

The faster an Irish player plays the more even her playing tends to become. If this didn't happen, then fast playing would sound too stilted.

TUNES WITH AN OVERTLY UNEVEN SUBDIVISION OF THE BEAT

Then there are tunes that are played in an overtly uneven fashion, such as hornpipes, mazurkas, schottisches, flings, barn dances, and germans. These tunes are normally played much more unevenly than reels, jigs, etc. There is no consensus on how to notate them. I prefer to notate them with even eighth notes and occasional triplets, a notational style which does not reflect the reality of their sound, but which I believe is the best compromise. I elaborate upon the reasons for this opinion in Chapter 14.

NATURE AND MUSIC SEEK A BALANCE

As you begin to pay attention to the lilt of good players, you will notice that it is changeable and flexible. There are some times when a heavier swing is called for and others when a more even delivery is appropriate. Even within a single tune there is such variance. If you adopt a "signature lilt" and adhere to it at all times, your playing will seem rigid and contracted, instead of flexible and expansive. Aim to be supple and let your lilt adjust itself to the nature of the moment. Let the music breathe.

As you can see, lilt is a complex and elusive thing, comprised of several interactive elements. It is not hard to hear it, but it is difficult to describe it in words.

AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF PERSONAL AND REGIONAL STYLES

Lilt is clearly an important element of personal style. It is sometimes an identifiable element of regional styles as well. For example, Galway players, such as Paddy Carty, tend to play more evenly than Sligo players, such as Seamus Tansey. However, such generalizations are of limited use because they tend to break apart as you listen closely to individual players, especially in modern times as the definitions of regional styles are blurring due to decreasing isolation.

ⁱ Mary Larsen, "Martin Hayes, A Lilt All His Own," *Fiddler Magazine*, Spring 1994: p. 9.

ⁱⁱ Robert Jourdain, *Music, the Brain, and Ecstasy* (New York: Avon Books, 1997), p. 281–2.

ⁱⁱⁱ Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, (1944; 20th printing, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968), p. 640.

^{iv} Willi Apel, p. 452.

^v Breandán Breathnach, *Folk Music & Dances of Ireland*, (Dublin: The Talbot Press, 1971), p. 14.

^{vi} John Smith and Joe Wolfe, in the International Congress on Acoustics, Rome, Session 8.09, pp. 14-15, describe cross fingering in this way: "Opening successive tone holes in woodwind instruments shortens the standing wave in the bore. However, the standing wave propagates past the first open hole, so its frequency can be affected by closing other tone holes further downstream. This is called cross fingering, and in some instruments is used to produce the 'sharps and flats' missing from their natural scales." In the case of C-natural, the most commonly used cross-fingering on the flute and tin whistle has T2 and T3 (see p. 64) covering their holes and all other holes open.

^{vii} "Half-holing" refers to the practice of only partially covering a tone hole in order to play a pitch that is in between the pitches produced by fully covering the tone hole in question and fully uncovering that tone hole.

^{viii} Willi Apel, p. 756.

^{ix} Breandán Breathnach, p. 35.

^x Breandán Breathnach, *Folk Music & Dances of Ireland*, (Dublin: The Talbot Press, 1971).

^{xi} Caoimhin Mac Aoidh, *Between the Jigs and Reels - The Donegal Fiddle Tradition*, (Nure, Ireland: Drumlin Publications, 1994).

^{xii} This is from an interview with Matt Molloy by Sean McCutcheon, a flute player from Montréal, that took place on September 26, 1997. I found it on Brad Hurley's website, "A Guide to the Irish Flute", <<http://www.firescribble.net/flute/molloy.html>>.

^{xiii} L. E. McCullough, *The Complete Tin Whistle Tutor* (New York: Oak Publications, 1976), p. 4.

^{xiv} L. E. McCullough, from his "Historical Notes" in Patrick Sky's *A Manual for the Irish Uilleann Pipes*, (Pittsburgh: Silver Spear Publications, 1980), p. 5.

^{xv} Na Píobairí Uilleann, <<http://www.iol.ie/npuhome.htm>> (5 September, 1998).

^{xvi} Brian E. McCandless, "The Pastoral Bagpipe," *Iris na bPíobairí (The Pipers' Review)* 17 (Spring 1998), 2: p. 19-28.

^{xvii} L. E. McCullough, from his "Historical Notes" in Patrick Sky's *A Manual for the Irish Uilleann Pipes*, (Pittsburgh: Silver Spear Publications, 1980), p. 5.