A

Collection

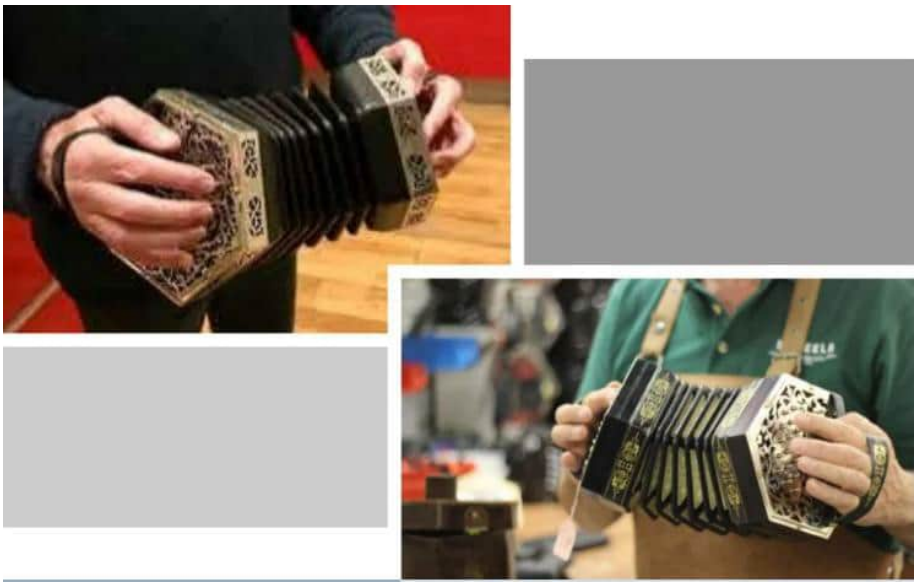
of

Australian Bush Tunes

(and some contemporary tunes)

Arranged in Two Parts

for your diversion and enjoyment



by

David Johnson

December 2022

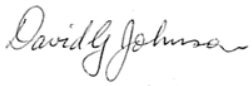
Notes:

This collection was inspired by the playing of Mary Booth and Ron McLaughlin at The Goulburn Club Fifth Friday Folk Concerts.

Most of these tunes had been previously arranged in four parts for the National Folk Festival Bush Orchestra that I have directed for over ten years.

The tunes are in approximate order of complexity.

Your feedback would be appreciated dave@davidjohnson.id.au



December 2022

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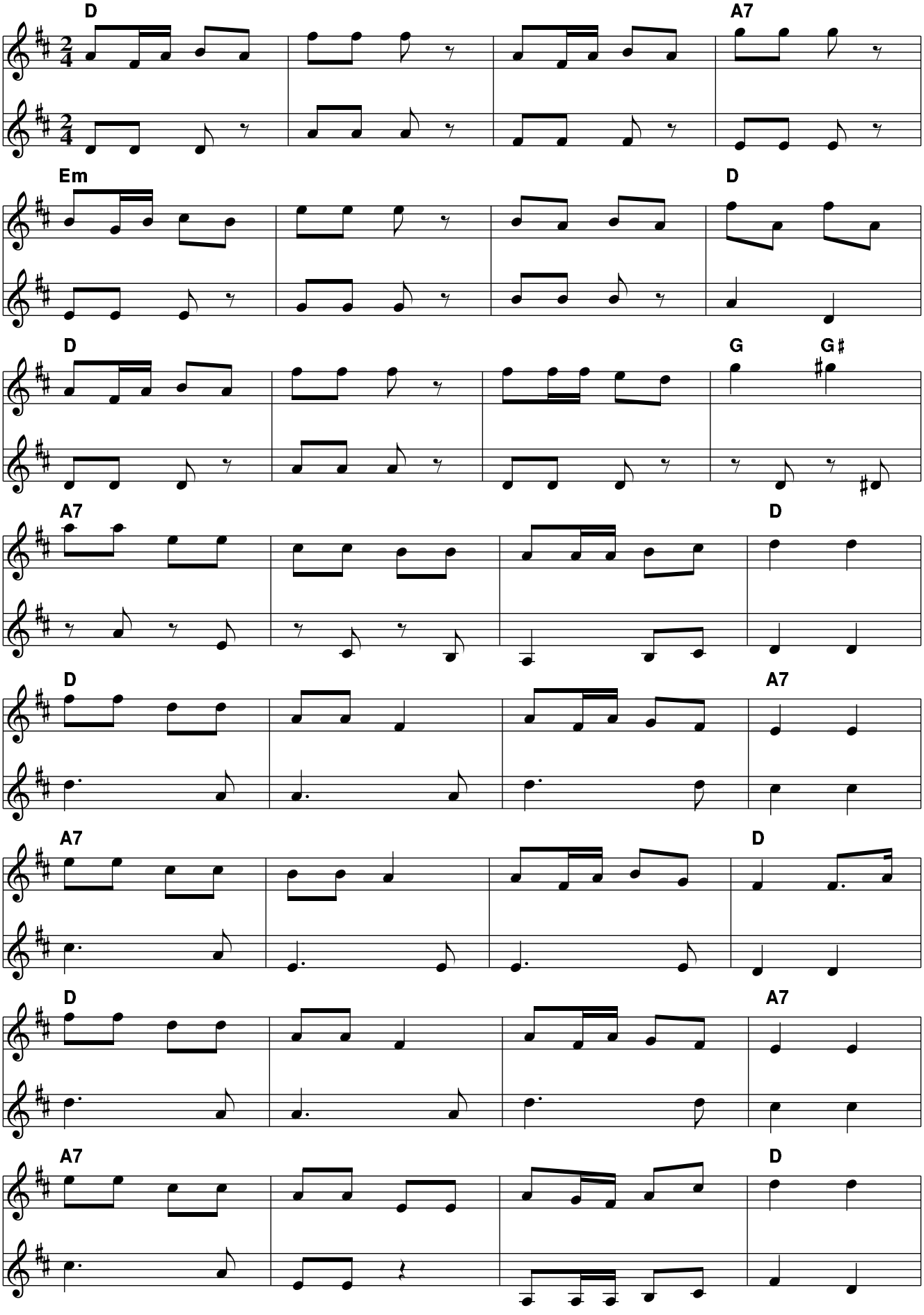
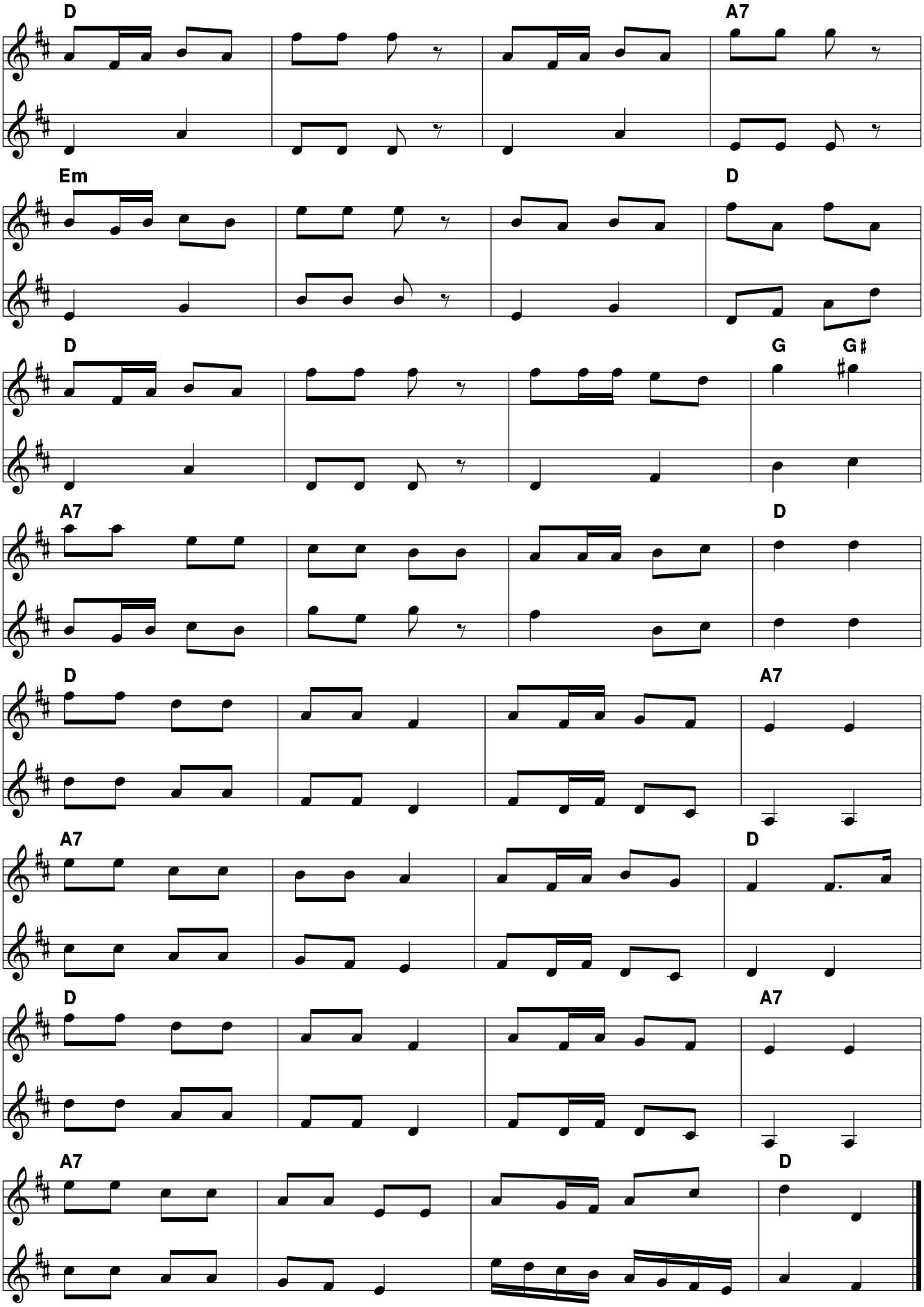
Gundy's Set Tune

Leo Donohue, from Golden Valley, Tasmania learnt this tune from an older local musician known as "Gundy".
Adapted for the Bush Orchestra at the National Folk Festival by Dave Johnson and here simplified to two parts.




D
A7
Em
D
D
G
G♯
A7
D
D
A7
A7
D
D
A7
A7
D

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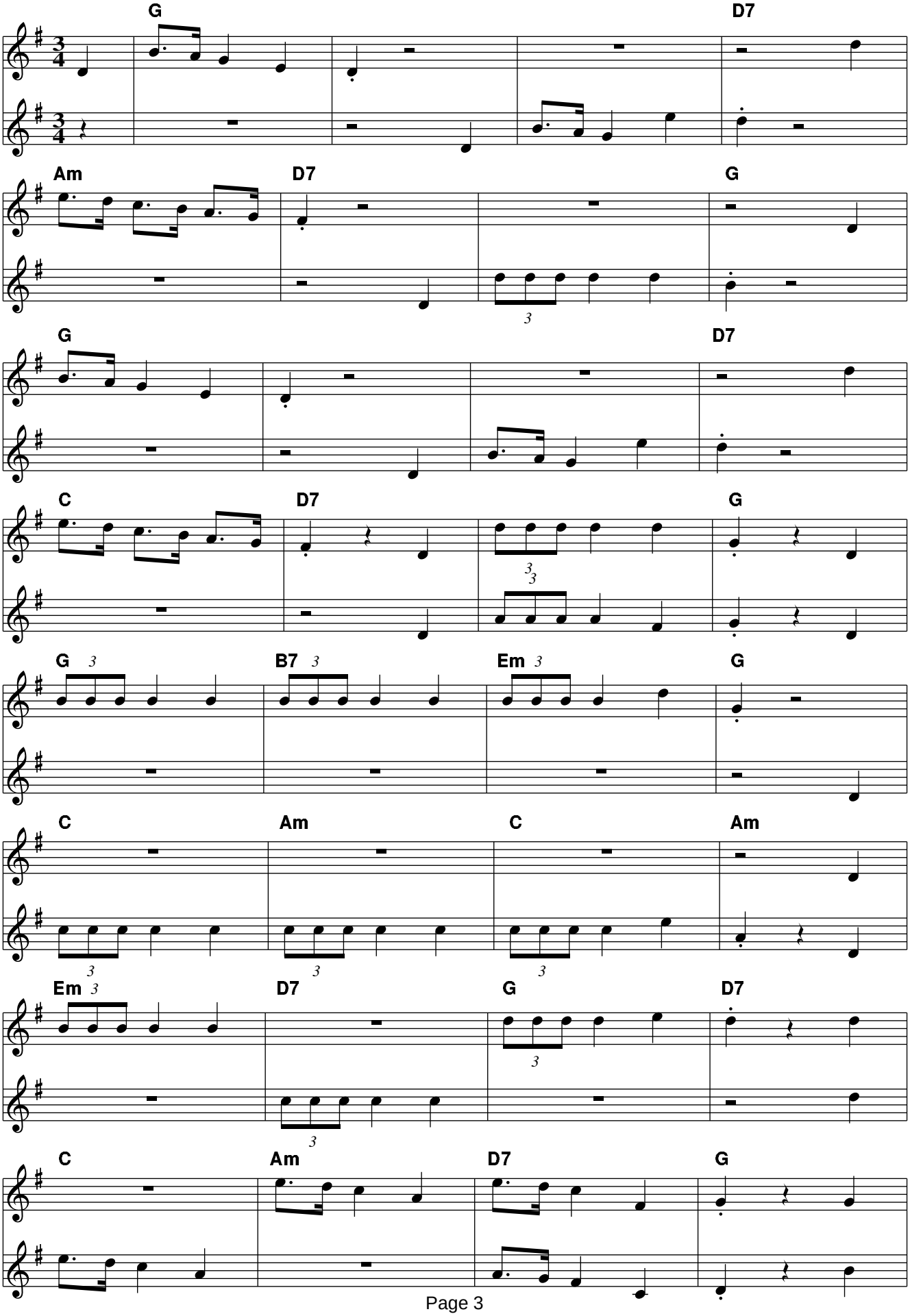
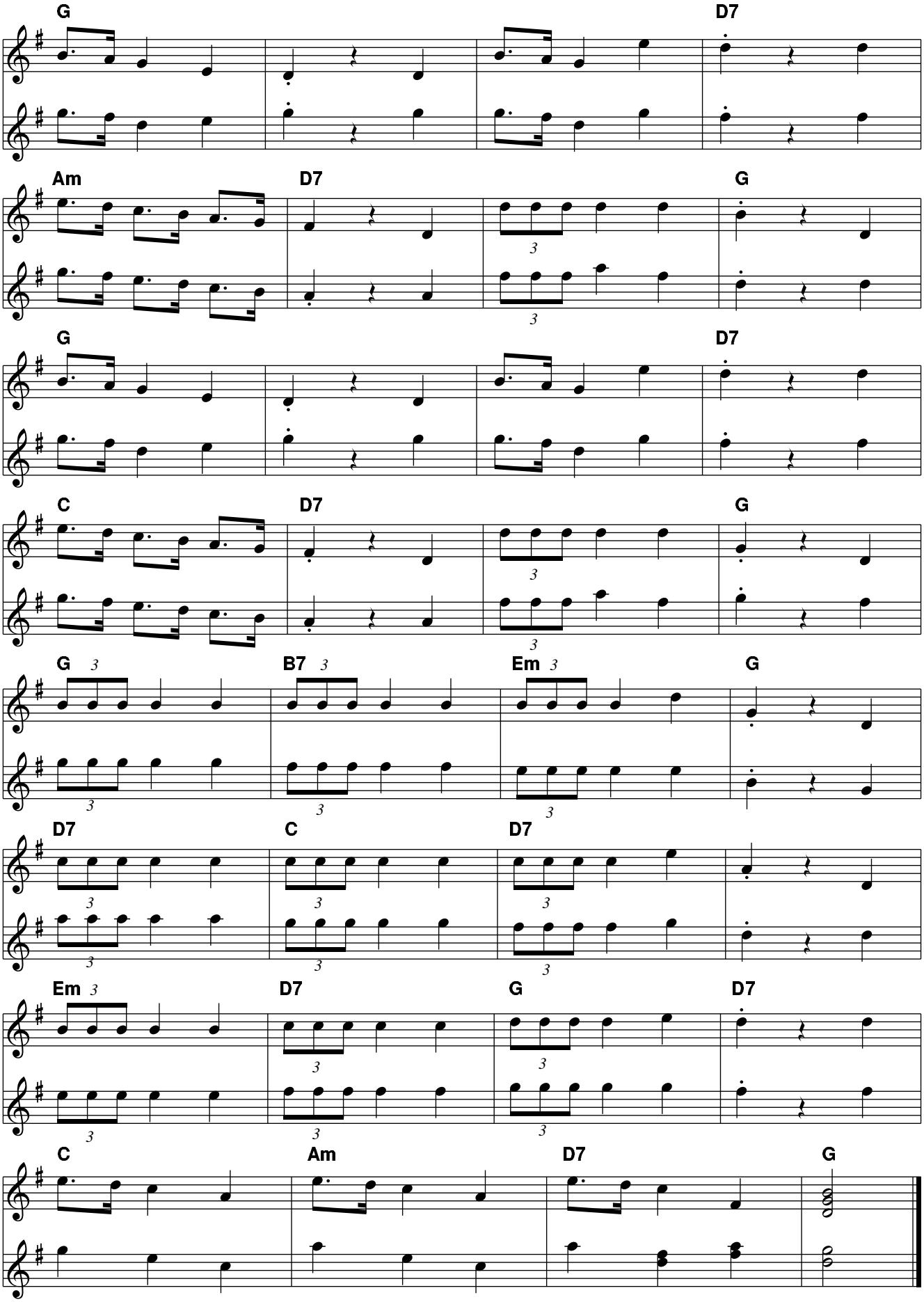
Mick Pilley's Varsovienna

This varsovienna was learnt by fiddler Mick Pilley from his father and recorded by John Meredith.
I first heard it from Bush Music Club Life Member, Jamie Carlin.
The varsovienna is characterised by the staccato notes every second bar in the A section and every 4th bar in the B section. This distinguished a varso from a common or garden variety waltz.




G
D7
Am
D7
G
G
D7
C
D7
G
G
B7
Em
G
D7
C
D7
Em
D7
G
D7
C
Am
D7
G

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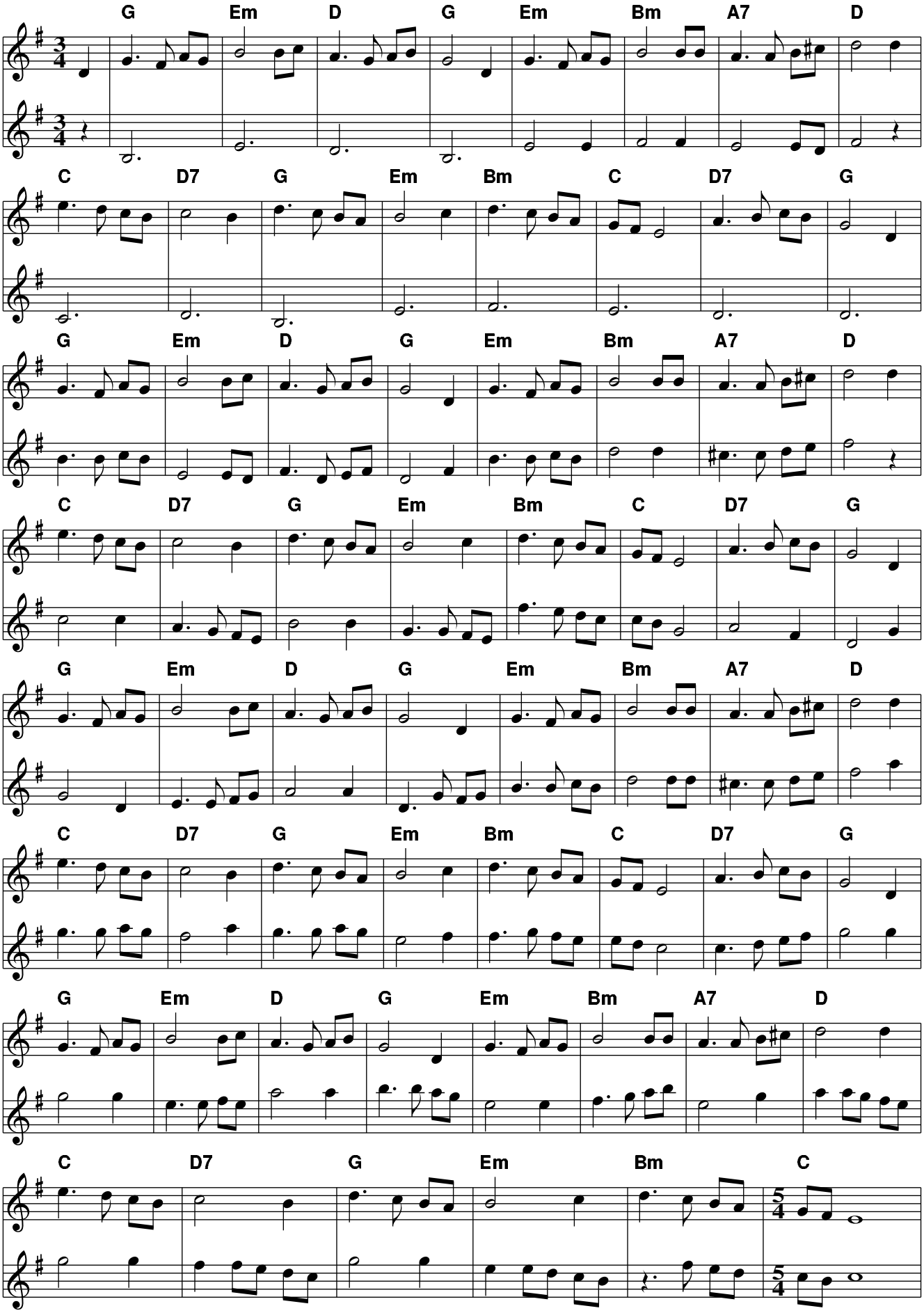
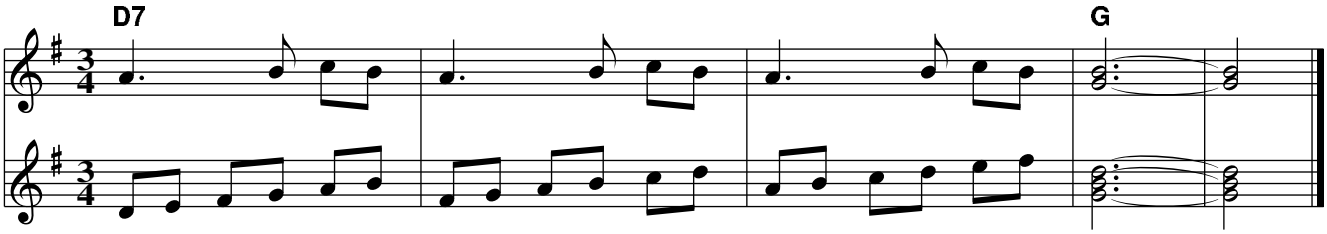
Patterson's Air

Adapted from W A Patterson from the North Coast of NSW, by Melbourne fiddler Harry Gardner.
Harry just loved a good slow air. Arranged specially for him, with great affection.
Don't be put off by the change of time signature at the end just hold the long note till it feels right!





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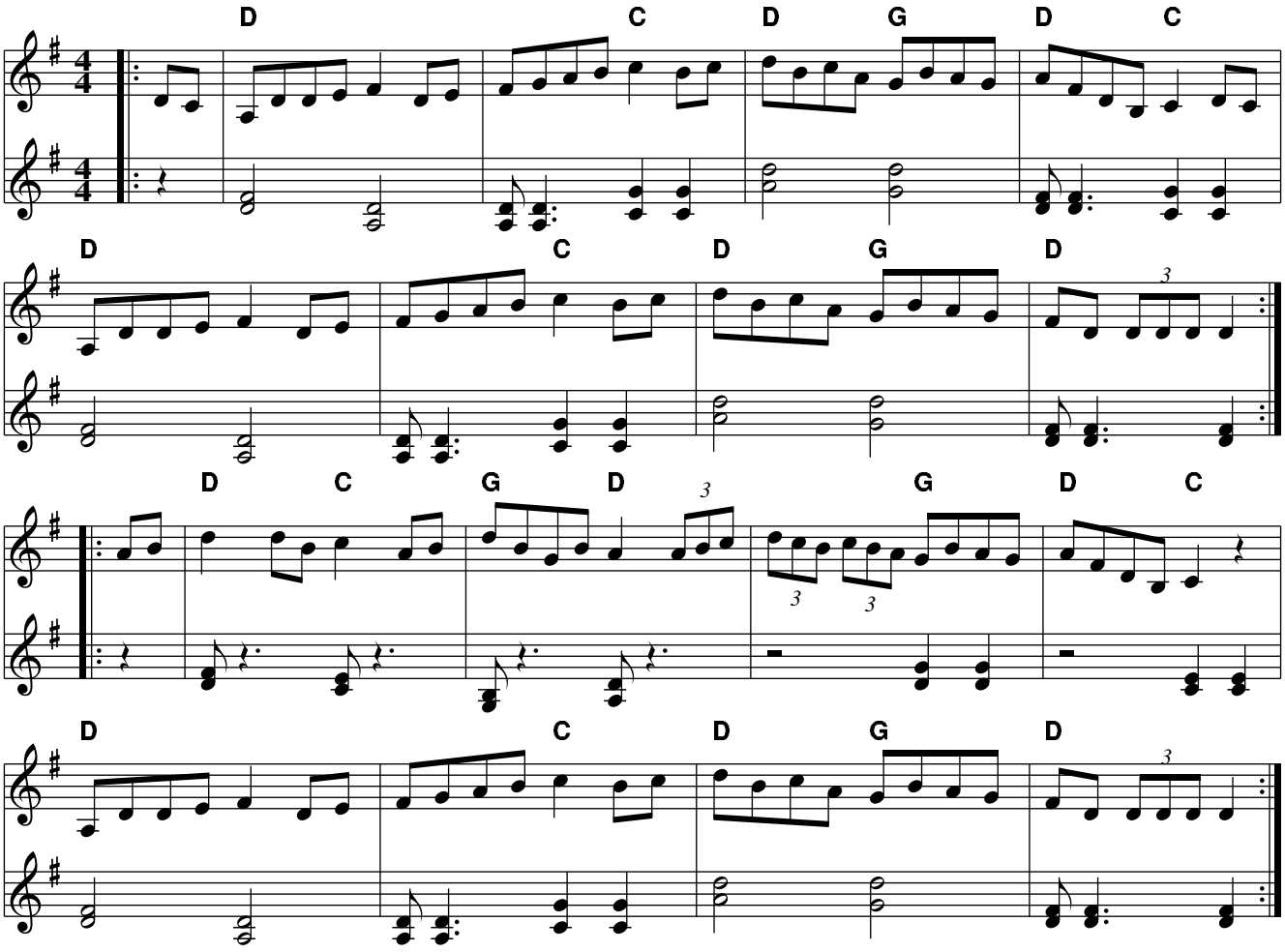
Sofala Cuckoo

A tune from the fiddle of Joe Yates as transcribed by Mike Martin.
Joe lived at Sofala and played for dances in the area with his extensive repertoire.
The tune is in the Mixolydian mode ie D scale with C natural instead of C#.



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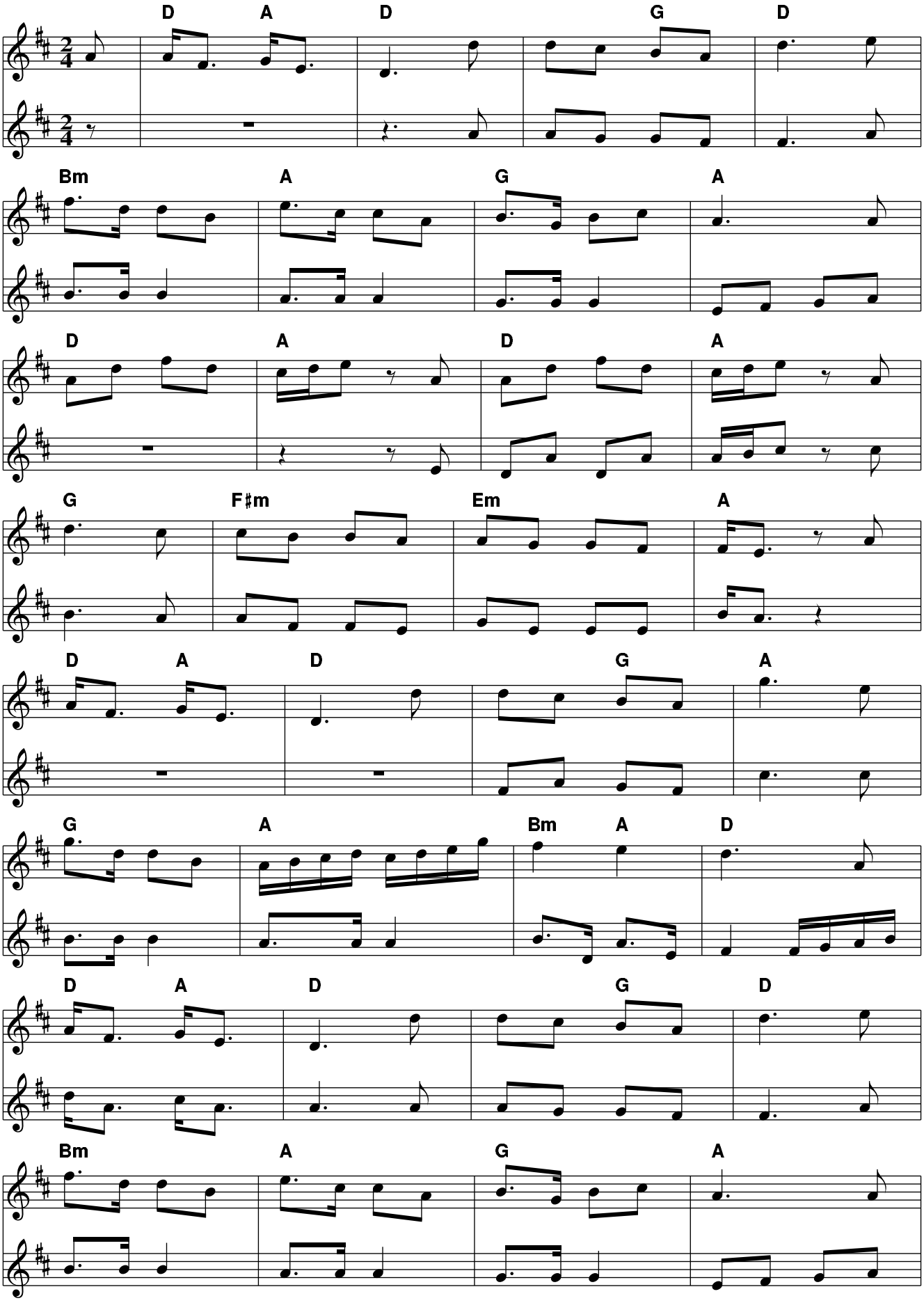
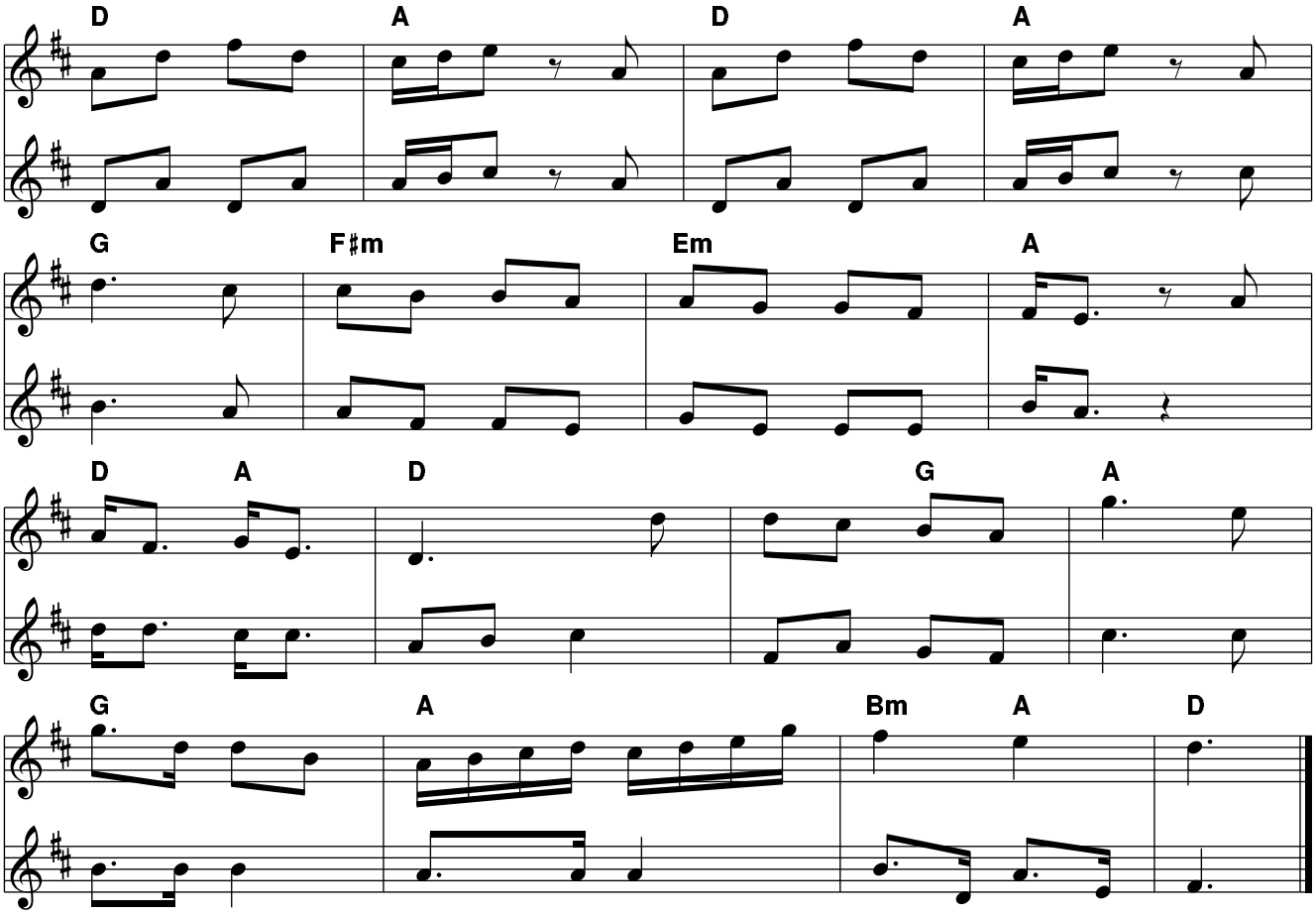
Listen to the Voice of Love

An air from William Litten, ship's fiddler on the HMS Gorgon, who wrote down his entire repertoire on a journey in 1802. Litten himself disappeared from history but his manuscript ended up in a Maritime museum in Massachusetts, USA. Maritime folklorist, Don Brian put me onto this collection.




D A D A
G F♯m Em A
D A D G A
G A Bm A D

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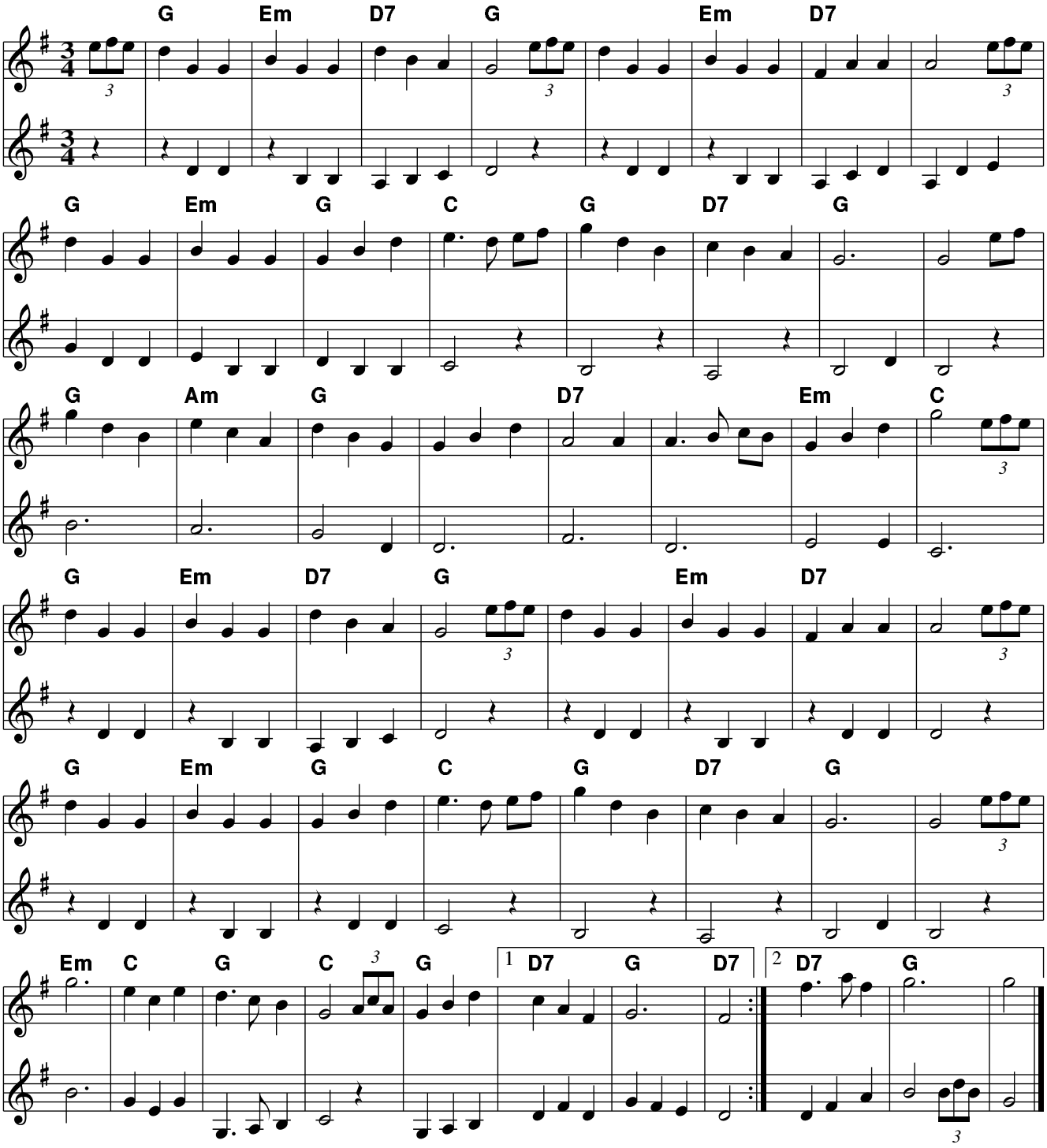
Bert Jamieson's Waltz

collected from Bert by Rob Willis, and transcribed/arranged Dave Johnson
Bert was a mothorgan player who played for local dances at Adaminaby.
The structure of this waltz is unusual A(16 bars)/B(8b)/A(16b)/C(8b).



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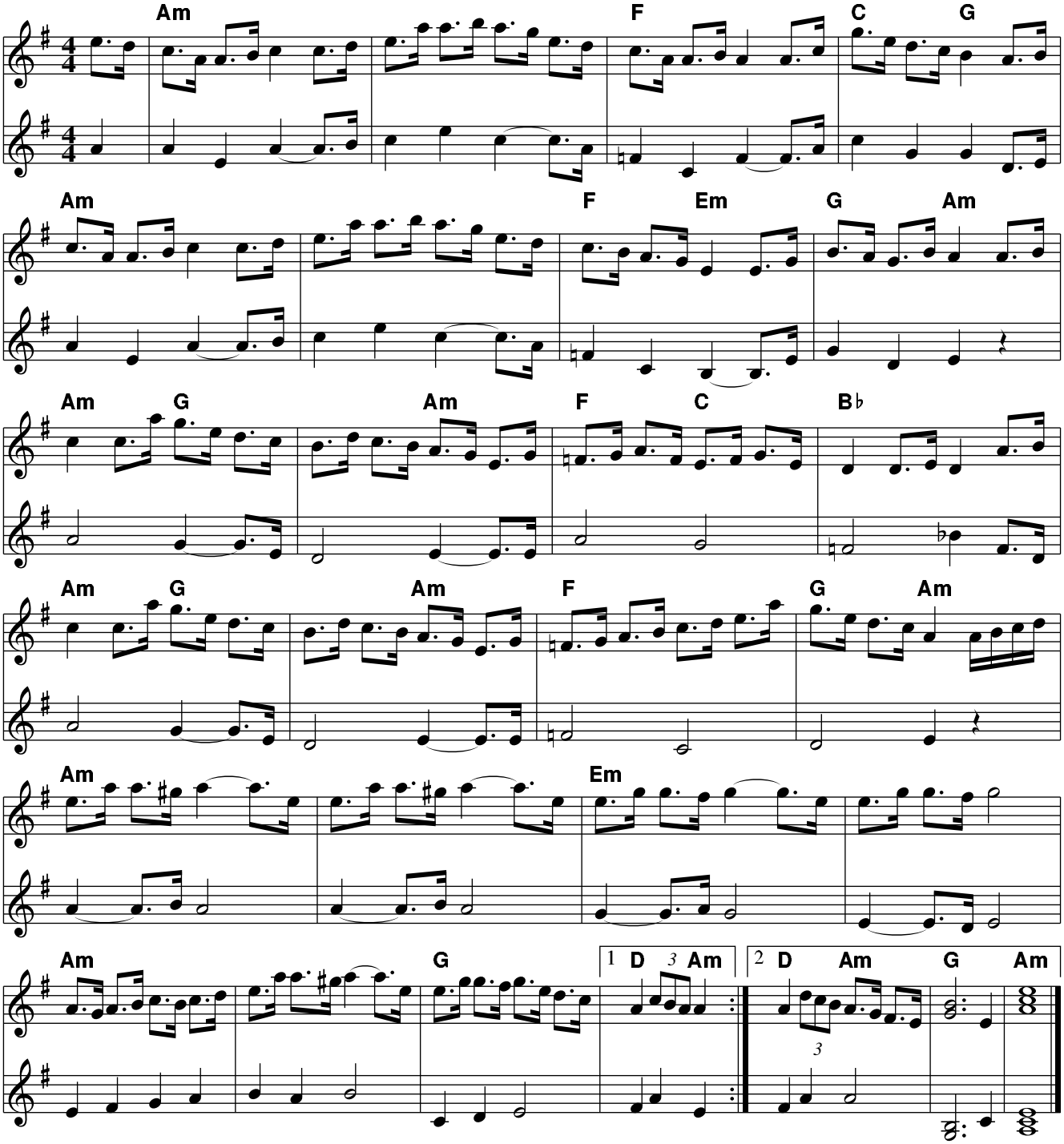
Thought I'd Lost You

by David Johnson – started many years ago and rediscovered and reworked in 2011.
Meant to be played whimsically, with a hint of yearning!



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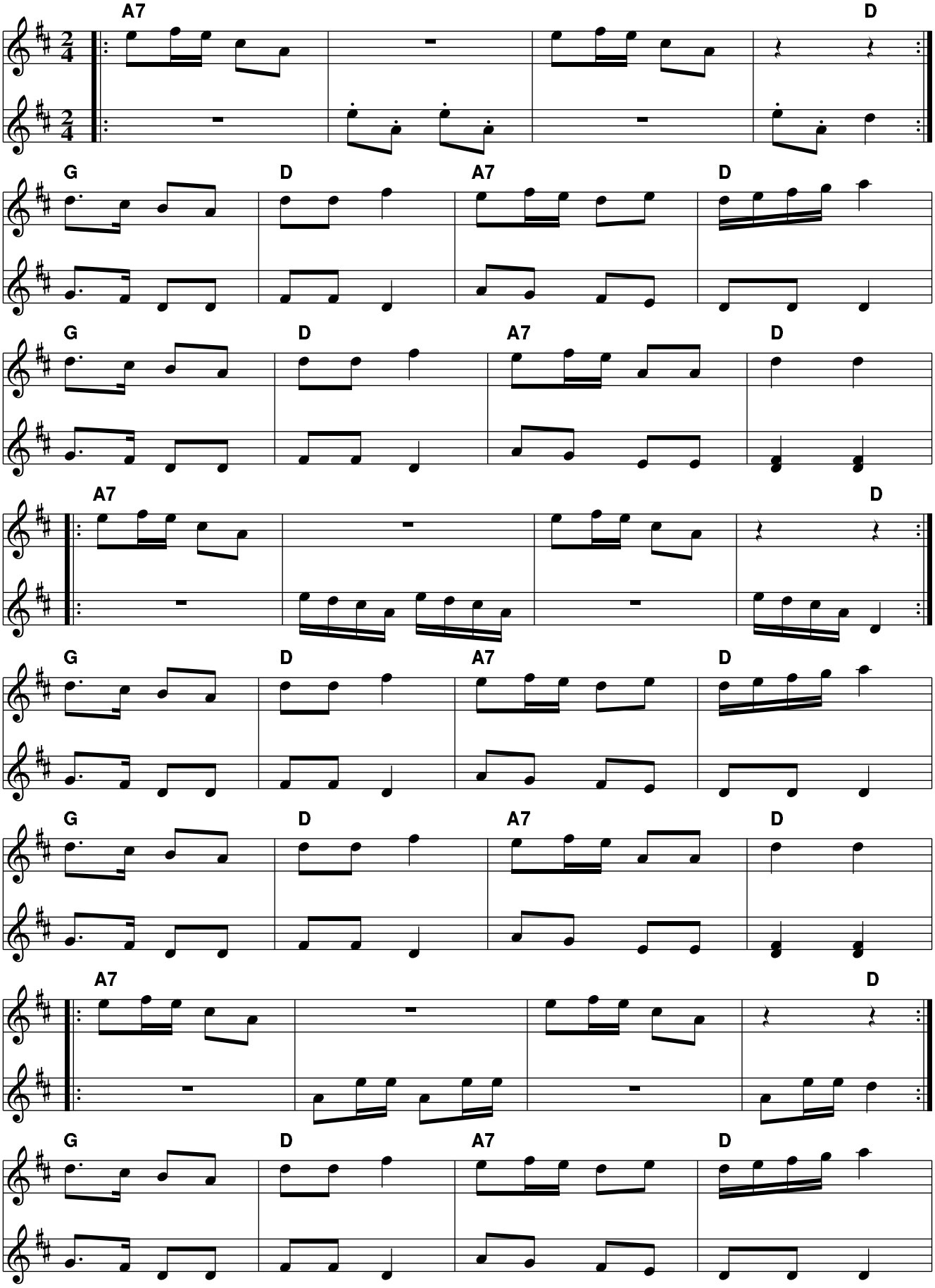
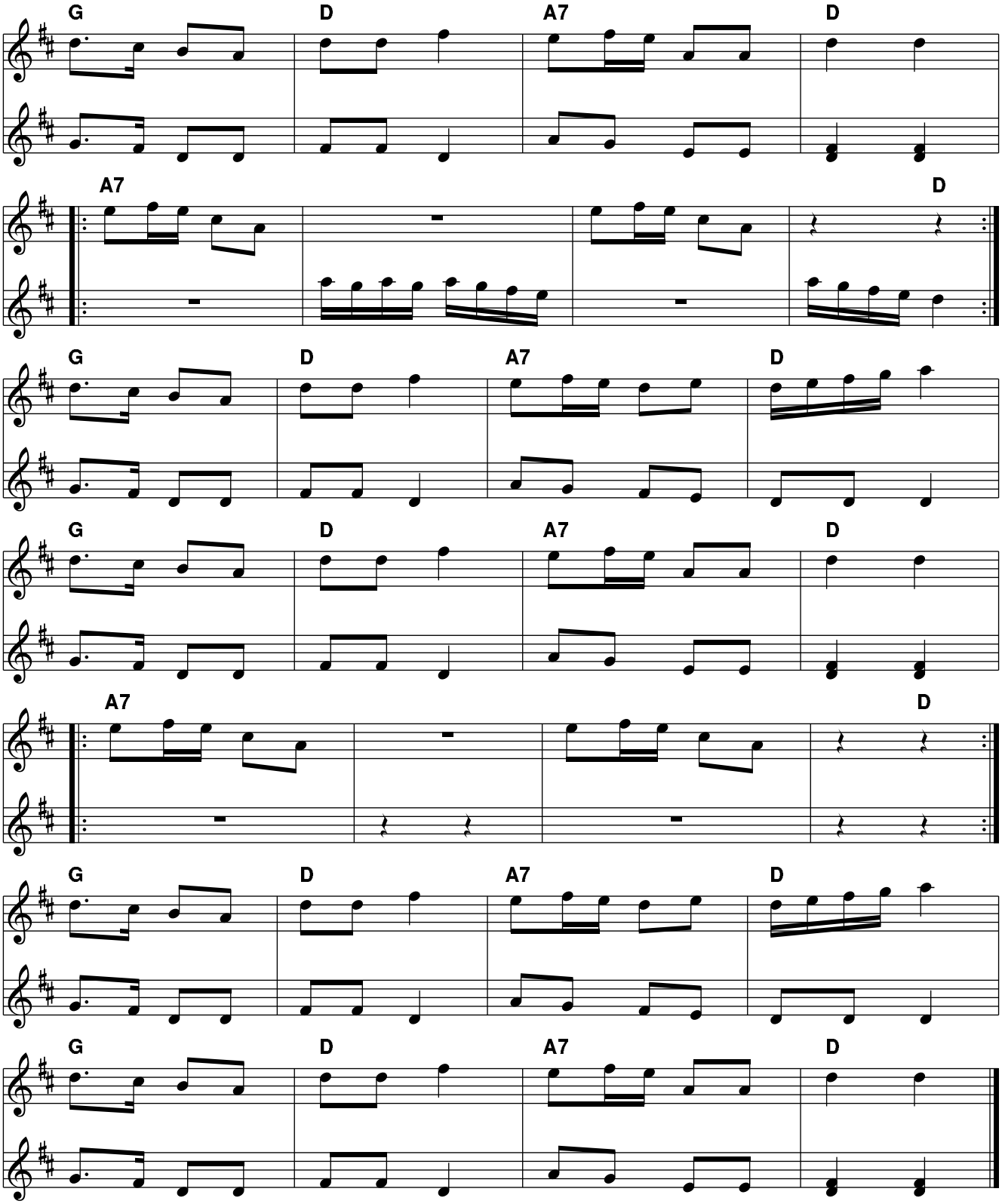
Johnny Up the Orchard

Original from the playing of Harry Cotter, recorded by Colin McJannett and transcribed by Dave Johnson.
Arranged as a fun piece. Instruments can of course change roles in the call and answer section and the chorus.




G D A7 D
A7 D
G D A7 D
G D A7 D
A7 D
G D A7 D
G D A7 D

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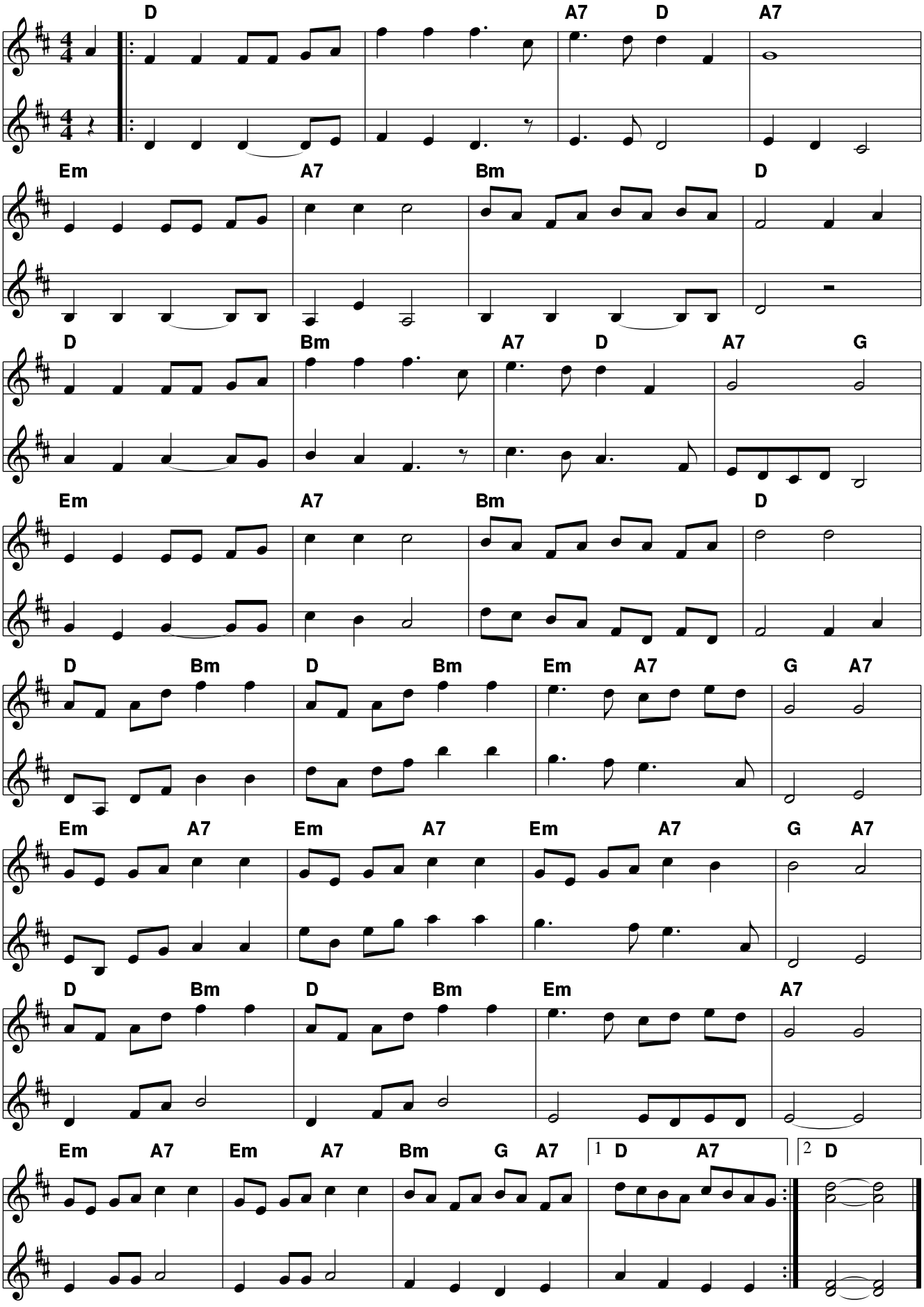
Old Drury

From fiddler Tom Walsh, from Trentham, Vic; Collected and transcribed by Alan Musgrove.
Tom was a regular at the National Folk Festival and was always keen to share his tunes.
The phrasing of the tune conjures up images of graceful country dancers doing a quickstep.



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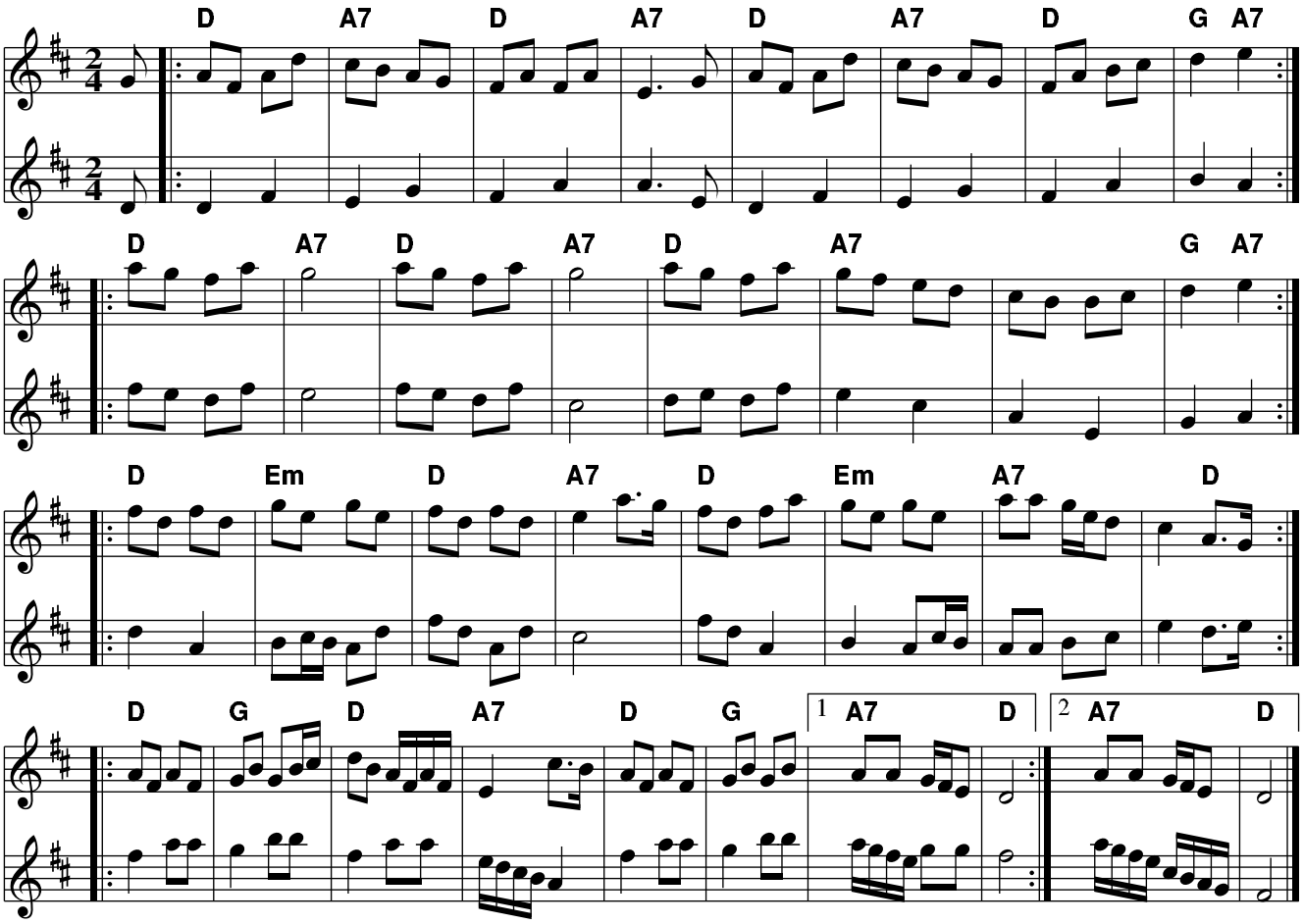
Errol Rodda's Alberts Tune

This tune was played by Errol Rodda on his C/C# accordion, learnt in German migrant country around Minda and Pinaroo, SA and recorded by John Meredith on a property near Quirindi.
The Alberts was one of the quadrille sets popular from the mid 1800s and danced all round the world.
This arrangement ignores the uninteresting first 16 bars of the collected tune.



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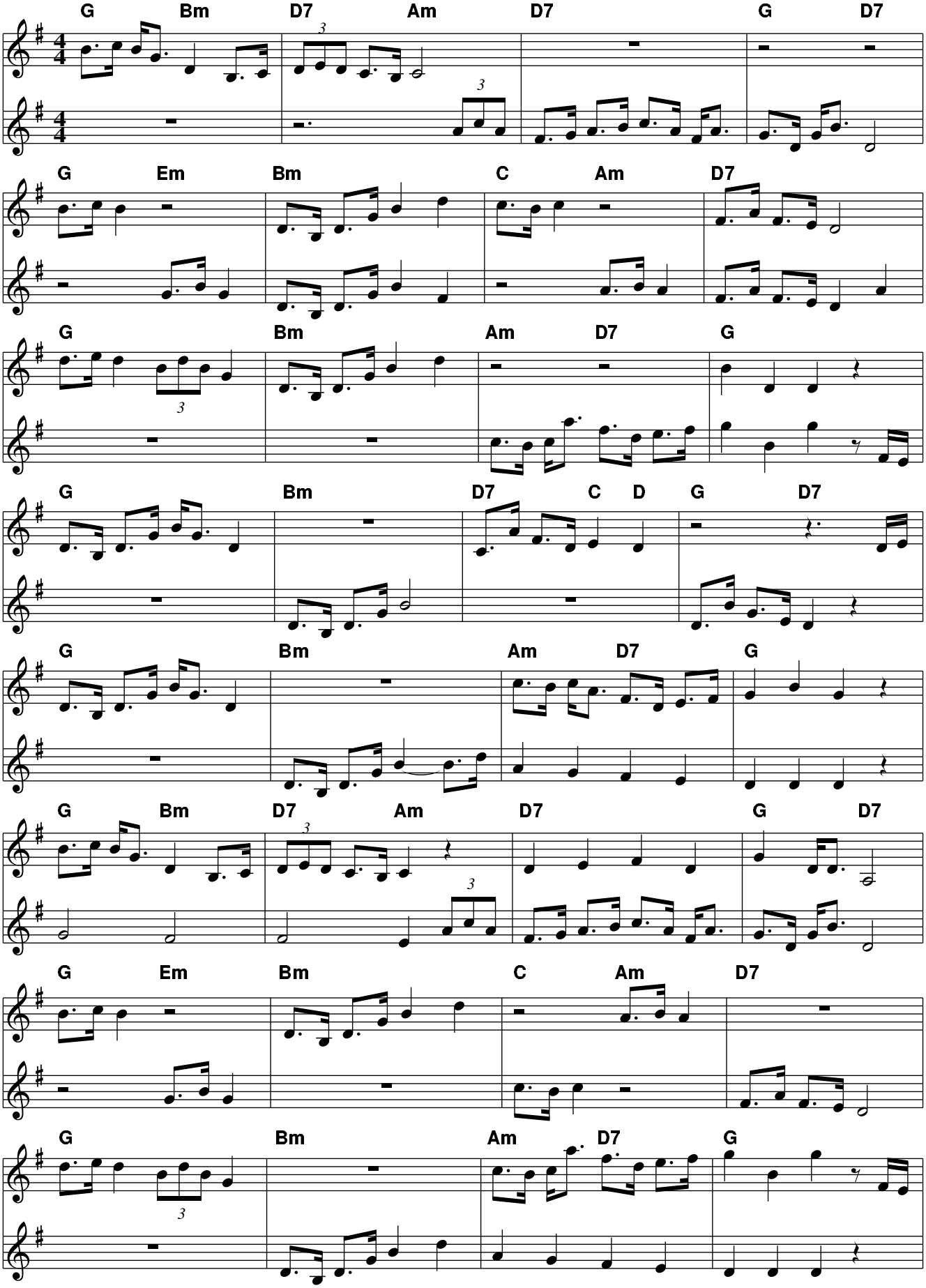
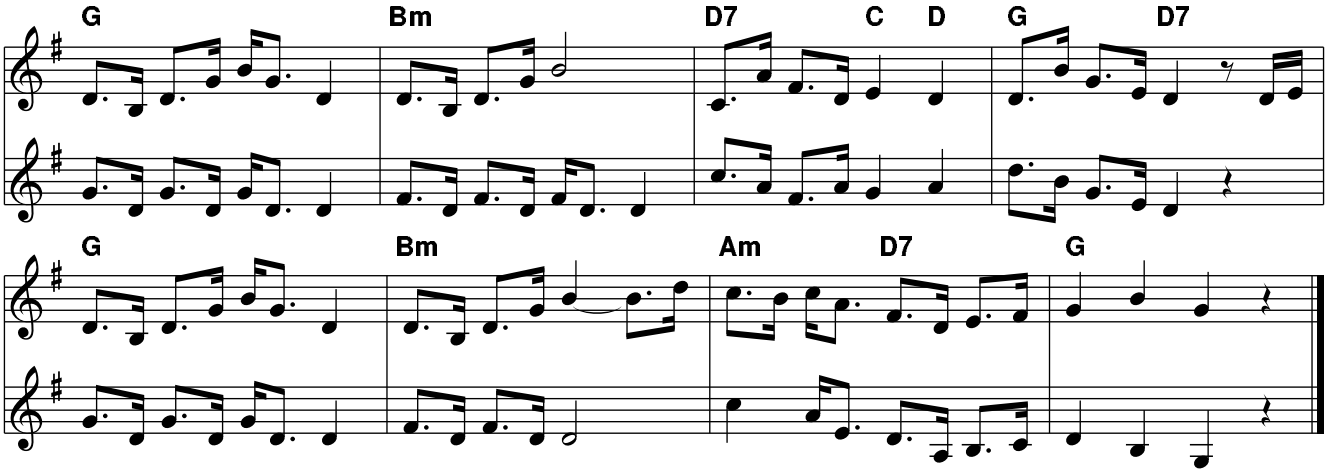
The Ernie James Schottische

Ernie James was recorded playing on his concertina by Reg and Bruce Kurtz from the Mudgee area.
The tune's unusual 20bar structure lends itself to melody swapping between the parts.





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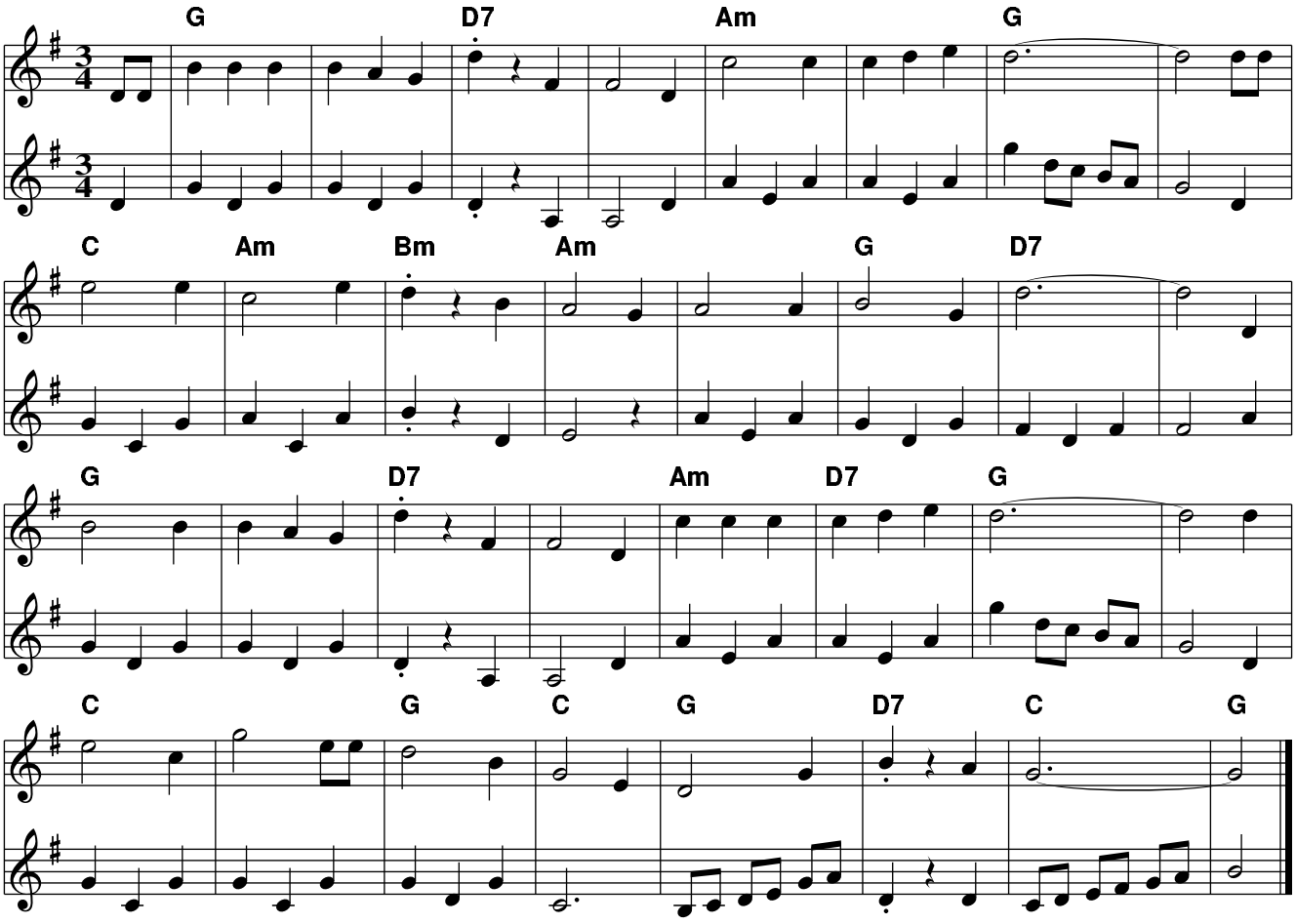
The Mildura Waltz

A distinctive waltz collected by the prolific dance music collector and publisher, Peter Ellis OAM
It comes from Perry's Orchestra of Mildura hence the name. The staccato notes give it character.



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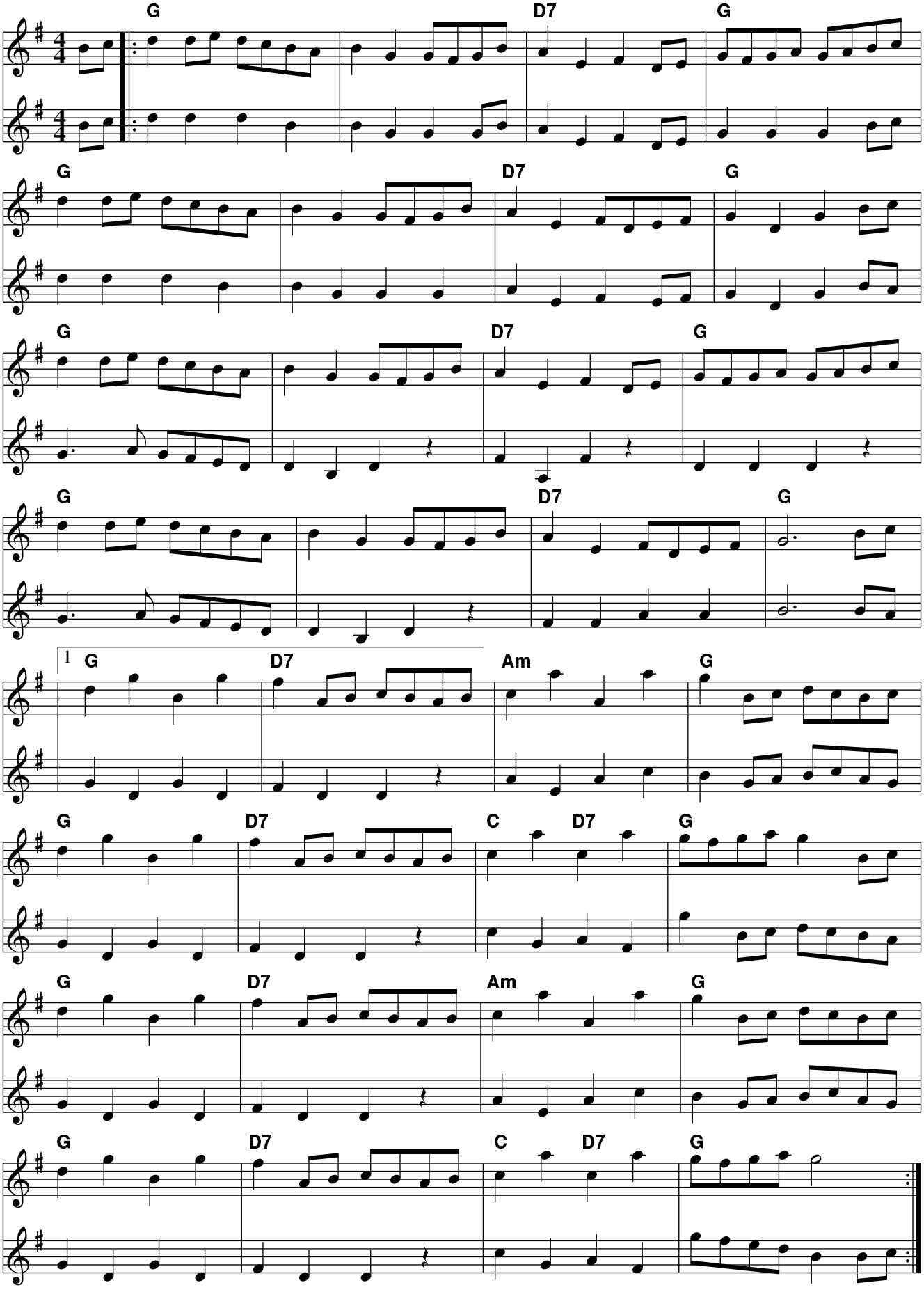
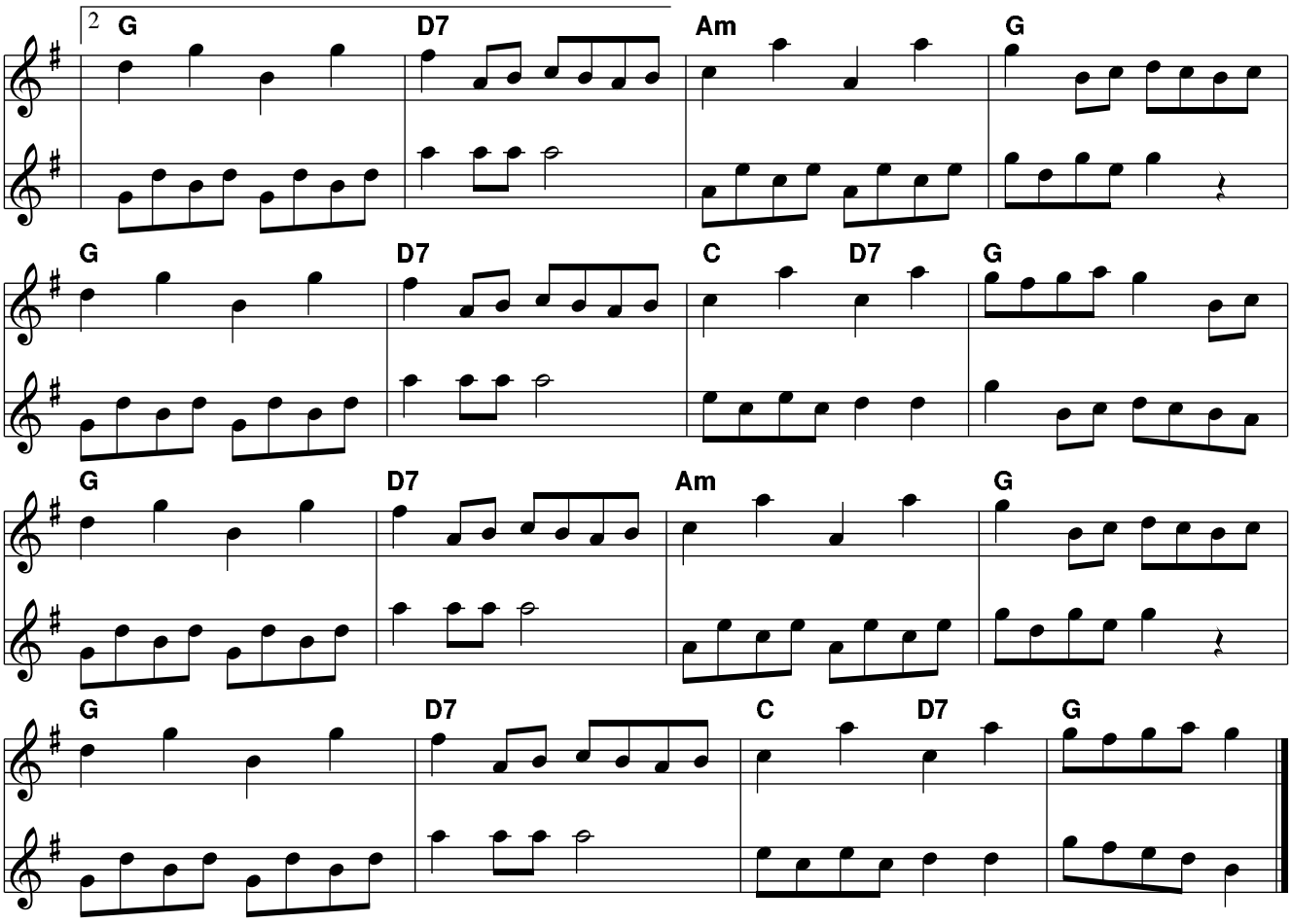
Joe Yates Hilo Reel

From the playing of Joe Yates, a great fiddler from Sofala. This arrangement developed from one by Greg O'Leary. The tune has an English reel feel to it. The second part gets busy in the repeat so watch the starting tempo!




2
G
D7
Am
G
G
D7
C
D7
G
G
D7
Am
G
G
D7
C
D7
G

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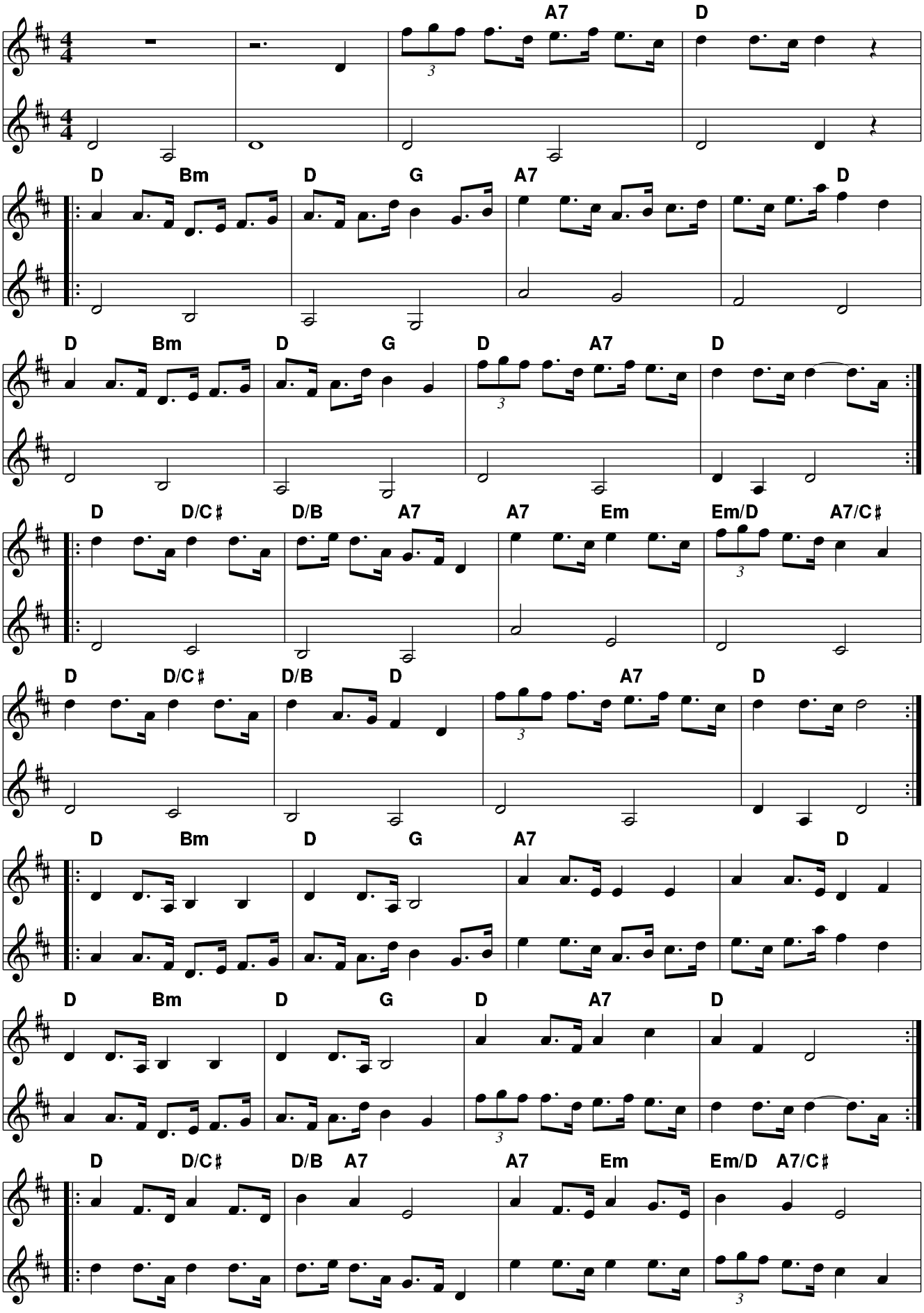
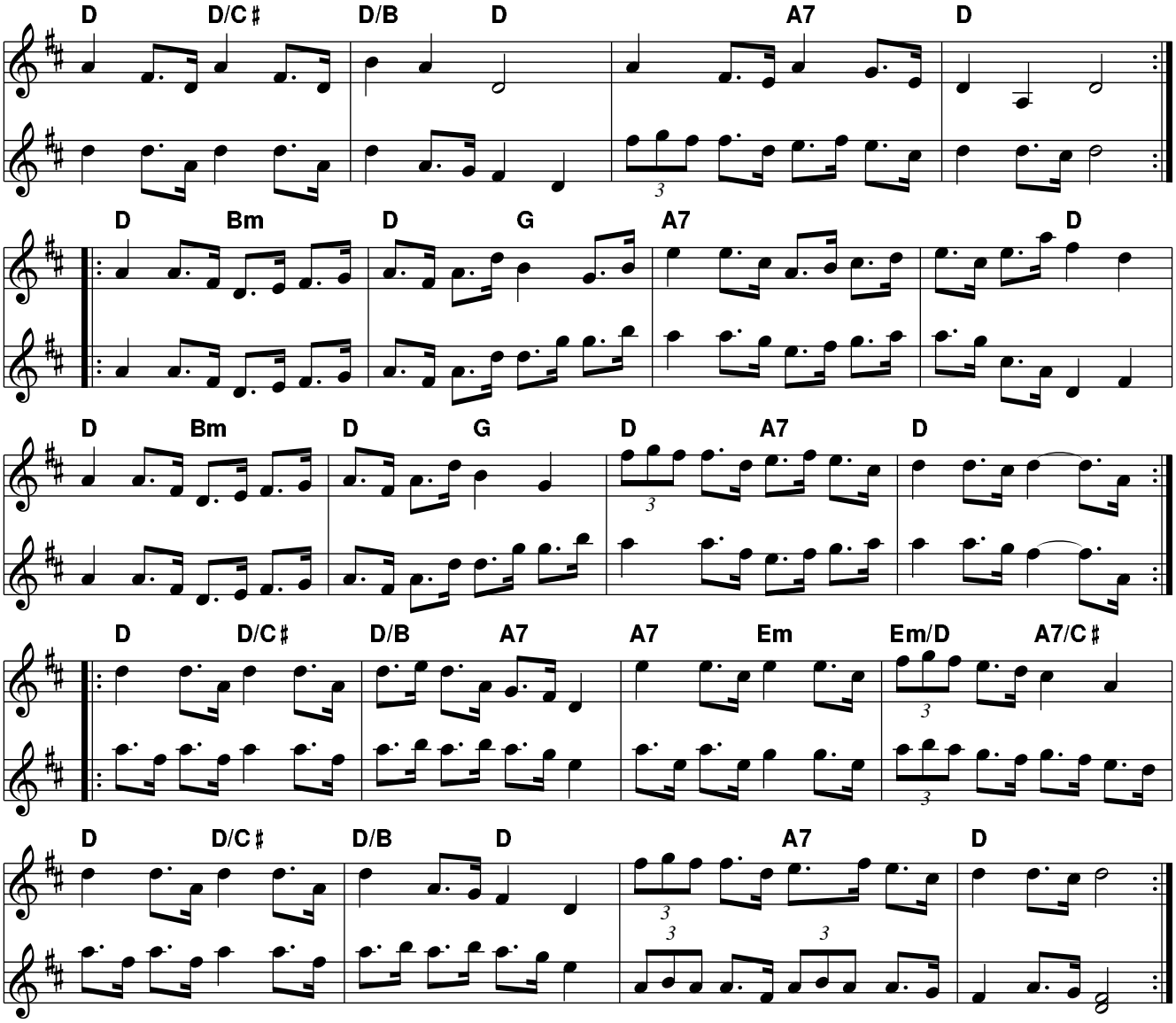
Bob in the Washhouse

I transcribed a few of Joe Cashmere's fiddle tunes for Bush Dance (1985) but missed this beauty.
Thanks to Alan Musgrove for finding and trancribing it.
The second part given here begins as an underpinning bass and then becomes a more challenging counterpoint.




D D/C♯ D/B D A7 D
D Bm D G A7 D
D Bm D G D A7 D
D D/C♯ D/B A7 A7 Em Em/D A7/C♯
D D/C♯ D/B D A7 D

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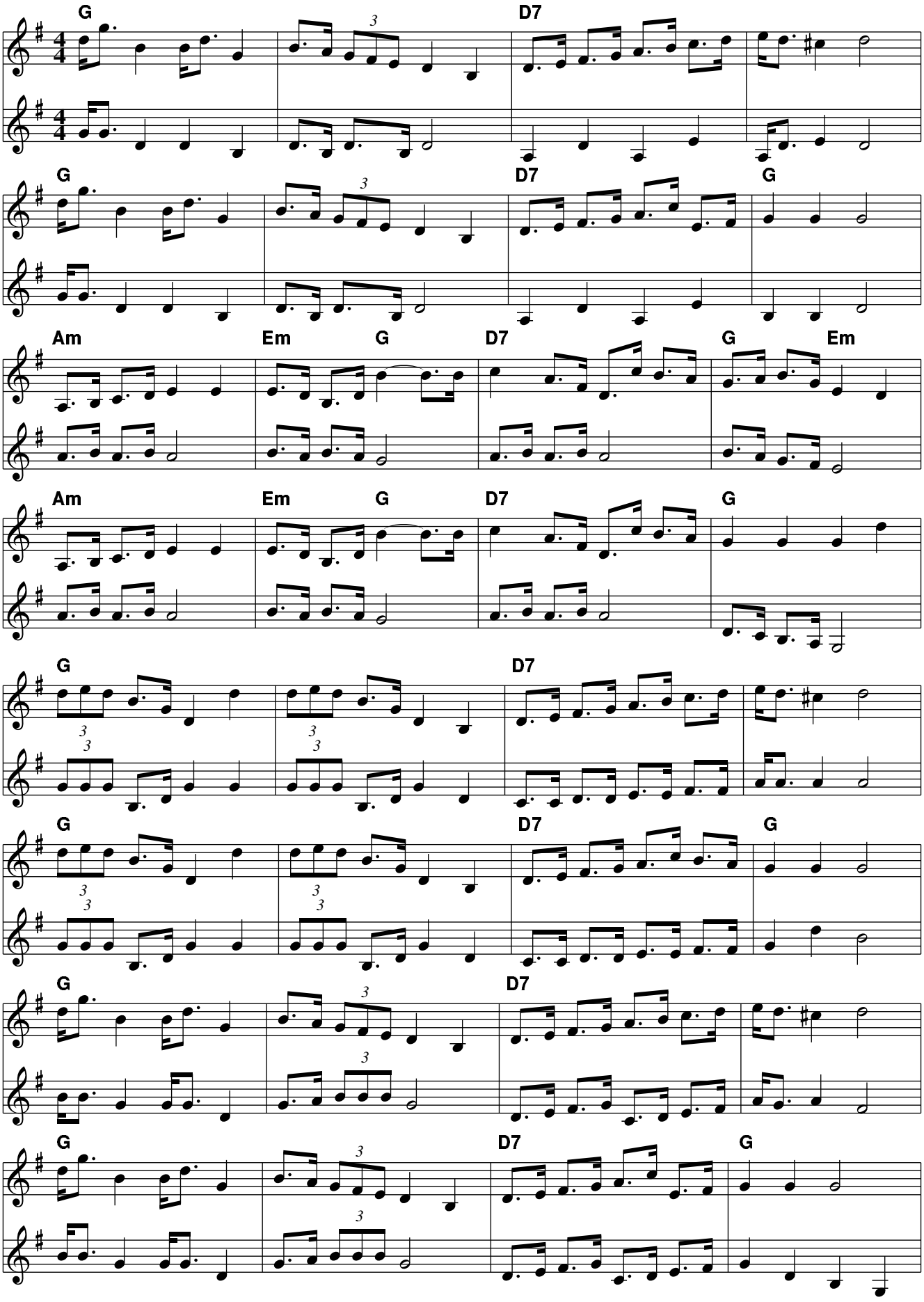
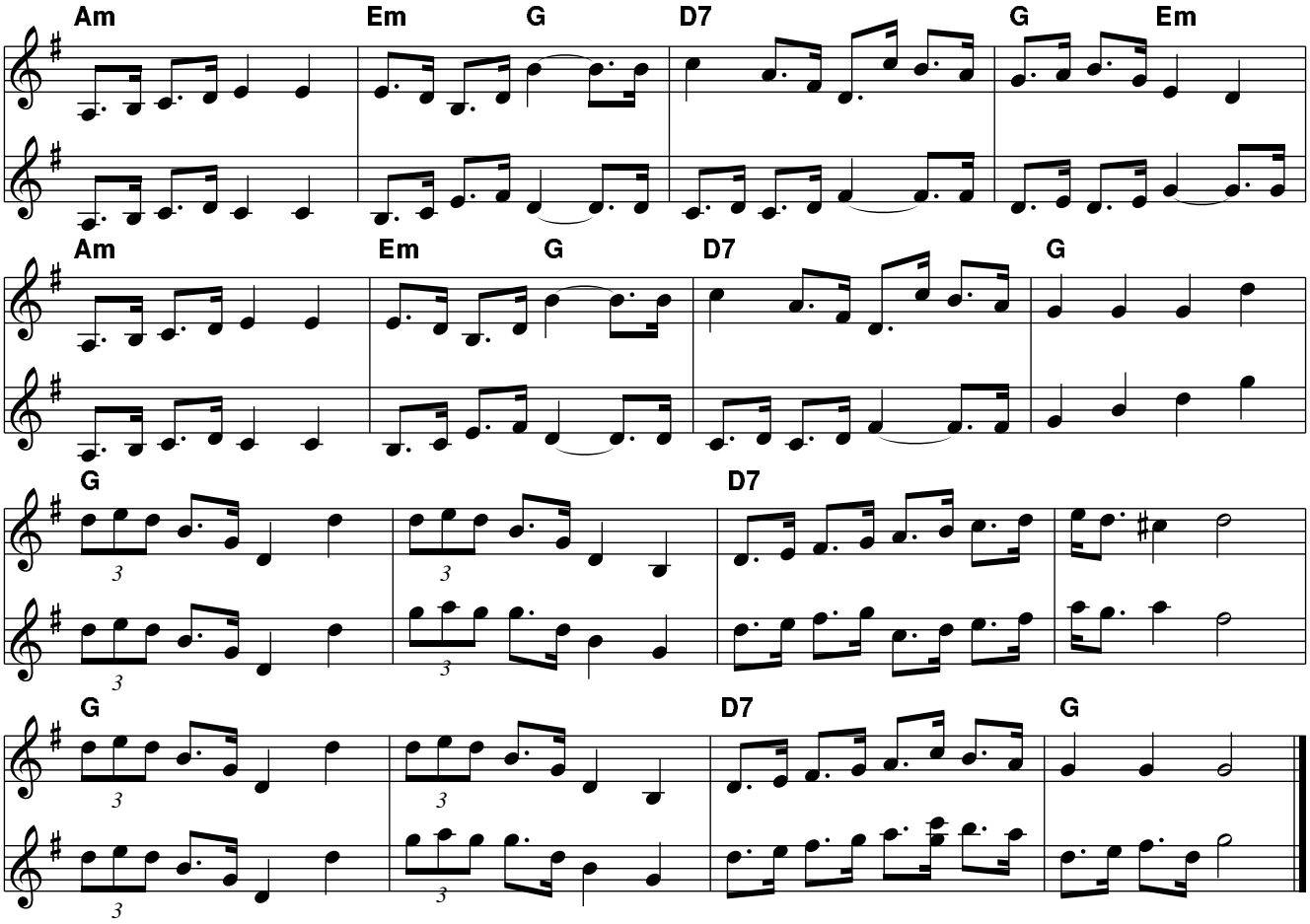
Joe Yate's Schottische

High, Low and Loopy

A three part schottische from Sofala fiddler, Joe Yates. Joe was visited by many collectors and was nery generous with allowing many recordings of his playing. It also means that the tunes sometimes acquire different names. High, Low and Loopy refers to the nature of the three parts of the tune.




Am
Em
G
D7
G
Em
Am
Em
G
D7
G
G
D7
G
D7
G

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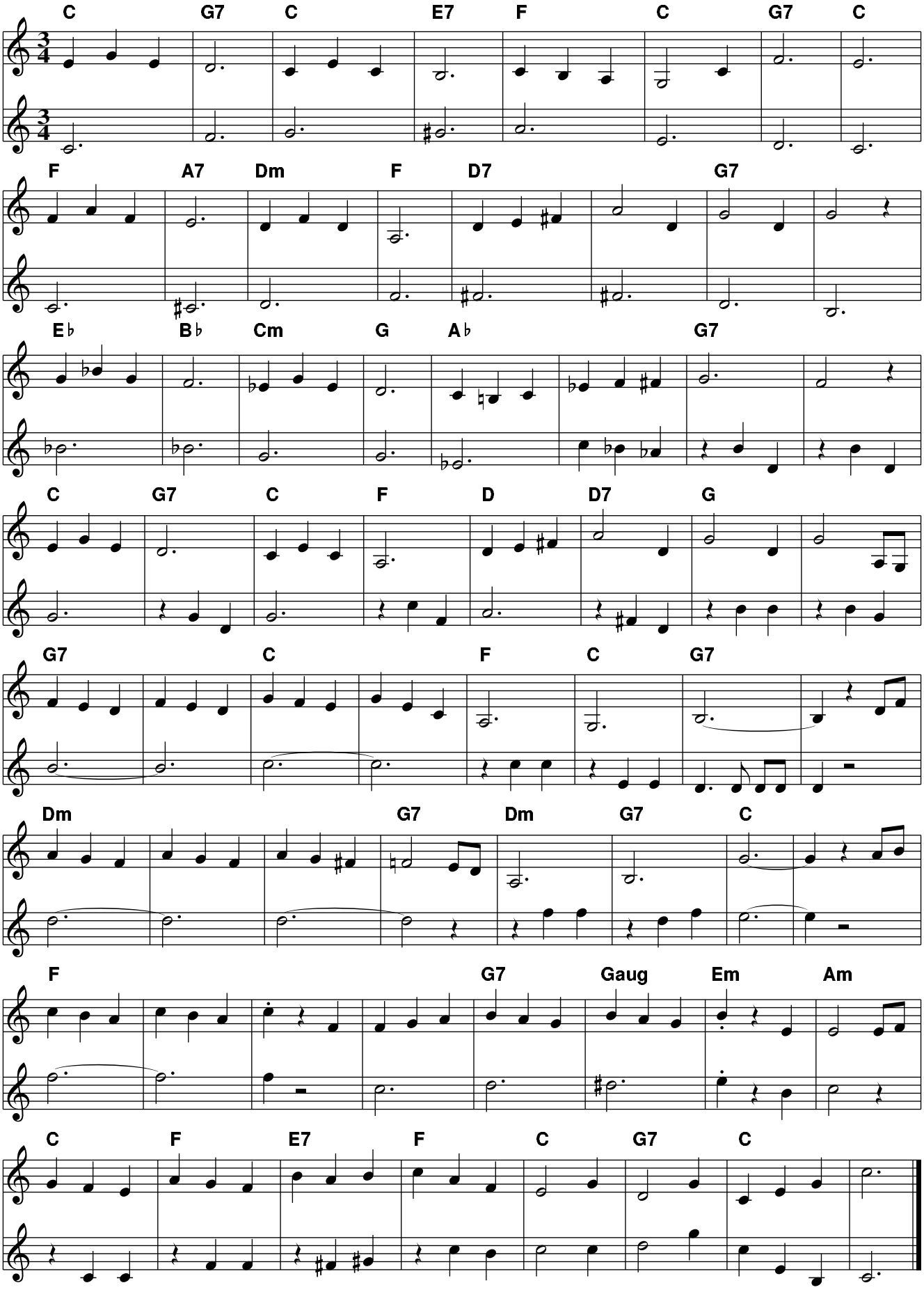
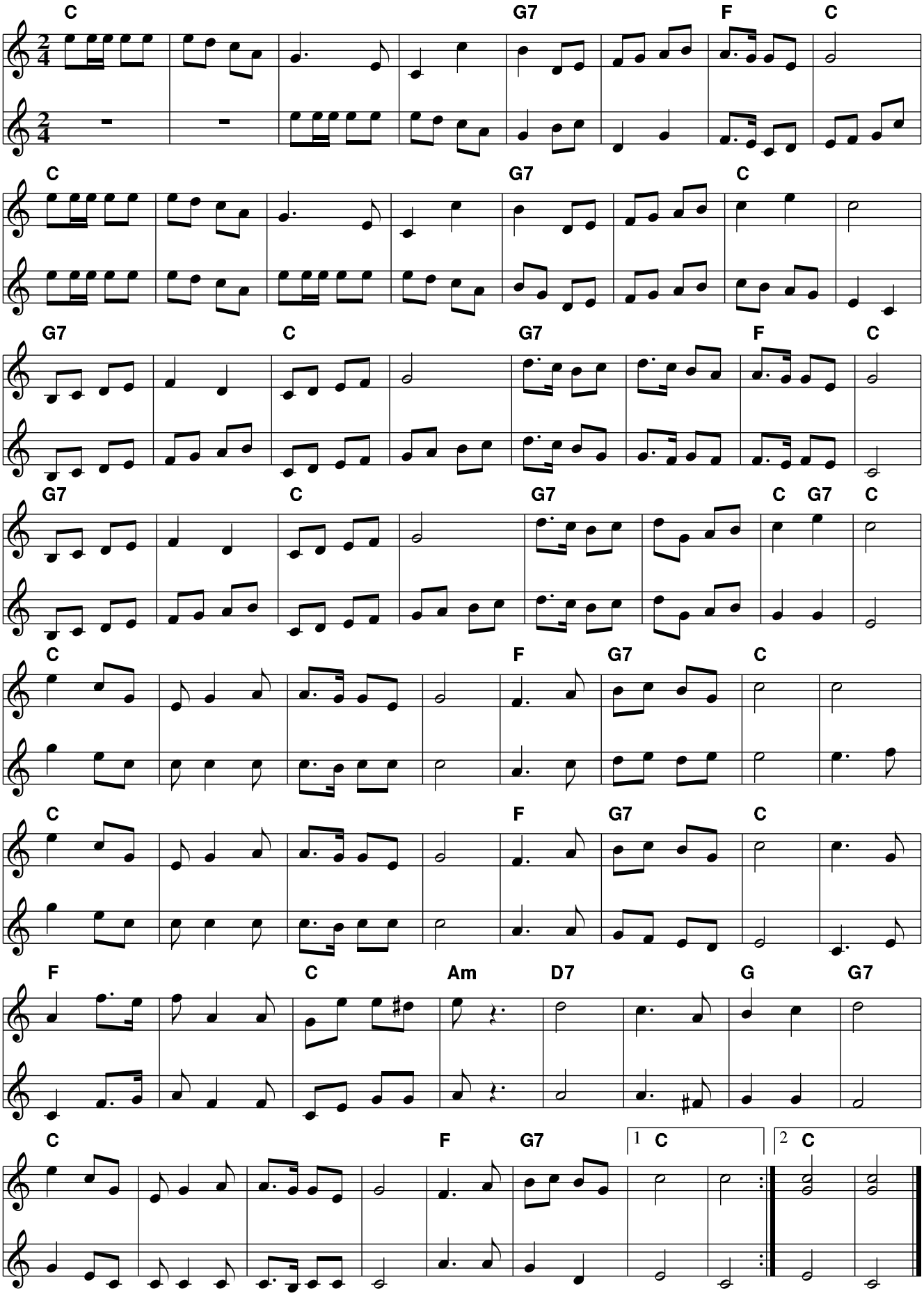
Wattle Time

Original music by Elizabeth Blair in 1922 arranged for the National Festival Bush Orchestra by Dave Johnson 2015. The tune has some interesting melody and chord digressions. You may need your note finder chart for this one!



Ali's Quickstep/Come to the Barn Dance

Two tunes collected from Val McGuiness, an islander dance band leader in Darwin NT by Tony Suttor and transcribed by Alan Musgrove. This arrangement running the two tunes together by Dave Johnson. The echo of the opening phrase by the second part just makes this arrangement.



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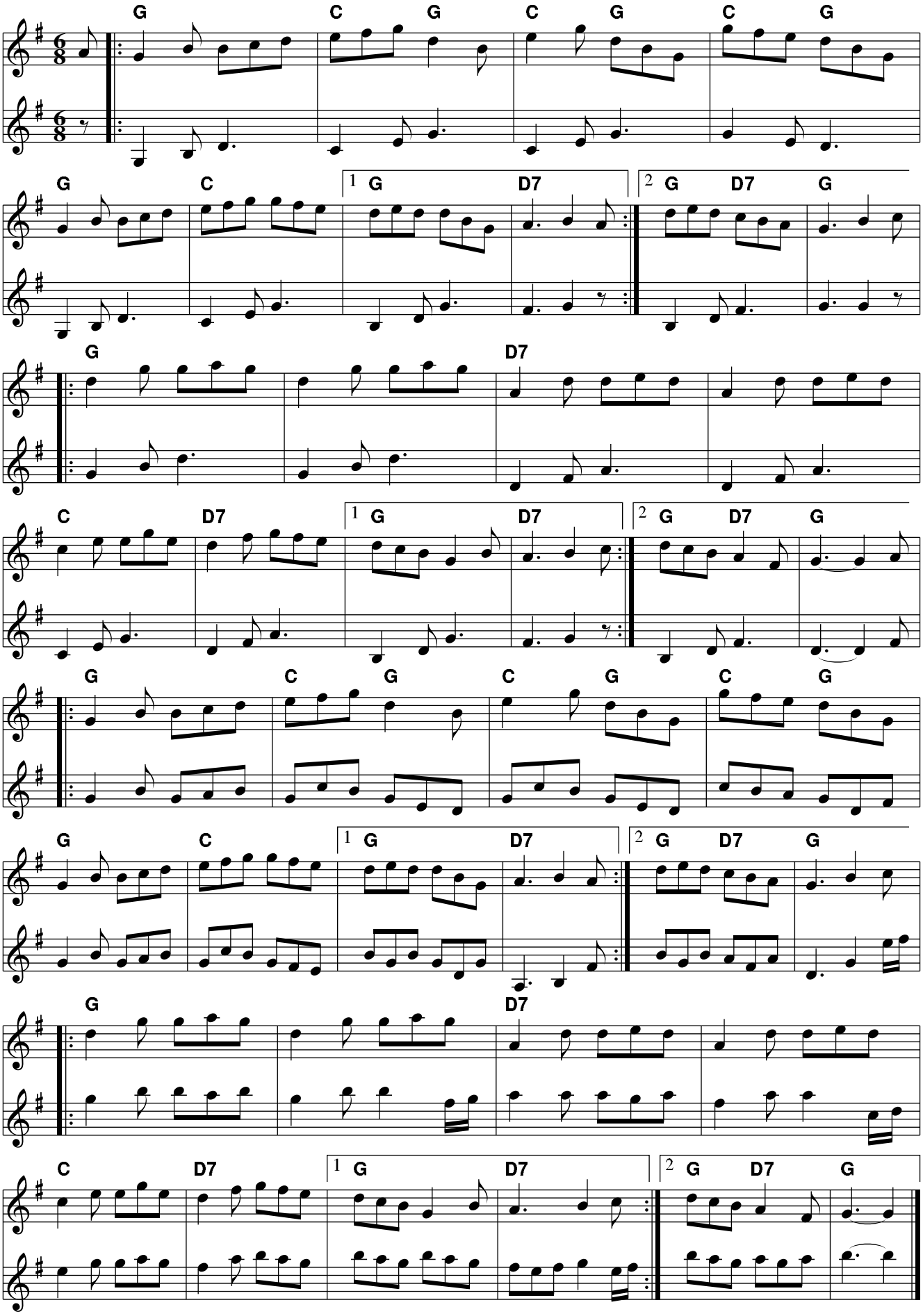
Welcome To Charlie

Collected from Andy Ramsay, of Leeton, NSW by collector, folklorist, and musician Alan Musgrove.
The tune is quite busy but intuitive, ie it plays itself as Peter McLaren would say.
The adage "marry in haste; regret at leisure" applies here!



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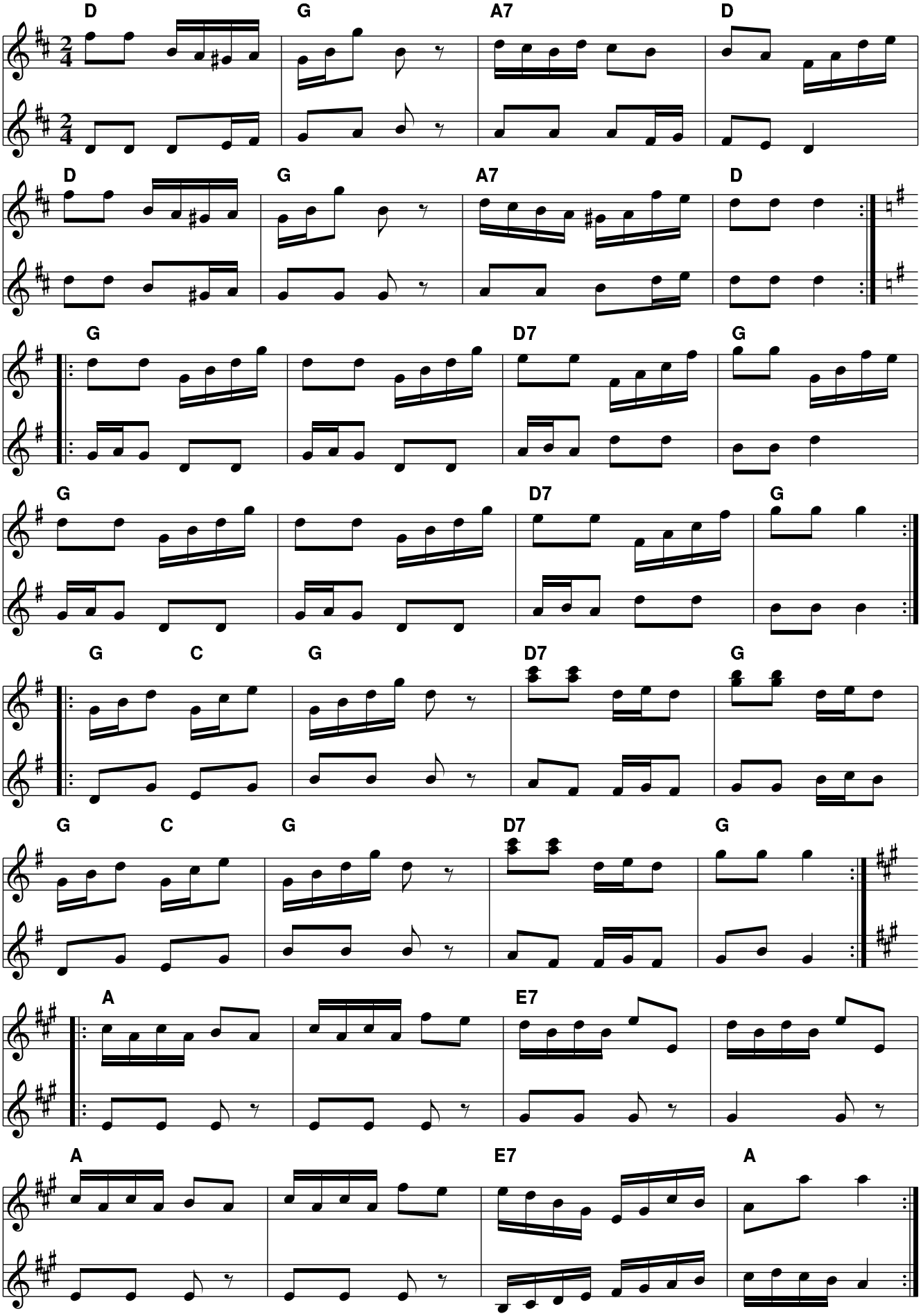
The Blue Mountain Polka

Composed by the mysterious R.E.V. in 1863. The second part was written by Jessica Randall 2005 for Paddys River Band. A busy tune and with its key changes, probably the most difficult in this collection.



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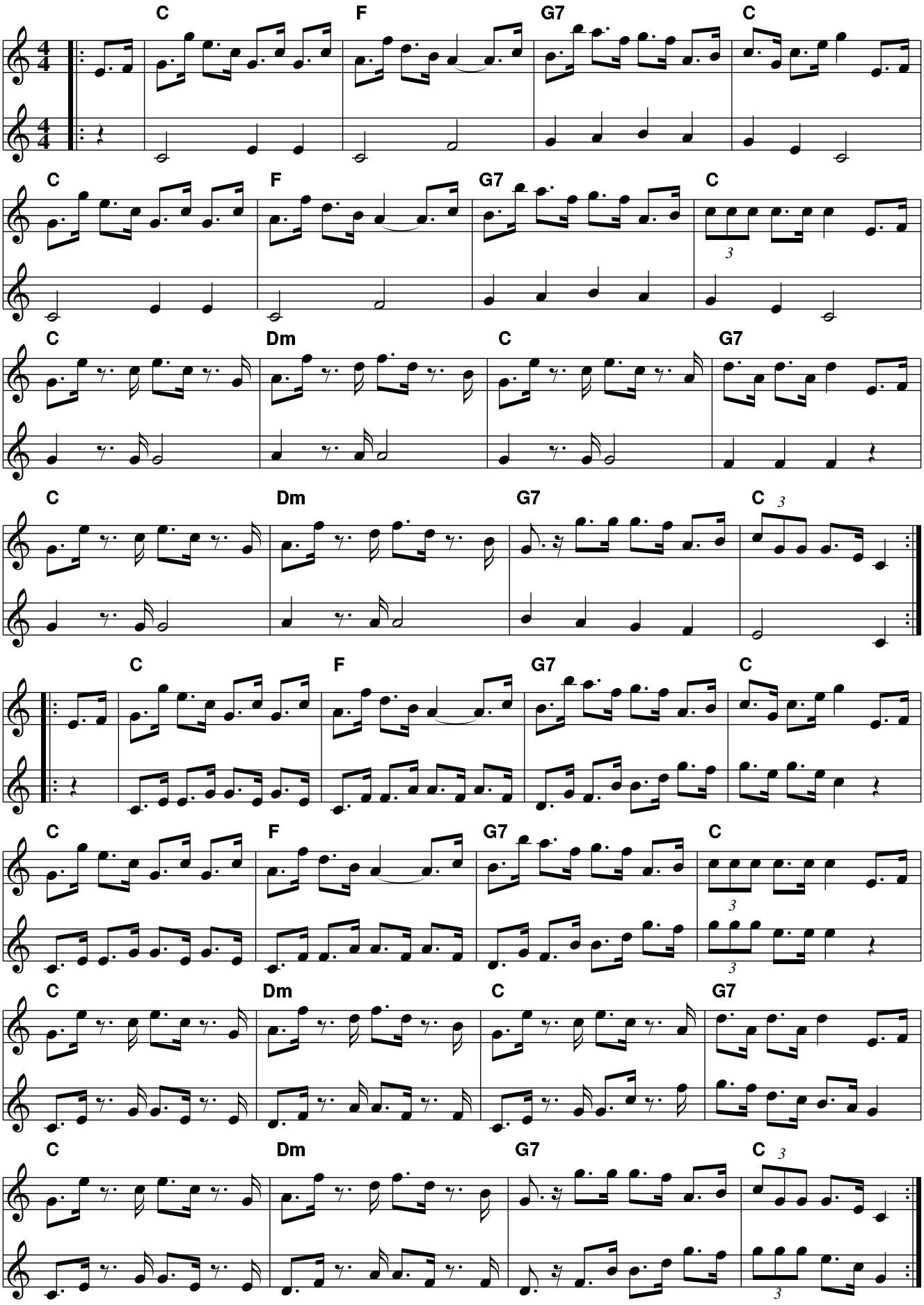
Music Makes Me Smile

A schottische with a 1920s feel composed by Con Klippel, Nariel Vic.Nariel proved to be a great source of both music and old style country dances. This tune was published in Music Makes Me Smile, by Peter Ellis & Harry Gardner, Pioneer Performer Series. The arrangement here has a simpler second part and then a busier second part. Play either or both as it suits your own playing.



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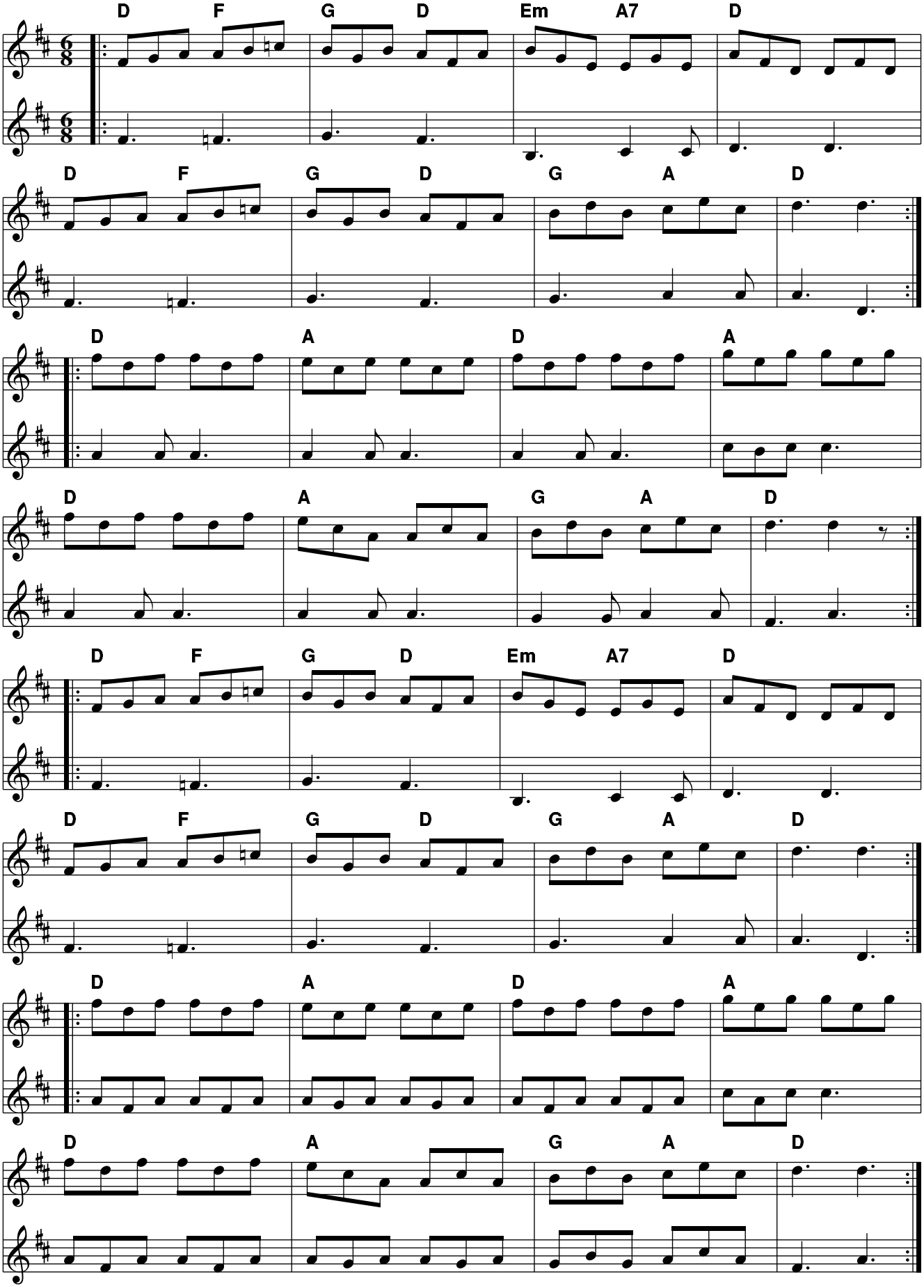
The Miners of Wicklow

from William Litten, ship's fiddler on the HMS Gorgon, who wrote down his entire repertoire on a journey in 1802. The music writing was cramped onto a small amount of paper and, with ink in short supply, he used his own blood when he had to.
The hook in this tune is the unexpected C note and F chord in the first bar. A ripper of a tune.