

MacNeil of Barra's March

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

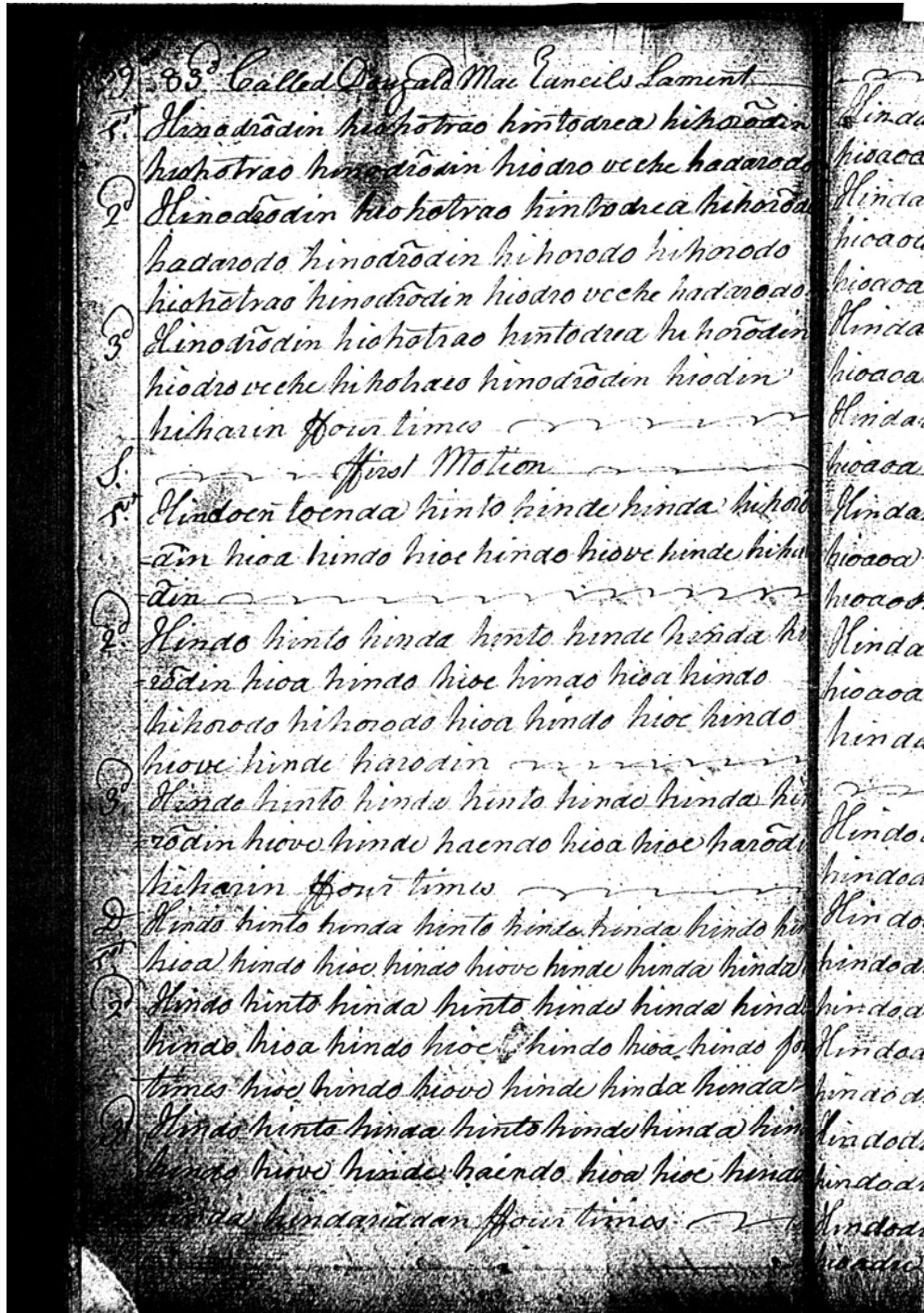
- **Nether Lorn Canntaireachd**, i 189-90 (with the title "Dougald MacRaneils Lament");
- The **MacArthur/MacGregor**, ff.21-3 (with the title "Spaidsearachd Bhairach, or the pride of Barroch");
- **David Glen**, ff.348-349;
- **Robert Meldrum**, ff.190-192;

and in the following published sources:

- **Angus MacKay's** *Ancient Piobaireachd*, pp.72-3 (with the title "Spaidseaireachd MhicNeile a' Bhara. MacNeill of Barra's March);
- **C. S. Thomason's** *Ceol Mor* p.119 (with the title "MacNiel of Barra's Lament"; Thomason has a tune entitled "MacNiell of Barra's March," but this is a different tune nowadays called "The Pride of Barra," not, in turn, to be confused with the MacArthur/MacGregor "Pride of Barra");
- **G. F. Ross**, *Some Piobaireachd Studies*, p.35 (with the title "MacNeill of Barra's Lament.")
- **Frans Buisman and Andrew Wright**, eds., *The MacArthur—MacGregor Manuscript of Piobaireachd (1820)*, pp.76-7, 135.

Colin Mór Campbell treats the tune like this:

pipes | drums



and so on. The tune is developed perfectly symmetrically:
ground;
siubhal singling and doubling;
taorluath fogsailte singling and doubling;

crunluath fogsailte singling and doubling.

The MacArthur/MacGregor times the tune as follows:

The image shows a handwritten musical score for a Piobaireachd. At the top left, there is a large 'N^o 2' written in cursive. The title 'Pìobaireachd' is written in a decorative, bold cursive font, with 'Bhànach, or the pride of Banach' written below it in a smaller cursive hand. The score consists of ten staves of music, all in treble clef and G major. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including minims, crotchets, and quavers, with many notes beamed together. There are several 'x' marks above some notes, likely indicating fingerings. A 'Vacc.' (Vivace) marking is present above the fifth staff. The word 'Doub.' is written above the eighth staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the instruction 'Volto Subito' written in cursive below the final staff.

pipes | drums

The image displays a handwritten musical score for pipes and drums, organized into three distinct sections. The first section, labeled 'var 2', consists of four staves of music. The second section, labeled 'Tuck', also consists of four staves. The third section, labeled 'D.C. var. 3', consists of five staves. The notation is written in a single treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The music is characterized by a complex, rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, typical of traditional Scottish pipe and drum music. The handwriting is in black ink on aged, slightly yellowed paper.

pipes | drums



There are a number of features worthy of note here including the "down" pointing of the siubhal, the square 4/4 timing of the taorluath fosgailte, and the "up" cut crunluath fosgailte typical of the MacArthur style. One notices, too, the absence of the "flourish bars" which are present at the ends of the various movements in the other settings.

Angus MacKay times the tune like this:

SPAIDSEAIRÉACHD MHIIC NEILE A' BHARA.

Mac Neil of Barra's

March.

Adagio.

XXIX

Variation 1.

Bis

Doubling of Variation 1.

The image displays a musical score for a pipe and drum piece, consisting of two main sections. The first section, labeled 'Variation 2.', is presented in three systems of staves. The first system includes a first ending bracket and a 'Bis' marking. The second system includes a second ending bracket. The third system includes a 'Bis' marking and a 'D.C. Thema.' instruction. The second section, labeled 'Crun-luath.', is also presented in three systems of staves. The first system includes a first ending bracket and a 'Bis' marking. The second system includes a second ending bracket. The third system includes a 'Bis' marking and a 'D.C. Thema.' instruction. The score is written in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature and features complex rhythmic patterns including triplets and sixteenth notes.

There are a number of interesting differences from the MacArthur/MacGregor setting which will certainly have been one of **Angus MacKay**'s sources. This includes the different turning of the coda of the ground, the predominantly "up" cut siubhal, and the more "orthodox" pointing of the crunluath variations.

C. S. Thomason reproduces MacKay's score, except that he re-times the crunluath fosgailte in 6/8 with semi-demi quaver triplets in the manner which had become orthodox

pipes | drums

by the end of the 19th century. He adds little to the stylistic possibilities of the tune otherwise and his score is not reproduced here.

David Glen follows MacKay, but the echo beats are timed in Glen's normal manner with the duration given to the first note of the group, as follows:

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Innaille of Barra's Piobair. (Grand March)

Finlarz (played 3 times)

1st time

2nd time

3rd time

1st time

2nd time

3rd time

Doubling

1st time

2nd time

3rd time

1st time

2nd time

3rd time













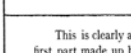
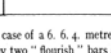
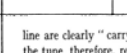

and so on.

pipes | drums

Robert Meldrum's setting adds nothing to the expressive possibilities of the tune and is not reproduced here.

G. F. Ross makes the interesting suggestion that the tune may be in 6 6 4 metre and have suffered structural dislocation, and he proposes quite a pleasing emendation as follows:

MACNEIL OF BARRA'S LAMENT.

Division.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
								
								
								
								

This is clearly a case of a 6. 6. 4. metre tune with the two bars missing in the first part made up by two "flourish" bars added at the end. It will be noticed the first two bars of each line are the same, and the second pair of bars in the second

line are clearly "carry on" bars to stretch the second line to six bars. To correct the tune, therefore, repeat the 1st and 2nd bars to fill the 3rd and 4th Divisions of the First line and omit the "flourish" bars in Divisions 7 and 8.

Commentary

This piece is at the centre of a cat's cradle of overlapping names, "MacNeill of Barra's Lament," "MacNeill of Barra's March," "The Pride of Barra" and so on, as indicated in the list of manuscript and printed sources at the head of this article. This is not a very satisfactory situation. It means, for example, that we cannot be sure that it was this tune that John Campbell from Nether Lorne gained 4th Prize with at the Edinburgh competition in 1816: his tune was called "Speadsearachd Bharra— Macneill of Barra's Salute."

The editors of *The MacArthur-MacGregor Manuscript of Piobaireachd (1820)* take the view that this may be a seventeenth-century tune, and that the dedicatee may have been one of the Clanranald bailies of South Uist (p.76).

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