

**FIRST DRAFT**



# **The Mossat Highland Bagpipe Tutor Book**

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Practical tuition, methods for learning tunes, and musical theory from the compiler of the Mossat collection (published 1995, a compendium of then unpublished tunes).

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## PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

### HANDS ON THE CHANTER:

#### ❖ RIGHT HAND

Place the end pad of the small finger or pinkie of the right or bottom hand onto the bottom hole of the chanter **Low A** hole.

Drop the other three fingers onto their ascending holes **B**, **C** and **D**.

Make sure that the fingers are straight across the chanter, and that the thumb at the back is positioned on its edge rather than flat. (Cybernetic, texts in theory part three).

Position the thumb of the lower hand either behind the **C** finger, or between the **B**, and **C** fingers this will give good balance to the hand while playing.

Feel the holes against the fingers. If you cannot, don't worry as it will come in time.

Do not at any time curl your fingers round the chanter, as this will let air escape since the holes are not properly sealed.

**Keep your fingers straight but not rigid.**

#### ❖ LEFT HAND

Place the second, or wedding ring finger, of the left or top hand onto the chanter's next hole **E**, the fifth hole from the bottom.

Place the end pad of the finger onto the hole, then place the other two fingers onto the ascending holes **F** and **G**; again, keep the fingers straight across the chanter.

The thumb is positioned on the top hole at the back of the chanter high A and on its edge rather than flat.

Now look down the line of fingers (they should look straight with the wrists and forearms in a half moon shape).

Don't be tempted to kink the wrists as this will make it hard to move the fingers, and will take your fingers off the centre line making squeaky noises.

Now blow the chanter and you should hear a clear low sounding note: this is **Low G**.

If you find, which you probably will, squeaky noises coming from the chanter, this is because the holes are not properly covered, or that fingers are not straight across the chanter.

Try positioning your fingers again.

Fingering and blowing the Chanter will seem hard work, and it is, but they will help to build up your finger dexterity, lungs, lips and stamina, in preparation for the bagpipes, the biggest challenge of your life.

**While playing the bagpipes we produce continues sound**, which means that every thing that we play is heard, mistakes and all, so to combat this, **I would**

**strongly advise anyone to go to a tutor or pipe band to learn properly.**

### **FOUNDATION:**

Foundation of the bagpipe finger work starts here.

As in building a brick wall, this is the concrete base that will support everything else. The bricks are the different notes and movements; the melody, rhythm and accents are the cement.

You cannot have one without the other.

You must build correctly, neatly and confidently to withstand the test of time.

**Always play slow and deliberate** while learning these scales and movements.

There is no requirement for speed at this stage since speed will come soon enough.

We are looking for **quality** rather than quantity.

The two basic functions to finger and practice correctly are the **Scale**, and the **G, D and E, grace notes**.

**All** other movements are derived from these.

### **BEAT:**

#### **❖ BEATING TO THE SCALE**

Secure a slow steady beat, with your foot, or metronome, and then proceed up the scale, ensuring, that the

Correct tuition will make all the difference in the end If it were easy everyone would be doing it.

individual notes, are being opened or closed, as the foot contacts the floor.

The beat will act as a regulator to all movements it is very important to apply the beat.

Ensure, that you play the notes, to the beat, and not the other way round.

Crispness in finger work will depend on this.

I will add the beat, to most of the exercises, to ensure balance of the movements.

The next important step, is to master the grace notes, once that has been accomplished, everything else, is progressively built on these two items.

### **FINGER MOVEMENTS:**

During practice of these finger movements require us to proceed up and down the chanter slowly and deliberately.

For example, when moving your fingers to create a note do not let your fingers do what they want as they will.

When you move your fingers move them sharply and cleanly, not only coming off the notes, but returning to them and between them.

Once you have mastered the Low A, try the next note, and so forth until the scale is completed both up and down.

Don't forget that all fingerwork is heard whether good or bad.

Sound **Low G** by continuing blowing then make your **Low A** finger (pinkie) spring off the chanter.

You will hear a higher sound than the Low G being produced which is Low A.

Imagine a cork coming out of a bottle: there is silence then a mini explosion when it is released.

Your finger will have to move sharply to achieve this.

This will take practice but it is well worth doing.

You will notice as you progress up the scale that each note in turn raises or sharpens in sound.

#### **PRACTICAL WORK ON THE CHANTER:**

##### **❖ BOTTOM HAND**

To do the above, sound or blow the chanter on note **Low G**, where all fingers cover all the chanter holes.

Sound the **Low A** and take the next finger up from the **Low A** off the chanter (2<sup>nd</sup> hole) this is **B** finger position.

The next note is **C**, this is harder to do, lift the next finger up (hole 3) and replace the **Low A** finger on its hole, looks like a bridge or a C facing the chanter, the **C** and **Low A** fingers move together ending up on **C** finger position.

Sound **C** and simply lift off the **D** finger, now look at the bottom hand all 3 fingers **B C** and **D** are off the chanter and the pinkie on the **Low A** hole, this is **D** finger position

Practise the bottom hand going up the scale until clean and correct.

##### **❖ TOP HAND**

The next note is **E**, which is the first finger of the top hand (ring finger) this is quite a hard move to master, sound **D** then lift the **E** finger off its hole and close the **D C** and **B** fingers together onto their holes while lifting off the **Low A** finger off its hole, **E** finger position.

This move involves 5 fingers changing places at the same time, crossing over noises will happen until you perfect the movement.

**While you use all of the top hand the pinkie of the bottom hand remains up or off the chanter in the Low A finger position.**

Sound **E** then lift the **F** finger off its hole (hole 6), **F** finger position, remember your pinkie

Sound **F** then lift the **High G** finger off its hole (hole 7) this is **High G** position, you should now have three fingers off the chanter on the top hand, remember your pinkie

Sound **High G**, take the thumb at the back of the chanter off and put the **E** finger on its hole (hole 8) this is **High A** position, remember your pinkie, the **E** finger should give the impression that it has pushed the thumb off the back hole.

Practice the top hand going up the scale until clean and correct, then practice the whole scale from bottom **Low G**

to top **High A** and back down until clean and correct this may take some time to accomplish as this is all new and a very disciplined exercise.

### **DOWN THE SCALE:**

You will notice as you progress down the scale that each note in turn lowers or flattens in sound.

#### ❖ **TOP HAND**

Sound High A, put the thumb on at the back of the chanter and take the E finger off its hole, this is the High G position.

The thumb should give the impression that it has pushed the E finger off the hole, you should now have three fingers off on the top hand, remember your pinkie,

Sound **High G**, place the **High G** finger back on hole this is **F** position, you should now have two fingers off on the top hand. Remember your pinkie,

Sound **F**, place the **F** finger down on its hole this is **E** position, you should now have one fingers off on the top hand, remember your pinkie.

Sound **E**, then place the **E** finger onto its hole, this is quite a hard movement to master, while all three fingers of the bottom hand are lifted together off their holes **D C** and **B** and placing the **Low A** finger on its hole, this is the **D** position, this move involves 5 fingers changing places at the same time, crossing over noises will happen until you perfect the movement.

Practice the top hand going down the scale until clean and correct.

#### ❖ **BOTTOM HAND**

Sound **D**, then close the **D** finger onto its hole, this is **C** position. **C** looks like a bridge or a C facing the chanter, **Low A** finger remains on its hole.

Sound **C** then close the **C** finger onto its hole and at the same time lift the **Low A** finger off the chanter this is **B** position.

Sound **B**, then close the **B** finger on its hole leaving the pinkie up or in its **Low A** position.

The last note is **Low G**, sound **Low A** then close the **Low A** finger on its hole, this is the **Low G** position with all fingers on the chanter.

Practice the bottom hand going down the scale until clean and correct.

Then practice the whole scale from bottom **Low G** to top **High A** and down the scale until clean and correct fingering is achieved this may take some time to accomplish.

If you are unfamiliar with reading music notation try looking at the notes as you play them also listen to the sound of each note that will help you later.

Look at diagram 1

## **CROSSING OVER NOISES:**

Crossing over noises occur by catching between notes.

### **❖ DIRTY PLAYING**

Catching or dirty playing means that while playing between two notes there are some other sounds appearing which does not give a clean finish to the second note.

Catching, for example **D to E**: The D fingers close to low A position, a fraction before sounding E. Another note, Low G, is sounded which is not required.

The way to eliminate this is to remember that if the highest note is sounded, for example the High A, you cannot sound any other note below it, so it follows that between D and E the E is given priority over the D then no dirty sound will appear.

The same applies going down the scale **E to D** notes, the D, will take priority over E.

For example. The D, fingers lift off the holes prior to closing the E, finger.

This is where your ears come into play as you must listen for these odd sounds and eliminate them.

### **❖ CLEAN PLAYING**

Clean playing is producing one note and then moving to the next note without another sound or note encroaching on the second note.

Dirty playing is producing one note and moving to the next note with a blip, or catching sound, in between the notes.

### **❖ HOW TO CORRECT DIRTY PLAYING**

**D to E** is the best example of this dirty playing.

When changing from bottom hand to top hand **D to E** the **D** is sounded, and before the **E** is sounded the bottom hand closes to Low A position too quickly.

This will happen in a split second but it does happen.

The rule to remember is to give priority to the note you are going to.

Sound **D** don't close the D fingers until the **E** finger is raised off the E hole, then close the bottom hand to Low A position without actually sounding Low A.

**(Take note that this position of the bottom hand is always on Low A while you are working with the top hand.)**

You now have a clean change over with no dirty sounds appearing this will have to be practiced slowly at first.

Notes that demand special attention to detail and practice are:

Up the scale **B to C, D to E, High G to High A.**

Down the scale **High A to High G, E to D, C to B.**

**E to D, and D to E,** are the hardest to master because of the hand changeovers.

Look at diagrams 2 and 3

### **BEATING TO THE SCALE:**

**Secure a slow steady beat with your foot or metronome** and then proceed up the scale ensuring that the individual notes are opened immediately the foot contacts the floor.

When descending the scale ensure that the individual notes are closed immediately the foot contacts the floor.

**Ensure that you play the notes to the beat** and not the other way round, what invariably happens is a piper plays a tune and the beat is an after thought to the tune which allows the music to wander, the beat has no control over the tune but playing a tune to the beat will have the opposite effect, it will control the preciseness of the tune and sound controlled throughout.

Playing to the beat is essential for stability of the music and playing along with other players or band.

Crispness in finger work will depend on this.

Add the beat to most of the exercises to ensure balance of the movements.

The next important step is to master the grace notes.

Once that has been accomplished, everything else is progressively built on these two items the **scale and three grace notes**.

Look at diagram 4

### **GRACE NOTES:**

The grace notes are musical ornaments used to adorn the melody and are written as smaller headed notes with their stems turned up.

Their individual value, <sup>1</sup>/<sub>32nd</sub> or **Demi-semi quavers** they have nothing to do with the flow or timing of the tune but do add **weight** to given notes to enhance the melody.

Therefore, they must be practiced until perfected.

The grace note adds a little weight to a given melody note and as you will see that the more gracing that is added the greater the weight.

#### **❖ G GRACE NOTE**

**The G grace note is not played as a melody note but as a false G** with only one finger raised rather than three, and has a snappy return, which means that the E and F fingers which would normally be off the chanter while sounding High G these melody notes are not used when a grace note is played.

There are two rules to apply to all three grace notes, **G, D** and **E**.

**Going up the scale: Lift the melody finger and the grace note finger off together.**

**They should leave the chanter at the same instance,** then sharply return the grace note finger, which will leave you sounding the melody note that you have chosen.

Take care to make sure that the grace note and melody note **do leave** the chanter together.

If not, you will either have the grace note sounding before or after the melody giving a dirty sound rather than clean sound on the melody note.

Some of these notes patterns with the fingers will feel very odd at first but stick to it since they will come with practice.

**Going down the scale: the melody and the grace note will land together on the chanter.**

Lift the grace note finger off the chanter on its own, prior to landing at the same instance as the melody note.

If not, you will either have the grace note sounding before or after the melody giving a dirty sound rather than clean sound on the melody note.

I referred earlier to the beat up and down the scale.

Rather than beating on the melody note, we are now concentrating the beat on the G grace note.

The G grace note when applied to the melody note will be played as normal with the exception that as the grace note on its quick return and before it closes will encompass the beat.

Look at diagrams 5 and 6

#### ❖ FINGER AND FOOT ACTING TOGETHER

For example. As the G grace note finger opens to create the false G the foot will also rise from the floor and as you

close the grace note finger onto the chanter hole, the foot will contact the floor at the same instance.

The idea is to have the beat reduced to the grace note value, which is short and snappy like a beat on the drum.

The majority of beats will have a G grace note on them, so this will have to be practiced until perfected.

Look at diagram

#### ❖ D GRACE NOTE

**The D grace note is not played as a melody note but as a false D**, which has a snappy return.

The two rules to apply to the D grace notes as well as in the G grace notes.

**Going up the scale: Lift the melody finger and the grace note finger off together.**

**Going down the scale: the melody and the grace note will land together on the chanter.**

For the purpose of this exercise, we can apply the beat to the D grace note as in the G grace note.

Look at diagram 7

#### ❖ E GRACENOTE

**The E grace note is not played as a melody note but as a false E**, which has a snappy return.

The two rules to apply to the E grace notes as well as in the G grace notes.

**Going up the scale: Lift the melody finger and the grace note finger off together.**

**Going down the scale: the melody and the grace note will land together on the chanter.**

For the purpose of this exercise, we can apply the beat to the **E** grace note as in the G grace note.

Look at diagrams 8, 9 and 10

The **High A** grace note, played as if going to the High A but return the thumb sharpish to High G and landing with the melody note.

Look at diagram 11

Doublings throw on D grips Toarluaths these movements add weight and charm to a tune.

All movements will have melody notes represented as grace notes in written music such as Low G's, Low A's, B's, C's D's, E's F's High G's and High A's mostly used in the centre of movements they are not actual grace notes but are played as short value melody notes (Demi-semi-quavers).

#### **THROW ON D:**

There are three styles of the Throw on D movement.

The same written form, shown on diagram 12, represents two of them in manuscript.

In Piobaireachd, the classical music for the Highland Bagpipes where a heavier throw is required, it is written similar to a Grip, (not shown here).

The Throw on D that I prefer is written in the open format of the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the diagram, which puts the emphasis on a crisp **D** grace note from **Low G** to **C**, rather than a D hit sounding throw on D.

Having the D grace note, slightly exaggerated to C, makes a crisper sounding throw.

Use the beat to control the movement. Use the beat on each grace note to balance the movement.

Look at diagram 12

#### **ALL DOUBLINGS:**

**All Doublings consist of the G Grace note which takes you to the melody/grace note in the centre of the movement which will be the same as the following melody note.**

**Then apply a second Grace note which will be a different grace note depending on which melody note that you are on at that time.**

For practice purposes treat the centre Grace note as a melody note.

When confident, then bring the two grace notes closer together.

This has the effect of having three grace notes as written.

The two grace notes used in the **Low G doubling** are **G** and **D**.

Look at diagram 13

The two grace notes used in the **Low A doubling** are **G** and **D**.

Look at diagram 14

The two grace notes used in the **B doubling** are **G** and **D**.

Look at diagrams 15 and 17

The two grace notes used in the **C doubling** are **G** and **D**.

Look at diagrams 16 and 17

The two grace notes used in the **D doubling** are **G** and **E**.

Look at diagram 18

The two grace notes used in the **E doubling** are **G** and **F**.

You may ask, what is a **F** grace note, well it is the same as the **G**, **D** and **E** grace notes, an adornment, which is only played on the **E doubling** except in Piobaireachd.

Look at diagram 19

The two grace notes used in the **F doubling** are **G** and **G**.

Look at diagram 20

The one grace notes used in the **High G doubling** is **G**.

Look at diagram 21

The one grace notes used in the **High A doubling** is **G hit**.

Look at diagram 22

You will notice that there is no G grace note from High G half doublings but there is a second grace note that makes up the half doubling.

Be aware that the second grace note on each melody note is different according to the melody note being played.

Look at diagram 23

You will notice that there is no G grace note from High A half doublings but there is a second grace note that makes up the half doubling.

Be aware, that the second grace note, on each melody note is different, according to the melody note being played.

Look at diagrams 24, 25 and 26

### **BIRLS:**

This gracing is accomplished by placing the little finger on the chanter just above the Low A hole and **sliding** the little finger once across the **low A hole**.

Look at diagram 27

To complete the movement then move the finger back across the Low A hole and as you come back to the top of the hole the tip of the pinkie is pulled inward toward the palm of the hand.

The Birl can be used with or without a G grace note.

Use the beat to control and even out the grace notes.

Look at diagrams 27 and 28

### **GRIPS:**

**Grips to be played correctly must clearly bring out the two low G's which are separated by the D grace note.**

**When playing this movement from D it is the B grace note that separates the two low G's.**

Use the beat to even out the grace notes in this movement.

Look at diagram 29

### **TAORLUATH:**

**Taorluath to be played correctly must clearly bring out the two low G's, which are separated by the D grace note.**

**When playing this movement from D it is the B grace note that separates the two low G's not the G gracenote.**

The Taorluath movement that incorporates the Grip and adds an **E** grace note to complete the movement.

**EG; Low G grace note, D grace note, Low G grace note and up to Low A with an E grace note.**

Use the beat to even out the grace notes in the movement.

Look at diagram 30

### **CRUNLUATHS:**

Crunluaths are piobaireachd movements.

The reasons that I include them here are: One they are harder to play than a Taorluath but incorporates the Taorluath movement so with practice of the Crunluaths the Taorluath will seem easy.

Two the Crunluath has an **F** grace note, as in the doubling of E, this will give you plenty of practice with the F grace note.

**EG; Low G grace note, D grace note, Low G grace note and up to Low A with an E grace note and followed by a F grace note.**

Use the beat to even out the grace notes in the movement.

Look at diagram 31

### **THEAMOLS ON THE SCALE:**

This movement is not a grace note or a hit but a slur.

Look at diagram 32

### **STRIKES ON B (HITS):**

The difference between a doubling and a strike is the centre note one is a grace note the other a melody note.

Look at diagram 33

### **STRIKES ON C (HITS):**

The difference between a doubling and a strike is the centre note one is a grace note the other a melody note.

Look at diagram 34

**STRIKES ON D (HITS):**

The difference between a doubling and a strike is the centre note one is a grace note the other a melody note.

Look at diagram 35

**STRIKES ON E (HITS):**

The difference between a doubling and a strike is the centre note one is a grace note the other a melody note.

Look at diagram 36

**STRIKES ON F (HITS):**

The difference between a doubling and a strike is the centre note one is a grace note the other a melody note.

Look at diagram 37

**STRIKES ON HIGH G (HITS):**

The difference between a doubling and a strike is the centre note one is a grace note the other a melody note.

Look at diagram 38

**STRIKES ON HIGH A (HITS):**

The difference between a doubling and a strike is the centre note one is a grace note the other a melody note.

Look at diagram 39

**SHAKES ON VARIOUS NOTES:**

Shakes are in general made up of G and E grace notes on a melody note with a strike tagged on all to be played as one movement .

Look at diagram 40

**TACHUMS:**

These are quite popular movements in tunes.

Look at diagrams 41 and 42

**TRIPPLINGS:**

Triplings are three notes played in the time of two.

The tie bar across the top of the melody notes with a 3 underneath represents this.

Look at diagram 43

**G D E GRACE NOTE, TRIPLING AND DOUBLING EXERCISE:**

These movements are also popular especially in strathspeys.

Look at diagram 44

**NOTE VALUES:**

Look at diagram 45

Practical Diagram 1

## Notes on the Scale

The diagram shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff contains an ascending scale with notes labeled: Low G, Low A, B, C, D, E, F, High G, and High A. The bottom staff contains a descending scale with notes labeled: High A, High G, F, E, D, C, B, Low A, and Low G. Each note is represented by a black dot on a five-line staff with a treble clef, and a vertical line connects the note to its label below.

As you progress through all the movements in this book the main notes will be referred to as Melody notes.

Every movement from now on must be played slowly deliberate and cleanly with a beat until competent and only then some speed may be applied.

Explanation notes: Practical information/ Hands on the chanter.

## Practical Diagram 2

### Exercise on changing hands

Look for clarity between notes

The image displays eight staves of musical notation, each containing a sequence of notes connected by stems. The notes are arranged in a way that demonstrates hand changes. The first four staves show a sequence of notes that would be played with the right hand, and the last four staves show a sequence of notes that would be played with the left hand. The notes are placed on the lines and spaces of the staves, and the stems connect them in a continuous line across the staves. The exercise is designed to help students practice clarity between notes when changing hands.

### Practical Diagram 3

## Notes on the Lines and Spaces

Notes on the Lines

Ledger line

Notes in the Spaces

G clef. Double bar line

Single bar lines.

These two scales rise and fall two notes at a time, which makes this harder as your fingers will try to follow the scale you have just learned, with one note following another.

Your fingers will try and follow the scale even although you want to play every second note this causes catches or blips between notes they must be clean.

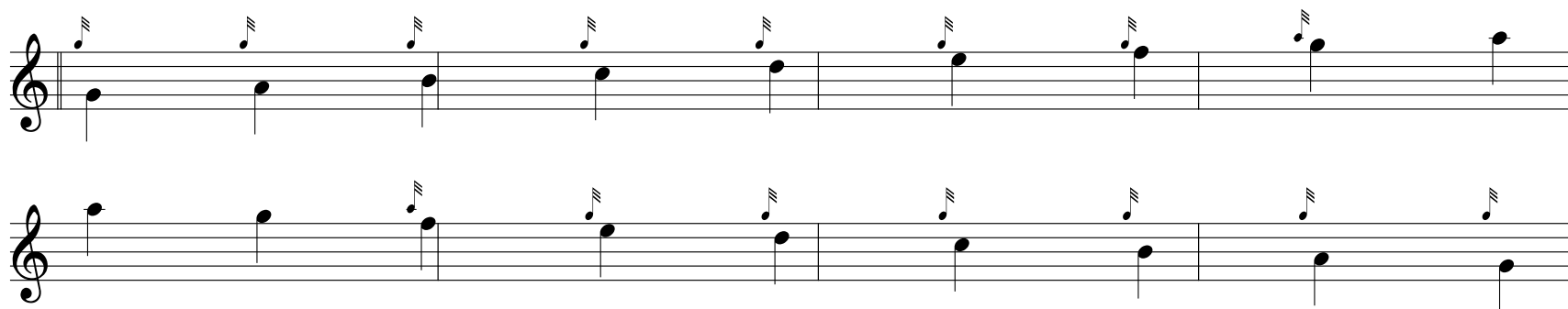
The answer is to think of the note you want to go to and make it the priority note, which should lift or drop to that note.

Explanation notes: Practical information/ Hands on the chanter/ Crossing over noises.



Diagram 5

## G Gracenote on the Scale



This is the first and most used grace note.

Written on manuscript it looks as if it is played in front of the melody note but it is not, it actually forms part of the note which it is attached.

Keep the grace note open until both grace note and melody note are clean with no other notes sounding.

The G Grace note is quite difficult to finger but will get easier as you perfect it.

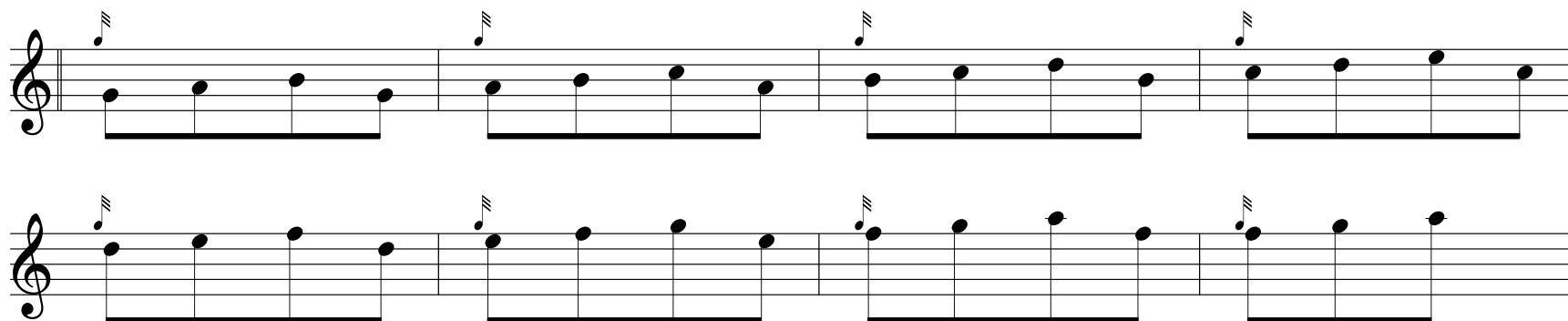
Beat the G Grace note as the G Grace note finger closes on the chanter, the same as your foot has to lift off the floor to place it back on the floor this is the beat.

So the G Grace note and foot make contact at the same instant.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Hands on the chanter / Grace notes.

Diagram 6

## G Gracenote exercise



This exercise will help in two things.

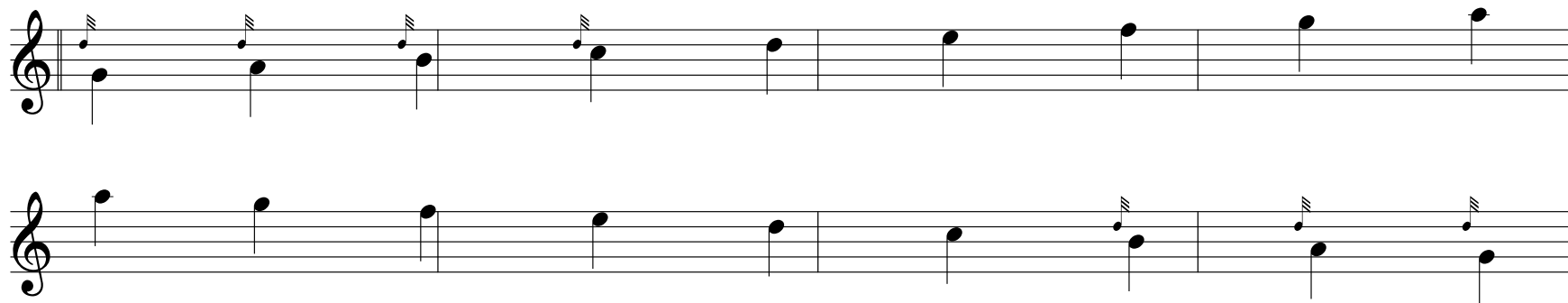
One to control the grace note.

Two to move the fingers around within the scale.

Beat the G Grace note as the G Grace note finger closes on the chanter, and play evenly the other notes if necessary beat all the notes until fluent.

Diagram 7

## D Gracenote on the Scale



Written on manuscript it looks as if it is played in front of the melody note but it is not, it actually forms part of the melody note to which it is attached.

The D Grace note is quite difficult to finge, keep the grace note as open as the G grace note it will get easier as you perfect it.

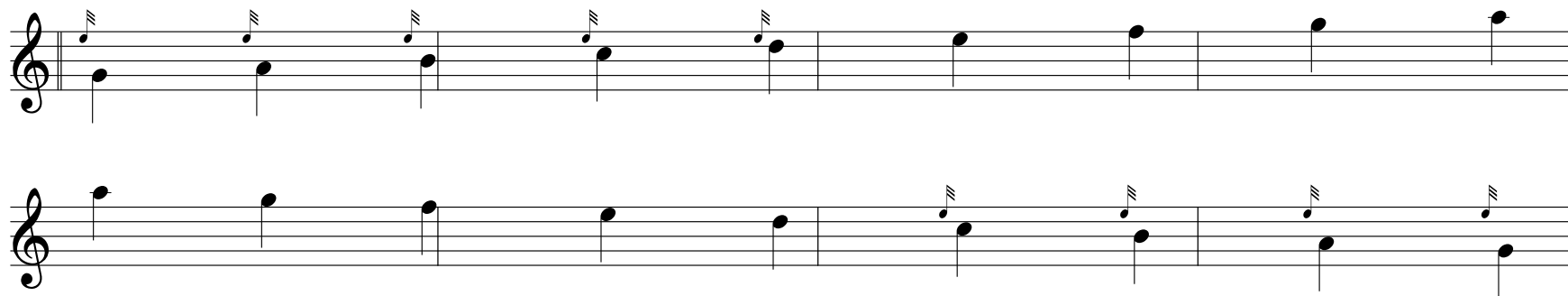
The D grace note is widely used in other movements

Beat the D Grace note as the D Grace note finger closes on the chanter, the same as your foot has to lift off the floor to place it back on the floor this is the beat, so the D Grace note and foot make contact at the same instant.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Hands on the chanter / Grace notes.

Diagram 8

## E Gracenote on the Scale



Written on manuscript it looks as if it is played in front of the melody note but it is not, it actually forms part of the melody note to which it is attached.

The E Grace note is quite difficult to finger, keep the grace note open as in the G and D grace notes movement this will get easier as you perfect it.

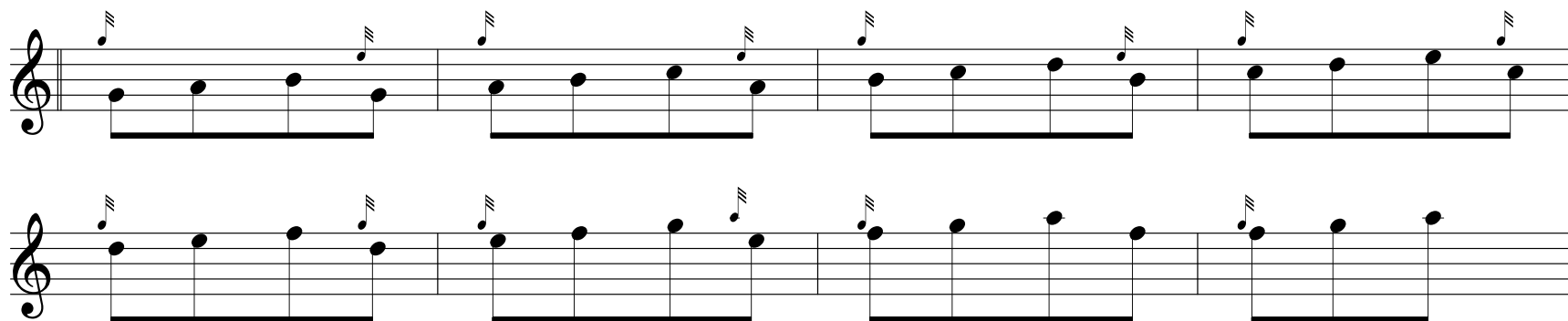
Beat the E Grace note as the E Grace note finger closes on the chanter, the same as your foot has to lift off the floor to place it back on the floor this is the beat

So the E Grace note and foot make contact at the same instant.

Explanation notes: Practice information / Hands on the chanter / Grace notes.

Practical Diagram 9

## G and E Gracenotes exercise



This exercise will help in two things:

One: to control the grace note.

Two: to move the fingers around within the scale.

Beat on the G grace notes and evenly play the other notes if necessary beat all the notes until fluent then return to beating on the grace note.

Practical Diagram 10

**G D and E Gracenotes exercise**

The image displays six staves of musical notation, each containing a sequence of notes with gracenotes. The notes are arranged in a pattern that suggests a specific rhythmic and melodic exercise. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are primarily quarter notes and eighth notes, with gracenotes indicated by a double slash (//) above the notehead. The exercise is organized into six measures per staff, with a double bar line at the end of each staff.

Introduction to note values and timing on part three and four, used mostly in Jigs.

Theory part two.

Practical Diagram 11

### High A Gracenote on the scale (Back Gracenote)



Sound Low G and then High A, close the thumb onto the chanter quickly which leaves High G melody note.

Down the scale, sound High G remove the thumb and sharply close to Low G.

It is an easy exercise but the control comes once you can replace your fingers back onto the holes without missing them.

Beat the back Grace note as the thumb closes on the chanter, remember when working on the top hand keep the pinkie off the chanter.

Explanation note: Practical information / Hands on the chanter / Grace notes.

## Practical Diagram 12

### Throw on D on the scale

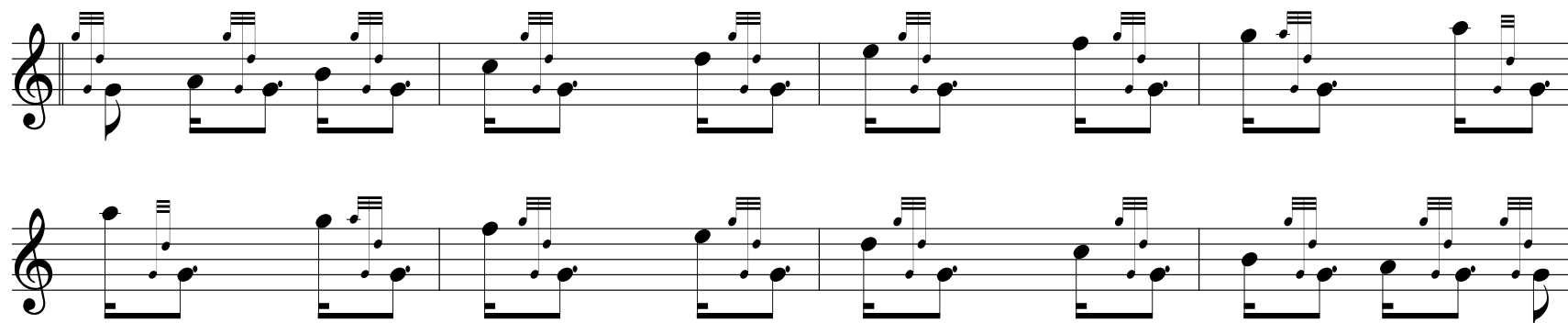
Breakdown in three parts  
Third part written as normal

The image displays six staves of musical notation for a practice exercise. The first three staves show a sequence of eighth-note chords, each with a grace note on the D note. The first two staves use a treble clef, while the third uses an alto clef. The last three staves show the same sequence of chords but with a normal eighth-note rhythm, without grace notes. The first two staves of the last three use a treble clef, and the third uses an alto clef. The exercise is written in a 2/4 time signature.

Sound Low G, up to C with a D grace note and sound D, this can be a difficult movement to master.

Practical Diagram 13

## Low G Doubling on the Scale



Low G doubling is produced by blowing Low G and playing a G and D grace note whilst on Low G.

The doubling consists of a High G grace note, Low G grace note, D grace note and a Low G melody note.

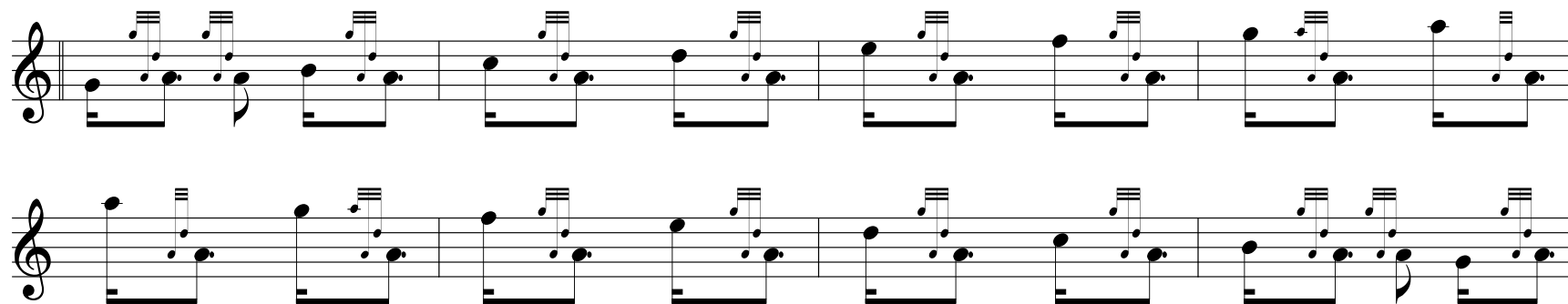
The Low G grace note is in fact part of the Low G melody note separated with a D grace note

Use the beat to play each grace note slowly then close up the doubling by beating on the G grace note only observing the pointing.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part 3 / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 14

## Low A Doublings on the Scale



Low A doubling is produced by blowing Low A and playing a G and D grace note whilst on Low A.

The doubling consists of a High G grace note, Low A grace note, D grace note and a Low A melody note.

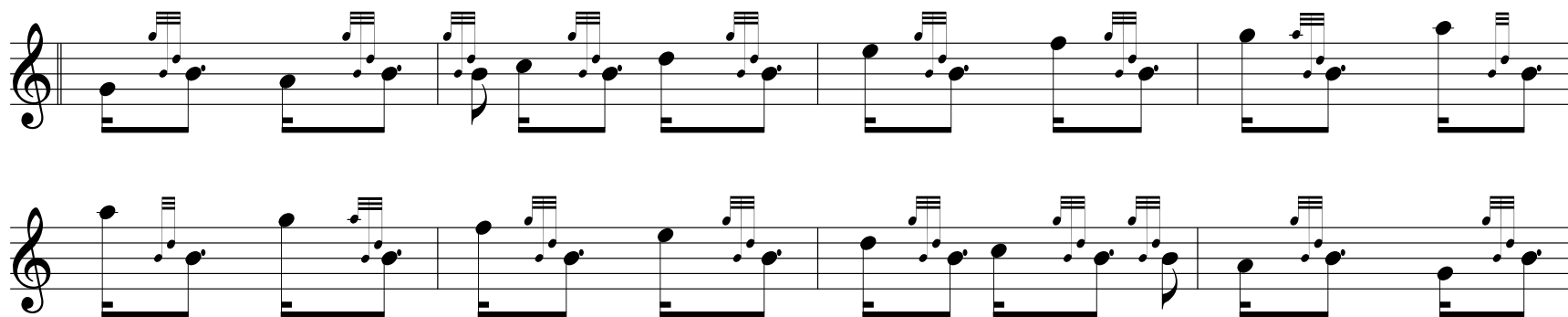
The Low A grace note is in fact part of the Low A melody note separated with a D grace note.

Use the beat to play each grace note slowly then close up the doubling by beating on the G grace note only observing the pointing.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

## Practical Diagram 15

### B Doublings on the scale



B doubling is produced by blowing B, playing a G and D grace note whilst on B.

The doubling consists of a High G grace note, B grace note, D grace note and a B melody note.

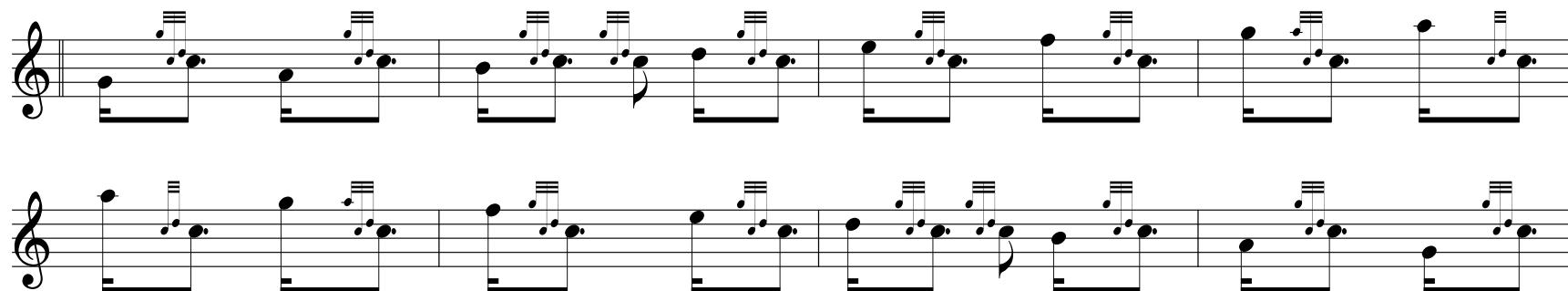
The B grace note is in fact part of the B melody note separated with a D grace note.

Use the beat to play each grace note slowly then close up the doubling by beating on the G grace note only observing the pointing.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 16

## C Doublings on the scale



C doubling is produced by blowing C, playing a G and D grace note whilst on C.

The doubling consists of a High G grace note, C grace note, D grace note and a C melody note.

The C grace note is in fact part of the C melody note separated with a D grace note.

Use the beat to play each grace note slowly then close up the doubling by beating on the G grace note only observing the pointing.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 17

## C and B Doublings Exercise



Each group which includes a doubling to be practiced slowly and deliberately with the G grace note on the beat the E grace note finishes the movement either to B, Low A or Low G.

These are the most used movements and must be practiced until perfect.

Keep the melody slow and gradually tighten up on the grace notes so that the centre note in the doubling sounds as tight as the grace notes either side of it.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.



Practical Diagram 19

## E Doublings on the scale

The image shows two staves of musical notation. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation consists of a series of notes on a five-line staff, with grace notes (indicated by a vertical line and a flag) preceding the main melody notes. The notes are arranged in a scale-like pattern, demonstrating the 'E doubling' technique. The first staff shows the notes E, F#, G, A, B, C, D, E, and the second staff shows the notes F#, G, A, B, C, D, E, F#. Each note is preceded by a grace note, and the notes are connected by a horizontal line, indicating a continuous scale.

E doubling is produced by blowing E and playing a G and F grace note whilst on E.

The doubling consists of a High G grace note, E grace note, F grace note and an E melody note.

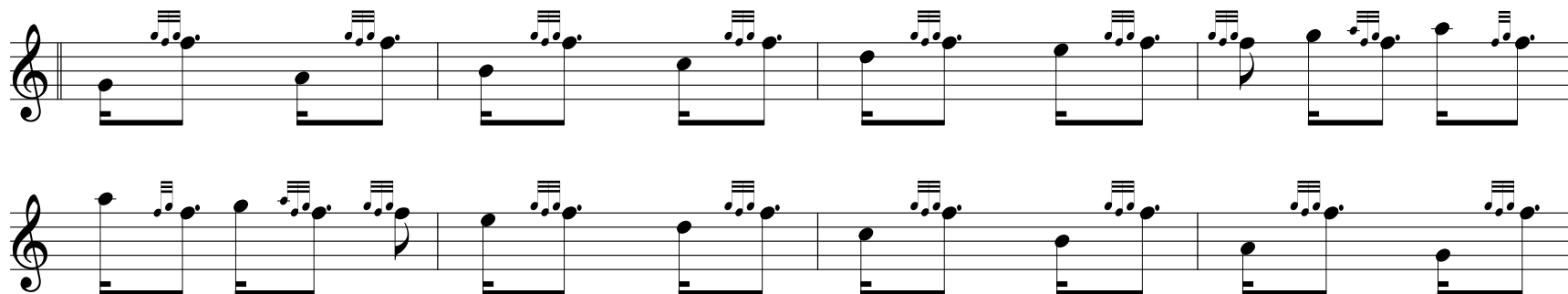
The E grace note is in fact part of the E melody note separated with an F grace note.

Use the beat to play each grace note slowly then close up the doubling by beating on the G grace note only observing the pointing.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

## Practical Diagram 20

### F Doublings on the scale



F doubling is produced by blowing F and playing a double G grace note whilst on F.

The doubling consists of a High G grace note, F grace note, High G grace note and an F melody note.

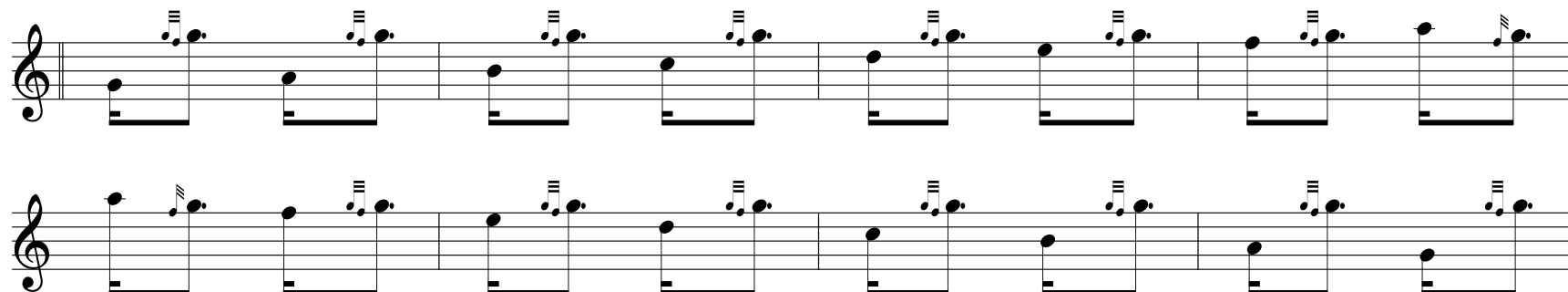
The F grace note is in fact part of the F melody note separated with a G grace note.

Use the beat to play each grace note slowly then close up the doubling by beating on the G grace note only observing the pointing.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 21

## High G Doublings (Throw on G) on the scale



High G doubling is produced by blowing High G grace note on F then sounding High G.

The doubling consists of a High G grace note, F grace note and a High G melody note.

The G grace note is in fact part of the G melody note separated with an F grace note.

Use the beat to play each grace note slowly then close up the doubling by beating on the G grace note only observing the pointing.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 22

## High A Doublings on the scale

High A doubling is produced by blowing High A and playing a G grace note whilst on A, this is a false G

The doubling consists of a High A grace note, High G grace note and a High A melody note.

The High A grace note is in fact part of the High A melody note separated with a G grace note.

Use the beat to play each grace note slowly then close up the doubling by beating on the High A grace note only observing the Pointing.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 23

## Half Doublings from High G with High A grace notes on the scale

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing eight measures. Each measure illustrates a half doubling technique. The notation shows a melody note (High G) with a grace note (High A) attached to it. The grace note is played first, followed by the melody note. The staves are arranged vertically, showing the progression of the scale.

Half doubling from High G are produced by blowing High G and playing a grace note whilst on a melody note.

The half doubling consists of a High G melody note, a grace note, and a melody note.

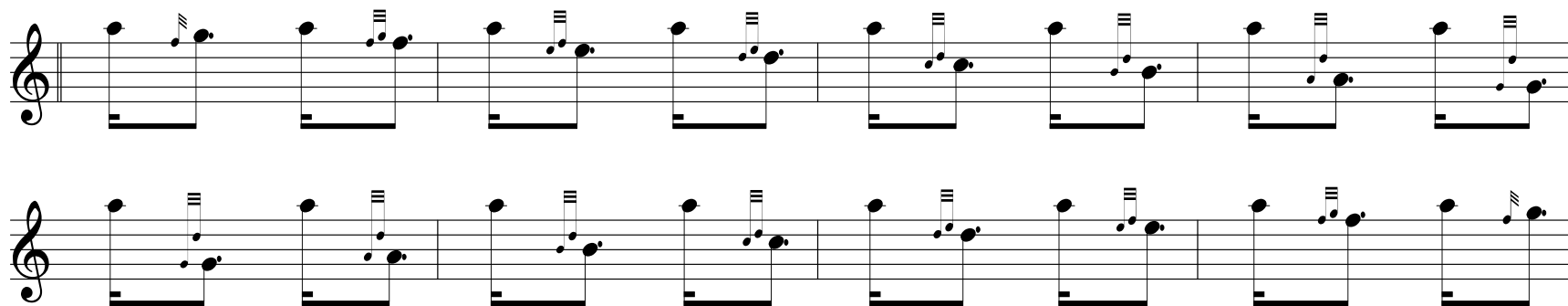
G grace notes cannot be played from High G but we can use High A or back grace notes.

Use the beat to play each grace note slowly then close up the doubling by beating on the High A grace note only observing the pointing.

Explanation notes: Theory part three Pointing.

Practical Diagram 24

## Half Doublings from High A on the scale



Half doubling from High A are produced by blowing High A and playing a grace note whilst on a melody note.

The half doubling consists of a High A melody note, a grace note, and a melody note.

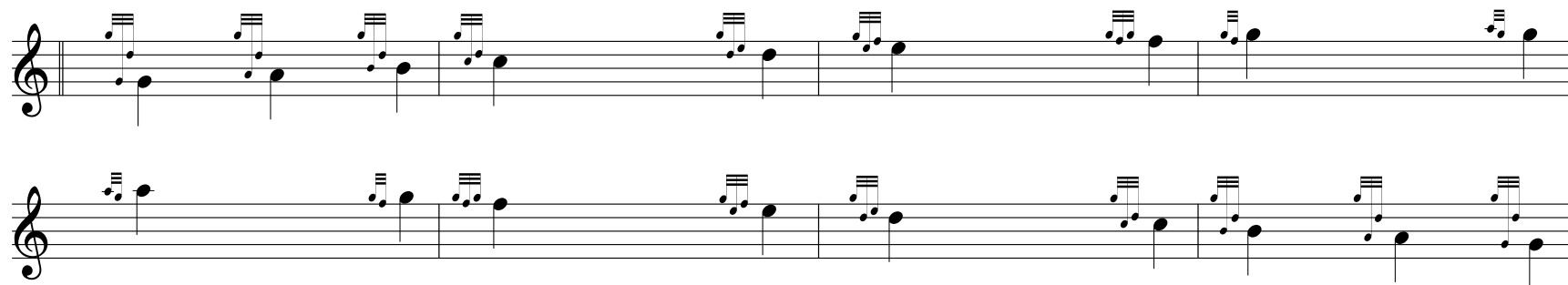
G grace notes cannot be played from High A.

Use the beat to play each grace note slowly then close up the doubling by beating on the first grace note only observing the pointing.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 25

## All Doublings Exercise



Each group which includes a doubling to be practiced slowly and deliberately with the G or leading grace note on the beat.

Keep the melody slow and gradually tighten up on the grace notes so that the centre note in the doubling sounds as tight as the grace notes either side of it.

These are the most used movements and must be practiced until perfect.

Be aware that the second grace note on each melody note is different according to the melody note being used.

Practical Diagram 26

## Main Doublings on the Scale



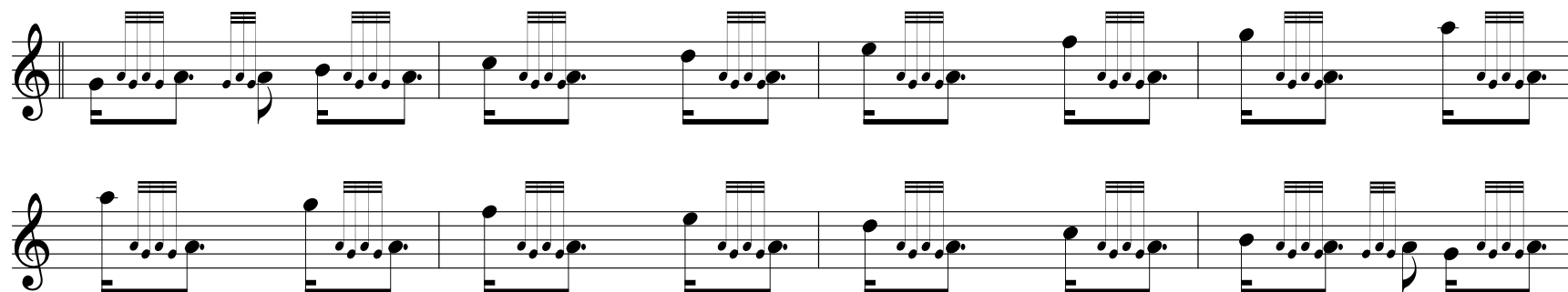
Each group which includes a doubling to be practiced slowly and deliberately with the G or leading grace note on the beat.

Keep the melody slow and gradually tighten up on the grace notes so that the centre note in the doubling sounds as tight as the grace notes either side of it.

These are the most used movements and must be practiced until perfect.

## Practical Diagram 27

### Birls on the Scale



The Birl is one of the hardest movements to master and will take effort and agility to achieve, there is nothing like a good sounding birl.

This gracing is accomplished by placing the pinkie beside the B finger and touching the chanter; slide the pinkie down across the Low A hole creating a momentary sounding of the Low G.

Still keeping the pinkie below the Low A hole and on the chanter, slide it back across the Low A hole again sounding a momentary Low G, as the pinkie crosses the hole pull the finger towards the palm of the hand,

that completes the movement.

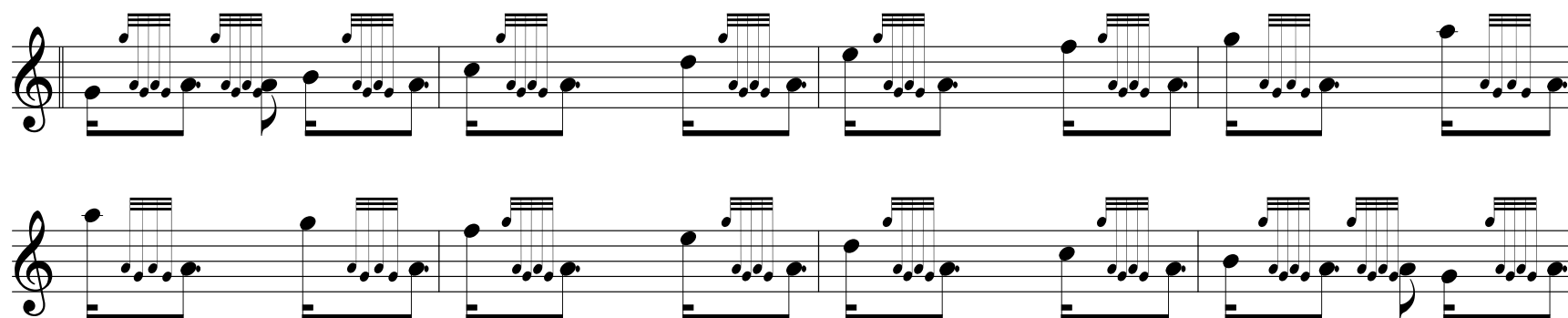
This has a slurring effect and quite distinctive.

Use the beat to even out the movement.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 28

## Birls on the Scale with G Gracenotes



The adding of a G grace note enhances the Birl movement, is played as part of the birl means that it will sound as it was meant to be there.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Sound the G grace note on Low A, slide the pinky down across the Low A hole sounding Low G, now on Low A, return across the Low A hole again sounding Low G as the pinky crosses the hole pull the finger towards the palm of the hand, that completes the movement.

Beat each grace note in this movement so that it becomes even then eventually tightened up and beating on the G grace note, you should have a nice ripple sound.

Practical Diagram 29

## Grips (Leumluath) on the scale



The bases of this movement are the sounding of two Low G, which are separated by a D grace note.

Sound Low G and place a D grace note on it and proceed to a melody note, beat each grace note.

Beat the G grace note on Low A (1), beat the first Low G grace note (2), beat the D grace note (3), beat the E

melody (4), timing is 1-2-3-4 slowly, eventually tightening up the grip and beating on the G grace note.

When playing from D to Low A the B grace note is used, use the beat to even out the movement.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three

## Practical Diagram 30

### Taorluath on the scale

The image shows three staves of musical notation for a Taorluath exercise. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a double bar line. The notation consists of a series of notes and grace notes. The first staff has 16 measures, the second has 16 measures, and the third has 16 measures. The notes are primarily eighth notes, with grace notes (indicated by a double slash) preceding them. The exercise is a scale-based Taorluath, moving from a low G up to a low A.

The bases of this movement are the sounding of Low G separated by a D grace note and adding an E grace note one step on from a Grip.

Sound Low G and place a D grace note on it and proceed to a E grace note to Low A melody note, beat each grace note.

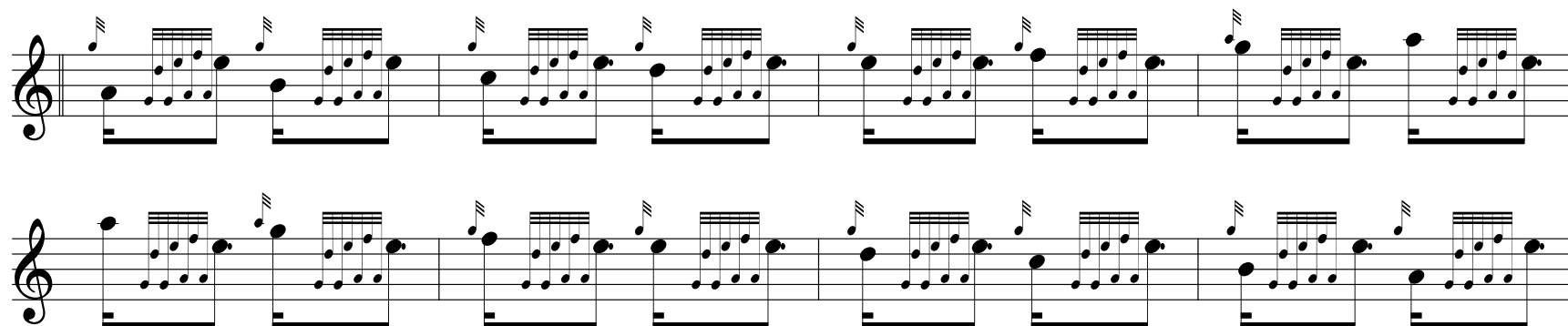
When playing from D it is the B grace note that separates the Low G, not the D grace note.

Beat the G grace note on Low A (1), beat the first Low G grace note (2), beat the D grace note (3), beat the E grace note to Low A (4) timing is 1-2-3-4 slowly, eventually tightening up the taorluath and beating on the G grace note.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 31

## Crunluath on the scale



The bases of this movement are the sounding of Low G separated by a D grace note and adding an E & F grace note, one step on from a taorluath.

Sound Low G and place a D grace note on it and proceed to a E grace note to Low A, followed by an F grace note on Low A, to an E melody note, beat each grace note.

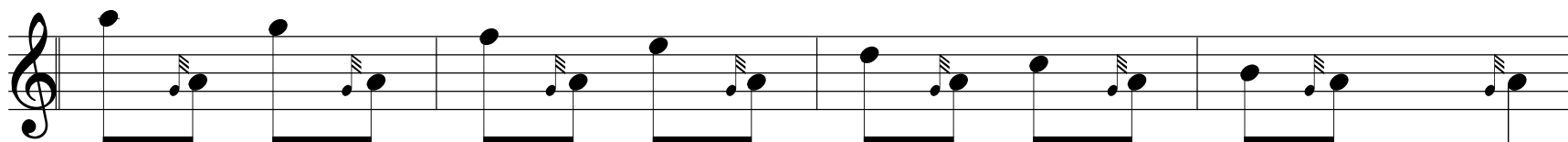
Beat the G grace note on Low A (1), beat the first Low G grace note (2), beat the D grace note (3), beat the E grace note to Low A (4) beat the F grace note (5) and beat the E melody note (6), timing is 1-2-3-4-5-6 slowly, eventually

tightening up the crunluath and beating on the G grace note.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 32

## Theamols on the scale



The sounding of the Low G grace note sounds like the first grace note of the Birl, which is more like a slur.

Close the chanter to Low G from any note and quickly come off the Low G to Low A.

Beat the Low G to emphasise the movement.

Practical Diagram 33

## Strikes on B (or Hits) with G & D grace notes on the scale

The diagram consists of four staves of music, each containing six measures. The first two staves show the top two notes of a scale (G and A) with grace notes (G and D) on the B note. The last two staves show the bottom two notes of a scale (G and F) with grace notes (G and D) on the B note.

These strikes are not dissimilar to doublings, the top two staves have the centre note as a melody note and bottom two staves have the centre note as a grace note.

To play strikes, deliberately close the B & Low A finger sounding the Low G melody note and off again ensuring clean contact on the hit,

as you get used to them light grace note.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 34

## Strikes on C or Hits on the scale

The image displays four staves of musical notation in treble clef, illustrating the technique of 'strikes on C' or 'hits on the scale'. The notation is organized into four systems, each with two staves. The first two systems show a sequence of notes where the top staff has a melody note and the bottom staff has a grace note. The last two systems show a sequence of notes where the top staff has a melody note and the bottom staff has a grace note. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with some dotted rhythms. The grace notes are consistently placed on the C note of the scale.

These strikes are not dissimilar to doublings, the top two staves have the centre note as a melody note and bottom two staves have the centre note as a grace note.

To play strikes, deliberately close the C & B fingers sounding the Low G melody note and off again ensuring

clean contact on the hit,

as you get used to them lighten and tighten up on the grace note.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 35

## Strikes on D (or Hits) on the scale

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing a sequence of notes representing a scale. The first two staves show the scale with the D note as a melody note, and the last two staves show it as a grace note. The notation includes treble clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 4/4. The notes are arranged in a sequence that moves up and then down the scale, with the D note being the central focus of each strike.

These strikes are not dissimilar to doublings, the top two staves have the centre note as a melody note and bottom two staves have the centre note as a grace note.

To play strikes, deliberately close the D finger sounding the C melody note and off again ensuring clean contact on

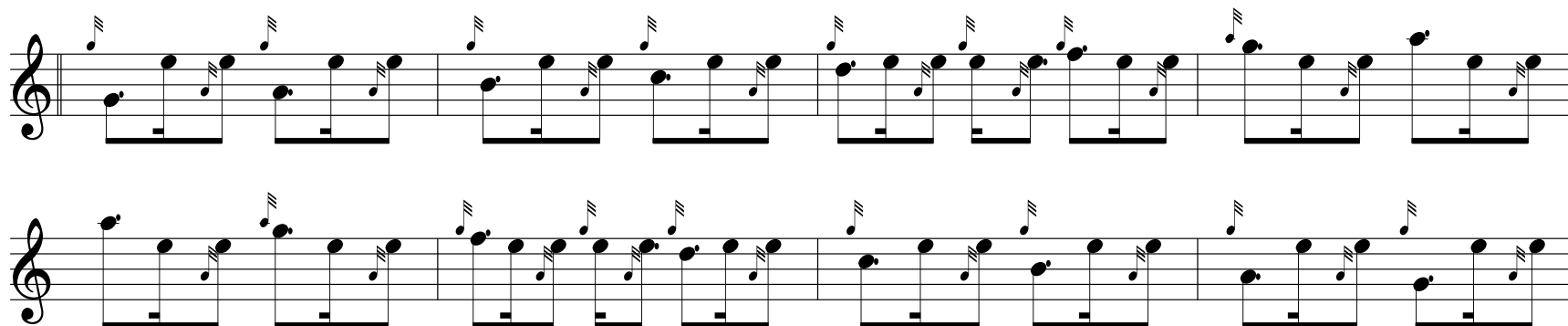
the hit,

as you get used to them lighten and tighten up on the grace note.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 36

## Strikes on E (or Hits) on the scale



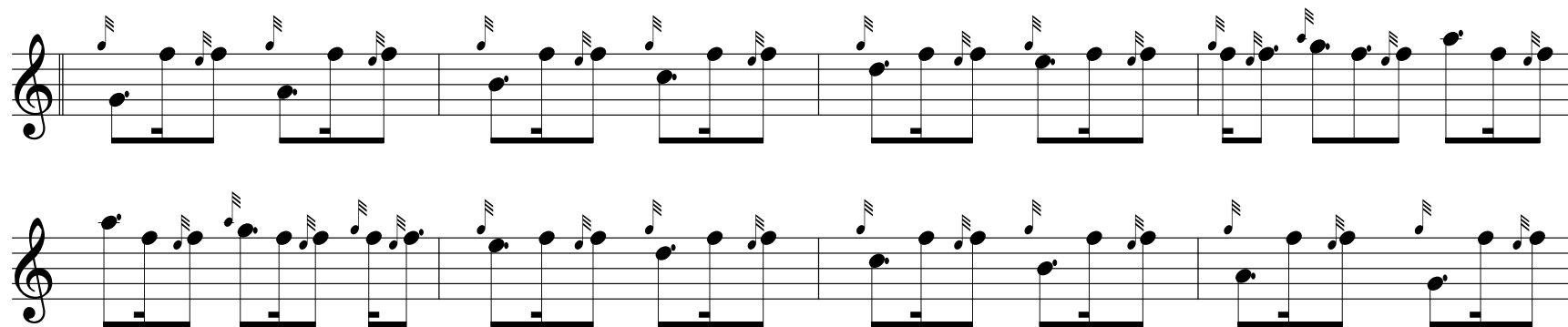
These strikes are not dissimilar to doublings, the two staves have the centre note as melody notes.

To play strikes, deliberately close the E finger sounding the Low A melody note and off again ensuring clean contact on the hit, as you get used to them lighten and tighten up on the grace note.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 37

## Strikes on F (or Hits) on the scale



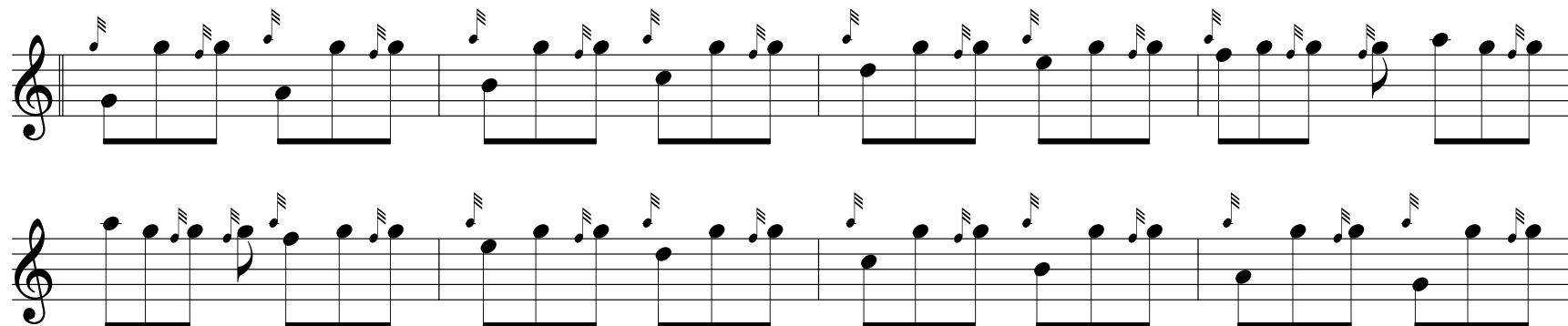
These strikes are not dissimilar to doublings, the two staves have the centre note as a melody notes.

To play strikes, deliberately close the F finger sounding the E melody note and off again ensuring clean contact on the hit, as you get used to them lighten and tighten up on the grace note.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 38

## Strikes on High G (or Hits) on the scale with back grace notes



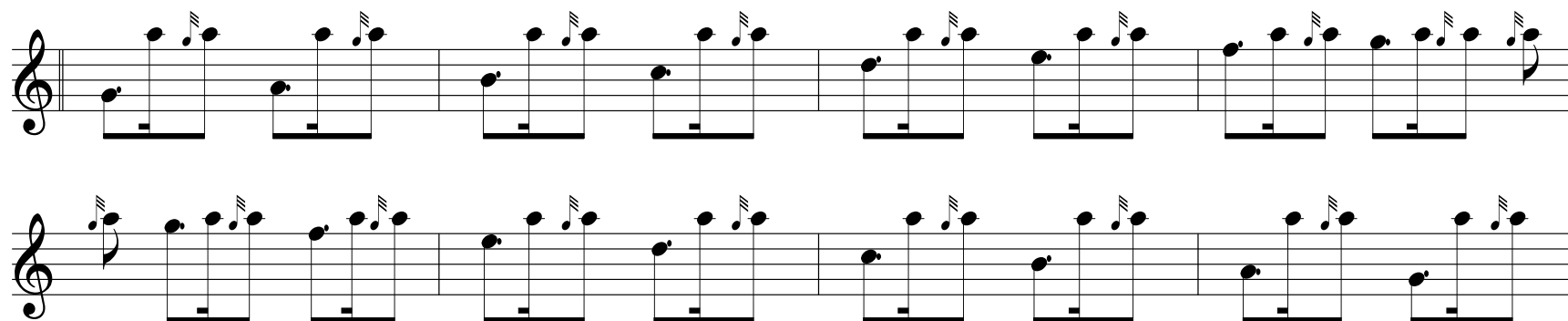
These strikes are not dissimilar to doublings, the two staves have the centre note as a melody notes.

To play strikes, deliberately close the High G finger sounding the F melody note and off again ensuring clean contact on the hit, as you get used to them lighten and tighten up on the grace note.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 39

## Strikes on High A (or Hits) on the scale



These strikes are not dissimilar to doublings, the two staves have the centre note as a melody notes.

To play strikes, deliberately close the High A thumb sounding the High G melody note and off again this is a false G, ensuring clean contact on the hit, as you get used to them lighten and tighten up on the grace note.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 40

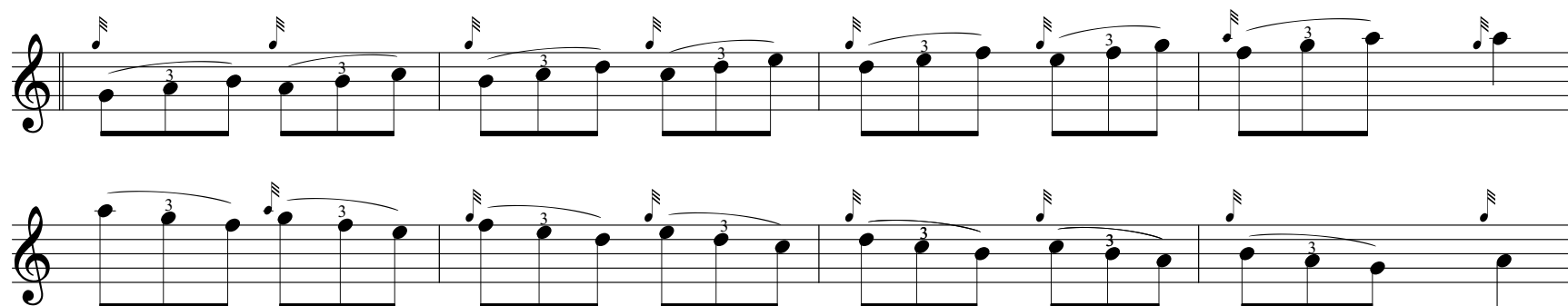
**Shakes on Various Notes with E Gracenotes on the scale**

The image displays eight staves of musical notation, each representing a different starting note for a scale exercise. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The notation consists of a sequence of eighth notes, with a grace note (a small 'e') preceding each note. The grace notes are positioned above the main notes. The exercises are arranged in a descending order of starting notes: the first staff starts on G4, the second on F4, the third on E4, the fourth on D4, the fifth on C4, the sixth on B3, the seventh on A3, and the eighth on G3. Each staff contains eight measures of music, with the final note of each exercise being a half note.



Practical Diagram 43

## Triplings on the scale



Triplings are three notes played in the time of two, the tie bar across the top of the notes and with the figure three depict this.

Beat each note evenly as in 1-2-3 in each group, and then beat on the G grace note as 1-2-3-4-5-6 etc smoothing out the whole exercise.

Explanation notes: Practical information / Theory part three / Pointing.

Practical Diagram 44

## G D E Grace note, Tripling and Doubling Exercise

These movements are used in Strathspey playing

Each group which includes a doubling to be practiced slowly and deliberately with the G or leading note on the beat.

Keep the melody slow and gradually tighten up on the grace notes so that the centre note in the doubling sounds as tight as the grace notes either side of it.

These are the most used movements and must be practiced until perfect observing the pointing.

Explanation notes: Theory part three / Pointing/ Tied notes.

Practical Diagram 45

### Note Values

The diagram consists of six horizontal musical staves, each starting with a treble clef and a double bar line. The notes are as follows:

- Staff 1: A single note with a long horizontal line above it, labeled "Semi Breve".
- Staff 2: Two notes, each with a vertical stem and a horizontal line above it, labeled " $\frac{1}{2}$  Minim".
- Staff 3: Four notes, each with a vertical stem and a short horizontal line above it, labeled " $\frac{1}{4}$  Crotchet".
- Staff 4: Eight notes, each with a vertical stem and a very short horizontal line above it, labeled " $\frac{1}{8}$  Quaver".
- Staff 5: Sixteen notes, each with a vertical stem and a very short horizontal line above it, labeled " $\frac{1}{16}$  Semi Quaver".
- Staff 6: Thirty-two notes, each with a vertical stem and a very short horizontal line above it, labeled " $\frac{1}{32}$  Demi Semi Quaver".

Note Value diagram must be thoroughly learned to enable you to read the time signature and the value of notes within a piece of music.

Without these note values you could not read and understand the musical score

## **THEORY IS SPLIT INTO THREE LEVELS.**

**LEVEL ONE: EASY.**

**LEVEL TWO: MODERATE.**

**LEVEL THREE: ADVANCED**

### **THEORY:**

#### **LEVEL ONE**

#### **HISTORY OF A TUNE:**

Most composed tunes have a history of why and where they were written.

I.e. military campaigns, their commanders, friends, places and loves.

#### **COMPOSERS NAME:**

This will identifies the original composer of the music.

The word traditional can be found in the composer's name place: this happens to a lot of older tunes which have outlived their composers.

The older and more poplar tunes may over time have lost their composer's name, for instance, Scotland the Brave.

Somewhere, someone will know who some of these composers were.

Also, there may be an arranger's name, who arranged the tune for a particular requirement.

### **SOUND:**

Vibrations are the cause of sound.

#### **❖ NOISE**

Noise is audible to the ear, irregular in sound, not constant enough to be musical, confused and discordant not making any sense at all.

#### **❖ MUSIC:**

Music is audible to the ear, regular in sound, constant and pleasing making sense to the ear.

Musical sound is the result of regular and periodic vibrations of air.

#### **❖ EAR:**

The ear has the capability of recognising different sounds at different levels.

## THE STAVE OR STAFF:

In bagpipe music notation the stave consists of five parallel lines: E, **G**, **B**, **D**, **F**, and four spaces between them, F, **A**, **C**, **E**.

The lines and spaces are read from the bottom up.

Take note that we do not use the first or E line or the First F space in pipe music.

## LEDGER LINES:

The Ledger is the short line above the stave on which the High A is positioned.

This ledger line will also create another space on which the High G is positioned.

## TREBLE OR G CLEF:

The G clef is the curved sign at the beginning of the stave.

It indicates where to fix the Low G notes on the stave from which all pipe music is written.

The tail of the G clef is positioned on the **Low G line** of the stave: this is the first note we use when we read up the stave.

## TIME SIGNATURE:

Immediately after the **G** clef sign, at the beginning of a piece of music, is another sign called a Time Sign or Time Signature this will give you information about the music.

## DOUBLE BAR LINES:

The double bar lines are the two short thick lines at 90 degree to the stave.

They can be found after the time signature and at the end of the last bar to indicate the beginning or termination of a section of movement.

## THEORY:

### LEVEL TWO

## SINGLE BAR LINES:

The single bar lines are the fine vertical lines that divide up the stave enabling the melody to be divided into logical bite size pieces.

They also separate the music into four or eight bar parts.

These single bar lines equally divide the amount of beats in the part or tune.

**BARS:**

Bars are the area between the fine vertical bar lines on the stave on which the melody is placed.

**NOTATION:**

Notation is the name given to the visual system of representing various sounds.

These sounds are represented on the stave utilising the lines and spaces.

Stave notation is the placing of the various relative duration notes, or symbols, on a series of lines and spaces. In piping, the notes of the melody have large heads with their tails pointing down across the stave and are written on these lines and spaces.

The smaller headed notes with their tails rising up across the stave are called grace notes, which are also written on the lines and spaces.

**SCALES:**

Scales are an alphabetical succession of sound.

**PITCH:**

Pitch is the height and depth of sound.

The notes take their names from the lines or spaces on the stave where they are placed and are used to denote relative pitch and duration.

**❖ VISUALLY:**

The two visual characters of pitch are length or duration (value of a note) and the height or depth (notation of a note).

Stave notation represents these.

Often referred to as the pitch ladder or stave, showing the modification of pitch.

For example, written music on a music score.

**TEMPO:**

Tempo is the speed of a composition.

**DEGREE OR INTERVAL:**

A degree, or interval, is the distance in pitch between any two musical sounds.

For example **A** and **B**, **B** and **C**, and so on.

**VOLUME:**

The bagpipes operate at quite a high decibel rate and with continuous sound.

### **TYPE OF TUNES:**

Type of tune means the construction of a particular melody.

For example, March, strathspey, reel, slow march, hornpipe or jig and this will also assist in the tempo which the tune will be played in.

### **TREBLE OR G CLEF:**

The **G** clef indicates where to fix the absolute pitch of notes upon a staff, from which all pipe music is written.

### **SINGLE BAR LINES:**

Single Bar Lines make it easier to read and phrase music.

These single bar lines equally divide the amount of notes and beats in the part, or tune.

This also determines the heavy beat / accent, or pulse, which occurs immediately behind these bar lines.

### **DOUBLE BAR LINES:**

Repeat dots are used when a part is to be repeated.

The repeat dots are found to the inside of the double bar line and are placed one above the other.

### **BARS:**

In the bars, music is comprised between two successive strongest accents.

The strong accent or beat is behind each bar line.

### **NOTATION IN THE BAR:**

This is called pitch.

Notations in the bars are at the composer's discretion.

They are there to help us learn the tune initially, and to assist us to remember the tune and to return to it years later.

It is not recommended learning tunes by ear, as you can miss so much.

### **BEAT:**

A beat is one of the main divisions of a bar or measure.

When beating out the time of the tune with the finger on a table top hold the beat as in the value of that note.

IE with the finger beat on the table, as the finger hits the table hold it in that position until the next beat presents itself then move sharply to create the next beat this will give value to that note.

Do not raise the finger in anticipation of the beat, the finger remains on the table until the next beat.

### **MEASURE:**

The measure is the music comprised between two bar lines.

### **PART OF A TUNE:**

A part consists of four bars or eight bars and can multiply up depending on the tune.

#### **❖ FOUR, OR EIGHT BAR PART:**

A four bar part is normally in strathspey or reel time.

The eight bar part can cover all tunes and can have as many as six parts to the tune.

#### **❖ PHRASES:**

Phrases are a term for binding two bars together: an eight bar part has four phrases.

A useful way to think of phrases is as follows: The first phrase is the question and the second phrase the answer

In that way, the third phrase and fourth phrase are the question and answer respectively, and so on.

### **INTRODUCTORY OR ENTRY NOTES:**

The introductory start or entry notes are found between the first double bar lines, and before the first single bar line.

Usually the start notes are written on a short stave.

These notes are not included in the beat but do form part of the tune.

Thus, the first beat of the tune immediately follows the first single bar line.

### **TIME SIGNATURE:**

For example, take a simple  $^2_4$  march.

The  $^2$  represents two beats to the bar while the  $_4$  is telling you that it is crotchets, with 2 crotchet to the bar beating on the crotchet. See the note value diagram 1 Theory.

The time signature sometime takes the form of a **C** or a **C** with a line drawn through it like this,  $\phi$ , but more often it consists of two figures in the form of a fraction, such as  $^2_4$ ,  $^3_4$ ,  $^6_8$ .

These figures between them tell the number of beats or pulse notes to each bar and the relation of the pulse or beat note to the semi breve. See the note value diagram 1 Theory.

Figures in fractional form, thus  $\frac{2}{4}$ ,  $\frac{9}{8}$ ,  $\frac{6}{8}$ , placed at the commencement of a piece music, represent the time in which the tune is written to indicate the position of the beats / accents and timing.

**A basic understanding of the time signatures is very important**, as without them we have no guide as to the beat, tempo, rhythm, or the composer's feelings to their music.

#### **KINDS OF TIME:**

##### **❖ TIME:**

Time is the grouping of sounds into sets of notes by means of accent.

All music has beats or pulses running through it and some pulses are stronger or more prominent than others.

Time is the means of measuring these beats or pulses into bars and this is determined by the regular periodic recurrence of the strong accent.

Time is a method of measuring and not to be confused with tempo.

##### **❖ DUPLÉ TIME:**

Duple Time is a term to describe species of time containing two beats in the bar.

Meaning two beats in the bar, with a rhythmic recurrence of **Strong – Weak**.

##### **❖ TRIPLE TIME:**

Triple Time is a term to describe species of time containing three beats in the bar.

Meaning three beats in the bar, with a rhythmic recurrence of **Strong – Weak – Weak**.

##### **❖ QUADRUPLE TIME:**

Quadruple Time is a term to describe species of time containing four beats in the bar.

Meaning four beats in the bar, with a rhythmic recurrence of **Strong – weak – Medium – Weak**.

In addition, each of the above times has two sub – divisions called simple and compound.

##### **SIMPLE TIME:**

Simple Time, where each beat of a bar is divisible by two.

Time in which the beat or pulse note is a simple one, which means it is undotted and can be equalled by two notes of lesser value.

For example, take a simple  $\frac{2}{4}$  march,

**COMPOUND TIME:**

Compound Time, where each beat of a bar is divisible by three.

Time in which the beat or pulse note is a compound one,

Which means it is a dotted note and can be equalled by three notes of lesser value.

For example, take a  $\frac{6}{8}$  march.

**THEORY:****LEVEL THREE****MELODY:**

Melody is single sounds in musical succession.

**RHYTHM:**

Rhythm is the vital principal in music by means of which sounds are felt to progress to certain points of culmination.

**ACCENT:**

Accent, in musical terms has a very wide meaning, and may be said to emphasis, stress, strain, force, dominance or prominence given to certain notes, or beats.

**TEMPO:**

Tempo is the speed or pace at which the music is played.

Speed or pace is the number of beats or paces to the minute.

This can be measured by using a metronome.

**DOTTED NOTES:**

A dot placed after any note increases its value by one half.

A dotted semi breve would therefore have the value of one semi breve and one minim.

Two dots placed after a note would increase its value by three quarters. which means that a double dotted semi breve would be worth, one semi breve, one minim and one crotchet.

This principal applies to any of the other notes.

In piping a double dot placed after a note rarely happens.

**TIED NOTES:**

Tied notes have a curved line above them connecting two or more notes of the same letter name and quality, which indicates that the first only is sounded, then prolonged as one sound, the duration of which is equal to the sum of the notes tied.

❖ **PAUSE MARK:**

A pause mark is a short curved line with a dot underneath shown above the note that is to be held; it leaves the length of the note to the performer discretion.

❖ **TRIPLINGS:**

Triplings are three notes played in the time of two; they have a curved line over the three notes and also have a number 3 under the curved line.

**SCALES AND OCTAVES:**

In modern music two scales exist: diatonic and chromatic.

The diatonic scale mainly consists of tones whereas the chromatic scale consists entirely of semi tones.

On the bagpipes, from **Low A to High G** is the diatonic scale with seven notes.

**TYPES OF SOUND:**

There are two types of sound in music: legato and staccato.

❖ **LEGATO:**

In legato, the sound is smooth and even, glides, or flows into each other with no sensation of separateness.

Great Highland Bagpipes fulfil this condition.

❖ **STACCATO:**

In staccato, the sound refers to notes played crisply and sharply.

The drum, being a percussion instrument, fulfils this condition.

**LOUDNESS OR AMPLITUDE:**

The loudness or amplitude depends on the extent of the to and fro movement of the vibrator.

When a tuning fork is struck, the resulting sound has a certain degree of loudness, which diminishes as the distance of the to and fro movement of the vibrator diminishes, until the vibrations stop and the sound ceases.

If the extent of the to and fro movement is increased, the sound will be correspondingly louder;

Therefore the greater the distance covered by the vibrator, the greater the degree of loudness or amplitude, provided the speed of vibrations per second is maintained.

❖ **VIBRATIONS:**

The octave or eighth note **High A** has exactly twice the number of vibrations per second of the **Low A**.



❖ **HOW PITCH IS AFFECTED BY VIBRATION:**

Pitch is affected by the length and position of the vibrator.

❖ **LENGTHENING:**

Lengthening of a drone reed tongue or extending the length of the drone by extending the tuning section of the drone slide up, or lifting the chanter reed out of its seat reduces the number of vibrations per second and lowers the pitch.

It extends the column of air.

❖ **SHORTENING:**

Shortening of a drone reed tongue or shortening the length of the drone by lowering the tuning section of the drone slide, or lowering the chanter reed in its seat increases the number of vibrations per second and heightens the pitch.

It shortens the column of air.

In a nutshell, flat sound: fewer vibrations.

Sharp sound: more vibrations.

The ear is considered to be capable of registering vibrations as low as 16Hz and as high as 32,000Hz.

(1Hz = 1Cps).

**PITCH:**

❖ **SCIENTIFICALLY**

By the statement of period.

For example, duration of note value, or frequency of the vibration per second.

The higher the note, the more vibrations, or the deeper the note, the fewer vibrations.

❖ **MUSICALLY:**

By assigning to the sound in question, its position in a certain accepted series of sounds constituting a musical scale.

Pitch is dependant upon the rapidity of the vibrations per second, and the greater the number, the higher the sound.

Vibrators, whether they be cane reeds or steel tongues, create alternate waves of condensed air and rarefied pockets when in motion and the speed of the waves per second, referred to as frequency, determines the pitch of sound.

It should be kept in mind, however, that sound may be similar in pitch and yet be entirely different in quality of sound.

## **PULSE / BEAT AND MEASURE:**

### ❖ **PULSE:**

The pulse is the distance from one accent to another.

The measured “Throb” of the music.

### ❖ **BEAT:**

The beat refers to metric accent.

Once you discover where the beat is, apply a slow regular foot tap but emphasis the strong notes (pulse).

It is important to have a rock steady beat.

This held or dotted note is the piper’s expression, or piper’s **heavy** left foot.

### ❖ **MEASURE OR BAR:**

The measure or bar refers to strong-weak accents as two-pulse measure.

Strong - weak - weak accent as three-pulse measure.

Strong - weak - medium - weak accent as four-pulse measure.

The pulse, being the distance, from one strong accent to the next.

## **ACCENT:**

In piping, it can only be obtained through the dominance or prominence of certain notes in the melodic sequence.

It is nevertheless so striking in character that bagpipe music is rated very high for its rhythmical qualities.

To produce a satisfactory musical effect it is not only necessary that there should be (1) variety of pitch and (2) duration of sound but also what is termed accent.

The grouping of sounds into sets by means of accents produces what is known as time.

## **RHYTHM:**

Rhythm is the regular recurrence of the strong and weak accents arising from the division of the music into regular metrical portions.

Language has its own natural rhythm.

The words and syllables when spoken form themselves into rhythmical recurring groups of two, three or four.

Simple nursery rhymes can be used to demonstrate rhythm.

### **METRICAL ACCENT:**

Metrical accent in music are written to incite action, such as marching or dancing, the music has within it, the regular rhythmic recurrence of pulsating accents or beats, which the listener anticipates to a very fine degree, and mark with spontaneous movement of feet or hand.

The recurrences of accents, both strong and weak, measured off in regular groups by bar lines and are known as metrical accents.

Metrical meaning measured.

### **PHRASES.**

A musical period of two bars.

By practicing the individual phrases, and movements within, you will memorise the tune easier.

### **CADENCE:**

A cadence is the completion of a phrase, or rhythmical period.

### **PIANO AND FORTY.**

The piano is the first time through the part, whether it is four or eight bar part and there are no repeat dots by the double bar lines.

The Forty is the second time through the part if played and does have repeat dots by the double bar lines (dotted bar line).

### **❖ 1<sup>ST</sup>, AND 2<sup>ND</sup> TIMES.**

The first and second times refer to the piano and forty but with a difference.

First time is the first time through the part (piano).

The second time through the part consists of the first four bars as first time through of the part, and then a different four bars to complete the part, which is different from the original last four bars.

This is usually marked on the music score with a line across the top of the score with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> times written on it.

### **INCOMPLETE BARS.**

An incomplete bar is the last bar in the part that does not have the last few notes included, but will have the correct number of beats.

If the introductory notes are included in the last beat then the bar and timing will work out mathematically.

## INTRODUCTORY OR START NOTES.

These notes will make up the timing of the last incomplete bar.

### KIND OF TIME:

#### ❖ DUPLÉ:

Duple means two beats in the bar with a rhythmic recurrence of **strong – weak**.

That is to say, the first beat in each bar is the strong one, the second beat, the weak one.

Time signatures that apply are  $\frac{2}{4}$ ,  $\frac{6}{8}$ ,  $\phi$ .

#### ❖ TRIPLE:

Triple means three beats in the bar with a rhythmic recurrence of **strong – weak - weak**.

That is to say, the first beat in each bar is the strong one, the second beat weak and the third beat also weak.

Time signatures that apply are  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{9}{8}$ .

#### ❖ QUADRUPLE:

Quadruple means four beats in the bar with a rhythmic recurrence of **strong – weak - medium - weak**.

That is to say, the first beat in each bar is the strong one, the second beat weak, the third beat not as strong as the first but stronger than the fourth weak beat,

Time signatures that apply are  $\frac{4}{4}$ , **C**,  $\frac{12}{8}$ .

### SIMPLE TIME:

Simple time is time in which the beat, or pulse note, is a simple one.

For example: Split common, reel time  $\phi$  or  $\frac{2}{2}$ , denotes two beats in the bar, beating on the minim.

$\frac{2}{4}$  denotes two beats in the bar, beating on the crotchet.

$\frac{3}{4}$  denotes three beats in the bar, beating on the crotchet.

$\frac{4}{4}$  or common time denotes four beats in the bar, beating on the crotchet.

### COMPOUND TIME:

Compound time is time in which the beat or pulse note is a dotted one.

For example:  $\frac{6}{8}$  denotes two beats in the bar, beating on the dotted crotchet.

$\frac{9}{8}$  denotes three beats in the bar, beating on the dotted crotchet.

$12_8$  denotes four beats in the bar, beating on the dotted crotchet.

In simple time the reading is direct, but in compound time three notes must be added together and represented by one dotted note.

The beat or pulse note is then referred to as a dotted crotchet, dotted quaver etc.

The beat or pulse note may be represented by any number of lesser notes to the value thereof, and when this occurs, the beat always falls on the first note.

#### ❖ TOP FIGURE:

The top figure of the time signature is the one that tells the number of beats and the number of the bottom figure to the bar.

This direct reading applies only with simple time.

In compound time, the top figure is always equal to or greater than six, and must be divided by three, to find the number of beats in each bar.

six divided by three equals two beats.

Nine divided by three equals three beats.

Twelve divided by three equals four beats.

When the letter **C** is given as the time signature, it means that the time is  $4_4$  and is referred to as common time.

#### ❖ BOTTOM FIGURE:

The bottom figure is the one that shows the relationship of the beat note to the semi breve.

Under the heading, Note Values diagram 1 it will be seen that each note has a reference figure, this figure being an abbreviation of its fractional value of the semi breve.

The  $2$  for instance means a half note Minim.

$4$ , a quarter note Crotchet.

$8$ , an eighth note Quaver.

#### GROUPING OF NOTES:

It is worth pointing out that notes are written in groups in each bar in the example Mairies Wedding in learning and writing a tune.

In the first bar, you have two groups of notes, both of which add up mathematically to a crotchet each. Thus, there are two beats to the bar beating on the crotchet.

Beat one, the Low G and Low A are two quavers grouped together, which add up to, and are equivalent of, a crotchet.

Likewise the Low A and B in the second group, add up to make the second crotchet, these notes also have a dot and cut on them i.e. (pointed) dotted quaver and semi quaver and must be expressed so when playing.

When the division of a beat, or bar is equivalent in crotchets, quavers, and semi quavers.

It is good practice, whenever possible, to group the equivalents together, to the value of the beat note.

Thus, showing at a glance, the group of notes comprising of that beat.

More importantly, the first note of the group is deemed to be the beat note and all other notes will follow this beat note.

### **CYBERNETICS:**

#### **THE SWING WRECKERS OF BOTH GOLF AND MUSIC**

Related to problems encountered by incorrect positioning of the fingers especially in sport and no less in playing certain musical instruments such as the Highland bagpipes.

Such matters may not always be common knowledge but generally teacher or coach knows best as what is right or wrong.

Application wise, in matters of basics and fundamentals.

These matters of cybernetics relate directly to misuse of the first finger and thumb of both left and right hands on the chanter.

Pinching or applying pressure directly between the chanter with the flat of the finger and the thumb causes a multitude of problems.

For this action triggers the large outer muscles of both arms and the shoulders which will create a lot of tension on the forearms and wrists.

Very often this will create other problems such as difficulty in playing birls and D grace notes due to the tension imparted to the wrists which inhibits the motion of these fingers.

On the other hand the novice may even experience difficulties in maintaining pressure on the pipe bag and problems with the top hand.

In severe cases this tension eventually creates a locking action which can be likened to a spring that gets tighter and tighter.

Very often the correct positioning of the fingers and hands on the chanter requires slight adjustment to avoid problems.

Any change feels strange at first but practice makes perfect.

Check it out with your tutor as many pipers has been amazed at the difference it has made to their playing in getting this basic right.

If the serious student studies a good piper playing they will note how relaxed and fluid the hands and fingers appear to be in their motion.

In effect the good piper or golfer has no blocks in their application.

In golf it is known as release whereby the hands and fingers are free to swing through the ball.

Or in piping the hands and fingers are free to swing through the music. ©2006 G.Cole

### **TONAL QUALITY (TIMBRE)**

Timbre is the quality of a sound referred to as tone.

A **Low A**, produced on a chanter of the Great Highland Bagpipes, has different qualities of sound from a note of similar pitch produced from any other musical instrument.

Terms used to define the quality of sound: full, round, resonant, rich, vibrant, shrill, hard, bright, thin, harsh, shallow, soft and dull.

With all the foregoing possible variants, it should be readily understood that a good musical ear, coupled to a good working knowledge of the bagpipes, reeds, and steady blowing control, is essential for the production of good timbre, or tonal quality.

### **UNISON:**

Is playing together either as a small group or as a full pipe corps.

Unison is the same sound produced by two or more instruments.

### **ENSEMBLE:**

Ensemble is the playing together of pipes and drums to produce tone and accuracy.

### **POINTING:**

Pointing is subjective interpretation.

Pointing is from the term, dotting and cutting.

Pointing is the adding of a point, or dot, to a note to prolong its value.

The compensatory cutting of an adjacent note is the adding of a short tail, which reduces its value within the framework of the metrical accents. All this gives a stilted effect to the music, typical of Celtic music.

Copyrights.

Copyright in law protects the works of the composers.

In piping, we are only too glad that other pipers are playing our work, and the copyright is really only used if tunes are recorded for public entertainment. I.e. CDs

But it is law to adhere to a copyright.

Permission should be sought if at all possible.

## THE PRACTICALS OF LEARNING AND WRITING A TUNE

All information required is detailed in the theory pages One, Two and three.

Having this fantastic tune in your head or having heard one but you don't have the music.

Do you spend a lot of time searching for the tune or have someone write it down for you at his or her convenience.

Why not learn how to do it yourself.

I will give you the guidelines to construct your own tunes or other music that you like.

These black marks on the manuscript aren't there to frighten you.

The black marks are there to give assistance to learning and knowing what you play is correct.

### **COPYING:**

Start by copy writing out other people's tunes this will prepare you for when you write your own music.

The more copying you do the easier you will recognise time signatures note values and movements without any trouble.

### **DIAGRAMS:**

The diagrams on the last few pages of these notes assume that you know nothing about writing out music.

As you probably have noticed on the first manuscript there are no time signatures, repeat dots, grace notes, melody notes or timing.

Have a go at writing out Mairie's Wedding for yourself without the aid of written manuscript.

This may not be as straightforward as you think.

Don't forget the pulse or strong beat is directly after the bar line.

This can be really difficult item to apply to writing out music because if it is not right it won't work.

The second diagram shows the strong reoccurring pulse behind the bar lines.

Third diagram shows the second and weaker pulse added, now having one strong beat and one weak beat to the bar.

Fourth diagram shows the time signature that is  $2_4$ .

How do we get  $2_4$ ? In the fourth diagram we have two crotchets, beating on the crotchet i.e. one strong beat and one weak beat.

Fifth diagram shows the group notes have been added to the beat notes that complete the melody of the tune.

In  $2_4$  we cannot have four crotchets to the bar as written in the diagram as this would be in  $4_4$  time.

So to achieve  $2_4$  time we must tie the non beat notes to the beat notes, making two crotchets into one crotchet by placing

a line between the two crotchet, giving two quavers value to each of the beat notes.

The final diagram has the completed tune the adding of gracing, pointing and repeat dots are up to the composer as to the difficulty and usage usually the simpler the better.

### **BEAT:**

**The beat is the most important ingredient in writing and playing music, this cannot be stressed enough.**

**The beat regulates and control the flow of the music.**

**Without this beat being in the correct place the music will drift and will not sound as it should.**

Get used to regular constant foot tapping with the beat notes ensuring they happen together.

March to the scale if necessary, ensuring that as the foot strikes the floor as the note is sounded, not before or after- - but exactly on the beat.

### **RECORDING:**

As people who cannot write or read music they tend to record their music on tape or write down their tune as a string of notes.

This in fact will make no sense to other musicians.

Recording onto tape may be fine but can be piecemeal which can be hard to follow or learn.

If you can work out the correct number of beats to satisfy a time signature you then will be able to work out where the single bar lines should be.

### **LEARNING A TUNE**

Learning a tune, the first steps to work out are what the time signature means, (diagram 1 theory).

Check the bottom number that will tell you the value of the notes per bar and the top number will tell you the amount of beats to that bar.

For example take a  $\frac{2}{4}$  march.

The  $^2$  represents two crotchets to the bar beating on the crotchet.

The  $_4$  is telling you that it is crotchets you are dealing with, see the note value diagram.

Then what medium is it in i.e. March strathspey etc this will give you a rough idea of what to expect of the tune.

Look at the manuscript it should be laid out as four bars to the stave.

This makes reading much easier to manage and being able to see at a glance the repeated bars and phrases which will make learning and memorising easier.

Once the beats notes are established play the first bar using the beat and your foot this will tie up the melody and beat.

This may be a two to four beat bars, again the time signature will tell you this.

To make playing easier on the instrument, try to sing or hum the tune, either out loud or even in your head.

This may seem childlike but most musicians do this and become excellent exponents of sight-reading.

Engage your fingers when singing, you will then have a head start using this technique as you will be far more confident of what you are aiming to achieve on the instrument and therefore will be more fluent.

Do the same with the second bar, play the two bars (one phrase) one after the other this will make more sense and begin to sound like a tune.

The second phrase is to be done exactly the same then put them all (first and second phrases) together, this is known as question and answers, complete the tune in the same way, also by doing this method you will start remembering the tune.

### **COMPOSING:**

If you are thinking of composing you will already have the tune in your head or even able to play it does makes things easier.

Make sure you have a sheet of manuscript and have the bar lines ruled off into four bars per stave as in first diagram.

This makes the writing and reading much more manageable and being able to see at a glance your repeat bars and phrases.

Play until you get a feeling for the tune within the bar using the foot to tap out the beat which will group the notes.

At this stage you may have some idea of the time and construction of the tune i.e.  $2_4$  march,  $6_8$  jig or whatever.

Hum the melody and beat with your foot to figure out which are the strong beat notes to enable the break up of the tune into smaller pieces so you have a chance to write them down in their correct position after the bar line.

You will be able to work out the time signature from this, and then fill in the melody behind these beat notes (Note value 1 Theory).

Putting the wrong time signature in place will give you a lot of problems so make sure that it is right.

The second, third or fourth beats are not behind the bar lines but placed in their individual groups behind the strong beats which are behind the bar lines.

Group the notes add the pointing and gracing, theory part three.

The beat notes will also help to position the gracing.

### **LISTENING TO A TUNE:**

Listening to a tune has its own problems like picking up on the pitch of every note, the movements and the timing.

Put the tune onto tape to assist the listening process.

i.e. play short pieces and write it down rewind and listen and check again.

tune into smaller pieces so you have a chance of writing them down in their correct position behind the bar line.

In a one-part tune (eight bars) you could have as many as thirty-two beats to deal with.

This could be either  $^4_4$  four crotchets to the bar beating on the crotchets or  $^{12}_8$  twelve quavers to the bar beating on the dotted crotchets.

Again pick up on the strong beat notes write them down behind the bar lines.

Listen to the group of notes with the strong beat, the beat being the first note in the group or only a single note.

The second, third or fourth beats are not after the bar lines but placed in their individual groups after the strong beat which are behind the bar lines.

Ending up with strong first beat, second beat, third beat and fourth beat or less in one bar depending on the time signature of the tune.

Group the notes and add the pointing and gracing as in diagram in last few pages. Theory part three.

The beat notes will also help to position the gracing.

As you probably see by these notes one of the main ingredients of understanding listening, composing or learning

Try and listening or humming the melody and beat with your foot to figure out which are the strong beat notes, segment the a tune is knowledge of where the beat/pulse lies and the note values used.

The beat notes are the guides to playing a solid consistent and disciplined performance.

The beats are regulators of constant time throughout the tune and will make it easier to play along with as you will know exactly where the beats notes are.

Understanding the beat is all-important and over time this will become quite natural to you.

#### **POINTS TO REMEMBER:**

**Play to the beat.**

**Grace notes played on the beat.**

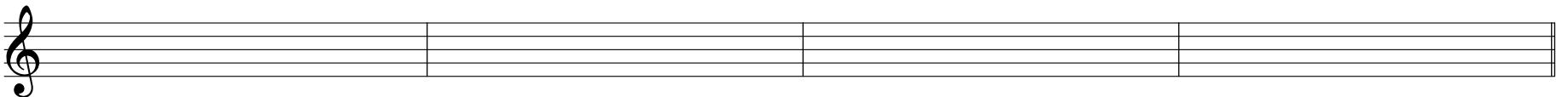
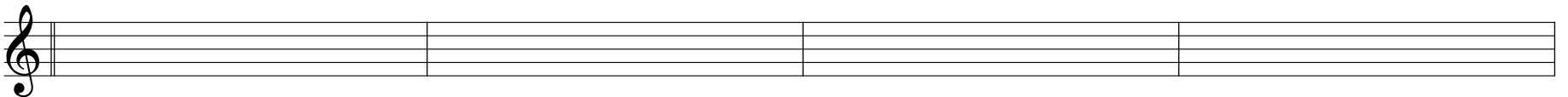
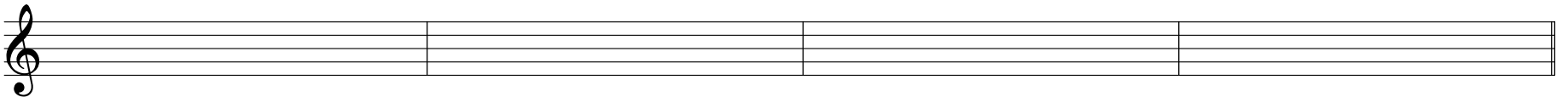
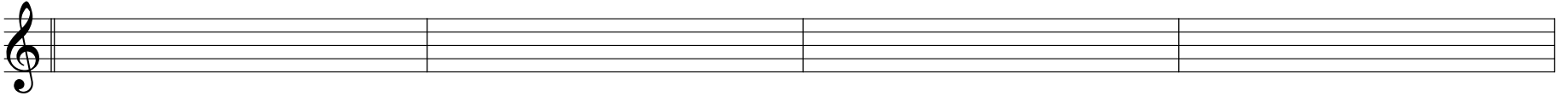
**Learn each phrase thoroughly.**

**Keep the melody slow and gracing tight.**

**Pointing: hold held notes and cut cut notes.**

# Mairi's Wedding

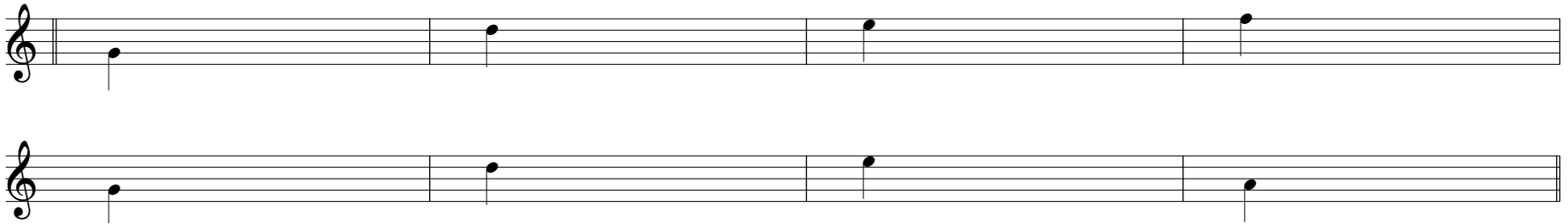
March



Have a go at writing out Mairie's Wedding for yourself without the aid of written music it is not easy.

## Mairi's Wedding

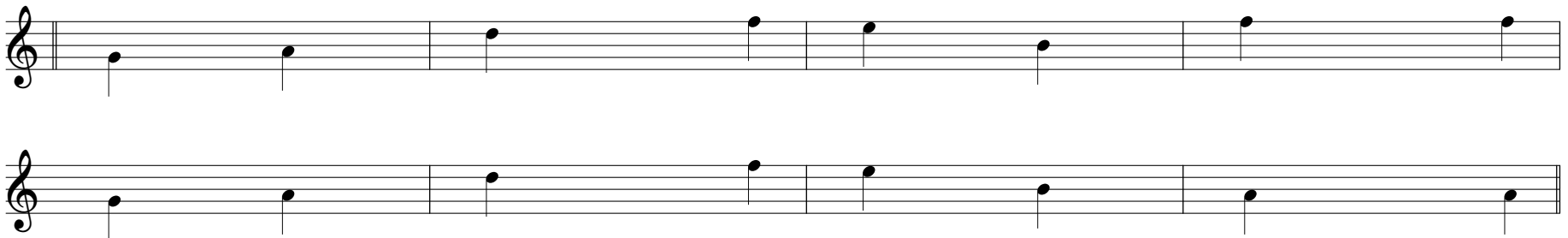
March



This diagram only shows the strong beat notes on the staff with the bar lines included.

## Mairi's Wedding

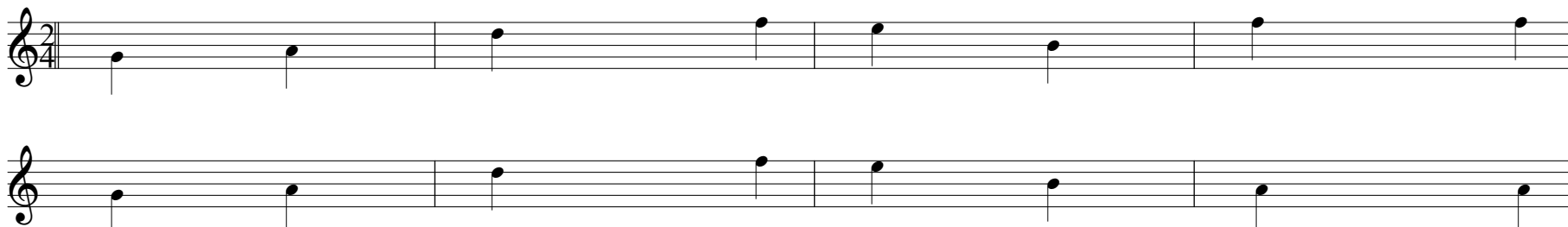
March



The second beat has been added to each bar, which is the weak beat; from this diagram you now can workout the time signature. Theory part three.

## Mairi's Wedding

March

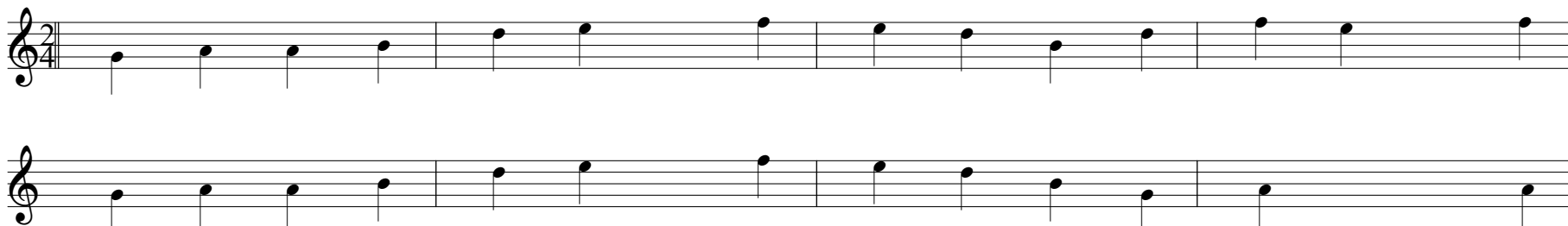


The image shows two staves of musical notation for the piece 'Mairi's Wedding'. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 2/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The second staff continues the melody with notes: B3, A3, G3, F#3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F#2, E2, D2, C2.

The time signature has been added.

## Mairi's Wedding

March



The image shows two staves of musical notation for the piece 'Mairi's Wedding', identical to the first section. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 2/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The second staff continues the melody with notes: B3, A3, G3, F#3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F#2, E2, D2, C2.

The group notes have been added to the beat notes,  
using the beat you can follow the tune fairly readily but  
it has a bit to go before being complete.



# Mairi's Wedding

March

The image displays a musical score for a march titled "Mairi's Wedding". The score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The music is organized into five staves. The first staff begins with a repeat sign. The second and third staves continue the melody. The fourth staff contains a first ending, marked with a bracket and the number "1". The fifth staff contains a second ending, marked with a bracket and the number "2". The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests, along with grace notes and repeat dots.

This is the completed tune with grace notes and the second part added, the two lines above the second part are the first and second times of the part. Theory part three.

The adding of gracing and repeat dots are up to the composer as to the difficulty and use, usually the simpler the better.