

LESSON 1b. Tune analysis  
& style markers, cross-  
referenced with the *Guide* (7)  
backup chords

# 1b. Swallowtail Jig

## VIOLIN

Irish setting

Track 3-1b. slow • Track 4-1c. lesson • Track 5-1d. fast

traditional Irish jig

Violin score for the traditional Irish jig "Swallowtail Jig". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 6/8 time signature. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 108. The score is divided into four systems of staves, with measure numbers 1, 5, 10, and 14 indicated at the start of each system. Annotations include: "Up-bow leading (16)", "roll-up (25)", "flick (23) buried inside slur", "jig turn (25) uses half a bar in 6/8", "grace-notes modify doubled pitches", "trill (25)", "reefing the bow (13)", and "bend note or smear up (23)". Chords are indicated above the staff: Em, D, and D. A note in measure 15 is annotated with "slurring into the downbeat (15) uses as much bow for the single note as for the two slurred notes". A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a bracket and the number 3.

Backup chords (8) - drive the first upbow and this one almost plays itself

Backup chords for the Swallowtail Jig, consisting of a single staff of music. The chords are indicated above the staff: Em, Em, D, D, Em, Em, D, Em. The music shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, corresponding to the chord changes.

### Tune analysis & style overlay for interpreting fiddle music:

Use this method to examine each tune for style, beat placement, form and chord structure

**1. Style:** Uses Irish "set" of jig ornaments, bowings, and rhythms: *flicks, smears, dotted quarter turns, trills, reefing, & rollups*. Pick and choose three or four from among them for each repetition of the tune, moving them around to create new rhythms and accent them. Left-hand ornaments are added to the melody when they can be incorporated at normal playing tempos. Work each one up to speed using the lesson CDs and slow-down computer software (*Resources, 66*) or a metronome, increasing the tempo each session until you're up to speed. All ornaments are played without taking any time of their own, and they often begin phrases. Cut notes short to leave time for ornaments, and more importantly, to leave space within a tune.

**2. Form:** 6/8 meter, structured evenly in two repeated 8-bar phrases, played AABB for 32 bars.

**3. Beat Placement:** Straight up on the beat, but *slurring into the downbeat*. Try slurring into the bar on an *UP-bow* to give a lilt to jigs.

**4. Chord structure:** E Dorian (E minor) - The harmony moves in a line, *i - VII - i*, in this case *Em - D - Em*. This is one of the four harmony types discussed in this book: **Dorian** (modal minor), commonly found in Irish, Scottish and Appalachian music. With only two adjacent chords to find and fiddle with, there's time to find more rhythms to play over them, as in the example above. See also *Diatonic Chords, 19; Chord Wheel, 18; Harmonic Structure, 19; Minor/modal chord progressions, 20*.