


# Important Note!

 Please read this page before proceeding to the tunes.

The tunes in this collection appear in a straightforward and unadorned form, making them accessible to all melody players, regardless of instrument. This page offers vital information, especially for those who are new to traditional Irish music, on what I intend to convey with this style of notation.

Experienced players may already know how to “decode” these transcriptions and put some “flesh on the bones.” Nonetheless, the following information may help bring some of their intuitive knowledge into focus.

## DOTTED QUARTER NOTES ARE USUALLY SUBDIVIDED INTO NOTES OF SHORTER DURATION


In this collection, dotted quarter notes –  – are **usually *not* meant to be played as written**. Instead, they commonly stand for one of several musical figures, shown below, each of which occupy the same amount of time as a dotted quarter note but are rhythmically more active. You may choose among them as you see fit.



If having so many choices seems daunting, begin by simply using the first of these figures. As you become accustomed to doing this, try adding others to your tool kit. (Though the examples above and below are shown centering on the note E, these figures can center upon a note of any pitch.)

Experienced players of Irish music will also use ornaments called “rolls,” “cranns” or “trebles” (also known as “triplets”) in place of many of the dotted quarter notes in this tune collection. To learn about traditional Irish ornamentation, you may wish to consult one of my other books, such as *The Essential Guide to Irish Flute and Tin Whistle*.<sup>1</sup>

## QUARTER NOTES ARE *SOMETIMES* SUBDIVIDED

When you encounter a quarter note –  – you may play it as written, or you may subdivide it into notes of shorter duration by substituting one of the musical figures shown below.



Experienced Irish musicians sometimes use shorter forms of rolls, trebles and cranns in place of quarter notes.

**Note well:** In reels, most quarter notes should be replaced by such ornaments or by one of the figures above.

## BRACKETED EIGHTH NOTES

Most of the reels in this book (and four of the hornpipes) include groups of three beamed eighth notes which are enclosed within a bracket. Please see pp. 13-14 for a full explanation of what these brackets mean.

## WHEN AND WHY?

To learn when and why to subdivide quarter and dotted quarter notes, as well as when and why *not* to, see *A Closer Look at Quarter Notes, Dotted Quarter Notes and Bracketed Eighth Notes* on pp. 13-16. Many examples are given.

<sup>1</sup> Grey Larsen, *The Essential Guide to Irish Flute and Tin Whistle* (Pacific, Missouri: Mel Bay Publications, Inc., 2003).