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
THE MUSIC OF THE PEOPLE OF THE HEBRIDIAN 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 WAILING SONGS ARE SURPRISINGLY LIKE WEST CENTRAL AFRICAN RHYTHMIC SINGING BAND SONGS, EVEN TO THE VERSES SUNG BY ONE MAN AND ANSWERED PATTERNS SUITABLE FOR WORKING OR DANCING. THE MUSIC OF THE EPIC BARDS (SIDE 1, BAND 2) AGAIN, THE SAME TONE AT THE ENDING POINTS IS OF FAR OLDER ORIGIN.

THE OBESIAN 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 AGCEDE), 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 BANDS (SIDE 1, BAND 2).


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

PEUIT-A-BEUL, or mouth music was in reality dance music. It was born as a result of the banning of the pipes following 1645 rebellion and became an art of expediency when Calvinism held sway and all forms of music and pleasure were considered sinful and violation, 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 'belonged' 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 decline of the clan spirit, composition for the pipes has steadily waned.

Hi-Ri-Hoireann O: WaULKING SONG. Sung by JOHN MACLEOD.

Tha Mhulad Tha Mhulad Tha Liunna Dubh Orm Fein.
Chorus (1): Hi ri hoireann O, hi ri hoireann O.

Sur Thuidh Mo Chridhe No Fidheal Gun Chleub.
Chorus (2): Hiri ri ri o ho ro ho i hoireann O.

Chuinnse Do-Mh Phuithar Mod Mo Chumra As Do Dheidh.
Chorus (1): Hiri ri hoireann O, hi ri hoireann O.

No Dhan Mhathair a Rug Mio, Chuir Mi Cuidam Na Ceum.
Chorus (2): Hiri ri ri o ho ro ho i hoireann O.

A Mhairheadhan Guiread's Dan A Chuir Thu Orm Breug.
Chorus (1).

Thuir THU Riumba LE URRADH Nach B9Muleilar Dhom'O: BraId.
Chorus (2).

Gu Beil Leabhadh M Pasadadh Bho Asna Mo Chleibh.
Chorus (1).

Cuma Nach Innesadh Tu an Fheirinn Cho Ginn Each Riam Fhein.
Chorus (2).

A N LARACH ANTIGHEARNA FOR NACH Bithinn's Tu Fhein?
Chorus (1).

Chuir Thu ORU$ MAR AITHLIS GU ROBH M'ATHAIR FOR E1.
Chorus (2).

Chu B'nunnach Dha M'Mathair's Dha T'athair Ba, Eib.
Chorus (1).

Chu B'nunnach Dha'n Tighemain'n an Laigh Na Grein.
Chorus (2).

'Is Ann a Gheobhta 'n Toigh T'athair Cinn's Gathan an Eib.
Chorus (1).

'Is Ann a Gheobhta 'n Toigh M'Mathair Cinn's Sabhan an Rheidh.
Chorus (2).

Chunna Mis 'an Tog Uabal Beachad Sual an Beo an De.
Chorus (1).

Dol a Choimheadh Na Grusagail Ghel Am Buanaich Thu Breidh.
Chorus (2).

Ma'n Taca Sa an Uirdh Bu Leum T'mhurain Rohm Cheud.
Chorus (1).

Chu B'th'ort M's Bileadhna Na Iainlaith Nan Speur.
Chorus (2).
THE Braid REFERRED TO WAS THE MARK OF A MARRIED WOMAN.

DUANAG NA CEARDAICH: OBSTINATE CHANT. SUNG BY MRS. ARCHIE MACDONALD. A BAND OF FINGALIAN WARRIORS ARE OUT HUNTING AND MEET WITH A MAN DRESSED AS A BLACKSMITH WHO THEY FOLLOW TO HIS SMITHY. HERE TWELVE POWERFUL SMITHIES APPEAR AND A TERRIFIC BATTLE AND SLAUGHTER ENSUES WITH THE WARRIORS BEING VICTORIOUS.

PUIRT-A-BEUL: MOUTH MUSIC. SUNG BY JOHN MACLEOD AND JOHN MACINNES. MOUTH MUSIC, AS THIS IS CALLED, WAS USED FOR DANCING DURING THE PERIOD WHEN INSTRUMENTS WERE BANNED FOR RELIGIOUS REASONS.

CRAOIBH NAN UBHAL: THE APPLE TREE. SUNG BY REINA MACLEAN.

HI-RI-RI-O. SUNG BY MRS. ARCHIE MACDONALD. THIS IS A TRADITIONAL SONG IN WHICH A BARDESS FROM BARRA TRADES INSULTS WITH A BARDESS OF SOUTH UIST. BOTH ARE APPARENTLY IN EXILE: THE BARRA WOMAN WISHES THAT MACDONALD CLAIRONALD OF SOUTH UIST WAS UNDER THE WAVES, HIS LADY THE DRUDGE OF A FARM SERVANT AND HIS HEIR BAKING BREAD AT MACNEILL'S COMMAND. THE BARDESS FROM SOUTH UIST THEN HASTENS TO SAY: "KEEP QUIET, YOU OLD HAG, I TOO HAVE A TONGUE IN MY HEAD", AND SHE TELLS HOW HER CHIEF'S SON IS AT THE HEAD OF A BAND OF SOLDIERS AND DESCRIBES THE LIFE AND GLORIES OF THE LORDLY HOME OF MACDONALD.
TRANSLATION

THEY ARE 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 WAS IN WASTE, BUT HE WAS UNLIKE YOURS!

THEIR HOUSES WERE NOT ALIKE AT SUNSET.

IN YOURS WERE FOUND THE HEADS AND BONES OF FISH, IN MINE OF STAGE, I SAW A YOUNG NOBLE PASS HERE YESTERDAY ON HIS WAY TO VISIT THE MAID, ALONG WITH WHOM HE WILL GAIN CATTLE.

LAST YEAR I HAD YOUR WELCOME BEFORE HUNDREDS, THIS YEAR YOU CARE FOR ME LESS THAN THE BIRDS OF THE AIR.

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