



Back a few Whither Zithers ago I remember having trouble describing the layout of accordions because of certain key words having more than one meaning. "Key," for example, as in "key words," but also the black and white keys of a keyboard and the key of a song. Leaving me with sentences like "The key at left shows the C key as the tonic in the key of C." I've been wondering how many such words -- words with more than one meaning -- there are in the world of folk music. Here's a very rudimentary, incomplete, and informally presented list that came to mind:

### BAND

- Gaggles of musicians, as *polka band*.
- Symbolic arm strap.
- Range of radio frequencies.
- In sound recording, a segment of music set off by silence; a track.

### BAR

- Same as a *measure*, in notation.
- Tavern, of course.
- A chord played on a stringed instrument which involves mashing one finger across all of the strings.
- To refuse admission.

### BEAT

- Tired, as *he was beat by the 3rd set*.
- Pulse in music, as *a waltz has three beats per measure*.
- Strike, as in *beat the bodhran*.
- Conquer, as in *beat the odds*.
- Be better than, as *You can't beat jazz*.
- Scram, as in *Beat it, muzak man*.

### BELT

- Sing loud. *She belts it out*.
- Trouser holder upper.
- Punch. *She belted his banjo*.
- Drink in a gulp; chug.
- Touring area, as the *Borscht Belt*.

### BLOCK

- A stoppage of brain, as *writer's block*.
- City section. *The line for Seeger's show wound around the block*.
- To plot the physical movement of characters on a stage.
- Section of time on radio or TV.

### BREAK

- Pause between sets of music.
- Instrumental solo between lyric passages. As in *banjo break*.
- What happens to banjo strings during the above.
- Fortunate turn of events in a career.
- To disobey a contract.

- Change of voice, as in yodeling.
- Cut in price, as for seniors.

### BRIDGE

- Structure on the face of an instrument that the strings press upon.
- A short melodic and thematic detour in a song.

### CHARGE

- Run toward. *They charged the stage*.
- Pay with credit: *She charged a CD*.
- Money required. *They charged \$10 at the door*.
- Replenish electrically.
- Legally accuse: *He was charged with burning the accordion*.
- Command, as in *charge of the band*.
- Thrill: *I get a charge out of you*.

### CLIP

- Speed. *He played Nola at a good clip*.
- Microphone holder.
- Digital overload. *He turned the gain up until it clipped*.
- Newspaper review. *The band had a good press clip*.

### FEEDBACK

- Critique received about a show.
- Howling of a PA system when sound from the speakers reenters the mics.

### FLAT

- A symbol lowering its note 1/2 step.
- An uncurved surface, as in flat-top guitar or flat-pick.
- Unemotional. *Her show was flat*.
- Punctured tire. *They had two flats on their way to the gig*.
- Background panel in a stage set.
- Off-key; slightly below pitch.

### FRET

- What musicians do in the green room.
- Raised wire on a fingerboard.

### GIG

- Job. *I have a gig in Toledo tonight*.
- Short for gigabyte.

### KEY

- Tonal basis. *What key are you in?*
- Thing you press to sound a note.
- Tuning tool for certain instruments.
- Explanatory area on a diagram.

### NOTE

- Symbol for a tone's pitch and length.
- The tone of a given frequency.
- A key, as on a piano.
- A short message.
- To observe.
- Quality, as *a note of scorn in the song*.

### PAN

- Musical pipe instrument (Pan Pipes).
- Stereo placement adjustment.
- Negative critique of a show.

### PITCH

- The frequency or tone of a note.
- Throw, as a tomato.
- A piece of promotional writing.
- The slant or rake of a stage

### POP

- Noise made by saying a plosive sound directly into a close microphone.
- Soda, as in *pop available in lobby*.
- Father or fatherish, as *Pop Wagner*.
- Arrive without notice for a short time: *He would pop in for the last set*.
- Ingest. *He would pop a calumet before the show*.
- Popular, as in *pop rock* or *pop music*.
- Pay for, as *Pop popped for the pop*.

### POT

- Volume knob (potentiometer).
- Money collected at the door.
- Marijuana.
- Beer belly.

### ROLL

- A steady drum rattle.
- Good momentum. *Dylan's on a roll*.
- What teens do with their eyes when they hear folk music.
- Make a cylinder, as *roll a cigarette*.
- Flip a vehicle. *He rolled the band van*.
- Sway. *They rolled with laughter*.
- Say with a trill. *He rolled his r's*.
- A cylindrical pile. *A roll of dimes*.
- A big bunch of money.

### RUN

- An ascending or descending progression of notes.
- A string of performances at one venue.
- Forced, as *run out of town*.
- Control, as *I'll run the PA*.
- Cost, as *a new PA will run \$2000*.

### SET

- Collection, as *a set of strings*.
- Uninterrupted segment of live music.
- A television receiver.
- Fixated, as *heart set on*.
- Happening at a specific time or place, as *a song set in 1880s London*.
- Apply music to, as *a poem set to music*.
- Positioned to catch the wind: set sail.
- Establish, as *set the attendance record*.
- Harden, as *the glue holding the broken guitar neck had not set by showtime*.
- Adjust. *He set the volume*.
- Celestial body moving beyond the horizon. *The sun set during the show*.

### STAND

- Tolerate, as *I can't stand muzak*.
- Upright pole for holding a microphone, sheet music, etc.
- Become vertical, as in *please stand for the Norwegian anthem*.
- Bleachers. *They sat in the stand*.
- Opinion. *Where do you stand?*
- Raised platform for a band.

There are many other such multiple meaning words in music, like *strike*, *tune*, *rest*, and so forth. Strange, don't you think? Nice of you to take the time to take in my take on it.