

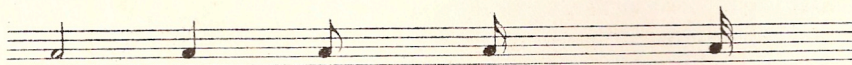
TUTOR FOR THE NORTHUMBERLAND HALF-LONG BAGPIPE

Players upon the Northumberland Half-long Bagpipe need not trouble themselves with sharps and flats; these are not used, though they are essential to the more elaborate and characteristic and better known Northumberland Small Pipes. The whole compass of the chanter is only one octave and one extra low leading note, so that all the music is written to come within this range.

The notes are called by the letters G A B C D E F G A and are written on the treble or G clef.



The value or duration of any note is denoted by its shape, as shewn below :—



1 minim = 2 crotchets = 4 quavers = 8 semiquavers = 16 demi-semiquavers.

A dot placed after a note makes that note half as long again.



Printed music is divided into portions of equal duration by bars drawn across the staff. Double bars indicate the end of sections and dotted double bars indicate that the sections on the dotted side are to be repeated. When the bars are dotted on both sides, both sections are to be repeated.



Three notes grouped together and with the figure 3 added, are to be played in the time of two notes of the same kind :—



In music there are different kinds of time—simple, duple, triple, (quadruple or common), and compound duple, triple, and quadruple. These are shewn by signs at the beginning of the music.

$\frac{2}{4}$ Two-four time, 2 crotchets or their value in a bar.

$\frac{3}{4}$ Three-four time, 3 crotchets or their value in a bar.

C. or $\frac{4}{4}$ Quadruple or common time, 4 crotchets or their value in a bar.

$\frac{6}{8}$ Six-eight time, 2 dotted crotchets, or 6 quavers or their value in a bar

$\frac{9}{8}$ Nine-eight time, 3 dotted crotchets, or 9 quavers or their value in a bar.

A pause (—) above a note indicates that the note must be sustained beyond its proper value at the will of the performer.

“Tr” (or trill) above a note indicates a rapid alternation of the note itself and the note above.

THE SCALE AND FINGERING.

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	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	G	A
LEFT.	Thumb.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	○
	1st finger.	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○
	2nd finger.	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	●
	3rd finger.	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	○	○
RIGHT.	1st finger.	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●
	2nd finger.	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	●
	3rd finger.	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	●
	4th finger.	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○

The fingering should be thoroughly learnt and mastered upon it before the full set is attempted.

Supposing this to have been accomplished, we will consider the pipes themselves. First strap the bellows round the body, so that they lie below the right arm, fastening the upper arm by means of the leather loop. Put the arm through the loop, twist up the slack and place the end round the narrow end of the bellows. This will keep the sleeve from interfering with the air inlet or clack.

Place the bag under the left arm, well up to the armpit, and the drones upon the left shoulder. Connect the airpipe with that on the bellows, and having corked up the drones, proceed to blow evenly and steadily until the bag is nearly full. Now press with the left arm until the chanter produces a full, clear tone.

When the player can blow and play the chanter with ease and confidence, it will be desirable to open the smallest drone. During the process of tuning, the drones may lie across the breast in order to be easily reached. The smallest drone sounds in unison with the lowest finger hole of the chanter, but is usually tuned to be in harmony with the E hole. This is accomplished by stopping the top three holes of the chanter with the left thumb, first and second fingers and allowing it to sound E, at the same time moving the drone slide in or out until the note emitted is in true harmony with the chanter note. Sliding the joint of the drone closer will sharpen the note, and *vice versa*. Sometimes it happens that the slide is at its limit of movement and still the note will not be correct; this is remedied by moving the string around the reed a little nearer the free end of the tongue to sharpen it, or a little further back to flatten it. Only experience will teach the player the various "ways" of reeds and the appropriate "tricks" by which they are mastered.

The player may open the longest drone in addition to the small one, as soon as the latter has been practised. The neck of the bag must be gripped firmly to prevent the chanter from sounding whilst this is being done, and the slides of the long drone may be manipulated until the two notes of the drones are in unison. The large drone sounds one octave below the small one. In the same way the middle drone may be opened and tuned, but in this case the note will be E, and it is tuned in harmony with the other two drones.

The three drones will now sound A₁ E₁₁ A₁₁ and will make a very full and pleasing harmony with the chanter.

The reeds, being much weaker than those used in mouth blown pipes, must not be damped, or they will become warped and useless. It is, therefore, necessary to warn players against blowing them with the breath. When a new chanter reed is inserted, the octave A A₁ should be tried, and if the top notes are flat the reed should be inserted a little further into the chanter. If the top is sharp the reed requires withdrawing a little, but it is essential that it be airtight at its point of insertion. When once the reed is set correctly it should not be interfered with as it is very easily damaged.

Sweet oil is used to keep the bag and bellows pliable, and it should be applied occasionally with a brush or rag, allowing it to soak into the leather.

The bag is made airtight by means of a paste of beeswax, resin, and sweet oil boiled together. When cold it should be of the consistency of very thick cream. A few spoonfuls are warmed and poured into the bag after removing the drones and chanter and corking up the stocks. It must be well worked into the seams, etc. A little air is left in the bag to prevent the sides from adhering.

While learning, and indeed at all times, never sacrifice accuracy to speed ; the latter will come with practice, but the former if once lost is not easily regained. An erect carriage is also to be cultivated as it adds greatly to the appearance of a piper. Let it be remembered also that the Northumberland pipes, large and small, are the last relics of the bagpipe in England, and are therefore something to be proud of and to be preserved at all costs. It is to the Scouts and other organisations that we look for this preservation.

Oil and wax must not be applied to bags which are made of mackintosh material, but only to bellows and bags of leather.

FOREWORD

In compiling this tutor and collection of suitable airs for the Northumberland Half-long Bagpipe, I venture to hope that Scouts and others who take up the study of the instrument, may find it of service. The book may be followed by a second collection if it finds sufficient support.

I wish to record my special thanks to our great authority upon musical matters, Dr. W. G. Whittaker, who has very kindly corrected and approved the whole book ; to G. V. Charlton, Esq., who has made many helpful suggestions and to whom Northumbrian pipers owe so much ; and to my friend Vivian Fairbairn, who has very kindly undertaken almost the whole of the final transcription of the music. All this assistance has been very cheerfully rendered.

I must also add a word expressing deep gratitude to those friends who have generously guaranteed the necessary funds for the publication, thus relieving us of all financial anxiety.

WM. A. COCKS

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