

Ferintosh

Laura Risk (violin) — Abby Newton (cello) — Kim Robertson (celtic harp)

With guest dancer
Sabra MacGillivray

The Forest Set

The Forest of Ga-ick (strathspey)

Sud an Gleann 'Sam Bi Na Feidh [*The Forest Where the Deer Resort*] (strathspey)

Calum Figheadair [*The Kilchattan Wedding*] (reel)

William Marshall (1748-1833)

probably Simon Fraser (1773-1852)

probably Simon Fraser

William Marshall was employed by the Duke of Gordon as butler, house steward, and factor (estate manager). He was a man of many interests, including architecture, law, astronomy, clock making, falconry, dancing, and athletics. A skilled violinist with over two hundred and fifty compositions to his credit, he became recognized as one of Scotland's major composers of fiddle music. *The Forest of Ga-ick* is in Marshall's third collection (1822). Captain Simon Fraser was another talented amateur musician of that era. Fraser wrote in the notes to his collection that *The Forest Where the Deer Resort* and *The Kilchattan Wedding* were "sung with inimitable humour by Alexander Fraser, Esq. Of Culduthel and the editor's grandfather."

Captain Simon Fraser of the Highlands

Airidh nam Badan [*The Glen of Copsewood*] (air)

Braighe Bhanbh [*The Highlands of Banffshire*] (strathspey)

A' Chridhealachd [*The Merry Making*] (reel)

probably Simon Fraser

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Captain Simon Fraser lived in Inverness-shire, near Loch Ness. He was said to "make the fiddle speak Gaelic" beautifully. The tunes in this first medley are all taken from Fraser's 1815 collection *The Airs and Melodies Peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland and The Isles*. Fraser's patrons wanted him to collect authentic traditional melodies, but Fraser remained vague about the source of many of the tunes; a good portion of these are probably his own.

Wallace & Myrtle

Wallace March

The Myrtle (Sonata from *Airs for the Seasons*)

Moderato - Allegro - Minuetto: Vivace

Unknown/ Burk Thumoth (18th century)

James Oswald (1710-1769)

Wallace March is found in Burk Thumoth's *Twelve Scotch and Twelve Irish Airs* (1743-4). Its title almost certainly refers to the great Scottish freedom fighter William Wallace (1270-1305).

James Oswald, a dancing master and cellist, composed two sets of forty-eight short sonatas called the *Airs for the Seasons*. The sonatas are grouped by season, and each one is named after a flower or shrub. *The Myrtle* is from *Summer* in the second set (1761). Myrtle is dedicated to Venus, and girls would place myrtle under their pillows on St. John's Eve and dream of their chosen lover in the hope the dream would come true. Royal brides in Britain still carry a sprig of myrtle in their bouquets, grown from a sprig in Queen Victoria's bridal bouquet, which was afterwards planted.

Inisheer

My Love's Bonny When She Smiles On Me

Come Sweet Lass

Thomas Walsh (contemporary Irish)

probably James Oswald

probably James Oswald

My Love's Bonny When She Smiles On Me remains popular to this day in Scottish country dancing. James Oswald's *A Second Collection of Curious Scots Tunes* (1744) is the source, as well as for *Come Sweet Lass*. *Come Sweet Lass* first appeared in 1698 under the title *Greenwich Park*, and appears to have been a theater song from the start.

Roslyn Castle (air)

Fingal's Cave (marching air)

Wha'll Be King But Charlie (jig)

Unknown

Unknown

Unknown

Two Great Houses

Ceann-ràra [*Kinrara*] (reel)

Forneth House (air)

probably Simon Fraser

Robert Petrie (1767-1830)

"This sprightly air commemorates the mirth and festivity kept up by the late Duchess of Gordon at Kinrara, every memorial of whom calling to mind how much she is missed," Simon Fraser wrote about *Ceann-ràra* in the notes to his collection. William Marshall also composed a tune for Kinrara. Robert Petrie claimed *Forneth House a Strathspey* as his own composition in his third collection (1800). He had also previously published it in his first collection (1790). Niel Gow published it with some changes and no attribution under the title *Mrs. Crawford's Favourite* in his fourth collection (1800), although his sons John and Andrew Gow used the *Forneth House* title in their Collection of Slow Airs... (c. 1795). Scots poet Robert Tannahill (1774-1810) composed a song to *Forneth House* beginning "Now Winter, wi' his cloudy brow, is far ayont yon mountains."

Ferintosh

Ferintosh [*An Tòiseachd*] (strathspey)

Irvin Stiple (reel)

John Howat's Reel

probably Simon Fraser

Unknown, from Robert Bremner

Hugh Dunlop

About *Ferintosh*, Simon Fraser wrote: "This air celebrates the district of Ferintosh, so famous for the production of the genuine Highland beverage, called whisky." *Irvin Stiple* (Irvine Steeple) comes from Robert Bremner's first collection (c. 1751-61). Neil Stewart published it under the title "Indernytie's Rant" in 1762. *John Howat's Reel* is one of a number of tunes in Kerr's Collection of Merry Melodies (published from 1875 on).

– INTERMISSION –

Black Jock (jig with variations)

Charles MacLean (c.1700-1773) et al., from Robert Bremner

Black Jock/Joke is known to have been played in Henry Carey's burlesque stage piece *Chrononhotonthologos*. The melody was also used for several different bawdy songs, although Thomas Moore later wrote the text "Sublime was the Warning" to the tune. The music is written for *scordatura* violin, meaning that the strings are tuned differently from standard (*g, d', a', e''*). In this case the bottom two strings are tuned one whole-tone higher (*a, e', a', e''*), producing a fuller and more ringing sound. The long variation set was popular with the Scottish crossover composers because it could make "big music" out of "small music." Pibroch, a Highland bagpipe tradition involving intricate ornamentation and variation, had made variation sets a familiar concept in Scotland. Fortuitously, variations were also a significant form in European art-music. In his youth, classical composer Muzio Clementi wrote a set of virtuosic keyboard variations on *Black Joke* (1777); his brilliant performances of this and other difficult pieces dazzled his audiences in London.

The Wauking of the Fauld (marching air)

Unknown

Scots poet Allan Ramsay (1686–1758) composed a song to this melody. It became part of his pastoral drama *The Gentle Shepherd*, published in the 1720s. It was also published in *Orpheus Caledonius* (1733). James Oswald printed an instrumental setting of the tune in *The Caledonian Pocket Companion* book 3 (1743-48). Ramsay's verses begin: "My Peggy is a young thing ... yet well I like to meet her at the wauking of the fauld." "Wauking" (sometimes "Wauking," "Waaking," "Waulking," or "Wakin") means "watching" and "fauld" refers to a sheep fold. Watching over the fold when the lambs were weaned or the sheep milked provided an opportunity for young men and women to spend time together.

The Virgin's Bower (Sonata from *Airs for the Seasons*)

James Oswald

Allegro - Adagio - Giga: Vivace

The Virgin's Bower comes from the second set of James Oswald's *Airs for the Summer* (1761). Virgin's bower, or *Clematis virginiana*, is native to eastern North America and bears small, white, fragrant flowers in mid-to-late summer. With the right support it easily grows into a leafy shelter. It was brought into cultivation only a few decades before Oswald wrote the sonata.

Glenlivet (reel)

Unknown

This Scottish reel first appeared in print in volume 1 of *Kerr's Merry Melodies*, published around 1875.

Mairi Young and Fair

A Mhàiri Bhàn Òg [*Mairi Young and Fair*] (slow air)

Duncan Ban MacIntyre (mid-1700s)

Rowing from Isla to Uist (slow jig) Unknown

A' Bhliadhna gus an Aimsir So [*New Year's Tunes*] (two jigs) Unknown

A Mhàiri Bhàn Òg (Mairi Young and Fair) is the opening of a song to his bride composed by Duncan Ban MacIntyre some time towards the middle of the 18th century. According to Simon Fraser, MacIntyre wrote the words to go with this tune. It is perhaps the most famous of all Gaelic love-songs, and Mairi seems to have been an ideal wife, adding to her wifely attributes the skill of being a fine whisky distiller. This set is drawn from both the Simon Fraser (1816) and Patrick McDonald (1784) collections. From the former comes *Rowing from Isla to Uist*, and from the latter *A' Bhliadhna gus an Aimsir So* (New Year's Tunes).

Tullochgorum

Tullochgorum [*The Blue-Green Hill*] (strathspey)

Unknown, variations by J. Scott Skinner (1843-1927)

Bernard's Well (reel)

Unknown, from Robert Bremner (c.1713-1789)

Neil Roy (reel)

Unknown

The prolific Scottish composer J. Scott Skinner (1843-1927) wrote these famous variations on *Tullochgorum*. The two-part traditional strathspey was first published c. 1751-61 by Robert Bremner. St. Bernard's Well is in Edinburgh. Its sulphurous water was considered to have healing properties. The reel named after it comes from Neil Stewart's collection (1761-62), where it also appears as *Shamboe Breeches*. *Neil Roy* seems to be derived from *The Bonny Lass of Luss* in Bremner's collection. The *Neil Roy* setting did not appear in print until the late nineteenth century.

Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonie Doon

James Miller and Stephen Clarke (18th century)

Robert Burns (1759-1796) set his poem *Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonie Doon* to a traditional melody, and published it in the *Scots Musical Museum* (1792). In *Early Scottish Melodies* (1900), John Glen relates that, according to a letter written by Robert Burns, the rudiments of the melody were composed by James Miller and finished by Stephen Clarke (music editor of the *Scots Musical Museum*). Supposedly Miller had wanted to compose a Scots air and Clarke had jokingly advised him to "keep to the black keys of the harpsichord." *Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonie Doon* is in fact pentatonic and can be played entirely upon the black keys.

Tunes for the Birds

Logan Water (song air)

Unknown, from Francesco Barsanti (1690-1760)

The Blackbird (Irish set dance hornpipe)

Unknown, from Francis O'Neill (1849-1936)

Lark in the Morning (jig)

Unknown, from Francis O'Neill

Bog an Lochan [*The Water Ouzel*] (strathspey)

Unknown

The Corbey and the Pyett (reel)

Unknown, from James Oswald

Green Grow the Rashes (reel)

Unknown, from Robert Bremner

Logan Water must have been a well-known melody, as Allan Ramsay directed that one of his songs in *The Tea-Table Miscellany* (1724) should be sung to the melody of *Logan Water*. The blackbird was used in songs as a symbol for various members of the royal Stuart family, and also as a symbol for Ireland. O'Neill remarked in 1910 that *The Blackbird* was a "universally known" tune. Note its unusual fifteen-bar structure. *Lark in the Morning* can be found in O'Neill's *The Music of Ireland* (1903). *Bog an Lochan* was first published in Robert Bremner's collection (c. 1751-61). It is played as a stepdance strathspey in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, as in Ferintosh's setting. *The Corbey and the Pyett* comes from James Oswald's *Caledonian Pocket Companion*. A corbie is a raven or crow and a pyett is a magpie. The melody to *Green Grow the*

Rashes appears in seventeenth-century manuscripts and was first published by Robert Bremner. Robert Burns rewrote a song to the air, which appears in the *Scots Musical Museum* (1787).

About the Music

The end of the Baroque era coincided with the “Golden Age” of Scottish fiddling, a time when rural fiddler and trained concert musician alike participated in the bloom of a national music. Normally today we think of art/classical music and traditional/folk music as being two separate cultures, but the distinction wasn't always so clear. In eighteenth-century Scotland, the groups of people participating in these two musics overlapped considerably. Members of all classes of society entertained themselves with their native music, and because of the political situation at the beginning of the century, much of the upper class held onto their native music to bolster their national pride. In Scottish traditional music, chosen airs and dance tunes are usually arranged into a medley, performed as a continuous stream of melodies, often increasing in speed as the tune types change, for example from slow air to march to strathspey to reel. Dance has always been an important part of this music, in the form of individual stepdance or highland dance, as well as social square dance or country dance. In Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, a distinctive fiddle and dance style has been preserved that is strongly rooted in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Gaelic Scottish Highland tradition.

About Ferintosh

According to the Twentieth century dictionary, “Ferintosh” was the name of a widely appreciated whisky distilled at Ferintosh, Ross, in the eighteenth century. The word remained in use until the early twentieth century to refer to whisky in general. In addition, the name refers to a village in the Black Isle of Scotland and a well known strathspey (a type of Scottish dance tune).

Ferintosh is now also an all-star trio of traditional musicians who perform Celtic and Baroque music. The three musicians joined forces after recording the CD *Castles, Kirks, and Caves*. Their sound has been described as “chamber folk” because it combines the soulfulness and energy of traditional Scottish music with the precision and color of Baroque music. The individual musicians are David Greenberg, fiddle; Abby Newton, cello; and Kim Robertson, harp. They are joined tonight by well-known Highland and Step dancer Sabra MacGillivray.

Their latest recording *Ferintosh* (September 2003) is available tonight.

Now living in Montreal, LAURA RISK grew up in the thriving San Francisco Scottish fiddle scene, learning her craft from master fiddler Alasdair Fraser. Recognized for her expressive, versatile playing and her unusual interpretations of traditional Scottish and Québécois tunes, Laura has performed and taught across North America, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand. In addition to her work with Ferintosh, she currently performs as a soloist and with Triptych and Greenfire. She has also toured with Ensemble Galilei, the John Whelan Band, and Québécoisse. Laura has over ten albums to her credit, including her latest release *2000 Miles*, which offers a distinctly Québécois take on classic Scottish fiddle tunes. Her debut album *Celtic Dialogue* was named one of the Boston Globe's "Top Ten CDs of 1999". Laura is a co-author of *The Glengarry Collection: The Highland Fiddle Music of Aonghas Grant*, which will be published by Mel Bay in late 2008. She also taught fiddling for five years at Wellesley College, where she founded the college's first Celtic music ensemble. www.laurarisk.com

ABBY NEWTON is best known for her groundbreaking work in the revival of the cello in American and Scottish traditional music. She has been a producer and performer on over a hundred recordings of folk artists including 17 CDs with Scottish singer, Jean Redpath. Fiona Ritchie, of the nationally syndicated NPR show *The Thistle and Shamrock*, did a feature program on Abby and her influence on the folk cello movement. Abby's solo CDs “*Crossing to Scotland*” (1997) and “*Castles, Kirks, and Caves*” (2001), have earned her critical acclaim both in the U.S. and abroad. Widely respected as an instructor and performer, she has conducted numerous workshops on folk cello technique in both the USA and Scotland, and has published two Celtic collections for cello. Throughout her career Abby has been active in both traditional and classical music, including performing with the prestigious ensembles *Amor Artis Orchestra*, the *American Symphony* and the *Cacelian Chamber Ensemble*. www.abbynewton.com

KIM ROBERTSON is a renowned performer and instructor who has stretched the boundaries of the harp for a new generation of performers and audiences. As a pioneer in the N. American folk harp movement, she combines an improvisational spirit with a passionate sense of tradition, bringing a contemporary touch to a centuries' old instrument. Born in Wisconsin, she is classically trained on piano and orchestral harp. In the mid-70's, Kim's discovery of the Celtic harp grew into a profound love for the instrument, setting her upon the path of exploration for which she is now widely known. She regularly tours the USA, Canada and Europe, and is recognized as one of the most popular lever harpists performing today. Her work encompasses over 20 album projects, 11 volumes of published harp arrangements, three instructional videos and an international itinerary workshops and retreats. Her latest releases are “*Dance to Your Shadow*” (Narada) and “*Searching for Lambs*” (Gourd). www.kimrobertson.net

SABRA MacGILLIVRAY is a champion highland dancer, a spectacular step dancer and a talented musician. A star of Nova Scotia tourism commercials and a guest on many television specials, Sabra is one of Atlantic region's leading ambassadors of Highland and Scottish step dancing. She tours and performs all over the world with her talented siblings, Kendra (fiddle) and Troy (piano & fiddle). Sabra has choreographed award-winning dances including *Chattan*, which placed first at the 2002 Loon Mountain Highland Games in New Hampshire. She was one of six dancers from Canada invited to be a guest solo highland dancer at the Royal Military Edinburgh Tattoo in Scotland. In stepdancing, she choreographs her own steps, combining movements that she has learned in Cape Breton step, Highland, Irish, and Flamenco dancing. Her quick and intricate footwork are always a crowd pleaser. Sabra's desire to express her rhythm has led her to become an accomplished bodhran player. She is mostly self-taught but has had direction from Michelle Stewart of Scotland. Sabra teaches highland dancing and step dancing in Cape Breton and has taught numerous workshops internationally. She also holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Nutrition from St. Francis Xavier University (1998) and a diploma in Massage Therapy from Northumberland College (2000). Sabra owns her own business called “*Celtic Touch Massage Therapy*” and works in Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia. www.sabramacgillivray.com