

Carmina Gadelica



Over one hundred years ago, the culmination of Alexander Carmichael's life work came to fruition with the publication of Carmina Gadelica. Orally collected last century in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, Carmina Gadelica comprises English translations of traditional Gaelic hymns, chants, and incantations transcribed lest they be lost forever as the Gaelic language was ever swifter squeezed out of use in Scotland: these religious texts contain a strange blend of pagan, Celtic and Christian imagery.

Ranging through invocations (prayers for protection, prayers before going to sleep); addresses to the saints; blessing for large events such as weddings and baptisms, and for everyday tasks (even banking up the fire for the night); incantations used in healing; love songs, milking songs, waulking songs; auguries, and the occasional curse, the texts document much about Scotland's beliefs and customs in days gone by, where *the sight* was as much part of everyday life as the church. The spiritual nature of the texts, with often-mysterious phrases and expressions, bring together these two beliefs which today are seen in opposition.

Peter set nineteen of these texts to music for soprano, tenor, baritone, and choir. The instrumentation of harmonium, piano, violin, flute and clarsach provides a variety of textures for the singers, combining the idioms of old church music with the haunting, almost ethereal sounds of Celtic tradition.

Carmina Gadelica is dedicated to the memory of Peter's grandfathers, George Robinson and Harry Simpson.

1. Rune Before Prayer: bending my knee - tenor, *baritone, choir*
2. Quern Blessing: on ash eve - *soprano*
3. Invocation: behold the lightener of the stars - *soloists, choir*
4. Smoothing the Fire: the sacred three - *baritone, choir*
5. Love Charm: a love charm for thee - *soprano*
6. Sea Prayer: blessed be the boat - *choir*
7. Setting the Iomart: the black by the white - *choir*
8. Curse on the Rival: verses made at the waulking frame - *soprano*
9. Invocation: the flood and the battle to come - *soloists, choir*
10. Blessing: o holy spirit - *soloists*
11. Hymn: may I speak each day - *choir*
12. Birth Baptism: a little drop - *soprano, tenor*
13. Invocation: the sun and the moon - *tenor, baritone*
14. Charm for Consumption: I trample on thee - *soprano, choir*
15. Omens: Early on the morning of Monday - *baritone*
16. Incantation: the catkin wool - *soprano*
17. Sleep Belssing: I lay me down - *soprano, baritone*
18. Incantation: the yarrow - *tenor*
19. Supplication: I pray Peter - *choir*

Soloists

Soprano - Linda Miller
Tenor - Peter Robinson
Baritone - George Gordon

Choir

Sopranos

Eunice Classon, Brid Cullen, Betty Ganson, Margo Imrie,
Marilyn Maule, Maureen McCue, Linda Milne, Anne Myrtle,
Linda Shipman, Jan Stuart, Jane Young.

Altos

Karen Austin, Cathie Brannigan, Claire Brown,
Kathleen Crowe, Alison Goodwin,
Linda McMann, Christine Thomson.

Tenors

Martin Butler, Peter Easson, Tony Hadden, Iain Hughes,
Alex Keddie, Robert Milne, David Mitchinson, Bill Split.

Basses

Lawrence Crowe, Alex Kinninmont, Duncan Robertson,
Neil Thomson, Alan Woolley.

Musicians

Dorothy Moncrieff - piano
Alan Gibson - harmonium
Moirá Anthony - violin
Mhairi Holligan - violin
Stuart Brand - flute
Heather Yule – clarsach

A recording is available. For more information, please contact Carpe Diem.

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