

Kathleen O'Hehir

Irish slide

D Major

Irish slides are usually played fairly fast, as part of a set of quadrilles referred to as a polka set i.e. a sequence of square dances to different rhythms, the first of the set being in a polka rhythm. The rhythm of a slide is less bouncy and more flowing than that of the similar single jig (which also has the characteristic crotchet followed by quaver sequences).

This example benefits from a steadier pace than is usual with slides. It is a beautifully relaxing tune. Use the variety of bow strokes to give shape to the melody with its restrained highlights and relaxed endings to the phrases.

Note the contrast between sustained notes marked with a horizontal line (a tenuto symbol) and the notes marked 'staccato' which are shortened and followed by a brief silence. Where there are two consecutive up bows (a broken slur) the first up bow will also be staccato. Neither the sustained nor the staccato notes require strong accentuation.

There does need to be some gentle accentuation of the beat where slurs are used. Sometimes the slur begins on an accented note (on the beat), but there are also slurs across the beat. The across-the-beat slurs require an accentuation of the middle or last note of the slur. Where this applies the bow direction sign is placed above the note requiring the accent. Just lean into the note with gentle bow pressure.