

*In 1965*, ten year old Jerry Holland and his father gazed through the window of a local laundry shop at what appeared to be a pretty good fiddle. The next day, without even trying it, Jerry senior took a chance, and bought it for his son. Young Jerry played this fiddle for many years, never knowing that it was actually a rare old Austrian violin made by Leopold Widhalm, a luthier who has been considered the Stradivarius of Austria. How such a fiddle came into the hands of a Chinese laundryman is one of the great mysteries that only the instrument itself will ever know. Innocently, Jerry senior paid fifty dollars for this old black fiddle. He took it home wrapped up like a blanket, hoping that it would sound good. It was with this violin that Jerry Holland went on to develop his expressive and dynamic style, a distinctive trademark accent in Celtic fiddle music.

This solo recording was made in an intimate home setting, with natural acoustics. There was no compression, equalization or noise reduction used, only the fiddle itself, in its purest form, recorded in a true stereo image. Crystal Clear captures the essence of the sound of one of the world's foremost Celtic fiddlers and composers.



*Jerry Holland*

**Jerry Holland** compositions designated (J.H.)  
They are registered with SOCAN. and published by:

**Fiddle Sticks**

(902) 794-4170

Recorded and Mastered by Paul M. MacDonald  
St. Anns Bay, October 2000.

**Notes and Production:**  
Paul M. MacDonald  
Paul S. Cranford  
Jerry Holland

**Photography:** Carol Kennedy

**Design:** Cole Mackin

(photos of Otis Tomas fiddles used in the design are from  
his website. ([www.fiddletree.com](http://www.fiddletree.com)))

Special thanks to Mary Larsen Holland and  
Fiddler Magazine ([www.fiddle.com](http://www.fiddle.com))

References (books available from Cranford Publications)

- JH1 ... Jerry Holland's Collection of Fiddle Tunes
- BS ... Brenda Stubbart's Collection of Fiddle Tunes
- DG ... The Dungen Collection
- LC ... The Lighthouse Collection
- JH2 ... Jerry Holland: The Second Collection
- WF ... Winston Fitzgerald: A Collection of Fiddle Tunes
- SF ... The Simon Fraser Collection
- CP ... Cranford Publications.

( [www.cranfordpub.com](http://www.cranfordpub.com) Tunes on-line, books, recordings etc )

*Solo Violin by Cape Breton Fiddler*  
*Jerry Holland*

*Crystal Clear*

**1. JIGS**

**The Dandy** (J.H.) .....JH1  
**The Black Rogue** (trad) .....JH2  
**Lakeview Drive** (J.H.) .....JH2

Jerry's two original tunes fit seamlessly around a traditional Irish jig. During the 1930s, *An Rógairé Dubh* (The Black Rogue), was recorded on 78 disc by Leitrim flute player John McKenna. Jerry heard it in Boston as a teenager from Bill Lamey at his Cape Breton dances.

**2. STRATHSPEYS & REELS**

**Glasgow Strathspey and Reel Society**  
 (Angus Fitchet, MCPS) - strathspey .....JH2  
**Mrs. Greig's** (trad) - strathspey .....JH1  
**Pottinger's** (Tom Anderson, MCPS) - reel .....JH2  
**A Winston Tune** (trad) - reel .....JH1  
**Inverness Lasses** - reel .....JH1, SF

Jerry learned this memorable set of tunes from John Campbell's first LP (Rounder 1975).

**3. IRISH HORNPIPES**

**The First of Spring** (Eddie Poirier, MCPS) .....JH2  
**Cooley's Hornpipe** (Paddy O'Brien, IMRO) .....JH2

A couple of Irish-style hornpipes. The first was written by Eddie Poirier, a New Brunswick musician who is at home with many fiddle styles and instruments. *Cooley's Hornpipe* is a popular Irish session tune. The composer, Irish button accordionist Paddy O'Brien, made many influential 78 recordings. In his later years Paddy became a prolific composer. He wrote this hornpipe in appreciation of another well-loved Irish box player, Joe Cooley.

**4. JIGS**

**Katie Ann Cameron** (J.H.) .....JH2  
**Stan Chapman's Jig** (J.H.) .....JH1  
**Father Hanley's** (Tommy Sullivan, p.d.) .....JH2

Jerry composed the first tune, *Katie Ann Cameron*, for a woman with a great love of Cape Breton music. *Stan Chapman's* was made in appreciation of the efforts Stan has given to the many beginning fiddlers he has taught. Jerry learned his setting of *Father Hanley* from a Frankie Gavin recording. It was first published in Boston, in a book titled *Irish Folk Dance Music* by Jerry O'Brien (1950).

**5. AIR**

**A Walk Through the Ruins**  
 (Paul S. Cranford, SOCAN) .....LC

Jerry fell in love with this lament the first time he heard it. Composed in the early '80s, it was intended to reflect the style of a cappella singers traditional to the west coast of Ireland.

**6. STRATHSPEYS and REELS**

**Christy Campbell's** (trad) - strathspey .....DG, CP  
**Anthony Murray's** (trad) - strathspey .....DG, CP  
**Bridge of Bamore** (trad) - reel .....DG, CP  
**Arrochar Bridge** (trad) - reel .....DG, CP

The Christy Campbell Medley is the most famous grouping of traditional Cape Breton raised-bass tunes. The fiddle is tuned in fourths, which like other open tunings, give a solo fiddle added resonance and colour. Complete historical notes and traditional scordatura settings to these tunes are found in *The DunGreen Collection*.

**7. STRATHSPEYS AND REELS**

**The Blackthorn Strathspey** (trad) .....JH2  
**The Braes of Marr** (trad) - strathspey .....JH2, DG  
**John Allan Cameron's Reel** (J.H.) .....JH1  
**Wild Alf McConnell** (J.H.) - reel .....JH2

The two strathspeys are unique versions of tunes which Jerry learned from Mike MacDougall. The first is a strathspey setting of an Irish reel. John Allan Cameron was instrumental in forming the Cape Breton Symphony. When Jerry was only 18, John Allan invited him to join the group. This experience inspired the teenage Jerry to continue developing his music as well as his eventual move to Cape Breton. Alf McConnell is a sponsor and concert promoter of Celtic music in the Chicago area. He recently published Jerry's album, *Fiddler's Choice*, on the Odyssey label.

**8. HORNPIPE AND REEL**

**Sean Maguire's Style**  
 (Brendan Mulvihill) - hornpipe .....JH1  
**The Palm Tree** (Billy McComiskey) - reel .....JH2

The composers represented here are two great friends who for many years played in a group known as The Irish Tradition. Brendan has visited Cape Breton many times. Recently he was here to perform for the annual Celtic Colours Festival. Jerry has played with Billy on numerous occasions at festivals and concerts from Washington, D.C. to Alaska.

**9. STRATHSPEYS and REELS**

**Killravock's** (trad) .....JH1  
**Munlochy Bridge** (trad) .....JH1  
**Green Grow the Rushes** (trad) - reel .....JH2  
**Heather Hill**  
 (Dan R. MacDonald, SOCAN) - reel .....HH, WF  
**Mourne Mountains** (trad) - reel .....JH2

Jerry learned the first three 18th century Scottish tunes from home recordings of Bill Lamey. The final two reels come from a classic Winston Fitzgerald 78 disc. *Heather Hill* is one of Dan R. MacDonald's most popular tunes.

**10. JIGS**

**January 16th** (J.H.) .....JH2  
**Francis Aucoin** (Howie MacDonald, SOCAN) .....JH2  
**Rannie MacLellan** (J.H.) .....JH2

This set is dedicated to the memory of Jerry's dear friend, the late John Morris Rankin.

**11. SLOW AIR, STRATHSPEYS & REELS**

**The Laird of Bemerside**  
 (J. Scott Skinner, p.d.) - air .....JH2  
**MacBeth's Strathspey** (trad) .....JH1  
**Sandy Cameron's**  
 (J. Scott Skinner, p.d.) - strathspey .....JH2  
**The Musical Chisholm Household**  
 (J.H.) - pipe reel .....JH2  
**House Hunting** (J.H.) - pipe reel .....JH2

Most Cape Bretoners associate this beautiful Skinner slow air with Angus Chisholm. *MacBeth's Strathspey* is an old Scottish pipe tune which was first recorded by fiddler Little Jack MacDonald. Skinner himself recorded *Sandy Cameron* in 1927 on a 78 disc. Jerry's setting of this strathspey comes from the current Inverness County tradition. In particular he was influenced by Buddy MacMaster. The last two pipe reels are recent pipe reels that have already caught on amongst both fiddlers and pipers.

**12. JIGS**

**Larry Reynolds' Fancy** (J.H.) .....JH2  
**Francis Xavier Kennedy MacDonald**  
 (David Greenberg, SOCAN) .....JH2  
**The Royal Circus** (trad) .....JH2

Over the years Larry Reynolds has been one of the key people in the Boston area Comhaltas organization. New Hampshire fiddler Jack Perron was so enamoured with the tune Jerry made for Larry that he made an old-style mechanical music box which plays the melody. *Francis Xavier Kennedy MacDonald* is one of David Greenberg's most popular compositions. *The Royal Circus* is a traditional Scottish jig Buddy MacMaster learned from one of the Gow Collections.

**13. STRATHSPEY and REELS**

**Dr. Shaw** (J. Scott Skinner, p.d.) - strathspey .....JH2  
**Dougie and Johnny** (J.H.) - reel .....JH2  
**The Southwest Fiddler** (J.H.) - reel .....JH2

This medley starts out with a J. Scott Skinner strathspey which was made famous in Cape Breton by a Bill Lamey 78 disc. Bill had the knack for finding tasty tunes in old books. He found *Dr. Shaw* in *The Harp and Claymore* (1890). Jerry titled the first reel because it reminded him of the style of music he had heard played by Dougie MacPhee and Johnny Wilmot. The last reel reflects memories of some of the music played in Southwest Margaree, in particular dances played by both Cameron Chisholm and Angus Allan Gillis.

**14. MARCH, STRATHSPEY & REELS**

**Moladh Maureen Nic Coinnich**  
 (John MacLean, SOCAN) - march .....JH2  
**Tom Dey**  
 (J. Scott Skinner, p.d.) - strathspey .....JH2, CP  
**The Mortgage Burn**  
 (Gordon MacLean, SOCAN) - reel .....LC, CP  
**Kentucky Mandolin**  
 (John Morris Rankin, SOCAN) - reel .....JH2

John MacLean is a Cape Breton piper from Dartmouth. Jerry and John recorded a duet on the new Celtic Colours CD. The strathspey *Tom Dey* was one of Jerry's father's favorite tunes. *The Mortgage Burn* is a popular tune from pianist Gordon MacLean. John Morris' soulful reel was composed after he was given the gift of a *Kentucky Mandolin*.

**15. JIGS**

**A.J. and Jeanette Beaton's**  
 (Doug MacPhee, SOCAN) .....JH2  
**The Bees Knees** (Robert Stubbart) .....BS  
**The Piano Summit** (Doug MacPhee, SOCAN) .....JH2

New Waterford, Cape Breton piano player Doug MacPhee composed the first jig for his dear friends A.J. and Jeanette Beaton of Troy, Cape Breton. He made the final jig after performing with six other Cape Breton pianists at the Judique Piano Summit on the 21st of April 1999. Jerry feels that these two jigs are of the same character as some of the earliest live music he heard as a youngster in Boston. The middle tune, *The Bees Knees*, is an Irish-style jig which comes from Northside fiddler Robert Stubbart.

**16. WALTZ**

**Margaret and Archie Neil** (J.H.) .....JH2  
 Archie Neil Chisholm was a fiddler and great supporter of Cape Breton music. His brother Angus was a major influence on Jerry's music. Archie Neil's wife Margaret lives in Margaree Forks.

**17. MARCHING AIR & REELS**

**J.O. Forbes of Corse**  
 (Peter Milne, p.d.) marching air .....WF  
**Grant's** (trad) - reel .....JH2  
**Charlie Hardie** (J. Scott Skinner, p.d.) - reel .....WF

Jerry learned the first tune from a home recording of Winston Fitzgerald which was given to him by his good friend Dave MacIsaac. Angus Chisholm introduced *Grant's Reel* to Cape Breton. He had learned it from a mid-'60s Sean Maguire LP. *Charlie Hardie* is a popular Skinner tune that was first published in *The Miller O'Him Collection* (1880).

**18. JIGS**

**Falcon Bigney** (J.H.) .....JH2  
**Kinnon Beaton** (J.H.) .....JH2  
**Little House Under the Hill** (trad.) .....JH2

*Falcon Bigney* is a young musician from Utah. Her older brothers formed the wonderful group Kirkmount. *Kinnon Beaton* is one of Jerry's favorite Cape Breton composers and dance players. Jerry thought he might like the character of this tune. *Little House Under the Hill* is Jerry's personal setting of an old Irish jig.

**19. STRATHSPEY & REELS**

**Merry Miss Mary B.**  
 (David Greenberg, SOCAN) - strathspey .....JH2  
**Fin Fever** (Paul S. Cranford, SOCAN) - reel .....LC  
**Johnena's Fine Mincemeat Pie** (J.H.) - reel .....JH2

These two reels tastefully complement each other. One night, when preparing for this recording, Dougie MacPhee dropped in for a visit and a few tunes. Jerry was looking for a strathspey to suit the character of the reels and Dougie immediately suggested this Greenberg original.

**20. REELS**

**Meeting Gigi** (J.H.) - reel .....JH2  
**Minnie Adams' House**  
 (Scott Macmillan, SOCAN) - reel .....JH2

Jerry broadcasted these two tunes with Scott Macmillan live over the internet last March for the CBC radio series *The Nova Scotia Kitchen Party*. *Meeting Gigi* was composed while Jerry was in Gig Harbour, Washington, visiting guitarist Mike Saunders and his wife Gigi. *Minnie Adams' House* was first published in Scott's *o'book Scoobie Tunes* (1996).