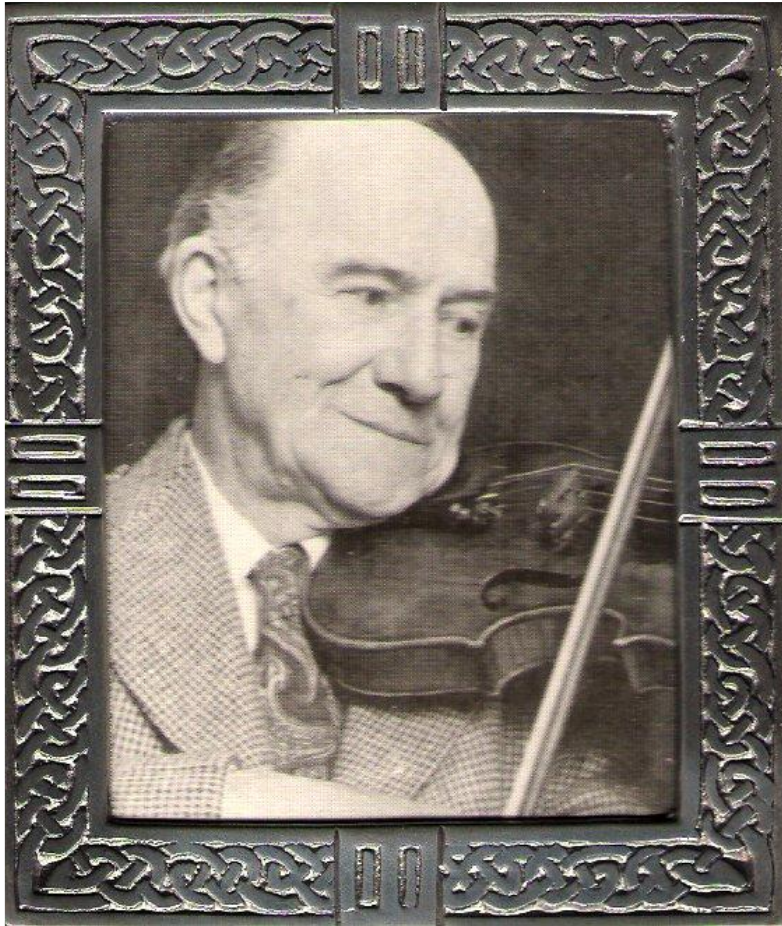




Hector MacAndrew 1903 – 1980

With This Website

www.scottishfiddlemusicinstyle.co.uk

*I remember with deep affection my teacher in this
field:*

Scots Fiddle Player Hector MacAndrew

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Whilst effort has been made to indicate sources, and to give credit to individuals and organisations - where possible, the texts (inclusive of historical data and my personal comments) are included to furnish ideas for anyone wishing to undertake more in-depth exploration.

Queries: Please email michaelr.welch@btinternet.com

No 34: 31st July, 2026

Tracks from my collection

N.B. Where Gaelic is quoted in a track title or text – this is taken directly from the source utilised

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Notes thereto:

01) Air: The Braes of Lochiel

No.44 in Simon Fraser's 1816 Collection. He has little to say of the source. In my own setting the tune is transposed into B minor. It may be that an older version would be pentatonic, as the rising opening phrase (F#ABDE) suggests immediately. Whatever the technical issues, the sense is nostalgic, an exile in the mind's eye re-visiting a land to which no return is possible.

02) Air and Reel: Ho! Away She Goes; Pipe Reel (anon)

Both these tunes were sourced from *Celtic Melodies Being a Collection of Original Slow Highland Airs, Pipe Music and Cainteareachd* [sic] Vol 1 by George Farquhar Graham and Finlay Dunn, Edinburgh c.1830. *Falbh orra Ho! (Ho Away She goes)* is described as a 'boat song' and is to be played/sung 'slowly and distinctly'. Unfortunately there are no Gaelic (or English) words to indicate substance or phrasing, so we are caged in bar lines.

Nevertheless I give it a (slow) salty tang, pushing off from the shore. Recording the sea was easy, but getting the gull entries at the right time was a real nightmare - they would never watch! The tune is hexatonic (EF#ABC#D).

Pipe Reel has no canntaireachd indications, - but it is pentatonic (ABDEG), perhaps of some antiquity.

I play at a moderate speed, intentionally, enhancing the subtleties of movement and phrasing. There is a marching two-step swish about these two tunes also... You choose.

03) Strathspey and Reel: Lady McIntosh's; Reel as Strathspey faster tempo; Reel 2: Craig Elachie

Two more tunes from the Angus Cumming Collection (1780) in much the same style as Track 07 above. Points to add about this collection: 1) the absence of 'slow airs' and 2) the inconsistency with the printed time signatures relating to strathspeys and/or reels 'Reells' - 2/2 or 4/4.

There were 361 subscribers to this book (172 Grants) and 26 Gaelic titles, so he must have had some following and presumably a Gaelic connection, given his pedigree. His collection was republished, from the same plates - 'J. Johnson, Sculptr. Edinburgh', in 1798. *Craig Elachie* is the first tune (in 'reel' time - 2/2) on page one. The crest of Clan Grant is a representation of a burning hill - Craig Elachie - the rock of alarm - the rallying point for the Clan.

04) 2/4 March: The Glengarry Gathering

I learned this march from Hector MacAndrew over 50 years ago. Piper Angus Macpherson, himself with a distinguished piping lineage, was enraptured by this tune - part of his DNA in contemporary parlance - and enthused about it '*...it will be played as long as pipes are played!*'.

The tune is a composition of the legendary Angus MacKay (c1813-1859), Queen Victoria's first piper. Although *piobaireachd* was indisputably this man's forte, like many pipers of his time, he was obliged to entertain with *ceòl beag* - the little (i.e. light) music - marches strathspeys, reels, hornpipes... often a condition of employment whether in the officers' mess, the chieftain's hall, or in a bothy on an earth floor.

5) 6/8 Jigs: The Goatherd and the Shepherd; The Grey Buck

Two lively tunes widely known, these arrangements prompted by the William Gunn Collection (1848). A popular book, which ran to nine editions, the ninth published in 1886. The volume has recently been republished. Born in Sutherland, Gunn was a Gaelic speaker. Gaelic precedes English in the tune titles: *Buachill nan Gobhar 'us Buachill; nan Caorach; Am Boc Glas*. 'Herdsmen' is an interesting metaphor.

06) Air: Song of Summer

Poem by Duncan Ban Macintyre (1724-1812).

Air from the Patrick MacDonald Collection (no. 21).

See *The Songs of Duncan Ban Macintyre* edited by Angus MacLeod (Scottish Gaelic Texts Society).

This wonderful, evocative poem, running to 25 verses, is in praise of summer and all that nature can bestow on us in this season of the year's cycle. It begins with the sun '...*when she doth rise, will come heat that will benefit, and not be lost to us...*'.

Crops - fragrance - fruit - the seasonal transformation of mountain wilderness - the lush forest - the distinctive 'dress' of the deer - bird song - all there from a man whose mantle of consciousness embraced nature as it embraced him. He could read from, remembering a quote by Seamus Heaney (*Preoccupations*, p. 132), 'a manuscript which we have lost the skill to read'. Macintyre was an unlettered man - his poems were transcribed for him (subsequently the English substance being made available) - his life multifaceted - 'but' as Angus MacLeod remarks on this work 'the poem is a noble structure, not excelled in style by any of the Gaelic poems on summer'. Duncan Ban is certainly a man to know, and thus through his eyes and sensibility, we become more in tune with his world - and the world around us.

7) 6/8 Jigs: The Lads of Dunse*; Drummond Castle; Minnie Hynd

*Spelling as in printed collection. The first two tunes appear as jigs in the Second Collection of tunes by Niel Gow, 1788, - i.e. the 'collection' is his, not all the tunes. He states they are 'old' but gives us no clue to origins (of which he may/may not have been aware). Suffice it to say that he, along with other like fiddlers, were soon caught up in the blossoming fashionable house party and ballroom fashion of the late 18th century, and those who had their wits about them (NG included!) saw to it that a ready supply of tunes was made available to satiate this appetite and entertain and impress their clients. The 'collections' reached epic proportions and the tunes ran into thousands (witness: Charles Gore's *The Scottish Fiddle Music Index*), a mixture of original compositions, adapted Gaelic song airs, and ballad airs, ceol beag. Modality metamorphosed along the way, doubtless in hand with social taste. The country fiddlers would have had their own agenda in style and performance. Contemporary comments as to Niel Gow's legendary up-bow stroke is an example. Here's the traditional element, in contrast to the drawing/ball room rather sanitised approach. On the subject of ceol beag, Minnie Hynd is a fiddle arrangement of the tune by P/M Donald McLean.

8) Air: Roderick of the Glens ('Ruaridh Ghlinneachan')

This air I arranged from No.180 in the Simon Fraser manuscript (intended to have been Vol. 2 of his collection) which resides in the Edinburgh University library. The text notes for this manuscript are, tantalisingly, missing, so his own source is unknown.

Who Roderick was therefore remains conjecture. Was he a Chisholm a Morrison or a Mackenzie? Is this a lament for a man or reflection on an empty glen with no fires, left to its tumbling streams, or both, or neither?

Whoever, I view this as a musical profile of a the man Fraser felt worthy of attention.

9) Reels: The High Road to Linton; Johnny Lad; The Smith of Chilliechassie; The Grey Wife of Raasay

An arrangement of four popular pipe reels. The *High Road to Linton* is widely known and comes in many guises. I first saw it in print in 1964 in *The Fiddler's Tune Book (Part II)* produced by the English Folk Dance and Song Society, there as *Jenny's Gone to Linton*. It's also known in Norfolk as *The Road to Lynn* presumably referring to King's Lynn.

There may be connections with the Borders and cattle droving. There are *Puirt-à-Beul* versions in the Western Isles. One is printed in Margaret Fay Shaw's book *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist*. Gaelic traditional singer Rona Lightfoot sings another. By sea and overland it's travelled everywhere.

I have no pedigree for *Johnny...* or *The Smith...* - public domain - origin obscure...

The Grey Wife of Raasay is possibly a composition of John MacKay of Raasay, father of Queen Victoria's piper Angus MacKay (1813-1859).

10) Track to follow

11) Strathspey and Reel: The Rocks of Cashel; The Geen Tree

Both tunes arranged from Niel Gow's Repository, Book II. Niel Gow (1727-1807) is a legendary figure in the annals of Scottish fiddle tradition. On the one hand rustic and pastoral and on the other able to translate much of the music he absorbed into the contemporary social ballroom scene, where he became very much in demand. Many 'collections' of tunes that he (and his family) played were in print from the late eighteenth century onwards and are a study in themselves into the way this music developed and adapted over the succeeding decades. *The Geen Tree* is perhaps the older of the two tunes based on the hexatonic scale. A portrait of Niel (by Raeburn) hangs in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, and another in the ballroom at Blair Castle.

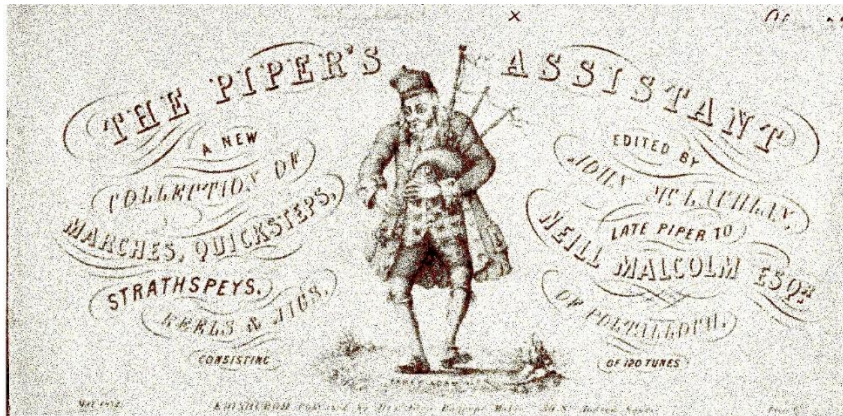
Duncan Macmillan (*Scottish Art 1460-1990*) says '...even more striking is the analogy between Raeburn's *Niel Gow* and Reynolds's remarkable portrait of *Joshua Sharp*. Both are pictures of someone intensely absorbed and turned inwards upon themselves...'

12) Air: The Major's Song (Òran A'Mhairsier)

We are very fortunate to be able to hear the singing of Miss Margaret Mackay (1872-1963), found in the archive material at Edinburgh University School of Scottish Studies and *Tocher* 22. The late Fred Macaulay recorded Margaret in 1952 and transcriptions of the songs were made by Morag MacLeod. Margaret's age, eighty years, it seems had done little to diminish the impact of her singing, in fact time passing - memory and reflection, the philosophical acceptance of the ways of nature (human and otherwise) - I reflect, it may have had the opposite effect. She sang continually whilst going about her daily activities. This song tells us of Mary, a young girl in love with 'a gunner from the high country, 'From the Highlands of Scotland where the deer are killed'. When Mary's parents hear of this, the romance with a soldier is forbidden. There are fourteen verses.

13) 9/8 Jigs: Drink the Worts and Spill the Beer; Tea in the Morning

These joyful, flowing, uplifting Irish jigs in 9/8 time are sourced from (a) Angus Glen's publication **The Piper's Assistant*, - title Page from NLS copy:



and (b) from O'Neill's *Music of Ireland* – both dance tunes, but which I play at a moderate speed, intentionally, enhancing the subtleties of movement and phrasing.

There is a marching two-step swish about these two tunes also... You choose.

*Not to be confused with Angus MacKay's book of the same name

14 Lament: The Head of Ghruinneart Sands (Ceann Traigh Ghruinneart)

This haunting lament, expressing as it does the bitterness, anguish, remorse and pain of conflict, is for Sir Lochlan MacLean of Duart, Mull (Lachlann Mor) killed in the battle of Gruinart, Islay, in 1598.

I am indebted to Scottish Studies Archives, University of Edinburgh Department of Celtic, for permission to extract the song from *Tocher* 35 and to hear the late William Mathieson's archive recording (SA 1976/105 A4).

The metrical implications (6/8 to 2/2) and the changes of tempo (my arrangement is slower) suggest a piobaireachd song. The tune is mixolydian. Whatever, only a fragment of tune/song appears to have come down to us. Here's an English translation):

*It was at the head of Gruinart Sands I left the hero,
It was at the head of Gruinart Sands I left
A man who could draw a sword and strike blows,
At the head of Gruinart Sands I left him.*

*Black cloth, brown cloth, cloth that destroyed me,
Black cloth, brown cloth, little batch of cloth.
Dearly did I sell the little batch of black cloth,
Dearly did I sell the little batch of cloth.*

It is suggested (*Tocher* 35) that the allusion to cloth probably meant the rent of 60 ells of black, white, and grey cloth demanded by the King for lands in the Rhinns of Islay of which disputed superiority was the principal cause of the battle.

15) Strathspey & Reel: The Loch of Forfar; Dundarg

These from the William Christie Collection.

Played here as unaccompanied dance tunes: the strathspey, mixolydian, - p.7, no composer credit - is aka *Blair's Favourite* (see [MSS Copy](#)), the lively reel (also mixolydian) is one of Christie's own compositions. The [Ancient promontory fort](#) (a more humble predecessor of Fort

George!) on the Moray coast must have captured his imagination (the cut and thrust of fifths). A rocky outcrop, inhospitable, wild in winter (and sometimes in summer!). The tune gives us an insight into this man's creative processes, - thoughts to accompany footsteps or at the fireside - as opposed to the whirling elegance of the ballroom.

In common with many collections of the time there are no printed bowings. All this is left to the skill (sometimes improvisatory) of the performer – especially with 'strathspeys'.

Of which - for further in-depth study - see Dr William Lamb's research material [Reeling, in the Strathspey](#), [accompanying video](#) and [Grafting Culture](#).

Likewise, throughout history, stone carving and architecture (military or otherwise) have developed their own stylistic modifications to reflect the demands of current culture, religion or politics.

16 Well May My True Love Arrive

A very touching air from Fraser's 1816 collection, again given to me by Hector, and again the key chosen is very effectively Eb. There is no doubt that the Captain's ear was vocally orientated when it comes to tunes like this. He says his father used to sing verses to this air, 'composed by a young lady under engagements to an officer in the same service with himself, under [General] Wolfe at Quebec. Their friends, however, mutually objected to their union'. Fraser refers to his father's and grandfather's singing, in his notes to about 25% of the tunes in the collection. It was said that he made his violin speak Gaelic like no other, and with his background it's not difficult to join up the dots to see how this came about. The songs would be spontaneous, emotional, ornamented and focussed, directly reflecting what these people lived through. I substituted Bb for the Fraser's printed B naturals in bars 10 and 14.

17) Puirt-à-Beul: Cairisitiona Ewen's Daughter (Cairistiona' Nighean Eoghainn);

This is an arrangement of a dance-song transcription made by Morag MacLeod from a recording of Alasdair Boyd's singing (Tocher Songs, School of Scottish Studies SA1956/165/A23).

Alasdair was born in South Uist in 1889 and died in Oban in 1970. He learned this song from Mary MacLellan, an expert in dance songs (puirt-à-beul) who lived next door to him. He learned many songs (recording over 70 for the School) from his mother and his aunt - work songs, lullabies and piobaireachd songs. He was also much in demand to play the pipes for dancing. As the story unfolds, we find Cairistiona Ewen's daughter... *she was nearly lost... Cas Odhar will play the pipes... we'll dance a jolly reel*'. The significance is obscure, as with much puirt-à-beul, where the voice, whether solo or in chorus, principally projects the rhythm to accompany and stimulate the movement of work activity. Perhaps she was a young, capricious girl? - flute dancing rings around...

18 Air: Corrabheinn - Tha'n Crodh Laoigh air Aodann Corrabheinn

The Calving-cattle Are on the Slopes of Corrabheinn

I first heard Margaret Stewart (<http://www.margaretstewart.com/>) sing this evocative song. She comments, in an email, on the number of cattle songs in the Gaelic culture 'cattle were the currency of the Gael, so very important to them' and upon *Maol Don - MacCrimmon's Sweetheart* - possibly the most well known piobaireachd relating to a cow in the pipe repertoire.

The tune is pentatonic (DEGAC) and most likely of traditionally ancient origin perhaps for the bagpipe (sung- canntairachd) or then for this song. I am very grateful (in order to get the sense of the air) to have the English translation Margaret offered me:

*The calving-cattle are on the slopes of Corrabheinn (X3)
Rain and wind on the slopes of Corrabheinn*

*Mary has the calving-cattle on the slopes of Corrabheinn (X3)
eleven cattle and six breeding cattle*

*The other cattle are on the island of the deers (3)
a dog driving them and a lad following them*

The exact location of the hill is obscure - there are three on OS - Mull, Skye, Jura - perhaps the most promising candidate.

I never regard any of these tunes or songs as 'melancholic' as some might suggest, but rather an expression of a people whose lives were very much governed by sometimes hostile elements, the soundscape the landscape - the universe in which they lived in daylight and in darkness and in which whose rhythms they were immersed for centuries.

19) Marches: 4/4 Highland Harry; 6/8 The Tailor's Wedding

Highland Harry has been in the public domain for a long time, in various guises: *The Highland Watch's Farewell to Ireland* (Stewart, 1762), *Highland Harry Back Again*, *Highlander's Lament*, *Highlander's Farewell* (Ross 1780), *My Harry Was a Gallant Gay* (poem - Robert Burns - 1787 - with Jacobite overtones), *Highland Harry* (James Hogg). There are versions in seven pipe collections (at least). I settled on a pentatonic setting in E (EF#ABD) which Hogg has (*Jacobite Reliques*, 1821, no.30, p.60). Well-travelled: there may also be an early Irish forebear. The 42nd Highlanders (Black Watch) were quartered in Ireland 1749-1756, firstly in Limerick and later in Galway. General Stewart of Garth (*Sketches of the Highlanders of Scotland*) makes the point that, contrary some expectation, there were no animosities, jealousies and disputes between the Highlanders and the local inhabitants amongst whom they were quartered. Why? He suggests a commonality of Celtic background - languages, music and culture. So, it may well be that a local tune was adopted/adapted as a marching song – as here

The Tailor's Wedding (Ross Bk5) or *Banis an Tàiller* (Gunn p.10) appears in 6/8 jig style, but I slowed it down to march time with the same step tempo as the previous tune... Tunes of this kind were often rebranded as the need arose.

20 Air: Lads Be Ye In Good Spirits Going Over the Oceans ('Illean Bithibh Sunndach)

For those who go down to the sea in ships

*The many ships that left our country
with white wings for Canada.
They are like handkerchiefs in our memories
and the brine like tears
and in their masts sailors singing
like birds on branches...*

Translation from *The Exiles* by Iain Crichton Smith. See *Modern Scottish Gaelic Poems*, Edited by Donald Macaulay, Canongate Classics 55. 1995.

These are not the words to the song from which I derived the arrangement, but rather added inspiration for it - along with the expressive traditional singing of Marion MacDonald who

came originally from Scallary, Barra. Marion's recording of the song is in the School of Scottish Studies Archive (SA1954.037.A1). Hearing it left a lasting impression... The rhythm of the sea, movement of a boat, pulling an oar, raising a sail... wet discomfort to be shouldered... The exhilaration of singing either solo or in chorus (or both - sequentially) in confrontation...

Many thoughts: Joseph Conrad... *Typhoon* to mind... among many stories. Poems...the sea shanty...adventures, under sail, oar, engines, vessels all sizes...hauling sheets...capstan ratchet rhythm...cork lifejackets...lifeboats... Norse seafarers, reading the Atlantic swells, currents, the windward sky...sea birds...fishermen... *Peter Grimes*...

The Music: as the singing fades, boat becomes hull down over the horizon... masts/sails finally vanishing...

We are left only with the sea, the shore, the rocks, it's many voices, - from wavelets to merciless roar, a complex soundscape and movement, ebb and flow, - there for eternity...



FOOTNOTE

Archive Extract, bottom of Home Page

Strathspey Delvinside

Hector MacAndrew Fiddle, his wife, Elsie, Piano

Notes © Michael Welch, 16th August, 2026
