

My Heart's In The Highlands

The following article about the song “My Heart’s In The Highlands” was extracted from these websites. For more information, please read the articles:

<http://www.pavanepublishing.com/Site/31/>
<http://www.boosey.com/teaching/sheet-music/Donna-Gartman-Schultz-My-Heart-s-in-the-Highlands/&MusicID=31205>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Burns
<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/my-heart-s-in-the-highlands/>
<http://www.standingstones.com/tradcllo.html>
<http://www.burnsscotland.com/database/results.php?field=what&searchterm=%22song+259%22&searchdb=scan>
<http://books.google.com/books?id=uIG2LoC3y0oC>
<http://folkcello.blogspot.com/2007/01/ben-franklin-folk-cello-aficionado.html>
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Oswald_\(composer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Oswald_(composer))
<http://www.rism.org.uk/manuscripts/browse/6048>
<http://www.robertburns.plus.com/greengrow.htm>

The melody for “My Heart’s In The Highlands” was taken from an existing old Scottish tune, “Failte na Miosg. (“The Musket Salute.) Famed 18th century cellist, James Oswald, collected traditional Scottish tunes and was the first to publish this piece in 1740. In 1790, Scottish poet Robert Burns added lyrics to the tune and re-titled it “My Heart’s In The Highlands.” In modern times, Donna Gartman Schultz arranged the piece for 4-part chorus.

Our Boosey & Hawkes sheet music has an introduction to the piece which includes lyrics, song notes, and a biography of Ms. Schultz. These introductory notes have been reproduced below, with additions.

Section I. has three articles about the song itself. Section II. is an article about Robert Burns. Section III. has two articles about James Oswald, including references to the tune. Section IV. is a biography of Donna Schultz.

This is followed by audio/video links, discography, text put to other music, and lyrics. Some historic versions of the melody may sound different.

I. My Heart's In The Higlands

My Heart's In The Highlands

Many of the works of the celebrated Scottish poet Robert Burns were written as lyrics to be sung to existing old tunes, in an effort to preserve them. In the aftermath of the Jacobite Rebellion, the English had forbidden the Scots to sing the old songs and the tunes were gradually being

forgotten. Together with James Johnson, Burns endeavor to preserve these old melodies, by creating new lyrics-most often far superior poetically to the original. *My Heart's in the Highlands* is one outstanding example of such a practice. It was written to be sung to the tune *Failte na Miosg* ("The Musket Salute.") According to Burns' own notes, "The first half stanza[of the chorus] is old;the rest is mine."

My Heart's In The Highlands

Volume III, song 259, page 268 - 'My heart's in the Highlands.' Scanned from the 1853 edition of the 'Scots Musical Museum', James Johnson and Robert Burns (Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1853).

Verse 1 (to the tune of 'Failte na miosg'): The title of the tune is in Gaelic and translates as 'The Musket's Salute'.

According to Burns, in his notes on the 'Museum', 'The first half-stanza of this song is old; the rest is mine'. Whilst Burns was the original author of many of the songs included by Johnson, he also spent a large amount of time revising and expanding already existing songs. In many cases all that remained was a title or possibly a few lines. Burns worked with these fragments to create a finished piece for the 'Museum'. The accompanying tune, 'Failte na miosg', appeared in James Oswald's 'Curious Collection of Scots Tunes' (1740) and, a number of years later, in his 'Caledonian Pocket Companion' (1759).

The 'Scots Musical Museum' is the most important of the numerous eighteenth- and nineteenth-century collections of Scottish song. When the engraver James Johnson started work on the second volume of his collection in 1787, he enlisted Robert Burns as contributor and editor. Burns enthusiastically collected songs from various sources, often expanding or revising them, whilst including much of his own work. The resulting combination of innovation and antiquarianism gives the work a feel of living tradition.

My Heart's in the Highlands

A fine example of Burns cleaning up a song is My Heart's in the Highlands. Written in the year 1790. Burns was then living at Ellisland Farm, although by this time he had been appointed a post in the Excise and was contributing to Johnsons Scots Musical Museum.

Because of the Jacobite Rebellion the English had so repressed the Scots that old songs were forbidden to be sung and were dying out. Burns collected these old fragments from people that he met on his tour. Sometimes only a tune was remembered and sometimes only a line or two. Johnson had the idea that he would publish these with the music and Burns wholeheartedly joined in this cause, so much so that he later became editor for Johnson. Not all the songs in the Museum were written by Burns although the majority were. Burns own note on My Heart's in the Highlands is as follows. The first half stanza is old, the rest is mine.

Mr Sharpe in his additional notes to the Museum gives what he calls the old words headed "The Strong Walls of Derry" which he tells us was a great favourite of Sir Walter Scott but like many other productions appears to be a string of shreds and patches from various sources.

One of the various sources was the "Boys of Kilkenny"
O' bonie Portmore, thou shines where thou stands
and the more I look on thee, the more my heart warms
but when I look from thee, my heart is full sore
for I think on the lily I lost at Portmore.

This made up the first verse of "The Strong Walls of Derry" which then goes on with no link whatsoever

There is many a word spoken, but few of the best
and he that speaks fairest, lives longest at rest
I speak by experience, my mind serves me so
But my Heart's in the highlands, wherever I go

Chorus

Let us drink and gae hame boys, drink and gae hame
If we stay ony langer we'll get a bad name
We'll get a bad name, and we'll fill ourselves fou
And the strong walls of Derry are ill to win through

Would this song have survived if Burns had not rewritten cleaner, purer words and from the patches created a song of beauty?

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

Tune - The Musket Salute

Chorus

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer,
A-chasing the wild deer and following the roe
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go!

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North
The birthplace of valour, the country of worth!
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love

Farewell to the mountains high cover'd with snow
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods!

Burns choice of words is important. The alliteration of H in the chorus emphasises this persons Heart belonging to his homeland. There is also an alliteration of "s" in My heart(s) in the

highland(s) my heart i(s) not here. Also a-cha(s)ing. This "s" is almost like a sigh and the chasing suggests the chasing of a dream which cannot be fulfilled.

The first verse uses the vowel "v" in valour, rove and love to emphasise each of these words.

In the second verse note that this person is remembering his homeland and the order of the lines is important. Firstly the soft snow. Secondly the fertility of the valleys. Thirdly the wild-hanging woods are mentioned and then we move onto the torrents and the loud-pouring floods.

This is symbolic of this persons heart and mind when thinking of his homeland. We start with soft images and move through the stages to his mind being tormented with torrents and floods almost as if this person is deeply moved to crying over the fact that he will never return.

We do not know why this person has left his beloved Highlands but it does not seem to be through choice. Does the Valour and Worth lead you to think that he could be abroad on regimental and military duty. Farewell is a "forever" word. This person will never return. Hence the anguish in his soul.

It is often pointed out that the rhymes are either weak or are "eye" rhymes. North and worth, Rove and love, woods and floods. However, in dialect and especially when sung these are not noticeable. It is of interest that Burns used the rhymes woods and floods in Tam o'Shanter,

Before him Doon pours all his floods

The doubling storm roars thro' the woods.

If it is acceptable in Tam (which it is) then likewise it must be acceptable in this poem.

II. Robert Burns

Robert Burns

Robert Burns (25 January 1759 – 21 July 1796) (also known as **Rabbie Burns**, **Scotland's favourite son**, the **Ploughman Poet**, the **Bard of Ayrshire** and in Scotland as simply **The Bard**) was a poet and a lyricist. He is widely regarded as the [national poet](#) of [Scotland](#), and is celebrated worldwide. He is the best-known of the poets who have written in the [Scots language](#), although much of his writing is also in English and a 'light' Scots dialect, accessible to an audience beyond Scotland. He also wrote in standard English, and in these pieces, his political or civil commentary is often at its most blunt.

He is regarded as a pioneer of the [Romantic movement](#) and after his death became a great source of inspiration to the founders of both [liberalism](#) and [socialism](#). A [cultural icon](#) in Scotland and among the [Scottish Diaspora](#) around the world, celebration of his life and work became almost a national [charismatic cult](#) during the 19th and 20th centuries, and his influence has long been strong on [Scottish literature](#).

As well as making original compositions, Burns also collected [folk songs](#) from across Scotland, often [revising](#) or [adapting](#) them. His poem (and song) *Auld Lang Syne* is often sung at [Hogmanay](#) ([New Year](#)), and *Scots Wha Hae* served for a long time as an unofficial [national anthem](#) of the country. Other poems and songs of Burns that remain well-known across the world today,

include [A Red, Red Rose](#), [A Man's A Man for A' That](#), [To a Louse](#), [To a Mouse](#), [The Battle of Sherramuir](#), and *Ae Fond Kiss*.

III. James Oswald

James Oswald

James Oswald (1711-1769) was a Scots [composer](#) and music publisher.

Oswald was born in [Scotland](#) in 1711, and died in [Hertfordshire](#) in 1769.

He wrote variations of popular Scottish [folktunes](#), arranged these for the [fiddle](#) and composed other original tunes in the same [genre](#). He published much of his work under the nom de plume "David Rizzio". A "Collection of Minuets " was published in Edinburgh in 1736 and a "Curious Collection of Scots Tunes " in 1740.

In 1741 he left [Edinburgh](#) for [London](#) and [Allan Ramsay](#) lamented this fact in "An Epistle to James Oswald". In London he eventually set up his own publishing house and published "[The Caledonian Pocket Companion](#)", a **collection of Scottish folktunes**, some with his own variations. This ran to 15 volumes and many editions.

Like many others whose works feature in the [Wighton Collection](#) in [Dundee](#), he was a member of "[The Temple of Apollo](#)", a secret musical society of composers in London along with the [Earl of Kellie](#), [John Reid](#), [Charles Burney](#) and others.

He was appointed chamber composer to [George III](#) in 1761. Since many of his compositions were written anonymously, research still needs to be done to identify them. He composed in both Scottish and classical 'style gallant' forms.

Contained within the Wighton Collection in Dundee is an MS for "Air for Autumn" in the composer's own hand.

James Oswald

In 1742 Oswald published two collections of *Curious Scots Tunes*, which included some music with Gaelic titles such as "More N'Ighean Ghiberlain" (The Gaberlunzie's Daughter) **and "Failte na Miosg" (The Musket Salute)**, along with those in English, among them "She's sweetest when she's naked" and "The Bottom of the Punch Bowl" ... The majority of these gave only the melodic lines, a practice praised by Benjamin Franklin when writing to Lord Kames that old Scottish airs needed no harmony:

Whoever has heard James Oswald play them on his violoncello, will be less inclined to dispute this with me. I have more than once seen tears of pleasure in the eyes of his auditors, and, yes, I think, even his playing those tunes would please more, if he gave them less modern ornamentation. Mary Anne Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers and their Music*, London, 1983, pp. 44-45

James Oswald

Ben Franklin – folk cello aficionado.

Maynard’s mentioned James Oswald. In case you’ve never heard of that famed cellist, let me you about him, by way of Benjamin Franklin.

Franklin was fortunate enough, by our standards, to have heard G.F. Handel’s last concert. He didn’t care for it. Too much repetition. He felt it was indicative of a lack of intelligence.

But he was very impressed indeed with a different court composer – James Oswald. Oswald was an import to the court from Scotland. In addition to composing, Oswald played cello, and collected and published folk tunes of his homeland (They are still available, I have his book “A Curious Collection of Scots Tunes” in PDF format). In a letter to Lord Kames, Franklin remarked that when a musician named James Oswald played tunes on his cello, the crowds fell in love with it so much that he witnessed *"tears of pleasure in the eyes of his auditors"*.

IV. Donna Gartman Schultz

Donna Gartman Schultz

Donna Gartman Schultz is the composer of numerous works for choirs, which regularly are performed throughout both the United States and internationally. She has written for and been commissioned by choral groups at all levels, from children’s to university and professional organizations.

A native of Louisiana, Dr. Schultz earned a degree in piano performance from Louisiana State University before pursuing graduate degrees in theory and composition at Michigan State University, where she subsequently taught as a full-time member of the faculty. After moving to the Pacific Northwest, she continued teaching as an adjunct member of the faculty at The Evergreen State College in Olympia for several years. Her professional time now is devoted primarily to composition, both choral and instrumental.

Audio/Video Links and Discography

WLW Choir <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbPNlgAgsj0&feature=related>

Whitman Treble Choir <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cu9VoBmICZQ&feature=related>

If you subscribe to iTunes, BuyMusic, Rhapsody or a similar service, keyword in “My Heart’s In the Highlands” and then you can listen to a sample from each artist.

If you do not subscribe to iTune, BuyMusic, Rhapsody or a similar service, below are links to albums containing the song. Click on the song’s link on the website to listen to a sample:

Smithfield Fair http://musicishere.com/artists/Smithfield_Fair/Burns_Night_Out

Jo Stafford <http://www.emusic.com/album/11019/11019469.html?fref=150051>

Peter McCutcheon http://musicishere.com/artists/Peter_McCutcheon/Land_of_My_Heart

Borealis <http://www.borealismusic.co.uk/borealis%20products.html>

David Solley <http://www.emusic.com/album/The-Robert-Burns-Songbook-The-Robert-Burns-Songbook-MP3-Download/11160524.html>

Kenneth McKellar <http://electricscotland.allcelticmusic.com/music/5d77ad34-df3a-102a-8020-000f1f67beb1/To+Robert+Burns+A+Tribute.html>

Jack Evans

http://www.footstompin.com/products/cds/a_highland_journey_in_music?currency=EUR

Scottish dialect version: <http://www.linnrecords.com/recording-my-heart-s-in-the-highlands-hdcd.aspx>

Multiple Artists <http://www.rhapsody.com/-search?query=My%20Heart%27s%20In%20The%20Highlands&searchtype=RhapTrack>

Text put to other music

Musical settings (art songs, Lieder, mélodies, (etc.), choral pieces, and other vocal works set to this text): http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=3421

Arvo Part version (Minimalist) <http://www.last.fm/music/Arvo+P%C3%A4rt/+videos/+1-P-Dw0wzhcRo>

Arvo Part version (Minimalist) <http://www.discogs.com/release/1045796>

LYRICS

My Heart's In The Highlands

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of Valour, the country of Worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild-deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

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