

standard notation. 116 of them are titled by Maloy as breakdowns, 24 are reels, and 19 are hornpipes. Key-wise, Maloy spreads the tunes around, though interestingly, he chose to write more in the key of C (25 tunes) than in A (23 tunes). Why this is, he doesn't say. Creativity sets its own rules, I guess. The key of D (51 tunes) gets the most, followed by G (40 tunes), while the more obscure keys of F (16), E (two) and B flat (two) get the fewest. There are no tempo markings, but there is a listing of some 285 Georgia fiddlers past and present, all counter-listed beneath their home counties.

To learn the tempos you'll need to listen to the three CDs of fiddler Casey Driscoll backed by guitarist Jon Grisham playing each tune through twice. What you'll find is that most of the tunes are taken in fast-medium to medium-fast range with a couple, for example "Candler County Breakdown," being somewhat slow and swingy and a few others, for example "Twiggs County Reel," being quite fast.

The big question is, of course, can a man write 159 fiddle tunes in a few months and have them sound good and avoid being repetitive? Having played through all 159 tunes before listening to the CDs, I can honestly say I find no bad tunes, though some are of an average quality. Most are in the good range and more than a few rise to the very good range. Listening to the CDs did change my conception of several, adding more to the very good range.

A few things that would have helped raise more tunes to a higher level would be having a bit more rhythmic variety, a few more chromatic notes, a few more surprises. As it stands, the majority of the tunes are mostly long, often unbroken, streams of sixteenth notes. In the whole of the book, I find but one tune, "Union County Breakdown," that uses a dotted note. Moreover only a few use eighth notes as an integral part of the melody and there are no quarter notes or long bow notes, and few double stops. The best of the tunes are those that break from the steady sixteenth-note patterns or offer more of a song-like quality in the melodic line.

All that said, it is doubtful that anyone, including Franz Schubert, could write 159 tunes in a few months and have them all be good. That there are a number of very good songs here is a testament to Frank Maloy's talent and creativity.

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Books

Frank Maloy
159 Original Georgia Fiddle Tunes



Patuxent Music

A couple of years ago, Georgia fiddler Frank Maloy had a creative spurt and began composing fiddle tunes by the dozens. As the manuscripts piled higher over the next several months, he switched from naming the tunes for friends and musicians and turned to the counties of his home state. When he'd finished, he had one for each county in Georgia, all 159 of them, and that soon led to this fiddle tune book and three-CD set.

Contained herein are all of those "county" tunes, each handwritten in clean, clear,