

## The Irish Washerwoman

This is a lovely arrangement of the Irish tune, “The Irish Washerwoman”. Do read the information at the bottom of the page in your book about the piece.

It is in 6/8 time. If you are not sure about this time signature, read the section on the Art Forms home learning resources, woodwind Yellow award 6/8 time signatures.

To practise getting the feel of 6/8 time count out loud up to 6 a few times and stress (say louder) numbers 1 and 4, keeping a steady beat.

1,2,3,4,5,6, 1,2,3,4,5,6, 1,2,3,4,5,6, 1,2,3,4,5,6.

Now you could clap beats **1** and **4** while counting out loud.

This is what you want to try to achieve when you play this piece, 2 groups of 3 adding up to 6.

It is much easier to count all the quavers when you first learn the piece, and to play it slowly. Don't be tempted to try and play the lively speed indicated right away, you will need to gradually work up to this.

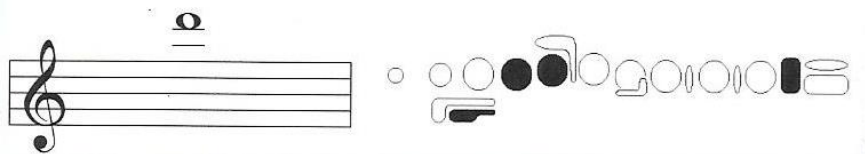
### Warm up

Before you start to play this piece you should warm up with something relevant to the music. This song is written in the key of C Major (which you learnt for your grade 2 flute exam) so practise playing through the C Major scale.

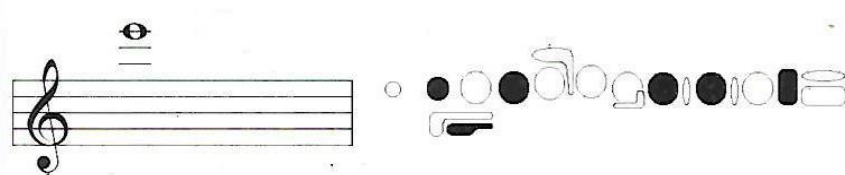
The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> lines of this tune go very high, right up to top F. You will need to prepare you for these high notes in your warm up.

Make sure you know the correct fingering for your high notes before you start.

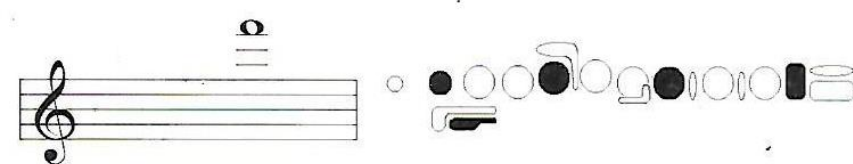
### High D



### High E

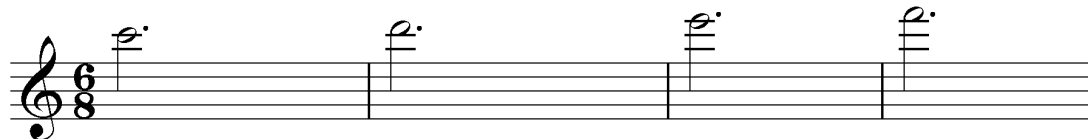


### High F

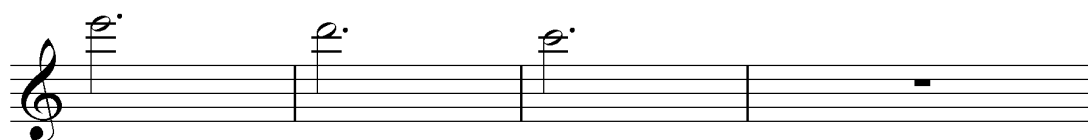


Now try this warm up.

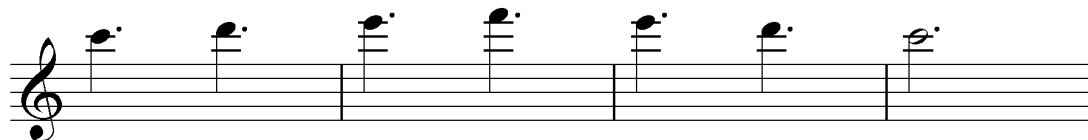
Count 1, 2,3,4, 5,6, 1, 2,3,4, 5,6, 1, 2,3,4, 5,6, 1, 2,3,4, 5,6,



1, 2,3,4, 5,6, 1, 2,3,4, 5,6, 1, 2,3,4, 5,6, 1, 2,3,4, 5,6,



1, 2,3,4, 5,6, 1, 2,3,4, 5,6, 1, 2,3,4, 5,6, 1, 2,3,4, 5,6,



1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6,



Now it is time to learn the song.

Don't try to play the song right through straight away, break it up in to manageable sections. This song has four main sections and a four bar ending. Practise each section separately.

Section 1 – from when you first start at the end of bar 4, to bar the end of bar 12

Play this at a slow speed, counting the quaver beats. Make sure you slur quavers 1-2 and 4-5. Try to make the staccato notes, (quavers 3 and 6) sound bouncy to give the melody a light feel.

Now try playing this section *mf*.

Section 2 – from bar 13 to the rest in bar 20

There is some very tricky fingering here, you will need to work on bars 14 and 16 slowly, one bar at a time.

Play bar 14 about five times over then do the same with bar 16. Now try adding the slurs and the staccato notes.

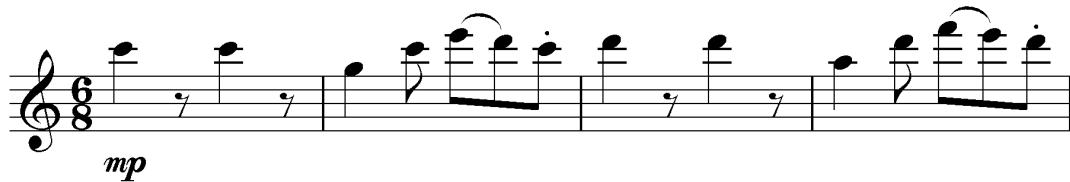
You will eventually have to play this fairly quietly, *mp*.

Playing high notes quietly is a difficult technique on the flute. You will need to support the note using your diaphragm muscle. To do this give a little push like when you laugh or say huh. You will also need to make a very small round shape with your lips, so think ooo, it really helps.

How quietly can you play these bars?

Now try to play the whole of section 2 quietly. Don't forget to count the rests as well as the notes, and watch out for the tie between bars 17 and 18. The dotted crotchet high C tied on to the quaver next to it means to add the value of both notes together (3+1) which equals 4 quaver beats.

Count 1, 2, 3, 4 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,



Count 1, 2, 3, 4 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5



This is a tied note, so hold it for 4 quaver beats.

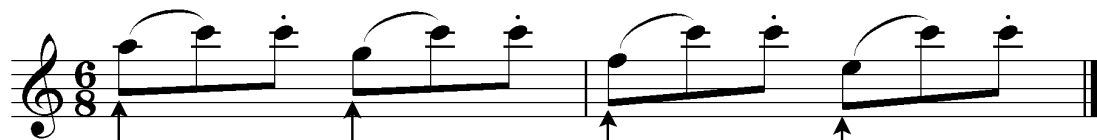
This is a tied note, so hold it for 4 quaver beats.

Section 3 – from the last quaver of bar 20 to the end of bar 28

Once you have mastered the high notes in section 2, you will find section 3 easier to play. It has the same slur and staccato pattern that you have already worked on in the previous sections. One of the features of this section is the use of repeated notes, first C to G, and later, B to G.

Bars 25 to 26 are like walking down a scale, but putting 2 Cs between every note of the scale.

Count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,



These are the important notes, walking down the scale. Try to play them slightly louder than the high Cs.

Notice that bars 27 and 28 are exactly the same as bars 11 and 12 which you have already practised.

Although there is a dynamic marking of *mf* here, don't play it too loud as the next section is louder.

#### Section 4 – from bar 29 to the end of bar 36

On the surface this looks easier, don't be fooled. The little arrow heads over the notes heads mean to accent, (play louder) the notes, so that they stand out. Make sure that you count this carefully. A crotchet lasts as long as 2 quavers, so you will need to hold the note for 2 beats, then rest for 1 quaver beat, and the tied note in bars 30 and 32 last for four quaver beats.

Count 1, 2, 3, 4 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,



Bars 33 and 34 have very tricky fingering, so practise playing these bars slowly. Play these two bars five times, starting very slow and getting slightly faster each time, not forgetting the slur and staccato markings.

Now play the whole section observing the dynamics. Notice there is a big crescendo through bar 35, ending with a really loud high C.

#### 4 Bar ending – bars 37 to the end

Make a big contrast here; you just finished section 4 *f*. This has to suddenly change in bar 37 to *p*. Make sure you can hear the difference in your volume. In the one bar rest at bar 38 imagine the piano echoing what you played in bar 37 as you count to 6. The whole piece ends with an octave drop playing the lower C as loud as you can, marked *ff*, and accent the last note. Don't linger too long on the last note, it is just one quaver long with a rest after it, so keep it short.

Now try to play the whole piece slowly, keeping each section the same speed, so make sure you start at the speed as you play the hardest section. Use a metronome beat to help, clicking all 6 beats to start with. As you gradually speed the piece up you could try changing the metronome click to 2 clicks per bar, quavers 1 and 4.

If you have the equipment you could try recording yourself, a voice record app on your smart phone will work for this. Now try playing a duet with your self by changing the order of the sections to: Section 2, Section 1, Section 4, Section 3, 4 bar ending. What you are now playing is similar to the piano accompaniment for this piece.

Have fun.