

These tunes and information were gratefully and “lifted” from the Edinburgh Shetland Fiddlers’ Society website.



The Faroe Rum Set:

These are traditional folk tunes, so every version you encounter will be subtly different.

Some of the attractiveness of Shetland tunes lies in the fact that they break the rules. Almost all Scottish tunes have an 8 bar A section and an 8 bar B section. Musically, these are not Scottish tunes and they usually depart from that custom. Even wider is the expectation that a tune will end on the note of its key - ie a tune in D will end on the note of D. Da Forfeit o' da Ship in this set and Da Shaalds o' Foula in the Garsters Dream set are examples of tunes that didn't, and have had a termination stuck on to help listeners relax.

The tunes in this set have the traditional internal structure of AABB. Each is played twice, ie AABBAABB. The order is as follows:

Faroe Rum	(midi) (hi-res for printing)
Aandowin at da Bowe	(midi) (hi-res for printing)
Da Forfeit o' da Ship	(midi) (hi-res for printing)

Faroe Rum

Trad. Shetland

Violin

D D A7 D A7 D

5 A7 D A A7 D A

9 A7 D A7 D

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Aandwin at da Bowe

Trad. Shetland

Violin

G G G C D G

5 C D G G C G C G C G

10 G C G D G C D G

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Da Forfeit o' da Ship

Trad. Shetland

Violin

D D A7 D A7

5 D G D G A7 D

9 G A7 G A7 D

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The Five Reel Set:

This set of five reels is one of the most popular sets of Shetland tunes.

These are traditional folk tunes, so every version you encounter will be subtly different.

The syncopation of Donald Blue in this set and Faroe Rum in the Faroe set display one of the features of the Shetland music style. Another phenomenon is the use of modes other than major or minor. These put Shetland in the middle of Scandinavia, if not geographically, then certainly musically.

[Here is an mp3 of the entire set](#), as performed one Sunday afternoon at Donald's place. The tunes have the traditional internal structure of AABB. Each is played twice, ie AABBAABB. The order is as follows:

Jack Broke da Prison Door
Donald Blue
Sleep Soond in da Morning
Lasses Trust in Providence

[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)
[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)
[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)
[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)

Jack Broke da Prison Door

Trad. Shetland

Violin

5

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Donald Blue

Trad. Shetland

Violin

3 1 0 2

2

0 1 3 0

1 3 1 3

1

2

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Sleep Soond in da Mornin'

Trad. Shetland

Violin

Am G Am G Am G Am G

5 G Am Am G Am

9 G Am Am G

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Lasses Trust in Providence

Trad. Shetland

Violin

D G A7 D G A7

5 D A7 D G D

9 A7 D A7 D

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Da Bonnie Isle o' Whalsay

Trad. Shetland

Violin

5

9

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The Ships Set:

Since this is a set of traditional folk tunes, there will be many subtle variations between written versions. The tunes here have the traditional internal structure of AABBC. Each tune is played twice, ie AABBCAABBC.

It may seem unusual to have a jig followed by a reel in the same set. It would be difficult to dance to! This is explained by the tradition of playing a slow air, followed by a normal-speed reel. Da Full Rigged Ship can certainly be played as a normal-speed jig, but it has a haunting feel which makes it good as a slower "listening tune".

[Here is an mp3 of the set](#), that we put together at Donald's place one Sunday afternoon.

The order is as follows:

Da Full Rigged Ship
Da New Rigged Ship

[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)
[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)

Da Full Rigged Ship

Trad. Shetland

Violin

Am Am Em Em D Am

6 Am Em G Em Am G Am D7 G

12 G Em Am G Am D7 Am Em Am Am

18 C C C C C C

24 Am G Am Am

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for a violin in 8/8 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first measure has a repeat sign. Chords are indicated below the staff: Am, Am, Em, Em, D, Am. The second staff starts at measure 6 and includes chords: Am, Em, G, Em, Am, G, Am, D7, G. The third staff starts at measure 12 and includes chords: G, Em, Am, G, Am, D7, Am, Em, Am, Am. It features a first and second ending. The fourth staff starts at measure 18 and consists of a continuous eighth-note pattern with a C chord indicated below. The fifth staff starts at measure 24 and includes chords: Am, G, Am, Am. It also features a first and second ending.

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Da New Rigged Ship

Trad. Shetland

Violin

Am Am D7 G D

5 1 2
D Em D Em A E7 A E7

9 1 2
A E7 A A C G

13 1 2
D Em C G Am Am

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The Ferry Reel Set:

These are traditional folk tunes, so every version you encounter will be subtly different.

In Scotland, it is normal to play reels at about 120 bpm (60 bars per minute). This will, of course, vary according to the taste of the performer. Musicologists have noted that in Shetland they tend to play reels at around 106 bpm. The midi files on this site are designed to run at that speed.

The tunes in this set have the traditional internal structure of AABB. Each is played twice, ie AABBAABB. The order is as follows:

Da Ferry Reel

[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)

Lay Dee at Dee

[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)

Miss Spence's Reel

[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)

Da Ferry Reel

Trad. Shetland

Violin

D E7 A G D

5 Em A7 D E7 A7 G A7

9 1 2 D D D D Bm

13 A7 E7 A7 D D

17 1 2 Em A7 D D

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Lay Dee at Dee

Trad. Shetland

Violin

D A7 D D G

5 E7 A7 D A7 D D A7 D

10 2. tr D D D G A7 A7

15 1 2 D D G Em A7 D D

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Miss Spence's Reel

John Anderson, 1759

Violin

5

9

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The Freddie's Tune Set:

Since this is a set of traditional folk tunes, there will be many subtle variations between written versions. Freddie's tune is played as written. Da Blue Yow is a short tune, so it may be played up to three times.

It may seem unusual to have a 3/4 (it isn't played as a waltz) followed by a reel in the same set. This is explained by the tradition of playing a slow air, followed by a normal-speed reel. Freddie's Tune is usually played as a slower "listening tune".

Freddie was Fredamann Stickle, composer and fiddler, who lived in the second half of the 18th century. A yow is a sheep.

Ornamentation: If you can't be bothered with ornamentation, ignore it. If you are a medium player and want a party piece, be guided by the written ornamentation here. If you want to become a better player, ignore this ornamentation and work out your own. Da Blue Yow is often played with swing.

The order is as follows:

Freddie's Tune
Da Blue Yow

[\(midi\) \(hi-res for printing\)](#)
[\(midi\) \(hi-res for printing\)](#)

Freddie's Tune

Fredamann Stickle, ~1800

Violin *Grave Cantabile*

Chord diagrams for the first system: Bb, Gm, Eb, F7, Bb, Gm, Eb, F7

Chord diagrams for the second system: Bb, Gm, Eb, F7, Gm, Ebm, Bb, F7, Bb, Gm

Chord diagrams for the third system: Eb, Bb, F7, Bb, Eb, Gm, Ebm, Bb, Gm

Chord diagrams for the fourth system: Cm, Cm, F7, F7, F7, F7, F7, F7, F7

Chord diagrams for the fifth system: F7, Bb, Gm, Eb, F7, Bb, Gm, Eb, F7

Chord diagrams for the sixth system: Bb, Gm, Eb, F7, Gm, Ebm, Bb, F7, Bb

Rall.

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Da Blue Yow

Fredamann Stickle, ~1800

Violin

D A G A

5 D Em A7 D D

10 D Em A7 D Em A7 D

15 Em/G D/A A7 D D

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The Garster's Dream Set:

A tune by itself lasts less than a minute, so we group them into sets for performance and dancing. The sets themselves have then become stable traditional entities. Since these are traditional folk tunes, there will be many subtle differences between written versions. They have the traditional internal structure of AABB. Each tune is normally played twice, ie AABBAABB. The order of this set is as follows:

Garster's Dream

[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)

Da Brig

[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)

Da Shaalds o' Foula

[\(midi\)](#) [\(hi-res for printing\)](#)

Garster's Dream

Trad. Shetland

Violin

G C G D D

6 G C G D7 G G G

12 Am G G G Am

17 Em D7 G

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Da Brig

Trad. Shetland

Violin

D D D D D

7 Em Em A7 D A D G

13 D A7 Bm A7 D G A7 G

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Da Shaalds o' Foula

Trad. Shetland

Violin

C G G D G D7

6 C G G D7 D D G

12 G G D7 G G G G D7

18 D D

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The Kishie Needle Set:

These are short reels - the sections are only four bars long, compared to the eight bars in a usual Scottish reel. They make up for it though, by having a greater than usual number of notes to the bar! As usual, the sections are doubled (as indicated by the repeats in the music), so the tunes are played AABBAABB. The exception is "Shelder Geö", which has an eight bar B section, played once.

On the CD, "The Silver Bow", this set lasts 1'53".

The first reel, "A' da Ships Ir Sailin'" does not end on the root note of the tune, i.e. it is written in G but does not end on G. This is not a problem since it is not the last tune in the set, but it would sound incomplete if it were. A linguistic equivalent would be a sentence which didn't properly...! In his book, "Ringing Strings", Tom Anderson suggests

that a solution would be to play the tune 1½ times, i.e. AABBA. Others have in other tunes swapped A and B parts round, starting the tune on the B part and ending on the A. Many argue that the written notes are only a point of departure.

A Shelder is a bird known elsewhere as Oyster Catcher. A Kishie is a straw basket, woven using wooden needles. Dye is a dialect word for "grandfather".

A' da Ships Ir Sailin'
Shelder Geö
Mak a Kishie Needle, Dye

A' Da Ships Ir Sailin'

Trad Shetland

Violin

5

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Shelder Geö

Trad Shetland

Violin

5

10

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Mak A Kishie Needle, Dye

Trad Shetland

Violin



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The Da Day Dawn Set:

Since this is a set of traditional folk tunes, there will be many subtle variations between written versions. The tunes here have the traditional internal structure of AABB(CC). Each tune is played twice, eg. AABBAABB.

It may seem unusual to have a jig followed by a reel in the same set. It would be difficult to dance to! This is in fact one of the more haunting "listening sets". The first two tunes are played slowly and emotionally. For contrast, the last tune, Da New Rigged Ship, is played at normal speed (normal here being about 106 bpm), to bring us all back down to earth with a skip.

[Here is an mp3 of the set](#), that we put together at Donald's place one Sunday afternoon.

The order is as follows:

Da Day Dawn

Da Full Rigged Ship

Da New Rigged Ship

(...and then finishing with a brief return to Da Day Dawn)

Da Day Dawn

Trad. Shetland

Violin

9

19

1

29

2

The image shows a musical score for a violin in 2/4 time. It consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The music is written in a single line. The second staff starts at measure 9. The third staff starts at measure 19 and includes a first ending bracket labeled '1' over the final two measures. The fourth staff starts at measure 29 and includes a second ending bracket labeled '2' over the first two measures, which then leads to a double bar line.

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Da Full Rigged Ship

Trad. Shetland

Violin

Am Am Em Em D Am

6 Am Em G Em Am G Am D7 G

12 G Em Am G Am D7 Am Em Am Am

18 C C C C C C

24 Am G Am Am

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for a violin in 8/8 time. It consists of five systems of music. The first system starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat), indicated by a flat sign on the B line. The time signature is 8/8. The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff, the chords are listed as Am, Am, Em, Em, D, and Am. The second system begins at measure 6 and includes a repeat sign. The chords are Am, Em, G, Em, Am, G, Am, D7, and G. The third system begins at measure 12 and includes two first endings, labeled '1.' and '2.'. The chords are G, Em, Am, G, Am, D7, Am, Em, Am, and Am. The fourth system begins at measure 18 and consists of six measures, each with a C chord. The fifth system begins at measure 24 and includes two first endings, labeled '1.' and '2.'. The chords are Am, G, Am, and Am.

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Da New Rigged Ship

Trad. Shetland

Violin

Am Am D7 G D

5 1 2.
D Em D Em A E7 A E7

9 1 2.
A E7 A A C G

13 1 2.
D Em C G Am Am

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