St Anne’s Reel
(“Standard” Version)
Submitted by Anne Lederman

St Anne’s Reel is probably the best known Canadian fiddle tune. It is a regular at most fiddle contests, and has been performed right across the country. Americans often will play it as an example of their Canadian repertoire. It is also a good “getting to know you” tune, as it is so well known by a large number of musicians. Find below two fiddle and banjo arrangements of this tune as well as a guitar version.

For the Violin

Anne Lederman sent along two versions of St Anne’s Reel. The first is the written “standard” version. She indicates that this is the earliest version she could find in print and wrote: “the consensus is that it was a Scottish tune although I haven’t got anything definite on an older source. It truly seems to be one of those tunes that has maintained its popularity solely through oral tradition.”
St. Anne's Reel  
(Ontario Version)  
Transcription by  
Anne Lederman  
Calligraphy by  
Anne Lederman

The second version sent along by Anne is the way she presently plays it. "Mine is a composite of what I heard and still hear people playing in Ontario. It is closer to what most people play now (compared to the 'standard' version). The two ending bars of A and B should all be considered interchangeable. The indicated bowing works for me, but I wouldn't use the same one every time."

For the banjo

Frailing or clawhammer banjo was developed in the United States but is very appropriate for Canadian fiddle tunes. John Leeder has prepared two frailing versions - one plain and one fancy. John indicates: "I first heard this tune played on the banjo by Carol Wright, who at that time lived in Ontario, Alberta, and played in an Edmonton-based group whose name escapes me. She played it in a 'double C' tuning (gCGCD). I later worked it out in a standard C tuning (gCGBD). However, as it's usually played in D on the fiddle, I capo to the second fret and tune the fifth string up to A. The tune can be heard on "Melodic Clawhammer Banjo" (Kicking Mule, KM 209) played by Henry Sapoznik. I've written out two versions."
Version 1 is relatively straight forward (although in staying close to the tune I couldn’t avoid a few double drop thumbs); version 2 has more fancy stuff and less rhythmic punch. I usually play the tune somewhere between the two versions.

**For the guitar**

Flatpicking guitar styles have become very important in the North American revival. Scott Rogers has transposed St Anne’s Reel to this style. He indicates: "Many guitarists who are interested in flatpicking fiddle tunes have no difficulty in finding suitable material. Transcriptions in tabulature can be found in instructional books and in publications like “Frets” magazine. There are, however, few, if any, transcriptions of “Canadian” fiddle tunes available. This is unfortunate in that there are many such tunes which lend themselves quite nicely to the guitar.

The version presented here is very close to the one taught to me on fiddle by Eleanor Townsend. Play it in the key of C and capo to the second fret if you are playing with a fiddler. All the notes are 1/8 notes with the exception of those which have a dot beside them. These should be given a 1/4 note value.