

My Dearest on Earth Give Me Your Kiss

There are settings of this tune in the following manuscript source:

- **David Glen's** MS, ff.89-93;

and in the following published sources:

- **C. S. Thomason**, *Ceol Mor*, pp.152-3;

- **David Glen**, *Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.240-243.

This tune came down from a single informant, namely Colin Cameron, and what his sources for it were is not known.

C. S. Thomason sets the piece like this:

The image displays a musical score for a pipe and drum piece, comparing two versions. The score is organized into two columns. The left column, representing Thomason's version, contains two systems of music. The first system is labeled '4.3.' and consists of three staves of music. The second system is labeled '6 T., 8 R.' and also consists of three staves. The right column, representing David Glen's version, is labeled '5.3.' and '7 T., 10 G., 11 R.' and also consists of three staves. To the right of these columns is a vertical staff labeled 'XCVII 163.' which appears to be a drum part or a specific notation for a drum instrument. The notation includes various note values, rests, and bar lines, with some notes marked with 'm' for grace notes.

Thomason version is rather awkwardly barred throughout. For example, the initial note of the motif in bar 5 should be the E quaver at the end of the preceding bar and the note values in bar four of line two plainly require adjustment to preserve the metre.

David Glen's version goes like this:

MY DEAREST ON EARTH, GIVE ME YOUR KISS!

THOIR DHOMH DO PHÒG, A LUÀIDH MO CHRIDHE!

Ùrlar.

100.

Var. 1st

1st time only.

Doubling of Var. 1st

1st time only.

The score consists of ten staves of music. The first staff is the main melody, followed by four staves of the 'Ùrlar.' (main melody) with a tempo marking of 100. Below this are three staves of 'Var. 1st' (first variation). The next two staves are a '1st time only' section. This is followed by two staves of 'Doubling of Var. 1st'. The final staff is another '1st time only' section. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Communicated by Colin Cameron, Piper to the Duke of Fife.

Written Played

Var. 2nd

Doubling of Var. 2nd

1st time only.

1st time only.

Var. 3rd Taor-luath.

1st time only.

1st time only.

Doubling of Var. 3rd Dùblachadh an Taor-luath.

Var. 4th Crùn-luath.

Doubling of Var. 4th Dùblachadh a' Chrùn-luath.

1st time only.

Trebling of Var. 4th Crùn-luath-a-mach.

1st time only.

Repeat Ùrlar.

Glen's solution to the problem of the second line in the ground is slightly different from Thomason's but still fails to produce of a metrically convincing reading, (although there are various features of his score which do commend themselves, such as his varied timing of the siubhal, pointing the singling "down" and the doubling "up." In his manuscript setting both movements are pointed "down"). Glen and Thomason were, of course, fairly close musical colleagues and both give Colin Cameron as their source for this late addition to the 19th century canon. Colin's hand was rather untidy, as readers of the Set Tunes series will be aware and the the problem may lie in a misinterpretation of his note values in the affected line. They could perhaps be read as follows:



Commentary:

In view of the deficiencies in Glen and Thomason's grounds— both seem "out" in the second line of the ground, we find ourselves in the unusual situation of preferring the emended setting by John MacDougall Gillies in the *Piobaireachd Society Collection* (second series) as the best available version.

In the winter of 1948 Bob Brown wrote to Archibald Campbell requesting guidance on the "approved" interpretations of certain tunes (presumably "set" for that year) of which this was one. Campbell replied:

14 Letham Road
Cambridge
7.2.48.

My Dear Brown,

Many thanks for your letter. [...] I am afraid that I cannot be much help, as, once more, these are tunes which I was not taught. [...]

My dearest on Earth. I sometimes wonder whether this is the same tune as one in John Bruce's list for the 1832 competition. "The Lovely Lady's Request," "Iartras na bain tighearn Bridhraich." It is not in any of the manuscripts and seems to have been supplied by Colin Cameron to General Thomason, and to Glen who published it as the last tune in his book. Both versions are much the same, though I think that Glen's is written the more intelligently. Glen also has the G grace note on E in line 2 bar 5 of the ground. I can't lay my hand on the original score that General Thomason had, and I am not sure that I have ever seen it.

Little is known of the background of the tune. Fionn's note in David Glen's published collection seems entirely speculative:

This pleasant tune is evidently the composition of some amorous piper who seeks to impress on his sweetheart the sincerity of his affection by means of his *piob-mhór*. ("Historic, Legendary and Biographic Notes," p.21)

"Luaidh mo Chridhe" has powerful echoes of other pieces. It is almost as if somebody had violently collided "The Young Laird of Dungallon" with "The Lament for MacLeod of Colbecks." Indeed it sounds very much like an uncollected composition of John MacKay (Angus's father), who seems to have been perfectly content to re-work similar motifs in successive compositions and whose tunes seem frequently to display the sprawling over-development we see above. It seems, at least to the present writer, an immensely dull tune, and it is not obvious what could be done to remedy this, since the tone row is insufficiently tensioned to support so large a structure.

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