

Biography

Mary MacPherson (known as Màiri Mhór nan Òran) was born Mary Macdonald in Skeabost, Skye on the 10th March 1821. Her family were crofters. She moved to Inverness in 1844 and married a shoemaker, Isaac MacPherson, whose own family were from Skye. On the death of her husband in 1871, she took work as a domestic servant but was accused of stealing. She professed her innocence but was imprisoned for 40 days. She stated that this was “the humiliation I suffered/which brought my verse alive”. Her sense of injustice was expressed in much of her writing, such as her poem *Tha mi sgith de luchd na Beurla* (I'm tired of the English speakers). After her release she moved to Glasgow and trained as a nurse. In 1876 she moved to Greenock but often visited Glasgow for cèilidhs, where there was a large community of Gaelic-speaking people. She retired to Skye in 1882 and by now had a considerable reputation for her songs and her championing of crofters rights. She was involved in Highland Land League meetings and supported advocates for reform such as John Murdoch, the campaigning journalist and founder of *The Highlander*, and the historian, Alexander Mackenzie. She campaigned for the election to parliament of Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, the Inverness solicitor and politician, who was also a supporter of reform. Mary's Gaelic verses were considered influential in promoting the campaign for land reform to the non-english speaking community. Her poems were written down by other people because although she could read, she could not write them herself (she knew 18,000 lines of traditional poetry by heart). She sang at the first National Mòd in Oban in 1892. She died on the 7th November 1898 and was buried beside her husband in Chapel Yard Cemetery in Inverness. A gravestone was erected by Charles Fraser-Mackintosh..

Note: I have not included the vocables eg *Hiuraibh ho ro* in the lyrics but have put them in the right hand column on each part page. I have also highlighted the actual Gaelic that is sung by each part on each verse so you know which Gaelic words you will be singing.

Page 2 Gaelic words

Page 3: English Translation

Page 4: Soprano 1 Words

Page 5: Soprano 2 Words

Page 6: Alto Words

Page 7: Tenor Words

Page 8: Bass Words

Rann 1

Moch 's mi 'g èirigh air bheagan èislein
Air madainn Chèitein 's mi ann an Òs
Bha sprèidh a' geumnaich an ceann a chèile
'S a' ghrian ag èirigh air Leac an Stòir
Bha gath a' boillsgeadh air slios nam beanntan
Cur tuar na h-oidhche 'na dheann fo sgòd
Is os mo chionn sheinn an uiseag ghreannmhor
Toirt na mo chuimhne nuair bha mi òg

Rann 2

Toirt 'na mo chuimhne iomadh nì a rinn mi
Nach faigh mi 'm bann gu ceann thall mo sgeòil
A' falbh 'sa gheamhradh gu luaidh is bainnsean
Gun solas lainnteir ach ceann an fhòid
Bhiodh òigrìdh ghreannmhor ri ceòl is dannsa
Ach dh'fhalbh an t-àm sin 's tha 'n glean fo bhròn
Bha 'n tobht aig Anndra 's i làn de fheanntaig
Cur na mo chuimhne nuair bha mi òg

Rann 3

Nuair chuir mi cuairt air gach gleann is cruachan
Far 'n robh mi suaimhneach a' cuallach bhò
Le òigrìdh ghuanach tha nis air fuadach
De shliochd na tuath bha gun uail gun ghò
Na raoin 's na cluaintean fo fhraoch is luachair
Far 'n tric a bhuaineadh leam sguab is dlò
'S nam faicinn sluagh agus taighean suas ann
Gum fàsainn suaimhneach mar bha mi òg.

Verse 1

Early I awakened with little sorrow
On a May morning is Ose
The cattle were lowing as they gathered
And the sun rising on Leac an Stòrr
The rays were beaming on the flanks of the mountains
Covering over night's gloom hastily
And up above me the lively Lark sang
Reminding me of when I was young

Verse 2

Reminding me of many things I did
Some from which I will never be free
Going to waulkings and weddings in winter
Without the light of a lantern but that of a burning peat
Lively youngsters would be singing and dancing
But that time is gone and the glen is enveloped in sadness
The ruin of Andrew's house overgrown with nettles
Reminding me of when I was young

Verse 3

When I walked by every glen and hillock
Where I was contented herding the cattle
With happy youths who have now been exiled
Natives of the north without pride or deceit
The fields and pastures were under heather and rushes
Where often I reaped the wisps and sheaves of the corn
If only I could see people and houses there now
I would grow contented as when I was young.

Nuair bha mi òg

Màiri Nic a'Phearsain

Rann 1

SOPRANO 1

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Rann 2

Toirt 'na mo chuimhne iomadh nì a rinn mi
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A' falbh 'sa gheamhradh gu luaidh is bainnsean
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Bhiodh òigridh ghreannmhor ri ceòl is dannta
Ach dh'fhalbh an t-àm sin 's tha 'n glean fo bhròn
Bha 'n tobht aig Anndra 's i làn de fheanntaig
Cur na mo chuimhne nuair bha mi òg

Ah

Ah

Rann 3

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Hiuraibh Hiuraibh

Hiuraibh

Hiuraibh

Nuair bha mi òg

Màiri Nic a'Phearsain

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Cur tuar na h-oidhche 'na dheann fo sgòd

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Toirt na mo chuimhne nuair bha mi òg

SOPRANO 2

Hiuraibh Hiuraibh

Hiuraibh Ho ro

O hiuraibh hiuraibh

Ah

Hiuraibh hiuraibh

Rann 2

Toirt 'na mo chuimhne iomadh nì a rinn mi

Nach faigh mi 'm bann gu ceann thall mo sgeòil

A' falbh 'sa gheamhradh gu luaidh is bainnsean

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Cur na mo chuimhne nuair bha mi òg

Ah

Ah

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Hiuraibh Ho Ro

Hiuraibh

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ALTO

Hiuraibh Hiuraibh

Hiuraibh Ho

O hiuraibh hiuraibh

Ah

Hiuraibh hiuraibh

Rann 2

Toirt 'na mo chuimhne iomadh nì a rinn mi

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Bha 'n tobht aig Anndra 's i làn de fheanntaig

Cur na mo chuimhne nuair bha mi òg

Ah

Ah

Oh

Rann 3

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Nuair bha mi òg

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Màiri Nic a'Phearsain

Tenor

Hiuraibh - Hiuraibh

Hiuraibh – ho - ro

O hiuraibh - hiuraibh

Ah

Hiuraibh - hiuraibh

Oh.....

Hiuraibh - Hiuraibh

Hiuraibh ho ro

o Hiuraibh

Nuair bha mi òg

Rann 1

Moch 's mi 'g èirigh air bheagan èislein

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Màiri Nic a'Phearsain

BASS

Hiuraibh Hiuraibh

Hiuraibh Ho ro

O Hiuraibh Hiuraibh

Ah

Hiuraibh Hiuraibh

Oh

Hiuraibh Hiuraibh

Hiuraibh Ho Ro

O hiuraibh

Nuair bha mi òg

Màiri Nic a'Phearsain