

MUSIC

Cape Breton's Diversity in Unity

Nighean Donn A' Chùil Reidh

E ho rò, mo nigh'n donn
E ho hù, mo nigh'n donn,
E ho rò mo nighean donn a' chùil rèidh;
Rìbhinn òg a bha rium
Raoir a' còmhradh gu ciùin,
Tha mo chridhe 'n diugh trom às do dhèidh.

'S e do chòmhradh, a rùin,
Cainnt as ceòlmhoire leam
Na guth smeòraich an dlùth choill nan craobh,
No bog thorman nan allt
Tigh'nn o àirigh nan gleann
'S mi 's a' mhoch mhadainn shamhraidh ri 'n taobh.

Tha do nàdar, a luaidh,
Coibhneil, càirdeil, gun ghruaim,
Gur e d'àilleachd thug buaidh air gach tè;
Dh'èireadh m'aighe le sunnd
Nuair a choinnicheadh tu rium,
'S chuirinn fàilt' air nigh'n donn a' chùil rèidh.

Gura guirme do shùil
Leam na 'n dealt air an driùchd,
Nuair a dhearcas tu rùin orm gu caomh;
Gu bheil maise mar nòin
Chuireadh sgaoileadh air bròn
Ann ad chruth, 's b'e mo dheòin bhith ri d' thaobh.

Tha gnùis àlainn gun ghruaim,
Tha gun àilgheas, làn stuaim,
'S pearsa dhìreach, dheas, uallach am falbh,
Air am bòidhche thig gùn
Anns an fhasan as ùir'
Aig an rìbhinn as cùirteile dealbh.

Tha do chàirdeas glè dhlùth
Ris na h-àileagain ùr
Bhiodh 's na blàir feadh nan dùthchannan thall;
'S tric a bhuannaich iad cùis
Ann am fàbhar a' Phrionns',
'S cha bhiodh onair an dùthcha air chall.

Nuair a chit' iad air sliabh,
Bu ro-bhòidheach an triall,
'S gum bu shuaicheantas riamh dhaibh 's gach àm
Long is leòghann is craobh,
'S an làmh-dhearg air an taobh,
Bradán tarragheal is fraoch glas nam beann.

Nam biodh beairteas dhomh buan
Rachainn sgrìob thar a' chuain
Don Roinn Eòrp' leat, a luaidh nan deagh bheus,
'S ann an dùthaich nan sonn
Bhiodh daoine-uaisle le fonn
A' cur fàilt air nigh'n donn a' chùil rèidh.

'S math thig fàineachan òir
Air na meòirean as bòidhch',
'S a bhios tric ann an seòmar ri gleus;
Tha do ghruaidh mar an ròs,
Chan eil uail ann ad nòs,
'S gur leat seusar gach seòl agus beus.

'S iomadh cliù th'air do ghnàths,
A nigh'n donn na sùil bhlàth,
Tha do shnuadh ann an àillead mar ghrèin,
Mar am flùran a' fàs
Ann an gleann 's am biodh blàths,
No mar Bhenus an àirde nan speur.

Gur e coibhneas do chainnt
A chuir bruaillean am cheann,
'S chan eil fuasgladh ach gann dhomh fon ghrèin;
Chan eil lèigh do mo chràdh
Air an t-saoghal seo mhàin,
A nigh'n donn nan sùl blàth, ach thu fhèin.

Translation:

Brown-Haired Maiden of the Smooth Tresses

E ho rò, my brown-haired maiden,
E ho hù, my brown-haired maiden,
E ho rò, my brown-haired maiden of the smooth tresses;
Young maiden who was with me
Last night talking gently,
My heart is heavy today after you.

Your conversation, my dear,
Is more musical to me
Than the song of the mavis in the dense forest,
Or the soft murmur of the streams
Coming from the mountain sheilings,
In the early morning beside me.

Your nature, my dear,
Is kind, affectionate and without gloom;
Your beauty has surpassed all women;
My spirit would rise with joy
When you would meet me,
And I would welcome the brown-haired maiden of the smooth tresses.

Your eye is more blue
Than the sheen on the dew,
When you look at me, dear, so gently;
There is beauty like the noontide
Which dispels sadness
In your nature, and my wish is to be beside you.

Your face is beautiful and without melancholy,
Without pride and full of modesty,
Your bearing straight, elegant and stately;
You look beautiful in a gown
Of the latest fashion,
Maiden of the most courtly appearance.

Your relationship is very close
To the worthy people
Who fought in battles in countries overseas;
They often won the cause
In favour of the Prince,
And the honour of their country was not lost.

When seen on the slopes
Their movement was very imposing,
And they always had as their emblem
The galley, the lion and the tree,
With the red hand beside them,
The white-bellied salmon, and the green heather of the mountains.

If I had lasting wealth
I would go on a voyage over the ocean
To Europe, my dearest one of good repute;
And in the land of heroes
Noble folk would joyfully
Welcome the brown-haired maiden of the smooth tresses.

Golden rings will well fit
The most beautiful fingers
That often play music in the room;
Your cheek is like the rose,
Your manner is without conceit,
You are the essence of character and virtue.

Your manner is much admired,
Brown-haired maiden of the warm eyes,
Your complexion is like the sun in its beauty,
Like the flower growing
In a glen full of warmth,
Or like Venus high in the sky.

The kindness of your talk
Has confused my mind,
And there is little relief for me under the sun;
There is no healing for my pain
In this world alone,
Brown-haired maiden of the affectionate eyes, except you.

Recording:

[Nighean Donn A' Chùil Reidh](#), 1974. Jimmy Gillis. T-990. Beaton Institute, Cape Breton University.