



# The Piper's Dojo

## The Bagpipe as an Extension of your Self

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### Chapter 4 Appendix: Bagpipe Embellishment Guide

This Embellishment Guide is meant to clearly lay out and illustrate how embellishments should be played and thought about.

Each Embellishment page includes a graphic of what the embellishment would look like when notated. It then breaks the movement into its discrete steps.

Lastly, there is an Explanation section where the different issues surrounding each type of embellishment are addressed.

To execute these embellishments, and develop them further, play each step, and follow the Cardinal Rules!

#### Two Cardinal Rules of All Embellishments:

1. Each step must be played accurately.
2. Each step must be played the same length (with exception of the final step, which could be any length).

#### Embellishment Velocity (speed)

- Build velocity gradually.
- Never sacrifice the cardinal rules for velocity.

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### Doublings up to F:

Look Like:



Steps:

3. Start on (come from) any note.
4. Play High G Gracenote to Note 'X'.
5. If Note 'X' is below D, Play D Gracenote on Note 'X'.
  - a. Otherwise, play next available ('X' + 1) Gracenote.

Explanation:

- These basic doublings have two steps, and thus produce two sounds.
- Downbeat/Accent goes on: Step 1
- A few things to realize about Doublings up to F:
  - You can only play these doublings up to F, because F is the highest note on which it is possible to play a High G Gracenote.
  - If Step 0 is a note above F, Step 1 will change to one of the following:
    - Play Thumb Gracenote to Note 'X' [only if Step 0 Note = High G]
    - Play Note 'X'. [i.e. omit the High G Gracenote. This is often called a "half doubling."]

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### High G Doubling:

#### Looks Like:



#### Steps:

0. Start on (come from) any note below High G.
1. Play High G Gracenote to F.
2. Play High G.

#### Explanation:

- The High G Doubling has two steps, and thus produces two sounds.
- Downbeat/Accent goes on: Step 1
- A few things to realize about High G Doublings:
  - You can only play these doublings starting from notes F or below, because F is the highest note on which it is possible to play a High G Gracenote.
  - While the High G Doubling is generally considered a member of the doubling "family," it is also very similar in sound and mechanics to a Light D Throw.

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### High A Doubling:

Looks Like:



#### Method A Steps:

0. Start on (come from) any note below High A.
1. Play High A.
2. Play High G strike on High A.

#### Method B Steps:

0. Start on (come from) any note below High A.
1. Play Thumb Gracenote to High G.
2. Play High A.

#### Explanation:

- The High A Doubling has two steps, and thus produces two sounds.
- Downbeat/Accent goes on: Step 1
- A few things to realize about High A Doublings:
  - When playing method A, some players produce a High G strike by “swiping” the thumb downwards. Others “swipe” upwards.
  - While the High A Doubling is generally considered a member of the doubling “family,” Method B is also very similar in sound and mechanics to a Light D Throw.

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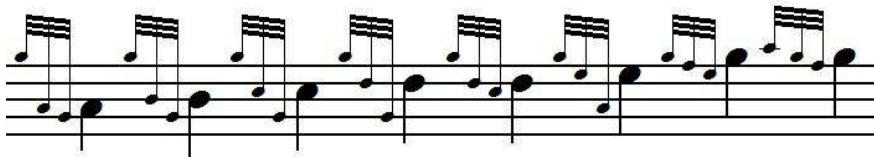
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### Double-Strikes:

Look Like:



Steps:

0. Start on (come from) any note.
1. Play High G Gracenote to Note 'X'.
2. If Note 'X' is below D, Play Low G Strike on Note 'X'.
  - a. If Note 'X' = D, play EITHER Low G Strike or Next-Lowest-Note ('X' - 1) Strike.
  - b. If Note 'X' is above D, play Next-Lowest-Note ('X' - 1) Strike.

Explanation:

- These basic doublings have two steps, and thus produce two sounds.
- Downbeat/Accent goes on: Step 1

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## Grip/Leamluath:

### Looks Like:



### Steps:

4. Start on (come from) any note.
5. Play Low G.
6. Play D Gracenote on Low G.
7. Play any note.

### Explanation:

- The Grip has three steps, and thus produces three sounds.
- Downbeat/Accent goes on:
  - Method A: Step 3
  - Method B: Step 1
- A few things to realize about Grips:
  - If Step 0 note = Low G, then Step 1 is omitted. In this case, the Grip would then become a two-step embellishment.

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### Taorluath:

#### Looks Like:



#### Steps:

0. Start on (come from) any note.
1. Play Low G.
2. Play D Gracenote on Low G.
3. Play E gracenote to any note (below E).

#### Explanation:

- The Taorluath has three steps, and thus produces three sounds.
- Downbeat/Accent goes on:
  - Method A: Step 3
  - Method B: Step 1
- A few things to realize about Taorluaths:
  - If Step 0 note = Low G, then Step 1 is omitted. In this case, the Taorluath would then become a two-step embellishment.
    - Special Note: In Piobaireachd Playing (and Piobaireachd playing only), When Step 0 = Low G, some players will play the two-step Taorluath as such:
      0. Start on (come from) Low G
      1. Play D Gracenote to Low A
      2. Play E gracenote on Low A.
  - Step Three can only be played to notes D or below, because D is the highest note on which it is possible to play an E Gracenote.

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### D Throw:

Looks Like ("Light," then "Heavy" respectively):



#### Method A – "Light" - Steps:

4. Start on (come from) any note.
5. Play Low G.
6. Play D Gracenote to C.
7. Play D.

#### Method B – "Heavy" - Steps:

0. Start on (come from) any note.
1. Play Low G.
2. Play D Gracenote on Low G.
3. Play C.
4. Play D.

#### Explanation:

- Steps:
  - "Light": The D Throw has three steps, and thus produces three sounds.
  - "Heavy": The D Throw has four steps, and thus produces four sounds.
- Downbeat/Accent goes on:
  - "Light":
    - Method A: Step 2
    - Method B: Step 1
  - "Heavy":
    - Method A: Step 3
    - Method B: Step 1
- A few things to realize about D Throws:
  - If Step 0 note = Low G, then Step 1 is omitted. In this case, the Throw would then become a two-step embellishment (or three-step if playing Method B).

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### Birls:

Looks Like ("Low A" Birl, then "G Gracenote" Birl respectively):



#### Low A Birl - Steps:

0. Start on (come from) any note.
1. Play Low A.
2. Play Low G Strike to Low A.
3. Play Low G Strike to Low A.

#### G Gracenote Birl - Steps:

0. Start on (come from) any note.
1. Play High G Gracenote to Low A.
2. Play Low G Strike to Low A.
3. Play Low G Strike to Low A.

#### Explanation:

- The Birl (Low A and G Gracenote) has three steps, and thus produces three sounds.
- Downbeat/Accent goes on: Step 1.
- A few things to realize about D Throws:
  - The mechanics of playing a birl are highly specialized, due to the necessity of high velocity (speed). Be sure to consult your instructor in regards to finding the best method for you.
  - Low A Birl Only: If Step 0 note = Low A, then Step 1 is omitted. In this case, the Birl would then become a two-step embellishment.
    - This Birl from Low A Looks like:



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