



MIXTER MAXTER 33

"Uisge Beatha," "Aqua Vitae," "Water of Life;" - or as it's more commonly called, whisky. Distilled in Scotland for centuries, it is one of the things which people think of when Scotland is mentioned. It's our leading export, with a market in every corner of the world, and around 40 bottles shipped every second. Whisky has always been a rich subject of Scots song and instrumental music, as we're going to discover today. Slainte mhath!

Spirit of the Water (John Mason)

slow air



Composed by fiddler John Mason for the Strathisla Distillery in Keith, makers of the popular export whisky Chivas Regal. John Mason MBE (1940-2011) was the co-founder of the Scottish Fiddle Orchestra, and its musical director and conductor for 31 years. He was original from Orkney, but later lived in Wigton and Troon.

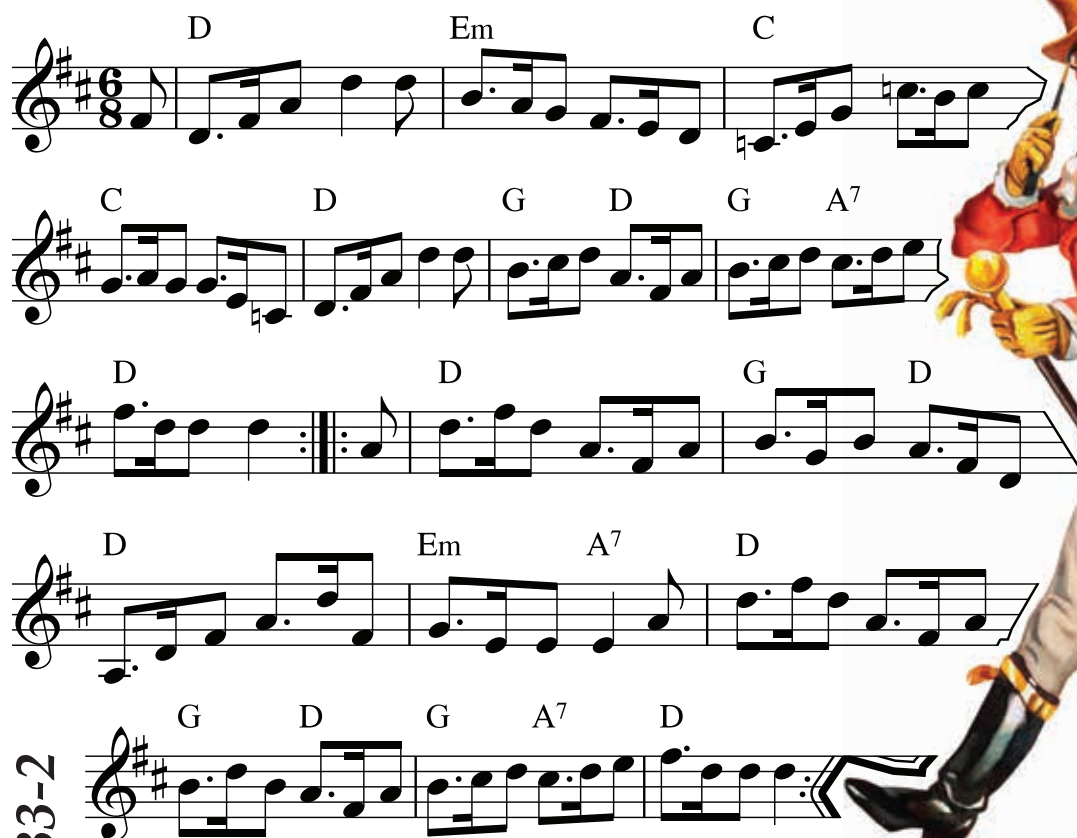
MM33-1

Anne's Whisky Jig (Alastair J MacDonald)

jig

*Johnnie Walker* (Bert Murray)

jig



The first jig came from fiddler Addie Harper, leader of the Wick Scottish Country Dance Band. Johnnie Walker was composed by Aberdeenshire fiddler Bert Murray.

Nigel Gatherer's Workshops

Fill Your Glasses (traditional)

strathspey

Talisker (James Scott Skinner)

reel

I got the first tune from Kerr's Merry Melodies (c1870s). Talisker was a Skinner strathspey which I've turned into a reel.

MM33-3

A Wee Drap o' Whisky (traditional)

A wee drap o' whis-ky, tae tak' when I'm wea-ry, my blood for to warm, my spi-rits to cheer;
 An' when I sit doon I in - tend to be mer-ry, so fill up a bum-per an'
 bring it roond here. There's hard - ly an hoor when I'm no' fee-lin' wea-ry, tto
 tell you the truth, I am wrocht ve-ry sair; My ploos and my las-sie gie
 me a' my plea-sure, so let's hae a kiss an' then tak' a drap mair.

1. *A wee drap o' whis-ky, tae tak' when I'm wea-ry,*
my blood for to warm, my spi-rits to cheer;
An' when I sit doon I intend to be merry,
So fill up a bum-per an' bring it roond here.
There's hardly an hoor when I'm no' fee-lin' weary,
To tell you the truth, I am wrocht ve-ry sair;
My ploos and my lassie gie me a' my pleasure,
So let's hae a kiss an' then tak' a drap mair.



Nigel Gatherer's Workshops

A Wee Drap o' Whisky (cont)

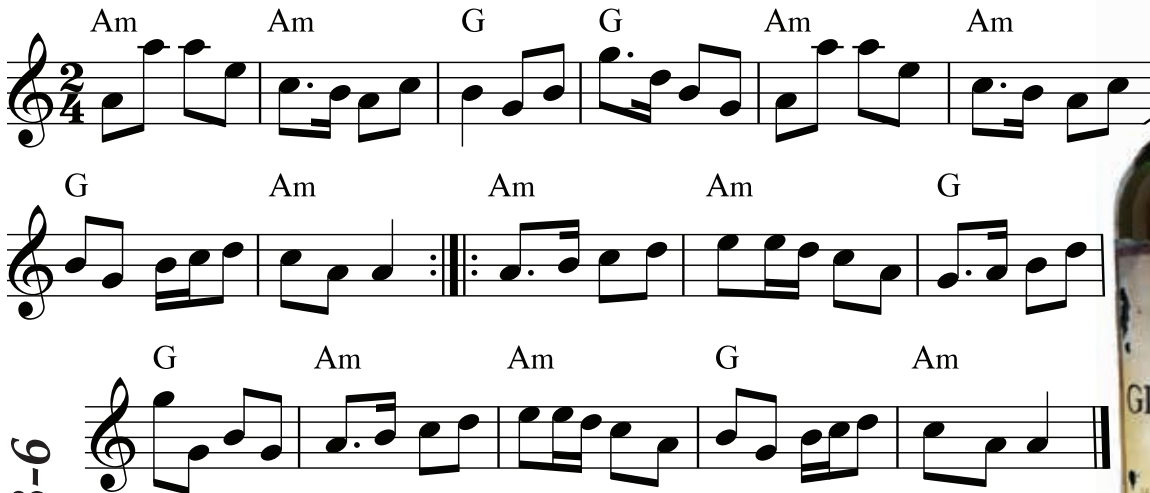
2. Contentit I sit, an' contentit I labour,
Contentit I drink, an' contentit I sing;
I never dispute or fa' oot wi' my neebors,
For that is a mean an' a vexatious thing.
An' few, very few ever hear me complainin'
Though oftimes the load of oppression I bear;
But what is the use o' a man aye complainin'?
For aye when he tastes, he maun hae a drap mair.



3. So come, noble waiter, bring in a large measure,
I mean a half-mutchkin, the best o' the toon;
An' when it is done, an' it's time tae be joggin'
Wi' the lightest o' care we'll gang toddlin' hame.
So good night to you all. I think it's nae treason
For now that the whisky speaks saft in my ear;
Good night an' safe hame, till further occasion
We'll a' meet in freenship an' hae a drap mair.

The original of this song was collected in Aberdeenshire in 1907 and later published in the Grieg-Duncan Collection. This setting is from a recording by Robin Laing, and I suspect the tune is his own.

The Whisky Polkas

ABSTAIN FROM WHISKY (*trad, arr. Gatherer*)THE TALISKER POLKA (*after James Scott Skinner*)THE GLENLIVET POLKA (*trad, arr. Gatherer*)

Three tunes adapted
from a jig and two reels
respectively.

Nigel Gatherer's Workshops

Let There Be Drams (Alan Reid/John McCusker)

jig

Chords: G, C, G, Am, Am, G, C, G, D7, C, G, Am, Am, G, Bm, G, C, G, D7, G, Em, C, G

This tune was written as a reel and recorded on The Battlefield Band's 1991 album New Spring. I thought it would make a good slow air, so I have adapted it for that purpose.

MM33-7

Tak' a Dram (Ian Sinclair)

Now the time has passed sae quick-ly, and the mu-sic's al-most done;—

We've heard the fid-dler and the pi-per, the sing-er and his song.

The time has come for us to leave you, one more

song be-fore we go, So but-ton up and aye be

chee-ry, and tak' a dram a-fore ye go.

- 2** For this night we will remember, for the music's been just fine; But the cauld, grey land
o' Caithness can be cruel and unkind. Noo we must bid fareweel and leave you,
traivel through the ice an' snaw, Sae button up, an' aye be cheery, an' tak' a dram
afore ye go. Sae button up, an' aye be cheery, an' tak' a dram afore ye go.

- 3** Sae good night, and God go with you, an' watch over you until
We can a' meet here thegither, an' oor glasses we will fill.
We will drink a toast tae absent freends and let
the beer and whisky flow, Sae button up, an' aye be
cheery, an' tak' a dram afore ye go. Sae button up
an' aye be cheery, an' tak' a dram afore ye go.

By Ian Sinclair
of Caithness and
recorded by his
band Mirk in
1982

