



## PUTTING THE LILT INTO DANCE MUSIC

Humans seem to have always enjoyed dancing to music. The old traditional (ear) players played with a liveliness and "lift" - which was the way the tunes had been passed down..

Rob Willis' video of Bert Jamieson in old age playing mouth organ while sitting on his bed is a good example of playing with a great dance rhythm. <https://youtu.be/ltMaOMvLDps>

There aren't any rules about how dance music HAS to be played. If it sounds right, then that's all that matters! But there are techniques you can use to help a tune 'get under the dancer's feet'.

### **There's more to a tune than just the dots**

Most of the old bush players didn't read music - and they played with lots of subtle variations that are missing from the sheet music. So feel free to add your own 'flavour' to the tunes as you play.

### **Feel the rhythm - accent the beat**

Remember the feel of the dance when you're playing. Think about the rhythm and try accenting the "strong" notes in the tune, e.g. the first note of each 3/8 in 6/8 jigs; the second beat (off beat) in 4/4 polkas and schottisches; the first and third beat in 3/4 mazurkas.

### **Varying the tune - lengthening, shortening & ornamenting notes**

Holding onto some notes and cutting other notes short can emphasise the rhythm and add some 'life' to a dance tune. Try playing different little variations each time through.

### **Herb's Jig**



*Play lead-in note(s) "grace notes". Feel each phrase in the tune.*

### **Connaught Man's Rambles**



*Accent the first note in each group of 3/8 - play as a crotchet and quaver. Add staccato.*

### **Clare Jig (The Old Favourite)**



*Varying long notes and 3/8 note lengths. Playing 'runs' to give the tune 'swing'.*

