

SSO Celtic Celebration

Program Notes

Marche Ecossaïse [sur un theme populaire] (Scottish March on a popular theme)

Scottish General Meredith Reid in 1891 asked Claude Debussy if he would write a march based on the traditional melody of the Ross clan, of which Reid was a descendant. Debussy, in need of cash, readily accepted and wrote a piece for piano four-hands, and orchestrated it years later, in 1908.

According to notes published by the Utah Symphony for a performance of the piece, "It begins with an air of mystery rather than pomp and when it does reach full voice, it is really more of a fantasy of fanfare flourishes and coloristic episodes. The Marche has a constantly transforming nature that culminates finally in a rousing martial salute that hopefully got at least one smile out of the commissioner."

Highland Cathedral

Highland Cathedral, a popular melody for the Great Highland Bagpipe, was composed by German musicians Ulrich Roeber and Michael Korb in 1982 for a Highland games held in Germany. It has been proposed as the Scottish national anthem. It has subsequently undergone various orchestrations and had lyrics added in English and in Scottish Gaelic.

The tune has been performed by the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, and featured in the album, *Spirit of the Glen*, which won a Classical Brit award in 2009. It has been performed at numerous Scottish cultural events, including Scotland's Rugby Union games. It is also a popular wedding song.

Silent Wings

Silent Wings is a new-age Celtic piece composed by Secret Garden, an Irish-Norwegian duo known for its neo-classical instrumental music. SSO co-music director Berthold Carrière has arranged this composition for orchestra, and it features pianist Marilyn Dallman, who has played for the Stratford Festival for more than 30 years.

Sir Festus Burke O'Carolan's Concerto Mr. O'Connor

These are a few of the many songs composed by Turlough O'Carolan, a blind Irish harper who made his living by journeying from one end of Ireland to the other, composing songs for patrons, mostly in the early Eighteenth Century. He is considered by many to be Ireland's national composer. Some of his compositions are performed by popular Irish musicians, such as Planxty, The Chieftains and The Dubliners. In addition, O'Carolan's Concerto has been used as a neutral Slow

March by the Foot Guards of the British Army during the ceremony of Trooping the Colour.

Graham Campbell, Toronto, has arranged these three compositions for orchestra.

Benedictus

Born in Edinburgh, Alexander Mackenzie took a great interest in folk music and produced several collections of arrangements of traditional Scottish songs. In 1903, interested in investigating Canadian folk song, he came to Canada on a tour arranged by Anglo-Canadian musician Charles A.E. Harriss. His visit stimulated the cultural scene and choral festival competitions were held throughout Canada.

Benedictus, originally composed in Italy for violin and piano and known then as Benedicite, is Mackenzie's best-known piece. The melody reflects his deep feeling for the violin, to which is added a sensitive use of harmonic and orchestral colouring.

Far and Away Suite

John Williams wrote the music for *Far and Away*, a 1992 adventure/romance film directed by Ron Howard and starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman. Cruise and Kidman play Irish immigrants seeking their fortune in 1890s America.

Irish Sherry Suite

Originally a string quartet arranged by Turlough O'Carolan, this version of Irish Sherry Suite has been arranged for orchestra by Berthold Carrière.