

Pipe Major John A. MacLellan, MBE

Folkways Records FW 8814

# SCOTTISH BAGPIPE MUSIC



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1967

MUSIC LP



Folkways Records FW 8814

SIDE I

- Band 1: I HAE' A WIFE O' MY AIN-BROSE AND BUTTER-THE  
DAGSHAI HILLS (trad.) 1:35  
Band 2: CABAR FEIDH THE PIPER'S BONNET (trad. strathspeys)  
CABAR FEIDH (reel) - THE SMITH OF CHILLICHASSIE (reel) 3:27  
Band 3: LAMENT FOR COLIN ROY MacKENZIE (piobaireachd) 14:45

SIDE II

- Band 1: THE PAP OF GLENCOE (march) - MAGGIE CAMERON (strathspey)-  
JOHN MacDONALD'S REEL 3:16  
Band 2: THE PLAINS OF NORMANDY (slow air) - THE SMITH'S OLD WIFE (jig) -  
A DRAW BEFORE YOU GO (jig) 3:35  
Band 3: LEAVING LUNGA (march) - ABERCAIRNEY HIGHLANDERS (March)-  
ARTHUR BIGNOLD OF LOCHROSQUE (march) 5:00  
Band 4: SEANN TRUIBHAS (dance air) - THE HAUGHS OF CROMDALE (march) -  
GLENGARRY'S MARCH 3:20  
Band 5: A CORONACH FOR JOHN F. KENNEDY 1:27  
Band 6: THE WHITE COCKADE (march) - SCOTLAND'S WELCOME TO THE  
KING OF NORWAY (march) - THE BRAES OF TULBYMET (strathspey)-  
THE REEL OF TULLOCH 3:12  
Band 7: FAREWELL TO THE CREEKS (march) - CAPTAIN OLDFIELD'S  
WELCOME TO KIBRAVOCK (march) 3:00

# SCOTTISH BAGPIPE MUSIC

Pipe Major John A. MacLellan, MBE

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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# Scottish Bagpipe Music

played by Pipe Major John A. MacLellan, M.B.E.

Notes on the recordings and introduction by Henry Cowell and Pipe Major John A. MacLellan, M. B. E.

Bagpipes, thought to have originated in India, are used, from India and Persia, through all the middle- and near-eastern countries and have at one time or another been used by all countries of Europe, under such different names as Musette in France, Dudle-back in Germany and Gaita in Spain. It is only in Scotland and Ireland, however, that the pipes became a serious instrument of warriors, and were developed to sound at maximum intensity with two to three drones (sustained tones) and a chanter (melody-playing pipe). It was in Scotland, also, that pipers invented for their instrument the only classical form in the Western World which does not fall into the conventional musical tradition of the Western World—namely, the piobaireachd, which is most carefully constructed. The Scottish warpipe is tuned with the drones on A, E, and A; the scale of the chanter (low to high) is G natural, A, B, C#, D, E, F#, A.

It is only in modern times that the bagpipe, originally a solo instrument, has been incorporated into bands with drum accompaniment. In the 17th and early 18th centuries, Scottish pipers led the clans into battle, and skirled the songs of victory and the dirges of defeat. It was the piper who celebrated births and marriages and composed laments on the deaths of the clan chieftains. This classical music for the pipes — or piobaireachd (pronounced "peebroch") — has come down through the years as unwritten melody, freely flowing, and subject to the personal interpretation of each performer. This music was handed from piper to piper even through the dark days after "The '45," when piping, like wearing the tartan, was subject to the death penalty. The piobaireachd is in the form of theme and variations, each successive variation requiring more intricate fingering. It is the amazingly rapid succession of grace notes (so-called "shakes") on almost every melody note that gives pipe music its distinctive and curious flavor. With the revival of piping in the early 19th century, and the formation of pipe bands in the Scottish regiments, there was added to the piping repertoire a variety of popular marches, military retreat airs, and Gaelic folk songs.

In these recordings a representative selection of all types of this typically Scottish music is played by one of Scotland's foremost pipers. Pipe Major

John A. MacLellan, of the Seaforth Highlanders, was associated with the Army School of Piping at Edinburgh.

## Notes on the Great Highland Bagpipe and Its Music

The Great Highland bagpipe takes its place as the major instrument in the bagpipe family, which encompasses bagpipes from Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, Brittany, India, Russia, and Hungary. All stem from the same source, that of the ancient reed pipe without wind-bag or any type of accompanying drone; these refinements have been added throughout the ages, thus evolving the instruments that are found in the various parts of the world today.

The Great Highland bagpipe developed to its present form in the mid-18th century when the large bass drone was added to the bagpipe that had already come to consist of bag, blowpipe, two tenor drones, and a chanter. The bag, which is the performer's reservoir of air, is usually made from a tanned sheepskin, but in hotter climates better results are derived from a cowhide or horsehide bag as they are less porous. The pipe bag is enclosed in a tartan cover, and the drones are held together by a tasseled cord. The performer places the bag under his left arm and the drones are carried over the left shoulder. Playing the bagpipe should place no strain on the performer, for, indeed, the bag and drones should be so fitted that the performer is perfectly at ease while playing. African blackwood is normally used for the wooden components, which are adorned with ferrules and mounts of ivory and silver. Although the less expensive instruments are now adorned with plastic fittings, the ferrules have the utility of preventing the wood from splitting. Reeds are made from Spanish cane which must be of the very best quality to obtain the best results.

The bagpipe has always functioned largely in Scottish Highland circles, and it can be traced to the very earliest days. The MacCrimmon family, pipers to the MacLeods of Dunvegan, are given most of the credit for popularizing and developing the Highland bagpipe and its music in the latter half of the 16th century. The MacCrimmons established a college on the island of Skye which is off the Northwest of Scotland, and to this college the various Clan Chiefs sent their best pipers to be perfected in the art of piping. Throughout the ages since 1600, MacArthurs, Rankines, Mackays of Gairloch and of Raasay, Camerons, MacPhersons, and Mackenzies are families who have done much to ensure that for present times the great heritage of piping handed on by them still flourishes.

The music played on the Great Highland bagpipe can be divided into three distinct groups. (1)



Piobaireachd (pronounced peebroch), the classical music of the Highland bagpipe, and of which group "The Lament for Colin Roy MacKenzie" is an admirable example. It shows the urlar (oorlar), meaning groundwork, which contains the theme of the piece, and various types of variations developed from the theme. These variations begin in a simple form, and as they are developed they become more complicated as the taorluath (tor-loo-a), crunluath (croon-loo-a), and crunluath-a-mach (croon-loo-a a mach) are played. The urlar demands from the performer much musical skill as well as fine finger work which becomes more difficult as these variations progress. Thirteen or fourteen minutes is the average time taken to perform a piobaireachd, which is music played on, and especially composed for, the Great Highland bagpipe. (2) Much folk-type music is played on the Highland bagpipe and will include dance tunes, folk airs, and melodies, as well as lighter marching music. Much of this type of lighter music is found to have its roots in the song airs of Lowland as well as Highland Scotland, and much of it has been adapted to the bagpipe. (3) A third type of music is called competition music, encompassing marches, strathspeys, and reels of an elaborate nature; technically difficult to finger, and requiring a high order of musical presentation. This music has the common bond with piobaireachd that it is especially composed by pipers for performance on the Great Highland bagpipe. Examples of all these types of bagpipe music are played on this record.

The musical scale of the Highland bagpipe has, like its music, roots in the folk music, particularly that of the Highland peoples; it is particularly peculiar to this idiom and to no other. The chanter has a compass of nine notes upward from treble G to A above the staff; the keynote is A pitched at 456 VPS. The intervals between the notes are not of equal temperament; those between C and D and between F and G are considerably more than a semi-tone, and the other intervals fall roughly in line with that of the tone interval. The accompanying drone harmony derives from the bass drone, sounding A in the bass clef, and also from the two tenor drones that sound middle A. The complete compass is shown in the following illustration.



These drones must be finely tuned together to give a completely blended note which in turn must at all times be completely in unison with the keynote A on the chanter. The instrument played on this record affords an excellent example of a well-balanced and finely tuned pipe, and shows to full advantage the best qualities of the Great Highland bagpipe.



#### Biographical Notes

##### Pipe Major John A. MacLellan, M.B.E.

Pipe Major John A. MacLellan was born in 1921, is a regular soldier with the British Army and serves with the regiment the "Queen's Own Highlanders." He is the Principal of the Army School of Piping at Edinburgh Castle.

He began to learn the music of his beloved bagpipe at the age of seven in the highlands of Scotland,



and like most pipers, his initial instruction was from his father. He soon came under the tuition of the great masters and attended under the great maestro Pipe Major Willie Ross, M. B. E. at the Army School, and later had instruction from the great piobaireachd player and tutor, Pipe Major John MacDonald, M. B. E.

Starting competitive piping in 1946, having been in the Army for ten years and appointed Pipe Major when only aged nineteen, MacLellan quickly became a contender for the leading honors, and his record in this field shows that he is a master of the art. He has won all the major prizes and is the holder of both the Highland Society of London's Gold Medals awarded for piobaireachd playing. He is the only piper ever to achieve the distinction of winning both the Masters' March Strathspey and Reel competitions and both Senior Piobaireachd events at the two major competitions in one year; this was achieved in 1958 at the Argyllshire Gathering and the Northern Meeting.

The post of Principal of the Army School of Piping is recognized as the most important post in piping, and since succeeding his own tutor in 1959, John MacLellan has been able to give much guidance and advice in all aspects of piping. In 1963 he was awarded the M. B. E. for his services in this connection.

#### Record Notes

##### SIDE I, Band 1

I Hae' a Wife o' My Ain  
Brose and Butter  
The Dagshai Hills

A group of tunes in 9/8 time. The first two are used by Scottish battalions of the British Army as duty tunes. "Brose and Butter" is a traditional tune used to signify that meals are ready.

##### SIDE I, Band 2

Cabar Feidh (Strathspey, Arr. J. A. MacLellan)  
The Piper's Bonnet  
The Smith of Chilliechassie (Reel, Arr.  
J. A. MacLellan)

A group of strathspeys and reels, of the competition type of music. "Cabar Feidh" means "deer's horns," and it is a tune that can be played as a march as well as a strathspey, reel, or jig.

##### SIDE I, Band 3

Lament for Colin Roy MacKenzie

Nothing is known about the history of this tune except that in 1840 Angus Mackay (celebrated piper to Queen Victoria) composed the variations that are used at the present time. It is an excellent example of piobaireachd and a great favorite of Pipe Major MacLellan.

##### SIDE II, Band 1

The Pap of Glencoe (March, W. Lawrie)  
Maggie Cameron (Strathspey)  
John MacDonald's Reel (Reel, Center)

A typical group of the heavier type of tunes. The march by W. Lawrie is a great favorite among pipers, and is a fine example of this music.

##### SIDE II, Band 2

The Plains of Normandy (Slow Air, J. A. MacLellan)  
The Smith's Old Wife (Jig, Arr. J. A. MacLellan)  
A Dram Before You Go (Jig, Arr. J. A. MacLellan)

This slow air was composed by the performer in 1944 as a tribute to all who fell in the Normandy battles. The two jigs are traditional old-type Highland jigs with two extra parts added to each by the performer.

##### SIDE II, Band 3

Leaving Lunga (March, Arr. W. Ross)  
Abercairney Highlanders (March, Arr. W. Ross)  
Arthur Bignold of Lochrosque (March, Arr.  
W. Ross)

Together with piobaireachd this is true bagpipe music especially composed for the bagpipe; however the "Abercairney Highlanders" is an example of arranging a traditional air in this form. These marches demand a great deal of skill and expression for a good performance, and are great favorites of the performer.

##### SIDE II, Band 4

Seann Truibhais (Dance Air, Arr. R. Reid)  
The Haughs of Cromdale (March)  
Glengarry's March (March)

This is a group taken from the lighter music which is traditional in Scotland, and is developed from the many song airs of centuries ago which are played on many instruments (violin and accordion for example as well as the bagpipes).

##### SIDE II, Band 5

A Coronach for John F. Kennedy (J. A. MacLellan)

This coronach, which means "lament," was composed in memory of the late President of the U. S. A. especially for a tattoo in Germany when the 1st Bn. Black Watch (RHR), who played at President Kennedy's funeral, and the 2nd Bn. Black Watch of Canada played the coronach.

##### SIDE II, Band 6

The White Cockade (March)  
Scotland's Welcome to the King of Norway  
(March, J. A. MacLellan)



The Braes of Tullymet (Strathspey)  
The Reel of Tulloch (Reel, Arr. R. Reid)

Another group of the light lilting music of Scotland. "Scotland's Welcome to the King of Norway" was composed by the performer in 1962 in this vein to commemorate a state visit. The "Braes of Tullymet" and the "Reel of Tulloch" are excellent examples of music for the dance.

#### SIDE II, Band 7

Farewell to the Creeks (March, Robertson)  
Captain Oldfield's Welcome to Kilravock (March)

Typical marching tunes in 6/8 time are probably the best type of bagpipe music to march to. The crotchet quaver beat creates a fine lilting rhythm.

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