

Lecture UCLA May 2016 -section 1

I have come to talk about the ancient bagpipe music of Scotland called – Piobaireachd or Ceol Mor (Big Music)—a music played exclusively on the great highland pipe. It is also termed the Ancient Martial Music of Caledonia in one of the early publications (in 1820) of the music in staff notation. The music of piob. is vastly different from the normal action inspiring pipe band music that we hear in marching or dancing tunes.

The talk will touch on the –source- history and lore of the music-as well as the ancient vocal and written word system of notation called canntaireachd. Also *will be* structure- and method of play will be discussed along with the preservation of the music to present day. *Also touched*

The ancient music of Piobaireachd is “non action” inspiring music, and is considered as Scotland’s main contribution to world culture. It ^{is} played only on the Great Highland Bagpipe. It is composed and constructed for and around the characteristics of that instrument. The music is most likely religious in origin- what we do know—goes back some 500 years to about

Musical illustrations will be shown on the practical chanter or electronic chanter. Pipers do all at most of their practicing on the practical piece. The full pipe is mostly kept for actual performances.

1600. What went before that is legendary and passed down from oral

sources and most probably developed from a sung music, or religious chant as well as harp music.

History is obscure- but by year 1600 the tunes were mature compositions. The music originated in the top north- west area of the Scottish mainland and in the Western Isles and is associated the Gaelic language culture.

No piobaireachd musical connection with Ireland has been established although the language of Gaelic as spoken in Scotland is understood to have originated from there about the 7th century, mingling with the ancient Pictish tongue before being further subject to Nordic or Viking influence.

Touch on Gaelic language vocabulary of 7000 words versus 90000—100000 words in English and others.

The music of piobaireachd could be termed as monadic art music ie. Like as sung with one voice, which in this case is the Great Highland Bagpipe played solo.

The repertory of the piob.music is based on some 300 ancient pieces- These mostly comprise a theme- followed by variations- built from the theme with increasing technical complexity. The music when played properly, comes over as slow and smooth, and when well played has the elusive feature that is termed - forward movement or flow.

The opening variation or main theme is termed the ground or in Gaelic—Urlar which may not show the most obvious musical strand- being sometimes decorated by long embellishments but it paves the way for what is to follow in the variations, where the decorative embellishments of the ground are dropped and the main theme notes stand out on their own, and projected by a series of complex technical embellishments.

Aw illustrate with
 castles with the Bneek
 explain title
 play Staw Av
 then Piob Form

During good playing—changes of pace and rhythm are introduced and the animation increases as the theme is presented in more skeletal or obvious fashion.

It should be stressed here that the Highland bagpipe has a continuous sound with constant volume on each note. The piper does not have the luxury of interrupting the sound in order to punctuate the music—this can only be done by spacing of the notes. and the insertion of grace notes or embellishment

Something similar happens on the organ. AW explain spacing. - Refer to pianistic comparison-- Glen Gould biography by Geoffrey Payzant -1984

Demonstrate grace notes for punctuation and separation of notes

The Great Highland Bagpipe has a scale of only nine notes ie. one octave plus one note beneath the basic A.

It also has three drones of constant volume-- two tenor drones that are on octave below the basic A of the chanter or finger piece - and one Bass drone which is two octaves below the basic A.—making up the total harmonious effect.

The chanter or finger piece has an upward tapered conical bore with the bottom end wider than the top end.

This make the constant volume of the bottom notes louder than the constant volume of the higher pitched upper notes. Often the louder lower note is far less important melodically and structurally than the higher

top note. But the pipe and the music and the good performer have ways of compensating for this--- with the pipe coming in to its own in this respect.

It can be said also that this music needs the great Highland Pipe .It being composed around the properties and the characteristics of that instrument.

When performing, the piper blows into- and stores air in the bag which must be one hundred percent airtight. Originally this was made from animal skins (sheep) but now synthetic materials are used although skins are still preferred by some performers for tonal effects even although they require much more care and maintenance .

The master player is able to blow with each breath exactly the same length and pressure during a performances, say for periods of 15 minutes or more.

Tune titles as have come down to us are often based on historical events as well as being commemorative of important people.

Eg.-- Highland clans—Highland Chieftans- clan gatherings- Battles or clan skirmishes—Laments - Salutes tributes.

They often have a rowing rhythm and can be heard to emulate the sound of the sea- indicating that

some of the music may have been sung by oarsmen to keep time with ^{rowing} ~~sailing~~ between the islands. Sample titles of the tunes in this respect comprise the likes of--

Macleod's Rowing Piob – The Sound of the Waves against the Castle of Duntroon – Old Men of the Shells—Scarcity of Fish- The Boat tune,- Sound of the sea etc. Aw- demonstrate on chanter-- Rowing Piobaireachd

Canntaireachd

Dhp

In early times before the advent of staff notation the music was transmitted orally by an informal or *often* spontaneous system of chanting - but this gradually formalised in to a written system of specially formed words to what is now called- Canntaireachd- where the melody notes of

the tune are represented by four of our five vowel sounds and the finger embellishments are represented by consonants placed in front of-- or after the vowel.

Here is how it would sound---sing-- hiharin dro o dro

Visual no. 1---- hiharin- dro- o- dro .

The full canntaireachd system might be likened to a language of about 350 words

The music began to be written down in this word form round about early 1600 s. Conversion to staff notation followed later and was first introduced in the book -- Complete Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe by Joseph MacDonald 1760

The main written source of canntaireachd is in two volumes of handwritten manuscript by one Colin Campbell dated 1797 but which did not appear until 1908 after being lost for ^{nearly 100} ~~many~~ years.

Aw relate the details of the re -discovery of the cannt .

The volumes are first referred to in 1816 when prizes were offered for writing the music down "scientifically" i.e staff notation. The books of canntaireachd were offered as an application but were rejected ^{For consideration} as no one ^{at the time} then could decipher them.

They reappeared in 1908 .when secy of Piobaireachd Society formed in 1902 was given them along with a set of pipes that he purchased from an old Lady in Oban by name of Campbell. .

Some 169 complete pieces are in the two volumes in this the main written cainntaireachd source. Each tune is written out in full using the system of words seemingly devised by Colin Campbell and although dated 1797 work in producing and accumulating these must have commenced many years before that.

Other fragments of much lesser contemporary sources exist from that time where the language of chant can

can slightly differ- but the basic principles were the same.

AW - demonstrate -Lament for Mary Macleod on chanter and follow by singing of the Canntaireachd.

Relate-- Gaelic Poetess -Rodell Church in Isle of Harris buried face downward in knave. -Witch craft- Also John Garve Macleod storm premonition ignored.

Resides now in the -- " pastures of the seals."

Describe volumes no1- 83 tunes -- no2- 86 tunes

All written in copper plate and in ink

Authors title in front cover of vol. 1--Colin Campbells instrumental book 1797

Titles tunes in gaelic

Order of tunes grouped together by the starting notes of each tune which could indicate that Campbell knew each of the 169 pieces before he started to write them down. And not as if he wrote them down as he acquired them from sources. Say some 30 hours playing time .Tests show that the contents were written in to the original bindings in both books.

Make point of being vocal system. Written Canntaireachd does not specify or indicate note values but note groupings are indicated by the formation of words. Phrases were sometimes indicated by the use of commas etc.

AW Now illustrate----- Praise of Morag

Visual- no. 2 Display of Colin Campbell's script

Visual -no. 3—Display of Piob Socy score and Cannt

Aw sing line one in Campbells cant

Hi harodin tra- hihodro rodin- hihorodindro-
 hihydroendem-hiharindro-hiemdintro hihorodin tro
 hihodro rodin.

Mention-- three line form of music

Illustrate line 1 singling variation one -- triple time .

play on chanter.

sing cannt.

haendam haendam hoendam hi hio din--- hoendam
 hoendam hioendam hi hio dem--- hinendam hoendam
 hinendam hioendam hoendam hioendam hoendam-hoendam .

Three four time pony and trap concept. Elaborate on
 story of tune where Morag or Marion was cover name
 for Prince Charles

Edward Stewart (in drag) – during aftermath of the
 failed 1745 Jacobite rebellion.

Aw illustrate on Chanter

Taorluath Singling - hadarid hadarid hodarid hihio din

Taorluath Doubing illustrate

Crunluath Singling - habandre habandre hobandre
 hihiodin

Crunluath Doubling illustrate

Crunluath a mach -- doubled form only

Hiotradre hiotradre hodrodre hodrodre hodrodre
 hodrodre hiotrodre hio^{tr}edre hin bandre hio^{tr}edre
 himbandre hiotrodre hodredre hio^{tr}edre hodredre
 hodrodre .

Cannt General

AW---- Illustrate various movements ie

Echo beats on all notes Illustrate pulse-- character etc

Throws-- edre -odro dare embare etc

E cadences

T. and C. etc

Crunluath a mach

Mention crunluath akin to harp strums -illustrate

Mention and illustrate the Scotch snap— ^{On fiddle music} circa 1750
 But Pub. was full of it long before
 Illustrate the playing by numbers rather than vocables.

(Blind Piper)

illustrate Scotch Snap in Blind Piper ^{modern et}
 192 hodins or Snap^r


Illustrate - demonstrate the pulsing required in the --
music to make common sense – relate to words.

Spacing again

The man credited with the present day method of writing this music on the stave is Donald MacDonald a bagpipe maker in Edinburgh who in 1820 published The Ancient Martial Music of Caledonia containing 23 tunes written out in full . AW- mention the stylistic difference in grace noting.

Make connection to the cracking of the
cantata/lead code with these tunes having
~~being~~ put on the stave.
been

Mention must be made of the publication titled- Ceol Mor published by Major- General C.S Thomason Royal Engineers who in in 1898 published an epic work of 300 complete tunes in his own devised ~~by~~ short hand system of notation in a book of 400 pages with dimension little more than the size of a pocket bible

Visual no 3—Ceol Mor 

UCLA--- Section 2

At the present time the passing on, preservation and method of portraying the music is based on what has been handed down through various channels which ^{can be} ~~are~~ ^{outlined} as follows

1—Traditional Teaching

A long - line of documented teachers going back to early 1600 s.-- Today the pedigree of traditional teachers is still very important although the advent of recording equipment has allowed leeway here.

Visual Aid – No 4-- MacCrimmon Dynasty

2—Piping Colleges

^{in early times} Piping colleges were established in a number of the islands- Skye and Mull. Music was often handed down from father to son. Today funded charities like the College of Piping Glasgow.-- National Piping Centre Glasgow – take- up a lot of the basic teaching load, but top level teaching is still very specialised and chosen on one to one basis from across the world.

3 --The Competition System

A competition system which was founded in 1781 with gold medals awarded yearly by important culture preservation organisations . *These continue to present*

eg.- the *Highland Society of London*. The prime purpose being to give the music- exposure –

This has been proved a great success and continues to the present day.

Without doubt- *The music of Piobaireachd has survived largely due to the competition system*. So much so that cynics have made the remark that it is now more of a sport than an art and can lead to over correct careful playing.

Early day events were often held in the open air and still are today at Highland Games and gatherings but the main events are now heard indoors and often in concert halls. Audiences in places like the Carnegie Hall have heard the music performed with aplomb by invited recitalists and have been enraptured by it.

Many of the original competitions have continued to the present time and are still annual events- attracting players from all over the world. Today, competitors from USA and Canada often take major prizes where the total number of competitors over a series of graded events can often

approach the 100 mark. These can be two or three day festivals of the music.

Again -There is no doubt that the preservation of the music is largely due to the competition system.

Lists of prize winners and their performing pieces have been kept meticulously over the years since inception and in a way form a historical role of honour going back to 1781

Visual Aid no 5---- Northern Meeting Roll

Major Competitions with important titles also take place world- wide and these are often supplemented by workshops as well as recitals.

4—Military

The Scottish Army Regiments in earlier days adopted the bagpipe as the main instrument of war it replacing the bugle –drum- trumpets and the like to inspire and rally men in battle, certainly up to the days of the first world- war. Today in the army, the pipe is used for ceremonial duties and duty calls. Such as reveille and lights out .Here the music of piobaireachd plays an important part especially in the officers realm.

There is also an Army School of piping- for many years housed in the ancient twelve century castle in Edinburgh but now located in its own special purpose building on outskirts of the city. Examinations have to be passed after a full time course of nine months

Graduates are awarded the Pipe Majors certificate which can lead to the rank of warrant officer. Pipers gaining this award are trained in the ancient music of the piobaireachd over and above the normal range of action inspiring music required by the military

In the early days the Army School was funded by the Pibroch Society who also sent instructors out to the Islands to preserve the music of Pibroch.

5 --Piobaireachd Society

However the most important factor in preserving this music was the formation of the Piobaireachd Society in 1902. The playing of the music at that time was judged to be getting more sparse and thought to be on the wane. Very little of the huge repertory was being performed in competition. Competitors were sticking within a small enclave of tunes and repeating these same tunes at every event- especially if they had been successful with them on previous occasions.

Since its formation the PS has been highly successful in their preservation work based on the following actions.

a) —The specification and prescribing a list of tunes every year for the major events. In gold medal competitions Eg --six or eight pieces, where competitors learn and submit say four of them and are given one to play on the day- at short notice chosen by the judges- often just before the actual performance. All of the tunes having to be played from memory- This could represent about two hours total playing time.

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Today In piping colleges and workshops held throughout the world these lists of tunes form a yearly curriculum for students and aspiring players who want to reach the highest level.

b)—Publishing edited and corrected versions of the bulk of the ancient repertory in a series of collections - 16 to date along with full editorial notes and details of different settings as well as information on the source—title- history - plus an edited score for each tune as well as the authority for the information published.

sales exceed 700 copies per year
This work has been done on a voluntary basis by those involved. The society is a registered charity. *400 members world wide*

c)—Editing and correction of previously published works and adding information to and developing these earlier works.

d) - All of most of the ancient repertory has now been converted to the stave from vocal and written canntaireachd sources. For preservation many early scores on the stave have been translated and converted- back to the ancient word written method of depicting the notes of the tune.

To date some 270 tunes have been analysed and preserved in this manner .Average playing time of one of these pieces can 12-15 minutes .The longest can take 25 minutes but these are fewer in number. The total no off tunes from ancient repertory is about 300 say equal to something like 60 hours performing time. All when played are performed from memory.

The melody of each piece is built around one of a series of phrase patterns –six in number – There are also a number of irregular pieces.

Each phrase or small sentence can comprise 2-3-4-beats sometimes occasionally 5 or 6. In a staff notation score each beat is represented by the crotchet or quarter note. Often each beat is split into quavers and semiquavers Some phrases can be twice as long as others depending on the pattern of the tune.

The scale of pipe has nine notes- but not all are used in every tune- A large bulk of the tunes do not use the nine notes. Many are pentatonic- using five notes- but if music is well played it never gets boring. - Trance - like effect can emerge.

Music memorised around the pattern of the phrases

These are consistent through all of the variations which number about eight in the average piece.

Bagpipe difficult to play –requires physical fitness.

Top performers playing lengthy pieces for some fifteen minutes or so- must be able to blow with each breath exactly the same length and same pressure in order to sustain the tone and tuning as well as control moisture for full length of performance.

Tune titles often can evoke memories of past times and past events -- Aw relate stories and lore

Old men of the shells -- scallop shells drink

Flame of Wrath for Squinting Peter- act of revenge

Too long in this condition -- Cold -Sherrifmuir 1715

Blind Pipers Obstinacy . Scotch snap – tune rhythm

Lament for the Union—1707 with England (now UK)

Relate main theme versus variations

Lament for Children –Said to be best single line melody in European music.

Aw illustrate tunes on chanter also canntaireachd.

Aw invite questions

Pentatonic scales

A Scale ----a---b---c--- e—f---a

G Scale--- g—a—b—d—e—g—a

D Scale—a—b—d—e—f--a

Visuals

<u>Number</u>		<u>Content</u>
1	Page	Nameless
	8	Hikavin Dro O Dro
2-	11	Praise of Morag
2A	11	Vocablo handwritten score
2B	11	Vocablo Printed score Prob Soc
2C	11	P.S. score Printed Stave
3	15	Thomson score Stave
4	16	Mac Crimmon Dynasty
5	18	Prize Pipe winners 1781 to Northern Meeting.