

Eriskay Love Lilt *(Vair me O, Gràdh Geal mo Chridh)*

TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH, ARR. HUGH LEVEY



WIND QUINTET

SCORE & PARTS

Eriskay Love Lilt (Gràdh Geal mo Chridh)

TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH - USED IN OUTLANDER

The story of Eriskay Love Lilt is fascinating. It was originally a traditional Scots Gaelic song from the tiny island of Eriskay in the Outer Hebrides, far off the west coast of Scotland. It is only about 2.5 miles long and has a population of approximately 150 people today.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, Scottish singer and pianist Marjory Kennedy-Fraser visited Eriskay to record the old Gaelic language songs before they died out. She recorded them on wax cylinders, later transcribing them for piano and voice. While this was admirable work, she also took these wonderful songs away from their native landscape, language and context, and transformed them into elegant pieces of music for the Edwardian drawing room and concert hall, which she published in 1909, 1917 and 1921. She gave this song the sentimental title of "Eriskay Love Lilt" which bears no relation to the original "Gràdh Geal mo Chridh", she changed the meaning of the song's words rather than translating the Gaelic accurately, and she even changed the tune. The original words are sung by a man whose love has left him and he feels that there is no more music in his life. The song is also known by the words of its chorus, which are usually written "Vair me o", as it sounds in English, but more correctly written in Gaelic as "Bheir mi o".

Happily the original Gaelic version has survived through oral tradition and modern recordings by Gaelic singers, although most of us are more familiar with the Kennedy-Fraser version. In this arrangement, Scottish musician Hugh Levey brings together both styles. The opening flute solo is to be 'sung' freely in the style of a Gaelic singer, before the other instruments join in to play the tune in the Kennedy-Fraser version. Each instrument gets its turn to play the tune while the arrangement and writing changes for each verse. The work ends with the haunting flute solo again.

The Gaelic version of the words and melody was used in Episode 3 of the Amazon Prime hit series, "Outlander".

PERFORMANCE NOTES

The opening flute solo may look rhythmically complex but it should be played from the heart rather than the head. Play it naturally and soulfully; it is merely an approximate transcription of how a Gaelic singer might perform it. For a model of how to 'sing' it, look for a recording by someone like Ishbel MacAskill.

Cover images: (1) Portrait of Marjory Kennedy Fraser by John Duncan (c.1922), in the National Galleries of Scotland. Public Domain, (2) Instruments, Yamaha Corporation, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

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Eriskay Love Lilt (Gràdh Geal mo Chrìdh)

Scottish Trad. (Arr. Hugh Levey)

Adagio

This system of the score includes staves for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, and Bassoon. The music is in 4/4 time and begins with a dynamic marking of *p*. The Flute part has a 'Flute cue' written above the first measure. A large blue watermark with the letters 'W' is overlaid on the center of the page.

a tempo

This system continues the score with staves for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), F Horn (F Hn.), and Bassoon (Bsn.). The tempo changes to 'a tempo'. The Flute part has a 'Play' instruction above the first measure. The Clarinet part has a dynamic marking of *mp* and a 'Play' instruction. The Bassoon part has a dynamic marking of *pp* and a 'Play' instruction. The system concludes with a *p* dynamic marking.

pp

8

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

F Hn.

Bsn.

PREVIEW ONLY

13

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

F Hn.

Bsn.

p

p

p

p

mp

17

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

F Hn.

Bsn.

23

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

F Hn.

Bsn.

cresc

mf