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**The Life and Work of (George John) Learmont Drysdale  
(1866–1909)**

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**Submitted for the degree of PhD  
The University of Glasgow  
Department of Music  
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**Volume 1**

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## **Abstract**

George John Learmont Drysdale (1866–1909) was a prolific composer who enjoyed considerable success in his time. Born and brought up in Edinburgh, he trained at the Royal Academy of Music in London before returning to Scotland to earn his living as a composer, conductor and teacher. His sudden death in 1909, at the age of 42, occurred just as he was reaching the peak of his creativity. Although respected by many leading musical figures of his time, poor self-promotion and a corresponding lack of published work led to his music falling into obscurity. Today, Drysdale and his works are virtually unknown.

Despite the fact that the majority of Drysdale's compositions survive (albeit in manuscript) and considerable documentation concerning him is extant, there is neither an objective account of his life and work, nor an accurate list of his works. This situation is remedied by the present study which is divided into two main sections. The first establishes a biography drawn almost entirely from primary source material and includes an examination of the promotion of Drysdale's work by his sister and others following his death. The second deals with Drysdale's compositions, beginning with a general survey of his oeuvre, before discussing each genre — orchestral and instrumental pieces, vocal music and theatrical works — in turn. This generic approach places Drysdale's works in their historical and biographical contexts, isolates stylistic models from both contemporary and previous generations of composers, and examines more general trends in his music. Numerous musical illustrations are provided to illuminate his compositional style, while insight into the reception of his music is drawn from contemporary press reports and correspondence.

The lack of an accurate and comprehensive survey of Drysdale's compositions is addressed in Appendix I. This exhaustive catalogue of works includes the location of autograph sources, dates of composition and, where appropriate, the date and place of first performance.

By drawing on unpublished primary sources and publications written during Drysdale's life, this thesis provides an objective evaluation of the character and worth of this forgotten Scottish composer.

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his family's archive at Inveraray Castle. The Argyll Archive was closed to researchers during the period when this thesis was being prepared and thus, I was unable to access it personally; however, I was very grateful to His Grace for commissioning two searches on my behalf based on information I had gleaned from the NRA survey.

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## Abbreviations Employed

BL	British Library, London
GUL	Glasgow University Library
CPM	<i>Catalogue of Printed Music in the British Library to 1980</i> 62 vols (London: K.G. Saur, 1984)
DNB on CD-ROM	<i>Dictionary of National Biography on CD-ROM</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) [compilation of first edition and supplementary volumes]
ECL	Edinburgh Central Library
MGG <sup>1</sup>	<i>Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> 17 vols (Kassel und Basel: Bärenreiter, 1949-86)
MGG <sup>2</sup> (Personenteil)	<i>Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. (Personenteil) 13 vols (to date) (Kassel and London: Bärenreiter, 1999-)
ML, Glasgow	Mitchell Library, Glasgow
MT	<i>Musical Times</i>
NAS	National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh
NRA	National Register of Archives
<i>New Grove...</i> (1980)	<i>New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> ed. by Stanley Saidie (London: Macmillan, 1980)
<i>New Grove...</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed., (2001)	<i>New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> ed. by Stanley Saidie (London: Macmillan, 2001)
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
<i>Oxford DNB</i>	<i>The New Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003)
RAM	Royal Academy of Music

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Mr Learmont Drysdale.

## Introduction

Having decided to pursue a Scottish topic of late-nineteenth century origin for this study, I investigated both the contemporary social position of music in Scotland and the backgrounds of several native composers. The most striking fact discovered was the absence of any establishments for advanced musical training in Scotland and the consequent loss of abundant talent to London and further afield. It is outside the scope of this thesis to detail reasons for Scotland's lack of support for its native musicians as this subject is fully discussed elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> It is sufficient to state that the perceived view of Scots of their native culture is one of inferiority to that of other nations. As Cedric Thorpe Davie noted in 1980:

There is a much-quoted Scottish version of the 'prophet without honour' tag which sums up the matter — 'Him a famous musician — dinna be daft, I kent his faither!' These words in a sense encapsulate the Scottish character, and suggest that complex combination of the hair shirt, self-depreciation and boastfulness which has often been an obstacle to the relaxed development of natural gifts and characteristics.<sup>2</sup>

Only one well-known figure from the period, Learmont Drysdale, returned to Scotland following his training at the Royal Academy of Music. He was to spend many years on the margins of musical life, composing, teaching and conducting and it was not until the age of thirty-eight that he secured his first official appointment, becoming composition master at the Glasgow Athenaeum (now the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama). Intrigued by this action of returning to Scotland in a climate so biased towards London and the European centres, I investigated further and found numerous references to Drysdale in musical dictionaries and studies in Scottish music, although none was extensive.<sup>3</sup> Even the short article in *New Grove*<sup>4</sup> did not enlighten me further about Drysdale's life and works although it did contain the information that his manuscripts were held in GUL. Further investigation revealed two separate holdings, namely the Farmer and Drysdale Collections. The former relates to the work of the musicologist Henry George Farmer, a champion of Scottish music. Janey Drysdale (Learmont's

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<sup>1</sup> The following studies offer a background for this topic: Cedric Thorpe Davie *Scotland's Music* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1980); Kenneth Elliott and Frederick Rimmer *A History of Scottish Music* (London: BBC, 1973); Henry George Farmer *A History of Music in Scotland* (London: Hinrichsen, 1947); John Purser *Scotland's Music* (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Cedric Thorpe Davie *Scotland's Music* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1980) 46

<sup>3</sup> These include the publications mentioned above as well as the articles, and entries in the musical and biographical dictionaries listed in the bibliography.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Mary Allan "Drysdale, Learmont" *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy <http://www.grovemusic.com> accessed 5 February 2006

sister) was a close friend of his in her later life and the collection contains hundreds of their personal letters, accounts detailing royalties earned posthumously by her brother's works, a few of his autograph scores and papers relating to Farmer's administration of her estate; they provided a wealth of information to draw upon. Nevertheless, in comparison, the Drysdale Collection is a treasure-trove; autograph manuscripts of compositions, personal letters, ephemera and a biography in his sister's hand written in 1942<sup>5</sup> provide insight into Drysdale's personal and working life. Further investigation also revealed smaller collections of his work in the NLS, the ML, Glasgow, ECL and the BL although many of the manuscripts in these institutions are copies. In addition, a considerable body of correspondence and ephemera relating to the opera *Red Spider* was discovered at Devon Record Office in Exeter and at the University of Texas at Austin, which also holds material concerning another opera *The Oracle*. The implication of these sources was that this was no mere dilettante Scots composer but a talented and professional all-round musician who was well respected in his time.

On examining many publications referring to Drysdale, it was immediately evident that they were drawn from a single source, the content and often the syntax being identical. Moreover, throughout, a 'halo' surrounded the composer and little objective criticism was apparent. Janey Drysdale published an account of her brother's life in the *Dunedin Magazine* in 1914<sup>6</sup> and this had provided the basis for these later articles. Fuller discussions do appear. There are three interviews with Drysdale given when he had major works performed.<sup>7</sup> These provide some insight into his personal and working life — his addiction to cigarette smoking, thoughts on sol-fa, the current state of Scottish music, and his favourite composers, for example — but generally they concentrate on widely known biographical details with passing mention of his best-known works. Henry Farmer's seminal survey *A History of Music in Scotland* (1947) has factual information concerning Drysdale's life and work, but this account has to be treated with caution bearing in mind that it was written at Janey Drysdale's suggestion and she is the

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<sup>5</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale", 1942, MS Drysdale Cb10-x.14, Drysdale Collection, GUL (this manuscript will hereafter be cited by author and title). Copies of this document are also available in the NLS and the BL.

<sup>6</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers: Learmont Drysdale" *Dunedin Magazine* 3 (November, 1914): 14-30

<sup>7</sup> Ernest Kuhe "Scottish Composers and Musicians: Mr. Learmont Drysdale" *Scottish Musical Monthly* (1894): 171-172, J. Cuthbert Hadden "Scots Worthies: Mr Learmont Drysdale" *Scots Pictorial* (15 October 1898): 145-146 and "Learmont Drysdale" *Musical Herald* (1 July 1904): 195-197

dedicatee. Similar reservations apply to Farmer's biography of the actress and singer Lucy Carr Shaw,<sup>8</sup> which includes a discussion of her rôle in Drysdale's opera *Red Spider* and her lengthy friendship with his sister Janey. *Scotland's Music*, John Purser's excellent survey of Scottish national music through the ages, devotes a short section to Drysdale which provides a synopsis of his life and refers to his major works.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the wide scope of this project necessarily restricted space for discussion of individuals; it was not Purser's remit to provide a full critical analysis of every composer mentioned. The works by Thorpe Davie, and Elliott and Rimmer include only scant information regarding Drysdale — they are factual and contain little assessment. Although my own publications, based on research undertaken for this thesis and an undergraduate dissertation,<sup>10</sup> have aimed to provide a more balanced review of Drysdale and his activities, context and constraints of space have not allowed for a full assessment. For example, the *Oxford DNB* article<sup>11</sup> can give little more than a brief biography and a limited evaluation of the composer within the 500 words allocated while my piece on the opera *Red Spider*<sup>12</sup> necessarily concentrates on that work.

As research into correspondence, school reports, church minutes and Royal Academy of Music records progressed, the realisation dawned that Janey Drysdale's biographies (and thus, published accounts drawn from them) are essentially flawed; sororial bias and, in the document of 1942, failings of an ageing memory had rendered them inconsistent and hence, unreliable. An American PhD thesis concerning Drysdale's choral pieces held promise of more recent research,<sup>13</sup> but proved to be of little value for this project. A considerable portion of the study relates to music in Britain in the late nineteenth century whilst the section concerning Drysdale's life is almost entirely based on Janey Drysdale's biography of 1942 and her book of press cuttings.<sup>14</sup> The short

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<sup>8</sup> Henry George Farmer *George Bernard Shaw's Sister and Her Friends* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1959)

<sup>9</sup> The series of broadcasts on which this book is drawn contains recorded examples from three Drysdale works: *The Kelpie*, Trio in F major and *Tam o' Shanter*.

<sup>10</sup> Moira Ann Harris "The Life and Work of George John Learmont Drysdale (1866–1909)", BMus. Hons diss., University of Glasgow, 1998

<sup>11</sup> "Drysdale, (George John) Learmont (1866–1909)" *Oxford DNB*, Oxford University Press, 2005 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32909>, accessed 29 January 2006]

<sup>12</sup> "Learmont Drysdale's Opera *Red Spider*: Some Threads Untangled" in *Notis musycall: Essays on Music and Scottish Culture in Honour of Kenneth Elliott* (Glasgow: Musica Scotica Trust, 2005)

<sup>13</sup> Kenny M. Sheppard *Selected Choral Works of Learmont Drysdale, Scotland's Forgotten Composer* PhD thesis, Texas Technical University, 1987 (Ann Arbor, Mich: University Microfilms AAI8806026). The author focuses on the motet *Hark 'Tis the Breeze* and the dramatic cantata *The Kelpie*.

<sup>14</sup> Janey Drysdale comp. *Press Cuttings* MS Drysdale Cb10-y.6, Drysdale Collection, GUL (items from this collection carrying call numbers with Cb9/10 prefixes will hereafter be cited by call number only)

section devoted to Drysdale's choral works is relatively superficial whilst the appended work list is drawn solely from GUL's Manuscript Catalogue and contains duplications, errors and omissions. The author seemed unaware of relevant holdings in other institutions and most surprisingly, those held in his own state of Texas at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center in Austin.

With my curiosity aroused by the web of bias and uncertainty presented by Janey Drysdale and perpetuated by writings based upon her work, I determined to discover the facts of the matter through examining as many primary sources, both textual and musical, as possible.

The present study is divided into two main parts. The biographical section provides the first comprehensive and objective account of Drysdale's life and musical development. The commentary is based on a wide variety of public and institutional records, personal and business communications, press reports and concert programmes with Janey Drysdale's biographies supplying personal or anecdotal information which could not be ascertained by any other means. Nevertheless, in practice, the process of constructing a reliable biography was more problematic than originally envisaged. For example, there were inexplicable gaps in the correspondence from Learmont to his family during the period he resided in London (1887–1892) — several letters a week would be followed by none for months, an unlikely pattern for a protected youngest son away from home for the first time. Moreover, sections of individual letters were frequently missing and in some instances, only the postscript survived. This unusual situation was partially explained by correspondence to Henry Farmer in which Janey reveals that she had been destroying family papers. For example, in 1947, and some years after the initial donation of her brother's scores to GUL, Janey tells Farmer:

I've looked everywhere for the Shaw letters and can't find them. So I must have burned them when I was destroying scores of letters and papers from distinguished people — I am heartily sorry [as] I know that you would have liked them.<sup>15</sup>

It is not known when this destruction took place but within a few months of the above letter, Janey graphically informs Farmer: "I've just been having a holocaust on the

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<sup>15</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 2 May 1947, MS Farmer 249/1947/c, Farmer Collection, GUL (items from this collection will hereafter be cited by collection name and call number only)

hill”<sup>16</sup> in reference to destroying documents relating to her older brother Andrew. It seems these acts were not simply a matter of housekeeping, as Janey had earlier explained to Farmer in reference to her younger brother:

Some of Learmont’s early letters from London to my mother and father and myself might give an outsider a wrong impression — he tells of incidents and sayings that he knew would delight us, not because they were compliments to himself, but because they would give us pleasure. You will understand. He was very like you in most important respects — too straightforward and outspoken for the world, and against shame of any kind, and with a great reverence for true ability.<sup>17</sup>

Drysdale’s personality will be considered more fully in the main discussion, but at this point, it is appropriate to draw a further possible inference from this deliberate destruction. Remarks in correspondence, Drysdale’s acknowledged lifelong devotion to his mother and some suggestive personal associations prompted questions about his sexuality. Janey’s 1914 biography contains several curious statements regarding her brother’s relationships with others, including “Drysdale, who was unmarried, was peculiarly devoted to his mother”.<sup>18</sup> Her personal copy of this article<sup>19</sup> is annotated with changes to the text and such remarks have generally been altered, “peculiarly” being replaced by “greatly” in this instance. As previously discussed, Drysdale’s letters were effectively censored by his sister following his death, but an occasional suggestive comment has escaped excision. One describes the young Scottish composer Hamish MacCunn as “...awfully good looking, not unlike Mendelssohn in a way”<sup>20</sup> while another speaks of “Oscar’s individuality”<sup>21</sup> when referring to a new play by Wilde, possibly suggesting more than a theatregoer’s acquaintance with the writer. There is no further mention of Wilde in the surviving correspondence. In letters to Farmer, Janey presents information such as “I wonder if you knew Geard the trombone player?

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<sup>16</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 17 July 1947, Farmer 249/1947/f. The term “holocaust” has a rather different connotation today. To Janey it may simply have signified the destruction by burning of documents very important in the lives of those to whom she had been devoted. It is outside the scope of this study to evaluate Janey’s mental state, but from her writings and through information garnered from an interviewee who was acquainted with her at this time, it seems probable that in later years she became very eccentric. The devotion of many years of her life to promoting both her brothers’ work with little success combined with living in a very remote home where she was frequently cut off from human contact for days at a time, might well have led to obsessive and peculiar behaviour. Her great age (eighty-six years at the time of this letter) must also be taken into consideration.

<sup>17</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 1 February 1945, Farmer 249/1945/b

<sup>18</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale “Scottish Composers ...” 24

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., see annotated copy held in Farmer 257.

<sup>20</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, 9 November 1888, Cb10-x.16/9

<sup>21</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 1 March 1895, Cb10-x.16/21

Learmont got lessons from him, and got intimate with him.”<sup>22</sup> A further question has arisen in connection with Drysdale and the ninth Duke of Argyll, a figure with whom the composer had close creative links in his later years, and who was rumoured to have homosexual inclinations.<sup>23</sup> However, such speculation must be considered in relation to the period under discussion; “intimate” may well be Janey’s description of an extremely close but innocent friendship (her wording in the biography of 1942 would support this hypothesis) while Learmont’s relationship with his mother might simply indicate the exceptional closeness that might develop between a sickly youngest child and his mother. This is an unprovable aspect of Drysdale’s character and even if true, the influence it had, if any, on his work is a matter of conjecture.

It is not known how Farmer reacted to the information that Janey was destroying material (his side of the correspondence is lost), but he is most likely to have strongly advised against such action, suggesting that he first examine any papers to assess their usefulness to future research. He certainly did save many documents. For example, Janey suggested that Hamish MacCunn’s were “very private letters, and [it is] up to you [Farmer] if they are included in the collection.”<sup>24</sup> The MacCunn material survives. Moreover, Farmer certainly did not follow an early imploration that scraps and unfinished pieces of Drysdale works be burned, as many of these items are extant.

Quantifying and assessing the primary sources often necessitated a lengthy and worldwide search. Some details of the work undertaken in this quest are included at relevant points in the thesis where they illuminate the discussion of particular pieces; at this juncture, however, it is appropriate to mention the two most problematical and extensive searches which had a significant impact on research. I have been unable to provide a full assessment of Drysdale’s collaborations with the ninth Duke of Argyll, as the Campbell family archive is at present closed to researchers — information has had to be drawn mainly from Argyll’s side of the correspondence (held in GUL) and secondary sources. The most wide-ranging and time-consuming enquiries involved the opera *Red Spider*. Several facets of this investigation proved challenging, but the most

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<sup>22</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 25 June 1944, Farmer 249/1944/1

<sup>23</sup> P.B. Waite “Campbell, John George Edward Henry Douglas Sutherland, marquis of Lorne and ninth duke of Argyll (1845–1914)” *Oxford DNB*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2005 [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32269](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32269), accessed 28 January 2006

<sup>24</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 20 June 1944, Farmer 249/1944/k

troublesome aspect was locating the material which Farmer had used to prepare his biography of Lucy Carr Shaw. Although Farmer cited its location as GUL, it was not listed in the catalogue; moreover, there was no record of its ever having been held. Following many months of investigation, a chance observation of an annotation in Farmer's personal copy of *George Bernard Shaw's Sister*<sup>25</sup> indicated that in the early 1960s he had sold a number of items associated with the publication to James Drake, a New York dealer. The latter's archive was traced to the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas but it did not include the relevant papers. Concurrently, however, the Center was testing a web database of their world-renowned Bernard Shaw Collection<sup>26</sup> and a fortuitous click of the mouse revealed what had been sought for so long. Moreover, there were a considerable number of letters relating to the opera *The Oracle* which had a tenuous connection with Bernard Shaw through one of its librettists. It was a welcome additional discovery.

An assessment of the promotional work undertaken following the composer's death concludes the biographical section of the thesis. This facet has hitherto been unexplored, but without these sterling efforts Drysdale would be little more than a footnote in history, his name appearing occasionally in musical dictionaries, studies in Scottish music or library catalogues. These promoters were fundamental in preserving Drysdale's compositions (few of which were published) for future generations, and ensuring that his archive was available to researchers.

The second part of the thesis discusses Drysdale's compositions. In a study of this length, it is impossible to provide a complete and comprehensive survey of a composer's oeuvre. For example, Drysdale composed numerous stage works and so a wide-ranging account of the historical context and musical content of each would be excessively laboured, while a blow-by-blow discussion of nearly one hundred songs or of many instrumental pieces would uncover little more than the information garnered from the present exploration of a few typical examples. Nevertheless, in view of the scant discussion of his music previously undertaken, this thesis provides an extensive generic overview of Drysdale's work which aims to capture his compositional methods

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<sup>25</sup> See Farmer 180, x. I am indebted to the GUL librarian Peter Asplin for drawing my attention to this annotation found while he was cataloguing the Farmer Collection.

<sup>26</sup> See: <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/research/fa/shaw.gb.hp.html> accessed 20 January 2006.

and developments while facilitating future research. The initial chapter isolates general trends in his music and includes an examination of his stimuli and possible influences on his work. With the exception of sacred music, Drysdale wrote for a variety of genres throughout his career, so rather than producing a chronological survey of his compositions, a generic approach has been employed in order to allow parallels between similarly constructed works. In addition, to reflect the considerable portion of his output within theatrical and vocal genres, introductory discussions review a cross-section of compositions in these areas with subsequent chapters providing a comprehensive investigation concentrated on a small number of representative or significant works. This selection has been based on a variety of factors, including successful projects which received critical acclaim during the composer's lifetime, works which show some degree of development in compositional style, pieces that are unusual or distinctive, and compositions accessible today where discussion may be of practical use to prospective performers and conductors.

A variety of approaches to analytical methodology is employed, determined by the character of the music discussed. Although based on in-depth investigation, analysis is distilled into a form which is informative and readable — in a study of this length, a bar-by-bar account would have been impractical and therefore major facets were isolated to form the basis for discussion. For example, the chapter on *Red Spider* is constructed around major influences upon the work (Devon folksong, music-hall style and grand opera) while discussion of the melodrama *The Plague* focuses on its unusual genre and possible reasons behind its conception, with the musical sections exploring how successful Drysdale was in depicting and supporting spoken text and action. The examinations of the overture *Tam o' Shanter* and the cantata *The Kelpie* take a sequential approach, reflecting the course of the lengthy poems on which they are based. In discussion of other works, significant features of form, harmonic structure, melodic construction and, where appropriate, orchestration are investigated. Considering that Drysdale's scores will, in general, be unknown to musicologists, the commentary includes a considerable number of musical examples which illuminate features outlined in the text. In addition to technical aspects, there is also exploration of a work's genesis, persons with whom it is associated, and details, if any, of performance and reception. The aim was to identify major trends in Drysdale's compositional style and where appropriate, to isolate stylistic precedents from earlier writers and

contemporaries, while setting his works in a historical context which takes account of both British musical life and Continental activities.

Two appendices complement the main discussion. The more important of these is a comprehensive catalogue of Drysdale's compositions drawn from various published and unpublished bibliographical sources, library catalogues, and programmes of performances. Some inaccuracies, duplications and omissions were discovered in lists and catalogues. This confusion has often occurred through problems of attribution between autograph manuscripts and copies, of which there are many, produced by Janey Drysdale after her brother's death as a means of disseminating his music more widely. Drysdale signed and dated many of his compositions, but several of the unsigned manuscripts are also marked "autograph", labels later applied, sometimes inaccurately, by Janey Drysdale or Farmer. It was not unknown for Janey to insert a title, composer or date in a true autograph, and, on at least one occasion, she added her brother's 'signature' to a manuscript which is obviously her copy. On occasion, this has led to the identification of a manuscript's status being unreliable — for example, the NLS state their collection comprises mainly autograph manuscripts, an assertion which, on only superficial examination, is patently incorrect. The accuracy of all entries in library catalogues has therefore been verified systematically, with every manuscript being examined before its inclusion in the present work list. The second appendix is a timeline listing the main events of Drysdale's life and career, providing a factual summary of the biographical section of the thesis. The study concludes with a comprehensive bibliography drawing together contemporary and subsequent references to Drysdale's life and music, as well as providing the location of many libraries and archives which hold material in relation to him.

Given the volume of Drysdale's output and his abilities as a composer, he deserves better than the limited, vague or anecdotal accounts found in previous articles and studies. This thesis redresses the balance by providing the first scholarly biography, survey of compositions and catalogue of works founded on an examination of all relevant accessible materials to illuminate the true character and worth of this forgotten Scottish composer.



1861-1965  
Extract of an entry in a REGISTER of BIRTHS  
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965

No.	1 Name and surname	2 When and where born	3 Sex	4 Name, surname and rank or profession of father, Name and maiden surname of mother Date and place of marriage	5 Signature and qualification of informant, and residence, if out of the house in which the birth occurred	6 When and where registered and signature of registrar
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800	George John Learmont Drysdale	1966 October Hurd	M	Andrew Drysdale Slater and Glasgow, Marine	Andrew Drysdale Father	1966 October 11 <sup>th</sup> W. Edinburgh
		6 <sup>th</sup> Dec. 1966 79 George Street Edinburgh		Tom Joseph Drysdale M. Servant		W. Edinburgh W. Registrar
				1965 June 17 <sup>th</sup> Glasgow		

The above particulars are extracted from a Register of Births for the District of St. Andrew in the Burgh of Edinburgh given under the Seal of the General Register Office, New Register House, Edinburgh, on January 1978

The above particulars incorporate any subsequent corrections or amendments to the original entry made with the authority of the Registrar General. This extract is valid only if it has been authenticated by the seal of the General Register Office. If the particulars in the relevant entry in the statutory register have been reproduced by photography, xerography or some other similar process the seal must have been impressed after the reproduction has been made. The General Register Office will authenticate only those reproductions which have been produced by that office.

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This extract is evidence of an entry and recording in a register of births in the City of Edinburgh.

Illustration 2: Birth Certificate of George John Learmont Drysdale

## 1. The Early Years: 1866–1887

George John Learmont Drysdale was born at 37 George Street, Edinburgh on 3 October 1866, the third and youngest child of Andrew Drysdale (1831–1918), a slater and glazier, and his wife Jane Elspeth Learmont (1827–1909).<sup>1</sup> His ancestors on both sides of the family were of Border stock. Andrew Drysdale was descended from the Scotts of Yarrow<sup>2</sup> and, it is thought, from the Douglasses of Brushwood Haugh who in 1503 left Dumfriesshire for the Haugh of Dollar because of a feud with friends of King James IV. Consequently, they changed their name from Douglas to that of their native parish, Drysdale.<sup>3</sup> By the early nineteenth century at least one branch of the Drysdale family was residing in West Linton, Peeblesshire birthplace of Andrew Drysdale.<sup>4</sup> Jane Elspeth Drysdale could trace her lineage back to the great Scottish poet and seer of the thirteenth century, Sir Thomas Learmont (c.1220–1297) of Ercildoune (better known as Thomas the Rhymer),<sup>5</sup> from whom one of Russia's most celebrated poets, Michael Lermontoff is also thought to have been descended.<sup>6</sup> She was born and brought up in the Scottish Borders, an area steeped in folklore, on the estate of the Earls of Traquair<sup>7</sup> where her father, George Learmont (c.1790–1871), was land steward for many years.<sup>8</sup> Their home was the meeting place of many notable figures such as the poet James Hogg (1770–1835) who resided at nearby Yarrow and the poet, essayist and critic Christopher North (1785–1854). These influences led to Jane's life-long interest in Border legend, ballad and song which she in turn passed on to her children.<sup>9</sup> Jane's family were well educated; as a young man, her father had written several mathematical treatises

<sup>1</sup> Birth Certificate: Registration District of St. Andrew, Burgh of Edinburgh. Entry no. 800, 24 October 1866

<sup>2</sup> This family also have a connection with the descendants of Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832). See "Sir Walter Scott" in *DNB on CD-ROM*.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Douglas "Drysdale Family of Dollar Origins: On the Twentieth Day of May", [1965], S.929.2DRY, ML, Glasgow. Kenny Sheppard in his *Selected Choral Works of Learmont Drysdale, Scotland's Forgotten Composer* suggests a relationship between the families of Andrew Drysdale and that of the well-known Reverend Dr John Drysdale (1718–1788) of Kirkcaldy. This link cannot be substantiated. See D.C.L. Drysdale *The Reverend John Drysdale and His Descendants 1681–1991* (Capetown: Privately published, [1991]).

<sup>4</sup> Certification of Andrew's birth cannot be located, so particulars have been ascertained from his marriage registration documents and census returns. His parents, Andrew Drysdale and Elizabeth Scott, married in West Linton on 8 August 1831. See: *International Genealogical Index On-Line Marriage Certificate: Parish of West Linton, Peeblesshire, 8 August 1831, Source Call Number 1067924*.

<sup>5</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 1

<sup>6</sup> W.S. Crockett to Janey Drysdale, 3 January 1944, Farmer 253/5<sup>3</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 1

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Dobson *Reminiscences of Innerleithen and Traquair* (Innerleithen: Smail, 1896) 165

<sup>9</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 1

including one entitled “The Practice of Plane Trigonometry”,<sup>10</sup> whilst her brother John (1830–1877), a civil engineer, designed and supervised the building of the Leaderfoot Railway Viaduct which spans the River Tweed near Earlston in Selkirkshire.<sup>11</sup>

This rich and diverse heritage must surely have encouraged Jane and her husband to provide their children with a good education. Their eldest son Andrew (1856–1937) was educated at the Edinburgh Academy. He trained in accounting and legal and general business in the Edinburgh office of land agents Moncrieff and Gillies-Smith before taking further training in farming and estate management in Lord Rosebery’s Estate Office at Dalmeny on the outskirts of Edinburgh. After a period as factor of Sir Douglas Stewart’s Murthly Estates in Perthshire, Andrew returned to Lord Rosebery’s employ<sup>12</sup> where, besides his other work, he researched and subsequently published a book on the effects of chemicals in agriculture.<sup>13</sup> In 1892, he was appointed Justice of the Peace for Linlithgowshire on the recommendation of Lord Rosebery.<sup>14</sup> Their daughter Jane, or Janey as she became known (1861–1949), attended Dr Oliphant’s School, Charlotte Square, where she became *dux* in the same year that Douglas Haig (later Field Marshal Earl Haig) was *dux* of the boys’ school.<sup>15</sup> Her secondary schooling was undertaken at Edinburgh Ladies College, one of the Merchant Company Schools and the first girls’ school in Edinburgh to follow a curriculum which corresponded to that of the well-known boys’ schools.<sup>16</sup> Here she received a thorough education<sup>17</sup> and distinguished herself by winning many prizes and bursaries.<sup>18</sup> Here she developed a particular interest in literature and music, receiving piano lessons from [Sir] Alexander C. Mackenzie

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<sup>10</sup> George Learmont “The Practice of Plane Trigonometry”, 1807, Farmer 258

<sup>11</sup> George Wood “An Appreciation of John Learmont: Civil Engineer of the North British Railway”, 1877, Farmer 260

<sup>12</sup> *The Edinburgh Academy Register: a Record of All Those Who Have Entered the School Since its Foundation in 1824* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1914) 309

<sup>13</sup> A[ndrew] L[earmont] Drysdale *Greater Profits From Land* (Edinburgh: Edina Publishing, 1914)

<sup>14</sup> [Lord] Rosebery to [Andrew] Drysdale, 8 December 1892, Farmer 605/1

<sup>15</sup> [Autobiography of Janey Drysdale], 24 November 1946, Farmer 255, tipped into *Dunedin Magazine* 1 (1912–13): affixed to back cover

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Law *Edinburgh Schools of the Nineteenth Century* ed. Ann Hope and Rosemary Wake ([Edinburgh]: Published privately, 1995) 106. Law notes that in addition to the study of the so-called female accomplishments of languages, the arts and domestic crafts, girls were thoroughly grounded in arithmetic, mathematics and Latin. For further information see John Harrison *The Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh and its Schools 1694–1920* (Edinburgh: The Merchants’ Hall, [1920]),

<sup>17</sup> “The Edinburgh Ladies College: [Leaving Certificate of Jane C. Drysdale]”, 21 July 1879, in Cb10–x.18. Janey received excellent gradings for all her studies which included English, French, Latin, arithmetic, mathematics, music and drawing.

<sup>18</sup> David Pryde LL.D. (Headmaster), [Testimonial in favour of Miss Drysdale], 27 July 1880 in Cb10–x.18. Pryde’s son, the artist James Pryde, was a friend of Learmont in later years.

(1845–1937),<sup>19</sup> most probably during the much assailed Ladies College classes where he was expected to teach eight pupils at eight pianos simultaneously.<sup>20</sup> In her late teens, Janey was to spend a year at school in Dresden where, amongst other subjects, she studied singing and was encouraged to broaden her experience of the Arts by visiting galleries and attending concerts and opera performances.<sup>21</sup> Janey developed interests in a diverse range of topics. She admired the works of Ibsen and the activities of the Fabian movement, and shared these interests with her devoted friend Lucy Carr Shaw, sister of George Bernard Shaw.<sup>22</sup> In her final years, she embraced Communism, keeping a huge portrait of Stalin over her mantelpiece.<sup>23</sup> Janey wrote several books on music including *Operas of Verdi*<sup>24</sup> and individual opera guides for Puccini's *Madam Butterfly*,<sup>25</sup> Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*,<sup>26</sup> and Wagner's *Tannhäuser*<sup>27</sup> which demonstrate her qualities as a writer. These guides are beautifully produced 16m<sup>0</sup> volumes with coloured plates and are well-written commentaries, providing easily digestible analysis with numerous musical quotations exemplifying the text. Janey was involved in the inauguration of the Dunedin Association (a society devoted to Scottish music and poetry), an idea originally conceived by Learmont.<sup>28</sup> She was particularly devoted to Learmont and was to be his greatest champion after his death when his music was all but forgotten. From the above evidence, it can be deduced that this was a middle-class family who valued good education in the sciences, literature and the arts, whilst appreciating the wealth of knowledge their background provided.

The family moved from Peebles to Edinburgh in the mid 1860s when Andrew acquired

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<sup>19</sup> “The Edinburgh Ladies College: [Leaving Certificate...]”

<sup>20</sup> David Pryde *Pleasant Memories of a Busy Life* (Edinburgh: Blackie, 1893) 135. Pryde dismisses the suggestion that this was poor teaching practice.

<sup>21</sup> A. Glendinning, [Testimonial in favour of Miss Drysdale], 31 July 1880, Farmer 255, tipped into *Dunedin Magazine* 1 (1912–13): affixed to inside front cover

<sup>22</sup> Henry George Farmer *George Bernard Shaw's Sister and Her Friends: A New Angle on George Bernard Shaw* (Leiden: Brill, 1959) 104

<sup>23</sup> Henry Farmer to Ivor Currall, 13 April 1960, Farmer 248/4

<sup>24</sup> J.C. Drysdale *Operas of Verdi* (London and Edinburgh: Jack, nd)

<sup>25</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ *Puccini: Madam Butterfly* (London and Edinburgh: Jack, nd)

<sup>26</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ *Pagliacci–Leoncavallo and Cavalleria Rusticana–Mascagni Great Operas Series* ed J. Cuthbert Hadden (London and Edinburgh: Jack, 1907). These publications are listed in the *British Library Catalogue of Printed Books to 1975* 360 vols (London: K.G. Saur, 1981) 87, 396.

<sup>27</sup> Henry Farmer *George Bernard Shaw's Sister...* 157. The author has been unable to trace this publication.

<sup>28</sup> Janey C. Drysdale “The Origins of the Dunedin Association”, Farmer 256, tipped into *Dunedin Magazine* 2 (1913–14): affixed to inside front cover

Field and Allan's slater, glazier and smoke curing business in Frederick Street.<sup>29</sup> They set up home in a five room flat in George Street, and the 1871 census shows that Andrew's business had expanded to that of a builder (a master-builder by 1881<sup>30</sup>) employing ten men and three boys.<sup>31</sup> Further investigation, however, reveals that Andrew's business experienced severe financial difficulties during the period 1872–82 with sequestrations and bankruptcy being registered in the Edinburgh Bankruptcy Court.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, he seems not to have allowed his financial difficulties to impact substantially on his children's education albeit that John Learmont (a confirmed bachelor) lived with the family during part of this period and probably contributed to the family finances.

According to Janey Drysdale, Learmont was a sickly child, having contracted pneumonia at the age of ten months and he spent most of his early years being entertained by his mother's tales and songs. He passed many hours watching the "comings and goings" of the nearby Edinburgh Music Hall and was fascinated by the organ grinders who frequented the vicinity. Even at this tender age he enjoyed picking out tunes at the piano, inventing and constructing simple instruments, and dressing up and reciting to anyone who would listen.<sup>33</sup> At the age of seven he was enrolled at Dr Oliphant's School,<sup>34</sup> a co-educational private establishment, which was staffed by graduates and trained teachers, a most unusual situation at that time. The junior classes followed a traditional programme of arithmetic, reading and writing, complemented by Scottish history, drawing and singing whilst the boys' course included some elementary Latin in preparation for their entry into the well-known high schools of Edinburgh.<sup>35</sup> However, due to poor health, Learmont's attendance was irregular and much of his tutoring came from a private governess.<sup>36</sup> A Miss Turnbull, who took pride in the fact

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<sup>29</sup> *Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directories* (Edinburgh: Morrison and Gibb, 1865–1905) 1865–6, 70

<sup>30</sup> Census of 1881: County of Midlothian, Edinburgh, St. George's Parish, vol. 103, p. 1, no. 7 (Entry: 3 Frederick Street)

<sup>31</sup> Census of 1871: County of Midlothian, Edinburgh, St. George's Parish, vol. 13, p. 9, no. 62 (Entry: 37 George Street)

<sup>32</sup> See Andrew Drysdale, Edinburgh: Sequestration Petition, 1872, CS284/22, National Archives of Scotland [NAS]; Andrew Drysdale, Edinburgh: Discharge (Trustees) Petition, 1874 CS284/57, NAS; Andrew Drysdale, Frederick Street, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Builder [Concluded Sequestration Process], 1878, CS318/18/78, NAS. He also had petitions against him in 1879 and 1902.

<sup>33</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 2

<sup>34</sup> "Royal High School of Edinburgh: Matriculation book", 1878–1879, SL137/15/4, Royal High School of Edinburgh Archives, Edinburgh City Archives [hereafter cited as RHS]

<sup>35</sup> Alexander Law *Edinburgh Schools of the Nineteenth Century...* 56

<sup>36</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 3

that she was the first piano teacher of Alexander C. Mackenzie, gave Learmont his first piano lessons and is said to have quickly recognised his talent.<sup>37</sup>

Learmont attended the Royal High School of Edinburgh from 3 October 1878 to June 1882,<sup>38</sup> during the rectorship of Dr [Sir] James Donaldson LL.D. who in later life became principal and vice-chancellor of St Andrews University.<sup>39</sup> In the early stages, the Royal High School curriculum was the norm of the time being centred round the core subjects of Latin, English, French, arithmetic, geography and history supplemented by writing and book-keeping, drawing, games and music.<sup>40</sup> From the fourth year of the curriculum onwards there were two distinct branches of study — the Classical and the Modern. The former group, composed mainly of those destined for careers in the church, law and medicine, continued with their study of the classics, English, French and mathematics. The Modern branch, which was introduced by Dr Donaldson in 1873,<sup>41</sup> provided a broader curriculum, meeting the educational and vocational needs of pupils who were planning to enter mercantile or industrial life. This course consisted of a greater variety of subjects including English, French, German, mathematics, arithmetic and book keeping, and physiology.<sup>42</sup> Learmont was not particularly academic; conversely, the prizes he gained in writing and bookkeeping,<sup>43</sup> map drawing<sup>44</sup> and producing the best notebook in the physiology class,<sup>45</sup> indicate an artistic flair. Furthermore, as the son of a builder, the prevailing social structures would have directed him to a profession/position within his own stratum of society. Thus, he undertook the Modern course,<sup>46</sup> leaving at the conclusion of his fourth year to begin training as an architect.<sup>47</sup> Outside school he developed interests in tennis, golf and billiards. However, his favourite pastime was to collaborate with school friends in the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> “Royal High School of Edinburgh: Class Attendance Registers”, 1878–1882, SL137/7/1–4, RHS

<sup>39</sup> Rosemary Goring ed. “Sir James Donaldson” in *Scottish Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1992) 119–120

<sup>40</sup> *Annual Report and Course of Study in the High School of Edinburgh During the Session Ended July 1879 with a List of Prizes Awarded at the Annual Examination, and the Names of the Pupils in the Various Classes* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1879) 24–25

<sup>41</sup> William C.A. Ross *The Royal High School*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1949) 69–70

<sup>42</sup> *Annual Report and Course of Study...* 1882, 27

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 1879, 33; 1880, 34; 1881, 38

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 1880, 30; 1881, 34

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 1882, 35

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 41

<sup>47</sup> The majority of pupils following the Modern course left school at this point. See: *Annual Report and Course of Study...* 1882, 37.

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organisation and production of private theatricals for home performance, for which he would often compose and perform the music, whilst also designing, building and painting the sets.<sup>48</sup>

Learmont's aptitude for drawing and design together with his family's association with the building trade led him towards architecture as a profession. This was not unusual in a period when wider access to good education allowed some degree of upward social movement particularly between business and professional classes.<sup>49</sup> From 1882 to 1884, Learmont worked as an assistant to the long established and respected Edinburgh architectural firm of Kinnear and Peddie.<sup>50</sup> Little is known of this period in Learmont's life, but as a trainee he would have spent much of his time inking drawings and producing tracings for more senior members of staff.<sup>51</sup> In 1884, his employment was terminated when he suffered a serious attack of pleurisy which necessitated several months of convalescence at his brother and sister's home at Kingswood House on Sir Douglas Stewart's Murthly Estate. He returned to employment in 1885, joining the practice of a rising young architect Robert Cameron, with whom he remained until his move to London in 1887.<sup>52</sup> During this period, Learmont continued his art education on a part-time basis at the Edinburgh School of Art achieving good results in exams and gaining at least one prize in freehand drawing.<sup>53</sup> However, he found the profession dull and at the age of twenty-one abandoned it in favour of music.<sup>54</sup>

Although Learmont's musical education had not been systematic to this point (1887), it had not been completely neglected. His piano lessons with Miss Turnbull had ceased at the age of twelve and between then and 1882, he had only taken part in class singing

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<sup>48</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 4

<sup>49</sup> Ian Gow (Archivist, Historic Monuments Record Office), telephone conversation with the author, 25 November 1997. Mr Gow states that it was commonplace for master-builders' sons of the time to be well educated, as this eased the upward social move into the architectural profession.

<sup>50</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 4

<sup>51</sup> Dawn McDowall (Archivist, National Register of Archives Scotland), telephone conversation with the author, 21 February 2000. Ms McDowall stated that she had found no mention of Learmont Drysdale in the Kinnear and Peddie archive. She suggested, however, that she had probably seen Drysdale's inkings and tracings in the process of her survey, but noted that trainees were never allowed to put their names on work, this being the preserve of the senior partners.

<sup>52</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 4

<sup>53</sup> "School of Art, Royal Institution, Edinburgh: Notification of result of Second Grade Art Examination", 11 July 1883, MS 6297/3, Small Collections, NLS. The South Kensington School of Art, London was the awarding body for these exams.

<sup>54</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 4

lessons at school although he continued to play and study theory at home.<sup>55</sup> In 1882 he began studying organ with Robert Scott-Riddell, organist of Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh and in the following year, he left this teacher in order to study with Charles Bradley, a successor of Alexander C. Mackenzie at St George's Parish Church.<sup>56</sup> Bradley was a fine musician and teacher who had received organ lessons from R.S. Burton, organist of Leeds Parish Church. He studied harmony and counterpoint with Dr. Armes, organist of Durham Cathedral and F.W. Davenport, son-in-law of Sir George Macfarren.<sup>57</sup> Bradley had a substantial teaching practice and in addition to organ taught piano, harmonium, harmony, counterpoint and fugue.<sup>58</sup> He also became well-known through being accompanist to Edinburgh Choral Union for many years.<sup>59</sup>

In 1883 Learmont applied for entry to the Royal College of Music in London<sup>60</sup> which in its inaugural year was seeking students through a countrywide advertising campaign.<sup>61</sup> Although no official record of his application survives,<sup>62</sup> Janey Drysdale notes that the interview was conducted in Edinburgh by a panel headed by Sir Herbert Oakeley (Reid Professor of Music at Edinburgh University<sup>63</sup>) and in the subjects he had studied, Learmont answered the questions correctly.<sup>64</sup> However, he was refused a place because he had not studied orchestration and is said to have remarked in reply to his rejection: "If I had studied orchestration I would not have needed to go to college!"<sup>65</sup> Whatever the details of the interview, Learmont was not selected to attend the final audition in London.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Robert A. Marr *Music for the People: a Retrospective Look at the Glasgow International Exhibition 1888* (Edinburgh and Glasgow: John Menzies, 1889) 39–40. R.S. Burton succeeded S.S. Wesley at Leeds Parish Church.

<sup>58</sup> *Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directories (1873–1905)... 1885–86*, 46 (Advertisement Directory)

<sup>59</sup> James Waddell *History of the Edinburgh Choral Union* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Choral Union, 1908) 317

<sup>60</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 4–5

<sup>61</sup> For example, see Advertisement: "Royal College of Music". *Scotsman* 9 March 1883, 1a. It was through this process that the composer Hamish MacCunn secured a place at the RCM.

<sup>62</sup> Dr Peter Horton (Reference Librarian, Royal College of Music), e-mail to the author, 9 July 2001. Details of unsuccessful applications were not retained by the institution.

<sup>63</sup> *Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directories (1873–1905)... 1883–1884*, 540

<sup>64</sup> The basic interview included the performance of pieces and scales, sight reading, playing from memory, theoretical questions, and reading a short passage aloud (to demonstrate "general education and intelligence"). Transposition, aural tests and extemporisation formed additional tests for more advanced students. Candidates at all levels were invited to bring examples of their composition. See "The Royal College of Music" *Scotsman* 14 March 1883, 5h.

<sup>65</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 5

Learmont continued his music theory education in Edinburgh at the Watt Institute and School of Arts, an institution that operated a day release/evening class format of study, which allowed working-class people to enjoy further education.<sup>66</sup> He attended concurrently the elementary and senior theory of music class of Dr. J.C. Grieve FEIS in session 1884–85 winning the Watt Literary Association Prize for Senior Music Theory<sup>67</sup> and achieving full marks in the Elementary Certificate.<sup>68</sup> During this period, he also composed several songs and piano pieces some of which were published both then and in later years,<sup>69</sup> and at least one gained a prize — the Award of Merit for musical composition issued by the magazine *Boys' Own*.<sup>70</sup>

During the summer of 1886, an International Exhibition was held in the Meadows area of Edinburgh and amongst other attractions, there were two daily organ recitals. A “Grand Organ” with four manuals and an unusual apparatus for transposition of pitch (to allow combined organ and band performances) was installed by Bishop & Son, London, and some forty-five organists, both local and from further afield, gave recitals.<sup>71</sup> Learmont played twice at this event, performing programmes of popular contemporary music including one of his own compositions.<sup>72</sup> In November of the same year, he was appointed as organist at Greenside Parish Church at a fee of £10 per annum.<sup>73</sup> The Church of Scotland had only begun allowing instrumental music during services in the mid 1860s and it was 1885 before Greenside acquired a second hand two-manual organ at a cost of £200.<sup>74</sup> The fee offered to Drysdale demonstrates the relative unimportance of this post in the eyes of the church. In comparison, a bible

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<sup>66</sup> John Strong *A History of Secondary Education in Scotland: an Account of Scottish Secondary Education From Early Times to the Education Act of 1908* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909) 212

<sup>67</sup> “Watt Institution and the School of Arts: Prize Register”, 1885, SA2/1/6, Heriot-Watt University Archives, Edinburgh. The candidate was expected to have knowledge of major and minor scale construction, all key signatures and clefs, rhythms, transposition and modulation. There were also ear tests and sol-fa exercises. See: “Certificate of Musical Ability No. 2 (Higher Subjects)”, 24 July 1885, MS 6297/13, Small Collections, NLS.

<sup>68</sup> “Certificate of Musical Ability No. 1 (Elementary)”, 24 July 1885, MS 6297/12, Small Collections, NLS

<sup>69</sup> Information drawn from several work lists and library catalogues. See Appendix 1.

<sup>70</sup> “*Boys' Own Paper*, Award of Merit” August 1884, 6297/11, Small Collections, NLS

<sup>71</sup> Robert A. Marr *Music and Musicians at the International Exhibition 1886* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1887) 181–5

<sup>72</sup> Daily Programmes: “Edinburgh International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art (1886)”, 16 July 1886, 5; 19 July 1886, 5, 9YT570.886, Marr Collection, ECL. Learmont performed his now lost “Gavotte” on 16 July 1886.

<sup>73</sup> Greenside Parish Church: Kirk Session Minutes, 1884–1891, CH2/524/5, NAS, 69

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 40

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reader appointed some months later attracted a fee of thirty pounds per annum.<sup>75</sup> However, the fact that the post was solely that of organist might also explain the small remuneration it attracted. The position of choirmaster was held by a Mr Ives, and from accounts in the Kirk Session minutes, it emerges that Ives was an accomplished musician who was granted several periods of leave of absence to continue his musical studies on the continent.<sup>76</sup> However, Drysdale did not allow his limited duties to prevent him taking advantage of a platform for his compositions, as he wrote at least one work<sup>77</sup> for the Greenside Choral Society (a group associated with the church), which was performed at a church concert. During this period, Janey Drysdale notes that Learmont appeared many times as a pianist at private functions and, before leaving Edinburgh in July 1887, he was well-known as an amateur musician.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 70

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 80

<sup>77</sup> G.J.L. Drysdale *Hark! Tis the Breeze* (motet for soli and chorus), 11 April 1887, Cb10–y.22. The autograph manuscript of this work is annotated: “Dedicated to the Greenside Choral Society”.

<sup>78</sup> Janey Drysdale “Learmont Drysdale” 5

*Organ and Concertina Recitals.*

**Organ Recitals in Grand Hall.**

From 2 to 3 p.m.

1. MARCH in B flat, *Silas Mendelssohn.*
2. LAIDEN OHNE WERTE, *Handel*
3. MEHURTO, *Handel*
4. AIR, *Where'er you walk,*
5. PRELUDE AND FUGUE in G, *Schubert*
6. SERENADE, *Gottfried*
7. GRAND CIRCUS in E flat, *Gottfried*

*Organist—A. W. DACE, A.R.A.M.*

From 6 to 7 p.m.

1. MARCH ROMAINE, *Gounod*
2. ALFONSO GRACIOSO, *Years*
3. FANTASIA ON SCOTCH AIRS, *Conen*
4. SONG, *The Hutter Land,*
5. OPERBUKE in G, *Hilly*
6. GAVOTTE, *G. J. L. Dreyfus*
7. AIR, *Gounod*
8. MARCH, *Quincy*

*Organist—G. J. L. DREYFUS.*

**CONCERTINA RECITAL**  
By PROFESSOR MACCANN

ON LACHENAL & CO'S NEW PATENT DUET CONCERTINAS.

*Treble, Crotchet, Tenor, and Bass Instruments.*

From 5 to 6 p.m.

1. MARCH, *Ans Flaphears, Clarie*
2. AIR DE BALLE, *Tenor and Pianoforte*
3. OPERA ROMANCES, *Les Epelles, Fidon*
4. POLKA DE CROIRE, *Selected from Polka, Minuet, etc., Clarinet, Joughmann.*
5. BATTLE MARCH, *Le Masotte, Rip Van Winkle, Solo Treble Concertina only*
6. VAISE (Duet), *Levanthay, Cory*
7. SONG, *Le Village de Kellay, Fanchonnet*

*Accompanist—MR. JAMES FLEMING.*

Advertisement.

**PEARS' SOAP**  
A SPECIALTY  
FOR CHILDREN



PEARS' SOAP solely is used in Doullton's Lavatories in the Exhibition

Illustration 3: Programme of Edinburgh International Exhibition (16 July 1886)

## 2. The London Years: 1887–1892

During the spring of 1887, Drysdale visited London with the intention of enrolling at the RAM.<sup>1</sup> The opportunities available in Scotland in that era for the study of music at a high level were non-existent and Drysdale would have been very aware that if he wished to further his musical career, a move to London was imperative. Drysdale sat the entrance examinations for the RAM and was auditioned by Wilhelm Kuhe (a professor of piano), J.T. Hutchinson (a professor of singing) and Frederick Corder (a professor of composition). His application was unsuccessful and he returned to Edinburgh.<sup>2</sup> However, this did not change Drysdale's intention of moving to London and he pursued this aim by seeking a musical post that would allow him further relevant training as well as experience of the city's musical life.

In July of 1887, Drysdale returned to London to take up the post of assistant organist at All Saints' Church, Notting Hill,<sup>3</sup> a fashionable "high" church which held full choral services on weekdays as well as Sundays.<sup>4</sup> The church's principal organist was George Ernest Lake (1854–1893), a fine player who was also known as a composer of church music and songs as well as a scholar, having read papers before the College of Organists and examined for Trinity College, London.<sup>5</sup> Lake's first appointment as an organist was during the late 1870s at St. John's Episcopal Church, Edinburgh where he remained for four years and following a short period at Weybridge Parish Church, he was appointed to All Saints' in 1885.<sup>6</sup> Exactly how Drysdale became cognisant of the All Saints' position is unknown; he could have made contact with Lake through the Edinburgh organ fraternity or he may have seen an advertisement such as the following in *MT* albeit that it is seeking a pupil:

RESIDENT PUPIL. — Mr. G. ERNEST LAKE, Organist and Musical Director, All Saints', Kensington, REQUIRES a gentlemanly YOUTH to train for a high-class

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<sup>1</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 5

<sup>2</sup> "Royal Academy of Music Ledger", Lent Term 1887, RAM Archives, London

<sup>3</sup> G.J.L. Drysdale to his mother, [July, 1887], Cb10-x.16/1

<sup>4</sup> "Resident Pupil – Mr. G. Ernest Lake" *MT* 28 (1887): 196 (Advertisement)

<sup>5</sup> James D. Brown and Stephen S. Stratton *British Musical Biography* (Birmingham: S.S. Stratton, 1897) 236. Five sacred choral pieces and one book of organ studies by Lake are listed in *CPM* vol. 34, 23.

<sup>6</sup> David Baptie comp. and ed. *Musical Scotland: Past and Present* (Paisley: J. & R. Parlane, 1894) 95. Exact dates for his Edinburgh post are not available, however, the period 1877–1884 can be deduced from previous and subsequent appointments.

professional position. Daily Choral Service. Large Organ, Broadwood Concert Grand, Music Library, and home comforts. Small Premium for Youth with talent.<sup>7</sup>

The number of such advertisements appearing in the musical press at this time demonstrates that it was a common occurrence for organists both to supplement their incomes and lessen the burden of their numerous church duties by this means. At least one other Scottish musician worked for Lake in this capacity: the composer, arranger and vocal pedagogue John Michael Diack (c.1870–c.1946) was his resident pupil in 1891.<sup>8</sup>

There are no official records concerning Drysdale's tenure at All Saints' and parish magazines of the period do not survive.<sup>9</sup> The church was bombed twice during the Second World War resulting in serious damage to buildings and parish documents,<sup>10</sup> and neither the local Diocesan Office nor the Church of England Record Office holds relevant copies of the All Saints' Parish Magazine.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the following review of this period is constructed from correspondence and secondary sources.

All Saints' maintained a sizeable musical establishment. In addition to his assistant, Lake had three resident organ pupils<sup>12</sup> and a choir comprising fourteen boys and a similar number of men.<sup>13</sup> This allowed Drysdale considerable experience in all departments of an organist's work including playing at principal services, acting as choirmaster and instructing junior organ pupils.<sup>14</sup> Drysdale assisted Lake in the organisation of recitals of both secular and sacred music at which he also performed and conducted<sup>15</sup> and at least one of his songs received a performance on this platform.<sup>16</sup> He also read papers at the All Saints' Guild meetings (a young men's group established

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<sup>7</sup> Advertisement: *MT* 28 (April 1887): 196

<sup>8</sup> Census of 1891: County of London, Paddington, St Luke's Parish, vol. 51, p 27, no. 201 [entry: 57 Burlington Road, Bayswater]

<sup>9</sup> Search of extant magazines and documents conducted by Andrew Tait, organist of All Saints' Church, Notting Hill and the author, 21 July 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Revd. J.H.C. Twisaday (Parish priest 1932–1961) *Thirty Years at All Saints' Notting Hill London W11* ([London]: np, 1964) 9–14

<sup>11</sup> The British Library and local London archives have been checked with negative results.

<sup>12</sup> G.J.L. Drysdale to his mother, [July 1887], Cb10-x.16/1

<sup>13</sup> "The Church Music" *All Saints', Notting Hill Parish Magazine* (May 1889): 20. This article concerns church music in All Saints' during the period 1888–89, however, Drysdale is not mentioned.

<sup>14</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 5

<sup>15</sup> Programme: "All Saints' Readings", 30 January 1888; "All Saints' Schools, an Evening Concert", 31 May 1888, Cb10-x.18 — Programmes of Performances of the Works of Learmont Drysdale/12; 9. The 30 January concert was reviewed in *MT*, but Drysdale's name does not appear. See: *MT* 29 (February 1888): 106

<sup>16</sup> Programme: "All Saints' Schools, An Evening Concert", 31 May 1888, Cb10-x.18 — Programmes.../9

during Drysdale's tenure at All Saints'<sup>17</sup>) on musical and literary subjects. One of these papers "The Emotional Effect of Art" was published subsequently in the *Kensington Churchman*,<sup>18</sup> a publication that embraced issues not covered by individual parish magazines.<sup>19</sup>

Lake seems to have introduced Drysdale to various aspects of London musical life. In a lengthy and detailed letter to his mother written on his arrival in London, Drysdale discusses a number of activities which Lake has arranged for him, including attending services at the Foundling Hospital where Lake was an organist and a visit to St Paul's Cathedral to see the organ and be introduced to the organist Dr John Stainer (1840–1901). Drysdale, however, was most excited about attending concerts at the Lyrical Club (more likely to be the 'Lyric Club', Piccadilly<sup>20</sup>) where he hoped to hear many notable musical figures including the tenor Barton McGuckin and the violoncellist Alfredo Piatti.<sup>21</sup> There is no further evidence to substantiate whether these visits actually took place.

Janey Drysdale states that her brother composed music for the All Saints' choir, although she gives no indication of the pieces involved.<sup>22</sup> Drysdale's extant oeuvre contains three Anglican service settings, of which only the "Kyrie Eleison" carries a date (8 June 1888 i.e. during his tenure at All Saints'),<sup>23</sup> but the rudimentary character of the remaining pieces also suggest an early composition date. In addition, all these movements bear the composer's full signature of G.J.L. Drysdale, a form of his name he used only until c.1889. Drysdale had little need to compose works of this type at any other period in his life — Greenside Church, his only other ecclesiastical appointment, had been strictly Presbyterian and music of this ilk would have been considered as suspiciously papist. During this time, Drysdale also composed a number of piano pieces and secular songs, two of which were published by Charles Woolhouse, London.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> "All Saints' Notting Hill" *Kensington Churchman*, 15 May 1888, 11b. This publication states that discussions were undertaken on "subjects of a useful character".

<sup>18</sup> G.J. Learmont Drysdale "The Emotional Effect of Art". A Paper Read before the All Saints' Guild For Men (Westbourne Park), on Sunday, 20 May" *Kensington Churchman*, 15 June 1888, 7c–8c

<sup>19</sup> "The Kensington Churchman" *St. Mary Abbots' Parish Magazine* (April 1888): 120

<sup>20</sup> The 'Lyrical Club' does not appear in London Post Office Directory for the period.

<sup>21</sup> G.J.L. Drysdale to his mother, [July 1887], Cb10-x.16/1

<sup>22</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 6

<sup>23</sup> See: "Agnus Dei", "Benedictus" and "Kyrie Eleison" in Farmer 510/9.

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix 1 for a complete list of works composed during this period.

Although Drysdale was moving closer to his goal of becoming a professional musician, he still felt ill at ease in London, his excitement tempered by awareness that his family was greatly missing him. He shows a particular sensitivity towards the feelings of his mother assuring her that he will be comfortable and well cared for by the Lakes, and imploring her to be cheerful<sup>25</sup> — correspondence implies that she was desolate at the departure of her youngest, favourite child. Similarly, Drysdale never severed his Edinburgh connections and throughout his residence in London returned frequently to Scotland, visiting his family and maintaining professional contacts with former teachers and colleagues such as Robert Scott-Riddell.<sup>26</sup>

In September of 1888, Drysdale finally gained entry to the RAM,<sup>27</sup> although documentation of this entrance examination does not survive. Around this time, however, Janey Drysdale wrote to Alexander C. Mackenzie who had just succeeded to the post of Principal in February of that year.<sup>28</sup> He acknowledged their previous Edinburgh association and assured her that he would generally take an interest in her brother's work and provide him with the best advice possible.<sup>29</sup> Drysdale, along with many other candidates, was summoned to appear before Mackenzie who conducted the auditions himself. He listened to Drysdale's piano playing and assessed his voice before examining his latest compositions and questioning him about music.<sup>30</sup> Mackenzie decided that piano should be Drysdale's principal study placing him under the tutelage of Wilhelm Kuhe and after careful consideration of his compositions, which he felt demonstrated talent but lacked the evidence of a thorough knowledge of theory,<sup>31</sup> assigned him to Frederick Corder as the teacher most appropriate for his needs.<sup>32</sup> To ensure that Drysdale received a rounded education, Mackenzie advised that he join the

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<sup>25</sup> G.J.L. Drysdale to his mother, [July 1887], Cb10-x.16/1

<sup>26</sup> For example, Drysdale attended a meeting of the local Harmonists' Society on 24 April 1889. See: "Edinburgh Harmonists' Society Attendance Book", 1885–1937, MS 21653, 28v, Edinburgh Harmonists' Society Papers, NLS.

<sup>27</sup> "Royal Academy of Music Register '0'", 1890–1893, RAM Archives, London, 191

<sup>28</sup> Frederick Corder *A History of the Royal Academy of Music From 1822 to 1922* (London: F. Corder, 1922) 82

<sup>29</sup> Alexander Mackenzie to Janey Drysdale, 11 September 1888, Farmer 311/9

<sup>30</sup> Learmont Drysdale to his father, 24 September 1888, Cb10-x.16/4. Drysdale was displeased about waiting six hours for his audition, but he still believed he was receiving 'special' treatment from Mackenzie as he notes: "When I first went into the room, he [Mackenzie] said 'Now Drysdale, I am hoping to smoke a cigar' showing at once of course that he was treating me on quite a different footing from the other candidates."

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Learmont Drysdale to his father, 26 September 1888, Cb10-x.16/3

RAM Chorus, and attend a large range of orchestral rehearsals and concerts which would assist in widening his musical experience.

Drysdale's professors were eminent musical figures of their time. Kuhe (1823–1912), a pianist, teacher, composer and administrator, was born in Prague and moved to London in 1847. He taught at the RAM from 1886–1904 and also organised an enterprising festival at Brighton for which he commissioned many new works including compositions by Cowen, Gounod and Prout.<sup>33</sup> Kuhe composed many pieces for the piano and wrote a book entitled *My Musical Recollections* in which he recalls personal and professional contacts with musicians such as Jenny Lind, Liszt, Chopin, Berlioz and Rubinstein.<sup>34</sup> He was a friend of both Liszt and Gounod and he introduced their music to Drysdale who became greatly attracted to it. Drysdale developed a particularly good relationship with Kuhe who was to remain a friend, mentor and champion until the end of his life.<sup>35</sup>

Frederick Corder (1852–1932) began teaching composition at the RAM in 1888, the year of Drysdale's entry to the institution. He was a well-known conductor, composer, translator and teacher who had studied at the RAM, in Cologne (on a Mendelssohn Scholarship<sup>36</sup> with Ferdinand Hiller) and in Milan. In later years, he and his wife Henrietta collaborated on translating into English a number of Wagner operas including the *Ring of the Nibelungen* in 1882 whilst he also wrote the libretto for his romantic opera *Nordisa* (1886), which was composed for and performed by the Carl Rosa Opera Company.<sup>37</sup> Corder produced technical treatises on a variety of musical subjects including composition and orchestration,<sup>38</sup> whilst in later life he was to write a history of the RAM as well as monographs on Beethoven, Wagner and Liszt. He was a progressive and enthusiastic teacher who promoted, in particular, the models of Liszt and Wagner. However, Corder's pupils rarely fulfilled their potential. He was over

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<sup>33</sup> John Warrack "William Kuhe" in *New Grove...*(1980) 10, 294

<sup>34</sup> Wilhelm Kuhe *My Musical Recollections* (London: Richard Bentley, 1896)

<sup>35</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 6. Extant correspondence demonstrates that the parties remained in close contact.

<sup>36</sup> This scholarship was the first successful venture in founding a fund in memory of Felix Mendelssohn. The first scholarship was awarded in 1856 to Arthur Sullivan. See: "Mendelssohn Societies" *New Grove...* (1980) 12,159.

<sup>37</sup> John Warrack "Frederick Corder" in *New Grove...*(1980) 4, 766

<sup>38</sup> *Modern Musical Composition* (London: Curwen, 1909); *The Orchestra and How to Write for it* (London: Curwen, 1896)

optimistic about pupils' work, relying on their enthusiasm both to overcome problems and to develop their own working methods. Furthermore, he failed to stress the importance of a disciplined approach and placed a reliance on derivative compositional techniques. In an article concerning Granville Bantock, another of Corder's pupils, Peter Pirie concurs with this assessment saying that Corder was too 'easygoing', his pupils suffering from a lack of self-discipline and an over-reliance on the fashionable continental models of their day.<sup>39</sup> Mackenzie, in hindsight, may have regretted his decision to place Drysdale under Corder's guidance — as later discussion demonstrates, Drysdale's work lacked self-discipline while his spirited inspiration and his originality needed tempering by a much sounder knowledge of compositional techniques.

Previously, the Lakes had provided Drysdale's board, lodging and necessary musical facilities, so his most important task following his entry to the RAM was to organise his domestic affairs. After some difficulty in finding suitable accommodation for himself and his hired piano (at 16/- per month, a considerable expense which he rather grudged<sup>40</sup>), Drysdale obtained the sole use of a large ground floor room for 10/- a week at 28 Abbey Gardens, St John's Wood, the considerable distance from the RAM being mitigated by finding a landlady who would not object to his practising.<sup>41</sup>

Drysdale's working relationship with his professors and his enthusiasm for studying at the RAM during this first session are evident in surviving correspondence with his family. For example, he writes to his sister:

Am busy with the score of my 'Ballade' so haven't time for more than a few lines today. ... Have done the 'Polonaise' [in A<sup>b</sup>] of Chopin and am to have the Schumann concerto with my master [Kuhe]. Mackenzie asked me the other day if I was ready to conduct the orchestra that I was to be sure to tell him whenever I was ready. ...

Hamish MacCunn was at the Academy on Tuesday and sat for a while at the orchestral rehearsal. I daresay you will now know that he has been appointed a professor in the RAM and only at 20. He is awfully good looking, not unlike Mendelssohn in a way.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> For a full discussion of this subject see: Peter J. Pirie "Bantock and His Generation" *MT* 109 (August 1968): 715–717.

<sup>40</sup> G.J.L. Drysdale to his father, [30 September 1888], Cb10-x.16/5

<sup>41</sup> Learmont Drysdale to his father, [24 September 1888], Cb10-x.16/4. According to *Kelly's Post Office Directory of London* 90<sup>th</sup> ed., this residence was known as "Mr J. Russell's Apartments" (See: p.145).

<sup>42</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, 9 November 1888, Cb10-x.16/9. There is frequent discussion of Hamish MacCunn (1868–1916) in Drysdale's correspondence of this period. The appointment of the young Scotsman as Professor of Harmony at such a prestigious institution as the RAM would have provided Drysdale with an important role model.

On the 17 November, Drysdale notes:

On Tuesday I had my piano lesson from Kuhe. I played the Chopin 'A<sup>b</sup> Polonaise' to him and he seemed very pleased with my rendering of it. He said I had done wonderfully well with it. I am just now practising Schumann's concerto and as yet am getting on fine with it. It is very stiff of course and wants a great deal of practice....

I am still at work scoring my 'Ballade' and I showed what I had done of it to Corder yesterday. He says just to go on with it, and he is of course telling me about orchestration, what to do and what to avoid. He picks out certain points in it and enlarges on them, thus correcting everything that is wrong. He is very interesting.<sup>43</sup>

It would seem that Drysdale was progressing well both with his piano playing and composition. The pieces Kuhe encouraged him to tackle suggest an advanced level of piano technique, a puzzling situation as surviving evidence suggests that he had not received much professional teaching to this point. However, correspondence such as the above and annual RAM reports do indicate that he coped well with the work prescribed. Meanwhile, Drysdale was thoroughly enjoying his composition, though he found the disciplined approach expected of him rather difficult to handle. His *Ballade*<sup>44</sup> (based on James Hogg's little known poem "May of the Morrill Glen") began life as a piano piece in which he struggled to eradicate faults in the otherwise well-constructed themes whilst attempting to reduce the excessive material between them.<sup>45</sup> Corder realised the work's potential and encouraged Drysdale to revise repeatedly, a process which took some time as he was unable initially to correct the errors.<sup>46</sup> After persevering for several weeks, Corder suggested that the work be scored as an orchestral piece which might be performed at the RAM orchestral practices.<sup>47</sup> Drysdale had learned several valuable lessons during the process — the importance of judging the merits of a work and deciding what was worthy of retention before building on these positive aspects and painstakingly rectifying faults.

The orchestral practices supplied one further vital service for the trainee composer. During this term, Drysdale studied Beethoven's Symphonies Nos 1 and 8 with a view to conducting them with the RAM orchestra. Finding this work very difficult, he wisely decided that he would not accept Mackenzie's offer of such a rôle until he was

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<sup>43</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 17 November 1888, Cb10-x.16/11

<sup>44</sup> The second version of the piano score, which contains annotated orchestration, and the full score of this work survive. See Farmer 501/1.

<sup>45</sup> Learmont Drysdale to his father, [October 1888], Cb10-x.16/7

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, [3 November 1888], Cb10-x.16/8

completely familiar with the scores. However, his excitement at the thought of undertaking this task prompted him to write his sister: "I'm looking forward to conducting and can you imagine your little brother standing up and directing the orchestra of the RAM."<sup>48</sup>

Drysdale's correspondence also demonstrates that he enjoyed associating with prominent musical figures and he apparently took full advantage of any influence offered if it would further his education as evidenced by the following:

In the evening [Lindsay] Lamb and I went to the Novello rehearsal when Mr. [Hubert] Parry came to conduct his oratorio *Judith* so we had the opportunity of seeing him. We got the music too so that we could follow it which makes it twice as useful. It is a privilege to get the music, but whenever I tell them who I am and mention Mackenzie's name it is all right, and I can get almost anything. His name is a password and it is so nice being able to call him a friend. It was awfully good of him the first night I was there, to tell them I was coming. Very few people are as mindful of everything as he is.<sup>49</sup>

William Lindsay Lamb (1867–1931) was brought up in Greenock and spent four years at the Scharwenka Conservatory in Berlin studying piano before returning to Britain to enrol at the RAM where he was a pupil of Frits Hartvigson.<sup>50</sup> On leaving the RAM, he became a professor at the Glasgow Athenaeum School of Music<sup>51</sup> and a long-standing member of the Glasgow Society of Musicians,<sup>52</sup> both bodies with which Drysdale was to have close contact in future years. Lamb was to be an invaluable friend to Drysdale during this early period at the RAM, regularly accompanying him to concerts both in London and at the Crystal Palace, and acting as a duet partner. Furthermore, he encouraged Drysdale not to become over-engrossed in musical pursuits by involving him in London's vibrant social scene. Lamb was acquainted with his fellow Greenockian Hamish MacCunn and shared certain aspects of the confidential knowledge he gleaned from this association with Drysdale, who duly passed it on to his family. On one occasion, Drysdale tells his sister:

He [Lamb] was at Hamish MacCunn's on Wednesday night having tea with him and he [MacCunn] showed him and played to him some of his new Glasgow Cantata "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" which Lamb says is very good and in advance of his other works. He said he didn't know about the professorship at the RAM until last Saturday ... He said to

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, 17 November 1888, Cb10-x.16/11

<sup>50</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, [3 November 1888], Cb10-x.16/8

<sup>51</sup> James Lauder *The Glasgow Athenaeum: A Sketch of Fifty Years Work (1847–1897)* (Glasgow: St Mungo's Press, 1897) 123

<sup>52</sup> "Glasgow Society of Musicians Cash Book" [May 1893–March 1905; April 1905–May 1923], Box 2, Glasgow Society of Musicians Archive, ML, Glasgow

Lamb the other night that he was surprised to find that they [the RAM] had such a fine orchestra among students.<sup>53</sup>

Gradually, Drysdale established a wide circle of acquaintances within the RAM. He became a particular friend of the organist Reginald Steggall and of Granville Bantock (1868–1946),<sup>54</sup> a fellow composition student of Frederick Corder and first winner of the RAM's prestigious Macfarren Scholarship. Bantock later achieved considerable success as a composer and conductor and succeeded Elgar as Professor of Music at Birmingham University. He was knighted in 1930.<sup>55</sup> The background to Bantock's arrival at the RAM was similar to that which Drysdale had experienced. His father, the prominent London physician Dr George Bantock,<sup>56</sup> had initially intended his son to train for the Indian Civil Service before deciding that he should become a chemical engineer.<sup>57</sup> Neither of these careers interested Granville in the slightest and, determined to study music, he persuaded his still unwilling father to allow him to train privately. Bantock eventually entered the RAM in September 1888,<sup>58</sup> although, in his case, his parents were not particularly supportive of his musical aspirations.<sup>59</sup>

Drysdale worked very hard during this first session and although lessons at the RAM took up only a limited amount of his time, he attended as many orchestral rehearsals and concerts as possible, as well as spending many hours each day at his lodgings practising, composing and completing written work. He also spent a considerable amount of time socialising with his friends in both musical and non-musical pursuits whilst being a frequent visitor to museums and galleries; nonetheless, he viewed this as an important part of a rounded education. On several occasions, Drysdale explains his working practices to his father, carefully justifying any periods when not studying; he had no paid employment and with living expenses in London so high, his father's financial help was vital. On one occasion, he notes coyly when relating his week's

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<sup>53</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, 12 November 1888, Cb10-x.16/10

<sup>54</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 6

<sup>55</sup> Peter Pirie/David Brock "Sir Granville Bantock" *New Grove...* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001) 2, 669

<sup>56</sup> Dr Cuillin Bantock, telephone conversation with the author, 13 July 2002. Dr George Bantock was a follower of the rival perception of asepsis which formed against Lister's work.

<sup>57</sup> Frank Howes "Sir Granville Ransome Bantock" *Dictionary of National Biography on CD-ROM* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

<sup>58</sup> Peter Pirie/David Brock "Sir Granville Bantock" *New Grove...* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001) 2, 669

<sup>59</sup> Granville Bantock to Mrs Young, 18 March 1896, 705:462/Box 20, Bantock Archive, Worcester Record Office. Mrs H.W. Young, an accomplished singer, was an old friend of the Bantock family who fostered Granville's interest in music. She almost certainly used her influence to persuade Dr Bantock into allowing Granville to train for a musical career. See Myrrha Bantock *Granville Bantock: a Personal Portrait* (London: Dent, 1972) 35–36.

activities: “I am writing you a few lines to tell you what I have been doing this week but I can’t do more than just give you a general idea.”<sup>60</sup>

The report that Drysdale received at the conclusion of his first session at the RAM demonstrates that he had progressed well in his studies. Of his principal study, Kuhe remarked that he was “exceedingly improved”; in harmony and composition it was stated that he had “much talent, at present somewhat wild, [but] works well” whilst his sight singing was deemed “highly satisfactory”.<sup>61</sup> Confusingly, Janey Drysdale in a contemporary account of events at the RAM prize giving that year, states that Learmont “failed in piano and sight singing”.<sup>62</sup> Comments such as “exceedingly improved” might suggest several meanings (e.g. good progress made, but the standard achieved still does not merit a pass); however, “highly satisfactory” can only indicate that standards have been met. It seems likely that Janey was mistaken (at least in her report of the sight singing result); any other solution would be bizarre. Drysdale’s improvements in harmony led to his being awarded a bronze medal in the subject<sup>63</sup> whilst his efforts in composition were rewarded by having his first orchestral work, his *Ballade* now renamed *The Spirit of the Glen*,<sup>64</sup> performed at St James’s Hall by students and professors of the Academy conducted by the principal.<sup>65</sup> Enrico Bevignani (1841–1903), the Italian conductor of Covent Garden Opera, was present at this concert and was obviously impressed with *The Spirit of the Glen* as in the following October he gave a performance of the work at a Promenade Concert at Her Majesty’s Theatre.<sup>66</sup> A highly popular series, these concerts featured a variety of musical styles from Beethoven to light dance tunes and included many artists of note. However, the inclusion of such novelty acts as ‘lady cornetists’, ‘lady whistlers’ and ‘claptrap ballad singers’<sup>67</sup> frequently produced lengthy and somewhat incongruous programming. The critic of *Musical Opinion* stated that performances were generally excellent although

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<sup>60</sup> Learmont Drysdale to his Papa, 5 October 1888, Cb10. x.16/6

<sup>61</sup> “RAM Annual Report”, July 1889, MS 6297/14, NLS

<sup>62</sup> Janey Drysdale to her aunt [Christian Learmont], July 1889, Cb10-x.16/13

<sup>63</sup> “Royal Academy of Music: Prize List”, July 1889, RAM Archive, London

<sup>64</sup> The surviving full score still carries the original title “May of the Morrill Glen”. However, although the new title chosen for the public performance is less specific to the programme of Hogg’s poem, it does more appropriately capture the mood of the work.

<sup>65</sup> “Royal Academy of Music” *Daily Chronicle* 27 July 1889, in Henry Farmer comp. “Press Cuttings — Drysdale”, Cb10-y.6, p. 5–6

<sup>66</sup> Programme: “Her Majesty’s in the Haymarket, Season 1889 — Promenade Concerts” 17 October 1889, Cb10-y.1/9

<sup>67</sup> J.B.K. “Concerts of the Month” *Musical Opinion* 13 (1 October 1889): 23

“Her Majesty’s orchestral music is a *terra incognita* to habitual frequenters at Promenade concerts.”<sup>68</sup> This less than prestigious concert series attracted little serious interest in the quality press and reviews of it are sparse. Nonetheless, it was still a great success for Drysdale to achieve in his first full year of training, the ultimate ambition of all aspiring composers — the professional performance of a work.

There are few extant documents concerning Drysdale’s second session at the RAM, however, from secondary sources it is apparent that this was probably his most successful. He was very active as both a student and performer, and believing that a good composer must have first-hand acquaintance with various orchestral instruments, he tried many of them at one time or another.<sup>69</sup> Drysdale was also to spend many evenings performing and acting as accompanist at RAM concerts and functions, playing both the classics and modern music, a versatility that was warmly encouraged by Kuhe. He performed several unknown works including Tchaikovsky’s *Fantasia de Concert in G Major* for piano and orchestra during a period when the composer was practically unknown to the British musical public.<sup>70</sup> This additional experience was to lead to a marked improvement in Drysdale’s pianoforte playing for which he was awarded the bronze medal that session.<sup>71</sup>

Drysdale’s compositional studies were also progressing. In December of 1889, he completed a trio for clarinet, bassoon and piano which he later adapted for the more traditional forces of violin, ‘cello and piano. The only information available concerning the trio’s first performance appears as the following annotation in Janey Drysdale’s hand in a published work list: “First performed at ‘Isaac’s ‘At Home’ in Feb. 1890.”<sup>72</sup> The string version of the work has received several performances in recent years<sup>73</sup> and was broadcast as part of the BBC Scotland series *Scotland’s Music* in 1992.<sup>74</sup> More information survives about Drysdale’s other compositions that year. In the spring of 1890, he began work on a cantata *Thomas the Rhymer* taking the text from Walter

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale “Scottish Composers...” 17 -

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> “Royal Academy of Music: Prize List, July 1890”, 4

<sup>72</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale “Scottish Composers...” 28. See copy: M21495, Arts Department, ML, Glasgow.

<sup>73</sup> Including a performance by the Marshall Willox Ensemble at the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam on 10 January 1993.

<sup>74</sup> Learmont Drysdale Trio in F contained in Programme 24 of *Scotland’s Music* (March 8, 1992)

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Scott's poem on the ancient ballad of that name.<sup>75</sup> Surviving correspondence from the period implies that Drysdale had completed the preliminary sketches for much of this large-scale piece, but only the prelude survives. The Academy orchestra performed the prelude of *Thomas the Rhymer* in July 1890 at the St James's Hall<sup>76</sup> where it was well received with the critic of the *Daily News* saying that it was "an admirable piece of tone painting, strongly imbued with the characteristics of Scottish music"<sup>77</sup> while the *Magazine of Music* stated:

[Drysdale's] orchestral prelude illustrating the ballad of *Thomas the Rhymer* ... is described by one of the most severe critics of a leading professional journal as singularly rich and effective. It rose infinitely above the level of the usual student's exercise.<sup>78</sup>

Drysdale tried to interest the conductor August Manns in performing the work at the Paterson concerts<sup>79</sup> in Edinburgh and solicited a performance at the Ipswich festival.<sup>80</sup> In a letter to Drysdale, Alexander C. Mackenzie offered advice concerning this matter whilst indicating that Manns had previously performed one of Drysdale's works at the Paterson concerts; however, there is no supporting evidence for this claim. Mackenzie's letter also enlightens us as to his view of Drysdale's academic deficiencies at this time, as it would seem that in the Principal's view, his musical imagination over-ruled his technical abilities.

Dear Mr. Drysdale,

If I remember rightly, you had a piece of yours performed last year in Edinburgh by Mr. Manns at the Paterson concerts and I think that you might safely ask [Paterson] to get Mr. Manns' approval of the new prelude with a view to its production. ...

As to Ipswich, that is quite a different affair and I think application would be useless. In Edinburgh you have not only an excuse but a good reason to show yourself even while you are a student. But it is premature to ask for appearances at festivals and try to take your place among composers who are working on their own responsibility ... but we hope that you will succeed eventually in taking a good place among [them]. If you want

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<sup>75</sup> Learmont Drysdale to his mother, 2 March 1890, Cb10-x.16/16

<sup>76</sup> "Academy Concert" *London Daily News*. [July] 1890 in Henry Farmer comp. "Press Cuttings — Drysdale", Cb10-y.6, p.14

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> [untitled] *Magazine of Music*. July 1890 in Henry Farmer comp. "Press Cuttings — Drysdale", Cb10-y.6, p.15

<sup>79</sup> These concerts were promoted by the Edinburgh businessman Robert Roy Paterson (1830–1903), senior partner of the firm Paterson and Sons, a publishing house and chain of music shops which had branches in many of the larger towns and cities of Scotland. Paterson was a well-educated musician who studied both in Edinburgh and at the Leipzig Conservatory before gaining experience of the music trade in London. He was a prolific composer of salon-type pieces for piano, and songs written under his own name as well as the pseudonyms Pierre Perrot and Alfred or Fra Stella. See Moira Ann Harris and Jane Mallinson "Paterson, Robert Roy" *MGG<sup>2</sup> (Personenteil)*, 13, 187.

<sup>80</sup> A.C. Mackenzie to Learmont Drysdale, 2 August 1890, Cb10-x.17/6

to be sure of this you will have to change your tack a little however, and give yourself a full year's work at counterpoint and form. Both I mean to say are your weak points. Fancy, which you have, alone will not carry you through either as a composer or a teacher. You must equip yourself also for work as a teacher for no man need hope to earn a good living as a composer of serious music. This is unfortunately a known fact, but is sometimes known too late. If you take my advice you will pay less attention to composition proper for a time and give yourself up to the study of the means to composition: a knowledge of which you decidedly lack just at the present. All this because I have your own interests at heart and feel bound to give you every advice whether the dose is palatable or not! ...

By all means speak to Mr. Paterson and mention my name if necessary.<sup>81</sup>

From the tone of this letter, it is apparent that Mackenzie felt Drysdale was rather too ambitious, possibly even 'big-headed'. He was aiming to advise a course of action that would not only improve Drysdale's compositional skills, but would also prepare him for a situation where teaching was a primary source of income. Drysdale, however, had a good, and possibly inflated, opinion of himself and apparently did not agree with the Principal's views, disliking music that was technically rather than imaginatively conceived and being quick to condemn those who followed the former route as the following demonstrates:

[The prelude] is very dramatic as far as I have gone, and really I think promises well. One or two of the students for whom I have played bits like it very much, and I really think there is no fear about my being able to do justice to this glorious theme. One of the last pieces I did of it, Corder remarked last lesson, 'that's very bold'. It seems that boldness is rather a characteristic of my music. One has much need to be so, as one hears plenty 'wishy-washy', imitation music....

Ethel Boyce's cantata<sup>82</sup> is to be done at the orchestral concert. Mackenzie was rehearsing the orchestral parts today and I think that it is simply downright rubbish and not music at all. Head and no heart. I would like to know what music was intended for if it wasn't to speak to the heart of the people. It makes me quite wild to hear music of that sort, weak and milk and water imitation of something else, for instance Wagner who was a genius himself, which can scarcely be said of any of his followers."<sup>83</sup>

As far as the author is aware, *Thomas the Rhymer* was not performed at that time at either the Paterson concerts or the Ipswich festival, although in later years it was to receive a number of performances including several given by Dan Godfrey at Bournemouth.<sup>84</sup> However, Drysdale's imagination seems to have triumphed over those

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Aaron A. Cohen "Ethel Mary Boyce" in *International Encyclopaedia of Women Composers* 2 vols (New York: Book and Music, 1987) 1, 101. Boyce (1863–1936) composed solo piano works, songs, cantatas etc. and won the RAM's Charles Lucas Medal in 1889.

<sup>83</sup> Learmont Drysdale to his parents [1890], Cb10-x.16/15

<sup>84</sup> Stephen Lloyd *Sir Dan Godfrey: Champion of British Composers* (London: Thames, 1995), 122. Also see programmes and prospectuses in Cb10-x.15, x.18 and y.1 for further performances.

who composed technically that year, as he was to win the renowned Charles Lucas Prize in July of 1890.<sup>85</sup>

The Charles Lucas Prize was considered the most prestigious award for original composition granted by the RAM during that period.<sup>86</sup> Charles Lucas (1808–1869) was a renowned cellist, conductor and composer,<sup>87</sup> who was Principal of the RAM from 1856–1866, and the prize was founded by subscription as a memorial to him in 1875.<sup>88</sup> The prize, a silver medal with a white enamel inlay depicting Orpheus with his lute designed by T. Woolner, R.A.,<sup>89</sup> was offered annually for composition students who had been studying at the Academy throughout the three preceding consecutive terms, with the subject, an *Overture to a Comedy* in 1890, being announced two months before the closing date of the competition.<sup>90</sup> Many musicians of distinction were awarded this prize during their attendance at the RAM<sup>91</sup> as the following extract from the prize list shows:

**Table 1:** Winners of the Charles Lucas Prize, 1879–1913<sup>92</sup>

Winner	Year	Winner	Year
Arthur Goring Thomas	1879/1880	G. Dorrington Cunningham	1900
C. Stewart Macpherson	1884	Adam von Ahn Carse	1901
Edward German	1885	Edwin York Bowen	1902
Arthur E. Godfrey	1886	Benjamin J. Dale	1903
Dora Bright	1888	Arnold E. T. Bax	1904
Learmont Drysdale	1890	Hubert C. Bath	1905
Herman F. Löhr	1893	Montague F. Phillips	1906
John B. McEwen	1895	Emma Lomax	1910
William H. Reed	1896	Morfydd Owen	1913

<sup>85</sup> “Royal Academy of Music: Prize List”, July 1890, 4

<sup>86</sup> *Royal Academy of Music: Prospectus* (London: np, 1889) 33

<sup>87</sup> William H. Husk and E. D. MacKerness “Charles Lucas” in *New Grove...* (1980) 11, 297

<sup>88</sup> *Royal Academy of Music: Prospectus* (London: np, 1889) 33

<sup>89</sup> The medal issued to Drysdale is now held in MS 6297, Small Collections, NLS.

<sup>90</sup> *Royal Academy of Music: Prospectus* (London: np, 1889) 33

<sup>91</sup> *Royal Academy of Music: Prize Booklet* (London: np, 1954) 33. ‘Winners of distinction’ have been judged by the author as those who receive entries in *New Grove...* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001).

<sup>92</sup> The prize ceased to be awarded in 1914.



# Royal Academy of Music,

TENTERDEN STREET, HANOVER SQUARE.

Principal

Dr. A. C. MACKENZIE.

## PRIZE LIST, JULY, 1890.

*Pupils only who have been studying in the Academy throughout the Academic Year are eligible for Prizes.*

### LADY RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

Has most kindly consented to distribute the Awards.

### MEMORIAL PRIZES.

#### THE CHARLES LUCAS SILVER MEDAL.

From a design by T. WOOLNER, R.A.

In Memory of

CHARLES LUCAS.

(Student, Professor, Conductor, and Principal.)

For the Composition of an Overture to a Comedy,

AWARDED TO Learmont Drysdale.

EXAMINERS: G. BUONOMICI, EATON FANING, and F. H. COWEN (Chairman).

#### THE PAREPA-ROSA GOLD MEDAL.

In Memory of

EUPHROSINE PAREPA-ROSA.

(Endowed by CARL ROSA, Esq.)

For the Singing of Pieces selected by the Committee.

AWARDED TO Marie Hooton.

EXAMINERS: HARTON MCGUCKIN, LEWIS THOMAS, and HILDA WILSON (in the Chair).

#### THE STERNDALE BENNETT PRIZE.

(Purse of Ten Guineas.)

In Memory of

PROFESSOR SIR WILLIAM STERNDALE BENNETT

M.A., Mus. D. Cantab., D.C.L. Oxon., R.A.M.

(Student, Professor, and Principal.)

For the Playing of a Pianoforte Composition by Sir WILLIAM STERNDALE BENNETT, selected by the Committee.

AWARDED TO Margaret E. Ford.

EXAMINERS: ALFRED GILBERT, BRADBURY TURNER, and Mdlle. JANOUCHA (in the Chair).

#### THE LLEWELYN THOMAS GOLD MEDAL.

In Memory of

LLEWELYN THOMAS.

M.D. Brussels.

(Hon. Physician to the Royal Academy of Music.)

(Presented by HENRY EVILL, Esq.)

For Declamatory English Singing, exemplified in Pieces chosen by the Committee.

AWARDED TO Emily Squire.

EXAMINERS: HENRY J. FROST, LIZA LEHMANN, and ANNA WILLIAMS (in the Chair).

#### THE EVILL PRIZE.

(Purse of Ten Guineas.)

(Presented by HENRY EVILL, Esq.)

For Declamatory English Singing, exemplified in Pieces chosen by the Committee.

AWARDED TO Edwin Houghton.

EXAMINERS: HENRY J. FROST, LIZA LEHMANN, and ANNA WILLIAMS (in the Chair).

#### THE BONAMY DOBREE PRIZE.

(Purse of Ten Guineas.)

(Presented by BONAMY DOBREE, Esq.)

For the Playing of a Violoncello Piece selected by the Committee.

AWARDED TO Bertie P. Parker.

EXAMINERS: H. TRUST, E. WOOLHOUSE, and A. PUGH (Chairman).

#### THE SAINTON-DOLBY PRIZE.

(Purse of Five Guineas.)

For Singing of a Piece chosen by the Committee.

AWARDED TO Emily Squire.

EXAMINERS: BEN DAVIES, ALBERT VISETTI, C. LYALL (Chairman).

Throughout his life Drysdale was in the habit of leaving important work until the last moment possible and the occasion of his submission for the Charles Lucas Prize was no different. On the 27 June 1890 and only four days before the competition's closing date,<sup>93</sup> Drysdale completed the piano score of his submission, the work drawing inspiration from a tour of the Western Highlands which he had undertaken during the summer vacation of 1889.<sup>94</sup> The forty page orchestral score, which was completed in pencil and includes an additional introduction, is dated 28 June; it is possible that Drysdale achieved this miraculous feat of scoring in just one day or he may have prepared the two scores simultaneously, completing sections of the piano score then orchestrating. However, the short time in which he completed the work is suggested by the annotation "kindly excuse the pencil writing" found at the score's conclusion.<sup>95</sup> By naming the orchestral version *Overture to a Scottish Comedy*, he fulfilled the necessary requirements of the competition's rules in writing an "overture to comedy", whilst explaining his prominent use of features such as scotch snap and dance rhythms derived from Scottish traditional music. It was an expedient change of title to suit the particular circumstances. Jane Drysdale states that her brother thought little of this work written in such a hurry for the competition. However, several other musicians did not concur with this assessment; Henry Farmer was keen to arrange it for military band, a plan with which he did not proceed<sup>96</sup> whilst the English pianist Harold Scott (b. c.1880) transcribed the piano version and included an arrangement of the orchestral introduction.<sup>97</sup> This version was used as overture/interval music during a Christmas season run of John Brandane's *Heather Gentry* at the Lyric Theatre, Glasgow in 1927/8.<sup>98</sup>

During the Autumn of 1890, Drysdale and the singer Robert Newman (1858–1926) were engaged to perform on a provincial tour of Ireland, Scotland and England with

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<sup>93</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers..." 17. Copy annotated by its author and held in Farmer 256.

<sup>94</sup> *Through the Sound of Raasay (In Memory of Skye)*, Cb9-x.1. The concluding page of this piano score is annotated "In memory of the Western Highlands August 1889".

<sup>95</sup> *Overture to a Scottish Comedy*, Cb9-x.2. The final page of the score contains Drysdale's signed pseudonym 'Ercildoune', home of his esteemed ancestor Thomas the Rhymer.

<sup>96</sup> Jane Drysdale produced a set of parts for the work. See Cb9-x.3.

<sup>97</sup> Harold Scott arr. *Through the Sound of Raasay*, Cb9-x.4. The arrangement is dated 6 September 1916.

<sup>98</sup> Programme: "*Heather Gentry*, a Highland Comedy in 4 Acts by John Brandane", The Lyric Theatre [Glasgow], 24 December [1927–4 January 1928], The Scottish National Players produced and directed by Tyrone Guthrie, Cb10-y.1/18. See 2B.c.Box 6, Scottish Theatre Archive, GUL for further information regarding this production, although the numerous reviews contained in this holding do not mention the music performed.

Mrs Mary Barker (mother of the actor, author and dramatist Harley Granville-Barker<sup>99</sup>) foremost lady reciter of the time.<sup>100</sup> In Newman, Drysdale once again befriended a musician who had gained considerable experience in life before entering the RAM. He began his career as a stockjobber in the City, before deciding to train as a singer and following study in Italy, worked successfully as a professional vocalist for six years. Following a failed venture into the concert agency business, he entered the RAM. In 1893, he became manager of the Queen's Hall where two years later he founded the Promenade Concerts appointing Henry Wood as their conductor.<sup>101</sup> Drysdale was solo pianist on the Barker tour whilst also acting as accompanist to Newman and providing incidental music of his own composition for some of Mrs Barker's recitations.<sup>102</sup> He earned a salary of five guineas for eight performances per week, with the Barkers paying for hotel accommodation and travelling expenses. Drysdale's contract seems to have continued until mid October, sometime after the date when he should have returned to his studies at the RAM — he probably believed that the considerable experience he was gaining, both musically and socially, outweighed the studies missed, although RAM rules frowned on such practices.

During the Barker tour, Drysdale was commissioned to write a choral work for the closing ceremony of the Edinburgh Exhibition of 1890<sup>103</sup> and chose to set Robert Burns's poem *Address to Edinburgh* in the form of a choral ode. Janey Drysdale states that the exhibition committee (at the suggestion of Robert Marr<sup>104</sup>) had offered this commission, but by the end of the exhibition, losses were so great that they could not afford a grand closing ceremony and the idea of such a work had to be given up.<sup>105</sup> In the event, the exhibition was concluded by a fireworks display and a performance given by the Edinburgh Highland Reel and Strathspey Society.<sup>106</sup> Official documentation of

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<sup>99</sup> "Harley Granville-Barker" *Webster's New Biographical Dictionary* (np: Merriam-Webster, 1995) in *Infopedia* CD-ROM (Bath: Future, 1996)

<sup>100</sup> A[lbert] Barker to Learmont Drysdale, 26 June 1890, Cb10-x.17/27

<sup>101</sup> David Cox *The Henry Wood Proms* (London: BBC, 1980) 23–26

<sup>102</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 13

<sup>103</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 19 August 1942, Farmer 249/1942/m. Hamish MacCunn had composed *Psalm VIII* for the opening ceremony. See handwritten sheet attached to "International Exhibition Edinburgh 1890: Official Daily Programme 1 May", YT 570.890/42182, ECL.

<sup>104</sup> Marr had been secretary of the Scottish Musical Society which was set up in 1878. See bibliography for information regarding the highly informative books he produced following the international exhibitions in Edinburgh (1886) and Glasgow (1888).

<sup>105</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 20 September 1947, Farmer 249/1947/i

<sup>106</sup> "International Exhibition Edinburgh, 1890: Official Daily Programme 1 November", YT570.890/42182, ECL

the commission cannot be traced, but this version of events is supported by a review of Scottish exhibitions given in the *Edinburgh Evening News* which states that the 1890 exhibition was a financial fiasco, the guarantee fund being too small in relation to the capital invested.<sup>107</sup>

Drysdale's third session at the RAM was very successful. In January of 1891 he won the Glasgow Society of Musicians' Prize of 30 guineas with his colourful overture *Tam o' Shanter* and this success led to the work receiving its first performance at the Glasgow Orchestral Concerts under the baton of August Manns. The performance took place at St. Andrew's Halls, Glasgow on 27 January 1891 and the published plebiscite taken that evening revealed that *Tam o' Shanter* received more votes than any other overture performed during the concert season.<sup>108</sup> In the autumn of that year, Wilhelm Kuhe notes in his autobiography that he advised Drysdale to contact August Manns and discuss the possibility of having *Tam o' Shanter* performed at the Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts, of which Manns was conductor.<sup>109</sup> In an interview of 1904, Drysdale's version of events surrounding this performance is somewhat different as he states:

I remember walking along Princes Street, Edinburgh with Manns. Suddenly and without prompting, he said 'I would like to do *Tam o' Shanter* at the Palace. My dear boy, let me do it, and I will make a success for you.' And he did! Need I say how honoured I felt, being only a second year student [*sic*]. ... Since then I have been proud to enjoy his friendship.<sup>110</sup>

It is difficult to judge the relative merits of these accounts: Kuhe may have had a poor memory or might be overstating the assistance he gave students; Drysdale could be exaggerating his involvement with a famous figure for the benefit of the interviewer. Whatever the absolute truth, the work received its first London performance on 24 October 1891. It was an important event for any composer to secure a performance under such a prestigious figure as Manns and for a student it was a particularly great honour, a situation which Drysdale obviously appreciated. Nevertheless, it seems that he did not build on this success. Janey Drysdale notes that her brother was asked to send his score for *Tam O' Shanter* to Chicago for inclusion in the 1893 exhibition, but that the music arrived too late.<sup>111</sup> It was one of many lost opportunities.

<sup>107</sup> "City Exhibitions of the Past" *Edinburgh Evening News* 22 April 1944, 3d-e

<sup>108</sup> "The Glasgow Orchestral Concerts" *Glasgow Herald* 29 January 1891, 4g

<sup>109</sup> Wilhelm Kuhe *My Musical Recollections* (London: Bentley, 1896) 268-269

<sup>110</sup> "Learmont Drysdale" *Musical Herald* (1 July 1904): 196

<sup>111</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 20 September 1947, Farmer 249/1947/i

Drysdale also made several experiments in composing different forms of vocal music with orchestral accompaniment setting the ballad “The Kelpie of Corrievreckan” by Dr Charles Mackay (1812–89) both as a cantata for soloists, chorus and orchestra, and as a recitation for speaker with orchestral accompaniment.<sup>112</sup> C. Leslie Walker accompanied by Drysdale on the piano first performed the recitation at an RAM Fortnightly Concert in June 1891<sup>113</sup> and this version was to receive several performances during the early twentieth century in Edinburgh.<sup>114</sup> Although the cantata setting of the text was not completed until 1894, a soprano solo “The Kelpie Galloped” was performed at an RAM concert in 1891.<sup>115</sup>

In November of 1890, Drysdale, Bantock and Steggall established the RAM Excelsior Society, a forum for present and former students to make music and meet socially.<sup>116</sup> The Society organised many dinners, lectures (including several on Wagner given by Frederick Corder) and concerts, which provided a platform for members to perform a variety of music including their own compositions.<sup>117</sup> In the 1891–92 session, Alexander Mackenzie was elected president whilst Drysdale was appointed honorary secretary and other members of the RAM staff joined including Frederick Corder and Tobias Matthay (1858–1945).<sup>118</sup> Drysdale’s main function at these evenings, organisation aside, was as accompanist and conductor, with the concerts providing a wealth of experience in orchestral conducting.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, during this session, Drysdale developed several new friendships. He often accompanied the tenor Philip Brozel (who later found fame as an operatic singer on the continent and in Russia) and he befriended William Wallace,<sup>120</sup> a Scotsman who in later years enjoyed considerable success as a composer.<sup>121</sup> Wallace (1860–1940) assisted Drysdale in correcting the parts for *Tam o’ Shanter* before its first

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<sup>112</sup> Learmont Drysdale “The Kelpie of Corrievreckan” full score (unfinished), piano score and 27 separate parts, [1891], Cb10-y.29–31

<sup>113</sup> Programme: “RAM Fortnightly Concert, 13 June 1891”, Cb10-y.1/7

<sup>114</sup> Janey Drysdale “Learmont Drysdale” 13. For example, a performance with piano accompaniment was given at a Dunedin Association recital on 17 December 1913. See *Dunedin Magazine* 2 (1913–14): 113.

<sup>115</sup> Programme: “Royal Academy of Music July Concert, 28 July 1891”, Cb10-x.15/4

<sup>116</sup> “Investiture of the Excelsior Society” 28 November 1890, Farmer 302/1

<sup>117</sup> [Newspaper Cuttings concerning the Excelsior Society], 705:492/Box 12 (v), Bantock Archive, Worcester Record Office, 1–2. These gatherings were often held at the Bantock family home in Granville Place, Portland Square.

<sup>118</sup> “RAM Excelsior Society Handbook”, 1891–1892, Farmer 245/1

<sup>119</sup> “Royal Academy of Music Excelsior Society: Concert Programme” 4 April 1892, Cb10-y.5/2.

Drysdale conducted Tchaikovsky’s *Serenade for Strings*; Handel’s *Dead March from Saul* and Bach’s *Concerto in D Minor for Piano and Orchestra*.

<sup>120</sup> Janey Drysdale “Learmont Drysdale” 14

<sup>121</sup> Conrad Wilson “William Wallace” in *New Grove...* (1980) 20, 178

performance in Glasgow and he wrote the programme notes for its first London performance at Crystal Palace.<sup>122</sup>

As Drysdale's studies progressed and he gained recognition in the wider musical field, he became more outspoken and less respectful of figures in authority within the RAM, and he made a point of demanding that his rights and dignity be respected. On one occasion, he was accompanying a pupil of the great Spanish voice teacher Manuel García. García (1805–1906) stopped the performance to point out an error which he believed Drysdale had made. Drysdale was quick to point out that García was mistaken and received an apology.<sup>123</sup> Henry Farmer notes that Drysdale had developed a particular hand gesture (right hand thumb to the nose with the digits well extended with the left hand joined to the right in a similar manner) which if addressed to a fellow student would be resented, but if made in reference to the Principal — sotto voce — was received with universal approval. It seems that the sentiments of this gibe quickly reached Mackenzie though he did not act immediately upon the knowledge.<sup>124</sup> This behaviour reached its peak towards the end of Drysdale's Academy career. The dénouement came when in July 1892 Mackenzie wished to perform Drysdale's most recent work *The Lay of Thora* (a dramatic scena for soprano and orchestra set to a text by Granville Bantock) at a forthcoming concert. Drysdale states that he made every effort to ensure that the parts were copied in time for the first rehearsal, but his copyist was unable to accommodate him. However, Mackenzie was determined to perform the work at this particular time and stated that the parts had to be ready for the following rehearsal.<sup>125</sup> The copyist completed the parts just in time for the rehearsal, but there was no time for Drysdale to proof read them and consequently, several mistakes were discovered in the copies during rehearsal. Mackenzie spoke harshly to Drysdale over the matter and eventually became "too abrasive and lost his head completely",<sup>126</sup> prompting an angry reply concerning Mackenzie's lack of gentleman-like behaviour from Drysdale. After this outburst, Mackenzie continued rehearsing as normal, but both he and Drysdale seemed to have nursed ill feelings over the matter, with Drysdale stating to

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<sup>122</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 14

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Henry Farmer [Typescript notes used in the preparation of *George Bernard Shaw's Sister and Her Friends*], Farmer 248/4v

<sup>125</sup> Learmont Drysdale to his mother, 14 July 1892, Cb10-x.16/17

<sup>126</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, [17] July 1892, Cb10-x.16/20

other RAM students that the principal was “ill tempered, ill mannered and a coward at heart.”<sup>127</sup> Apparently, Drysdale had already decided to leave the Academy prior to this contretemps<sup>128</sup> and it was some time before Mackenzie wreaked his revenge by refusing to allow Drysdale to enter the RAM premises.<sup>129</sup> Outraged at this treatment, Drysdale petitioned the RAM Committee for a consideration of the matter. However, after their discussion and a statement from the principal they decided that “having heard [the principal’s statement] and read the correspondence [the committee] hereby endorses the action of the principal.”<sup>130</sup> Drysdale was so angered by this decision that he returned his three RAM medals and stated that he no longer wished to have any association with the institution.<sup>131</sup> The incident rumbled on until the summer of 1893 with Drysdale even threatening legal action against the principal and his committee, believing that one student at least should be “able to assert his rights and not be disposed to buckle to the caprices of the principal.”<sup>132</sup> The events surrounding Drysdale’s departure from the RAM remained in the collective memory of Academy students for some years, a somewhat elaborated version of the tale still being recounted when Arnold Bax entered the institution in 1900 as he vividly describes in his memoirs:

Long ago in the heroic era — another Scot, Learmont Drysdale, dared to oppose claymore to claymore, and when at rehearsal of a composition of Drysdale’s the Principal broke out into his tantrums, the reckless student shouted back, ‘Then don’t do the damn thing!’ and snatching his score from the desk fled from the Academy for ever.<sup>133</sup>

As Bax’s contemporary Eric Coates notes when describing a similar incident: “to argue with Mackenzie was more than useless, nay, it was fatal”.<sup>134</sup>

In 1927 Sir John McEwen, who succeeded Mackenzie as principal of the RAM, found Drysdale’s medals in the principal’s safe and being unaware of the reason for their presence there, returned them to his sister accompanied by a letter requesting

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 2 August 1944, Farmer 249/1944/m

<sup>130</sup> “Royal Academy of Music: Minute books”, 1892–1897, p.25: 12 December 1892, RAM, London

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p.42: 14 March 1893

<sup>132</sup> Learmont Drysdale to N. Threlfall (Chairman of the Committee of Management), 16 July 1893, Farmer 245/4

<sup>133</sup> Arnold Bax *Farewell, My Youth* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943) 20

<sup>134</sup> Eric Coates *Suite in Four Movements* (London: Heinemann, 1953) 67. The student in question was B. Walton O’ Donnell later the conductor of the BBC Military Band. Mackenzie grew so furious that he threw the full score into the “bowels of the orchestra”, whilst the furious composer wisely rushed away giving all parties the chance to regain their composure.

information about the situation.<sup>135</sup> Miss Drysdale's explanation, if any, is unknown, but she decided to present her brother's medals and certificates to the nation.<sup>136</sup> Given the information above concerning the unfavourable circumstances under which Drysdale left the RAM, it is curious that a well-known writer on the history of Scottish music erroneously states that Drysdale "proceeded south to the Royal Academy of Music for his musical education. He remained there as a member of the teaching staff for most of his professional life."<sup>137</sup> The author has found no evidence to support this statement. Drysdale followed his intentions as stated to the management committee and severed all links with the institution. A search of all the relevant archives has also revealed that Drysdale left the RAM without any professional qualifications, albeit that this situation was common during the period when people entered such institutions for the prime purpose of education. Nonetheless, Drysdale had left his mark upon the RAM and was fondly remembered by a number of his contemporaries including William Henry Bell who eulogises:

At the time I entered his [Corder's] class his most prominent students were Granville Bantock, and a brilliant but rather erratic genius named Learmont Drysdale.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Henry Farmer to Mr Dobie (Librarian at NLS), 12 August 1944, MS 6297, NLS

<sup>136</sup> The Charles Lucas Medal and the RAM Bronze Medal for Harmony (1889) are in MS 6297, Small Collections, NLS; the Bronze Medal for Pianoforte (1890) is held by the Department of Coins and Medals, the British Museum (registration number 1948-7-8-1).

<sup>137</sup> Frederick Rimmer "The Late Nineteenth to Mid-Twentieth Centuries" in Kenneth Elliott and Frederick Rimmer *A History of Scottish Music* (London: BBC, 1973) 66

<sup>138</sup> "From W.H. Bell's Reminiscences" in Lewis Foreman *From Parry to Britten: British Music in Letters 1900-1945* (London: B.T. Bateford, 1987) 4

### 3. Freelance Composer and Conductor: 1892–1903

Details of Drysdale's activities between 1892 and 1903 are sketchy, but some information regarding this important period in his professional life has been gleaned from correspondence, concert programmes, newspaper reviews and various secondary sources. During the first few years after leaving the RAM, Drysdale's location seems to have been dependent on the projects he was undertaking and, presumably, on the practicalities of his financial circumstances, a subject of which little is known. When in Edinburgh, he frequently resided with his brother and sister at "The Leuchold" on Lord Rosebery's Dalmeny estate. Here, as Janey Drysdale recalls, the siblings had a vibrant social life with "Andrew's scientific friends, Johnnie's [Learmont's] artist friends and my own — Bohemians all and delightful company."<sup>1</sup> From 1895, Drysdale was permanently resident at his family home in Castle Street<sup>2</sup> and later at Greenbank Terrace in the upmarket district of Morningside.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that mother and youngest son were devoted and that they derived mutual benefit from their shared life, but Andrew Drysdale's attitude is more difficult to establish. Correspondence indicates that father and son were close — for example Andrew did provide generous support for Learmont's studies at the RAM — nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that he did not trust his son's financial judgement. Over many years, Andrew involved his wife, elder son and daughter in a number of important financial transactions; there is, however, no official record of Learmont being included in such dealings.<sup>4</sup> His lack of financial and business acumen was rather understated by Janey when she noted: "he [Learmont] was not a commercial man".<sup>5</sup> Living with a devoted and protective family, the delicate son/sibling would have been relieved of serious financial worry earning a little from teaching and conducting, whilst leaving plenty of time to concentrate on composition. There is no evidence to suggest that Drysdale undertook work as an

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<sup>1</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, [1942], Farmer 249/1942/w

<sup>2</sup> Electoral Register: City of Edinburgh, West Division, St. Luke's Ward, 1895–96, p. 125, no. 4228 [Entry: George John Learmont Drysdale, 30 Castle Street]

<sup>3</sup> Census of 1901: County of Midlothian, Edinburgh, Parish of Morningside, vol. 167, p. 2, no. 10 [Entry: 9 Greenbank Terrace]. In 1897, the family moved their home to 13 Greenbank Terrace, but around 1900 made a further shift to no. 9 of the same road. See *Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directories* of the period.

<sup>4</sup> *Register of Sasines* (Edinburgh: H.M.S.O, 1897–1909): Midlothian, Edinburgh, 1897, no. 2519, 2521; 1906, no. 5959; 1909, no. 5440. This register records documents that narrate the legal transactions involved when heritable property changes hands or is used as security for a loan. See Cecil Sinclair *Tracing Your Scottish Ancestors* revised ed. (Edinburgh: The Stationery Office, 1997) 54.

<sup>5</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 38

organist/choirmaster or that he had a teaching practice of any great size<sup>6</sup> — he seems to have ignored Alexander Mackenzie’s advice regarding the importance of teaching for a composer. However, he did occasionally perform at amateur concerts including one at Dalmeny village in 1893 where he played some piano solos and acted in a short play.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, secondary evidence suggests that Drysdale maintained a high standard of piano playing. During the tour of his opera *Red Spider* in 1898, Drysdale is recorded as having amazed the cast with his improvisatory skills and his ability to recall many of the older operas from memory, the latter talent encouraging the leading lady Lucy Carr Shaw to “catch him out” by demanding a particularly wide variety of extracts.<sup>8</sup>

Drysdale’s periods of residence in London are difficult to trace although he appears to have visited the capital fairly frequently to work with associates or meet friends, whilst occasionally, he would be invited to hear a performance of one of his works. On short visits, correspondence suggests that he stayed with friends (membership of a residential club has not been traced) whilst lengthier stays were spent in lodgings.<sup>9</sup> His longer residences in the capital are impossible to substantiate officially — he was ineligible to vote there and none of his stays coincided with a decennial census.

Throughout this period Drysdale remained in communication with a number of his RAM friends who were to provide him with many useful contacts in the London musical scene. For example, in 1895 Georg Jacobi, brother of Drysdale’s friend Maurice Jacobi and long-standing conductor at London’s Alhambra Theatre, arranged for a performance of Drysdale’s *Polka o’ Salon* and an unspecified ‘Dance’.<sup>10</sup> However, it was not just professional associates that Drysdale maintained as evidenced by his friendship with the musician and actress Lena Ashwell (1872–1957). During 1897,

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<sup>6</sup> Many sources including Post Office directories of London and Edinburgh from the period have been searched in an effort to provide information concerning Drysdale’s location and activities at this time.

<sup>7</sup> Programme: Social evening held by the Riding School, Dalmeny Park, 7 April 1893, Cb10-x.18/13

<sup>8</sup> Henry George Farmer *George Bernard Shaw’s Sister...* 102–3. The letter between Farmer and Janey Drysdale cited as the source for this information has not been traced.

<sup>9</sup> For example, correspondence from 1899, written during Drysdale’s collaboration with the actor and dramatist Arthur Branscombe, gives his address as 53, Ordnance Road, St. John’s Wood, a residence in which he had lodged whilst studying at the RAM. *Kelly’s Post Office Directory of London* for that year states this accommodation was an apartment house owned by a Mr Henry Newall.

<sup>10</sup> G. Jacobi to Learmont Drysdale, 11 November 1895, Cb10-x.17/20. This theatre, also known as the Alhambra Palace of Varieties, is listed under “Music Halls” in *Kelly’s Post Office Directory of London 1900* (see p. 2236).

Ashwell encouraged Drysdale to perform in charity concerts in London's East End as well as frequently inviting him to dine at her home.<sup>11</sup>

In February of 1893, Granville Bantock invited Drysdale to assist in the establishment of a scheme whereby native composers would campaign against the adverse treatment by the critics of contemporary British music through undertaking the publication of a monthly journal.<sup>12</sup> Drysdale initially agreed to Bantock's proposal and wrote seeking further information. In his reply Bantock explained:

It is proposed to establish a crusade against the standard of musical criticism in this country, much after the manner in which Schumann and his friends acted in Germany. To further our aims it will be necessary to publish a paper as Schumann did, which will fill up the vacancy now existing by dealing purely with criticism and reviewing in an honest fashion, and at the same time setting up a high standard of excellence required. There is no existing musical paper at the present time, that would fulfil this want, and such a paper would be sure to obtain a wide circulation in the musical profession. ... The power that such means would give us is indisputable, and we could make our weight felt throughout the kingdom, besides adding to our own reputation and remuneration. To start the paper, it is probable that each member may be required to obtain or dispose of some 10 shares at 20s/-, or 10s/- per share. That matter will, however, be for discussion. The staff will probably consist of A. Davidson Arnott,<sup>13</sup> Erskine Allon, H.O. Anderton together with yourself and [myself].<sup>14</sup>

After some consideration, Drysdale decided not to join the group although the exact reasons for this decision are unknown, as his reply to Bantock does not survive. Janey Drysdale states that her brother believed that critics treated his work fairly and that he did not attract the negative criticism which the group aimed to counter. Whatever the reason, Bantock accepted Drysdale's arguments replying:

Many thanks for your long and well reflected letter, which I have given much consideration to. We had a very successful meeting, and have cast our plans.... The paper however will not be issued monthly, and will take a slightly different form, although the essence of the matter remains practically unaltered.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See undated letters from Lena Pocock [stage name Ashwell] to Learmont Drysdale in Cb10-x.17/18<sup>1-5</sup>. It seems probable that Ashwell and Drysdale met during their student days at the RAM. Ashwell, a woman of religious conviction, backed many good causes. During World War 1, she arranged concerts and dramatic performances for troops at the front (thus anticipating the work of E.N.S.A. in the second war), an enterprise that she later extended to embrace performances given for a nominal fee at local venues in London. She was appointed an OBE in 1917. For further information see "Ashwell, Lena" *Oxford DNB* 2, 700–701.

<sup>12</sup> Granville Bantock to Learmont Drysdale, 4 February 1893, Cb10-x.17/15<sup>3</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *MT* notes that A.D. Arnott was the first Bachelor of Music at the University of Durham. See Percy A. Scholes *The Mirror of Music: A Century of Musical Life in Britain as Reflected in the Pages of the Musical Times* 2 vols (London: Novello and Oxford University Press, 1947) 2, 675.

<sup>14</sup> Granville Bantock to Learmont Drysdale, 8 February 1893, Cb10-x.17/15<sup>4</sup>

<sup>15</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 11 February 1893, Cb10-x.17/15<sup>5</sup>

Financial considerations such as the expense of acquiring shares in the scheme, and funding travel and subsistence expenses might have also dissuaded Drysdale from involvement. However, there might have been further reasons for declining. Drysdale saw himself chiefly as a composer and he may have decided that contributing to such an erudite project would be unsatisfying and irrelevant to his needs. Furthermore, his limited professional experience as a composer may not have provided him with the necessary insight to realise either the true manner in which the critics evaluated his works or the broader aims of Bantock and his colleagues.

The first issue of the *New Quarterly Musical Review*, with Bantock as its editor, appeared in May 1893, the introductory statement outlining its rationale thus:

While we shall feel bound to mention serious faults, or what seem to us, in works here reviewed, we shall do our best to remember that to criticise is to judge; and that to judgement sympathy is essential, prejudice fatal, that a work can only be understood by looking at it from the author's point of view.<sup>16</sup>

The periodical covered a wide variety of subjects and attracted an array of well-known figures including Frederick Corder, J. A. Fuller Maitland, [Sir] Alexander Mackenzie and Ernest Newman, with the younger generation of men such as Orsmond Anderton and William Wallace also figuring. Wallace seems to have become involved after Drysdale's refusal to join the group and there were lengthy periods during Bantock's tours abroad when he was required to perform the duties of editor.<sup>17</sup> Considering Drysdale's academic weaknesses, it is doubtful whether he could have coped with such responsibilities.

During the summer of 1893, Drysdale accompanied his brother Andrew on a visit to Lord Rosebery's estate in the Moorfoot Hills, an area of outstanding natural beauty just to the south of Edinburgh.<sup>18</sup> One particularly lonely glen on the South Esk River where the ruined Hirendeane castle nestles at the foot of the imposing Blackhope Scar<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> [Granville Bantock] "Introductory" *New Quarterly Musical Review* 1 (May 1893–February 1894): 2–3. The final issue of the journal appeared in February of 1896, the collaborators apparently having decided that they were unable to continue with the venture because of other professional commitments. Unfortunately, this issue is not discussed directly in the correspondence between Bantock and Wallace held by the NLS.

<sup>17</sup> Granville Bantock to H. Orsmond Anderton, 2 December 1894, 705:492/Box 12 (i), Bantock Archive, Worcester Record Office

<sup>18</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 15–16

<sup>19</sup> This glen is the catchment area of Gladhouse Reservoir, part of the Edinburgh public water supply system. See *Guide to Scottish Lowlands: Edinburgh, the Clyde, and Border Country* (London: Geographia, [1975])



**Illustration 5: Hirendeán Castle and Gladhouse Reservoir** the scene which inspired the overture *Herondean*.

inspired Drysdale to begin work on the orchestral overture *Herondean*.<sup>20</sup> Janey Drysdale notes that Sir George Kitchin, founder and long-standing conductor of the amateur, but highly regarded London Stock Exchange Orchestral Society, wrote to her brother inquiring if he had a new composition which his orchestra might perform. Drysdale suggested that his still incomplete *Herondean* be performed, a proposition to which Kitchin agreed and the performance date was set for February of 1894.<sup>21</sup> For unknown reasons (though delays in scoring and a consequent lack of rehearsal time are suspected) this arrangement did not come to fruition and the work did not receive its first performance until 24 April at the St James's Hall when it was given before an enthusiastic audience and generally favourable press. The *Daily News* noted that *Herondean* was:

A new important work.... The two principal subjects are thoroughly Scottish.... A little compression would make the overture more effective; but alike in material and workmanship, it is highly interesting and *Herondean* will probably be considered the best thing which this clever former student of the RAM has yet done.<sup>22</sup>

During Drysdale's lifetime, *Herondean* received performances in Glasgow and Edinburgh whilst following his death it was given a number of times including twice at Bournemouth.<sup>23</sup>

It was 1894 before Drysdale completed his cantata *The Kelpie* and in December Paterson published the piano/vocal score.<sup>24</sup> The work received its first performance at the Music Hall in Edinburgh on 17 December given by the Scottish Orchestra, Kirkhope's choir and the soloists Pauline Joran and Philip Brozel.<sup>25</sup> *The Kelpie* was well received with the *Scotsman* noting:

Taken as a whole, the work is distinguished by richness and variety of orchestral treatment. ... The vocal music is, in the main, dramatic in character. The opening and closing portions of the poem ... are treated with a certain rugged vigour of rhythm and style which are thoroughly appropriate.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 15

<sup>21</sup> Concert prospectus: "Stock Exchange Orchestral Society and Male Voice Choir for the Eleventh Season 1893-94", Cb10-y.2

<sup>22</sup> "Stock Exchange Orchestra" *Daily News* 25 April 1894 in Henry Farmer comp. "Press Cuttings — Drysdale", Cb10-y.6, 18

<sup>23</sup> Stephen Lloyd *Sir Dan Godfrey: Champion of British Composers* (London: Thames, 1995) 113, 199. The second occasion was in 1934, the final year of Godfrey's tenure as conductor of the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra.

<sup>24</sup> Paterson and Son to Drysdale, 23 November, 1894, Cb10-x.17/54<sup>3</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Programme: "Paterson and Sons' Subscription Orchestral Concerts 1894-95, *The Kelpie*", Edinburgh Music Hall, 17 December 1894, Cb10-x.15/11

<sup>26</sup> "Amusements: Orchestral Choral Concert in the Music Hall" *Scotsman* 18 December 1894, 5c

*The Kelpie* was only one of two large-scale works by Drysdale published during his lifetime (the other being the choral ballad *Tamlane* in 1905) presumably because of these works' suitability for the many amateur choral societies in existence at that time. Nonetheless, *The Kelpie* was not heard again until 1939, when the Dunfermline Choral Union performed it.<sup>27</sup>

Drysdale's theatrical career is an enigmatic one. His correspondence informs us that he regularly attended theatrical performances and that he was acquainted with a number of prominent actors and actresses including Johnson Forbes Robertson, Mrs Patrick Campbell and Ellen Terry. However, there is little extant material concerning his professional work, with his own correspondence having to be relied upon for the limited information available. Much of this demonstrates that Drysdale had a working and critical knowledge of the theatrical genre. For example, in a letter of March 1895 he describes a performance he attended of Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*, noting:

It is very sparkling with regard to dialogue which is exceedingly bright and amusing, [and] also full of clever sayings. The latter although they may be contrived and manufactured in a very artificial way are still really clever, and are after all part of Oscar's individuality. The purely constructive part of the piece is often defective, and sometimes good opportunities are lost, but there is no doubt that, although a great part of it is quite frivolous and farcical, it is still an amusing piece to [...] liken to.<sup>28</sup>

The references to 'Oscar' suggest that Drysdale might have been acquainted with Wilde — not an unlikely assumption considering his other theatrical connections.

In late 1893, Drysdale became friendly with the actor Ian Robertson (brother of the actor [Sir] Johnston Forbes Robertson<sup>29</sup>) whose father had been a longstanding friend of his family.<sup>30</sup> Drysdale became a regular visitor to the Robertson household and was particularly attracted by Robertson's wife (the actress Gertrude Knight) whom he described as "charming, broadminded, and unconventional in her views particularly regards the relationship of men and women" — it was one of the few occasions when Drysdale revealed his feelings about any woman other than his mother or sister. During

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<sup>27</sup> Programme: "Dunfermline Choral Union, *The Kelpie*", Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline, 21 March 1939, Cb10-x.15/29

<sup>28</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, 1 March 1895, Cb10-x.16/21

<sup>29</sup> Forbes Robertson was renowned for his portrayal of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. See Clement Scott *Some Notable Hamlets of the Present Time* (London: Greening, 1900) 148.

<sup>30</sup> Henry George Farmer, *George Bernard Shaw's Sister...* 100

1892, Ian Robertson had completed a one-act play entitled *The Plague* from which he and Drysdale conceived a form, termed ‘mystic musical play’, in which there was a fusion of words, action and music. The resulting work, a grey, sombre piece, received its first and only public performance at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh on 16 October 1896.<sup>31</sup> It was given before a crowded house and to some critical acclaim, it being stated that the collaborators had produced “a fascinating little work”.<sup>32</sup>

Drysdale was not inactive in other areas of his work during this lengthy association with Ian Robertson. Early in 1895, he and Ernest Kuhe (the son of Wilhelm Kuhe) worked on the operetta *In Office Hours*, a one-act sketch set in a dramatic agent’s office. There is, however, no record of a performance of this work and the manuscript has been lost. Soon after, Drysdale began the most successful collaboration of his career with the cleric, author and folklorist Sabine Baring-Gould. In 1887, Baring-Gould had completed his novel of Devon life *Red Spider* which was so well received that he was persuaded to write an operatic version of the story. Following unsuccessful approaches to Hubert Parry<sup>33</sup> and Engelbert Humperdinck,<sup>34</sup> Baring-Gould chose Drysdale as his new partner in August of 1895.<sup>35</sup> There followed a long period of collaboration during which Drysdale paid several visits to Lewtrenchard Manor, Baring-Gould’s Devonshire home, where they completely redrafted the libretto into an acceptable format. Having begun work on the opera in earnest, the partners attempted to secure backing for the production. In March 1896, Drysdale sought the support of the impresario and London

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<sup>31</sup> Programme: “*For the Crown, Shades of the Night and The Plague (October 16 only)*”, 12–17 October 1896, Edinburgh, Royal Lyceum Theatre. Theatre Programme Catalogue R.283.c.1 (165), NLS. *Shades of the Night* preceded *For the Crown* during the rest of the run.

<sup>32</sup> [“The Plague”] *The Stage*, October 1896 reproduced in “Extracts from Press Opinions” (c.1897), Cb10-y.3, 79

<sup>33</sup> Sabine Baring-Gould to [William Wallace], 2 February 1893, MS 21550, f.189, William Wallace Papers, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. Wallace seems to have written to Baring-Gould offering to collaborate on *Red Spider*, but his offer was refused on the pretext that Parry was in the process of deciding whether to become involved.

<sup>34</sup> “The Author of ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’ at Home — The Rev. S. Baring-Gould at home.” *The Young Man: A Monthly Journal and Review* 9 (September 1895): 294. This matter is also mentioned in a letter of 1895 from Baring-Gould to his daughter Mary (in deposit 5203, Devon Record Office. This correspondence has not yet been catalogued), but there is no independent evidence to corroborate this approach.

<sup>35</sup> “A Scottish Composer and His Works: Mr Learmont Drysdale’s New Opera”, *Glasgow Evening News* 15 May 1896, 3b. It is not known who introduced Baring-Gould to Drysdale. However, it is most likely that William Wallace, whom Drysdale had been acquainted with during his time in London, was the connection.



**Illustration 6: Baring-Gould's home at Lewtrenchard Manor**

theatre manager Sir Augustus Harris<sup>36</sup> whose initial reaction to the proposal was non-committal and he was to die before making a final decision. To complicate matters, Drysdale suffered a serious illness around this time which caused valuable time to be lost on the project. During 1897, Drysdale solicited support from both the Carl Rosa and D'Oyly Carte Companies in connection with a number of his theatrical works.<sup>37</sup> Rosa's response to Drysdale is unknown, however, the Cartes examined *The Oracle* and *In Office Hours*, but disliked their texts and although they thought highly of the music of *Red Spider*, they believed that the libretto contained numerous weaknesses which would adversely affect the work's success.<sup>38</sup> Thus, Drysdale and Baring-Gould were required to finance the production of *Red Spider* themselves.<sup>39</sup> No expense was spared in the production with a first rate company of nearly fifty members being engaged<sup>40</sup> including Lucy Carr Shaw, sister of George Bernard Shaw, in the leading role of 'Honor Luxmore', the conductor Walter Scott, who shared the musical direction with Drysdale, and the choreographer Will Bishop.<sup>41</sup> A provincial tour was booked and the opera received its first performance in Lowestoft in July 1898 conducted by the composer.<sup>42</sup> *Red Spider* successfully toured Britain for 17 weeks receiving more than a hundred performances in locations as distant as Plymouth and Inverness. Nevertheless, the run was curtailed in December of that year when the production began making substantial losses.<sup>43</sup>

Lucy Carr Shaw realised that several of Drysdale's operas had been refused for production because of their unsuitable libretti. In an effort to promote his cause, she

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<sup>36</sup> Augustus Harris to Learmont Drysdale, 7 March 1896, Cb10-x.17/35. A newspaper article of October 1896 suggests that Harris had secured for his theatre a virtual monopoly of Drysdale's compositions. There is, however, no corroborative evidence to support this statement. See [*"The Plague"*], *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, 17 October 1896, 5b.

<sup>37</sup> Jessie Rosa to Mrs [Jessie] Kuhe, 21 April [1897], Cb10-x.17/47; Helen Carte to Learmont Drysdale, 19, 28 October, 4 December 1896 and Richard D'Oyly Carte to Learmont Drysdale, 30 April 1897, Cb10-x.17/49<sup>1-5</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Helen Carte to Learmont Drysdale, 24 December, 27 October 1897, Cb10-x.17/49<sup>9</sup> and <sup>7bis</sup>. Mrs Carte advised Drysdale to set libretti which had been selected by a theatre manager or written by a major figure in the field.

<sup>39</sup> "*The Red Spider: Agreement between Sabine Baring-Gould and Learmont Drysdale*", 11 August 1898, Swansea, tipped in Cb9-y.12

<sup>40</sup> Henry George Farmer *George Bernard Shaw's Sister...* 101

<sup>41</sup> Kurt Gänzl *The British Musical Theatre* 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1986) 1: 1865–1914, 694–695

<sup>42</sup> "*The Red Spider: A New Opera at Lowestoft*" *Lowestoft Weekly Press*, 28 July 1898, 8b

<sup>43</sup> Lucy Carr Shaw to Jane Crighton [Drysdale], [December 1898], Box 56.5/2 — Miscellaneous third party correspondence, George Bernard Shaw Collection, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin (hereafter cited as Shaw Collection, HRC). Individual items numbers have been added by the author (i.e. /2) for ease of location.

decided to approach her brother whom she believed was the only writer who would be capable of producing a libretto which would do justice to Drysdale's musical gifts. It was not the first time that Shaw had been asked to write a libretto for Drysdale. During 1895, Drysdale had attended a performance of Shaw's *Arms and the Man* (1894) and was convinced that the dramatist had "out-Gilberted Gilbert".<sup>44</sup> He saw great possibilities of composing a comic opera with a libretto by Shaw and immediately wrote to him begging his co-operation, but Shaw replied brusquely:

I am afraid that if I ever find time to write opera librettos [*sic*], the first three or four are already bespoken. But there seems very little chance so far of my finding time for the work.<sup>45</sup>

Carr Shaw, although unaware of this earlier request, did not immediately rush into the matter judging that her then invalided brother (also recently married to the wealthy Charlotte Payne-Townsend and preoccupied with his masterpiece *Cæsar and Cleopatra*<sup>46</sup>) would not be conducive to the approach. Thus, it was some months before Lucy considered it propitious to suggest the collaboration to Shaw and she immediately wrote to Drysdale:

I think it is very likely he [Shaw] will be in town one day next week, if so you might arrange to meet him at the Square.<sup>47</sup> You had, perhaps, better write and ask him.<sup>48</sup>

Following his interview, Drysdale noted to his sister:

I found Bernard Shaw a very nice fellow. He told me that he would be pleased to write something for me, only he could not see his way to finding time for a long while to come. He says that he has often been spoken to on this score and that he sees no possibility of finding time to do so, nor does he think he is much nearer. He recommended Hitchens<sup>49</sup> to me.<sup>50</sup>

A kinder, though no less negative reply than previously encountered, but it seems that Shaw was determined to avoid writing a libretto; he had even rejected Richard D'Oyly

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<sup>44</sup> Henry Farmer *George Bernard Shaw's Sister...* 101. Farmer quotes from notes made by Janey Drysdale on 8 June 1947, but this document has not been traced.

<sup>45</sup> G. Bernard Shaw to Learmont Drysdale, 12 April 1895, Box 36.2 — Outgoing Correspondence: D–F, Shaw Collection, HRC

<sup>46</sup> Hesketh Pearson *Bernard Shaw: His Life and Personality* (London: The Reprint Society, 1942) 217, 219–220

<sup>47</sup> Shaw's mother's home at 29 Fitzroy Square which he used for business purposes.

<sup>48</sup> Lucy Honor Luxmore Carr Shaw to Mr Drysdale, [1898], Box 56.5/68 — Miscellaneous third party correspondence, Shaw Collection, HRC

<sup>49</sup> Robert Hitchens succeeded Shaw as music critic of the *World*.

<sup>50</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, [1899], quoted in Henry George Farmer *George Bernard Shaw's Sister...* 101. The original of this letter has not been traced.

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Carte's approaches on Drysdale's behalf made during the production of *Red Spider*.<sup>51</sup> Henry Farmer suggests that Shaw, a wily businessman and a master of contracts and finance, might have been repelled by a librettist's secondary rôle which meant their receiving a reduced share of the profit as well as the kudos. Even worse, the music might be more popular than the words and plot.<sup>52</sup> Having reckoned on such exigencies, Shaw most likely decided to temporise with those composers anxious to collaborate with him, whilst being determined not to accede to their requests. He was successful in this aim, as he was never to write a libretto.<sup>53</sup>

Towards the end of 1897 as arrangements for *Red Spider* were coming to fruition, Drysdale became involved with the librettists Alfred Warwick Gattie and Frederick Pilleau on the satirical opera *The Oracle*.<sup>54</sup> Drysdale's partners in this venture were an ill-assorted duo. Gattie (1856–1925) was an inventor, philosopher, and sometime amateur actor and dramatist who began his career as a clerk in the Bank of England before rising meteorically by the end of his life to be chairman of his own engineering company 'Gattie Springs'.<sup>55</sup> Gattie would later provide the inspiration for the "Breakages Ltd" facet of Shaw's popular play *The Apple Cart* (1929) which affirms the anti-democratic doctrine whilst acclaiming the monarchy.<sup>56</sup> Around 1897, a minor flirtation arose between Gattie and Janey Drysdale, a platonic relationship which endured until his death in 1925.<sup>57</sup> It was through Gattie that Drysdale was introduced to Pilleau,<sup>58</sup> of whom little is known except that he was a minor painter of watercolours<sup>59</sup> and the author of a book which describes his system of defining chess moves using a

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<sup>51</sup> Madame Carte to Learmont Drysdale, 2 November 1898, Cb10-x.17/49<sup>11</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Henry George Farmer *George Bernard Shaw's Sister...* 118–119

<sup>53</sup> See biographies of Shaw including those by Hesketh Pearson, St John Ervine and Archibald Henderson.

<sup>54</sup> F. Startin Pilleau and A.W. Gattie *The Oracle* [Typescript libretto], [1897], Cb9-y.4; MS 3215–16, NLS

<sup>55</sup> "Gattie, Alfred Warwick" *Who Was Who: 1916–1928* 7 vols (London: Black, 1947) 2, 396

<sup>56</sup> George Bernard Shaw *The Apple Cart: A Political Extravaganza* (London: Constable, 1930) xxv–xxix

<sup>57</sup> Henry George Farmer [Typescript notes used in preparation of *George Bernard Shaw's Sister...*], F248/4v. Surviving correspondence between the parties attests to this relationship. See Box 55.8 — Miscellaneous third party correspondence: F–H, Shaw Collection, HRC

<sup>58</sup> A.W. Gattie to Learmont Drysdale, 30 March 1897, Box 55.8/10 — Miscellaneous third party correspondence: F–H, Shaw Collection, HRC

<sup>59</sup> J. Johnson and A. Greutzner comp. *The Dictionary of British Artists: 1880–1940* (Suffolk: Antique Collectors Club, 1976) 403; Christopher Wood *The Dictionary of Victorian Painters* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Suffolk: Antique Collectors Club, 1978) 371

maximum of two letters.<sup>60</sup> *The Oracle* was apparently his only major theatrical venture. The Drysdales seem to have become particularly friendly with the Pilleau family; Frederick visited the Drysdale family home in 1899 when he made the acquaintance of Janey, for whom he wrote some verses. In later years, an Olive Pilleau (probably Frederick's daughter, although the relationship is not given in correspondence) regularly visited Janey and she was to receive £20 from the latter's will.<sup>61</sup>

Having failed to persuade any London management to produce *The Oracle*, the collaborators attempted to secure a production at the Broadway Theatre in New York. Their intermediary was one Count Zborowski (also known as William Elliott<sup>62</sup>), an enigmatic character who is described variously as a Polish aristocrat and an American theatrical magnate, although neither label can be verified. It is known, however, that he was born in New York City around 1856, married Margaret Carey, the granddaughter of William Astor, and was a racing driver who took part in a number of the early Grand Prix races.<sup>63</sup> He was killed during the La Turbie Hill Climb of 1903.<sup>64</sup> How *The Oracle*'s collaborators became acquainted with this colourful figure is unknown, but the parties became friendly, visiting Grendon Hall, Zborowski's Warwickshire home, on at least two occasions.<sup>65</sup> Although Zborowski apparently thought highly of *The Oracle*, he was unable to influence his manager in New York who thought the humour would not suit his American audience and turned the work down.<sup>66</sup> Thus, plans for a production of *The Oracle* were abandoned and although this would have been a disappointment for Drysdale (although he was so busy at this time that he had been forced to employ a

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<sup>60</sup> F. Startin Pilleau *The Dynamic Chess Notation* (London: H. Cox, 1896). This work was published under the imprint of the British Chess Club, which suggests that Pilleau was a member and may explain a letter to Drysdale from Helen D'Oyly Carte being addressed there in January 1898. See Madame Carte to Learmont Drysdale, 14 January 1898, Cb10-x.17/49<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> Will: Jane Crichton Drysdale [copy], 13 October 1948, 250/1

<sup>62</sup> "Countess Zborowski Dead" *New York Times* 11 July 1911, 7e

<sup>63</sup> See <http://genforum.genealogy.com/zabriskie/messages/72.html> accessed on 5 November 2005

<sup>64</sup> "English CA: 1921 Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang" <http://www.sportscarmarket.com/mp/0003-eng.php> accessed on 27 October 2002. This website relates to the sale of a 1921 Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang, a series of racing vehicles built and raced by Zborowski's son Louis during the early 1920s and more recently immortalised by the 1960s film *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (based on Ian Fleming's book of the same name). Zborowski's son suffered a similar fate to that of his father, as he was killed in a crash during the 1924 Italian Grand Prix. The Zborowskis were resident in England for some years, as both the Count and an infant son (died c.1893) were interred in the family plot at Burton Lazars, Leicestershire. See [Untitled] *The Times* 10 April 1903, 7f.

<sup>65</sup> Learmont Drysdale ["Life List to 1901"], Farmer 257, tipped into *Dunedin Magazine* 3 (1914–15): affixed to p. 14; Zborowski to Learmont Drysdale, 13 January 1898, Box 57.4/4 — Miscellaneous third party correspondence: W–Z, Shaw Collection, HRC

<sup>66</sup> Zborowski to Learmont Drysdale, 27 September 1897, Box 57.2/3 — Miscellaneous third party correspondence: W–Z, Shaw Collection, HRC

business agent<sup>67</sup>), the cancellation allowed him to concentrate his efforts upon arrangements for *Red Spider*. When a performance of *The Oracle* was contemplated in 1912, the score could not be found,<sup>68</sup> a situation which recent searches by the author has not remedied.<sup>69</sup>

Information regarding Drysdale's activities around the turn of the century is sparse. He visited Boulogne with Frederick Pilleau in 1899, a trip which seems to have been purely for pleasure.<sup>70</sup> Professionally, he undertook several appointments as a theatre conductor working with Frank E. Tours in the comic opera *Melnotte* in 1901<sup>71</sup> and in an unnamed American musical comedy in 1902.<sup>72</sup>

In late 1900, Drysdale is believed to have been asked by Sir Theodore Martin<sup>73</sup> (an honorary member of the exhibition's council<sup>74</sup>) to write the music for the opening ode of the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901. Janey Drysdale notes that her brother had begun work on the project when some members of the exhibition's music committee decided they wanted Hamish McCunn to undertake the commission, but Martin stated that if Drysdale was not to write it, he wanted no ode and this edict was followed.<sup>75</sup> Although no official source has been traced to verify Janey's version of events, it seems that Drysdale was linked to the project as the press reported his

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<sup>67</sup> This information appears in a letter from Richard D'Oyly Carte to Drysdale of 11 October 1897 (Cb10-x.49<sup>7</sup>) and although the forename of this person is not mentioned, it possibly refers to William Lestocq, a dramatist working in London around the turn of the twentieth century.

<sup>68</sup> Robin Legge to Miss Drysdale, 19 April 1912, Farmer 311/2; A. Richardson (Secretary of D'Oyly Carte Co.) to Janey Drysdale, 4 June 1912, Cb10-x.18/1

<sup>69</sup> All library and archive catalogues listed in the acknowledgements to this thesis have been examined. During research, a substantial number of documents relating to this work and *Red Spider* were discovered at the Harry Ransome Humanities Research Centre in Austin, Texas, but the score for *The Oracle* was not amongst this material.

<sup>70</sup> Learmont Drysdale ["Life List to 1901"], Farmer 257, tipped into *Dunedin Magazine* 3 (1914–15): affixed to p. 14

<sup>71</sup> Kurt Gänzl *The British Musical Theatre* 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1986) 1: 1865–1914, 784. A comic opera in two acts also known as *The Gardener's Bride*. Premiered at the Coronet Theatre, London and ran to six further performances.

<sup>72</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 22

<sup>73</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 19 August 1942, Farmer 249/1942/m. Martin (1816–1909), a well-known lawyer and man of letters, was born in Edinburgh and attended the Royal High School (See *Who Was Who: 1897–1915* 7 vols {London: Black, 1947} 1, 477–478). Why he should promote Drysdale's work is not known. It has not been possible to trace any link between the parties except that they attended the same school albeit at different times.

<sup>74</sup> "Articles of Association of the International Exhibition Association of Industry, Science, and Art: Glasgow 1901", D644809, Glasgow Room, ML, Glasgow, 8

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

involvement whilst always suggesting that Rudyard Kipling was to supply the text.<sup>76</sup> The exhibition's Music Committee minutes refer only once to the music for the opening ode and on that occasion they decided to defer a decision on the matter.<sup>77</sup> Janey's account of why the commission was cancelled may be correct, but it is also possible that it was as a result of the scaling-down of arrangements for the exhibition ordered by King Edward VII on the death of his mother, Queen Victoria, in January of that year.<sup>78</sup> Whatever the reason for the lack of an ode, *MT* was unimpressed by the exhibition's opening ceremony noting that the occasion was "robbed of much of its interest from a musical point of view, by the absence of choral 'ode'" whilst explaining rather sardonically that "the [Glasgow] Choral Union supplied some miscellaneous pieces with band and organ accompaniment."<sup>79</sup> Once again, Drysdale had lost a valuable opportunity to further his work although on this occasion it would seem that the failure was through no fault of his own.

Between 1901 and 1903, Drysdale was particularly active in composition. He composed numerous songs including a number written for several well-known music hall stars of the time,<sup>80</sup> undertook choral settings of Charles Kingsley's poem *The Proud Damozel* and the ballad *Tamlane* (which was not completed until 1905), and began work on four operas of which only the scores of the unfinished *The Vikings* (1902) and *Flora Macdonald* (1902–3) survive. Janey Drysdale notes that arrangements for the latter's production were in place but were later cancelled and Drysdale, needing the spur of performance to retain his motivation, did nothing about the work until the last time he visited London (1908) when he spoke of it to the Scots scholar and man of letters Andrew Lang (1844–1912).<sup>81</sup> Lang, whose diverse interests included Scottish history, seems to have been eager to work with Drysdale on a new

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<sup>76</sup> Learmont Drysdale comp. "Press Cuttings of Learmont Drysdale", 1896–1907, Farmer 624, f.12v. Cuttings include *Musical Opinion*, nd; *Musical Standard* 22 September 1900 and *Athenaeum* 13 September 1900.

<sup>77</sup> "Minutes of the Glasgow International Exhibition Association 1901", Sub-committee on Music: 12 September 1900, D644809, Glasgow Room, ML, Glasgow, 327

<sup>78</sup> Perilla and Juliet Kinchin *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions: 1888, 1901, 1911, 1938, 1988* (Glasgow: White Cocade, [1988]) 63

<sup>79</sup> "Music in Glasgow" *MT* 42 (1 June 1901): 408

<sup>80</sup> "Music Hall Songs", tipped into the front cover of Henry Farmer comp. "Press Cuttings — Drysdale", Cb10-y.6. This list contains the names of a number of music hall singers including the well-known Florrie Ford and Marie Loftus. However, performances by these singers have not been traced. For further information regarding the Scottish music hall of the period see: J.H. Littlejohn *The Scottish Music Hall 1880–1990* (Wigtown: G. C. Book Publishers, 1990); Paul Maloney *Scotland and the Music Hall: 1850–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

<sup>81</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 2 August 1944, Farmer 249/1944/m

libretto for the opera although he warned: “I have two big historical books in hand, apart from minor things [and] I do not think I can ask you to hope for much at present.”<sup>82</sup>

The collaboration did not take place, although Drysdale noted in a worklist of 1908 that Lang had written the text, a statement that puzzled Janey Drysdale, a co-author of the original libretto.<sup>83</sup> Extracts from *Flora Macdonald* were performed in North Carolina at the sixth “Our Scottish Heritage” Symposium in 1995<sup>84</sup> — possibly Drysdale’s music is eventually finding a highly specialised niche in the repertoire.

Little is known of the two remaining theatrical works written at this time, as both are lost. Whether the light opera *The Girl From London* was finished is not documented, but it is recorded that the full score and parts of the musical sketch *Long and Short* were complete by 1903.<sup>85</sup> An annotation on Drysdale’s autograph work list (c.1908) suggests that this work was performed.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, the librettist of the sketch, the actor and dramatist George Thorne, attempted to arrange a tour of the work and sought the financial backing of a friend who had “come into a lot of money”,<sup>87</sup> but his approach was apparently unsuccessful, as no further mention has been traced of *Long and Short*. Thorne also asked Drysdale to complete a stage work *The Canterbury Bells* following his breaking off his arrangement with its composer, a decision which had been prompted by Drysdale pronouncing that the one number he had examined was “ROT”.<sup>88</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that Drysdale undertook this work.

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<sup>82</sup> Andrew Lang to Learmont Drysdale, 18 May [1908], Cb10-x.17/4<sup>2</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 2 August 1944, Farmer 249/1944/m

<sup>84</sup> John J. Toffey to Sheila [Craik] (former librarian for Fine Arts, Music and Theatre, GUL) 22 November 1995, Drysdale file, Scottish Music Centre, Glasgow. Toffey was researching for his publication *A Woman Nobly Planned: Fact and Myth in the Legacy of Flora Macdonald* (Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 1997).

<sup>85</sup> George Thorne to Learmont Drysdale, 19 February 1903, Cb10-x.17/26

<sup>86</sup> “List of works by Learmont Drysdale”, [1908], Cb10-y.6

<sup>87</sup> George Thorne to Learmont Drysdale, 19 February 1903, Cb10-x.17/26

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4. The Final Years: 1903–1909

During the spring of 1903, Drysdale moved to Lasswade near Edinburgh where for the first time in his life he undertook the responsibility of running his own household. His home ‘Christina Bank’ was rented from the Kirk Session of the local parish of Cockpen for £31. 2s. 6d. per annum, a substantial sum considering the normal rental for houses in the area was between £4 to £14<sup>1</sup> — ‘Christina Bank’ was, however, in the upmarket area of Broomieknowe. When not working away from home, Drysdale spent much of his time composing although he did set aside some time to attend local events. On one occasion, he was an adjudicator at a “contest of gramophone records”<sup>2</sup> in the local public hall. The commercial gramophone had been in existence for more than a decade by this time, but may still have been a novelty in the country parishes. What form such a contest took is unknown, although Drysdale notes that the job was rather arduous as the party was large.

In May of 1904, Drysdale had written to James Lauder, Manager and Secretary of the Glasgow Athenaeum inquiring about the post of Composition and Theory master,<sup>3</sup> subjects previously taught by the Principal, Dr. Edward E. Harper and others.<sup>4</sup> In this initial letter he sets out his qualifications for the post including mention of: prizes won at the Royal Academy of Music; a generic list of his works; venues where his compositions had been performed and his experience in conducting, staging opera, chorus drilling, choir training and teaching.<sup>5</sup> However, the most enlightening (albeit only to be expected) information provided gives insight into Drysdale’s reasons for applying for the post. He states:

I have the national music of Scotland thoroughly at heart, and while catholic in my tastes, I am in keen sympathy with the progress of musical culture in Scotland. I am also alive to the possibilities of this post and the opportunities it might afford me for fostering true talent and asserting and developing the national spirit of music.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Valuation Roll: County of Mid-Lothian, Parish of Cockpen (Lasswade District), 1903–1904. p. 249, no. 1041 [House: ‘Christina Bank’, Broomieknowe]. This extract provides valuations for a variety of domestic and commercial property in the district. Of the 50 properties listed, ‘Christina Bank’ attracted the fourth highest rental.

<sup>2</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, [1908], Cb10-x.16/30

<sup>3</sup> Learmont Drysdale to James Lauder, 3 May 1904, Cb10-y.4

<sup>4</sup> *Glasgow Athenaeum School of Music: Calendar 1903–1904* (Glasgow: C.L. Wright, 1903) 114

<sup>5</sup> Learmont Drysdale to James Lauder, 3 May 1904, Cb10-y.4

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Drysdale obtained testimonials from several well-known figures with whom he had been associated during his years in London. These included Frederick Corder, Wilhelm Kuhe, and Sir August Manns who described him as “prominently gifted and thoroughly well educated”.<sup>7</sup> Henry Wood’s testimonial is particularly glowing, stating:

I am delighted to hear of your application for the Athenaeum post and I feel they should have appointed you straight away. It is useless my making any remarks [concerning your] fitness or musical attainment for such a position, for all musical England knows your worth and your unbounded abilities, so I can only wish you all possible success.<sup>8</sup>

These views provide evidence today of the high regard in which Drysdale was held during his life.

On 24 May 1904, the Athenaeum School of Music Committee appointed Drysdale as Professor of Harmony, Counterpoint, and the Rudiments of Music,<sup>9</sup> and it was not long before he was attempting to influence the institution’s working practices even though he had not officially taken up his post. When the Music Section of the Board of Studies met on 13 June, they spent much of their meeting discussing a letter from Drysdale concerning regulations surrounding the compulsory Rudiments of Music examinations. The system in place did not allow candidates who failed the Rudiments paper to enter for the practical examination. Drysdale suggested that it would be fairer if the ‘pass’ mark for this paper was reduced to 50%. Students failing to reach this figure would be allowed to enter the practical examination, but the marks they received in the latter section would be reduced by the number they were short in the Rudiments paper. The committee unanimously approved this proposal and recommended it to the governing body of the institution for adoption, but when put before the Executive Council, it was rejected and instead Harry A.L. Seligmann ARAM made the following resolution:

In view of the importance of this matter, it is inexpedient to make any alterations on the present system until it has been very fully considered and the present being a small meeting the arrangements now in force should be continued for another year.<sup>10</sup>

It is surprising that the committee who examined Drysdale’s suggestion initially was unanimous in its decision, as to this day, rudiments play an important role in the education of well-rounded musicians — possibly it wished to present an approachable

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<sup>7</sup> August Manns to Learmont Drysdale 27 April 1904, Farmer 310/13

<sup>8</sup> Henry J. Wood to Learmont Drysdale, 3 May 1904, Farmer 308/8

<sup>9</sup> “The Glasgow Athenaeum (Incorporated): Board of Studies Minute Book”, 24 May 1904, H1/2/1, Strathclyde University Archives, Glasgow

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 June 1904

and flexible attitude to their new member of staff. Furthermore, this incident reinforces the view that Drysdale lacked awareness of the importance of the ‘nuts and bolts’ of music; to him, a pupil should not be denied progression as a performer because he lacked theoretical knowledge. It was the same argument to which he had so strongly objected when Mackenzie advised him many years before (cf. 42–43).

Drysdale took up his post at the Athenaeum in the autumn of 1904<sup>11</sup> being contracted to teach classes in the following subjects, at levels varying from preliminary to diploma: harmony; counterpoint, canon and fugue; analysis and composition; orchestration; rudiments of music and sight-singing.<sup>12</sup> The position included work in the evenings and at weekends, which presumably reflects the varied backgrounds and academic levels of the students who attended (i.e. daytime classes such as harmony and composition for those who studied full-time and out-of-working hours classes such as rudiments and sight-singing for those who were otherwise employed during the day).<sup>13</sup> It was an arduous task, particularly for a man not immediately recognized for his academic prowess.

It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of Drysdale’s teaching as only the results of the First and Second Grade Harmony classes were published. In these groups, five pass certificates were awarded and one student received both an honours certificate and a bronze medal. These results are comparable with both his predecessors’ and his successor George Stewart, BMus.<sup>14</sup>

At the annual meeting of the School of Music staff in April 1905, Drysdale was one of eight candidates proposed for election to the three staff places on the institution’s Executive Council. He presumably realised that a position on this governing body would allow him direct influence in the passing of regulations and in the formulation of new developments and, thus, the best way of achieving such changes as those he had advanced in the previous year. Drysdale was unsuccessful in the election,<sup>15</sup> however, not

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<sup>11</sup> *Glasgow Athenaeum School of Music: 57th Annual Report of the Governors for the Year Ending 31/8/1904* (Glasgow: C.L. Wright, 1904) 10

<sup>12</sup> *Glasgow Athenaeum School of Music: Prospectus, 1904–1905* (Glasgow: np, 1904) 8

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 28

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 57; *1905–1906*, 57

<sup>15</sup> “The Glasgow Athenaeum (Incorporated): Board of Studies Minute Book”, 7 April 1905, H1/2/1, Strathclyde University Archives, Glasgow

everyone concerned with the future of music in Scotland agreed with this decision. John Runciman, the hard-hitting music critic of the *Saturday Review* and a good friend of Drysdale's at this time, believed that Scottish music education was severely hampered both by inappropriate management and teaching practices, and suggested that:

Some good might come of the Glasgow Athenaeum School of Music if it were left under the care of Mr Learmount [*sic*] Drysdale unhampered by outsiders who know nothing about music and are unsympathetic where music is concerned. ... Those who become teachers can ... instead of the eternal round of counterpoint and fugue devote some of their lessons to awakening the true spirit of music in their pupils. This, and the Athenaeum School under the control of a musician — not a counterpoint-monger — and the Reid Chair [Music Department, University of Edinburgh. The position was held by the German music scholar and author Frederick Niecks from 1891 to 1914] occupied by a musician — not an antiquary — may result in Scotland some day becoming musical.<sup>16</sup>

However, considering that Drysdale and a number of his acquaintances assisted Runciman in the preparation of this article, one of a series which judged the current state of music in Scotland, it is not surprising that it should proclaim his cause.<sup>17</sup>

Soon after his failure to secure a place on the Athenaeum's Executive Council, Drysdale wrote to Edward Elgar, then professor of music at Birmingham University, inquiring about the availability of teaching posts there. The Birmingham chair had been endowed expressly for Elgar just four months previously by the businessman Richard Peyton<sup>18</sup> and as Elgar explains in his reply:

The establishment of a teaching staff in connection with the University is not contemplated and developments must of necessity be slow. I will keep your letter from [*sic*] me in case anything should happen. I know of you and have gained much pleasure from performances of your compositions at Crystal Palace.<sup>19</sup>

The status of being a colleague of Elgar as well as the possibility of reducing his workload leaving him more time to concentrate on composition would have been important reasons for Drysdale seeking such a position. However, even before Elgar

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<sup>16</sup> John F. Runciman "Music in Scotland: III — Education" *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Arts* 1 July 1905, 13–14. Some years previously during a discussion with the musicologist J. Cuthbert Hadden, Drysdale had ridiculed Runciman's view that Handel was a 'great composer'. Drysdale noted that Runciman, usually a champion of the aesthetic in music, and an opponent of the scholarly and pedantic, had on this occasion, exposed his true beliefs. In reply, Drysdale pronounced that Handel was the "very embodiment of the colourless, being almost entirely devoid of dramatic idea, aesthetic aim, or romantic feeling." See Learmont Drysdale to J. Cuthbert Hadden [draft], nd, Farmer 310/5.

<sup>17</sup> The *Saturday Review* "Music in Scotland" series consists of: "I — The Scottish Orchestra", 3 June 1905; "II — The Concert Trade", 17 June 1905; "III — Education", 1 July 1905.

<sup>18</sup> Percy Scholes *The Mirror of Music 1844–1944...* 2, 678. Granville Bantock took over this post in January 1909.

<sup>19</sup> Edward Elgar to Learmont Drysdale, 30 May 1905, Farmer 310/16

replied to this approach, Drysdale had resigned from his post at the Glasgow Athenaeum<sup>20</sup> stating that he wished to devote his time to composition. Nevertheless, it is also likely that both the particularly demanding duties and his failure to secure a place on the institution's governing body were involved in this decision to quit the only professional position that he was ever to hold.

During his tenure at the Athenaeum, Drysdale had become a member of the Glasgow Society of Musicians (GSM), a lively club catering for the city's musical fraternity. The GSM was established in 1884 and many notable figures such as Alexander C. Mackenzie, Hans Richter, Sir Arthur Sullivan and Joseph Joachim were associated with it whilst its local membership included Glasgow's most prominent musicians.<sup>21</sup> Although the GSM held many official dinners, concerts and lectures, its main function was as a meeting place for local musicians and it provided an excellent venue for new arrivals in the city to establish contact with the wider musical community. It was to this society that Drysdale brought John Runciman when the latter was preparing his series of articles for the *Saturday Review*<sup>22</sup> — it was the only place in the city where a truly representative selection of the musical fraternity could be found. The management, realising that the society could not survive on the membership of professional musicians alone, allowed non-musicians to join as Associates, thus providing a truly diverse clientele.<sup>23</sup> Drysdale was elected a member on 25 October 1904,<sup>24</sup> but failed to pay his subscription until 15 February of the following year having been prompted by a letter from the Secretary which informed him that he would be denied further entry to club until his debt was settled.<sup>25</sup> It was a time of great change for the Society for they were planning removal to their first permanent home and to finance the project, instituted a debenture scheme whereby members and associates could contribute to costs. Drysdale applied to buy two of these debentures at a cost of £5, but although the Society pursued

<sup>20</sup> "The Glasgow Athenaeum (Incorporated): Board of Studies Minute Book", 23 May 1905, H1/2/1, Strathclyde University Archives, Glasgow

<sup>21</sup> [E. J. V. Brown] *The Glasgow Society of Musicians* (Glasgow: Published privately, 1944) 2, 20–38. The GSM survived until the 1980s.

<sup>22</sup> John F. Runciman to Learmont Drysdale, 31 May 1905, Cb10-x.17/22<sup>1</sup>

<sup>23</sup> [E. J. V. Brown] *The Glasgow Society of Musicians* (Glasgow: Published privately, 1944) 16–17

<sup>24</sup> Hugh Stirling (Secretary of the GSM) to Learmont Drysdale, 25 October 1904, "GSM Letter Book: 27 May 1902–10 November 1905", Glasgow Room, ML, Glasgow, p. 232. This deposit was donated in March 1994 by the Scottish music enthusiast Alastair Chisholm following his discovery of the remnants of the GSM's archives in a local second-hand bookseller 'Voltaire and Rousseau'. The shop's owners had acquired sundry records and parts of the GSM library when the society disbanded in the late 1980s.

<sup>25</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 3 February 1905, p. 265. The annual subscription was 21s., with initial entry money being levied of 10s. 6d.

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payment for some months, he seems to have reneged on the arrangement, as the accounts show no record of the transaction.<sup>26</sup> In debt to the Society for most of his membership, Drysdale was threatened with legal proceedings for non-payment of subscriptions in April 1908 and although this action was not pursued, he was expelled from the GSM in the following year.<sup>27</sup>

Drysdale had not completely neglected composition during his employment at the Glasgow Athenaeum. In 1904, at the request of [Sir] Henry Wood, Drysdale wrote an orchestral work *Border Romance*.<sup>28</sup> Wood conducted the work's première at a Promenade Concert in the Queen's Hall in October 1904 and it received a second performance in Glasgow by the Scottish Orchestra under Sir Frederick Cowen in December of the following year. Drysdale completed the choral ballad *Tamlane*, begun in 1901, during 1905 and in November of that year, it received its first performance given by the Clydebank and District Choral Society at Clydebank Burgh Hall.<sup>29</sup> It is probable that Drysdale became acquainted with the Clydebank Union's conductor William J. Clapperton through the GSM and, thus, used this connection to solicit a performance for this relatively large-scale and expensive to produce work.<sup>30</sup> The vocal/piano score of *Tamlane* was published and the work received several more performances over the next few years including one as late as 1948 given with piano and string quartet accompaniment by the choir of New Kilpatrick Parish Church, Bearsden.<sup>31</sup>

Whilst still working in Glasgow, Drysdale became friendly with Graham Price, Professor of Elocution at the Athenaeum and the subject's Authorised Teacher at the

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<sup>26</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 24 April 1905, Page 309; 8 June 1905, p. 345. These premises, at 73 Berkeley Street, were still owned by the society at their dissolution in the 1980s.

<sup>27</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 29 April 1908, "GSM Letter Book: 11 November 1905 – 2 March 1909", p. 399; 20 April 1909, "GSM Letter Book: 13 March 1909 – 17 February 1914", p.17

<sup>28</sup> Henry Wood to Learmont Drysdale, 5 June 1904, Cb10-x.17/37<sup>3</sup>

<sup>29</sup> "*Tamlane*: Successful Performance by Clydebank Choral Union" *Clydebank and Renfrew Press* 1 December 1905, 2g

<sup>30</sup> Clapperton was president of the GSM in 1903–1904. See [E. J. V. Brown] *The Glasgow Society of Musicians* ... 23.

<sup>31</sup> Programme: "*Tamlane*" performed by New Kilpatrick Parish Church Choir, Glasgow, 27 February 1948 in Henry Farmer comp. "Cuttings on Music in Scotland", Farmer 219, p.100

University of Glasgow.<sup>32</sup> In 1905, Price organised a production of Euripides' *Hippolytus* using the new English translation by Gilbert Murray, professor of Greek at Glasgow and Oxford Universities. As the institution's Professor of Composition, Drysdale would have been the natural person to choose when Price was looking for music for his project. The programme acknowledges the assistance of several prominent individuals and groups, although it does not describe the manner of their help. Francis Newbery, Principal of the Glasgow School of Art, is most likely to have organised preparation of the scenery whilst the appearance of the GSM suggests they helped in recruiting the sizeable orchestra which was directed by Edward Joachim, a member of their committee.<sup>33</sup> The work received its première at the Athenaeum Hall on 30 November 1905 and ran for a further three performances with the music being well received as evidenced by the following critic's remarks:

The music was felt to be in dramatic harmony with its subject — a fact which points to Mr. Drysdale's high achievement, for it is no slight feat on the part of the composer to have so sympathetically illustrated some of the more important moments in so beautiful and sublime a drama.<sup>34</sup>

Drysdale was to have his less successful ventures during this otherwise productive period. In August 1904 the American actress and dramatist Grace Hawthorne, acting on advice from Alexander C. Mackenzie, commissioned Drysdale to write an overture and incidental music for a five-act historical play *William Wallace* which she was dramatising from Jane Porter's romantic novel *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810).<sup>35</sup> It was to be a large-scale venture with arrangements being made for a lengthy run in Glasgow with subsequent visits to Edinburgh and other principal Scottish towns. Unfortunately, a misunderstanding had led to arrangements for the music being overlooked and Drysdale was informed that his contribution would have to be completed within two months when he must be prepared to rehearse the orchestra and conduct in person at the opening performance.<sup>36</sup> He accepted the commission on the basis of receiving 1½ percent of the

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<sup>32</sup>Programme: "Euripides' *Hippolytus*", Glasgow, Athenaeum Hall, 30 November and 1–2, 4 December 1905, Cb10-y.2/5b

<sup>33</sup> *Post Office Directory of Glasgow 1905–1906* (Glasgow: Aird and Coghill, 1905) 392. Joachim taught at the Glasgow College of Music and had formerly been a first violin with the Scottish Orchestra (see Sketch Programmes: Paterson's and Sons' Subscription Orchestral Concerts for 1894–1903). Born in St Pancras, London around 1872, he does not seem to have been related to the violinist Joseph Joachim.

<sup>34</sup> "The Hippolytus of Euripides" *Glasgow Evening News* 1 December 1905, 7b

<sup>35</sup> Stanley Killby to Learmont Drysdale, 13 August 1904, Cb10-x.53<sup>1</sup>. This was Porter's second and most notable novel, a five-volume work written within a year, which describes the fortunes of the Scottish patriot William Wallace.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

gross receipts and for her part, Hawthorne agreed to augment the orchestra for the first week of the production in an attempt to give it a “good send off”<sup>37</sup> whilst reassuring Drysdale that she would endeavour to ensure an efficient rendering of his music throughout the run. However, these plans did not come to fruition, as soon after the parties came to this agreement the project was cancelled when Miss Hawthorne became seriously ill.<sup>38</sup> Drysdale’s other major failure during this period was to occur through his own shortcomings. In June of 1905, the Scottish poet and writer Alexander Cargill at the behest of the Edinburgh publisher Roy Paterson approached Drysdale to suggest that they collaborate on a submission for the 1908 Ricordi Opera Competition,<sup>39</sup> a contest open to British composers with a generous first prize of £500 and fees on performance.<sup>40</sup> This would have been an excellent opportunity for Drysdale to promote his work as well as providing the chance to earn a sizeable sum of money. However, it took him seven months to reply to Cargill’s suggestion (he seems to have used his preparations for *Hippolytus* and *Tamlane* as an excuse for this delay), by which time the author had sought agreement from another composer. Drysdale had made a bad decision in not replying immediately to this request; Cargill had been very eager to collaborate with him, as can be deduced from the following:

Had you only written me earlier — if merely to say that, by and by when you had more time, you might think of looking at my book, — I would positively have waited; but not having heard at all from you since June of last year, I could only conclude that you had no idea of competing or, perhaps, had seen some libretto more to your mind. ... I consider that I have been particularly unfortunate in “missing” you in this matter, for I know a good deal about the excellence of your work and have great hope of you.<sup>41</sup>

Cargill attempted to remedy the situation by suggesting that Drysdale set another of his texts as a cantata, but the composer seems to have rejected this approach. Once again, poor management of his business affairs had adversely affected Drysdale’s chances of securing a success.

In 1906 Drysdale was hired to conduct the Glasgow Select Choir (formed 1879),<sup>42</sup> a well-known group of twenty-four singers who embarked on frequent tours both north

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<sup>37</sup> Grace Hawthorne to Learmont Drysdale, 20 August 1904, Cb10-x.53<sup>3</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Janey Drysdale “Learmont Drysdale” 24

<sup>39</sup> Alexander Cargill to Learmont Drysdale, 20 June 1905, Cb10-x.17/51<sup>1</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Percy Scholes *The Mirror of Music 1844–1944...* 2, 646. Dr Edward W. Naylor of Cambridge won the competition with *The Angelus*, the second place being accorded to Gustav Holst’s *Sita*.

<sup>41</sup> Alexander Cargill to Learmont Drysdale, 9 February 1906, Cb10-x.17/51<sup>3</sup>

<sup>42</sup> “New Conductor for Glasgow Select Choir” *Glasgow Herald* 20 July 1906, 8g. The previous conductor J. Miller Craig had retired from the conductorship after twenty-one years of service.

and south of the Border.<sup>43</sup> During Drysdale's year with the choir they undertook a tour of the Midlands and the south of England whilst maintaining regular concert appearances in Glasgow,<sup>44</sup> including one engagement at a sumptuous civic reception for The American Institute of Mining Engineers and Blast Furnace Managers held in Glasgow's City Chambers. Drysdale wrote at least two works for his choir including the choral ballad *Barbara Allan* and the part song "John Grumlie"<sup>45</sup> and both received several performances (including at the aforementioned event) during Drysdale's conductorship and after. The following quotation demonstrates the popularity of the choir as well as highlighting the high standard of both singers and conductor:

The appearance of the Glasgow Select Choir in the St. Andrew's Hall on Saturday attracted, as they never fail to do, a large audience. The programme ... was rendered in that excellent fashion which had always been a characteristic of the choir's work, and which redounds not only to the credit of individual members, but to that of the popular conductor, Mr. Learmont Drysdale.<sup>46</sup>

By September of 1907, Drysdale had resigned from the conductorship,<sup>47</sup> a period so brief that his tenure is not recorded in the annals of the choir.<sup>48</sup>

During May of 1908, a prestigious exhibition designed to improve trade relations between France and the British Empire was held at Shepherd's Bush in London.<sup>49</sup> The Franco-British Exhibition's Honorary President was the ninth Duke of Argyll,<sup>50</sup> whose professional career, which included service as an MP, private secretary to the India Office (1868–71) and Governor General of Canada (1878–83), eminently qualified him for the position.<sup>51</sup> In 1907 Argyll wrote the Inaugural Ode for the exhibition's opening ceremony choosing Drysdale to write the music<sup>52</sup> and although it is not documented how the parties became acquainted, it is likely that they met in December of 1906 when the Select Choir performed for the Birmingham and Midland Scottish Society of which

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<sup>43</sup> "Music in Glasgow" *MT* 45 (December 1904): 811

<sup>44</sup> Programmes: Concerts given by the Glasgow Select Choir, September 1906–May 1907, Cb10-y.2/6–10

<sup>45</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers..." 23

<sup>46</sup> "Select Choir's Concert" *Glasgow Evening News* 5 November 1906, 9f

<sup>47</sup> "Music in Glasgow" *MT* 48 (October 1907): 673

<sup>48</sup> "History of Glasgow Select Choir", [1991], Arts Department, ML, Glasgow. The unnamed author of this short history states that records of the choir's activities from 1888–1917 are extremely scant, a fact which may explain the omission of Drysdale's conductorship. The choir was disbanded in April of 1989.

<sup>49</sup> [Duke of] Argyll to [Lord] Minto, 25 January 1906, MS 12774/223<sup>1</sup>, Minto Papers, NLS. Minto was the Viceroy of India from 1905–1910.

<sup>50</sup> F.A. Campbell to the Duke of Argyll, 19 January 1907, MS 12774/234, Minto Papers, NLS

<sup>51</sup> *Who Was Who, 1897–1916* 4 vols (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953) 1, 22–23

<sup>52</sup> Argyll to Learmont Drysdale, [9 September 1907], Farmer 262/2. Argyll states that he had first heard Drysdale's music at a performance of *The Plague* in 1896.

Argyll was patron.<sup>53</sup> In offering Drysdale this commission, Argyll explained that there was to be no pecuniary benefit involved, noting:

The prestige of the music will have to be your just reward, but it will make you widely known. [...] They [the committee] are thinking of offering the chance to other men but I feel it would be much pleasanter to bring forward a fellow countryman.<sup>54</sup>

After eight months' work on the project, which included Drysdale making several visits to the Duke's country seat at Inveraray, the Franco-British Ode was presented to the exhibition's Music Committee which included Sir J. Frederick Bridge and Imre Kiralfy, Commissioner-General of the exhibition.<sup>55</sup> The Ode lasted in excess of an hour, but the music committee decided that this was too long and Drysdale was asked to produce a shorter work.<sup>56</sup> The collaborators duly produced a second version, but on the second examination by the committee, Drysdale's music was rejected<sup>57</sup> and the commission passed to Sir Charles Villiers Stanford who was required to complete his setting of the Duke's text within two months.<sup>58</sup> There was little reason for Argyll to pursue the matter as he had lost nothing, but Drysdale, very angry about the treatment he had received, petitioned him to plead his cause before the committee. Argyll, who had been so keen for Drysdale to undertake the commission initially, did little to assist, insisting that he had nothing to do with the music of the exhibition. It was a great disappointment for Drysdale who had been expecting great things from this prestigious commission and he was to be further frustrated when Argyll stated that he should not promote his version of the ode before Stanford's setting was heard to ensure that "no one can say yours is too like his".<sup>59</sup> It is difficult to judge how Drysdale reacted to this peculiar edict considering his piece was completed first. Argyll attempted to resolve the upset by inviting Drysdale to accompany him to the opening ceremony of the exhibition<sup>60</sup> and although it is not clear whether he accepted this offer, Drysdale firmly placed blame for the fiasco on the committee. Janey noted many years later: "the music was beyond Kiralfy, who wanted

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<sup>53</sup> Programme: "Concert given by the Glasgow Select Choir for the Birmingham and Midland Scottish Society", Cb10-y.2/10

<sup>54</sup> Argyll to Learmont Drysdale, 18 April 1907, Farmer 262/3

<sup>55</sup> Kiralfy (d. 1919) was associated with a number of prestigious exhibitions. See *Who Was Who* vol. 2: 1916–1928, 589–590 .

<sup>56</sup> Argyll to Learmont Drysdale, 22 June 1907, Farmer 262/5

<sup>57</sup> Argyll to Learmont Drysdale, 3 March 1908, Farmer 262/17

<sup>58</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 22 April 1908, Farmer 262/20

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Invitation: "Duke of Argyll for the opening of the Franco-British Exhibition on 14 May 1908", Farmer 262/23. The invitation is amended to include Drysdale.

something cheap in both senses — a military band instead of an orchestra and a cheap melody instead of a scholarly work.”<sup>61</sup>

Following the debacle over the Franco-British Ode, Argyll was to offer Drysdale a further opportunity to promote his work. The Campbell family of Argyll are one of the oldest Scottish aristocratic dynasties and several of its members have taken an active interest in their native culture. Argyll’s brother, Lord Archibald Campbell, was involved in the publication of the “Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition” series, whilst his cousin, John Francis Campbell of Islay, was a prominent scholar in the field of Celtic oral traditions.<sup>62</sup> Thus steeped in family tradition, Argyll aspired to write literature in this vein. In 1897, he had collaborated with Hamish MacCunn on *Diarmid*, a Celtic opera in four acts produced at Covent Garden by the Carl Rosa Company. However, this work does not seem to have fulfilled Argyll’s literary ambition and he later wrote another libretto *Fionn and Tera*, whose plot is a bizarre juxtaposition of traditional Celtic mythology and classical Greek tragedy.<sup>63</sup> Drysdale agreed to compose the music and by March 1909 had practically completed the piano score; however, over the next two months, other work claimed his attention and he had little more than begun the orchestration when death intervened. *Fionn and Tera* was left at various stages of completion, the majority being in piano score, a few sections being fully orchestrated, whilst others were only sketched.<sup>64</sup>

Following his disappointment over the music for the Franco-British Exhibition, Drysdale had not relied completely upon receiving a further commission from Argyll and had solicited work from other quarters. In the spring of 1908, he approached W.S. Gilbert to suggest that they collaborate on an operatic venture, but the dramatist declined.<sup>65</sup> Soon after this rejection, he was to receive a commission from an unexpected source. As much of his original work demonstrates, Drysdale maintained an active interest throughout his career in Scottish traditional music. Nevertheless, it was not until the final years of his life that he became actively involved in folksong

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<sup>61</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 18 August 1942, Farmer 249/1941/m

<sup>62</sup> Anja Gunderloch “Notes on Argyll’s *Fionn and Tera*”, May 1999, produced for, and in the possession of, the author. See also John MacKechnie *Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in Selected Libraries in Great Britain and Ireland* 2 vols (Boston, Mass.: Hall, 1973) 1, 83.

<sup>63</sup> Duke of Argyll *Libretto of Fionn and Tera* (Edinburgh: Cuthbertson, 1912)

<sup>64</sup> David Stephen to Janey Drysdale, 25 August 1910, Cb10-x.17/55<sup>1a</sup>

<sup>65</sup> W.S. Gilbert to Learmont Drysdale, 12 May 1908, Cb10-x.17/2

arrangement following a commission from the choirmaster and bandmaster James Wood who was in the process of compiling a Scots song collection published as *Song Gems*.<sup>66</sup> Drysdale's main involvement was as editor of the volume but he also supplied several of his own arrangements. It seems likely that these activities were instrumental in his being made president of the Edinburgh branch of the Scottish National Song Society (SNSS), which had been founded in 1906 to promote the interests of Scottish literature and song.<sup>67</sup> This society held concerts and song competitions, but little further evidence remains concerning its activities except that it seems to have ceased operation around 1910.<sup>68</sup> Although Janey Drysdale does not mention the SNSS in her biographies, she does state that during the last few months of his life, her brother was formulating plans for a society to promote the interests of Scottish music, but that he died before these came to fruition.<sup>69</sup> The aims of the society she describes are somewhat similar to those of the SNSS, nevertheless, it is not possible to determine whether this was the same project under discussion. In 1911, Janey Drysdale, Lauchlan MacLean Watt and several other enthusiasts took up Learmont's ideas and instituted the Dunedin Association<sup>70</sup> which will be discussed fully in the following chapter.

Drysdale returned to Edinburgh to live with his family in April of 1909<sup>71</sup> during a time of great distress in the household. Andrew had been forced to return to the family home having been accused of financial misconduct and summarily dismissed from the Earl of Rosebery's employ. He entered a slander action against Rosebery at the High Court in Edinburgh claiming damages of £10,000.<sup>72</sup> The affair created a public scandal — the idea of a middle-class person suing such a prestigious figure (Rosebery had been Prime Minister from 1894–95) with extensive financial resources and influence would have been considered futile. As expected, the Establishment backed Rosebery and on 20

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<sup>66</sup> James Wood comp. *Song Gems (Scots): The Dunedin Collection* (London: Vincent Music Co., 1908)

<sup>67</sup> "Scottish National Song Society". *Glasgow Herald* 22 May 1909, 5f

<sup>68</sup> By 1909 the SNSS seem to have had branches in all of Scotland's major cities. Nevertheless, beyond a few newspaper reports, a journal article and one song collection it adopted (viz. Hugh Robertson's *The Scottish Orpheus*), little evidence remains to determine the extent and scope of its activities. See Ian A. Olson "Gavin Greig's Lecture to the Scottish National Song Society, November 1909. A Failure of Nerve?" *Northern Scotland* 17, no. 2 (1987): [151]–158.

<sup>69</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers..." 24

<sup>70</sup> Janey C. Drysdale to the Members of the Dunedin Association, 14 October 1911, UY875/Box 3, Donaldson Muniments, Special Collections Department, St Andrew's University Library

<sup>71</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers..." 24. This article states only that Drysdale returned to his native Edinburgh in April of 1909, however, correspondence further demonstrates that he was residing with his family at 22 Braid Crescent, Morningside.

<sup>72</sup> "Action Against Lord Rosebery" *The Times* 15 March 1909, 3f

April the judge dismissed Andrew's action decreeing that he should pay all expenses, although he qualified his findings thus:

In justice to the pursuer ... the result of the investigation appears to have been entirely satisfactory, and ... no allegation against his probity is made by the defender on record.<sup>73</sup>

Andrew's appeal against this decision was unsuccessful leaving him substantially poorer. It is outside the scope of this thesis to judge the propriety of Andrew's case, but it does demonstrate a further example of the Drysdale family trait of defending their rights in seemingly impossible situations.

Soon after Learmont's return to Edinburgh, he placed the following advertisement in the *Scotsman*:

MR LEARMONT DRYSDALE has taken up residence in Edinburgh and is prepared to receive PUPILS for INSTRUCTION in THEORY of MUSIC, HARMONY, and all branches of COMPOSITION (Counterpoint, Form, Orchestration, etc.); in Pianoforte and Vocal Rendition; also to Prepare Candidates for Mus.Bac. and Mus.Doc. Degrees and Students entering for LRAM and other Diplomas, etc.<sup>74</sup>

As far as can be ascertained, this is the first time Learmont advertised for pupils, possibly suggesting that there was some financial hardship in his family following Andrew's unsuccessful court action. Although Drysdale could be considered qualified to undertake teaching of general music theory, harmony and composition to intermediate levels, his belief that he could prepare candidates for Bachelor and Doctoral degrees is suspect. As stated previously, Alexander C. Mackenzie believed form and counterpoint were Drysdale's "Weak points",<sup>75</sup> a view with which later discussion will concur. A survey of the advertising pages of the *MT* demonstrates that quite an industry had grown up around the preparation by post of candidates for degrees and it is likely that Drysdale was attempting to capture the Edinburgh market in this service.

A further tragedy struck the family when Mrs Jane Drysdale was suddenly taken ill and after a short illness died on 9 June aged eighty-two years.<sup>76</sup> Learmont, who was particularly devoted to his mother, was desolate and whilst attending her funeral at

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<sup>73</sup> "The Action Against Lord Rosebery: Judgement for the Defender" *The Times*, 21 April 1909, 4c

<sup>74</sup> [Advertisements] *Scotsman* 1 May 1909, 1e

<sup>75</sup> A.C. Mackenzie to Learmont Drysdale, 2 August 1890, Cb10-x.17/6

<sup>76</sup> *Calendar of Confirmations and Inventories Granted and Given up in the Several Commissariats of Scotland in the Year of 1911* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1912) 169

Peebles Cemetery caught a chill<sup>77</sup> which developed into pneumonia and within a week, he too was dead.<sup>78</sup> He was interred in the Learmont family burial ground alongside his beloved mother on 22 June 1909.<sup>79</sup> Several newspapers and journals, including the *Glasgow Herald*<sup>80</sup> and *The Times*,<sup>81</sup> published substantial obituaries concerning the factual details of Drysdale's life, however, *MT* was more emotive stating: "The death of so gifted a composer, in the prime of life, is a matter for deep regret."<sup>82</sup> More personal statements can be found in letters sent to his sister, including from the musicologist J. Cuthbert Hadden, whose sentiments encapsulate the mood expressed in much of this correspondence:

I am at the moment working on my Haydn chapter<sup>83</sup> and it maddens me to write of such a placid, easy-going existence, which went down to its end heavy with honours. It maddens me to have to write it and have to contrast it with the pathetic fate of that life so dear to us all and which has gone out from us forever.<sup>84</sup>

Drysdale died intestate and it was nearly two years before his sister was granted confirmation<sup>85</sup> over his estate which was valued at £14, 10s. 4d.,<sup>86</sup> a minuscule amount considering a career of nearly twenty years as a professional musician.

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<sup>77</sup> "Musical Composer's Death: The Late Mr L. Drysdale" *Glasgow Herald* 19 June 1909, 6f

<sup>78</sup> Death Certificate: Registration District of Morningside, Burgh of Edinburgh, entry no. 540, 19 June 1909 [Date of death: 18 June 1909]

<sup>79</sup> Burial Register: Peebles Old Churchyard, [nd], p. 259, lair 346

<sup>80</sup> "Musical Composer's Death: The Late Mr L. Drysdale" *Glasgow Herald* 19 June 1909, 6f

<sup>81</sup> "Obituary: Mr Learmont Drysdale" *The Times*, 21 June 1909, 10g-h

<sup>82</sup> "Mr. Learmont Drysdale" *MT* 50 (July 1909): 456

<sup>83</sup> This reference is to "Papa and Mamma Haydn" in *Master Musicians: Stories of Romantic Lives — A Book For Players, Singers and Listeners* (London: Peter Davies, 1909) 49–68. In the "Preface", Hadden states that his book chiefly concerns the composers' lives rather than providing any technical or critical analysis of their music. He completed the book in September of 1909.

<sup>84</sup> J. Cuthbert Hadden to Janey Drysdale, 21 June 1909, Cb10-y.7/1

<sup>85</sup> Confirmation is the Scots law equivalent of probate.

<sup>86</sup> Inventory: Sheriff Court of Edinburgh — George John Learmont Drysdale, 21 April 1911, SC70/1/513: pp 577–578, NAS. This sum included £8, 10s. 4d. derived from his mother's estate. Janey Drysdale's inheritance of both her brother's and mother's estate is unusual, as her father Andrew Drysdale was technically next of kin in Scots law and hence, legally entitled to inherit. It seems probable that Mr. Drysdale, who was then eighty, waived his rights in the estates in return for his daughter completing the executories. This procedure might also explain the lengthy time it took to grant confirmation.



1861-1965

**Extract of an entry in a REGISTER of DEATHS**  
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965

32316

No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Name and surname Rank or profession and whether single, married or widowed	When and where died	Sex	Age	Name, surname and rank or profession of father Name and maiden surname of mother	Cause of death, duration of disease and medical attendant by whom certified	Signature and qualification of informant and residence, if out of the house in which the death occurred	When and where registered and signature of registrar
541	George John Learmont Drysdale	1904 11 W. John New St. Dundee	M	90	William Drysdale Mrs. Drysdale	Coronary Resumption 7 days	Witnessed by Mother	1904 Dundee
	George John Learmont Drysdale	1904 11 W. John New St. Dundee	M	90	William Drysdale Mrs. Drysdale	Coronary Resumption 7 days	Witnessed by Mother	1904 Dundee

The above particulars are extracted from a Register of Deaths for the  
 in the City of Edinburgh District of Morningside  
 Given under the Seal of the General Register Office, New Register House, Edinburgh, on 6 January 1998

The above particulars incorporate any subsequent corrections or amendments to the original entry made with the authority of the Registrar General.  
 This extract is valid only if it has been authenticated by the seal of the General Register Office. If the particulars in the statutory register have been  
 reproduced by photography, xerography or some other similar process the seal must have been impressed after the reproduction has been made. The General Register  
 Office will substitute any such process reproductions which have been introduced by that office.

Illustration 7: Death Certificate of George John Learmont Drysdale

## 5. The Posthumous Promotion of Drysdale's Compositions

Janey Drysdale was devoted to her brother during his lifetime, providing support and assistance whenever possible and was particularly keen to promote his career. After Learmont's death, Janey considered her duty was to further his cause, an ideal that was to occupy her for the remainder of her life. The following discussion outlines the major contribution (aside from that detailed elsewhere) Janey and others made to ensure that Learmont Drysdale's work was not lost to future generations.

The formation of the Dunedin Association in 1911 was to provide an important forum for the promotion of Scottish music and literature, and Janey Drysdale's position as honorary secretary of the society ensured that her brother's work benefited substantially from its activities. Under the auspices of the society, which at its zenith had some one thousand members including such notable figures as Sir J. Frederick Bridge, Sir Frederick Cowen, Hamish MacCunn and Sir James Donaldson (the society's president for some years),<sup>1</sup> all types of Scottish music ranging from folksong to large-scale choral and orchestral works were performed. Drysdale's smaller-scale pieces were heard frequently at the society's monthly meetings<sup>2</sup> and the choral ballad *Tamlane* was performed at a prestigious concert of works by Scottish composers held under the association's auspices at the Music Hall in Edinburgh in 1913.<sup>3</sup> Between 1912 and 1915, the association published the *Dunedin Magazine* which embraced a variety of topics connected with Scottish culture including informative articles concerning recent research in the field, biographies of native composers and authors, and numerous reviews of performances and recent publications. However, by 1917 the society ceased to function, its membership having seriously declined during the First World War.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Dunedin Association: List of Proposed Office Bearers", [October 1911], UY875/Box 3, Donaldson Muniments, Special Collections Department, St Andrew's University Library

<sup>2</sup> These performances consisted mainly of instrumental items (including an organ version of *Tam o' Shanter* arranged and performed by the Glasgow organist and teacher H. Sandiford Turner), songs and recitations. Programmes of concerts held between 1912 and 1915 can be found in the *Dunedin Magazine*.

<sup>3</sup> Advertising Flyer: Choral/Orchestral Concert of Works of Famous Scottish Composers given by the Edinburgh Choral Union and the Dunedin Association, Edinburgh Music Hall, 7 March 1913, Cb10-x.18: Programmes of Performances of the Works of Learmont Drysdale/20. This concert included performances of *The Cotter's Saturday Night* by A.C. Mackenzie and Hamish MacCunn's *The Cameronian's Dream*.

<sup>4</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 30

A lack of published material was Janey's major difficulty in promoting performances of her brother's music. Manuscript copies slightly eased this situation, but there were still considerable logistical problems in linking performance material with conductors. Thus, to secure performances it was imperative that the popular items in Drysdale's oeuvre be published. In 1919, Janey made enquires about the Carnegie Trust's scheme for publishing the work of native composers.<sup>5</sup> Initially there was some dubiety about Drysdale's work being eligible under the rules of the scheme, but following a discussion of the matter by the Trust's Music sub-committee, it was decided that a recently deceased composer should be treated in the same manner as his living contemporaries.<sup>6</sup> Janey chose to submit what she considered Drysdale's most popular piece *Tam o' Shanter* and the composition was duly accepted by the publication committee who invited [Sir] Dan Godfrey (for many years Director of Music at the Bournemouth Winter Gardens<sup>7</sup>) to edit the work.<sup>8</sup> Godfrey (1868–1939) did not have an easy task as there were "many discrepancies and not a few wrong notes",<sup>9</sup> however, this did not deter him from producing a military band arrangement, published by Chappell, which became popular over the following years.<sup>10</sup> A close friendship developed between Dan Godfrey and Janey. It was he who advised her on the business arrangements concerning Stainer and Bell's publication of *Tam o' Shanter* and in future years, he programmed a number of Drysdale's works at the Bournemouth Winter Gardens Concerts.<sup>11</sup> The easy access to reasonably priced parts for both versions of *Tam o' Shanter* boosted the number of live

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<sup>5</sup> Janey Drysdale to the Carnegie Fund for Publishing British Composers' Works [draft], nd, Farmer 247/32

<sup>6</sup> Minutes of Music Sub-Committee meeting: Item III — Music Publication Scheme's acceptance of works by deceased composers, 16 December 1919, GD 281/41/68/11, Carnegie Trust Papers, NAS. Some years previously Sir James Donaldson had tried to acquire funds from the Trust to further Drysdale's work but had been informed that there was no money available, the above scheme having not yet been instituted. See Janey Drysdale to A.B. Hyslop (Interim Secretary of the Carnegie Trust), [November 1919], Farmer 247/32.

<sup>7</sup> See Stephen Lloyd *Sir Dan Godfrey: Champion of British Composers* (London: Thames, 1995) 113. Godfrey was acquainted with Drysdale's work having given performances from manuscript of *Tam o' Shanter* and *Herondean* in 1915. For further information see Cb10-x.18: Miscellaneous Letters from Dan Godfrey, Adrian Boulton, Julius Harrison, Ernest Bulloch.

<sup>8</sup> Colonel J.M. Mitchell (Secretary of the Carnegie Trust) to Miss Drysdale, 19 May 1920, Farmer 247/36

<sup>9</sup> Dan Godfrey to Miss Drysdale, 20 June 1921, Farmer 247/13

<sup>10</sup> Stainer and Bell: Royalty Accounts to Miss J.C. Drysdale 1922–1945 [*Tam o' Shanter*], Farmer 247/102/1–45 These documents list numerous broadcast and live performances of this arrangement of the work.

<sup>11</sup> See programmes of the Bournemouth Winter Gardens Concerts in Cb10-y.1/13–17 and references in Stephen Lloyd *Sir Dan Godfrey*....

and broadcast performances not just within Britain and Ireland,<sup>12</sup> but worldwide in such far-flung places as Calcutta, Durban and Moscow.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, Janey made only a small financial gain from the royalties (approximately £125 in twenty-three years)<sup>14</sup> due mainly to the low charge for the sale/hire of the work<sup>15</sup> and the perpetual problem of unofficial performances and copying/lending of parts.<sup>16</sup> During the life of their publication scheme, the Carnegie Trust published fifty-six new works by contemporary British composers<sup>17</sup> including Vaughan Williams's *A London Symphony*, Holst's *The Hymn of Jesus* and works by Bliss, Frank Bridge, McEwen and Stanford.<sup>18</sup> *Tam o' Shanter* was in distinguished company.

During the late 1920s, Janey moved to a lonely cottage (The Hannel) in the hills some three miles from the village of Traquair, Peeblesshire and close to her mother's family home on the estate of the Earls of Traquair. Learmont had been greatly attracted by the landscapes and folklore of this area,<sup>19</sup> and Janey, desirous to commemorate the life of her brother, decided that the hilltop close to her new home would be the perfect location for a memorial. Over the following years whenever she or any of her guests climbed the Hannel Hill, they would take a stone with them to add to a small shepherd's cairn located at the summit. Eventually the stones were piled four feet high and Janey formed

<sup>12</sup> Stainer and Bell: *Royalty Accounts*.... There were frequent live performances of the work (e.g. Bantock conducted it in Birmingham on 11 December 1922) as well as broadcasts both nationally and from a number of regional stations (e.g. London, Dublin, North Region, Glasgow and Belfast).

<sup>13</sup> L. Dunn (Bandmaster of The Cameronians, Scottish Rifles) to Janey Drysdale [typescript copy], 13 October 1943, attached to Farmer 249/1943/g. Dunn had conducted the band arrangement of *Tam o' Shanter* for the annual Burns Club concert at the Empire Theatre, Calcutta in 1938. Janey also mentions that the band version had been broadcast twice that year [1943] (see Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 16 October 1943, Farmer 249/1943/g); Janey Drysdale to Dan (Stuart) Godfrey (musical director, Durban, [son of Dan Godfrey above]) [draft], 27 March 1929, attached to Farmer 247/70; Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 11 December 1943, Farmer 249/1943/j. In this letter, Janey mentions that Professor Nebolsin, the Moscow conductor, had rehearsed *Tam o' Shanter* and having been favourably impressed decided that the work was to be included in a forthcoming programme. See also Henry Farmer "Scottish Composers" [letter to the editor] *Glasgow Herald* 16 December 1943, 4f.

<sup>14</sup> Stainer and Bell: *Royalty Accounts*.... These accounts include royalties earned through sale/hire of parts, and for live and broadcast performances of both versions of the work.

<sup>15</sup> "Agreement Between Composer and Publisher for Music Published Under the Carnegie Trust No. 7431", 23 December 1921, Farmer 247/28. Prices agreed: full score 15s./; orchestral parts 17s./6d. and hire fee 12s./6d. The publisher considered these figures as relatively low.

<sup>16</sup> There is correspondence throughout the period 1922–1948 which is concerned with unofficial (Godfrey's term is 'promiscuous') performance and copying of parts.

<sup>17</sup> "Carnegie United Kingdom Trust" in *New Grove*... (1980) 3, 800

<sup>18</sup> Catalogue: "Carnegie Collection of British Music: Complete List of Works by Modern British Composers" (London: Stainer and Bell, nd). This collection was for many years held by the Trust at their premises in Dunfermline. It has recently been moved to the Library of King's College, London.

<sup>19</sup> For example, his interest in this area provided the inspiration for *Tamlane*, *Border Romance* and arrangements of numerous local traditional songs.

a monument into which she incorporated a stone tablet engraved with the simple inscription: “Learmont Drysdale, Composer 1866–1909”. In September of 1937, an ill-assorted group of some sixty people made their way by horse and/or foot to the summit of Hennel Hill to attend the memorial ceremony.<sup>20</sup> Sir Dan Godfrey made the dedication and the contralto Miss Catherine Mentiplay, accompanied (though how is not known<sup>21</sup>) by her husband William Elliot, performed several of Drysdale’s songs.<sup>22</sup> The cairn, which still stands though in a ruinous condition and without its memorial tablet, is a puzzle to many in the area today as they have no idea who Learmont Drysdale was, a regrettable situation considering Janey’s reasons for placing it there.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> James Frazer, conversation with author, 17 November 1997, Innerleithen, Peeblesshire. Mr Frazer, who was a young boy at the time, observed members of this group leaving for Hennel Hill. He also states that Miss Drysdale was known in the villages of Innerleithen and Traquair as “an eccentric old buddy” who wasn’t liked by local shopkeepers and tradesmen because “she was a hard taskmaster and mean wi’ it!”

<sup>21</sup> Contemporary accounts and photographs do not inform us of the exact nature of this accompaniment. Could a small piano have been mounted on the back of a horse or did Mr. Elliot perform on a guitar or small harp?

<sup>22</sup> “Memorial to Learmont Drysdale” *Border Telegraph* 7 September 1937 in Farmer comp. “Cuttings on Music in Scotland”, Farmer 219, p. 57–59. Miss Mentiplay performed at the Dunedin Association and in a broadcast performance of Drysdale’s *Burd Ailie* on 7 December 1945 (see “Scots songs” *Radio Times* {30 November 1945}), but the author has been unable to find any further references to this singer. A William Elliot produced two British musicals in New York in 1917 and 1918 (see Kurt Gänzl *The British Musical Theatre* 2 vols {London: MacMillan, 1986} vol 2, 49, 53). However, this identification is purely suppositional.

<sup>23</sup> Jennifer Caird, conversation with author, Traquair, Peeblesshire, 14 February 1998. Mrs Caird stated that she and other local people had on occasion discussed the identity of Drysdale without any positive result. In 2000, a local farmer removed the tablet from the cairn for safekeeping.

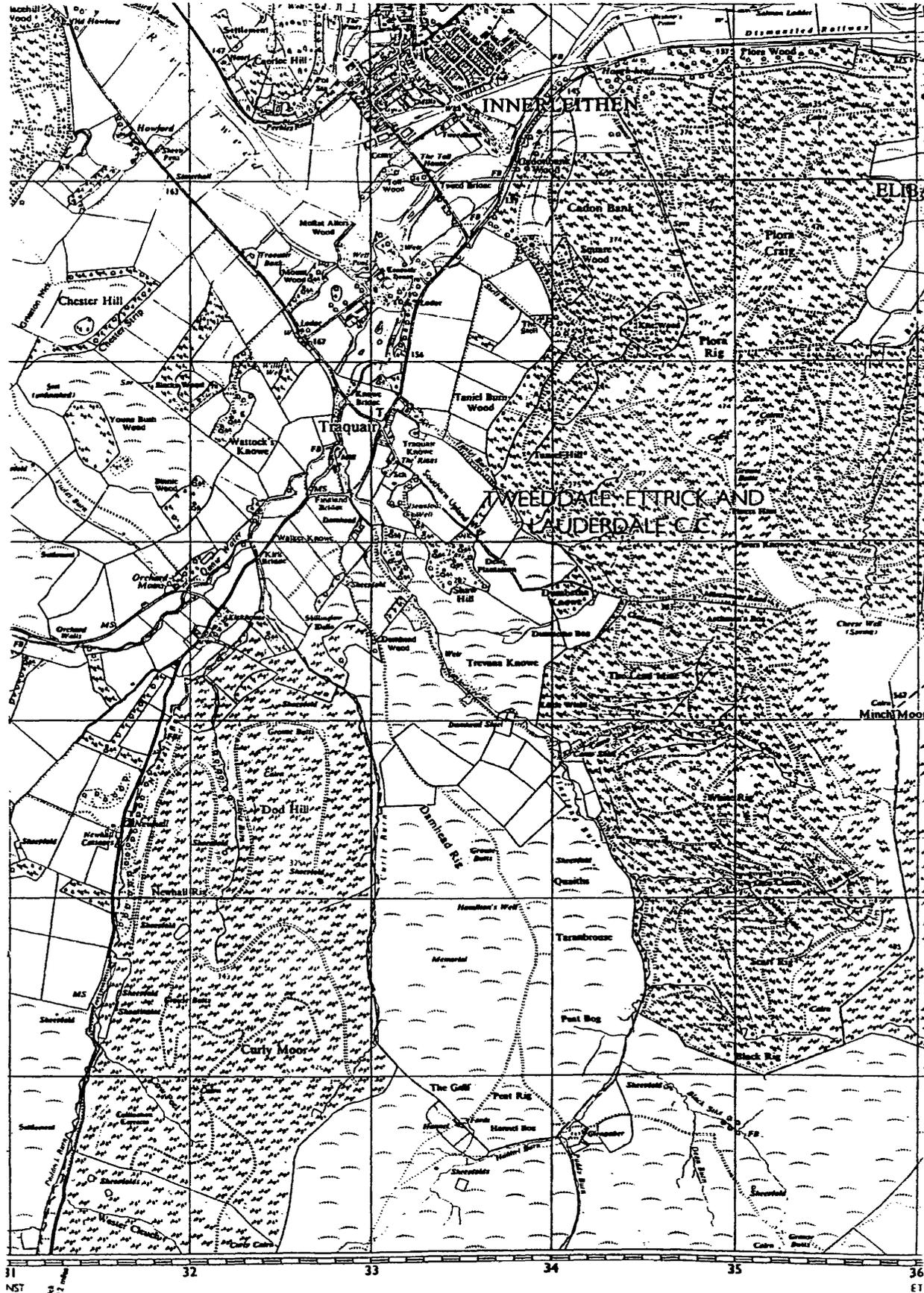


Illustration 8: Map Location of the Learmont Drysdale Memorial



**Illustration 9: Photographs of the Learmont Drysdale Memorial**

Janey seems to have spent a good deal of her twenty years at The Hennel producing manuscript copies of her brother's compositions to send conductors in the hope of securing performances.<sup>24</sup> Initially, she had either stored Drysdale's manuscripts herself or the conductors who programmed his music retained them. However, this ad hoc arrangement was difficult to operate successfully when arranging performances and Dr Herbert Carruthers of the BBC in Glasgow (who had possibly experienced some difficulty accessing material) advised that the manuscripts should be deposited with the Edinburgh publisher Bruce, Clement and Co. who operated a circulating music hire library.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the library's secretary James C. Moonie (brother of the composer W. B. Moonie) also agreed to collect royalties for performances and broadcasts.<sup>26</sup> This arrangement was advantageous from a number of aspects: conductors had easier access to performing material; the manuscripts appeared in the publisher's catalogue exposing them to a wider audience and Janey no longer had to keep track of the whereabouts of each individual work or chase up unpaid royalties. Nevertheless, the situation was not perfect, as Moonie was lax in keeping track of performances and, thus, collecting royalties due.<sup>27</sup>

Janey also enlisted the assistance of many musicians in her quest to disseminate her brother's music. In 1939, she contacted the composer Erik Chisholm (1904–1965) in connection with his revival of the Dunedin Association and he responded by asking if she would send him as many of Drysdale's manuscripts as possible with a view to promoting their performance.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, Chisholm noted that he wished to study Drysdale's work as part of his research for a history of Scottish music he was undertaking with the composer John McQuaid (1909–2004).<sup>29</sup> However, following receipt of the manuscripts, Chisholm made little headway with his project or securing performances, and when Janey inquired as to his progress in the matter he remarked: "It's difficult to get performances for living composers, [and] twenty times harder for [the] dead".<sup>30</sup> Chisholm was well-known for his vigorous promotion of neglected

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<sup>24</sup> Extant correspondence demonstrates that Janey received a few affirmative replies including one from Julius Harrison of the Hastings Municipal Orchestra (24 October 1937, in Cb10-x.18).

<sup>25</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 8 April 1942, Farmer 249/1942/c

<sup>26</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 27 January 1946, Farmer 249/1946/c

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 8 April 1942, Farmer 249/1942/c

<sup>29</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 19 August 1942, Farmer 249/1942/m. There is no evidence to suggest that the parties proceeded with this project.

<sup>30</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 17 May 1942, Farmer 249/1942/e

music,<sup>31</sup> so it would seem that Janey was simply unfortunate in placing Drysdale's manuscripts in his care at a particularly busy period of his life.<sup>32</sup>

Throughout this period, Janey maintained contact with the musical world through correspondence and in particular, letters in support of her brother's work to national newspapers. It was through the publication of letters from Dr Henry Farmer (musicologist, orientalist and champion of Scottish music<sup>33</sup>) in the *Glasgow Herald* that she became acquainted with his sterling work on behalf of native composers. Some time later, a friend informed Janey that Farmer (1882–1965) had included a Drysdale chamber work in a concert at the Glasgow Art Galleries. Janey, intrigued by the programme's description of a piece for two violins and piano (a combination not employed by her brother), wrote to Farmer inquiring where he had obtained this arrangement of an unpublished work.<sup>34</sup> Janey does not name the piece and as much of Farmer's side of the correspondence is lost, it is not known if he replied to her specific inquiry. However, he had been interested in her brother's work for some time,<sup>35</sup> as evidenced by the numerous entries concerning Drysdale in his press cuttings book of Scottish musicians.<sup>36</sup> Janey's approach prompted a lengthy correspondence between the parties which developed into a close friendship. Farmer did his utmost to promote Drysdale's music through articles in the press and using his influence in professional circles (i.e. BBC, Scottish Orchestra and universities<sup>37</sup>), however, like Janey, he had little success. He did succeed in persuading Janey to donate Drysdale's manuscripts, correspondence and ephemera to the nation in the hope that at some point in the future interest would be rekindled in his music. Janey had considered this type of arrangement previously and had asked the music critic Robin Legge (whom she states was a great admirer of Drysdale's work) whether the manuscripts should be deposited in the Scottish National Library (now the National Library of Scotland). Legge had advised

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<sup>31</sup> "Dr Erik Chisholm" *MT* 106 (August 1965): 623

<sup>32</sup> Caroline Mears "Erik Chisholm" in *New Grove...* (1980) 4, 286. As well as working on his own composition at this time, he was musical director of several opera and ballet companies.

<sup>33</sup> William J. Conner "Henry George Farmer" in *New Grove...* (1980) 6, 400–401

<sup>34</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 6 March 1942, Farmer 249/1942/a

<sup>35</sup> Henry Farmer to Janey Drysdale, 17 March 1942, in Cb10-x.18: Dr Farmer and Dr Cunningham/1

<sup>36</sup> Henry Farmer comp. "Cuttings on Music in Scotland", Farmer 219

<sup>37</sup> For example, see correspondence between Henry Farmer and BBC Scotland administrators, Farmer 246/1–7 and reviews of performances solicited by Farmer, given by Glasgow University Orchestra of *Tam o' Shanter* ("University Concert: The Orchestral Society" *Glasgow Herald* 6 May 1943, 3e) and the Prelude to *Thomas the Rhymer* ("Glasgow University Orchestra: A Scottish Prelude" *Glasgow Herald* 11 May 1944, 6e).

against this course of action explaining that this library's strict access policy did not allow material to leave its premises and, thus, the manuscripts would be unavailable for performance.<sup>38</sup> Janey donated the majority of Drysdale's archive to GUL in June 1942 with the proviso that access to autograph manuscripts (excepting those of which there was no copy) be restricted to library consultation only. The copies made by Janey and any uncopied autograph manuscripts were to be available to groups wishing to perform the works.<sup>39</sup> Further manuscript copies and other miscellaneous items were sent to the Scottish National Library, the British Museum<sup>40</sup> (including an autograph extract from his last and unfinished opera *Fionn and Tera*<sup>41</sup>), ECL and the ML, Glasgow. These donations have partially fulfilled the donor's desired intentions as they have been consulted during the research process for several books and broadcasts concerning music in Scotland.<sup>42</sup> However, Janey's main hope was that public access to Drysdale's compositions would encourage more regular performances of his work and from this perspective her intention has singularly failed. Furthermore, access to the Drysdale Collection has now been restricted to the Department of Special Collections Reading Room meaning prospective performers face considerable costs to secure copies of performing material.<sup>43</sup> The fate of Drysdale's work as 'living music' is precarious.

Before the 1940s there had been limited research into the field of Scottish art music with few people of importance declaring an open interest in the subject. From early in their relationship, Janey encouraged Farmer to commit his extensive knowledge of the topic to print asking: "Have you not thought of writing a history of Scots music? It is much needed."<sup>44</sup> When discussing the Chisholm/McQuaid project she once again raised the matter saying: "How I wish you had time to write such a history".<sup>45</sup> Farmer did eventually undertake the project and the resulting publication *A History of Music in*

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<sup>38</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 8 April 1942, Farmer 249/1942/c

<sup>39</sup> Henry Farmer to Janey Drysdale, 10 April 1942, in Cb10-x.18: Dr Farmer and Dr Cunningham/2

<sup>40</sup> W. Cunningham (Librarian, GUL) to Miss Drysdale, 3 August 1944, in Cb10-x.18: Dr Farmer and Dr Cunningham/10

<sup>41</sup> British Museum to W. Cunningham, 25 April 1946, in Cb10-x.18: Dr Farmer and Dr Cunningham/17

<sup>42</sup> For example see Kenneth Elliott and Frederick Rimmer *A History of Scottish Music* (London: BBC, 1973) and John Purser *Scotland's Music* (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream, 1992) both with accompanying radio broadcasts.

<sup>43</sup> At a charge of 30 pence per A4 sheet with no discount for bulk, the cost of reproducing a full score and set of parts for any large-scale work is very expensive and outside the reach of most amateur groups.

<sup>44</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 18 June 1942, Farmer 249/1942/h. Messages of encouragement run through much of Janey's correspondence.

<sup>45</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 19 August 1942, Farmer 249/1942/m

*Scotland* became the seminal work on the subject,<sup>46</sup> the author acknowledging his debt to Janey in the book's dedication. This was not Janey's only contribution to Farmer's literary work. Janey and Lucy Carr Shaw had corresponded regularly since their initial meeting in 1898 during the tour of *Red Spider* and the former had amassed a significant collection of letters, photographs and ephemera connected with the actress. Furthermore, Lucy had been particularly vigorous in promoting Learmont's songs in the years following his death drawing on her connections in the musical fraternity and approaching a number of publishers on Janey's behalf,<sup>47</sup> but as with many other supporters of Drysdale's music, her efforts were unsuccessful.<sup>48</sup> Janey, conscious both of her debt to Lucy in the matter of Learmont's music, and the lack of recognition she received in her acting career, gave her Shavania to Farmer extracting the promise that he would edit and publish her letters together with a short biography. On receipt of the collection, Farmer examined the papers clarifying any obscure points with Janey, but pressure of work meant that he did not progress further with the project at that time. It was 1959 before he completed *George Bernard Shaw's Sister and Her Friends*,<sup>49</sup> a work which not only contains considerable reference to both Learmont and Janey Drysdale, but challenges the perceived view of Lucy (which had originated from Shaw himself and had been perpetuated by his biographers<sup>50</sup>) as a talented, but lazy performer unlikely to achieve success. Some mystery surrounds the material used in the preparation of *George Bernard's Shaw's Sister and Her Friends* as Farmer implied that once publication was complete the source documents would be deposited in GUL.<sup>51</sup> However, most of this material (much of it still marked with GUL call numbers) now forms part of the world-famous George Bernard Shaw Collection at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas at Austin, Farmer having sold it

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<sup>46</sup>Published in London by Hinrichsen in 1947.

<sup>47</sup> Lucy Carr Shaw to Janey Drysdale, 6, 31 August, 17, 23 November 1910, Box 56/5<sup>59-60, 63-64</sup> — Miscellaneous third party correspondence, Shaw Collection, HRC. For example, Lucy approached the song composer Ernest Newton, a family friend, as well as the publishers Boosey, Elkin, Novello, and Joseph Williams.

<sup>48</sup> Elkin to Miss Carr Shaw, 5 December 1910; Lucy Carr Shaw to Janey Drysdale, 6 April 1911, Box 56/5<sup>66, 34</sup> — Miscellaneous third party correspondence, Shaw Collection, HRC

<sup>49</sup> Published in Leiden by E.J. Brill in 1959.

<sup>50</sup> George Bernard Shaw "Preface" *London Music in 1888-1899 as Heard by Corno di Bassetto (Later Known as George Bernard Shaw) with some Further Autobiographical Particulars* edited in Dan H. Laurence *Shaw's Music* 3 vols, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw (London: Bodley Head, 1981) 1, 51

<sup>51</sup> For example, in a letter to Miss Olive Bell, Farmer states that her letters will be carefully preserved along with the tributes of others to Lucy and that "among these relics are some fifty letters to one of my own dear friends, Janey Drysdale, the sister of the composer of the opera *Red Spider*.... All of these, with other Shaviana, will most likely be deposited in the Farmer Collection in Glasgow University Library." See Farmer 179/55.

through an intermediary in 1960 for £100.<sup>52</sup> It seems that Farmer was quite entitled to dispose of this material as he wished, it having been bequeathed to him by Janey in her will of 1948.<sup>53</sup>

During the 1940s Farmer began corresponding with the Australian organist, choirmaster and composer Robert Dalley-Scarlett (1887–1959)<sup>54</sup> and always desirous of promoting Drysdale's music, took the opportunity of soliciting performances. He introduced Dalley-Scarlett to Janey and the new acquaintances began corresponding on a regular basis. Dalley-Scarlett arranged for several of Drysdale's works to be sent to him, not an easy task in war-torn Britain with music publishers' operations greatly scaled down and postal links between Britain and the Antipodes uncertain. In 1946, he asked Janey to order fifty copies of the choral ballad *Barbara Allan* from its publisher Curwen, but they were unable to fill the order as the work was out of print. However, they did give permission for him to produce his own copies. Dalley-Scarlett arranged both live and broadcast performances of a number of Drysdale's works including *Barbara Allan*, extracts from *The Kelpie* and several original songs and Scots song arrangements<sup>55</sup> and several of these were so well received that repeat performances were given.<sup>56</sup> Dalley-Scarlett also solicited performances of works he was unable to present himself; he showed *Tam o' Shanter* to William Post the Australian Broadcasting Commission's (ABC) conductor in Melbourne who duly performed the work on 15 December 1948.<sup>57</sup> In addition, Janey was also eager to attract attention to Scottish music in general and she notes: "one must put forward melodious and dramatic works that have already been stamped as original and characteristically Scottish".<sup>58</sup> She sent Dalley-Scarlett a number

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<sup>52</sup> Henry Farmer diary, 2, 6, 8 April, 21 May 1960, Farmer 317; annotation and tipped-in letter from James Drake (New York dealer) to Henry Farmer, 12 May 1960 in the latter's personal copy of *George Bernard's Shaw's Sister and Her Friends*, Farmer 180, x–xi

<sup>53</sup> Will: Jane Crichton Drysdale [copy], 13 October 1948, 250/1

<sup>54</sup> Letters from Dalley-Scarlett to Henry Farmer in Farmer 243. For further information see: "Dalley-Scarlett, Robert" in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1966) 8: 1891–1939.

<sup>55</sup> "The Music of Learmont Drysdale" *ABC Weekly*, 10 January 1948, 10. This broadcast was given by the ABC Brisbane Singers conducted by Dalley-Scarlett on 15 January and comprised of *Barbara Allan*, excerpts from *The Kelpie* and the songs "Where shall the Lover Rest?", "Reaping the Bracken" and "When all the World is Young".

<sup>56</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 24 February 1948, Farmer 249/1948/e. Janey notes that she had been informed by Dalley-Scarlett that the repeat performances of *The Kelpie* and *Barbara Allan* were most successful. The conductor also indicated that he was contemplating a performance of *Tamlane*, but a record of this event has not been traced.

<sup>57</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 27 May 1947, Farmer 249/1947/e; 18 December 1948, Farmer 249/1948/y

<sup>58</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 26 October 1947, Farmer 249/1947/l

of compositions by Scottish composers at least one of which, Hamish MacCunn's *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, was performed at a festival organised by the conductor where it was deemed "a great success".<sup>59</sup> In 1956, Dalley-Scarlett honoured Janey's life and achievements by presenting a talk about her for the ABC in Adelaide.<sup>60</sup>

During the 1920s and 1930s, a number of Drysdale's works were broadcast both in Scotland, and on the regional and national radio networks. Performances of *Tam o' Shanter* were most frequent, but works such as *Thomas the Rhymer*, the March from *The Franco-British Ode* and several original and traditional songs were also heard. Nevertheless, realising that the BBC was probably the most significant promoter of music in Britain and its colonies, Janey barraged it with letters urging it to broadcast more of her brother's work.<sup>61</sup> Following such an approach in 1929, Herbert Carruthers, Musical Director of the Scottish Region, reassured her that he was "using a great deal of her brother's work".<sup>62</sup> Some years later she contacted the London Station about including a Drysdale work in the forthcoming promenade season, but this request met with a lukewarm response and Sir Henry Wood (conductor of the Promenade Concerts and commissioner of *Border Romance* some 30 years before) is noted as saying that he:

Did not feel that this composer's [Drysdale's] music justifies representation in the Promenade programmes as he feels it would seem rather old-fashioned and academic nowadays.<sup>63</sup>

During the war years broadcasts of Drysdale's music dwindled and by 1945 Janey could no longer contain her frustration at the BBC's treatment of her brother's work. Her final letter to the Corporation makes a number of accusations which centre round the neglect of both her brother's music and that of Scottish composers in general, but the Director

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Robert Dalley-Scarlett "Unsung Heroine", typescript of broadcast given in [September] 1956, Farmer 248/2. In the letter to Farmer which accompanies this typescript, Dalley-Scarlett mentions that he has kept Janey's correspondence to him. However, although the author has located material relevant to Dalley-Scarlett in the Universities of Queensland and Sidney, postal enquires suggest that neither institution holds this correspondence.

<sup>61</sup> There is a sizeable Drysdale file at the BBC Written Archives Centre at Caversham (items from this archive will be cited as Drysdale File, BBC), which consists entirely of letters from Janey, with the BBC's internal exchanges debating how to respond to her. For further information concerning operational aspects relating to music selection of the BBC during its early years see Jennifer Doctor *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music, 1922-1936: Shaping a Nation's Tastes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>62</sup> Herbert Carruthers to Miss Drysdale, 16 April 1929 in Farmer comp. "Cuttings on Music in Scotland", Farmer 219, p. 79. In this letter, Carruthers notes that he had played at the Dunedin Association concerts.

<sup>63</sup> BBC Internal Circulating Memorandum — Subject: Letter from J. C. Drysdale, 19 April 1938, Drysdale File, BBC. This document was circulated around several members of staff for comment.

of Music's platitudinous response to Janey's grievances in no way reflects his and his staff's annoyance at her persistent complaints or their judgement of Drysdale's music.<sup>64</sup> In the internal memorandum issued in response to the complaint, the Depute Director of Music, Kenneth Wright, states his frank opinion on the matter thus:

I have looked right through this file, as though I was aware that Miss Drysdale has for years had a complaint against the Corporation for the "neglect" of her brother's music, I also knew that the fault lay not with ourselves, but with his music.<sup>65</sup>

It seems that Janey had initially sought the assistance of Ian Whyte (the BBC's head of music in Scotland) to promote broadcasts of her brother's work at the London Station, but the tactic failed as Wright notes:

I am anxious that Ian Whyte should be exonerated in this matter, as he has repeatedly asked me if he could possibly include any of Drysdale's music in our recordings for the L.T.S. [London Transmitting Station] and our library. When I pressed him, he admitted that there was only one which he felt might be suitable, namely *Tam o' Shanter*, and I purposely listened to it in a programme and could not feel that it was any use at all for propaganda purposes. In fact, I was very disappointed in it. It is as old fashioned as MacCunn, and nothing like so good.<sup>66</sup>

Wright defended the lack of broadcasts on the Scottish network by emphasising that the regional stations' programme production was destined for the National and Overseas Services and that only material of sufficient quality was suitable for such broadcasting. On this point he declares: "no-one can claim that his [Drysdale's] music can deserve a place in such programmes."<sup>67</sup> However, he did concede that there might be scope for an occasional broadcast when the second wavelength became operational in Scotland. What Wright means by propaganda is unclear: did he perceive nationalistic overtones in *Tam o' Shanter*, an undesirable feature during a period when the BBC's duty was to stress the solidarity of the Union, or did he simply believe that the work was of insufficient quality to represent British music on the Overseas network? The answer probably lies to some degree with both arguments.

All new works submitted for broadcast by the BBC were examined by an anonymous panel that recommended those which were appropriate for broadcasting. For many

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<sup>64</sup> Victor Hely-Hutchinson to Miss Drysdale, 15 May 1945, Drysdale File, BBC

<sup>65</sup> K.A. Wright, [BBC Internal Memorandum] — Subject: Complaint from Miss J. Drysdale, 15 May 1945, Drysdale File, BBC

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. For further information regarding broadcasting during World War Two see Asa Briggs *The War of Words* vol III of *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

years, this panel's reports were confidential and unavailable to researchers; however, they have recently become accessible revealing not only the identity of the assessors but also some seemingly inappropriate judgements of composers well respected today.<sup>68</sup>

Lewis Foreman notes:

From the mid-1930s onwards, the BBC instituted a system in which what we would now regard as some of the leading composers of the day were de facto secretly divided into two classes — the assessors and the assessed. Thus, John Ireland, Benjamin Dale, Arthur Benjamin, Edmund Rubbra and Gordon Jacob ... read and generally rejected the music of Frank Bridge, John Foulds, Alan Bush, Havergal Brian and George Lloyd.<sup>69</sup>

Amongst the examples cited by Foreman are views of Gerald Finzi's *Bagatelles* for clarinet and piano which were judged in March 1942 as being of:

No musical value, but well written. The clarinet part is not very interesting, but with a good player could sound expressive. ... I do not think it a worthy contribution to the clarinet and piano literature.<sup>70</sup>

A spectacular example of how the judges failed to recognise a work, admittedly rather slight in stature, which is highly regarded by musicians today; however, such assessments do have to be read in context of the times in which they were written. The fact that many members of the panel were also composers has a bearing on their judgement of others — the possibility of nepotism cannot be ignored. A number of prominent figures examined Drysdale's work with almost unanimous disapproval.<sup>71</sup> In May 1943, John Ireland declared *Herondean* "uninspired and dated. Little more than the musical platitudes current at the time it was written"<sup>72</sup> whilst Gordon Jacob believed the work:

Would seem faded and out of date and it does not appear to have sufficient strength and character to compensate for the [decided] lack of sophistication shown both in its themes and their orchestral treatment.<sup>73</sup>

Comments such as these are almost of more interest for the light they shed on the views of the judges, as the opinions they express on the music judged. However, the assessments of A.B. (most likely the Australian conductor and assistant BBC Music

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<sup>68</sup> Lewis Foreman "‘Good’, ‘Bad’, ‘Not Suitable for Broadcasting’" *The British Music Society Newsletter* 85 (March 2000): 4

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>71</sup> Works assessed: *Herondean*, *Spirit of the Glen*, *Through the Sound of Raasay*, *Thomas the Rhymer* and *Tamlane*.

<sup>72</sup> Score Readings: Drysdale, Learmont — *Herondean* "Concert Overture for Orchestra", 20 May 1943, Drysdale File, BBC

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

Director Aylmer Buesst) seem more considered demonstrating a willingness to accept that during their period, such works were thought “quite good”,<sup>74</sup> and that prevailing fashion played a role in their rejection. The numerous complaints received from Janey prompted the BBC into reading some of Drysdale’s works twice and during the war an additional opinion was sought from Arthur Bliss who had “regretfully agreed”<sup>75</sup> with the judgements already reached. Having considered the weight of this evidence, Wright believed he had ample justification for his refusal to broadcast Drysdale’s music and, thus, his complete rebuttal of Janey’s complaint.

During the latter years of her life, Janey lived in relative poverty supplementing her old age pension with a small rental income from a tenement property in Edinburgh and during particularly difficult years, an annuity from the Royal Society for the Relief of Indigent Gentlewomen. However, Janey was determined that promotion of Learmont’s music should not end on her death. Some months before she died Janey substantially altered her will, disinheriting her closest relative Jean Hope,<sup>76</sup> in favour of Farmer (who was also nominated as executor) and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music (RSAM). The latter bequest was to be used to found a scholarship for the purpose of popularising Learmont’s work.<sup>77</sup> Farmer, cognisant of the problems such decisions can create, advised Janey to reconsider and she eventually agreed to nominate Miss Hope as her residual legatee.<sup>78</sup> Janey’s bequest to the RSAM took the form of her property at 17 Caledonian Crescent in Edinburgh, but years of financial constraint meant she had been unable to undertake the substantial repairs and improvements this building required, and by the time of her death it was in poor condition and attracting a very low rental value. The RSAM refused the bequest under the pretext of the property’s condition and signed

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<sup>74</sup> A.B. “Learmont Drysdale:[Assessment of works for Orchestra]”, nd, Drysdale File, BBC

<sup>75</sup> K.A. Wright, [BBC Internal Memorandum]...

<sup>76</sup> What provoked Janey into making this decision is not clear, but relations between the cousins seem to have been strained for some time and Farmer suggests that their political views (Miss Hope was a staunch Conservative whilst Janey was a Communist) had a large part to play in their estrangement. In February of 1949 when Janey was informed that the local shepherd (her nearest neighbour) was resigning his post at the May quarter day, she decided that she could not remain completely isolated at The Hannel. She was unable to find a new home and when Miss Hope was asked if she would be willing to have her to stay, it seems that lady refused. This matter had not been resolved by the time of Janey’s death (for further information see Henry Farmer “Statement regarding Miss Hope and Miss Drysdale”, [1949], Farmer 250/73).

<sup>77</sup> Will: Jane Crichton Drysdale.... A number of Janey’s friends also received small sums of money and personal possessions.

<sup>78</sup> Henry Farmer “Statement regarding Miss Hope and Miss Drysdale”, [1949], Farmer 250/73

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the deeds over to Jean Hope as the residual legatee of Janey's estate.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, it would seem likely that the provision attached to the bequest (viz. that it should be used to found a scholarship for the promotion of Drysdale's music) had some influence on their decision. They may have decided that it would be difficult to fulfil such a condition and rather than binding themselves to promoting the work of an obscure composer (with all the administrative and legal responsibilities that would entail), they declined the offer. Meanwhile, Farmer retained his rights to Janey's letters and books, including those bearing the label "The Farmer Collection" (held by GUL), and any future royalties from Drysdale's works.<sup>80</sup>

In the years following Janey's death, there was little change in the fortunes of Drysdale's music and his manuscripts lay in their respective libraries occasionally being consulted by researchers. Meanwhile, Farmer was spending much of his time researching a number of Scottish composers (including Drysdale) for articles in *Grove 5* and *MGG* as well as continuing work on his oriental studies. *George Bernard Shaw's Sister and Her Friends* (1959) was to be his last major publication. It was many years before there was any significant revival of interest in Drysdale's work. When John Purser's monumental radio series *Scotland's Music* was broadcast during 1991–92, its twenty-fourth programme included a biographical account of Drysdale with a short stylistic assessment of his music supported by extracts (specially recorded for the series) from *Tam o' Shanter*, *The Kelpie* and the Trio in F. Since the series' conclusion, these recordings have been available to researchers, conductors and performers via the services of the Scottish Music Centre, which also holds a sizeable collection of Drysdale's published work. It was through such a recording that Robert Tucker (conductor of the Broadheath Singers) became acquainted with *The Kelpie*.<sup>81</sup> In September 2001, following considerable problems in accessing performing material, the

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<sup>79</sup> Walton White to Henry Farmer, 1 July 1949, Farmer 250/35. This property sold for £1000. Janey's uncle, John Learmont, had bought it in 1876 for £2150 with an annual rental totalling £176, however, by 1948 the rentals were raising a mere £82 (see Goalen and Gibson, Factors, to Janey Drysdale, 26 November 1948, Farmer 250/9).

<sup>80</sup> Will: Jane Crichton Drysdale.... These rights are not mentioned in Farmer's will and thus, it has not been possible to locate the present owner.

<sup>81</sup> Robert Tucker, conversation with the author, 26 July 2001, London. The Broadheath Singers were formed by Tucker in 1971 for a one-off performance that included rarely heard music by Elgar and Parry. The idea of reviving such works was so well received that the group continue to give one concert annually in which they focus on the works of British composers. See David J. Brown ed. *Before Elgar and After: British Music in Performance — 25 Years of the Broadheath Singers* (London: The Broadheath Singers, 1995).

Broadheath Singers gave the first complete performance of *The Kelpie* in 62 years. To facilitate their project, the choir commissioned the production of multiple copies of vocal score and a new full score now held by SMC. *The Kelpie*, thus, may ride again.

## 6. The Music of Learmont Drysdale: Overview

Drysdale was strongly influenced by the folklore of his mother's native Borders and many of his compositions are connected with this area. Local ballads provide the basis for vocal works such as *Thomas the Rhymer* (1890; unfinished) and *Tamlane* (1905) although neither employs the melodic material associated with its traditional text. This is not always the case — the choral ballad *Barbara Allan* (1906) is based on one version of the traditional melody with which it is associated.<sup>1</sup> A number of Drysdale's songs are settings of texts by Walter Scott and James Hogg, writers closely associated with the Borders, and the latter's ballad "May of Morril Glen" also provided the stimulus for his first orchestral work *The Spirit of the Glen* (1889). However, the foremost supplier of Drysdale's song texts is the mysterious Ercil Doune, a name connected with the thirteenth-century poet and seer Thomas the Rhymer who held land at Erceldoune near the Borders' town of Galashiels. Investigation has revealed that the composer's sister Janey used this pseudonym for her writings, an apt choice considering the Learmont family's connection with the poet. It was not just the literature of the Borders which inspired Drysdale; its imposing landscapes provided stimulus for several compositions including the orchestral pieces *Border Romance* and *Herondean* although these works convey general impressions rather than specifically illustrating a definite programme.

Drysdale also drew upon other areas of Scotland for inspiration. There are several song settings of texts by Robert Burns and his colourful poem *Tam o' Shanter* was used by Drysdale as the stimulus for his concert overture of the same name. The poetry of many lesser-known Scots authors also appears in his oeuvre. For example, there are a number of songs with texts by the Cromarty author and journalist Donald A. MacKenzie (1873–1936), a prominent writer on anthropological and mythological subjects with whom Drysdale held many common interests. The part song "Whar Daur Meddle Wi' Me" is a setting of a poem by the Dundonian Sir William Allan, a prolific writer of patriotic and fervid texts whose sentiments would have appealed to the composer's national spirit and strong sense of patriotism.

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<sup>1</sup> The earliest printed source of this melody has been traced to James Johnson *The Scots Musical Museum* 6 vols (Edinburgh: Johnson, 1790) 3, 230.

Several works have links with Scotland's rugged west coast — the orchestral overture *Through the Sound of Raasay* was written following Drysdale's tour of the Western Highlands whilst the cantata *The Kelpie* is a setting of Dr Charles Mackay's poem "The Kelpie of Corrievreckan" which has its basis in the folklore associated with fairy water creatures. The stimulus of Celtic folklore and legend, albeit from mainly Irish sources, also played a prominent part in Drysdale's collaboration with the ninth Duke of Argyll on the opera *Fionn and Tera* with the partners drawing great strength from their mutual interest in the then burgeoning renaissance in Celtic culture.

Drysdale's works demonstrate expertise in integrating features derived from Scottish folk music into a style based on the more traditional composers of the late-nineteenth century. He draws upon devices from a wide variety of his native genres including folksong, bagpipe music and dance tunes.<sup>2</sup> The features most commonly found are:

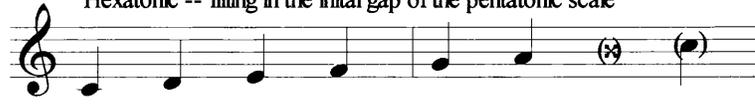
- gapped scales in their many transpositions. Root forms used include

**Ex.6.1** — Root forms of gapped scales

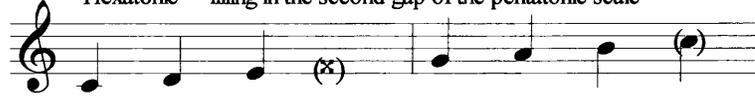
Pentatonic



Hexatonic -- filling in the initial gap of the pentatonic scale



Hexatonic -- filling in the second gap of the pentatonic scale



(x) indicates the gaps within the scale

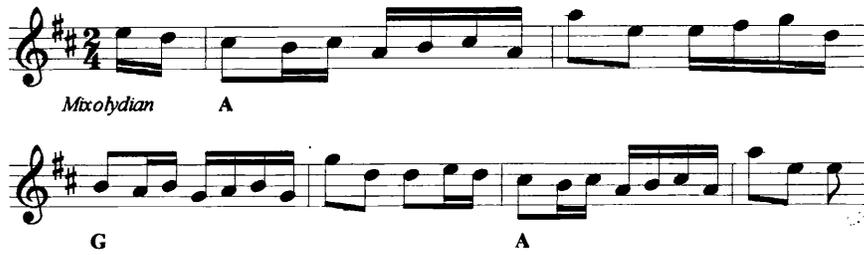
These scales are often employed in melodies forming the major motifs and themes of folk-inspired works giving them a distinct traditional flavour;

- modal keys associated with the flattened leading note (most frequently Dorian, mixolydian and Aeolian modes);

<sup>2</sup> For further information concerning this topic see Francis Collinson *The Traditional and National Music of Scotland* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

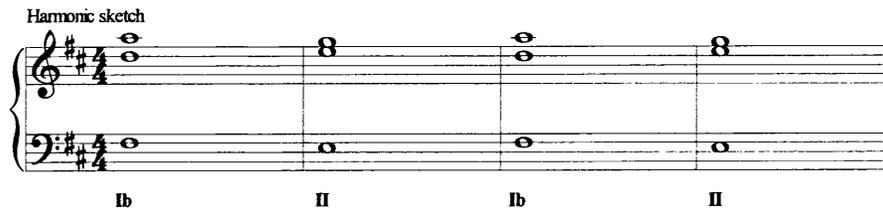
- the ‘double tonic’ progression. The shifting between the tonic triad of the home key and the triad a full tone lower;

**Ex.6.2** — Scottish pipe tune<sup>3</sup> “The Inverness Gathering” based on the double tonic progression



On numerous occasions, Drysdale manipulates western-type chordal progressions to mimic this effect.

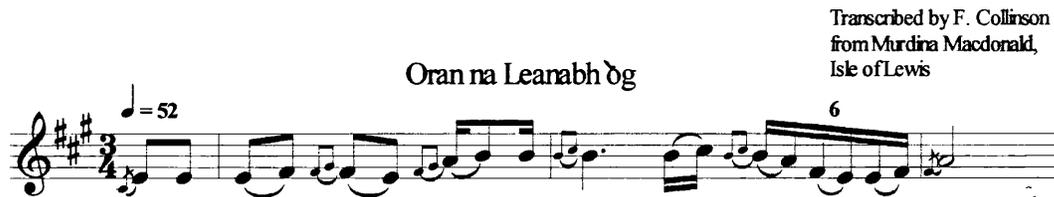
**Ex.6.3** — Example of chord structures used to mimic the double tonic progression



The contents of this specimen summary will be discussed in more detail later.

- melodies which begin and/or end on notes other than the tonic;
- melodic ornamentation such as grace notes and roulades;

**Ex.6.4** — Examples of melodic ornamentation found in traditional tunes



- Scottish traditional rhythmic characteristics including the often clichéd Scotch snap;
- long pedal points/drones found in bagpipe music;
- the mimicking of folk instruments.

<sup>3</sup> Reproduced from Francis Collinson *The Traditional and National Music...* 24

Such devices make frequent appearances in Drysdale's music. Nevertheless, he rarely employs known traditional material; instead, these features are deftly incorporated into his composition, infusing it with an innate Scottishness.

Drysdale's composition training from Frederick Corder had a considerable impact on his work. At a basic level, this took the form of the straightforward technical advice expected from a teacher: means of thematic development; advising on orchestration (in which Drysdale had no experience); or choosing the correct nomenclature for a composition of a particular structure. Corder also had his own techniques and preferences which he disseminated to his students. For example, he promoted the use of particular harmonic devices such as the final inversion of the German sixth chord and its resolution for 'gloomy writing',<sup>4</sup> a progression which Drysdale's compositions, and particularly those from the RAM years, frequently employ. However, Corder's teaching went beyond advising on simple technicalities. He vigorously encouraged the employment of compositional techniques derived from composers connected with the late Romantic German style, notably, Wagner. In Drysdale's music, this influence is often evident in the harmonic language employed and in the deployment of devices such as:

- lack of full cadences to achieve continuity;
- recurring motifs and rhythmical figures which take the form of leitmotif-like devices which are used to identify and recall specific characters, actions and emotions;
- passages of chromatically shifting chords over pedals which momentarily obscure the prevailing tonality;
- sudden enharmonic changes.

Drysdale's correspondence and programmes of concerts where his own works were given show that he attended performances of several of Wagner's works.<sup>5</sup> In an interview of 1904, where Drysdale discusses, amongst other subjects, the composers he particularly admires he gives his qualified approval of Wagner thus:

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<sup>4</sup> Frederick Corder *Modern Musical Composition* (London: Curwen, [1909]) 11

<sup>5</sup> For example, the overture to *Tannhäuser* was performed at the same concert as the first performance of Drysdale's *Tam o' Shanter*.

[Wagner] stands apart [from the German School], of course; but although I yield to no one in my appreciation of his genius, I cannot from certain points of view, wholly admire all his works.<sup>6</sup>

Influences from British music are also evident. There are occasional similarities to Elgar in Drysdale's harmonic and formal structures, and his melodic writing. However, it is the many similarities with Sullivan, and, in particular, his Savoy Operas (pieces with which Drysdale was known to be familiar<sup>7</sup>) which are most apparent. This influence is best observed in Drysdale's light operatic works with their number structures and variety of forms and styles which include pot-pourri overtures, lengthy first act finales and conclusions which are constructed from previously stated material. Nevertheless, in Drysdale's oeuvre in general, it is Sullivan's often simple but charming melodies and their skilful orchestration which seem to have had the greatest influence on his music.<sup>8</sup>

An examination of Drysdale's juvenilia (written following a basic musical education centred on knowledge of rudiments) establishes the basis upon which his compositional technique was built and indicates the extent of his natural talent. These pieces reveal Drysdale's limited technical capabilities, but do demonstrate his ability to employ effective structures and to write satisfactory melodies within a simple harmonic idiom based upon primary triads coloured by occasional appoggiaturas and chromatic chords. Tonality is generally well defined — the occasional use of chromatic harmonies over lengthy pedals pre-empting a later stylistic fingerprint — whilst modulations are mainly effective, though limited to closely related keys. However, overall, the music is commonplace with otherwise acceptable writing being spoiled by: failure to capture the full possibilities of a text; foursquare phrasing; otherwise satisfactory melodies which contain cumbersome movement; lack of thematic development; awkward harmonic progressions; less than subtle linking of sections, and passages which do not achieve an effective climax.

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<sup>6</sup> "Learmont Drysdale" *Musical Herald* (1 July 1904): 196. He notes that his sympathies are with the modern school more especially the French (it is most likely that this refers to Gounod, whose influence is apparent in several works, and possibly Massenet), with Russian music, as represented by Tchaikovsky, also having strong claims on his appreciation. He further states that Wagner apart, he has no sympathy whatsoever, with the modern German school (probably referring to figures such as Strauss).

<sup>7</sup> Correspondence demonstrates this fact. For example, Drysdale attended a performance of *The Yeoman of the Guard* during its opening run in October 1888. See: Learmont Drysdale to his Papa [Andrew Drysdale], [October 1888], Cb10-x.16/7.

<sup>8</sup> Gervase Hughes in *The Music of Sir Arthur Sullivan* (London: Macmillan, 1960) notes how musicians generally enjoyed playing Sullivan's work (page 96). Drysdale's orchestral writing demonstrates a similar diversity in the use of forces. For example, woodwind parts (such as those in *The Kelpie* and *Red Spider*) contain a mixture of tutti, countermelody and solo writing, a variety which is appreciated by performers.

Corder's tuition effectively harnessed Drysdale's latent talent allowing him to transcend many of the difficulties experienced in his early works. He taught Drysdale to compose in large-scale forms and encouraged him to revise and rewrite repeatedly (a process which the student found much more difficult than the initial composition of a work) whilst stressing the need to eradicate faults in the development of otherwise well-constructed themes. He introduced Drysdale to orchestration, an area for which he was to have a decided flair — throughout his professional career this aspect of his work attracted much positive comment. A progressive and enthusiastic teacher, Corder nevertheless placed dependence on modelling techniques and was over-optimistic of pupils' compositions, relying on their enthusiasm to develop their own working methods rather than stressing the importance of a disciplined approach. Though Corder's teaching enabled Drysdale to develop his compositional skills to a degree which allowed him to express his many original ideas coherently and in a professional manner, his work still lacked self-discipline. His spirited inspiration and originality would have been better served by a sounder knowledge of compositional techniques.

The style which Drysdale formed at the RAM was to remain largely unchanged during his working life although he did diversify, writing larger-scale works for concert hall and theatre as well as experimenting with more unusual genres such as melodrama. Critics frequently praised his music for its beauty of thematic material, orderly and interesting workmanship and vibrant orchestration, whilst his choral and theatrical works were known for their colourful characterisations and atmospheric portrayals of dramatic texts. Although changes in Drysdale's style are observed occasionally (e.g. his *Border Romance* of 1904 contains melodic and rhythmic ideas which are more fully explored and expanded, and there is a previously unseen complexity in many of his textures), such developments were not maintained. The choral ballad *Tamlane*, written in 1905, is commonplace and marred by a number of blemishes in compositional technique.

The following discussion provides a summary of the general trends and stylistic features present in Drysdale's music.

## Genre

### Orchestral Works:

- concert overtures/orchestral ballads;
- preludes (initially intended as introductions to large-scale choral pieces which were not completed);
- country dances which are mainly drawn from operatic scores.

The works in this group are illustrative — compositions such as symphonies and sets of variations are not found.

### Instrumental pieces for:

- piano and organ;
- individual instruments with piano accompaniment.

### Chamber Music:

- Small-scale works for string/or wind ensembles.

### Theatrical:

- grand or romantic opera;
- light opera (Drysdale employed a variety of nomenclatures for these works including operetta, comic or comedy opera);
- musical sketch;
- melodrama (i.e. spoken action with continuous musical accompaniment). This technique is also used as a localised dramatic device within otherwise sung works;
- incidental music.

### Secular Choral:

- large-scale works for chorus, both with and without soloists, and orchestra —
  - cantata;
  - ceremonial ode;
- recitation for speaker and orchestra;
- dramatic scena for vocal soloist and orchestra;
- choral ballad;

- part songs;
- folksong settings, both for a cappella groupings and with piano accompaniment.

#### Sacred Choral:

- mass movements;
- motet;
- hymn arrangement.

Drysdale composed sacred works only when he held church appointments (i.e. from 1886 to 1888).

#### Solo Vocal:

- songs with piano accompaniment in the following styles —
  - art;
  - music hall;
- folksong arrangements.

A complete list of Drysdale's compositions appears in Appendix I.

### Form and Structure

#### **Large-scale works:**

- orchestral —
  - modified sonata forms;
  - works which do not conform to any distinct structure (e.g. three-part forms which contain elements of both sonata and rondo form although they are not standard 'sonata rondo');
- choral —
  - external structures which emerge from the plot of the text;
  - traditional operatic forms such as recitative, aria and chorus arranged in:
    - number format;
    - through-composed sections linked to provide a continuous scene or act;
    - a mixture of these;
  - use of recurring motifs to identify and recall specific characters, emotions or ideas contained within a text.

### Small-scale works:

- orchestral —
  - binary and ternary dance forms which are drawn mainly from folk tradition;
- chamber and instrumental —
  - ternary;
  - modified sonata form;
- song
  - binary and ternary structures of varying complexities;
  - strophic structures are common in songs influenced by folk tradition or music hall style.

### Harmonic Idiom

Drysdale uses the various chordal structures common to the more traditional composers of the late-nineteenth century such as Dvořák, Elgar and Gounod and to a lesser degree, Liszt, Tchaikovsky and Wagner. Diatonicism predominates with melodic appoggiaturas and suspensions often serving to intensify otherwise straightforward progressions. Rich colouring is also provided by chords with added sevenths, ninths and elevenths, as well as a variety of chromatic chords including secondary dominants, diminished sevenths, augmented and Neapolitan sixths, and chromatically altered harmonies. Modal harmonies and in particular, chords constructed on the flattened seventh degree of the scale, are common. There is a little evidence of experimental techniques (e.g. quartal harmonies or atonality) such as those pursued by the avant-garde of the period.

### Tonality

In general, tonality is well defined and closely related keys are employed. Nevertheless, there are often abrupt tonal moves including frequent use of tonalities associated with the tertiary shift (i.e. keys a major or minor third lower/higher). Occasional tonal obscurity is achieved through devices such as:

- prolonged dominant preparations;
- tonality being briefly suspended by non-functional progressions including series of seventh chords (major/minor and diminished) supported by chromatic bass lines.

This device is often associated with the tonal anchor of a pedal point which serves to strengthen the overall tonality;

- sudden chromatic shifts where some or all of the parts move by a semitone;
- mixing of parallel major and minor tonalities creating passages of modal ambiguity;
- employing keys associated with the flattened leading note, a modal relationship related to the double tonic effect;
- delayed resolutions.

The notation of one fewer sharp than the established key is found in a number of Drysdale pieces and is associated particularly with movements beginning with long dominant preparations This feature is often linked with works based on Celtic themes.<sup>9</sup>

### Modulating Techniques

The most frequently employed method of modulation is via common chords. Other techniques used include:

- shifts via a sustained note or notes common to both tonalities;
- chromatic shifts;
- diminished seventh chords;
- enharmonic change;
- deceptive resolutions of established dominant chords.

### Melody

Drysdale demonstrates a particular gift for writing attractive and satisfying melodies, but much of his work shows limited evidence of systematic thematic development. Often, formation of extended melody relies upon phrase repetition varied through minor modifications in the melodic line and techniques such as register change, altered instrumentation, differences in texture or underlying harmonies.

### Rhythm

Notable features in Drysdale's employment of rhythm include the use of:

- rhythmic structures derived from traditional music and dance forms;
- recurring rhythmic motifs to identify and recall a specific character or action;

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<sup>9</sup> For example, the Introduction of *The Kelpie* (1891–4), and the opening choruses of *Ode to Edinburgh* (1891) and the Celtic opera *Fionn and Tera* (1909) employ this device.

- rhythmic figures as a method of characterisation in illustrative works;
- simple and compound metre appearing simultaneously;
- cross rhythm as a tension-building device.

### Textures

The textures most prevalent are:

- homophony;
- melody with accompaniment which is frequently interwoven with countermelodies to produce more sophisticated effects;
- passages of simple melodic imitation. However, Drysdale's few attempts at writing in complex contrapuntal styles such as canon and fugue are clumsy and ineffective.

Throughout Drysdale's oeuvre, from his earliest works for keyboard to his late orchestral writing, the use of arpeggiation is frequent and may explain his enthusiasm for the 'orchestral effect' of the harp,<sup>10</sup> an instrument which appears in all his larger-scale scores.

### Scoring and Orchestration

Drysdale's orchestral and choral/orchestral music generally employs the standard instrumental scoring used by less-adventurous composers of his era: double woodwind; 4 horns; 2 cornets; 2 tenor and one bass trombone; tuba; timpani; assorted percussion; harp; and strings with instruments such as piccolo and cor anglais being found occasionally. Scoring of theatrical works is based on reduced configurations of the above. There is one idiosyncrasy in Drysdale's choice of instrumentation — he invariably employed cornets rather than trumpets, a preference which seems to have been acquired from Frederick Corder who discusses the relative merits of the instruments in his orchestral treatise thus:

I think the vaunted brilliancy of the trumpet its most serious drawback, because it simply kills all the other instruments. ... I maintain that in competent hands it [the cornet] can play not only all existing trumpet parts more discreetly and bearably than the trumpet itself, but can furnish a far better upper part in the trombone harmony.<sup>11</sup>

Although Drysdale was a pianist with a limited first-hand acquaintance of orchestral instruments, he demonstrates considerable skill in writing for orchestra. For example,

<sup>10</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, 17 November 1888, Cb10-x.16/11. In this letter, Drysdale is discussing his first orchestral work *The Spirit of the Glen*.

<sup>11</sup> *The Orchestra and How to Write for It* (London: Curwen, [1896]) 57

his woodwind parts are often relatively straightforward to play, but are interestingly and intelligently written with a stimulating mix of attractive solos and countermelodies, doubling and tutti work. He does employ many of the conventional effects propounded by his contemporaries writing on orchestration — the plaintive sound of the oboe for amorous or solemn passages, brass groupings for martial writing or arpeggiated harp portraying the ethereal. Nevertheless, some novel instrumental combinations are found: cornets doubled by violins at both unison and octave enriched by an accompaniment of harp, lower brass and strings — an exceptionally mellow timbre; or cor anglais supported by tremolo muted violins, with viola and ‘cello which provides a particularly haunting effect. However, there are also a few passages where he has been unable to achieve an appropriate balance in the orchestral body leaving melodic lines obscured by dense scoring. There are also occasional stylistic inaccuracies including the use of repetitive figures for clarinet that frequently cross the break area in the instrument’s compass; in many cases, clumsy writing results. Corder states in his treatise that the clarinet can play certain arpeggio passages very well, however, he warns of passages “troublesome to finger quickly, ... [as they occur] just on the joining of the two registers.”<sup>12</sup> It seems Drysdale did not always follow this advice.

#### Vocal Writing and Word Setting

In theatrical and choral works, solo parts often present technical demands which only first-rate musicians can effectively execute. However, to maximise his music’s appeal to the substantial amateur market of the era, Drysdale ensured that the chorus parts of choral works and songs were not particularly demanding; thus, in general, ranges and tessituras are easily manageable whilst the rhythms and intervals employed are relatively accessible.

Drysdale’s word setting rarely displays any particularly notable features although obvious technical errors such as false accents are uncommon. When fitting music to words he often seems to have taken the line of least resistance rather than seeking to develop any features of rhythmic interest which might be lurking behind a metrical façade. However, it must be acknowledged that Drysdale’s scope for originality in this area was more often hampered by his ill-advised choice of texts rather than any lack of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 43

compositional skill on his part, a trait he had in common with many of his contemporaries.

The features and stylistic trends referred to in the foregoing discussion are examined in detail in the following chapters where specific reference will be made to individual works.

## 7. Vocal and Choral Music

The composition of music for voices occupied a considerable portion of Drysdale's life both as enthusiastic amateur and as professional composer. As can be observed in the list below, these works are in a wide range of genres and styles which utilise various combinations of instrumental and vocal forces viz:

- A cappella voices
  - Part songs (including folksong arrangements)
  - Mass settings
  - Christmas hymns
- Piano or organ accompaniment
  - Solo song and folksong arrangements for one voice
  - Part song (including folksong arrangements)
  - Choral ballad
  - Mass settings and sacred motet
- Orchestral accompaniment
  - Solo recitation/melodrama
  - Dramatic scena for solo voice
  - Cantata
  - Choral ballad
  - Choral ode (occasional music)

Further details of the works included in the above categories are provided in Appendix 1.

Although this thesis cannot provide a comprehensive account of every composition Drysdale wrote for voices, the background to many works is mentioned in the biographical section of this study while this chapter discusses a representative sample of pieces which demonstrate the eclectic manner of his efforts in the area. The following chapter concentrates on the large-scale setting of Charles Mackay's *The Kelpie*.

## 7.1 Sacred music

Drysdale's sacred works are directly associated with his early church appointments, suggesting that he did not write them from choice but as part of his professional remit. One such work was the sacred motet *Hark! 'Tis the Breeze*<sup>1</sup> which was composed for the Greenside Choral Society, a group associated with the Edinburgh church in which he held his first position as organist (cf. 28–9). Janey Drysdale states that he also wrote music for the choir of All Saints', Notting Hill although she gives no indication of the pieces involved.<sup>2</sup> Among her brother's extant works are three mass movement settings of which only the "Kyrie Eleison" is dated (8 June 1888 i.e. during his tenure at All Saints'),<sup>3</sup> but the rudimentary character of the remaining pieces also suggests an early composition date. These works are simplistic and rather banal, possibly reflecting the Presbyterian Drysdale's lack of familiarity (and interest) in the medium.

The most substantial work of the group is *Hark! 'Tis the Breeze*. A setting of a two-stanza sacred text by the Irish poet Thomas Moore (1779–1852),<sup>4</sup> Drysdale's work has an initial, additional three-line stanza which opens with the title, followed by two unattributed lines (these may have been composed by him or drawn from elsewhere). Drysdale repeats the text as necessary for both sectional and musical requirements (see Table 2).

Scored for tenor and bass soloists, SATB chorus and organ, this work has a manageable vocal range and is within easy reach of a proficient choir; nevertheless, the solo parts have a wider compass and were probably written for talented members of the group or visiting singers.

The work contains two parts. Part 1 divides into several sections which although related thematically, vary on each repetition. Part 2 sets only the second stanza — through-composed, each section is nevertheless thematically related.

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<sup>1</sup> The autograph manuscript is annotated: "30 Castle Street, Edinburgh, 11 April 1887 dedicated to the Greenside Choral Society". See Cb10-y.22.

<sup>2</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 6

<sup>3</sup> See: "Agnus Dei", "Benedictus" and "Kyrie Eleison" in Farmer 510/9. It is not known if this group originally included a Sanctus.

<sup>4</sup> *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore, Complete in One Volume* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1852) 250. It was written by Moore in 1816.

**Table 2:** Text and forces employed in *Hark! 'Tis the Breeze*

Part/Bar Nos.	Text set	Forces utilised	Tempo/Comments
<b>Part 1</b> 1–11	Introduction	Organ	
12–24	Inserted text	Bass solo	<i>Adagio sostenuto</i> . Recitative-like <i>colla voce</i> style
25–52 <sup>3</sup>	Stanza 1	Bass solo followed by unison tenors and basses	Tenor & bass echo the final two lines of the soloist
57–72	Stanza 1	Chorus	<i>Andante</i>
73–102	Stanza 2	Tenor solo	<i>Piu mosso, con passione</i>
102–134	Stanza 1, latter section	Tenor soloist and chorus	
<b>Part 2</b> 135–142	Stanza 2	Organ interlude	<i>Allegro vivace</i>
143–158	Stanza 2	Chorus	
159–174	Stanza 2	Tenor solo	
175–190	Stanza 2	A cappella chorus	
191–255	Stanza 2	Chorus and organ	<i>Allegro animato</i>

There is a reliance on sectional writing punctuated with cadential points, and thus a lack of any harmonic technique to maintain flow between sections, a feature prominent in Drysdale's later works. Part 1 is based in D<sup>b</sup> major with occasional passing shifts through subdominant and relative minor keys. Part 2 is more tonally unsettled and provides some early examples of Drysdale's favourite techniques for modulation — moves via notes common to each key, enharmonic change, and chromatic and tertiary shifts. Overall, however, the music seems to have great difficulty in moving from D<sup>b</sup> major and it is only in the final section that there is any notable shift from the home key (Ex.7.1). Having previously passed through B<sup>b</sup> minor, the music shifts enharmonically into E major. Although the tonally unstable passage which follows begins by moving towards C# minor, it lands instead on the parallel major chord before shifting chromatically between this and A major harmony. The tonality settles in A major before modulating back to D<sup>b</sup> major via the common note in the chords of F#minor/A<sup>b</sup>7. It is a simple but reasonably effective technique which provides welcome relief from the previously rather static tonality.

**Ex.7.1** — *Hark 'Tis the Breeze*, harmonic sketch of bars 198–217

Harmonic sketch of bars 200 to 215

The image displays four systems of musical notation, each representing a different harmonic sketch for bars 200 to 215. Each system is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).  
 - The first system shows a progression starting with **Bb min:** and includes a **Chromatic shift/ common note**.  
 - The second system features **E maj:**, an **Enharmonic change**, a **Chromatic shift**, and a **Chromatic alteration of 3rd**.  
 - The third system includes **A maj:lc**, **v7**, and **I**.  
 - The fourth system shows **VI**, **Db maj:V7**, and **lc**, with a **Chromatic and enharmonic change**.

In the chorus sections, diatonic chord structures are prevalent and the infrequent chromatic moves are approached via adjacent notes; there are no awkward chromatic leaps, an avoidance which may not only underline the limited technical capabilities of Greenside Choral Society, but provides evidence of Drysdale's restricted compositional experience. This crude harmonic technique is observed initially in the organ introduction where the semitone shifts are a simple move to three chromatic lower auxiliaries and back. The later chromatically altered V7 harmony of the penultimate chord is effected by simply sharpening the fifth. Moreover, this section is supported by a tonic pedal/inverted pedal over which a series of parallel sixths chromatically ascend then descend back to D<sup>b</sup> — the music has really gone nowhere. Pedal points appear on several other occasions, often providing a tonal anchor in the few sections which are more tonally unsettled.

### Ex.7.2 — *Hark! 'Tis the Breeze*, Introduction

The image shows a musical score for the introduction of 'Hark! 'Tis the Breeze'. It consists of two systems of music for Organ. The first system is marked 'Adagio sostenuto' and features a melody in the right hand with dynamics *mf* and *pp*. The left hand provides accompaniment, including a 'Series of parallel 6ths'. A 'Db pedal' is indicated below the first system. The second system continues the accompaniment with a dynamic of *p*. A note marked with an asterisk (\*) is identified as a 'triple, chromatic, lower auxiliary notes over an Ab pedal'.

In general, the setting is rudimentary. Syllabic word setting is the norm and there is little attempt to interpret the text musically beyond the many repetitions of the climactic line “power and glory of love” or the occasional use of unexpected chromatic harmony on an important word. The static setting is not improved by a simple quadruple metre and rhythms which contain little variety. Moreover, four-bar phrasing (mainly 2+2) predominates, following the pattern suggested by the lines of the text; there is only occasional relief from this regularity, such as when a phrase repetition disrupts the ‘four-square’ structure. Although the melody in the initial sections is chordally derived, some melodic decoration is apparent (see Ex.7.2), but the later chorus passages are generally devoid of these additions, rendering them bland and uninteresting.

The work does contain some positive aspects. As Table 2 demonstrates, the pace gradually increases from *Adagio Sostenuto* at the opening to *Allegro Animato* in the final section, providing some degree of momentum and mounting tension. Alternation of textures is also used to some effect. The mainly melody-with-accompaniment textures of the solo sections are contrasted with chordal support in other areas, where it is often employed as a subtle tension-building device when moving towards the homophonic chorus passages or at other intermediate climaxes in the melodic line. Within sections, further contrast is effected occasionally through imitative devices such as question and answer effects. There is also some variety in the combination of forces employed, which provides timbral contrast (see Table 2). Nevertheless, these features provide only momentary colour within this otherwise pedestrian and limited piece.

## 7.2 Solo and part songs

The genre of solo song forms a considerable portion of Drysdale's oeuvre. He composed at least one hundred songs and although many are not dated, this information can sometimes be estimated through examination of features in the autograph manuscript (e.g. Drysdale's handwriting or comparison of manuscript paper) or occasionally more accurately determined from secondary sources such as programmes, correspondence or newspaper reviews. It is known that many of Drysdale's earliest works were songs — several were written during the period around 1883/1884 when he studied elementary music theory at the Watt Institute and School of Arts (cf. 28) whilst others date from the time just prior to his entering the RAM. He also wrote many during the decade or so before his death (see Appendix 1 for further detail).

The autograph manuscripts of a number of song and song arrangements are missing. They fall into two categories — those that appear in a work list but cannot be traced, and those where copies made by Janey Drysdale exist, but the autographs do not (i.e. they were in existence following Drysdale's death but no longer can be located). Glasgow University holds the majority of extant autographs and although a search of all other institutions and private collectors<sup>5</sup> known to hold Drysdale manuscripts revealed several more, these collections mainly consisted of multiple copies (particularly of arrangements). Janey does mention in her correspondence that she made at least one copy of each Drysdale song in the years following his death and that she used these to furnish interested performers with scores. Nevertheless, she does state that when no copy was available, an autograph manuscript would be lent. Correspondence does suggest, however, that many of these items were returned.

The texts set by Drysdale encompass a wide range of poetry. There are many settings of lowland Scots poets including Burns, Scott and Hogg although Drysdale was not parochial in his preferences and authors such as Moore, Swinburne and Longfellow are also represented. The largest group (encompassing almost half the songs) consists of writers contemporary with Drysdale. Several of these figures had collaborated with him on larger scale projects — for example, the ninth Duke of Argyll, Claude Burton and

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Professor G. Ross Roy of the Department of English, University of South Carolina has formed a collection of settings of Burns and other Scottish poets which is housed at the Special Collections Division of his university. His collection includes twelve original songs and folksong arrangements by Drysdale. None of these is an autograph manuscript.

Frederick Pilleau. Many others seem to have been friends and acquaintances: Arthur Corney and W.H. Sams (both associated, although not exclusively so, with Drysdale's music hall songs {cf. 307}) and Donald A. Mackenzie, a prominent Scots writer on anthropology and mythology whose poetry, much of it in the Scots vernacular, would have appealed to Drysdale's patriotic ideals.<sup>6</sup> However, by far the most prolific author was his sister Janey who supplied at least sixteen texts, mostly of a sentimental vein.

A few of the early songs contained enough merit to warrant publication. "My Lady Sleeps" was composed in 1884 when Drysdale was just 17 years old and before he had any rigorous theoretical training or instruction in composition. The song's text is drawn from Act I, Scene III of *The Spanish Student* by the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882) where it takes the form of a 'Serenade' (i.e. it is also a song in the play).<sup>7</sup> The text has a relatively complex structure, containing four stanzas each consisting of a three-line verse with a refrain from which Drysdale derives his title:

"She sleeps!  
My lady sleeps!  
Sleeps!"

The text is romantic in subject and contains some colourful elements for musical portrayal. The first three verses concern nature ('Stars', 'Moon', 'Wind' and 'summer nights') whilst the final section tells of the 'lady's' dreams. Colour is also important in the initial verses (i.e. azure, golden and silver) while the refrain, true to the textual subject, has a particularly soporific quality provided by 'sh', 's' and 'ee' sounds. Although not outstanding, it contains elements which have the potential to provide a composer with considerable stimulus. Drysdale's setting opens imaginatively enough. It is tuneful and although the opening theme is mainly harmonically derived, some melodic devices do enhance the generally triadic line. The accompaniment is set in a guitar-like arpeggiated texture and is coloured by occasional chromatic harmony. It leaves the listener with reasonable expectations for the remainder of the song.

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<sup>6</sup> A number of copies of Drysdale songs and folksongs are held in MS19310, D.A. Mackenzie Collection, NLS.

<sup>7</sup> Henry Wadsworth Longfellow *The Spanish Student* (London: Moxon, 1843). This text has been set by a number of composers including Elgar in the form of a work for choir and orchestra (published Novello, 1904) and as a quartet for male voices by John Hyatt Brewer (published New York by Gray, 1918).

Ex.7.3 — “My lady sleeps”, Introduction and opening of Verse 1

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system is the piano introduction, marked *Andante grazioso*. It features a treble clef with a *Lower aux.* line and a bass clef. The piano part is marked *p* and includes a *dim 7th on A#* marking. The second system is the vocal line, marked *Triadic vocal line*, with lyrics "Stars of the sum - mer night". The piano accompaniment for this system is marked *Pno*. The third system is the piano accompaniment for the vocal line, with lyrics "Far in yon az - ure deeps". The piano part is marked *Pno* and features a chromatically altered subdominant chord.

Nevertheless, Drysdale only develops his initial ideas partially. The song does not seem to lead anywhere — there is no definitive climax — and although the vocal line is workman-like and relatively fluent throughout, it is too triadically based and contains limited rhythmical interest. In all, it does little to enhance the text. A binary structure and regular two- or four-bar phrasing emphasise the static setting with syllabic word setting increasing the stolidity. Moreover, sometimes lines of text are removed or repeated — a justifiable procedure when it improves the setting — but some of Drysdale’s alterations detract from the soporific quality. There is also little attempt to portray the meaning of the text beyond the ‘serenading’ guitar-like texture dominating the accompaniment (an effect somewhat marred by the supporting octave/octave and fifth dotted crotchets of the bass line {see Ex.7.3}) and the representation of “Sleep” through the drawing out of rhythmic values in the coda. This latter device is enhanced by the use of a chromatically altered subdominant chord, a welcome surprise after the predominantly diatonic harmonies heard previously.

## Ex.7.4 — “My lady sleeps”, Coda

The musical score for "My lady sleeps", Coda, is presented in two systems. The first system is marked "[Andante grazioso]" and features a vocal line with the lyrics "Sleeps, sleeps, she sleeps, she" and a piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern. The second system is marked "calando pp" and features a vocal line with the lyrics "sleeps, she sleeps" and a piano accompaniment with a more active eighth-note pattern. Chord symbols I, IV, IV<sup>b3</sup>, and I are indicated below the piano parts.

Although Longfellow’s text is not outstanding, it does contain a considerable level of stimulus upon which Drysdale has capitalised to a limited extent. The song was accepted for publication, appealing to the amateur drawing-room market. The vocal range is relatively wide (B<sup>1</sup>–F<sup>#</sup>"), but its upper limit is approached by easily obtainable intervals within a melodic line based on triads and stepwise motion. Moreover, the accompaniment is simply executed. Thus, both parts are easily accessible to the average amateur musician. Easily performed and relatively bland, this song is similar both to others of its type and to many of Drysdale’s other published works — ‘pot boilers’ appealing to a mass market.

During the late 1890s, Drysdale wrote many original songs. “Memory’s Fairest Flow’ret” (published Ascherberg, 1898)<sup>8</sup> and “Snowdrops” (published Paterson, 1896)<sup>9</sup> provide a representative model of those composed during the period. Both are settings of texts by Janey Drysdale using the pseudonym Ercil Doune and are typical of her style — highly sentimental, embracing topics such as nature and love, and with use of similar metaphors and forms of language. Possibly snowdrops, the first flowers of the year,

<sup>8</sup> In Act II of *Red Spider*, this song was used to replace the creepy ballad of witchery “When the hooting owls are flying” and was performed (with an orchestral accompaniment which is no longer extant) throughout the opera’s lengthy run. The text is particularly sentimental and bears little relevance to the operatic action.

<sup>9</sup> “New Songs” *The Times* 25 August 1896, 10d

may be a metaphor for the purity of first or early love — words such as ‘white’, ‘snowy’, ‘innocence’, ‘truth’ and ‘pure’ contribute to this effect — while “Memory’s Fairest Flow’ret” discusses the metaphorical memory of ‘better times’. The subject matter is rather ‘twee’ for modern consumption, although such texts would have been popular in their time.

As with his earlier songs, Drysdale makes limited effort to represent these texts musically. The use of static followed by chromatic harmony in “Memory’s Fairest Flow’ret” might portray ‘lost beauty’ or ‘better times’ while the bare octaves/unisons in the opening bars of the right hand part of “Snowdrops” suggest textual references to purity.

**Ex.7.5 — “Snowdrops”, Introduction**

Andante amoroso  
Piano  
mf

As can be observed in Exs 7.5 and 7.6, themes are generally well shaped using a range of melodic decorations to provide variety while adding richness to the harmony.

**Ex.7.6 — “Memory’s fairest flow’ret”, Introduction**

Andantino affettuoso  
mf  
Passing note Lower auxiliary  
Lower auxiliary  
Strong bass line which outlines rising stepwise motion

Compared with Drysdale’s earlier songs, the piano parts are more complex. Accompanying figurations are less repetitive and although melody with accompaniment texture still predominates, block harmonies, doubling of the voice part and the occasional use of countermelody are also observed.

These later songs also contain more chromatic harmonies and some tonal instability is apparent, including abrupt shifts in tonality, but unlike many of his other works, Drysdale makes scant use of lengthy pedals or dominant preparations. Modulations are generally achieved through common chords or chromatic shifts, while tonal interest is maintained in a number of ways. In “Memory’s fairest flow’ret” the tonally unstable central section alludes to several keys but remains in none, moving via chromatic shifts and V<sup>7</sup> chords through parts of a cycle of fifths (bars 37<sup>3</sup>–41; 43–44).

Ex.7.7 — “Memory’s fairest flow’ret”, opening of Verse 3

[Andantino affettuoso]

29

Gone are all thy gra - ces, Beau - ty hast thou none,

Piano

33

Rad - iant once thy bright - ness Blush - ing in the sun,

Pno

Conclusion of passage with preponderance of F# minor chords

37

Cull'd in sum - mer glo - ry By a lov - ing hand,

Pno

*f*

41

*rall* Ne'er a fair - er flow'r - et *p* Blos - som'd in the land

Pno

*colla voce*

There are, however, a few passages in this song where the harmonic progressions are weak and tonality static, a blandness which detracts from the musical impetus. One

section leading into the opening of the third stanza is based almost solely around F# minor chords, although Drysdale's use of this harmonic structure may reflect the textual meaning "Gone are all the graces, beauty hast thou none" (See Ex.7.7).

The simpler "Snowdrops" generally modulates towards the ends of stanzas with the effect of these key changes being weakened through:

- moving into the dominant key but avoiding a full perfect cadence by inserting a second inversion of the subdominant chord (in the manner of a triple appoggiatura) before resolving onto the tonic (Ex.7.8a);
- moving into the subdominant key following several bars of dominant pedal and a perfect cadence, but leaving the tonality ambiguous by having a chromatically inflected sharpened fourth in the melodic line. By employing this device, Drysdale provides one of the rare occasions when the music enhances textual meaning (Ex.7.8b).

Such techniques also provide a seamless musical join between stanzas.

**Ex.7.8** — "Snowdrops", modulations at conclusion of: (a) Verse 2; (b) Verse 3

(a)

9 [Andante amoroso] a tempo

Voice

earn - est of the sweetspring - time To Thee and me so dear.

Piano

a tempo

Bb maj II V7 IVc I

(b)

19 [Andante amoroso]

Sharpened 4th Verse 3

poco a poco cres- cen - do

Voice

sor - row yet thy heart had sought. They're white as is thy snow - y breast

Pno

poco a poco cres- cen - do

Ab maj v7 I

End of dominant pedal

In “Snowdrops”, Drysdale also exploits the tension-raising properties of chromatic chords, avoiding their use until the coda where they support the song’s climax by providing a vivid contrast to the preceding diatonic harmonies.

**Ex.7.9** — “Snowdrops”, Coda

The musical score for the coda of "Snowdrops" is presented in two systems. The first system shows the voice and piano parts. The voice part begins with the tempo marking "[Andante amoroso]" and the instruction "slargando". The lyrics are "And vow to love and cher-ish thee with". The piano part features a "crescend" marking. The second system continues the voice part with the lyrics "love as strong as life." and the piano part with a "ff" marking. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Compared to Drysdale’s early songs, these works demonstrate developments in several areas of his compositional style: more complex structures with appropriately positioned and thus, satisfactory climaxes, fluent melodies, an adequate variety of textures and a judicious use of chromatic harmonies. “Snowdrops” and “Memory’s fairest flow’ret” are relatively well-constructed and attractive examples of Victorian parlour songs.

“Wha daur meddle wi me” is a setting for soprano, contralto and piano of a four-verse text in the Scots vernacular by Sir William Allan, a Dundee-born engineer and Liberal politician who wrote numerous volumes of fervidly patriotic Scottish songs. In fact, the first edition of *DNB* notes that from 1871 until his death Allan wrote so many volumes of verse that he was the “most prolific poet of [the] time”.<sup>10</sup> “Wha daur meddle wi me”

<sup>10</sup> A.H.M. [Alexander Hastie Millar] “Allan, Sir William” *DNB on CD-ROM*

is a loose translation of the motto of Scotland “Nemo me impune lacessit”<sup>11</sup> with this significant phrase providing the opening line of each verse. Allan’s text in itself is not particularly meritorious, but its sentiment would have appealed to Drysdale’s nationalist spirit and strong sense of patriotism.

Drysdale produced two versions of “Wha daur meddle wi me”.<sup>12</sup> The first was published by Curwen (*Choruses for Equal Voices* number 1060). Neither the manuscript nor the publication is dated although the latter is likely to be around 1907 considering the *Choruses for Equal Voices* series numbers and reports of its publication in the press. Although the second unpublished manuscript employs the same melody and similar harmonies, it is set in compound time and lacks the rhythmic drive found in the other version. This manuscript is annotated “Lasswade, November, 1906”, and, thus, was written during the period of Drysdale’s conductorship of the Glasgow Select Choir; however, neither version seems to have been performed by them.

The vocal parts employ easily sung intervals within a mainly syllabic setting of simple rhythms and regular, four-bar phrasing albeit that there is effective use of syncopation and displacement of accent that aptly reflects the vocal rhythm as well as providing a sense of rhythmic drive (see Ex.7.10). Although the outer verses of the song do not attempt to represent the text musically, the third verse, which extols Scotsmen, does use tonal ambiguity and drones to portray the sentiments expressed by a particularly patriotic text. The effect of this device is heightened by the generally diatonic harmony of the outer verses being contrasted with this more adventurous treatment in verse 3. The opening tonic drone of this verse reinforces the new key of C major before moving into a tonally unstable passage in which chromatic shifts and, more occasionally, common chord notes are used to allude to related keys (tonicisation). By using the first inversion of the tonic chord of each new key, Drysdale further weakens any modulatory effect adding to the feeling of tonal instability. This progression is also employed to effect most modulations within the song, which are mainly to the subdominant or, less frequently, to the relative minor.

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<sup>11</sup> Mairi Robinson ed. *The Concise Scots Dictionary* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985) 783

<sup>12</sup> In Cb10-y.33.

Ex.7.10 — “Wha daur meddle wi me”, Verse 3

Syncopated setting

Sop  
Wha daur med-dle wi me tak' tent Scots-man's proud spi-rit can

Con  
Wha daur med-dle wi me tak' tent A Scots-man's proud spi-rit can

Piano  
C major: I Tonic pedal II7 VI/ G maj: II

S.  
nev-er be bent, He's thrawn and he's down, And croons he will cloor, He

C.  
nev-er be bent, He's thrawn and he's down, And croons he will cloor, He

Pno  
G: V7c C: V7 I F: V7d Ib D: V7d Ib C: V7d Ib D#dim7

S.  
ne'er for a cow-ard was meant, that's kent, He ne'er for a cow-ard was meant, that's kent.

C.  
ne'er for a cow-ard was meant, that's kent, He ne'er for a cow-ard was meant, that's kent.

Pno  
Ib

Drysdale employs several techniques derived from traditional music to portray Allan’s Scots text. The vocal line is set to a hexatonic tune which avoids the fourth of the scale (its use is confined to areas where the music moves through subdominant key) and there is some use of pedals to mimic drones. Moreover, dominant harmony is avoided, frequently being substituted by subdominant chords, a common facet of Scots folk music.

Ex.7.11 — “Wha daur meddle wi me”, Introduction

The musical score for the introduction of "Wha daur meddle wi me" is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with various note values and rests, marked with a forte (f) dynamic and the tempo instruction "Allegro risoluto". The bottom staff is in bass clef and provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. Below the bass staff, Roman numeral figures indicate the chord progression: I, IV, I, IV, IV, I, IV, VI, IV, I, IV, I. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

Linked to this feature is the preference for modulation to the subdominant key, rather than the more usual dominant, albeit that the third verse is based in this tonal area.

“Wha daur meddle wi me” demonstrates Drysdale’s ability to compose simple but effective music. The work shows restraint in its harmonic and modulatory techniques, whilst the vocal parts require little technical ability from the performers — Drysdale could not have made it much easier with intervals of thirds and sixths and a mainly consistent rhythm between the parts. The average school choir or singers at home could easily perform the song. From examination of the other published choral compositions of this period (e.g. *Barbara Allan* below), it can be seen that Drysdale was capable of producing works which were more technically demanding for both choir and accompanist. There is no doubt that in ‘Wha daur meddle wi’ me’, Drysdale is writing for a specific market — that of the amateur.

### 7.3 Folksong arrangement

From his earliest works, Drysdale’s original compositions demonstrate his considerable interest in Scottish traditional culture. Nevertheless, it was not until the final years of his life that he became actively involved in folksong arrangement, following a commission from the choirmaster and bandmaster James Wood. In a fascinating anecdote (given in full Scots vernacular), Wood relates how he learned of Drysdale’s aptitude for folksong arrangement.<sup>13</sup> Around 1902, Drysdale called on John Glen (a member of the well-known Edinburgh instrument making and publishing family, and an eminent scholar of Scottish music<sup>14</sup>) to ask for a copy of the old song “The braes o’ Killiecrankie” which he

<sup>13</sup> James Wood “Meeting of Mr John Glen and Learmont Drysdale”, [1908], in *Brief Biographies of Learmont Drysdale* Cb10-y.7 (bound after the article from the *Musical Herald*)

<sup>14</sup> John Glen formed a collection of old Scottish printed music books which was acquired by the NLS in 1927. His publications include *The Glen Collection of Scottish Dance Music* 2 vols (1:1891, 2: 1895) and *Early Scottish Melodies* (1900).

wished to employ in his new opera *Flora Macdonald*. Glen took the opportunity to show Drysdale a version of Wood's "Mally Lee" which had been set by John Grieve. Afterwards Glen expostulated to Wood:

I tell't ye it wadna dae. ... He [Drysdale] condemned it at once as an atrocity, and he sat doun at the piano and played right off an accompaniment that wad a dune your heart guid tae listen to.<sup>15</sup>

Glen and Drysdale proceeded to spend the evening going through arrangements, with the composer providing re-harmonisations and suitable accompaniments such that:

He just made beautiful harmony out o' what some o' them wad ha'e the cheek to tell ye was impossible to harmonise. What a differ frae a lot o' your consecutive fifth gentry! He's simply a musical genius and one or two like him, if they were gi'en the opportunity, wad mak' Scottish music second to none in the wide world. I've interested him in what we're doein', but he's too busy the noo wi' his opera [*Flora Macdonald*]. But we'll see him again.<sup>16</sup>

Glen died in 1904 and it was four years before Wood proceeded with the project. By this time Drysdale was happy to assist in the work and he collaborated with several other eminent Scottish musicians including J.A. Moonie, Allan MacBeth and Charles MacPherson in the production of a collection published as *Song Gems*.<sup>17</sup> Drysdale's main involvement was as general editor of the volume but he also supplied several of his own arrangements. These are of their period, being similar in style to those made by the well-known Scots folksong researcher and arranger Marjorie Kennedy-Fraser around the same time (see Ex.7.12 for Drysdale's arrangement of R.A. Smith's "Row weel your boatie").

Drysdale took his task of editor seriously, researching the antecedents of music and text whilst noting similarities among some one hundred and thirty Scots folksongs; his final analysis shows that his chosen texts were set to only forty-five melodies.<sup>18</sup> As well as associating with the prominent folksong scholars of his time, surviving documents pertaining to his work in this field demonstrate that Drysdale studied the collections of many earlier enthusiasts including James Johnston, Henry Playford, Allan Ramsay, Robert Archibald Smith and George Thomson. It seems likely that these activities were instrumental in Drysdale being made president of the Edinburgh branch of The Scottish

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<sup>15</sup> James Wood "Meeting ..."

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> James Wood comp. *Song Gems (Scots): The Dunedin Collection* (London: Vincent Music Co., 1908)

<sup>18</sup> Learmont Drysdale "Notes on old Scottish Tunes", [1908], M23907, Arts Department, ML, Glasgow



National Song Society (SNSS) which had been founded in 1906 to promote the interests of Scottish literature and song (cf. 80).<sup>19</sup> A number of Drysdale's settings were performed at the society's successor organisation the Dunedin Association in the years following his death. Moreover, the Scottish baritone Hamish MacKay sang a number of Drysdale's arrangements during tours of Canada and the USA (including at a lecture and performance at the Carnegie Hall, New York<sup>20</sup>) and said of them: "anything more beautiful than [Drysdale's] settings of 'I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen' and 'Willie's gane to Melville Castle' [do] not exist in the song literature of any nation."<sup>21</sup>

Today's fashion, however, would call for a more sympathetic and simple realisation of folksong rather than the highly pianistic and more advanced harmony utilised in Drysdale's arrangements.

#### 7.4 Barbara Allan: a choral ballad with piano accompaniment

Drysdale's interest in traditional music did not just entail imitating folk style in his original compositions or producing arrangements of songs; he also employed it as the basis for compositions, producing works which are a hybrid of arrangement and original music. One of the best examples of this style is found in *Barbara Allan* (1906) in which Drysdale demonstrates his ability to develop the limited material available in one version of a traditional ballad, to form a medium-scale work lasting around eight minutes. Drysdale designates *Barbara Allan* as a choral ballad, a genre popular with composers of his generation although the term is not listed in any modern reference work in English, suggesting that the terminology is no longer extant in this country. The only entries discovered are those in the early editions of Grove's Dictionary which state "Choral ballads, are generally speaking, musical settings of poems that would be naturally described as ballads",<sup>22</sup> not particularly helpful when trying to discern the exact features of a genre. Such works are unified by the metre of their text, but a limited examination of a few examples has indicated a diverse form which varies in scale,

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<sup>19</sup> "Scottish National Song Society" *Glasgow Herald* 22 May 1909, 5f

<sup>20</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 5 November 1946, Farmer 249/1946/u. Drysdale's music was to lose one of its greatest supporters when Hamish Mackay was drowned after the *Lusitania* was torpedoed on 7 May 1915.

<sup>21</sup> Hamish MacKay "Piano Accompaniments to Scots Songs" *The Scottish American* 6 May [1912] in Henry Farmer comp. "Press Cuttings — Drysdale", Cb10-y.6, p. 67

<sup>22</sup> W. H. Cummings with additions by J. Fuller-Maitland "Ballad" *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Macmillan, 1904) 1, 173

structure and forces utilised, a diversity which is observed in Drysdale's settings in the genre (e.g. *The Proud Damozel* and *Tamlane* {see App. I for further information}).

*The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*,<sup>23</sup> Bertrand Bronson's survey of Francis Child's monumental ballad collection,<sup>24</sup> states that there are at least 198 textual variants associated with "Bonnie Barbara Allan", gathered from numerous sources in both Britain and the USA. These variants have similar subject matter and express the same sentiment — unrequited love. Nevertheless, they contain innumerable differences in detail, a feature of their diverse heritage. Bronson classes the version of text set by Drysdale as Scots in origin.<sup>25</sup> First printed in Allan Ramsay's *A Tea-Table Miscellany* of 1724,<sup>26</sup> this text has appeared in numerous publications since that time.<sup>27</sup> Its structure is common ballad form (i.e. four alternating four-stress and three-stress lines, with the rhyme scheme ABCB).

Bronson provides over a hundred different melodies associated with "Barbara Allan". He notes that the earliest printed source of the melody used by Drysdale can be traced to James Johnson's *The Scots Musical Museum*<sup>28</sup> compiled between 1787–1803. The melody has a four-phrase structure mirroring the metre of the text, with longer notes at the ends of the second and fourth phrases (the three-stress lines of the text) providing symmetrical two-bar phrases. The tune is built on a 'D' hexatonic scale (i.e. dorian mode without the sixth) but has a major feel to its third phrase.

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<sup>23</sup> Bertrand Harris Bronson *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads with Their Texts, According to the Extant Records of Great Britain and America* 6 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962)

<sup>24</sup> Francis James Child *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* 8 vols (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown and Co., 1857–59)

<sup>25</sup> Bertrand Harris Bronson *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads...* 2, 322

<sup>26</sup> Allan Ramsay *A Tea-Table Miscellany: A Collection of Choice Songs, Scots and English* 2 vols (Glasgow: Fouks, 1768) 2, 171–172

<sup>27</sup> Including Thomas Percy *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* 3 vols (London: Dodsley, 1767) 3, 131–

<sup>28</sup> James Johnson *The Scots Musical Museum* 6 vols (Edinburgh: Johnson, 1790) 3, 230

Ex.7.13 — Traditional melody of “Bonnie Barbara Allan”, James Johnson *The Scots Musical Museum*, 3, 230

Phrase (1) (2)

It was in and a-bout the Mar - tin - mas time, When the

(3)

green leaves were a fal - ling, That Sir John Graham in the

(4)

west coun - tric, Fell in love with Barbara Al - lan

Drysdale does not provide the source for the traditional melody and text he employs (and the song does not form part of his extant folksong researches<sup>29</sup>), but as previously noted, he was familiar with the work of both Ramsay and Johnson through his related studies.

*Barbara Allan* is scored for SATB and piano with the chorus textures occasionally augmented by division of parts. The work is accessible to the competent choir, being well within available ranges and generally lacking in any awkward intervals. This lack of serious technical demand does not equate with the reported talents of the Glasgow Select Choir to whom the work is dedicated. Drysdale, however, would have been aware that a relatively simple but effective setting would be of more interest to publishers who, in turn, wished to attract the largest market possible.

Drysdale retains the traditional version of the text but uses an interesting mix of Scots and English dialect which does not totally conform with any of the versions discussed above, a divergence which may owe some debt to the oral tradition he inherited from his mother. His setting is in simple quadruple metre and mainly syllabic — the few melismatic passages either emphasise final lines of stanzas or form choral accompanying figures such as the “Ah” in verse eight (Ex.7.17). Although lines of direct speech by particular characters are generally allocated to the correct sex of singer, repetitions are given by the full choir, providing an effective variety of timbre and texture. In comparison with his other vocal works, Drysdale makes considerable use of textual representation within the music. For example, a “deid bell” rings on a drone in

<sup>29</sup> Learmont Drysdale “Notes on old Scottish Tunes”, [1908], M23907, Arts Department, ML, Glasgow

the weak beats of verse eight (Ex.7.17) while pedals continue throughout the final verse conveying the sense of Barbara's loss. In addition, unison/octaves highlight "Though your hearts' blood were aspillin" (Ex.7.14a), whilst chromaticism and ambiguous tonality underline "slichted [slighted] Barbara Allan" (Ex.7.14b), a line further emphasised by a slower tempo.

**Ex.7.14** — *Barbara Allan*, textual representation in: (a) Verse 4; (b) Verse 5

(a)

[*Allegro moderato*]  
*p*

S A  
T B

Though your hearts' blood were a - spill - in

*p*  
*p*

**Dominant preparation**

*Animato*  
*mf*  
*cresc.*

The image displays a musical score for the song 'Barbara Allan'. Part (a) shows the vocal lines for Soprano (S) and Alto (A) and the piano accompaniment for Verse 4. The tempo is marked as 'Allegro moderato' and the dynamics are 'p' (piano). The lyrics for the vocal parts are 'Though your hearts' blood were a - spill - in'. The piano accompaniment features a section labeled 'Dominant preparation'. Below this, the beginning of Verse 5 is shown, marked 'Animato' and 'mf' (mezzo-forte), with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking.

(b)

*Meno mosso*

S  
A

*p*  
And slicht - ed Bar - ba - ra Al - lan,

T  
B

*Meno mosso*

*p*

Piano

*And*

slicht - ed Bar - b'ra Al - lan

slicht - ed Bar - b'ra Al - lan

Sudden tempo change is rather unusual in Drysdale's work and is used here to considerable effect to highlight particularly prominent phrases. Moreover, longer than usual note durations seem to symbolise death in verses three and seven (an effect heightened by the pedal), although rhythms generally follow those of the traditional melody albeit that the dotted figures are not always retained (see Ex.7.13).

Although the chorus sections are generally homophonic interspersed with occasional melody with accompaniment passages, there are a number of welcome changes to the prevailing textures which assist in portraying the sentiments of the traditional ballad. For example, the closing lines of verses frequently employ imitation which can either be between the vocal parts themselves (accompanied by the piano) or between all the available forces as shown in Ex.7.15. Both these features assist in accentuating significant text.

**Ex.7.15** — *Barbara Allan*, conclusion of Verse 3

[*Allegro moderato, meno mosso*] *rall*

S  
A  
T  
B  
Piano

"Young man, I think ye're dy - ing,  
"young man,  
dy - ing!  
I think ye're dy - ing!"

*p* *pp* *p*

The piece is through composed and although its structure is developed from the folk melody, the allocation of text to music differs from that of the traditional setting as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3:** The folk melody “Barbara Allan” and how it is employed by Drysdale

Verse/section in Drysdale’s setting	Phrase/s of folk melody used/ developed <sup>30</sup>	Structural function in Drysdale setting (with bar nos. <sup>31</sup> )	Comments
<b>Introduction</b>	1 & 2	Bars 1–24 <sup>2</sup>	Mainly based on a cell derived from phrase 2
<b>1</b>	1 & 2 :	A [24 <sup>3</sup> –32]	
<b>2</b>	3 & 4 :	B [32–43]	An additional passing note in the melody and the supporting harmonies clearly indicate a major tonality
<b>3</b>		C [48–63]	New material which is harmonically derived
<b>4</b>	Some similarity to 1 & 2; 4	D [64–74]: a hybrid of A <sup>1</sup> and B	Resembles A in rhythm and shape, but the final line is set as in phrase 4 of the traditional melody
<b>5</b>	Based on 3 & 4	B <sup>1</sup> [77–89]	Opens as B but develops new music based upon it
<b>6</b>	3 & 4	B [90–106]	
<b>7</b>	Some similarity to 1 & 2; 4	D [109–120]	
<b>8</b>	3 & 4 :	:B:  [128–155]	
<b>9</b>	1 & 2 :   3 & 4 :	A B [159–183 <sup>1</sup> ]	
<b>Postlude</b>		Bars 183 <sup>2</sup> –4	Based on a cell derived from phrase 2

The Introduction begins with the first half of the traditional melody followed by material based on a melodic cell derived from phrase 2 (Cell A). However, the passage is rather static, as there is little variety in tonality, very limited thematic development and a great deal of repetition.

<sup>30</sup> See Ex.7.13 for details of the phrase structure.

<sup>31</sup> Missing bars correspond with piano links between verses.

Ex.7.16 — *Barbara Allan*, Introduction

The musical score for the introduction of 'Barbara Allan' is presented in three systems. The first system shows the initial chords and the 'chromatic shift' from A7 to B min. The second system features a 'Mixing of relative major and minor' section and a 'Cell A' motif. The third system concludes with 'Tonicisation'. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'.

Drysdale's treatment of the vocal sections is rather more effective and demonstrates a considerable degree of inspiration when developing the limited traditional material available. Within stanzas, phrasing is based around four bars (normally 2 + 2) but is not rigid and varies frequently, mirroring the changing metres of the text. Lines two and four of each stanza often have their final syllable lengthened beyond that of the traditional melody, providing further phrase irregularity. Drysdale also varies the internal verse structures in several ways including:

- repeating the final line of each stanza and/or one or other of its phrases, often emphasising the climactic section (Exs 7.14b and 7.17);
- repeating verse eight (which concerns Barbara's realisation of her love for the dead Sir John) in its entirety. Internal repetitions, set imitatively, enhance the final line "cried woe ...". Various vocal timbres are used to provide contrast during the second statement of the text (see Ex.7.17);
- repeating each couplet in verse nine, emphasising Barbara's wish for death. There are further internal repetitions within each couplet.

Furthermore, the change in setting in verses eight and nine from that built up over the first seven verses provides additional weight to the climax of the ballad. In all, these divergences from four-square regularity provide a flexible and sympathetic reading of a colourful text.



As with most of Drysdale's mature music, *Barbara Allan* employs a mixture of diatonic harmony, and chromatic and altered/compound chords (e.g. # or bIV, bVII<sup>9</sup>) as well as harmonic devices which temporarily obscure tonality, including:

- pedal points which underpin both diatonic and chromatic harmonies, and often take the form of prolonged dominant preparations (Exs 7.14a and 7.15). Tonic and dominant pedals are also combined to form drone effects (see Ex.7.17);
- the mixing of relative minor and major. This occurs both diatonically through common chords and by sudden chromatic moves. In the Introduction (Ex.7.16), these devices are combined: the A<sup>7</sup> chord (bar 2<sup>2</sup>) is the flattened seventh of B minor (it also indirectly forms the 'double tonic' effect outlined in the traditional melody), whilst beat 3 is chromatically altered, pulling the tonality back to B minor;
- Tonicisation. The suggestion of other keys via chromatic shifts and notes common to both tonalities, but where full modulation to the new key is not achieved. In the Introduction, Drysdale uses the technique to create a passage which churns along vaguely hinting at keys, but ends exactly where it started, B minor (see Ex.7.16).

The resulting effect of such devices is short-term tonal ambiguity within a tonal framework of B minor and D major.

*Barbara Allan* was published by Curwen as part of their series *The Choral Handbook* in 1906<sup>32</sup> and appeared in both staff and tonic Sol-fa editions, a common practice during a period when many members of amateur choirs were unable to read staff notation.<sup>33</sup> The Glasgow Select Choir gave the work's first performance at the St. Andrew's Halls, Glasgow on 3 November 1906 to some acclaim in the local press. The *Glasgow Evening News* noted:

A feature [of the Select Choir concert] was the singing of a ballad *Barbara Allan*... The composition is most creditable to the writer, and gives musical enhancement to the sentiment of the ballad."<sup>34</sup>

The Select Choir performed *Barbara Allan* on several occasions both during Drysdale's

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<sup>32</sup> The publication notes that *Barbara Allan* was also copyrighted in the USA in 1906.

<sup>33</sup> Drysdale was not particularly impressed by the sol-fa system although he appreciated its usefulness in training singers. See "Learmont Drysdale" *Musical Herald* (1 July 1904): 196.

<sup>34</sup> "Select Choir's Concert" *Glasgow Evening News* 5 November 1906, 9f

tenure and after. Since his death, it has been broadcast on Australian radio<sup>35</sup> with its most recently known performance being in Georgetown, Texas in 1984.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, *Barbara Allan* and similar works, though very popular in their time, were by the 1920s becoming unfashionable and falling from the established repertoire; today, they are rarely performed. A sympathetic setting and an effective development of Scots traditional material, this work deserves to be better known.

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<sup>35</sup> [Untitled Listing] *ABC Times* 10 January 1948, tipped into GUL's copy of Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers..." in Farmer 257. The performance was given by the ABC Brisbane Singers conducted by Dr Robert Dalley-Scarlett (cf. 94–5).

<sup>36</sup> Kenny Sheppard "Selected Choral Works of Learmont Drysdale..." 88

## 7.5 Larger-scale compositions for voices and orchestra

By the conclusion of his first year of study at the RAM, Drysdale had familiarised himself with the workings of the orchestra. During the following session, Corder encouraged him to widen his compositional experience by experimenting with the combination of voices and orchestral instruments. In February of 1890, Drysdale began working on the cantata *Thomas the Rhymer* based on the ancient ballad of that name.<sup>37</sup> This was literature which was close to his heart — not only was he deeply interested in Border poetry and song, he was reputedly a relation, albeit at a great many generations' distance, of the ballad's eponymous hero. The text was a perfect choice for his first composition in the genre.

Wishing to produce a work that provided a suitably dramatic representation of the text, Drysdale decided that the music should run almost continuously, believing that this structure would be the most appropriate method of maintaining tension. Corder disagreed, suggesting that the resulting sections would be of excessive length, an inadvisable strategy for an un-staged work. From his correspondence, it seems that Drysdale conceded to Corder's greater knowledge and experience, agreeing to divide the piece at the natural breaks within the text, providing at least two major pauses in each part of the work,<sup>38</sup> a division which reflects the three-section structure of the ballad. It was an important lesson for Drysdale in the balancing of artistic ideals against the needs of performers and listeners. An assessment of how successful he was in deploying this strategy is difficult to ascertain from the surviving sketches (dated February 1890). These show only the opening theme and a basic chordal accompaniment for each number; there are at least thirteen, a division which in itself contradicts Drysdale's intended structure for the piece. It is probable that he intended to link these items with connecting passages or *segue* markings (a device used to great effect in his later cantata *The Kelpie*) to produce continuous sections as outlined to Corder. The use of recurring themes is also apparent from the sketches, and a sizeable orchestra and SATB chorus are implied, although the vocal types of the individual soloists are not discernible. The text suggests at least three male soloists and one female soloist were required.

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<sup>37</sup> Learmont Drysdale to his mother, 2 March 1890, Cb10-x.16/16

<sup>38</sup> Learmont Drysdale to his mother and father, [1889], Cb10-x.16/15

It seems likely that Drysdale had proceeded further with this enterprise than the scant sketches discussed above suggest. His letters imply he had completed a considerable portion of the score. Moreover, he notes that Corder believed the cantata too extensive for production at the RAM (a comment suggesting that the work was at least drafted), but believing it eminently suitable for the booming choral society market, suggested Drysdale have it published. As previously discussed, Drysdale did complete the prelude which was performed at an RAM concert at the close of the 1890 session (cf. 42–4).

If Janey's memory is accurate, Drysdale's first professional commission was to compose the closing ode for the Edinburgh International Exhibition of 1890.<sup>39</sup> The work is a setting of Robert Burns's *Address to Edinburgh*, which was written on the poet's first visit to the capital in November 1786, soon after the publication of his earliest volume of works (the "Kilmarnock Edition").<sup>40</sup> The poem honours the city, proclaiming its proud history as the seat of monarch and parliament, and extols its people and architecture. There are some stanzas which contain the personal reflections of the poet — references to a female friend and to his home town of Ayr — as well as one verse which indicates his Jacobite political leanings. These sections are omitted by Drysdale — he presumably considered them irrelevant to the spirit he aimed to convey. Moreover, Nationalist sentiments in a work destined for a public festival in the Conservative and Unionist Scotland of 1890 would not have been appropriate.

Only the piano-vocal score of Drysdale's setting is extant, but additional annotations within the manuscript show that the work was to include a sizeable orchestra and an organ to accompany the baritone soloist and SATB chorus. As shown in Table 4, Drysdale employs a modified through-composed structure — as in Burns's poem, the first stanza is repeated in full at the work's conclusion. The music runs almost continuously with modulatory orchestral links between most stanzas. The only break occurs at the conclusion of stanza 1 where a three-beat silence provides an emphatic ending to this particularly rousing section.

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<sup>39</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers...", 17. Hamish MacCunn composed his *Psalm VIII* for the opening ceremony.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Burns *Poetical Works of Robert Burns* ed by William Wallace (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1990) viii

**Table 4:** Schematic analysis of *Ode to Edinburgh*

Stanza [pages in score]	Textual subject	Treatment of text	Significant features	Key
[1–2]			Orchestral introduction supported by dominant pedal.	C major
1: Initial 4 lines only [2–11]	Praise of Edina. Drysdale adds an additional “Hail”.  Initial line set in full	Emphasises initial line “[Hail], Edina! Scotia’s darling seat!” through many repetitions. Change to $\frac{6}{8}$ metre heralds a complete setting of text.  Change to $\frac{12}{8}$ . Repetitions of “Hail Edina”. Return to $\frac{4}{4}$	Homophonic texture. Dominant pedal.  First full cadence in tonic key.  Imitation highlights central text.  Homophonic	F major
[11–12]		Orchestral link	Flute solo	E major
2 [12–17]	Extols wealth, justice, architecture and learning.	Section solos with each line of text taken by a different voice type.  Tutti; different lines of text given simultaneously.  Tutti; the initial lines repeated. Postlude	Melody and accompaniment texture supported by strings and woodwind.  Imitative. Brass  Homophonic  Flute solo.	E major
3 [18–21]	The greatness of Edinburgh’s men.	Unison/8ve setting of initial line. Use of section pairing/section solos.	Homophonic, organ and brass support. More of orchestra gradually added.	G major
4 Initial 4 lines only [21–27]	The greatness of Edinburgh’s women.	Soprano section solo.  Repeat by full chorus. Modulatory postlude.	Change to $\frac{12}{8}$ metre followed by short introduction. Melody and accompaniment texture.  Mainly homophonic.	D major
5 [27–30]	Edinburgh Castle	Baritone solo.	Introduction. Melody and accompaniment with prominent arpeggio figuration.	B minor
6	Reflecting on the loss of Scotland’s royal house.	Omitted		
7 [31–38]	The poet’s pride in his ancestors and their determination.	Baritone solo.  Initial 4 lines taken by tenors and basses, lines 5–8 by full choir.	As verse 5  Mainly homophonic.	B major
8 [38–45]	As verse 1.	As verse 1	Change to $\frac{12}{8}$ . Modulatory passage hailing Edina, then as verse 1.	B major F major

Although the Introduction employs an F major key signature, the lengthy ‘G’ pedal suggests a C Major tonality. Nevertheless, the music takes an unexpected turn, cadencing on a second inversion of the tonic triad of F major rather than the expected full close in C major, a device that maintains continuity into the strong initial stanza saluting “Edina! Scotia’s darling seat!”. The initial repetitions of “Hail” are Drysdale’s addition and provide a powerful tool in conveying the rousing sentiments of Burns’s opening stanza.

**Ex.7.18** — *Ode to Edinburgh*, Introduction and opening of Verse 1

The musical score is presented in a multi-system format. The first system shows the piano introduction with a tempo marking of [Maestoso moderato] and a dynamic marking of *p*. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system shows the vocal entry for 'Hail' in the soprano part, with a dynamic marking of *ff*. The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The third system shows the vocal entry for 'Hail all hail' in the soprano part, with a dynamic marking of *ff*. The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The fourth system shows the vocal entry for 'hail' in the soprano part, with a dynamic marking of *ff*. The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

It is not until the end of verse one and following a lengthy dominant preparation, that the full perfect cadence in the home key of F major is heard. The final cadence of this

stanza (and, hence, of the work's conclusion) also provides an interesting example of Drysdale's developing harmonic technique. Changing metres build a considerable degree of tension, which in the closing section is both maintained and enhanced by a progression of altered and chromatic harmonies that ultimately conclude with a quasi-plagal cadence (Ex.7.19). This preponderance of chords associated with the subdominant and the corresponding lack of dominant harmony has its basis in Scottish traditional music. However, excepting melodies built on gapped scales, there are few other elements drawn from this tradition.

**Ex.7.19** — *Ode to Edinburgh*, conclusion of Movements 1 and 8

[Moderato Maestoso]

S  
A  
T  
B  
Pno

All hail all hail E-din-a  
All hail all hail E-din-a

Rall ff

F Maj: V7 IV/IV IV IV<sup>b3</sup> Aug<sup>6</sup> I

Sco-tia's dar-ling seat all

VI II<sup>7</sup><sup>b3</sup> (G7)

fff marcato

I

Even at this early point in his compositional training, Drysdale was experimenting with tonalities remote from his chosen home key, through techniques such as sudden chromatic moves and tertiary shifts (see Table 4). Although such devices are not always employed in a manner as subtle as that found in his more mature works — the sudden chromatic change at the conclusion of the first verse one is a case in point (Ex.7.20a) — their use demonstrates that Drysdale was exploring and widening his technical language. Tertiary shifts are used to considerable effect in the central verses, with the music settling in E then G major, before exploring keys associated with D major — the expected B minor and the more distant B major. An adroit enharmonic change swiftly returns the music from this remote tonality to the home key of F major. Drysdale was definitely making advances in the art of colourful modulation.

Ex.7.20 — *Ode to Edinburgh*: modulations between movements (a) 1 & 2; (b) 7 & 8

(a) *[Maestoso moderato]*

ff

F maj: I  
dominant pedal

E maj: Ger 6th  
(enharmonically  $\vee^7$  of F maj)

(b) Harmonic outline

Chromatic shift

Enharmonic change  
via a Ger 6th to F major

Tonic pedal

Drysdale completed the work on 14 October 1890 and had already sent it to Novello for printing when he was informed that the festival committee had been required for financial reasons to amend their plans for an extensive closing ceremony and had decided to cancel his commission. In any event, Drysdale was too late with his submission (the extant score bears evidence of this ‘rush job’ — there are, for example, a great number of missing accidentals) and the publishers, being unable to complete printing by the deadline, returned the score. Robert Newman (cf. 46–7), who was to

undertake the baritone solo in the work, states that the publishers had a high opinion of the piece and were particularly impressed with the colourful orchestration. Nevertheless, they felt it would attract mainly local interest and might not have many sales outside Scotland and this, together with the shortage of time in which to print, had led to the decision not to publish.<sup>41</sup>

With the exception of the dramatic cantata *The Kelpie* (1891–1894), Drysdale concentrated on orchestral and theatre music over the following decade and it was to be the next century before he embarked on writing further choral works. In 1900, there was some suggestion that he might write the opening ode for the Glasgow International Exhibition of the following year, but as previously discussed (cf. 66–7), this commission did not come to fruition. Drysdale’s autograph chronology of his life<sup>42</sup> states that he also began work in 1900 on a composition for chorus and orchestra called *Barnbogle*,<sup>43</sup> but no score survives.

Early in January 1901, Drysdale completed the first draft of *Earl Haldane’s Daughter*, a setting of Charles Kingsley’s ballad “It was Earl Haldan’s Daughter” (1852).<sup>44</sup> He renamed the second draft *The Proud Damozel* and its autograph manuscript states that the work was intended for choir and orchestra; however, a full score and orchestral parts have not been traced.<sup>45</sup> The work has an important link with other compositions written in the early 1900s — the first appearance of an attractively-shaped theme which also plays a prominent part in *Tamlane* (1901–1905) and the orchestral *Border Romance* (1904).

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<sup>41</sup> Robert Newman to Learmont Drysdale, 18 October 1890, Farmer 308/6

<sup>42</sup> Learmont Drysdale [“Life List to 1901”], Farmer 257, tipped into *Dunedin Magazine* 3 (1914–15): 14

<sup>43</sup> The title *Barnbogle* refers to an ancient castle on the banks of the River Forth on the Rosebery estate at Dalmeny where Andrew Drysdale was factor at this time.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Kingsley *Andromeda and Other Poems* (London: Parker, 1858) 87–89. The ballad also appears in Kingsley’s *Westward Ho!* (1852).

<sup>45</sup> There is no information regarding this work in the relevant correspondence, but it is probable that a full score was never prepared, a view with which a work list drawn up by Janey concurs: “1901. *Earl Haldane’s Daughter* (*The Proud Damozel*) for chorus and piano” in “List of Works”, [1910], Cb10-y.6.

Ex.7.21 — ‘Ballad’ theme employed in *The Proud Damozel*, *Tamlane* and *Border Romance*



Although Drysdale began the choral ballad *Tamlane* in 1901, he did not complete the work until 1905. A setting of the ancient Scottish ballad of the same name, the text employed is based on the version by Scott, it being, in Drysdale’s view, the most faithful to the original verses.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, in the “Prefatory Note” to his published edition, Drysdale wrote that he omitted many verses and for musical purposes made some slight alterations and additions to the text, but he states:

[I have] endeavoured to preserve the atmosphere and retain the feeling and phraseology of the old lines, which it is hoped will be found to have been treated in the most faithful spirit of reverence.<sup>47</sup>

*Tamlane* tells the story of a mortal being spirited away to Elfland and his redemption through the courageous love of an earthly woman — an old idea and common to the folklore of many countries. The name of Tamlane is a corruption of the old Thomalin derived from Thom o’ the Lynn and the scene of the ballad is Caterhaugh, a romantic spot in Selkirkshire at the confluence of the Rivers Etrick and Yarrow. The well where Janet trysted with her elfin lover can be seen today. In fact, it is marked on the latest Ordnance Survey Leisure Map as “Tamlane’s Well”.<sup>48</sup>

In general, the musical style and techniques employed in *Tamlane* are consistent with Drysdale’s other mature works. It features the use of recurring themes, mixtures of diatonic and chromatic harmonies, the exploration of remote tonalities within a strong tonal framework, and devices derived from folk tradition. In addition, he divides the work into three sections with each part running continuously in the manner outlined in his discussions with Corder concerning *Thomas the Rhymer*. Nevertheless, in a few areas Drysdale’s style has somewhat altered. The opening passages of each section utilise contrapuntal techniques, rather unusual for Drysdale who was not an exponent of

<sup>46</sup> Learmont Drysdale “Prefatory Note” *Tamlane* (London: Bayley and Ferguson, [1905]), [ii]

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> See Tweed Valley: Peebles to St Boswells, Ordnance Survey Outdoor Leisure 44, (1997), NT/438267.

such ‘learned’ methods; in fact, during his years at the RAM he decried as uninspired those who advocated them (cf. 43). In this instance, he seems to have decided that styles drawn from earlier times would capture the ‘antiquarian’ subject matter of the text. The success with which he deploys such devices is questionable, as the passages are not always technically secure and often break the basic rules of counterpoint. Moreover, they frequently seem contrived. Parts 1 and 2 employ the same theme (see Ex.7.21) and although they open satisfactorily enough, their extensions become rather artificial and somewhat cumbersome. The introduction to Part 1 resembles a French overture: there is an opening passage at a moderate speed (although in flowing semiquaver arpeggiation rather than dotted figurations), a faster fugato section reminiscent of Handel and two further repeats of the slower-paced section with new jig-like material inserted. Part 2 begins as a piece of two-part sequential counterpoint supported by a dominant pedal. The passage continues through a chain of suspensions in which the countermelody is harmonised in thirds with the pedal appearing in cross-rhythm in two parts, a dense texture in which the main melody is subsumed completely. The extension of this passage is complicated further by a series of chromatic shifts which churn dissonantly to little musical effect — without the ever-present pedal any sense of tonality would be lost in these bars (see Ex.7.22, systems 5–6).

Ex. 7.22 — *Tamlane*, Introduction to Part II

*Allegro giusto*  
*p*

Derivative of Theme 1

A min (b7):  
 Dominant pedal

Sequential extension—

Alteration of theme \*

Parallel 5ths  
*dim*

Par. 5ths

Theme 1

Cross rhythm pedal

There is little doubt that in employing these techniques Drysdale aimed to create an atmosphere appropriate to a textual subject concerning mediaeval ladies at leisure and as such, it is an apt response to the stimulus. Nonetheless, his mediocre technical skill

has, on occasion, produced flawed and rather ineffective music. He may have been wiser to employ his attractive theme in a less complex manner.

The fugato at the opening of Part 3 is particularly lack-lustre and dense, although it could possibly be considered an appropriate reflection of the opening line of the section “Gloomy, gloomy was the night and eerie was the way”.

**Ex.7.23** — *Tamlane*, Introduction to Part III

*Andante sostenuto*

Evidence of Drysdale’s lack of technical skill in counterpoint is apparent from the appearance of several grammatical errors (e.g. see Ex.7.22, systems 3 and 4) while his predilection for pedals suggests that he considered his flawed contrapuntal technique might lead him astray tonally and thus, he was determinedly maintaining a permanent link with his home key.<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, pedals, particularly in octaves, are a dirge-like addition to already over-complex music.

<sup>49</sup> Grammatical errors are also observed in other Drysdale’s works. For example, see Ex.7.28b, bars 6–7.

Drysdale does not use solo voices in *Tamlane*. However, he still achieves effective contrasts in vocal timbre by employing devices such as a cappella setting or accompanied passages for one voice type, with such variations frequently being linked to the prevailing subject matter. Text is generally assigned to the correct sex of singer — male voices ‘speak’ for Tamlane, female for Janet — leading to a considerable degree of vocal pairing and less occasionally, to sections sung by one voice-type alone (Ex.7.24). Although passages of general narration can be sung by any voice type, Drysdale characterises the plot further by setting text specifically directed at particular characters to the appropriate sex of singer. Repetitions of such text are often given by a different group of voices, providing further contrast as well as carrying the story forward by alternate strains of chorus, both sectional and full, and accompaniment. In conjunction with this shrewd use of vocal timbre, variations in style and texture provide further contrast — for example, imitation, recitative-like writing or homophonic passages can highlight particularly significant sections of text (see Ex.7.25).

Ex.7.24 — *Tamlane*, Part I, Fig. 22

*[Allegretto]*  
*p*

S  
A

Say, why put ye the rose, Jan - et what  
 gans ye break the tree, And why come ye to  
 Car - ter - haugh with-out the leave o' me.

S  
A

my dad-dy gied it mine ain my dad-dy gied it  
 me, my dad-dy gaed it me, my dad-dy gaed it me.

Ex.7.25 — *Tamlane*, Part I, fig. 27

*[Allegretto]*  
*p*  
 His true love and his Queen.

*Bass p*  
 His true love and his Queen.

*p a tempo*  
 Queen.

*Tenor p*  
 His true love.

and his Queen.

Although the lack of a full score and parts means it is impossible to judge the effectiveness of Drysdale's instrumentation, his colourful orchestration of other works suggests that this piece would have been just as imaginative. At least one review concurs with this suggestion, stating: "the orchestration, especially in the processional towards the close, is well balanced and well coloured to suit the imagined scene."<sup>50</sup>

In November of 1905, *Tamlane* received its first performance given by the Clydebank and District Choral Society at the town's Burgh Hall. The *MT*'s correspondent praised the work, but his critique (amongst others) suggests that the age-old problem of the 'scratch orchestra' had somewhat marred the performance:

The programme was notable from the fact that Mr Learmont Drysdale's *Tamlane*, a ballad for chorus and orchestra, received a first hearing. Mr Drysdale, who has been very happy in his treatment of the old Border ballad, conducted the performance and secured a good rendering of the choral music, the orchestral part suffering somewhat from lack of sufficient rehearsal.<sup>51</sup>

The critic for the local newspaper also admired the music as "splendidly adapted to the theme, [and] full of a mystic beauty as of a far-off time seen through the colouring atmosphere of tradition."<sup>52</sup> Moreover, he informs us that the work received an enthusiastic reception, as:

The large audience, which was representative of all that is best in Clydebank and district, expressed their appreciation of the composition by unstinted applause, and at the conclusion the composer had to bow his acknowledgements repeatedly.

Both the piano/vocal score and a sol-fa edition of *Tamlane* were published by the London division of the Glasgow company Bayley and Ferguson. The work received several more performances over the next few years including one as late as 1948 by the choir of New Kilpatrick Parish Church, Bearsden.<sup>53</sup>

In 1913, the Dunedin Association sponsored a special performance of *Tamlane* with MacCunn's *The Cameronian's Dream* and Mackenzie's *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. The press again admired the work with the *Scotsman*'s critic noting:

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<sup>50</sup> "Concert of Scottish Composers in Edinburgh" *Scotsman* 8 March 1913, 9b

<sup>51</sup> "Music in Glasgow" *MT* 47 (1906): 49

<sup>52</sup> "*Tamlane*: Successful Performance by Clydebank Choral Union" *Clydebank and Renfrew Press*. 1 December 1905, 2g

<sup>53</sup> Programme: "*Tamlane* performed by New Kilpatrick Parish Church Choir", Glasgow, 27 February 1948 found in Henry Farmer comp. "Cuttings on Music in Scotland", Farmer 219, p. 100. This performance used a piano and string quartet accompaniment.

It is a finely conceived descriptive musical setting of the old Border ballad, and is informed throughout with a healthy melodious-ness that befits the theme. Opening with an orchestral introduction, of which the programme character is obvious, it follows through the chorus the links of the legend by which the daring Janet won from the toils of Elfland spells her *Tamlane*. The work is characterised by much good choral writing; and altogether *Tamlane* may be regarded as one of the maturest of the late Learmont Drysdale's works.<sup>54</sup>

The *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* stated: "*Tamlane* is here made a choral work of singular grace and imaginative force. [...] The writing is powerful throughout, and bears everywhere the marks of true inspiration"<sup>55</sup> while the city's *Evening News* compared the piece favourably with Dvorak's *Spectre's Bride* and suggested that "Scottish choral societies would do well to take up this wonderfully characteristic work of the Scottish composer, which is as worthy of consideration as is that of the Bohemian."<sup>56</sup> High praise indeed for the Scot!

Only two days before the Dunedin Society concert it was discovered that there were no parts either published or in manuscript for *Tamlane*, a peculiarity as the piano/vocal score<sup>57</sup> states that these were available from the publisher from whom the full score had been procured. In the event, three copyists had to work day and night producing parts for an orchestra of more than sixty.<sup>58</sup> Janey had intended to copy the full score, but could not find time when it was in her possession and she returned it to the publisher along with the new parts and the piano/vocal scores. Although she discussed with Henry Farmer the possibility of retrieving the score from the publishers in 1942 to make a copy for GUL, she does not seem to have followed this suggestion through. This was unfortunate, since Novello took over the London division of Bayley and Ferguson some years ago<sup>59</sup> and the performing material for this work, along with a great many other irreplaceable manuscripts, has disappeared. It is, thus, no longer possible to perform *Tamlane* in its full orchestral setting.

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<sup>54</sup> "Concert of Scottish Composers in Edinburgh" *Scotsman* 8 March 1913, 9b

<sup>55</sup> "[*Dunedin Society Concert*]" *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* [8] March 1913, "Cuttings from Newspapers" in Cb10-y.6, p.49

<sup>56</sup> "[*Dunedin Society Concert*]" *Edinburgh Evening News* [8 March] 1913, "Cuttings from Newspapers" in Cb10-y.6, p.50

<sup>57</sup> Learmont Drysdale [Title Page] *Tamlane* (London: Bayley and Ferguson, [1905]), [i]

<sup>58</sup> "Edinburgh Violinist's Memories: Drama of Lack of Orchestral Parts" npub, nd, in Henry Farmer Comp. "Cuttings on Music in Scotland", Farmer 219, p. 80. The published score notes that band parts were available for hire.

<sup>59</sup> The parent branch of this company still trades through an accountant's office in Glasgow although its activities are confined to supplying works (mainly small-scale vocal pieces) from their back publications catalogue.

*Tamlane* does contain some negative aspects. The introductions to each part contain weak counterpoint and the ubiquitous droning pedals exacerbate their rather unsatisfying extensions. Moreover, several sections overwork a limited number of musical ideas. Nonetheless, there is merit in the work. Drysdale employs the available forces with a considerable degree of assurance and although the lack of soloists restricts his range of timbral contrasts, the text is aptly characterised and there is effective use of the chorus through a cappella settings, voice pairing or section solos, techniques that would have been enhanced by colourful orchestration. The work is well structured and has a satisfactory mixture of textures, tempos and metres. Overall, however, *Tamlane* does not reach the high standard set by Drysdale some ten years earlier when he composed *The Kelpie*, his most successful choral work.

The circumstances surrounding Drysdale's last work for chorus and orchestra provide the final chapter in his unfortunate record with commissions. As previously discussed (cf. 77-9), in 1907 Drysdale was asked by the ninth Duke of Argyll to set his Ode for the opening ceremony of the Franco-British Exhibition to music, a considerable undertaking as the work was to consist of eight movements extolling British/French culture and industry. After eight months' work on this substantial project, Drysdale submitted a completed manuscript piano/vocal score (with indications of orchestration) to the exhibition's Music Committee (which included Sir J. Frederick Bridge), but they deemed it too large-scale for their requirements.<sup>60</sup> Imre Kiralfy, Commissioner-General of the exhibition, met with Drysdale and persuaded him to abridge the setting to around ten minutes in length, suggesting what should be cut and even providing timings for each movement. Following this meeting Drysdale wrote to Argyll in an outwardly circumspect manner taking much of the blame for the refusal on himself: "I lost sight of the fact that this is not an actual concert but a ceremonial function which must necessarily be short and compact". Nevertheless, the fact that the composer was annoyed is also implied with comments such as "Of course, had I seen Kiralfy to begin with it would have saved me some work" although he wisely tempers his criticism with "I don't mind that at all as long as we get what we want."<sup>61</sup> Argyll had mentioned a time limit of an hour, however. In a letter written during the collaborators' initial

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<sup>60</sup> Argyll to Learmont Drysdale, 22 June 1907, Farmer 262/5

<sup>61</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Argyll, [1908], tipped in *Inaugural Ode: Specially Written for the Opening of the Franco-British Exhibition, London 1908* [Version 1], Cb9-x.8

discussions about the proposal, he notes the committee had stated that experience of previous exhibitions “found that it does not do to have more than an hour’s music at the opening ceremony.”<sup>62</sup> Either Argyll had misconstrued the committee’s requirements or they had changed their minds. Whatever the reason, the collaborators had to contract their work severely, a fact evidenced by several unusual documents affixed to the scores. One contains the full text annotated with timings and numbers of bars. Another, which Drysdale calls a “Time Sketch”,<sup>63</sup> consists of the melody line of each movement with metronome markings. From this he calculated the exact timings of each section, tabulating this information on a sheet from an accountant’s ledger book,<sup>64</sup> comparing the original number of bars with those of the new version and Kiralfy’s suggested length. Drysdale was forced to omit the lengthy fifth movement concerning hunting (over six minutes long) and a large section of the “Prayer” completely. Nevertheless, the figures suggest that the abridged composition (or “dwarf form”, as Argyll was to term it<sup>65</sup>) was still too long and this second version contains further cuts — it was a desperate attempt to squeeze the work into the required time, but the consequence of this action is music which at times feels rushed and abrupt. In the event, this second version was also rejected<sup>66</sup> although the exact reason for this decision is not recorded, as the correspondence between Drysdale and Kiralfy is lost.<sup>67</sup> The commission passed to Sir Charles Villiers Stanford who was required to complete his setting within two months.<sup>68</sup> Although Argyll had to alter his text substantially (no doubt at the behest of Stanford), his efforts bore fruit; the resulting work received a considerable degree of coverage in the press as well as being published by Boosey and Co. It was a great disappointment for Drysdale who firmly placed the blame for the fiasco on the committee. Argyll did try to rectify this situation — he suggested that their work could be given at an exhibition in Edinburgh and following Drysdale’s death, attempted to resurrect it for the proposed Franco-Scottish Society’s visit to Glasgow in 1911. Neither of these proposals was acted upon.

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<sup>62</sup> Argyll to Learmont Drysdale, 22 June 1907, Farmer 262/5

<sup>63</sup> “Time Sketch” tipped in *Inaugural Ode:...* [Version 2], Cb9-x.9

<sup>64</sup> “[Timings for Ode]” tipped in *Inaugural Ode:...* [Version 2], Cb9-x.9

<sup>65</sup> Argyll to Learmont Drysdale, 8 December 1907, Farmer 262/12

<sup>66</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 3 March 1908, Farmer 262/17

<sup>67</sup> Janey notes to Farmer that she was in possession of the letters which passed between Kiralfy and her brother, however, this correspondence has not been traced.

<sup>68</sup> Argyll to Learmont Drysdale, 22 April 1908, Farmer 262/20

As shown in Table 5, the Ode is through-composed and has well-contrasted sections which are seamlessly joined by orchestral links to form a continuous flow of music.

**Table 5:** Schematic analysis of the *Franco-British Ode*

Section [Page/s in score] <sup>69</sup>	Textual subject	Significant features	Main tonality
Orchestral Introduction [1]		Fanfare-like opening with drums and trumpets supported by a dominant pedal. Although the main motif (See Ex.7.26b) is initially pentatonic, it soon becomes diatonic.	C major
Opening Chorus [2–6]	“Union flag and Tricolor”	Full chorus supported by an orchestral tutti. Occasional trumpet fanfares and violin runs are prominent in the melody with accompaniment texture.	C major
Norman [7–14]	“Now the Norman as of yore”	The hexatonic melody lacks the seventh. There is a mainly homophonic texture with occasional imitative passages in the choral parts and use of counter-melody in the orchestra. Prominent use is made of motif 1 in the central passage.	E major/minor
Hammers [15–20]	“Hammers as of old have rung”	The mainly hexatonic melody is set in fugato in the chorus parts, supported by a homophonic accompaniment. The ostinato bass line has a prominent anvil part.	E minor
Love, War and Commerce [21–29]	“Love is ours for valour tried”	The melody, which is initially pentatonic, is taken by female then male voices. It is then treated imitatively supported by a melody with accompaniment texture over a dominant pedal. A full chorus section follows which gradually increases in pace and musical tension. The section concludes with modulatory link with prominent brass part and trumpet fanfares.	D major
Prayer [29–34]	“God without whose will is nought”	Hymn-like SATB chorus parts are supported by a melody with accompaniment texture (which has a prominent sextuple figuration) in strings and organ. An augmented version of “God save the King” appears as a countermelody in brass.	C major
Finale [35–46]	“Defend our land from evil change and chance”	Homophonic opening includes a prominent fanfare figure. There are several statements from national melodies which although mainly in the brass, do appear in other parts.	C major

<sup>69</sup> The section titles employed are those provided by Drysdale in *Inaugural Ode: ...* [Version 2], Cb9-x.9

The opening section closely resembles the Introduction to *Ode to Edinburgh* of 1890, with its dominant pedal and, as shown in Ex.7.26, a main motif which has many similarities in both melodic and rhythmic construction.

**Ex.7.26** — Comparison of main motifs from: (a) *Ode to Edinburgh*; (b) *Franco-British Ode*

(a)

(b)

It seems sensible to assume that Drysdale drew ideas from this earlier unperformed work written for a similar occasion.

Drysdale employs many contrapuntal devices in this work but unlike those found in *Tamlane*, they are applied with more technical proficiency. The “Hammers” section (Ex.7.27) is a good example of the successful use of fugato. In comparison with the introductory sections of *Tamlane*, the melody is of a simple mainly hexatonic construction while imitation is initially limited to the octave. The accompanying harmonies derive from the double tonic effect (I–bVII) with the bass line consisting of an unusual ostinato of anvils of differing sizes, a particularly appropriate feature in a movement about hammer-men — in fact, the movement is rather reminiscent of the “Anvil Chorus” in *Il trovatore*. From relatively crude ingredients, Drysdale has composed effective music apposite to its textual subject.

Ex.7.27 — *Franco-British Ode*, Opening of “Hammer” section

*Allegro giusto*  $\text{♩} = 96$

S  
A  
T  
B

alto  
Ham - mers that of old have rung

Bass  
Hammers that of old have

Anvils  
E min: (small) I  $\flat$ VII  
(large)  
*f Pesante*

that of old have rung that of  
rung that of old have rung that of

Ham - mers that of old have rung  
old have rung Ham - mers that of  
Ten

old have rung  
A min: I  $\flat$ VII

Another clever feature is Drysdale’s inclusion of melodies associated with the countries involved in the exhibition — “God save the King”, “La Marseillaise” and “Auld lang syne” appear in various guises, in complete or partial statements which may, or may not have alterations in pitch or rhythm to suit their harmonic setting. In the “Prayer”, “God save the King” is given in augmentation with the pitch occasionally altered to fit with the prevailing harmony (Ex.7.28a). Moreover, not content with single statements of his

chosen melodies, Drysdale combines them within an imitative texture to produce highly complex music of a particularly rousing nature (Ex.7.28b).

Ex.7.28 (a) — *Franco-British Ode*, Conclusion of “Prayer”

[Andante religioso  $\text{♩} = 64$ ]

Soprano: What from  
 Alto: Know - ledge and the time to know what from  
 Tenor: act or speech may  
 Bass: act from act or speech may  
 Brass: \*  
 Organ (Sketch): f  
 Piano: f, p

\* "God save the King" in augmentation

Ex. 7.28 (b) — Franco-British Ode, Finale

*[d = 120]*  
*Auld lang syne*

Brass

S. A. T. B.

The gifts of peace are gifts di - vine. No days o' auld lang - syne

Manzellate (Brass)

*ff marcato*

(Auld lang syne\*)

Manzellate

\*1. Aukward fram h at modulation

Brass

S. A. T. B.

peace are gifts di - vine

are gifts di - vine

Manzellate (Brass)

*ff marcato*

(Auld lang syne\*)

The manuscript lacks a text, articulations and dynamic markings for much of this extract.

The titles of the melodies given in this example are reproduced as they appear in the autograph score.

It is regrettable that this final commission fell through. Both versions of the *Franco-British Ode* contain much merit and although the earlier attempt is rather prolix, the discipline of revising and condensing did have a positive effect on the later version. The variety of subject matter provided in the text assists in achieving a work which has well contrasted sections relevant to the nations involved. Drysdale deploys various textures, musical techniques and devices to portray these subjects and is particularly clever in his drawing together of national melodies from Britain and France to depict accord between the nations. *The Franco-British Ode* would have provided a fitting introduction for an important event extolling both the individual greatness of Britain and France as well as recognising their close ties. The work did have some public exposure. In 1914, William Short (principal trumpeter with the King's Band<sup>70</sup>) arranged a march for military band from themes drawn from the first and final sections of the work. This arrangement received a number of performances over the following years including those given by the Band of HM Royal Horse Guards (Blues) in August 1914 and the Dunfermline Military Band in 1931.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> [Untitled] *MT* 49 (August 1908): 535. Little is known about this figure although he successfully sued the London Chamber of Commerce over a breach of his band's contract at the War Exhibition of 1916. See "King's Bench Division, King's Trumpeter's Claim against the War Exhibition" *The Times* 27 January 1917, 4b

<sup>71</sup> Programmes: "Band Music, The Band of HM Royal Horse Guards (Blues)", 26 August 1914, Cb10-y.5/8; "The Carnegie Dunfermline Trust — Music in Parks... Dunfermline Military Band", 27 May 1931, Cb10-y.5/11

## 8. The Dramatic Cantata *The Kelpie*

In the spring of 1891, Drysdale began work on a dramatic cantata for soloists, chorus and orchestra setting a text adapted from Charles Mackay's poem "The Kelpie of Corrieveckan".<sup>1</sup> Although it was 1894 before *The Kelpie* was completed, the soprano solo "The Kelpie Galloped" (which later became No.5 of the work) was performed at an RAM concert in the St. James's Hall, London in July 1891. The solo part was taken by Margaret Ormerod, a fellow student of Drysdale, accompanied by the Academy's orchestra which included professors and students, both past and present.<sup>2</sup> Nothing further is known about this performance and reviews have not been traced in contemporary publications such as *MT*.

Drysdale also set the text as a recitation for speaker and orchestra using thematic material similar to that found in the cantata.<sup>3</sup> C. Leslie Walker first performed this version at an RAM Fortnightly Concert in June 1891<sup>4</sup> and during the early twentieth century the elocutionist Etta Young gave a number of renditions of the work in Edinburgh.<sup>5</sup> All of these performances were given with piano but the numerous annotations on the orchestral parts suggest that the work also appeared with a full accompaniment. Such a performance has not been traced.

In 1892 and with a view to issuing *The Kelpie* as a dramatic cantata, Drysdale received permission from Charles Mackay's son to set to music and publish "The Kelpie of Corrieveckan",<sup>6</sup> but some years later Eric Mackay wrote to Drysdale explaining:

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<sup>1</sup> *The Poetical Works of Charles Mackay: Now for the First Time Collected, Complete in One Volume* (London: Warne, [1876]) 78–90. The poem was first published in Mackay's *Legends of the Isles, and Other Poems* (Edinburgh: np, 1845) and was reissued several times during the 1850s.

<sup>2</sup> Programme: "Royal Academy of Music July Concert", 28 July 1891, Cb10-x.15/4. Several of the autograph woodwind and brass parts for this number contain annotations giving names of RAM professors (e.g. "Mr Lazarus", the famous clarinettist and teacher, appears on the part for his instrument). In some instances, the professors were actually members of the orchestra (e.g. Geard, the Professor of Trombone and Wotton of bassoon) whilst others seem to have passed the parts to their students.

<sup>3</sup> Learmont Drysdale *The Kelpie of Corrieveckan* full score (unfinished), piano score and 27 separate parts, [1891], Cb10-y.29–31

<sup>4</sup> Drysdale provided the piano accompaniment.

<sup>5</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 13. For example, a performance with piano accompaniment was given at a Dunedin Association recital on 17 December 1913. See *Dunedin Magazine* 2 (1913–14): 113

<sup>6</sup> Mackay to Drysdale, October 11 1892, Cb10-x.17/12<sup>3</sup>. Eric Mackay was also a writer and had his works set by composers such as Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Gustav Holst. His sister was the music-hall star Mairi Corelli.

Another musician has applied to set “The Kelpie of Corrievreckan” (the copyright of which belongs to me) accompanying his application by the offer of an honorarium. ... I gave you permission to print and publish the poem, — but not exclusive permission. ... If you like to hand me an honorarium equal to the one offered I will make the friendly permission I gave you to an exclusive permission, and will write to the new applicant saying that I have disposed of the exclusive right to you.<sup>7</sup>

Considering this letter was sent in March 1895 some months after the cantata’s publication by Paterson and Sons it is assumed that the work was issued on the basis of this ‘friendly permission’ and that no financial arrangement had been entered into at that time. Unfortunately, there is no further extant correspondence between the parties detailing any later negotiations. Nevertheless, a thorough search of the major library catalogues of Britain, Europe, the USA and Australia has unearthed no other musical setting of this text (albeit that there is a short piece for clarinet and piano which employs the title<sup>8</sup>), suggesting that Drysdale may have paid the honorarium to secure exclusive rights to the work. Five hundred copies of piano/vocal score were printed in the winter of 1894 and it seems that Drysdale paid for the publication, as he was sent a fully itemised account from the publisher for £78.<sup>9</sup> The work was also available in the USA through Paterson’s agents Boosey, New York. Although the full score and orchestral parts were not published, manuscript copies could be hired from Paterson.<sup>10</sup> For the present location of autograph sources, see Appendix I.

It was not until 17 December 1894 that Drysdale conducted the first complete performance of *The Kelpie*. It was given at the Music Hall in Edinburgh with the Scottish Orchestra, Kirkhope’s Choir,<sup>11</sup> and the soloists Philip Brozel and Pauline Joram. Brozel, who was later to become a singer of international repute, had been a friend of Drysdale’s at the RAM, while Joram was a distinguished operatic soprano of the time. The soloists seem to have been eager to ensure a good performance, with Joram noting in a letter to Drysdale:

<sup>7</sup> Mackay to Drysdale, 2 March 1895, Cb10-x.17/12<sup>1</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ruth Gipps *The Kelpie of Corrievreckan for Clarinet in A and Piano* (London: Hinrichsen, 1942)

<sup>9</sup> Paterson and Sons to Drysdale, 23 November, 1894, Cb10-x.17/54<sup>3</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Learmont Drysdale *The Kelpie* (London: Paterson, [1894]) 1

<sup>11</sup> John Kirkhope (1844–1920) was an Edinburgh wine merchant and the founder, and conductor for nearly forty years, of the successful choir which bore his name. His services to music were recognised by the award of an honorary Mus.Doc from Edinburgh University. See “Death of Mr John Kirkhope” *Scotsman* 12 August 1920, 4e.

Both Mr. Brozel and I hope the orchestra won't be at the high pitch, as we are not accustomed to it. We are rehearsing the duet [presumably No. 8, the Love Duet] everyday together. Hoping everything will go off splendidly.<sup>12</sup>

Both soloists were assessed as “first-rate” by *The Scotsman* who also noted that Mr Kirkhope's choir “has borne aloft a standard of perfection in part singing which is scarcely anywhere equalled ... Mr Drysdale could scarcely have desired a better performance.”<sup>13</sup> The work itself was also generally well received by both audience and press with *The People* stating that “the composer [had] made masterly use of the situation presented”<sup>14</sup> while *The Scotsman* noted that the work was distinguished by rich and varied orchestral treatment and with vocal music which was, in general, dramatic. The reviewer, however, was not convinced by all aspects of *The Kelpie* and suggested that:

There are at least two movements ... Nos. 4 and 8 ... where lyrical and melodic treatment was surely required. It is here that Mr Drysdale falls short of his opportunity. The love duet [No.8] in particular is wanting in spontaneity and passion; and thus an opportunity of relieving the sombre tragic character of the opening and closing passages is lost.<sup>15</sup>

As can be gathered from the following discussion, such criticisms could be justified in No.4 “And Jessie fickle and fair was she” which is a rather bland setting of a colourful text, but the Love Duet is a gloriously passionate number which aptly captures the intense emotions of the characters. In contrast to the *Scotsman*'s critique, the correspondent of the *Scottish Musical Monthly* was particularly disparaging of the work. Amongst other faults he suggests that Drysdale had been over ambitious when choosing to set such a demanding text, noting that “the temptation to realism is strong; but for such flights as are here attempted stronger wings are required”.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Drysdale's originality was “running amuck — stupendous dissonances, awkward changes of key, peculiar rhythms, one of those pianoforte accompaniments which are the despair of small choral societies.”<sup>17</sup> Other critiques by this anonymous writer suggest his dislike of ‘modern’ idioms and a penchant for what Drysdale's set would

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<sup>12</sup> Joram to Drysdale, 10 December 1894, Cb10-x.17/24

<sup>13</sup> “Amusements: Orchestral Choral Concert in the Music Hall” *Scotsman* 18 December 1894, 5c

<sup>14</sup> [“The Kelpie”] *People*, [December] 1894 reproduced in “Extracts from Press Opinions”, ([1897]), Cb10-y.3, 84

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> “Three New Cantatas: Mr. Learmont Drysdale's *The Kelpie*” *Scottish Musical Monthly* 2 (January 1895): 94

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*



1894-95.

## Fifth Orchestral Concert.

### **"THE KELPIE,"**

A Dramatic Cantata.

WORDS BY DR CHARLES MACKAY

Music by Mr LEARMONT DRYSDALE.

(Op. 4.)

*Soprano* MISS PAULINE JORAN.

*Tenor* MONS. BROZEL.

### *The Argument.*

This weird but beautiful Scotch ballad tells of a demon lover, who, by means of fair looks and sweet words, lures a simple village maiden to her doom.

On Beltan E'en the Kelpie, or water demon, in the form of a handsome knight, mounts his steed, and galloping from his whirlpool

have termed “the consecutive fifth gentry”.<sup>18</sup> For example, his discussion of Arthur Somervell’s *The Power of Sound* states:

A distinctly valuable addition to ... the English School. Absolutely devoid of anything fantastic or extravagant. ... The last chorus is a really fine piece of sustained fugal counterpoint.<sup>19</sup>

The *Scottish Musical Monthly* was based in Scotland and it is probable that the author knew Drysdale and was for some personal reason anxious to discredit his work. The review may tell us more about the professional jealousies of its author than providing a true reflection of contemporary views of Drysdale’s work. This journal did, however, report one very unusual aspect of the performance — the concert was relayed by telephone to the home of its promoter, Roy Paterson (cf. 42, n.79) and thus, could be considered the first broadcast performance of a Drysdale work.<sup>20</sup> As far as can be ascertained, *The Kelpie* was not heard again until 1939 when it was performed by the Dunfermline Choral Union who also arranged and paid for the production of a sol-fa version.<sup>21</sup> Some years later the ABC Brisbane Singers conducted by the Australian musician Robert Dalley-Scarlett gave several live and broadcast performances of extracts from *The Kelpie* which were well received (cf. 94).<sup>22</sup>

The Broadheath Singers (an amateur group well known for its revivals of forgotten British choral music) gave the most recent performance of *The Kelpie* in September 2001 in Slough, Berkshire. The *British Music Society News* stated:

[*The Kelpie*] takes us back to a forgotten musical world, perhaps glimpsed in Elgar’s earlier extended choral works. ... We have had few revivals of extended character pieces such as this, though extracts from Hamish MacCunn’s *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* of 1888 did appear on a Hyperion CD a few years ago. On this showing the Drysdale is the better piece; more focussed, perhaps stronger invention.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> James Wood “The meeting of Mr John Glen and Mr Learmont Drysdale”, [1908], in *Brief Biographies of Learmont Drysdale* Cb10-y.7 (bound after the article from the *Musical Herald*)

<sup>19</sup> “Three New Cantatas: Mr. Learmont Drysdale’s *The Kelpie*” *Scottish Musical Monthly* 2 (January 1895): 94

<sup>20</sup> “Music of the Month: Edinburgh” *Scottish Musical Monthly* 2 (January 1895): 89

<sup>21</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 25 July 1946, Farmer 249/1946/p

<sup>22</sup> “The Music of Learmont Drysdale” *ABC Weekly*, 10 January 1948, 10; Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 24 February 1948, Farmer 249/1948/e

<sup>23</sup> Lewis Foreman “Broadheath Singers/Tucker: 29 September 2001” *British Music Society News* 92 (December 2001): 211–212. The compact disc referred to in this review is Hamish MacCunn *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood and Other Music*, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Hyperion CDA 66815.

The Broadheath Singers commissioned the production of multiple copies of the vocal score and a new full score transcribed on the *Sibelius* music software programme. Thus, for the first time in *The Kelpie's* existence, choirs can easily access its performing materials, a situation that will hopefully result in its more frequent appearance in the programmes of the numerous choral societies for which it was originally intended.<sup>24</sup>

“The Kelpie of Corrievreckan”, a typical Victorian moralising tale warning women of the dangers of courting handsome, seemingly wealthy strangers, first appeared in Charles Mackay’s collection *Legends of the Isles, and Other Poems* in 1845. Mackay (1812–89) was a prolific nineteenth-century poet and journalist of Scottish birth who left Scotland at an early age to be educated in London and Brussels. It was 1844 before he returned to Scotland as editor of *The Glasgow Argus* and in 1846 he was made an honorary LLD of Glasgow University. Returning to London in 1848, he held several journalistic posts including both that of editor of *The Illustrated London News* and of New York special correspondent to *The Times* during the American Civil War. Mackay had eclectic interests which included the legend, ballad and song of his native country,<sup>25</sup> literature that also held great appeal for Drysdale.

In Mackay’s tale, the Kelpie, a malevolent water demon,<sup>26</sup> takes the form of a handsome knight who dwells in Corrievreckan Whirlpool, an area of sea lying between the Scottish West Coast islands of Scarba and Jura. The work begins with the Kelpie mounting his horse and ascending from the depths of the whirlpool. He rides far across the sea and, at length, reaches Loch Buy<sup>27</sup> on the shores of Mull where he is halted by the sounds of villagers celebrating the feast of Beltane, a Celtic fire festival held on 1 May to mark the end of winter.<sup>28</sup> With the Kelpie’s appearance, the villagers’ festivities abruptly cease. He approaches the fair, but fickle, Jessie who sits with a suitor whom

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<sup>24</sup> This material is held by the Scottish Music Centre, Glasgow.

<sup>25</sup> Charles Kent “Charles Mackay” *DNB on CD-ROM* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

<sup>26</sup> For further information concerning the mythology surrounding kelpies see James MacKillop *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 249.

<sup>27</sup> Maps dating from around 1936 to the present show this as Loch Buie (pronounced Bu-ie as in ‘Drambuie’).

<sup>28</sup> MacKillop (see fn 26) notes that this Celtic feast was fixed for 1 May throughout most of the British Isles, but 15 May in Scotland. Mackay seems to have been unaware of this later date.

she has half-promised to marry. Jessie immediately recognises the ‘knight’ as her ideal husband and agrees to an assignation by moonlight.

Part Two begins with their trysting. The Kelpie courts Jessie and implores that she marry him; she willingly submits and they seal their love with a gold ring. Mounting his horse, they ride long over mountain and moor, but it is only when they reach the coast and Jessie inquires of her new home that the Kelpie reveals his true identity. Despite her wild screams, he drags her beneath the waves and into the depths of the whirlpool. Her body is found on the following morning by a fisherman and laid to rest in a grave by the seashore.

Each year, thereafter, on Beltane Eve, the Kelpie rides through the village with the ghost of Jessie.

Drysdale inserted seven stanzas of his own composing in Mackay’s text (see Appendix III) and in the foreword to the cantata explains:

For the purpose of musical treatment it has been found desirable to embody additional verses at certain points in the story, which seem in the composer’s opinion to demand musical elaboration.<sup>29</sup>

These stanzas successfully integrate with Mackay’s narrative, supplying descriptive material which embellishes an already picturesque text. Drysdale omits Mackay’s final moralising stanza, possibly because it detracted from the poem’s otherwise dramatic mien.

Drysdale employs his standard orchestral configuration (cf. 111) to accompany soprano and tenor soloists, and SATB Chorus (a rather large choir is required to balance the extensive and sometimes thickly scored orchestral forces). His writing for the orchestra and vocal soloists presents technical demands which can only be effectively executed by first-rate musicians. Amateur groups, however, can satisfactorily perform the chorus parts as ranges and tessituras are not particularly demanding, whilst the rhythms and intervals employed are relatively accessible.

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<sup>29</sup> Learmont Drysdale *The Kelpie* (London: Paterson, [1894]) 2

The overall external form of *The Kelpie* emerges from the plot of the poem. The work is composed of 15 numbers, which are in traditional vocal forms such as arioso, aria and chorus, and is divided into two parts:

Part One:

- The Kelpie's ride across the sea (Nos. 1, 2 and part of 3)
- his arrival at the village (No.3)
- the introduction of Jessie (No.4)
- the Kelpie's luring of Jessie to the tryst (Nos 5–7).

Part Two

- the couple's courtship (Nos 8–9)
- their riding to the sea and their plunging into it (Nos. 10–13)
- the discovery of Jessie's body (No.14)
- her burial and the Kelpie's annual ride through the village with her ghost (No.15).

Individual numbers are normally through-composed or in two- or three-part form, although for dramatic reasons they are connected from No.10 onwards by *attacca* directions and link passages to form a continuous flow of music.

Drysdale uses a number of recurring motifs, themes and rhythmical figures to identify and recall specific characters, actions and emotions, providing an element of cohesion between movements. These motifs are presented below with each example being given a recognition letter which will be used to identify it in the text.

**Ex.8.1** — Motifs employed in *The Kelpie* with their identifying letter

Sea [S1] — this figure has numerous derivatives which represent both the sea and the Kelpie [see R1 below]



Depths of the sea [D]



**Ride [R1]** — a derivative of S1 which takes its own identity as a representation of the Kelpie's journey. The close relationship of these motifs is a persistent musical reminder that the Kelpie comes from the sea.



**The Kelpie [K1]** — appears in a number of closely linked rhythmical and melodic forms.



**The Kelpie [K2]** — has two tonal guises associated with different forms of the supertonic note of the scale — B natural when rising, B flat when falling.



**Jessie [J]** — a simple pentatonic melody which highlights the difference in character between the rustic naivety of Jessie and the conniving Kelpie.



**Love [L]** (evolved from a phrase in No. 2)



Drysdale employs these motifs in a variety of ways. The opening figure S1 initially reflects the action of the sea whilst its derivative R1 represents the Kelpie's ride. This means several different associations are suggested to the listener — the sea, the Kelpie's journey, and on occasion, his malevolence. Thus, the music is operating on different levels — a simple representation of a character which simultaneously suggests an underlying atmosphere within the action. A further advance of this technique occurs when R1 is subtly altered and extended into a theme which is associated with the Kelpie disguised as a chivalrous knight, its amorous associations being provided by inserting the distinctive melodic contour of J (bars 1–2).

### Ex.8.2 — Motif R2/J



Frequently, short, but easily recognisable, elements from motifs are subtly infused within the orchestral texture to provide a musical means of indicating or inferring ideas which are not at the forefront of the prevailing action. L's distinctive neighbour note pattern (Ex.8.3a) is often employed in this fashion. This figure initially appears during the Introduction (albeit with a major 3<sup>rd</sup> emphasising the flattened seventh) in the theme representing the Kelpie's whirlpool home (Ex.8.3b) and Drysdale uses the device as a continual reminder of the demon's malevolence even when he is in amorous mood.

### Ex.8.3 — Neighbour note pattern in: (a) Motif L; (b) Whirlpool theme



Further similarities between themes include the ascending melodic minor figure in **K1**, (bar 3) that appears in **K2** (bars 1 and 3) and which, in turn, is similar to the rising scale pattern in **L** (bar 1). These similarities of melodic construction provide additional cohesion within the work. Nevertheless, Drysdale's use of melodic recurrence is not Wagnerian 'unending' melody but the judicious repetition or alternation of ideas which gradually build up an individual movement, somewhat similar to that found in the Franco/Italian operatic style of composers such as Massenet in *Manon* or possibly Puccini's *La bohème*.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to repeated melodic motifs and themes, recurring rhythmic patterns in the accompaniment are employed throughout the work. These are normally used to represent the galloping of the Kelpie's horse with numbers 3, 5 and 6 (see Ex.8.18) also taking the form of melodic figures.

<sup>30</sup> For further information see Hugh Macdonald "A Musical Synopsis" in Nicholas John ed. *Manon: Massenet* English National Opera Guide 25 (London: Calder, 1984) and William Drabkin "The Musical Language of *La bohème*" in Arthur Groos and Roger Parker eds *Giacomo Puccini: La bohème* Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: CUP, 1986)

#### Ex.8.4 — Galloping Rhythms [GR]



Generally, text is set syllabically, although the neighbour note figure of **L** is treated melismatically, possibly a reflection of the emotional intensity with which it is associated. Drysdale sets the few sections of direct speech contained within the poem for the correct sex of singer. However, as the majority of Mackay's poem consists of descriptive narrative, Drysdale had considerable freedom in his choice of forces, allowing him to employ a varied and rather more psychological approach in his setting. Particularly notable are the numbers which relate the narrative from the perspective of the opposite sex. For example, stanzas 10 to 12, which provide a vivid description of the Kelpie's handsome demeanour, are set for soprano solo and present the text from a decidedly female perspective. Drysdale frequently repeats sections of text, both as a structural device and as a method of reinforcing particularly important points in the narrative. Generally, these repetitions are set in varied choral textures; thus, a solo vocal passage will be echoed by homophonic textures in the chorus or in passages of imitation. There is also frequent use of voice pairing (e.g. male voices alternating with female).

The tonal and harmonic techniques Drysdale employs in *The Kelpie* are similar to those used in his other mature works (cf. 109–10). The work begins in F# minor and concludes in F# major and many numbers are centred in these keys or in tonalities related via the tertiary shift, namely A major/minor and D major. Twelve numbers begin and/or end in keys associated with this relationship and a further two numbers are in F major, a tertiary shift from D major. This provides tonal cohesion throughout the work and balances the more remote tonalities explored within individual numbers.

Although Drysdale employs vague tonality at the opening of many numbers, tonal areas within individual sections are generally well defined with modulations often being to

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closely related keys. Nevertheless, there is also prominent use of more complex modulatory techniques. Tertiary shifts from established tonalities are common, with moves to the mediant major being particularly widespread and frequently achieved through the subdominant chord with a flattened third (IV<sup>b3</sup>). Sudden and brief shifts between the tonic major and minor also appear, creating passages of modal ambiguity, while sudden chromatic shifts, enharmonic change and deceptive resolutions are prevalent. However, it is keys associated with the modal relationship between the flattened leading note and the tonic which are most prominent, an apposite reflection of the nature of the subject matter.

Although diatonicism predominates, melodic appoggiaturas and suspensions often intensify otherwise straightforward progressions. Furthermore, chords with added sevenths and ninths, as well as various chromatically altered and modal harmonies (particularly those associated with the flattened seventh {for example, see Ex.8.26}) provide rich colouring. Occasionally, harmonic progressions have a French flavour, a rather intangible quality which seems to be associated with the grace and smoothness in moving between chords.

As with much of Drysdale's work which has folk-based subject matter, *The Kelpie* contains numerous features drawn from traditional music which portray the local colour prominent in Mackay's text. Melodies forming major motifs and themes are generally based on gapped scales, and features such as drones and grace notes are frequent.

The following analytical discussion of *The Kelpie* takes a movement by movement approach to capture Mackay's narrative, providing general trends for each number and highlighting interesting features. Presentation and depth of descriptive analysis depends on the requirements of the music and will be given either in tabulated form or as prose. Constraints of space mean only short extracts of music can be provided in the text and readers are directed to the published score for more detail.

## 8.1 Part One

### “Introduction”

As is common to many of Drysdale’s pieces based on traditional subject matter (cf. 110), the written key signature of the opening of this through-composed introduction is B minor, one sharp less than the established key of F# minor.

During the section, Drysdale achieves the effect of an increasingly tempestuous sea in two ways:

- An unsettled metric structure. In bars one and two, only the bass drum and double bass give a clear indication of the written time signature whilst the other parts give the impression of compound duple metre. The following two bars display even greater metrical conflict as horns and trombone 1 continue in  $\frac{6}{8}$  whilst the other instruments firmly establish simple triple metre. From bar nine, all parts are in  $\frac{3}{4}$

#### Ex.8.5 — Introduction, bars 3–4

The musical score for Ex.8.5, Introduction, bars 3–4, is presented in three staves. The top staff is for horns and trombones (hns/trbs) in treble clef, the middle for voice (vc) in bass clef, and the bottom for double bass (db) in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked [Allegro moderato]. In the first bar, the horns and trombones play a sustained chord of F# and C# in the first two bars, with a '+crt' marking above the staff in the second bar. The voice and double bass play a rhythmic motif of eighth notes in the first two bars, with a '>' marking above the staff in the second bar.

- Continuous rhythmical and melodic development of the opening motif. The first appearance of the main figure consists of two notes — F# and the C# above it. As the music progresses, this interval of the fifth is filled in and developed in a variety of ways to produce a number of derivative figures of increasing rhythmic density — five notes per bar to eighteen during a period of fifteen bars — which provides an ever-heightening musical intensity suggestive of the turmoil of sound produced by the whirlpool.

Ex.8.6 — Variants of the Sea Motif [S]

Ex.8.6 consists of seven numbered variants of the Sea Motif in bass clef, 2/4 time signature. Variant 1 is a simple eighth-note pattern. Variants 2 and 3 feature eighth-note triplets. Variant 4 has a triplet of eighth notes followed by a quarter note. Variant 5 features a triplet of eighth notes followed by a dotted quarter note. Variants 6 and 7 feature sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents.

The pace of the harmonic rhythm also contributes to the growing tension. Only the tonic triad is employed during the first ten bars. The rate of harmonic change is then increased with the resulting progression (consisting of tonic and flattened leading note harmonies) forming the motif which represents the depths of the sea [D].

Ex.8.7 — Introduction, bars 11–14

Ex.8.7 is the introduction to bars 11-14, marked *[Allegro moderato]*. It features a piano part with a fanfare-like melody and an orchestral accompaniment. The piano part has a dynamic marking of *ff*. The harmonic analysis for the piano part is as follows:
   
Bar 11: D (chord), F#m: I (chord), S5 (articulation)
   
Bar 12: bVII (chord), I (chord), 3 (articulation)
   
Bar 13: bVII (chord), I (chord), 3 (articulation)
   
Bar 14: bVII (chord), I (chord), bVII (chord)
   
The orchestral accompaniment (Orch tutti) features a bass line with sixteenth-note patterns and slurs, with harmonic analysis:
   
Bar 11: S6 (articulation), I (chord)
   
Bar 12: bVII (chord), I (chord), 6 (articulation)
   
Bar 13: bVII (chord), I (chord), 6 (articulation)
   
Bar 14: bVII (chord), I (chord), 6 (articulation)

A fanfare-like statement (Ex.8.8), derived from the opening motif and GR7 (Ex.8.4), announces the first appearance of a theme with a surging accompaniment which portrays the Kelpie in his whirlpool home (Ex.8.9), before in the final section, the opening figure (S1) is developed as an accompaniment feature, producing R1.

**Ex.8.8** — Introduction, Fanfare theme

[Allegro moderato]

crt

**Ex.8.9** — Introduction, Kelpie’s whirlpool home theme

[Allegro moderato]

ob

There is a resemblance between several passages in this introduction and the music of Richard Wagner and in particular, with the overture to *Der fliegende Holländer*. Besides the obvious link in the maritime subject matter, both works have opening themes which have a decisive tonic/dominant contour and a rolling arpeggio-based string ostinato representing the motion of the sea.

**Ex.8.10** — Overture *Der fliegende Holländer*: (a) opening (See Ex.8.6, S1 for comparison); (b) and (c) string figurations (See Ex.8.6, S6–7 for comparison)

(a) [Allegro con brio]

bn/trs *f* Molto marcato

(b) [Allegro con brio]

lower strs/+vn2 8ve higher *f* *ff*

(c) [Allegro]

vns/+va/vc in lower 8ves *f* *p*

Furthermore, the melodic and rhythmical contours of the fanfare figure (Ex.8.8) are reminiscent of the “The Ride of the Valkries” from *Die Walküre*.

**Ex.8.11** — Main theme, “The Ride of the Valkries”, *Die Walküre*



descending chromatic phrase which graphically portrays the slithering movement of “Dug out of the depths where the sea snakes crawl”.

**Ex.8.13** — No.1, Orchestral interlude

[*piu animato*]

**K1** provides the thematic basis for Section B which contains four complete statements of stanza 2. Contrast is effected by alternate statements of the text being given by different voice pairings (e.g. soprano and tenor alternating with alto and bass). Although the initial statements employ the natural form of leading note, the final appearance uses the flattened seventh which, when combined with the supporting double tonic progression, gives the passage a strong folk flavour. Apart from the need for contrast between repetitions and a smooth progression into **D**, there is no obvious textual reason for altering the mode of this theme.

**Ex.8.14** — No.1, Section B (a')

[*Piu animato* ♩ = 84]

A shift to A major and strong, generally diatonic harmonic progressions provide a rousing conclusion to the vocal section of the number. Unfortunately, the coda, formed of a statement of **K1** in A major, is commonplace and trite — the movement would be stronger without it.

The connection of the flattened seventh between the opening and concluding keys (B minor and A major) effectively strengthens the modal relationship so frequently

employed by Drysdale. Nevertheless, in this number F# minor is always employed as an intermediary key and, thus, a direct approach between B minor and A major is avoided. Within each subsection of the number, the tonality is generally settled with only occasional passing modulations being used for colour. A particularly fine example of this technique is found at the main climax where a sudden chromatic move and tertiary shift in key from A to C major greatly strengthens the passage's effect.

**Ex.8.15** — No.1, Section B (a')

[*Piu animato* ♩ = 84]

chromatic shift  
A - C major → C - A major

Linked to the use of modal tonality, is the employment of harmonies built on the flattened seventh of prevailing keys. The occurrence of these chords in close proximity with those employing the raised seventh provides an interesting mix of modal and minor tonality, a device prominent during the appearance of the depth motif associated with text “water clear” (Ex.8.16).

**Ex.8. 16** — No.1, Section A

*Allegro moderato*

S  
A

He mount - ed his steed of the wa - ter clear. And

*il basso marcato*

3

sat on his sad - dle of sea - weed sere;

3

2. Tenor Solo and Chorus “And away he galloped”

A setting of stanzas 3 and 4, this number describes the Kelpie’s turbulent journey. Each stanza forms one part of the two-part structure with an internal form as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6:** Form of “And away he galloped”

Section	Motifs employed	Key	Significant features
Introduction	K2 supported by GR1	Tonally vague	
A	K2	A minor	Solo tenor statement which is echoed by the chorus. The brisk and jagged style is thoroughly representative of the action.
B (abc <b>b'</b> )	Orchestral statement related to L	E minor, C, A majors	More lyrical setting of a mainly descriptive text.
A' (extended)	K2, L derivative	A major	Extension includes an orchestral interlude with similarities to L.
B' (c' <b>b''</b> )		A major	Contains tonic minor shifts and chromatically altered chords that intensify the dramatic effect.
Coda	Based on a figure derived from K2 and GM3		

The orchestral introduction opens with statements of **GRI** in timpani, viola and 'cello, which gradually increase in volume suggesting the Kelpie drawing ever closer to the scene. Tonal vagueness emphasises the expectant atmosphere.

**Ex.8.17** — No.2, Introduction



As shown in Ex.8.18, the above rhythmic figure appears in several melodic (**GM**) and rhythmic guises (including **R1**) within the orchestral accompaniment and pervades much of the movement with an insistent musical reminder of the Kelpie's galloping horse.

**Ex.8.18** — No.2, Melodic variants of Galloping Motif (**GM**), 1–7



A description of the action of the sea is also prominent in the text and Drysdale graphically illustrates this with pounding accompaniments featuring swift runs and vigorous rhythms.

Two subsections in this number are rather more chromatic than previously found. Both the statement of **K2** (Ex.8.19a) and the main theme of section B (Ex.8.19b) have flattened supertonic notes within their melodic lines, the latter example rather ambiguously floating between A and E minors. These flattened notes are emphasised by supporting Neapolitan Sixth harmonies which provide an appropriately haunting effect and although they do not portray any specific textual meaning, are illustrative of the

unsettled atmosphere of the action. An additional chromatic essence is provided by the close proximity of the flattened and natural forms of the supertonic.

**Ex.8.19** — No.2, use of flattened supertonic: (a) Section A; (b) Section B, Main theme

(a)

[*Allegro ma non troppo*]

T  
8  
And a - way he gal - lop'd a horse - man free, \_\_\_\_\_

*mf*

3

*il basso marcato e stacc.*

N6

3

T  
8  
Spur - ring his steed through the stor - my sea

N6

3

(b)

*Poco piu Allegro*

T  
8  
A - way by Scar - ba's rock, by Lun - ga's shore

*mf*

3

The B(c) subsection introduces a theme containing elements of L which is to play a major role in the work. It is given in its full form in the accompaniment whilst a varied version is simultaneously presented by the tenor soloist. Set to the seemingly unconnected text “And on to Loch Buy, away, away” this clever musical device subtly hints at the tumultuous events to come.

Ex.8.20 — No.2, Section B (c)

The image shows a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a vocal line (T) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are "And on to Loch Buy, a -". The piano accompaniment has a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The second system also has a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "-way, a - way. By". The piano accompaniment continues with similar rhythmic patterns. The score includes dynamic markings like 'f' and 'L derivative', and various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and triplets.

3. Chorus “On to Loch Buy”

This lengthy number is a setting of stanzas 5 to 7 which describe:

- the Kelpie’s arrival at Loch Buie — the conclusion of the first scene telling of his journey;
- his attention being arrested by the sound of the villagers’ merrymaking;
- the villagers’ festivities.

This through-composed number has the following structure:

**Table 7:** Structure of “On to Loch Buy”

Section	Stanza/s set	Motifs employed	Significant features
Introduction			Tonally vague passage built on C#dim7 <sup>th</sup> chords.
A	5, first couplet  5, second couplet	<b>V1, V1<sup>2</sup></b> play a significant role in the accompaniment which introduces the villagers’ revels.	Dramatic arioso for male voices. Its effectiveness is enhanced by the initial chromaticism of both melody and harmony.  Narrative set in parlante style.
Orchestral link		<b>V1</b>	The interjection of slow-moving chromatic harmonies suggest the Kelpie’s presence.
B	6, first couplet	<b>V2</b>	Text is given alternately by female and male voice pairings.
Orchestral link		<b>V1</b>	The interjection of slow moving chromatic harmonies suggest the Kelpie’s covert observation of the scene.
C	6, second couplet	<b>V3</b> <b>V1<sup>2</sup></b> (orchestral link)	Imitative setting.
Orchestral link		Development of <b>V1<sup>2</sup></b>	
D	7	<b>V4</b> in chorus simultaneous with <b>V1<sup>2</sup></b> in orchestra. <b>V4</b> merges with a passage derived from <b>K1</b>	A bland passage harmonised by a circle of fifths (albeit coloured by suspensions) provides stark contrast with previous material and serves to emphasise the Kelpie’s presence musically. Change to compound duple metre.
Orchestral link		<b>V5</b>	
E	7, first couplet	Closely related derivative of <b>V5</b>	Music is heavily influenced by folk tradition.
F	7, second couplet	<b>V6</b>	Return to Drysdale’s normal harmonic style.
Coda		<b>V5</b>	

As shown in Table 7, the number comprises of several sections based on a new syncopated hexatonic figure [**V1**] with a leaping off-beat accompaniment that represents the villagers and their festivities.

**Ex.8.21 — No.3, Villager Motif**



V1's rhythmical and melodic developments — some of which are only distantly related (they might have the prominent rising interval or be based on a similar rhythmical or harmonic structure) — provide the basis for each separate section.

**Ex.8.22 (a)–(f) — No.3, Developments of V1**



The opening chromatic passage with its irregular rhythmic patterns and sudden silences aptly captures the Kelpie's halting on hearing the sounds of the villagers' revelries (Ex.8.23a). Moreover, the shift from a style based on the chromatic techniques of the late-nineteenth century to folk-influenced material highlights the conclusion of the first scene relating the Kelpie's journey and the move to action associated with villagers. Particularly striking are the chromatic shift from a Gb to C major chord which vividly portrays the text "sunset glow'd" and the increasingly louder interpolations of V1 and V1<sup>2</sup> in the orchestra representative of the Kelpie drawing closer to the scene (Ex.8.23a).

Throughout the number, continual musical indications represent his presence, both directly through snippets of his themes, and indirectly via chromatic progressions in the brass which lend a sense of unease to the prevailing jollity (Ex.8.23b).

Ex.8.23 — No.3, Musical references to the Kelpie: (a) Section A; (b) Orchestral link 1

(a)

mf  
Andresch'de shire as sua - set - glow'd  
Sostenuo  
pp scherzando  
hear  
And stopp'do hear the sounds of joy  
p tempo

(b)

Molto poco meno  
p  
p sostenuto  
And stopp'd, and



violin is accompanied by droning fifths in the double bass, and grace notes in oboes and clarinets, orchestration designed to enhance the folk idiom by mimicking the distinctive timbre of the bagpipes. Nevertheless, considering the emphasis Drysdale gives to portraying the Scottish character of the stanza, it seems bizarre that text concerning the dancing of a reel is set as a jig.

**Ex.8.26** — No.3, Section E (soprano and alto, and orchestra only)

[*Meno mosso*]

ob/c/vn2

vn1

vc/db

I                    bVII                    I

sop + alto

The pi - per played a light - some reel, — And

bVII                    I                    bVII

timed the dance with toe and — heel;

I                    bVII                    I

At the conclusion of the number, the tonality moves decisively into D major and a return to Drysdale's more usual harmonic style, albeit with one curiosity, the appearance of jarring false relations, chromatic aberrations within an otherwise diatonic framework.

**Ex.8.27** — No.3, Section F



4. Tenor Solo "And Jessie, fickle and fair was she"

This setting of stanza 8 is a narrative sung by the tenor describing the rustic beauty of Jessie and her wooing by the village boy Evan. A straightforward through-composed number, it is a serene interlude within otherwise vigorous action and provides an effective musical illustration of a love scene amidst the villagers' boisterous ceilidh. This number is based on J and the employment of a diatonic harmonic framework coloured only by subtle suspensions emphasises the simplicity of Jessie and her suitor. Chromaticism is sparingly used, but the sudden chromatic shift from D to F majors in the orchestral opening is notable, and enhanced by long inverted dominant pedals in the violins. The most interesting aspect of this otherwise simplistic song is the warm and mellow timbre of woodwind and horns, which effectively supports the delicate subject matter.

**Ex.8.28** — No.4, Introduction



Chromatic shift  
D → F major

## 5. Soprano Solo “The Kelpie galloped”

This lengthy number is a setting of stanzas 9 to 12 which tell of the Kelpie’s arrival at Loch Buie in the guise of a handsome knight and of the attention he receives from the curious villagers. There is a vivid description of his handsome form and its effect on the local maidens, and a hint of his true purpose — to lure them away. The setting for soprano voice indicates that the handsome stranger is discussed from a female perspective — men would be immediately suspicious of the sudden appearance of such an eye-catching fellow.

The number is through-composed with an introduction and nine short sections of constantly changing metre and tonality which reflect the diverse sentiments contained within the poem. Dramatic coherence is achieved by using derivatives of a number of motifs which also serve to suggest actions and emotions not directly alluded to in the text.

Introduction — a menacing orchestral passage of tonally vague diminished and augmented harmonies over **GR9** (Ex.8.4) represents the Kelpie’s appearance on the scene.

**A** — a distinctive new pentatonic theme [**R2/J**] derived from the ride motif and elements of **J** is introduced, portraying the Kelpie as an elegant and noble figure. It supports an appropriately rustic F pentatonic vocal melody for much of the section.

Ex.8.29 — No.5, Section A

[Allegro misterioso]

The Kelpie galloped o'er the green

**B** — a tonally ambiguous section based on L which tells of the Kelpie’s noble mien.

**C** — an orchestral statement in D pentatonic of R2/J in augmentation followed by an arioso section derived from variants of K1/2, represents the villagers’ interest in the handsome stranger.

**Ex.8.30** — No.5, Section C

[*Allegro misterioso*]

S  
And old and young stood up to see, And

S  
won - der'd who the knight could be

+ Similarities to K2 bars 1-2  
\* Derivatives of K1 bars 3-4

**D** — the Kelpie's stunning appearance is aptly depicted by a graceful melody (a derivation of Section C above) accompanied by a flowing harp figuration.

**Ex.8.31** — No.5, Section D

*Moderato grazioso*

S  
His flow - ing locks were au - burn bright, His  
cheeks were rud - dy, his eyes flash'd light;

**E** — a move to the subdominant key and a change to compound triple metre introduces a passionate section based on K1 and simultaneously sounding versions of L which aptly illustrates the Kelpie's good looks and seeming gallantry.

**Ex.8.32** — No.5, Section E: (a) Derivative of K1; (b) Simultaneous versions of L

(a)

Derivative of K1 bars 3-4

S  
flow - ing locks were au - burn bright

(b)

S  
And as he sprang from his good [gray] steed

L derivatives

*sempre legato*

**F** — an agitated passage of chromatically shifting melody and harmony supports further acclamation of the Kelpie’s handsome form. The passage ends with a quotation of **J**, suggestive of Jessie’s interest in the ‘knight’.

**G** — a chromatic move from F major to A major introduces a passionate section based on **L**, portraying the ardent feelings of the village maidens on seeing the handsome ‘knight’.

**H** — a chromatic shift from an E<sup>7</sup> to F chord and a sudden change to simple triple metre, herald the return of an arpeggiated form of **GR6** (Ex.8.4) which graphically depicts the Kelpie springing from his horse.

**Ex.8.33** — No.5, Section H, derivative of **GR6**

*Allegro risoluto*

A rising semi-sequential melody supported by chromatically shifting harmonies increases tension throughout the final appearance of stanza 10. Towards the section’s conclusion, elements of **K1** and **L** appear within the accompaniment subtly reinforcing the Kelpie’s actions.

**I** — this section is the only direct statement of the Kelpie’s malevolent intentions towards the village maidens. It opens with a sequential chromatic passage of suspensions and retardations with ornamented resolutions (reminiscent of Wagner’s

*Tristan*) and provides an apt musical depiction of the yearning of the nubile village maidens for the handsome ‘knight’.

**Ex.8.34** — No.5, Section I

*J Piu lento*

The musical score consists of two staves: a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with syncopated duplets and a final section with a tonic pedal. The bass staff provides harmonic support with chords and a similar syncopated pattern. The tempo is marked 'J Piu lento'.

Throughout this climactic section, prominent use of syncopated duplets and L, strengthened by a lengthy tonic pedal in the concluding section, reinforce the significant textual message.

Passionate and dramatic, this number marks a significant event in the tale — the Kelpie in chivalrous guise, making his introduction to the villagers. Its construction is based on a number of derivations of R2/J, K1/2, J and L set in a variety of tempi and metre within an ever-changing style which features sudden shifts in tonality and frequent use of chromatic harmony to colour a highly descriptive text.

6. Tenor and Soprano Solo “And Jessie’s fickle heart”

During stanzas 13 to 15, the Kelpie commences his courting of Jessie. She accepts his advances and they arrange an assignation by moonlight. In the initial stanza, the tenor tells of Jessie’s hopes that the Kelpie will court her. The following text is the turning point in the drama — a sudden change from descriptive narrative to direct speech forcibly emphasises the Kelpie’s successful luring of the coy, but capricious village girl.

This through-composed number consists of two consecutive solos for tenor then soprano structured as follows:

**Table 8: Text and features of “And Jessie’s fickle heart”**

Section	Textual subject	Motifs employed	Significant features
Introduction		<b>R2/J</b>	Tonally vague passage.
<b>A</b>	Expressive description by the tenor of Jessie’s feelings on realising she has caught the stranger’s eye.	<b>J</b> in voice and orchestra.	Passage based around G major/E minor with a melody formed mainly by the latter tonic triad.
<b>B</b>	The tenor narrates Jessie’s hopes that the ‘knight’ will court her.		Opens with a chromatic shift into a section loosely centred in E major.
Orchestral Interlude		Modal derivative of <b>K1</b> .	Based initially on Section A, the following series of chromatically shifting harmonies indicate that the Kelpie is approaching Jessie. The section ends with short recitative describing the action.
Short passage of recitative			
<b>C</b>	The Kelpie pleads for Jessie to be his bride.	<b>L</b> and associated material from No. 5	A passionate section in $\frac{9}{8}$ with a sweeping orchestral accompaniment which employs suspension and varied tempi to illustrate the textual subject.
Orchestral interlude		<b>K1, R1</b>	Menacing and tonally ambiguous passage that serves as a final warning to Jessie of the Kelpie’s sinister intentions.
<b>D</b>	Jessie responds to the Kelpie’s proposition. A short section of arioso dramatically announces Jessie’s agreeing to meet the Kelpie “When the moon’s aloft”.  The final section provides a poignant expression of Jessie’s rapture on being courted by a ‘knight’.	Based on <b>J</b>	Arioso consisting of a simple A Aeolian melody (echoed by the flute) that illustrates Jessie’s naivety.

The sectional construction of this number effectively depicts the atmospheric and dramatic text through unsettled tonality, sudden chromaticism, uneasy syncopations, and subtle, though sometimes grotesquely altered, references to recurring motifs. Musical illustration of textual meaning is a prominent feature, with Drysdale employing numerous tonal, harmonic and textural devices to effect graphic portrayal. The opening narrative is set to music portraying Jessie’s emotions as she first catches the attention of the Kelpie. The expectant atmosphere is established by an ambiguous opening maintained throughout the section by a tonality which wavers between G major and E minor, and weakened by the use of second inversion chords and dominant pedals.

Superimposed upon this restless accompaniment is a subtle pulsing figure in the upper strings which graphically captures the beating of the excited Jessie's 'fickle heart'.

Ex.8.35 — No.6, Section A

[Allegretto espressivo]

T  
 fl/cl +8ve/2.8ves sus  
 vn2  
 PP  
 -fl  
 And +vnl  
 Jes - sie's fick - le  
 +fl

T  
 heart beat high, beat high, As she  
 +ob  
 va  
 +cl

T  
 caught the strang - er's glanc - ing eye:  
 +harp -cl  
 harp, chords on beat  
 -harp  
 +harp  
 +br/db pizz on beat

The recurring motifs do not simply convey the prevailing actions and emotions of the characters, but are used to heighten the underlying dramatic elements so central to the text. In particular, **K1** appears in several guises which serve to underline the Kelpie's evil intent whilst reinforcing Jessie's blissful ignorance of the fate about to befall her. Initially, the motif appears in an expressive modal form in the oboe which seems to indicate the Kelpie's love for Jessie. Nonetheless, the unsettled syncopated

accompaniment, with its preponderance of seventh harmonies, suggests that he is not of honourable intent.

Ex.8.36 — No.6, Orchestral Interlude 1

[Allegro espressivo]

On the second appearance of K1, there is an immediate suggestion of evil. The richly coloured diatonic progressions that supported the Kelpie’s impassioned plea for Jessie’s hand in marriage in the previous section abruptly cease. A sudden chromatic shift heralds a highly dissonant passage in which the oboe presents K1 in A minor, using both natural and sharpened forms of the sixth note of the scale, supported by #VI<sup>7</sup> chords. The following appearance of R1 in the bass produces a short passage of compound harmony of #VI<sup>7</sup> over a D# (i.e. #IV<sup>9</sup>). Musically, it is a final desperate warning to Jessie of the danger she courts.

Ex.8.37 — No.6, Orchestral Interlude 2

[Allegro vivace]

Nevertheless, she is oblivious of her fate and demurely answers the Kelpie with a naïve Aeolian melody which represents her coy acceptance of his advances (Ex.8.38a). Her rapture at securing him is portrayed by a soaring vocal line subtly coloured by suspension — it is a ‘spine-tingling’ illustration of this pivotal point in the action (Ex.8.38b).

**Ex.8.38** — No.6, Section D: (a) Section of arioso; (b) Conclusion

(a)

[Andante con moto] *ad lib* *Rall*

S Meet me to - night when the moon's a - loft; \_

(b)

*teneroso*

S [pp] I've dream'd of thee I thought thou cam - est court - ing me! I

[pp]

S thought, I thought thou cam - est court - ing,

*pp*

S court - ing me!

*molto rall* *a tempo*

*molto rall* *pp* harp arpeggiation in  $\flat$  *a tempo*

The musical score is presented in two parts, (a) and (b). Part (a) is a vocal line for Soprano (S) in 3/4 time, marked [Andante con moto] and ad lib. The lyrics are "Meet me to - night when the moon's a - loft; \_". The melody is simple and lyrical, with a slight suspension on "loft;". Part (b) consists of three systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked [pp] and teneroso. The lyrics are "[pp] I've dream'd of thee I thought thou cam - est court - ing me! I". The piano accompaniment is also marked [pp]. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics "thought, I thought thou cam - est court - ing," and the piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked pp. The third system shows the vocal line with lyrics "court - ing me!" and the piano accompaniment. The vocal line is marked molto rall and a tempo. The piano accompaniment is marked molto rall and pp harp arpeggiation in flat, with a tempo marking at the end.

### 7. Chorus “When the moon her yellow horn displayed”

This short but atmospheric number tells of the couple’s furtive journey to the tryst. Singers of the opposite sex relate the couple’s individual actions — thus, a bass section solo describes Jessie’s journey whilst that of the Kelpie is provided by the sopranos. The full chorus echoes each of these statements, significantly highlighting this pivotal event in the tale.

As shown in Table 9, the number is in three-part form and based on tonalities associated with the tertiary shifts around F minor/major — Db major (Bb minor) and Ab major.

**Table 9:** Schematic analysis of “When the moon her yellow horn displayed”

Section	Key	Vocal setting	Subject/Significant features
Introduction	F minor, Bb minor		F pedal with passages of pizzicato lower strings.
A	Bb minor	First couplet set as a bass section solo.	Opening melody is parlante-like in style and centres around the note ‘F’, emphasising significant text.
A’		Altered repeat of first couplet set for a cappella chorus.	Orchestra punctuates only the conclusion of the passage.
B	Ambiguous.  Chromatic shift into F major.	Second couplet set as a soprano section solo.  Entry of lower voices	A tetratonic melody containing elements of J is supported by harmonies of ambiguous key. The resulting tonal uncertainty suggests Jessie’s anticipation of the forthcoming assignation. The section concludes with a sudden chromatic shift into F major emphasised by a tonic pedal and the entry of the lower voices.
A’’	Bb minor/ Bb major	Full chorus in a mixture of a cappella and accompanied settings.	<i>pp misterioso</i> setting of the final line of this stanza. The variety of settings highlights the Kelpie’s appearance at the trysting place.
Postlude	Bb major		<b>R2/J</b> appearance in the major mode suggests that the Kelpie is in amorous and triumphant mood following his successful wooing of Jessie.

This is a colourful and atmospheric number which effectively represents and enhances textual meaning. The opening, with its eerie pedal sustained by the horns, and furtive pizzicato figures from ‘cellos and basses, immediately captures the action detailed in the text.

Ex.8.39 — No.7, Introduction

[Andante misterioso e sostenuto]

Furthermore, Drysdale employs highly colourful chromatic passages, including series of secondary dominants, to effect a constantly shifting and frequently ambiguous tonality which serves to represent both Jessie’s confident expectations and accentuate the danger about to befall her. This device is particularly effective in the second section where remarkable dissonance (for Drysdale) is achieved by added tones/compound chords and multiple pedal points within a tentative Ab major, the irregular five-bar phrase emphasising the passage’s emotional intensity. Enhanced by shimmering orchestration, the combined effect of these devices graphically illustrates the vivid text “Where all the stars are shining bright”.

Ex.8.40 — No.7, Section B

[Andante misterioso e sostenuto]

S  
When all the stars were shin - ing bright, A -  
- lone to the tryst - ing went the knight.

fl/ob  
[Sketch] vn/va/harp

The jaunty postlude based on **R2/J** suitably reflects the emotional state of the characters; the Kelpie is in buoyant mood at the success of his conquest whilst Jessie is ecstatic at securing his affection. However, passing chromatic harmonies and a final quasi-plagal cadence suggests that Jessie is blissfully unaware of the danger she courts.

**Ex.8.41** — No.7, Postlude

[Poco piu mosso]

bVI

II9b5

## 8.2 Part Two

### 8. Duet — Soprano and Tenor “I have loved thee long”

Part 2 opens with a setting of stanzas 17 to 20 which tell of the lovers tryst. A passionate love duet in quasi-rondo form set in the first person, the number expresses the thoughts and feelings of the characters who each present their emotions in alternate stanzas before joining to deliver the closing text. The duet pattern employed is similar to that found in the Franco-Italian operatic style viz:

- tenor alone;
- soprano alone;
- tenor and soprano together, often in octaves.

As in this example, the scheme may appear more than once within an individual number.

For the first time in *The Kelpie*, tonality is firmly established at the opening of a number. In the initial section which presents the Kelpie’s passionate love song to Jessie, diatonicism predominates within a rich orchestral scoring, the emotional intensity being enhanced by imitative effects between voice and orchestra, and the doubling of the vocal line at the octave by the violins.

#### Ex.8.42 — No.8, Section A

[Andante con espressione]

T I have loved\_ thee long, I have loved\_ thee well, I have  
 S loved\_ thee long, I have loved\_ thee well,

A short orchestral passage of pulsing violin and viola chords and a sudden chromatic shift into Bb major introduce Jessie’s reply to the Kelpie. This melody has some similarities with No. 4 “And Jessie, fickle and fair was she” (Ex.8.28) and as in this earlier appearance, her naivety is underlined by a diatonic harmonisation.

Ex.8.43 — No.8, Section B

[Andante con espressione]

S  
Fair Sir, thy suit I'll  
ne'er deny, Through poor my lot, my hopes are high;

Harp,  
beat 1 of each bar  
vn2/va  
vl sus  
bn/vc  
bn sus/vc  
pizz  
+ob sus  
+fi  
piu mosso  
fl  
ob  
+db

An extended version of section A follows in which the lyrical soprano countermelody weaves around the Kelpie's love song — an appropriate musical representation of the couple's union. The section concludes with a rapturous orchestral interlude based on L.

Ex.8.44 — No.8, Section A'

[Andante con espressione]

S  
Fair Sir, thy suit I'll ne'er deny, Though poor my lot, my hopes are more than words can tell!

T  
I have loved thee long, I have loved thee well, Maid en, O

8

During the passionate section C, octave doubling by violins is once again prominent; however, on this occasion, tension is further increased by a change in the time signature

of the accompaniment to simple triple time while the voices continue in compound metre.

Ex.8.45 — No.8, Section C

*Piu mosso* vocal line doubled by vn1  
*p* 8ve/15th above

By thy brow so li - - ly

white,, and flow - ing tress - es

gol - - - den bright,

Chords: Bb7, Eb, Eb7, C7, F, Db, Ebm9, Gb, Ab7, Db, Db7

Enharmonic Ger 6th  
of Eb major

A short phrase from the conclusion of section A heralds a passage in which the characters' feelings are initially presented as solos decorated by wind dovetailing before they join in a final passionate declaration of love (Ex.8.46). The number concludes with a short orchestral postlude which contains a chromatic bass line derived from the L neighbour figure, a timely reminder of the number's subject matter.

Ex.8.46 — No.8, Conclusion of Section A'' and orchestral postlude

[Andante con espressione] *molto rall.*

Soprano: I am thine.

Tenor: Be thou mine.

Piano: *molto rall.*, *pp*, *pp*

figure

Tertiary Shift

Love neighbour

Both the firm establishment of tonality at the opening and the generally diatonic harmonisation of the initial sections of this number imply that there are no suggestive ideas or ulterior motives here, simply a passionate declaration of the couple's love for each other. Towards the conclusion of section A', however, the harmonic style changes — dissonant appoggiaturas, modulatory sequences and chromatic harmonies frequently appear, enriching the setting and supporting a gradual increase in tension. By section C there is an incessantly changing tonality effected through chromatically shifting harmonies loosely based upon the circle of fifths progression (Ex.8.45). Aurally, however, this passage gives the sense of being harmonically non-functional, as appoggiaturas and inverted chords weaken the sense of tonal direction. This unsettled language, when combined with a gradually rising vocal line and the cross-rhythmic effects produced by simple against compound metre, provides passionate music truly representative of the text. The tension is not maintained in the final section where it is

replaced by serene music subtly decorated with a chromaticism that aptly represents the lovers' pleasure. Their final declaration of love is exquisitely coloured by a soaring vocal line and sudden tertiary shifts between D and Bb majors — it is a poignant portrayal of their rapturous union (Ex.8.46). A major contributor to the emotional charge of this passionate number is the widespread employment of doubling the vocal parts in the orchestra. The device is particularly effective when found in the violins where it appears at one and two octaves (sometimes simultaneously) above the vocal melodies.

#### 9. Chorus and Tenor Solo “He took her by the hand so white”

This through-composed number is a setting of stanza 21 in which the Kelpie symbolises his union with Jessie by presenting her with a ring.

**Table 10:** Schematic analysis of “He took her by the hand so white”

Section	Subject	Motifs employed	Significant features
Introduction		Similarities to <b>V</b> group, <b>K2</b>	Syncopated flute melody.
A	The chorus tell of the Kelpie's gift.	<b>K2</b> in A major	A simple homophonic and diatonic setting which aptly reflects the normality of the Kelpie's action. A contrasting and rather more chromatic a cappella setting signifies the giving of the ring.
B	The Kelpie sings in the first person of Jessie's beauty and of the new bond between them using the “Maiden ...” text which initially appeared in No. 8. <sup>32</sup>		A sudden chromatic shift introduces a contrasting and agitated section in F# major/minor. The ‘Maiden’ text is emphasised by echo effects in the chorus.
Postlude		<b>K1</b> (latter portion), <b>S7</b> (Ex.8.6).	A passionate orchestral passage in F# major which includes a semiquaver figure in clarinet which is vaguely reminiscent of <b>S7</b> .

Although the opening of this number immediately dissipates the tensions created in the love duet, the music still contains elements of unease. The syncopated melodic figure of the introduction is reminiscent of the **V** motifs and seems to offer one final plea for Jessie to remain with the villagers, a suggestion emphasised by the unsettling tremolo accompaniment in violin, a dominant pedal in horn and frequent second inversion harmonies. The appearance of the initial part of **K2** in oboe, however, quickly counters

<sup>32</sup> This repeat appears in Mackay's original text.

this appeal and although the abbreviated form of V appears once more, it is then abandoned. The Kelpie has proved the stronger and has won Jessie from the villagers.

Ex.8.47 — No.9, Introduction

The number's major strength is the contrast, both within and between sections, of tonality, texture and timbre which enhances the portrayal of this pivotal moment in the drama. Initially, the narrative is set diatonically for accompanied chorus, but at the significant text "And gave her a ring of gold so bright", there is a change to an a cappella setting which is emphasised by non-standard phrase length and coloured by chromatically shifting harmonies.

## Ex.8.48 — No.9, Section A

[Andante tranquillo]

S  
A  
T  
B

And gave her a ring of the gold so  
bright; of the gold so bright;  
bright; the gold so bright  
bright; the gold so bright, so bright;  
bright; of the gold so bright, so bright;

With the appearance of direct speech as the Kelpie extols Jessie's beauty, there is an abrupt change of style. The tonality shifts chromatically from A to F# major, and a variety of textures and timbres are employed to enhance the dramatic sentiments expressed in the text. The chorus echoes the solo tenor's statements in both imitative and homophonic textures with alternate entries being highlighted further by contrasts in orchestration. In the latter stages of the number, the sense of urgency is increased by large variations of tempo and it is the greatest of these which emphatically underlines the Kelpie's final declaration "Now thou art mine!" (Ex.8.49a). However, this passionate music is countered by a timely reminder of the danger Jessie courts — an orchestral statement of a derivative of **D**, reinforced in the postlude by appearances of **K1** and **S1** (Ex.8.49b).

Ex.8.49 — No.9: (a) conclusion of Section B; (b) opening of Postlude

(a) *[Andante tranquillo]*

S  
A  
T  
B

Maid - en, O maid - en, now thou 'rt mine!  
*f* Maid - en, O maid - en, *ff* thou'rt mine!

*molto accell* *D: derivative* *ff* 3 *feroce*

*molto rall*  
 Tenor solo  
*p* Now thou art mine!  
*p* thou'rt mine!

(b)

*orch* *largamente* *cantando*

K1 S7 derivative cl

10. Chorus “He lifted her on his steed of gray [sic]”

This narrative is a setting in two-part form of stanza 22 which details the lovers’ journey to the sea. Following a short orchestral introduction formed of tonally ambiguous D augmented harmonies and R1, the chorus, with musical material drawn from the initial section of No.2 (K2), tells of the couple’s journey, linking prevailing events with the Kelpie’s ride across the sea (see Ex.8.19). The following climactic text “Over the rocks,

to the dark sea shore” is emphasised by a declamatory chorus passage of unison and octaves. This chromatic, disjunct and generally descending melody is punctuated by half diminished and enharmonic French sixth chords in lower brass and double bass which represent and stress textual meaning.

Ex.8.50 — No.10, Section B

[Moderato risoluto]

S  
O - ver the rocks, to the dark sea - shore, to the

A

T

B

*f* *p*

half dim. on F# half dim. on G#

Allegro giusto

dark sea shore

*pp* *p*

enharmonic Fr 6th

Such portrayal continues in the postlude where an atmospheric depiction of the couple’s ride towards the sea is achieved through a chromatically shifting melody closely related to D accompanied by GR4/8/9 (Ex.8.4).

**Ex.8.51 — No.10, Postlude**

**11. Soprano Solo “We have ridden East”**

In this two-part setting of stanza 23, Jessie, tired after her long journey, inquires of her new home. The number is introduced by a short ostinato passage in lower strings based on **GR9** that maintains the tonic and dominant pedals associated with F# minor, whilst the supporting slow-moving harmonies in trombones and cornets steer the tonality towards B minor.

**Ex.8.52 — No.11, Introduction**

The B section consists of a sustained melody in mixolydian mode in which Jessie questions the Kelpie. It has similarity with her solo in No. 6 (where she accepts the Kelpie’s advances), albeit that it is linked to the prevailing action by the accompanying leaping arpeggic quaver figure derived from **R1**.

**Ex.8.53 — No.11, Section B**

*[L'istesso tempo]*

S  
O say, say, is thy dwell - ing be - yond the sea?  
Hast thou a good ship wait - ing for me?

A return to simple triple metre heralds the coda which forms an orchestral link to No. 12. Based on a B phrygian hexatonic melody derived from both the semiquaver run of **K2** and the second phrase of **D**, it is harmonised with modal chords linked to the home key of B minor by the pivot of the Neapolitan 6<sup>th</sup> (i.e. ii of B phrygian). A strong sense of the tonic key is maintained by an inverted pedal which also functions as a dominant preparation for the following number.

**Ex.8.54 — No.11: (a) Coda, opening; (b) previous figures developed:**

(a) *L'istesso tempo*

(a) *L'istesso tempo*  
fl/ob1  
ww/vn/va  
vc/db pizz  
K2  
D  
sf marcato  
sf fm/crt  
K2 trbs  
Neap 6th  
bVII (b3)  
bII

(b)

(b)  
K2 Semiquaver figure  
D bar 2

This number contains the last setting of direct speech from Jessie. With music based on **K2**, albeit in quadruple metre, effectively stressing her sole statement of this theme so closely associated with the Kelpie, Jessie tells of her long ride. Her following question is highlighted by the employment of material derived from No. 6 when she coyly accepted the Kelpie's advances — an apt and timely musical 'flashback' in the circumstances. With the appearance of a derivative of **D**, however, there is no doubt as to her fate.

## 12. Tenor Solo “I have no dwelling beyond the sea”

In this setting of stanzas 24 to 27, the Kelpie provides an unpleasant answer to Jessie’s question. He states that his home is in the depths of the whirlpool and reminds Jessie that she has chosen to elope with him and to scorn her lowly village lover. Striving to persuade her that she will experience happiness, the Kelpie describes his plans for their wedding and extols the pleasures of his ocean home. With repeated appearances of variants of K2, the number has a rondo-like form.

The dramatic tension is maintained from the previous number by the continuing F# pedals which support a short scalic motif initially seen in the closing section of the Introduction.

### Ex.8.55 — No.12, Introductory orchestral link

The musical score for Ex.8.55, No.12, Introductory orchestral link, is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo and dynamics are marked as *Allegro con fuoco* and *ff*. The melodic line in the treble clef starts on a B note and moves upwards through a series of eighth notes, with a chromatic contour. The bass line in the bass clef consists of a series of chords, including diminished seventh chords and other chromatic harmonies, which support the melodic line. The score is labeled "orch tutti" on the left side.

The first section is an operatic-style recitative in which the Kelpie informs Jessie of her fate. The declamatory vocal line has powerful forward propulsion effected through strong repetitive rhythms and a melodic contour which is formed from gradually increasing intervals from the central tonic B. This melodic line is punctuated by diminished seventh chords and other chromatic harmonies that contribute to tonal ambiguity. The combined effect of these devices aptly illustrates and intensifies the drama of the text.

Ex.8.56 — No.12, Section A

[*Allegro con fuoco*]  
*f parlante* > *ferocemente*

T  
 I have no dwell - ing be - yond the sea, I

Orch  
 tutti

have no good ship wait - ing for thee;

Quasi recitative  
 3 3  
 Thou shalt sleep with me on a couch of foam, Thou shalt

sleep with me on a couch of foam,

The following orchestral interlude maintains tonal ambiguity by means of diminished seventh and augmented chords, and occasional seventh harmonies which resolve irregularly. This harmonic feature is associated with swift scale passages, double dotted rhythms in the form of cornet fanfares, and syncopation, providing a vivid representation of Jessie learning of her dreadful predicament.

Ex.8.57 — No.12, Orchestral Interlude 1

[Allegro con fuoco] fanfare-like motif in crts

Orch

*sfp*

*cres - cen - do*

C#dim

*sf*

C7  
sus b6(=#5)

*cres.*

*f*

C7 Irregular resolution D#dim Faug Daug

In the highly dramatic second section, the Kelpie reminds us with several statements of K2 and L (the latter set to the text “Maiden whose eyes like diamonds shine” as it appears in No.8) that Jessie has chosen her own fate, a reminiscence enhanced by the orchestral accompaniment which is derived from GM2/3 (Ex.8.18). The following restatement of this passage employs K2 in B major without the flattened supertonic and is extended with material derived from the Love Duet. Its more settled style recalls the passion of earlier times and suggests that the Kelpie is trying to persuade Jessie that even in the light of his cruel deception, she will experience happiness in her new home.

Ex.8.58 — No.12, Section B

[Allegro con fuoco]

L derivative *cres* - - - - *cendo* - - *f*

T

Maid - en whose eyes like dia - monds shine, like dia - - - -

- monds shine.

The third section is a tonally shifting arioso passage (with some melodic and textural similarities to Section C of No. 8 {Ex.8.45}) in which the tension is maintained by the fast moving harp accompaniment (with its occasional cross-rhythmic eight demisemi-quavers against three quaver figures) in opposition with the sustained line of the tenor voice.

**Ex.8.59** — No.12, Section C

[Allegro con fuoco]

neath the rocks I shall bear thee down,

*p* *Cres* *cen* *do* *poco* *a* *poco*

The orchestral transition which follows is a foreboding chromatic passage (based on an inversion of **D**) which seems to anticipate the horrific events about to take place in the next movement. The tonality continues to centre on **B** (strengthened by a dominant pedal for much of the passage) although the mode is ambiguous.

**Ex.8.60** — No.12, Orchestral Interlude 2

[Allegro con fuoco]

*sf* *p* *p*

The number ends with **K2** once again appearing in B major over an increasingly agitated accompaniment which contains references to **D**, **R** and several derivatives of **GR3** (Ex.8.4).

This dramatic and highly effective number draws on a number of previously presented motifs to form a vivid portrayal of the tale. **K2** provides the main thematic material, appearing in several guises, both ominously, using the flattened supertonic, and somewhat beseechingly in the major mode. **L** also occurs in a variety of forms emphasising the Kelpie's passionate pleas that Jessie experience happiness in her new home, a device further enhanced by Drysdale insertion of the "Maiden ..." text initially encountered during the lovers' tryst (No.8).

The number's sectional structure and contrasting styles suggest musically that the Kelpie employs a variety of strategies to justify his deception. The opening recitative announces his intentions for Jessie's future — she has no choice but to join him in his watery home. However, the B sections with their prominent use of **L** become more conciliatory in tone, implying that the Kelpie is trying to entice Jessie with the comfort and riches he believes he can provide. Dramatic tension is maintained in such areas by a constantly shifting and often ambiguous tonality, a feature achieved through use of various chromatic harmonies that are combined with sudden shifts of key to provide a graphic portrayal of Jessie's horrific fate.

### 13. Chorus "The grey steed plunged in the billows clear"

This number provides the major climax of the work. A setting of stanzas 28 and 29, it tells of the lovers' plunging into the waves and their sinking to the depths of the sea. Although the structure is through-composed, the appearance of **D** and its derivatives throughout the movement provides an element of unity.

Following a short orchestral link, the couple's plunging into the sea and the horror of Jessie's shrieks are graphically illustrated by scale and arpeggio figures, and a series of chromatically shifting harmonies which support an agitated parlante chorus passage of unison/octaves. During the second section, text concerning Jessie is once again employed and linked to thematic material found in No.9 (section B) at "Maiden..." (see

Ex.8.49a),<sup>33</sup> although initially derived from music which first appeared in No. 1. By using material so closely associated with the action of the whirlpool, Drysdale emphasises that the Kelpie has returned to his lair to enjoy the fruits of his journey. Set using staggered and imitative entries coloured by occasional melodic tritones and forcibly punctuated by diminished chords, the passage creates a powerful climax which captures the intense drama of this pivotal moment. As the chorus completes the “Maiden...” music, there is a sudden change of mood. Chromatic derivatives and inversions of **D** as well as the scale figure from **K1** combine, creating tension further enhanced by an abrupt acceleration in tempo. The sudden entry of the cornet and the following brass section solo of slow moving chromatic harmonies enhanced by suspension, indicate the couple’s final plunge into the sea.

**Ex.8.61** — No.13, Orchestral Interlude 2

The musical score for Ex.8.61, Orchestral Interlude 2, is presented in three systems. The first system is marked *[Allegro molto]* and includes dynamics *ff*, *marcato molto*, and *feroce*. The second system includes dynamics *sff*. The third system is marked *molto sostenuto* and *molto rall.*, and includes dynamics *sfp*. The score features various instruments including trbs/tba, crts, and timp. A "D inverted" chord is indicated above the first system.

The portrayal continues with a derivative of **D** appearing as an ostinato supporting vocal parts containing material from the whirlpool theme. A short phrase based on **GM6** (Ex.8.18) then appears representing the riders plunging through the sea, an action reinforced by the following march-like quasi-recitative of mainly unison/octave in which the a cappella chorus declaim text concerning this momentous event (Ex.8.62a).

<sup>33</sup> This repetition appears in Mackay’s poem.

The tension gradually subsides with **D** ultimately forming a chromatic triplet figure which is accompanied by various tonic/dominant basses (Ex.8.62a & b) derived from **S1** (Ex.8.6) and **GM** (Ex.8.18).

Ex.8.62 — No.13: (a) Section C; (b) and (c) Orchestral postlude (see over)

(a)

[1-96]

*Quasi recit*

S  
A  
T  
B

As they

*pp* sank and the an - gry waves be - low

*pprecipitato*

GM6

*f* *Impetuosissimo*

Down to the rocks where the sea - parts

*f* *Assistendo*  
*il basso ben memorato e pesante*

Where the sea - parts creep, creep,

*f*

Twice the fun - dled dash

*mf*

oms deep

*p*

(b) [♩ = 94]

D derivative

(c) [♩ = 94]

D derivative

Derivatives of S1 and GM

The passage is linked to the following number by a solemn horn pedal supporting shimmering chords in upper woodwinds and violin that portray the end of Jessie’s struggle, an effect heightened by a shift in tonality from B minor to the flattened leading note minor (A minor).

**Ex.8.63** — Link to No.14

[smorendo] *pp*

*f/ob/vn*

*pp*

**14. Alto and bass sections — “At morn a fisherman sailing by”**

The final two numbers of the work could be considered as a single entity, as they both employ text drawn from stanza 31 as well as containing similar melodic material. For clarity, however, the following discussion will treat them individually as in Drysdale’s numbering structure. A two-part number, No. 14 is a setting of stanzas 30 and 31 (couplet 1) which tell of the fisherman finding Jessie’s corpse followed by a partial description of the place where she is to be buried. The number has the following structure:

**Table 11:** Form and significant features of “At morn a fisherman sailing by”

Section/subject	Motifs used	Significant features
Introduction	<b>K1</b>	Oboe solo with a diatonic and homophonic accompaniment in strings.
A: Tells of the fisherman finding Jessie’s body.	Some material based on <b>K1</b> , <b>K2</b> , <b>S7</b> in inversion, <b>J</b> .	An alto section solo which is accompanied by a sextuplet semiquaver figure in the clarinet’s upper register. Thematic material is employed from No. 7 when Jessie’s journey to the tryst was described and she is alluded to by a short quotation from <b>J</b> .
Orchestral link	Melody based on elements of <b>K1</b> and <b>L</b> neighbour figure.	A solemn passage in oboe and flute in which the prevailing sentiment is enhanced by a brief move through flattened mediant and German sixth chords in the accompaniment.
B/introduction to No. 15: A description of Jessie’s place of burial.	<b>K2</b>	An alto and bass sectional solo. The dark timbre of the forces employed is enhanced by a diatonic harmonisation and slower tempo providing an apposite depiction of this most sombre moment in the tale. The section ends with a solemn statement of <b>K2</b> in oboe that links smoothly into No. 15.

The introductory material in oboe and the initial chant-like statement from the alto section provide a particularly effective expression of the sombre sentiments of the text. By using derivatives of **K1/2** in the melodic line, Drysdale indicates musically that the Kelpie is responsible for Jessie’s death. Nevertheless, the accompanying clarinet figuration simultaneously provides an ethereal and somewhat jubilant quality which suggests that even though the Kelpie has caused Jessie’s demise, she has ultimately escaped from him.

**Ex.8.64** — No.14: (a) Introduction; (b) Section A

(a) *Andante*

ob  
pp  
**K1**

(b) *[Andante]*

Altos

At morn a fish - er - man

Orch [Sketch]

cl/vn

pp

hns/vns

sail - - - ing by,

K1/2

Saw her pale corse

float - - - ing high;

pp

pp

The image shows a musical score for an opera. It consists of four systems of music. The first system is for the Alto voice and the Orchestra (labeled 'Orch [Sketch]'). The Alto part has the lyrics 'At morn a fish - er - man' and features six sixteenth-note slurs. The orchestra part includes a Clarinet/Violin (cl/vn) part with sixteenth-note slurs and a Horns/Violas (hns/vns) part with sustained notes. The second system continues the Alto part with the lyrics 'sail - - - ing by,' and the orchestra part. The third system is for the Klavier (K1/2) part, with the lyrics 'Saw her pale corse' and sixteenth-note slurs. The fourth system continues the Klavier part with the lyrics 'float - - - ing high;' and sixteenth-note slurs. The score is marked with a tempo of 'Andante' and includes dynamic markings like 'pp'.

With a move to the major mode, the poignancy of the previous section is partially replaced by a simplicity and sadness which corresponds to text concerning Jessie's worldly beauty. It is an effective use of tonality to underline the subtly different moods expressed within the libretto.

### 15. Chorus “They dug her grave”

The final number provides a further description of Jessie’s burial place and tells of the Kelpie riding through the village each year on Beltane Eve with Jessie’s ghost behind him. As with several previous numbers, it is structured in a quasi-rondo form as shown in Table 12:

**Table 12:** Schematic analysis of “They dug her grave”

Section/text	Motifs employed	Setting	Significant features
A: Stanza 31, couplet 2. The digging of Jessie’s grave.	<b>K2, fanfare figure</b>	Alto section solo  A cappella chorus repeat the above text.	Simple diatonic string accompaniment in E major.
B: Stanza 31, complete. The digging of Jessie’s grave.	<b>K1 and L</b> combined with new thematic material.	Tenor and bass setting of couplet 1 which is repeated by full chorus.	A lengthy section which is extended by sequence and imitation, and coloured by a number of passing modulations effected through chromatic shifts and common notes.
Orchestral link	Derived from <b>K2</b> , bars 3-4.		Short modulatory passage which features a plaintive solo oboe.
A’: Stanza 31, couplet 2	<b>K1</b>	A cappella chorus.	An abbreviated and particularly solemn recapitulation of A in E major.
Two-part orchestral transition (a b)	‘a’ — <b>fanfare figure</b> (Ex. 8.8)  ‘b’ — <b>R2/J</b> contracting to <b>R1</b>		The fanfare figure signifies the action of the sea. A modulation from E to F# major introduces section ‘b’. The handsome ‘knight’ is suggested by his motif.
C: Stanza 32. The Kelpie and Jessie galloping over the green.	Similarities to <b>V2</b> ; <b>K2</b>	A setting of the final stanza for chorus in unison/octaves.	Shift to B minor. The section concludes with a chromatic modulation into F# major through a German sixth.
Orchestral conclusion	<b>L</b>		A passionate section with prominent use of changing metres. The music concludes with the triplet figure from the love theme treated imitatively and harmonised diatonically over a tonic pedal which firmly establishes F# major, the tonic major of the key with which the work opened.

This final number provides an appropriately dramatic conclusion to the work. Each element of its sectional structure skilfully depicts the various actions outlined in Mackay’s text both through judicious use of forces and through sombre versions of motifs. Moreover, Drysdale enhances the solemnity surrounding Jessie’s burial by employing features such as:

- Word painting —

**Ex.8.65 (a)** — No.15 Section B: (a) rolling-like melodic contour at “breakers roar”;  
 (b) falling major/minor seconds at “sigh” and large leaps which portray the “wild winds”

(a)

[Andante]

break - - - ers roar,

Detailed description: This musical notation is in treble clef, key of A major (three sharps), and 3/2 time. It consists of six measures. The first measure contains a half note G4. The second measure contains a half note A4. The third measure contains a half note B4. The fourth measure contains a half note C5. The fifth measure contains a half note B4. The sixth measure contains a half note A4. A long slur covers the notes from the first to the sixth measure, indicating a continuous, rolling melodic line. The lyrics 'break - - - ers roar,' are written below the notes, with hyphens under 'break' and 'ers'.

(b)

[Andante]

Where wild winds sigh,

Detailed description: This musical notation is in treble clef, key of A major (three sharps), and 3/2 time. It consists of six measures. The first measure contains a half note G4. The second measure contains a half note A4. The third measure contains a half note B4. The fourth measure contains a half note C5. The fifth measure contains a half note B4. The sixth measure contains a half note A4. A long slur covers the notes from the second to the sixth measure, indicating a continuous melodic line. The lyrics 'Where wild winds sigh,' are written below the notes, with hyphens under 'wild' and 'sigh,'.

- Structural devices including imitation and, in particular, at the initial presentation of the dramatic text “They dug her grave”, a descending five-bar canonic passage between soprano and tenor;

Ex.8.66 — No.15, Section B

[Andante]

S  
A  
T  
B

dug her a grave, They dug her a grave, They  
grave, a grave, a  
grave, They dug her a grave, They dug her a  
They  
grave, They dug her a grave, a

dug her a grave by the wa - ter clear,  
grave, by the wa - ter clear,  
grave by the wa - ter clear,  
dug her a grave by the wa - ter clear,  
grave by the wa - ter clear,

- Chromatic harmony and modulation — the sorrowfulness of the canonic section above is greatly increased by the passing chromaticism created by the horizontal movement of the parts. Moreover, at the final appearance of **K2** the flattened supertonic note and its associated Neapolitan sixth harmonisation provide a haunting portrayal of “on a steed as fleet as the wintry wind” before a chromatic modulation through a German sixth poignantly highlights the text “Jessie’s mournful ghost behind”;

Ex.8.67 — No.15, Section C

[Andante misterioso]

S  
A  
T  
B

On a steed as fleet as the win - try

bn/crts/trbs/tba

N6

pp

wind with Jes - sie's mourn - ful ghost be - hind.

+trns

Gtr6

- Timbre — dark orchestral and vocal colours are prominent throughout the movement. They are best demonstrated by the oboe’s plaintive tone which dominates the orchestral sections or in the mellow sound of the alto section’s announcement of “They dug her grave by the water clear”.

The orchestral transition which follows Section A’ is the pivotal moment of the number. The passage, which is aptly indicated *misterioso*, anticipates the subject of the following text by providing an effective musical allusion to the couple’s ride, through employing

theme **R2/J** originally used to herald the handsome knight's appearance on the village green (Ex.8.2) over an accompaniment used initially in the **V** motifs (Exs 8.23–25)

**Ex.8.68** — No.15, Orchestral Transition

*Allegretto misterioso*

**R2/J**

V accompaniment

The text relating to this critical moment is emphasised by a choral setting of unison/octaves accompanied by the commanding timbre of brass alone. Initially, the melodic material, which is treated sequentially and with limited augmentation, has a vague similarity to **V2** further linking it with the Village reference in the text.

**Ex.8.69** — (a) No.15, Section C; (b) No.3, **V2**

(a)

*Andante maestoso*

Augmentation

And ev - 'ry year at Belt - an E'en, the Kelp - ie gal - lops o'er the green

(b)

**V2**

The orchestral postlude provides a powerful conclusion. The love theme is expanded and developed at length using a mixture of duplets and triplets in the melody against a compounded accompaniment. This truly passionate music with its abundance of dissonant appoggiaturas and delayed resolutions is enhanced by the occasional insertion of a four-beat bar within the established triple metre, a device especially effective when placed at a peak in the melodic phrase. By lingering over this major climax, Drysdale considerably enhances the emotional impact of the final passage.

Ex.8.70 — No.15, Conclusion

[Andante maestoso]

orch

brass *pp* *p* fanfare *pp* *f largamente*

Cross rhythm

SI

*Andante maestoso*

*ff* *cantando*

phrase extension

*con passione*

*allargando*

### 8.3 Conclusions

Set to a colourful text which contains excellent material for musical depiction, *The Kelpie* is both descriptive and dramatic — it is eminently suitable material for an operatic libretto. Nevertheless, Drysdale chose to set it as a dramatic cantata. The production of an opera was a large financial undertaking while a choral setting cost the composer little and would appeal to the large choral union market of the time — it was a much more cost-effective operation. Unlike opera where action provides an important part in the depiction of the drama, Drysdale had to characterise and portray the story through his music alone. Chorus and soloists relate the narrative in turn using a variety of vocal styles appropriate to the prevailing action. Declamatory recitative supports such text as the Kelpie's bold announcement of Jessie's fate (No.12), two-part texture expresses declarations of love in "I have loved thee long" (No.8) whilst a variety of solo aria styles relate both direct speech and narrative. The chorus describes the action using a number of textures and styles, creating contrast and enhancing significant elements within the tale — for example, imitation depicts a lively reel in "On to Loch Buy" (No.3), whilst an a cappella setting punctuates the climactic text concerning the couple's disappearance into the depths of the sea (No.13).

*The Times* correspondent's review of *The Kelpie*'s première stated that "the descriptive passages contain some striking pictorial effects"<sup>34</sup> and there is no doubt that there is a variety of vibrant and rich orchestration evident throughout the work. It is a major contributor in the creation and maintaining of dramatic tension while it plays an important rôle in the depiction of text. Ingenious scoring combined with a judicious selection of melodic devices enhances the musical depiction of such passages as the woodwind's 'crawling sea-snake' in No.1 (Ex.8.13) or the violins' portrayal of Jessie's 'fickle beating heart' at the opening of No.6 (Ex.8.35). Particularly noteworthy is the way in which reed instruments and double bass mimic the bagpipes during the vigorous jig of No.3 (Ex.8.26). Nevertheless, the orchestra frequently plays a subordinate role, as the primary emphasis is on vocal melody with the emotional charge of such melodies being reinforced by doubling — sometimes by another voice, at other times by instruments such as violins in their high register (e.g. No.8).

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<sup>34</sup> "Music in Scotland" *The Times* 19 December 1894, 9f

While the distinctive Scottish flavour found in much of the music suitably captures the local colour prominent in Mackay's text, Drysdale does not employ any known traditional material. As in his other works based on traditional subject matter, he draws on characteristics associated with Scottish folk music such as gapped scales, modal harmonies (particularly bVII and the associated double tonic effect), lengthy pedals and the dance rhythms so prominent in fiddle tunes. Although the ceilidh scene in No.3 is the most graphic example of this feature, much of Part One is subtly infused with such material, corresponding to a text which is frequently concerned with local description. It is an extremely effective way of highlighting the simplistic and rustic elements in the tale. As the work progresses and the action centres on drama associated with the characters and their fate, these Scottish features appear less often — modality within a recurring motif or when Jessie displays her ingenuousness are their most notable guise.

Chromatic writing is used frequently to enhance textual portrayal and to create and sustain dramatic tension. Throughout the work, Drysdale maintains an unsettled and tense atmosphere by employing tonally vague introductions to numbers. The effectiveness of this feature is enhanced by using diatonic openings only where the Kelpie is outwardly benign or absent completely, namely the Love Duet (No.8) and the final narrative describing Jessie's corpse and her burial — these numbers effect an immediate and striking contrast with other material. Occasionally, there are more dissonant passages achieved through the use of compound chords or added tones over pedals. The most startling example of this feature can be found in the central section of No.7 (Ex.8.40) where it provides an ethereal depiction of the Kelpie's starlit journey to the trysting.

Drysdale achieves cohesion by using recurring melodies and rhythmic figures which identify and recall specific characters, actions and situations. Several of these motifs are constructed from similar melodic cells allowing Drysdale to identify and infer several textual ideas simultaneously. The **R2/J** motif is an excellent example of this technique. The elements of **S** and **R** at once remind of the Kelpie's origins and his journey, whilst the snippet of Jessie's theme indicates the amorous side of his character.

The music of *The Kelpie* demonstrates that Drysdale clearly understood the performing forces for which he composed and that he was fully aware that a vocal work's success

depended on its accessibility to the amateur choral unions so popular at that time. While the chorus writing had to be suitable for amateur singers, solo vocal and orchestral parts could be more elaborate, reflecting the greater technical and expressive demands which could be exacted from professional soloists and orchestras.

Faults can be found. In the initial numbers, reliance on sectional repetition and occasional passages of lack-lustre 'filler' material detract from an otherwise vivid depiction. Furthermore, the repeated appearance of tonally ambiguous 'galloping' introductions does become rather tiresome — Drysdale sometimes seemed unable to recognise that overworking the most picturesque of effects could detract from an otherwise excellent idea. Nevertheless, there is much to commend in this work. Use of irregular phrase structures and unusual rhythmical groupings, features absent in much of his other work, rich and varied orchestration which is employed with great effect to enhance vocal melody, colourful characterisation, attractive melodic lines and judicious use of local devices expertly fused within a romantic style combine to create a graphic depiction of this dramatic text. The work contains genuine variety and towards its close, a momentum which drives the music to a dramatic conclusion leaving the listener in no doubt that Drysdale was completely involved with his subject.

## 9. Orchestral and Instrumental Music

### 9.1 Early Works

Before his arrival at the RAM, Drysdale had written only small-scale works — piano music, sacred pieces and songs. Corder suggested a course of study which built upon this experience, setting the young composer the task of writing a piano ballade, a genre rather more extended than the short pieces and variation formats with which he was familiar. Drysdale had a long-standing interest in the ballads of the Scottish Borders and it was from this source that he sought inspiration, choosing James Hogg's mystical poem "May of the Morrill Glen" for his new work. As discussed previously, this first composition for Corder was to be a steep learning curve for Drysdale (cf. 37): after several years of writing light-weight pieces quickly and with little revision, he was surprised by the amount of thought and effort involved in the academic study of composition. Moreover, reading between the lines of his correspondence, Drysdale was used to his works receiving praise unconditionally, not a situation he encountered at the RAM.

Following weeks of constant revision, Corder stated that he was satisfied with the ballade and suggested that Drysdale should attempt to score it for orchestra. Drysdale began by annotating possible instrumentation in pencil upon his piano version, allowing changes and corrections to be made at an early stage. Although Drysdale notes that he had the orchestra in mind when composing the piano version,<sup>1</sup> his preparation does not seem to have made the task of scoring any easier. He was surprised by the numerous alterations, deletions and additions that were required in producing his orchestral score, particularly when he considered the exhaustive preparatory work he had undertaken. Nonetheless, he found that the medium stimulated fresh ideas whilst the insights gleaned into orchestration during rehearsals and concerts provided a variety of strategies for experimentation,<sup>2</sup> so although he thought scoring was hard work, he preferred it to writing the piano score: it was "the laborious part".<sup>3</sup> Drysdale's efforts were to be rewarded in the following year when his Ballade, now renamed *The Spirit of the Glen*, was performed by the RAM orchestra at their end-of-session concert. The work was

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<sup>1</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, [3 November 1888], Cb10-x.16/8

<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 12 November 1888, Cb10-x.16/10

<sup>3</sup> Learmont Drysdale to his father, [November 1888], Cb10-x.16/7

well received by Drysdale's teachers, colleagues,<sup>4</sup> and by the London critics as demonstrated by the following quotations from contemporary press reports:

There were three new pieces (still in manuscript) by students, the most taking of which proved to be that of Mr. Corder's pupil Mr Learmont Drysdale, a countryman, we are informed, of Mr Hamish MacCunn. Mr Drysdale's work is a ballad for orchestra entitled *The Spirit of the Glen*, a theme admitting of picturesque and fanciful effects, of which the most is made. Whilst handling his resources (including two harps) with excellent judgement, the composer evinces the gift of poetic feeling.<sup>5</sup>

Joseph Bennett the eminent critic of the *Daily Telegraph* stated:

[The] ballade is one of the most satisfactory works we have recently met with. It shows strong imaginativeness and equal command of picturesque expression. ... Mr Drysdale has a happy knack of melody both in single phrases and in developed tunes, and all his music conveys a feeling of conscious strength which commands respect, while in this instance encouraging hope. The ballade is distinctly Scottish in character of theme.<sup>6</sup>

Janey Drysdale suggests that a publisher was keen to publish *The Spirit of the Glen* following its initial public success, but that the piece was passed over in favour of another composer's work.<sup>7</sup> In 1929, the BBC broadcast the work although their reading panel later judged it (along with Drysdale's other orchestral compositions) as being old-fashioned and unlikely to find a place in the repertoire;<sup>8</sup> it was not broadcast again.

*The Spirit of the Glen* demonstrates Corder's positive influence in a number of areas of Drysdale's compositional technique. When compared to his juvenilia, it has a more concise structure and tighter thematic construction, while its development section makes inventive use of material without being particularly prolix. Moreover, as shown below, the well-constructed themes have a decidedly Scottish flavour which aptly portrays their stimulus (Ex.9.1). Although there is no doubt that this is still the work of a student, the improvements observed show that by the conclusion of his first year at the RAM, Drysdale had acquired many new skills in the process of developing and refining the art of composition.

<sup>4</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers..." 16

<sup>5</sup> "Royal Academy of Music" *Daily Chronicle* (27 July 1889) in Henry Farmer "Press Cuttings — Drysdale", Cb10-y.6, p. 5–6

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Bennett "Academy concert" *Daily Telegraph* ([27 July] 1889) quoted in Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers..." 17

<sup>7</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 20 September 1947, Farmer 249/1947/i

<sup>8</sup> A[ylmer] B[uesst] "Learmont Drysdale:[Assessment of works for Orchestra]", nd, Drysdale File, BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham



Charles Geard<sup>10</sup> (a member of the Crystal Palace Orchestra<sup>11</sup>) for whom he acquired a great regard and with whom he was to remain in communication for many years.<sup>12</sup> By the end of the 1890 session, he was not yet advanced enough to play the trombone in the RAM orchestra at the end-of-term concert, but desperate to be involved, gained valuable experience by playing the triangle part alongside Granville Bantock who undertook the rôle of cymbal and side drum player.

## 9.2 *Tam o' Shanter*

The greatest success of Drysdale's career at the RAM was to come during his third session. It was in the spring of 1890 that the Glasgow Society of Musicians announced they were sponsoring a competition for a new concert overture or symphonic poem. The entries were to be judged by [Sir] Alexander C. Mackenzie and [Sir] Frederick Cowen,<sup>13</sup> and submitted by 1 November 1890. It was the end of July before Drysdale received a copy of the conditions for the prize from a fellow student at the RAM.<sup>14</sup> He did not act immediately on the matter and his sister Janey notes that he did not decide on the subject and begin work on the overture until one week before the closing date of the competition.<sup>15</sup> Although this miraculous speed seems unlikely, a letter to Drysdale from Frederick Corder on 30 October states "the plan you propose for the piece should do very well",<sup>16</sup> which rather suggests that when Drysdale sent his prompting letter, the work was still being written. In addition, when discussing Drysdale's lack of inspiration with an entry for a competition in the following year, Janey notes: "you know you very nearly gave up 'Tam', and it has done you a lot of good."<sup>17</sup> It seems probable that a lack of inspiration and application led to Drysdale leaving work on *Tam o' Shanter* until the last moment possible.

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<sup>10</sup> "Royal Academy of Music Register '0", 1890–1893, RAM Archives, London. The register notes that Drysdale paid a fee of 22 guineas for this second study.

<sup>11</sup> George B. Shaw "St John's Eve" *Star* 20 December 1889 in Dan H. Laurence *Shaw's Music* 3 vols, The Bodley Head Bernard Shaw (London: Bodley Head, 1981) 1, 877

<sup>12</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 7. The language Janey uses with reference to Geard is rather suggestive of a relationship which was more than simple friendship.

<sup>13</sup> "Glasgow Society of Musicians — Conditions of Prize Competition, 1890", tipped into Cb9-x.16. Manuscript material relating to the Prize Competitions is missing from the Glasgow Society of Musicians Archives now held by the ML, Glasgow.

<sup>14</sup> James Lynne to Learmont Drysdale, 30 July 1890, tipped into Cb9-x.16

<sup>15</sup> Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 6–7

<sup>16</sup> Frederick Corder to Learmont Drysdale, 30 October 1890, Cb10-x.17/7

<sup>17</sup> Janey Drysdale to Learmont Drysdale, [October 1891], in Cb10-x.18: Letters concerning the Crystal Palace performance of TOS, Saturday 24 October 1891

# Glasgow Society of Musicians.

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## CONDITIONS OF PRIZE COMPETITION, 1890.

1. A Prize of Thirty Guineas shall be given for the best Orchestral Composition in the form of Concert Overture or Symphonic Poem.
2. The Competition shall be limited to Members and Associates of the Glasgow Society of Musicians, and to Composers born in Scotland, or whose ordinary, or principal domicile has been in Scotland for the last three years.
3. Works intended for Competition must be in the hands of the Secretary of the Society not later than 1st November, 1890, and must be signed with a Motto.
4. Works intended for Competition must not have been already publicly performed, printed, or published.
5. Along with the Compositions, Competitors must lodge with the Secretary a sealed envelope containing, enclosed, his name and address, and with the Motto written on the outside. The letter bearing the Motto of the successful Competitor only shall be opened.
6. Compositions received in terms of the above conditions shall be submitted to Dr. A. C. Mackenzie and Mr. Frederic H. Cowen who have kindly consented to act as Judges, but should a large number of compositions be received these gentlemen shall be at liberty to submit them to another musician, to be appointed by them, who shall reduce the number in the first instance. A copy of their report shall be printed and may be had by Competitors from the Secretary.
7. In case none of the Compositions shall reach the standard of excellence desirable, in the opinion of the Judges, the Committee shall be entitled to withhold the Prize announced, and should the Judges consider any two or more Compositions to be of equal merit, the prize shall be divided.
8. The unsuccessful Compositions must be sent for by letter within three months after the Report of the Judges has been announced, and any Composition not sent for within that period shall become the property of the Society.
9. The Composition gaining the Prize shall remain the property of the Composer, but should it be at any time printed or published he shall be bound and entitled to announce it as "Prize Composition of the Glasgow Society of Musicians, 1890," and to furnish a copy for the Library of the Society.

HUGH A. STIRLING, *Secretary*,

133 ST. VINCENT STREET, GLASGOW.

*Tam o' Shanter* won the Glasgow Society of Musicians' prize of 30 guineas with an additional and important bonus — that the work receive its first performance at the Glasgow Orchestral Concerts under the baton of August Manns.<sup>18</sup> The performance took place at St Andrew's Halls, Glasgow on 27 January 1891 and the published plebiscite taken that evening revealed that *Tam o' Shanter* received more votes than any other overture performed during the concert season. Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* took second place whilst his *Tannhäuser* and Hamish MacCunn's *Land of the Mountain and the Flood* were in third.<sup>19</sup> Of course, a new work by a local, albeit relatively unknown, composer is likely to attract considerable attention. The audience and orchestra showed their appreciation by calling Drysdale to the platform and heartily congratulating him.<sup>20</sup> The critics concurred with their view and generously praised *Tam o' Shanter*. The *Glasgow Evening News* noted:

[The] work bears ample evidence of imaginative power (that rare gift) and of the possession of the artistic means necessary to carry out musical conceptions.... It exemplified anew the composer's command of flowing melody, skilful and effective workmanship and highly coloured orchestration.<sup>21</sup>

As previously stated (cf. 48), Wilhelm Kuhe advised Drysdale to contact August Manns and discuss the possibility of having *Tam o' Shanter* performed at the Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts, of which Manns was manager.<sup>22</sup> Although Manns acceded to this request, he stated that following his experience of conducting the work in Glasgow, early rehearsal and careful marking of the copies would be required to allow the main themes of the work to be protected "through modification of nuances in the accompanying and counter parts."<sup>23</sup> Whether this indicates that the Glasgow Orchestral Society Orchestra was under rehearsed or that Manns believed Drysdale's scoring was not appropriately balanced (a fault which could justifiably be levelled at a few passages<sup>24</sup>) is unknown. Nonetheless, there are few corrections and alterations on the score in Drysdale's hand, suggesting that he did not react to this comment.

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<sup>18</sup> John Wallace (Acting Secretary, Glasgow Choral Union) to Learmont Drysdale, 15 Jan 1891, tipped into Cb.9-x.16

<sup>19</sup> "The Glasgow Orchestral Concerts" *Glasgow Herald*, 29 January 1891, 4g

<sup>20</sup> "Orchestral Concert" *Glasgow Herald*, 28 January 1891, 6h

<sup>21</sup> "Glasgow Orchestral Concert" *Glasgow Evening News* 28 January 1891, 4h

<sup>22</sup> Wilhelm Kuhe *My Musical Recollections* (London: Bentley, 1896), 268–269

<sup>23</sup> August Manns to Learmont Drysdale, 13 October 1891, Cb10-x.17/9

<sup>24</sup> For example at N where the melodic line in the 'cellos and double basses is overpowered by the rest of the orchestra.

## THE GLASGOW ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS.

The following is the result of the plebiscite taken  
at the Glasgow Orchestral Concerts on the even-  
ings of Saturday and Tuesday last:—

SYMPHONIES.			
	Sat.	Tues.	Tot.
No. 4 in B Flat—Beethoven	58	10	68
No. 5 in C Minor—Beethoven	57	152	209
No. 6 in F, "Pastoral"—Beethoven	174	188	362
No. 7 in A—Beethoven	23	51	74
No. 8 in F—Beethoven	15	35	50
No. 9 in E Minor—Beethoven	41	38	79
In G, "Military" (No. 11 of "Salomon")			
HAYDN.			
In A, "Italian"—Mendelssohn	38	24	62
In A Minor, "Scottish"—Mendelssohn	55	24	79
In E Flat—Mozart	160	117	277
No. 2 in B Minor (unfinished)—Schubert	14	77	91
No. 1 in B Flat—Schumann	181	125	306
No. 4 in D Minor—Schumann	23	29	52
No. 5 in B Minor—Schumann	33	39	72
OVERTURES.			
Mantelstein—Auber	30	9	39
Fugate—Beethoven	9	15	24
Lovers, No. 3—Beethoven	48	28	76
The Naiads—Sterndale Bennett	4	1	5
The Roman Carnival—Verboix	31	9	40
Tam o' Shanter—Learmont Drysdale	29	82	111
In Autumn—Grieg	10	15	25
Lead of the Mountain and the Flood— Hamish MacCann	71	43	114
Ravenwood—A. O. Mackenzie	15	12	27
Ruy Blas—Mendelssohn	6	7	13
A Midsummer Night's Dream—Man- delsohn	61	56	117
The Lovely Melusine—Mendelssohn	17	18	35
The Magic Flute—Mozart	40	35	75
The Merry Wives of Windsor—Niccolai	18	16	34
La Czarra Indra—Rosenl.	5	7	12
William Tell—Kossel	63	44	107
Rossiniade—Schubert	74	36	110
Olympic—Spontini	—	—	—
Macbeth—Sullivan	3	2	5
Di Ballo—Sullivan	1	2	3
The Flying Dutchman—Wagner	83	74	157
Rienzi—Wagner	27	35	62
Tannhauser—Wagner	113	65	178
Lohegrin—Wagner	45	46	91
Der Freischutz—Weber	33	34	67
Obere—Weber	21	18	39
BALLET AIDS AND DANCE MUSIC.			
Concert Suite, "Carmen"—Bizet	141	117	258
Minuet for Strings—Beethoven	120	128	248
Gavotte, "Yellow Jasmine," from "The Language of the Flowers"—Coven	111	108	219
Suite of Ballet Airs, "Nyctia"—Ballin	114	99	213
Minuetto from "Serenade"—Handel	43	32	75
Selection from Spanish Ballet in "Le Cid" —Massenet	73	44	117
Gavotte from "Idomeneo"—Mozart	80	76	156
Ballet Divertissement, "The Dance of the Hours" ("La Gioconda")—Peschelli	83	73	156
Selection from the Greek Ballet in "Assuata"—Saint-Saens	48	78	126
MISCELLANEOUS.			
Pilgrim's March from "Harold in Italy"— Berlioz	84	36	120
Two Pictures, "Cloud and Sunshine"— Frederic Cliffe	13	33	46
Selection from Suite "Peer Gynt"—Grieg	68	42	110
Serenade in G for strings—Haydn	15	46	61
Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 1 (B-flat)—Liszt	83	62	145
Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 4 (E-flat)—Liszt	23	37	60
Symphonic Poem, "Les Preludes"—Liszt	30	22	52
Incidental Music to "Ravenwood"—A. O. Mackenzie	37	32	69
Noturno from the Italian Suite—Raf.	23	28	51
Extr'acts from "King Manfred"—Repetto	16	45	61
Symphonic Poem, "The Spinning Wheel of Omphale"—Saint-Saens	82	80	162
Ruhs in E minor and Certain Tune in G (Rosenmund)—Schubert	38	28	66
Selection from the Incidental Music to "Macbeth"—Sullivan	23	17	40
Rhapsodie Norvegienne, No. 3, in G— Grieg	8	8	16
Quintic Quatuor—Tschelichewsky	17	17	34
Polka of Abergavenny and Proclamation of Hastings—Wagner	67	87	154
Introduction to Act III. of "Die Meistersinger" —Wagner	30	61	91
The Invitation to the Waltz—Weber	154	145	299
Serenade, in E-flat—T. Wingham	2	2	4

Illustration 12: The Glasgow Orchestral Concerts — Plebiscite (29 January 1891)

*Tam o' Shanter* received its first London performance on 24 October 1891 and was enthusiastically received by both public and press. *The Times* praised the work for its “distinct imaginative power and a good deal of originality” but went on to say:

The piece would be none the worse for a little condensing, as at present the working out is a good deal too long. It was hardly kind to give in the same concert the *Lenore Symphony* of Raff, in which the famous spectral ride could hardly fail to obliterate the remembrance of the young Scotchman's treatment of so very similar a subject.<sup>25</sup>

The critic had justification in stating that the transition section contains limited material which is rather ‘overworked’ (see Table 13 below). In the writer's view, however, the development, or ‘working out’ as it was frequently termed by Drysdale's contemporaries, is not particularly lengthy and is reasonably well structured with inventive use of well-contrasted material. It is noted that Raff's symphony is hardly well-remembered today. *Tam o' Shanter* received several further performances during Drysdale's lifetime including one by the Scottish Orchestra conducted by George Henschel in his native Edinburgh in February 1894.

*Tam o' Shanter* was not published during Drysdale's lifetime. However, in the late 1910s, the Carnegie Trust established a scheme for the publication of works by British composers. Initially only works by living composers were accepted but in 1919 Janey Drysdale inquired whether the Trust would be willing to publish works by recently deceased composers, arguing that their living contemporaries were eligible to submit. The Trust agreed to her request.

Henry Hadow (chief adjudicator), Granville Bantock and Dan Godfrey examined *Tam o' Shanter* and their published adjudication states:

A characteristic work by a talented Scottish composer whose early death was a serious loss to our national art. It is vigorous, striking and tuneful, and well represents a period in the development of British music.<sup>26</sup>

The initial adjudication, however, contained rather mixed views. These positive sentiments are contrasted with “not a strong work, and rather spun out”<sup>27</sup> and “a little

<sup>25</sup> “Crystal Palace” *The Times*, 26 October 1891, 6d

<sup>26</sup> Percy A. Scholes *Carnegie United Kingdom Trust: New Works by Modern British Composers* First Series (London: Stainer and Bell, 1921) 11

<sup>27</sup> Entry: “Scheme for the Publication of Musical Compositions” — Adjudication by Mr Godfrey of *Tam o' Shanter* by Learmont Drysdale, [May] 1920, Carnegie Trust Papers, GD 281/41/68/1, NAS, Edinburgh (hereafter cited as Carnegie Trust Papers). This fault is the same one commented upon by *The Times* critic 30 years before.

old fashioned at the present day and it's not quite strong enough to break through its fashion".<sup>28</sup> The consensus was to reserve judgement until the other entries had been examined. Works of stronger musical interest and value seem not, in the adjudicators' view, to have been submitted and *Tam o' Shanter* was chosen for publication. Despite his reservations concerning the work, Dan Godfrey edited and prepared it for press and produced a military band arrangement, which he hoped would assist in bringing it to public notice.<sup>29</sup> This band arrangement, which was to be published independently by Chappell,<sup>30</sup> was to cause a serious disagreement between Godfrey and the Trust. Godfrey believed that it should be published first as this would help sale of the orchestral version,<sup>31</sup> but the Carnegie Trustees were not convinced. After four months of wrangling, the dispute was sent to the Music Sub-committee for adjudication. They stated that the military band version should not appear before the publication of the full score and orchestral parts. Dan Godfrey protested and the matter was referred for opinion to Stainer and Bell,<sup>32</sup> who advised that issuing a full orchestral score was the best way to secure the long-term future of a work<sup>33</sup> (a view no doubt coloured by their not being involved in the publication of the arrangement). It was decided for sake of copyright that the Trustees' view should prevail and that the band version should not be published before the full score.<sup>34</sup>

The easy access to reasonably priced parts for both versions of *Tam o' Shanter* led to an encouraging increase in both live and broadcast performances not just within Britain and Ireland,<sup>35</sup> but around the world in such far-flung places as Calcutta<sup>36</sup> and

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. — Adjudication of Sir Henry Hadow

<sup>29</sup> Dan Godfrey to Colonel J. M. Mitchell (Secretary of the Carnegie Trust), 4 June 1920, GD 281/41/68/7, Carnegie Trust Papers

<sup>30</sup> Colonel J. M. Mitchell to Janey Drysdale, 11 June 1920, Farmer 247/39

<sup>31</sup> Dan Godfrey to Colonel J. M. Mitchell, 4 June 20, GD 281/41/68/7, Carnegie Trust Papers

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of Music Sub-committee: Paper VI — Carnegie Trust Music Publications Scheme, 12 October 1920, GD 281/41/68/11, Carnegie Trust Papers

<sup>33</sup> Stainer and Bell to Colonel J. M. Mitchell, 17 August 1920, GD 281/41/72/9, Carnegie Trust Papers

<sup>34</sup> Minutes of Music Sub-committee:..., 12 October 1920, GD 281/41/68/11, Carnegie Trust Papers

<sup>35</sup> Royalty Accounts detailing performances of Drysdale's works for the years 1922–1943 show that the orchestral version received a number of concert performances including two at Harrogate in 1923. Around 50 broadcasts were given from a number of BBC stations including several from Belfast (e.g. 19/6/29), the Scottish Region (e.g. 15/5/35), the Midland Region (e.g. 30/7/32) and London (e.g. 17/3/35). The band arrangement also had a number of performances during this period.

<sup>36</sup> L. Dunn (Bandmaster of The Cameronians, Scottish Rifles) to Janey Drysdale, 13 October 1943, Farmer 249/2/6. Dunn had conducted the band arrangement of *Tam o' Shanter* at the Empire Theatre, Calcutta in 1938. He also notes that this version was out of print at that time. In a letter to Farmer, Janey mentions that the work had been broadcast in India in 1940 and 1943. See Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 16 October 1943, Farmer 249/2/5. Royalties for these performances seem not to have been paid.

Moscow.<sup>37</sup> The work was also made available in the USA in 1925,<sup>38</sup> although there are no records of performances there. An additional benefit of this publication was to promote inquires about other Drysdale works and for some years manuscript copies and parts for unpublished compositions were made available by Janey to meet the requirements of a number of conductors (cf. 90). Moreover, Godfrey was to continue to be a stalwart supporter of Drysdale's orchestral music throughout his many years as conductor of the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra.<sup>39</sup> Although *Tam o' Shanter* is no longer in print, the full score as well as string and woodwind parts can be hired from the publishers.<sup>40</sup>

In the opinion of many critics, *Tam o' Shanter* (1790) is Burns's masterpiece and it is still one of his most popular works today.<sup>41</sup> It tells the tale of the inebriated Tam making his way home on horseback late one stormy evening. On approaching Alloway Kirk he is surprised by blazing lights coming from the building and through a window sees an amazing sight — warlocks and witches dancing to the accompaniment of the bagpipes. Tam stares at the scene, amused and curious. Most of the party are old hags so he is particularly drawn to, and bewitched by, Nannie, a 'young and hearty' looking girl in a short shirt (cutty sark) who is being particularly capricious. As her dancing becomes ever more frenzied, Tam completely loses his reason and roars "Weel done, Cutty-sark!" Instantly there is darkness and he only just manages to rally his horse Maggie before the witches are after him, screeching and howling. Witches and evil spirits cannot follow their quarry beyond the next stream, but as Tam reaches the keystone of the bridge, Nannie, far ahead of the rest, grabs Maggie's tail. The fugitives escape but Maggie now has a bare rump! The poem has inspired several compositions, including

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<sup>37</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 11 December 1943, Farmer 249/2/8. Janey mentions that the Moscow conductor Professor Nebolsin had been favourably impressed by *Tam o' Shanter* and had included the work in his programmes.

<sup>38</sup> Stainer and Bell to Janey Drysdale, 13 August 1925, Farmer 247/60

<sup>39</sup> See Stephen Lloyd *Sir Dan Godfrey: Champion of British Composers* (London: Thames, 1995) for performances of Drysdale's orchestral works by the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra.

<sup>40</sup> Archivist (Stainer and Bell), telephone conversation with the author, 6 February 2001. The archivist did not mention brass and percussion parts. The work can also be hired through the British Union Catalogue of Orchestral Sets network whilst the full score is available from several university and public lending libraries.

<sup>41</sup> Robert Burns *Poetical Works of Robert Burns* ed by William Wallace (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1990) x. The poem was written to accompany a drawing of Alloway Kirk by the antiquary and acquaintance of Burns, Captain Francis Grose (c.1731–1791), and was first published in Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland* in 1791 (see op. cit. 340n).

concert overtures by Alexander Campbell Mackenzie (*Tam o' Shanter*, Third Scottish Rhapsody, 1911) and, more recently, Malcolm Arnold (*Tam o' Shanter*, 1955).

On the title page of his score, Drysdale cites the following text from the poem:

**“The hour approaches, Tam maun ride.”**

That hour o' night's black arch the keystone,  
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;  
And sic a night he takes the road in  
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;  
The rattling showers rose on the blast;  
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;  
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellowed;  
That night a child might understand  
The deil had business on his hand.

Nonetheless, the music is suggestive of much of Burns's gruesome tale so these stanzas, which were normally reproduced in programme notes, seem to have been provided as an aid to scene setting rather than being the only portion of the text portrayed musically. Drysdale probably assumed that the poem was well-known enough not to need full reproduction. Frequently, however, specific depiction of text seems secondary to a general portrayal of the dramatic scene.

*Tam o' Shanter* requires Drysdale's standard orchestral configuration (cf. 111–2) albeit with only 2 horns and an additional piccolo. He wished to call the work a symphonic poem but Frederick Corder advised that this term referred to a type of composition of variation structure involving metamorphosis of themes. The work was not structured in this manner and thus, Corder believed it should have a vaguer title such as overture or tone picture.<sup>42</sup> In fact, *Tam o' Shanter* is in modified sonata form as demonstrated below:

**Table 13:** Schematic analysis of *Tam o' Shanter*

Section	Melodic Material	Main Key
<u>Introduction</u>		B minor
<u>Exposition</u> Subject 1 Transition	Allegro furioso Episode based on the above theme.	B minor

<sup>42</sup> Frederick Corder to Learmont Drysdale, 30 October 1890, Cb10-x.17/7

Section	Melodic Material	Main Key
Subject group 2	Brief and stormy episode followed by Subject 1 in the same key. Abrupt change in rhythm followed by a modulatory section. Dance-like section with prominent syncopation and chromatic movement.  Theme 1 — Andante grazioso Short syncopated link in violins Theme 2 Link with prominent syncopation in violins .	A minor  G major G major
<u>Development</u> Transitional material	Dance-like section	Sequential treatment - dim. 7 <sup>th</sup> chords.
Subject 2 Subject 1	Alternate statements of Subject 2, Theme 1 and Subject 1 are often simultaneous with dance-like transitional material.	F#, C# minors, E major
<u>Recapitulation (abridged)</u> Subject 1 Transition Subject group 2	Greatly contracted Greatly contracted Theme 2	B minor B major
<u>Coda</u>		B major/B minor

For ease of comparison with the work's programmatic stimulus, the following brief analysis is arranged chronologically with examples being provided for particularly interesting features within the music. The reader is referred to the published full score for further detail.

The opening four-bar introduction aptly portrays the initial line of text ("The hour approaches, Tam maun ride"), the sombre orchestration and repeated notes being suggestive of the church clock chiming midnight on a dark and stormy evening.

### Ex.9.2 — Introduction

*Andante misterioso*

hrs *pp*

trbs *pp*

*pp* bd

cym with drum stick

The music then launches into a vigorous exposition as Tam begins his ride through the storm represented by a <sup>12</sup><sub>8</sub> galloping-like motif scored with the dark coloured timbres of

low-register clarinets, bassoon and ‘cellos accompanied by vigorous dotted rhythmic figures in the strings. The opening harmonic progression forms a double tonic progression, immediately providing the music with a distinctly traditional flavour.

### Ex.9.3 — Exposition, Subject 1

*Allegro furioso*

During the transition, this theme is developed through use of syncopation, and question and answer-type effects between woodwinds which are suggestive of squalling showers. Moreover, the string accompaniment contains a series of chromatically altered harmonies that alternate in texture between phrases of block chords in vigorous dotted rhythm and *ffp* tremolo chords — Maggie is galloping bravely against the violent and sudden gusts of wind (Ex.9.4a). A cessation of the prevailing rhythm informs us that Maggie has stopped abruptly in her tracks astonished by the fantastic lights and sounds emerging from Alloway Church. The following passage contains a series of sequentially treated major and diminished seventh harmonies in detached quavers against which galloping rhythms in lower strings aptly represent Tam, emboldened by the effects of whisky, urging the astonished Maggie forward (Ex.9.4b). Tam’s arrival at Alloway Kirk is marked by the trombones’ series of abrupt chromatic and enharmonic progressions whose increases in volume and *ffp* markings suggest the bellowing of thunder overhead. These phrases are answered by tremolo violin chords of increasing intensity which resemble musically the eerie flashing lights and cackling witch-sounds emanating from the church (Ex.9.4b).

Ex.9.4 — Transition:(a) Maggie galloping against the wind;  
(b) Tam urging Maggie forward and his arrival at Alloway Kirk

(a) *Allegro furioso*

mp trbs/tba + crt 5ve higher  
f fls/obs  
vns/va/vc  
f db pizz (at pitch)/timp  
p  
-obs/+cls  
f  
db arco-timp on beat  
db pizz

(b) [*Allegro furioso*]  
vns/brass/perc. tutti +5ve lower  
va + crt/vns 5ve higher  
vc/db  
Tempo animato  
Tutti  
vns  
mf  
ffp  
trbs  
tba  
vc/db  
db pizz  
mp  
crt  
trbs p  
tba marcato

Later passages are accompanied by flurries in upper woodwinds which indicate Tam and Maggie's furtive observation of the monstrous scene. In the following passage, the impetuous effect created by prominent syncopation and chromaticism in both melody and accompaniment adeptly portrays the witches' fantastic dance.

**Ex.9.5** — Transition, final section

*Animato*

vnl/vn2 8ve lower

The second subject group provides an immediate contrast to the preceding material. It opens with a wistful melody for oboe enhanced by a series of chromatically shifting chords in horns and upper strings (although the strong dominant/tonic movement in the lower strings firmly anchors the G major tonality) which seem to express the amorous sentiments connected with Tam's fascination with the comely wench Nannie.

**Ex.9.6** — Subject 2, Theme 1

*Andante grazioso*

ob  
vn2/vn1  
va/vn2  
vc/db

The theme continues through an improvisatory development played by the oboe before merging with a sweeping, expansive melody in the cornet and violin 1 which is enriched by a mellow scoring of brass, strings and harp — Tam sounds enraptured by Nannie.

**Ex.9.7** — Subject 2, Theme 2

*Broadly cantando*

ff  
crts/vrs  
vnl 8ve higher

The exposition is concluded by a syncopated and triplet link passage that is to play a prominent role in the development of the work, the triplets pre-empting the return to compound time and the restoration of the galloping rhythmic motif.

### Ex.9.8 — Conclusion of Exposition

*Appassionata*

musical score for Ex.9.8, Conclusion of Exposition. The score is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It features a violin part (Vn 1) and a piano accompaniment. The violin part starts with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and continues with a syncopated eighth-note pattern. The piano accompaniment consists of sustained chords in the left hand and a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand. Performance markings include 'vns/1 8ve higher', 'trb1/hn/va', 'tba/vc/db', '+trb2/crts', and 'accel.'. The piece concludes with a final triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4).

During the development, the listener comes face-to-face with the ever more frenzied cavorting of the witches' revels. The music, reminiscent of a scherzo, has a carnival-like atmosphere effected through energetic rhythms, leaping melodic phrases and chromatic runs, many of which are based on the opening gallop motif. The orchestration is appropriately agile — woodwinds (without the languorous oboe), harp and strings — and soon the flutes and clarinets are cavorting wildly, supported by sustained chords in the violins, rather like one couple demonstrating their remarkable dancing skills whilst the others look on. Towards the conclusion of the section, tension is heightened by occasional snatches of heavily scored dancing motif (Ex.9.5) suggesting that the witches' cavorting is becoming ever more furious. Then suddenly the momentum ceases. There are several sharp and intrusive interjections from the trombones based on the galloping theme which immediately divert our attention back to Tam who, in his wild excitement, has roared “Weel done, Cutty-sark!” (Ex.9.9). These interjections, which contain a number of sudden enharmonic modulations, are alternated with furious chromatic flurries in the woodwind which are suggestive of the witches dashing from the kirk “as bees bizz out wi' angry fyke [fret], when plundering herds assail their byke [nest].”

### Ex.9.9 — Conclusion of Development

[*Con fuoco*]

trbs/tba  
ff marcato

ff  
bd  
cym. (with stick)

With the recapitulation specific depiction of textual action ceases, but there are subtle changes to reflect the greater tension of the dramatic scene. Subject 2, Theme 1 appears at a quicker pace with a triplet feature in the double basses whilst Theme 2 is enlivened by being placed in compound time and accompanied by galloping figurations and tremolo chords.

### Ex.9.10 — Recapitulation: Subject 2, Theme 2

*Un poco meno mosso* ♩ = 104

vnl  
hns/trbs + vn2/va (tremolo)  
harp: chords on beat throughout  
vc + crt 8ve higher  
bn/tba/db

These devices cleverly increase the dramatic impact of the music without altering the sonata form structure, although it is notable that the simple expedient of involving the woodwind is not employed to further enhance orchestral weight and consequently heighten musical tension. Chromatically shifting harmonies over a tonic pedal and a sudden change of mode, provide a strong and deliberate marking of the approaching coda and the return to a more specific depiction of the poem's text.

The coda opens with a vigorous cross-rhythmic figure which introduces a number of chromatic and modulatory recitative-like phrases in the lower brass/strings that are closely related to those at the conclusion of the development section (see Ex.9.9). We are hearing the final instalment of the tale. The opening phrase is accompanied by tension sustaining tremolo chords in the upper strings and a forceful galloping rhythm in the timpani. Tam and Maggie are running in wild terror and, briefly, the witches' pursuit is heard in the descending chromatic runs of the woodwind which are supported by disturbingly effective diminished seventh harmonies in trombones and tuba.

**Ex.9.11 — Coda**

[*Allegro furioso* ♩ = 116]

The musical score for Ex.9.11 — Coda is presented in four systems. The first system includes staves for strings (vns/va), lower brass/strings (bns/b.trb/tba/db), and timpani (timp). The second system includes staves for woodwinds (pic/fls/obs/cls), trombones and tuba (t. trbs.), and lower brass/strings (b.trb/tba only). The third system includes staves for woodwinds (pic/fls/obs/cls) and lower brass/strings (b.trb/tba only). The fourth system includes staves for woodwinds (pic/fls/obs/cls) and lower brass/strings (b.trb/tba only). The score features a variety of dynamics including *ff*, *ff marcato*, and *p*. The percussion part includes a cymbal (cym) with a 7/7 rhythm. The woodwind part features descending chromatic runs and diminished seventh harmonies. The lower brass/strings part features a forceful galloping rhythm.

As these phrases die away, the dotted rhythmic figuration reappears in the timpani and lower strings in the form of a dominant pedal of increasing intensity, over which appears a suddenly quiet and ever-quickening version of the galloping theme in viola and 'cello. Tam and Maggie are making their final dash for the keystone of the bridge, but with the persistent Nannie very close behind. An abrupt silence is suggestive of Maggie's tail being wrenched off, before the final crashing chords inform us that the fugitives have escaped.

Although *Tam o' Shanter* was written at the beginning of Drysdale's third session at the RAM, it is undoubtedly a work with a distinct Scottish flavour and early evidence that his London training was not diluting his inherent nationalistic tendencies. He does not quote directly from any traditional Scots tunes, but his themes are influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by his country's folk music. The opening melody of Subject 1 is based on the initial five notes of the minor scale — pentatonic. Nonetheless, as the notes employed do not contain the gapped format often found in folk melody, the result is not particularly idiomatic. Drysdale cleverly strengthens the folk idiom of this theme by using harmonies which employ the flattened seventh degree of the scale (Ex.9.3). The first theme of the second subject is more obviously formed upon a gapped scale pattern and moves between pentatonic and hexatonic for much of its length — only in its final few bars does the fourth of the scale (C natural) fully assert itself. The folk idiom is enhanced by a generally diatonic harmonisation strengthened further in the melody's later stages, by a long dominant drone from the bassoon and cello. Moreover, the oboe's meandering, wistful melodic line, with its free flowing rhythm and occasional grace notes, is improvisatory and bardic in character — somewhat like a pibroch theme. Nevertheless, this theme contains a surprise within its opening — the sharpened fourth (C#) of the scale, which adds a colourful tinge to the otherwise pentatonic melody, and is supported by an equally distinctive move from the tonic chord to a diminished harmony. It is a clever reconciliation of traditional devices with the harmonic language of the work's period. (Ex.9.6)

Theme two of the second subject area demonstrates a different facet of Drysdale's compositional style (see Ex.9.7). This simple melody is enhanced by the unusual, but very effective, combination of violin and cornet which allows it to penetrate the sonorous orchestration of sweeping harp arpeggiation and brass chords. It is a passage

with some overtones of Tchaikovsky (the timbre of the scoring and its prominent harp part), but with a strong ‘British-feel’, rather reminiscent of Elgar’s symphonic works of the early twentieth century. Moreover, the turn figure in its third bar has similarities to motifs found in the compositions of Wagner (e.g. the “Venusberg Music” from *Tannhäuser*). This suggests that Drysdale’s experiences in London and, in particular, his composition training from Frederick Corder were having a considerable influence on his work, as the teacher encouraged pupils to employ compositional techniques derived from composers of the Romantic German style.<sup>43</sup> A number of further passages in *Tam o’ Shanter* demonstrate this influence. The trait is strongest in the harmonic language employed, and derivative techniques include sudden chromatic and enharmonic changes (Ex.9.4b) and passages of chromatically shifting chords over pedals which momentarily obscure the prevailing tonality (nonetheless, although vague, tonality is never completely obscured, the pedals providing an anchor to the prevailing key — see conclusion of Development). There are more subtle nuances of Wagner’s style — the colourful deployment of the large orchestra or the rhythmic drive of the opening theme, reminiscent of the vitality found in his “Ride of the Valkyries” from *Die Walküre* (1856) are particularly notable examples. The use of the final inversion of the German sixth chord is one of Corder’s favourite harmonic techniques (cf. 104). Moreover, Drysdale’s choice of key structure reflects mid-nineteenth-century trends, his main modulations being based around the tertiary shift and moves between tonic major and minor (see Table 13).

It is unfortunate that *Tam o’ Shanter* was not published until 1921. By this period, the musical style of Drysdale and his contemporaries was falling out of fashion and the next generation looked on it with disdain — the comments of Sir Henry Hadow’s adjudication are a reflection of this fact. *Tam o’ Shanter* does have some weaker aspects — the rather overworked transition section and the occasional loss of important melodic material through dense scoring are the most obvious faults. Moreover, Drysdale could have made greater effort to portray his stimulus more explicitly. Nevertheless, these blemishes are outweighed by the work’s many positive attributes. It is vigorous and expressively exuberant, and vibrantly scored with a colourful variety of orchestral timbres. Drysdale presents well-crafted and stimulating thematic material that is

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<sup>43</sup> “Frederick Corder” in *New Grove...* (1980) 4, 766

imaginatively developed and supported by an interesting variety of harmonic language. The juxtaposition of his native folk idiom with the musical style of the period is particularly praiseworthy. Through the easy accessibility of performance material, *Tam o' Shanter* is a prime candidate for a modern revival of Drysdale's work.

With the exception of the overture *Herondean* (1893–4; cf. 56–8), stage works and choral music became the focus of Drysdale's compositional efforts during his latter years at the RAM and in his early professional life. The reasons for this change are not easy to ascertain, but it is known that Corder set further tasks involving vocal/orchestral writing and Drysdale seems to have developed a preference for genres involving these forces. There may also have been worldlier considerations. Drysdale probably believed such works would have a better chance of repeat performances (and, hence, be of greater financial benefit) — the touring opera company and the local choral society were at their zenith.

### 9.3 Border Romance

It was not until 1904 that Drysdale was to write another orchestral work. In February of that year during the Queen's Hall Orchestra's first tour of the provinces,<sup>44</sup> [Sir] Henry Wood was conducting in Edinburgh and it seems that Drysdale had been in contact with him (although it is not known what form this took). Wood declined an invitation to visit Drysdale's home but he did suggest meeting the composer in the 'Artists' Room' following the concert. He also noted "by all means send me your score when you like, I shall be delighted to look at it."<sup>45</sup> Drysdale sent *Tam o' Shanter*, but Wood stated that he wanted a work which had not been produced previously in London. He asked Drysdale to write a new orchestral piece stressing "this would be a much better advertisement for you, as your overture will be passed over without a notice."<sup>46</sup> Considering the few performances *Tam o' Shanter* had received during the years following its initial appearance, Wood's advice was sensible. Drysdale duly informed him of the title of his 'new' work (though which is not known — *Herondean* seems likely as it was produced in London), but he could not fool the conductor, who immediately replied:

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<sup>44</sup> Henry J. Wood *My Life in Music* (London: Gollancz, 1938) 248. It is not known how Drysdale and Wood became acquainted.

<sup>45</sup> Wood to Drysdale, 23 January 1904, Cb10-x.17/37/2

I am sorry but I must have a composition, however small, that has not been done in London before at all. Choose whatever you like best yourself, but it must be 'First performance in London'.<sup>47</sup>

This order having been issued, Drysdale began composing a completely new work entitled *Border Romance*.

Wood expected a professional service from composers — the music had to reach him well in advance of the performance and he did not allow his orchestra's time to be wasted through errors in the parts. He emphasises this point to Drysdale, stating: "make sure your parts are note perfect."<sup>48</sup> Possibly, he was aware of Drysdale's reputation for leaving work until the last possible moment. *Border Romance* was first performed on 8 October 1904 by the Queen's Hall Orchestra at a Promenade Concert in London conducted by Wood. *The Times* noted that "the programme was of the popular order ... and not only was practically every seat occupied, but the so-called promenade was literally packed."<sup>49</sup> It was an advantageous setting for a première. Drysdale's work was programmed alongside such popular fare as extracts from Thomas's *Hamlet*, *Fra Diavolo* by Auber, and the ubiquitous Tchaikovsky *1812 Overture*, a work which *The Times* reporter suggested "surely might be allowed to rest for a time".<sup>50</sup> Stewart Macpherson (*Violin Concerto in G minor*) and the Hungarian Karl Goldmark (*Sakuntala Overture*) were also represented, providing an interesting picture of music considered popular fare at that time.

The critics reaction to *Border Romance* was generally favourable. *The Times* noted that Drysdale had been one of London's 'rising stars' but that his name had, at that time, been rarely seen by the London public, as his sphere of activity had moved to Glasgow. The writer continues by providing an erudite and appropriately considered criticism of the work:

If he [Drysdale] has many more compositions in his portfolio as good as *Border Romance*, the orchestral poem played on Saturday, we sincerely hope we may soon hear them. The 'poem' has its faults; it is prolix and contains some repetitions which seem unnecessary. But there is no denying the beauty of the thematic material ... while the

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<sup>46</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 5 June 1904, Cb10-x.17/37/3

<sup>47</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 18 June 1904, Cb10-x.17/37/5

<sup>48</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 23 June 1904, Cb10-x.17/37/6

<sup>49</sup> "Concerts". *The Times*. 10 October 1904, 6c

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

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workmanship is clean, sane, and interesting, especially in the capital use of the strings. Its beauty far outweighs its prolixity, and it is of few new works that that can be said.<sup>51</sup>

The Scottish Orchestra gave the work's first performance in Scotland on 23 December 1905 at the St Andrew's Hall, Glasgow in a concert which included Liszt's symphonic poem *Tasso* and Tchaikovsky's *Marche Slave*. The *Glasgow Herald's* critic was in sarcastic mode when reviewing the concert, discussing at length the elaborate and lengthy preparations required of the 'Perfect Concert-goer' attending a performance including programme music. Drysdale had not provided a poetic basis for his work and the reviewer was unable to estimate "the degree of success he attained as a tone poet" although the themes conveyed "by their curve and general nature suggestions of Border music".<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, the critic believed that as a musician, Drysdale had produced a pleasant work and remarked:

The scoring, if it tends at times to thickness, presents some points of originality, and the piece as a whole has character, with the romantic flavour one would expect from its title.<sup>53</sup>

*Border Romance* did not fare well in the plebiscite held during this 1905–06 season of Glasgow Orchestral and Choral Union Concerts, receiving only a few votes.

In 1911, Sir Henry Wood chose *Border Romance* as one of four works to represent Scotland in a concert which was to take place as part of the "Festival of the Empire",<sup>54</sup> a celebration to mark the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary. In the event, Wood did not conduct this concert and, instead, [Sir] Alexander C. Mackenzie officiated. He removed *Border Romance* from a lengthy programme which included two of his own pieces, and works by the Scottish composers Hamish MacCunn, John MacEwen and William Wallace. There was, however, also an assortment of other pieces with spurious Scottish connections by non-native composers.<sup>55</sup> Janey Drysdale was

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> "Glasgow Choral and Orchestral Union — The Imperfect Concert-goer" *Glasgow Herald* 24 December 1905, 10a

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> This fact is corroborated in an article by 'Musicus' of the *Daily Telegraph*, which lists *Border Romance* as one of the works to be performed at the Scotch Concert to be held on 20 June 1911. See 'Musicus', "Festival of Empire Music", *Daily Telegraph*, 18 March 1911 in Henry George Farmer "Cuttings on Music in Scotland", Farmer 219/70

<sup>55</sup> A review of this concert does not appear in either *The Times* or the *Glasgow Herald*. The Press was completely caught-up with the arrangements for the coronation on 22 June and presumably the Scotch Concert review did not equate in import with this great event. *MT* lists the works performed and little else.

furious at this decision and asked Mackenzie to reinstate *Border Romance* in the programme, but he replied that it was impossible to represent all Scots composers — he had only one rehearsal for the concert and there was no time to rehearse Drysdale's piece adequately.<sup>56</sup> Mackenzie's attitude is somewhat difficult to justify considering the inclusion of two of his own pieces and the assortment of pseudo-Scots music on offer. As previously discussed (cf. 50–2), relations between Mackenzie and Drysdale had been soured by a disagreement towards the end of the latter's career at the RAM and it seems reasonable to suggest that a negative bias is evident in Mackenzie's handling of the later situation. Janey Drysdale appealed for assistance from Arthur Balfour (leader of the Conservative Opposition) who was a native of East Lothian. Balfour seems to have been sympathetic to Janey's predicament, but in his reply to her he explains:

I have nothing to do with the music selection for the Scotch Concert or the International Music Congress.... [However], no personal consideration [of Mackenzie's] should be allowed to modify the programme.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, without the aid of any powerful Scottish ally, Janey was defeated; Mackenzie's view prevailed and the concert went ahead without Drysdale's music. Although *Border Romance* did receive several performances during the years following Drysdale's death (including at Bournemouth under the baton of Dan Godfrey<sup>58</sup>), the lack of published performance material has severely restricted its production.

As previously stated (cf. 101), Drysdale was strongly influenced by the folklore of his mother's native Borders and several of his compositions have connections with the area. For example, *Herondean* conveys general impressions of the locale while works such as *The Spirit of the Glen* (1888) and *Tamlane* (1901–5) have their basis in Border ballad. Programme notes and reviews contemporary with the first performances of *Border Romance* emphasise that the composer disclaimed any intention of illustrating a definite programme or telling a particular story. Instead, they stress that Drysdale wished to

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<sup>56</sup> Mackenzie to Janey Drysdale, 24 March 1911, Farmer 311/14

<sup>57</sup> Balfour to Janey Drysdale, 11 May 1911, Farmer 310/15. This was the Fourth Congress of the Internationale Musik-Gesellschaft held in London in the Summer of 1911. Mackenzie was instrumental in bringing this conference to Britain and at his committee's request Balfour acted as president. The congress was a great showpiece for British music with twenty-eight native composers being represented, however, Drysdale was not included. For further details see Sir Alexander Campbell Mackenzie *A Musicians Narrative* (London: Cassell, 1927) 228–232.

<sup>58</sup> [Sir] Dan Godfrey *Memories and Music: Thirty-five Years of Conducting* (London: Hutchinson, 1924) 299. This performance took place before Godfrey became acquainted with Janey Drysdale and was a result of his quest to promote the cause of British music.

convey the impressions and emotions aroused by the Scottish Borders and the romantic landscapes associated with James Hogg and Sir Walter Scott. The Queen's Hall programme further notes that "whilst depicting several phases of nature, the music aims at suggesting also human emotions to the hearer."<sup>59</sup> In this manner, *Border Romance* fulfils its composer's intentions – an abstract piece of music. Nevertheless, when the impressions conveyed by the title are juxtaposed with the musical language employed, the listener is certainly presented with ample material to suggest Scots music. Drysdale's objective was not unique; John McEwen when discussing his orchestral ballad *Grey Galloway* (1904–6) with the conductor [Sir] Donald Tovey expressed similar aims stating, "there is no legend to serve as 'programme' to this piece of pure music. It is called a ballad as certain compositions by Chopin are called Ballades."<sup>60</sup> Drysdale's composition appears in work lists and programmes under two names — *Border Romance* and *Border Ballad* — and is described by the composer as an orchestral poem.<sup>61</sup> 'Romance' has been a common vocal form in Europe since the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. In Spain and Italy (where it was known as 'romanza'), the term nearly always indicated a ballad and this fact might provide the link between Drysdale's alternative titles. In the nineteenth century, the terms were applied most frequently to small-scale pieces with no common formal structure such as Chopin's piano Ballades or Schumann's *Drei Romanzen* op.28. True to its title, *Border Romance* does not conform to any distinct formal structure. It is a substantial work which contains some elements of both sonata and rondo form (although it is not a 'sonata rondo'): there is an overall three-part structure where the themes presented in Section 1 are contrasting in both key and style as is usual in sonata form. These melodies are developed in Section 2, before two further themes are announced. Elements of Sections 1 and 2 are then partially recapitulated, albeit in new keys, with the order of appearance of Theme 1 being reversed; the closing statement of Themes 2 and 1 function as a coda. Similarity to rondo structure can be observed through the recurring statements of Theme 1, which are interspersed with the opposing Themes 2, 3 and 4. The following table shows the structure schematically:

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<sup>59</sup> Programme: "Queen's Hall Concert", 8 October 1904, tipped in the full score of *Border Romance*, Cb10-y.13

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in "J.B. McEwen: *Grey Galloway*, a Border Ballad for Full Orchestra" Donald Francis Tovey *Essays in Musical Analysis* 6 vols (London: OUP, 1937) IV, 161.

<sup>61</sup> "List of works by Learmont Drysdale", [1908], in Cb10-y.6

**Table 14:** Structure, melodic material and tonality employed in *Border Romance*

Section	Melodic material	Main key
Introduction	Theme 1	F# Minor
<u>Section 1</u>	Theme 1 Theme 2 Two-bar link	F# minor D major
<u>Section 2</u> — development of:	Theme 1. On occasion, this theme is combined with the initial phrase of the hymn tune “St. Anne” and with elements of Theme 2. Four-bar modulatory link. Theme 3 — jig-like melody. Six-bar link. Theme 4 Simultaneous statements of elements from Themes 1 and 2.	A Minor E Major  G# minor  Bb Major Bb Minor
<u>Section 3</u> — recapitulation of:	Theme 2 — contracted version. Theme 1 — initially compete but then successive statements of the opening two bars. Theme 4 — a statement of Theme 1 also appears as the music drives towards its main climax.	E major  A Major
<u>Coda</u>	Theme 2 in augmentation. Theme 1 ( <i>Maestoso</i> tempo) appears in the bass, decorated by a triplet figuration of mainly repeated pitches in the remainder of the orchestra.	A major

Continuity between both larger-scale and shorter sections is frequently effected by avoiding full cadential points of root progressions and substituting second inversion tonic resolutions for perfect cadences (see Ex.9.20). The failure of the bass note to return to the tonic drives the music forward, providing continuity.

Modal melody and gapped scales are prominent, providing the main themes with much of their Scottish flavour. Theme 1 is in Dorian mode with the flattened seventh in both melody and harmonic support. In the Introduction, this theme is treated imitatively by woodwind and horns accompanied by a drone effect in strings (Ex.9.12a), but in Section 1, it appears in very different guise, march-like, with military-style rhythms in the percussion and punctuating chords in the brass accompaniment (Ex.9.12b). The technique of transformation of themes is also employed with each of the main melodies having several variants (see Ex.9.13a & b and 9.16a, b & c). There is, moreover, a degree of similarity in the construction of these themes with their basic elements being found in the initial phrase of Theme 1 (Ex.9.12b, cells *a*, *b* and *c*) as outlined in the

following examples. Within these, the affixation of “” to a cell indicates a melodic variation while a numeral designates a harmonic derivative such as found in cell ‘**b2**’ which begins on the tonic rather than the fifth of the scale as in the parent motif (Ex.9.15, 9.17 and 9.18).



During Section 2, Drysdale develops elements from Theme 1 in a number of ways, including:

1. Intervallic extension where the second phrase is altered to produce a self-contained melody which is passed between various instruments (Ex.9.13a, cell 'c');
2. Intervallic variations where the pitches of the initial phrase, cells 'a' and 'b', are altered (Ex.9.13b);
3. Sequential extension of the opening phrase, cells 'a' and 'b' (Ex.9.13c).

**Ex.9.13 — Section 2: Development of Theme 1 (a), (b) and (c)**

(a)

(b)

(c)

Textural developments of Theme 1 and its derivatives includes both their combination with various countermelodies and treating elements of the initial phrase imitatively. Moreover, in this and many other passages, Drysdale employs textures which include different versions of Theme 1 played simultaneously (Ex.9.14).

Ex.9.14 — Development: imitative treatment of ‘a’ and its derivatives

The musical score for Ex.9.14 is for three woodwinds: Flute (fl), Oboe (ob), and Clarinet (cl). The tempo is marked [Allegro giojoso]. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score shows a development of a theme through imitative treatment across the instruments. The first staff (fl) has a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The second staff (ob) has a similar melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The third staff (cl) has a similar melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The score continues with further imitative treatment across the instruments.

Theme 2 is in root pentatonic mode. Initially appearing in ‘cello, its folk quality is enhanced by Scotch snap rhythms and a dominant drone. Nevertheless, when compared with other themes within the work, it has a weaker sense of melodic direction.

Ex.9.15 — Section 1, Theme 2

The musical score for Ex.9.15 is for a full orchestra. The tempo is marked Allegro Giojoso. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score shows a development of Theme 2 through various instrumental parts. The first staff (vnl) has a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The second staff (vn2/va) has a similar melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The third staff (hrs) has a similar melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The fourth staff (f vc) has a similar melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The fifth staff (db/timp) has a similar melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The sixth staff (hn) has a similar melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The score continues with further imitative treatment across the instruments.

Section 1 contains several developments of this theme: a rhythmical and melodic variant, which appears simultaneously with the original melody, extends its initial entry (Ex.9.16a) while the thematic intervals that comprise its ‘a’ derivative are developed at length (Ex.9.16b). A further variant then appears and is passed between the upper woodwinds and first violin (Ex.9.16c).

Ex.9.16 — Section 1, Theme 2: thematic developments

(a)



(b)



(c)



Theme 3 is in Aeolian mode with a prominent flattened seventh appearing in both melody and harmony. Its traditional flavour is enhanced by the use of the double tonic progression, a dance-like meter and grace notes, all supported by a tonic drone. It is an apt representation of a Scottish bagpipe performing a jig. Simultaneously, slow-moving harmonies in the horns add a rich and somewhat contrasting element within the orchestral timbre.

Ex.9.17 — Section 2, Theme 3

[Allegro gioioso]  
Meno mosso

vn2/va + ob/cl 8ve higher + hn sustained

harp/vc/db + hn sus G# pedal

Double tonic progressions

Hn with bass

Theme 4 is a simple melody in root pentatonic mode which appears initially in the cor anglais.<sup>62</sup>

**Ex.9.18** — Section 2, Theme 4

On occasion, elements from the different themes and their derivatives combined to produce further developments in texture and melodic variety. For example, at the close of Section 2 elements of Theme 1 and Theme 2 appear simultaneously.

**Ex.9.19** — Section 2, combination of derivatives of Themes 1 and 2

<sup>62</sup> This theme appears in a birthday letter sent from Drysdale to his sister Janey on 24 July 1904 (see Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, Cb10-y.13). As previously stated (cf. 150–1), it is also found in the choral ballad *Earl Haldane's Daughter* (1901) and the dramatic cantata *Tamlane*.

Although diatonicism predominates in *Border Romance*, chords with added sevenths, ninths and elevenths, and a variety of chromatic chords provide rich colouring. Modal harmonies and, in particular, chords constructed on the flattened seventh degree of the scale, are employed frequently (See Exs 9.12a and 9.17). Nonetheless, in 1904 this harmonic language is backward looking when the style of some of Drysdale's contemporaries is considered. The music of Debussy and Sibelius had appeared in Britain by this time. Moreover, chromatic works by Schoenberg and Stravinsky were in existence although they were not yet known in British concert halls. The harmonic language of *Border Romance* is decidedly old fashioned when compared to such 'modern' works.

As demonstrated in Table 14, the main tonal areas of the work centre round the tertiary shift. The tonality of Section 1 is based round a tertiary shift associated with F# minor — D major, while the opening of Section 2 is in A minor and the final theme of the recapitulation and coda are in A major. This relationship provides tonal cohesion within the outer sections of the work and balances the exploration of more remote tonalities in the central area where a new tonal relationship of E major and G# minor is employed, although the other main key used in this section, Bb major, is only a tone distant from G# minor. A minor provides the link between Sections 1 and 2 (i.e. a tertiary key of F# minor, while V of A minor = I of E major). Generally, tonal areas within each section are clearly defined and closely related keys used, with moves to the dominant and relative minor/major of established tonalities being most commonly found. Nevertheless, chromatic writing does occur. Sudden chromatic shifts of key are a common feature and, occasionally, tonality is suspended briefly by sequential progressions of seventh chords (major/minor and diminished) supported by chromatic bass lines. These devices are often associated with the tonal anchor of a pedal point, which serves to strengthen the prevailing tonality. Although the most frequently employed method of modulation is via common chords, there are also more highly developed techniques used, including shifts via a sustained note or notes common to both tonalities, chromatic shifts, and enharmonic change. The link between Sections 2 and 3 consists of a series of chords moving by chromatic shift over drones (unusually, a diminished fifth — B–F) before a move via the common note B and a chromatic shift leads onto the dominant seventh of E major.

Ex.9.20

Sketch

[Allegro gioioso, pui mosso]

ob

hns

trbs

bass trb/  
tuba

db

*pizz*

Dominant pedal      G#dim7      G7

*Allegro gioioso*

tim.

melodia marcato

bn/vc

C#7      E Major: V7

Common tone and chromatic shift

In Section 2 during the concluding bars of Theme 3, there is an unusual example of a chromatic and enharmonic modulation (Ex.9.21). The F#<sup>7</sup> chord functions both as a German sixth (i.e. the seventh is rising to the fifth of the new key) and as a seventh chord, the viola part falling to the third. Thus, there are two simultaneous but different resolutions of the same progression. Whether Drysdale intended this is difficult to assess — it may simply be an error in his part writing.

Ex.9.21 — Section 2, Theme 3: differing resolution

Harmonic sketch

Va only

F#7

Bb

*Border Romance* requires an orchestra using Drysdale's basic configuration (cf. 111–2) with the addition of a cor anglais and a variety of percussion. The work contains some notable orchestration and there are many unusual combinations of instruments often involving the use of the mellow timbres of cornet and cor anglais. For example, the initial appearance of Theme 4 is presented by the cor anglais accompanied by the subdued timbre of muted tremolo violins (see Ex.9.18). When restated, *Divisi* violins present the theme in double octaves supported by block harmonies in cornets, lower brass and strings, with the arpeggiated harp accompaniment adding an ethereal effect to this unusual timbre. Allied to this vibrant orchestration is Drysdale's employment of various textures and figurations within the inner parts. Theme 2 initially appears in 'cello and clarinet over a syncopated chordal accompaniment (Ex.9.15). On its repetition two octaves higher, the theme is supported by an elaborate texture, including semiquaver figuration in clarinets, violas and 'cellos, which provides a stark contrast between the statements.

Ex.9.22 — Section 1, Theme 2

Sketch of main textures

[Allegro gioioso]

cls + va/divisi vc in lower register

mf hns (+ A pedal 8vc lower)

cr1/2 8vc lower

p trbns

vn1/vn2 8vc lower + fl variant

f

divisi vc

f

db + bn/b.trb/timp. variants (p)

Such figurations also play a prominent part during the development of Theme 1, where they are simultaneous with chorale-like statements of the hymn tune “St Anne” in brass and lower strings. It is a highly successful tension-raising device.

**Ex.9.23** — Section 2, Theme 1: combination with the hymn tune “St Anne”

sketch

"St Anne"

Crts/trbs/tba  
+ va/db

throughout in harp  
divisi +8ve lower

vns 1 & 2

Theme 1 developed through sequential extension

+cl

+va

+bn

When compared with Drysdale’s earlier works in the orchestral genre, *Border Romance* demonstrates a marked development in the composer’s style. Melodic and rhythmic ideas are more fully explored and there is a previously unseen complexity in many of his textures. Moreover, the ease with which he fuses traditional folk idioms with the musical style of the period is admirable. The work does have weaker aspects — some sections are repetitious and thus, rather prolonged, a fault not completely mitigated by Drysdale’s use of contrasting orchestration or varied accompaniment figures. The short cuts annotated on the manuscript score remedy this fault and effectively tighten the work’s structure. It is, however, unclear who made these alterations: it is possible that Drysdale reacted to the press criticism of prolixity or undertook the changes on the advice of Henry Wood, but it was unusual for him to alter works after completion. It seems most likely that a later conductor such as Dan Godfrey made the changes in an effort to display the work to best effect. There is also occasional loss of important melodic material through dense scoring. For example, in the second theme of Section 1 an already full accompaniment is further complicated by semiquaver figurations in clarinets, violas and ‘cellos (Ex.9.22). The clarinet parts are difficult to execute being centred round the most awkward area of the instrument’s compass (i.e. the break from

Bb–C) — even a professional player would struggle to achieve the light rippling effect the composer surely intended. These minor faults are outweighed by the work’s many positive attributes. It is vigorous and expressive in turn, and vibrantly scored with vivid, and occasionally startling, orchestral timbres. Drysdale presents attractive, well-crafted and thoroughly contrasting thematic material that is imaginatively developed and supported by an interesting variety of harmonic language. There is use of a diverse range of textures, the most notable being the incorporation of the hymn tune “St Anne” into Section 2, a rather surprising and unfathomable quotation. It seems to be the only time that Drysdale employs a known tune in an original composition without there being a discernable reason.<sup>63</sup>

Regardless of these many attributes, this complex work has to be heard before its merits can be fully recognised and evaluated, a situation which can only be rectified by easily accessible performing material and the support of sympathetic conductors.

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<sup>63</sup> This device is employed in the opera *Red Spider* and the choral ode *The British Tribute to France*, but in each of these cases, the melodies used are directly related to the prevailing text (e.g. the insertion of “God save the King” and “La Marseillaise” in the latter work).

#### 9.4 Instrumental Music for small forces

As Appendix 1 demonstrates, Drysdale composed many small-scale instrumental works, an opus which consists mainly of pieces for piano solo and for melodic instruments with piano accompaniment. He showed little interest in writing for chamber ensemble with the only work originally conceived in this format being the early trio for clarinet, bassoon and piano written in December 1889 and later adapted for the more traditional forces of violin, cello and piano. The unusual instrumental combination of the first version suggests its composition for a specific group of players — probably the composer himself and clarinet- and bassoon-playing friends from the RAM — a supposition supported by the domestic location of the work’s first performance: “Isaac’s ‘At Home’ in Feb. 1890”.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Drysdale seems to have composed many of his instrumental pieces for a particular purpose. He wrote the organ piece *Gavotte in Bb* for performance at the Edinburgh International Exhibition of 1886, providing an early chance to demonstrate publicly both compositional and performing skills. Some piano solos were destined for the commercial market: many are in a style similar to numerous others composed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries — light-weight and simplistic, focusing on dances, marches and character pieces, and destined to appeal to the amateur. *Ballade* was composed for Drysdale’s friend Emile Sauret, professor of violin at the RAM from 1890–1903.

The following short discussion concentrates on pieces for the instruments most favoured by Drysdale (and with composers of the period in general): compositions for piano solo and for violin with piano accompaniment.

*Ballade* for violin and piano is a short character piece inspired by ballad form. Drysdale does not specify a particular text as his stimulus and in this manner, the piece is similar to *Border Romance* where he disclaimed any intention of illustrating a definite programme, his rationale being to convey the impressions and emotions aroused by romantic Lowland landscapes (cf. 262–3). There is no external evidence to verify if this principle was applied to *Ballade*. Nevertheless, the resulting music is similar — an abstract piece whose title provides the setting, and where the musical language and

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<sup>64</sup> Annotation on work list in Jane Crichton Drysdale “Scottish Composers...” 28. See copy: M21495, Arts Department, ML, Glasgow.

structures employed present material suggesting balladry. At some point, the accompaniment of this work was arranged for the unusual combination of harp and strings, but the autograph of this version does not survive and thus, the arrangement is not directly attributable to Drysdale.<sup>65</sup>

*Ballade* has the following form:

**Table 15:** Schematic analysis of *Ballade*

Section	Tonality and modulation	Significant features
Introduction	B major	Compound triple metre. Derived from A.
A	B major. The music moves towards the dominant at the conclusion of the section.	Hexatonic melodic line.
Modulatory link	Enharmonic and chromatic change.	
B	Eb major	
Modulatory link	Modulation effected through chromatic shift.	
C	G major	Hexatonic melodic line.
Link		A cadenza. The section features numerous trills and several sections of ornamental passagework. In the chamber version, long notes and pauses indicate where the soloist must improvise.
A'		
Extended Link	B major	
Coda	B major	Opens in simple-triple metre before returning to compound time. The melodic line is coloured by the instruction <i>sur G corde</i> to the solo violinist.

*Ballade* shows limited evidence of features drawn directly from traditional music. Although some sections employ hexatonic melodies, the accompanying harmony is not modal — for example, chords associated with the flattened seventh are not employed and consequently, the double tonic effect is completely absent. Conversely, diatonicism predominates, richly coloured by a variety of chromatic harmonies and chords with added sevenths, ninths and elevenths while tonality is based around tertiary shifts: B major to Eb (D#) major and G major. Nevertheless, balladry is suggested by lilting,

<sup>65</sup> Although an autograph solo violin part held by the NLS may belong to this arrangement (see MS3212), the score survives only in copies made by Janey Drysdale. Moreover, the arrangement only appears as a later annotation on Drysdale's autograph work list of 1907 (most likely an addition by Janey) and on catalogues prepared after his death.

expansive melodies with frequently varying phrase lengths (Ex.9.24a), the bardic effect being enhanced in Sections C and A' by an arpeggiated accompaniment in which irregular groupings are numerous — cross-rhythm frequently occurs, producing a significant degree of rhythmical complexity as well as powerful emotional intensity (Ex.9.24b). The insertion of duplets within the prevailing compound metre in the main themes further increases rhythmical interest (Ex.9.24)

**Ex.9.24** — *Ballade*: (a) Section A, main melody showing varying phrase lengths and use of duplets;  
 (b) Section C, use of irregular groupings

(a)

Violin

*A tempo [Andante]*  
*mf*  
*Poco rall*

*A tempo*  
*Poco accel*

(b)

*A tempo [Andante]*

Violin

Piano

*largamente*

*f*

*p*

*cres*

*f*

That a violinist (and possibly the dedicatee) made a contribution to this composition is suggested by some of the more advanced technical writing for violin found. The execution of passages such as Ex.9.24b would require a player of considerable skill while the coda (Ex.9.25) contains a feature that does not appear in any other Drysdale

work: a long section of *sul G corde* applied to a considerable portion of the instrument's compass — it provides a haunting conclusion to this atmospheric piece.<sup>66</sup>

### Ex.9.25 — Coda

The musical score for the Coda consists of three systems. The first system shows the Violin and Piano parts. The Violin part is marked *Tempo one [Andante]* and *Sul G corde*. The Piano part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system continues the Violin and Piano parts, with the Violin part marked *rall* and *Perdendosi*, and the Piano part marked *p*. The third system concludes the piece, with the Violin part marked *pp* and the Piano part marked *ppp*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Although the manuscript of *Ballade* is not dated, Janey Drysdale states that it was written in 1892, coinciding with the period during which both Drysdale and Sauret were associated with the RAM (1890–1892). Sauret seems not to have performed the piece publicly, but a fellow student of Drysdale's played it at a RAM concert soon after its

<sup>66</sup> Bars 4 and 5 show remarkable harmonic, melodic and rhythmic similarity with the conclusion of the Love Duet in *The Kelpie* (see Ex.8.46).

composition.<sup>67</sup> Although *Ballade* was not published, it did receive some performances in the following years<sup>68</sup> and when Sauret was informed of these, he noted: “I am so glad your brother’s *Ballade* dedicated to me is being played with means, it certainly deserves to be known as it is most charming.”<sup>69</sup>

The Sonatina for piano<sup>70</sup> is a short single-movement work. Although its title suggests a composition in several movements, the source material does not indicate that anything other than a stand-alone piece was intended. In other aspects, the work conforms to the normal use of the term “sonatina” — a short, easy and otherwise light sonata. As shown in Table 16, the piece follows the standard plan for such a movement (i.e. sonata form with a short development).

**Table 16: Structure, tonality and significant features in Sonatina**

Section	Tonality	Significant features
Exposition 1 <sup>st</sup> subject	G Major	Use of non-coinciding phrasing between the hands. The accompaniment is dominated by an arpeggiated quaver figuration (Ex.9.26a).
Transition	A passing hint of the mediant minor leads to the dominant.	Benefits from smooth modulations and a considerable degree of rhythmical and harmonic interest (Ex.9.27a).
2 <sup>nd</sup> subject	D major	The dominant key is emphasised by a lengthy D pedal. A block-chord accompaniment predominates (Ex.9.26b).
Development	Unsettled tonality	Material from both thematic areas is developed in the order in which it appeared in the exposition.
Recapitulation	Standard recapitulation with themes in the tonic key.	The home key is emphasised by a tonic pedal sounding throughout much of the second subject and coda.
Coda	G major	

The piece is reliant on four-bar phrases (mainly in two-bar groups) with only the Transition diverging from this pattern — a single five-bar phrase is used to link it to the second subject. There is some variation in the treatment of this regular phrase pattern,

<sup>67</sup> Programme: Handwritten sheet annotated “RAM days” [i.e. 1888–1892], in Cb10-x.18

<sup>68</sup> For example, Programme: Monthly Meeting of the Dunedin Association on 20 January 1915 *Dunedin Magazine* 3 (1914–15): 122. *Ballade* and *Reverie* were performed by the violinist Isobel Marshall.

<sup>69</sup> Emile Sauret to Janey Drysdale, 12 November 1916, Farmer 308/4<sup>2</sup>

<sup>70</sup> This work is one of three Drysdale piano pieces used by Henry Farmer to form the suite *Woolwich Memories*, a title presumably used by him because he had been based at Woolwich Barracks during his army service. Farmer’s title for this movement is “Shooters Hill”.

however. At the opening of the Exposition, both parts have identical phrase lengths, but the accompaniment begins on the first beat while rests in the right-hand part displace the beginning of the melody, adding a degree of complexity to the passage which would be absent if the phrasing coincided (Ex.9.26a). The second subject is enhanced by phrase contraction effected by the insertion of a bar of triple metre (Ex.9.26b).

**Ex.9.26 — Phrasing: (a) Subject 1; (b) Subject 2**

(a)

(b)

Although the melodic line contains some attractively shaped motives, there is little thematic expansion and only the Development demonstrates any degree of variation and sequential extension (Ex.9.27b). A lack of originality also pervades tonality and

harmony, with modulations being limited to the areas specified in the structural plan for sonata form. Common chords and an enharmonically changing diminished seventh in the Transition effectively shift tonality through the mediant minor (Ex.9.27a) while in the Development, greater tonal variety is created through use of diminished seventh chords, chromatic shifts, deceptive resolutions of established dominants and the mixing of parallel major and minor. In general, however, the piece is formed from simple chordal structures although some colouring is provided by added chords and chromatically altered harmonies, including several supertonic chords with flattened fifths (Ex.9.26b and Ex.9.27a and b).

**Ex.9.27 — Tonal and harmonic features: (a) Transition; (b) Development**

(a) *[Moderato]*

Ch# B min:  
dim7 I V7 IB  
Enharmonic dim 7th

F# D7 Emin Emin7b5  
[D: II II7 b5 V7 sus 4 ————3]

(b)

[Moderato]

chromatic shift

G# dim7 A7 D7 Gmin 7

Emin7 b5 A7 D

Emin7 b5 C#dim7 Dmin Emin7 b5 C#dim7

\* Mixing of parallel major and minor

Rhythmic structures are generally commonplace, though occasionally, some less mundane features do appear. In Subject 1, a flowing quaver accompaniment is placed against the dotted quaver/double dotted crotchet and semiquaver motif providing a degree of rhythmic interest (Ex.9.26a). The opening section of Subject 2 includes a cross-rhythmic effect created by triplet against duplet quavers with the rhythmical irregularity being enhanced by the insertion of the bar of triple metre. The syncopated accompaniment in much of this section further heightens rhythmical interest (Ex.9.26b).

*Valsette*<sup>71</sup> is a simple waltz movement for piano written in 1904. It is constructed using contrasting strains of mainly sixteen-bar sections, a characteristic reminiscent of the orchestral waltzes of the Strauss family. This piece, however, is more closely related to Chopin's waltzes for piano<sup>72</sup> and in particular, displays remarkable similarities in formal and rhythmic construction with his *Valse* Op.69, No.2 (see Ex.9.29 and Ex.9.30 for comparison).

<sup>71</sup> This piece forms the second movement of Farmer's suite *Woolwich Memories* where it has been given the title *Valsette: The Band Ball*.

<sup>72</sup> Also see Op.70, No.2.

*Valsette* has the following form:

**Table 17:** Structure, tonality and significant features of *Valsette*

Section	Key	Significant features
<b>Introduction</b>   :	A major	Includes several chromatic chords which are anchored to the home key by a dominant pedal. The considerable degree of rhythmic drive found in this section is not maintained in the main body of the piece (Ex.9.28).
<b>A (a)</b> — 32 bars {8-bar sections} <b>(b)</b> — 16 bars	A major	The final eight bars are based on the Introduction. New strain which begins in the dominant, but concludes with an imperfect cadence in A major, returning the music to the opening.:
<b>B</b>   : 48 bars {16+16+16}	D major	Based on rhythmic elements drawn from A(b). The final eight bars could be considered as a short codetta. The section ends with a perfect cadence in D major :
<b>Link</b> — 8 bars	Re-establishes A major	
<b>A' (a')</b> — 32 bars	A major	The final two bars of A(a) are altered to form an imperfect cadence in A major; b is omitted.
<b>B'</b> — 16 bars	A major	Greatly curtailed version of B. The final four bars are altered to provide a link into the coda.
<b>Coda</b> — 18 bars		The constant quaver figuration of the melody and increased movement in the bass line, provides an element of rhythmic drive absent from much of piece.

**Ex.9.28** — *Valsette*, Introduction

*Tempo di Valse*

The musical score for the Introduction of *Valsette* is presented in two systems. The first system shows the piano accompaniment with a dominant pedal (Ic) and chromatic shifts in the bass line. The second system includes a *Rall.* marking and further chromatic shifts. Chords are labeled as Ic, A#dim7 (reading F# as an appog.), II7, D#dim7, Ic, II9 #3, and V7.

Four-bar phrasing is the norm, but occasional phase extension and syncopation (achieved through ties and slurs) provide a degree of structural variety and some

rhythmic drive in the A(a) sections. Nevertheless, the predominantly crotchet-minim accompaniment does not provide sufficient forward momentum and when combined with the staid rhythms found in the melodic line of the A(b) and B sections (Ex.9.29), the effect is pedestrian. The use of a livelier accompaniment figure (such as that found in the Chopin example {Ex.9.29}) would provide a greater degree of rhythmic interest.

**Ex.9.29 — Valsette: (a) Section; A; (b) Section B, third strain**

(a)

[Tempo di Valse]

tetratonic motif

syncopation

slurs used to effect syncopation

Rall.

(b)

[Tempo di Valse]

**Ex.9.30 — For comparison with Ex.9.29 Frederick Chopin *Valse* Op.69, No.2:**

(a) Opening strain with ties over barlines and six-quaver grouping;

(b) Second strain, dotted crotchet and three-quaver rhythmic grouping

(a)

Moderato

(b)

a tempo con anima

Drysdale's melodies have attractive contours and although mainly diatonic, a four-bar tetratonic motif does form the initial portion of Section A (Ex.9.29a). The harmonic support is similarly commonplace and tonality generally relatively static, but there are occasional transient modulations to the dominant and relative minor effected by chromatic shifts. Colouring is also provided by occasional chromatic chords and altered harmonies, particularly those associated with the supertonic (see Ex.9.28 and Ex.9.31).

**Ex.9.31** — *Valsette*, Section A, part b

The musical score for Ex.9.31 is in 3/4 time, key of E major (two sharps), and marked "[Tempo di valse]". It consists of a melody in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The piano part features a chromatic shift from E to F# minor. The chords are labeled as E:I, F#min: VIIo7, and I.

Both the *Sonatina* and *Valsette* are written sympathetically for piano, are well structured, and demonstrate some evidence of rhythmic and melodic inspiration. Nevertheless, they contain little in the way of thematic development and much of the writing is commonplace — straightforward modulations, lack-lustre harmonic progressions and foursquare phrasing predominate. The *Sonatina* appears to be constrained by its structure, suggesting, initially, that it was composed at a time when Drysdale's compositional technique would not allow him to transcend the formal 'rules' of sonata form. The work is not dated, but this reliance on formal structure and the generally simplistic harmonic progressions suggest an early composition date. Moreover, the manuscript contains numerous inaccuracies and notational errors, including omitted accidentals and incorrectly placed stems.<sup>73</sup> The piece cannot have been composed before he entered the RAM (a period when he wrote many piano pieces), as the manuscript is signed "Learmont Drysdale", a signature he used only after 1888, but it seems probable that it was written soon after this time. The later *Valsette* is competently written, but suffers from limited rhythmic drive and a lack of textural contrasts — it frequently does not capture the spirit of a waltz. As a pianist, Drysdale

<sup>73</sup> Works written before Drysdale's entry to the RAM generally have descending stems placed on the right of a note head rather than the left. This notational error disappears in later manuscripts.

would have been familiar with the instrumental waltzes of Chopin,<sup>74</sup> but this simple composition has more similarities with the parlour-type pieces written for the extensive amateur market of the time.

*Ballade* contains none of the above faults. Its programme, if any, is hidden, but it contains well-shaped melodies, appropriately diverse rhythms and phrase structures, and colourful tonality. When combined with idiomatic use of the violin's expressive tone qualities and a sensitive accompaniment, such features capture the prevailing mood, which is alternately expansive, passionate and haunting. It is probably Drysdale's most successful small-scale instrumental piece.

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<sup>74</sup> In correspondence, Drysdale notes that he played Chopin's Ballades and Polonaises, but the Waltzes are not mentioned. Nevertheless, it is probable that Drysdale would also have been familiar with these works.



**The Life and Work of (George John) Learmont Drysdale  
(1866–1909)**

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## 10. Introduction to Drysdale's Theatrical Works

A considerable part of Drysdale's professional life was devoted to writing for the theatre. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive account of every composition Drysdale wrote for the genre, this introductory section discusses a number of pieces, often in relation to a particular facet of their genesis, composition or production. Table 18 provides a complete list of Drysdale's compositions for the theatre. It gives background details about each work and in some instances provides the only extant information about a piece. The main body of discussion takes place in subsequent chapters where there is a detailed examination of specific works. With so many compositions lost or incomplete, the finished ones almost selected themselves for discussion here. These pieces contain a wealth of interesting detail in relation to their genesis, genre, composition, and performance history and provide a representative overview of Drysdale's theatrical work as a whole.

**Table 18:** A list of Drysdale's theatrical ventures

Date	Title (genre)	Acts	Librettist(s) <sup>1</sup>	Notes <sup>2</sup>
c.1894–6	<i>The Plague</i> (melodrama)	1	Ian Robertson	Produced in Edinburgh, October 1896.
1895	<i>In Office Hours</i> (operetta)	1	Ernst Kuhe	Complete, not traced.
1895–7	<i>Red Spider</i> (comic opera)	3	S. Baring-Gould	Toured 1898. Published 1898: four songs (Ascherberg) and text of songs and choruses (Tamblyn).
1897	<i>The Oracle</i> (comic opera)	2	A.W. Gattie/ F.S. Pilleau	Was considered for the Broadway Theatre in 1897. Lost by 1912.
1899– 1900	Un-named theatre work		Arthur Branscombe <sup>3</sup>	Opening chorus discussed in letters of Autumn 1899.
1902	<i>The Girl From London</i> (light opera)	2	Reginald Rutter	Not traced. Incomplete.
1902	<i>The Vikings</i> (light opera)	2	Claude Burton/ Louis Tracy <sup>4</sup>	Incomplete.
1902–3	<i>Flora Macdonald</i> (romantic opera)	3	Several (see later)	Incomplete.

<sup>1</sup> Details about librettists are provided only where these persons have not been discussed in the main text of the thesis.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix I for location of manuscripts.

<sup>3</sup> Actor, dramatist and manager of the theatrical company "Arthur Branscombe's London Combination" (for further information regarding this company see: "Music Hall Reports" *Barr's Professional* 6 October 1900, 5). Branscombe's works include the highly successful musical comedy *Morocco Bound* (1893) which toured in 1898 around the circuit of theatres staging *Red Spider*. It is possible that Branscombe and Drysdale met during this period.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly a journalist (1863–1928) residing in London at the time of the 1901 census. He later became a prolific novel and mystery writer who wrote under both his own name and that of Gordon Holmes. See: <http://users.ev1.net/~homeville/fictionmag/q91.htm>

Date	Title (genre)	Acts	Librettist(s) <sup>1</sup>	Notes <sup>2</sup>
1902–3	<i>Long and Short</i> (musical sketch)	1	George Thorne <sup>5</sup>	Not traced. Complete. <sup>6</sup>
1905	<i>Hippolytus</i> (incidental music)	2	Euripides, translated by Gilbert Murray	Produced in Glasgow, 1905.
1908–9	<i>Fionn and Tera</i> (grand opera)	2	J.D.S. Campbell, ninth Duke of Argyll	Unfinished. Completed by David Stephen. Libretto published by Cuthbertson, 1912.
Nd	Burlesque Comic opera		W.H. Sams <sup>7</sup>	Not traced. Written for The Borellis. <sup>8</sup>
Nd	<i>The Martyrs of Solway</i>		James L. Mackenzie	Plot, initial sketches and one unfinished song extant.

As observed in Table 18, several manuscripts are incomplete, few of the finished pieces reached production and no work was published in its entirety. Moreover, while the majority of Drysdale's manuscripts are extant, a significant proportion of the theatrical material is missing (see Appendix I for full details). The following discussion will examine a number of possible reasons for this limited success in a medium on which Drysdale expended considerable effort.

Although Drysdale was well aware of the advantages of collaborating with a reputable author, he never managed to secure the services of a well-known and respected writer for the theatre.<sup>9</sup> As previously stated, he had unsuccessfully approached Bernard Shaw in 1895 (cf. 63) and was later to seek through the services of Alfred Gattie a partnership with Arthur Ropes (also known as Adrian Ross), one of the foremost librettists of musical comedy of the time.<sup>10</sup> Gattie had persuaded Ropes to examine Drysdale's work

<sup>5</sup> There are two possible identities for this librettist: 1 — a song writer (born Gloucester c.1860) living in London at the time of the 1901 Census; 2 — an actor born in Surrey in 1856 (d.1922) who was associated with the D'Oyly Carte travelling companies and wrote texts for burlesques, sketches and comic operas. He was also a member of the Garrick Club, Edinburgh, thus providing a link with Drysdale's home city. For further details see: Bampton Hunt ed. *The Green Room Book...* 335.

<sup>6</sup> Although an annotation on the autograph work list drawn up by Drysdale c.1908 implies that this work was performed, no further evidence has been discovered to corroborate this.

<sup>7</sup> Most likely the actor William H. Sams born in Scotland c.1878.

<sup>8</sup> A Señor Alfred (place of birth Corlemile, Italy) and a Madame Anita Borelli (p.o.b. New York) were residing in Halifax, Yorkshire at the time of the 1901 Census with occupations listed as musical artists. They appeared as "The Borellis, a musical speciality/absurdity" on several occasions at the prestigious Glasgow and Edinburgh Empire Palace Theatres during the 1900s.

<sup>9</sup> Helen Carte's (wife of Richard D'Oyly Carte) opinion was that Arthur Pinero, W. S. Gilbert and Sidney Grundy were the thoroughly well-known and successful authors of the time. See Helen Carte to Drysdale, 27 October 1897, Cb10-x.17/49<sup>7bis</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Gattie to MacNab [Drysdale], 8 October 1898, box 55.8/13 — Miscellaneous third party correspondence: F–H, Shaw Collection, HRC. Ross collaborated with Arthur Branscombe and the composer F. Osmond Carr on *Morocco Bound* providing a further link between Drysdale and these parties. The nickname 'MacNab' appears on Gattie's letters to Drysdale written after December 1897.

and had even reached the stage of suggesting terms, outlining the agreement reached between the collaborators for *The Oracle* (however, the details of this arrangement are unknown). This is the only reference relating to the proposed venture — it is not known if Drysdale even sent his music to Ropes for examination.

Generally, Drysdale had to work with authors of, at best, limited experience in writing for the theatre and the prevalence of the amateur librettist among his collaborators suggests that many ventures were the result of personal contacts. Although the ideas resulting from these partnerships may have been worthy, momentum might have been difficult to maintain when time and money were required to bring plans to fruition. Drysdale's sister Janey and several of his friends feature in the above list as well as some more prominent figures, namely the ninth Duke of Argyll and Sabine Baring-Gould. Argyll, a dilettante whose interests centred on Celtic folklore, had some relevant experience as he had provided Hamish MacCunn with the libretti for his operas *Diarmid* (1897) and *Breast of Light* (unfinished, c.1898). *Diarmid* was produced and ran for a number of performances (including a command event for Queen Victoria<sup>11</sup>), but it could not be considered a major success. Although Baring-Gould was a respected author, he had little knowledge of theatrical matters. Nonetheless, it is probable that Drysdale saw advantages in collaborating with such high profile figures, considering their influence an asset when seeking backers or encouraging managements to support their work. Argyll certainly attempted 'string-pulling' when making arrangements for both the *Franco-British Ode* and the production of *Fionn and Tera*, but this did little to further these ventures particularly from Drysdale's perspective. In Alfred Gattie, Drysdale did find a writer with considerable experience in the theatrical field (albeit that he, like Argyll, was also a dilettante) — by the time of his collaboration in *The Oracle*, Gattie had written several plays which had reached production. The quality of his work is questionable, however. Shaw discusses Gattie's *The Honourable Member* in his diary of 1896 and finds some merit in the play at an idealistic level:

*The Honourable Member* [...] is a remarkable play; not because the author, Mr Gattie, is either a great dramatic poet or even, so far, a finished playwright; but because he seems conversant with ethical, social, and political ideas which have been fermenting for the last fifteen years.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Hindmarsh "Learmont Drysdale and Hamish MacCunn" *British Opera in Retrospect* ed. Stanley Mears ([London]: British Music Society, 1986) 75

<sup>12</sup> Ed. Sydney Weintraub *Bernard Shaw: The Diaries, 1885–1897* 2 vols (University Park, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania, 1986) 2, 1135: 16 July 1896

Another of Gattie's works *The Transgressor* was less fortunate in the criticism it attracted. During 1894, the play was produced in New York where it was heartily condemned on two occasions by the theatrical critic of the *New York Times* thus:

She [Olga Nethersole] acted [...] in an illogical, unnatural, ill-conceived rôle in one of the very worst plays ever put together, even by a modern, iconoclastic sneering Englishman.<sup>13</sup>

It is an extraordinary thing, this play, in every respect; a queer mixture of pretentious writing, ineffective bombast, feeble stagecraft, and infantile device.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, Gattie had no experience in writing libretti — he was not, in Helen D'Oyly Carte's terms, a "thoroughly well-known and respected author".<sup>15</sup> It would seem that Drysdale had again chosen unwisely.

Drysdale always liked to be involved in the process of producing a libretto and no doubt believed that with his contribution a problematic text could be improved — alterations such as strengthening a work's structure, improving characterisation and providing increased and appropriate opportunities for musical numbers were his most frequent changes. Professional authors might not have been agreeable to this form of interference from a composer, but there would have been considerably more scope for input with the amateur writer. Often Drysdale's suggestions were accepted with little argument from his collaborators — Baring-Gould and the Duke of Argyll seemed to appreciate any assistance he gave and even solicited it when unable to solve problems themselves. Such ready assent was not always forthcoming. Pilleau contested Drysdale's criticisms and strongly argued his own point of view with some success. However, Pilleau was also willing to compromise and, where he felt it justified, would alter his text to suit the needs of the music.

Drysdale's failure to follow standard theatrical practices also contributed to his lack of success in the genre. For example, in October 1897 Helen Carte reminded him that it was usual to have a libretto vetted and accepted by a theatrical manager before embarking on a project, impressing on him the folly of not following this procedure.<sup>16</sup> Drysdale was well aware of this. He had occasionally warned partners of the rashness of

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<sup>13</sup> E.A.D. ["Review of *The Transgressor*"] in *New York Theater Reviews* 2 vols (New York: New York Times, 1975): 2, 16 October 1894

<sup>14</sup> "No Further Mystery about Miss Olga Nethersole" in *New York Theater Reviews...* 2, 21 October 1894

<sup>15</sup> Helen Carte to Drysdale, 27 October 1897, Cb10-x.17/49<sup>7bis</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

rushing into projects without the libretto first being accepted by a management. A letter he wrote to Alfred Gattie during the formulation of plans for *The Oracle* illustrates this:

Until the libretto has been accepted it is no use my wasting time over the matter. Besides it is not my business at all to do this and I am certainly not going to trouble myself to run about London seeing managers.<sup>17</sup>

It would seem that an agreement with a manager fell through or that Drysdale was persuaded to continue work without securing a contract, because the collaborators were still seeking a backer when *The Oracle* was complete. Gattie seems to have learned from the experience and when he approached Arthur Ropes in 1898, he assured Drysdale that:

Nothing is definitely arranged at present but I have given it to be clearly understood that you do not intend to write a bar on trial, but that you must be commissioned.<sup>18</sup>

### 10.1 Hippolytus

It is only with his incidental music for Euripides' *Hippolytus* that Drysdale was involved with a truly worthy text. Translated in 1902 by the well-known and highly respected Professor Gilbert Murray (cf. 300, n. 29–30), Drysdale's music for this work did receive a degree of critical and academic acclaim. However, the subject matter was unlikely to attract wide-scale popularity and corresponding financial success, or as the *Scotsman's* critic reported: "the audience was select rather than large."<sup>19</sup> Although there is no direct evidence as to how the production came about, it is probable that Drysdale became acquainted with Graham Price, the producer (who himself undertook the rôle of Hippolytus), during his period of employment at the Glasgow Athenaeum. As Professor of Composition, Drysdale would have been the natural person to choose when Price, the Athenaeum's Professor of Elocution, was looking for music for his production.

The play<sup>20</sup> concerns the goddess Aphrodite's expectation that her people honour her sacred privileges — sex, passion and love. Hippolytus, the illegitimate child of Theseus, says freely that Aphrodite is despicable. Instead, he worships Artemis, goddess of chastity, childbirth and the hunt. Jealous, Aphrodite decides to punish Hippolytus through exerting her influence on his stepmother Phaidra by producing an insatiable

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<sup>17</sup> Drysdale to Gattie [draft], [November 1896], Cb9-y.5 (bound at the back of the scenario of *The Oracle*)

<sup>18</sup> Gattie to MacNab, 8 October 1898, box 55.8/13 — Miscellaneous third party correspondence: F–H, Shaw Collection, HRC

<sup>19</sup> "Greek Drama at Glasgow" *Scotsman* 1 December 1905, 7d

<sup>20</sup> Robert Bagg's edition of *Hippolytus* (London, 1974) is used for this synopsis. Murray's translation expresses the same sentiments rather more wordily but without any risqué vocabulary.

sexual longing for her stepson. Phaidra becomes wretched through unfulfilled lust and rather than be accused of incest she finally hangs herself, stating that she wishes to save her family and country [Crete] from shame. However, she leaves a tablet (the classical world's equivalent of a suicide note) stating that Hippolytus has raped her. Although Hippolytus denies these charges, his furious father refuses to believe him and uses the curses given to him by Poseidon to kill his son. Artemis then informs Theseus that his wife has lied and that his son is innocent, but it is too late, Hippolytus is dying. Theseus goes to his son, who forgives him before dying. Theseus is desolate; he will never again worship Aphrodite.

Price's production of *Hippolytus* consisted of spoken verse contrasted with eleven musical numbers which include operatic-style choruses, passages for soloists, incidental music for orchestra, and, to a much lesser extent, melodrama (see Ex.10.1). The music's primary function is to undertake the rôle of the reciting chorus which comments on, and reinforces the meaning of, the main characters' actions. Solo sections within the reciting chorus reflect any member of that group's individual comments, but Euripides never names these individuals and they always have anonymous titles such as 'a maiden' or 'an old woman', retaining the role of commentator rather than participator in the action (see Ex.10.3). The main characters' parts are spoken, with one notable exception — Hippolytus's first entry (No.2) is sung, highlighting this significant point in the action. Drysdale has not set to music all the chorus sections found in the play and some recitations are retained to provide vivid contrast at particularly important parts in the drama. For example, when the chorus comments on the power of Eros and Aphrodite and the lust they are bringing upon Phaidra, Price's version highlights the passage by using recitation rather than a musical setting.

Drysdale maintains musical coherence in the work by employing both small-scale repetition — devices such as recurring melodic and harmonic motifs — and more extensive sectional repeats. Thus, from Part II, No.10 onwards the music is based around a varied repetition of elements in Part I, and in particular, the lengthy first section of No.3. On occasion, there is a complete restatement (with slight changes in texture or voicing), whilst other sections are constructed from a few derived bars. Nevertheless, these restated passages do not seem to be associated with particular characters apart from 'hunting call' phrases being linked with Hippolytus and Artemis.

Moreover, there seems little to connect the subject matter of the source music and its restatement (it could be suggested that Drysdale was running out of ideas and time) although there is a tenuous link of death between some numbers.

The production's programme states that Price aimed to retain the elements of Greek representation which bring out the beauties of the play.<sup>21</sup> Drysdale's response to this objective is a mainly syllabic word setting within melodic lines which contain a great deal of chant-like note repetition, providing an apt representation of the rôle of reciting chorus (see Ex.10.3). Further textual representation is effected through various orchestral, harmonic, rhythmic and dynamic devices. For example, the opening of No.2 vividly recreates Hippolytus's return from the hunt with compound duple rhythms set in a mixture of harmonic intervals of a third, fourth and a fifth (linking with the Ancient Greeks' belief that fourths, fifths and octaves were consonant intervals), supported by a long dominant pedal in the lower strings.<sup>22</sup> The portrayal is enhanced by orchestration associated with the hunt — horn and cornet, an expedience where only one horn was available — while suitably increasing dynamics represent hunters and horn calls drawing closer to the scene (bar 10 onwards).

#### Ex.10.1 — Introduction

*Allegretto*

The musical score for the introduction of Hippolytus is presented in two systems. The first system shows the instrumental parts: a Horn (without) and Cornet (without) part in the upper staff, and a Piano (vc) part in the lower staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The piano part begins with a dynamic marking of *p db* and includes a *pizz* (pizzicato) instruction. The horn and cornet part features a melodic line with repeated notes and rests. The second system shows the vocal part for Aphrodite, with the lyrics "Aphrodite: But soft, here comes he striding from the chase" written above the staff. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady rhythmic pattern.

The tonality and harmonic vocabulary employed in *Hippolytus* are similar to that found in Drysdale's other mature works, with frequent use of modality, chords with roots a

<sup>21</sup> Programme: Euripides' *Hippolytus* 30 November and 1–2, 4 December 1905, Cb10-y.2/5b

<sup>22</sup> R. P. Winnington-Ingram "Greece: Ancient" *New Grove...* 7, 660, 663. Although there is no specific evidence regarding drones in Ancient Greek music, some ancient musical authorities suggest their use (see below).

third apart,<sup>23</sup> and chromatic harmonies associated with the flattened submediant. Moreover, there is prominent use of chromatic harmonies to highlight significant text, a technique which is enhanced in Ex.10.2 by the use of several disjunct, dissonant intervals in the solo contralto's melodic line as well as pounding rhythms in the accompaniment.

**Ex.10.2** — Part 1, No.3, Contralto solo

[Moderato]  
*agitato*  
 C solo  
 The bur - den of wild will and the bur - den of pain Through my heart first that  
 [p]  
 ponderous rhythms  
 E half dim  
 G#dim7  
 aug 4th  
 dim 5th  
 wind of ter - ror spread. But I in  
 f  
 p  
 G#dim  
 aug 2nd  
 fear, in fear con - fess - ed  
 molto rall  
 E half dim  
 G dominant pedal  
 aug 2nd

As in previous works, chromatic harmony creates passages of tonal obscurity that are anchored to the home key by prolonged pedal points. Drysdale carries this technique

<sup>23</sup> A device also used by other composers of the period such as Debussy (e.g. see the concluding bars of "Clair de lune").

further in *Hippolytus* by combining tonic and dominant pedals to form drone effects, possibly in the belief that such features were an integral part of ancient Greek musical style. However, as Winnington Ingram states there is no specific evidence to support this supposition although he does note that the aulos (a pair of reed-blown pipes with independent mouthpieces) may have consisted of one drone pipe, while citing Plutarch *De musica* as providing evidence of moving drones in polyphony.<sup>24</sup> It may have been a similar belief which led Drysdale's to base many of the melodies on modal or gapped scales supported by drone effects (e.g. see Ex.10.3).

**Ex.10.3** — Part 2, No.10, Opening

*Allegro* Chant-like melody in transposed Aeolian mode

T B Sure - ly the thought of the Gods hath balm in it

*f* *mf*

Tonic and dominant drones

al - ways to win me far from my griefs

When Drysdale approached Gilbert Murray about using his music in the latter's production of *Hippolytus* to be staged a few months after the Athenaeum performance, he thought the music "beautiful and interesting ... but it is quite different from the sort of thing I have used hitherto for Greek plays". In the event, Murray opted for a simpler score by Florence Farr which employed only a lyre, although he did state that this arrangement "is indeed thought disagreeable by many musical people. If ever we were

<sup>24</sup> R. P. Winnington-Ingram "Greece: Ancient" *New Grove...* 7, 659, 663 (see also H. Weil and T. Reinach ed. and French trans *Plutarque: De la musique*, Paris 1900)

to change, I think your music would be admirable.”<sup>25</sup> The use of modality and pentatonicism would probably have been regarded as a reasonable representation of Ancient Greek musical style in 1905<sup>26</sup> when there was scant knowledge of it and, in particular, the features of its sound. The position in relation to the latter is not much different today.

This version of *Hippolytus* received its first performance at the Athenaeum Hall, Glasgow on 30 November 1905 and ran for a further four evenings. It was a reasonably lavish production requiring a sizeable orchestra for the theatre,<sup>27</sup> wigmakers, costumiers and scenery<sup>28</sup> and had a number of eminent patrons including Sir John Ure and Lady Primrose, and several professors of Glasgow University.<sup>29</sup> A section of the stalls was reserved for school parties who received tickets at half price, suggesting that the producer intended to reflect Gilbert Murray’s ideology of opening the Classics to a wider audience, although the problem of students wanting “Greece on inadequate Greek” had been Murray’s original reason for the translation.<sup>30</sup> The programme states that the drama proper was acted with the minimum of movement on a raised stage, reflecting the stateliness of Greek art and drama, whilst the chorus stood apart on a lower stage. No mention is made of the positioning of the orchestra. The music for

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<sup>25</sup> Gilbert Murray to Learmont Drysdale, 27 February 1906, Farmer 310/14. Farr had been George Bernard Shaw’s lover during the 1880s and 90s, and in a letter to her of 1905, he discusses her new music for Euripides’ *Trojan Woman*, a further collaboration with Murray, thus: “Be very discreet about using modern, fashionable discords. In the *Hippolytus* towards the end, you began to ramble up and down staircases of minor thirds. The effect is modern, cheap and mechanical. Stick to the common chord, major or minor, and avoid regular sequences or figurations in a deplorable manner. I strenuously advise you not to introduce deliberate figuration of discords. ... The minute you begin to figure dim 7ths and the like, Euripides gives place to Liszt, and the harmony becomes instrumental in its suggestion.” This is the only reference traced regarding this composer’s incidental music for *Hippolytus*. See Bernard Shaw to Florence Farr, 5 March 1905, Box 34/8 — Outgoing Correspondence: D–F, George Bernard Shaw Collection, HRC

<sup>26</sup> A search of several databases (e.g. JSTORE) has unearthed few papers written by 1905 which refer to the music of the Ancient Greeks. Generally, these focus on related topics (e.g. Indian music, modes) rather than being concerned with Ancient Greek music *per se*. However, in 1897 C.F. Abdy Williams published a discussion of the subject which though mainly theoretical, has some reference to the practicalities of performance. See “Ancient Greek Music” Proceedings of the Musical Association (1897): 125–144

<sup>27</sup> 2 flutes, oboe, 2 clarinets, horn, 2 cornets, 1 tenor and 1 bass trombone, and strings.

<sup>28</sup> Programme: Euripides’ *Hippolytus* 30 November and 1–2, 4 December 1905, Glasgow, Athenaeum Hall, Cb10-y.2/5b

<sup>29</sup> Professor Gilbert Murray, holder of the Glasgow University chair of Greek from 1889–1899, was not one of these patrons. He was appointed a fellow of New College, Oxford in 1905.

<sup>30</sup> M.I. Henderson “Murray, George Gilbert Aimé” *DNB on CD-ROM*. Murray’s reasons for accepting the chair at Glasgow University included the chance to exercise his liberal ideology through expanding accessibility to the Classics by working with students who “lacked social privilege” but who were “rich in brains”. These translations began as a lecturing tool and “Glasgow men received them with Scottish stampedes of applause”.

*Hippolytus* was well received by the press with the *Glasgow Evening News* noting that it was in “dramatic harmony with its subject” and “sympathetically illustrated some of the more important moments in so beautiful and sublime a drama.”<sup>31</sup> The *Glasgow Herald* agreed with these sentiments saying:

Music suited to the nature, nationality and period of the tragedy has been composed for the occasion by Mr. Learmont Drysdale, and is effective alike in the vocal and instrumental numbers.<sup>32</sup>

However, the *Glasgow Evening News* was less complimentary about the performance:

The choristers sang their parts satisfactorily, but the band had evidently not mastered the score and therefore the conductor, Mr. E.R. Joachim [cf. 75, n.33], had a difficult task in endeavouring to do justice to Mr. Learmont Drysdale’s composition.<sup>33</sup>

Although there is no direct evidence to suggest that the Athenaeum sponsored this performance, considering the above statement it seems probable that at least some of the orchestra was drawn from their students who would have been enthusiastic amateurs attending lessons on a part-time basis.<sup>34</sup> Such players may well have lacked the necessary experience to perform Drysdale’s score adequately, particularly if there was limited rehearsal time. Nevertheless, the production was generally well received in the press with the *Evening News*’s few critical comments being immediately mitigated by “it would be ungrateful to dwell upon them [the limitations]”.<sup>35</sup> The critics felt that the event was of great importance in Glasgow’s dramatic world. Not only was it following the fashion in academic centres such as Oxford and Cambridge for the revival of Greek drama,<sup>36</sup> it was a rare opportunity for the city’s citizens to experience one of the most famous classical plays. For this experience, they were willing to forgive an occasional amateurish lapse.

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<sup>31</sup> “The Hippolytus of Euripides” *Glasgow Evening News* 1 December 1905, 7b

<sup>32</sup> “A Greek Play in Glasgow” *Glasgow Herald* 1 December 1905, 10g

<sup>33</sup> “The Hippolytus of Euripides” ...

<sup>34</sup> *Glasgow Athenaeum School of Music: Prospectus, 1904–1905* (Glasgow: np, 1904) 8

<sup>35</sup> “The Hippolytus of Euripides” ...

<sup>36</sup> These productions included incidental music by Parry, Stanford, Bantock and later, by Vaughan Williams.

## 10.2 *Flora Macdonald*

The sizeable proportion of incomplete works within Drysdale's theatrical oeuvre suggests his need for short-term goals (i.e. a performance) to ensure that he completed a project. Janey Drysdale alludes to this trait<sup>37</sup> and it is demonstrated in his oeuvre as a whole. The majority of his small-scale works are finished; they were written quickly, so that he had little time to lose interest. Of his completed larger-scale orchestral works, several were required as submissions for the RAM; others were competition entries or commissions. His two major choral works (*The Kelpie* and *Tamlane*) fall into none of the above categories, but at a time when the amateur choir reigned supreme, the likelihood of performance would have provided sufficient impetus for completion. It is with theatrical works that the problem of maintaining motivation is most apparent — frequent delays, changes and postponement of plans, rows with colleagues and cancelled productions all had to be contended with. Although there are several of Drysdale's works in which these circumstances are thought to have occurred, it is with the romantic opera *Flora Macdonald* that this unfortunate trait is most keenly observed.

There is scant and contradictory information regarding events relating to the conception, writing and proposed production of *Flora Macdonald*, but what is available indicates that Drysdale and his collaborators expended a considerable amount of effort upon it. Surviving correspondence implies that this was a joint venture between John F. Preston, a theatrical manager and the producer of "Preston's Productions", and Drysdale although it is not known how the parties met or who initiated the project.<sup>38</sup> In the early 1900s, Preston sent Drysdale the first act of his historical drama *Flora Macdonald* which was written under the pseudonym Max Goldberg.<sup>39</sup> A team of lyric writers, which included both Preston and the composer, as well as other stalwart providers of Drysdale texts such as his sister Janey, W.H. Sams and Claude Burton, moulded the play into a suitable operatic libretto.<sup>40</sup> In addition, several further authors are identified by their surnames alone — Old, Cuthbertson and Matthews. Work seems to have

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<sup>37</sup> For example, Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 20 September 1947, Farmer 249/1947/i

<sup>38</sup> Preston (born c.1863) was in Glasgow during August 1900 when Preston Productions staged his *The Rich and the Poor of London*. He could have met Drysdale at this time. A review of this production can be found in "Theatrical and Music Hall Notes" *Barr's Professional* 24 August 1900, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Other work by Goldberg includes dramatisations of Dumas's *The Man in the Iron Mask* (prod. 1899) and an historical drama based on the story of Kenilworth (prod. 1897). There is no evidence to suggest that *Flora Macdonald* was ever produced as a play.

<sup>40</sup> It was not an unusual practice during this period to have multiple librettists/lyricists. *Morocco Bound* had three while *King Kodak* (1894) had nine.

progressed well. By 1903, a libretto had been produced (albeit that the version held by GUL bears little relation to the few titles and sections of text inserted in the incomplete full score), much music written and orchestration begun. Drysdale had even produced sketches for Prince Charlie's costumes as well as suggesting that the singer Vernon Cowper (who had played Charles Luxmore in *Red Spider*) should take the major rôle of Locheil — the composer believed Cowper had an excellent voice as well as looking good in highland dress.<sup>41</sup>

In an undated draft of a document which outlines the rationale behind *Flora Macdonald* (it seems probable that this was part of a written approach to backers), Drysdale states:

I am treating [*Flora Macdonald*] in an original way as it will be a combination of grand opera, romantic drama and light comedy opera. [...] I am making the music thoroughly Scottish in character and the comedy interest is kept through Flora's servants.<sup>42</sup>

The libretto shows that the work was to be a number opera in three acts consisting of a mixture of arias, duets, choruses, ensembles and dances connected by spoken dialogue. Eight numbers survive in full score (although the vocal parts are incomplete and the text missing from all but one item) and they exhibit several of the characteristics outlined by Drysdale. Scottish style is prominent and effected through use of devices such as ostinato (Ex.10.4a), double tonic progressions and passages of drones (Ex.10.4a/b), melodies based on gapped scales (Ex.10.4b), dance rhythms derived from jigs and reels (Ex.10.4b) and the imitation of bagpipes and fiddles (Ex.10.4b).

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<sup>41</sup> Drysdale to Preston, [April 1903], Acc 4694/18<sup>2</sup>, NLS. In this letter, Drysdale also discusses a borrowing from *Red Spider* ("a brief and bright duet about spring and lovers"), however, he does not identify the specific number.

<sup>42</sup> Learmont Drysdale ["Rationale of *Flora Macdonald*"] in Cb9-x.24

Ex.10.4 — Act I: (a) No. 1, Opening chorus; (b) No. 4, Prince Charlie and chorus, central section

(a)

(b)

The numbers for Flora’s servants are in a light-hearted Sullivanesque style (Ex.10.5a) while Prince Charlie’s “Oh dear land of France” is a fine example of a lyrical romantic aria (Ex.10.5b).

**Ex.10.5** — (a) Act 1, No. 7, opening of duet for Janet and John;  
(b) Act II, No. 6, “Oh dear land of France”, opening of verse one and two

(a)

f/cis/vnl

ff

vn2/va + crt2/mn sus.

vnl + cls/crt1 (sketch)

bn

vc + b. trom/db (mainly on beat)

(b)

Prince Charlie/vnl 8ve higher 2nd verse

[No text given]

+ob

ob/cls/bn/mn/crt1/vnl/va

vc pizz

+bn arco

db pizz (at pitch)

Drysdale's annotations on the original play script<sup>43</sup> provide further clues to the styles he envisaged for the work. "Strains of bagpipes heard without" and "wild reels to be included" run alongside references to more traditional art music techniques such as the use of melodrama and the employment of recurring motifs referring to particular characters.

Janey Drysdale notes that arrangements were made for *Flora Macdonald's* production in Manchester but were later cancelled<sup>44</sup> (press reports substantiate this claim<sup>45</sup>), implying that work on the music was in its concluding stages. If this were the case, much of the material has since been lost, as only the libretto, some sketches and the incomplete full score survive. It was a great deal of wasted effort (and, presumably, financial outlay considering the number of commissions of lyrics involved) for Preston and Drysdale. Janey does not give the reason for the production's cancellation and only refers to the opera again when she mentioned to Henry Farmer that her brother had later attempted to resurrect *Flora Macdonald* when he solicited the assistance of Andrew Lang in preparing a new libretto for it in 1908.<sup>46</sup> Drysdale died before any further work was undertaken.

There is little doubt that *Flora Macdonald* provided excellent subject matter for Drysdale to demonstrate his expertise in integrating features derived from Scottish traditional music within a cosmopolitan style of romantic opera. That the collaborators were unable to bring this work to production may simply have been that they were unable to raise the necessary capital with which to proceed or, more simply, fallen out over some operational detail. However, the failure to produce at a time when the fashion for all things Scottish was at its zenith suggests there was a catastrophic failure of management.

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<sup>43</sup> "Max Goldberg "*Flora Macdonald*, Historic Drama in 4 acts", Acc 4694/5-8, NLS

<sup>44</sup> Learmont Drysdale ["Rationale..."]. This information is provided by Janey Drysdale in a later addition on this document. An annotation on Preston's manuscript script notes that he was connected with W.B. Broadhead's Manchester Hippodrome around this time.

<sup>45</sup> For example, the *Glasgow Herald* reported that the production would open in Manchester before embarking on a provincial tour. See "Dramatic and Musical: A Scotch Opera" *Glasgow Herald* 10 July 1903, 7a-b.

<sup>46</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 2 August 1944, Farmer 249/1944/m. Drysdale had stated that Lang was the librettist of *Flora Macdonald* in a work list drawn up around 1908.

### 10.3 Music Hall Songs

Drysdale did not confine his efforts to mainstream theatre. For a short period during the early 1900s, he became involved in popular culture through writing for the music hall. He wrote a number of pieces specifically for this genre as well as integrating elements from the style into many of his light operatic works. Table 3 is drawn from a document produced by the composer listing his music hall songs. It provides the titles of songs and names music hall artists against each item. It is not clear whether the names given refer to those for whom the song was written or to its intended performer (or, indeed, both). The notes provided with the table give brief biographical details, where available, and attempt to link Drysdale with the authors and artists.

**Table 19: Music Hall Songs**

Title	Author	Performer/ written for	Notes <sup>47</sup>
Ballad	Ercil Doune <sup>48</sup>	Clara Wieland <sup>49</sup>	
Boulogne	Doune	Wieland	
Burlesque comic opera	W.H. Sams	The Borellis	See Table 18 above
Coronation Song	Sams	Mignon Tremaine <sup>50</sup>	
Dollie	Sams	Violet Dale <sup>51</sup>	
Gavotte ["In the days of long ago"]	Sams	Dale	Composed in Edinburgh.
He's the sort of bloke	Sams	Arthur Rigby <sup>52</sup>	
I put my little bonnet on so	Arthur Corney <sup>53</sup>	Dale	
It had the desired effect	Corney	Rigby	
Jane	Sams	Kitty Wager <sup>54</sup>	
Love Levels all	Corney	Florrie Forde <sup>55</sup> Lottie Lennox <sup>56</sup>	
Maudie's Motor	Sams	May Mays	Composed 1903 or after.
Never put it down in black and white	Corney	Dale	

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix I for location of autograph manuscripts where extant.

<sup>48</sup> Pseudonym used by Janey Drysdale.

<sup>49</sup> Comedian and burlesque artiste who during the 1901–2 season made several appearances at Glasgow's Tivoli and its Empire Palace, Moss Empires' flagship theatre.

<sup>50</sup> Performer in *The Babes in the Wood* at the Crystal Palace Theatre, January 1905.

<sup>51</sup> Appeared in pantomime in Edinburgh during the 1901–2 season. Possibly acted on Broadway in 1909 and 1923.

<sup>52</sup> Performer in music hall, pantomimes and plays between 1898 and 1953. During the 1900s, he appeared as a solo artist at the Edinburgh and Glasgow Empire Palace theatres.

<sup>53</sup> Comedian and performer (died c.1902). He composed both text and music for the song "There's nothing in it".

<sup>54</sup> Comedienne who made several appearances at the Glasgow Empire Palace in the early 1900s. She performed at the Edinburgh Empire in 1906.

<sup>55</sup> Stage name of the Australian music hall performer Florence Flannagan (1876–1940) who became a highly successful star in Britain. She appeared in Edinburgh and Glasgow during the period under investigation.

<sup>56</sup> Comedienne billed as "the favourite London star" in the Glasgow Tivoli programme of 25 January 1901.

Title	Author	Performer/ written for	Notes <sup>47</sup>
Sadie	Doune	Wager/Dale	
Scotch <sup>57</sup>		Marie Loftus <sup>58</sup>	
Smart, Smart, Smart	Sams	Dale	
Wake up Britannia	Smedley Norton <sup>59</sup>		
You'll be my girlie	Sams	Dale	Composed 2 January 1902.

A number of difficulties arise when investigating Drysdale's work in this medium. Firstly, it is unclear where his involvement took place. His official residence during the early 1900s was in Edinburgh. Nevertheless, he did visit London frequently and during 1901 had an accommodation address in Brixton, an area with a sizeable colony of music hall 'pros'.<sup>60</sup> It is possible that Drysdale encountered such performers during his stays in London and work might have been secured in this manner. Furthermore, Sams, the lyricist with whom Drysdale worked most frequently on music hall material, resided in London and commissions may have been obtained through this avenue.

In Scotland, Glasgow was the hub of theatre activity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was within easy reach of Edinburgh and Drysdale could have made frequent visits to attend performances and associate with artists (he certainly commuted between the cities when teaching at the Glasgow Athenaeum). As one of the largest centres of music hall outside London, Glasgow possessed a plethora of halls and variety theatres and a resident as well as a migrant population of performers. Although Edinburgh did have music halls, the scale of operation was much smaller and sources of information today are scarcer. Thus, it has been difficult to trace relevant data from Edinburgh theatre collections which are generally limited to a small number of programmes and a few sundry administrative records — only three artists listed by Drysdale appear in this material. In contrast, a sizeable collection of records survives in

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<sup>57</sup> Loftus's professional advertisements in the *Era Almanack* state: "Will take a few good Scotch songs", which concurs with the subject matter of this item.

<sup>58</sup> Glasgow-born performer (1857–1940) who was one of the leading stars of British music hall between 1880s and WWI. She made several appearances at the Glasgow and Edinburgh Empire Palace Theatres during the period in question. In January 1903, she earned the sizable fee of £70 for a week's run at the Edinburgh Empire (see: *Empire Theatre Cash Receipts (1897–1903)*, 19 January 1903, YPN2605E/530195, Edinburgh Room, ECL). She was also a principal boy in Augustus Harris's pantomimes at Covent Garden and Drury Lane and it is possible that she met Drysdale through this association (cf. 60–62).

<sup>59</sup> Several references to songs by an S. (Smedley?) Norton have been found including "The lions on guard" and "I'll invite you to the wedding" both with music by F. Osmond Carr, providing a further connection with Drysdale (see p. 292, fn 10).

<sup>60</sup> Paul Maloney *Scotland and the Music Hall: 1850–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003) 123

Glasgow and many of Drysdale's artists are listed in the city's outstanding playbill collection held at the ML. A further consideration is that many acts toured the 'circuits' (halls in various towns and cities owned by the same theatre syndicates). Thus, a performer at Moss's Glasgow Empire may well have performed in the company's Edinburgh theatre in the preceding or following week. In light of this fact, performance dates garnered from Glasgow playbills were used to search the weekly theatrical paper the *Era* for Edinburgh appearances. This strategy revealed that several of the artists listed had indeed performed in the capital.

The second problem associated with these songs is that the performers and librettists listed were not major stars of the genre (Marie Loftus and Florrie Forde are the exceptions) and this has proved problematic when attempting to discover definitive information about their connections with Drysdale. Documents such as playbills, and notices and reviews in the press do provide some data, but generally little more than the performer's name and the location of the performance. Moreover, playbills rarely give the titles of items performed and never give the identity of the songwriter — complete emphasis is placed upon the artist. Thus, Drysdale songs might have been performed regularly (or, conversely, not at all) but the ephemeral nature of the medium makes this impossible to prove. Furthermore, biographical details of performers and lyric writers are scant, the itinerant nature of their employment and the frequent use of stage names leaving the researcher with little possibility of further enquiry.

It is outside the scope of this thesis to provide a full assessment of the status of music hall in Scotland during the early 1900s and little beyond a brief overview, including background information concerning the rôle of songwriter and lyricist, can be provided. There are numerous publications concerning the genre and the reader is directed specifically to Paul Maloney's excellent *Scotland and the Music Hall 1850–1914* (Manchester: 2003) and from a wider British perspective, to Dagmar Kift *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class and Conflict* (Cambridge: 1996) for a full exploration of the topic. A survey of a number of such publications has found no mention of Drysdale or the authors with whom he was associated and the employment of some supposition has been necessary in an attempt to assess his contribution to the art form.

Music hall was the principal popular medium of entertainment in Britain from the 1850s to the First World War and in the closing years of its supremacy it entertained 25 million people per annum and employed 80,000. Thus, there were considerable opportunities for financial gain — this fact in itself it likely to have drawn Drysdale into writing for the genre. However, these monetary aspects were not all they seemed. Paul Maloney explains that as artists normally performed original material, they generated a constant demand for new, up-to-date songs on topical subjects. In Scotland most of this market was controlled by a small number of songwriters who sold material to artists on an exclusive basis. Nevertheless, this practice did not guarantee financial success. Artists could purchase songs (fees in the 1890s ranged from £1 and £5 per item) and legally put their name on them leaving the composer with no further rights. Hence, a performer could earn a fortune from a song bought for a few pounds. Maloney also states that there were a large number of lesser songwriters who advertised their services in trade papers as well as “an informal network of elusive, almost Dickensian figures ... who sold songs or ‘gags’ to artists on an ad hoc basis, often in bars”.<sup>61</sup> It would be difficult to envisage Drysdale, the middle-class composer, selling his work in the latter manner and there is no evidence to suggest that he was one of a select group of songwriters which included the Glasgow-based James Curran and Alex. Melville. A search of both the *Era* and of the Scottish music hall press has found no evidence of Drysdale’s songs being performed. Moreover, there is no indication that he advertised, although it cannot be discounted that a ‘serious’ composer, wishing to keep his music hall work a secret, might use a pseudonym. The most that can be construed from the available information is that Drysdale’s connections in the theatrical world provided him with useful contacts within the music hall fraternity.

Apart from Janey Drysdale, the authors who supplied Drysdale’s with texts for these songs are elusive. Of Corney and Norton, nothing is known beyond what is listed in Table 18. W.H. Sams was possibly the actor William H. Sams, born in Scotland c.1878 and living in London at the time of the 1901 Census. His performances included minor roles at the Theatre Royal, Greenock (1899) and the Edinburgh Lyceum (1905) and it is likely that the William H. Sams who performed in a number of productions on Broadway between 1909 and 1930 is the same person. Sams, Corney and Norton

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<sup>61</sup> Paul Maloney *Scotland and the Music Hall...* 112

provided Drysdale with a number of additional texts besides those listed above (see “Songs”, Appendix I). Several of these have a subject matter and/or a musical style suggesting that they were also written for the music hall. For example, Sams’s “Julia’s Motor” has the same textual structure (albeit with alternative names and some changes to reflect contemporary happenings) and employs similar thematic material to that found in “Maudie’s Motor”. It can only be assumed that such items were not commissioned or taken up by an artist and, thus, do not appear on Drysdale’s list of music hall performers and authors.

Texts in these songs encompass a variety of subjects and emotions. Comedy, sentimentality, patriotism in respect of Britain and the empire and, conversely, songs which recognise the Scots’ distinct cultural agenda are all interspersed with topical references and the occasional risqué allusion — in fact, a reflection of the subjects and styles common to music hall material as a whole. The musical language is also appropriate for mass appeal — strophic structures with memorable choruses for audience participation, catchy tunes, strong rhythms with a foot-tapping swing and chordally based accompaniments which provide ample support for the singer through devices such as the doubling of the vocal line. Several of these textual and musical features are demonstrated in the following examples. In “Jane” (Ex.10.6), a country girl comes to London to take up the position of housemaid to a wealthy lady. The saucy text is set to a simple, but appealing tune which is supported by diatonic harmonies and coloured by modulation to closely related keys. It is exactly what it was designed to be — a ‘pop song’.

Ex.10.6 — “Jane”, refrain

[Moderato]

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of two systems. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "Ev - 'ry fort - night she had an ev - 'ning off". The piano accompaniment has a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Bor - rowed a few of her mis - tres - 's togs to make her look a toff". The piano accompaniment includes several triplet markings over the right hand.

The chorus continues:

She went on the warpath,  
striving the men to beguile.  
With a wink in eye as the fellows went by  
and a chase-me-Charlie smile.

As the numerous verses unfold, we learn that Jane has been successful in her exploits. She goes to a bar room and meets a soldier who takes her for a kiss and cuddle (there is suspicion of more but this, of course, is not stated directly). Jane’s master happens to observe the couple’s clinch and wrongly identifies the servant as his wife whereupon he “thumped the soldier and then realised, ‘It’s Jane!’”. As is common in many music hall songs, “Jane” contains a moral twist and the text of the final chorus is altered to inform us that the housemaid, though still “on the warpath”, is now off every evening — she is sacked! Problems with servants formed a frequent topic of discussion for the middle-class of Edwardian Britain (correspondence between members of the Drysdale household often mentions it); conversely, a lowly housemaid’s attempt to outwit her employers would appeal to the large working-class element of an audience. It is a song which contains much for all and is evidence of Maloney’s thesis that by the early 1900s music hall had become an entertainment aimed at a much broader spectrum of society than simply the working-class.

The two 'Motor' songs (both with texts by W.H. Sams) are evidence of the craze during the early 1900s for that newest of machines, the car (it is also interesting to note that the notion of women drivers creating havoc is not a new one). Both songs have allusions to the Boer War (1899–1902). "Julia's Motor" (dated 1901) mentions Colonel Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief of British Forces in South Africa from 1899–1900. Julia's vehicle also strikes a pro-Boer meeting, a highly topical reference at a time when prominent political figures such as Keir Hardie and Lloyd George were actively pro-Boer following British atrocities in the war. "Maudie's Motor" is undated but the annotation "Lasswade, N.B." implies a composition date of 1903 or after. The pro-Boer verse is omitted reflecting the change in political thinking by that time, but the reference to Lord Roberts was still topical — during 1902–3 a Royal Commission investigated the conflict and his actions were closely scrutinised. It is not known what Drysdale's views on this subject were as he never mentions the war in extant correspondence; in fact, he rarely discusses any political matter.<sup>62</sup> Musically, these songs are of a more advanced style than "Jane" (albeit, that 'Maudie' is a contracted version of the earlier 'Julia' setting). The leaping melody with its occasional chromatic inflection has immediate appeal. Subtle colouring is provided by judicious use of chromatic chords and hints of closely related keys (e.g. dominant, mediant minor and supertonic major) while syncopation adds a lively bounce to already jaunty rhythms. The lively refrain is particularly memorable, the 'tooting' motor horn instruction providing an apt and somewhat comic touch.

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<sup>62</sup> Janey Drysdale states that her brother "refused to subscribe to any opinion not approved of by his reason. In politics, he had great sympathy with the Fabians." See Janey Drysdale "Learmont Drysdale" 38.

Ex.10.7 — “Maudie’s Motor”, refrain

[*Allegro con spirito*]

They say your style of dri - ving is a bit pe - cul - i - ar and the

(Motor horn)

peo - ple scoot when toot, toot, toot, comes Mau - die's mo - tor car.

The lack of definitive information concerning Drysdale’s music hall songs precludes a full assessment of his contribution to the genre. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that his work was recognised by a number of professional artists, including several figures highly regarded in the field. His songs are attractive, well-designed musical compositions and eminently suitable for their purpose. Drysdale seems to have been completely at ease in writing for the mass entertainment of his time.

## 11. *The Plague: A Mystic Musical Play*

In October of 1896 at the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh the first performance took place of a most curious work. *The Plague*, Drysdale's first major theatrical venture and his only collaboration with the actor and playwright Ian Robertson (cf. 59–60), was a sombre piece described by the collaborators as a one act mystic musical play.<sup>1</sup> Although this description does little to explain the work's true genre, a closer examination of the score reveals that the text is declaimed over continuous music, a technique known as melodrama.

### 11.1 A background to melodrama

In 1913, the actor William Gillette confessed that even when he questioned “really intellectual people”<sup>2</sup> none of them appeared to be certain of the meaning of the term ‘melodrama’. James Smith in his critical guide *Melodrama* further explains:

[In 1973] the situation has not changed. Ask a musician, or a literary scholar, or even that convenient abstraction the man on the street, you will get three very different answers.<sup>3</sup>

From a musical perspective, Peter Branscombe in *New Grove...* notes:

[Melodrama] is a kind of drama, or part of a drama, in which the action is carried forward by the protagonist speaking in the pauses of, or later commonly during, a musical accompaniment.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, this definition has a number of applications and problems with nomenclature have existed from the beginning. Moreover, writers upon the subject differ (substantially, on occasion) in their treatment of the term. A number of these facets of melodrama will be investigated in this chapter, placing *The Plague* within its historical and cultural context while suggesting influences which may have stimulated Drysdale and Robertson's interest in the technique.

Whether melodrama can be considered a genre has been the subject of some debate. Branscombe provides some clarification, stating:

<sup>1</sup> “List of Works by Learmont Drysdale”, [1908], in Cb10-y.6

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by James L. Smith in *Melodrama* (London: Methuen, 1973) 1

<sup>3</sup> James L. Smith *Melodrama...* 5

<sup>4</sup> Peter Branscombe “Melodrama” in *New Grove...* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001) 16, 360

It is more fruitful to consider melodrama as a technique that seeks a particular kind of balance between words and music, than to look upon it as an independent dramatic genre.<sup>5</sup>

Jan van der Veen in his survey concurs with this view, noting that melodrama is:

A musical technique which seeks by organic and artistic means to unite a spoken literary text, whether dramatic, epic or lyrical, with an instrumental music which interprets and underscores the declamation.<sup>6</sup>

Many composers experimented with the fusion of words, action and music, and the results manifest themselves in a variety of forms. Thus, it seems sensible to embrace the above approach and view melodrama as a technique which enhances textual intelligibility rather than attempting to categorise its various forms as a specific genre.

The term ‘melodrama’ is taken from the Greek *melo-drame* (literally, a song and drama) and although the technique seems to have been born with the reciting choruses of ancient Greek drama, little is known about how such works were performed and how important a part music played. From this time onwards, the mixing of speech and music became a common occurrence in theatrical works. For example, plays by Shakespeare often have scenes accompanied by music. Flourishes on trumpets, marches and songs are the most commonly found forms, but music is also used to emphasise particularly dramatic moments such as in Act 1 of *Macbeth* where hautboys accompany the king’s entrance into the castle which is to be his place of death.<sup>7</sup> Occasionally, simultaneous use of speech and music is implied. In Act 4 of *King Lear* there is the direction “soft music playing” as Lear sleeps. That Shakespeare intended the music to continue during the following dialogue is evident as the physician refers to it in his later statement to Cordelia “Please you, draw near. — Louder the music there!”<sup>8</sup>

In France during the second half of the eighteenth century, melodrama was a term which became associated with the ‘Querelle des Bouffons’, a partisan squabble fought out in Paris between 1752 and 1754 concerning the relative merits of French and Italian opera. One of the major combatants in this argument was the Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) whose views on music departed somewhat from those

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Jan van der Veen *Le mélodrame musical de Rousseau au Romantisme: ses aspects historiques et stylistiques* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1955) 1

<sup>7</sup> William Shakespeare *Macbeth* Act I, Scene VII, in *Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (London: Hamlyn, 1958) 926b

<sup>8</sup> *King Lear* Act 4, Scene VII, in *Complete Works...* 887a

of his contemporaries (i.e. the humanist notion that the art arose in response to text; to Rousseau, accented declamation, the cry of passion of primitive man, was the true origin of music). During the ‘Querelle des Bouffons’ Rousseau supported the cause of Italian *opera buffa*. His *Lettre sur la musique française* (1753) and several further articles which were later incorporated into his *Dictionnaire* of 1768, conclude that opera was impossible in the French language, which, he maintained, was expressive only of ideas, not sentiments; having no marked accent it could not give rise to song.<sup>9</sup> He articulates his conclusions on French music in a later essay of 1777 thus:

Persuaded that the French language, destitute of all accent, is not at all appropriate for music, and principally for recitative, I have devised a genre of drama in which the words and the music, instead of proceeding together, are made to be heard in succession, and in which the spoken phrase is in a way announced and prepared by the musical phrase. The scene *Pygmalion* is an example of this genre of composition and it has not had imitators. By perfecting this method, one would bring together the double advantage of relieving the actor through frequent rests and of offering to the French spectator the type of melodrama most suited to his language.<sup>10</sup>

The lyric scene *Pygmalion* (sketched during the 1760s and first performed in Lyon in 1770) is considered the first explicit melodrama. Contrary to Rousseau’s assertion that there had been no imitators of this type of composition (by 1777), *Pygmalion* had actually become very influential and much discussed, particularly in Austria and Germany where it was taken up in earnest by composers such as Georg Benda (1722–1795). The technique of presenting text and music alternately which Rousseau describes, became the standard form for melodrama (designated ‘old form’ by Edward Kravitt in his paper on late romantic melodrama<sup>11</sup>). Some composers also experimented with simultaneous presentation of text and music (‘new form’) — as early as 1775, Benda employed this more advanced technique both in his *Ariadne auf Naxos* and in *Medea* where the occasional especially dramatic passage is declaimed during the music.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau “Letter on French Music” (1753) trans. and ed. by John T. Scott in *Essay on the Origins of Languages and Writings Related to Music*, vol 7 of *The Collected Writings of Rousseau* series ed. Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly (Hanover, NH and London: University Press of New England, 1998) 141–174

<sup>10</sup> “Letter to Mr Burney and Fragments of Observations on Gluck’s *Alceste*” (1777) trans. and ed. by John T. Scott in *Essay*... 497

<sup>11</sup> Edward F. Kravitt “The Joining of Words and Music in Late Romantic Melodrama” *Musical Quarterly* 62, 4 (1976): 571–590

<sup>12</sup> A modern edition of *Ariadne and Naxos*, designated by Benda as a duodrama (i.e. 2 speakers), appears with Johann Reichardt’s melodrama *Ino* in *German Opera 1770–1800* vol 4, ed. with introductions by Thomas Bauman (New York and London: Garland, 1985).

In France, meanwhile, the number of theatres increased rapidly following the French Revolution and there developed new forms of drama. Musical works by composers such as Cherubini (1760–1842) took the form of ‘rescue’ or ‘escape’ operas and soon after appeared on the London stage, where British composers including Stephen Storace (1763–1796) and Michael Kelly (1762–1826) took up the idea. These operas have spoken dialogue linking the musical numbers and specialise in plots with spectacular escapes from disaster, the reward of virtue and honest love, evil paying its overdue debts and perishing in such horrors as conflagrations and earthquakes. Dramatic and structural elements of these ‘rescue’ operas alongside Rousseau’s techniques of textual intelligibility were to be the inspiration for another form of entertainment at the so-called Parisian Théâtres du Boulevard. With fast-moving, moralising plots and featuring class struggle, spectacles and violence, with an undercurrent of pathos, these works were accompanied by short instrumental passages which consisted largely of string tremolos. One of the most successful creators of such ‘mélo-drames’ in the early 1800s was René-Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt, who, Nigel Gardner notes, overtly appealed “to the emotive powers of music”.<sup>13</sup> This form of drama was very successful although one anonymous writer described it as “unworthy of a self-respecting man of letters” and an “aberration of [good] taste”.<sup>14</sup>

Most true melodramas of the late eighteenth century were of a serious nature and classical in subject, but by the early nineteenth century, the range of subject matter was widening to include biblical and more general dramatic themes, and also comedy. Melodrama was to flourish around this time, but over the following few years it gradually fell into disuse as an independent form, although as a technique it continued to be employed in other genres. There are many instances of its use in incidental music — Beethoven’s *Die Ruinen von Athen* (1811) and *König Stephan* (1811), Schumann’s *Manfred* (1848–9) and Bizet’s *L’Arlésienne* (1872) are well-known examples. Melodrama also found favour with operatic composers who would use short sections of speech to increase dramatic tension and carry the action forward, a technique which is particularly effective because of the contrast it provides within an otherwise sung work. The Dungeon Scene in Beethoven’s *Fidelio* (1804–5), the Wolf’s Glen scene in

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<sup>13</sup> Nigel Gardner “Introduction to the Music” in *Henry Irving and “The Bells”* ed. by David Mayer (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980) 108

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Elin Nichols Olin *Le ton et la parole: Melodrama in France, 1871–1913* PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1991, 9

Weber's *Der Freischütz* (1817–21) and the letter scene in Act II of Verdi's *La Traviata* (1852) are familiar examples of melodrama being employed in this manner. Drysdale also used this technique in many of his scores for stage works.

It was towards the conclusion of the nineteenth century that melodrama was revived as an independent musical form. At this time, many composers strove to create works which realistically represented man's environment, an idea similar to Rousseau's philosophy that nature should prompt musical expression. It was thought that vocal music should imitate natural speech and evidence of this ideal can be seen in the melodic declamation (*Sprechgesang*) of Wagner's music dramas or the lieder of Wolf. As in the eighteenth century, the ultimate outcome of this trend was works in which spoken texts fused with music to convey language with the utmost clarity. Kravitt notes, albeit erroneously, that the German composer Engelbert Humperdinck was the first to revive melodrama as an independent compositional form with his *Königskinder* of 1897.<sup>15</sup> In the following year, the composer explained in a letter his belief that the rebirth of melodrama was inevitable, stating:

Our modern opera is taking a path that must lead to the melodrama. With the dominant endeavours of our time, which no one can avoid, to bring reality to the stage, one must find a form that is suitable to this trend, and in my opinion the melodrama is that form.<sup>16</sup>

*Königskinder* was a failure. Some critics objected furiously to the extensive fusion of speech and music, although according to the composer Max von Schillings (who was later to write several melodramas), the reason for the work's lack of success was that "its style was too novel and the period of rehearsals too short."<sup>17</sup> Schillings's implication is that the logistical problems in synchronising words with music and the method of sung speech required needed greater preparation. In the event, Humperdinck withdrew *Königskinder*, although he revised it as an opera in 1910.

Elin Olin in her study of French melodrama<sup>18</sup> repudiates Kravitt's assertion that Humperdinck was the first to revive melodrama as an independent form. She states that in France during the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was an increased fascination with the historical and artistic lineage connecting ancient Greek and

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<sup>15</sup> Edward F. Kravitt "The Joining of Words and Music..." 572

<sup>16</sup> Engelbert Humperdinck to Dr Distl [archivist], 2 November 1898, quoted in Edward F. Kravitt "The Joining of Words and Music..." 572

<sup>17</sup> Edward F. Kravitt "The Joining of Words and Music..." 577.

<sup>18</sup> Olin, op. cit

contemporary French culture, and lists composers such as Bizet, Chausson, Gounod and Massenet as having achievements in the field of melodrama before the advent of *Königskinder*. Olin categorises French melodramatic composition in the following way:

1. Large-scale compositions, or individual numbers within the same, which were intended for staged production;
2. Single dramatic scenes, or collections of such, for performance by a narrator with piano or chamber ensemble;
3. Compositions for concert performance by one recitant with orchestra.

She provides comprehensive listings of works belonging to each category and although the recitation-type pieces she describes in rubrics 2 and 3 are clearly independent forms of melodrama, the presence of the stand-alone piece within her list of staged productions is not completely clear. She states that the works listed within rubric 1 include both the use of melodrama as an independent form as well as declaimed sections (sometimes complete numbers) within incidental music to plays or operas, but the presence of the former is hard to discern. Furthermore, the works discussed are generally in number format (a major departure from the through-composed form of *Königskinder* or Drysdale's *The Plague*), some are lost (their existence only verified by press reports), and others have no published source (in practice, works in manuscript are unlikely to have been accessible to Drysdale and Robertson). Most importantly, many were written after *The Plague*. In fact, a close examination of Olin's list reveals no independent French stage composition written before 1894 (the probable year of *The Plague*'s composition<sup>19</sup>) which corresponds completely to the techniques employed in Drysdale and Robertson's work (i.e. a through-composed form in which there is a total fusion of text, action and music).

Not discussed in any detail by commentators is the work of the Czech composer Zdeněk Fibich (1850–1900) possibly the foremost exponent of the independent form of melodrama during the late nineteenth century. Fibich wrote a number of concert and stage melodramas, including an immense trilogy *Hippodamia* (1888–91) which John

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<sup>19</sup> Although a number of Drysdale's autograph manuscripts for *The Plague* are extant (see Appendix 1), none is dated. Either Henry Farmer or Janey Drysdale has added an annotation of c.1894 to several scores, a date supported by contemporary correspondence and biographical sources. Robertson's typescript text is dated August 1892. See copies in GUL and the BL.

Tyrrell in *New Grove*... notes “were the most ambitious melodramas of all time.”<sup>20</sup> Fibich was familiar with Benda’s melodramas and works such as Schumann’s *Manfred* which mainly employed the ‘old form’ of speech alternating with music, but he was to experiment with melodramatic technique, building upon the forms with which he was familiar. In his earlier concert melodramas, a piano accompaniment attempts to convey the numerous discreet moods of the text. In the later *The Water Goblin* (1883) and *Hakon* (1888), the orchestra provides a continuous, symphonically developed accompaniment, preparing the way for *Hippodamia*, published in Prague in 1891, where, as in *The Plague*, there is an uninterrupted instrumental part.

Whether the French and Czech developments discussed above had been widely disseminated in Britain by 1894 has been difficult to ascertain. The BL holds published copies of several French melodramas and has the 1891 edition of the piano scores of *Hippodamia*, so Robertson or Drysdale could have been aware of their existence through this source. Reports of French works occasionally reached the British press and these may well have played their part in inspiring the collaborator’s project. Nevertheless, the author has been unable to trace any account of Fibich’s works in the British press or standard musical journals such as *MT*. It is possible, of course, that the partners developed the idea themselves, informed by contemporary philosophies and practices of the time.

British composers also experimented with the combination of speech and music. During the early nineteenth century, composers such as Thomas Busby (whose scores for *A Tale of Mystery* {1802} and *Rugantino* {1805} are based on works by Pixérécourt) and Henry Bishop wrote music for theatrical melodramas.<sup>21</sup> Concert recitation, when text is recited and the piano or orchestra provides an accompaniment appropriate to the dramatic situation, was very fashionable in the late nineteenth century with examples including works by Alexander C. Mackenzie and Granville Bantock. Drysdale also had experience of performing and writing in this area. During the autumn of 1890, he had toured the provinces providing his own incidental music to complement the recitations of Mrs Mary Barker (cf. 46–7) while in the following year he had his recitation

<sup>20</sup> John Tyrrell/Judith A. Mabary “Zdenek Fibich” in *New Grove*... 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (2001) 8, 759

<sup>21</sup> For further information see Bruce Carr “Theatre Music: 1800–1834” in Nicholas Temperley ed. *The Romantic Age 1800–1914* (London: Athlone, 1981) 288–306. Some of Bishop’s melodramas have near-continuous music; however, they have a number format and are not through-composed.

*The Kelpie of Corrievreckan* performed at an RAM concert (cf. 168). Moreover, both of Bantock's recitations were written for RAM events, suggesting that this type of work was one which students were encouraged to compose. Some composers also experimented with differing combinations of speech and music for the concert hall. In 1889, Mackenzie composed a rather unusual choral work *The Dream of Jubal* to a libretto by Joseph Bennett. A hybrid of orchestral and choral music combined with recitation, Duncan Barker notes that it was innovative in that it made extensive use of narration with a sympathetic accompaniment.<sup>22</sup> Mackenzie was aware that his piece was intended for choral performance and he restricted the declamatory element to the lengthy introduction for speaker and orchestra, and a few spoken passages between the remaining seven solo and choral movements. He had moved beyond the melodramatic recitation employed by composers such as Beethoven and Mendelssohn (in his incidental music to *Antigone* of 1841) in that the technique became integral to the whole conception. Barker states that in many ways *The Dream of Jubal* is an extension of nineteenth-century programme music noting that Mackenzie in "using a narrator to speak over the music goes one step further than providing a programme note to describe the sound which the listener will hear."<sup>23</sup> There are certainly similarities between the melodramatic elements of this work and *The Plague* particularly in that the musical accompaniment is an integral part of declamation. Nonetheless, there are also major differences: *The Dream of Jubal* contains no action; moreover, singing is its central feature and declamation, though an important element, takes a subsidiary role. In contrast, *The Plague* centres on the clear expression of declaimed text over continuous music which supports and enhances the dramatic action. If examined in Barker's terms, *The Plague* is a further step forward from Mackenzie's work and is based on the rationale that text is at its clearest when declaimed over an accompaniment expressly written to fuse with speech and action.

The revival of Greek drama in academic circles was also to focus minds on the concurrent presentation of speech and music. Since knowledge of the sound of Greek music was (and is) virtually non-existent, contemporary composers such as Bantock Parry and Stanford were asked to supply incidental music which they believed would be

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<sup>22</sup> Duncan James Barker "The Music of Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1847–1935): A Critical Study", 2 vols, PhD diss., University of Durham, 1999, 1, 145

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 147

appropriate for the dramatic situation. Drysdale was also to undertake such a project in Glasgow in 1905, when he provided music for Euripides' *Hippolytus* which includes sections of melodrama (cf. 295–301).

Music has always played a major part in theatrical productions in Britain, as its use in Shakespeare's work and the later theatre compositions of Henry and Daniel Purcell, Henry R. Bishop, and William Reeve demonstrates. There are also numerous examples of the use of melodrama in the incidental music of composers such as German, Parry, Coleridge-Taylor and Mackenzie. However, there is one further type of theatrical music which probably had a significant influence upon Robertson and Drysdale's work — that used to accompany theatrical melodrama, the most prolific form of staged play in Britain from the middle- to late-nineteenth century. These works were similar in form to those found in the earlier Parisian Théâtres du Boulevard and had music that accompanied romantic and sensational happenings which observed particular conventions including a 'happy ending'. Music enhanced the concentration of audiences, by helping them to assess personality and to recognise from aural signals the emotional state of the characters before them. Generally, it consisted of stock 'off-the-peg' numbers drawn from compilations of short extracts (*melos*) designed to provide accompaniments for the various emotions expressed in the drama. In his autobiography James Glover, Musical Director at the Drury Lane Theatre from 1893–1919, recalls being called at short notice to compose incidental music for a pantomime and taking down some forty numbers to be scored or written (a job, that he notes, should have been nearly a month's work). Glover suggested to the theatre manager, one Andrew Melville, that he take the material and decide how the work could be managed in the short time available. Melville disagreed, saying "Nonsense, [...] we produce a new drama tonight [...] and I want about sixty 'melos' numbers for that. Take them down."<sup>24</sup> Glover continues:

At this time musical directors travelled with a book of 'agits', i.e., *agitatos*, 'slows', — that is, slow music for serious situations — 'pathetics', 'struggles', 'hornpipes', *andantes* — to all which adapted numbers called 'melos' any dramatic situation was possible [*sic*]. Armed with my chart of appropriate 'melos' I got on through [to] the middle of the evening, when I saw a man writhing in agony on the stage. "My God! — I'm dying — curse her! She has poisoned me — but if there is justice in heaven may the rest of her life be a hell on earth—gug—gug—gug", writhed the actor, and down he fell prostrate. Just

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<sup>24</sup> James M. Glover *Jimmy Glover — His Book* (London: Methuen, 1911) 225

then the tube whistle in the orchestra blew hard. "Who's there?" said I. "Melville", was the reply. "Well, what of it?" I answered. "Play up, old man." "I've no cue." "Cue be d—d! Don't you see a man dying on stage? Give us four bars of 'agit'."<sup>25</sup>

Such a book of 'agits' survives in the London Theatre Museum. Written sometime after 1857 by the theatrical bandmaster Alfred Cooper (1840–1901), it served as incidental music for melodramas at the City of London Theatre and at other venues in South East England. Cooper's melos contain pieces suitable for every mood and occasion encountered within melodrama. 'Hurries' or 'agits' (*agitatos*) for physical action, struggles and combat (Ex.11.1a); *andantes* or slows or pathetics for touching, melancholy or romantic moments (Ex.11.1b); *tremolos* or 'mysts' (*mysteriosos*) for suspense, apprehension, terror, and the appearance of visions or ghosts (Ex.11.1c), the latter being near enough a requirement in the genre. There are also 'character' pieces, themes or motifs to introduce, describe and, hence, identify the melodrama's individual characters.

Ex.11.1<sup>26</sup> — 'Agits' for various situations: (a) a hurry; (b) a slow; (c) a mysterioso

(a) *Furioso*

This hurry describes an exciting on-stage moment; it is particularly effective in the minor key. Played slowly it provides a musical signature for a male character, hero or villain.

(b) *Moderato*

A sentimental melo theme suitable for introducing and identifying a female character or pair of lovers. In a minor key, it suggests distress.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 225–6

<sup>26</sup> Examples drawn from David Mayer and Matthew Scott *Four Bars of 'Agit': Incidental Music for Victorian and Edwardian Melodrama* (London: French, 1983)

(c) *Mysterioso*

This melo originally appeared as the ‘ghost melody’ in *The Corsican Brothers* (1852) with music by C. von Frankenstein where it was played as the ghost of the murdered man appears to his brother. Originally scored for tremolo violins, Mayer notes that it is especially effective when played on a saw.

David Mayer in his survey of the form states that in the larger London productions it was often customary for full scores (consisting of twelve to fifteen melodic lines of a few bars length and in a variety of moods) to be composed for each new melodrama. When these scores are juxtaposed with a work’s prompt script, it is apparent that music was often continuous, and that many episodes within scenes were supported entirely by accompaniment.<sup>27</sup> Gradually the musical element dwindled and eventually disappeared altogether, leaving the dramatic form of spoken melodrama known today. Drysdale may have had direct experience of this form of melodrama. A newspaper article of October 1896 states that Sir Augustus Harris, manager of the Drury Lane Theatre, London had secured a virtual monopoly of Drysdale’s compositions for his theatre.<sup>28</sup> The veracity of this statement has been questioned previously (cf. 62, n.36), but if it does contain any truth, we can speculate that Drysdale gained experience in the role of theatrical composer during a period when opera, musical pantomime and theatrical melodrama were the staple fare at Drury Lane.<sup>29</sup> Tellingly, Drysdale is not mentioned in James Glover’s autobiography.

<sup>27</sup> David Mayer and Matthew Scott *Four Bars of ‘Agit’... 3*. This technique was the forerunner of the musical scores used to accompany silent films.

<sup>28</sup> [“*The Plague*”] *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* 17 October 1896, 5b

<sup>29</sup> Harold Rosenthal “Sir Augustus Harris” *New Grove...* (1980) 8, 249–250; David Mayer and Matthew Scott *Four Bars of ‘Agit’... 1*

Henry Irving's very successful *The Bells* (1871) is a well-known example of the theatrical melodrama of the time. Unlike *The Plague* the music is not continuous — there are sixteen short cues which assist in expressing both the actions of the characters and the story — but the techniques employed demonstrate a number of similarities with those used by Robertson and Drysdale. Although music introduces the most simple of actions in *The Bells*, it also provides a pictorial effect. When employed together, acting, speech and music project moments of great intensity. It is probable that the collaborators had seen *The Bells* — Irving appeared in the leading role over 800 times between the work's conception and his death in 1905. Furthermore, it is likely that Robertson wrote *The Plague* while working with Henry Irving's company during 1892.<sup>30</sup>

### 11.2 Subject, rationale and textual matters

*The Plague* is set in a feudal castle during the middle ages and employs a cast of four:<sup>31</sup> My Lord, the Master; My Lady, the Wife; An Apothecary; Spirit [of Death].

Time of the action: a very short period during the early hours of the morning

The master and child of the house have succumbed to the plague and the attending apothecary is pessimistic about their fate. The wife falls into a trance and is approached by the Spirit of Death who states he will save only one of her loved ones and calls on her to choose which. She sways between maternal love and wifely affection and on her final declaration of love for her husband, the 'sands of time' run out. The Spirit disappears and she awakes from her trance to find her husband recovering and her child dead. In most ways, this subject matter parallels that generally found in Victorian melodrama — highly emotional, sentimental and sensational (including the ubiquitous vision scene) — however, there is no 'happy ending'.

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<sup>30</sup> Robertson was working with Irving at the Lyceum sometime after April of 1892 until the following year. See *Who Was Who in the Theatre: 1912–1976* 4 vols, Gale Composite Biographical Dictionary Series (London: Pitman, 1978) 4, 2046.

<sup>31</sup> These characters are designated by their rôle and not by a given name, a feature common to many mediaeval plays.

No primary source material concerning the ideology behind Drysdale and Robertson's work on *The Plague* has survived. However, Janey Drysdale does provide some insight into the rationale behind the piece when she states:

The action and dialogue [...] are wedded to an elaborate orchestral accompaniment, together with an unseen choir, [...] to form an homogeneous whole. This new art-form differs from grand opera or music drama in that the words are spoken instead of being sung. This gives more freedom to the voice in getting the true intonation to express dramatic feeling than where the words are sung, and it is obviously the method most true to nature.<sup>32</sup>

As is demonstrated in the previous discussion, Janey's assertion that this was a 'new art-form' is misguided — *The Plague* includes a number of features drawn from other techniques utilising simultaneous action, speech and music. Nevertheless, there seem to be few works which completely parallel it — through-composed and with absolute fusion of action, music and text. Her statements regarding this union also provide insight, albeit at second hand, into how Drysdale himself may have embraced the realist ideal so fashionable with many of his contemporaries.

The declamatory part is placed above or between the staves and although this gives the performers an approximate indication of the relationship between words and music, no exact rhythmical synchronisation is shown. The coordination of speech and music in melodrama has been approached in a number of ways. Bizet uses the method described above in *L'Arlésienne*, while others provide rhythmic values for the words, pitch inflection being left to the discretion of the performer. In the full score of his *Königskinder*,<sup>33</sup> Humperdinck moves the closest to sung speech notating exact rhythms and providing a guide for pitch inflection (he terms this 'bound melodrama' although he contended that the notation is not a sign for absolute but for "relative pitch, for the raising and lowering of the voice"<sup>34</sup>). It was this aspect of the work which most upset Humperdinck's critics, as they argued that only a highly specialised actor-musician could realise his notation.

<sup>32</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers..." 20

<sup>33</sup> The piano score, however, has text typed above the stave in the same manner employed by Drysdale.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Edward F. Kravitt "The Joining of Words and Music..." 577

Ex.11.2 — Extract from *Königskinder* (condensed score)

(a) *Mässig* GANSEMAGD

Mein lie - ber Kna - be, ich komm' zu

dir. Hab' mir mein Furch - ten ub - er - wun - den

### 11.3 Music

Drysdale's music is almost continuous — it is interrupted only twice, firstly to highlight My Lady's reply to the Spirit of Death's statement that a loved one will be taken from her ("But I have **none other left** on earth but these two") and soon after when he demands that she "**Choose**" (see Ex.11.14, bar 367). At these points, the text does not alternate with the accompaniment in the manner of the 'old style' of melodrama; it is an inherent part of it, the silence acting as a dramatic tool emphasising poignant imagery. There is little use of recitative-like structures or the placing of text over unresolved chords, devices employed by some composers of late-nineteenth-century melodrama. Instead, Drysdale merges areas of action accompanied by music with those where speech is also employed — the actors declaim over a continuous stream of musical sound.

Throughout the drama, Drysdale employs numerous strategies to ensure that his music closely parallels the imagery and moods contained in the text. Most importantly, by employing a through-composed structure he captures the 'moment in time' effect inherent in Robertson's script. Continuity is achieved in a number of ways, several of which appear during the music that accompanies My Lady's impassioned questioning of the apothecary about her child (Ex.11.3). Devices include: enharmonic shifts which

avoid the tonic following a  $V^7$  chord; deceptive resolutions of dominant preparations where the resolution to the tonic is prevented, a device linked to the lack of full cadential points; preference for inverted perfect cadences which avoid dominant to tonic movement in the bass line.

**Ex.11.3** — *The Plague*, My Lady questions the Apothecary (bars 112–144)

*Andante*  
 [Lady:] Thou canst give me no hope (pointing to the child). [Apoth:] They both live Madam. Hope and pray. [Lady: (look[ing] eagerly into his face)]

112 *vrs* (con sord.) [Chromatic shift]  
 #dim Off Min: I IV (ii7) I ii7  $V^7$  (app. 6 - 5)

118 Let me look at you Your face tells me nothing [Apoth:] Have hope.  
 VI I ii7  $V^7$  (4 - 3 sus.) [G#7 = Db Maj: Ab7] [Dominant pedal]

124 [Lady:] I see none in your face. [Apoth:] Pray then. [Lady:] Ah.  
 Ab7 Ger. 6th of C major [Dominant pedal]

130 (Lady goes to prie-dieu and kneels.)  
 Organ (behind scenes)  
 Andante Maestoso (sempre legato)

135 [Lady:] God have mercy.  
 poco a poco cres.

140 *L'istesso tempo*  
 +strs/hn/crt tutti 'Celestial' trumpets *Molto cres.*  
 Inverted perfect cadence





The child is represented by a sweeping mainly diatonic theme which appears in different keys and slightly varied forms. The simple diatonic construction reflects the child's innocence. This melody provides the main thematic material for the latter part of the work, reflecting musically that it is the child who dies.

**Ex.11.7 — Motif: Child**



The Spirit of Death is connected with a figure consisting of descending leaps of an augmented fourth/diminished fifth.

**Ex.11.8 — Motif: Spirit of Death**



Unity is further enhanced by the chromatic nature of much of the thematic material.

*The Plague* requires an orchestra consisting of single woodwind, horn, two cornets, two tenor and one bass trombone, timpani and assorted percussion (including bells which chime the strokes of midnight), harp, strings, off-stage organ and SATB chorus, colourful scoring which assists in conveying the dramatic atmosphere and enhancing textual meaning. In the Introduction<sup>36</sup> soft timpani rolls and tremolo strings, followed by passages derived from the storm motif in wind and strings, portray the storm which forms the backdrop to the work.

<sup>36</sup> This section is greatly curtailed in the piano score. Presumably used for rehearsing actors or for performances given for friends and possible promoters (see later), this score did not require the full Introduction with its close links to the action on stage.

Ex.11.9 — Introduction (bars 1–13)

*Allegro agitato*

up. strings

[Motif Storm]

fl/ob/cl

mf

3

3

3

+crts/trbs

pp

hn/vc/db

+timp roll

sf

vns

pp

va/vc

Pizz

+fl/cl

+bn

-fl/cl

-bn

-timp

p

Tenderness and pathos are important elements within this drama and are accompanied by appropriately sombre scoring. For example, in Ex.11.3 various rich combinations of wind and strings assist in capturing the apothecary’s mood as he examines the dying child, both underpinning and enhancing the prevailing emotion. In addition, the off-stage organ in the following passage provides a particularly apt accompaniment to My Lady’s prayers. There is also some suggestion of techniques drawn from the theatrical melodrama of the time such as the scurrying ‘agitato’ string passage when the Spirit of Death appears.

## Ex.11.10 — The Spirit appears (bars 261–268)

*Allegro agitato molto*

ob/c/bn

timp./strs

pizz. db at pitch

*p molto crescendo*

Lady: Too late

+trbs/tba 8ve lower

+crts

+vn2 8ve lower

+fl

vnl

*p molto crescendo*

+hn

arco

timp. roll

It is here.

O. O. O. [sic]

sff

Meno mosso

cnt/trb1

*p*

trb2

pesante

b. drum

b. drum

sff

*p*

trbs/vc/db

[Motif Spirit of Death]

The central dramatic idea of *The Plague* is My Lady's time in the spirit world and Drysdale's choice of orchestration is particularly effective in conveying this facet. Harp, cornets, with off-stage organ and chorus provide the ideal resources for 'heavenly' representation and considerably enhance both the musical interpretation of text and the associated imagery. The chorus is always associated with My Lady's spiritual being — through chorale-like settings, they implore God to have mercy on her, an effect heightened by the addition of 'celestial' harps and trumpets.

## Ex.11.11 — My Lady prays (bars 146–158)

[Andante maestoso]  
[Celestial chorus,  
behind scenes]

146

S  
A  
T  
B

God have mer - cy

[Celestial harps]

150

[Celestial trumpets]

Orch.

152

Lady: God have pity

[Celestial harps]

154

[Celestial trumpets]

155 [Celestial chorus,  
behind scenes]

O God have pi - ty

[Organ,  
behind scenes]

When in her trance, dialogue between My Lady and the Spirit of Death is often simultaneous with the chorus which provides poignant comment on the desperate situation concerning the fate of master and child. The chorus's setting at the conclusion of the work is particularly effective. As the narrative is complete, this final scene must be portrayed through stage action and the supporting musical material alone. The child theme, played by full orchestra, supports the inconsolable mother as she kneels at the crib of the dead infant, while the Chorus of Angels praises God, beseeching him to receive the child into his care. It is an adept portrayal of a desolate scene.

As common to Drysdale's other works of this period, the harmonic vocabulary employed in *The Plague* uses a mixture of diatonic and chromatic chords. In the 'Illness' Motif (Ex.11.6), chromatic harmony and suspension greatly assist in portraying dramatic atmosphere. Moreover, the many chromatic intervals found within the individual melodic lines of the themes further increase the effect of great pathos. In general, chromaticism tends to be associated with particularly emotional points in the drama. Tonality is generally well defined and closely related keys employed. However, a number of devices are used to obscure tonality briefly, including sudden chromatic shifts and prolonged dominant preparations or pedal points which support churning and sometimes chromatic harmonies. Chromatic passages that interrupt the sense of tonal centre also appear, although Drysdale often places these over pedals to provide a tonal anchor (Ex.11.9 & 11.12).

**Ex.11.12** — Chromatically moving passage anchored by a dominant pedal (bars 52–56)

*Allegro agitato*

[Lady:] thee shall have wealth. I have gems of great value, jewels and heirlooms. They are thine, every one. I give them to thee, but save these precious lives.

The musical score for Ex.11.12 is presented in two systems. The first system contains the first four measures of the passage, and the second system contains the next four measures. The music is in 4/4 time and the key signature has two flats (B-flat major). The piano accompaniment features a constant rhythmic pattern of eighth-note triplets in both the right and left hands. The melody in the right hand is chromatically descending, starting on G4 and ending on E3. The lyrics are: [Lady:] thee shall have wealth. I have gems of great value, jewels and heirlooms. They are thine, every one. I give them to thee, but save these precious lives.

Modulation is effected through devices such as diminished seventh chords (albeit rather clichéd through over-use), sudden enharmonic changes, and chromatic shifts which sometimes occur in all parts but more often with one or more notes in common between chords. Occasionally, chains of V7 chords that move through parts of the circle of fifths vaguely alluding to different keys are also employed. Nevertheless, modulations are often transitory providing an important element in maintaining continuity.

**Ex.11.13** — Harmonic outline showing a selection of devices which effect transient modulation (bars 202–212)

202

G F Ger<sup>6</sup>-C G<sup>7</sup> D<sup>#dim</sup> C A<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b7</sup>

Chromatic shifts Chromatic shifts with common note\*

207

A<sup>b</sup> A<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> C (double passing notes) G<sup>7</sup> C

Chromatic shifts in all parts Chain of V7 chords Inverted perfect cadence

Areas of chromaticism and constantly shifting tonality are the unmistakable expression of My Lady's emotional turmoil. With her child's death and the enforced resolution of her impossible situation they are replaced at the conclusion with diatonicism and tonal stability; her struggle has ended and she is left only with her sorrow.

Judicious use of rhythmic devices also assists in the portrayal of imagery and text. Such techniques are particularly prominent during My Lady's trance and include the scurrying and often off-beat semiquaver figure which alerts the audience to the presence of the Spirit of Death (Ex.11.10). Moreover, sudden changes in rhythmic accent/value are employed to emphasise particularly important drama such as when My Lady is pressed to make her terrible decision (Ex.11.14). The music becomes agitated through syncopation and triplets that reflect "The sands of time are almost run" (bars 358–361), sudden accents emphasise "One must go" (bar 362), while longer values on weak beats (derived from My Lady's motif) support the Spirit's repetition of this statement, and My Lady's following "Which?" (bars 363<sup>4</sup>–366). The sudden silence at "Choose?" (bar

367), the rapid semiquaver runs and tremolo (bars 368–370) associated with My Lady's impassioned reply and the Spirit's final demand which conclude this passage, adeptly capture this intensely poignant moment.

**Ex.11.14 — The Spirit of Death demands that My Lady should choose (bars 355–370)**

Spirit: Speak      Lady: I dare not.      Spirit: Speak.      The sands of time are almost

355 *Agitato*

va      vn2      etc.      vn1

pp      +cl/va

ppp      vc/db      pizz.

run.      The spirit of the dying prepares.      Speak.      Lady: One must go[?]

359

+vn2

tutti

363      Spirit: One must go.      Lady: Which?      Spirit: Choose

*Meno mosso*

ff      [Motif: My Lady]

sfp      pp      [Motif: Illness]

Arco      cl/bn/tr/db

Lady: No, no, O God, not that, I cannot

368 *Allegro molto* vn

bn/trb/+va

sfp      Pizz.

timp./vc/db      bn/trb/+va tremolo

Spirit: Choose.

#### 11.4 Preparations for performance and reception

It seems that the collaborators were anxious to solicit opinions of *The Plague* before mounting their production, and several sources state that the work was shown to well-known figures including Ruskin, Ellen Terry and Mrs Patrick Campbell;<sup>37</sup> Janey Drysdale notes that “all of them expressed the most flattering opinions”.<sup>38</sup> Further evidence is not available to substantiate this claim, although a letter of 1894 from Terry to Drysdale demonstrates that he did invite her to hear the music while she was staying in Edinburgh. Terry, who professed to be suffering from a throat ailment which precluded her from speaking, declined the invitation, but replied:

Under these circumstances I fear I must not hear your music to Ian’s little play — for although I’m not suffering from ear ache, imagine how difficult it would be, upon hearing your music, to refrain from explaining — in admiration! Seriously I am not well enough at present to see you.<sup>39</sup>

As discussed previously, Drysdale had a number of links with the theatre while Robertson, a professional actor and manager, was closely connected with some of the most prominent theatrical names of the time. Thus, it is likely that the collaborators did seek opinions of their work from such figures, although none agreed to perform the work. There is also some evidence to suggest that Robertson attempted to have his work produced by companies other than his brother’s — he approached both Bernard Partridge (an actor with the Forbes-Robertson Company, later *Punch* artist and cartoonist) and the actor/producer Will Terriss about an un-named one-act play in the 1890s.<sup>40</sup> However, *The Plague* is not mentioned directly. Moreover, a set of orchestral parts was sent to Robertson in America during 1913, suggesting that he might have been soliciting a production,<sup>41</sup> but there is no evidence that the work was performed. Having failed to secure interest in *The Plague*, it seems likely that Ian Robertson eventually suggested to his brother that his company mount a production. Johnson Forbes-Robertson was an experienced theatrical manager who would have realised that this rather unusual piece would have limited public appeal; nonetheless, he would have wished to support his brother’s work and he would have been interested to see how successful this experimental form was in production. In agreeing to a single

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<sup>37</sup> These include an article in the *Glasgow Evening News* of 7 October 1896 and Janey Drysdale “Learmont Drysdale”.

<sup>38</sup> Janey Drysdale “Learmont Drysdale” 18

<sup>39</sup> Ellen Terry to Drysdale, 27 October 1894, Cb10-x.17/1<sup>3</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Bernard Partridge to Ian Robertson, 7 March 1893, f.116; Will Terriss to Ian Robertson, 27 June 1897, f.155; in Add. 62700, Vol. VII, Knight and Forbes-Robertson Papers, BL

<sup>41</sup> Implied in note on envelope containing orchestral parts, Cb9-y.9.

performance during a suitable slot in the company's schedule (the work's concision necessitated programming with a piece of complementary length and subject), Forbes-Robertson would have fulfilled both caveats without committing his company to undue financial risk. Some time for rehearsal and additional funds for items such as licences and scenery would have been necessary, but, undoubtedly, Drysdale and Ian Robertson would have undertaken the most onerous work required to overcome the numerous technical problems (such as the synchronisation of speech, action and music) without financial recompense.

*The Plague* received its first and only public performance at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh on 16 October 1896 before a crowded house. *The Plague* preceded a performance of the Forbes-Robertson Company's successful production of *For The Crown*, John Davidson's translation of the French novelist François Coppée's romantic play *Pour la couronne* (1895).<sup>42</sup> The performance was given by a group of actors well-known in their time — William Burchill, Lily Hanbury, Ian Robertson and Johnson Forbes-Robertson — and Drysdale conducted.

Melodrama can be problematic in performance. Aspects such as synchronisation of the declamatory part with the accompaniment (particularly when the former is not provided with a rhythmical structure) and the balance between the forces — the individual actors and the orchestra — being exceptionally difficult to achieve. In fact, it is one of the main reasons cited for the lack of success of the form.<sup>43</sup> Reviews suggest that Robertson's production managed these aspects with considerable skill, although commentators do not mention them specifically. From the critics' discussion of the work, it is apparent that the actors performed well (although Lily Hanbury was criticised by one writer because "her voice was not altogether well attuned to the deep and heart rendering pathos of the part"<sup>44</sup>) with the orchestra providing both an effective and an appropriate accompaniment. There is no suggestion that the declamation was

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<sup>42</sup> Programme: *For the Crown*, *Shades of the Night* and *The Plague*, Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, October 12–17 1896, (*The Plague*, 16 October only), Theatre Programme Catalogue R.283.c.1 (165), NLS. *Shades of the Night* by Captain Robert Marshall preceded *For the Crown* during the remainder of the run. Johnson Forbes-Robertson in his 1925 autobiography comments favourably on both the above works — he does not mention *The Plague*. See Johnson Forbes-Robertson *A Player Under Three Reigns* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1925) 178–180.

<sup>43</sup> For example, Kravitt has a thorough discussion of these problems in his "The Joining of Words and Music..." including Schilling's review of Humperdinck's *Königskinder*.

<sup>44</sup> "A Mystic Musical Play At the Lyceum" *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* 17 October 1896, 5b

overshadowed by the accompaniment or of any problems in synchronising music with text. This achievement was not dependent solely on first-class performers under capable direction. Robertson and Drysdale's concept of fusing music, text and action had resulted in a work expertly constructed for its purpose and as the *Era* critic noted: "The episode is of the briefest character, [...] but it forms an admirable foundation for the musical fabric which the composer has so expertly raised upon it."<sup>45</sup>

There is no record of Drysdale's view of the performance but Robertson was very satisfied, noting in his playbook/diary: "My play produced for one night — great success".<sup>46</sup> The work was well received by both the theatrical and local press. The *Stage* stated:

Of the opportunities offered by the play it may be said that Mr. Drysdale has taken full advantage, and playwright and musician between them have produced a fascinating little work. The musical merit of *The Plague* is high [...] Mr. Drysdale is to be congratulated on a complete success.<sup>47</sup>

The *Era* further noted that "Mr Robertson and Mr Learmont Drysdale were recalled several times at the conclusion, and the public will no doubt be glad to hear of their collaboration again".<sup>48</sup> A further collaboration was never to take place, Drysdale having already embarked on *Red Spider* which was to take up a good deal of his time over the following years.

*The Plague* and similar works attracted interest in their time, but by the early twentieth century such compositions had become unfashionable and today they seem too emotional, sentimental and naïve to attract any serious consideration. In 1961, Henry Farmer sought a performance of *The Plague* (along with another Victorian work *The Mourner* by G.H. Murray) at the Glasgow College of Dramatic Art. The response from the college's Director sums up the view of such works at that time:

I have read them both and [...] I find them interesting period pieces. I doubt very much if either could stand up to revival today. If they were undertaken sincerely as they would have to be they would seem extremely naïve from today's standards. "The Plague" particularly has an intriguing idea but the dialogue of 1892 would sound archaic and precious [*sic*]

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<sup>45</sup> "The Plague" *Era* 24 October 1896, 13c

<sup>46</sup> "The Plague 16 October, 1896" Playbook of Ian Robertson: 1879–1919, Add. 62703 (Vol. X), f.9, Knight and Forbes-Robertson Papers, BL

<sup>47</sup> ["The Plague"] *Stage* October 1896 reproduced in "Extracts from Press Opinions" (c.1897), Cb10-y.3, 79

<sup>48</sup> "The Plague" *Era* 24 October 1896, 13c

spoken today. They have been fascinating to read from an historical point of view, but I would not like to try these out with students.<sup>49</sup>

Nonetheless, to audiences of 1896 used to theatre music consisting of 'agits', the unusualness of such a work aroused a great deal of interest and in the words of the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, *The Plague* "was received with the utmost favour".<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Colin Chandler [Director of the College of Dramatic Art, Glasgow] to Henry Farmer, 8 November 1961, tipped in Cb9-y.6

<sup>50</sup> "A Mystic Musical Play At the Lyceum" *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* 17 October 1896, 5b

## 12. The Comic Opera *Red Spider*

*Red Spider* was Drysdale's greatest public success.<sup>1</sup> The work was extravagantly mounted and during 1898, it toured throughout Britain. This chapter provides an overview of the genesis of *Red Spider* and discusses its production and reception. An examination of a selection of numbers from the work will demonstrate the diversity of treatments employed by Drysdale and indicate much of merit.

### 12.1 Genesis and preparations

When cleric, author and folklorist Sabine Baring-Gould (1834–1924), author of such hymns as “Onward Christian soldiers” and “Now the day is over”, published his colourful novel of Devonshire country life *Red Spider* in 1887, it was so well received that he was persuaded to write an operatic version of the story. He sought the literary assistance of the author and dramatist Aimée Beringer, wife of Oscar Beringer the well-known pianist and teacher. For musical expertise, Baring-Gould called on the services of fellow clergyman Henry Fleetwood-Sheppard (a composer and arranger of liturgical music)<sup>2</sup> with whom he was collaborating on the monumental folksong collections *Songs and Ballads of the West* (1889–91) and *A Garland of Country Song* (1895).<sup>3</sup> The collaborators decided to base their operatic version of *Red Spider* on a selection of these traditional melodies, a technique which has its roots in the ballad operas so popular in the eighteenth century. This rationale may have been inspired by the following review of the novel from the *Bristol Times* discovered in Baring-Gould's cuttings book for the period:

In it [*Red Spider*] one is again and again brought face to face with incidents and situations depicted in *Songs of the West*. Were this story of the *Red Spider* dramatised, how many of

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<sup>1</sup> The collaborators used various terminologies to describe the work during its composition including “Romantic Comic Opera” (1895), “Comedy Opera” (1895), “Light Romantic Opera” (1898), “Ballad Opera” (Baring-Gould after 1898). The terminology would seem to refer to subject and musical content rather than a specific generic form. This writer uses the Lord Chamberlain's Office classification of “Comic opera”.

<sup>2</sup> Fleetwood-Sheppard ([1824]–1901), rector of Thurnscoe, Yorkshire, was precentor of the Doncaster Choral Union from 1864–1884. His sacred works include several anthems, and arrangements of settings of the Te Deum, Benedictus, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. He collaborated with Baring-Gould on a number of folksong and sacred music projects.

<sup>3</sup> Baring-Gould also collaborated extensively on folksong research with F.W. Bussell (Mus. Doc. and vice-principal of Brasenose College, Oxford) and his name is linked with the work of Lucy Broadwood, Frank Kidson and Cecil Sharp.

these songs would drop into a more natural place, and light up the dialogue by their melody and sprightly wit?<sup>4</sup>

By the autumn of 1892, Fleetwood-Sheppard was complaining that Mrs Beringer's constant changes to the libretto were making it unworkable — he was finding it impossible to integrate his folk material into the new incidents and situations she was adding to the plot. He was also concerned about his involvement in such an extensive project, noting in a letter to Baring-Gould that “an old country parson verging on 70, unknown in the musical world is hardly the man to raise expectations or create sympathy — the matter is prejudged at once”.<sup>5</sup> In light of these circumstances, he ended the collaboration. Baring-Gould began seeking another suitable composer for the project and his correspondence suggests that he sent Charles Hubert Parry the libretto early in 1893.<sup>6</sup> It is not recorded how Parry reacted to this request, but he had a considerable workload at the time and is known to have been approaching a state of nervous exhaustion following a difficult period with his incidental music to *Hypatia*.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, after investing two years of gruelling effort in his previous operatic venture (*Guenever*, completed 1886), Parry had been bitterly disappointed when it failed.<sup>8</sup> Such circumstances would have provided him with good reasons to decline the commission. Concurrently, the Scottish composer William Wallace expressed an interest in setting the work, but his approach was unsuccessful, as Baring-Gould and Mrs Beringer had temporarily shelved the project.

In an interview given in the summer of 1895 Baring-Gould announced that he had re-launched his scheme, stating: “I am hoping that Humperdinck may see his way to write the music for *Red Spider*, which certainly contains stronger material for dramatic

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<sup>4</sup> “Songs of the West” *Bristol Times* 17 August 1891 in Sabine Baring-Gould comp. *Commonplace Book* (1890–94), vol.2, p.18. This document is in the private collection of Baring-Gould's great-granddaughter Dr Merriol Almond.

<sup>5</sup> Fleetwood-Sheppard to Baring-Gould, 9 August 1892, Deposit 5203, box 32 [attached to manuscript libretto of Act II], Devon Record Office, Exeter (items from this deposit will hereafter be cited by call number and collection name)

<sup>6</sup> Baring-Gould to [William Wallace], 2 February 1893, MS 21550, f.189, William Wallace Papers, NLS. *Red Spider* is not specifically mentioned. However, Baring-Gould states “I believe the libretto is now in Dr Hubert Parry's hands” and as *Red Spider* was his only venture into the operatic genre, it is reasonable to assume that this is the work under discussion.

<sup>7</sup> Jeremy C. Dibble *C. Hubert H. Parry: His Life and Music* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 308

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 241–2, 515

treatment than *Hänsel and Gretel*.<sup>9</sup> Humperdinck did not become involved<sup>10</sup> and in the autumn of 1895, Baring-Gould entered into partnership with Drysdale, although how the parties were introduced is not known. Possibly, Drysdale may have learned of the project through his friend William Wallace.

After four years of considerable effort, Baring-Gould and Mrs Beringer had failed to create a suitable libretto for *Red Spider*. Seeking inspiration, Baring-Gould solicited Drysdale's advice. In a letter to Mrs Beringer informing her of progress on the project, Baring-Gould notes that he and his new partner had spent a week completely rewriting the work with "the result [being] so complete a remodelling, that little remained of the 2 act play".<sup>11</sup> He also tactfully suggests that she withdraw from the venture with due compensation for her efforts, a request with which she complied though the occasional correspondence between the parties over the following years does not reveal whether their relationship remained amicable following this summary removal. Although little evidence remains about this stage in the work's development, the drafts of the libretto and the annotations they contain detailing the collaborators' alterations, additions and deletions demonstrate that it was redrafted into three acts (after initially being increased to four) and the internal structures tightened through changes to the dialogue and increased (and appropriate) opportunities for musical numbers.<sup>12</sup>

Most sources record that *Red Spider* was first produced at Lowestoft on 25 July 1898.<sup>13</sup> However, an advertising flyer recently discovered in Devon Record Office<sup>14</sup> announces that the first performance was to take place on 13 November 1897 in Wells, Somerset, details which are supported by the records of theatrical entertainments held by the Lord

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<sup>9</sup> "The Author of 'Onward Christian Soldiers' at Home — The Rev S. Baring-Gould at Home" *The Young Man: A Monthly Journal and Review* 9 (September 1895): 294. Baring-Gould also mentions this to his daughter in a letter of 1895 (in DRO but not yet been catalogued).

<sup>10</sup> No material has been discovered either in the Baring-Gould archives or in the Humperdinck Collection at the University of Frankfurt-am-Main which suggests that the parties were in contact.

<sup>11</sup> Baring Gould to Beringer, 5 [September] 1895, TD166/6, DRO

<sup>12</sup> See draft libretti in box 13; 32, DRO

<sup>13</sup> For example, both the contract between Drysdale and Baring-Gould signed on 11 August 1898 (tipped in Cb9-y.12) and announcements in the theatrical press support this date.

<sup>14</sup> Advertising Flyer: "The *Red Spider*, Town Hall, Wells, 13 November 1897" box 13A, DRO

Chamberlain's Office.<sup>15</sup> A trial run in Wells would have been a sensible course of action for the collaborators, allowing their work to be presented on a limited scale and before a small, local audience, prior to its official launch. There was a perfect opportunity for such a performance. From the early 1890s, Baring-Gould and the Devonshire singer Frank Pemberton (later the General Manager of the *Red Spider* tour) had organised several series of lectures and concerts based on items in *Songs and Ballads of the West*. By 1897, these performances had developed into elaborate events involving colourful staged tableaux with action, costume and scenery. Such a concert was given on 12 November 1897 at Wells Town Hall, with a cast identical to that announced for the proposed production of *Red Spider* on the following afternoon. However, it is doubtful if this performance of the opera actually took place or if it did, whether it was open to the public. It is not reviewed in the press, although the *Songs of the West* concert given on the previous evening is discussed at length in the local *Wells Journal*<sup>16</sup> and there is no mention of the event in surviving correspondence concerning the work. To complicate the matter further, the administrative records of Wells Town Hall have not survived.

Initially, Drysdale had proposed a short tour of *Red Spider* in the spring of 1898, but adequate funds were not forthcoming. In a letter to Baring-Gould giving his reasons against proceeding with the tour, Drysdale provides a rare insight into his working knowledge of the theatrical business (while implying the reverse of his partner) and emphasises the financial burdens of mounting a theatrical production thus:

I am afraid it would be impossible to carry out this idea on £200 — the sum you say you are proposing to put into the venture. When I roughly calculated the probable cost I found that it would require about £500 to do it properly, as although I am firmly convinced that the opera would be a great success, still one must be prepared for losses and therefore have some capital to fall back upon. ... £200 goes very fast in theatrical speculation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> [*Red Spider*], 31 December 1897, Add. 53647/label no. 421, Lord Chamberlain's Plays, Playscripts vol. 28 (1897), BL. A December licensing date seems not to have precluded a November performance. A number of other entertainments registered on the same day as *Red Spider* had been performed before they had been approved — in fact, many were Christmas pantomimes which had been running for several weeks by the time they received official sanction.

<sup>16</sup> "Songs of the West" *Wells Journal* 18 November 1897, 4c. It is possible that this 'performance' was undertaken for legal reasons such as registering copyright.

<sup>17</sup> Drysdale to Baring-Gould, 10 December 1897, box 26 (in bundle of manuscript letters about dramatisation of novels), DRO

Common sense prevailed and the tour was postponed until July 1898. The collaborators' logistical problems were not over, however. During the intervening months, several applications for financial support were unsuccessful and Drysdale's approach to Helen Carte of the D'Oyly Carte Company requesting that they produce *Red Spider* failed because the management considered that the libretto had numerous weaknesses which would adversely affect the work's success.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the partners were required to finance the venture themselves with each investing £250 to capitalise their company, the Red Spider Syndicate. How Drysdale obtained such a large sum is unknown, but it is most likely that he acquired it from his father. It is less certain whether he would have received the money as a gift or would have agreed to repay the sum in full (or even with interest) if the venture should be successful. The contract drawn up between Baring-Gould and Drysdale details their particular financial interests in the scheme and stipulates the proportion of profit they would earn for each particular aspect of the production.<sup>19</sup> For example, profits from theatrical performances were to be shared 45% Baring-Gould, 55% Drysdale, while sales of the Book of Words<sup>20</sup> were split 75%/25% in favour of the former. The Syndicate's General Manager Frank Pemberton was to receive a 10% share of the nett profits from theatrical performances and performing rights. It had been Drysdale's idea to employ the Manager on this financial basis and as he noted to Baring-Gould "it would make him [Pemberton] much more anxious to do his best in the management, knowing what he has to gain".<sup>21</sup> The contract also reveals that the partners had extensive plans for publication including the issue of the complete libretto, vocal score, a piano score as well as separate sheet publications of individual numbers. Apart from the Book of Words, only four numbers from Act Two appeared, published by Ascherberg in 1898.<sup>22</sup>

## 12.2 Subject

There is much more to the story of *Red Spider* than is found in its stage representation. The work is notable more as an account of colourful and stage-worthy characters living

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<sup>18</sup> Carte to Drysdale, 27 October 1897, Cb10-x.17/49<sup>7bis</sup>. Mrs Carte advised Drysdale to set libretti which had been selected by a theatre manager or written by a major figure in the field (cf. 292, n.9).

Nevertheless, she did have a good opinion of Drysdale's music.

<sup>19</sup> Agreement between Sabine Baring-Gould and Learmont Drysdale, 11 August 1898, tipped in Cb9-y.12

<sup>20</sup> S. Baring-Gould *The Red Spider: A Comic Opera in Three Acts* (London: Tamblin, [1898])

<sup>21</sup> Drysdale to Baring-Gould, 9 May 1898, box 26 (in bundle of manuscript letters about dramatisation of novels), DRO

<sup>22</sup> These were: "Memory's fairest flow'ret", "There was a fox", "Wee mousie pousie" and "Here do I stand".

a simple village life in a bygone age, than for any clear story line or systematic dramatic development. The libretto's many clichéd elements — the spinning songs, drinking songs, a witch's waltz and a children's prayer with a chorus of angels — suggest that Baring-Gould wanted to include as many pot-boilers as possible, but Drysdale's treatment of these items is generally fresh and attractive. The appearance of such popular numbers, and the eclectic style of *Red Spider* as a whole, implies that the partners wanted their work to appeal to the widest possible audience — it was certainly not aimed primarily at the serious opera goer — and Drysdale, ever the pragmatist, would have been fully aware that financial success depended on filling theatres.

The opera is set in the village of Bratton Clovelly, West Devon<sup>23</sup> during the late eighteenth century: Act One — October; Act Two and Three — six months later. It has the following Dramatis Personæ:

Honor Luxmore — 'The Red Spider' (eldest daughter of Oliver Luxmore)	Soprano
Kate Luxmore (her sister)	Mezzo soprano
Larry Langford (nephew of Lawyer Langford)	Tenor
Charles Luxmore (eldest son of Oliver Luxmore)	Baritone
Sam Voadun (lover of Kate)	Baritone
Lawyer Langford (landowner)	Bass
Mrs Veale (housekeeper of Lawyer Langford)	Contralto
Oliver Luxmore (peasant)	[Baritone] <sup>24</sup>
Stout (innkeeper of the 'Ring of Bells')	
Ten children of various ages from 15 years downwards	
Angels and ploughmen	
Dancers	

The story of *Red Spider* centres round Honor Luxmore (the eldest of a large, impoverished family) who was entrusted by her late mother with the care of her siblings. She performs her duty selflessly, even her personal relationships being sacrificed for the sake of this sacred charge.

<sup>23</sup> This village is some three miles from Baring-Gould's home at Lewtrenchard Manor.

<sup>24</sup> The libretto and score do not specify the voice type.

Larry Langford, Honor's sweetheart, is the son of a neighbouring farmer and heir to Lawyer Langford, the wealthy owner of an adjoining farm. The lawyer is a grumbling old bachelor, who is tyrannised by his housekeeper, Mrs Veale, a cunning, elderly woman who practises witchcraft and is feared by locals. Lawyer Langford courts the affections of Honor, whom he has discovered is an heiress to a fortune. Larry is enraged.

Honor's foolish brother Charles, a former soldier, is now servant to Lawyer Langford and is made a tool of the designing Mrs Veale. She wishes to marry her master but fears she will be ousted by his attachment to Honor so steals a £5 note from him and gives it to Charles under false pretext. She then suggests to Langford that Charles may have stolen the money, in the hope that he will refrain from marrying the sister of a thief. Langford falls into her trap and presumes Charles guilty, but thwarts Mrs Veale's plans by trying to use his power over Honor to extract a promise of marriage in return for offering to pardon her brother. Honor is on the point of sacrificing her happiness for the sake of her brother and family, when the true culprit, Mrs Veale, is exposed, and the story ends with Honor and Larry united.

### 12.3 Some musical discussions

The instrumental forces employed in *Red Spider* were somewhat larger than those available to most provincial theatre orchestras (viz.: piccolo, 2 flutes, oboe, 2 clarinets, bassoon, 2 cornets, horn, tenor and bass trombone, timpani, assorted percussion, harp and strings), so seven London musicians travelled with the company to augment local bands.<sup>25</sup>

The work has three acts consisting of 30 numbers — solos, duets, ensembles and dances — connected by spoken dialogue. The overture exists only as a sketch in the autograph full score and does not appear in the extant orchestral parts. As is common with many light operatic overtures of the period, it has a potpourri structure — a four-bar introductory passage and a number of link phrases connect various extracts drawn from individual numbers. Apart from these phrases, Drysdale provides no musical notation

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<sup>25</sup> The *Era's* Edinburgh correspondent considered the inclusion of a lady trombone player in the orchestra a great novelty. See: "Amusements in Edinburgh" *Era* 22 October 1898, 8d.

and the score is annotated instead with directions such as “take in ‘Fox Song’ No. 15”, or “take in 1<sup>st</sup> verse of ‘Flowers of the Valley’ No. 19 omitting bass”. Drysdale’s sister later produced a complete copy of the score from these instructions which is now held by GUL.<sup>26</sup>

True to Baring-Gould and Fleetwood-Sheppard’s original plan, the work reflects the lore of its Devon setting and close consideration was given by composer and librettist to choosing traditional material which was compatible with the operatic plot. This material is not identified in the scores. Thus, it has been necessary to discover this information through a variety of means, including:

- references to source material found in collaborators’ annotations in draft libretti;
- comparison between melodies employed in the opera and Baring-Gould’s published folksong collections;
- references in Baring-Gould’s correspondence with Aimée Beringer and Fleetwood-Sheppard.

The recent discovery of a letter from Baring-Gould to Lucy Broadwood inviting her to hear *Red Spider* during its rehearsals in London, partially confirms the results of the above investigation, as it lists six of the traditional melodies included in the opera. Furthermore, Baring-Gould’s statement that “you will hear the music [where] several of our folk airs are introduced”, suggests that these songs also formed part of his joint research with Broadwood.<sup>27</sup>

Folk-derived material normally forms only part of a number and the structures, generally ABA, have contrasting central sections set to new ‘composed’ melodies which are often in different metres and/or in a related key. The traditional material, both melodic and textual, is interpolated in various ways. Melodies can be set to a new text or vice versa. The opening song “The Red Spider” is based on the traditional Devon

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<sup>26</sup> In Cb10-y.20–21

<sup>27</sup> S. Baring-Gould to Miss Broadwood, 10 July 1898, 2185/LEB/1/296, Broadwood Collection, Surrey Record Office, Woking. The songs listed are: “The blue kerchief”; “The oxen ploughing”; “Why should we be dullards sad?”; “Lemonday”; “Flowers of the valley” and an unpublished melody for “Matthew, Mark, Luke and John”.

melody “The Blue Kerchief”<sup>28</sup> but colour is the only link with the traditional text. Kate, with interjections from the chorus, explains that Honor’s nickname ‘Red Spider’ is due to her fondness for scarlet clothes.<sup>29</sup> The title song of the work, it introduces the heroine and describes her many attributes. Drysdale sets the hexatonic tune diatonically, initially over a drone bass, and to a bubbling accompaniment figure which drives the music continually forward.

**Ex.12.1** Act I, No. 2 — “The Red Spider”, verse one

[*Allegretto con moto*]  
KATE *p*

A spi - der, a lit - tle red spi - der, is she, the\_

lads have so called Hon - or Lux - more, as we

The contrasting central section is considerably more complex. Its new composed melody is centred on the dominant key and the uncertain and volatile sentiments of the text are represented musically through unsettled features such as a disjunct vocal line, sudden chromatic shifts, false relations and frequent passing modulation.

<sup>28</sup> Baring-Gould & Fleetwood-Sheppard *Songs and Ballads of the West* (London: Methuen, [1891]) 84–5

<sup>29</sup> Baring-Gould’s novel draws comparison between Honor and the folklore surrounding the ‘lucky’ red spider known in Devonshire as a money-spinner.

Ex.12.2 “The Red Spider”, verse three

[Allegretto con moto]  
K. [p]

The luck in this life is not al - ways so sure, cap -  
-ric - ious and vol - a - tile, nev - er se - cure.

In the final stanza, the chorus, humming quietly through closed lips, accompanies Kate adding a warmth of sound which effectively portrays textual meaning — Honor spins happiness and goodness.

Following ‘Red Spider’s’ song, news arrives that Larry has won a ploughing competition. The assembled group decides that he is generally an idler and Honor agrees, although in her following song she sings wistfully of him. The ‘A’ sections of this number are based on the traditional melody “The Cuckoo”,<sup>30</sup> an appropriate subject at this point in the plot which concerns the actions of the feckless and flighty Larry. The text is not traditional and had been written by Baring-Gould to an alternative melody for “The Cuckoo”.<sup>31</sup> Drysdale’s setting is particularly evocative of textual meaning with its leaping lines, weaving texture and prominent use of leaps of a third in the woodwind and string accompaniment which reinforce the cuckoo analogy musically.

<sup>30</sup> Baring-Gould & Fleetwood-Sheppard *A Garland of Country Song* (London: Methuen, 1895) 2–3

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 4–5

Ex.12.3 Act I, No. 3 — “The Cuckoo”, conclusion of Introduction and Opening of verse one

[*Allegretto grazioso*]

HONOR [*p*]

The\_

vn1  
fl/ob/cl  
+harp [*p*]  
va2/va  
vc/+db *pizz*

cuc - koo is a gid - dy bird none\_ oth - er as\_\_ he;

The musical score is for Act I, No. 3, "The Cuckoo", concluding the Introduction and opening the first verse. It is in 3/4 time, marked *Allegretto grazioso*, and in the key of D major. The score features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part is characterized by a relentless arpeggiic figure in the right hand, while the left hand provides a steady bass line. The vocal line begins with the word "The" and continues with the lyrics "cuc - koo is a gid - dy bird none\_ oth - er as\_\_ he;". The score includes dynamic markings such as [*p*] and [*pizz*].

Initially, the predominantly hexatonic melody is harmonised diatonically in a setting which employs inverted pedals and drones, but later, passing moves through dominant and subdominant keys provide additional colour. In the ‘B’ sections (stanzas two and four), there is a change to quadruple metre and a move to the subdominant key. In contrast to the folk style of the previous section, these verses are in a more complex aria style with the occasionally chromatic and composed melody being treated imitatively by wind and violins over an accompaniment which is dominated by a relentless arpeggiic figuration.



(b) *[Andante grazioso]*

Hon. Cuc-koo cuc-koo cuc-koo cuc-koo

S. A. Cuc-koo\_cuc-koo cuc-koo\_cuc-koo cuc-koo\_cuc-koo cuc-koo\_cuc-koo

T. B. Cuc-koo\_cuc-koo\*  
\* text omitted from score

Orch. fl/ob/cl  
harp arp. throughout  
bn/strings (sketch) + db pizz

Act Two opens to Honor spinning, with the children kneeling in a ring around her. She sings the gentle spinning song “By the Setting Sun”, whose metaphoric text concerns the children entrusted to her care. Above, unbeknown to Honor and the children, a chorus of angels guards them. The number is constructed around several separate elements, both composed and drawn from folk repertoire, which combine to produce a rather more complex structure than is generally found in this opera:

- Introduction
- A (Honor)
- B (Children’s Chorus based on the folksong “Matthew, Mark, and Luke and John”<sup>32</sup>)
- A’ (Honor, slightly extended material)
- C (Chorus of angels)
- B (Children’s chorus, harmonised by chorus of angels who often have an alternative text)
- Coda (Honor and angels in an extended “Amen”)

<sup>32</sup> Sabine Baring-Gould col. *Folk Songs of the West Country: Annotated from the MSS at Plymouth Library and With Additional Material by Gordon Hitchcock* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1974). 36–7

Ex.12.6 — Act II, No. 10 “Spinning Song”, Introduction

*Andante spianato*

fl/ob/+cl 8ve lower

vns/va

vc

bn/m+db

simile

A continuous sextuplet semiquaver figuration in the upper strings depicts Honor’s spinning. Placed against a constant quaver motion, it produces a cross-rhythmic effect which is occasionally enhanced by syncopated rhythm, providing a subtle contrast to the prevailing metre. The simplicity of the dramatic setting is reflected in the use of diatonic harmonies supporting a composed melody that begins hexatonically, its otherwise attractive contour being somewhat marred by awkward leaps. Nevertheless, the resulting ‘thin’ sound does effectively enhance textual meaning.

Ex.12.7 — “Spinning Song”, verse 1

[*Andante spianato*]

Honor

Awkward leaps

By the set - ting sun I spin Lit - tle threads so light and thin

Flax they be yet gol - den seem in the glor - ious ev' - ning beam

The children’s chorus which follows is based on both the text and melody of the old prayer “Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John” which Baring-Gould notes was “at one time the only prayer used by the village children” (presumably in his parish of

Lewtrenchard).<sup>33</sup> It is supported by colourful orchestration with the prayer melody being passed between woodwind and horns over diatonic harmonies within the tonic key.

**Ex.12.8** — “Spinning Song”, first children’s prayer

[*Andante spianato*]

Children's chorus

Mat - thew Mark and Luke and John

Bless the bed that I lie on

Initially sung in unison, the children divide into two groups for the final lines of the prayer, supported in the orchestra by a variety of wind and brass doublings. It is a simple, but effective representation of the innocence of children’s prayers. In response to Honor’s text concerning how all good children will be protected by God, a chorus of angels sings from behind whilst the accompanying semiquaver figuration is maintained indicating her continued spinning.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

Ex.12.9 — “Spinning Song”, opening of Angels’ Chorus

[Andante Spianato]

S  
A  
T  
B

We hear thy prayer dear child - ren

figuration continues in orchestra

The angels enter again during the second rendition of the children’s prayer and either comment on the action through use of separate textual material set in harmony with the children, or join forces, singing the same music and words. These passages reflect that Honor and the children are unaware of the heavenly bodies that protect them; the audience being the only group who realise that the heroine and her blessed charges are protected by angels. In general, the angel material is more harmonically complex (e.g. occasional chromatic and secondary seventh chords) than that presented by Honor and the children, further enhancing the distinction between these higher beings and simple mortals.

Honor’s second-act song “There was a woman” is a complete setting, melody and text, of the ancient pan-British ballad “The flowers in the valley”.<sup>34</sup> Two variants of this melody appear in Baring-Gould’s manuscript collection of folksongs.<sup>35</sup> Both are in mixolydian mode, the second having a flattened sixth at its opening which creates a particularly haunting effect. However, the Fleetwood-Sheppard setting employed by Drysdale alters the melodic line, placing it firmly in the major mode, considerably lessening the eerie aspect of the traditional versions.

<sup>34</sup> Baring-Gould & Fleetwood-Sheppard *A Garland...* 8–9

<sup>35</sup> Bertrand Harris Bronson *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads with Their Texts, According to the Extant Records of Great Britain and America* 6 vols (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959) 1, 190. Baring-Gould’s autograph manuscript collections of West Country folksongs include: Plymouth Public Library — a manuscript fair copy of 202 songs and 13 notebooks containing items taken down in the field by Baring-Gould, Fleetwood-Sheppard and F.W. Bussell; Killerton House, Exeter — Baring-Gould’s personal manuscript containing the fair copy of c.650 songs.

**Ex.12.10** — (a) opening of two traditional variants of “The flowers of the valley”,<sup>36</sup>  
 (b) Act II, No. 19 — opening of melody employed by Drysdale

(a)

(b)

It is sunset and Honor, sitting alone, gradually falls into a reverie during which she sings. On the surface, it is an uncomplicated setting of a simple melody — the harmonisation is diatonic, with colouring provided by passing moves to the dominant, and in the final stanza, via chromatic shifts in harmony. Nevertheless, there is an underlying complexity. At the opening, the transparency of muted violins and harp arpeggiation captures Honor’s dreamy state (Ex.12.11a), whilst in later sections, melodic doubling and simple but attractive inner melodies in ‘cello, woodwind and horns enrich the setting in a manner reminiscent of many of the light operatic numbers of Arthur Sullivan. The musical instruments mentioned in the narrative provide Drysdale with an excellent opportunity for musical mimicry with effects such as arpeggiation and pizzicato double bass imitating the lute, and bubbling leaps, trills and passage-work representing the flute and violin (Ex.12.11b).

**Ex.12.11** — “There was a woman”: (a) Introduction; (b) verse four

(a) *Andante affettuoso*

cl/vn1 muted +8ve above +fl

harp arp. in

ob/vn/vn2

bn/vn +vn2/va muted

bn/va

vc/+db pizz

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Bronson notes that this melody belongs to the “Cruel Brother” group of ballads.

(b)  
[Andante affettuoso]  
HONOR

The harp, the lute, the pipe, the flute, the cym - bal sweet goes the tre - ble vio -

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line for Honor and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a violin (vnl) with a suspended E string (sus. E<sup>III</sup>), a flute (fl), a violin (vnl), a bassoon (bn), and a double bass (db) with pizzicato (pizz) and harp arpeggio (arp. m) markings. The second system continues the piano accompaniment with a violin (vnl), a double bass (db) with arco, and a piano (pizz) marking. The third system features a violin (vnl) with a forte (f) dynamic and a clarinet (cl) with a forte (f) dynamic, and a viola (va) with a forte (f) dynamic.

The number successfully juxtaposes the representation of textual narrative with the portrayal of a character's subconscious state through an intelligent and subtle setting of a traditional song.

The crying of Honor's baby sister disturbs her reverie. Melodrama<sup>37</sup> accompanies Honor's contemplation as she considers how much she loves the good-hearted and seemingly reformed Larry, but she still feels that marriage is impossible until the children have grown up. The baby cries again and to soothe her Honor sings the simple

<sup>37</sup> Action accompanied by melodrama is annotated in pencil on the typescript libretto held by GUL.

strophic lullaby “Sleep, Baby Sleep” which, in its final section, includes a highly appropriate textual reference to the nursery rhyme “Rock a bye baby on the tree top”. The song’s undulating melody is harmonised diatonically, frequently over prolonged pedals, and is occasionally coloured by passing hints of closely related keys. The mellow timbres of woodwind, horns and strings provide an accompaniment within which a constant quaver figure is often placed against a gentle syncopated swell providing a gentle rocking motion. It is particularly evocative of the dramatic setting.

**Ex.12.12** — Act II, No. 20 “Sleep, baby sleep”, verse one

[Andante]

Honor

Sleep ba - by sleep\_ Dad is a - way

Shut\_ lit - tle peep - ers\_ sweet\_ I pray

Despite the apparent simplicity, the introduction and link sections are frequently chromatic, shifting through common tones and sudden shifts, as if warning of danger (Ex.12.13a). Hence, it is no surprise when at the conclusion of Honor’s second stanza, we hear at a distance, snatches of the first two lines of Charles’s Drinking Song (No. 6). There is an effective dovetailing of simple and compound quadruple rhythms, as the rocking quaver accompaniment associated with the lullaby continues against the bawdy strains of Charles and his three drunken friends. An extremely chromatic area anchored by a dominant pedal ends the drunks’ first interjection, whilst a correspondingly

diatonic passage heralds Honor's next entry which introduces the text of "Rock a bye baby" set to a variant of the "Sleep, baby, sleep" melody. By the third bar of this statement, Charles and his friends once again are heard coming ever closer to the scene (Ex.12.13b). The section is an excellent example of opposing metres and contrasting styles of harmony and tonality being used as a means of characterisation.

**Ex.12.13** — "Sleep, baby, sleep": (a) Introduction; (b) link to No. 21

(a)

*Andante*

musical score for the introduction of "Sleep, baby, sleep". The score is in 4/4 time and features three staves: c/vn1 +fl 8ve higher (top), hn/vn2/va (middle), and vc/db (bottom). The tempo is marked *Andante*. The key signature has two flats. The first staff contains a melodic line with a slur over the first two bars and a *simile* marking. The second and third staves provide harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

(b)

[*Andante*]

musical score for the vocal entry of "Rock a bye baby". The score is in 4/4 time and features two staves: Honor (top) and Drunks (bottom). The tempo is marked [*Andante*]. The key signature has two flats. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Rock a bye ba - by on the tree top". The Drunks part is marked "Drunks (derived from No. 6)" and features a 12/8 time signature. The lyrics continue: "Then when the wind blows cra - dle will rock here's to the cup that bears us up when grief and pain are nigh".

Towards the conclusion of Honor's lullaby, her vocal line consists of longer rhythmic values of decreasing dynamic level, suggesting that baby has been lulled to sleep. However, a chromatic element also appears which previously has only been associated

with the drunken group suggesting that her peace will be short-lived and turmoil will soon take its place.

The third act begins with Larry and Sam serenading the Luxmore sisters from outside their cottage with the quartet and chorus “Awake! maid, awake”. The number is based on the melody of the folksong “Lemonday”<sup>38</sup> (derived from the old English word *leman*, a sweetheart or lover). Leman Day falls on Midsummer’s Day and Fleetwood-Sheppard notes that the song is, in fact, a version of the Midsummer Day Carol<sup>39</sup> — thus, although the subject of the folksong is appropriate for this point in the action, it is inconsistent with a scene set on May Day. The number is in ternary form and has the following internal structure:

- **A** {sub-structure a, b, b’} — Larry
- **A’** — Larry and Honor
- **B** {linked melodic ideas derived from “Lemonday” c, d, e & f} — various pairings of characters and full quartet
- **A’’** — Chorus
- **Coda**

The introduction, a partial statement of the folksong melody accompanied by rippling harp arpeggiation, is evocative of the still atmosphere immediately before dawn.

**Ex.12.14** — Act III, No. 23 “Awake, maid, awake”, Introduction

*Andante cantabile*

ob/vn1 +fl 8ve higher

p

ww/brass/ +vn2/va

harp/vn1

+bn/vc

vc/+db pizz

harp arp.

<sup>38</sup> Sabine Baring-Gould and Henry Fleetwood-Sheppard *A Garland...* No. 12

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

The text concerns the waking of nature on a beautiful May Day and begins by Larry calling on the girls to rise and join him, the opening repeated notes of the folksong melody forming an appropriately musical alarm call.

**Ex.12.15** — “Awake, maid, awake”, verse one: the opening of “Lemonday”

[*Andante cantabile*]

musical 'alarm' call

A - wake maid a - wake on this glad May morn ... ing

The melody is supported by mainly diatonic harmonies that are occasionally coloured by subtle chromatic shifts such as those seen in Ex.12.14. When the opening section is repeated Larry sings of Honor, comparing her to the ‘sweetest flower’, and she replies, via a countermelody, that she will soon come to him,<sup>40</sup> providing an apt musical portrayal of the lovers’ harmonious relationship.

In section ‘B’, the various parties, both in pairs and as a quartet, comment on nature’s morning activities. There is prominent use of chromatic harmonies (e.g. diminished seventh and secondary dominant chords) and frequently changing tonality, a feature accomplished by the employment of sudden chromatic shifts through both common chord notes and enharmonic change. Initially, one pair of singers will discuss the ‘activity’ of certain flowers/birds before this is commented on by the full quartet. This technique provides contrasts in texture, as well as drawing attention to significant text, and is particularly successful when linked to other devices such as chromaticism which enhance textual meaning. For example, when the quartet unites to comment on the imminent sunrise, the event is represented by a melody line which rises steadily over the distance of a diminished twelfth. The effect is enhanced by the supporting chromatic shifts within the harmony and the sudden change of texture when the discussion of flowers resumes.

<sup>40</sup> The text assigned to Honor is not provided in the libretto although it appears in the piano/vocal score in Cb9-y.12.

## Ex.12.16 — “Awake, maid, awake”, central section

[Andante cantabile]

Honor  
Ex - pect - ing the sun\_ that is short - ly to rise The dai - sies their

Kate  
Ex - pect - ing the sun\_ that is short - ly to rise The prim - rose their

Larry  
Ex - pect - ing the sun\_ that is short - ly to rise

Sam  
Ex - pect - ing the sun that is short - ly to rise

H.  
fa - ces up hold - ing the dew\_ ly - ing still\_ in their tear - la - den eyes

K.  
fa - ces up hold - ing the dew\_ ly - ing still\_ in their tear - la - den eyes

L.  
the dew ly - ing still in their tear la - den eyes

S.  
the dew ly - ing still in their tear la - den eyes

Towards the conclusion of this section, the music builds to a rousing climax via an ever-rising melodic line coloured by sudden modulation. The peasants and children enter and as the sun rises, all join forces in the final chorus, a restatement of the number's opening section.

The traditional material employed in this song has been colourfully arranged and significantly enlarged to form an attractive and well-constructed number which

successfully contrasts the emotion of love and the joy of spring, with the colourful, rather analogous, discussion of the specific birds and flowers.

Further traditional melodies employed in the opera include “The oxen ploughing” (No. 4 with excerpts reappearing throughout the work), the drinking song “Why should we be dullards sad?” (No. 21) and a highly appropriate reference to the “The British Grenadiers” (No. 17) as Charles tells of his romantic conquests whilst a ‘rambling soldier’. However, much of the remaining music is in a pseudo folk-style: simple ABA and strophic structures are prevalent; melodies are frequently based on gapped scales accompanied by simple diatonic progressions and supported by pedals and drones; modulations are normally to closely related keys, and many of the rhythmic structures are derived from traditional dance music. Rustic orchestration, with skirling flutes and fiddle-like effects on violin, further enhances this traditional flavour. Such features are central to the numerous dance numbers, providing an immediately recognisable countrydance style as found at the conclusion of Kate and Sam’s Act II duet “When you’re my husband” (No.11).

**Ex.12.17** — Act II, No. 11 “When you’re my husband”, concluding dance

[*Allegretto con spirito*]

The musical score for the concluding dance "When you're my husband" (Act II, No. 11) is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is for the melody, marked with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 6/8 time signature. The instrument is identified as fl/vnl (flute/violin) with a triangle. The bottom staff is for the accompaniment, marked with a bass clef, the same key signature and time signature, and the instrument is identified as vn2/va+bn/hn sus. (violin 2/viola/bassoon/horn sustained). The bass line is marked with vc (violin/celesta) and db pizz (double bass pizzicato). The melody consists of a series of eighth notes with chromatic auxiliary notes and grace notes, creating a folk-like, jig-like character. The accompaniment provides a simple harmonic support with a tonic drone.

This ornamental melody is coloured by numerous chromatic auxiliary and grace notes, and frequent interjections from the woodwind. The harmonisation is mainly diatonic and supported by a tonic drone, with the music moving only briefly away from the home key of A major. It is a simple, but effective countrydance in the style of a jig. In vocal items, however, traditionally derived features are generally restricted to the opening section of a number with the melodic and harmonic language quickly changing to encompass more extensive diatonic and, less frequently, chromatic writing.

Folk music is not the only external source drawn upon. Music hall-style patter songs loaded with humorous banter make several appearances. In the Act I trio “Women’s tongues” (Charles, Kate and Honor), the sisters tackle Charles about his idleness and fecklessness. The family cannot afford to keep him and it is bad enough that he has been discharged from the army, without his poor behaviour at home. In reply to his sisters’ nagging Charles complains “What’s man’s brawl to women’s chatter”. In the following humorous number he chastises ‘women’s tongues’ whilst his sisters commend them. As the parties argue and tempers become frayed, the deluge of words is reminiscent of patter-song style. From the introduction, the jaunty rhythms and the accompanying pizzicato strings, staccato woodwinds and leaping bass line capture the sentiment of this humorous, but rather barbed text.

**Ex.12.18** — Act I, No. 7 “Women’s tongues”, Introduction

*Allegretto Scherzando*

The musical score is for the introduction of 'Women's tongues'. It is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The tempo is *Allegretto Scherzando*. The score consists of two staves: a woodwind staff (flute or clarinet) and a string staff (pizzicato). The woodwind part starts with a dynamic of *f* and includes a marking '+ob 8ve lower' above the second measure. The string part starts with a dynamic of *f* and includes a *dim* marking in the third measure. The woodwind part features a series of eighth-note chords, while the string part features a leaping bass line with eighth-note chords.

The harmonisation in the outer sections of this ternary number is generally diatonic and confined to closely related keys, but in the central section, both melody and harmony are considerably more chromatic. There are sudden chromatic shifts, and chords such as augmented sixths (Ex.12.19) and diminished sevenths are employed. Chromatic modulation is also frequent and is often used to enhance textual meaning. For example, several chromatic shifts and a sudden move to A $\flat$  major (set to crisp ‘snipping’ rhythms), capture the brisk argument between the sisters and their brother and highlight Charles’s gibe “Women’s tongues deserve a snipping”.

## Ex.12.19 — “Women’s tongues”, verse two

[Allegretto scherzando]

Honor

Goad to no - ble work the lag - gard, Call from er - ror stray - ing feet,

f/vob [p] (-ob)

vn/va pizz +cl/vln sus.

vc pizz

bn/+db pizz

Charles

Kate

Wo - men's tongue's de - serve a snip - ping, Oh my tongue you've in - jured me.

+bn sus.

Stage actions also emphasise Charles’s argument when he attempts to shut his sisters’ mouths with his hands or pinch them under the chin. Nevertheless, beneath the surface humour there is a serious note — women sustain the Luxmore household and they have the final say in any dispute.

The central section of Act II presents subject matter particularly appropriate for music hall-style treatment and contains excellent musical characterisations of Lawyer Langford, Mrs Veale and Kate. In the duet “Not Young in Years”, Langford boastfully declares that he is in his prime whilst Mrs Veale dismisses him as an old fool. She fusses that her master needs someone to care for him and lectures him about the inadvisability of plunging rashly into marriage with Honor. To himself Langford notes that if he can secure Honor and have a son of his own, his nephew Larry will be disinherited. Furthermore, Langford has secured the proof of the marriage of Luxmore’s mother and the sisters can now claim their rightful inheritance — Honor will be wealthy and thus, an attractive proposition. The following lengthy duet consists of nine short stanzas which are often set concurrently as each party follows their individual lines of thought. Langford notes that what he lacks in youth, he makes up for in gold — he is in

his prime and what more could a bride want? However, Mrs Veale, in asides, notes that he is a fool! As Langford continues to describe his virtues as a bridegroom, he sees Mrs Veale spying on him and, very angry, attempts to dismiss her completely. She continues to taunt him and the final section is based on a “Ha ha” textual motif with which she mocks.

This is a long (11 folios) and repetitious number in which the narrative is either divided between the characters as they state their relative positions, or presented as dialogue through simultaneous delivery of assigned text. At the opening, the dark orchestral timbre of oboe, bassoon, horns and strings (joined later by a full brass section) is heightened by a prominent syncopated accompaniment in violin 2 and viola, devices that provide a highly appropriate characterisation of Langford — pompous and sure of himself. Nonetheless, the uneasiness resulting from chromatic movement and syncopation suggest that he is a little unsteady and not quite up to taking on a young wife.

**Ex.12.20** — Act II, No. 14 “Not young in years”, Introduction

*Allegro Moderato*

ob/vn  
vn2/va  
bn/hn/vc  
db pizz

+hn/va  
bn

As if to assure us that he is not past his best, he launches into a sparkingly orchestrated waltz which is based on a simple, mainly pentatonic, melody supported by primary harmonies and a tonic pedal (Ex.12.21a). More complex music, which includes use of devices such as chromatic shift, is used to highlight particularly significant passages of

text including when Langford pompously states that “None but the moneyed deserve the fair!” (Ex.12.21b).

**Ex.12.21** — “Not young in years”, verse one, Langford’s refrain: (a) opening;  
(b) conclusion

(a)  
[Tempo di valse]

No time like the pre - sent time

(b)  
[Tempo di Valse]  
Langford

None but the mon - ey'd none but the mon - ey'd  
none but the mon - ey'd de - serve the fair

The latter section of the refrain is always associated with Mrs Veale mocking Langford as he pompously argues that it is time he got rid of her and acquired a wife. Set simply to a hexatonic melody, a comic element is introduced musically by a jaunty countermelody in the first violin.

**Ex.12.22** — “Not young in years”, Mrs Veale’s refrain, countermelody

Violin

It is a particularly appropriate musical setting for the mood. The final section of the number develops elements found above, including snatches of text, a similar hexatonic

melody with frequent arpeggiated motion and prominent use of the violin countermelody. The “Ha ha” textual motif also becomes prominent. Initially, it is used spasmodically by the mocking Mrs Veale against Langford’s narrative, before he joins her, as if realising that there is no point in arguing. Their dispute over for the present, they descend into complete farce. The “Ha ha” motif is developed through various chromatic melodic patterns, some syncopated with displaced beats others melismatic, supported by correspondingly coloured harmonies which build to a rousing climax. The tension is heightened by the contrast between passages which are accompanied by vivid orchestration (including a form of the countermelody in upper woodwind and violin) and silence, leaving the vocalists to joust unaided.

**Ex.12.23** — “Not young in years”, final refrain

[Tempo di valse]

ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ah

[p cres. poco a poco]

vn1  
cl  
vn2/va double stop  
+brass  
cl 3rd lower/+fl

vc/+bn/db outlined or sust.

ah [ah ah ah] ah

f/ob/c/vn1  
+ob  
trv/crn/trb1/vn2/va  
bn/vc  
db/+trb2 sust.

Undoubtedly the number is long, but this prolixity is mitigated by entertaining subject matter and a sectional structure that contains contrasting material which appropriately represents both the mood of, and the interaction between, the characters.

Following their lengthy argument, Langford again threatens Mrs Veale and she retreats to a safe hiding place. He calls Honor from the cottage saying he is an admirer who bears a communication to her advantage before advancing and offering himself and his fortune to her. At this point, one of the three hidden characters (Kate, Sam and Mrs Veale) sneezes and disturbs Langford's speech. "Have the children colds?" he asks Honor, and then continues with his courting, stating that he is a superior choice to Larry as a husband for her. As he kneels at Honor's feet, the sneezing occurs again and as the puzzled Langford looks about in an attempt to discover the source of the strange sound, Kate steals out, takes Honor's place and indicates to her sister that she should withdraw. Langford returns to the matter in hand and kneels before Kate who bursts out laughing. The following allegorical solo and dance "There was a Fox" is nursery rhyme-like with prominent use of nonsense syllables, but it has a serious message — Kate informs Langford that Honor does not welcome his advances. The strophic number consists of three contrasting sections set respectively, in 6/8, 2/4 and 4/4 metre, and followed by a dance based on foregoing material. The music successfully responds to the analogous text — the subtly flavoured harmony with its chromatic and enharmonic shifts and coloured chords add an element of unease to the prevailing diatonicism, so from the introduction the listener is aware of Kate's witty, but barbed comments.

**Ex.12.24** — Act II, No. 15 — "There was a fox", Introduction

*Allegretto giocoso*

The musical score is written for piano in two systems. The first system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo marking is *Allegretto giocoso*. The first staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system also consists of two staves, continuing the piece. The key signature changes to two flats (B-flat and E-flat) in the second system. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass clef staff.

Subsequent sections contain a wealth of textual depiction including the chirping staccato quavers and grace notes associated with the clucking pullet and a rising melodic line of dotted rhythms in voice (doubled by violin) representing the cockcrow.

**Ex.12.25** — “There was a fox”, verse one: (a) clucking pullet; (b) cockcrow

(a) *[Allegretto giocoso]*

KATE *[p]*

Cluck went the pul - let, speed - i - ly flew

f/c/vn1

ob/vn2/va (sketch) *p*

timp/lower strings *[pizz]*

(b)

K.

I'm for cock - a - doo - dle, cock - a - doo - dle - doo - dle - do.

vn

ob/cls *sust. p*

vn2/va/vc

bn/tn/db

The image displays two musical excerpts, (a) and (b), from a score. Excerpt (a) is for 'KATE' and is marked 'Allegretto giocoso'. It features a vocal line with lyrics 'Cluck went the pul - let, speed - i - ly flew' and an instrumental accompaniment for flutes, violins, and other instruments. Excerpt (b) is for 'K.' and features a vocal line with lyrics 'I'm for cock - a - doo - dle, cock - a - doo - dle - doo - dle - do.' and an instrumental accompaniment for various instruments including violin, oboe, and bassoon.

The dance section that follows each stanza and accompanies Kate’s taunting of Langford features grace notes, triplet figures and drones which effectively mimic folk style.

Ex.12.26 — “There was a fox”, dance

[Allegretto giocoso]



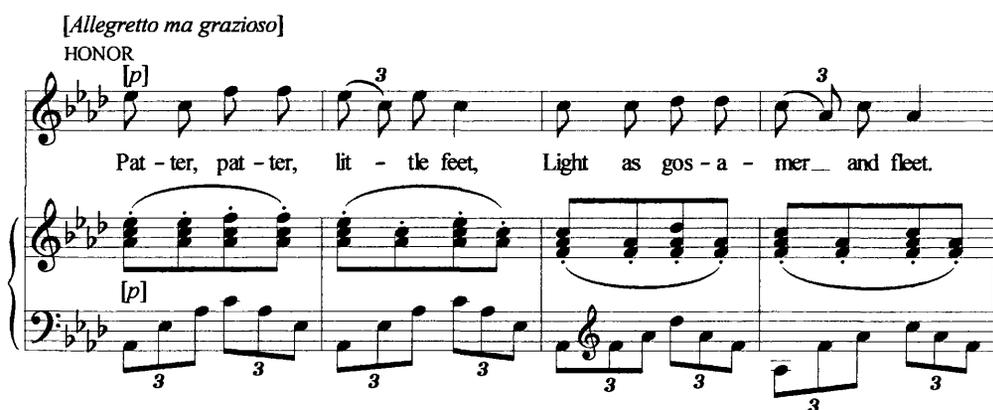
A charming but simple number, “There was a fox” gains strength from its sectional structure, textual representation and colourful orchestration. Extremely popular with audiences, it was frequently encored.<sup>41</sup>

The opera is not without its sentimental numbers. Possibly the most attractive song in this vein occurs in Act III as Honor prepares the children’s breakfast on May Day morning. She calls them with the strophic song “Patter, patter, little feet” which has an attractively shaped melody supported throughout by a cross-rhythmic feature of duplet against triplet, aptly portraying the children’s tripping along to her call.

Ex.12.27 — Act III, No. 24 “Patter, patter, little feet”, verse one

[Allegretto ma grazioso]

HONOR



Pat - ter, pat - ter, lit - tle feet, Light as gos - a - mer and fleet.

Initially, the music is mainly diatonic with the occasional German sixth which seems to encourage the children to ‘awake’. Later sections are tonally more unsettled — in verse

<sup>41</sup> This fact is noted in many reviews of the work (e.g. “The Red Spider: A New Opera at Lowestoft” *Lowestoft Weekly Press* 28 July 1898, 8b; “The man in the Stalls: Red Spider” *Western Figaro* 2 September 1898, 6a).

one a move to the tonic minor highlights Honor encouraging the children to “Scatter dreams of darkness” (Ex.12.28a), whilst the refrains open with a series of semitone shifts and altered chords over a chromatically moving bass which urge them musically to obey her commands (Ex.12.28b).

**Ex.12.28** — “Patter, patter, little feet”: (a) verse one, section in tonic minor;  
(b) refrain, chromatic movement

(a) *[Allegretto ma graziosa]*

Scat - ter dreams of dark - ness bred, cob webs from the drow - sy bed

(b) *[Allegretto ma graziosa]*

Come, come, chil - dren come, bread and but - ter round me come,

*poco accel - - er - ando - -*

Drysdale is adept at reflecting changes in dramatic context or in the mood of characters. Two successive numbers in Act II, the lively duet “When the spring comes in” and the sentimental song “Where do I stand”, provide a particularly fine example of this quality. In the duet, Honor and Larry discuss the prospect of their marriage by extolling the virtues of the natural activity of spring — the pairing of the species. A mixture of analogous and narrative material informs us that Larry wishes to enter swiftly into wedlock whilst Honor wants time to consider. This modified strophic song contains three short narrative stanzas (with the second being based on new musical material) followed by longer two-part refrain sections which contain an interesting mix of onomatopoeic, alliterative and nonsense rhyme text. Structurally, the balance between

verse and refrain material is unusually biased towards the latter (more than double the length of the narrative section) allowing prominence to be placed on the most interesting portions of the text from a musical perspective. The section is treated both homophonically (with the singers mainly in 3rds and 6ths) and contrasted in areas of dialogue with more open-textured passages formed of question and answer-type phrases, styles which reflect the emotions experienced by Honor and Larry during their spirited discussion. The introduction immediately captures the jovial scene with a leaping quaver accompaniment.

**Ex.12.29** — Act II, No. 12 “When the spring comes in”, Introduction

*Allegro ma grazioso*

The musical score for Ex.12.29 is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. It features a leaping quaver accompaniment. The top staff is for Violin 1/Flute (vn1/fl) and the bottom staff is for Violin 2/Viola (vn2/va). The woodwinds/brass (ww/brass) and strings/contrabass (trbs/vc/+db pizz) are also indicated. The tempo is *Allegro ma grazioso*. The score shows a melodic line in the upper voice and a rhythmic accompaniment in the lower voice. The woodwinds/brass part is marked *f* and the strings/contrabass part is marked *pizz*. The tempo is *Allegro ma grazioso*.

In the verse sections, the melody is generally diatonic (although its opening does have a hexatonic feel), but, in contrast, the frolicking refrain is enhanced by frequent chromatic inflection, a device that is particularly prominent at the nonsense text “tra la, la”. The music is often coloured by passing modulation, chromatic shifts and in one instance, a tonally vague area which, at its conclusion, is supported by drones. Further colouring occurs through musical representation and orchestration appropriate to the text. For example, at “Pipe so sweet and a tweet, tweet, tweet” grace notes on flute and clarinet with repeated notes in the melodic line represent bird sounds (Ex.12.30a) whilst in the refrain sections, flute, clarinet and violin play grace notes and ‘floating’ semiquaver patterns which effectively portray the forthcoming “All the birds in the air declare” (Ex.12.30b).

Ex.12.30 — “When the spring comes in” refrain: (a) opening; (b) conclusion

(a)

[*Allegro ma grazioso*]

With a pipe so sweet and a tweet, tweet, tweet

fl/c1  
ob/vns + bn/hn sus.  
va  
vc/db

(b)

fl/c1 8ve lower  
+vn 8ve lower

From a rather naïve text, Drysdale has produced a vibrant setting through use of contrasting sectional material, chromatic inflection and varied harmonic techniques, strengthened by vivid orchestral colouring. There follows a sudden change in mood. Larry tries to persuade Honor to go to a dance but she refuses, as the children cannot be left alone. Larry replies that he is lost without her; he knows he has been neglectful in the past, but from now on, he promises not to stray. Honor, knowing her duty, declines, and Larry, becoming annoyed, retorts “Honor, will you marry me? No! — Honor, do you love me? No!” Honor returns to the cottage noting, sadly, that she did not say that and leaves him perturbed. In the following two-stanza strophic serenade “Here do I stand”, Larry pours out his feelings of unrequited love. The opening is resolute with Larry’s love proclaimed by strong diatonic harmonies, but the chromatic appoggiaturas in the otherwise diatonic melody line and syncopation within the accompaniment suggest that he believes all is not well with this romance.

**Ex.12.31** — Act II, No. 13 “Here do I stand”, Introduction

*Andante con espressione*

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system features a vocal line (va) with a melodic line that is chromatically descending and includes a triplet. The instrumental parts include fl/vn1 + ob/vn2 8ve lower, cl/hns/crt, and trbs/vc/db. The second system continues the vocal line and includes parts for +cl/hns/crt and va. The score is marked with 'Andante con espressione' and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and a triplet.

The attractively shaped vocal line is subtly coloured with diatonic and chromatic appoggiaturas, and a number of sudden chromatic shifts. This melodic line is linked to harmonic language which contains frequent use of chromatic shift, enharmonic change, sometimes combined, and sudden chromatic alteration of chords. The verse section only hints at related keys although the one established modulation to the dominant is achieved through the subtly coloured progression  $ii^{7b5}-V-I$ . However, the refrain section begins chromatically with  $A^b$  major being established before further coloured progressions return the music towards the home key of F major.

Ex.12.32 — “Here do I stand”, verse one conclusion and opening of refrain

[*Andante con espressione*]

Mir - ro'd in thy clear eyes      Come to me here in the

moon - light love      Speak to me here 'neath the stars a - bove

These chromatic techniques effectively support and enhance the yearning sentiments of the text, though, as is common in much of Drysdale's vocal music, they tend to colour rather than depict any specific textual meaning.

The mood is not always light-hearted or sentimental. There are moments of intense drama to be found, particularly in the lengthy finales to Act One and Two. Through-composed, they consist of a variety of styles such as sung dialogue, melodrama (used throughout the work to enhance particularly poignant or dramatic moments in the spoken dialogue, or intensify the effect of important text within an otherwise vocal number), arioso, aria and conclude with a full chorus. In the Finale to Act One, Langford and Larry argue over the fate of the former's property. Larry cheekily insists that Langford's estate is entailed to him and thus, he must inherit; conversely, the other implies that he will do anything to avoid Larry inheriting, as he believes him a wastrel. The villagers and Sam interpose in an attempt to defuse the situation, but fail. The combatants come to blows with both producing a knife, at which point Honor intervenes to demand peace. The final chorus comments on Honor's virtues as a peacemaker.

The structure is similar to many late-nineteenth century light operatic finales — set using a variety of styles, finishing and ending in closely related keys but diverging within, and including some reference to previously stated material. It draws all previous action to a satisfactory close and allows a new ‘chapter’ to begin in the following act. A simple form of leitmotif is employed. Snatches of Larry’s opening number (No. 4), the folksong “The oxen ploughing”,<sup>42</sup> are developed as he fights with his uncle whilst the orchestral interlude and Honor’s interjection into the fray are based on her title song “The Red Spider”. Melodically, the themes associated with Larry and Honor are very similar, emphasising the couple’s close relationship:

**Ex.12.33** — Comparison of: (a) Larry’s theme — “The oxen ploughing”;  
(b) Honor’s theme — “The Red Spider”

(a)

(b)

Transposed

The image shows two musical staves. Staff (a) is in G major (one sharp) and contains the melody for 'The oxen ploughing'. Staff (b) is in D major (two sharps) and contains the melody for 'The Red Spider', which is a transposed version of the first staff. Both staves are in treble clef and show a similar melodic contour with eighth and quarter notes.

In general, the vocal lines are appropriate for the violent subject matter. They are, for Drysdale, unusually chromatic and disjunct, and move vigorously through areas of recitative, parlante and arioso, driving the action incessantly forward. This agitated and aggressive music successfully represents the furious dispute between uncle and nephew where snatches of No. 4 are developed through constantly changing tonalities ominously reminding us of Larry’s previously carefree attitude (Ex.12.34 and 35a). It was easy for Larry to shirk real work when he was certain he would inherit his uncle’s fortune, but the musical reference suggests that this notion was foolish and he will soon be called to account for it.

<sup>42</sup> Baring-Gould & Fleetwood-Sheppard *Songs and Ballads* ... 122–3

Ex.12.34 — Act I, No. 9, Finale, development of Larry's theme

[*Allegro agitato*]

Larry

I am heir I am the

Development of L.

heir

The occasional chorus interjections pleading for the violence to cease use smoother melodic contours and more diatonic intervals which enhance their conciliatory tone. As the action draws towards its climax, there is a sudden change in style. They declare their readiness to kill in spoken melodrama, an effect heightened by the following move to triple time and the resulting intensification of pace (Ex.12.35a). The forceful rhythms and chromatic harmonies capture the violence of this scene which culminates in a German sixth and sudden silence at which point Honor intervenes with a passage, based on her title song “The Red Spider”. Drysdale’s treatment of this passage is notable. The driving rhythms, chromaticism and heavy orchestration that accompanied the hostility of the preceding section abruptly cease being replaced with settled tonality and mellow scoring, the “Red Spider” melody being placed high in the flute’s register above delicate harp arpeggiation and a sustained string accompaniment (Ex.12.35b). It is a highly effective musical representation of the angelic Honor’s prayer for calm.

Ex.12.35 — Finale: (a) Larry's declaration to his uncle;  
(b) Honor's intervention in the fray

(a)

[Allegro agitato]

LARRY

I am the heir.

[sf] *L theme* (b)

Langford

now take you this

S. A. *p* Cease this strife for - bear for bear

T. B.

*f* *sf*

Larry

S. A. And take you that

T. B. They've come to blows

*f*

*allegro moto*

*sf* *sf marcato*

(b) *[Allegro molto]*  
 HONOR  
*sf* Hands off you mad - men *p* peace, 1

*Tutti*  
 hn/vn1  
 vn2/va  
 vc  
 ob Pizz.

*Andante tranquillo*  
*pp*  
 pray!  
 RS theme  
 fl/ob  
*pp*  
 +harp arp.

In the concluding section, villagers' praise Honor's valiant action in a hymn-like setting of "The Red Spider", aptly reflecting her saintly demeanour.

Ex.12.36 — Act II, Finale, final chorus

*Andante maestoso*

S.A.  
 T.B.

Red spi - der spins peace and no dis - cord can prove [so]

S.A.  
 T.B.

strong as to stand 'gainst the power of her\_ love

As the act moves towards its conclusion, tension is developed gradually. There is more frequent use of harmonies coloured by sudden chromatic shifts and enharmonic change, a gradual increase in orchestral and vocal forces, and a corresponding expansion of tessitura in the voice parts which culminates with Kate soaring onto a sustained C<sup>'''</sup> (rather high for the mezzo soprano voice) supported by Sam,<sup>43</sup> six-part chorus and full orchestra. It is a fitting musical tribute to the remarkable 'Red Spider'.

The conclusion of Act Two, "Stand back", is probably the most powerful number in the work. Disjunct and chromatic vocal lines, cross rhythm, unstable tonality and heavy scoring represent the vicious fight between Larry, and Charles and his drunken friends. This musical violence is starkly contrasted with Honor's powerful, near ethereal, arioso sections, as she heroically guards her home from violation by the drunken mob. From a slight plot, Drysdale has produced intense musical drama.

As Honor attempts to keep Charles and his three drunken companions, who are goading him, out of the precious family home, the village girls comment on the action. Meanwhile, Kate prompts Sam to intervene and assist Honor. He tries to reason with Kate, not wishing to pick a fight with four drunken men. Eventually, Larry enters with a group of lads and valiantly throws Charles down the steps of the house saving Honor from harm. The chorus praises his action and chuckle at the fate of the drunken Charles. Once again, the structure is based on a standard late nineteenth-century finale although on this occasion, dialogue and interjections from bystanders form the focus of the number and are central to portraying the tense dramatic scene. The main deviations from this fragmented format are the two 'heavenly' sections assigned to Honor (the first as she guards her home, and then as she waits for Larry to come to the rescue), and the final chorus. The number has the following structure:

<b>Page<sup>44</sup></b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>Characterisation</b>	<b>Scoring</b>
• 233	Dialogue/commentary — Allegro (E minor)	Honor, Charles and men.	Full orchestra
• 243	Dialogue/commentary	Kate and girls, Honor, Charles.	Strings

<sup>43</sup> The scores do not specify exactly who should take the additional lead baritone/bass part which is inserted below Kate's on the score. Considering the dramatic context, Langford seems impossible, leaving Sam as the most likely candidate.

<sup>44</sup> Page numbers refer to the piano/vocal score held by GUL, Cb9-y.12.

<b>Page</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>Characterisation</b>	<b>Scoring</b>
• 246	Arioso — Andante (F major)	Honor with interjections from Charles and men.	WW, brass, string, harp, entries
• 251	Dialogue (Db maj/Bb min)	Kate/girls, Charles and men.	Strings
• 254	Arioso — derived from previous sections (A major)	Honor, interjection from Charles and girls.	Harp, strings, brass entries
• 258, p.4	Chorus (Allegro vivace)	Charles, men and girls.	Full orchestra
• 264		Above continues. Climax of action as Larry enters and knocks Charles down. Larry's theme appears in the orchestra to emphasise his triumph in the fray.	Full orchestra
• 265, p.3 <sup>sys4</sup>	Chorus (G min/maj)	Men and girls are joined at 267 by Honor and Larry doubling the soprano and tenor parts, but with an alternative text which expresses the sentiments felt by the individual parties.	Full orchestra

The dialogue and commentary sections capture the violence of the drama. Disjunct vocal lines, vigorous rhythms, question and answer effects, frequent chromatic progressions (including the extensive use of diminished seventh harmonies) and an avoidance of strong cadential moves continually drive the music forward through areas of constantly shifting tonality (Ex.12.37a). In contrast, Honor's arioso sections have a more settled tonality, frequently strengthened by pedal points, and their strong melodic lines powerfully declaim her righteous cause (Ex.12.37b).

Ex.12.37 — Act II, No. 22, Finale: (a) Introduction;  
 (b) Honor's second intervention

(a)  
*Allegro*

Full orchestra throughout

vln (+ all subsequent runs)

Honor Charles  
 Stand back Hul -

Men  
 - lo De - fi - ant, Yes, Red

Honor  
 Spi - der You shall not pass

Detailed description: This section is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a full orchestra throughout. The first system shows the violin part with the instruction 'vln (+ all subsequent runs)'. The vocal line for Honor begins with 'Stand back' and Charles with 'Hul -'. The second system continues the vocal line with 'Men' and the lyrics '- lo De - fi - ant, Yes, Red'. The third system shows Honor's line 'Spi - der You shall not pass'.

(b)  
*[Andante]*

Harp arpeggiation throughout

Here I stand with

arms out - - spread to

guard our sac - - red

home

Detailed description: This section is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features harp arpeggiation throughout. The vocal line begins with 'Here I stand with'. The second system continues with 'arms out - - spread to'. The third system shows 'guard our sac - - red'. The fourth system ends with the word 'home'.

The chorus's jubilant praise of Larry and Honor's heroic action in the final section is aptly represented by an 'Amen'-type conclusion consisting of a repeated  $IV^{#3}-I$  progression and a final perfect cadence coloured by a Picardy third. It is an apt musical portrayal of the triumph of good.

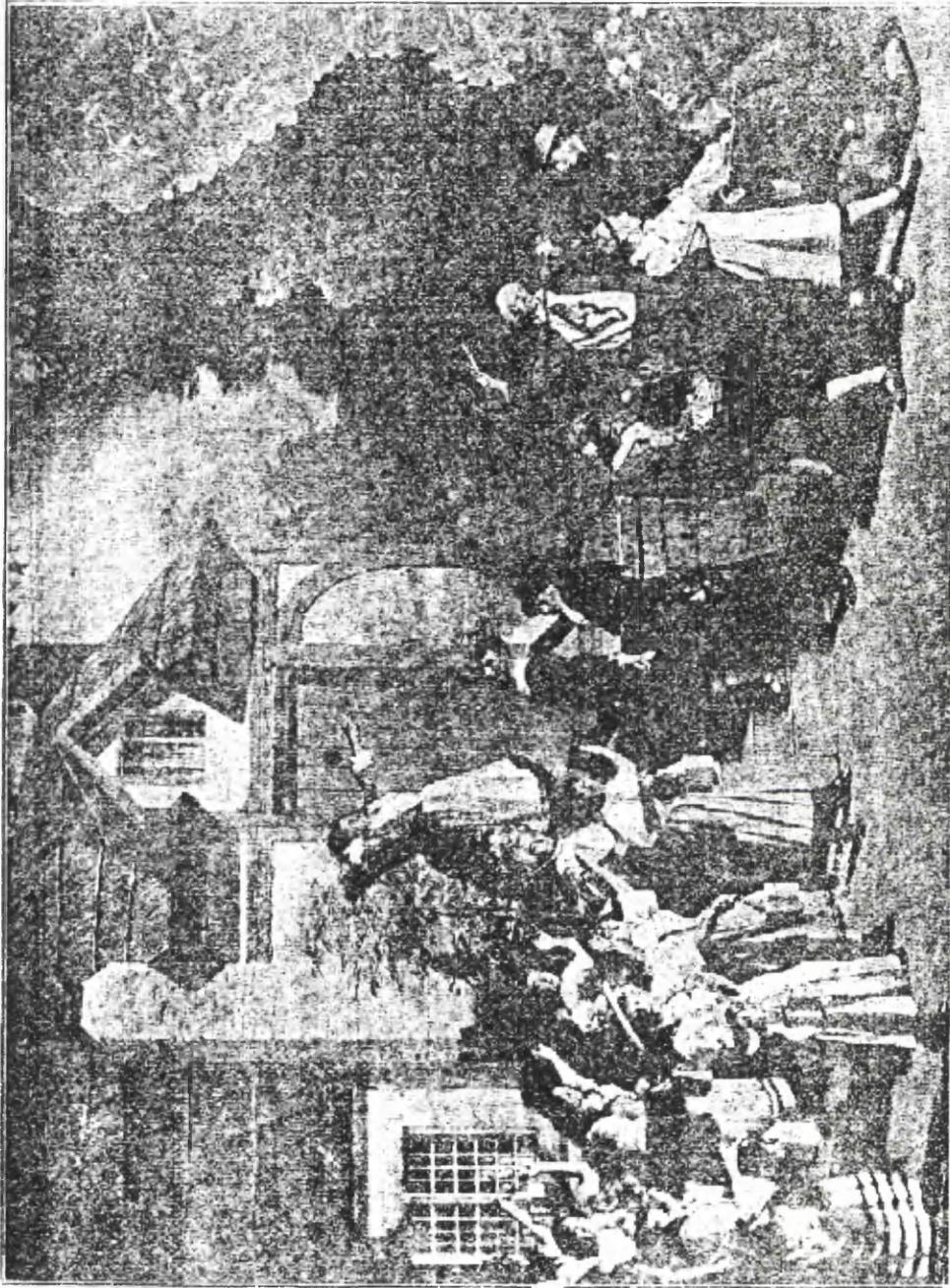
**Ex.12.38** — Act II, finale, final chorus

*[Allegro]*

Honor  
Larry  
S. A.  
T. B.

To heaven  
Oh shame  
Was a gal-lant gal-lant  
throw

The score consists of two systems. The first system includes vocal staves for Honor, Larry, S. A., and T. B., and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line with chords. The second system continues the vocal parts and piano accompaniment, ending with a Picardy third in the piano part.



Scene from  
the  
New Opera  
RED  
SPIDER



**Illustration 13: Scene — Finale of Act II of *Red Spider* reproduced from the programme of performances held at Her Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen (7–12 November 1898)**

Considering the quality of the conclusions to previous acts, the opera's final number is disappointing. It does not resolve a number of dramatic threads developed during the work and fails to build tension to the expected climax. The libretto at this point is lengthy and includes material which rounds off the loose ends in the plot, such as Langford's possession of the missing register which proves the Luxmore inheritance, Charles's reformation, the commendation of Honor's virtue and the marriages of the various couples involved. However, the scores and the published *Songs and Choruses* contain different textual material both from that provided by the printed libretto, and from each other. The piano/vocal score contains eight sections of arioso and duet (the latter being drawn from previous numbers and indicated by blank passages which are annotated with references to the earlier items to be included) and is concluded by a rousing chorus. Throughout, emphasis is placed on recapitulating previously heard material rather than finalising the plot. The text employed in the full score and *Songs and Choruses* is a greatly curtailed version of the piano/vocal version and uses only the final two sections presented — it simply provides a 'happy ending' with the respective couples (including Langford and Mrs Veale) being united by marriage. Thus, there is little attempt to draw the dramatic threads to a satisfactory conclusion whilst musically, there is no direct reference to previously stated material — a melodic line faintly reminiscent of "When the spring comes in" (No. 12) is the only similarity. Why there is such a discrepancy between the versions of the work bears examination. After the completion of the libretto, the collaborators may have decided that this final section was both unduly complex and over long — it does follow 29 numbers, some of which are rather lengthy. The discrepancy between the piano/vocal score and the other performing material might be explained by Drysdale's propensity for leaving work to the last possible moment. A number is easily and quickly written in a piano or even a full score format if constructed from previously stated material, particularly when the composer indicates the required passages by handwritten instructions. However, the same method cannot be employed for orchestral parts — performers have to be provided with correctly notated music. If time were short, the only remedy would have been to curtail the number. The following analytical description of the finale is drawn from the full score and orchestral parts, this being the version heard during the opera's original production.

**Introduction** A scalic, bell-like figuration over a tonic pedal introduces the joyful scene.<sup>45</sup>

**Ex.12.39** — Act III, No. 30, Finale, Introduction

*Allegro*

**Arioso** Honor sings of the church bells rung for weddings, prayers and death. A simple diatonic section, accompanied by harp arpeggiation, it aptly represents the subject matter.

**Chorus** The harp arpeggiation gives way to bell chimes and all praise the joyous wedding bells that are to peal over the countryside in celebration of the forthcoming marriages.<sup>46</sup> The melodic line is faintly reminiscent of No. 12 “When the spring comes in” (Ex.12.29) and is generally diatonic with sporadic chromatic inflection. An area of chromatic movement increases the tension towards the climax and final cadence, with the joyous mood being further enhanced by the rich and rather unusual orchestral colouring of flute, full brass section, timpani and strings (Ex.12.40).

**Ex.12.40** — Act III, No. 30, Finale, concluding section

[*Allegro*]

(melody has similarities to No. 12)

vn1/+fl 8ve higher

vn2 divisi 8ve lower

[f] hn/crt/vn2/va

trb/vc/db

vn2 divisi

+va 8ve higher

This final number does provide a simple and light-hearted conclusion to the work. Nonetheless, the lack of a definitive resolution of a number of dramatic strands and a weak textual structure results in a failure to build tension to the expected dramatic climax — a pity considering the strengths outlined in the finales of previous acts.

<sup>45</sup> This is set in B major in the piano score, a key that seems inappropriate when the overall tonality of the opera is considered.

<sup>46</sup> The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Bratton Clovelly still has a splendid set of bells which the author has had the privilege to try out using their miniature carillon.

## 12.4 Production

By late spring of 1898, a provincial tour of *Red Spider* was booked, with the hope that a London production would eventuate. The work was lavishly mounted and an excellent company engaged. Lucy Carr Shaw (1853–1920), singer, actress and sister of George Bernard Shaw took the leading rôle of Honor Luxmore and the male lead Larry was taken by the tour’s General Manager Frank Pemberton. The rehearsals were held in London under the direction of Richard Temple (who had formerly worked with the D’Oyly Carte Company<sup>47</sup>) and personally supervised by both Baring-Gould and Drysdale.

*Red Spider* opened on 25 July 1898 at the Marina Theatre, Lowestoft and travelled the length and breadth of Britain for the following four months.<sup>48</sup> Author and composer were present at many of the performances. Drysdale conducted on a number of occasions (the production’s official conductor was Walter Scott, a former pupil of Sir Julius Benedict and an organist and conductor of some ability<sup>49</sup>) and Baring-Gould was called on several times to speak at the close of performances. The production received a mixed reception. In Baring-Gould’s native county the notices were, as would be expected, euphoric. On the opening night at Plymouth, “not a single seat was unoccupied”<sup>50</sup> and the *Western Morning News* noted that

The verdict of the audience was unmistakably favourable. From the first their sympathies were actively enlisted, and as the piece proceeded they grew more and more enthusiastic in their demonstrations of approval.<sup>51</sup>

There are several less enthusiastic reviews to be found in the quality press of cities such as Liverpool, Glasgow and Edinburgh (possibly a reflection of these publications’ wider experience in judging the operatic genre). For example, the *Liverpool Mercury*’s review,

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<sup>47</sup> Bampton Hunt ed. *The Green Room Book or Who’s Who on the Stage* (London: Clark, 1906) 327

<sup>48</sup> The production toured the following locations: Ipswich, Swansea, Leamington, Exeter, Plymouth, Norwich, Reading, Walsall, Barnsley, Llandudno, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Paisley, Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee and Coatbridge.

<sup>49</sup> Scott was best known as a chorumaster at the Gloucester and Worcester Festivals, and the Cardiff Music Festivals. See James D. Brown and Stephen S. Stratton *British Musical Biography* (Birmingham: S. S. Stratton, 1897) 865.

<sup>50</sup> [“*Red Spider*”] *Devon and Exeter Gazette* 2 September 1898 in Lucy Carr Shaw *Theatrical Press Cuttings* (c.1887–1898), Vertical Files: IV, Shaw Collection, HRC, 14

<sup>51</sup> “Theatre Royal, Plymouth: *The Red Spider*” *Western Morning News* 30 August 1898 in Lucy Carr Shaw *Theatrical Press Cuttings* (c.1887–1898)... 14



**Illustration 14:** Lucy Carr Shaw as "Red Spider"

which found little to praise in the production and particularly disliked the libretto, stated:

Called the *Red Spider*, it purports to be a romance, but the novelist and his advisors have missed the way to use the mission of the theatre. As a play, *Red Spider* is as crude as crude can be; it tells no story, and of action in the strict sense of the stage, there is none.<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, the individual performances of members of the cast and Drysdale's music generally attracted favourable comment. In Drysdale's home-town of Edinburgh, the music was warmly received, but in his review of *Red Spider* the *Scotsman's* critic found little else to his liking and made a particularly nasty attack on the libretto saying:

Some of the songs are exceedingly tuneful ... and the orchestration is generally effective and frequently brilliant. But one cannot gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles, and that is the task Mr Drysdale set himself when he put his hand to such a libretto as Mr Gould has written.<sup>53</sup>

Nonetheless, the reviewer notes that a very sympathetic, although not numerous, audience demanded a large number of encores, suggesting that as popular entertainment *Red Spider* was a success.

By October 1898 the Syndicate was losing money and accusations of blame were flying. Pemberton believed that the opera's story was not able to unfold fully because of too frequent interjections of music. Drysdale took umbrage at this criticism and responded by blaming bad management for the poor state of the finances. The disagreement rumbled on for some weeks before Pemberton resigned, necessitating two replacements, a singer and a manager.<sup>54</sup> *Red Spider* reached its hundredth performance during its Dundee run (15–20 November 1898), but the celebrations were short-lived and in the face of continuing financial problems and shrinking audience numbers (though still generally favourable reception) the tour closed at Coatbridge, Lanarkshire on 27 November 1898. Concurrently, the D'Oyly Carte Company expressed an interest in seeing *Red Spider* when the tour came nearer London, Drysdale having written to inform Madame Carte of the production's progress. In her reply to Drysdale, Carte encapsulates many of the sentiments expressed by the opera's critics during the tour:

<sup>52</sup> "Prince of Wales" *Liverpool Mercury* 11 October 1898, 8f

<sup>53</sup> "The *Red Spider* at the Lyceum Theatre" *Scotsman* 18 October 1898, 5d. The critic seemed unaware of Drysdale's involvement in the libretto.

<sup>54</sup> The replacements were Faithful Pearce who took the rôle of Larry and Ernest Gerard (formerly of the Carl Rosa Company) was appointed as General Manager.

I was very much interested in your letter and was particularly pleased to hear that the music of your piece has been so successful. As you say, we always thought the music should be, but there undoubtedly were great difficulties in the libretto, and one may say this without in any way reflecting on the distinguished author, because there is no doubt that the finest authors may easily go wrong in writing the libretto for a light opera, unless they have made a special study of the requirements.

What I would like now is for you to let me know where the 'Red Spider' is going to be played a little while ahead if the tour is continuing, as then I might have an opportunity of hearing it. I should particularly like to do this.<sup>55</sup>

Her interest came too late. The notices for ending the tour had been posted and the opera was never again staged.

### 12.5 Conclusions

Critics of today might consider *Red Spider* to be hampered by its weak libretto and riddled with clichés, but there is much to commend in the work — attractive melodic lines, colourful characterisation, occasionally brilliant orchestration and humorous, light-hearted numbers which are skilfully contrasted with poignant love songs and moments of high drama.

It is easy to understand why *Red Spider* was successful in its time. It is a simple drama centred round those human emotions most likely to attract popular enthusiasm — love, hate, jealousy, spite and pride. The work does contain formulaic elements; the pot-pourri overture and finales, the prevalence of strophic structures, and the rather clichéd numbers — the spinning, drinking and milking songs. The characters are often stock in manner — the virtuous, dutiful sister who struggles against poverty to bring her siblings up correctly or the evil witch-woman who attempts to win the affections of her pompous master. However, the musical treatment is fresh and Drysdale's characterisations often excellent. The rollicking drinking songs which personify the drunken, foolish Charles (Ex.12.41a), or the delightful portrayal of the pompous Squire Langford such as found in the duet "Not young in years", or the Act I song "The Weather is Cold" [No. 8], where the deliberately overstated introduction, reminiscent of a lumbering Spanish dance,<sup>56</sup> neatly captures Langford's arrogant, imperious manner (Ex.12.41b).

<sup>55</sup> Carte to Drysdale, 2 November 1898, Cb10-x.17/49/11

<sup>56</sup> The author has been unable to trace any Spanish dance form that has the same characteristics as the one employed here. However, the syncopating ties and ornate final-beat figuration are common to several Spanish dance forms and some rhythmic similarities with Granados's *Spanish Dances* are noted.

Ex.12.41 — Act I, Introductions to: (a) No. 6 “Then here’s to the cup”;  
 (b) No. 8 “The weather is cold”

(a)

*Allegretto*

fl/vn 7

*f*

tutti

(b)

*Allegro con moto*

fl/vns 7

*f cresc*

*sf*

c/vn/brass/str

Detailed description: The image shows two musical excerpts, (a) and (b). Excerpt (a) is titled 'Allegretto' and is for flute/violin (fl/vn). It features a melody in the right hand with a '7' above it, and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include 'f' and 'tutti'. Excerpt (b) is titled 'Allegro con moto' and is for flute/violins (fl/vns). It features a melody in the right hand with a '7' above it, and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include 'f cresc' and 'sf'. The bass line is labeled 'c/vn/brass/str'.

The flighty Larry’s poignant song of unrequited love “Here do I Stand” (No. 14) is rendered more effective by the contrasting gaiety of the surrounding numbers whilst cross-rhythmic effects effectively depict the children’s delicate footsteps in Honor’s delightful song “Patter, Patter Little Feet” (No. 20). Drysdale has mastered the art of capturing the prevailing emotional atmosphere musically.

Baring-Gould’s enthusiasm for Humperdinck’s *Hänsel und Gretel* also seems to have influenced a number of the dramatic and musical features found in *Red Spider*. Similarities include:

- some use of authentic folksong with other melodies being folk-influenced;
- a limited use of restatement of themes linked to specific characters;
- children singing an evening prayer and answered by a chorus of angels; and
- a witch’s waltz.<sup>57</sup>

Baring-Gould’s story, however, concerns fictional ‘real-life’ people and their folklore — even his witch is a real person considered evil by virtue of her deeds. *Red Spider* is

<sup>57</sup>*Hänsel und Gretel* is also a number opera with a ‘pot pourri’ overture. However, these features were common to many contemporary operas so Drysdale’s employment of them cannot be specifically attributed to Humperdinck.

not a fairy tale. Musically, Drysdale does not exploit the Wagnerian-influenced harmonies prominent in Humperdinck's work, although this harmonic style was a common feature in many of his other compositions. Presumably, he believed that a diatonic framework with occasional colouring chromaticism would be more appropriate for *Red Spider's* setting. The musical style does, however, contain similarities with Sullivan's Savoy Operas — number operas in a mixture of styles including the use of pot-pourri overtures, lengthy first act finales and humorous patter songs. It is, however, Sullivan's often simple but charming melodies with their delightful orchestration which seems to have had the greatest influence on *Red Spider*.

*Red Spider* would certainly be worth reviving. However, before any production could proceed, new performing material would have to be prepared — the scores are incomplete, several numbers are missing from the orchestral parts and a comparison of the extant manuscripts has uncovered many inaccuracies and discrepancies between sources. The minimum material required for any basic staging would be a printed libretto and a piano/vocal score, with a set of orchestral parts available to groups wishing to mount a larger-scale production. To help keep costs low, these materials could be available for hire from an institution such as the Scottish Music Centre. Nevertheless, even with access to performing material, *Red Spider* is unlikely to be high on the list of priorities for a professional company. The work's obscurity and the expense of hiring a large cast (including, of course, the many children's rôles, speaking parts and dancers) would make any commercial production a considerable financial risk. Furthermore, if a national company such as Scottish Opera was anxious to produce works by native composers it may prefer to stage those based on more local subjects (for example, Drysdale's Celtic-inspired *Fionn and Tera* or MacCunn's *Jeanie Deans* and *Diarmid*) rather than *Red Spider* with its West of England setting. Nonetheless, the opera may still find a niche in the repertoire. For the local operatic society, student or semi-professional company, the principal rôles are not unduly demanding and there is much for chorus and orchestra to enjoy, including a number of lively dances. In addition, directors anxious to involve as many members as possible in their production would welcome the considerable cast list. There has been some recent interest in *Red Spider*. In 1997, Tim Laycock and his team at the Red Spider Company,<sup>58</sup> an amateur

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<sup>58</sup> See <http://users.breathe.com/ronald.wawman/> for details regarding this company.

group based in Bratton Clovelly (the village in which the work is set), considered a production on a limited scale. However, the revival of a full-scale opera with only manuscript performing material was beyond the scope of a small local group. It was decided to rewrite the work as a community play and to draw musical items from *Songs of the West*. The production was a great success and was repeated the following year. This event was a lost opportunity for reintroducing, albeit on a very limited scale, selections of Drysdale's music for *Red Spider* into the repertoire. Even if a few numbers were published with the option for flexible scoring for the small amateur group, his music could be heard once again. Baring-Gould and Drysdale may have aspired to lavish performances given in grand theatres by a first-rate cast, but today it is through amateur companies that 'Red Spider' is most likely to spin her web once more.

### 13. The Final Work: *Fionn and Tera*

#### 13.1 Background

During 1908 Drysdale began a second collaboration with the ninth Duke of Argyll. In his later years, Argyll had aspired to write works which he believed would be of permanent value in the renaissance of Celtic art<sup>1</sup> and one facet of this interest was his collaboration in 1897 with Hamish MacCunn which resulted in the four-act Celtic opera *Diarmid* (cf. 79; 293). *Fionn and Tera* was Argyll's second libretto on a Celtic theme. This work is similar to *Diarmid* in that it is drawn partially from elements in the 'Fionn Cycle' of myths, although Argyll's description of his libretto as "Celtic/Phoenician" allowed for a greater breadth of material to be employed.<sup>2</sup> The Fionn Cycle is a large body of verse and prose romances focusing on the mythical hunter-warrior-seer Fionn Mac Cumhaill [Finn Mac Cool] and his band of warriors, the Fianna (the Fienne), a kind of freelance army. It constitutes one of four major mythical cycles of early Irish tradition of which it is the most popular, extensive and long-lived. It first appeared in eighth-century texts and flourished in both the written and oral traditions of Ireland as well as in the oral traditions of Gaelic Scotland and the Isle of Man. Although these myths are closely associated with the natural world, they also include numerous references to the supernatural such as Fionn's possession of the gift of clairvoyance and his miraculous fighting prowess. There are many thousands of narratives within this tradition and the character of Fionn is portrayed in many ways — the brave youth, a crude, buffoonish bumbler, a jealous avenger, and the ageing cuckold. He also undertakes numerous adventures and sails to exotic places such as Scandinavia, Rome or Greece. He is betrothed to Grania but she elopes with his younger and rather more attractive nephew Diarmid; it is this story which forms the basis of MacCunn's opera.<sup>3</sup> Tera is not part of Celtic tradition although one myth does refer to an un-named Greek princess who pursues Fionn. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a full survey of this large and complex subject and for further information the reader is directed to

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<sup>1</sup> "Death of the Duke of Argyll" *Edinburgh Evening News* 4 May 1914, 3e. Further information regarding the Celtic renaissance during this period can be found in Michael Lynch "Scotland in its Historical Perspective" in *Scotland; A Concise Cultural History* ed Paul H. Scott (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1993) 15-45.

<sup>2</sup> Duke of Argyll *Libretto of Fionn and Tera* (Edinburgh: Cuthbertson, 1912)

<sup>3</sup> This tale is known as "The Pursuit of Diarmid and Grania". The opera also includes elements of Norse Mythology. There is a Norse king and Freya, Goddess of Love, as well as sundry Vikings and Norse warriors.

James MacKillop's excellent survey of Celtic mythology which contains some 4000 entries, ranging from brief definitions to extended essays, as well as comprehensive lists for further reading.<sup>4</sup>

Elements from both Celtic and Greek mythology are used in the storyline of *Fionn and Tera*.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Argyll effects some interesting juxtapositions of these traditions: for example, the Celtic Fionn is noted as a superb athlete so fits neatly into the concept of a Greek sporting contest. The Celtic component of the libretto has not been traced in published versions of the myths but it is probable that Argyll garnered material from alternative sources which are inaccessible today. Memories of convivial discussions with his cousin John Francis Campbell of Islay, a prominent scholar in the field of Celtic oral traditions, or ideas drawn from the Dewar Manuscripts, a collection of Gaelic folktales commissioned by the eighth Duke at the request of his son then Marquis of Lorne.<sup>6</sup> These were later translated into English to allow Lorne to study them in detail.<sup>7</sup> Both the manuscripts and their translation are in Inveraray Castle and are at present unavailable for inspection although a small selection is published in the volume cited below. That Argyll's knowledge of the tradition was extensive is demonstrated by his use of certain motifs which are less accessible and do not immediately suggest a Celtic derivation. For example, visitors from Greece may seem inconsistent with an Irish setting, but they are not an invention used by Argyll to suit the intricacies of his plot. The twelfth-century text *Leabhar Gabhala* (the book of invasion/conquests)<sup>8</sup> records the invasion of Ireland by marauders from Greece and Greeks appear in several guises within the Fionn cycle.

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<sup>4</sup> James MacKillop *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford: OUP, 1998)

<sup>5</sup> However, the mythologies of all cultures contain many universal themes and it is often not possible to attribute a specific motif to a particular tradition. This subject is explored in greater detail in Stith Thompson *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* 6 vols (Bloomington: 1955–58) and Dan Ben-Amos "The Concept of Motif in Folklore" in Venetia J. Newall ed. *Folklore Studies in the Twentieth Century: Proceedings of the Centenary Conference of the Folklore Society* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Brewer/Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1978, 1980) 17–36.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. John Mackechnie ed. *The Dewar Manuscripts: Scottish West Highland Folk Tales* Vol. 1 (Glasgow: William Maclellan, 1964) 36. Further volumes have not been traced. The Argyll family was afraid that the vast body of mainly oral tradition practised in their lands would be lost to future generations and commissioned the Gaelic-speaking woodman John Dewar of Rosneath to travel the countryside transcribing tales related to him by local people. It is the largest collection of folk tales ever gathered in Scotland, consisting of five large volumes and two notebooks (some 750,000 words).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 49. The translation was undertaken between 1879 and 1881 by Hector McLean.

<sup>8</sup> A pseudo-historical text by various authors and from different periods which purports to synchronise myths, legends and genealogies from early Ireland within the framework of biblical exegesis.

As Argyll's label of "Celtic/Phoenician" suggests, *Fionn and Tera* is not drawn from Celtic tradition alone. There is a scene set in Carthage where Olympic-type games are being held — the use of this location in second century BC (the period of the opera's setting) is borne out by historical fact.<sup>9</sup> The figure of Tera, the archetypal pure and beautiful Greek maiden in Argyll's work, is more elusive. It seems most likely that the name is derived from the Titan goddess Gaea, (mother earth) who is alternatively known as Tera<sup>10</sup> although this very large and voluptuous woman cannot particularly be reconciled with the operatic Tera — she presided over marriage and nursed the sick, but mated with her own child Uranus to produce the horrifying Cyclopes and Hecatoncheires. Argyll had received a thorough classical education,<sup>11</sup> so probably would have been aware of the goddess's unpleasant characteristics; he may simply have decided that her euphonious name was what his plot and, most importantly, its title required.

When the above derivations of the plot are considered, it is puzzling that Argyll hoped *Fionn and Tera* would have a "chance of being presented as a truly British (Celtic) product!"<sup>12</sup> He took steps to maintain this position, standing fast over proposals that Fionn must die at the conclusion of the opera noting: "It would be historically incorrect. He falls and may be supposed to die, but we must not give him any death certificate!"<sup>13</sup> This attitude begs the question why elements in the plot cannot be attributed to attested Celtic (or even Classical) tradition. The reason for the divergence from this objective is found in correspondence between the collaborators. Drysdale had rather a poor opinion of Argyll's work in its original form,<sup>14</sup> but had learned from a private source that the Moody-Manners Company was proposing a special London season in the following year, one feature of which would be a short British opera in one or two acts. Drysdale

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<sup>9</sup> William L. Langer comp. and ed. *An Encyclopaedia of World History* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Harrap, [1953]) 33

<sup>10</sup> "Gods, Heroes, and Myth", <http://www.gods-heroes-myth.com/godpages/gaea.html> accessed on 18 October 2004

<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Argyll could see little value in this study, believing that subjects such as science, mathematics, languages and law were what men needed to survive in a modern society. See his *Passages from the Past* 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1907) 1, 101–102

<sup>12</sup> Argyll to Janey Drysdale, 3 September 1910, Farmer 262/64

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Argyll, 30 October 1908, tipped in the full score of *Fionn and Tera*, Cb10-x.2. Drysdale was not the only person to hold a negative view of Argyll's work. Some years before, Argyll had asked J.F. Campbell of Islay to translate sections of the latter's *Leabhar na Féinne* (a collection of heroic ballads linked to the Fenian Cycle drawn from manuscript sources) for versification. Campbell declined, later stating that "he [Argyll] paraphrases without mercy and his own poems are not greatly admired of the public." See John Mackechnie "J.F. Campbell Collection" *Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts* (Boston, Mass.: G.K. Hall, 1973) I, 83, note 4.

considered that the subject of *Fionn and Tera* was eminently suitable for such a project and instead of rejecting what he perceived as a flawed libretto outright, suggested numerous alterations and deletions to tighten the work's structure and ensure that it conformed to the practical requirements of music and stagecraft. He also wished the opera to have strong, vigorous action which should be conveyed through the drama with as little narrative as possible.<sup>15</sup> A complete copy of the original version of the libretto has not been traced, so it is impossible to say how apposite Drysdale's views were. However, Argyll seems to have reacted favourably to many of these suggestions and acted on Drysdale's proposals to condense the libretto into two acts and to accentuate the character differences between each of the leading roles.<sup>16</sup> The latter included some skewing of personalities to reinforce particular characteristics. For example, Grania's 'bad side' was accentuated to make her an absolutely wicked, jealous and vindictive woman, a departure from her more benign character in attested tradition (although it was she not Fionn who ran off with her lover). Drysdale believed such changes would strengthen the work and in this instance noted that the 'altered' Grania would make a splendid foil for the pure Tera, as well as prompting the audience to have greater sympathy with hero and heroine.<sup>17</sup> Argyll's efforts to enhance opportunity for dramatic effect included introducing the motif of a rowan hold or ring — in Celtic mythology, rowan trees are endowed with the power to ward off evil spirits<sup>18</sup> — combining this with Fionn's use of his sword to break their power; in many traditions a standard method of chasing fairies away was the use of iron. There are also some dramatic tools which have overtones of James Macpherson's *Ossian* such as lovers being separated by a tragic death or the disappearing spirit. Fionn's vision of a golden boat may also fit into this context, although it could be connected with Tir nan Og [Land of Youths], a supernatural place without time which Fionn's son Oisín is said to have visited.<sup>19</sup> In summation, Argyll's extensive knowledge of both Celtic and Classical traditions gave him an extensive range of possible source material, but when juxtaposed with

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<sup>15</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Argyll, 30 October 1908... Cb10-x.2

<sup>16</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, 18 January 1909, Cb10-x.16/29; [January] 1909, Cb10-x.16/28

<sup>17</sup> Learmont Drysdale to Argyll, 30 October 1908... Cb10-x.2

<sup>18</sup> Argyll to Learmont Drysdale, 2 November 1908, Farmer 262/31. For further information regarding rowans in Celtic Mythology see Duncan Fraser *Glen of the Rowan Trees* (Montrose: Standard Press, 1978) 9–11.

<sup>19</sup> Anja Gunderloch "Notes on Argyll's *Fionn and Tera*", May 1999, produced for, and in the possession of, the present author.

Drysdale's dramatic ideas and the many alterations imposed by them, the work contains a significant element of poetic licence.

By March 1909, Drysdale had nearly completed the piano score of *Fionn and Tera* although during the next two months, other projects, including his work with the Scottish National Song Society, claimed his attention and he had little more than begun orchestration when death intervened. The work was left at various stages of completion. The majority was in piano score although there was no overture and some sections (in particular, link passages) were only sketched. Drysdale had also written forty-two pages of full score. The orchestration in this manuscript (held by the Mitchell Library, Glasgow<sup>20</sup>) is not quite complete — the scoring is missing from the occasional bar while some short sections have no text or contain melodic lines without accompaniment. The final page consists only of vocal parts. The manuscript begins during the opening scene at the point when the Greeks come ashore and Fionn makes his entrance and concludes with a portion of the jovial duet on his first meeting with Tera. It includes sections of recitative, arioso, chorus and duet and Drysdale's orchestration of these various styles is closely related to those found in his other vocal works, in particular, *The Kelpie*. Although there is no evidence to explain why he started scoring part-way through the first act, it is likely that he derived particular inspiration from this central facet of the drama — Fionn's initial meeting with Tera.

Drysdale had been in contact with Charles Manners about producing *Fionn and Tera*, meeting the impresario in Edinburgh where he played the score to him.<sup>21</sup> Following Drysdale's death, Argyll contacted Manners with a view to ensuring that the project proceeded as planned. The timescales were tight, as Argyll hoped the opera could be completed for Manners's visit to Edinburgh in October of 1909. In July of that year, Argyll contacted Janey to ask if her brother had any musical friend or pupil who might interpret his notes on *Fionn and Tera*.<sup>22</sup> She acted swiftly on this suggestion, although it is not known how she went about the task, and in August approached the Scottish composer David Stephen (1869–1946), Director of Music to the Carnegie Trust, who agreed to complete, orchestrate and prepare the opera for production in a style as close

<sup>20</sup> See *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Mitchell Library to 1976* held by the Department of Archives and Special Collections, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Manners to Janey Drysdale, 18 February 1911, Cb10-x.18/10

<sup>22</sup> Argyll to Janey Drysdale, 21 July 1909, Farmer 262/47

to Drysdale's as was possible.<sup>23</sup> Events surrounding this stage in the opera's development are reasonably well documented in correspondence from Argyll and Stephen to Janey who acted as their intermediary. However, a full picture of the situation is not available, as very few of Janey's letters to the collaborators have been traced.<sup>24</sup>

Stephen in his initial letter to Janey stated:

I must confess that I am not particularly enamoured of the book. It wants something to make it interesting. I doubt if, as an opera, it could even be a success. That does not take away from the beauty of the music which throughout is charming and in many places strong and full of dramatic fervour which is also missing from the words. ... Many numbers are no more than sketches and will require a good deal of filling up to make them ready for presentation. I have been trying my hand at many of the connecting passages and think I can put them in something like the shape of the rest.<sup>25</sup>

This process took much longer than Stephen expected. Work on the opera had to be fitted around his contractual commitments which included a full-time and arduous position at the Carnegie School of Music in Dunfermline. He was soon to realise the sheer scale of what he had undertaken and wrote to Janey saying "I am progressing, although slowly, with the opera. I find that there is really much more work in it than I thought; however, I am far enough on now to make me determined to complete it."<sup>26</sup>

This extra work included a considerable time assessing the merit of the many alternative sketches provided by Drysdale or completing those which entailed major reconstruction as Stephen explained:

I am constantly meeting with passages where seemingly your brother was in doubt as to what [was] the best course to follow, judging by the number of alternative readings. I have given these a good deal of thought before selecting one or the other. I have also in several places curtailed passages which I consider to be unduly spun out. ...

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<sup>23</sup> David Stephen to Janey Drysdale, 25 August 1910, Cb10-x.17/55<sup>1a</sup>

<sup>24</sup> The Argyll Archives at Inveraray Castle are the largest private collection in the country; however, they are closed to researchers at this time. The Argyll family was kind enough to allow the author to consult the NRA survey of their collection. It contains very limited detail regarding the specific contents of individual boxes and files, but in some instances gives general descriptions which allowed the author to assess if particular holdings might contain material relevant to *Fionn and Tera*. Two letters were discovered during the subsequent search that was undertaken on the author's behalf. The result of this search was very limited and considering the sizeable body of Argyll's correspondence held by GUL, it can only be assumed that there is much more Drysdale material than can at present be located. In addition, correspondence sent to the Duke at his London residence, Kensington Palace (which represents a fair proportion of the Drysdale material), was returned to Inveraray after the death of Princess Louise in 1939 rather than being retained by the Royal Archives in Windsor. Janey's letters to Stephen have not been traced.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen to Janey Drysdale, 25 August 1909, Cb10-x.17/55/1<sup>a</sup>

<sup>26</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 29 November 1909, Cb10-x.17/55/5

The Rowan Fairies Chorus sketch affords very little clue to the composer's intentions, so that I am inclined to think that an entirely new movement will require to be written. If this can be done in the style of the original there may be little amiss, and with a view of familiarising myself with Learmont's methods as exemplified in some of his finished choral work, perhaps you will be good enough to send me some of his published choral works.<sup>27</sup>

The considerable number of passages which have multiple drafts, suggest that Drysdale applied and tested his ideas in various ways. This is unusual for a Drysdale work, as he seemed able to reproduce in score what lay in his imagination without the need for numerous drafts; a rough sketch or two was more usual. This more conscientious approach suggests his determination to produce a work of high quality, possibly a reflection of working with a prominent figure such as Argyll or with a subject by which he was particularly stimulated. He was also anxious that Manners would agree to produce the opera and would not have risked having it refused because of sloppy workmanship. Moreover, Stephen implies in his initial letter to Janey that there was much of quality in Drysdale's music. The time and effort he expended on the project suggest he maintained that view.

Argyll, impatient to present the work for production, quickly became concerned about what he perceived as Stephen's slow progress and suggested to Janey that the composer should come to his family's Rosneath estate in the hope that he could complete the work in a shorter timescale.<sup>28</sup> Janey informed Argyll that the composer was unlikely to accept his offer, as he was unable to leave his heavy contractual commitments in Dunfermline.<sup>29</sup> Stephen concurred with her view, no doubt relieved that he was not required to discuss the matter directly with an increasingly frustrated Argyll. In the event, Stephen was unable to complete the work in time for the Moody-Manners Company's season that year.<sup>30</sup> Argyll became increasingly anxious about the work's future and during the latter part of 1911 when orchestration was progressing very slowly he complained vigorously to Janey about the delay (yet another operatic season was about to be missed), and suggested that another musician should undertake the orchestration if Stephen could not find time.<sup>31</sup> Argyll believed that Stephen was not wholeheartedly behind the project retorting: "I am sorry to say further that I think it

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Argyll to Janey Drysdale, 2 May 1910 Farmer 262/60

<sup>29</sup> Janey Drysdale to Argyll, 5 May 1910, Bundle 314, Personal and Business Correspondence of the ninth Duke, Argyll Archives, Inveraray Castle

<sup>30</sup> Argyll to Janey Drysdale, 6 May 1910, Farmer 262/61

<sup>31</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 10 Nov 1911, Farmer 262/87

shows very little interest in the matter, that this orchestration has not been done long ago".<sup>32</sup> Janey seems to have deflected Argyll's criticisms by explaining that she was willing to wait a little longer. Stephen completed the scoring a short while later.

Manners waited more than two years to receive sections of the fully orchestrated work, but on examining them he opined:

I am sorry to say that there is a lot, that in my opinion would have to be revised, but the principal thing I find against the opera is this — that the Greeks when singing are all right, and it is a very clever idea of Mr Drysdale putting the music onto the Greek scale, but the same characteristic of the Greek notes and composition is also given to other characters in the opera, not Greek, and this of course would be not only inartistic to carry out before the public, but we should get it very hot indeed from not only the critics, but from everyone. ... However, I am sure I need not impress on you how wishful I am to produce anything English, and so if you can only prove to me that I am wrong, or that we can make alterations so as to make the opera not only feasible but more modern in its orchestration I shall be only too happy to meet you at any time to go into the matter with you and my conductor.<sup>33</sup>

This pronouncement thoroughly infuriated Stephen and he told Janey:

It is to my mind meaningless. The reference to Greek scales is all nonsense and shows very little knowledge in the past of M[anners]. I do not think your brother intended to herald the Greeks with Hellenic music. I rather think the whole idiom throughout the opera is more or less founded on the pentatonic scale which our own Scottish music is mostly built. There is of course a certain resemblance to Greek tonality which might be taken as M[anners] suggests.

His reference to modern orchestration is another point. In my scoring throughout, I have adhered to the style of scoring exemplified in the 30 or 40 of pages of completed scoring which your brother left. I took this to be the style of scoring which he intended to adopt right through the work and I have been very careful not to bring myself or my own methods into the work. Possibly this accounts for the length of time I have taken.

My own idea is that M[anners] wants to think he is conferring a great favour on all of us by producing the work. Personally, I would rather see the work laid aside than brought out under such conditions.<sup>34</sup>

Argyll considered Manners' criticism valid not because of any particular view he himself held (he always maintained that he was not a musician), more from an implicit belief in the manager's superior judgement. He suggested that the offending Greek

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<sup>32</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 7 November, 1911, Farmer 262/86

<sup>33</sup> Charles Manners to David Stephen, 24 November 1911, Cb10-x.18/18

<sup>34</sup> Stephen to Janey Drysdale, 27 November 1911, Cb10-x.17/55/28

scales “could surely easily be altered,”<sup>35</sup> a comment which Stephen ignored. The composer’s reply to Manners has not been traced, nonetheless, his correspondence to Janey suggests that he presented his forthright views to the manager, with the result that within a week any chance of a production was gone.

During these years, several other companies had been approached about producing the opera. Thomas Beecham’s initial reaction to the work was positive and he had hopes of producing it in his 1911 season. Nonetheless, Argyll had heard that Hamish MacCunn, then deputising for Beecham at Covent Garden, might be adverse to the enterprise and regarded cooperation with the composer as hopeless because “he fancies he should have a [monopoly] of Celtic opera although he has failed to produce his no. 2 [with] any company under his conductorship.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, Argyll was not surprised when Beecham did not produce *Fionn and Tera* that season although the manager did state that the venture might be undertaken in the next (and, thus, after MacCunn’s short association with the company ended). Beecham did not pursue the matter. The Carl Rosa Company refused even to look at the score because it was with “an ephemeral manager”.<sup>37</sup> Janey informs us that this slight was aimed at Charles Manners.<sup>38</sup>

In late 1911, as an agreement with Manners was becoming less likely, Argyll began negotiations with the American impresario Oscar Hammerstein. Hammerstein owned a number of opera houses in the United States and his Manhattan Opera in New York was so successful that the Metropolitan Opera paid him \$1,250,000 for an agreement that he would cease productions in the city for ten years.<sup>39</sup> Following this deal, he came to London and erected the luxurious London Opera House. However, business did not progress well. Audiences dwindled and a subscription committee was formed which included Argyll, Lord Howard de Walden and several other aristocratic patrons, to assist

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<sup>35</sup> Argyll to Janey Drysdale, 25 Nov 1911, Farmer 262/91. Argyll is reported to have been suffering from the early stages of senility by this time, a malady which may have had a detrimental effect on his objective judgement. Nevertheless, in his dealings with Janey, signs of this disability are not particularly evident, the overall impression being simply that of an author anxious to see his work performed. For further information see P.B. Waite “Campbell, John ... ninth duke of Argyll” Oxford *DNB* <http://www.oxfordnb.com/view/article/32269> (accessed 18 October 2004).

<sup>36</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 1 December 1910, Farmer 262/71. The opera to which Argyll is referring is *Breast of Light* (c.1898) for which he also wrote the libretto. MacCunn did not complete the work.

<sup>37</sup> Copy of letter from Van Norden (Carl Rosa Company) to Janey Drysdale, [31 May 1911], Cb10-x.18/9 verso

<sup>38</sup> This information appears as an annotation in the letter cited in footnote 35.

<sup>39</sup> Harold Rosenthal *Two Centuries of Opera at Covent Garden* (London: Putnam, 1958) 364

in bolstering finances. Two Celtic operas were announced in Hammerstein's prospectus for the summer season of 1912: *Fionn and Tera* and Josef Holbrooke's *The Children of Don*.<sup>40</sup> The latter work was produced, its librettist T.E. Ellis, otherwise Lord Howard de Walden of the subscription committee, financing the venture, but it was a failure.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, Drysdale's work had been postponed, Hammerstein stating that there was too little time for preparation.<sup>42</sup> This assertion may have been true, but it is probable that his decision was also prompted by Argyll's reticence to finance the production of his work as de Walden had done. In the event, *Fionn and Tera* was not produced, as Hammerstein's company collapsed, unable to rival Covent Garden's long-standing tradition. Throughout this period, Stephen had voiced his doubts to Janey regarding Hammerstein's commitment to *Fionn and Tera*. The composer believed that the impresario was using the opera to create interest in his other ventures rather than having any intention of production, a ploy he had adopted previously.<sup>43</sup>

There was little advance in the fortunes of *Fionn and Tera* over the following years. Early in 1914, Argyll proposed the publication of a cycle of three works — a Celtic *Ring Cycle* — with *Fionn and Tera* as the second in the series.<sup>44</sup> The other operas were MacCunn's *Diarmid* and a setting of Argyll's libretto *Columba* which, he stated, was in the process of composition although he did not name the composer. The NRA survey of the Inveraray Archives mentions that Argyll sent this libretto to Elgar who informed him that it was unsuitable for a musical setting.<sup>45</sup> No other information has been uncovered regarding it. Stephen was against publishing *Fionn and Tera* at that time, believing that if it was ever staged there were bound to be alterations which would mean that the printed copy would differ from the actual work as performed. Furthermore, he felt that from a commercial view, the publishing of the work by an Edinburgh firm and especially one which was not a music publishing house would be a mistake. He continues:

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 366

<sup>41</sup> Hermann Klein "London Opera House" *MT* 53: 450–451

<sup>42</sup> Argyll to Janey Drysdale, 15 March 1912, Farmer 262/110

<sup>43</sup> Stephen to Janey Drysdale, 28 March 1912, Cb10-x.17/55/41

<sup>44</sup> Holbrooke's *The Children of Don* was also the first of a Celtic trilogy which included the later *Dylan* (1914) and *Bronwen* (1929). The operas set T.E. Ellis's extensive poem *The Cauldron of Annwyn* which was based on the Welsh saga *The Mabinogion*. Argyll might have been aware of the Ellis and Holbrooke venture and decided to produce a Scottish/Irish equivalent.

<sup>45</sup> Survey: "Campbell Family, Dukes of Argyll", description of bundle 464, NRA (Scotland) 1209, West Register House, Edinburgh. The written permission of the current Duke of Argyll is required to examine this survey.

If there is anything in publication, it is in making the work known. This can never be done unless by a firm of recognised standing as a music house. Personally I think His Grace's terms are all for himself and scraps for you.<sup>46</sup>

Janey did not take Stephen's advice. By March 1914, the Edina Publishing Co. had provided estimates for the publication of the vocal score — the production of 500 copies was to cost £132. However, bad luck was once again to afflict a Drysdale work. In late April, Argyll took ill and within a week was dead. Plans for publication were cancelled (Janey was unable to defray the cost) and the opera lost its main promoter in London theatrical circles. However, Janey still believed that the work had a future within Scotland as demonstrated by the following statement:

The press have on several occasions, suggested that a company should be formed to run Scottish opera, beginning with this work. Let us hope that ere long enlightened and patriotic Scots will combine for the purpose of presenting to the public the masterpieces of their country's music, of which they have been so long deprived by lack of enterprise on the part of those responsible for the state of musical matters in Scotland.<sup>47</sup>

Janey's optimism was unfounded. *Fionn and Tera* has never been performed and the establishment of Scottish Opera in 1962 has done little to improve the status of native opera in general.

### 13.2 Drama

Characters:

Fionn – Celtic Chief of the Feinne [Fianna] (Tenor);

Grania – Daughter of King Cormac of Ireland who is betrothed to Fionn (Contralto);

Tera – A Greek Maiden (Soprano);

Soldier – One of the Feinne (Baritone);

Chorus of Irish, Feinne, Greeks, Carthaginians and Fairies.

Period of action: 2<sup>nd</sup> Century

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<sup>46</sup> Stephen to Janey Drysdale, 15 April 1914, Cb10-x.17/55/48

<sup>47</sup> Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers ..." 24

LANCASHIRE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Sea horizon



Illustration 15: Drawing, possibly by Drysdale, of the set envisaged for *Fionn and Tera*

Synopsis:

Act 1 — Ireland

The curtain rises on a busy Irish marketplace. Some of the crowd leave in excitement to watch the approach of a strange vessel. Meanwhile Fionn enters in preoccupied and gloomy mood relating that he has had a vision of a woman's face in which potent magic has shone. Fienne soldiers enter followed by a party of Greek merchants, landed from the above vessel, who have come to barter precious stones for Fienne gold. With them is Tera, to whom they have entrusted their most valuable jewels. Fionn at once recognises her face as the one in his vision and welcomes her eagerly. However, Grania observes the nature of their meeting, which arouses her suspicion and promotes feelings of vindictive jealousy.

Fionn invites the Greeks to display their goods to his people. Meanwhile, in an aside, Tera implores the merchants to be honest and not to give the Fiennes glass as gems. Grania takes Tera to one side and requests a viewing of the finest jewels. Grania admires one emerald in particular but while she is examining other stones, Tera's attendant, unseen by her mistress or Grania, switches the gem for a piece of glass. Grania pays for her chosen jewel with the country's gold not her own.

A feast is prepared and Fionn places himself next to Tera which infuriates Grania who casts a spell upon her. At this point uproar breaks out among the Irish when they discover that the Greeks have been aiding their enemies and the visitors flee, Tera being forced to bury the treasure. Fionn promises to protect her with his life but Grania overhears and curses them both with her most powerful spell "The Curse of Druid's Grove". The curtain descends on Grania cursing Tera, Tera praying to her gods, the awe-struck people praying for Fionn's welfare and Fionn's declaration of protection for the Greeks.

Act Two: Scene One — A public place in Carthage where  
preparations are being made for an athletic contest

Tera has returned from Ireland and is sitting with the competition judges. She spies Fionn and the Feinne in the crowd. They are welcomed by all and invited to compete in the contest. Whilst the crowd's attention is diverted, Fionn declares his undying love for

Tera and urges her to return to Ireland with him. She agrees, revealing that she knows where the treasure is buried. The lovers disguise themselves and flee.

### Act Two: Scene Two — Ireland

The Greeks have returned and Grania details a party of her soldiers to watch, intending to punish them for their fraud. The Fienne also hide, having learned from a druid seer that their treasure is buried nearby. At twilight, Fionn and Tera enter with their men and search unsuccessfully for the treasure. Disappointed, the men leave and the couple settle down to rest.

The darkness increases as a storm approaches. A misty light discloses the rowan hold, rowans in semicircle and Grania within, imprisoned by the fairies for giving away the country's gold. In despair, she calls on Fionn to aid her. Observing the scene, he hacks a rowan with his sword, thus destroying the spell. Tera, fearing danger for Fionn, throws herself between him and one of his phantom opponents. She receives a fatal blow intended for him. The fairies vanish and in the dawn, Fionn finds the gold exposed by his breaking the spell. The Fienne and Grania's soldiers reappear. The dying Tera bids farewell to Fionn and summons him to meet her in Paradise. The followers hail her passing spirit and a vision appears in which Tera is seen landing from a golden boat on a golden shore, welcomed by a chorus of bright spirits in a shining orchard.

### 13.3 The music of *Fionn and Tera*

The following manuscript material is extant:

#### Piano scores

- The NLS holds what seems to be Drysdale's incomplete autograph score. This manuscript consists of a large number of unbound folios in two separate holdings; the majority of the opera forms one, while most of the final scene is placed along with several loose sketches, in a second. Most of the main elements (choruses, arias, duets etc.) are complete. Nevertheless, many of the passages linking these sections appear in various stages of development, some roughly sketched within the main score others on separate sheets; there are also some incomplete or blank bars. Two hands are in evidence: Stephen in his

correspondence to Janey implies that initially he used this score as a framework to complete the music,<sup>48</sup> thus, it is not always possible to ascertain exactly what is original Drysdale work. Only a few of Drysdale's many sketches (as detailed in Stephen's correspondence) are in this collection;

- Drysdale's autograph score of Tera's Act I aria "Who may tell how breezes rise?" is held by the BL;
- Stephen's completed score is in the Drysdale Collection, GUL;
- The Mitchell Library, Glasgow holds a copy of Stephen's score which is written in at least two hands. An annotation on the copy, possibly by Henry Farmer, states: "partly written in the handwriting of David Stephen but mostly in that of Janey Drysdale the sister of the composer"<sup>49</sup> — however, this statement cannot be verified. One hand is very neat, practically like printing, the other untidy with stems in the wrong direction, a feature of Janey's writing. This may be the score Janey produced with the choirmaster James Wood (cf. 80); in 1947 she sent Farmer a "*Fionn and Tera* draft, copied half by me and half by James Wood — the latter is like print."<sup>50</sup> Blank bars and sketched passages do suggest that this is a draft rather than a complete score;
- Hammerstein's conductor took a further copy to America which was not returned. It has not been traced,<sup>51</sup>
- Janey's correspondence implies that another copy existed. It may be this score to which Stephen refers in a letter of 1942, following Janey's request for information concerning its whereabouts.<sup>52</sup> Stephen was unable to access the manuscript at that time and there is no further reference to it in correspondence.

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<sup>48</sup> David Stephen to Janey Drysdale, 25 August 1909, Cb10-x.17/55/1a

<sup>49</sup> *Fionn and Tera*, piano score (annotation on the first folio), see *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Mitchell Library to 1976*, Arts Department, Mitchell Library, Glasgow. There is no location given for this material, but "in the Music Stack after the uncatalogued songs" should give staff adequate information to locate it.

<sup>50</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 9 December 1947, Farmer 249/1947/o

<sup>51</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, 17 May 1942, Farmer 249/1942/e

<sup>52</sup> David Stephen to Janey Drysdale, 4 December 1942, Cb10-x.17/55/52

### Full scores

- The Mitchell Library holds the composer's incomplete autograph score. This manuscript is forty-two pages in length, a tiny proportion of the work as completed by Stephen;
- Stephen's completed two-volume score is held in the Drysdale Collection, GUL;
- Janey notes that a duplicate of the above was produced for Argyll after he stipulated that there must be a second copy. Initially, he wanted the score photographed to allow further copies to be made if required, but eventually agreed to reproduction by hand. As this copy has not been traced in accessible archives, it is assumed to be at Inveraray Castle.

Without Drysdale's sketches and with Stephen's additions to the incomplete autograph piano score, it is not always possible to ascertain exactly what material is the former's original work. To reflect this situation, the following discussion centres on general trends found in the music and where possible uses examples drawn from material which is considered to be of Drysdale's composition.

### Form and Structure

*Fionn and Tera* is composed of traditional operatic forms such as recitative, aria, duet, arioso and chorus, which are linked to produce a continuous scene or act. To effect this feature Drysdale uses full cadential points of root progressions only for particularly important moments in the drama, substituting long dominant pedals followed by second inversion tonic resolutions for the majority of perfect cadences (e.g. see conclusion of Ex.13.7). The failure of the bass note to return to the tonic drives the music forward, providing the desired continuity.

The use of recurring motifs that refer to a specific character or an idea provides an overall structure to the work. These motifs and their associated recurring melodies include:

**Ex.13.1** — Recurring motifs and associated melodies employed in *Fionn and Tera*

Motif 1:



Connected with Tera, this short motif has great melodic potential and occurs more frequently than any other in the work. It is instantly recognisable by the descending interval of a perfect fifth followed by a rising perfect fourth and its use of appoggiaturas. It is often extended into a sweeping diatonic melody (RM1) to denote the love of Fionn and Tera.

Recurring Melody 1 (RM1)



Both the basic motif and its extension are initially stated as Fionn sees his portent vision of a maiden's face. They undergo some degree of transformation through both rhythmic and, more occasionally, intervallic changes (e.g. see Ex.13.10 for RM1 in diminution). At important points in the emotional drama, pedal points and chromatic harmony often support the motifs.

RM1 provides the material for the work's dramatic conclusion, a massive on-stage chorus extolling Tera. For the most part the music is diatonic with the heightening of tension towards the final climax being provided by a prolonged dominant preparation, reiterations of Motif 1 in the bass and one of the few full perfect cadences in the work. As in other instances where such cadences are employed, this feature is further highlighted by cadential extension of the tonic root chord, the cadence occurring some bars before the conclusion of the passage. There is a notable reference to "Valhalla" in the text during this extract which provides proof of Argyll's aspiration to write literature to a "grand Wagnerian plan".<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> "Death of the Duke of Argyll" *Edinburgh Evening News* 4 May 1914, 3e

Ex.13.1b — Act II, scene 2, conclusion of Final Chorus (sketch)

[Maestoso allargando]  
RMI

S. er of Val - hal - la's  
T. Giv - ver[sic] of Val - hal - la's  
B. er of Val - hal - la's

Piano: Modif 1b

S. Flower, fruit and flower — of  
T. Fruit and flower — of  
B. Fruit and flower — of

Piano: Dominant pedal

Sudden shift to the subdominant

SA war - fare, — flower of war - fare, —  
TB war - fare, — flower [of] war - fare, —  
Pno war - fare, — flower of war - fare, —

Piano: Sequential use of Modif 1  
Perfect cadence with extension of final chord

SA peace  
TB peace  
Pno peace

Piu lento peace

Motif 2

This fragment represents jewels and is recognised by its upward leaps (mainly of a fifth) which then fall a tone. It is often varied chromatically, although the melodic shape remains distinct; rhythmically, it can be altered by a dotted quaver/semi-quaver figure replacing one or more sets of quavers. From the sub-motifs connected with this phrase, the following, linked to Grania's lust for gems, is particularly prominent (Motif 2b).

Motif 2Motif 3:

Motif 3 is used when there is discussion of the gold. It is modal in quality and when extended is quasi-pentatonic (RM3); generally, dominant pedals and diatonic harmonies support it.

Recurring Melody 3 (RM3)

The motif and in particular, its extension have a rhythm and melodic line similar in style to that used by Wagner in the opening scene of *Das Rheingold* as the Rhine Maidens swim around their gold (Ex. 13.2). A self-acknowledged Wagnerite, Drysdale is likely to have known this work and may have either intentionally used the idea or have been subconsciously influenced by it.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Ernest Kuhe "Scottish Composers and Musicians: Mr. Learmont Drysdale" *Scottish Musical Monthly* (July 1894): 171–172

**VOGL.** *ff*

Bett! \_\_\_\_\_ Rhein - - - gold! Rhein - - - gold!  
 bed! \_\_\_\_\_ Rhine - - - gold! Rhine - - - gold!

**WELLG.** *ff*

Bett! \_\_\_\_\_ Rhein - - - gold! Rhein - - - gold!  
 bed! \_\_\_\_\_ Rhine - - - gold! Rhine - - - gold!

**FLOSSH.** *ff*

Bett! \_\_\_\_\_ Rhein - - - gold! Rhein - - - gold!  
 bed! \_\_\_\_\_ Rhine - - - gold! Rhine - - - gold!

hei - a ja-hei - a! hei - a ja-hei - a! Wal - la la la la la hei - a ja -  
 hei - a ja-hei - a! hei - a ja-hei - a! Wal - la la la la la hei - a ja -

hei - a ja-hei - a! hei - a ja-hei - a! Wal - la la la la la hei - a ja -  
 hei - a ja-hei - a! hei - a ja-hei - a! Wal - la la la la la hei - a ja -

hei - a ja-hei - a! hei - a ja-hei - a! Wal - la la la la la hei - a ja -  
 hei - a ja-hei - a! hei - a ja-hei - a! Wal - la la la la la hei - a ja -

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Ex.13.2: Act One, Scene One from *Das Rheingold* by Richard Wagner.  
*Das Rheingold* English trans. by H. & F. Corder (Mainz: Schott, [1882]) p. 36

(a) Motif 4; (b) an associated melody

(a)



(b)



The Greek merchants are represented by this chant-like motif which, in its extended forms (e.g. Motif 4b), often appears in transposed Aeolian mode

Motif 5

Motif 5 refers to Grania. Although the intervals involved in the initial descending leap may be altered (e.g. to a minor sixth), the contour remains constant. It is the least frequently found of the main motifs.

Several further motifs and melodies recur within Act I. One theme (Ex.13.3) seems to be associated with the happiness of the couple. Initially used flirtatiously, in later appearances it recalls the emotion of their first meeting. It is recognisable by its opening syncopation and disjunct quality, the intervals of a rising fifth and minor seventh being particularly distinctive.

**Ex.13.3** — Act I, recurring melody A

A further theme seems to be connected with Grania's giving away the gifts of gold she has received from Fionn (Ex.13.4a). A melody with similar rhythmical properties appears when the Greeks state the purpose of their visit is to acquire gold. This 'disguised' melody may be a veiled reference of the deceit to follow (Ex.13.4b).

**Ex.13.4** — Act I, recurring melody B: (a) Grania's giving away of Fionn's gifts;  
 (b) disguised version of melody which appears in the Greeks' opening chorus

(a)

Jewel motif connected with Grania

(b) *[Moderato]*

Gold, \_\_\_\_\_ Gold seek \_\_\_\_\_ we, \_\_\_\_\_ the gold

Drysdale uses the recurring motif technique less methodically and in a simpler manner than composers such as Wagner or Berlioz. Moreover, on occasion, Drysdale uses motifs in ways which are not directly connected with their initial purpose — the love duet between Fionn and Tera in the final scene is based on Motif 3 (gold), but its textual content refers only to the emotions of the couple although the dramatic context does concern the search for the treasure.

In *Fionn and Tera* Drysdale generally employs the various chordal structures found in his other mature works (cf. 109). Diatonic writing is often associated with passages of narrative with interest in these functional progressions being provided by appoggiaturas, false relations, passing notes, and suspensions; these may be chromatically inflected. Frequently, dissonance in these passages is enhanced by lengthy pedal points (see Ex.13.6). Chromatic harmony is normally associated with sections of heightening tension and high emotional drama. Although this final composition displays little evidence of the use of contemporary experimental techniques (e.g. atonality), there are occasional glimpses of minor developments in Drysdale's style. For example, in the final scene as Fionn fights his ghostly assailants around the rowan hold, a descending quaver figure is set in a Debussy-like passage of parallel fourths/fifths and octaves supported by static tonic harmony.

**Ex.13.5** — Act II, scene 2: Fionn fights the spirits to free Grania from the rowan hold

*Alla furioso*

In general, however, the harmonic language found in *Fionn and Tera* has most in common with composers of the middle and late nineteenth century — Gounod and Tchaikovsky and to a lesser degree, Liszt and Wagner.

Although tonal areas are generally clearly defined and closely related keys used, there are abrupt shifts to keys up a second or down a third and chromatic shifts where all parts move by a semitone. On occasion tonal obscurity is effected by:

- prolonged dominant preparations and pedal points which can support non-functional chordal clusters. Nonetheless, these lengthy pedals in themselves provide a tonal anchor;
- chromatic passages that suspend any sense of tonal centre for several bars;
- delayed resolutions;
- sudden shifts to the subdominant (see Ex.13.1b);
- chords altered by the flattened seventh degree of the scale (see Ex.13.7);
- mixing of parallel major and minor tonalities.

Drysdale mainly employs common chord modulations. He also achieves shifts to new key centres through:

- a sustained note or notes common to both tonalities;

- use of enharmonic spellings of chords;
- chromatic shifts in one or more part/s;
- a mixture of the above;
- deceptive resolutions of established dominant chords.

The following passage (Ex.13.6) demonstrates some of the features discussed above, as well as displaying Drysdale's use of harmony and tonality as a means of enhancing dramatic depiction. E minor is established in the previous passage as Grania calls on Fionn to release her from the rowan hold. As her desperation rises the tonality becomes unstable, the music moving swiftly through both diatonic and chromatic harmonies before a chromatic shift into G major highlights a subtle alteration in Grania's mood to one of despair tinged with jealousy — a more animated tempo and flowing arpeggiation enhance this change. In the following section a combination of a prolonged dominant pedal, chromatic dissonances in the voice part and several chromatic shifts in harmony increase the feeling of agitation and unease. Moreover, such shifts provide additional emphasis at “die”, as well as reflecting the mounting tension as Grania's jealousy grows. At the conclusion of the passage, the chromatically descending bass and sudden shift into F Major combined with the cross rhythm produced by the ascending triplet minims over the semiquaver accompaniment, provide a dramatic culmination to the climax developed over the previous sixteen bars. Fionn has awoken and is coming to Grania's rescue.

Ex.13.6 — Act II, scene 2, Grania's plea for release from the rowan hold (continued overleaf)

Declamatory style

Grania  
Piano

Break my pri-son bars per-ish per-ish  
but dim. as D  
C  
Ab

*Ftu animato*  
 this en-chan-ted grove! Where be-neath the  
mp  
F min Ab aug. F min Ab G; D7 D pedal begins  
Move the common note and chromatic shifts

sou-thern stars art-thou  
G

In-ving, while I die?  
G7 E7  
Move the common notes

G.  
Pno

O ye sods! does  
G7  
Chord?

Te-rat's eye see thee  
And  
Cresc.  
Chromatic shift in two parts

hap-py does she now  
poco a poco  
cres.

kiss thee on thy laugh-ing brow?  
And

The image displays two musical excerpts. The first excerpt, labeled 'G.', features a vocal line with the lyrics 'Fi - - onn!' and 'Fi - - onn!'. The piano accompaniment is marked 'Cresc molto' and includes annotations: 'G7', 'shift via common notes and chromatic movement', and 'G# dim7'. A note in the piano part is annotated with 'shift via common note, and enharmonic and chromatic movement to:'. The second excerpt, labeled 'Pno', is in F major and includes a triplet of notes, a 'false relation' indicated by a dashed arrow, and a 'Motif Gold' section. The piano part is marked 'ff' and includes annotations: 'F major: Aug 6', 'Cross rhythm', and 'Inverted cadence on Ic of F major'.

A further feature observed in the opening section of this passage is Drysdale's employment of declamation to highlight important text, a technique also used when Grania decides to exchange Fionn's gifts for the emerald she desires and when the Fienne state that a druid seer has informed them where the treasure is hidden. As is observed in the Ex.13.6, such declamatory treatment significantly enhances textual intelligibility.

Elements drawn from traditional music play an important role in representing and supporting drama in *Fionn and Tera*. Drysdale does not employ any known material, drawing instead on characteristics associated with traditional music, including:

- modal and gapped scales;
- long pedal points which mimic the drones of the bagpipes;
- double tonic progressions;
- grace notes;
- rhythmic structures associated with folk song and dance music.

These devices generally coincide with elements in the drama concerning the Fienne or Fionn as an individual and, as such, are akin to the recurring motif technique discussed above.

The opening chorus provides several examples of folk-inspired writing (Ex.13.7). The eight bars of orchestral introduction was Stephen's addition,<sup>55</sup> so insight into Drysdale's compositional technique can be gleaned only from the point where the chorus enter. The setting is a market place in Ireland and the music depicts a scene of increasing noise and bustle, an effect created musically by the chorus parts entering in imitation at one beat's distance. Although the key signature is D major, the music is dominated by a pedal 'A' and there are numerous statements in the bass line of the notes 'A'/'E' (and vice versa); this implied 'A' tonality, but with frequent use of 'G' natural, indicates transposed mixolydian mode. The use of flattened sevenths is a feature of the Scottish bagpipe (also pitched in the mixolydian mode); this could, in turn, explain Drysdale's frequent use of tonic pedals as a representation of drones (cf. 102–3). Although the music modulates several times in the course of the chorus, the flattened seventh of each established key remains prominent.

Integrated with these elements drawn from folk style are examples of chromatic harmony and modulation, including tertiary and semitone shifts. Furthermore, chromatic harmony is used to build musical tension whilst the flattened seventh may produce dissonant harmonies and ambiguous modulations.

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<sup>55</sup> Stephen to Janey Drysdale, 27 November 1911, Cb10-x.17/55/28. The incomplete autograph score held by the NLS does not have a prelude.



Celtic-derived characteristics are not the sole traditional elements found in *Fionn and Tera* and Charles Manners's comments concerning the use of 'Greek scales', so derided by Stephen, were not wholly inappropriate. Although Manners was seemingly unaware of the basic similarities between folk music of different lands, Stephen is also incorrect when he states that the opera was "more or less founded on [the] pentatonic scales [on] which our own Scottish music is mostly built".<sup>56</sup> *Fionn and Tera* includes various scale-types, both folk-derived and those common to art music. Moreover, the use of modes is appropriate in both the Celtic-inspired sections, as discussed above, and in the passages referring to Greeks. Contrary to Stephen's remarks, Drysdale does represent the Greeks with what he seems to have perceived as their musical style — their first chorus is developed from the chant-like Motif 4 in transposed Aeolian mode and is supported by stepwise-moving parallel harmonies within a homophonic texture. The stately demeanour is enhanced by sonorous orchestration.

**Ex.13.8** — Act 1, the Greek's opening chorus

*Moderato*

Chorus of Greeks

Far have we sailed with ad-venturous voy-age

Orch.

*mp* *bn/brass/strings tutti*

*f/ob/cl sketched, mainly 8ve higher*

search-ing for me-tals

Orch.

*vob.* *+brs*

Although Stephen employs a highly stylised phrase (with a prominent augmented second) to herald the approach of the Greeks (Ex.13.9a), Drysdale's setting conjures up

<sup>56</sup> Stephen to Janey Drysdale, 27 November 1911, Cb10-x.17/55/28

this image more simply through a minor tonality with tonic and dominant drones (Ex.13.9b).

**Ex.13.9** — Act I, treatment of the entry of the Greeks: (a) Stephen; (b) Drysdale

(a) *Piu animato*

Aug. 2nds

(b) [*Piu animato*]

*f* fls/obs/crts  
cls/vns

*f* bns/trns/trbs/va/vc/db

fls/cls (also octave lower)

\* Amended to sextuplet, error in manuscript

Some of Drysdale's intentions for the orchestration of *Fionn and Tera* can be gleaned from the forty-two pages of the surviving full score. This manuscript begins at the point in the opening scene as the Greeks arrive in Ireland and concludes with a portion of the duet on Fionn's first meeting with Tera. The scoring and orchestration of the various styles employed during this extract — recitative, arioso, chorus and duet — are similar to that found in Drysdale's other vocal works, in particular the dramatic cantata *The Kelpie* (see Chapter 8). The instrumentation is not stated on the manuscript, but extrapolated from the individual lines is as follows: double woodwind, four horns, two cornets, two tenor and one bass trombones, timpani, harp and strings. To this Stephen added a piccolo, a cor anglais and a trumpet; he seemed unaware of Drysdale's preference for cornets.

A variety of vibrant and rich orchestration is evident throughout this short manuscript, providing a major contribution to the creation and maintaining of the dramatic tension so central to the storyline. The primary emphasis is on vocal melody, with the orchestra

playing a subordinate though important supporting role. As demonstrated in Ex.13.8, chorus passages are treated homophonically and display thick orchestral textures, the vocal parts often being doubled by the orchestra, sometimes an octave higher in upper woodwind and violins. In passages of recitative and arioso, strings and brass punctuate while the woodwind provide countermelodies. Fionn and Tera's initial duet has vocal parts that weave an intricate imitative texture with melodic lines based on RM1, orchestral doubling both at pitch and at one and, on occasion, two octaves above, reinforcing the melody's emotional charge (Ex.13.10).

# Ex.13.10 — Act I, Conclusion of duet for Fionn and Tera

[Andante sostenuto]

RMI in diminution and treated insistively

Tera: Gold our peo- ples' hearts arev - er 3 for our ver - dure.

Fionn: Love love... brings thoughts hid - den thoughts to life and

Orch: obs, cl, vln divisi, 8ve higher, bn, bn sus, vl, vcl, +ve

Ext: Ch bnl / hrs / vln2, +ve tremolo sottopied, vl, +ve

Br2/vcl2/db

T. nev - ver fades nev - er nev - er nev - er nev - er

F. nev - er nev - er fades nev - er nev - er

Orch: bn1, Val, +vcl

Dominant pedal

T. fades

F. fades

Orch: vl + 8ve higher, vln2 divisi, +br2/vcl2/sus/db

Extended tonic pedal which highlights full perfect cadence in D major.

Orch: vl2

Orch: Tuti

pizz db at pitch

As in Drysdale's other compositions, the harp is employed to intensify particularly poignant or intense points in the drama. For example, it appears as Fionn tells of his vision of a beautiful maiden, as well as immediately after his first sight of Tera, significantly enhancing these prominent moments.

Although *Fionn and Tera* contains much of value, problems of attribution limit the scope of this assessment. The material known to be composed by Drysdale contains suitably dramatic arias and ensemble sections and the distinctive Celtic flavour captures the local colour prominent in the text. The variety of vibrant and rich orchestration evident in the short section of extant full score suggests that this work would have maintained the high quality of scoring found in Drysdale's other pieces. The judicious use of texture and vocal styles deliver text in a manner appropriate to the evolving storyline. Moreover, along with harmony and tonality, these techniques enhance textual portrayal, and assist in creating and sustaining dramatic tension. There is no doubt that the libretto is flawed; what could have been an excellent source of inspiration, often proves banal, and in some places, simply ridiculous — Drysdale and Stephen's skills have made the best of this unfortunate position.

In this, his final work, Drysdale demonstrates a high degree of compositional skill. Nevertheless, the seeds of *Fionn and Tera* are evident in many of his earlier compositions and there is little in the work which demonstrates any major development in the style he formed both during and in the years following his RAM training.

## Conclusion

Learmont Drysdale was a well-educated and talented musician who was respected by many musical figures of his time. Nevertheless, he could be opinionated, headstrong, and self-assured to the point of arrogance and this was to lead to his alienation from one of the most prominent members of the musical establishment, Sir Alexander C. Mackenzie. It was not to one's advantage to be unpopular with Mackenzie whose far-reaching influence is reputed to have thwarted Drysdale's efforts on several occasions. Even following Drysdale's death, Mackenzie avoided promoting his work.

There are other factors which contribute the relative obscurity of Drysdale's music today. He had little interest in promoting his own work — once completed a composition was set aside and a new project begun, suggesting that the creative process was of more importance to him than performance. Even his sister states that he was his "own worst enemy",<sup>1</sup> missing many opportunities which other composers would have felt privileged to have been offered. Although Janey Drysdale expended tremendous effort championing Learmont's music (much greater than he himself would have undertaken), her success in keeping his work before the public was limited. By the 1920s the musical style of Drysdale and his contemporaries was inevitably falling out of fashion and this, coupled with Janey's over-persistent championship, which deterred more than it encouraged, were key reasons for the lack of recognition of his work and its disappearance from the repertoire.

However, Janey's efforts were not fruitless. With so few of Drysdale's compositions having been published, the only access to his music was through the autographs and copies of manuscripts she owned. Henry Farmer, with exceptional perspicacity, realised that this was an untenable situation — the manuscripts had to be stored safely and be available for consultation by interested parties. In persuading Janey to donate them to the nation, Farmer saved Drysdale's work from oblivion, for when in 1949 she lost her life along with the bulk of her possessions in the fire which razed her home to the ground, the manuscripts were already preserved for posterity in GUL.

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<sup>1</sup> Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 20 September 1947, Farmer 249/1947/i

It has been suggested that Drysdale was reaching his compositional maturity at the time of his premature death and that great things were expected of him. As this study illustrates, there was little development in his style after the mid-1890s, although some later works such as *Border Romance* (1904) and *Fionn and Tera* (1908–9) do show greater compositional refinement. A longer life might have produced a larger oeuvre but the available evidence suggests that significant developments in Drysdale's style would have been unlikely.

Drysdale had a close affinity with his native culture and incorporated many features from Scottish traditional music into his compositions. This does not mean that he was politically a Nationalist. Like the majority of his countrymen of similar social class and standing, Drysdale regarded himself as culturally Scottish but of British nationality. As his correspondence reveals, he saw his homeland as “N.B.” (North Britain), a term which would horrify Scots today. The Scot of the 1900s had little need to make any kind of political statement through his music. Imperial Britain was rich and successful and the talented and relatively affluent seemed happy with their lot.<sup>2</sup> Foreign contemporaries of Drysdale (e.g. Jean Sibelius) living in severely oppressed nations, frequently used folk tradition in their music to express political sentiments. In contrast, Scottish composers tended to employ features from their native tradition as a superficial method of providing local colour within the style of mainstream Western art music. However, Drysdale's music is more idiomatically Scottish than his better-known countrymen Mackenzie and MacCunn.

For much of his working life Drysdale concentrated on composition, avoiding the full-time commitments in administration, teaching and conducting that many of his British and European contemporaries were required to undertake to earn a living. Drysdale had few responsibilities — he was unmarried and for many years resided in the family home. His father probably gave him financial support, a subsidy rather similar to Madame Meck's sponsorship of Tchaikovsky or, to a lesser degree, the state funding some European musicians were lucky enough to receive to allow them to focus on composition. Had Drysdale been obliged to support himself through composition, he might have felt more responsibility to cherish and make the most of opportunities. The

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<sup>2</sup> For further discussion of this facet of Scottish social history see T.M. Devine “Politics, Power and Identity in Victorian Scotland” in *The Scottish Nation* (London: Penguin, 1999) 273–298.

requirement to maintain his own household would surely have prompted him to undertake a professional career — his knowledge of the musical theatre, for example, might have opened avenues in what was the mainstay of British popular entertainment at the time. Although Drysdale's return to Edinburgh following his RAM training shows his allegiance to Scotland, it reveals his lack of awareness of the limited opportunities available there to the composer. Hamish MacCunn was just as patriotic but remained in the south, realising that British musical life centred on London. Drysdale was not an astute person and seemed to lack the ability to see beyond problems and judge possible opportunities. His appointment at the Glasgow Athenaeum was the beginning of a teaching career, but he quickly felt inhibited and constrained by the position and instead of cultivating potential possibilities he resigned, citing as reason a need for more time for composition. In summation, Drysdale's failure to fulfil his potential is probably a combination of personal factors, his marginalisation from the London musical establishment and the relative lack of opportunity in Scottish musical life.

To later generations much of Drysdale's music seems old-fashioned — for example, Victorian parlour songs with sentimental texts or unusual genres such as melodrama and recitation which, although admired in their time, held little appeal in following years. The language and subject matter of many texted works has dated, and the quality of some libretti is poor. These factors are common to the music of many British composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but in Drysdale's case, because little of his oeuvre has been published, succeeding generations have been unable to evaluate fully the extent of his worth. The representative sample of Drysdale's compositions discussed in this study has demonstrated the variety, compositional skill and dramatic insight to be found in his music. His works are not based on learned techniques, nor do they contain any deep psychological intent, but their talented originality merits a revival of interest in the music of Scotland's forgotten composer, Learmont Drysdale.

## **Appendix I**

### **List of compositions and arrangements by Learmont Drysdale**

## Introduction

This list of Learmont Drysdale's works includes information (where known) regarding:

- Date and place of composition;
- Date and place of first performance;
- Location and status (e.g. incomplete) of the autograph manuscripts;
- Information relevant to the composition and/or first performance of the work;
- Alternative versions of works.

The sources used to compile the list include:

### Library Catalogues

1. BL: electronic catalogue of manuscripts;
2. ECL: music card catalogue;
3. GUL: electronic catalogue of Drysdale Collection and Farmer Collection;
4. ML, Glasgow: manuscript catalogue and music card catalogue;
5. NLS, Edinburgh: manuscript catalogue.

### Work lists

1. Jane Crichton Drysdale "Scottish Composers: Learmont Drysdale" in *Dunedin Magazine* (November 1914): 27–30;
2. Henry George Farmer "Drysdale, Learmont" in *MGG*<sup>1</sup> 3, cols 833–834;
3. "List of Works by Learmont Drysdale", (c.1907), in Cb10-y.6, Drysdale Collection, GUL;
4. *British Music Society Annual 1920* ([London]: British Music Society, 1920) 204–7.

### Programmes

1. Cb10-y.1/y.2/y.5, Cb10-y.18, Drysdale Collection, GUL;
2. Daily Programmes: "Edinburgh International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art (1886)", 9YT570.886, Marr Collection, ECL.

### Journals and newspapers

- Information drawn from advertisements, articles and reviews in publications listed in the bibliography

The following *sigla* are used to identify the location of autograph manuscripts:

- ***GB-En*** — National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
- ***GB-Ep*** — Edinburgh Central Library;
- ***GB-Gm*** — Mitchell Library, Glasgow;
- ***GB-Gu*** — Glasgow University Library;
- ***GB-Lb*** — British Library, London;
- ***RR Coll*** — Ross Roy Collection, currently on loan to the University of South Carolina.

‘Not traced’ placed against any work denotes that the composition is noted in one of the above work lists, but has not been traced in any of the libraries and archives surveyed by the author.

Extant autograph manuscripts of songs and song arrangements are held by GUL unless stated otherwise. A number of these pieces exist only as copies. In such instances, the location of the copy/ies is given.

## Theatrical

Title and genre	Acts, librettist	Date	Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes
<i>The Plague</i> : incidental music to a mystic musical play (melodrama)	1, Ian Robertson	1894	FS and parts, and contracted P/V score <i>GB-Gu</i> . Complete P/V score and sketches <i>GB-En</i> . First performed Edinburgh Lyceum, 12 Oct 1896
<i>In Office Hours</i> (operetta)	1, Ernest Kuhe	1895	Not traced
<i>Red Spider</i> (comedy opera)	3, Sabine Baring-Gould	1895-7	FS and parts, P/V score <i>GB-Gu</i> . P/V also <i>GB-En</i> . Libretto pub. London: L. Tamblyn, 1898. Also several individual songs pub. London: Ascherberg, 1898. First performed Lowestoft, July 1898
<i>The Oracle</i> (comic opera)	2, F. Startin Pilleau and A. W. Gattie	1897	Not traced. Typescript libretto and scenario <i>GB-Gu</i> and <i>GB-En</i>
[Burlesque comic opera]	Not known, W.H. Sams	c1902	Not traced
<i>The Girl from London</i> (light opera)	2, Reginald Rutter	1902	Unfinished. Not traced
<i>Long and Short</i> (musical sketch)	1, George Thorne	1902-3	Not traced

## Theatrical

Title and genre	Acts, librettist	Date	Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes
<i>Flora Macdonald</i> (romantic opera)	3, C. Burton, J.C. Drysdale, J. F. Preston, W.H. Sams and others	1902-3	Unfinished. Libretto and incomplete FS <i>GB-Gu</i> ; libretto and autograph musical sketches <i>GB-En</i>
<i>The Vikings</i> (light opera)	2, Claude Burton and Louis Tracy	[1903]	Unfinished. P/V score <i>GB-Gu</i> . Possible short section of sketch in <i>GB-Gm</i> .
<i>Hippolytus</i> (incidental music to a Greek play)	2, Euripides, English translation Gilbert Murray	1905	FS (incomplete) and parts, P/V score <i>GB-Gu</i> . For vocal soloists, chorus and orchestra. First performed Athenaeum Theatre, Glasgow, 30 Nov 1905
<i>Fionn and Tera</i> (grand opera)	2, John Douglas Sutherland Campbell, 9 <sup>th</sup> Duke of Argyll	1908-9	Part of Act I, Scene I in FS <i>GB-Gm</i> ; incomplete P/V score <i>GB-En</i> ; one number <i>GB-Lb</i> . Score completed by David Stephen. Arranger's autograph FS and P/V score <i>GB-Gu</i> ; incomplete P/V score <i>GB-Gm</i>
<i>The Martyrs of Solway</i>	James L. Mackenzie	Unknown	Plot, initial sketches and one unfinished song <i>GB-Gu</i>

## Orchestral

Title and genre	Date	Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes
<i>The Spirit of the Glen</i> : Ballade for Orchestra	1889	FS <i>GB-Gu</i> . First version entitled <i>May of the Moril Glen</i> . First performance St James Hall, London
<i>Through the Sound of Raasay</i>	1. 1889	Copied FS and parts <i>GB-Gu</i> ; Copied set of parts <i>GB-En</i> . Arranged for concert performance by Harold E. Scott, January 1916, autograph <i>GB-Gu</i> ; also for pianoforte solo
Version 2 entitled <i>Overture to a Comedy</i>	2. 28 June 1890	2. FS <i>GB-Gu</i> . Awarded Charles Lucas Medal, Royal Academy of Music 1890
<i>Thomas the Rhymmer</i> : Orchestral Prelude	1890	Autograph FS and copied parts <i>GB-Gu</i> ; FS possibly autograph <i>GB-En</i> . First performed RAM, London, 25 July 1890. Also for pianoforte solo
<i>Tam o' Shanter</i> : [Concert Overture]	1890	FS and parts <i>GB-Gu</i> . Pub. London: Stainer & Bell, 1921 (Carnegie Collection of British Music). Arr for military band by Dan Godfrey, pub London: Chappell, 1921. Glasgow Society of Musicians' Award Nov 1890. First performed Glasgow, Choral Union Concert, 27 Jan 1891
<i>Herondean</i> : Concert Overture	1893-4	FS and parts <i>GB-Gu</i> . First performance by Stock Exchange Orchestra, London, 24 April 1894

## Orchestral

Title and genre	Date	Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes
<i>Graceful Dance</i>	1898	FS and copied parts <i>GB-Gu</i> ; FS and separate piano version also <i>GB-En</i> . From <i>Red spider</i>
Two Dances from <i>Red Spider</i> 1. Country Dance 2. Dance	1898	FS <i>GB-Gu</i>
Melody for Small Orchestra	1903	Copy of FS and parts <i>GB-Gu</i> . From the opera <i>Flora Macdonald</i>
<i>Suite of Old Dances for Orchestra</i> 1. Morris Dance, 2. Maypole Dance, 3. Allemande	[1898/1904]	FS <i>GB-Gu</i> , <i>GB-En</i> . Manuscript of 2 in <i>GB-En</i> is annotated “from <i>Red Spider</i> ”. Also for pianoforte solo
<i>Border Romance</i> : Orchestral poem	12 Aug 1904	FS and parts <i>GB-Gu</i> . Commissioned by [Sir] Henry Wood and first performed Queen’s Hall, London, 8 Oct 1904

## Sacred Choral

<b>Title (text)</b>	<b>Forces</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes</b>
<i>Hark! 'Tis the Breeze</i> : Motet (Thomas Moore)	Soli, chorus and organ	11 April 1887	<i>GB-Gu</i> . Written for the choir of Greenside Parish Church, Edinburgh
Agnus Dei	S, SATB, keyboard	1888 or earlier	<i>GB-Gu</i> . Probably written for the choir of All Saints' Church, Kensington
Benedictus	SATB	1888 or earlier	<i>GB-Gu</i> . Probably written for the choir of All Saints' Church, Kensington
Kyrie Eleison	SATB, keyboard	June 1888	<i>GB-Gu</i> . Probably written for the choir of All Saints' Church, Kensington
Christmas Hymn: <i>Hark the Herald Angels Sing</i> (Felix Mendelssohn/Charles Wesley)	SATB	Unknown	Copy <i>GB-Gu</i> . Arrangement
<i>Once in Royal David's City</i> : Christmas Carol for Chorus and Organ (Henry John Gauntlett/Cecil Francis Alexander)	SATB, organ	Unknown	Unfinished. <i>GB-Gu</i> . Arrangement

**SECULAR CHORAL**  
For  
soli and/or chorus with orchestra

<b>Title and genre (librettist)</b>	<b>Forces</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes</b>
<i>Thomas the Rhymer</i> : Dramatic Cantata (Sir Walter Scott, adapted Drysdale)	Soli, chorus, orchestra	1890	Incomplete. Preliminary pencil sketches (P/V format) dated February 1890 GB-Gu
<i>Edinburgh</i> : Choral Ode (Robert Burns)	Baritone, chorus, orchestra	14 Oct 1890	Autograph piano-vocal score with orchestral markings GB-Gu. Composed Edinburgh
<i>The Kelpie</i> : Dramatic Cantata (Charles Mackay)	Soli, chorus, orchestra	1891-4	Autograph FS and parts GB-Gu; incomplete FS GB-Gm. P/V score Pub. London: Paterson and Sons, [1894]. First performance Edinburgh Music Hall, 17 Dec 1894
<i>Barnbougle</i> [unknown]	Chorus, orchestra	[1900]	Not traced
<i>The Proud Damsel</i> : Choral Ballad (Charles Kingsley)	SATB, orchestra	1901	FS not traced. Autograph piano-vocal score and copied vocal parts GB-Gu. First draft, dated 8 Jan 1901, entitled <i>Earl Haldane's Daughter</i> GB-Gu; copy GB-En

**SECULAR CHORAL**

For

**solī and/or chorus with orchestra**

<b>Title and genre (librettist)</b>	<b>Forces</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes</b>
<i>Tamlane</i> : Dramatic Cantata (Scott)	Chorus, orchestra	1901-5	Autograph FS and parts not traced. P/V score pub. Bayley and Ferguson, [1905]. First performed by Clydebank and District Choral Union, 24 Nov 1905
<i>Inaugural Ode</i> [ <i>Franco-British Ode</i> ] or <i>The Scottish Tribute to France</i> , written for the opening of the Franco-British Exhibition, London 1908 (John Douglas Sutherland Campbell, 9 <sup>th</sup> Duke of Argyll)	SATB, chorus	Sept 1907	Autograph piano-vocal score <i>GB-Gu</i> . Selections arr for military band as <i>Franco-British March</i> by William Short, 1914

**SECULAR CHORAL**

**For**

**solo voice with orchestra**

<b>Title (librettist)</b>	<b>Forces</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes</b>
<i>The Kelpie of Corrievreckan:</i> Melodrama/recitation (Charles Mackay)	Speaker, orchestra	1891	FS, P/V score and parts <i>GB-Gu</i>
<i>The Lay of Thora:</i> Dramatic Scena (Granville Bantock)	Soprano, orchestra	1892	FS, P/V score and parts <i>GB-Gu</i>

**SECULAR CHORAL**  
For  
accompanied voices

<b>Title (librettist)</b>	<b>Forces</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes</b>
<i>Sing Heigh-ho!</i> : "Where sits a bird on ev'ry tree" (Charles Kingsley)	SATB, piano	1903 or later	P/V score <i>GB-Gu, GB-En</i> . Not published but annotated "Might be printed without accompaniment if required"
<i>Barbara Allan</i> : Choral Ballad (Traditional)	SATB, piano	1906	P/V score <i>GB-Gu, GB-En</i> . Pub. London: Curwen & Sons, [1906], (Choral handbook, no. 797). Written for Glasgow Select Choir
<i>John Grumlie</i> : part song on a traditional air (Traditional)	SATB, piano	Nov 1906	P/V score <i>GB-Gu, GB-En</i> . Written for Glasgow Select Choir
<i>Wha Daur Meddle wi' Me?</i> (Sir William Allan)	SA, piano	Version 1: Nov. 1906; Version 2: [1906-7]	P/V scores <i>GB-Gu, GB-En</i> ; 2: pub. London: Curwen & Sons, [1906-7] ( <i>Choruses for equal voices</i> , no. 1060)
<i>Allister MacAllister</i> (James Hogg)	SATB, piano	26 Feb 1907	Unfinished. P/V score <i>GB-Gu</i>
<i>Chorus of the Night Watchers</i> (Granville Bantock)	SATB, piano	Unknown	Unfinished. <i>GB-Gu</i>

**SECULAR CHORAL  
For  
unaccompanied voices**

<b>Title (librettist)</b>	<b>Forces</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes</b>
Ye Banks and Braes (Robert Burns)	Men's voices	25 Aug 1888	<i>GB-Gu</i>
Flowers of the Valley (Traditional)	SATB	1898 or after	<i>GB-Gu</i> . Traditional pan-British melody also employed in <i>Red Spider</i>
Annie Laurie (Lady John Scott)	SATB	Unknown	Not traced
As Two Lovers Sentimental (Robert Mann)	Presumably female and male	Unknown	Not traced
The Fighting Temeraire (Sir Henry Newbolt)	SATB	Unknown	Not traced. Copy MS <i>GB-Gu</i>

## Instrumental and Chamber

Instrument	Title	Date	Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes
Oboe and piano	<i>Old Melody</i> (arrangement)		<i>GB-Gu</i>
Organ	Gavotte in Bb	[1886]	Complete autograph not traced. Autograph sketches <i>GB-En</i> . Performed by LD on organ at Edinburgh International Exhibition, 16 July 1886
Pianoforte	<i>Dance of the Ploughmen</i>	[1898]	<i>GB-Gu, GB-En</i>
	<i>Fantasia Eccossais (Annie Laurie)</i>	[1884]	Unfinished set of variations <i>GB-En</i>
	<i>Franco-Scottish March</i>	[1907]	Arranged from the ode <i>Scottish Tribute to France</i>
	<i>Graceful Dance in C</i>	[1898]	Not traced. Possibly arr. of dance from <i>Red Spider</i>
	<i>In the Strath: Sketch</i>	July 1888	<i>GB-Gu</i>
	<i>Liebeslied: Sketch</i>	[1888]	<i>GB-Gu</i> . Pub. London: C. Woolhouse, [1888]. BMS states Cary
	<i>Quick March: New Century</i>	April 1901	<i>GB-Gu</i>
	<i>Overture: Through the Sound of Raasay (In Memory of Skye)</i>	Aug 1889	<i>GB-Gu</i> . Composed in Western Highlands

## Instrumental and Chamber

Instrument	Title	Date	Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes
Pianoforte	Rigaudon		Mentioned in BMS; JD copy <i>GB-En</i>
	<i>Rustic Dance</i>	6 April 1888	<i>GB-En</i> . Dedicated to T.A.B.
	Sarabande in E		Copy <i>GB-En</i>
	Sarabande in G		Copy <i>GB-En</i>
	Sonatina		<i>GB-Gu</i> ; <i>GB-En</i>
	<i>Tayside Waltz</i>		Complete autograph not traced, possibly lodged with publishers; <i>GB-En</i> MS incomplete. Pub. London: Paterson, [nd]
	Three Old Dances: 1. <i>Morris Dance</i> , 2. <i>Maypole Dance</i> , 3. <i>Allemande</i>		2. is from <i>Red Spider</i>
	<i>Valsette: [The Band Ball]</i>	4 April 1904	<i>GB-En</i> , <i>GB-Gu</i> . Written Lasswade. Subtitle supplied by Henry Farmer on <i>GB-Gu</i>
	<i>White Heather: Polka de Salon</i>	[1895]	<i>GB-Gu</i> . Pub. London: Paterson & Sons, c1895. Also arranged for orchestra: autograph FS and copied parts <i>GB-Gu</i>

### Instrumental and Chamber

Instrument	Title	Date	Source(s) of autograph(s) and notes
Violin and piano	<i>Ballade</i>	[1892]	<i>GB-Gu, GB-En</i> . Dedicated to Emile Sauret. Also exists in an arrangement for solo violin, harp and strings, but autograph does not survive.
	<i>Reverie</i>	[1907]	<i>GB-Gu</i>
	<i>Romance</i>		Not traced
Clarinet, bassoon, piano	Trio in F	19 Dec 1889	<i>GB-En</i> has some autograph material as well as two parts in a different hand. First private performance London Feb 1890. Also for violin, cello, piano <i>GB-Gu</i> .

<u>Title</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Afar on the Rolling Sea	Matthias Barr	Before 1888. Unfinished; accompaniment not complete
Ask Not if Still I Love	Thomas Moore	Also <i>GB-En</i> . Performed RAM, London, 18 Dec 1891
Ballad	Ercil Doune [Janey C. Drysdale]	Not traced
The Bhoys	Claude Burton	Also <i>GB-En</i> . Published London: Francis, Day & Hunter
Bonnie George Campbell	Old Scots Ballad	Only JD copy extant
Bonnie White Heather	Sinclair Dunn	Also <i>GB-En</i>
Boulogne	Doune	Not traced
Ca' the Yowes	Robert Burns	Performed RAM, 21 Mar 1891. Pub. in <i>Scottish Musical Monthly</i> Oct 1894
Chansonette (I would I were a pretty bird)	Doune	
The Chord of Love	Doune	Composed 23 Dec 1897
Come Dearest Heart	E. Oxenford	Not traced
Come Let Me Take Thee to My Breast	Burns	Also <i>GB-En</i> . Version 1 composed 19 June 1888; version 2 not dated
Coronation Song (Lord of our isles)	Burton	[1901], refers to King Edward VII. Annotation regarding SATB chorus notes: "Refrain may be sung in harmony if desired but it is more suited to unison." There is a further manuscript ascribed with the motto "Carpe Diem" containing an alternative refrain (words and music).
Coronation Song	W.H. Sams	[1901], not traced but possibly refers to alternative refrain mentioned above
Cradle Song (Close the drowsy lids)	Doune	

<u>Title</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Cradle Song (O blue eyes close in slumber)	Caris Brooke. BMS states Cary	Dedicated to LD's mother. Composed Jan 1888. Pub. London: Woolhouse, [1888]
Cradle Song	Kate Gerard	Also listed as "Lullaby"
Curate's Song (Life is so very Uncertain)	B.G.R. (?S.B. Ritchie)	
The Curling Song	Thomas S. Aitchison	Two versions. Pub. in <i>Caledonian Curling Club Annual</i> , 1911
Dark Clouds are Floating	Dingelstedt	Composed June 1889
The Darkie's Farewell: Plantation Song	Doone	
Deirdre's Keening	Donald A. Mackenzie	Autograph not traced. Pub. <i>Celtic Annual</i> 1915
Dollie	Sams	Not traced
The Drowned Lover	D.A. Mackenzie	Melody by Drysdale, harmonised and arranged by Harold E. Scott
England	Burton	Also <i>GB-En</i> . Composed June 1903. In cycle of three songs: <i>The Girls That I Love</i>
Fair Araby	Granville Bantock	Not traced
Far Away	[Mrs Hemans]	
Farewell Theresa	Moore	Performed at All Saints' Church, Kensington, London, 31 May 1888
Firelight Dreams	Sams	
A Floweret Grew in a Garden Fair	Doone	Unfinished
From the Mountain to the Sea	B.O.P.	Written Kingswood, Murthly, Perthshire, April 1884
Gavotte (In the days of long ago)	Sams	[?1901] Composed 9 Greenbank Terrace, Edinburgh

<u>Title</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>
A Golden Dream	Burton	Composed Greenbank Terrace, Edinburgh
He's the Sort of Bloke	Sams	Not traced. Possibly "Bloke" in 1907 list
Here Do I Stand	Sabine Baring-Gould	From <i>Red Spider</i> . Pub. London: Ascherberg, 1898
I Put my Little Bonnet On, <u>So!</u>	Arthur Corney	Also <i>GB-En</i> . Composed 1903 or after
I Wonder Why?	F.S. Pilleau	Unfinished
If Love Were What the Rose Is	Algernon Charles Swinburne	Performed Edinburgh, 31 Jan 1913. Accompaniment of extant autograph unfinished; completed copy by JD is drawn from extant material
Ireland	Burton	Also <i>GB-En</i> . Composed June 1903. In Cycle of Three Songs: <i>The Girls That I Love</i>
It Had the Desired Effect	Corney	Not traced
Jane	Sams	[?c1901]
Julia's Motor	Sams	Composed 29 Dec 1901
The Legend of the Crossbill	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	Autograph MS has violin obbligato
Love and Charity		MS lacks text. According to Farmer, text is by W. Parke
Love Levels All	Corney	Not traced
Love's Floweret	Doune	Composed 30 Castle Street, Edinburgh
The Maiden With the Eyes So Blue	Doune	Autograph only <i>GB-En</i> : D.A. Mackenzie Collection, MS 19310
Mary Darling	Doune	Composed 30 Castle Street, Edinburgh
Maudie's Motor	Sams	Also <i>GB-En</i> . Composed Lasswade, 1903 or later

<u>Title</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>
The Memory of the Dead	Burton	Incomplete <i>GB-En</i> : MS 3213 and D.A. Mackenzie Collection, MS 19310. Possibly written c1902, following conclusion of Boer War
Memory's Fairest Floweret	Doune	From <i>Red Spider</i> . Pub. London: Ascherberg, 1898
My Dearest Love	Doune	Not published but has printer's marks
My Dearie O'	Hogg	Three extant versions: 2. bears title of initial line "O I hae seen when fields were green"; 3. I hae lost my Jeannie o'
My Lady Sleeps	Longfellow	11 Mar 1884. Pub. London: London Music Publishing Co., 1894
My Little Philippine	Corney	Lacks following dance
My Queen of May	D.A. Mackenzie	Autograph not traced. Copies <i>GB-Gu</i> , <i>GB-En</i>
My Sailor Lad	Cecil Lorraine	[?1884]. Dedicated to Lady John Manners
My True Love Has Nae Goud nor Gear	Burton	Autograph not traced. Copies <i>GB-Gu</i> , <i>GB-En</i>
Never Put in Down in Black and White	Corney	Autograph only <i>GB-En</i> : D.A. Mackenzie Collection, MS 19310
O Stay, Sweet Warbling Woodlark, Stay!	Burns	Autograph not traced. Copies <i>GB-Gm</i> , <i>GB-Gu</i> , <i>GB-En</i>
The Pipes	W. Cuthbertson	Two versions, neither quite complete. JD copy completed from extant material
The Reaper and the Flowers	Longfellow	Edinburgh, 26 Aug 1883. Fair copy made 30 Sep 1883
Sadie	[Doune]	Not traced

<u>Title</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>
The Sardine and the Sprat	Sams	Lasswade, 1903 or later. Also <i>GB-En</i> . Pub. <i>British Students' Song Book</i> , London: Bayley and Ferguson, 1913
Scotch		Not traced
Scotland	Burton	Also <i>GB-En</i> . Composed June 1903. In Cycle of Three Songs: <i>The Girls That I Love</i>
The Sea Song of Gafran	Hemans	
[She Has Come Like a Radiant Sunbeam]	9 <sup>th</sup> Duke of Argyll	Tenor solo from the opera <i>Fionn and Tera</i>
Sing Heigh-ho	Charles Kingsley	Composed "Summer House, Kingswood, Perthshire, 15 Sep 1889". Also set for SATB
Smart, Smart, Smart	Sams	Not traced
Smiles	Sams	
Snowdrops	Doune	Autograph not traced. Pub. London: Paterson and Sons, [1896]
The Song of the Bow	Arthur Conan Doyle	22 May 1902
Song of Heroes	D.A. Mackenzie	Autograph not traced. Copies <i>GB-Gu</i>
A Song of the Ships	Lauchlan MacLean Watt	Autograph not traced. Copies <i>GB-Gu</i> and <i>GB-En</i>
A Song of Summer	Doune	
Song of the Sword ("The wind is dying with the dying day")	Burton	Tenor solo from <i>Flora Macdonald</i> . Copies <i>GB-Gu</i> , <i>GB-En</i> .
Spring Song	Doune	Pub. London: Paterson and Sons, [1896]
The Stars of Night	J.L. Mackenzie	Unfinished soprano solo from <i>The Martyrs of Solway</i>

<u>Title</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Sunshine on the Sea	Mrs G.L. Banks. Words from <i>Ripples and Breakers</i>	Murthly, 6 Oct 1885. Pub. London: Paterson and Sons, nd
Territorial's Song	9 <sup>th</sup> Duke of Argyll	Autograph not traced. Copies <i>GB-Gu</i> , <i>GB-En</i>
There Was a Fox	Baring-Gould	From <i>Red Spider</i> . Pub. London: Ascherberg 1898
[The Trees They are Budding]	Burton, J.C. Drysdale et. al.	From the opera <i>Flora Macdonald</i>
The Troubadour	Sir Walter Scott	Extant autograph unfinished. Performed RAM, 16 Nov 1889
Trust	Burton	Probably <i>GB-Gu</i> "Trust, Trust, Trust", a pencil draft incorrectly bound and not catalogued
Twilight Dreams	Sams	Autograph not traced. Copy <i>GB-Gu</i>
The Valley of Silence	[Fr Abram Ryan]	Autograph lacks final bar
Wake Up Britannia	Smedley Norton	Not traced
The Warrior Bold	Pilleau	Employs SATB in refrain. Pub. <i>British Students' Song Book</i>
We Stand Alone	Norton	Unfinished. In two sections, second is sketched
Wee Mousie Pousie	Baring-Gould	From <i>Red Spider</i> . Pub. London: Ascherberg 1898
Wee Wee Man		Autograph only <i>GB-En</i> . Lasswade, 1903 <sup>1</sup>
What Do I Wish Thee?	Not given	Complete though some sketched in pencil. Before 1888
When All the World Is Young	Kingsley	Also <i>GB-En</i> . Composed 14 Sep 1889, Kingswood, Perthshire. Dedicated to LD's mother. Three versions with slightly different accompaniment

<sup>1</sup> On the autograph MS, LD notes that this song is practically an original song not simply an arrangement of "Bundle and Go". See MS 3213, *GB-En*

<u>Title</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Where Shall the Lover Rest?	Scott	Two incomplete autograph sketches. Completed copy by J. Drysdale
Will He Come?	Doune	
Wine, Glorious Wine	J.L. Mackenzie	Not traced
You'll Be My Girlie	Sams	Composed Edinburgh, 2 Jan 1902

<u>Title</u>	<u>Melody/Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Ay Waukin' O	Traditional Scots/ Adam Skirving	Autograph only <i>GB–Ep</i>
Barrochan Jean	Forest Dryden/ Robert Tannahill	Autograph not traced; copy <i>GB–Gu</i> . Pub. <i>Song Gems: the Dunedin Collection</i> . London: Vincent Music Co, 1908
Bonnie Briar Bush		Autograph not traced; copies <i>GB–En</i> , <i>GB–Ep</i>
Bonnie George Campbell	Old Scots Ballad	Autograph not traced; copy <i>GB–Gu</i>
Bonnie Nellie Brown	Alexander Hume	Also <i>GB–En</i> . Two versions of autograph.
Bundle and Go	Traditional melody/ D.A. Mackenzie	See also “Wee, wee man” in songs for solo voice
Burd Aillie	John Gray/James Smith	Autograph not traced; copy <i>GB–Ep</i> , <i>GB–Gu</i> . Pub. Edinburgh: Edina Pub. Co., nd
The Coortin' at E'en	J.P. Clarke/Robert Nicoll	<i>Song Gems</i>
Craigellachie!	A. Marie Grant/Alex Grant	
Dumbarton's Drums	Old Scots/Traditional	Unfinished
Fair Are the Flowers in the Valley	Old Devon folksong	Used in the opera <i>Red Spider</i>
The Foray: Border Moss- trooping Song	Scots air, adapted/ Sir Walter Scott	Engraved for <i>Song Gems</i> but not published – 1908 or earlier
From Ye to Me		Not traced
Get Up and Bar the Door	Traditional Scottish	Not traced
Gin Ye'll Come Dawtie	Traditional Scots/ James Honeyman	Autograph not traced; copies <i>GB–Gu</i> , <i>GB–En</i> , <i>GB–Ep</i>
Haro Mary Dhu	D.A. Mackenzie	Also see “Mhairi Dhu”

<u>Title</u>	<u>Melody/Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Helen of Kirkconnell	Traditional Scottish	Not traced
Hey Johnny Cope	Traditional Scots/ Adam Skirving	
The Highland Widow's Lament	Melody from Gaelic air/ Burns	
I Gaed a Waefu' Gate Yestreen	Traditional Scots/ Robert Burns	
I Hae Naebody Noo	Traditional Scots/ Hogg	Autograph not traced; copies <i>GB-Gu, GB-En</i> . Engraved for <i>Song Gems</i> but not published
Ilka Blade o' Grass	Traditional, adapted John Wilson/ James Ballantine	
It Fell on a Morning	Traditional/ Joanna Baillie	Engraved for <i>Song Gems</i> but not published
Jenny MacPhee	Founded on an old melody/Alexander Grant	Also <i>GB-En</i> . 1903 or later
Jess MacFarlane	Old Scots air/ Traditional	
The Laird o' Loganlea	Dryden/Allan Ramsay	<i>Song Gems</i>
The Lass with the Delicate Air	Thomas Arne/Anon	
Lassie wi' the Yellow Coatie	Words and melody by John Hamilton	Autograph not traced; copies <i>GB-Gu, GB-En, GB-Ep</i>
Listen to the Voice of Love	James Hook/Anon	Autograph incomplete
Lock the Door Lariston	Traditional Scots/Hogg	
Low Down i' th' Brume	Traditional Scots/ J. Carnegie of Balmadoon	<i>Song Gems</i>
Mally Lee	[Dryden]/Robert Chambers' <i>Traditions of Edinburgh</i>	Autograph only <i>GB-En</i> . Pub. Edinburgh: Edina Pub. Co.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Melody/Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Mhairi Dhu	Traditional Gaelic/ D.A. Mackenzie	Autograph not traced; copies <i>GB-Gu, GB-En</i> : MS 3213 and DAM Coll., MS 19310; <i>GB-Ep</i> . Same arrangement with different words as "The Stars Are All Burning"
Miller o' Dee	Traditional/ Alexander Grant	Autograph not traced; copies <i>GB-Gu, GB-En, GB-Ep</i>
My Bonnie Bell	John Glen/Burns	<i>Song Gems</i> . Autograph not traced; copy <i>GB-Gu</i>
My Fiddle and Me	Peter Macleod/Ballantine	<i>Song Gems</i> . Autograph not traced; copy <i>GB-Gu</i>
My Hawk is Tired of Perch and Hood	George F. Graham/ Scott	<i>Song Gems</i> . Autograph not traced; copy <i>GB-Gu</i>
The Nameless Lassie	Alexander Mackenzie/ Ballantine	Autograph not traced; copies <i>GB-Gu, GB-En, GB-Ep</i>
O My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose	Traditional/Burns	Autograph not traced; copy <i>GB-Gu, RR Coll</i>
O My Luve's Bonnie	Traditional/ D.A. Mackenzie	Autograph not traced; copy <i>GB-Gu, GB-En</i> : MS 3213 and DAM Coll., MS 19310; <i>GB-Ep</i> . Engraved for <i>Song Gems</i> but not published
The Plaid Among the Heather	Founded on an old strathspey/Hector Macneil	Autograph not traced; copy <i>GB-Gu</i> . Engraved for <i>Song Gems</i> but not published
The Rambling Sailor	[English]	Not traced
Reaping the Bracken	Old Gaelic air/James L. Mackenzie	Autograph not traced; copies <i>GB-Gu, GB-En, RR Coll</i>
Row Weel My Boatie	R.A. Smith/Walter Smith	<i>Song Gems</i>
Sandy Owre the Lea	Traditional Scots song	<i>Song Gems</i> . Also London: Boosey, 1908
Saw Ye My Wee Thing?	Traditional ( <i>Bonnie Dundee</i> )/Hector Macneil	<i>Song Gems</i>

<u>Title</u>	<u>Melody/Text</u>	<u>Notes</u>
The Spinning Wheel	D.V. Thomson/D.A. Mackenzie	Autograph not traced; copies <i>GB-Gu, GB-En</i> : MS 3213 and DAM Coll., MS 19310; <i>GB-Ep</i>
The Stars Are All Burning	Traditional Gaelic/Albyn's Anthology	See <i>Mhairi Dhu</i>
Tam Glen	Traditional/Burns	
[Then] On wi' the Tartan	Traditional/Hew Ainslie	Also <i>GB-En. Song Gems</i>
There Grows a Bonnie Briar Bush	Traditional/ D.A. Mackenzie	Autograph not traced; copy <i>GB-Gu, GB-En</i>
Were na' My He'rt Licht	Old air <i>Kellyburn Braes</i> / Lady Grizel Baillie	<i>Song Gems</i>
Widdicombe Fair	Devon folksong	Pub. in Baring-Gould ed. <i>English Mintrelsie</i> Edinburgh: Jack, 1895-1899
Willie's Gane to Melville Castle	Old Scots	Autograph not traced; copies <i>GB-Gu, GB-En, GB-Ep, RR</i> <i>Coll</i>

## Appendix II: Timeline of Learmont Drysdale's Life

**Note:** The following timeline details the main biographical events of Drysdale's life, as constructed from available biographies, correspondence and secondary sources such as programmes and reviews.

**1866** — Born 3 October, 37 George Street, Edinburgh.

**1873** — Learmont Drysdale [LD] is enrolled at Mr Oliphant's School, 33 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh

**1878** — On 3 October, LD enrolls at the Royal High School of Edinburgh.

**1882** — LD completes his education at the Royal High School in June and enters employment with the Edinburgh architectural firm of Kinnear and Peddie.

LD begins organ lessons with Scott-Riddell, organist of Greyfriars Church.

**1883** — LD is rejected by the Royal College of Music, London.

Charles Bradley, organist of St. George's Parish Church, becomes LD's organ teacher.

LD wins the Freehand Drawing Prize of the Edinburgh School of Art (July).

**1884** — Early in the year, LD suffers a serious and prolonged attack of pleurisy which leads Kinnear and Peddie to terminate his employment. He spends most of the year recuperating at his brother and sister's home at Kingswood House on Sir Douglas Stewart's Murthly estate.

The London Music Publishing Co. publish the song "My Lady Sleeps"

**1885** — The rising young architect Robert Cameron employs LD.

LD studies music theory at the Watt Institute and School of Arts and wins two prizes.

**1886** — During July, LD gives two organ recitals at the International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art.

On 1 November, LD is appointed organist of Greenside Parish Church

**1887** — LD leaves the employ of Robert Cameron and in July, moves to London to take up the post of assistant organist at All Saints' Church, Notting Hill.

**1888** — C. Woolhouse, London publishes the piano sketch *Liebeslied* and "Cradle Song".

In September, LD enters the RAM. He lodges with Mrs Russell, 28 Abbey Gardens, St John's Wood.

- 1889** — On 26 July, LD's first orchestral work *The Spirit of the Glen* is performed by the RAM orchestra at the St James's Hall, London.

During the summer, LD visits Murthly and undertakes a tour of the Scottish Highlands.

LD moves to lodgings in Mr Newall's apartments, 53 Ordnance Road, St John's Wood (Autumn).

- 1890** — Drysdale's Trio is performed at "Isaac's 'At Home' (February).

LD begins a cantata based on Sir Walter Scott's *Thomas the Rhymer*. In July, the work's prelude is performed at the St James's Hall.

LD wins the Charles Lucas Medal with his *Overture to a Scottish Comedy* (July).

Alexander C. Mackenzie tells LD that he is too inexperienced to submit works to the Norwich Festival. He suggests that LD spends a full year working on counterpoint and form, and pays less attention to composition proper (2 August).

Mrs Barker employs LD as accompanist on her tour of England and Ireland (autumn).

In the autumn, LD writes his *Ode to Edinburgh* for the Edinburgh International Exhibition of 1890. The commission is cancelled.

- 1891** — On 12 January LD is informed that his *Tam o' Shanter* overture has been awarded the Glasgow Society of Musicians' Prize of 30 Guineas. The work is performed under Manns in Glasgow on 27 January when it received more votes in the published plebiscite than any other overture played during the Glasgow Orchestral Society series.

In the spring, LD sets Charles Mackay's poem "The Kelpie of Corrievreckan" as a recitation and begins work on a cantata to the same text. A soprano solo from the latter is performed at an RAM concert at St. James Hall on 28 July.

Manns conducts the second performance of *Tam o' Shanter* at the Crystal Palace, London on 24 October.

- 1892** — LD composes a dramatic scena *The Lay of Thora* to a text by Granville Bantock.

LD leaves the RAM in July following a public row with the Principal, Alexander C. Mackenzie, during a rehearsal of *The Lay of Thora*.

**1893** — On 4 February, Granville Bantock invites LD to join the group of composers who will set up the *New Quarterly Musical Review*. LD initially agrees, but on reflection decides not to become involved in the scheme.

LD takes part in theatricals at Dalmeny Park and spends time with his brother on Lord Rosebery's estate in the Moorfoot Hills.

In November, LD writes an orchestral work *Herondean* which has been inspired by his sojourn at Moorfoot.

LD begins work on *The Plague*.

**1894** — In April, *Herondean* is performed at the St James's Hall by the Stock Exchange Orchestral Society conducted by George Kitchen.

LD spends time at Moorfoot.

*The Kelpie* is published by Paterson and on 17 December receives its first performance.

**1895** — Ernest Kuhe and LD collaborate on an operetta *In Office Hours*.

LD attends a performance of Shaw's *Man and the Arms* and is highly impressed. He approaches Shaw about writing a libretto for a comic opera, but the playwright refuses (12 April).

LD begins work on *Red Spider* and visits Lewtrenchard Manor, Devon to collaborate with the work's author Sabine Baring-Gould.

**1896** — [Sir] Augustus Harris considers producing *Red Spider*, but an arrangement is not forthcoming (March).

LD is ill in the spring and spends his summer at Moorfoot.

LD attempts to interest Mr and Mrs D'Oyly Carte in some of his theatrical works (October).

On 16 October, *The Plague* is produced at the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh.

**1897** — The Drysdale family move from 3 Castle Street to 13 Greenbank Terrace, Morningside.

At the request of Jessie Kuhe (wife of Wilhelm Kuhe), Jessie Rosa agrees to meet LD and discuss an unnamed libretto.

During the summer, LD visits Moorfoot.

LD begins work on a satirical opera *The Oracle* in collaboration with A.W. Gattie and F.S. Pilleau.

LD employs an agent Mr Lestocq to handle his increasingly complex business affairs.

Arrangements made to produce *Red Spider* at Wells, although it is uncertain if the performance took place (November).

**1898** — *Red Spider* is completed and LD visits Baring-Gould at Lewtrenchard to finalise arrangements for the opera's production. The work receives its first performance at Lowestoft on 25 July and tours Britain until December.

Richard D'Oyly Carte suggests that George Bernard Shaw writes a libretto for LD; once again, Shaw declines.

Mrs D'Oyly Carte is pleased that *Red Spider* is a success but restates her belief that there are great difficulties with its libretto. The tour concludes before she has a chance to see the production.

**1899** — LD visits Boulogne; it is the only time he travels abroad.

LD collaborates on an unnamed theatrical work with Arthur Branscombe and in August the collaborators meet in Edinburgh to review their progress.

**1900** — *Herondean* is performed at the St Andrew's Hall, Glasgow under the baton of Frederick Cowen.

**1901** — In January, LD composes his choral ballad *The Proud Damozel or Earl Haldane's Daughter* and begins *Tamlane*.

LD is asked to provide music for the opening ode of the Glasgow International Exhibition, but the commission is cancelled (spring).

**1902** — LD begins work on the romantic opera *Flora Macdonald*, the light opera *The Girl from London* and the musical sketch *Long and Short*. Only the latter is completed.

**1903** — George Thorne, the librettist of *Long and Short*, believes he may have found a backer for a tour of the work, but his plan fails. LD is asked to complete a stage work called *The Canterbury Bells*, as Thorne's arrangement with its composer has been broken off. The music, if written, does not survive.

LD moves to Lasswade, Midlothian (spring).

**1904** — In May LD is appointed harmony and composition professor at the Glasgow Athenaeum.

The actress Grace Hawthorne commissions LD to write incidental music for a five act historical play *William Wallace* founded on Jane Porter's novel *The Scottish Chiefs* (August). LD accepts the commission but the project is cancelled when Miss Hawthorne becomes seriously ill.

Henry Wood commissions LD to write an orchestral piece for the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts and the resulting work *Border Romance* receives its first performance on 10 October.

On 25 October LD is elected a member of the Glasgow Society of Musicians.

**1905** — LD writes to Elgar to inquire about the availability of teaching posts at Birmingham University (May).

LD resigns from his post at the Athenaeum stating that he wishes to devote his time to composition.

When preparing a series of articles about the current state of music in Scotland, John Runciman (music correspondent of the *Saturday Review*) seeks the assistance of LD (May-July).

Alexander Cargill wishes to collaborate with LD on a work to be submitted for the Ricordi Opera Competition (20 June).

LD conducts the Clydebank Choral Union in the first performance of *Tamlane* at Clydebank Burgh Hall (24 November).

Gilbert Murray's version of *Hippolytus* is staged with incidental music written by LD at the Glasgow Athenaeum Hall (November/December).

Professor Gilbert Murray thanks LD and Graham Price for producing his version of *Hippolytus*. However, he is unwilling to use LD's music in his own production.

**1906** — Cargill decides to collaborate with a Devon composer on the Ricordi Opera Competition project, as LD has taken too long to reply to his offer (9 February).

For one season, LD becomes conductor of the Glasgow Select Choir. Under his baton the choir undertakes a tour of the Midlands (November/December).

**1907** — The ninth Duke of Argyll and LD collaborate on the inaugural ode for the opening of the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush, London.

**1908** — The *Franco-British Ode* is rejected by the exhibition's Music Committee (February).

LD edits and provides several arrangements for a collection of Scots songs published as *Song Gems*.

W.S. Gilbert states that he will not write a libretto for LD (12 May).

LD and the ninth Duke of Argyll begin work on a grand opera *Fionn and Tera*.

**1909** — On 20 April LD is informed that his name has been deleted from the list of members of the Glasgow Society of Musicians because his subscriptions have not been paid for two years.

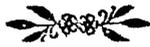
LD returns to Edinburgh to live with his parents at 22 Braid Crescent, Morningside (April).

On 21 May LD is elected president of the Edinburgh branch of Scottish National Song Society.

Mrs Elspeth Drysdale dies following a short illness on 9 June at the age of 82. At her funeral, LD catches a chill which develops into pneumonia.

George John Learmont Drysdale dies at home on 18 June at the age of 42. His funeral is held on 22 June at Peebles Cemetery where he is interred in the Learmont family burial ground.

# "THE KELPIE."



## *The Argument.*

THIS weird but beautiful Scotch ballad tells of a demon lover, who by means of fair looks and sweet words, lures a simple village maiden to her doom.

On Beltan E'en the Kelpie, or water demon, in the form of a handsome knight mounts his steed, and galloping from his whirlpool home over the billows reaches the shore, and at length halts on the scene of a village merry-making, where old and young are holding high revel. In the midst of the festivities the attention of all is suddenly arrested by the appearance of the handsome and mysterious stranger, who, amid curious and admiring glances gallops across the green, and, dismounting, approaches the fair Jessie. The maiden, overpowered by his noble bearing and flattering address, recognises in him the ideal of her girlish dreams, and willingly agrees to a tryst by moonlight.

A scene of rapturous love making takes place, and their union is sealed with a ring of gold. Together on his steed they ride away over mountain and moor till at length they come to the sea. Here the Kelpie reveals himself, and in spite of her wild shrieks he plunges with her into the waves and drags her down into the depths of the whirlpool. In the morning her lifeless floating form is found by a fisherman, and laid in a grave by the sea shore.

"And every year at Beltan E'en  
The Kelpie gallops o'er the green,  
On a steed as fleet as the wintry wind,  
With Jessie's mournful ghost behind."

## *The Libretto.*

## I.

He mounted his steed of the water clear,  
And sat on his saddle of sea-weed sere;  
He held his bridle of strings of pearl,  
Dug out of the depths where the sea-snakes curl.

## II.

He put on his vest of the whirlpool froth,  
Soft and dainty as velvet cloth,  
And donn'd his mantle of sand so white,  
And grasp'd his sword of the coral bright.

## III.

And away he gallop'd, a horseman free,  
Spurring his steed through the stormy sea,  
Clearing the billows with bound and leap—  
Away, away, o'er the foaming deep!

## IV.

By Scarba's rock, by Lunga's shore,  
By Garveloch isles where the breakers roar,  
With his horse's hoofs he dash'd the spray,  
And on to Loch Buy, away, away!

## V.

On to Loch Buy all day he rode,  
And reach'd the shore as sunset glow'd,  
And stopp'd to hear the sounds of joy  
That rose from the hills and glens of Moy.

## VI.

The morrow was May, and on the green  
They'd lit the fire of Beltan E'en,  
And danced around, and piled it high  
With peat and heather and pine-tops dry.

## VII.

A piper played a lightsome reel,  
And timed the dance with toe and heel;  
While wives look'd on, as lad and lass  
Trode it merrily o'er the grass.

## VIII.

And Jessie (fickle and fair was she)  
Sat with Evan beneath a tree,  
And smiled with mingled love and pride,  
And half agreed to be his bride.

## IX.

The Kelpie gallop'd o'er the green—  
He seem'd a knight of noble mien,  
And old and young stood up to see,  
And wonder'd who the knight could be.

## X.

His flowing locks were auburn bright,  
His cheeks were ruddy, his eyes flash'd light;  
And as he sprang from his good gray steed,  
He look'd a gallant youth indeed.

## XI.

His noble brow was fair to see,  
And sweet that smile as smile could be;  
His glancing eye shone like a star  
In darkest night from heav'n afar.

## XII.

His comely form drew many a sigh  
From maidens' hearts as he rode by;  
His tender looks they seem'd to say:  
"Maiden, come with me away."

## XIII.

And Jessie's fickle heart beat high,  
As she caught the stranger's glancing eye:  
And when he smiled, "Ah well," thought she,  
"I wish this knight came courting me!"

## XIV.

He took two steps towards her seat—  
"Wilt thou be mine, O maiden sweet?"  
He took her lily-white hand, and sigh'd,  
"Maiden, maiden, be my bride!"

## XV.

And Jessie blush'd, and whisper'd soft—  
"Meet me to-night when the moon's aloft;  
I've dream'd, fair knight, long time of thee—  
I thought thou camest courting me."

## XVI.

When the moon her yellow horn display'd,  
Alone to the trysting went the maid;  
When all the stars were shining bright,  
Alone to the trysting went the knight.

## XVII.

"I have loved thee long, I have loved thee well,  
Maiden, oh more than words can tell!  
Maiden, thine eyes like diamonds shine;  
Maiden, maiden, be thou mine!"

## XVIII.

"Fair sir, thy suit I'll ne'er deny—  
Though poor my lot, my hopes are high;  
I scorn a lover of low degree—  
None but a knight shall marry me."

## XIX.

"By thy hand so lily white  
And flowing tresses golden bright;  
By thy lips and cheeks so red,  
I swear I love thee and will thee wed."

## XX.

"Thou art a knight of noble mien,  
So fair a knight I ne'er have seen;  
I'll follow thee whate'er betide,  
Fair sir, I'll be thy loving bride."

## XXI.

He took her by the hand so white,  
And gave her a ring of the gold so bright;  
"Maiden, whose eyes like diamonds shine—  
Maiden, maiden, now thou'rt mine!"

## XXII.

He lifted her on his steed of gray,  
And they rode till morning, away, away—  
Over the mountain and over the moor,  
And over the rocks, to the dark sea-shore.

## XXIII.

"We have ridden east, we have ridden west—  
I'm weary, fair knight, and I fain would rest,  
Say, is thy dwelling beyond the sea?  
Hast thou a good ship waiting for me?"

## XXIV.

"I have no dwelling beyond the sea,  
I have no good ship waiting for thee;  
Thou shalt sleep with me on a couch of foam,  
And the depths of the ocean shall be thy home."

## XXV.

"Thou hast scorn'd a lover of low degree,  
And vow'd a knight should marry thee;  
Thou hast chosen well for me and mine,  
Maiden, whose eyes like diamonds shine."

## XXVI.

"Thy veil shall be of the coral bright,  
I'll give thee a ring of pearl so white;  
Thy bridal maidens fair mermaids three,  
And merry the wedding feast shall be."

## XXVII.

"Beneath the rocks I shall bear thee down,  
The slimy seaweed thy wedding gown;  
By Scarba's breakers shall we be wed,  
The whirlpool froth thy bridal bed."

## XXVIII.

The gray steed plunged in the billows clear,  
And the maiden's shrieks were sad to hear.  
"Maiden, whose eyes like diamonds shine—  
Maiden, maiden, now thou'rt mine."

## XXIX.

Lo! the cold sea-blast did blow,  
As they sank 'mid the angry waves below—  
Down to the rocks where the serpents creep,  
Twice five hundred fathoms deep.

## XXX.

At morn a fisherman, sailing by,  
Saw her pale corse floating high;  
He knew the maid by her yellow hair  
And her lily skin so soft and fair.

## XXXI.

Under a rock on Scarba's shore,  
Where the wild winds sigh and the breakers roar,  
They dug her a grave by the water clear,  
Among the sea-weed salt and sere.

## XXXII.

And every year at Belton E'en,  
The Kelpie gallops o'er the green,  
On a steed as fleet as the wintry wind,  
With Jessie's mournful ghost behind.

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### **Sound Recordings**

Drysdale, Learmont *The Kelpie* The Broadheath Singers and The Windsor Sinfonia, Carolyn Foulkes (soprano) and Eugene Ginty (tenor) conducted by Robert Tucker. Recorded at St. Mary's Church, Slough on 29 September 2001

\_\_\_\_\_ "Love Duet" from *The Kelpie* BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Patricia McMahon (soprano) and Alexander Morrison (tenor) conducted by Alan Hazeldine contained in programme 24 of *Scotland's Music* (March 8, 1992)

\_\_\_\_\_ Extracts from *Red Spider* Catherine Oxley (soprano) and Gillian Scott (mezzo soprano) accompanied by Stuart Campbell (piano). Recorded at the Concert Hall, University of Glasgow on 18 June 2001

