

Niel Gow's Lament for the Death of His Second Wife

A

2

1. | 2.

B

2

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It consists of six staves. The first staff begins with a boxed 'A' and a fermata over the first measure. The second staff contains two endings, labeled '1.' and '2.', with a repeat sign at the end. The third staff begins with a boxed 'B'. The fourth and fifth staves contain a complex, fast-moving melodic passage with many sixteenth notes. The sixth staff concludes the piece with a final cadence.

"Niel Gow's Lament For His Second Wife", also known as "Niel Gow's Lament For The Death Of His Second Wife" is a Scottish slow air in a 6/8 time and D Major. The parts are played AAB (Cranford/Holland, Gow, Hunter, Johnson, Neil), AABB' (Perlman).

This air is one of the most celebrated compositions of the famous Scots fiddler and composer Niel Gow (1727-1807). His second wife was Margaret Urquhart of Perth, to whom he was happily married for three decades, the wedding having taken place in 1768. Although all Niel's children were the issue of his first wife, Margaret Wiseman (1730-c. 1766), Margaret Urquhart was welcomed by the family and maintained affectionate relationships with all her stepchildren. After her death in 1805 Niel was grief-stricken and stopped playing for a while, until encouraged to pick up the fiddle again by his family. When he did so, he produced this air. A note below the air in the Gows' Fifth Collection (1809) reads: "They lived together upwards of thirty years; she died two years before him. She had no issue."

It was printed in Carlin's **The Gow Collection** (1986), Cranford's **Jerry Holland: The Second Collection** (2000), Gow's **Fifth Collection of Strathspeys Reels** (1809), Hunter's **Fiddle Music of Scotland** (1988), Johnson's **The Kitchen Musician No. 5: Mostly Irish Airs** (1985) (revised 2000), Martin's *Ceol na Fìdhle, vol. 1* (1991), Neil's **The Scots Fiddle** (1991), Perlman's **The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island** (1996) and Purser's **Scotland's Music** (1992).

It was recorded by Wendy MacIssac on **The 'Reel' Thing** (1994), Alasdair Fraser & Paul Machlis on **Legacy of the Scottish Fiddle vol. One** (2000), George Wilson on **The Royal Circus** (2000), Abby Newton on **Castles, Kirks and Caves** (2001), Ken Pearlman on **Northern Banjo**, Ron Gonella on **Scottish Violin Music from the Gow Collections** (1973).