

Air

The Wild Rover

Arr. P/M Jerry McGee 2008

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef. The key signature is D major (two sharps: F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The piece consists of six staves of music. The melody is characterized by a mix of eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together in groups of two or three. There are several instances of grace notes (short eighth notes) preceding the main notes. Phrasing is indicated by curved lines (slurs) over groups of notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

The Wild Rover

The Wild Rover (Roud 1173) is a popular folk song whose origins are contested.

According to Professor T. M. Devine in his book *The Scottish Nation 1700 - 2000* (Penguin, 2001) the song was written as a temperance song. The song is found printed in a book, *The American Songster*, printed in the USA by W.A. Leary in 1845, and spread from Scotland to America from the Temperance movement. There is another USA printed version in the "Forget-Me-Not Songster" (c 1850), published by Locke. An alternative history of the song is suggested by the fact that a collection of ballads, dated between 1813 and 1838, is held in the Bodleian Library. The printer, Catnach, was based in the "7 Dials" area of Covent Garden, London. The Bodleian bundle contains "The Wild Rover". The Greig-Duncan collection contains no less than six versions of the song. It was compiled by Gavin Greig 1848–1917.

It is often considered to be a drinking song rather than a Temperance song. The song is a staple for artists performing live music in Irish pubs.

Lyrics

I've been a wild rover for many's the year,
and I spent all me money on whiskey and beer.
And now I'm returning with gold in great store,
and I never will play the wild rover no more.

(Chorus):
And it's no, nay, never! No, nay, never, no more,
will I play the wild rover. No (nay) never no more!

I went to an alehouse I used to frequent,
and I told the landlady me money was spent.
I asked her for credit, she answered me "nay,
such a custom as yours I could have any day".

(Chorus)

I pulled from me pocket a handful of gold,
and on the round table it glittered and rolled.
She said "I have whiskeys and wines of the best,
and the words that I told you were only in jest".

(Chorus)

I'll have none of your whiskeys nor fine Spanish wines,
For your words show you clearly as no friend of mine.
There's others most willing to open a door,
To a man coming home from a far distant shore.

(Chorus)

I'll go home to me parents, confess what I've done,
and I'll ask them to pardon their prodigal son.
And if they forgive me as oft times before,
I never will play the wild rover no more.

(Chorus)