

Killiechassie Lassie

Reel



Killiechassie Lassie: I have long been interested in Killiechassie, a beautiful name for a beautiful place lying, as it does, on the very lip of the vale of Fortingall, and was interested in the tune “The Smith of Killiechassie” whose form and title have evolved over the years. Originally it was “The Drunken Smith of Killiechassie”; there is even a version in the McLennan papers which calls it “A Hundred Pipers Lying Drunk.” So when the novelist J. K. Rowling whose work I greatly admire came to live in Killiechassie, it seemed time for a tune. Musically the piece tries to be inventive yet within a strictly “traditional” idiom. It sits quite well with the strathspey “Tullochvenus to Bogentassie.” Southern Perthshire has long been associated with witchcraft and wizardry and the supernatural in general. The mountain Schiehallion was the headquarters of all the Scottish fairies and their chronicler, the Rev. Robert Kirk, a graduate of Marischal College, Aberdeen, was minister of Aberfoyle. He described in his book *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns, & Fairies*, (compiled 1691-2, and first published Edinburgh 1815) how “our Northern-Scotish, and our Athol men are so much addicted to and delighteth with Harps and Musick...as if they were impotent of its powers, and unable to command it; for we have seen some poor Beggars of them chattering their teeth for cold, that how soon they saw the fire, and heard the Harp, leapt thorow the house like Goats and Satyr”.