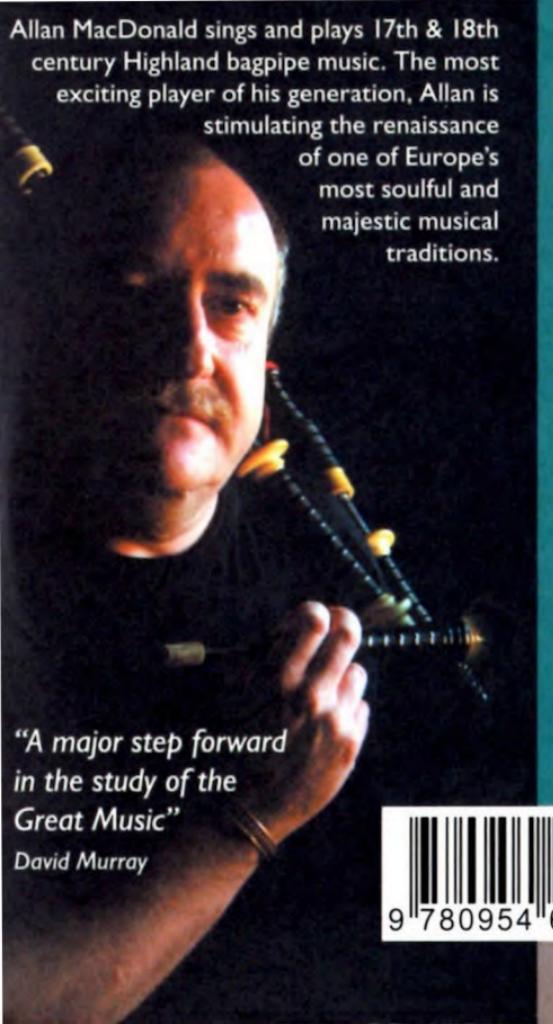


Allan MacDonald
DASTIRUM

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1	Lament for Alasdair Dearg (c.1630)	8:35
2	Hiotrotro – <i>chanting of the Urlar</i>	0:58
3	Hiotrotro	3:38
4	The Red Speckled Bull <i>by Ronald MacDonald of Morar (1662-1741)</i>	7:52
5	Lament for Donald of Laggan (1645)	7:32
6	Hihorodo hao	2:50
7	Port Jean Lindsay (1620s) Javier Sainz Gaelic harp	1.21
8	I am proud to play a pipe	8:13
9	A Lament	6:23
10	Lament for Red Hector (1651)	4:01
11	The End of the Little Bridge	10:38
12	Lament for the Young Laird of Dungallan (1739)	15:15

Total Time 78:57

Produced by Barnaby Brown & Allan MacDonald



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THE JOHN MACFADYEN MEMORIAL TRUST



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Allan MacDonald

DASTIRUM

*This CD is dedicated to all the pipers
and Gaels who found pibroch eluded them.*

Produced with support from:

THE JOHN MACFADYEN MEMORIAL TRUST



Edited by Barnaby Brown

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CONTENTS

Foreword by John Wallace	7
Introduction by Barnaby Brown	9
1 Lament for Alasdair Dearg (c.1630).....	17
2 Hiotrotro – <i>chanting of the Urlar</i>	20
3 Hiotrotro.....	21
4 The Red Speckled Bull.....	23
5 Lament for Donald of Laggan (1645)	29
6 Hihorodo hao.....	31
7 Port Jean Lindsay (1620s) – Javier Sáinz, <i>Gaelic harp</i>.....	33
8 I am proud to play a pipe.....	36
9 A Lament	41
10 Lament for Red Hector (1651)	43
11 The End of the Little Bridge	46
12 Lament for the Young Laird of Dungallan (1739).....	49
The March of Tradition by Hugh Cheape.....	51
Allan MacDonald	54
Ailein Domhnallach le Iain MacAonghuis.....	64

Dastirum is an encouragement—‘three cheers’, ‘be proud’, ‘bravo’—to everyone who is carrying this music out of obscurity.

Siubhal (pronounced “shu-al”) is a ‘journey’, and the term for a set of variations, or musical voyage.

Acknowledgements

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Allan's Instrument: R. G. Lawrie drones—a gift from the late Andrew MacNeill, Colonsay—W. Sinclair chanter, sheepskin bag, Ezeedrone™ reeds (tenors and chanter), cane bass.

CD & cover artwork: details from “Cadhas do Bhrighde” (1949-68) by Alexander J. Haddow. The cock refers to 2nd February, St Bride’s day, when cockfighting was a custom in the West Highlands. The other animals—hare and cat—were sacred to Brigid, the Triple or Mother Goddess of pagan culture, later made respectable as St

Bride. Two animal motifs appear as terminals: snake heads, because on St Bride's day, the first day of spring in the old Highlands, "the serpent comes from the mound"; and shark heads, because in some of her aspects the Goddess had power over large sea creatures. In the circle of birds, no two are identical. These are stylised lapwings—the crafty bird to whom King Solomon whispered his secrets.

In a panel surrounded by a red and yellow pattern of 42 units, three sows attack a boar. Why 42? This mysterious number crops up in II Kings 2: "And there came forth two she bears out of the wood and mauled forty and two children". There were also 42 books of hermetic mysteries, and Osiris was judged by 42 infernal jurymen.

This "Token of respect to Brigid" took the artist 19 years to complete. Reproduced by kind permission of Alastair D. Haddow, with commentary abridged from the artist's book, *The History & Structure of Ceol Mor* (1982, reprinted 2003).

Inside cover: Portrait of an unknown Highland chieftain, once thought to be Alasdair Dearg, heir to Glengarry. Reproduced by courtesy of the Clan Donald Lands Trust.

Photos: by Kerstin Grünling (pages 8 & 70), Barnaby Brown (cover & page 33), and Tobias Görner (page 60).

Sources: Facsimile excerpts (pages 19-50) reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland and The Piobaireachd Society, with special thanks to Roderick Cannon.

A PDF of the scores used for this recording is available at

www.pibroch.net

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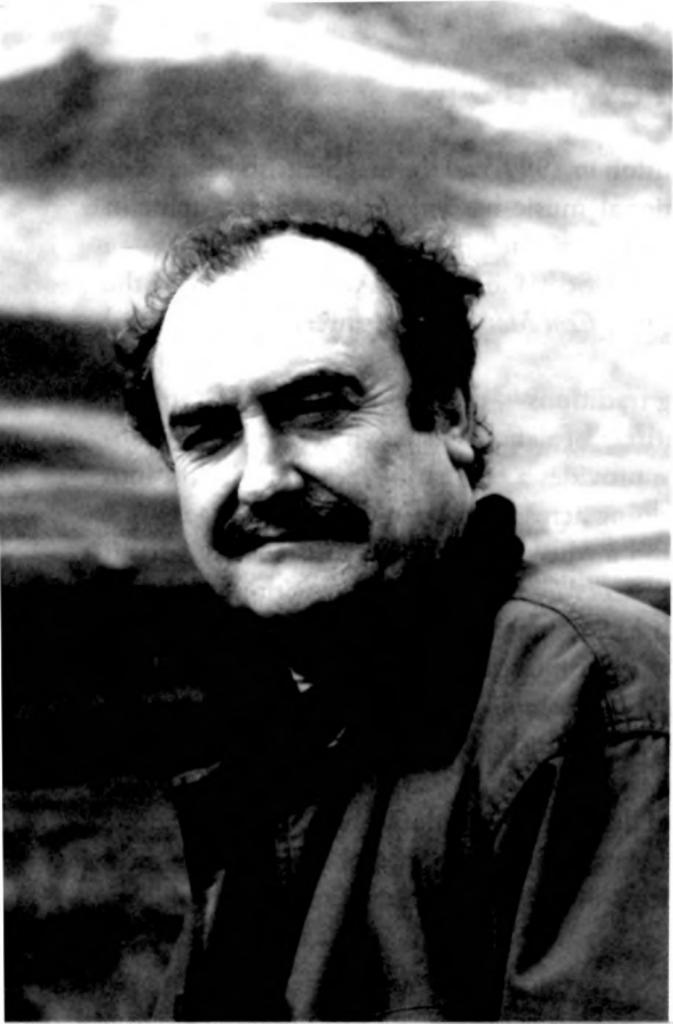
Foreword

SINCE THE UPSWING to devolution in 1999, and the first Scottish Parliament in 300 years, our national traditional music has enjoyed a massive uplift in popularity. It has metamorphosed into a coat of many hues and many colours—a kaleidoscope reflecting the complexity of Scotland's myth. And at its core is the purifying ice cold stream of pure distilled *Cèòl Mór*, the last unrecognised classical tradition in Western music.

Other territories have their piping traditions—the Sardinian *launeddas* springs to mind, but that consists almost entirely of dance music, whereas pibroch is abstract music. Its performance practice provides a fascinating viewing window into what instrumentalists were probably doing across Europe in the Middle Ages.

Through listening to this music, and a wheen of music like it, I relearnt what it was like to be both Scot and musician. *Cèòl Mór* is a living music, with much left to say about the human condition. Allan MacDonald is one of its greatest exponents.

I made Allan's acquaintance at Celtic Connections early in January 2002, only a few days after my own return to Scotland from 40 years in the wilderness to work at our very own and extraordinary Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Extraordinary because it is the only conservatoire in the UK which takes its own national music seriously enough to award degrees in it. And it is the only conservatoire in the world to award degrees in performance up to PhD level in one of the most widely played classical music instruments in the world—the Highland bagpipe.



As someone who has always had an instantly emotional response to the pipes, it has taken me a fair while to learn to appreciate the intellectual rigour of *Cèòl Mór*, and the refined artistry of a player like Allan. Put simply, Allan is music, music is Allan. He is one of those rare beings for whom, with instrument in hand, anything is possible. This CD transported me to places I have never been before. If this is your introduction to *Cèòl Mór*, I wish I were you so that I could experience my journey all over again.

This CD is your starting point for an amazing intellectual and emotional experience.

JOHN WALLACE
RSAMD, Glasgow
4 March 2007

Allan MacDonald—*Dastirum*

Introduction

by Barnaby Brown

"This instrument produces what the Irish regard as the touchstone of fine musical sounds"

Richard Stanihurst (*De Rebus in Hibernia Gestis*, 1584)

PIBROCH is like fine wine—it adds a touch of class to any occasion, attracts myth and obsession, holds secrets to aficionados, and a small sip leaves a wonderful feeling. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, pibroch roused men's courage in battle, gathered clans when scattered, immortalized heroes, chieftains, and great events, and uplifted people's spirits when feasting, marching, rowing, or harvesting. Considered the highest form of piping (known in Gaelic as *ceòl mór*, the 'big music'), pibroch carries a bouquet of superiority, dignity, mystery, and romance. It brings to life the late-medieval history of Ireland and Scotland and endows Highland culture with a majestic nobility. Yet, the bagpipe is linked in most people's minds, not with great music, but with the clichés of Scotland: kilts, massed bands, buskers, and "Scotland the Brave". The ceremonial music of the Gaelic chieftains, 1550-1750, has kept a low profile.

Why is this? Opportunities to hear pibroch or have it explained to you are scarce, unless you are a Highland piper; or married to one. Its full glory is often concealed. Once discovered, however, its intricacies and delights continue unfolding for years.

Like Bach's fugues, structural depth accounts both for its perennial fascination and the failure by many players to appreciate or convey what is happening in the music. But these are not the only reasons it is underestimated or overlooked by the world at large. There are also deep prejudices, at least in the UK, and an intractable lack of confidence on the part of its artists, particularly those of Highland background. Often an object of ridicule, the bagpipe is not recognized as a serious musical instrument in many schools.

Competitions have dominated pibroch performance since 1781, and recitals were rare before the 1980s. The circuit of annual competitive events which now spans the globe has the positive effect of nurturing artistic companionship and technical excellence, but it has also bred cultural fundamentalism. Pibroch has been steadily institutionalized since the early nineteenth century, and the pursuit of an idealized version of the past has extinguished the variety which once clearly existed. Resistance to innovation has created new obstacles. At the premier pibroch events in 2006, the excessive periods of tuning (during which everyone talked) and appalling programming betrayed a performer culture indifferent to the audience. One heavy pibroch followed another from 9am to 5pm. No harper, singer, fiddler, professional storyteller, or even a light pibroch relieved the ear. No wonder the general public was absent.

The first serious attempt to tackle this problem was a recital organized by Patrick Molard in 1992. It was in Brest, repeated in Paris, with audiences that would put Scotland to shame. There wasn't a note of tuning on stage. 1500 people showed

up in Brest, 900 in Paris, and there have been regular pibroch recitals and educational events in Brittany ever since. Allan MacDonald was one of the artists, and he repeated the no-tuning-on-stage idea at the Edinburgh International Festival in 1999. People still talk about that night as the best pibroch concert in modern times. Allan set another milestone at the 2004 Festival by involving other instruments and an actor, creating four chamber-music evenings that set pibroch in its historical and cultural context. This won a Herald Angel award for its imaginative and creative approach, broadening pibroch's appeal to a mainstream audience.

So why has pibroch not yet emerged from its cocoon? Yes, competition players have been desensitized to the needs of listeners and, yes, musicality has been stultified by the transfer of power from living player to printed score—or, more recently, archive recording. But the root of the problem lies deeper. An economic and cultural depression blighted Gaelic-speaking communities throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, exacerbated by brutal reprisals following the 1745 uprising. The structure of Gaelic society was systematically dismantled by a nervous Government; Gaelic-speaking leaders were executed, exiled, and replaced by those more attuned to 'British' norms; and this state-sponsored terrorism was followed by economic deprivation and population displacement on a massive scale. This has been well documented,¹ and we are still living with the resulting brain drain away from piping and collapse of cultural confidence associated with language loss.

The strength of piping today owes much to the College of Piping in Glasgow, founded in 1944, and the *Piping Times*, its monthly magazine since 1947. The

Piobaireachd Society, founded in 1903, has also grappled with the editorial nightmare of publishing sources that are enigmatic, inconsistent, and which differ from the teaching received by oral transmission. One of the brightest developments in recent years has been the degree course launched in 1996 by the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, which has expanded in partnership with the National Piping Centre since 2000. Allan MacDonald was on the steering committee and is one of the principal tutors. An issue he constantly challenges is the lack of time or willingness on the part of competitors to risk something new, even when it has historical authority. It takes less time to go with the known, and the result for audiences is increasing boredom. As observed in the *Piping Times* editorial of July 2005, the interpretative convergence is stultifying: everyone sounds the same.

Considerable development is required before the conditions and prospects for aspiring pipers today are as attractive as they were in the seventeenth century. Estate papers record how students were sent to colleges on the isles of Skye or Mull by patrons who paid their board, clothing and tuition in full, with lifetime employment and high social prestige assured for at least 30 players at any one time: no chieftain was credible without a decent piper. Today, equivalent training inevitably means running into debt, and both social status and job security as a performer are a far cry from that enjoyed by pibroch's composers. Are we a more cultured society today than the pre-Industrial Gaels?

The most famous piping colleges were extinct by the 1770s, and a deterioration in training is evident in the earliest pibroch sources, none of which were produced

by the teaching elite of the 1700s—the Rankins, MacArthurs, or MacCrimmons. In 1841, a distinguished judge recorded a conversation with Angus Cameron, identifying the cause of this collapse. Cameron had won the 1794 competition in Edinburgh at the age of eighteen. Like all pibroch artists born before the 1860s, his first language was Gaelic. The judge caricatured his Highland English:

Though giving great praise to old rivals, and to young aspirants, he bemoaned the general decline of the art, for he said that there was not now one single “real piper—a man who made the pipe his business”, in the whole of Appin. I suggested that it was probably owing to the want of county militia regiments, for the Highland colonels used to take their pipers with them. But he eschewed this, saying that we had plenty pipers long before the militia was heard of. I then suggested the want of training. “Ay! there’s a deal in that, for it does tak education! a deal o’ education”. But then, why were they “no’ educated”? So he hit it on the very head, by saying it was the decline of chieftains, and their castles and gatherings. “Yes”, said I, “few of them live at home now”. “At hame! ou, they’re a’ deed! an’ they’re a’ puir! an’ they’re a’ English!”²

By 1800, the gentry in the Highlands were exclusively English-educated. Pibroch became part of a booming new industry of Highland entertainments, more about *haute couture* and tartan, seeing and being seen, than about music or culture. The commercial success of these shows spawned the Highland games movement, which spread across Scotland from the 1860s onward, following the expansion of the rail network. But there were cries of cultural fraudulence. In 1884, Highlanders were urged to boycott the Argyllshire Gathering by the *Oban Times*:

*let them show by their absence from these shows that they have awakened to a sense of their position and will not any more be made puppets for the amusement of Cockney visitors, or to flatter the vanity of Highland lairds.*³

By 1890, the Northern Meeting was attracting 10,000 paying spectators. “The list of those present at the Balls... read like an international ‘Who’s Who’. Princes, Dukes, Ducs, Marquises, Earls, Counts, Comtes, Barons... eminent Indian grandees such as the Maharaja Holkar of Indore, Princess Sophia Duleep Singh, the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baronda.”⁴ The social climate was marked by deference and servility on the part of Gaelic-speaking pipers, and the conviction that *we* are civilized and *they* are not on the part of English-speaking gentry who were the employers, judges and arbiters of all that was acceptable in pibroch. Everything the gentry did reinforced their social superiority, and the extension of their sphere of control and influence into pibroch was, paradoxically, both the hand of death and the harbinger of the renaissance we are enjoying today.

What plunged pibroch into shadow is “bookish” judging: the transfer of authority from master player to printed page. In a comprehensive study of this process, William Donaldson writes:

*They clung to MacKay’s book and considered departure from it, even in the smallest detail, as ‘wrong’. Their formal education encouraged them to look for a fixed, original, authoritative score and they consistently failed to grasp that variety and fluidity were inherent qualities in traditional music, signs not of corruption and decay but of well-being and vitality.*⁵

John MacLennan (1843-1923) witnessed the rise of this controlling impulse. He complained to the *Oban Times* in 1920:

*The piper may have a far better setting of the tune, but he dare not play it, and his own natural abilities are curbed; he must simply play note for note what is put before him; he is simply a tracer or a copyist, and is not allowed to become an artiste.*⁶

A culture of servile adherence or military conformity soon prevailed, with original dissenters dying off in the 1920s and subsequent challengers ostracized vindictively, particularly between the 1960s and 1980s. Fortunately, it is now recognized that there is far more to pibroch than what you hear at the competitions. Pipe Major Angus MacDonald (1938-1999) admitted, “I have learned more about pibroch since I stopped competing than I ever dreamed there was to learn”.⁷

After rising to the top, conforming to the orthodox playing style, Allan MacDonald broke ranks. Since 1990, his refreshing, soulful interpretations have won the hearts of a much larger circle and helped to stimulate fresh thinking. In this he has several predecessors, but Allan’s colossal musicianship and integrity have carried the swell of discontent gathering over the twentieth century to a watershed. He embodies a new era in pibroch, one in which scholarship and tradition are cross-fertilizing each other with valuable results; above all, one where communication with the audience comes first. Comments like “You nearly took me off my seat!” from an elderly lady in Skye gave Allan greater satisfaction than any of his prizes.

What the piping world lacks more than anything else is a discerning audience of non-players—something the current event format will never achieve. At the

most prestigious competitions in Scotland, the audience rarely numbers more than forty, the Glenfiddich Championship at Blair Castle being a noble exception. In his complete recording of William Byrd's keyboard music, Davitt Moroney writes, "Appreciation (let alone affection) is difficult to acquire without direct contact with the music", and the same is true of pibroch, which is described in *The New Grove Dictionary* (2001) as "an esoteric repertory performed only by and for aficionados". This is accurate today, but need it remain so? The beauty of Allan's playing and the content of these pages are a bid for greater accessibility. The title *Dastirum* is an encouragement to artists, promoters, film makers, and patrons to help pibroch reach beyond the ghetto of the competitions. Despite its major place in Scottish history and the extraordinary love for things Highland across the globe, how often do non-pipers get the opportunity to hear our instrument's finest music? *Dastirum!*

New listeners may find the "big music" easier to appreciate in smaller doses, framed by something more familiar or an illuminating explanation. The track notes that follow open with historical material compiled by Hugh Cheape, Allan MacDonald and myself, followed by some discussion of the music. The recording is testament to a remarkable artist at the height of his powers and offers a balanced sampling from the cellar of over 300 works. We hope it unlocks a complexity of delights that will continue unravelling for years. Each work has been refined by generations of oral transmission and boasts excellent structure, velvety overtones, and a long finish. *Slainte!*

1 Cumha Alasdair Dheirg Mhic 'ic Alasdair
Lament for Alasdair Dearg of Glengarry

Chanting of the Urlar

0.37 *Urlar* • 2:01 *Siubhal Órdaig*

3:16 *Ludh Sleamhuinn Singling* • 4:08 *Doubling*

4:48 *Taobhludh*

5:43 *Crunnludh*

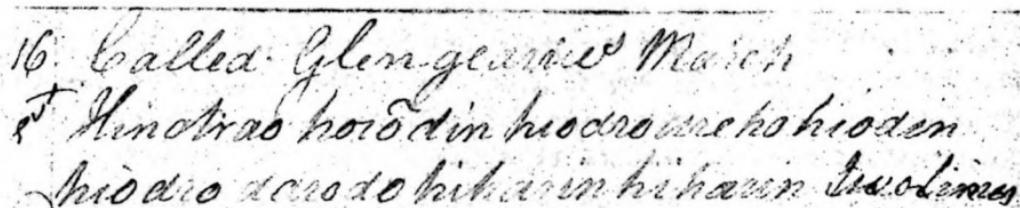
6:32 *Crunnludh a mach*

A LASDAIR DEARG, or Red Alasdair (probably because of his hair) would have become chief of the Glengarry MacDonalds had he not died in about 1630. This lament appears to be his sole memorial. His life and career have been obscured in conventional history because he died before his father, the unusually long-lived Donald of Laggan (1543-1645). The MacDonalds of Glengarry (from 1660 spelt MacDonell) were in dispute with the Mackenzies of Kintail over land in Lochalsh and Knoydart. The Mackenzies had been empowered by King James VI and I to squeeze the MacDonalds out, but Glengarry resisted, pursuing territorial rights forfeited to the crown in 1493. Alasdair Dearg's step-brother, Angus, achieved greater fame by being the product of Glengarry's first marriage and, in 1602, by his death in combat on one of these territorial expeditions.

A portrait survives in the Museum of the Isles, Armadale (reproduced on the inside front cover), showing the *beau ideale* of the Gaelic warrior chieftain, con-

ventionally described in panegyric poetry equipped with helmet, chain-mail shirt, and sword: *clogaid is lùireach is claidheamh*. In the 1890s, Clan Donald historians claimed it was a portrait of Alasdair Dearg, but this is highly dubious. It was painted at least 50 years after Alasdair Dearg's death, and is largely a copy of the portrait of Lord Mungo Murray (1680s) by John Michael Wright.

Allan begins by singing the *Urlar*, or Ground, in the traditional way Gaels would vocalise this music in a teaching context. When pipers began to write down their music, after several generations of purely oral transmission, at least two individuals committed this *canntaireachd*, or 'chanting' to paper. Their ignorance of the staff notation used in Western music is probably a blessing, as their texts preserve idiosyncrasies that might otherwise have been lost. Colin Campbell wrote out 168 works in a manuscript dated 1797, and Niel MacLeod of Gesto published 20 works in 1828. This lament is in both collections and the first Quarter of the *Urlar* can be compared below. Campbell writes "two times" to indicate a repeat. At this date, the word "March" was a generic term for any pibroch.



Colin Campbell's Instrumental Book, 1797 (revised copy, c.1814-19)

This work is an excellent introduction to pibroch structure. The music begins with a leisurely *Urlar*, or ‘floor-plan’, upon which a series of *Siùbhlachéan* (variation sets, or ‘wanderings’) grows organically. Each variation is characterised by a single embellishment, reiterated with hypnotic effect. The intensity gradually increases, reaching its zenith in the *Crunnludh a mach* and ending with a return to the *Urlar*.

In every pibroch, three techniques combine to create an orderly and majestic build-up of tension and drama. There is the growing complexity of the embellishments, producing a crescendo effect; a gradual emergence from rhythmic dream-world into a trance-inducing dance; and the distillation of a roaming melody into a more potent melodic essence. This third aspect, the reduction of the melodic line, can either be systematic—closely echoing the *Urlar*—or more adventurous. During the nineteenth century, however, rigid thinking narrowed the perspective of many pibroch editors. Variations that displayed structural creativity were typically assigned to an unpublizable heap or emended to correspond with the *Urlar*, which rendered the musical journey less exciting. Such emendations have been reversed on this recording by returning to the earliest manuscripts. In this lament, an entire ‘Thumb Variation’ (the *Siubhal Órdaig*) has been reinstated.

I hiembotrao, hioradine, hodro, botrieo, hiodine, hodro, diriro, hiererine, hieririne,

Niel MacLeod of Gesto (1828), *A Collection of Piobaireachd or Pipe Tunes, as verbally taught by the McCrummen pipers in the Isle of Skye to their apprentices*

2 Hiotrotro – chanting of the *Urlar*

COLIN CAMPBELL'S original 1797 manuscript has been lost. Allan sings from a revised copy made by the author in two volumes, signed in 1815 and 1820:

49	Called One of the Brigadoons
50	Hiotrotro himbaibain himbari heche ha are himbari heche dariche hiotrothiin
51	Himbari heche hadre himbari hiotrotro himbaibain
52	Him dilihi chedan diliki dilie bidehim bari hiotrothiin

The business of interpreting Campbell's notation is far from straightforward, as it requires intimate knowledge of the performing style of the period and many questions remain open to debate.

A fixation over minutiae in pibroch is a modern phenomenon which, like clan tartans, has its origins in the Victorian invention of a standardised tradition. For example, when singing the *Urlar*, Allan interchanges "himbari" and "bari", treat-

ing these as variants of the same embellishment. He does not tie himself rigidly to the score for the simple reason that, before the nineteenth century, good players reworked their material like storytellers. Allan applies such embellishments as the spirit moves him, in tune with the spirit of the age.

3 Hiotrotro

Urlar • 0:58 Variation 1 • 2:04 Variation 2

IN THE SAME way that some Gaelic songs are identified by the unique syllables of their refrain, rather than by the opening line of poetry, nameless pibrochs are identified by their opening vocables in Campbell's notation. "Hiotrotro" corresponds to the first three notes of this work.

In the teaching of pibroch, chanting has always been considered superior to staff notation. In 1942, John MacDonald of Inverness recalled his tuition in Badenoch with Malcolm Macpherson (*Calum Piobaire*, d.1898). Macpherson was regarded as the finest player of his generation:

I can see him now, with his old jacket and leather sporran, sitting on a stool while the porridge was being brought to the boil. After breakfast he would take his barrow, cut a turf, and build up the fire with wet peat for the day. He would then sit down beside me, take away all books and pipe music, then sing in his own canntaireachd the ground and different variations of the particular piobaireachd he wished me to learn.

It was from these early associations of Malcolm Macpherson that I realised that piobaireachd must be transmitted by song from one piper to another in order to get the soul of it; the lights and shades. Most of the piobaireachd players of the present day rely on the score, but you cannot express in musical notation what you would like to. It is really impossible.⁸

Chanting has proved its worth in many instrumental traditions worldwide as an educational tool, as nothing surpasses the human voice for clarity when conveying a musical interpretation to a student. These chants are onomatopoeic; in pibroch, vowels rise with pitch height, and consonant clusters immitate the embellishments. When writing it down, Colin Campbell found it was necessary to adapt the chant systematically, otherwise his text would be ambiguous (like Gesto's). He invented a notation system of high cultural sensitivity, but had to compromise the chant's beauty on the tongue in order to clarify which notes to play.

The variations of this work are freer than those we generally find in the modern pibroch tradition, but this is typical of the older sources, written before rigid notions about *Urlar* construction set in and the urge to standardise became universal. All the Gaelic arts have been creeping into closer resonance with the Industrial English-speaking world and pibroch is no exception. Could it be that these earlier, freer settings reflect more the natural landscape of the composers, and less the regular cityscape of Victorian and Edwardian publishers?

Colin Campbell used an enigmatic title, “One of the Cragich”, for this and four other works, including the “Lament for Donald of Laggan” (track 5). There is noth-

ing more rocky about these works than any others, however, so we suggest that he learnt them from a piper whose nickname was ‘Cragich’, possibly after the ‘rocky’ environment of his home, or ‘rugged’ features of his face.

4 An Tarbh Breac Dearn The Red Speckled Bull

<i>An tarbh breac dearg,</i>	The red speckled bull,
<i>An tarbh a mharbh mi,</i>	The bull I killed,
<i>Tarbh buidhe, buidhe, buidhe,</i>	A yellow bull,
<i>Tarbh buidhe, buidhe a mharbh mi.</i> ⁹	A yellow bull I killed.

0:39 *Urlar Singling* • 1:41 *Doubling*

2:19 *A' Cheud Shiubhal Singling* • 3:17 *Doubling*

3:50 *Leth-Leagadh Singling* • 4:45 *Doubling*

5:11 *Crunnludh Fosgailte Singling* • 6:11 *Doubling*

THIS PIBROCH is attributed to Ronald MacDonald of Morar (1662-1741), known in Gaelic as *Ràghnall MacAilein Oig*. He was an aristocratic harper and fiddler as well as a consummate piper and local hero.¹⁰ The “Lament for Ronald MacDonald of Morar”, one of the highlights of the repertoire, can be heard on *Donald MacPherson – A Living Legend*, volume 1 in this series. Numerous folktales tell of his immense strength. This one was told in 1909 by Peter McDonald, a piper living at Acharacle, just south of Moidart and Morar:

Bha Raonull Mac Ailean Òig air a thuras dol coimhead Lochiel, agus thog na Camshronach tarbh guinideach fo taobh Loch Arkaig, agus chuir iad e air thoisich air Raonull, aig abhainn Sgaitheal, agus chuir an tarbh coslas fiadhaich air, agus thubhairt Raonall gum b'fhearr as heachnadhbh, acht thubhairt an gille, "Cha mhaith leam iad bhi 'g ràdh tann gun do theich sinn roimhe". Mar sin, chaidh Raonull s'an tarbh anns an abhainn. Mharbh Raonall an tarbh agus sniomh e dheth an dà adharc agus thog e air a' ghille an giùlan. Rinn e port ri taobh Loch Iall, agus sheinn e airson a' cheud uair mar bha e fagus do Chaisteal Achmacara. Agus mar phill e dhachaidh, chaidh e coimhead air Donallach na Ceapach agus sheinn e am port seo dha. Dh'iarr Fear na Ceapaich am port gu bi na Fhailte aig e fhèin—agus thug Raonull dha e.¹¹

Ronald MacDonald of Morar was on his way to visit Lochiel. The Camerons took a vicious bull from Loch Arkaig side and sent it on in front of Ronald to the River Sgaitheal. The bull appeared very fierce and Ronald said it was better to avoid him, but his gilly said, "I would not like them to say we ran away." So Ronald and the bull attacked one another in the river. Ronald killed the bull and twisted off its two horns and gave them to the lad to carry. He composed a pibroch by the side of Loch Eil and played it for the first time when he was nearing Achmacara Castle. When he returned home, he went to visit McDonald of Keppoch (in Arisaig) and played him the tune. The laird of Keppoch asked if the tune could be a "Salute" to himself, and Ronald agreed.

The 'Bull' title appears in an 1814 competition account, but when Donald

MacDonald first wrote the music down, in 1826, he called it *An t-Arm Breac Dearg* (“The Red Tartaned Army”). This was the battle cry of the MacQuarries of Ulva—an island on the west coast of Mull—which explains the alternative title given by General Thomason in 1905, “The Macquarries Gathering”.

Whether the word is *Tarbh* ('Bull') or *t-Arm* ('Army'), the song associated with this pibroch sheds light on its rhythmic scansion. The positions of stresses have wandered in many tunes because pipers cannot play a note louder or quieter, only longer or shorter, or with a heavier or lighter embellishment. This can lead one to misinterpret the beat, master pipers included. As pibroch floated out of a Gaelic-speaking culture and into an English one, it gradually lost touch with the songs and *canntaireachd* that formerly guided its transmission. In this case, *an tarbh breac dear* became *an tarbh breac dear*. The stresses are clear when Allan sings it, but listening to the pipe they are much more ambiguous—which illustrates why the songs and chanting are so important in pibroch teaching.

This work employs an *Urlar* design found in numerous pibrochs, including “The End of the Little Bridge” (track 11). The component phrases come in two musical flavours, alternating in a symmetrical ‘Woven’ pattern:

a a A B A
b b B' A B"

The **A** flavour (or ‘sonority’) in “The Red Speckled Bull” contains the same ingredients as the **B** flavour, but in different proportions. **B** has a spicier effect because

it contains more of the dissonant note 'B', which clashes against the drones on 'A'. The effect is a mesmerising ebb and flow of musical intensity. Example 1 shows the complete procession of interweaving sonorities, during which this 'Woven' design is reworked nine times.

A feature of this pibroch in the earliest source is the effective way momentum is increased in the four Doublings: each phrase **B** is halved in length:

A' A b A
 b b A b

Asymmetrical phrases are common in Gaelic harp and vocal music. Their gradual disappearance in piping is a symptom of a changing musical landscape, hastened by the rise of light music and pipe-band repertoire. The asymmetry in this work was eclipsed in the 1840s by Angus MacKay's manuscript, and for the following 150 years, literate pipers considered reduced phrase lengths to be 'wrong'. They were edited into uniformity in numerous works, with ponderous musical results.

Another feature reinstated by Allan is the original execution of the *cruinnludh fosgailte*. Here is the final **b A b**, as written by Donald MacDonald in 1826:



Example 1. “An Tarbh Breac Dearn” — a score to help listeners follow Allan’s performance. A subtle and flexible craft of timing is essential to pibroch. The process of transcription inevitably involves simplification, standardisation, and interpretation by someone far removed from the composer. Pibroch artists are trained to add an idiomatic rubato, first learnt by ear, then developed individually.

Urlar

a a A

B A

b b B

A B'

1:41 Urlar Doubling

Musical notation for Urlar Doubling. The top staff consists of two measures of eighth-note pairs followed by four measures of eighth-note pairs with letter labels: A, b, b, A. The bottom staff consists of four measures of eighth-note pairs with letter labels: b, b, A, b.

2:19 A Cheud Shiubhal • 3:50 Leth-Leagadh • 5:11 Crunnludh Fosgailte

Singling

Musical notation for Singling. The top staff consists of three measures of eighth-note pairs with letter labels: a, a, A. The bottom staff consists of four measures of eighth-note pairs with letter labels: b, b, B, A.

Doubling

Musical notation for Doubling. The top staff consists of four measures of eighth-note pairs with letter labels: A', A, b, A. The bottom staff consists of four measures of eighth-note pairs with letter labels: b, b, A, b.

Repeat the Urlar

5 Cumha Dhòmhnuill an Lagain *Lament for Donald of Laggan*

Urlar

1:51 *Taobhludh Gearr Singling* • 3:30 *Doubling*

4:38 *Crunnludh Breabach Singling* • 6:09 *Doubling*

DONALD OF LAGGAN became chief of the MacDonalds of Glengarry in 1574. He seems the epitome of the late-medieval Highland clan chieftain, his longevity offering a sort of immortality. His pursuit of territorial rights in the Earldom of Ross, formerly part of the Lordship of the Isles, was opposed by leading families such as the Mackenzies and Grants, who were more frequently in favour with king and government. They took every opportunity to place Donald of Laggan in disrepute, and in a legal action brought against him in Edinburgh it was alleged that “he had a painter in Lochcarron (which then belonged to him) painting images; that he worshipped the image of St Coan, called in Edinburgh Glengarry’s god”. These charges reflect the religious fervor of the Covenanters, which culminated in the “Act anent the demolishing of Idolatrous Monuments” (1640) ordering the destruction of all remaining “Images of Christ, Mary and saints departed”. St Coan, an eighth-century Irish missionary, had dedications in Lochalsh and Knoydart. Reverence for the Irish saints of the Columban church persisted long after the Reformation, and Glengarry’s continuing adherence to Catholic ceremony was used by his opponents to smear his name.

Donald of Laggan died at the age of 102 on 2 February 1645, outliving his son, Alasdair Dearg, whose lament opens this disc. Donald appears on official documents as *Domhnall MacAonghais mhic Alastair*, but continued to be known as Donald of Laggan because, before his succession to Glengarry, he lived at Laggan, not far from Invergarry Castle. His daughter, Iseabail Mhòr, was maid of honour to the Queen of James VI and I, Anne of Denmark. Iseabail married the 15th MacLeod chief, Sir Rory Mor of Dunvegan, and lived to the age of 103. Tradition records that for several years before her death, she was lulled to sleep every night by one of the MacCrimmon pipers, who was instructed to play her father's lament in the adjoining room. Whether this was at Dunvegan Castle or at her dower house at Scarista, Harris, remains uncertain, as is the attribution to Patrick Mor MacCrimmon.

More often than not, pibroch variations come in pairs, and this work exemplifies the distinction between a Singling and a Doubling variation. In the Singlings, each phrase ending is marked by a slowing down and a cadential motif, whereas in the Doublings, the figuration continues uninterrupted and at a slightly faster tempo.

On this recording, Allan interprets the earliest text, which differs substantially from the version familiar today. When Colin Campbell's 1797 setting was first published, in 1981, Roderick Cannon wrote, "To some players, it may seem like sacrilege to put forward an alternative version of such a well-known tune."¹² Twenty-five years later, the stagnancy of the competition scene continues to discourage exploration of the unfamiliar and Campbell's version remains unknown. The work appears to have been tidied up for publication by Angus MacKay in about 1840, and a simi-

lar sanitizing process can be observed in the sources of “Lament for Alasdair Dearg” where, again, Allan brings an earlier text out of obscurity. Here, MacKay’s *Urlar* is in suspiciously close alignment with the variations, whereas in the transcriptions by Colin Campbell and MacKay’s brother, John, the musical plot is more creative: eight elastic phrases in the *Urlar* are transformed into seven tight breaths in the variations, producing a more dramatic crescendo effect.

6 Hihorodo hao

Urlar • 1:06 Variation • 2:16 *Urlar*

THIS IS ONE of the jewels of the repertoire. With deft craftsmanship, the *Urlar* develops and ultimately transfigures the opening pair of phrases. Rather than limiting the music to one key, the drones are the wellspring of variety and tension in pibroch; against their continuity, subtle melodic transformations cast successive phrases into new tonal light. In this case, the transformations are cumulative. Unassuming elements are worked up into a shapely, dramatic structure bearing the hallmarks of great composers: thematic cogency, structural control, and rhapsodic genius.

It is a mistake to imagine that pibroch was cut off from the mainstream of European civilisation. The miniature ‘sonata’ form of this *Urlar* supports John MacInnes’s suggestion (page 56) that we should see the Gaelic arts in a wider

European cultural context. In the age of sea-travel, the Hebrides was anything but isolated: chiefs and priests finished their education in Paris or Rome;¹³ bardic poetry makes frequent allusion to classical Latin literature; and chiefs, like Donald Duaghla Mackay (d.1649), were regular guests at court in Denmark, Germany, and Sweden, and might often have brought their musicians with them.

“Hihorodo hao” was transcribed in 1820 by John MacGregor, principal piper to the Highland Society of London. He gave it no title, so the work is known by its opening notes as they would have been written down by Colin Campbell. MacGregor was employed by the Highland Society of London to notate pibrochs from the dictation of Angus MacArthur, then an old man and one of the most highly regarded players of his generation. MacArthur was the last in a line of hereditary pipers to Lord MacDonald of Sleat. He grew up at Hungladder, near the castle of Duntulm on the northernmost peninsula of the Isle of Skye. MacArthur accompanied Lord MacDonald to London in 1793 and was based there as part of the chief’s household for the last thirty years of his life.

This work is rarely performed because it does not fit the competition mould (the same is true of tracks 3 and 10). The lack of *taobhludh* and *cruinnludh* variations provides a pleasant contrast to the longer works that make prize-winning tunes. Although competitions were intended to save pibroch from decline, the irony is that their single-tune format suffocates a third of the repertory. Their inexorable propagation at the expense of audience-friendly events is ultimately demeaning to the artists, and robs the general public of a major cultural inheritance.

7 Port Jean Lindsay

SOTTISH HARP music was never written down by the harpers themselves, and this *port* (or 'tune') was collected by a lute player, Robert Gordon of Straloch, in the 1620s. It has been restored to its original instrument by Javier Sáinz, guided by Edward Bunting's careful documentation of a playing style which died out in 1807.

Rev. James Kirkwood (1650-1709) summarised the Gaelic musical world as follows:

The Greatest Music is Harp, Pipe, Viol [fiddle], and Trump [jaw harp]. Most part of the Gentry play on the Harp. Pipers are held in great Request so that they are train'd up at the Expence of Grandees and have a portion of Land assignd and are design'd such a man's piper. Their women are good at vocal music; and inventing of Songs.¹⁴

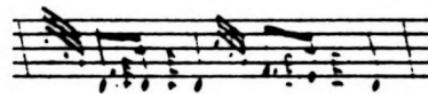


Javier Sáinz plays a copy of the fifteenth-century 'Lamont' harp, made by Guy Flockhart. The original is in the Museum of Scotland.

It has often been concluded that pibroch is indebted to the older harp tradition, and this track illustrates one particular way pipers may have emulated the music of their respected colleagues. When Allan heard the wire-strung harp for the first time, he was immediately convinced of the likelihood of musical crossover.¹⁵ The ringing brass strings create a rich, drone-like effect, and the sound of each chord—a falling arpeggio—made sense of one of the thorniest debates in pibroch performance practice: the interpretation of introductory runs. These were first written by pipers as follows:



Joseph MacDonald, c.1760, *folio 16r*



John MacGregor, 1820, no. 6



Peter Reid, 1826, *folio 9r*



John MacGregor
1820, no. 17



Donald MacDonald, 1820, p. 100



Allan MacDonald—*Dastirum*

This style of playing was extinct by 1900, but seems to correspond with the wire-strung harp techniques documented by Edward Bunting in 1796:

ANCIENT MUSIC OF IRELAND.

27

DOUBLE NOTES, CHORDS, ETC.—*Continued.*

NAMES IN IRISH CHARACTERS.	NAMES IN ENGLISH CHARACTERS.	TRANSLATION.	MUSICAL EXAMPLES.
GLEASLUITH, ^a	Glasluith,	Quick locking,	
CÉANN AN CHROIbh, ^b	Cennanchruich,	Extremity of hand,	
TAOIBH CROIBH, ^c	Taobherobh,	Side hand,	
LANCHROIBH, ^d	Lanchrobb,	Full hand,	

In this track, note how Javier varies his timing of the falling arpeggios. The pibroch sources show wide variation in the timing of introductory runs; sometimes, one or two of the ornamental notes within the run were held longer than the others. This was a vital technique for achieving light and shade on an instrument that cannot change its volume. By 1900, the exception had become the rule and pipers always held one note ('cadence E') much longer. These cadence 'E's are often confused with melody notes and can seriously obscure the melody. Their original expressive effect has been undermined through overuse and pruning them back is one of the revolutionary features of Allan's playing.

8 Dastirum gu seinnim piob *I am proud to play a pipe*

Urlar

1:16 *Siubhal Órdaig*

2:35 *Taobhludh Gearr Singling* • 3:50 *Doubling*

4:45 *Crunnludh Breabach Singling* • 6:05 *Doubling*

DASTIRUM is now an obscure word. It was used by Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair in a song, "Moladh Mòraig" (c.1750 or earlier), that imitates pibroch in its structure:

Dastram, dastram,

Dastram Mòrag

In this context, it may mean ‘hurray’, ‘bravo’, or possibly ‘I’d do anything for’. The pibroch title recorded by Angus MacKay is the only other known use of the word, and his translation is ‘I am proud I play a pipe’.

Perhaps a hint of indignation or defiance lies in the meaning of *dastirum*. As the Reformation took hold in the Highlands, the bagpipe became associated with Catholicism and known as the ‘Papish’ instrument. To those attempting to civilise the natives, the pipes were a potent symbol of social disorder and banditry. Seventeenth-century efforts to enforce uniformity of tongue and manners in every corner of Britain and Ireland left cultural scars still felt today. It is in this context of repression that the title “*Dastirum gu seinnim piob*” perhaps makes most sense.

There is an intriguing echo of plainchant in this melody. It would certainly fit the Gaelic psyche to respond to an act of ecclesiastical antagonism creatively, using the church’s musical palate to reply in a defiant, mocking tone. Another possibility is that it is a rejoinder to the series of satirical songs ridiculing the pipes that begins in the early seventeenth century, when the cultural institution of learned poetry recited to harp accompaniment was overshadowed by an upwardly mobile pibroch tradition. The first and most famous of these poems is by Niall Mòr, one of the MacMhuirich lineage of poets serving the MacDonalds of Clanranald. Two verses give the idea:

*Piob sgreadain Iain MhicArtuir
Mar eun curra air dol air n-ais,
Làn ronn 's i labhar luigneach,
Com galair mar ghuilbnich ghlais.*

John MacArthur’s screeching bagpipe
is like a diseased heron,
full of spittle, long-limbed and noisy,
with an infected chest like that of a grey curlew.

Piob Dhòmhnaill do cheòl na cruinne Of the world's music Donald's pipe
Crannaghail bhreòite as breun roimh shluagh: is a broken down outfit, offensive to a multitude,
Cathadh a mhùin dò'n mhàla għrodaidh, sending forth its slaver through its rotten bag;
*Fuidh 'n t-suil għrainde robaich ruaidh.*¹⁶ it was a most disgusting filthy deluge.

During Niall Mòr's lifetime (c.1550–c.1630), the rise of piping in the chief's household and declining taste for the learned poetic craft went hand in hand. Pibroch gradually became more fashionable and, by the 1650s, the bagpipe was the king of instruments. Feted like heroes, its players developed a haughty, superior attitude, remarked upon by Captain Edmund Burt in the 1720s. He describes how the chief was accompanied on formal visits, or journeys into the hills, by a retinue consisting of his foster brother, his poet, his spokesman, his sword-carrier, a man to carry him over fords, a horseman, a baggage man, “*The Piper*, who, being a gentleman, I should have named sooner. And lastly, *The Piper's Gilly*, who carries the bagpipes”. The piper's behaviour attracted further comment:

In a morning, while the chief is dressing, he walks backward and forward, close under the window, without doors, playing on his bagpipe, with a most upright attitude and majestic stride. It is a proverb in Scotland, viz. 'the stately step of a piper'. When required, he plays at meals, and in an evening is to divert the guests with his music, when the chief has company with him...

His gilly holds his pipe till he begins; and the moment he has done with the instrument, he disdainfully throws it upon the ground, as being only the passive means of conveying his skill to the ear, and not a proper weight for him to carry or

bear at other times. But, for a contrary reason, his gilly snatches it up—which is, that the pipe may not suffer indignity from its neglect.¹⁷

After Culloden, the bagpipe's fall in status was rapid. By 1780, the pre-eminent MacCrimmon pipers refused to teach their own children, as piping had fallen beneath their dignity. It has taken over 200 years for Scottish society to accept the bagpipe once again as a serious musical instrument.

Angus MacKay pencilled above his brother's score, "John MacKay's Favourite," probably referring to his father who was one of the greatest pipers of the early nineteenth century. As in "The Red Speckled Bull", two musical flavours are interwoven in this composition. The design is different, however, and the contrast between the two sonorities more marked. Example 2 (overleaf) shows how the 'Interlaced' design proceeds in the *Urlar*. The **A** sonority excludes the spiciest notes on the bagpipe ('B' and 'low G') unlike the **B** sonority, which gives them prominence. The variations follow essentially the same melody, substituting their particular embellishment and building to a climax of driving isorhythm in each Doubling.

Here is the opening of the *Siubhal Órdaig* ('Thumb Variation'), so called because particular notes in the melody are raised to 'high A', the thumb note:



This type of variation probably originates in the harp tradition. In Wales, at least, a major way of forming variations was to raise the thumb by two or three strings.¹⁸

Example 2. The *Urlar* design of “*Dastirum gu seinnim piob*”

Twenty out of 300 surviving pibrochs share the ‘Interlaced’ *Urlar* design of this work. The same pattern is reworked in all six movements:

A B A B-flavour cadence
 B' A B" hiharin × 4

Urlar

B-flavour cadence

B'

A

B"

darodo

hiharin × 4

9 A Lament

Voluntary Prelude

0:27 *Urlar* • 3:10 *Variation* • 5:40 *Urlar (1st Quarter)*

IN 1580, Vincenzio Galilei, father of Galileo the astronomer, wrote that the Irish used the bagpipe to “accompany their dead to the grave, making such sorrowful sounds as to invite, nay, compel the bystanders to weep.”¹⁹ This is the earliest reference to piping at a Gaelic burial, but the custom is likely to be considerably older. Over 80 laments survive, among them the most soulful and majestic melodies in the repertoire. This nameless work is a keening lament, for it begins on the highest notes of the chanter and gradually sobs its way to the bottom of the scale, breathes, and then repeats the process. This is a stylized evocation of the ritual wailing led by professional female mourners, which characterised Gaelic funerals until only recently. In both Ireland and Scotland, the English-educated ruling class found keening an abominable habit, and the church eventually succeeded in excluding women from funerals altogether. The keening tradition petered out in the 1930s in Scotland, and somewhat later in Ireland after generations of practice in secret.

Rev. James Kirkwood (1650-1709) described how keening preceded and followed the piping in a funeral procession:

The women make a crying while the corps is carried and when they have done, the Piper plays after the corps with his great pipe. When they come to the churchyard all the women (who always go along to the Burial place) make a hideous Lamentation

*together and then they have their particular Mournfull Song for their other Friends that lye there.*²⁰

More details emerge in the letters of Captain Edmund Burt, written in the 1720s:

Not long ago a Highlandman was buried here. There were few in the procession besides Highlanders in their usual garb; and all the way before them a piper played on his bagpipe, which was hung with narrow streamers of black crape...

*The upper-class hire women to moan and lament at the funeral of their nearest relations. These women cover their heads with a small piece of cloth, mostly green, and every now and then break out into a hideous howl and ‘Ho-bo-bo-bo-booo’, as I have often heard is done in some parts of Ireland.*²¹

In 1642, The Synod of Argyll expressed its distaste for this “hideous howl”:

*Because it is common custome in some of the remotest pairts within this province of ignorant poore women to howle their dead into the graves, which commonly is called the coronach, a thing unseemly to be used in any true Christian kirk... it is ordained that every minister both in preacheing and catechiseing endeavour to inform them how unseemly to Christians, and offensive to God, and scandalouse to others the lyke practice and carriage must be.*²⁰

In 1666, The Synod of Armagh in Northern Ireland threatened pipers who led funerals or played at wakes with excommunication. Both practices persisted, however, and in 1689, Sir Richard Cox complained that bagpipes “are much used at Irish Burials to increase the noise and encourage the Women to Cry and follow the Corpse.”²²

Like “Hihorodo hao”, this work was transcribed in 1820 from the playing and chanting of Angus MacArthur.

[10] Cumha Eachainn Ruaidh nan Cath
Lament for Red Hector of the Battles

Urlar • 1:23 Variation • 2:39 *Urlar*

THERE ARE TWO famous “Red Hectors of the Battles”, both Maclean chieftains. *Hector Rufus Bellicosus*, the 6th chief, was killed at the Battle of Harlaw in 1411, where he was second-in-command to his uncle, the MacDonald Lord of the Isles. This Red Hector and his adversary, Sir Alexander Irvine of Drum, mortally wounded each other in single combat. Hector was buried in Iona, and descendants of both sides commemorated the swordfight with an annual ceremony in which swords were exchanged.²³

The other Red Hector, the 17th chief, was killed at the Battle of Inverkeithing in 1651. The coronation of Charles II in Perth prompted Cromwell to send a large division of his army across the Firth of Forth at Queensferry under General Lambert. When news of this reached the King’s camp, General Holburne of Menstrie was sent with a cavalry regiment 1000 strong, supported by Sir Hector Maclean with 800 of his clan, the laird of Buchan with 700 men, and Sir John Brown of Fordel with 200 cavalry and two battalions of lowland foot. Here is how Maclean’s official poet, Eachann Bacach, recorded the events:

*Gura h-oil leam an sgeul seo a dh'èisd me Di-dòmhnaich,
Gun bhith tuilleadh ga foighneachd ach an fhoill-sa chath Hòbron;
Dh'fhàg e shios Mac Gill-Eathain a' cur a' chatha 'na ònar,
'S theich iad fhèin roimh a chèile 's bha ratreut ann mar òrdan.*

*S mòr bha d'uireasbhaidh làmh ort ged thug àrdan ort fiuireach,
Agus tuilleadh 's an t-anbharr theachd a nall air an luingis;
'S mise chuireadh an geall sin, mur biodh ann ach na h-uiread
Nach buaileadh iad bang anns a' champa le sulas.*

*Cha bu shlakan aig ònid culaidh chòmhraig a' ghaisgich:
Dol an coinneamh do namaid cha chrith-mhanntain seo ghlac thu;
Nuair a bhuaileadh thu beum sgèithe dh'iarraidh cèile com-bat riut
'S a thug thu 'nan còmhdaile, theich Hòbron 's a mharcshluagh.²⁴*

The news I heard on Sunday grieves me; there was no talk but of Holburne's treachery. He left Maclean on the field, fighting the battle alone, while they fled in disarray, retreat the order of the day.

Great was your lack of men, but pride made you stand fast, even though an overwhelming force had come over on the ships. I would lay a wager that, had you been equal in number, it would not have been their drums beating in celebration that night.

No fool's cudgel was this hero's weapon, no tremor seized you when you encountered the enemy. While you charged, your shield struck out in search of a foe, Holburne and his cavalry fled.

Outnumbered and betrayed, Maclean's men were encircled by Lambert's army. In order to protect their young chief, the prime target, kinsmen formed a human shield around him. When one fell, his place was immediately filled by another, who shouted "*Fear eile airson Eachainn*" (another man for Hector), until eight clansmen had, with the same cry, sacrificed themselves. Towards the end of the battle, Sir Hector was killed by a musket ball, and 700 Macleans and 100 MacQuarries lay dead. It was said that thirty-five men returned to Mull. There were not enough men left to plough and plant in Mull, Morvern and Tiree for a generation.²⁵

While identification with the 17th chief seems more likely, this lament may have been a harp piece or song celebrating the 6th chief, adapted by pipers centuries later. It was first written down in about 1840 by the brothers John and Angus MacKay. Angus later revised his score, but his original transcription corresponds with that of his brother and was chosen for this recording. John's manuscript has been neglected because many of the barlines and grace notes, and all the beams, dots, and titles, were added in about 1905 by Dr Charles Bannatyne. Fortunately, the larger melody notes written by John MacKay are unmistakable:



John MacKay's manuscript, c.1840

11 Ceann na Drochaide Bige The End of the Little Bridge

Urlar

0:30 *A' Cheud Shiubhal Singling* • 1:00 *Doubling*

1:30 *5 Leth-Leagadh variations* • 2:51 *Urlar*

3:17 *6 Taobhludh variations* • 6:21 *Urlar*

6:46 *6 Crunnluadh variations* • 9:48 *Urlar*

THIS IS A PRIME example of battle music, possibly the oldest genre of Gaelic piping. In a manuscript written in Ireland in the 1480s, the hero Fierabras is advised to sound the pipes (*piba*) as he lays siege to a castle.²⁶ In reporting the Battle of Flodden (1513), an English poet described the Scots army “with their shrill pipes: Heavenly was their melody: their Mirth to heare”.²⁷ And in 1580, Vincentio Galilei wrote:

*The practice of this instrument is widespread amongst the Irish; to its sound these unconquered and fearsome warriors mount their campaigns and encourage one another to feats of valour in the midst of battle.*¹⁹

The antiquity of this particular battle tune is suggested in the manuscript “Traditions of the Western Isles”, compiled in Stornoway by Donald Morrison in the 1820s. He states that Donald Cam, chief of the MacAulays of Lewis, took part in an expedition to Ireland during which he was the victor in a single combat with “the great McBane”—a champion of the opposing army. Morrison writes, “there

was a song composed in honour of this victory—the song is *Cean na Drochaid*, or the Head of the Bridge". William Matheson points out that Donald Cam is on record in 1610, and suggests that the tradition refers to the expedition in 1594 of an army of Islesmen to aid Red Hugh O' Donnell in his rebellion against Queen Elizabeth I.²⁸ Other pibrochs that arose from this campaign are "Lament for Hugh", "Lament for Samuel", and later the "Lament for the Earl of Antrim".

Curiously, a Victorian obelisk on the bridge in Golspie, Sutherland, bears the inscription: *Mór-fhear Chatt do cheann na drochaide bige—gairm clan Chattich nam buadh* (The *Chatt* chief to the end of the little bridge—war cry of the victorious clan Chattan). A *gairm* was shouted before charging into battle, sending a wave of courage through the warriors. Although there was no bridge on this site before 1810, and the obelisk looks even later, it seems unlikely that anyone would invent this *gairm*. It probably refers to a historic event, possibly the same 1594 expedition.

On more solid ground, we have a note written by Niel MacLeod of Gesto based on information from one of the last hereditary pipers to MacLeod of MacLeod, Iain Dubh MacCrimmon (c.1731-c.1822):

Played by Macleod's piper, inviting the Clan Cameron to follow him and his party across the bridge to attack the enemy, which the Camerons did, during a rebellion in Ireland; and, as far as I can understand, it was in King William the Third's time [1689-1702]. Macleod of Macleod calls the tune his gathering or battle tune, and the Camerons call it their gathering or battle tune, and from the account given to

*me of it, they both seem to have an equal right to it, with this difference, that it was played by Macleod's piper at the head of his party, inviting the Camerons to follow and join them.*²⁹

This story was in circulation by 1785, when the title “*Cean Drochaid Beg*—Head of the Little Bridge, or the Cameron’s Gathering” appeared on a poster for a competition in Edinburgh.³⁰ In Colin Campbell’s manuscript, however, these titles belong to different, albeit similar, compositions. Did two works become fused over time? More likely, one work divided into variants later distinguished as separate compositions. At least five works in Campbell’s manuscript could be described as close relatives of “The End of the Little Bridge”.

This recycling of phrases occurs in all orally-transmitted heritage, a phenomenon termed ‘centonisation’. In common with Homeric poetry, Gregorian chant, and many books of the Bible, pibroch enjoyed centuries of creative fluidity before crystallising in authoritative editions. As literacy levels rose, the power and prestige of storytellers, church singers, pipers, and priests as the sources of knowledge in the Western world gradually transferred to the book. In pibroch, as in plainchant, this caused the birth of rigidity and undermined the skill of extemporaneous composition, for which this constellation of works is prime evidence.

85 | Called the End of the little Bridge
85 | Himbabom to three times himda che

[12] **Cumha Tighearna Òig Dhùngalain**
Lament for the Young Laird of Dungallan

*Tha oighre òg aig fear Dhùngalain,
Is fhaicinn fallain togail māil,
Tha oighre òg aig fear Dhùngalain,
'S fhaicinn fallain 's fhaicinn slān.* The laird of Dungallan has a young heir,
May we see him fit collecting the rent,
The laird of Dungallan has a young heir,
May we see him in robust, good health.

0:56 *Urlar*

3:03 *A' Cheud Shiubhal Singling* • 4:47 *Doubling*

6:15 *Taobhludh* • 8:20 *Doubling*

9:43 *Crunnludh* • 11:48 *Doubling* • 13:11 *Urlar*

HERE WERE THREE lairds of Dungallan, but only one who died young: John Cameron, the second laird, who was in his 20s when he died in 1739. This lament is almost certainly his, and the song associated with it could express concern for John's health when he inherited the Dungallan estate as a child in 1719. Allan sings two versions of the song: the first is from a manuscript by Angus Fraser (d.1874), the second, from Angus MacKay's book of 1838.

Archibald Cameron, the first laird, and his elder brother, Allan of Glendessary, each married daughters of Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel, and thereby became the leading men of clan Cameron, next to the chief. The small estate of Dungallan was part of the lands of Glendessary. It took its name from a ruined fort on a tidal island on Loch Sunart, which opens out to the Sound of Mull on the southerly

side of the Ardnamurchan peninsula. The family seat was at Glenahurrich.³¹

The young laird's lament survives in four independent sources, each with its own distinctive characteristics—evidence of master players making the work their own in the days before mass-produced texts and bookish judging curbed pibroch players' creativity. In this recording, Allan follows Angus MacKay's book, leaving his personal mark in the timing of *A' Cheud Shiubhal*, (The First Motion). Although MacKay calls it a "Salute", earlier sources agree it is a lament:

Colin Campbell (c.1819)

Called Dùin Gallans Lament

Niel MacLeod of Gesto (1828)

**MAC, VIC HOROMOID, alias M'LEOD GESTO'S
LAMENTATION.**

In handwritten notes recently discovered by Roderick Cannon, Gesto offers more background:

Mac mhic Thormoid's Lamentation, being a lament, played at the funerals of each of them, every old time and also, Justice.

Mac mhic Thormoid (son of the son of Norman) is Gesto's own patronymic. It appears Iain Dubh MacCrimmon told him that this lament was traditionally played at MacLeod of Gesto's funeral. If this is accurate, then the work was in circulation before the Dungallan song and title became attached to it. This conclusion is supported by the fact that, in 1820, Angus MacArthur, Lord MacDonald's piper, could not remember the work's title at all.

The March of Tradition

by Hugh Cheape

A WEALTH AND VARIETY of music and one of the most powerful and successful of wind instruments are among Scotland's familiar and celebrated attributes. This cultural success story, the bagpipe, has been played in Scotland for most of six hundred years. The instrument has a long pedigree deriving from prehistoric shawms and hornpipes of Near and Middle Eastern civilisations, evolving with bag and drones in Classical and early European history, and emerging as a familiar instrument by the twelfth century, itself significantly a renaissance period of economic wellbeing. The same period saw Europe drawing on the enriching influences of Arab music and learning in the wake of the Crusades.

This medieval period was characterised by movement, both of folk and of ideas, and movement is a metaphor for a restlessness and curiosity which readily breathed life into music. Travelling folk, *jongleurs* and minstrels, provided entertainment in court and castle, burgh and countryside, and carried music and song throughout Britain and Europe. The medieval wandering minstrel, whether piper or singer, could be described as *joculator* in official Latin, but earned the familiar and affectionate 'jockie' when he arrived in Scotland. We might suggest therefore that the bagpipe has descended from earlier European types and was probably being played in slightly different form towards the northern and western parts of Scotland from

the fifteenth century. We should not ignore that what is so familiar today owes much more to the intervening centuries and pre-eminently to the history of Gaelic Scotland. The Highland bagpipe which has done so much to carry and broadcast the music of Scotland is the creation of the exceptional society of the historical *Gàidhealtachd* which has contributed so much to the musical wealth of Scotland. We are celebrating the experience today of the bagpipe as the symbol and vehicle of a living and thriving, even explosive musical tradition.

The bagpipe exists for the music played on it and wherever the pipes are played, repertoires consist of music for dancing, music for singing, and music for listening to, such as instrumental versions of songs or what might be termed 'art music' such as the exceptional *ceòl mór*. The history of this music in the longer term is challengingly elusive, because it was so rarely written down. But the steady wind of tradition blowing down through the centuries has carried an enormous quantity of music to the present, blessing Scotland with one of the richest musical repositories in the world.

Good music is never the preserve of any one instrument or medium and will readily transfer between them. This has always suited the piping tradition of Scotland which has thrived on learning and transmitting music by word of mouth. The lively and inventive traditions of *canntaireachd*, or 'chanting', and *port-a-bial* or 'mouth-music', show how fluently the voice was substituted for the bagpipe, not only in the context of teaching, but also to provide music for dance or entertainment.

Traditional music exponents such as fiddlers and pipers did not read or write down their music and little is known about it in detail until the eighteenth century.

The Union of the Parliaments of 1707 prompted a self-conscious movement to recall and define the music and the language of Scotland—an assertion of a distinctive Scottish identity. Collectors and publishers such as Allan Ramsay, James Oswald, David Herd, Robert Burns and James Johnson began to record first the words and then the music of songs. The bagpipe was late in adopting conventional methods of staff notation and was not systematically handled until the early nineteenth century. As traditional music was written down, arranged and re-arranged and published, the swirling pools of folk music lost their fluidity and movement and began to crystallise.

Siubhal in Scottish Gaelic refers to a group of pibroch variations but also means 'journey' or 'march' and symbolises the survival and versatility of the bagpipe in Scotland. After the debacle of the Jacobite Wars and the British state's pre-emptive strike against Gaelic society, the pipes survived by virtue of the growth of empire and standing armies whose interests it was perceived to serve. A rich variety of instruments in different permutations faded before a standardised bagpipe and styles of playing. Pipe bands have followed the British Army and have been recreated in their own image round the world. Uniformity was also promulgated by the competitions beginning with the Falkirk Cattle Tryst in the 1780s. A now prevailing mood of re-interpretation and experimentation has taken piping out of the shrinking closet of its own tradition, into the kitchen and 'up the house'—*thig a nios* is a traditional invitation to gather round the hearth in the best room. Interest and enthusiasm world-wide has recognised a new value in Scottish piping and the culture is dynamic, self-conscious and confident; the journey is only beginning.

Allan MacDonald

A LEADING LIGHT in the Gaelic musical scene, Allan MacDonald is in demand internationally as a composer, musical director, piper, singer, workshop leader, and lecturer on Gaelic music. One of his myriad gifts is to make pibroch accessible and lovable. His work as a scholar-performer reuniting seventeenth-century piping with its Gaelic roots is influencing a whole generation of pipers.

Allan has performed at every major Celtic and piping festival on the planet. He lectures on the Scottish Music course at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama, and has had numerous commissions to compose for BBC television. In 1999 and 2004, Allan directed two pioneering series for the Edinburgh International Festival, presenting every aspect of the piping tradition in 13 concerts, linking music with Scottish history and culture. In 2005, he co-directed a six-part television series screened on RTE, BBC3 and ITV—"The Highland Sessions"—addressing the common language and musical traditions of Scotland and Ireland, which won the best documentary music award in Ireland.

The BBC made a documentary on Allan and his brothers, Dr Angus and Iain (also world-famous pipers), broadcast in January 2007. The three brothers were born in the tiny Gaelic-speaking township of Glenug in Moidart. Allan won the highest award in piping, the Clasp at the Northern Meeting, two years running (1989 and 1990). He then followed his heart and developed a style of playing more in tune

with the Gaelic culture of 1550-1750. His approach is infused with an insider's ear for the fragile traces of historical continuity that survive within Gaelic-speaking communities, and he attempts to reverse the effects of post-Industrial sanitisation and cultural colonialism.

This freer, more varied, and historically-informed approach to *ceòl mór* may be too novel for some judges, but to many minds it makes the 'great music' more appealing. When Bill Livingstone (another double Clasp-winner) retired from the competitive circuit in 2006, he commented, "Thank goodness I didn't hear Allan's interpretations before, they would have been the ruination of me!"

John MacInnes writes:

THE MACDONALD family from Glenugie in Moidart, of whom Allan is a worthy representative, are internationally renowned for their supreme endowments in the world of piping and Gaelic music generally. In addition to his accomplishments as composer and exponent of bagpipe music, Allan has carried out original research on the relationship between pibroch and associated Gaelic songs and brings his insights to bear on his style of playing. This has aroused a great deal of interest and also some controversy, particularly among conservative-minded devotees of the classical music of the pipes. There is a fixed belief in many quarters that pibroch has endured for centuries without stylistic deviation, and that any attempt to bring a fresh interpretation to bear upon it should be actively discouraged.

It is in fact intrinsically unlikely that any art that depends so much on oral transmission (a claim strongly urged for pibroch) would remain thus rigidly unaltered. The historical record, however, is meagre. Indeed the origins of pibroch remain stubbornly obscure. While the genre may well embody a strain of ancient Gaelic music composed perhaps by piper-bards, its developed form almost certainly derives in some measure from the musical traditions of harpers who, until the passing of the Middle Ages, were the high-caste musicians of Gaelic society. Musicologists have noted that Gaelic harp-music has an 'international' dimension, which probably means that traveling minstrels from Ireland, England and France, and perhaps farther afield, could have influenced each other. Ireland, with its families of Anglo-Norman extraction, certainly would have a pre-eminent role in this scenario. But within the Highlands of Scotland too, there were great families such as the Frasers, Grants, Chisholms and Comyns whose ancestry was French but who became Gaelicised. These magnates would naturally extend their patronage to native Gaelic musicians and foreign minstrels alike and their castles offered attractive meeting-places for practitioners of various arts and crafts. In these circumstances, some degree of cross-fertilisation would be inevitable.

Whatever influences may have gone to mould pibroch, it is uniquely Gaelic. Nevertheless, it is tempting to think, if impossible to prove, that the music of harp and pipe as well as certain traditions of Gaelic song melody, may have drawn something from a rich mix of native and foreign elements in the distant past. We should then see these arts in a wider European cultural context.

All that is of course speculation. What is certain is that Allan MacDonald's theory and practice have stimulated a new interest in pibroch and kindled discussion among pipers and their audiences throughout the world. Because of his native musicality, the subtlety of his analysis, and the vividness of his playing, his interpretation bids fair to restore *Ceòl Mór*—this 'Great Music' of the Gael—to its pristine splendour.

David Murray writes:

"Piobaireachd has survived largely through the Army, and by means of the competition system. And the competition system has given with one hand and taken away with the other, for it has fostered playing for dead accuracy alone, to the sacrifice of expression."³²

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL of Kilberry wrote this 60 years ago, and time has proved him right. It is ironical that the present state of affairs is due principally to the influence of the publications of the Piobaireachd Society, to which Kilberry devoted his life after his retirement from the Indian Civil Service in 1928, and to *The Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor*, which he edited and published in 1948. He died in 1963, having edited books 2 to 10 in the Piobaireachd Society's series. He was succeeded as secretary of the Music Committee of the Piobaireachd Society by Archibald Kenneth, who, with Kilberry's son James, edited books 11 to 15 of the series. Both were his devoted acolytes.

Outwith the Society, however, things were very different. Its earlier publications were far from being greeted with universal acclamation by the performing community, many of which had learned under the very teachers whom Kilberry had claimed as his own. But at the major competitions—the Northern Meeting at Inverness, and the Argyllshire Gathering at Oban—the Society's Music Committee recommended that competitors should play from a list, their intention being to encourage pipers to extend their knowledge of the repertoire beyond the small number of works in popular circulation. The tunes on this list were published in the Piobaireachd Society collections, and as the judges at these prestigious events were provided by the Piobaireachd Society, it was soon assumed that what they wanted to hear were the styles and settings published by the Society. The Music Committee denied, and continues to deny, that competitors are restricted to these, and insists that any authoritative setting may be played. But the courage and extra effort required to submit anything out of the ordinary is rare.

In the year 2000, three tunes were set by the Society from the MacGregor-MacArthur manuscript, in an attempt to encourage pipers to leave the comfort zone of Kilberry's editorial legacy. The reaction of the judges to several fine performances which attempted to recover a lost style was hostile: "too extreme" we were told. The passage of time has removed from the piping scene those whose objections to Kilberry's books were based on their own experience as pupils in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Three generations of pipers, and more importantly teachers, have grown up under the pressure to conform to the style sanctioned by

the clear print and erudite notes of the Society's books. Yet there has always been a tiny minority of dissenters who were upset to see musical aspects of the tradition disappearing, initially from the printed page and, subsequently, on the competition platform. Their objections have largely been ignored by the piping establishment, which is now, of course, made up of performers whose reputations were built on a more or less strict adherence to Kilberry's monumental and orderly legacy.

So far, such objections have been confined to the written word. Now, at last, a piper has come forward who can do more than that. Allan MacDonald is a native Gaelic speaker, a fine singer, and an outstanding performer on the Highland pipe. At the age of seventeen, he lost faith in competitive pibroch because, despite having Gaelic titles, he felt the tradition had little bearing on the Gaelic culture he had grown up in. He became acerbic about it, failing to see how the modern performance style could ever have survived in an oral tradition. Not only did it fail to connect with the idiom of Gaelic song, but it jarred with a substantial body of evidence, painstakingly written down by pipers between the 1760s and 1840s.

These early sources cemented Allan's doubts about the antiquity of the 'traditional' style, transmitted to him by his teachers in a spirit of faithful, often fervent conviction. For example, it is impossible to sing Campbell's 1797 chant with the modern timings of the family of embellishments known as *crathanan* or double 'beats'. But sung by Allan, with an ear to the Gaelic tradition he grew up in, and an eye to the timings in the early sources, this ancient chant makes an instant impact on the modern ear. And this impression is reinforced when Allan puts it on the pipe.

Once the confusing, rigid musical decadence that became obligatory over the years is pruned back, the theme begins to make sense.

Played in orthodox style, the Ground of every pibroch can sound similar, be it Lament, Salute, Gathering, or March. The ornament known as ‘cadence E’ tends, nowadays, to be applied in the same manner, in the same place, by every performer. This is just one of a host of musical elements that used to be more flexible. Where 200 years ago the artist’s genius found expressive outlet, producing a refreshing variety between performances, things have become much more frozen.

Allan is not afraid to take each tune on its own terms. His interpretation of Campbell’s 1797 setting of “Lament for Alasdair Dearg” is profoundly moving. He treats Donald MacDonald’s 1826 setting of “The Red Speckled Bull” quite differently, and leads one who has never cared for the tune to change his opinion. Allan’s stature as a piper is confirmed by the way in which he plays the variations, neither stereotyped nor predictable as we so often hear them played today. His fingering is immaculate, especially in the *Crunnludh fosgailte*, which he plays ‘open’, a style unanimously agreed upon in the early sources but rarely heard today.

It is encouraging to one who has often become despondent over the current approach to the classical music of the Highland pipe to find two musicians whose approach is the opposite of formal or stereotyped, and who do not constantly justify themselves with the old pipers’ saying, “That’s the way I got it”. Barnaby Brown is one of the rising generation of pipers who are not content with the often turgid renderings of our glorious *Cèòl Mór*, the ‘Great Music’, with which we have to be

content today as pipers of skill and ability, clearly capable of much more adventurous and spirited presentation, strive for yet more of the glittering prizes. The new editions Barnaby prepared for this recording are clear, helpful, and instructive, and add much to the impact of Allan's outstanding playing. All in all, this is a major step forward in the study of the Great Music.

Donald MacPherson writes:

NO-ONE HAS a monopoly on taste. I hope this CD encourages more pipers to respect what our predecessors took such trouble to write out, 200 years ago. We should come to terms with the whole evidence, not skip over the parts that challenge modern convention. Allan's skill bringing out the beauty of these older texts, his fine bagpipe, and the clarity of his embellishments are uplifting to hear. His singing of the songs and *canntaireachd* is a lovely added feature.

Bill Livingstone writes:

I HAVE KNOWN Allan for 30 years, and he has amazed me with his piping more often than I can remember. It was his genius as a light music player that first captured me. Allan is not merely fast fingered, it was his knack for playing the embellishments in perfect context with the piece, so that they defined the rhythmical substructure of the tune, that made him so mesmerizing. It was not long before

his prowess as a pibroch player also became apparent. As this was happening, I heard rumours of Allan's studies into the relationship between pibroch and Gaelic language and song, but it was a while before I caught the full impact of his research.

Several years ago, my wife Lily and I were driving to the Highland Games at Fort Erie, in Ontario, Canada. The road takes one through the heart of Niagara wine country, so we had planned to find a shady spot in some vineyard for a picnic lunch. But it began to rain. Then to pour. We did park in the middle of a vineyard, but we had to enjoy our picnic and the chardonnay in the car.

A friend had given me tapes of Allan, interviewed on Radio Scotland by Iain MacInnes. It was a wonderful, near-mystical experience. The rain pounded the roof, the car closed in with the heat and steam, and Allan took us on a journey... playing, singing and talking. He told us about the ancient keening tradition, and the original, functional nature of much of pibroch music. He sang the Gaelic songs which underlie the melodies of so many tunes, and laid out his intuition about the complex rhythms which were surely imported into our music from the Gaelic language.

I was pinned to the seat. I heard things that I had never imagined before. Lily, who has been listening to this music for 35 years, but in our modern performance style only, was equally enchanted. It was an exquisite and romantic moment. But from a more mundane point of view, it was a musical epiphany.

Allan has shown, to me at least, that the old manuscripts, and Gaelic language and song, hold the key to a beautiful way of performing this music. I recently shared

a stage with him where I demonstrated the modern performance style, and Allan then took us back in time, suggesting how the same tune might have been played 300 years ago. I found the difference exhilarating, of greatest interest. So too did the non-pibroch-playing audience.

Some people are strongly attached to the modern tradition, and find Allan's revolutionary approach unsettling. But no one can doubt that we are listening to a consummate musician, playing with passion and mastery of his art. His integrity and intelligence in a hostile field is something to be treasured.

Allan has made more impact than anyone else in his generation. The world of piping and the music of Scotland are the richer for his genius.



Ailein Domhnallach

le Iain MacAonghuis

MÀTHÉID DUALCHAS an aghaidh nan creag, chan eil e 'na iongnadh sam bith ged a bhiodh ceòl ann an teaghlaich nan Domhnallach á Gleann Uige am Müideart agus sa h-uile duine a bhoineas dhaibh. Tha dual dhe sin a' tighinn a thaobh an athar; tha dual eile a' tighinn o chuideachd am màthar á Uibhist a Deas; is tha na dhà air an sniomh comhla san ealain a th'aig an triùir mhac, Aonghas, Ailein agus Iain. Dh'fhaointe cunntas a thoirt air gach fear dhiubh fa leth - oir tha iad uile cliùiteach, ach se Ailein an dràsda cuspair an t-seanchais.

Thug Ailein Ghlinn Uige am mach na duaisean as airde ann am piobaireachd — ceòl na pioba sam iomlaine — ceòl-beag agus ceòl-mór. Chan e nach do choisinn daoine eile an dearbh urram sin iad fhéin o chuireadh air bhonn comhfharpaisean piobaireachd an toiseach, san Eaglais Bhric agus an àiteachan eile. Bidh cuimhne air na h-ainmeannan aca-san gu léir fhad is a bhios spéis aig duine idir do chèol na pioba; ach tha inbhe eile os cionn sin aig Ailein Domhnallach.

O chionn àireamh bhliadhnaichean rinn e rannsachadh fiachail air an dàimh a tha eadar an ceòl-mór agus na h-òrain a tha comh-cheangailte ri na puirt-mhóra: abair an dràsda *Cumha Mhic an Tòisich* agus an t-òran *Eoghain Oig leag iad thu / Eoghain Oig thog iad thu... an eabar a' ghàrraiddh*. Se seinneadar a tha an Ailein; tha

a' Ghàidhlig aige o ghlùin a mhàthar; is tha na feartain sin ag obrachadh comhladh air chor is gu bheil an ceòl agus an sgoilearachd a' tighinn gu grinn a réir a chéile.

Se toradh na h-obrach is e an déidh a bhith breithneachadh gu geur air na ceistean bunaideach gu bheil e air beachd sonraichte a ghabhail air gnè a' chiùil agus mar bu chòr sin a chur an céill—beachd, ma dh'fhaite, ris nach aontaich a h-uile duine, oir tha britheamhnan a' chiùil-mhóir gu minig buailteach air slighe caran ainleathann a leanalt. Is dòcha nach b'ann an diugh no an dé a chaidh an t-slighe sin a shuidheachadh. Chan e nach eilear agus nach robhar feedh nan linntean ri deasbad man dòigh cheart, no man fhìor dhòigh, no man dòigh as fhéarr, no ga bè dé, air ceòl-mór a chluich.

Co-dhiubh, tha Ailein Domhnallach a nis air dreach a chur air a' phioaireachd a their cuid a tha ùr nodha ach a their cuid eile a tha gar n-aiseag air n-ais a dh'ionnsaigh am a tha air chall ann an eachdraidh. Seo mar a tha an ceòl, their iadsan, ann an riochd is ann am binneas on fhìor thoiseach.

Nis, tha daoine ann, piobairean agus luchd-leanmhain na piobaireachd, a tha meas nach do dh'atharraich an ceòl-mór riamh o chuireadh cruth air o thùs. Nam b'e is gu robh sin mar sin, s'e nì annasach a bhiodh ann: bhiodh e eadar-dhealaichte o ealain sam bith eile—ceòl no dràma no seinn—oir tha gach ginealach a' cur a chruth fhéin air ealain a réir slat-tomhais an ama agus fo chomhair an t-suidheachaidh. Tha sin fior ged a bhiodh ceòl (no faclan) air an sgrìobhadh is air an cumail fo smachd an leabhair. Tha Karl Popper ag innse mar a chuala e an ceòl aig Mozart ann an New York an déidh dha Vienna fhàgail far a robh e cho eòlach air a' cheòl

o lathaichean òige. Fhuair e bristeadh dùil. Bha puingean a' chiùil, tha e ràdh, co-thromach is ceart a réir is mar a bha iad air pàipear—ach cha b'e an ceòl aig Mozart a bha ann idir. Bhiodh e dualach gun doirte atharrachadh na bu mhutha buileach air gnè a' chiùil nam b'e is gura h-ann le aithris bheòlain is le ceòl-cluaise a thàinig e gar n-ionnsaigh tro na linntean.

Tha an eachdraidh aig na linntean sin cho duatharach is a dh'fhoghnais, gu h-àraid aig an fhìor thoisearch. Tha an ceòl-mór a' nochdadadh gu h-obann ann an cruth coileanta mar gun deach a chur ri chéile ann am mionaid uarach, gun ròs againn air na ceumannan a ghabh ùdairean nam port, dh'fheumadh e bhith, mas do ràinig iad an ire so leis an ealain.

Chan eil ach aiteal beag de fhiosrachadh ri fhaotain sna naidheachdan. Sonraich, an dràsda, *Piobaireachd Dhomhnaill Duibh*. Tha òran ann a rinn piobaire—na fac-lan agus an ceòl comhla—ach sann as déidh sin a rinn piobaire eile an ceòl-mór a th'againn fon aon ainm. A réir coltais, uair dhe robh saoghal, bha dà dhreuchd aig aon duine: piobaire agus bard. Canamaid ma tà gura h-e an ceòl aige-san ceòl dùthchasach nan Gàidheal.

Ach a thaobh a' chiùil-mhóir tha e aithnichte gu bheil ceangaltais air choireigin eadar e agus ceòl na clàrsaich, ged a dh'fhaodadh a bhith nach gabh sin a chur an céill gu mionaideach. Tha e aithnichte cuideachd gu bheil ceòl nan clàrsairean ann an tomhas 'eadar-nàiseanta': dàimh aige ri ceòl Sasannach is Frangach.

An gabh e bhith, ma tà, gu bheil susbaint sa cheòl-mhór a tha fior Ghàidhealach ach gu bheil an cruth a th'air de ghnè eile—rud a tha gar toirt air n-ais, is dòcha, gu

ruige tìr-mór na Roinn Eorpa? (Tha samhail dhen dearbh nì ann am meadarachd is ann an susbaint nan òran.)

Chan eil teagamh nach eil àite prionnsabalach aig Eirinn san tàrmachadh air a bheil mi mach. Ach seallaibh air seo cuideachd. O chionn suas ri mìle bliadhna thàinig teaghlaichean móra cumhachdach de stoc Frangach agus thuinich iad air Gàidhealtachd Alba: Frisealaich, Siosalaich, Granndaich agus Cuimeanaich. Saoilidh mise nach eil sinn fhathast a' toirt fa-near gum biodh buaidh aca air cultur nan Gàidheal. Far an robb taigh-mór no caisteal sam bith, bha an t-àite sin na cheann-uidhe aig luchd ealain is bhiodh e nàdarra gu leòr—a chionn se luchd-siubhail a bh'unnta—gum biodh iad a' tighinn ás a h-uile cearna, cho fad ás ris an Fhraing fhéin, á Sasainn, far Galltachd Alba, agus a thuilleadh air sin ás na dùth-channan Gàidhealach cuideachd, an Alba is an Eirinn. Ma thachair a leithid thàinig ionadh sruth ciùil is eile comhla; mar a gheibhearr chon an latha an diugh, bhiodh daoine ag ionnsachadh o chéile agus a' cur an dreach fhéin, mar a b'aill leotha, air na thog iad o chéile.

Ga nach eil agam ach tuairim an seo mu thimcheall tinnseadal a' chiùil-mhóir, tha aon nì cinnteach. Tha grinneas is loinn ann an "guth nam meur" (mar a thuirt Am Piobaire Dall) aig Ailein Domhnallach a th'air annas ùr a thoirt dhan phìobaireachd agus air farpas ath-bheothachadh air feadh an t-saoghail.



NOTES

- 1 For example, see Frank McLynn (1985), *The Jacobites*; and also A. J. Youngson (1973), *After the Forty-Five: The Economic Impact on the Scottish Highlands*.
- 2 Henry Cockburn (1889), *Circuit Journeys*, pp.107-8, quoted by William Donaldson (2000), *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society*, p.192.
- 3 *Oban Times*, 13/9/1884, p.3, quoted by Donaldson, *ibid.*, pp.203-4.
- 4 Angus Fairrie (1988), *The Northern Meeting 1788-1988*, pp.52-4.
- 5 Donaldson, *ibid.*, p.242.
- 6 *Oban Times*, 23/10/1920, p.3, quoted by Donaldson, *ibid.*, p.332.
- 7 David Murray, in conversation with the editor 6/8/2006.
- 8 "Piping Reminiscences", *Oban Times*, 1942, quoted by Donaldson, *ibid.*, p.214.
- 9 John Lorne Campbell (1999), *Songs Remembered in Exile* (revised edition), p.66.
- 10 *An Gaidheal* III (1874), pp 72-75. For further tales concerning the composer, see Alexander J. Haddow (1982, reprinted 2003), *The History & Structure of Ceol Mor*, pp.78-81.
- 11 Transcribed by Colonel C. Greenhill Gardyne in a letter to John Campbell of Kilberry, kindly brought to our attention by Roderick D. Cannon. (Kilberry Papers, NLS ms 22107, ff. 5-14).
- 12 *Piping Times* 33 No.10, pp.26-27.
- 13 John Bannerman (1983), "Literacy in the Highlands", in Ian B. Cowan & Duncan Shaw, *The Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland*, pp.214-235.
- 14 Ed. John Lorne Campbell (1975), *A Collection of Highland Rites and Customs*, p.49.
- 15 A presentation by Ann Heymann in 1992 at the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh.
- 16 Derick Thomson (1974), "Niall Mór MacMhuirich", *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 49, pp.21-2. Translation by John Lorne Campbell, in Francis Collinson (1975), *The Bagpipe*, pp.186-7. For its survival in South Uist oral tradition, see William MacDonald (1999), "Further Reminiscences", *Proceedings of the Piobaireachd Society Conference XXVI*. For other poets' replies, see Colm Ó Baoill (1979), *Eachann Bacach and other Maclean poets*, pp.221-2.

- 17 *Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland* (1998), letter XXI.
- 18 Peter Greenhill informs the editor that in the Robert ap Huw MS (c.1613), there are numerous instructions to form variations by raising the thumb, or whole hand. One such rubric is on p.24: "The sixth *cainc* is played like the fifth, only raising two strings on the upper thumb."
- 19 "È grandemente esercitato questo strumento da populi d'Irlanda, al suono della quale usano quelle indomite salvatiche e bellicose genti, muovere gli eserciti ed inanimirgli à menare valorosamente le mani contro gli inimici; accompagnando ancora con essa i morti loro alla sepoltura; con il quale fanno modi talmente lugubri, che invitano anzi sforzano à piangere i circostanti." *Dialogo di Vincentio Galilei... della musica antica, et della moderna* (1581), p.146.
- 20 Ed. John Lorne Campbell (1975), *A Collection of Highland Rites and Customs*, pp.86-7.
- 21 *Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland* (1998), letters XI and XXIII.
- 22 Sean Donnelly (1998), "A Few Seventeenth-Century Irish Pipers", *Piping Times* 50, No.6, p.51; *Hibernia Anglicana* (London, 1689), p.24.
- 23 Nicholas Maclean-Bristol (1995), *Warriors and Priests: the History of the Clan MacLean (1300-1570)*, pp.31-33 & 174.
- 24 These three verses are from the 27-verse "Song to Sir Eachann" in Ó Baoil, *op. cit.*, pp.34-37.
- 25 Jo Currie (2000), *Mull: The Island and its People*, p.13.
- 26 Seán Donnelly (2001), *The Early History of Piping in Ireland*, p.9.
- 27 John Purser (1992), *Scotland's Music*, p.90.
- 28 Information communicated to Roderick Cannon by William Matheson: *Register of the Privy Council* vol.IX, p.16, and Donald Gregory (1836), *The History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland*, 2nd edition (1881, reprinted 1975), p.261.
- 29 *Celtic Magazine* (1883), 8, No.XCIII, p.435. Gesto's manuscript is at www.pibroch.net.
- 30 John Grahame Dalyell (1848), *Musical Memoirs of Scotland*, Appendix I; reproduced in *Piping Times* 19, No.6, p.9.
- 31 Bridget Mackenzie (2004), *Piping Traditions of Argyll*, p.288.
- 32 Archibald Campbell (1948), *The Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor*, Introduction p.8.



