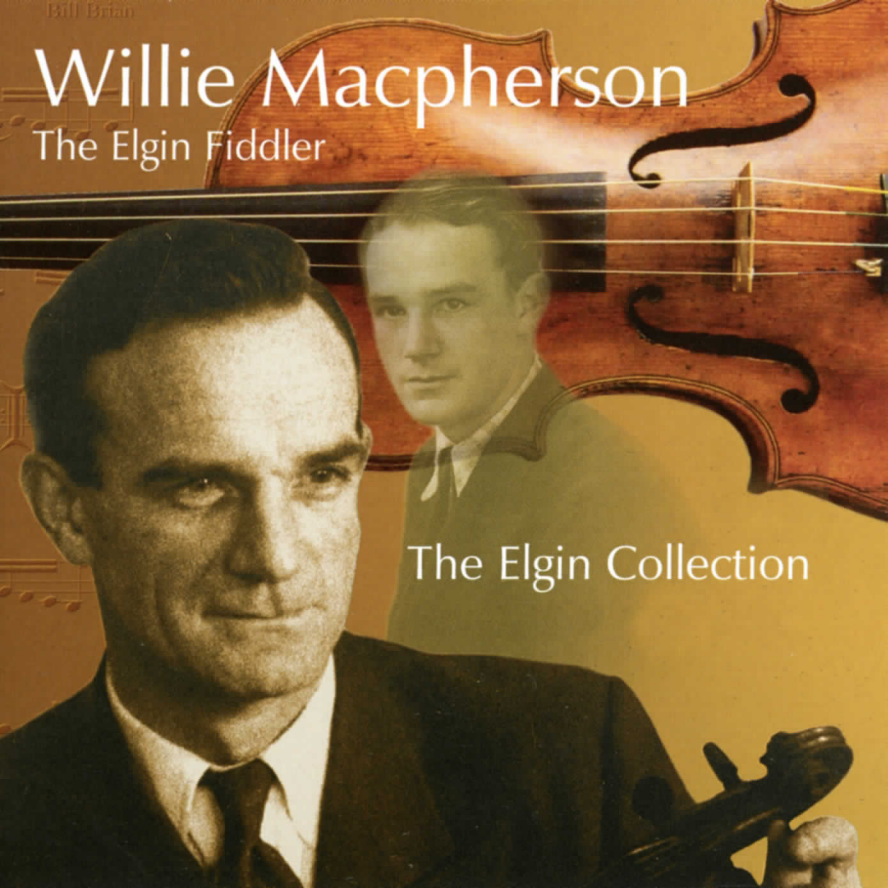


Bill Brian

Willie Macpherson

The Elgin Fiddler



The Elgin Collection



Willie Macpherson (1920 - 1974) was one of the outstanding musicians of his generation. In his short career, interrupted by war service, he became both a classical violinist of the highest class and one of the principal exponents and champions of traditional Scots fiddle music. Born in Elgin, one of a family of seven, Willie received support and sponsorship in his musical education from local families. One gift of enormous importance to a rising musician was that of a very special instrument. This 18th century violin of English origin became Willie's constant companion and served him and his family to the end of his days. It is now the "crown jewel" in the collection of the

Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Willie played in the First Violins of the Scottish National Orchestra from 1955 to 1966 when he returned to Elgin to immerse himself in teaching his instrument and in the musical culture - both classical and traditional - of the home town that he loved.

Willie threw his energies into reviving the Elgin Strathspey and Reel Society that had been in abeyance since the early 1950s. From its inauguration in 1970, the Society, with Willie as musical Director and Bill Brian as Leader went from strength to strength. Willie's presence attracted the best players, including a number of young players of high ability and, soon, individual members, groups, and the orchestra were winning competitions and classes at all major festivals across the North East. Following Willie's death, the Society has continued to prosper with Bill Brian at the helm.



In the last few years, the Society members have been endeavouring to promote themselves and their music, nationally and internationally, as per the Society Constitution. A travel fund has been installed, and this has been used to good effect, having already plied our music in such places as Denmark (twice) and Ireland. The Society, each year, always makes a point of visiting other similar organisations in the U.K. by sending players to take part in their rallies, concerts and music-making events, thus keeping in touch with current trends etc., in our traditional music. The future of Elgin Strathspey and Reel Society looks bright. The group is strong in membership, enthusiasm and the motivation to go forward in the knowledge that their best efforts are keeping alive the traditions of our national music.

The composition of the few tunes presented here can not be dated with any certainty. Willie was certainly playing and composing traditional music while involved in the very heavy classical schedules of the SNO. We know that *Mr A F Macpherson's Reel* and *Mrs Macpherson's Strathspey* date from 1954 when they were recorded under the auspices of The Clan Macpherson Association to honour two distinguished members. Those associated with The Elgin Strathspey and Reel Society date from 1970 to 1974, following the re-formation of the Society. We know that Willie met Harry and Effie Glasgow, keen followers of the traditional music scene, when he returned to work in the Elgin area. The others could have been composed at any time. The naming of the tunes follows traditional patterns. The two *James Macpherson* tunes are dedicated to Willie's father, who was the driving force behind the early stages of his son's career. Those named after places reflect the composer's fondness for the quiet beauty of Elgin and its environs and the personal memories associated with them.

1	Elgin Junior Strathspey & Reel Players Johnston's Mill	March Reel	2.58
2	Fogwatt Burns Supper	March	2.17
3	William Macpherson (Composed by A.R. Robertson)	Hornpipe	1.38
4	Effie Glasgow Strathspey Effie Glasgow Hornpipe	Strathspey & Hornpipe	2.15
5	Elgin S&R Players March Elgin S&R Players Strathspey Elgin S&R Players Reel	March, Strathspey & Reel	4.51
6	James Macpherson Strathspey James Macpherson Reel	Strathspey & Reel	2.25
7	Willie Macpherson (Composed by Bill Brian)	Polka	2.24
8	Newmill Brig Pansport Reel	Strathspey & Reel	1.50
9	Harry Glasgow Harry Glasgow Hornpipe	Slow Air & Hornpipe	2.32
10	The Bow Brig	March	1.54
11	Brumley Brae Sheriffmill	Reels	1.20
12	Strathmashie (Trad.) A.F.Macpherson	Strathspey & Reel	1.52
13	Mrs Fraser Macpherson	Strathspey	1.17
14	The Coleburn	Slow Air	2.32

Tracks 1,2,4,5,6 played by Elgin Strathspey & Reel Society

Tracks 3 & 7 played by Bill Brian

Tracks 8,9,10,11,12 & 13 played by William Macpherson

William Macpherson Hornpipe (Track 3) Composed by A.R.Robertson

Willie Macpherson Polka (Track 7) Composed by Bill Brian

Strathmashie Strathspey (Track 12) Traditional

All other tune composed by William Macpherson