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Royal Conservatoire  
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## Romantic National Song Network

**Exchange Talk + at the Royal Conservatoire of Music, Glasgow**

**Monday 18 March 2019, 6pm**

**Programme**

**Sofia Kirwan-Baez (soprano), Erin Spence (soprano)**

**Stephen Walker (tenor), Jonathan Kennedy (baritone)**

**David Gerrard (fortepiano), Aaron McGregor (violin), Alice Allen (cello)**

### **BRITAIN**

When Britain first at Heav'n's Command. Britannia rule the Waves.

James Thomson & Thomas A. Arne [1750]

### **ENGLAND**

True Courage

Charles Dibdin (1798)

The Sea

Barry Cornwall & Sigismund Neukomm (c. 1835)

The Death of Nelson

Samuel J. Arnold the Younger & John Braham (1811)

### **BRITAIN**

Britons Strike Home

Henry Purcell arr. Henry Leslie (c. 1865)

## IRELAND

- Girl I left behind me                      Thomas Moore & trad. arr. Sir John Stevenson (1818)  
Girl I left behind me                      Anon. & trad. arr. W.H. Hopkinson (1895)  
Silent o Moyle                              Thomas Moore & trad. arr. George A. Macfarren (1860)  
Pretty Girl milking her cow              Trad. arr. Edward Bunting (1840)

## SCOTLAND

- Corn Riggs from *The Gentle Shepherd*                      Allan Ramsay/trad. [1758]  
My boy Tammy                              Hector Macneill trad. arr. Stephen Clarke (1803)  
Bonny Prince Charlie                      James Hogg & Niel Gow Jun. (c.1819-1823)  
Scots Wha Hae                              Robert Burns & trad. arr. J. T Surenne (c. 1848)

## BRITAIN

- Tight little Island                              T. J. Dibdin & T. Attwood (c. 1802)

## WALES

- From George Thomson's *A Select Collection of Original Welsh Airs*, Vol.1. (1809)  
Sir Watkyn's Dream                              Anne Hunter & trad. arr. Joseph Haydn  
The Fair Mourner                              Anne Hunter & trad. arr. Koželuch  
Ar Hyd y Nos (The Live Long Night)              M.G. Lewis & trad. arr. Joseph Haydn

## BRITAIN

- Rule Britannia                              James Thomson & Thomas Arne arr. William Horsley [1830]

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## BRITAIN

**'When Britain first at Heav'n's Command. Britannia rule the Waves'**, better known as **'Rule Britannia!'**, is, today, probably the best known of the British songs that came from the period 1750-1850 and, as such, it will act as the overture and finale in tonight's concert. The first version is a song-sheet from 1750 clearly printed on the back of the success of the 1745 version of James Thomson's and David Mallet's masque *Alfred* with music by Thomas Arne. The masque, written for the young Hanoverian Prince Frederick, dates from 1740, but Arne's music enhanced its popularity and 'Rule Britannia' appeared as its rousing finale. It remains a point of some interest, that this musical version appeared at the same time as the last major Jacobite rising, supporting

the Stuart dynasty. While Britannia is an ancient icon, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century she became a symbol of British naval strength and power across the growing Empire. But the librettists, Thomson and Mallet or 'Malloch', were Scots, whose view was that the power of the British nation was the sum of her parts. Thomson, who is attributed as author of the ode 'Rule Britannia', was a supporter of the Union of the parliaments of Scotland and England in 1707.

Tonight we'll hear the first verses of the song from 1750 and then, to close, we'll hear the remaining verses in an 1830 arrangement of Arne's by then rather famous tune by William Horsley. We were spoilt for choice by the range of song-sheets and arrangements available! Like several of the National songs published during the period, this one has retained its popularity and is best known today in its annual rendition at the last night of the BBC Proms.

## ENGLAND

**'True Courage'** (1798) was composed by Charles Dibdin the Elder (c.1745–1814). In the century between 1750 and 1850, English identity was based above all on its maritime prowess. In music, sea songs came to be seen as 'national' products – and none more so than those of Southampton-born Charles Dibdin. Actor, manager, novelist, pedagogue, entrepreneur, innovator, and artist. Dibdin was best known for his songs – he wrote nearly a thousand – which he performed in self-accompanied solo shows in his own London theatre. A tenth of these were sea songs. While the best known is 'Tom Bowling', 'True Courage' was popular until the early twentieth century, and is more representative of Dibdin's work. It is written from the vernacular perspective of a sailor in the Royal Navy: it is patriotic but not nationalistic; it extols a sentimental, humane vision of manliness; and it is set to a jaunty, distinctive tune in 3/4 – a time signature Dibdin himself associated with ruffled waves upon an ocean.

**'The Sea'** (c.1835) was composed by the Chevalier Sigismund Ritter von Neukomm (1778–1858) with words by Barry Cornwall (real name Bryan Waller Procter, 1787–1874). As with 'The Death of Nelson' and indeed its close contemporary 'A Life on the Ocean Wave', this English sea song had international roots: Neukomm was an Austrian whose career took him from Salzburg to St Petersburg to Rio de Janeiro – which perhaps explains this son of the mountains' affinity with a song of restless water-borne travel! Though the lyric makes no mention of nation, it was immediately heralded as a national song, and was the stand out hit song of 1830s England. It spawned endless parodies, from the banal ('The Land') to the filthy ('The C, the C, the open C...'). Through-composed and operatic, it nevertheless appealed greatly to the mass of the people, and is a neat if almost paradoxical sibling to Henry Bishop's now far better known 1823 song 'Home, Sweet Home', the two together expressing what was seen at the time as the two sides of English national character: the impulse to roam, and the longing for home.

**'The Death of Nelson'** (1811) was composed by John Braham (c.1774–1856) with words by Samuel J. Arnold the Younger (1774–1852). This song was originally performed by Braham himself in his opera *The Americans*, a full six years after Nelson's death. Unusually for a national song, and especially a sea song, it is a sophisticated composition comprising both recitative ('O'er Nelson's tomb...') and aria ("'Twas in Trafalgar's bay..."). Nonetheless it became a hit at all social levels, cementing Braham's reputation as the foremost English tenor of his generation, and endured in national repertoires for more than a century. Like many 'English' songs, its tale is really one of cosmopolitanism. Braham himself – born John Abraham – was a Jewish singer, trained by an Italian castrato, Venanzio Rauzzini, and his signature tune heavily plagiarised the 'Chant du Départ', which was at that time the national anthem of Napoleonic France!

**RNSN member Oskar Cox Jensen (Queen Mary University, London)**

## BRITAIN

**'Britons, Strike Home!'** (1695) was composed by Henry Purcell (1659–1695). This ode, often paired with its preceding number 'To Arms', comes from the late Purcell opera *Bonduca*, celebrating the life of the ancient British Queen Boudica. For the first half of our period 1750–1850, it was a much-performed staple of the British theatre, often filling out programmes due to its short duration (the lyric is a single couplet) and extreme emotional heft. By the early years of the nineteenth century it had become a *de facto* national anthem to rival 'God Save the King' and 'Rule, Britannia!' – the latter of which based its distinctive punctuation on the earlier Purcell piece. Its popularity was perhaps never higher than during the Napoleonic Wars, when it became a bellicose song of resistance, but its relevance faded in the decades after 1815, when Britons had little to revenge, and when the vogue among antiquarians was to celebrate *England's* Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic heritage, rather than *Britain's* ancient, druidic past.

## IRELAND

In Ireland, it is often the tune itself rather than a particular song that endures. Behind the tunes and also the lyrics may lie the ancient history or mythology of the nation. The set for this concert features three iconic tunes from the repertory. **'The Girl I left behind me'** is a tune of disputed origin: there are several early musical sources that are Irish, but its association with fond farewells made it popular with army regiments or parting migrants and so it travelled far, with the lyrics varying along the way. You will hear two versions of this tune; the first is Thomas Moore and Sir John Stevenson's arrangement, 'As slow our ship', which appeared in the seventh number of the *Irish Melodies* in 1818. Moore develops the notion of 'farewell' implicit in the tune title, telling us the story of an emigrant leaving behind a community of loved ones. The second version is an arrangement of the most widely-circulating English version of the lyrics by the little-known W.H. Hopkinson, for a multi-volumed collection known as the *British Minstrelsie*. First published in 1895, this collection shares with the Romantic National Song Network an interest in promoting the music of the 'four nations' of Great Britain.

**'Silent o Moyle'** (tune 'Arrah, my dear Eveleen') is presented in George Alexander Macfarren's 1860 arrangement of Moore's Irish Melody; Moore appears to have sourced the tune from Edward Light's *A Select Collection of Scottish and Irish Airs for the Voice* (London, 1790s). Also known as the 'Song of Fionnuala', Moore's lyrics are inspired by her story as the daughter of the Irish seas god Lir, transformed into a swan and condemned to wander the rivers and lakes of Ireland until Christianity should come. The Straits of Moyle separate Ireland from Britain at the Glens of Antrim. The song has but two verses; the detail of the story Moore presents in a footnote.

**'Pretty Girl milking her cow'**, or **'Cailin Deas Crúite na mBó'**, is a very popular tune in the Irish tradition; the tune and several quite distinct versions of the lyrics are found in the collection of Irish music formed by Edward Bunting (1773-1843), now housed in Special Collections and Archives, Queen's University Belfast. Today we are making the first known recording of the version presented in Bunting's published collection of 1840, *The Ancient Music of Ireland*. "While the moon calmly sleeps on the ocean" tells the story of a sad emigrant, forced to leave his 'pretty girl milking her cow' to seek his fortune abroad.

**RNSN member Sarah McCleave (Queen's University, Belfast)**

## SCOTLAND

**'Corn Rigs'** is the final song of Allan Ramsay's *The Gentle Shepherd*, first published as a 5-act play in 1725. Much inspired by John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, Ramsay (1686-1758) transformed it into a ballad opera with 22 songs and it appeared in print in 1729. It remained highly popular

throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and gained national and international reputation with performances taking place in North America, Australia and Jamaica. There are numerous published versions of *The Gentle Shepherd*, but musical notation wasn't included until 1758 when a Glasgow-based printer called John Robertson Jun. created an all-inclusive edition. It is this edition we are using for the performance this evening. 'Corn Rigs' became one of several 'hits' from Ramsay's play and was the basis of Robert Burns's much-loved 'It was upon a lamma's night' written in the 1780s.

**'My Boy Tammy'** appeared first anonymously as 'The Lammy' in *The Bee, or Literary Weekly Intelligencer* in 1791 with melody included. But the song was written by the Scots poet Hector Macneill (1746-1818), who had recently returned from Jamaica, where he had been unsuccessful in finding a post as collector of customs. It's a song of rural courtship which takes the form of a dialogue (a common format for pastoral lyrics) between Tammy and his mother. The tune appears to be traditional, but has close resemblance to the well-known Scots tune 'Muirland Willie'. While it appears in numerous Scots song collections at this time, we are using its appearance in *The Scots Musical Museum* in 1803 for tonight's performance. This collection, arguably the most important single collection of Scots songs in the period, included 600 songs with text and music and was published by James Johnson in Edinburgh between 1787 and 1803. Macneill's song then became the basis of a new broadside ballad 'The Free Kirk and her Boy Tammy' in the 1840s, referring to the heated debate about the Free Kirk having received money from American Slave owners. While he steered clear of controversy in his songs, Macneill had in fact defended the slave trade in an earlier pamphlet in the 1780s.

**'Bonnie Prince Charlie'** is a Jacobite song created by James Hogg (1770-1835) and tonight's concert features one of several song-sheet versions of the song, in this case with music by Niel Gow Jun., son of the famous Scots fiddler, published around 1819. It had already appeared in a slightly easier arrangement in *A Border Garland* published in Edinburgh by Niel's son Nathaniel Gow. The song-sheet mentions celebrated singers Miss Stephens and Miss Noel. Catherine or 'Kitty' Stephens (1794-1882) was often associated with performances of Scots songs in the theatre and at Vauxhall Gardens, where Miss Noel's name is also listed. While 'Bonny Charlie', 'Charlie is my Darling', 'Charlie Stuart' and 'O'er the Water to Charlie', all of which appear in the Second Series of *Jacobite Relics* in 1821, call for support of the rightful King, Hogg's 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' rather praises the loyalty of specific Highland men, whom he names, and celebrates their prowess. Jacobite songs and tunes became central to Scots song collections from the early 1800s.

**'Scots wha hae'** is one of several songs that the Scots have debated about using as their national anthem (a debate that is still very much alive). It was written by Robert Burns (1759-96) in 1793 and his description about it, given in a letter to the editor George Thomson, is palpable in his passion for the themes of 'truth' and 'liberty', roused by Burns having listened to the tune 'Hey tutti taiti'. Burns was already interested in the figures of William Wallace and Robert the Bruce – his lyric is titled 'Robert Bruce's Address to his Army at Bannockburn', referring to the famous Scots victory over England at Bannockburn in 1314. Burns had visited the site on his trip to the Highlands in 1787. But he also makes direct reference to the contemporary 'glorious struggle for Freedom', namely the goings-on of the French Revolution. Tonight's arrangement of the song appears, with a long historical note, in George Farquhar Graham's *The Songs of Scotland* published in three volumes in the 1840s.

**RNSN Principal Investigator Kirsteen McCue (University of Glasgow)**

## **BRITAIN**

**'The Tight Little Island'** (c.1802) was composed by Thomas Attwood (1765–1838) after 'The Rogue's March', with words by Thomas John Dibdin (1771–1841). Of all tonight's songs, this minor theatrical hit is probably the least likely representative of a 'national' canon. Like several

other comic but patriotic songs of the age, most notably 'Chapter of Kings', it takes the form of a historical narrative, relating Britain's history, in an irreverent take on the 'sceptred isle' style. The 'BRITAIN' it venerates is unconvincing, described as a single and coherent island rather than an archipelago of different peoples, and this perhaps reflects the context of its composition: the year before the resumption of hostilities with Napoleon, when the fear of invasion that spread through much of southern England's loyalist population secured this song an unlikely fame. Though the song itself did not last, the phrase 'Tight Little Island' *did* stick, appealing especially to a bourgeois Victorian sensibility. Today, it comes layered with irony.

## WALES

The three Welsh songs featured in this concert have been selected from *A Select Collection of Welsh Airs*, a three-volume collection published by the Edinburgh-based editor and musician George Thomson (1757-1851) between 1809 and 1817. Thomson had already enjoyed great success in his collaboration with Robert Burns in the 1790s, *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs* (1793); his Welsh collection was perhaps a natural development from that earlier project. Drawing on previous publications of traditional Welsh song, and adding tunes that he collected, Thomson commissioned an array of Romantic poets to compose lyrics for his volumes. The result would be a new and highly fashionable form of nationally-inflected parlour song.

The first song, '**Sir Watkyn's Dream**', features the well-known Welsh air 'Llwyn Onn'/'The Ash Grove', arranged by Joseph Haydn with words by the Scottish poet Anne Hunter. 'Llwyn Onn', here notated in G major, is a lively and pretty tune, to which Hunter's lyrics set a dream scene of woodland deer stalking. Chasing the doe with his hounds, Sir Watkyn finds himself increasingly lost in a strange and rapidly-changing landscape of rivers, castles and crags. However, the lightness of the tune is not betrayed by the song's ending, in which, though trouble seems to lie before him, Sir Watkyn awakens in safety.

The second song is the contrastingly melancholic '**The Fair Mourner**, to the tune 'Morfa Rhyddlan', or 'The Marsh of Rhuddlan', a stately melody in G minor. Less well known today than the other two songs in this programme, 'Morfa Rhuddlan' was highly popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, often featuring in travel accounts of Wales as a favourite air requested of harpers. Its title refers to the site of a first-millennium battle near the north-east Wales coast, in which Welsh forces are said to have suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of the Mercians. The song is therefore an elegy for those lost in the battle, and more generally for an attenuated Welsh independence. Although Haydn provided a setting of this tune, Thomson never published it and chose instead a setting he'd received from the Bohemian composer Leopold Koželuch.

The final song showcases the popular Welsh melody '**Ar Hyd y Nos**', here arranged in A major. Still widely sung, the tune 'Ar Hyd y Nos', known in English as 'The Live Long Night', was first published in Edward Jones's *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* in 1784. The melody has usually been interpreted as a carol or lullaby, and Thomson's lyricist, the novelist Matthew Lewis, best known for his tale of Gothic shocks *The Monk* (1796), takes the second of these approaches in his lyrics. In Lewis's hands the song is still a lullaby addressed to a fretful baby, but now also becomes a Gothic-inclined elegy: mention of the baby's recently-deceased father lying as 'a cor[p]se', while a lightning storm unfolds, brings a macabre quality to this setting. This is another of Joseph Haydn's fine settings for Thomson's *Welsh Airs*.

**RNSN member Elizabeth Edwards**

**(University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies)**

## **Biographies**

### **Sofia Kirwan-Baez, Soprano (Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama)**

Born of a Venezuelan Mother and an English Father, and raised for most of her life in France, Sofia's international upbringing has provided her with a wide diversity of musical experiences. She began her musical education through the violin, which she studied both in London and in El Sistema when living in Caracas, Venezuela. However, her encounter with the piano a few years later ignited a passion for it that was to remain throughout her studies both in Venezuela and in France at the Perigueux Conservatoire. At 16, she began singing lessons with Julia Brian. For her undergraduate degree, she read music at St John's College, at the University of Oxford, where she was coached by Kathryn Harries. Her preliminary performance exam earned her a scholarship to also receive vocal lessons at the Royal Academy of Music with Glenville Hargreaves. She was in a number of student productions, including Playhouse productions of both Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* and Bernstein's *Candide*, as well as gave numerous recitals both around Oxford and in the Dordogne, France. Furthermore, Oxford allowed her to discover a love for choral singing – she was a choral scholar at St John's College as well as a member of Schola Cantorum. She is currently part of Genesis Sixteen and is studying her Masters in vocal studies at the Royal Welsh College of Music.

### **Erin Spence, Soprano (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)**

Scottish Soprano Erin Spence is currently in her final year of the undergraduate Vocal Studies course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under the tutelage of Linda Ormiston. She has been an active member of the Scottish Opera Young company for seven years now and has been awarded many solo roles in their productions. Erin also performed as the soprano soloist for the Encouraging New Opera project, a collaboration between Scottish Opera and the University of Aberdeen. She has been successful in multiple competitions including being awarded best vocalist in the 18 and under Solo Singing class at The Fife Festival of Music three years in a row and winning the 21 and under recital class in 2015. Concert performances include: Soprano Solo Haydn's *Creation* (Sscot), Chorus Britten's *Spring Symphony* (RCS Choral), Chorus Beethoven IX (RCS Voices and BBC SSO), Chorus Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* (Scottish Opera), Chorus Rued Langgaard's *Music of the Spheres* (RCS Voices and BBC SSO) and Children's Chorus for Puccini's *Edgar* (Scottish Opera). In September 2019 Erin will begin her studies on the Master of Music (Performance) course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

### **Stephen Walker, Tenor (D.I.T Conservatory of Music)**

Stephen studies in the D.I.T Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of Dr Robert Alderson. He is currently in his 2nd year on the degree course in the college. Stephen made his operatic debut with the college, playing the role of Sileno in the bi-centenary revival of Kane O'Hara's *Midas*. He later went on to perform in the John Field Room of the NCH with the D.I.T Opera Ensemble as chorus in an excerpt from *The Rake's Progress* by Stravinsky. He has worked with Lyric Opera Company in their production of *The Pirates of Penzance* on the main stage of the National Concert Hall. Most recently, Stephen has worked with the DIT Opera in the role of the Sailor for their production of *Dido and Aeneas*. Stephen hopes to continue and further his future in opera. He will soon play the role of Tamino in an excerpt from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* with the college later in the year. Stephen has also won various prizes in competitions, most notably he was a prize-winner at the 2018 Feis Ceoil.

### **Jonathan Kennedy, Baritone**

Jonathan Forbes Kennedy graduated in June 2017 from the MMus programme at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, having studied under the tutelage of Alan Watt. Prior to this, he was awarded a BMus (Hons) from the RCS in June 2015. During his studies, Jonathan won the Jean Highgate Scholarship for Singing at the RCS in his second year, and was 'Highly Commended' this year in the prestigious Governor's Prize for Singing. Operatic roles include: Der Vater in *Hansel und Gretel* (Berlin Opera Academy) Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* (Fife Opera), Onégin in *Eugene Onégin* (Edinburgh Studio Opera), Escamillo in *Carmen* (Edinburgh Studio Opera), Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Opera Dei Lumi), The Host of the Garter Inn in *Sir John in Love* (RCS), Antonio in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (RCS), Norton in *La Cambiale di Matrimonio* (Raucous Rossini), Sgt Bouncer in *Cox and Box* (The Scottish Consort). Jonathan also created the role of Rev. Tregold in Surrey Opera's production of Louis Mander and Stephen Fry's *The Life to Come*. This Summer Jonathan will be singing in the Chorus of Grange Park Opera's production of *Don Carlos*, and also singing the role of The Speaker in a production of *The Magic Flute* with Waterperry Opera Festival.

### **David Gerrard, Fortepiano**

David Gerrard performs on the harpsichord, clavichord and organ. Working extensively with Oxford's Bate Collection and the Russell and Mirrey Collections in Edinburgh, he has given recitals on many significant historical keyboard instruments. His solo and ensemble engagements have taken him to the London Handel Festival, Handel House, the Brighton Early Music Festival and the Three Choirs Festival, along with various appearances on BBC Radio 3 and 4, and BBC Radio Scotland. In demand as a continuo harpsichordist and organist, David has performed at home and abroad with both modern and period instrument groups including Dunedin Consort, London Mozart Players, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Northern Sinfonia. A skilled choir trainer and conductor, he has held appointments as Organ Scholar at Canterbury Cathedral and Magdalen College, Oxford, and as Assistant Organist at Paisley Abbey.

David graduated with double first-class honours in Music from the University of Oxford, followed by a Master's degree in Early Keyboard Performance from the University of Edinburgh where, at present, he is undertaking doctoral research (generously funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council). David is also a Tutor in the University's Reid School of Music where he teaches harmony and counterpoint, performance studies and music history. With past experience working as a harpsichord technician and restorer, he has begun building early keyboard instruments.

### **Aaron McGregor, violin**

Aaron McGregor is a violinist and AHRC-funded PhD researcher at the University of Glasgow. His research focusses on the early history of the violin in Scotland, investigating the social functions, repertoire, and cultural importance of fiddlers from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries.

Brought up in Orkney, Aaron studied at the University of Edinburgh and the RCS, winning the Willy and Betty McPherson Prize for violin, the Dunbar-Gerber Chamber Music Prize, and the Niecks Essay Prize for his final year dissertation on the McFarlane Manuscript. He led the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, and the RCS symphony and opera orchestras, giving concertos with the RCS baroque ensemble, NYOS strings, and the Edinburgh University Orchestras, including the world premiere of Thomas Seltz's *Violin Concerto* in 2009. He has appeared with groups such as RSNO, Ludus Baroque, Oxford Baroque, Dunedin Consort, the GRIT Orchestra, and the Cinematic Orchestra. As violinist with early music group Concerto Caledonia, Aaron has made several live



BBC radio broadcasts, released an album of 18th-century Scottish dance music, and produced the historical dance project 'Nathaniel Gow's Dance Band: Ceilidh Nights'.

### **Alice Allen, 'cello**

Alice Allen is from Aberdeenshire and formerly young artist in residence with the Scottish Ensemble. Now one of Scotland's top freelance cellists, Alice works with many of the country's leading performing groups including the BBC Scottish symphony Orchestra and the Brodick Quartet. Alongside this she has studied traditional cello with leading instrumentalist Natalie Haas, and has recorded with many leading folk artists including former BBC young traditional musician of the year Robyn Stapleton and MG ALBA Scots Singer of the year Iona Fyfe.

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The Royal Society of Edinburgh funded **Romantic National Song Network** has been working in partnership with and offers kind thanks to:



The aim of the network is to explore and map the area of national song culture in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales during the period 1750-1850. At this time of great political upheaval, the four nations of the British Isles (and many European nations) were actively collecting and disseminating what was presented to the public as 'National Song'. While work has been done on some individual writers, composers and editors/publishers, there is still considerable confusion about the meaning of the term 'National Song' and little understanding of the relationships between the living song cultures of the British nations during this time. The network is focussing particularly on songs published with music and intended to encourage performance.

Bringing together scholars working in literature and language, musicology, history, history of the book, and performance history, the RNSN is exploring who was creating these songs and where they were published and performed. Our network has begun to establish how these songs shaped public perceptions of the different national cultures of the British Isles. For more information, song stories, reading lists and blogs please visit our website at: [rnsn.glasgow.ac.uk](http://rnsn.glasgow.ac.uk) and you can tweet @UofG\_RNSN.