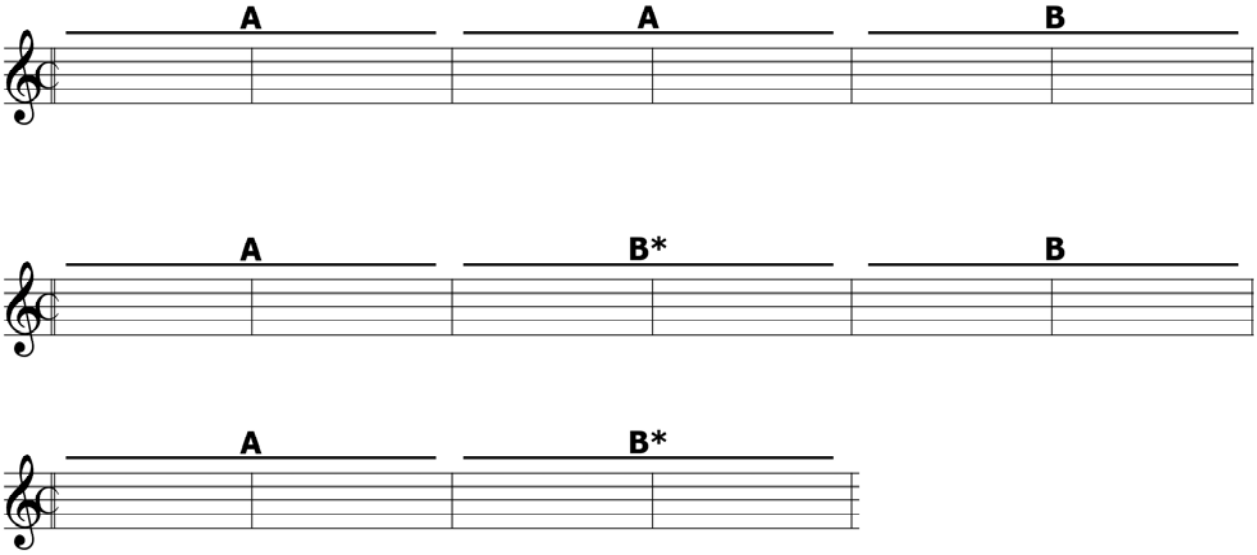
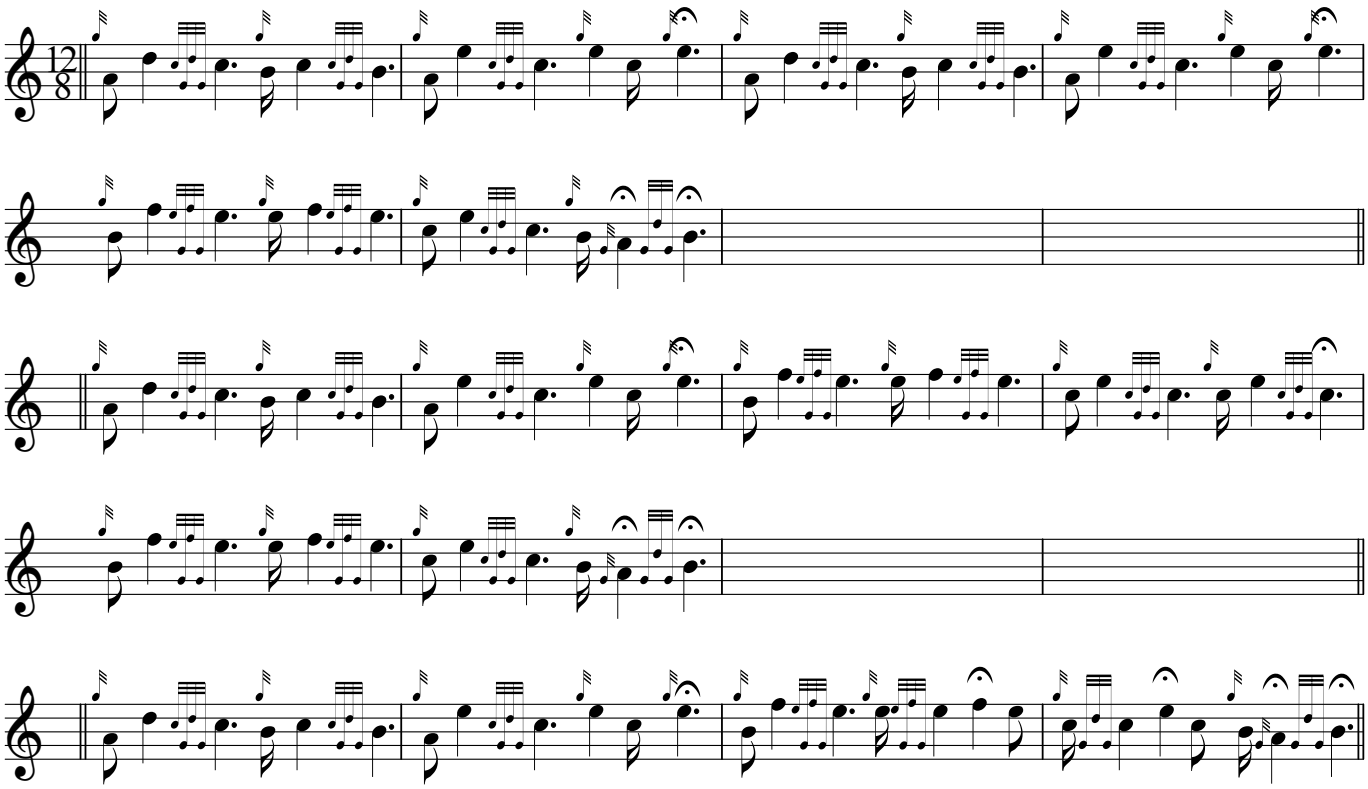
It is helpful to know the structure or classification of Piobaireachd. The Little Spree is classified as of Primary construction as below with three lines in the urlar/ground and each variation. The bars per line are six, six, four. The small phrases each of two bars are simply: Line 1 - A, A, B; line 2 - A, B,* B; and line 3 – A, B*. The * indicates that often these bars have small changes to the theme. Knowing the structure helps with memorization of the piece, and shows the element of what we call “phrasing” (a little coma at the end of the phrase meaning to dwell subtly on last longest note of the phrase, but as much in your mind without dwelling too much on that note).

Sometimes I put a pause mark 𝄐 on appropriate notes at the end of some phrases, or elsewhere to denote usually a little extra tasteful duration. The written piece of only the urlar/ground, the first variation (doubling of the ground), and the second Siubhal variation follows on from the structure illustration below.

PRIMARY CONSTRUCTION



The Urlar



Note

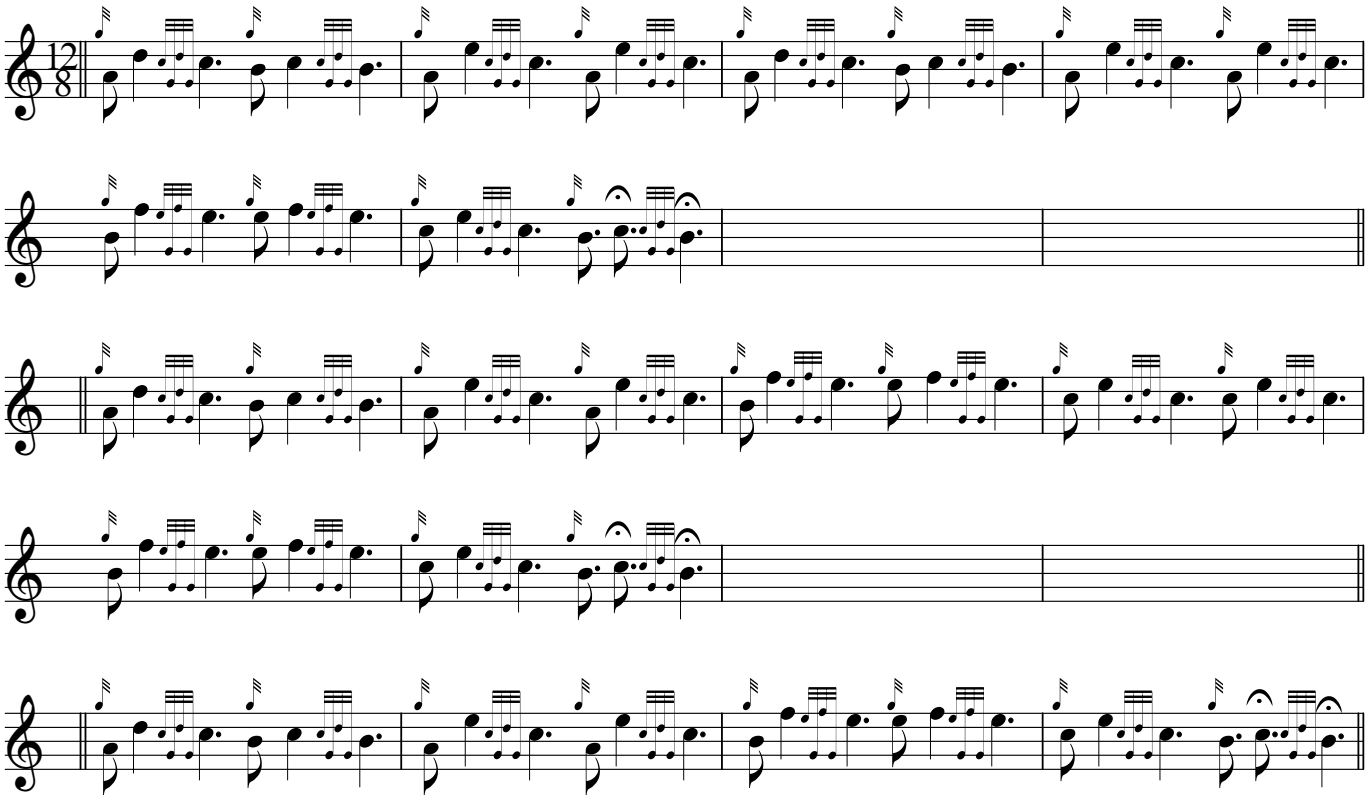
Time taken to normally play the first line as a guide to timing the Urlar would be about 42 seconds duration, give or take a second or two.

Endeavour to have a song-like approach with a certain momentum and subtle feeling on the notes with pause marks thus often occurring at the end of the small phrases (every two bars) as mentioned above, without seemingly dragging or becoming tedious. Listen to the relevant audio of the piece.

I have taken some liberties in the notation with a few note values to convey a shorter value i.e. the sixteenth notes (semiquavers) as in bar one first line and elsewhere where the “B” is fractionally shorter than the first low “A” eighth in that bar.

Technically, there are many trills on “E” that you can find out how to play them well if necessary in the relevant videos on that embellishment.

Variation 1 Urlar doubling.

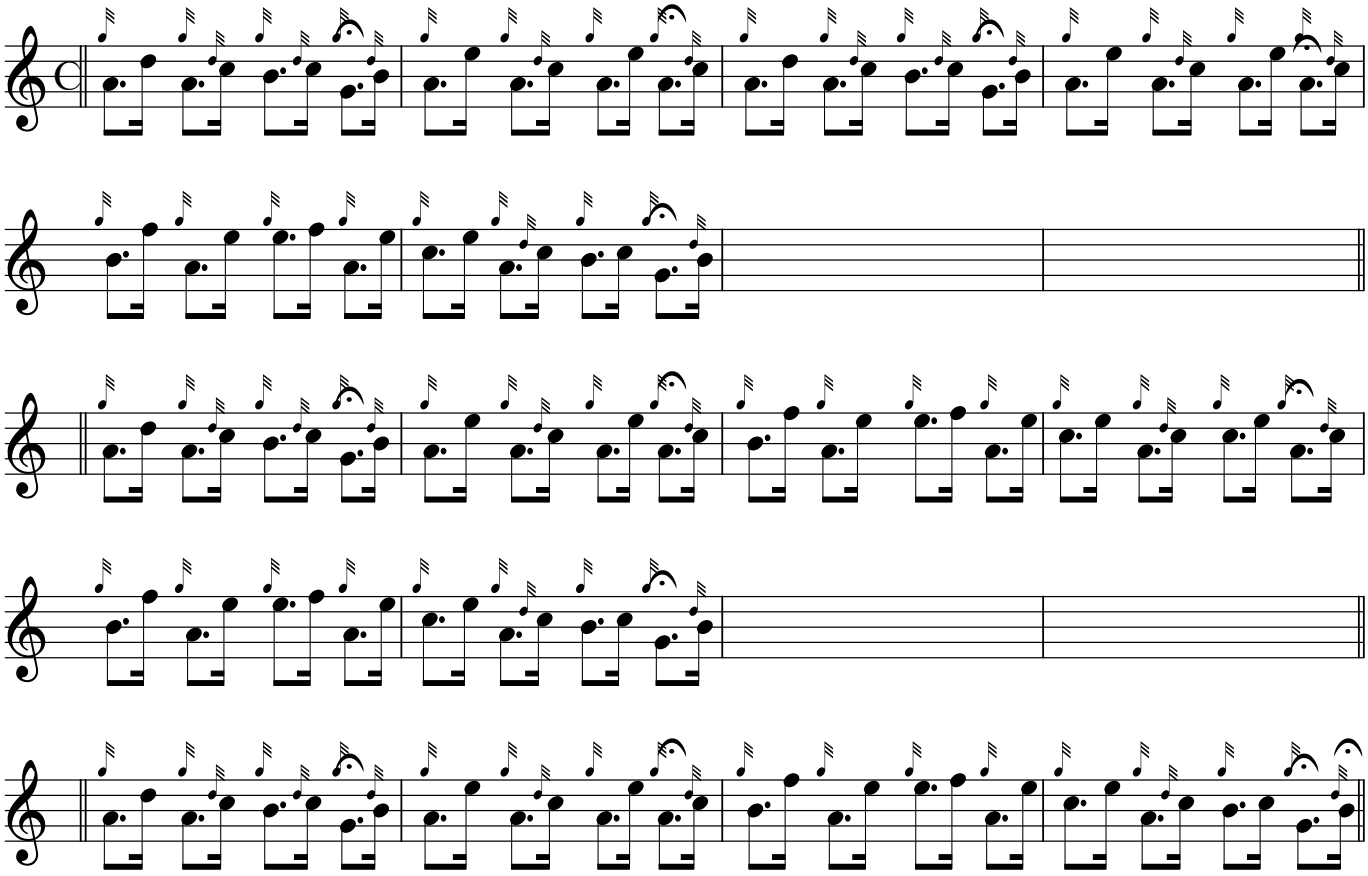


Note

This doubling of the Urlar would be at a slightly faster tempo (say 36 - 40 seconds depending on mood etc.) and more regular rhythm. Listen for the certain subtly at the end of these lines especially in the last line before the change to the next variation that follows next page. Written to show.

You may have a very subtle touch, hardly noticed or just in your mind as a controlling point on the last of each little phrase.

Variation 2



Note

This Siubhal variation has good feeling on the lower dotted notes with the shorter sixteenth notes relatively shorter than written yet not clipped – a kind of subtle cutting with the fingers just opened/raised a little higher perhaps. The phrasing touches could be applied in this variation to the last dotted note in each bar as indicated with pause marks, yet not overdone in the fairly regular quite faster rhythm of about
30 seconds or so first line guide. Listen to the audio tutorial relevant to the whole Piobaireachd.
In the audio the next Taorluath Fosgailte (tripling) variation might be a slightly steadier tempo, with the final Crunluath Fosgailte variation slightly faster than the tripling, yet controlled especially on the normal upper hand crunluath longer theme notes.