

MUSICAL TRADITONS

Musical Sentences

By Stewart Hendrickson

It is the end of August as I write this column. I have just spent the past six days in the hospital recovering from intestinal bleeding and a broken rib with a punctured lung (I'll spare you the gory details!). I'm doing fine now, but I need to get this column in by the end of the week, so I'll recycle a column from October, 2006.

This column grew out of some summer foolishness. A thread on the *Mudcat.org* titled "musical sentences" began: "During a quiet spell in chat we started bandying about daft sentences made up of tunes." Starting with about five sentences in that thread, I couldn't resist adding some of my own.

And then I couldn't stop! The rules are simple, just use titles of tunes to make up sentences. They can be outrageous or just plain daffy. Irish tunes are the best; you can just list a bunch of titles and then mix and match.

The titles of Irish tunes have absolutely nothing to do with the tunes. They are just devices for remembering tunes and telling others what tunes you might play; much better than "let's play that tune I don't know the name of but which comes after that other tune, you know!"

Tunes associated with songs usually are named after the song. But other tunes are named by something the composer associates with the tune, such as where it was composed, what happened at the time, or simply an outrageous title guaranteed to get one's attention and thus propagate the tune.

So here we go. Five of these sentences came from the *Mudcat.org*, the rest I'll have to take responsibility for (I won't tell you which!).

Step It Out Molly, we'll dance to **Fagin's Jig** as they **Smash The Windows** at **The Little Beggarman's** house in **Kildare Town**, **All In The Month Of May!** **The Little Beggarman** took off his **Mason's Apron** when he danced at **Mairi's Wedding**. And **Hardiman The Fiddler** played the **Kesh Jig** while **The Boys Of The Lough** danced with **The Limerick Lassies**.

Kiss Me Kate and **Strike The Gay Harp**. **Wink Her Aside** and offer **A Fig For A Kiss**. **Behind The Haystack** he **Merrily Kissed The Quaker's Wife** (or she **Merrily Kissed The Quaker**). **Last Night's Fun** was **Rolling In The Ryegrass** with **The Sligo Maid**. **Last Night's Fun** became no **Lark In The Morning**.

I was **Tripping Up The Stairs** to **My Darling Asleep** in the room with **The Dusty Windowsills** as **The Lark In The Morning** whistled **Music For A Found Harmonium**. **Drowsy Maggie** awoke on the **Banks Of The Bann** as **The Wandering Minstrel** sang **The Aaran Boat Song**. **If I Had Maggie In The Woods** we would take **The Gravel Walks** to **The Banks Of Lough Gowna** where **I Buried My Wife And Danced On Her Grave**.

I took **The Jaunting Car** to **Take You Home Kathleen** to see your **Irish Eyes Are Smiling** when you talk to **The Drunken Sailor**.

Paddy O'Brien said it was **The Devil In The Kitchen**, but it was only **The Ass In The Graveyard**. Although he was told to **Nail That Catfish To The Tree**, **Moses Hoed The Corn** instead. Before anyone could object, he was **Done Gone**.

The Maid Behind The Bar and the **Cook In The Kitchen** ran **Off To California** on a

New Rigged Ship sailing Over The Ocean on The Rolling Waves. The Ships Are Sailing in The Dingle Regatta past the Sailor On The Rock.

My Ass Ran Away on The Tar Road To Sligo as The Wild Irishman chased the Rambling Pitchfork past The Lilting Banshee. The Flowers Of Edinburgh were blooming in the New Mown Meadow as a Piper On Horseback chased The Wee Rabbit up Spancil Hill.

The Pigeon On The Gate flew Over The Moor To Maggie as The Foxhunters chased The Old Grey Goose, while The Cat That Ate The Candle and The Fox On The Prowl ran through The Hole In The Hedge.

Billy In The Lowground went Over The Waterfall and found Angleline The Baker in The Crisis on the Craigs Of Tumbledown Mountain. The Cat That Kittled In Jamie's Wig chased The Butterfly along the Cliffs Of Moher while The Connaughtman's Rambles took him down The Road To Lisdoonvarna and then to Galway Bay and the island of Inisheer.

"Saddle The Pony for A Trip To Durrow," said Lucy Campbell to The New Policeman. Rakish Paddy robbed The Bank Of Ireland, but all he got was an Old Penny.

The Drunken Landlady said Farewell To Whiskey as she slid down Denis Murphy's Slide to Welcome Whiskey Back Again.

"When Sick Is It Tea You Want?" asked The Wise Maid. Farewell To The Troubles Of The World, Pull The Knife And Stick It Again.

My Mind Will Never Be Easy with The Fly In The Pint and The Eel In The Sink. Sailing Into Walpole's Marsh in Splendid Isolation, My Love Is In America.

Kick The World Before You, Some Say The Devil's Dead, but The Scolding Wives Of Abertarf are not.

Bang Your Frog On The Sofa, Flick It Up And Catch It, and Wallop The Cat From Under The Table.

Tickle Her Leg With The Barley Straw (or Get Up Old Woman And Shake It), Old Hag You've Killed Me.

Tell Her I Am, The Wind That Shakes The Barley or The Floating Crowbar.

Now it's up to you to play this game and see how many more you can add. How about starting with **Shove The Pigs' Foot A Little Further Into The Fire... ?**

Cheers!

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