

If you have been seized by the beauty and energy of traditional Irish music, I invite you to join those of us who have taken on its learning as a “delightful challenge.” I came across this phrase while reading an interview with famed Irish musician Donal Lunny in *The Irish Times*.ⁱⁱⁱ

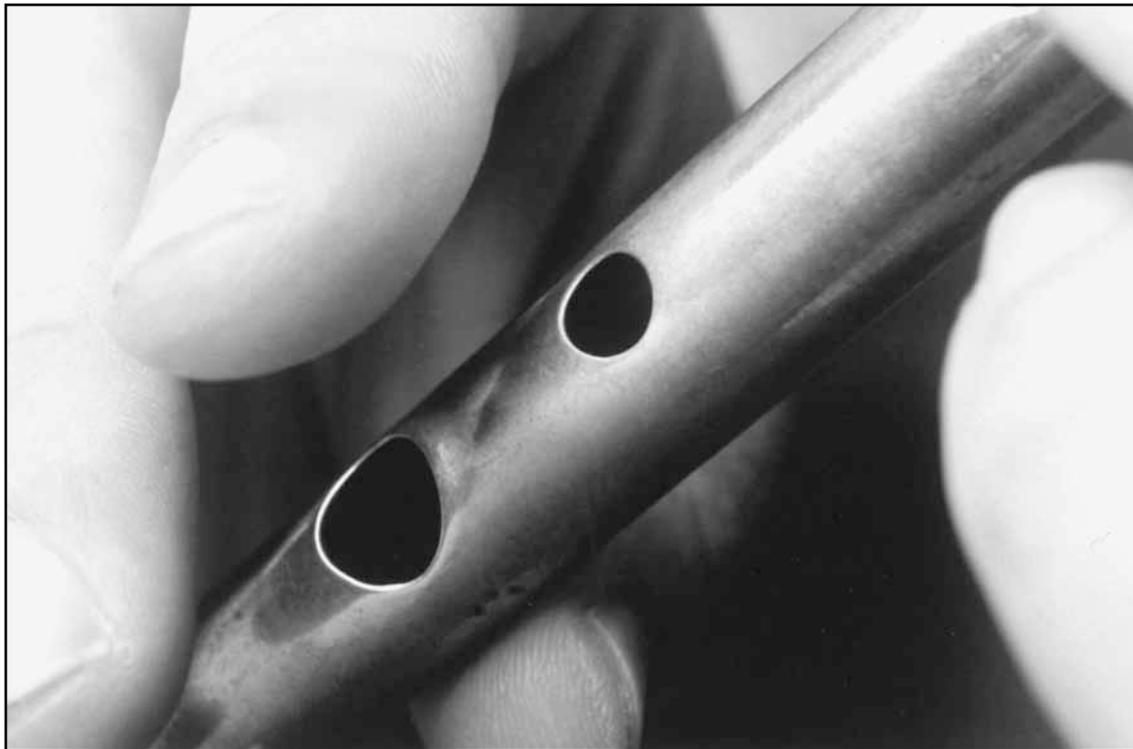
I thought I had invented the lefthanded guitar! I got the notion of reversing the strings spontaneously and worked away at it. I had to work out my own chords and found this a delightful challenge. I used to have a piece of wood under the desk with the strings and the frets on it and when I should have been listening to the history teacher I was researching chords under the desk!

Don't be daunted by the seeming enormity of the task of learning traditional Irish music, for it is not a task but a process, and an ongoing joy. It will bring you into contact with many fine people who share your passions. This may actually be the best part of all.

Take inspiration from young students who cannot be held back from working on what is truly important to them, laboring surreptitiously under their desks to expand the world's artistic delights.

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ⁱ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992).

ⁱⁱ L. E. McCullough, *The Complete Tin Whistle Tutor* (New York: Oak Publications, 1976).

ⁱⁱⁱ John Kelly, “Following His Own Act,” *The Irish Times*, September 5, 1998.