

Period Music

MUSIC

The bagpipe music played by the pipers of the 78th Regiment, during the Seven Years' War (1757-1763) is one of the most difficult periods to research as very little written material has come to light. Bagpipe music, until the early 19th century, was strictly a vocal tradition.

That there were Company pipers on strength in the Regiment is undisputable. Original and secondary sources continually refer to the pipers playing for battle. Sgt. Thompson's Diary states—"General Townshend observing that the piper was missing, and he knowing well the value of one on such occasions, he sent in all directions for him and he was heard to say aloud, "'Where's the Highland Piper?' and 'Five pounds for a piper'".(1) The establishment for "Drummers" was two per company. It is likely that one was actually a piper, possibly the Company Commander's personal piper, since pipers although not officially recognized by the Army until the mid 19th century, were mentioned in reports of wounded, strength, etc. grouped with drummers. This being the case, and with 10 or more companies, we can expect that there were a minimum of 10 pipers and 10 drummers in the Regiment. In fact, the May 1758 strength return states 30 Pipers and Drummers. A set of Scottish small pipes exist with the inscription "1st Highland Battn. Jan 4, 1757. Hon. Coll. Montgomery". This regiment was raised at the same time as the 78th and was said to have 30 pipers and drummers.(2)

Before the Proscription Act of 1745, Piobaireachd (Ceol Mor) or Great Music (Classical) was played on all occasions. Since pipes were known to have been played at weddings, public festivals, and funerals for centuries before the Act, a piper's repertoire would have included Ceol Beag or small music such as jigs, reels, slow airs and strathspeys. The Act of 1745 changed this. Not only was the Army were allowed to play the instrument (cattle drovers were another exception). The enforcement of the act was very difficult in remote areas. "We know that by 1780 the situation had become quite serious, because the Highland Society of London was considering ways of reviving piobaireachd. But in 1760 piping might well still have been in a flourishing state."(4). The Act was repealed in 1784.

When the first written bagpipe music appears in the early 19th century Piobaireachd and small music are still in the piper's repertoire, but middle music (Ceol Meadonach) such as marches (called quicksteps at the time) are also printed.

There is no doubt that piobaireachd was the official music of military pipers during the period of the 78th Regiment. For example, the Regimental Orders of the Western Fencible Regiment dated 1778 lists only Piobaireachds to be played for all duties such as 'gathering', 'Revellee', 'The Troop', 'Retreat' and 'Tattoo'.(3)

If piobaireachd was played for official occasions, then the pipers of the 78th would have entertained the troops with dance music, e.g. strathspeys, reels and jigs. The term "march" was reserved only for Piobaireachds, so tunes that could be marched to were "Quicksteps". Collinson (p. 182) says "The pipe march for marching in the modern sense was probably devised in the newly raised Highland Regiments serving abroad, where there were proper roads to march on. Such roads called for the lilt of a tune in suitable tempo; and doubtless it was not very long before the magic powers of the Scottish pipes to shorten the miles was realized." It is, therefore, an assumption that pipers in the 78th were marching the troops in the New World to quickstep marches. We can only surmise the extent to which the pipers and drummers played together. There was definitely nothing like a pipe-band marching the Regiment through the North American campaign and wouldn't be officially until 1854. That pipers played with drummers is seen with the town pipers of earlier centuries. In Edinburgh, slightly before 1660, the office of piper seems to have lapsed, and the city made do with a drummer. In that year, however, they added a piper, John Johnstone, to the strength, again, 'to accompany the town's drummer throw the town morning and evening.' (5) Drummers may have joined the pipers of the 78th to play together to entertain the men, and with some of the stories of drunken parties, this would only seem natural.

The oldest known non piobaireachd tunes

The first books of written bagpipe music only appeared in the early 19th century when a prize was offered by the Highland Society of London to the person who created a systematic form of notation. To that point the music was passed on vocally, generation to generation. We must also rely on the studies of non piper musicians who were in Scotland during the period. They tried to transcribe the native music (bagpipe, fiddle and harp) to staff notation. The names and tempo may be different than their modern form, but the melody is recognizable.

Pipe Major Cairns notes "What's in a Name":

—;"Delvin Side" is a strathspey in A. MacKay and a march and strathspey in W. Ross.

—;"Hot Punch" appears as "The Earl of Fife's March" in W. Ross "Piobroch O'Donald Dhu" is "Lochiel's March" in W. Ross "Devil's in the Kitchen" a strathspey is "The Prince of Wales' Jig" in W. Ross.

—;"Lady Loudon" is a two part Strathspey in A. MacKay called "Miss Louisa Campbell's Delight"

–;"The Drunken Piper" in W. Ross is called "Highland Rory", for we all know there is NO SUCH THING as the title suggests. (6)

The following is a list of the earliest printed books of bagpipe music with the modern names for the recognizable tunes they contain: (7)

Joseph MacDonald; A Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe, written 1760 1763, published 1803.

MacLean's Gathering (pio)
 MacDonald's Gathering (pio)
 War or Peace (pio)
 Donald Dugahal MacKay (pio)
 Black Donald's March (pio)
 Rory MacLeod's Lament (pio)
 Lament for the Viscount of Dundee (pio)
 The Stool of Repentance (jig)
 John MacKechnie (reel)

Patrick MacDonald; A collection of Highland vocal airs, never hitherto published. To which are added a few of the most lively country dances or reels of the North Highlands and Western Isles and some specimens of bagpipe music, 1784.

John MacKechnie's Reel
 The Grey Bob
 The Athol Plaid
 Eastwood Cottage
 Arlitrach Stumpie
 The Goatherd
 McIntosh's Lament
 Never more shall I return
 A Bagpipe Lament
 Alike to me peace or war
 A bagpipe march
 The Gathering of the clans.

Daniel Dow; A collection of ancient Scots music for the violin, harpsichord or German flute, never before printed consisting of ports, salutations, marches or piobrachs, 1771?

Monymusk (he composed it)
 Port Gordon (a harp tune?)
 Da Mihi Manum (a harp tune?)
 Lord Bradalban's march–;Boddich na mbrigs
 Pibrach Chlann Raonailt–;ClanRanald's march to Edinbr
 jsobail ni Caoidh–;Stewarts march (i.e. The Prince's salute)
 S, fhada mar so tha sinn–;Duke of Atholl's march a Pibrach

Donald MacDonald; A collection of the ancient martial music of Caledonia ..., (1822)

Reel of Tulloch
 Brose and Butter
 Tulloch Gorum
 Cock Crowing (i.e. Cock of the North)
 Up and Waur them a', Willie
 Monymusk
 The Grey Buck
 The Amorous Lover
 Cripple Malcolm in the Glen (i.e. Miss Drummond of Perth)
 The Warst Carle in a' the World
 Mrs. McLeod of Raasay Culcairn's Strathspey

Footnotes

(1) Harper, Col. J.R., The Fraser Highlanders, MMMM, Montreal, 1979,
page 90

(2) Collinson, Francis; The Bagpipe, the history of a musical instrument, Routledge & Kegan Paul Press, London, 1975,
page 124.

(3) preface by Seumus McNeil to the reprint of Joseph MacDonald's Compleat Theory, written in 1760 63.

(4) Collinson page 175.

(5) Collinson page 99

(6) We are indebted to Pipe Major Archie Cairns, former senior Pipe Major of the Canadian Armed Forces and currently Major, Commanding Officer, The Central Region Cadet School of Pipes and Drums, London, Ontario for his help. In 1966 he was tasked with preparing the music for the Highland Scene in the 1967 Canadian Armed Forces Tattoo, and was sent to research music in Scotland. Some of the tunes included here are the result of this work, and Pipe Major Cairns feels they are typical of the period. His main references are manuscript books written by Willie Ross and Angus MacKay in the early 19th century.

(7) Cannon, Roderick D.; A Bibliography of Bagpipe Music, John Donald Publishers Ltd., Edinburgh, 1980.