

Hello banjo friends,

Are we loving the Sandy River Belle tuning at this point? Are we imagining using it as our default tuning for the key of G? Not yet? Well...good thing I have one more week to convince everyone! :)

After the exertion that was Stump-Tailed Dolly, I hope that you found tonight's tunes to be a relative breeze. This special setting of Sail Away Ladies is certainly rhythmically tricky, but ALL that the fretting hand has to worry about is the second and third fret zone. This is not atypical of the compactness of tunes arranged in this tuning! John Riley the Shepherd is in some ways even more user friendly, but do stay focused on the tune's structure to keep from going in complete circles as you encounter recurring themes.

Here are a few nice takes on tonight's Sail Away Ladies:

-fiddler Uncle Bunt Stephens, to whom this version is attributed, in a recording from 1926: <https://www.slippery-hill.com/content/sail-away-ladies-11>

-the wonderful Rayna Gellert on fiddle (this tune is at the very top of her lengthy list of tune videos): <https://www.raynagellert.com/tune-videos>

-fiddler Mark Simos with Molly Tenenbaum on banjo--in the Sandy River Belle tuning, no less!--in a medley from Mark's spectacular "Race the River, Jordan" album from the 1990s. The second tune in the medley is one of Mark's many fine original tunes written in a traditional style, and I love how it references Sail Away Ladies while also being its own unique thing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j06N7A1fvuk>

...and here are some renditions of John Riley the Shepherd:

-source fiddler Art Stamper from his wonderful "Goodbye Girls, I'm Going to Boston" album from 1990: <https://www.slippery-hill.com/content/john-riley-shepherd>

-Erynn Marshall, Carl Jones and friends in the 2019 Clifftop traditional band contest finals: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqPG5SaTen4>

-fiddler Katie Davis Henderson from her terrific "New Tune a Day" video series (playing a whole step lower than usual; to play against her fiddle, you would need to tune down to fDGCD): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UobPQeTy7_8

Enjoy the tunes, utilize the tabs if you like, and please never hesitate to reach out with questions, comments, or other feedback.

Sail Away Ladies, Sail Away!

Cheers,
Adam