

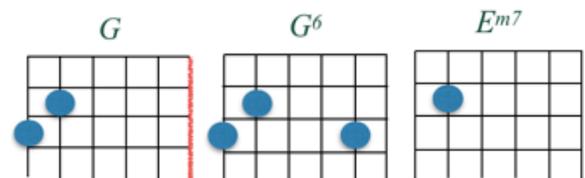
# The Minstrel Boy

Words & Music by Thomas Moore, with the third verse written during the US Civil War by an unknown person or persons

*C G C Em Am*  
 The minstrel boy to the war is gone,  
*G<sup>6</sup> F C G C*  
 In the ranks of death you'll find him,  
*C G C Em Am*  
 His father's sword he has girded on,  
*G<sup>6</sup> F C G C*  
 And his wild harp slung behind him,  
*Am F G<sup>6</sup> Em*  
 "Land of Song"! said the warrior bard,  
*Am Em<sup>7</sup> F G C*  
 "Tho' all the world betrays thee,  
*C G C Em Am*  
 One sword at least thy rights shall guard,  
*G<sup>6</sup> F C G C*  
 One faithful harp shall praise thee"!

*C G C Em Am*  
 The Minstrel Boy will return we pray;  
*G<sup>6</sup> F C G C*  
 When we hear the news we'll cheer it,  
*C G C Em Am*  
 The minstrel boy will return one day,  
*G<sup>6</sup> F C G C*  
 Torn perhaps in body, not in spirit.  
*Am F G<sup>6</sup> Em*  
 Then may he play his harp in peace,  
*Am Em<sup>7</sup> F G C*  
 In a world such as Heaven intended,  
*C G C Em Am*  
 For all the bitterness of man must cease,  
*G<sup>6</sup> F C G C*  
 And every battle must be ended.

*C G C Em Am*  
 The Minstrel fell, but the foeman's chain,  
*G<sup>6</sup> F C G C*  
 Could not bring his proud soul under,  
*C G C Em Am*  
 The harp he loved ne'er spoke a - - gain;  
*G<sup>6</sup> F C G C*  
 For he tore its chords asunder,  
*Am F G<sup>6</sup> Em*  
 He said "No chains shall sully thee,  
*Am Em<sup>7</sup> F G C*  
 Thou soul of love and bravery!  
*C G C Em Am*  
 Thy songs were made for the pure and free;  
*G<sup>6</sup> F C G C*  
 They shall never sound in slavery".



} Intro and between each verse

## History

"**The Minstrel Boy**" is an Irish patriotic song written by Thomas Moore (1779–1852) who set it to the melody of *The Moreen*, an old Irish air. It is widely believed that Moore composed the song in remembrance of a number of his friends, whom he met while studying at Trinity College, Dublin and who had participated in, and were killed during the rebellion of the United Irishmen.



The song gained widespread popularity and became a favorite of many Irishmen who fought during the American Civil War and gained even more popularity after WW I. The song is notably associated with organizations that historically had a heavy representation of Irish-Americans, in particular the police and fire departments of New York, Boston and Chicago and those of various other major US metropolitan areas. The melody is frequently played at funerals of members and / or officers of such organizations who

have died or been killed in service, typically on bagpipes.

Moore was feisty fellow. In 1803 he travelled across the United States and Canada. During this visit Moore developed a deeply critical view of the United States. He particularly disliked the governing Democratic-Republican Party and President Thomas Jefferson. Following his visit he published a book, *Epistles, Odes, and Other Poems*. A repeated theme were his observations of the institution of slavery. Moore's mocking criticisms of the United States provoked outrage in America and led to a number of rebuttals. In Britain, a critical review of his book led to Moore challenging Francis Jeffery, an editor, to a duel. They met at Chalk Farm but the duel was interrupted by the arrival of the authorities and they were arrested.

Lord Byron publicly derided Moore who then sent a letter to Byron hinting that unless the remarks were clarified Moore was prepared to fight Byron. Byron had left Britain to travel abroad and the letter did not reach him. When the two men eventually met each other the dispute was settled and they soon became very close friends.

Moore was a strong advocate for Catholic Emancipation; he regarded its absence as the source of all problems in Ireland and the sole reason behind the 1798 rebellion. However, he experienced a difficult relationship with the leader of the Catholic Association, Daniel O'Connell whom Moore regarded as a demagogue, believing "O'Connell and his ragamuffins have brought tarnish upon Irish patriotism".

*irishpage.com, Getty Images and Wikipedia*