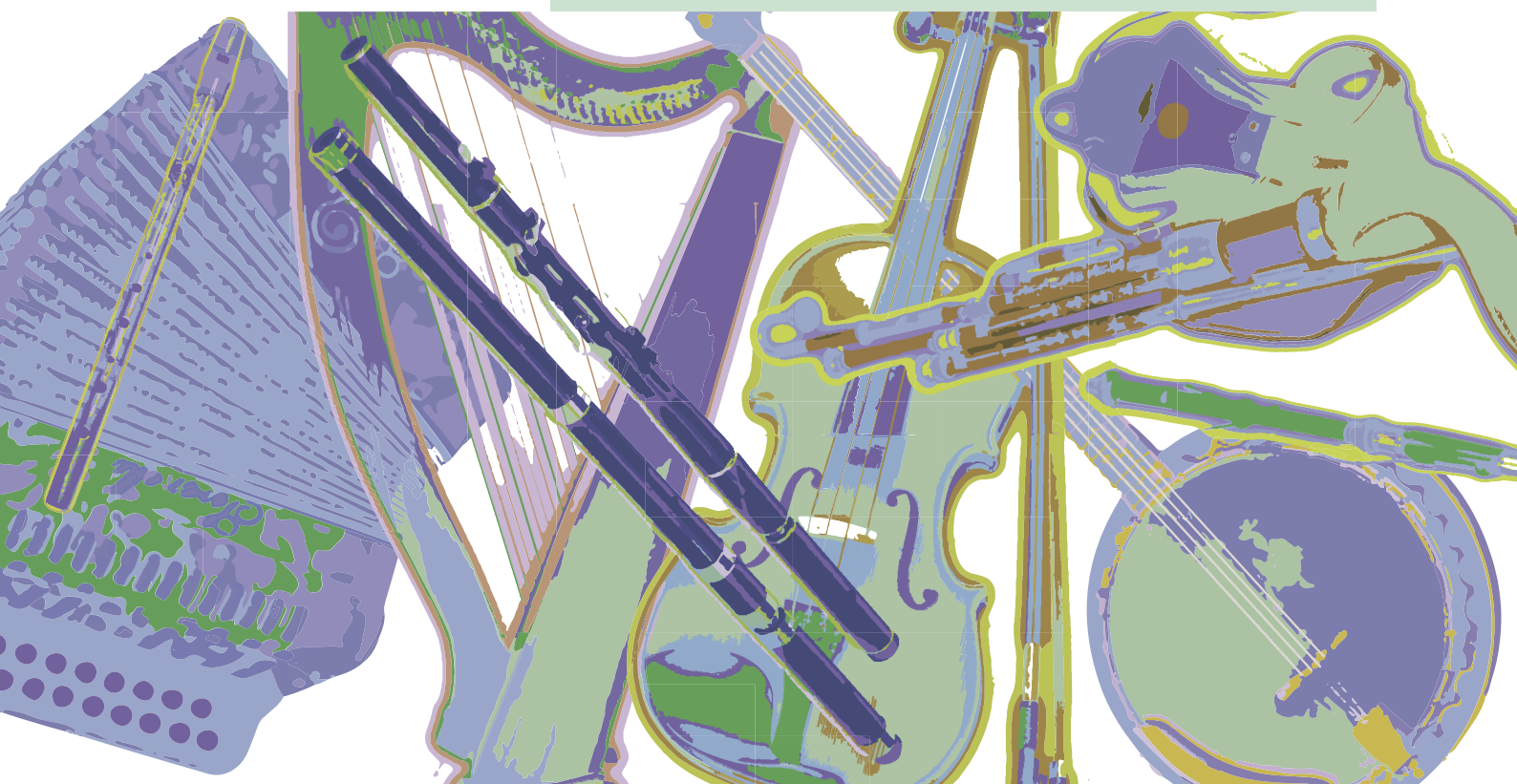



Comhaltas

Irish Traditional Music Exams



SCT
Scrúdú Ceol Tíre

**Syllabus
2024 Edition**



Irish Abroad Unit

An tAonad Ceolach Eorpach
Department of Foreign Affairs



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

SCT

Scrúdú Ceol Tíre

Administered by
COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN

TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC EXAMINATIONS

Syllabus - 2024 Edition

SCT Examination Board

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Kathleen Nesbitt
Martin Power
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Caitríona de Brún
Éamonn Ó hArgáin
Tomás Ó Maoldomhnaigh

Director of SCT

Oisín Mac Diarmada



SCT Examination Office

Clasaí
Alfie Byrne Road
Clontarf
Dublin 3
Ireland

THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

by Senator Labhrás Ó Murchú, Director General of CCÉ

Is dea scéal é go bhfuil ag eirí thar barr leis an Scrúdú Ceol Tíre (SCT) – á eagrú ag Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. Tá an tionscnamh stairiúil seo tráthúil agus oiriúnach go mór mhór mar lóchrann an dóchais ar an ród seo romhainn. Is breá le daoine óga dúshlan chun caighdeán a fheabhsú agus a gcumas a fhorbairt agus, dar ndóigh, tá an scéal amhlaidh le ceoltóirí traidisiúnta na hÉireann.

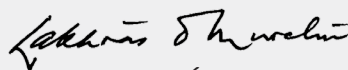
Launched by President Mary McAleese in December 1998, the Irish traditional music examinations have met with exceptional success. This examination network is a further example of the vibrancy of, and the standards being achieved in, Irish traditional music. This native music of Ireland now enjoys an enviable status, not only nationally but also internationally, and none more so than among young people.

Young people welcome a challenge to improve their skills and raise their standards and this applies also to the young traditional musicians of today. They have demonstrated their prowess, adaptability and innovative artistry and they have won the admiration of many people at home and abroad. These young performers have remained true to the tradition which they have inherited from the older exponents while at the same time bringing their own artistic enthusiasm to bear on their musicianship.

It is now generally acknowledged that Irish traditional music should enjoy the fullest recognition and equality, with all the necessary resources, within the education system and at all levels. One hopes that this will be achieved in the near future.

The late Micheál Ó hEidhin, former Music Inspector with the Department of Education, gave unstinted and invaluable service to the development of SCT – based on his own professional and traditional background – to the development of the examination syllabus. In this he was ably assisted by the CCÉ Project Committee, consisting of Dr. Antóin Mac Gabhann, Dr. Tomás Ó Canainn, Séamus Mac Mathúna, Máirtín de Paor, Micheál Ó Briain, Lourda Griffin, Micheál Ó hAlmhain and Mary Nugent. Among others who gave considerable assistance were Noel Hill, Kathleen Nesbitt and Paddy Ryan. To all who helped in any way to bring his project to fruition we express our heartfelt appreciation.

The Ardchomhairle of CCÉ, and indeed our membership worldwide, look forward with confidence to the continued development of Scrúdú Ceol Tíre (SCT). We see this as another important milestone in the cultural life of Ireland, the Irish diaspora and friends of Ireland.



Dr. Labhrás Ó Murchú
Director General of CCÉ

25 YEARS OF SCRÚDÚ CEOL TÍRE

by Oisín Mac Diarmada, Director & Chief Examiner SCT

Marking 25 years of Comhaltas Scrúdú Ceol Tíre, the launch of this new 2024 syllabus is notable also for a new partnership with Music Teachers' Board (MTB), opening up Ofqual accreditation in the UK for the first time.

The onset of SCT examinations in 1999 launched an era whereby a structured system of graded assessment could offer an important learning support to teachers and students of traditional Irish music. With over 75,000 examinations already completed, the experience harnessed since the original roll-out has been an invaluable resource in constructing this revised syllabus. The 25 years since have seen traditional Irish music become ever more established as a field of study within third level education, and initiatives such as the SCT examinations continue to play a part in the overall development of a broad musical skill set within the traditional music community.

A hugely important role has been played by the dedicated team of educationalists who have given immeasurable service and expertise to Comhaltas' education programme. We are particularly indebted to the lifetime work of Kathleen Nesbitt, Martin Power and Paddy Ryan. The ever-present expertise and dedication of Majella Bartley, Director of Education & TTCT, has been of immense importance in continuing to harness and grow the educational potential of this initiative. I also wish to acknowledge the work of the SCT Administration team, who have worked tirelessly as the chief point of contact with teachers and parents over many years. I would like to especially thank the incredible panel of SCT examiners who have given many years of dedicated service in encouragement of local musical communities. The partnership of so many dedicated music teachers has been a critical part of the successful roll-out of this examination system over 25 years, and I look forward to continuing an active engagement with music education practitioners in striving to serve the educational needs of students.

It is my sincere hope that the legacy of our founding director Micheál Ó hEidhin (1938-2012) will continue to live on through the continued development and internationalisation of SCT examinations in the years ahead. Many thanks for your continued support.



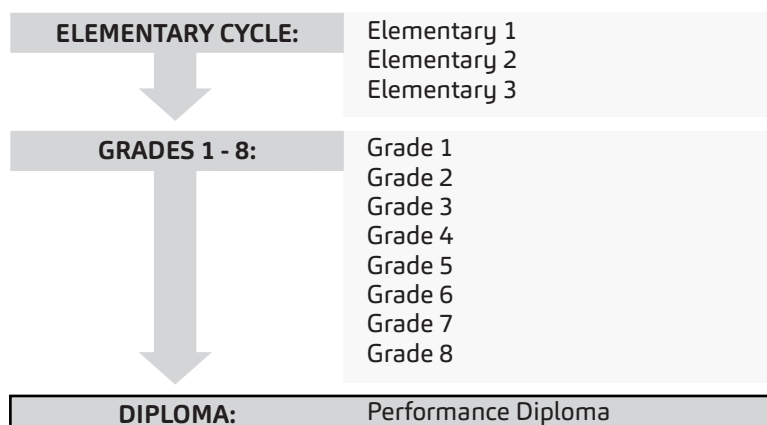
Oisín Mac Diarmada
Director & Chief Examiner SCT

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GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS & STUDENTS

1 The SCT examination system comprises 12 grades as follows:



The examination process comprises three sections, i.e. Performance, Repertoire & Aural Skills, Theory & Musical Knowledge (plus Research Project Grades 6 - 8 only).

The overall percentage mark and grade category awarded will be determined by the marks accumulated from each of the three sections, as follows:

MARKING SCHEME

A) Performance	60
B) Repertoire & Aural Skills	20
C) Theory & Musical Knowledge	20

GRADE CATEGORIES

PASS	60% - 74%
MERIT	75% - 86%
DISTINCTION	87% - 100%

A minimum overall mark of 60% (Pass) is required to progress from one exam grade to the next. In the event of a Pass mark not being achieved, the candidate is encouraged to repeat the exam during the next examination session.

Performance Diploma

The Performance Diploma is a recital-style examination aimed at performers of exceptional ability who have received Distinction in Grade 8 examination. The 40 - 45 minute solo recital will be examined by a panel of examiners, comprising at least one instrument-specialist in the instrument being examined.

MARKING BREAKDOWN	TOTAL MARKS
Interpretation	45 marks
Technical Skills	35 marks
Choice of Programme	10 marks
Stage Presentation	10 marks

Accreditation

Comhaltas SCT Examinations Now Regulated by Ofqual

Beginning in 2024, Comhaltas SCT Exams have been added to the Ofqual (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) register of qualifications in England.

This exciting accreditation development has been facilitated by Comhaltas project partner The Music Teachers' Board (MTB). The Music Teachers' Board are an Ofqual regulated awarding body, offering qualifications in both practical and performance grades.

Accreditation by Ofqual provides a mark of quality, providing recognition that Comhaltas SCT / MTB are in adherence to Ofqual rules and requirements, combining expertise in assessment with effective

operational delivery. In turn, this provides assurance that the learners who take Comhaltas SCT / MTB Ofqual regulated qualifications have the required level of knowledge and skills in the relevant subject area.

Comhaltas SCT / MTB Grades 6-8 are now eligible for the following UCAS Tariff points*

*UCAS Tariff points translate qualifications and grades into a numerical value. This numerical value is used by Higher Education course providers in the UK as part of satisfying entry requirements for a particular course.

	UCAS Tariff points		
	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Distinction	12	16	30
Merit	10	14	24
Pass	8	12	18

- 2 The SCT Examination System is designed for the assessment of traditional Irish music only.
- 3 The Examiner may ask the candidate to play all or part of the performance requirements listed in the syllabus. Unless otherwise indicated by the Examiner, candidates should perform each tune twice, except in the case of a Single Reel, which should be performed three times.
- 4 Candidates are required to present the Examiner with a Repertoire List, outlining competency with tune repertoire learned in addition to the examination performance material. The list should be clearly written or typed with tunes numbered and categorised into various tune-types. The syllabus outlines the required number of tunes for each examination. Candidates on harp or piano are not expected to provide left- hand accompaniment for tunes on Repertoire List.
- 5 Candidates are responsible for tuning and provision of their own instruments. No instruments will be supplied by the Exam Centre.
- 6 Candidates may not be accompanied during the examination on another instrument.
- 7 Candidates may be examined on syllabus material of previous grades.
- 8 In the Performance section of grades Elementary 1 through to Grade 2, candidates asked to play an air can play any slow traditional Irish melody, with or without strict meter. From Grade 3 onwards, where candidates are asked to play a Slow Air, this should be a melody without strict meter, representative of either a song or instrumental air.
- 9 Candidates must not use any form of notated music during the Performance section. Use of notated music during the Performance section will result in a 20 marks deduction in this section, unless the use of notation has been approved following a prior Additional Needs form request. It is however acceptable for all candidates to notate the beginning (1-2 bars) of Performance tunes and Repertoire List tunes to assist recall.
- 10 Candidates should write to the SCT Examination Office well in advance of the entry date, regarding any instrument not offered as instrument choice on the online entry system.
- 11 Performance pieces can be selected from the list of Suggested Tunes on pages 14 to 19 of this syllabus. Alternatively candidates can perform pieces of own choice, provided that they are of an appropriate standard, relative to the list of Suggested Tunes. Credit will be given for candidate ability to embellish tunes with tasteful ornamentation and variation, especially as they progress through the grades.
- 12 The SCT Board have decided that from the 2025 Exams onwards, at Grade 8 level, the three candidates achieving the highest overall mark will be awarded the Micheál Ó hEidhin medal in recognition of reaching an exceptional standard of musicianship.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

- 1 It is very important that first-time candidates enter at a level suitable to their overall ability and this decision should be taken in conjunction with their teacher. To achieve this it is vital that all aspects of the syllabus are considered carefully.

All candidates will be required to provide verification of identity and age.

In the case of Grade 6, 7 and 8 examinations, a Research Project must be submitted online by March 1st of the year of examination. Details of submission guidelines can be found in the syllabus.

2 Place of Examinations

Examinations will be held at centres throughout Ireland and in other selected countries. A new digital examination option is also offered. In the event that an exam centre selected has an insufficient number of entries, candidates may be moved to a nearby centre.

3 Dates of Examinations

Spring / Summer: late March to early June

Candidates must be prepared to present themselves for examination on any date within the stated period (including Sundays)

A letter may be enclosed with the entry form(s) detailing inconvenient dates. Every consideration will be given to these requests but no undertaking can be given that such dates will be avoided. Once dates and times have been fixed for examination, they cannot be altered. A limited number of regional pick-up dates will be offered at 5 Comhaltas Regional Centres at the end of the examination period to candidates unable to attend their originally scheduled exam. Payment of additional full entry fee will be required to avail of a pick-up date exam.

4 Fees, Method and Date of Entry

Details of entry fees and closing dates are available at www.comhaltas.ie. Candidates may be enrolled by a branch of Comhaltas, school, teacher, parent or guardian. Application can be made online at the www.comhaltas.ie or by official paper application. If amendments are requested after submission of the entry form(s), an additional fee may be charged. Entry forms together with the full fees must reach the SCT Examination Office on or before closing date.

All communication with the SCT Examination Office must be via the Comhaltas website or in the form of email to the following address: sct@comhaltas.ie

Late entries will not be accepted

In the case of Grade 6 - 8 candidates, a copy of the Research Project must be uploaded to the SCT online entry system (PDF or Word format) by 5pm on March 1st prior to examination. The Research Project must be accompanied by a completed Cover Sheet, downloadable from www.comhaltas.ie. Any Research Project received after this date will not be assessed and candidate will therefore not be eligible for any of the marks available for this section.

5 Examinations Conducted Through the Medium of Irish

A request for examination(s) to be conducted through the medium of Irish will be facilitated if possible, provided this facility is requested at time of application.

6 Candidates with Additional Needs

Candidates with additional needs will be accommodated provided such facilities are requested at the time of entry. The Additional Needs Form can be downloaded at Comhaltas Education and should be emailed to sct@comhaltas.ie. All candidates will be assessed on the same basis.

7 Recording of Examinations

Audio recordings of examinations are made for purposes of accreditation, standardisation and examiner training. The recording process will not affect the examination procedure.

8 Notices of Date and Time

Notices will be sent as early as possible to the entrant (i.e. branch of Comhaltas, school, teacher, parent or guardian), stating the precise date that the Examiner has been scheduled to visit the exam centre concerned and a timetable for all their candidates. Candidates must attend for examination at the time indicated on the timetable. **The Examiner will not alter the time of examination for any candidate. Candidates arriving late for their Exam will be deemed absent.** Alterations to the timetable may be possible in exceptional circumstances. The SCT Examination Office must be notified by email of any proposed alterations and an additional fee may be charged for this service. Please quote Applicant Number on any correspondence to the office, to aid processing of requests. Communication by phone will not be facilitated. Any candidate who does not attend at the allocated time will be deemed to be absent.

9 Absence from Examination

Any candidate failing to attend for examination on the date and at the time appointed will forfeit any entry fee, except in the case of illness, in which case a medical certificate must be sent to the SCT Examination Office. Notification of such must be sent to the SCT Examination Office within seven days of the date of the examination. Dates cannot be altered for school examinations, school tours, family holidays, etc. unless notified on the application form. Such requests should take the form of specific dates. Requests for block dates will not be considered. The SCT Examination Office may at its discretion, refund such portion of the entry fee as shall be determined, or arrange for the examination of the candidate at a future date.

10 Results of Examinations

The SCT Examination Office will send the entrant a Result Sheet and Certificate by post for each candidate, of which there is no duplicate, giving details of results. The office cannot accept responsibility for the non-receipt of any Result Sheet/Certificate after its dispatch by post. We regret that no results can be communicated by telephone to Applicant.

Complaints must be notified in writing to the SCT Examination Office, Clasač, Alfie Byrne Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3 within 30 days of receipt of result. A €50 fee must be submitted along with written complaint, refundable upon complaint being upheld. Complaints will be considered by SCT Examination Board and decision communicated to Applicant within 30 days of receipt. The decision of the SCT Examination Board is final.

ELEMENTARY 1

■ Performance (60 marks):

1 tune as follows:

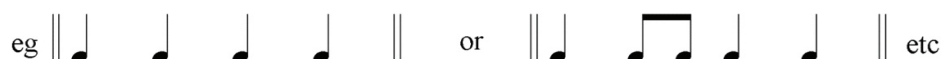
Candidates will be asked to play any **one tune** of their own choice.

■ Repertoire & Aural Skills (20 marks):

Candidates are required to present a **Repertoire List**, comprising **1 tune**, not including the tune already played in the Performance section. They will be asked to play a section from the tune.

Candidates will be asked:

1) to clap the rhythm of one bar in 4/4 as demonstrated **twice** by the Examiner.



2) to identify tune type based on a sample 8-bar melody played **twice** by the Examiner, i.e. Air or Polka.

3) to differentiate between high and low notes a fifth apart (the root D and the A above), played **twice** in any order, on any instrument by the Examiner.

■ Theory & Musical Knowledge (20 marks):

Candidates will be asked to play a short sight-reading test on their instrument written in staff notation comprising the notes D and D'.



Candidates will be asked:

1) to talk about where they learn music.

2) to name 2 instruments other than their own.

ELEMENTARY 2

■ Performance (60 marks):

2 tunes as follows:

Candidates will be asked to play any **2 tunes** of their own choice.

■ Repertoire & Aural Skills (20 marks):

Candidates are required to present a **Repertoire List**, comprising **2 tunes**, not including tunes already played in Performance section. They will be asked to play a section from **1** of these tunes.

Candidates will be asked:

1) to clap the rhythm of two bars in 4/4 as demonstrated **twice** by the Examiner.



2) to identify tune type based on a sample 8-bar melody played **twice** by the Examiner, i.e. Air or March.

3) to identify note either a 5th or octave interval above root D (A or D'), played **twice** beginning with D on any instrument by the Examiner.

■ Theory & Musical Knowledge (20 marks):

Candidates will be asked to play a short sight-reading test on their instrument written in staff notation comprising the notes D, A, D'.



Candidates will be asked:

1) to describe what happens generally during their music lesson.

2) to describe their own instrument.

ELEMENTARY 3

■ Performance (60 marks):

2 tunes as follows:

Candidates will be asked to play **1 tune** of their own choice. For their 2nd tune, candidates will choose one of either **Double Jig, Slide** or **Single Jig**.

■ Repertoire & Aural Skills (20 marks):

Candidates are required to present a **Repertoire List**, comprising **5 tunes**, not including tunes already played in Performance section. They will be asked to play a section from **2 tunes** chosen by the Examiner from the Repertoire List.

Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to clap the rhythm of two bars in 4/4 as demonstrated **twice** by the Examiner.



- 2) to identify tune type based on a sample 8-bar melody played **twice** by the Examiner, i.e. Polka, Double Jig.

- 3) to identify note either a 4th or 5th interval above root D (G or A), played **twice** beginning with D on any instrument by the Examiner.

■ Theory & Musical Knowledge (20 marks):

Candidates will be asked to play a short sight-reading test on their instrument written in staff notation comprising the notes D, D', G, A.



Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to describe a musical instrument other than their own.
- 2) to describe what they enjoy about learning traditional Irish music.

■ Performance (60 marks):

3 tunes as follows:

Candidates will be asked to play **one Polka** and **one Air**. For their 3rd tune, candidates will choose one of either **Double Jig**, **Single Jig** or **Slide**.

■ Repertoire & Aural Skills (20 marks):

Candidates are required to present a **Repertoire List** comprising **10 tunes** not including tunes already played in Performance section.

They will be asked to play a section from **2 tunes** chosen by the Examiner from the Repertoire List.

Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to identify tune type based on a sample 8-bar melody played **twice** by the Examiner, i.e. March, Polka, Double Jig.
- 2) to identify note either a 2nd, 4th or 5th interval above root D (E, G or A), played **twice** beginning with D on any instrument by the Examiner.
- 3) to repeat on their instrument a simple 2-bar phrase (4/4 time in D major) using crotchet notes - D, E, G, A -, as played **three times** by the Examiner.

■ Theory & Musical Knowledge (20 marks):

Candidates will be asked to play a short sight-reading test on their instrument written in staff notation comprising the notes D, D' E, G, A.



Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to name a well-known musician who plays the same instrument as the Candidate.
- 2) to discuss some of the ways their musical skills have advanced during the past year.

GRADE 2

■ Performance (60 marks):

3 tunes as follows:

Candidates will be asked to play **one Air** and **one Reel**. For their 3rd tune, candidates will choose one of either **Double Jig**, **Single Jig** or **Slide**.

■ Repertoire & Aural Skills (20 marks):

Candidates are required to present a **Repertoire List** comprising **15 tunes**, not including tunes already played in Performance section.

They will be asked to play a section from **3 tunes** chosen by the Examiner from the Repertoire List.

Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to identify tune type based on a sample 8-bar melody played **twice** by the Examiner, i.e. Polka, Double Jig, Reel.
- 2) to identify note either a 3rd, 5th or 6th interval above root D (either F#, A, B) played **twice** beginning with D on any instrument by the Examiner.
- 3) to repeat on their instrument a 2-bar phrase (4/4 time in D major) using crotchet notes - D, E, F#, G, A - played **three times** by the Examiner.

■ Theory & Musical Knowledge (20 marks):

Candidates will be asked to play a short sight-reading test on their instrument written in staff notation comprising the notes D, D', E, F#, G, A, B, C# using both crotchet and quaver notes.



Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to describe a recording of a reel which they have listened to, naming the tune, musician(s) and any other relevant musical information.
- 2) to name two prominent musicians who play locally to where the candidate lives, along with the instrument(s) they play.

■ Performance (60 marks):

4 tunes as follows:

Candidates will be asked to play **one Slow Air, one Hornpipe, one Double Jig** and **one Reel**.

Note: Slow Air may be chosen from list of suggested slow airs on page 15 of this Syllabus.

■ Repertoire & Aural Skills (20 marks):

Candidates are required to present a **Repertoire List**, comprising **20 tunes** (categorised under tune-type headings to include at least 4 Reels and 4 Double Jigs), not including tunes already played in Performance section.

They will be asked to play a section from **4 tunes** chosen by the Examiner from the Repertoire List.

Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to identify tune type based on a sample 8-bar melody played **twice** by the Examiner, i.e. Double Jig, Reel, Hornpipe.
- 2) to identify note either a 5th, 6th or 7th interval above root D (A, B, C#), played **twice** beginning with D on any instrument by the Examiner.
- 3) to repeat on their instrument a 2-bar phrase (6/8 time in the key of D major) using all notes of the scale and crotchet and quaver note durations, as played **three times** by the Examiner.

■ Theory & Musical Knowledge (20 marks):

Candidates will be asked to play the following major scale, one octave up and down, on their instrument:

- **D major**

Candidates will be asked to play a 2-bar sight-reading test in D major, written in staff notation using both crotchet and quaver notes.



Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to describe a recording of a hornpipe which they have listened to, including naming the tune, musician(s) and any other relevant musical details.
- 2) to describe and demonstrate two types of ornamentation which can be used on their own instrument.

GRADE 4

■ Performance (60 marks):

5 tunes as follows:

Candidates will be asked to play **one Slow Air, one Reel, one Slip Jig** and **a selection of two Double Jigs (connected)**

Note: Slow Air may be chosen from list of suggested slow airs on page 15 of this Syllabus.

■ Repertoire & Aural Skills (20 marks):

Candidates are required to present a **Repertoire List**, comprising **25 tunes** (categorised under tune-type headings to include at least 6 Reels and 5 Double Jigs), not including tunes already played in Performance section. They will be asked to play a section from **4 tunes** chosen by the Examiner from the Repertoire List.

Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to identify tune type based on a sample 8-bar melody played **twice** by the Examiner, i.e. Double Jig, Reel, Slip Jig.
- 2) to identify note either a 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th interval above root D (F#, G, A, B, C#), played **twice** beginning with D on any instrument by the Examiner.
- 3) to repeat on their instrument a 2-bar phrase in 4/4 time in the key of D major using crotchet and quaver note durations, as played **three times** by the Examiner.

■ Theory & Musical Knowledge (20 marks):

Candidates should be asked to play the following major scale, one octave up and down, on their instrument:

• G major

Candidates will be asked to play a 2-bar sight-reading test in 4/4 time in the key of either D major or G major, comprising crotchets, dotted crotchets and quavers, written in staff notation. Candidates should be familiar with notes ranging from D to higher octave G'. They will also be asked to identify the **key signature** of sight-reading test.



Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to describe a recording of a slip jig which they have listened to, naming the tune, musician(s) and any other relevant musical detail.
- 2) to name three musicians (past or present) who play the same instrument as the candidate, referencing the region each are from, and any other relevant musical detail.

■ Performance (60 marks):

6 tunes as follows:

Candidates will be asked to play **one Slow Air**, **one Barndance**, **two Double Jigs** (connected) and **two Reels** (connected).

Note: Slow Air may be chosen from list of suggested slow airs on page 15 of this Syllabus.

■ Repertoire & Aural Skills (20 marks):

Candidates are required to present a **Repertoire List**, comprising a total of **30 tunes** (categorised under tune-type headings to include at least 7 Reels and 7 Double Jigs), not including tunes already played in Performance section. They will be asked to play a section from **5 tunes** chosen by the Examiner from the Repertoire List.

Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to identify note from interval of a 2nd to octave interval above root D (E, F#, G, A, B, C#, D'), played **twice** beginning with D on any instrument by the Examiner.
- 2) to identify tune type based on a sample 8-bar melody played **twice** by the Examiner, i.e. Reel, Slide, Hornpipe, Slip Jig. Also to recognise simple ornamentation in any of the above tunes, i.e. grace notes (cuts), triplets (legato or staccato), rolls, sliding notes.
- 3) to repeat on their instrument a 2-bar phrase in 4/4 time in the key of D major using dotted crotchet, crotchet and quaver note durations, as played **three times** by the Examiner.

■ Theory & Musical Knowledge (20 marks):

Candidates will be asked to play the following two major scales, one octave up and down, on their instruments:

- **D major**
- **A major**

Candidates will be asked to play a 2-bar sight-reading test in 4/4 time or 6/8 time, written in staff notation in the key of D major or A major, comprised of crotchets, quavers and dotted crotchets. Candidates should be familiar with notes ranging from D to higher octave B'. They will also be asked to identify the **key signature** of sight-reading test.



Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to contrast the playing styles of **two** musicians (past or present) each representing a different regional style.
- 2) to demonstrate and discuss **three** forms of ornamentation on their instrument.

GUIDELINES FOR GRADES 6 - 8

Specific Musical Requirements Grade 6,7 and 8

At Grade 6,7 and 8 there are specific musical requirements that will change each year.

The Slow Airs list is relevant for Grade 6, 7 and 8.

The Instrument-specific Dance Tunes list is relevant only for Grade 7 and 8.

The list for the relevant Exam cycle will be available for Download each year from 1st September at **www.comhaltas.ie** i.e. the tunes for Exam year 2025 will be available for Download on 1st September 2024.

In Grades 6, 7 and 8, candidates must submit a **Research Project** as part of the examination. A copy of the Research Project (PDF or Word file format) must be uploaded to the SCT Online Entry System by 5pm on March 01st prior to examination. The Research Project must be accompanied by a completed Cover Sheet, downloadable from **www.comhaltas.ie**. Any Research Project received after this date will not be assessed and candidate will therefore not be eligible for any of the marks available for this section. Guidelines for subject area of Research Project are detailed under relevant grade information. All audio, video and written (including online) sources utilised in the course of Research Project preparation must be acknowledged, and transcribing or plagiarising of existing material will render project inadmissible for marking.

During the Theory & Musical Knowledge section of the examination, the Examiner will discuss aspects of the Research Project with the candidate. Particular focus will be given to the candidate's ability to recall key information from the Research Project.

Performance tunes can be selected from the list of Suggested Tunes on pages 17 & 18 of this Syllabus. Alternatively candidates can play tunes of their own choice, provided the tunes are of similar standard to those featured on the list of Suggested Tunes.

At Grade 8 level, candidates achieving an overall mark of 90% and above will be awarded the Mícheál Ó hEidhin Medal, in recognition of reaching an exceptional standard of musicianship.

■ Performance (60 marks):

7 tunes from a prepared list of **9** as follows:

Candidates will be asked to play **one Slow Air** (chosen by candidate from a list of 3 prescribed slow airs), **one Hornpipe, two Double Jigs** (connected), **two Reels** (connected).

Also to play one of the following: **Fling, Slip Jig, Slide** (as chosen by the Examiner).

Note: Refer to CCÉ website for details of prescribed Slow Airs for year of exam entry

■ Repertoire & Aural Skills (20 marks):

Candidates are required to present a **Repertoire List**, comprising a total of **40 tunes** (categorised under at least 6 different tune-type headings to include at least 10 Reels and 10 Double Jigs), not including tunes already played in Performance section. They will be asked to play a section from **6 tunes** chosen by the Examiner from the Repertoire List.

Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to identify tune type **and** time signature based on a sample 8-bar melody played **twice** by the Examiner, i.e. Slide, Fling, Slip Jig, Mazurka.
- 2) to repeat on their own instrument a 2-bar phrase in 4/4 time in the key of D major with use of ornamentation, as played **three times** by the examiner.
- 3) From a 32-bar tune sample played once by Examiner, candidates will be asked which of the following modes the tune is based around: (i) G Ionian/Major (Doh Mode in G), (ii) D Ionian/Major (Doh Mode in D), (iii) A Dorian (Ray Mode in G), E Dorian (Ray Mode in D).

Examples of Ionian (Doh) and Dorian (Ray) Mode Tunes:

Ionian (Doh) Mode tunes: Sally Gardens (Reel) or Boys of Bluehill (Hornpipe)

Dorian (Ray) Mode tunes: Drowsy Maggie (Reel), The Sligo Maid (Reel), Old Man Dillon (Double Jig)

■ Theory & Musical Knowledge (20 marks):

Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to play a 4-bar sight-reading test in 6/8 time, in the key of C major or A major, comprising crotchet, dotted crotchet, quaver and semi-quaver note values. They will also be asked to identify the **key signature** of sight-reading test.



- 2) to play each of the following **three** scales, one octave up and down, on their instrument:

- **A major (A, B, C#, D', E, F#, G#, A)**
- **C major (C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C)**
(*whistle, flute, uilleann pipes should begin C major scale on the C above the middle C, due to instrumental range)
- **E Dorian (Ray Mode in D) [E, F#, G, A, B, C#, D', E]**

■ Research Project

The Research Project at Grade 6 level involves writing a 500 word response having listened in detail to a commercially-released full-length album of traditional Irish music, where the candidate's own instrument is featured prominently. The written response should aim to illustrate musical awareness and the ability to analyse musical performance and repertoire on the part of the candidate. The title of the album along with performer name(s) / instrument(s) played should be clearly stated.

The Research Project will be discussed with the candidate during the examination, with an ability to recall and discuss relevant information being of critical importance.

GRADE 7

■ Performance (60 marks):

8 tunes from a prepared list of **10** as follows:

Candidates will be asked to play **one Slow Air** (chosen by candidate from a list of 3 prescribed slow airs), **two Slides** or **Single Jigs** (connected), **one Hornpipe**, **two Reels** (connected), and one instrument specific **Double Jig**. Also to play **one** of the following: **Mazurka**, **Barndance** or **Slip Jig** (as chosen by the Examiner).

Note: Refer to CCÉ Website for details of prescribed Slow Airs & Instrument-Specific Double Jig relevant to year of exam entry

■ Repertoire & Aural Skills (20 marks):

Candidates are required to present a **Repertoire List**, comprising a total of **50 tunes** (categorised under at least 7 different tune-type headings to include at least 15 Reels and 12 Double Jigs), not including tunes already played in Performance section. They will be asked to play a section from **7 tunes** chosen by the Examiner from the Repertoire List.

Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to identify tune type **and** time signature based on a sample 8-bar melody played **twice** by the Examiner, i.e. Slide, Hornpipe, Slip Jig, Mazurka, Barndance, Fling. Candidates should also be able to identify any use of ornaments within the sample melody.
- 2) to repeat on their instrument a 2-bar phrase in 4/4 time in the key of D or G major with use of ornamentation, as played **three times** by the Examiner.
- 3) From a 32-bar tune sample played once by Examiner, candidates will be asked which of the following modes the tune is based around: (i) A Dorian (Ray Mode in G), (ii) E Dorian (Ray Mode in D), (iii) E Aeolian (Lah Mode in G), (iv) B Aeolian (Lah Mode in D).

Examples of Dorian (Ray) and Aeolian (Lah) Mode Tunes:

Dorian (Ray) Mode tunes: *Drowsy Maggie (Reel), The Sligo Maid (Reel), Old Man Dillon (Double Jig)*

Aeolian (Lah) Mode tunes: *Martin Wynne's No. 1 (Reel), The Otter's Holt (Reel), The Old Grey Goose (Double Jig), The Musical Priest (Reel)*

■ Theory & Musical Knowledge (20 marks):

Candidates will be asked:

- 1) to play a 4-bar sight-reading test in 3/4 or 4/4 time, in either: (i) A Dorian (Ray Mode in G), (ii) E Dorian (Ray Mode in D). Note values can comprise crotchet, dotted crotchet, quaver and semi-quaver notes.



- 2) to identify **time signature** of the 4-bar phrase

- 3) to identify the **mode** of the 4-bar phrase

Candidates will be asked to play the following **three** scales, one octave up and down, on their instrument:

- **F major** (F, G, A, Bb, C, D', E', F')
- **E Aeolian (Lah Mode in G)** [E, F#, G, A, B, C, D', E']
- **B Aeolian (Lah Mode in D)** [B, C#, D', E, F#, G', A', B']

■ Research Project

The Research Project at Grade 7 level involves a minimum 750-word analysis of **two** prominent recorded musicians, one whose recording career dates from the pre-1960s era & one who recorded in the post-1960s era. The project should compare and contrast specific recorded material from both musicians to illustrate consistency and/or changes in performance styles and recording technology during the time span under discussion. All audio, video and written (including online) sources utilised must be acknowledged, and written reference made to any original research (e.g. interview, visit to regional or national archives) undertaken. The Research Project will be discussed during the examination, with an ability to recall and discuss relevant information being of critical importance.

■ Performance (60 marks):

10 tunes from a prepared list of **14** as follows:

Candidates will be asked to play **one Slow Air** (chosen by candidate from a list of 3 prescribed slow airs), **two Double Jigs** (connected), **two Slip Jigs** (connected), **one Hornpipe** or **Barndance**, **two Reels** (connected) and **one instrument-specific Reel** (prescribed).

Also to play **one** of the following: **Set Dance**, **Schottische**, **Hop Jig**, **Clan March** and a composition of Turlough O'Carolan (as chosen by the Examiner).

Note: Refer to CCÉ Website for details of prescribed Slow Airs & Instrument-Specific Reel relevant to year of exam entry

■ Repertoire & Aural Skills (20 marks):

Candidates are required to present a **Repertoire List**, comprising a total of **65 tunes** (categorised under at least 8 different tune-type headings to include at least 20 Reels and 15 Double Jigs), not including tunes already played in Performance section.

They will be asked to play a section from **8 tunes** chosen by the Examiner from the Repertoire List.

Candidates will be asked:

1) to identify tune type **and** time signature based on a sample 8-bar melody played **twice** by the Examiner, i.e. Slide, Clan March, Slip Jig, Mazurka, Barndance, Fling, Schottische. Candidates should also be able to identify any ornaments featured within the sample melody.

2) to repeat on their instrument a 2-bar phrase in 4/4 time in the key of D major, G major or A major with use of ornamentation, as played **three times** by the Examiner.

3) from a 32-bar tune sample played once by Examiner, candidates will be asked which of the following modes the tune is based around: (i) **A Dorian (Ray Mode in G)**, (ii) **E Dorian (Ray Mode in D)**, (iii) **E Aeolian (Lah Mode in G)**, (iv) **B Aeolian (Lah Mode in D)**, (v) **D Mixolydian (Soh Mode in G)**, (vi) **A Mixolydian (Soh Mode in D)**.

Examples of Aeolian (Lah in G) and Mixolydian (Soh in G) Mode Tunes:

Aeolian Mode: Martin Wynne's No. 1 (Reel), The Otter's Holt (Reel), The Old Grey Goose (Double Jig), The Musical Priest (Reel)

Mixolydian Mode: Rakish Paddy (Reel), My Love is in America (Reel), Banish Misfortune (Jig)

■ Theory & Musical Knowledge (20 marks):

Candidates will be asked:

1) to play a 4-bar sight-reading test in 9/8 or 12/8, in either: (i) E Aeolian (Lah Mode in G), (ii) B Aeolian (Lah Mode in D), (iii) D Mixolydian (Soh Mode in G), (iv) A Mixolydian (Soh Mode in D).



2) to identify the **time signature** of the 4-bar phrase

3) to identify the **mode** of the 4-bar phrase

Candidates will be asked to play the following **two** modal scales, one octave up and down:

- **D Mixolydian (Soh Mode in G)** [D, E, F#, G, A, B, C, D']
- **A Mixolydian (Soh Mode in D)** [A, B, C#, D', E', F#, G', A]

■ Research Project

The Research Project at Grade 8 level should take the form of a live concert review of approximately 1000 words and provide information about performer(s), location/timing of event, repertoire played, performance traits and relevant background information about the performers. The Research Project should focus primarily on candidate analysis and response to the performance.

The Research Project will be discussed during the examination, with an ability to recall and discuss relevant information being of critical importance.

PERFORMANCE DIPLOMA

As the final examination in the SCT programme, the **Performance Diploma** is intended for exceptional performers who have achieved a Distinction mark at Grade 8 level.

Candidates are asked to perform a 40 - 45 minute solo recital programme, including spoken tune introductions, which will be assessed by a panel of examiners. The performance will be open to the general public and candidates are expected to structure a varied programme of minimum 15 tunes to include each of the following tune categories, in any selection combinations: Reel, Double Jig, Hornpipe, Slow Air, Barndance, Slide, Polka, Slip Jig. A typed list of programme content must be presented to panel of examiners on the day of examination. The panel of examiners will comprise at least one instrument-specialist in the instrument being examined.

Candidates are expected to include material sourced from the following 3 categories:

- (a) Early Recordings [first half of 20th century]
- (b) Published Collections & Manuscript Sources
- (c) Newly Composed [1980s onwards]

The recital will be assessed under the following areas:

Interpretation	45%
Technical Skills	35%
Choice of Programme	10%
Stage Presentation	10%

SUGGESTED TUNES FOR ELEMENTARY CYCLE

(Melodies may also be chosen from other grades)

AIRS

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| - An Ghaoth Aneas | - Siobhán Ní Dhuibhir | - Bog Braon |
| - Níl 'na Lá | - Eibhlín a Rún | - The Castle of Dromore |
| - Buachaill ón Éirne | - Inis Oírr | - Éamonn a'Chnoic |
| - Thugamar féin an Samhradh Linn | - Bheir Mé Ó | |

MARCHES

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| - O'Neill's March | - The Foggy Dew | - Kelly the Boy from Killane |
| - Fáinne Geal an Lae | - The Three Flowers | - O'Donnell Abú |
| - Óró Sé do Bheatha 'bhaile | - The Minstrel Boy | - The Harp that Once |
| - God Save Ireland | - O'Neill's Cavalcade | - The Mountains of Pomeroy |
| - The Boys of Wexford | - The Battle of Aughrim | |
| - Ding Dong Dederó | - The Return to Fingal | |

POLKAS

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| - Maggie in the Wood | - East Limerick Polka | - Sweeney's Polka |
| - The Rakes of Mallow | - The Britches Full of Stitches | - The Scartaglen |
| - I have a Bonnet Trimmed with Blue | - Beidh Aonach Amárach | - The Spanish Lady |
| - Peg Ryan's Polka | - Ballydesmond 2 & 3 | - Terry Teehan's |
| - Bhíosa Lá 'bPort Láirge | - Lackagh Cross | |

DOUBLE JIGS

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| - The Connachtman's Rambles | - The Humours of Glendart | - The Miller of Glanmire |
| - My Darling's Asleep | - The Rambling Pitchfork | - The Kesh Jig |
| - Tripping Up the Stairs | - The Geese in the Bog | - The Maids on the Green |
| - Saddle the Pony | - The Ship in Full Sail | |

SUGGESTED TUNES FOR GRADES 1 - 5

Slow Airs listed are relevant for Grades 3, 4, 5

■ POLKAS

- Glen Cottage 1 & 2
- Brosna/O'Keeffe's/Ballydesmond 2
- Pádraig O'Keeffe's/Nell Fees/The Cascade
- Gullane Polka
- The Dark Girl Dressed in Blue
- The Banks of Inverness
- Britches buttoned on
- Donal Murphy's
- Ní Magadh Leat a Táimse
- As I went up on the Ice
- Ballydesmond 2 & 3
- Lackagh Cross
- Sweeney's Polka
- Tarrant's/The Blue Ribbon
- The Scartaglen/Denis Murphy's
- The East Limerick Polka 2
- The Spanish Lady
- Farewell to Whiskey
- The Dark Girl Dressed in Blue
- Terry Teehan's
- Donncha Lynch's/Dul dtí's na Rásanna

■ DOUBLE JIGS

- Scatter the Mud
- Saddle the Pony
- The Luck Penny
- The Humours of Glendart
- The Miller of Glanmire
- The Kesh Jig
- The Maids on the Green
- The Munster Jig
- Down the Back Lane
- Garret Barry's Jig
- Strop the Razor
- The Connacht Man's Rambles
- Old Tipperary
- The Rambling Pitchfork
- Paddy's Return
- Out in the Ocean
- The Ship in Full Sail
- The Mist on the Meadow
- Apples in Winter
- Fanning's
- The Geese in the Bog
- The Ship in Full Sail
- The Mist on the Meadow

■ SLOW AIRS (Grades 3, 4, 5)

- Port na bPúcaí
- Sliabh Geal gCua
- Táimse im'Chodhladh
- Coinnleach Ghlas an Fhómhair
- De Bharr na gCnoc
- Blind Mary
- A Spailpín a Rún
- Sé Fáth mo Bhuartha
- Úna Bhán
- Maidin Luan Chincíse
- Úr Chill an Chreagáin
- An Raibh tú ag an gCarraig
- Amhrán na Trá Báine
- Ar Éirinn ní nEosfainn cé hí
- An Mhaighdean Mhara
- An Caisideach Bán
- The Dear Irish Boy
- Rocking the Cradle
- An GoirtÁn Eornan
- Bean Dubh an Ghleanna
- Sliabh na mBan
- Liam Ó Raghallaigh
- Mo Mhúirnín Bán
- Aisling Gheal
- Seolfaimíd araon na Géanna romhainn
- Na Connerý's

■ HORNPIPES

- The Friendly Visit
- Chief O'Neill's Favourite
- Alexander's Hornpipe
- The Plains of Boyle
- The Harvest Home
- The Tailor's Twist
- The Pleasures of Hope
- Kitty's Wedding
- The Few Bob
- An Comhra Donn
- The Home Ruler
- Cronin's
- Off to California
- The Boys of Blue Hill

■ REELS

- The Lady on the Island
- The Concert Reel
- The Wind that Shakes the Barley
- The Boyne Hunt
- Drowsy Maggie
- The Skylark
- Miss Monaghan
- The Little Bag of Peaties
- The First House in Connaught
- The Sailor on the Rock
- The Bank of Ireland
- The Morning Star
- The Maids of Michelstown
- The Dunmore Lassies
- The Sligo Maid
- The Star of Munster
- The Templehouse
- The Swallow's Tail
- The Red Haired Lass
- The Merry Blacksmith
- The Wise Maid
- The Belles of Tipperary
- The Tarbolton
- The Longford Collector
- The Sailor's Bonnet
- The London Lassies
- Last Nights Fun
- The Mountain Road
- Rolling in the Ryegrass
- The Humours of Tulla
- The Heather Breeze
- Ah! Surely
- The Union Reel

■ SLIP JIGS

- Hardiman the Fiddler
- Drops of Brandy
- The Swaggering Jig
- Gort na Móna
- Dever the Dancer
- Humours of Whiskey
- The Dragon Fly
- The Honey Bee
- My Mind Will Never Be Easy

■ SLIDES

- Art O'Keeffe's
- Chase me Charlie
- Kilcummin Slide
- The Toormore
- The Lisheen Slide
- Eibhlín Ní Riordáin
- Biddy from Sligo
- The Quarry Cross
- Merrily Kiss the Quaker
- Denis Murphy's Slide
- The Brosna Slide
- Johnny Mickey's Slide
- Denis O'Keefe's Slide
- The Hare in the Corn
- If I had a Wife

SUGGESTED TUNES FOR GRADES 6 - 8

(Tunes may also be chosen from other grades)

■ MAZURKAS

- Peeler Creek
- Sonny's Mazurka
- The Irish Mazurka
- The Munster Cloak
- Shoe the Donkey
- The Old Donegal Mazurka

■ FLINGS

- Mrs Galvin's
- John Roche's
- Love Will You Marry Me
- Knocktoran Fair
- Moneymusk
- An Buachaill Dreoithe
- Cuz Teahan's
- Mary Brennan's Fling

■ BARNDANCES

- The Curlew Hills
- The Peach Blossoms
- Mrs. Kenny's
- The Belle of the Ball
- If there weren't any women in the World
- Around the Fairy Fort
- The Chaffpool Post
- New Broom
- Jimmy Duffy's No. 1 & 2
- Hayes' Favourite

■ SCHOTTISCHE

- Castles in the Air
- Sweet Flowers of Milltown
- Orange and Blue
- Queen Anne's
- Green Grow the Rushes O!
- The Cat that Kitted in Jamie's Wig
- Miss Crawford
- Killarney Wonder

■ SET DANCES

- The Three Sea Captains
- The Garden of Daisies
- The Ace and Deuce of Piping
- The Kilkenny Races
- The Princess Royal
- Poll Ha'penny
- The Blackbird
- Madame Bonaparte
- King of the Fairies
- The Job of Journeywork
- Rub the Bag
- Jockey at the Fair
- The Hunt
- Bonaparte's Retreat
- The Lodge Road
- St Patrick's Day

■ REELS

- Bonny Kate
- The Broken Pledge
- The Old Torn Pettycoat
- Rakish Paddy
- The Concertina Reel
- Farewell to Connacht
- The Mullingar Races
- The Templehouse Reel
- Within a Mile of Dublin
- Paddy Ryan's Dream
- The Salamanca Reel
- The Chicago Reel
- Never was Piping so Gay
- The Wild Swans of Coole
- The Leitrim Lilter
- The High Road
- The Garavogue
- The Punch Bowl
- Kilcoon
- Ríl an Spidéil
- The Boys of Ballisodare
- Trip to Durrow
- The Maid of Mount Kisco
- Colonel Fraser
- The Humours of Ballyconnell
- Lord Gordon's
- The Graf Spey
- Christmas Eve
- Lord McDonald
- Miss McDonald
- Trim the Velvet
- The Jolly Tinker
- The Yellow Tinker
- The Bucks of Oranmore
- The Floggin Reel
- Lucy Campbell
- The Bunch of Keys
- Kilty Town
- The Red Bee
- Bunker Hill
- The Girl that Broke my Heart
- The Ballinasloe Fair
- The Dublin Reell

■ SINGLE JIGS

- Smash the Windows
- Dinny Delaney's
- Behind the Bush in the Garden
- Sergeant Cahill's Favourite
- The Humours of Limerick
- Pat Ward's
- The Fowler on the Moor
- The Humours of Kilclogher
- Ask my Father

■ SLIP JIGS

- The Whinny Hills of Leitrim
- The Leitrim Quickstep
- Moll Roe
- Kitty Come Down to Limerick
- A Blast of Wind
- Hardiman the Fiddler
- Give Us a Drink of Water
- Ride a Mile
- Elizabeth Kelly's Delight
- Drops of Brandy
- The Kid on the Mountain
- Gusty's Frolics

■ HOP JIGS

- The Foxhunters
- Comb Your Hair and Curl It
- The Boys of Ballisodare
- The Promenade
- John McFadden's
- Spatter the Dew
- Cucanandy
- The Rocky Road to Dublin

■ DOUBLE JIGS

- The Luckpenny
- Cherish the Ladies
- The Humours of Ennistymon
- The Doberman's Wallet
- Banish Misfortune
- The Humours of Ballyloughlin
- Paddy O'Rafferty
- The Restless Boy
- The Cook in the Kitchen
- Doctor O'Neill's
- The Chorus Jigs
- The Monaghan Jig
- Strike the Gay Harp
- The Killimor
- Gillian's Apples
- The Frieze Britches
- The Old Grey Goose
- Tom Billy's
- The Blarney Pilgrim
- The Gold Ring
- The Battering Ram
- The Langstern Pony

■ HORNPIPES

- Fuaime na Farraige
- The High Level
- An Móinteáin
- The Exiles Return
- Flaherty's Hornpipe
- Old Man Quinn
- The Shaskeen
- Johnny Cope
- Chief O'Neill's Favourite
- Kitty's Wedding
- The Liverpool Hornpipe
- Spellan the Fiddler
- The Sweep's Hornpipe
- The Quarrelsome Piper
- The Groves

■ SLIDES

- Art O'Keefe's
- Dawley's Delight
- Quarry Cross
- I'd Rather Be Married Than Left
- Chase me Charlie
- The Kilcummin
- Slide An Chóisir
- The Lisheen Slide
- Eibhlín Ní Riordáin
- Biddy from Sligo
- Ceol a'Mhála
- Óró Bhuachaillín
- Merrily Kiss the Quaker's Wife
- The Bunratty Boys
- Denis Murphy's Slide
- The Brosna Slide
- Johnny Mickey's Slide
- Denis O'Keefe's Slide
- The Hare in the Corn
- If I had a Wife
- John Kelly's Slide
- Dan O'Keefe's Slide
- The Glen Cottage Slide
- Danny Abs'
- The Star above the Garter
- Daithín Davy's
- The H Note
- Tuar Slide
- Johnny O'Leary

