

Section Three: Tunes Requiring the Use of Keys

These are tunes which employ one or more of the four pitches – E \flat , F \sharp , G \sharp and B \flat – that fall outside the natural scale of the Irish, or simple-system wooden flute. For players of wooden Irish flutes, these tunes require the use of one or more metal keys. Players of the modern, Boehm-system flute are typically accustomed to playing these notes, but that is often not the case with players of Irish flute.

It is not physically difficult to use the keys on keyed Irish flutes. It may seem challenging at first, but usually this is only due to unfamiliarity. With experience and practice, it becomes quite natural to use them. Doing so allows the player to open a door to a new body of music, to play tunes many of which I think sound especially lovely on the flute.

Not surprisingly, nearly all tunes of this type originated with players of non-wind instruments.

- Some of these tunes have notes that fall below the low D of the standard Irish flute and require the player to make creative adjustments. Such too-low notes (and sometimes other notes that precede and/or follow them) have been raised by an octave in these tune settings. The original low notes are represented by open, stemless diamond-shaped noteheads. (See pp. 27-28 for more on this.)
- Some tunes require the player to jump frequently and/or rapidly from the high register down to the low, a maneuver which can be challenging on the flute but presents no special difficulty for non-wind instruments. It also does not seem to be challenging on the high D whistle.
- Many tunes contain sequences of fingerings that are idiomatic to their non-wind instrument of origin but which fall less naturally on the flute (as well as whistle and uilleann pipes).
- Many of these tunes invite ornamentation on C and C \sharp . These notes are not as readily ornamented on the flute as on non-wind instruments. When long or short rolls on C or C \sharp would likely be played on other instruments, the flute player can either play unadorned notes or employ melodic variation, finger or breath vibrato, and shadings of pitch, tone and loudness. (There are fingerings that allow flute players to simulate rolls on C and C \sharp . For information on these, see *The Essential Guide to Irish Flute and Tin Whistle* or *The Essential Tin Whistle Toolbox*.)
- These tunes are often in modes that for the most part cannot be played on Irish flute without the use of keys. These modes include D Dorian, G Dorian, D Aeolian, G Aeolian, F Ionian, C Ionian, A Ionian and G Mixolydian.

Section Three contains 9 jigs, 12 reels, 4 hornpipes, 1 slide, 1 mazurka, and 1 air.

