

Grey Larsen's Irish Tune Bank

AN ORIENTATION TO THE IRISH TUNE BANK TRANSCRIPTIONS & RECORDINGS

In each of these transcriptions and recordings I am hoping to convey several things:

- An example of how you can integrate ornamentation into the tune.
- An example of how you can vary the tune. I play the repeat of each part differently than I play its first statement. I have transcribed each A and B part just as I play them on the recording, so you can see, hear and compare the variations. (Of course, since I play them on flute, I do have to leave out certain notes in order to breathe).
- Examples of where flute and whistle players can omit a note to take a breath without disturbing the tune. There are usually many opportunities for this kind of articulate breathing. Flute and whistle players must learn how to omit notes or shorten long notes instead of trying to sneak breaths between the notes of a tune. Creating space by note omission is, in fact, an excellent way to vary a tune, so players of other instruments would be wise to take notice. See [*Advice for Flute and Whistle Players on Finding Good Places to Breathe in Irish Dance Tunes*](#), a free download the Irish Tune Bank.

About the selection of tunes in the [ITB Vault](#):

- Some of these tunes are well-known, and learning them will help the novice and intermediate player build his or her repertoire of session tunes that others are likely to know. Players who already know these tunes may enjoy hearing a fresh approach and new variation ideas.
- Some of these tunes are quite unusual, and will be fascinating to novice and veteran players alike.
- Some of these tunes I play as I have learned them in person from elder players in Ireland and the US, or from old 78-rpm recordings, and so may vary somewhat from more common versions.
- I will build up an archive of tunes representing a variety of tune types, though jigs and reels will likely be the largest categories. [I welcome your thoughts on this.](#)
- [I also welcome your requests for specific tunes to include, and your input on any other aspect of the Irish Tune Bank.](#)

Please note that:

- In the ITB transcriptions, I always write out both times through an A or B part. I use no repeat signs.
- The second statement of a part is almost always different from the first.
- When my performance of a tune is based on a particular musician's version, I stay fairly faithful to his or her version in the first time through each part. Then, in the second time through each part, I vary the tune somewhat. By doing this, I hope to show by example how variation and small-scale improvisation can be expressed well within the language of Irish traditional music.
- Please remember, these tune settings are **not** written in stone. The way I ornament and vary each tune represents only one out of hundreds of possibilities. These tune settings are useful as examples that work well.

- It can be valuable to work through these tunes as I have played and notated them in the tune packets. You may discover ways of playing that you might not have thought of before, or techniques that you have not yet worked on. But please don't stop there. Make the tunes your own.
- On the recordings I play these tunes on flute, so by necessity my versions will reflect somewhat the idioms of traditional Irish wind instruments. But players of other instruments can easily learn and adapt these tunes, just as we all do in sessions and other learning situations. If you are not a flute or whistle player, adapting a flute player's version of a tune to your instrument may yield fresh insights for you.
- If you are unfamiliar with my method of notating ornamentation, see [*A Guide to Grey Larsen's Notation System for Irish Ornamentation*](#), a free download at the Irish Tune Bank.
- If you are unfamiliar with modal scales and mode signatures, see [*Modal Scales in Traditional Irish Music*](#), another free download at the Irish Tune Bank.
- If you wish to slow down, speed up, or change the pitch of my recordings, I highly recommend the excellent and inexpensive software [*The Amazing Slow Downer*](#). Read about it and download a free trial version by [clicking here](#) (available for Windows and Mac). If you buy ASD through these links, I will earn a small commission and you will be helping to support my continuing creative work.

Welcome to the Irish Tune Bank community. [I welcome your feedback and suggestions.](#)

Grey Larsen