

Styles & Genres



Tune Types: Marches



MARCHES ARE usually in one of two styles: *processional* (e.g. wedding marches) and *military*. In Scotland, the vast majority of marches are in the military style, and most come from the bagpipe repertoire.

Most bagpipe marches are either written in 2/4 or in 6/8 (it is quite usual to talk of "2/4 marches" and "6/8 marches"), and they have become very popular with all players of Scottish music - it is amazing the variety that you can get from the nine note bagpipe range!

Some Scottish dances use pipe marches; for example: The Gay Cordons, Canadian Barn Dance, The Eva Three Step, etc.

Rhythm and Pick Direction

Whether we're talking about 2/4 or 6/8, the essential rhythm is two beats in the bar. Marches are functional tunes, and if you think of a troupe of soldiers marching along a road, you get an idea of the rhythm.

When it comes to 6/8 marches, the pick direction should be the same as for jigs. However, marches in 2/4 tend to have mostly eighth notes, and you use mostly downstrokes throughout. The exceptions would be the note after a dotted note, and the second of a pair of

sixteenth notes (semiquavers) - see Example 1.

Another way of thinking about it is to imagine the notes double in value, and then apply the normal pick direction rules (Example 2).

EX.1

d u d d d u d u d d u

EX.2

d u d d d u d u d d u

The Queen's Welcome to Invercauld (J S Skinner) 2/4 pipe march

Marches