

The Gentle Shepherd

The Play

The Gentle Shepherd (published 1725) is Scotland's first opera. It is unique, all the music is based on popular Scottish fiddle and folk tunes. It features heart-felt ballads and traditional foot-stomping traditional dance music and fuses Scottish fiddle playing with the Italian baroque style.

The hero of the piece and the Gentleman Shepherd is Patie (Patrick). He is son of Sir William, and was left as a baby in the care of Symon for his own safety, incognito, when his father fled the country. Patie has grown up as a poor, hardworking shepherd, unaware of his titled family background, and is in love with Peggy. Peggy is the gentle, virtuous and beautiful heroine of the play. She is thought to be Glaud's niece, but was left as a baby on Glaud's doorstep. She is in fact the daughter of Sir William's own dead sister, saved from rapacious relatives by her nurse Mause, who is supposed to be a witch.

Jenny, only daughter of Glaud and Elspa, is the lively, teasing, sceptical friend of Peggy. Jenny toys with the affection of Roger, a rich young shepherd who is in love with her and is Patie's friend. Comic scenes throughout the

whole revolve round Glaud's sister Madge, Baudy (in love with Peggy) and Mause.

The story of Patie and Peggy's developing love and their constancy through all change and difficulties is contrasted with the more fraught uncertainty in the Jenny, Roger and Baudy triangle and gives bracing variety to the play. Even when Patie is acknowledged by his father Sir William and sees a glittering future before him he remains true to Peggy. His steady, simple upbringing in the countryside has formed a sound character in keeping with the 18th century Pastoral idea that simple nature encourages virtue while the artificiality of town life breeds vice. The inestimable value of 'Life happy from ambition free, Envy and vile hypocrisy, Where truth and love with joys agree, Unsullied with a crime...He lives, and, unafraid of fate, Contented spends his time' is the underlying theme of the play.

CHARACTERS:

MEN:

Sir WILLIAM WORTHY.

PATIE, the Gentle Shepherd, in love with Peggy.

ROGER, a rich young shepherd, in love with Jenny.

SYMON & GLAUD, two old shepherds, tenants to Sir William.

BAULDY, a hynd, engaged with Neps.

WOMEN:

PEGGY, thought to be Glaud's niece.

JENNY, Glaud's only daughter.

MAUSE, an old woman, supposed to be a witch.

ELSPA, Symon's wife

MADGE, Glaud's sister.

SCENE: A shepherd's village and fields, near Edinburgh.

TIME OF ACTION: Within 24 hours.

First act begins at eight in the morning.

Second act begins at eleven in the forenoon

Third act begins at four in the afternoon.

Fourth act begins at nine o'clock at night.

Fifth act begins by daylight next morning.

HISTORICAL PERIOD: Restoration of King Charles II

SONGS: 22 tunes including;

"The waukin o the fauld"

"Muckin o Geordie's byre"

"Yellow haired laddie"

"Tweed side"

"Bonny grey-ee'd morn"

"Corn-rigs are bonny"

"Wae's my hert that we should sunder"

"Leith wynd"

In the 1800s Hansel Monday (the first Monday of January) was one of the most exciting days of the year in Carlops. The village was a miniature "Thrums" with forty weavers, three grocers, three carriers, one tailor, two schoolmasters, two shoemakers, and four inns; for that evening saw the annual performance of *The Gentle Shepherd*.

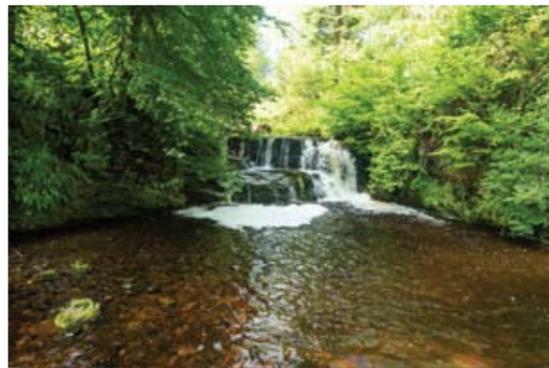
Younger members of the players were apprentice weavers who eagerly learned their parts to birr of the pirn and the song of the shuttle. The performance was held in Carlops Mill with the laird contributing to the expenses. The staging, lighting and seating were of a primitive kind, but "the play's the thing." The play was so popular that the Carlops players visited the surrounding districts. A horse and cart were provided, "the horse decked out with ribbons, and Geordie Soutar sitting on the foreshore, fiddlin', and the rest of the company a' as merry as mice in a mouldy cheese, with the Carlops folk a' at their doors seeing them off."

Taken From Carlops- *The "Gentle Shepherds"* by Will Grant

Prologue: Act 1 Scene II

A flowrie howm between twa verdant braes,
Where lasses use to wash and spread their claihs,
A trotting burnie wimpling thro' the ground,
Its channel pebbles, shining, smooth and round;
Here view twa barefit beauties, clean an clear;
First please yer ee next gratify yer ear-
While Jenny what she wishes discommends,
An Meg, wi better sense, true love defends

Peggy's Pool



The Washing Green



Sandy's Cave



View from Craigie Bield



River Esk through Habbie's Howe



More views around Newhall Estate and Carlops featured in *The Gentle Shepherd*