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Concerto Caledonia directed by David McGuinness

Tracks 1, 3, 5, 7-8, 10-11, 13, 19

Mhairi Lawson | Soprano
Jamie MacDougall | Tenor
Lucy Russell, Sarah Bevan-Baker | Violins
Katherine McGillivray | Viola, Viola d'amore (19)

Alison McGillivray | Cello

David McGuinness | Harpsichord

Tracks 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14-17

David Greenberg | Violin
Sarah Bevan-Baker | Violin
Steve Player | Guitar
Dominic O'Dell | Cello
David McGuinness | Harpsichord

Recorded in Crichton Collegiate Church, Midlothian Produced by Paul Baxter & David McGuinness 2016 Edit: David McGuinness 2016 Mastering: Stuart Hamilton at Castlesound Design: Ewan MacPherson at Quiet Design

Recorded by Tony Kime, 25-26 January 2003

Recorded by Delphian, 27 October 2002

It's been fascinating to return to this rather random collection of 18th-century Scottish music, thirteen years after recording it. The album was compiled from two sets of recording sessions: one for the songs with Mhairi & Jamie, and another for the instrumental music with David Greenberg. The instrumental tracks that don't appear here found their way onto our *Spring Any Day* Now album.

DG and I had spent a few days at his place in Halifax, Nova Scotia playing through a huge pile of photocopies of old books that both of us had amassed over the years. Soon, we had enough repertoire to keep us going for a few years more.

For this reissue I went back to the session takes, fixed up a few edits, and had the whole thing remastered beautifully so that it's a more inviting listen over its considerable length. One reason to be glad that the CD era is over is that we don't feel the need to make albums 70 minutes long any more. What were we thinking?

The other joy of revisiting the tapes is that most of the spaces between takes are filled up with laughing or messing around. One moment that I was tempted to include on the album was at the end of *Now Westling Winds*, where Mhairi had just improvised a particularly delicious chromatic line around Urbani's original. The silence at the end of the take was broken all too soon by Katherine McGillivray's voice: "That's very silly."

David McGuinness, 2016



Maybe it's a surprise that the first song in a collection of music from 18th-century Scotland isn't about lads and lassies tripping on the green, or for that matter about a Young Pretender. No homespun tartanry here: it's a song written in the voice of a Senegalese man sent into slavery in Virginia.

But then **Robert Burns** was no ordinary collector and writer of songs, and his consciousness of human rights also gave us *A man's a man for a' that.* He didn't admit to writing the words of *The Slaves Lament* himself, but we can be sure that it was he, as the book's *de facto* editor, who included it in James Johnson's songbook *The Scots Musical Museum*.

The *Museum* took up much of Burns's creative energy for the last decade of his life: his only other major work of the period is *Tam O'Shanter*. He chose and edited the texts, and in many cases identified the tunes to go with them, and these tunes were then given basses by the Edinburgh organist **Stephen Clarke**. Much of the music was taken from other books, and the settings were kept as simple as possible. In fact, the title-page of later editions proudly proclaims that the songs are 'unincumbered with useless accompaniments & graces'. A few weeks before he died in 1796, Burns wrote to Johnson: 'I will venture to prophesy, that to future ages your Publication will be the text book & standard of Scotish Song & Music.'

Roughly contemporary with Burns's and Johnson's efforts in Edinburgh, the Thompson family of music publishers in London were hard at work on a volume called **The Caledonian Muse**. Although their names appear nowhere in the volume, the address of their warehouse on the title-page makes it very clear whose production it was. It was one of the first printed collections of tunes to purposefully include both Highland and Lowland music, and they prefaced the book with a long and learned essay on the history of Scottish music, from Greek antiquity onwards, mostly taken from John Ramsay of Ochtertyre.

In the 1780s the Thompsons still had in print their editions of tune books from four decades earlier by Edinburgh's William McGibbon, James Oswald and, from Dublin, **Burk Thumoth**. Thumoth was a flute player and trumpeter, and his books of Irish Airs are amongst the first printed sources of Irish traditional music. With the Irish material he printed Scots tunes in his first book, and English tunes in the second.

Also in Dublin in the middle of the century was **Francesco Geminiani**, whose unashamedly ornate arrangement of *The Broom of Cowdenknows* and *Bonny Christy* appears in one of the more misleadingly-titled books from music history, *A Treatise of Good Taste in the Art of Musick*. The ton weight of Italianate decoration may not always seem like good taste to us, but sometimes there is a place for useless accompaniments and graces.

Pietro Urbani's arrangements of songs by Burns and others are more subtle, but these also do more than simply present the songs: like the settings of Domenico Corri, Urbani's fellow Italian in Edinburgh, they're a record of his own singing style. Urbani's arrangements are sophisticated, but charmingly simple in effect, and he usually reserves the 'useless graces' for a characteristic pause near the end of each verse, allowing him to briefly show off his vocal technique. If he were alive today his books would no doubt form the basis of an album called *Pietro Urbani sings the Songs of Robert Burns* (note which name would come first - some things never change).

James Johnson let Urbani borrow freely from Burns's texts prior to their publication in the *Museum*, and Burns enjoyed Urbani's singing very much, but was less enamoured of his ambition. Nonetheless, in the case of *The Red Red Rose*, Burns passed on the words himself, as Urbani points out:

The words of the **Red Red Rose**, were obligingly given to [the author] by a celebrated Scots Poet, who was so struck with them when sung by a country girl, that he wrote them down, and, not being pleased with the Air, begged the Author to set them to Music in the stile of a Scots Tune, which he has done accordingly.

Burns's own version of events is slightly different. He had already failed to find an appropriate tune for the song in the luxury edition being prepared by George Thomson, with arrangements by, amongst others, Haydn and Beethoven, and he was growing tired of Urbani's eagerness to collaborate.

I ... gave him a simple old Scots song which I had pickt up in this country, which he had promised to set in a suitable manner. I would not even have given him this, had there been any of Mr Thomson's airs, *suitable to it*, unoccupied.

Urbani's tune, lovely as it is, never caught on; but then neither did the Niel Gow tune chosen by Burns himself. The one picked by Thomson a few years later fared no better; in fact, it wasn't until the 1820s that the song's popularity took hold when the celebrated precentor of St George's, Edinburgh, R.A. Smith, published it to yet another tune. As might be guessed from the title: **The** rather than **A** *red red rose*, Urbani's publication preserves an earlier version of Burns's text from the one now known, which appeared posthumously in volume 5 of the *Museum*.

Urbani was only too eager to trade on his association with the ploughman from Ayrshire who was the talk of Edinburgh, and his boasting of their 'collaboration' was too much for Burns, who cut off all communication with him in 1794. By the following year, Urbani was beginning to fall out of favour in Edinburgh generally. Even so, in his third book, he still couldn't help himself from using Burns's words, although they'd been written many years before when Burns was a teenager:

there is only one Song inserted which is not Scots viz. Now westling winds, sett to Music by the Author (The words of which are by the Celebrated Burns) which he hopes will not be unacceptable to the public.

But customers were now proving more difficult to find:

N.B. It is requested, that those Ladies and Gentlemen who wished to continue their Subscriptions and have neglected to send in their names, will send to No. 10 Princes Street where the Subscriptions for the fourth Volume is going on.

Urbani's glory days as a singer at St Cecilia's Hall were now behind him, and he settled into the music business as a publisher, before losing a lot of money presenting Handel oratorios, and leaving for Dublin. Perhaps his unfortunate personal manner got in the way of his talent, but his arrangement of *Cauld Kail in Aberdeen* is an object lesson in how to set a tune without depriving it of its energy.

Far more successful at the music publishing game was **Robert Bremner**, who moved his operation from Edinburgh to London in 1762. His work was always marked by a sureness of touch, and his early book of fiddle variations, from which *Old Sir Symon the King* comes, is no exception. Although the book is supposedly of 'Scots tunes', this particular one is based largely on the setting in John Playford's 1684 London book *The Division Violin*. The tune also appeared as *Old Simon the King* in a harpsichord version probably by Purcell, in *The Second part of Musick's Handmaid* in 1689.

Bremner's 1750s collection of *Thirty Scots Songs* was successful enough for the Edinburgh publisher and dancing master **Neil Stewart** to produce his own version some time later, with different songs but an almost identical titlepage, even down to mis-spelling the poet Allan Ramsay's name. The story goes that when Lady Anne Lindsay of Balcarres was putting the finishing touches to the ballad *Auld Robin Gray*, the catalogue of disasters that befall the heroine's family in the third verse was still too short by one. Her nine-year-old sister Elizabeth piped up: 'Steal the cow, sister Annie'.

Bremner would have been encouraged to leave Edinburgh for London by the example, 20 years earlier, of **James Oswald** whose background as a Fife dancing-master was to be the basis of his fortune, selling books of Scots fiddle tunes in London, and eventually becoming court composer to King George III. The song cycle *Colin's Kisses* dates from just after his arrival in England, and *The Mutual Kiss* comes at the very end of the set of 12. The first ten kisses appear on Concerto Caledonia's album *Colin's Kisses*.

Singer and lutenist **John Abell** was born in Aberdeenshire, two generations before Oswald, and when his musical gifts became apparent, the only respectable outlet for them in Scotland was in the singing of metrical psalms. He didn't hang around for long; by 1679 he was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in London. He travelled widely abroad, possibly acting as a spy for the king as he went, and it was some 20 years before he finally settled back in London to sing at the theatre in Drury Lane. By this time he had, scandalously, married into the nobility, run up substantial debts, and left behind him a trail of near-legendary stories.

His 1701 book of *Songs in Several* Languages was probably intended to be a memento of his own renowned performances as a countertenor, and a temperamental one at that. As the playwright William Congreve wrote: 'Abell is here: has a cold at present, and is always whimsicall, so that when he will sing or not upon the stage are things very disputable.' Abell's book isn't much use as a musical source on its own, as it only presents the bare bones of the songs, with such maddening features as long stretches of repetitive bass line tantalisingly marked 'trumpet', and no hint of what the trumpet's notes might have been. In the book there's a beautiful French lute-song, a decidedly bold love song in half-remembered Italian, and an astonishing hymn of praise to King Billy and his victory at the Battle of the Boyne. Abell's own sympathies were decidedly Catholic: to quote John Purser's note in his copy of the score, this makes the song "the grossest grovel in the world". Abell's short song about friendship in a very English style makes its point more gently, even with my added faux-Purcell string parts.

Born in Perthshire, **Robert Mackintosh** worked in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and London, and his place in the pantheon of Scots fiddling is secured by the fact that one of his pupils was the young Nathaniel Gow. An unashamed virtuoso with a concerto of his own and a repertoire of special effects under his fingers, Mackintosh seems to have been as happy when leading the orchestra of the Aberdeen Musical Society as he was playing tunes for dancing: his first printed music book includes up-to-date minuets, completely out-of-date sonata movements in the style of Corelli, and pages of Scots reels. Perhaps it was the strain of reconciling the two musical worlds, and the two audiences, that led to his reputation as a difficult character.

Tune books are usually associated with fiddlers, but the first printed Scots tune books to appear on each side of the Atlantic were both volumes of harpsichord music. Given that a harpsichord was a considerable investment, you could assume that its owner might have a few shillings to spare for some music to play on it. Alexander Reinagle's book of Scots tunes for harpsichord, first published in Glasgow, made it into print in Philadelphia before any fiddle music got to press in America, and **Adam Craig's** delightful and substantial book of 34 tunes won a similar race in Edinburgh some decades earlier. The tunes are set out on the page like English harpsichord music, with simple harmony and a quirky but sure style.

Finally, when faced with a song of parting as perfect as Burns's *Ae fond kiss*, and set to his chosen tune of *Rory Dall's Port*, accompaniments and graces really do become useless. Here it is presented with Stephen Clarke's bass line and not much else.

David McGuinness, 2004 (revised 2016)



John Abell, A Collection of Songs in Several Languages (London, 1701)

Robert Bremner, A Curious Collection of Scots Tunes (Edinburgh, 1759)

Adam Craig, A Collection of the Choicest Scots Tunes (Edinburgh, 1730)

Francesco Geminiani, A Treatise of Good Taste in the Art of Musick (London, 1749)

James Johnson, The Scots Musical Museum, vol.4 (Edinburgh, 1792)

Robert Mackintosh, Airs, Minuets, Gavotts and Reels (Edinburgh, 1783)

Robert Mackintosh, A Fourth Book of New Strathspey Reels (London, 1803)

James Oswald, Colin's Kisses (London, 1742)

[Samuel, Ann & Peter Thompson], The Caledonian Muse (London, 1790)

Neil Stewart, Thirty Scots Songs Adapted for a Voice and Harpsichord, The Words by Allan Ramsey (Edinburgh, c.1780)

Burk Thumoth, Twelve Scotch, and Twelve Irish Airs with Variations (London, c.1745)

Pietro Urbani, A Selection of Scots Songs, books 2&3 (Edinburgh, 1794-95)

2 arranged by David Greenberg & David McGuinness – PRS/MCPS/SOCAN 5, 11, 13, 19 arranged by David McGuinness – PRS/MCPS

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Harpsichord by Robert Deegan 1991, after Moermans 1584

Photos:

Mhairi Lawson: Hanya Chlala Jamie MacDougall: Marc Marnie Concerto Caledonia: Kevin Low

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The Slaves Lament

written or collected by Robert Burns (1759-1796)

It was in sweet Senegal that my foes did me enthral, For the lands of Virginia,-ginia, O: Torn from that lovely shore, and must never see it more; And alas! I am weary, weary O: Torn from that &c.

All on that charming coast is no bitter snow and frost, Like the lands of Virginia,-ginia, O: There streams for ever flow, and there flowers for ever blow, And alas! I am weary, weary O: There streams &c.

The burden I must bear, while the cruel scourge I fear, In the lands of Virginia,-ginia, O; And I think on friends most dear, with the bitter, bitter tear, And alas! I am weary, weary O: And I think &c.



Cauld Kail in Aberdeen Alexander, 4th Duke of Gordon (1743-1827)

There's cauld kail in Aberdeen, And ca' stocks in Stra'bogie; Gin I hae but a bony lass, Ye're welome to your Cogie. And ye may sit up a' the night; And drink till it be braid daylight; Gie me a lass baith clean and tight, To dance the Reel of Bogie.

In Cotillons the French excel;
John Bull, in Countra dances;
The Spaniards dance Fandangos well,
Mynheer an All mande prances:
In foursome Reels the Scots delight,
The Threesome maist dance wondrous light;
But Twasomes ding a' out o' sight,
Danc'd to the Reel of Bogie.

Come, lads, and view your Partners well, Wale each a blythsome Rogie; I'll tak' this lassie to mysel, She seems sae keen and vogie: Now, Piper lad, bang up the Spring; The Countra fashion is the thing, To prie their mou's e're we begin To dance the Reel of Bogie.

Now ilka lad has got a lass, Save yon auld doited Fogie, And taen a fling upo' the grass, As they do in Stra'bogie. But a' the lasses look sae fain, We canna think oursel's to bain, For they maun hae their Come-again, To dance the Reel of Bogie.

Now a' the lads hae done their best, Like true men o' Stra'bogie; We'll stop a while and tak a rest, And tipple out a Cogie: Come now, my lads, and tak yor glass, And try ilk other to surpass, In wishing health to every lass, To dance the Reel of Bogie

The Broom of Cowdenknows Robert Crawford (1695-1732)

How blyth was I each morn to see,
My Swain come o'er the Hill,
He leap'd the burn and flew to me
I met him with good will.
O the broom, the bonny bonny broom,
The Broom of the Cowdenknows,
I wish I were with my dear Swain,

With his Pipe and my Ewes.

I neither wanted ewe nor lamb,
When his flocks round me lay:
He gather'd in my sheep at night,
And chear'd me all the day.
O the broom, &c.

He did oblige me ev'ry hour, Cou'd I but faithful be. He stole my heart, cou'd I refuse Whate'er he ask'd of me. O, the broom, &c.

Hard fate that I must banish'd be,
Gang heavily and mourn,
Because I lov'd the kindest swain
That ever yet was born.
O, the Broom, the bonny bonny broom,
Where last was my repose:
I wish I were with my dear swain,
With his pipe and my ewes.

The Red Red Rose

Robert Burns

O my love's like the red, red rose, That's newly sprung in June: O my love's like the melody, That's sweetly play'd in tune. As fair art thou, my bonie lass, So deep in love am I; And I can love thee still, my Dear, Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my Dear, And the rocks melt wi' the sun; I can love thee still, my Dear, While the sands o' life shall run. And fare thee weel, my dearest love, O fare thee weel, a while. And I will come again, My Love, Tho' 'twere ten thousand mile.

Now Westling Winds Robert Burns

Now westling winds, and slaught'ring guns Bring Autumn's pleasant weather; The gorcock springs, on whirring wings Amang the blooming heather. Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain, Delights the weary Farmer; The moon shines bright as I rove by night To muse upon my charmer.

The Pairtrick lo'es the fruitfu' fells; The Plover lo'es the mountains; The Woodcock haunts the lanely dells, The soaring Hern the fountains; Thro' lofty groves the Cushat roves, The path o' Man to shun it; The hazel bush o'erhangs the Thrush, The spreading thorn the Linnet.

Thus ev'ry kind their pleasure find,
The savage and the tender;
Some, social join, and leagues combine,
Some solitary wander;
Avaunt, away! the cruel sway,
Tyrannic Man's dominion;
The Sportsman's joy, the murdering cry,
The flutt'ring, gory pinion.

[But Peggy dear the ev'ning's clear, Thick flies the skimming swallow; The sky is blue the fields in view All fading-green and yellow; Come let us stray our gladsome way, And view the charms o' Nature; The rustling corn, the fruited thorn, And ilka happy creature.]

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk, While the silent moon shines clearly; Ye'll clasp my waist, and, fondly prest, Swear how ye lo'e me dearly! Not vernal show'rs to budding flow'rs, Not Autumn to the farmer, So dear can be as thou to me, My fair, my lovely charmer.

The Mutual Kiss

Robert Dodsley (1703-1764)

Celia, by those Smiling Graces
Which my panting Bosom warm,
By the Heaven of thy Embraces,
By they wondrous power to Charm,
By those soft bewitching Glances
Which my inmost bosom move,
By those Lips whose Kiss entrances,
Thee and Thee alone I love.

By thy Godlike Art of loving,
Celia with a Blush replies,
By thy heavenly power of moving,
All my soul to sympathize,
By those eager soft Caresses,
By those Arms around me thrown,
By that look which Truth expresses,
My fond Heart is all thy own.

Thus with glowing Inclination,
They indulge the tender Bliss,
And to bind the lasting Passion,
Seal it with a mutual Kiss,
Close in fond Embraces lying
They together seem to grow,
Such Supream Delight enjoying,
As true Lovers only know.



Reading ends in Melancholy,
Wine breads Vices and Diseases;
Bus'ness is Care, and Love is Folly,
Wholly Freindship only pleases:
Flasks, Affairs, Books and Dolly,
Farewel all if Freindship ceases.





When the Sheep are in the Fauld, and the Ky at hame, And a' the warl'd to Sleep are gane, The Waes o' my heart fa' in Show'rs frae my ee When my Gudeman lyes sound by me.

Young Jamie lo'ed me well and he sought me for his bride; But saving a crown he had naething beside, To make that crown a pound my Jamie gade to Sea; And the crown and the pound were baith for me.

He had nae been awa a week but only twa, When my mother she fell sick and the Cow was stown awa, My father brake his arm and my Jamie at the sea, And Auld Robin Gray came a courting me.

My father couldna work and my mother couldna spin; I toil'd day and night but their bread I couldna win; Auld Rob maintain'd them baith and wi' tears in his ee Said Jenny for their saks O marry me.

My heart it said nay I look'd for Jamie back, But the wind it blew high and the Ship it was a wrack, The Ship it was a wrack why didna Jenny dee? Or why do I live to say waes me. Auld Robin argued sair tho' my mother didna speak, She look'd in my face till my heart was like to break, So they gied him my hand tho' my heart was in the sea, And Auld Robin Gray is Gudeman to me.

I hadna been a wife a week but only four, When sitting sae mournfuly at the door, I Saw my Jamies wraith for I couldna think it he, Till he said I'm come back for to marry thee.

O sair did we greet, and mickle did we say, We took but ae kiss and we tore ourselves away, I wish that I were dead but I'm no like to dee, And why do I live to say waes me.

I gang like a Ghaist, and I carenae to spin, I darena think on Jamie for that wad be a sin, But I'll do my best a Gudewife to be, For Auld Robin Gray is kind to me.





