

## FOREWORD

This little selection of airs from my private collection is placed before the piping fraternity in the hope that from it they will be able to increase their repertoire.

Modern pipers are scattered all over the British Empire, pipe bands and pipers' societies being now found at many large centres in the Colonies and America. Owing to the extended scope, the Editor has included some secular tunes which will appeal to local audiences who are not too familiar with purely Scottish tunes.

As the kilt itself as an honourable article of attire can grace any occasion or assembly, so the piper and his music, in safe hands, is able to do the same, be it wedding, feast, dance, scene of mourning or church parade.

To the piping fraternity and lovers of music, few remarks are necessary in alluding to the pleasure found in the stirring march and quick-step, the national dance music of Strathspey and rollicking reel, the sympathetic feeling of the dirge and wailing lament. Also in the "carefully composed" music of the "Ceol Mor," now-a-days termed Pibroch or classical music of the pipe, generally a theme with or without variations. The meaning of its name is, of course, "pipe music."

### **A Solo Instrument.**

It is as a solo instrument, however, that the pipes excel, and being by its nature and construction a compound instrument, it is complete in itself, and can stand alone.

### **Wealth of Music.**

The wealth of pipe music and Scottish airs is immense, and tunes can be found to fit and to grace any occasion, running the gamut of the human feelings and emotions.

### **Pipe Music.**

Though the piper should by all means read works and handbooks upon musical history and art for the sake of general knowledge, a Scottish firm lately expressed in a footnote in their latest catalogue the hope that pipers would take a greater interest in music generally. The highland piper need pay but little attention to the use of 'signatures and clefs, as such are not needed upon his non-signature instrument. Whilst many marches and dance tunes, etc., of ordinary pipe music for pibroch are composed upon all the available notes of the chanter from top to bottom, from G to G and from A to A, many others are strongly influenced by or tinctured by the chanter modes or pentatones. Pibroch and many other old reels and port nam beul are built upon the chanter modes entirely, some going back to Druidical times. Occasionally the old musicians made use of an extra note outside of a mode used, as a "passing note," merely for the purpose of rounding off corners in the music. (For additional chanter modes, see Plate I.)

The register of the Chanter is apart from and outside modern music, and the performing piper or pipe band should carefully choose its programme music, and not use all of one kind. Thus by using his knowledge he will create more interest in the music and avoid monotony.

This is simply an imitative intoning of the tunes, but really forms the best way of acquiring the music, and belongs to the rhythm-containing-and-giving- outfit. It was a great aid to memory in the old oral style of teaching, and is still very useful when used along with modern staff notation.

As the printed staff notation may be said to be an approximate suggestion, or a picture only of the music which can easily be read by the performing artist, it should be the endeavour of the student to be able to interpret these dumb signs into actual living music. But music must be *heard* to be appreciated, thus the interpreter actually "re-creates" music again, and he should try to find out what the composer meant by it, and bring it again to life. This can only be done by one who has the "soul of music."

A Highland lassie in domestic service in London was told by her mistress of the pipers practising in the park, and thinking to please the lonely girl so far away from home, advised her to go and hear them play, which she did, and on being asked how she liked them, replied: "True enough, my lady, they play the pipes right enough, but, alas, they do not speak my language to me! The soul was wanting in the music."

The blending of the modes and their existence which have fortunately been preserved in their pristine purity obtain now upon the chanter handed down to us, and it is expedient that they be kept in their purity. The oldest tunes are gems of purity, and should not be altered by so-called improvements. These tunes are carefully built up and arranged so that each note is in its proper place, even as an architect plans each stone of a building for its proper place, and alteration results in mutilation and disaster.

The range of the chanter is so small, and the old masters have covered so much ground, as to leave seemingly little scope for later-day composers; still, with the exercise of skill, patience and inspiration, something may yet be done by an infinite capacity for taking pains, commonly called genius.

Pipe music, especially pibroch, should be a steady flow of music, with nothing jerky about it, as held by Donald Cameron, the last king of Pipers.

**The Pipe Blend.**

To—make the harmony of the drones pure. tune first of all the outer small drone or tenor to low A of the chanter, and the big drone an octave lower, and you will hear the harmonic distinctly an octave higher than written, or it may be an octave lower, as a man's voice is to a woman's, even when they think they are singing in unison.

Pipe drones correspond to above and form a fixed droning or humming accompaniment, or sustained burden to the voice of the chanter. Pipers sometimes speak of the *humming of the pipes* in the same way that a little boy with his humming top speaks of it *going to sleep*. This, in poetical language, is alluded to as the "*Rise and Fall*," or "*Rise and Fa*," is historically mentioned in the poem "Pipes at Lucknow," by J. G. Whittier, and corresponds to the voice of nature upon the aeolian harp played upon by the wind, or the breath of the wind upon reeds by the riverside, or through a ship's rigging, a sound once heard never forgotten:—

"Oh they listened, dumb and breathless,  
And they caught the sound at last:  
Faint and far beyond the Goomtie  
'Rose and fell' the pipers' blast."  
("Goomtie River.")

Then in the song "Jessie's Dream," by John Blockley:—

"I heard the pipers play,  
I kened its "*Rise and Fa*.'"

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Then we have the historical allusion in a poem by R. T. S. Lowell:—

"It was not long ere it made its way—  
*A thrilling, ceaseless sound:*  
It was the pipes of the Highlanders!  
And we all thanked God aloud."

"THE RISE AND FALL."—This swelling and pulsating sound from the pipes can be heard at a great distance on the still air; some pipers affirm that it can be heard to greater advantage in a small room than in a large hall. When so heard, it has the power over some of sending them into a kind of trance or day dream.

**Macrimmon Method of Speaking Chanter.**

Two systems of Macrimmon vocables existed of pipers' language or singable vocables. First, the old style, one vocable served for two and sometimes three different notes, making the reading of such rather difficult, except to those actually taught from Neil Gest's book of 1828. Mr. Simon Frazer is, as far as I know, the only man now living taught from that book, called "canntaireachd." Pat Macrimmon improved upon the above and arranged a second style, making use of a separate vocable for each chanter note, and called shantair eachdt. The only exception to scale is the letter u used when passing from high A to F E, and this merely for the sake of euphony in both old and new systems

Pat Mor system is very useful to anyone with a good ear and for teaching purposes, and is an attempt to sing the music and make the chanter speak. Letters B. T. V. are used between notes having no grace notes, but used as sparingly as possible, as Hinda Hova Bodin, B. is used descending.

High cutting grace notes are H, as Hin Ho. Low cutting grace notes are R, as ro, ra, rin, combined Ho, rin, etc.; L is used for doublings—Holo, Hielie, Hele, Hili; gdgO group of graces = dro; gdgc with D = dra; gdc with D = tra.

The early Macrimmons, being very religious people  
**Key to System.** placed their key in the English Bible at Gen. III., 24; this verse contains important pipe vocables, so extremely characteristic of the pipe chanter music, and only imitated upon other instruments, alluding to the dro, tre, etre, betre, vetre vocables:—

“So *He* ‘DRO’-VE out the man and *He* placed in the East of the Garden of *Eden* *Che-ru-bims* and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the ‘TREE’ of life.”

Indeed, a “significant passage” when one thinks  
**Piping Secrets.** about the “secrets of piping.” The vocables were invented for pibroch only, primarily, but may be used for teaching ordinary pipe notation, and the Editor has arranged this also. All the vocable letters are contained in the following:

“Christ will be our Saviour if we follow His teachings.”

Groups of notes or beats never alter, and were given names, such as Love, Hypocrisy, and so on.

Time was shown by sometimes doubling letter D: hodin—hoddin; hadin—haddin; hadrin—haddrin, etc.

In singing grace-note-cadence gedO, hio, heao, it should be sung with a “y” in centre of group as: Hiyo, Hiyodin, Hiyorin, Hiyiririn quickly, but not written that way.

It is an established fact that the olden time pibroch players imitated each other, or have remarked:  
**Parodies.** “I will write one as like yours as possible.”

Hence we have, even now, in the pibroch books companion tunes, twin tunes, or parodies in plain English. Some of these are undeniably clever, but as years pass by, the query has arisen, who composed number one? One pibroch book in existence to-day contains many pibrochs arranged in pairs. Example: “Glen is Mine” and “Chrisholm’s Salute”; “Lament for the Harp Tree” and “Corriess.”; “The Red Hand in McDonald’s Arms” and “The MacGregors’ Salute.”

and invention is a gift, but much can be done by  
**Composition** hard work and application. Music will not convey her gifts to us until we breath the atmosphere which is found at a higher altitude than that in which walks the ordinary man.

Since all the world loves a tune, the survival of the fittest, whether folk-song or pibroch, is the true test of popularity. The composition of a good pibroch shows a deep mastery of musical material, and should be interesting as much for its intellectual quality and attributes of construction as for its sensuous charm of melody, and to test its theme or Urlar we must ask: "Does it make music and is it pleasing?"

**A Revival** of a branch of our National music may come sooner or later, but the "Old Music" and pipe music belong to an "older system" than does modern music. The former was in existence long before modern music was invented. There is nothing radically wrong or uncouth about it or its scale. The trouble arises from making improper comparisons, and looking at it from a modern musical standpoint, and talking about it in modern musical terms. If we accept the five-note origin, several beautiful musical laws are found operating simply and effectually within its homely register or abacus:—

On Scotia's plains in days of yore,  
When lads and lassies Tartan wore,  
When sweetest music rang from shore to shore;  
But harmony is now no more  
and music's deid.

*Extract from Robt. Fergusson's "Elegy on the Death of Scot's Music."*

Like all poets, he had the truest insight, and according to him, Scotia's genius for music was personified by the reed. It would be a triumph for Highland music if it is proved that the musical genius of our country still lies sheltered secure, biding its time, in the pipe chanter.

Canntaireachd plays a great part in preserving **Pibroch Rhythm.** the old rhythm, which is totally unlike modern regular rhythm based on modern harmonic requirements. The old system was purely melodic (and horizontal), and one can only catch its rhythm by studying long and carefully the older tunes. One finds that the cadences and grace notes are a most important part of the rhythm-giving outfit, and cannot be dispensed with:

I'll take my pipe and try the Phrygian melody,  
Which he that hears lets through his ears,  
A madness to distemper all the brain;  
Then I another pipe will take  
And Doric music make  
To civilize with graver notes, our wits again.  
*(Randolph.)*

**In Conclusion** I would like to see the pipe societies encourage pibroch playing among the young. If quite small school children can readily play a "tune with variations" upon the piano, such as "Bluebells of Scotland," "Carnival of Venice" and "Home, Sweet Home," why not teach the pipe-pupil some piobaireachds, which are merely tunes with variations.

It is certainly remarkable how pipe players have carried their hobby to far-distant lands, and have contributed largely to pipe music literature. A player who thoroughly understands and loves his instrument never ceases to play even in advanced old age "until the silver cord be loosed or the golden bowl be broken." He will sit fingering a tune upon his walking stick, or liltng a tune in the canntaireachd laden with memories of the Old Countrie. Young pipers should never leave Scotland without learning the pibroch notes and exercises upon the Urlar.

## Tuning and Tonality of the Bagpipe

High A  
Low A Tenor Drone  
Bass Drone  
Prove by E  
Harmonics  
think of  
or  
then add  
Bass Drone  
The Continuous Drone Accompaniment  
A 15th  
E 12th  
C 10th  
E 5th  
Harmonic E sounding an octave higher than written

## The Unsigned, Unclefed Chanter

Picture of Staff

Register of Chanter tones or notes  
Hard notes  
Soft or sweet  
G A B C D E F G A Roman Letters  
un in o ie a e i u di Pat Mor vocables, Sheantaireachd  
in in o o a ie i i i Old Style, Neil Gesto cantaireachd  
N. B.

The High and Low notes  
CALL 1 2 3 4 5  
ANSWER  
The first tune  
G and A  
G A  
may be  
5 4 3 2 1  
compared to octave notes

## Favourite Elements of Pipe Music

G A B D E  
A B D E G  
B D E G A

A B C# E F#  
B C# E F# A

A B D E F  
B D E F A  
D E F G A

G A B C D E G  
G A B D E G A  
A C D E F  
A C D E G

G A B C D E F G  
A B C D E F G A  
G A B C D E F G A

N. B. This term by some pipers seems to be a leaning, or natural feeling towards a kind of Major and Minor. "The Keel Row" may be termed Hard Major, and "Flowers of the Forest" softer Minor. (But "The Land of the Leal", hard, may yet be soft.) B C D may be flattened by raising one finger in Pibroch G sharpened.