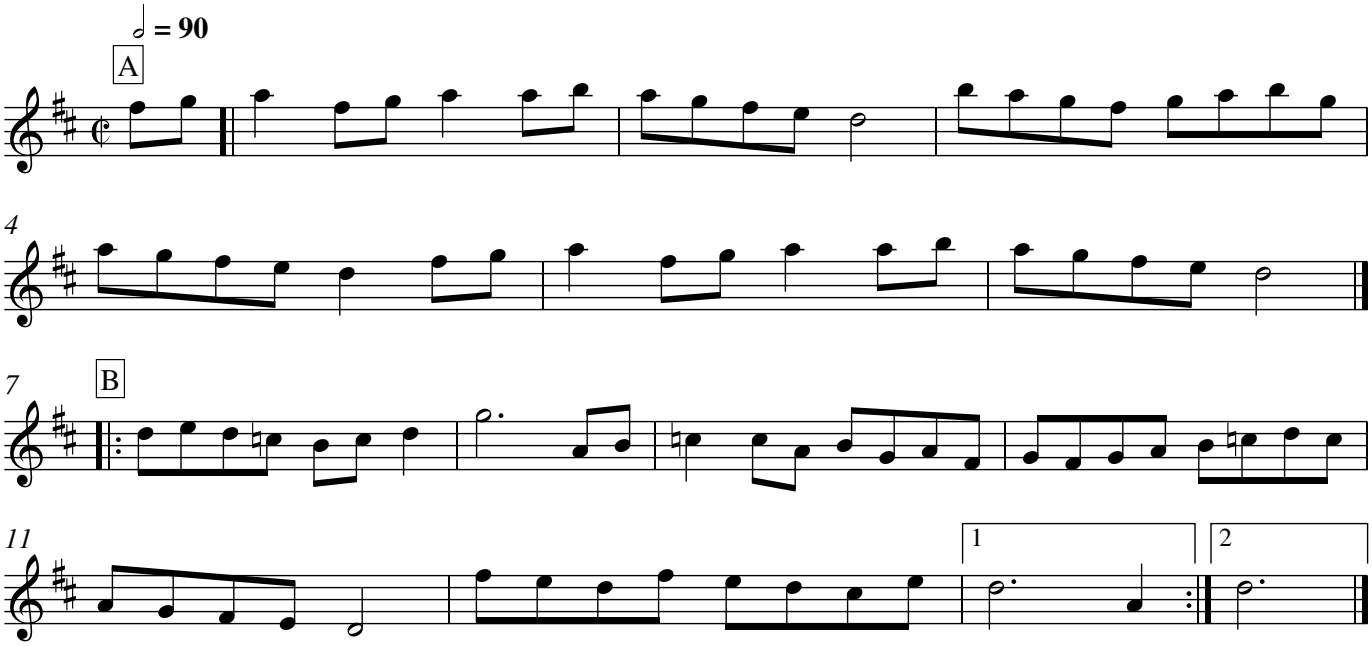
1. Ship In The Clouds

Trad arr. ©2026 Ben Paley

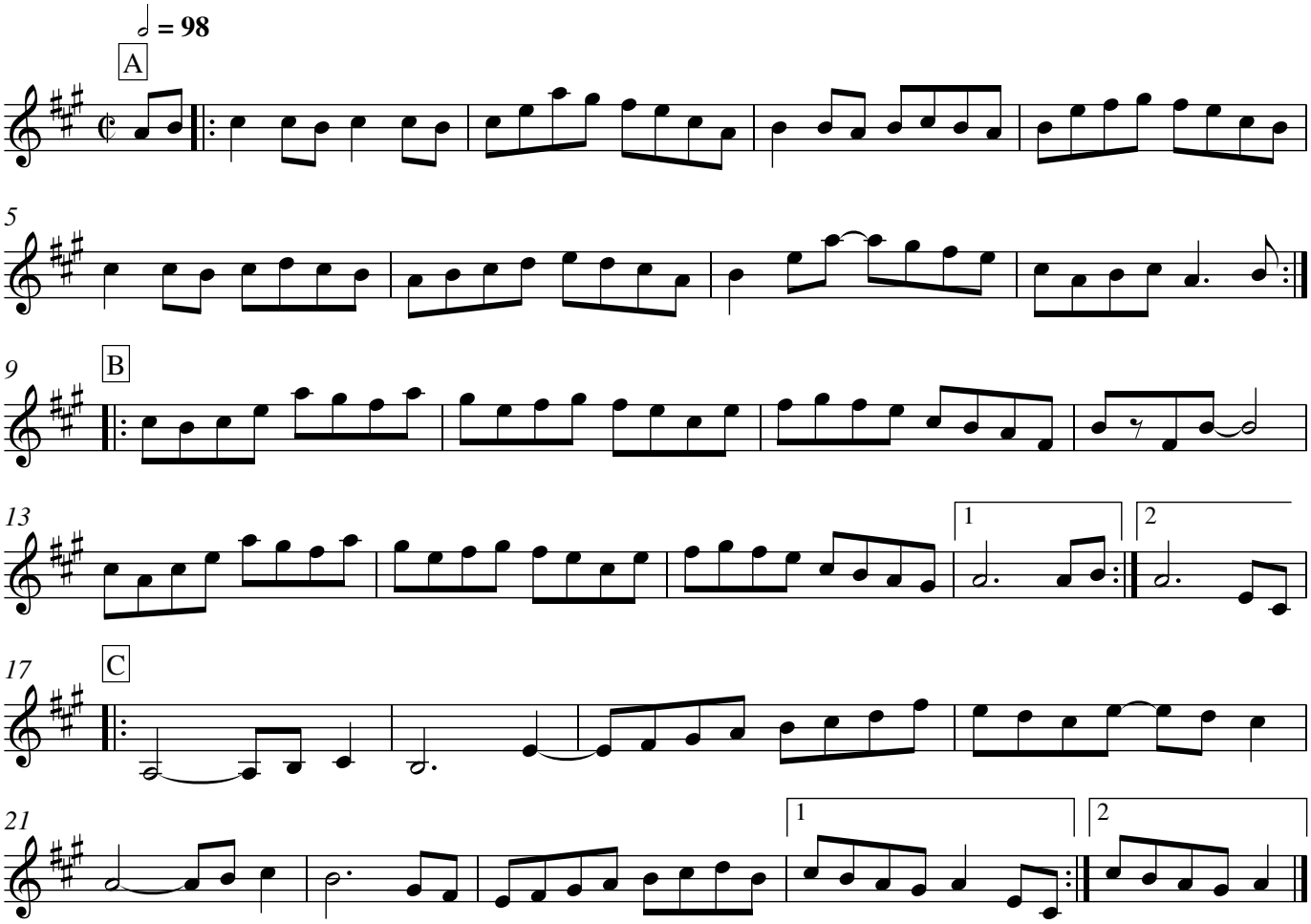


Discography: Andy Cahan, Laura Fishleder and Lisa Ornstein, "Ship in the Clouds", 1978

Notes: I love this tune. It's quite irregular but it doesn't sound irregular, it just works. What a fully joyous melody. And what a great name for a tune, eh?

2. Bull at the Wagon

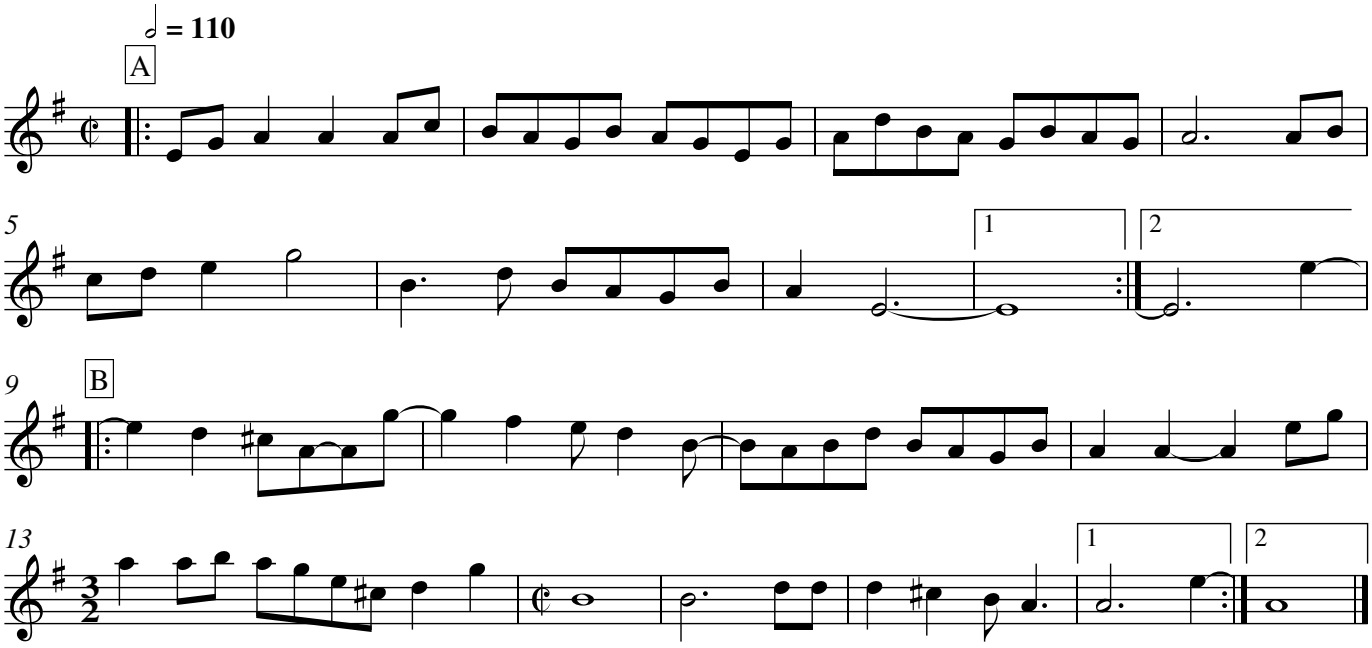
Trad arr. ©2026 Ben Paley (New Mexico/Texas, USA)



Notes: This spiky reel was recorded in Texas in 1929 by the Lewis Brothers, and it's been played and recorded by many people since then. I learnt it from my dad, who played it on the fiddle. I think, as a result, my version is a little spikier than the way most people play it, while also closer to the 1929 recording, but that's pretty subjective. It always feels to me like a crooked tune, and I have to count to remind myself that it's totally straight.

3. Trips Around the Sun

©2018, Andrew Marlin



Discography: Andrew Marlin, "Buried in a Cape", 2018

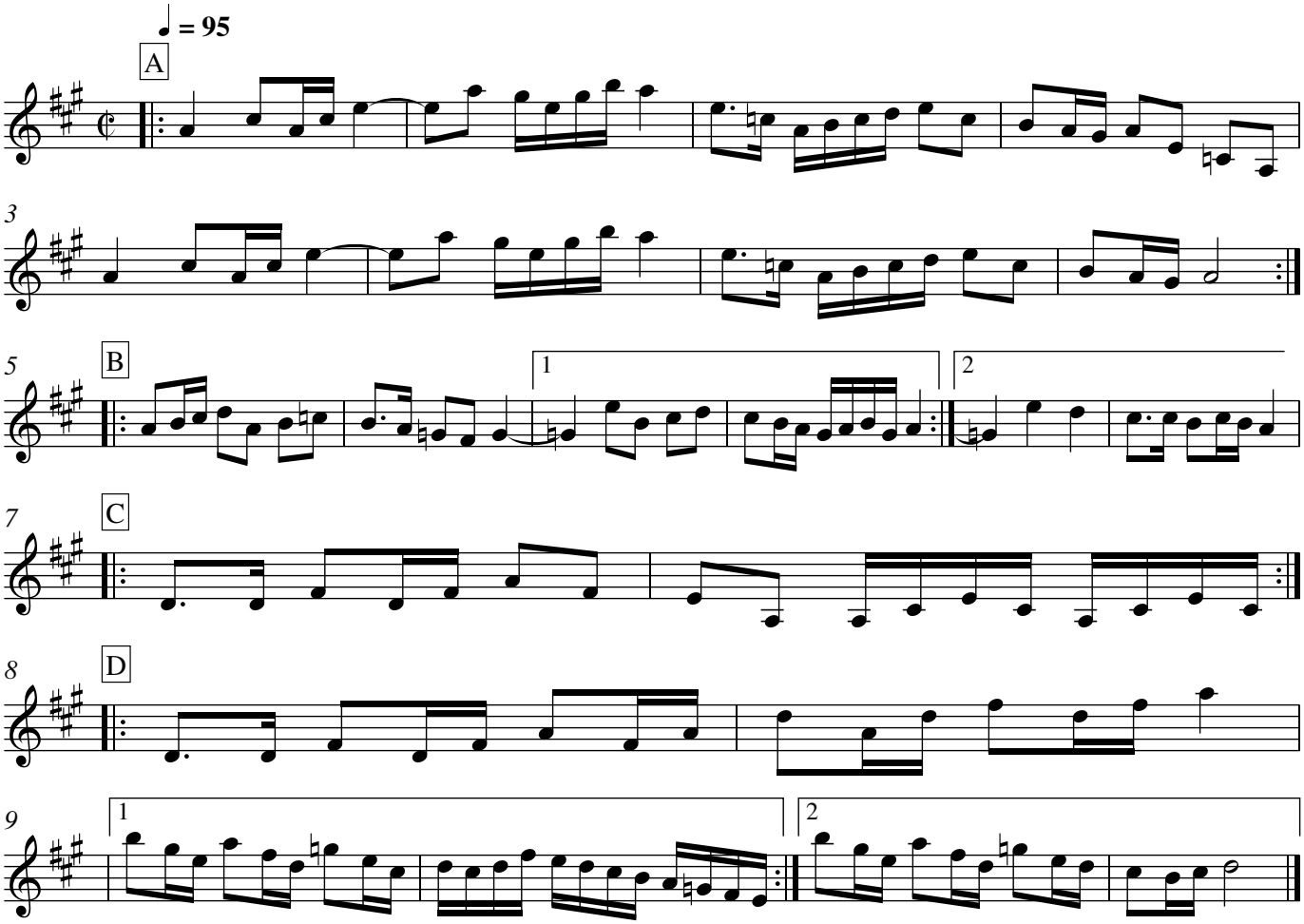
Notes: This is a tune by Andrew Marlin, from his terrific album "Buried in a Cape". It's not difficult for the fingers, but there's lots of syncopation and anticipation. That's what gives it its charm, of course, but it can also make it trickier to learn.

I've left the long E notes at the end of the [A] section alone, but you probably wouldn't want to play them that way very often. There are lots of little fills and tricks and things you can do to ornament that space. Definitely start by listening to Andrew Marlin himself play it!

4. Skrammelpolskan efter Karl Lindblad

Rattle-polska from the playing of Karl Lindblad

Trad arr. ©2026 Ben Paley (Gästrikland, Sweden)



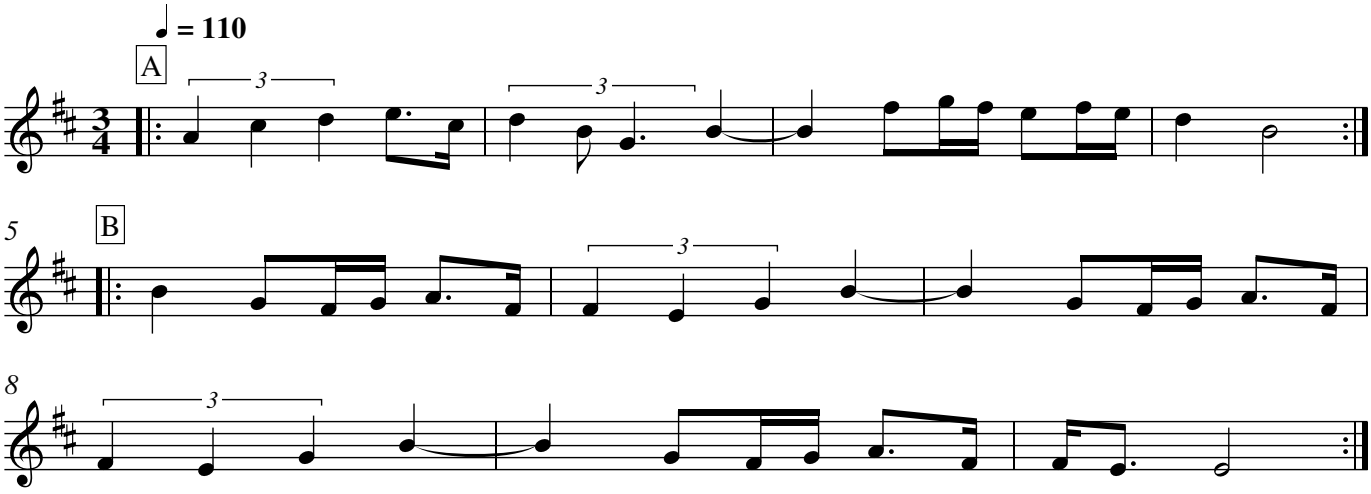
Discography: Tony Wrethling, Ulf Hermansson and Per Börjesson, "Felan Går - Danslåtar från Gästrikland", 1979
Sven Ahlbäck, "Gästriketon", 1981 (as "Polska efter Karl Lindblad")

Notes: This is a lovely big polska. Lots of shifts of tonality, but on the other hand the rhythm is pretty straight.

5. Faut Margit lieken efter Einar Britt

Margit the Bailiff's tune (?) from the playing of Einar Britt

Trad arr. ©2026 Ben Paley (Älvdalen, Dalarna, Sweden)



Discography: Simon Simonssons Kvartet, "Längs Gamla Stigar och Färdeväger", 1989
Filip Jers Quartet, "Filip Jers Quartet Plays Swedish Folk", 2015
Tant Parant, "Ro och trevnad, lycklig levnad", 2024

Notes: This tune looks a little simple and repetitive written down. It's not complicated at all, apart from being a polska, but there is so much that can be done with it. I first heard it on the album by Simon Simonssons kvartett, Längs gamala stigar och färdevägar, and they turn this little tune into a jewel

I've transcribed it in D Major just to avoid accidentals, but it doesn't seem to me to spend much time actually in D.

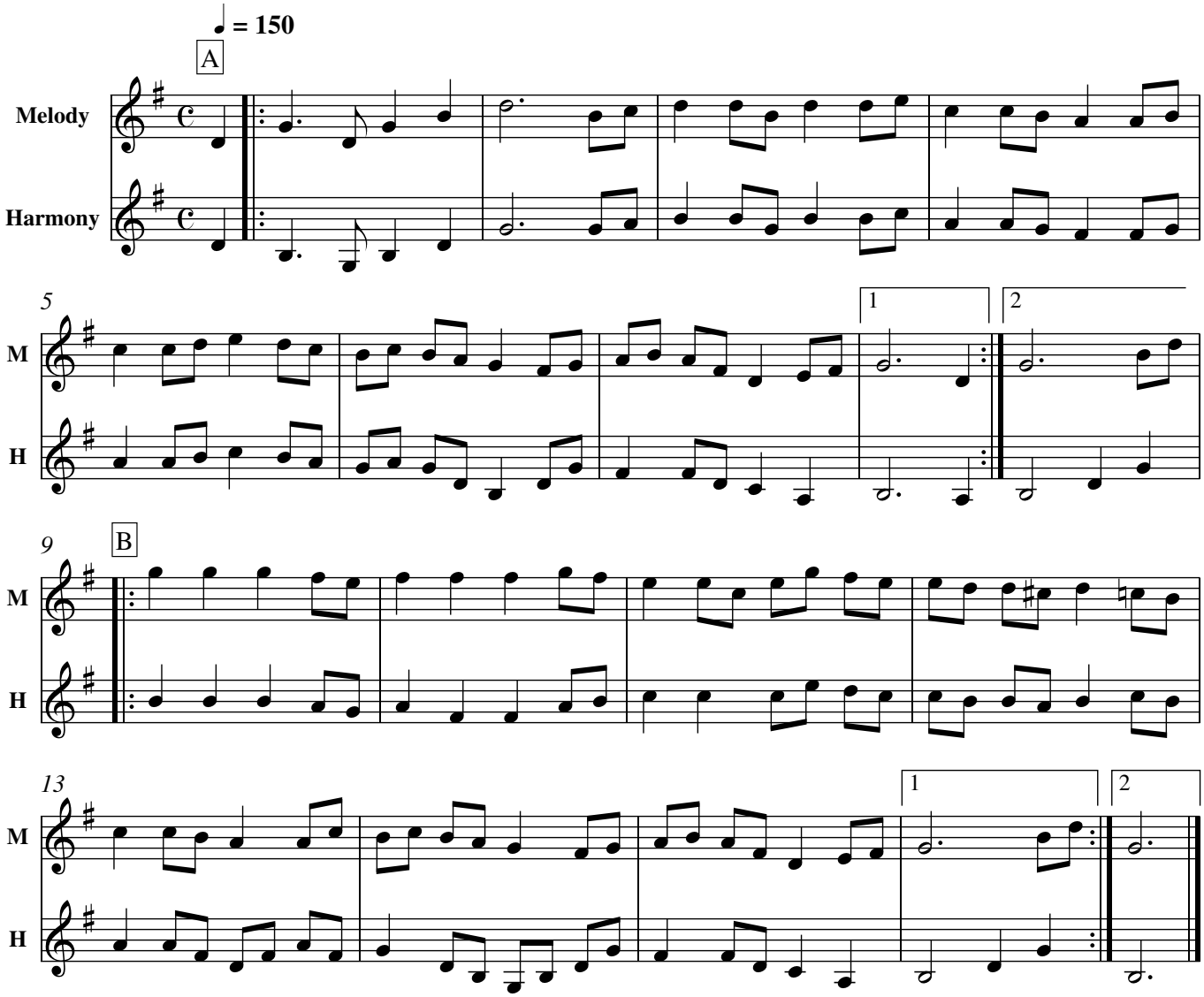
The second part does a little XXY thing I really like, that always reminds me of the trilithons at Stonehenge: a short phrase that's played twice like the sarsen stones, then a single short phrase to cap them off, like the lintel stone.

Finally: it's a polska, the beats are not all the same length: please please please don't try and play it without listening to Simon Simonsson's Quartet first. I've tried using triplets to express the rhythm of some bars, do you think it works?

6. Äppelbo Gånglåt

Walking tune from Äpplebo

Trad arr. ©2026 Ben Paley (Äpplebo, Dalarna, Sweden)



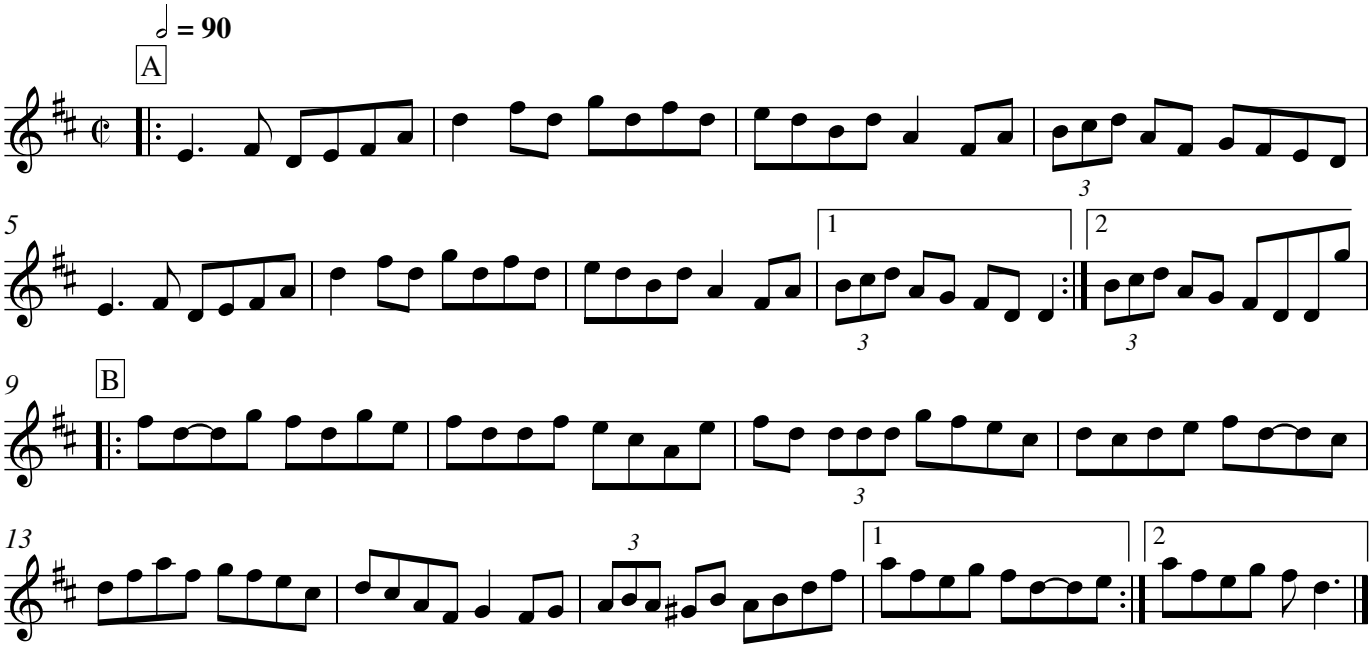
Discography: Ben Paley, "Swedish Fiddle Music", 1993

Notes: This is a very popular tune in Sweden, and relatively well-known elsewhere. One of those tunes that probably gets overplayed because it's really good.

7. The Providence Reel

The Rossport Reel

John McGrath, arr. ©2026 Ben Paley (Rossport, Mayo, Éire)



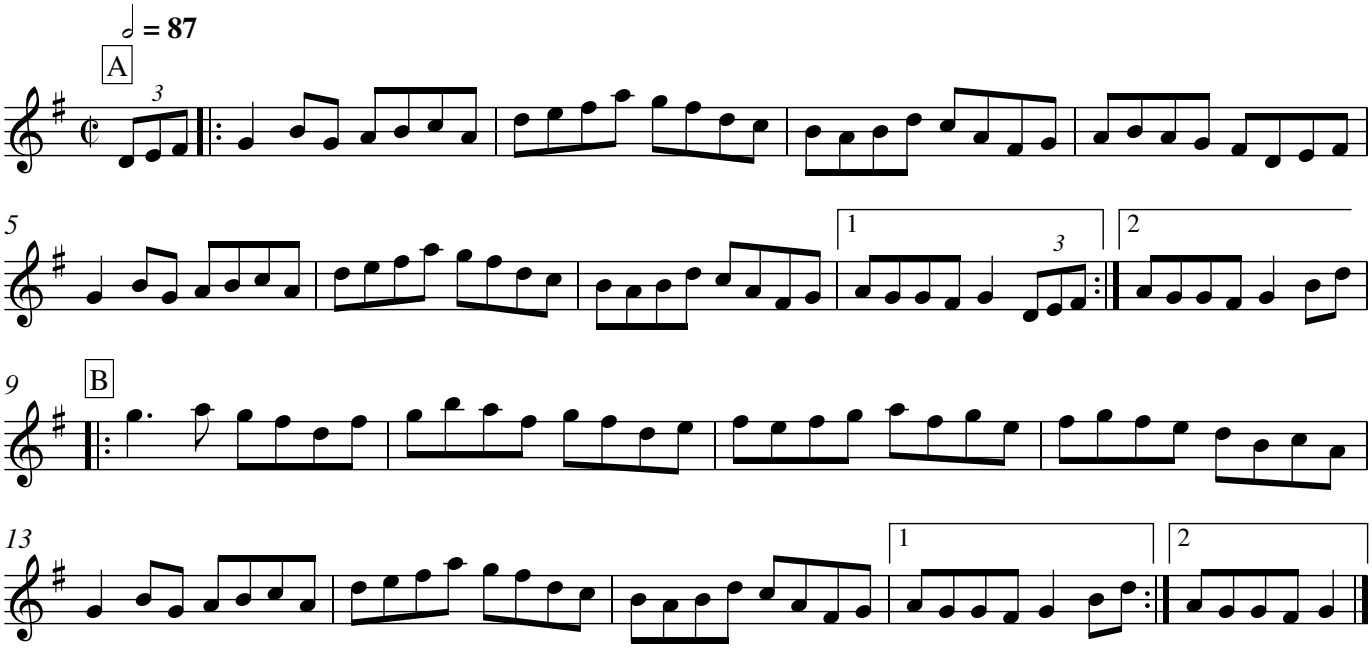
Discography: Séamus Creagh and Aidan Coffey, "Traditional Music From Ireland", 1999
Actually, there are so many, just go and have a look at
https://thesession.org/tunes/376/recordings

Notes: This is another tune which I first heard on the album Traditional Music From Ireland by Séamus Creagh and Aidan Coffey. There's not a bad track on that album, by the way. The tune was composed by John McGrath, some time in the 1920s or '30s, and it's sometimes called the Rossport Reel, after his birthplace.

8. The Rover in the Bog

Broadway

Trad arr. © 2021 Ben Paley (Ireland)



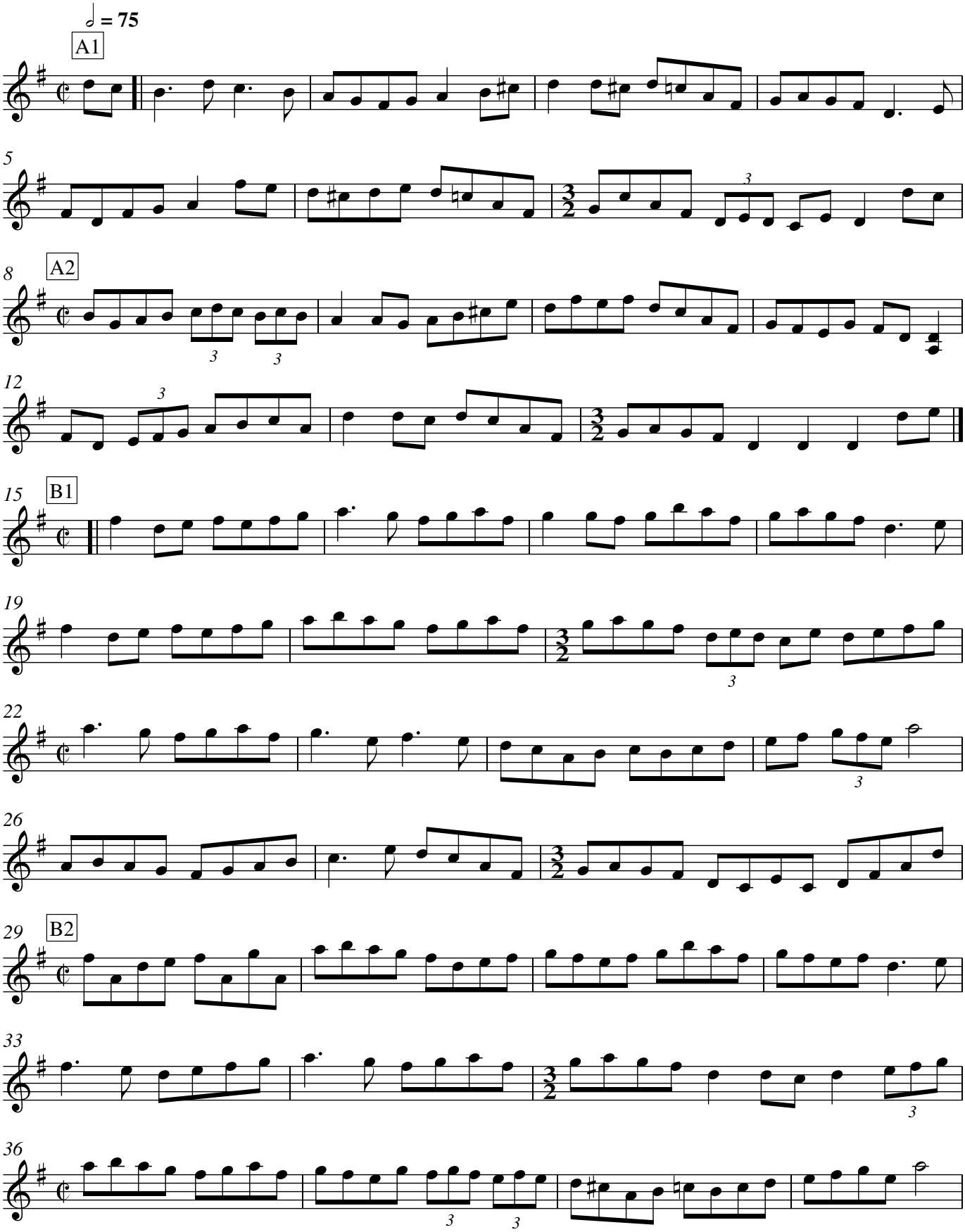
Discography: Le Chéile, "Lord Mayo", 2006
Eamon McGivney, John Kelly and Peadar Ó Riada, "The Drôle", 2013
Ben Paley, "Homunculus Mellitus", 2019

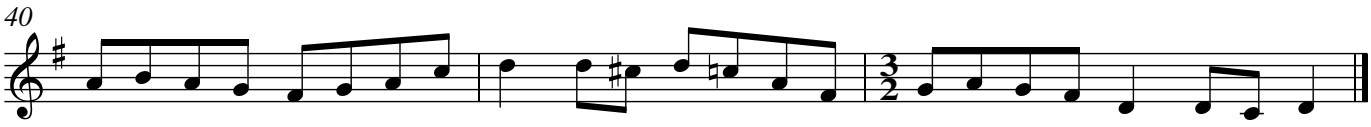
Notes: I got this brilliant sparkling reel from anglo concertina player Mandy Murray in Brighton.

9. The Blackbird

Queen of The Earth and Child of the Skies

Trad arr. ©2026 Ben Paley (These Islands)





Discography: Edden Hammons, "The Edden Hammons Collection", 1999 (as "Queen of The Earth and Child of the Skies")
Seán Ryan and P.J.Moloney, "Traditional Music of Ireland Vol.1", 1960
Seán Ryan and Peter Carberry, "Traditional Music of Ireland Vol.2", 1960
Tommy Potts, "The Liffey Banks", 1971
Finbar and Eddie Furey, "The Dawning of the Day", 1972
John Carty, "Yeh, That's All It Is", 2005
The Expatriate Game, "Traditional Irish & American Music", 2005

Notes: This tune is so amorphous, it's hard to write down because there are just so many different things to do. When John Carty plays it, it's almost unrecognisable at times from the sheer exuberance of his variations and as for Tommy Potts' version, I'm not even completely sure it's the same tune. I've chosen to write it here without repeats so as to include a couple of different ideas. It's not just an Irish tune, you'll hear versions of it from all around these islands, and there's even an American version called "Queen of The Earth and Child of the Skies".