



Beginning Irish Mandolin by Michael B. Gregory

Here's a common session tune called The Liltin' Banshee. I think it's fun to play and sounds great. I learned it from this Comhaltas video:

http://comhaltas.ie/music/detail/comhaltaslive_242_5_mike_rafferty_on_irish_flute/ which features Mike Rafferty playing flute, his daughter Mary Rafferty Clancy on accordion and Mary's husband Donal Clancy on

bouzouki. They play two jigs in this video and we'll present the second one in our next issue.

One thing I'd like to urge you to do is to observe very carefully the pick directions that are indicated in the score. Although some very good players observe patterns different than the one indicated (down-up-down, down-up-down), I strongly recommend that beginners stick with this one. If you listen carefully to the mp3's I've provided (as well as the video), you'll notice that beats one and four in each measure are emphasized. Many of you have told me that you use the mp3's to learn the tunes and pay almost no attention to the written music. That's fine as long as you pay attention to the rhythm of the music as well as the melody. Most traditional players learn by ear so you're in good company. But the down-up-down picking pattern for jigs is the way that most agree achieves the proper jig rhythm on the mandolin. If you have not been using this down-up-down down-up-down pattern on your jigs yet, then I recommend you change NOW. It will be a bit uncomfortable at first but in time (weeks, months or YEARS!), it will feel natural and when you learn new jigs the pattern will be automatic. Your sound will improve immeasurably.

If you have a recorder, it's a good idea to make a recording of your playing every few months. Listen carefully - not only to the notes but the overall feeling of the rhythm. Archive your recordings - don't erase them - in that way you can mark your progress.

Browse around the Comhaltas site when you get a chance. There's some wonderful material available there. The more Irish music you listen to, the better.

Thanks for your encouraging emails. Any suggestions, criticisms or requests will be courteously considered.

The Lilting Banshee

Tablature system 1 (measures 1-4). The guitar part features a sequence of chords: 5, 2-0-0, 2-0-0, 2-0-2, 5-0, 2-0-0-0, 5-2, 5-2-0, 5-2-0. The melody is in treble clef, key of D major (two sharps), and 6/8 time. It begins with a quarter note D4, followed by eighth notes E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, and a dotted quarter note B4.

Tablature system 2 (measures 5-8). The guitar part continues with chords: 2-0-0, 2-0-0, 2-0-2, 5-0, 2-0-0-0, 5-2, 5-2-0-0, 5. The melody continues with eighth notes C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, and a dotted quarter note D4. A first ending bracket covers measures 7 and 8, ending with a double bar line and repeat sign.

Tablature system 3 (measures 9-12). The guitar part features chords: 5-2-0-0, 0-5-5-5-3-0, 5-2-0-5-0, 2-0-0-0, 5-2. The melody continues with eighth notes D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, and a dotted quarter note A4. A second ending bracket covers measures 11 and 12, ending with a double bar line and repeat sign.

Tablature system 4 (measures 13-16). The guitar part features chords: 5-0-2-3, 0-5-5-5-3-0, 5-2-0-5-0, 2-0-0-0, 5-2, 5-2-0-0. The melody continues with eighth notes G4, F#4, E4, D4, C5, B4, and a dotted quarter note A4. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat sign.