

A Primer on Reels, Jigs, and Strathspeys

By

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11 February 2021

For the New York Branch

(Updated 25 March 2021)

Thoughts on Music and Dance

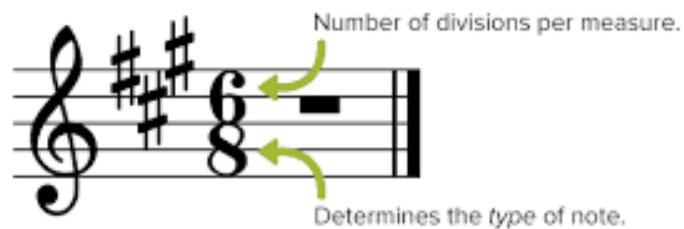
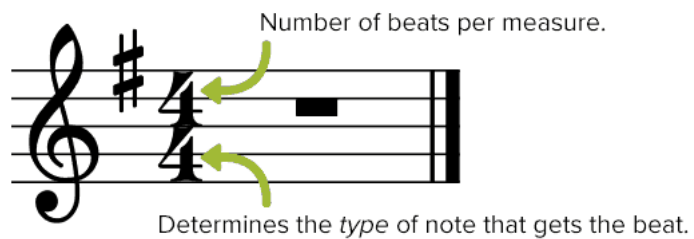
- “The music is the stimulus of the dance and dance should be the physical expression of the music”

Jean Milligan

- “Dancing is music made visible”

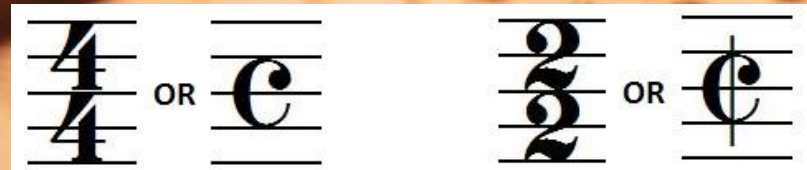
George Balanchine

Time Signatures



- Common time signatures:

- 4/4 – Reels, Strathspeys
- 2/4 – Reels
- 2/2 – Reels
- 6/8 – Jigs
- 9/8 – Slip Jigs
- 3/4 – Waltzes



The terms **duple**, **triple**, and **quadruple** refer to the number of beats per measure/bar

	meter signature	beat unit	division of the beat	
Simple Duple	$\frac{2}{4}$			Reel
Compound Duple	$\frac{6}{8}$			Jig
Simple Triple	$\frac{3}{4}$			Waltz
Compound Triple	$\frac{9}{8}$			Slip Jig
Simple Quadruple	$\frac{4}{4}$			Reel, Strathspey

Note Notation

American

Whole Note

Half Note

Quarter Note

Eighth Note

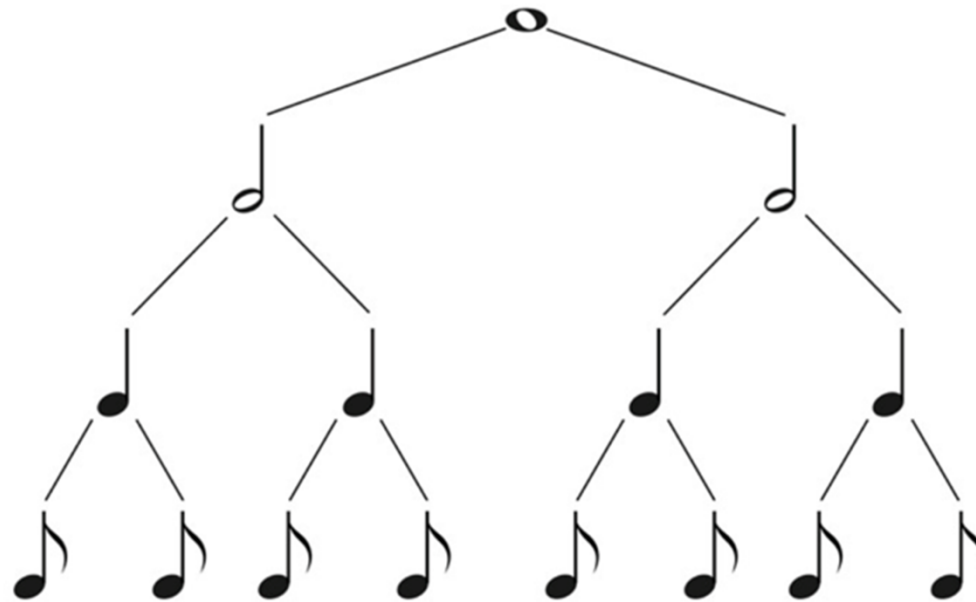
British

Semibreve

Minim

Crotchet

Quaver



Musical Overview

- Jigs

- Double Jigs
- Pipe Jigs
- Single Jigs/Two-Steps
- Slip Jigs

- Strathspeys

- Strong/traditional Strathspeys
- Slow Airs and Songs
- Schottisches, Highland Strathspeys

- Reels

- High Energy (aka Running, Driving, Killer) Reels
- Hornpipes
- Song Tunes
- Marches, Polkas and Others

Jigs

- Double Jig – most common
 - Laird of Milton's Daughter
 - River Cree
 - The Wild Geese
 - The Express
 - Roaring Jelly
- 6/8 Pipe March (64 bars)
 - Blue Bonnets - AABBCDD
 - Duke of Atholl's Reel

Laird of Milton's Daughter




The image displays the musical notation for the jig 'Laird of Milton's Daughter'. It is written in 6/8 time and G major (one sharp). The notation consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 6/8 time signature. The melody is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a final double bar line at the end of the fourth staff.

Single Jigs

The Frisky



- Ian Powrie's Farewell to Archterarder
- Rothesay Rant
- White Heather Jig 
- The Nurseryman
- The Frisky

Slip Jigs

150 Drops Of Brandy (E/J)



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- Slip Jig
- Strip the Willow




Strathspeys – Scotch Snap

Scotch Snap



A very short accented note before a longer note.




THE BRAES OF TULLYMET STRATHSPEY 

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Segue Reel. D.C.

Detailed description: This block contains a musical score for 'The Braes of Tullymet Strathspey'. The score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat. It consists of six staves of music. Several instances of the Scotch Snap rhythm are highlighted with yellow boxes. The first staff begins with a 'V' (crescendo) marking. The second staff ends with a 'V' (crescendo) marking. The sixth staff ends with a 'D.C.' (Da Capo) marking and the text 'Segue Reel.'.

Traditional (Strong) Strathspeys

- Gang the Same Gate
- Up in the Air 
- Braes of Tulliemet
- Invercauld's Reel 
- Sugar Candie 
- John McAlpin

Gang the Same Gate



The image displays the musical score for the traditional strathspey 'Gang the Same Gate'. The score is written on four staves in a treble clef, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing beamed eighth notes and sixteenth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Strathspeys – Slow Airs, Songs

The Lea Rig



Musical score for 'The Lea Rig' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff is the melody, and the following three staves are accompaniment. The piece ends with a double bar line.

• Slow Airs

- Miss Gibson's S'pey
- Autumn in Appin



• Songs

- Lea Rig
- Sean Truibhas Willichan

Schottisches, Highland Strathspeys

The Glasgow Highlanders

The Glasgow Highlanders *Traditional*

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- Glasgow Highlands
- Foursome Reel



Reels – High Energy (Running, Driving, Killer)

- Sleepy Maggie
- Lady Susan Stewart's Reel 
- Pinewoods Reel 
- General Stuart's Reel
- The Highlandman Kissed His Mother 
- Montgomeries' Rant
- De'il Amang the Tailors 

6. SLEEPY MAGGIE -- Reel



Musical notation for the reel "Sleepy Maggie". The notation is written on four staves in treble clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is characterized by a driving, rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the word "Fine." written above the final note.

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Reels - Hornpipes

The Sailor

The Davy Hornpipe



$\text{♩} = 232$

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West's Horn. Robertson's Hornpipe



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Reels – Song Tunes

Mairi's Wedding




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- Mairi's Wedding

- Irish Rover 

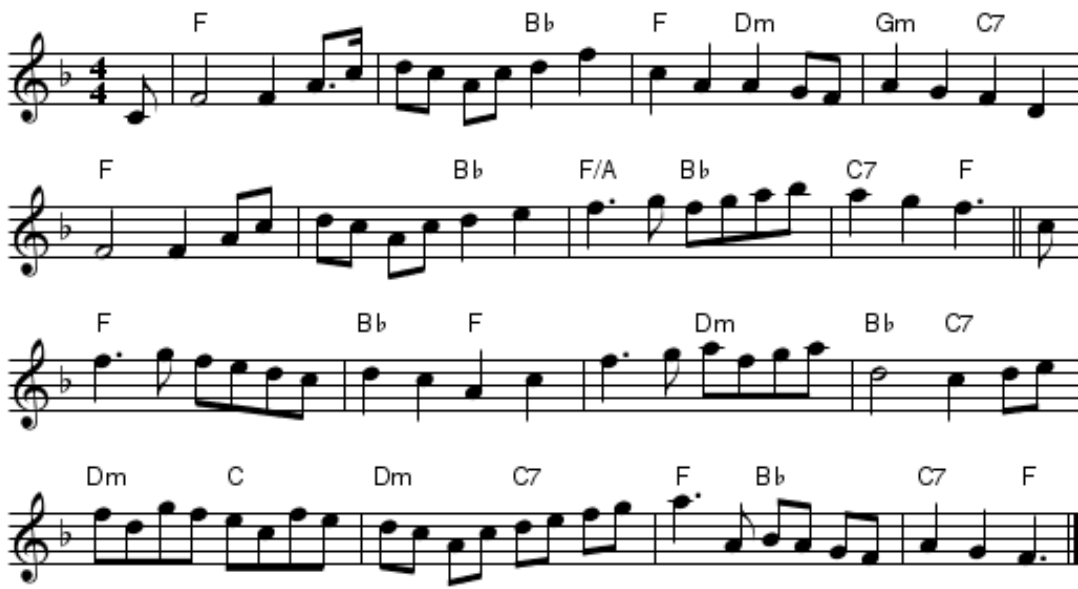
- Corn Rigs

- Bratach Bana 


Reels – Marches, Polkas and Others

None so Pretty 

Johnnie in Nether Mains *Niel Gow*



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- None So Pretty
- Maxwell's Rant
- J.B. Milne (polka) 
- Shiftin' Bobbins (polka)
- Duke of Perth 
- White Cockade
- Red House

References/Acknowledgements

- <https://www.mcowen.net/bmco/tunes/BarFavDances.pdf>
- <https://www.rscds.org/learn/music-resources/types-tunes>
- “A Guide to Music in the Teaching of Scottish Country Dancing” by Muriel A. Johnstone
- Andy Imbrie, San Francisco Branch, for providing feedback on the 11 February 2021 version

A blurred background of a musical score with a pencil resting on it. The score is on aged, yellowed paper. The pencil is positioned diagonally across the page, pointing towards the bottom right. The word "Questions?" is centered over the score in a large, black, sans-serif font.

Questions?

Final Thought

“Dancing is an expression of our capacity to celebrate life!”

- *Peter Block*

The background of the slide is a warm, orange-toned image of a musical score. A hand is visible, pointing at a specific staff of music. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white rectangular area.

Follow-up Talk
*The Art and Science of
Creating a Ball Program*