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Thomas Keith

A Discography of Robert Burns 1948 to 2002

After Sir Walter Scott published his edition of border ballads he came to be chastised by the mother of James Hogg, one Margaret Laidlaw, who told him:

“There was never ane o my sangs prentit till ye prentit them yoursel, and ye hae spoilt them awthegither. They were made for singing an no for readin: but ye hae broken the charm noo, and they’ll never be sung mair.”¹

Mrs. Laidlaw was perhaps unaware that others had been printing Scottish songs from the oral tradition in great numbers for at least the previous hundred years in volumes such as Allan Ramsay’s *The Tea-Table Miscellany* (1723-37), *Orpheus Caledonius* (1733) compiled by William Thompson, James Oswald’s *The Caledonian Pocket Companion* (1743, 1759), *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs* (1767, 1770) edited by David Herd, James Johnson’s *Scots Musical Museum* (1787-1803) and *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs* (1793-1818) compiled by George Thompson—substantial contributions having been made to the latter two collections by Robert Burns. That doesn’t mean Mrs. Laidlaw was wrong in her observation; by the time Scott’s *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* was published in 1803 the “charm,” as she called it, was beginning to break. Others, such as Francis James Child and, most notably, Gavin Grieg, would carry on the work well into the nineteenth century, but the oral tradition as

¹Hamish Henderson, *Alias MacAlias, Writings on Songs, Folk and Literature* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 23.

it once had been was, by the turn of the twentieth century, no more. Later still, Hamish Henderson and Alan Lomax worked diligently in the 1950s and 1960s to track down and record, on paper and audio tape, the oral tradition where it was scattered in Scotland, mostly in the communities of traveling folk.

Industrialization and cultural evolution, abetted more by emigration than by ethnomusicologists or song-collectors, left the oral tradition, as it was known, to the past along with its broken charm, which resulted in the silencing of thousands of traditional Scottish songs. So, Burns was not alone in that the greatest percentage of his songs remained on the printed page for over one hundred and fifty years. Often assumed to be, or treated as poetry when considered at all, Burns's collection of 324² or 354³ songs (or more or fewer, depending upon who is counting) is a singular achievement due to his unusual ability to write, re-write and adapt the lyrics for the tunes he wished to preserve. He proved to be a master of the Scots vernacular, an adroit musical editor with an impeccable ear, and created a lyrical record of Scotland's poor and working people as they neared the close of the eighteenth century.

This is not to say that Burns's songs were ignored entirely. On the contrary, several were sung over and over again wherever the Scots traveled or settled. However, hardly more than three dozen of them saw their way into the public repertoire and many of those lyrics were not regularly credited to Burns.

It was the invention of Thomas Edison's "talking machine" that caused Burns's songs to be *heard*, outside of Burns Suppers and occasionally the concert stage, by a wider audience. From approximately 1900 to 1950 sound recordings of Burns songs were produced as singles on either cylinder records or 78s, usually with the Burns song on one side (in the case of the 78s) and combined with a sentimental song such as "Home Sweet Home." Searches of library holdings and Internet auctions reveal the top five most often recorded songs of Burns from this period were, in descending order: "Auld Lang Syne," "Comin' Thru the Rye," "John Anderson, My Jo," "Flow Gently Sweet Afton," and "Ye Bank and Braes of Bonnie Doon."⁴ Therein lies much of the evidence that it was not until the mid- to late-1950s that Burns's massive song collection began to be heard by a wider audience with the advent of the long-playing ["lp"] 33 1/3 revolutions per minute ["rpm"] vinylite record, introduced by Columbia Records in 1948. Early in the twentieth century a group called The Old Home Singers, recording on the Edison label, appeared repeatedly on cylinders with their versions of "Auld Lang Syne" and "Comin' Thru the Rye." In 1994 the Moidart Music Group, in Kent, released *The Star of Rabbie Burns* on compact disc which features twenty-six early

²Serge Hovey, *The Robert Burns Song Book*, I (Pacific, Missouri, 1997), p. 2.

³James C. Dick, *The Songs of Robert Burns* (Hatboro, Pennsylvania, 1962), p. 342.

⁴This conclusion comes from Internet searches of library holdings and Internet auctions. These sources are listed as part of the endnote for the discography.

monograph recordings from 1906-1942, sung by some of the most prominent British stars of opera and the music hall such as Joseph Hislop, Father Sydney MacEwan, Maggie Teyte, Roy Henderson, Isobel Baillie, and John McCormack. There is a greater variety in this collection beyond the top five Burns songs mentioned above and that is most likely because these artists came from the concert stage. At least two 78s were released in conjunction with the 1930 black-and-white British film *The Loves of Robert Burns* and feature solos by popular Scottish tenor Joseph Hislop who played Burns in the film. One of the earliest, if not the first, spoken word recording dedicated to Burns was a Burns Supper "Immortal Memory" address, *Robert Burns—A Man Amongst Men*, published by Columbia Records in 1929 as a 78 rpm gramophone record. The speech was written and read by the Rt. Hon. J. Ramsay MacDonald, ex-Prime Minister of Great Britain, leader of the Labor Party in the House of Commons from 1911 to 1914. The former Prime Minister was a regular speaker on the Burns Supper circuit and gave the address at the unveiling of the Vancouver Burns statue on August 25, 1928.

The discography which follows includes only recordings produced from 1948 to 2002 dedicated entirely to the work of Burns, whether musical or spoken word, or those on which at least fifty-percent of the selections are by Burns. Recordings which feature a few songs or poems by Burns are not included. Due to the fact that most recordings were initially printed only once, reissues (most often they are albums that have been reissued as a cassette or compact disc) are listed separately. These recordings are in fact distinct releases and will show within the scope of the entire discography when interest in producing Burns sound recordings ebbed and flowed. When recordings were distributed in both the United Kingdom and the United States (or elsewhere) simultaneously, all identification numbers are given and they are listed as one entry. The exception to this is the case of the Greentrax (Scotland) publication of certain of the Redpath/Hovey albums which, due to distribution limitations and the passage of time between some of the United States and United Kingdom editions, are essentially reissues. Home-made tapes are not part of this discography, but self-published recordings packaged and intended for distribution, however modestly, are included.⁵

The abbreviations used for this discography are: "LP" for a 33 1/3 rpm record album; "2LP" for a double 33 1/3 rpm record album release; "45" for a 45 rpm record; "CT" for a cassette tape; "2CT" for a double cassette tape release; "CD" for a compact disc; "2CD" for a double compact disc release; "***" for a reissue or the inclusion of previously recorded material.

⁵While I have endeavored to listen to and inspect a copy of each recording listed, when that was not possible, I made every attempt to gather complete information for the albums. Many recordings were not printed with a copyright or production date and in those cases I have, through release information, cover copy, and library purchase dates, attempted to fairly date the recording. Those dates are preceded by the term "circa."

A Robert Burns Discography

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| (1) | <i>circa</i> 1948-50
JAY 3003 (LP) | <i>Norman MacKaye Sings Ballads of Scotland's Bard Robert Burns</i>
/ pub. by Jay Records, London, England |
| (2) | <i>circa</i> 1951
CL 6274 (LP) | <i>My Heart's in the Highlands—Jo Stafford Sings the Songs of Robert Burns</i>
music by Alton Rinker, accompaniments by Paul Weston /
pub. by Columbia Records, CBS, New York, NY, USA |
| (3) | <i>circa</i> 1954
CL 1043 (LP) | <i>Jo Stafford Sings the Songs of Scotland with Words by Robert Burns</i>
music by Alton Rinker, accompaniments by Paul Weston *
/ pub. by Columbia Records, CBS, New York, NY, USA |
| (4) | <i>circa</i> 1956
ARS 29 (LP) | <i>Tam o' Shanter, A Symphonic Ballad</i> by George W. Chadwick
(Side 2)
American Recording Society Orchestra, Max Schoenherr,
conductor / pub. by American Recording Society, New York
NY, USA |
| (5) | 1957
RLP 12-823 (LP) | <i>The Songs of Robert Burns Sung by Betty Sanders</i>
accompanied by Jerry Silverman, guitar; Harry Smyles, oboe
/ pub. by Riverside Records, Bill Grauer Productions, New
York, NY, USA |
| (6) | 1958
Elektra 155 (LP) | <i>Bobby Burns' Merry Muses of Caledonia</i>
sung by Paul Clayton; accompaniments by Fred Hellerman
/ pub. by the Elektra Corp., New York, NY, USA |
| (7) | <i>circa</i> 1958
ANGEL 35256
(LP) | <i>Burns Night—Songs and Poems of Robert Burns</i>
The Saltire Music Group, Hans Oppenheim, director
/ pub. by Angel Records, New York, NY, USA |
| (8) | <i>circa</i> 1958
02551-2(a)
(LP) | <i>Songs to Verses by R. Burns</i>
composed by G[eorgiy] Sviridov; S[amuel] Marshak,
translator /pub. by МЕЛЮДИЯ, "made in USSR" |
| (9) | 1959
Philips
ABL 3280/1 (2LP) | <i>Burns Nicht "A Traditional Supper in Auld Reekie"</i>
with Janessa Clark, Harold Wightman, Joan Alexander, Hugh
MacDiarmid / pub. by Philips, Great Britain |
| (10) | 1959
Parlophone PMC
1077 (LP) | <i>The Immortal Memory</i>
with Duncan Macrae, Kenneth McKellar, Ian Wallace, Peter
Mallan, Alistair McHog, Stuart Gordon, and Jimmy Shand and
his Band / pub. by EMI Records, Ltd., Middlesex, England |
| (11) | 1959
Spoken Arts 754
(LP) | <i>The Love Songs of Robert Burns</i>
sung by Ann Moray; Charles Crowder, arranger and harpist
/ pub. by Spoken Arts, Inc., New Rochelle, NY, USA |

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- (12) 1959
TC 1103 (LP) *The Poetry of Robert Burns and Scottish Border Ballads*
read by Frederick Worlock (Burns, side 1) and C.R.M. Brooks
(ballads, side 2), directed by Howard Sackler / pub. by Caed-
mon, New York, NY, USA
- (13) 1959
JES 3 (45) *Robert Burns Bi-centenary*
sung by Robin Hall / pub. by Collector Records, London,
England
- (14) circa 1959
EDP 225 (45) *Robert Burns, Scottish Love Songs*
sung by Duncan Robertson / pub. by Delyse Records, London,
England
- (15) 1959
PS 179 (LP) *The Songs of Robert Burns – Kenneth McKellar*
/ pub. on the Decca label by London Records, England
- (16) 1959
FW 8758 (LP) *The Songs of Robert Burns Sung by Ewan MacColl*
/ pub. by Folkways Records & Service Corp., New York, NY,
USA
- (17) 1960
FL 9877 (LP) *Poems and Letters of Robert Burns*
read by Max Dunbar / pub. by Smithsonian Folkways Records,
Washington, DC, USA
- (18) 1960
ABE 10215 (45) *Poems of Robert Burns Read by Alex Allan*
/ Philips Minigroove, pub. by Philips, Great Britain
- (19) 1960**
tce 137 (45) *The Poetry of Robert Burns*
read by Frederick Worlock / pub. by Caedmon Records, New
York, NY, USA
- (20) circa 1960
SR 4513 (LP) *Songs of Robert Burns*
sung by Joan Summers / pub. by Scottish Records, Aberdeen,
Scotland
- (21) 1960
ABE10214
(45) *Songs of Robert Burns Sung by Joan Alexander and Duncan
Robertson*
/ pub. by Phillips Minigroove, Great Britain
- (22) 1960
tce 138 (45) *Tam o' Shanter*
read by Frederick Worlock / pub. by Caedmon Records, New
York, NY, USA
- (23) circa 1961**
33CX 1317 (LP) *An Evening with Robert Burns*
The Saltire Music Group, various artists, notes by Maurice
Lindsay / pub. by Columbia Records and distributed by EMI
Records Limited, Middlesex, England
- (24) circa 1961**
SEB 3512 (45) *Songs and Poems of Robert Burns*
The Saltire Music Group, various artists / pub. by Columbia
Records and distributed by EMI Intl., Middlesex, England

- (25) 1962
D1 (LP) *Songs from Robert Burns' Merry Muses of Caledonia Sung by Ewan MacColl*
produced by Kenneth S. Goldstein and Harry Oster / pub. by Dionysus Recordings and distributed by Folk-Lyric Records, Baton Rouge, LA, USA
- (26) 1963
LLP 1013 (LP) *The Jolly Beggars: A Cantata with Words by Robert Burns*
The Saltire Music Group; arrangements by Cedric Thorpe Davie; performed by The Edinburgh Quartet / pub. by Waverly Records, Edinburgh, Scotland
- (27) 1963 (LP) *Twelve Songs* [of Robert Burns for harpsichord]
arranged by Francis Hopkinson; Thomas Heywood, tenor; Melville Smith, harpsichord; Robert Thornton, liner notes / pub. by Cambridge Records, Wellesley, MA, USA
- (28) 1964
33SR 124 (LP) *Tam o' Shanter and Other Poems*
read by Harold Wightman ("A Recorded Anthology of Scottish Verse" Part One—Poems of Robert Burns) prod. by Douglas Gray / pub. by Scottish Records, Aberdeen, Scotland
- (29) 1965
33SR 125 (LP) *More Burns Poems*, read by Tom Fleming
("A Recorded Anthology of Scottish Verse" Part Two—More Burns Poems) prod. by Douglas Gray / pub. by Scottish Records, Aberdeen, Scotland
- (30) 1965
(45) *Robert Burns—His Life and Tradition in Words and Sound* by Ian Nimmo
[104 page book with record, illustrated with photographs] / pub. by Record Books, Limited, London, England
- (31) 1967
EMI/Waverly
ZLP 2102 (LP)
WAV 25015 (LP) *John Cairney as Robert Burns*
/ pub. by EMI Records, Middlesex, England and by Capital Records, Canada under the title *The Life of Robert Burns*
- (32) 1968
SZLP 2111 (LP) *For Auld Lang Syne*
Max Houliston and his Band, the Dumfries Academy Choir; John M. Walker, musical director; Sybil MacKenzie, soprano Joe Campbell, tenor / pub. by Waverly, a Company of EMI Group, England
- (33) 1968
Nevis 107 (LP)
1968
MMLP 31 (LP) *The Legend and the Man*
selections from the works of Robert Burns and Hugh MacDiarmid read by Hugh MacDiarmid / pub. by Nevis Records, Scotland, and by Major Minor Records, London, England
- (34) 1968
XTRA 1074 (LP) *Tam o' Shanter (Songs and Poems by Robert Burns)*
performed by Ian Campbell / pub. by Transatlantic Records, London, England

- (35) 1968
MMLP38 (LP) *There Was a Lad*
sung by Nigel Denver / pub. by Major Minor Records,
London, England
- (36) 1968
MFP-A 8096 (LP) *William MacAlpine Sings Robert Burns*
arranged by Pearce Higgins, produced by John Boyden
/ pub. by Music For Pleasure, Paul Hamlyn, Pty, Ltd., Dee
Why West, NSW, Australia, dist. by EMI Records, London,
England
- (37) 1969
MAL 1201 (LP) *Bawdy Burns Ballads: The Gorbals High Society Clan*
produced by Siggys Jackson; Don Lowes, musical director;
various artists / pub. by March Arch Records, England, and
distributed by Pye Records, London, England
- (38) 1969
(LP) *Poems by Robert Burns [and] Scottish Border Ballads*
read by Gordon Jackson and Ann Penfold, sung by David
Chatterton / pub. by Lexington Records, Great Britain
- (39) circa 1969-70
9004 (LP) *Robert Burns in Poetry, Song and Prose*
a program arranged and performed by Arnold Johnston
1971 / pub. by Aural Press, Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA and by
CMS 614 (LP) CMS Records, Inc., New York, NY, USA
- (40) 1972
PLP 1034
(LP) *Burns*
read by Isla Blair, Julian Glover and Duncan McIntyre (from
the Argo series "The English Poets from Chaucer to Yeats")
/ pub. by Decca Records Co. Ltd., London, England
- (41) 1973
SBE 156 (LP) *Bill McCue Sings the Best of Robert Burns*
/ pub. by Beltona Records, a division of Decca, London,
England
- (42) 1974
SK 2013 (LP) *The Bard*
readings from Burns by Robert Forman / pub. by Grampian
Records, Scotland
- (43) 1974
SSC 002 (CT) *Burns Nicht At Lugton*
with Rev. Robert Peterson and Rev. James Currie / pub. by
Scotsoun, Glasgow, Scotland
- (44) 1974
Waverly
SZLP 2141 (LP) *The Kindling Fire—The Songs and Poems of Robert Burns*
John Laurie, actor; Patti Duncan, soprano; James Boyd, tenor;
Claire Liddell, piano / pub. by EMI Records Ltd., Middlesex,
England
- (45) 1974
SEL 5115 (LP) *A Rosebud by My Early Walk, Songs of Burns sung by Moira
Anderson*
/ pub. by Decca Records, London, England
- (46) 1975
SSC 066 (CT) *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*
a selection from the Kilmarnock Edition read by members of
the Irvine Burns Club / pub. by Scotsoun, Glasgow, Scotland

- (47) 1976 GCC
90466 &
90467 (2LP)
RECS 448 (CT) *John Cairney Tells the Robert Burns Story*
produced by T. Shanter Productions / pub. REL Records,
Edinburgh, Scotland, manufactured and distributed by
Columbia Records (CBS)
- (48) 1976
VSP 2035 (CT) *Robert Burns in Sight and Sound*
various singers and readers—part of an educational package
containing pictures and a booklet / pub. by Visual Sound
Projects, Edinburgh, Scotland
- (49) 1976
PH1037
(LP, CT) and
SCRM 1170 (LP,
CT) *The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 1*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge
Hovey / pub. by Philo Records, Inc., N. Ferrisberg, VT;
distributed by Rounder Records, Cambridge, MA, USA, and
Scottish Records, Callander, Scotland
- (50) circa 1977
NEV LP 112 (LP) *Alastair McDonald Sings Robert Burns*
produced by Jim McLean / pub. by Nevis Records, London,
England
- (51) 1977
SSC 116 (CT) *The Jolly Beggars (Love and Liberty) A Cantata by Robert Burns*
recorded at Poesie Nansie's Mauchline, Ayrshire, introduction
by Tom Crawford; singers: Bob Shankland, Andy Hunter,
Jean Redpath, Adam McNaughton, and Yia Steven / pub. by
Scotsoun, Glasgow, Scotland
- (52) 1977
WSTM 7729
(LP) *A Night With Robert Burns — A Portrayal by Jack Whyte*
Calgary Burns Club / pub. by Westmount Records, Calgary,
Alberta, Canada
- (53) 1977
LILP 5070 (LP) *Ron Gonella's Burns Night*
fiddle selections performed by Ron Gonella / pub. by Lismor
Recordings, Glasgow, Scotland
- (54) 1977
SSC 035 (CT) *The Poems of Robert Burns, Volume I*
Scotsoun Makars Series, narrated by Tom Crawford, various
readers / pub. by Scotsoun Recordings, Glasgow, Scotland
- (55) 1977
SSC 036 (CT) *The Poems of Robert Burns, Volume II*
Scotsoun Makars Series, narrated by Tom Crawford, various
readers / pub. by Scotsoun Recordings, Glasgow, Scotland
- (56) 1977
SSC 037 (CT) *The Poems of Robert Burns, Volume III*
Scotsoun Makars Series, narrated by Tom Crawford, various
readers / pub. by Scotsoun Recordings, Glasgow, Scotland
- (57) 1977
5092 (LP)
LICS 5092 (CT) *The Robert Burns Songbook*
sung by Helen McArthur, Peter Morrison, Bill McCue and
David Solley, produced by David Silver / pub. by Lismor
Recordings, Glasgow, Scotland

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- (58) 1978**
KDP C2 (CT) *Kenneth McKellar Sings Robert Burns*
orchestral arrangements by Peter Knight and Robert Sharples,
notes by Maurice Lindsay, compiled and produced by Ray
Horricks / pub. by Decca Record Co. Ltd., London, England
- (59) 1978
BBR/LP 108 (LP) *Robert Burns in Verse and Song (Volume 1)*
readings by the Rev. James Currie; Cormack & Sharpe,
singers; Marsali Robertson, harpist; produced by David Silver
/ pub. by Bluebell Records and Tapes, Glasgow, Scotland
- (60) circa 1979
HRT 003 (CT) *Robert Burns—Iain Cuthbertson*
produced by Marc Ellington; Karen Ellington, musical
director / pub. by Heritage Sound Recordings, Seton Works,
Cockenzie, East Lothian, Scotland
- (61) 1979
RB LP 1790 (LP) *Tam o' Shanter and Songs by Robert Burns*
with the Bearsden Burgh Choir, George MacIlwham,
composer and piper; Renton Thompson, conductor; Bill
McCue, bass soloist / pub. by Lismor Records, distributed by
Peter Hamilton, Glasgow, Scotland
- (62) circa 1980
SSC 039 (CT) *18 Burns Songs and Their Stories*
told by the Rev. Robert Paterson 'The Happy Padre,' with
various singers / pub. by Scotsoun Recordings, Glasgow,
Scotland
- (63) circa 1980**
SRC 124 (CT) *Poems of Robert Burns*
read by Harold Wightman (original LP *Tam o' Shanter and
Other Poems*, 1964) / pub. by Scottish Records, Glasgow,
Scotland
- (64) circa 1980**
SRC 125 (CT) *Poems of Robert Burns, Vol. 2*
read by Tom Fleming (original LP *More Burns Poems*, 1965)
/ pub. by Scottish Records, Glasgow, Scotland
- (65) 1980
PH1048
(LP, CT)
SCRM 171
(LP, CT) *The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 2*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge
Hovey / pub. by Philo Records, Inc., distributed by Rounder
Records, Cambridge, MA, USA, and Scottish Records,
Callander, Scotland
- (66) 1981
BBR/C 139 (CT) *The Ballads of Robert Burns*
sung by George Cormack and Irene Sharp, produced by David
Silver, musical direction by Archie Duncan / pub. by Bluebell
Records & Tapes, Glasgow, Scotland
- (67) 1981
PH1071
(LP, CT) *The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 3*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge
Hovey / pub. by Philo Records, Inc., distributed by Rounder
Records, Cambridge, MA, USA

- (68) 1981
PH1072
(LP, CT) *The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 4*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge Hovey / pub. by Philo Records, Inc., distributed by Rounder Records, Cambridge, MA, USA
- (69) circa 1982
SCRM 157
(CT) *Burns Songs from the Scots Musical Museum, Volume I*
sung by Jean Redpath, notes by Donald A. Low / pub. by Scottish Records and distributed by Post House, Callander, Scotland
- (70) circa 1982
SCRM 161
(CT) *Burns Songs from the Scots Musical Museum, Volume II*
sung by Jean Redpath, notes by Donald A. Low / pub. by Scottish Records and distributed by Post House, Callander, Scotland
- (71) circa 1982
SCRM 162
(CT) *Burns Songs from the Scots Musical Museum, Volume III*
sung by Jean Redpath, notes by Donald A. Low / pub. by Scottish Records and distributed by Post House, Callander, Scotland
- (72) circa 1982
SCRM 163
(CT) *Burns Songs from the Scots Musical Museum, Volume IV*
sung by Jean Redpath, notes by Donald A. Low / pub. by Scottish Records and distributed by Post House, Callander, Scotland
- (73) 1982
FBI00 (CT) *Robert Burns Selected Poems and Songs*
read by Edwin Henderson, produced by John B. Schefel / pub. by JBS Records, a division of Filterbond Ltd., Hertford, England
- (74) 1983/84
SSC 067 (CT) *Burns Cottage Selection from the Works of Robert Burns*
various artists / pub. by Scotsoun, Glasgow, Scotland
- (75) 1984
MKC 103 (CT) *The Legends of Scotland: Robert Burns 1759-1796*
told in song and story by Bill McCue / pub. by MK Records, Glasgow, Scotland
- (76) 1985
(CT) *Burns on Fiddle*
Betty Henderson and Reesa McGinn, fiddlers, with narration by Rev. J. Currie / pub. by Dept. of Continuing Education, Stirling University, Scotland
- (77) 1985
PH 1093
(LP, CT) *The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 5*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge Hovey / pub. by Philo Records, Inc., distributed by Rounder Records, Cambridge, MA, USA
- (78) 1985
SSC 303 (CT) *Tam's Text*
"Tam o' Shanter" read by Frank Bryson with accompanying phonetic text of "Tam o' Shanter" / pub. by Scotsoun, Glasgow, Scotland

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- (79) 1986
LDDC8001
(CT) *A Burns Supper: a Night of a Thousand Tributes*
various artists / pub. by Lismor Recordings, Glasgow,
Scotland
- (80) 1986
WH16 (2CT) and
WH16 (CT) *A Burns Supper—Tam o' Shanter & Other Verses from Burns*
and
Tam o' Shanter and Other Verse by Burns
read by John Ramage, music by Alex Yellowlees / pub. by the
Scottish Library Association and Scottish Talking Books by
Whigmaleerie, Edinburgh, Scotland
- (81) 1986
ISBN
1-85968-520-X
(CT) *A Celebration: Robert Burns Scotland's Immortal Bard*
performed by John Ramage, Bill Torrance, David Campbell
and Nancy Doherty, with musicians Alex Yellowlees and
Duncan Smith, A Whigmaleerie Production / pub. by
Canongate Audio, Edinburgh, Scotland
- (82) 1986**
CDTRAXX 007
(CT) *The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 4*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge
Hovey / pub. by Greentrax Records, Edinburgh, Scotland
- (83) 1987
LIS 6019
(LP, CT) *Kenneth McKellar—To Robert Burns—A Tribute*
/ pub. by Lismor Recordings (Lismor de luxe), Glasgow,
Scotland
- (84) 1987**
CDTRAXX 008
(CT) *The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 5*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge
Hovey / pub. by Greentrax, Edinburgh, Scotland
- (85) 1987
PH 1114
(LP, CT)
and
CDTRAXX 0055
(CD) *The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 6*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge
Hovey / pub. by Philo Records, Inc., distributed by Rounder
Records, Cambridge, MA, USA, and pub. by Greentrax,
Edinburgh, Scotland
- (86) 1988
LC0001 (CT) *The Quern Present the Life, Poetry and Songs of Robert Burns*
Wallace Lockhart, narrator, with instrumental soloists / pub.
by Lapwing Records, Edinburgh, Scotland
- (87) 1988
Chandos
ABRD 1324 (LP)
CHAN 8636 (CT) *Robert Burns Songs and Music*
The Scottish Early Music Consort; songs from *The Scots*
Musical Museum; arrangements by Hayden, Beethoven,
Weber, Hummel, Kozeluch; fiddle music by Neil Gow;
directed by Christopher Field; various artists / pub. by
Chandos Records, Colchester, England
- (88) 1988**
LICS5070
(CD) *Ron Gonella's Burns Night*
fiddle selections performed by Ron Gonella / pub. by Lismor
Recordings, Glasgow, Scotland

- (89) circa 1988
ZCLOC1039 (CT)
LOC 1038 (CD) *A Tribute in Song to Robert Burns*
with Valerie Dunbar, The Clydesiders, Anne Lorne Gillies,
and Peter Mallan / pub. by Lochshore of KLUB Records Ltd
Glasgow, Scotland
- (90) 1989
REH737 (LLP) *The Miller's Reel (A love story from the songs and letters of
Robert Burns)*
a BBC Radio Scotland broadcast from 1986 with Jean
Redpath, Rod Paterson, David Hayman, Phyllis Logan and the
Edinburgh String Quartet; arrangements by Serge Hovey /
pub. by BBC Enterprises, Ltd., Great Britain
- (91) 1989
11 0331-1231 (LP) *Robert Burns / Leopold Kozeluh [sic] [Skotske Lidove Pisne
Roberta Burnse V Uprave Leopolda Kozekuha]*
sung by tenor James Griffet / pub. by Supraphone Records,
Czechoslovakia
- (92) 1989
TUT 140 (LP)
72140A (CD)
1991
GL3059 (CD) *Songs of Robert Burns Sung by Andy M. Stewart*
/ pub. by Wunder Tute, Germany (1989) and Green Linnet
Records, Danbury, CT, USA (1991)
- (93) 1990
BE 4/2 (CT) *Classically Scottish*
words and music provided by Burns, arrangements by
Beethoven, Hayden, Kozeluch, Pleyel and Weber; sung by
Scottish soprano Enid Bannatyne / pub. by the 4 Label, BE
Records, Selkirkshire, Scotland
- (94) 1990**
FW8758 (CT) *The Songs of Robert Burns Sung by Ewan MacColl*
/ pub. by Folkways Records & Service Corp., New York, NY,
USA
- (95) 1990
PH1126
(LP, CT) *The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 7*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge
Hovey / pub. by Philo Records, Inc., distributed by Rounder
Records, Cambridge, MA, USA
- (96) 1991
TRAX 042 (CT) *Burns Songs in Gaelic – Orain Le Raibeart Burns*
sung by Elfrida Scott / pub. by Greentrax Records, Edinburgh,
Scotland
- (97) 1991
BP-CD01 (CD) *For the Love o' Burns*
sung by Pamela Campbell / pub. by Burnside Productions,
Charlottetown, PEI, Canada
- (98) 1991**
FCS 09877 (CT) *Poems and Letters of Robert Burns*
Read by Max Dunbar / pub. by Smithsonian Folkways
Records, Washington, DC, USA

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- (99) 1991
Literary Series I
(CT) *The Verse of Robert Burns "Satire and the Supernatural"*
read by Prof. R.D.S. Jack / pub. by University of Edinburgh,
Dept. of English Literature, Scotland
- (100) 1992
EPD 001 (CD) *Love Songs of Robert Burns*
sung by soprano Shoshana Shay, arranged and performed by
John Davidson / pub. by ELM Productions, Inc., New York,
NY, USA
- (101) 1992
DARC 1003 (CT) *There Was a Lad: Carl Peterson Sings Robert Burns*
/ pub. by Darach Recordings, Norristown, PA, USA
- (102) 1992
(CT) *The Works of Robert Burns in the Doric, Volume One*
read by "Killie" an Ayrshire Chiel / pub. by Killie Ltd.,
London, England
- (103) 1992
(CT) *The Works of Robert Burns in the Doric, Volume Two*
read by "Killie" an Ayrshire Chiel / pub. by Killie Ltd.,
London, England
- (104) 1992
(CT) *The Works of Robert Burns in the Doric, Volume Three*
read by "Killie" an Ayrshire Chiel / pub. by Killie Ltd.,
London, England
- (105) 1992
(CT) *The Works of Robert Burns in the Doric, Volume Four*
read by "Killie" an Ayrshire Chiel / pub. by Killie Ltd.,
London, England
- (106) 1993**
LIDC 6019 (CD) *Kenneth McKellar – To Robert Burns – A Tribute*
/ pub. by Lismor Recordings, Glasgow, Scotland
- (107) 1993**
RRCD 1322
(CD) *Robert Burns—Scottish Airs*
in 18th century settings by Leopold Kozeluch, sung by James
Griffet, (original LP *Robert Burns / Leopold Kozeluh [sic]*,
1989) / pub. by Champion Records, Cheshire, England
- (108) 1993
LFP 7730 (2CT) *Robert Burns: A Selection of Poems, Ballads, and Song Lyrics*
read by Bill Patterson and Hannah Gordon / pub. by EMI
Records, London, England
- (109) 1994
(CT) *Burns in Burns's Own Ayrshire Dialect – volume 1*
spoken by Robert Pate / pub. by Robert Pate, Ayrshire,
Scotland
- (110) 1994
(CT) *Burns in Burns's Own Ayrshire Dialect – volume 2*
spoken by Robert Pate / pub. by Robert Pate, Ayrshire,
Scotland
- (111) 1994**
OSS 102 (CD) *Songs of Robert Burns*, sung by Ewan MacColl
/ pub. by Ossian Records, Cork, Ireland

- (112) 1994**
MIDM004 (CT)
MIDCD004 (CD) *The Star o' Rabbie Burns—The Songs of Robert Burns 1759-1796*
early monograph recordings 1906-1942, various artists, The Balladeer Series / pub. by Moidart Music Group; Kent, England
- (113) 1994
CDTRAX 085 (CD) *Toasting the Lassies*
a selection of the Love Songs of Robert Burns arranged and performed by Gil Bowman / pub. and distributed by Greentrax, London, England, in conjunction with the International Burns Festival '96
- (114) 1995**
LBP 2020 (CD) *Alastair McDonald Sings Robert Burns*
pub. By Lochshore Records, by KRL, Glasgow, Scotland
- (115) 1995
DSM51201 (CD) *Among the Lasses—Songs of Robert Burns*
Susan Rode Morris, Soprano and Phebe Craig, harpsichord / pub. by Donsuemor Records, Berkeley, CA, USA
- (116) 1995**
CHANDOS 0581 (CD) *Auld Scottish Songs*
Scottish Early Music Consort [original LP *Robert Burns Songs and Music*, 1988]; collected by Robert Burns; arranged by Hayden, Beethoven, Weber, Hummel, and Kozeluch; various artists / pub. by Chandos Records, Colchester, England
- (117) 1995
DSM40601 (CD) *Between the Late and Early: Romantic Songs of Robert Burns*
Susan Rode Morris, soprano, and Phebe Craig, harpsichord / pub. by Donsuemor Records, Berkeley, CA, USA
- (118) 1995
DUNCD 020 (CD) *Dougie MacLean—Tribute*
[to Robert Burns, Neil Gow and Robert Tannahill] / pub. by Dunkeld Records, Perthshire, Scotland
- (119) 1995**
CDLOC 1091 (CD) *The Legend and the Man*
selections from the works of Burns and MacDiarmid read by Hugh MacDiarmid / pub. on Lochshore Records, by KRL, Glasgow, Scotland
- (120) 1995**
(CT, CD) *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*
read by John Cairney / pub. by Harper Collins, London, England
- (121) 1995**
CDL51103 (CT) *The Poetry of Robert Burns and Scottish Border Ballads*
read by Frederick Worlock (Burns, side 1) and C.R.M. Brood (ballads, side 2); directed by Howard Sackler / pub. by Caedmon, New York, NY, USA
- (122) 1995**
(CT) *Robert Burns 200*
material previously recorded by various performers, compiled and produced by Drew Taylor / pub. by Skirling Records, Lanarkshire, Scotland

- (123) 1995
 LCOM 6039 (LP)
 LIDC 6039 (CD)
 LIS 6039 (CT) *The Robert Burns Collection—The Burns Supper*
 various artists / pub. by Lismor Recordings, Glasgow,
 Scotland
- (124) 1995
 LCOM 6041 (LP)
 LIDC 6041 (CD)
 LIS 6041 (CT) *The Robert Burns Collection—The Music*
 with the Gaelforce Orchestra / pub. by Lismor Recordings,
 Glasgow, Scotland
- (125) 1995
 LCOM 6040 (LP)
 LIDC 6040 (CD)
 LIS 6040 (CT) *The Robert Burns Collection—The Songs*
 various artists / pub. by Lismor Recordings, Glasgow,
 Scotland
- (126) 1995
 LCOM 6042 (LP)
 LIDC 6042 (CD)
 LIS 6042 (CT) *The Robert Burns Collection—The Words*
 read by Tom Fleming / pub. by Lismor Recordings, Glasgow,
 Scotland
- (127) 1995
 EDP 002 (CD) *The Thistle & the Rose, Songs of Robert Burns*
 sung by Shoshana Shay, soprano; arranged and performed by
 John Davidson / pub. by ELM Productions, Inc., New York,
 NY, USA
- (128) 1996
 (CT) *Burns in Burns's Own Ayrshire Dialect – volume 3*
 spoken by Robert Pate / pub. by Robert Pate, Ayrshire,
 Scotland
- (129) 1996
 SSC 126/127 (2CT) *Burns Nicht—Revisited!*
 a return to the Lugton Burns Club [SSC 003, 1974] / pub. by
 Scotsoun, Glasgow, Scotland
- (130) 1996
 CKD 050 (CD)
 or HONCD
 5047 (CD) *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 1*
 various artists, produced by Fred Freeman / pub. by Linn
 Records, in association with the Burns Federation, Glasgow,
 Scotland,
- (131) 1996
 CKD 051 (CD) *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 2*
 various artists, produced by Fred Freeman / pub. by Linn
 Records, Glasgow, Scotland
- (132) 1996
 SMD607 (CD) *An Honest Lass*
 sung by Gilly Hewitt / pub. by Smiddy Made Music,
 Blairgowrie, Scotland
- (133) 1996
 LCOM 5250 (CD) *Honest Poverty—Alastair McDonald,*
 / pub. by Lismor Recordings, Glasgow, Scotland
- (134) 1996**
 RELCD 503
 (CD, CT) *Pride and Passion: Songs of Robert Burns*
 various artists / pub. by REL Productions, in conjunction with
 an exhibit at the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh,
 Scotland

- (135) 1996
ALBA02 (CD) *"Robert Burns: A Woman's Man" Sung by Romey Carr
"A Man's Woman"*
/ pub. by Alba Records for Ramishaw Ltd., Glasgow, Scotland
- (136) 1996
IRCD 035 (CD)
IR 035 (CT) *Robert Burns' The Merry Muses*
with various artists / pub. by Iona Records, a division of
Lismor Recordings, Glasgow, Scotland
- (137) 1996
CDTRAXX 117
(CD) *Songs from the Bottom Drawer—Rod Patterson Sings Burns*
/ pub. by Greentrax Records, East Lothian, Scotland
- (138) 1996**
JR 103 (CD) *The Songs of Robert Burns* [from the Scots Musical Museum],
Volume I
sung by Jean Redpath, researched by Donald Low and
Douglas Gray / pub. by Jean Redpath Records, Tucson, AZ,
[later Osprey, FL], USA
- (139) 1996**
JR 104 (CD) *The Songs of Robert Burns* [from the Scots Musical Museum],
Volume II
sung by Jean Redpath, researched by Donald Low and
Douglas Gray / pub. by Jean Redpath Records, Tucson, AZ,
[later Osprey, FL], USA
- (140) 1996**
PH1187 (CD)
TRAXX114
(CD) *The Songs of Robert Burns—Vols 1 & 2*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge
Hovey / pub. on Philo label by Rounder Records, Cambridge
MA, USA and by Greentrax Records, East Lothian, Scotland
- (141) 1996**
PH1188 (CD)
TRAXX115
(CD) *The Songs of Robert Burns—Vols 3 & 4*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge
Hovey / pub. on Philo label by Rounder Records, Cambridge
MA, USA and by Greentrax Records, East Lothian, Scotland
- (142) 1996**
PH1189 (CD)
TRAXX116
(CD) *The Songs of Robert Burns—Vols 5 & 6*
sung by Jean Redpath, researched and arranged by Serge
Hovey / pub. on Philo label by Rounder Records, Cambridge
MA, USA and by Greentrax Records, East Lothian, Scotland
- (143) 1997
IRMA (CD) *Burns, Banks & Braes*
sung by Morven Rae, with arrangement of traditional and new
tunes by Ian Rae / pub. by IRMA Music, London, England
- (144) 1997
(CT) *Burns in Burns's Own Ayrshire Dialect – volume 4*
spoken by Robert Pate / pub. by Robert Pate, Ayrshire,
Scotland
- (145) 1997
CKD 062 (CD) *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 3*
various artists, produced by Fred Freeman / pub. by Linn
Records, Glasgow, Scotland

- (146) 1997
CKD 083 (CD) *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 4*
various artists, produced by Fred Freeman / pub. by Linn
Records, Glasgow, Scotland
- (147) 1997**
JR 105 (CD) *Songs of the Robert Burns* [from the Scots Musical Museum]
Volume 3,
sung by Jean Redpath, researched by Donald Low and
Douglas Gray / pub. by Jean Redpath Records, Tuscon, AZ
[later, Osprey, FL], USA
- (148) 1998
CKD 088 (CD) *Auld Lang Syne*,
various artists—a composite album culled from Linn’s
Complete Songs of Robert Burns series / pub. by Linn
Records, Glasgow, Scotland
- (149) 1998
ARZ6708 (CD) *Bobby Burns: Music Celebrating the Poetry of Robert Burns*
chorus and orchestra conducted by Robert DeCormier; various
artists; [“The Jolly Beggars” complete, plus other songs];
arrangements by Vaughan Williams, Schostakovich, Mayer,
Haydn, Beethoven and DeCormier / pub. by Arabesque
Recordings, a division of Rebot Corp., New York, NY, USA
- (150) 1998
CKD 086 (CD) *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 5*
various artists, produced by Fred Freeman / pub. by Linn
Records, Glasgow, Scotland
- (151) 1998
CKD 099 (CD) *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 6*
various artists, produced by Fred Freeman / pub. by Linn
Records, Glasgow, Scotland
- (152) 1999
CKD 112 (CD) *Alloway Tales*
sung by Ian Bruce / pub. Linn Records, Glasgow, Scotland
- (153) 1999
CKD 107 (CD) *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 7*
various artists, produced by Fred Freeman / pub. by Linn
Records, Glasgow, Scotland
- (154) 2000
(CD) *The Ayres Burns Songs*
/ pub. by Shirley and Peter Bennett, Montreal, Canada
- (155) 2000
CMP8002
(CD) *Celtic Connections Volume 2, Songs of Robert Burns*
various performances culled from Greentrax recordings
/ pub. by Greentrax Records, East Lothian, Scotland
- (156) 2000
CKD 143 (CD) *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 8*
various artists, produced by Fred Freeman / pub. by Linn
Records, Glasgow, Scotland
- (157) 2000
BBJ2016 (CD) *Jim Mullen / Burns*
jazz arrangements by Jim Mullen, performed by the Jim
Mullen Quartet / pub. by Black Box Music Ltd., London,
England

- (158) 2000
SSC 139 (CT) *The Soun o Burns*
poems selected and read by James A. MacBain to accompany the book *The Black and Blue Burns* which contains phonetic versions of Burns's poems / pub. by Scotsoun, Glasgow, Scotland
- (159) 2001
CKD 156 (CD) *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns, Volume 9*
various artists, produced by Fred Freeman / pub. by Linn Records, Glasgow, Scotland
- (160) 2001
PUR7ST
(CD) *Creative Fire—The Poetry of Robert Burns*
performed by Billy McColl; music performed by David A. Stewart, Finbar Furey and others. / pub. by www.pureuk.com, Scotland
- (161) 2001
22579 (CD) *David Arditti Burns Songs*
David Arditti, composer and pianist; William Revels, baritone / pub. by MP2.com, San Diego, CA, USA
- (162) 2002
KPCD005 (CD) *Burns An A' That—On the Wagon*
with Peter McCarra and Michael Kidd / pub. by Big Country Music, Crieff, Scotland
- (163) 2002
SP73154 (CD) *Burns Night Out! —Smithfield Fair*
with special guest Tom Murray Sr.; produced by Smithfield Fair and David Praet / pub. by Stevenson Productions, Baton Rouge, LA, USA

The earliest long-playing, 33 ½ rpm, album devoted entirely to the songs of Burns which I could locate is *Norman MacKaye Sings Ballads of Scotland's Bard Robert Burns* published by Jay Records circa 1948-50. MacKaye had a pleasant baritone, clear Scottish pronunciation and, significantly, chose to record "Duncan Gray," "Whistle O'er the Lave o't," "Willie Brewed a Peck o' Maut" and "Of A' the Airs" in addition to the more commonly recorded songs such as "Bonnie Doon," and "Coming Thro' The Rye."

In the early 1950s there were two albums dedicated to the songs of Burns which featured American popular singer, Jo Stafford. The music by Alton Rinker on these two albums, *Jo Stafford Sings the Songs of Scotland with Words by Robert Burns* (circa 1954) and *My Heart's in the Highlands* (circa 1951), bears faint resemblance to the original Scottish tunes (with the exceptions of "Comin' Thro the Rye," "Auld Lang Syne," and the spuriously placed "Annie Laurie") and combined with Jo Stafford's rich and versatile alto voice they create a sound that is pleasant, but not Scottish. There must have been some hope that Jo Stafford's interpretations of Burns songs would find their way to the "Hit Parade" or the top-forty on the radio as they do indeed have the quality of popular American standards of the day. The overly-stringed orchestrations could have come directly from the soundtracks of Hollywood films of the period.

American folk singer Betty Sanders released an album of Burns songs, *The Songs of Robert Burns Sung by Betty Sanders*, in 1957. Accompanied throughout by Jerry Silverman on guitar, and occasionally by Harry Smyles on oboe, Miss Sander's unremarkable voice belies the strength of her interpretations which are notable for their energy, intelligence and humor. Sanders added just enough Scots pronunciation so as *not* to fall into the trap of a phony Scottish dialect which can be off-putting. Sanders chose a variety of Burns songs in her seventeen selections, including what were quite likely some of the first recordings of "My Soldier Laddie," "The Highland Widow's Lament," "My Dowry's [*sic*] the Jewel,"⁶ and "Braw Lads of Galla Water."

The Saltire Music Group, under the direction of Hans Oppenheimer, released three albums, *Burns Night—Songs and Poems* (circa 1958), *An Evening with Robert Burns* (circa 1961) and, on 45 rpm, *Songs and Poems of Robert Burns* (circa 1961), utilizing material from the same recording sessions. The recitations of poems such as "To a Mouse" and "Tam o' Shanter" are performed slowly and carefully in an apparent attempt to prevent the listener from being confounded by the Scots vocabulary. The reading of "Tam o' Shanter" by a woman named Meta Forrest is especially well done. All sung by classically trained singers, the songs are not as consistently friendly on the ear. A laborious operatic performance style prevails among the song selections with the exception of those sung by soprano Margaret Fraser who was inclined to a lighter touch.

Undoubtedly one of the most popular interpreters of Burns's songs is Kenneth McKellar whose first Burns album, *The Songs of Robert Burns*, was released in 1959 and most recently, on compact disc, in 1993. McKellar is a tenor and his style comes directly from the operetta or art-song tradition. When he first began recording this was an asset as he musically bridged the gap between the earlier and middle parts of the twentieth century. He is still beloved by a generation of Scots who associate the songs of Burns with McKellar's wholesome and heartfelt renditions. However, McKellar's style clashed with the later trends to interpret Burns songs as folk music, to create contemporary interpretations, or attempts to perform the songs as they might have been heard in Burns's time.

The first flood of Burns albums appeared during the years just before, during and after the bicentennial of his birth in 1959. Releases during that period included McKellar's album; Ann Moray singing *The Love Songs of Robert Burns* (1959); the first printing of *The Songs of Robert Burns Sung by Ewan MacColl* (1959); two "Burns Night Supper" albums, *The Immortal Memory* (1959) featuring Duncan Macrae, Kenneth McKellar, Ian Wallace and Jimmy Shand, among others; *Burns Nicht "A Traditional Supper in Auld Reekie"* (1959) featuring

⁶The large number of artists and producers involved in the albums in this discography have naturally led to variants in titles, spelling, tunes, anglicization of Scots words and other anomalies which will not be corrected throughout this paper, nor necessarily noted, unless the variant or anomaly is relative to my comments.

Harold Wightman, Joan Alexander and Hugh MacDiarmid; *Bobby Burns' Merry Muses* (1958) sung by Paul Clayton; *Songs from Robert Burns' Merry Muses of Caledonia Sung by Ewan MacColl* (1962); and The Saltire Music Group's *The Jolly Beggars: A Cantata with Words by Robert Burns* (1963). With the exception of the rugged, intimate sound of Scottish folklorist and song-writer Ewan MacColl on his two albums, the musical performances in this group primarily conform to the semi-classical style of Kenneth McKellar so popular at that time. In the case of Cedric Thorpe Davie's setting of *The Jolly Beggars* on the Saltire Music Group album, the style is distinctly classical and, considering the subject matter, not terribly effective.

These recordings were followed in the next few years by two albums (presumably part of a planned collection of several more) by Scottish Records of Aberdeen which feature Harold Wightman, *Tam o' Shanter and Other Poems* (1964), and Tom Fleming, *More Burns Poems* (1965). Part anthology, part introduction, these artists give practical readings of a variety of Burns's poems. In 1967 Nevis and Major Minor Records each released *The Legend and the Man*, an album of Hugh MacDiarmid reading from his own works as well as from Burns. While MacDiarmid's reading style is often so subtle as to be phlegmatic, this album provides a material connection between two distinguished Scottish poets. *John Cairney as Robert Burns* (1967) was the first of several recordings to preserve John Cairney's famous stage portrayal of Burns in his one man show which he performed for nearly twenty years. Cairney was a fine actor with a powerful voice and presence which are evident on this and the later recordings.

One of the most important Scottish recording ventures was started by Dr. George Philps and W. Allan Ramsay in Glasgow in 1974. They called their modest company Scotsoun and dedicated it to establishing a sound archive of Scots as a living language and the results of Scots used as a means for creative expression. Of Scotsoun's over one hundred cassette recordings, eleven are devoted entirely to the work of Robert Burns. Over the years Philps and Ramsay chose a useful and inventive variety of contexts in which to record Burns's works such as a Burns Night Supper, *Burns Night at Lugton* (1974); *The Jolly Beggars* (1977), performed by Scottish folk singers and recorded at Poosie Nancie's Inn, Mauchline; a selection of readings from The Kilmarnock Edition, *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1975); various readers interpreting 34 of Burns's poems and songs, including several of the much longer pieces, in three volumes, *The Poems of Robert Burns* (1977); *Burns Cottage Selection from the Works of Robert Burns* (1983/4), intended as an introduction for tourists; the Rev. Robert Paterson telling the stories behind some of the songs, accompanied by singers, piano and fiddle on *Burns Sangs (circa 1980)*; and *Tam's Text* (1985), featuring Frank Bryce reading "Tam o' Shanter" and published with a "Scotscrieve" booklet of the text written in a phonetic version of the Ayrshire dialect. Scotsoun's cassettes cover a thorough range of Scottish literature; the company is still issuing new cassettes and books every year, and will undoubtedly make more contributions to the discography of Burns in the future.

American composer Serge Hovey (1924-1989) began his work on Burns's songs in the 1950s when he set about matching all the tunes to the lyrics for which Burns intended them. Hovey accomplished this through years of research, in the United States and Scotland, using Burns manuscripts and correspondence, and becoming well-acquainted with the earlier research of Henley and Henderson, James C. Dick and, later, James Kinsley. In the process Hovey developed an authoritative understanding of Scottish music, historically and technically, and immersed himself in Burns biography and criticism. The consequence of Hovey's diligence is evident in the second phase of his project—his thoughtful arrangements of the songs which combine modern and traditional instruments with orchestrations that have a distinctly Scottish sensibility. By 1973 Hovey completed the piano and vocal arrangements for 324 Burns songs which he organized thematically into four volumes and collectively titled *The Robert Burns Song Book*. While the first two volumes of Hovey's project, edited by his wife, Esther Hovey, have just recently been published (the other two are in preparation) it was recording *The Robert Burns Song Book*, a projected 26 volumes (only seven of which were ultimately recorded, 88 songs, due to Hovey's death in 1989) that would bring Hovey's vision of Burns to life. The late Scottish ethnomusicologist and folklorist Hamish Henderson was enthusiastic about Hovey's work, thought by many at the time to be radical, too modern, too sophisticated and too far afield from the sound of Burns songs in popular tradition—not to mention the fact that Hovey was not a Scot. Henderson was not alone in his frustration with the treatment of Burns as he described it in Timothy Neat's 1988 documentary *The Tree of Liberty*:

Like all great artists . . . Burns has needed a lot longer than his lifetime to come into his own. But the question is: are we ready for him? His own age emphatically was not. Already in his own lifetime, attempts were being made to cut him down to size and obscure his message. . . . What Scots succeeded in doing with Burns was a truly grisly spectacle. They wanted to turn him into a sort of literary equivalent of Lenin in his tomb. I'm quite sure that a lot of real Burns lovers have looked on that ghastly spectacle with a sort of despair. Through the reek, through the sodden, maudlin haze of a million Burns suppers, anyone might have been forgiven for asking: how is it possible to rescue this poor painted, cosmeticized cadaver of a dead poet from the ghastly mess in which they've laid him? Can it be done? Well, in my own opinion the answer is triumphantly "yes." And the key is the songs. And specifically the great song complex to which Serge Hovey has devoted himself. . . .⁷

The essential ingredient Henderson suggested for the recording of Hovey's arrangements was the participation of Scottish singer Jean Redpath, whose powerful soprano voice and intense commitment to Scottish culture brought added authority to the project. *The Songs of Robert Burns, Volume I* was published

⁷Timothy Neat, documentary, *The Tree of Liberty*, (Edinburgh, 1988).

simultaneously in 1976 by Philo Records, N. Ferrisberg, Vermont, and Scottish Records, Callander, Scotland, with liner notes by Esther Hovey. The combination of Hovey's arrangements and musical direction with Redpath's voice opened up the whole question of Burns songs to popular and academic consideration in a way that has changed how they are now appreciated. While earlier researchers had also discovered Burns's note referring to "A Red, Red Rose" on a manuscript in the British museum ("The tune of this song is in Neil Gow's first collection, and is there called *Major Graham*."), Hovey was the first to set aside the melody chosen by George Thompson after Burns's death which had become popularly attached to the song, "Low Down in the Broom," and recorded an arrangement of the tune "Major Graham" set to Burns's lyrics, unaltered.⁸ The result was not only an exquisite new rendering of a familiar Burns song, but at least a dozen other singers and arrangers followed suit and recorded "A Red, Red Rose" with the melody for which Burns wrote it. Hovey's decision to use Burns's choice of melody has resulted in folk singers recording the original versions of several Burns songs, most notably "Auld Lang Syne." Prior to the Redpath/Hovey recordings there were three albums dedicated entirely to songs from Burns's *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* (the two mentioned earlier by Paul Clayton and Ewan MacColl as well as *Bawdy Burns Ballads: The Gorbals High Society Clan*, 1969), and a scattering of songs from *The Merry Muses* showed up on a few other albums. In none of those cases were the songs, whether determined to be by Burns or not, performed without the lyrics being altered, bowdlerized, transliterated or otherwise expurgated. Hovey, on the other hand, chose at least one song from *The Merry Muses* for each album and did not alter a single word from the text he determined to be Burns's, so the songs were sung as written for the first time and, perhaps not surprisingly, initially censored on the radio in Scotland.⁹ Songs from *The Merry Muses* are now commonly included on recordings of Burns's songs and the lyrics are now scarcely ever altered in any way. There are dozens of songs Hovey chose for his albums that had rarely seen the light of day, let alone been connected to their original tunes, which, as a result of being heard on the Redpath/Hovey albums, have become part of the standard repertoire of Scottish folk-singers in Scotland, Ireland, Canada and the United States such as "Song Composed in August," "Wantoness," "The Winter it is Past," "Nine Inch Will Please a Lady," "The Slave's Lament," "Will Ye Go to the Indies, My Mary," "The Mill, Mill O," "Last May a Braw Wooer," "Gloomy December," "The Fornicator," "Hey Ca' Thro," and "O Merry Hae I Been Teethin' a Heckle," to name a few. Jean Redpath possesses one of those rare voices that has a quality which comes as close as any human voice to the depth and precision of a musical instrument. In her case, perhaps, a cello. Her pleasing

⁸James C. Dick, *The Songs of Robert Burns* (Hatboro, PA, 1964).

⁹*The Burns Chronicle*, 99 (Kilmarnock, 1990), 78.

sound and intuitive execution are well suited to Hovey's innovative arrangements and are a key factor in the popularity of these recordings which have been reprinted and continue to sell one and two decades after their initial releases.

Uncontested as the individual who has recorded the most Burns songs (180, thus far), Jean Redpath's other significant contribution to the discography of Burns was created in collaboration with the late Dr. Donald Low of Stirling University. Recorded from 1976 to 1980, and published *circa* 1982 on cassette tapes by Scottish Records of Callander, Scotland (later reissued on compact discs by Jean Redpath Records), *Songs from the Scots Musical Museum* is an important collection as it presents all the songs Burns collected and lyrically adapted for James Johnson's six-volume publication. *The Scots Musical Museum* stood the test of time and became, as Burns predicted, "...the text book & standard of Scottish Song & Music" as it was the source for material for most late nineteenth and early twentieth century popular Scottish song books.¹⁰ Burns's contribution to this work was long misunderstood since the poet demurred from taking the credit for many of his rewrites of traditional lyrics which essentially became such significant variants as to be rightfully considered new songs. Such was Burns's involvement that, according to Low, "Burns was in fact editor of the *Museum* in all but name..."¹¹ Once again, bringing Burns's work off the page and into the recording studio increased appreciation of the high degree of his accomplishment. Performing *a cappella* or occasionally accompanying herself on guitar, Redpath's singing on these recordings is, as on the Redpath/Hovey albums, typically clear, unaffected and unmistakably potent.

The other major Burns recording project, *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns* was conceived and produced by Dr. Fred Freeman of Edinburgh University, and the first disc, published by Linn Records, Glasgow, was issued in 1996 in conjunction with "The Burns Festival '96." Freeman's goal was to have all the known Burns songs recorded on compact discs, creating the first complete collection of Burns songs, and with nine volumes (253 songs) published thus far, his worthy goal is very near to being achieved. In the liner notes for the first disc in the series Freeman writes, "The artists here, working in the fluid tradition of folk music that the song-writer admired so much, have endeavored to do justice to the spirit and intention of the composer and the music (rather than to the letter of some abstract law)." If that can be understood as an attempt to balance eighteenth-century Scottish music with the styles of the contemporary folk movement, then in the main the various renditions are quite successful. Who arranged the various songs (though presumably the respective musicians) was not made clear until another sentence was added to the liner notes starting with

¹⁰*The Letters of Robert Burns*, 2nd edn., ed. G. Ross Roy, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1985), II, 382.

¹¹James Johnson and Robert Burns, *The Scots Musical Museum, 1787-1803*, introduction by Donald A. Low (Portland, OR, 1991), p. 2.

Volume 5, “The arrangements in the series, for the most part, represent a dialogue between the producer [Freeman] and the players.” This is helpful information and it would also be helpful to know, along with Dr. Freeman’s choice of songs for each volume, exactly what tunes he selected to go with Burns’s lyrics and whether or not they were Burns’s choice—many are recognizable and readily identified, but too many are not. That “dialogue” is the element which gives the series its weaknesses, occasions where the style of arrangement combined with a particular tune or the talents of a particular performer are so mismatched, or so out of sync with the lyrics, that the effect is awkward or muddled, or at the least, disappointing. That said, however, the same, presumably free-form, arranging style has produced some of the most memorable renditions of Burns songs recorded thus far. Arthur Johnstone sings “Scots Wha Hae” to a strict martial rhythm and manages to invest the song with an immediacy that is inspired. Janet Russell’s fierce and straightforward version of “Wha’ll Mowe Me Now” elevates it beyond the realm of bawdry into something much more meaningful and moving—with Russell it becomes a song of protest and a wail of grief. Rod Paterson articulates “My Nanie O” with a combination of simplicity and vitality that captures the spirit of the song. The same could be said for Gordeanna McCulloch’s “Comin Thro’ the Rye,” Tony Cuffe’s “The Weary Pund o’ Tow,” Davy Steele’s “John Barleycorn: A Ballad,” Wendy Weatherby’s “Logan Braes,” and just about anything sung by Ian Bruce, but especially “Ye Jacobites by Name” and “Now Westlin Winds and Slaught’ring Guns.”

There are two other significant components to *The Complete Songs of Robert Burns* series issued by Linn Records that make it unique. First is the unusual array of musical instruments played throughout: fiddle, guitar, harpsichord, bagpipes, small pipes, flute, cello, bass, accordion, bouzouki, clarsach, mandolin, cittern, bodhran, whistle, banjo, dulcimer, djembe, congas, cojon, concertina, recorder and harmonica. Second is the extraordinary gathering of talent exemplified by the Scottish folk singers appearing on various volumes. In addition to those singers already mentioned, there are performances by Christine Kydd, Billy Ross, Alan Reid, Ian F. Benzie, Leslie Hale, Brian Miller, Mick West, Corrina Hewat, Jamie McMenemy, James Malcolm, Elspeth Cowie, John Morran, Bobby Eaglesham, Gillian MacDonald, Ian Anderson, Mairi Campbell, Mae McKenna, and Ross Kennedy.

In the category of “spoken-word” there are at least three dozen recordings dedicated entirely to Burns’s poetry or which contain several readings of his poems. It may be the nature of such recordings, but few are particularly successful with the exceptions of the John Cairney albums (1967, 1976, and 1995), the three Scotsoun cassettes which comprise *The Poems of Robert Burns* (1977), *The Verse of Robert Burns “Satire and the Supernatural”* (1991) read by Professor R.D.S. Jack, and *Robert Burns: A Selection of Poems, Ballads and Songs* (1993) read by Bill Patterson and Hannah Gordon. Though Caedmon Records specialized in spoken word albums, their 1959 release, *The Poetry of*

Robert Burns and Scottish Border Ballads, is perhaps the least satisfying of them all.

In 1996 Iona Records released *Robert Burns' Merry Muses* (another recording dedicated to *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*) which features singers Gill Bowman, Tich Frier, Fiona Forbes, Robin Laing, Scott Murray and Davy Steele performing nineteen excellent renditions from Burns's "private collection," many of which had not been previously recorded with their lyrics unexpurgated such as "Ye Hae Lien Wrang Lassie," "The Bonniest Lass," "Wad Ye Do That?" "How Can I Keep My Maidenhead?" "Nae Hair On't," and "Duncan Macleerie."

Some of the more interesting Burns recordings of the 1970s and 1980s were: *Alastair McDonald Sings Robert Burns* (circa 1977); *Tam o' Shanter and Songs by Robert Burns* (1979), features the Bearsden Burgh Choir (Glasgow) with talented bass soloist Bill McCue in piper George MacIlwham's unique choral arrangement of Burns's most famous comic poem; *Robert Burns / Leopold Kozeluh [sic]* (1989), a selection of the Czechoslovakian composer's arrangements of Burns songs from Thomson's *Select Collection of Scottish Airs*; The Scottish Early Music Consort's album of arrangements from Thomson's *Collection* by Hayden, Beethoven, Weber, Hummel and Kozeluch, and from *The Scots Musical Museum*, with fiddle music by Neil Gow, titled *Robert Burns Songs and Music* (1988) (reissued in 1995 on compact disc as *Auld Scottish Sangs*); and the especially successful offering from the lead singer of the band Silly Wizard, *Songs of Robert Burns Sung by Andy M. Stewart*. With the reissues of many albums from the previous four decades as compact discs and the flurry of activity surrounding the 1996 Burns bicentennial, the greatest number of Burns recordings was issued in the 1990s. As was the case before that time, some were less successful in their respective efforts and some more so. Some of the noteworthy Burns recordings released during the 1990s include *Burns Songs in Gaelic* (1991) sung by Elfrida Scott, *There Was A Lad: Carl Peterson Sings Robert Burns* (1992), *Among the Lasses* (1995) with soprano Susan Rode Morris and harpsichordist Phebe Craig, *Tribute* (1995) by Dougie MacLean whose performance of "The Slave's Lament" is remarkable for its drive and originality, *Songs from the Bottom Drawer—Rod Patterson Sings Burns* (1996) which is a showcase for one of the best contemporary Scottish folk singers, and Ian Bruce's splendid *Alloway Tales*.

One other notable recording is *Jim Mullens / Burns*, released in 2000, on which the Jim Mullen Quartet successfully performs eleven Burns songs in modern jazz instrumental arrangements—a surprising and impressive achievement; probably farthest afield of any of the attempts to contemporize Burns songs.

Although I have avoided what I consider to be the folly of declaring any particular album or artist's rendition as definitive, I have naturally indicated my preferences. Neither have I engaged in the questions of which singer, instrument, producer or style of arrangement is most true to what Burns heard or wanted to hear. Until there is a time machine to transport someone back to find out, there can be no certain answer, however the lack of answers will fittingly never prevent

the questions from being asked. While the musicians and scholars will be sorting it all out among themselves for some time to come, it is clear that the work done thus far has gone a long way to rekindle much of the “charm” of the oral tradition—at least in the case of Burns’s songs—of which Mrs. Laidlaw spoke with such regret. It is highly unlikely that this discography of Burns recordings to date is complete and, not only will earlier recordings turn up over time, the numbers of new recordings will dramatically increase in the future. For, in spite of the profusion of recordings in the last fifty-four years that has finally established tangible evidence of Burns’s standing as a master lyricist and song-collector, the one hundred sixty-three recordings listed in this discography are really just the beginning.

New York City

The information for this discography was gathered from albums, cassettes and compact discs belonging to the author; articles by R. Peel in *The Burns Chronicle*, 3rd Series, IX (1960), 97; 3rd Series, XV (1966), 45-54; 3rd Series, XXII (1973), 6-7; 3rd Series, XXIV (1975), 14-17; 4th Series, I (1977), 49; the sound recording collections at The Cleveland Public Library; Lincoln Center Library, New York; The Mitchell Library, Glasgow and The New York Public Library; the Internet auction site www.ebay.com; the record company and distribution websites www.greentrax.com, www.jeanredpath.com, www.linnrecords.com, www.lismor.com, www.mp3.com, and www.portlandamerica.com; as well as from Internet searches of the following university and public library holdings: Australian National University; British Library Public Catalogue; California State Library; Carnegie Mellon University—Pittsburgh; Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries; Columbia University—New York; Dublin City University; Glasgow University; Idaho State University; Illinois State University; King’s College, London; Lewis & Clark College—Portland; The Library of Congress—Washington D.C.; McGill University—Montreal; Metro Boston Library Network; Michigan State University; Milwaukee Public Library; Minneapolis Public Library; Mississippi State University; National Library of Australia; National Library of Canada; National Library of Scotland; National Library of Wales; New York University; Ohio State University; Pennsylvania State University; Princeton Public Library; Queen Margaret University College—Edinburgh; San Francisco State University; State Library of Florida; State Library of South Australia; Strathclyde University—Glasgow; TriUniversity Group of Libraries—Ontario; University College—Cork; University College of North Wales; University of Adelaide; University of Denver; University of Edinburgh; University of Iowa; University of Manitoba; University of South Carolina, G. Ross Roy Collection; University of Toronto; University of Virginia; Washington D.C. Research Library Consortium; and Washington State University.