

Set Tunes for the Gold Medal Competitions in 2018

The following notes are from the piobaireachd judges seminar held on 12th November 2017 to discuss the 2018 set tunes.

*Scores for 'War or Peace (Gesto) and The MacLean's March (MacArthur) are available from The Piobaireachd Society website at www.piobaireachd.co.uk under 'Set Tunes'

Hugh Jamieson

MacKenzie of Applecross's Salute

PS 10 p 290 new (p 288 old)

The run-downs in this tune might be presented in any of three ways:

- 1 With the 'B' stressed
- 2 As the 'Donald Mor' variant (Binneas has this)
- 3 With a stressed 'E' in the cadence followed by a normal 'D' gracenote to 'B'

All are acceptable so long as they are consistent throughout the tune.

In Angus MacKay's book, the double echoes in bar 2, Line 1 of the ground, are written with both 'low Gs' as semi-quavers. The movement is seldom, if ever, heard like this but it is recognised that it is written in this form.

The tune is unusual in that the T & C singlings are in breabach form while the doublings are written conventionally. The breabach notes themselves might be presented either by pointing the second note or as even couplets.

The previous edition of book 10 was inconsistent in the gracenotes to the cadences in lines 1 and 3 of the singlings of the T & C. These were sometimes 'Ds' and sometimes 'Es'. In the latest edition all are 'Ds'.

In the crunluath singling of the score in the last book 10, last bar of lines 1 and 3, the 1st 'Low A' should be a 'low G'. This has been corrected in the new addition.

Please note:

Despite the best efforts of the editorial team, a couple of errors have crept into the score for this tune in the new edition of book 10. These are:

- The 'low G' in bar 4, line 2 of V1 should be 'low A'.
- The 5th bullet in the notes should refer to lines 1 and 3, not 1 and 2.

The Young Laird of Dungallon's Salute PS 10 p 292 new (p 290 old)

This tune was set as recently as 2013 and there is already a good deal of analysis on the PS website, emanating from the judge's discussions at that time. This will not be repeated here.

There is a Crunluath-a-mach indicated in MacArthur and, while the 2013 discussion concluded that a CAM seemed appropriate for this tune, in the 2017 discussion the playing of a CAM was thought to be optional.

MacKenzie of Gairloch's Lament PS 10 p 296 new (p 294 old)

This tune is in Primary form with the three lines having the phrase structure AAB/ABB/AB.

The ground is now presented in 12/8 in the new book 10 and the T & C have been moved to 2/4 from 6/8.

Short notes (quavers) occasionally occur adjacent to each other across phrase boundaries, e.g. in Var. 2. Binneas places an accent on the first one. Care is needed to maintain smooth transitions.

The MacGregor/MacArthur setting is replete with cadences. Pipers who choose to mix settings, e.g. MacGregor style but without all of the cadences, should submit the amended score if this route is followed.

***War or Peace (Gesto)**

PS 10 p 306 (new)

This tune is rarely heard. The Gesto setting has been recommended when the tune has been set in the past. Angus MacKay's setting has been criticised for being overloaded with variations.

In the ground, players tend to shorten the note before the 'D' Taorluath much as we play a 'D' taorluath-a-mach.

In transliterating the Gesto canntaireachd directly, the most remarkable difference is in the way that the crunluath-a-mach is written/played. P/M William MacLean has noted this variation as a 'crunluath breabach-a-mach which seems to adequately describe the structure.

Tempo was felt to be critical to adequately evoke the effect of a call to war, although, it was pointed out that the tune was 'War **OR** Peace' which might allow for a softer treatment to represent 'Peace'.

Older settings seem to have structural issues whereas Gesto seems to follow a form we recognise and this, perhaps, makes it easier to memorise.

***The MacLean's March** (MacArthur/ MacGregor)

PS 10 p 308 (new)

The setting in the new book 10 is taken from MacArthur. This setting is thought to pre-date that of Angus MacKay by about 20 years. The previous

edition of book 10 was largely based on MacKay and there was a theory that MacKay copied the tune from MacArthur and converted it into his father's style of playing.

The grounds are basically the same, give or take small pointing or gracing differences.

Variation 1 is cast in 6/8 in MacArthur and in 4/4 by MacKay. MacKay achieved his 4/4 time by essentially adding 28 cadences over the three lines with the cadences not shown as cadences, but as beats.

Taking these 'cadences' out gives a fluent 6/8 melody.

The MacRae's March

PS 10 p 304 new (p 302 old)

The tune appears in Glen's Collection, General Thomason's 'Ceol Mor' and in John Smith's MS as well as those mentioned below.

There seems to be three settings of this tune

1. The MacArthur MS, which seems to be the earliest source
2. Angus MacKay's book. This is probably derived from the MacArthur MS with some editing. This is the basis for the PS setting.
3. Ian M'Lellan/John MacLellan included the tune in his publication. It differs slightly in aspects of notation and construction from the other settings. It contains an unusual throw which occurs frequently in the ground and thumb variation and it is cast in 4/2.

The metre is the same in all three settings.

The presentation in the MacArthur MS includes attractive touches. In the ground there are additional 'F' connecting notes leading into GED cadences and sound effective. In line three of ground and thumb variations there is an unusual combination of grace notes with the use of the 'high G' grace note

following 'high A' ('High A' then the 'G' grace note to the themal 'F'). In the thumb variation this combination continues introducing 'C' theme notes and a 'B' theme note.

This grace note combination appears in another two tunes in the collection, so it seems unlikely to be a mistake.

The Clan MacNab's Salute

PS 15 p 520

The tune is published in PS book 15 and Kilberry. Historically, there are settings in Donald MacDonald's MS (as 'James William Grant's Salute' and 'The Elchies Salute'), Peter Reid's MS, Angus MacKay's Collection, Donald MacPhee's Collection, David Glen's Collection and in C.S.Thomason's 'Ceol Mor'

There are differences in all of these settings (e.g. in Reid the timing of some of the echo beats is reversed and cadences are shown from 'C' instead of 'B'). These must be borne in mind but, in reality, it was felt that most will play from the PS or Kilberry books.

The tune is also mentioned in A.Wright's book 'General Principles of Piobaireachd' wherein the author remarks that the singling 'up and down' pointing is evened out in the lead up to the cadence, whereas in the doubling it is wholly up.

The Brother's Lament

PS 16 p 544

This tune originates from 'The John Smith MS' and is published in PS book 16, where a number of structural inconsistencies have been addressed.

The original can be consulted on the PS website.

