

THE ALDEBURGH CONNECTION

**AULD LANG
SYNE**



**WALTER HALL
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29th, 1987
2:30 p.m.**

AULD LANG SYNE

MARY LOU FALLIS - soprano

JANET STUBBS - mezzo

GLYN EVANS - tenor

DANIEL NEFF - baritone

STEPHEN RALLS & BRUCE UBUKATA - piano

Krista Buckland - violin, Peggy Lee - cello

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with ANDREW GILLIES as Robert Burns

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Today, on the eve of St. Andrew, we celebrate in word and song Robert Burns. The Scots revere him as a national bard and a larger audience, the world over, respects him as a genuine people's poet. There is something in his simplicity and in his complete understanding of the joys and sorrows of ordinary human beings that inspires our sympathy and claims our love.

All of us on stage form part of the wider audience of admirers, and not a few pints of Scottish blood flow in our collective veins. As musicians we are particularly attracted to Burns, for few poets have been so responsive to music. He rescued, rewrote and recreated hundreds of items from the vast but fragmentary mass of Scottish popular songs. We begin this afternoon with an old tune, then add Burns's poetry, in order to show how, by some magic, Music and Word seem always to have existed together.

From the start, Burns's popularity was enormous and his influence far-reaching. Haydn and Beethoven set many of the tunes for which Burns had provided poetry and in the 1840s, Robert Schumann composed a number of songs to Burns's texts. We prefix our performances of the German translations with some lines from the original versions.

Burns was born in Alloway, near Ayr, the son of a poor tenant-farmer, in 1759. He initially followed his father's occupation, but with little success. A

decision to emigrate to Jamaica was prevented at the last moment by the overnight success of his first published volume Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect (1786). Fame drew him to Edinburgh, but he soon tired of city life and returned to the country, to Ellisland, near Dumfries, where he combined the duties of a farmer with those of an Exciseman for ten parishes. As prolific as ever in song-writing, he nevertheless earned little from his poetic labours and farming proved once more a failure. He and his family moved to Dumfries, where he rose to the position of acting Superintendent of Excise. But his last few years were clouded by increasing ill-health, and he died, famous but poverty-stricken, in 1796.

The Scottish poet, Hugh MacDiarmid, complained that the Burns cult 'has denied his poetry to laud his amours. It has preserved his furniture and repelled his message.' But at the same time, the universality of his appeal is something which would have profoundly gratified the poet himself. He felt far more at home among his country folk of Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire than amid the flattering but patronizing society of Edinburgh. Perhaps the worst excesses of the Burns cult are waning. We are better able to see him honestly as a man reflecting his time and place, and we can see in his verse not just a spontaneous lyric talent, but a sophisticated poetic art.

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All today's songs are settings of Robert Burns.

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PROLOGUE

My luve is like a red, red rose

Traditional tune

Dem roten Röslein (Op. 27/2)

Robert Schumann

This German version of our first song was set by Schumann in 1840, the year in which the translator Wilhelm Gerhard's Gedichte von Robert Burns first appeared in Leipzig.

A BONNIE LAD

The ploughman Trad., arr. Franz Joseph Haydn
 George Thomson (1757-1851) was, for fifty years, secretary to the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Arts and Manufactures in Scotland. His major activity was the collection of folksongs, the commissioning of new words by leading poets of the day and their publication with new accompaniments by the leading composers. Haydn was paid £291:18s for arranging 230 airs; Beethoven received £550 for setting 126. Burns, emphatically and to Thomson's sorrow, refused any payment for his verses.

Jemand (Op. 25/4) Schumann
For the sake o' somebody: in 1840, Schumann was separated from his own 'somebody' - Clara Wieck.

A RANTIN, ROVIN BOY

Polly Stewart Trad., arr. Ludwig van Beethoven

Comin' thro' the rye Traditional tune

The discreet hint Francis George Scott
 Burns loved dialogue poems, in which the boy is more or less successful in his pursuit of the girl. Here are two examples, the first set by a Scottish composer.

Liebhabsers Ständchen (Op. 34/2) Schumann
O let me in this ae night: Schumann's lovers are much more voluble in their nocturnal argument.

Behold, my love Trad., arr. Beethoven

DEPARTED JOYS

The lea-rig Trad., arr. Kenneth Elliott

Will ye go to the Indies? Traditional tune

Highland Mary Traditional tune

SLAVE TO NAE BODY

Duncan Gray Trad., arr. Beethoven

Niemand (Op. 25/22)

Schumann

I hae a wife o' my ain: Schumann, in his struggles with the father of his wife-to-be, must have identified with Burns in his similar plight and rejoiced in his success.

O, how can I be blithe and glad Trad., arr. Beethoven

INTERMISSION

during which tea will be served in the lobby

FRENCH AND ENGLISH TRIBUTE

Chanson écossaise

Trad., arr. Maurice Ravel

Ravel entered his setting of Ye banks and braes in an international competition in 1910. His sketch survives in a somewhat intractable version, and we feel justified in performing it as a piano-duet.

Marche écossaise

Claude Debussy

General Meredith Reid commissioned this piece in honour of his ancestors, the ancient Earls of Ross. (Burns lived his life in southwestern Scotland, but did travel as far north as Inverness, on the borders of Ross and Cromarty.)

The highland balou (A charm of lullabies)

Benjamin Britten

My hoggie)
Afton water) (A birthday hansel)

Britten

In the first song: "An unco tyke...maist has kill'd my hoggie" = a wild dog almost killed my sheep. Britten composed his Burns cycle for the seventy-fifth birthday of the Queen Mother. It was first sung at a private performance at Balmoral by the founding Patron of The Aldeburgh Connection, Sir Peter Pears.

Ca' the yowes

Trad., arr. Roger Quilter



RAGING FORTUNE'S WITHERING BLAST

A man's a man for a' that Trad., arr. Leopold Kozeluch
 A Bohemian composer working in Vienna and Prague,
 Kozeluch was one of the first arrangers employed
 by George Thomson. Beethoven wrote in a letter:
 "Moi je m'estime encore une fois plus supérieur en
 ce genre que Monsieur Kozeluch (miserabilis)."

The lovely lass o' Inverness Trad., arr. Beethoven

Die Hochländer-Witwe (Op. 25/10) Schumann

A translation of The highland widow's lament.

SCOTTISH FAME

Mary Morison)

Francis George Scott

Ay waukin', O)

Scott (1880-1958) shared a birthday with Robert Burns.
 Hugh MacDiarmid described him as "blazing with spiritual energy."

EPILOGUE

The gard'ner wi' his paidle Trad., arr. Haydn

Robin Adair)

Trad., arr. Beethoven

Auld lang syne)

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The remaining concerts in our Sunday Series will be
Northern Lights on January 31, with MARTHA COLLINS,
 GABRIELLE PRATA, DENNIS GIESBRECHT and MARK PEDROTTI;
1888 - Year of Song on March 13, with NANCY HERMISTON,
 CATHERINE ROBBIN, TONY BOUTTÉ and KEVIN McMILLAN, and
Lorelei on May 8, with DEBORAH MILSOM, BENOIT BOUTET
 and DANIEL NEFF. If you enjoyed today's performance,
 why not subscribe to the series? Brochures are available
 in the lobby. Simply send today's ticket stub(s), along
 with \$24 (\$18 seniors/students) to:

THE ALDEBURGH CONNECTION, 74 Follis Avenue,

Toronto M6G 1S6 (telephone 531-3330)

- and your tickets will be mailed to you.

Please also consider making a donation to our funds. A gift of \$35 (or \$50 dual membership) will qualify you to become a Friend of The Aldeburgh Connection Concert Society, and will help to ensure the continuation of our presentations. All donations will be acknowledged with a receipt for income tax purposes.

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Aldeburgh, on the east coast of England, is the small town where Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Eric Crozier founded the Festival of Music which flourishes to this day. STEPHEN RALLS and BRUCE UBUKATA have visited and worked there for many summers, together with many of the singers appearing with The Aldeburgh Connection. The group is their brain-child, and has been filling a major gap in the Canadian concert scene for the past five years.

JANET STUBBS and DANIEL NEFF are among many who have benefitted from study at the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh with the generous assistance of THE CANADIAN ALDEBURGH FOUNDATION.

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We are delighted that ANDREW GILLIES is appearing this afternoon as Robert Burns. Now a principal actor with the Shaw Festival Ensemble, he was in fact born and brought up in Ayr, Scotland, close to the birthplace of Burns himself. Mr. Gillies will be appearing in Shaw's You never can tell in the Shaw Festival's winter tour and also next summer. His recent successes include leading roles in Cavalcade, Peter Pan and Marathon 33.

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT.

THE WORDS BY BURNS.—THE ACCOMPANIMENTS BY KOZELUCH.

PIANO
FORTE
AND
VOICE.

ALLEGRETTO. *p* *f*

MARY LOU FALLIS has ranged from The Magic Flute to The Turn of the Screw on the operatic stage. Also widely known as a concert soloist, her one-woman shows Primadonna, Emma - Queen of Song and Mrs. Bach have brought her fame coast to coast and won her an ACTRA award in 1985.

JANET STUBBS, one of Canada's leading mezzos, recently made her Ravinia Festival début with the Chicago Symphony. Forthcoming engagements include Beethoven's Missa Solemnis in Winnipeg, Nicklaus in Tales of Hoffman with the Canadian Opera Company and performances and a recording of The Sound of Music with the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra.

GLYN EVANS has just returned from a performance of the Verdi Requiem in the National Arts Centre. He is busy across Canada both in opera and in concert. Further appearances this season will include Handel's Ode to St. Cecilia in Montreal, Mendelssohn's Lobgesang in Kitchener and Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle in Edmonton.

DANIEL NEFF, like all today's soloists, is a graduate of the University of Toronto's Opera School; he has made solo appearances with Opera Piccola, Calgary Opera and Vancouver Opera. In Toronto, he starred in A Night in Venice by Johann Strauss and will return to Opera in Concert in Chabrier's Le roi malgré lui.

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Shortbread biscuits for afternoon tea supplied by
LA ZECCA (Carl Stryg) Tel: 421-9611.

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We gratefully acknowledge assistance from:

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