

Section One: Whistle-Friendly Tunes

The bulk of the tunes in this collection are “whistle-friendly,” tunes which favor the whistle’s natural capabilities while steering clear of its limitations.

Note that whistle-friendly tunes fit well on the flute and uilleann pipes as well.

Many of these tunes were no doubt made by players of the Irish flute, uilleann pipes and tin whistle, the three simple-system wind instruments of traditional Irish music. Others seem to be more idiomatic to non-wind instruments, but nevertheless meet the following whistle-friendly criteria:

- The tunes fall within the comfortable octave-plus-a-sixth range of the tin whistle in D, never venturing below low D or above high B. The one exception to this is tune 84, *The Swaggering Jig*, which includes a half-holed high C \sharp .
- The tunes flow naturally under a whistle player’s fingers, and present no special fingering challenges.
- The only notes that occur in these tunes are D, E, F \sharp , G, A, B, C \natural and C \sharp , the notes that are easily played by covering and uncovering the whistle’s six finger holes. The tunes do not contain notes that require cross-fingerings (with the exception of C \natural) or half-hole fingerings.
- The notes that most naturally invite ornamentation are the ones that whistle players can embellish with variety and ease: namely E, F \sharp , G, A and B – and not C \natural or C \sharp .

Since the crann on D (and E) can be challenging for all but the advanced whistle player, it could not be considered a whistle-friendly technique. However, because cranns are such a beautiful element of whistle ornamentation, I include five tunes in Section One that call for their use (numbers 27-30 and number 72). Cranns were adopted by Irish flute and whistle players at least as early as 1925, and probably earlier. For players who are not yet comfortable with playing cranns, there are melodic alternatives that can be employed. See pp. 21-22 for information on these.

Section One contains 30 jigs, 42 reels, 11 hornpipes, 2 slip jigs, 1 hop jig, 1 polka, 2 slides, 2 marches, 1 set dance, 1 air and 2 harp pieces.

