

The Brae Reel

The Brae Reel is widely played in the western part of PEI. Local lore holds that it was composed by a fiddler, Preston MacKinnon, from a district called "The Brae." This transcription is

*reprinted from Ken Perlman's **The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island** (published by Mel Bay).*

Note: The up-arrow symbol [↑] indicates that the note is to be played slightly higher than the written pitch.

While I was in the full enjoyment of [breakfast], the old woman of the house said to the master:

"Have you got your flute with you?"

"Yes," he returned.

"Have a blow at it," said the old woman, coaxingly. "Do!"

The master, upon this, put his hand underneath the skirts of his coat, and brought out his flute in three pieces, which he screwed together, and immediately began to play. My impression is, after many years of consideration, that there never can have been anybody in the world who played worse. He made the most dismal sounds I have ever heard produced by any means, natural or artificial. I don't know what the tunes were—if there were such things in the performance at all, which I doubt—but the influence of the strain me upon was, first, to make me think of all my sorrows until I could hardly keep my tears back; then to take away my appetite; and lastly to make me so sleepy that I couldn't keep my eyes open. They begin to close again, and I begin to nod, as the recollection rises fresh upon me. Once more the little room with its open corner cupboard, and its square-backed chairs, and its angular little staircase leading to the room above, and its three peacock's feathers displayed over the mantelpiece—I remember wondering when I first went in, what that peacock would have thought if he had known what his finery was doomed to come to—fades from before me, and I nod, and sleep. The flute becomes inaudible, the wheels of the coach are heard instead, and I am on my journey. The coach jolts, I wake with a start, and the flute has come back again, and the master at Salem House is sitting with his legs crossed, playing it dolefully, while the old woman of the house looks on delighted. She fades in her tune, and he fades, and all fades, and there is no flute, no master, no Salem House, no David, no anything but heavy sleep.

Charles Dickens David Copperfield (Yarmouth, England)

For Montrealers, the YD [Yellow Door] is a performers workshop.[.] The audience is receptive, the freebies have good ideas, and there is also lunch daily for 35c. Many of the young people performing acoustic guitar/banjo&c. music are aware of the standing rule—you'll never get rich at it, but it's a lot of fun.

Chuck Baker CFMS Newsletter Bulletin Volume 8 (unnumbered) (March 1973)