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Title

An edition of selected orchestral works of
Sir John Blackwood McEwen
(1868 - 1948)

Alasdair James Mitchell
PhD
The University of Edinburgh
September 2002
Abstract

A critical edition of selected orchestral works of
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This doctoral presentation consists of the preparation of critical editions of eight orchestral works by J.B. McEwen: Symphony in A minor (1895-99), Viola Concerto (1901), Coronach (1903), The Demon Lover (1907-08), Grey Galloway (1908), Solway, A Symphony (1911), Hills 'o Heather (1918), and Where The Wild Thyme Blows (1936).

In the absence of any monograph on McEwen there is a chapter which brings together for the first time the biographical information that can be culled from various sources; some, like the correspondence between Henry George Farmer and McEwen in the late 1940's, has never been discussed before.

A separate chapter surveys the collection of McEwen manuscripts held at Glasgow University Library, its condition, the extent of it, and how it came to be housed there.

There follows a discussion of each of the selected works from the point of view of the editorial issues relating to them and also some aspects of McEwen's stylistic development. It was important to McEwen that a composer spoke in his native voice through his music as is evident in a letter he wrote to H. G. Farmer in 1947. Discussion of this aspect of his expressive style is therefore helpful in understanding his development from the early Symphony in A minor of 1895-99 to his last orchestral work, Where The Wild Thyme Blows of 1936. Such a stylistic study is secondary to the main thrust of the thesis which is a critical edition, but it is necessary in order to fully understand the complex issues involved in making McEwen's last orchestral work performable. Where The Wild Thyme Blows was left incomplete and the present editor has made a performing version. There is a brief concluding section which consolidates evident features of the McEwen manuscripts which would be useful for further studies of these papers.

Each of the selected works is presented as a separate volume in a scholarly edition with full critical commentary given at the end of each volume.

1. Glasgow University Library catalogue n.MS Farmer 217
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Declaration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Table of contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chapter 1: A Biographical Study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Chapter 2: The McEwen Collection at Glasgow University Library.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 31   | Chapter 3: A critical survey of selected works.  
3.1 *Symphony/String Quartet in A minor* (1895-99). |
| 42   | 3.2 *The Viola Concerto* (1901). |
| 50   | 3.3 *Coronach* (Border Ballad n.1), *Epilogue* (*Symphony in A minor*) and the Border Ballad tradition. |
| 56   | 3.4 *The Demon Lover* (Border Ballad n.2), *Graih my Chree*, further thoughts on the Border Ballad Tradition, and new French influences. |
| 70   | 3.5 *Grey Galloway* (Border Ballad n.3), a synthesis of place and heritage. |
| 75   | 3.6 *Solway a Symphony*, a refinement of the synthesis of place and literature. |
| 84   | 3.7 *Hills o' Heather* for violoncello and orchestra, idyll or elegy? |
| 91   | 3.8 *Where The Wild Thyme Blows*, McEwen's farewell to the orchestra. |
| 99   | 3.9 Postscript |
| 105  | Appendix: Personalia |
Introduction

The springboard to begin this doctoral presentation was the preparation of scores and orchestral parts for a series of recordings of orchestral works by Sir John Blackwood McEwen undertaken by Chandos Records in the first half of the 1990's. The work had to be done speedily to meet deadlines and there was a need to subsequently revisit the manuscript sources and research the subject thoroughly and in a scholarly manner and make a critical edition.

The source for McEwen's compositional work is the 'McEwen Collection' held at Glasgow University Library (GUL). It is a very large collection including work in most genres but especially chamber music. However there is a significant quantity of orchestral work and the present editor's long-term aim is to prepare an critical edition of all the orchestral pieces. A 'Complete McEwen Edition', even of just the orchestral work, would be a colossal task and far beyond the bounds of this doctoral thesis. The orchestral works held in the McEwen Collection number some 2 symphonies, 4 overtures, 5 tone poems, 4 works for solo instruments with orchestra, 7 suites, and 6 miscellaneous works; some 28 items in all. For this reason a selection of eight works as representative of the orchestral output has been made, each very distinct and different in character. Part of the editorial process has involved looking at certain chamber works as they relate directly to the orchestral pieces. However, discussion of McEwen's chamber music repertoire in general has been avoided as this is such a large topic and will require a separate study.

McEwen held the belief that it was important to speak in one's native tongue and he wanted his music to sound Scottish. Even when writing his sunniest music on one of his regular visits to France, his idiom is French Impressionism in the Debussian mould but his accent is distinctly Scottish (viz. The Biscay String Quartet of 1913). He could not make head nor tail of Scottish Renaissance music, for example, because it sounded exactly the same to him as work by any other Renaissance composer working elsewhere in Europe. This is evident from a letter he wrote to H. G. Farmer, librarian at Glasgow University\(^1\). The letter begins with a
paragraph returning some 16th century Scottish music which Farmer had sent McEwen and continues ...

*I examined these mss very carefully as I hoped to find in them some traces of those features of musical expression which are characteristic of Scottish folk music as it has been handed down through tradition. I am very sorry that I have found nothing distinctive in these works. They all are products of the medieval ecclesiastic musical idiom which, so far as I can know, was common to monastic composers all over Europe, Italy, Germany, Holland, France, England. Indeed if one could arrange a performance of representative works of these countries without any clue of language - say if all were sung to Latin words - I question whether a jury of experts could decide in the case of any work, what the country of origin might be.*

(letter dated 8 January 1948)

An element of the present study is to evaluate McEwen's own output in terms of its Scottish-ness as a means of understanding his stylistic development as an orchestral composer, to see whether his endeavour to find a Scottish vernacular musical style for himself in terms of the cultural situation of the late 19th century and early 20th century was in any way successful, and to appreciate the complex issues involved in preparing a performing version of his last and unfinished orchestral piece, *Where The Wild Thyme Blows.*

The editorial policy has been to present as much as possible in the main text of the score and to put information relating to detailed corrections in the commentary at the end of each score. In other words, what appears in the main body of the text is, in the editor's considered opinion, McEwen's final thoughts. All other evidence, whether supportive or contradictory, will be found at the end of the score in the commentary and appendices. By this means it is possible for both the academic and the performer to be confident that they have all the possibilities in front of them without being bogged down by minutiae.

Very little has been written about McEwen; there is no monograph and very little biographical information to make such a book interesting to the
musical public. There is a useful article by Bernard Benoliel in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*\(^2\) and an extended article in the *Dunedin Magazine* of 1915\(^3\). Considering he held public office for twelve years as Principal of The Royal Academy of Music, one of the premier music conservatories in Britain, he was a very private man.

The object of this doctoral thesis is the preparation of a critical edition of eight selected orchestral works by McEwen, prefaced by as much biographical information as can be gleaned from the few sources available, and a brief description of the 'McEwen Collection' at GUL and how the manuscripts came to be housed there. Furthermore, there is discussion of various stylistic issues relating to each selected work in order to advance understanding of McEwen's achievement in the field of orchestral music in the first half of the 20th century. The works selected for this study are presented in separate volumes:

*Symphony in A minor* (1895-99)
*Viola Concerto* (1901)
*Coronach* (1903)
*The Demon Lover* (1907-08)
*Grey Galloway* (1908)
*Solway, A Symphony* (1911)
*Hills 'o Heather* (1918)
*Where The Wild Thyme Blows* (1936)
Notes: Introduction

1. Glasgow University Library (GUL) : MS Farmer 217, a collection of correspondence to Henry George Farmer from J.B. McEwen dating from 1947-48. These letters are bound together in card bindings covered with dark blue linen, the volume measuring 8¼ x 10 inches.


3. The Dunedin Magazine, Vol. III December 1915 No. 3, p. 141 author unknown but possibly Miss Drysdale, sister of the composer Learmont Drysdale (1866-1909) who was secretary of the Dunedin Magazine at this time and was in correspondence with McEwen about the article (see chapter 1).
Acknowledgments

Many have assisted me with this study and thanks must be given to all of them for so willingly contributing to the finished work. Thanks are due to the University of Edinburgh Faculty of Music for allowing me to proceed with this doctoral project, and in particular to Dr Noel O'Regan who so patiently supervised my work. During the whole duration of the work staff at Glasgow University Library (GUL) Special Collections Department have been generous in their support and help in all matters relating to manuscripts held in the archives; the facilities there are model. The library at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama has been useful as a source for some articles in periodicals and as a source for consulting the Scottish Minstrelsie. The quality of the music examples and edited scores is very much due to the Sibelius music programme and I am grateful for Liquid Silicon in Kirkcaldy for supplying both the programme and the computer hardware to run it. Thanks go to John White, late professor of viola at the RCM, for his interest in McEwen's Viola Concerto and his help, albeit without success, in making contact with the Tertis family to try to find Tertis's personal copy of the solo viola part. Thanks must be given to Chandos Records for making recordings of most of the selected works and to Bernard Benoliel for introducing me to the treasures of the McEwen Collection at GUL. In the early stages it was helpful to try out the works with an orchestra and thanks are due to Edinburgh Symphony Orchestra for allowing me the luxury of a play-through of the works in the midst of a busy schedule. I should also thank Edinburgh City Council Education Department and Dr Colin O'Riordan for some financial support towards fees. Finally, behind any long-term project there is someone who keeps a clear head and steers a steady course, that person is my wife, Fiona, and I thank her for her perseverance and indulgence to allow me to see this work through to completion.
Chapter 1

A Biographical Study

Very little is known of McEwen's life; unlike Sir Alexander Mackenzie he did not write an autobiography, he was a very private man. The most useful source for his early career up to 1915 can be found in an extended article in the Dunedin Magazine of 1915 and a few remarks in letters to H.G.Farmer.

Born in Hawick in the Scottish borders on 13th April 1868, the son of the Presbyterian minister of East Bank United Presbyterian Church, McEwen moved with his family to Glasgow in 1871 when his father became minister of Sydney Place Church. Here he spent his formative years. Perhaps the Presbyterian family background instilled in him an obsessive work ethic for he was most definitely a workaholic. "Thorough" was a description often associated with him, indeed The Times obituary of 1948 referred to him as "a thoughtful musician". The obituary continues: "Like many thoughtful Scotsmen, he had a philosophical turn of mind, and this found a further outlet in a number of critical writings, of which the most profound is The Thought in Music (1911) which contained some interesting and original discussions of the nature of rhythm." Fortunately he never lost touch with his Border roots which remained an inspiration to him throughout his life. His school years began at Dennistoun Academy from where he progressed to the City School and latterly to the Glasgow High School. 1888 saw him graduating with an arts degree (MA) from Glasgow University, however no mention can be found of any music classes that he may have attended during these studies.

McEwen did not go into the music profession with any kind of encouragement from his father. In a long letter to Henry George Farmer as late as 1947 he gives us an insight into his early years:

My father was a typical product of the calvinistic doctrine,

somewhat ameliorated by a remoteness from mundane

affairs derived, I believe, from the conviction that life on

Earth was an important prelude to a mystically imagined
eternal life on the other side of the grave. Although this did not prevent him from having two wives and twelve children, it seems to have had the effect of preventing his active interference with the designs of God which were evident (amongst other things) in the way those twelve children developed and the ways of life they severally followed. This same remoteness affected his view of his professional work as a minister and the conditions under which it was carried out. He had, therefore, no definite views as to the place of music in life, and though he inclined to the idea that singing, if congregational, was helpful to the purposes of the church, music in itself was to be distrusted and for his son to become a professional musician was a profession of which, I think, he really did not approve.

(from a letter dated 27 December, 1947)

During his last years at the university he took lessons in musicianship from D.B. Johnstone, a well-known teacher in Glasgow according to the Dunedin article. He is known to have considered it very lucky that he should have been studying in Glasgow at a time when the arts were so much to the fore, and with such an eclectic and outward-looking attitude. This was the time of the architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh (McEwen's exact contemporary). Glasgow was without doubt at that time one of the great industrial and economic dynamos of Great Britain and it was in that great city that he began working as an organist and choirmaster. He must have had private lessons in piano and organ from an early age, as his first appointment was at the age of seventeen as organist of St John's Free Church, followed two years later by the Parish Church of Lanark. During this period he quickly built up a strong piano teaching practice and if his book on interpretation is anything to go from he must have been a most exacting pedagogue.

However, like many Scotsmen of talent and ability he found it necessary, in 1891, to go south to London as there was little employment or scope for development for a serious musician in Scotland at this time. Sir Alexander
Mackenzie, Hamish McCunn, and William Wallace had to do the same for the same reasons, and only Learmont Drysdale attempted to make a living in Scotland. According to the Dunedin Magazine article, before entering the Royal Academy of Music in 1893 he had already written quite a number of works, many of which have subsequently been lost. These include three symphonies, two string quartets, the first act of an opera on the subject of Ossian, an overture, a Mass in C, a one-movement trio for flute, oboe and piano, a cantata *A Mistletoe Legend, The Victim* for chorus and orchestra, a cantata entitled *The Vision of Jacob*, and settings of *Psalm 24* and *Psalm 130*. By 1893 he was a pupil of Frederick Corder and Tobias Matthay at the RAM. Although McEwen claimed that it was his fellow students, including W.H.Bell, Hermann Lohr, Charles Macpherson, and Theo Wendt, who had the strongest influence on him, surely Corder's enthusiasm for Liszt and Wagner rubbed off on him, too, as these masters cast a long shadow over McEwen's compositional methods. To McEwen's regret two of Scotland's most interesting composers of that time, Learmont Drysdale and William Wallace, had preceded him at the RAM although he subsequently struck up a friendship with Wallace for many years.

It was through performances of a *String Quartet in F major* (1893) and a *Scene from Hellas* (1895) in 1896 that McEwen's name first came to public notice. The *Scene from Hellas*, after a poem by Shelley, received several performances thereafter, notably at a concert in London in 1901 when McEwen became a professor at the RAM. The report in the *Musical Times* found it "estimable music, strong, imaginative, and knit with masterly command of resource." McEwen never lost faith in the work and even made some small revisions to it as late as 1947 (see McEwen's own preface to the autograph score).

For a short spell between 1896 and 1898 he was lecturer in harmony at the Glasgow Athenæum. He became organist at the South Parish Church, Greenock and gave piano lessons. This gave him a comfortable but certainly not kingly income. Composition continued with an *Overture to a Comedy* which Corder conducted at a Trinity College (London) concert in 1898, and a symphonic poem *Comala*. During this period he was working on the *Symphony in A minor*, his biggest work so far. This was originally a huge five-movement symphony, the
conventional four movements (Allegro - Andante - Scherzo - Finale) succeeded by an extended and eloquent *Epilogue*. The fifth movement was cut and later re-worked as the first of the Border Ballads, *Coronach*. It was with this symphony that the young McEwen met the first of a series of set-backs as a composer; it was impossible for him to get such a work performed. With great regret he was forced to re-score the piece as a string quartet and in this form the work was published by Novello & Co. in 1903. Ironically the *String Quartet in A minor* was very successful and was performed frequently "in England, as also in the United States, South Africa and Australia, and even Scotland (!)".

In the spring of 1898 he was enticed back to London's Royal Academy of Music as lecturer in harmony and composition where he remained for nearly forty years. He did keep a connection with the Glasgow Athenaeum as an examiner in harmony. The heavy demands of teaching meant that academic vacations were the only time that he could devote to composition. With characteristic grit he managed to produce a steady stream of works, some of which were very substantial, viz. *Six Highland Dances for Violin and Piano* (1899), a *String Quartet in E minor* (1900), the *Viola Concerto* (1901), and the *Sonata in E minor for piano* (1901) published by Novello in 1903. The Musical Times described the Piano Sonata as "an individual, dignified, and forceful work of ample dimensions, broad ideas, and spacious technique."

The *Viola Concerto* dates from the year 1901 and apparently was written in response to a request for a concerto for that instrument by the young virtuoso, Lionel Tertis. McEwen would have known Tertis while the latter was a student at the RAM, perhaps he even gave him harmony lessons. Tertis had been involved in McEwen performances; he was the viola player in the premier of the *A minor String Quartet* in 1899 (see chapter 3.1). The thirty-three year old McEwen rose to the challenge and created the first British viola concerto in modern times. Although deeply rooted in the Brahmsian style the concerto shows many signs of resourcefulness and originality both in form and lyricism. The work was first heard in the viola/piano version in a concert of McEwen's music at the RAM on May 24th, 1901. The Musical Times review thought highly of the work:
Mr J.B. McEwen gave an Invitation Concert at the RAM on 24th May when a number of original works by this clever young composer were performed. These included a Concerto for Viola.... The concerto is well written, although distinctly difficult, and was excellently played by Mr Lionel Tertis and Miss Marion White.

Tertis premiered the fully orchestrated version of the work in Bournemouth with the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra on November 11th, 1901. The conductor was Dan Godfrey. It has not been possible to find any of the orchestral parts used for that performance or, indeed, Tertis's viola part. According to the Dunedin Magazine McEwen wrote one other concerto, a *Concerto for Piano forte in One Movement*; sadly this has been lost and there remains only a tantalising fragment in the McEwen Collection. There is just one completed concerto by McEwen and in the light of this and considering the paucity of works for viola it seems quite astonishing that this work has remained unperformed since the first decade of the 20th century.

It was in this same year, 1901, that McEwen embarked on his biggest work, the *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* for soprano, chorus and orchestra. The work occupied him from 1901 to 1905. He had already produced a number of fine choral pieces in the preceding decade but nothing on such a lavish scale as the *Hymn*. There was apparently no commission for the *Hymn* and, not surprisingly in consequence, no evidence of any performance of the work in his lifetime. Rutland Boughton discussed the work in detail in his 'Studies in Modern British Music' (*The Musical Standard*, August 1906) and he must surely have worked from the manuscript. Boughton's study is mentioned in the Dunedin Magazine but, again, there is no mention of performances. The numerous discrepancies between the vocal score and the orchestral score are further evidence of non-performance. McEwen's setting of Milton's pantheistic apocalyptic poem is a typically post-Wagner/Liszt conception with strong overtones of French (Franck and d'Indy) and Russian music (Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov). A further element in the stylistic melting pot is the Victorian English choral tradition founded in
Mendelssohn and Brahms and continued by Parry and Elgar. This would appear to add up to an eclectic stylistic disaster but McEwen proceeds with such confidence and vision that the end result is totally convincing and very impressive. He never composed another large-scale work for chorus and orchestra and the *Hymn* stands as his *magnum opus* in the genre.

1904 was the year in which McEwen got his first hearing at a Philharmonic Society Concert in the Queen's Hall, London, with a performance of *Coronach*, the first of the Three Border Ballads. This work grew out of the discarded 'Epilogue' of the *A minor Symphony* of 1896. It is poignant to see how McEwen refused to discard good work and preferred to rework or re-score it in an attempt to make it performable. As will be discussed in chapter 3.1, the 'Epilogue' to the *A minor Symphony* was doubly flawed in that it made the Symphony unwieldy and was thematically much too indebted to Wagner. Reworking the material as a one-movement symphonic poem with new material in the episodes gave the composition a new lease of life and the composer found it possible to get it performed. It was conducted by Sir Frederic Cowen "with conspicuous success".

The second of the Border Ballads, *The Demon Lover*, was written in 1907-8 and was never performed in his lifetime. The titles of these two Border Ballads derive from poems collected by Sir Walter Scott in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. The significance of this poetical collection in relation to McEwen's music is discussed at some length in chapter 3 but the thrust of the argument is that the young Walter Scott had been consciously and methodically attempting to create a Scottish vernacular literary style by steeping himself in the rich soil of Border folk poetry (see the introductory essay by T. F. Henderson in the 1902 edition of Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*) and that McEwen was attempting to do the same thing by the same means in musical terms a century later.

At the same time (1907-8) McEwen was working on his most performed orchestral work, *Grey Galloway*. This is the third of the Border Ballads and received its premier on 2nd February, 1909 at the Philharmonic Society's Mendelssohn centenary concert conducted by Camille Chevillard. Born in the Borders, McEwen's native Galloway inspired him to write a work which expresses the dark moods of the Scottish landscape from deep inside the music. This is no
superficial tartan picture postcard; the very sinews of the music reek of the terrain, its weather, and its people. The orchestral palette is big and McEwen uses his large forces with masterly aplomb. It was with this work that McEwen simultaneously achieved an individual and distinct musical voice and some measure of recognition from the musical public and critics. The work was performed frequently throughout his lifetime and was published by Stainer & Bell. The *String Quartet in C minor* followed and was performed extensively in Britain and in Europe. It was first heard in 1910 in the Bechstein Hall, London, played by the Schwiller Quartet, when it was greeted with loud applause. According to the Dunedin article the critic of the *Morning Post* found the work

*imbued with the characteristic of the composer's native country of Scotland...*This, however, is not its only good feature, for while *its national colour is restrained in phrase, the harmonic treatment is both modern and individual.*

There followed a fallow period when very little was composed. This was most probably due to McEwen's interest in the cause of British composers and the difficulties they had in getting their work heard. McEwen was instrumental in setting up the Society of British Composers (1905-18) along with others of like mind and he served as Honorary Secretary for three years. As with every other task he undertook, McEwen did the job with incredible thoroughness and apparently spent all his free time fostering and protecting the interests of his fellow British composers. He also wrote his *Textbook of Harmony and Counterpoint* at this time.

Late in 1909 he began writing music once more and two dramatic works appeared, *The Gamekeeper* and *The Royal Rebel*, although they were never performed. This is the period of the gestation of the *Solway Symphony*, two string quartets, and a number of piano pieces and songs. There were also academic productions; *The Elements of Music* (1909), *Primer of Harmony* (1911), *The Thought in Music* (1911), and work on *The Principles of Phrasing in Music* which was published in 1914. The effort needed to see these works to completion on top of his teaching duties at the RAM took its inevitable toll.

In 1913 McEwen requested, and was granted, leave of absence from
the RAM for six months on account of continued insomnia. This might suggest that McEwen's tendency towards depression had led, through over-work, to some kind of a breakdown. The composer took himself off to the Bay of Biscay, France, to a small fishing village called Cap Ferret. Here the change of air and the relaxed ambience of the little seaside fishing village did its magic and the composer was restored to health and began writing again. The best known piece from this period is the String Quartet in A minor entitled 'Biscay'. It was premiered in London by the London String Quartet in 1915 and has been the most performed of McEwen's string quartets. Each of its three movements have descriptive titles, something McEwen was very fond of doing, and are tightly argued. A critic of the time found this to be one of its endearing traits:

Indeed it is a merit with Mr McEwen that he studiously avoids the aimless excursions in which the inexperienced composer is prone to indulge, and the conciseness of these impressions of Biscay is not the least of their virtues.

(Glasgow Herald, June 1915)

This is a very attractive work with memorable ideas, none of which outstay their welcome, each movement painting a distinct mood. The medium of the string quartet is handled with total assurance. At the first performance the work was followed by a performance of Debussy's String Quartet and the Glasgow Herald critic mentions that comparison between the McEwen and the Debussy was extremely favourable.

It was in 1915 that the Dunedin Magazine featured McEwen in an extended article which, as was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, is the source of most of the early biographical material on the composer. It was an excellent feature of this magazine that from time to time there appeared such articles on young Scottish composers. We must assume that the information given in this article is accurate as McEwen is known to have seen the final draft before publication. He wrote to the secretary of the Dunedin Association as follows:

'Dear Miss Drysdale,

I return the draft of the article on myself and the list of my compositions. It is, I think, admirable; I only wish the subject
were more interesting. I have made one or two slight additions, including that of a new Sonatina for violin and pianoforte, which I am just putting the finishing touches to, and which will be completed by the time your magazine appears - Fate and the Zeppelins being willing.

I must thank you very much for the immense amount of time and trouble you must have expended over such an unworthy subject.

Believe me

Yours very truly,

John B McEwen

(letter dated November 9th 1915)

This letter is the only evidence, tentative though it be, as to the author of the article as it was the policy of the magazine to publish without acknowledgment of the author. It is possible that Miss Drysdale was the author, she was the sister of the composer Learmont Drysdale.

McEwen was in his fiftieth year when he wrote *Hills o’ Heather*. It was completed in February 1918 when the Great War was still raging in Europe and brave men on all sides were falling never to get up again. All that was comfortable and secure in pre-war Europe was changing and when the war ended the world would be a very different place. McEwen, like so many thinking people at this time, realised that the old ways would never come back, that the fabric of society was changed for ever. His creative response was "a retrospect", the sub-title of *Hills o’ Heather*, suggesting some kind of nostalgic backward look at a fanciful idyllic idea of the Scottish landscape. The original sub-title was "a poem for cello and piano" and this might have avoided the charge of sentimentalism which such a title can easily bring on itself. However, be that as it may, the music is far from saccharine, tinged as it is with moments of jarring discord and oblique harmonies. Like Ravel’s *La Valse* which works on two levels, a celebration of all that is glamorous in the waltz or all that is decadent in the waltz society, McEwen’s *Hills o’ Heather* can be heard as a musical evocation of a Scottish landscape that is lost forever or bitter
regret for the way war has destroyed so many elements of the life and culture of the land of his birth.

In 1924 McEwen succeed Sir Alexander Mackenzie as Principal of the RAM. He held this important position until 1936 when he retired. In 1926 the degree of DMus (honoris causa) was conferred on him by Oxford University. 1931 saw him elected President of the Incorporated Society of Musicians and he was knighted by King George V. The University of Glasgow, his alma mater, conferred the honorary degree of Ll.D on him in 1933 and he was an honorary member of the Helsingfors Conservatorium (Denmark) and the Royal Academy of Music in Florence (Italy). The period of his leadership of the RAM was a time of academic administration with the customary honours that are concomitant with such appointments. McEwen appears to have done the job with his usual diligence and, of course, composition virtually stopped. It was only after 1936, at the age of sixty-eight, that he was again able to find time for creative work.

One of life's great ironies is that when we have the time and space for creative work it should come at a period in our life when we have less energy. McEwen, tired from years of administrative grind, attempted to write orchestral music once more but was unable to find sufficient enthusiasm for the project to see it to completion. This last orchestral piece, Where The Wild Thyme Blows, is really a fourth Border Ballad. But, depressed at the total impossibility of getting such a piece performed, he reworked the material as the first movement of a piano trio. His last work appears to have been the Fantasia for String Quartet in E major (Quartet no.17) which is dated 12th December 1947, just six months before his death in 1948.

To the general public his career was that of a most respected academic. He was a champion of new music and did much to help the cause of other composers. He published a series of influential musical textbooks. He continued to write fine instrumental music after his retirement as well as pamphlets and books up to his death. McEwen died suddenly (according to The Times21) at his home in London on 14th June 1948 and was cremated two days later. A practical idealist, he left a substantial legacy and the copyright to his music to Glasgow University for the promotion of new Scottish chamber music.

He was a very private man; little is known of his day-to-day life and
only rarely did he say much about his creative work. It was Henry George Farmer, Librarian at Glasgow University Library (GUL), who persuaded him to leave his collection of manuscripts in the safe keeping of Glasgow University Library and it was to Farmer that McEwen confided how precious his creative work was to him while doubting whether anyone else might ever think it of any worth. He wrote:

'I shrink from having my intimate thoughts and feelings scattered promiscuously, and although no "uninitiated" eye would have understood what the notation conceals, such a fate seemed to me like a violation of my personal and intimate privacy. Besides, if in later years any attempt at aesthetic evaluation be made it will not be influenced by interest, antagonism and partisanship.'

(letter to Farmer dated November 27, 1947)
Notes: Chapter 1
1. The Times: 17 June 1948 J.B. McEwen obituary is headed 'A Thoughtful Musician'
3. GUL: MS Farmer 217
5. J.B. McEwen: Tempo Rubato or time-variation in musical performance. OUP, London, 1928. The author uses an ingenious method to analyse minute variations of tempo in recorded performances. This is done by scratching a graph onto smoked glass using a needle attached to the diaphragm of the pick-up of an acoustic 78 rpm record player. By means of such graphs he was able to measure with great accuracy tiny fluctuations in tempo and thereby make postulations on various performer’s style of rubato.
7. The Dunedin Magazine see note 4
8. The Musical Times Vol.46, January 1905, page 31. The Sonata in E minor has been recorded by Chandos Records played by Geoffrey Tozer cat. no. CHAN 9933.
10. The Dunedin Magazine see note 4
11. McEwen: Concerto for Pianoforte in One Movement, GUL cat. no. MS McEwen S.28. The manuscript score consists of pages 41 - 60 of full piano and orchestra score along with some loose sheets with sketches of working out of ideas in pencil. The score is fully worked out with page numbers and corrections of various kinds and the orchestration appears to be completed. The fragment displays large-scale sweeping gestures and interestingly uses the pause in much the same way as in the Viola Concerto first movement (see chapter 3.2). The broad phrases suggest an extended work of impressive length and depth. It is a very sad loss that we do not have the complete piece.
12. The Musical Standard August 1906 'Studies in Modern British Music'
14. The Dunedin Magazine see note 4
15. Scott, Sir Walter: Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, Edinburgh 1801
Primer in Harmony Ricordi, London 1911
The Thought in Music see note 2
The Principles of Phrasing in Music Augener, London 1914
18. The Dunedin Magazine see note 4
20. GUL: MS Farmer 217
21. The Times: 17 June 1948, J.B. McEwen death notice 'McEwen on June 14 1948 suddenly at 25 Abercorn Place, St John's Wood London NW8 late Principal of the Royal Academy of Music aged 80 cremated June 16.'
22. GUL: MS Farmer 217
Chapter 2

The McEwen Collection
at Glasgow University Library

The manuscripts of McEwen's extant compositions are housed at GUL Special Collections under the heading 'The McEwen Collection'. This represents 237 catalogued items taking up some twelve feet of shelf space; 188 items are completed works in some form or other. Many of the manuscripts are draft versions of works, although they represent each work in its entire length. There are also some fragments, sketches, and incomplete draft manuscripts which have been useful in studying the gestation of certain works. However the majority of these incomplete items are abortive attempts at working up a composition. It seems that McEwen was in the habit of destroying his early preparatory work when he reached completion of a composition and only the completed draft and final versions of these were retained. It is rare to find fragments of works which reached completion.

The condition of much of the material gives cause for concern. The paper is now fragile having lost its flexibility and pages easily detach themselves from bindings. The ink must be quite acidic causing further deterioration of the paper. Unfortunately, only five items in the collection have been microfilmed, viz: Hills 'o Heather, Where The Wild Thyme Blows, Demon Lover, Coronach, and Empire Pageant. Preservation in digital form, ie. on computer, is a pressing need for such an important collection, and this would have the added virtue of easy access to the works without further disturbance of the fragile manuscripts.

Most of the completed works have been hard-bound with linen covers and gold-letter titles on the spines. This work was done on the instruction of Henry George Farmer, part-time librarian at GUL in the late 1940s when the collection came to Glasgow. This was an excellent and straightforward method of preservation of the major documents, giving the manuscript sheets protection and keeping otherwise loose pages together. In at least one instance, however, faulty binding of
loose sheets has led to mis-information in the library's catalogue (see chapter 3.2, *Viola Concerto*). In this instance a draft version of a work has no page numbers and some pages have been assembled in the wrong order giving the impression that the manuscript is a "fragment" when in fact it is nearly all there. Some major works remain without binding, for example the final orchestral score of the Border Ballad *Coronach*.

The bulk of the completed works are catalogued under the shelf system "MS McEwen Ca______". This represents material catalogued on card-index by Farmer when the collection came to GUL. However, some sixty documents (two feet of shelving) were received in 1981 from the Scottish Music Archive comprising mainly drafts, fragments and sketches. These are catalogued under the shelf system "MS McEwen S______". The entire McEwen catalogue (Ca numbers and S numbers) is readily accessible on the GUL website at http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/manuscripts/ and for this reason a complete listing is not included in this thesis.

It was Farmer who persuaded McEwen to donate his manuscripts to GUL. Apparently Farmer wanted to create a Scottish National Collection of music manuscripts at the library. This was doubtless the result of his pioneering work writing the first authoritative history of music in Scotland¹ published in 1947. He certainly made significant headway in this venture with extensive collections of the works of Frederick Lamont, Learmont Drysdale, Hamish MacCunn, and of course, McEwen. Correspondence suggests that he had his eye on the works of Alexander Mackenzie but Mackenzie's then surviving daughter wanted the manuscripts kept at the RAM as this had been her father's wish².

A spin-off from Farmer's project to bring together important documents by Scottish composers was the formation of the Scottish Music Archive just four years after his death. Serious work to form such an archive began in 1964 when the music departments and faculties of the Scottish universities along with the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, the Scottish Arts Council, the Saltire Society, and BBC Scotland formed a steering committee to get the idea off the ground. Its official opening was in 1969 and housed as part of the Music Department of Glasgow University. In 1985 the Archive was re-constituted as the Scottish Music Information Centre and became independent of the universities and
colleges. Its remit is to allow easy access to the work of Scottish composers for study and performance. This archive has a valuable library of recorded performances of works by Scottish composers. SMIC holds a substantial amount of McEwen's work, both printed and photocopy material, as well as recorded performances on LP, tape, and CD.

Farmer seems to have made his approach to McEwen in the year 1947 after some correspondence between them regarding Farmer's *History of Music in Scotland*. Farmer was needing information about McEwen's works and some clarification about dates relating to his career at the RAM. Following on from this there were a series of letters suggesting to McEwen that his music would be best served by having it incorporated into the manuscript collection at Glasgow University, McEwen's alma mater:

Dear Dr Farmer,

.....Some time ago you were so kind as to suggest that my manuscripts might be afforded house room in the Library of Glasgow University. Acting on this I wrote to the Principal and received his very kind approval of the suggestion and so I propose in the immediate future to take the necessary steps to carry this out...

(letter to H.G. Farmer from J.B. McEwen dated 7 October 1947)

The composer was enthusiastic about the idea although doubting the worth of his output to the musical public of his day or in the future. In any case he had all but ceased writing music due to ill health. Nonetheless his music was very precious to him in spite of a life-time of neglect by performers and the musical public which had made him sceptical of its worth or possible recognition after his death. Farmer was clearly persuasive and by the end of the year (1947) McEwen had dispatched ten boxes of material to GUL.
I have got packed all the mss I care to have preserved and am writing to the carriers to call and collect them. There are, in all, ten parcels and I have instructed the carrier to pack these in one container. They weigh about one hundred pounds! I enclose with this a list of these parcels with details of their contents.

(letter dated 21 October 1947)

Note that McEwen was selective as to which manuscripts he wished preserved, the fate of those manuscripts which he did not choose to send to GUL is unknown. The following is a list of the items in each parcel as listed by McEwen in his letter of 21 October 1947 (ref. GUL MS Farmer 217):

**parcel I**
- scores: Suite in E 1893
- Overture to a comedy 1894
- Scene from Hellas 1895
- Symphony in A minor 1895-98
- The Last Chantey 1898
- Graih my chree 1900
- Viola Concerto 1901

**parcel II**
- parts: String quartet in F major 1893
- String quartet in A major 'Biscay' 1913
- String quartet in E flat major 1918
- String quartet in B minor 1920
- String quartet in A 'Jocund Dance' 1920
- String quartet in F 'In modo scoticò' 1936
- First quintet for winds 1939

**parcel III**
- scores: String quartet in F major 1893
- String quartet in A minor 1898-99
- String quartet in E minor 1901
- String quartet in C minor 1905
- String quartet in A major 'Biscay' 1913
- String quartet in E flat minor 'Threnody' 1916
- String quartet in E flat major 1918
- String quartet in B minor 1920
- String quartet in A 'Jocund Dance' 1920
- National Dances for string quartet 1923
- String quartet in C minor 1928
- String quartet in D minor 1936
- String quartet 'In modo scoticò' 1936
- String quartet in G 'Provençale' 1936
- Trio for violin, cello and piano 1937
- Two wind quintets 1939
- Trios for violin, viola, cello 1943
- String quintet 1911
parcel IV scores: Hymn On The Morning Of Christ's Nativity
(piano score) 1901-05
Rhapsody 'Prince Charlie' 1915
Ballet suite 1914
Ballets de Lilliput 1922
Prelude for orchestra 1935
Overture di ballo 1936

parcel V scores: Solway Symphony 1911
Suite in D for strings 1937
Duets for massed violins 1938

parcel VI parts: Graih my chree
Suite in E
Coronach
Demon Lover
The woods aglow (song)

parcel VII parts: Symphony in A minor
Overture to a comedy

parcel VIII for violin and piano:
First sonata 1913
Second sonata 1913
Two movements (poems) from the sonatas 1913
Little sonata in A 1916
Sonata fantasia 1921
Sonata in G 1929
Sonata in A minor for violin or viola 1941
Six Highland Dances
Improvisations Provençale 1937

parcel IX Songs

parcel X scores: Coronach
Grey Galloway
Demon Lover
Hills o' Heather for cello and orchestra 1918
Where The Wild Thyme Blows 1936
Three scenes from The Empire Pageant 1909

McEwen even donated the sum of £200 to cover the cost of housing the manuscripts in the library:

Dear Dr Cunningham (Librarian at GUL)

...I expect that you know of the arrangement I suggested to the Principal that I should contribute £200 to Glasgow University Library funds to cover the cost of the accommodation and arrangement of the manuscripts.

(letter dated 7 November 1947)
It is not clear what happened to this money as it appears that Farmer himself sorted the scores out, catalogued them on card-index, and had many of the items bound without any recompense as can be deduced from a foot-note to a copy of a letter from GUL to McEwen dated 18 November 1947 concerning the details of the conditions for housing the collection:

_The arrangement and classification of these mss, collating them, giving them their appropriate titles for the binders, was carried out by me, as Dr Cunningham knew, without any cost to the University and without any thanks, in the years 1948-49_  

_J.H.Farmer_

It was extremely fortunate that Farmer had the foresight to get the McEwen manuscripts housed at GUL as the composer admitted that they could have had a much hotter ending:

_My mss are now safely housed in the Glasgow University Library. I am very grateful to you for suggesting this course, otherwise I think I should probably have piled them in a heap in my back garden and set fire to them._  

(letter dated 27 November 1947)

Was this the fate of the manuscripts which were not sent to GUL?

McEwen gave quite specific instructions about the terms of his gift to the library. Most notable was that the material should be available to remove from the library for the purpose of giving performances of the music:

_My mss have been deposited in the Glasgow University Library on the understanding that access to them by anyone who wishes to see them will be easily available and that any musician who desires to use them for a performance inside or outside the University will be permitted to take them out of the Library subject to the approval of the authorities._  

(letter dated 10 December 1947)
Fortunately this particular stipulation is no longer permitted by GUL as the condition of the collection is now too fragile but it gives added impetus to the long-term project of creating a McEwen 'Complete Edition' which would allow public access to all the material in a scholarly edition. It has to be said that GUL have always been extremely helpful with access to the collection when performances or recordings have been projected.

Further impetus has been given to a 'Complete Edition' by a series of commercial recordings of McEwen’s most important orchestral/choral work by Chandos Record Company in the 1990’s and more recently the inauguration of a major series of recordings of his chamber music in 2001 both with the financial help of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust. Recordings are the most accessible method of getting to know musical works. McEwen, himself was well aware of this and jumped at the chance to have his Solway Symphony recorded away back in 1923. Indeed the Solway Symphony was the first British symphony to be recorded complete without any cuts (Elgar’s early acoustic recordings were abridged versions and his work only appeared in a complete form in the late 1920’s). Unfortunately for McEwen’s reputation as a composer the quality of the recording is very poor and the orchestral playing unacceptable to modern ears.

The power of recorded performances was recognised by John Purser, author of Scotland’s Music. This book grew out of an epic series of broadcasts, 30 ninety-minute programmes commissioned by Martin Dalby (Head of Music, BBC Scotland). Recordings were published by Linn Records of selected items from these broadcasts and the recordings give a wonderful way into a hitherto mostly unknown treasury of Scottish music of all kinds. The complete set of BBC recorded broadcasts can be consulted at SMIC and includes a fine performance of McEwen’s Grey Galloway.

Turning to the McEwen manuscripts themselves one is confronted not only with a collection which is ageing and deteriorating but also with the problem of a body of work which has, on the whole, remained unperformed and was largely unperformed in the composer’s lifetime. Working up a piece to completion is an arduous and very time-consuming activity but preparing a work for actual performance requires a further labour from the composer; “dotting the i’s and
crossing the t's" as it were. McEwen's "finished" work has all the hallmarks of the former and not the latter; they are deficient in details of phrasing, dynamics, checking for wrong notes in otherwise matching parts, and inconsistencies. The policy of this editor has been to endeavour to give the best possible reading in every instance while noting every discrepancy in the editorial commentary at the end of each work. The outcome should be a score which is ready to perform with all "the i's dotted and the t's crossed" while satisfying the student eager to know the processes the composer has gone through to arrive at the finished work.
Notes: Chapter 2

2. GUL: MS Farmer 217
3. Chandos Record Company: recordings of McEwen works:
   - CHAN9241 Three Border Ballads: *Coronach, Demon Lover, Grey Galloway*
     London Philharmonic Orchestra conductor Alasdair Mitchell
   - CHAN 9345 *A Solway Symphony, Hills' o Heather, Where The Wild Thyme Blows*
     London Philharmonic Orchestra, Moray Welsh 'cello, conductor Alasdair Mitchell
   - CHAN9669 *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*
     London Philharmonic Orchestra, Brighton Festival Chorus, Janice Watson soprano, conductor Alasdair Mitchell
   - CHAN9880 *Violin Sonatas nos.2, 5, 6 and The Prince Charlie Rhapsody*
     Olivier Charlier violin Geoffrey Tozer piano
   - CHAN9933 *Piano Sonata in E minor, Vignettes from La Côte d'argent, Four Sketches, Sonatina, Three Preludes, On Southern Hills*
     Geoffrey Tozer piano
4. Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust: founded by Ursula Vaughan Williams, widow of the composer, the Trust is a charitable organisation whose remit is to disburse monies accrued from performing and copyright income from the works of Vaughan Williams.
5. Recording: McEwen 'Solway' A Symphony, transcribed from 78's to LP by Pearl Records Ltd with the catalogue number Opal 808. The recording as appalling as is the performance by the Aeolian Orchestra conducted by Cuthbert Whitemore.
Chapter 3

A critical survey of selected orchestral works

3.1 Symphony/String Quartet in A minor (1895-1899)

The manuscript sources for the Symphony in A minor consist of the autograph score (GUL Ca.14-y17), the autograph set of parts (GUL Ca.14-y172), the autograph score of the discarded Scherzo (GUL MS McEwen S 4), and the autograph score of the discarded Epilogue (GUL MS McEwen S 4). The manuscript source for the String Quartet in A Minor is the autograph score (GUL Ca.14-z75). The orchestral score of the Symphony (source A) is hard-bound in dark blue cloth and measures 13¾(height) x 10¾(width) inches and consists of 193 pages of manuscript music. A further page is inserted before page 1 (title page) with the following written in the composer's hand and signed:

A
symphony
in
A minor
by
John B. McEwen
composed 1895-1898

Performance duration = 32 minutes (to 34)
I. Allegro marcato = 10-11
II. Andante quasi adagio = 10
III. Vivace = 4½-4½
IV. Finale : Allegro vivace = 7
V. Epilogue (scrapped) used later as Coronach

After I had finished the Symphony in A minor I found that there was not the slightest chance of getting a performance of a work of this nature by an unknown composer without social influence and money. In order to give myself the harmless gratification of hearing the music, even in modified form, I arranged it for String Quartet. As a quartet it was played at the R.A.M. at a meeting of
the Musical Union by a quartet of students, viz:

1st V.        Spencer Dyke
2nd V.        Stephen Champ
viola         Lionel Tertis
cello         Herbert Withers

It seemed to please some people and through the kind offices of my friend A. J. Jaeger of Novelllos, this firm agreed to publish the work as a Quartet on condition that I wrote for them (without special remuneration) four short, easy, choral pieces. It was duly published in this form in 1903, and has been played as such frequently both in this country and abroad.

The original symphony has, however, never been performed

J.B.McEwen, 1943-44

P.S. The chief subject of the 2nd movement is an old Highland Tune.

The highland tune which McEwen refers to in his post script is a traditional fiddle tune called The Arran Boat Song. This melody is found in many anthologies of scottish fiddle music but is currently best known in the version given in Ceol Na Fidhle (Highland Tunes for the Fiddle) volume 1 published by Taigh Na Teud, Isle of Skye 1985 (revised 1991). McEwen would most likely to have found it in Greig's Scots Minstrelsie published in 1893 in Edinburgh.

The set of orchestral parts (source P) consists of 26 hand-written parts plus 13 uncompleted string parts. The parts are kept in a box measuring 14¼ x 12 inches and show no evidence of having been used. They are of great interest as there are many minor differences between the parts and the score (A) and evidently McEwen had further refined his concept of the work at the part-writing stage. On the other hand there are some blatant errors of omission (bars missing and sections of music omitted) and in consequence this source can only be used as supplementary and not as prime evidence.

The scores of the discarded Scherzo and Epilogue are of great interest although they do not belong to the main text of the Symphony. These scores are kept in a large brown envelope measuring 12 x 16 inches. These sources are given in full as Appendix 1 and 2 of the critical edition of the Symphony.

The score of the String Quartet in A minor (source Q) is hard-bound
in dark blue cloth measuring 13¾ x 10¾ inches. It is fundamental in understanding the Symphony as is the Symphony in understanding the Quartet. In order that direct comparisons can be made with ease the Quartet score is given in full beneath the score of the Symphony.

McEwen began work on the A minor Symphony in his twenty-seventh year in 1895 and completed the orchestral score in 1898. This was not his first venture into the symphonic genre; symphonies in C minor, F minor, and F sharp minor predate the A minor one but are now lost. The composer included these early symphonies in lists of his works as late as 1920. However there is no mention of them in his gift of manuscripts to GUL (see chapter 2). It has to be assumed, for the time being, that he regarded them as juvenilia and destroyed them. They may turn up in due course perhaps with other missing works like the Piano Concerto and the orchestral version of A Winter Poem.

The original concept of the A minor Symphony was ambitious; a five-movement work lasting over forty-five minutes. It was completed in this extended form with a first movement Allegro marcato, second movement Andante, quasi adagio, third movement Allegretto scherzando, fourth movement Allegro vivace, and a Finale : Epilogue Andante maestoso.

At some point before 1898 (the date of completion of the score) the composer became aware of the first of two flaws in this scheme. The Epilogue's melodic material in the contrasting episodes was too similar, in his opinion, to themes in Richard Wagner's Lohengrin. The manuscript of the Epilogue has a note written in blue crayon pencil in McEwen's hand:

This might have been used (with alteration) if Wagner had not written 'Lohengrin'!

J.B. McEwen

It is difficult to identify any specific motif from the Wagner opera which McEwen had in mind when he wrote the above comment but the themes in the contrasting episodes of Epilogue do have Lohengrin affinities:
‘Epilogue’ themes

1. 

2. 

3. 

‘Lohengrin’ themes

1. 

2. 

3. 

Act II scene 4

Act II scene 1

Act I scene 3
Furthermore, the Epilogue has very much the 'feel' of the Prelude to Act I of Lohengrin. In any case the Wagnerisms were sufficient reason for McEwen to reject his Epilogue for the A minor Symphony. The second flaw compounded the problems the Epilogue made for the Symphony; it made the work unwieldy. McEwen always preferred to be concise and was happy to trim down material whenever possible as will be seen throughout this chapter. McEwen took the decision that his Scherzo did not work in this new set-up; perhaps it was too lightweight now that the Epilogue had gone, perhaps something with more bite and energy was required, at least in the main section. A new third movement was written although it incorporates the Trio idea from the discarded Scherzo. This new third movement has grit and driving rhythm in the main section counterbalanced by a very lyrical trio. The movements which he cut are important enough to give in full and appear as appendices at the end of the critical edition score.

The discarded Epilogue turns out to be the basis of McEwen's first Border Ballad Coronach. The main ideas were good and worth reworking into another piece. This was achieved by cutting the Lohengrin-like episodes and replacing them with new ideas and creating an extended coda (see chapter 3.4). In the light of this, the Symphony's Epilogue takes on some significance in the development of McEwen's orchestral writing. The A minor Symphony becomes a stepping-stone to his mature works of the first decade of the twentieth century. It is also an early demonstration of McEwen's ability to re-cast his material in different genres; a feature which manifests itself in several guises throughout his work.

McEwen regarded the A minor Symphony as a major personal achievement. He not only re-scored the work as an excellent string quartet in the year 1898-99 he also revisited the orchestral score as late as 1943-44 and wrote the somewhat bitter prefatory note pasted into the title page of the original 1898 score quoted above (see pages 31-32).

The score along with a handwritten set of parts has languished since 1898 as yet unperformed. Has history been just or cruel in this instance? We know that the material and the structures are sound by the fact that the String Quartet version was played regularly in McEwen's lifetime. The String Quartet version is a fine work and extremely well written for each of the instruments. Quartet players
enjoy playing this piece and audiences enjoy listening to it. With only a very few small differences the quartet is essentially the same music as the symphony. With uncanny aplomb McEwen reduces his orchestral concept to the highly disciplined medium of the quartet.

So the question to be asked is: how well does McEwen handle the symphony orchestra and does the orchestral version add to the piece in any way? In the Symphony McEwen is somewhat conventional in his use of the orchestra, avoiding any risky or purely colourful effects in favour of well tried-and-tested combinations. On the first page of the score percussion instruments (triangle, cymbals, and bass drum) are listed. There are some very sketchy indications of their parts up to bar 91 (first movement) but everything is most emphatically scored out in blue crayon and there are now no percussion parts in the work. This is the first of many instances of McEwen's suspicion of the percussion department. Nevertheless the orchestration does add considerably to the overall power of the piece in loud passages; the dynamic range is unarguably much greater than with a string quartet. Textures and inner lines in quieter passages are much clearer in their orchestral guise; for example, in the first movement at bar 116 the woodwinds have busy music while the strings hold a sustained line; this idea is lost in the String Quartet. Certain passages inevitably are more colourful when orchestrated allowing details to be picked out. A good example of this can be found in the first movement at bars 158-160 where the motif:

gets added emphasis, and even more appearances, than in the Quartet.

It is where McEwen differentiates the function of motifs through use of his orchestra that important material has had to be lost when reducing to quartet. For example in the first movement at bars 227-230 the figure does not appear in the Quartet whereas in the Symphony its gives the music a wonderful rhythmic impetus. The passage in the first movement at letter P is unquestionably superior in the Symphony. Here a complex texture of interweaving
lines sparkle with colour and the clarity achieved by contrasting instrumental
timbres allows these lines to have an individual character.

At one point in the first movement an important structural detail is
missing in the Quartet. This is at bar 301-302 where the violas have the
figure which leads to the cellos slower version in bar 303:

This lovely detail, missing in the Quartet, adds to the Symphony's strands of melodic
expression. A similar moment is to be found in the third movement at bar 35-37
where the upward figure in the winds:

and even the rising:

figure of bar 39 is missing in the Quartet. This rising motif gives forward
momentum helping to drive the music onwards with great energy.

Although eschewing orchestral effects for purely sensational results
McEwen does use the differing colours of the orchestra well. There is much
beautiful detail to be found in the slow movement and attention is drawn to the
passage at bars 62-66 especially. Here the woodwinds have a delicate web of
melodies combining in a totally satisfying way and this is what McEwen has
transferred to the String Quartet. However, against this the strings create a
secondary background shimmer with trills and rising scales which gives the passage
a magical quality. This kind of rich texture was soon to become a hallmark of
McEwen's orchestral style such as will be found in Border Ballad n.2 *Demon Lover*.
Later in the slow movement the idea is turned round with the melodic writing in the
strings, and the winds making comment with light-footed semiquavers (bars 125-
134).

There is one instance where the tables are turned with McEwen
unable to resist adding a further development in the Quartet. This is to be found in
the third movement at bars 93-95. At this point the quartet has an imitative figure
between the first and second violins which is not to be found in the Symphony.

At two places bars have been cut in the Quartet. McEwen must have been aware that the limitation of just four players in a moderate-size room does not allow for the same expansiveness that can be achieved by a symphony orchestra in a concert hall. He therefore cut certain bars which rely wholly on a sense of space to achieve their effect but have a minimal effect on the overall structure. These cut bars are represented by blanked-out bars in this edition.

The composer's attitude to working in orchestral or chamber music genres was one of expediency. There is a paucity of orchestral work in his output because he couldn’t get performances. He elucidates the topic most eloquently in a letter to H.G.Farmer:

My composing activities since the beginning of the century have merely been the occupation of my leisure and have been more in the nature of escapism and distraction from the serious business of earning a living. I have never been, or tried to be, a professional composer and that is the reason for what my old friend Corder regarded as an undue pre-occupation with chamber music. It takes less time to write a string quartet than a symphony and in the old days one could have the satisfaction of hearing one's work without undergoing the mortification and annoyances of suing for a performance from a swollen-headed conductor or an arrogant impresario or board of directors.

(letter dated 28 June 1947)

To summarise; McEwen uses a conventional orchestra quite conservatively on the whole but with sensitivity, with an ear for colour, and with care to make his musical intentions as clear as possible. It is fair to say that the work benefits from being presented as an orchestral piece. The added possibilities that an orchestra can give are used to effect and allow him more options in complex situations. On occasion the orchestra can produce more melodic lines and
interesting textures than the string quartet; it even gives more space to the work (where bars have been cut in the Quartet). The composition exists in two perfectly successful forms, as a symphony and as a string quartet. This, of course, is not unprecedented or original in any way; there are many instances of works co-existing in more than one guise and there are several other examples in McEwen's output.

Bernard Benoliel, considers the A minor Symphony in his note for the CD recording of the Three Border Ballads:

*The A minor Symphony shows a fine grasp of traditional forms and a foretaste of the original voice that would appear later.*

*The successful recasting of the score as the String Quartet in A minor eliminated some of the rougher edges, nevertheless the Symphony bears comparison to Dvořák's First Symphony *Bells of Zlonice*. It should have been performed at the time.*³

So, is the young McEwen a Scottish Dvořák? Certainly he was a composer steeped in the traditional music of Scotland as it was known at that time⁴:

*Dear Dr Farmer,*

*Thanks for your kind letter of June 19th. I have asked my wife who is good enough to arrange such things for me to find such a photo as you require.*

*I shall be much interested in reading your forthcoming 'History of Music in Scotland' if I am lucky enough to last till it appears.*

*I am very ignorant but did not imagine that there had been much music in Scotland prior to the 19th century apart from the immense mass of song and dance tunes in which as a child I was soaked.*

*Certainly in Glasgow where I spent my adolescence the people were so industrialised that they had lost touch with the primitive and traditional Scots music and only a small group of well-to-do dilettante were interested in the Germanised concerts*
As for a Scot of respectable parentage endeavouring to become a composer!!! It was something reprehensible and ought to be discouraged - a belief they did their best to live up to. Judging from what I hear and see in the press this seems to still be the attitude of the native population, an attitude which is encouraged by individuals and bodies which are concerned with music production and performance. I believe there are a number of young composers in Scotland and I have hoped to get knowledge of their work through broadcasting but the Scottish organisations seem content to follow the English programmes and perform mostly the same foreign works as we get in London.

(letter dated 23 June 1947)

So what is Scottish about this piece? Are there any features which we can say are undoubtedly nationalistic in style? The most obvious is the main theme of the second movement Andante, quasi adagio which is based on "an old Highland Tune" to quote the composer\(^5\)(cf. p.32). As mentioned earlier, the tune is The Arran Boat Song, a traditional tune to be found in many fiddle collections and also in The Scots Minstrelsy, a magnificent six-volume collection of songs published in 1893 \(^6\):

\[\text{Diagram of music notation}\]
The melody is given in a straightforward setting at the start of the movement and then embellished with colourful figurations of various kinds but without losing sight of the original melody. The important point is that McEwen leaves the actual folk tune alone, he does not subject it to any kind of development or fragmentation which would be inappropriate and destroy the essential Scottishness of the tune. His handling of traditional material is, therefore, very similar to Dvořák's method.

McEwen never used a recognisable, nameable folk tune again in his orchestral output (excepting works like *Prince Charlie* and *The Jocund Dance* which were arrangements of traditional tunes). For this reason it is necessary to delve deeper into his musical style to find what it is that makes his music speak with a Scottish tongue. Others before McEwen had succeeded in making their music sound Scottish, not least of all Mendelssohn (in his *Scottish Symphony*) and Bruch (in his *Scottish Fantasia* for violin and orchestra). McEwen readily adopted features he found in Mendelssohn and Bruch which suited his purpose, albeit in a harmonic framework which is more advanced, more chromatic.

Mendelssohn found that minor mode music was well suited to creating the dark moods of the Scottish landscape. His *Scottish Symphony* and *Hebrides Overture* both are in minor keys. McEwen's key scheme for his Symphony,

\[ A \text{ minor} - E \text{ minor} - D \text{ minor} - A \text{ minor} \]

is, to say the least, centred on the minor mode. It will become clear, indeed, that he preferred minor keys and as his musical style developed he preferred more and more extreme minor keys. The *A minor Symphony*, with each of its movements in the minor mode, is a dark piece. It is also an earnest, taut, and very serious work. Driving rhythms with a propensity to dotted patterns including the "Scotch snap" remind us of traditional march tunes, particularly the principal themes of the first and last movements. Thorough working out of melodic imitation and elaboration add to the intensity and weight throughout. Even in the delightful second movement this density of construction and development imbue the folk tune theme with a mood of earnest resignation.

Furthermore, the score is littered with snippets, fragments, of melody
and rhythm which remind us of Scottish tunes; fleeting glimpses which are gone before we can really grasp them. The little tune in the third movement at bars 45-52 could be a reel or even a strathspey but it is over before we can give a name to it. It sounds traditional but is, of course, McEwen's own invention:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{\textbf{Example 1}} \\
&\text{\textbf{Example 2}}
\end{align*}
\]

The second bassoon at bar 28 of the slow movement seems to be launching into the \textit{Skye Boat Song}, but this is just a fragment, a momentary hint and perhaps some kind of cross reference to the \textit{Arran Boat Song}:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{\textbf{Example 3}}
\end{align*}
\]

One could sift through the score finding one detail after another much as one could dissect a Tchaikovsky, or a Dvořák symphony and find connections with their native music. The point is that McEwen has already discovered some sort of Scottish musical vernacular here, albeit in a conservative setting. But it was a beginning, a springboard from which to develop a more individual style, a more personal voice.

\section*{3.2 The Viola Concerto (1901)}

The manuscript sources for the \textit{Viola Concerto} consist of the autograph orchestral score\textsuperscript{7} and the draft piano/viola score\textsuperscript{8}. The orchestral score is hard-bound in dark blue cotton and consists of 175 pages of manuscript music. It shows many signs of being used as a conducting score as there are some corrections in lead pencil and most tempo and dynamic markings are indicated in blue crayon, a feature of McEwen scores. On the title page McEwen has given the date of
composition as 1901. This date is substantiated by a note in pencil at the top right-hand corner of the title page which reads:

Bournemouth
Nov. 11th 1901
Dan Godfrey

The writing and signature are not in the composer's handwriting style and it is likely that Sir Dan Godfrey, conductor of the first performance, wrote and signed the above at the time of the première.

A detailed survey of the full score shows several layers of working and each needs some elucidation. The score is written in black ink in what is recognisably McEwen's own hand. This text has been adopted as the basis of this critical edition. Certain passages have been scratched out, probably by pen-knife, and new music over-written. On account of this method of correction it is still possible to read the original version which McEwen scratched out and where this can be done it is described fully in the critical commentary of this edition. The overwritten corrections are in McEwen's own hand in black ink. For this reason such corrections have been adopted as the composer's final intentions for these passages.

On account of McEwen's consistent use of blue crayon on much of his manuscripts, where such markings add to what is already there in black ink the editor is confident that these are the composer's intentions and in these instances the blue crayon markings have been absorbed into this edition. At a few points in the orchestral score there are coloured pencil markings which are not blue, sometimes in green and occasionally in purple crayon. In most cases these markings duplicate indications found above or below in the same bar written in ink or blue crayon. This suggests that these markings were added by the conductor to draw his attention to these details and for this reason, with only one exception, these markings have been ignored for the purpose of this edition. The one exception is to be found in bar 91 of the first movement where "1Fg" has been written in purple pencil under the horn parts suggesting the addition of a bassoon at this point. This adds nothing to the passage in question and is of doubtful origin; although mentioned in the commentary it is not included in the main text of this edition.

Lastly, in respect of text revisions in different coloured writing, there
are many indications written in lead pencil. Lead pencil was not a writing medium favoured by McEwen in his completed manuscripts and such markings should be treated with some scepticism. (However, see chapter 3.5 *Grey Galloway* where McEwen added some changes to the printed score in pencil) Furthermore, the lead pencil markings in the orchestral score are not recognisably in the composer's hand. They might have been added by the conductor or some other person, possibly Tertis. Where they add something new these markings have been described in the commentary.

A further issue relating to revisions of the text must now be tackled. That is the use of "small notes". Two quite separate problems are covered by "small notes". Firstly, certain passages are written in the original score in small notes and are further clarified (in that source) by the addition of the rubric "small notes" written at the start of such a passage and "ord. notes" when ordinary notation is resumed. This represents a revision of the text by the composer as it gives rise to the possibility of a reduced orchestration of the work. When all "small notes" are used in performance it would be possible to perform the work without the use of trombones or tuba which would substantially lighten the weight of the orchestral colour. Considering the difficulty that a solo viola will always have in projecting a line through any orchestral texture such a thinning of orchestration could be considered beneficial. However, there is no evidence to lead us to adopt this revision as the composer's final thoughts on the matter as it is not possible to ascertain which version was used when the work was performed in 1901 due to the orchestral parts having been lost. For this reason we include the "small notes" sections exactly as they appear in the autograph. This allows for performances of both versions from the critical edition.

There is a second kind of "small notes" used in the critical edition. That is where they are used by the editor to show where a passage has been crossed out in the autograph but there is no evidence that these were sanctioned by the composer as the crossings out are not recognisably in the composer's handwriting. McEwen's favoured methods of deleting material were to cross out in blue crayon or scratch out with pen knife. However, in the case of the *Viola Concerto* certain passages have been crossed out by a wavy pencil line. Most of these crossings out
have virtue in that they appear to have the effect of lightening the orchestration to allow the solo viola greater ease in projecting its line. An exception is to found in the first movement at bar 58 onwards where a delightful countermelody on clarinet and later on oboe has been crossed out. In every instance "small notes" have been described fully in the commentary and the inclusion of these passages in this edition allows performers to judge for themselves how best to present the work at these points.

The last revision that requires some discussion is the question of the cut in the second movement from bar 39 to bar 73. This is a substantial cut of one-third of the whole movement and would need some convincing evidence to support its adoption as the composer's final thoughts on the matter. The loss of the middle section makes the original ternary form of the movement into binary form and deprives it of the delightful musical ideas contained therein, not least of all the beautiful change of key from F major to A major at bar 51. A study of the sources will facilitate the formation of a balanced view. The indication of a cut can be found in both the orchestral score and the piano score, in both manuscripts marked in blue crayon. No other sign of the middle section being jettisoned can be found, no pencil scoring out, no sign of pages having been fixed together by paper-clips or pins. Looking at another McEwen autograph, Demon Lover, several places can be found where cuts have been made by the composer. In Demon Lover pages of music paper have been cut out of the score as well as some bars being very severely crossed out in ink and a new set of rehearsal and page numbers inserted. In this case there is no doubt as to the composer's final thoughts. In the Viola Concerto it can easily be imagined that the young composer might have been prevailed upon by soloist or conductor to shorten his work in some way and this is what he came up with. The middle section remains intact in the autograph sources and is included here in full. In the light of the above layers of revision the orchestral score is a complex document embodying two versions of the work for large and reduced orchestra and containing the suggestion of a very curtailed second movement.

The draft piano/viola score has some interesting features which are worthy of mention. This score is hard-bound in dark blue cotton and consists of 76 pages of manuscript music. It is bound incorrectly; some of the pages which should
be at the beginning of the score appear at the end giving the impression that the
document is incomplete and it is described as such in the GUL catalogue. Some
other sections are only briefly sketched as a single melodic line or simply a series of
harmonies in block chords. About three-quarters of the work is to be found here
(and this has been used as the basis of the edition of the piano score which matches
the orchestral score edition). Some details have been culled from McEwen’s piano
score and incorporated into the critical edition, in particular there are some
interesting bowings and articulation differences between this source and the
orchestral score. There are also one or two dynamic indications not to be found in
the orchestral score. There are many signs which show that this piano version is an
early draft of the work, for example different key signatures at certain points and the
notation of some passages in notes of half the value found in the orchestral score.

What of the music? On the face of it this is a conventional three-
movement concerto:

*Allegro moderato - Allegretto grazioso - Allegro con brio*

The first movement discusses two main contrasting ideas; the second movement is
an expansive ternary form structure (if the cut is ignored); and the Finale is a kind of
sonata-rondo form. Contained within this conventional layout are some original and
idiosyncratic formal ideas.

The first movement begins impressively in C minor but comes to an
abrupt stop almost immediately with the solo viola taking a short cadenza. The
orchestra strikes up once more, only to be interrupted again by the soloist playing a
second cadenza (there is a similarity here with Liszt’s *Piano Concerto no.1*). The
way is now clear for some kind of momentum to be built up but an uneasy
relationship has been established between the orchestra and the soloist; there is a
distinct feeling of instability. It is only when the key of E flat major is reached (bar
57) that a more co-operative climate prevails and this is enhanced by the flowing
lyricism of the new melodic idea:

![Musical notation](image)

Throughout the first movement McEwen contrasts the uneasy relationship between
soloist and orchestra in the minor key music with the flowing and comfortable relationship reserved for the major key music. The coda reaches a satisfactory resolution of these issues with a peaceful repose in C major.

Matters are quite different in the predominantly melodic second movement in F major. Here the solo viola launches straight into an extended song which it then elaborates while the melody continues in the orchestra. A secondary idea follows in the extremely remote key of D flat major, a long way from the first movement C minor. This allows the middle section to begin in the home key of F major and move forward with some wonderfully chromatic turns to the crux of the matter at bar 51. Here, at the very centre point of the whole concerto, the music moves into a radiant A major for what is perhaps the most beautiful music in the work. The solo viola leads throughout this passage, spinning out a fine melodic thread delicately accompanied by the orchestra. The music works back to F major by bar 73 at which point the orchestra takes over. Some charming filigree work from the viola brings the movement to a quiet ending.

The Finale appears to be setting off on some kind of march but this soon changes to triple time for the main part of the movement. This is set in motion by the orchestra with predominantly dotted rhythms firmly in C major. The idea is taken up by the soloist and elaborated with much bravura. After a modulating passage for orchestra it is the soloist's turn to introduce the second idea, which is in the dominant key of G major (bar 54). This tune has a certain swagger about it which is particularly engaging; one can imagine the young virtuoso Tertis enjoying this moment and playing it up as much as possible:

\[ \text{Viola solo} \]

A further idea works its way into the picture at bar 76 which is lyrical and graceful, in contrast to all that has preceded it, and works as a foil putting the energetic music into relief:

\[ \text{Oboe} \]

There is a recapitulation which focuses on the soloist with decorations and bravura variations on the material. A brief Presto coda with a reminder of the first idea brings the work to an end in C major.
McEwen's method of coping with the difficulties of concerto writing, and the special problems of a viola concerto, is interesting. Pitting one solo instrument against a whole orchestra, especially if that instrument has a cover-tone like a viola, gives rise to all sorts of issues like balance between soloist and orchestra and the relationship they have both acoustically and structurally. McEwen's understanding of concerto as a concept must inevitably affect the form.

In the first movement the relationship is uneasy, especially when the music is in the minor mode. It is as if the soloist wanted to interrupt the orchestra's attempts at playing a symphony and by interrupting in this way was forcing the symphony to become a concerto. It is only in the coda that some kind of rapprochement is achieved. This essentially dramatic approach to concerto writing is in this instance very effective as it continually puts the solo viola in the spotlight; a sort of David and Goliath scenario. As the viola is a very difficult instrument to hear in a concerto this tactic pays huge dividends.

After the stop-start of the first movement a more flowing style is needed for the second movement and McEwen is well aware of this. However, a continuously lyrical mood is hard to achieve with the cover-tone of a viola. His treatment of the orchestra in accompanying the viola's fine melody is delicate and considerate of these difficulties. Strings are muted throughout, woodwinds are thinned down to one to a part when the soloist is playing, brass dynamics are extremely quiet (often ppp).

The Finale is a "gloves off" affair, full of energy and fun. The orchestra, although very active in solo passages, is marked down to very quiet dynamics with a predominance of staccato articulation. Clever use is made of pizzicato in the strings to assist further the balance difficulties (e.g. bars 54-61 and in the coda at bar 254-269). The combination of these tactics gives the solo viola some sort of chance of cutting through the orchestra and engaging in real dialogue with it. Balance problems in a viola concerto will always be a huge challenge for any composer. The use of the "small notes" revision to reduce the orchestration emphasises McEwen's concern that the soloist should be heard. Remembering that McEwen's was the first viola concerto by a British composer in modern times it is remarkable that his score is a model of care and attention to detail and achieves a
successful outcome to such a difficult proposition.

Why then did Tertis not continue to play the McEwen Concerto? It was not written for a commission - as far as is known McEwen never wrote any orchestral music to commission - and so Tertis had no obligation to keep it in his repertoire. Furthermore, if the second movement was given in its severely cut version then the audience heard a very different work from that conceived by the composer. The centre of this concerto contains its most beautiful music and losing it would have made the work incomplete and unsatisfactory. This could have contributed to its neglect. And then Tertis had other composers lined up to write works for him; the lovely York Bowen Viola Concerto (1907) followed shortly after the McEwen concerto. The same fate befell Bowen’s concerto; a few performances and then oblivion.

There has been no mention of Scotland vis-a-vis the music of the Viola Concerto. The Viola Concerto does not follow in the footsteps of Bruch’s Scottish Fantasia for violin and orchestra or Mackenzie’s Scottish Piano Concerto. These works plunder Scottish folk music for their melodic inspiration (albeit very cleverly); McEwen avoids any such overt picture-postcard Scottishness. And yet there is an accent of the North here. Not so much use is made of the minor mode as we found in the A minor Symphony for, although the work is based in C minor, there is a predominance of major key music and the whole Finale is written around C major. No, the Scottish accent is hidden in the dotted rhythms so prevalent in the piece. The opening gesture of the concerto:

```
Allegro moderato
```

the little woodwind figure of the second movement bars 12-13:

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[Music notation]
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and the sturdy dotted rhythm of the main idea of the Finale (although reminiscent of
Polonaise it has more weight than the Polish dance:

Allegro con brio

and many more, contribute to this rhythmic preoccupation. Coupled with this there are numerous harmonic inflections which remind us of Scottish folk music, moments where the harmonies slip down a tone like so many traditional fiddle tunes with double tonics. Such moments are mostly to be found in the first movement; the opening bars, for example, or at bars 148-154 and bars 181-186.

McEwen's style is becoming more developed, the language more integrated into the material, the medium and the message are converging. The Viola Concerto is a fine work and deserves to be heard on its own merits, but in the context of his whole output it stands at the threshold of the mature works for orchestra. The style and the content are not quite in true harmony.

3.3

Coronach (Border Ballad n.1),

Epilogue (Symphony in A minor), and the Border Ballad tradition

There are four manuscript sources for McEwen's Coronach (Border Ballad n.1). The primary source is the autograph orchestral score (catalogue number MS McEwen S26/1) which can be dated November 1903 although the date written at the end of the score is 1906 (see below). This score (A) is kept in a loose brown paper cover with the manuscript sheets sewn together and including one loose sheet. The outside of the cover is inscribed 'CORONACH' and on the verso 'J.B.McEwen, Royal Academy of Music'. Unaccountably for many years this score was separated from the bulk of McEwen manuscripts and held in a box of uncatalogued items. Only as recently as 1996 when the Collection was catalogued on computer did it get its shelf mark (S26/1). For this reason the set of orchestral parts for Coronach, which were properly catalogued by Farmer, are listed as..."score wanting".

The orchestral score (A) shows signs of being worked over on several
occasions. The bulk of the musical text is written in black ink. The black ink score has some scratching out in places where the composer has changed his mind. These changes are mostly to do with time signatures and resultant changes in bar-line placement. Superimposed on the black ink score can be found many markings in blue crayon. These blue markings are mainly to do with dynamics and phrasing but there are some which relate to percussion and timpani parts. For example, at bars 38-41 there are indications in blue that the cymbals and bass drum should play but the precise rhythm is not clear; for this, reference must be made to the cymbal part in the autograph set of orchestral parts (the bass drum part is missing). Lastly, there are some lead pencil markings which are mostly corrections of accidentals which seem to be the result of noticing such details when copying out the set of parts. The parts have these corrections incorporated in ink without sign of corrections being made at a later stage. There are, however, many details of phrasing, missing accidentals, and missing dynamics in individual instruments throughout score A which have been corrected in this edition and these are itemised fully in the critical commentary.

The second source for Coronach is the autograph set of parts (O) catalogue number Ca - 14y29. These are kept in a cardboard storage box and consist of a full set of parts, some 46 parts in all including multiple string parts; a huge labour which the composer undertook with great care. The parts are clearly set out, even with time given for good page turns. Although essentially identical to A, source O has been useful to confirm difficult readings in A and this has been particularly helpful with the part for cymbals which is very sketchy in A. Moreover the bass drum part has been lost and an attempt at some kind of reconstruction has been made by this editor. McEwen was always extremely economical with his use of percussion; it was evidently a section of the orchestra he preferred to do without if at all possible. As mentioned earlier, the first page of the A minor Symphony has some percussion indicated in ink and then decisively crossed out in blue crayon. In McEwen's great choral work Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity percussion is restricted to the storm scene in the first chorus and then one cymbal crash much later on and even this is uncertain due to the poor state of the manuscript. There is a distrust of percussion in all McEwen's orchestral output. The parts have also been helpful with the important task of dating Coronach. The first-desk copy of Violin I
has the date of composition as 1903 on the title page. McEwen was sometimes a bit vague about dating his work and gives the year 1906 on his score (A). The article in the Dunedin Magazine of 1915 gives the date of composition as 1903 with the premier performance in 1904 and so the violin part confirms 1903 as the actual date of completion of the work (see chapter 1, page 17 concerning the accuracy of details in the Dunedin article).

The third Coronach source is an autograph (undated) draft piano score (P), catalogue number MS McEwen S26/2. This document is a neatly written version of the work as a piano solo; did McEwen consider the possibility of recasting the work a piano piece? The layout of P shows signs that it predates A in as much as the barring and the time signatures are different. No subsequent attempt has been made to change the time signatures to match A, however extra bar-lines have been inserted from time to time in pencil to bring P into line with A. At the end of P there is a completely different coda which is given as an appendix to this edition. This is followed in P by two pages of sketches for a another coda but these sketches are very fragmentary. On a separate double sheet of paper can be found a neat copy of the new coda in full and this exactly matches the orchestral version. This extra sheet is loosely inserted into the pages of P. This source is of most interest as it shows some of the process by which the composer reached his final version of the work; apparently he was uncertain whether to end quietly or strongly.

The final Coronach source is the discarded Epilogue Finale (E) of the Symphony in A minor. This has already been discussed and is given in full as Appendix 2 to the edition of that symphony. As a textual source E is of little value because Coronach is a complete reworking of the Epilogue idea and not a revision of it. On the other hand E is very interesting from the point of view of McEwen's compositional process and in particular the gestation of his first mature orchestral work. Comparison of the two pieces shows us that the composer stripped away all the Wagner Lohengrin episodes from E leaving just the main idea from which to start afresh with Coronach, adding new episodes and an extended A major coda.

McEwen's use of the orchestra has developed quite dramatically over the short five-year period between the completion of E (1898) and A (1903). The Epilogue is set in a conventional integrated orchestration in a post-Brahms style
whereas in *Coronach* it is much more a function of the structure. For example the opening of *Coronach* is restricted to winds and brass with the strings entering as late as bar 17, and even then only with subsidiary material. In the first episode at bar 60 the strings are again pushed into the background and the focus is on the woodwinds. It is with the change of key to A major and metre to quadruple time at bar 170 that the strings come into their own with a truly majestic and noble melody that Elgar would have been proud to own as his own:

![Music Example]

Holding back string colour until so late in the piece has a wonderful effect, highlighting this new A major idea and clothing it in a glowing string tone. This change of colour is emphasised by having the strings remove their mutes at this point. There is no such inspired moment anywhere in the *Symphony in A minor Epilogue*.

Bernard Benoliel, in his notes for the CD recording of the Three Border Ballads, considers that the ideas for the Ballads go back to 1900 'when McEwen wrote an accompaniment to the recitation of a Manx poem by Hall Caine on the legend of the demon lover, entitled "Graih my Chree".

In the light of *Coronach*’s derivation from the *Symphony in A minor Epilogue* of 1898 we can push back Benoliel’s date by at least two years. Manx folk-lore does belong to the Celtic tradition and also has strong connections with the Border ballad but in the case of *Coronach* we have to look elsewhere for its literary and musical inspiration. In his CD notes Benoliel makes some extremely interesting and relevant correspondences with ballad-type works by other composers:
'...McEwen's conception of the Border Ballad probably owes as much to Chopin's "Ballades" as they do[sic] to Wallace's symphonic poems or Drysdale's ballade for orchestra "The Spirit of the Glen"(1889) and "A Border Romance"(1904). Another precedent is seen in Brahms' "Four Ballades" for piano op.10 (1854), the first being inspired by the Scottish ballad "Edward", in the German translation by Herder.'

Here Benoliel touches on the heart of the matter; McEwen, steeped in Scottish folk music from his earliest childhood, was also well read in Scottish literature. The collection of Border Ballads by Sir Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* would have been an essential part of any youngster's education in a Scottish school and remains so even today. The eclectic McEwen would undoubtedly have made connections with his own literary heritage as well as with works similarly inspired by Chopin, Brahms, Schubert et al. The importance of Scott in this cannot be underestimated since two of the titles for the Border Ballads come directly from Scott's *Minstrelsy*: i.e. *Coronach* and *The Demon Lover*, and the story-line of the latter comes directly from this source.

The coronach was a Gaelic dirge intoned at funeral rites of chiefs and nobles, an ancient Celtic tradition. It was the clan bard whose task and honour it was to compose the coronach and perform it, probably with accompaniment of the Gaelic harp or clarsach. A few of these poems have survived to modern times and Scott collected a fine one in his 'Minstrelsy' with the title 'Glenfinlas or Lord Ronald's Coronach'. The actual content of the poem is not relevant in the case of McEwen's *Coronach*, although the rhythm of the opening verse does fit neatly with that of the first phrase of the orchestral work:
Perhaps the ballad was in McEwen's mind when he reworked the material and this gave rise to the title he chose for the transformed piece. But surely the inspiration for the music is the idea of a coronach, a great and noble funeral march, an heroic tone-poem obituary. And McEwen comes up with a ceremonial piece of great and serious pomp and nobility ranking with the finest of Parry, Elgar and even Berlioz.

There is a box of recently catalogued material at GUL which contains a piano piece by McEwen with the title Coronach. It is undated but bears the inscription in blue crayon:

'also slow movement of st quartet in C minor'

The String Quartet in C minor, one of three quartets in that key that he wrote, has the completion date of August 1906 which means that the piano piece predates this somewhat. It is, therefore, entirely possible that the piano Coronach was written about the same time as the orchestral work. The piano piece is an extended 'Andante Espressivo' with the first section in 4/4 metre in the key of E minor and features the characteristic Scotch snap rhythm. There is a contrasting middle section, 'Poco piu mosso', starting in E minor moving through E flat minor to A major/F sharp minor. There follows a recapitulation of the material of the first section with a couple of bars heroically reiterating the main melodic idea as a coda. Although the material is quite different the sombre mood is very similar to the orchestral Coronach.

Elsewhere McEwen uses titles taken from Scottish traditional musical and poetic forms. Titles such as Pibroch evoke a scene of the lone kilted Highland piper set in a heather-covered rugged landscape so popular in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. It should be clear that McEwen was making a conscious effort to make his music both sound and look Scottish. By going back to his Border roots and immersing himself in its rich tradition of poetry he was attempting to create a
musical form and personal voice that spoke with a Scottish accent, a Scottish vernacular musical style even. McEwen wrote in a letter published in The Glasgow Herald\textsuperscript{13} about the Scottish composers of the early 20th century, a group of which he was very much a member:

'\textit{these composers had something individual to say and were able to say it in a way which is peculiar to their race, associations, and outlook}'

When \textit{Coronach} was performed in concert in 1904 it was the individuality of McEwen's style that impressed audience and critics alike. The Dunedin article describes the audience response to the premier:

'\textit{The music is strong and earnest...The work was received most cordially, the composer being called to the platform at its conclusion}'\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{Coronach} is the first of the mature orchestral works in which McEwen succeeded in writing in a truly Scottish vernacular style.

3.4 \textit{The Demon Lover} (Border Ballad n.2), \textit{Graih my Chree}, further thoughts on the Border Ballad Tradition, and new French influences.

The second of the Border Ballads, \textit{The Demon Lover}, dates from
Like Coronach, it grew out of an earlier composition, in this case Graih my Chree (1900) for reciter, string quartet, piano, and timpani. While Graih my Chree was performed on at least one occasion (24th June, 1901 at the RAM)\textsuperscript{15} with the recitation given by Mrs Matthey, McEwen never heard his symphonic poem The Demon Lover. The premier was not until 1993 when it was recorded by the London Philharmonic Orchestra\textsuperscript{16}.

There are four sources for Demon Lover, two autograph scores and a full set of autograph orchestral parts along with a sketch trying out some of the thematic material, all of which are to be found in the McEwen Collection at GUL. The score, parts and a piano reduction of Graih my Chree are also in the collection.

The autograph score of the final version of the work (A)\textsuperscript{17} is hard-bound, with black linen covers measuring 18 x 13½ inches, and consists of 76 pages of music. On the title page of A McEwen has written:

\begin{quote}
\textit{The Demon Lover}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{(A Border Ballad no.III)}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{for orchestra}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{by J.B. McEwen}
\end{quote}

This numbering as Border Ballad no.III is confusing because this is also the number which he gives to the Border Ballad Grey Galloway. Chronologically Demon Lover is second in the series and this is the numbering adopted by this edition (see chapter 3.5 page 71 for further discussion of the numbering of the Border Ballads). The work is written on 34-stave manuscript paper, necessary for the huge orchestral resources called for and for the many instances of strings dividing into multiple parts. A notable feature is the lack of blue crayon markings so much employed in his other manuscripts. The blue crayon is found here but reserved for cue numbers. Corrections and crossings out are marked in black ink. This suggests that the composer never went back to the score to highlight salient points or to make changes. This is further evidence that the piece was never performed in his lifetime.

The second source is the draft orchestral score (B)\textsuperscript{18} consisting of 100 un-numbered pages measuring 10½ x 13½ inches, sewn together into a brown paper cover. On the cover McEwen has written in blue crayon:

\begin{quote}
\textit{The Demon Lover}
\end{quote}
On the first page of the score he has written in pencil:

1st Score  The Demon Lover  by John B McEwen
(A Border Ballad no.III)

and on the foot of this same page in ink:

Begun on RMS "India" July 14, 1907.

The orchestra employed in this score is smaller than the final version, using four horns instead of six and no harp. The music in this draft version is essentially the same as in the final version, excepting the first five minutes. These first minutes of the piece in the draft version are completely different, focusing as they do on the theme:

He develops this in purely instrumental terms, carefully working out motifs taken from the theme. This lacks the dramatic element which is such a feature of the rest of the piece; although cleverly worked, it is a symphonic rather than narrative style and not in keeping with the highly charged subject matter or the thematic material. McEwen wisely reworked this whole section using much more of the Graih my Chree material which gives the new opening section a strong feeling of onward momentum and drama.

McEwen's treatment of the orchestra is fundamentally different in the draft score. With fewer horns, no harp, and virtually no divisi string writing this early score looks and sounds completely different from the final version. The imaginative and colourful vision of the finished piece is missing; the composer reworked the orchestration of the entire piece and made some inspirational choices. Compare the equivalent passage from B to that of bars 86ff of A. Note how, with
the addition of harp, timpani, and extra woodwinds and use of divisi strings, he transforms the following rather ordinary phrase into a moment of musical magic:

McEwen's use of the orchestra has developed phenomenally since the *Symphony in A minor* (1898) and the *Viola Concerto* (1901).

The third source is the set of orchestral parts (O)\(^{19}\). This is a full set
of hand-written parts in McEwen's writing and includes multiple string copies and corresponds with source A. There are some copying errors in the parts and the total lack of corrections or pencil markings, which orchestral players like to put into their music, is further evidence of no performances. The parts have been a very useful resource in checking doubtful readings in A and B and have sometimes given further detail of articulation, phrasing, and dynamics not found in the scores. These have been listed in full in the critical commentary.

The fourth source is the manuscript sketch (S) 20. This consists of seven pages of 24-stave manuscript paper with what is clearly McEwen's first ideas for the piece. There are many themes from the work, each with multiple alterations. The thematic ideas are disconnected, no attempt has been made to connect them in any way. The last four pages contain pencilled fragments of harmonic and thematic working. Although not of any immediate help in preparing this edition, this document is a rare insight into the composer's compositional method as there are very few early draft versions of McEwen's work extant. He seems to have destroyed most of his sketches. Evidently McEwen would put together a group of thematic ideas onto a page of manuscript paper and work at them until he was satisfied that his basic material was to his liking before considering the form and flow of his composition.

_Demon Lover_ grew out of _Graih my Chree_, and in order to fully understand the Border Ballad n.2 it is necessary to look at this earlier piece in some detail. There are three sources for _Graih my Chree_, the autograph score (Gs) and parts (Gp) and the piano reduction (Gr) 21. The work dates from 1900 and consists of a series of introductions and interludes with recitation of the poem of the same title by Sir Thomas Henry Hall Caine. Melodrama, or speech accompanied by music, is an unusual genre but one which has occasionally interested composers over the years from Benda 22 to the present day, with perhaps the most successful being William Walton's _Façade_ (1922).

We do not know the reasons for McEwen being interested in Hall Caine's poem but we can make some considered guesses as to why he should have written such a piece. McEwen counted Tobias and Jessie Matthay in his circle of friends and Mrs Matthay was renowned for her abilities in the recitation of poetry 23.
Indeed, it was for her that he ventured into the risqué territory of ‘sprechgesang’, or, as he called it, ‘inflected voice’ on at least four occasions. It is likely that she suggested the Caine poem to McEwen. *Graih my Chree* is a fascinating score with many fine musical ideas but its great weakness is the poem. The story tells of a poignant and powerfully dramatic situation, not unlike Wagner’s *Flying Dutchman*, which Hall Caine has turned into a Victorian melodrama wallowing in sentimentality and verging at times on the farcical. As it stands the piece is unperformable today, but perhaps an attempt could be made to marry the musical score with the poem entitled *The Demon Lover* as found in Walter Scott’s *Minstrels* as it could transform the work. Scott’s version of the story is much more concise, the language direct and powerful and for this reason both versions are given at the end of this edition of the score. Furthermore, Walter Scott’s version is significant because McEwen chose to give the Border Ballad title of *The Demon Lover* to his symphonic poem rather than the title of Hall Caine’s poem. He could see the difficulties with *Graih my Chree* and wanted to root his tone-poem firmly in Scottish soil (Caine’s poem, although Celtic in origin, is based on a Manx version of the story).

The story-line of *Demon Lover* plays an important part in the musical themes and structure of McEwen’s Border Ballad. The composer is, however, at pains to warn against looking for every detail to be described in the music; he explains his method in a typewritten message pasted into the verso of the title page of *Demon Lover*:

> The thematic substance of this piece is mostly taken from music composed in the year 1900 for Mrs Matthay as an accompaniment to the recitation of a poem by Hall Caine entitled ‘Graih my Chree’. The subject of the poem is found in the folk-lore of several countries and consists of the luring of a woman from home, husband and children, as a Demon who takes the form of her dead sailor lover. The step by step illustration of the story which was necessary in the accompaniment of the recitation has not been maintained in the orchestral Ballad. The composer’s aim was the construction of a piece which would not only be expressive of the emotional
content of the story, but would be a coherent and adequate instrumental work.

Note McEwen's wording carefully for it reflects Scott's own choice of words in the introduction to the Border Ballad in his *Minstrelsy*..."It contains a legend, which, in various shapes, is current in Scotland." In the edition which was available at the time that McEwen was writing his *Demon Lover*, that of T. F. Henderson published in Edinburgh in 1902, the editor goes on to show how the legend was current in English folk-lore, too. This is further evidence that McEwen was using Scott's collection as a source of inspiration for his musical work.

The task, now, is to look at the Border Ballad and see what of the earlier *Graih my Chree* material he has used, what its original context was vis-à-vis the poem, and how McEwen developed these ideas orchestrally.

All the thematic material in *Demon Lover* derives from *Graih my Chree* and for this reason it will be helpful to identify the themes and point out the text with which these themes are associated. This will shed light on the development of *Demon Lover* and give textual anchors to help make sense of the work. Reference can be made to Hall Caine's text in the appendix to the score. Bar numbers attached to the musical examples from *Graih my Chree* refer to the bar numbering of that work:
‘Graih my Chree’ - Thematic Scheme

1. bar 1
   \( p \) sostenuto

2. bar 7
   \( f \) largamente
   \( \text{pp} \)

3. bar 47
   molto adagio
   \( \text{ppp dolce} \)

4. bar 53
   allegro agitato

5. bar 81
   "in spite of Hell" "& the Devil" "& Death" "I will come to thee" "Graih my Chree"
   \( \text{ff} \) \( \text{fff} \)

6. bar 95
   adagio
   \( \text{fff} \)

7. bar 113
   allegretto
   \( p \)

8. bar 137

9. bar 148
Graih my Chree - Textual Co-relation

bar 1  theme 1  I must leave thee, love of my soul, he said...sure as we part.
bar 7  theme 2  interlude
bar 47 theme 3  He smiled to the North, he smiled to the South...win a wife a home!
bar 55 theme 4  They had not sailed but half of their course...the skipper his voice was heard.
bar 70 theme 1  I vowed by our troth that dead or alive...my choking breath.
bar 81 theme 5  In spite of Hell and the Devil and Death... words linked directly with the music (see music example n.5)
bar 84-94 theme 1  transition passage
bar 95 theme 6  He will come no more to thine arms my child...He will keep his vow, she said.
bar 106-107 theme 1  link passage
bar 108 theme 6  She climbed the brows of the cliff at home...but never a word to me.
bar 113 theme 7  Then of lovers another came wooing the maid...but die in my childless shame,
bar 137 theme 8  They bore her a bride to the kirkyard gate...and she murmured ah woe is me!
bar 148  theme 9  They had not been wedded a year...but barely two
bar 156  theme 10  When the good wife close to the hearth-stone
crept...while the good man slept
bar 160  theme 11  And the wind in the chimney blew...a pane of the
window fell in with a crash.
bar 172  theme 12  O was it a stone from the West sea beach...and there
in the red, red light she found
bar 188  theme 13 + 1  O why didn't thou stay so long Juan...and my bark
lies out in the bay.
bar 204  theme 7 + 8  But I have a husband that loves me dear...I have come
for thee Janey, my heart.
bar 211  theme 9  But I have a child of my body...vessel must ride,
Or what will befall, God will !
bar 219  theme 14  Now ever alack thou must kiss and go back...and soul
you belong to me Graih my Chree.
bar 230  theme 15  She followed him forth like one in a sleep...and
wonderful sight.
bar 244  theme 16  Now weigh and away, my merry men...in their glee.
bar 249  theme 6  With the rich man's pride and his sweet daughter...to
the banks of Italy.
bar 260  theme 16 + 6  But she made a piteous moan.
bar 280  theme 17  Oh where is my house and my sweet baby...my Jammie
I'm woe for thee.
bar 287  theme 16  The skipper he shouted for music and song...and
the riot.
bar 297  theme 6  Fit for a funeral.
bar 305  theme 18  But still the skipper he kissed her and cried.
bar 323  theme 1/19  I'm a ghostly man with a ghostly crew and this is a
ghostly ship  (see The Demon Lover bar 267-268)
bar 342  theme 20  By the plight of our troth, By the power of our Bond...
(see The Demon Lover bar 313 onwards)
It is now possible to attach text to the themes of The Demon Lover and the most striking feature to emerge is that McEwen follows the story-line of Graih my Chree remarkably closely in The Demon Lover. His assertion that it was not necessary to illustrate the poem step by step is therefore misleading for he does indeed follow the gist of the poem and the thematic material does come more or less in the same order. What he does is to allow these themes to develop in purely musical terms, unfettered by the text; The Demon Lover is easily twice as long as Graih my Chree. The key scheme of the earlier work is preserved in the latter based, as it is, on the dark key of E flat minor.

Coronach brought together McEwen's deep understanding of the Scottish musical idiom and his love of the poetry of the Border Ballads. He used the idea of a coronach poem to make sense of his musical creation. With The Demon Lover the actual poetry, even a specific poem, is the springboard for his imagination. The poem holds the key to understanding the musical work, much as Dvořák and Smetana had used their folk tales and poetry as a direct inspiration for tone-poems. McEwen's music and the Border Ballads are here inseparable; the music only makes sense, only makes its full impact, if we know the poem which inspired it. McEwen's The Demon Lover is firmly rooted in the Border Ballad tradition and depends on this literature for its very existence.

The composition of The Demon Lover marked a turning point in McEwen's orchestral output. From this point onwards McEwen turned away from pure music in favour of descriptive music, tone-poems. Even his very successful symphony, the Solway Symphony of 1911 is more a triptych of tone-poems than a symphony in the Austro-Germanic or Sibelius mould. This had an enormous effect on how he used the orchestra in order to allow the music to tell a story or paint a scene. The orchestra was now used to conjure up mood or to colour a musical picture.

The first clear signs of McEwen's abilities in this style of orchestration can be found in the Hymn on the morning of Christ's nativity written between 1901 and 1905. Bernard Benoliel, in his notes for the premier recording of the work, finds French and Russian influences in the music:
'McEwen's setting is a post Wagner-Liszt symphonic conception, related especially to its French and Russian trajectories: the barbaric, quasi-oriental rhythms, colourful scoring and langeur of Borodin, eg. Prince Igor, and Rimsky Korsakov, Symphony no.2 Antar, though without their formal longeurs, and the tormented chromaticism and heavy orchestral textures of the Franck school, eg. D'Indy, L'étranger and Symphony no.2 in B flat, and the exquisite melodic contours and hyper-emotionalism of Chausson, Poème de l'amour et de la mer.26

Throughout the *Hymn*... McEwen uses a very large orchestra in terms of colour and texture in order to underline Milton's poem in a visual way, or to create an appropriate mood as backcloth to the text. Much use is made of multiple *divisi* strings, written-out embellishments involving notes of very short value, and complex rhythmic juxtapositions which create a quasi-chaotic effect similar to light reflecting off moving water. These pictorial features are very evident also in *The Demon Lover*.

It is known that McEwen urged his composition pupils to study the *String Quartet* of Claude Debussy and that he considered this work to be the finest example of quartet writing "in the modern idiom"27. How far back his knowledge and admiration for Debussy's work goes cannot easily be gauged, but from the evidence of the *Hymn*... it seems reasonable to assume that he was aware of Debussy's work during the years 1901-05. In the light of this and on the evidence to be found in *The Demon Lover* we can describe McEwen's orchestral music from 1905 onwards as in some way 'impressionist'.

This ties in with similar movements in Scottish painting at this time, the 'Scottish Colourists' and 'The Glasgow Boys'. The 'Scottish Colourists' were a group of four painters; Samuel Peploe (1871-1935), John Ferguson (1874-1961), George Hunter (1879-1931), and Francis C.B. Cadell (1883-1937). 'The Glasgow Boys' were a larger group including James W. Hamilton (1861-1932), Sir George Pirie (1863-1946), Sir James Guthrie (1859-1930), Edward A. Walton (1860-1922), Joseph Crawhall (1861-1913), and Edward A. Hornell (1864-1933). Both these
artistic groups grew out of the pioneering work of the older painter, William McTaggart (1835-1910), whose later work is characterised by a very vigorous and impressionistic approach to his subjects where figures are so freely sketched that they become part of their surroundings, figure and context are blended into one. McTaggart used texture to create movement and mood, eschewing vivid colours, whilst the younger men were fascinated with strong juxtapositions of colour. The correlation between McEwen and painting movements in Scotland at this time is discussed further by both Farmer and Purser. Indeed Purser goes so far as to suggest:

_The relationship between sound and vision is intimate in McEwen and his work should be seen as integral to the renaissance of Scottish painting at this same time._

McEwen's music is very much of its time, very much in tune with the leading lights of Scottish visual art. At first sight of the opening bars of _The Demon Lover_ we could be looking at a tone-poem by Chausson. By bar 22 (to bar 60) the music is suffused by a distinctly Debussian, even Ravelian, flavour mixed with the melodic inflections of another Francophile, Frederick Delius. The Allegro at bar 179 has the assurance and light touch of Saint-Saëns, e.g. _Le Rouet d'Omphale_. These are possible influences, possible antecedents from which McEwen may have learned his art but the work itself is thoroughly original and distinctive.

McEwen recognised that, like so many other musicians and artists, his creative centre of gravity had moved from Germany and central Europe to a more colourful France. He was becoming a Francophile. Indeed, when he set up a publishing company to promote British composers in 1908 it was named 'The Anglo-French Music Company'. France was to play an important role in McEwen's life over the next thirty years.
McEwen's trilogy of Border Ballads is completed by *Grey Galloway*. Unlike the other two works in the set it did not grow out of earlier work, it has no musical antecedents. A second difference between this and the other ballads is that there appears to be no specific or inferred literary inspiration from the border ballad poetic tradition. In this case McEwen's muse was the location, cleverly blended with the rich cultural heritage of folk music. Furthermore, *Grey Galloway* has been the most performed of McEwen's works. In 1922 Sir Henry Wood included it in his Promenade Concerts in London and in two further concerts in the 1924 and 1926 series. With no antecedents to discuss, no literary connections to be made and a score which is unproblematic there is limited scope for the editor here. However, there are errors in the first printed edition and details culled from the various manuscript sources add greatly to an understanding of McEwen's achievement with *Grey Galloway*.

There are four sources for *Grey Galloway*; three autograph manuscripts and the composer's personal copy of the printed edition published by Novello, all of which can be found in the McEwen Collection at GUL.

The earliest *Grey Galloway* document is a piano sketch (P1). This consists of six pages of manuscript outlining, mostly in a single line, the entire work. There are many indications of instrumentation given in abbreviated form most of which McEwen stuck to in the final orchestral score. However, the point of greatest interest in this document is that the work is here represented, albeit in sketch form, in its original form without the cuts or changes adopted in the later orchestral score. For this reason it has been included as an appendix to this edition. The cue numbers in this transcription of P1 are placed so as to match up with the final orchestrated score to make comparisons between the two sources easier. In the actual autograph P1 the cue numbers appear in different places according to McEwen's system of placing a cue after every ten bars.

The second *Grey Galloway* document (P2) is a more fully worked
out draft of the work on three staves. It consists of 6 pages of manuscript representing almost two-thirds of the work breaking off at bar 191 (as numbered in the critical edition). Although harmonies and textures are very fully given there are hardly any indications of orchestration here in stark contrast to P1. In consequence source P2 adds little to one's knowledge of Grey Galloway and is not given as an appendix. It is, nevertheless, interesting from the point of view of the gestation of the work and a rare insight into McEwen's compositional process; working up a skeletal piano score into a fully formed musical composition on three staves in preparation for orchestration. This is a very common method for composers to work on an orchestral composition, one that was consistently used by Elgar for example32.

The third source for Grey Galloway (A) is the completed autograph orchestral score33. This is cloth-bound in black measuring 12½ x 18 inches with Auto. Score - Grey Galloway - McEwen on the spine. The first page reads:

1908
"Grey Galloway" No.2 ? (No.3)
A Border Ballad

The last page of the score is dated September 12, 1908. Evidently the composer was in some doubt as to the precise order of production of the Border Ballads (viz the confusion about whether to number this the second or the third). This may be due to the fact that both The Demon Lover and Grey Galloway were completed in the same year and at almost the same time. The conception of The Demon Lover dates back to July 1907; Grey Galloway was possibly started in the September of that same year according to Tovey34:

From the composer I learn that there is no legend to serve as 'programme' to this piece of pure music. It is called a ballad, as certain compositions by Chopin are called Ballades. Galloway is merely a geographical expression, and not a Laird or Younger of that ilk; and 'grey' refers to the weather that prevailed there in the September when the composer conceived this work - if not also at other times.
From Tovey’s evidence the numbering of *Grey Galloway* as third of the series seems appropriate. Source A is extensively marked in pencil in a hand different from that of the composer. These pencil markings relate to the setting up of printing plates for the work giving precise numbers of staves required for each page and showing exactly where pages should end and their numbering, along with a whole host of detailed instructions to the engraver. It must be assumed, therefore, that this autograph score was used by Novello to produce the first printed edition in 1910. There are interesting cuts and changes marked in blue crayon by McEwen which are fully described in the commentary. What is fascinating is that even at the late stage of a neat fully orchestrated score the composer is prepared to make changes, however small, tightening up the structure by pruning or clarifying a transition, or by making a little more space to make a thematic or key-change manoeuvre.

The fourth source for *Grey Galloway* (B)$^{35}$ is McEwen’s own personal copy of the first printed edition. Although produced with paper covers this particular copy has subsequently been hard-bound in black cloth measuring 11½ x 15¾ inches with *Score - Grey Galloway - McEwen* on the spine. The printed edition dates from 1910 and was published by Novello and Company in London in their Avison Edition, which was dedicated to producing printed scores of works by British composers working during the first decade of the 20th century. When the score was hard-bound an extra sheet was included before the printed title page. This extra sheet has two monochrome photographs 11 x 7½ inches pasted onto it. The picture at the top of the page is titled:

*The lighthouse and village of Sutterness, Galloway*

The picture below has the title:

*The Galloway village of Kippford on the Estuary of the Urr*

These pictures could have been cut out of an early tour guide book or the like and although they may not have any specific relevance to the musical work they clearly have some sort of associative importance for McEwen to have taken the trouble to cut them out and paste them into his copy of the score.

The cover of the printed score reads:
This first edition of *Grey Galloway* dating from 1910 represents McEwen's last thoughts on the work and has to be the principal source of a critical edition. There are only a handful of minor errors and omissions in B which have been corrected in this edition. Nevertheless, McEwen's own copy of B has some interesting alterations to the orchestration as well as a suggested cut. The cut is indicated to start five bars after figure 12 (at bar 125) and end at the third bar of figure 13 (at bar 133). The alterations to the scoring consist of tinkerings with the scoring, possibly as a result of balance difficulties at a particular performance. The changes are pencilled into the printed score and are incorporated into the autograph score (A), also in pencil. However the changes given in source A and B are not exactly the same, as will be seen in the critical commentary. The first commercial recording 36 and also a BBC broadcast performance (BBCSSO conducted by Sir Charles Groves) 37 did not incorporate these alterations as they were found to be unnecessary for a satisfactory balance. For this reason they appear in the critical commentary and not in the main text of this edition. At the end of B the composer has written in pencil that the work takes twelve minutes to perform. Recorded performances by the BBCSSO of 14.35 minutes and the London Philharmonic Orchestra of 15.05 minutes suggest that McEwen's timing (12 minutes) is too short.

The shadow of Claude Debussy is cast over much of the orchestral style but the impression is not of sunny Spain or mid-day by Mount Etna but the
dour greyness of the Scottish Borders. It is reminiscent of the later paintings of Sir William McTaggart in this respect. John Purser, in his book, *Scotland’s Music*, was so impressed with the work that he devoted two pages illustrating McEwen’s rich scoring for the middle section. Tovey, rightly, points out in his essay that certain features of the music...

> are intimately Scottish. For example, the lovers of folk-music who think that ‘Annie Laurie’ is a folk-song, have probably forgotten or never known that the pentatonic scale has a mode for each of its notes. The opening theme of ‘Grey Galloway’ is not a folk-song, but it is a typical example of pentatonic Dorian in the scale DFGACD

It is by this means that McEwen is able to write original themes that sound Scottish. By using the traditional pentatonic scales so prevalent in Scottish folk music and incorporating rhythmic inflections found in his native instrumental music McEwen is free to spin melodic lines of great originality and create musical forms which he can shape in a very personal way. His indebtedness to his Scottish cultural heritage is never in doubt but he has freed himself sufficiently to allow himself to be original.

This is a very different work from anything McEwen had written previously for orchestra. There is no leaning heavily on literary crutches to support his musical ideas here. The place, the people, and their folk music were inspiration enough. This is further underlined when we consider the two pictures pasted into source B by the composer, both of which are very outdoor scenes. *Grey Galloway* is a very outdoor kind of piece utterly devoid of the claustrophobic atmosphere of *The Demon Lover*. Orchestral effects are airy, melodic shaping is inspired by folk music. Gone is any hint of heaviness to produce dark emotive introversion. Tovey ends his essay on *Grey Galloway* by penning one of his most colourful musical descriptions which suggests that he finds much to praise in the work:
...the first episode, in the remote key of B major, gives an impression of fairy-like subtleties of sunlight and gossamer-strewn heather seen through rain and mist.

3.6 **Solway a Symphony,**

a refinement of the synthesis of place and literature.

McEwen's last work with the title 'symphony', albeit a sub-title, was written in the year 1911. The title *Solway a Symphony* suggests that the work has strong associations with that great river estuary marking the southwest border between Scotland and England and also that the form of the piece has aspirations to being a symphony. One is struck by the similarity in title with another work inspired by water, Debussy's *La Mer, three symphonic sketches* written some ten years earlier. Moments in both *The Demon Lover* and *Grey Galloway* show the possible but undocumented influence of the French master's colourful orchestral style and intentional harmonic vagueness through the use of the whole-tone scale. These features are very much in evidence in *Solway* and it seems inconceivable that McEwen would not have been familiar with *La Mer*, given his acknowledged love of Debussy's *String Quartet* 39. There were several London performances of *La Mer* during the first decade of the 20th century including a Promenade Concert performance conducted by the composer himself. There is an allusion to Wagner's *Siegfried's Rhine Journey* in the Finale of *Solway* which might invite comparisons between the Solway and the Rhine, at least in their long and colourful folk heritage of songs and stories.

There are five sources which can be referred to in the preparation of a new edition of *Solway*. These consist of, firstly, a bundle of musical sketches; secondly, an autograph piano score; thirdly, a very large-format autograph orchestral
score; fourthly, a slightly smaller autograph orchestral score; and lastly, the first printed edition of 1922. The first four sources are to be found in the McEwen Collection at GUL. The first printed edition can be had from the publishers, Stainer and Bell (London).

The bundle consists of sketches for *Solway (A)* on 20 sheets of music paper measuring 10½ x 13⅞ inches and 5 sheets measuring 10½ x 14⅞ inches. These sheets are tied together with one loop of brown parcel string and kept in a large brown envelope. All the thematic material of each of the three movements can be found in some semblance of the order in which they will appear in the completed work but here in a disjointed form with much crossing out and working on harmonic sequences and melodic development. At the end of the fifth sheet, where there is a skeletal version of the end of the first movement, McEwen has written the date: *Jan 3 1911*. It is very unusual for McEwen to date his preliminary work for a piece, he is more accustomed to dating a completed piece even if it is not the final version. For some reason he felt inclined to date this sketch and with a date so early in the new year we can surmise that he had worked on these sheets during the Christmas vacation from the RAM in 1910. We can, therefore, reasonably assume that the gestation of *Solway* started at least as early as mid-December 1910.

The opening idea for the second movement is given in semiquavers instead of quavers. It is always interesting how composers arrive at the notation of their music and certainly in this instance McEwen's decision to double the note values from semiquavers to quavers gives the visual impression of the static expanse he was attempting to create in the music; ie. the mood of the music and the look of the score are at one. One of the sheets with second movement material has a pencil calculation written on it:

```
134
\hline
4
88 536
528 6. 1/11 (minutes)
\hline
8
```
This appears to be a calculation of performing time using a metronome marking (crotchet = 88) and counting the number of beats to arrive at the likely duration of a passage of music. The calculation goes as follows: 134 bars in 4/4 time = 536 beats, divide this by the metronome marking of 88 beats per minute = 6 minutes remainder 8 which is 1/11th of a minute (5½ seconds). Now McEwen was very consistent about giving timings for his music but these timings, as we have already seen, tend to be underestimated. If he calculated his durations using the metronome method above, this would have such an effect as there is no allowance given for ritardandos and other expressive changes of tempo of which there are many indicated in his music.

The last five sheets of A are sketches for string quartet. The first page is a quartet version of the opening 27 bars of the first movement of Solway. The other four pages are related to the Finale of Solway. These quartet fragments pose interesting questions, important enough to have the sketches included as appendices to the critical edition of Solway. The first point that should be made is that these fragments have never been discussed before, indeed their very existence appears to have gone un-recorded. Had only the first movement fragment been left one might have been justified in assuming that McEwen had made a start to converting his Solway Symphony into a string quartet much as he had done with the early Symphony in A minor. Given the skill with which he wrote for string quartet there are, nevertheless, some clumsy moments of double stopping in the viola which suggest an arrangement of an orchestral score rather than an original composition for string quartet:

The second fragment, which is quite considerable in length, puts the Solway quartet fragments in a completely different light. It is significant that the first page of the Finale fragment consists of what appears to be the end of a quartet movement using
material not found anywhere in the symphony. This is followed by a brief melodic idea in the first violin which is crossed out, and again, this tune is not found in the symphony. After this the Vivace Molto fragment follows which gives exactly the entire main section of the Finale of Solway but in the form of a string quartet. Here the writing is very characteristic of McEwen's mature quartet style where he handles the material and the medium with great virtuosity. Notwithstanding the undoubted hand of a master at string quartet writing, McEwen goes outwith the range of the violin by asking the second violin to play some G flats (surely a momentary aberration):

Because the Finale music is preceded by music foreign to the symphony it is possible that the quartet was written before the symphony. In other words, the Finale of Solway could have originally been part of an earlier string quartet. Indeed the string parts of the symphony are virtually identical to the quartet. Several writers have noted that the Finale of Solway is not on the same level of inspiration as the other movements.

_The main theme of this superbly constructed sonata rondo is closely related ... to the symphony's opening melody but the Lisztian transformations are not extreme enough to keep the material consistently fresh. The brilliant references to Siegfried's Rhine Journey are too definite not to be intentional but the movement is not the equal of its two outstanding predecessors._

It is this editor's contention that the first two movements of Solway were originally conceived as movements for a symphony whilst the major part of the Finale was stolen from an abandoned string quartet; and that this explains the apparent disparity of originality and inspiration between the first two movements and the Finale. When a critical survey is made of McEwen's string quartets (and there is a pressing need
for such an undertaking) these *Solway* fragments must be included, and it may be that the rest of the quartet from which the Finale was taken will be discovered amongst the archive documents in the McEwen Collection at GUL.

The autograph piano score (B) 42 consists of twenty pages of music paper measuring 10½ x 13¼ inches sewn together and bound in a brown paper cover and is undated. The first movement has the title *Solway* and each of the three movements has the poetic preface found in the printed first edition. However, each movement lacks the individual titles given in later sources. This score represents the symphony in its entirety and corresponds with the work as we know it with very minor differences where McEwen has reworked passages of transition. In one instance (the viola part of the Finale at bar 62, see below) the piano score has given added weight to an editorial decision.

The first of the two autograph scores (C) 43 is a very large format book of 34 stave music paper hard-bound in cream coloured cotton 13 x 17¾ inches. It is dated September 1911 under the last bar of the Finale. The first sheet is plain paper with the following written in ink:

```
Solway
  a
Symphony
1st Mov Allegro moderato   9 mins
2nd Mov Tranquillo        5 mins
3rd Mov                   9 mins
                           23 minutes
```

The first page of music paper reads:

```
Solway
  a Symphony
  I
Low Tide
  J.B. McEwen

"The glassy ocean hushed forgets to roar
But trembling murmur on the sandy shore
```
And lo! his surface lovely to behold
Glows in the west, a sea of living gold

The title of the second movement is given as follows:

Nocturne

[Moonlight on the Solway, an impression]

The title for the Finale is as in the printed edition of 1922:

The Sou' West Wind

The titles of the first two movements are different from the 1922 edition as is the poem which prefaces the first movement and these give an extra dimension to what the composer was trying to achieve in his music. The poet who penned the lines at the head of each movement is unacknowledged. However McEwen had a brother Thomas who wrote poetry as a hobby and he had set at least one of his poems for female voices in 1898. This is a cantata called A Day In Spring and the poetic style is similar enough for it to be possible that Thomas McEwen might have penned the prefaced lines to each of the movements of Solway. It is also possible, of course, that the composer wrote the verses himself.

Source C is a fascinating document as it represents the work in transition from piano score (B) to its finished form (D). We can be certain that it post-dates the piano score as this was McEwen's habitual method of work; and we can be certain it pre-dates D because of a series of small and rather faint pencil markings found below the Double bass stave in C. These begin at bar 182 in the first movement and are the page numbers of the full score D. From this it can be deduced that source C was used to prepare source D which is a neat copy of C with the corrections made in C incorporated into D. Throughout C we find corrections mostly in the form of crossing out of doublings in order to lighten the scoring. The effect of this is to sharpen the instrumental colour into more primary colours much as the 'Scottish Colourists' were doing in their painting at the same time. Again, Debussy comes to mind with his careful use of the orchestral palette to achieve maximum colour with minimum means. Without this pruning the score looks heavy
and lack-lustre. There are a couple of instances of judicious cutting in order to tighten up a phrase, losing a bar or two to make a bolder effect. But, the vast majority of changes are improvements to the orchestration and it is McEwen's handling of the orchestra that is so impressive in the finished work. These improvements were achieved by the composer going through source C with his now familiar blue crayon pencil crossing out all evidence of "heaviness" in the scoring. It was probably the best work he did on Solway for it guaranteed its eventual success in the concert hall.

The second of the two autograph orchestral scores (D) 45 is hard-bound in black cotton measuring 10½ x 14¼ inches with Auto Score - Solway Symphony - McEwen in gold lettering along the spine. The score is dated September 1911 on the last page (p.170). As in C, McEwen gives timings for each movement (9 mins, 5 mins, and 9 mins) and he helpfully adds this up for us:

*This work takes 23 minutes to perform.*

As mentioned above, this score appears to be a neat copy of source C and in turn this neat copy was used by the publishers, Stainer and Bell, to prepare the first printed edition in 1922. Evidence for this is everywhere to be seen in the form of pencil markings in another hand giving places where pages should begin and tidying up minor irregularities in McEwen's notation. Furthermore, the plate number (2397) of the Stainer & Bell score is pencilled in at the foot of page 1 of D. It should also be noted that errors in this source are carried forward into the printed edition of 1922. There is also a set of printed orchestral parts 46 with this score.

The final source for Solway is the first printed edition (E) by Stainer and Bell produced in 1922 with financial assistance from the Carnegie Fund. It is a very elegant production with a set of orchestral parts beautifully presented and, with a few very minor flaws, accurately produced. As this is the final version it can be assumed that it is a fair representation of the composer's intentions for the work. There are errors as can be seen from the extensive editorial section at the end of the present critical edition. Nevertheless, where all else fails the 1922 score must take precedence over the other sources and is the basis on which the new critical edition has been made. There is only one instance where this editor has overruled evidence in E in preference to the other sources. This occurs in the Finale at bar 62 (and the
analogous point in the recapitulation at bar 209). At this point there is overwhelming evidence from all the other sources that McEwen had thought of something else for the violas and the printed 1922 score is the only source to differ. Indeed, the piano score (B) has the viola part written in red ink in this bar; the only bar where red ink is used in the entire document.

The First World War meant that Solway had to wait until 1922 for its premier with the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra under Sir Dan Godfrey. The first Scottish performance was in Dumfries on February 9, 1923. The first performance in London was given under the baton of Sir Eugene Goosens on February 22, 1923 in which the programme included Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. The symphony has the rare distinction to be the first British symphony to be recorded unabridged. The recording was made by the fledgeling HMV company in 1923 with a pick-up orchestra given the name 'The Aeolian Orchestra' conducted by Cuthbert Whitemore. The record was remastered in LP format by Opal - Pearl Records in the mid 1960's.

The title Solway sets the musical inspiration for the work in that geographical area and the poetic preface to each movement underlines the pictorial, musical landscape-painting aspect of McEwen's creation. It is easy to find picture-postcard musical analogies in the music. The programme note to a performance given in the Paterson's Orchestral Concerts series at the Usher Hall in Edinburgh 1929 reads:

*The idea of dark water, baleful and deep, is suggested when a version of this theme (the opening viola solo) sinks into the bass. (The) Animato.... is very suggestive of sucking waves and shifting sands. The movement of the harmony is unstable. It rises by semitones and sinks back in a similar fashion. This continues as a boiling turmoil."

And so it continues in similar vein. There may well be some sort of musical picture painting here but musical language is not precise, not semantic, it reaches emotions, feelings and intellect through imprecise means.

There is another possible way into the music and that is, once again, through the literature of Sir Walter Scott and in particular the novel *Redgauntlet*
which has many references to the Solway estuary. There is one description of a moonlit night in *Redgauntlet* which is very close to McEwen's sound picture for the second movement, *Moonlight*:

> It was high water, and the ebb had not yet commenced. The moon shone broad and bright upon the placid face of the Solway Firth, and showed a slight ripple upon the stakes, the tops of which were just visible above the waves, and on the dark-coloured buoys which marked the upper edge of the enclosure of nets. At a much greater distance - for the estuary is here very wide - the line of the English coast was seen on the verge of the water, resembling one of these fog banks on which mariners are said to gaze, uncertain whether it be land or atmospheric delusion ... It was indeed a scene of exquisite stillness - so much so, that the restless waves of the Solway seemed, if not absolutely to sleep, at least to slumber. On the shore no night-bird was heard, the cock had not sung his first matins, and we ourselves walked more lightly than by day, as if to suit the sound of our own paces to the serene tranquillity around us.

Furthermore, one of the principal characters in the novel, Edward Redgauntlet, was also known as *The Laird of the Solway Lochs*. The Solway Lochs are pools of salt water left by the receding tide.

In *Solway, a Symphony* there exists a refined synthesis of geographical place and its literary heritage translated into a personal musical language which is at once original and direct. The achievement is remarkable. McEwen used the large symphony orchestra in only two works after *Solway*, namely *Hills 'o Heather* and *Where The Wild Thyme Blows*. These later works are, however, small scale; he never embarked on anything so big as a symphony ever again, in spite of encouragement to do so from his musical friends and colleagues. Havergal Brian wrote an article on McEwen's retirement with entreaties to write for orchestra once more (although one might have preferred his comment on English music to read British music):

> I sincerely hope that the reasons of health are only a contributory cause of the retirement of Sir John McEwen from the position of Principal of the Royal Academy of Music. Health is doubtless one true reason, for I have noticed that, on the few occasions when I have lunched with him during the past ten years our more robust
food has been passed over in favour of a light diet. By retiring now he may again surprise us by another masterpiece like 'Grey Galloway' or 'Solway' for such works have added rare lustre to the modern School of English Music.  

3.7 **Hills o' Heather** for violoncello and orchestra, idyll or elegy?

There are three sources that can be identified in the preparation of a critical edition of *Hills o' Heather*. These are: the autograph orchestral score, the published edition of the version for cello and piano dating from 1919, and a collection of miscellaneous manuscripts of sketches and drafts of the work. This work is unusual in that there is a quantity of preparatory drafts and sketches extant. This material has been extremely helpful in preparing a thorough and accurate critical edition as well as deepening our knowledge of McEwen's composition methods. The autograph orchestral score and the collection of drafts and sketches are to be found in the McEwen Collection at GUL; the published edition of 1919 can also be consulted at SMIC.

The orchestral score (A) is a large book 13 x 18 inches hard-bound in dark-red cloth containing 30 sheets of 34-stave manuscript paper. This is the only source for the orchestral version of the work. There is no evidence in any of the piano/cello sources that would suggest that this orchestral arrangement was anything but an after-thought. In places where the orchestral texture is quite different from the piano version no other source corroborates the orchestral one. It has to be assumed, therefore, that this is an orchestral arrangement of the piano/cello version made some time after the piano score was completed. Disappointingly, the orchestral score is undated. It is an interesting study to see how McEwen reworks his ideas to achieve a successful orchestral interpretation of his original creation. The orchestral version was never performed in McEwen's lifetime; no orchestral
parts have been found and no evidence of performances has been forthcoming. The work had to wait until 1994 when it was recorded by Chandos Records. A notable feature of A is that there are very few dynamic markings, something that has had to be rectified in the critical edition. For these and other points of phrasing, bowing and tempo marks the printed edition of 1919 has been the most reliable source for the new edition as can be seen in the critical commentary at the end of the score. At the foot of the last page of A the composer has written in pencil:

7\1/4 minutes without cadenza

By this he intends that the piece will last longer due to the nature of the freedom of tempo in the cadenza sections and therefore he was not able to calculate an accurate timing using the metronome method. (The Chandos recording has a duration of 10.33 minutes)

The printed edition of the version for cello and piano (B) was published by McEwen's own publishing enterprise, The Anglo-French Music Company Limited, in 1919. This company, founded in 1908, produced works by McEwen and his associates until about 1924. It is a very plain, rather utilitarian, volume with a grey cover; the only decorative element being a stylised union flag with a French cockerel superimposed. The music print is very clear and well spaced with only one error in the solo cello part where some staves on the second page have bass clefs instead of tenor clefs. As already mentioned, the name of the publishing house and the union flag/cockerel emblem underline McEwen's fascination with France and French music, particularly Debussy. Certainly the whole-tone scale and intentional harmonic vagueness is much in evidence in this piece. As mentioned earlier, source B has been invaluable in supplying dynamics, tempo indications and expression marks missing in source A. McEwen took great trouble in checking proofs when his works were published and this editor is confident that, with only minor details excepted, these printed editions are accurate documents. Source B is dated below the last bar in the piano score: London, March, 1918.

A third source for Hills o' Heather (C) is a collection of manuscripts catalogued at GUL under one call number, S.34. There are seven items under this one call number which we will identify as follows:
S.34/1 consists of an autograph solo cello part measuring 10\(\frac{1}{2}\) x 13\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches written on 12-stave music paper. It is undated but has pencil markings relating to the setting up of plates for the 1919 publication. Strangely, there are dynamic and bowing markings missing which are not missing in the published cello part; these must have been added either from the piano score or by instruction from the composer at proof stage.

S.34/2 is a piano score marked in large pencil letters:

*First Draft Feb 1918*

At the end of the piece the date *Feb. 23, 1918* is given. It is written on 15-stave music paper again measuring 10\(\frac{1}{2}\) x 13\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches. At the top of the first page McEwen has written the following advice:

*The time must be very elastic*

*throughout the recitation at the beginning*

*and at the end of this piece.*

And below the title *Hills o' Heather* the sub-title *Poem for cello and piano* differs from the final version *A Retrospect*. There are some interesting points to come out of a study of this manuscript. For example, there is an extra bar of sextuplet arpeggios after bar 7 and after bar 92 before the solo entry (see critical commentary). After bar 63 there are thirteen bars of different music followed by twelve bars similar to the final version leading to what is bar 68 in the final version. This is such a significant section of music which McEwen cut as to be worthy of quoting in full
and it appears as Appendix 1 of the critical edition of the score. Once more McEwen can be seen cutting passages from his original conception in order to be concise. Two further differences are quite small; the triplet rhythm of the solo cello at bars 124-125 and the lack of a rest before the solo entry at bar 140 both of which are described in the critical commentary. A particular feature of this score is the almost total lack of dynamic markings which is also a feature of the orchestral score. This illustrates McEwen's method of working by which dynamic markings are left to last and often never given unless a performance or publication was in sight; the orchestral score was never performed in his lifetime.

S.34/3 is a solo cello part written on 12 stave music paper measuring 10½ x 13½ inches. The sub-title, Poem, is as in S.34/2 which suggests that this cello part is contemporary with that piano score. In the margin at bar 44 someone has written in pencil:

from here to end of next page (bar 90) time more or less strict

Other minor differences from the final version are given in the critical commentary and are mostly of the expression variety (bar 44 cantabile, bar 60 pp sotto voce, bar 73 rit., bar 141-143 octave higher). Again, there are few dynamics. The most interesting thing about this source is that it is marked throughout with bowing and cello fingerings and that these bowings were adopted by McEwen in the final printed version. He must have given it to a cellist friend to get their professional advice on such matters and also to try the piece out.

S.34/4 is a fragment, one double sheet of orchestra music paper with what looks like species counterpoint exercises on two pages and sketches of a couple of sections of Hills o' Heather scribbled on the remaining two pages. These sketches appear to relate to changes McEwen made at bar 63 onwards.

S.34/5 is an early sketch of the opening of the work. It is identical to the beginning as it appears in the final version up to bar 39. However, from bar 40 it continues in a quite different way (see Appendix 2 of the critical edition). This then picks up the music of bar 44 of the final version for ten more bars only to fizzle out in some illegible pencil scribbles. The evidence suggests that this is McEwen's first attempt at getting his ideas down on paper and that this source predates S.34/2 dated 23 February, 1918.
S.34/6 is a full-length draft of the piano score written on 24-stave music paper measuring 10½ x 14¼ inches. It is very similar to S.34/2 especially at bar 63 onwards. There are a couple of small differences; at bar 60 he marks *poco animato*, and at bar 134-135 the solo cello is accompanied (see critical commentary).

S.34/7 is the score used by the engravers to set up the plates for the 1919 edition, it has the plate numbers at the bottom of the first page (A.F.M.Co 63) along with numberings of stave and page endings. There are also cue numbers every ten bars; these do not appear in the printed music but they do occur in the orchestral score. This could suggest that this is the copy that McEwen worked from when he orchestrated the piece and is further evidence that the orchestral version post-dates the piano/cello version. If this is the case then the orchestral score can be dated to no earlier than 1919, i.e. after publication of the piano/cello version when McEwen would have had his manuscript returned from the printers.

John Purser recognised the difficulty that a title like *Hills O' Heather (A Retrospect)* could place on such a work:

*Here is an example where that amiable image of Scotland does indeed intrude on reality in a negative way. There should be nothing whatever wrong with such a title. The image it should evoke is one of undisputed beauty. McEwen sadly subtitled it 'A Retrospect', having completed it in far-away London in March 1918 as the First World War ground to a close. Its defiant, wild and uninhibited rhetoric is not too demanding....*  

McEwen's original sub-title was *Poem for cello and piano*. This epithet would, perhaps, have offset the hint of sentimentality of the main title but, for some reason, it was removed in favour of *A Retrospect* which does, if anything, underline the sentiment. Why?

One should look back to McEwen's formative years as a young man working in Glasgow in his mid-twenties for surely this is the period when much of his outlook on life and his cultural situation would have been formed. At about this
time, 1893 to be precise, a very elegant and substantial publication was produced in Edinburgh; the *Scots Minstrelsy: a national monument of Scottish Song*. Edited and arranged by John Greig, M.A.(Edin.), Mus.Doc.(Oxon.) in six volumes with original coloured illustrations by J. Michael Brown, this was indeed a handsome edition which all self-respecting music lovers of the time would have wanted to own. Furthermore, it was dedicated to her majesty Queen Victoria and her letter of approval is given in facsimile at the beginning of volume 1. It would be extremely surprising if McEwen did not own a copy of this publication; he must certainly have known it as it would have been on nearly every piano in cultured musical circles of Scotland at the time. Volume 3 is of interest to us in this chapter for the artist, J. Michael Brown, has chosen to introduce it with a full-coloured plate depicting a soldier returning to wife and family. The scene is narrative in the best Victorian tradition; the soldier in full highland dress has a strong determined look about him, his wife stands behind the youngest child who offers her father outreached hands. A second child looks at the soldier from behind with a happy smile on her rosy cheeks while her grandmother has a look of resigned pleasure that the man of the house has returned home safely. The scene is set outside a very basic looking but-and-ben cottage and in the background there are hills of heather (see illustration on page 90). The similarity between this picture and the music of *Hills o' Heather* is remarkable and more connections between the picture and the music can be found. Indeed the music could be a tone poem of the picture. It is hardly a coincidence that the tune used in the second movement of the early *A minor Symphony* is also to be found in this very same volume (see chapter 3.1).

By early 1918 it was known that the Great War would end and that Germany would be defeated but no one knew how long it would take for the war engine to grind to a muddy halt. Soldiers would return home, but not to the idyllic cottages at the foot of heather-covered hills. The war had left indelible scars on soldiers and society. The world had been changed, the social structures of the past century had been replaced by a cynical distrust of authority born of the war experience. McEwen's war-piece is truly bitter-sweet, it is no 'charming soupsong' as Benoliel would have it. He wrote no heroic elegy or in memoriam but in *Hills o' Heather* McEwen expressed his deep love of his native Scotland and his deep
sadness at the traumatic changes and sacrifices it had undergone as a result of the First World War. He never returned to this kind of subject again; it was his first and last thoughts on the matter in his orchestral output.
3.8

Where The Wild Thyme Blows,
McEwen's farewell to the orchestra.

OBERON: I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite overcanopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet muskroses and with eglantine.

('A Midsummer-Night's Dream' Act 2 scene 1 by William Shakespeare)

In 1936 McEwen was taking a restful holiday in his favourite country for vacations, France, and as so often with him, part of the rest therapy was to indulge himself in composition; a string quartet The Provencale and Where The Wild Thyme Blows for orchestra. This was to be his last venture into orchestral composition and it was never completed. He took it so far and then abandoned the project which he possibly might have finished if he had remained longer in Cannes. Fortunately he did not give up on the material and one year later he adapted the piece as the first movement of the Trio for Piano, Violin, and Cello in A minor. This has allowed comparisons to be made between the two works, comparisons which throw up interesting insights into McEwen's compositional method. Furthermore, the density of thematic material in the trio compared to the orchestral score is remarkable and underlines other evidence that the 1936 orchestral version is incomplete. The existence of the Piano Trio of 1937 has allowed the editor of this critical edition of the orchestral score to attempt to fill in the missing elements to let the music be heard. The guiding rule in this performing version has been to add as little as is necessary to what McEwen left of the orchestral score to allow the work to be performable. A discussion of this process concludes this section.

There are two manuscript documents relating to Where The Wild Thyme Blows and both of them are in the McEwen Collection at GUL. The orchestral score (source A) is a large book 11x14½ inches hard-bound in dark-red cloth. On the spine is written 'Auto Score - Where The Wild Thyme Blows - McEwen'. The music is written on 16 sheets (32 sides) of 24-stave music paper. On the first page beside the title the composer has written in pencil
adapted to Piano Trio

J.B.McEwen

Cannes 1936

Source A is problematic; some instruments are listed at the start of the score but have absolutely no music to play (Double Bassoon and Timpani), other instruments play for a few bars at the beginning and at the end (e.g. harp), instruments play and then abruptly stop even when ties and phrasing continue into the next bar, and there are only a handful of dynamic markings. The evidence is that this is "work in progress", a draft of an, as yet, uncompleted piece. Tantalising this most surely is because what can be seen here is the embryo of a beautiful and original composition. The work begins with dreamy whole-tone scales endlessly rising and swirling like midsummer-night mists overlaid with a haunting repeating refrain:

There is a quiet timeless feel to the music as is drifts effortlessly from key centre to key centre. A second melodic idea appears in the violins at bar 32 rising at first as it is related to the opening bars and then falling away:

The interval of the 3rd is prominent in this falling figure and becomes the basis of the accompaniment of the middle section. The contrasting middle section has a folksong quality which is engaging by its Dorian modality and the rocking chordal accompaniment in the strings:

Reminders of the bassoon tune of bar 1 can be heard in trombone and trumpet and eventually these prevail and lead back to the opening material and the work ends with peaceful undulating chords. It is an idyl of great poetic restraint and economic
in its use of thematic material, melodic motifs being cleverly inter-related. Had McEwen finished the scoring it would undoubtedly have been one of his most important achievements in orchestral writing.

But the work is a torso and can only be understood with reference to the first movement of the Piano Trio in A minor (1937); source B. This is such an important document in the discussion of Where The Wild Thyme Blows that some space must be taken to elaborate on several aspects of the chamber work. The autograph score of the Trio consists of three hard-bound volumes in dark-green cloth measuring 11x14½ inches (violin and cello parts) and 10½ x 13¾ inches (score). The score is written on 23 sheets (46 sides) of 18-stave music paper, the violin part consists of 5 sheets (ten sides) of 14-stave music paper, and the cello part of 4 sheets (eight sides) of 14-stave music paper. The piano score and the parts for both violin and cello are much worked over with pencil markings to do with performing the piece (fingerings, bowings, extra dynamics, cues, and the like). Evidently there must have been a performance which the composer heard, most likely he played the piano part himself as there are very much fewer pencil markings in the piano part than in the string parts. The score is dated July 1937 after the final bar of the second movement. The Trio is in two movements, the second of which is an extended scherzo in 6/8 alternating 3/4 metre; there are some bars in 11/8 and 4/4 to further tease the rhythmic flow. It is a delightfully light-footed movement with distinct Fauré and Ravel touches of modality, whole-tone scales, and augmented harmonies; a perfect foil to the dreamy first movement.

Even a cursory glance at the Piano Trio first movement will reveal that this version of the orchestral piece is a finished work. The score is fully worked out with tempo markings, dynamics, phrasing, and most important of all there is thematic material here which is not to be found in source A. Bars 9-10 are very different in both sources for while A has an elegant falling idea in the winds accompanied by the rising whole-tone figure, source B has undulating semiquavers in the strings with a rippling arpeggio in the piano. At bar 17 source B introduces an arabesque in demisemiquavers in the strings of which not a hint can be found anywhere in source A, a sad loss as this motif ties together the fragments of melody allocated to bass clarinet and cellos in A. From bar 22 to 46 both sources match
fairly well in terms of thematic layout. At bar 47 source B has a key change to one sharp (duplicated in the next bar) while maintaining the 4/4 metre; source A has no key change and a 5/4 bar (returning to 4/4 in the next bar). B gives a new tempo *Poco piu allegro* which is helpful in giving the middle section some impetus to gather some momentum after the stasis of the first section. Source B offers no new insights until bar 65 where a whole bar is cut to tighten up this cadence point before continuing with further melodic development of the middle section themes. For the next ten bars both sources concur. Then at bar 77 source A has 5/4 while source B remains in 4/4 with a *Poco Rit.* followed by *Tempo I.* The reprise of the first music is characterised by more use of the woodwinds in A and a very fully worked left hand in the piano part of B. There is also a hint of a counter melody in the piano left-hand from bars 78-82. At bar 93 the piano in B has an inversion of the whole-tone idea of bar 1 in the right hand against the original in the left hand; a delightful development of irresistible simplicity which is lacking in source A. At bar 104 source B takes three bars to cover the same ground as A does in two bars due to the divergence of melodic material at this point similar to bar 9-10. Bar 112-113 is quite different in both versions with the Trio score having two extra bars. Source B also has two extra bars at the end of the work giving the opening idea of bar 1 in augmentation.

Had source B only revealed McEwen's intentions concerning tempi, dynamics, and phrasing a study of the two scores would have been destined to be an academic exercise of limited interest. However, the richness of the Trio version is so arresting and the finished state so satisfactory that placing the two scores together, as has been undertaken in this edition, reveals many tiny details of divergence. If there were some way to put the two versions together then there would be the possibility of producing a performing version of the orchestra score which would allow the piece to be heard as McEwen's last orchestral work. With this in mind the editor of this edition has attempted to complete the work which McEwen abandoned in 1936 and this performing version (P) is given as the second part of the critical edition of *Where The Wild Thyme Blows* (pp.39-76).

In preparing the performing version every effort has been made to add as little as necessary to make the orchestral score "work", and to make clear what is
original McEwen and what is editorial. The first task was to incorporate as much of the expressive elements from the Piano Trio into the orchestral score as possible. This was a relatively straightforward task in respect of dynamics and expression markings (such as dolce and espressivo) and those which are editorial are printed in upright (ie. not sloping) type. In some instances McEwen was consistent in his choice of notation in both sources but the two versions differ in certain details. For example, the motif in solo bassoon in bars 1-8 has staccato marking in A but tenuto markings in B

McEwen keeps to this throughout each score and the editor has not wished to change the orchestral notation to match that of the Trio as the difference, if indeed there is any\textsuperscript{62}, is minimal. In the case of bowing and phrasing, where these can be taken from the Trio they have been added to the orchestral score and marked with a cross-hatch:

Similarly, phrasing and bowing which have been deduced from analogous situations have been added and marked with a cross-hatch.

The matter of incorporating actual material from the Trio into the orchestral score is much more problematic for it will never be known what the composer's real intentions were. Had he finished A it would probably have looked very different from that which the editor has suggested. Additions to the score fall into three types; those which were deemed necessary in order that instruments would have a viable contribution to make to the score (eg. timpani and harp), those which are implied by evidence in the orchestral score, and those which allow material found only in the Trio to fill in empty spaces in the orchestral score.

The first of these types of addition to the orchestration relates to the harp, double bassoon and the timpani. McEwen's use of percussion was always frugal, to say the least. In many instances he had percussion written into his scores
only to cross them out with the blue crayon. However, his use of timpani is consistent, if restrained, in all the orchestral scores (except *Hills 'o Heather* which has no timpani). For this reason the editor has given the timpani a quiet but helpful role to play by covering the implied pedal point in the piano left-hand in bars 1-9, 17-22, 75-76, 78-86, 93-97, 119-120. The harp is a more complicated matter. There are only a few notes for the harp to play in source A at the beginning of the piece and it was a straightforward process to extend the harp part beyond this wherever the music was similar in layout. The complications occur where the piano in B has harp-like figuration which is important in giving impetus to the forward motion of the music. A good example of this is to be found at bars 13-16 where the piano demisemiquaver arpeggio is transferred to the harp. A similar situation is found at bars 25-28, 62-63, 67-68, 90-92, 100-103. Fortunately the last four bars of the harp are original McEwen; there is no way one could have guessed at such a delicate score colour at this point because there is no similar moment earlier in the piece.

The stave for double bassoon is marked *ad lib.* as are all double bassoon parts in McEwen's orchestral scores. For this reason it has been omitted in P.

At several points in A McEwen has implied that certain instruments should be playing although he has left their parts blank. The harp at the beginning is a case in point, but other instances would be the brass chords at bars 19-21. Here McEwen gave held chords to trombones in bars 17-18 and it is likely that he would have continued with this scoring for the next few bars. At bar 46 the flutes and clarinets have tied notes over into bar 47 but the following bar is empty in A; in P these parts are carried forward into bar 47 using notes from the string parts. At bar 50 the counter-melody is doubled on bass clarinet and bassoon and for this reason it was felt necessary to double the main melody of the oboe at bars 48-53 with cor anglais an octave lower. The bassoon at bars 90-91 covers the cello part in the Trio but the continuation in bars 93-94 is omitted in A but taken forward in the P. Horn 3 at bar 93 sets up a syncopated rhythm which is tied over into bar 94 which is empty; this rhythm is carried forward to bar 97 in P. Also at bar 93 the bass clarinet and bassoon have the beginning of a doubling of the cello/double bass part but this is not continued, however the continuation is implied by this incipit and for that reason it appears in P.
The most difficult task of the three has been to find ways to interpolate new material from the Trio into the orchestral score. The difficulty is twofold; firstly, what to put in and what to leave out, and secondly, how to allocate such material to instruments. As far as selecting material to put in, the rule has been to use only the minimum to make the piece viable. When McEwen has reworked scores in other mediums he often made changes, sometimes adding new things and sometimes cutting. The Trio version is no exception with bars added in places and cut in others and some completely different textures at times. So not everything had to be transferred into a performing version and, where it has been incorporated, it has been scored as simply as possible with no doublings to thicken the scoring. The most obvious place where this has been done is at bars 17-23 where the rippling lines of the violin and cello parts in B are transferred to flute and clarinet in P with the intention of placing this music in the orchestral score with the minimum of fuss.

At bars 31-32 the cello line in the Trio is lost in A and has been given to horn in P by way of a foreshadowing of the horn scoring at the end of the piece. The middle section (bars 48-77) has no need for extra material as the music has a convincing flow as it stands. A small countermelody has been added to the 2nd Horn to cover the implied imitation in the piano left-hand in bars 78-82. At bar 101 further interpolations need to be made. Here, at bars 101-102, the violins cover the cello motif in the Trio. The music in bars 104-105 is quite different in A and B, and as both are convincing in their own right the orchestral version is untouched in P. Bar 106 has a horn covering the cello part of B, again as a foretaste of the horn solo in the final bars.

Benoliel considers *Where The Wild Thyme Blows* a fourth Border Ballad:

*Though it comes almost thirty years after *The Border Ballads* it could be described as a fourth Border Ballad, linked both in its topographical preoccupations and its structure. It is closest to *Coronach* in being an exploration of a single mood, but a mood far removed from the human emotions of the earlier heroic ballad.*
While there are plenty of pentatonic melodic ideas and much use is made of the "Scotch snap" rhythm, and these are features of much traditional Scottish music, there is little else to associate with McEwen's homeland. On the other hand, McEwen could be making reference to the words of a traditional Scots song, *The Wild Mountain Thyme*, which makes considerable use of the "Scotch snap".

The *Wild Mountain Thyme*:

![Musical notation of The Wild Mountain Thyme](image)

If this were the case, then the reference is far removed from the work McEwen created both in mood and style.

The most likely literary source to which McEwen is alluding in the title is, however, the well-known quotation from Oberon's speech in Act 2 of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* quoted at the head of this section. The mood is very much in harmony with the magical fairyland which Oberon oversees in that play, too. The drifting whole-tone scales, the static harmony, the snatches of melody which turn back on themselves all combine to transport the listener to a fourth dimension where time stands still and what was finite becomes infinite. Place is irrelevant, feelings have become tangible. Is it that the listener is intended to recall not only the lines that follow on from the title:
...where the wild thyme blows
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows...

but also the words that preface it? For they are:

I know a bank... where the wild thyme blows

Is this, then, a work of intense nostalgia; a work that seeks to recapture the feelings, moods and spirit of a place that could no longer be visited, except in dreams, because the world had changed (and was about to change even more) beyond recognition? The work ends with a question mark, there is no real conclusion. The listener has entered a magical world for a few minutes where time stood still and then has awakened as from a reverie. And with characteristic understatement McEwen bade farewell to the orchestra.

3.9 Postscript

It is now possible to have an overview of the McEwen orchestral manuscripts and to discuss certain aspects in more general terms. As in every manuscript study it is essential to be familiar with the author's style of calligraphy. Fortunately McEwen's calligraphy is consistent throughout his compositionally active years. In other words, a manuscript from the 1890's displays the same handwriting features as one from the 1930's and this is the range relevant to the orchestral works. On account of this calligraphic consistency the editor has been confident in assessing what is McEwen's writing and what is another's work. As few people other than the composer had cause to use the manuscripts there are only a small number of instances where this is an important issue; for example the Viola Concerto and manuscripts used to prepare publisher's printing plates.
A major feature of McEwen's manuscripts is his use of a blue crayon pencil. The blue crayon has several uses, namely: to insert rehearsal cue letters, to draw attention to dynamics and phrasing/articulation and tempo markings that apply generally, to indicate that some instrument part has been cut, and to show that a section of music has been cut. Taking each in turn, it was McEwen's habit to place rehearsal cue letters after ten bars had elapsed, i.e. there are fully ten bars before the next cue letter is given. In consequence it is interesting when this system is broken and the number of bars separating cue letters is changed. This almost always happens when some alterations have been made by cutting or re-working a passage and the cue letter has stayed with the same bar in the revised version. Any study of McEwen manuscripts should note this feature as evidence of some revision process. The use of blue crayon to draw attention to expression marks might suggest that they are an aid for the conductor. However, very few orchestral works by McEwen were performed in his lifetime and there is no distinction between those that were performed and those that were not in respect of his blue-crayon expression markings. It is, therefore, more likely that McEwen put them there to help him prepare sets of orchestral parts. Drawing attention to a particular dynamic, articulation, phrasing, or tempo change meant that he did not have to repeat the marking of this feature in every part on the score but that it should be inserted in each individual part when he came to write them out. Cutting and generally slimming down his orchestral scores was part of McEwen's compositional method as has been illustrated throughout chapter 3 and the blue crayon is the tool he used to indicate such pruning. Whether it be taking out an individual instrument to thin the orchestration, or to cut a few bars of music to tighten up the structure of a passage, or (as in the Viola Concerto) to indicate a huge optional cut, the blue crayon is used to make such changes unambiguous. Consequently any blue crayon marking in McEwen's autographs should be considered as being the composer's markings and that they are significant.

There are marked differences in the state of completeness between scores of works which were performed in McEwen's lifetime and those which were not. It is evident that the composer took extra care with works which were performed in order that the performers would have an accurate text to work from. Preparing a critical edition of works in both these categories has highlighted this
point. Furthermore, McEwen chose to send GUL very few examples of his preliminary work in the form of sketches and drafts. Consequently where such material is extant in the collection it is both unusual and extremely helpful in gaining an understanding of the composer's compositional methods.

The works selected for study for the purpose of this thesis have been chosen carefully in order to illustrate McEwen's development as a composer over a forty-year span. In time the author intends to prepare similar editions of all McEwen's extant orchestral output. Indeed, he has already completed work on McEwen's choral work, arguably his magnum opus, *Hymn On The Morning Of Christ's Nativity*.

The perception of McEwen has changed radically since the early 1990's. The initial impetus was surely Purser's assessment of the composer as an important figure in the canon of Scottish composers in his ground-breaking series of BBC Scotland broadcasts and his book *Scotland's Music*. Then there was the ongoing series of commercial recordings by Chandos Records devoted to McEwen's orchestral, choral, and presently his chamber music. These have inspired others to perform the music and make recordings. This doctoral thesis is the first critical edition of McEwen's music and hopefully others will pursue studies in other aspects of his work in order that a more complete picture can be made. It seems evident enough to this author that McEwen's achievement is only now becoming apparent and that he is not only an important musical figure in the context of Scotland's musical heritage and one that she can be justly proud of, but that he is a composer to be reckoned with alongside British and European composers of the late 19th and early 20th century. No mean achievement for one who confessed to Farmer in a letter 65:

> My composing activities since the beginning of the century have merely been the occupation of my leisure and have been more the nature of escapism and distraction from the serious business of earning a living. I have never been or tried to be a professional [sic] composer.

letter dated June 28 1947
Notes: Chapter 3

1. Greig, John Scots Minstrelsie, T.C.& E.C.Jack, Edinburgh 1893, in six volumes. The Arran Boat song can be found in volume 3, page 296-97, where it is used to set words by Robert Allan (1774-1841). The song is called Queen Mary’s Escape and the melody is described as a Highland Boat Air.

2. The British Music Society Annual : 1920, page 315-317 (copy in Royal College of Music Library)


4. GUL : MS Farmer 217

5. McEwen, John Blackwood : from the inserted page before the title page of the Symphony in A minor as described on page 31.

6. Greig, John: Scots Minstrelsie T.C.& E.C.Jack, Edinburgh 1893, in six volumes. The Arran Boat song can be found in volume 3, page 296-97, where it is used to set words by Robert Allan (1774-1841). The song is called Queen Mary’s Escape and the melody is described as a Highland Boat Air.

7. GUL : Ca 14-y11

8. GUL : Ca 13-y46


10. see note 15, chapter 1.

11. GUL : MS McEwen S27.

12. Pibroch is used as title for the third movement of the String Trio in A (1943) catalogue number MS McEwen S8 and also for the slow movement of a String Quartet in A (undated but probably c.1943) catalogue number MS McEwen S14/4.

13. The Glasgow Herald : January 7, 1944


16. Chandos Records Ltd : catalogue number CHAN9241

17. GUL : Ca14-y28

18. GUL : MS McEwen S47

19. GUL : Ca14-y29

20. GUL : MS McEwen S60

21. GUL : Ca14-z55-60: this covers all the Graih my Chree manuscripts.

22. Benda, Jirí Antonín : born Staré Benátky, Bohemia c.1722 died 1795 (see biographical note in Appendix).


24. McEwen wrote three works for reciter apart from Graih my Chree; these were:

   Romney’s Remorse (Tennyson) dated 1901 - catalogue number Ca13-y29a

   Margaret Forbes Poems, dated 1943 - catalogue number Ca13-y29b

   Focus, undated - catalogue number MS McEwen S38

25. see note 15, chapter 1


27. Musical Times, Vol.64 page 209 review of a Toronto performance of McEwen’s Biscay Quartet by the London String Quartet in 1923 mentions McEwen’s respect for Debussy’s String Quartet and how he urged his pupils to study the piece

28. References are made to the connection between McEwen and painting by Farmer in A History of Music in Scotland (see note 2, chapter 2) page 335 and by Purser in his programme notes to a CD recording of string quartet music by Scottish composers including the première recording of McEwen’s Biscay Quartet (1913) on the Meridian label catalogue number CDE 84445 first issued in March 2001.

29. Wood, Sir Henry : included Grey Galloway in his Promenade Concert series in 1922 on 3rd September; the programme included Debussy’s Danse Sacre et Profane. In the 1924 series he programmed it, along with Ravel’s Valses Nobles et Sentimentales, on 13th September. In the 1926 series he conducted it on 25th September with Delius’s Brigg Fair. It is interesting that Wood
considered *Grey Galloway* in the context of works by Debussy, Ravel, and Delius which are distinctly impressionist in style.

30. GUL MS McEwen S.36a
31. GUL MS McEwen S.36b
32. Reed, W.H. *Elgar as I knew him* Gollancz, London 1936. This has extensive facsimiles of Elgar's manuscripts of *Symphony n.3* pages 196, 202, and 203 have examples of Elgar's use of three-stave manuscript with extensive indications of orchestration.

33. GUL Ca14-y.30
34. Tovey, Sir Donald Francis *Essays in Musical Analysis* Vol.4 'Illustrative Music' Oxford University Press, London 1936, page 161.
35. GUL Ca14-y.31
36. Chandos Records CHAN9241 McEwen *Three Border Ballads*
37. SMIC there is a tape recording of this broadcast performance held in the record library
39. see note 27 above
40. GUL MS McEwen S.69
41. Benoliel, Bernard programme note to recording of *Solway A Symphony*, Chandos Records CHAN9345 published 1994
42. GUL MS McEwen S.68
43. GUL MS McEwen S.87
44. GUL MS McEwen S.74
45. GUL Ca14-y.26
46. GUL Ca14-y.26bis
47. *Musical Times* Vol.63 (1922) page 798
48. *Musical Times* Vol.64 (1923) page 205
49. *Musical Times* Vol.64 (1923) page 276
50. Opal-Pearl Records Ltd catalogue number Opal 808
51. Paterson's Orchestral Concerts series at the Usher Hall, Edinburgh on 9th December 1929 conducted by Albert van Raalte. The programme note is by Frank Moyes, Mus Bac. This was the first performance of *Solway* in Edinburgh. A further performance was given, again in the Usher Hall, on the 18th May 1956 by the Scottish National Orchestra conducted by Karl Rankl. The programme for the latter was a very enterprising one given entirely to music by Scottish composers:

Robin Orr  
Overture *Prospect of Whithy*

Cedric T. Davie  
*Fantasia on Four Scottish Tunes*

J.B. McEwen  
*Solway A Symphony*

Alex. Mackenzie  
Piano Concerto op.35 *The Scottish*

Ian Whyte  
*A Scots Tune*

Iain Hamilton  
Overture *Bartholomew Fair* op.17

52. *Musical Opinion* August 1936
53. GUL Ca14-y.33
56. GUL S.34 contains seven items (drafts of the entire work for cello and piano and some sketches)
57. Purser, John *Scotland's Music* page 245
58. see footnote 6
59. Brown, J. Michael, Edinburgh painter who is known to have exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy between 1879 and 1906
60. Benoliel, Bernard booklet notes to recording by Chandos Records (1994) catalogue number CHAN 9345
Blows.
63. Benoliel, Bernard, programme notes to premier recording of *Where The Wild Thyme Blows*
Chandos Records (CHAN9345) 1995
64. Kennedy, Peter (ed.) *Folksongs of Britain and Ireland*, Oak Publications, London 1975
65. GUL MS Farmer 217
Appendix

Personalia

Chapter 1

Corder, Frederick: born London 1852 died 1932. Student at RAM where he won the Mendelssohn Competition and went to Cologne to study composition under Ferdinand Hiller. Noted for his translations of the libretti of Wagner operas in collaboration with his wife and published by Schott. He wrote works in many genre including orchestral music and opera. Became professor of composition at the RAM and promoted to Curator in 1889. As well as McEwen, the young Bantock, Bax, and Holbrooke were eminent composition pupils of Corder. His books The Orchestra and How to Write for It (1895) and Modern Composition (1909) were influential in their time. He retired from the RAM in 1922.

Matthay, Tobias: born London 1858 died 1945. Matthay's parents came from North Germany. Matthay entered the RAM in 1871 where he won the Sterndale Bennett scholarship. He became sub-professor in 1876 and full professor in 1880 and remained at the RAM until 1925 when he left to continue his work in his own school which he had founded in 1900. He wrote several pedagogical works on piano playing notably The First Principles of Pianoforte Playing, Relaxation Studies, Method in Teaching, and Musical Interpretation which in turn develop aspects of technique first analysed in his major work The Act of Touch (1903). He married Jessie Kennedy, daughter of David Kennedy, in 1893. Mrs Tobias Matthay was well known as a reciter and McEwen wrote his first version of Demon Lover under the title of Graih my Chree for Reciter and Chamber Ensemble for her.

Bell, William Henry: born St Albans 1873 died 1946. Entered the RAM in 1889 winning the Goss Scholarship. He was professor of harmony at the RAM from 1903 until 1912 when he moved to Capetown, South Africa as Principal of the South African College of Music and later as Professor of Music at the Capetown University. He was married to a sister of J.B. McEwen and she was a pupil of Matthay and an accomplished pianist; she taught at the SACM. W.H.Bell was highly considered as a composer in South Africa and he produced an impressive amount of works mainly for orchestra. There is a good article on Bell in Grove 3rd edition.

Lohr, Hermann: born Plymouth 1871 died 1943. Remembered chiefly as a composer of popular ballads published by Chappell. Also wrote some works for orchestra and an opera.

Macpherson, Charles: born Edinburgh 1870 died 1927. Aged nine he entered the choir of St Paul's Cathedral London. On leaving the choir in 1887 he took on various positions as choirmaster and organist in London churches. Entered the RAM in 1890 winning various scholarships. In 1916 became organist and choirmaster at St Paul's Cathedral where he remained until his death. He left some interesting compositions for orchestra, chorus, and chamber groups.

Wendt, Theo: conductor of the Capetown Municipal Orchestra. He conducted first performances of orchestral works of W.H.Bell.

Drysdale, Learmont: born Edinburgh 1866 died 1909. One of the very few Scottish composers of the late 19th and early 20th century to have elected to live and work in Scotland. After a spell at the RAM he returned to Scotland in 1904 to teach at the Athenaeum (later to be known as the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama). He died five years later and with him died great hopes, as he was prodigiously talented as a composer. There is a fine article on Drysdale in the Dunedin Magazine of 1915 Vol.1 and also in Purser's Scotland's Music.

Wallace, William: born Greenock 1860 died 1940. Graduated from Glasgow University in 1885 with degrees in medicine. However he gave this up for music and studied at the RAM and continued there for some time as a teacher. He was an original composer and his claim to fame is as the first British composer to write symphonic poems. These are very much after the Liszt model and his first
effort in this form, *The Passing of Beatrice*, could be said to be a continuation of Liszt's *Dante Symphony*, taking us from Purgatory to Paradise. The style is intensely romantic.


**Cowen, Sir Frederic**: born Kingston, Jamaica 1852 died 1935. Conductor and composer. Brought to England as a child and became conductor of the Philharmonic (1888-92, 1900-07) and the Scottish Orchestra (1900-10). He composed operas, cantatas, oratorios, symphonies, overtures, piano pieces, and over 300 songs.

**Chevillard, Camille**: born Paris, France 1859 died 1923. Prominent French orchestral conductor and composer. Founded the 'Trio Chevillard' in 1895. Took over conducting the Lamoureux concerts on the death of their founder in 1899.

**Mackenzie, Sir Alexander Campbell**: born Edinburgh 1847 died 1935. Probably one of the most important and for too long neglected of British composers of the second half of the 19th century. With the advent of CD recording his music is now gaining a wider audience and appreciation. He met Liszt who admired his compositions, was a friend of Sarasate who played his *Violin Concerto* (although he could have played it very well himself from all accounts). Paderewski played his *Scottish Concerto*, and Grieg was familiar with his music, and the conductors Hans von Bulow and Richter performed many of his orchestral pieces. His international renown would have been unquestioned in his day. He became Principal of the RAM in 1888, a post which he held with great distinction until 1924 when McEwen succeeded him. Mackenzie's memoirs, *A Musician's Narrative*, is a most entertaining read and an insight into the cultural and musical life of Britain and Europe at this time; essential reading for anyone with an interest in late-Victorian music.

Chapter 2

**Farmer, Henry George**: born Crinkle, Ireland 1882 died 1965. Came to Glasgow in 1914 as a band musician playing in theatres. He had a life-long interest in eastern music. As early as 1904 he had published a book on the Royal Artillery Band. In 1915 he translated Salvador-Daniel's 'La Musique arabe' but was dissatisfied with the theories he found therein. This prompted his own in-depth study of Arabian music and instruments. He supplemented his income from working as Director of Music at the Empire Theatre, Glasgow, with fellowships from the Carnegie Trust which allowed him to continue music research. He latterly turned his attentions to Scottish music culminating in his *History of Music in Scotland* (1947). In 1951 he was appointed a librarian at GUL where he remained until the year of his death. He received the honorary degree of D.Litt. from Glasgow University

**Frederick Lamont**: born Glasgow 1868 died 1948. Pianist and composer, pupil of Bülow and Liszt, made his debut in Berlin in 1885 and subsequently toured throughout Europe and America. He wrote an overture, a symphony and much piano music.

**MacCunn, Hamish**: born Greenock 1868 died 1916. Studied at the RCM and a pupil of Parry. His overture *Land of the Mountain and the Flood* (1887) made him famous in his time. He produced much fine work, in particular the opera *Jeanie Deans* (1894).


Chapter 3

**Benoliel, Bernard**: born Detroit, USA 1943. Studied composition with Ross Lee Finny at the University of Michigan and with Stefan Wolpe in New York. Settled in London and devotes his entire life to two tasks, viz composition and the promotion of neglected British music. The compositions are few but finely crafted and very spiritual and uncompromising. It is as Secretary of the Ralph Vaughan William Trust that he has successfully promoted British music through financial
sponsorship of performances and an impressive series of fine commercial recordings, a project which continues. He has written an excellent book on Parry Parry Before Jerusalem published in 1997 by Ashgate, Aldershot.

Tertis, Lionel: born West Hartlepoo 1876 died 1975. Tertis studied at the Hochschule für Musik, Leipzig and the RAM. He became the foremost viola player of his time and toured extensively throughout Europe and America as a soloist. Many British composers wrote works for him including McEwen, Bax, Benjamin Dale, York Bowen, and Frank Bridge. He produced a big powerful tone of much beauty and intensity. His preference was for a viola of large dimensions to achieve this tone quality.

Godfrey, Sir Dan: born London 1868 died 1939. Sir Dan Godfrey came from a long line of English musicians associated with military bands. He was famed for his work with the Bournemouth orchestra which he took over in 1892 and raised to full symphonic status before retiring in 1935. His most important work was to encourage young British composers by giving many performances of their work. His book Memories and Music (1924) is a record of his career and his personal views on music. It contains a fascinating chart of the orchestral instruments each with a colour which he associates with the timbre of the instrument; for example he felt that the flute was blue and the clarinet 'rose-pink to blush-red'.

Caine, Sir Thomas Henry Hall: born 1853 died 1931, novelist of Manx and Cumberland parentage, who worked as a teacher, architect's assistant, and journalist in his early years. In 1878 he delivered a lecture at the Free Library in Liverpool on D.G.Rossetti which brought him into correspondence with the poet. Caine was befriended by Rossetti and spent the last few months of Rossetti's life as his housemate. He wrote Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti in 1882 and edited much of the poet's work for publication. He subsequently took to writing fiction and published many novels which were widely popular at the time. These works have a somewhat sentimental reputation and many of them are centred in the Isle of Man. He was an authority on Manx folk culture and language.

Benda, Jirí Antonin: born Staré Benáky, Bohemia c.1722 died 1795. Violinist and composer of some distinction who worked at the Prussian court and became Kapellmeister. He wrote several fine melodramas where he handles the combination of spoken voice and orchestra with originality.

Walton, Sir William: born Oldham 1902 died 1983. His witty and iconoclastic Façade of 1921-22 was a setting of poems by the Sitwells in which the words were recited with accompaniment of a small ensemble.