



BAGPIPE TUTORIALS

Pipe Major Bill Robertson,
ex The Royal Scots



John Roy Stewart

Strathspey (Traditional)

The musical score consists of seven staves of music in treble clef, common time (C). The piece is a traditional strathspey, characterized by its complex, rhythmic patterns. The notation includes numerous sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together, and frequent use of grace notes. The melody is highly ornamented, with many slurs and ties. The piece begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign, indicating a first ending. The final staff concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Please see next page for some lesson pointers



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Lesson Pointers:

It helps to beat time with all four beats to the bar to keep the beats in control without jumping onto some beats too soon. Allied with these beats should be good attention always to the dotted notes that are relatively longer in duration than one might think. As a result the short notes have to be in the main relatively shorter than the 16th note as written, yet clearly executed without clipping. These few points help to maintain the rhythm and lift or bounce of the dance.

Many of the doublings on short notes should have the similar timing of basic strathspey movement i.e. the rather open doubling on a short C, or B, going down fairly smartly to the longer dotted low A, B, or low G. In triplings/triplets make sure all three notes are heard clearly with the longest third note held well enough for the remainder of the beat.

Keep in mind a slightly extra feeling on the first beat in each bar seemingly without disturbing the momentum or the regular dance rhythm.

When two short 16th notes follow one another as in the first bar third and fourth beats – Low G, low A – B, E, the first of the two very short notes low A should be slightly more relaxed/very subtly to allow the next short note B to be executed clearly with its doubling in this case, yet seemingly keeping the first dotted note long enough.