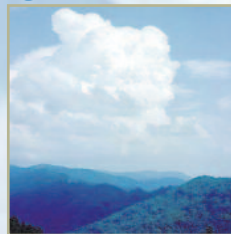




skye consort

Matthew White, countertenor / *contre-ténor*
Alex Kehler, baroque violin / *violon baroque*
Amanda Keesmaat, baroque cello / *violoncelle baroque*
Seán Dagher, cittern / *cistre*
Andrew Horton, double bass / *contrebasse*
Betsy MacMillan, viola da gamba / *viòle de gambe*
Thomas Gossage, percussion

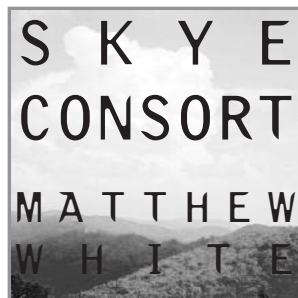
SKYE



CONSORT

TRADITIONAL CELTIC MELODIES

Matthew White
COUNTERTENOR



- 1 Jenny Nettles** 2:42
Trad. Scottish (arr. S. Dagher, A. Kehler)
- 2 The Prickeli Bush** 3:44
Trad. English (arr. S. Dagher, A. Kehler)
- 3 The Earl's Chair Set** 3:40
Trad. Scottish/Irish (inst., arr. S. Dagher, A. Kehler)
- 4 Matt Highland** 5:34
Trad. Scottish (arr. S. Dagher)
- 5 Pegeen Mike / The Widow Quinn / The Blarge Jig** 4:21
(inst., S. Dagher)
- 6 The Outlandish Rogue** 3:09
Words: Trad. English; Melody: S. Dagher
- 7 The Penknife Murderer** 2:36
Trad. Swedish (inst., arr. S. Dagher)
- 8 Cam ye o'er from France?** 2:41
Trad. Scottish (arr. S. Dagher)
- 9 The Dewy Dells of Yarrow** 2:45
Trad. Scottish (arr. S. Dagher)
- 10 Lamento di Tristano / Brudmarsch** 3:52
Trad. Italian/Swedish (inst., arr. S. Dagher)
- 11 Let Me In This Ae Night** 4:34
Trad. Scottish (arr. S. Dagher)
- 12 The Banks of the Sweet Primroses** 3:27
Trad. English (arr. S. Dagher)
- 13 Gan Ainm** 3:40
A. Kehler (inst., arr. S. Dagher)

Recorded and produced by / *Enregistrement et réalisation* : Johanne Goyette
July 11, 12, 13, 2000 / *11, 12, 13 juillet 2000*. Église Saint-Joseph-de-Rivière-des-Prairies, Rivière-des-Prairies (Québec)
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skye consort

In the fall of 1998 the founding members of the Skye Consort decided to put together a musical group that reflected their diverse musical interests and backgrounds. Both Alex Kehler and Matthew White shared a love of many of the sonorities associated with the early music movement and felt that a fusion of these sounds with the evocative melodies of folk repertoire would work well. The concept of using a countertenor or falsetto voice seemed a way of emphasizing the ethereal and melancholy qualities of these songs. Once the concept was decided upon, Seán Dagher was approached for his skills as both an arranger of this repertoire and as a first rate performer. It wasn't long into the rehearsals before we all realized that we had found a new and interesting sound. The next step was to further deepen and characterize this sound by adding bass

instruments and percussion. The result is an effective blend of folk music with what has become known as a more "classical" style of playing and singing. The name of the group is taken from the title of a collection of Scottish melodies compiled in 1887 by Kieth Norman MacDonald. We have included some of these tunes on this our first recording.

The songs and instrumental pieces chosen for the album come mainly from the Celtic, English and Swedish traditions but we have also included arrangements of melodies written by Seán and Alex in a style that complements the other selections. Dispensing as much as possible with the input of publishers and previous arrangers, Seán and Alex have attempted to arrange these songs from single line melodies.

À l'automne 1998, les membres fondateurs du Skye Consort décidèrent de former un groupe qui refléterait leurs divers intérêts et antécédents musicaux. Alex Kehler et Matthew White partageaient tous deux une prédilection pour maintes sonorités associées au mouvement de renouveau de la musique ancienne et ils estimaient qu'une fusion de celles-ci avec les mélodies évocatrices du répertoire folklorique serait d'un bel effet. Le concept d'utiliser une voix de haute-contre ou de fausset semblait un moyen idéal pour souligner le caractère éthéré et mélancolique de ces chansons. Une fois le concept établi, on approcha Seán Dagher pour ses qualités d'arrangeur de ce répertoire et d'interprète de premier ordre. Après seulement quelques répétitions, nous étions tous à même de constater que nous avons trouvé une sonorité inédite et intéressante. La prochaine étape était d'approfondir et de caractériser davantage cette sonorité en y

ajoutant des instruments de basse et des percussions. Le résultat est un heureux mélange réussi de musique folklorique avec un style de jeu et de chant qu'il est convenu d'appeler plus «classique». Le nom du groupe vient du titre d'un recueil de mélodies écossaises compilées en 1887 par Kieth Norman MacDonald. Nous avons inclus quelques-uns de ces airs dans cet enregistrement, qui est notre premier disque.

Les chansons et les pièces instrumentales choisies pour cet album proviennent surtout des traditions celtique, anglaise et suédoise, mais nous avons aussi inclus des arrangements de mélodies écrites par Seán et Alex dans un style qui s'accorde avec les autres titres. Se passant autant que possible de l'appui d'éditions et d'arrangements existants, Seán et Alex ont tenté d'arranger ces chansons à partir de la simple ligne mélodique.

Jenny Nettles; the mullein dhu

(gaelique pour «le somôre moulin»)

These songs are both Scottish reels that Alex played with his father as a child. Children in rural Scotland are well acquainted with this song. It is a simple story that in its original version involves a young lover scorned by both the object of her desire and her social class. With fitting melodrama, she takes her own life in despair. She is allegedly buried between two Lairds' land near the Lomond hills. In an attempt to lighten the mood, we did not include all the verses and decided that our version would reflect only the lover's courtship.

Ces deux pièces sont des reels écossais qu'Alex jouait, enfant, avec son père. Dans la campagne écossaise, les enfants connaissent bien cette chanson. Encore une fois, il s'agit d'une histoire simple qui dans sa version originale met en jeu une jeune amoureuse rejetée par l'objet de ses désirs ainsi que par les gens de son propre rang social. Comme il sied à un tel mélodrame, elle finit par s'enlever la vie dans un geste désespéré. Elle serait enterrée, paraît-il, entre deux terres seigneuriales non loin des collines Lomond. Afin d'alléger l'atmosphère, nous n'avons pas inclus toutes les strophes, ne gardant que celles qui évoquent la cour que fait la jeune femme.

*Saw ye Jenny Nettles, Jenny Nettles, Jenny Nettles?
Saw ye Jenny Nettles, coming from the market?
Wi' bag and baggage on her back, her fee and bountith
in her lap,
Wi' bag and baggage on her back, and a baby in her
oxter.*

*I took her hand, I pressed it. I asked if she could fancy
me.
My heart you have distressed it, coming from the
market.
My bonnie lass both trig and neat, no fairer trips on
London street,
Your glancing even subdues my heart, among the
heather barefoot.*

*My holding stands on yonder glen, I have a but, I have
a ben,
If you'll be lady of my own, you'll go no longer barefoot.
I met beyond the cairnie Jenny Nettles trig and braw,
Among the shaws o' Barnie, skipping lightly barefoot.*

*A silken gown then you shall have, clad anew from top
to toe,
A pair o' shoes and stockings too, to keep you from goin'
barefoot.
I met beyond the cairnie, Jenny Nettles trig and braw,
Among the shaws o' Barnie, skipping lightly barefoot.*

the prickeli bush

(le buisson épineux)

This is the story of a woman in a very prickly situation. She is to be hanged, but at the last minute, she is saved by her love. Although this arrangement is based on an English version of the melody, variants of this song can be found all over the Mediterranean. Eastern versions tend to include a section in which the maid is abducted by pirates.

Voici l'histoire d'une demoiselle qui se retrouve dans une situation bien épineuse. On doit la pendre, mais elle est délivrée à la dernière minute par son bien-aimé. Bien que cet arrangement se fonde sur une version anglaise de la mélodie, des variantes de cette chanson se retrouvent partout autour de la Méditerranée. Les versions qui proviennent du levant comprennent souvent une section où la jeune fille est enlevée par des pirates.

*O the prickeli bush, that breaks my heart so sore,
If I ever get out of this prickeli bush I'll never get in it
anymore.*

*Hangman stay your hand, o stay it for a while,
For I think I see my father coming over yonder stile.*

*Father have you brought me gold, or silver to set me free?
To save my body from the cold cold ground, and my neck
from the gallows tree?*

*No, I have not brought you gold, or silver to set you free,
To save your body from the cold cold ground, and your
neck from the gallows tree.*

*Hangman stay your hand, o stay it for a while,
For I think I see my true love coming over yonder stile.*

*True love have you brought me gold, or silver to set me
free?
To save my body from the cold cold ground and my neck
from the gallows tree?*

*Yes, I have brought you gold, and silver to set you free.
To save your body from the cold cold ground and your
neck from the gallows tree.*

*O the prickeli bush, that breaks my heart so sore.
Now I am out of this prickeli bush I'll never get in it
anymore.*

THE EARL'S CHAIR SET

The first tune of this three part medley is a Strathspey called "Caledonia's Wail for Neil Gow, her Favorite Minstrel" and is attributed to a Captain Fraser. The *Earl's Chair* is the middle section of the medley and is an Irish reel played especially slowly here to emphasize the beauty of the melody. The last tune, "The Nine Pint Cogie," is another reel taken from the Skye Collection.

Le premier morceau de ce pot-pourri en trois parties est le *strathspey* intitulé *Caledonia's Wail for Neil Gow, her Favorite Minstrel*, attribué au capitaine Fraser. Le *Earl's Chair*, la section médiane de ce pot-pourri, est un *reel* irlandais joué ici à un tempo particulièrement lent afin de souligner la beauté de la mélodie. Le dernier air, *The Nine Pint Cogie*, est un autre *reel* tiré du recueil Skye.

MATT HIGHLAND; THE SWEET PRIMROSES (LES BERGES DES SUAVES PRIMEVÈRES)

Seán heard both of these tunes on an album by Martin Carthy and Dave Swarbrick called "And Two Came By." Though Martin Carthy specializes in English repertoire, *Matt Highland* is of Scottish origin and *The Banks of the Sweet Primroses* (lyrics on page 19) shares a melody with an Irish song called *Peggy Gordon*.

Seán a entendu ces deux mélodies sur un album de Martin Carthy et Dave Swarbrick intitulé *And Two Came By*. Bien que Martin Carthy se spécialise dans le répertoire anglais, *Matt Highland* est d'origine écossaises et *The Banks of the Sweet Primroses* (paroles en page 19) partage une mélodie avec la chanson irlandaise *Peggy Gordon*.

*There was a lord lived in this town, who had a handsome lovely daughter.
She was courted by a fair young man who was a servant to her father.
But when her parents came to know, they swore they'd send him from the island.
The maid she knew her heart would break had she to part with young Matt Highland.*

*Straight way unto her love she goes, into his room him to awaken.
Sayin', "Arise my love and go away this very night you will be taken.
I overheard my parents say in spite of me they would transport you.
So arise my love and go away this very night you will be taken."*

*"O must I go?" he says to her, "O must I go without my wages.
Without a penny in my purse just like some poor forlorn stranger."
"Here's fifty guineas in bright gold and that's far more than father owes you.
So take it now and go away I wish to God I'd gone before you."*

*They both sat down upon the bed just for this side of one half hour.
And not a word did either say though down their cheeks the tears did shower.
She laid her head upon his chest as round his neck her arms entwined.
"Not a duke nor earl nor a lord I'll wed I'll wait for you my own Matt Highland."*

*The lord discussed with his daughter fair one night alone in her bed chamber.
Sayin', "I give you leave to bring him back since there's no one your style above him."
She wrote a letter then in haste for him her heart was still repining.
She brought him back to the church they went and made a lord of young Matt Highland.*

peegen mike
the widow quinn
the blarge jig

These pieces were written by Seán for a 1998 production of a play set on the west coast of Ireland called "The Playboy of the Western World" by J.M. Synge. The first part, "Peegen Mike," was to be played before the action started and was written to evoke the starkness of the west coast of Ireland. The second movement, "The Widow Quinn," is a stylized wail that reflects the widow's suffering at the end of Act II. As music for the end of the play, Seán wrote "The Blarge Jig" to help alleviate but not obliterate the tension and anguish with which the play closes.

Ces morceaux ont été écrits par Seán pour une production en 1998 de la pièce de théâtre *The Playboy of the Western World* de J.M. Synge, dont l'action se déroule sur la côte ouest de l'Irlande. La première partie, *Peegen Mike*, devait se jouer avant que ne débute l'action pour évoquer l'austérité de la côte ouest de l'Irlande. Le deuxième mouvement, *The Widow Quinn*, est une complainte stylisée qui reflète les souffrances de la veuve à la fin du deuxième acte. Comme musique pour la fin de la pièce, Seán a écrit *The Blarge Jig* pour contribuer à atténuer sans toutefois oblitérer la tension et l'angoisse qui règnent sur la fin de la pièce de théâtre.



Photo : Candido Carbone

the outlandish rogue (le gredin étranger)

Seán found the lyrics for this song in a collection of ballads collected by a 19th century cataloguer of Scottish and English ballads named Francis James Child. He was unable to find a melody that he thought was suitable for the text so wrote his own. Again, there are many versions of this story but we thought this one was special, because for once, the woman wins the day and the rogue actually gets what he deserves.

Seán a trouvé les paroles de cette chanson dans un recueil de ballades écossaises et anglaises réunies au 19e siècle par Francis James Child. Il a cependant été incapable de trouver un texte qu'il jugeât convenir au texte, alors il en composa une lui-même. Encore une fois, il existe de nombreuses versions de cette histoire, mais nous pensions que celle-ci était spéciale car — et il était grand temps — la femme remporte la victoire et le gredin se fait enfin rendre la monnaie de sa pièce.

*"An outlandish rogue came from the northlands,
And he came wooing to me.
He told me he'd take me to some foreign lands,
And there he would marry me,
And there he would marry me."*

*"Go and fetch me some of your mother's gold
And some of your father's fee.
And two of the best nags out of the stable.
Where there stand thirty and three.
Where there stand thirty three."*

*Now she mounted on her milk white steed,
And he on his dipple grey.
And they rode till they came to the seaside.
Three hours before it was day,
Three hours before the day.*

*"Duff off duff off your silken things.
And deliver them to me.
For it looks far too rich and far too gay
To rot in the salty sea,
To rot in the salty sea."*

*Now he turned his back unto her.
And viewed the watery stream.
She caught him round the middle so small.
And forced him into the stream,
and forced him into the stream.*

*Now she mounted on her milk white steed.
And led the dipple grey.
And she rode till she came to her father's house
Three hours before it was day
Three hours before the day.*

the penknife murderer
(l'assassin au canif)

Seán learned this melody from the Swedish folk group Väsen. He was inspired by how the tune subtly sways between 3/4 and 6/8. This ambiguity in the time signature creates the desire to tap one's toes but some question as to when.

Seán apprit cette mélodie du groupe folklorique suédois Väsen. Il a été touché par la manière qu'a cet air d'osciller subtilement entre le 3/4 et le 6/8. Cette ambiguïté de la mesure donne envie de taper du pied, mais laisse incertain quant au moment de la faire.

cam ye o'er from france?
(arrivez-vous de france ?)

The relationship between the Scottish people and the English Crown has always been strained. This is an 18th century satirical song written from the Scottish perspective that pokes fun at King George I—"Geordie." All the references in this song are to his courtiers and their carryings on.

Les relations entre le peuple d'Écosse et la Couronne d'Angleterre ont toujours été tendues. Cette chanson satirique du 18^e siècle, écrite d'un point de vue écossais, se moque du roi George I^{er} — «Geordie». Toutes les allusions dans cette chanson se réfèrent à ses courtisans et à leurs agissements.

*Cam ye o'er from France? Cam ye down by London?
Saw ye Geordie Whelps and his bonny woman?
Were ye at the place called the Kittle Hoosie?
Saw ye Geordie's grace riding on a goosie?*

*Geordie he's a man, and can little doubt it.
He's done all he can, what can do without it.
Down there came a blade, linkin like my lordie;
He would drive a trade at the loom of Geordie.*

*Though the cloth was bad, blithly may we niffer;
If we get a web it makes little differ.
We have tint our plaid, bonnet belt and swordie
Ha's and mailins braid but we have a Geordie.*

*Jocky's gone to France, and Montgomery's lady.
There they'll learn to dance, Madame are you ready?
They'll be back belyue, belted, brisk and lordly
Brawly may they thrive to dance a jig with Geordie.*

*Hey for Sandy Don! Hey for Cockolorum!
Hey for Bobbing John, and his Highland quorum.
Many a sword and lance swings at Highland hurdie.
How they'll skip and dance o'er the bum of Geordie.*

the dewy dells of YARROW (les vallons frais de YARROW)

This 19th century song of Scottish origin tells the story of a young boy killed fighting for the hand of his love. Found by Seán in the Penguin book of Canadian folk songs, it was chosen primarily for the interesting time signature changes that occur underneath its more fluid melodic line.

Cette chanson du 19^e siècle, d'origine écossaise, raconte l'histoire d'un jeune homme tué en se battant pour la main de sa bien-aimée. Trouvée par Seán dans le livre de chansons folkloriques canadiennes publié par Penguin, elle a été choisie avant tout pour ses intéressants changements de mesure se produisant sous une ligne mélodique plus fluide.

*There lived a lady in the north,
You could scarcely find her marrow.
She was courted by nine noblemen,
On the dewy dells of Yarrow.*

*Her father had a bonny ploughboy
And she did love him dearly
She gilded him with a single sword
For to fight for her on Yarrow.*

*As he climbed up yon high hill,
And they climbed down the other,
There he spied nine noblemen,
On the dewy dells of Yarrow.*

*Did you come here to drink red wine?
Or Did you come here to borrow?
Or Did you come here with a single sword
For to fight for her on Yarrow?*

*I came not here to drink red wine,
And I came not here to borrow,
But I came here with a single sword
For to fight for her on Yarrow.*

*Three he drew and three he slew
And two lie deadly wounded,
When a stubborn knight came up behind
And pierced him with his arrow.*

*Oh mother dear make me my bed
And make it long and narrow.
For the one that died for me today,
I will die for him tomorrow.*

Lamento di Tristano / Brudmarsch

(swedish: bridał march / suédois pour «marche nuptiale»)

The *Lamento di Tristano* is from a book entitled *Medieval Instrumental Dances* edited by Timothy J. McGee and is a standard of the medieval repertoire. The *Brudmarsch* comes from an anthology compiled by Ben Paley: *Swedish Fiddle Music*. These seemingly disparate styles were paired here for a reason. The medieval scale used in the *Lamento* happens to be the minor scale used most commonly in Celtic music. This inspired a Celtic accompaniment that made it a good partner for the *Brudmarsch*, a Swedish tune in a very characteristically Swedish minor mode but with a nearly Celtic rhythm and feel.

Lamento di Tristano est tiré du volume *Medieval Instrumental Dances* édité par Timothy J. McGee. C'est un classique du répertoire médiéval. Le *Brudmarsch* provient de l'anthologie *Swedish Fiddle Music*, préparée par Ben Paley. Ces deux styles apparemment hétérogènes ne sont pas réunis ici sans raison : il se trouve que la gamme médiévale utilisée dans le *Lamento* est identique à la gamme mineure la plus fréquemment employée dans la musique celtique. Cela inspira un accompagnement celtique à la pièce, ce qui en fit un bon compagnon pour le *Brudmarsch*, un air suédois dans un mode mineur typiquement suédois, mais avec un rythme et une atmosphère presque celtiques.

Let me in this ae night

(laissez-moi entrer cette nuit seulement)

There are many variants of this story and song throughout Ireland, Scotland, and England. This melody's exact origin is difficult to determine but interestingly there is an extant version with basso continuo by C.P.E. Bach in the 18th century.

Il existe de nombreuses variantes de cette histoire et de cette chanson à travers l'Irlande, l'Écosse et l'Angleterre. L'origine exacte de la mélodie est difficile à déterminer, mais il est intéressant de noter qu'il existe une version avec basse continue réalisée par C.P.E. Bach au 18^e siècle.

Let Me In This Ae Night

*O let me in this ae night, this ae, ae, ae, night;
O let me in this ae night, and I'll no come back again, jo.*

*O lassie are ye sleepin' yet, or are ye waukin I wid wit,
For love has bound me hand and foot, And I wad fain be in, jo.*

*O let me in this ae night, this ae, ae, ae, night;
O let me in this ae night, and I'll no come back again, jo.*

*"My father's workin in the street, my mother the chamber keys does keep,
My chamber door does chirp and cheep, I dare not let you in, jo.
O gae your ways this ae night, this ae, ae, ae, night;
O gae your ways this ae night, for I dare not let you in, jo.*

*But I'll come steelin softly in, and cannily make little din;
My foot step tread there's none can hear for blowin wind and rain, jo.
O let me in this ae night, this ae, ae, ae, night;
O let me in this ae night, and I'll no come back again, jo.*

*Cast up the door unto the wet, cast off your shoes from off your feet,
Then to my chamber you may creep, but you may not do't again, jo.
O Leeze me on this ae night, this ae, ae, ae, night;
The joys we've had this ae night, your chamber walls within, jo.*

the banks of the sweet primroses

*As I walked out one fine summer's morning,
For to see the fields and take the air,
Down by the banks of the sweet primroses,
There I beheld a maid most wondrous fair.*

*All three long steps I stepped up to her,
Not knowing her as she passed me by,
I stepped up to her thinking for to view her,
She appeared to me like some virtuous bride.*

*I says, "Fair maid where you going,
And what's the occasion of all your grief?
I could make you as happy as any a lady,
If you would grant me one small relief."*

*"Stand off stand off! You are a false deceiver.
You are a false deceitful man I know 'tis clear.
For 'tis you that does cause my poor heart to wander,
And in your comfort lies no refrain."*

*"So I'll go down to some lonesome valley,
Where no man on earth there shall me find,
And the pretty little small birds all change their voices,
And every moment blows blustering wind."*

*"So come all young men who go asailing,
Pray pay attention to what I say for 'tis many,
The dark and the cloudy a morning,
Turns out to be a sun shiny day."*

gan ainm

(gàéilique pour «sans nom»)

This song was written by Alex in 1998 using a chordal violin texture based upon a Norwegian hardanger fiddle style—specifically that of Annbjorg Lien. It was written in memory of an Icelandic friend and fellow violinist named Gunnhildur Baldurson.

Alex a écrit cette pièce en 1998 en ayant recours à une texture d'accords au violon basée sur le style du violon folklorique norvégien Hardanger — plus particulièrement sur celui d'Annbjorg Lien. Elle a été composée à la mémoire de Gunnhildur Baldurson, une amie et collègue violoniste islandaise.