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INTRODUCTION

SCOTTISH FIDDLE MUSIC is unique and satisfying, a positive contribution to Scotland's culture here and throughout the world. I hope this book will interest those who know little about the subject while still providing new information and ideas for those deeply involved in it.

The times I have spent playing and listening to Scottish fiddle music have been among the happiest of any of my musical experiences. I have written this book as a result of my own curiosity about the background to the music, and I hope the many fiddlers who share my love of the music will have as much pleasure from reading it as I have had from their playing.

This book is by no means definitive; indeed, the study of Scottish fiddle music is only in its infancy; it is, without question, a lifetime's work, and more. In consequence, I have restricted the scope, investigating fewer people more thoroughly, rather than providing a survey with little depth. Not all composers and fiddlers will be found in this book, nor is this a compendium of Scottish melodies. Rather, I hope this work will serve some useful purpose by providing a continuation, in some small way, of the research begun by John Glen into the origins of fiddle music and the lives of the men who composed it.

Much remains to be discovered and studied: manuscripts, lost or as yet unknown, which could widen our knowledge of tune sources and transmissions; documentary evidence of the way fiddlers lived, played, and composed. Music from a certain geographic area or of a particular type could be studied in depth, as could, say, the relationship between fiddle and bagpipe music or between Scottish and Irish fiddling. Modern technological advances such as tape and video recorders could allow style to be studied in detail for the first time. If present-day interest encourages research into these or other aspects of fiddle music, the future could bring exciting insights into this delightfully Scottish gift to the musical world.

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