

Celtic Fiddle

Tutor

BOOK 2
Tune Types and
Ornamentation

Compiled and taught by Barb Bycroft
(Fiddler with Twisty Willow
Celtic Band)

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BOOK 2: TUNE TYPES AND ORNAMENTATION

(to be used in conjunction with the tune sets in Book 3: Barb's Celtic Collection)

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(Note: All tunes printed in this book are Traditional unless otherwise indicated).

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JIGS

There are three types of jig - double jigs (6/8), slip jigs (9/8) and single jigs/slides (12/8).

DOUBLE JIGS

Double jigs are played more frequently and are often just called "jigs".

There are 2 triple beats to the bar. eg

123	456
1	2

First we will concentrate on the bowing. While the left hand makes the note, the right (bow) hand makes the music. The rhythm or "soul" of a tune is created by the bow hand.



ACHIEVING THE JIG RHYTHM:

The first quaver in each group of three is given a very slight stress and lengthened a little. The second is shortened.

Think of the pattern: **Wan-a-ka, Wan-a-ka** (slight emphasis on "Wan" and shorter "a").

If all the quavers were played exactly alike, the tune would not sound like a jig.



OPEN STRING EXERCISE
(also play this on the other three strings)



The symbol ^ indicates a slight accent or stress – so you can play the note pattern like this:



Review

- Jigs are not usually written this way. The printed notes are an indication of the melody and rhythm, which then has to be interpreted.
- Listening to jigs and learning aurally is important to achieve this.
- Play the tune mainly using the **middle third of the bow**.
- An accent is achieved by pressing slightly on the bow with the first finger and at the same time bowing a little faster.
- Ensure bow and wrist are loose and relaxed at all times.



SKYE BOAT SONG (Scottish)



When you feel you are succeeding with the jig rhythm, play this Irish tune.

Try 2 bars at a time then build up to the full tune. Decide where to slur sets of notes.

THE CONNACHTMAN'S RAMBLE (Irish)



The next tune features the same kind of bowing. Again work through 2 bars at a time.

OLD JOHN'S JIG (Irish)



Use 4th finger in bar 4.



Jigs were probably derived from the European gigue style. There have been jigs in England, Scotland and France since at least the 16th century and jigs were very popular in Scotland and Ireland in the 17th century. (The Scots claim they had them first!). Many good jigs from the 18th century survive today as lively dance tunes and songs.



Bernadette Connelly dancing with
Twisty Willow on the Fiji tour

Let's learn some basic ornaments.

ORNAMENTATION – The Slide

The slide is a simple effective way of decorating a tune

Finger the note slightly flat, then quickly slide up to the correct tuning (approximately a semi tone). Apply slides to a leading note (For example "Old John's Jig", page 9, Bar 1, 3, 5 – put a slide on the first quaver of each set of 3).



And "Wild Geese", page 10, Bars 1, 3, 4 – put a slide on the first C# crotchets.

This is a good technique as it is also useful when you need to adjust flat intonation. Slides are not usually written on the music – it is over to the player to apply them.

ORNAMENTATION – The Single Cut – single grace note or acciaccatura

The cut is when a single grace note cuts into and emphasizes the main note.

- Is mainly used to separate 2 notes of the same pitch
- Is usually played very quickly before the beat
- Is usually played in one bow stroke (grace note and main note are slurred)
- Is influenced by Gaelic traditional singing as well as imitating the playing of the pipes

Pipers in the past were influenced by the classical music of Corelli and other European composers. The single cut is obtained by a quick flick of the finger so that it just touches the string momentarily.

Examples:



Flick any free finger above the note

Flick finger 1 note above the note

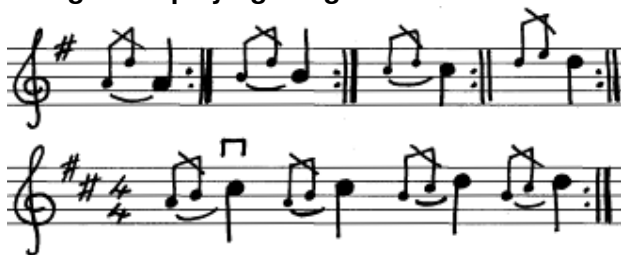
Flick finger 1 note below the note

Repeat each exercise until it happens automatically.



ORNAMENTATION – The Double Cut

The double cut is similar except there are 2 grace notes. Again the finger barely touches the string when playing the grace notes.



Main note / one above / main note

Two notes below main note



This tune has rolls, cross bowing and a cut already marked. Work through the tune two bars at a time.

RAMBLING PITCHFORK (Irish)



Keep fingers on the keyboard as much as possible – only raise a finger when necessary. Eg in bars 1 and 2 and bars 5 and 6, hold second finger down from the end of the roll to the last F# as indicated by the line over the notes.

In bars 1 and 5 you may find that your second finger touches the open A, but with practice you will learn to place it so that this does not happen.

Review: Keep fingers on the keyboard whenever possible

Raising a finger only when necessary is a good habit to acquire as this type of fingering helps improve playing technique through economy of movement. It also improves intonation. There are other advantages we will discuss later.

Master class in Sligo style fiddle playing with Martin Dowling at Tubbercurry



Martin was born in Sligo but grew up in Wisconsin. He learnt classical violin as a child and later specialised in Sligo style fiddle. He has played with Kevin Burke, Liz Carroll and other well known Irish fiddlers. Now lectures in History at Belfast University and is an expert on Michael Coleman (Sligo's most famous fiddler). He has recorded with his flautist wife.