

9 Great New Tunes To

ROCK YOUR CEILIDH

By:

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The new style of English Ceilidh has been gathering strength in recent years, without clear definition, so with this collection of new dance melodies we take the opportunity to build a fresh musical context for many of the traditional dances.

When we put our first barn dance band together some years ago we soon realised that a collection of Morris Tunes was not going to be enough for a modern audience. The band would have a strong rhythm section and whilst “eclectic” is a rather over used word, it was a useful to describe our musical tastes.

The early band line up proved to be very effective, and stands good today - consisting of the essential Rock structure: drum kit, electric bass and electric guitar. We then added extra instruments – so the electric guitarist plays all manner of strings including mandolin, acoustic guitar and bouzouki (guitar type instrument from Greece), the bandoleon player doubles on guitar, the keyboard player also adds flute/whistle and some saxophones.

Looking at what other bands were doing, we find Rufus Return, the Ran Tan Band and Wap Weazel among a number of notable bands – all sharing the common rock line up with various folk instrument added along side.

And, one by one, the Morris tunes were to be replaced by melodies written by the band members and by the other bands we admired.

The structure we have adopted employs only 16, 32 or 48 bars of crisp melody, adding interesting and modern chord structures, whilst allowing fluidity to the arrangements that our drummer has described as freer than some of the jazz groups he works with.

Arrangements are not allowed to stray too far from the simple rhythms and melodies that folk dance requires, and instruments take turns in a (fairly) organised fashion. No cabaret ending- instructs our caller, and slow starts with a single instrument are the common rules by which we mostly abide.