

stimuli. What they found in part was the music around them, the previously unwritten melodies in current use, which until then had only been transmitted aurally.

None of these MSS are for fiddle; lutes and viols had swept the country, and the remaining fiddlers presumably played by ear and had no need or inclination to write down what they performed. The educated compilers of the MSS naturally wrote down the music in sets for their own instruments. It is reasonably safe to assume, however, that these MSS continue the fiddling tradition, giving a picture of the general instrumental repertoire freely circulating and known to most musicians whatever their instruments. This sharing of tunes never stopped. For instance, some of the music from the Skene MS appears in later printed collections of fiddle music, although often considerably changed: "Dumbarton Drums" and "Stir her up and hold her ganging" appear in the seventeenth century in Playford's collections; "Blue Ribbon Scotch Measure" and "Goodnight and joy be with you all" in Gow publications in the eighteenth century; and "Jenny drinks nae water" and "Jenny Nettles" in *The Athole Collection* (1884).

Another tune still popular today could well have been played at a dance in 1634, on a bizarre occasion when Lady Rothiemay entertained the Highlanders who had just robbed and burnt down her neighbour Fren draught's house. She "dancit with the licht horsemen in the place of Rothiemay, the cushion dance . . ." ¹⁶ If this seems callous, she had good reason, since Fren draught had been responsible for the death of her husband and son. The tune still associated with the cushion dance, an old kissing dance, is called in the Skene "Who learned you to dance and a towdle" (ex. 2). ¹⁷ It was later collected from tradition, "as sung by girls playing on the streets in Glasgow", and printed with words beginning "Who learned you to dance, Babbity Bowster [bolster], Babbity Bowster". ¹⁸

Ex. 2 WHO LEARNED YOU TO DANCE AND A TOWDLE



A tune which does not seem to have survived to the present day has the intriguing title "Pitt on your shirt on Monday" (ex. 3):¹⁹

Ex. 3 PITT ON YOUR SHIRT ON MONDAY



Some melodies in the Skene MS are also found in print in Scotland's earliest collection of secular music, usually referred to as "Forbes's Cantus" (1662). The full title of the work is *Cantus, Songs and Fancies. To Thre, Foure, or Five Parts, both apt for Voices and Viols. With a brieffe Introduction of Musick, As is taught in the Musick-Schools of Aberdene by T[homas] D[avidson] M[aste]r of Musick*. Although two other editions²⁰ were brought out, it is sad to record there was no other music published in Scotland, except the Psalters, until 1726.

It is fortunate that, lacking printed sources, other MSS have survived to give some idea of what was being played almost three hundred years ago. Among them are the Rowallan MS (lute, c. 1620), Straloch (lute, 1627-9), Guthrie (viola da braccio, c. 1680) Blaikie (lyra-viol, 1685, 1692), Leyden (lyra-viol, c. 1695) and Atkinson (? violin, 1694-5). Of these, the Straloch can be found only in a partial transcript made in 1847, and the Blaikie as a partial copy made in 1854 of another copy of the 1692 MS. Some thought and some detective work may still rediscover the originals, and perhaps unearth others which have been misplaced and forgotten.

From the Rowallan lute MS, which belonged to Sir William Mure of Rowallan, an accomplished musician and poet, comes "Ouir the Dek, Davie" (ex. 4)²¹ which even in this setting is clearly in the Scottish idiom: