

Tune of the Month By Amy Shaw

The 2012 Minnesota Irish Music Weekend continues to be a great source of tunes for this column. This month's tune was taught during one of the flute workshops at MIM by Sean Gavin, a flute player and uilleann piper in two acclaimed bands, Bua and NicGaviskey. Sean has a wonderful ability to teach a tune *and* to explain particular elements of playing style in a practical way. I wonder if he learned to do this from his father, Clare fiddler Mick Gavin, who has been performing and teaching in Detroit for many years. In any case, it's easy to see that Sean grew up immersed in the music. He now lives in Chicago, where he has gotten to know the great Sligo flute player, Kevin Henry, from whom he learned Biddu McGhee.

Kevin Henry was born in 1929 near the town of Tubbercurry along the Mayo/Sligo border, where you probably couldn't throw a stone without hitting a musician. There were lots of flute bands and fife and drum bands in the area, and consequently lots of flute players. Kevin absorbed the rich repertoire of local tunes before emigrating to England, then to Canada and New York. He settled in Chicago in the 1950s, where he has been an inspiration to many younger musicians over the years. Kevin's hearty flute playing has been described by *Irish Times* writer Mic Moroney as "an eloquent time-capsule style with its own stonking, woofing, internal rhythm section." (I had to look up "stonking." It means amazing, or powerful.) Speaking of Kevin's 1998 CD, *One's Own Place*, which you can get from New Folk Records, Moroney commented that the album "truly burps up the Sligo Coleman country of old." Besides playing the flute, whistle, and uilleann pipes, Kevin is also a great storyteller, and the album features a number of his recitations.

Usual disclaimers: Any transcription errors are my own. The notation here is not meant to be a substitute for listening. It is simply an aid to learning the tune.

Biddu McGhee

The musical notation for 'Biddu McGhee' is presented in four staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and contains the first four measures. The second staff continues with measures 5-8, including a first ending bracket over measures 7-8 and a second ending bracket over measures 9-10. The third staff contains measures 11-14, with a repeat sign at the beginning and a fermata over the final note of measure 14. The fourth staff contains measures 15-18, with first and second ending brackets over measures 17-18.

Rhythm: jig

Source: Sean Gavin, St. Paul, 17 June 2012

Discography: Kevin Henry, *One's Own Place: A Family Tradition* (1998), track 10