Irish Music for Barred Percussion Ensemble

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About the CD

The CD contains both recordings and data files. The audio recordings reflect one of many ways these scores may be performed. Please use them as a guide and encourage your students to be involved in arranging the pieces.

The data files include reproducible lead sheets for the melody parts in standard and Alphanotes notation. To access the data files, you will need a PDF reader, such as Adobe Reader, which you can download for free at http://get.adobe.com/reader/. Once you have installed a PDF reader, simply insert your CD into your CD drive. When prompted, click on View Files to see all of the resources available to you.
This polka goes by many names. Here are a few: “Charley O’Leary’s Favourite,” “Sweeney’s,” “Sweeny’s Tjum Tjum,” “Kitty Molloy’s Favourite,” “Casey’s,” and “Teehan’s.” According to one source:

*Denis Murphy was an Irish fiddler from Sliabh Luachra. Both Denis and his sister, Julia Clifford, are regarded as archetypal Kerry musicians, and were taught by the legendary Padraig O’Keefe. There are a few tunes given Denis’s name after the way he played them. (www.nigelgatherer.com)*

With so many alternate titles, it almost seems as though a piece takes on the name of whoever performs it. Hey, maybe after you play it, you can re-name it after yourself, too!

**Teaching Tips**
- This polka can be played by most of your upper-grade students as written or easily modified to work for less experienced students. Most students are able to play the original melody.
- Use the recording to help your students become familiar with the tune. Further prepare the students by having them clap, pat, step, etc. the beat and prominent rhythm patterns as they listen. You might also teach a dance to help reinforce the AB form. The heel-toe Polka works really well with this tune.
- Notice the alto and soprano parts are rhythmically similar in the A section. Begin by teaching these parts in two-measure segments.
- Notice the tenor and bass parts are rhythmically similar to each other, too. Teach these parts next, also in two-measure segments.
- At the B section, have the sopranos, altos, and tenors practice patting their rhythm before playing it: left, right, rest, right, left, right, rest. Then demonstrate the parts for each section. Teach each part in two-measure segments. You can simplify the bass pattern, if needed, by changing mm. 13–14 to be the same as mm. 9–10.
- Once your students have mastered the piece, you might say, “Wow, you play like Denis Murphy!”

**Performance Suggestions**
Repeat the piece four times in this order, with these suggestions:

**First Time**
- A section: Start with the melody played by marimba. On the repeat, add the recorder to the melody as well as the baritones and basses playing the alternative part seen below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baritone</th>
<th>Bass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- B section: The recorder and marimba continue to play the melody while the baritone and bass voices continue the alternate pattern until m. 13, beat 1 where they should stop.

**Second and Third Times**: All play as written.

**Fourth Time**
- Create an interlude-like section by having the voices layer in every eight measures (repeating the A section until all are in) in this order: baritone, tenor, marimba on melody, recorder on melody, alto and bass (playing the alternate pattern), soprano.
- Repeat the A section one more time (bass on regular pattern).
- Play the B section two times.
Repeat entire piece as desired.
Rob Roy MacGregor

Also known as “Rob Ruadh Macghriogair,” this tune is considered a “strathspey” which is a dance form that is similar to the hornpipe. It is rhythmically unique, including the “Scotch snap” (two notes played close together as is notated using a sixteenth note followed by a dotted eighth). This style is associated with Scottish dance and song. Strathspey is also a region in Scotland. This tune should not be confused with “Rob Roy,” which is a reel.

Rob Roy MacGregor was a hero in Irish folklore. This tune is no doubt named after him.

Teaching Tips

- Play the recording for your students. I have used bagpipe as one of the melody voices on the recording although we will undoubtedly use recorders in the classroom. If you have a bagpipe player in the area, consider inviting them to demonstrate their instrument for your students.
- This tune is in AB form. Each section consists of a couple patterns that are more or less repeated.

Performance Suggestions

Swing the eighth notes in this tune. Essentially you will play the tune four times, but for the sake of clarity, we’ve notated the A and B, A’ and B’, and A-Final sections separately.

Introduction: Accompaniment voices softly roll on their pitches

First Time

- A section: Marimba plays the melody while accompaniment voices continue to roll.
- B section: The recorder joins the marimba on the melody. Accompaniment voices roll on assigned pitches.

Second Time

- A’ section: All voices, except the bass and melody, play the first four measures. All voices, except the bass, play the A’ section two times, taking the second ending to the B’ section.
- All voices, except bass, play the B’ section.

Third Time

- All play A’ and B’ as written.

Fourth Time

- A’ section: Repeat the first four measures with voices entering in this order: alto, tenor and soprano (enter together), marimba on melody, recorder on melody, baritone and bass together; continue to play the section one more time, taking the second ending to the B’ section.
- B’ section: All play.
- A-Final section: Play as written.
Traditional Irish Tune  
Arr. by Doug Edwards