

# MY NANNY O. HAYDN AND SCOTTISH SONGS

## Introduction

From the beginning of the 1790s to 1804 Haydn arranged 429 Scottish folksongs for various Scottish music editors. During his two stays in London he became acquainted with the culture and the folk music of the British Isles. He was very popular to the London society and was asked for composing for diverse people and occasions. In addition to his greater works he wrote instrumentations to hundreds of popular Scottish and also some Welsh airs.

The Scottish music editor George Thomson (1757-1851) asked several famous and less famous Viennese composers – Haydn and Beethoven were the best-known - to arrange (mainly) Scottish folksongs, which he published in numerous editions. The edition of Scottish folksong occupied George Thomson, who was a clerk at *Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Art and Manufacture in Scotland*, during his whole long life. Multiple re-editions and special editions make an accurate overview problematical.<sup>1</sup>

The common standard of the arrangement for Thomson is the instrumentation (with some exceptions): the vocal part (exceptionally two voices) is (are) accompanied by a keyboard trio, i. e. a typical Viennese genre brought to a first culminating point by Haydn. The fact of integrating folklore of the British Isles with classical music of the Viennese School is unique in the history of music and underlines the social affiliation of the arrangements for the music appreciating “upper class” which aims to unify chamber music with their own Scottish music idiom. Even the British Embassy in

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kirsteen Mc Cue: *George Thomson (1757–1851): His Collections of National Airs in their Scottish Cultural Context*. Dissertation, University of Oxford 1993.

Vienna points out this interrelationship between Great Britain and Austria on its webpage.<sup>2</sup>

Bringing together Scottish folk melodies with the art of the classical period is not only a strange, but also an attractive symbiosis between two different musical cultures. In musical scholarship it combines ethnomusicology with historical musicology.

During his first stay in London from 1791 to 1792 Haydn arranged a first set of one hundred songs for the bankrupt William Napier (ca1740-1773). His altruist aim was to help this Scottish music seller out of his private misery. The edition was so successful that Napier could plan a second set of fifty songs which was arranged by Haydn during his second sojourn in London from 1794 to 1795. For this set Napier could offer adequate wages to Haydn.<sup>3</sup> Before arranging the first two sets for Napier, Haydn already had some experience with songs for one voice, his *24 German songs* (1780/81) and his *Twelve English Canzonettas*. The latter were composed during Haydn's second sojourn in London. In addition to these compositions in three sets of twelve songs each, Haydn wrote further 15 single songs.

Back in Vienna and not ignoring the enormous success of Napier's edition, Haydn was first contacted by George Thomson in 1799 to provide him with arrangements. Before, from 1793 on, Thomson collaborated already with Pleyel (1757-1831) and with Kozeluch (1747-1818). Haydn wrote arrangements for Thomson until 1804. In concurrence to Thomson, he also cooperated with William Whyte (ca1771-ca1858), a third editor of Scottish folksongs. While the contact between Haydn and Thomson is

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<sup>2</sup> see

<http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1089129278588> (5/2008).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Georg August Griesinger *Biographische Notizen über Joseph Haydn*. Reprint of the edition of Leipzig 1810. Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik 1979, Peter Krause (Ed.), p56 & Albert Christoph Dies: *Biographische Nachrichten von Joseph Haydn. Mit Anmerkungen und einem Nachwort*, Berlin: Henschel 1959, Horst Seeger (Ed.), p158.

well documented<sup>4</sup>, there is little known about the relationship between Haydn and Whyte.

Today all the 429 folksong arrangements are published in the “Haydn-Gesamtausgabe, XXXII” of the Cologne Haydn Institute.

vol. XXXII/1:1-100      *Schottische Lieder für William Napier*, Karl Geiringer (Ed.), Henle, Munich 1961

All the other arrangements have been published between 2000 and 2005.

vol. XXXII/2:101-150      *Schottische Lieder für William Napier*, Andreas Friesenhagen (Ed.), Henle, Munich 2001

vol. XXXII/3:151-268      *Schottische Lieder für George Thomson*, Marjorie Rycroft et al. (Ed.), Henle, Munich 2001

vol. XXXII/4:269-364      *Schottische Lieder für George Thomson*, Marjorie Rycroft et al. (Ed.), Henle, Munich 2004

vol. XXXII/5:365-429      *Schottische Lieder für William Napier*, Andreas Friesenhagen, Egbert Hiller (Ed.), Henle, Munich 2005

### **Haydn’s “raw material”. *Nanny O***

In the following lines we will introduce the Scottish song *My Nanny O* and compare it with a typical song of Haydn’s native country. After the description of Haydn’s instrumentation we will look at some arrangements of *My Nanny O*. Haydn’s four arrangements of *My Nanny O* are ideally suited for introducing this new genre that he was confronted to late in his late career. The original song has been published in the first volume of the *Scots Musical Museum (SMM)*, the most important collection of Scottish songs, edited in six volumes between 1787 and 1803. *My Nanny O* was published at least in three earlier collections and probably for the first time ca1726. The text of variant below was written by the famous Scottish poet and song writer

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<sup>4</sup> see letter contact between Haydn and Thomson => Bartha, JHW XXXII,3-4

Robert Burns (1759-1796). He provided the major part of the song texts for the *SMM*, as the original texts often were considered to be too unsophisticated for publication.

The image shows a musical score for the song 'My Nanny O' in 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score is divided into eight phrases, each labeled with a letter: A, B, C1, D, E, F, C2, and D. The lyrics are written below the notes. The melody features large intervals, including ascending minor sixths and descending fifths, octaves, and a thirteenth.

Be - hind yon hills where Lu - gar flows, 'Mang moors an' mos - ses  
 mo - ny, O; The win - try sun the day has clos'd, And I'll a - wa to NAN - NIE O. The  
 west - lin wind blows loud and still, The nights baith mirk and rain - y O; I'll  
 get my plaid, and out I'll steal, An' owre the hills to NAN - NIE O.

Figure 1 – My Nanny O with melodic structure<sup>5</sup>

When it comes to the music of the Scottish songs, the following characteristics can be emphasized with the help of the example of *My Nanny O*: The songs are long and have symmetrical structures (8 phrases)! The number of different phrases of *My Nanny O* is 6, and it has immense range of a 13<sup>th</sup>. Large intervals, both ascending and descending mark the melodic line of *My Nanny O* with a typical ascending minor sixth at the end of phrases C1 and F and in the bars 9/10 and 13 and furthermore the descending 5th and octaves at the end of the phrases B, D and F. In addition to the large intervals comes an considerable range of a thirteenth that cannot be mastered by an amateur singer. Scottish songs very often change to the high register during the second part (at the beginning of phrase F). In the songs of Central Europe this

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<sup>5</sup> James Johnson: *The Scots Musical Museum (SMM)*, vol. 1, Edinburgh 1887, p89. *Nanny O* however was published first by Alexander Stuart in his collection *Music for Allan Ramsay's Collection of Scots Songs*, Edinburgh 1725 ca., p86 and appeared in further collections; William Thomson, *Orpheus Caledonius or a Collection of the best Scotch Songs set to Musick* (sic) London 1726, p38; finally a second edition in the *SMM*, vol. 6, Edinburgh 1803, p600.

phenomenon is called “Metatyp”.<sup>6</sup> Typical song incipits: a part of songs are beginning with a -5/1<sup>7</sup> pattern, with the fifth degree as upbeat. This model is also very common to central European songs and occurs especially in faster melodies. Less common, i. e. more distinctive Scottish, are beginnings of songs in slow movement with three steps up or down, followed by a larger skip or a change of the melodic line, whether by step or by skip. These figures can be found inside the songs as well.<sup>8</sup> A lot of the songs of Scotland are more developed and sophisticated with a majority being completely diatonic with scales of seven and more tones. Scottish tunes have diverse tonalities from pentatonic to modal scales<sup>9</sup>. Typical Scottish songs are those with pending tonalities between major and minor, respectively between other scales, as we can see here in the example of *My Nanny O*. The phrases A/D & F are in c-minor (c-minor can be considered as the main tonality of the song), whereas the phrases B/C1/E & C2 tend to Eb-major. Another attribute of Scottish songs are dotted rhythms. In this song they occur more sparsely. The scots snap, this “very life-blood of Scots musical rhythm”<sup>10</sup> consists in an inverted dotted rhythm with the shorter semiquaver first. It appears in bar 13.

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Wiegand Stief: *Der Metatyp der deutschen Liedmelodien und die Handschrift Hoppe*. Bern: Peter Lang 1995.

<sup>7</sup> The digits mark the tone degrees in relation to the fundamental. 1 would represent the tone C in C-Major or in c-minor and -5 the fifth degree below middle C.

<sup>8</sup> Examples of ascending incipits are: 345121, 12321, 123-5-61; Examples of descending incipits are: 32135, 321543.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Francis Collinson: *The traditional and national music of Scotland*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1966, pp4-10.

<sup>10</sup> Collinson, p29.

On the other hand the songs Haydn grown up with in his east Austrian homeland were quite different. In his music we often can hear this Central European folksong tradition. *Das Sauschneiderlied* is a typical song of Central Europe and has six short asymmetric phrases. The number of different phrases is 3 with a range of a 7<sup>th</sup>. Without this upbeat, the range would be only a 4<sup>th</sup>. This typical song from Central Europe begins with an archetypal upbeat D-G and has a diatonic five tone scale (degrees 1-5 in G-Major), without being a pentatonic song because of the occurrence of the semitone step b-c. The sixth and seventh degrees are missing. The *Sauschneiderlied* has been arranged to a *Capriccio* with variations for piano by Haydn.<sup>11</sup>

Acht Sau- schneida mias-sns sein, mias-sns sein, wanns an Sau - bärn wulln  
 5 schneidn. Zwoa vorn und zwoa hin - tn, zwoa halt - tn oa - na bin - dtn, und  
 10 oa - na schneidt drein, schneidt drein; eah-na ach - te mias sns sein.

Figure 2 – *Das Sauschneiderlied*

The song models that Haydn arranged for the Scottish publishers differed not only melodically but also formally from what he was familiar with. Haydn often had to transfer modal songs into tonal compositions. After having arranged hundreds of songs, he got exhausted and mentioned in a letter to Thomson that he was tired of arranging further songs he didn't like and which always remained strange to his musical feeling<sup>12</sup>, although after a while he accepted to pursue his collaboration with

<sup>11</sup> Capriccio on *Acht Sauschneider müssen sein*, Hob. XVII/1.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Dénes Bartha, (Ed.): *Gesammelte Briefe und Aufzeichnungen. Unter Benützung der Quellensammlung*, H. C. Robbins Landon. Kassel: Bärenreiter 1965, pp390, letter of 2/01/1802.

Thomson, which in addition not only brought him honour within the Scottish population, but also was a quite lucrative affair for him. Despite his precarious health at the age of seventy, his sense of business was unbroken and so he asked several times his apprentice Sigismund Neukomm (1778-1858) for assistance.<sup>13</sup>

### **The instrumentation**

While the arrangements for Napier were accompanied by a violin and a basso continuo, those for Thomson and Whyte were additionally enforced by a violoncello; but the main instrument remained always the piano. However it was never stated that the string parts could be leaved out. They not only doubled the right and the left hand, but also could play some independent traits. The instrumentation is equivalent to the keyboard trio, a typical genre of the Viennese classical period that Haydn rised to a first zenith. He composed 29 trios from the late 1760 years to 1797. However the denomination folksong arrangements with keyboard trio would be inadequate: At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century music playing in Scotland was quiet different to the traditions of today. Wind instrument with the exception of recorder and flute and percussion were performed generally by professional musicians, while string and keyboard instruments were played by amateur musicians. Furthermore men preferred recorder, flute, the Scottish fiddle, which became very popular in Scotland during this time<sup>14</sup>, or the violoncello. Female players tended to the piano. This tradition reflects perfectly a societal situation with men leaving their home in the morning and coming together for making music collectively in the evening and women staying alone at home and

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Rudolph Angermüller: *Neukomms schottische Liedbearbeitungen für Joseph Haydn*. In: *Haydn-Studien III/1* (1974), pp151–154.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. David Johnson: *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*. London: Oxford University Press 1972, p101.

playing piano. In this sense and because of playing music alone, women played instruments able to produce harmonies and men, meeting in groups of amateur musicians, played monodic instruments<sup>15</sup>. The instrumentation of the folksong arrangements is indeed equal to the keyboard trio; however it must be seen under a regional and sociological viewpoint and not under the perspective of genre. The keyboard trio should be considered only as an instrumental “template” for the arrangements. In addition to the bagpipe the violin (better known as fiddle) can be considered as a fundamental instrument in folk music. As a matter of fact piano and cello being also played by amateurs, it seemed obvious for the publishers to ask Haydn to arrange for these popular instruments in the Scotland music life. Concerning the composition of the instruments we know from a query from Thomson to Hummel, a later collaborator of the Scottish publisher to arrange for violin or flute, cello and pianoforte.<sup>16</sup> Yet we have no proofs if Thomson solicited Haydn also to arrange for this combination.

### The Music of Haydn’s arrangements

Among the 429 melodies Haydn wrote for Scottish publishers as many as 73 were arranged twice or more. *My Nanny O* actually was arranged four times.

<b>JHW XXXII/</b>	<b>Ordered by</b>	<b>1st Publication</b>
1:37	William Napier	1792
3:199	George Thomson	1805
4:317	George Thomson	1803 composed, but not published by Thomson
5:381	William Whyte	1806 (cf at the end of the article)

Figure 3 – Publishers and first publications of *My Nanny O*

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. *ibid.* p23.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. James Cuthbert Hadden: *George Thomson, the friend of Burns. His life and correspondence.* London: Nimmo 1898, p350.

When it comes to music, we should opt for an example that exemplifies the typical style of Haydn, i. e. the arrangement for William Whyte. The notation of the score sums up Haydn's practice: The violin is conceived as a counterpart to the voice and benefits from a certain independence of the right hand. It could be leaved out; but in this case the composition would loose musical substance, but would still remain playable. The keyboard is the main accompanying instrument and is positioned as usual directly under the voice part. The violoncello assumes the role of an amplifier of the left hand – the sound of keyboard basses of the time of Haydn being less voluminous than those of a concert grand of today. We can observe that the violoncello doubles the lowest part of the left hand. In some arrangements however Haydn bestows on the cello a more independent part. Beethoven, who also arranged about 150 songs for Thomson, chooses a different order with the string instruments above the vocal part(s) and the piano below. Compared to Haydn he conceives the strings as a counterbalance to the keyboard with an autonomous cello part.<sup>17</sup> Usually Haydn's piano score does not exceed three parts, except in homophone passages, i. e. in chords or in slower progressions as seen in the last few measures. The voice is always doubled, be it by the right hand, as usual, or the violin, or by both. In *My Nanny O* Haydn maintains his acquired habit in doubling it in large passages by the right hand and in juxtaposing the violin at the end of the vocal part. He economizes on dynamics, which in this example seem to be forgotten completely. But dynamics are performed between the lines and often in relation to the textual statements. The

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Petra Weber-Bockholdt: *Beethoven Werke. Abteilung XI, volume 1. Schottische und walisische Lieder und Kritischer Bericht*, Munich, Henle 1999.

information about the song text and instrumental parts, the so-called “symphonies”<sup>18</sup> also arise from Thomson’s letter to Hummel: Haydn and the other arrangers had no idea of the text, because melodies were sent without text, except some explications about its content. The “symphonies” should be six to eight bars long – in reality Haydn’s ritornellos are somewhat shorter.<sup>19</sup> However Thomson was not at the origin to bring out songs with instrumental parts. Shortly before, the Italian-born musician Domenico Corri (1746-1825) had also published a song collection for voice and continuo with introductions and ritornellos.<sup>20</sup> The example of *My Nanny O* gives indeed a comprehensible insight to this requested formal structure: The introduction has eight bars, and the ritornello is four bars long. The song incipit is anticipated during two bars at the very beginning of the arrangement in the right hand – this is a common attribute of most arrangements. The violin doubles it in the upper octave.

JHW XXXII	Introduction	Ritornello
1:37	no introduction and ritornello	
3:199 for two vocal parts	4 bars	2 bars
4:317	8 bars	6 bars
5:381	8 bars	4 bars

Figure 4 – The lengths of the “symphonies” of the four arrangements of *My Nanny O*

The transition to the vocal part is four bars long and is realised mainly by the dotted rhythm – a semantic trait of Scottish songs - in reference to the song upbeat, followed, after a crotchet rest, by a final cadenza. The motivic allusion to the song

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<sup>18</sup> The term „symphony“ appears also in the collection title; cf. for instance, George Thomson: *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs, for the Voice with introductory & concluding Symphonies & Accompaniments for the Piano Forte, Violin & Violoncello, by Haydn*, vol. 4, London, Edinburgh 1805.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Hadden, p350 (see above).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Domenico Corri: *New and complete collection of the most favourite Scots songs*, 3 vol., Edinburgh 1783-1788ca.

melody is principally more important in the introductions. As a basic principle of Haydn the ritornello relates seldomly to motivic elements of the precedent melody. In the ritornello JHW XXXII/5:381 for Whyte's collection we notice again the occurrence of the dotted rhythm. The common trait with the arrangements for Thomson is the two bar anticipation of the melody incipit. In the Whyte arrangement Haydn ascribes less importance to another distinctive element, the motive of a descending octave followed by a dotted rhythm and a crotchet at the end of the song.<sup>21</sup>

JHW XXXII/3:199,  
p114 – End of the  
introduction

JHW XXXII/4:317,  
p137 – End of the  
introduction

JHW XXXII/4:317,  
p139 – End of the  
ritornello

Figure 5

Haydn refers to this characteristic element of *My Nanny O* in placing it at the end, i. e. at exposed positions in the instrumental parts. In the arrangements “playing” with motives and the imitating short melodic clichés replaces the development of thematic material in larger and more structured musical artefacts. In contrast to the arrangements for Thomson and Whyte the “harmonisations”<sup>22</sup> for Napier are not bounded with “symphonies” and has its – less skilful – antecedent inter alia in the *SMM*, but here without violin part. The divergent structure and instrumentation also

<sup>21</sup> ... i. e. the phrases D and partially also F (cf. song example above).

<sup>22</sup> The term „harmonisation“ sorts well with the songs arranged for Napier and is applied in the subtitle of the collection.

implicates a different treatment of the instruments. Most obvious is the voice standing alone, without being doubled. - It can however be played by the piano player. The violin part is a mixture of a discreet accompaniment and of a second voice. Both, the violin and the thinly conceived basso continuo part<sup>23</sup>, cede the primacy to the voice.

Slow

Violin

While, ab-sent from these faith-ful arms, O'er dis-tant hills my Hen-ry hies. Fears,

fond-ly - fram'd, my heart a-larms, And tears of pas-sion bathe my eyes:

6 6, 6 5 6, 10 10, 5 6 3, 6 4, 5 3, 4

Figure 6<sup>24</sup>

## Summary

At the beginning of his collaboration with the Scottish editor Thomson we can see Haydn energetically involved in a new experience which seemed to interest him strongly. Transferring motives of the original song melody into the instrumental parts is a proof for a more intensive identification of Haydn with the music of Scottish songs. This can be observed during the first period of the master's relationship with Thomson. After a while however his interest seems to degenerate. Motivic work evaporates and arrangements become more uniform. Later arrangements for Thomson and for Whyte point up a more reserved, but a seasoned and self-confident Haydn, who economises on his talents, but still realises pleasing little compositions

<sup>23</sup> The numbers of the figured bass may possibly not have been added by Haydn!

<sup>24</sup> JHW XXXII/1:37, S. 39, first part, with an earlier text to Burns (cf. above).

which were accepted generously by the editors and by Scottish amateur performers, for whom they were finally planned. Most arrangements remain at a higher artistic level than those of Pleyel and of Kozeluch, or even Hummel and Weber, but not than those of Beethoven, which however were often confronted with the objection to be too difficult for amateur musicians.

We finally observe that musicology has taken little notice of this immensely vast corpus of Haydn's oeuvre since 1961 and especially after 2001, when the first arrangements were published by the Haydn Institute of Cologne in the context of the Complete Haydn Edition. Audio records of all Scottish songs of Haydn will be available in the *Haydn Year 2009*, recorded by the *Haydn Trio Eisenstadt*<sup>25</sup>.

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Adagio". The score is arranged for four parts: Violino (Violin), Voce (Voice), Fortepiano (Piano), and Violoncello (Cello). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo marking "Adagio" is placed above the first staff. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Be - hind yon hills where Lu - gar flows, 'Mang". The piano part features a prominent bass line with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) in the lower register. The cello part provides a steady accompaniment. The score is divided into two systems, with a measure number "5" at the beginning of the second system.

<sup>25</sup> Cf <http://www.haydntrioeisenstadt.at/> (10/2008).

11

moors an' mos - ses mo - ny, O; The win - try sun the day has clos'd, And I'll a - wa to NAN - NIE, O.

This musical system contains measures 11 through 16. It features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "moors an' mos - ses mo - ny, O; The win - try sun the day has clos'd, And I'll a - wa to NAN - NIE, O."

17

The west - lin wind blows loud and shill, The night's baith mirk and rain - y, O; I'll

This musical system contains measures 17 through 22. It features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "The west - lin wind blows loud and shill, The night's baith mirk and rain - y, O; I'll".

21



get my plaid, and out I'll steal, An' owre the hills to NAN - NIE, O.

25



Figure 7<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *My Nanny O*, JHW XXXII/5:381, pp45