

Mairi's Wedding

Johnny Bannerman (in Gaelic), trans. Sir Hugh Robertson

Polka

trad. Scot. - FF Version

3

5

8

(AKA: *Lewis Bridal Song, Màiri Bhàn*)

Playing Notes: Mandolin. End with a G - off SHARP!

Mairi's Wedding

Chorus: Step we gaily, off we go
 Heel for heel and toe for toe,
 Arm in arm and row on row,
 All for Mairi's wedding.

1. Over hillways up and down
 Myrtle green and bracken brown,
 Past the sheiling through the town
 All for sake of Mairi.

2. Red her cheeks as rowans are,
 Bright her eyes as any star,
 Fairest o' them all by far
 Is our darling Mairi.

3. Plenty herring, plenty meal,
 Plenty peat to fill her creel,
 Plenty bonnie bairns as weel
 That's the toast for Mairi.

This song was originally written in Gaelic (hence the Gaelic version of Mary in the title) by Johnny Bannerman of Glasgow in 1935 for his friend Mary McNiven, just a year after she had won the 'Mod'* gold medal for singing. The tune was the traditional 'Lewis Bridal Song', named after the Hebridean 'Isle of Lewis'. It was translated into English the following year by Sir Hugh Robertson. Apparently she wasn't getting married at the time - it was just a song... she wasn't actually married until 6 years later - to Skye-born sea captain John Campbell.

*The Mod (actually, the 'Royal National Mod' is Scotland's Gaelic festival, held every October since 1892, at a different location each time. It is competition-based, celebrating the Gaelic language through music, dance, drama, art and literature.

Some definitions; a 'sheiling' is the name given to a country dwelling, usually of the single-level thatched type, in the Scottish highlands and Islands. Such buildings were typically used by shepherds while their flock was in the upper pastures during the summer months. 'Rowans' are, of course, berries from the Rowan tree (Mountain Ash in N. America).