



Arthur Cormack

## BUANAS

SKYECD58

Faclan nan Òran agus Eadar-theangachaidhean

Songs Lyrics and Translations

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### Cha tig Mòr mo bhean dhachaigh

### *My wife Morag will never return home*

**Arthur Cormack** (Vocals); **Ingrid Henderson** (Piano); **Rachel Walker** (Backing Vocals); **Angus MacKenzie**; Whistles; **Blair Douglas** (Accordion)

In this song a bereaved father mourns the mother of his child. He lulls the child gently, observing that while everything in nature will continue to renew, his wife did not have a long life. Often sung to the tune of *Lochaber No More*, I picked up this tune from Rita and Mary Rankin in Toronto in 1991. When we were recording this, I asked Angus MacKenzie of Dàimh, originally from Mabou, to play whistles and when I told him about the tune he reckoned Rita and Mary might have got it from his late mother, Maureen, herself a Rankin from Mabou.

Cha tig Mòr mo bhean dhachaigh  
Cha tig Mòr mo bhean ghaoil  
Cha tig màthair mo leanaibh  
Nochd cha laigh i ri m' thaobh

*My wife Morag will never return home  
Morag, my beloved wife will not return  
The mother of my children  
Will not lie by my side tonight*

Èist, mo leanaibh, gu sàmhach  
Cuimhnich thusa mar thà  
Tha do mhàthair sa chlachan  
'S ann am achlais dhut fàs

*Listen quietly, my baby,  
Remember how it is  
Your mother is in the graveyard  
You will grow up in the crook of my arm*

Tha an crodh-laoigh anns an eadrach  
'S iad a' freagairt nan laogh  
Tha mo Mhòr-sa 'n Dùn Bheagain  
'S cha fhreagair i m' ghlaodh

*The cattle are in the milking-fold  
Lowing in answer to the calves  
Morag lies in Dunvegan  
And will not answer my call*

Ged a gheibhinns' air m' òrdugh  
Stoc is stòras on rìgh;  
B' annsa Mòr a thighinn dhachaigh  
Gu laighe ri m' thaobh

*Though I would get by order  
Cattle and riches from the king  
I would far rather Morag were with me  
Lying by my side*

Fàsaidh bàrr air an fhiùrain  
Agus duilleach air craoibh  
Fàsaidh fras air an luachair  
Ged nach d' fhuair mo bheans' aois

*Flowers will form on the branch  
The trees will grow leaves  
Seed will appear on the rushes  
But my wife did not have a long life*

Ged a dhèanainn fhìn pòsadh  
Mar bu chòir dhomh nad dhèidh  
O cha togadh mo chridhe  
Ri fìdheall nan teud

*Although I should remarry  
As I ought to with you gone  
My heart will not lift  
To the sound of the stringed fiddle*

## Mo Mhàiri Mhìn

## My Tender Mary

**Arthur Cormack** (Vocals); **Iain Smith** (Mandolin & Backing Vocals); **Blair Douglas** (Piano and Accordion); **Rachel Walker** (Backing Vocals); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle); **Eric Cloughley** (Guitar & Drums)

A love song written by Blair Douglas and set in Portree, using his childhood haunts such as Sgorrybreck and Ben Cracaig as a backdrop. Although I know Blair better than most people, his muse for this particular song remains unknown!

A Mhàiri bhòidheach, 's a Mhàiri mhìn  
Is tu mo ghràdhais is m' eudail bhinn;  
Seach gach gruagach, mo roghainn fhìn  
A Mhàiri bhòidheach, a Mhàiri mhìn.

*My beautiful Mary and my tender Mary  
You are my darling and my treasure  
Above all the girls, you are my choice  
My beautiful Mary, my tender Mary*

Mi 'm shuidh' sa chiaradh, aig ceann a' chidh'  
Oidhche Dhùbhlachd, 's am bàgh fo shith;  
Mo shùil ri Cràthcaig, 's an Sgorra ghrinn  
Ach na mo smuaintean, tha mo Mhàiri mhìn.

*Sitting at dusk, by the quayside  
A December evening, the bay calm;  
My eye is on Ben Chrachaig and Scurrybreac  
But my thoughts are on my beautiful Mary*

Gheall thu dhòmhsa do làmh 's do chridh'  
Ach bha do bhriathran, gun bhlàths 's gun bhrìgh;  
'S ged bha mo dhùilsa gum biomaid pòst'  
Bha 'n dris 's an droigheann an cois an ròis.

*You promised me your hand and your heart  
But your words were without warmth and substance  
Although I hoped that we would be wed  
There were thorns and briars on the rose*

Am fois na h-oidhche, 's mi leam fhìn  
Bidh mo smuain ort, a Mhàiri mhìn;  
A Mhàiri bhòidheach, ged mheall thu mi  
Cho fad 's is beò mi, bidh 'n gath nam chridh'.

*In the quiet of the night, when I am alone  
I think of you, my tender Mary  
My beautiful Mary, you deceived me  
As long as I live there will be a thorn in my heart*

## Thàinig maor na mo dhàil

## A factor came to me

**Arthur Cormack** (Vocals); **Mary Ann Kennedy** (Harp)

One of the saddest but most beautiful of songs, written by Neil MacPhee from Vatersay in two sections. Four verses were written in February 1925 when his wife died with the remaining verses written on the anniversary of her death in February 1926. It was sung originally to the tune of *Iain Ghlinn Cuaich* but the bàrd's daughter, Theresa MacNeill, gave the words to Kenna Campbell in the 1980s and asked her to compose a tune especially for the song, the one I sing here, with thanks to Kenna for teaching it to me.

Thàinig maor na mo dhàil  
Le teann òrdan gum pàighinn cis,  
Gun grad libhriginn dha  
Beanag lurach an nàdair ghrinn;  
Thug e dhomh airson òl  
Deoch a' mhulaid a dhòirt mum chridh',  
Dh'òl mi cupan a' bhròin  
Dh'fhosgail tobraichean deòir mo chinn

*A factor came to me  
With a sharp order to pay a tax  
Immediately I was to deliver to him  
My beautiful wife of the most lovely nature  
He gave me to drink  
A cup of sadness that poured on my heart  
I drank the cup of sorrow  
And wells of tears opened*

Tha bean chomain mo chridh'  
Air a tasgadh sa chill gun deò  
'S mise 'g acain na dith  
Ged nach leasaich e mi ri m' bheò  
Ro mhath choimhlion thu ghaoil  
Cuspair beatha gach aon dhe d' sheòrs',  
Ionad màthar is mnaoi  
Dàrna cathair fo Rìgh na Glòir.

*My beloved wife  
Has been deposited lifeless in the grave  
I bemoan her loss  
Although this can never be changed  
You fulfilled to perfection, my love  
The life roles expected of you  
As a mother and a wife  
You sit in the chair next to God*

Dh'fhàg thu dìleab nad dhèidh  
Ged nach airgead, no sprèidh, no nì  
Triùir do phàistean beag òg

*You left a legacy behind you  
Though not money nor cattle nor worldly things  
But three of your young children*

Nach robh riamh na bu bhòidhch' san tìr  
Ged nach ceannaich an t-òr  
Tochra thug thu le còir dhomh fhìn  
Chaneil comhartachd dhòmhs'  
'S ann a mheudaich mo bhròn ri linn.

Bhon a thriall thu don uaigh  
Tha dubh iargain a luaidh gam chlaoidh  
Chaidh a' bhliadhna mun cuairt  
Cha do thiorraich mo ghruaidh gad chaoidh  
Ach 's e nì tha gam chràdh  
'S a' cur saighdean an sàs am thaobh  
Freagairt ceistean do phàist'  
"Cuin a thig i, mo mhathair chaomh?"

Làmh bu dèanadach feum  
Ceann na riaghailt bu ghèire tùr  
Nàdur foighdneach, rèidh  
Cridhe carantach, cèilidh, ciùin;  
Modhail, sìobhalt do bheul -  
Ribheid bhinn an àm gleusadh ciùil  
Com bu shubhailceach beus  
Dha robh màthair Mhic Dhè na h-iùil.

B' òg a fhuair mi thu ghaoil  
Leis an t-Sacramaid naoimh air làimh  
'N dèidh a seulachadh dhuinn  
Ann an ìobairt na h-Aifrionn-bhainns'  
Ged a shaoileadh le càch  
Gun sgaoileadh am bàs am bann  
Cha do dh'fhuasgail e dha  
Tha gach dual dhe gu làidir, teann.

*There were none more beautiful in the land  
Though gold did not buy  
The dowry that assigned you to me  
There is no comfort for me  
My sadness has grown as a result*

*Since you went to the grave  
Black sorrow has exhausted me, my darling  
A year has passed  
But my cheek has not dried lamenting you  
But the thing that pains me  
And has placed an arrow in my side  
Is answering your children's questions:  
"When will my darling mother come?"*

*A resourceful and useful hand  
A head filled with great sense and wisdom  
A patient, calm nature  
A charitable, sociable, peaceful heart  
A polite, civil tongue –  
Sweet reeds in times of singing  
A heart of virtuous conduct  
Mary, Mother of God, was her guide*

*I was young when we were married, love,  
By the Holy Sacrament  
Sealed for us  
In the offering of the Wedding Mass  
Though others might think  
That the ties would be broken in death  
They have not been opened  
Each strand stands strong and tight*

## Cnoc nan Craobh

## The Hill of the Trees

**Arthur Cormack** (Vocals); **Mary Ann Kennedy**, **Gillebride Macmillan**, members of **Inverness Gaelic Choir** (Backing Vocals)

This song is one of many by Dòmhnall Ruadh Caimbeul, Donald Campbell. This one was written for his wife, Morag Campbell - Mòr nigh 'n Uilleam Bàin, referred to in the song. Several of Dòmhnall Ruadh's songs have been recorded by the Campbells of Greepe, relatives of Dòmhnall Ruadh. This one was given to me by a member of that illustrious family, Ann Michie, in the late 1980s when she was living in Camustianavaig and the Gaelic tutor for Portree Gaelic Choir.

Èirich 's tiugainn, o mo chailin  
Èirich 's tiugainn, o mo ghaol,  
Èirich 's tiugainn leam a chuachag,  
'S bheir sinn cuairt gu Cnoc nan Craobh

*O rise up and come my darling,  
O rise up and come my love  
Rise up and come with me my pretty one  
We'll take a walk to Cnoc nan Craobh (The Hill of the Trees)*

Ged a bhiodh gaoth fhuar a' Mhàirt ann,  
Sneachda bàn air bhàrr a' fhraoich,  
Shuidhinn greis air Cnoc na h-Àirigh,  
'S Mòr Nigh'n Uilleam Bàin ri m' thaobh

*Though the cold March wind is blowing  
And the white snow lies on the heather  
I would sit for a while at the Hill of the Shieling  
With Marion, fair William's daughter by my side*

Mheall is char thu mi le d' bhriathran,  
'S thug thu mi le d' bheul a thaobh;  
'S cha mhòr nach deacha mi gad iarraidh  
'S gun mi fichead bliadhna dh'aois

*You teased and charmed me with your words  
You beguiled me with your talk  
I almost asked for your hand in marriage  
Before the age of twenty*

Chì thu bhanarach 's a buachaill,

*You will see the milkmaid and her herdsman*

Buaraichean aca ri 'n taobh,  
'S na laoigh bheaga ruith mun cuairt orr'  
Sìos is suas mu Chnoc nan Craobh

*With the cow-fetters beside them  
The young calves running round them  
Up and down about Cnoc nan Craobh*

Nuair bu dlùithe 'm fraoch sam barrach,  
'S duilleach a' falach nan craobh,  
'S tric a ghabh mi sgrìob le m' annsachd,  
Null 's a nall mu Chnoc nan Craobh

*When the heather and the branches were at their thickest  
And the leaves completely covered the trees  
I would often take a walk with my beloved  
Back and forth around Cnoc nan Craobh*

Tha 'n t-Easa Mòr bha 'n Àirigh Bhàidein,  
Tighinn a-mhàin o ghleann a' fhraoich,  
'G uisgeachadh nan lusan àlainn  
Timcheall Gàradh Chnoc nan Craobh

*The Great Waterfall at Àirigh Bhàidein,  
Flowing down from the heather glen,  
Watering the beautiful plants  
Around Cnoc nan Craobh's garden*

'S iomadh dheònaicheadh bhith tàmh ann,  
Thig iad o 'n t-sàl is o 'n fhraoch,  
'Bheachdaireachd air obair nàdair  
Timcheall gàradh Chnoc nan Craobh

*Many people would wish to live there  
They come from the sea and the heather  
To contemplate nature's work  
Around Cnoc nan Craobh's garden*

## **An nochd gur faoin mo chadal dhomh      *Tonight, sleep is futile for me***

**Arthur Cormack** (Vocals); **Chaz Stewart** (Guitar); **Blair Douglas** (Accordion); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle)

I first heard the melody for this song on the wonderful *Skyedance* album by Alasdair Fraser and Paul MacLis and had the pleasure of singing the song with Alasdair at a concert in Santa Cruz towards the end of his Valley of the Moon Fiddle Camp in California where I taught Gaelic singing in 1996. The words in this version are from *Sàr-obair nam Bàrd Ghàidhealach* although there are other versions, for example in Keith Norman MacDonald's Gesto Collection. The writer is unknown.

An nochd gur faoin mo chadal dhomh  
Sior acain na bheil bhuam,  
Do chomunn le deagh chaoimhnealachd  
Dh'fhàg mi bho'n raoir fo ghruaim;  
Gur tric mi ann an aisling leat,  
Gach uair d' an dèan mi suain;  
Trom-osnach nuair a dhùisgeas mi  
Air bhith gad ionndrainn bhuam

*Tonight, sleep is futile for me  
Bemoaning what I don't have  
Your kindly company  
Left me sorrowing last night  
I often dream about you  
Each time I sleep  
Sighing heavily when I awake  
Missing your presence*

Air bhith dhomh 'g ionndrainn suairceis bhuam,  
S tu leagh mo shnuadh 's mo bhlàth,  
O rinn do ghaol-sa fuarachadh  
Cha dualach dhomh bhi slàn;  
'S ann riut a leiginn m' uireasbhaidh,  
Air ghleus nach cluinneadh càch,  
Dh'fhàg d' aogasg mi cho muladach,  
'S gur cunnart dhomh am bàs

*Missing your gentleness  
Which fused with my smile and my affections  
Since your love has cooled  
I cannot survive  
I would reveal my imperfections  
In confidence to you  
Your beauty has left me so sad  
That my life is in danger*

Is mòr a tha do ghibhtean ort  
A tha gun fhios do chàch;  
Corp seang gun fheall gun fhalachd ann  
Gur cas thu mhealladh gràidh;  
'S a liughadh òigear furanach  
A thuilleadh orm-sa 'n sàs,  
D' an tugadh d' aodann faothachadh,  
'S an t-aog gan cur gu bàs

*Great are your gifts  
Unseen by others  
A slender body lacking deceit and malice  
You beguile many, my love  
There are scores of welcoming young lads  
Apart from me  
Who have rejoiced in your beauty  
And are now facing death*

Tha bean do neòil am braithreachas  
Mar eala bhàn nan speur;  
Gur binne leam bhith mànràn leat

*A woman of your complexion is like  
The fair swan of the skies  
It was sweeter for me to whisper lovingly to you*

Na clàrsaichean nan teud;  
Is tha do thlachd is d' àillidheachd,  
A' cur do ghràidh an cèill;  
Gur cosmhail thu ri àilleagan,  
D' an umhlaich càch gu lèir

Thug mise gaol da-rìridh dhut  
Nuair bha thu d' nionaig òig;  
Is air mo làimh nach dìbrinn e  
Air mhìle punnd den òr;  
Ged fhaighinn fhìn na chrùintean e  
Ga chunntadh dhomh air bòrd;  
Cha trèiginn gaol na ribhinne  
A tha 'n Ìle ghlas an fheòir

## Ged is socrach mo leaba

Arthur Cormack (Vocals)

Written by Gilleasbaig Ruadh Mac Mhic Dhòmhnaill, Archibald MacDonald known as 'An Ciaran Mabach'. This son, also known as *B' annsa cadal air fraoch* is said to have been written while the bàrd was in Edinburgh attending doctors after injuring his leg. Places in Skye, Uist and Lewis are mentioned in the song as he misses the opportunity to be out in the hills and moors he loved so much. This song was given to me by Allan MacDonald, Glenuig, but was also sung by Rev William Matheson.

Ged is socrach mo leaba, b' annsa cadal air fraoch,  
ann an lagan beag uaigneach 's bad de luachair rim thaobh;  
nuair a dh'èirinn sa mhadainn, shiubhal ghlacagan caoin  
na bhith triall chon no h-Abaid 'g èisteachd glagraich nan saor.

Chan eil agam cù gleusta, chan eil feum agam dha;  
cha suidh mi air bac, an sliabh fada bho chàch;  
cha leig mi mo ghadhar chaoidh am faghaid an t-Sròim Bàn,  
's cha sgaoil mi mo luaidhe 'n Gleann Ruadhain gu bràth.

'S oil leam càradh na frìthe 's mi bhith 'n Lite nan long -  
eadar ceann Sàile Shìofoirt 's Rubha Ghrianaig nan tonn,  
agus Uisinis riabhach san tric a dh'iarr mi 'n damh donn,  
bhith fo bhinn aig na bodaich dham bu chosnadh cas chrom.

Tha Loch Lacasdail fhèin 's gun fiù an fhèidh air a' chlàr  
far an cromadh na ceudan 'n àm dhan ghrèin dhol mu làr;  
Loch nan Uidhean gan trèigsinn far 'n tric am b' fheudar  
dhaibh snàmh  
's Gile Bheag air a' Chaorainn 's mu dhà thaobh a' Chùirn  
Bhàin.

'S binne leam na guth fìdhle ged a sgrìobt' i gu cruaidh  
crònan mullach na Caillich mun iadh gailleann is fuachd  
agus mullach Coir' Ìle 's brèagha frith san taobh tuath,  
's a' ghlas-ghaoth nam aodann gun a faotainn mun cuairt.

'S e mo ghràdh am fear buidhe nach dèan suidhe mun bhòrd,  
nach iarradh ri cheannach pinnt leanna no beòir;  
uisge-beatha math dùbailt 's e nach dùraigeadh òl -

*Than to listen to the stringed harp  
And your pleasure and beauty  
Portray your love perfectly  
You are like a treasured jewel  
To which others would bow down*

*I gave my true love to you  
When you were a young girl  
And I swear that a thousand pounds of gold  
Would not change my mind  
Though I would have the gold in crowns  
Counting it at a table  
I wouldn't forsake my love for the girl  
In green grassy Islay*

## Though my bed is comfortable

*Though my bed is comfortable, I'd rather sleep in the heather  
in a lonely little hollow with a clump of rushes beside me  
I would rise in the morning, to traverse pleasant hollows  
rather than travel to the Abbey listening to the carpenters' clamour*

*I have no quick-witted dog, I have no need of such  
I won't sit on a peatbank or on a moor far away from everyone  
I'll not release my hound in the chase at Sròim Bàn  
And I'll never again fire a lead bullet in Glen Ruadhain*

*I am vexed by the thought of the deerforest while I'm in Leith of  
the Ships  
Between the head of Loch Seaforth and Greenock Point of the  
waves  
And brindled Uisinis where I often hunted the stags  
Instead I'll be with the old men who make a living from the plough*

*Not even Loch Laxdale has deer on its plain  
where hundreds would descend as the sun went down  
Loch nan Uidhean has forsaken them where so many of them  
once swam  
And at Gile Bheag on the Caorann on each side of Cairn Ban*

*Sweet to me is the sound of the fiddle though she be robustly  
played  
The croon on the summit of the Cailleach in times of storm and  
cold  
and the top of Islay's corry and the beautiful forests in the north  
The grassy wind in my face slowing my pace*

*My love is the dun-faced man who wouldn't sit at a table  
Who would not order a pint of beer or ale  
A double-distilled whisky he would dare not drink*

b' fheàrr leis dibh' às an fhuaran 's uisge luaineach an lòn.

*He would rather drink the restless water from the stream*

'S i mo ghràdh a' bhean-uasal dha nach d' fhuaras riamh lochd,  
nach iarradh mar chluasaig ach gualainn nan cnoc;  
's i nach fhuilingeadh an t-sradag bhith air a lasadh ri corp –  
och, a Mhuire, mo chruaidh-chas nach d' fhuair mi thu nochd.

*My love is the noble lady who was never at fault  
who would ask for no pillow but the shoulder of the hill  
She would not bear the shot that would spark on her flank  
O Virgin Mary, woe is me that I did not find you tonight*

Chuir mi 'n gunn' air a' choltair, chaoidh cha tog mi ri àird -  
's ann a bhios mi aig baile dèanamh arain le sàmh;  
nì mi balt a' chruaich-mhònadh, 's math an còmhnadh an càl,  
's fòghnaidh siud airson sithne, 'n gille-bride breac, bàn.

*I've put the gun in its sling, I will never again make for the heights-  
I'll be at home making rotten bread  
I'll edge the peatstack, there's succour in cabbage  
Enough of venison, there's always the oystercatcher*

## Fàgail Ghlaschu

## Leaving Glasgow

**Arthur Cormack** (Vocals); **Ingrid Henderson** (Piano); **Angus MacKenzie** (Whistles); **Paul Jennings** (Percussion)

Ruairidh Campbell, Ruairidh mac Iain mac Dhòmhnail 'ic Iain Bhàin, known as 'Ròidseag' and 'The Case' was born in Loch Carnan, South Uist on Christmas Day 1900. He came from a family of renowned bards and, by all accounts, did well in school. In common with many young men of that time, Ruairidh went to sea. It was tough life at that time with long hours, poor food and a shortage of water on voyages that often lasted a year or more. Ruairidh died suddenly in London in 1947 but left a great legacy in his songs including this one and *A Pheigi a ghràidh* (track 12).

An àm bhith fàgail Ghlaschu air madainn mhoich Dimàirt  
Bha m' inntinn trom fo airtneal 's mi cho fad bho thìr mo  
ghràidh,  
A' fàgail mo luchd-eòlais anns a' bhaile mhòr a' tàmh  
Na deòir nan sruth om shùilean 's mi cur cùlaibh ri mo  
ghràidh.

*Leaving Glasgow early on a Tuesday morning  
My mind was heavy with sorrow and I'm far from the land that I  
love  
Leaving my acquaintances who live in the city  
The tears streaming from my eyes as I turn my back on my love*

Chan iongnadh ged bhiodh cianalas am-bliadhna orm is  
gruaim  
Tha falt mo chinn air liathadh, 's chan eil iall dheth a bhios  
buan,  
Is ged nach eil mi aosta thàinig caochladh air mo shnuadh  
On dh'fhàg mi an t-eilean àlainn, Uibhist àrda nam beann fuar.

*It's no surprise that I feel homesickness and gloom this year  
My hair has greyed and hardly a strand will remain  
And though I am not old, my appearance has changed  
Since I left the beautiful island, Uist of the cold, high mountains*

'S e Uibhist tìr as bòidhche leam tha 'n-diugh fo neòil nan  
speur  
Gur tric a shnàmh an ceò air a' Bheinn Mhòr 's mu Sgor an  
Fhèidh  
'S a-staigh gu gualainn Mhaireabhal, far 'm minig 'n do thàmh  
an sprèidh  
'S bu tric a thug mi ruaig ann 's b' e mo luaidh bhith às an  
dèidh.

*Uist is the most beautiful place that lies beneath the skies  
The mist often swam on Beinn Mhòr and Sgor an Fhèidh  
And in to the shoulder of Maireabhal where the cattle often used  
to rest  
I often took a stroll there, I would love to be gathering the cattle  
now*

Ach, b' fheudar Uibhist fhàgail 's tighinn a thàmh am measg  
nan Gall  
'S e dh'fhag a-nochd sa bhàta mi 's i mach air bhàrr nan tonn  
An fhairge 's i na smùid agus an stiùir agam nam làimh  
'S a cùrsa o Cheann Èirinn leinn gu Buenos Aires thall.

*But I had to leave Uist and go to live amongst lowlanders  
That's what left me on the boat tonight, out on the high seas  
The sea angry and my hand on the rudder  
Setting our course from the tip of Ireland across to Buenos Aires*

Nuair thèid mi chun na cuibhle, nuair bhios an oidhche fuar,  
Gur tric a bhios nam inntinn-sa 'n aon nì don tug mi luaidh  
Bu mhath dhomh bhith nam chiobair seach bhith mach fo  
bhinn nan stuadh  
Gu faighinn cadal socair dh'aindeoin osnaichean a' chuain.

*When I'm at the wheel on a cold night  
Often in my mind my one love  
I would rather be a shepherd than be at the mercy of the waves  
Then I could get a restful sleep despite the sighing of the sea*

Ach tha gillean gasta innte cho math 's a dh'fhàg an tìr  
Tha Dòmhnall ann is Alasdair, tha Cailean ann 's mi fhìn  
An Uibhist nam beann àrda 's ann a dh'àraicheadh na suinn  
'S gun cluinnte fuaim na Gàidhlig 's iad gu h-àrd air bhàrr a'  
chruinn.

*But there are lads on board as fine as ever left the shore  
There's Donald and Alasdair, Colin and myself  
In Uist of the high mountains the heroes were reared  
And Gaelic can be heard from high up the mast*

Ach sguiridh mi den dàn seo, chan eil mo chàileachd ann,  
Chan eil mi na mo bhàrd, cha deach na tàlantan nam cheann  
Ma 's e gu bheil e 'n dàn dhomh tilleadh sàbhailt innte nall  
Gun gabh mi bàt' na smùide 's thèid mi null gu Tìr nam Beann.

*But I'll bring this song to a close, I'm not in the mood for it  
I'm not a poet, those talents weren't given to me  
If it is my destiny to safely return across the sea  
I'll take the steamer and head across to the Land of the Mountains*

## **Latha dhomh sa Chuilthionn chreagach** *I was one day in the rocky Cuillin*

**Arthur Cormack** (Vocals); **Blair Douglas** (Piano); **Rachel Walker** (Backing Vocals)

This writer of this song is unknown but I got it from Allan MacDonald, Glenuig, when he asked me to sing in a concert at the Edinburgh Festival in 2000. It tells the story of the Battle of Coire na Creiche in Skye in 1601- the culmination of a year of feuding between the Clan MacLeod of Dunvegan and Clan Donald of Sleat, which ended with a MacDonald victory in Coire na Creiche on the northern slopes of the Cuillin hills. It was the last clan battle in Skye.

Latha dhomh sa Chuilthionn Chreagach

*I was one day in the rocky Cuillin*

Hoireann o gù o gu eile  
O hi ù a o hug eile  
Hoireann o gù o gu eile

*Hoireann o gù o gu eile  
O hi ù a o hug eile  
Hoireann o gù o gu eile*

Chuala mi 'phìob mhòr ga spreigeadh

*I heard the great pipes stirring*

Bha nam chuimhne ged bu bheag mi

*I remembered, though I was but young*

Latha bha chreach an Dùn Bheagan

*The day of Dunvegan's destruction*

Bha beul sìos air luchd nan leadan

*Death befell those of the long flowing hair*

Bha làrach am bròg san eabar

*Their footprints were in the bloody mire*

B' e Clann Dòmhnail a rinn a leagail

*It was Clan Donald that knocked them down*

## **Màiri Nighean Alasdair (Gaoil na h-Òige)** *Mary, daughter of Alasdair MacKay*

**Arthur Cormack** (Vocals); **Blair Douglas** (Piano); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle)

A masterpiece by William MacKenzie (Uilleam Dhòmhnail 'ic Choinnich – Bàrd Cnoc Chùsbaig) from Point in Lewis, following the death of his wife and childhood sweetheart, Mary MacKay. When eventually he had to emigrate to Canada with his family, it is said he extracted one of his teeth and left it in her grave. William died in Canada and is buried Mountain View Cemetery, Fort William, Ontario.

A Mhàiri nighean Alas' 'Caoidh  
A Mhàiri nighean Alasdair  
A Mhàiri nighean Alas' 'Caoidh  
'S dh'fhàg mi tinn is airsneulach

*Mary, Alasdair MacKay's daughter  
Mary, Alasdair's daughter  
Mary, Alasdair MacKay's daughter  
You have left me poorly and sorrowing*

Thug sinn fichead bliadhna pòst'  
Is bha sinn òg ri leannanachd,  
Is nuair a b' fheàrr a bha ar dòigh  
Nach brònach rinn sinn dealachadh.

*We were married for twenty years  
And were young sweethearts  
And when our love was at its height  
How sad we were to part.*

Ach 's e dhealaich sinn am bàs;  
Cha dèanadh càil dhuinn d' fhalach air,  
Bheir siud an dachaigh chum an làir,  
'S mo phàistean thèid air allaban.

Tha 'n teaghlach 's iad ri togail uam  
A' dol thar chuain do Chanada  
Bho chaidh am màthair do an uaigh  
'S e siud thug fuachd don dachaigh orr'

Chan iongnadh ged dh'fhàsainn liath,  
'S mo chiabhagan bhith tanachadh,  
Ma thèid mi tarsainn air an t-sàil,  
'S ga fàgail ann an Aiginis.

Cha d' smaoinich sinn a-riamh 's i beò,  
Gum biodh cuan mòr gar dealachadh,  
Gum biodh i adhlaicht' air an Aoidh,  
Is mis' fo chraoibh an Canada.

Ged a dhealaich sinn an tìm  
Bidh sìth againn nach cailleadh sinn  
'S nuair a choinnicheadh sinn a-rithist  
Bidh fireantachd na ghealladh-san

A Mhàiri nighean Alas' 'Caoidh  
A Mhàiri nighean Alasdair  
A Mhàiri nighean Alas' 'Caoidh  
'S dh'fhàg mi tinn is airsneulach

*But it was death that divided us  
Nothing could conceal it from us  
It will raise the home to the ground  
And my children will be left to wander.*

*My family have upped and left me  
And gone overseas to Canada  
Since their mother went to the grave  
Their home has become a cold place to them*

*It is no wonder that I would go grey  
And my hair would thin  
If I am to go across the sea  
And leave here in Aiginis*

*We never thought while she was alive  
That a great ocean would divide us  
That she would be buried on "The Eye"  
And I beneath a tree in Canada.*

*Though we are parted for a time  
We will have peace that we will not lose  
And when we meet again  
There will be truth in that promise*

*Mary, Alasdair MacKay's daughter  
Mary, Alasdair's daughter  
Mary, Alasdair MacKay's daughter  
You have left me poorly and sorrowing*

## Tir mo ghràidh

## My beloved land

**Arthur Cormack** (Vocals); **Eric Cloughley** (Guitar); **Iain Smith** (Mandolin & Backing Vocals); **Blair Douglas** (Piano and Accordion); **Rachel Walker** (Backing Vocals); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle)

A song written by Blair Douglas reflecting the strength of the ties that bind the Scottish Gaels and Cape Bretoners. Having been at the wonderful Celtic Colours festival in Cape Breton on two occasions, I was struck by just how Gàidhealach some of the people are generations after their forefathers settled there. Their hospitality is legendary and their ties with Gaelic language and culture still strong.

Seasamh na m' aonar fo dhubhar giuthais  
Sealladh suaimhneach gun sanas cruais;  
Clachan-cuimhne, 's leacan-uaigh'  
O thir nan uachdran, tha mo smuain

Air àilleachd nam beanntan, 's nan coilltean dorch'  
Nam bàgh 's nan tràighean, 's nan slèibhteann corrach;  
Dùthaich 's dùthchas, ceangailt' gu teann  
Chan eil bacadh gar sgarradh, ach taisdeal nan tonn.

Tha mo shùil air "Tìr an Àigh"  
Null thar chuain gu "Tìr mo Ghràidh".

'S a' fàgail Dhùn-Bheagain, le sgàil thar mo shùil  
Clann- a-Leòid, clann- a'-bhòid, 's a' chaora-mhaol;  
Cha robh feadan-airgid no' bratach-shìth  
Gaoir nan Gàidheal, "cha till, cha till."

*Standing alone, 'neath the shadow of a pine  
A peaceful scene, without a hint of hardship  
Memorials and gravestones  
From the "land of the lairds" (Skye), my thoughts are*

*On the beauty of the mountains and the dark woods  
The bays and the beaches, and the steep hillsides  
Our land and heritage, tightly intertwined  
Nothing separates us, but an ocean voyage*

*My eye is on the "Land of Happiness" (Cape Breton)  
Across the ocean to the "Land of my Love" (Cape Breton)*

*Leaving Dunvegan, with sadness in my eyes  
MacLeods, the children of the voyage, and the Cheviot sheep  
There was no Silver Chanter, nor Fairy Flag  
The cry of the Gael, "We will not return"*

'S bidh 'n ceòl ag èirigh on Chladach a Tuath  
Puirt nam fiddlearan, 's nan òran luadh;  
'S e "Mo nighean donn as bòidhche", 's "Ho ro 's toil leam fhin"  
'S ged 's cian ar sgaoileadh, mar aon ar cridh'

*The music will rise from North Shore  
The fiddlers' tunes and the milling/waulking songs  
"Mo nighean donn as bòidhche" and "Ho ro 's toil leam fhin"  
Though great our separation, our hearts are as one*

## Thoir an t-soraidh seo bhuam

## Take this greeting from me

Arthur Cormack (Vocals); Mary Ann Kennedy (Harp); Duncan Lyall (Bass); Allan Henderson (Fiddle)

Iain Nicolson – An Sgiobair – was born in Siadar, Uig in Skye in 1903. Apparently he never worked at sea but earned the nickname 'The Skipper' after wearing a sailor's suit on his first day at school. During World War 2 he was in the *Royal Scots Fusiliers* and worked for the Forestry Commission thereafter. He wrote songs and poetry from his teens and lived in Cuidreach with his wife, Mary, and their eight children until his death in 1999. This song was written as an apology of sorts for Isabel (Bella) Gillies whom The Skipper had prevented from going out on a date with Duncan MacKinnon, after which he wrote a song about the prevented liaison. Bella was so annoyed at not being allowed to meet Duncan, and the song that followed, that she asked The Skipper to write another for her, this time praising her.

Thoir an t-soraidh seo bhuam  
Chun na rìbhinn as suaic'  
Air an tric bhios mi smuaintean an còmhnaidh  
Gur òigh thu tha ciùin  
A tha finealt gun smùir  
Bidh gach fear a' cur ùidh na do bhòidhchead

*Take this greeting from me  
To the sweet-natured girl  
Who is forever in my thoughts  
You are the most gentle maid  
Refined and unblemished  
Each man is fascinated by your beauty*

Na mo dhùisg is nam shuain  
Bidh mo smuain ort gach uair  
Gur e àilleachd do shnuaidh a' toirt leòn dhomh  
Bheilag òg an fhuilte dhuinn  
'S mòr a dh'fhàs ort a loinn  
Tha thu gàrbheulach, aoidheil, gun mhòr-chùis

*In waking and sleeping  
My thoughts are forever with you  
Your beauty has wounded me  
Young Bella of the brown hair  
The embodiment of elegance has grown in you  
You are smiling, affable, without conceit*

Tha thu sìobhalta, suaic'  
'S tu gun phròis na gun uaill  
Tha gun fhoill, na gun ghruaim, na gun ghòraich  
Do dhà shùil, mheallach, chiùin  
Toirt dhut àilleachd is mùirn  
Beul a' mhànrain bhon cùbhraidh na pògan

*You are civil and gentle  
Without pride or vanity  
Without deceit, without gloom or folly  
Your two beguiling, gentle eyes  
Give you beauty and joy  
A mouth full of loving talk and sweet kisses*

Tha thu bho fhìor Chloinn Ill los'  
Bho 'n robh tàlant' is rian  
Nach robh meat ann an gnìomh ri àm còmhraig  
Gheibh iad urram is cliù  
Bho gach aon chuir orr' iùil  
'S beag an t-iongnadh 's ann leam ged bhiodh tòir ort

*You're from the true Gillies clan  
Who were talented and sensible  
Who were not cowardly in their actions in times of strife  
They get respect and renown  
From all who get to know them  
It's little wonder that you would have admirers*

Ach 's tu mo roghainn fhìn  
Bhon a chunnaic mi 's a chì  
Ach, mo thruaighe, dè nì mi 's mi gun chòir ort?  
Oir tha eagal orm a ghaoil  
Gun tòir càch thu a thaobh  
Oir bidh an tòir ort luchd maoin agus stòrais

*But you are my own choice  
From those I've seen and will see  
Alas, what can I do since I have no right to you?  
Since I fear, my love,  
That others will take you aside  
Since you are courted by people of means and riches*

Ach mur bi e an dàn  
Nach fhaigh mi thu air làimh  
'S e mo dhùrachd gu bràth dhut gach sòlas  
Gach beannachd nad dhèidh  
'S gach cùis bhith leat rèidh  
Ge b'e àite fon ghrèin sam bi d' chòmhnaidh

*But if it is not to be  
And I don't get your hand  
It's my eternal wish that you'll be happy  
Every blessing be with you  
And may everything go smoothly for you  
Wherever you will live under the sun*

## A Pheigi a ghràidh

## Peggy, my love

**Arthur Cormack** (Vocals); **Eric Cloughley** (Guitar); **Chaz Stewart** (Guitar); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle)

Written by Ruairidh Caimbeul (Ròidseag) from South Uist (see track 7 above). Although made famous by the late, great Calum Kennedy, there are many notable versions of this song loved by Gaelic audiences all over.

A Pheigi a ghràidh 's tu dh'fhàg mi buileach gun sunnd,  
'S mi seòladh an-dràst' thar sàil dh'Astràilia null,  
Tha 'n oidhche fliuch, fuar, 's mi shuas ga cumail air chùrs,  
'S tu daonnan nam smuain, a luaidh, bhon dhealaich thu rium.

Bhon dhealaich thu rium neo shunndach m' aigne gach là,  
'S mi seòladh a' chuain, 's gach uair gam sgaradh o d' ghràdh,  
Ma bheir thu bhuam fuath, 's nach dual dhomh d' fhaighinn gu bràth,  
Gum faic thu led shùil, a rùn nach bi mi fad' slàn.

Cho fad 's thèid mi null bidh dùil am tilleadh a-nall,  
Far do dh'fhàg mi mo rùn fo thùrs am baile nan Gall,  
'S thèid sinn le sunnd a-null do dh'Uibhist nam beann  
Far am faigh mi ort còir le pòsadh ceangailte teann.

Nuair gheibh mi ort còir ri 'r beò cha bhì oirnn dhìth  
Gun dèanainn dhut lòn gu leòr air muir agus tìr;  
'S ged theireadh an sluagh a luaidh nach dèanainn dhut nì,  
Gun togainn dhut bàrr a ghràidh ged 's maraiche mi.

Ged 's maraiche mi tha sgìth a' treabhadh a' chuain,  
Bha 'n iomadach àit' is ceàrnaidh, deas agus tuath,  
Chan fhaca mi ann tè Ghalld' a sheasadh riut suas,  
A bhean a' chùil bhàin chaidh àrach an Uibhist nam buadh.

An Uibhist nam buadh gur truagh nach robh mi leat thall  
Is fàinne den òr mu d' mheòir gar ceangal le bann  
'S ma thilleas mi luaidh thar chuain an turas seo nall  
Dh'Àird Choinnich thèid sinn le cinnt gar ceangal gu teann.

Gun sguir mi den dàn mu 'm fàs sibh uile dheth sgìth,  
'S gun tuig sibh mo chàs 's mi 'n-dràst' cho fada bho thìr,  
Ach an rud tha mi ràdh, gu bràth gun aidich mi fhìn,  
'N taobh tuath Loch a' Chàrnain dh'àraicheadh cailin mo chridh'

*Peggy, my love, you've left me completely dejected  
And I'm now sailing across the sea to Australia  
The night is wet and cold and I'm up keeping the boat on course  
You're ever in my thoughts, my darling, since you parted from me*

*Since you parted from me, my spirit is dejected each day  
And I sail the ocean, every hour taking me away from your love  
If you have turned against me and if I'm destined never to get you  
You will see for yourself, my love, that I won't live long*

*As I sail I will expect to return  
To where I left my sorrowing love, in the city of Lowlanders  
And we will go joyfully to Uist of the mountains  
Where I will give you my vows in binding matrimony*

*If you become mine, in our lifetime we'll want for nothing  
I would make plenty food for you on sea and land  
Though some people might say, darling, that I could make nothing  
for you  
I'd grow crops for you, love, though I'm but a sailor*

*Although I am a seaman tired of sailing the ocean  
Who has been in many places and parts both south and north  
I've never seen a lowland woman who would be a match for you,  
My lady of the fair hair who was brought up in Uist of the many  
virtues*

*In Uist of the many virtues, alas I'm not with you over there  
And a ring of gold on your finger a band tying us together  
And if I return, my love, on a voyage there across the sea  
To Ard Choinnich we will go firmly bound in certainty*

*I'd better stop this song before you all become tired of it  
And I hope you understand my dilemma when I'm so far from land  
But I'll say one thing, I will forever admit it to myself:  
It was on the north side of Loch a' Chàrnain that my beloved girl  
was raised*

## Pòg aon oidhche earraich

## A kiss one spring night

**Arthur Cormack** (Vocals); **Blair Douglas** (Accordion); **Ingrid Henderson** (Piano); **Rachel Walker** (Backing Vocals); **Allan Henderson** (Fiddle); **Chaz Stewart** (Guitar); **Andrew MacPherson** (Percussion); **Eric Cloughley** (Bass)

Runrig recorded *Pòg aon oidhche earraich* with the spoken word and a vocal chorus. Calum Macdonald kindly reworked the lyrics, adding verses that could be sung with the chorus, and I am delighted to have included it. Runrig have been instrumental in bringing Gaelic to a wider audience across the world, promoting goodwill towards the language in the process. As the band retires in 2018, I would like to thank them and congratulate them for all they have achieved and I'm grateful to Calum and Rory for allowing me to record this song.

Bha an oidhche socair, ciùin  
Oidhche Mhàirt ùr eile  
Grian a' tuiteam tro na neòil  
Ceann seachdain, crìoch la'

Os cionn gach àite a' ghealach àrd  
Gillean òg' air rathad an talla  
Ceòl a' gluasad thar a' bhàigh  
Mar thonnann blàth an dàin

Bha i àlainn, bha i grinn  
Sùilean mar na reultan cruinne  
Gruagach òg cho ceart is còir  
A' feitheamh air an làr

Rinn sinn dannsa 's dh'fhan sinn ann  
Gun robh 'n ceòl 's an còmhradh seachad  
'S mar sin dhan àite thorrach shlàn  
Làn geallaidh, fois is tàimh

O luaidh b' e siud an gràdh  
A dh'fhàg mi ceangailt' riut an-dràst'  
Cò shaoileadh an rud a dh'fhàs  
Bho phòg aon oidhche earraich?

The night was quiet and peaceful  
Another new March night  
The sun tumbling through the clouds  
The weekend and the end of the day

Above the whole place, the moon high in the sky  
The young lads on the road to the hall  
The music moving across the bay  
Like the warm waves of fate

She was lovely, she was beautiful  
Eyes like the perfect stars  
A young maid, so good and virtuous  
Waiting on the dancefloor

We danced and we stayed there  
Until the music and conversation were done  
And then to that fertile, healthy place  
Full of promise, peace and contentment

O my darling that was the love  
That has left me still bound to you  
Who could imagine what would grow  
From a kiss one spring night?