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THE SONG TRAIN

Handsome Molly

Traditional, arranged by Harvey Reid and Joyce Andersen



"Handsome Molly" first showed up in the earliest days of recordings of folk music in the late 1920s, and over the years it has been done by quite a number of folk, country, and bluegrass artists, ranging from Ian and Sylvia to Mick Jagger. The versions all have pretty much the same chords and melody, with only minor variations in the words. We decided to give it a more modern rhythm and forgo the faster and bouncier way the old-time and bluegrass people often do it. On our recording, Joyce adds some rhythmic interest with full-chord hammer-ons, which means she strums the strings open and then quickly presses her fingers down to sound the chord. The verse and chorus have the same chords and melody, so it is a very simple, yet engaging song.

—HARVEY REID

Chords

D: xx0132
A: 001230

Banjo Chords

D: x0123
A: x1111

Mando Chords

D: 1002
A: 1200

Strum Pattern

D: xx0132
A: 001230

- D A
1. Well I wish I was in London or some other seaport town
- D
- I'd set my foot on a steamboat and sail the ocean round
- Chorus
- D A
- While sailing round the ocean, while sailing round the sea
- D
- I think of handsome Molly wherever she might be
- D A
2. Her hair's as black as a raven, her eyes as black as coal
- D
- Her cheeks they shone like lilies out in the morning glow
- D A
3. I went to church last Sunday she passed me on by
- D
- I knew her mind was changing by the roving of her eye

Repeat chorus

Additional lyrics at AcousticGuitar.com/songtrain