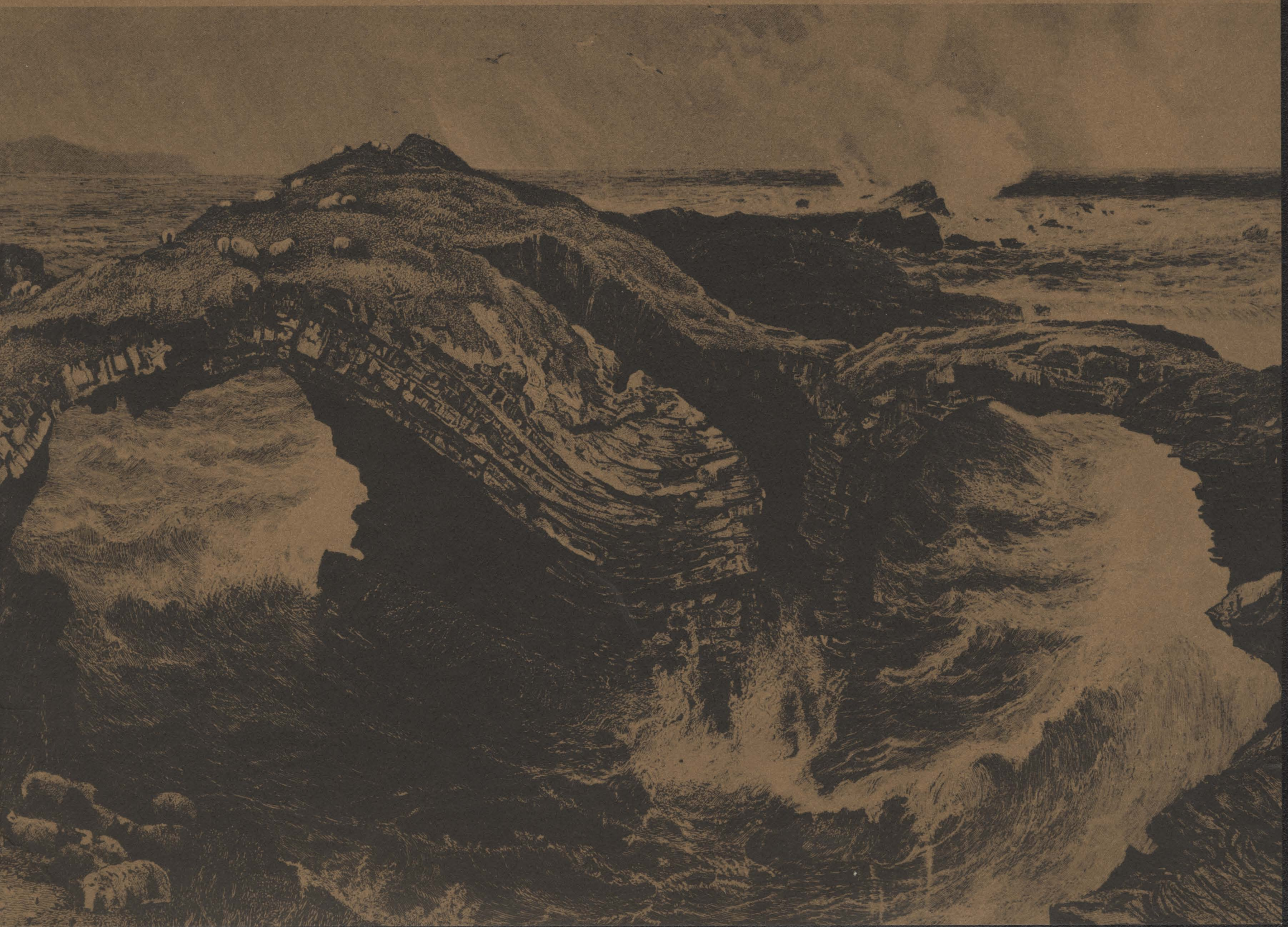


# SONGS AND PIPES OF THE HEBRIDES

Recorded and with Notes by Polly Hitchcock / Ethnic Folkways Library / Folkways Records FE 4430

Waulking Songs / Ossianci Chant / Mouth Music / Lullaby / Work Songs / Bagpipes / Lament / Emigrant's Song





Puir-A-Beul  
Hi-Ri-Hoireann O  
Duanag Na Ceardaich  
Craobh Nan Ubhal  
Ho-Re-A La Vo  
Caristrona  
Gu Mo Slan Do Na Hearish  
Ho Ho Vo Laidi Bheag  
Waulking

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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43 W. 61<sup>ST</sup> ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A.

# SONGS AND PIPES OF THE HEBRIDES



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# SONGS AND PIPES OF THE HEBRIDES

## FOREWORD BY HENRY COWELL

THE MUSIC OF THE PEOPLE OF THE HEBRIDEAN ISLANDS IS IN FOLK-TRADITIONAL STYLE, PRESERVED THROUGH LEARNING BY EAR, BUT LEARNED WITH GREATEST ACCURACY AS TO DETAIL, AS WELL AS IN GENERAL MANNER. CHORDS PLAY NO PART; ONLY MELODY, OFTEN SUNG SO AS TO FORM RHYTHMIC PATTERNS SUITABLE FOR WORKING OR DANCING. THE WALKING SONGS ARE SURPRISINGLY LIKE WEST CENTRAL AFRICAN RHYTHMIC SINGING BAND SONGS, EVEN TO THE VERSES SUNG BY ONE MAN AND ANSWERED BY A LINE FROM THE WHOLE GROUP. THE MODES ARE ALSO SIMILAR -- MODES OFTEN USING FIVE OR SIX TONES TO THE OCTAVE RATHER THAN SEVEN. THE MOST FAMILIAR FORM OF THE FIVE TONE (PENTATONIC) SCALE IN THE HEBRIDES IS IDENTICAL IN FORM WITH THAT OF CHINA -- D, E, G, A, C, D, WITH THE RISING C TO D FOR A FINAL CADENCE (SEE SIDE 1, BAND 1). MORE RECENT FOLK SONGS FROM MAINLAND SCOTLAND ARE APT TO USE THE MORE FAMILIAR FORM: C, D, E, G, A, C. THE RISING WHOLE TONE AT THE ENDING POINTS IS OF FAR OLDER ORIGIN.

THE OSSIANIC CHANT, OF IRISH ORIGIN, IS THE OLDEST FORM REPRESENTED ON THESE RECORDS, AND, INDEED, THE OLDEST FORM OF GAELIC MUSIC WHICH STILL LIVES. THERE ARE BUT FOUR TONES IN THE SCALE (IN FORM A, C, D, E), AND MANY WORDS ARE SPOKEN ON EACH TONE WITH RHYTHMICAL FREEDOM, SO THAT ANY PROSE TEXT MAY BE CHANTED TO THE SAME MELODIC OUTLINE. THIS IS THE STYLE OF THE EPIC BARDS (SIDE 1, BAND 2).

ALSO STEMMING FROM ANCIENT OR MEDIEVAL TIMES IS THE LULLABY (SIDE 2, BAND 3). WHILE THERE MAY BE FOUND A FEW VARIATIONS, THERE IS ONLY ONE MAIN OLD MELODY USED FOR LULLABIES IN GAELIC -- A MELODY COMMON TO THE WESTERN ISLES BOTH OF SCOTLAND AND IRELAND, AND ALTHOUGH THE PRECISE AGE IS UNKNOWN THE SCHOONTREE (MUSIC OF SLEEP) TUNE IS IN THE OLDEST FIVE-TONE FORM -- E, G, A, C, D, E, WITH A AND C THE POINTS OF REST. FROM ABOUT THE SAME EARLY PERIOD COME THE MELODY OF THE CAOINE (LAMENT; SIDE 2, BAND 1). AGAIN, THE SAME MELODIC FORM IS USED BY ALL THE GAELIC-SPEAKING PEOPLES, AND THIS SAME SONG IS SUNG FOR THE EXPRESSION OF PERSONAL GRIEF, OR AT A WAKE FOR THE DEAD, BY PROFESSIONAL WAILERS WHO ARE PAID TO SING IT. THE SIX-TONE SCALE FORM A, C, D, E, G, A, B IS USED.

MOUSE MUSIC (SIDE 1, BAND 3) IS FOR DANCING. IT IMITATES THE RHYTHM OF LILTING PIPES AND FIFES OR FIDDLES IN REELS AND JIGS. ALTHOUGH WIDELY USED DURING A PERIOD OF RELIGIOUS BAN-

NING OF DANCE INSTRUMENTS, IT HAS BEEN KNOWN SINCE THE 16TH CENTURY IN DISTRICTS WHERE INSTRUMENTS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN RARE.

SIDE 2, BAND 2 SHOWS A TYPE OF SONG INTRODUCED IN THE 19TH CENTURY, AND MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO MAINLAND MUSIC.

IN SIDE 2, BANDS 4 AND 5, ARE HEARD SOME FINE PIPING, WITH CLEARLY PLAYED GRACES (RAPID TONES) BETWEEN MAIN MELODY TONES. THE PIPES ARE THE SAME IN SCALE AS MAINLAND ONES -- DRONE TONES ON A, E, A AND A COMBINED DIATONIC MAJOR SCALE AND MIXOLYDIAN MODE ON A: G FLAT, A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#, A.

## INTRODUCTION AND NOTES ON THE RECORDINGS BY POLLY HITCHCOCK

THE LITTLE CHAIN OF BLEAK, ROCKY ISLANDS RISING OUT OF THE SEA SEVENTY MILES WEST OF SCOTLAND ARE CALLED THE OUTER ISLES OR THE OUTER HEBRIDES, IN CONTRAST TO THE MANY ISLANDS OF THIS SAME GROUP THAT LIE CLOSE TO THE COAST OF SCOTLAND. THIS REMNANT OF THE CELTIC CIVILIZATION HAS MANY INGREDIENTS BROUGHT BY PLUNDERERS OF OLD FROM SCANDINAVIA AND FROM THE PASSING SEA FARERS FROM IRELAND, SPAIN AND OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. THE NORSEMAN'S INFLUENCE ON LANGUAGE AND MUSIC IS VERY MARKED IN THE NORTHERN ISLANDS OF LEWIS AND HARRIS, WHICH ARE PREDOMINANTLY PROTESTANT. THE SOUTHERN ISLANDS OF BARRA AND THE UISTS ARE CATHOLIC, THEIR GROWTH HAVING BEEN INFLUENCED BY PROXIMITY TO IRELAND. WHATEVER EFFECT THESE VARIOUS INFLUENCES MAY HAVE HAD, THE ISLANDER TO-DAY IS A STAUNCH SCOTSMAN, PROUD AND INDEPENDENT, WHO SPEAKS ENGLISH BUT "HAS THE GALLIC" -- OR IN OTHER WORDS SPEAKS GAELIC WITH HIS OWN PEOPLE.

HARDSHIPS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER SEEMED TO HAVE PURSUED EACH GENERATION -- INVASIONS FROM THE NORTH, CATTLE RAIDERS FROM THE SOUTH, AND "EVICTI-ONS" DUE TO POLITICS ON THE MAINLAND TO THE EAST OF THEM WERE ALL PART OF THEIR GROWTH AND CHANGE. BUT ONE RELIABLY CONSTANT HARDSHIP WAS NATURE. AT THE MERCY OF OCEAN WINDS AND STORMS, THESE BLEAK, ROCKY ISLANDS SUPPORT LITTLE VEGETATION. HEATHER AND GORSE ABOUND, BUT IN THIS SHALLOW SOIL POTATOES AND OATS WERE THE ONLY CROPS. PEAT BOGS FURNISHED THE FUEL, AND ANIMAL LIFE CONSISTED OF CATTLE, SHEEP, CHICKENS, AND THE OCCASIONAL PONY.



IN THIS SELF-CONTAINED UNIT MUSIC PLAYED A TREMENDOUS PART. NOT ONLY WERE ALL THE DAILY CHORES, I.E. REAPING, MILKING, SPINNING, ETC., ACCOMPANIED BY SONG TO RELIEVE THE MONOTONY OF THEIR TASKS, BUT ENTERTAINMENT CONSISTED OF TELLING TALES OR SINGING THE HEROIC SONGS OR THE LAMENTS THAT WERE SUCH AN INTIMATE PART OF THEIR LIVES AND THEIR HISTORY. NO NEWSPAPERS, NO RADIOS, NO AMUSEMENTS, WITH THE RESULT THAT THEY WERE FORCED TO USE THEIR OWN IMAGINATION AND INGENUITY FOR PLEASURE.

ONE OF THE NEVER ENDING ACTIVITIES OF THE ISLAND WOMEN WAS THE MAKING OF WOOLEN CLOTH FOR BLANKETS AND CLOTHING. THIS INVOLVED MANY TIME-CONSUMING PROCESSES. AFTER A SHEARING, THE WOOL HAD TO BE WASHED, DYED, TEASED, CARDED, SPUN, WOVEN AND SHRUNK, AND EACH OF THESE OPERATIONS WAS PERFORMED BY HAND. THE LAST OPERATION, THE SHRINKING OF THE CLOTH, WAS A GAY SOCIAL OCCASION CALLED A "WAULKING" AND USED TO OCCUR AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK. TODAY IT IS LESS OFTEN. A LONG TABLE IS SET UP AND THE HEAVY WET CLOTH IS SPREAD OR LAID DOWN ONE SIDE ROUND THE END AND UP TO THE OTHER SIDE. THERE ARE ANYWHERE FROM FIVE TO TEN WOMEN SITTING DOWN EITHER SIDE OF THE TABLE. THE THUMPING BEGINS AND THEY SWING TO THE RIGHT PICKING UP THE CLOTH, THEN SWING TO THE LEFT PASSING THEIR PORTION ON TO THEIR NEIGHBOR WITH ANOTHER THUMP ON THE TABLE. THE CLOTH IS KEPT IN CONSTANT CIRCULATION, THE MOISTURE GRADUALLY BEING BEATEN OUT OF IT. THE RHYTHM OF THE WORKERS IS STEADILY MAINTAINED BY SINGING. A LEADER SINGS A LINE, THEN EVERYONE COMES IN WITH A REFRAIN LINE WHICH IS USUALLY A SYLLABLE CHORUS. THE MUSICAL PHRASE ITSELF IS SHORT AND SIMPLE. SOMETIMES THEY HAVE TWO DIFFERENT CHORUS LINES WHICH THEY ALTERNATE. ONE SONG MAY GO ON FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES, THEN THERE WILL BE A PAUSE AND THE CLOTH IS MEASURED. SEVEN TIMES THE LENGTH OF THE MIDDLE FINGER IS THE DESIRED WIDTH AND MAY TAKE AN HOUR AND A HALF OF SONGS AND LABOR TO ACHIEVE, WITH AN OCCASIONAL REISOAKING OF THE CLOTH. AFTER A FINAL TAPPING SONG WHEN THE CLOTH HAS AT LAST BEEN FOLDED AND PILED ON THE TABLE A PARTY FOLLOWS AND THE MEN AND CHILDREN WHO WATCH ON THE SIDE LINES JOIN IN FOR THE FOOD AND DANCE THAT FOLLOWS.

THE PEOPLE OF THE HEBRIDES SET THEIR RHYTHMIC PATTERN BY THE WORK THAT IS BEING DONE, ADDING INTERESTING SYNCOPATIONS TO EMBELLISH THE AIR OR INTERRUPT MONOTONOUS REPETITION. HARMONY AS A MUSICAL ELEMENT WITH GREAT POSSIBILITIES IS IGNORED. THEY PREFER UNADULTERATED MELODY, AND THROUGH THIS PREFERENCE HAVE ACHIEVED AN INFINITE VARIETY OF BEAUTIFUL SONGS BASED ON THE PENTATONIC SCALE AND MINOR MODES WITH CURIOUSLY INTERESTING CADENCES. THE FORM IS ALWAYS THE SAME WHETHER IT IS A COMPOSITION OF GREATER OR LESSER SCOPE. THERE IS A VERSE LINE AND AN ANSWERING CHORUS LINE IN WHICH ALL JOIN.

PUIRT-A-BEUL, OR MOUTH MUSIC WAS IN REALITY DANCE MUSIC. IT WAS BORN AS A RESULT OF THE BANNING OF THE PIPES FOLLOWING THE '45 REBELLION AND BECAME AN ART OF EXPEDIENCY WHEN CALVINISM HELD SWAY AND ALL FORMS OF MUSIC AND PLEASURE WERE CONSIDERED SINFUL AND VIOLINS, HARPS, ETC. WERE BURNED. BUT THE LOVE OF MUSIC AND DANCING WAS SUCH THAT THOSE WHO COULD SING INVENTED WORDS OR SUNG SYLLABLES TO THE FAMILIAR DANCE RHYTHMS, WITH AN EASE AND SMOOTHNESS OF SHIFTING RHYTHMS THAT STEMS PARTLY FROM THE

LANGUAGE ITSELF AND PARTLY FROM THE HABIT OF OCCUPATIONAL RHYTHMS.

INSTRUMENTS TOO HAVE PLAYED A PART IN THE MUSICAL LIFE OF THE PEOPLE. THE BAGPIPES HAVE ALWAYS "BE-LONGED" TO SCOTLAND. PIPING FLOURISHED UP TO 1745 WHEN THE BATTLE OF CULLODEN PUT AN END TO THE CLAN SYSTEM. BUT UP TO THIS TIME CLAN CHIEFS HAD THEIR PIPERS, WHOSE FUNCTION WAS COMPARABLE TO THAT OF THE COURT MUSICIANS ON THE CONTINENT. DURING THIS PERIOD THERE WAS VIGOROUS RIVALRY AND EXCITING COMPETITIONS. DURING THE PAST 200 YEARS, HOWEVER, THE DÊME DECLINE OF THE CLAN SPIRIT, COMPOSITION FOR THE PIPES HAS STEADILY WANED.

HI-RI-HOIREANN O: WAULKING SONG. SUNG BY JOHN MACLEOD.

THA MULAD THA MULAD THA LIUNN DUBH ORM FHEIN.  
CHORUS (1): HI RI HOIREANN O, HI RI HOIREANN O.

GUR TRUIME MO CHRIDHE NO FIDHEAL GUN GHLEUS.  
CHORUS (2): HIRI RI RI O HO RO HO I HOIREANN O.

CHA INNSEN DO-M' PHUITHAR MID MO CHUMBA AS DO DHEIDH.  
CHORUS (1): HI RI HOIREANN O, HI RI HOIREANN O.

NO DHAN' MHATHAIR A RUG MI, CHUIR MI CUDAM NA CEUM.  
CHORUS (2): HIRI RI RI O HO RO HO I HOIREANN O.

A MHAIRHEAD NAN CUIREAD'S DAN A CHUIR THU ORM BREUG. (CHORUS (1))

THUIRT THU RIUMBA LE URRADH NACH B'FHUILEAR DHOMH'M BRAID. (CHORUS (2))

GU BHEIL LEANABH M PASGADH BHO ASNA MO CHLEIBH.  
(CHORUS (1))

CUMA NACH INNSEADH TU AN FHEIRINN CHO CINNTEACH RIUM FHEIN. (CHORUS (2))

AN A LARACH ANTIGHEARNA FOR NACH BITHINN'S TU FHEIN? (CHORUS (1))

CHUIR THU ORMSA MAR AITHLIS GU ROBH M' ATHAIR FO EI. (CHORUS (2))

CHA B'LUNNAN DHA M'ATHAIS'S DHA T'ATHAIR SA, EISG. (CHORUS (1))

CHA B'LUNNAN DHA'N TAIGHEAN'N AM LAIGHE NA GREIN.  
CHORUS (2)

'S ANN A GHEOBHTA 'N TOIGH T'ATHAR CINN'S CNATHAN AN EISG. (CHORUS (1))

'S ANN A GHEOBHTA N TOIGH M'ATHAR CINN'S SABAN AN RHEIDH. (CHORUS (2))

CHUNNA MIS 'AN T-OG UASAL BEACHAD BUAB AN SEO AN DE. (CHORUS (1))

DOL A CHOIMHEAD NA GRUAGAICH LEIS AM BUANNAICH THU SPREIDH. (CHORUS (2))

MA'N TACA SA AN UIRIDH BU LEUM T'FHURAIN ROMH CHEUD. (CHORUS (1))

CHA MHUTH'ORT MI 'MBLAIDHNA NA IANLAITH NAN SPEUR. (CHORUS (2))



#### TRANSLATION

THERE IS SADNESS, SADNESS  
THERE IS A BLACK VEIL  
[O.F. OF DESPAIR] ON ME  
MY HEART IS HEAVIER THAN A  
VIOLIN OUT OF TUNE.

I WOULD NOT TELL MY SISTER  
HOW GREAT MY LAMENT FOR YOU.  
NOR THE MOTHER WHO BORE ME  
AND WHOSE STEPS I MADE HEAVY.

OH, MARGARET OF THE WILES  
YOU WERE QUICK TO TELL A  
LIE ABOUT ME. YOU TOLD ME AS  
A CERTAINTY THAT I NEEDED  
THE BRAID.\* THAT A CHILD LAY  
WITHIN ME. WHY NOT SPEAK TRUTH  
AS I DO? IN GOD'S PRESENCE  
YOU CAST AS A SLUR THAT MY  
FATHER WAS IN WANT BUT HE  
WAS UNLIKE YOURS 'ISH!

THEIR HOUSES WERE NOT ALIKE  
AT SUNSET.

IN YOURS WERE FOUND THE HEADS  
AND BONES OF FISH, IN MINE OF  
STAGS. I SAW A YOUNG NOBLE  
PASS HERE YESTERDAY ON HIS  
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LAST YEAR I HAD YOUR WELCOME  
BEFORE HUNDREDS. THIS YEAR  
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\*THE BRAID REFERRED TO WAS THE  
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DUANAG NA CEARDAICH: OSSIANIC CHANT. SUNG BY  
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PRODUCTION DIRECTOR - MOSES ASCH

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