

About This Book:

You can never have too many good tunes to play.

Experienced performers know the value of a good simple melody. Brass players use them for buzzing. Everyone can use them for sight-singing. Some instruments can use them for transposition or clef practice. They can be used to warm-up or warm-down. They provide excellent practice to develop tone, phrasing, articulation and intonation. Most importantly, a good simple melody is just satisfying to play!

This book provides a wealth of melodies for musicians to use as they see fit. It is not a method book. The first section, “Building a Foundation” is designed to be studied in sequence. The remaining sections generally progress from simple to complex but are meant more for browsing than for sequential study.

Many of the melodies in this book are drawn from existing folk songs but I have taken the liberty of slightly changing some of these pieces to meet the needs of this collection. This is particularly true with the fiddle tunes, most of which have been changed from their “original” form.

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30 original “Foundation Pieces,” each in a clearly defined musical style.	
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63 legato melodies. Some arranged as duets. Some are sequences of short melodic ideas. Most melodies are presented in two keys.	
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44 melodies in a detached style. Includes sets of short etudes focusing on a particular rhythmic/metric element	
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12 original pieces to strengthen a sense of common musical styles: 4 waltzes, 4 marches and 4 fanfares.	
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(D) indicates a duet. * indicates an original piece

#1. Pure and Simple

1.

Can you sing this? Can you buzz this on your mouthpiece?

$\text{♩} = 76$

a. *mp*

mf

mp

b. *mp*

mp

mp

mp



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#2. Exciting and Projected

$\text{♩} = 112$

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#3. Relaxed and Free

Sustain a rich sound through the leaps.

a. $\text{♩} = 84$

mf

mp

rit.

a tempo

slower

rit.

mf

mp

b.

mf

mp

mp

a tempo

mf



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6.

#6. Light and Clear

Tonguing means nothing without the air. Each note needs a little burst of air so lips can vibrate.
At faster tempi, this exercise is good for double tonguing practice.

♩ = 100-138

a.

b.

mf

rit.

(◡)

f

mp

mf

f



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#14. Boisterous, Fiery

This would make a good pirate song. The notes should be exclamation points, not question marks. Arrr!

a. $\text{♩} = 104$

b.



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#27. Smooth Leaps

Avoid pinching the upper notes or sagging on the lower notes. Instead, find the "center of the bullseye." Keep the sense of musical line going throughout.

$\text{♩} = 80 - 92$

a. *mp* *cresc.* *mf* *f* *mp*

b. *mp* *cresc.*



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Singing Smoothly

Tips for Using This Section

- **Sing and Buzz**

The essential thing when you play any instrument is to keep your “singing mind” awake. As Arnold Jacobs put it, be a great singer in your mind and let your instrument reflect this.

Pick any tune and sing or buzz it before playing it on your instrument. Don't worry if it doesn't *feel* the same as when you play; that's not the important thing. Instead, focus on how you want it to *sound*. By going back and forth between your instrument and singing/buzzing, you can develop a more natural singing approach without focusing too much on mechanics.

- **More on Singing**

Although you can sing on the syllable “la” for each note, I prefer solfège. In solfège, you have a choice between *moveable do* and *fixed do*. Either system is fine. I prefer *fixed do* because I can use it on more advanced music.

- **More on buzzing**

When buzzing, take a deep relaxed breath and buzz with an ease. Don't force. A good buzz is a happy balance between the extremes of tight/constricted and loose/airy. In legato, keep a nice steady stream flowing. You can get feedback by holding tissue paper or a piece of paper in the mouthpiece (an incentive spirometer is also useful for this). tongue when buzzing legato.

- **Transposing**

Most of these tunes are presented in two keys: diatonic, you can play them in two other keys by changing the key signature (replacing E-flat major with E major). You can transpose these tunes up or down an octave.

Better yet, memorize a tune and play it in three registers. Developing this skill will be a more natural player.

- **Harmonizing**

These tunes include suggestions for how to play these chords while you sing. If you can't play someone can play chords for intonation practice!

Note: Chords are given to make transposing easier. Dominant chords are given for



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#1. Riverbanks

B.E.

a. 



b. 



#2. The Praties, They Grow Small

a. 



b. 





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#27. A Diatonic Sequence (descending)

a. 



b. 



c. 



d. 





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#30. Allgrave

B.E.

a.

b.

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il. *a tempo*

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#48. The Fair Lass in the Meadow

Welsh/B.E.

a.

b.

c.

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Singing with a Bounce

Tips for Using This Section

- **Sing and Buzz**

Just as with “Singing Smoothly” it is helpful to sing and buzz these tunes and then play them on your instrument. When buzzing short notes, be certain they still have a good tone. As the old saying goes, the bread is made of the same ingredients no matter how thinly you slice it.

When buzzing the mouthpiece or playing a brass instrument, have the attacks ride on a burst of air. A former teacher once said, “Get right to the ‘ah’ of ‘tah’.” Most of these tunes have a light happy feel so make them sound effortless. When singing, you can either use solfège or sing on one syllable (I prefer “tah” or “bah” because they bounce nicely).

- **A Bit About Note Shape**

Every note has a shape. The beginning should start with a full tone right away. Keep the middle nice and steady. Let the end taper a bit so the note rings.

More about the beginnings: many brass players struggle to begin notes well. One common problem is the “wah” (sneaking into a note). Make the note start with an immediate full sound. When buzzing, you can use a piece of paper in front of the mouthpiece and watch it jump with each burst. You can also have an incentive spirometer, invert it and buzz into it. If the air goes in, the little ball jumps right to the top. A common source of “wah” is the beginning of a note.

More about the endings: Don’t end notes too suddenly. When playing moving notes. Think “tah” not “tut.” Keep the ends tapering.

- **Rhythm**

Make sure the beat is rock solid and the tempo is accurate. A quick way to make any ensemble sound better is to have slightly different interpretations of the rhythm. This can be a big source of trouble.

In common time, the dotted-half note ends up sounding like triplets ().

In 6/8 time, the dotted-half note ends up sounding like triplets ().

- **Transposition**

As with the key signature, transposition into the key of the instrument is important.



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#14. Four Little Tonguing Etudes

B.E.

a.  *mf* *f*



 *mp*

 *mf* *f*

b.  *mp*









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Fiddling Around

What's in This Section

After years of playing Kopprasch, Tyrell and Arban etudes (all quite valuable in their own way), I wanted to find examples from common folk music that would allow players to challenge their technical skills. Fiddle tunes are great for this! Of course, fiddlers don't have to come up for air so some adaptation was necessary.

Here you will find 16 fiddle tunes adapted for wind instruments. Two of the tunes ("Blarney Stone" and "The Tithe War") are original. The rest are based more or less on existing tunes. If my changes were fairly extensive, I renamed the tune with a title related to the original. Fiddle tunes are often handed down through oral tradition so it is common to find many variations of one tune and multiple titles for the same melody.

Tips for Using This Section

- **Keep it Clean**

Consider playing these in two different modes: (1) slower/more careful pushing the boundaries/faking it. Both are useful.

- **Keep it Relaxed**

As with any technically challenging music, it is all too easy for tension makes things sound worse and slows you down constantly try to creep into your playing. Reducing it

- **Keep it Joyful**

Too often we sound as if we are working. Add liveliness to them so it should be easy to

- **Keep Your Gas Tank Full**

Besides the simple matter of the question of breathing. When those little breaths between of these pieces you will find them in order to breathe drop too far before to stay in the up



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