

ROISIN DUBH

(The Little Black Rose)

16th C. harp tune

6th string = D

Very freely [mm ~ 50]

The musical score is written for a 16th-century harp, specifically for the 6th string which is tuned to D. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo/mood is marked 'Very freely [mm ~ 50]' and the initial dynamic is 'mp' (mezzo-piano). The score consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 2/4 time signature. It features a melody starting on a half rest, followed by eighth and quarter notes, a repeat sign, and then a series of notes including a half note and a quarter note, ending with a long, sweeping slur over the final two notes. The subsequent staves continue the melody and accompaniment, with various note values, rests, and slurs. The bottom staff starts at measure 20. The notation includes many beamed eighth notes and quarter notes, suggesting a lively but flexible tempo.



"A harp tune of the Jacobite period (late 16th century) written and composed, some have said, in praise of Hugh Roe O'Donnell (Red Hugh O'Donnell) and in support of the Stuart kings. The title is widely reported to have been an allegorical name for Ireland (Flood, 1906), at least at one time in history, but whether the song was political allegory or an ode to love, it was probably the most widespread of Gaelic Irish folk songs in the 18th century with words collected from all four provinces of the country." (*Fiddler's Companion*)

The version most familiar to today's musicians is the one noted in the 1790's by the collector Edward Bunting from the playing of harper Daniel Black (no relation of mine!)