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Six Folk Arrangements for Youth Ensembles



Photograph: Roswitha Chesher

By Laurel Swift



National Foundation for
Youth Music



Supported using public funding by
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English Folk Dance and Song Society

The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) is the national folk arts development organisation for England, championing English traditional folk music, dance and related arts as part of the rich and diverse cultural landscape of the UK. It is based at Cecil Sharp House, a dedicated folk arts centre and music venue, in Camden, North London, which is also home to EFDSS' Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML). England's national folk music and dance archive, which provides free online access to thousands of searchable folk manuscripts and other materials.

EFDSS creates and delivers creative learning projects for children, young people, adults and families at Cecil Sharp House, across London and around the country; often in partnership with other organisations. Learning programmes draw on the diverse and vibrant traditional folk arts of England, the British Isles and beyond, and focus on song, music, dance, and related art forms such as storytelling, drama, and arts and crafts.

Six Folk Arrangements for Youth Ensembles

Produced by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), September 2015

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About this resource

This resource contains arrangements of six traditional English folk tunes that were created for use on the English Folk Dance and Song Society's youth programme, from 2012 to 2015. This includes the *Get Your Folk On!* holiday courses and London Youth Folk Ensemble, funded by the National Foundation for Youth Music.

These arrangements have a traditional melody, with a composed harmony, bass line and suggested chords. They were arranged by Laurel Swift, or Laurel Swift and David Delarre. Each arrangement has been created to be taught by ear to a group of young musicians of mixed ability and instruments. Ideas for developing each arrangement into a performance piece are also included in this resource.

At the end of the resource, there are some suggested exercises to use with youth folk ensembles to develop understanding and skills in playing folk music and playing as a group.

Recordings have been made to demonstrate these arrangements and they are freely downloadable at www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/six-folk-arrangements-for-youth-ensembles

Thanks to our musicians, Laurel Swift (fiddle and double bass), Nick Hart (melodeon), Esbjörn Wettermark (clarinet) and David Delarre (guitar).

Tips for using this resource

- Work by ear with your group to get the most creative use of this resource.
- Find the musical part most suited to each player. E.g. bass players do not have to play the bass line! Each arrangement has been created to include a simpler and more challenging line to engage musicians with different levels of ability.
- Many folk tunes are written to accompany dancing. Finding the groove, understanding the rhythm and learning to keep a solid pulse are therefore very important for a good sound.
- There are no rules! A tune can be repeated as many times as you want, with different parts sounding at different times. These arrangements give some examples of the many ways to arrange traditional folk tunes for ensemble playing. Encourage creativity and exploration, have fun with the group and allow the group to have fun with the music. Enjoy!

Supporting resources

Beginner's Guide to English Folk Music

Highly recommended reading! Here, the structure and different types of folk tunes are clearly explained, with accompanying audio files:

<http://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/beginners-guide/music#efdss-types-of-tunes>

Folk Music: A resource for creative music-making: Key Stage 3 and 4

Accompanied by audio files, this resource explores what folk music is and includes practical activities and ideas for finding repertoire:

<http://efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/folk-music-a-resource-for-creative-music-making-key-stage-3-and-4>

Working by Ear

Further tips on teaching and learning by ear, along with a selection of audio files:

<http://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/working-by-ear-by-rob-harbron-and-miranda-rutter>

Film

London Youth Folk Ensemble - footage of the Ensemble playing some of the arrangements in this pack can be found here:

<http://www.cecilsharphouse.org/csh-learning/london-youth-folk-ensemble/film-and-gallery>

EFDSS YouTube channel - for more ideas

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CecilSharp1>

Tune 1: Oats and Beans

This popular ceilidh tune is a 'jig'. Jigs are dance tunes in 6/8. Commonly, in England, jigs are played with a 'bumpy' feel. Think of tunes like *I Saw Three Ships* and *Blaydon Races*. Please see the supporting jig exercises at the end of this resource for tips about playing the distinctive character of a jig.

For more information and examples, visit *Beginner's Guide to English Folk Music* on the EFDSS website: <http://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/beginners-guide/music#efdss-tune-example-jig>



Photograph: Rachel Elliott

Arrangement Ideas

Play four times 'around the tune' (this means four times through, including all repeats, i.e. AABBC x 4).

Begin with guitarists playing the A part chords, gradually add other harmony lines. Introduce the tune the second time through.

Within the four repeats of the tune, each section chooses to solo their favourite part (A, B or C), sometimes playing with another section and supporting harmony line.

The final time through, play the tune of the B part quietly, crescendoing to a louder final C part.



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Tune 1: Oats and Beans

A TRAD ARR L SWIFT

B

C

www.efdss.org

Arrangement Ideas

The simple melody line accentuates the strong rhythmic accompaniment of this hornpipe, leaving space for the busy accompaniment to offer a challenging line to more advanced players.

For this arrangement, a simple tune and a more embellished version could be included, alternating between the two, and adapting the harmony lines appropriately for contrast and interest.

There are two alternative 'B' parts in this arrangement (B and Alt B), one with minor chords instead of major, a common technique in folk accompaniment.

A 'build section', in this case based on a repeated fragment of the tune, has been included in this arrangement to create dynamic contrast within the piece before returning to the final A part.



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Tune 2: Washing Day

TRAD ARR LAUREL SWIFT

A G C G D G C 1. D C 2. D G

B G C G D 1. G C D C 2. G C D G

ALT B Em Em D C G/D D



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BUILD SECTION

Tune 3: Banbury Bill

Banbury Bill is a morris dance tune from the Bampton tradition of Cotswold morris. This was found and adapted from *A Handbook of Morris Dances*, by Lionel Bacon, a compendium of Cotswold morris notation.



Photograph: Rachel Elliott

Arrangement Ideas

Explore and make the arrangement as simple or as complex as you wish.

Divide the notes of block chords between players, or use the root for a less-advanced group.

Make sure the tune is heard clearly at some point with little accompaniment, and also include a moment where the tune drops out completely and the accompanying parts come to the fore.

The off-beat accompaniment should work well on fiddles, but you may not want it continuously.



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Banbury Bill

A TRAD. ARR. LAUREL SWIFT

D G Em A D G A

1. 2. **B** G A D Bm A G

A D G 1. 2. G A D G A G A

Tune 4: Old Lancashire Hornpipe

This 3/2 hornpipe is a popular session tune with English folk musicians.



Photograph: Rachel Elliott

Arrangement ideas

This is a really strong tune and does not need a lot of additional arrangement.

Explore the potential for dynamic contrast by pairing up different parts.

Avoid playing all parts together in the B section, unless you want a 'crunchy' sound!

The harmony line has a different chord structure to the chords and bass line.



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Tune 4: Old Lancashire Hornpipe

TRAD. ARR. LAUREL SWIFT & DAVID DELARRE

Sheet music for "Tune 4: Old Lancashire Hornpipe" in 3/2 time, key of D major. The music is arranged for three staves (treble, alto, and bass clef). The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).

The music is divided into four systems, each with a section label in a box:

- System 1:** Labeled **A**. Chords: A/D, D, D(SUS2), A, D(SUS4), D(SUS2). The first staff has a repeat sign at the end.
- System 2:** Labeled **B**. Chords: Bm, G, A, 1. Bm. The first staff has a repeat sign at the end.
- System 3:** Labeled **2. Bm**. Chords: G, A, 2. Bm, G, A, Bm, C#m7(b5). The first staff has a repeat sign at the end.
- System 4:** Labeled **C**. Chords: D, A/D, G/D, 1. D(SUS4), A/D, 2. D(SUS4). The first staff has a repeat sign at the end.

Tune 5: South Australia

This is a popular sea shanty - a work song sung to accompany labour on merchant ships, like hauling ropes. The tune itself is quite simple, so we created a highly decorated version of it to use between verses.



Photograph: Roswitha Chesher

Arrangement Ideas

Keep the vocals well to the front of the arrangement.

A few people sing the verses and everyone join in the repeated lines and chorus.

Use the decorated tune as a feature, and to break up the verses at certain points.



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Tune 5: South Australia

A TRAD ARR LAUREL SWIFT & DAVID DELARRE

SONG TUNE

IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA I WAS BORN HEAVE A - WAY HAUL A - WAY

INSTRUMENTAL TUNE

F#°/D G/B C(add9) A

IN CAPE TOWN RIGHT OFF THE HORN, AND I'M BOUND FOR SOUTH AUST - RAILIA

B Em F#°/D G A Bm

HAUL A - WAY YOU ROLLING KINGS HEAVE A - WAY HAUL A - WAY HAUL A - WAY YOU'LL

Em G 1. A 2. A D

HEAR ME SING AND I'M BOUND FOR SOUTH AUST - RAILIA RAILIA

Tune 6: Radstock Jig

This tune was collected by Cecil Sharp from James Higgins, on New Year's Eve in 1907 in Shepton Mallet.

Despite the title, Radstock Jig is not a jig! There are many different types of English folk tunes in 4/4, including hornpipes, reels, rants and polkas. The exact tune type is defined by how it is played, for example how the beat is emphasised, and the speed.



Photograph: Roswitha Chesher

Arrangement Ideas

This is a complex tune with two alternative sets of chords and harmony for the B part, to help create variety and dynamic contrast.

Keep a simple structure, building up from chords to the tune. Off-beats on a high A note are also a good texture to add in during a build-up.



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Radstock Jig

TRAD. ARR LAUREL SWIFT & DAVID DELARRE

Sheet music for Radstock Jig, featuring three systems of music in 2/4 time, key of D major (two sharps).

System 1: Measures 1-4. Chords: C, G, F, Am.

System 2: Measures 5-8. Chords: Am, A/G, D, D.

System 3: Measures 9-12. Chords: Gmaj7, A.

System 4: Measures 13-16. Chords: Gmaj7, D, D7.

ALT 8

Exercises

Below are some example exercises used within the youth programme to understand and develop ensemble skills.

1: Jig Rhythm 1

- Choose a jig tune to work with eg *Oats and Beans*.
- Everyone play the tonic note (the first note in the scale, eg D) on the main beats making every note as staccato as possible:



- Next, add a short upbeat to precede every beat



- Play the upbeat with as big a crescendo as possible, as though it is surging onto the beat. Remember to keep the beat itself as short as possible.

2: Jig Rhythm 2

- Everyone play a tonic on the main beats as before, making every note staccato.
- Fill in the small beats between every beat |1&a2&a|1&a2&a|1&a2&a|
- Emphasise the first note of every three as much as possible, whilst keeping it crisp and staccato.
- Emphasise the last of every three – remember the crescendo from the first jig rhythm.
- Turn the middle note of every 3 into ghost note. This is where you put in so little effort you can barely hear it.



3: Jig Groove Exercise

- On the tonic note, alternate between 4 bars each of:
 - a) Jig Rhythm 1
 - b) Jig Rhythm 2
 - c) A staccato note on the first beat only
- Divide into three groups.
- Once everyone is confident with the three rhythms, tell the group the rhythm will be travelling in a clockwise motion on the order 'Switch' - meaning all groups swap rhythms with the one being played by the group to their right when they hear the word 'Switch'.
- Split into pairs. One person plays the A-part of the tune, the other plays the three rhythms for 4 bars each. Switch over every 8 bars. Continue switching over every 4 bars, then every 2 bars.
- Now switch over when you and your partner decide to do it - using eye contact!
- Play the whole tune / parts and see how much you have incorporated the jig groove into the tune itself.

4: On the Beat, Off the Beat - exploring rhythmic emphasis

- Everybody steadily counts out loud: 1 2 3 4.
- Internalise the count, so no-one is speaking, but everybody has the same count going in their head.
- Say a number and everyone clap on that number only, every time it comes around.
- Continue adding in / taking away / changing numbers every 4-8 bars, depending how challenging it is for the group. It's useful to regularly go back to 1, and also to revisit some patterns.
- These patterns are particularly useful:

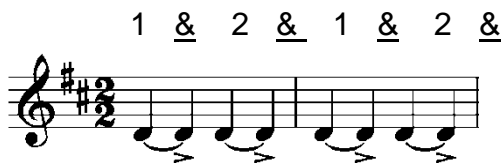
1 & 3,	1 & 4,	2 & 4,	1 & 2 & 4,	2 & 3 & 4.
--------	--------	--------	------------	------------
- Explain that when we clap on 1 & 3, that is 'on the beat', and when we clap on 2 & 4 that is the 'off-beat'.

- Try the exercise again, specifically listening to the different kinds of grooves and feel created when different beats are at the fore-front.
- Try this on instruments with some of the group playing the tune, and the rest playing the different beat combinations on a drone note. How does the change of emphasis affect the mood of the music?

5: Accenting Beats or ‘Pulsing’

This exercise demonstrates how you can add a pulse within a sustained note to give it more lift and momentum. This is common in folk music.

- Play minims on a D note
- Add a subtle push on the second beat of each minim



- Divide the group in two, with one playing the tune and the other playing the minims, with or without ‘pulsing the beat’. Discuss how this changes the feel of the music.
-

6: Introducing 3/2 Time

- On instruments, play the 3 main beats of the 3/2 bar, keep the notes staccato.

1 & 2 & 3 & | 1 & 2 & 3 &

- Play the 3 main off-beats only (the &'s), again play staccato.

1 & 2 & 3 & | 1 & 2 & 3 &

- Split into two halves, one half playing on the beat, one playing the off-beat. Swap over.
- Finally, play beat 1 on the beat, and beats 2 and 3 off the beat: 1 & 2 & 3 &.



- Repeat this pattern until the musicians are confident.
- When you have learnt some of *Old Lancashire Hornpipe*, try accompanying the tune to the different rhythms above. Which one sounds good?

Creating an arrangement

1: From Drones to Harmony

- In a circle, number your group 'No. 1s' and 'No. 2s'. No. 1s play a section of a tune in D, and No. 2s play a pulse on D. Switch over and repeat.
- Try the same exercise, but pulsing on E. Discuss how it changes the feel of the tune.
- Repeat the exercise on every note of the D scale (D E F# G A B C#). Change pairs if necessary.
- Repeat once more on D. Notice how 'dull' in tone it sounds compared to some of the others. Allow students to discuss which sounds they liked best, and revisit any they wish.
- In pairs take turns playing the drone and playing the tune.
- Each person should find either a drone note they like throughout the tune, or a sequence of drone notes (limit it to 6 in total across the 4-bar phrase).
- Repeat the task increasing the rhythmic interest in the drone part. Play the chords / accompaniment notes on every beat.
- Take a few minutes to make a short arrangement of the tune using these drone ideas and share with the rest of the group.

Creating rhythmic accompaniment

- One group plays the melody of a folk tune, whilst the other plays harmony notes or chords on the first beat of each bar.
- Now play the accompaniment on the 1st and 3rd, on the 1st and 4th, or on the 2nd and 4th beats of each bar.

- Play the chords in a 'shuffle' rhythm:



- Discuss what sounds good, and what is easier or harder.
- Finally, in a group, work out an accompaniment for the tune, using a mix of the different rhythms tried. Remember to include some silence and to maintain the sense of pulse in both the accompaniment and the tune.

3: Short Note, Long Note

There is a lot of freedom in folk music to change the feel of a whole piece by the phrasing of individual notes.

- Revisit the exercise 'Accenting Beats or Pulsing'
- Play the first phrase of the tune of *Radstock Jig* (1st two bars)
- Make the first note, C, as short and staccato as possible.
- Make the C sustain with a pulse in the middle. You will probably find that the E becomes pulsed too, and the final G. That's good.
- Start quietly and play the most rapid crescendo you can during the C. What happens to the E? Do you have to make it staccato to put a stop on the crescendo? Or does the crescendo continue and you put the staccato on the first G?
- Play each of the different options (staccato C, pulse C, crescendo C) a few times. Discuss the impact of each and what effect or function you might use them for (eg dancing, dramatic effect, mood change).
- Ask the musicians to find other notes in the tune, where you have a similar choice. Alter the impact by using a staccato / pulsed or long note / dynamic.

Laurel Swift



Photograph: Ian Anderson (fRoots)

Laurel Swift is a performer, workshop leader and composer. She works with the English Folk Dance and Song Society as a regular project leader and tutor, currently leading the London Youth Folk Ensemble. Laurel was the Artistic Director of Shooting Roots for twelve years, running youth arts programmes at folk festivals. Laurel plays in a duo with Ben Moss, fiddle with The Glowworms and double bass with Gadarene. Laurel is the founder and choreographer of Morris Offspring and co-created 'Under Her Skin' with performance storyteller Debs Newbold.

London Youth Folk Ensemble



Photograph: Roswitha Cheshier

Set up by the English Folk Dance and Song Society in 2013, the London Youth Folk Ensemble is a group of committed young musicians with a passion for playing and performing folk music. Meeting monthly at Cecil Sharp House, the Ensemble works with professional folk musicians to create and perform folk music from the British Isles and beyond.

Ensemble members play as a whole group, exploring and arranging traditional folk repertoire; develop their performance style and presentation; work in small groups on their own material; develop skills in playing music for dancing; and learn about the history and culture of folk music.

London Youth Folk Ensemble 2015-16 is led by folk artists Laurel Swift and David Delarre.

www.cecilsharpshouse.org/lyfe

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