Mastering "The Black Bear"

Practice tempo target is 60 bpm. Play slower until you master an exercise, with embellishments. Note that the time signature is 2/4. I use double beating, that is 4 beats per measure, where an 8th note (one flag) gets one beat. Think of each beat (tap of your foot) as a "down/up", like a conductor's baton.

1. Getting into the tune with a consistent rhythm is the 1st exercise. Set your pace... 1.. 2.. 3.. 4... Sound E for 3 ½ beats and the two intro 16th notes (two flags) on the "up beat" of #4. Equal value for the 16th notes, right on to the three 8th notes in a smooth rhythm. Play as written, observe the repeat marks. Repeat it several times. As you get it, play it without looking at the music. Try to visualize the notation as you do this. Go on to the next exercise only after you master this first one.
Be sure to play the D-throw and D-strike sounding a solid low-G.

2. This exercise adds the first four-bit encounter. Again, repeat, repeat... as written. G-grace note, **hold-cut, hold-cut**. Keep the "cut" <u>much</u> shorter than the hold.

3. On to measures 3 and 4: an E-doubling and a tour-la , and G-D grace notes, also a change in the cut-hold sequence. Note the 4th measure: **cut-hold, hold-cut**..... **hold-cut, cut-hold**.
I visualize this 8bit run as **te-tah tah-te tah-te-te-tah**..
Get the rhythm first, then add the grace notes.
Measures 5 and 6 are direct repeats of 1 and 2.

4. Measures 7 an8 complete the first part of the tune. Nothing new here, except a grip, which again, requires robust low-G's; and little half-doubling on F.

When playing the full tune, this first part is repeated, with the two pick-up notes.

5. Measure 9 is very similar to measure 1, adding a tour-la to the sequence: tour-la... D-throw..D-strike.

6. Measure 10 has a 4 bit run with cut-hold hold-cut, or te-tah tah-te if you like. Measures 11 and 12 are identical to 9 and 10, except that the author sneaks in a half-doubling on F six notes from the end of 12.

7. This line puts 9, 10,11, and 12 together. Work it, repeat it, until you can play it without the music.

8. Measure 13 is the start of a three measure barrage of 4 bit work. Lets look at 13:
The timing is **hold-cut-cut-cut....cut-hold-cut-hold**. Or **tah-te-te-te-.... te-tah-te-tah**. In double-time beating, each two notes is one beat.

9. Measure 14: **hold-cut-cut-hold hold-cut-cut-hold** or **tah-te-te-tah... tah-te-te-tah**.

10 Measures 15 and 16 are "relief" measures, where we return to the comfortable **hold-cut-hold-cut** pattern. A new high-A grace note appears: lift all upper hand fingers off the chanter, like you were dropping a pencil.

At this point, the tune reverts back to Part 1, without the pick-up's.

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