

## DANCE

### FEATURES OF THE MUSIC

Many traditional English dances are performed to **REELS** or **JIGS**, although many earlier dances were performed to *hornpipes*.

A **REEL** can also be a figure or the name of a dance but this has nothing to do with the music. Its time signature is usually 2/4 or 4/4. You should be able to count 2 beats to each bar. Most **REELS** gives a flat driving tune.

The **JIG** is bumpy and has a kick which makes you pick your feet up. Its time signature is 6/8. You should be able to count 2 beats to each bar.

### LENGTH

Most traditional dance music comes in 8 bar phrases which is effectively 16 steps. Figures usually take 4 or 8 bars, although some can be performed sometimes to the shorter length and sometimes the longer. If they can take 4 bars they are often repeated the other way round to complete 8 bars.

Examples:

#### 4 BARS

Swing  
Star (then repeated other way)  
Cross over with partner

#### 8 BARS

Swing  
Promenade  
Single cast

Most tunes have an 8 bar phrase which is then repeated (called the **A** music) and a different 8 bar phrase which is also repeated (the **B** music) giving 32 bars.

So most dance tunes are **A1** (1st time), **A2** (2nd time), **B1** (1st time), **B2** (2nd time).

Some dances require 24 bars, 40 bars or 48 bars, and rarely other lengths, so there may be **C** and **D** music, or either the **A** or **B** does repeat.

There is usually a chord or a few bars preceding the A music in order to get ready to start.






### INSTRUMENTS

Traditionally the musician, who was paid by the dancers, played solo on fiddle, pipe(s), concertina, melodeon or accordion. These instruments are easily portable but provide sufficient volume or carrying power when used alone. Nowadays bands of mixed instruments usually play for dances and are electronically amplified.



**Concertina.** A traditional folk instrument invented in the 19th century in England, it is played by pulling and pushing bellows (originally leather) and pressing buttons on the ends of a hexagonal or similar panel. The Anglo-concertina is played by

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	<p>pulling and pushing for different notes like a melodeon, the English concertina by pulling/pushing for the same note like an accordion.</p>
	<p><b>Melodeon.</b> A traditional musical instrument with bellows and buttons at both ends which works on the same principle as the mouth organ and Anglo-concertina by pushing and pulling for different notes.</p>
 <p><b>Harp and flute</b></p>	 <p><b>Tambour and flute</b></p>
<p><b>Windpipe</b></p> 	 <p><b>Fiddle</b></p>