

Carolan, Connellan & Lyons

18th century Irish harp music performed by Simon Chadwick
Wighton Centre, Dundee, Saturday 23rd January 2010

Turlough Carolan (1670-1738)

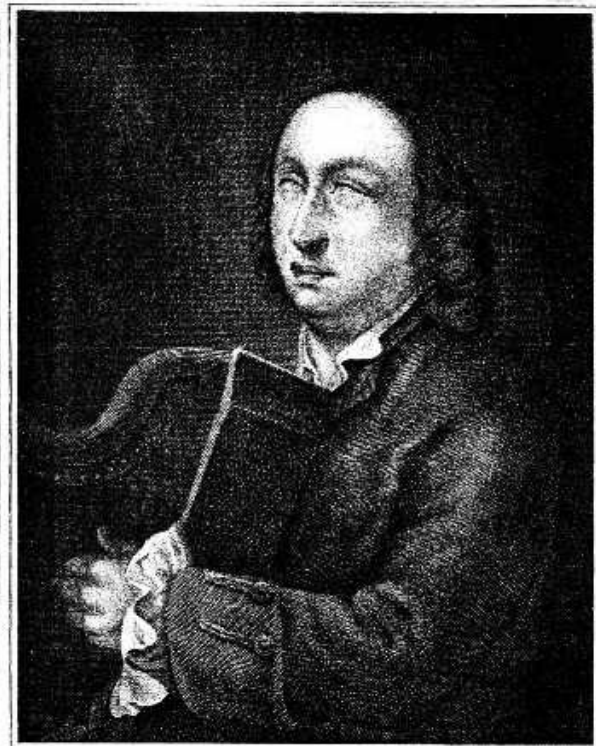
- Mrs Power* This Italianate tune from Edward Bunting's 1796 collection is also known as *Carolan's Concerto*
- Loftus Jones* Another Italianate tune, this one from Hime's *Compositions of Carolan* of 1798
- Captain Sudley* Composed by Carolan for his daughter Siobhán's wedding.
- Seabhac na hÉirne* This tune is *Port Atholl* by Rory Dall. Carolan borrowed the tune for one of his songs.
- The Elevation* An ecclesiastical composition, from Hime's *Compositions of Carolan* of 1798

Thomas Connellan (c. 1640 - post 1717)

- Síle Bheag Ní Chonalláin* A song in praise of Celia Connellan.
- Killiekrankie* A celebration of the Jacobite victory of 1689. This setting is from the music manuscript of Padraig Ó Néill from Co. Tipperary, c. 1790, where it is titled *Killiekrankie by Connellan*.
- King James March to Ireland
Lochaber
The Wild Geese* Three variants of this famous tune, which commemorates James II's ill-fated expedition in Ireland, culminating in his defeat at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 and the exile of the remainder of the old Gaelic aristocracy.

Cornelius Lyons (c. 1680 - c. 1750)

- Aileen Aroon* This arrangement of the well-known Irish song air *Éibhlin a Rúin* is very different from the versions that were published in Scotland in the 18th century.
- The Lady of the Desert* A set of baroque variations collected by Bunting from the Derry harper Denis O'Hampsey in the 1790s. Also appears in Scottish books in the Wighton Collection.
- Callena Vacca* Baroque variations on an old Irish song air.



Printed and Published by M. G. Harcourt, Printer of the Stationers' Company, Dublin.

CAROLAN,
The Celebrated Irish Bard.

To His Excellency the Marquis Wexley, K.G.
LOVE-LIGHTENANT of IRELAND &c. &c.

This Print (with Permission) is most respectfully Inscribed, by his most Obedient Servant,
John Murray.

Turlough Carolan (1670-1738) was the most famous of all the old Gaelic harpers. He was born in Nobber, co. Westmeath, Ireland, in 1630.

Carolan was blinded by smallpox at the age of 18, and because of this he was sent by his patron, Mrs. MacDermott Roe of Alderford, to study the old Gaelic harp traditions. His training was complete 3 years later, and she provided him with a horse, a guide and some money, to start him on his career.

Carolan was best known in his own day as a singer-songwriter. He was an itinerant - he toured from one place to another, staying in the big houses and entertaining the gentry. A lot of Carolan's tunes are named for individual patrons, and many of them were composed as songs in the Irish language. Carolan spent time in Dublin where he was influenced by fashionable visiting Italian musicians.

Some of Carolan's music was published in the 18th century; the Wighton Collection

has a copy of a very rare collection, which includes Carolan's characteristic treble and bass settings: *A Favourite Collection of the much Admired Old Irish Tunes, the original and genuine compositions of Carolan, the celebrated Irish bard*, published by Hime, Dublin, c. 1798 (Wighton 10448)

Thomas Connellan (c. 1640 - post 1717) was from Cloonmahon, co. Sligo, Ireland. His brother William was also a harper and composer. Thomas lived in Scotland and was made a Burgess of the City of Edinburgh in 1717.

According to the late 18th century Irish harpers, Thomas Connellan composed, or at least popularised, two well-known Scottish tunes. He also composed beautiful Irish songs which were preserved and transmitted by the last of the Irish harpers in the late 18th century, and were collected from them by Edward Bunting. (Wighton 7066)

Cornelius Lyons (c. 1680 - c. 1750) was harper to the Earl of Antrim. Literate and sighted, he composed elaborate baroque variation-sets which were loosely based on traditional Irish *sean-nos* song airs. His compositions were collected by Edward Bunting from the Derry harper Denis O'Hampsey (1695-1807).

Lyons's most popular work, *The Lady of the Desert*, was popular in Scotland. It appears in John Bowie's *Strathspey Reels & Country Dances* of 1798 (Wighton 10459) as well as other books published in Edinburgh in the late 18th century.