

The New MWPBA Mini-MSR Event

The Rule

The Grade 4 MSR will consist of play four parts of 2/4 march, four parts of strathspey, and four parts of reel. A selection of two different two-parted tunes in any or all categories is permitted.

NOTE: This is consistent with the PPBSO requirements provided that the reels are "dot-cut." This is consistent with the RSPBA requirements for Grade 4A at the major championships provided that the bands choose tunes off the Prescribed Tune list. This is consistent with the EUSPBA requirement provided that the band plays either two two-parted strathspeys and two two-parted reels or one two-parted strathspey, and one two-parted reel. This could be made consistent with the WUSPBA requirements provided that the band plays only one two-parted strathspey and only one two-parted "dotted" reel.

Resources

Musical Appreciation and Performance: the DVD – advice on learning tunes and practicing
Guidance on the Selection and Performance of MAP tunes in RSPBA Contests

Tune Selection

the tune selection process should start NOW

two-parted tunes are highly recommended for most bands

the RSPBA Prescribed Tune list is attached and reflects the expected degree of difficulty

settings can be downloaded at <http://www.rspb.org/html/prescribedtunes.php>

simpler tunes will help with unison and tone in the pipe corps and are perfectly acceptable

the contest circle is not the place to play "challenging" tunes - save them for a Burns supper

a band is only as strong as its weaker players, the weakest player should be able to play to play

the tunes comfortably at tempo

if the players cannot meet the target tempo after 3-4 weeks, the tune or score is too hard

set the final target tempo when choosing tunes to help the drummers write appropriate scores

"dot-cut" reels are recommended as a stepping stone to the full MSR in Grade 3

March

2/4 marches are different from 4/4 marches:

(1) up to 4 notes to a beat and almost always dotted and cut

(2) twice as many beats are accented

Tempo: 72 – 78 bpm - spirited and lively

Unison: be careful of phrases with four notes to the beat

make sure all players give the same dot/cut values and the rhythms are clear

It is the treatment of the short notes that separates bands in a contest

work on alignment of embellishments to the beat

doublings start on the beat, taorluaths and grips end on the beat

Phrasing: in 2 parted tunes there is often a four-bar Q&A pair

phrase separation – look at the melody and ignore the bar lines and beams

make sure the final note of each phrase gets its full value

don't rush into the connecting notes into the next phrase

Strathspey

Strathspeys need strong pointing - clearly contrast the dotted 1/8 notes with the 1/16

Tempo: 108 – 120 bpm

Unison: watch the triplets (3 note runs)

make sure both the pipe corps and the drum corps are giving the same treatment

traditional idiom is two 16th notes followed by a 32nd note

three even notes is acceptable (depending on taste)

tachums in stressed positions - be sure to hold the second (dotted) note

the tachum with a doubling is played as a traditional triplet rhythm for balance

Phrasing: usually one bar question phrases and one bar answers (a two-bar Q&A pair)

4 beats to the bar

put a strong accent on the downbeat

try to put a secondary accent on 3rd beat - but do not over-accent and get a 2/4 rhythm

phrase separation shows lots of variety - connecting notes can be less than a beat to a

full beat or more

Reel

The goal is a smooth, flowing melody

Tempo: 76 – 84 bpm - don't lose the dance idiom

Unison: if too pointed: (1) the cut notes become indistinct; and (2) unison suffers

work on unison and clarity in any GDE groups

doublings on a melody quarter note can sometimes be opened up to a tachum rhythm

watch the unison on strikes (all 3 tune categories)

if timing is reversed on a strong beat (tachum) then stress the dotted note

Phrasing: usually one bar question phrases and one bar answers (a two-bar Q&A pair)

only 2 beats per bar!

phrase separation – connecting notes can be as short a single eighth note

Working up a new tune

ensemble decisions about the suitability of the drum scores should be made early

drum scores should support the Q&A pairs and phrasing presented by the pipe corps

use the "stutter" method from the RSPBA DVD

work on attacks until they are automatic

work on breaks: Hold the tempo of the first tune all the way to through the last beat,

give the first beat of the new tune it's full value (if not slightly elongated)

make sure the pipe tone does not drop in the last few bars of a tune

PM and DS should regularly listen from outside the circle during band practice

pipers should regularly play in groups of 3-4 to catch unison and blowing problems

the players need to take personal responsibility for mistakes

don't miss the opportunity to use the bass and tenors as independent voices

consider placement of players in the circle

confident anchors by the drum corps - the back-left corner is key

separate weak blowers with strong blowers to minimize "pitch creep"

experiment with a tighter circle - builds confidence and tightens sound

Grade 4 and Novice Juvenile Competition Format 2016 and additions to the "RSPBA Prescribed Tune List"

For Major Championships, Novice Juvenile Bands will be split into two Grades from 2016 - "A" and "B".
Novice Juvenile "A" is aligned with Grade 4A and Novice Juvenile "B" is aligned with Grade 4B.

Tweet

In addition, whilst the criteria for Grade 4A (and now Novice Juvenile "A") retains the 4 Parts March (in 2/4 Time Signature), 4 Parts Strathspey and 4 Parts Reel; the requirements have been altered to allow Grade 4A and Novice Juvenile "A": to play (from the RSPBA Prescribed Tune List) either:-

- 1 x 4 Parted 2/4 March or 2 x 2 parted 2/4 Marches
- 1 x 4 Parted Strathspey or 2 x 2 parted Strathspeys
- 1 x 4 Parted Reel or 2 x 2 Parted Reels

This playing requirement change will also apply to Minor Grade 4 MSR Contests. Grade 4 and Novice Juvenile requirements of Quick March Tempo for Minor Contests remains unchanged.

Major Championships - Grade 4B and Novice Juvenile "B"

- 4 x 2 parted Marches from the "RSPBA Prescribed Tune List"
- Bands may choose Parts 1 and 2 of any of the 4 parted tunes offered on the list
- All tunes played must come from the "RSPBA Prescribed Tune List"

Major Championships - Grade 4A and Novice Juvenile "A"

- 4 Parts March (in 2/4 Time Signature), 4 Parts Strathspey and 4 Parts Reel
- This can be 1 X 4 parted March/Strathspey/Reel OR 2 x 2 parted Marches/Strathspeys/Reels
- Bands may choose Parts 1 and 2 of any of the 4 parted tunes offered on the list
- All tunes played must come from the "RSPBA Prescribed Tune List"

Minor Contests:

- Grade 4 and Novice Juvenile remains as stipulated currently - being 2-1/2 to 4-1/2 Minutes Quick March Tempo
- For Minor Grade 4 and Novice Juvenile "A" MSR Contests; Championship playing requirement change will also be applied

New Tunes Added:

As a result of these changes for the **2016 season**, you will now see new 4 parted Strathspeys and 4 parted Reels added to the "RSPBA Prescribed Tune List" below. All previous tunes remain on the list.

PRESCRIBED TUNES 2/4 MARCHES - MUSIC

2/4 Marches - 2 parts

1. Achany Glen (Added for 2015)
2. Atholl and Breadalbane Gathering (Revised for 2015)
3. Auchmountain's Bonnie Glen (Revised for 2015)
4. Australian Ladies (Revised for 2015)
5. Campbell's Farewell to Redcastle (Revised for 2015)
6. Captain Norman Orr Ewing (Added for 2015)
7. Corriechoillies 43rd Welcome to the Northern Meeting (Revised for 2015)
8. Donald MacLellan's Farewell to Oban (Added for 2015)
9. Duncan MacInnes (Added for 2015)
10. Dundee Military Tattoo (Added for 2015)
11. Greenwood Side (Revised for 2015)
12. Hills of Perth (Added for 2015)
13. I'll Gang Nae Mair Tae Yon Toon (Revised for 2015)
14. Jenny's Bawbee (Revised for 2015)
15. John MacMillan of Barra (Added for 2015)
16. King George V's Army (Added for 2015)
17. Mackay's Farewell to the 74th (Revised for 2015)
18. Major C. M. Usher O.B.E. (Revised for 2015)
19. McKenzie Highlanders (Revised for 2015)
20. Men of Argyll (Revised for 2015)
21. Mairi Bhan (Revised for 2015)
22. Miss Delicia Chisholm (Added for 2015)
23. Mrs H.L. MacDonald of Dunach (Added for 2015)
24. Muir of Ord (Added for 2015)
25. Pipe Major William Ross's Farewell to the Scots Guards (Revised for 2015)
26. Prince Charles Welcome to Lochaber (Added for 2015)
27. Rantin 'Rovin' Robin (Revised for 2015)
28. Teribus (Revised for 2015)
29. The 51st Highland Division at Wadi Akarit (Added for 2015)
30. The 25th K.O.S.B.'s Farewell to Meerut (Revised for 2015)

PRESCRIBED TUNES STRATHSPEYS & REELS - MUSIC

Strathspeys - 2 parts

1. Archie Duncan (Added for 2016)
2. Amiston Castle (Added for 2016)
3. Aspen Bank (Revised for 2014)
4. Because he was a Bonny Lad (Revised for 2014)
5. Campbeltown Kiltie Ball (Revised for 2014)
6. Captain Colin Campbell (Added for 2016)
7. Captain Horne (Revised for 2014)
8. Colonel MacLeod (Revised for 2014)
9. Dalnahassalg (Revised for 2014)
10. Dornie Ferry (Added for 2016)
11. Dorrotor Bridge (Added for 2016)
12. Highland Harry (Added for 2016)
13. J.F. MacKenzie (Revised for 2014)
14. Jennifer Finlayson (Added for 2016)
15. Kathleen Mala (Added for 2016)
16. Lady MacKenzie of Fairburn (Revised for 2014)
17. Lady MacKenzie of Gairloch (Revised for 2014)
18. Loudens Bonnie Woods and Braes (Revised for 2014)
19. Maggie Cameron (Added for 2016)
20. McPhedran's Strathspey (Revised for 2014)
21. Molly Connell (Revised for 2014)
22. Munlochy Bridge (Revised for 2014)
23. O'er The Bows To Ballindalloch (Revised for 2014)
24. Orange and Blue (Revised for 2014)
25. Pipe Major Hector MacLellan (Added for 2016)
26. Seonaidh's Tune (Revised for 2014)
27. Struan Robertson (Added for 2016)
28. Susan MacLeod (Added for 2016)
29. The Caledonian Canal (Added for 2016)
30. The Inverness Rant (Revised for 2014)
31. The Keel Row (Revised for 2014)
32. The Market Place of Inverness (Revised for 2014)
33. The Marquis of Huntly (Revised for 2014)
34. The Smiths a Gallant Fireman (Revised for 2014)

Latest News

[Music Board Gradings for 2016](#)

[World Solo Drumming and International Juvenile Solo Tenor Entries now open](#)

[2016 Major Championship Dates and Locations](#)

[World Solo Drumming - Adult Final Tickets For Sale](#)

[World Championships - Grade 1 Finalists](#)

[View All News](#)

Latest Band Summaries

[Pitlochry](#)

[Innerleithen](#)

[Chatsworth](#)

[Peebles](#)

[Stranraer](#)

[View All Band Summaries](#)

Latest Drum Major Summaries

[Innerleithen](#)

[Peebles](#)

[Stranraer](#)

[Cowal](#)

[Portrush](#)

[View All DM Summaries](#)

Upcoming Contest Draws



Follow @RSPBAHQ

Next Event

World Solo Drumming

17th October 2015

Glasgow Caledonia University
Glasgow

16 days 23 hrs 10 mins

2016 Information

[Annual Fees UK Bands](#)

[Annual Fees Non UK Bands](#)

[Prescribed Tunes](#)

[2016 Grading Changes](#)

Links to more 2016 info will be added as it becomes available.

Latest Magazine

Jul 2015
Edition Out Now



For more information and free digital back editions [click here](#)

- 2015)
31. The 72nd Highlanders Farewell to Aberdeen (Revised for 2015)
 32. The 79th's Farewell to Gibraltar (Added for 2015)
 33. The Brown Haired Maiden (Revised for 2015)
 34. The Drunken Piper (Revised for 2015)
 35. The Earl of Mansfield (Revised for 2015)
 36. The Haughs of Cromdale (Added for 2015)
 37. The Liberton Pipe Band (Added for 2015)
 38. The Pipers Cave (Revised for 2015)
 39. The Rhodesian Regiment (Added for 2015)
 40. The Siege of Delhi (Added for 2015)
 41. The Sweet Maid of Glendaruel (Revised for 2015)
 42. Walter Douglas M.B.E. (Added for 2015)

2/4 Marches - 4 parts

1. Achany Glen (Added for 2015)
2. Atholl and Breadalbane Gathering (Added for 2015)
3. Auchmountain's Bonnie Glen (Added for 2014)
4. Australian Ladies (Added for 2015)
5. Captain Norman Orr Ewing (Added for 2015)
6. Donald MacLean's Farewell to Oban (Added 2015)
7. Duncan MacInnes (Added for 2015)
8. Dundee Military Tattoo (Added for 2014)
9. Hills of Perth (Added for 2015)
10. John MacMillan of Barra (Added for 2014)
11. King George V's Army (Added for 2014)
12. Major C.M. Usher O.B.E. (Added for 2015)
13. Men of Argyll (Added for 2015)
14. Miss Delicia Chisholm (Added for 2015)
15. Mrs H.L. MacDonald of Dunach (Added for 2014)
16. Muir of Ord (Added for 2015)
17. Prince Charles Welcome to Lochaber (Added for 2015)
18. The 25th K.O.S.B.'s Farewell to Meerut (Added for 2015)
19. The 51st Highland Division at Wadi Akarit (Added for 2015)
20. The 79th's Farewell to Gibraltar (Added for 2015)
21. The Haughs of Cromdale (Added for 2015)
22. The Liberton Pipe Band (Added for 2015)
23. The Rhodesian Regiment (Added for 2015)
24. The Siege of Delhi (Added for 2015)
25. Walter Douglas M.B.E. (Added for 2015)

**RSPBA
Music Board**

Strathspeys - 4 parts

1. Archie Duncan (Added for 2016)
2. Arniston Castle (Added for 2016)
3. Captain Colin Campbell (Added for 2016)
4. Dornie Ferry (Added for 2016)
5. Dorrotor Bridge (Added for 2016)
6. Highland Harry (Added for 2016)
7. Jennifer Finlayson (Added for 2016)
8. Kathleen Mala (Added for 2016)
9. Maggie Cameron (Added for 2016)
10. Pipe Major Hector MacLean (Added for 2016)
11. Struan Robertson (Added for 2016)
12. Susan MacLeod (Added for 2016)
13. The Caledonian Canal (Added for 2016)
14. The Marquis of Huntly (Added for 2016)

Reels - 2 parts

1. Alick C. McGregor (Added for 2016)
2. Angus MacLellan (Added for 2016)
3. Caber Feidh (Added for 2016)
4. Captain Lachlan MacPhail of Tiree (Added for 2016)
5. Circassian Circle (Revised for 2014)
6. Colonel MacLeod (Revised for 2014)
7. Duncan Findlay's Reel (Added for 2016)
8. East Wood Cottage (Revised for 2014)
9. Famous Ballymote (Revised for 2014)
10. Flora, Mrs MacLeod of MacLeod (Added for 2016)
11. Gena MacLeod (Added for 2016)
12. High Road to Linton (Revised for 2014)
13. Jock Wilson's Ball (Revised for 2014)
14. Kalabakan (Added for 2016)
15. Lexy McAskill (Added for 2016)
16. Lord James Murray (Revised for 2014)
17. Lt. Col DJS Murray (Added for 2016)
18. Major David Manson (Added for 2016)
19. Marion and Donald (Revised for 2014)
20. Miss Girdle (Revised for 2014)
21. Molly on the Shore (Revised for 2014)
22. Over the Isles to America (Added for 2016)
23. Pipe Major Calum Campbell (Added for 2016)
24. Piper of Drummond (Revised for 2014)
25. Sheila McMurchy's Dance (Added for 2016)
26. Sleepy Maggie (Revised for 2014)
27. Tail Toddle (Revised for 2014)
28. The Ale is Dear (Revised for 2014)
29. The Blackberry Bush (Added for 2016)
30. The Fairy Dance (Revised for 2014)
31. The Man from Glengarry (Added for 2016)
32. The Silver Spear (Revised for 2014)
33. The Sound of Sleat (Added for 2016)
34. Willie Murray (Revised for 2014)

Reels - 4 parts

1. Alick C. McGregor (Added for 2016)
2. Angus MacLellan (Added for 2016)
3. Caber Feidh (Added for 2016)
4. Captain Lachlan MacPhail of Tiree (Added for 2016)
5. Colonel MacLeod (Added for 2016)
6. Duncan Findlay's Reel (Added for 2016)
7. Flora, Mrs MacLeod of MacLeod (Added for 2016)
8. Gena MacLeod (Added for 2016)
9. Kalabakan (Added for 2016)
10. Lexy McAskill (Added for 2016)
11. Lt. Col DJS Murray (Added for 2016)
12. Major David Manson (Added for 2016)
13. Molly on The Shore (Added for 2016)
14. Over the Isles to America (Added for 2016)
15. Pipe Major Calum Campbell (Added for 2016)
16. Sleepy Maggie (Added for 2016)
17. Sheila McMurchy's Dance (Added for 2016)
18. The Blackberry Bush (Added for 2016)
19. The Man from Glengarry (Added for 2016)
20. The Sound of Sleat (Added for 2016)

**RSPBA
Music Board**

Guidance on the selection and performance of MAP tunes in RSPBA Contests.

In general terms, the issues to be addressed in selecting and performing MAP tunes include tempo, technical difficulty, tonality, rhythm, ensemble, 'breaks', and corps playing.

TEMPO is affected by many factors, such as the type of piece, e.g. March, Strathspey, or Reel, etc., its **technical difficulty**, and the ability level of the performers. If the piece challenges the ability of the performers, for example, inexperienced juveniles, then it is unlikely that its tempo will be in keeping with the expected '**Lively and Spirited**' interpretation of the March rhythm in a contest. Notwithstanding this, it is anticipated that pipe bands which are obviously in a 'learning' situation may not be able to match the expected criteria until sufficient competency and experience is reached, though allowance will not be made for this in a contest. Therefore, to achieve the best musical effect, it is important to select tunes within the areas of capability and experience of the pipe band.

The 'correct' tempo of any piece is always a matter of choice in relation to its style or type, and has long been a point of discussion among musicians who are engaged in repeatedly performing long-established traditional or classic pieces of music. However, guidelines can be drawn as to what tempo is most appropriate. This also applies to other music out with that of the bagpipe. For example, to play a piece given the tempo mark 'Allegro', meaning 'quick, lively, bright', could only be achieved through learning and experience. However, with the invention and extensive use of the 'metronome' (from about 1810), 'Allegro' has been assessed as having a tempo range of between 120 and 160 beats per minute. This offers the performer some latitude in the tempo of the piece according to its type, and the interpretation of the melody.

Suggested tempo for MAP:

2/4 March – approx. 78 beats per minute;

Strathspey – approx. 120 beats per minute;

Reel – approx. 84 beats per minute.

TONALITY is the use of a succession of different scales to provide variety and contrast in a medley, or 'set', of tunes. This aspect of medley construction can easily be identified through the traditional grouping of the set of marches:

'Scotland the Brave' (final note 'Low A'); 'Bonnie Galloway' (final note 'D');, 'Rowan Tree' (final - 'Low A'); and 'The Black Bear' (final - 'D').

It is the 'Final' of a melody which identifies its particular scale.

RHYTHM is the result of the regular recurrence of 'strong' and 'weak' pulses, and is the means by which the 'characteristics', or 'idiom', of different types of music is defined, especially those pieces designed to inspire action such as the well known dance, the 'Waltz'. This is achieved, firstly by the tempo, and secondly by the accurate observation of 'relative note values'. The subdivision of the beat note into particular 'note groups', provides the vitality and distinctive quality of the various types of music.

'Vitality' is not created by playing quickly, but by playing the relative note values accurately. A common fault in playing a 'Strathspey', which is written in 'simple time', is not playing the note values accurately. Each bar consists of four crotchets, with each crotchet often subdivided into a 'note group' consisting of a semi-quaver and a 'dotted' quaver, providing a 'pointed' effect to the tune. This 'idiom' is frequently referred to as the 'Scotch Snap'. Nonetheless, in the effort to execute this type of tune, it often happens that the *pointed* effect of the note groups, the 'Strathspey' idiom, becomes lost as the note values in these groups are wrongly played, as crotchet and quaver, drifting into 'compound time' and sounding 'rounded'.

This is also the case with Reels, where the differences in value between the 'dotted' and 'cut' notes become less obvious, and less *pointed*, if not observed by the performer, becoming 'round' and uninspiring.

Ensemble means the combined musical effect of all instruments in performance. In striving for 'good' ensemble, it is of the utmost importance that the Pipe Major and Leading Drummer actively collaborate on all aspects of tune selection, to ensure the most effective accompaniment and support for the melodies by the percussion section of the pipe band.

This must include the anticipated tempo of the pieces in performance, so that drum scores of the most appropriate technical difficulty and dramatic effect can be developed. This is another example of a typical fault in pipe band performances at contests. Where the beatings are designed for a particular tempo, but the actual performance tempo is slower than planned during the 'uptake' to the opening piece, the drummers spontaneously have to try to assess how stretch out the content of the beatings in an attempt to adapt to a tempo which has not been thoroughly rehearsed. This occurs often when, after the tempo has been set by the Pipe Major, followed by the introductory 'opening rolls' at that tempo from the drum corps, the pipers over-emphasise the notes at the beginning of the tune, during uptake, causing the tempo to 'drop'. Conversely, if the beatings are complex, and a quicker tempo arises during uptake, this means the beatings have to be crammed into shorter periods of time.

In either situation, the all important ensemble effect will be lost to some degree, and frequently it is a matter of 'degree' which decides the outcome of a contest.

Corps playing is a hugely influential aspect of any performance, and is best achieved by each member of the band focussing on the either the Pipe Major or Leading Drummer, to ensure that they are playing 'in time' with the band leaders. Each person has a slightly different sense of 'time', and without that concentrated effort to focus on the 'time-keepers' of the band, the musical and dramatic impact of the performance is diminished. This can be most obvious where those elements of harmony from pipers, or bass section, do not accurately coincide with the melodies and their 'high points'.

'Breaks', the moment of changing from one tune another, have to be clear and precise. It's another common fault, and is an area which requires great concentration. 'Good breaks' do not occur easily, and pipers and drummers must prepare themselves for each coming 'break' to another tune. This is just as important where the 'breaks' lead to a change of idiom. To fail to have precise breaks reduces the dramatic effect of a sudden change in tempo, rhythm, and idiom, spoiling the excitement and tension of the set. Where the rhythm and tempo changes at these 'breaks' in a 'March, Strathspey and Reel' set, pipers and drummers must think ahead to the anticipated effect and try to produce it instantly.

30.09.2010

The Brown Haired Maiden

March

Traditional

Musical score for 'The Brown Haired Maiden' in 2/4 time. The score consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 2/4 time signature, and a repeat sign. The music is written in a simple, rhythmic style. There are several annotations: a circle around a note in the first staff, a circle around a note in the second staff, and a diagonal slash through the first two staves. A bracket is placed under a group of notes in the fourth staff.

MacKay's Farewell to the 74th

March

Musical score for 'MacKay's Farewell to the 74th' in 2/4 time. The score consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 2/4 time signature, and a repeat sign. The music is written in a simple, rhythmic style. There are several annotations: a circle around a note in the first staff, a circle around a note in the second staff, a circle around a note in the third staff, a circle around a note in the fourth staff, and a diagonal slash through the fourth and fifth staves. Brackets with first and second endings are present throughout the score.

Colonel MacLeod

Strathspey

Musical score for 'Colonel MacLeod', a Strathspey. It consists of three staves of music in G major. The first staff has several measures grouped with brackets. The second staff has a circled measure. The third staff continues the melody. The piece is marked 'R.S.P.B.A. MAP 2009'.

Lady MacKenzie of Gairloch

Strathspey

Musical score for 'Lady MacKenzie of Gairloch', a Strathspey. It consists of three staves of music in G major. The first staff has several measures grouped with brackets. The second staff has a circled measure and a first ending bracket. The third staff has a second ending bracket. The piece is marked 'R.S.P.B.A. MAP 2009'.

The Ale is Dear

Reel

Musical score for 'The Ale is Dear', a Reel. It consists of three staves of music in G major. The first staff has several measures grouped with brackets. The second staff has a circled measure. The third staff continues the melody. The piece is marked 'R.S.P.B.A. MAP 2009'.

The High Road to Linton

Reel Trad.

Musical score for 'The High Road to Linton', a Reel. It consists of two staves of music in G major. The first staff has several measures grouped with brackets. The second staff has a circled measure. The piece is marked 'R.S.P.B.A. MAP 2009'.