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The Choral Works of Hamish MacCunn

Jane Wilson Mallinson

Submitted for the Degree of PhD

University of Glasgow

Department of Music

April 2007

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The Choral Works of Hamish MacCunn

Abstract

Hamish MacCunn, born in Greenock in 1868, began composing at an early age and continued to do so until his premature death in 1916. Although the greater part of his oeuvre was written for voices – solo with piano accompaniment, part-songs, cantatas, choral ballads, and operas – today his fame depends largely on one work, the concert overture *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood* (1887). Since MacCunn's engagement with choral music spanned his entire compositional life, it is this genre which offers the best opportunity to survey his music and to observe his creative development.

The purpose of this study is to examine MacCunn's choral works, and to consider what they reveal about MacCunn as a composer, as a person, and as a Scot. The opening chapter provides a brief biography of MacCunn, much of it constructed from primary sources, followed by an overview of the background to choral music in mid- to late-nineteenth-century England and Scotland. Succeeding chapters deal with MacCunn's choral works using a genre-based approach, and examine the genesis of each work, the choice of text, first performance and reception and give a detailed commentary on the techniques employed by MacCunn to illustrate and elaborate his text. The final chapter addresses the issue of MacCunn's identity as a composer within the context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Appendix 1 gives the full texts of the choral works. Appendix 2 lists all traced performances to date of MacCunn's choral works and thus offers an indication of their uptake and performance. Two versions of a selective worklist are provided in Appendix 3, the first arranged by genre, the second in a chronological listing.

Contents

	Abstract	
	Illustrations	5
	Tables	6
	Acknowledgements	8
	Abbreviations	10
	Introduction	12
Chapter 1	Hamish MacCunn: a Short Biography	18
Chapter 2	Choral Music in Nineteenth Century Britain	53
Chapter 3	The Cantatas – I	74
	<i>The Moss Rose (Version 1)</i>	76
	<i>The Changing Year</i>	76
	<i>The Moss Rose (Version 2)</i>	78
	<i>Bonny Kilmeny</i>	80
Chapter 4	The Cantatas – II	103
	<i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>	103
	<i>Queen Hynde of Caledon</i>	151
Chapter 5	Choral Ballads	179
	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	181
	<i>The Cameronian's Dream</i>	197
	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	223
Chapter 6	Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads	246
	<i>Kinmont Willie</i>	252
	<i>The Jolly Goshawk</i>	262
	<i>Lamkin</i>	279
	<i>The Death of Parcy Reed</i>	291
Chapter 7	Occasional Music	305
	<i>Psalm VIII</i>	308
	<i>Livingstone the Pilgrim</i>	317
Chapter 8	Expressions of Identity	329
	Conclusion	347

Contents (continued)

Appendix 1	Texts of Choral Works (in the order discussed)	
	<i>The Changing Year</i>	353
	<i>The Moss Rose (Version 1)</i>	354
	<i>The Moss Rose (Version 2)</i>	355
	<i>Bonny Kilmeny</i>	356
	<i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>	358
	<i>Queen Hynde of Caledon</i>	362
	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	366
	<i>The Cameronian's Dream</i>	367
	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	368
	<i>Kinmont Willie</i>	369
	<i>The Jolly Goshawk</i>	371
	<i>Lamkin</i>	373
	<i>The Death of Parcy Reed</i>	375
	<i>Psalm VIII</i>	377
	<i>Livingstone the Pilgrim</i>	378
Appendix 2	List of Performances of MacCunn's Choral Works	380
Appendix 3	Selective Work Lists	
	by genre	386
	chronological	387
	Bibliography	
	Manuscript sources	390
	Newspapers and periodicals	391
	MacCunn's published choral works	392
	Books and articles	393

Illustrations

Illustration 1	Hamish MacCunn (Source: Lebrecht Music Archive)	19
Illustration 2	Hamish MacCunn 1914 (Source: <i>Dunedin Magazine</i> 2, 1914, 64)	19
Illustration 3	Hamish MacCunn – portrait by John Pettie, 1886 (Source: Hamish MacCunn <i>Songs and Ballads of Scotland</i>)	20
Illustration 4	Hamish MacCunn – bust by D.W. Stevenson, 1889 (Courtesy of Alexander McCall Smith)	20
Illustration 5	MacCunn’s birthplace, 11 (formerly 15) Forsyth Street, Greenock (Source: <i>Daily Record</i>)	23
Illustration 6	‘Thornhill’ the MacCunn family home in Greenock (Source: the author)	23
Illustration 7	Abbey Court, MacCunn’s London home (Source: the author)	48
Illustration 8	MacCunn’s grave in Hampstead Cemetery (Courtesy of Alasdair Chisholm)	48
Illustration 9	<i>Bonny Kilmeny</i> – front cover of piano-vocal score	101
Illustration 10	<i>The Cameronian’s Dream</i> – front cover of piano-vocal score	201
Illustration 11	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i> – painting by Sir William McTaggart (Courtesy of Dr James Holloway)	225
Illustration 12	William Allingham <i>The Ballad Book</i> – title page	249
Illustration 13	Greenock Looking Towards Helensburgh (© University of Aberdeen, Henry Washington Wood Archive)	331
Illustration 14	Map of Greenock and the Firth of Clyde (Source: Wikipedia (public domain), adapted by the author)	331

Tables

1.1	Compositions by MacCunn 1881–April 1883	27
1.2.1	Opera conducting engagements by MacCunn 1894–1906	43
1.2.2	Opera conducting engagements by MacCunn 1907–1915	44
2.1	Note names used by Mainzer and Wilhem	55
2.2	Early choral societies in England	58
2.3	Early choral societies in Scotland	61
2.4	Hamish MacCunn’s choral works	69
3.1	Cantatas by Hamish MacCunn	75
3.2	Alterations to Hogg’s text made by James MacCunn	83
3.3	Schematic outline of <i>Bonny Kilmeny</i>	86
4.1	Settings of Scott’s <i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>	106
4.2	Canto Second XVII compared with MacCunn’s libretto [<i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>]	109
4.3	Canto Second XXXIV compared with MacCunn’s libretto [<i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>]	109
4.4	Comparison of MacCunn’s text with that of Scott [<i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>]	110
4.5	Overview of structure of <i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>	113
4.6	Schematic outline of Part 1 Number 7 [<i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>]	128
4.7	Comparison between the libretti of <i>The Spectre’s Bride</i> and <i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>	149
4.8	Comparison of Hogg’s lines with MacCunn’s libretto [<i>Queen Hynde of Caledon</i>]	154
5.1	MacCunn’s choral ballads	180
5.2	Settings of ‘Lord Ullin’s Daughter’	183
5.3	Tonalities of stanzas 1 and 2 [<i>Lord Ullin’s Daughter</i>]	188

Tables

(continued)

5.4	Schematic outline of Section 2 – Pastoral Scene [<i>The Cameronian's Dream</i>]	206
5.5	Schematic outline of Section 3 [<i>The Cameronian's Dream</i>]	210
5.6	Schematic outline of Section 4 – The Ascension [<i>The Cameronian's Dream</i>]	215
5.7	Settings of Longfellow's 'The Wreck of the Hesperus'	226
6.1	Manuscript sources of the <i>Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads</i>	248
6.2	Tonal framework of the <i>Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads</i>	250
6.3	Dedicatees of the <i>Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads</i>	251
6.4	Repetition of melody in <i>Kinmont Willie</i>	253
6.5	Textual repetition in verse 43 [<i>Kinmont Willie</i>]	259
6.6	Comparison of verse 1 in Allingham and MacCunn [<i>Lamkin</i>]	280
6.7	Comparison of verse 20 in Allingham and MacCunn [<i>Lamkin</i>]	280
6.8	Comparison of verses 10 and 11 in Allingham and MacCunn [<i>Lamkin</i>]	281
6.9	Scenes and structure of <i>Lamkin</i>	282
6.10	Scenes in <i>The Death of Parcy Reed</i>	291
6.11	Distribution of melody and keys in the Hunting scene [<i>The Death of Parcy Reed</i>]	295
6.12	Dialogue between Parcy Reed and the Hall brothers	297
8.1	Performances of MacCunn's choral works by country	340

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Jane Mallinson

Glasgow, March 2007

Abbreviations

Acc.	Accession
BL	British Library
Cond.	Conductor
CP	Crystal Palace
CPM	Catalogue of Printed Music in the British Library to 1980
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
FS	Full score
GRO	General Record Office, Scotland
Grove 1	<i>Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>
Grove 2	<i>Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> 2 ed.
Grove 3	<i>Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> 3 ed.
Grove 5	<i>Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> 5 ed.
GUL	Glasgow University Library
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LMS	London Missionary Society
MGG	<i>Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i>
MGG 2	<i>Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart.</i> 2 ed
MNCM	Manchester Northern College of Music
MOM	<i>The Mirror of Music 1844–1944: a Century of Musical Life in Britain as Reflected in the Pages of the Musical Times</i>
MR1	<i>The Moss Rose</i> (Version 1)
MR2	<i>The Moss Rose</i> (Version 2)
MT	<i>Musical Times</i>
Mus. Dir.	Music Director
NG	<i>New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i>
NG2	<i>New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.</i> 2ed
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NS	New Series
<i>Oxford DNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
Perf.	Performance
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew

RAM	Royal Academy of Music
RCM	Royal College of Music
<i>Riemann 12</i>	<i>Riemann Musik Lexikon</i> 12 ed.
RNCM	Royal Northern College of Music
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
SRI	Statutory Record Image

Introduction

The subject of this thesis, ‘The Choral Works of Hamish MacCunn’, was chosen for a variety of reasons, the most important being that nineteenth-century choral music as a genre and MacCunn as a composer have been largely neglected by musicologists. A second, more personal reason was the author’s life-long involvement as a performer of choral music. The fact that the MacCunn Collection is housed in the Special Collections Department of Glasgow University Library and allowed ready access to primary sources was an added bonus.

Hamish MacCunn’s reputation today depends on the concert overture *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood*, as the use of its second subject for the theme tune of the popular 1970s BBC television series *Sutherland’s Law* brought it to the attention of an unusually wide public.¹ It is not generally appreciated that the greater part of MacCunn’s oeuvre was written for voices – solo with piano accompaniment, part-songs, cantatas, choral ballads, operas – and that in his lifetime, with the exception of his opera *Jeanie Deans*, his greatest successes were his choral works. He noted in his autobiography that his earliest choral work was an oratorio started at the age of twelve.² Since MacCunn continued to write choral works throughout his life, they, as a corpus, offer the opportunity to examine his compositional technique and his aesthetic outlook from youth to maturity, and to consider the implications of his choice of his texts.

A review of the literature reveals few in-depth studies of MacCunn. He has entries in standard reference works e.g. *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians*³, the *Dictionary of National Biography*⁴ and the *Oxford DNB*.⁵ Entries in foreign reference works – *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*⁶ and *MGG 2*,⁷ *Enciclopedia*

¹ *Sutherland’s Law* ran from 1973 to 1976 and starred Iain Cuthbertson as the Procurator Fiscal of ‘Glendoran’, a small Scottish town.

² The autobiography was written in an extended letter from MacCunn to Janey Drysdale. (Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 29 Dec 1913, GUL MS Farmer 264). The text was subsequently edited by her and published as ‘Scottish Composers: Hamish MacCunn’ *Dunedin Magazine* 2, 1914, 64–78.

³ *Grove* 2 and all subsequent editions.

⁴ Claude Aveling ‘MacCunn, Hamish (James)’ *DNB 1912–1921*, 352–353.

⁵ Jan Smaczny, ‘MacCunn, Hamish’ *Oxford DNB* 2 ed. 35, 188–189.

⁶ Henry George Farmer ‘MacCunn, Hamish’ *MGG* 1960, 8, cols 1378–9.

⁷ Jane Mallinson ‘MacCunn, Hamish’ *MGG 2 Personenteil* 11, cols 696–697.

*della musica*⁸ and *Encyclopédie de la musique*⁹ show that to some extent his existence is acknowledged beyond the shores of the United Kingdom.

In his lifetime, MacCunn was the subject of a number of short articles, mainly of a factual, biographical nature, in periodicals, magazines and newspapers, the most famous being his interview with George Bernard Shaw.¹⁰ His autobiography, edited by Janey Drysdale, sister of the composer Learmont Drysdale, appeared in the *Dunedin Magazine* in 1914.¹¹ An obituary in *Musical Opinion* by Edmondstone Duncan, a contemporary at the Royal College of Music, gives the most detailed contemporary account of MacCunn as a composer and as a person, and is accompanied by a work list.¹²

Following MacCunn's death in 1916, very little of substance was written about him. A.M. Henderson's *Musical Memories* (1938) presents already available biographical details to which is added a very personal account of his dealings with MacCunn,¹³ while a mainly biographical article published in the Scottish periodical *Outlook* in 1937 laments the recent neglect of MacCunn's works.¹⁴ An increase in interest in Scottish music in the post-war period was marked by the publication of three monographs devoted to its history. Two are of the 'slim volume' variety and thus are unable to give much space to the assessment of individual composers.¹⁵ The third, Henry George Farmer's *A History of Music in Scotland* (1947), is a seminal work, in that it was the first attempt to give a comprehensive account of Scottish music from earliest days to the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ In it, several pages are devoted to MacCunn but Farmer stops short of offering his own critical assessment, relying on quotations from the press to convince the reader of MacCunn's abilities.

⁸ Claudio Sartori (ed) *Enciclopedia della musica* 4 vols. Milan: Ricordi, 1963–64, 3, 59.

⁹ François Michel (ed) *Encyclopédie de la musique* 3 vols. Paris: Fasquelle, 1958, 3, 121.

¹⁰ George Bernard Shaw 'Lions of the Season: Hamish MacCunn' *The Star* 7 May 1889 reprinted in *Shaw's Music: the Complete Musical Criticism* edited by Dan H. Laurence. 3 vols. London: Bodley Head, c1981, 1, 621–624.

¹¹ [Janey Drysdale] 'Scottish Composers: Hamish MacCunn' *Dunedin Magazine* 2: 1914, 64–78. This has been the main source of biographical material for most subsequent studies.

¹² Edmondstone Duncan 'Hamish MacCunn: 1868–1916 – an Appreciation' *Musical Opinion and Musical Trade Review* 39, 759–761.

¹³ Archibald Martin Henderson *Musical Memories* London: Grant Educational, 1938, 65–72.

¹⁴ David Mackie 'Hamish MacCunn' *Outlook* 1, 1937, 70–84.

¹⁵ Kenneth Elliott and Frederick Rimmer *A History of Scottish Music* London: BBC, 1973; Cedric Thorpe Davie *Scotland's Music* Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1980.

¹⁶ Henry George Farmer *A History of Music in Scotland* London: Hinrichsen, 1947, 519–521.

Since 1990 there has been a further revival of interest in Scottish music in general. The remit of John Purser's *Scotland's Music* (1992), based on a series of radio broadcasts, is too broad to permit coverage or analysis of topics in depth. Three columns are devoted to MacCunn but none of his choral works is mentioned.¹⁷ Stuart Scott's *Hamish MacCunn 1868–1916: a Short Biographical Sketch* (2002), a distillation of biographical details from readily accessible sources, contains several inaccuracies and does not add to existing knowledge.¹⁸ David Burkett's article is in similar vein, although it does contain some information about more recent performances of MacCunn's works.¹⁹

Recently two doctoral dissertations have addressed aspects of MacCunn's music. The first, by Jennifer Oates, is devoted to a study of the opera *Jeanie Deans* and its fusion of Scottish traditional music with that of Western European art music.²⁰ More recently Alasdair Jamieson's thesis 'The Music of Hamish MacCunn (1868–1916): a Critical Study' has been accepted by Durham University.²¹ These two researchers have also contributed scholarly articles on various aspects of MacCunn.²² With the exception of the work of Oates and Jamieson, all of the above mentioned are derived from Janey Drysdale's edited version of MacCunn's 1914 autobiography²³ and make little or no mention of his choral works.

MacCunn's most famous work, *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood*, was first recorded in 1968²⁴ and is currently available on several CDs. The proliferation of recordings of his best-known piece and the corresponding neglect of others tends to confirm the impression that he wrote nothing else of substance. Only one short extract

¹⁷ John Purser *Scotland's Music* Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1992, 222–223.

¹⁸ Stuart Scott *Hamish MacCunn 1868–1916: a Short Biographical Sketch* Sale: The Author, 2002.

¹⁹ David Burkett 'Hamish MacCunn – 1868–1916' *British Music Society News* 105, March 2005, 262–266.

²⁰ Jennifer Lynn Oates 'Opera Tradition and Scottish Nationalism: Hamish MacCunn's *Jeanie Deans* (1894)' Unpublished doctoral thesis, Florida State University School of Music, 2001.

²¹ Alasdair Jamieson 'The Music of Hamish MacCunn (1868–1916): a Critical Study' Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Durham, 2006. This thesis has not been available to the present author.

²² Alasdair Jamieson 'Hamish MacCunn as Conductor' *British Musical Theatre of the Victorian and Edwardian Eras* no. 3 Spring 2004, 23–27; 'MacCunn revisited' *British Music Society News* 106, June 2005, 337–338; Jennifer Lynn Oates 'The Making of Scottish National Opera: Hamish MacCunn's *Jeanie Deans*', *Opera Journal* 35, 2002, 3–28; 'Hamish MacCunn: a Scottish National Composer?' in Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton (eds) *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, 145–157.

²³ [Janey Drysdale] 'Scottish Composers: Hamish MacCunn' *Dunedin Magazine* 2: 1914, 64–78.

²⁴ *Music of the Four Countries* Scottish National Orchestra, conducted by Alexander Gibson. EMI ASD2400, 1968.

of a choral work, the finale of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* has been recorded,²⁵ and the lack of opportunity to listen to MacCunn's choral works in an age of instantly available music compounds the lack of awareness of this aspect of his compositional output.

Published studies of nineteenth-century choral music have tended to concentrate on countries other than Great Britain, and thus information on this genre in late nineteenth-century Britain is limited. In Parry's brief article on the cantata in the first edition of *Grove*, mention of British choral music is confined to a mere three words 'Bennett's *May Queen*'.²⁶ Early studies of English music which attempted to cover a large time-span e.g. Walker,²⁷ devote little or no space to what was considered to be an inferior genre. Other accounts, while offering greater depth, concentrate on oratorio, thus excluding all secular works.²⁸ Percy Scholes's review of a century of choral music, although entitled 'The Century of Oratorio', does give some attention to secular works and provides a useful, if superficial, overview of the topic.²⁹ More recently, Burrows's article contributes good background information on the position of choral music, in particular the Victorian mania for performances on a grand scale.³⁰ The most useful general article, spanning the period from Crotch to Delius, is that by Nigel Burton, but limitations of space do not permit the treatment of the topic in depth.³¹

The above review of the literature demonstrates the dearth of readily available publications devoted to MacCunn and the lack of in-depth analyses of English/ British choral music in the mid to late nineteenth-century.

This study begins with a brief biography of MacCunn, constructed where possible from primary sources. The biography is an essential component of the study, because MacCunn's early life and upbringing have an important bearing on his outlook as an adult and on his choice of musical and literary stimuli; and his experience as a

²⁵ Hamish MacCunn: *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood* Hyperion CDA66815, 1995. Other works included are *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow*, *The Ship o' the Fiend* and extracts from *Jeanie Deans*.

²⁶ C. Hubert H. Parry 'Cantata' in *Grove* 1, 1, 305.

²⁷ Ernest Walker *The History of English Music* Oxford, Clarendon P, 1907.

²⁸ For example, Arnold Schering *Geschichte des Oratoriums* Kleine Handbücher der Musikgeschichte nach Gattungen. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1911.

²⁹ Percy A. Scholes 'The Century of Oratorio' *MOM* 1, 65–142.

³⁰ Donald Burrows 'Victorian England: an Age of Expansion' in *The Late Romantic Era: From the Mid-19th Century to World War* edited by Jim Samson. Man and Music. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991, 266–294.

³¹ Nigel Burton 'Oratorios and Cantatas' in *Music in Britain: the Romantic Age* Athlone History of Music in Britain, 5. London: Athlone Press, 214–241.

practising conductor and musician has an evident bearing on his compositional activities. The biography is followed by an examination of the background to choral music in nineteenth-century Britain, with separate sections devoted to England and Scotland. The rise in popularity of choral singing is explained, and discussed with reference to the prevailing social attitudes of Victorian Britain. MacCunn's choral output is placed in context, and the reasons why he, like so many nineteenth-century composers, favoured this genre, are examined.

The central part of the study consists of a detailed examination of MacCunn's choral works. A genre-based approach (cantatas, choral ballads, occasional music) was chosen in preference to a chronological account, as it brings together similar works and permits easy comparison. For each work, a thorough account is provided of its commission and/ or genesis, the choice of text and librettist, location of manuscripts and source materials, first performance and reception. There is also a detailed commentary which examines the techniques used by MacCunn to illustrate and elaborate his text, and which assesses to what extent they were artistically successful. The approach adopted for each commentary is mainly analytical, but a sequential approach was chosen for the shortest works – Psalm VIII and *Livingstone the Pilgrim* – and for those works where the narrative strongly influenced the musical treatment – *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *The Cameronian's Dream*, *The Jolly Goshawk*, and *The Death of Parcy Reed*.

The final part of the study addresses the difficult question of MacCunn's identity. The influences which shaped him are discussed, as are the opinions held about him by his contemporaries and by later commentators. Consideration is given to the terms 'Scottish composer' and 'national composer', how they have been applied to MacCunn, and his position in relation to other composers associated with the label 'national' e.g. Grieg, Smetana, Dvořák, Sibelius and Elgar.

The conclusion examines how MacCunn's choral works, which span the years 1883–1914, provide a record of his compositional evolution. Techniques and influences are summarised and a final assessment of MacCunn is offered.

Three appendices complement the main body of the work. The first provides the full text of all MacCunn's choral works, giving the reader access to the libretto in its

entirety. This is particularly useful when an analytical, rather than a sequential approach has been adopted in the discussion of a work. Appendix 2 lists all traced performances of MacCunn's choral works. Compiled from exhaustive searches of electronic and paper sources, it permits the reader to trace the uptake of each work, to see how long each work remained in the repertoire and to appreciate the geographic spread of performances. Appendix 3 consists of two selective lists of MacCunn's works. The first, arranged by genre, shows at a glance the extent of MacCunn's choral writing; the second, arranged chronologically, allows the choral works to be seen in the context of MacCunn's compositional output.

MacCunn's choral works are today largely unknown. This study acknowledges their importance by offering the first detailed assessment of each, based on an examination of all relevant literary and musical materials.

Chapter 1

Hamish MacCunn: a Short Biography

On 22 March 1868 at 15 Forsyth Street,¹ Greenock in Scotland, twin sons were born to James MacCunn and his wife Barbara.² One twin, William, was to die six months later, but his brother James, who in early adulthood adopted the name ‘Hamish’ to avoid confusion with his father,³ outlived his brother by nearly 48 years and was to become one of the best-known British composers of his time.

There are few surviving primary documents which allow the reconstruction of Hamish MacCunn’s life, for he kept no diary, or if he did, it has not been traced. The principal source of information is a brief autobiography written in 1913 at the request of Janey Drysdale, sister of the composer Learmont Drysdale, for publication in the *Dunedin Magazine*.⁴ To this may be added his surviving letters held in various libraries, together with letters to him and references in the correspondence of other people. Secondary material includes articles in newspapers, and features and reviews in the music press. Information about personal dates and residences has been obtained from Parish Records, Statutory Records and Census Records, or gleaned from correspondence.

Greenock is situated on the banks of the River Clyde some 20 miles downstream from Glasgow. According to the article in the *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland* Greenock in the nineteenth century was the fifth town in Scotland. It was a thriving port and major centre for heavy engineering, shipbuilding and its associated industries such as sail and rope making. It was also Scotland’s ‘sugar capital’ with more than ten refineries.⁵ The article also points out that there was a thriving cultural life in the community, with several libraries, a philharmonic society, an agricultural society, a society for promoting Christian knowledge and two arts societies. The town had two

¹ Now number 11.

² SRI Statutory Births 564/03 0333 (James), 564/03 0334 (William).

³ A Gaelic form of ‘James’.

⁴ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 29 Dec 1913, GUL MS Farmer 264. The text was edited by Janey and published as ‘Scottish Composers: Hamish MacCunn’ *Dunedin Magazine* 2, 1914, 64–78.

⁵ Francis H. Groome (ed) *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland: a Survey of Scottish Topography, Statistical, Biographical and Historical* Edinburgh: Jack, 1883, 3, 219.



Illustration 1 – Photograph of Hamish MacCunn, date unknown



Illustration 2 – Photograph of Hamish MacCunn, 1914

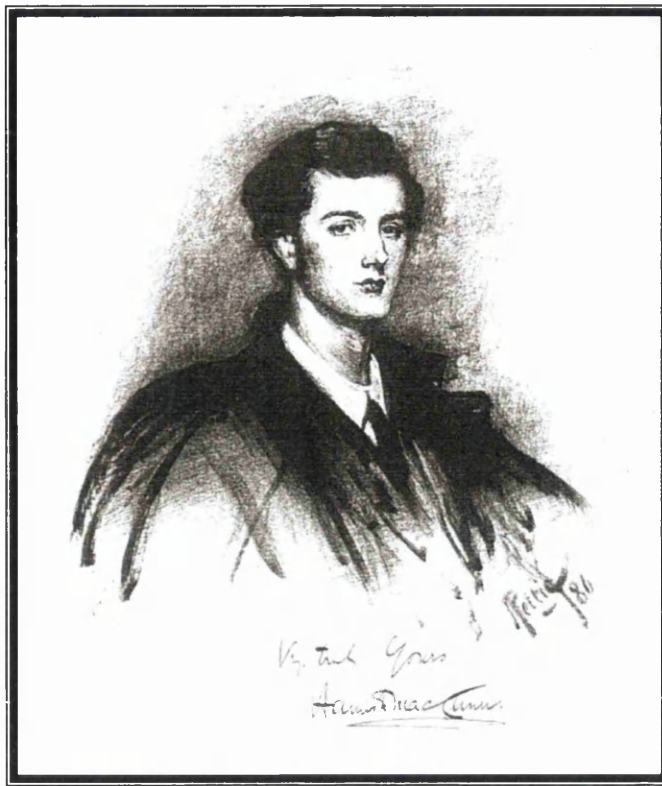


Illustration 3 – Portrait of Hamish MacCunn by John Pettie, 1886

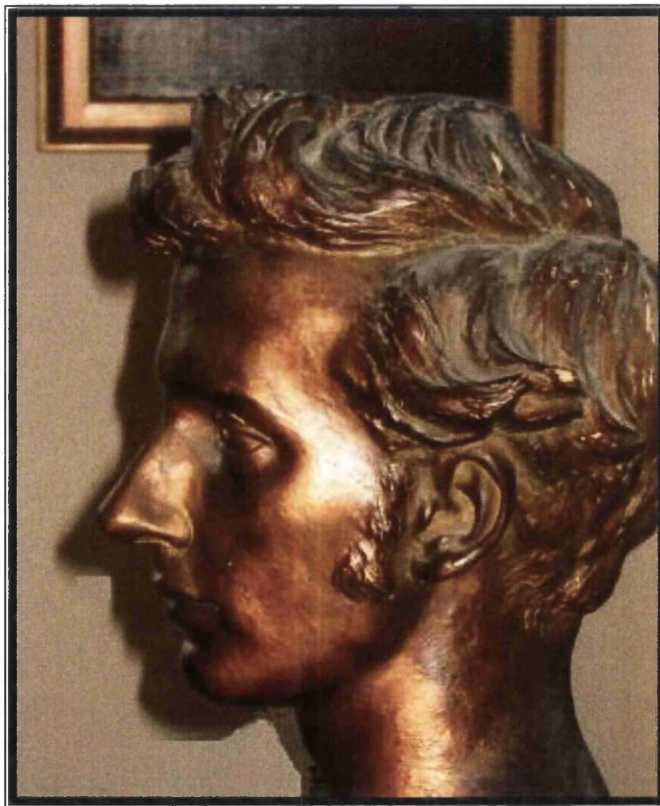


Illustration 4 – Head of Hamish MacCunn by D.W. Stevenson, 1889

newspapers, the *Greenock Advertiser* and the *Greenock Herald*, both published twice weekly.

Greenock's most famous son is the engineer James Watt (1736–1819), who improved the steam engine. Other notable Greenockians are the musicians William Wallace (1860–1949) and Allan Macbeth (1856–1910) who became first principal of the Glasgow Athenaeum School of Music in 1892, the artists Patrick Downie (1854–1945), and James Herbert McNair (1868–1965), one of the group of artists known as 'The Glasgow Four',⁶ and several minor poets including Jean Adam (1704–65), John Wilson (1720–1789), Joseph Hyslop (1798–1827) and Alan Park Paton (1818–1905), the town's librarian and nephew of the composer John Park.

It was in this flourishing commercial and cultured community that MacCunn's parents, both of whom came from well established and highly regarded Greenock families, were raised. His father James (1840–1918) and his grandfather John (1802–1873) were successful ship owners whose company was engaged in the China tea trade. The company's vessels included the *King Arthur*, the *Guinevere*, and the *Sir Lancelot*, custom-built by Robert Steele & Company of Glasgow, which held the record for the fastest passage from Foochow to the Lizard.⁷

As well as being a businessman who was knowledgeable about the design and construction of boats, James MacCunn was enthusiastic about the arts, in particular music and literature. He would almost certainly have maintained an extensive library of books and music, and have subscribed to a selection of periodicals e.g. *Scots Magazine*, *Quarterly Review*, *Spectator*, *Quiz*, *Bailie* and the *Musical Times*. He is known to have corresponded with the poet Tennyson as to whether the correct spelling was 'Lancelot' or 'Launcelot'.⁸ He provided the libretti for four of Hamish's choral works – *The Moss Rose*, *Bonny Kilmeny*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Queen Hynde of Caledon* – and wrote the lyrics for some of his songs. His creativity extended to painting, sculpting and inventing and there are two patents in his name.⁹ His youngest brother John (1846–

⁶ The better-known members were Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Margaret Macdonald and Frances Macdonald.

⁷ David R. MacGregor *Fast Sailing Ships: Their Design and Construction* Lymington: Nautical Publishing, 1973, 256, 266.

⁸ Basil Lubbock *The China Clippers* Glasgow: Brown, 1914, 215. *Sir Lancelot* was the name of one of the MacCunn Company's sailing clippers.

⁹ James MacCunn *An Improved Binding Clip, Clasp, or Holder for Periodicals, Manuscripts, Patterns and The Like*. United Kingdom patent application 358, A.D 1891; James MacCunn *A Contrivance or*

1929) had a distinguished academic career, ultimately as Professor of Philosophy at Liverpool University.

Barbara Neill, MacCunn's mother, born in 1846, was one of the six children of John Neill and Catherine Isabella Dempster. The Neill and Dempster families owned one of the many sugar refineries in Greenock and the dynastic marriage of the partners' children would have served to strengthen the business. In about 1863 John Neill junior, John and Catherine's first son, became a partner in the business which became Neill, Dempster and Neill. Barbara, who according to Hamish had been a pupil of William Sterndale Bennett, was 'an extremely able amateur pianist and she also sang charmingly. She seemed to know instinctively the more secret meanings of the beautiful in music'.¹⁰

James MacCunn and Barbara Neill were married in Greenock in 1865. They had nine children, of whom six (five sons and one daughter)¹¹ survived to adulthood. The family led a comfortable life in the town's West End, living first at 15 Forsyth Street (Illustration 5), then at 60 Esplanade. In 1873 John MacCunn died. Four years later his widow Mary moved to live with her unmarried son Andrew in Rothesay on the Isle of Bute, allowing the next generation of MacCunns, James and family, to move into the family residence 'Thornhill' (Illustration 6), a substantial stone villa at 37 Ardgowan Street. A good indication of the comfortable lifestyle in which MacCunn was raised is the fact that the 1881 Census indicates that the household was served by a staff of five (two nurses, a governess, a cook and a housemaid).¹²

Family background

Every encouragement was given to the development of MacCunn's musical talent. As he said in later life, 'I was always in the most sympathetic musical atmosphere as a child, & [...] I had an unusually advantageous beginning'.¹³

Apparatus for Facilitating the Insertion and Removal of Studs, Buttons, Sleeve Links and Other Articles Into and From Button or Other Holes in Starched Materials. United Kingdom patent application 13,263 A.D. 1901.

¹⁰ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 29 Dec 1913, GUL MS Farmer 264, 3. A possible allusion to Eduard Hanslick's *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* Vienna, 1854, first published in English in 1891. As there is no record of a Barbara Neill at the Royal Academy of Music where Sterndale Bennett was a professor, it must be assumed that she studied privately with him.

¹¹ John (1886–1909), James (Hamish), George (1873–1941), Agnes (1875–1962), Robert (1876–1938), Andrew (1881–1966).

¹² 1881 Census GRO 564-3/33/16.

¹³ GUL MS Farmer 264, 3.



Illustration 5 – MacCunn’s birthplace, 11 (formerly 15) Forsyth Street, Greenock



Illustration 6 – ‘Thornhill’, the MacCunn family home in Greenock

Letters written in the early 1890s by MacCunn's younger brother, Andrew, to his cousin Barbara Dempster in Edinburgh, reveal the extent of parental support given to the children of the MacCunn household in relation to music. In 1890, aged just nine, Andrew wrote, 'I am having an easy time of it just now. I only have to do an hours practise [sic] every morning.'¹⁴ Another letter reveals that 'Aggie and Miss Thallon took *Tannhäuser* and several duets to be bound'.¹⁵ A few years later he wrote of the Easter anthem which he [Andrew] had written for his cousin's church choir 'The copy I send you is in my own writing but Papa copied the lithographic copy, as he is a much plainer printer.'¹⁶ A week later he wrote:

Last night Papa and I went to Henschel's last concert, and I liked it very much. This is the first time I have been to one of Henschel's, and I think I like his orchestra better than Manns' as regards good playing, but I don't like him so much, as a conductor, as old Manns.¹⁷

The concert to which Andrew was referring took place in the Edinburgh Music Hall and the programme included Wagner's Prelude to *Lohengrin*, a Slavonic Dance by Dvořák, and Schumann's Fourth Symphony.¹⁸ However, what probably induced MacCunn senior to make the journey with his son from Greenock to Edinburgh was the first Edinburgh performance of Learmont Drysdale's award-winning overture *Tam o' Shanter*.¹⁹ The fact that Andrew makes no comment on the distance indicates it was not an unusual event to attend concerts outside their home area of Greenock.²⁰

Similarly, when Hamish was only eight years old, his father took him to Sydenham²¹ where they went to the Crystal Palace every day for a whole season to hear

¹⁴ Andrew MacCunn to Barbara Dempster, 21 May 1890, NLS Acc. 6792.

¹⁵ Andrew MacCunn to Barbara Dempster, 13 Apr 1890, NLS Acc. 6792. Aggie was Andrew's older sister Agnes; Miss Thallon was the family governess.

¹⁶ Andrew MacCunn to Barbara Dempster, 22 Feb 1894, NLS Acc. 6792.

¹⁷ Andrew MacCunn to Barbara Dempster, 28 Feb 1894, NLS Acc. 6792. August Manns (1825–1907), German conductor who was musical director of the Crystal Palace and did much to encourage contemporary British music.

¹⁸ 'Orchestral Concert in the Music Hall' *Scotsman* 27 Feb 1894, 5.

¹⁹ *Tam o' Shanter* was awarded first prize in the Glasgow Society of Musicians' competition of 1891 and received its first performance in Glasgow on 27 Jan 1891.

²⁰ Andrew also became a successful composer and conductor. In 1904 he emigrated to Australia where he worked for many years for J.C. Williamson's theatres as conductor, musical director and orchestral manager.

²¹ Census evidence suggests that visits to London were not unusual for the family. In 1871 James and Barbara were living (as opposed to visiting) at 10 Rothwell Street, Marylebone with their young sons John and James (Hamish) and one domestic servant. PRO RG/10/237 folio 28 page 47.

August Manns conduct the Crystal Palace Orchestra.²² Exposure to such high quality orchestral playing at such a young age can only have had a very positive effect on the young Hamish. In later life MacCunn publicly acknowledged ‘the inestimable benefit he owed to the enthusiastic support of his father’.²³ A less public acknowledgement of his mother Barbara came with the dedication on the full score of his opera *Jeanie Deans*: ‘I dedicate this work to my most dear mother’.²⁴

Education

Hamish’s general education was at Greenock Academy, the Kilblain Academy, the Avenue Park Collegiate School, and with private tutors. He says that he was an undistinguished pupil, whose only school award was a third prize for geometry.²⁵ Despite this claim, it is evident that he must have received a very good education. This is revealed in his fluent use of language in both his correspondence and public speeches, in his appreciation and knowledge of literature and in his awareness of Scottish culture.

MacCunn’s musical education began at about the age of five with piano lessons from ‘a dear old lady, Mrs Liddell’.²⁶ According to the 1871 Census, Mrs Liddell, a native of Forres in Morayshire, was a sixty-year-old widow living not far from the MacCunn household at 28 Brisbane Street, Greenock with her unmarried daughter and one domestic servant.²⁷ Her occupation is listed as ‘interest of money’, and so it would appear that her piano teaching served to supplement her investments or pension. Nothing is known about her qualification to teach but she seems to have given the young MacCunn a good grounding in piano playing, encouraging him with ‘oranges and sweeties’.²⁸ An erstwhile duet partner of MacCunn reported that by the time he was twelve he already had a good technique.²⁹ Mrs Liddell does not appear in the 1881 Greenock Census, so her association with MacCunn must have ended some time prior to this date.

²² George Bernard Shaw ‘Lions of the Season: Hamish MacCunn’ *The Star* 7 May 1889 reprinted in: George Bernard Shaw *London Music as Heard by Corno di Bassetto (Later Known as Bernard Shaw) with Some Further Autobiographical Particulars* London: Constable, 1937, 112.

²³ ‘Complimentary Supper to Messrs Manns and MacCunn’ *Scotsman* 22 Jan 1889, 6.

²⁴ Hamish MacCunn *Jeanie Deans* 1894, RCM 4763.

²⁵ GUL MS Farmer 264, 3–4.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 4.

²⁷ 1871 Census, GRO 566/03 043/03 008.

²⁸ GUL MS Farmer 264, 4.

²⁹ David Mackie ‘Hamish MacCunn’ *Outlook* 1, 1937, 80.

MacCunn studied violin with Thomas Calvert who was musical director of the Greenock Theatre Royal for many years. Born in Ireland c. 1835, he was settled in Greenock by 1871 with his wife Matilda, living at 73 Nicolson Street. Their professions are respectively listed as musician (violinist) and vocalist.³⁰ By the next Census in 1881 Calvert has risen in the world, living at the more prestigious address of 21 Ardgowan Street and styling himself as ‘Professor of Music’.³¹ His obituary mentions that he had been ‘for the last forty years a familiar figure in our midst and for many years the musical director of the Theatre Royal’. It also adds that his wife (née Miss Matilda Dunsmore) was well known throughout the country as a ‘much valued and most tasteful Scottish vocalist’.³²

The most important teacher with whom the young MacCunn studied was George Thomas Poulter. Poulter was born in London in 1837,³³ but some time before 1851 the family moved to Warwick where Poulter senior was a bookseller.³⁴ Poulter’s teachers were James William Elliott³⁵ and Henri (Hendrik) Van Den Abeelen,³⁶ both of whom would have taught him in the conventional Anglican Church music tradition. Poulter became church organist at Wasperton, near Stratford-on-Avon, in 1854. He then moved to Greenock on being appointed private organist to Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, 7th Baronet, who had built a private Episcopal chapel, St Michael and All Angels, on his Ardgowan Estate in 1855.³⁷ The 1861 Census shows him to be living at 17 East Blackhall Street with his wife Ann and his baby daughter Annie. The family subsequently moved to 18 Ardgowan Square where they were living at the time of Poulter’s death in 1901.³⁸ Poulter took an active part in the musical life of Greenock. At various times he was organist at the Mid Parish Church and St Paul’s Church and he

³⁰ 1871 Census, GRO 564/03 033/03 051.

³¹ 1881 Census, GRO 564/03 033/20.

³² ‘Death of Mr Thomas Calvert’ *Greenock Telegraph* 17 Jun 1901, 2.

³³ Parish Records of Marylebone 1680–1892, accessed 26:07:2005 via www.familysearch.org.

³⁴ 1851 Census, PRO HO/107/2072 173/3. I am grateful to Kathryn Lewis, London for this information.

³⁵ James William Elliott (1833–1915) was born in Warwick and trained as a chorister in Leamington Spa. He became an organist and choirmaster and moved to London in 1862. He assisted (Sir) Arthur Sullivan with editing church hymns and also composed hymns and nursery rhymes.

³⁶ Details about this musician are very vague. In the 1861 English Census Henri Van Den Abeelen, born in Holland c. 1827 was living in Leamington with his Scots-born wife and five-year-old son who was born in Belgium. His age is given as 34 and his profession as ‘Professor of Music’. He reappears in the 1891 Census as ‘Hendrik J.K. Abeelen’ living with his wife in Southampton. Twelve compositions by him are listed in *CPM*.

³⁷ *Baptie Musical Scotland Past and Present: Being a Dictionary of Scottish Musicians From About 1400 Till the Present Time* Paisley: Parlane, 1894, 150. Baptie incorrectly gives Poulter’s year of birth as 1838. He also mis-spells Wasperton as ‘Warperton’. The *Specification of Work Relative to Plans of Chapel at Ardgowan*, Mitchell Library, Glasgow T-ARD/1/6/623, required the work to be completed by 1855.

³⁸ 1861 Census GRO 564/03 039/03 016; 1881 Census GRO 564/3 027; 1901 Census GRO 564/02 028/02 007.

also held the post of town organist.³⁹ He was director of the Greenock Choral Society from 1864 to 1870⁴⁰ and he also conducted his own Select Choir. One of its performances is reported in the *Musical Times*.⁴¹ The British Library holds four works by Poulter – a cantata *The Bridge of Duty* published in Greenock c. 1865 and three piano pieces published in London dating from 1871.

With Poulter, MacCunn studied piano, organ, harmony and composition. The earliest of MacCunn's surviving manuscripts in Special Collections in Glasgow University Library dates from 1881⁴² and so is it likely that it was at about this date that MacCunn embarked on more serious musical study with Poulter in preparation for a possible career in music.⁴³

Table 1.1 below shows that MacCunn's output greatly increased in the early months of 1883, the year in which he auditioned for the newly founded Royal College of Music (RCM) in London.⁴⁴ The compositions are mainly settings of songs with piano accompaniment, but there is also a fantasia overture, six minuets for piano, theme and variations for piano, an attempt at a cantata, *The Moss Rose*,⁴⁵ and a setting of Psalm 100 for chorus, quartet and tenor solo with organ accompaniment.⁴⁶

Year	Extant compositions
1881	3
1882	4
1883 (up to 20 April)	7

Table 1.1 – Compositions by MacCunn 1881–April 1883

Royal College of Music

Natural talent combined with good teaching brought success to MacCunn, when at the age of fourteen, he was one of the six successful applicants awarded an Open

³⁹ Baptie *Musical Scotland*, 150.

⁴⁰ Robert A. Marr *Music for the People: a Retrospect of the Glasgow International Exhibition, 1888 With an Account of the Rise of Choral Societies in Scotland* Edinburgh: J. Menzies, 1889, 22.

⁴¹ 'Greenock' *MT* 20, 330, 1879.

⁴² When MacCunn's manuscripts were donated to GUL, his widow instructed Charles O'Brien, his former pupil, to destroy any early works which showed MacCunn in a poor light. Charles O'Brien to Henry George Farmer, 8 Oct 1950, GUL MS Farmer 217/42.

⁴³ By 1881 Mrs Liddell, MacCunn's first piano teacher, was no longer living in Greenock.

⁴⁴ MacCunn's second audition for the RCM took place in London on 20 April 1883.

⁴⁵ Later to be totally reworked at the RCM.

⁴⁶ MacCunn later wrote on the MS 'a wretched attempt'.

Scholarship to the College to study composition.⁴⁷ This was a considerable achievement. Of the 1581 applicants who were auditioned, 480 were selected for a second audition in London in front of the Director and Board of Professors in April 1883.⁴⁸ From these, fifty were awarded Open Scholarships and a further forty-four were offered places. MacCunn entered the college on 7 May 1883,⁴⁹ the day of its official opening by the Prince of Wales.

College records⁵⁰ show that MacCunn's principal study was composition with Hubert Parry⁵¹ and second subjects were piano with Mr Cliffe⁵² and viola with Mr Gibson.⁵³ He also undertook classes in harmony and counterpoint (Dr Bridge),⁵⁴ ensemble class and orchestral practice (Mr Holmes)⁵⁵ and choral practice (Mr Faning).⁵⁶ In his autobiography MacCunn also mentions as teachers Sir Charles Stanford (composition),⁵⁷ Franklin Taylor⁵⁸ for piano (rather than Mr Cliffe) and Mr W.B. Wotton (bassoon).⁵⁹ Reports on his progress show that he was a very talented student: 'Very good progress. Very quick and attentive' (viola); 'Quality good, quantity somewhat small' (counterpoint). The remarks of Parry, his composition teacher, show that perhaps the pupil and master did not always see eye to eye. 'Has great abilities & intelligence, but does not bring them to bear readily' and 'Must set his face to control and direct his energies'.⁶⁰ Fellow students also admired MacCunn's natural talent. Edmondstone Duncan, who was his contemporary at the RCM and later became a music critic and writer, described him as:

A young Orpheus, drawing after him all who loved music. [...] His gifts alone fascinated those who came into contact with him. He was a good pianist at fourteen. Professor Franklin Taylor

⁴⁷ 'Royal College of Music' *Monthly Musical Record* 8, 1883, 108. MacCunn was one of only two Scots to win a scholarship, the other being a flautist, Hubert J. Lambach of Edinburgh.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Stanford gives a lively account of the audition process in his autobiography (Charles Villiers Stanford *Pages from an Unwritten Diary* London: Arnold, 1914, 217–218).

⁴⁹ RCM Scholars' Register 1.

⁵⁰ RCM Scholars' Register 1.

⁵¹ (Sir) (Charles) Hubert (Hastings) Parry (1848–1918), composer, scholar and teacher. Taught composition at the RCM, and from 1884 till his death was Director of the College.

⁵² Frederic Cliffe (1857–1931), professor of Piano at the RCM from 1884 to 1931.

⁵³ Possibly George Alfred Gibson (1849–1924).

⁵⁴ Sir (John) Frederick Bridge (1844–1924), organist, composer and writer, taught at RCM from 1883 to 1923.

⁵⁵ Henry Holmes (1839–1905), professor at the RCM from 1883 to 1893.

⁵⁶ Eaton Faning (1850–1927), teacher, choral conductor and composer who taught the choral class at the RCM from 1883 to 1887.

⁵⁷ Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924), composer and teacher at the RCM from 1883 till his death.

⁵⁸ Franklin Taylor (1843–1919), pianist, professor of piano at the RCM from 1883 to 1915.

⁵⁹ William B. Wotton (1832–1912), bassoonist, taught at the RCM from 1883 to 1905.

⁶⁰ RCM Scholars' Reports.

would have liked to train him as a soloist. He could handle both the violin and viola well enough to take part in orchestral and quartet playing. He could extemporise a pianoforte sonata when most boys would have been mystified by the term. He has a true sense of absolute pitch and knew every sound in the orchestra. All such things MacCunn could do, and he did them so modestly and so naturally that you felt flattered if you caught him in the act.⁶¹

In studying with Parry and Stanford, MacCunn had the opportunity to learn from two technically accomplished composers who were progressive in outlook and who were still actively engaged in composition. Hubert Parry (1848–1918) had enjoyed a privileged upbringing. His musical education had started at an early age, continued at Eton under George Elvey,⁶² and at Oxford. He also studied composition for a short time with Henry Hugo Pierson in Stuttgart.⁶³ Parry greatly admired Brahms as he ‘epitomized Parry’s ideal of all that was artistically sincere, single-minded, and intellectually honest. Perhaps most important of all, his music was full of individual character and conviction.’⁶⁴ He had held ambitions to study with Brahms but when this proved to be impossible, he became a pupil of Edward Dannreuther who introduced him to the music of Berlioz, Liszt, Tchaikovsky and Wagner.⁶⁵

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) was born in Dublin. Like Parry, his musical education began when he was very young. His Dublin teachers included Michael Quarry who gave him lasting respect for the music of Bach, Schumann and Brahms. As a law student at Cambridge University Stanford was actively involved in the musical life of the university. After graduating he was appointed to the post of organist at Trinity College, Cambridge. Under the terms of his appointment, Stanford was given leave to be absent for the Michaelmas Term for three consecutive years to further his musical studies abroad, and thus he was able to study composition with Carl Reinecke in Leipzig and with Friedrich Kiel in Berlin.⁶⁶

MacCunn, with his interest in Scottish folk music and heritage, would have perhaps found more of a kindred spirit in Stanford whose ‘heritage of Irish folklore, folk

⁶¹ Edmondstoune Duncan ‘Hamish MacCunn: 1868–1916’ *Musical Opinion & Musical Trade Review* 39, 1916, 759.

⁶² George Elvey (1816–1893), organist at St George’s Chapel, Windsor from 1835 to 1882.

⁶³ Henry Hugo Pierson (Pearson) (1815–1873), English-born composer who spent much of his life in Germany.

⁶⁴ Jeremy Dibble *C. Hubert H. Parry: His Life and Music* Oxford: Clarendon P., 1998, 345.

⁶⁵ Dibble, *C. Hubert H. Parry*, 107.

⁶⁶ Jeremy Dibble *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002, chapters 1 and 3.

music and mysticism was latent beneath the training and education he gained abroad; it saved him from that insularity of outlook which had pervaded English music since Handel's time.'⁶⁷ There is a similarity in the folk-inspired compositions of Stanford and MacCunn. Stanford's Irish-inspired works span the years 1887 to 1923; MacCunn's Scottish-inspired works span a similar range, 1885 to 1913. Stanford's earliest, Symphony no. 3 *Irish*, was first performed in London in May 1887, only six months before the first performance of MacCunn's concert overture *Land of the Mountain and the Flood*.

Within a few months of his enrolment at the RCM, MacCunn took part in a class in front of royalty. The *Musical World* reported:

His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh visited the college last Saturday afternoon [Sat 1 Dec] during the weekly *ensemble* class, and listened to a part of a Quartet in D by Haydn, and of Mozart in E flat. The class was conducted by Mr Henry Holmes, professor of the violin, and the following students performed:- Sutcliffe, Bent, McCunn [sic], Squire, Miss Holiday, Dolmetsch, Kreuz and Werge.⁶⁸

MacCunn was a frequent participant in student concerts – between 16 July 1884 and 27 May 1886 he appeared eleven times playing the viola in chamber music, accompanying singers and instrumentalists and performing a piano duet with Marmaduke Barton.⁶⁹ It was at student concerts that four of his songs and the cantata *The Moss Rose* had their first performances.⁷⁰ While still a student, MacCunn achieved his first public success on 27 October 1885 when his overture *Cior Mhor*⁷¹ (now lost) was performed at the Crystal Palace under the direction of Sir August Manns, an active supporter of British composers. MacCunn would write to him at a later date: 'I shall ever feel that you have been my strongest supporter.'⁷² *Cir Mhór* is a mountain on the Isle of Arran and its use as a title gives an early indication of how MacCunn was inspired by Scottish

⁶⁷ Frederick Hudson 'Stanford, Charles Villiers' in *NG* 18, 71.

⁶⁸ 'Royal College of Music' *Musical World* 61, 1883, 767.

⁶⁹ Marmaduke Barton (1865–1938), student and then piano professor at the RCM. He and MacCunn became life-long friends.

⁷⁰ Alasdair Jamieson 'MacCunn Revisited' *British Music Society News* 106, 2005, 337.

⁷¹ 'Cior Mhor', present day spelling 'Cir Mhór'. (*Island of Arran* Sheet 69 1:50,000 First Series, Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 1976. Grid Reference 973432). It is tempting to surmise that the *Fantasia Overture* in E Minor for piano, dated 'Brodict Sep 1883' (GUL MS MacCunn 24) may be an early draft of *Cior Mhor*.

⁷² Hamish MacCunn to August Manns undated [?1887], Moldenhauer Archive MA 115, Northwestern University Music Library.

landscapes. As the MacCunn family spent summer holidays on Arran,⁷³ the mountain would have been a familiar sight to him.

After May 1886, MacCunn took part in no further student performances and his deteriorating attendance record hints at his growing alienation from the College. Whereas in his first academic year, 1883–4, he was absent six times, once without leave, in his second year he was absent 16 times and only once with permission.⁷⁴ On 5 April 1887, disenchanted with the College, its prejudices and internal social structure, he took the decision to resign his scholarship and decline his Associateship. In an intemperate letter to the principal Hubert Parry, he wrote:

It was not with the examination that I found fault. But I have always felt, while at the College, what was to me an entirely foreign sensation, namely that while meeting the various men there in their several capacities, I had not met one man, bar yourself, who had acted to me, [...] with the remotest vestige of a supposition that *possibly* I might *be* a gentleman.

[...] The 'last straw' seemed to me to be arrived at when they offered me *their* associateship, *their* patronage, *their* God-forsaken passport to society under conditions which appeared to me only consistent with their former demeanour and uncouth behaviour. Hence my reasons for declining the degree were simply that musically I did not esteem it, and socially I thought of it and those who conferred it with infinite and undiluted disgust. Remember I am always particularly speaking of the College *without your* personality.⁷⁵

MacCunn's resignation from the RCM and his letter to Parry give a vivid insight into a particular aspect of MacCunn's personality – his extreme forthrightness, which at times verged on arrogance.

After the Royal College of Music

Having left the RCM, MacCunn embarked on a career as a composer. The next few years were, in terms of composition, the best of his life. 1887 saw the first performance of the work by which he is still remembered, the concert overture *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood*. Performed by the Crystal Palace Orchestra under the direction of August Manns, it was an immediate success. It was widely played during MacCunn's lifetime with performances in Britain and in what were then colonies. It has never completely left the repertoire – it continued to be played after his death and there were radio broadcasts of it as early as 1924.⁷⁶ In 1968 it was recorded

⁷³ GUL MS Farmer 264, 3.

⁷⁴ RCM Scholars' Reports.

⁷⁵ Hamish MacCunn to Hubert Parry, 11 Jul 1887, quoted in Dibble *C. Hubert H. Parry*, 261–2.

⁷⁶ 'Broadcasting' *Times* 26 Aug 1924, 8.

by the then Scottish National Orchestra under Sir Alexander Gibson⁷⁷ and since then has been continuously available on several recordings.

1888 was MacCunn's *annus mirabilis*. Five of his works were performed for the first time: the choral works *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, *Bonny Kilmeny*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and the orchestral ballads *The Ship o' the Fiend* and *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow*. All, except *The Ship o' the Fiend* which was conducted by Henschel at the Queen's Hall, had their first public performance at Crystal Palace under the direction of August Manns.

The first ever performance of *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow* took place at a private concert at 'The Lothians', the London home of the Scottish artist John Pettie RA,⁷⁸ who had become acquainted with the MacCunn family in about 1884 while on holiday on Arran.⁷⁹ Pettie 'was devoted to music, though he was never a musician. [...] It was the colour of music, its richness and emotion that haunted him.'⁸⁰ Pettie 'was keenly interested in his [MacCunn's] early success as a composer', and attended a concert in Birmingham in 1883 at which MacCunn's music was performed.⁸¹ On 4 June 1889, MacCunn married Alison, Pettie's only daughter. By 1891 they were living at 21 Albion Road, Hampstead, with their son Fergus (born 19 April 1890) and two household servants. Hamish's younger brother George, occupation 'shipbroker's clerk', was also living there.⁸² MacCunn, with all the confidence of his twenty-three years, gave as his occupation 'composer of music'.

MacCunn introduced his father-in-law to a wide circle of musicians some of whom including the conductor August Manns, the Scottish baritone Andrew Black (who performed several of MacCunn's works), Benoit Hollander,⁸³ George Marshall-

⁷⁷ *Music of the Four Countries* Scottish National Orchestra, conductor Alexander Gibson. EMI ASD 2400, 1968.

⁷⁸ "'The Lothians" Orchestral Concerts' *MT* 29, 1888, 420.

⁷⁹ *GUL MS Farmer* 264, 13.

⁸⁰ Martin Hardie *John Pettie R.A., H.R.S.A.* London: Black, 1908, 198–9.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 198–200. In the light of this statement, it is possible that MacCunn first met the Pettie family in 1883. They were certainly acquainted by 1886 when Pettie did a portrait of MacCunn (Illustration 3). It seems very unlikely that Pettie would have attended such a concert without knowing MacCunn. The concert has not been traced.

⁸² 1891 Census, PRO RG12/110 75/7.

⁸³ Benno Hollander (1853–1942), violinist and leader of the orchestra for Henschel's London Symphony Concerts.

Hall⁸⁴ and Edmonstoune Duncan sat for him.⁸⁵ Pettie produced two portraits of MacCunn. The first, executed in 1886, was exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy in 1889 (Illustration 3); the second (1892) is inscribed on the back 'Portrait of Hamish MacCunn: an hour's sketch'.⁸⁶ MacCunn also served as a model for several of Pettie's paintings including 'Challenged' and 'The Violinist'. His most famous representation of MacCunn is 'Two Strings to Her Bow', which now hangs in Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow. The painting shows a young woman walking in a country lane arm-in-arm with two young men. The dandy on the left is modelled on Hamish MacCunn, the country lad on the right is a likeness of Alec Watt.⁸⁷ The young lady is modelled on Miss Margaret Thallon who was a governess of the MacCunn household in Greenock. This is confirmed by correspondence held by Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries⁸⁸ and also by a letter from Andrew MacCunn, Hamish's brother, to his cousin Barbara in which he says: 'Miss Thallon is going away tomorrow. Who will play my duets with me I wonder?'⁸⁹ MacCunn and Miss Thallon were also models for Pettie's painting 'A Storm in a Teacup' set in the same country lane.

An indication of MacCunn's success and popularity is the number of invitations he received to address clubs and societies. He was the guest of honour in January 1889 of both the Edinburgh Pen and Pencil Club and the Edinburgh Society of Musicians.⁹⁰ The following year MacCunn and his father-in-law John Pettie were guests of the Cap and Gown Club in Edinburgh.⁹¹ In 1897 the Scottish Society of Literature invited MacCunn to give a lecture in Glasgow on 'Scottish Music Past and Present'.⁹² In each of these addresses and talks, MacCunn gave vent to his preoccupation with the need to establish a Scottish school of music, an idea which in later life was to become an all-consuming passion.⁹³ In 1898 he was scheduled to be the opening speaker at the

⁸⁴ George Marshall Hall (1862–1915) was a life-long friend of MacCunn. He studied at the RCM and later became first professor of music at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

⁸⁵ Hardie, *John Pettie* 154.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 248, 256.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 145. John Edward Marshall Hall, brother of George Marshall Hall, claims that the taller gentleman is his brother who studied at the RCM at the same time as MacCunn. ('Memoir of Professor G.W.L. Marshall Hall Given by His Brother John Edward Marshall Hall' University of Melbourne Archives M-HH Group 1, No1/1/2).

⁸⁸ Margaret Thallon to Mr Honeyman, 8 Aug 1945; George Buchanan to un-named correspondent, 23 November 1971, Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1/1/63.

⁸⁹ Andrew MacCunn to Barbara Dempster, 13 Apr 1890, NLS Acc. 6792.

⁹⁰ 'Edinburgh Pen and Pencil Club' *Scotsman* 16 Jan 1889, 6; 'Complimentary Supper to Messrs Manns and MacCunn' *Scotsman* 22 Jan 1889, 6.

⁹¹ 'The Cap and Gown Club' *Scotsman* 27 Jan 1890, 8.

⁹² 'Mr Hamish MacCunn on Scottish Music' *Scotsman* 15 Jan 1897, 6.

⁹³ See for example his correspondence with Janey Drysdale, GUL MS Farmer 263.

National Convention of Music Teachers in Edinburgh on 15 September but in a total lapse of manners he sent a telegram one hour before the start of the meeting regretting that rehearsals with the Carl Rosa Opera Company in Liverpool prevented his attendance.⁹⁴ Other indications of MacCunn's celebrity are the fact that his head, sculpted by D.W. Stevenson, was displayed at the Royal Scottish Academy's exhibition of 1891⁹⁵ (Illustration 4) and that a photo of his son Fergus appeared in the *Windsor Magazine* under the rubric 'Children of Notable People'.⁹⁶ A rather more amusing indicator of MacCunn's popularity is the fact that a prize-winning horse (a Lord Erskine colt) was named 'Hamish MacCunn'.⁹⁷

In the 1890s MacCunn continued to compose pieces inspired by Scottish themes. Two choral works *The Cameronian's Dream* (1890) and *Queen Hynde of Caledon* (1892) were produced, but thereafter MacCunn was to turn his attention to opera. This is not totally unexpected as two of his choral works, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Queen Hynde of Caledon* were styled 'dramatic cantata' and in places include stage directions.

In 1889 MacCunn received a commission from Carl Rosa⁹⁸ to write an opera for his company. Various librettists and topics were tried before Joseph Bennett⁹⁹ completed a libretto which was acceptable to MacCunn. This was *Jeanie Deans*, based on Sir Walter Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*. MacCunn conducted the first performance in Edinburgh on 15 November 1894.¹⁰⁰ It was an immediate success and a milestone for British music in that it was the first opera by a Scottish composer based on a Scottish topic, in which Scottish folk music was seamlessly integrated into mainstream Western European art music.

A year after the premiere of *Jeanie Deans*, the Marquis of Lorne (later Ninth Duke of Argyll)¹⁰¹ approached MacCunn to suggest an opera *Diarmid* based on the

⁹⁴ 'National Convention of Music Teachers' *Scotsman* 16 Sep 1898, 7.

⁹⁵ 'The Royal Scottish Academy' *Times* 16 Feb 1889, 6.

⁹⁶ 'Children of Notable People' *Windsor Magazine* 1, 1895, 29.

⁹⁷ 'The Highland and Agricultural Society's Show' *Scotsman* 27 Jul 1892, 7.

⁹⁸ Carl Rosa (1842–1889), German impresario and conductor who founded his opera company in 1875.

⁹⁹ Joseph Bennett (1831–1911), writer and music critic.

¹⁰⁰ GUL MS Farmer 264, 5–6.

¹⁰¹ John Douglas Sutherland Campbell (1845–1914), later Ninth Duke of Argyll, was a proponent of the Celtic Renaissance.

Celtic legend of Diarmid and Grania.¹⁰² Information about the collaboration is sketchy as access to the Argyll family archive at Inveraray Castle has been denied.¹⁰³ It cannot have been an easy collaboration, for writing to Janey Drysdale some years after the event, MacCunn was quite dismissive of the Duke.

Of course there are already many societies, both in Scotland & in Ireland, with very similar objects to those you describe. But these never seem to get much further than an enthusiasm of the all too familiar “Scots wha hae” & “Faugh-a-ballagh” order.

Or else they incline in the other direction of a rather useless and irrelevant insistence (after the manner of the Duke of Argyll) on “snippets” of legendary particulars as to fairies, fairy beads, rowan trees & “bogles” & “such-like”, common to all nations whose commerce with Scotland & Ireland has fired the Celtic imagination.¹⁰⁴

Diarmid was first performed on 23 October 1897 at Covent Garden, conducted by MacCunn, and in 1898 selections from the opera were performed for Queen Victoria at Balmoral Castle by a trio of the original cast members, Madame Kirkby Lunn, Cécile Lorraine and Philip Brozel accompanied by MacCunn.¹⁰⁵ A second collaboration on *The Breast of Light*, a sequel to *Diarmid*, was never completed.¹⁰⁶ The Duke continued to pursue his operatic ambitions and later wrote the libretto for Learmont Drysdale’s Celtic opera *Fionn and Tera* (1908–9).¹⁰⁷

By the 1890s MacCunn’s activities begin to fall into three separate strands – teaching, conducting and composing.

Teaching

MacCunn was appointed Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music in November 1888. Learmont Drysdale, who was then a student there, wrote to his sister Janey:

¹⁰² For details, see for example ‘Diarmid Ua Duibne’ in: James MacKillop *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998, 123–4.

¹⁰³ A. Montgomery, Factor, Argyll Estates to Jane Mallinson, 4 March 2004.

¹⁰⁴ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 6 Aug 1911, GUL MS Farmer 263/01.

¹⁰⁵ GUL MS Farmer 264, 7.

¹⁰⁶ MacCunn’s sketches are held in Special Collections, GUL MS MacCunn 17.

¹⁰⁷ For a detailed account of *Fionn and Tera* see Moira Ann Harris ‘The Life and Work of (George John) Learmont Drysdale 1866–1909’ Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 2006, 398–430.

Lamb¹⁰⁸ was with me and afterwards came out here and spent the evening with me. He was at Hamish MacCunn's on Wednesday night having tea with him and [MacCunn] 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 anything about the professorship at the R.A.M. until last Saturday he had a letter from MacKenzie saying that the committee had appointed him and asking if he would accept it. Fancy his being a professor at the Academy at the age of 20.¹⁰⁹

MacCunn resigned from this appointment in 1893 after a disagreement with the college principal Alexander Campbell Mackenzie. College minutes reveal that after MacCunn had had to cancel a composition class at very short notice, Mackenzie suggested that MacCunn should relieve himself of:

an engagement which is not likely to work satisfactorily or agreeably to either side. I take this step with great reluctance; but as I have said above the requirements of a public Institution like this are inexorable, and leave me no alternative.¹¹⁰

MacCunn's reply to Mackenzie explained that his absence was caused by illness. He reminded Mackenzie that he had been given to believe that there would be no work available for him that particular term and he had therefore been unprepared for Mackenzie's unexpected offer of teaching. He continued in his distinctive style:

Accept my assurance that, if you and the Committee of the Royal Academy of Music consider these grounds sufficient to form the basis of a formal request for my resignation, no-one could be in greater haste than I to sever even the very smallest connection with an institution which estimates so cheaply and treats so inconsiderately, not to say discourteously, those artists who receive honour, and give honour, by being enrolled on its professorial list.¹¹¹

This exchange illustrates the precarious nature of teaching for the younger teachers at the RAM. They were paid only on an hourly basis and it would appear from a remark by MacCunn in the first letter of the exchange that the usual rate for teaching composition classes was five shillings per hour.¹¹² Once again MacCunn had demonstrated a forthright approach in dealing with authority, and having already

¹⁰⁸ Lindsay Lamb (1868–1930), native of Greenock and student at the RAM. His family lived near the MacCunns (and in the same tenement as the Poulter family). It is almost certain that MacCunn and Lamb would have known each other prior to going to London.

¹⁰⁹ Learmont Drysdale to Janey Drysdale, 12 Nov 1888, GUL Cb.10- x.16/10.

¹¹⁰ A.C. Mackenzie to Hamish MacCunn, 16 Nov 1893. Copy in RAM Minute Book, 1893, 82.

¹¹¹ Hamish MacCunn to A.C. Mackenzie, 22 Nov 1893. Copy in RAM Minute Book, 1893, 83.

¹¹² Hamish MacCunn to A.C. Mackenzie, 11 May 1893. Copy in RAM Minute Book, 1893, 81.

alienated Parry the Principal of the RCM, he now added Mackenzie, the RAM's Principal, to the list of those he had offended.

MacCunn was particularly attracted to academic teaching. With its regular salary, it would have afforded a degree of financial stability denied to most musicians, relying as they did on irregular income from published compositions, conducting and teaching. Even before he had left the RAM, he had made two attempts to gain employment in this field. The first was an indirect approach made with all the confidence and self-assurance of youth in a letter to Professor John Stuart Blackie¹¹³ whose poem 'The Emigrant's Farewell' MacCunn had previously set. MacCunn was not hesitant about promoting himself. He wrote:

Dear Professor Blackie

What is going to be done about this chair of music in Edinburgh University?

I hear that Mackenzie (who is an Edinburgh man & would have been the "right man in the right place") has decided to leave it alone.

Why then is it not offered to me?

Perhaps some of those who have to do with it are afraid that I would teach them those "nasty, vulgar Scotch [sic] songs".

So I would – rather! I hear that there are a lot of Englishmen wanting to come over the border to get the "job".

"Old harp of the Highlands, how long hast thou slumbered

"In cave of the corrie, ungarnished, unstrung!"

Are we to have an English la-di-da "kyaw-kyawing like a crow", & teaching music to a nation whose glory is it's[sic] rich inheritance of song! Seriously – "hooly & fairly" – can you advise me what to think or do in the matter?

I have not thought of applying for the post myself, but rather than see an English musician – especially one of the modern breed – filling it, I would wish it myself.

Please regard this as private & confidential &, if you have time, favour me with reply.¹¹⁴

It is left to the imagination how the professor would have replied to such a letter. In the words of an old Scots saying, MacCunn was 'not backward about coming forward' and seemed to have to no conception of how his approach would have appeared to a highly respected academic. In the event MacCunn, perhaps on the advice of Professor Blackie, did not apply and the chair was given to Frederick Niecks.¹¹⁵ We

¹¹³ John Stuart Blackie (1809–1895), Scottish scholar who was a keen advocate of Scottish nationalism and the Celtic revival; Professor of Greek at Edinburgh 1852–1882.

¹¹⁴ Hamish MacCunn to John Blackie, 13 Nov 1890, NLS 2638 f.170.

¹¹⁵ Friedrich Niecks (1845–1924), Reid Professor of Music at Edinburgh University 1891–1914.

do not know MacCunn's thoughts on the appointment of a German, but his reaction to the appointment of a German to the post of chorus-master of the Edinburgh Choral Union probably offers a good indication.

I had not heard anything about the Choral Union chorus-mastership appointment; but from your letter I gather that a "wee German lairdie" – or rather "bardie" – has been engaged.¹¹⁶ He may be a Beethoven on tin wheels for all I can guess, – but it seems strange that a foreigner should be concerned with training a chorus in respect of clear diction in the English language.¹¹⁷

In 1893 Sir Charles Hallé founded the Manchester College of Music and MacCunn was quick to try his luck in this direction. He wrote to Sir Charles in an attempt to obtain a post, and a letter to Mr Stanley Withers, the College secretary, expressed concern at not having received a reply.

I wired Sir Charles the other day, & I have this afternoon written to him again, expressing my willingness to enter heartily into the new scheme and assuring him of the great interest I feel in the whole concern.¹¹⁸

This letter was followed up five days later by a telegram acknowledging a reply from Withers:

Thanks for kind letter. If obstacle you speak of refers to any present uncertainty about future terms and conditions I am quite willing to meet you half way in the matter pending further arrangements.¹¹⁹

In spite of (or perhaps on account of his persistence) MacCunn was not successful and the appointment for harmony, composition and history of music was given to Dr Henry Hiles assisted by R.H. Wilson and Walter Carroll.¹²⁰

MacCunn taught privately throughout his professional life. As his most distinguished pupils he cited Liza Lehmann and the late Mrs Frank Lawson (widow of

¹¹⁶ Gottlieb Feuerberg of Perth. His tenure was short-lived. Despite the fact that he had lived in Scotland for 18 years and had married a Scot, he was interned as an enemy alien at the outbreak of the First World War.

¹¹⁷ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 1 Jul 1913, GUL MS Farmer 263/08.

¹¹⁸ Hamish MacCunn to Stanley Withers, 26 Feb 1893, Royal Northern College of Music RMCM /A/1/7 ff. 21-22.

¹¹⁹ Hamish MacCunn to Stanley Withers, 3 Mar 1893, RNCM RMCM /A/1/7 ff. 23-24.

¹²⁰ Henry Hiles (1826-1904), organist and lecturer, professor at the Manchester College of Music from 1893-1904.

Sir Julius Benedict).¹²¹ Liza Lehmann was a singer who, after her marriage in 1894, devoted herself to composition.¹²² Surprisingly, in her autobiography written after MacCunn's death, she does not mention him as a teacher, but she does acknowledge him in her entry in *Who's Who*.¹²³ Her compositions are for the most part for voices and include the popular song cycle *In a Persian Garden* (1896), a setting of verses from Fitzgerald's translation of the *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyām*. She also wrote several works for the stage, including the opera *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1906) for which MacCunn was the musical director. After the first performance in Manchester, the production transferred to the Prince of Wales Theatre, London for a short run.¹²⁴

Little is known about the late Mrs Frank Lawson.¹²⁵ She was born Mary Comber Fortey in Bellary, Madras Presidency, India¹²⁶ c.1858 and in 1877 entered the RAM to study piano on the recommendation of Dr John Stainer.¹²⁷ In 1886 she became the second wife of Sir Julius Benedict¹²⁸ who was 50 years her senior. Shortly after his death she married Frank Lawson, a man of considerable means.¹²⁹ The *CPM* lists five songs written by her in the early 1880s and a piano primer *How to Play the Pianoforte*, written jointly with Arabella Goddard and others. The only other work listed, a piece for piano *Silhouette* (1908), probably dates from the time when she was MacCunn's pupil. She died in 1911.

Another of MacCunn's pupils was Charles O'Brien.¹³⁰ Writing to Henry George Farmer,¹³¹ O'Brien outlined his life in the following terms:

Charles H. F. O'Brien: born 6 September 1882, Eastbourne, Sussex. (This may seem rather surprising in the case of a Scottish musician, but my parents were domiciled in Edinburgh prior to this and my father had accepted a summer engagement in the Devonshire Park Orchestra, taking my mother with him). Six weeks later they returned to Edinburgh where I have remained ever since. I was educated at George Watson's College Edinburgh and studied composition under the

¹²¹ GUL MS Farmer 264, 12.

¹²² Liza Lehmann (1862–1918), whose husband was Herbert Bedford, a painter and composer.

¹²³ Liza Lehmann *The Life of Liza Lehmann* London: Fisher Unwin, 1919; *Who Was Who: a Companion to Who's Who 1916–1928* vol.2 London: A. & C. Black, 618.

¹²⁴ Kurt Gänzl *The British Musical Theatre, Vol. 1 1865–1914* London: Macmillan, 1986, 1096.

¹²⁵ Mary Comber Fortey (c.1858–c.1910).

¹²⁶ I am grateful to Liz Trow, New Zealand, a descendant of Mary Comber Fortey, for this information.

¹²⁷ RAM 1874–1894 Register, 63–64.

¹²⁸ Sir Julius Benedict (1804–1885), English composer and conductor of German birth.

¹²⁹ The 1901 Census shows Mary C. Lawson living with her stepson and son and eight servants at 12 Bruton Street, Westminster. PRO RG13/81 fol.90 p.43.

¹³⁰ O'Brien died in 1968.

¹³¹ Henry George Farmer (1882–1965), latterly music librarian at Glasgow University Library, authority on Arabic music and author of *A History of Music in Scotland* London: Hinrichsen, 1947.

late Hamish MacCunn. I graduated Bachelor of Music at Oxford University and Doctor of Music at Dublin University (Trinity College). I am Director of Music at the Royal Blind School, Edinburgh.¹³²

Prior to his appointment at the Royal Blind School, O'Brien taught at the Royal High School of Edinburgh. He also conducted the Edinburgh Bach Choir from 1911 to 1920. Despite working full-time as a teacher, O'Brien was able to find the time to compose. His works include the concert overtures *The Minstrel's Curse*¹³³ (performed in Edinburgh in 1905) and *To Spring* and *Ellangowan* (both performed at Bournemouth under the direction of Sir Dan Godfrey).¹³⁴ Several of his compositions were published, but much of his work remains in manuscript.¹³⁵ He wrote in a Scottish idiom 'flavoured strongly with classicism' and was 'entirely unsympathetic to the recent new trends of music'.¹³⁶ His sonata for clarinet and piano was recently reissued and has had some performances.¹³⁷

Previous biographers of MacCunn have always stated that he taught at the Guildhall School of Music from 1912 onwards, but in a letter to Janey Drysdale MacCunn said:

By the way I am not at the Guildhall School of Music. The pushful minstrel at the head of that concern¹³⁸ did not please me a little bit, so I left the place after a few months' hopeless attempt to make anything decent of the opera class.¹³⁹

This statement is corroborated by information contained in a scrapbook of press cuttings about the Guildhall School of Music¹⁴⁰ and by other archival material. MacCunn was appointed as director of the opera class and professor of composition in early October, filling the vacancy caused by the death of Coleridge-Taylor.¹⁴¹ In the Guildhall

¹³² Charles O'Brien to Henry George Farmer, 16 Jan 1960, GUL MS Farmer 215/5.

¹³³ 'Music in Edinburgh' *MT* 47, 1906, 49. 'The Minstrel's Curse' in the English translation of 'Des Sängers Fluch', a ballad by Ludwig Uhland (1787–1862). It was set by Schumann as a cantata (1852) and also inspired von Bülow, Busoni and Corder.

¹³⁴ *Ellangowan* was performed in the 1917–18 season and *To Spring* was performed in the following season.

¹³⁵ Many of his manuscripts are held by the Scottish Music Centre, Glasgow.

¹³⁶ W[illiam] S[aunder]s 'O'Brien, Charles H.F.' in *A Dictionary of Modern Music and Musicians* general editor A. Eaglefield-Hull. London: Dent, 1923, 357.

¹³⁷ Charles O'Brien *Sonata for Clarinet and Piano* Edinburgh: Hardie Press, 1995.

¹³⁸ (Sir) Landon Ronald (1873–1938), conductor, pianist and composer, and Principal of Guildhall School of Music, 1910–1938. His annual salary of £1,000 would have made MacCunn extremely jealous.

¹³⁹ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 5 Jan 1914, GUL MS Farmer 263/19.

¹⁴⁰ Guildhall School of Music Scrapbook July 1910 – Jan 1916 [unpaginated, but in chronological order], London Metropolitan Archives CLA/056/AD/04/009.

¹⁴¹ Died 1 Sep 1912.

Prospectus for 1912 MacCunn is listed as a professor of composition, with shared responsibilities for the choir and the opera class.¹⁴² He was well suited for this last appointment, as he had been musical director of the original production of German's *Merrie England* which the class was rehearsing. However, he did not remain in post long enough to bring the production to the stage as his last engagement seems to have been a concert on 4 December 1912.¹⁴³

By 1914 MacCunn was once again pursuing the possibility of academic employment. His enthusiasm, possibly verging on desperation, to obtain an academic appointment is very evident. During the time that he corresponded with Janey Drysdale, MacCunn applied for the post of Principal of the proposed Scottish College of Music in Edinburgh and the Reid Chair of Music at Edinburgh University. He also considered but rejected the notion of applying for the Principalship of the Conservatorium of New South Wales. He wrote to Janey Drysdale:

The salary is certainly a very good one, & all the conditions etc are extremely favourable for the man who goes to out Botany Bay. But that man will not be Hamish MacCunn. I would rather live in a wee cottage at Arrochar, & look out at the Cobbler & take an occasional trout from the loch or the burn.¹⁴⁴

The College of Music never did get established and in the competition for the Reid Chair at Edinburgh University, Donald Tovey¹⁴⁵ was the successful candidate. However, in defeat MacCunn's sense of humour shines through. He wrote:

I am forming a small select choir – male voices – of the other candidates & myself & have arranged "Dove sono" as a part-song in twelve free contrapuntal obbligati. Twig the ghastly pun? "Tovey! So no!"¹⁴⁶

Conducting

As a conductor MacCunn had learned 'on the job', initially conducting his own works, when he was enthusiastically received by audiences. He also gained orchestral experience in the early 1890s conducting a small number of concerts for the Orchestral

¹⁴² Guildhall School of Music Prospectus 1912, 9. LMA CLA/056/AD/02/001

¹⁴³ Guildhall School of Music Concert Programmes 1912. LMA CLA/056/AD/03/020. The opera received two performances on 4 and 5 April 1913, conducted by Edward German and Ronald Landon.

¹⁴⁴ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 14 Jun 1914, GUL MS Farmer 263/35.

¹⁴⁵ Donald Tovey (1875–1940), appointed Reid Professor of Music at Edinburgh University in 1914 as successor to Friedrich Niecks. He held the post till his death.

¹⁴⁶ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 21 Jul 1914, GUL MS Farmer 263/49.

Society of the Hampstead Conservatoire, a privately run establishment not far from his home.¹⁴⁷

Conducting, particularly of opera, was to become an increasingly important part of MacCunn's professional life. A list of operas conducted by MacCunn is given in Tables 1.2.1 and 1.2.2. He was well regarded in this capacity and appears to have had a very business-like approach to his work as the following letter suggests.

Dear Mr Stoker

Before Mr Bispham¹⁴⁸ returned to America he told me that you are going to look after the 'Vicar of Wakefield' – which I am to conduct for him.

I feel that it is time for us to see about engaging the chorus, & I have written to Mr Hugh Moss suggesting our having some auditions.

In order to avoid the chance of our losing the best of those we engage, just before we require them, I would prefer that they all have contracts. Perhaps you & Mr Moss & I might meet one day soon & chat over these & other matters?

Y^{rs} faithfully

Hamish MacCunn¹⁴⁹

The first opera which MacCunn conducted was his own composition *Jeanie Deans*. Both this and his next opera *Diarmid* were produced for the Carl Rosa Company and may have prompted his engagement by that company for a season in 1899 when he was either conductor or music director for eleven different operas. The following year he was principal conductor of the Moody-Manners Opera Company, which toured throughout Britain. During the week it was in Edinburgh the company performed six operas – *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Faust*, *Carmen*, *The Jewess* and *The Bohemian Girl* the first two of which were conducted by MacCunn.¹⁵⁰ Another very full year as far as conducting was concerned was 1910 when MacCunn was associated with Thomas Beecham's three opera seasons – a spring and autumn season of serious opera at Covent Garden and a summer season of 'opera comique' at His Majesty's Theatre. MacCunn

¹⁴⁷ Established c.1886. Cecil Sharp the folk-song collector succeeded the founder George F. Geaussen as principal in 1896.

¹⁴⁸ David Bispham (1857–1921), American baritone.

¹⁴⁹ Hamish MacCunn to Bram Stoker, 13 Aug 1906, Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection, MS 19c Stoker.

¹⁵⁰ 'Tannhäuser at the Lyceum Theatre' *Scotsman* 6 Nov 1900, 5.

Date of first perf.	Work	Composer	Perfs	Capacity	Company	Theatre	Town
15 Nov 1894	<i>Jeanie Deans</i>	MacCunn	2	Cond	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	Edinburgh
21 Nov 1894	<i>Jeanie Deans</i>	MacCunn	2	Cond	Carl Rosa	Theatre Royal	Glasgow
22 Jan 1896	<i>Jeanie Deans</i>	MacCunn	2	Cond	Carl Rosa	Daly's	London
23 Oct 1897	<i>Diarmid</i>	MacCunn	3	Cond	Carl Rosa	Covent Garden	London
10 Nov 1898	<i>Carmen</i>	Bizet	1	Mus. Dir./Cond	Carl Rosa	Grand Theatre	Leeds
3 Jan 1899	<i>Carmen</i>	Bizet	7	Mus. Dir./Cond	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	London
4 Jan 1899	<i>Faust</i>	Gounod	10	Mus. Dir./Cond	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	London
5 Jan 1899	<i>Lohengrin</i>	Wagner	4	Mus. Dir./Cond	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	London
6 Jan 1899	<i>Pagliacci</i>	Leoncavallo	6	Mus. Dir./Cond	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	London
6 Jan 1899	<i>Cavalleria rusticana</i>	Mascagni	6	Mus. Dir./Cond	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	London
13 Jan 1899	<i>Il Trovatore</i>	Verdi	2	Mus. Dir.	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	London
21 Jan 1899	<i>Maritana</i>	Wallace	3	Mus. Dir.	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	London
28 Jan 1899	<i>The Bohemian Girl</i>	Balfe	1	Mus. Dir.	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	London
2 Feb 1899	<i>Tannhäuser</i>	Wagner	5	Mus. Dir.	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	London
3 Feb 1899	<i>Tristan and Isolde</i>	Wagner	3	Mus. Dir./Cond	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	London
4 Feb 1899	<i>The Lily of Killarney</i>	Benedict	3	Cond	Carl Rosa	Lyceum	London
5 Nov 1900	<i>Tannhäuser</i>	Wagner	1	Cond	Moody-Manners	Royal Lyceum	Edinburgh
7 Nov 1900	<i>Lohengrin</i>	Wagner	*	Cond	Moody-Manners	Royal Lyceum	Edinburgh
10 Nov 1900	<i>Lohengrin</i>	Wagner	1	Cond	Moody-Manners	Royal Lyceum	Edinburgh
1901	<i>The Flying Dutchman</i>	Wagner	*	Cond	Moody-Manners	Various	Provincial tour
1901	<i>Tristan and Isolde</i>	Wagner	*	Cond	Moody-Manners	Various	Provincial tour
2 Feb 1902	<i>Merrie England</i>	German	119	Mus. Dir. (with German)	Savoy	Savoy	London
24 Nov 1902	<i>Merrie England</i>	German	56	Mus. Dir.	Savoy	Savoy	London
22 Jan 1903	<i>A Princess of Kensington</i>	German	112	Mus. Dir.	Savoy	Savoy	London
3 Oct 1903	<i>Merrie England</i>	German	*	Cond	Actual Savoy	Royal Lyceum	Edinburgh
10 Dec 1903	<i>The Earl and the Girl</i>	Caryl	371	Mus. Dir.	Savoy	Adelphi/ Lyric	London
23 Dec 1903	<i>Little Hans Anderson</i>	Slaughter	27	Mus. Dir.	Savoy	Adelphi/ Lyric	London
5 Jan 1905	<i>The Talk of the Town</i>	Haines; MacCunn	101	Mus. Dir.	Savoy	Lyric	London
28 Aug 1905	<i>Blue Moon</i>	Talbot; Rubens	182	Mus. Dir.	Savoy	Lyric	London
12 Nov 1906	<i>The Vicar of Wakefield</i>	Lehmann	*	Mus. Dir.	Bispham	Prince's	Manchester
12 Dec 1906	<i>The Vicar of Wakefield</i>	Lehmann	37	Mus. Dir.	Hugh Moss	Prince of Wales's	London

Table 1.2.1 – Opera conducting engagements undertaken by MacCunn, 1894–1906

Date of first perf.	Work	Composer	Perfs	Capacity	Company	Theatre	Town
12 Apr 1907	<i>Tom Jones</i>	German	109	Mus. Dir.	Courtneidge	Apollo	London
10 Apr 1909	<i>A Waltz Dream</i>	Straus (Oscar)	*	Mus. Dir.	Waltz Dream Co	Various	Provincial tour
20 Sep 1909	<i>The Mountaineers</i>	Somerville	61	Cond.	Savoy	Savoy	London
15 Dec 1909	<i>Fallen Fairies</i>	German	50	Mus. Dir. (with German)	Savoy	Savoy	London
14 Mar 1910	<i>Carmen</i>	Bizet	2	Cond.	Beecham	Covent Garden	London
12 May 1910	<i>The Tales of Hoffman</i>	Offenbach	34	Cond. (with Beecham)	Beecham	His Majesty's	London
14 May 1910	<i>Hansel and Gretel</i>	Humperdinck	4	Cond.	Beecham	His Majesty's	London
24 May 1910	<i>Shamus O'Brien</i>	Stanford	5	Mus. Dir.	Beecham	His Majesty's	London
4 Jul 1910	<i>Fledermaus</i>	Strauss (Johann)	7	Cond.	Beecham	His Majesty's	London
5 Sep 1910	<i>The Tales of Hoffman</i> <i>Fledermaus</i>	Offenbach Strauss (Johann)	*	Cond. (with Beecham and Carr)	Beecham	Various	Provincial tour
7 Jan 1911	<i>A Waltz Dream</i>	Straus (Oscar)	106	Mus. Dir.	Waltz Dream Co	Daly's	London
23 Sep 1911	<i>Bonita</i>	Fraser-Simson	42	Mus. Dir.	Pigott	Queen's	London
6 Feb 1915	<i>Tales of Hoffman</i>	Offenbach	57	Cond. (with Bath)	Beecham	Shaftesbury	London
9 Feb 1915	<i>Bohème</i>	Bizet	15	Cond.	Beecham	Shaftesbury	London
6 Oct 1915	<i>The Tales of Hoffman</i>	Offenbach	10	Cond.	Beecham	Shaftesbury	London
13 Oct 1915	<i>Faust</i>	Gounod	10	Cond.	Beecham	Shaftesbury	London

Table 1.2.2 – Opera conducting engagements undertaken by MacCunn 1907–1915

* indicates number of performances is unknown.

1897–8 Carl Rosa tour

Liverpool (12–17 Sep), Birkenhead (19–24 Sep), Bradford (Jan 1898), London (2 Jan 1899 for 6 weeks), Birmingham (19–25 Mar 1899), Manchester (May 1898), Belfast (Sep 1898 – short season)

1900–1901 Moody-Manners tour

Tour started at Leicester on 3 September 1900 and took in Blackpool, Douglas, Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Sunderland, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Burnley, Dublin, Cork, Liverpool, Hanley and Hull before the end of 1901.¹

¹ Alasdair Jamieson 'Hamish MacCunn as Conductor' *British Musical Theatre of the Victorian and Edwardian Eras* no. 3, Spring 2004, 23–27.

was also involved with the company, sharing the conducting with Thomas Beecham and Howard Carr, when it toured with its summer programme to the provinces (5 September–17 December).¹⁵¹ Although MacCunn also conducted orchestral music – he was appointed conductor of the Stock Exchange Orchestra in 1914¹⁵² – his preference was for opera. He conducted till 1915 (the year before his death), when he once again undertook engagements for Beecham at the Shaftesbury Theatre.

Stock Exchange Orchestra

In the autumn of 1913 MacCunn was appointed conductor of the ambitious amateur Stock Exchange Orchestra,¹⁵³ which gave its concerts in the Queen's Hall. He was not a stranger to the orchestra, having some 20 years earlier conducted it in a performance of his orchestral ballad *The Ship o' the Fiend*.¹⁵⁴ This orchestra had a reputation for giving interesting programmes and attracted notices from the *Times* as well as from the musical press. Under MacCunn's direction it gave a season of three concerts, which included Glazunov's Violin Concerto and the overture to Rimsky-Korsakov's *Nuit de Mai*, as well as the more usual *Egmont* overture and selections from *Hänsel und Gretel*. The final concert in the series included a performance of Gounod's *Messe des Orphéonistes* which MacCunn reorchestrated for the occasion, the orchestral score being lost.¹⁵⁵ This work seems to have been substituted for MacCunn's Border ballad *The Death of Percy Reed* which had previously been advertised as part of the programme.¹⁵⁶ The outbreak of the First World War led to the Society's abandoning its next season and it would appear that it did not reform after the Armistice.¹⁵⁷

Composing

Given the amount of time MacCunn devoted to conducting, it is hardly surprising that his compositional output began to diminish. He famously remarked to A.M. Henderson: 'My literary practice for the last five months has consisted of writing luggage labels – at which I am really expert'.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵¹ Beecham does not mention MacCunn in his account of his 1910 season in his memoirs – Thomas Beecham *A Mingled Chime: Leaves from an Autobiography* London: Hutchinson, 1944.

¹⁵² GUL MS Farmer 264, 12.

¹⁵³ 'Miscellaneous' MT 54, 757, 1913.

¹⁵⁴ 'Latest News – From Private Correspondence' *Scotsman* 21 Feb 1894, 7.

¹⁵⁵ 'Amateur Orchestras' MT 55, 45, 1914; 'Stock Exchange Orchestral and Choral Society' *Times* 6 Feb 1914, 8; 'Stock Exchange Orchestral and Choral Society' *Times* 3 Apr 1914, 10.

¹⁵⁶ 'Miscellaneous' MT 54, 757, 1913.

¹⁵⁷ 'The Coming Season in London' MT 55, 620, 1914.

¹⁵⁸ A.M. Henderson *Musical Memories* Glasgow: Grant Educational, 1938, 69–70. Archibald Martin Henderson (1875–1957) was organist and choirmaster at the University of Glasgow from 1906 to 1954.

In the 1890s, MacCunn wrote a further two Scottish-inspired pieces: *Six Scotch Dances for Piano* (1896) and *Highland Memories* (1897) for orchestra. He also wrote many songs in this period, perhaps inspired by his wife Alison, who was reputed to be a very good singer.¹⁵⁹ In 1891 *Songs and Ballads of Scotland* was published – a collection of 100 songs arranged by MacCunn – in which he adopted a new approach to folk and traditional song. Whereas previously many Scottish folksongs had been set or arranged by foreign composers with little or no knowledge of, or feeling for the material (for example, arrangements commissioned by Napier and Thomson from German composers such as Haydn, Beethoven and Kozeluch), the preface announced that ‘Mr MacCunn has discarded the usual introductory and concluding symphonies, leaving the melodies to stand on their own. Where several versions of the melodies exist, Mr MacCunn has adopted the oldest’.¹⁶⁰

In the first decade of the twentieth century, possibly in an attempt to reach a wider audience, MacCunn largely abandoned Scottish stimuli in favour of more universal themes. Despite heavy conducting commitments, he wrote two stage works *The Masque of War and Peace* (1900) and *The Pageant of Darkness and Light* (1908),¹⁶¹ and the very successful light opera *The Golden Girl* (1905) to a libretto by Basil Hood. The production opened in Birmingham at the Prince of Wales Theatre on 5 August and then toured for four months.¹⁶² MacCunn, however, did not conduct, as at that time he was musical director of *Blue Moon* at the Lyric Theatre, London. In 1905 a commission to write a choral piece for voices and orchestra for the Coliseum Theatre, London was fulfilled with the setting of Longfellow’s ballad *The Wreck of the Hesperus*.

Towards the end of his life, MacCunn returned to Scottish themes. In 1913 he published his *Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads: The Jolly Goshawk, Kinmont Willie and Lamkin* for SATB chorus and orchestra, and *The Death of Percy Reed* for men’s choir (TTBB). Sadly for MacCunn they were not performed until after his death. In 1913 he was also commissioned to write the cantata *Livingstone the Pilgrim* for the London Missionary Society’s Livingstone Centenary celebrations.

¹⁵⁹ ‘Though she [Alison Pettie] does not sing in public, she does a great deal of good work with her fine voice among the poor people of the East End.’ *Presbyterian Messenger* no. 860, Nov 1916, 325.

¹⁶⁰ Hamish MacCunn *Songs and Ballads of Scotland with Pianoforte Accompaniment* Paterson: Glasgow, [1891].

¹⁶¹ Both of these works are given more attention in Chapter 7 – Occasional Music.

¹⁶² Gänzl, *The British Musical Theatre*, 1, 1905, 913.

In 1915 MacCunn was diagnosed as having cancer of the throat and was forced to stop conducting. He wrote to Janey Drysdale:

As to myself & my doings, perhaps you may have noticed that my name has been “out of the bill” of the opera at the Shaftesbury Theatre for some two months. I know that you will be grieved to hear that this is due to the state of my health. I am very seriously & dangerously ill. The trouble is cancer of the throat, & four of the most distinguished surgeons in London have agreed that an operation is utterly impossible.

I am being treated by inoculation [sic] & in other ways. I have lively hopes of recovery. But the medical prognostications leave me very little real hope – & not very much time.

I suffer very little, except in swallowing. And my voice is entirely gone.

But God is good; & I know that whatever is to be will be right. And I don't think that I am at all afraid.¹⁶³

MacCunn died on 2 August 1916 and was buried two days later at Hampstead Cemetery where his grave is marked by a Celtic cross bearing the inscription ‘He was a gallant gentleman’ (Illustration 7).¹⁶⁴ MacCunn was mourned by his family and also by members of the musical community. They included the contralto Louise Kirkby Lunn who had created the role of Ella in MacCunn’s *Diarmid* and the tenor Iver McKay who was tenor soloist in the first performance of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Floral tributes from the Beecham Opera Orchestra, Robert Courtneidge, Edward German, Liza Lehmann, Mignon Nevada and the Stock Exchange Choral and Orchestral Society show how well regarded he was by his musical friends and colleagues.¹⁶⁵

MacCunn’s estate amounted to a mere £140.¹⁶⁶ This sum is as much indicative of the precarious nature of employment in the musical profession as it is of MacCunn’s unwillingness to compromise the comfortable lifestyle to which he, as a child, had been accustomed. He had been educated privately, and despite the uncertainties of making a living in the musical profession, his son Fergus¹⁶⁷ was educated by a tutor and at private

¹⁶³ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 7 Jan 1916, NLS 3651 ff.108–109.

¹⁶⁴ Possibly inspired by the epitaph on the cairn erected in the Antarctic in 1912 to the memory of Captain Oates – ‘Hereabouts died a very gallant gentleman’.

¹⁶⁵ ‘The Late Mr Hamish MacCunn’ *Glasgow Herald* 5 Aug 1916, 6.

¹⁶⁶ MacCunn’s will was made on 19 Dec 1889, shortly after his marriage. Probate was granted on 22 Dec 1916 to his wife Alison, the sole legatee. Copies supplied by Her Majesty’s Courts Service, York, 31 Aug 2005.

¹⁶⁷ Fergus MacCunn (1890–1941) enlisted in the First World War as a private and rose to the rank of lieutenant. After the war he worked for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty for Animals, eventually becoming its chief secretary.

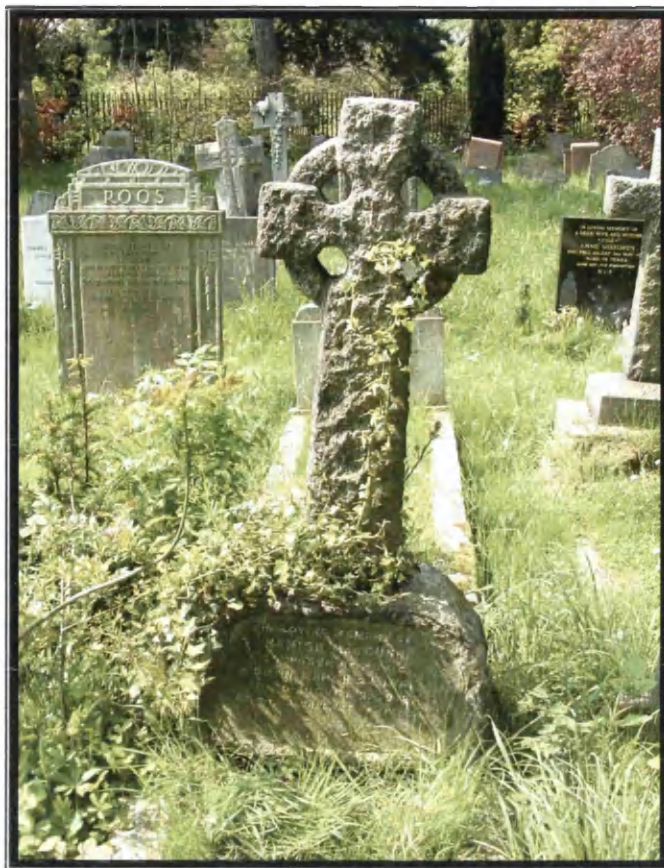


Illustration 7 – MacCunn's grave, Hampstead Cemetery



Illustration 8 – Abbey Court, Hampstead, MacCunn's London home

schools.¹⁶⁸ The family lived at well-to-do London addresses – 21 Albion Road, and from 1903 at 6 Abbey Court, Abbey Road (Illustration 8). In an interview with J. Cuthbert Hadden, MacCunn indicated that he was no Bohemian: ‘I live well, because I feel that any form of unnecessary hardship would probably impair my activity. Art, to my mind is not compatible with miserable surroundings.’¹⁶⁹

There is little documentary evidence about MacCunn’s income but on one occasion, in a letter to his father-in-law, MacCunn wrote, ‘I managed to dig a little quartz out of the publishers before leaving – £160 – in all. £100 from Augener¹⁷⁰ & £60 from Sheard,¹⁷¹ so that was "no that bad".’¹⁷² Between 1890 and 1914, MacCunn received a mere £60 in copyright payments from Novello & Co. For his cycle of Six Love Songs he received £25-0-0, a similar amount for four three-part songs for female voices, and £10-0-0 for the Romance in G for violin and piano.¹⁷³ He also received an unascertainable payment for royalties for *The Wreck of the Hesperus* – the ledger entry reads: ‘By copyright Wreck of the Hesperus royalty 1½’.

Another indicator of MacCunn’s financial situation is to be found in his wife Alison’s charitable giving. In 1891, her donation to ‘Women’s Work in Foreign Lands’ was a generous five shillings, but in the following two years it decreased to four shillings, then to two. Thereafter, from 1894–1900, it remained stable at two shillings and sixpence,¹⁷⁴ half of the first documented donation. This would seem to indicate straightened circumstances in the MacCunn household. In the last stages of his life MacCunn’s financial difficulties became known to fellow musicians, and a meeting attended by both of his former teachers, Parry and Stanford, was organised in an attempt to assist him financially.¹⁷⁵

MacCunn found it difficult to express his thoughts in other than the most direct terms. However, in his letters, especially those to Janey Drysdale, he reveals himself to be a kind, thoughtful person with a good sense of humour. As an afterthought to his

¹⁶⁸ *Who Was Who 1941–1950: a Companion to Who’s Who* vol. 4. London: A. & C. Black, 1952, 720.

¹⁶⁹ J. C[uthbert] H[adden] ‘Scottish Composers and Musicians: I – Hamish MacCunn’ *Scottish Musical Monthly* 1, 1894, 55.

¹⁷⁰ Possibly for songs to texts by George MacDonald and William Black.

¹⁷¹ Probably for the songs ‘Bethesda’ and ‘The Sailor’s Lot’.

¹⁷² Hamish MacCunn to John Pettie, 30 Jul 1892, NLS 10994 f.156-7.

¹⁷³ Novello and Company Business Archive BL MS Music 817, 181. As the archive consists of 311 volumes, it has not been possible to examine it exhaustively.

¹⁷⁴ St John’s Wood Presbyterian Church Annual Reports 1891–1900. LMA/4319/A/0354/01–10.

¹⁷⁵ Dibble *Charles Villiers Stanford*, 433.

autobiography he wrote, 'My motor car number (unaccountably omitted from "Who's Who") is 53. It passes this door, goes as far as Plumstead, under the direction of a brother conductor.'¹⁷⁶ His kindness and generosity are recounted by both A.M. Henderson and Charles O'Brien. The former related how when he, aged 14, and his family were on holiday on Arran, MacCunn took time to come to their hotel in Lamlash to listen to him play his own compositions. 'And let it be recorded as a proof of forbearance and kindness of heart, that instead of dissolving into helpless laughter, he took the trouble to show me how I might improve'.¹⁷⁷ When O'Brien was a struggling youngster, MacCunn befriended him and corrected many of his compositions without ever charging a fee.¹⁷⁸ He also was willing to comment on scores sent to him by Janey Drysdale. In reply to a letter, he wrote:

It has been impossible until now to examine the works you sent. As to these, comment is, unfortunately, very easy & very brief. Mr Grieg's productions are workmanlike. The others I cannot speak of at all, except to say that they are efforts in the right direction.¹⁷⁹

Religious belief

One area of MacCunn's life which has been ignored is his attitude to religion. He was born into a respectable upper middle-class Scots Presbyterian family and was married in St John's Wood Presbyterian Church with which his wife's family and other notable London Scots had a strong association.¹⁸⁰ In 1906 MacCunn's son Fergus was admitted as a first communicant¹⁸¹ and two years later James MacCunn and his unmarried daughter Agnes both joined the congregation when they moved to London. However at some point in his life MacCunn seems to have broken with his family's Presbyterian tradition by joining the Catholic Church. Although no documentary evidence has been found, this hypothesis can be supported by a number of facts, both biographical and musical.

Whereas the first part of MacCunn's funeral was conducted at the family home

¹⁷⁶ GUL MS Farmer 264, 13.

¹⁷⁷ Henderson *Musical Memories*, 71.

¹⁷⁸ 'Festival Suggestions' *Edinburgh Evening News* 13 Jul 1949, 4.

¹⁷⁹ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 11 Mar 1912, GUL MS Farmer 263/02.

¹⁸⁰ A.P. Watt, the literary agent was a member of the Kirk Session, and later Session Clerk.

¹⁸¹ St John's Wood Presbyterian Church Annual Report 1906. LMA/4319/A/035, 9.

by the Rev John Monro Gibson,¹⁸² the retired minister of St John's Wood Presbyterian Church, the committal at the cemetery was conducted by a Roman Catholic clergyman, Canon Wyndham of St Mary with the Angels, Bayswater.¹⁸³ An article about the history of St John's Wood Presbyterian Church mentions famous people e.g. John Pettie, MacCunn's father-in-law, in terms of membership but states, somewhat obliquely: 'Hamish MacCunn was with us for a while' as if unwilling to explain the situation any further.¹⁸⁴ An overt indication of a new found faith is evident in one of MacCunn's last letters to Janey Drysdale, in which he expresses a calm acceptance of his illness and imminent death.¹⁸⁵ Significantly this is the only surviving letter in which MacCunn mentions God, and it stands in great contrast to his earlier outspoken and generally self-centred correspondence.

Musically, MacCunn covertly expressed his distancing from and disillusionment with Presbyterianism in *The Cameronian's Dream* (1889) (see Chapter 5). However by 1913, the depth of feeling expressed in the central movement of *Livingstone the Pilgrim* 'Darkness prevailing' points to an internal crisis in the composer (see Chapter 7). Additionally MacCunn experienced a late resurgence of creativity. From about 1912, after a relatively unproductive period, he wrote a substantial number of pieces in a relatively short time,¹⁸⁶ perhaps driven by his new-found faith and a desire to complete as much as possible in the time left to him.¹⁸⁷

The above facts seem to point to a conversion to Roman Catholicism relatively late in MacCunn's life,¹⁸⁸ possibly at a time when he was already ill and knew he was dying, showing a more serious and up till now unrecognised facet of MacCunn.

¹⁸² John Monro Gibson (1838–1921), Presbyterian minister and author, minister of St John's Wood Presbyterian Church, 1880–1913. The incumbent at the time was Alexander Matheson MacIver, previously minister of the English [i.e. English language as opposed to Gaelic] United Free Congregation, Stornaway.

¹⁸³ 'The Late Mr Hamish MacCunn' *Glasgow Herald* 5 Aug 1916, 6.

¹⁸⁴ R.S. Robson 'Footnotes on Our [St John's Presbyterian Church] History. III – Artistic Presbyterian Messenger no. 860, Nov 1916, 325–327.

¹⁸⁵ Quoted on page 47.

¹⁸⁶ *Livingstone the Pilgrim*, *Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads*, and several part-songs and chamber pieces.

¹⁸⁷ This perhaps explains why *The Death of Percy Reed*, begun in 1896, was completed in 1913.

¹⁸⁸ W. Gordon Gorman's *Converts to Rome: a Biographical List of the More Notable Converts to the Catholic Church in the United Kingdom During the Last Sixty Years* London: Sands, 1910 lists more than 30 composers, some very minor, who converted to the Catholic Church. As MacCunn is not listed, his conversion most likely took place after the publication of this volume.

No firm reason for MacCunn's adoption of the Catholic faith can be offered. A tenuous link between MacCunn and St Mary with the Angels is provided by the composer Sidney Peine Waddington (1869–1953), choirmaster at the church from 1884–1905. In 1883 Waddington along with MacCunn was awarded a scholarship to study composition at the RCM and as a fellow student would have been in close contact with MacCunn for several years.¹⁸⁹ Whatever the reason, MacCunn's conversion would have represented a major step for him, and given the level of anti-Catholic sentiment prevalent at the time, particularly in the *milieu* from which MacCunn sprang, would have caused consternation to the rest of his family.¹⁹⁰

MacCunn took pleasure in simple activities – billiards and fly-fishing¹⁹¹ – and was always an athletic man enjoying golf, swimming and yachting.¹⁹² He does not seem to have travelled abroad, preferring to spend his leisure time in Scotland on Arran or in Arrochar, or at his parents' home in Greenock. Although they never met, he is perhaps best summed up by Janey Drysdale, who seems to have come to a deep understanding of him as a result of their lengthy correspondence.

MacCunn the man is quite as admirable. Full of geniality, absolutely free from affectation, and with a keen sense of humour, yet not without native dignity, he is beloved and respected by all who have the privilege of knowing him.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ 'Royal College of Music' *Times* 23 Apr 1883, 6.

¹⁹⁰ See T.M. Devine *The Scottish Nation: 1700–2000* London: Allen Lane, 1999, 488 *et seq.*

¹⁹¹ 'MacCunn, Hamish' *Who Was Who 1916–1928: a Companion to Who's Who*, Vol 2, London: A. & C. Black, 1947,

¹⁹² Duncan 'Hamish MacCunn', 760.

¹⁹³ Janey Drysdale 'Scottish Composers: Hamish MacCunn' *Dunedin Magazine* 2, 1914, 73.

Chapter 2

Choral Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain

In an interview with George Bernard Shaw, MacCunn explained that he had no interest in writing abstract music,¹ and the five orchestral pieces he wrote – *Cior Mhor* (1885), *Land of the Mountain and the Flood* (1886), *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow* (1888), *The Ship o' the Fiend* (1888), *Highland Memories* (1896) can all be classed as programme music. Whereas *Cior Mhor* is a depiction of a mountain on the Isle of Arran in varying weathers and *Highland Memories* is inspired by Highland landscape, the other works mentioned use Scottish literature as their stimulus. The majority of MacCunn's compositions were for the voice: opera, solo, and choral. Reasons as to why MacCunn elected to write choral works are offered in the following brief examination of the background to choral music in nineteenth-century Britain, where a variety of factors combined to make it the most popular musical genre in the country.

Up to the early nineteenth century in Britain, oratorio was the most popular large-scale vocal music genre, whereas in other European countries, opera, which enjoyed the patronage of the wealthy, predominated. In Britain, prevailing puritanical attitudes encouraged antipathy towards operatic and dramatic productions as their content was deemed to be inappropriate. In the words of John Ella: 'The prevalent religious sentiment of the English middle-classes conduces much to the increase of vocal societies and choral performances in London, supported by a numerous class of persons who never enter the theatre'.² Choral singing contributed directly to an increase in participation in music, and in the wider scheme of things played an important role in the social history of the United Kingdom.

England

The Choral Movement – its origins and development

The origins of the choral movement in England are to be found in the eighteenth century in Lancashire in the north of England, where the 'Old Lancashire Notation', a

¹ George Bernard Shaw 'Lions of the Season: Hamish MacCunn' *Star* 7 May 1889, reprinted in George Bernard Shaw *Shaw's Music: the Complete Musical Criticism* edited by Dan H. Laurence. 3 vols. London: Bodley Head, 1981, 1, 623.

² John Ella *Musical Sketches, Abroad and at Home* London: Ridgeway, 1896, 149.

modified form of the gamut,³ continued in use for teaching church choirs. From time to time, choirs from neighbouring parishes would come together with local instrumental groups to perform a so-called ‘village oratorio’ which usually consisted of a performance of *Messiah*. Travelling singing teachers carried the practice into the West Riding and the North Midlands so that by the beginning of the nineteenth century in the North of England there was a strong tradition of secular choirs performing oratorio.⁴

In the 1840s the emergence of the sight-singing movement gave further impetus to choral singing. This movement, which originated in France, had as its main aim the education and improvement of the adult working classes. The advantage of teaching singing in preference to an orchestral instrument or piano is immediately obvious – the voice is the most portable of instruments, costs nothing and everyone has one. The importation of sight-singing into Britain was prompted by the Victorian desire for the betterment of the lower classes – time spent singing was time spent away from unsuitable activities such as drinking. ‘Popular song was thus seen to constitute an “important means of forming an industrious, brave, loyal, and religious people”’.⁵

The nineteenth century also saw musical education, in the form of sight-singing, being extended to children by two different agencies. In the early part of the century, some enlightened factory owners, following the example set by Robert Owen,⁶ opened schools to educate their workers’ children. Subjects taught included reading, writing, arithmetic, and singing using the Old Lancastrian notation.⁷ In the early years of Queen Victoria’s reign ‘the question of education occupied the minds of practically all responsible English people’.⁸ Strenuous efforts were made by early reformers to improve national education, and music, which was considered to exert a moral influence, was introduced into the school curriculum in the form of singing. Later, the 1870 Elementary Education Act, which introduced free education in England, directed that a school’s grant be reduced ‘by one shilling per scholar, unless the inspector be

³ A feature of the system of solmization developed by Guido d’Arezzo (c. 991–after 1033).

⁴ Barbara Mohn *Das englische Oratorium im 19. Jahrhundert: Quellen, Traditionen, Entwicklungen* Paderborn: Schöningh, 2000, 44–45.

⁵ Bernarr Rainbow *The Land Without Music: Musical Education in England 1800–1860 and Its Continental Antecedents* London: Novello, 1967, 120.

⁶ Robert Owen (1771–1858), Welsh social and educational reformer, founder of the model community at New Lanark near Glasgow.

⁷ E.D. Mackerness *A Social History of English Music* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964, 128–131.

⁸ *Ibid*, 153.

satisfied that vocal music is made a part of the ordinary course of instruction.’⁹ The use of a financial sanction to encourage schools to include musical instruction in their timetable contributed to the gradual improvement of the country’s musical literacy.

The other area in which musical education was to make a significant contribution was in the Anglican Church, where standards of singing were low, both in the choir and in the congregation. The Society for the Promotion of Church Music, founded in 1846, called for Church music to be as good as that which obtained in the concert hall or opera.¹⁰ As the century progressed, choral services in cathedrals were brought to a higher standard and the practice of sung services was extended to many parish churches. Some churches also instigated singing classes for their congregations.

Sight-singing systems

Two sight-singing systems imported from the continent in the 1840s, those of Wilhem¹¹ and Mainzer,¹² enjoyed some success. These methods use staff notation in combination with a system of letters or names using a fixed ‘doh’. Each note of the scale is given a fixed name, using those of the Guidonian gamut, with the addition of ‘si’ for B.

Note	Note name
B	si
A	la
G	sol
F	fa
E	mi
D	re
C	ut

Table 2.1 – Note names used by Mainzer and Wilhem

Mainzer’s instruction manual is presented like a catechism, each chapter introducing new material in the form of standard questions and answers.

Question. How do you call that which strikes the ear in listening to music?

Answer. **SOUNDS.**

⁹ Quoted in *MOM*, 2, 618.

¹⁰ Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music*, 192.

¹¹ Guillaume Louis Bocquillon Wilhem (1771–1842), French music teacher.

¹² Joseph Mainzer (1801–1851), German educator who came to England c.1840.

Q. In what manner are sounds expressed in musical writing?

A. By marks called **NOTES**.¹³

These are followed by exercises to be sung to note names and finally by exercises with words, all of which urge the singer to moral and godly behaviour.

Example 2.1a¹⁴



Example 2.1b¹⁵



Both Mainzer's and Wilhem's methods were extremely popular and many thousands of people attended classes in towns throughout the country.

Before attending the [Wilhem] class, I had concluded that music was a study beyond my capacity, but the first night I was there and saw the adequateness of the method to the initiated, I got quite interested, and became, I rather think, a musical enthusiast.¹⁶

The title of Mainzer's manual was *Singing for the Million*, and given the impact of his and other sight-singing methods, the notion of one million is no exaggeration. Although his system is no longer used, Mainzer's substantial and lasting legacy is the *Musical Times*, which began its life in 1844 as *Mainzer's Musical Times*. A weakness of both the Mainzer and Wilhem methods was that because they relied on the fixed 'doh' system, they were not able to take the majority of students beyond the very rudimentary stages of singing at sight. Although it was easy to sing in the key of C major, it became progressively more difficult to sing in distant keys.

A major change in direction was introduced by John Curwen (1816–1880), a Nonconformist English minister, when he adapted the system developed by the

¹³ Joseph Mainzer *Singing for the Million: a Practical Course of Musical Instruction* London: The Author, 1841, 1.

¹⁴ Ibid, 27.

¹⁵ Ibid, 28.

¹⁶ George Lewis *Observations of the Present State of Congregational Singing in Scotland, with Remarks upon the Means of its Improvement* Edinburgh: 1851, quoted in Robert A. Marr *Music for the People: a*

Norwich schoolteacher Sarah Jane Glover.¹⁷ This method, which uses a movable, as opposed to a fixed doh, dispenses with the stave altogether, using a system of letters to represent the pitch and punctuation characters to indicate the duration of each note.

Example 2.2a – example of Tonic Sol-fa notation¹⁸

IF HAPPINESS (A round for four voices) KEY D M. 60

:s | d¹ : d¹ | r¹ : r¹ | m¹ : m¹ | d¹ : d¹ | l : l | t : t | d¹ : – | –

If | hap - pi - ness has | not her seat, And | cen - tre in the | breast,

:s | f : f | f : f | m : s | d¹ : s | l : f | r : s | d ; – | –

We | may be wise or | rich or great, But | ne - ver can be | blest..

Example 2.2 b – Example 2.2a transcribed into staff notation

IF HAPPINESS (A round for four voices)

If hap-pi-ness has not her seat, And cen-tre in the breast, We
may be wise or rich or great, But ne-ver can be blest.

Curwen's system, known as the Tonic Sol-fa Method, was widely adopted throughout Britain, for teaching both children and adults. The Tonic Sol-fa College, founded by Curwen in London in 1869, continues today as the Curwen College of Music, an examining rather than a teaching body.¹⁹

Overall, the influence of sight-singing was such that vocal musical instruction became the rage. Successful pupils in their turn started classes, many of which were formed into permanent choirs and choral societies.

Growth of choral societies

The growth in the number of people able to sight-read music led to an increase in the number of choral societies in the country. The earliest were founded in the North

Retrospect of the Glasgow International Exhibition, 1888, with an Account of The Rise of the Choral Societies in Scotland Edinburgh; Menzies, 1889, xcvi.

¹⁷ John Curwen. *An Account of the Tonic Sol-fa Method of Teaching to Sing: a Modification of Miss Glover's Norwich Sol-fa Method, or Tetrachordal System* London: 1855.

¹⁸ John Curwen *Singing for Schools: a Grammar of Vocal Music, Founded on the Tonic Solfa Method and a Full Introduction to the Art of Singing from the Old Notation* 7 ed. London: T. Ward, c. 1857, 36.

¹⁹ Curwen College of Music website: <http://mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/Curwen>, accessed 2 Aug 2005.

of England, an outgrowth of the old Lancastrian method of teaching singing. To these were added a vast number of choral societies, as the sight-singing movement took root and flourished (See Table 2.2).

Date	Society
1798	Oratorio Singers, Sheffield
1813	Union Choral Society, Coventry
1817	Halifax Choral Society
1821	Bradford Choral Society
1827	Newcastle Choral Society
	Nottingham Choral Society
1833	York Choral Society
1836	Huddersfield Choral Society

Table 2.2 – Early choral societies in England²⁰

Societies were commonly based in the community e.g. Plymouth Choral Society, Bedford Choral Society, but others were associated with churches e.g. Kensington Presbyterian Choral Society, with educational establishments e.g. Bradford Technical College Musical Society, Great Western Railway Mechanics' Institute Choral and Orchestral Union, or with an employer e.g. The Post Office Choral Union, Liverpool, Barclay's Bank, London. Some societies were associated with a particular cause e.g. Portsmouth Temperance Choral Union, Newcastle Co-operative Choral Society, while others proclaimed their allegiance to Tonic Sol-fa by incorporating it into their society's name e.g. Burslem Tonic Sol-fa Choir. Membership of a choral society allowed people to enjoy an improving hobby and to socialise with like-minded people.

Whereas previously choral singing had been the domain of the cultured and aristocratic classes, as a result of the sight-singing movement and of the Tonic Sol-fa method in particular, it was now open to a much wider participation, and to some extent allowed for the breaking down of the rigid class barriers which operated in Victorian society. An 1849 account of a choral class in a market town on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk gives ample proof of this.

Seated in groups, arranged with methodical irregularity, so that none should be 'below the salt', in their best dresses and in their best behaviour too, everyone feeling as much at home as when at home, and yet brought into free and friendly intercourse with the classes that are separated from them in ordinary life by an impassable barrier of convention; a pleasanter sight than these working people cannot well be imagined.²¹

²⁰ Mohn *Das englische Oratorium im 19. Jahrhundert*, 46–47.

²¹ 'Music, a Means of Popular Amusement and Education' *MT* 3, 1849, 240+245.

The rise in sight-singing and the formation of many new choral societies coincided with the move by the Novello publishing company, established in 1811, to make printed music available at more affordable prices. Given the greatly expanded market, it was possible to increase print runs and thus offer music at a much cheaper price. For example, in 1837 the price of a piano-vocal score of *Messiah* was one guinea (£1.05), but by 1887, it cost a mere shilling (5 pence).²² Scores translated into Tonic Sol-fa notation were even cheaper to produce, as they could be set using ordinary letterpress type and required less paper.

Music festivals

Another factor contributing to the popularity of choral singing was the establishment of music festivals to raise money for local charities. Some of the oldest British festivals – the Three Choirs Festival (1737), Birmingham (1768), Norwich (1770) for example – predate the start of what was disparagingly termed the ‘oratorio industry’ by Rosa Newmarch;²³ many more festivals came into being when it was at its height in the second half of the nineteenth century, for example Leeds (1859) and Bristol (1873), leading to the commissioning of many new works. In the early part of the 1800s, Handel’s oratorios, many of which were written for the English market, were most often performed, but the first performance of Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* at the Birmingham Festival of 1846 gave an impetus to musical progress and to the weakening of Handelian dominance. This, in Nigel Burton’s opinion:

[...] did more than anything else to drag British choral music belatedly into the romantic era. Mendelssohn was to exert a vital and beneficial influence on the course of Victorian music: his style, whatever its faults, flexed sufficient musical muscle to effect several immediate and long overdue improvements.²⁴

Scotland

Many of the observations made above in respect of England apply equally to Scotland, but there were also differences, which are detailed in the following brief account. Scotland had a much smaller population (1,805,864 in 1811) and a much less

²² Joseph Bennett *A Short History of Cheap Music as Exemplified in the Records of the House of Novello, Ewer & Co* London: Novello, Ewer & Co, 1887, vii.

²³ Rosa Newmarch *Henry J Wood Living Masters of Music*, 1. London: Lane, 1904, 14.

²⁴ Nigel Burton ‘Oratorios and Cantatas’ in *The Romantic Age* edited by Nicholas Temperley. Athlone History of Music in Britain, 5. London: Athlone Press, 1981.

active classical musical life than England. Another main difference is outlined thus by David Johnson:

Eighteenth-century Scotland possessed two distinct types of music: ‘folk’ and ‘classical’. These coexisted within the same cultural framework and even, to some extent, interacted, while retaining their individualities and behaving, in a sociological sense, quite differently from each other.²⁵

Whereas folk music has always flourished in Scotland, classical music has only flourished sporadically. In the eighteenth century, although there were some Scots composing in the classical tradition, for example Thomas Alexander Erskine, sixth Earl of Kelly (1732–81), many musicians tended to concentrate on the collection and publication of traditional songs, for example Allan Ramsay’s *The Tea-Table Miscellany* (4 volumes, 1723–37), and *The Scots Musical Museum* (6 volumes, 1787–1803), a collaboration between the Edinburgh publisher James Johnson and the poet Robert Burns. Traditional instrumental music was also collected and arranged, for example, by William McGibbon (c. 1690–1756) and Charles McLean (1712–c. 1770). Music flourished only in the small number of cities and towns which were able to support professional musicians. Edinburgh, with its Edinburgh Society of Musicians, was the centre of musical excellence, and there was also musical activity in Glasgow and Aberdeen. As in England, most musical activity and knowledge was confined to the wealthy and professional classes.

Sight-singing and the growth of choral societies

The sight-singing movement reached Scotland in 1842 with the arrival of Wilhelm Mainzer in Edinburgh. Here he set up his headquarters and taught for the next six years. When he moved to Manchester in 1848, Mainzer’s work was continued by teachers who had previously been his pupils. In Glasgow and the West of Scotland the rival Wilhem system, favoured by John Hullah (1812–84), was the preferred teaching system. Both the Mainzer and Wilhem methods attracted thousands of pupils, before being supplanted by the Curwen (Tonic Sol-fa) system, introduced when its founder John Curwen visited Scotland in 1855. Although some choral societies had been in existence prior to the rise of the sight-singing movement, the Curwen system was to prove the catalyst for the creation of many more societies throughout Scotland. Table

²⁵ David Johnson *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* 2 ed. Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2003, 3.

2.3 lists some of the early choral societies founded in Scotland and demonstrates that by 1860 the movement was widespread.

Date	Society
1843	Glasgow Choral Union
1847	Aberdeen Harmonic Choir Selkirk Choral Society
1850	Perth Choral Society
1858	Edinburgh Choral Union
1860	Montrose Harmonic Union Stirling Choral Society

Table 2.3 – early choral societies in Scotland²⁶

As in England, many societies were formed as the continuation of a singing class – for example in Selkirk, a course of lessons on the Wilhem method led to the formation of the Selkirk Choral Society in 1847.²⁷ A survey of the columns of the *Musical Times* from 1880 to 1886 indicates that there were choral societies in 36 different Scottish towns, ranging from Thurso and Dingwall in the north to Dumfries and Jedburgh in the south.

Scottish churches

In the Scottish reformed churches, where use of the organ was prohibited,²⁸ sung worship was limited to unaccompanied metrical psalms set to a very limited number of tunes. Standards of singing were low and very few church choirs were able to attempt to sing harmony. The movement to improve choir and congregational singing tended to concentrate on the publication of psalters and hymnbooks,²⁹ but efforts were also made to raise the standard of singing by practical means. An early reformer was Robert Archibald Smith (1780–1829), the son of a Scottish weaver, born and educated in England. Smith worked as precentor in Paisley Abbey and Edinburgh St George's where his innovative work, based on his knowledge of English practices, significantly influenced the development of Scottish Presbyterian church music.³⁰

²⁶ Marr *Music for the People*, xcvi–ciii.

²⁷ *Ibid*, xcvi.

²⁸ The Church of Scotland finally authorised the use of the organ in worship in 1866 ('Music in Scotland' *MT* 42: 793, 1901).

²⁹ See Henry George Farmer 'Chapter 2 – The Church' *A History of Music in Scotland* London: Hinrichsen, 1947, 365–379.

³⁰ Moira A. Harris and Jane Mallinson 'Smith, Robert Archibald' in: *MGG* 2 Personenteil 15, cols 972–973.

Scottish education

Scotland had a long history of teaching music to children in school. Sang Schules (Song Schools), which began life as institutions of the medieval Roman Catholic Church, continued post-Reformation under the aegis of the Episcopal Church, but taught only a limited number of children in a few towns. Prior to the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act, which established Board Schools, there was no statutory requirement to teach music. Schools were run by local parishes, or in some instances, by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. In England the 1870 Act had made musical education compulsory by introducing a system of financial penalties; in Scotland after the 1872 Act, musical education was assured by teaching musical skills in the Normal Schools (teacher training colleges) to trainee teachers who would pass on their knowledge in the classrooms of the Board Schools. School songbooks, children's cantatas and operettas, and other material suitable for classroom use began to be published. By 1894 it was reported:

Music is [now] taught, not only in Glasgow, but all over the country, on well-defined principles, and with the happiest results. Under the School Board of Glasgow, and in a few denominational schools, upwards of 90,000 children are receiving instruction in singing, at the hands of thoroughly competent teachers; whilst a staff of visiting masters are in regular attendance, superintending the whole. These children are taught to sing in two parts, and to read notes at first sight. Many of them are able to write down a melody of a tune on hearing it sung for the first time; and also rhythms containing various nice divisions of a pulse; feats that would have sorely puzzled the so-called teachers of the past generation.³¹

Emergence of British composers of choral music

Native composers, for example Crotch, Attwood, Goss and Wesley, began to write oratorio and thus lessen the hold of foreign composers. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the secular cantata began to gain ground,³² and by the end of the century, choral ballads, following the success of Stanford's *The Revenge* (1886), were also popular. The poems and ballads of Longfellow, Campbell and Browning were frequently chosen for setting. *The Hesperus* was repeatedly wrecked, *The Battle of the Baltic* was fought several times over, and *The Pied Piper* wreaked his revenge more than once. In general, the subject matter of cantatas and ballads demonstrates a move towards a more romantic outlook, with treatment of medieval tales and border ballads (Macfarren's *May Day*, MacCunn's *Four Traditional Border Ballads*), the supernatural

³¹ Andrew Aird *Glimpses of Old Glasgow* Glasgow: Aird & Coghill, 1894, 192.

³² See Maxwell W. Pettitt 'The Mid-Victorian Secular Cantata 1850–1870' *British Music* 11, 1989, 29–43.

(MacCunn's *Bonny Kilmeny*, Drysdale's *Tamlane*), exoticism (Bennett's *Paradise and the Peri*, Coleridge-Taylor's *Hiawatha*) which in turn encouraged a more romantic musical handling.

Reasons for writing choral music

There were several main reasons why a composer would elect to write a choral work rather than an opera or symphony.

1. Academic exercise

In the nineteenth century, universities which awarded music degrees³³ required the submission of a choral work as an academic exercise. In his biography of Parry, Jeremy Dibble writes: 'Parry had already begun to draw up an outline for his BMus exercise – a cantata setting numerous passages from the Old Testament [...]. The work soon took shape, its format adhering strictly to the examination rubric.'³⁴ In Dibble's opinion, the work, while being technically correct, is 'conventional', 'traditional' and 'derivative'. Nonetheless Parry was awarded the degree and, at eighteen, was the youngest to receive it. The problem with this type of composition is that it will, of necessity, adhere strictly to a rubric – to do otherwise would be to court failure. The candidate will strive to demonstrate his (or her) technical ability, often at the expense of originality. This is amply revealed by the following review of *The Widow of Nain* by A.J. Caldicott,³⁵ performed at the Bristol Festival in 1881:

The work was originally written for the purpose of obtaining a musical degree at Cambridge, and of that purpose it bears every trace. Mr Caldicott is a scholarly musician, well grounded in harmony and counterpoint, and he is evidently proud of the fact. His score bristles with canons and other contrapuntal devices and for fear that his skill might be overlooked he thinks it necessary to draw special attention to it. In one instance we are informed in a foot-note that, "this canon is so arranged that if the copy be turned upside down and the voice parts be read backwards the same outlines of the melody are maintained." A scholastic trick of this kind may possibly please an examining body, but the public – to whom, after all the music should be addressed – justly refuse to take the slightest notice of it. A musician, no doubt, must know all the intricacies of his art, but these must always be the means of attaining a higher purpose, never that purpose itself. To parade them in a demonstrative manner is, to say the least, in very doubtful taste.³⁶

³³ Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, and Trinity College, Dublin.

³⁴ Jeremy Dibble *C. Hubert H. Parry: His Life and Music* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992, 38.

³⁵ Alfred James Caldicott (1842–1897) studied at Leipzig under Moscheles, Hauptmann and Plaidy. He was Professor of Harmony at the Royal College of Music from 1884–1891. He was best known for 'vocal music cast in a light vein'. ('Obituary' *MT* 38:1897, 842).

³⁶ 'Worcester Musical Festival' *Times* 10 Sep 1881, 6.

The outcome of the academic exercise was that large quantities of choral works were written by aspiring musicians who were anxious to receive academic validation and its attendant status. While some exercises had aesthetic merit, many others were undistinguished and their first performance was also their last.

2. Financial

The prevailing enthusiasm for choral music, vast numbers of participating amateurs, a publishing industry which readily accepted choral music and published it cheaply, and a good chance of performance at one or more of the country's many music festivals all provided sound financial reasons for writing choral music. In mid-Victorian times (1850–70), the cantata 'was the only large scale form apart from the oratorio which provided the composer with a living and met with the approval from those consumers who began to realise that English composers might after all have something worth saying'.³⁷ Between the years 1870 and 1910, approximately two hundred choral pieces were written by English composers for performance at festivals.³⁸ Music festivals were extensively reviewed, both in the national and in the music press, which helped to bring the new works performed to the notice of a wide public.

3. Commissions

Many choral pieces were commissioned by choral societies or festival committees. To receive a commission was significant for a composer, in that it guaranteed a fee, a performance and further income from publishers' royalties. Publishers would actively promote a commissioned work in the music press and this was especially true in the case of Novello, who besides being music publishers, were also the proprietors of the *Musical Times*. A number of works written at this time bear the following instruction on the title page 'Choral Societies wishing to perform this Cantata will please communicate with the Publishers'³⁹ i.e. an invitation to pay performance royalties. Audiences' enthusiasm for choral music and desire for knowledge was exploited by publishers who advertised vocal scores and analytical programmes for purchase prior to the performance.⁴⁰

³⁷ Pettitt 'The Mid-Victorian Secular Cantata 1850–1870', 38.

³⁸ Charles Reid 'Britain from Stanford to Vaughan Williams c. 1880–1939' in *Choral Music: a Symposium* London: Penguin, 1963, 266.

³⁹ e.g. Hamish MacCunn *The Cameronian's Dream* Edinburgh: Paterson, 1890, i.

⁴⁰ e.g. MacCunn's *Bonny Kilmeny*. This is comparable to today's practice of selling CDs at a concert venue.

4. Choral music as a substitute for opera

In nineteenth-century Britain, opera was centred in London and thus inaccessible to a large section of the population. Towards the end of the century, touring companies, for example the Carl Rosa Opera Company and the Moody-Manners Company, did take opera to provincial centres but their visits were brief and unable to satisfy the demand for large-scale vocal works. Opera was costly to produce, expensive to attend and was viewed with suspicion by a large puritanical section of British society. Additionally, operas written by British composers suffered from being considered inferior to those written by their European counterparts. Some British composers, for example Alexander Campbell Mackenzie and Ethel Smyth, found it easier to have their operas performed in Germany than in Britain.⁴¹ The unsympathetic British environment meant that for many composers it was a struggle to bring their opera to the stage, as they very often had to find funding from a consortium of financial backers.⁴² Given these circumstances, it was expedient to cast operatic ideas in the form of oratorio, cantata or choral ballad to ensure performance.

As the nineteenth century progressed, more choral works which incorporated the word ‘dramatic’ into their subtitle were published. ‘Dramatic oratorios’ include: Mackenzie’s *Rose of Sharon* (1884), Cowen’s *Ruth* (1887), Bridge’s *Repentance of Nineveh* (1890) and Stanford’s *Eden* (1891). Dramatic cantatas were written as early as the 1860s e.g. Smart’s *The Bride of Dunkerron* (1864), but a major impetus to this genre seems to have been the outstanding success of Dvořák’s *The Spectre’s Bride* (1884), which had its first performance in England at the 1885 Birmingham Festival. Later titles include Mackenzie’s *The Story of Said* (1886), Corder’s *The Sword of Argantyr* (1889), Bantock’s *The Fire Worshippers* (1892), and Drysdale’s *The Kelpie* (1894). Many more works were published which, although they did not specifically include the term ‘dramatic’ in their title, treated their subject matter in a highly dramatic manner.

These works were performed on the concert platform rather than the stage, but all employed techniques that belonged to opera. Many contained stage directions e.g. ‘The Sulamite is brought back by an Elder of the village: the Beloved follows her’,

⁴¹ Mackenzie’s operas were performed in Britain but had many performances in Germany. Three of Smyth’s operas were premiered in Germany.

⁴² MacCunn himself made these points in a very well-argued letter to the *Times*. ‘Opera in English’ *Times* 10 Aug, 1901, 14.

‘They look upon the Sulamite curiously’⁴³ which indicate that the works have been conceived not just aurally but also visually. Features found in opera of the period are also found in choral pieces – works are through-composed; themes or leitmotifs are used to characterise a person or an emotion; vivid orchestral interludes describe or comment on the action. Many late nineteenth-century choral works were in effect operas stripped of scenery, costumes and stage movement. That staging was possible is confirmed by the Royal Carl Rosa Opera Company’s inclusion in its 1898 touring repertoire of Sullivan’s *The Martyr of Antioch* which was originally conceived as a choral work and premiered at the 1880 Leeds Festival. The Company had also produced an adaptation of Berlioz’s *La Damnation de Faust*.⁴⁴ In commenting on the transfer of *The Martyr of Antioch* from concert platform to stage, the *Musical Times*’s critic commented:

This opens up a wide field for the Carl Rosa Company, seeing that there are many cantatas more or less easily adaptable to stage requirements, and sufficiently popular in their original form to encourage a hope that the public would follow them to the theatre. The names of these works will easily spring to the reader’s mind. Conspicuous among them is “The Rose of Sharon” [...]. Cowen’s “Sleeping Beauty” is another example, and there are not a few others like it.⁴⁵

The verdict on nineteenth-century choral music

Nineteenth-century choral music has not received a good press in the past. Newmarch’s remarks in 1904 about the ‘oratorio industry’ were reinforced some sixty years later by Percy Young’s deprecating remarks about ‘great heaps of discarded compositions’ in a chapter subtitled ‘Mediocrity in Spate’.⁴⁶ Today, with the benefit of further distance, it can be said that while much of the choral music of the Victorian period seems average and at best, inoffensive, it was popular, was enthusiastically performed and received, and remained in the repertoire for some considerable time. Regrettably this performance tradition has been substantially lost. Reasons for this include the decline in choral singing and the corresponding increase in orchestral concerts, the domination of first radio and then television, universal access to ‘instant music’, fewer people actively involved in amateur music making, unavailability of

⁴³ From Mackenzie’s *Rose of Sharon* (1884).

⁴⁴ Premiered in its operatic version in Liverpool, 3 Feb 1894.

⁴⁵ ‘Royal Carl Rosa Opera Company’ *MT* 39, 1898, 247.

⁴⁶ Percy M. Young *The Choral Tradition: an Historical and Analytical Survey from the Sixteenth Century to the Present Day* London: Hutchinson, 1962, 236.

orchestral parts. To quote Nicholas Temperley who has given new impetus to the study of Victorian music:

The number of people who can read a score in a library and imagine how it would sound is quite small. For wider assessment, one needs performance and recordings. They cost money, time and trouble, which few are willing to invest on untried bodies of music.⁴⁷

In recent years there has been an indication that some people are willing to risk performing a ‘forgotten’ work rather than opting for yet another performance of *Messiah*. For example, the Broadheath Singers (Slough) specialise in reviving British cantatas and oratorios, and in recent years have mounted performances of Drysdale’s *The Kelpie* and Stanford’s *Battle of the Baltic*.⁴⁸ The Eildon Singers (Melrose) recently performed MacCunn’s *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*,⁴⁹ and the London Oriana Choir has presented MacCunn’s *The Wreck of the Hesperus* in a programme entitled ‘Songs of the Sea’.⁵⁰ In the field of commercial recording, there have been releases on CD of Parry’s *Job*, Sullivan’s *The Golden Legend* and *The Prodigal Son* and McEwen’s *Ode on the Morning of Christ’s Nativity*. The final recitative and chorus of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* were included on a CD of MacCunn’s music⁵¹ and this may lead in time to a complete recording.

MacCunn and his choral works

The foregoing account allows MacCunn’s choral works to be placed in their historical and musical context. MacCunn grew up and lived at a time when sight-singing and choralism were very important elements of amateur musical life. Choral works were frequently performed by large choirs and attracted large audiences. It was therefore an obvious and logical choice for him to devote a large part of his compositional efforts to a genre which was so popular and which virtually guaranteed repeat performances of every work.

MacCunn’s initial introduction to choral music would have been at an early age as a member of an audience. It is known that his parents, his father in particular, gave

⁴⁷Nicholas Temperley ‘Introduction: The State of Research in Victorian Music’ in *The Lost Chord: Essays on Victorian Music* edited by Nicholas Temperley. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989, 14.

⁴⁸ David J. Brown (ed) *Before Elgar and After: British Music in Performance: 25 Years of The Broadheath Singers* Iwer Heath: The Broadheath Singers, 1995.

⁴⁹ Melrose, 25 April 2004, reviewed in ‘Hail to the Singers’ *Border Telegraph* 8 Jun 2004, 17.

⁵⁰ St James’s Piccadilly, London, 14 May 2005.

⁵¹ *Hamish MacCunn: The Land of the Mountain and the Flood* Hyperion CDA66815, 1995.

him every encouragement, and part of his broader musical education would have included attending concerts given by choral societies in the West of Scotland, such as the Greenock Choral Union,⁵² the Glasgow Choral Union and the Paisley Choral Union, and also further afield, in Edinburgh and at the Crystal Palace. Later, as a music student in London, he would have attended many choral performances in London and at the Crystal Palace.

As a student of composition, first in Greenock, and subsequently at the Royal College of Music in London, MacCunn would have been required to write cantatas or oratorios as a compositional exercise. His first essay in this form was at the age of twelve: ‘an oratorio which wouldn’t “oratore”’, as he quaintly wrote to Janey Drysdale, because he was more interested in boyish pastimes.⁵³ This would imply that this oratorio was written as the result of an exercise set by his teacher rather than as an act of inspiration. No work corresponding to MacCunn’s description has been traced, but an incomplete, undated cantata *The Changing Year*⁵⁴ and a version of *The Moss Rose* (MR1) dated 30 April 1882⁵⁵ in the MacCunn Collection, Glasgow University Library indicate that this particular oratorio must have been the first of several early attempts to write for an accompanied chorus. A second version of *The Moss Rose* was completed when MacCunn was at the RCM and was performed by the student chorus and orchestra.⁵⁶ Given this initial success, and the prevailing musical climate which was eager for new choral music, it was natural for MacCunn to continue to write cantatas. Table 2.4 is a complete list of MacCunn’s works for accompanied chorus with details of libretto, description, forces, opus number, date of composition, first performance and location of the autograph manuscript.

Although MacCunn apparently followed the well-established path of choral writing, in some ways he was less typical than many of his contemporaries. Several of his works were commissioned by choral societies (see Table 2.4 over), and he was commissioned to write a cantata for the 1890 Norwich Festival. Unfortunately the commission was not completed in time, and this may explain why he failed to attract

⁵² Its director was George Poulter, MacCunn’s first teacher of composition.

⁵³ Hamish MacCunn to Janey C. Drysdale, 29 Dec 1913, GUL MS Farmer 264, 3.

⁵⁴ MS MacCunn 19. GUL gives date of c1884. The librettist is not acknowledged, but may possibly be James MacCunn senior.

⁵⁵ MS MacCunn 24. The MS is unusually neat and may be a fair copy made by MacCunn’s father.

⁵⁶ MS MacCunn 23, dated ‘London July 1884, RCM’, and performed by the RCM chorus and orchestra, 10 Dec 1885.

Title	Libretto	Description Forces	Opus no.	Date of completion	First performance	Autograph MS*	Publication
<i>The Moss Rose</i> (MR1)	From the German of Krumphacher	Cantata (A.T., SATB, piano)	—	30 Apr 1882	None traced	MS MacCunn 24	Unpublished
<i>Motet in E-flat: Psalm C</i>	King James Bible	Motet (S.A.T.B., SATB organ)	—	6 Apr 1883	None traced	MS MacCunn 20	Unpublished
<i>The Changing Year</i>	James MacCunn?	Cantata (T., SATB, piano)	—	[1883–4]	None traced	Piano-vocal sketch MS MacCunn 19 (incomplete)	Unpublished
<i>The Moss Rose</i> (MR2)	James MacCunn after Krumphacher, transl. J. Brainerd	Cantata (S.T. Bar., SATB, orch.)	—	Jul 1884	London (Albert Hall) 10 Dec 1885	FS; MS MacCunn 23	Unpublished
<i>Bonny Kilmeny</i>	James MacCunn after James Hogg	Cantata (S.T. Bar., SATB, orch.)	2	21 Mar 1886	Edinburgh 22 Dec 1888	FS; MS MacCunn 40	Edinburgh: Paterson, 1888
<i>Lord Ulfin's Daughter</i>	Thomas Campbell	Ballad (SATB, orch.)	4	15 Mar 1887	London (C.P.) 18 Feb 1888	FS; MS MacCunn 25	London: Novello, 1888
<i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i> *	James MacCunn after Sir Walter Scott	Dramatic Cantata (S. Mezz., T. Bar., SATB, orch.)	7	29 Oct 1888	Glasgow 18 Dec 1888	FS; RCM MS 4236	London: Novello, 1888
<i>The Cameronian's Dream</i> *	James Hyslop	Ballad (Bar., SATB, orch.)	10	Oct 1889 6 Dec 1889	Edinburgh 27 Jan 1890	Piano-vocal score: NLS MS21979 FS; MS MacCunn 5	Edinburgh: Paterson, 1890
<i>Psalm VIII*</i>	King James Bible	(SATB, orch.)	—	1890	Edinburgh 1 May 1890	Lost	Dundee: Methven Simpson, 1890
<i>Queen Hynde of Caledon</i> *	James MacCunn after James Hogg	Dramatic cantata (S. S.T. Bar., SATB, orch.)	13	31 Oct 1891	Glasgow 28 Feb 1892	FS; MS MacCunn 4	London: Chappell, 1891
<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i> *	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	Dramatic Ballad (SATB, orch.)	—	Jun 1905	London 28 Aug 1905	FS; RCM MS 5135a	London: Novello, 1905
<i>Livingstone the Pilgrim</i> *	C. Sylvester Horne	Cantata (S. Bar., S.A.T.B., narrator, SATB, organ)	—	Nov 1912	London 19 Mar 1913	Organ-vocal score: MS MacCunn 11 (lacks no. 5)	London: Weekes, 1913
<i>Kinnmont Willie</i>	Traditional	Ballad (SATB, orch.)	—	Jun 1913	Sheffield 17 Apr 1921	FS lost Sketches: MS MacCunn 34 Piano-vocal score: MS MacCunn 10	London: Weekes, 1913
<i>The Jolly Goshawk</i>	Traditional	Ballad (SATB, orch.)	—	Jun 1913	Sheffield 17 Apr 1921	FS lost Sketches: MS MacCunn 36 Piano-vocal score: MS MacCunn 9	London: Weekes, 1913
<i>Lamkin</i>	Traditional	Ballad (SATB, orch.)	—	Jun 1913	Sheffield 17 Apr 1921	FS lost Sketches: MS MacCunn 35 Piano-vocal score: MS MacCunn 6	London: Weekes, 1913
<i>The Death of Percy Reed</i>	Traditional	Ballad (TTBB, orch.)	31?	1896? 1913	London 25 Mar 1925	FS lost Piano-vocal score: MS MacCunn 1	London: Weekes, 1913

Table 2.4 – Hamish MacCunn's choral works

* Location (if) unless stated otherwise

• Commissioned work

any further commissions for a major music festival. In addition, the fact that he tended to set Scottish texts, or that he wrote secular, rather than sacred, cantatas may have been negatively viewed by some English festival committees. Being Scottish was not a barrier, as the majority of choral works by Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, a fellow Scot, were commissioned by festivals e.g. *The Bride* (Worcester, 1881), *The Rose of Sharon* (Norwich, 1884) *The Dream of Jubal* (Liverpool, 1889), *The Sun God's Return* (Cardiff, 1910). His only cantata written to a Scottish text, *The Cotter's Saturday Night* (1888) was originally intended for the 1888 Birmingham Festival.⁵⁷ It was not completed in time and was premiered in Edinburgh, followed by a performance at the Albert Hall at which Mackenzie noted with some irony that 'the choir courageously grappled with a foreign tongue'.⁵⁸

Another possible barrier may have been that because within the space of a few years, MacCunn managed to offend not only Hubert Parry, his teacher (and later Principal of the RCM) but also Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, Principal of the RAM. Pillars of the musical establishment and captains of the oratorio industry, they may have been unwilling to recommend him to festival committees. In his autobiography of 1927 Mackenzie relates that when he was too busy to fulfil a commission for incidental music for Robert Buchanan's play *Marmion* in 1891, he recommended 'a most talented young composer' to undertake the task. The young man failed to deliver the music on time and ultimately it was Mackenzie who wrote the music. His description of the incident 'a quixotic way of reading a lesson to a junior by severely punishing myself'⁵⁹ indicates that he had a long memory and that one would cross him at one's peril.

MacCunn's choral works fall into four distinct chronological groups:

1. Juvenilia, early works up to 1885
2. Scottish inspired works, 1888–1892
3. Universal themes, 1900–1913
4. Border Ballads, 1914

⁵⁷ Mackenzie was originally asked to write a large-scale oratorio. When it became apparent he would not complete it in time, he offered to write a shorter cantata – *The Cotter's Saturday Night*.

⁵⁸ Alexander Campbell Mackenzie *A Musician's Narrative* London: Cassell, 1927, 170.

⁵⁹ Ibid. It is possible that the young composer was MacCunn, who at this time was teaching at the RAM. Other possible contenders are William Wallace (1860–1940), Learmont Drysdale, Lindsay Lamb.

1. Juvenilia, early works up to 1885

To MacCunn's early choral compositions belong *The Moss Rose* (first and second versions) and *The Changing Year* (incomplete). The *Motet in E Flat: Psalm 100* for chorus, quartet and tenor solo with organ accompaniment displays an early ability to compose a good if conventional melody, but a very poorly executed passage of fugal writing confirms MacCunn's later annotation on the score 'a wretched attempt'. None of these works was published and as far as can be ascertained, only the second version of *The Moss Rose* was ever performed.

2. Scottish inspired works, 1886–1892

The majority of MacCunn's choral works date from his most prolific period (1886–1892). Early public recognition was achieved in 1888 with the performance and publication of *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Bonny Kilmeny* and to these were added *The Cameronian's Dream* and *Psalm VIII* (1890), and *Queen Hynde of Caledon* (1891). In the 1890s when MacCunn turned increasingly to conducting to earn a living, there was a substantial decline in his compositional activity in all genres.

3. Universal themes, 1900–1913

At the start of the twentieth century, MacCunn turned away from Scottish themes and looked to more universal themes for inspiration, perhaps in the hope of reaching a wider audience. At this time he was heavily involved with the London theatre, both as a conductor (see Table 1.2) and as a composer of light opera, and he wrote just two choral works. The first, *The Wreck of the Hesperus* (1905), is a rather unusual and interesting work, as it was written for performance at the London Coliseum Theatre. After a gap of some years, MacCunn was commissioned by the London Missionary Society to write *Livingstone the Pilgrim* for the centenary celebrations of David Livingstone's birth in 1913.

4. Border Ballads, 1914

MacCunn's last choral works, the *Four Traditional Scottish Border Ballads* (*Death of Parcy Reed*, *The Jolly Goshawk*, *Kinmont Willie*, *Lamkin*), were published in 1914 but evidence from the manuscript of *The Death of Parcy Reed* indicates that it was

begun as early as 1896.⁶⁰ Sketches for the other ballads indicate several draftings and it is possible that MacCunn, aware of the cancer that was to cause his untimely death, had decided to publish whatever material he had in hand. The early orchestral successes *The Dowie Dens of Yarrow* and *The Ship o' the Fiend* were inspired by Scottish ballads and, by revisiting Border balladry, MacCunn's compositional life came full circle.

Dissemination of MacCunn's choral works

Appendix 2 lists performances of MacCunn's choral works compiled from the *Times*, the *Musical Times*, the *Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Herald* and various other sources. Although in no way complete, it gives some insight into the uptake of MacCunn's works, and shows that his Scottish texts were not necessarily a barrier to performances outside Scotland.

There are various ways in which MacCunn's choral works might have become known. Although he only received one festival commission (which he did not complete), the fact that *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Bonny Kilmeny*, *The Cameronian's Dream*, *Queen Hynde of Caledon* were premiered or had early performances under the direction of August Manns at the Crystal Palace, one of the outstanding musical venues in the United Kingdom, would have added to MacCunn's reputation. Personal recommendation and lobbying by family and friends probably also played their part; for example, performances of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Lord Ullin's Daughter* in Greenock in 1889 were probably due to the agency of MacCunn's father; the North Leith Singing Class which gave *Bonny Kilmeny* in 1901 was conducted by a Mr Pettie, almost certainly a relative of MacCunn's wife Alison (née Pettie); and the 1900 Melbourne performance of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* could have been suggested by George Marshall-Hall, Professor of Music at Melbourne University, a lifelong friend and advocate of MacCunn. Publishers' advertisements in the music press, often quoting favourable reviews, brought new works to the attention of a singing public whose attitude towards new compositions was very positive, and who were eager to perform or hear new works. While grappling with a 'foreign tongue' may have discouraged English choirs from programming MacCunn's works, it is likely that Scottish texts set by a Scottish composer would have encouraged performance in Scotland, and possibly also in countries of the British Empire (Australia,

⁶⁰ The autograph piano-vocal score appears to be inscribed 'opus 31', but this has been partially scored through in pencil. If this reading is correct, this dates the work to approximately 1896.

Canada, New Zealand) where there were many expatriate Scots and people of Scots descent.

Succeeding chapters offer a detailed examination by genre (cantata, ballad, occasional music) of each of MacCunn's published choral works, discussing text and music, performance and reception.

Chapter 3

The Cantatas – I

The Changing Year – The Moss Rose – Bonny Kilmeny

The term ‘cantata’ was first used in Italy in the late sixteenth century to describe accompanied song, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century:

[it] applied to such a variety of works that a straightforward account of its development is hardly possible. [...] The single most conspicuous change affecting the cantata during this period was its transformation from a work for a few solo voices, sometimes with chorus, to one for chorus and orchestra, and even this was less a case of genuine evolution than the simple appropriation of a term that had by then lost its original connotation, at least as far as secular music was concerned. The 19th-century cantata is, in short, an entirely different kind of cantata from that of the preceding two centuries, to which it is connected by only the most tenuous links.¹

Unlike the sonata, a cantata cannot be defined by its form since, being text-based, its form is the end product of the compositional process applied to the text. In the nineteenth century, the secular cantata was regarded as a sub-genre of the oratorio, differentiated by ‘its shorter duration, its less elevated style, and its tendency toward a lyric rather than an epic and dramatic character’.² Attempts to further subdivide the genre on the basis of the literary genre or subject matter of the text are not particularly helpful, as they lead to a plethora of smaller divisions, which isolate rather than unite.³ Percy Young in *The Choral Tradition* describes the nineteenth-century cantata as ‘an extension of Romantic literature and of the German *Lied* on the one hand and as a medium wherein the new symbolism of colourful orchestral music might be exploited’.⁴ For the purposes of this discussion, ‘cantata’ is defined as a multi-movement setting of a secular literary text for soloists, chorus and orchestra.

In Britain as the nineteenth century progressed, the concert hall rather than the church gradually became the main venue for choral performance. Although there continued to be a demand for sacred choral works, there was a marked growth in the

¹ Malcolm Boyd ‘Cantata. VI. The Cantata since 1800’ in *NG* 2, 3, 40.

² Carl Dahlhaus *Nineteenth-Century Music* Berkeley: University of California P, 1989, 163.

³ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth Century Music*, 163.

⁴ Percy M. Young *The Choral Tradition* London: Hutchinson, 1962, 218.

composition of secular cantatas. As mentioned in Chapter 2, in the mid-Victorian period (1850–1870) an English style of secular cantata began to develop, which provided a bridge between oratorio and opera. Pettit lists twenty-two cantatas written during this period by English composers, including Leslie, Loder, Macfarren, Sullivan and S.S. Wesley.⁵ By the late 1880s when MacCunn began composing, the secular cantata was a well-established genre in Britain. Table 3.1 lists his seven cantatas, of which five are known to have been performed. As the final title listed was commissioned for a specific occasion, it will be considered in Chapter 7 – Occasional Music.

Title	Text	Date	First perf.	Manuscript	Notes
The Moss Rose (MR1)	Krummacher	1882	None traced	MS MacCunn 24 Full score	Unpublished
The Changing Year	Unidentified	[1883/4]	None traced	MS MacCunn 19 Draft for 4 voices and piano; 16 folios, incomplete	Unpublished
The Moss Rose (MR2)	Krummacher, trans. Brainard	1884	1885	MS MacCunn 23 Full score	Unpublished
Bonny Kilmeny	James Hogg	1886	1888	MS MacCunn 40 Full score	Published
The Lay of the Last Minstrel	Walter Scott	1888	1888	RCM MS 4236 Full score	Published
Queen Hynde of Caledon	Hogg	1891	1891	MS MacCunn 4 Full score	Published
Livingstone the Pilgrim	C.S. Horne	1913	1913	MS MacCunn 11 Piano-vocal score, incomplete	Published

Table 3.1 – Cantatas by Hamish MacCunn

Libretti

James, MacCunn’s father, who besides being a businessman was also something of a literary dabbler, was involved to some extent with all bar one of the libretti for his son’s cantatas. James MacCunn’s influence and involvement is discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

⁵ Maxwell W. Pettitt ‘The Mid-Victorian Secular Cantata 1850–1870’ *British Music* 11, 1989, 38.

The Moss Rose (1882)

Prior to his enrolment at the RCM, MacCunn composed a setting of 'The Moss Rose' for four-part chorus with piano accompaniment (referred to as *MRI*). Although it is subtitled 'cantata', in terms of style and length (seven pages), it is more like a part-song in which voices are doubled by the piano. This 'cantata' is discussed below in conjunction with the second, fuller version of *The Moss Rose* (1884).

The Changing Year

The manuscript of *The Changing Year* consists of a title page inscribed 'The Changing Year' Cantata' followed by 15 folios of a sketch for tenor solo, SATB chorus and piano. Although it is unsigned, it is clearly in MacCunn's hand. Comparisons with other manuscripts indicate it is a very early work, perhaps started shortly after he entered the RCM. It is even possible that this may be the work to which MacCunn referred as 'the oratorio which wouldn't "oratore"', started at the age of twelve.⁶ The title, the extant verses and the outline musical sketches indicate that this was planned to be a substantial piece, of which the concluding pages have been lost.⁷ The unattributed text has not been traced, and it is possible that it came from the pen of MacCunn senior. The 'Winter' section consists of four verses, rhyme scheme ABAB while 'Spring' has one triplet (AAA) followed by a quatrain (ABAB). The quality of the poetry is poor, as is demonstrated by the opening stanza:

Ah! when will dreary winter speed away?
Hark! the waves bursting on the sounding shore
And February storms in stern array
Rending the forest with prolonged uproar.

The scansion of some lines is extremely irregular, and the content is derivative of much nineteenth-century poetry – the 'Winter' section's subject matter, that of a ship's crew exposed to the dangers of the elements, is reminiscent of Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and Longfellow's 'The Wreck of the Hesperus' (which MacCunn set some 20 years later).

⁶ GUL MS MacCunn 264, 3.

⁷ A reference to the 'Winter' motive indicates that it occurs on page 48. Only 30 pages are now extant, indicating that the work was completed but that at least 17 folios have since been lost.

MacCunn's sketches of motifs for three seasons of the year – Winter, Spring and Summer – appear at the beginning of the manuscript with indications of their keys and the pages on which they occur. (Examples 3.1, 3.2a, 3.2b, 3.3).⁸

Example 3.1 – ‘Winter motive pages 1&2’



Example 3.2a – ‘Spring motive (1) pages 34&37’



Example 3.2b – ‘Spring motive (2) p. 25 & 28’



Example 3.3 – ‘Summer motive p. 48’



From this evidence, it can be assumed that the work was in three sections (there is no mention of Autumn), and set in a fairly conventional tonal framework.

With the exception of the use of motifs, the setting shows little originality. Harmony is mostly diatonic, harmonic progressions are conventional, and there are no independent vocal lines. In ‘Winter’, the first movement, most of the text is delivered either in unison or by single voice parts. Over-repetition of phrases (‘Wild blew the gales’ is repeated eight times) and the constant arpeggio accompaniment make the movement over-long, uninspiring and monotonous.

The second movement ‘Spring’ is in the style of a pastoral, in 6/8 time and with tonic-dominant drones. These features are very reminiscent of several piano pieces in

⁸ MS MacCunn 19, fl v. MacCunn styles them ‘motives’ and this term is retained when quoting him.

Schumann's *Album für die Jugend*,⁹ which would doubtless have been familiar to MacCunn. There is some slightly more interesting part-writing in this movement, but excessive repetition is again a major fault.

The main interest of this apprentice piece lies in the fact that it marks the point from which MacCunn started, and shows, when compared with later works, how quickly he developed as a composer of choral music.

The Moss Rose (1884)

The Moss Rose, the first of MacCunn's cantatas to be performed, was composed while he was a student at the RCM. The full-score manuscript held in Special Collections, Glasgow University Library is dated 'London July 1884, RCM' but the work was not performed until over a year later in a Pupils' Concert in the West Theatre, Royal Albert Hall on 10 Dec 1885, even although there were eight RCM Pupils' Concerts prior to this.¹⁰ It is not known why it took so long for MacCunn's to work to be accepted for performance.

This version of *The Moss Rose (MR2)* is conceived on a much more elaborate scale than MacCunn's previous setting, being scored for three soloists (soprano, tenor and baritone), SATB chorus and orchestra. Both works are signed 'James MacCunn'.

The text for *MR1* is attributed thus: 'Words from the German of Krumacher [sic]' and consists of nine rhyming couplets of iambic tetrameter (in English). Slightly more information about the text is given for *MR2*: 'Words adapted from the German of Krumacher as rendered by J.G.C. Braynard [sic] (an American Poet)¹¹ by James MacCunn'. James MacCunn in this instance is not Hamish, but his father, James MacCunn senior, and this is the first documented instance of collaboration between father and son. The text of *MR2* consists of four quatrains, rhyme scheme ABCB, followed by thirteen rhyming couplets, all in iambic tetrameter. Only four lines from *MR1* are retained in *MR2*, and therefore it must be assumed that James MacCunn

⁹ In particular *Schnitterliedchen*, Op. 68 no. 18.

¹⁰ Information obtained from RCM advertisements in the *Times*.

¹¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacker (1796–1868) German clergyman and poet; John Gardiner Calkins Brainard (1796–1828) American poet. MacCunn's transcriptions of his librettists' names were less than accurate.

senior is the principal author of the libretto. It is not known how he came to have knowledge of Krummacher's poem, since it has not been traced in any standard anthology of the time. There were, however, two settings of the poem for solo voice by Edward Bunnett (1870) and Charles Hall King (1880)¹² and it may have been through acquaintance with one or other song that the poem became known to MacCunn senior.

MR2 consists of a central section for soprano and tenor soloists flanked on either side by a section for chorus. The work is through-composed, with each movement flowing into the next without pause. In all aspects it is considerably superior to *The Changing Year* and shows how much progress MacCunn had made under the tuition of Parry and Stanford. Although the writing for chorus is mainly homophonic, there are some instances of imitative writing, and effective contrast is achieved by the alternation of harmony and unison in the opening choral section. Orchestration shows a level of maturity, with a variety of timbres and textures, and intelligent use of the full orchestra.¹³ Harmony is more fluid than in *The Changing Year*, as can be seen from the opening bars (Example 3.4).

Example 3.4 – Opening of *The Moss Rose*

Perhaps the most notable feature is the recurring Moss Rose motif introduced in bar 1, and which later occurs in inverted form (Examples 3.5a and b).

Example 3.5a – Moss Rose motif

Example 3.5b – Moss Rose motif inverted

¹² Source: BL on-line catalogue <<http://catalogue.bl.uk>> accessed 26 Oct 2005.

¹³ Orchestra – double woodwind; 2 horns; timpani; strings.

The motif is used in the opening section and at the start of the central section, whereas the inverted motif occurs solely in the latter. Interestingly, or perhaps coincidentally, both motifs are used nine times. There is no real indication of the motif's meaning which functions more as a musical calling card than as a leitmotif, and given the very narrow focus of the text, it is surprising that its use is not continued to the end of the work.

Bonny Kilmeny

The cantata *Bonny Kilmeny* was written in 1886 while MacCunn was still a student at the Royal College of Music. The title on the full-score of the cantata is *Kilmeny*, whereas the published title is *Bonny Kilmeny*. In this chapter, *Kilmeny* is used to refer to Hogg's poem from which the libretto is taken, and *Bonny Kilmeny* to MacCunn's cantata.

Text

The text for *Bonny Kilmeny* is taken from James Hogg's epic poem *The Queen's Wake* (1813),¹⁴ the work which first brought Hogg to the attention of the literary world. The poem, set in the Palace of Holyrood in 1561, the year in which Mary Queen of Scots returned to Scotland from France to claim her throne and kingdom, tells the story of seventeen bards who sing their songs in competition with one another. This type of scenario has a long tradition in literature, going back at least to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1387), but as far as Hogg is concerned, a much more recent example was to be found in Canto Six of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). In *The Queen's Wake* the prize is a harp, the symbol of poetic inspiration for Romantic authors. Hogg's glorification of bardic culture in his poem is seen as a reaction to the rational methods of the Enlightenment and 'an attempt to explore, recover, and to reanimate a Scottish national identity that had been obscured and complicated, for Hogg's generation, by the 1707 Union with England.'¹⁵ *The Queen's Wake*, which ran to five editions in Hogg's lifetime, remained in print until the middle of the twentieth century and has recently been republished in a new scholarly edition.¹⁶

¹⁴ 'Wake' – Scots for 'competition'.

¹⁵ Douglas S. Mack 'Introduction' in James Hogg *The Queen's Wake: a Legendary Poem* The Stirling/South Carolina Research Edition of the Collected Works of James Hogg, 14. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004, xxvii.

¹⁶ James Hogg *The Queen's Wake: a Legendary Poem* Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004.

On the second night of the wake, the thirteenth bard, ‘Drummond from the moors of Ern’, tells a story which combines the ideal and the supernatural, that of the pure girl Kilmeny who vanishes without trace while out in the glen. She is mourned for dead, but eventually returns to tell her fellow mortals about the land to which she had been taken. In it, a place free from all the trouble and sin of the real world, she is taken to a high mountain to be shown a vision of the future – Mary Queen of Scots’ conflicts with John Knox, and her death in exile in England; the Scottish religious wars of the Covenanters in the seventeenth century; and the Napoleonic Wars (1799–1815) which were still in progress at the time of Hogg’s writing. A month and a day after her return, Kilmeny disappears and goes back to the other world. The ‘other world’ of Kilmeny was for a long time interpreted as fairyland, but Douglas Mack has proposed that in fact the land is heaven.¹⁷

Kilmeny contains several literary echoes. The simple style of narration, originally written in old Scots,¹⁸ harks back to the Scots Makars¹⁹ and the world of the medieval poem. The story of abduction to the supernatural world is common to many folklore traditions and is the subject of several Scottish Border Ballads, e.g. ‘Thomas the Rhymer’ and ‘Tam Lin’. Hogg, a native of the Scottish Borders who was steeped in its ballad tradition, was writing at a time when the Romantic movement, expressing a nostalgia for a simple and heroic past, initiated a pan-European revival of interest in folk tales and ballads. The visionary element in *Kilmeny* has been seen to have parallels with Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, in which Adam is taken by the Archangel Michael to a high hill in Paradise and shown a vision of the course of history.²⁰

Kilmeny is generally judged to be one of Hogg’s best pieces of work. It was extensively anthologised and was a favourite recitation piece. Proof of its popularity is seen in the number of artists who were inspired to illustrate it. As early as 1833, there were two paintings on a Kilmeny theme, one by the Northumbrian-born artist John Martin (1789–1854) who was personally known to Hogg, and the other by Andrew

¹⁷ Douglas S. Mack ‘Hogg’s *Kilmeny*: an Interpretation’ *Studies in Scottish Literature* 4, 1966–7, 42–45.

¹⁸ The antiquated Scots style and spelling of the 1813 edition was replaced by Hogg in subsequent editions by language much closer to standard English albeit flavoured with Scots vocabulary.

¹⁹ ‘Makar’ is a medieval Scots term for a poet. Makars include William Dunbar (?1456–?1513), Robert Henryson (?1424–?1506), Sir David Lyndsay of the Mount (c.1486–1555), Bishop Gavin Douglas (1476–1522).

²⁰ Douglas S. Mack ‘Introduction’ in James Hogg *The Queen’s Wake: a Legendary Poem* Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2004, xlv–xlv.

Somerville (1804–34), an Edinburgh artist who often used Border ballads as a source of inspiration.²¹ Kilmeny paintings were exhibited by R.S. Lauder (1860), Hugh Cameron (1891) and T.B. Blacklock (1897).²² In the early twentieth century, both Mary Corbett and Jessie M. King provided illustrations for published editions of *Kilmeny*²³ which in their very different ways capture the magical essence of the poem and show the continuing fascination which the poem held for the artistic community.

Libretto

The works of Macpherson, Burns and Scott have been the inspiration for many composers, both British and European. James Hogg's works, however, seem to have attracted far less musical interest and he does not even merit a mention in Roger Fiske's study *Scotland in Music: a European Enthusiasm*.²⁴ Prior to MacCunn's *Bonny Kilmeny* there are examples of settings of Hogg's shorter poems for solo voices, trios and quartets, mainly by British composers. By choosing to set *Kilmeny*, whose continuing popularity with the Scottish public would have made it an attractive and obvious choice, MacCunn was creating a precedent rather than following in an established tradition. The libretto for *Bonny Kilmeny* is an adaptation by MacCunn's father James, which uses approximately half of Hogg's lines, but:

[...] for the purposes of musical treatment the story has been condensed and arranged in a consecutive form. For the same reason, alterations, excisions and additions to the text have been necessary, but with the utmost regard to preserve and sustain the mystic beauty and simplicity of the poem.²⁵

The most notable alterations are:

- the removal of the symbolic references to political events and the consequent narrowing of focus on the purity of Kilmeny, the beauties of nature, and the distant land which she visited
- the rewording of the passage given to Kilmeny as soloist from third to first person

²¹ Meiko O'Halloran 'Hogg, Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Illustrations to *The Queen's Wake*', in James Hogg *The Queen's Wake: a Legendary Poem*, cii–civ.

²² Institution of Fine Arts' *Scotsman* 20 Mar 1860, 4; 'The Exhibition of the Royal Scottish Academy' *Scotsman* 13 Feb 1891, 5; 'The Royal Scottish Academy's Exhibition' *Scotsman* 8 Mar 1897, 5.

²³ James Hogg *Kilmeny* with illustrations by Mary Corbett. London: John Lane, 1905. James Hogg *Kilmeny* illustrated by Jessie M. King. London: Foulis Press, 1910.

²⁴ Roger Fiske *Scotland in Music: a European Enthusiasm* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.

²⁵ James MacCunn 'Kilmeny Adapted as a Cantata', in Hamish MacCunn *Bonny Kilmeny* Edinburgh: Paterson, 1888, ii.

- the partial Anglicisation of the text e.g. ‘went’ for ‘gaed’, ‘smoke’ for ‘reek’; ‘golden’ for ‘gouden’, ‘got’ for ‘gat’ –however, there is no apparent systematic scheme of replacement, and in the piano-vocal score a glossary is provided for twenty-two Scots words which could prove problematic for English choirs and audiences
- the excision of lines – where Hogg has verses with an uneven number of lines, one line is either added or omitted, thus allowing for strophic setting in verses of four lines (See Table 3.2).

Hogg	MacCunn
Bonny Kilmeny gaed up the glen; But it wasna to meet Duneira’s men, Not the rosy monk of the isle to see, For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be. It was only to hear the Yorlin sing And pu’ the cress-flower around the spring; The scarlet hypp and the hyndberry And the nut that hung frae the hazel tree; For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.	Bonny Kilmeny went up the glen; But it wasna’ to meet Duneira’s men, Not the rosy monk of the isle to see, For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be. Twas only to hear the yorline sing And to pu’ the cress-flow’r around the spring; To pu’ the hyp and the hyndberry, For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be. The nuts from the hazel tree that swung To gather, as she sweetly sung Sweet hymns of holy melody, For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.

Table 3.2 – Alterations to Hogg’s text made by James MacCunn

Table 3.2 shows, in bold, James MacCunn’s additions to Hogg’s opening nine lines to form three quatrains of four lines. By repeating ‘For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.’ and by inserting a reference to ‘sweet hymns of holy melody’, even greater emphasis is laid on Kilmeny’s purity. The table also shows the substitution of the Standard English ‘went’ for the Scots ‘gaed’.

- the addition of an epilogue by Dr David Moir.²⁶ To quote the librettist again:

The addition of an epilogue appearing to be necessary to complete the work musically, the words thereof which form the closing chorus have been selected from a poem [...] the sentiment of which (being elegiac verses on a beautiful girl), is singularly in sympathy with the story of Kilmeny in its eulogy of pure, perfect and spiritualised womanhood.²⁷

26 Dr David Moir (1798–1851), Scottish physician and writer, frequent contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*.

²⁷ James MacCunn ‘Kilmeny Adapted as a Cantata’ in Hamish MacCunn *Bonny Kilmeny* Edinburgh: Paterson, 1888, ii.

Of the seven verses in Moir's poem 'Weep not for Her: a Dirge', only three verses are used, numbers one, seven and six.²⁸

MacCunn's libretto consists of 136 lines, the majority of which are arranged in rhyming couplets in iambic tetrameter. To this is appended the epilogue consisting of Moir's three verses of six lines (iambic pentameter, rhyme scheme ABABCC) followed by the refrain 'Weep not for her!'. Hogg's poem, in a style similar to that of a traditional ballad, tells its story in a simple, detached manner without offering any comment on the action, whereas Moir's more elaborate verses, overlaid with Victorian sentimentality, detract from the established feeling of antiquity by addressing the listener directly about the fate of the principal character.

Sources

The full score of *Kilmeny*, held in Special Collections, Glasgow University Library²⁹ is signed and dated 26 March 1886. The title page, inscribed in elaborate black calligraphic script decorated with red, reads: 'Kilmeny | Cantata | for | Soli, chorus and orchestra | by | Hamish MacCunn'. The succeeding three pages, also in elaborate script, contain the librettist's justification for his alterations and additions under the heading 'Kilmeny Adapted as a Cantata' and the Argument (f1v), the words for Part 1 (f2r), and the words for Part 2 (f2v). Comparisons of the artwork with manuscripts of MacCunn's brother Andrew, mentioned in Chapter 1, indicate that it is the work of MacCunn senior. Hamish MacCunn has added on the flyleaf a quotation of twenty-seven lines from the prelude to *Kilmeny*.

Where proud Ben Vorlich cleaves the wind:
There oft, when suns of summer shone,
The bard would sit, and muse alone,
Of innocence, expelled by man;

The final two lines of the quotation serve as a most appropriate injunction to the audience.

O list the tale, ye fair and young,
A lay so strange was never sung.

²⁸ David Macbeth Moir *Poetical Works* edited by Thomas Aird. 2 ed. 2 vols. Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1860, 1, 154–156.

²⁹ GUL MS MacCunn 40.

Scoring

The work is scored for double woodwind, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, strings, timpani, harp, soprano, tenor and baritone soloists, and SATB chorus.

Musical treatment

The libretto delivered to MacCunn by his father is a tale by a Scottish poet, with a Scottish location, about a pure maiden who is spirited away to another world, possibly fairyland. The pacing of the narrative does not vary much. Even the abduction of Kilmeny, one of the central events of the cantata, is carried out in the gentlest possible manner and is described in lyrical terms, *Andante sostenuto*, by the tenor soloist. Overall the libretto invites a treatment which unites the separate numbers and conveys the work's ethereal quality, its involvement with the supernatural and the realm of Celtic mysticism, its Scottishness and above all, its 'mystic beauty and simplicity'. MacCunn's response is based on the use of recurring themes, the use of motifs repeated within numbers, appropriate setting of the text, atmospheric instrumentation and the incorporation of Scottish musical elements.

The work is through-composed and divided into two sections – Part One consisting of seven numbers and Part Two which has five numbers followed by the Epilogue (See Table 3.3). The tonal structure shows that moves to keys a third apart dominate and this is also true of the tonal structure of each number. In two instances there is a move from tonic minor to tonic major (Numbers 7–8 and 9–10) and in another two instances there is a shift of a fourth (Numbers 4–5 and 8–9). A return to the home key of F major in the last number would have been more satisfying, but as this would have resulted in a rather low tessitura for all voices, the final number is in B flat major.

No	Text	Forces	Key	Intervallic relationship with previous number	Themes
1	Bonny Kilmeny went up the glen	SA	F		BK
2	Long may her minny look o'er t the wa'	Tenor solo	D minor/ D major/ C major	Relative minor	BK; LF; Waiting
3	In yond greenwoode there is a waikie	SATB	A minor/ D major/ F sharp major	Relative minor	BK; GW
4	Oh, sleep gentle maiden!	SATB unaccompanied	A minor	Mediant minor	
5	Long have I searched the world wide	Baritone solo	D minor/ D major	Subdominant	BK; Horse motif
6	They claspit her waist and hands so fair	Tenor solo	B flat major/ E major	Flattened submediant	Abduction
7	Now shall the land of spirits see	SATB	C major	Flattened submediant	Fugue-like theme
8	When seven lang years had come and fled	Baritone solo	C minor/ C major	Tonic minor	Waiting; BK; LF; GW; Late
9	Kilmeny! Kilmeny! Oh, where have you been?	SATB	F minor	Subdominant minor	GW; Anxiety motif
10	Kilmeny looked up with a lovely grace	Baritone solo	F major	Tonic major	LF
11	I have come from the land of light and love	Soprano solo	A flat major/ E major/ A flat major/ E flat minor	Flattened mediant	BK; Abduction
12	When a month and a day had come and gaen	Baritone solo	C minor/ E flat major	Tonic major	LF; GW
13	Weep not for her! Oh, she was far too fair	SATB	B flat major	Dominant major	Westminster ("Big Ben") Chimes

Table 3.3 – Schematic outline of *Bonny Kilmeny*

BK = Bonny Kilmeny

LF = Lily flower

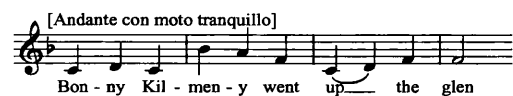
GW = Greenwood

Recurring themes and motifs

MacCunn's use of recurring themes and motifs within *Bonny Kilmeny* is extremely complex. By employing five recurring themes to represent the work's main ideas, MacCunn is able to comment musically on the action and invest it with a strong sense of cohesion.

Two themes are associated with Kilmeny, the central figure of the cantata (Examples 3.7a and b).

Example 3.7a – Bonny Kilmeny (BK)

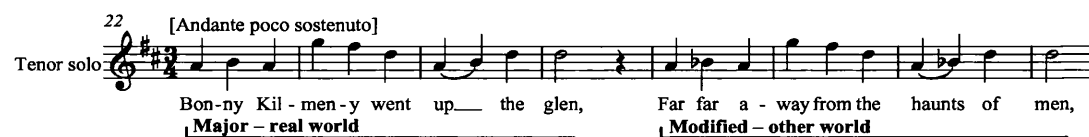


Example 3.7b – Lily flower (LF)



The Bonny Kilmeny theme is the most frequently used theme in the work, being employed in six separate numbers. Easily recognised by its leap of a rising seventh, it takes the form of the melody of the opening chorus, which is introduced by the altos and then reprised by sopranos and altos in three-part harmony. The melody is based on the Mixolydian mode, with its distinctive flattened seventh degree, which in a Scottish context seems to mimic the scale of the bagpipes. In Numbers 2 and 8, a modified form, in which the sixth of the scale is flattened, is juxtaposed to the major version, contrasting the real world with the other world to which Kilmeny is taken (Example 3.8).

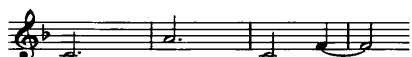
Example 3.8– Bonny Kilmeny – modified version



The Lily Flower theme is first heard in Number 2, 'Her brow was like the lily flower', introduced by the first violins over a flowing triplet accompaniment in the second violins and violas. The words describing Kilmeny's attributes are sung by the tenor soloist to a melody which is more elaborate than the Bonny Kilmeny theme, having chromatic decoration and resultant harmonic complexity. There is a similarity between the themes, as they are both centred on the tonic triad, but whereas Bonny

Kilmeny cadences on the first degree of the scale, Lily Flower cadences on the leading note (Examples 3.9a and 3.9b)

Example 3.9a– Bonny Kilmeny theme in outline



Example 3.9b– Lily Flower in outline



The Bonny Kilmeny theme is purely referential, whereas Lily Flower serves as a descriptor, a reminder of Kilmeny's purity, the lily being white and a religious symbol of innocence. In one movement, Number 8, the two themes are elided and combine their meanings. Example 3.10a shows a modified opening of Lily Flower (A), followed by two bars (B) which comprise the last five melodic notes of the opening stanza of Number 1 (Example 3.10b).

Example 3.10a – Elision of two themes



Example 3.10b



Two themes represent the supernatural and its powers (Examples 3.11a and b). The greenwood is the arena of supernatural beings, thus its theme signifies their activity, while the Abduction theme, first sung to the words 'They claspit her waist and her hands so fair' represents the action of removing Kilmeny from the Greenwood to the other world.

Example 3.11a – Greenwood



Example 3.11b – Abduction



The Greenwood theme is first heard in Number 3 – ‘In yonde greenwood’, as a menacing ostinato in a minor key, introduced by the strings playing *pianissimo* in the lower register. The entire number is made up of this ostinato or its rhythmically altered derivatives (Example 3.12).

Example 3.12 – ‘In yond greenwood’

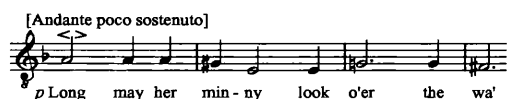
The musical score for 'In yond greenwood' is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 10-16) features a Tenor (T.) and Bass (B.) vocal line with lyrics 'In yond green - wood there is a wake, And'. The orchestration includes Horns/Trumpets (Hns/ tpts) and strings. The strings play a continuous, low-register ostinato marked *pp*. The second system (measures 17-23) continues the vocal line with lyrics 'in that waike there is a wene,'. The orchestration remains, with the strings continuing their ostinato. The third system (measures 24-30) shows the vocal line concluding. The strings play a final cadence marked *f pp*. A legend at the bottom left indicates 'A = antique style cadence', with 'A' markers placed under the first and last measures of the piece.

To match the antique feeling created by the use of old Scots words, MacCunn uses a homophonic setting which gives the impression of the chanting of an ancient magic spell. A further antique touch is the addition of a decorative, quasi Landini-type, cadence.

The Abduction theme occurs twice, in Number 6 – ‘They claspit her waist and hands so fair’ and in Number 11 – ‘I have come from the land of light and love’. At the beginning of Number 6, it is announced by a horn call, then played twice by the violas in the introduction. It forms the first two phrases of the tenor’s solo, is repeated in the third stanza and echoed in the postlude. In Number 11 it is used in the central section to accompany the soprano soloist as she describes her abduction with the words ‘They led me far to a mountain green’.

The final theme represents the waiting for the return of Kilmeny (Example 3.13a). The Waiting theme is introduced in Number 2 ‘Her brow was like the lily flower’ by the tenor soloist, sung quasi recitative, and appears in a truncated form in Number 8 (Example 3.13b).

Example 3.13a – Waiting



Example 3.13b – Truncated Waiting theme



The Waiting theme, associated as it is with Kilmeny’s minny (mother) carries the deep poignancy of a mother’s waiting for the return of her daughter.

Of these themes, Bonny Kilmeny and Waiting are introduced first in the vocal line and thereafter occur principally in the accompaniment. The remaining three themes, Lily Flower, Greenwood and Abduction occur first in the accompaniment, prior to their text being sung.

Recurring motifs and themes within numbers

In addition to the principal recurring themes mentioned above, MacCunn also uses internal motifs and recurring themes which are specific to one number to illustrate the immediate action. Number 5 – ‘Long have I searched the world wide’, in which the baritone soloist sings of his global search for a pure maiden, is accompanied by a recurring rhythmic motif to indicate the galloping of his horse as it carries him on his mission. The first time it is played it is given prominence by the first violins (Example 3.14a) but thereafter is relegated mainly to lower registers as in Example 3.14b and Example 3.14c.

Horse motifs

Example 3.14a



Example 3.14b



Example 3.14c



At the words ‘As spotless as the morning snaw’, the Bonny Kilmeny theme and the horse motif are heard simultaneously, indicating that search has succeeded in finding Kilmeny, who fits the description of a pure maiden (Example 3.15 over).

Example 3.15 – Bonny Kilmeny theme with horses motif

Another internal motif is that used to indicate anxiety in Number 9 – ‘Kilmeny! Kilmeny! O where have ye been?’ As the chorus directly questions Kilmeny as to where she has been, their enquiries are accompanied by an edgy rhythmic ostinato which alternates between first and second violins and persists almost uninterrupted throughout the number (Example 3.16).

Example 3.16 – Anxiety motif

Aggregation of recurring themes

Number 8 – ‘When seven long years had come and fled’, which opens Part Two, is an excellent example of MacCunn’s skill at using motifs to greatest effect. The truncated Waiting theme (Minny) (see Example 3.13b) opens the number and the concluding section (bars 43–76) is made up entirely of recurring themes – Bonny Kilmeny, Lily Flower, Greenwood, the elided Bonny Kilmeny + Lily Flower, along with an internal theme, matched to the text ‘Late in the gloaming’ (Example 3.17). Such a density of themes displays MacCunn’s awareness of the potency of thematic symbolism. The recurring themes, although confined to the accompaniment, are given prominence by virtue of being melodically more interesting than the vocal line, which functions as a pedal point rather than melodic decoration. Thus it is the voice on a repeated G which sings of Kilmeny’s homecoming and simultaneously leads to the eventual tonal homecoming in C major in bar 66.

Example 3.17 – Number 8 – ‘When seven lang years had come and fled’

[Moderato ben sostenuto] *Late* *tranne*

35 *p* *pp*

Baritone solo

Late late in the gloam-ing when all was still, When the fringe was red on the west - ren hill, The

Orch.

strings *pp* *cl* *pp*

43 *p*

wood Late was sere, The moon on the wane, The smoke o' the

Late (major) *BK*

pp *pp*

48 *pp*

cot hung o'er the plain, Like a flee-cy cloud In the

BK *Lily + BK*

53 *pp* *pp*

world a - lane, Late in the gloam-ing, Late in the gloam -

GW *GW*

pp *pp* *timp*

62 *pp*

ing Kil - men - y came hame.

Lily + BK

pp

69 *Lily + BK*

sf p

The musical score is for a baritone solo and orchestra. It is in 4/4 time and D minor. The tempo is 'Moderato ben sostenuto'. The score is divided into systems, with measures 35, 43, 48, 53, 62, and 69 marked at the beginning of each system. The baritone solo part has lyrics in Scottish Gaelic and English. The orchestra part includes strings, woodwinds (flute, oboe, clarinet), and percussion (timpani). Dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *sf* (sforzando). The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slurs, and articulation marks.

Text setting

MacCunn's response to the Hogg/MacCunn libretto displays a high level of understanding of and sensitivity towards the text. Chorus numbers, which for the most part are set homophonically, create an atmosphere of stillness and mysticism, reflecting the supernatural realm in which the story takes place. A particularly good illustration of this is Number 3 – 'In yond greenwood', which describes the enchanted location where Kilmeny falls asleep. Written in a minor key, its homophonic, hypnotic, chant-like writing hints at magic and spells. Starting pianissimo, with muted strings in the lower register alternating with male voices (Examples 3.12a, 3.13), there is a rise in pitch, a thickening in texture, and an increase in dynamics with the gradual addition of instruments and the female voices of the chorus, reaching a fortissimo at the point where the text describes the maike (elf or brownie) as having 'neither flesh, nor blood nor bone' (Example 3.18).

Example 3.18 – Number 3 – 'In yond greenwood'

The musical score for Example 3.18, Number 3 – 'In yond greenwood', is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 24-28) features Soprano (S. A.) and Tenor (T. B.) voices, and the Orchestra (Orch.). The lyrics are: 'And in that wene there is a maike, that'. The second system (measures 29-33) continues the lyrics: 'nei - ther has flesh, nor blood, nor bone,'. The score includes dynamic markings (p, cres, ff, sf p) and performance instructions (obs/cl/s/hns, +fls/bans, vns+8va/vlas, vcs/dbs, +tpts).

Further indications of the supernatural at work are made by the unsettled tonality and the tripping semiquaver accompaniment, perhaps suggested to MacCunn by Mendelssohn's Overture *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1826).

The least successful choruses are Number 4 – 'Chorus of spirits' and Number 13 – 'Weep not for her'. They are similar in that they are both strophic settings of overtly sentimental texts and are the only two movements which do not employ recurring themes. Their strophic nature combined with their homophonic treatment means that contrast can only be achieved by variation in dynamics, but this is not enough to alleviate the monotony of the setting. The opening bars of Number 13, repeated in the chorus's opening bars appear to be a direct quotation of the Westminster ("Big Ben") Chimes. It is unclear whether this is a coincidence or whether the motif is intended as a symbol for the passing of time, and by analogy for the passing of Kilmeny.

Example 3.19 – Number 13 – 'Weep not for her'

13 [Andante espressivo]
Westminster ("Big Ben") chimes

S. A. *p* Weep not for her, oh she was far too fair,

T. B.

In the cantata's solo numbers, the tenor and bass share the role of narrator, while the soprano soloist assumes the role of Kilmeny. The baritone solo in Number 8 – 'When seven lang years had come and fled', although labelled 'Recit' by MacCunn is more arioso than recitative (Example 3.17). Repeated notes and stepwise movement in the vocal line and pedal points in the string accompaniment recreate the feeling of calmness and serenity expressed in the words, while the use of recurring motifs introduces an additional layer of significance.

The soprano solo, Number 13 – 'I have come from the land of love and light' is the longest solo in the cantata. It is through-composed, and like the Kilmeny theme, is in triple time. The text describes the land to which Kilmeny was taken, an unchanging land of mystic thought, and like the baritone solo in Number 8, it is set syllabically. Movement is mainly step-wise, and when leaps occur, they are mainly fourths or fifths. An extensive use of pedals helps to create an impression of tranquillity, and the

inclusion of the harp, the instrument of heavenly beings, further underlines the perfection of the place visited by Kilmeny.

Harmony and tonality

Bonny Kilmeny serves to illustrate that as a result of his study at the RCM MacCunn had expanded his harmonic vocabulary and relied less on simple diatonic harmony than in his previous cantatas. Example 3.20 shows the use of half diminished seventh chords, an augmented triad and diminished triads to create a feeling of uncertainty.

Example 3.20 – Number 8 – Orchestral introduction

Moderato ben sostenuto

Orch strings *pp*

c minor: i II v⁷ half dim. VI+ iv half dim.

6

dominant pedal (V of E_b) i V v⁷ I

There are also examples of augmented sixths and Neapolitan sixth chords in the score.

Tonality is less rigid and like the example above underlines the otherworldliness of much of the work. A sudden modulation from E major to E flat major draws attention to the text 'and I saw the changes' in Number 10. A two-bar dominant pedal leads one to expect a full close in E major, but instead it resolves on a second inversion of E flat major (Example 3.21).

Example 3.21 – Unexpected modulation

69

Tenor solo

And I saw the changes the spirits wrought,

Orch.

E major: V expected resolution E major E_b major

Orchestration and instrumentation

MacCunn's use of the orchestra, in terms of texture and timbre, is very effective. His orchestration is, if anything, understated, and never overwhelms the voices it accompanies. Orchestral *tuttis* are used only when required for emphasis.

In the introduction to the opening number – 'Bonny Kilmeny went up the glen' the alternation of woodwind pairings with strings over a dominant pedal creates a mysterious, pregnant atmosphere in which something is waiting to happen (Example 3.22).

Example 3.22 – Introduction to Number 1

The musical score for Example 3.22, 'Introduction to Number 1', is written for woodwinds and strings. It begins with a tempo marking of 'Andante con moto tranquillo'. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-10) features a woodwind melody (flutes and clarinets) over a string accompaniment. The second system (measures 11-19) continues the woodwind melody with string accompaniment. The third system (measures 20-28) shows the woodwinds playing a more active melody with string accompaniment. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *v* (forte). The score is marked with 'cls' for clarinets, 'fls' for flutes, 'strings', 'bsns' for bassoons, 'vns/vlas' for violas, and 'vcs/dbs' for violas.

Flutes and clarinets continue to set the scene in the opening number by imitating woodland birds in the accompaniment and between vocal phrases.

Another very effective atmospheric passage with an interesting pairing of instruments is the eight bar postlude for horn and harp which follows the soprano solo (Number 11 – 'I have come from the land of love and light'). The static harmony, punctuated by a rocking stepwise movement in the horn, gives the impression of calm and serenity (Example 3.23 over).

Example 3.23 – Number 11 – ‘I have come from the land of love and light’ – postlude

141 Adagio

Hom

pp
Harp e flat minor arpeggios (demisemiquavers)

Harp simile

The heroic style baritone solo ‘Long have I searched the world wide’ is introduced by a passage in which the violas play a demisemiquaver figure (rising D minor scale) (which sounds like the arrival of a galloping horse) punctuated by chords played by horns, trumpets and violas (Example 3.24).

Example 3.24 – Number 5 – ‘Long have I searched the world wide’ – Introduction

1 Allegro con brio

Orch.

via f 7

vc/db

5 hns/tpts/via

via 7

vc/db

strings

Scottish elements

MacCunn’s inclusion of Scottish elements in *Bonny Kilmeny* is extremely economical and understated, with a judicious admixture of folk elements introduced at the beginning of the work to indicate its Scottish context. The Kilmeny theme is central to the work, as it incorporates several representative characteristics of traditional music. Its melody, like so many Scots airs, is, with the exception of three notes, pentatonic, and its phrases cadence on either the first or sixth degree of the scale. A direct consequence of the melodic material is the absence of dominant harmony. The hexatonic Abduction theme (Example 3.11b) in Number 6 also echoes traditional Scots melody. Bagpipes, a traditional instrument, are suggested by the use of the flattened seventh degree of the scale and the incorporation of drones. A further allusion to bagpipes, or possibly the fiddle, is the use of two acciaccaturas (Example 3.25, bars 29 and 37).

Example 3. 25 – Scottish elements in *Bonny Kilmeny*

The musical score for 'Bonny Kilmeny' is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 29-35) is marked 'Tranquillo' and features a vocal line (A) and an orchestral line (Orch) with 'vc1' and 'vc2/db' parts. The lyrics are: 'Bon - ny Kil - men - y went up the glen, But it was - na to meet Dun - eir - a's'. The second system (measures 36-41) continues the lyrics: 'men, Nor the ros - y monk of the isle to see, For Kil - men - y was'. The third system (measures 42-47) concludes with the lyrics: 'pure as pure could be.' The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, and *p*. A bracket under the first system is labeled 'Tonic and dominant drones'. Asterisks (*) above measures 29, 36, and 42 indicate notes not in the pentatonic scale.

*= notes not in the pentatonic scale

Although the harp, a traditional Scottish instrument, is used in Numbers 3, 11 and 12, it is in the context of a celestial rather than a Scottish instrument, since its use coincides with textual allusions to heaven. There are few examples of Scottish features after the first number, but the repetition of the Kilmeny theme in a further five numbers serves to anchor the action musically in a Scottish soundscape.

First performances

The first performance of *Bonny Kilmeny*, took place in Edinburgh on 13 December 1888 at a charity event. The choir was Mr Kirkhope's Private Choir,³⁰ accompanied by a string quintet,³¹ piano and harmonium, and the solos were performed by leading amateurs of the city. 'A large and fashionable audience'³² filled the Queen Street Hall, anxious to hear the latest work by MacCunn, the rising Scottish composer.

³⁰ John Kirkhope (1844–1920), the choir's director was an amateur singer. He founded his choir in 1881 and was its conductor till 1916, when the direction passed to Donald Tovey, Professor of Music at Edinburgh University. Kirkhope was awarded an honorary D. Mus by the University in 1920.

³¹ 'Music in Edinburgh' *Musical Times* 30, 1889, 28. According to the *Scotsman's* critic, it was a string orchestra.

³² 'Mr Kirkhope's Concert' *Scotsman* 14 Dec 1888, 5.

The *Scotsman*'s reviewer commented favourably on all aspects of the work. The libretto was judged to be 'much superior, both in poetic value and its general arrangement, to the ordinary cantata book', and the music was deemed to be 'in almost perfect accord with the nature of the theme'.³³ The brief notice in the *Musical Times* also commended the libretto, but found that 'the work suffers from a want of declamatory variety in the soli, and from an absence of breadth working out the chorus'.³⁴

A second Edinburgh performance, with the Kirkhope Choir and full orchestral accompaniment, was conducted by MacCunn some five weeks later on 21 January 1889, in a Paterson's Orchestral Concert. Paterson's were an Edinburgh-based firm of music publishers and instrument sellers which, under the management of the founder's son, Robert Roy Paterson,³⁵ became one of the most important music enterprises in Scotland. When in 1887 the Edinburgh Choral Union Orchestra Concerts ran into financial difficulties, Paterson, an active supporter of music in Edinburgh, took over their management, and they continued as the Paterson Concerts until 1931.³⁶

The *Scotsman*'s critic found that his earlier impressions of the work were confirmed and that it was 'a charming piece of work [...] free from the grandiose, and from all suspicion of over-anxious ambition'.³⁷ On this occasion, the solos were performed by well-known professional singers – Agnes Larkcom, Iver McKay and Bantock Pierpoint. On both occasions the choir's performance was singled out for praise:

Mr Kirkhope's Choir again distinguished themselves by a perfect exhibition of choral singing. For perfect unanimity of tune, time, and shading, for precision of entry and movement, and above all for rare distinctness of utterance, Mr Kirkhope's Choir is out of sight the best in the city at present, and would compare favourably with any of the same size in the country.³⁸

Bonny Kilmeny had already been performed by choral societies in several provincial locations in both Scotland and England, and by 'smaller Metropolitan choral

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ 'Music in Edinburgh' *Musical Times* 30, 1889, 28.

³⁵ Robert Roy Paterson (1830–1903). Paterson also composed numerous salon works mostly under the pseudonyms Pierre Perrot, Alfred Stella and Fra. Stella, most of which were published by his own firm.

³⁶ Moira Ann Harris and Jane Mallinson 'Paterson, Robert Roy' in: *MGG 2 Personenteil* 13, 2005, col. 187.

³⁷ 'Amusements: Fifth Orchestral Concert' *Scotsman* 22 Jan 1889, 5.

³⁸ Ibid.

societies with pianoforte accompaniment only,³⁹ prior to its first full London performance, conducted by August Manns at a Crystal Palace Saturday concert on 8 March 1890. Whereas Scottish reviewers had received the work with enthusiasm and concentrated on the work's positive aspects, the critic of the *Times* offered a more dispassionate appraisal, finding more to criticise than to praise. The libretto was judged to be a weak Scottish reflection of the Persephone myth and the music was characterised as no more than 'the work of a very promising student'. The review took MacCunn to task for the lack of variety and tempi in the choral passages and also for his poor part-writing technique. Adopting a purist's approach, the reviewer found fault with MacCunn's occasional upward resolution of sevenths.

For instance, there has existed for some time a popular prejudice to the effect that sevenths should be resolved downwards, whereas their resolution in the choruses of *Bonny Kilmeny* is almost always by ascent. Until he establish, by means of bold originality of effect or superlative merits of some kind, his claim to be considered as above all rules, it will be well for the composer to observe those which have been recognised as binding by most of the great masters in all time.⁴⁰

Other reviews were similarly critical. The *Musical Times* said that 'the later works produced by this young Scotch composer have shown a weakness for working on the lines of modern composition which necessitates intricate and meaningless writing, an absence of melody, and a preponderance of technical difficulties.'⁴¹ George Bernard Shaw, writing in the *Star*, delivered an even more damning judgement.

Bonny Kilmeny is a juvenile work of Mr MacCunn's; and although a fairy story set to music could have no better quality than juvenility, yet Mr Manns' platform is hardly the right platform for it. [...] Mr MacCunn's diffuse strains, full of simple feeling and fancy as they are, did once or twice suggest to me that the Sydenham orchestra might be better employed than in accompanying Hogg's verses and tootling the sentimental interludes for the wood wind [sic] which occur between every line.⁴²

Publication and subsequent performances

Bonny Kilmeny was published by Paterson and Son, the Edinburgh company which promoted the first public performance of the work. Obviously hoping for high

³⁹ 'Music and the Drama' *Glasgow Herald*, 10 Mar 1890, 13.

⁴⁰ 'Crystal Palace Concerts' *Times* 10 Mar 1890, 10.

⁴¹ 'Crystal Palace' *Musical Times* 31, 1890, 213.

⁴² Shaw, George Bernard *London Music in 1888–89 as Heard by Corno di Bassetto (Later Known as Bernard Shaw) with Some Further Autobiographical Particulars* London: Constable, 1937, 326–7.

sales, they issued a variety of formats, offering three different options for the piano-vocal score (paper covers, paper boards, scarlet cloth), and the programme for the Edinburgh performance on 21 January 1889 indicates that copies of the vocal score could be purchased in the hall on the night of the concert. Also available were staff notation choruses, a Tonic Sol-fa edition, single sheets of 'The Chorus of Spirits' and Weep Not for Her'. All versions of the vocal score were attractively presented with a brown, art nouveau style etching of Kilmeny printed on the buff outside cover (Illustration 8). Orchestral parts were also issued and a part for harmonium ('in lieu of wind parts'), but the full score was only ever available in manuscript.



Illustration 8 – Cover of *Bonny Kilmeny*

In spite of the less than encouraging press reviews, *Bonny Kilmeny* received a reasonable number of performances in the five years following its publication. There seems to have been a revival of interest in the 1920s and 1930s – performances in 1928

and 1938 may have been staged to mark the sixtieth and seventieth anniversaries of MacCunn's birth.⁴³

Assessment

Bonny Kilmeny was written while MacCunn was still a student at the RCM, at a time when he was still experimenting and refining his compositional technique. In *Bonny Kilmeny* he shows more confidence in handling his text and is far more economical in the use of textual repetition than in previous works. Technically he is more adventurous, using augmented sixths, augmented and diminished triads, enharmonic key changes and tertiary shifts. His integration of recurring themes and motifs into the texture of the accompaniment shows a high degree of skill and imagination, as does his orchestral palette.

One criticism, not of MacCunn but of his librettist, is the addition of the epilogue by Moir 'Weep not for her' as its sentimentality does not sit comfortably with Hogg's more detached narrative. Although the cantata could have ended quite satisfactorily at the end of Number 12 – 'When a month and a day had come and gaen', a final number for chorus was added, since it would have been expected by both audience and choir. A further but minor criticism of the libretto is the introduction of the role of 'the reverent fere' for the baritone soloist, without any explanation in the prefatory material as to who this person is. This anomaly was noted by the critic of the *Times*: 'the task of following the story is not made easier by the uncertainty which hangs over the identity of the "reverent (possibly intended for reverend) fere" to whom is allotted some of the most attractive music of the whole work'.⁴⁴

The simplicity and lyricism of Hogg's *Kilmeny*, its 'aërial, fading music'⁴⁵ are well conveyed by MacCunn's musical interpretation and this is what allows it to withstand the test of time. The listener is lulled into suspending his disbelief, and like *Kilmeny* is led into a timeless world.

⁴³ See Appendix 2 – Performances of MacCunn's Choral Works.

⁴⁴ 'Crystal Palace Concerts' *Times* 10 Mar 1890, 10.

⁴⁵ Louis Simpson *James Hogg: a Critical Study* Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962, 91.

Chapter 4

The Cantatas – II

The Lay of the Last Minstrel – Queen Hynde of Caledon

The Lay of the Last Minstrel

By 1888, at the relatively young age of 20, MacCunn was gaining the reputation of being the rising Scottish composer of the time. His early overtures *Cior Mhor* (1885), *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood* (1887) and *The Ship o' the Fiend* (1888), and his choral ballad *Lord Ullin's Daughter* (1888) had all been premiered in London and had been well received. *Cior Mhor* and *Land of the Mountain and the Flood* had also been performed to Glasgow audiences by the Choral Union Orchestra under the direction of August Manns.¹ Although the initial reception of *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood* had, according to the *Glasgow Herald's* critic, been cool, it received enough votes to be repeated a few months later at the Plebiscite Concert which traditionally ended the season of the Saturday Popular Concerts.² The following week, 'Gewandhaus', the music critic of the Glasgow weekly publication *Quiz* remarked: 'we welcome the composition [*The Land of the Mountain and the Flood*] and live in hopes of higher things from this rising musician'.³

A further indication of MacCunn's growing reputation is that he was the subject of the prominent feature 'Men You Know' in the *Bailie*, a Glasgow weekly periodical. The article, accompanied by a pen and ink portrait of MacCunn, gave biographical details about the composer 'whose striking achievements in the field of musical art are at present exciting so much attention all over the country', as well as details of his compositions to that date. The article concluded: 'Admiration is indeed so great that the critics themselves, generally so guarded, are full of enthusiastic prognostications of Mr MacCunn's future'.⁴

¹ *Cior Mhor* 22 Jan 1887; *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood* 24 Dec 1887.

² 4 Feb 1888.

³ 'Musical Moments' *Quiz* 14, 10 Feb 1888, 230.

⁴ 'Men You Know [Hamish MacCunn] – No 803' *Bailie* 31, 7 Mar 1888, 1.

Shortly after these positive press comments, the Glasgow Choral Union, obviously impressed by MacCunn's early successes, decided to commission a choral work from him for their 1888–9 season.

Mr Hamish M^cCunn [sic] A suggestion was made that the Secretary should write Mr M^cCunn asking if he would provide a new work for a first performance, which would take up from one to two hours. This work should include solos and the subject should be admitted to the Council for approval. If he agreed, the council was prepared to offer him a commission of £50.⁵

In some quarters, however, it was suggested that the commission was not earned entirely on merit. The music critic of the *Bailie* wrote:

The young composer is a very fortunate man. Friends at court, and not a little public puffing, have evidently aided his leaps into fame quite as much as the observation of the great talent promised in his musical productions. Another composer-musician, of Celtic origin, now at the very summit of the profession and of his art, was not so fortunate and had to fight his way upwards, ability and genius alone securing him his now proud position.⁶

By August 1888, the work was well in hand, and MacCunn wrote to August Manns from Corrie on the Isle of Arran:

I am supposed to be here for a holiday! But have been working six or seven hours, every day for the last month, at once. [...] I hope you will include my "Lay of the last minstrel" in the Saturday concerts, for I have worked like a Trojan for months past at it, & I think it is in my very best style. I will see that Novello send you a copy of the pianoforte-vocal score as soon as ever they can get it printed.⁷

The commission was a bold move for the Choral Union, as it was the first time in their history that they had commissioned a work. Its council showed itself to be very astute in business matters, for 'in confirming the £50 commission for the work it was emphasised that this should give the Union the right not only to first performance of the work, but also to subsequent performances by the Union free of charge'.⁸

⁵ Robert Craig *History of the Glasgow Choral Union*, Mitchell Library Glasgow TD1556/8/3/8, 93.

⁶ 'Quavers' *Bailie* 33, 21 Nov 1888, 7. The other composer to whom reference is made is in all likelihood Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, who had recently been appointed principal of the Royal Academy of Music.

⁷ Hamish MacCunn to August Manns, 30 Aug [1888], RCM MS7020, 8.

⁸ Craig *History of the Glasgow Choral Union* TD1556/8/3/8, 118.

Choice of text

There is no indication as to why MacCunn decided to set Scott's poem in fulfilment of the commission. Craig, in his *History of the Glasgow Choral Union*, notes: 'It had been learned early in the season that Mr MacCunn had chosen Sir Walter Scott's poem "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" as the subject of the dramatic cantata he had undertaken to write for the Union.'⁹ It may have been MacCunn's own choice, but external factors, and his father James, who once again was his librettist, may have significantly influenced the final choice of text.

The enthusiastic reception of *The Spectre's Bride*, a dramatic cantata by Dvořák, could have suggested the choice of format and general subject matter. Commissioned for the Birmingham Music Festival, *The Spectre's Bride* received its first British performance on 27 Aug 1885, where according to the *Musical Times* it had a 'triumphant reception'.¹⁰ This was quickly followed by performances in all major musical centres in the UK, including London, Crystal Palace, Liverpool, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The libretto of *The Spectre's Bride* uses the ballad 'Svatebni košile' by the Czech poet Karel Jaromir Erben (1811–1870), published in his *Kytice z povětí národních* (*A Garland of National Myths*) in 1853.¹¹ The theme of *The Spectre's Bride*, that of the ghost of a dead lover returning to claim his sweetheart, is widespread in European folk literatures. Known in Scotland as 'Sweet William's Ghost',¹² versions are also found in France, Denmark, Russia, France, and Germany where it is best known as Bürger's 'Lenore'. Dvořák's success, attributed to his melodious, colourful and richly orchestrated treatment of the macabre folk-tale, may have suggested to MacCunn a model on which to base his new work and may have ultimately led to the choice of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* which has several features in common with *The Spectre's Bride*. These include the use of a ballad-like tale with national overtones and the inclusion of macabre elements. These will be more fully considered at a later stage of the discussion.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ 'Music in Birmingham' *MT* 26, 1885, 50.

¹¹ Erben's ballads were based on Czech and Slovak folk legends. The literal translation of 'Svatebni košile' is 'The Bridal Nightgown' but as this might have offended the sensibilities of Victorian audiences, it was rendered as *The Spectre's Bride* by the translator Rev. J. Troutbeck.

¹² Child Ballad 77. Another version was Walter Scott's 'William and Helen', his 1796 translation of Bürger's 'Lenore'.

Prior to MacCunn's setting of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* several composers, notably John Clarke-Whitfeld, had mined it for verses to set as songs or glees, but only one composer, Thomas Mee Pattison, had used it as the subject for a cantata (See Table 4.1 below). Published by Novello late in 1885, it does not seem to have enjoyed any great success. It was sparingly advertised in the *Musical Times* and few performances prior to MacCunn's composition have been traced.¹³

Composer	Title	Date	Genre
John Clarke-Whitfeld	'The sun had brightened the Cheviot grey'	1802	Glee
John Clarke-Whitfeld	'Sweet Teviot! on thy silver tide'	1802	Glee
John Wall Callcott	'Rosabelle'	1807	Glee
John Clarke-Whitfeld	'The feast was over in Branksome tower'	1808	Glee
Saunders Bennett	'Love will still be Lord of all'	1808	Song
John Clarke-Whitfeld	'The minstrel's harp'	1810	Recitative and air
Thomas Attwood	'In peace love tunes the shepherd's reed'	1810?	Glee
John Clarke-Whitfeld	'The goblin page'	1813	Scena
John Fane (Lord Burghersh)	'Tis done! 'Tis done!'	1815	Scene
John Clarke-Whitfeld	'The minstrel's tale'	1820	Glee and solo
John Clarke-Whitfeld	'Breathes there the man with soul so dead'	1828	Recitative and air
D.W. J.	'Call it not vain: elegy on the death of Sir Walter Scott'	1832	Song
John Clarke-Whitfeld	'Is it the roar of Teviot's tide'	1835	Glee
George William Chard	'The Mass was sung'	1841	Solo with chorus
Thomas Mee Pattison	<i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>	1885	Cantata
Hamish MacCunn	<i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>	1888	Cantata
Anthony Collins	<i>The Lay of Rosabelle</i> ¹⁴	1932	Cantata

Table 4.1 – Settings of Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*¹⁵

Another possible reason for the choice of Scott's text, other than the MacCunns' love of Scottish literature, is that the only other choral piece to be premiered by the Glasgow Choral Union had been Macfarren's setting of Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*, commissioned by the Glasgow Musical Festival Executive Committee for the opening of the New Public Halls [St Andrew's Halls] in Glasgow on 15 Nov 1877. In reviewing its first performance, the critic of the *Musical Times* wrote:

The subject, suggested to the composer by Glasgow itself, had special attractions for the local mind. Not only is "The Lady of the Lake" a Scottish story, but the principal scene of it is laid not far from the Clydeside town, a spot familiar and dear to all. Professor Macfarren, therefore, started with a good deal in his favour, because sure, at any rate, of a public inclined to be pleased.¹⁶

¹³ It was mentioned twice as being in preparation (*MT* 26, 1885, 443 and 501). Thereafter it was listed with other Novello publications published in the previous month and in box advertisements in the back matter. Performances traced are: Broughton-in-Furness, 19 Dec 1885 (*MT* 27, 1886, 44); Hurstpierpoint, 11 Feb 1886 (*MT* 27, 1886, 170); Londonderry 5 Dec 1887 (*MT* 29, 1888, 5).

¹⁴ This composition won the competition for the centenary of the death of Sir Walter Scott organised jointly by the Glasgow Society of Musicians and the Scott Centenary Committee. The work was performed at St Andrew's Hall, Glasgow in the commemoration concert on 22 Dec 1932.

¹⁵ Compiled from *CPM*, *MT*, and *GUL* catalogue.

¹⁶ 'Glasgow Choral Union' *MT* 18, 1877, 595.

The work was well received and performances by choral societies throughout Great Britain over the following ten years were noted in the *Musical Times*.¹⁷

Walter Scott also provided the basis for another contemporary cantata, Frederic Corder's *The Bridal of Triermain* (1886), five performances of which were reported in the *Musical Times* for the season 1886–7.¹⁸ Given James MacCunn's interest in music and his passion for Scottish literature, it is likely that he was acquainted with any or indeed all of the above-mentioned works by one of several means – having been present at a performance, having read a review in the *Musical Times*, having purchased the score, or having borrowed it from Novello's Circulating Music Library.

Text

Sir Walter Scott's epic poem in six cantos *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) was his first major work. In the preface to the first edition, Scott wrote:

The Poem, now offered to the Public, is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetic ornament.¹⁹

In order to reflect the antiquity of the setting, Scott cast his poem as an 'Ancient Metrical Romance' and put the poem into 'the mouth of an ancient minstrel, the last of the race',²⁰ who bewails the decline of his art and his nation while telling a Border tale of feud, witchcraft and frustrated love set in the mid-16th century. Lady Buccleuch, the chatelaine of Branksome Hall, has lost her husband in a skirmish in which one of his opponents was Lord Cranstoun,²¹ who is in love with Margaret, her daughter. However, the feud between their families makes their passion hopeless. Lady Buccleuch, seeking vengeance, commissions Sir William Deloraine to ride to Melrose Abbey to recover her family's magic book from the tomb of the wizard Michael Scott. As Deloraine returns, he meets Lord Cranstoun and is wounded by him. At Lord Cranstoun's bidding, his elfin page carries the wounded man to Branksome Hall, and, impelled by the spirit of mischief, lures away the lady's little son, the heir of the house, who falls into the hands

¹⁷ In the 1886–7 season three performances were recorded in the *MT* (*MOM* 1, 145).

¹⁸ *MOM*, 1, 145.

¹⁹ Preface to the First Edition of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* in Walter Scott *Poetical Works* London: Collins, 1942, 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ MacCunn's libretto uses the spelling 'Cranston'

of her English enemy, Lord Dacre. The latter, with Lord William Howard, intends to storm Branksome on account of Deloraine's misdeeds as a Border thief. While the Scots army is still on its way to relieve Branksome, a single combat is suggested between Sir William Deloraine, now lying wounded, and Sir Richard Musgrave, whose lands Deloraine has harried – the lady's little son to be the prize. The challenge is accepted and Musgrave is defeated. It is discovered that the victor is actually Lord Cranstoun, who with his page's assistance, has assumed the form and arms of Deloraine. Lord Cranstoun's service to the house of Buccleuch heals the feud, and he and Margaret can marry.²²

The stanzas are irregular, with each line consisting of seven to twelve syllables, four of which are accented. The rhyme scheme is not fixed – rhyming couplets predominate, but there are also occasional passages where the rhyme scheme ABAB interrupts the regularity of the rhyming couplets.

Libretto

The libretto of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, like that of *Bonny Kilmeny*, is the work of MacCunn's father, James. Although this was not the first libretto he had written for his son, none of the previous cantatas had been performed in Glasgow when *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was commissioned.²³ In order to reduce Scott's six cantos to a manageable length, James MacCunn adopted a 'cut and paste' approach. Passages from each of the six cantos of Scott's poem were selected, and rearranged as required (not always in Scott's sequence) to produce a greatly abridged version of the original poem. Some lines have minor alterations, while others are of MacCunn's devising. For example:

²² Adapted from 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel' in: *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* edited by Margaret Drabble. Rev. ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995, 564.

²³ *The Moss Rose* was performed in London in 1885. *Bonny Kilmeny* had its first performance at a charity concert in Edinburgh on 13 December 1888, just five days before the premiere of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

Scott	MacCunn
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flag-stone, Which the bloody Cross was traced upon: He pointed to a secret nook; An iron bar he Warrior took; And the Monk made a sign with his withered hand That grave's huge portal to expand.	"Behold; upon the broad flag-stone The bloody Cross in light is thrown! Now with this iron bar , command The grave's wide portal to expand!"

Table 4.2 – Canto Second XVII compared with MacCunn's libretto²⁴

Scott	MacCunn
And now in Branksome's good green wood, As under the aged oak he stood, The baron's courser pricks his ears As if a distant noise he hears	Hark! hark! who comes through Branksome wood , On such a meeting to intrude? The baron's courser pricks his ears As if a distant noise he hears

Table 4.3 – Canto Second XXXIV compared with MacCunn's libretto²⁵

If the plot of Scott's poem appears to be dense, MacCunn's libretto makes it almost impenetrable and relies on the audience's having read the argument (plot outline) provided in both the concert programme and in the piano-vocal score. The *dramatis personae* are reduced to:

Lady Buccleuch	soprano
Margaret	mezzo-soprano or contralto
Sir William of Deloraine	tenor
Mountain Spirit	
The Monk	baritone
Lord Cranston	
River Spirit	

The action of Scott's poem is condensed to focus on three episodes: Lady Buccleuch's desire to avenge her husband's death and Sir William of Deloraine's errand on her behalf to retrieve the Magic Book from Melrose Abbey; the forbidden love of Margaret of Branksome and Lord Cranston; and the single combat between the Scottish and English champions, which by saving the heir to the house of Buccleuch, ensures its survival.

There are major criticisms to be made of the libretto. Although the minstrel of the title narrates the action, he is never mentioned in the text. Over-editing gives rise to the omission of the loss and wounding of William of Deloraine, and to the taking hostage of Lady Buccleuch's young son. These incidents are mentioned in the argument, but their absence from the libretto leads to moments of incomprehension for

²⁴ Bold text indicates Scott's words retained by MacCunn.

²⁵ Bold text indicates Scott's words retained by MacCunn.

the audience. Why does Cranston bring back a son who was not posted missing? Why is there concern about Deloraine's fitness to do battle with Musgrave, as no mention is made of the injury he sustains in his fight with Cranston? The addition of two stanzas from the sixth canto at the end of Part 2 to form Numbers 9 and 10 is unnecessary, as the cantata seems complete at the end of Part Two, Number 8 which features Lady Buccleuch, Margaret, Cranston and chorus. In Scott's poem, the line 'Breathes there the man with soul so dead' and those that follow are spoken by the Minstrel prior to the marriage of Margaret and Cranston, whereas in the cantata, they are assigned to Cranston. There is no dramatic or musical justification for the additional numbers and it could be that the highly patriotic notions expressed belong as much to James MacCunn as they do to the character Cranston. A further criticism of the librettist is his disregard of Scott's verse patterns. For example, in the passage below, the original rhyme scheme, ABABAACDCD, is reduced by a process of excision and rearrangement to a series of rhyming couplets AABBCC (Table 4.4).

Scott	MacCunn
In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier The warlike foresters had bent And many a flower and many a tear Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent: But o'er her warrior's bloody bier The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear! Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain, Had locked the source of softer woe: And burning pride and high disdain Forbade the rising tear to flow.	In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear! Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain, And burning pride and high disdain Vengeance that locks the source of woe Forbade the rising tear to flow.

Table 4.4 – Comparison of MacCunn's text with that of Scott

Despite the libretto's obvious faults, it still provides a reasonably cohesive plot, and retains the characteristics of the original: epic scale, bardic elements, medieval setting in a Scottish castle, noble and chivalrous characters, the influence of the supernatural, and a strong contrast between dramatic and romantic passages.

Sources

MacCunn's manuscript full score of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* is held in the Library of the Royal College of Music.²⁶ Novello and Co published the piano-vocal score, a tonic sol-fa version, and all orchestral parts. A notable omission in the published score was the lack of an acknowledgement of the commission from the

²⁶ RCM MS 4236. The full score was only ever available in manuscript and the fact that it is preserved is thanks to Oliver Davies, formerly head of the College's Department of Portraits, who saved it when Novello & Co, the publishers of the work, were discarding many manuscripts.

Glasgow Choral Union, a fact brought to the attention of the readers of the *Bailie* by means of a wryly humorous poem.

The Lay of the Very Latest Minstrel

If it happened that one
Were inclined to poke fun
At the Messieurs MacCunn,
Father and son,
Shapers and dressers of Scott –
Then, as some are enquiring, the first would be bid
To tell us in what old-time circus there rid
That Teviotside Cid,
Who for bold Musgrave did,
And so doughtily fought.

And why needed this ring-rider fleet
His name and address so oft to repeat,
Though in melody sweet
His Marg'ret he'd greet,
And her mother appease?
P'rhaps to future shop-knights it might well be
A hint of bold Cranston's to such as would tell me
Where, say, the best place they sell tea,²⁷
And, like some aye-sounding bell, me
Their stock advertise.

But, next, Hamish, my son,
What ill had we done,
We folks who had run
For the Lay of MacCunn
The first hour it came here,
That in these early copies,
Of a work where our hope is,
Of the Union Commission, which surely a prop is,
And a gift, if no trope is,
Not a word did appear.

Still, author and musicus, Messieurs MacCunn,
Managing father and talented son,
All do commend the work you have done,
And that yet greater fame be won
All most heartily pray.
Only, Hamish, forget not your friends at the Choral,
Remembrance that's due is a duty before all;
In your choice of a subject aye adhere to the moral,
And for lyrical drama a wreath that is floral
Will yours be one day.²⁸

²⁷ Reference to Miss Cranston's tearooms, a well-known Glasgow institution.

²⁸ 'The Lay of the Very Latest Minstrel' *Bailie* 33, 26 Dec 1888, 6.

Instrumentation

The cantata is scored for double woodwind, piccolo and contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones; tuba, 3 timpani, triangle, side drum, bass drum, strings, soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor and bass soloists and SATB chorus. Surprisingly, given the title of the work, the instrumentation does not include a harp.

The Cantata

Compared with previous cantata settings of Scott, such as Macfarren's *The Lady of the Lake*, Pattison's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Gadsby's *Alice Brand* (1876) and *Lord of the Isles* (1879), which are all small-scale and restrained, MacCunn's setting of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* is of epic proportions and illustrates the text on a canvas as broad and as sweeping as those used by Victorian landscape painters. As the descriptive subtitle 'a Dramatic Cantata' indicates, it focuses on conveying the action and drama of a medieval tale, rather than on the staid presentation of a piece of poetry. The inclusion of directions indicating the position of the characters e.g. 'Margaret (on the turret)' 'Lady Buccleuch (on the Castle wall)' shows that MacCunn may have viewed this cantata as an opportunity to create a quasi-opera for concert performance. By avoiding prolixity, a feature of oratorios and earlier secular cantatas which had the effect of holding back the action, and by allowing the narration to flow uninterrupted from one number to the next, MacCunn gives impetus to the dramatic imperative.

An outline of numbers, and their distribution among soloists and chorus, together with an indication of tonal centres and motifs is presented in Table 4.5 (over). Bold lettering has been used to highlight the extensive use made of the chorus, a fact which would have had great appeal for choral societies.

Number	Title	Forces/ description of movement	Principal tonal centres	Leitmotifs, Recurring Motifs & Themes
Part 1 1	Nine-and-twenty knights of fame	Orchestral introduction, chorus Fast, knightly	F major	Knights Horses
2	But he, the chieftain of them all	Choral recitative Slow, heroic	D flat major; B flat major; G minor/ G major	Chieftain
3	Sleep'st thou brother	Dialogue between Mountain Spirit and River Spirit; chorus Moderate, scherzando, lyrical	B flat major; G minor; B flat major	Supernatural Celestial influence
4	Sir William of Deloraine	Solo: Lady Buccleuch Fast, dramatic	B major; E major; E minor; E major	Deloraine Mighty Book
5	The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark	Chorus Fast, heroic	A minor; F sharp minor; C major; E major; A minor; A major; A flat major; A minor	Horses
6	Who knocks so loud?	Solo recitative: The Monk Fast, dramatic	A minor; C minor; C major	
7	Before their eyes the wizard lay	Chorus and The Monk Moderate, very dramatic	B flat minor; G flat major; C minor; B flat minor; B flat major	Supernatural Deloraine Mighty Book
Part 2 1	The wild birds told their warbling tale	Tenor solo; chorus Moderate, lyrical	D major; A major; F major; D major; E major; A major; F major; D major	
2	Hark, hark! Who comes	Chorus Fast, dramatic	G minor; B flat major; D minor	Horses Deloraine
3	True love's the gift	Solo and recitative: Margaret Moderate, lyrical, very expressive	F sharp major; D major; F sharp major	True love
4	No! 'tis the beacon blaze of war	Chorus Fast, martial	B minor; F sharp major; D major; B minor	Knights
5	Why 'gainst the truce of Border tide	Lady Buccleuch with chorus Moderate, dramatic	G major; C major; E minor; G major; D major; G major	Deloraine
6	Now is the hour	Choral recitative Fast, dramatic	D minor; C major; C minor; A flat major; D minor	Deloraine Mighty Book Cranston
7	'Tis done! 'tis done!	Chorus Slow, dramatic	G minor	
8	For this fair prize	Lord Cranston, Lady Buccleuch, Margaret, chorus Varying tempi, lyrical	E flat major; C major; F major; E flat major	Cranston Celestial influence True love
9	Breathes there the man	Recitative: Lord Cranston Slow, dramatic	A flat major; C major; D minor; F minor; D major	
10	O Caledonia! stern and wild	Chorus Moderately fast, patriotic/ jingoistic	C major; G major; A major; A minor; C major	

Table 4.5 – Overview of structure of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*

Leitmotifs, recurring motifs, recurring themes

In *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* MacCunn relies heavily on the use of leitmotifs, and recurring motifs and themes to illustrate and give cohesion to his narrative (see Examples 4.1–4.9) Their use will be discussed in the appropriate section of the commentary.

Example 4.1 – Scottish Knights (Leitmotif)

Allegro brioso

S. A. *Now_ o - ver Bor - der, dale and fell, Full wide and far is ter - ror_ spread;*

T. B. *Now_ o - ver Bor - der, dale and fell, Full wide and far is ter - ror_ spread;*

Chorus doubled by brass

Example 4.2 – Horses (Recurring motif)



Example 4.3 – Chieftain (Recurring theme)



Example 4.4 – Supernatural (Leitmotif)



This leitmotif is used at the beginning of two numbers (Part 1 Number 3 and Part 2 Number 6) to signal the involvement of the supernatural in the action. The intervallic relationship of the first three notes is identical to that of a transformation of the Scottish Knights leitmotif (SK 2 Example 4.11) and indicates the engagement of these forces in the eventual outcome of the story.

Example 4.5 – Celestial influence (Recurring theme)



This theme, derived from the Scottish Knights leitmotif (Example 4.1), is the most important in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, as the text with which it associated offers the solution to the problems of the protagonists – the ruling celestial bodies will not act in a benevolent fashion until all conflict has been resolved.

Example 4.6 – Deloraine (Leitmotif)

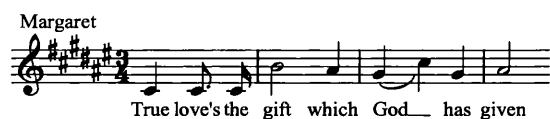


The leitmotif which MacCunn uses to represent Deloraine, the cantata's central character, is developed more than any other of the leitmotifs or themes in the work.

Example 4.7 – Mighty Book (Leitmotif)



Example 4.8 – True Love (Recurring theme)



Example 4.9 – Cranston (Recurring theme)



In addition to using melodic devices to represent people or ideas, MacCunn uses tonality to characterise Lady Buccleuch and Cranston. Their opposition to each other is illustrated by the fact that whereas Lady Buccleuch sings only in sharp keys, flat keys (A flat, E flat) are employed for Cranston.

Part 1

Part 1 Number 1 – ‘Nine-and-twenty knights of old’

A bright orchestral introduction of 71 bars sets the scene for the story. It depicts the gradual approach from a distance of the Scottish knights on horseback, accompanied by horn calls of the hunt, and the martial sound of trumpet fanfares and side drums, as they ride towards Branksome Hall. The leitmotif of the Scottish Knights (SK1, Example 4.10), a two-bar cell, is initially played by the woodwinds and is accompanied in the strings by the triplet horse motif (Example 4.2) over an extended dominant pedal.

Example 4.10 – Scottish Knights SK1 (Leitmotif)



A contrasting phrase (SK2) is achieved by a thematic transformation of SK1, in which descending intervals generally replace ascending intervals (Example 4.11).

Example 4.11 – SK2



A further transformation (inversion) SK3, heard in the lower register, suggests the galloping of the knights on their horses (Example 4.12), as do the descending quaver scales played by the cellos and double basses (bars 52 – 54 and 66 – 68).

Example 4.12 – SK3



The introduction leads to two strophically set stanzas, which describe the knights and their retainers. The melody (Example 4.13), an extension of the SK1 leitmotif, is introduced by the tenors and basses in unison, and is then continued in four-part harmony by all sections of the chorus.

Example 4.13 – Opening vocal line



All the elements which characterise the introduction continue throughout this number – in the verses, in the lengthy interlude and in the shorter postlude – providing a bright, strong and heroic opening to the work.

Part 1 Number 2 – ‘But he the chieftain of them all’

This number, a choral recitative, further sets the scene, explaining that Lord Walter has been slain and that his grieving widow seeks revenge. It opens with the first statement of the rhythmically conspicuous Chieftain theme (Example 4.14), in which a solemn and sonorous orchestral unison gives way to a richly harmonised plagal cadence. Although the recurring theme used to represent Lord Walter, Lady Buccleuch’s slain husband, occurs only in this number, its frequent use indicates that his death, and his widow’s desire for vengeance, are the mainspring of the plot. The two opening vocal phrases, derived from Chieftain 1 and sung by the chorus, are echoed by the accompaniment. Thereafter the repetition of a heavily accented rhythmic ostinato in

the lower register – ♩. ♪ ♪ ♪ – derived from Chieftain 1, underlines the gravity of the situation (Example 4.14).

Example 4.14 – Chieftain 1 recurring theme

Maestoso con moto (quasi Andante con moto)

Chieftain inversion 1

S. A. *f* But he, the chief-tain of them all

T. B.

Orch. *tutti f* *ff* *tutti ff*

Chieftain

8 **Chieftain inversion 2**

f His sword hangs rust-ing on the wall

vns

bns/tpns/ bns/vla/

trb/vcl/ do

cre

rhythmic ostinato **rhythmic ostinato** **rhythmic ostinato**

Further explanation of the situation is given, once again using the Chieftain theme to carry the message (Example 4.15). This example also shows how skilfully MacCunn moves to distant keys – in the space of four bars he moves, by means of enharmonic change, from D flat major to F sharp minor.

Example 4.15 – Use of Chieftain theme

Chieftain **Chieftain** **Chieftain modified**

A. *p* In sor-row o'er Lord Wal-ter's bier, The La-dye dropp'd not flow'r nor tear! Ven-geance, deep

D \flat major: I IV I I V III I 7 \Rightarrow 7 of F \sharp major

enharmonic key change

Harmonic outline

This key change marks the beginning of a short contrasting section whose strong emotions – vengeance, pride, disdain, woe – are forcefully expressed by the chorus, and

reflected in the chromatic harmony, which stands in contrast to the preceding, mainly diatonic harmony (Example 4.16).

Example 4.16 – Vengeance, pride, disdain and woe

24 [Maestoso con moto, quasi Andante con moto]

S. A. Ven - geance, deep brood-ing o'er the slain, And burn - ing pride, and high dis- dain, Ven - geance! that

T. B. p f

Orch. ww/brass double voices strings

29 dim Chieftain

locks the source of woe p For - bade the ris - ing tear to

33 Chieftain (augmentation)

flow, p for bade the ris - ing tear to flow.

Chieftain Chieftain (fragment) Chieftain (fragment)

ob1 a ob1 hn1

The return to the home key is accompanied by restatements of the Chieftain leitmotif and a return to diatonic harmony. The scene ends with a coda which describes Lady Buccleuch standing in a tower, looking out into the 'calm and clear' night. A feeling of the calmness is projected by the chorus intoning the text on a single pitch (D), underpinned by slow moving chordal accompaniment.

Part 1 Number 3 – ‘Sleeps’t thou brother?’

The scene moves from the tower to an unspecified moonlit location at night. The River Spirit and Mountain Spirit are engaged in discussion about the ongoing feuds and about who will marry Margaret of Branksome. Thus it is made clear that the action concerns not only human beings, but also supernatural forces (musically represented by a leitmotif and a recurring theme) which will determine the outcome of the action. The opening phrase of the first violin introduces the Supernatural leitmotif, which is immediately echoed by the first bassoon. A fragment of the Celestial Influence theme is also incorporated, in advance of a full statement. The open texture and light orchestration convey the peacefulness of the night and the beauty of the landscape (Example 4.17).

Example 4.17 – Introduction to Part 1 Number 3

The tranquillity continues to be portrayed by *tremolando* strings which accompany the dialogue between the two spirits. The opening question and answer (Example 4.18) are based on fragments of the Celestial Influence theme, a transformation of the SK1 leitmotif (Example 4. 1). This is a good example of MacCunn’s manipulation of one leitmotif to create a new independent leitmotif.

Example 4.18 – Dialogue between the spirits

The Supernatural leitmotif is repeated, and coinciding with a change in tempo to *Allegretto scherzando*, is then transformed into a playful figure to describe elves dancing, in a passage reminiscent of, and possibly inspired by Mendelssohn's overture *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1826) (Example 4.19).

Example 4.19 – ‘Merry elves their morris pacing’

[Andante espressivo] **Supernatural** **Supernatural 2** **Supernatural 2** **Supernatural 2**

Mountain Spirit: Mer - ry elves their mor-ris pac-ing, To æt - ial min-strel-sy,

The River Spirit interrupts the merry antics to discuss a serious subject – the fate of Margaret of Branksome, whose ‘tears mix with my polluted stream’ and to ask when ‘these feudal jars’ will end. The solemnity of the topic is reflected by the return to the initial slower tempo, a key change from B flat major to the relative minor and the replacement of the playful figure with a legato aria accompanied by sombre repeated chords (Example 4.20).

Example 4.20 – ‘Tears of an imprisoned maiden’

[Andante espressivo] **Tears, tears of an im - pris - on'd maid - en**

To the Mountain Spirit's questions as to the fate of Margaret, and the ending of warfare, the River Spirit at first offers a rather enigmatic answer which refers to various celestial bodies – the Plough, Orion, and the Great Bear – using as a vehicle the Celestial Influence theme, now heard in full for the first time in B flat major (Example 4.21), then reprised in D major.

Example 4.21 – Celestial Influence theme – first full statement

Poco più moto con brio

Ar-thur's slow wain his course doth roll, In ut - ter dark-ness doth roll - a - round the pole;—

The theme is then heard in its original key and its text makes its meaning clearer – the celestial bodies will not show any favour to the inhabitants of Branksome and the surrounding country until disputes, both personal and factional, have been resolved. The melody and words are then taken up by the chorus in four-part harmony.

No kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
No kind influence deign they shower
Till pride be quelled and Love be free.

The Celestial Influence melody is the most important in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, as it indicates the solution to the protagonists' problems. Its simple melody, sung *piano* throughout this number, and its diatonic harmonisation (chords I, IV and V) reflect the outcomes which it demands – peace, calm and harmony. The number concludes with a short postlude which, with minor alterations, repeats the introduction.

Part 1 Number 4 – 'Sir William of Deloraine'

This scene offers a total contrast to the preceding one. The location moves from the domain of the supernatural into the realm of the human beings who inhabit Branksome Castle, and the atmosphere changes to one of high tension. As the plot begins to unfold, Lady Buccleuch summons her knight Sir William of Deloraine to ride to Melrose Abbey. There with the help of a holy hermit, he will retrieve the Mighty Book of the Buccleuch family from the grave of the wizard Michael Scott which will assist Lady Buccleuch to exact revenge for her husband's death.

To summon her knight, Lady Buccleuch uses the Deloraine leitmotif (Example 4.21a) which is introduced in the vocal line and then echoed in the orchestral accompaniment (Example 4.22). Deloraine's leitmotif, as befits his status as a knight, is derived from that of the Scottish Knights (Example 4.21b), introduced in the opening number of the cantata. The similarity between the two leitmotifs is obvious – they both begin with a rising fourth, and then ascend stepwise to the dominant of the scale.

Example 4.21a – Deloraine



Example 4.21b – Scottish Knights



Example 4.22 – Deloraine (Leitmotif)

Deloraine
Con brio e con fuoco

Lady Buccleuch: *f* Sir Wil - liam of De - lo - raine Good at need,

Orch. strings/brass, obs, bns

Deloraine (fragment)

5 Mount thee on the wight - est steed Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,

obs/cis / bns / strings, bns

Deloraine (inversion) **Deloraine (fragment)**

The tempo (*Con brio e con fuoco*), the dotted rhythms of the opening bars, and the transition through several keys indicate the urgency of request. The vocal line has a wide range and as Lady Buccleuch's recitative progresses, the highest note of each phrase, which carries the most important word, is higher than that of the previous one (Example 4.23).

Example 4.23 – Lady Buccleuch's recitative

18 Poco più lento

Lady Buccleuch: *p* Greet the fath - er well from me Say that the fa - ted hour is

Orch. *p* strings, hns

23 *Brio*

come, And that to night he shall watch with thee To win the trea - sure of the tomb

tutti + B.D. / cym, brass

With a change in tonality from E major to E minor and a slowing of the tempo, the mood becomes more solemn. Lady Buccleuch continues to give instructions to

Deloraine. The seriousness of her purpose is indicated by the wide range in the vocal line, the strings' sombre *tremolando* chords, and the slow rate of harmonic change. A second leitmotif, that associated with the Mighty Book, is introduced in this section (Example 4.24a), but the full extent of its meaning is not revealed till later.

Example 4.24a – Mighty Book leitmotif



Emphasis is given to the word 'bloody' as the C major harmony of the phrase creates a dissonance over a D pedal. The leitmotif is repeated in the next phrase, but with an altered rhythm and extended range (Example 4.24b) to emphasise the dramatic nature of the text. There then follows a further transformation (Example 4.24c) which is repeated within the space of six bars. Thus even although the leitmotif's full meaning has not been revealed, its importance has already been emphasised.

Example 4.24b – Mighty Book 2



Example 4.24c – Mighty Book 3



This episode contains an interesting example of MacCunn's interpretation of the Scottish 'double-tonic' feature. Within the context of E minor two bars of D minor (rather than the expected D major) are interpolated.

The scene is concluded by a short orchestral postlude of strings punctuated by short phrases played by the horns.

Part 1 Number 5 – The clattering hooves the watchmen mark

This scene consists solely of narrative and depicts Sir William's night ride from Branksome to Melrose Abbey. Subdivided into three sections by two orchestral interludes, it offers a vivid depiction of the speed and urgency of the mission by means of the fast tempo (*Allegro con brio*) and driving rhythms derived from the basic Horses motif (Example 4.25).

Example 4.25 – Basic Horses motif

The darkness of the night is matched by the opening A minor tonality. The night watchman's repeated challenge to the rider to stop – 'stand ho!' – is sung by the full chorus at a much slower rhythmic rate than the accompaniment. The full harmonies of the chords, A minor followed by A major, shine out through the darkness. The injunction to halt goes unheeded, as the onward galloping of the horse is still heard in the orchestral accompaniment (Example 4.26).

Example 4.26 – Opening of Part 1 Number 5

7 [Allegro con brio]

B. *f* The clat - t'ring hoofs the watch - men mark,

Orch. *ff* *bn 1/ vras* *bn 2/ vras* *vn 1* *cbn/ dbs*

11 *ff* Stand, ho! thou cour - ier of the

T. B. *tutti*

15 dark; stand, ho! stand, ho! *tutti*

vn 1/ vn 2/ vras *vcs/ dbs - 8ve*

The first orchestral interlude continues to use the Horses motif and variants (Example 4.27). The presence of duplet quavers in a 6/8 context provides a vivid illustration of the pell-mell ride of the horse and its rider.

Example 4.27 – Orchestral interlude, showing triple and duple time

The musical score for Example 4.27 is written for an orchestra in 6/8 time. It consists of two systems. The first system begins at measure 26 and the second at measure 31. The score includes parts for Violins (vns), Violas (vias), Cellos (cls), Double Basses (dbs), and Woodwinds (wds). The first system shows a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and duplets. The second system continues the pattern with various instrumental entries and exits.

The tonality moves rapidly from F sharp minor to C major, at which point the narrative is taken up by the chorus. Once again there are two separate strands of narration – the slow moving line of the chorus, doubled by woodwinds and horns, and that of the much faster moving strings representing the galloping of the horse. The slow moving diatonic harmony of the line ‘now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung’ emphasises the solemnity of the religious office.

In the second orchestral interlude the pace seems to increase with the upper strings playing a rhythmic semiquaver ostinato, below which a variant of the Horses motif is played alternately by the violas and cellos (Example 4.28).

Example 4.28 – Second orchestral interlude

The musical score for Example 4.28 is written for an orchestra in 6/8 time. It starts at measure 74 and is marked 'Allegro con brio'. The score includes parts for Violins (vns), Violas (vias), and Cellos (cls). The first system shows a rhythmic semiquaver ostinato in the upper strings, with a variant of the Horses motif played alternately by the violas and cellos.

The diminished harmonies give an indication of the impending meeting with the world of the spirits. When the chorus re-enters, it is in close two-part chordal harmony, like an echo of the midnight lauds borne on the wind. This is punctuated by alternating solo trumpets playing the Horses motif, evoking the wild excitement of the ride.

A change in metre and tempo (*Andante ben sostenuto*) and a progression of solemn chords played by bassoons, contrabassoon, horns, trombones and tuba marks the knight's arrival at Melrose Abbey. The solemnity of the occasion is conveyed by the chorus's recitative passage, sung *pianissimo* to the accompaniment of *tremolando* strings. The tempo changes to *Allegro*, and Deloraine's knocking on the door with his dagger – 'He struck full loud and he struck full long' – is portrayed by effective textual setting and by the representation of knocking in the accompaniment (Example 4.29).

Example 4.29 – Deloraine knocks at the door

The musical score for Example 4.29 is divided into three systems. The first system, measures 135-138, features Soprano (S. A.) and Tenor (T. B.) voices. The lyrics are "He struck full loud, and he struck full long." The tempo is marked "Allegro". The second system, measures 139-142, is for the Orchestra (Orch.), with a tempo change to "Vivace con brio". The third system, measures 143-146, is for the Piano (No. 6), with the tempo "L'istesso tempo" and an "Attacca" marking.

Part 1 Number 6 – 'Sir William of Deloraine'

This scene consists of the exchange between Deloraine and the monk of Melrose Abbey. Continuing without a break from the previous number, it begins with Deloraine's imperious knocking on the abbey door, portrayed by an orchestral *tutti*. In reply to the monk's question 'Who knocks so loud?', Deloraine explains his mission with a paraphrase of Lady Buccleuch's words, which uses more or less the same melodic material, harmonised in the same way, as in Number 4. By using material previously associated with Lady Buccleuch, Deloraine identifies himself as her representative. The monk's reply, an account of how he buried the Mighty Book, consists of four rhyming couplets treated musically as two stanzas. A rhythmically altered version of the Mighty Book leitmotif is accompanied by a sombre, low register ostinato which has a heavy, hypnotic effect (Example 4.30 over).

Example 4.30 – The monk's reply

30 Andante con moto

The Monk

p I swore to bu-ry his Migh - ty_ Book, That nev - er mor - tal might there-in_ look;

Orch.

bns/ vlas div.

pesante

vcs/ dcs

Mighty Book (altered)

The mood alters as the monk's narration changes to a faster, more declamatory style, using wide intervals, high tessitura and the repetition of The Mighty Book leitmotif. Rising tension and excitement is variously indicated in the accompaniment by *tremolando* strings, rising semiquaver passages, repeated quaver chords, vague tonality, and use of diminished harmonies.

The scene concludes with the opening of the Wizard's grave. The narrative pace is held back by a reduction in the rhythmic rate, and this, combined with the use of silence and a move from D flat major via F sharp minor to the remote key of C major reflects the dramatic tension of the text (Example 4.31).

Example 4. 31 – End of Part 1 Number 6

[Andante con moto]

85

The Monk

ff Now, with this i - ron bar, com - mand The grave's wide por - tal

Orch.

ff

D \flat major.

V 7

enharmmonic key change

90

F \sharp minor V

I

F \sharp dim 7

To ex - pand!

VofC

I

Short pause. Attaca

Part 1 Number 7 – ‘Before their eyes the Wizard lay’

This number, the work’s longest and most complex, concludes Part 1 of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Table 4.6 below provides an overview of the number and its principal features.

Bars	Time	Description/ Features	Tonality	Leitmotifs
1–12	3/4	Orchestral introduction; Supernatural leitmotif prominent	B flat minor	Supernatural
13–26	3/4	Quasi-recit, chant-like, voices in unison/at the octave, step-wise movement, doubled by horns; Supernatural leitmotif used as ostinato	B flat minor	Supernatural
26–52	4/4	Contrast to previous section. Ternary. SATB in four-part harmony; <i>tremolando</i> strings; suspensions for religious effect. Wider leaps and greater compass in melodic line	G flat major	
53–64	3/4	Repetition of melodic outline and harmony from 13–26	B flat minor	Supernatural
65–83	4/4	Monk solo, declamatory; high tessitura; <i>tremolando</i> strings and triplets indicating terror	Unsettled; extended F sharp pedal	
82–114	4/4	SATB in unison/at the octave contrasting with harmonised passages; <i>tremolando</i> strings	C minor	Deloraine Mighty Book
115–144	4/4	Orchestral interlude in which diminished seventh harmony predominates (115–122); short contrapuntal vocal passage (123–135); re-use of material from orchestral interlude 137–144)	Unsettled	Mighty Book
145–166	4/4	Monk solo, declamatory passage with wide intervals, followed by short lyrical passage; <i>tremolando</i> C pedal in lower strings	C minor	
166–187	3/4	Coda, reusing opening material; contrast between unison and harmony	B flat minor	Supernatural
188–end	6/8	Orchestral postlude	B flat minor; B flat major	Supernatural

Table 4.6 – Schematic outline of Part 1 Number 7

The *dramatis personae* are the Monk, Deloraine (who does not have a speaking part), and the chorus, which has the largest part and fulfils the role of narrator. The number opens with a short orchestral introduction. The horns play a distinctive melody used several times within the number, to which is added the Supernatural motif in counterpoint (Example 4.32).

Example 4.32 – Opening of Part 1 Number 7

Andante con moto, ma solennis ♩ = 50

Orch.

hns

vns/vlas

vcs

Supernatural leitmotif (diminution)

Supernatural leitmotif

dbs/dbn/tba 8vb

The chorus in unison sets the scene, using the melody introduced by the horns, with the Supernatural leitmotif continuing as an ostinato (Example 4.33).

Example 4.33 – Description of the Wizard

13 [Andante con moto, ma solennis] 15

S.A.
T.B. 8vb

p Be-fore their eyes the Wi-zard lay, As if he he had not been dead a day

For the most part, the line is set syllabically, rising and falling by stepwise motion, giving the impression of an ancient religious chant. The description continues with a contrasting section in which the chorus in four-part harmony is doubled by woodwind and brass with a *tremolando* string accompaniment. The slow tempo, the slow rate of harmonic change and the use of suspensions continue the religious undertone established at the opening of the movement. A gradual increase in tension, effected by a rising dynamic, reaches a climax at the word ‘right’, emphasised by an orchestral *tutti* (Example 4.34).

Example 4.34 – Religious effects

38 [Andante con moto, ma solennis] 40 45

S.A.
T.B.

[*p*] His left hand held his Book of Might A sil-ver cross was in his right

[*p*] *f* *cres* *ff*

Action resumes in the solo passage in which the Monk urges Deloraine to fulfil his mission. Prefaced by the direction ‘*with terror*’, the passage employs various devices – an increase in tempo, relatively high tessitura of the voice, melodic sequence, octave leaps – to reflect the monk’s fear. Uncertain tonality and diminished seventh harmonies, *tremolando* upper strings and rushing semiquaver passages in the lower strings further emphasise this fear. Deloraine’s anxiety to complete his mission as quickly as possible is shown by his springing into action before the Monk has finished his solo (Example 4.35 over).

Example 4.35 – The Monk's solo

145 [Più allegro]

The Monk

Orch. strings

"And when we are on death-bed laid, O may our dear

La - dye, and sweet Saint John For - give our

+obs/bns sustained

Adagio, quasi Recit

souls for the deed we have done!"

p 160

sf

The chorus resumes the narrative, and using the Mighty Book motif in conjunction with a modified version of the Deloraine motif (Example 4.36), describes how Deloraine takes the Mighty Book from the grave. By repeating the phrase to the words 'With iron clasp'd and iron bound' the two motifs clearly indicate Deloraine's metal gauntlet claspings the Mighty Book.

Example 4.36 – Deloraine + magic

Deloraine

Mighty Book

Then De - lo - raine in ter - ror took
With i - ron clasp'd, and with i - ron bound

The act of taking the Book is described in a passage of detached chords which mimic gasps of terror. The horror of the dead man frowning from the grave is conveyed by the use of the final chord – C minor with added minor seventh and ninth, and major eleventh (Example 4.37 over).

Example 4.37 – The dead man frowned

95 [Allegro di molto]

S.A. *f* And, as he took it, the dead man frowned.

T.B. *f* And, as he took it, the dead man frowned.

doubled by ww/fms/strings

f tutti, strings trem. Eb in horns

The choral narration continues, describing the strange noises and fiends which have been unleashed by the act of opening the grave. These are portrayed in the orchestra by conventional means – diminished harmonies, chromatic semiquaver passages, vigorous *sforzandi* in the woodwind, and *tremolando* strings. The confusion is further projected by a short but very effective passage of counterpoint for the tenors and basses (Example 4.38), which incorporates a version of the Mighty Book leitmotif extended by the insertion of a scalic passage to which the word ‘laughter’ is set. It is thus used figuratively to indicate magic and its agents – ‘voices unlike the voice of man’.

Example 4.38 – Confusion

123 [Allegro di molto] Mighty Book extended

S. *ff* Loud sobs and laugh

A. *f* Loud sobs, and

Orch. *ff* *sf* *sf* *ff* *sf*

S. ter loud - er, ran,

A. laugh - ter loud - er ran,

T. And voi - ces un -

Mighty book extended

Example 4.38 (continued)

Example 4.38 (continued) shows a vocal duet between Tenor (T.) and Bass (B.) voices, accompanied by piano. The Tenor part begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and a crescendo leading to a measure marked 130. The lyrics for the Tenor are "like the voice of man,". The Bass part enters with the lyrics "And voices unlike the voice of man,". The piano accompaniment features complex rhythmic patterns in both hands, with dynamic markings including *sf* (sforzando) and *ff* (fortissimo).

After the Monk has sent Deloraine on his errand, he voices a prayer that they may be forgiven for what they have done. In it, the only piece of lyrical writing in this movement, the words are accompanied by solemn sustained chords in the strings, supported by the woodwinds.

Example 4.39 – The Monk's prayer

Example 4.39 – The Monk's prayer shows the Monk's vocal line and the orchestral accompaniment. The Monk's part begins at measure 145, marked *[Più allegro]*. The lyrics are: "And when we are on death-bed laid, O may our dear La-dye, and sweet Saint John For-give our souls for the deed we have done!". The orchestral accompaniment (Orch.) features sustained chords in the strings, marked *+obs/bns sustained*. The tempo changes to *Adagio, quasi Recit* at measure 160, marked *p* (piano). The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as *sf* (sforzando).

The movement concludes with re-use of the opening melodic material (Example 4.34) to describe the return of the Monk to his cell and his death. The tension of the movement is released by the reduction in dynamic to *pianissimo*, and a short *Adagio* orchestral postlude in 6/8 in which the Supernatural leitmotif once again figures, before a final close on a quiet sustained B flat major chord.

Part 2

Part 2 Number 1 – ‘The wild birds told their warbling tale’

The second part of the cantata opens with a secret meeting of the lovers, Cranston and Margaret of Branksome, in an idyllic pastoral setting ‘beneath the hawthorn green’. This number provides a welcome calm interlude after the previous excitement and action. Neither character has a speaking role, and the scene is described by the tenor soloist and chorus who act as unseen and distant observers of the lovers.

The number is in ternary form – A B A' – and the form is reinforced by the way in which the lines are assigned – firstly to the tenor soloist (8 lines), then to the chorus (8 lines), and finally to both soloist and chorus (6 lines, of which the last two are repeated for the sake of balance). The text is slightly unusual in that the first eight lines have the rhyme scheme ABACDADA whereas the subsequent lines are rhyming couplets. The three recurring ideas introduced in the first four bars – two contrasting melodies, Theme 1 and Theme 2, and a persistent rippling semiquaver figure in the violins representing the song of the wild birds (Example 4.40 over) – give a strong feeling of cohesion to the number. Theme 2 is also used in the accompaniment in conjunction with the birdsong figure to echo vocal phrases, and also in the closing postlude (Example 4.41 over). The simple, lyrical melody and its diatonic harmony convey the feeling of calmness and serenity evoked by the lyric.

Example 4.40 – Opening of Part 2 Number 1

Theme 1

Andante con moto espressivo

Tenor solo: The wild birds told their

Birdsong figure

Orch. (ob/cl, vns, vcs, dbs): *p*, *pp*

Theme 2

3 warb - ling tale, And wak - en'd ev - 'ry flow'r that blows;

Example 4.41 – Birdsong and Theme 2

Theme 2

18 Tenor solo: *p* The fair - est maid in Te - viot - dale.

Bird song

Orch. (vns, vcs, vln/vla/vcl): *p*, *pp*, *espressivo*

Theme 2

20 Chorus

Part 2 Number 2 – ‘Hark, hark! who comes’

The tranquillity of the previous scene is abruptly disturbed by the approach of a horse. The galloping hoof beats, portrayed by quaver triplets in the strings and the stirring fanfares on the horns, prompt the basses of the chorus to ask, in a declamatory fashion, who is approaching (Example 4.42). This episode is then repeated in sequence by the tenors.

Example 4.42 – The approach of Deloraine

Allegro agitato, ma moderato $\text{♩} = 92$

B. Hark, hark! who comes through

hns

Orch. vns/vlas vcs

5 Brank - - some wood, On such sweet

Horns

bsns/tbta/dbsn

8 meet - - ing to in - trude?

The process of revealing the identity of the rider is drawn out by the separation of vocal phrases by up to eight bars. The final passage before the revelation uses standard anticipatory devices – *tremolando* strings, diminished seventh chords – to add to the tension already created by the galloping motif indicating the speed and rhythm of the horse (Examples 4.43a and b over).

An increased rhythmic pace in the central section reflects a change in Margaret's mood as she considers the qualities of love. Towards the end, as the pace decreases, the first theme is constantly reiterated, either in full or in part in the accompaniment (Example 4.47).

Example 4.47 – Conclusion of central section, showing repeated use of Theme 1

30 [Andante, ben sostenuto, espressivo] *espress*
 Lady Margaret with dead de - sire it doth not
 Orch. (ww/ hns/ strings) *p*
 35 die *pp*

The recapitulation of the A section incorporates both Theme 1 and Theme 2 with the addition of a low register, rippling semiquaver accompaniment played by violas and second violins over an F sharp pedal (Example 4.48).

Example 4.48 –Recapitulation, showing simultaneous use of Theme 1 and Theme 2

[Andante, ben sostenuto, espressivo]
 41 Theme 2 – True love
 Lady Margaret *p* It is the se - cret sym - pa - thy, The sil - ver link, the silk - en tie,
 Theme 1
 Strings (utti con sord) *p*
 vns 1
 vias/ 2 vns
 vns/dhs

This is one of the most lyrical numbers of the whole work, with its diatonic harmony, and simple but memorable melodic themes. However, the dramatic imperative of the narrative too soon interrupts the lyricism, and in the coda, when Margaret draws

attention to the red glare in the sky, the dynamic changes from *piano* to *forte*, the tempo picks up speed and unmuted strings play strident pizzicato quaver chords on the downbeat, accentuating the question ‘Is yon red glare the western star?’

Part 2 Number 4 – ‘No! ‘Tis the beacon blaze of war!’

This number follows on from the previous one without a break. It describes the outbreak of hostilities, the spread of terror and panic in the local inhabitants (represented by the full chorus) and the call of the Scottish knights (sung by the male chorus) to ride to Branksome. A pedal F sharp leads the tonality into B minor, and the loud martial sounds of woodwind, brass, full percussion and three timpani announce the arrival of the raiding English army. The agitation is further reflected by the fortissimo dynamic, by the heavy use of accented beats, triplet quavers and descending dotted quaver passages. The number is in palindromic form and consists of the following sections:

- A Orchestral introduction, and choral recit (Example 4.49)
- B Melody 1, sung by full chorus (Example 4.50)
- C Melody 2, sung by tenors and basses of chorus (re-use of Scottish Knights’ leitmotif from opening of cantata)
- B' Melody 1 (last phrase extended and altered)
- A' Orchestral postlude

Triplets are a feature of the accompaniment throughout the number. At times they imitate the rhythmic pounding of horses’ hooves, a recurring feature of the work. They also form part of a rhythmically prominent one-bar cell which recurs throughout the number. Example 4.49 (over), in which the chorus cries out in alarm when they see the signal fire for war, shows repeated use of this one-bar cell designated ‘Panic motif’.

Example 4.49 – Choral recit – ‘No! ‘tis the beacon blaze of war!’

Example 4.49 is a musical score for a choral recitative. It features three staves: Soprano (S. A.), Tenor (T. B.), and Orchestra (Orch.). The tempo is marked [Allegro brioso]. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score begins at measure 10. The vocal parts sing: "No! No! no! 'Tis the beacon blaze of war!". The orchestra provides accompaniment, including a "Panic motif" in the brass and percussion. The score continues to measure 13, where the vocal parts sing "war!". The orchestra continues with a rhythmic pattern. The score is marked with various musical notations, including triplets, accents, and dynamic markings like *ff*.

The B sections consist of a four-bar melodic phrase, distinguished by the use of dotted rhythms, triplets and accented notes (Example 4.50). Its tonality is slightly ambiguous, alternating between B minor and D major.

Example 4.50 – Melody of B sections

Example 4.50 is a musical score for the melody of the B sections. It features two staves: Soprano (S. A.) and Tenor (T. B.). The tempo is marked Allegro brioso. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score begins at measure 1. The vocal parts sing: "Now o - ver Bor - der, dale and fell, Full wide and far is ter - ror spread;". The Tenor part is marked "Chorus doubled by brass". The score includes various musical notations, including triplets, accents, and dynamic markings like *ff*.

The central section stands in contrast to the other sections in that it is in F sharp major and compound time. The tenors and basses, adopting the persona of knights, urge all to ride out for Branksome, using the Scottish Knights' leitmotif, but in abbreviated form and in a very distant key (F sharp major as opposed to F major). There are also minor differences in orchestration. A return to the opening D major/ B minor tonality is effected by a rather abrupt move from a chord of G sharp major to the dominant seventh

of D major, sustained for seven bars, before the chorus, repeating the B section melody, continues the description of fire raising, showing ‘southern ravage has begun’. The number ends with a short orchestral postlude which restates material from the introduction.

Part 2 Number 5 – Why ‘gainst the truce of border tide

This warlike number is conceived on a grand scale, and brings together the two opposing factions – the Scottish knights in the castle and the English knights outside the castle wall. They are addressed in heroic fashion by Lady Buccleuch, a lone female figure standing on the battlements (Example 4.51). Two tonal centres are used to represent the opposing parties – G major for Lady Buccleuch and the Scottish knights, and C major for the English knights. It opens with a strong, four-bar martial melody based on the tonic triad. The first two bars are reminiscent of the Welsh folk tune *Rhyfelgrych Cadpen Morgan* (Example 4.52),²⁹ while the next two bars are a statement of the Deloraine leitmotif.

Example 4.51 – Opening of Part 2 Number 5

Andante maestoso Lady Buccleuch
(on the Castle wall, Quasi recit)

Deloraine

Why 'gainst the truce of bor__ der tide In hos-tile guise dare ye to ride

Rhyfelgrych Cadpen Morgan

Orch. Bsn + brass strings brass

Example 4.52 – Rhyfelgrych Cadpen Morgan³⁰

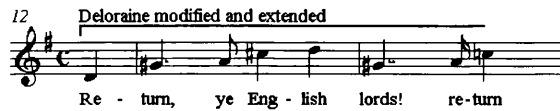
Forth to the bat - tle, On - ward to the fight,

²⁹ *Rhyfelgrych Cadpen Morgan* (Captain Morgan's March) was one of the Welsh tunes included in George Thomson's *Select Collection of Welsh Airs* London: Preston, [1809–1817]. See Joseph Haydn *Volksliedbearbeitungen* Nr 269–364 – schottische und walisische Lieder für George Thomson herausgegeben von Marjorie Rycroft. *Joseph Haydn Werke* Reihe XXX11, Bd 4. München: G. Henle, 2004, 106–108.

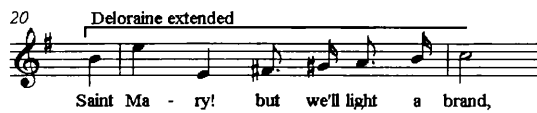
³⁰ Tune: as in Haydn above; words: <http://www.contemplator.com/wales/battle.html> accessed 29 Nov 2006.

Although Deloraine is not present physically in this scene, the number of times his leitmotif is repeated, both by Lady Buccleuch (Examples 4.53a and 4.53b) and by the Scottish knights (Example 4.54), emphasises his centrality to the action.

Example 4.53a – Deloraine motif modified and extended



Example 4.53b – Deloraine motif extended



Example 4.54 – Deloraine motif in augmentation

The scene ends in stirring fashion with the Scottish knights and Lady Buccleuch together expressing their defiance of the English. Lady Buccleuch's solo restates earlier material, and the knights' war song 'Our slogan is the lyke-wake dirge' is set to a melody introduced in the previous number (Example 4.50). The martial nature of the scene is conveyed by the use of brass and percussion, by the persistently loud dynamic (*forte* and *fortissimo*), by the use of dotted rhythms, by the use of fanfares in both the orchestra and the chorus (Example 4.54) and the use of march-time throughout.

Part 2 Number 6 – 'Now is the hour'

The Scots await the arrival of the wounded Deloraine to fight the English champion Musgrave. Eventually the Scot rides up wearing his complete armour.

An aggregation of motifs and themes is used in this number to indicate that the climax of the piece is approaching (Example 4.55). It opens with a one-bar statement of the Supernatural leitmotif intimating that strange things are about to happen. A version

of the Deloraine leitmotif in the minor mode illustrates the vocal line ‘wounded Deloraine delays.’ This is immediately followed by the concatenation of a Deloraine leitmotif with that of the Mighty Book (previously noted in Part 1 Number 7, Example 4.36) which reinforces the fact that magic or supernatural powers are at work. Its importance is underlined by the slower tempo (*Poco più sostenuto*) which obtains for a mere eight bars.

Example 4.55 – opening of Part 2 Number 6 – Now is the hour

Allegro agitato, ma non troppo vivace

S. A.
T. B8vb

voices doubled by ww

Orch.

tutti ff

sf strings

Supernatural

Now is the hour of Brank-some's need, O Migh-ty Book! the com - bat speed! For

7 Wounded Deloraine

Poco più sostenuto

wound-ed De - lor - aine de - lays.

Deloraine

Mighty Book

sf

sf

obl

tbns/ vcs

tbns/ db

vcs

Mighty Book

Deloraine

Bars 17–34 consist of a patriotic verse sung twice by the Scottish knights and other people in the castle.

Where is a champion in his stead,
Whose heart beats for his native land?
Who for Buccleuch the sword will raise
‘Gainst Musgrave, hand to hand?

The first time the verse is sung, it is begun by the basses, first in unison and then in two parts. When it is repeated, it is sung by all voice parts in four-part harmony. It is accompanied throughout by a persistent rising staccato triplet Horses motif. The verse is harmonised diatonically, and is given strength by the use of root position chords and close harmony. Interest is added by the way in which the tonality changes within the space of a few bars. Starting in D minor, the tonality moves into G major. A two-bar harmonic sequence (IV–I–IV–I) is repeated when the tonality slides into F major at the

point where the tenors join in. The verse ends in E major and a return to D minor for the repeat is effected by an A major chord.

An orchestral interlude in A flat major (marked *Alla marcia*) introduces a theme which only later is identified as the embodiment of Cranston. The heroic feel of its simple, mainly stepwise melody is strengthened by its descending bass line (Example 4.56). The four-bar phrase is extended by repeating in sequence cells from the melody (marked A and B in Example 4.56). The Cranston theme appears just twice and does not undergo any significant transformation. Its use is rather enigmatic because its first appearance is in the orchestra and its meaning is only revealed on its second occurrence when Cranston sings the line ‘Cranston am I of Teviotside’ (Part 2 Number 8).

Example 4.56 – Cranston theme

A return to the home key of D minor is achieved by a move from A flat major to C minor, from which an augmented sixth chord on B flat leads to the dominant of D minor. Immediately the Deloraine leitmotif joined to the Mighty Book leitmotif sounds out, played by horns, trombones, cellos and double basses, showing once again that Deloraine is linked with magic. Arpeggiated C minor triplets indicate the arrival of a horse and rider, whom the basses announce as William of Deloraine. However, this is immediately contradicted by the music – the melodic outline differs from that of Deloraine, indicating that the knight sheathed in Deloraine’s armour is not he. The harmonic ambiguity of the passage also indicates doubt. Although the passage begins in C minor, the melodic contour implies a rising E flat major scale, but instead of the expected IV–I cadence, the final note cadences on a minor chord (Example 4.57).

Example 4.57 – Deloraine leitmotif – altered to indicate impersonation by Cranston

Once more the tonality returns to the home key of D minor and the number ends with repetition of the opening bars, after which the chorus intones a final unaccompanied plea on a D major chord which ends on a diminished seventh chord on F sharp. The same chord is then played in outline *precipitato* and *fortissimo* by the strings, possibly indicating the combat. The final detached *fortissimo* quaver chords sound like the stabbing motion of weapons as the two opponents meet.

Part 2 Number 7 – ‘Tis done! ‘Tis done!’

The off-stage combat between ‘Deloraine’ and Musgrave which results in the latter’s death is described by the chorus *Andante maestoso e pesante*. The narrative is mostly unaccompanied, with ends of phrases punctuated by a Deloraine motif, which although altered melodically, retains its distinctive double-dotted rhythm and thus its association with Deloraine. Example 4.58a shows the four-note Deloraine melodic outline associated with the Magic Book. Example 4.58b shows it reduced to a triad and in Example 4.58c, it is a series of four ascending stepwise notes.

Examples 4.58a–c – Modifications of the Deloraine motif

Example 4.58a



Example 4.58b



Example 4.58c



Musgrave’s fall on the field of battle is illustrated by descending chromatic passages in both the chorus and accompaniment. A descending G minor scale underlines the finality of the closing words ‘Thence shalt thou never rise again’.

Part 2 Number 8 – ‘For this fair prize’

In many respects this number could have ended the cantata, since it brings together the major characters, Lady Buccleuch, Lady Margaret and Cranston and the attendant chorus, as the denouement of the story is reached, related by use of many of the work’s motifs and themes. The double-dotted Deloraine motif played initially by the first oboe and then by the first horn provides a link from the previous number. The scene opens with Cranston singing a lyrical victory song in E flat. Simple and diatonic, it is accompanied by a flowing triplet accompaniment and tonic–dominant harmony. The aria ends with his assertion of his identity, sung to the melody to which he entered in Deloraine’s armour (Example 4.59 over). It is given prominence by the change in

accompaniment – flowing triplets are replaced by the descending crotchet scale previously associated with the melody.

Example 4.59 – Cranston theme with its text



The chorus in two-part harmony then pleads on Cranston's behalf with Lady Buccleuch that she will consent to his marriage to her daughter Margaret. The melody is simple and moves either stepwise or in small intervals, accompanied by triplet arpeggios. The tonality moves to C major for Lady Buccleuch to admit that she has been conquered by fate and in so doing quotes the Celestial Influence theme. This is immediately followed by Lady Margaret who repeats the True Love theme, first sung by her in Part 2 Number 3. Originally in F sharp major and triple time, it is now cast in 4/4 and in F major.

Cranston again repeats his victory song (still in E flat) before the chorus, as omniscient observers, bring the number to an end by repeating the Celestial Influence theme to the words:

And well we read the stars' decree
For pride is quell'd and Love is free.

Although this number is complex in that it makes use of several leitmotifs and themes to make its point, its harmonic and tonal structure is relatively simple, reflecting the fact that an outcome has been reached.

Part 2 Number 9 – 'Breathes there the man' and

Part 2 Number 10 – 'O Caledonia! Stern and wild'

Number 9 is a short recitative-like passage, declaimed by Cranston, which develops the idea of patriotism, first voiced in Part 2 Number 6: 'Where is a champion in his stead whose heart beats for his native land?' It begins in fairly sedate manner, with chordal accompaniment, but the pace and tension are intensified by the use of descending semiquaver scalar passages, perhaps illustrating the excitement of the wanderer returning from a foreign shore. The most notable feature of this short number

is that it introduces the finale's closing phrase, set with the words: 'This is my own, my native land!'(Example 4.60).

Example 4.60 – 'This is my own, my native land!' (Patriotic theme)



This melody is immediately echoed and reinforced by the accompaniment.

Number 10 is a rousing hymn to Scotland, an expression of patriotism and devotion to the homeland, set in ternary form. Throughout it there is a feeling of strength and constancy, achieved by a steady crotchet beat in the lower strings, above which, in the opening bars, the horns and trumpets add fanfares. The text is set homophonically, again adding to the strength of the number. The patriotic theme, introduced in Number 9 is now used for the words 'Land of the mountain and the flood' (Example 4.61). The impression of strength is reinforced by the fact that the phrase starts on a downbeat, unlike its precursor in the previous number.

Example 4.61 – 'Land of the mountain and the flood'



First performance and reception

The first performance of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was given by the Glasgow Choral Union at a concert on 18th December 1888 in the St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow. The programme included MacCunn's orchestral ballad *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow* which he himself conducted, but the new cantata was conducted by Joseph Bradley, the Choral Union's chorus master. The soloists were Lillian Nordica, Grace Damian, Iver Mackay and Andrew Black. The new work was awaited with anticipation by the Glasgow press and public. Prior to the performance the musical critic of *Quiz* noted in his regular column:

On next Tuesday next, there will be produced for the first time, a large and important work for chorus and orchestra, dealing with a thoroughly Scottish subject, composed by a Scottish musician. The history, poetry, and fiction of Scotland have been illustrated in music by several

able composers of other countries, and the peculiar characteristics of Scottish music have been appreciated and imitated by many distinguished musicians, but Hamish MacCunn [sic] – whose new cantata “The Lay of the Last Minstrel”, we refer to – is the first Scotch composer who has treated the legendary history of Scotland in music on a large scale, in the attempt to give adequate expression and illustration to wild grandeur, the picturesque beauty and warm feeling of Scottish character and poetry.³¹

His counterpart in the *Bailie* also devoted column space to a pre-performance review of the just published work.³² Two week later, this was followed by a more detailed analysis, quoting four musical themes which had caught his attention – The Scottish Knights, Supernatural, True love and the Battle hymn of the Scottish borderers.³³

The performance was widely noted, and the Scottish press, while pointing out the weakness of the libretto and the relative absence of ‘a good tune’, was enthusiastic, particularly in respect of the work’s Scottish nature and of MacCunn’s use of Scottish material. The *Scotsman*’s critic noted: ‘Mr MacCunn’s merit does not consist in merely imitating Scottish music. It is a much higher task he essays. He is endeavouring to adapt for artistic purposes the musical ideas and peculiarities that are contained in our folk-songs,³⁴ and the *Glasgow Herald*’s critic concurred with the comment: ‘The distinctively Scottish nature of Mr MacCunn’s music is something new in art’.³⁵ The review in the *Musical Times* which reached a much wider musical audience was brief, but fulsome:

The new musical illustration of the stirring and interesting tale is, as a whole, eminently successful, rising in some places to a point of absolute genius. There is indeed a strong infusion of local colour all through, with much graceful writing of a general character, and little of what may be considered the conventional.³⁶

The work made such an impression on *Quiz*’s critic that a brief notice which appeared three days after the performance was followed up by a more substantial and very positive review a week later, in which *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was described as: ‘A complete work of art, in which the words are necessary to the music, while the music

³¹ ‘Hamish MacCunn’ *Quiz* 16, 1888, 145.

³² ‘Quavers’ *Bailie* 33, 5 Dec 1888, 7.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ ‘Glasgow Choral Union Concert: Mr Hamish MacCunn’s New Works’ *Scotsman* 19 Dec 1888, 7.

³⁵ ‘Choral-Orchestral Concerts: “Lay of the Last Minstrel”’ *Glasgow Herald* 19 Dec 1888, 7.

³⁶ ‘Music in Glasgow and the West of Scotland’ *MT* 30, 1889, 28.

enriches and expresses the poetic and emotional suggestiveness of the text'.³⁷ The same article, however, was highly critical of the performance of the chorus and soloists and ended:

We feel it to be our duty, however, in the interests of the Choral Union and its patrons, to draw attention to those weaknesses, as they will require careful consideration if artistic performances of modern works are to be attained at their choral concerts.³⁸

The Scottish premiere was soon followed by a performance at Crystal Palace conducted by August Manns on 16 February 1889 with three of the four original soloists, Grace Damian being replaced by Marie Curran. This concert was widely reviewed and Novello, the work's publisher, was quick to print a full-page advertisement in the March issue of the *Musical Times* featuring extracts of reviews of the English press.³⁹ In the years after publication, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was performed widely throughout the United Kingdom. MacCunn conducted performances in two significant English musical centres – Liverpool (24 October 1889) and Birmingham (27 March 1890) – both of which were well received.⁴⁰ There were also performances abroad – New York (1891) and Melbourne (1900) – and the cantata remained in the repertoire until World War I, since when there has been only the occasional revival, the most recent noted being in Melrose in 2004.⁴¹

While Scottish audiences and critics welcomed and focussed on *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*'s Scottishness, in the wider world it was acclaimed as a piece of British,⁴² not Scottish music, full of freshness and vigour. A major and justifiable criticism made by most reviewers was that the libretto was scrappy and that the final recitative and chorus were totally unnecessary. Perhaps the most telling contemporary criticism was that made by the reviewer of the *Musical Times* after hearing the Crystal Palace performance:

³⁷ 'Musical Moments' *Quiz* 16, 1888, 169.

³⁸ The Choral Union retaliated by withdrawing their advertising from *Quiz*. ('Musical Moments' *Quiz* 16, 1889, 209).

³⁹ '*The Lay of the Last Minstrel*' *MT* 30, 1889, 190. Newspapers quoted were: *Times*, *Daily Chronicle*, *Daily News*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Globe*, *St. James's Gazette*, *Standard*, *Sunday Times*, *Weekly Dispatch*.

⁴⁰ 'Music in Liverpool and District' *MT* 30, 1889, 675; 'Festival Choral Society' *Birmingham Daily Post* 28 Mar 1890, 4.

⁴¹ See Appendix 2.

⁴² *Daily News*, *Globe* quoted in '*The Lay of the Last Minstrel*' *MT* 30, 1889, 190.

He [Dvořák] gives us plenty of development, is not afraid to repeat words, and writes some very fine long movements. Mr MacCunn on the other hand, goes to the extreme of saying his say once (and very well sometimes), but before his hearers have time to feel and interest in the movement it is over; the full close comes and we are started in a fresh number.⁴³

This reference to Dvořák serves as a reminder that earlier in this chapter, mention was made of the possibility that MacCunn may have looked to Dvořák's *The Spectre's Bride* to provide a model for success. A more detailed comparison of the two works (Table 4.7) shows the extent to which there are parallels in Dvořák's and MacCunn's libretti.

Subject	Dvořák <i>The Spectre's Bride</i>	MacCunn <i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>
Treatment of a national folk tale	Bohemian folk tale made into a ballad by Erben, a national poet; incorporates elements of Czech folk melody and dance	Scottish border tale told by Walter Scott, a national poet; no musical references to Scottish folk melodies or dances
Involvement of the macabre/supernatural	Ghost of dead lover is the mainspring of the story	The grave of a dead wizard is opened to retrieve the Mighty Book for its magic powers to overcome enemies – i.e. it is the instrument of the final outcome
Love story	Central to the plot	Love story is sub-plot
Wild night journey	On foot	On horse
Invocation of religion	Religion is an important aspect of the tale	Religion is less central. The Monk's prayer ends Part 1.
Plot	One central plot, straightforward narration; unity of action.	Central plot with sub-plot; omissions in libretto make plot difficult to follow
Repetition of text	Prominent feature, used to excess	Avoided
Structure	The maiden's opening and closing prayers frame the text, moving the action into and away from the supernatural world	Through-composed, and very loosely structured

Table 4.7 – Comparison between the libretti of *The Spectre's Bride* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*

The unity of action and the small number of characters in *The Spectre's Bride* allow Dvořák to present a much more cohesive and coherent tale, using the soprano and tenor soloists to represent the two protagonists, and the baritone soloist and the chorus as narrators. As MacCunn's libretto involves more central characters, and the plot is more complicated, the narration is more fragmented and structurally diffuse. Dvořák's cantata is better constructed with the soprano's opening and closing solos (Numbers 2 and 17) acting as a framework, moving the action into and out of the supernatural. While MacCunn avoids textual repetition, Dvořák goes to the other extreme by

⁴³ 'Crystal Palace' *MT* 30, 1889, 151.

repeating text excessively. These differences in the libretti will obviously result in a different musical treatment, but there are some similarities worth mentioning. Both composers use recurring motifs, but whereas Dvořák employs a vague ‘Spectre’s motif’ (based on a falling fifth) in the orchestral introduction which is later repeated, and repeated musical themes (the natural result of the textual repetition) to give unity to his work, MacCunn relies on a combination of leitmotifs, recurring motifs and themes to give his work cohesion. Both composers’ orchestration is rich and colourful, but MacCunn’s treatment of the dramatic and of terror is much better handled. Dvořák’s appeal to nationalism is both textual (use of folk tale) and musical (use of folk dances and imitation of folk melody outlines) but MacCunn’s expression of national feeling is confined to the text of the final scene with its patriotic text ‘O Caledonia! stern and wild’.

This comparison would seem to confirm that while *The Spectre’s Bride* may have provided a starting point for MacCunn, his musical treatment was not influenced by Dvořák. Both works have their strengths – MacCunn’s treatment of the dramatic possibilities of his libretto is excellent, but it is to the detriment of lyrical writing. Conversely Dvořák’s cantata contains beautiful arioso writing for the soloists, but his dramatic pacing and expression of drama and terror is much less well essayed.

Assessment

The Lay of the Last Minstrel is the longest of MacCunn’s choral works and the one which displays his youthful abilities to the full. His full appreciation and respect for his text is reflected in the mainly syllabic word setting and the inventive harmony and tonality contribute to the telling of the tale. The orchestration shows a deep understanding of colouring and timbre, and also sympathy for accompanying voices. The vocal writing is dramatic, expressive or lyrical as required by the libretto and the melodic line always fits the voice or voices well. The outstanding feature is MacCunn’s skilful use of leitmotifs, recurring motifs, and recurring themes and melodies, to inform and elaborate on the action.

In terms of expressing national elements, an aspect which appears to have excited Scottish critics and audiences, the only overt expression of Scottishness, as stated above, is textual rather than musical and is to be found in the final two numbers,

which do not sit well with the rest of the work. There are some musical features which could be termed ‘Scottish’ –

- melodic contours reminiscent of folksong e.g. Example 4.3 – the pentatonic Chieftain theme, in which there is an upward move from the sixth degree of the scale to the tonic at the cadence and Example 4.8 – the hexatonic True Love melody
- plagal harmony arising from the use of pentatonic and hexatonic melody
- use of dotted rhythms e.g. Example 4.51
- mimicking of the ‘double tonic’ e.g. in Part 1 Number 4 (bars 29–39)

MacCunn integrates these features into the work so well that they never obtrude, but their contribution to the work overall is far less than that of standard Western art music techniques, in particular the extensive use of leitmotif and recurring motifs and themes.

The importance of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* in terms of MacCunn’s development is that it was extremely successful. In terms of his future career, it may be viewed as his first tentative step away from choral music and the concert platform towards the stage and opera. His next cantata *Queen Hynde of Caledon* would take him one step further along this path.

Queen Hynde of Caledon

In April 1889, following the nationwide success of his early choral works – *Lord Ullin’s Daughter*, *Bonny Kilmeny* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* – a brief paragraph in the *Musical Times* announced that MacCunn had received a commission for the 1890 Norwich Festival.⁴⁴ A second announcement in December intimated: ‘Mr MacCunn has found a theme in Hogg’s “Queen Hynde of Caledon”, the libretto by his father’.⁴⁵ The fact that he already had a commission for the opening of the International Exhibition of Electrical Engineering, General Inventions and Industries in Edinburgh in May 1890⁴⁶ may have delayed his start on the Norwich commission, for he was unable to deliver *Queen Hynde of Caledon* in time. A meeting of the Festival Committee was reported as follows in the *Norwich Mercury*:

⁴⁴ ‘Facts, Rumours, and Remarks’ *MT* 31, 1889, 276.

⁴⁵ ‘Facts, Rumours, and Remarks’ *MT* 31, 1889, 721.

⁴⁶ Fulfilled as *Psalm VIII* – see Chapter 7 – Occasional Music.

The committee regret to state that they have recently been informed by Mr Hamish McCunn [sic] that it was quite impossible for him to complete the new work he had undertaken to compose for the Festival in sufficient time for it to be properly rehearsed by the chorus. Under these circumstances the committee had no alternative but to release Mr McCunn from his promise. That gentleman has however agreed to conduct one of his compositions at the Thursday evening concert.⁴⁷

Although the committee refers to MacCunn as a ‘gentleman’, elsewhere he appears to have caused no little annoyance by electing to go on holiday rather than fulfil the commission. As the *Musical Times* tartly observed:

Apropos to the Norwich Festival, it is reported that the new work which Mr Hamish MacCunn undertook to write will not be forthcoming. The reason given is want of time, but this, of course, may not be the only cause. Mr MacCunn is now on holiday in Scotland.⁴⁸

MacCunn did eventually complete *Queen Hynde of Caledon*, and some time prior to the start of their 1891–92 season, he approached the Glasgow Choral Union, offering them the first performance of his new cantata.

Mr Hamish MacCunn wrote offering the first performance of his newly completed Dramatic Cantata “Queen Hynde of Caledon” and declared he was prepared to dedicate it to the Glasgow Choral Union. The Council decided that “Mr MacCunn be offered the sum of Twenty Guineas⁴⁹ for the first performance of the work on condition that it will not be advertised by any other society until after its production in Glasgow, and that the cost of the vocal parts and the hire of the score and band parts, and royalty for the use of the libretto will not exceed what we have paid in the case of “The Lay of the Last Minstrel”.

These conditions were accepted by Mr MacCunn, and he offered his services as conductor, but the Council decided that Mr Bradley [the choirmaster] should undertake it.⁵⁰

Queen Hynde of Caledon was MacCunn’s last major cantata and was the second to draw on the work of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, for its libretto. At the time when Hogg was alive:

⁴⁷ ‘Norfolk and Norwich Musical Festival: the Final Arrangements for the Coming Festival’ *Norwich Mercury* 27 August 1890 [per Norfolk County Library].

⁴⁸ ‘Facts, Rumours, and Remarks’ *MT* 31, 1890, 471.

⁴⁹ A cheque for £21 was sent to MacCunn on 9 Feb 1892 by the secretary of the Glasgow Choral Union. John Wallace to Hamish MacCunn, 9 Feb 1892, Glasgow Choral Union Letter Book 27 December 1891–10 October 1892, 290.

⁵⁰ Robert Craig. *Glasgow Choral Union and Its Orchestra* Mitchell Library, Glasgow. TD1556/8/3/9, 158–159.

The values and the glories of civilisation were to be identified with London, the centre of the British Empire; and deviations from the cultural norms of the British metropolis were, by definition, to be regarded as manifestations of the second-rate, the backward, the provincial.⁵¹

– an attitude epitomised by Samuel Johnson’s much-quoted remark that ‘the noblest prospect a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England’.

National epics describing the mythological origins of a particular race exist in various guises. Some are legends written down in antiquity e.g. Virgil’s *Aeneid*, some are relatively more recent transcriptions of the oral tradition e.g. the Finnish *Kalevala*, collected in the 1830s by Elias Lönnrot, while others are deliberate literary constructs e.g. Spenser’s *Faerie Queen* (1590–96). Hogg’s *Queen Hynde* (1824) belongs to the latter category, and is his account of the origins and roots of the Scottish nation, in which he seeks ‘to generate a myth of national origins that will help to restore Scottish self-respect’.⁵² Hogg used his epic to give voice to the Scottish margins, to demonstrate that the society and culture of pre-Union Scotland had distinct and positive attributes. Set in the sixth century on the west coast of Scotland, the epic’s main focus is a symbolic illustration of the upholding of Scottish independence. By defeating Eric, King of the invading Norsemen in armed combat, Eiden, the Scottish prince disguised as a humble Scottish peasant, saves Scotland from annexation by a marauding country, in a scenario which, for Scots, instantly conjures up echoes of Bruce at Bannockburn.

In order to mimic an epic style, Hogg’s text contains echoes of authentic Gaelic poetry from the bardic tradition, specifically Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair (Alexander MacDonald) (?1695–?1770) and Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir (1724–1812), and of James Macpherson (‘Ossian’). The inclusion of the Celtic Saint Columba in the poem indicates that Hogg views positively the influence of the Christian church and its values in the shaping of the Scottish nation, and this is depicted by the triumph of the Scottish champion Eiden over Eric the heathen Norwegian King.⁵³

⁵¹ James Hogg *Queen Hynde* edited by Suzanne Gilbert and Douglas S. Mack. The Stirling/South Carolina Research Edition of James Hogg, 6. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1998, xxvi.

⁵² *Ibid.*, xxxi.

⁵³ For a full discussion of *Queen Hynde*, see the introduction to James Hogg *Queen Hynde* edited by Suzanne Gilbert and Douglas Mack. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1998 Stirling/South Carolina Edition of James Hogg, 6.

Libretto

According to the title page of the score, the libretto of *Queen Hynde of Caledon* is ‘founded on Hogg’s Poem *Queen Hynde* arranged and written by James MacCunn’ [the composer’s father]. The use of the term ‘founded on’ is essential, since a mere twenty lines in the entire libretto are from Hogg’s *Queen Hynde*, leaving one to conclude that the bulk of the libretto is from the pen of MacCunn senior. Genuine lines from Hogg are taken from Books One and Four, but are not used sequentially. Table 4.8, a comparison of MacCunn’s opening lines with those of Hogg, shows that the libretto opens with a genuine Hogg line (Book Four, line 194), but thereafter there is a rapid deviation. Bold type indicates Hogg’s lines retained by MacCunn; an asterisk indicates that Hogg’s line has been altered.

Hogg	MacCunn
(<i>Queen Hynde</i> Book Four, 194–197)	(<i>Queen Hynde of Caledon</i> , opening four lines)
The harp has ceased in Selma’s hall; And from her towers, and turrets tall, No glimm’ring torch or taper shone, For they had died out one by one.	The harp has ceased in Selma’s hall. (4:194) The hum of revelry declines. And from the towers and turrets tall (4:195*) No glimm’ring torch or taper shines. (4:196*)

Table 4.8 –Comparison of Hogg’s lines with MacCunn’s libretto

Whereas Hogg’s *Queen Hynde* consists of couplets of rhyming tetrameter, MacCunn’s rhythmical and metrical schemes vary, giving greater scope to the composer. Several numbers e.g. ‘Uisnar’s improvisation’ (Number 9) use the rhyme scheme ABAB, while other numbers are more complex e.g. ‘Chorus of celestial spirits’ (Number 5) and Wene’s solo in Scene II (Number 7), both of which have a palindromic rhyme scheme (ABCCBA).

James MacCunn’s libretto transplants three of Hogg’s characters, Queen Hynde of Caledon, King Eric of Norway, and Wene, a lady of Hynde’s court, into his scenario, which is loosely based on Hogg’s central plot. The persona of St Columba is not included, but the libretto strongly associates his Christian values with the Scottish court e.g. in ‘Let thy banner be the Cross’ (Number 5). While Queen Hynde and King Eric retain their original roles, Wene, who is described variously in the poem as ‘wicked Wene’, ‘petulant, pesterous Wene’ and ‘capricious Wene’, and who, in a sub-plot wreaks havoc disguised as the Queen, is reduced to a flat, two-dimensional character.

The fourth major character, Uisnar⁵⁴/Aidan is based on McHouston/Eiden, but whereas in Hogg's epic, the disguised Eiden is a 'low hind' (farm servant), a peasant who can wield a sword, MacCunn's disguised Aidan is a bard (although confusingly, on account of poor editing, he is referred to as 'a peasant with a mighty sword' in the dream experienced by Queen Hynde).

James MacCunn's libretto indirectly reveals his social and political adherence. By replacing Hogg's peasant warrior with a bard (more akin to a character from Walter Scott), he raises the status of Scotland's saviour from that of a common man to that of a member of a noble and aristocratic class with which MacCunn, as a member of the wealthy merchant class, would have identified. The lyric for the chorus number 'Let thy banner be the cross' carries an overtly nationalistic message in the lines 'Let thy banner be the Cross, And a nation great shall rise'. As these lines are from the pen of MacCunn rather than Hogg, they may be taken as an indication of his nationalist sentiment. This is discussed further in Chapter 8.

The libretto as it stands is not self-explanatory and, as with *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, reference has to be made to the argument, outlined below, to understand the plot fully.

Scene I

King Eric of Norway, learning of the succession of Princess Hynde to the Scottish throne, decides to invade and carry her off while the Scottish army is absent in Ireland, where Prince Aidan (betrothed to the Princess Hynde) is reported to have been slain. In a vivid dream Hynde is warned of impending danger from foreign foes, but is assured of safety and triumph by Celestial Voices.

Scene II

The Court, mostly consisting of youths and maidens (all the veteran warriors being absent), passes its time singing and dancing. One of the sweetest singers, Wene, has just finished her song and dance when a wandering minstrel calling himself Uisnar (who is really Prince Aidan in disguise) comes upon the gay assembly and improvises a song of impassioned love which deeply touches the Queen.

Scene III

Despite losing many of their ships in a storm, the Norsemen, led by King Eric, arrive in the Bay of Beregon. They defeat the Scots and march to the Palace of Selma, before which they sing their

⁵⁴ The name 'Uisnar', which does not appear in *Queen Hynde* or in any of MacPherson's works, appears to have been coined by James MacCunn.

Battle Hymn. King Eric proclaims a truce, proffers his love to Queen Hynde, and offers to unite the crowns of Caledon and Scandinavia. The Queen and Wene reply in indignant terms, and reject his proposals with scorn. Eric again demands her hand, threatening to bear her off by force of arms and reproaching her with the taunt that her warriors are far away, and that she is therefore unprotected. Here the harper Uisnar starts forward from among the Queen's attendants, throws down his harp, draws his sword and challenges Eric to mortal combat. They fight, and Eric is slain, as the fleet of the Scots is hailed returning victorious from Erin. Uisnar thereupon, on being thanked by the Queen for his great valour, throws off his disguise, reveals himself as Prince Aidan, and the Norsemen flee.

Scene IV

The story concludes with a festival the same night in the Great Hall of the Palace of Selma.⁵⁵

Sources

The full score for *Queen Hynde of Caledon* is held in Special Collections, Glasgow University Library.⁵⁶ The title page, in MacCunn's hand, reads '*Queen Hynde of Caledon* | a Dramatic Cantata | for | Soli, Chorus and Orchestra | – FULL SCORE – | Hamish MacCunn (Opus 13).' It is signed and dated '21 October/91, London'. Also on the title page is the rubber stamp of the music publishers Chappell & Co. and their address '50 Bond Street, W'. The score has been used for performance, but its condition indicates that it has been used infrequently. It appears to have been written hastily, as it contains many errors and corrections, one of which, written in MacCunn's hand on an envelope stuck to the verso of folio 9, reads 'NB. The introduction to No 2 differs in the vocal score, and requires to be corrected in the Soprano Vocalists [sic] copy.' The fact that the envelope is embossed with 'Crystal Palace Company' seems to indicate either that the first time this correction was made was in rehearsal for the first London performance on 5 March 1892, or that he was in the habit of helping himself to envelopes.

Scoring

The work is scored for double woodwind, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, strings, harp; two soprano, one tenor and one baritone soloists, and SATB chorus. Unusually, and in breach of theatrical convention, MacCunn has assigned the part of the hero Uisnar to the baritone soloist and that of the villain Eric to the tenor.

⁵⁵ Abridged from Hamish MacCunn *Queen Hynde of Caledon* London: Chappell, 1892, [ii].

⁵⁶ GUL MS MacCunn 4.

General observations

Queen Hynde of Caledon is a work of transition. Written at the same time as MacCunn was writing his first opera *Jeanie Deans* (completed in 1894), *Queen Hynde of Caledon* is a composite work, which narrows the gap between cantata and opera. It indicates the direction in which MacCunn's compositional path was to travel, away from Scottish cantata towards Scottish grand opera,⁵⁷ and shows his growing awareness of the dramatic possibilities offered by the cantata as a genre. The work is described as a 'dramatic cantata' but it is evident that the possibility of staging the work must have been in MacCunn's mind, since the libretto contains stage directions such as:

- Queen Hynde, in her bed-chamber, looking from the casement, sings (Number 2).
- Youths and maidens in the Gardens of Selma, singing, dancing and making merry (Number 6).
- They engage [in battle] and Eric is mortally wounded (Number 11).

The review in *Quiz* noted: 'the work does not properly belong to the concert platform but to the stage.'⁵⁸ This fact was also noted in the programme note for the first London performance: 'the cantata has been written throughout as if intended for the stage; and is therefore practically an opera, excepting so far as the limitations of the conventional cantata-chorus are concerned'⁵⁹ and a review of the performance referred to it as 'the lyrical portions of an opera, since for stage performance it would require to be supplemented by spoken dialogue'.⁶⁰

Other indications that staging was a possibility include:

- the observance of the classical unities of place, time and action (as in the opera *Diarmid*), which would have made stage production relatively easy
- the operatic treatment, discussed below, of many of the numbers, in particular the scene with Eric, Queen Hynde, Wene and Uisnar (Number 11) and the Uisnar and Hynde's love duet (Number 13)
- several of the numbers, particularly those for the chorus 'Come maidens leave your broiderie' (Number 6), 'They come, they come' (Number 12), 'Awake a hundred harps' (Number 14) have very long introductions and/or interludes leading one to believe that this is to accommodate action on stage

⁵⁷ *Jeanie Deans*, *Diarmid*, and the unfinished *Breast of Light*.

⁵⁸ 'Musical Moments' *Quiz* 22, 1892, 208.

⁵⁹ Crystal Palace Season 1891–1892. Programme of the Fourteenth Saturday Concert, 5 March 1892, 532.

⁶⁰ JB Carlile 'Queen Hynde of Caledon' *Theatre* 19, 1892, 219.

- the relatively minor role given to the chorus and the correspondingly greater attention focussed on the soloists

Taking into account the plot, the location, and other observations made above, one expects that MacCunn's musical treatment of the libretto will reflect the epic and bardic nature of the work, its Scottish context, its courtly setting in the distant past, and its operatic potential.

Bardic elements

The harp and its ancient bardic culture are as central to *Queen Hynde of Caledon* as they are to Hogg's poem. This is highlighted by the first line of the opening chorus: 'The harp has ceased in Selma's hall.' The second stanza continues in a similar vein:

The bard has sung his latest lay,
That love or victory extoll'd
And sinks to rest, to soar away
With spirits of the bards of old.

It is known that Hogg was greatly interested and inspired by a monograph by John Gunn on the Scottish harp⁶¹ and it is therefore fitting that this interest is emphasised and conveyed by MacCunn. The presence of the harp is expressed musically throughout the cantata either by the orchestral mimicking of harps or by the use of the instrument itself. The allocation to Uisnar, the minstrel, of an extensive solo in the form of an improvisation further focuses attention on the harp. The improvisation is extremely long and each phase is marked by a change in mood, tonality and style of accompaniment

Harp imitations

In the opening bars, rising arpeggios in the strings imitate the sweep of the minstrel's hands over harp's strings and later in the same number there are further examples in triple time (Example 4.62 over). At other times the harp is used as the main instrument of accompaniment (Example 4.63 over).

⁶¹ John Gunn *An Historical Enquiry Respecting the Performance on the Harp in the Highlands of Scotland* Edinburgh, n.p., 1807. See Moira A. Harris and Jane Mallinson 'Gunn, John' *MGG* 2, Personenteil 8, cols 281-282.

Example 4.62 – ‘The harp has ceas’d’

13 [Andante, ben sostenuto]

Orch. *pp* *dim*

18

S. A. The harp has ceas'd in Sel - ma's hall

T. B.

Example 4.63 – Use of harp in Uisnar’s improvisation

1 Andante molto espressivo e ben sostenuto

Uisnar

Orch. *pp* *dim*

Harp

3

is - - - nar lov'd a gen - - - tle maid, a

Scottish features

Although reviews of early performances referred to the work's use of Scottish ballads and 'local colour', no authentic Scots airs have been identified in the work. Only the melody of Uisnar's improvisation has a distinctly Scottish feel, with its hexatonic opening and the move from the sixth to the first degree of the scale at the end of its opening phrase 'gentle maid', all features common to many traditional Scots airs (see Example 4.63 above). One reviewer claimed it was very similar to Sir Henry Bishop's popular ballad 'My pretty Jane' (Example 4.64 below) and opined: 'one is tempted to imagine that some Scottish prototype of that popular tenor ballad may exist.'⁶² A comparison of the two melodies shows that apart from the initial rising sixth, they have little in common.

Example 4.64 – 'My pretty Jane'⁶³

The musical score for 'My pretty Jane' is presented in two staves. The top staff is for Tenor, written in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and common time. The melody begins with a rising sixth interval. The lyrics are: 'My pret - ty Jane, my pret-ty Jane Ah! nev - er nev - er look so shy,'. The bottom staff is for Piano, featuring a rhythmic accompaniment of chords and single notes, primarily in the right hand, with some bass line activity in the left hand.

The introduction to Number 6 – 'Come Maidens Leave Your Broiderie' is written in the style of a vigorous Scots reel, to which the youths and maidens of the court dance Example 4.65).

Example 4.65 – Come maidens leave your broiderie (introduction)

The musical score for the introduction to 'Come maidens leave your broiderie' consists of two systems. The first system is for the Orchestral (Orch.) part, marked 'Allegro giocoso' and 'p' (piano). It features a melody in the upper strings (labeled 'ww/hns/strings') and a bass line with 'Triangle in quavers'. The second system continues the orchestral part, marked 'cres' (crescendo), and includes a piano accompaniment part with chords and single notes.

⁶² *Daily Telegraph* 7 Mar 1892, reported as 'Mr Hamish MacCunn's New Cantata' in *Scotsman* 7 Mar 1892, 9.

⁶³ Henry Bishop 'My pretty Jane' also known as 'The bloom is on the rye' published in London in 1832. Source of example: Sabine Baring Gould (ed) *English Minstrelsy: a National Monument of English Song the Airs, in Both Notations*, arranged by H. Fleetwood Sheppard, F.W. Bussell and W.H. Hopkinson. 8 vols. Edinburgh: Jack, 1895, 3, 52.

It possibly hints at the Northumbrian folk tune ‘The Keel Row’ but in style it calls to mind MacCunn’s *Six Scotch Dances* published in 1896, e.g. ‘Dirk Dance’ (Example 4.66).

Example 4.66 – Dirk Dance Op. 28 no. 4



There is one sole instance of the repeated use of grace notes in imitation of the fiddle and/or the cello, instruments traditionally used to accompany Scottish dances. Significantly this is in the chorus number ‘They come! They come!’ (Number 12) thus linking this Scottish feature to the approach of the returning Scottish army (Example 4.67 over).

Other than the above, all of which are rather superficial, there are no features which could be identified as being stereotypically Scottish. This is possibly because the setting is at the Scottish court, and MacCunn evokes a regal setting by omitting references to folk music, rather than by including courtly features. Nothing in the music suggests a courtly setting, nor the period in which the action is set.

Example 4.67 – Use of grace notes

1 *Allegro agitato* *p* *vlas*

Orch.

vcs/dbs

6 *f* They come! *f* They come! *f* They come! *f* They come!

S. A.

T. B.

f They come! *f* They come! *f* They come! *f* They come!

ff *ff* *ff* *ff*

9 come! 10 they come! they come! they come!

11 come! they come! they come! they come!

12 come! they come! they come! they come!

13 come! they come! they come! they come!

14 come! they come! they come! they come!

Leitmotifs and recurring themes

More obvious than the inclusion of Scottish material is MacCunn's use of leitmotifs and recurring themes. As in his previous cantatas, leitmotifs based on melody, pitch or key are used to illustrate, comment and give cohesion.

Uisnar is the sole character to be represented by a series of leitmotifs. His leitmotif first occurs in the postlude to Queen Hynde's aria 'O memory', hinting at a connection yet to be explained. Its meaning is not revealed until Number 8 – 'Uisnar I am called', where a six note melodic contour is the precursor to a series of Uisnar leitmotifs. (Example 4.68 over)

Example 4.68 – Number 8 – ‘Uisnar I am called’

26 [Andante con moto]

Uisnar

U - is - nar I am call'd

Orch.

vlas

tpis/vcs

cbs

This is then developed by Uisnar in his lengthy improvisation, into which are incorporated several versions of his leitmotif. The opening, in which he sings of his love, is characterised by an initial rising sixth, to which is added the already introduced melodic contour (Example 4.69a). It is later repeated in a minor form reflecting the text it carries, ‘Uisnar sought the castle walls | In dismal rue’ (Example 4.69b).

Example 4.69a – Uisnar major

Uisnar

U - is - nar lov'd a gen - tle maid

Example 4.69b – Uisnar minor

Uisnar

U - is - nar sought the cas - tle walls

Example 4.69c – Uisnar minor, modified

Uisnar

But oh his heart was wound - ed sore

Example 4.69c shows a further modification of the leitmotif. The rhythm is altered and the melody, while retaining the initial rising sixth, is shortened, and reflects the sadness and pain of the text with its minor mode.

Near the end of the improvisation, a leitmotif used to denote Uisnar in battle (Example 4.70a over) refers back to Queen Hynde’s dream, in which she foresees the Norwegian invasion, symbolised by ‘the Black Bull of Norway’, and the slaying of the bull by ‘a peasant with a mighty sword’ (Example 4.70b over). Thus confusingly Uisnar, the saviour of Scotland, is identified musically as a peasant, rather than the bard

as which he is disguised, an anomaly arising from James MacCunn's poor editing of his libretto.

Example 4.70a – Uisnar revealed as the peasant with a mighty sword

Uisnar

All scathe - less pass'd he thro' the fight

Example 4.70b – Queen Hynde's dream

Queen Hynde

A pea - sant with a migh - ty sword

A final use of the Uisnar leitmotif comes in Queen Hynde's recitative which precedes the love duet. Immediately after her command 'Say who thou art', the leitmotif is heard in the accompaniment, revealing the identity of the man who has rescued Queen Hynde and Scotland (Example 4.71)

Example 4.71 – 'Rise Victor'

Queen Hynde

1 Quasi recit Sostenuto

"Rise, Vic - tor, from thy bend - ed knee; _____

Orch. brass

5 Thy craft is more than min - strel - sy Say who thou art! Uisnar De - clare thy line - age,

9 and claim Re - ward, the rich - est words can name."

Uisnar

A leitmotif is used to represent the threat of the invading Norwegian army. Its textual marker is 'the Black Bull of Norway' first introduced in Number 3 – 'The voice is silent', when it intrudes on Hynde's dream (Example 4.72a). It is chanted by the tenors and basses in unison on C flat and thus the pitch of C flat becomes associated with threat and menace.

Example 4.72a – The Black Bull 1

It then recurs in a fuller version, in 12/8 time, in which there is a repeated falling semitone in the accompaniment and a diminished seventh chord with an inverted tonic pedal.

Example 4.72b – Black Bull 1 and 2a

The rhythmic triplet figure with its falling semitone (Black Bull 2a) appears in modified forms (Black Bull 2b and Black Bull 2c) to accompany the distinctive C flat pitch of the Black Bull 1 leitmotif (Examples 4.72c and 4.72d).

Example 4.72c – Black Bull 1 and Black Bull 2b

The musical score for Example 4.72c is divided into two systems. The first system, starting at measure 113, is marked [Allegretto moderato] and features a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. It includes a vocal line for T. B. (Tenor Basso) and an orchestral (Orch.) accompaniment. The T. B. line contains the lyrics "The Black Bull of Nor - way" and is marked with the "Black Bull 1" leitmotif. The Orch. part features a "Black Bull 2b" leitmotif, which is a rhythmic triplet figure with a falling semitone. The second system, starting at measure 115, continues the orchestral accompaniment with the "Black Bull 2b" motif and includes a vocal line for the T. B. part with the lyrics "has bro - ken his band". This section is marked with a *molto cres* (molto crescendo) dynamic.

Example 4.72d (over) shows the final exchange between Queen Hynde and the Norwegian King Eric, in which all the elements of the Black Bull leitmotif – pitch, interval, harmony and rhythm – are used cumulatively to underline the threat posed by Eric.

Chapter 1 THE CONSTITUTION 22

Orch.

Example 4.73 – King Eric in D major

Allegro moderato

Orch. *hns/tpns/tbns*

Eric

For- bear ye sons of Thor, for- bear

However, while attempting to woo Queen Hynde, Eric sings flatteringly, disguised in the distant key of G flat major (Example 4.74). His true colours are revealed by the interpolation of a fanfare in D major in the accompaniment (Example 4.75).

Example 4.74 – King Eric disguised in G flat major

Andante espressivo con moto

Eric

Thou bright-est gem of Ca-le-don! whose beau-ty rare all min-strels sing,

Orch. *strings*

Example 4.75 – Eric's true colours revealed

Andante espressivo con moto

Eric

My crown I place be neath thy feet

Orch. *cls/bns/hns*

G minor

And yield all Nor-way's realm to thee

strings

B major

D major arpeggio

Recurring themes

MacCunn uses one recurring theme to telling effect. The melody of Queen Hynde's first solo, 'O memory', sung as a wistful lyrical soliloquy (Example 4.76), is reused for the final love duet between Uisnar and Hynde.

Example 4.76 – Queen Hynde's soliloquy

The musical score for Queen Hynde's soliloquy 'O memory' is presented in three systems. The first system, labeled 'Orch.', shows the orchestral accompaniment for strings and woodwinds (marked 'cls'). The tempo is 'Andante con moto'. The key signature has three flats (B-flat major). The strings play a triplet pattern in the right hand and a slower triplet in the left hand, both marked 'pp'. The second system, labeled 'Queen Hynde', shows her vocal melody. She begins with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by the lyrics 'O me - mo - ry'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same triplet pattern. The third system, starting at measure 5, shows the vocal melody continuing with the lyrics 'the van - ish'd past re - store'. The piano accompaniment features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand and a triplet in the left hand, marked 'pp'. The score concludes with a final triplet of eighth notes in the vocal melody and a triplet in the piano accompaniment.

The rapturous reunion of the lovers is introduced by a passage of triplet semiquavers over a slow-moving harmonic bass, which leads to the restatement of Queen Hynde's solo 'O memory'. When first used, this melody was a lament for the past in the key of A flat major. Now set in the higher key of B major, it is cast as an ecstatic love duet, in which Queen Hynde and Uisnar/Aidan's reunion is depicted musically, as their melodies combine in the style of an operatic duet (Example 4.77 over). A more powerful depiction would have been achieved if Uisnar's counter-melody had been associated with him previously, rather than being newly introduced material.

Example 4.77 – Love duet

32 Vivace e con fuoco

Queen Hynde

Uisnar

Orch.

35

39

King! Ye

Hynde! my be - lov - ed and my

come a gain O hap - py days of yore!

Queen! ye come a - gain O hap - py days of yore!

Use of orchestra

MacCunn uses the orchestra effectively to describe the action, which must be imagined by the cantata's audience. The sword fight between Aidan and Eric is vividly portrayed in a passage extending to 14 bars. Descending and ascending semiquaver passages suggest the rapid footwork involved in swordplay; repeated accented crotchets describe the clash of blades and lunging motion. A final rising chromatic passage leads to an *fff* D⁷ chord followed by a long silence, indicating Aidan's victory over Eric.

Other effective examples of the use of the orchestra are to be found in word-painting. In Example 4.78 (over) the rising vocal line describing the 'pillars of the sky' is continued for a further bar by the orchestral accompaniment.

Example 4.78 – Word painting

13 Adagio

Queen Hynde

Like gol - den pil - lars of the sky!

Orch.

cres

In Example 4.79, from Uisnar's improvisation, the rolling motion of the sea is conjured up by swift chromatic passages in the cellos.

Example 4.79 – Orchestral depiction of the 'angry sea'

molto rall

Uisnar

Be-yond the an - gry sea

Orch.

brass

pp

vcs

dfs

Influences

As in previous cantatas, MacCunn shows his indebtedness to Wagner. An example of this is the already mentioned extensive use of leitmotifs. Another example is to be found in the similarities between the concluding number of Scene 1 'Let thy banner be the cross' and the Pilgrims' Chorus from Act III of *Tannhäuser*. The text of both numbers has a religious or quasi-religious message; one is sung by a chorus of celestial spirits, the other by a band of returning pilgrims; the initial stanzas of both are sung a cappella, while the final stanza is accompanied by unison strings in fast passage work (Example 4.80 over). Whereas in *Tannhäuser* the accompaniment is an unrelenting descending scale, in *Queen Hynde of Caledon* there is an alternation between descending scales and rising arpeggios, but the overall effect is too similar to be coincidental.

Example 4.80 – ‘Let thy banner be the cross’

42 Andante con moto

S. A. *ff* Let thy

T. B.

Orch. *vvv/brass double voices*

Timps. *+side drum*

46 ban - ner be the Cross And al

50 nat - ion great shall rise

bass drum/ cymbals

MacCunn told George Bernard Shaw that he could find no words to express his admiration for the ‘beauty and dramatic force of the Prelude to [Gounod’s] Faust’,⁶⁴ and Gounod’s influence is apparent in *Queen Hynde of Caledon*. The light-heartedness and nonchalance of some numbers e.g. the chorus number ‘Come maidens leave your

⁶⁴ George Bernard Shaw ‘Lions of the Season: Hamish MacCunn’ *Star*, 7 May 1889 reprinted in *Shaw’s Music: the Complete Musical Criticism* edited by Dan H. Laurence. 3 vols. London: Bodley Head, 1937, 1, 623.

broiderie’ and Wene’s Scene II song ‘I love to trill’, typified by their being set in waltz time, call to mind the Kermesse scene from *Faust*. The love duet between Uisnar/Aidan and Hynde is cast in distinctly French operatic style.

Weaknesses – musical

When its numbers are viewed in isolation, much of the music in *Queen Hynde of Caledon* is extremely effective, but when considered as a whole, it fails to make a satisfactory cantata. There are several reasons for this. Musically, the work is unsatisfactory because it lacks stylistic homogeneity and because MacCunn fails to stamp the work with a coherent personal style.

Unusually for MacCunn, some of the word setting is extremely poor, as shown in Example 4.81 taken from Wene’s solo in Scene II, in which the melismatic treatment of the word ‘secret’ verges on the incongruous.

Example 4.81 – Poor word setting



As with the number which precedes it, ‘Come maidens leave your broiderie’, the overworking of a single theme is very tedious. However, were these two numbers to be staged, the visual effects of scenery and movement of the cast would tend to compensate for their monothematic treatment.

Weaknesses – libretto

By using his father’s less than adequate libretto, MacCunn immediately set himself at a disadvantage. It contains inconsistencies e.g. the previously mentioned confusion as to whether Uisnar is a peasant or a minstrel, the incongruity of a Caledonian queen of the sixth century singing about ‘Elysian bowers’. There are scenes which appear to nod in the direction of the Savoy operas – e.g. Uisnar’s entrance disguised as a minstrel seems to allude to Nanki-Poo in *The Mikado* (1885), and the dialogue which introduces his song cannot help but remind one of ‘The Merryman and His Maid’, sung by Jack Point and Elsie Maynard in *The Yeoman of the Guard* (1888), which opens with the line ‘I have a song to sing o’.

Ladies of court: Lo here a minstrel comes with harp strung on his shoulder. What art thou and whence?

Uisnar: Uisnar I am call'd. Alas! I come from Erin, where the em'rald turf is stain'd with blood. I fain would sing to ye an air, a simple tale that stirs a flood of thought within my heart. Wilt hear?

Ladies of court: Sing on, O minstrel, we give ear.

It should also be noted that the courtiers, who halt their festivities to allow Uisnar to sing his song, are not given the right of reply, since the scene concludes, rather unsatisfactorily, at the end of Uisnar's improvisation.

The libretto's major weakness lies in the first half of the second scene, in which the female chorus and Wene spend an inordinate amount of time singing and dancing for no particular reason and to no great effect. There is no logical progression from the end of the previous scene, or to the beginning of the next scene. It is probably intended as light relief from the serious content of the previous scene, but without the benefit of staging and visual effects, it is too long and the musical material is overworked.

In *Queen Hynde of Caledon*, as in *Bonny Kilmeny* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, the final chorus cannot be justified dramatically, since the work could end quite satisfactorily at the end of the love duet. The rationale for its addition seems to have been that James MacCunn felt that this feature was a *sine qua non* of a cantata, expected by both chorus and audience.

MacCunn was not oblivious to faults in libretti, for when he was commissioned by Carl Rosa to write an opera, he tried several subjects and librettists before electing to work with Joseph Bennett on *Jeanie Deans*. MacCunn was very aware of the importance of good lyrics and corresponded regularly with him throughout their collaboration on the opera. When setting a cycle of Bennett's poems, he wrote:

If I might make a suggestion, I would beg you, if you will, to substitute some other words in the 3rd verse, for 'My love, my life, my light.' That line appears to me to so intense as to make the reply of the girl, which follows ('I will come again' etc) rather prosaic.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Hamish MacCunn to Joseph Bennett, 11 Jul 1889. Pierpont Morgan Library MFC M133.B4716(4). MacCunn is referring to 'A Message from the East in May' no. 1 of *Cycle of Six Love-Lyrics* Op.9. London: Novello, 1891. Despite MacCunn's request, Bennett did not change the text.

Although the above quotation refers to a solo song, it demonstrates MacCunn's awareness of the importance of good lyrics. He must have held Bennett in high regard as a collaborator, as he wrote to him a few years later suggesting that he write the libretto for a cantata.⁶⁶

The libretto of *Queen Hynde of Caledon* is the weakest with which MacCunn had to work. The fact that his father was the librettist may have made it very difficult for him to criticise, or to suggest alterations or improvements. The libretto of a choral work is like the ribs of an umbrella – if the framework is unsound, no matter how attractive the fabric, the whole thing collapses.

First performance and reception

Queen Hynde of Caledon was first performed by the Glasgow Choral Union at an all-choral concert in Glasgow's St Andrew's Hall on 28 January 1892.⁶⁷ Although MacCunn was present at the performance, it was conducted by the chorus-master Joseph Bradley. Before reviewing the specifics of *Queen Hynde of Caledon*, the critic of the *Glasgow Herald* made some very perceptive remarks about the dramatic cantata in general.

The new dramatic cantata, a form of composition the popularity of which is significant both of our national languid interest in opera and our willing acceptance of a compromise that adapts for concert, uses dramatic material that rightly belongs to the stage [...]⁶⁸

Quiz's critic also found the work to be more suited to the stage, stating: 'The music is dramatic throughout and would be most effective if accompanied by stage accessories',⁶⁹ and his counterpart in the *Bailie* noted in a pre-performance review of the published score that Uisnar's improvisation was 'of highly operatic character, foreshadowing, it may be, the composer's future achievements in another field'.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Hamish MacCunn to Joseph Bennett, 10 Apr 1900. Pierpont Morgan Library MFC M133.B4716(13). It would appear that nothing came of MacCunn's suggestion.

⁶⁷ The other item on the programme was Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang*.

⁶⁸ 'Choral Union Concert' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Jan 1892, 7.

⁶⁹ 'Musical Moments' *Quiz* 22, 1892, 208.

⁷⁰ 'Quavers' *Bailie* 39, 27 Jan 1892, 10.

In general, the work received a mixed reception. The *Scotsman*'s review hailed the work as 'the best work in its form which he [MacCunn] has yet accomplished',⁷¹ whereas the *Herald* suggested that 'it seems unlikely that Mr MacCunn's new work will advance his reputation as much as had been hoped'.⁷² There were other major differences of opinion between the two last mentioned reviewers. The libretto was praised by the *Scotsman*, but the *Herald*, referring to the chorus number 'Let thy banner be the Cross', was quick to point out that 'the conventions of sentiment and language tend naturally to the correspondingly stereotyped conventions of an unaccompanied chorus'. While the inclusion of Scottish features was noted by the *Herald* and the *Musical Times*, the *Scotsman*'s critic commented that 'there is no appreciable effort in "Queen Hynde" to imitate with any consistency the peculiarities of Scottish music'.

The first London performance of *Queen Hynde of Caledon* took place on 5 March 1892 at Crystal Palace conducted by MacCunn. Also included in the programme were Mendelssohn's *Hebrides* overture, the Introduction to Act III of *Lohengrin* and the scene at the Wizard's Grave from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* conducted by August Manns (who sang with the chorus in *Queen Hynde*). The performance, which was widely reviewed in both the national and musical press, received a mixed reception. The *Daily Telegraph*'s review was particularly critical, and a few days later MacCunn referred to it in a letter to that newspaper's critic Joseph Bennett: 'I cannot imagine that you had anything to do with the contemptible, scurrilous and untrue report of my "Queen Hynde of Caledon" which appeared on Monday in the pages of the "D.T."',⁷³

While certain aspects of the cantata were singled out for praise e.g. 'the instrumentation is, as usual, full of ingenious effects'⁷⁴ and the 'vigorous and picturesque'⁷⁵ Battle Hymn of the Norsemen, many features were viewed negatively. These features included the lack of homogeneity caused by the influence of various schools and styles, the 'too lengthy drawing out of poverty-stricken phrases'⁷⁶ and the libretto. English reviewers revealed cultural differences by taking the libretto to task for references to the 'Black Bull': 'The sudden ejaculation by the male chorus in the middle

⁷¹ 'Mr Hamish MacCunn's New Cantata' *Scotsman* 29 Jan 1892, 5. A condensed version of this review, prefaced by an explanatory paragraph about MacCunn appeared as 'Live Musical Topics' in the *New York Times* 14 Feb 1892, 12.

⁷² 'Choral Union Concert' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Jan 1892, 7.

⁷³ Hamish MacCunn to Joseph Bennett, 8 Mar 1892. Pierpont Morgan Library MFC M133.B4716(10).

⁷⁴ 'Crystal Palace Concerts' *Monthly Musical Record* 22, 1892, 87.

⁷⁵ 'Crystal Palace Concerts' *Daily Telegraph* 7 Mar 1892, 3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

of the Queen's soliloquy of the words 'The Black Bull' is quite pointless and almost ludicrous, suggesting as it does a midnight visit to some local hostelry.'⁷⁷ and: 'When Queen Hynde refers to the 'Black Bull' we cannot help thinking of some wayside inn where her Majesty intends to put up.'⁷⁸

Despite extensive research, no subsequent performance of the work has been traced.

Publication

The piano-vocal score was published by the London firm of Chappell & Co. early in 1892. There is no evidence of orchestral parts having been published, and it must be assumed that all parts and the full score were only ever available in manuscript. Despite MacCunn's offer to dedicate the work to the Glasgow Choral Union, no such dedication appeared on either the vocal score, the full score or in the programme. It appears that Chappell did little to promote the work in its published form, as there is no evidence of any advertising in the musical press.

Assessment

As was noted above, *Queen Hynde of Caledon* is a work of transition and as such is a hybrid – half cantata, half opera, or rather, neither cantata nor opera. While there is much in the work which is good or better – in particular Eric's attempted wooing of Hynde, the love duet between Aidan and Hynde, the robust battle hymn of the Norsemen – the parts do not add up to make a satisfactory whole. As a cantata, the work fails because orchestral passages, which would go unremarked in an opera, as they would accompany action on stage, are too long and interrupt the forward movement of the cantata. From a purely practical point of view, the work is unlikely to appeal to amateur choral societies since there are not many numbers for the chorus, and what few there are do not make any great demands of the performers. As an opera it fails because the plot is slight, and lacking in originality and cohesion. Whether viewed as a dramatic cantata or an opera in search of dialogue, *Queen Hynde of Caledon* fails, primarily because the libretto is inadequate and cannot stand by itself.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ 'Crystal Palace Concerts' *Monthly Musical Record* 22, 1892, 87.

Conclusion

The Lay of the Last Minstrel and *Queen Hynde of Caledon* were MacCunn's largest choral works and the only two styled 'dramatic cantata'. Although the former did not enjoy the spectacular success of Dvořák's *The Spectre's Bride*, it did achieve a reasonable amount of critical and popular acclaim. Thus when *Queen Hynde of Caledon* was published there were great expectations of MacCunn. The inclusion of longer solos allowed him to display his sympathetic writing for the voice but he failed to deliver the advance in compositional technique for which the critics were hoping.

In both *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Queen Hynde of Caledon* MacCunn exploits to the full the dramatic potential of the libretto, but ultimately he, like many nineteenth-century composers of cantatas, was either let down by his librettist, or failed to communicate his exact requirements to the librettist.⁷⁹ In terms of MacCunn's oeuvre, both cantatas are transitional works – they allowed MacCunn to experiment with dramatic, operatic-like texts without incurring the expense of staging and production. The experiment would come to fruition with the composition of his two Scottish operas *Jeanie Deans* (1894) and *Diarmid* (1897).

⁷⁹ As previously mentioned, it may not have been easy to for MacCunn to argue with his father *qua* librettist.

Chapter 5

The Choral Ballads

Lord Ullin's Daughter – The Cameronian's Dream – The Wreck of the Hesperus

Choral ballads are an important part of the musical heritage of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century but until recently they have not received much attention from musicologists. An indication of this is that most musical reference works do not treat the term 'Choral ballad' as a separate entity. In *New Grove 2* it is dealt with in the article 'Cantata' while in *Riemann 12* and *MGG 1* and *2* it appears under both 'Cantata' and 'Ballade'. Writing from a German perspective, Dahlhaus asserts that the choral ballad is a separate genre¹ but British musicology is unable to offer any hard and fast definition, and that offered in *Grove 3* is no more than a statement of the obvious – "Choral ballads" are, generally speaking, musical settings for voices generally with orchestra of poems that would naturally be described as ballads.'²

The earliest choral ballads can be traced back to mid-nineteenth-century Germany and in particular to Robert Schumann and Max Bruch who 'established a tradition in which literary and musical elements combined to form a genre in the full sense of the word'.³ They later became a popular genre in Britain, where, as in Germany, the rapid growth in choral societies led the demand for music for the amateur choral market. While the German choral ballad is generally written for a soloist or soloists, chorus and orchestra, the British choral ballad tends to be only for choir and orchestra.⁴ Perhaps all that can be said about the choral ballad that it is a genre of choral music, a through-composed setting of a ballad, either traditional or literary, for choir and orchestra.

One of the earliest and most popular British choral ballads was Charles Villiers Stanford's setting of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's ballad 'The Revenge'. Premiered at the

¹ Carl Dahlhaus *Nineteenth-Century Music* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, 163.

² W.H. Cummings 'Ballad' in *Grove 3*, 1, 205.

³ Dahlhaus *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 163.

⁴ Michael Jarczyk *Die Chorballade im 19. Jahrhundert: Studien zu ihrer Form, Entstehung und Verbreitung* München: Katzschler, 1978, 157–168; 'Ballade 10. Chorballade' in *MGG 2* Sachteil 1, 1994, cols. 1150–1115.

Leeds Festival in 1886, it was performed widely throughout Britain in subsequent years. Such was its popularity that by 1897 over 60,000 copies of the vocal score had been sold and unusually, for a British choral work, the full score had been published.⁵ Stanford's success with *The Revenge* or indeed Stanford himself as MacCunn's teacher may have prompted MacCunn to consider the ballad as a source of inspiration.

In all MacCunn set seven ballads: *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, *The Cameronian's Dream*, *The Wreck of the Hesperus* and *Four Traditional Scottish Border Ballads* – *The Jolly Goshawk*, *Kinmont Willie*, *Lamkin* and *The Death of Parcy Reed*. (Table 5.1)

Title	Date	Text	First performance
<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	1888	Thomas Campbell	Crystal Palace, 18 February 1888
<i>The Cameronian's Dream</i>	1890	Joseph Hyslop	Edinburgh, 27 January 1890
<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	1905	Longfellow	London, 28 August 1905
<i>The Jolly Goshawk</i>	1914	Traditional	Sheffield, 17 April 1921
<i>Kinmont Willie</i>	1914	Traditional	Sheffield, 17 April 1921
<i>Lamkin</i>	1914	Traditional	Sheffield, 17 April 1921
<i>The Death of Parcy Reed</i>	1914	Traditional	London, 25 March 1925

Table 5.1 – MacCunn's Choral Ballads

Only one ballad, *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, does not have Scottish associations. *Lord Ullin's Daughter* and *The Cameronian's Dream* are literary ballads by Scots poets about Scottish subjects, whereas the *Four Traditional Scottish Border Ballads* are treatments of published versions of Scottish oral tradition. The choice of *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, by the American poet Longfellow, may have been dictated by the circumstances of its commission (for performance in a London variety theatre) or by the fact that it was written at a time when MacCunn was trying to establish himself as a British rather than a Scottish composer.

The first three mentioned ballads are examined in this chapter and the *Four Traditional Scottish Border Ballads* are treated separately in Chapter 6.

⁵ Jeremy Dibble *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002, 178.

Lord Ullin's Daughter

The text used by MacCunn for his Opus 4, *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, is the poem of the same name by the Scottish poet Thomas Campbell (1777–1844). The idea for the poem first came to Campbell in 1795 when he spent some months on the island of Mull working as a tutor to the family of Mrs Campbell of Sunipol. Writing in 1837 to Francis W. Clark, the then owner of the Isle of Ulva, Campbell says:

I heard the tradition [of Lord Ullin's daughter] when I was a very young man during my sojourn in Argyleshire [sic] and my impression was that the chief of Ulva was on his way back to his own estate with his bride when flying [sic] before her pursuers he embark'd with her at a ferry at Loch Goyle.⁶

The poem tells the story of a young couple, the chief of Ulva's Isle and his bride, Lord Ullin's daughter. Their union is opposed by Lord Ullin, who with his followers, is in hot pursuit of the couple, who, to escape the outraged father, need to cross Lochgyle (in all probability Loch Goil in Argyllshire). Despite its being a stormy night, a boatman heroically agrees to put his boat to sea, not for money but for the sake of the beautiful lady. The storm continues unabated, the boat founders and the bride's father arrives at the water's edge just in time to see his daughter, her lover and the boatman drowning.

Written in ballad form, the poem consists of 14 stanzas of four lines, alternating iambic tetrameter and trimeter. The traditional rhyme scheme, ABAB, alternates strong and weak rhymes. The poetic structure is strengthened by the occasional use of internal rhyme e.g.

And, by my word! the bonny bird;

Adown the glen rode armèd men;

For sore dismayed, through storm and shade;

The waters wild went o'er his child;

⁶ Thomas Campbell to Francis W. Clark, Chieftain of Ulva, 7 December 1837, regarding the composition of the poem *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, GUL MS Gen 502/6.

The poem was first sketched in 1795, elaborated in 1804 and finally published in 1809.⁷ Like many of Campbell's other poems, e.g. 'The Battle of the Baltic', 'Ye Mariners of England', it quickly became extremely popular. It circulated as a broadside ballad in the 1820s,⁸ was included in anthologies⁹ and was learned by heart by countless generations of schoolchildren.¹⁰

The earliest association of Campbell's text with music appeared in 1809, the year it was first published, in Edward Bunting's *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* where the words are matched to the traditional Irish hexatonic melody, 'Eilighe gheall chuinn' known in English as 'The charming fair Eily'.¹¹

Example 5.1 – The charming fair Eily¹²

A chief - tain to the High - lands bound Cries, 'Boat - man do not tar - ry! And I'll give thee a sil - ver pound To row us o'er the fer - ry.' 'Now who be ye would cross Loch Gyle This dark and storm - y wa - ter?' 'Oh I'm the chief of Ul - va's isle, And this Lord Ul - lin's daugh - ter.'

Thereafter there were a number of settings as a song, duet or choral ballad before MacCunn's version was composed (see Table 5.2 over). Arthur Jackson's choral ballad (1879) enjoyed some popularity and the *Musical Times* records performances of it in the early 1900s.¹³

It is almost certain that MacCunn would have known Campbell's poem from childhood, possibly having learned it at school, and he may also have associated it with its 'original' tune – 'The charming fair Eily' (Example 5.1 above).

⁷ Thomas Campbell *Gertrude of Wyoming and Other Poems* London: Longman, 1809.

⁸ See, for example, the broadside held in National Library of Scotland 'The Comic Divan; Lord Ullin's Daughter' NLS APS.3.84.4 <http://www.nls.uk/broadsides/broadside.cfm/id/16636>, accessed 26 Feb 2005.

⁹ 'Lord Ullin's Daughter' continues to be included in anthologies. The tenth edition of *The Columbia Granger's Index to Poetry* edited by Edith P. Hazen (1994) lists nine in print anthologies in which it may be found.

¹⁰ The present writer's mother (1911–2000) could recite the entire poem from memory.

¹¹ Edward Bunting *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland, Arranged for the Piano Forte* [...] London: Clementi, [1809].

¹² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹³ For example, it was performed at the Crystal Palace at the Annual Festival of the Tonic Sol-fa Association in 1903. ('London and Suburban Concerts' *MT* 44, 1903, 179).

Composer	Title	Form	Date
Traditional Irish air set by Edward Bunting	<i>A Chieftain to the Highlands Bound</i>	Song	1809
John Andrew Stevenson	<i>The Chieftain and Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Duet with piano accompaniment	1824
George Thomson	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Song	1826
George Hargreaves	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Trio	1835
Joseph Francis Duggan	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Song	1854
Edward Land	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Song	1866
Arthur Herbert Jackson	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Choral ballad	1879
Oliveria Luisa Prescott	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Choral ballad	1884
Alfred Gaul	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Descriptive choral song for men's voices	1885
Arthur Henry Mann	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Part song	1887
Robert Lucas Pearsall	<i>A Chieftain to the Highlands Bound</i>	Part song	1887
William Wolstenholme	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Cantata (Degree exercise for Oxford University)	1887
Hamish MacCunn	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Ballad for chorus and orchestra	1888
John Armour Haydn	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Trio	1888
Arthur Ham	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Choral ballad with piano accompaniment	1893
Sinclair Dunn	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Song	1894
Arthur Somervell	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Dramatic ballad for solo voice and chorus	1904
Clarence S. Hill	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Song	1913
Arthur Somervell	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Short cantata for schools and classes, for treble voices	1925

Table 5.2 – Settings of 'Lord Ullin's Daughter'¹⁴

While MacCunn himself may have selected the ballad for musical treatment, it is possible that it was suggested by his father James. Reasons for choosing Campbell's poem are its already-mentioned popularity, its Scottish theme (always attractive to MacCunn) and the opportunities it offers for dramatisation. Slightly more than half of the lines consist of direct speech allocated to the four principal characters – the chief of Ulva, the boatman, the eponymous heroine and Lord Ullin, her father.

Sources

MacCunn's full score manuscript of *Lord Ullin's Daughter* is held in the Special Collections Department of Glasgow University Library.¹⁵ At the end of the score in MacCunn's hand is the legend 'completed 15/3/87 (London)', i.e. just three weeks before MacCunn left the Royal College of Music. The title page reads: '*Lord Ullin's Daughter* (Thos. Campbell) | Ballad for Chorus and Orchestra | Hamish MacCunn (Opus 4)'.¹⁶ There follows in pencil in MacCunn's hand a note of the dates of two

¹⁴ Collated from various sources including CPM, GUL on-line catalogue, MT.

¹⁵ GUL MS MacCunn 25.

¹⁶ It originally read 'Opus 4 no 1' but 'no 1' has been heavily scored out in pencil.

Crystal Palace performances – a Saturday Concert on 18 Feb 1888 and a Ballad Concert on 28 Apr 1888.¹⁷ There is also his address in pencil ‘49 Ladbroke Road | Notting Hill Gate W’ which has been scored out. On the outer back cover of the full score is a label, also in MacCunn’s hand, which indicates that the score was exhibited at the Victorian Era Exhibition.¹⁸ This manuscript, acquired by Glasgow University Library when MacCunn’s widow donated the bulk of her husband’s manuscripts, appears to be the only extant copy of the full score. To judge from its condition, in particular the heavily worn bottom right hand corners, it has been used on many occasions as a conductor’s score.

Scoring

The work is written for chorus (SATB) and orchestra – double woodwind; 2 horns; 2 trumpets; 3 trombones (2 tenor, 1 bass); strings; percussion: timpani, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, and triangle.

Musical Treatment

In this, his first setting of a ballad, MacCunn skilfully handles the text and the forces at his disposal. He focuses on the dramatic nature of the ballad and tells the tale by exploiting melody and melodic themes, harmony and harmonic progression, choral and orchestral textures. He also injects a certain amount of local, Scottish colour to emphasise its Scottish location and theme.

The dramatic narrative is underlined by the allocation of direct speech to certain sections of the chorus. Thus the soprano section takes on the role of Lord Ullin’s daughter; in general the chieftain’s words are sung by the tenors, and those of the boatman by the basses. Lord Ullin’s words are sung by both tenor and bass sections. There are exceptions to the foregoing, since strict adherence to these allocations would have resulted in under-use of the soprano and alto sections. Thus, for example, the full chorus sings the words of the boatman, ‘Out spake the hardy highland wight, "I’ll go, my chief, I’m ready!"’

¹⁷ No reference other than this has been found to the latter concert to date.

¹⁸ Held in the summer of 1897 in Earl’s Court to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. MacCunn was a member of the Music Committee.

Structure

The work is set out in two main sections with a short coda.

- Section 1 from the beginning to letter D; (verses 1 – 6 of the poem)
- Section 2 from letter D to the end of verse 14
- Coda – 10 bars¹⁹

Section 1 introduces the *dramatis personae* – the chieftain (the Lord of Ulva), his bride (Lord Ullin's daughter), the boatman, Lord Ullin and his retinue. Written almost entirely in direct speech as an exchange between Ulva and the boatman, this section vividly and economically sets the scene. It explains the plight of the couple and ends with the boatman's agreeing to row the couple across the stormy sea. Thus the stage is set for the ensuing tragedy. Section 2 describes the growing force of the storm. Lord Ullin and his men are heard approaching on horseback and the couple set out in the small boat which is overcome by the waves. Lord Ullin arrives in time to see his daughter drowning. The father is left standing distraught on the shore lamenting the fate of his daughter. The instrumental coda reprises the opening material.

Text setting

MacCunn does not interfere with Campbell's text, other than to repeat important or dramatic lines e.g. 'Oh, I'm the chief of Ulva's Isle', 'My blood would stain the heather', 'So though the waves are raging white'. Within the structure of a through-composed work, each verse is set as a discrete unit. By employing an element of repetition (particularly of the main theme) MacCunn's setting reflects the simplicity of the ballad structure.

Themes

The main theme of the work, the Chieftain theme, is presented by the first violins in the short orchestral introduction before being restated by the basses in their opening line (Examples 5.2a and 5.2b). There then follows an antiphonal passage in which the theme is given out alternately by the tenor and bass sections, each in a different key.

¹⁹ References are to the published piano-vocal score Hamish MacCunn *Lord Ullin's Daughter: a Ballad for Chorus and Orchestra, the Poetry by T. Campbell* Op. 4. London: Novello, 1888.

Example 5.2a – Opening bars, Chieftain theme

Allegro non troppo, ma con brio Chieftain theme

♩ = 120

Orch

brass/timps *f* *cres* strings

Example 5.2b – Stanza 1

[Allegro non troppo, ma con brio] *ff con brio* Chieftain theme in home key

BASSES

Orch. strings *mf*

A chief- tain to the high-lands bound Cries "Boat - man do not tar- ry"

25 TENORS *con brio* *ff* And I'll give thee a sil-verpound To row us o'er the fer- ry."

Fragment of chieftain theme

Fragment of chieftain theme, echo

obs/cl/s/bns

Fragment of chieftain, echo

obs/cl/s/bns

MacCunn had the knack of composing strong opening themes, not only in his choral works but also in his orchestral works, for example *The Land of the Mountain and The Flood* (1887) and *The Dowie Dens of Yarrow* (1888) (Examples 5.3a and 5.3b).

Example 5.3a – Opening theme of *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood*

Allegro con brio

Example 5.3b – Opening theme of *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow*

p

The Chieftain theme has much in common with both of the above – a strong, hexatonic melody with distinctive dotted rhythms. MacCunn draws heavily on the Chieftain theme in the first section of *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, but avoids monotony by allocating lines

alternately to the bass and tenor sections and by moving through keys a third apart (B flat major, D major, F major). Following the F major episode, the interpolation of new material into the strophic structure increases the dramatic effect and breaks up what would have become a pedestrian narration. The prominence of A flat and the lack of a perfect cadence lend an uncertainty to the tonality before the return to the home key of B flat major (Example 5.4).

Example 5.4 – Stanza 2, lines 3 and 4

42 *[Allegro non troppo]*

T. "Oh, I'm the Chief of Ul - va's Isle, *ffs*

Orch

47 *cres*

Oh, I'm the chief of Ul - va's Isle And *cres*

50 *ff*

this Lord Ul-lin's daugh - ter."

Chieftain theme in home key

Stanza	Key	Section	Text
1	B flat	Bass	A chieftain to the highlands bound cries, "Boatman do not tarry!"
	D	Tenor	And I'll give thee a silver pound to row us o'er the ferry."
2	F	Bass	"Now who be ye would cross Lochgyle This dark and stormy water?"
	E flat (but with tonicization of A flat)	Tenor	"Oh, I'm the Chief of Ulva's Isle, [new material]"
	B flat	Tenor	"Oh, I'm the Chief of Ulva's Isle, And this Lord Ullin's daughter!"

Table 5.3 – Tonalities of stanzas 1 and 2

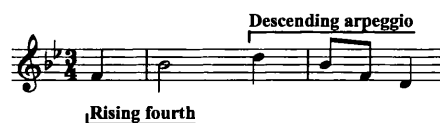
The chieftain theme recurs in the closing stages of the work when it is sung by Lord Ullin to the words: 'And I'll forgive your Highland chief'. It is heard for the last time in the postlude, repeated several times in B flat minor before a lone horn sounds out the theme *pianissimo* in the home key, like the ghost of the chieftain calling from beyond the sea (Example 5.5).

Example 5.5 – Chieftain theme in closing bars

The musical score for Example 5.5, titled "Chieftain theme in closing bars," is written for voice and piano. It features three systems of music. The first system shows the vocal parts (T. and B.) and the orchestral parts (Orch.). The vocal parts sing the words "La - ment - ing." with a *dim* (diminuendo) marking. The orchestral parts include a *vc* (viola) part with *espress.* (espressivo) and *strings trem.* (strings tremolo) markings. The piano accompaniment features a *Chieftain, minor* theme. The second system shows the piano accompaniment with a *Chieftain, minor* theme and a *Chieftain, major* theme. The piano accompaniment includes a *via* (viola) part with *vn, vla, pizz* (violin, viola, pizzicato) markings and a *hn* (horn) part with *sempre pp* (sempre pianissimo) marking. The piano accompaniment also includes a *Chieftain minor > major* theme. The third system shows the piano accompaniment with a *sempre dim* (sempre diminuendo) marking and a *pp* (pianissimo) marking. The piano accompaniment includes a *fls.* (flute) part with *pp* marking and a *strings* part with *ppp* (pianississimo) marking. The piano accompaniment also includes a *hns.* (horn) part with *ppp* marking.

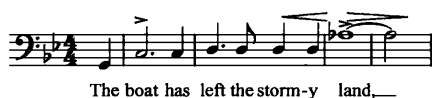
Throughout the work, MacCunn uses recurring motifs based on features of the Chieftain theme (Example 5.6).

Example 5.6 – Basic outline of Chieftain theme

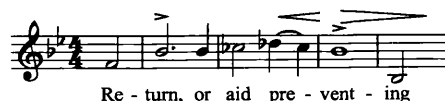


Emphasis on rising fourth (Examples 5.7a, b, c, d)

Examples 5.7a



Example 5.7b



Examples 5.7c



Example 5.7d



Example 5.7d lacks the initial rising fourth, but has the same strong rhythmic identity as Example 5.7c.

Descending arpeggio – Examples 5.8a, b, and c

Example 5.8a – ‘My blood would stain the heather’



Example 5.8b – ‘When they have slain her lover’

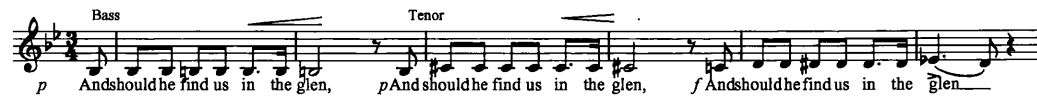


Example 5.8c – ‘I’ll meet the raging of the skies’

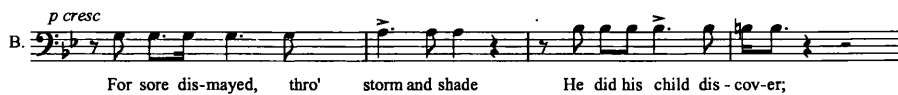


A second theme, a rising chromatic passage, first introduced at letter B, is used in conjunction with repetition of text to indicate drama and tension (Example 5.9a). This chromatic theme contrasts completely with the Chieftain theme, being dramatic, recitative-like and ideally suited to match the speech patterns of the text. A derivative of this theme, which is not strictly chromatic, is used as the opening to many of the stanzas in Section 2 (Example 5.9b).

Example 5.9a – Chromatic theme



Example 5.9b – Chromatic theme, altered



Orchestration

MacCunn uses the orchestra very effectively as an accompanying instrument, never overwhelming the vocal parts. He skilfully uses a variety of textures, ranging from solo strings as in the opening line (see Example 5.2b), to full orchestra as a marker of moments of heightened drama, for example, when the daughter sings 'I'll meet the raging of the sea, But not an angry father' or at the end when the father cries out in grief. At the conclusion of the work, the orchestra is reduced to strings in their lower register with interpolations from dark-timbred instruments depicting Lord Ullin's desolation as he is left lamenting on the shore (Example 5.5).

Orchestral effects

Elements of the narrative are well illustrated in the orchestral accompaniment. The broken chord triplet accompaniment which portrays the galloping of the pursuing horsemen (Example 5.10) is amplified by the antiphonal effect of the tenor and bass sections. The use of triplets in this context is reminiscent of Schumann's 'Wilde Reiter' from his *Album für die Jugend* with which MacCunn, who learned the piano at an early age, would have been familiar. The mounting fear of Lord Ullin's daughter, as she hears the approach of her father and his horsemen, is portrayed in grouped semiquaver figures, which mimic the irregular beat of her heart (Example 5.11a). This figure is derived from the immediately preceding groups of semiquavers, which mimic the

trampling of the armed men as they approach (Example 5.11b), and demonstrates MacCunn's ability to transform material in a simple but effective manner.

Example 5.10 – Galloping horsemen

T. His horse-men hard be-hind us ride; Should they our steps dis-cov-er

B. His horse-men hard be-hind us ride; Should they our steps dis-cov-er

Orch.

Example 5.11a – Rising fear

S. *[Allegro non troppo]*
p "Oh haste thee, haste!" the la-dy cries, "Though storms a-round us ga-ther,"

Orch.

Example 5.11b – Trampling figure from which Example 5.9a is derived

MacCunn's most successful portrayal is that of the gathering force of the storm and the raging of the sea, which is achieved by a cumulative effect of repeated, mainly triadic, figures, and a gradual increase in instrumentation. Example 5.12a shows an early depiction of the raging sea, at the point when the boatman agrees to put his vessel to sea, while Example 5.12b with its triplet accompaniment depicts the boat struggling against the waves.

Example 5.12a – Sea and waves

Example 5.12a is a musical score for three parts: Soprano (S. A.), Tenor (T. B.), and Orchestra (Orch.). The tempo is marked *[Allegro ma non troppo]*. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The Soprano part has the lyrics: "So though the waves are rag - ing white, I'll row". The Tenor part has the lyrics: "you o'er the fer - - - - - ry." The Orchestra part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, creating a sense of movement and turbulence. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system ending with a double bar line and the second system continuing the music.

Example 5.12b – Sea and waves – triplets

Example 5.12b is a musical score for two parts: Bass (B.) and Orchestra (Orch.). The tempo is marked *[Allegro non troppo]*. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The Bass part has the lyrics: "f The boat has left the storm - y land,". The Orchestra part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many triplets and sixteenth notes, creating a sense of movement and turbulence. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system ending with a double bar line and the second system continuing the music.

As the storm grows in strength, the rhythmic pace increases and a combination of semiquavers and *tremolo* strings depicts the turmoil. As the tragedy climaxes, the father's shouts to his daughter are accompanied by ascending and descending chromatic figures in triplets, semiquavers and sextuplets.

Vocal writing

The vocal writing makes quite heavy demands of the chorus, especially in the upper register. However, the melodic line flows well and is well matched to the text. MacCunn contrasts the melody of the Chieftain theme with declamation of the more

dramatic parts – a feature of Wagner’s operas and also Lied settings by Wolf, e.g. ‘Prometheus’. There is only one problematic interval for amateur choirs – a rising diminished fifth which occurs three times. Apart from this minor difficulty, the work is well suited to the amateur market, as much of the vocal line is doubled by sections of the orchestra.

Tonality and Harmony

Both harmony and tonality are dictated by the work’s thematic material. The Chieftain theme, which predominates in Section 1, invites strong diatonic harmony, whereas the chromatic nature of the dramatic theme in Section Two gives rise to greater tonal and harmonic fluidity. Starting in G minor, it moves through D minor and A flat minor before settling in C minor. Thereafter there are short episodes in F minor and B flat minor before the return to the home key of B flat major. The minor tonality of Section 2 is interrupted by the unexpected reappearance of the ‘Chieftain’ theme in G major, and at the end of the work, just before the coda, there is a subtle conflict between minor and major tonality before the final statement of the Chieftain theme (Example 5.5).

A noticeable feature of the opening of Section 1 is the use of plagal harmony and a relative absence of dominant harmony as a result of the hexatonic melody. Augmented sixth chords are used occasionally. Diminished and diminished seventh chords are used to underpin and highlight certain words of the text e.g. ‘drearer’, ‘grief’, ‘lamenting’. There is one instance of unexpected dissonance where a C natural in the soprano line is set against a C sharp in the alto, to illustrate the word ‘dark’.

Use of Scottish traditional elements

MacCunn emphasises the Scottish nature of the work by incorporating features of traditional music. The outstandingly Scottish feature is the hexatonic Chieftain theme, which recurs throughout the work and acts as its melodic framework. Other Scottish features are the use of the so-called ‘Scotch snap’, and the use of the strings in imitation of the harp (the favoured accompanying instrument of story-tellers) at the beginning and end of the work (Examples 5.2b and 5.5). MacCunn wisely avoids injecting the whole gamut of Scottish features e.g. drones, ornaments in imitation of bagpipes, double tonic, showing an awareness that less is more.

Dramatic pacing

MacCunn's response to the poem, like his response to the later *Four Traditional Scottish Border Ballads*, is to treat it as a tragic opera in miniature. He achieves this by using bold melodies, strong, easily identifiable themes and recitative-like setting of words. As a good dramatist, he uses a variety of techniques to vary the pace of the action. While some stanzas run directly into the next, others are separated by orchestral passages of varying length. The pace increases in Section 2 with the change in the time signature and with the speeding up of the orchestral accompaniment – the storm initially is represented by triplet figures in the strings, but as it increases, the strings have semiquavers and eventually sextuplets. Towards the end, although the orchestra is still playing semiquavers, the pace is slowed by the rhythmic decrease in the vocal line as the chorus declaims in unison 'And he was left lamenting'. The reprise of the previously jaunty 'Chieftain' theme is toned down by a reduction in speed to *Allegretto non troppo* from the initial *Allegro con brio*. A further slowing is achieved in the coda by the sustained *pianissimo* horn call punctuated by *pizzicato* strings (Example 5.5).

First performance and reception

The first performance of *Lord Ullin's Daughter* was given on 18 February 1888 at Crystal Palace by the Crystal Palace Choir and Orchestra under the direction of August Manns. The work was well received, and was heard to good advantage being juxtaposed to Speer's *Day Dream* of which the *Times* critic said: 'The music [is] always tuneful but little expressive, reminiscent of many things that have been said before, and a trifle monotonous withal'.²⁰ In contrast, MacCunn's work was well reviewed. The critic of *The Musical Times* praised it for its 'freedom from musical platitudes and second-rate suavity',²¹ and the *Daily Telegraph*'s review commented:

This is not like the music of a beginner, either of the bold beginner who blunders recklessly into bogs, or of his timid brother who looks round at every step. As a matter of fact the cantata or whatever it may be called, is full of excellence. There is hardly a passage in the vocal music that violates the rules of its order; all being comparatively easy and pleasant to sing. As for the orchestration, few things more picturesque and generally masterful have been written by so young a hand. But the chief merit of the work lies higher – in, for example, its successful suggestion of

²⁰ 'Crystal Palace' *Times* 20 Feb 1888, 4.

²¹ 'Crystal Palace' *MT* 29, 1888, 149.

the ballad tune associated with free modern treatment, and in the striking completeness with which the catastrophe is illustrated by passages of forceful description and deep emotional expression.²²

There was a further Crystal Palace performance on 8 December 1888 when it was once more well received by the critics, although on this occasion the notice in the *Musical Times* remarked that it 'is not quite equal in thought and workmanship to Mr MacCunn's orchestral work recently noticed in the *Times*'.²³

The work's first Scottish performance, in spite of its dedication to the Glasgow Choral Union, was given in Greenock, MacCunn's home town, by the Greenock Choral Union on 28 December 1888. It was reported that 'the Town Hall was filled to overflowing, the audience being specially enthusiastic on the subject of "Lord Ullin's Daughter", and the young composer was called to the platform and loudly cheered.²⁴ The dedicatees, the Glasgow Choral Union, finally performed the work under the baton of August Manns in the Saint Andrew's Hall on 19 December 1893. The programme claimed it was the first Glasgow performance,²⁵ but in fact this honour went to the South Side Choral Union whose performance in April 1889 was reviewed in the *Musical Times*.²⁶

The work received further mention in the press with the publication of the piano-vocal edition, which was reviewed in the *Musical Times*, dated 1 January 1888.²⁷ A version in tonic sol-fa quickly followed, as did orchestral parts²⁸ but the full score was never published.

In the years following its publication *Lord Ullin's Daughter* was performed often throughout the United Kingdom in locations as far apart as Sunderland and Plymouth, Edinburgh and Cardiff.²⁹ The first overseas performance was given in

²² 'Crystal Palace Concerts' *Daily Telegraph* 20 Feb 1888, 3.

²³ 'Crystal Palace' *Times* 10 Dec 1888, 6. The orchestral work to which reference is made is probably *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow* performed 13 Oct 1888.

²⁴ 'Greenock Choral Union Concert' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Dec 1888, 7.

²⁵ Glasgow Choral Union *Programme for the Third Choral Concert, Season 1893-94 19 Dec 1893*, 80.

²⁶ 'Music in Glasgow' *MT* 30, 1889, 293.

²⁷ Hamish MacCunn *Lord Ullin's Daughter*. A Ballad for Chorus and Orchestra, the Poetry by T. Campbell Op. 4 London: Novello [1888] reviewed in *MT* 29, 1888, 46.

²⁸ Hamish MacCunn *Lord Ullin's Daughter*; Translated into Tonic Sol-fa Notation by W.G McNaught London: Novello, [1888]; Hamish MacCunn *Lord Ullin's Daughter* [orchestral parts] London: Novello, [1888].

²⁹ See Appendix 2.

Washington D.C. by the Chorus Society in April 1890 and the following year the work was performed in June 1891 by the Hampden County Musical Association conducted by George Chadwick, as part of their programme given at the Springfield (Mass) Musical Festival.³⁰ A further and more prestigious North American performance by the National Chorus of Toronto under the direction of Albert Ham³¹ took place in Toronto's Massey Hall in January 1909.³² Possibly the first Antipodean performance took place in the Wellington Opera House in New Zealand on 7 October 1897³³ and it is likely that there would have been performances in many other countries of the Empire, where Scots were so much a part of expatriate society and activities.

Assessment

Lord Ullin's Daughter is a work of balance and of contrasts. In it, MacCunn avoids the clichés, e.g. undue repetition or over-elaboration of sections of the text, overuse of diminished sevenths, employed by so many choral composers of the time. There is balance in the use of sections of the chorus, and between the chorus and orchestra, and balance of structure and tonality. MacCunn introduces just the right amount of Scottish elements, and he unifies the music and text with subtlety and skill. The contrasts are achieved by means of contrasting themes, and by variations in the dramatic pacing of the work. The following quotation from *The Glasgow Herald's* review of an early performance seems as relevant today as it was then:

In this ballad for chorus and orchestra we meet [...] thematic material which seems at once so fresh, so new and so familiar. There is moreover, the same air of exceeding naturalness, as if the music had lain hidden in the text waiting to be discovered.³⁴

³⁰ 'Music in America' *MT* 32, 1891, 422. George Chadwick (1854–1931) was an American composer and conductor.

³¹ Albert Ham (1858–1940), British-born organist, composer and conductor, who spent most of his working life in Toronto. The sole conductor of the National Chorus founded in 1903, he retired to England in 1936. Ham himself set 'Lord Ullin's Daughter' as a choral ballad, published in 1893. www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com accessed on 6 March 2005.

³² 'Foreign Notes' *MT* 50, 1909, 194.

³³ 'Wellington (New Zealand)' *MT* 39, 1898, 53.

³⁴ 'Greenock Choral Union Concert' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Dec 1888, 7.

The Cameronian's Dream: a Ballad

According to the programme for its first performance *The Cameronian's Dream* was 'specially written for these concerts' i.e. Paterson's Orchestral Concerts in Edinburgh.³⁵ A link was established between MacCunn and Paterson in 1888 when *Bonny Kilmeny*, MacCunn's first cantata, was premiered at a Paterson concert and published by Paterson & Sons. The cantata's artistic and commercial success would have readily encouraged Robert Roy Paterson to commission a further work from MacCunn.

Text

'The Cameronian's Dream', a poem by James Hyslop (or Hislop),³⁶ a minor poet born in Kirkconnell, Dumfriesshire, was first published anonymously in the *Edinburgh Magazine* in February 1821.³⁷ The events it recounts took place at a time of religious turmoil in Scotland when the supporters (Covenanters) of the Solemn League and Covenant, a declaration of Presbyterianism, found themselves in direct opposition to King Charles II's imposition of an Episcopal church. Dissenting ministers who were ejected from their parishes held large open-air religious assemblies called conventicles at secret locations. In 1679, following the murder of the Episcopal Archbishop of St Andrews, there was an armed rising in the west of Scotland. On 20 July 1680, Richard Cameron, a preacher and leader of one of the armed factions, was resting with 60 of his followers (Cameronians) on Aird's Moss near Cumnock when they were surrounded by a much larger force of government troopers, commanded by Bruce of Earlshall. In the ensuing battle Cameron was killed, and his head and hands were then taken to Edinburgh and fixed on the Netherbow Port.³⁸ Cameron's mutilated body was buried at the scene of the battle along with eight of his followers.

Many incidents involving Covenanters were kept alive by word of mouth and eventually passed into a rich folklore tradition. Hyslop's poem is an early example of a romanticised account of a covenanting battle, probably based on oral accounts. To the

³⁵ Patersons' Concerts [Programme for] Third Season, Sixth Concert, Monday January 27th 1890. Choral-Orchestral.

³⁶ James Hislop (1798–1827). He also wrote a second, much longer poem about the Cameronian cause entitled 'The Cameronian Vision'.

³⁷ 'Cameronian Dream' *Edinburgh Magazine and Literary Miscellany* 31, 1821, 112, signed 'Banks of the Crawick, 17 Nov. 1820.' The Crawick Water is a tributary of the River Nith in Dumfries and Galloway.

³⁸ Michael Lynch *Scotland: a New History* London: Pimlico, 1992, 294–295; Rosemary Goring (ed) *Chambers Scottish Biographical Dictionary* Edinburgh: Chambers, 1992, 72.

actual events of the battle is added the Covenanters' singing of a psalm prior to the battle, and the end of the poem describes how those killed in battle are taken up into heaven in a chariot driven by angels. This mythologizing of the Covenanters was to continue, and the significance of this topic for Scots is attested by the large number of books written about Covenanting subjects, for example *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* (1828), *The Martyrs, Heroes and Bards of the Scottish Covenant* (1853), *Peden the Prophet: a Tale of the Covenanters* (1859), *The Martyr Graves of Scotland* (1875).³⁹ In 1890, at the time of the first performance of MacCunn's ballad, the subject matter of the poem would still have had great resonance for a large number of Scots.

Reasons for the choice of this particular text are unknown, as no documents relating to the commission have been traced. Possibly it was suggested by Robert Roy Paterson when he commissioned the work, or MacCunn may have proposed the poem, on account of its Scottish subject matter. In addition, the apocalyptic elements of the closing verses offered him scope for Wagnerian treatment. Another possibility is MacCunn's father, who had been involved with his son's previous choral works, may have drawn his attention to the poem. Living in Greenock, MacCunn senior, an enthusiastic amateur musician and litterateur, would have known of Hyslop who had been a school-master in Greenock from 1818–1820. 'The Cameronian's Dream' was widely anthologised⁴⁰ and the publication in 1887 of Hyslop's collected poems with an introduction by the Reverend Peter Mearns would have generated renewed interest in the poet.⁴¹ According to Mearns, the correct title is 'The Cameronian Dream' and it:

brought the youthful author into notice, both in this country and America; it was inserted in numerous periodicals, and in collections of sacred poetry; and manuscript copies of it were circulated in moorland districts, particularly among his native hills.⁴²

³⁹ Robert Wodrow *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* 4 vols. Glasgow: Blackie, 1828; George Gilfillan *The Martyrs, Heroes and Bards of the Scottish Covenant* London: Cockshaw, 1853; Morton Brown *Peden the Prophet: a Tale of the Covenanters* London: Snow, 1859; John H. Thomson *The Martyr Graves of Scotland* Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter, 1875.

⁴⁰ For example, Chambers' *Cyclopedia of English Literature* (1844); James Grant Wilson (ed) *The Poets and Poetry of Scotland from the Earliest to the Present Time* 2 vols. London: Blackie, 1877.

⁴¹ James Hyslop *Poems, with a Sketch of His Life and Notes on His Poems* by the Rev. Peter Mearns. Glasgow: Wright, 1877.

⁴² Hyslop *Poems*, 61.

Mearns correctly states that many of the versions in circulation were corrupt but is wrong in claiming that his is the definitive edition⁴³ for the title in *The Edinburgh Magazine* is 'Cameronian Dream'.

The poem consists of 14 quatrains of anapaestic tetrameter with the rhyme scheme AABB. Since the title used by MacCunn is 'The Cameronian's Dream' as opposed to '(The) Cameronian Dream' it can be assumed his source was not Mearns's edition but an earlier publication. This may have been a deliberate decision, made to make the work more accessible, since the original text's vocabulary may have appeared too Scottish to appeal to a wide audience.

The use of the possessive 'Cameronian's' rather than 'Cameronian' slightly alters the perspective of the poem, identifying the narrative 'I' with the persona of one Cameronian, whereas the poet's title implies that the dream is about Cameronians. In the third stanza, Hyslop's phrase 'On Wardlaw, and Cairntable', is replaced by 'Oe'r meadows and valleys' a substitution probably made by MacCunn for the sake of euphony. The majority of verses have weak rhymes, some of which are poor e.g. Zion/lying, blood/wood, east/breast, laughter/slaughter. Some lines do not scan particularly well e.g. ' And drink the delights of green July's sweet morning'.

From a structural point of view, the poem is unsatisfactory. In the opening stanza, the poet takes the listener back in time by recounting a dream. This not uncommon literary device suggests that the dream will be used to frame the story and, although the ensuing events are related in the past tense, the final verse describes, in the present tense, the reward awaiting those killed in the battle, with no return to the opening dream. The poem may best be described as an indifferent art ballad but its subject matter, the death of a covenanting martyr, would have made it popular both in the district in which it is set and further afield. As mentioned above, many legends attached to the Covenanters and they still had resonance for people of MacCunn's generation.

⁴³ Ibid, 106–7.

Sources

MacCunn's manuscript copy of the full-score is held in Special Collections, Glasgow University Library. The title page reads 'The Cameronian's Dream | A Ballad | for Baritone Solo, Chorus and Orchestra | Poem by | James Hyslop | The Music composed by | Hamish MacCunn | (Opus 10) | "Non decet te semper cantare tuos amores"'.⁴⁴ The final leaf is signed 'The End. Hamish MacCunn 6/12/89. London'. The score has been used as a conductor's score – it has been marked in various places where there is a lack of clarity and MacCunn has indignantly scribbled on the verso of the flyleaf: 'Some donkey has scrawled over this score with pencil marks and made a mess of it generally'.⁴⁵ The manuscript copy of the piano-vocal score is held in the national Library of Scotland.⁴⁶ Dated 'Oct/89', it bears the inscription 'To my much valued and esteemed friend A.P. Watt Esq. from the Author'.⁴⁷

The piano-vocal score and tonic sol-fa version were published by Paterson & Sons, as were the string parts. Other orchestral parts and the full score were only ever available in manuscript from the publisher. On the front cover of the vocal score there is a striking illustration featuring two winged angels on a chariot, Richard Cameron lying on the ground with his helmet, shield and fallen standard beside him. In the foreground lies his sword on top of his bible (See Illustration 9 over). The vocal score is 'Dedicated to Mr Kirkhope's Choir', the choir associated with the Paterson Concerts.

Scoring

The poem is set for baritone solo, SATB chorus and accompanying orchestra – double woodwind; 2 horns; 2 trumpets; 2 cornets; 3 trombones; strings; percussion: timpani, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, and triangle. It is not absolutely clear whether it was MacCunn's decision to use cornets. They are not listed in the instrumentation of the piano-vocal score, but they are pencilled into the full score (pages 28 and 48).

⁴⁴ Translation by Dr Betty Knott-Sharpe, Classics Department, University of Glasgow. Extensive research has failed to find a source for the quotation.

⁴⁵ GUL MS MacCunn 5.

⁴⁶ NLS MS21979.

⁴⁷ Alexander Pollock Watt (1838–1921), family friend, and founder of the A.P. Watt & Son literary agency.

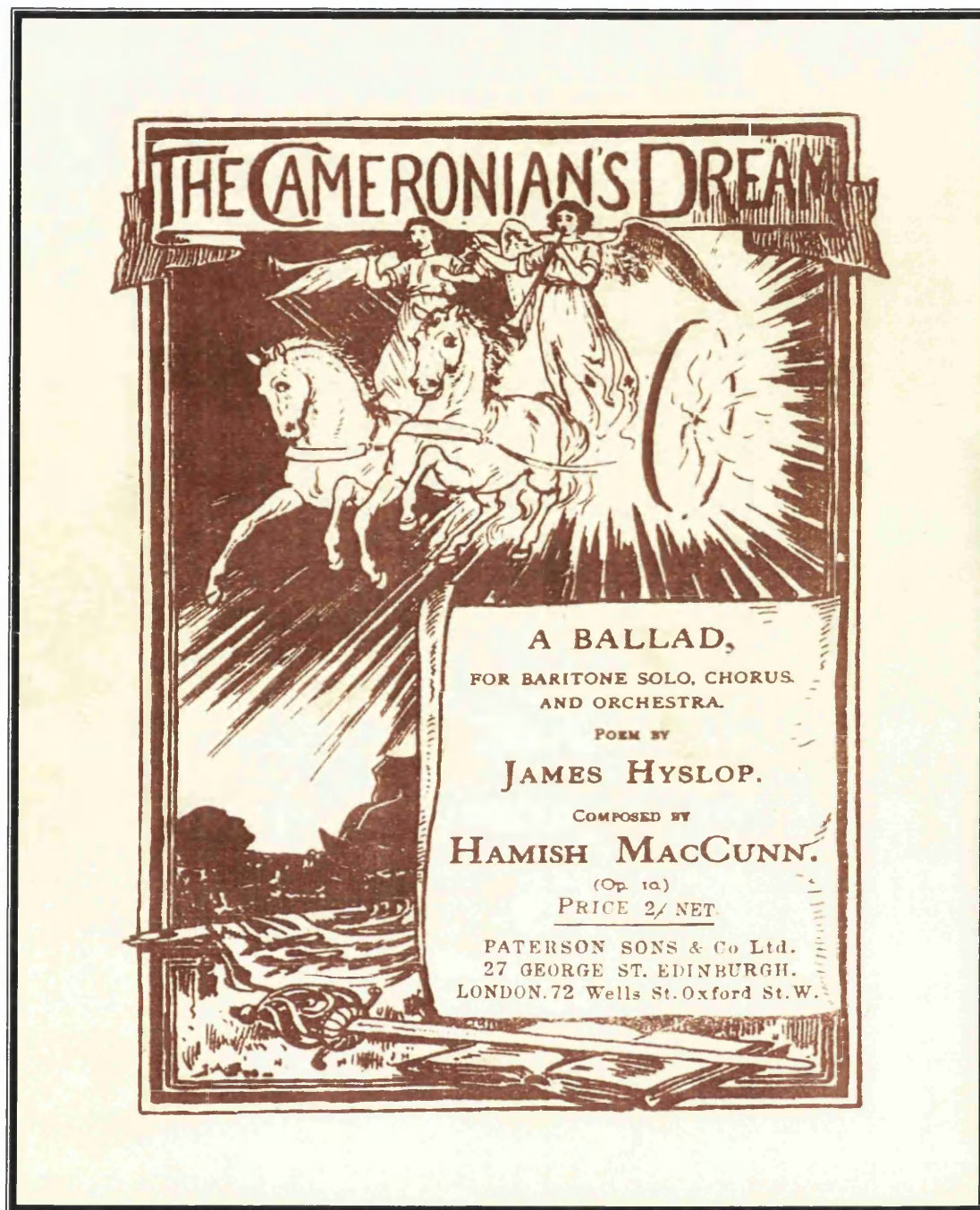


Illustration 9 – *The Cameronian's Dream* – front cover of the piano-vocal score

As George Bernard Shaw's review of the first Crystal Palace performance makes specific reference to 'the ridiculous post-horn flourishes on the cornet', it may be assumed the cornets were intended by MacCunn, rather than being the work of 'the donkey'. This is the only work in which MacCunn employs cornets the reason being that he probably valued the difference in timbre between the cornet and trumpet – the use of trumpets after the mellowness of the cornets would be even more obvious and strident.

Treatment

The work is through-composed and it may be divided into four sections –

- | | |
|-----------|----------------|
| Section 1 | The Dream |
| Section 2 | Pastoral Scene |
| Section 3 | The Battle |
| Section 4 | The Ascension |

Section 1 –The Dream (Bars 1 – 38)

In a dream of the night I was wafted away
To the moorland of mist where the martyrs lay;

A short orchestral introduction in the lower register sets the scene. While the horns, violas and cellos maintain a pianissimo A pedal, the tuba and double basses hint at the opening notes of the baritone solo ‘In a dream of the night’ (Example 5.13). The uncertainty and the vagueness of the dream and the mist of the moors are musically depicted by diminished seventh chords and by the uncertain tonality. D minor is not established till bar 4, but a move towards the dominant major, achieved in bar 16 by a rather sudden but conventional cadence, is immediately cancelled by a return to D minor.

The chromatically altered melodic line of the opening baritone solo with its rising and falling contour mirrors the dreamlike quality of thoughts rising and falling in the subconscious mind. From bar 5, the first note of each bar is the highest and from bar 7 it is higher than the previous bar – thus giving prominence to the key words, in particular ‘**m**artyrs’ ‘**C**ameron’ and ‘**B**ible’. The feeling of uncertainty is reinforced by the short orchestral interlude at the end of the first stanza based on an abrupt rising harmonic D minor scale over a sustained dominant pedal (Example 5.14 over). The use of rhythmically altered motifs derived from this scale also contributes to the edginess (Example 5.15 over). An increase in pace is effected by a change in metre, a faster tempo and the rhythmic impetus of the accompanying triplets.

Example 5.13 – Opening bars

Andante con moto

BARITONE SOLO

In a dream of the night I was

Orch.

pp Hns/ vlns/ vcs
timp. 8ya

Db/ tba

dim. 7

waft - ed a - way To the moor - land of mist, where the mar - tyrs

p

strings

triangle

lay; Where Ca - me-ron's sword and his Bi - ble are seen

15

En - grav'd on the stone where the hea - ther grows green.

dim.

12

Example 5.14 – Orchestral interlude and baritone solo

16 *Piu moto*

BARITONE SOLO

Orch.

vlas/ vcs

sf *p* *cres*

Db/ timps

side drum rolls

20

'Twas a dream of those a ges of dark ness and

f

blood, when the min is - ter's

25

home was the moun tain and wood;

Example 5.15 – Motifs

A - motif derived froms bar 16

A' - motif with triplet

A'' - motif with semiquavers

The soloist's line continues in a style similar to the opening, with important words of the text emphasised by their pitch, length and position in the bar. Beneath it, the continued use of the accompanying rhythmic motif, the off-beat accents, staccato notes, the low roll on the kettledrum, and the conflict of soloist's simple metre against the compound metre of the accompanying orchestra introduce an element of tension which illustrates the text's description of the dangers faced by the Covenanters. The addition of the side drum signals the battle to come. Thereafter there is a slowing of the accompaniment, and the driving rhythm is replaced by a slow-moving major chordal progression as the drama of the text unfolds. The soloist's final dramatic words, highlighted by a move from the chord of C major⁷ to the dominant chord of D minor, are followed by the silence of the orchestra (Example 5.16).

Example 5.16 – 'All bloody and torn'

31 *[Piu moto]* *ff* *Andante*

BARITONE SOLO

Orch. *ff* *Andante* *f* *dim*

C A⁷ d C F⁷

ww/ brass/vlas/ vcs/ dbs

A short chorale-like passage played by woodwind, brass, and the lower register strings ends this section with a perfect cadence in C major.

Section 2 – Pastoral Scene (bars 39 – 136)

It was morning; and summer's young sun from the east
Lay in loving repose on the green mountain's breast;

The text of this section evokes the beauties of nature, painting a happy picture of the expansive landscape, the blue of the sky, the white clouds, and the green mountain slopes bathed in the summer sun. The emptiness of the countryside is accentuated by the absence of human beings and the presence of animals – sheep, plovers, curlews and larks. The overall impression is of peace and absence of danger. When human beings are eventually mentioned they are 'happy daughters' i.e. female and unthreatening.

Orchestra	Chorus	Voices	Text	Bars	Tonal centre
Theme 1				12	F major
Theme 1	Y*	SATB	It was morning	17	F major
Themes 1 and 3				12	A flat major
Theme 2 Theme 3	Theme 2	SA (3 parts)	And far up in heav'n	5	F major
Theme 2 Theme 3	Theme 2	TB (3 parts)	And far up in heav'n	5	A major
Theme 1	Z*	SATB	And in Glenmuir's wild solitude	9	F major
Theme 1				10	C major
Theme 1	Theme 1	B soli; T soli	And Wellwood's sweet valley	7	F major
Theme 2 and 3	Theme 2	TB	Its daughters were happy	6	B flat major
Theme 2 and 3	Theme 2	SATB	Its daughters were happy	6	F major
Theme 3				8	F major

Table 5.4 – Schematic outline of Section 2 – Pastoral Scene

* Y, Z = non-recurring melodic material

Introduced by five bars of orchestral accompaniment, this section consists of three verses in which the chorus describes the beauties of the landscape. Although each verse is treated as a separate entity, the section is unified by the use of three recurring themes. The first theme (Example 5.17a) is introduced by the orchestra (Example 5.18) and later is used as a counter-melody to the chorus. It recurs as an orchestral interlude in A flat major and C major before being introduced into the vocal line (Example 5.19). The second theme (Example 5.17b) occurs in the vocal parts – in F major, A major and B flat major – doubled by the orchestra. The third theme, a repeated group of semiquavers suggestive of birdsong (Example 5.17d), is used in conjunction with one of the other themes.

Examples 5.17a–c – Pastoral themes



a) Pastoral theme 1



b) Pastoral theme 2



c) 'Esperto nocchiero' theme transposed from Bb

Example 5.17d – Pastoral theme 3 – Birdsong



Example 5.18a (over) shows the opening of the pastoral section. Written in F major, the traditional pastoral key, it features a simple melody which hints at traditional, though not necessarily Scottish folk tunes, with moves from the tonic to the sixth degree of the scale. MacCunn's use of plagal harmony, and corresponding avoidance of dominant harmony, induces a feeling of tranquillity which is reinforced by simple diatonic harmony, the drone accompaniment (F and C) in the cellos, and the semiquaver theme suggestive of birdsong (Example 5.17d). While the first theme (Example 5.17a) shows an element of melodic inventiveness and lyricism, the second (Example 5.17b), perhaps because of the number of times it is repeated, seems rather more prosaic by comparison. Its ordinariness is emphasised by the homophonic setting for the chorus, in which all the parts move in parallel and are doubled by sections of the orchestra. It was to this theme George Bernard Shaw was referring when he wrote, 'and I may add, as to Mr MacCunn's setting of line after line to the measure of [Bononcini's] 'Esperto nocchiero' [The Expert Sailor],⁴⁸ that I have heard it quite often enough.'⁴⁹ Example 5.17c shows this theme transposed into F major.⁵⁰ It is likely that if Shaw knew the aria, MacCunn also knew it – it was in the repertoire of the Monday Popular Concerts, was available in several editions⁵¹ and was performed in serious recitals. A review in the *Times* of an 1898 recital refers to the 'delicious Esperto Nocchiero'.⁵² The similarity noted by Shaw between MacCunn's and Bononcini's themes is more rhythmic than melodic, and it is not possible to say whether this is anything more than coincidental. A different use of pastoral themes, in which Pastoral theme 2 is used as the melody accompanied by Pastoral theme 3 is shown in Example 5.18b (over).

⁴⁸ An aria from Bononcini's opera *Astarto*, first performed at the Haymarket Theatre, London, 19 Nov 1720.

⁴⁹ George Bernard Shaw *Music in London 1890–94* 3 vols. London: Constable 1932, 1, 94.

⁵⁰ John Glenn Paton (ed) *Italian Arias of the Baroque and Classical Eras: an Authoritative Version Based on Authentic Sources* Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing, c.1994, 74.

⁵¹ For example *L'Esperto nocchiero* arr. by H.C. Deacon 1898; *L'Esperto nocchiero* ed. by C Pinsuti 1874.

⁵² 'St James's Hall' *Times* 20 Oct 1898, 7.

Example 5.18a – Pastoral theme 1 in accompaniment, drones in bass

51 [Andante con moto]

S. A. It was morn-ing; and sum-mer's young sun from the East lay in

T. B.

Orch. fls/ clars *pp* Pastoral theme 1 strings

via

I IV vii I Vb7 vi ii V I

60

lov-ing re- pose on the green moun-tain's breast; O'er mea-dows and val-leys the

Pastoral theme 1

IV I IV7 I/Vb7 I V7 I IV I

65

clear shin-ing dew, Gli-sten'd sheen 'mong the

Pastoral theme 1 Gli-sten'd sheen

obs/ clars

hns/ bns

IV I Eb: I Ab: V7 I

heath-bells and moun-tain flow'rs blue

Pastoral theme 1

obs/ cls/ hns

hns

IV+ II ii- Ic V I

Example 5.18b – Pastoral theme 2 as melody, birdsong theme in accompaniment

Pastoral theme 2 doubled by horns

117 *Andante con moto*

T. Its daugh - ters were hap - py to hail the re-turn - ing, and

B.

Orch. *Pastoral theme 3 (birdsong)* *Pastoral theme 3*

vns 1, 2 *[pp] hns* *vcs/dbs*

cres *120 cen - do*

drink the de-lights of green Ju - ly's bright morn - ing.

Pastoral theme 3 *Pastoral theme 3* *Pastoral theme 3*

cres *cen - do*

The Pastoral section is unduly long, but the varied use of the vocal parts – full chorus alternating with female voices in three parts, male voices in three parts, tenors, basses soli – interspersed with orchestral interludes, adds variety. The section ends as it begins, with an orchestral interlude in F major, in tranquil mood, with a feeling of calm induced by a gentle alternation between tonic and supertonic chords and the reiteration of the birdsong theme.

Section 3 – The Battle (bars 137 – 274)

Ah! There were hearts cherish'd far other feelings,
Illum'd by the light of prophetic revealings.

Orchestra	Chorus	Voices	Text	Bars	Key
Tremolo		Bar. solo	But Ah! There were hearts	137–145	Tonal centre E minor
Fanfare; horses		Bar. solo	'Twas the few faithful ones	146–162	B minor → F sharp minor
Horses		Bar. solo	Their faces grew pale	162–173	Uncertain tonality moving towards D minor
Colleshill				174–180	D minor
Horses; fanfares pointing important words		Bar. Solo	The hills with their deep mournful music	181–202	B minor; Rising chromatic scale over pedal A
Horses		SATB	Though in mist	203–225	F minor
Horses				226–234	F minor
Valkyrie; Tremolo; Semiquaver figuration	Valkyrie	TB (3 parts) SA (3 parts) TB SATB	The muskets were flashing	235–256	F minor – A flat major
Postlude –B flat pedal				256–274	Unsettled

Table 5.5 – Schematic outline of Section 3

The soloist sets the scene immediately prior to the battle with a recitative-like passage. The narration is then carried forward reusing the melody line from the opening of the piece (Example 5.19, c.f. Example 5.13). Descriptive elements of the battle are introduced e.g. the galloping of horses (Example 5.19), the mimicking of war trumpets (Example 5.20) and semiquaver passages indicating the turmoil of the battlefield.

Example 5.19 – Re-use of opening melody accompanied by horse motifs

[Allegro moderato] 155 *cres* *accel*

BARITONE SOLO

For the horse - men of Earls-hall a - round them were

Orch.

158 *f* *sf a tempo*

hov' - ring, And their bri-dle reinsrang thro' the thin mist- y cov-er-ing.

161 *pp* *dim* *pp*

Example 5.20 – Trumpet fanfares

239 [Allegro con brio]

S. A. *ff* The hel - liets were cleft and the red blood was stream - ing

Orch.

According to legend, the Cameronians sang a psalm to the tune ‘Coleshill’ immediately before the battle. By interpolating the tune immediately after the words ‘They sang their last song to the God of Salvation’, MacCunn makes a musical allusion to the Cameronians which would have been immediately recognisable and meaningful to contemporary Scottish audiences. This is clearly intended to be a feature, as in the manuscript it is marked ‘(Chorale)’ and ‘(“Coleshill”)’.⁵³

⁵³ MacCunn may have been mistaken in using ‘Coleshill’ as the Covenanters’ tune, for according to Temperley in *The Hymn Tune Index* the earliest known date for the use of the name is in 1711, 31 years after the battle, and Moffatt and Patrick in the *Handbook to the Church Hymnary* claim it was not

Metrical psalms were an important feature of Scottish Presbyterian worship. Early Scottish psalters contained only twelve ‘common tunes’ for psalm singing and to these, the Psalter of 1635 added Proper Tunes, in keeping with:

‘the ideal of the Reformers, which was to give each Psalm its own tune, as indissolubly wedded to it as the air of any well-known secular song is to the words for which it was written.’⁵⁴

It has not been possible to establish which words were proper to Coleshill. In the *Scottish Psalter*⁵⁵ of 1855, it was published with Psalm 3 and the following are the words with which MacCunn’s audience would probably associated the melody – ‘O Lord how are my foes increased? Against me many rise.’⁵⁶

The tune ‘Coleshill’ is hexatonic, based on the Dorian mode (Example 5.21).

Example 5.21 – Scale in the Dorian mode



Transposed Dorian mode, lacking the sixth of the scale

Psalm tunes were originally sung unaccompanied in unison. When modal psalm tunes were harmonised, arrangers often misunderstood their nature and harmonised them to fit either the major or minor scale. Thus the 1855 Psalter, while retaining the modal melody of ‘Coleshill’, introduces a raised leading note in the tenor line (Example 5.22). MacCunn’s harmonisation, using mainly root position chords, gives the melody a feeling of great strength and solidity, and his avoidance of the unsharpened seventh (except at the cadence to return to B minor) shows his awareness of the tune’s modal nature (Example 5.23).

published in Scotland till 1762. ‘Coleshill’ is a modified form of ‘Dundee’ one of the earliest psalm tunes and at some point there must have been confusion between the two tunes.

⁵⁴ Millar Patrick *Four Centuries of Scottish Psalmody* London: Oxford UP, 1949, 65.

⁵⁵ *The Scottish Psalter with Accompaniments for the Organ or Pianoforte* Edinburgh: Paton and Ritchie, 1885.

⁵⁶ *The Book of Psalms and Sacred Harmonies* Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1854, a ‘barn-door’ psalter, suggests the following Psalms for ‘Coleshill’ 31, 50, 59, 64, 77, 119, 142.

Example 5.22 – ‘Coleshill’

C.M. COLESHILL Psalm III

S. A. T. B.

O Lord, how are my foes in - creas'd? a - gainst me ma - ny rise.
Ma - ny say of my soul, For him in God no suc - cour lies

The Scottish Psalter Edinburgh: Paton and Ritchie, 1855

Example 5.23 – MacCunn’s harmonisation of ‘Coleshill’

174 *Andante alla breve*

f *ff* *dim*

179 *[Allegro]*

dim p *pp*

Instrumentation: bn/hn in D/hns in C/tbns/tba/vla/vc db/timps

A letter from William Black to MacCunn indicates that at the time MacCunn was writing *The Cameronian's Dream*, he was probably also working on *Songs and Ballads of Scotland*, a collection of one hundred traditional folk songs.⁵⁷ Black writes: ‘In “A Highland Fair” (produced at Drury Lane in 1731) you will find about fifty of the Scottish tunes then the most popular, though the words – written for the little opera – are sad rubbish.’⁵⁸ MacCunn’s awareness of modality would have increased as he worked with such a quantity of folk melodies, many of which were modal and pentatonic or hexatonic.

⁵⁷ ‘A Handsome Christmas Present’ [Advertisement] *Scotsman* 28 Dec 1891, 1.

⁵⁸ William Black to Hamish MacCunn, 9 Jul 1889, Watt Library, Greenock. William Black (1841–1898) was a novelist and early exponent of the ‘Kailyard School’, a term applied to a group of Scottish writers who exploited a sentimental and romantic image of small town life in Scotland.

Other noteworthy features of this section include the use of a rising chromatic scale to reflect the words ‘derision and laughter’ (Example 5.24).

Example 5.24 – Derision and laughter illustrated

BARITONE SOLO

Orch.

[Allegro] 191 *accel*

But the me - - lo - dy died 'midst de - ri - - sion and

cres

p *accel*

195 *ff*

laugh - ter, As the hosts of un - god - ly

precipitato

Fanfare - ww + cornets

Fanfare - ww + cornets

Narration of the battle is given to the chorus, and MacCunn offers a vivid description of events using a variety of devices. A falling and rising semiquaver figure accompanied by rolls on the side drum is used to depict the thunderstorm; the horse motif continues to be heard, variations in its metre – triple and duple, simple and compound – indicating the turmoil of the battlefield. The words of the text are thrown out antiphonally by the chorus. The obvious allusions to Wagner’s *Die Walküre* in the soprano and alto line (Examples 5.25a–d) add an extra dimension, by referring the listener to the work of another composer and perhaps suggesting parallels in the content.

Example 5.25 a and b– References to *Die Walküre*

240

a) Trumpets, sopranos, altos. Text : 'Their dark eyes flashed lightning'

253

b) Sopranos. Text : 'The mighty were falling'

Examples 5.25 c and d – References to *Die Walküre*



c) Baritone solo. Text: 'A chariot of fire through the dark cloud descended.'



d) Valkyries motif. *Die Walküre* Act 3 scene 3. Bass tp/ hns 6&8

The section ends with the full chorus intoning 'When in Wellwood's dark moorlands the mighty were falling', increasing in volume from *piano* to triple *forte* in five bars. The aftermath of the battle is depicted by a *pianissimo* orchestral postlude. A sustained B flat pedal on the tuba and kettledrum, accompanied by a roll on the bass drum, is punctuated by fragments of the horse motif which give way to more sustained chords in the woodwind and brass. The section ends with three spaced-out semiquaver strokes on the kettledrum and then a bar of sustained silence.

Section 4 – The Ascension (bars 274 – 433)

A chariot of fire through the dark cloud descended

Orchestra	Chorus	Voices	Text	Bars	Tonal centre
Diminished chords, <i>tremolando</i> , <i>ppp</i>				275–286	Moving towards G flat major
'Coleshill'; semiquaver accompaniment				287–300	G flat major
Semiquaver accompaniment		Bar. solo	When the righteous had fallen	301–310	G flat major moving to C major
Trumpet motif; Rhinegold motif; Valkyrie motif; semiquaver accompaniment		Bar. solo	Its drivers were angels	310–319	C major
Trumpet motif; Valkyrie motif; semiquaver accompaniment		Bar. solo	And its burning wheels turned Repeats material from bars 305ff	320–328	B major
Coleshill; semiquaver accompaniment				329–343	G flat major
Semiquaver accompaniment		Bar. solo	A seraph unfolded its doors bright and shining	343–359	
Semiquaver accompaniment		Bar. solo recit	And the souls that came forth	360–367	Fluid; final cadence in C major
<i>Tremolando</i> accompaniment over static C major harmony	SATB	Bar. solo	On the arch of the rainbow	367–392	C major
<i>Tremolando</i> accompaniment over static C major harmony	SATB	Bar. solo	Glide swiftly bright spirits Reuses material from bars 367ff	393–417	C major
Postlude – <i>tremolando</i> strings, trumpet motif, followed by sustained chords on ww and horns				417–433	C major

Table 5.6 – Schematic outline of Section 4 – The Ascension

This final section describes how those killed in battle are taken up into heaven by angels riding a chariot of fire drawn by white horses. In Hyslop's apocalyptic text, MacCunn has seen obvious parallels with Wagner's *Rheingold* and has borrowed from the final act of this opera to set his text.

After the dramatic silence, a rising sequence based on a diminished seventh chord played *tremolando* by the strings leads to an orchestral interlude in G flat major in which 'Coleshill' is restated initially by trumpets and trombones and then by bassoons and horns (Example 5.26). Attention is drawn to this repetition by marking its beginning and end with arpeggiated grace notes on the trumpet.

Example 5.26 – Restatement of 'Coleshill' melody in bass

290 [Con moto]

Orch.

p marcato Coleshill

293

Coleshill

Melody - trumpets and trombones, bassoons and horn

The solo voice takes up the narration in a vigorous and heroic style with a predominance of triadic outlines and octave leaps in the melodic line. A flowing semiquaver accompaniment in a high register suggests the appearances of angels and chariots. A second orchestral interlude reintroduces 'Coleshill'. From bar 341 the rate of harmonic change begins to slow, imparting a majestic quality. A recitative bridge passage sung by the soloist over a simple chordal accompaniment leads to the final *Allegro molto* chorus in C major.

The predominant, martial motif in this section (Example 5.27a) is introduced briefly in the trumpet in bars 310–311 and thereafter is used to punctuate the tremolando accompaniment. A derivative (Example 5.27b) is used for the vocal line of the soloist and the soprano chorus, for the words 'On the arch of the rainbow' (Example 5.28). Both these motifs appear to be in imitation of Wagnerian motifs – the Sword

motif and the Rainbow Bridge motif (Example 5.27c and Example 5.27d). The superficial similarity of content – Cameronians ascending into heaven, and the gods crossing the rainbow bridge into Valhalla – has possibly suggested to MacCunn that a similar treatment would be appropriate. A further similarity to *Rheingold* is MacCunn's use of *tremolando* strings in imitation of the six harps used by Wagner in his postlude.

Examples 5.27

- a) Martial motif in *The Cameronian's Dream*
- b) Rainbow motif in *The Cameronian's Dream*
- c) Sword motif from Wagner's *Rheingold*
- d) The Rainbow Bridge motif from *Rheingold*

a) *[Con moto]*



Trumpet

b) *Allegro molto*



Baritone soloist

c)



d)



Hn/Bass cl/Bn/Vc

The final section, in which the chorus echoes the soloist, is characterised by almost static C major harmony and a remarkable resemblance to the final scene of *Rheingold* (Example 5.28 over).⁵⁹ The soloist and chorus unite for the last line (marked *Maestoso*) 'A kingdom of glory'. The piece ends with a brief orchestral postlude in which the rainbow motif sounds for the last time, the ethereal *tremolando* gives way to sustained chords in the woodwind and brass, and the work ends on a *pianissimo* chord of C major.

⁵⁹ First performance Munich, 22 September 1869.

Example 5.28 – Motifs in orchestral accompaniment and in vocal line

The musical score is divided into three systems, each featuring a Baritone Soloist, an Orchestra (Orch.), and a vocal line (Soprano Alto and Tenor Bass).

- System 1 (Measures 367-370):** The Baritone Soloist part begins with the tempo marking *[Allegro molto]*. The Orchestra part features a **Martial motif** starting at measure 367, marked *f* (forte), and a **Rainbow motif** starting at measure 370, marked *dim* (diminuendo) and *p* (piano). The vocal line includes the lyrics "On the" at measure 370.
- System 2 (Measures 375-380):** The Baritone Soloist part continues with the **Rainbow motif**. The vocal line includes the lyrics "arch of the rain - bow" at measure 375 and "On the arch of the rain - bow" at measure 380.
- System 3 (Measures 380-385):** The Baritone Soloist part continues with the **Rainbow motif**. The vocal line includes the lyrics "The cha - riot is gli - ding" at measure 380 and "The cha - riot is glid - ing" at measure 385.

MacCunn, like many of his generation, admired Wagner and a Wagnerian influence in his compositions was noted when he was still a student. Parry noted in his diary that when Joachim was acting as external examiner at the RCM, the latter 'got it into his head that MacCunn was influenced by Wagner and said "he had been submitted to a pernicious influence"'.⁶⁰ After leaving the RCM, MacCunn applied the use of leitmotif with some success in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. *The Cameronian's Dream*

⁶⁰ Quoted in: Jeremy Dibble C. Hubert H. Parry: *His Life and Music* London: Oxford UP, 1992, 221.

is different in that it quotes Wagnerian leitmotifs – The Rainbow Bridge and the Valkyries – and in this respect it is derivative rather than inventive.

MacCunn's engagement with the text

There are three facts, which, if taken together, could be construed as an indication of MacCunn's distaste for the text. The first is the Latin inscription in MacCunn's hand which appears on the title page of the full score (see page 200), but is not reproduced in the published piano-vocal score. With it MacCunn perhaps calls into question the need for continuing to repeat the poem and the sentiments it expresses. The second, the allusions to *Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* could be viewed as an example of MacCunn's admiration for Wagner. However, at another level, a further indication of his dislike of the text could be seen in his equating the Cameronians, their Christian God, angels and heaven with Wotan, Norse gods, the Valkyrie maidens and Valhalla. The third coincidence is the inclusion of the psalm tune 'Coleshill', a tune claimed by Covenanters, but which was also one of the tunes to which 'The Cameronian Cat', a set of frivolous verses which poke fun at the strict Presbyterianism of the Cameronians, was sung.⁶¹ If the foregoing are intentional rather than merely coincidental, then it is reasonable to conclude that for some reason, MacCunn did not like the text and probably enjoyed leaving hidden markers of his distaste.⁶²

Overview

Whether or not MacCunn was in total agreement with the sentiments expressed in Hyslop's poem, his response to it is vigorous, particularly to the more dramatic passages – the storm, the battle scene and the Ascension. Word setting is mainly syllabic and prosody is well respected. MacCunn makes limited but effective use of word painting e.g. the use of chromaticism to illustrate 'derision and laughter' (Example 5.24). His orchestration is excellent, and he uses his large forces well, varying registers, combinations of instruments and techniques to portray events as they unfold.⁶³ The orchestra functions well, both as the instrument of accompaniment and as the provider

⁶¹ 'The Cameronian Cat' appeared in James Hogg's *The Jacobite Relics of Scotland* published in 1819. In the Scottish Presbyterian Church, psalms were rehearsed using secular 'practice' verses rather than the sacred verses which were reserved solely for worship.

⁶² As stated in Chapter 1, there is evidence to suggest that MacCunn was received into the Roman Catholic Church some time in his adult life, and this fact could have a bearing on his treatment of the text.

⁶³ The instrumentation for *The Cameronian's Dream* is greater than most of MacCunn's other works.

of highly descriptive interludes between vocal sections. Its role is further enhanced by the integration of motifs into its texture, allowing it to comment on the action

What is striking about this work is the large part given to the soloist – eight verses, as opposed to the five allocated to the chorus, with the final stanza sung by both soloist and chorus. The range required of the soloist is quite wide (F–e") and technically the vocal part requires a strong, dramatic and flexible voice. The choral writing, however, is well suited to amateur choirs, as it is almost entirely homophonic and nearly always doubled by the orchestra. The syllabic setting of both the soloist's and the chorus's lines is further evidence of a Wagnerian influence.

Given MacCunn's enthusiasm for Scottish themes and melodies, it is surprising that he did not use more Scottish material to reflect the text's Covenanting context and content. Apart from the inclusion and treatment of 'Coleshill', which is only Scottish by association,⁶⁴ there is nothing in MacCunn's music which proclaims its Scottishness – no use of traditionally accepted 'Scottish features' such as the 'Scotch snap', imitation of bagpipes or fiddles, and no pentatonic or hexatonic melodies. MacCunn's treatment of the poem, focussing on its dramatic rather than its national features, and the employment of Wagnerian techniques places his treatment firmly in the mainstream of European tradition.

First performance

The first performance of *The Cameronian's Dream* was conducted by MacCunn on Monday 27 January 1890 in Edinburgh. The soloist was Georg Henschel⁶⁵ and the chorus parts were sung by the work's dedicatees, the Kirkhope Choir, Edinburgh's foremost choir, which had a reputation for a very high standard of performance. Other items on the programme included part-songs performed by the choir, two solos written and performed by Henschel, and MacCunn's overture *Land of the Mountain and the Flood*.

⁶⁴ Coleshill is the name of a village in England, and it is probable that the tune of the same name is English in origin.

⁶⁵ (Sir) (Isidor) George [Georg] Henschel (1850–1934) British baritone, conductor and composer of German birth.

Four days later the second performance was given in Glasgow in the St Andrew's Halls by the Glasgow Choral Union. Once again MacCunn conducted, but this time the soloist was Andrew Black who had been engaged to sing in the evening's other work, MacCunn's cantata *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Copies of correspondence from the secretary of the Glasgow Choral Union to MacCunn reveal that they had planned their performance of *The Cameronian's Dream* as early as August 1889 and that the Choral Union was the driving force in engaging the soloist.

58 West Regent Street
Glasgow
21 August 1889

Dear Mr MacCunn

Thanks for your note and have engaged Andrew Black for 30th January when we will perform the "Lay" and "Dream". I am also advising Mr Paterson to engage him for Edinburgh 27 January.

Kind regards

Yours faithfully

John Wallace⁶⁶

The first English performance was at the Crystal Palace was on 6 December. Once again the soloist was Henschel and MacCunn the conductor.

Reception

While favourable comment was made about *The Cameronian's Dream*, it was less well received than some of MacCunn's previous works, and in Glasgow, its juxtaposition with his cantata, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, was deemed to put it at a disadvantage. Both the Edinburgh and Glasgow correspondents of the *Musical Times* commended the orchestration,⁶⁷ and the *Glasgow Herald's* critic went as far as to suggest that it might have been more successful had it been treated purely orchestrally.⁶⁸ All Scottish critics commented on the work's lack of Scottishness but surprisingly the

⁶⁶ John Wallace to Hamish MacCunn, 21 Aug 1889. Glasgow Choral Union Letter Book 20 February 1889–18 January 1890, 355. RSNO Archives.

⁶⁷ 'Music in Edinburgh' *MT* 31, 1890, 165; 'Music in Glasgow' *MT* 31, 1890, 166.

⁶⁸ 'Choral Union Concert' *Glasgow Herald* 1 Feb 1890, 3.

Times's reviewer remarked on 'its abundant use of 'local colour' and its tuneful themes'.⁶⁹

At the Crystal Palace, another choral work, *L'Allegro ed il Penseroso* by Parry, MacCunn's teacher, completed the programme. Inevitably comparisons were made, and the work of the master was deemed to be superior to that of his pupil.⁷⁰ As was his wont, George Bernard Shaw delivered the *coup de grâce*:

The fiery chariot business at the end, with the ridiculous post-horn flourishes on the cornet, supported by a mechanical accompaniment which is as empty of poetic meaning and as full of prosaic suggestion as the tintinnabulation of an electric alarm, will probably end its day in ashes on Mr. MacCunn's hearth, when he has come to see that when we applauded *Lord Ullin's Daughter* so heartily we never intended him to make a habit of it.⁷¹

Following initial performances in Edinburgh, Glasgow and London, *The Cameronian's Dream* does not seem to have been taken up by choral societies and few subsequent performances have been traced, proving the assertion that it was 'really a long solo with a few choruses thrown in, and quite unsuited for performance by the class of choral societies for which it was presumably written'.⁷² Its publishers, Paterson and Sons, ran a series of four advertisements in the *Musical Times* in 1905 and a further advertisement appeared in 1923,⁷³ possibly in an attempt to clear stocks. In the 1920s and 1930s there were four radio performances (see Appendix 2).

The Cameronian's Dream displays many of MacCunn's strengths, in particular a good response to a dramatic text and colourful orchestration, but there are features – overuse of themes, under-use of chorus, Wagnerian imitation, and particularly subject matter – which would have discouraged, and probably still discourage choral societies from programming it.

⁶⁹ 'Crystal Palace Concert' *Times* 8 Dec 1890, 3.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Shaw *Music in London 1890–94* 1, 94.

⁷² 'Mr Hamish MacCunn's New Cantata' *Scotsman* 29 Jan 1892, 5. This article was a review of the first performance of *Queen Hynde of Caledon* which it found superior to *The Cameronian's Dream*.

⁷³ *MT* 46, 1905, 421, 495, 560, 623; *MT* 64, 1923, 811.

The Wreck of the Hesperus

In 1905 I wrote a ballad for chorus and orchestra on the subject of Longfellow's *Wreck of the Hesperus*. This was done for Mr Stoll of the Coliseum and was sung, twice daily, for some four months by the Coliseum Choir, accompanied by the excellent orchestra.⁷⁴

In 1905 MacCunn received a commission from an unexpected quarter, from Oscar Stoll,⁷⁵ theatrical impresario and owner of the London Coliseum Theatre of Varieties. When it opened on 24th December 1904, this theatre was the most innovative and luxurious in Britain, with a triple-revolving stage, lifts, a Royal entrance, and comfortable seats all of which could be booked in advance.⁷⁶ Stoll wished to offer high-quality entertainment suitable for respectable suburban families, and his programmes were a mix of music hall, circus, drama, orchestral music and opera.⁷⁷ An illustration of the eclectic nature of the programmes is given by the following quote from the *Times*:

The visitor to the six o'clock performance at the Coliseum will see some marvellous birds, an Australian entertainer, the Bioscope, an irresponsible musicality called *The Maid of the Moon*, the magnificent choral setting and orchestral setting of 'The Wreck of the Hesperus' and a pictorial production of 'Joseph and his Brethren', 'histrionically and musically treated' by a number of authors, producers, scene-painters, composers, and so forth.⁷⁸

Some famous acts which appeared on the stage of the Coliseum include the actress Sarah Bernhardt,⁷⁹ the tenor John McCormack,⁸⁰ Vesta Tilley the music hall performer,⁸¹ Grock the clown,⁸² the Diaghilev Ballet Company, and the Milan Opera Company.

Stoll also commissioned original music and arrangements of classical music. Walter Slaughter⁸³ his music director wrote much of the day-to-day music for the

⁷⁴ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 29 Dec 1913, GUL MS Farmer 264, 9.

⁷⁵ (Sir) Oscar Stoll (1866–1942), would have been aware of MacCunn's work as a conductor of light opera.

⁷⁶ Prior to this innovation, it was only possible to book boxes, hence the term 'Box Office'.

⁷⁷ Felix Barker *The House that Stoll Built: the Story of the Coliseum Theatre* London: Muller, 1957, 19–20; 23.

⁷⁸ 'The Coliseum' *Times* 26 Sep 1905, 4.

⁷⁹ Sarah Bernhardt (1844–1923) French actress and tragedienne. Legend claims that when first asked to appear at the Coliseum, Bernhardt cabled back the simple refusal, 'After monkeys, not'.

⁸⁰ John McCormack (1884–1945) Irish-born American tenor.

⁸¹ Vesta Tilley, professional name of Lady de Frece, née Matilda Alice Powles (1864–1952), comedienne and male impersonator.

⁸² Grock, stage name of Adrien Wettac (1880–1959), world-famous Swiss-born clown.

⁸³ Walter Slaughter (1860–1908), conductor and composer, wrote music for many light operas and revues.

Coliseum, but other composers were also involved. Stoll's most famous commission is probably Elgar's masque *Crown of India*, written to coincide with King George V's visit to India.⁸⁴ Many serious artists hesitated to be associated with variety, but:

Stoll had a marvellously simple way of overcoming all scruples. Money – the sort of money he could offer for an engagement at the Coliseum – spoke very persuasively. To capture the famous, he also applied the technique of the financier buying property. He made his offer when he heard that they were in low waters.⁸⁵

For Elgar, once he had overcome any misgivings about being associated with variety, the financial reward was great. In a letter to a friend, he wrote:

When I write a big serious work e.g. *Gerontius* we have had to starve & go without fires for twelve months as a reward: this small effort [*Crown of India*] allows me to buy scientific works I have longed for. [...] It's all very curious & interesting & the people are so good & so desperately respectable & so honest & straightforward – quite a refreshing world after Society – only don't say I said so.

My labour will soon be over ... & God bless the Music Halls!⁸⁶

In addition to Stoll's commission fee, Elgar shared an advance of £600 from the publishing firm Enoch & Sons with his librettist and Stoll.⁸⁷ Nothing is known of the state of MacCunn's finances in 1905, and although he had a full diary of conducting engagements,⁸⁸ he would doubtless have been happy to accept Stoll's commission.

Text

'The Wreck of the Hesperus' by the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82) was first published in 1841 in his *Ballads and Other Poems*. Longfellow was second in popularity only to Tennyson in the English speaking world,⁸⁹ was widely anthologised and 'was probably the most frequently set American poet of

⁸⁴ Barker, *The House that Stoll Built*, 179.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Edward Elgar to Frances Colvin, 14 Mar 1912, quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime* Oxford: Clarendon P, 1990, 244.

⁸⁷ Jerrold Northrop Moore *Elgar and His Publishers: Letters of a Creative Life* 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1987, 2, 764.

⁸⁸ 101 performances of *Talk of the Town* and 182 performances of *Blue Moon* at the Savoy Theatre – see Table 1.2.1, page 43.

⁸⁹ Margaret Drabble (ed) *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* 5 rev. ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995, 593.

the 19th century'.⁹⁰ The poem's vivid description and its sentimentality held wide appeal for the reading public of the day. It inspired pictorial representation e.g. Sir William McTaggart's painting of the same name⁹¹ which has been described as: 'extremely dark, but painted with a translucency that prevents heaviness. [...] It suggests a lingering adolescent taste in the young artist for scenes of melodrama and horror.'⁹² (Illustration 11).



Illustration 11 – *The Wreck of the Hesperus* by Sir William McTaggart

It was possibly this melodramatic element which made it such a popular choice for setting to music. Table 5.7 shows that *The Wreck of the Hesperus* has been set as a solo song, trio, part song, glee, choral ballad and cantata.

⁹⁰ Miriam W. Barndt-Webb 'Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth' *NG* 2, 15, 168.

⁹¹ Sir William McTaggart (1835–1910) Scottish painter. His *Wreck of the Hesperus* was painted in 1861.

⁹² Lindsay Errington *William McTaggart 1835–1910* Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland, 1989, 26.

Composer	Title	Form	Date
Hatton, John Lipptrot	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Solo ballad	1853
Blockley, Thomas	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Song	1857
Weiss, Willoughby Hunter	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Song	1858
Anderton, Thomas	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Cantata for solo and chorus	1872
Parker, Louis Napoleon	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Set to music for three female voices	1875
Hiles, Henry	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Four voice glee	1879
Haworth, Franklin	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Part song	1883
Lewis, Charles Hutchins	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Cantata for treble voices	1886
Foote, Arthur William	<i>The Skipper's Daughter – The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Choral ballad	1889
Dunkley, Ferdinand L.	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Ballad for chorus and orchestra	1893
Fisher, Arthur E.	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Cantata for ladies voices	1893
Wareing, Herbert	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	S.T.B., chorus and orchestra	1895
Chapman, W. M	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Cantata for solo voices, chorus and orchestra	1899
Fisher, Arthur E.	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Cantata for mixed voices	1905
MacCunn, Hamish	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Dramatic ballad	1905
Mills, Charles	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Cantata	1917
Harris, Cuthbert	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Trio	1924

Table 5.7 – Settings of Longfellow's 'The Wreck of the Hesperus'⁹³

The poem consists of 22 stanzas in ballad metre – alternating lines of iambic tetrameter and trimeter – with the rhyme scheme ABCB. Based on a true story, it relates how the *Hesperus*, an American sailing ship and her crew foundered in a storm because her captain refused to take advice from an older and more experienced sailor. Its language tries to imitate that of the traditional ballad by use of repetition, either within a line, or by repeating lines e.g.:

And a scornful laugh laugh'd he.

'O father! I hear the church-bells ring, | Oh say, what may it be?'

'O father! I hear the sound of guns, | Oh say, what may it be?'

'O father! I see a gleaming light, | Oh say what may it be?'

However, its language and its style, in which the subject of the sentence is held back till the third line of the stanza, indicate its literary, as opposed to traditional, origins.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear, | Through whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept | Tow'rds the reef of Norman's Woe.

⁹³ Compiled from CPM.

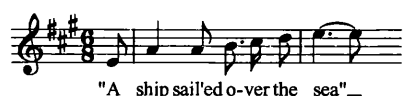
The ballad's subject matter reflects both the late-Victorian fascination with tragedy and death (c.f. Longfellow's 'Excelsior', Kingsley's 'The Sands of Dee') and the stock-in-trade of the traditional ballad.

Sources

MacCunn's manuscript full score is held in the Royal College of Music Library. It appears to have been written in some considerable haste and this perhaps explains the existence of a second fair copy in a hand other than MacCunn's.⁹⁴

The title page reads:

To my friend | Walter Slaughter⁹⁵



The Wreck of the Hesperus | Dramatic Ballad | for | Chorus and Orchestra | Poem by Longfellow | Music by | Hamish MacCunn | (Full Score) | The Property of Novello & Co Lim^d 160 Wardour St. W.

Scoring

The work is written for four-part chorus (SATB) and orchestra – double woodwind + piccolo; 2 horns; 2 trumpets; 3 trombones; strings; percussion: timpani, side drum, bass drum, cymbals, and triangle.

Structure

Labelled a 'dramatic ballad', the structure of the work is dictated by the text, to which MacCunn's response has been to focus on the drama of the story, and to set it like an opera in miniature. The characters of the text become the *dramatis personae* of the musical treatment, with the parts allocated:

⁹⁴ RCM MS 5135a and RCM MS 5135b respectively. The latter is probably the publisher's hire copy.

⁹⁵ Walter Slaughter was musical director at the Coliseum. He and MacCunn moved in similar musical circles, and had previously collaborated in the 'fairy play' *Little Hans Andersen* at the Adelphi Theatre in 1903. Slaughter wrote the music to Basil Hood's libretto and MacCunn was musical director. The quotation is from the song 'The Mermaid' sung by the Princess in Act 2. The key in the published score is G major, not A major as quoted by MacCunn. I am grateful to Alasdair Jamieson for directing me to this song.

Daughter	sopranos
Old Sailor	tenors
Skipper (Father)	basses

With one exception, when the soprano section describes the father's attempts to keep his daughter safe, the part of the narrator is taken by the full chorus. The work is through-composed.

Background

The Wreck of the Hesperus was written for a very specific set of circumstances – performance in a large variety theatre to accompany a series of ‘vivid magic lantern pictures, which were shown on the white iron curtain, synchronising with the more dramatic moments of the music’.⁹⁶ The use of lantern-slides was a feature of the Coliseum from its opening day, as indicated by the *Era*'s review of the first day's performances. ‘The popular song "Bluebell" was sung by Mr Allan Morris and the auditorium choir, with illustrations thrown on the fireproof curtain.’ and ‘The pleasing ballad "The Missouri River" pictorially illustrated by the magic lantern [...] was loudly applauded.’⁹⁷

In carrying out Stoll's commission, MacCunn would have been constrained by aspects of production and by the clientele for which the Coliseum catered. Production considerations would have included the sequence of the lantern-slides and performance time, since the ballad was only a small part of a two-hour show. The audience, possibly not overenthusiastic about ‘serious’ music, would have expected continuous, fast action, emphasis on the story, not too much orchestral music (as opposed to accompaniment) and recognisable musical conventions. Many of the features of the work reflect these circumstances, and rather than deal with the work in a linear manner, a more analytical approach will be adopted to examine the devices employed by MacCunn to meet the needs of this unusual commission.

Just as today's cinema-going audiences know the story of *Titanic* before they see the film, it is fair to assume that MacCunn's audience would have known the story of the *Hesperus*. Indeed, at a time when rote learning and recitation in school were the norm, many of the audience would have been able to recite all or part of the ballad.

⁹⁶ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 29 Dec 1913, GUL MS Farmer 264, 9.

⁹⁷ ‘The Coliseum’ *Era* 31 Dec 1904, 23.

MacCunn's main aim, therefore, would be not to tell the story, but to illustrate it musically, and to make his music accessible to the Coliseum audience while providing an appropriate accompaniment to the pictorial background.

The melodramatic nature of 'The Wreck of the Hesperus' would have immediately suggested to MacCunn the employment of techniques commonly used in the incidental music which was an essential ingredient of Victorian and Edwardian melodrama. In the theatre, orchestra leaders were expected to provide, at short notice, music appropriate to the action of the play. Many had their own stock of brief 'melos', short pieces of music suited to every mood and occasion which were identified by their tempi e.g.:

Furiosos i.e 'hurries' or 'agits' (agitatos) for intense physical action, struggles and combats; andantes or 'slows' or 'pathetics' for touching or melancholy or romantic moments; tremolos or 'mysts' for scenes of apprehension, terror, the appearance of visions or ghosts.⁹⁸

The Wreck of the Hesperus shows that MacCunn gauged perfectly all the requirements of the commission, and delivered a short work with a running time of approximately 20 minutes, which by remaining more or less within the boundaries of the melodrama's musical conventions would have matched the expectations of the audience. The devices which MacCunn employs are conventional and predictable, but they are applied in such a way as to transcend the commonplace.

MacCunn uses a variety of musical styles to tell his story.

Folk song style

The ballad opens in a brisk 2/2 as the *Hesperus* puts to sea (Example 5.29a over). The simple melodic line, sung in unison by the full chorus, although typical of many folk ballads and sea shanties, has a slightly cumbersome feel, starting as it does on an anacrusis and on the tonic, rather than moving in the more expected way from dominant to tonic (see Example 5.29b over).

⁹⁸ David Mayer and Matthew Scott *Four Bars of 'Agit': Incidental Music for Victorian and Edwardian Melodrama* London: Samuel French, 1983, 2.

Example 5.29a – Opening bars

Tempo moderato, ma con anima

S. A.
T. B 8vb

Orch.

fls/obs/clis/bns/hns It was the schoo- er Hes-per-us, That sail'd the win-try sea;—

f obs/clis/bns/hns/tps/vcs vns1 +8ve/vcs

dbz pizz

Example 5.29b – Expected opening

It was the schoo- er Hes-per-us

The conventional orchestral accompaniment and diatonic harmony complement the simplicity of the melody, which at the end of the piece is used as an introduction to the coda. The setting of the second stanza is slightly more elaborate, with a tertiary shift modulation to G flat major, an element of chromaticism in the melody, and independent voice parts. However, the four-bar double pedal in the vocal parts (B flat and F) and the concluding B flat pedal retains the impression of folk music.

Declamation

MacCunn uses recitative to carry the more dramatic moments of the ballad, a technique used by Wagner and other German composers. These passages feature either chorus sections or the full chorus declaiming syllabically and in unison. In Example 5.30, the tenor section, representing the old sailor, gives warning of the approaching hurricane. MacCunn previously made similar use of declamation in *Lord Ullin's Daughter*.

Example 5.30 – Hurricane warning

42 [Tempo moderato, ma con anima]

T

cresc e agitato

I pray thee, put in-to yon-der port, For I fear a hur-ri-cane, I fear a hur-ri-cane."

Orch.

vns1+2

vlas/vcs

p cresc

cresc

obs/clis/bns sustained chords F minor D 1/2 dim F# dim7

The repetition of the text ‘I fear a hurricane’, emphasised by the use of sequence, highlights the growing fear of the sailor. The accompanying *tremolando* strings, moving in a harmonic progression from minor to half diminished to diminished seventh, further emphasise the dramatic nature of the passage.

Example 5.31 shows the full chorus intoning solemn words in a chant-like fashion against an equally solemn, slow-moving chordal accompaniment of bassoons, brass and *tremolando* strings. A rising sequence, both melodic and harmonic, is used effectively to project the drama of the passage. A strong half-close on a bare F sharp unison prepares for the *a cappella* hymn which follows in B major. In both passages the text is aptly matched by the accompaniment’s style and orchestration. A further example of declamation is the use of wide intervals (fifths and octaves) to emphasise dramatic moments (Examples 5.32a and b). These vocal gestures have the same function as the exaggerated hand and body gestures used by actors in melodrama.

Example 5.31 – Solemn, chant-like setting

177 *Adagio* *mf*
But the fa - ther an - swer'd nev - er a word, A fro - zen corpse was he.
Bns/brass/string trem *mf* *p*
ab: i iv V of A I IV

181 *cresc* *3*
Lash'd to the helm all stiff and stark, With his face turn'd to the skies The lan-tern gleam'd thro' the
cresc *f cresc*
a: i iv V of B I b: i

186
gleam - ing snow On his fix'd and glas - sy eyes.
iv V7 of C V7 of B

177

octaves

fifth

octave

S.

260 octave octave octave fifth

S.

Ho! ho! Ho! ho! Ho! ho! the break-ers roard!

A stylistic device used by MacCunn in the telling of the tale is the use of stylistic parody. In stanzas 8 and 9, the father's words of comfort to his daughter are set as a macabre lullaby in the unusual key of A flat minor (Example 5.33).

[Moderato]
cl + 8ve/bn1/vc
mf *116*

B. "Come hith - er! come hi - ther! my lit - tle daugh - ter, And do not trem - ble so; For

Strings *p*

I can wea - ther the rough - est gale That e - ver wind did blow."

232

A further example of stylistic parody is the setting of stanza 14, the daughter's prayer for rescue (Example 5.34). Set for four-part unaccompanied chorus, this passage superficially resembles a hymn. However, many features – the maudlin sentiment of the text allied to the chromatically altered harmony, the use of stepwise movement in semitones in both the melody and the lower parts, and the use of suspensions – suggest the style and the saccharin sentimentality of a parlour ballad. The descending sequence and textual repetition in the soprano line reduces tension and enhances the words of the text 'still'd the wave'.

Example 5.34 – The maiden's prayer

190 [Moderato]

S. *p* Then the maid - en clasp'd her hands and pray'd That sa-ved she might be; And she thought of Christ Who

A. Then the maid-en clasp'd her hands and pray'd That sa-ved she might be And she thought of Christ Who

T. Then the maid-en clasp'd her hands and pray'd That sa-ved she might be; and she thought of Christ, of

B. The the maid-en clasp'd her hands and pray'd That sav - ed she might be; And she thought of Christ, of

197 **sequence**

still'd the wave, still'd the wave still'd the

still'd the wave, Who still'd Who still'd the wave,

Christ Who still'd the wave, still'd the wave Who

Christ, of Christ who still'd the wave, still'd the wave, still'd

202

wave On the Lake, the Lake of Ga - li - lee.

still'd the wave On the Lake of Ga - li - lee.

still'd the wave On the Lake of Ga - li - lee.

the wave On the Lake of Ga - li - lee.

The setting of stanzas 20 and 21, in which the discovery of the drowned daughter is described (Example 5.35 over), stands out from the preceding and succeeding sections, as it is in 3/4 as opposed to 4/4 time. Stylistically the setting of these verses points in two different musical directions. The flowing violin obbligato is reminiscent of a baroque vocal cantata, but there are also hints of French sacred music, for example the ‘In Paradisum’ of Fauré’s Requiem⁹⁹ or ‘The Shepherd’s Farewell’ from Berlioz’s *L’Enfance du Christ*.¹⁰⁰ The soprano and alto sections in unison are accompanied by strings (violin 2, viola and cello), woodwind (flute, oboe, clarinet) and horn. Above this, the high-register quaver obbligato, played principally by the first violins, seems to hint at heaven or paradise but the dissonance of bar 302 brings home the stark reality of the scene.

The setting of the final stanza combines two musical styles. A repetition of the simple folk-like element of the opening melody brings the work full-circle and leads to the coda, an impassioned plea made by the narrator (chorus) for all people (the audience) to be spared from the fate of the *Hesperus* (Example 5.36 over) There are a few alterations to the opening material – there is a strong dominant-tonic introduction, a quiet dynamic, and the unaccompanied chorus in four parts has a very strong bass line. The tempo is slower than that of the opening bars and all these features serve to give a feeling of finality. A rising sequence of tonic chords leads to a finale reminiscent of many oratorios or grand operas, with the chorus sections *divisi*, the first soprano line reaching a sustained high B flat, the full orchestra playing *forte* or *fortissimo*, *tremolando* strings, repetition of the text ‘Christ save us all’, and emphasis on the word ‘death’.

On a smaller scale MacCunn uses many devices to illustrate and elaborate the action. Examples are depictions of the elements – the wind, the force of the storm, the raging sea. Example 5.37 (over) shows the figure used to represent the wind – a descending staccato quaver figure in the woodwind over tremolo strings and sustained chords in the brass. The woodwinds’ bare fourths and fifths give the impression of coldness and their staccato execution emphasises the capriciousness of the wind.

⁹⁹ The first London performance of this work is thought to have been produced by Stanford in the 1890s.

¹⁰⁰ 1903 was the centenary of Berlioz’s birth. To mark the occasion the *MT* issued ‘The Shepherd’s Farewell’ as a musical supplement, thus bringing it to a very wide public. (*MT* 44, 1903, 322-327)

Example 5.35 – 'At daybreak'

279 *Andante placido*

S. A. *At day-break, on the leak sea-beach, A*

Orch. – strings/ww/hns *p dolce*

285 *fish-er-man stood a-ghast To see the form of a mai-den fair Lash'd close to a drift-ing mast. The*

291 *dim*

salt sea was fro-zen on her breast, The salt tears in her eyes, And he saw her hair, like the

297 *dim*

brown sea-weed And he saw her hair, like the brown

302 *sea-weed, On the bil-lows fall and rise.*

+cll

pp

C♭ - B♭

The musical score is for a piece titled 'At daybreak'. It features a vocal line (S. A.) and an orchestral accompaniment (Orch. – strings/ww/hns). The tempo is marked 'Andante placido'. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 279, 285, 291, 297, and 302 indicated. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. Performance markings include 'p dolce', 'dim', 'pp', and 'C♭ - B♭'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 5.36 – Finale

Example 5.36 – Finale

Measures 307-318. The score is for a vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and orchestra. The tempo is *Tranquillo*. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 4/4.

Measures 307-312: The vocalists enter with the lyrics: "Such... was the wreck of the Hes-per-us In the mid - night and the snow... Christ save us". The orchestra provides accompaniment. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.

Measures 313-317: The vocalists continue: "all, Christ save us all from a death like this, from a". The orchestra continues with accompaniment. Dynamics include *f cresc*, *ff*, and *cresc*. The tempo marking *allargando* appears above the vocal lines.

Measures 318-322: The vocalists conclude: "death On the reef of Nor - man's Woe...". The orchestra provides accompaniment. Dynamics include *fff*, *f*, and *dim*. The tempo marking *allargando* continues. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Example 5.37 – Wind

Example 5.37 – Wind

Measures 63-64. The score is for an orchestra. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 4/4.

Measure 63: The wind section (flutes, oboes, and clarinets) plays a four-bar chromatic quaver figure. The strings play a sustained chord. The brass section plays sustained chords.

Measure 64: The wind section continues the chromatic quaver figure. The strings and brass continue with sustained chords.

A four-bar chromatic quaver figure is used to represent the ferocity of the storm (Example 5.38). Flutes, oboes, clarinets and violins descend for two and a half bars and then ascend for one and a half bars, while in bars three and four cellos and double

basses continue the descent. This is followed by four bars of tonal uncertainty over an A natural pedal, effecting a transition from G minor to B flat minor. The addition of percussion – side drum, bass drum, timpani, triangle and cymbals – further emphasises the unleashed power of the natural elements against which the ship has little chance of survival.

Example 5.38 – Storm

79

S. A. *ff* Down came the storm, and smote, and

T. B. *Pedal G*

Orch. tutti *ff* fls +8ve/obs/cl/s/vs1 trem b tbn/vcs/dbs side drum

83

smote a - main The ves - - - sel

Inner pedal A₁

bass drum/cym

86

in its strength;

Inner pedal A₁

timp/tr bass drum/cym *fff*

The musical score is written for Soprano Alto (S. A.), Tenor Bass (T. B.), and Orchestra (Orch. tutti). It is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 79-82) features the vocalists singing 'Down came the storm, and smote, and' over a 'Pedal G' in the bass. The orchestra provides a rhythmic accompaniment with flutes, oboes, clarinets, and strings playing tremolos, and bass tubas, violas, and cellos playing a steady eighth-note pattern. A side drum is also present. The second system (measures 83-85) continues the vocal line with 'smote a - main The ves - - - sel' over an 'Inner pedal A₁'. The bass drum and cymbal are active. The third system (measures 86-89) shows the vocalists singing 'in its strength;' over another 'Inner pedal A₁'. The orchestra includes timpani, triangle, and cymbals, with a forte (fff) dynamic marking in the bass line.

The angry sea is vividly portrayed by the repetition of a two-bar phrase, in which MacCunn makes very effective use of different sections of the orchestra moving in different rhythmic patterns (Example 5.39).

Example 5.39 – Angry sea

[Tempo moderato, ma con anima] 155

B. [Some] ship in dis-tress that can-not live in [such an angry sea]

Horns in F

Bass drum

Violins I and II

Violas

Violoncellos

Double Basses

Ww/brass sustained chords

The violins have a falling and rising chromatic quaver figure derived from that associated with the storm (Example 5.38); cellos have a quaver arpeggio figure alternating between A major and D flat major; the violas play *tremolando* minims and there is a sustained roll on the bass drum. The bass section moves in rhythmic parallel with the horns, and their figure is repeated in diminution in the first bar of the double basses' figure. The syncopated rhythm in the double basses' phrase further emphasises the turmoil of the raging sea.

Another very effective piece of orchestral description is the passage in which the ship sinks (Example 5.40 over). The chorus in unison is doubled by the orchestra in a unanimous and slow chromatic descent, conjuring up the image of the ship sinking slowly, down into the depths. As the ship sinks, the wind, represented by the first violins' ascending chromatic figure, howls unabated.

Example 5.40 – The sinking of the ship

[Tempo moderato, ma con anima]

S. A.
T. B. 8vb

Violin I

Orch.

Bass drum

With the masts went by the board; Like a ves-sel of glass she stove and sank, Like a ves-sel of glass she stove and sank,

260

Imitation

Bearing in mind that MacCunn was writing for an unsophisticated audience, he can perhaps be forgiven for the obvious orchestral imitation of sounds mentioned in the text. Thus 'the sound of guns' elicits a few well-chosen strokes on the bass drum and 'I hear the church bells ring' is illustrated not only by a physical bell but also by a rocking minim ostinato in the lower strings suggestive of the rocking motion of bells in their tower (Example 5.41 over). The triplet ostinato in the upper strings, which accompanies the daughter's anxious questions to her father in this and the two subsequent stanzas, seems to replicate her fearfully pounding heart.

The sound of the ship's iced-up sails rattling in the rigging is particularly well depicted (Example 5.42 over). The passage in duple time interrupts the established triple metre and the heavy accents placed on each note have the effect of converting the iambic metre of the text into trochees. The duple time is further emphasised by the staccato of the strings and by the addition of the dry sound of the side drum. The homophonic setting for the chorus, in which the soprano line oscillates over the repeated root position triads of the lower voices of the chorus, forcefully projects the harsh words of the text.

Example 5.41 – Church bells

126 [Tempo moderato ma con anima] *f* *agitato*

Soprani
+fl 8va/ol

Strings

Bell

"O Fa - - - ther! I hear the

church - bells ring O say O say, what may it be?"

The musical score is for a scene titled 'Church bells'. It features three main parts: Soprani (Soprano), Strings, and a Bell. The Soprani part begins at measure 126 with the lyrics '"O Fa - - - ther! I hear the'. The Strings part provides a harmonic accompaniment with triplets of eighth notes. The Bell part consists of single notes struck on a bell. The tempo is marked '[Tempo moderato ma con anima]' and the dynamics are *f* (forte) and *agitato* (agitated). The score continues to measure 129 with the lyrics 'church - bells ring O say O say, what may it be?'. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and the time signature is 4/4.

Word painting is employed in a few instances in the ballad, for example, the word 'frozen' (bar 290) is accompanied by dissonant harmony – E and E sharp struck simultaneously against a sustained F sharp – and 'tears' (bar 292) – F double sharp against sustained F sharp and G sharp.

Example 5.42 – The rattling shrouds

The musical score for 'The rattling shrouds' is presented in two systems, measures 250 to 253. The tempo is marked 'Tempo moderato, ma con anima'. The score includes parts for Soprano (S. A.), Tenor (T. B.), Orchestra (Orch.), and Side Drum. The vocal parts have lyrics: 'Her rat- tling shrouds all sheath'd in ice. Her' in measure 250, and 'rat - tling shrouds all sheath'd in ice, With the' in measure 253. The orchestration features strings playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with a 'fls + 8v' (flute and 8va) part in the upper register. The Side Drum part consists of a simple rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

Sequence

Throughout the piece extensive use is made of textual repetition in combination with musical sequence. Instances of small-scale sequence can be seen in Examples 5.31, 5.34, 5.35 and 5.42. In verses 11 (Example 5.32), 12 and 13, the daughter's growing anxiety and agitation, expressed in the text by the repetition of question beginning 'O father' are set to the same melodic outline, repeated each time up one semitone.

Vocal writing

The Wreck of the Hesperus is the only choral piece written by MacCunn for a professional chorus. The Coliseum Auditorium Choir consisted of thirty-two men,

women and boy choristers who performed from memory in the darkened auditorium.¹⁰¹ The standard of the performers is reflected in the vocal ranges of the parts (particularly the sopranos) and in some of the more elaborate writing, for example, in the unaccompanied hymn-like plea of the daughter (Example 5.33). Other sections of the work are less complicated, for example the lines in which the words are declaimed on a single note, but the frequent chromaticism of the vocal line, seldom doubled by the accompaniment, makes it more demanding than MacCunn's other works which were written for the amateur choral market.

Orchestral writing

The orchestra provides a highly appropriate accompaniment, offering aural illustrations of the text and the lantern-slides in a rich variety of instrumentations and textures. Orchestral interludes are few and short, probably to accommodate the taste of the audience whose main interest would have been in the vocal music and the presentation of the drama.

Conclusion

MacCunn successfully fulfilled the remit of his commission. By incorporating recognisable elements from melodrama (the declamation of syllabically-set text, exaggerated vocal gestures, recognisable musical conventions), by maintaining a brisk narrative pace and by keeping orchestral interludes to a minimum, he produced a work which catered for the limited tastes of the variety theatre audience. However, by carefully grafting these elements into a more 'classical' approach, the outcome is a work with wider appeal and deeper meaning.

The significance of the opening motif (Example 5.42a), only becomes apparent at the very end when it reappears in the inner voices of the chorus and orchestra as an unprepared, and therefore very obvious appoggiatura, set to the word 'woe',¹⁰² could perhaps be taken to be the motto and meaning of the piece.

¹⁰¹ Barker, *The House that Stoll Built*, 23.

¹⁰² Falling semi-tone leitmotifs are frequent in Wagner's *Ring der Nibelungen* and in particular in *Das Rheingold* where it is a characteristic of the minor transformation of the Rheingold leitmotif.

Example 5.42a – Opening bars



Example 5.42b – Closing bars



The repetition of opening material at the close of the work – melody, the unsettling flattened sixth degree of the scale, (Examples 5.42a and b), the frame of the E flat home key – allied to the frequent use of sequence, the similarity of the rhythmic profile in the descriptive phrases, unifies, gives structure to, and transcends what superficially appears to be a loosely constructed, through-composed work. While the lantern-slides were an integral part of the original performances, the fact that the work is able to stand alone without them demonstrates the strength of MacCunn's music.

First performance and reception

As already noted, *The Wreck of the Hesperus* was written for the Coliseum Theatre, London and had its first performance on 28 August 1905. In his biography MacCunn claims that it was 'performed twice nightly for some four months'.¹⁰³ However, it would appear that his recollections are not completely accurate, since, according to advertisements in the *Era*, it was performed three times daily till mid-October. Thereafter, there was just one performance per day, and by 18 November it was off the bill altogether. Proof of the work's commercial success is the fact that it ran for a considerable time on a tour of the provinces, as MacCunn wrote to Janey Drysdale.

So enormously impressive and successful was the experiment that Mr Stoll sent a special chorus to all the halls on his circuit, especially to perform *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, which they did for nearly a year.¹⁰⁴

There were over 30 theatres in the Stoll-Moss circuit. Advertisements in the *Era* for their theatres' rehearsals with references to 'Illustrated Songs' and 'vocal items by the choir' provide evidence that there was a peripatetic chorus performing at a different venue every week,¹⁰⁵ but it has not been possible to substantiate MacCunn's claim that *The Wreck of the Hesperus* was on the circuit for such a length of time.

¹⁰³ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 29 Dec 1913, GUL MS. Farmer 264, 9.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ 'Manchester – Hippodrome' *Era* 17 Mar 1906, 10.

The Wreck of the Hesperus was well received. The *Era* noted:

Another novelty at the Coliseum is a pictorial and choral presentation of Longfellow's "Wreck of the Hesperus" of which there are several musical settings, all more or less popular. Mr Hamish McCunn [sic] is responsible for the latest musical setting, which is original, melodious and well orchestrated. The descriptive illustrations of the wreck thrown on the screen enable the audience to follow the tragic story to its conclusion and the Coliseum choir and orchestra gave every possible musical effect to the score.¹⁰⁶

The *Glasgow Herald* critic was as complimentary of the choir who sang the ballad from memory in the darkened auditorium as he was of MacCunn's music, which was 'distinguished by a poetic fidelity'.¹⁰⁷ The review in the *Times* praised the workmanship of the piece but found a lack 'in the invention of thematic material' in comparison with earlier works.¹⁰⁸ There was no review of the performance in the *Musical Times*, possibly because the performance was in a variety theatre.

Novello's publication of the staff vocal score¹⁰⁹ coincided with the first performances. The *Scotsman* commented: 'Picturesque and melodious, it is very nearly as good [...] as "Lord Ullin's Daughter"'.¹¹⁰ On this occasion the *Musical Times* deigned to notice the work and gave a very perceptive assessment, saying:

Mr MacCunn's music is quite independent of pictorial accessories, and well able to stand on its own merits. [...] While duly illustrative of the text, the composer has eschewed complexities and written with directness of expression that is happily in consonance with the simple pathos of the incident.¹¹¹

String parts were issued in 1906, but all other orchestral parts and the full-score were only ever available in manuscript from the publisher. A tonic sol-fa version of the vocal score was issued in 1907.

With multiple performances given in the London Coliseum and the theatres on the Stoll-Moss circuit and aggressive marketing of the vocal score by Novello,¹¹² the

¹⁰⁶ 'Variety Gossip' *Era* 2 Sep 1905, 20.

¹⁰⁷ 'Dramatic and Musical' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Aug 1905, 7.

¹⁰⁸ 'The Coliseum' *Times* 29 Aug 1905, 7.

¹⁰⁹ 'Just published: *The Wreck of the Hesperus*' *MT* 46, 1905, 692.

¹¹⁰ 'Musical Publications' *Scotsman* 13 Dec 1902, 2.

¹¹¹ '*The Wreck of the Hesperus*' *MT* 1905, 46, 800.

¹¹² Advertised in 'Back Matter' of the *MT* on a monthly basis from October 1905 – June 1906.

work reached a large market and this is reflected in the number of early performances, the majority of which were in England (See Appendix 2). Until recently the last traced performance of the work was in 1930, the absence of further performances probably being more a reflection on the libretto's lack of appeal to post-Edwardian audiences than on the quality of MacCunn's music. Although the piece has recently been revived,¹¹³ it is unlikely to be performed other than as a theatrical curiosity, yesterday's 'simple pathos' being today's 'over-sentimentality'.

Conclusion

Two of the ballads, *Lord Ullin's Daughter* and *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, share the same subject matter, that of the sea, a storm, a sinking ship and ensuing tragedy, and it is hardly surprising that MacCunn's treatment of both shows a similarity. In particular, the musical descriptions of wind and sea, figures of quavers, triplets and semiquavers are not dissimilar. In all three works, it is noticeable that the text is for the most part set syllabically. This is appropriate as the main aim of a ballad is to tell a story and melismatic setting interferes with the projection of the narrative. Syllabic setting and the use of declamation betray the stylistic influence of Wagner, as do the incorporation of quotations from *Das Rheingold* into the final scene of *The Cameronian's Dream*.

Today none of the texts has a widespread appeal. In particular *The Cameronian's Dream* and *The Wreck of the Hesperus* are very much products of their time and, unlike traditional ballads, which have a timeless quality, they lack the qualities which would allow them to transcend the time of their creation. It is unfortunate that the unattractiveness of the texts makes revival unlikely, as the musical treatment of all three ballads is creative and well suited to the text. The ballad most likely to be performed is *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, as its text is the most acceptable to contemporary performers and audiences, and its musical treatment is the most vigorous and creative.

¹¹³ Personal communication from Fiona Tong, secretary of the London Oriana Choir, 1 Feb 2007 in which she writes, 'The MacCunn is a bit of a choir favourite - we love singing it!' A further performance is programmed for 29 June 2007.

Chapter 6

The Border Ballads

Kinmont Willie – The Jolly Goshawk – Lamkin – The Death of Percy Reed

MacCunn's final choral works, *Kinmont Willie*, *The Jolly Goshawk*, *Lamkin* and *The Death of Percy Reed* were published as a group in 1913 under the title *Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads*.¹ The first three are for mixed chorus (SATB and orchestra, whereas the last-named is for male chorus and orchestra (TTBB).

Background to ballads

Ballads are universal to the folk tradition. For centuries they were sung or recited, their survival depending solely on oral transmission. It was not until the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when ballad collecting was in vogue that the texts were recorded and published and thus made available to a much wider audience. Examples of British collections are Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (3 vols, 1765) and Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (3 vols, 1802–3). To the literary Romantic Movement, which idealised ballads as the simple literature of the common people, they were a source of fascination and inspiration. In time ballads became the subject of academic study. The outstanding example for the English language is Francis James Child's *English and Scottish Ballads* (8 vols, 1857–59) in which 305 ballads with textual variants are recorded and numbered. A correspondingly thorough study of the music associated with the Child ballads was later undertaken by Bertrand Bronson.²

Traditional Scottish Border ballads fall broadly into three categories – dramatic renderings of historical deeds and events ('Kinmont Willie', 'The Death of Percy Reed'); tales of love, very often, though not always, tragic in outcome ('The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow', 'The Jolly Goshawk'); tales of the supernatural ('The Ship o' the Fiend'). 'Lamkin', a ballad of treachery and revenge does not fall neatly into any of

¹ Referred to hereafter as '*Border Ballads*'.

² Bertrand Harris Bronson *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1959.

these categories. Features of the ballad as a form are:

- stanzas of four lines (ballad stanza), generally in iambic metre, but with occasional dactyls
- lines of tetrameter
 ‘Have ye na heard o’ the fause Sakelde,
 O have ye na heard o’ the keen Lord Scroope?’ (‘Kinmont Willie’)
or alternating tetrameter and trimeter
 ‘O weel is me, my jolly goshawk,
 That you can speak and see’ (‘The Jolly Goshawk’)
- a rhyme scheme usually ABCB (‘Lamkin’), but AABB (e.g. ‘The Twa Corbies’, ‘The Lament of the Border Widow’) and ABAB (‘Binnorie’) are also found
- the repetition of lines
- simple, direct use of language
- the narrator’s adoption of a neutral, non-committal stance

There is nothing to suggest that MacCunn’s *Border Ballads* were commissioned. He had spent a good number of years attempting, largely unsuccessfully, to appeal to a wider audience by setting texts written in standard English. In electing to set texts from the Scottish tradition, he was returning to Scottish material which was his greatest inspiration and had brought him his greatest success. A letter to Janey Drysdale indicates that in June 1913 the *Border Ballads* were at the final stages of completion– ‘I am just finishing the “fair copies” of my four new Border Ballads for Chorus & Orchestra’,³ and in a subsequent letter he says ‘They will really enhance my reputation. Wait till you hear them with the orchestra, & I know you’ll agree with me.’⁴

While it is possible that the first three ballads were indeed newly composed, evidence from the autograph piano-vocal score of *The Death of Parcy Reed*⁵ indicates that this ballad was not new and that someone, most likely MacCunn himself, had been at pains to conceal its true date of composition. At the end of the work, the place and date of composition have been completely obliterated with ink, but the opus number on the title page, only partially scored out in pencil, is ‘31’, suggesting a composition date of no later than 1896. There is no indication of when the three ballads for mixed choir

³ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 12 Jun 1913. GUL MS Farmer 263/09.

⁴ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 5 Jan 1914. GUL MS Farmer 263/19

⁵ GUL MS MacCunn 1.

were begun. Examination of the autograph sketches reveals that several drafts were made, but none is dated. Given MacCunn's mention of his *new Border Ballads*, it is most likely that the mixed choir ballads were indeed begun in 1913 or early 1914 and that he then decided to include the earlier, unpublished *The Death of Percy Reed* with them.

Sources

Neither the full scores nor the orchestral parts for any of the *Border Ballads* have been traced, and thus comment on orchestration is not possible, except for the very few occasions where orchestral cues are given in the published piano-vocal score. In the preface to the set, instrumentation is given as double woodwind + piccolo; 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba; a large percussion section to include a stage crash rattle and a 'piece of clanking and jingling steel chain';⁶ harp and strings. All surviving manuscripts, including drafts for three of the titles, are held in Special Collections, Glasgow University Library. These drafts (the only surviving drafts for choral music completed by MacCunn) offer some insight into the compositional process. Table 6.1 gives an overview of source material and also an indication of the ballad's number in the collections edited by Child and Allingham.

Title	Draft	Piano-vocal score	Child number	Allingham number
<i>Kinmont Willie</i>	MacCunn MS 34	MacCunn MS 10	186	50
<i>The Jolly Goshawk</i>	MacCunn MS 36	MacCunn MS 9	96	25
<i>Lamkin</i>	MacCunn MS 35	MacCunn MS 6	93	56
<i>The Death of Percy Reed</i>	Not extant	MacCunn MS 1	193	10

Table 6.1 – MS sources of the *Border Ballads* and reference numbers in printed collections

MacCunn's engagement with Border ballads was long-standing, as two of his early orchestral ballads, *The Ship o' the Fiend* (Opus 5) and *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow* (Opus 6), both composed in 1888, have Border ballads for stimulus. At the beginning of each score an abridged version of the ballad is printed, and the pieces provide a vivid illustration of the text. *The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow*, cast in a modified sonata form, differentiates the two central characters by exploiting the sonata's contrasting themes. The first, representing the male protagonist, is in common time and in the tonic key. It is strong and rhythmical (see Example 5.3b) whereas the second theme, which represents the female character, is in $\frac{3}{4}$ time and is flowing and lyrical. *The Ship o' the Fiend*,

⁶ Required only for *Kinmont Willie*.

being through-composed, gives a better point-to-point account of the story. In returning to Border ballads for inspiration, MacCunn brought his compositional career full circle.

For the *Border Ballads*, MacCunn indicated that his source was the small volume of ballads edited by the Irish poet William Allingham,⁷ which he described as ‘a very intimate companion of mine since childhood’ and ‘an inexhaustible source of delight and entertainment’ (See Illustration 11).⁸ The illustration on the title page, that of a minstrel performing for a nobleman and his family, would have been very appealing to an imaginative child. MacCunn’s adult observations about ballads, their performance and their transmission show his love and deep appreciation of them. It would appear that his knowledge of the ballads did not extend to knowing their original melodies, since none of those used by him corresponds to those associated with the ballads as detailed by Bronson.

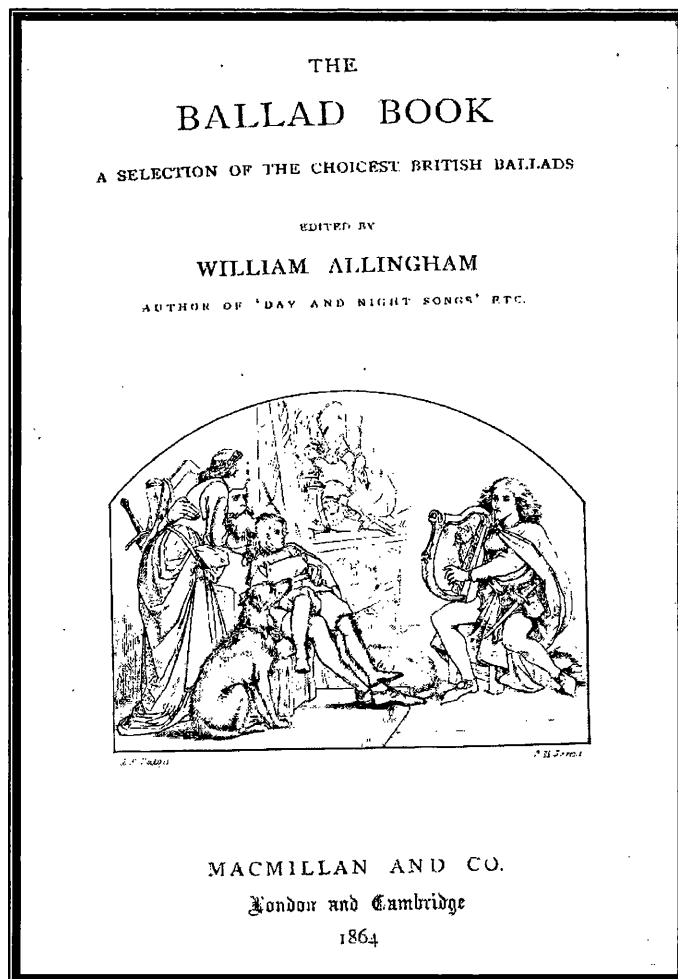


Illustration 11 – Title page of William Allingham’s *Ballad Book*

⁷ William Allingham (ed) *The Ballad Book: a Selection of the Choicest British Ballads* London: Macmillan, 1864, and subsequent editions.

⁸ Hamish MacCunn *Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads for Chorus and Orchestra* London: Weekes, 1913, ii.

Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads

As mentioned in Chapter 4, in the late nineteenth-century many ballads were set for chorus and orchestra, but the majority of these were literary as opposed to traditional ballads. MacCunn's *Border Ballads* are unique in that he was the first and only composer to have set them. The ballads were published in the following numbered order:

1. *Kinmont Willie*
2. *The Jolly Goshawk*
3. *Lamkin*
4. *The Death of Parcy Reed*

Despite the chronological gap separating the composition of *The Death of Parcy Reed* from the mixed voice ballads, MacCunn's approach is relatively consistent. As a result, all four have certain features in common, which will be addressed in general terms before commenting on specific aspects of each ballad.

'Kinmont Willie' and 'Lamkin' have stanzas of four lines with the rhyme scheme ABCB. The majority of stanzas in 'The Jolly Goshawk' and 'The Death of Parcy Reed' also have four lines, but a small number have six lines with the rhyme scheme ABCBDB. As far as metre is concerned, the historical ballads – 'Kinmont Willie' and 'The Death of Parcy Reed' – are in tetrameter, whereas 'The Jolly Goshawk' and 'Lamkin' alternate tetrameter with trimeter. 'Kinmont Willie' and 'The Jolly Goshawk' are the longest of the four and MacCunn, by omitting some verses from them, indicates his awareness of their length and attempts to create a tighter, more concise libretto.

On the page, a ballad can appear lengthy and monotonous, but in the oral tradition it was brought to life by the skill of the reciter. Similarly MacCunn, by employing a variety of standard musical devices, brings life and excitement to the text. Each ballad is contained within a recognisable tonal framework (Table 6.2)

Ballad	Opening tonality	Closing tonality	Relationship
<i>Kinmont Willie</i>	D minor	B flat major	Submediant major
<i>Jolly Goshawk</i>	D major	D major	Tonic major
<i>Lamkin</i>	G minor	G major	Tonic major
<i>The Death of Parcy Reed</i>	F sharp minor	B major	Dominant major

Table 6.2 – Tonal framework of the *Border Ballads*

MacCunn's setting of the texts, being mostly syllabic and almost devoid of melismatic writing, shows his respect for their style and prosody. Each verse is set strophically, resulting for the most part in regular four-bar phrases. The narrative flow is maintained by limited use of orchestral interludes and by the sparing use of textual repetition. Exchanges between two characters or parties in the text are mirrored musically by the repetition of melody, as in *Kinmont Willie* when the question 'Where be ye gaun ...?' is asked four times, each time set to the same melody. Similarly in *Lamkin*, the exchanges between Lady Wearie and the nurse reuse the same melodic material. The speed of the narrative is reflected by the music's frequent changes of tonality within, as well as at the end of verses. Changes in time signature are used to prevent the musical metre becoming an exact copy of the ballads' regular and unrelenting iambs. The choral writing is mainly homophonic and makes effective use of voices in unison and vocal pairings. Other than a few high notes which might strain the average choral society soprano and tenor, not many technical demands are made of the singers, and as such the *Border Ballads* are easily accessible to the amateur market for which they were intended.

When appropriate, the Scottish origins of the texts and their characters are reflected in the music by imitation of Scots folk melody, reference to Scottish dances, use of pentatonic, hexatonic and modal scales, use of the Scotch snap, double tonic and a tendency to use plagal harmony. However, these features are never over-played nor allowed to dominate and they are an integral, organic feature of each ballad setting.

MacCunn dedicated the *Border Ballads* to family members or friends, as illustrated in Table 6.3.

Title	Dedicatee	Notes
<i>Kinmont Willie</i>	Professor John MacCunn MA LLD DLitt	John MacCunn (1846–1929), MacCunn's uncle, one time professor of philosophy at Liverpool University
<i>The Jolly Goshawk</i>	Mrs John Pettie	Elizabeth Pettie (1846–1916), MacCunn's mother-in-law
<i>Lamkin</i>	'My father'	James MacCunn (1840–1918)
<i>The Death of Parcy Reed</i>	Professor William Paton Ker MA	William Paton Ker (1855–1923), Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of London, friend of the MacCunn family

Table 6.3 – Dedicatees of the *Border Ballads*

Kinmont Willie

Prior to the Union of the Crowns in 1603, the Border region displayed all the lawlessness characteristic of a frontier. In the words of Sir Walter Scott ‘the borders of Scotland formed the stage, upon which were presented the most memorable conflicts of two gallant nations’.⁹ Reiving (cattle rustling), murder, arson, and pillaging were common activities of border clans. The ballad ‘Kinmont Willie’ relates a historical event, and all its characters are historically attested. On 17 March 1596, a day’s truce was called to allow opposing parties to meet and negotiate. As William Armstrong of Kinmont, known as Kinmont Willie, was returning home to Scotland, a band of Englishmen broke the truce by capturing him and taking him in chains to Carlisle Castle. He was held prisoner for nearly a month, until his kinsman, Scott of Buccleuch, led a party of 80 horsemen to Carlisle and rescued him.

Text

A detailed history of the ballad ‘Kinmont Willie’ and its variants is given in Child (Child 186).¹⁰ The version of the ballad given by both Child and Allingham (MacCunn’s source) has 46 verses. MacCunn sets 43 verses, and in abbreviating the text, omits those verses (13–15) which explain in detail the reason for the course of action taken by Buccleuch, namely that there is peace between Scotland and England and that the sole aim of the rescue party is to free Kinmont Willie without harming any English people or property.

‘But since nae war’s between the lands
And there is peace, and peace should be,
I’ll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be!’¹¹

‘Kinmont Willie’ is a historical ballad and as such, falls into the category described by Allingham in his introduction thus: ‘The truly historical ballads are one and all inferior and, considered as poetry, rather like chips in the porridge.’¹² All the characters involved in the story are male: Kinmont Willie, Sakelde, Lord Scroope,

⁹ Walter Scott *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border Consisting of Historical and Romantic Ballads Collected in the Southern Counties of Scotland; with a Few of Modern Date, Founded upon Local Tradition* 3 v. Kelso: James Ballantyne, 1802–1803, 1, i.

¹⁰ Francis James Child (ed) *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* 8 vols in 5. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882–94, 3, 469–474.

¹¹ Allingham *The Ballad Book*, 273.

¹² *Ibid*, vii.

Buccleuch, Dickie o' Dryhope, and the members of the rescue party. Unlike other ballads, for example 'Lamkin', where there is a preponderance of direct speech, in 'Kinmont Willie', narrative outweighs speech in a ratio of 3:2. The narrative is direct and immediately draws the listener into the story with its opening question: 'O hae ye na heard o' the fause Sakelde?'.

Treatment of the text

Given that all the characters in the narrative are male, it was perhaps a strange decision to have set the ballad for a mixed choir, when a setting for a male voice choir to partner *The Death of Percy Reed* might have been more logical and appropriate. The decision may have been made out of commercial expediency, as at the time of composition there were more mixed voice than male voice choirs in existence in the United Kingdom.¹³ With the exception of Sakelde, who is always represented by a tenor-bass pairing, there is no consistency in the allocation of voices to a particular character.

The work is through composed (570 bars). Most verses are set strophically with regular four-bar phrases. A sense of cohesion is achieved by the repetition of sections of melodic material, as demonstrated by Table 6.4 below.

Verses	Melody used
1–5	ABABB
11 & 12	CC
13 & 14	DD
18–22	EFEFE
23–26	GHGG+H
40–43	JKJL

Table 6.4 – Repetition of melody in *Kinmont Willie*

Melody

The opening of the work opposes two very contrasting melodies. Sakelde's theme (melody A) is a very unexpected and original opening for a traditional Scottish ballad (Example 6.1). Consisting of a brisk descending chromatic scale, it recalls the Habanera from Bizet's *Carmen*.¹⁴

¹³ For a full discussion of the history and development of male voice choirs in the United Kingdom, see Christopher Robin Wiltshire 'The British Male Voice Choir: a History and Contemporary Assessment' Unpublished doctoral thesis. Goldsmiths' College, University of London, 1993.

¹⁴ MacCunn conducted *Carmen* in London in 1898 and again in 1899.

Example 6.1 – Sakelde’s theme (melody A)

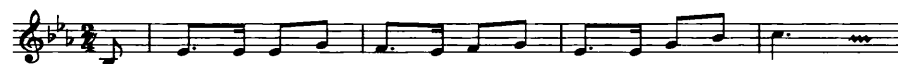


In contrast Kinmont Willie’s theme (melody B, Example 6.2), a solid diatonic folk-like tune based on the pentatonic scale, has much in common with other Scots airs e.g. ‘Auld Lang Syne’ (Example 6.3) or the middle section of ‘The Piper o’ Dundee’ (Example 6.4).

Example 6.2 – Kinmont Willie’s theme (melody B)



Example 6.3 – Auld Lang Syne¹⁵



Example 6.4 – The Piper o’ Dundee¹⁶



By opposing the chromaticism of melody A with the diatonicism of melody B, MacCunn is able to indicate the qualities of his protagonists. Chromaticism is used to represent the untrustworthy character of the Englishmen Sakelde and Scroope, while the diatonic melody illustrates the straightforward, honest nature of the Scot Kinmont Willie. This dichotomy is further underlined by the ensuing contrast between chromatic and diatonic harmony. Melody A is used one further time in an abbreviated and rhythmically altered version (bars 184ff.), again referring to ‘the fause Sakelde’ (Example 6.5).

¹⁵ Source: Hamish MacCunn *Songs and Ballads of Scotland* Edinburgh: Paterson, 1891, 86.

¹⁶ Source: James Hogg *The Jacobite Relics of Scotland, Being the Songs, Airs, and Legends of the Adherents of the House of Stuart* Second Series edited by Murray G.H. Pittock. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2003, 43.

Example 6.5 – Sakelde’s theme, rhythmically altered

183 *[Allegretto moderato]* **Sakelde's theme**
 S.A. T.B. 8vb *f* The first man that we met wi', *pp* Whae should it be, Whae should it be,
 188 **Sakelde's theme** *rall molto ff*
 Whae should it be, but the fause Sa- kelde?
rall sf p rall molto fff

A further use of chromaticism, as an indication of Sakelde’s treachery, is a rising two octave semiquaver scalic passage in the accompaniment (bars 264–265) as the sopranos sing ‘fause’ on a sustained high F sharp. The rising diminished fifth, introduced in melody A (Example 6.1), is later used in a similar context (bars 250ff.), along with a falling diminished fifth, to indicate wrong-doing – e.g. in connection with the text ‘row-footed outlaws’. Melody B (Kinmont Willie’s theme), which features prominently at the beginning of the work, is heard as a fragment towards the end of the piece (bar 490ff.) and in the postlude (bars 564–565).

Given the war-like nature of this particular ballad, most of the narrative melodic material reflects treachery, riding and fighting, and is set appropriately. Welcome relief is found in the short interlude in which Kinmont Willie, held prisoner in Carlisle Castle, sings the wistful air ‘O I sleep saft’ (Example 6.6 over). This section differs in every respect – metre, melody and atmosphere – from the rest of the work

Example 6.6 – Kinmont Willie’s air

418 Andante sostenuto, quasi Adagio

"O I sleep saft, and I wake aft, It's

lang since sleep-in' was fley'd frae me, Gie my ser-vice back to my wife and bairns, And

a' gude fel-lows that spier for me."

I ii I I vi IV

I iv I iv⁷

The text is set like a lullaby to a pentatonic melody with a gentle rocking accompaniment. The dissonance and unexpected harmony resulting from use of the flattened sixth of the scale at the words 'sleep', 'wake' and 'spier' contribute an underlying feeling of unease. In the bars containing the more positive words 'Gie my service back to my wife and bairns' C sharp replaces C natural, and the rhythmic ostinato gives way to a slower chordal accompaniment. The incorporation of an edgy element recalls the lullaby in *The Wreck of the Hesperus* composed some years previously.¹⁷ This is an extremely atmospheric episode which shows MacCunn's creativity and sensitivity at their best.

Descriptive features

MacCunn uses his accompaniment to describe various features of the text – for example, wind is illustrated by ascending and descending chromatic passages (bars 281ff.), while a descending chromatic quaver passage conjures up the panic of the English horsemen (bars 365ff.). The chains which bind Kinmont Willie are represented

¹⁷ See Example 5.33, page 232.

by the clanking of heavy chains (bars 431ff.). This is indicated in the autograph sketch, and is one of the few clues regarding orchestration which MacCunn has left. When Willie is rescued, the jingle of chains as he is first carried by his rescuers and then rides away on his horse, is imitated by repeated grace notes in the accompaniment (bars 451ff.). In the bars immediately following the text ‘the Carlisle bells were rung’ triplet quavers mimic the ringing of bells (Example 6.7). This figure is very similar to the ostinato which accompanies the first theme in the Carillon from Bizet’s *L’Arlésienne* Suite No. 1 (1872).

Example 6.7 – Bell motif



The sound of trumpets is portrayed by triadic outlines in both the vocal line and in the accompaniment (bars 310–329). Tenors and basses, doubled by lower register instruments, give voice to Buccleuch’s command ‘Now sound out, trumpets!’ (Example 6.8).

Example 6.8 – Trumpet calls

The trumpet motif is continued by all voices and accompaniment in unison (Example 6.9) as the words of the Scottish motto, the last line of verse 28, ‘Wha’ dare

meddle wi' me?'¹⁸ sound out and are then repeated, as if echoing round the countryside. This motif recurs later in the accompaniment (bars 513–514).

Example 6.9 – “Wha’ dare meddle wi’ me?”

322 *Andante con brio*

Tutti *ff* “Wha’ dare med-dle wi’ me?” _____ “Wha’ dare med-dle wi’ me?” _____

326 *Echo*

“Wha’ dare med-dle wi’ me, med-dle wi’ me, med-dle wi’ me, med-dle wi’ me?”

Chorus and orchestra in unison

The prominence given to this text can also be seen as MacCunn’s voicing to his feelings of Scottishness.

Metre and rhythm

Effective use is made of metre e.g. compound time mimics the rhythmic pounding of horses’ hooves. Variation in metre, e.g. a shift from 2/4 to 6/8 underlines the joyful nature of the text: ‘garr’d the doors bang merrily’ (bar 381). The telling use of 3/4 metre for Kinmont Willie’s air (Example 6.6) has already been mentioned. Similarly rhythmic motifs are used to represent two of the characters. ‘Kinmont Willie’ or its diminution ‘Willie’ is presented as a rhythmic motif (Examples 6.10a and b) while a solemn spondee-like rhythm is used to represent Buccleuch (Examples 6.11a and b).¹⁹

Examples 6.10a and 6.10b – Kinmont Willie rhythmic motif

a Kin - mont Wil - lie

t Kin - mont Wil - lie

Examples 6.11a and 6.11b – Bauld Buccleuch rhythmic motif

a bauld Buc - cleuch

t bauld Buc - cleuch

¹⁸ ‘Wha’ dare (daur) meddle wi’ me’ is the translation of the Scots motto ‘Nemo me impune lacessit’.

¹⁹ The fact that this ‘Willie’ motif is repeated nine times at the end of stanza 32 might cause problems in any revival of the piece.

Many verses have regular four-bar phrases. However, MacCunn injects variety by repeating small sections of text which enables the verse to be extended – for example verse 43 in which repetition of text extends the verse to 14 bars (Table 6.5 over).

Original Text	MacCunn
All sore astonish'd stood Lord Scroope	All sore astonish'd stood Lord Scroope
He stood as still as rock of stane;	He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trew his eyes	He scarcely dared to trew his eyes
He scarcely dared to trew his eyes	He scarcely dared to trew his eyes
When thro' the water they had gane.	When through the water, thro the water he had gane.

Table 6.5 – Textual repetition in verse 43

Treatment of dramatic events

Although the ballad concentrates on giving a factual account of an historical event, MacCunn illustrates the tenser incidents convincingly by the imaginative use of conventional musical techniques. A good example is the description of the Scots rescue party creeping up to the walls of Carlisle Castle in which MacCunn combines a rising melodic sequence with a corresponding increasing dynamic over a *tremolando* accompaniment (Example 6.12).

Example 6.12 – Build up of tension combining the use of sequence, dynamics and tremolando strings

293

[Andante largamento]

cres

pp

We crept on knees, and held our breath, Till we placed the lad-ders a-against the

G

297

cres

f

wa' And sae read-y was Buc-cleuch him-sel' To mount the first be-fore us a'

G

G = possible reference to *The Jolly Goshawk*²⁰

²⁰ The question of self-quotation will be discussed below in the context of *The Jolly Goshawk*.

The rescue party's meeting with Sakelde (bars 186ff.) is dramatised by the repetition of 'Whae should it be' by the chorus in unison, on a descending chromatic sequence (Example 6.5), while his murder is highlighted by sustained high F sharp in the soprano line and an ascending semiquaver chromatic passage in the accompaniment.²¹

Scottish features

There are several musical features which indicate the Scottish nature of the work. As stated above some melodies in the ballad, although composed, are similar to traditional Scots airs – see, for example, Kinmont Willie's air (Example 6.2) compared with traditional Scots tunes (Examples 6.3 and 6.4). Another composed Scottish melody illustrates the idiomatic use of a predominantly hexatonic melody, the Scotch snap, and the tendency to cadence on the sixth degree of the scale (at the word 'tree') (Example 6.13).

Example 6.13 –Buccleuch's anger

[Allegretto moderato con fuoco] 82

B. "O is my bas-net a wid-ow's curch, Or my lance a wand o' the wil-low tree? Or my

86

arm a la-dy's li-ly hand That an Eng-lish lord should licht-ly me!"

Arising from the melodic outline of tunes is the tendency to avoid dominant harmony as for example in Kinmont Willie's air (Example 6.5).

Modality

In earlier works, MacCunn occasionally employed modes and modal harmony. In *Kinmont Willie* there is a much freer use which possibly points to an affinity with the music of Vaughan Williams. A good example of similarities between MacCunn and Vaughan Williams is demonstrated by the two following extracts. Example 6.14a is in transposed Dorian mode, whereas Example 6.14b is in transposed Aeolian mode, but both have in common triple time in which a stepwise melody moves in parallel sixths over a pedal.

²¹ This is also a further example of chromaticism being used to illustrate an undesirable trait, in this case 'fause'.

Example 6.14a – ‘We go to hunt an English stag’ (*Kinmont Willie*)

202 [Allegretto]

S. A.

"We go to hunt an Eng - lish stag, Has

tres - pass'd on the Scots coun - tie."

mf

cresc

Example 6.14b – ‘As the old mother sways her to and fro’ (Vaughan Williams’s *Sea Symphony* Second movement)

29 Largo sostenuto

Semi-chorus of altos

pp As the old moth - er sways her to and fro sing-ing her husk - y song, -

Conclusion

MacCunn’s simple and direct response to the text is well in keeping with its uncomplicated and traditional style. He conveys its Scottish tradition, the events of the day – murder, long journey, emotion, rescue, humour – in totally appropriate ways. However, the length of the ballad is not in his favour, and for this reason, it is a less successful setting than either *The Jolly Goshawk* or *Lamkin*.

The Jolly Goshawk

‘The Jolly Goshawk’ (Child 96)²² is a Border version of that age-old predicament of two lovers who are kept apart by parental disapproval.

A Scottish lord has sent two letters to his English love. Not having received a reply, he asks his goshawk to take another letter to her. The lady answers by sending love tokens, a ring and the garland from her hair, and by telling her love to wait for her at the fourth church in Scotland. She then asks her father that when she dies he will bury her at the fourth church in Scotland. Having obtained his agreement, she takes a sleeping potion and is pronounced dead. Her funeral procession enters Scotland and duly arrives at the fourth church where the Scottish lord is waiting for her. He pulls back the shroud to find his love alive. The lady tells her family to go home to England and declares that she will live in Scotland with the man she loves best of all.

MacCunn’s final setting omits six lines from Allingham’s version of the ballad:

lines 5 and 6 of verse 11

‘Ask me na for that Scottish lord,
For him ye’ll never see!’

lines 5 and 6 of verse 14

‘This is all my asking, father,
I pray you grant it me!’

lines 3 and 4 of verse 28

And up and started her ain true love,
The chieftain o’ them a’.

The second and third omissions are inconsequential, but the omission of the father’s lines in verse 11 which explain the reason for the action makes MacCunn’s version of the story unclear. Interestingly, these lines were retained in the draft version (Example 6.15), which varies substantially from that of the published version (Example 6.16). In the latter the time signature is different, the voices are unaccompanied, the Goshawk motif is omitted, and the exchange between the lady and her father is lost.

²² Child *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* 2, 355–367.

Example 6.15 – Draft setting of stanzas 11 and 12²³

Allegretto moderato

Sopranos She's hi'ed her to her fa-ther dear _____ as fast as gang could she _____ I'm

S. A. sick at heart my fa-ther dear, An ask ing grant you me!' _____

T. B. _____ Bases *ff* 'Ask me na' for that Scot-tish lord, For

f 'An ask - ing, dear fa-ther, she says, 'An ask - ing grant you

him ye'll ne - ver see!' _____

Goshawk

f me! _____ 'That if _____ I die _____ in fair Eng - land,

Bases *ff* 'Him ye'll ne-ver see!' _____

Goshawk

As in published score

In Scot - land ye'll bur - y me.' _____ At the first kirk in fair Scot - land

The musical score is written for Soprano (S. A.), Tenor (T. B.), Basses, and Piano. It is in 6/8 time and the key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto moderato'. The lyrics are in Scottish Gaelic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings like *f* (forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). There are also performance instructions like 'As in published score' and 'Goshawk' (likely referring to a specific musical style or instrument). The lyrics are: 'She's hi'ed her to her fa-ther dear _____ as fast as gang could she _____ I'm sick at heart my fa-ther dear, An ask ing grant you me!' 'Ask me na' for that Scot-tish lord, For 'An ask - ing, dear fa-ther, she says, 'An ask - ing grant you him ye'll ne - ver see!' 'That if _____ I die _____ in fair Eng - land, 'Him ye'll ne-ver see!' In Scot - land ye'll bur - y me.' At the first kirk in fair Scot - land

²³ Folios 9–11, MS MacCunn 36.

Example 6.16 – Published version of stanzas 11 and 12

The image shows a musical score for two stanzas of a song. It is written for Soprano (S. A.) and Tenor/Bass (T. B.) voices. The tempo is marked 'Piu mosso, ma sostenuto'. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score is divided into three systems, each with a measure number at the beginning: 224, 230, and 236. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves. The first system (measures 224-230) includes the lyrics: 'She hied her to her fa - ther dear, As fast as gang could she: I'm sick at heart, my fa - ther'. The second system (measures 230-236) includes: 'fa - ther dear, An ask - ing grant you me! An ask - ing, an ask - ing, fa - ther dear An ask - ing grant you'. The third system (measures 236-242) includes: 'me; That if I die in fair Eng - land, In Scot - land you'll bu - ry me. That if I die in'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano) and 'dim' (diminuendo).

The ballad consists of 140 lines, of which 94 are direct speech. Sections of the chorus take the part of the principal characters:

- the lady – sopranos
- auld witch-wife – altos
- the goshawk – tenors
- the father } – basses
- the lover }
- narrator – the chorus, in four parts and in a variety of vocal pairings

MacCunn exploits the high proportion of direct speech, treating the ballad as the libretto for an opera in miniature with six scenes.

- Scene 1 Exposition
- Scene 2 The goshawk delivers the letter and the lady talks to her father her father
- Scene 3 The lady takes the sleeping potion and is declared dead
- Scene 4 The goshawk returns to the lover and delivers the lady's message. The lover and his followers set out to meet the lady.
- Scene 5 The funeral cortege comes into Scotland and stops at the fourth church in Scotland
- Scene 6 Finale. The lady is found to be alive and is united with her love

The two catalysts to the action, the goshawk and the ring, are represented by leitmotifs. The goshawk has two distinct leitmotifs. The first, a semiquaver motif of

accompaniment to elaborate a passage which describes the goshawk perching on a tree as it waits for the lady to come out of church.

Example 6.20 – Goshawk leitmotifs 1 and 2

The musical score for Example 6.20 is divided into three systems. The first system (bars 119-126) is marked [Allegretto giocoso] and features a vocal line (S. A. and T. B.) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics "And there he sat" and "there he sat". The piano accompaniment includes the Goshawk 1 leitmotif, marked *pp* and *dim*. The second system (bars 127-135) features the vocal line with the lyrics "As she cam' frae the mass" and the piano accompaniment, which includes the Goshawk 1 leitmotif. The third system (bars 136-143) features the vocal line with the lyrics "senza rall" and the piano accompaniment, which includes the Goshawk 2 leitmotif, marked *p*.

As has been mentioned, both Goshawk leitmotifs also occur in *Kinmont Willie* (bars 296ff.). It could be assumed that the reuse of motifs is purely coincidental and has no significance, but the motifs, in particular Goshawk 2, are too distinctive for this to be so. If this is a case of deliberate reuse of material, it is not possible to establish which occurrence is the quotation, as there is no way of determining which of the two ballads was composed first.

The second leitmotif is that of the Ring. It is introduced in the melody sung by the lady to the goshawk (Example 6.21 over).

Example 6.21 – Ring leitmotif

203 Sopranos *Andante sostenuto* *ben espressivo*

I send him the ring from my fin - ger, The gar - land frae my hair,

Ring leitmotif

p

The leitmotif is reprised when the goshawk uses the melody to give the lady's reply to the Scottish lord (bars 351ff.). It also occurs in truncated form at two further points in the ballad, both times in the orchestral accompaniment, as in Example 6.22 and 6.23 below.

Example 6.22 – Truncated Ring leitmotif in accompaniment

220 [Andante sostenuto]

p Sopranos 'Ye'll bid him wait for me there.'

Ring

rall *dim* *à tempo* *pp*

The final occurrence comes in the orchestral interlude immediately before the goshawk addresses the Scots lord (Example 6.22).

Example 6.23 – Truncated Ring leitmotif in accompaniment

348 *Andante* *p espressivo*

Ring

Ring

Ring

Ring

352 *ppp* **Ring**

Scene 1 – Exposition (verses 1–5)

The work opens in D major with a brisk ten-bar orchestral introduction. Thereafter the scene consists of dialogue between the lover and the goshawk, constructed from three different melodies. The opening melody, sung by the lover, is diatonic and folk-like, harmonised by alternating tonic and submediant chords. In contrast the goshawk's melody is chromatic, with corresponding chromatic (octatonic) harmony (Example 6.24). Also chromatic is the melody which carries the instruction to the goshawk: 'When ye come to the castle, Light on the tree of ash' (Example 6.25).

Example 6.24 – Opening stanza of *The Jolly Goshawk*

10 [Allegretto giocoso]

Basses

f 'O weel is me, my jol - ly gos-hawk, That you can speak and flee — For

D major: I I vi I vi

15 Tenors

you can car - ry a love - let - ter To my true love frae me.' — 'O

vi iii⁷ I vi⁰ I Vc II⁷ V

19

how can I car - ry a let - ter to her, Or how should I her know?

F III⁺ bV⁺ IV⁺ bVI bii bVI

Example 6.25 – Association of chromaticism with the goshawk

42 [Allegretto giocoso]

Basses

When ye come to the cast - le, Light on the tree of ash —

The third melody is that which refers to the ‘four and twenty fair ladies’ – a four-bar phrase derived from a one-bar cell used in sequence, and which is used twice in the final verse of the first scene (Example 6.26). With it, there is a return to the tonal stability of the opening bars.

Example 6.26 – Melody for ‘Four and twenty fair ladies’

53 [Allegretto giocoso]

Basses
Four and twen - ty fair la - dies Will to the mass re - pair

Scene 2 – The goshawk delivers the letter and the lady talks to her father her father (verses 6–15)

An orchestral interlude of 29 bars constructed from the two Goshawk leitmotifs opens the second scene, in which the goshawk comes to the castle. It is at this point (verse 6) that all four sections of the chorus sing together for the first time. This verse is for the most part unaccompanied, and what accompaniment there is, does not double the voices but repeats the Goshawk 1 leitmotif.

The passage which describes the goshawk on the ash tree is particularly evocative. The textual repetition, the chordal setting and slower rhythmic pace reflect the bird sitting at rest, and the hymn-like style points to the fact that the bird is awaiting the end of the church service (see Example 6.20).

The goshawk’s delivery of the letter and of the lover’s message once again is accompanied by the Goshawk 1 motif, which appears in every bar of verse 9. It is accompanied by a chordal two-bar ostinato which moves from chord I to the remote flat VI (Example 6.27 over). The *misterioso* indication and the unrelenting hypnotic ostinato very effectively convey the impression of magic or enchantment.

Example 6.27 – Goshawk 1 leitmotif used as ostinato

180 Allegretto poco andante Tenors *misterioso*

Goshawk 1 Goshawk 1 modified *p* 'Ye're

F major: I Two bar ostinato bVI

184

bid-den to send your love a send, for he has sent you twa:'

Verse 16, in which the lady replies by sending her ring and the garland from her hair, is a double stanza in which lines 1 and 2 are repeated as lines 5 and 6. The melody of lines 1 and 2 has already been mentioned with reference to the Ring leitmotif (Example 6.21). It is simple and intensely lyrical, accompanied in standard art song style by flowing triplets in the bass line. When the text is repeated, the melody becomes more intense, with wider leaps and an element of chromaticism. Correspondingly, the harmony becomes more complex, moving away from the home key of B flat major. The next two lines are set as recitative over a rich chordal accompaniment (Example 6.28 over). The imitation of liturgical chant reflects the content of the text, with its references to 'the fourth kirk'. The final line sees a return to the opening lyricism, and a return to the home key via a dominant F pedal in the bass.

Example 6.28 – Recitative setting

216 [Andante sostenuto] *solennemente*
 Sopranos And at the fourth kirk in fair Scot-land, At the fourth kirk in fair Scot-land,
 A major
 221
p 'Ye'll bid him wait for me there.' *Ring*
rall *dim* *a tempo* *pp* *Ring*

The lady's request to her father, is somewhat surprisingly, sung not by the soprano section but by the full chorus unaccompanied. Its textual repetition and rather monotonous and repetitive melodic line are like the pleadings of a spoilt child (Example 6.16). These features, although set to a different melody, were present in MacCunn's original setting (Example 6.15). The text's religious content is reflected in its musical style which combines elements of a hymn-setting with allusions to chorale writing.

In the setting of verses 13 and 14 the chorus is divided into 6 parts (SAATTB), and sopranos and altos are doubled by the accompaniment and at the octave by the tenors and basses. There is an almost constant tonic-dominant drone accompaniment in the bass in imitation of a tolling church bell, over which move parallel chords (Example 6.29). Although in MacCunn uses first inversion chords rather than parallel fifths, this passage is reminiscent of Debussy's *La Cathédrale engloutie* (1910).

Example 6.29 – Church bells

240 [Più mosso ma sostenuto]
 S. A. A. At the first kirk in fair Scot-land, You cause the bells be rung,
 T. B. B.
tranquillo

Scene 3 – The lady takes the sleeping potion and is declared dead (verses 16–23)

In this scene, MacCunn skilfully creates an atmosphere of tension, magic and foreboding. The impression of a death bell being rung is produced by a syncopated crotchet ostinato over a sustained tonic pedal. The opening text is set to a monotonous melody which uses only the notes of the tonic triad (F minor) and in which rising and falling fifths feature prominently. The monotony is broken unexpectedly by a sequence of rising minor thirds,²⁴ in both the melody and accompaniment, emphasising the seriousness of the event about to take place (Example 6.30).

Example 6.30– The lady falls into a trance

273 *Andante con moto*

The la - dy's gone to her cham - ber And a moan - ful wo - man was

Tonic-dominant pedal

278 *cresc molto* *f* *ff* *p* *dim*

she, As if she had tak - en a sud - den dwalm, As were a - boot to dee.

cresc molto

Imitation

The same strophic setting, repeated to describe the lady's falling into a trance, is intensified by the incorporation of a staccato rising minor third motif into the ostinato in the accompaniment (Example 6.31). The use of staccato in the context of magic or supernatural events possibly alludes to the Goshawk 2 leitmotif (Examples 6.19a and b).

²⁴ Another example of MacCunn's use of the octatonic scale.

Example 6.31 – Intensification of accompaniment

292 [Andante con moto]

pp She's fall - en in - to a hea - vy trance so pale and cold was she,

Ostinato

The intervention of the 'auld witch-wife' is announced by a high register triplet appoggiatura in the accompaniment and is continued by a detached chromatic vocal line and octave leaps. The chorus in unison, quasi recitative accompanied by *tremolando* chords, describes the gruesome test – the dropping of hot lead on the skin – used to ascertain that the lady is dead.

The scene concludes with preparations for the funeral being made by her brothers who make the coffin, and by her sisters who make the shroud. The mood is altered by the insistent semiquaver accompaniment in the bass, by the modal and folk-like character of the melody which features use of flattened seventh of the scale and the double tonic) and by the staccato nature of the vocal line. This last feature is used to particularly good effect when the word 'stitching' is repeated several times to extend the phrase and also reflect the busy activity of the sewing and the stabbing action of the needle (Example 6.32).

Example 6.32 – Stitching illustrated

335 [Andante]

Sopranos The cloth was o' the sat-in fine, And the stitch - ing, stitch - ing, stitch - ing, stitch - ing, the stitch - ing silk - en wark.

[*mf*] *cresc* *dim* *dim*

The stitching theme is continued in the brief postlude which ends the scene.

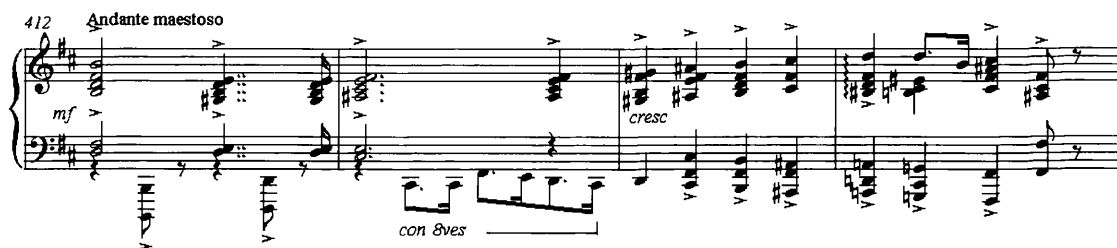
Scene 4 – The goshawk returns to the lover and delivers the lady’s message. The lover and his followers set out to meet the lady (verses 24–26)

The location moves to the English lord’s castle as the goshawk returns from its errand. It recounts to its master that the lady sends various love tokens and the instruction to wait for her at the fourth kirk in Scotland. The message is conveyed using material from Scene 1 (bars 203–223), identical in all aspects, except that the key is B major rather than B flat major. There then follows a section in which the lord summons his followers to meet the lady at the fourth kirk in Scotland. The drawing out and repetition of the text ‘For we must on to merry England, To save my love frae pine.’ over more than twenty bars, illustrates the distance involved. The use of a triplet staccato figure in the accompaniment mimics the galloping of horses, a standard musical device much favoured by MacCunn.

Scene 5 – The funeral cortege comes into Scotland and stops at the fourth church in Scotland. The lady is found to be alive and is united with her love (verses 27–34)

This scene is constructed entirely from narrative, and three musical ideas, all related to death and the church, are combined to elaborate and illustrate the funeral cortege’s approach into Scotland. The first, a four-bar phrase in the accompaniment with the distinctive rhythm of a funeral march (Example 6.33), introduces the scene and is repeated as a short orchestral interlude between verses 27 and 28.

Example 6.33 – Funeral march



The second idea, the tolling of the death bell, is represented by a syncopated bell-like ostinato in the bass. The third idea is that of liturgical chant – much of the text is set syllabically in the style of chant (Example 6.34 over).

Example 6.34 – Funeral bells and chant

419 [Andante maestoso]

Sopranos & Altos The fu - ner - al came in - to fair Scot - land,

f

Bells

422

And they caused the bells be rung,

loco

pp

p

mf

Bells

The meeting of the Scottish lord with the funeral cortege at the fourth kirk in Scotland is highlighted by an abrupt key change from E flat major to E major, as if to indicate the meeting of the two opposing factions. The Scottish lord's words are set slowly and chant-like over sustained low register chords. The pace becomes even slower as he removes the shroud to reveal the lady's face, and the dramatic moment is extended by the repetition of 'The lady then' by different sections of the chorus, sounding like trumpet fanfares. The moment at which the lady opens her eyes is reinforced by the sudden modulation to D major by means of an augmented sixth chord, and by the sustained D major chord to which the word 'eyes' is set (Example 6.35 over).

Example 6.35 – The lady is found to be alive

474 *Più adagio*

Basses *pp* He strip-pit the sheet from off her face, — A lit-tle — be-low the chin;

480 **Vocal fanfares**

Sopranos and altos

Tenors The la - dy then — The la - dy then

Basses *p* The la - dy then, — The la - dy then, —

485 *accel cresc molto* *Largo*

she op - en'd her eyes, — And look-it full on him. —

accel cresc molto *ff*

The lady's first words to her love are set to a lively tune in jig time, which emphasises her joy at being alive and in the company of her love (Example 6.36).

Example 6.36 – The lady comes back from the dead

488 *Allegretto agitato*

p 'O give me a shive o' your bread, love, O give me a cup o' your wine! —

pp

The final reference to the goshawk occurs with the lady's words:

‘And ye may say that ye sought my skaith
And that I hae gien you the scorn.’

Set to a rising chromatic passage, they are accompanied by the distinctive semiquaver Goshawk leitmotif 1 (inverted), followed by the Goshawk leitmotif 1 in augmentation (Example 6.37), serving as a reminder of the goshawk’s agency in the events which have taken place.

Example 6.37 – Final musical references to the Goshawk

506 [Allegretto] *mf cresc*

Sopranos And ye may say that ye sought my skaith, And that

Goshawk leitmotif 1 inverted

509 *ff*

I hae gien you the scorn.

Goshawk leitmotif 1 in augmentation

The musical score for Example 6.37 consists of two systems. The first system, starting at measure 506, is marked [Allegretto] and *mf cresc*. It features a vocal line for Sopranos and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a semiquaver Goshawk leitmotif 1 in inverted form. The second system, starting at measure 509, is marked *ff*. It continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment, featuring a semiquaver Goshawk leitmotif 1 in augmentation. The piano part includes a semiquaver Goshawk leitmotif 1 in augmentation.

The rousing finale of the work consists of the last two verses of the ballad set to a strong melody in march time (*Andante maestoso ma con fuoco*). The penultimate verse is a relatively simple eight-bar strophe, sung by the soprano section taking the part of the lady.

Example 6.38 – Penultimate verse

513 *Andante maestoso, ma con fuoco*

Sopranos *f* ‘I cam’ na’ here to bon-ny, bon-ny Scot-land To lie down in the clay!

The musical score for Example 6.38 consists of two systems. The first system, starting at measure 513, is marked *Andante maestoso, ma con fuoco*. It features a vocal line for Sopranos and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a semiquaver Goshawk leitmotif 1 in augmentation. The second system, starting at measure 516, continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment, featuring a semiquaver Goshawk leitmotif 1 in augmentation.

The final verse reiterates the lady's reasons for coming to Scotland. This is mirrored in the setting which is a variation of the previous verse, expanded from eight to eighteen bars by means of sequence. The full chorus joins in and one can imagine that if this had been an opera, the chorus would have sung 'She cam' na' here ...' against the leading lady's 'I cam' na' here ...'. This is another section which MacCunn altered before publication. The rising chromatic sequence of the draft (Example 6.39a) was replaced by a much stronger diatonic line (Example 6.39b) which is much more in keeping with the positive nature of the words and the onward movement towards the climax of the finale.

Example 6.39 – Finale – comparison of draft with published version

a) Draft, p 35

mf I cam' here to bon - ny Scot - land, I cam' here to bon - ny Scot - land

To the man, the man the man that I lo'e best.

b) Piano-vocal score, bars 530ff

I cam' here to bon - ny Scot - land, I cam' here to bon - ny bon - ny Scot - land

To the man, the man To the man that I lo'e best.

Although the tempo remains constant (*Andante maestoso, ma con fuoco*), the pace quickens from bar 522 with the introduction of a running quaver bass which leads to the final bars (Example 6.40).

Example 6.40 – Final bars

535 [Andante maestoso, ma con fuoco]

To the man that I lo'e best.

Conclusion

MacCunn's response to *The Jolly Goshawk* shows how he was able to apply skills acquired as a composer and as a conductor of opera to much smaller works. His use of leitmotifs and recurring themes gives unity to the work. Although some folk elements are incorporated into the music, e.g. folk-like dance tunes, double tonic, there is nothing in the music to specifically convey the Scottish context of the story. Rather MacCunn employs the musical language of the western European tradition to tell a story of love, which with the aid of the magic and the supernatural, triumphs over parental disapproval.

Lamkin

The ballad 'Lamkin' tells the story of a nobleman, Lord Wearie, who is unable to pay Lamkin, the mason who has built his castle. Lamkin vows to take revenge and fulfils his vow by his plotting with the family's nurse who lets him into the castle when Lord Wearie is away from home. Acting together they kill Lady Wearie and her baby. Both Lamkin and the nurse are found guilty of murder and are condemned to death.

The many variants of the ballad are fully discussed by Child²⁵ and more recently by Niles.²⁶ Allingham, MacCunn's source, uses Child's variant U, but MacCunn's text varies slightly, and this is possibly to what he alludes in the final paragraph of his preface:

²⁵ Child *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* 2, 320–342.

²⁶ John de Witt Niles 'Lamkin, the Motivation of Horror' *Journal of American Folklore* 90, 1977, 465–6.

‘For their courteous permission to make use, here and there, of the variant versions of stanza, or of construction and sequence, so discerningly and admirably chosen and adopted by Mr Allingham, I have to express to Messrs. Macmillan & Co. my most cordial acknowledgements and thanks.’²⁷

While acknowledging the use of ‘variant versions’ of stanza, MacCunn does not indicate their provenance. By this stage in his career MacCunn’s considerable experience of setting text and working with singers would have allowed him to adapt a text to make it more appropriate with regard both to plot and euphony, rather than relying, as in earlier years, on his father for his libretto. Significantly, all of MacCunn’s changes are for the better.

In MacCunn’s version, the opening line makes a greater impact by having more regular scansion and a strong ending (Table 6.6).

Allingham	MacCunn
O Lamkin was as good a mason	O Lamkin was a mason good
As ever hewed a stane	As ever biggit wi’ stane
He biggit Lord Weare’s great castle	He biggit Lord Wearie’s great castle
But payment gat he nane	But payment gat he nane

Table 6.6 – Comparison of verse 1 in Allingham and MacCunn

Greater impact is also achieved in verse 20 where the nurse’s complicity with Lamkin is emphasised by replacing the weaker ‘O’ with the more emphatic ‘Yes’ (Table 6.7).

Allingham	MacCunn
‘Now sall I kill her, nourice?	‘Now sall I kill her, nourice?
Or sall I let her be?’	Or sall I let her be?’
‘O kill her, kill her Lamkin	‘Yes, kill her, kill her Lamkin
For she ne’er was good to me.’	For she ne’er was good to me.’

Table 6.7 – Comparison of verse 20 in Allingham and MacCunn

In verses 10 and 11 consistency and balance are achieved by using ‘a’ in both question and answer (Table 6.8 over).

²⁷ MacCunn *Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads*, ii.

Allingham	MacCunn
'O where's a' the men o' this house, That ca's me Lamkin?' 'They're at the barn thrashing, 'Twill be lang ere they come in.'	'O where's a' the men o' this house, That ca's me Lamkin?' 'They're a' at the barn thrashing, 'Twill be lang ere they come in.'

Table 6.8 – Comparison of verses 10 and 11 in Allingham and MacCunn

'Lamkin', like 'The Jolly Goshawk' has a high proportion of lines which consist of direct speech – 76, as opposed to 40 of narrative, and as with 'The Jolly Goshawk' MacCunn treats the text as a libretto of an opera in miniature. The four major characters are Lamkin, Lord Wearie, Lady Wearie, and the Nourice (nurse). There are also the castle's maidservants (stanzas 26 and 27)²⁸, and a narrator. A different section of the choir is used to represent each of the main protagonists:

Lamkin – tenors (but occasionally tenors and basses)
 Lord Wearie – basses
 Lady Wearie – altos
 Nourice – sopranos (but occasionally sopranos and altos)
 Narrator – various grouping
 Maidservants – sopranos and altos

As the story unfolds, focus is placed on the dialogue and interaction between the characters.

Lamkin and Lord Wearie – verses 2–3
 Lord and Lady Wearie – verses 4–6
 The Nurse and Lamkin – verses 10–13; 20–22
 Lady Wearie and the Nurse – verses 14–17
 Lamkin and Lady Wearie – verse 19
 Lord Wearie and un-named witness(es) – verses 26–27

Although the work is through-composed, it can be divided into five main scenes, of which the longest and most important is scene 3, the central scene both in terms of position and action (Table 6.9).

²⁸ The characters are not named specifically, but as the part is sung by sopranos and altos in harmony, it may be assumed that they are female, and more than one in number.

No	Scene	Verses Bars	Time	Main keys
1	Exposition Lamkin, Lord and Lady Wearie are introduced. Lord Wearie says he cannot pay Lamkin for his castle and Lamkin vows to take revenge. Lord Wearie warns his wife to beware of Lamkin	1–6 1–67	3/4	G major, E minor
2	Betrayal The nurse lets Lamkin into the castle through a small window which has not been locked	7–9 68–109	4/4	G minor
3	The Revenge	10–22	4/4	
a	Lamkin enquires as to the whereabouts of all the people who live in the castle	110–276 10–12	3/4	C minor, E flat major; E flat minor, D flat major; F sharp minor
b	Lamkin and the nurse make the baby cry to entice the lady downstairs	110–157 13–17	3/4	D major; G major; C major
c	The murders	158–217 18–22	4/4, 2/2	E flat major, A flat major, F sharp minor
		218–27		
4	Lord Wearie's return to his castle In England, Lord Wearie has a presentiment of danger and sets off on the journey back to Scotland. When he arrives at his castle he finds his child's blood in the hall and his wife's blood in the bower.	23–27 277–367	4/4	E flat major, G flat major
5	Coda The fate of Lamkin and the nurse is learned	28–29 368–404	4/4	G major, G minor

Table 6.9 – Scenes and structure of *Lamkin*

Some of MacCunn's responses to the text are fairly predictable, particularly the use of diminished seventh chords, *tremolando* strings and chromatic passages to underline the more melodramatic aspects of the story – the killing of Lady Wearie and her child, and Lord Wearie's discovery of the murders. However, other devices are used to elaborate the text in a more creative manner.

Characters are delineated by the use of contrasting styles. Lamkin, the drama's central character, is represented by a leitmotif introduced in the opening bars. The simple pentatonic melody over a plodding crotchet bass line paints a picture of a solid, uncomplicated artisan (Example 6.41).

Example 6.41 – Lamkin leitmotif

1 *Con moto moderato, ma con brio*

Tenors and basses O Lam-kin was a ma-son guid, As ev-er hew'd a stane;

This leitmotif occurs twice more in the accompaniment (bars 28–29, bars 64–67) but in a minor key, thus indicating in a very subtle way that although Lamkin is a good mason, he is not a good person.

In complete contrast Lord and Lady Wearie are characterised by a flowing, elegant melody accompanied by rising horn calls, befitting their genteel and courtly status (Example 6.42).

Example 6.42 – Lord and Lady Wearie

31 *[Con moto moderato]*

S. A. *mf* The lord said to his la-dy As he mount-ed his horse,

T. *p*

Horn call

A very different style and melody are used to portray the scene of Lord Wearie in England. A simple hexatonic melody (again in E flat major), superimposed over a rhythmic ostinato and tonic-dominant drones suggest rusticity and merry-making (Example 6.43 over). The rhythmic ostinato is identical to that used in the ‘Dirk Dance’ in MacCunn’s *Six Scottish Dances*.²⁹

²⁹ Opus 28, published in 1896, in versions for full orchestra, small orchestra, and piano. ‘Dirk Dance’ is number 4 in the set.

Example 6.43 – Lord Wearie in England

277 *Allegretto comodo* *dolce*

S. A. Lord Wear-ie sat in Eng - land, A - drink ing o' the wine; He

T. B. felt his heart grow heav - y At this ve - ry same time.

283

MacCunn uses a second leitmotif, the castle/money motif (Example 6.44a over). Initially it is associated with the word 'castle'. Thereafter it or its derivatives occur, principally in the accompaniment, to refer to Lamkin and his gang (Example 6.44 b over), in association with demands for payment, the castle's doors and windows (Example 6.44a over) and the consequences of non-payment (Example 6.44c over). This motif, based on a rising quaver scale and with its reference to a contract, seems to allude to or to be based on the Spear leitmotif of Wagner's *Ring* (Example 6.44d over). Its final occurrence, transformed and in a slow tempo, is to indicate the consequences of non-payment, when Lord Wearie is told of the murder, first of his child and then of his wife. (Example 6.44d over).

Example 6.44a– Castle/money leitmotif

74 [Con moto moderato]

S. A. *pp* When all the doors, all the doors were guard - ed

T. B.

77

And all the win - dows shut, There was still one lit - tle win - dow,

pp *cresc* *sf*

Example 6.44b – Castle/money leitmotif and its transformation

50

Altos *f* 'O what care I for Lam - kin Or an - y of his gang?

Example 6.44c – Castle/money leitmotif transformed³⁰

castle/money motif (transformed)

S. A. [Adagio molto] *ff* It is your lit - tle son's heart's blude,

pp

Example 6.44d – Spear leitmotif³¹

WOTAN der Speer, mit sei - ner Spit - ze speert Wo - tan die Welt

con 8ves

Spear Spear inversion

³⁰ The performance instruction in the draft manuscript is 'With insane intensity'.

³¹ Deryck Cooke 'A Introduction to Wagner's *Der Ring der Nibelungen*' London: Decca, 1968, 17.

The two leitmotifs – Lamkin and Castle/money are juxtaposed at bars 27ff., when Lamkin tells Lord Wearie: ‘Ye shall hae cause to rue’. His threat is carried by the Castle/money leitmotif, immediately followed by the Lamkin leitmotif transformed into a minor key, indicating Lamkin’s treacherous character (Example 6.44e).

Example 6.44e – Lamkin and castle/money leitmotifs juxtaposed

Example 6.44e is a musical score for tenors, starting at bar 27. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The top staff is for the Tenors, with the lyrics 'Ye sall hae cause to rue.' written below it. The bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The score is divided into two sections: the first section, labeled 'castle/ money leitmotif transformed', spans from bar 27 to bar 32; the second section, labeled 'Lamkin leitmotif transformed', spans from bar 33 to bar 38. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes, with some notes marked with 'v' (accents).

Dramatic devices

As in the other *Border Ballads*, MacCunn emphasises textual repetition by using the same melody, sometimes with small variations, for each repetition. When Lamkin enters the castle, he asks the nurse where all the men of the castle are (Example 6.45). Here again the characters are differentiated by their melodies. Lamkin’s chromatic and disjointed minor melody indicates his roughness, whereas the nurse’s flowing and more lyrical major melody conceals her deviousness.

Example 6.45 – Question and answer

Example 6.45 is a musical score for tenors and sopranos, starting at bar 111. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The top staff is for the Tenors, with the lyrics 'O where's a' the men o' this house That ca's me Lam- kin?' written below it. The bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment. The score is divided into two sections: the first section, labeled '[Andante] Tenors', spans from bar 111 to bar 115; the second section, labeled 'Sopranos', spans from bar 116 to bar 120. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes, with some notes marked with 'p' (piano), 'dim' (diminuendo), and 'sf' (sforzando).

A heightening of tension is achieved when the same melodic outline is repeated in a higher key to enquire first about the women (E flat minor answered in D flat major), and then the lady of the house (both question and answer in F sharp minor). Other passages which feature textual repetition (verses 4 and 5; 14–17; 21–22; 26–27; 28–29) are similarly treated, with reuse of melodic material.

Scene three, the central scene, is a good illustration of MacCunn's ability as a dramatic composer. Three forte staccato chords (bar 142) mimic the sharp cries of the baby in response to the nurse's pinching. These are followed by an orchestral illustration of crying which will be instantly recognisable to anyone who has had to cope with a crying baby. A rising sequence of descending chromatic quaver passages gradually becomes quieter. They give way to a *piano* chromatic triplet figure, interrupted at times by silence, as if the baby is waiting to see if anyone will come to it before it starts crying once more (Example 6.46).

Example 6.46 – Crying child

The musical score for Example 6.46, titled 'Crying child', consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system, starting at bar 142, features a treble and bass staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with three forte (f) staccato chords in the bass, followed by a melodic line in the treble that descends chromatically. The second system, starting at bar 147, continues the chromatic descent in the treble, with a forte (sf) dynamic marking, followed by a piano (p) section. The third system, starting at bar 152, features a piano (p) dynamic marking and continues the chromatic triplet figure in the treble, with a key signature change to two sharps (F# and C#) in the final measures.

This descriptive orchestral interlude leads to the exchange between Lady Wearie and the nurse, in which Lady Wearie, in the manner of one “to the manor born”, calls down instructions to her nurse to quieten the baby. The chromaticism established in the orchestral passage continues into the accompaniment, and the superimposition of Lady Wearie’s simple diatonic air over this edgy figure is used to create a feeling of tension and unease (Example 6.47 over). This unease is compounded by the use of the flattened

sixth of the scale in the melody and its unexpected harmonisation by a Neapolitan chord in bar 166. This passage is another illustration of MacCunn's ability to introduce foreboding into a lullaby, which in normal circumstances should be the most reassuring of songs.³²

Example 6.47 – Lady Wearie's lullaby

158

Tranquillo

Altos *placidamente* <>

'O still my bairn, nour - ice,

162

Sopranos <>

Still him if you can.' 'He will not still,

165

mad - am, For a' his fa - ther's land.'

The musical score for 'Lady Wearie's lullaby' is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (bars 158-161) features an Alto voice part with the lyrics 'O still my bairn, nour - ice,'. The piano accompaniment consists of a continuous stream of eighth notes in the right hand and a simpler bass line in the left hand. The second system (bars 162-164) features a Soprano voice part with the lyrics 'Still him if you can.' and 'He will not still,'. The piano accompaniment continues with similar rhythmic patterns. The third system (bars 165-168) features a vocal part with the lyrics 'mad - am, For a' his fa - ther's land.' The piano accompaniment concludes with a final chord. Performance markings include 'Tranquillo' and 'Altos placidamente' for the first system, and 'Sopranos' for the second. Dynamic markings include 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte).

In the ballad, Lady Wearie's coming down stairs to be confronted by Lamkin is described straightforwardly in one verse. MacCunn increases the tension by extending his setting to nineteen bars. Two bars of chromatically descending detached staccato quaver chords imitate Lady Wearie's footsteps as she comes down the stone stairs (Example 6.48).

Example 6.48 – Lady Wearie comes down stairs

203 [Più sostenuto]

Chorus in unison *p* The first step the la - dy step-pit, She step-pit on a stane

The musical score for 'Lady Wearie comes down stairs' is presented in a single system. It features a chorus in unison. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo marking is '[Più sostenuto]'. The dynamic marking is 'p' (piano). The lyrics are 'The first step the la - dy step-pit, She step-pit on a stane'. The melody is a simple, descending line of eighth notes. The piano accompaniment consists of a continuous stream of eighth notes in the right hand and a simpler bass line in the left hand.

³² See *The Wreck of the Hesperus* and *Kinmont Willie* for other examples.

The text is set to notes of short value, separated by rests, and a short orchestral interlude is interpolated before line three of the verse. Tension is finally released with the revelation that she has come face to face with Lamkin. This is illustrated musically by a massive crescendo, *fortissimo tremolando* chords, a gong stroke,³³ and the word ‘Lamkin’ declaimed fortissimo by the female chorus.

Following the climax of the work, in which Lamkin’s villainy is revealed to Lord Wearie, tension is sustained by an orchestral interlude of semiquaver scalar chromatic passages over alternating tonic and flattened dominant chords. There is then a slight release of tension as the orchestra, still at *fortissimo*, plays a descending triplet passage in unison leading to the coda.

In the coda, MacCunn completes the release of tension and creates a feeling of calm and completion. Orchestral accompaniment is reduced to a sustained tonic pedal. The beauty of the songs of the blackbird and the mavis are contrasted with the ugly fate of Lamkin and the nurse, by juxtaposing polyphony with homophonic word setting (Example 6.49 over).

³³ Bar 218 – this is the only orchestral cue in the entire piano-vocal score.

Example 6.49 –Coda

368 *Andante ben sostenuto* *ben legato e placidamente*

S. *p* O sweet - ly sang the black - bird, That sat up -

A. O sweet - ly sang the black - bird, That sat up -

T. O sweet - ly sang the black - bird, That sat up -

B. *cresc* O sweet - ly sang the black - bird, That sat up -

ppp

373 *Andante ben sostenuto* *ben legato e placidamente*

S. on the tree; But sair moan'd Lam - kin, When he was judg'd to dee.

A. on the tree; But sair moan'd Lam - kin, When he was judg'd to dee.

T. on the tree; But sair moan'd Lam - kin, When he was judg'd to dee.

B. on the tree; But sair moan'd Lam - kin, When he was judg'd to dee.

sf *p*

While the narrator of the ballad does not comment on the justice of the fate of Lamkin and the nurse, MacCunn's setting of the last two verses appears to voice a judgement. Lamkin's fate is treated simply, dispassionately and diatonically over a tonic pedal with modulation from tonic major to tonic minor. In the final verse, the nurse's fate is dealt with more fully by means of full orchestration, faster rate of harmonic change, and the repetition of the words 'sair grat the nourice' which possibly indicates that she got her just punishment.

Conclusion

Although 'Lamkin' is a Border ballad, the names of the principal protagonists are not typically Scottish and there is no indication in the text as to the location of the

action,³⁴ other than that given by the Scots language. Being aware of this, MacCunn has focussed on treachery and revenge, the pivotal elements of the tale, and, as in *The Jolly Goshawk*, has avoided the use of markedly Scottish features in the music.

The Death of Parcy Reed

‘The Death of Parcy Reed’ (Child 93)³⁵ is a historical ballad which tells of vendetta, murder and revenge. Parcy Reed, the warden of Redesdale in Northumbria, has made an enemy of a fellow Borderer named Crosier, who vows to take revenge. When Reed goes on a hunting expedition with the three Hall brothers of Girsonfield, they betray him to his enemies, the Crosiers, who murder him.

The characters in the ballad are all male:

Parcy Reed

The Hall brothers – Johnnie, Willie and Tommy

The Crosiers

A herd

To them is given 100 lines of direct speech, while the remaining seventy lines are given to a narrator who firmly takes the side of Parcy Reed by condemning the Hall brothers’ actions, and calling them ‘fause’ and ‘traitors black’ prior to the act of betrayal. The narrator’s sympathies are further displayed in the way he describes the death ‘Alake and wae for Parcy Reed’ and ‘They mangled him most cruellie’.

Treatment of the text

The work is through-composed (519 bars), but MacCunn subdivides the text into five distinct scenes, as shown in Table 6.10 below.

No	Scene	Stanzas	Pages
1	Exposition	1–5	106–109
2	Hunting	6–12	109–117
3	Betrayal	13–26	117–126
4	Encounter with the Crosiers	27–31	126–138
5	Parcy’s farewell	32–41	138–146

Table 6.10 – Scenes in *The Death of Parcy Reed*

³⁴ The only geographic place mentioned is England, from which Lord Wearie returns by sea and then on horseback.

³⁵ Child *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* 4, 24–28.

Given that the *dramatis personae* are all male, it is not surprising that MacCunn has chosen to set the text for a male voice choir. There is no consistent allocation of voices to specific characters, although, in general, Percy Reed is represented by tenor voices and the Hall brothers by basses, possibly in keeping with the operatic convention that the hero is a tenor and the villain a bass. This is particularly effective in the Betrayal scene in which Percy's speech, sung by tenors, alternates with that of the brothers, sung by basses.

1. Exposition

MacCunn's first three stanzas set the scene by painting a picture of a land in chaos. This is illustrated by the text's setting, in which the words are passed from tenors to basses and back, as they shout their discontent to one another. Musically the chaos is represented in the opening bars (Example 6.50 over) by means of a jarring melodic sequence based on the Phrygian mode, a brisk tempo (*Animato, e con brio*), minor and diminished harmonies, and no fixed tonal centre. This is repeated in sequence as MacCunn skilfully overlaps the end of one phrase with the beginning of the next to give a seamless exposition. The first major chord is not heard till bar 15 and the first perfect cadence does not occur till bars 22–23 where B minor is established.

Example 6.50 – Opening of *The Death of Parcy Reed*

The musical score is for the opening of 'The Death of Parcy Reed'. It features two vocal parts, T. 1 and T. 2, and a piano accompaniment. The tempo and mood are marked 'Animato, e con brio' and 'ff' (fortissimo). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are in Scottish Gaelic and English. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-5) shows the vocal parts entering with the lyrics 'God send the land de - liv - er - ance Frae ev - ry reav - ing rid - ing Scot!'. The piano accompaniment provides a rhythmic and harmonic foundation. The second system (measures 6-10) continues the vocal parts with 'cow nor ewe, We'll sune hae neith - er staig nor stot.' and 'The_ out - laws_ come frae Lid - des - dale, They her - ry Redes - dale far and'. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady rhythm. The third system (measures 11-15) shows the vocal parts with 'near They can - na pass the pui - man's mear.' and 'rich man's geld - ing it maun gang, They can - na pass the pui - man's mear.' The piano accompaniment includes a 'cres' (crescendo) marking. The score is written for two vocal parts and piano, with a key signature of one sharp and common time.

Animato, e con brio *ff*

T. 1 God send the land de - liv - er - ance Frae ev - ry reav - ing rid - ing Scot!

T. 2 We'll sune hae neith - er

F# minor C# minor dim +7

6 cow nor ewe, We'll sune hae neith - er staig nor stot.

The_ out - laws_ come frae Lid - des - dale, They her - ry Redes - dale far and

The_

11 near They can - na pass the pui - man's mear.

rich man's geld - ing it maun gang, They can - na pass the pui - man's mear.

cres

The two characters who are central to the action, Parcy Reed and Crosier, are introduced in the second part of the exposition, which stands in complete contrast to the opening. In the first two phrases, the melody is strong and folk-like, its modal quality emphasised by the use of the flattened seventh (A natural rather than A sharp) and the alternation between chord I and chord III (Example 6.51 over).

Example 6.51 – Parcy Reed’s entrance

However, after the end of the second phrase, there is a subtle move away from folk melody into a more elaborate style. Example 6.52, in which Crosier threatens to ravage the land and kill all of Parcy’s children, illustrates how MacCunn uses a passage based on the diminished seventh to underline the menace in the text. The melody consists of a rising octatonic scale, harmonised by minor chords in which the flattened fifth of one chord becomes the third of the next.

Example 6.52 – Extension of diminished seventh

2. Hunting

This scene describes Parcy Reed’s hunting excursion on which he is accompanied by the three Hall brothers, and ends with Parcy Reed falling asleep after the exertions of the day. A prominent feature of the text is that the opening line of each verse mentions hunting. MacCunn exploits this repetition to give cohesion to the section by using two distinct melodies (melodies A and C) as shown in Table 6.11 (over).

Stanza	Melody	Key(s)	Text
6	A + A	B major – D major	To the hunting, ho!
7	A + B	F sharp major – A major – B major	To the hunting, ho!
8	C	A major – E minor – F sharp major	They hunted high, they hunted low
9	A' + D	B major – C sharp major	They hunted high, they hunted low
10	C	B major – D major – G sharp major	They hunted high, they hunted low
11	A' + E	C major	They hunted high in Batinghope
Orchestral interlude – restatement of Melody C; re-use of descending chromatic theme from exposition; restatement of horn call			
12	B' + B"	F sharp major	They lighted aff in Batinghope

Table 6.11 – Distribution of melody and keys in the Hunting scene

The recurring melodies A, A' and C have an appropriate folk-like quality. Melody A (Example 6.53) is pentatonic and recalls genuine hunting songs, its rising fifths imitating horn calls. Melody C (Example 6.54) also has the feel of a hunting song with the insistent pounding of horses hooves heard in the triplet quavers.³⁶

Example 6.53 – ‘To the hunting, ho!’ (Melody A)

62 [Animato] (All tenors) Horn call

To the hunt - ing, ho! cried Par - cy Reed, 'The morn - ing

Horses (rhythmic ostinato)

65 Horn call

sun is on the dew; Horn call

ff

³⁶ MacCunn's earlier part-song (SATB) 'Hark forward' (c. 1889) also incorporates the features of both of these melodies.

Example 6.54 – ‘They hunted high’ (Melody C)

86 [Animato]

T. 1
T. 2
B. 1
B. 2

They hunt - ed high, they hunt - ed low _____ By heath' - ry hill and birk - en shaw; _____

All basses

Melody B and its variants (Example 6.55) have a declamatory quality, and with their slower pace stand in contrast to melodies A and C. The triplet horn calls in the accompaniment are like fanfares and in conjunction with the use of the major mediant chord on the fourth beat of bars 80 and 81 draw attention to the deviousness of the Crosiers.

Example 6.55 – ‘The three fause Ha’s’ (Melody B)

79 [Animato]

T. 1
T. 2
B. 1
B. 2

f And the three fause Ha's o' Girs - - on -

A major: I - - - - - III - - - - - I - - - - - III - - - - - I - - - - -

83

field A - lang wi' him he has them ta'en.

modulation to B major: III V⁷ I

The recurring melodies and motifs give cohesion to the scene, while the fairly rapid key changes give it energy and forward movement.

The final stanza uses variants of melody B. The unaccompanied recitative over static harmony serves to slow down the pace of the action and defuse tension. The

orchestral punctuation between phrases is marked *pp* and a feeling of peace and calm is reached at the words ‘sleeping sound’.

3. **Betrayal**

While Parcy Reed is asleep, the Hall brothers make him vulnerable to his enemies by stealing his bridle, putting water into his gun, and fixing his sword in its sheath. Five members of the Crosier family then come upon them. Parcy Reed’s repeated pleas for help are met with refusal, as the Hall brothers fear retribution from the Crosiers.

The scene is set in a dramatic style. The lines of verses 13 and 14 describing the Halls’ treachery are set simultaneously, producing a unit of five phrases and achieving brevity possibly at the expense of clarity. In the recitative-like vocal line, fifths and octaves (like dramatic hand gestures) feature prominently, and the supporting sombre chordal harmony consists of minor and diminished chords. The warning to Parcy Reed (stanza 15), ‘Awaken, waken ye Parcy Reed’ sung antiphonally by three sections, is like a clarion call echoing round the hillside. A feature of the accompaniment is detached accented quavers decorated with grace notes, possibly in imitation of the bellowing of natural hunting horns. The antiphonal setting continues, with the approach of ‘the five Crosiers’ appropriately mentioned five times. In contrast, the last line of this stanza ‘Coming o’er the Hingingstane’, set homophonically and in a minor key, emphasises the menace of the approaching enemies.

There then follows the dialogue between Parcy Reed and each of the Hall brothers, outlined in Table 6.12.

A	B
Parcy Reed:	Hall brother:
‘O turn thee, turn thee, Johnnie Ha’	‘I mayna’ turn, I canna’ turn,
O turn thee man, and fight wi’ me;	I daurna’ turn and fight wi’ thee;
When ye come to Troughend again,	The Crosiers haud thee at a feud,
My gude black naig I will gie ye.’	And they wad kill baith thee and me.’

Table 6.12 – Dialogue between Parcy Reed and the Hall brothers

MacCunn underlines the repetition of the text, by using the same material for each exchange, which is cast in double stanza form (Example 6.56 over). **A** is sung by Parcy Reed and **B** by each Hall brother in turn. **A** is set in a major key and **B** in its relative minor. An increase in dramatic tension is achieved by repetition of text and melody, and by setting each repetition in a key a tone higher.

Example 6.56 – ‘O turn ye, turn ye Willie Ha’

247 All tenors (Parcy Reed)
[Animato]
mf 'O turn thee, turn thee, Wil-lie Ha', O turn thee, man, and fight wi' me;

252 — When ye come to Trough - end a - gain, A yoke o' ous-en I'll gie to thee.'

257 All basses (Hall brother)
f I may-na turn, I can-na turn, I daur-na turn and fight wi' thee; The Cros - iers

261 haud thee at a feud, And they wad kill baith thee and me.'

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of staves. The first system (measures 247-251) features a vocal line for 'All tenors (Parcy Reed)' and a piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 252-256) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The third system (measures 257-260) introduces a vocal line for 'All basses (Hall brother)' and continues the piano accompaniment. The fourth system (measures 261-264) continues the bass vocal line and piano accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *f*, and a tempo marking [Animato]. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

4. Encounter with the Crosiers

This section deals with the fight between Parcy Reed and the Crosiers. Prior to this, the vocal writing is almost exclusively homophonic, but to illustrate the melee, greater use is made of independent vocal lines. The confusion of the fight is depicted musically e.g. in bars 322ff where ‘Alake and wae’ is repeated three times with entries one fourth apart (B flat, E flat, A flat, D flat). The thickening of the choral texture at this point is balanced by a corresponding lightening of the accompaniment, which is reduced to punctuating chords. The mortal wounding of Parcy is depicted both melodically and harmonically by diminished sevenths with an ascending chromatic line in the accompaniment for added effect.

Independence of the vocal lines continues with the couplet ‘They hackit aff his hands and feet and left him lying there’. The first line is set as a canon at the second for four voices. Repetition of words and melismatic setting draw attention to the horror and cruelty of the act. However, the rather banal melody in conjunction with prolixity, melodic sequence and the excessive use of melisma over-emphasises the deed and unintentionally tips the drama into melodrama. A brief orchestral interlude of descending chromatic scales leads to a short six-bar ostinato in which the first full bar of Parcy Reed’s melody (see Examples 6.51) is heard six times in the bass. This leads directly to the Crosiers’ leave-taking of Parcy Reed which is set to the melody used in verse 4. There Parcy Reed has captured Crosier; now the roles are reversed and the Crosiers have captured Parcy Reed (Examples 6.57a and 6.57b). The melody, harmony, key and accompaniment are identical, and so it is fitting if ironic, that the same melody is employed to bring the tale full circle.

Example 6.57a – Parcy Reed’s capture of Crosier



Example 6.57b – Crosiers’ revenge on Parcy Reed



5 Parcy’s farewell

The scene for Parcy’s death is set by a slow recitative supported by *tremolando* low register root position chords. Initially the melodic line is static, reflecting the calm of the words ‘It was the hour of gloamin’ grey’ but then tension is built up by the use of rising semitones, an increasing dynamic and the interpolation of two and a half beats rest before the words ‘be Laird Troughen?’. As before, textual repetition, in this case ‘There’s some will call me Parcy Reed’, is underlined by the use of similar melodic material.

Parcy’s final farewell to his wife, his daughter, his sons, his followers, and neighbours, consists of five stanzas (37–41) set to the same melody. It is at the same time both strong and pathetic, and the first two pentatonic phrases are strongly suggestive of a folk tune (Example 6.58a over) – the first phrase is almost identical to that of the air to which Robert Burns set ‘Auld lang syne’ (Example 6.58b over). Given that these are both songs of leave-taking, the similarity may well be intentional.

Example 6.58a – Parcy’s farewell



Example 6.58b – Auld lang syne³⁷



At each repetition there is an upward shift in tonality of a semitone, achieved by ending the verse on the flattened sixth of the prevailing key, which then becomes the fifth of the ensuing key. In each repetition, there is a thickening of the orchestral texture, which by the final stanza, marked *largamente*, has a homophonic chordal accompaniment.

The coda, marked *Quasi andante, tranquillo*, continues in the newly established key of B major. In four sparsely orchestrated bars consisting of octaves and fifths, the death of Parcy Reed is intimated by soft horn calls. The final bars consist of sustained *pianissimo* root position chords leading to an extended plagal cadence.

MacCunn’s response to his text displays a dual approach. He demonstrates his respect for the traditional verse form by retaining the structure imposed, indeed dictated, by the four-line stanzas. His understanding of the traditional origins of the tale is reflected in the quasi-folk melodies to which much of the text is set, and sequence is effectively used to emphasise textual repetition. His appreciation of the dramatic nature of the tale is displayed by use of standard musical devices and techniques to illustrate and enhance the drama – recurring themes, recitative-like passages, alteration of pace and dynamics, variation of metre, use of *tremolando* strings. Melodic chromaticism and the resulting chromatic harmonies, more adventurous than in previous works, give a particular edge to some of the more grisly passages.

First performances

The first performance of the *Border Ballads* was planned to be given jointly by the choir of the Dunedin Society and the Edinburgh Choral Union under the baton of MacCunn in the winter of 1913. The suggestion was made by MacCunn in a letter to Janey Drysdale in June of that year.³⁸ He next refers to the *Border Ballads* in January of

³⁷ Source: James Johnson *The Scots Musical Museum* introduction by Donald A. Low. 2 vols. Aldershot: Scolar P, 1991, 2, 426, transposed from D major.

³⁸ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 12 Jun 1913, GUL MS Farmer 263/09.

the following year, when he writes, 'They will really enhance my reputation. Wait till you hear them with the orchestra, & I know you'll agree with me.'³⁹ It would appear that the choir's progress was slow, for in February he writes to enquire whether the choir might be ready with *Kinmont Willie* by May⁴⁰ and later that day he writes again: 'Of course I'll come & conduct the concert for the Dunedin Association in May'.⁴¹ It would appear that further delays ensued, and eventually the outbreak of the First World War caused the project to be abandoned.

Kinmont Willie, *The Jolly Goshawk* and *Lamkin* were finally given first performances on 17 April 1921 by the Sheffield Amateur Musical Society conducted by Sir Henry Wood, and in the presence of MacCunn's widow Alison. The music and performance were well received in the press. The *Musical Times*'s critic commented on 'the music following the story from point to point with wonderful closeness and dramatic effect' and 'the constantly changing speed, tonality and character of the music'.⁴² Reviews in the local press were equally favourable. In the opinion of the *Sheffield Daily Independent*'s critic, 'These ancient Scottish ballads, full of chivalry, romance and heroic deeds provide most congenial material for the composer's great gift of dramatic musical expression and harmonic colouring. It is descriptive writing at its best, skilfully orchestrated'.⁴³ Similarly, the critic in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* commented on 'the attractive musical settings which have many intensely dramatic moments. The works are fully and richly scored for orchestra'.⁴⁴ The fact that both local critics commented favourably on MacCunn's orchestration adds to the regret that the full scores have been lost. Both critics were unanimous in commending the standard of performance achieved by the chorus and orchestra. No further performances have been traced, and given that the full scores have been lost future performances are unlikely.

The first performance of *The Death of Parcy Reed* was advertised in the November 1913 issue of the *Musical Times* for 2 April 1914, to be given by the Stock Exchange Choral and Orchestral Society,⁴⁵ of which MacCunn had recently been appointed conductor. In the event Gounod's *Messe des Orphéonistes* (also for male

³⁹ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 5 Jun 1914, GUL MS Farmer 263/19.

⁴⁰ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 25 Feb 1914, GUL MS Farmer 263/24.

⁴¹ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 25 Feb 1914, MacCunn MS 263/25.

⁴² 'Music in the Provinces: Sheffield' *MT* 62, 441, 441.

⁴³ *Sheffield Daily Independent* 20 Apr 1921, 5.

⁴⁴ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 20 Apr 1921, 4.

⁴⁵ 'Miscellaneous' *MT* 54, 1913, 757.

voice choir) was substituted for the new ballad.⁴⁶ Alasdair Jamieson suggests the change of programme could have been occasioned by ‘a change of personnel [...] as the Great War approached’⁴⁷ but given a straight substitution of one piece for male voice choir by another, this seems unlikely.

It was not until nearly ten years after MacCunn’s death, and four years after the first performance of the three mixed-voice ballads that the premiere of *The Death of Percy Reed* took place. It was given by the Male Voice Choir of the Barclay’s Bank Musical Society, at the Queen’s Hall, London on 25 March 1925 as part of a programme which included an overture, part-songs, a piano concerto and vocal solos. The short programme note was written by MacCunn’s son Fergus.

The ballad itself is a very ancient one, and popular I think, as much for the bald simplicity of its language as for the gruesome nature of the incident embodied. The account in verses 26 to 31 is a masterpiece of graphic description, and one cannot but admire the skilfully abrupt change in verses 32 to 36 from an atmosphere of diabolical cruelty to one of extreme pathos. In these eleven verses lies the strength of the Ballad, as I think the composer (my father) has made sufficiently clear in his setting.⁴⁸

The critic in the *Times* suggested that the use of male voices with no soloists gave the work a ‘certain monotony’, and suggested that ‘a less continual illustrative treatment of the text would have helped matters’. However, he praised the closing section for its emotion and ‘poetic atmosphere’.⁴⁹ The ballad remained in the Society’s repertoire and was performed on at least four further occasions in subsequent years. A performance at Bristol University has also been traced.⁵⁰

Conclusion

The piano-vocal scores of *Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads* were published, both in one volume and individually, in 1913 by Weekes & Co of London,⁵¹ but for reasons unknown MacCunn retained the copyright. The full score and orchestral

⁴⁶ ‘London Concerts’ *MT* 55, 1914, 331.

⁴⁷ Alasdair Jamieson ‘Hamish MacCunn as Conductor’ *British Musical Theatre of the Victorian and Edwardian Eras* no. 3 Spring 2004, 23–37 [page 15 of author’s typescript].

⁴⁸ Barclay’s Bank Musical Society *Programme and Book of Words, Twelfth Concert, Queen’s Hall, Langham Place, 25th March 1925*.

⁴⁹ ‘Barclays Bank Musical Society: Concert at Queen’s Hall’ *Times* 26 Mar 1925, 14.

⁵⁰ See Appendix 2 for details.

⁵¹ The artwork for the front cover is similar in style to that of the full score MS of *Bonny Kilmeny* and is probably the work of James MacCunn senior.

parts were only ever available in manuscript and as they have been lost, chances of future performances are severely limited. This is regrettable, for the ballads were written for amateur societies and, apart from some high notes which are beyond the reach of the average soprano or tenor, present little difficulty.

Although the general compositional style used by MacCunn for the *Border Ballads* was, by 1913 standards, rather old-fashioned, it does show that he had assimilated some more recent musical developments – Debussy, Vaughan Williams, Elgar – and was less influenced by Wagner than in previous choral works. There is a much more telling use of chromaticism, particularly in *The Death of Parcy Reed*. Chromatic melodic lines are used not only in a literal fashion, for example, to depict the panic of the English horsemen and the howling of the wind in *Kinmont Willie*, or the baby's crying and footsteps descending stone stairs in *Lamkin*. They are used figuratively in leitmotifs and themes to represent people who are enemies (Sakelde and Lord Scroope in *Kinmont Willie*, Crosier in *The Death of Parcy Reed*). They also point to the agency of the supernatural or magic (the goshawk and the witch-wife in *The Jolly Goshawk*). In some passages MacCunn's experimental chromaticism moves into the realm of octatonicism e.g. in *The Jolly Goshawk* (Examples 6.18a, 6.30), *The Death of Parcy Reed* (Example 6.52). Although it is possible that he had been made aware of this effect by hearing works by Rimsky-Korsakov, Ravel or Debussy, it is equally likely that it is the outcome of his own experimentation. The result is a much more varied harmonic palette, with greater use of augmented chords; augmented chords with an added seventh; diminished chords and diminished seventh chords. There is also a greater tonal freedom arising from the use of modes and modal harmony as in *Kinmont Willie* (Examples 6.14 a) and *The Death of Parcy Reed* (Example 6.50).

Although there is evidence of more modern compositional techniques in the *Border Ballads*, it is MacCunn's relatively conservative approach which gives them their integrity, as it recognises their antiquity and simplicity. It allowed MacCunn to serve the texts he was setting, complementing rather than overwhelming them as a more contemporary style of composition might have done.

At no time does MacCunn allow his Scottishness to overpower the texts. His sympathetic and dramatic settings do justice to the Scottish elements of the ballads without the need to superimpose musical clichés indicative of Scottish subject matter.

Kinmont Willie is the ballad which displays the most Scottish features. Never overstated, they are always an integral, organic part of the music. *The Jolly Goshawk*, *Lamkin* and *The Death of Percy Reed*, while having some melodies composed in a non-specific, traditional style,⁵² depend on leitmotifs, melodic repetition, chromaticism, quotations and allusions, and other standard techniques of mainstream Western European music to tell their story. While the words of the ballads are Scottish and may not be readily understood by English speakers, the music is European and can be understood and appreciated by all, irrespective of language.

⁵² The fact that the critic of the *Sheffield Daily Independent* commented on MacCunn's 'weaving in many lovely old airs' is a measure of how successful MacCunn was in composing authentic sounding folk melodies.

Chapter 7

Occasional Music

*The Masque of War and Peace – The Pageant of Darkness and Light – Psalm VIII –
Livingstone the Pilgrim*

MacCunn received commissions for four pieces of occasional music. Of these two, *Psalm VIII* (1890) and *Livingstone the Pilgrim* (1913), were choral and two, *The Masque of War and Peace* (1900) and *The Pageant of Darkness and Light* (1908) were staged pageants. The two stage works are beyond the scope of this research, but it is useful to mention them here briefly as they share some features with *Psalm VIII* and *Livingstone the Pilgrim*.

The Staged Pageants

The Masque of War and Peace

The Masque of War and Peace with music by MacCunn and a libretto by Louis N. Parker¹ was written for a charity event held at Her Majesty's Theatre on 13th February 1900 to raise funds for a military charity, the Widows and Orphans of Her Majesty's Household Troops.² Organised by Mrs Arthur Paget, a London society hostess, philanthropist and war nurse,³ the first half of the entertainment consisted of eleven individual 'tableaux vivants' entitled *A Dream of Fair Women* in which the roles were taken by society ladies. The second half consisted of *The Masque of War and Peace* followed by a *Patriotic Picture of Great Britain, her Colonies and Dependencies* arranged by Percy Anderson with music by Sir Arthur Sullivan.⁴

There are reports in the *Times* of two further performances of *The Masque of War and Peace*. The first in 1908 was to raise funds for a riding school for the City of London Rough Riders (Imperial Yeomanry).⁵ The second took place in 1915 for the benefit of the American Women's War Hospital in Paignton, Devon,⁶ but it has not been possible to ascertain whether either or both of these performances used MacCunn's

¹ Louis N. Parker (1852–1944), dramatist and composer.

² GUL MS Farmer 264, 8. The performance took place during the time of the Boer War.

³ Lady Arthur Paget (1865–1919).

⁴ 'Her Majesty's Theatre' *Times* 14 Feb 1900, 10.

⁵ 'Court Circular' *Times* 16 May 1908, 13.

music. The 1908 performance was ‘arranged by Countess Feodora Gleichen, Gertrude Crawford and Mr Giles’ but no mention is made of the libretto or whether there was any music.⁷ The libretto for the 1915 performance at the Drury Lane Theatre, London, although by Louis N. Parker, was written especially for the occasion and bears no resemblance to the text of 1900.

The Pageant of Darkness and Light

The Pageant of Darkness and Light was commissioned by the London Missionary Society (LMS) to feature in its 1908 missionary exhibition, the Orient in London. Held in the Agricultural Hall, Islington, the aim of the exhibition was to ‘make visible in London the work of missionaries in India, China, South and Central Africa, Madagascar, New Guinea and the South Sea Islands’.⁸ The libretto was written by “John Oxenham”⁹ who outlined it as follows to a meeting of the Pageant Committee:

It would consist of five scenes, suggesting the conquest of darkness by light in different parts of the world. The first would represent an Indian camp on the edge of a forest in the Canadian North-West; in the second scene Livingstone would be seen in Central Africa; the next scene would be laid in India in 1829; the fourth scene would represent an island in the South Seas; and finally, all the contingents taking part in these four scenes would assemble for the closing demonstration.

MacCunn then explained that the music would be ‘reasonably easy – as simple as was compatible with the action it accompanied.’¹⁰ For the London Missionary Society *The Pageant* was to be a vehicle for promoting its missionary cause.

Stirring words, original music, and beautiful scenery will be combined in this endeavour to enlist the most popular and “up-to-date” form of spectacular appeal in the cause of missionary propaganda. As an entertainment the pageant will be unique, but its great aim will be to put in picturesque guise the grand story of missionary enterprise, and fire its hearers and spectators with something of the spirit of the heroes of whom it tells.¹¹

The exhibition was opened on the afternoon of 4 June by the President of the Board of Trade, Winston Churchill M.P., who gave a rousing speech.¹² That evening an

⁶ ‘A War Masque: The American Hospital Matinee’ *Times* 28 Apr 1915, 11.

⁷ ‘Court Circular’ *Times* 16 May 1908, 13.

⁸ ‘The Orient in London: Opening Ceremony’ *Times* 5 Jun 1908, 12.

⁹ Pseudonym of William Arthur Dunkerley (1852 – 1941), journalist and novelist.

¹⁰ ‘The Orient in London’ *Times* 22 Feb 1908, 12.

¹¹ F Holderness Gale ‘What the Exhibition Is to Do: a Chat About the Orient in London’ *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* NS 16, 1908, 84.

¹² (Sir) Winston Churchill MP (1864–1965).

ensemble of 600 performers, the majority of whom were amateurs, gave the first performance of *The Pageant of Darkness and Light*. The *Times*'s critic was impressed by the libretto, the music and the staging, and warmly congratulated Oxenham, MacCunn and the pageant's director Mr Hugh Moss on the 'excellence and success' of their work.¹³ The pageant was performed every evening and at least three afternoons a week until the exhibition closed on 11 July.¹⁴ Some of its aspects attracted adverse publicity but this did not surprise the LMS. An article in its journal stated 'The Pageant at the Orient attracted a certain amount of criticism which was neither unexpected nor unwelcome. A method of impressing the public so novel and ambitious was bound to offend some.'¹⁵ Prior to the final performance, Mrs Livingstone Wilson (the daughter of David Livingstone) presented MacCunn, Oxenham and Moss each with a paper-knife carved out of the wood of the tree under which David Livingstone was buried.¹⁶

In 1910 an American company whose aim was to organise missionary exhibitions throughout the world purchased the costumes for £600. The pageant was shortened, Oxenham's libretto was rewritten but MacCunn's music was retained.¹⁷ MacCunn in his autobiography states that it played to exceptionally large numbers – a total of 670,000 people saw it in principal cities throughout the USA, including Boston¹⁸ and Chicago, with takings estimated at \$123,000.¹⁹ However, as the publishers, Weekes and Co, were the copyright holders, it is unlikely that MacCunn benefited financially from this success.

¹³ 'The Orient in London: Opening Ceremony' *Times* 5 Jun 1908, 12.

¹⁴ 'The Orient in London' *Times* 25 May 1908, 17.

¹⁵ 'The Outlook' *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* NS 16, 1908, 141.

¹⁶ 'The End of the "Orient". Final Scenes. The Future of the Pageant' *Christian World* 16 Jul 1908, 13.

¹⁷ 'Missionary Pageants and Exhibitions' *Times* 7 Oct 1910, 3.

¹⁸ Performed twice a day from Saturday 22 April till 20 May 1911. 'Gospel Spreading Throughout the World to be Shown in Detail at Giant Boston Exposition' *Charlotte Daily Observer* 20 Apr, 1911, 9.

¹⁹ GUL MS Farmer 264, 10–11.

Choral Works

Psalm VIII

Psalm VIII stands apart from MacCunn's other occasional pieces, as it is an early work written in conventional church anthem style. Although it uses a biblical text, it was not written for liturgical use but for the opening of the 1890 International Exhibition of Electrical Engineering, General Inventions and Industries in Edinburgh.

The late nineteenth century was a time of rapid industrial expansion and a feature of this period was the number of international exhibitions held to foster trade and international understanding. The Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 was the first exhibition to be held on a grand scale and was emulated both in the UK and worldwide. In Scotland, Edinburgh and Glasgow had thrown their hats into the ring with exhibitions in 1886 (West Meadows, Edinburgh) and 1888 (Kelvingrove, Glasgow).²⁰

The Edinburgh exhibition was first suggested in March 1889 as a suitable way of celebrating the opening of the Forth Rail Bridge and of demonstrating the progress of electrical science. Fourteen months later, on 1 May 1890, the International Exhibition of Electrical Engineering, General Inventions and Industries was opened to the public at a 50-acre site in Merchiston. Music was to play an important part in the festival with daily performances by choirs, orchestras and brass bands.²¹ Situated within the Main Building:

The Concert Room is a capacious hall 100 feet wide and about 190 feet long. The floor slopes downwards towards the platform, so that the audience at the back may have as good a view as those in the front. Full accommodation is offered for Choral Services and Band Performances, and beneath the orchestra are ample dressing and retiring rooms, as well as apartments for bandsmen and the storing of instruments and music. The Hall provides seated accommodation for over 3000 people. At the north end, the Organ, built by Mr Ingram of London, is placed, and the mechanism of it is worked by a gas engine placed in a small detached building situated at the back of the Hall.²²

²⁰ Perilla Kinchin and Juliet Kinchin *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions: 1888, 1901, 1911, 1988* Wendlebury: White Cockade, 1988.

²¹ Robert A. Marr (ed) *Official Programmes, International Exhibition, Edinburgh [1 May–1 Nov] 1890* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1890.

²² S. Lee Bapty *Official Guide, International Exhibition of Electrical Engineering, General Inventions and Industries* Edinburgh: Constable, 1890, 10–11.

Around the hall were tablets displaying the names of celebrated composers, with Scotland being represented by Mackenzie and MacCunn, and England by Purcell and Bennett.²³

Few details of the commissioning of *Psalm VIII* have been traced. In 1947, Janey Drysdale wrote that Simpson the publisher who paid £100 for the work had said that ‘it was not worth the paper it was written on’.²⁴ MacCunn, as the rising Scottish composer of his time may have been an obvious choice, although Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, the leading Scottish composer of the day, must surely have been considered. However, as Mackenzie had written *The New Covenant* for the opening of the 1888 Glasgow Exhibition, it is possible that Edinburgh’s city fathers did not wish to be seen to be copying their rival city. The fact the commission for the closing music was given to Learmont Drysdale does seem to suggest that preference was given to the younger generation of composers.

The fact that MacCunn wrote just two sacred choral pieces indicates that he did not write religious music by choice. Being a Scottish Presbyterian, he may not have found writing anthems to his taste. It is often assumed that MacCunn was ‘untainted by the organ loft’, meaning that he had escaped the influence of the Anglican Church tradition. This is not strictly accurate as his first harmony and composition teacher, George Poulter was educated mainly in the English church tradition, as were Parry and Stanford his composition teachers at the RCM. MacCunn’s first religious piece, the *Motet in E flat: Psalm C* for Tenor Solo, Quartett [sic], Chorus, with Accompaniment for the Organ, dated 6 April 1883, is a juvenile work, probably set as an exercise by Poulter, his Greenock teacher. MacCunn has added to the score at a later date ‘A very miserable bit of trash’.

Psalm VIII is MacCunn’s second religious work and the only one to be published.²⁵ The manuscript has not been traced, therefore all references are to the

²³ ‘General Description of the Exhibition’ *Glasgow Herald* 1 May 1890, 15.

²⁴ Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 20 Sep 1947. GUL MS Farmer 249/6. I am grateful to Moira Harris for drawing this correspondence to my attention.

²⁵ GUL MS MacCunn 20.

printed organ and vocal score.²⁶ Although MacCunn continued to allocate opus numbers up to about 1896, he did not give one to *Psalm VIII*.

Psalm VIII is a short through-composed work of 144 bars in ternary form (A B A') for SATB chorus with organ accompaniment. The text used 'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!' is from the King James Bible and is set in its entirety. The choice of text is very fitting for an exhibition designed to show man's progress in engineering, with lines such as: 'Thou madest him [man] to have dominion over the works of thy hands.' Each phrase of the text is treated as a musical phrase, a standard response to this kind of text, with a short gap between each, varying in length from a quaver to three bars. There is a lot of textual repetition – either by exact imitation with one voice echoing the phrase previously sung by another or by sequence. In keeping with the English style of church anthem, the text is set syllabically and closely follows speech patterns.

Section A – bars 1–52

The introduction is unusual in that it begins on the leading note of the scale and the first three notes of the opening bar outline a diminished triad. The text of the opening section is a paean to the Lord, enumerating his wonderful works. The majestic Wagnerian opening introduces a bell-like rhythmic motif which occurs throughout the piece and is liberally employed in the opening section (Example 7.1).

Example 7.1 – Rhythmic ostinato



The cumulative effect of triplets interrupted by the dotted figure and the close texture of full chords over the dominant pedal give character and strength to the introduction and opening section (Example 7.2 over). A rising scale in the accompaniment introduces the opening words of the work, 'O Lord our Lord!' which are emphasised by the first use of the tonic chord in root position in bar 12. The apparent tonal stability of C major is immediately shaken by a cadence on a G minor rather than the expected G major chord.

²⁶ Hamish MacCunn, *Psalm VIII, Set to Music by Hamish MacCunn for the International Exhibition of Electrical Engineering, General Inventions and Industries, Edinburgh 1890, and Performed by the Edinburgh Choral Union at the Opening Ceremony, May 1890* Dundee: Methven Simpson, 1890.

Example 7.2 – Opening of *Psalm VIII*

‘How excellent is thy name’ is set in a stepwise movement in D minor which is immediately repeated up a tone in the key of B major. At the approach to the first full close of the piece, there is a slowing of the rhythmic pace which emphasises the text ‘Thy name in all the earth!’ (Example 7.3 over).

Example 7.3 – First full close

21 [Allegro, Moderato maestoso]

S. A. *ff* Thy name in all the earth!

T. B. In all, in all the earth!

ORGAN *ff*

Most of the opening section is homophonic, although there is a slight change in character at bar 33 when the accompaniment becomes more flowing, in keeping with the words ‘Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings’ which are introduced, appropriately, by the female voices in unison (Example 7.4).

Example 7.4 – ‘Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings’

33 [Allegro, Andante maestoso] *pp*

S. A. Out of the mouths of babes and suck - lings hast thou or - dain - ed strength be -

ORGAN *p*

37

S. A. cause of thine en - em - ies,

T. B. Out of the mouths of babes and suck - lings hast thou or - dain - ed strength

Section A concludes with a restatement by the organ of the opening melody in diminution, in A minor as opposed to the opening C major. Its last four bars provide a link to the central section by modulating to E flat major. The reduction in tempo and the descending piano quaver passages bring a degree of calmness in preparation for the next section (Example 7.5 over).

Example 7.5 – End of Section A

Section B – bars 53–110

The central section falls into three separate sub-sections (bars 53–63; bars 64–82; bars 83–110). The contrast in key and tempo from the opening section underlines the more reflective, contemplative nature of the text ‘When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers’ (Example 7.6).

Example 7.6 – Psalm VIII – opening of central section

The accompaniment is less dense and the choral texture above is open with sopranos and tenors in canon at the octave, moving in leaps of a fifth or an octave.

Section B1 – bars 53– 63

The harmony is static for the first 4 bars, the accompaniment is ‘orchestral’ and the choral texture above it is very light, with soprano and tenor in canon at the octave, moving in leaps of a fifth or an octave.

Section B2– bars 64 – 82

This section, in which there is an increase in the rate of harmonic change, consists of mainly homophonic writing for unaccompanied full choir. The organ is used only to lead from one phrase to the next, the one exception being in bars 70–71, where the move onto a diminished seventh chord in bar 71 is highlighted by the organ (Example 7.7).

Example 7.7 – And the son of Man

68 [Molto meno mosso] *poco rall e dim*

S. A. And the son of man, that thou vi - si - test him?

T. B. *p* that thou

ORGAN *poco rall e dim* *p* *rall*

Section B3 – bars 83–110

The full choir is reintroduced by means of a solo line for the bass section accompanied by a crotchet figure over a pedal C. A gradual increase in tempo and dynamics, and a thickening of the choral texture, corresponding to the text’s listing of those things controlled by man, leads to a majestic full close in D flat major and a return to the opening tempo at bar 108. A short bridge passage repeats the triplet motif of A and prepares for the return to the home key by means of a descending D flat major scale (Example 7.8 over).

Section A’

The final section (bars 111–136) is identical to the opening section except that it ends on a perfect cadence.

Psalm VIII Coda

The work concludes with an eight-bar coda with the repeated word 'Amen' set to two plagal cadences. The first cadence is robust and majestic and re-uses the rhythmic ostinato from the work's opening motif, while the second cadence is marked 'Adagio', with chordal accompaniment which allows the voices to 'shine through' (Example 7.9 over).

Example 7.8 – End of Section B

102 [Poco piu moto]

S. A. and the fish of the sea, And what so-ev-er pass-eth through the

T. B.

ORGAN

106

paths of the seas.

Final section A'

Reintroduction of opening material, transposed

Example 7.9 – Coda

136 [Moderato maestoso]

S. A. A - - - men! A - - - men!

T. B.

ORGAN

Adagio

molto rall

A = restatement of rhythmic ostinato, B = rhythmic ostinato modified

First performance and reception

The first performance of *Psalm VIII* took place on 1 May 1890 as part of the opening ceremony of the International Exhibition of Electrical Engineering, General Inventions, and Industries, Edinburgh, and was not without event.

After the applause which had greeted His Royal Highness's closing remarks had subsided, Sir Thomas Clark intimated that the Right Rev. Bishop Dowden would offer prayer. Bishop Dowden was, however, apparently out of hearing, and an awkward hitch occurred. The officials looked hastily about for the missing bishop and then everyone else, including the Duke and Duchess, commenced to gaze around to see if they could discover him. Just as matters appeared to be growing serious, the threatened breakdown of the arrangements was averted by Sir Thomas Clark by calling upon the choir to sing the Eighth Psalm – an event which ought in ordinary course to have followed the prayer. The rising of the choir happily terminated the hitch.²⁷

The performance itself was hindered by the fact that the organ was only partially completed. 'Between the unfinished state of the organ, the incorrect angle of the mirror [...] the performance was not altogether satisfactory.'²⁸ The performers, the Edinburgh Choral Union accompanied by Charles Bradley, were conducted by MacCunn who was afterwards presented to the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. There was a second performance three days later, directed by the Edinburgh Choral Union's own conductor Thomas Collinson. The account of proceedings in the Choral Union's official history offers a rather different account: 'The ceremony was a brilliant function, and the notice taken of the part taken by the Society in it was very favourable.'²⁹

Unusually for MacCunn the main feature of the piece lies in its harmony rather than in its melody. The reviewer of the *Musical Times* castigated MacCunn for the 'wild transitions of key'.³⁰ Some modulations are rather sudden, but they probably do not offend the modern ear as much as they offended the reviewer, who also found fault with the unidiomatic writing for the organ, pointing out in particular the 'rapid succession of sixths, à la *Meistersinger* in the Introduction to the tremolo violin passages nearer the end.' The passages mentioned by the reviewer draw attention to the fact that MacCunn's experience of the organ was limited. As a boy in Greenock he learned to play the organ but he does not appear to have continued when he moved to London. As far as is

²⁷ 'The Edinburgh International Exhibition' *Scotsman* 2 May 1890, 6.

²⁸ 'Music in Edinburgh' *MT* 31, 1890, 358.

²⁹ James Waddell *History of the Edinburgh Choral Union* Edinburgh: Edinburgh Choral Union, 1908, 210.

known, he never held a church appointment and this, his only published composition for organ, was written as the result of a commission, not as an act of inspiration. The reviewer's comment about '*tremolo* violin passages' points to the fact that MacCunn was much more at home when he was writing for orchestral accompaniment. A latter opinion, that expressed by Janey Drysdale in 1947 was that the work was 'a pure pot-boiler' may to some extent have been influenced by the fact that her brother's work *An Ode to Edinburgh* which had been commissioned for the closing of the Festival was not performed as the organising Committee had run out of money.³¹

There are two different critical approaches to this work. The negative would claim that that the whole consists of too many parts and that MacCunn's approach is too eclectic. A positive view would say in MacCunn's defence that the musical line is well matched to the text and that he makes good use of contrasts – dynamics, accompanied versus unaccompanied voices, thin texture set against thicker texture, harmony against unison, varying styles of accompaniment, contrasting speeds – and that an element of unity is achieved by the use of the rhythmic ostinato.

Psalm VIII is not one of MacCunn's more inspired works, and does not rise to the occasion as do better known functional pieces such as Handel's Coronation Anthem *Zadok the Priest*. To echo the review in the *Musical Times*: 'Occasional music is very rarely inspired, and Mr MacCunn's "Eighth Psalm" [...] is no exception to the rule.'

Livingstone the Pilgrim

In the early twentieth century David Livingstone (1813–1873), the Scottish missionary and explorer, was regarded as a national hero.³² The centenary of his birth in 1913 gave rise to a week of nationwide events which included lectures and church services to mark the occasion. On 19th March, the anniversary of his birth, a service was held at Livingstone's grave in Westminster Abbey. Later that day in the Albert Hall, the Archbishop of Canterbury and other notable speakers paid tribute to Livingstone's greatness and *Livingstone the Pilgrim* was performed.

³⁰ 'Music in Edinburgh' *MT* 31, 1890, 358.

³¹ Janey Drysdale to Henry Farmer, 20 Sep 1947, GUL MS Farmer 249/6.

³² Born 19 March 1813 in Blantyre, Lanarkshire; died 30 April 1873 in Ilala, modern Zambia. Andrew C. Ross *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire* London: Hambledon, 2002 gives a good assessment of Livingstone's life, work and significance.

The London Missionary Society, with which Livingstone had been associated from 1838 to 1857 and which had first sent him to Africa in 1841, was the moving force in these celebrations. At a meeting held in December 1910, it was proposed ‘to inform the Funds Agency Committee that the [Livingstone Centenary] Sub-Committee was unanimously in favour of celebrating the centenary year of Livingstone's birth’.³³ The Sub-Committee was duly constituted³⁴ and minutes of its meetings report a variety of ideas, including a National Memorial Service in Westminster Abbey and a public demonstration in the Albert Hall on 13 March, the day of Livingstone's birth.³⁵ Disappointingly there is no mention of the commissioning of *Livingstone the Pilgrim* in any of the LMS minutes. The last recorded mention in minutes of the Centenary celebration is 30 April 1912 when the Sub-Committee presented a report to the LMS Board.³⁶ Thus it may be assumed that *Livingstone the Pilgrim* was commissioned some time after this date. Even after the event, there is no mention of *Livingstone the Pilgrim* in official LMS records. The Annual Report states:

The outstanding feature of the whole year was the Livingstone Centenary celebration, which issued during March in a world-wide celebration, recognition and interest which surpassed anything hoped for by the most sanguine workers. The extraordinary amount of space given to Livingstone in the columns of the daily press (which is always the best test of such a celebration) showed that the virile, aggressive and broad-minded missionary advocacy associated with the name of Livingstone has its appeal to those often regarded as beyond our reach.³⁷

MacCunn had previously collaborated with the LMS, when he wrote the music for *The Pageant of Darkness and Light*. Part Two of this work dealt with Livingstone and Africa and the LMS decided that ‘the African section of *The Pageant of Darkness and Light* be reprinted for the Centenary celebrations’.³⁸ This was duly published as *The Livingstone Episode From the Pageant of Darkness and Light*,³⁹ possibly with the intention of its being used in the celebration. However, a report of November 1912 that ‘Special scenery and costumes for a Livingstone pageant episode, with special words

³³ SOAS CWM/LMS/Home/Occasional Committee/Box 3, 19 Dec 1910, 160–161.

³⁴ SOAS CWM/LMS/Home/Occasional Committee/Box 3, 23 Jan 1911, 162–163.

³⁵ Ibid, 27 Jun 1911, 166–169.

³⁶ SOAS CMS/LMS/Board Minutes/Box 53, 289.

³⁷ London Missionary Society. *The Hundred and Eighteenth Report for the Year ending March MDCCCXIII* London: LMS, [1913], 39.

³⁸ SOAS CWM/LMS/Home/Occasional Committee/Box 3, 27 Jun 1911, 166.

³⁹ Hamish MacCunn *The Livingstone Episode From the Pageant of Darkness and Light* Words by John Oxenham Music by Hamish MacCunn. London: Weekes, 1913. A copy, possibly unique, is held in SOAS CMS/LMS/Home/Odds/Box 31.

and music, have been prepared by the London Missionary Society' suggests that by then a work had been specially commissioned for the occasion.⁴⁰ The first mention in print of the new cantata appeared in the January 1913 issue of the *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* which featured a copy of the final hymn 'intended to be sung by the congregation. The cantata will be ready after Christmas. Price 6d each, 4s 6d a doz. net.'⁴¹ The following month it was announced that the new cantata was ready at a cost of 6d. and that word sheets were available at the price of 2s. a hundred net.⁴²

Text

The text is the work of Charles Silvester Horne, a Congregational minister and politician.⁴³ He does not appear to have published any significant amount of poetry and his credentials for producing this particular text seem to have been that he was the author of a biography of Livingstone and also of a history of the LMS.⁴⁴ Horne and MacCunn may have first met in 1908 at the Orient in London exhibition when Horne, a member of the organising committee, was 'captain' of the 10,000 stewards who acted as guides to the public.⁴⁵

The text consists of a biography of Livingstone written in traditional ballad form – quatrains of iambic pentameter which narrate the story – interspersed with hymn-like verses. These verses stand in contrast to the narrative portions in that their lines do not always have a regular metre. However, they do have a regular syllabic pattern (e.g. 6.6.6.4) showing the author's familiarity with hymnology. The content and sentiments of the text are a product of their time – a dramatic representation of the life of Livingstone cloaked in the prevailing Christian theology. With the exception of No. 3, those verses which are set to music do not, to any great extent, carry the narration forward.

⁴⁰ 'National Livingstone Centenary Celebrations' *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* NS 20, 1912, 262.

⁴¹ 'From the New Livingstone Cantata "Surely he cometh"' *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* NS 21, 1913, 6.

⁴² 'Livingstone the Pilgrim' *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* NS 21, 1913, 32

⁴³ (Charles) Silvester Horne (1865–1914), father of the comedian Kenneth Horne.

⁴⁴ C. Silvester Horne *The Story of the LMS 1795–1895* London: LMS, [1895]; *David Livingstone* London: Macmillan, 1912.

⁴⁵ 'The Orient in London: Opening Ceremony' *Times* 5 Jun 1908, 12.

Sources

The manuscript of MacCunn's final draft is held in Special Collections, Glasgow University Library.⁴⁶ It is a bound oblong octavo and consists of 11 leaves, containing Numbers 1 – 4 (Number 5 is missing).⁴⁷ Unlike many of MacCunn's other works, there is no title page. Each number is inscribed 'Livingstone' and is initialled and dated 'HMacC 11/12' i.e. November 1912. This date fits neatly with evidence presented above for the time of the placing of the commission. The score (staff with tonic sol-fa) was published in 1913 jointly by the London Missionary Society and Weekes & Co. as *Livingstone the Pilgrim: a Cantata*.⁴⁸

General background

This work is written for soprano and baritone soloists, quartet (S.A.T.B.), a narrator, chorus (SATB) and organ. MacCunn indicates in the score that sections of the chorus may replace the baritone soloist and quartet, but not the soprano solo. This work is unique in MacCunn's worklist as it is his only choral work to employ an unaccompanied speaking narrator to link choral sections. The earlier staged work for the LMS *The Pageant of Darkness and Light*, described in the *Times* as a 'masque-oratorio or modern miracle play'⁴⁹ uses a Prolocutor to introduce, in verse, each of its five episodes. However, it is conceived on a much grander scale than *Livingstone the Pilgrim* incorporating narration, melodrama, solo arias and choruses performed by a large company of musicians and actors.

Livingstone the Pilgrim has an arch structure and as such focuses attention on the central section, Number 3 – 'Darkness Prevailing'.

No. 1 Opening chorus – 'Great Father of Mankind'

Narration (5 stanzas)

No. 2 Quartet – 'The Selfless Love of Man'

Narration (9 stanzas)

No. 3. Baritone solo and chorus – 'Darkness Prevailing'

Narration (1 stanza)

⁴⁶ GUL MS MacCunn 11.

⁴⁷ It probably became detached when the final chorus was being prepared for publication in the *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society*.

⁴⁸ The copy held in GUL Special Collections Ca15-w.39 is inscribed 'Papa from Hamish 5/1/13'.

⁴⁹ 'The Orient in London' *Times* 25 May 1908, 17.

No. 4 Soprano solo – ‘To the Eternal Hills’

Narration (8 stanzas)

No. 5 Hymn – Chorus and congregation – ‘Surely He Cometh’

The strophically-set hymn-like texts of Numbers 1, 2, 4 and 5 are treated with a degree of economy and simplicity which takes into account the number of performers required,⁵⁰ the accompanying instrument (organ) and the high reverberation time of the performance venue (the Albert Hall).⁵¹ Thus the complexity of each number is in inverse proportion to the number of performers. Numbers 1 and 5, which are sung by the choir, and choir and audience respectively, have simple melodic lines with block harmony doubled by the organ (Example 7.10).

Example 7.10 – Opening of Number 1

The musical score for the opening of Number 1 is written for SATB voices and organ. The tempo is marked '[Andante quasi adagio]'. The organ part is marked 'ff FULL'. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) sing the following lyrics: 'Great Fa - ther of man - kind, Who Thy blest Son re - signed To seek the faint and blind Who from Thee roam, The last'. The organ provides a block harmony accompaniment. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 6.

Number 5 ‘Surely He Cometh’ is in similar style but, as it written for congregational singing, is less adventurous in tonality than Number 1.

The text of Number 2 – ‘O Selfless Love of Man’, consists of four short verses set strophically by MacCunn in an ||: ABC :|| pattern, in which the C section repeats text from B. Arranged for SATB quartet, the sections are linked by two or four bar phrases

⁵⁰ There were eight hundred in the chorus.

on the organ. The melody is hymn-like and the harmony is mainly diatonic. In Section A, there is very little accompaniment and what there is appears to have the purpose of maintaining the pitch of the quartet. MacCunn's dislike of sagging choruses is known from his remark written in the manuscript full score of *Bonny Kilmeny*: 'N.B. A slight addition for the Wood Wind and Horns has been made for the purpose of keeping the Chorus from drifting in Pitch'.⁵² The accompaniment in Section B is a *pianissimo* dominant pedal while in Section C the texture thickens and doubles the voices until the *forte* climax is reached and the stanza ends as it begins – unaccompanied.

Example 7.11 – 'The selfless love of man' – opening

The musical score for 'The selfless love of man' – opening is presented in a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with organ accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Andante con moto'. The organ part features a series of chords and a dominant pedal in Section B, followed by a thickening texture in Section C. Dynamics include *p*, *dolce*, *dim.*, *pp*, and *cresc.*. The lyrics are: 'The self-less love of man, The fear-less love of truth These be, since time be-gan, The bea-con lights of youth.'

Number 3, the core of the work and the keystone of the arch, stands in stark contrast to the other numbers, both textually and musically. The first leaf of the manuscript is titled 'The Valley of the Shadow' but in the published score the title is 'Darkness Prevailing'. Added in parentheses in the manuscript, and perhaps indicative of his full engagement with the text,⁵³ is a quotation in MacCunn's hand from the King James Bible: 'The sorrows of death encompassed me: the pains of Hell gat hold upon me'.⁵⁴ Further proof of the depth of MacCunn's engagement is his robust musical

⁵¹ It was not until 1941 that alterations were made to the Albert Hall which rendered it 'a hall in which music could be heard'. *MOM*, 2, 899.

⁵² Hamish MacCunn *Kilmeny* GUL MS MacCunn 40, 92-93.

⁵³ It is possible that MacCunn already had some indication of the illness which was to cause his premature death.

⁵⁴ King James Bible Psalm 116. 3.

treatment of the sombre text depicting the lone pilgrim in metaphysical darkness, experiencing doubt and despair, mocked by enemies and near to death. This may be an expression of MacCunn's crisis of belief which led to his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church.

The text of this number is structured A B A. Since there is no known surviving copy of the original libretto, it is not possible to say whether Horne wrote it as such, or whether it was MacCunn's idea to repeat the opening section. While the other movements have lines of even-numbered syllables, this movement has lines with predominantly odd numbers of syllables. In the outer sections the syllabification is 5.5.5.5 as opposed to the 7.7.6.7.7.6 of the central section. MacCunn's ternary musical setting mirrors the structure of the text— the central section sung by the baritone solo is flanked by the opening and closing sections, sung by the chorus.

'Darkness Prevailing' is the only number written in a minor key and the tempo indication of *Allegretto maestoso* makes it the fastest. Dynamic markings are mainly *fortissimo* or greater, and it is in triple time, as opposed to the quadruple time of the other numbers. From the opening bars a forward impulse is given by the rhythmic figure ε. ξ | η ε. ξ | η in the organ accompaniment and an atmosphere of brooding menace is created by chromatic quaver figures. The melody for 'Darkness prevailing, Heaven's light failing' is appropriately set to descending triads while that for 'Hell's host assailing' rises. The organ doubles the chorus throughout this section (Example 7.12 over). The sound it would have produced in the Albert Hall would have had made a great impression on the audience

The harmonic language used is quite unusual for MacCunn. After establishing the home key of D minor in the first two bars of the introduction, there is an unsettling cadence on the flattened dominant chord (A flat major). The deviation is 'corrected' by a repetition of the opening phrase, this time cadencing on a chord of B major. There then follows a sequence of predominantly augmented major chords which combine with chromatic quaver runs in the bass to give the piece an edgy feel from the very beginning. A further edge is added by the tritone in the treble in bars 8–9.

The central section, sung by the baritone soloist, is linked to the outer movements by the continued use of sequence and triadic outlines in the melody. A

change of pace and timbre in the accompaniment indicates the imminence of danger. The emphatic block chords which end the previous section give way flowing triplets, which in turn are replaced by staccato quaver chords (Example 7.13).

Example 7.12 – ‘Darkness prevailing’

Allegretto maestoso

ORGAN *ff*

con 8ves

9

15

22

S. *ff* Dark - ness pre -vail - ing, Hea - ven's light fai - ling, Hell's host as - sail - ing, Curs - ing and wail - ing.
pesante

T. *pesante*

B.

ff

Example 7.13 – ‘See how the floods are surging’

Allegretto maestoso

BARITONE SOLO

f See how the floods are surging!

ORGAN *p*

5

p Sor - row his soul sub - merg - ing

dim

A two-octave descending quaver chromatic passage both in the vocal line and in the accompaniment graphically illustrates a descent into Hell (Example 7.14).

Example 7.14 – ‘Fierce foemen round him flocking’

[Poco più moto]

BARITONE SOLO

f Fierce foe - men round him flock - ing!

ORGAN

Ostinato

4

ff Their cru - el voi - ces mock - ing!

Ostinato

Chromatic descent

8

p Death's pale ad - vanc - ing wave!

pp

con sves

The final bars of this section are the most dramatic and most desperate of the piece, with the soloist declaiming ‘No hope but in the grave!’

Example 7.15 – ‘No hope!’

[Poco più moto]

BARITONE SOLO

f No hope! No hope!

ORGAN

ff

6 *ff* No hope but in the grave!

rall. e dim. *p*

Tempo primo cres. molto

rall. *p* *f*

This movement is unique in MacCunn’s choral oeuvre as it shows the depth of feeling which MacCunn was able to convey musically. Some elements of this

movement, the ternary setting for chorus and baritone solo, the strong dynamic, the triple metre and the fast tempo are reminiscent of a section of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* 'For behold the trumpet shall sound'. Other elements, particularly the chromatic figures perhaps suggest reference to Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*.⁵⁵ MacCunn never composed an oratorio, but 'Darkness prevailing' is ample proof that he could have done so convincingly, had he been so inclined.

Number 4 – 'To the Eternal Hills', is a strophic setting of a paraphrase of Psalm 121 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills'⁵⁶ for soprano soloist and organ. Being assigned to a soloist, the melodic line is more interesting and technically more demanding than other numbers – for example the phrasing requires excellent breath control. The soloist at the first performance was a boy soprano, and MacCunn must have borne in mind the particular timbre of a boy's voice when writing this number.

The introduction, with its rising chromatic bass and augmented harmonies, refers back to the previous number. The notion of 'calm', the last word spoken by the narrator before this number, is reflected in the rocking movement of the triplets which impart a pastoral feeling in keeping with the text (Example 7.16 over). A modulation to the tonic minor reflecting the text 'thro' night, thro' mists of morn' is followed by a short passage of chromatically altered harmony before a return to the home key of E major.

⁵⁵ Elgar's setting of Cardinal Newman's poem would have had a particular resonance for MacCunn as a convert to Roman Catholicism

⁵⁶ King James Bible Psalm 121. 2.

Example 7.16 – ‘To the eternal hills’

Andante placidamente

ORGAN

p

dim.

cresc.

f

dim.

Vocal phrasing: A - bars 6 - 8; B - bars 8 - 11

Number 5 – The text of the final number ‘Surely He Cometh’ is a rearrangement by Horne of verses from ‘St Paul’ a poem by Frederick W.H. Myers.⁵⁷ As in MacCunn’s previous LMS production, *The Pageant of Darkness and Light*, the final number takes the form of an act of worship when the narrator says: ‘Now, in the spirit of thanksgiving and grateful worship, let all here assembled rise and sing to the praise and glory of Almighty God.’ The text is well set for congregational singing – the diatonic melody is uncomplicated and easily learned; the phrases are short and the metronome marking $\theta = 72$ allows the verses to be sung without dragging.

With the exception of Number 3 – ‘Darkness prevailing’ and Number 4 – ‘To the eternal hills’, the numbers can be summed up as elaborate hymns written in fairly

⁵⁷ Frederick W.H. Myers (1843-1901); *St Paul* London: Macmillan, 1867.

conventional style. As with *Psalm VIII*, one criticism of *Livingstone the Pilgrim* is that the organ accompaniment, particularly for Numbers 3 and 4, is less than idiomatic, and it is evident that MacCunn would have preferred to have used an accompanying orchestra rather than be restricted to the organ.

The performance of the cantata on 19 March attracted very little interest in the press. The *Times* in its report of the proceedings merely stated, 'The cantata *Livingstone the Pilgrim* (by C. Silvester Horne and Hamish McCunn [sic]) was rendered by a choir of 800 voices, the story being narrated by Mr. Alexander Watson.'⁵⁸ The soloists were a boy soprano called Master John Child⁵⁹ and Mr Stewart Gardner;⁶⁰ the quartette was made up of members of the Choir of St Michael's Church, Cornhill, London. The organ was played by Mr Wharton Wells⁶¹ and MacCunn conducted.⁶² In 1924 an episode of *Livingstone the Pilgrim* was part of the 'Eastward Ho' section of the Pageant performed at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley.⁶³ No subsequent performance has been traced.

There are some pieces of occasional music which are both pertinent to the occasion for which they were composed and which have qualities which ensure their continued performance. Neither *Psalm VIII* nor *Livingstone the Pilgrim* rises beyond the occasion for which they were commissioned, and they confirm the opinion that 'occasional music is very rarely inspired'.⁶⁴ The former could possibly be used as an anthem as part of a church service, but this is unlikely given the amount of unexceptional church music in existence. *Livingstone the Pilgrim* suffers from the fact that there are not too many occasions on which it could be performed – 2013, the bicentenary of Livingstone's birth, would be the next appropriate date.

⁵⁸ 'Livingstone Centenary' *Times* 20 Mar 1913, 9.

⁵⁹ Little information has been found about this singer. He was a soloist in Costa's *Eli* in Kettering in 1911 and demonstrated Elizabethan songs at a meeting of the Royal Music Association in 1912. He was possibly the son of John Child, an oratorio soloist and opera singer associated with the Moody-Manners Company.

⁶⁰ Stewart Gardner was a frequent soloist for London and suburban choral societies in the early 1900s.

⁶¹ Harry Wharton-Wells (c1870–1942), organist at Putney Parish Church for 53 years.

⁶² *Programme for the Livingstone Centenary* pasted into the published score of *Livingstone the Pilgrim* held in GUL Special Collections Ca.15-w.39.

⁶³ Jeffrey Richards *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876–1953* Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001, 203. The Pageant, which ran from 26 July to 30 August 1924, was divided into three sections – Westward Ho, Eastward Ho and Southward Ho – which were performed on successive evenings.

⁶⁴ 'Music in Edinburgh' *MT* 31, 1890, 358.

Chapter 8

Questions of Identity

The topics of identity and nationalism and their expression in literature, art and music have been addressed by many scholars. The aim of this chapter is not to engage in a wide-ranging review or discussion, but to focus on MacCunn by examining the influences which produced in him such a strongly developed sense of identity, and their impact on his compositional output. It will bring together contemporary views about him as a composer and compare these with more recent musicological writings.

The development of self and identity depends on the two opposing concepts of ‘nature’ and ‘nurture’. For MacCunn, ‘nature’ accounts for his natural musical ability, whereas ‘nurture’ is responsible for the encouragement of his talent and his very strongly developed sense of identity. As a child MacCunn would have looked out from the upper storey of ‘Thornhill’, the family home in Greenock, over the Firth of Clyde to the Cowal Hills, to a Highland landscape where land and sea interlock and where the often swift changes in weather can radically alter the appearance of the landscape. It was described in the following terms in 1883:

The magnificence of the prospect from the hill behind the towns of Greenock and Port Glasgow, and even from the quays of these towns, deserves notice. Immediately before you is the River Clyde, having all the appearance of a fresh-water lake (as the outlet to the sea is not visible), with numbers of large and small sailing vessels upon it. Next to this, the opposite coast of Dumbarton and Argyllshire [...] meets the eye, and the prospect is terminated by the western range of the Grampian Mountains at unequal distances, and so craggy on the tops, that, by way of contrast, they are called here by the emphatical name of the Duke of Argyll’s Bowling Green. Along the skirts of these hills there are many eligible situations for those who have a relish for the beauty and magnificence of nature. [...] On the opposite side of the Firth are in view the parishes of West Kilpatrick, Dumbarton with its rock and castle, Cardross, Row,¹ and the peninsular parish of Rosneath, on the SE of which is a castle of the Duke of Argyll [...]. In ascending the Greenock hills, the prospect is still varied and extending. From Corlic, the highest ground in the parish, may be seen on a clear day, besides that of Renfrew, part of the counties of Bute, Arran, and Argyll, with the western part of the Grampian mountains, of Perth, Stirling, Lanark, and Ayr.²

¹ Rhu.

² Francis H. Groome (ed) *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland: a Survey of Scottish Topography, Statistical, Biographical, and Historical* Edinburgh: Jack, 1883, 3, 220.

A contemporary photograph taken from above Greenock contrasts the industrial nature of the town with the beauty of the Firth of Clyde and the Highland hills beyond its northern bank (Illustration 12 over), and the panoramic nature of the view is well illustrated by the map of the Firth of Clyde (Illustration 13 over).

Up to the time when he left Greenock to study in London, images of Scotland's landscape would have been an integral, though possibly unnoticed, part of MacCunn's daily life. Family walks – Andrew MacCunn mentions that 'Papa and Bob walked to Kilmalcolm [sic]'³ – and family holidays on Bute, on Arran, and in Arrochar would have served to draw attention to the natural beauty of Scotland. MacCunn's love and awareness of this landscape is reflected in the titles of his early orchestral pieces *Cior Mhor* and *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood* and the later *Highland Memories*.

The influence of MacCunn's father James, a very talented, artistically inclined man, should not be ignored. Unlike John, his younger brother, who enjoyed a university education and became a respected academic, James as the eldest surviving son in his family probably had no choice but to follow his father into the family's shipping business rather than being allowed to follow his artistic inclinations.⁴ His enthusiastic encouragement of all his children's artistic abilities may have been compensation for his own lack of personal fulfilment.

As his son's musical career developed, MacCunn senior continued to play an important part in his life, and a measure of this involvement is the allusion to him in a contemporary article as 'managing father'.⁵ He wrote the libretti for all his son's cantatas, of which three are based on Scottish texts. They were written when MacCunn was still relatively young (aged 18–22) and was still likely to accept paternal guidance on artistic matters. The subjects of the texts are thus indicative of MacCunn senior's interests and of the intellectual environment in which his son was raised. It must

³ Andrew MacCunn to Barbara Dempster, 13 Apr 1890. NLS Acc. 6792. Bob is Robert MacCunn, (1876-1938), brother to Hamish and Andrew.

⁴ The 1861 Census gives the occupation of both James and his brother Andrew as 'Clerk to ship owner'. GRO Census 1861 564/03 049/03 01 014.

⁵ See page 111 – 'The Lay of the Very Latest Minstrel'.



Illustration 13 – Greenock Looking Towards Helensburgh, c1877

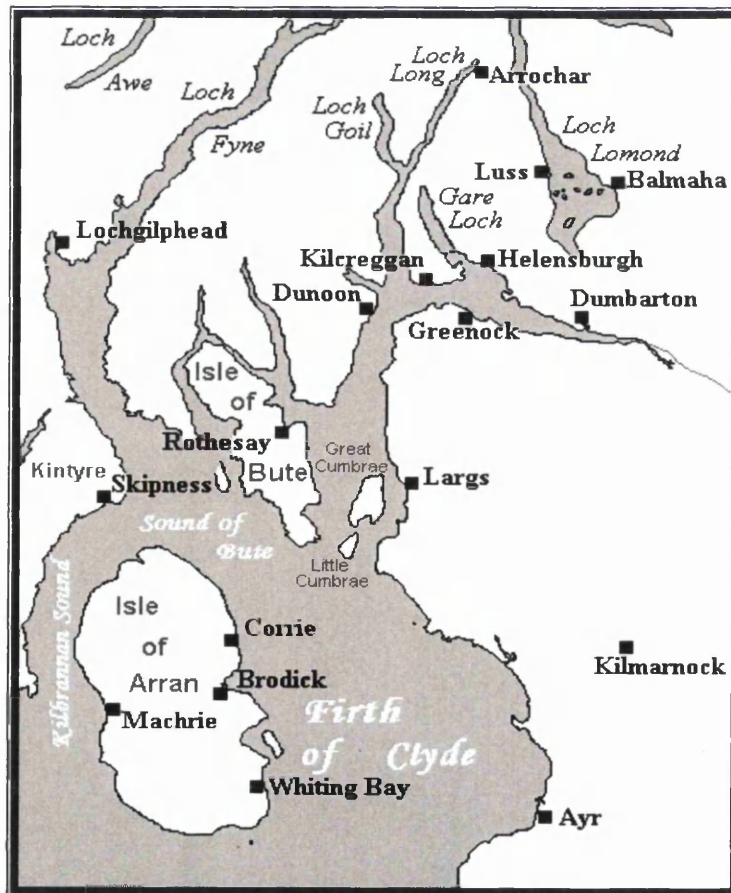


Illustration 14 – Map of the Firth of Clyde

however be assumed that he agreed with his father's choice of subject, for it was not in his nature to do anything *contre coeur*. The cantatas *Bonny Kilmeny*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Queen Hynde of Caledon* are based on epic poems by Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) and James Hogg (1770–1835), two major Scottish authors.

Scott, a lawyer and son of a lawyer, came from a privileged Edinburgh background. He was influenced by the German Romantic poets, and published translations of Goethe and Bürger. His fascination with the folklore of the Scottish Borders gave rise to his three-volume collection of ballads *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–3), in which he was assisted by friends, advisers, and by many elderly informants who were the keepers of the oral tradition. His endeavours were in part motivated by a patriotic intention, for in the introduction to the *Minstrelsy* he writes, 'By such efforts, feeble as they are, I may contribute to the history of my native country; the peculiar features of whose manners and character are daily melting and dissolving into those of her sister and ally [England].'⁶ Scott's earliest original works were epic poems, but after 1814 he turned to novel writing. His works, written in a highly Romantic vein, were extremely popular, widely disseminated and translated, and provided many European composers with the stimulus for operas, cantatas and solo songs.⁷

Hogg, known as the 'Ettrick Shepherd', came from a humble farming background and was largely self-educated. As such, he was the complete antithesis to Scott, by whom he was befriended and encouraged after he supplied ballads from the oral tradition of Ettrick for Scott's *Minstrelsy*. Hogg wrote in the Scottish vernacular style and although he enjoyed success, it was not on the same scale as Scott's. Hogg's reputation waned after his death, and for a long time his fame rested on two frequently anthologized poems 'A Boy's Song' and 'Kilmeny'. True appreciation of him as a writer came only posthumously, particularly in respect of *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), first revived in the 1880s. Hogg's writings, like Scott's, were translated into European languages, but translations of his poetry were made too late for it to be taken up by Romantic composers. In 1835, the German poet and writer Ferdinand Freiligrath claimed to have translated Hogg's poems but they do

⁶ Walter Scott *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* Kelso: James Ballantyne, 1802–3, 50.

⁷ See Roger Fiske *Scotland in Music: a European Enthusiasm* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983, 207–209.

not appear to have been published.⁸ Compared with Scott and Robert Burns, Hogg's poetry was set by surprisingly few composers.⁹

Common to all three texts chosen by the MacCunns as the basis for a cantata libretto is their looking back to Scotland's distant past. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* is set in the mid-sixteenth century, at the time of Border warfare between Scotland and England, when there was constant feuding between rival clans and factions in the area known as 'The Debatable Lands'. *Queen Hynde of Caledon* reaches back to an even earlier period, to that of Scotland's Celtic era. Enthusiasm for this period was kindled by James Macpherson (1736–96), whose *Fingal: an Ancient Epic Poem* (1762) purported to be a translation from the original Erse of an epic by Ossian, son of Finn. *Bonny Kilmeny*, possibly inspired by the subject matter of Scottish Border ballads or Gaelic folk tales, is set in Scotland at an unspecified time, in supernatural Celtic twilight. In their writing both Scott and Hogg were promoting ideas of Scottishness within the context of Scotland after the 1707 Union of the Parliaments. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Kilmeny*, and *Queen Hynde of Caledon* are all iconic texts offering their respective author's understanding of Scottish national identity and nationhood.

MacCunn senior's alterations to *Queen Hynde of Caledon*, detailed in Chapter 4, which subverted Hogg's ideas and brought them into step with those of Scott, are probably a reflection of his own political leanings. A letter from Sir James Fergusson (1832–1907), the unsuccessful Tory candidate for Greenock in the 1878 election, proves conclusively that he was a supporter of that party.

Although we can now recal [sic] our defeat with more equanimity than was possible at first, I cannot omit to express to you my grateful sense of your exertions on my behalf, which I well know were heartily and effectively rendered. Indeed I do not think I am wrong in attributing to you many clever illustrations of the successive phases of the contest, which had an important influence on the popular mind. There is no doubt that we ought to have won, but – we were unfortunate.¹⁰

⁸ W. Buchner *Ferdinand Freiligrath: ein Dichterleben in Briefen* 2 vols. Lahr: Schauenburg, 1882, 1, 149 quoted in: Walter Pache "'Der Ettrickschäfer Hoggs [sic]": a Scotsman's Literary Reputation in Germany' *Studies in Scottish Literature* 8, 1970, 116.

⁹ Other than MacCunn, composers include Joseph Barnby, J. Michael Diack, Learmont Drysdale, Charles MacPherson, Otto Schweizer, Cyril Scott, Francis George Scott, Thomas Wilson, William Wordsworth.

¹⁰ James Fergusson to James MacCunn, 16 Feb 1878. MacCunn Collection, Watt Library, Greenock.

The most apt description for MacCunn senior's politics is the relatively recently coined term of 'Unionist-Nationalism'.¹¹ 'Scotland's mid-nineteenth century nationalists believed their nation had entered the Union of 1707 as an equal, and that was how they demanded to be treated.'¹² i.e. a strong sense of Scottish identity was allied to the desire for an *equal* partnership between Scotland and England within the Union.

Of the other overtly Scottish texts set by MacCunn, those which have early opus numbers – the ballads *Lord Ullin's Daughter* and *The Cameronian's Dream* – may also have been suggested for treatment by his father. Those written near the end of his life, *The Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads*, were without a doubt MacCunn's own choice. However in the preface to the vocal score, MacCunn says that his source, Allingham's *Ballad Book*,¹³ had been known to him since childhood, indicating yet again that his tastes had been shaped by the *milieu* in which he grew up.

As he matured, MacCunn continued to be drawn to Scottish texts and topics – notably for his operas *Jeanie Deans*, *Diarmid* and the incomplete *The Breast of Light*. It was not inevitable that he would choose a Scottish topic, for while looking for a theme for his first opera, Rider Haggard's *Cleopatra* was considered.¹⁴ A further and significant expression of interest in Scottish topics is seen in the publication of MacCunn's *Songs and Ballads of Scotland* (1891). His appropriately simple piano accompaniments avoided the excesses of previous generations who had embellished the tunes with inappropriate harmonies and complicated 'symphonies', and demonstrated his complete understanding of the nature of Scots folk music.¹⁵

In an interview with J. Cuthbert Hadden, MacCunn said:

The more I look into the large and interesting tradition of ballad music and ballad literature that has been bequeathed to us, the more I feel that there is plenty of material for the work of more than one life. I really feel no interest in foreign subjects – no doubt because I am a Scotsman.¹⁶

¹¹ For a full account of this concept, see Graeme Morton *Unionist-Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830–1860* East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999.

¹² Morton *Unionist-Nationalism*, 190.

¹³ William Allingham (ed) *The Ballad Book: a Selection of the Choicest British Ballads* London: Macmillan, 1864, and subsequent editions.

¹⁴ GUL MS MacCunn 264, 5.

¹⁵ For example, the settings of Scottish folksongs made by Haydn, Beethoven, Pleyel and Kozeluch for the Scottish publishers Napier, Thomson and Whyte.

¹⁶ J. C[uthbert] H[adden] 'Scottish Composers and Musicians: I – Hamish MacCunn' *Scottish Musical Monthly* 1, 1894, 55.

This remark is perhaps indicative of the fact that MacCunn's general education ended at the relatively young age of fifteen when he left Scotland for London and that he lacked exposure to and awareness of English literature in the wider sense of the word. It is often overlooked that many of MacCunn's solo songs do not use Scottish texts and in the first decade of the twentieth century, the majority of his work eschewed Scottish stimuli in favour of English texts. It is perhaps because they treated 'foreign subjects' that they were not as successful as MacCunn's Scottish works.

The experience of living in a different culture tends to have one of two outcomes – either the person becomes totally assimilated or, conversely, protests their difference. As a Scot in London, MacCunn fell into the latter category, making a point of emphasising his Scottish identity. He returned frequently to Greenock to visit family and friends. He also spent many holidays in Scotland, at Corrie on the Island of Arran and at Arrochar in Argyll, where he indulged in his favourite pastimes, sailing and fishing. There is nothing to suggest that MacCunn ever had the inclination to travel to European countries either for pleasure or to experience the richness of its musical life, for example to attend the Bayreuth Festival, and it would appear that he did not hold a passport.¹⁷ However, possibly recognising the limitations of his own education, he advocated that students might consider a period of study in Europe (most likely Germany) after having completed their musical studies in England or Scotland.¹⁸

MacCunn's known enthusiasm for Scottish culture led to his involvement with the Dunedin Association, inaugurated in 1911 by a group of eminent Scots whose aim was to provide a forum for the promotion of Scottish music and literature and 'making Scottish minstrelsy a living force'.¹⁹ Shortly before its formal inauguration, Janey Drysdale, one of the founding members, wrote asking MacCunn to become one of several Vice-Presidents. He willingly accepted the invitation, replying:

¹⁷ Prior to 1916, it was desirable, but not essential, to hold a passport to travel to Europe. The UK Passport Service (Disclosure of Information) has no record of a passport being issued to MacCunn. Undated communication to the author, Reference Disc/Info/MacCunn 110705, received Oct 2005.

¹⁸ Hamish MacCunn 'A Scottish College of Music' *Dunedin Magazine* 1, 1913, 153–158.

¹⁹ 'Dunedin Association' *Scotsman*, 21 Dec 1911, 6. A MS history of the association, written by Janey Drysdale, is tipped in to the front of *Dunedin Magazine* 2, 1914, GUL MS Farmer 256.

I must apologise for the delay in answering your very interesting letter about the "Dunedin Association". By all means add my name to the list of members of your provisional Committee, & please advise me as to what is being done, & as to how I can be of use in any way.²⁰

At the Association's zenith, there were more than one thousand members, amongst whom were many notable literary, artistic and academic figures. Musical activities included the encouragement of performances of all types of Scottish music ranging from folksong to large-scale choral and orchestral works,²¹ and regular monthly meetings at which smaller-scale pieces by MacCunn and other contemporary Scots composers were heard.²² Between 1912 and 1915, the *Dunedin Magazine*, devoted to Scottish culture, published articles about recent research, biographies of native authors and composers (including MacCunn), and reviews of recent performances and publications. By 1917 the society folded, due to a serious decline in membership caused by the First World War,²³ and the lack of anyone willing to take on the position of honorary secretary.

MacCunn's involvement continued till his death in 1916. In his last surviving letter to Janey Drysdale, he wrote:

I have not been so well lately, or your kind letter would not have remained so long unacknowledged.

Will you be so good as to express to Mr Lachlan Watt & those present at the meeting of the Dunedin Association my grateful appreciation of their touching message of sympathy and good wishes?

Such sincere & spontaneous sympathy is indeed most consoling & stimulating; & it has made me the stronger to "fecht" with much weariness & some pain.²⁴

Shortly after MacCunn began corresponding with Janey Drysdale, a group of people, some of whom were also members of the Dunedin Association, proposed the foundation of a Scottish School of Music for Edinburgh. The concept was outlined in some detail by Janey in a letter to MacCunn,²⁵ who enthusiastically embraced the idea,

²⁰ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 6 Aug 1911, GUL MS Farmer 263/01. Janey Drysdale's letter is not extant.

²¹ In March 1913, the Association promoted a concert of Scottish choral music in Edinburgh at which works by Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, Learmont Drysdale and MacCunn were performed.

²² These performances consisted mainly of instrumental items, songs and recitations. Programmes of concerts held between 1912–1915 can be found in the *Dunedin Magazine*.

²³ Janey Drysdale 'Learmont Drysdale', 1942, 30, GUL Cb10–x.14.

²⁴ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 27 Jan 1916, NLS 3651/110.

²⁵ Janey Drysdale to Hamish MacCunn, 6 Apr 1913, GUL MS Farmer 263/54.

perhaps not entirely for altruistic reasons, as he hoped to be offered the Principalship. At Janey's instigation MacCunn wrote an article for the *Dunedin Magazine* strongly supporting the establishment of such a school.²⁶ He pointed out how the lack of a music training establishment in Scotland disadvantaged Scottish students, who wishing to study music were forced to choose between London and the Continent. He remarked that for the Scot, 'London is in effect no nearer to the Waverley Station than Leipsic or Berlin are to the pier of Leith'.²⁷

Another manifestation of MacCunn's strong sense of Scottishness is his xenophobia, revealed in correspondence with his more intimate acquaintances. In a letter to Professor Blackie,²⁸ commenting at length on the vacancy for the Chair of Music at Edinburgh University, MacCunn expressed his concern that there were no Scottish candidates and that a large number of Englishmen were interested in the job. By referring to in the letter to 'an English la-di-da "kyaw-kyawing like a crow"', MacCunn reveals his antipathy towards the stereotypical upper-class ('la-di-da), loudly spoken ('kyaw-kwaying) Englishman.

More than twenty years later, in a letter to Janey Drysdale, MacCunn laments the appointment of a German as temporary choirmaster of the Edinburgh Choral Union. 'Never heed the Feuer-Zauber gentleman.²⁹ [...] Scotland for the Scot, & away with foreign devils.'³⁰ There is an element of jocularly in MacCunn's statements, but it does not conceal the underlying xenophobic sentiment. Another letter also indicates a degree of anti-Semitism: 'As to the Hebrew gentleman you mention, I am not inclined to think, let alone write. I have always made it a rule to give such folks a "miss in baulk" altogether.'³¹

²⁶ Hamish MacCunn 'A Scottish College of Music' *Dunedin Magazine* 1, 1913, 153–158.

²⁷ MacCunn 'A Scottish College of Music', 158.

²⁸ See Chapter 1, page 37.

²⁹ A reference to Gottlieb Feuerberg, German-born temporary conductor of the Edinburgh Choral Union and an allusion to the Feuerzauber music which ends Wagner's *Siegfried*.

³⁰ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 23 Jun 1913, GUL MS Farmer 263/10.

³¹ 'Miss in baulk' – Originally (*Billiards*): failure to hit the object ball, on account of which the opponent scores; *spec.* a deliberate failure which leaves the cue ball in a safe position. *to give a miss in baulk* and variants: to avoid hitting the object ball, esp. with the intention of putting one's ball in a safe position (usually in the baulk area of the table) *Oxford English Dictionary* 2 ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989. Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 25 Feb 1914, GUL MS Farmer 263/25.

MacCunn's stylish and fluent letters reveal a confident man whose strong feeling of Scottishness is displayed by his knowledge and appreciation of Scots culture and by his unaffected use of Scots vocabulary. He writes of his love of 'true' Scottish culture and his scorn of what he calls the 'vernacular "wha'-hae-wha-hoo-hooch-aye" side of the art' and makes scathing references to the Duke of Argyll, a supporter of the Celtic revival and the librettist for his grand opera *Diarmid*, for his 'useless and irrelevant insistence on "snippets" of legendary particulars as to fairies, fairy beads, rowan trees & "bogles" & such-like'.³²

All of the above demonstrate how deeply entrenched was MacCunn's feeling of Scottishness and how it impacted on his music. Contemporary reviews in both the Scottish and British press,³³ as quoted in previous chapters, reported at length on MacCunn's adoption of a Scottish idiom and the incorporation of Scottish musical features into his works. The fact that MacCunn was perceived to be a 'Scottish composer' lead critics to expect and identify Scottish elements in his music even when they were not present (as for example in reviews of *Queen Hynde of Caledon*) and when he used more universal themes his works were judged to be less satisfactory.

MacCunn, a Scot in England

From the age of 15, MacCunn's permanent home was London, but he never became totally assimilated into London society, towards which he had an ambivalent attitude. On the one hand, he vociferously professed his individuality and Scottishness, but on the other, he was anxious to be accepted as a member of the musical establishment, whose pillars, Mackenzie, Parry and Stanford, formed a closed circle which it was almost impossible to break into.³⁴ He had already experienced, while still a student, what he perceived to be rejection by his mentor (see his letter to Parry in Chapter 1). He served on the committees of several organising bodies – the Music Committee of the Victorian Era Exhibition³⁵ and the committee which was formed to

³² MS Farmer 263/01. Despite his denigration of the Duke's tastes, MacCunn did seem to be drawn to couthy Scottish literature. A notable example is his setting of Charles Murray's 'Hame', a typical example of the Kailyard School. MacCunn said of it: 'It is very sad but to a Scots heart there is a sort of pleasant solace in its pathos.' (Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 11 March 1914, Farmer 263/32).

³³ For a detailed account, see Jennifer Oates 'Hamish MacCunn: a Scottish National Composer?' in Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton (eds) *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, 145–157.

³⁴ This was pointed out by George Bernard Shaw *Music in London 1890–94* 3 vols. London: Constable, 1932, 1, 260.

³⁵ 'Victorian Era Exhibition' *Times* 29 Jan 1897, 10.

persuade the London County Council to build an opera house – thus associating himself with Mackenzie, Parry, Stanford, Parratt, Stainer and Sullivan.³⁶ Furthermore, he was not averse to using the columns of the *Times*, the mouthpiece of the establishment, to voice his support for having opera sung in English rather than in its original language.³⁷

While living in London, any barriers which MacCunn encountered were principally of his own making. On a personal level they were the result of his own headstrong nature, for example his dealings with Parry and Mackenzie. On a professional level, thanks to the encouragement of August Manns, he enjoyed early success with performances of his orchestral works at the Crystal Palace. However, his decision to choose Scottish texts to set, or put differently, to ignore the much larger corpus of English poetry for his choral works, betrays either naivety or arrogance – naivety in believing that texts which enjoyed little resonance south of the Tweed could be attractive to choral societies; arrogance that despite his texts' lack of universal appeal, he could succeed.³⁸ The remark made by Mackenzie about a performance of his setting of *The Cotter's Saturday Night* at the Albert Hall 'where the choir courageously grappled with a foreign tongue' gives some indication of the difficulties experienced by choirs singing in any language other than Standard English,³⁹ and it must be remembered that in this period nearly all foreign choral works e.g. Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Dvořák's *The Spectre's Bride*, were performed in English translation. A summary of Appendix 2 – List of Performances of MacCunn's Choral Works (Table 8.1), shows that although more performances of MacCunn's choral works have been traced in England than in Scotland or in other countries, the proportion (52:42) does not reflect the fact that in 1901 England's population was eight times greater than that of Scotland.⁴⁰

³⁶ 'Proposed Opera-House for London' *Times* 22 Jun 1898, 6.

³⁷ 'Opera in English' *Times* 10 Aug 1901, 14.

³⁸ As mentioned above MacCunn showed a much less narrow-minded approach when choosing texts for his solo songs. Although he set poems by Scottish writers, the majority are written in Standard English rather than Scots dialect.

³⁹ Alexander Campbell Mackenzie *A Musician's Narrative* London: Cassell, 1927, 170.

⁴⁰ In 1901, the population of England was 32,527,813 compared with Scotland's 4,472,103.

Country	Number of performances	Percentage of total
England	99	52
Scotland	76	42
Ireland	1	6
Wales	3	
British Empire	5	
USA	3	
Total	187	100

Table 8.1 – Performances of MacCunn’s choral works by country

During his lifetime, MacCunn’s public persona was that of a talented musician and rising star, a Scot who infused Scottishness into his music. The fact that his early successes, both orchestral and choral, all relied on Scottish stimuli or Scottish texts, led to his being branded ‘Scottish’. There were however occasions when his Scottishness was forgotten or overlooked. A report of the General Committee of the Norwich Festival in January 1890 announced that Dr Hubert Parry and Mr Hamish MacCunn ‘two English composers’⁴¹ had been commissioned to write new choral works for the forthcoming festival, presumably as an antidote to the 1887 Festival which had been ‘ridiculed as a "Festival of Foreigners"' as its new works had been by foreign composers.⁴² The fullest appreciation written at the time of his death by Edmondstoune Duncan began: ‘The life and work of Hamish MacCunn [...] form a romance in the history of musical England.’⁴³

How should MacCunn be regarded?

MacCunn has been variously styled as ‘Scottish composer’, ‘Scottish national composer’⁴⁴, and even ‘Scottish Nationalist composer’.⁴⁵ He is most certainly ‘Scottish’ by birth, by culture and by his own admission. ‘Scottish national composer’ he is to some extent by virtue of his use of Scottish stimuli and his incorporation of Scottish

⁴¹ ‘Norfolk and Norwich Festival: Meeting of the General Committee; the Artists Engaged’ *Eastern Daily Press*, 20 January 1890, 2.

⁴² ‘Facts Rumours, and Remarks’ *MT* 30, 1889, 721.

⁴³ Edmondstoune Duncan ‘Hamish MacCunn: 1868–1916’ *Musical Opinion & Musical Trade Review* 39, 1916, 739.

⁴⁴ By Janey Drysdale.

⁴⁵ See for example Jennifer Oates’s thesis ‘Opera Tradition and Scottish Nationalism’ and the running title for her article ‘Hamish MacCunn: a Scottish National Composer?’ in Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton (eds) *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, 145–157.

musical features. However strip away the Scottish features and underneath, in the deeper structure, one finds music written in the European, and more particularly German, art tradition – music written by an heir to Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Wagner. There are many more features in MacCunn's music which align him with European musicians than with professional folk musicians who wrote in the Scottish vernacular style e.g. Niel Gow (1727–1807) and his son Nathaniel (1763–1831), Alexander McGlashan (c. 1740–1797) and William Marshall (1748–1833).

The use of the label 'Scottish Nationalist composer' requires a certain amount of circumspection, as the term 'Scottish Nationalist' in the twenty-first century has a fairly narrow political connotation, being identified with the Scottish National Party, a left-of-centre political party committed to Scottish independence. While MacCunn's personal outlook as a Scot is readily understood, his opinions in relation to political nationalism are more difficult to ascertain.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Scottish nationalism was not the political movement it is today. Its first stirrings can be traced to shortly after the Act of Union of 1707 which brought about the union of the Scottish and English parliaments and saw the seat of government move from Edinburgh to London. Thereafter, despite the guarantee of continuing independence of the church, the mint, and the education and the legal systems, Scotland, subsumed into the Union as North Britain, experienced a loss of identity. While many Scots welcomed the Union and the prosperity they hoped it would bring, particularly in the wake of the failure of the disastrous Darien venture (1698–1700),⁴⁶ many others vigorously opposed and resented the treaty. The discontent at the apparent loss of nationhood felt at the time of the treaty continued to be felt and was articulated for a later generation by Burns in his poem 'Such a parcel of rogues in the nation'.

⁴⁶ This was an enterprise to establish a Scottish colony on the Isthmus of Panama to trade with both the Atlantic and Pacific simultaneously. Half of the total of Scotland's available capital was lost, and the ensuing failure had wide-ranging economic and political repercussions. For full details, see John Prebble's *The Darien Disaster* London: Secker & Warburg, 1968.

Fareweel to a' our Scottish fame	What force or guile could not subdue,
Fareweel our ancient glory;	Thro many warlike ages,
Fareweel e'en to the Scottish name,	Is wrought now by a coward few,
Sae famed in martial story.	For hireling traitor's wages.
Now Sark rins over Solway sands,	The English steel we could disdain,
An' Tweed rins to the ocean,	Secure in valour's station;
To mark where England's province	But English gold has been our bane –
stands –	Such a parcel of rogues in the nation!
Such a parcel of rogues in the nation!	

O would, ere I had seen the day
That Treason thus could sell us,
My auld grey head had lien in clay,
Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!
But pith and power, till my last hour,
I'll mak this declaration;
We're bought and sold for English gold –
Such a parcel of rogues in the nation!⁴⁷

After the Act of Union, Edinburgh, the nation's capital 'awoke painfully to the fact that it had become, culturally and politically, a satellite of London'.⁴⁸ The loss of cultural identity seems to have provided an additional spur for the collections of Scots songs and tunes,⁴⁹ already in train as a result of the Romantic Movement's general enthusiasm of the for gathering folk material. The collecting, anthologising, arranging and publication of Scots folk material continued throughout the nineteenth century with publications by amongst others George F. Graham, John Muir Wood and John Glen. MacCunn entered into this continuum with the publication of his *Songs and Ballads of Scotland* (1891).

Another factor which coloured the outlook of many, but not all, Scots was the repercussions and reprisals resulting from the unsuccessful Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745. The proscription of the bagpipe and the traditional Highland belted plaid, the forerunner of the kilt,⁵⁰ turned them into symbols of lost national identity. By the early nineteenth century, Highland dress and traditions – the kilt, clan tartans, and bagpipes – had been adopted as **national** Scottish symbols. The spectacular pageant held to mark

⁴⁷ Robert Burns *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns 1759–1796* Glasgow: Collins, [c.1948].

⁴⁸ David Johnson *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* 2 ed. Edinburgh: Mercat P, 2003, 133.

⁴⁹ For example Allan Ramsay's *Tea-table Miscellany* (1723–c. 1727) James Johnson's *The Scots Musical Museum* (1787–1803); David Herd's *Ancient and Modern Scots Songs* (1769); Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802); James Oswald's *The Caledonian Pocket Companion* (1745–65); Robert Bremner's *Collection of Scots Reels and Country Dances* (1757–1761).

⁵⁰ The proscription was repealed in 1782.

the visit of George IV to Edinburgh in 1822, stage-managed by Sir Walter Scott, was noteworthy in that all participants, including the king, were attired in Highland dress, an indication of its elevation to a national, Scottish, dress. The rehabilitation of Highland dress and the sentimental Jacobitism purveyed by writers such as Scott, Burns and Hogg contributed to the creation and expression of a national identity, into which were drawn attributes from previously separate and distinct Scottish cultures – Highland (Celtic), Lowland and Border.

In the mid-nineteenth century, in seeking to reassert its identity, Scotland looked back to those four Scots – Wallace, Bruce, Burns and Scott – who, more than any others, had assumed iconic status. Specific events which brought them to public attention were the death of Walter Scott in 1832, the centenary of Burns's birth in 1859, the Wallace commemoration (1857-69), and plans for the Wallace/Bruce monument in Edinburgh. William Wallace and Robert Bruce were warriors who led the Scots in their fight against English domination in the Wars of Independence, which culminated in Bruce's victory at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott were writers who in their literary works glorified Scotland's distant past – for example, Burns's poem 'Robert Bruce's March to Bannockburn' (1793) and Scott's epics *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), *Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field* (1808), and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810). With the advantage of distance, they reinvented the more recent past, by portraying a form of sentimental, romanticised Jacobitism to which many Scots would not have subscribed politically but to which they were emotionally attracted.

The rise in Scottish sentiment was not mirrored by any political movement. The National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights, founded in 1853, had as its aim the protection of Scottish interests and the pursuit of equal treatment for Scotland within the Union. Membership was drawn from a wide range of social classes.⁵¹ Similarly the membership of the Scottish Home Rule Association founded in 1886 came from a wide range of backgrounds and beliefs, and included romantic conservatives⁵² unionists, radicals and Gladstonians.⁵³

⁵¹ Keith Webb *The Growth of Nationalism in Scotland* Harmsworth: Penguin, 1978, 55.

⁵² Of whom one was Professor John Stuart Blackie, a correspondent of MacCunn.

⁵³ Christopher Harvie *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics 1707 to the Present* 3 ed. London: Routledge, 1998, 17.

There is nothing to suggest that MacCunn's notion of his Scottishness had any political connotations. In correspondence he often quoted a Scottish address as 'North Britain' or 'N.B.' rather than 'Scotland'. In all probability, like his father James, he could be described as a 'Unionist-Nationalist'. For MacCunn, like many Scots, there was no conflict between his inherent Scottishness, his position as a Scot within the Union, and his Britishness within the British Empire, a concept which could be illustrated by three concentric circles with ever increasing radii, with the self at the centre. Scots, because of the high standards of Scottish education,⁵⁴ contributed disproportionately to the development of the British Empire and members of the MacCunn family were part of the Scottish diaspora which benefited greatly from the opportunities it afforded. Of Hamish's younger brothers, George worked for many years in Singapore as a rubber-planter⁵⁵ and later lived in Canada, Robert emigrated to New Brunswick, and Andrew emigrated to Australia where he worked as a conductor and theatrical musical director.

The six-hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn on 24 June 1914 was marked by countrywide celebrations in Scotland. In a *Scotsman* editorial, Bannockburn was described as the event which 'secured for Scotland freedom and national identity for all time'.⁵⁶ It would have been natural for MacCunn, the fervent Scot, to wish to commemorate this anniversary and a letter to Janey Drysdale outlines plans for his personal contribution:

My "Bannockburn" orchestral fantasia is beginning to take shape. But all I can say as to its design is that it ends with "Scots wha' hae" fortissimo, full orchestra, followed immediately (in the key of flat) by God save the King, reinforced by the full organ, at the commencement of which the lights should be turned full on, & the English & Scottish standards displayed beside the Union Jack. Of all which more anon.⁵⁷

Given MacCunn's sense of humour, this piece may well have been nothing more than the fantasy of its title, but the account indicates that he, like his father, viewed his Scottish identity within the Union, and that for him there was no contradiction in the

⁵⁴ Prior to 1832, Scotland had four universities to England's two.

⁵⁵ His arrival in Singapore is recorded in a letter from Andrew MacCunn to Barbara Dempster, 9 Mar 1894 (NLS Acc. 67920), and the birth of his son on 1 Jul 1911 is recorded in the *Greenock Telegraph* of 1 Jul as 'son to Mr and Mrs George N.D. MacCunn, Singapore'.

⁵⁶ *Scotsman*, 24 Jun 1914, 8.

⁵⁷ Hamish MacCunn to Janey Drysdale, 3 Mar 1914, GUL MS Farmer 263/30. The only other mention of the *Bannockburn Fantasia* is in a previous letter to Drysdale, dated 25 Feb 1914, GUL MS Farmer 263/25.

juxtaposition of ‘Scots wha’ hae’ with ‘God save the Queen’. This is symbolically illustrated in the proposed display of the Scottish Saltire and the St George’s Cross which, when combined, produce the emblem of Union, the Union Flag.

In the late nineteenth century MacCunn was not alone in imbuing his music with national colouring. Other Scots, notably Learmont Drysdale and to a lesser extent Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, also wrote art music into which they integrated Scottish elements. There were similarly inclined English composers such as Delius, Vaughan Williams and Holst who looked to English folk tradition for inspiration, and the Anglo-Irish Stanford drew heavily on Irish melodies for his *Irish Rhapsodies* and his ‘Irish’ Symphony (no. 3). However in Europe, composers who gained recognition as national composers by drawing on their folk traditions, e.g. Dvořák, Smetana, Sibelius and Grieg, were living under totally different circumstances to those of MacCunn and his British counterparts. The European nationalist composers were unhappy with the political oppression of their respective nations and cultures and used music not only to assert national identity, but also to express a political ideology.

MacCunn was happy to live as a Scot, a Briton and a citizen of the Empire. His passionate and life-long love for his country, for its language, its music, its literature and its landscape is best defined as ‘cultural’ nationalism, for which there is no place in the political notions of Nationalism or Independence. For him, expression of this identity in music was perfectly natural and expected. In his article on the proposed Scottish School of Music, he sums up his musical ethos:

What is in the blood will eventually appear without invitation or education. If the heart of the student whisper to him of heather and the deer, the bog-myrtle, the blue lochs and green grass, be sure we may expect to hear all about it later on. What he needs to learn is the art of music, which, in the abstract, is of no nationality at all.⁵⁸

MacCunn clearly voiced his desire to avoid musical clichés. Interviewed in 1897, he said, ‘When a man is painting a bit of Scottish scenery, he uses the same pigments as others. Why, then, should I not treat Scottish music without the introduction of the dirk and tartan?’⁵⁹ It is ironic that although he strongly believed that music was universal, he

⁵⁸ MacCunn ‘A Scottish College of Music’, 158.

⁵⁹ ‘Mr Hamish MacCunn’ *Strand Musical Magazine* 6, 1897, 330.

is now firmly labelled 'Scottish'. He is thus consigned to the margins of British and European music, often fulfilling the role of the token Scot. As has been demonstrated, his music is thoroughly grounded in the European mainstream. For this reason, he deserves to be recognised as a European composer who sometimes speaks with a Scottish accent. Even with the accent, he is perfectly understandable within the wider context of European art music.

Conclusion

The foregoing study has examined MacCunn's choral music in some depth. This conclusion now brings together salient points which have emerged from the discussion.

Musical style

MacCunn wrote in a Late Romantic idiom, inherited from his teachers Parry and Stanford. In an early interview with George Bernard Shaw, MacCunn said that he admired Weber and Gounod.¹ As he matured, his extensive experience as an opera conductor gave him a breadth and depth of knowledge of composers and their styles. The incorporation of leitmotif and a commitment to the musical portrayal of drama clearly indicate the extent of Wagner's influence. Notable stylistic traits of MacCunn include the inclusion of Scottish features, a predilection for plagal harmony and a corresponding avoidance of dominant harmony, and the use of rising sequence, particularly in orchestral passages. Later works – *Livingstone the Pilgrim* and the *Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads* – show that MacCunn was open to more recent influences. The central movement of the former has echoes of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*. The *Border Ballads* with their greater use of modal harmony seem to take into account the earlier works of Vaughan Williams e.g. *A Sea Symphony* (1910). They are also the works in which MacCunn's use of chromaticism is most advanced.

Leitmotif

MacCunn makes frequent use of recurring themes and leitmotifs. The earliest work to attempt the use of leitmotif is the incomplete *The Changing Year*. The second setting of *The Moss Rose* (MR2) makes use of a single motif and its inversion to signify the flower of the title. The cantatas *Bonny Kilmeny*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Queen Hynde of Caledon* show a confident and more creative approach to the use of leitmotif, with melody, rhythm, key and pitch being used to represent characters or ideas. At the climax of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* when the wounded Deloraine has to meet the English knight Musgrave in single combat (Part 2 Number 6), three leitmotifs are combined in the orchestral accompaniment to indicate the agency of magic and

¹ Shaw, George Bernard 'Lions of the Season: Hamish MacCunn' *The Star* 7 May 1889 reprinted in *Shaw's Music: the Complete Musical Criticism* edited by Dan H. Laurence. 3 vols. London: Bodley Head, c1981, 1, 623.

Cranston's impersonation of the wounded Deloraine (Examples 4.55–4.57). In *Bonny Kilmeny* a similar aggregation of leitmotifs and recurring themes is used in a much shorter passage to spell out a narrative at a time when the pace of the action has slowed down (Example 3.17).

MacCunn's straightforward approach to the setting of ballads gives less opportunity for complicated use of leitmotif or themes. By incorporating just two themes into *Lord Ullin's Daughter* and by repeating the Chieftain theme in the coda, MacCunn heightens the feeling of tragedy and gives unity to the work. Of the *Border Ballads*, *The Jolly Goshawk* shows the greatest and most inventive use of leitmotif with the integration of the Goshawk and Ring leitmotifs throughout the work.

Text setting

MacCunn's appreciation and respect for all his texts is evident, and his musical treatment is always appropriate to the style. Thus a simple folk ballad is matched musically with a straightforward strophic setting, while the more complex text of the cantatas receives a more elaborate approach. In general his word setting is syllabic, with melisma being reserved for effect, as with the leitmotif used to represent the Mighty Book in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (Example 4.7)

With the exception of his early works – *The Moss Rose (MR2)*, *The Changing Year* and Motet in E flat – MacCunn avoids prolixity. Text is only repeated for effect, for example in *Kinmont Willie* to mimic trumpets echoing round the hills (Example 6.9); to create suspense, as in *The Jolly Goshawk*, when the line 'The lady then' is repeated four times (Example 6.35); or to make the impassioned plea at the end of *The Wreck of the Hesperus* when the chorus repeats the line 'Christ save us all' (Example 5.36).

Vocal writing

MacCunn's greatest musical gift was his ability to compose well for the voice. The choral works which require soloists – *Bonny Kilmeny*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *The Cameronian's Dream*, *Queen Hynde of Caledon*, *Livingstone the Pilgrim* – all contain examples of superb lyrical writing. A matter of regret is that too often MacCunn's dedication to the dramatic imperative means that the melody is not

exploited to its full potential. A good example of this is Margaret's solo 'True love's the gift' in Part 2 of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The lyricism is sustained for just over two minutes before being interrupted by a passage marked '*Quasi recit*' which carries the action forward. The lack of stand-alone solos had economic implications for MacCunn, for only one solo from a choral work – 'Her brow was like the lily flower' – the tenor solo from *Bonny Kilmeny* was published separately in sheet form.

Choral writing

Most of the choral writing in MacCunn's corpus is homophonic because he believed that fugue should be avoided 'except for definite purposes'². Passages of imitative writing are present, but they are very infrequent and of short duration e.g. the eleven bars at the end of Number 7 in *Bonny Kilmeny* and the echo effect in Number 10 of *Queen Hynde of Caledon* when the basses sing in quasi-canon with the tenors. This avoidance of imitative writing is possibly because MacCunn was not very comfortable with this style, as can be seen in a passage of his early *Psalm C* which contains a very poor attempt at counterpoint.

Scottish elements

By the late-nineteenth century, the emergence of national music and composers in Europe led to the incorporation of features which functioned as markers of national identity. For Scottish music these were melodies based on pentatonic and hexatonic scales and the use of the 'double-tonic' effect in which the tonality moves from the tonic to the flat seventh and then returns to the tonic. The mimicking of Scottish folk instruments was achieved by incorporating the bagpipe scale, in which the seventh degree is flattened, by introducing long pedal points/drones found in bagpipe music and grace notes and ornamentation, a feature of both bagpipe and fiddle music. Rhythmic structures derived from traditional dance music including the 'Scotch snap', a particular feature of the Strathspey were also commonly used. MacCunn, like several other Scots of the period, notably Learmont Drysdale, used all of the above to a greater or lesser degree.

² J. C[uthbert] H[adden] 'Scottish Composers and Musicians I – Hamish MacCunn' *Scottish Musical Monthly* 1, 1894, 55.

Melody

In MacCunn's choral works the feature which shows his skill as a composer and his oneness with his Scottish musical heritage is his ability to compose a melody which is 'at once thoroughly original and deceptively genuine'.³ An obvious example of this is the strong hexatonic melody with distinctive dotted rhythms used to represent the Chieftain in *Lord Ullin's Daughter* (Example 5.2b). Other examples of composed melodies in the Scottish style are the *Bonny Kilmeny* theme (Example 3.7a), the recurring Chieftain theme in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (Example 4.3), Uisnar's improvisation (Example 4.63), Kinmont Willie's melody (Example 6.2) and Buccleuch's anger (Example 6.13). Several of these melodies cadence from the sixth degree to the tonic, in the style of many Scottish melodies.

Another feature typical of Scots folk melody is the 'double tonic', a harmonic progression, or a melodic progression based on it, in which two chords a tone apart (usually I and β VII) alternate. Double tonic is used occasionally by MacCunn, e.g. in *The Jolly Goshawk* (bars 329–333). Sometimes he employs a modified form, as in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* where there is a shift from E minor, not to the expected D major, but to D minor (Part 1 Number 4 bars 29–39).

Folk-instruments

The mimicking of folk instruments is a feature which is used very sparingly by MacCunn. Reference is made to bagpipes by the use of the flattened seventh of the scale (*Bonny Kilmeny*, Example 3.25). Drones and extended pedal points are used but more often as a standard technique of the late Romantic period than as an indication of Scottish content. Occasionally an acciaccatura is used to mimic the fiddle and there is one instance of its sustained repetition in *Queen Hynde of Caledon* (Example 4.67).

Dance music

Infrequent rhythmic allusions to Scots music are the inclusion of folk dance rhythms – the reel in *Queen Hynde of Caledon* 'Come maidens leave your broderie' (Example 4.65) and the jig at the end of *The Jolly Goshawk* (Example 6.36). The Scotch snap is also used on a few occasions, as in *Kinmont Willie* (Example 6.13), but in this

³ [Notes accompanying CD], *Songs from the Exotic: Falla, Rodrigo, Berio, Weir* Polly May, mezzo-soprano and Lucy Walker, piano. DCD 34002. Edinburgh: Delphian Records, 2001, page 2.

instance the use of the dotted rhythm could be interpreted as much an expression of anger as an indication of Scots provenance.

Although the above feature in MacCunn's music, they never obtrude as they are always skilfully integrated into the standard musical language of late nineteenth-century Europe.

Drama

The outstanding feature of MacCunn's response to the majority of his texts is his interpretation and portrayal of its dramatic qualities. At all times the dramatic element of the narrative takes precedence, and MacCunn uses the features outlined above in conjunction with standard musical techniques (recurring motifs, rapid key changes, diminished harmonies, *tremolando* strings) to illustrate the action, be it galloping horses, a stormy sea, or a fight between knights, and to describe the gamut of human emotions – love, scorn, fear, joy. In the early cantatas, particularly *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Queen Hynde of Caledon*, despite the obvious Scottish context, the depiction of Scottishness takes second place to the dramatic imperative, a fact which was not always perceived by contemporary reviewers. This is also true of the settings of the *Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads* where the musical treatment underlines the oral tradition and transmission of the ballads, as if the music is taking the place of the tradition-bearer telling the tale.

Final conclusion

Whereas earlier British composers had exploited English language texts by setting them in a European style or by using folk music, MacCunn was one of the first British musicians to set Scottish texts in a style which successfully fused Scottish folk traditions with mainstream Western European music. Despite the fact that he set texts which were more widely accessible – *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, *Livingstone the Pilgrim* – MacCunn's acceptance as a European composer was hindered by his being labelled 'Scottish' at an early stage in his career.

Changing musical fashion, a limited canon and the decline in choral singing has led to the 'loss' of MacCunn's choral works. Today, with the benefit of distance, it is

possible to re-assess their value, to recognise not just their Scottishness but also their position within the wider arena of British and European music.

Appendix 1

Texts of Choral Works

The Changing Year

Winter

Ah! when will dreary winter speed away?
Hark! the waves bursting on the sounding shore
And February storms in stern array
Rending the forest with prolonged uproar.

Wild blew the gales across the midnight sea
Bleak blew the snowdrift in the pilot's face
Fatal lay the rocks all hidden close a-lee
Well that he watched the compass in its place.

Hearts far away beside the glowing fire
Were trembling true to him that dared the storm
Love breathed a prayer that quelled wild winter's ire
And happy home rejoiced with greetings warm.

Chill, chill the air came o'er the frozen blue
Ghost-like, the bergs beet a gallant band
Ah what befell the wearied Arctic crew
Steering for loved ones in their native land?

Spring

A change is nigh, see from the shining isles
A spirit presence comes with radiant smiles
Bewitching weird old winter with her wiles.

Rejoice for winter's latest night,
Has fled, and cheerful smiling Spring
Comes tripping in with step as light
As fairy on the wing.

Author unknown

The Moss Rose (MR1)

The Angel of the flow'rs one day
Beneath a rose tree sleeping lay

That spirit to whose charge is given
To bathe young buds in dews from Heaven.

Awaking from his light repose
The Angel whispers to the rose,

“Oh fondest object of my care
Still fairest found, where all are fair.

“For the sweet shade thou giv'st to me
Ask what thou wilt, 'tis granted thee.”

Then said the rose with deepened glow:
“On me another grace bestow!”

The spirit paused in silent thought
What grace as there the flow'r had not?

Tw'as but a moment, o'er the rose
A veil of moss the angel throws.

And cloth'd in Nature's simplest weed
Could there a flow'r that rose exceed!

Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacker

The Moss Rose (MR2)

Chorus

Where sleeps the angel of the flowers
That brings the jewel of the dawn
Whose wand is waved and dew distils
On every blade upon the lawn?

Where sleeps the angel of the flowers
That brings the noiseless charmed key
Whose touch unlocks the treasure gates
Wherever floral treasures be?

In yonder garden rich with gems
Of gold and silver, ruby, blue.
Beyond the skill of painter's art
The angel at the sunset flew.

And folding up his airy wings
Of gossamer for peaceful hours
Beneath the shadow of the rose
Slept the bright angel of the flowers.

Baritone solo

Awaking from his light repose
The Angel whispered to the Rose:

Tenor solo

'O fondest object of my care,
Still fairest found where all are fair;
For the sweet shade thou giv'st to me,
Ask what thou wilt, 'tis granted thee'.

Soprano solo

'Oh give to me some gift whereby
Thy favour every one may know;
Some simple little mark of love
That will another grace bestow'.

Baritone recit

The spirit paused in silent thought;
What grace was there the flow'r had not?
'Twas but a moment, o'er the rose
A veil of moss the angel throws.

Chorus

Oh happy rose the fairest flow'r
That blossomed first in Eden's bower
The angel now has giv'n to thee
A pledge of sweetest amity.

By misty influences brought
From rocky solitudes has sought,
This simple weed of mossy place
Is woven as a robe of grace.

A veil whose texture slim reveals
The beauty it but half conceals;
Fair raiment for Elysian bow'rs,
As Queen of all the garden flow'rs.

Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacker
Translated by J.G.C. Brainard, adapted by James MacCunn

Bonny Kilmeny

PART I

1. –CHORUS – Female voices

Bonny Kilmeny went up the glen;
But it wasna' to meet Duneira's men,
Not the rosy monk of the isle to see,
For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.

Twas only to hear the yorline sing
And to pu' the cress-flow'r around the spring;
To pu' the hyp and the hyndberry,
For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.

The nuts from the hazel tree that swung
To gather, as she sweetly sung
Sweet hymns of holy melody,
For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.

2. – SOLO – Tenor

Long may her minny look o'er the wa'
Long, long seek in the greenwood shaw
Long, long the Laird of Duneira blame,
And long, long weep ere Kilmeny come hame.

Bonny Kilmeny went up the glen;
Far, far away from the haunts of men;
And, oh! Er beauty was fair to see,
But still and steadfast was her ee.

Her brow was like the lily flower,
And her cheek the moss-rose in the shower;
Her voice like distant melody,
That floats along the silver sea.

But she paused to hear the yorline sing,
And pu' the blue cress-flow'r round the spring.

3. – CHORUS

In yon greenwoode there is a waike,
And in that waike there is a wene,
And in that wene there is a maike,
That neither has flesh, nor blood, nor bone,
And down in that greenwoode he walks alone.

SOLO – Tenor

In that green wene Kilmeny lay,
Her bosom happit with flouris gay;
But the air was soft and the silence deep,
And bonny Kilmeny fell sound asleep.

4. – CHORUS OF SPIRITS

Oh, sleep, gentle maiden! A mortal no more,
Bright spirits are tenderly hovering o'er,

And whispering softly, like dreams of the morn,
Oh, blest be the day Kilmeny was born!
Oh, sleep, spotless maiden, bright beauty of birth,
The star of the angels attended thy birth;
Its halo of purity well hast thou worn,
Oh, blest be the day Kilmeny was born!

Oh, sleep, angel-maiden! while reverent fere
Shall tell how he watched thee and wafted thee here
Full welcome is thine these realms to adorn,
Oh blest be the day Kilmeny was born.

5. – SOLO – Baritone, the reverent fere

Long have I searched the world wide
And every land and city tried;
Both night and day I've watched the fair
With zeal a thousand years and mair,
And spotless virgin found I nane,
Until this bonny maid I saw
Unsullied as the maiden snaw.
Full twenty years she's lived as free
As the sprites that sojourn in this countree;
I've brought her from the snares of men,
That sin or death she ne'er may ken.

6. – SOLO – Tenor

They clasped her waist and hands so fair,
They kissed her cheek and they combed her hair;
They lifted Kilmeny, they led her away,
And she walked in the light of a sunless day.
The sky was a dome of crystal bright,
The fountain of vision and fountain of light;
The emerald fields were of dazzling glow,
And the flowers of everlasting blow.
Then deep in the stream her body they laid,
That her youth and beauty might never fade;
And they smiled on heaven when they saw her lie
In the stream of life that wandered by.

7. – CHORUS

Now shall the land of spirits see,
Now shall it know what a woman shall be;
The sun that shines on the world so bright,
A borrowed gleam from the fountain of light;
And the moon that hangs on the sky so dun,
Like a golden bow or a beamless sun –
Shall pass away, and the angels fair
Shall miss them all in the ambient air;
But long, long after both night and day,
When the sun and the world have fled, away
When the sinner has gone to his awesome doom,
Kilmeny shall smile in eternal bloom!

PART II

8. – RECITATIVE – Baritone

When seven lang years had come and fled,
When grief grew calm and hope was dead,
When mass for Kilmeny's soul had been sung,
When the Beadsman had prayed and the dead-bell rung,—
Late, late in the gloamin' when all was still,
When the fringe was red on the western hill,
The wood was sere, the moon on the wane,
The smoke of the cot hung o'er the plain,
Like a little wee cloud in the world it's lane,—
Late, late in the gloamin' Kilmeny cam' hame.

9. – CHORUS

Kilmeny! Kilmeny! Oh where have you been?
Long have we sought thee by holt and dean,
By lynn and ford and greenwoode tree,
And yet ye are healthful and fair to see!

Where got ye that joup of the lily sheen?
That bonny snood of the birch so green?
And these rose, the fairest that ever were seen?
Kilmeny! Kilmeny! Oh where have you been?

10. – RECITATIVE – Baritone

Kilmeny looked up with a lovely grace,
But no smile was seen on Kilmeny's face.
As still was her look, as steadfast her ee,
As the stillness that lat on the emerant lee,
Or the mist that sleeps on a waveless sea.

11. – SOLO – Soprano

I have come from the land of love and light,
Where there is no sun or moon or night;
Where the rain never fell and the wind never blew,
Where the dawn never broke and the cock never crew
But the river flows in a living stream,
And the glory of heaven a cloudless beam.
On a couch of the shining silk so slim
All striped with the bars of the rainbow's rim,

I woke when they bore me from haunts of men
That sin or death I might never ken.
They lead me far to a mountain green,
To see what mortal had never seen,
And I saw the changes the spirits wrought

In the mystic land of life and thought.
I look, but saw no sun nor skies,
But a crystal dome of a thousand dyes;
It was neither sea nor land aright,
But the presence of Eternal Light,
And radiant beings went and came,
Swifter than wind or the linked flame.

I come to warn ye, maidens fair,
The loved of heaven, the spirits' care
That all whose lives are free from stain
Shall bloom in beauty when time is gaen.

12. – RECITATIVE – Baritone

When a month and a day had come and gaen,
Kilmeny sought the greenwoode wene,
There laid her down on the leaves so green.
But Kilmeny on earth was never seen.
She left this world of sorrow and pain,
And returned to the land of thought again.

EPILOGUE

13 – CHORUS

Weep not for her! Oh she was far too fair,
Too pure to dwell on this guilt-tainted earth,
The sinless glory, and the golden air
Of Zion, seemed to claim her from her birth.
A spirit wandered from its native zone
Which, soon discovering, took her for its own.
Weep not for her!

Weep not for her! Her memory is the shrine
Of pleasant thoughts, soft as the scent of flowers,
Calm as on windless eve the sun's decline,
Sweet as the song of birds among the bowers.
Rich as a rainbow, with its hues of light
Pure as the moonshine of an autumn night.
Weep not for her!

Weep not for her! She is an angel now,
And treads the sapphire floor of paradise,
All darkness wiped from her refulgent brow,
Sin, sorrow, suffering, banished from her eyes.
Victorious over death, to her appear
The vista'd joys of heaven's eternal year.
Weep not for her!

James Hogg, adapted by James MacCunn

Appendix I Texts

The Lay of the Last Minstrel

CHARACTERS.

LADY BUCCLEUCH	Soprano.
MARGARET OF BRANKSOME	Mezzo-Soprano or Contralto.
SIR WILLIAM OF DELORAINE }	Tenor.
MOUNTAIN SPIRIT	
THE MONK	
LORD CRANSTON	Baritone.
RIVER SPIRIT	

AND CHORUS.

PERIOD.—Middle of Sixteenth Century.

SCENES.—Branksome Castle, a stronghold of the Buccleuch family, near
the Border, and Melrose Abbey.

PART I.

No. 1.—CHORUS OF MALE VOICES.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all;
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest,
With corslet laced,
PiHow'd on buckler cold and hard:
They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And drank the red wine through the helmet barr'd.

No. 2.—CHORAL RECITATIVE.

But he, the chieftain of them all—
His sword hangs rusting on the wall
Beside his broken spear!

In sorrow, o'er Lord Walter's bier,
The Lady dropped nor flower nor tear,
Vengeance! deep brooding o'er the slain,
And burning pride and high disdain!
Vengeance! that locks the source of woe
Forbade the rising tear to flow.

See! she seeks the secret bower
In old Lord David's western tower,
And looketh forth to view the night,
And lo! the night is calm and clear.

No. 3.—SCENE—RIVER SPIRIT AND MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

River Spirit.

"Sleep'st thou, brother?"

Mountain Spirit.

"Brother, nay—
On my hills the moon-beams play.
Merry elves their morris pacing,
To aerial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!"

River Spirit.

"Tears of an imprisoned maiden
Mix with my polluted stream;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou, who viewest the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars?
What shall be the maiden's fate?
Who shall be the maiden's mate?"

Mountain Spirit.

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
In utter darkness round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim
Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet-star;
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,
Till pride be quell'd, and Love be free."

Chorus.

But no kind influence deign they shower,
Till pride be quell'd, and Love be free.

No. 4.—SOLO.—*Lady Buccleuch.*

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the Father well from me;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

"What he gives thee, see thou keep;
Stay not thou for food or sleep:
Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
If thou readest, thou art lorn!
Better had'st thou ne'er been born."

No. 5.—CHORUS.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark;—
"Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark."—
"For Branksome, ho!" the knight replied,
And left the friendly tower behind.

When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.
These sounds, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fall,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone.

When Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all;
He sought the Convent's lonely wall.
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and he struck full long.

No. 6.—SCENE—THE MONK AND
SIR WILLIAM OF DELORAINE.

The Monk.

"Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?"

Deloraine.

"Hail to thee! Monk of St. Mary's aisle!
The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me,
Says that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."

The Monk.

"And, darest thou, Warrior! seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?
Then, daring Warrior, follow me!"

"I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look;
And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his Chief of Branksome's need:

And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on St. Michael's night,
When the bell toll'd one, and the moon was bright.

"Lo, Warrior! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night:
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."

"Behold; upon the broad flag-stone
The Bloody Cross in light is thrown!
Now, with this iron bar, command
The grave's wide portal to expand!"

No. 7.—CHORUS.

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
He seem'd some seventy winters old;
A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
His left hand held his Book of Might;
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his knee:
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook
And all unruffled was his face.

The Monk.

"Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those, thou may'st not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!"

Chorus.

Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound:
And, as he took it, the dead man frowned.

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night returned in double gloom;
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were
E'en, as through the aisle they pass'd, [few.
They heard strange noises on the blast;
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man;
As if the fiends kept holiday.

The Monk.

"Now, hie thee hence, by naught be stayed;
And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St. John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!"

Chorus.

The Monk returned to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped.
When the Convent met at the noontide bell—
The Monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasp'd fast, as if he still prayed.

END OF PART FIRST.

PART II.

No. 1.—SOLO TENOR AND CHORUS.

The wild birds told their warbling tale,
And waken'd every flower that blows;
And peeped forth the violet pale,
And spread her breast the mountain rose.
But lovelier than the rose so red,
Yet paler than the violet pale,
She early left her sleepless bed,
The fairest maid in Teviotdale.

The Knight and the Ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately, young, and tall;
Dreaded in battle, loved in hall:
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
Lent to her cheek a livelier red;
When the half sigh her swelling breast
Against the silken ribbon prest;
When her blue eyes their secret told,
Though shaded by her locks of gold—
Where would you find the peerless fair,
With Margaret of Branksome might compare?

No. 2.—CHORUS.

Hark! hark! who comes through Branksome wood,
On such sweet meeting to intrude?
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.

See! on his steed, so dapple-gray,
All dark with sweat, and splashed with clay;
His armour red with many a stain;
Gallant William of Deloraine!

He bowed his head, and couched his spear,
And spurred his steed to full career.
The meeting of those champions proud
Seem'd like the bursting thunder-cloud.

No. 3.—SOLO.—*Margaret.*

(*The evening—On the high turret sitting alone.*)

True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die;
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.—

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst height,
That spreads abroad its wavering light?
Is yon red glare the western star?—

No. 4.—CHORUS.

No! 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!

Now over Border, dale, and fell,
Full wide and far is terror spread;
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
The peasant leaves his lowly shed.
On Penchryst glows a bale of fire,
And three are lit on Priestthaughswire;
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout!
Mount, mount for Branksome, every man!

From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Show southern ravage has begun.

No. 5.—SCENE—LADY BUCCLEUCH (*on the
Castle wall*). ENGLISH BORDERERS (*with-
out*). SCOTTISH KNIGHTS (*within*).

Lady Buccleuch.

Why 'gainst the truce of border-tide
In hostile guise dare ye to ride,
With Kendal bow and Gilsland brand
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
Return, ye English lords! return!
And if but one poor straw ye burn,
Or do our tower so much molest
As scare one swallow from her nest;
St. Mary! but we'll light a brand
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland.

The English Borderers.

We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
That he may suffer march-treason pain.
He harried the lands of bold Musgrave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.

Yield thee! or hear our warrison
To storm and spoil thy garrison!
And this fair boy to London led
Shall good King Edward's page be bred.

Lady Buccleuch.

Say to your lords of high emprise
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him, by oath, of treason-stain,
Or else the single combat take
'Gainst Musgrave for his country's sake.
For the young heir of Branksome's line
God be his aid and God be mine!
Through me no friend shall meet his doom,
Here, while I live, no foe finds room.

But, if thy lords their purpose urge,
Take our defiance loud and high,
Our Slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,
Our moat the grave where they shall lie.
Awake the Slogan, kinsmen true!
"St. Mary for the young Buccleuch!"

The Scottish Knights.

Our slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,
Our moat the grave where they shall lie.
Awake the slogan, kinsmen true!
"St. Mary for the young Buccleuch!"

No. 6.—CHORAL RECITATIVE.

Now is the hour of Branksome's need,
O Mighty Book! the combat speed!
For wounded Deloraine delays.

Where is a champion in his stead,
Whose heart beats for his native land?
Who for Buccleuch the sword will raise,
'Gainst Musgrave, hand to hand?

Who comes?

Lo!

'Tis he! the Knight of Deloraine!
'Tis he himself, all free from pain!
In armour sheathed from top to toe.

Now is the hour of Branksome's need,
O Mighty Book! the combat speed!

No. 7.—CHORUS.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretched him on the bloody plain;
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
Thence shalt thou never rise again!

No. 8.—SCENE—LORD CRANSTON, LADY
BUCCLEUCH, MARGARET, AND CHORUS.*Lord Cranston.*

For this fair prize I've fought and won,
For her alone the ring I ride;
Cranston am I of Teviotside,
And bring thee back thy noble son!

Chorus.

Oh, Ladye fair, the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranston's Lord and Teviot's Flower,
And never aught but union know.

Lady Buccleuch.

"Not you, but fate has vanquish'd me,
Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower.
For pride is quell'd, and Love is free!"

Margaret.

"As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be
For this is our betrothing day."

Lord Cranston.

For this fair prize I've fought and won,
For her alone the ring I ride;
Cranston am I of Teviotside,
And bring thee back thy noble son!

Chorus.

"Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
And well we read the stars' decree,
For pride is quell'd, and Love is free."

No. 9.—RECITATIVE.—*Lord Cranston.*

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,
From wandering on a foreign strand!

No. 10.—CHORUS.

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged strand!

THE END.

James MacCunn after Sir Walter Scott

CHARACTERS.

QUEEN HYNDE, <i>Queen of Ancient Caledonia</i>	SOPRANO.
WENE, <i>one of the Ladies of the Court</i>	SOPRANO.
UISNAR, <i>the disguised name, as a minstrel, of Prince Aidan, afterwards King of Caledonia</i>	BARITONE.
ERIC, <i>King of the Norsemen</i>	TENOR.
And CHORUS.	

PERIOD—Latter part of Sixth Century.

SCENES—At Beregon, the ancient capital of Scotland, and neighbourhood.

SCENE I.—Beregon. Night.

No. I.—CHORUS.

The harp has ceased in Selma's hall,
The hum of revelry declines,
And from the towers and turrets tall
No glimmering torch or taper shines.
The bard has sung his latest lay,
That love or victory extoll'd;
And sinks to rest, to soar away
With spirits of the bards of old.
Silence beneath the watching stars!
Save for the voices of the sea,
That sing along the sandy bars
With lulling sweetness, dreamily.

No. II.—SOLO.

(QUEEN HYNDE, *in her bed-chamber, looking from the casement, sings. Overheard by UISNAR.*)

O memory, the vanished past restore
And bear me back to yonder pleasant grove,
Where I may hear again the tale of love
My warrior breathed on Lora's echoing shore!
Oh, there alone I find my heart's repose,
Listening the message that the waters bear;
For whispers linger on the am'rous air
Where Lora's stream in murmuring music flows.

No. III.—CHORAL RECITATIVE.

The voice is silent, and the queenly head
Is pillowed on a snowy um.

No. IV.—QUEEN HYNDE'S DREAM.

SOLO.—QUEEN HYNDE.

O ye familiar scenes! how fair
Are Appin's hills that tower on high,
And Morven's mountains lost in air
Like golden pillars of the sky!
Ye snowy clouds, whose mass conceals,
Like smoke from rolling chariot wheels,
The trackless region of the storms,
And the wild thunder's hideous forms!
Ye well-known fields! ye waving woods of Lorn,
Swept by the gold hair of the dreaming morn!
And wept o'er by the silver mist above!
All thy endeared familiar scenes I love!

MALE CHORUS (*strange voices*).

The Black Bull!

(*She starts and listens.*)

QUEEN HYNDE.

The little ewe-flower stars the lea.
The harebell nods beside my knee:
And all the sward in summer prime
Is woven with the woodland thyme;
But hues of heaven are on the flowers,
And perfume from Elysian bowers,
And floods of fairy sunlight showers.
But hark!

MALE CHORUS.

The Black Bull of Norway has broken his band,
He's down through the links of fair Scotland;
But the power of the isle shall be lost or won
Ere ever he turn his horn from the sun.

QUEEN HYNDL.

I am alone,
What mean these voices?
There is no one nigh!

MALE CHORUS (*loudly*).

The Black Bull of Norway has broken his band,
He's down through the links of fair Scotland!

QUEEN HYNDL.

Even now he comes with thunderous heat—
A raging bull of monstrous frame,
With wealthy mane and eyes of flame,
His white horns thick ring in the light
Like boreal streamers o'er the night.

The mountains groan
With howlings of unearthly tone.
Suddenly he stops! His wild career
Is checked!—See, from the sword
A peasant, with a mighty sword,
Leaps on the creature, and his blood
Outpours upon the plain a crimson flood!

And mystery on mystery.
The blood-red sword ascends on high
With jewelled hilt against the sky,
A radiant Cross!

NO. V.

CHORUS OF CELESTIAL SPIRITS

Let thy banner be the Cross,
Blazon'd in a crimson dye,
On a white and spotless shield,
Carried foremost in the field,
God will give the Victory,
If thy banner be the Cross, the holy Cross!

Let thy banner be the Cross,
Emblem of the Sacred Son,
Of the pure and spotless life—
Bear it bravely in the strife.
God will fight for Calverton,
If thy banner be the Cross, the holy Cross!

Let thy banner be the Cross,
And a nation great shall rise
Vanquishing all other lands,
Until she the world commands,
And her throne is in the skies!
Let thy banner be the Cross, the holy Cross!

END OF SCENE I.

SCENE II.—Beregion. The following morning.

(*Youths and Maidens in the Gardens of the Palace of Selma, singing, dancing
and making merry.*)

NO. I.—CHORUS.

FEMALE VOICES.

Come, maidens, leave your broderie,
And fold it by, and cease to sigh
For swallows now have cross'd the sea,
And hither hie,
Where draperies of flower and tree
More graceful are,
And richer far,
Than all your broderie!
Come, maidens, where the daisy stars
Are thickest strewn upon the lawn,
And where the pine-tree shadow-bars
Are broadest thrown;
While cloudless air and sapphire skies
Are glowing bright
With noonday light,
And ring with melodies.

NO. II.

(*Enter WENE, dancing and singing.*)

SOLO.—WENE AND FEMALE VOICES CHORUS.

I love to trill the whole day long,
Like lark on wanton wing,
I love to trip on airy foot
To merry measure of the lute,
With dance-inviting string.

As joyful voices join the song,
And wreaths are waving round the ring
I love to trill the whole day long,
And trip to dulcet string.

CHORUS.

Come, joyful voices, join the song,
And wave the wreaths around the ring;
We love to trill the whole day long,
And trip to dulcet string.

WENE.

I love to look in laughing eyes,
That sunny gladness bring;
I prize the touch of finger-tips,
And, better still, of loving lips
Their secret whispering,
As joyful voices fall and rise,
And wreaths are waving round the ring,
I love to sing to laughing eyes,
And trip to dulcet string.

CHORUS.

Come, joyful voices, fall and rise,
And wave the wreaths around the ring,
We love to sing to laughing eyes,
And trip to dulcet string.

No. III.—CHORAL RECITATIVE.

(PRINCE AIDAN, *disguised as a minstrel, enters.*)

CHORUS.

Lo! here a minstrel comes, with harp
Slung on his shoulder. "Who art thou,
And whence?"

UISNAR.

Uisnar I am called.

Alas! I come from Erin, where
The emerald turf is stained with blood.

I fain would sing to ye an air—
A simple tale—that stirs a flood
Of thoughts within my heart. Wilt hear?

CHORUS.

Sing on, O minstrel. We give ear!

No. IV.—UISNAR'S IMPROVISATION.

Uisnar loved a gentle maid

Of high degree;

But he was borne to distant wars
To fight for his countree.

Oh, beautiful that maiden's hair

Of ruddy gold,

When o'er her lover's sorrowing face
In parting kiss it rolled.

All scatheless passed he through the fight
On every field.

For lover's courage was his might,
And true love was his shield.

But oh! his heart was wounded sore,

Worse than if slain,

An evil bird a message bore

That all his love was vain:

That she, the sunbeam of his life,

Unfaithfully

Had wedded with a gallant lord

Beyond the angry sea.

Uisnar sought the castle walls

In dismal rue,

To lay him down and die with grief,

If so this tale were true.

Now underneath her casement he

Stole by starlight,

And heard her sing the olden lay

He loved, forth to the night;

And then he knew the cruel tale

That rent his heart

Came by an evil-omened bird,

That played a witch's part:

And that his gentle maid was true,

And love was strong,

For tender thoughts awoke anew.

And lingered in her song.

And so he swore upon his sword,

Whate'er befell,

That he would dare a thousand deaths

For one that loved so well.

END OF SCENE II.

SCENE III.—At Beregon, opposite the Palace of Selma.

No. I.—CHORUS.

MUSICIANS.

Battle Hymn of the Norsemen.

To thee, great Odin of the thunder cloud,

To thee we pray!

To thee, great Thor, resistless god of war,

To thee we pray!

Bend from the sky! lead us to victory!

O lead the way!

Thor and Odin rule the spheres,

Clash the shields and clang the spears!

O Thor! with clamours of thy mighty hammer's

Deafening blow,

Awake in fire, with forked-lightning bow,

And strike the foe!

As quaking mountains rock beneath thy heel,

O lay them low!

Thor and Odin rule the spheres,

Clash the shields and clang the spears!

No. II.—SCENE.

ERIC, QUEEN HYND, WENEL, *and* UISNAR.

ERIC.

Forbear! ye sons of Thor, forbear!

I grant a truce. The fairest fair

Has mightier sway than monarch's sword.

I bow to Albyn's Queen. My word

I pledge that love is all my quest

From thee, fair flower of the West!

Thou brightest gem of Caledon!

Whose beauty rare all minstrels sing:

Fair Queen! to thee swift have I flown.

Waived as on a sea-bird's wing!

Thy guiding spirit bade me come,

And steered thro' storms my dragon ships

From fiords far across the foam

To hear the music of thy lips!

My crown I place beneath thy feet,

And yield all Norway's realm to thee.

If thou wilt make my throne complete,

And grant thy royal love to me!

QUEEN HYND.

'Tis vain with flattering words to sue:

I spurn thy boasted crown and lands!

A maiden's heart that beatech true

Can only yield when love commands!

WENEL.

Love prompted not thy reeving quest,

Bold leader of this fierce array.

Ye'd lure the bird and rob the nest,

When Albyn's Eagles are away!

QUEEN HYNDE.

For would'st love I give thee scorn

hate.

(*Pointing to the Norwegian banner.*)

Proud maid! by Odin I have sworn
To make thee mine. Behold unfurled
Norway's Black Bull that rules the world!
Thine be that Empire, thine that throne,
O beauteous Queen of Caledon!

QUEEN HYNDE and WENI together.

For proffer'd love I give thee scorn;
Back to your ships, ye o'ward crew
We dare the worst that ye can do.
Beware the Eagle's swift return,
Beware!

ERIC.

Imperious Queen! thy power resist
Love may not win thy thousand charms.
But by this sword I hold thee mine.
And by the right of Norway's arms
Thy warriors are far away.
Where is the sword to say me nay?

UISNAR.

(*Rushing forth from the Queen's attendants, throws
down his harp, and draws his sword.*)

Presumptuous spoiler of the land!
Defiance to thy vaunted power!
I swear upon my trusty brand,
Thou shalt not touch this precious flower.
Ha! did'st thou dream, across the main,
Home to thy firds with her to flee?
Thine eyes shall never lit again
On palaces beyond the sea!
Another hand thy dragon ships
Can steer away. For Norseman's breath
Will curse thy name with bitter lips—
Tyrant! I dare thee to the death!

(*The eagle, &c. and Eric is mortally wounded.*)

NO. III.—CHORUS (*the people*).

They come! they come! the cry resounds
From hill and tower and echoing shores.
They come! the sea is white with sails
And glitter of fast-sweeping oars.
And, as they cry, a mortal blow
Has laid the mighty monarch low.
They come! the steeds of Ocean bound,
Their silver bridles flecked with foam;
And golden cars on wheels of light,
Bearing triumphant warriors home.
They come! they come! and, at the cry,
The frightened Norsemen turn and fly!

NO. IV.—SCENE.

(QUEEN HYNDE *surrounded by her retainers*;
UISNAR *kneeling before her.*)

QUEEN HYNDE.

Rise, Victor, from thy bended knee:
Thy craft is more than minstrelsy.
Say who thou art!
Declare thy lineage, and claim
Reward, the richest words can name.

UISNAR (*rising*).

It is enough! my longing eyes
Have their reward. The richest prize
Is constant love. No fleeting wraith
Before thine ardent eyes I bring,
But him who swore to love till death!

QUEEN HYNDE.

Aidan! my warrior, my King!

UISNAR (AIDAN).

Hynde! my beloved, and my Queen!

QUEEN HYNDE and AIDAN.

Ye come again, O happy days of yore!
And we shall wander in yon pleasant grove,
Together culling emblem flowers of love
That ever bloom by Lora's echoing shore.
There we shall seek in peace true heart's repose.
Listening the memories the waters bear:
For whispers linger on the am'rous air
Where Lora's stream in murmur'ing music flows.

END OF SCENE III.

SCENE IV.—The feast in the great hall of the Palace of
Selma. Evening.

CHORUS.

Awake a hundred harps, and raise
Triumphant songs of festival!
As oaken faggots roar and blaze
In Selma's lofty hall.
Let trumpet tongues proclaim the King,
And chief of Erin's wars,
While shouts of triumph rise and ring
Aloft to the tingling stars.

As wine flows, and the joyful shell
Goes circling round the martial throng
Ye bards! of deeds victorious tell,
And speed the night in song!

The Cross above the Bull has waved,
The flower of the Isle is won,
And Aidan's mighty sword has saved
Queen Hynde of Caledon.

THE END.

James MacCunn after James Hogg

Lord Ullin's Daughter

A chieftain to the Highlands bound
Cries 'Boatman, do not tarry!
And I'll give thee a silver pound
To row us o'er the ferry.'

'Now who be ye would cross Lochgyle,
This dark and stormy water?'
'O, I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,
And this Lord Ullin's daughter.

'And fast before her father's men
Three days we've fled together,
For, should he find us in the glen,
My blood would stain the heather.

'His horsemen hard behind us ride;
Should they our steps discover,
Then who will cheer my bonny bride
When they have slain her lover?'

Out spoke the hardy Highland wight,
'I'll go, my chief! I'm ready;
It is not for your silver bright,
But for your winsome lady.

'And, by my word! the bonny bird
In danger shall not tarry;
So, though the waves are raging white
I'll row you o'er the ferry.'

By this the storm grew loud apace,
The water-wraith was shrieking;
And in the scowl of heaven each face
Grew dark as they were speaking.

But still, as wilder blew the wind,
And as the night grew drearer,
Adown the glen rode armèd men---
Their trampling sounded nearer.

'O haste thee, haste!' the lady cries,
'Though tempests round us gather;
I'll meet the raging of the skies,
But not an angry father.'

The boat has left a stormy land,
A stormy sea before her,---
When, oh! too strong for human hand,
The tempest gathered o'er her.

And still they rowed amidst the roar
Of waters fast prevailing:
Lord Ullin reached that fatal shore,---
His wrath was changed to wailing.

For sore dismayed, through storm and shade,
His child he did discover:
One lovely hand she stretched for aid,
And one was round her lover.

'Come back! come back!' he cried in grief
Across the stormy water:
'And I'll forgive your Highland chief,
My daughter! oh my daughter!'

'Twas vain: the loud waves lashed the shore,
Return or aid preventing;
The waters wild went o'er his child,
And he was left lamenting.

Thomas Campbell

The Cameronian's Dream

In a dream of the night I was wafted away
To the moorland of mist, where the martyrs lay;
Where Cameron's sword and his Bible are seen
Engraved on the stone where the heather grows green.

'Twas a dream of those ages of darkness and blood,
When the minister's home was the mountain and wood;
When in Wellwood's dark valley the standard of Zion,
All bloody and torn 'mong the heather was lying.

It was morning; and summer's young sun from the east
Lay in loving repose on the green mountain's breast;
O'er meadows and valleys the clear shining dew
Glistened there 'mong the heath-bells and mountain flowers blue.

And far up in heaven, near the white sunny cloud,
The song of the lark was melodious and loud;
And in Glenmuir's wild solitude, lengthened and deep,
Were the whistling of plovers and bleating of sheep.

And Wellwood's sweet valleys breathed music and gladness,
The fresh meadow blooms hung in beauty and redness;
Its daughters were happy to hail the returning,
And drink the delights of July's sweet morning.

But, oh! there were hearts cherished far other feelings,
Illumed by the light of prophetic revealings,
Who drank from the scenery of beauty but sorrow,
For they knew that their blood would bedew it to-morrow.

'Twas the few faithful ones who with Cameron were lying
Concealed 'mong the mist where the heath-fowl was crying;
For the horsemen of Earlsall around them were hovering,
And their bridle-reins rang through the thin misty covering.

Their faces grew pale, and their swords were unsheathed,
But the vengeance that darkened their brow was unbreathed;
With eyes turned to heaven, in calm resignation,
They sang their last song to the God of Salvation.

Though in mist and in darkness and fire they were shrouded,
Yet the souls of the righteous were calm and unclouded
Their dark eyes flashed lightning, as, firm and unbending
They stood like the rock which the thunder is rending.

The muskets were flashing, the blue swords were gleaming,
The helmets were cleft, and the red blood was streaming,
The heavens grew dark, and the thunder was rolling,
When in Wellwood's dark moorlands the mighty were falling.

When the righteous had fallen, and the combat was ended,
A chariot of fire through the dark clouds descended;
Its drivers were angels on horses of whiteness,
And its burning wheels turned on axles of brightness.

A seraph unfolded its doors bright and shining,
All dazzling like gold of the seventh refining
And the souls that came forth out of great tribulation,
Have mounted the chariots and steeds of salvation.

On the arch of the rainbow the chariot is gliding,
Through the path of the thunder the horsemen are riding.
Glide swiftly, bright spirits! the prize is before ye,
A crown never fading! a kingdom of glory!

The Wreck of the Hesperus

It was the schooner Hesperus
That sailed the wintry sea:
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old sailor,
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,
'I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.

'Last night, the moon had a golden ring,
And tonight no moon we see!'
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the North-east,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain,
The vessel in its strength:
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

'Come hither! come hither! my little daughter,
And do not tremble so:
For I can weather the roughest gale,
That ever wind did blow.'

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.

'O father! I hear the church-bells ring,
O say, what may it be?'
'Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!'-
And he steered for the open sea.

'O father! I hear the sound of guns,
O say, what may it be?'
'Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea!'

'O father! I see a gleaming light,
O say, what may it be?'
But the father answered never a word,
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That saved she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave,
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear
Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Towards the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between
A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf,
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
She drifted a weary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
On the reef of Norman's Woe!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Kinmont Willie

O have ye na heard o' the fause Sakelde?
O have ye na heard o' the keen Lord Scroope
How they hae ta'en bauld Kinmont William
On Hairbee to hang him up?

Had Willie had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Salkelde had never the Kinmont ta'en,
Wi' eight score in his companie.

They band his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back;
They guarded him, fivesome on each side
And brought him ower the Liddle-rack.

They led him through the Liddle-rack
And also thro' the Carlisle sands
They brought him to Carlisle castell
To be at my Lord Scroope's commands.

'My hands are tied, but my tongue is free,
And whae will dare this deed avow?
Or answer by the Border law?
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?'

'Now haud thy tongue, thou rank reiver!
There's never a Scot shall set ye free;
Before ye cross my castle gate,
Ye sall tak farewell o' me.'

'O fear na that, my lord,' quo' Willie
'Fear na that, Lord Scroope,' he said,
'I never yet lodged in a hostelrie
But I paid my lawing before I gaed.'

Now word is gane to the bauld Keeper,
In Branksome Ha' where that he lay,
That Lord Scrope has ta'en the Kinmont Willie,
Between the hours of night and day.

He has ta'en the table wi' his hand,
He garr'd the red wine spring on hie;
'Now a curse upon my head,' he said,
'But avenged of Lord Scroope I'll be!'

'O is my basnet a widow's curch?
Or my lance a wand of the willow-tree?
Or my arm a lady's lily hand?
That an English lord should lightly me.'

'And have they ta'en him Kinmont Willie,
Against the truce of Border tide
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Is keeper here on the Scottish side?

'And have they e'en ta'en Kinmont Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear,
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Can back a steed, or shake a spear?'

He has call'd him forty marchmen,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except Sir Gilbert Elliot, call'd
The laird of Stobs, I mean the same.

He has call'd him forty marchmen bauld,
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleuch
With spur on heel, and splent on spauld
And gluves of green, and feathers blue.

There were five and five before them a'
Wi' hunting-horns and bugles bright
And five and five came wi' Buccleuch
Like warden's men, arrayed for fight.

And five and five like masons gang,
That carried the ladders lang and hie;
And five and five, like broken men;
And so they reached the Woodhouselee.

And as we cross'd the Bateable Land,
When to the English side we held,
The first man that we met wi'
Whae sould it be but fause Salkelde!

'Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen?'
Quo fause Salkelde, 'come tell to me!'
'We go to hunt an English stag,
Has trespass'd on the Scots countrie.'

'Where be ye gaun, ye marshall-men?'
Quo fause Salkede, 'come tell me true!'
'We go to catch a rank reiver,
Has broken faith wi' the bauld Buccleuch.'

'Where are ye gaun, ye mason-lads,
Wi a' your ladders lang and hie?'
'We gang to herry a corbie's nest,
That wons not far frae Woodhouselee.'

'Where be ye gaun, ye broken men?'
Quo fause Sakelde, 'come tell to me!
Now Dickie of Dryhope led that band,
And the never a word of lear had he.

'Why trespass ye on the English side?
Row-footed outlaws, stand!' quo' he;
The never a word Dickie to say,
But he thrust the lance thro' his fause bodie.

Then on we held for Carlisle toun,
And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we crossed;
The water was great, and meikle of spait,
But the never a horse no man we lost.

And when we reached the Staeshaw-bank,
The wind was rising loud and hie;
And there the Laird garr'd leave our steeds,
For fear that they should stamp and neigh.

And when we left the Staneshaw-bank
The wind began fu' loud to blaw
But 'twas wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
When we came beneath the castell-wa'.

We crept on knees, and held our breath,
Till we placed the ladders against the wa'
And sae ready was Buccleuch himsel'
To mount the first before us a'.

He has ta'en the watchman by the throat
He flung him down upon the lead;
'Had there not peace between our lands,
Upon the other side thou hast gaed!

'Now sound out, trumpets!' quo Buccleuch;
'Let's waken Lord Scroope right merrilie!'
Then loud the Warden's trumpet blew –
Wha' dare meddle wi' me?

Then speedilie to wark we gaed
And raised the slogan ane and a'
And cut a hole thro' a sheet of lead
And wan to the castle-ha'.

They thought King James and a' his men
Had won the house wi' bow and speir
It was but twenty Scots and ten
That put a thousand in sic a steer!

'Wi' coulters and wi' forehammers,
We garr'd the doors bang merrilie,
Till we came to the inner prison,
Where Willie Kinmont did lie.'

And when they came to the inner prison
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie.
'O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the day that thou's to die?'

'O I sleep saft, and I wake aft;
It's lang since sleepin' was fley'd frae me;
Gie my service back to my wife and bairns,
And a' guidie fellows that speir for me.'

The Red Rowan has hnt him up,
The starkest man in Teviotdale:
'Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till of my Lord Scrope I tak' farewell.'

'Farewell, farewell, my good Lord Scrope!
My gude Lord Scrope, farewell!' he cried
'I'll pay you for my lodging maill
When first we meet on the Border-side.'

Then shoulder high, with shout and cry,
We bore him down the ladder lang;
At every stride Red Rowan made,
The Kinmont's aims play'd clang.

'O mony a time,' quo Kinmont Willie,
'I hae ridden horse baith wild and wood;
But a rougher beast the Red Rowan
I ween my legs have ne'er bestrode.

'And mony a time,' quo Kinmont Willie,
'I've prick'd a horse out oure the furs
But since the day I backed a steed,
I never wore sic heavy spurs!'

We scarce had won the Staneshaw-bank,
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men, in horse and foot,
Cam wi' the keen Lord Scroope along.

Buccleuch has turn'd to Eden water,
E'en where it flowed frae bank to brim,
And he has plunged in wi' a' his band,
And safely swam then thro' the stream.

He turn'd him round on the other side,
And at Lord Scrope his glove flung he;
'If ye like na my visit in merry England,
In fair Scotland come visit me!'

All sore astonish'd stood Lord Scrope
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trew his eyes
When through the water they had gane.

'He is either himself a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I wadna have ridden that wan water
For a' the gowd in Christentie.'

Traditional

The Jolly Goshawk

‘O weel is me, my jolly goshawk,
That you can speak and flee;
For you can carry a love letter
From my true love frae me.’

‘O how can I carry a letter to her,
Or how should I her know?
I bear a tongue ne’er wi’ her spak’,
And eyes that ne’er her saw.’

‘The white o’ my love’s skin is white
As down o’ dove or maw;
The red o’ my love’s check is red
As blood that’s spilt on snaw.

‘When ye come to the castle,
Light on the tree of ash,
And sit you there and sing our loves
As she comes frae the mass.

‘Four and twenty fair ladies
Will to the mass repair;
And weel may ye my lady ken,
The fairest lady there.’

When the goshawk cam’ to the castle,
He lighted on the ash,
And there he sat and sang their loves
As she cam’ frae the mass.

‘Stay where ye be, my maidens a’,
And sip red wine anon,
Till I go to my west window
And hear a birdie’s moan.’

The lady’s gaen to her west window
The bolt she faintly drew,
And into that lady’s wite, white neck,
The bird a letter threw.

‘Ye’re bidden to send your love a send,
For he has sent you twa’;
And tell him where he may see you soon,
Or he canna live ava’

‘I send him the ring from my finger
The garland frae my hair
I send him the heart that’s in my breet,
What would my love have mair?
I send him the ring from my white finger
The garland frae my hair;
And at the fourth kirk in fair Scotland,
Ye’ll bid him wait for me there.’

She hied her to her father dear,
As fast as gang could she;
‘I’m sick at heart my father dear;
An asking grant you me.

‘An asking, an asking, father dear!
An asking grant you me;
That if I die in fair England,
In Scotland you’ll bury me.’

‘At the first kirk in fair Scotland,
You cause the bells be rung;
At the second kirk in fair Scotland,
You cause the mass be sung.

‘At the third kirk in fair Scotland,
You deal gold for my sake;
At the fourth kirk in fair Scotland,
O there you’ll bury me at!’

‘Your asking is but small’, he said;
‘Weel ganted it shall be.
But why do ye talk o’ suchlike things?
For ye arena going to dee.’

The lady’s gane to her chamber,
And a moanful woman was she,
As if she had ta’en a sudden dwalm,
And were about to dee.

The lady’s gane to her chamber,
As fast as she could fare;
And she has taken a sleepy draught,
She mix’d it wi’ muckle care.

She’s fallen into heavy trance,
So pale and cold was she,
She seemd to be as surely dead
As ony corpse could be.

Then up and spak’ an auld witch-wife,
At the fireside sat she;
‘Gin she kill’d hersel’ for love,
I wot it weel may be.

‘But drap the het lead on her cheek,
And drap it on her chin,
And drap it on her bosom white,
And she’ll maybe speak again.
‘Tis much that a young lady will do
To her true love to win.’

They drapt the het lead on her cheek,
They drapt it on her chin,
They drapt it on her bosom white,
But she spak’ none again.’

Her brothers went to a room,
To make to her a bier;
The boards were o’ the cedar-wood,
The edges o’ silver clear.

Her sisters went to a room,
To make to her a sark;
The cloth was o' the satin fine,
And the stitching silken-wark

'Now weel is me, my jolly goshawk,
That ye can speak and flee;
Come show me any love-tokens
That you have brought to me.'

'She sends you the ring frae her finger
The garland frae her hair
She sends you the heart with in her breast,
What would you have mair?
She sends you the ring from her white finger
The garland frae her hair;
And at the fourth kirk in fair Scotland,
She bids you wait for her there.'

'Come hither, all my merry young men!
And drink the good red wine!
For we must on to merry England,
To save my love frae pine.'

The funeral cam' into fair Scotland,
And they caused the bells be rung;
At when it came to the second kirk,
They caused the mass be sung.
And when it came to the third kirk,
They dealt gold for her sake.

At the fourth kirk in fair Scotland
Stood spearmen in a row;
And up and started her ain true love,
The chieftain over them a'.

'Set down, set down the bier,' he says,
'Till I look upon the dead;
The last time that I saw her face,
Its colour it was warm and red.'

He strippit the sheet from aff her face
A little below the chin;
The lady then she open'd her eyes,
And lookit full on him.

'O give me a shive o' yur bread, love,
O give me a cup of your wine!
Long have I fasted for your sake,
And now I fain would dine.

'Gae hame, gae hame my seven brothers,
Gae hame and blaw the horn!
And ye may say that ye sought my skaith,
But that I hae gi'en you the scorn.

'I cam' na here to bonny Scotland
To lie down in the clay;
But I cam' here to bonny Scotland,
To wear the silk so gay!

'I cam' na here to bonny Scotland
Among the dead to rest;
But I cam' here to bonny Scotland
To the man I lo'e the best!'

Traditional

Lamkin

O Lamkin was a mason guid
As ever biggit wi' stane;
He biggit Lord Wearie's great castle,
But payment gat he nane.

'O pay me now, Lord Wearie,
Come pay me out o' hand.'
'I canna pay you, Lamkin,
Unless I sell my land.'

'O gin ye winna pay me,
I here sall take a vow,
Before that ye come hame again,
Ye sall have cause to rue.'

The lord said to his lady,
As he mounted his horse,
'Beware, beware o' Lamkin,
That lieth in the moss.'

The lord said to his lady,
As he rode away,
'Beware, beware o' Lamkin,
That lieth in the clay.'

'O what care I for Lamkin,
Or any o' his gang?
I'll keep my doors weel guarded,
My windows a' penned in.'

When all the doors were guarded
And all the windows were shut,
There was still on little window,
And that one was forgot.

And the nourice was a fause limmer
As e'er hung on tree;
She laid a plot wi' Lamkin,
When her lord went o'er the sea.

She laid a plot wi' Lamkin
When the servants were awa',
Loot him in at the little window,
And brought him to the ha'..

'O where's a' the men o' this house,
That ca's me Lamkin?'
'They're a' at the barn thrashing,
'Twill be lang ere they come in.'

'O where's a' the women o' this house,
That ca's me Lamkin?'
'They're a' at the well washing,
'Twill be lang ere they come in.'

'O where's the lady o' this house
That ca's me Lamkin?'
'She's up in her bower sewing,
But we soon can bring her down.'

'And how are we to bring her down?'
Says Lamkin.
'Pinch the babe in the cradle here,'
Says the fause nourice to him.

'O still my bairn, nourice,
Still him if you can.'
'He will not still, madam,
For a' his father's land.'

'O still my bairn, good nourice,
Still him wi' the keys.'
'He will not still, my lady,
Let me do what I please.'

'O still my bairn, kind nourice,
Still him wi' the ring.'
'He will not still, dear mistress,
Let me do anything.'

'O still my bairn, sweet nourice,
Still him wi' the bell.'
'He will not still, my lady dear,
Till ye come down yourself.'

The first step the lady steppit,
She steppit on a stane;
The last step the lady steppit,
There she met Lamkin.

'O mercy, mercy, Lamkin!
Have mercy upon me!
O harm ye not my little son,
I pray you let him be!'

'Now sall I kill her, nourice?
Or sall I let her go?'
'Yes, kill her, kill her Lamkin
For she ne'er was good to me.'

'Then scour the basin, nourice,
And mak' it fair and clean,
For to keep this lady's heart's blood,
For she comes o' noble kin.'

'There needs nae basin, Lamkin;
Let it run upon the floor;
What better is the heart's blood
O' the rich than o' the poor?'

Lord Wearie sat in England,
A-drinking o' the wine;
He felt his heart fu' heavy
At this very same time.

'I wish a' may be weel,' he says,
'Wi' my dear lady at hame;
For the rings upon my fingers
They're bursten into twain.'

He sailed in his bonny ship
Upon the saut sea-faem;
He leap'd uupon his horse,
And swiftly he rade hame.

'O wha's blude is this,' he says,
'That lieth in my ha'?'
'It is your little son's heart's blude,
The clearest ava!'

'O wha's blude is this,' he says,
'That lieth in the bower?'
'It is your lady's heart's blude,
Where Lamkin slew her!'

O sweetly sang the blackbird,
That sat upon the tree;
But sair moaned Lamkin,
When he was judged to dee.

O bonny sang the mavis,
Out o' the thorny brake;
But sair grat the nourice
When she was tied to the stake.

Traditional

The Ballad of Parcy Reed

God send the land deliverance
Frae every reaving, riding Scot
We'll sune hae neither cow nor ewe,
We'll sune hae neither staig nor stot.

The outlaws come frae Liddesdale,
They herry Redesdale far and near;
The rich man's gelding it maun gang,
They canna pass the puir man's mear.

Sure it were weel had ilka thief,
Around his neck a halter strang;
And curses heavy may they licht
On traitors vile oursel's amang!

Now Parcy Reed has Crosier ta'en,
He has delivered him to the law;
But Crosier says he'll do waur than that,
He'll make the tower o' Troughend fa'.

And Crosier says he will do waur –
He will do waur if waur can be;
He'll make Parcy's bairns a' fatherless;
And Parcy's land may then lie lee.

'To the hunting, ho!' cried Parcy Reed,
The morning sun is on the dew;
The caller breeze frae aff the fells
Will lead the dogs to the quarry true.

'To the hunting, ho!' cried Parcy Reed,
And to the hunting he has gaen;
And the three fause Ha's o' Girsonfield
Alang wi' him he has then ta'en.

They hunted high, they hunted low,
By heathery hill and birken shaw;
They raised a buck on Rouken Edge,
And blew the mort at Ealylawe.

They hunted high, they hunted low,
They made the echoes ring amain;
Wi' music sweet o' horn and hound,
They merry made fair Redesdale glen.

They hunted high, they hunted low,
They hunted up, they hunted down,
Until the day was past its prime,
And it grew late in the afternoon.

They hunted high in Batinghope,
When as the sun was sinking low
Says Parcy then, 'Ca' off the dogs,
We'll bait our steeds and homeward go.'

They lighted aff at Batinghope
Atween the brown and benty ground;
They had but rested a little while
Till Parcy Reed was sleeping sound.

There's nane may lean on a rotten staff
But him that risks to get a fa';
There's nane may in a traitor trust,
And traitors black were every Ha'.

They've stown the bridle aff his steed,
And they've put water in his lang gun;
They've fixed his sword within the sheath
That out again it winna come.

'Awaken ye, waken ye, Parcy Reed,
Or by your enemies be ta'en;
For yonder are the five Crosiers
A-coming owre the Hingin-stane!'

'If they be five, and we be four,
Sae that ye stand alang wi' me,
Then every man ye will take one
And only leave but two to me;
We will them meet as brave men ought,
And make them either fight or flee.'

'We mayna stand, we canna stand,
We daurna stand alang wi' thee;
The Crosiers haud thee at a feud,
And they wad kill baith thee and we.'

'O turn thee, turn thee, Johnie Ha',
O turn thee, man, and fight wi' me;
When ye come to Troughend again,
My gude black naig I will gie thee;
He cost full twenty pound o' gowd,
Atween my brother John and me.'

'I mayna turn, I canna turn,
I daurna turn and fight wi' thee;
The Crosiers haud thee at a feud,
And they wad kill baith thee and me.'

'O turn thee, turn thee, Willie Ha',
O turn thee, man, and fight wi' me;
When ye come to Troughend again,
A yoke o' owsen I'll gie thee.'

'I mayna turn, I canna turn,
I daurna turn and fight wi' thee;
The Crosiers haud thee at a feud,
And they wad kill baith thee and me.'

'O turn thee, turn thee, Tommy Ha',
O turn now, man, and fight wi' me;
If ever we come to Troughend again,
My daughter Jean I'll gie to thee.'

'I mayna turn, I canna turn,
I daurna turn and fight wi' thee;
The Crosiers haud thee at a feud,
And they wad kill baith thee and me.'

‘O shame upon ye, traitors a’!
I wish your hames ye may never see;
Ye’ve stown the bridle off my naig,
And I can neither fight nor flee.

‘Ye’ve stown the bridle off my naig,
And ye’ve put water i’ my lang gun;
Ye’ve fixed my sword within the sheath
That out again it winna come.’

He had but time to cross himsel’,
A prayer he hadna time to say,
Till round him cam’ the Crosiers keen,
All riding graith’d and in array.

‘Weel met, weel met, now, Parcy Reed
Thou art the very man we sought;
Owre lang hae we been in your debt,
Now will we pay you as we ought.

‘We’ll pay thee at the nearest tree,
Where we shall hang thee like a hound;’
Brave Parcy rais’d his fankit sword,
And fell’d the foremost to the ground.

Alake, and wae for Parcy Reed!
Alake, he was an unarmed man!
Four weapons pierced him all at once,
As they assail’d him there and than.

They fell upon him all at once,
They mangled him most cruellie,
Their slightest wound might caused his deid,
And they hae gi’en him thirty-three;
They hackit off his hands and feet,
And left him lying on the lee.

‘Now, Parcy Reed, we’ve paid our debt,
Ye canna weel dispute the tale,’
The Crosiers said, and off they rade –
They rade the airt o’ Liddesdale.

It was the hour o’ gloaming gray,
When herds come in frae fauld and pen.
A herd he saw a huntsman lie,
Says he, ‘Can this be Laird Troughen?’

‘There’s some will ca’ me Parcy Reed,
And some will ca’ me Laird Troughen’;
It’s little matter what they ca’ me,
My faes hae made me ill to ken.

‘There’s some will ca’ me Parcy Reed,
And speak my praise in tower and town;
It’s little matter what they do now,
My life-blood rudds the heather brown.

‘There’s some will ca’ me Parcy Reed,
And a’ my virtues say and sing;
I would much rather have just now
A draught o’ water frae the spring!’

The herd flung off his clouted shoon
And to the nearest fountain ran;
He made his bonnet serve a cup,
And wan the blessing o’ the dying man.

‘Now, honest herd, ye maun do mair,
Ye maun do mair, as I you tell;
Ye maun bear tidings to Troughend,
And bear likewise my last farewell.

‘A farewell to my wedded wife,
A farewell to my brother John,
Wha sits into the Troughend tower
Wi’ heart as black as any stone.

‘A farewell to my daughter Jean,
A farewell to my young sons five;
Had they been at their father’s hand,
I had this night been man alive.

‘A farewell to my followers a’,
And a’ my neighbours gude at need;
Bid them think how the treacherous Ha’s
Betrayed the life o’ Parcy Reed.

‘The Laird o’ Clennel bears my bow,
The laird o’ Brandon bears my brand;
When’er they ride i’ the Border-side
They’ll mind the fate o’ the laird Troughend.’

Traditional

Psalm VIII

O Lord our Lord, how excellent in thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, yea, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O Lord our Lord, how excellent in thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

King James Bible

Livingstone the Pilgrim

1 – Great Father of Mankind

OPENING CHORUS

Great Father of mankind,
Who Thy blest son resigned
To seek the faint and blind
Who from Thee roam,
The Last of our dark race
The Lost to worth and grace,
The Least in pow'r and place,
O lead them home.

Father, Thy soldier stands,
With his uplifted hands
Waiting Thy dread commands
In faith arrayed.
Speak but the word, O Lord,
Gird on the sacred sword,
Then be Thy Name adored
Thy will obeyed.

Give light to those who seek,
Give courage to the meek
Give pow'r Thy word to speak,
Thy life to live,
That all beneath the sun
May know Thy vict'ry won,
And Freedom's day begun,
Thy wisdom give.

2 – The Selfless Love of Man

QUARTETTE. S.A.T.B

The selfless love of man,
The fearless love of truth –
These be, since time began,
The beacon light of youth.

O life , complete, secure,
Large-hearted, clear of sight,
All travail to endure
When Love and Truth unite.

O wise and happy fate,
Where heart and mind engage
Their pow'rs to dedicate,
And bless our pilgrimage.

3 – Darkness Prevailing

FULL CHORUS AND BARITONE SOLO

Darkness prevailing,
Heaven's light failing,
Hell's host assailing,
Cursing and wailing.

Black midnight o'er him,
Death's vale before him
Trembling and terror,
Anguish of error;
Faith's lamp relinquish'd,
Almost extinguished!

Darkness prevailing,
Heaven's light failing,
Hell's host assailing,
Cursing and wailing.

By the dark river
Must his soul quiver?
Who shall deliver?
What Pow'r can save?

See how the floods are surging!
Sorrow his soul submerging!
Scarce can he breath or see!
Slow move his feet and slower,
Low burns the lamp and lower,
Must he defeated be?

Fierce foemen round him flocking!
Their cruel voices mocking!
Death's pale advancing wave!
Grief and despair enfold him!
Dire pains of Hell fast hold him!
No hope but in the grave!

Darkness prevailing,
Heaven's light failing,
Hell's host assailing,
Cursing and wailing.

Black midnight o'er him,
Death's vale before him
Trembling and terror,
Anguish of error;
Faith's lamp relinquish'd,
Almost extinguished!

Darkness prevailing,
Heaven's light failing,
Hell's host assailing,
Cursing and wailing.

By the dark river
Must his soul quiver?
Who shall deliver?
What Pow'r can save?

4 – To the Eternal Hills

SOPRANO SOLO

To the eternal hills
 I will uplift mine eyes,
 The Pow'r the flowing stream that fills
 My ev'ry need supplies.
 Thro' night, thro' mists of morn,
 My onward steps He keeps.
 To me His Wisdom he has sworn
 Who slumbers not nor sleeps.

No sun shall smite by day,
 Nor moon by night shall grieve
 The souls that on God's pilgrim way
 Shall in his love believe.
 O Wisdom, Love and Pow'r!
 Be Thy blest presence near,
 That in the dark and evil hour
 My soul may know no fear.

5 – Surely He Cometh

HYMN

(To be sung by the Congregation)

Surely He cometh, and a thousand voices
 Call to the Saints and to the deaf are dumb;
 Surely He cometh,, and the earth rejoices,
 Glad in His coming Who hath sworn "I come."
 This hath He done and shall we not adore Him?
 This shall He do and can we still despair?
 Come let us quickly fling ourselves before Him,
 Cast at his feet the burden of our care.

Witness the men with whom a word he gaineth,
 Bold who were base and voices who were dumb:—
 Battle, we know, so long as life remaineth,
 Battle for all, but these have overcome.
 Who-so hath felt the spirit of the Highest
 Cannot confound, nor doubt him, nor deny;
 Yea, with one voice, O world though thou deniest,
 Stand though on that side for on this I am.

Hear, what a sound, and too divine for hearing,
 Stirrs on the earth and tremble on the air:
 Is it the thunder of the Lord appearing?
 Is it the music of his people's prayer?
 Can it be true the the grace he is declaring?
 O let us trust Him for his words are fair!
 Man, what is this, and why art thou despairing?
 God shall forgive thee all but thy despair.

Flash from our eyes the glow of our thanksgiving,
 Glad and regretful, confident and calm,
 Ten thro' all life and what is after living,
 Thrill to the tireless music of a psalm.
 In death, in life, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning,
 He shall suffice me, for he hath sufficed:
 Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
 Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

C. Sylvester Horne

Appendix 2 - Performances of MacCunn's Choral Works

Title	Date	Town	Country	Performers
Bonny Kilmeny	1888-12-13	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr Kirkhope's Private Choir
Bonny Kilmeny	1889 winter	Wallasey	England	Mr J Ross and Choir
Bonny Kilmeny	1889-01-21	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr Kirkhope's Choir
Bonny Kilmeny	1889-04-05	Newcastle	England	Mr T. Albion Anderson's Amateur Choir
Bonny Kilmeny	1889-04-05	Paisley	Scotland	Paisley Choral Union
Bonny Kilmeny	1889-05-07	North Berwick	Scotland	North Berwick Musical Society
Bonny Kilmeny	1890-02-	Bridge of Allan	Scotland	Bridge of Allan Choral Society
Bonny Kilmeny	1890-03-08	Crystal Palace	London	Crystal Palace Choir and Orchestra
Bonny Kilmeny	1890-03-19	Edinburgh	Scotland	Infirmary Street U.P. Church Musical Association
Bonny Kilmeny	1890-04-25	Aberfeldy	Scotland	Aberfeldy Choral Union
Bonny Kilmeny	1890-06-09	Basingstoke	England	Basingstoke Harmonic Society
Bonny Kilmeny	1891-04-16	Bristol	England	Mr John Barrett's Choir
Bonny Kilmeny	1891-11-24	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr Kirkhope's Choir
Bonny Kilmeny	1892-03-17	Leeds	England	Leeds Scottish Amateur Vocal Society
Bonny Kilmeny	1892-04	Dundee	Scotland	Dundee Choral Union
Bonny Kilmeny	1892-05-07	Cheltenham	England	Herr Lortzing's Choir
Bonny Kilmeny	1892-06-06	Glasgow	Scotland	Bridgeton Choral Society,
Bonny Kilmeny	1893-04-02	Dalkeith	Scotland	Dalkeith Philharmonic Society
Bonny Kilmeny	1893-12-12	Liverpool	England	Post Office Choral Society
Bonny Kilmeny	1894 or earlier	England	England	English public school (unnamed)
Bonny Kilmeny	1901/2	Leith	Scotland	Mr Pettie's North Leith Singing Class
Bonny Kilmeny	1905-05-03	Bognor	England	Bognor Music Society
Bonny Kilmeny	1908-06-01	Kensington	London	Kensington Presbyterian Choral Society
Bonny Kilmeny	1912-06-25	Edinburgh	Scotland	Provincial Training College Choir
Bonny Kilmeny	1921(winter)	Lochgelly	Scotland	Lochgelly Choral Union
Bonny Kilmeny	1924-11-07	Glasgow	Scotland	For the opening of Glasgow's new radio station premises
Bonny Kilmeny	1925-04	Dunfermline	Scotland	Dunfermline Choral Union
Bonny Kilmeny	1925-09-19	Aberdeen (BBC)	Scotland	2BD Operatic Choir and Orchestra - radio broadcast
Bonny Kilmeny	1928-02-24	Linlithgow	Scotland	Linlithgow Choral Union
Bonny Kilmeny	1928-04	Jedburgh	Scotland	Jedburgh Choral Union

Appendix 2 - Performances of MacCunn's Choral Works

Title	Date	Town	Country	Performers
Bonny Kilmeny	1929-07-04	Glasgow (BBC)	Scotland	The Station Choir
Bonny Kilmeny	1935-04-24	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr W.B. Moonie's Choir
Bonny Kilmeny	1938-03-12	Edinburgh	Scotland	Corstophine Philharmonic Society
Bonny Kilmeny	1938-03-23	Inverness	Scotland	Inverness Choral Society
Bonny Kilmeny	1938-12-06	Galashiels	Scotland	Galashiels Choral Union - Live radio broadcast
Cameronian's Dream	1890-01-27	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr Kirkhope's Choir
Cameronian's Dream	1890-01-30	Glasgow	Scotland	Glasgow Choral Union
Cameronian's Dream	1890-04	Glasgow	Scotland	Bridgeton Choral Society,
Cameronian's Dream	1890-12-06	Crystal Palace	London	Crystal Palace Choir and Orchestra
Cameronian's Dream	1891-12-21	Edinburgh	Scotland	Edinburgh Choral Union
Cameronian's Dream	1892-12-03	Crystal Palace	London	Crystal Palace Choir and Orchestra
Cameronian's Dream	1899-12-18	Edinburgh	Scotland	Edinburgh Choral Union
Cameronian's Dream	1913-03-07	Edinburgh	Scotland	Edinburgh Royal Choral Union
Cameronian's Dream	1924-10-24	Glasgow (BBC)	Scotland	The Station Choir [BBC Glasgow] - radio broadcast
Cameronian's Dream	1925-09-19	Aberdeen (BBC)	Scotland	2BD Operatic Choir and Orchestra - radio broadcast
Cameronian's Dream	1926-03-09	Dunfermline	Scotland	Dunfermline Choral Union
Cameronian's Dream	1929-08-01	Aberdeen (BBC)	Scotland	Station [2BD] Choir and Orchestra - radio broadcast
Cameronian's Dream	1937-10-29	Edinburgh (BBC)	Scotland	BBC Singers and Scottish Orchestra - radio broadcast
Death of Parcy Reed	1925-03-25	London (Queen's Hall)	England	Barclay's Bank Musical Society
Death of Parcy Reed	1927/8	London (Queen's Hall)	England	Barclay's Bank Musical Society
Death of Parcy Reed	1928/9	London (Queen's Hall)	England	Barclay's Bank Musical Society
Death of Parcy Reed	1931/2?	London (Queen's Hall)	London	Barclay's Bank Musical Society
Death of Parcy Reed	1931-05-30	Bristol	England	Bristol University Men's Choir
Death of Parcy Reed	1934	London (Queen's Hall)	London	Barclay's Bank Musical Society
Death of Parcy Reed	1934/5	London (Queen's Hall)	England	Barclay's Bank Musical Society
Jolly Goshawk	1920-03-30	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr De La Haye's Choir
Jolly Goshawk	1921-04-17	Sheffield	England	Sheffield Amateur Musical Society
Kinmont Willie	1920-03-30	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr De La Haye's Choir
Kinmont Willie	1921-04-17	Sheffield	England	Sheffield Amateur Musical Society
Lamkin	1921-04-17	Sheffield	England	Sheffield Amateur Musical Society
Lamkin	1933 (March)	Glasgow	Scotland	Glasgow Grand Opera Society

Appendix 2 - Performances of MacCunn's Choral Works

Title	Date	Town	Country	Performers
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1888-12-18	Glasgow	Scotland	Glasgow Choral Union
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1889 Winter	Paisley	Scotland	Paisley Choral Union
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1889/90	Greenock	Scotland	Greenock Choral Union
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1889/90	Kilmarnock	Scotland	Kilmarnock Philharmonic Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1889-02-16	Crystal Palace	London	Crystal Palace Choir and Orchestra
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1889-10-24	Liverpool	England	Liverpool Philharmonic Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1890 (winter)	Girvan	Scotland	Girvan Choral Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1890-01-30	Glasgow	Scotland	Glasgow Choral Union
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1890-03-27	Birmingham	England	Festival Choral Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1890-12-03	Bradford	England	Bradford Technical College Musical Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1890-12-03	Tottenham	England	Chorus conducted by Mr G.Cox
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1891-04	New York, NY	USA	New York Chorus Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1893 spring	Ilkley	England	Ilkley Vocal Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1896/7 season	Greenock	Scotland	Greenock Choral Union
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1897-04-29	London	London	Barnes Choral Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1900-11-26	Melbourne	Australia	Melbourne Philharmonic Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1904-05-03	Sheffield	England	Sheffield Amateur Musical Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1905-11-28	Leeds	England	New Leeds Choral Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1906-02-15	Plymouth	England	Mutley & Mannermead Choral Class
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1907-03-20	London	London	South London Choral Association
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1909 (winter)	Streatham	England	Stratham Hill Choral Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1909-04-27	Stony Stratford	England	Stoney Stratford Musical
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1910-02-03	Launceston	England	Launceston Choral Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1910-04-21	London (Queen's Hall)	London	West London Choral Union
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1910-12	Sheffield	England	Norton Lees Choral Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1911/12	Richmond (London)	London	Richmond Philharmonic Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1911-05-12	Glasgow	Scotland	Glasgow Choral Union
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1912-02-28	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr Moonie's Choir
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1912-12-14	Liverpool	England	Post Office Choral Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1913-04-14	Leek (Staffs)	England	Leek Amateur Musical Society

Appendix 2 - Performances of MacCunn's Choral Works

Title	Date	Town	Country	Performers
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1914-04-25	Bristol	England	West Bristol Choral Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1930-11-05	Galashiels	Scotland	Galashiels Choral Society
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1932-03-30	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr Moonie's Choir
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1932-12-22	Glasgow	Scotland	Glasgow Choral Union
Lay of the Last Minstrel	1977-05-01	Edinburgh	Scotland	BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra
Lay of the Last Minstrel	2004-05-23	Meirrose	Scotland	Eildon Singers
Livingstone the Pilgrim	1913-03-19	London (Albert Hall)	London	Massed choir of the London Missionary Society
Livingstone the Pilgrim (part)	1924-07 and 08	London (Wembley)	London	Empire Exhibition Choir
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1888-02-18	Crystal Palace	London	Crystal Palace Choir and Orchestra
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1888-12-08	Crystal Palace	London	Crystal Palace Choir and Orchestra
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1888-12-28	Greenock	Scotland	Greenock Choral Union
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1889/90	Sunderland	England	Sunderland Philharmonic Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1889-03-25	Dundee	Scotland	Amateur Choral Union
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1889-04-1	Glasgow	Scotland	South Side Choral Union
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1890-03-??	Edinburgh	Scotland	Hope Park Musical Association
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1890-04	Washington, DC	USA	Chorus Society of Washington
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1891-04-08	Plymouth	England	Plymouth Choral Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1891-05-12	Sheffield	England	Sheffield Amateur Musical Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1891-06	Springfield, Mass	USA	Hampden County Musical Association
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1892-04	Birkenhead	England	St Cecilia Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1893-04-29	Crystal Palace	London	Crystal Palace Choir and Orchestra
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1893-06	London (St James's Hall)	London	Handel Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1893-12-19	Glasgow	Scotland	Glasgow Choral Union
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1894-04-06	Oundle	England	Oundle Choral Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1894-05-08	Bedford	England	Bedford Choral Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1894-11-22	London	London	South London Choral Association
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1895/6 season	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr Millar Craig's Choir
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1895-04-09	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr Millar Craig's Choir
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1896-02-07	Cardiff	Wales	Cardiff Musical Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1896-02-10	Poole	England	Poole Musical Association
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1897-03-08	Downend (Bristol area)	England	Downend Choral Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1897-10-07	Wellington (Opera House)	New Zealand	Mr Maughan Barnett's Musical Association
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1897-12-15	Salisbury	England	Sarum Choral Society

Appendix 2 - Performances of MacCunn's Choral Works

Title	Date	Town	Country	Performers
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1899/90	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr Moonie's Choir
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1899-04-04	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr Millar Craig's Choir
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1899-12-05	Catford	England	Catford Choral Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1900-04-25	Tynemouth	England	Tynemouth Amateur Vocal Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1900-04-28	Crystal Palace	London	Crystal Palace Choir and Orchestra
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1900-05-01	Sheffield	England	Sheffield Amateur Musical Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1901/2	Edinburgh	Scotland	Mr Moonie's Choir
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1902-11-29	Cottingley (W. Riding)	England	Cottingley Choral Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1905-02-05	Boscombe	England	St Clement's Choral Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1906-7	Bermondsey	London	Bermondsey Settlement Choral & Orch Union
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1907-04-12	Aberdeen	Scotland	Rosemount Parish Church Choir
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1908-02-28	Amersham	England	Amersham Choral Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1909-01-19	Toronto (Massey Hall)	Canada	National Chorus of Toronto
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1909-01-21	Market Drayton	England	Market Drayton Musical Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1909-10	Glasgow	Scotland	Teachers' Choral Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1909-11-28	Crystal Palace	London	Crystal Palace Choir and Orchestra
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1910-06-25	London	London	Royal Normal Coll & Acad of Music for the Blind
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1910-12-09	London (Portman Rooms)	London	Orpheus Choral Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1911-10-26	Penrith	England	Penrith Musical Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1911-11-29	Belfast	Ireland	Philharmonic Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1912-04-17	Exeter	England	Exeter Oratorio Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1920-02-01	Liverpool	England	Liverpool Philharmonic Choir
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1924 (summer)	Haileybury	England	Haileybury School Choir
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1927 (Christmas)	Malvern	England	Malvern School Choir
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1929-07-04	Glasgow (BBC)	Scotland	The Station Choir
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1930-12-02	Glasgow	Scotland	Glasgow Choral Union
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1936-03-11	Greenock	Scotland	Greenock Philharmonic Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1938-03-23	Inverness	Scotland	Inverness Choral Society
Lord Ullin's Daughter	1947	?Brisbane	Australia	?Brisbane ABC Singers
Psalms VIII	1890-05-01	Edinburgh	Scotland	Edinburgh Choral Union
Psalms VIII	1890-05-3	Edinburgh	Scotland	Edinburgh Choral Union

Appendix 2 - Performances of MacCunn's Choral Works

Title	Date	Town	Country	Performers
Queen Hynde of Caledon	1892-01-28	Glasgow	Scotland	Glasgow Choral Union
Queen Hynde of Caledon	1892-03-05	Crystal Palace	London	Crystal Palace Choir and Orchestra
Wreck of the Hesperus	1905-08-25	London (Coliseum)	England	Coliseum Auditorium Choir
Wreck of the Hesperus	1906-05-02	London	London	Richmond New Philharmonic Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1907 (winter)	London	London	Central London Choral Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1907-04-02	Edinburgh	Scotland	Fettes College Choir
Wreck of the Hesperus	1908-03-13	Edinburgh	Scotland	Edinburgh Southern Choral Association
Wreck of the Hesperus	1909 (winter)	London	London	Stroud Green Choral Association
Wreck of the Hesperus	1909-01-11	Hanley (North Staffs)	England	Mr H. Sheridan's Orchestral & Choral Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1909-04-02	London	London	Battersea, Clapham & Wandsworth Choral Union
Wreck of the Hesperus	1910-01-25	Farnham	England	Farnham Musical Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1910-04-21	London (Queen's Hall)	London	West London Choral Union
Wreck of the Hesperus	1910-04-27	Hughenden	England	Hughenden & District Choral Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1910-05-07	London	London	South East London Choral Union
Wreck of the Hesperus	1911-01-17	Woking	England	Woking Musical Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1911-01-26	London (Royal Horticultural Hall)	London	St Margaret's Musical Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1911-04-08	London	London	Hackney and Finsbury Choral Union
Wreck of the Hesperus	1911-05-10	Stratford (Town Hall)	London	Waldstein Academy Choral Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1911-08-19	Sydney	Australia	Radwick District Musical Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1911-11-30	Edmonton	England	All Saints' Choral Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1911-12-26	Morrison	Wales	Tabernacle United Choir
Wreck of the Hesperus	1912 (winter)	London	London	East London Choral Union
Wreck of the Hesperus	1912-03-27	Edinburgh	Scotland	Western Choral Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1912-05-16	Solihull	England	Solihull Musical Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1913 (winter)	London	London	Hither Green Choral & Orchestral Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	1913-12-08	Purley	England	Purley Choral Union
Wreck of the Hesperus	1928-03	Glasgow	Scotland	Shawlands Choral Union
Wreck of the Hesperus	1928-05-21	Caerphilly	Wales	Caerphilly & District Choral Soc
Wreck of the Hesperus	1930-01-24	Blyton, Lincs	England	Blyton Choral Society
Wreck of the Hesperus	2005-05-14	London	England	London Oriana Choir
Wreck of the Hesperus	2007-06-30	London	England	London Oriana Choir

Selective Worklist

(arranged by genre)

Choral Music

The Moss Rose (James MacCunn after Krummacher translated by J. Brainard) Cantata for soprano, tenor, baritone, SATB and orchestra (1884)

Bonny Kilmeny (James MacCunn after James Hogg) Cantata for soprano, tenor, baritone, SATB and orchestra, op. 2 (1888) Edinburgh 1888

Lord Ullin's Daughter (Thomas Campbell) Ballad for SATB and orchestra, op. 4 (1888) London 1888

The Lay of the Last Minstrel (James MacCunn after Sir Walter Scott) Dramatic cantata for soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone, SATB and orchestra, op. 7 (1888) London 1888

The Cameronian's Dream (James Hyslop) Ballad for baritone, SATB and orchestra, op. 10 (1889) Edinburgh 1889

Psalm viii for SATB and Organ (1890) Dundee 1890

Queen Hynde of Caledon (James MacCunn after James Hogg) Dramatic cantata for 2 sopranos, tenor, baritone, SATB and orchestra, op. 13 (1892) London 1892

The Wreck of the Hesperus (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow) Dramatic ballad for SATB and orchestra (1905) London 1905

Livingstone the Pilgrim (C. Sylvester Horne) Cantata for soprano and baritone, S.A.T.B. quartet, narrator, SATB, organ (1912) London [1913]

Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads for Chorus and Orchestra (1913) London 1913

Kinmont Willie (SATB); *The Jolly Goshawk* (SATB); *Lamkin* (SATB.); *The Death of Percy Reed* (TTBB)

Part-songs (SATB unless otherwise noted, * indicates song was published)

If thou art sleeping maiden (Longfellow) (1883)

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes (Shakespeare) (1883)

Oh where art thou dreaming? (Thomas Moore) (1884)*

Child of the summer (Anon) (1886)

I've been a roaming (Anon) (1886)*

King Death was a rare old fellow (Barry Cornwall) (1886)

Love thee dearest, love thee (Thomas Moore)(1886)

Why, lovely charmer (Anon) (1886)

It was a lass for love a-seeking (Mary E. Wilkins) (c. 1888)*

Hark forward (*Songs of the Chase*) (c.1889)*

It was a lass (Mary E. Wilkins)(c. 1889)*

O mistress mine (Shakespeare) (c.1889)*

There is a garden in her face (Richard Alison)(c.1889)*

Soldier rest (Walter Scott) (c. 1893)*

Another glass before we go (William Black) ATTBB (1913 or earlier)*

In the primrose time o' the year (William Black) (1913 or earlier)*

Star of descending night (Ossian) TTBB (1913 or earlier)

Night (Richard H. Barham) SSA (1914)*

O my love leave me not (Gaelic, trans. by Mrs F. Grant) SSA (1914)*

On a faded violet (Shelley) SSA [1914?]*

Whither? (Longfellow) SSA (1914)*

Ye little birds (Alexander Campbell) (n.d.)

Solo songs

c. 100, mostly written 1890–1900

Stage Works

Jeanie Deans (Joseph Bennett after Sir Walter Scott) grand opera in 4 acts, op. 4 (1894 Edinburgh), London 1894

Diarmid (John Douglas Sutherland Campbell, 9th Duke of Argyll) grand opera in 4 acts, op. 34 (1897 London), London 1897

Breast of Light (Duke of Argyll) grand opera, op. 36 unfinished, (composed [c1898])

The Masque of War and Peace (Louis N. Parker) (1900) London 1900

Ballet (E.W. Royce) (composed 1905)

The Golden Girl (Basil Hood) light opera in 2 acts, (1905 Birmingham) London [1905]

Prue (Charles Taylor) light opera in 2 acts, unfinished, (composed 1906)

The Pageant of Darkness and Light (John Oxenham) Stage pageant in 5 episodes (1908 London) London 1908

The Sailor and the Nursemaid (Charles Childerstone) sketch (composed 1912)

Additional numbers for Herbert E. Haines/ Seymour Hicks *The Talk of the Town* (1905); Oscar Straus/ Felix Dörmann/ Leopold Jacobson *A Waltz Dream* (1908)

Orchestral Works

Cior Mhor overture (1885) MS lost

The Land of the Mountain and the Flood Concert overture, op. 3 (1887) London 1889

The Ship o' the Fiend Orchestral ballad, op. 5 (1888) London 1890

The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow Ballad-overture for orchestra, op. 6 (1888) London 1891

Highland Memories Suite op. 30 (1896) London 1897

Suite of 4 Dances (1904–9)

Chamber and Piano Music

Three Romantic Pieces Cello and piano, op. 27 (1894) London 1894

Six Scotch Dances Piano, op. 28 (1896) London 1896

Hornpipe Piano (1912) London 1912

Valse gracieuse Piano (1912) London 1912

Amourette; Blush; Constancy; Hope Cello and piano (1914) London 1914 (published separately)

Eglantine; L'Inconnue Cello and piano/ Violin and piano (1914) London 1914 (published separately)

Romance in G Violin and piano (1914) London 1915

Arrangements

Songs and Ballads of Scotland (1891) Edinburgh 1891

Writings

'A Scottish School of Music' in *The Dunedin Magazine* 1, 1913, 153–8

Selective Worklist

(arranged chronologically)

Date of composition	Title	Genre
1882	<i>The Moss Rose (MR1)</i>	Choral
1883	<i>Psalm C</i>	Choral
	If thou art sleeping maiden	Part-song
	Sleep dwell upon thine eyes	Part-song
	<i>The Changing Year</i>	Choral
1884	<i>The Moss Rose (MR2)</i>	Choral
	Oh where art thou dreaming?	Part-song
1885	<i>Cior Mhor</i>	Orchestral
1886	Child of the summer	Part-song
	I've been a roaming	Part-song
	King Death was a rare old fellow	Part-song
	Love thee dearest, love thee	Part-song
	Why, lovely charmer	Part-song
1887	<i>The Land of the Mountain and the Flood</i>	Orchestral
1888	<i>Bonny Kilmeny</i>	Choral
	<i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>	Choral
	<i>Lord Ullin's Daughter</i>	Choral
	<i>The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow</i>	Orchestral
	<i>The Ship o' the Fiend</i>	Orchestral
1888	It was a lass for love a-seeking	Part-song
1889	<i>The Cameronian's Dream</i>	Choral
1889	<i>Psalm VIII</i>	Choral
1889	Hark forward	Part-song
1889	It was a lass	Part-song
1889	O mistress mine	Part-song
1889	There is a garden in her face	Part-song
1892	<i>Queen Hynde of Caledon</i>	Choral
1894	<i>Three Romantic Pieces</i> Cello and piano	Chamber
	<i>Jeanie Deans</i>	Stage
1896	<i>Six Scotch Dances</i> Piano	Chamber
	<i>Highland Memories</i>	Orchestral
1897	<i>Diarmid</i>	Stage
1898	<i>Breast of Light</i>	Stage
1900	<i>The Masque of War and Peace</i>	Stage
1904-9	<i>Suite of 4 Dances</i>	Stage
1905	<i>The Wreck of the Hesperus</i>	Choral
	Ballet	Stage
	<i>The Golden Girl</i>	Stage
1906	<i>Prue</i>	Stage
1908	<i>The Pageant of Darkness and Light</i>	Stage

1912	<i>Hornpipe</i> Piano	Chamber
	<i>Valse gracieuse</i> Piano	Chamber
	<i>Livingstone the Pilgrim</i>	Choral
	<i>The Sailor and the Nursemaid</i>	Stage
1913	<i>Kinmont Willie</i>	Choral
	<i>Lamkin</i>	Choral
	<i>The Death of Percy Reed</i>	Choral
	<i>The Jolly Goshawk</i>	Choral
1914	Star of descending night	Part-song
	<i>Amourette</i> Cello and piano	Chamber
	<i>Blush</i> Cello and piano	Chamber
	<i>Constancy</i> Cello and piano	Chamber
	<i>Eglantine</i> Cello violin and piano	Chamber
	<i>Hope</i> Cello and piano	Chamber
	<i>L'Inconnue</i> Cello violin and piano	Chamber
	<i>Romance in G</i> Violin and piano	Chamber
	Night	Part-song
	O my love leave me not	Part-song
	Whither?	Part-song
	On a faded violet	Part-song

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Quiz (Glasgow)
Scotsman (Edinburgh)
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The Times
Windsor Magazine

¹ Place of publication is London, unless otherwise stated.

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London: Paterson, 1888

Cameronian's Dream: a Ballad for Baritone Solo, Chorus, and Orchestra

Poem by James Hyslop; Composed by Hamish MacCunn (Op. 10)
Edinburgh: Paterson, 1889

Four Scottish Traditional Border Ballads for Chorus and Orchestra

[*Kinmont Willie, The Jolly Goshawk, Lamkin, The Death of Parcy Reed*]
by Hamish MacCunn.
London: Weekes, 1913. Plate number 6357

Lay of the Last Minstrel: a Dramatic Cantata for Soli, Chorus, and Orchestra

Arranged and Adapted in Scenes from Sir Walter Scott's Poem by James MacCunn;
the Music Composed by Hamish MacCunn (Op. 7).
London: Novello, 1888. Plate number 8028

Livingstone the Pilgrim: a Cantata [for] Soprano and Baritone Solos, Quartette, Narrator, Chorus, and Organ

Written by C. Silvester Horne, M.A.; Composed by Hamish MacCunn
London: Weekes, 1913

Lord Ullin's Daughter: a Ballad for Chorus and Orchestra

The Poetry by Thomas Campbell; the Music Composed by Hamish MacCunn
(Op.4) London: Novello, 1888. Plate number 8013

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Dundee: Methven Simpson, 1890

Queen Hynde of Caledon: a Dramatic Cantata for Soli, Chorus, and Orchestra in Four Scenes Founded on Hogg's Poem "Queen Hynde"

Arranged and Written by James MacCunn; the Music Composed by Hamish
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London: Chappell, 1892. Plate number 19138

Wreck of the Hesperus

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London: Novello, 1905. Plate number 12168

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