

Learn
to
play

the

tin whistle

With

ARMAGH PIPERS CLUB



Part 3



LEARN TO PLAY THE TIN-WHISTLE

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INTRODUCTION

All traditional musicians, if asked when or how they learned to play, will invariably reply that they never really received any formal musical training, rather they grew up with the music from the cradle. To people in search of encouragement, this reply has the effect of dashing their hopes of ever grasping the elusive traditional style. It should be said straightaway that this reply is the stock-in-trade of all traditional musicians, and what it simply means is that they have spent a long time absorbing the sounds of the music, and that therefore, the expression of the music through whatever instrument they play is completely intuitive.

What the learner should realize very early in his apprenticeship is that, apart from learning the technicalities, he should spend a long time training his ear by listening to as much good playing as possible.

This third book is almost completely based on the playing of great players from Donegal, Clare, Kerry, Limerick, and Dublin. The tunes themselves can nearly all be found on records produced by Gael-Linn, Topic, and Claddagh. We hope that these unusual tunes and unusual versions will stimulate learners to go to the original for further inspiration.

Irish music is not the cut and dried, dead-pan thing that piano-accordians and ceili bands often make it - it is full of surprises and excitement, and above all, it is the living expression of the oldest musical tradition in Western Europe.

Listen to the playing of Willie Clancy, Seamus Ennis, Johnny Doherty, Paddy Taylor, John Kelly, and Denis Murphy, to mention only a few of the greats, and you will quickly realize the importance of listening to the music as against just reading it.

THE STRUCTURE OF IRISH MUSIC

The structure of Irish music is derived from that of early Gregorian Chant. i.e. it is based on Modes and not on Major & Minor scales. The basic scale does correspond with the Major scale - doh, ray, me, fah, soh, la, ti, doh. A new scale was then built on each of these notes - the Ray mode is ray, me, fah, soh, la, ti, doh, ray, etc. The Doh mode (Ionian mode) is the most common and over two-thirds of the tunes in these books are in the Doh mode. Examples of tunes in the Ray mode (Dorian mode) are:-

Part 1 Nos. 3, 12, 18 (b), 22, & 28 (b).

Part 2 Nos. 9, 20 (b) & (c), 22 & 29.

Part 3 Nos. 2, 6, 23, 25 & 30.

Examples of tunes in the Soh mode (Mixolydian mode) are:-

Part 1 Nos. 4 & 17.

Part 2 Nos. 4 & 7.

Examples of tunes in the Lah mode (Aeolian mode) are:-

Part 1 Nos. 8, 9 & 16.

Part 2 Nos. 2, 10 & 11.

Part 3 Nos 1 & 18.

Often the final note of a tune is a guide to the mode but many dance tunes are circular i.e. they do not end on a closing note but on a note or notes which lead back to the beginning again.