INTRODUCTION

FORGOTTEN MUSIC
from the ISLES of the WEST

All of the music in this volume was published in the earlier part of the last century and most of it was collected by Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857–1930). Each of her three volumes of *Songs of the Hebrides* (1909, 1917, 1921) as well as the two further volumes, *From the Hebrides* (1925) and *More Songs of the Hebrides* (1929) carry lengthy introductions with many musical examples, and it is from these songs and tunes, which have no piano setting, that this selection has been made.

A great deal of the music in Kennedy-Fraser's introductions are work-songs with words, or such as "mouth music", *puirt à beul*, and where words exist they are in Scottish Gaelic. Hard physical repetitive work was a feature on these Scottish islands and music was sung to lighten the load or to help keep a community working together. Many of the songs have a hypnotic repetitive circular quality with no clear ending. Kennedy-Fraser's collaborator Kenneth MacLeod (1871–1955) comments

> ….labour songs, as sung by the people, have no stereotyped beginning or end. In fact, they are all, being circular tunes. If you wish to arrange them for the public you have to choose where to begin and where to end effectively.

Kennedy-Fraser elaborates saying:

> The songs were almost invariably long, consisting often of many verses strung on strophes of characteristic recurrent refrains. They were intended, in the case of labour songs, to carry one over long stretches of monotonous labour. To this end it was essential that they should have an inherent circular quality; that they should lend to turn ever upon themselves; that they should appear to end, not at the end but at the beginning; that the last note, contrary to custom, should in its very nature be un-restful and onward-driving, carrying the singer perforce to the inevitable repetition.

Because Kennedy-Fraser's art-song settings for piano and voice were successful both nationally and internationally, these short song examples from her introductions, which she gives to illustrate a musical aspect of Hebridean song, have been somewhat passed over in favour of the longer and more elaborate art-song settings.

Although Marjory Kennedy-Fraser was very successful in her day it was not without her critics, many of whom disliked the way she used the musical material she collected, altering words or tunes to create art-song arrangements. Criticism started in the middle of the 1920s, when the Victorian-Edwardian Celtic Twilight had become more and more unfashionable and there was a clear idea that the musical material should be collected in a more objective or scientific way and published in an unaltered state. Criticism of her work has hardly abated since then and at the same time new generations discover and admire her arrangements. (For a balanced view of this controversy see the lengthy article by Virginia Blankenhorn *Songs of the Hebrides and the Critics* which can be viewed online.)

J.L. Campbell who as a collector himself, preferred a more objective presentation of the musical material he gathered, tempered his criticism of the Songs of the Hebrides by saying "Actually, the most interesting part of Mrs Kennedy Fraser's publications are those portions of the prefaces where a few untouched-up versions of the airs are printed". In fact there are more than 200 art-song settings in addition to more than 100 "untouched-up versions" amongst Kennedy-Fraser's five volumes of songs. It is from the latter that the 42 tunes and songs in this collection are drawn.

Each of the tunes is given in two versions. Versions as found in the introductions ❊ with obvious textual errors corrected but without the words to give a clear version for melody instruments. For singers the second version has the given words, suggested chords as well as the same chords notated in the nearest inversion under the melodic note and may suit instruments such as lute, harp or keyboard. Guitarists and other players of plucked strings can find chord positions which suit their instrument. Metronome speeds are editorial suggestions.

I hope that this edition will be useful to solo players as well as ensembles. When there is more than one performer, singers or players of melody instruments could start with the melody only. Players of bass instruments could eventually join in with the roots of the chords, harmonies added gradually, starting with open octaves or fifths and only later filling in with thirds as the tune is repeated again and again. Although the tunes from each of Kennedy-Fraser's volumes are grouped together I have reorganised the sequence according to key so that sets can be made easily with a view to performance. There is so much really good music collected and published but languishing in books very few people open. I hope this edition will bring these tunes and songs to the attention of a wider public

Anyone interested in the background to a particular tune would do well to consult the lengthy introductions given by Marjory Kennedy-Fraser in the five volumes mentioned above, some of which can be viewed online at www.imslp.org

J.S.Clark
Monassa
Ireland 2021

❊
No.3 time signature changed from 3/8 to 3/4,
No.8 time signature changed from 12/8 to 12/4
No.14 transposed from A flat major miixolydian to D major mixolydian,
No. 36 transposed up a fourth

Preview

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Preview

1. A MHAIRI BHOIDEACH

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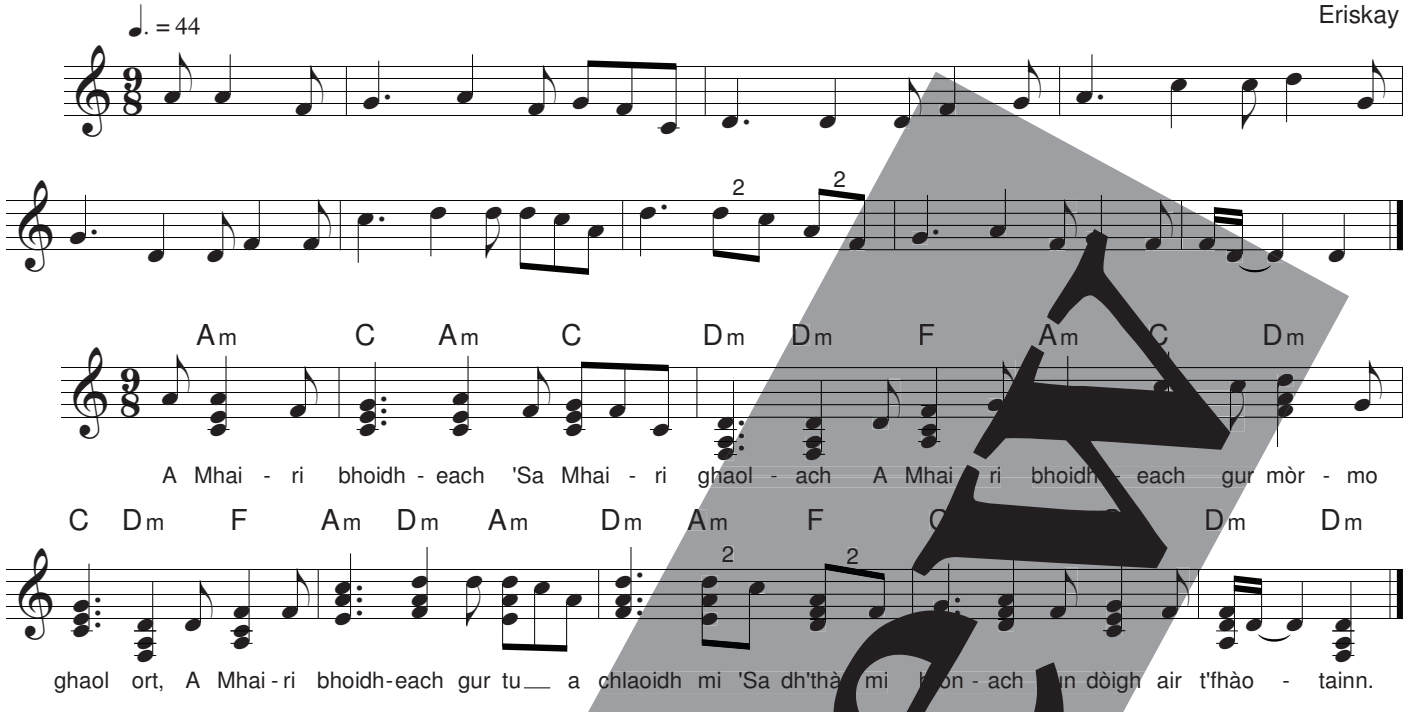
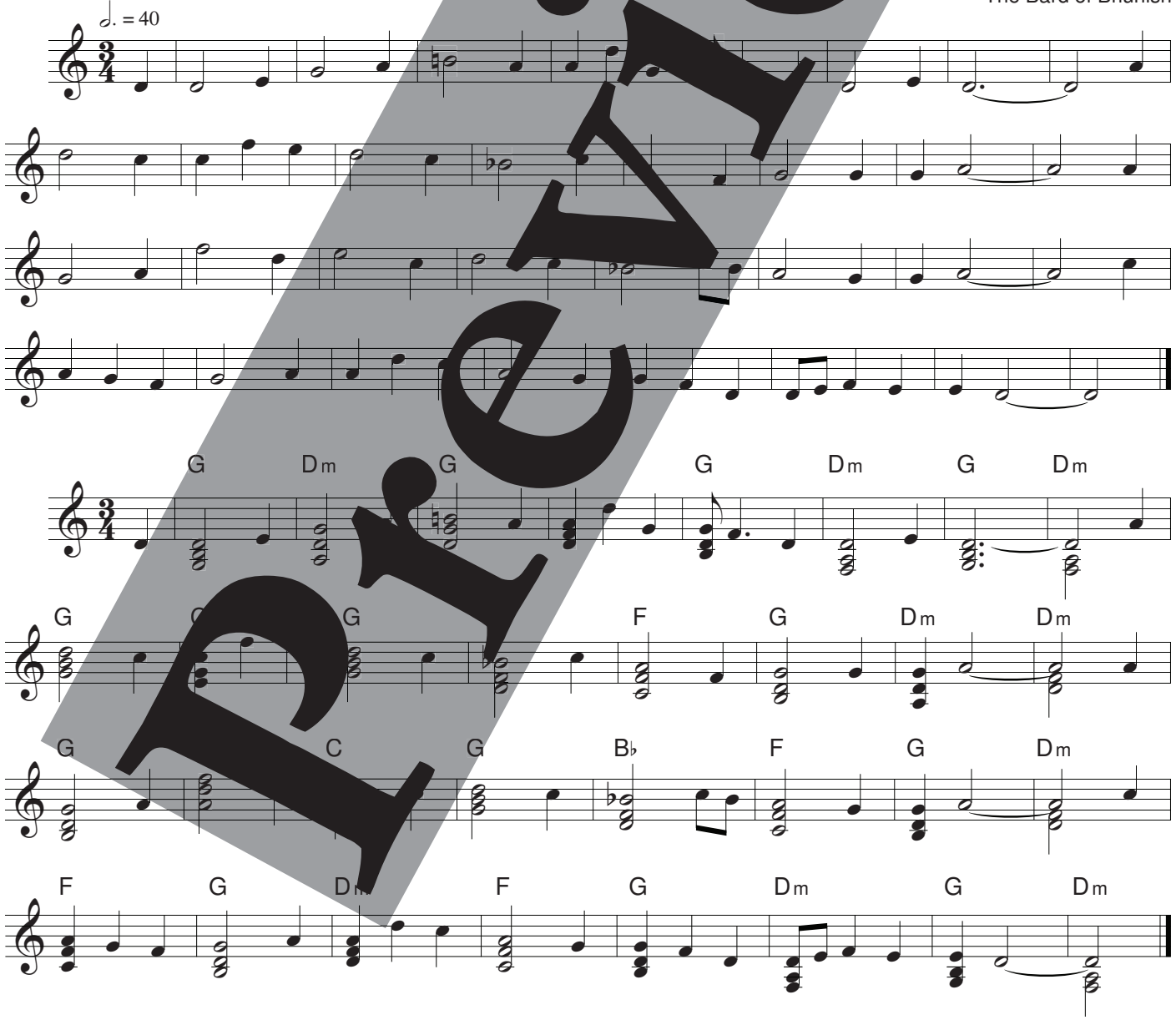


2. BARRA BARD'S LAMENT ON TWO YOUN

The Bard of Briunish



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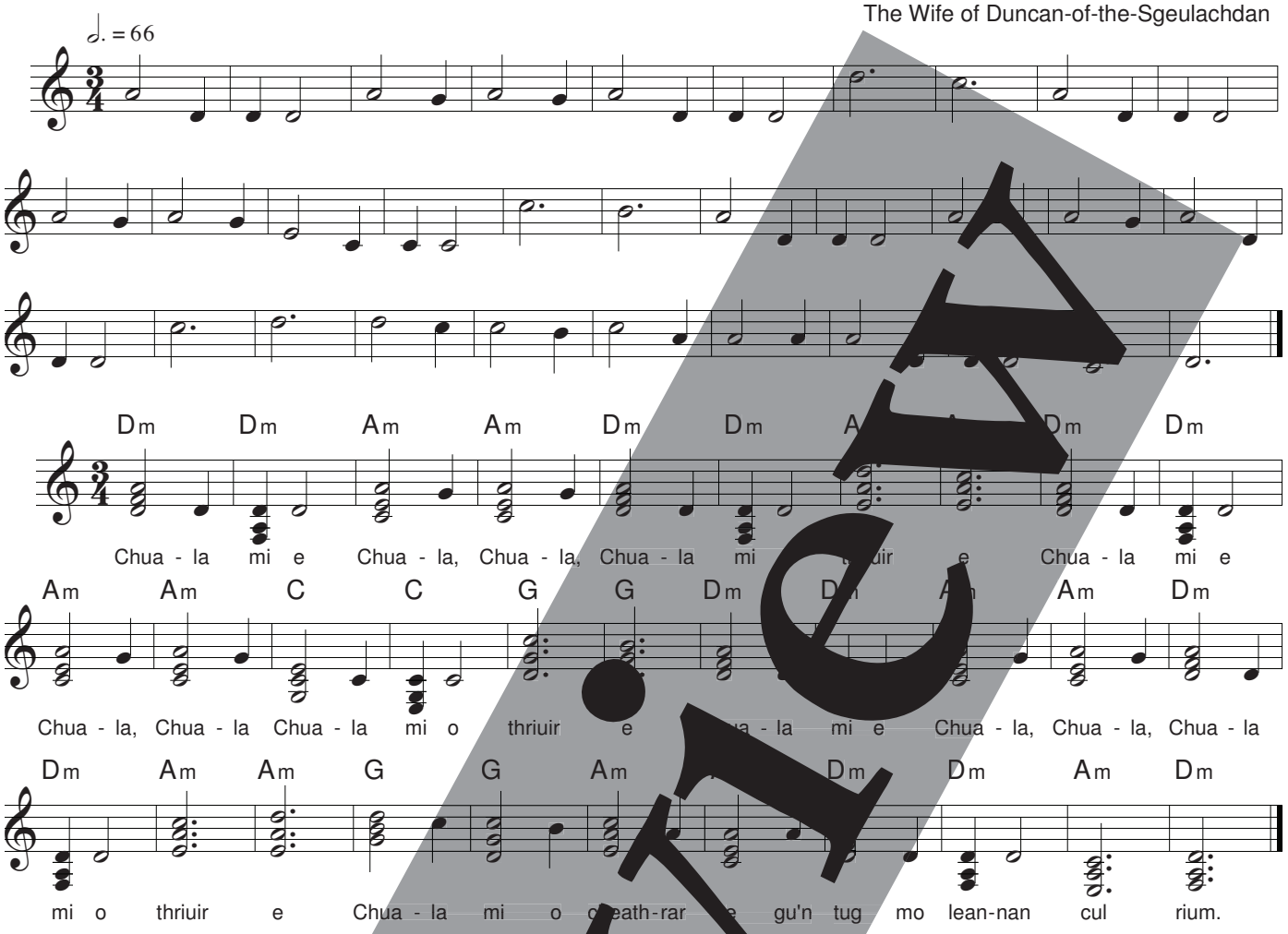
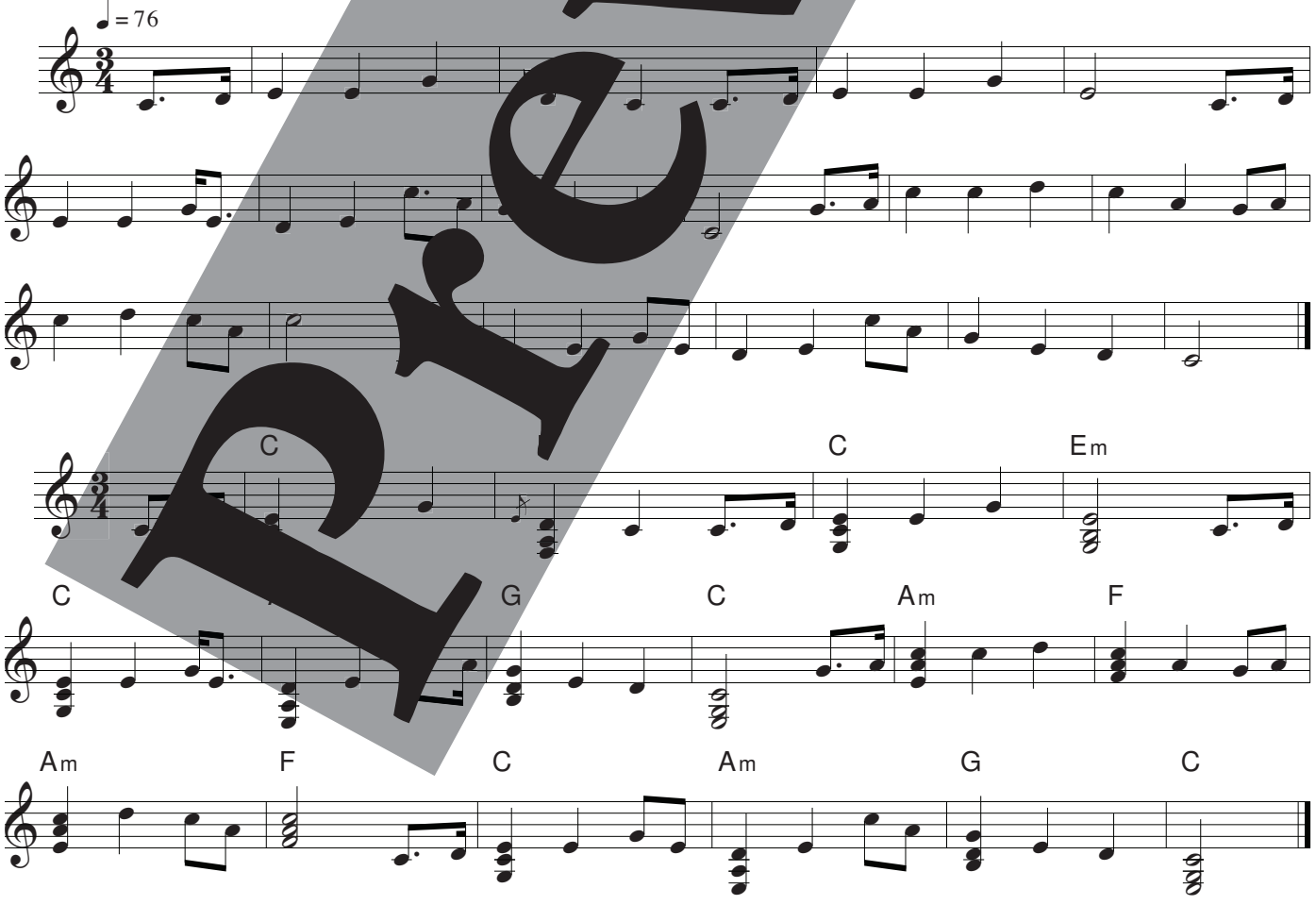
3. PORT - A - BEUL *MOUTH MUSIC*

The Wife of Duncan-of-the-Sgeulachdan



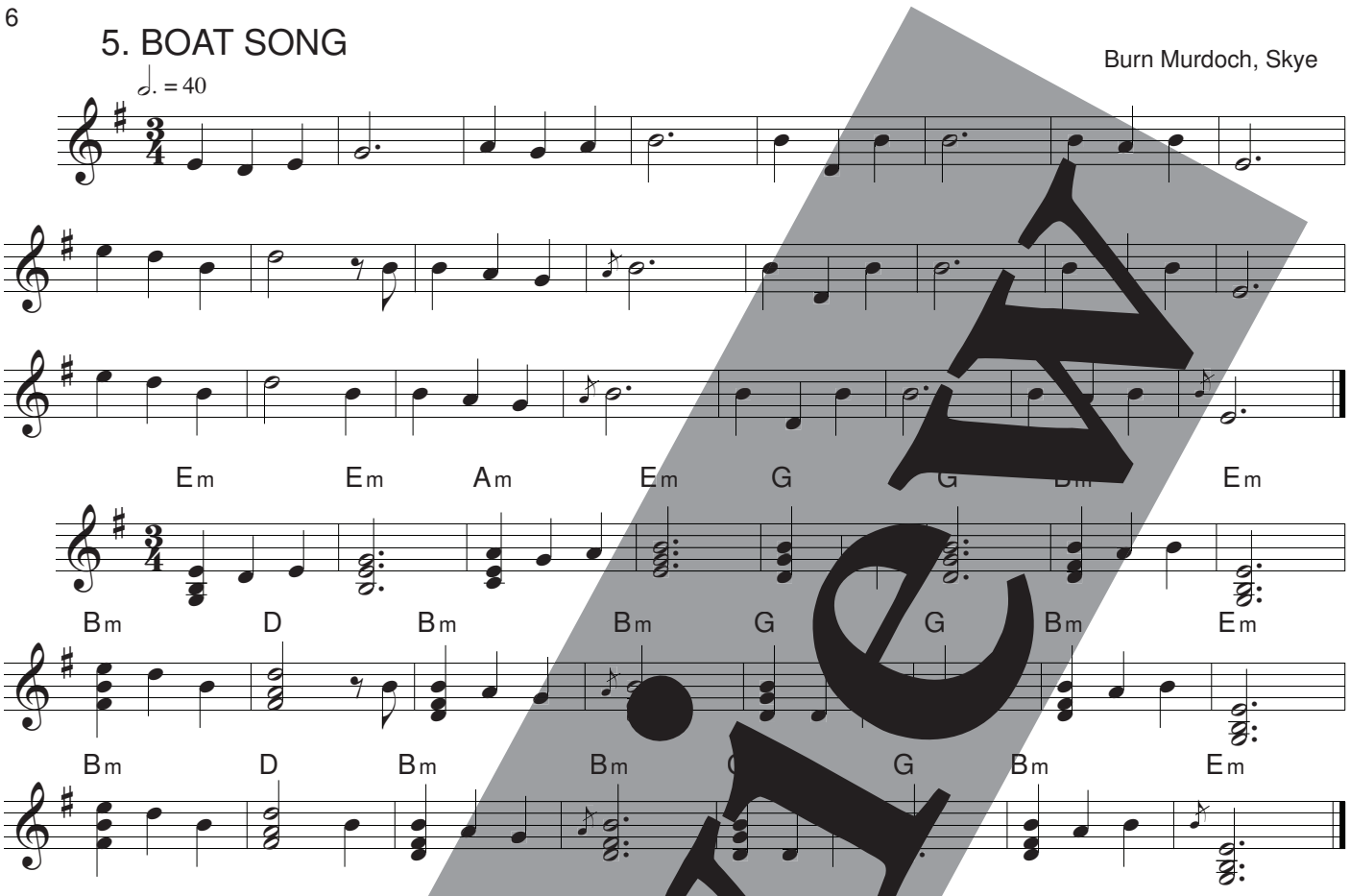
4. CRODH CHAILEIN



Preview

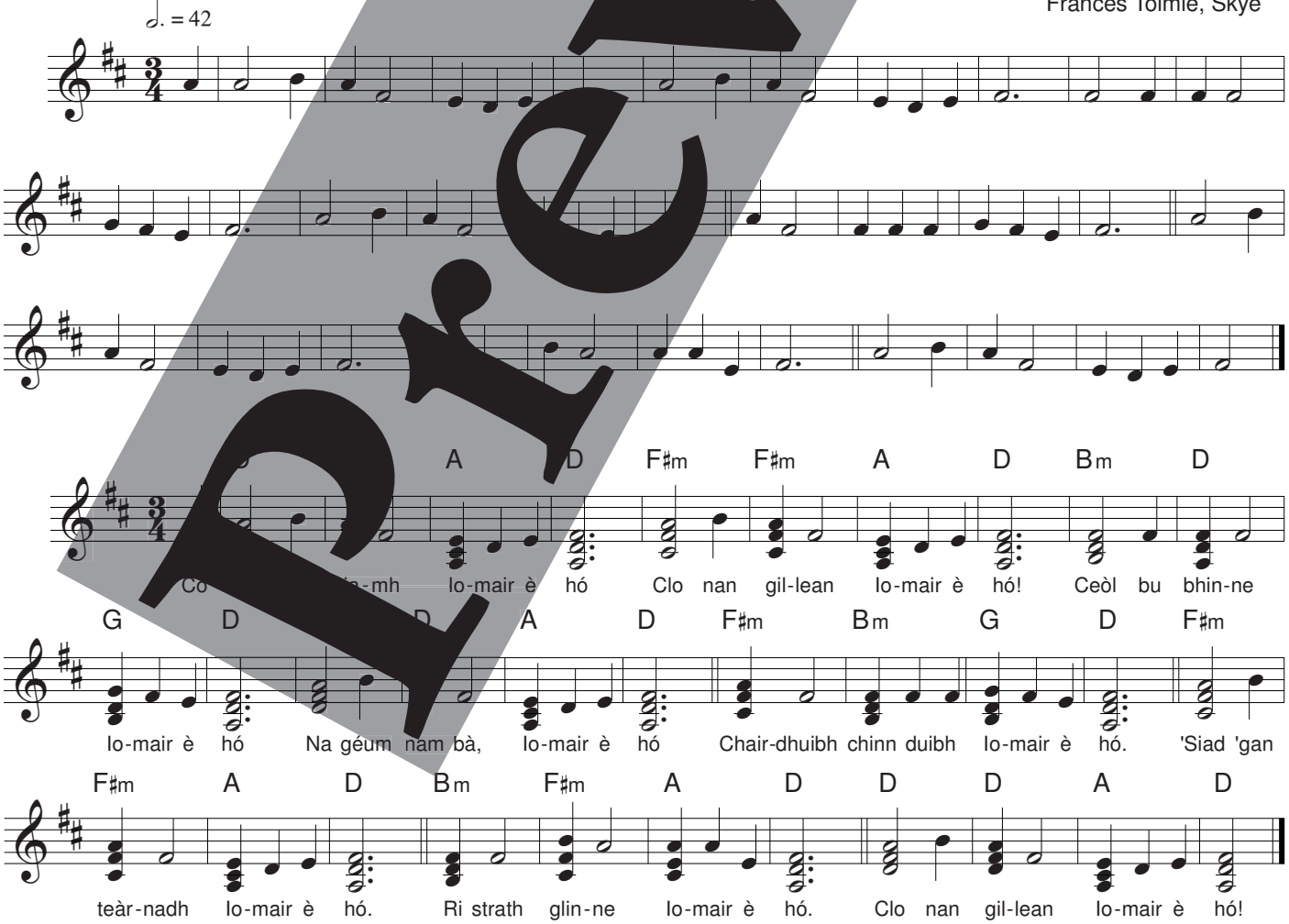
5. BOAT SONG

Burn Murdoch, Skye



6. CLO NAN GILLEAN

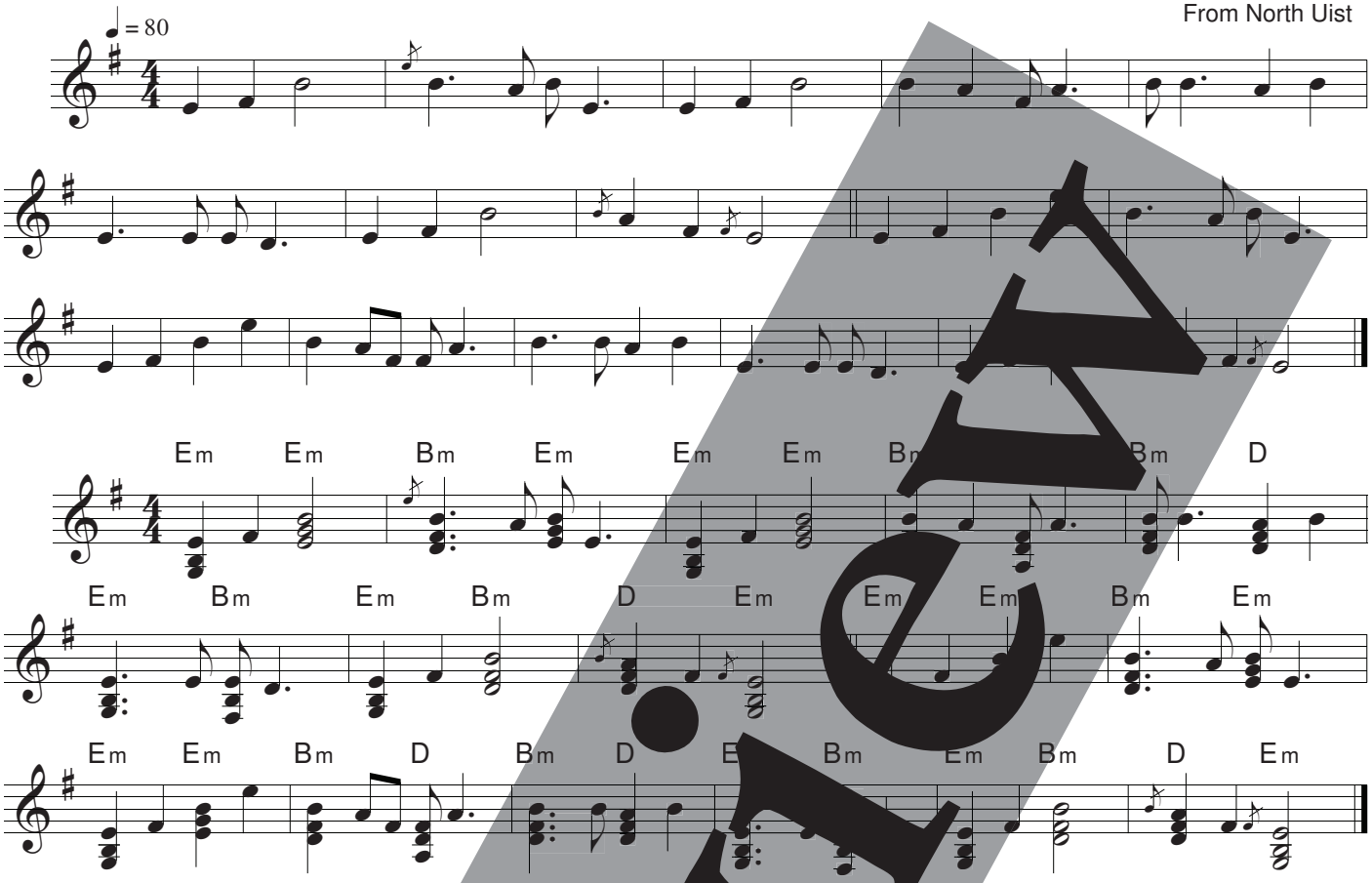
Frances Tolmie, Skye



Preview

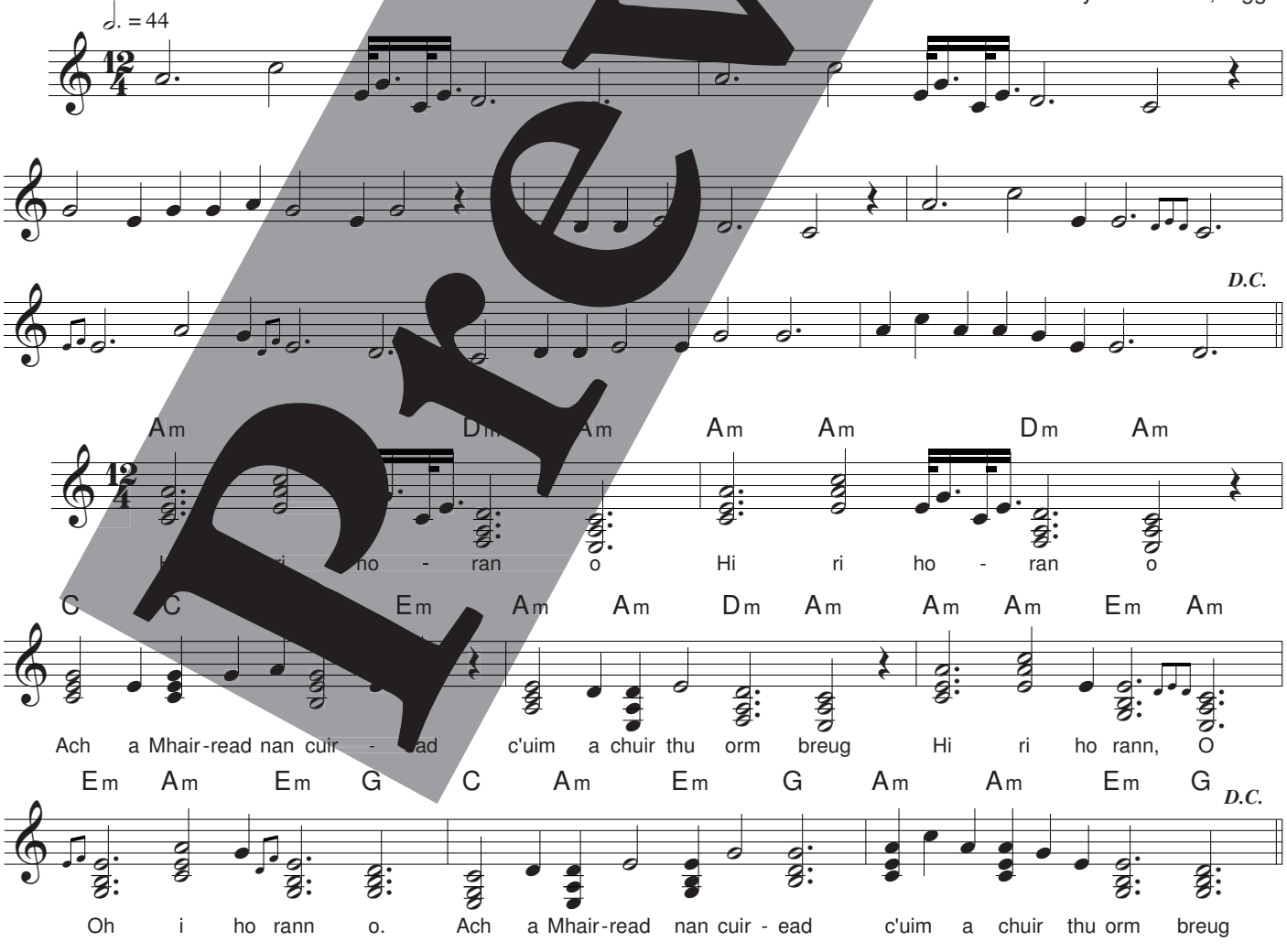
7. LOVE SONG

From North Uist



8. A MARY MACLEOD WAULKING SONG

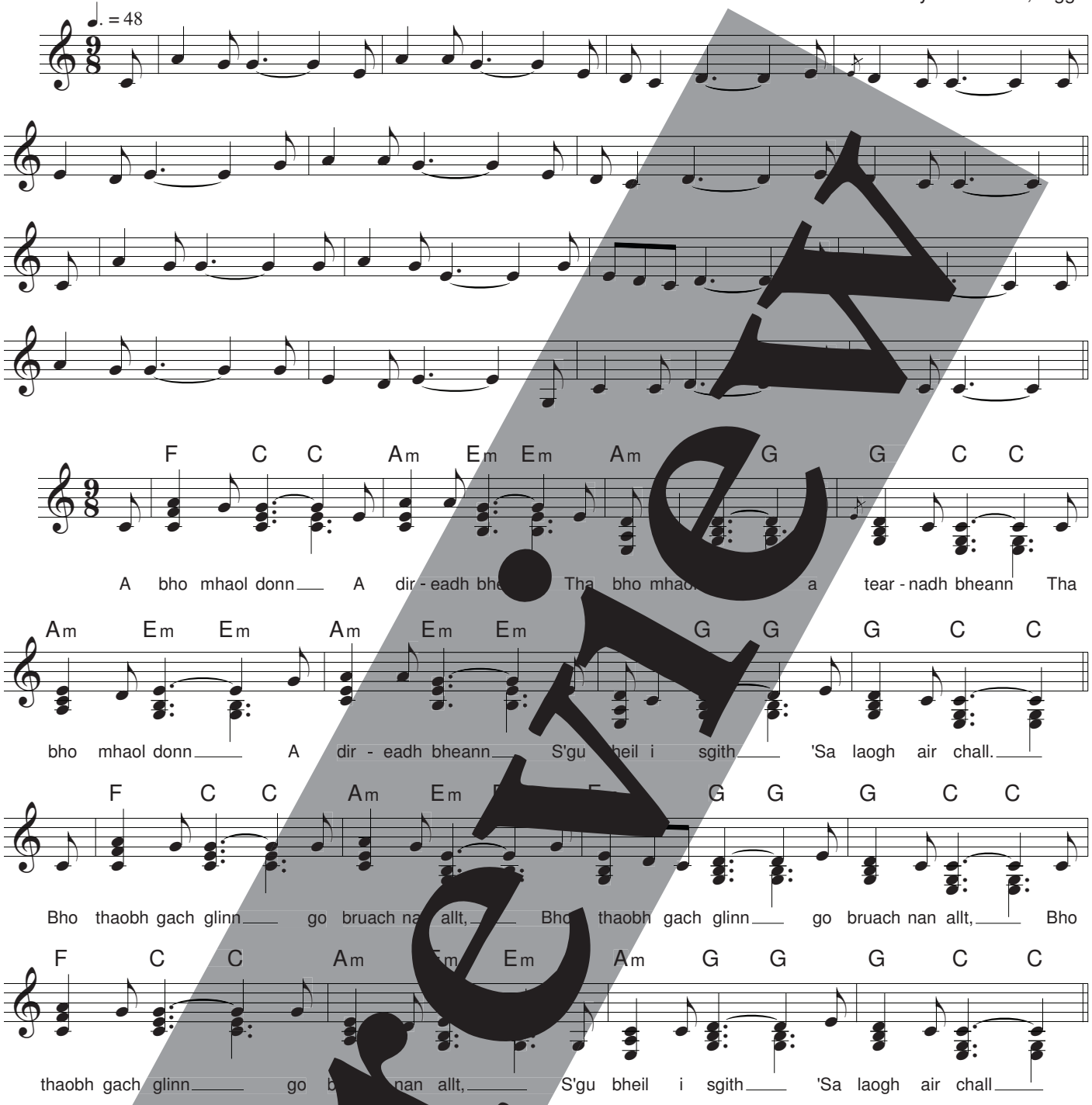
Kirsty Mackinnon, Eigg



Preview

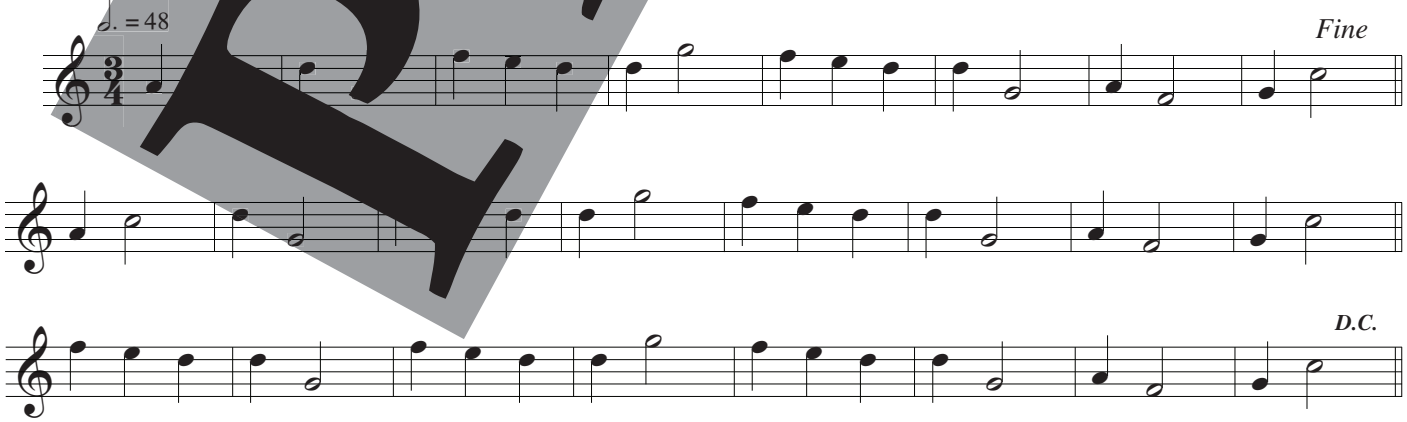
9. MILKING CROON

Kirsty Mackinnon, Eigg



10. MILK ON THE THREE LOCHS

Piper Macleod, Eigg



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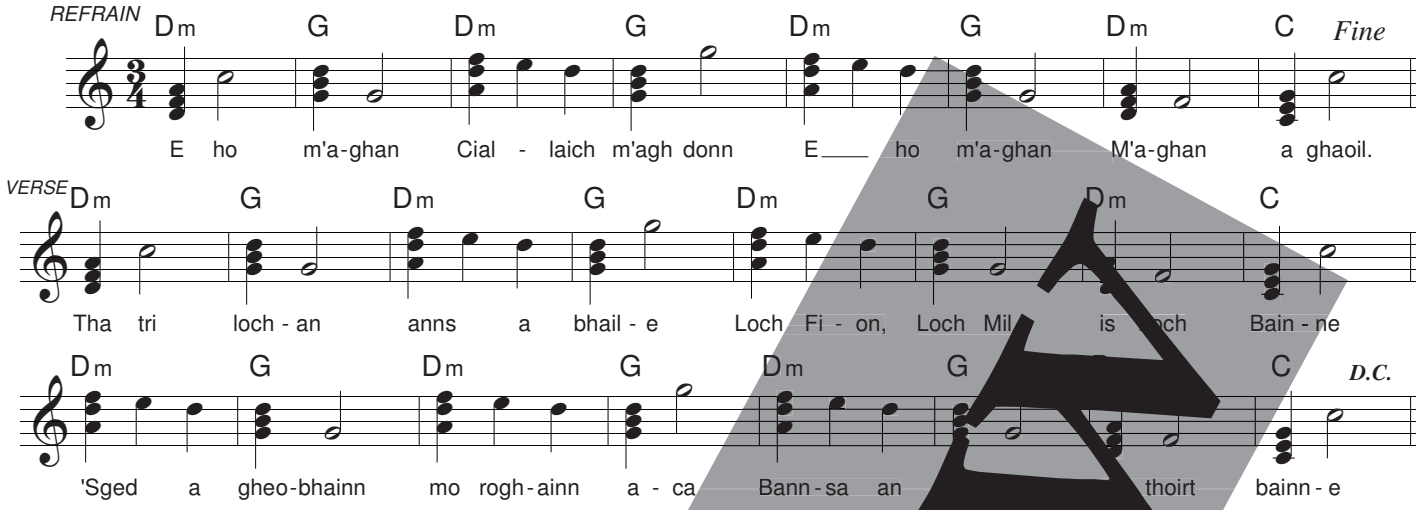
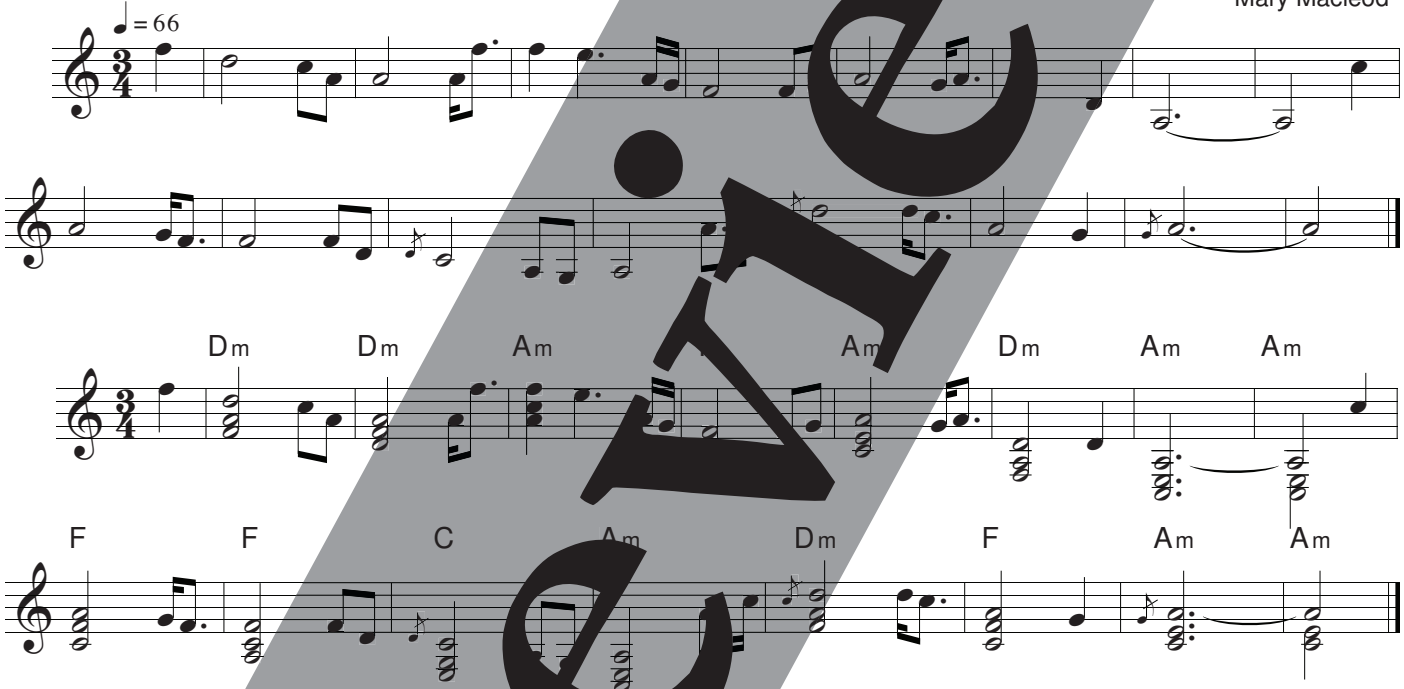


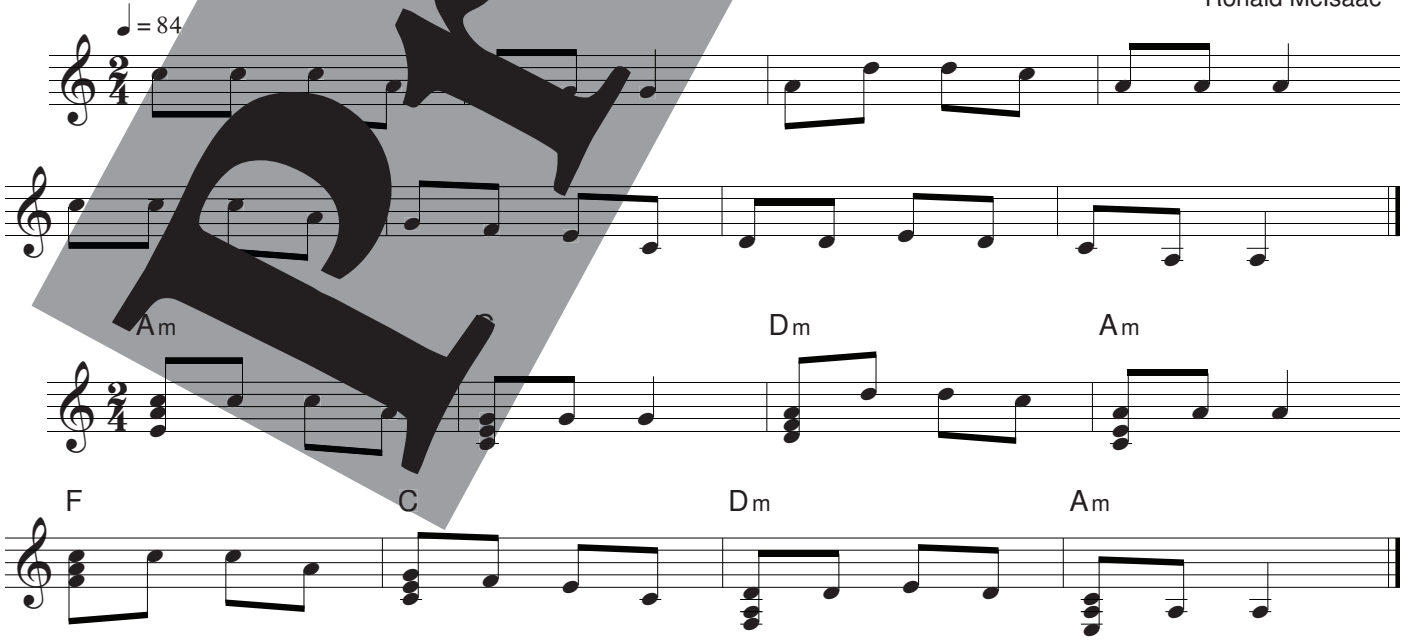
11. 17th CENTURY LAMENT

Mary Macleod



12. PORT-A-BIAL CA[illegible]ADH[illegible]DH

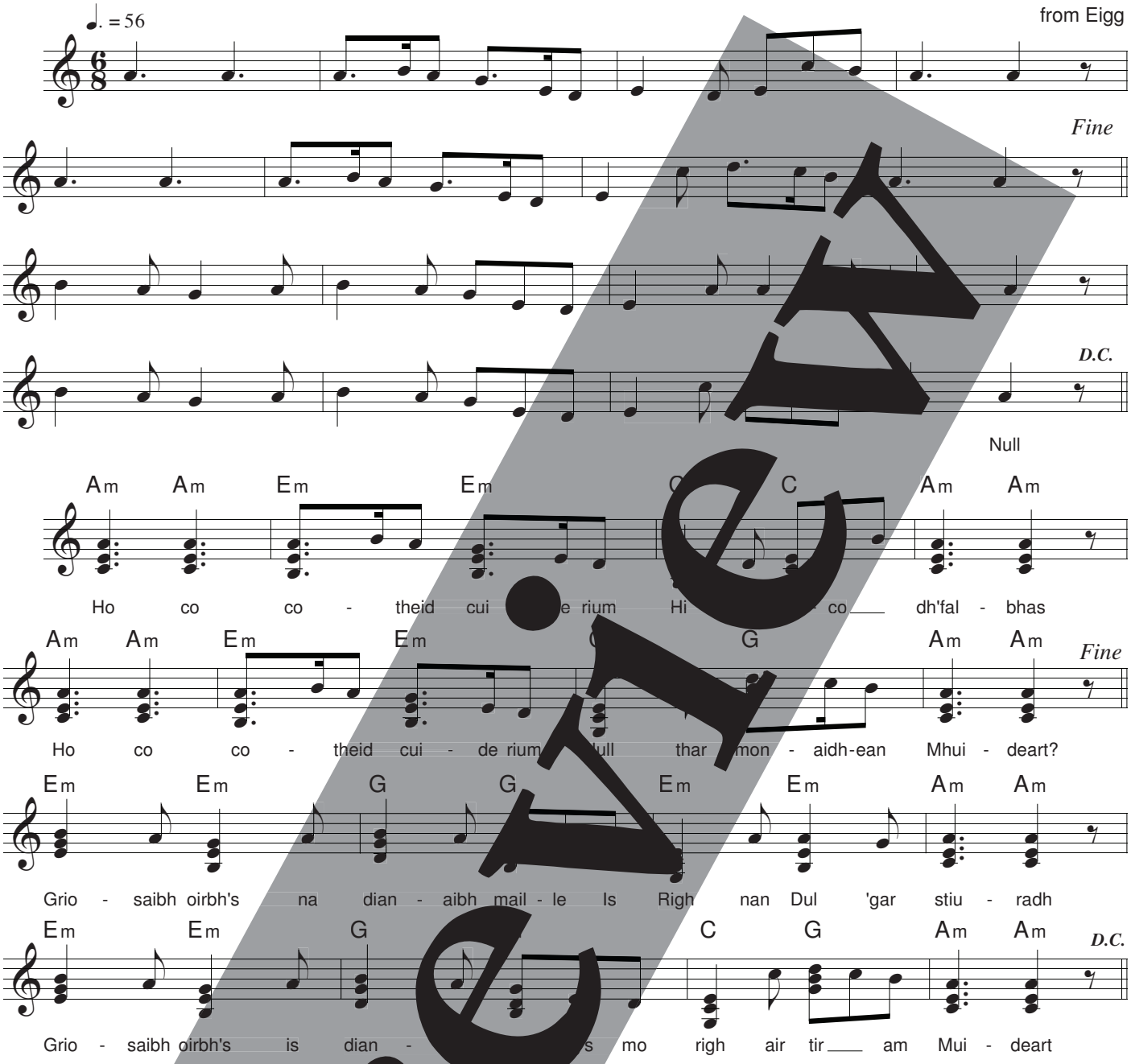
Ronald McIsaac



Preview

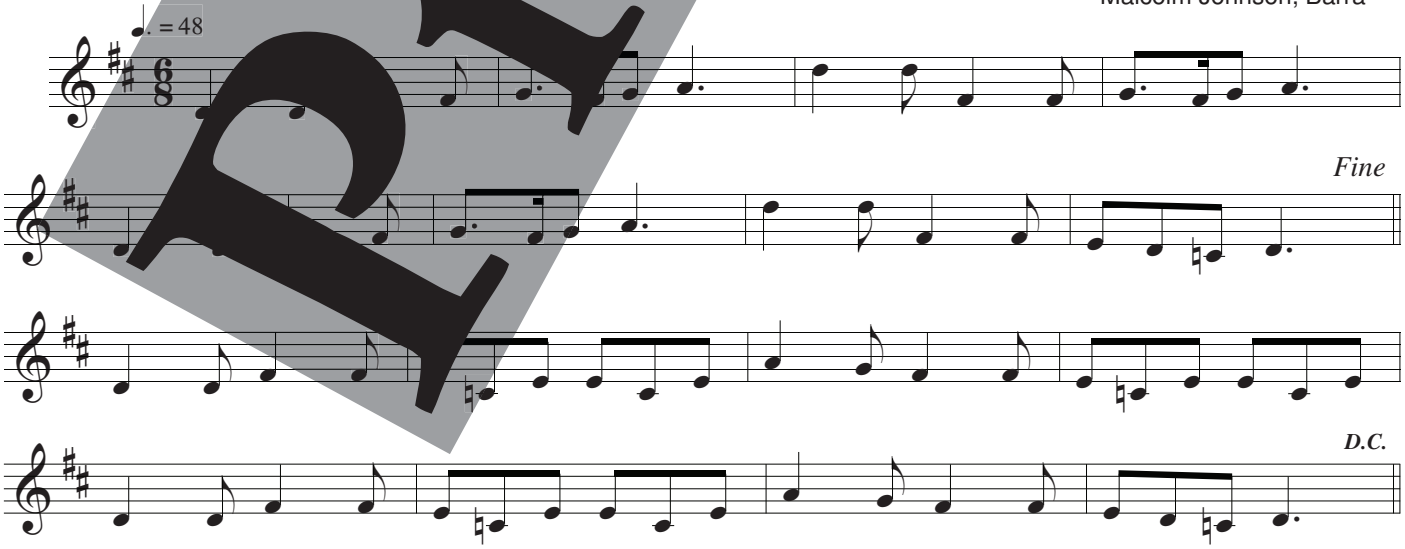
13. JACOBITE RISING SONG

from Eigg



14. LURE OF THE S MAIDEN

Malcolm Johnson, Barra



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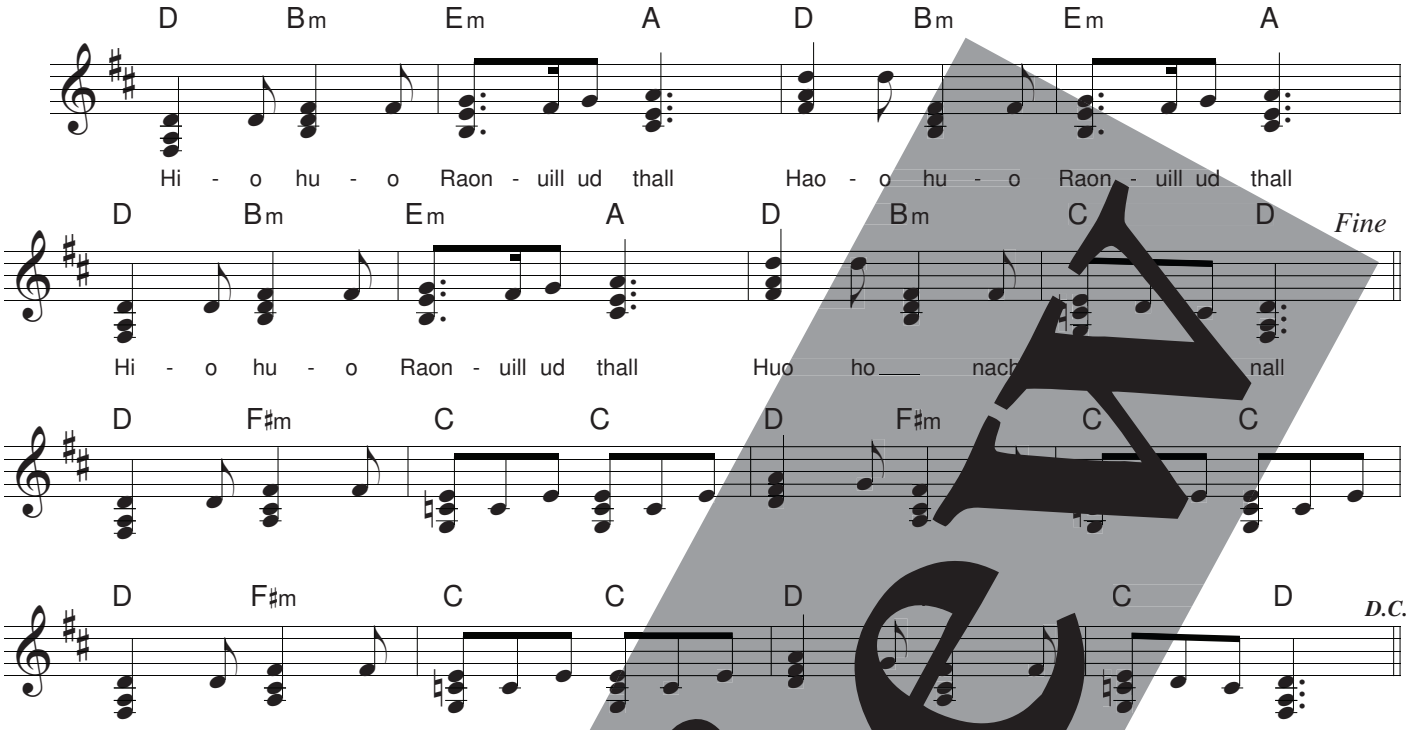
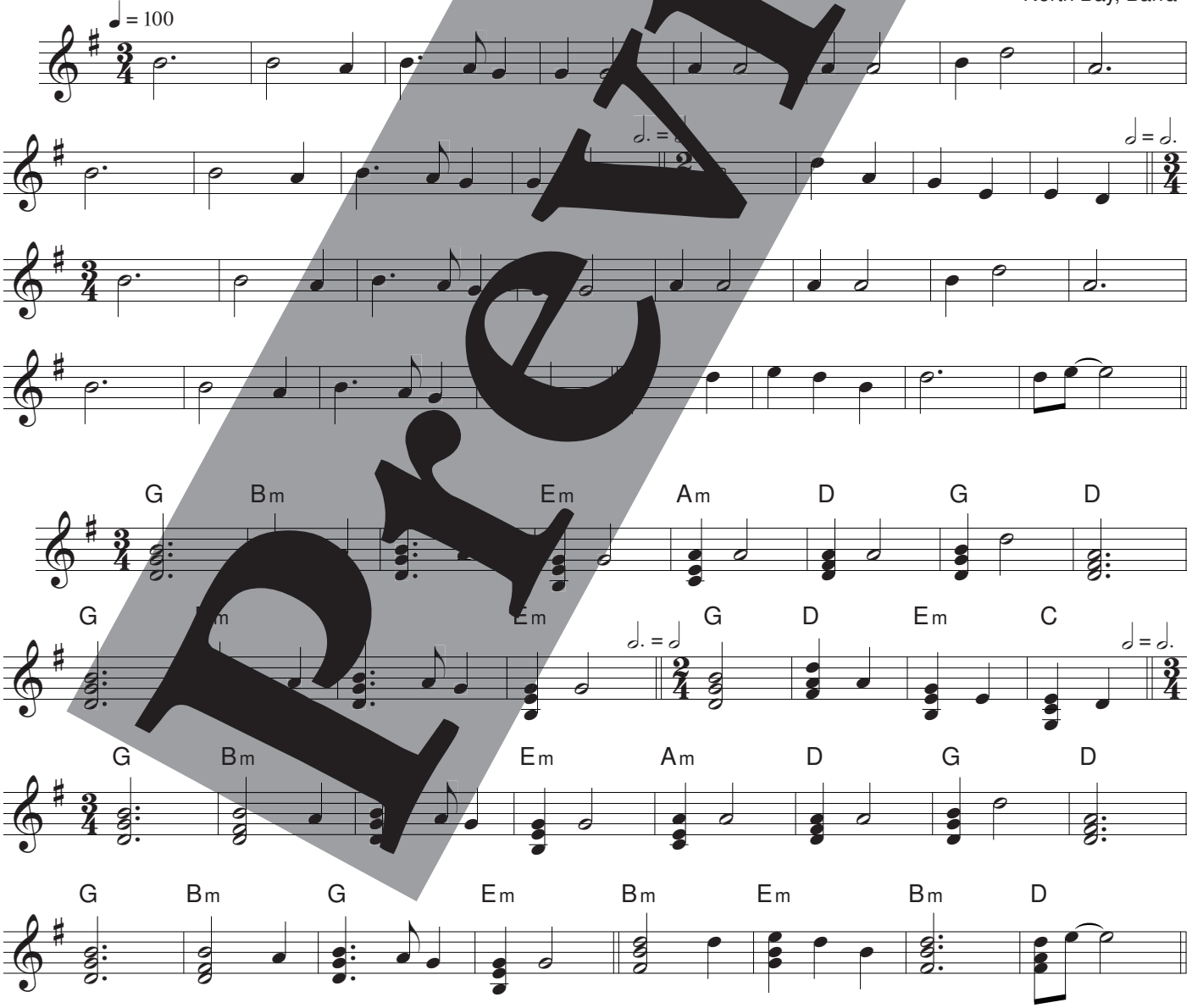


15. LAMENT

North Bay, Barra



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